

DEATH AND PEZ

By Bobby Keniston

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CHARACTERS: (1 male, 1 either)

REGGIE: A high school student, prone to high levels of stress. He is very passionate about succeeding, but, in the process, kept himself from having a great deal of fun.

DEATH: Death is very congenial and good-natured, and also quite funny. Appears easily distracted, but is very much in control. This role can be played by either a male or a female.

PROPERTIES LIST

Desk (pre-set)	A Skull-Head Pez Dispenser (pre-set)
Notebooks, Scattered Papers, School Supplies (pre-set)	A Table Lamp (pre-set)
Stack OF Books (pre-set)	A Cell Phone (pre-set)
Pez Dispensers (enough to constitute a collection)	Watch (Death)
	Bed (optional)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play was originally performed in a MUCH different draft in 1994, as part of a Gifted and Talented theater group final performance entitled "Bobby's Dead". It was one of the first scripts I had ever written, and, I believe, the very first script of mine that was given a performance. The name of the student, of course, was named after me-- Bobby. I have happily changed the character's name to Reggie (and have, hopefully, given him some mannerisms that are not my own). I found the script recently, still liked the premise, and have created this entirely different piece around it. Nonetheless, I dedicate this play to Dave Greenham, my gifted and talented theater teacher, for encouraging my writing all those years ago.

SETTING: The bedroom of REGGIE DYSART, a high school student. There is a desk stage downstage left, with a table lamp, and a stack of books on it, and several papers, pens, and other school supplies. Stage left, there is door leading out into the rest of the house. Stage right there are a number of shelves which display a Pez dispenser collection. It can be a varied collection, but one of the dispensers needs to be the popular Halloween item with a skull head. REGGIE's bed can be upstage center. It is a neat, studious room, albeit somewhat cluttered by books and schoolwork.

AT RISE: REGGIE is working at his desk. HE is frazzled and stressed out. HE looks through one of his books while trying to finish an assignment. After a moment, there is a knock on his door.

REGGIE: (*calling off*) I'm working!

(*Beat. Another knock.*)

I AM WORKING.

(*Beat. Another knock.*)

What, mom, do you want to write my paper on death imagery present in the works of Hawthorne?

(*Beat. Silence.*)

Didn't think so.

(*REGGIE resumes working. Another knock.*)

Give me a break! Fine, just come in!

(*DEATH enters, dressed in typical "Grim Reaper" regalia. Aside from this imposing appearance, DEATH is quite congenial. REGGIE looks up and is immediately startled.*)

DEATH: Hiya.

REGGIE: What...? Who...?

DEATH: Don't mind me. I'm a little early.

REGGIE: Oh my...

DEATH: Seriously, I'm not even here. Just go about your business.

(*Beat*) You've got about ten minutes.

REGGIE: (*closes his eyes*) Okay, Reggie, you must be dreaming.

DEATH: Nope. I'd pinch you, but... well, you know. (*DEATH makes a gesture of a falling tree, complete with a sound*) Kersplat. Kind of an occupational hazard. Sorry.

REGGIE: (*calling out*) Mom! Dad!

DEATH: They're at the Benson's party. Remember? It's Friday, after all. Good food, a few cocktails. Fun. Speaking of which, why are you doing homework on a Friday night? I mean, it's none of my business...

REGGIE: Don't hurt me! (*grabs his table lamp and brandishes it like a pathetic weapon*)

DEATH: Whoa, take it easy, lamp-boy. I'm not dangerous. I'm nice. I just have to kill you in nine and a half minutes. (*Beat*) Give or take.

REGGIE: (*puts down lamp, picks up a cell phone*) I'm warning you... I'm calling the police.

DEATH: You can try. Be my guest. Cell phones have a tendency to die around me. I think of it as my contribution to save the bees. (*Beat*) I like to look on the bright side.

REGGIE: (*slams down cell phone*) Get out!

DEATH: I should know better than to come early. It just gets kind of boring, waiting around.

REGGIE: Get out of my room!

DEATH: Okay, relax, tough guy. You're being rude.

REGGIE: You're here to kill me, and I'm the one who's being rude?

DEATH: Look, a job's a job. I try to be pleasant about it. (*Notices REGGIE's Pez collection.*) Oh, cool! Pez!

(*DEATH crosses to look at the Pez dispensers. REGGIE makes a break for the door.*)

Not so fast, kemosabi.

(*DEATH makes a gesture, and REGGIE acts as if HE's being pulled back to his chair.*)

Have a seat.

(*REGGIE sits roughly, as if pushed.*)

Try to relax. Breathe. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may and all that. (*notices the skull Pez dispenser*) Oh, wow! Look! It's like me, only Pez! (*moves the dispenser's head as if it's talking, in an exaggerated high voice*) Look at me! I am mini Death! (*DEATH laughs. Beat*) Can I have this?

