

# THE INEVITABLE

REVISED EDITION

WILLIAM PATTISON



# **THE INEVITABLE**

**By**

**William Pattison**

**Dedicated to my mentor Harlan Ellison.**

**I could feel his spirit guiding me as I wrote...**

**Have you ever really contemplated your own death? I mean the moment you let go of this mortal coil and move on to that undiscovered country that none return from. What is a dying person's last feeling at the moment of death? Do you know? I do. The feeling is that of surprise.**

**I know what your response is. You question it. Why surprise? Why would a person be surprised at that moment?**

**The reason is quite simple. The person who is dying suffers from the irrational hope that they can cheat death. That somehow the Grim Reaper will carelessly pass them by and the hourglass of their life will somehow find hidden sand to keep going. It is a foolish hope for you see the problem is death is not careless. Death does not make mistakes. Death does not make deals and doesn't debate right or wrong. There is no reasoning with death. Death doesn't care about what you want or what you need. Death has a job to do and it won't be deterred from doing it.**

**People have claimed to have cheated death but they are fools. It just wasn't their time, but they arrogantly believe they changed their very destiny. What a pathetic joke. You cannot change the inevitable. Death is inevitable. Death has dominion.**

**Immortality is an illusion. Yes, some beings may have longer lives and appear to be immortal, but death is always in the background and in the end death will even come for these beings. Angels, demons, gods, humans, animals, worlds, galaxies, universes, multiverses, and creation itself eventually ends. It is the way of things.**

**I can see the look on your face, that look of defiance. Oh, no not me! I'm going to go down kicking and screaming. Death can't have me. I won't go without a fight.**

**Death won't give you a chance. If it has come to take you, it will do just that. No ifs, ands, or buts. It will just happen and, as I said, all you will get a chance to feel is surprise and that will be it. Game over.**

**How am I so knowledgeable about this? Why do I know with such certainty that I'm right? I've personally observed Death making his rounds, that's how I know...**

**It happened a little over fifty years ago when I was seven years old. I was in the hospital for an operation and after I got a nasty staff infection. I had a high fever and was sweating profusely. I also was cursed with an open gut incision that had a drainage tube come out of it. The other end of the tube came out in my groin area. It was horribly painful when the doctor pulled it out. The odor coming from the wound smelled like rotting meat.**

**I didn't realize at the time but I would have to suffer with this nightmare for two years, until the damned thing closed up on its own, that ruined any opportunity for me to socialize or make friends**

when I went back to kinder garden. It also left me with a horrible scar on top of everything.

The boy in the next bed had problems with his lungs and would whistle as he breathed. He had an oxygen mask and a noisily whirring air system. He would periodically get coughing fits and would take off the mask long enough to spit in a bowl on the table next to his bed. It was just a joyous time.

Every couple of hours, from what I could estimate, the nurse would come in and check on us. She kept telling me to try and get some sleep. Unfortunately, sleep evaded me.

The problem was quite simply that the noise of my roommate's breathing problem prevented me from falling asleep. I would lay in bed and want the peace and rest of sleep only to find myself wide awake and uncomfortable in the dark stillness that enveloped both myself and my roommate. The time dragged by slowly and felt utterly endless.

But then to my surprise I saw movement in the shadows. A figure, which was shrouded in black that was darker than the shadows, moved with a flowing motion toward my roommate's bed. The thing in black raises its arm and I saw a flash of pale white as its skeleton-like hand came down and touched my roommate's forehead. Then I heard it in a soft voice say, "Rest." And suddenly the whistling breathing stopped and the alarm on his monitor went off.

Before disappearing the cloaked figure turned to me and I actually saw its skeletal face and glowing red eyes. It pointed its thin finger at me and from its sardonically smiling mouth I heard it say, "Not your time...Yet."

Then it simply melted into the shadows just before three nurses came rushing into the room to try in vain to revive my roommate.

