

# **Wounded Souls**

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To Alicia-  
For believing in me



**Angel  
of  
Death**



It was just after midnight when she crept through the quiet house into the bedroom where a man and his wife were sleeping. She looked closely at the man, her first client of the day. He was only fifty and in good health, but what he didn't know, as he lay there sleeping quietly with a smile on his face, was that he had a brain aneurysm that was going to rupture in just a few moments. She leaned over him and watched as the man sucked in his last breath and slowly exhaled it.

The man found himself standing awake, at the end of his bed, looking at the smiling face of the beautiful woman. Her dark hair contrasted her pale skin, which despite its white color, still had a warm and inviting appearance. He felt calm and content as he looked into her welcoming eyes. She held out her hand and he took it gently. She guided him toward the circle of light on the other side of the room. As he entered, he vanished along with the light.

She stood silently for a few moments looking at where the man had been, and then she looked back at the bed where the man's sleeping wife lay. The wife had another ten years. Some of those years would be filled with sorrow at the loss of her husband, but in the end, she would have more happy years.

The woman wanted to stay longer and enjoy this happy home before it was tarnished by the sadness of the man's death, but she had other clients waiting. She wished all of

her clients could have as peaceful a transition as this man, but she knew most would have much more pain in dying. But it was the pain that some faced after death that saddened her. So many souls would not be escorted into heaven as this man had, but be escorted, instead, to much more sinister place.

**Angel  
of  
Death 2**



He stood over a sink with tears running down the sides of his face. In one hand, he held a razor. On the wrist of the other was a dotted line marking out, with careful precision, the exact path of an artery in his arm.

She stood nearby. She was unable to keep her eyes on the man. Her face was full of sadness. Of all the people that she had to take, suicides were always the worst. She could never understand why someone, given such a great gift of life, would willingly kill themselves. She heard the man release a grunt of pain at what he had just done.

The man was standing now, looking at the body that had been his home on earth. He turned and saw the woman. Her beautiful face was not smiling this time, but instead her eyes were filled with tears. She knew that this man would have had many happy years left on earth, but in his moment of sadness he thought that death would end his pain. She wished he had realized that his death was only the beginning of his pain.

She reached out and took his hand with a gentle kindness, probably the last kindness he would ever know. She led him slowly into the darkness.



# **Perfecting the Eye of the Beholder**



Angel looked to the other side of the waiting room. All of the men and women sitting across from her looked the same. The men all had toned muscular physiques that looked like they had just left the gym. The women were skinny with the typical “perfect” breasts and well defined asses. Angel’s physique was the same as everybody else’s. Genetic engineering and plastic surgery had made sure of that.

The fact that everybody looked alike didn’t bother Angel. In fact, it gave her comfort to think that she blended in with any crowd. She could walk into any city in the world and meet a thousand people who looked just like her, and for that matter, acted and thought like her.

Angel had one difference from the many people just like her - she didn’t find any of the people in the waiting room attractive. They were pictures of perfection. Why wouldn’t anybody find them attractive? No, Angel’s disease prevented her from having any kind of attraction to any person in her world. She hated it. That’s why she agreed to the experimental procedure. Some quick pain pills and a non-evasive ultrasound surgery on her brain and she would find the people around her beautiful. She would finally be normal.



**Angel  
of  
Death 3**



Something had gone horribly wrong. It was an amateur bank robbery. He had handled these before. The clerk pushes the button. He shows up. The robber gets scared and eventually gives up. That's not what happened today. He showed up, like always, but the robber was not scared. It was as if the robber had been waiting for him to show up, just so he could shoot him.

He found himself lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood. Somewhere else in the room someone was screaming. He stared up at the ceiling with his hand on his chest, feeling the hole, just to be sure that it had actually happened. His eyes began to defocus as his body became weaker. Through his blurry vision he made out the shape of a woman as she leaned down over him and placed a hand on his shoulder. He couldn't see well enough to be sure, but he thought she was smiling. She leaned down closer to his ear and whispered quietly, "I'm not here for you. You're going to be alright." His vision went black as he passed out. The last thing he heard was another gun shot.

