

DEATH IS DEAD

by
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FADE IN:

A LARGE MISSILE LAUNCHER

Archive footage shows a large gun barrel slowly turning until the black eye of the missile shaft is large and still.

ELI (V.O.)

Medical research is a bit like the
Ministry of Defense.

BOOM!

The missile is let loose into the great big sky.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If anyone actually did their job, there
wouldn't be a job to do.

A BOMBER PLANE

Archive footage shows a British Ally bomber plane in the sky.

POW!

Suddenly, it bursts into flames as some UFO hits it squarely; the plane drops errantly to earth.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LAB - DAY

You're average 29 year-old male yuppie, ANDRE McPHERSON, swings on a make-shift harness wearing a white laboratory smock and a HUGE magnifying monocle over his eye. He looks a little uncomfortable swinging slowly over a veritable garden of laboratory mice, separated into carefully marked sections such as 'A-BOMBS', 'Plan-B', 'C No Evil', etc.

ELI (V.O.)

Take us for instance.

ANDRE

This one's dead!

ELI (V.O.)

Right now I work at a French
pharmaceutical firm called Lipon, in
their experimental research department.

Your average 29 year old female yuppie, OLIVIA HUGHES, places a 12-inch vinyl record on a record player. The music plays normally, but on the punch of a button, the vinyl begins to play backwards. Olivia observes the mice and makes notes.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We're in charge of covering all ground that science is embarrassed to touch, and try our hand at the same infections and virus strains, cancers and diseases that the real scientist treat. You know... superstitions.

ELI WOOSTER, an unassuming 25 year-old man, stands in front of his colleagues with one hand in front of his stomach and one in front above his head, and a series of electrode monitoring cables stuck to him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Is it rub your head and pat your stomach, or the other way 'round?

Both Andre and Olivia shrug and answer in perfect opposites. Eli looks confused.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We try everything.

INT. LAB MONITORING ROOM - DAY

Andre ducks his head inside. Olivia is watching some computer graphics and Eli is standing in his pajamas.

ANDRE

I couldn't finish my lunch so I gave it to the rats in 'P.O.E.O.P.E.' Is there a way we can monitor that?

ELI

What did you have?

OLIVIA

They're not rats. They're mice.

ANDRE

I had a chicken korma. Have we even given these guys curry before?

OLIVIA

Tikka masala, not the korma. And most of them are female.

Eli looks slightly disappointed.

ELI
I haven't eaten today.

ANDRE
What are you doing in pajamas?

ELI
I'm going to sleep.

OLIVIA
Eli's got the graveyard shift.

ANDRE
For what group?

ELI
Plan B's watching a Bergman marathon.

ANDRE
Puh. That won't work!

OLIVIA
No? Putting a black cat in with the
'George W Bushes' was much better?

Andre shrugs.

ANDRE
I gotta get outta here. I'm starving.

INT. LAB - LATER

Andre and Olivia are leaving out the front door in heavy winter coats as Eli waves goodbye in his pajamas.

ELI (V.O.)
We also spend a lot of time injecting terminal illnesses into new specimens, perfectly living things, and then testing various hypothesis that never, ever work. Ever. We get paid for this. The idea of a cure seldom enters into our minds.

INT. LAB - LATER

Eli kneels beside the bed in the center of the laboratory. *Wild Strawberries* is projected on the far wall for a captivated audience of sick mice.

ELI
Now I lay me, down to sleep...

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We even pray.

ELI (CONT'D)
...And God bless the mice in section
'Blue J' but not any of the other groups.

Eli hops into bed. The theater scene from *The Silence* plays on the wall, and then it cuts to the other sister moaning in bed.

Eli moans in bed. He then frees himself from the bed sheets. He is sleepwalking. He passes the mice and their movie marathon, and turns into the laboratory kitchen.

INT. LAB KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Eli, still asleep, begins assembling a sandwich from ingredients in behind the various cabinets in the kitchen. Some of these things are in no way edible. The end result is microwaved.

Eli sits down at the table to eat this horrendous heap of semi-edible foodstuffs and takes the first bite.

DEATH - a black spot carrying a scythe - sits opposite Eli, still chewing and now reacting negatively to his culinary invention.

DEATH
Hey.

Eli moans.

DEATH (CONT'D)
Hey!

Eli wakes up, and is startled almost out of the chair.

ELI
God! You scared me, Andre.
(looks around)
Was I sleepwalking? Shit. Are the films
still playing?
(lowering his head)
I'll have to start all over again. What
the hell am I eating?

Death has no reply.

ELI (CONT'D)
Andre? No? Olivia?

DEATH
No.

ELI
(waiting)
Andre?

DEATH
I'm Death, you idiot.

ELI
Death? Oh, Death!
(looks down at the sandwich)
Am I...

Death stands up and startling rummaging through the kitchen cabinets.

DEATH
Relax...You have anything to drink around here?

Eli starts to wince in pain, holding his side.

ELI
I don't know. My stomach feels terrible.

