

DEATH

Written by

Holly Weene

A Monosyllabic Short

OVER BLACK

THE SOUND OF A HOSPITAL MONITOR BEEPING

FADE IN:

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - DIMLY LIT

Monitors, IV Pumps, Oxygen tubing surround a hospital bed.

A young girl, frail, age 8, lies sleeping in the bed. This is MEG. Fighting for her life. Her nurse, KATE, 30s stands over her bed. Kate turns to look out the adjacent window to a full moon still hanging in the gray sky of dawn.

KATE
(V.O.)

Death stares at me with black eyes.
I feel its gaze; its cool breath.
The age old curse wakes. It is near
on this day; in this place. But I
do not fear it. When it comes for
these small ones, I will fight.
Though I have not yet seen its
face, I know it lurks. I feel it. I
pray this child does not.

The girl Meg, stirs in bed. Groggy with sleep and illness, she looks up at Kate.

MEG
Who are you?

Kate feigns surprise.

KATE
Who am I? It's Kate. You know me.
I'm your nurse. I've been off for
two days and you don't know me?

She winks at Meg and smiles

MEG
(weakly)
Oh....yeah, Miss Kate.

She considers Kate for a moment

MEG (CONT'D)
I had a bad dream.

KATE
A bad dream?

Meg's gaze drifts behind Kate to a chair in the corner.

MEG
Yes. An old man.

KATE
What? What old man?

Meg continues her gaze at the chair.

MEG
Him.

Kate stiffens with apprehension and looks behind. The chair, as it was when she entered, remains empty.

MEG (CONT'D)
He stares at me.

KATE
Meg, there is no old man. There is
no one in the chair.

A noticeable shiver runs through Kate as she glances behind once more. The chair remains empty. She shakes it off.

KATE (CONT'D)
Come on now. No more of this, Meg.
It's time to start your meds.

Kate holds up the small IV bag. Meg sighs and looks away.

MEG
I don't like them.

KATE
I know, but this is the last dose,
and then you are done. No more
meds!

MEG
Then I won't die?

KATE
What? No! Of course you won't die,
Meg. Why would you think such a
thing?

She's used to feigning bravado for the kids.

MEG
The old man says I will.

KATE

Meg! Stop it! It was just a dream.
No one will hurt you.

Kate is trying to convince herself also. She starts to turn around to the chair again, following Meg's gaze, but stops herself.

Meg breathes a heavy, doubtful sigh.

MEG

Yeah. Just a dream I guess.

Kate is hanging the bag of medication now and programming the IV pump. Meg continues to lie in the bed but now she reaches for a Jack-o-lantern shaped pillow propped on the bedside table. She studies it.

MEG (CONT'D)

I wish I could dress up for trick
or treat.

Kate is relieved that Meg's thoughts are lightened. Her heart melts a little.

KATE

Oh Meg, I do too. But you will
next year. Wait and see.

Meg smiles a faint smile but then darkens again.

MEG

Do you think there are real ghosts,
Miss Kate?

KATE

Of course not.

MEG

Not at all?

Kate turns her face away - to hide the lie.

KATE

Nope.

MEG

Did you know Tim?

KATE

Yes, of course. I was his nurse
too.

Kate frowns. Where is this going?

MEG
He saw a real ghost.

KATE
And how do you know that?

MEG
He was sick just like me. He told
me he saw a ghost one night and
then... the next day, he died.

Kate stops in mid-motion of programming the pump.

KATE
Meg, I told you, you will not die.
I won't let you. I won't. Tim's
case was not the same as yours.
Not at all.

Meg remains doubtful.

MEG
I think the ghost he saw was that
old man. And now he's here for me.

She tears up now

MEG (CONT'D)
That's why I'm scared.

She presses her face in the Jack-o-lantern pillow and sobs.
Kate strokes Meg's head, a tear forming in her own eye. She
turns and switches the pump to the "ON" position.

KATE
(softly to Meg)
You go back to sleep. No more
ghosts.

MEG
Don't leave. Please.

KATE
Meg...I have more work to do. I'll
be back soon. You rest now.

MEG
Can you make him leave?

Meg once again looks past her to the chair. Kate tries not to
tremble.

KATE

Meg...sweet child, there is no one here.

Meg knows better as she continues to look past Kate at the chair.