When he awoke, he was lying on a hospital bed. He could feel the pressure of the bandages wrapped around his chest. His partner was sitting in the chair next to him.

"How ya doin'?" his partner asked with a fake happiness that people always use when trying to cheer up somebody in a hospital bed.

He was too weak to voice a reply.

“You got pretty lucky. The bastard missed your heart. He would have shot you again if I hadn’t shot him first, but He won’t be causing us anymore trouble.”

**Angel  
of  
Death 4**



She could have played with the red ball all day. It was her favorite toy. She would run around the front lawn kicking the ball and running after it. Sometimes she would throw the ball up the in the air and try to catch it as it came back down. Today, she happened to kick the ball into the road. She ran after it as she always did. She didn't see the truck coming.

The next thing that she did see, however, was the beautiful woman. Her white face shone in the bright sunlight of the day. She raised a welcoming hand to the girl, but the girl was in a jovial mood. Thinking that she would make a game of chase with this new woman, she ran in the other direction but was stopped short by the sight of her body laying dead on the road while her mother was sobbing over her.

The mother looked up from the body and saw the girl standing next to her as a ghost. The mother reached out her hand to the girl in disbelief. The girl, not yet realizing that she was dead, tried to touch her mother's hand, but their hands went through each other. It was only then that the girl realized that the body was her own.

The girl fell to her knees and began to cry, but then she felt a hand on her shoulder. She looked up and saw the beautiful woman smiling at her. The woman leaned down and whispered to the girl in a soft, sweet voice, "It will be alright, but you have to come with me

now.” She took the girl’s hand and helped her to her feet. She then slowly lead the girl into the light.

# **Five Minutes**



How long is five minutes? A scientist would say that five minutes is 2,757,789,531,000 periods of radiation of a cesium 133 atom. But what is five minutes to the person experiencing it? A wise man once told me that five minutes with your hands on a beautiful woman was only a few seconds, but five minutes with your hand on a hot oven was hours.

I am experiencing the hours, while my love is experience the seconds. It has been an eternity since she stepped into the time vortex. Neither of us knew if it would work, but I couldn't stop her from trying it. For her, the journey to the very near future would be instantaneous. Would be, that is, if the portal worked and didn't kill her.

I still have 30 seconds left until I know if my love is alive.

It might as well be 30 years.



**Angel  
of  
Death 5**



Men have their whole lives to make sure that they go into the light when they die. This man had 70 years. But he, like so many other people, ignored death his whole life. It figures that he would choose after he's dead to try to fight his way out of going into the darkness.

She was waiting for the man behind a dumpster. She hated dragging people into eternity like this, but he wouldn't go peacefully like the rest of them. He was determined to make her work. In a few minutes he would be coming around the corner into the alley, that's when she would jump him.

He had lived a relatively normal life. He went to church every Sunday and most people would have been surprised to find that he had any sin worthy of sending him to hell, but most people didn't know about the children he molested. She knew, and she knew that he had to pay for what he had done. He had other plans. As soon as he realized where she was going to lead him, he started running. He chose to make his stand against the darkness after the choice was no longer his to make.

She knew nobody had ever escaped her grip, and soon he would know too. In just a few seconds, she would grab him by the collar drag him into the darkness.



**The Gift  
of  
Naiveté**



Fear. Doubt. Uncertainty. Emotions long gone from this society now found new life in the minds of John and Paula. For the first time in their lives, they were unsure. They didn't know if what they were doing was the right thing. They didn't know what tomorrow would hold.

Sirens sounded softly in the distance. Someone knew that they were there.

"We have about five minutes until the police get here." said Paula, "It's now or never."

The explosives that John had placed strategically around the Knowledge Retainment Center were hard to come by since the world had stopped fighting wars 20 years ago. Some explosives were still manufactured, but they were only used to demolish old buildings to make room for the new models that were earthquake proof, fire proof, flood proof...everything proof. But even the strength of the new buildings had nothing on the structural reinforcements of the Center. Even the old nuclear bombs were no match for the Center. No, John and Paula needed the most powerful bomb ever made. It was known only as "The Winkie."

