

## Death in Gold Robes

Word Count: 747

Imagine finding it at the bus stop.

After years of escape, it--Death--has finally found me. He was not dressed in a simple black robe; nothing about Death was so simple. He wore gold rings on his slender fingers, diamond watches on his wrist. I knew that he would eventually find me starving at the bus stop, but I did not think he would so soon. "Get up, boy." Death muttered.

His voice was not deep. He did not wear a sad smile. His face was twisted in a prideful smirk, his sharp features cutting through every simplistic image of Death the world has created. His long, pointed fingers reached for my throat in what I thought was an attempt to kill me, but instead, he grabbed a worn-down, paper coffee cup filled with all the money I own. Death was supposed to take life, I knew that, but I did not think he would take more. I found his eyes rapidly searching for something, and his breathing hitched.

"Hurry, we don't have much time." I was again surprised by the reality of Death. He was not a reserved, tamed being; he was rushed and eager, almost greedy. Behind him, a dark shadow raced into an alley. He caught my stare and twisted his neck, searching for what caught my attention. He, too, saw the shadowed figure, and I could sense his fear rise as it raced past buildings, speeding to us. *Death was afraid.* And I was too.

I stood up and ran, Death following me. The shadowed figure was faster. I turned to take a closer look at what it was, only to see a shining object soar through the air and plunge into my right shoulder. I screamed out in pain, my frail body crashing onto the solid ground. As my knees cracked in pain, I saw the shadowed figure grabbing Death by the neck. It shrieked, and as the darkness around it subdued, I could finally see it. *The shadow looked like Death.* My head spun, both from the

blood rushing out of my body and my confusion. *This* thing looked like Death; it wore an ominous black robe and carried itself in a dark and elegant manner, opposite to the Death that had met me at the bus stop.

The shadow whispered something into my killer's ear, ripping gold chains from his pocket. Finally, the shadow noticed me, and in a wave of darkness, it pulled the shining object--a dagger--from my shoulder. It stared into my eyes, a sad smile playing at its mouth, as it spoke with a kind voice, "I'm sorry, boy."

"You were not meant to die today." My head spun, and I looked back at the creature that killed me. The shadow noted my confusion.

*"That is not Death."*

I gulped for air as my body finally grew weak. I barely registered the words that the shadow has spoken. *That was not Death.* The shadow was mad. I was clearly dying, and only Death can kill. The shadow ignored my efforts to hang on to life. It reached its cold hand to my cheek before turning away. It ran to what was apparently *not* Death. Both beings stared at each other, and suddenly, a swarm of black wind surrounded the shadow. Gold covered the other.

Gold. Gold was not the colour of Death. My head felt light. *I'm dying.*

I started to understand what was happening as my life flashed before my eyes.

I was four years old when my mother died.

I was eleven when my father was sent to jail.

I was thirteen when I dropped out of school.

I was seventeen when the gold creature found me.

My family could not afford medical care for my mother, my father was in a debt he could not pay. I had to leave school to find a job, to find money. *Money*. That was the first thing the gold-creature sought when he found me. He was not Death, the shadow was Death.

I started to see blackness, my lungs collapsing.

The gold-creature valued only power over others. He killed my mother, put my father in prison, and killed *me*. He did not care for my life, not like Death had. He seemed willing to kill *hundreds of thousands of people for a dime*.

The blood gushing out of my shoulder slowed.

I did not find Death at the bus stop.

I took my last breath.

*I found greed.*