REGGIE: No!

DEATH: (*hurt*) Fine. (*puts it down*) You don't have to be mean about it. It's not like you're going to need it.

REGGIE: Don't say that! Please! Don't say that!

DEATH: (*quickly*) Oh, Gosh, you're right... okay, okay, I'm sorry. (*crosses to REGGIE*) Look, I forget sometimes, okay? Being an immortal, I forget that dying is kind of a big deal to you guys. I didn't mean to make light of things. You must be going through a lot right now. So, please forgive me. (*Beat*) Do you forgive me?

REGGIE: I don't know.

DEATH: Fair enough. I understand. (*Beat*) So can I have that Pez dispenser?

(*REGGIE gives him a harsh look.*)

All right, we'll forget about Pez for a moment. So, Reginald...

REGGIE: (*soft*) Reggie. Everyone calls me Reggie.

DEATH: Okay, Reggie. I know you're probably scared.

REGGIE: No. I'm not.

DEATH: You're not scared?

REGGIE: No. I'm very... (*trails off*)

DEATH: Yes?

REGGIE: MAD! I'm really MAD!

DEATH: Huh?

REGGIE: It's not fair! I have worked so hard! I've spent all four years of my high school career working, planning for my future. I was going to get into a good college, study law, pass the bar, become a famous lawyer, start a high-yield I.R.A. account so I could retire in style and luxury, and then spend the rest of my life having fun. Having fun! For once!

DEATH: Wow. You really did have it all planned out. But, you must've had some fun before now.

REGGIE: Not really.

DEATH: C'mon.

REGGIE: No. I've always been serious-minded.

DEATH: When you were a kid?

REGGIE: Yes.

DEATH: Did you ever go to Disneyland?

REGGIE: Math camp.

DEATH: Birthday parties?

REGGIE: Learning opportunities.

DEATH: Hiking?

REGGIE: Reading.

DEATH: Snowball fights?

REGGIE: Understanding the geometrical arc of projecting a spherical object through space and time, and the force required to...

DEATH: All right, I get it. You're serious. Ever had a girlfriend?

REGGIE: No. (*realizes something*) Oh no!

DEATH: What?

REGGIE: I've never had a girlfriend!

DEATH: That's a bummer.

REGGIE: I've never been on a date, never been in love, never even kissed a girl... I'm going to die with un-kissed lips!

DEATH: That's a rough break. (*checks watch*) Hey, you've got about five minutes. Any cute neighbors?

REGGIE: Oh, that's hilarious.

DEATH: Sorry. Just a thought.

REGGIE: There was supposed to be time. Time for everything. Love. Fun. Being frivolous, hanging out. Don't you get it? There was supposed to be time to relax! (*Beat*) How do I... I mean, what kills me?

DEATH: I'm no doctor, but I'm guessing stress.

REGGIE: Of course! Figures! (*Beat*) Is it going to hurt?

DEATH: I hope not.

REGGIE: What?

DEATH: No, no. I'll make sure it doesn't hurt.

REGGIE: Thanks. (*Beat*) I guess there was no point.

DEATH: What do you mean?

REGGIE: Everything I have ever done has all been leading up to something I'm never going to have. I've just been building towards something, SOME THING, and I never really knew what it was. I haven't been living, I've been preparing to live.

DEATH: (*after a pause*) That's pretty deep. If it's any consolation, it sounds like you've really dedicated yourself to your goals. Sure, it was at the expense of having a life, but...

REGGIE: How is that supposed to make me feel better?

DEATH: Cut me some slack! I don't do the whole "comforting thing" very often.

REGGIE: I guess when you're the Grim Reaper...

DEATH: Hold on! I prefer Death.

REGGIE: Why?

DEATH: There's nothing "grim" about me. I'm nice. (*Beat*) If anything, I should be called "The Necessary Reaper". I serve the most necessary purpose there is.

REGGIE: Killing people?

DEATH: I don't kill people! People die. Or expire, if you will.

REGGIE: But why me?

DEATH: Why not? Everyone dies. It's not like I'm picking on you.

REGGIE: Okay. But why now? Why not some old guy at the nursing home?

DEATH: Hate to break this to you, but there's no criteria, buddy-boy. Do you think your life is somehow valued more than someone who has lived eighty years? Or some murderer's life in a jail somewhere?

REGGIE: *(after a beat)* Well, yeah, kinda.

DEATH: And you have a valid point, I admit. But death isn't like that. Everyone is equal in death, my friend. And just a tip---most people think it's too soon, whether they're nine or ninety. *(Pause)* You okay?

REGGIE: I'm a little depressed.

DEATH: *(somberly)* Yeah. *(Pause---then, very cheerful)* Well, Reggie, it's been great talking to you! I don't get to really talk to someone very often. But, I'm afraid it's time now. Sorry.

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