John pushed the button on the detonator and they both watched as the Knowledge Retainment Center was consumed in a ball of fire. The shock wave could be felt for miles, and many of the surrounding building were destroyed in the blast.

People had already started to gather in the streets as the police came to arrest John and Paula. When the police got there, however, they just stood in amazement and watched the melted remains of the Center cool in the shallow crater that the explosion had left. Why bother arresting these two when society as they knew it had come to an end?

One of the officers—now consumed with the same fear, uncertainty, and doubt that John and Paula had felt—looked at the two and in a sad, quiet voice said, “Why?”

Paula smiled and said with a deep satisfaction, “So that our children will have something new to discover.”

Miles away from the explosion the plaque that graced the entrance to the Center was lying in the mud. It read, “The Knowledge Retainment Center is the only receptacle of all the knowledge that mankind has ever gained. It will house that knowledge for this and all future generations.”

# **Undoing the Future**



Steve and Akiva both sat with their backs against the tree in a grassy field. Akiva was staring at a pocket watch that he had recently acquired.

“You know,” Steve said, “I used to have a pocket watch just like that.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah. My father gave it to me as a gift when I turned 13. It was a family heirloom. He got it from his father at 13. I loved that watch. It was engraved on the back with the words, ‘To my beloved son, Benjamin.’ That was my father’s name.”

“What happened to it then?”

“I was angry. I forget what about now. Something pithy I’m sure. I threw the watch into the road. It was run over by an 18 wheeler. I tried to collect the parts, but it was so badly damaged that I couldn’t get it to work again.”

“I wish that I could go back in time and change the past so that I had never thrown that watch, but I know that you can’t undo the past. That makes me wonder, if you can’t undo the past, can you undo the future? Isn’t the future just somebody else’s unchangeable past?”

A few moments passed as they both just sat there in silence. Akiva finally broke the silence, “I think that you can undo the future.” Akiva got up to walk away, but stopped short and handed his pocket watch to Steve. “Here, you can keep this.”

On the back of the watch was engraved,

“To my beloved son, Benjamin.”

# **Allegory**



The villain sat in darkness clothed with the blood of past victims. Content with his previous victories the villain lurked in his newly won darkness.

The villain's critics said that he would never be able to win. They said that he was too old, that he had lost touch with reality, and most grievous of all, that the light would prevail.

He had showed them. He fought his enemy in bloody combat, but his victory was swift. No sooner had his enemy fallen then he turned his attention to the candles. With maniacal glee he smothered the candles, one by one.

As the darkness grew and spread throughout the room, so did the villain's power. Drunk with power the villain dispatched a few lesser enemies with barely a notice.

As time grew on, the villain's enemies began to back down without a fight, and the villain became confident in his darkness. No longer did he watch for enemies because to him they posed no threat.

The villain made no notice when the hero humbly entered. The villain slept as the hero lit a candle. No protest was made to his action, and the villain didn't even stir. So the hero lit another and with the light from two, he lit a thousand more. Soon the flames formed an inferno and began to lite the others without the hero's help.

The villain awoke to find his world ablaze. The light from the flames burned his eyes. In a state of confusion he attempted to attack the hero but charged headlong into the burning inferno. He died in a puff of smoke.

Thus the hero defeated the villain without a battle and brought light back to the world.

**Hot  
Summer  
Days**



With his eyes closed, Mark felt the warm sun on his face. The heat brought back memories of his childhood, when he would run and play in summer days. But just a few months ago he thought that he would never feel the heat of the sun again. The boys over at Sky Reclamation Service, however, could do miracles. It was the first sunlight that earth had experienced since the nuclear war ended three years ago. Eternal winter finally gave way to new summer.

Of course, there still weren't any green plants, and other animals were no where to be found. But Genetic Reclamation Service was already at work on bringing them back. Even if they never succeeded, Mark was happy just being able to feel the sun on his pale skin again after all these years.

Mark inhaled deeply. Yup, the air still smelled like he remembered it, nauseating, but at least he didn't have to breath with a mask over his face anymore.

Mark opened his eyes and saw the ocean out in front of him slowly beginning to thaw in the light of the new sun. Mankind had put earth through hell, but that was over now. He knew that he would live to once again see more hot summer days.



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