DEATH
Yeah...well...
(spots some whiskey)
This will do.

The sandwich is almost bubbling. Eli looks closely at it.

ELI
This is uncooked rashers, a paper towel, some apricot jam, and ecco-friendly detergent, on some stale bread. Are you sure I'm not going to die?

Death, now sitting down, shoots back the drink, and pours another.

DEATH
It's impossible.

ELI
I don't know. I definitely feel weird.

DEATH

Me too.

Eli is really in pain.

ELI

Well, listen...If I'm not going to die, I mean...What are you doing here, Death?

DEATH

I'm coming home with you... You bastard.

ELI

Why are you being mean to me?

DEATH

You're sandwich cured death. Come on, let's go. I'm tired.

ELI

I'm not going to die?

DEATH

Nobody is going to die, alright. That sandwich cured death for everybody. And now I'm out of a job.

Eli is stunned.

DEATH (CONT'D)

So I'm staying at your place

INT. ELI'S FLAT - NIGHT

The main light to Eli's modest flat turns on, and Death and his master enter.

ELI

Listen, I have to go to the bathroom so let me just tell you real quick what's what.

(Death ducks around the corner)

This couch pulls out into a futon. It's probably pretty comfortable. Kitchen is just through there. I have to leave for work around ten to eight, so... I'll try not to make too much noise. I'll get you some bed sheets. Oh, and this is the bathroom -

Eli notices Death is not in the room.

ELI (CONT'D)

Death?

Eli pokes his head into a crack in the bedroom and sees death's cloak on the bed, and lump beneath the covers. Death groans, somewhat aggravatingly.

Eli shivers with disgust and turns off the light.

INT. ELI'S FLAT - MORNING

The television is on and Eli regains consciousness on the futon.

ELI

What time is it?

DEATH

Who cares?

ELI

What?

Eli looks at the clock.

ELI (CONT'D)

Jeesh! I gotta get out of here.

Eli pops up and runs to the bathroom to brush his teeth. Death turns of the television and follows his host.

DEATH

Where are you going? I'm bored. Can I come?

ELI

(mouth full of toothpaste)

I'm going to work.

DEATH

Work? Why are you going to work? You'll probably be fired.

ELI

I don't think you understand what I do for a living.

DEATH

You work for a pharmaceutical company, right?

ELI

Well, yeah.

Death turns back to the television.

DEATH

I'll see you in a bit.

Eli leaves.

INT. LAB - DAY

Andre is swinging on the ring and Olivia is mopping the floor when Eli walks into the laboratory. Both Andre and Olivia turn towards their co-worker.

ANDRE

Where have you been? *Autumn Sonata* was skipping when I came in.

ELI

Oh?

OLIVIA

Did you vomit in the kitchen last night and forget to clean it up?

ELI

I, uh...?

Andre, now off of his ring, stands closer to Eli and Olivia.

ANDRE

Did you say your prayers?

ELI

Yes. Listen. I started sleepwalking last night, and I went into the kitchen and started making a sandwich. And then Death appeared.

ANDRE

Wait, a sandwich. What kind of sandwich?

OLIVIA

I think I know exactly what kind of sandwich.

ELI

I forget. But listen, death appeared and now he's living at my place.

OLIVIA
Death?

ELI
Yes. He's very rude.

OLIVIA
I bet.

ANDRE
What the hell is he doing there?

ELI
He's unemployed.

ANDRE
What?

ELI
He's convinced the sandwich I ate cured
death.

OLIVIA
But you threw it up.

ELI
(frustrated)
I'm sorry, alright? Stop bringing it up!

OLIVIA
No, I just mean that maybe it didn't
work.

ELI
I don't think that matters. He had
breakfast this morning.

Andre is shouting from the kitchen.

ANDRE
How do you make one of these things?

ELI
It's not just me that won't die. Nobody
can die.

OLIVIA
Nobody?

Andre walks out of the kitchen, astounded. He holds a
meat cleaver.

ANDRE

No?

Eli shakes his head. Andre walks to the back of the lab where the 'N-vy of the World' group is stationed. Eli and Olivia watch as Andre removes one of the mice, lays it on the lab table, raises the cleaver, drops it down with a clean THWAP! Andre holds the cleaver to his side and looks down at the table.

Olivia is a little shocked.

ELI

Is it dead?

ANDRE

Nope.

OLIVIA

Eli...Where's Death right now?

CUT TO:

INT. WORKING PUB - DAY

A small, weathered-looking MAN in his late fifties, buys a pint of IPA at the bar, and turns to his left in utter horror.

Death is having a drink next to him, and takes note of the man's deeply held concern.

MAN

Uh-!

DEATH

Close your mouth, will you?

MAN

What are you doing here?!

DEATH

Relax, okay? Just calm down. I'm not doing that anymore.

The man doesn't believe it.

DEATH (CONT'D)

You're off the hook.

MAN

Off the hook?

The man is having trouble coming to terms with this.