KATE (CONT'D)

Now shhhhhh. I'll be back soon.

She raises her finger to her lips as Meg closes her eyes in sleep.

Kate turns to leave the room but stops beside the chair, every hair on end now. She narrows her eyes and in a low, threatening voice she nearly hisses her words to the chair.

KATE (CONT'D)

I know who you are. Leave her. Do you hear me? GET. OUT.

Angle on the still empty chair as we...

FADE OUT.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES' STATION - A LITTLE LATER

Kate approaches the nurses' station. Halloween decorations are scattered about. Another nurse, BEV, middle aged, looks up.

BEV

How were your days off? You look tired.

KATE

Bad start to the day. I guess it shows.

BEV

You look pale too. Have you seen a ghost?

She picks up a plastic ghost perched on the desk and shakes it at Kate.

KATE

Well, too much talk of ghosts, let's say.

BEV

Well, it IS the night of haints;
when ghosts roam and the witch
rides, you know.

She howls and shakes the ghost at Kate again as she chuckles to herself. Kate turns her gaze back toward Meg's room.

KATE

There's a real one here.

She's serious. Bev sobers.

BEV

A real ghost? Here? What do you mean?

KATE

You know what I mean. I feel it. I know him. You do too. And you know why he's here.

BEV

You give me chills, Kate. You know we do the best we can for these kids. Most of them live. We lose some, yes. But this talk of ghosts is...not like you. You need to stop it. Go take a break. You need it.

Bev shakes her head and returns to her work as Kate looks back toward the door to Meg's room once again.

INT. - MEG'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Kate eases the door open and peaks in. She opens it wider to enter but then looks suspiciously at the empty chair. The pump beeps. The medication bag is empty. Meg lies in bed staring up at it.

KATE

All done.

MEG

I'm glad. And you were right. I feel good. And I'm not scared now.

KATE

Well, that makes me feel good too.

She smiles and touches Meg's cheek. As she does, a look of concern crosses her face.

KATE (CONT'D)
Your skin feels cool. Are you
cold?

MEG
Yes, very cold.

She shivers and hugs the jack-o-lantern pillow to her as she once again looks past Kate to the chair. Kate starts to turn, but then thinks better of it.

KATE
It's just the drug. It does that.
It makes you feel cold.

MEG
Yeah, I know.

She glances at the empty chair.

MEG (CONT'D)
He's gone now.

KATE
That's good. I told you it was
just a dream.

MEG
I guess you were right.

Kate smiles at Meg and caresses her cheek again.

KATE
Of course I was right. It's my job
to keep you safe and help you get
well. You will be fine and like I
said, next year will be your year
to trick or treat.

Meg smiles weakly at her as she begins to doze off again.

MEG
Yeah, trick or treat...

And then more softly

MEG (CONT'D)
Boo! Miss Kate...

KATE
Boo! Right back at you!

Kate smiles and pulls the blanket more closely around Meg.

KATE (CONT'D)

There, now you won't be so cold.

Kate turns to leave the room but stops at the empty chair. She again narrows her eyes as she speaks to it in a low rasp.

KATE (CONT'D)

You lose. You can't have this one.
I'm glad you are gone. Take your
curse of death and go back where
you came from. And do not come back
here. Ever!

INT. - NURSES STATION - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Kate approaches from down the hall. An ORDERLY with a patient on a gurney stops at the desk where Bev is still seated.

ORDERLY

Where do you want this one.

Bev looks at her clipboard

BEV

Room 6

The orderly starts down the hall pushing the gurney past Kate. Kate rushes to the desk in confusion.

KATE

Bev? What's up with that? Room 6 is
Meg's room. You know that.

Bev looks at her with concern.

BEV

Oh Kate....

KATE

What? What's wrong?

Bev looks incredulous

BEV

Kate, no one is in that room.

Kate's lips start to tremble.

KATE

No... I was just in that room. Meg
is there and she's fine. I just saw
her... and she's fine! She's
fine.....

Kate is shaking now.

BEV

Kate.... Oh Kate.

Bev rises to put her arm around Kate.

BEV (CONT'D)

Meg died last night.

Kate's eyes open wide and her mouth drops open in horror.

FLASH TO:

A candle is suddenly extinguished, as we....

SLAM TO BLACK

THE END