



A Death

Stephen King

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Jim Trusdale had a shack on the west side of his father's gone-to-seed ranch, and that was where he was when Sheriff Barclay and half a dozen deputized townsmen found him, sitting in the one chair by the cold stove, wearing a dirty barn coat and reading an old issue of the Black Hills Pioneer by lantern light. Looking at it, anyway.

A Death Details

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From Reader Review A Death for online ebook

Aj the Ravenous Reader says

I am not a huge fan of the King...

hides under the table

Although if I were this kid and you're a Stephen King fan, I'm sure you'll think twice about assaulting me. Lol.

Let me explain further, will you? As I was saying, I am not a huge King fan only because I'm such a wimpy reader.

But many thanks to Shelby for sharing a free access to this very cunningly crafted short story that allowed me to take a peek into the ingenuity of the author. This shrewd story played tricks with my head and emotions!

You can read the really short story for free here:
A Death by Stephen King

Karlyflower *The Vampire Ninja, Luminescent Monster & Wendigo Nerd Goddess of Canada (according to The Hulk)* says

3.5 Stars

A Death is a shortie that I would say primarily prays on the reader's own honesty.

It is the story of a man being accused of murdering a ten-year-old girl for a silver coin (her birthday coin, to be exact). And the only evidence to his 'crime' is that his ancient hat was found underneath the body.

There's a whole mob mentality element to this shortie that I found interesting. And it shows one of my favourite King writing stamps which is his ability to create characters which it is a coin flip really of whether you will like or loathe them. He has this talent for writing gritty, hateable characters in situations where you want to believe them, even against your better judgement.

Andrew Smith says

A short, atmospheric Western tale of a man accused of the brutal rape and murder of a young girl. The locals are baying for blood and local carpenter is soon knocking up up some gallows. Typical SK in the way he builds an atmosphere and creates tension. There's enough suspense to keep the reader interested too - did he do it, has he been framed?

Available free online (Thanks Shelby for the tip) and as part of a collection The Bazaar of Bad Dreams.

I'm still making my mind up as to whether I will buy the collection, but if this is the standard I should expect then I'd be a mug not to. King is a certainly a master storyteller, be it in the long form, his excellent novellas (see Different Seasons) or, as I can now evidence, his short stories.

Char says

A clever short story by the King with an ending I did not expect.

Zoeytron says

It is commonly known that Jim Trusdale is 'bone-stupid', and now he has lost his hat. He was partial to that hat, it was given to him by his father. The implication of it being found under the dead body of a little girl bodes ill for him.

This is a gritty little diddy by the master, Stephen King. Short story in the New Yorker magazine. Excellent.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Stephen King. A short story set in the old West. A young girl is murdered; her silver dollar, a birthday present, stolen.

Jim Trusdale's hat is found under her body, but the dollar is nowhere to be found. In Jim's simple-minded way, he protests his innocence more and more vehemently as he is arrested and put on trial. But his fate, in the form of incensed and vengeful townspeople, is quickly closing in on him.

“I don’t want to ride in no funeral hack,” Trusdale said. “That’s bad luck.”

“You got bad luck all over,” one of the men said. “You’re painted in it. Get in.”

Only the sheriff begins to doubt Jim's guilt . . .

This is a bit of a slight tale, and probably wouldn't get much attention if it weren't for the fact that King wrote

it. But it's only a ten-minute read, maybe, and it's free online here, courtesy of The New Yorker magazine. And it sucked me in: I kept reading faster and faster, getting more and more worried about where this was headed. The spare prose King uses here fits the genre well.

3.5 stars. Give this a read if you're a fan of King, or westerns, or murder mysteries, or short stories generally. I for one didn't guess the ending. Thanks to Kelly and Shelby for bringing this story to my attention!

karen says

WELCOME TO DECEMBER PROJECT!

last year, i carved out my own short story advent calendar as my project for december, and it was so much fun i decided to do it again this year! so, each day during the month of december, i will be reading a short story and doing the barest minimum of a review because ain't no one got time for that and i'm already so far behind in all the things. however, i will be posting story links in case anyone wants to read the stories themselves and show off how maybe someone *could* have time for that.

here is a link to the first story in last year's project,

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

which in turn links to the whole monthlong project, in case you wanna do some free short story reading of your own! links to the stories in this year's advent-ure will be at the end of each review.

enjoy, and the happiest of decembers to you all!

DECEMBER 3

"Hang that baby killer!" a man shouted, and someone threw a rock. It flew past Trusdale's head and clattered on the board sidewalk.

