

## "IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH" Page Sample #1

by Frederick Passmore

*(A small-to-medium size group of people are on stage, gathered in twos and threes. Music from your own separate source can be playing softly in the background suggesting a party or a simple gathering, such as happens at mall food courts where teens hang out. In the foreground are MC and his friend, JB.)*

MC: So, did you ask her out?

JB: *(Playing ignorant.)* Ask who out?

MC: *(Playfully elbowing him and nodding toward a girl onstage.)* "Who?" Lisa Hampton, who else have you been talking about for a week?

JB: *(Looking over at her in the crowd.)* Uh, well... no, actually... not yet. I will though. I'll get around to talking to her tonight and I'll ask her.

MC: Don't wait too long, I might ask her out myself!

JB: *(Also playfully.)* You do and die!

*As they make small talk and laugh, DEATH enters the room and stands near the side of the stage, watching the crowd.*

***(Begin Track #1, the "Death Stalks" music.)***

*After a moment DEATH begins to slowly make his way through the crowd, which seemingly does not see him. MC, however, does notice DEATH and points him out to JB.)*

MC: Hey, JB! Check out the weirdo in the creepy get-up! Behind you!

*(MC points back over JB's shoulder at DEATH as the specter takes another measured step in their direction. JB glances over his shoulder at the approaching figure. Everyone else in the crowd acts as if they don't see him, but they do move aside to let him pass.)*

JB: *(Nonchalantly)* Oh, him. That's the Specter of Death. He comes around every so often. He must be here for a pickup.

MC: He's coming this way! Is he after one of us?

JB: Nah, probably not. Anyway, like I was saying...

*(JB continues making small talk but MC is too shaken by the approach of DEATH to answer, and he watches helplessly as it nears JB. MC gestures wordlessly and backs up as DEATH slowly and deliberately closes the gap.)*

JB: Hey, what's wrong? You look like you've just seen a ghost!

*(As MC wordlessly points, DEATH arrives, then reaches out and lays a hand on JB's shoulder. JB shivers as if suddenly cold.)*

JB: I feel like somebody just walked over my grave!

*(DEATH unshoulders his scythe and lowers the blade between MC and JB as if severing something between them.)*

JB: Hey! What's happening? *(He looks back over his shoulder and into the face of DEATH.)* NO! Not me! I'm not ready!

*(DEATH firmly grips JB's arm and begins to escort him toward the side of the stage.)*

JB: *(Pleading)* You can't... I'm too young to go with you! *(Looking back at MC.)* Help me, don't let him take me, man!

*(MC holds up his hands helplessly and can only watch in horror.)*

JB: *(Sobbing, as he is unwillingly led offstage by DEATH.)* No, I'm not ready, I'm not ready...I never thought you'd come for me so soon! Nooooo!

*(The music track should be ending about now.)*

*(MC watches as JB. is escorted out of sight. His shoulders droop and he is visibly depressed. Several people from the crowd come over and pat him on the back in a brief attempt to console him. They soon go back to talking with each other and laughing. MC stands alone, looking lost.)*

MC: What a bummer! JB was my best friend. This is just the worst thing that could possibly happen.

*(Just then DEATH re-enters and stands in the same spot as before. MC sees him and stares, aghast.)*

MC: I take that back.

*DEATH is staring back at MC who tries to determine if DEATH is looking at him or someone else. He looks around and then points to himself and mouths "Who, me?" to the specter. DEATH remains unmoving. MC moves through the crowd and sits down in a chair. He picks up a magazine and holds it in front of his face as if reading. He is really trying to hide from DEATH and keep an eye on him at the same time. When he peeks over the magazine, DEATH is unmoving. But every time he raises the magazine to "read," DEATH takes a few steps closer. Finally MC holds the magazine directly against his face and trembles in fright, during which DEATH moves to stand right in front of him. MC gingerly lowers the magazine again and jumps in terror--trashing the magazine--when he sees DEATH confronting him.)*

MC: Whoa! He sneaked up on me!

*(MC jumps up and makes a wide berth around DEATH, who slowly turns to keep MC in sight. MC is unnerved by this attention and is about to panic. No-one else seems to notice his distress.)*

MC: What am I gonna do? I'm not ready to go either!

*(MC approaches PERSON #1 for company and advice.)*

MC: Can we talk for a minute?

PERSON #1: Sure. *(Bids good-bye to EXTRA he was talking to and turns his attention to MC.)* Now, what's the problem?

*(MC takes him by the elbow and draws him aside slightly.)*

MC: This may sound strange, but I think I'm being followed, and I wanted to be with someone.

PERSON #1: Followed? By whom?

MC: Promise you won't laugh?

PERSON #1: I promise. Now, who's tailing you?

MC.: Well, it looks like...Death.

PERSON #1: *(Steps back away from MC and looks around apprehensively.)* Death?

MC: Yeah...see him over there? *(He points him out to #1.) (Continues...)*