**When they finished they pulled the privacy curtains around him, like that was going to hide the fact that I was in the room with a dead body. I guess they wanted to keep from traumatizing me. Good luck there.**

**It was hours later when the nurses finally moved my roommate out and set up the bed for another occupant.**

**My new roommate was an annoying, selfish, little asshole who would constantly have the nurse change the TV channel when I was watching something. He also would have the nurse pull the privacy screen between us so I couldn't even look out the window on the other side of him. And, if that wasn't enough, the little bastard snored.**

**Thankfully I only had to endure him a couple days before my fever broke and I was moved to a private room until I recovered enough to go home.**

**But that wasn't the last time I saw Death. I saw him when my father died. In 1986 it was discovered that my father was suffering from a tumor in his brain that the doctors at the time were unable to remove. They gave him less than a year to live. For months I helped take care of him and watched as the man I once knew and respected slowly degenerated into a pathetic thing that couldn't even feed himself.**

**At one point early on my mother ended up having a heart attack when she tried to lift my father back into his bed after he fell out of it. I had been stuck doing a late night shift at work and didn't find out until six hours later when I finally got home. My poor father ended up spending all that time on the floor by his bed laying in his own excrement.**

**Given our mother's condition, my sisters and I took turns watching over dad. Amusingly, I always seemed to end up getting**

**the eleven o'clock to three am shift. In the end I had to quit my job in order to help because my manager kept putting me on night shift at work when I clearly told him I had to work days so I could take care of dad. It was a fun time I can tell you.**

**On a couple of occasions during this time while I watching over him Dad begged me to grab his pistol that he kept in his closet and put him out of his misery, but, of course, I couldn't do that. He also asked my other sisters. They also refused. They told me this. It was a shared pain between the four of us.**

**Death, aka The Grim Reaper, arrived on an evening in the fall. I was watching Dad at the time. Death lifted himself out of the hard wood floor in front of my father's dresser. Like before he seemed to flow over to my father's bedside. He seemed not to notice me.**

**He put his boney hand on Dad's forehead and brought his head down close to Dad's face. "Your pain and the burden of the war is over. Rest."**

**I looked down at my father's face and his tortured expression softened and a look of peace replaced it.**

**I opened my mouth to say something. I can't remember what.**

**What I do remember is that Death turned to me and put his boney finger up to his sardonically smiling teeth and hushed me. Then, he once again sank into the floor and disappeared. I ran out of the room to inform my family of our father's demise.**

**Ten years later my mother died in same hospital I had my first experience with death in.**

**This began when my sister noticed that my mother's feet had become horribly swelled up. We rushed her to the hospital and after examining her the emergency doctor admitted her and informed us, to our shock that our mother wouldn't survive the night. They stuck**

her on a respirator because she had trouble breathing laying down. It was something I'd noticed a week earlier but didn't acknowledge until that moment.

Once again my sister's and I took turns sitting with mom. Of course, I was the last and was there at the end. I had actual dozed off and immediately woke up when Death arrived.

Similarly, like with my father, the dark robed figure lifted himself up from the white tiled floor. He flowed over to my mother's bed. I could see my mother's eyes look up at him. Once again he put his white boney hand on her forehead. He lowered his skeletal face down to her and said in his usual soft voice, "Your work is done, dear lady. Paradise awaits."

Then he simply gave me a glance before swiftly lowering himself into the floor before her heart monitor flat lined and the alarm went off.

A few years ago my aunt died. I wasn't there, thankfully, but I can imagine my old friend came to her bedside touched her head and send her on.

So, now I'm the one feeling my mortality. I've suffered a heart attack and though I have recovered I know I'm not completely out of the woods.

But, am I afraid of Death's eventual coming? No. Why should I be? Death is inevitable. Death is part of life. Death is what reminds us to try and live our best life, because we don't want to have it end with us having wasted it. No, I don't fear death, because even if he comes in a cloak of darkness and is pale and skeletal he comes to comfort you and help your transition. There is no reason to fear death for death gives life meaning, for we only live once. He is our companion that welcomes us at the end of our journey. Why would I

**fear that? I will welcome him as I would a dear friend. There is your answer.**