Sheriff Barclay turned and held up his lantern and surveyed the crowd that had gathered in front of the mercantile. "Don't do that," he said. "Don't act foolish. This is in hand."

i so appreciate level-headed and thoughtful authority figures who try to keep angry mobs in check and make sure justice is served and folks are innocent until proven guilty.

of course, i could be wrong about that.

i haven't read stephen king in a really long time, and this story was just one cruel pop in the head. in a good way. and oddly enough, in the second instance of odd synchronicities this week, i read it right before going to see *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, so so my notions of criminality and reasonable response and justice and the like are all in a lather.

good story.

free story.

read it for yourself here:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/20...>

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peiman-mir5 rezakhani says

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Becky says

I've been underwhelmed by the last couple of King books I've read... until this little gem. It's mind-blowing to me how the pen that wrote this excellent little story is the same one that wrote... that other one. (Honestly, I'm still not convinced.)

Anyway... This is a great little story - about misconceptions and leaping to judgement.

King is the master of the short story. He has the reader in the palm of his hand and molds us to think the things he wants us to think. I have MISSED this King. It's so great to see a story like this, to see that he is still amazing in this arena, and can still bring characters to life in such detail with so few pages, and sometimes only with a handful of words. And for such a short story to have the kind of impact that this one has... it's impressive. I only wish it was longer.

Definitely worth the few minutes it will take to read it. Go do it!

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

You can read this one for free here

This short story isn't really horror. It's more of the mess with your head type reading. Jim Truesdale is accused of murdering a young girl in town. The only evidence is the hat that he wears constantly. It's found on the girls body. The reason for her murder? A silver dollar.

The story is short and I don't want to give anything away. Go read it, if for no other reason than it's Uncle Stevie writing it.

Edward Lorn says

King fooled me. I didn't think he had it in him, but he did it. I thought I had this one pegged. Another *The Green Mile*, only in short story form. (Once you read this, you'll understand why I say that.) But I did not expect the last chapter. You might, but I didn't. And I don't wanna hear "You didn't see that coming?!?!?" No, fucker, I didn't. Sometimes, I'm easy. This time I was. Enough said.

I'd bet dollars to donuts this story ends up in *The Bazaar of Broken Dreams* later this year.

In summation: A far more literary tale from King about how what you want to believe can alter your perception of things and, in the end, blind you to other possibilities.

Final Judgment: Shit-yr-pants good.

Delee says

It's teenie weenie...but it's Stephen King and it's free! Who am I to complain?

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/201...>

Black Hills of Dakota 1889-

A little girl is killed and the townspeople are screaming for justice.

The evidence points to Jim Truesdale...but Sheriff Barclay is questioning whether the right man is going to hang for the crime.

A DEATH is just a little taste of King's new short story collection -The Bazaar of Bad Dreams- coming out in November/2015.

Bark says

My GR friends alerted me to this story yesterday. You can read it online free by clicking [HERE](#).

It will only take you a few minutes to read but I think it's worth your time. It's dark but has a few moments of King humor.

Where is it, Jim?"

"My hat?"

"You think I went up your ass looking for your hat? Or through the ashes in your stove? Are you being smart?"

A man is accused of murdering a young girl back in the wild, wild west. He claims he's innocent and doesn't even know her but they've found his hat with the body. Did he do or didn't he do it? You'll have to read it to find out.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

"You got bad luck all over. You're painted in it."

It's just not Jim Trusdale's day. After spending what little money he had on a couple of drinks at the local watering hole, Jim finds himself accused of murder. Not just any murder either. The murder of a 10-year old little girl . . . on her birthday.

Wise advice to all – make sure you always know where you left your hat . . .

Shelby tipped me off to THIS freebie, and as a Constant Reader how could I resist? If you need something to fill a few spare minutes, give it a read.

Trudi says

Currently available for FREE through *The New Yorker* website.

This is a "short" short story and if I have any real complaint is that I wish it had been longer. But brief King is rare King so I'm just gonna shut up and enjoy this little piece for what it is.

So what is it?

It's a moody little Western gem that sucks you in from its opening scene: a sheriff and a posse come to "collect" Jim Trusdale -- for lack of better phrasing, the village idiot (Constant Readers will also be reminded of John Coffey from *The Green Mile*). Jim has misplaced his beloved well-worn hat. Unfortunately for him it's been recovered near the dead body of a 10 year old girl who has also been robbed of her birthday silver dollar.

None of this looks good for simple Jim. In fact, it all adds up to a heaping mound of terrible. As one man observes: *"You got bad luck all over...You're painted in it."*

Like King's best short stories, you won't be able to put this one down until you finish it. In just a few short pages he's able to create a remarkable amount of tension between the weary Sheriff who begins to have doubts about Jim's guilt, and the accused who has no meaningful way to defend himself against this horrible crime. The men share a potent intimacy in the closed confines of the holding cell (and a strip search scene that is brief but memorable).

And about that ending:

(view spoiler)
