

Years 5 & 6

1st Place: Mudith Kariyawasam

Year 6, Harrisdale Primary School

## Death

A single act of kindness can change a life – an extraordinary change for an extraordinary being.

Greetings, my fellow weaklings. You must have heard of me before. You see, I'm quite famous or possibly notorious on the planet that you call Earth. I might have met one of your family or friends. But I'll tell you now that I will encounter you one day. Sooner or later. I seep under doors and mats, peep through curtains and holes, conjuring an atmosphere of emptiness in my wake. In my presence, all beings kneel and beg to die. Anonymously, I creep into many lives, destroy their souls and take them away into my realm, bursting with wicked laughter. My name echoes around the world. I have been known and feared, for centuries and I will be for many years to come. I am invincible, colder than ice and darker than tar; no one could possibly thwart me. After all, who doesn't fear "Death"? Yes, you heard that, I'm "Death". So kneel down before me. For you are weak, and I am strong.

If you're reading, well, continue because you might just find me waiting for you at the end of the story. Waiting for you to come to me, so I can destroy you and take you away. How lovely would that be? Anyway, enjoy the life you're having so far because you won't be living for much longer. Good luck. You will need it.

Back to my task, I'll have to deal with you later. I am lurking in the shadows of a dimly lit room. On an old dusty bed lay an old man by the name of Frederick Thompson. He breathes in shallow breaths, and his heart beat slow. Without hesitation or guilt, I raise my scythe and plunge it into the man's chest. I howl wickedly, my voice echoing in the room. I scoop his soul out of his chest, and with a swish of my cloak, I had already crossed the border that separates the dead and the living. As I scan around, all I can see is impenetrable darkness. The biting wind is bleak, and each ghostly, dead tree sways in sync in the wind. I allow the soul free, where it will roam, alone and forgotten with the dead and deceased. In the distance, I can make out a huge black figure amidst all the dark clouds – my fortress. If you're a being like me, surely you would need a grand house. As I enter my fortress, I am greeted by stacks of skulls that are purely for attraction. I can hear my servants (who are just dead souls that I took pity on) cleaning my home. I smile in satisfaction as I prepare for my upcoming appointment. Focusing as hard as I can, my mind travels into the foreseeable future, which considers the following death that I shall commit.

Initially, it's a blur. But as the obscurity disperses, it reveals a small yet tormented child with a vague coat of uncertainty surrounding him. My thin lips twist into a sinister smile as my mind travels into the present once more. I lift my great scythe and get ready to do what death does: killing. With just a swish of my cloak, I am gone, the atmosphere of eternal despair, still lingering in the air.

As my surroundings come back to view, I realise that I am in the warm sunshine. I stagger back in disgust as the bright, radiant sun pierces my dark body. I hide in the shadows of a great tree. The absence of sunlight alleviates my skin, and my

powerful aura of death returns. All the plants around me wither and die. As I look around, I realise the once colourful meadow is now a grey, desolate field. I stared into the distance, and I can see a young boy staring out into the now bleak surroundings, feeling lost and alone.

I look into his eyes, and I can witness the countless taunts that he has gone through. I can see all the atrocious actions that he has been put against. Betrayed, hurt, misery. These emotions are circulating through his heart, this very second. He has a soft yet tormented soul that slowly been ebbing away by the words and actions of others. The final thread is about to snap. Now, he sits here on a branch of a tree, thinking about what has happened to him. This tree that he is sitting at this very moment is like his home. It is one of the only places he feels safe. He has come here countless times for company. However, today feels wrong. His laughter is now gone. I watch as he stares forward into the grey meadow. I can see tears pouring down his eyes – tears of fear, misery and grief. I look into his eyes, and I can see the pain. The pain that is slowly eating away at his heart. I watch as memories flood past his eyes. The memories of his childhood, full of colour and joy. Now it has all vanished.

I can feel a tear slide down my own face. This is the first time this has ever happened. I want to kill myself for doing this, only to realise that I was never alive. I blink, trying to stop the tears running down my face, but I can't help it. I am actually feeling sorry for him. For once in my entire "death-span", I have ever felt sympathetic for a fellow being. Around me, I can see lightning cackle, and the clouds were the kind of grey that could possibly make pure metal tremble, as if it couldn't handle the amount of greyness in the air. All the swirling darkness that seemed to give you a chill and make your hair stand up, was bound to worsen later. I look at the boy. I look at the tears. I look at his evil past that has been torturing him for months. Even though I am invisible to him, he can sense my presence as if it is a coat of darkness surrounding him.

The branch snaps. He falls. For a moment, I think my heart skipped a beat, which is funny because I never had one. I can see the shock on his face. Plummeting down from the tree-tops, he grabs onto a thin branch. He screams for help, his words echoing in the distance. No one was coming. I didn't want to take him away. He didn't deserve to die. He didn't do anything wrong, and he is only little. Right? There was a tiny voice in the back of my head.

*Don't do it. Let him die.*

But is that right? By now, I felt like kicking myself. The tiny voice came back.

*Who cares about what's right?*

My thoughts swirled around in my head, engulfing every bit of my conscience. I tried to convince myself that he was innocent, and then, at the same time, I wanted to hit myself. Yet, I couldn't bring myself to do it. He closes his eyes. Suddenly, a branch comes falling down from the top of the tree and hits the boy on the head. He's unconscious. I can see the tips of his fingers slowly sliding off the branch. My eyes widen. I don't want this to happen. I know I must not do this. His fingers slip . . .

Without a second thought, I race over to catch him. I can feel his warmth in his body. His last remaining hope. Slowly, I lay him down on the ground. His eyes were closed, and he wasn't moving. He was still breathing. I felt elated, and then at the same time, I felt lost. I can't quite explain it. I was lost, lost in my own world, unaware of what I was doing. Unaware that I was about to change forever. I slowly fix my mind on the present and realise the truth. What had I done? This was something that I had never

done before. I look down at his face and can see a flicker of warmth and joy. A small ember that sparked happiness and pride. Then and there, I knew that no matter how dark my personality was, I had done the right thing. This was a 'death-changing' moment.

I am prowling within the shadows of a dimly lit room. On a bed lay an old lady by the name of Eva Gibson. She breathes in short breaths, and her heart palpitated unevenly. The surrounding machines beep slowly, and for a second or two, they nearly halt. I can see her chest rise and fall. I watch as surgeons pick away at her heart, trying all their hardest to help her. However, her fate lay within the hands of me. I realise that I only have one choice now. Let her live or let her die. I remember the times when I was brutal, vain and oppressive. Now, it's all gone. I have changed now. I keep in mind that day, although it has been a while ago, decades in fact. I remember that boy, and I remember what benevolence feels like. I look into her eyes. I see past all the misery and contempt and there, right within the middle, is a spark of joy. It was the same feeling that I had experienced decades ago and also countless other times. She deserves to live. It is the only right thing. The machines return to a steady beat, and the surgeons are now closing up the wound. I still remember the day, decades ago – the day when it all changed for the better. I will never forget it.