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Death and Money

This is a very old story.

There were three young men. They liked to eat, and they liked to drink a lot.

One day they were in the bar of the Grand Hotel. Through the window, they saw some men. They had the body of a dead man.

‘What’s that?’ said the 1st young man. He said to a child, ‘Boy, come here!’ The boy came. The young man said, ‘Who is dead? Go and ask.’ The boy went, and came back.

‘That was one of your old friends,’ he said. ‘He was often here at the Grand Hotel with you.’

‘Why is he dead?’

‘I don’t know,’ said the boy. ‘Death takes all lives.’

‘The boy is right,’ said the barman. ‘Death is going to take your life someday. Perhaps today. Perhaps tomorrow.’

‘Oh no,’ said the 1st young man. ‘Death is not going to take my life.’

'You must be ready for Death,' said the barman.

The 1st young man said, 'Where is Death? I am going to find him and kill him. Are you coming with me?'

'Yes,' said his friends.

The three young men walked up the road.

An old man came along the road. He knocked the ground with his stick. 'Open for me, Mother,' he said to the ground. 'Old man,' said the 1st young man.

'Why do you knock the ground with your stick?'

'I am old. I don't want to live. But Death is never going to take me. The ground is not going to open for me. I walk along the road and I say, "Mother, I want to die."

'But I can't die.'

'Where is Death?'

I saw him under a tree, upon the mountain there,' said the old man.' Go there, find the tree, and Death too.'

The three young men walked up the mountain. They came to the tree. Under the tree was money, a lot of money.

The 1st young man said, 'Now, my friends, are we going to take this money? Or are we going to find Death and kill him?'

'The money,' said his friends.

'Where are we going to take it?'

'To my house,' said the 2nd young man.

'Not in daylight,' said the 3rd young man. 'People mustn't see us.'

'No,' said the 1st young man. 'We must take it home by night. We want some beer now, beer and food. Who is going to the town, to buy beer and food?'

'I am,' said the 2nd young man. 'Give me some money.'

He went down the road to the town.

The 1st young man said to the 3rd young man, 'Are we going to give him some of this money?' 'No,' said the 3rd young man. 'How can we kill him?'

'I have a knife. And you have a knife.'

The 2nd young man walked to the town and he said, 'I want all the money. Why not? But how can I get it? They are two and I am one.'

Then he said, 'I'm going to kill them.'

He went to a shop. He asked for poison. 'I want something to kill the rats in my house,' he said to the man in the shop. 'They eat all my food.'

'I have some very good rat-poison,' said the man.

The young man went away with the rat-poison.

He went to the Grand Hotel. 'Three bottles of beer, please,' he said.

He put poison in two of the bottles. Then he went back to his friends. His two young friends put their arms round him.

They killed him with their knives.

'Now,' said the 1st young man. 'Have some beer.'

They opened all the bottles of beer. Before night, they were dead.

The old man was right.

Death was under the tree.



His friends put their arms round him. They killed him with their knives.