DEATH

Yeah. Death is dead now. It's just me.

MAN

(smiling to himself)

Really?

DEATH

Yeah. Really.

MAN

This is the dog's bollix!

DEATH

You sure about that?

MAN

Certainly! I'm buying you a drink, my friend!

Death looks over surprised by this act of generosity.

INT. ELI'S FLAT - NIGHT

Eli, dressed in a bath robe and wet hair - reads 'Silence' by John Cage on his futon when he hears a knock on his door.

Eli opens the door and Death comes swirling in drunk as a skunk. He crashes on the futon, bends around backwards, and hurls at the side of the couch.

ELI

Ugh! I'll kick you out on the street.

Death laughs.

DEATH

You aren't the only one willing to lend their right hand to dear old Death. I'm the best news this world has ever seen.

ELI

You're just a black spot with a stick.

DEATH

You have no idea what you've done.

Death looks out the window.

DEATH (CONT'D)
I have nothing to live for.

ELI
Yeah, well, for someone who has nothing
to live for, you sure do talk a lot.

Eli sits somewhere else and returns to his book.

DEATH
Shit. I left my scythe at the pub.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ELI'S FLAT - MORNING

Death is watching the television, where a man with a
spike through his head is being interviewed by a somewhat
startled interviewer

INSERT: Television Interview

INTERVIEWER
Mr. Bishop, you're not bleeding.

MR. BISHOP
Is that a question?

INTERVIEWER
I'm sorry, I'm just a little...

MR. BISHOP
My doctor, who retired yesterday, said my
body is not producing any blood, and that
is why I'm not bleeding.

INTERVIEWER
Does it hurt?

MR. BISHOP
It did at first, but at this point I
honestly can't tell the difference.

INTERVIEWER
Still, it must feel funny?

MR. BISHOP
(nodding)
Funny, certainly.

Eli is horrified. He looks out of his bed sheets and up at Death who looks down ominously.

INT. STREETS - DAY

Andre and Olivia are outside the office building as Eli walk up to them.

 ANDRE
There he is.

 OLIVIA
Hi.

 ELI
What's going on?

 ANDRE
We're fired?

 ELI
Am I fired, too?

 ANDRE
Yes.

 OLIVIA
Everyone's fired.

 ELI
Oh.

Andre and Olivia look very angry.

 ELI (CONT'D)
Well that's too bad. What are you
doing...today?

 OLIVIA
We can't do much. There's no terminal
diseases in the world anymore. No
cancers, no life-threatening viruses.
Infections don't really matter. Nothing
really matters.

 ELI
We were never scientists in the first
place, though. So...

 OLIVIA
There's not even war anymore because it's
not possible to win.

ELI
I was never too keen on war.

OLIVIA
I guess I'm going shopping.

Eli nods.

Eli sees Andre a few meters away talking with a few BUSINESSMEN in black bowlers and suitcases. They each look with very slight but contemptuous glances in Eli's direction.

ELI
I guess, I'm going home. I mean,
shopping.

Eli walks away from whence he came, picking up speed. He has a target on his back.

INT. ELI'S FLAT

Eli slams the door. And hides behind it. Death steps out of the bathroom.

DEATH
You look frightened.

ELI
I'm terrified!

DEATH
What the hell are you afraid of? I'm not touching you.

ELI
Oh, yes - this is just a big laugh for you, isn't it! Why is it so cold in here?

DEATH
I opened up the window.

ELI
It's winter!

DEATH
Is it? I like it.
(looking down at the
television)
Hey, you're on the television.

Eli looks at the television.

INSERT: Television Report

Eli's picture is on the television.

BBC REPORTER

Authorities are asking for citizens of Britain to join their local angry mob in search for this man, Eli Wooster, in connection with the death of Death.

Eli panics. Death is drinking a bottle of whiskey and hanging out of the window.

ELI

What are we going to do?!

DEATH

What do you mean?

ELI

They're coming to kill me!

DEATH

Not possible.

ELI

We'll then everything but!

Death lets out a belly laugh.

DEATH

You know what, Eli. I think I have a purpose in life now.

ELI

What's that?

DEATH

(laughing)

To laugh at your wonderful jokes.

Eli calms down his hysterical tone, and looks down at floor. He sees Death's scythe. Suddenly, a swift shuffle and noise is made from the window sill..

EXT. ELI'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

Death falls a few stories from the top-flat window.

CUT TO:

INSERT: Microscopic film images of cancer cells and viruses, flesh eating bacteria, and various other life-threatening biological plagues.

Mr. Bishop, walking down the street with the spike through his head, falls straight to the ground.

Eli looks out of the window.

ELI

Whoops.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The mob didn't kill me. Instead, all the cancers and infections, viruses and diseases we had all missed so much came back in an instant. We got our jobs back. ...Even war was back. And everyone knew it was going to be alright.

A LARGE MISSILE LAUNCHER

Archive footage shows a large gun barrel slowly turning until the black eye of the missile shaft is large and still.

BOOM!

THE END