



The Walker

By Richard Miller

I Walk.

I walk among you, the people, the living.

But I, myself, do not live. That is not why I am here. I am here to walk, so that is what I do.

And as I walk, I stalk. I stalk you, the living.

But you don't know this.

You don't know I stalk you because you don't see me. Or, if you do, you pretend not to. You ignore me, unwilling to acknowledge my presence.

For I am lifeless, without life.

My eyes are cold.

And dark.

And like me, are also without life.

Yet they see.

They see you.

And they watch, my eyes do.

They watch you.

For that is what I do. I walk, and I watch.

...and I wait.

I am always waiting.

In the shadows, in the darkness...I wait and watch.

But you don't see me.

You don't see me, but I am there.

Always.

Always there, always watching, and always waiting.

And even though I watch you, I have no feelings for you. I feel nothing. Nothing but cold indifference.

Because that is who I am.

The walker.

The watcher.

The waiter.

...the hunter.

Always the hunter, but never the hunted.

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As I walk, and wait, and watch, I know that you will one day see me, that the day will come when you will finally know who I am.

But only when the time is right.

And not before.

Until then - until it is time for you to know me - I will simply wait.

And watch.

Because that is what I do.

And I have done so for a very long time. As long as there has been life. For I am as much a part of life as the thoughts within your mind, or the emotions that you feel...The sounds you hear, the sights you see... As much a part of life as the blood that courses through your veins, even.

And even though I am a part of life, I, myself, do not live.

For I am lifeless.

And cold.

And dark.

And indifferent.

And one day, you will know who I am.

And when that time comes – the day you come to know me - you will only know me once, and then never again. Our business together will be concluded, and I will watch for you no more.

I will no longer wait.

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There is a field. A green field. One with tall, green grass. Very tall and very green. And in the tall, green grass, there is a tree. A tall tree. Tall and firm. And in this tree, there is a boy. A young boy. One with bright yellow hair. Hair, the color of the sun. I can see him clearly. And what I see is that he is wearing a pair of coveralls, but that his feet are bare. He is without shoes.

I have waited and watched for this boy many times, but it is only now - on this day, at this moment - that I can finally see him.

And I see him clearly.

I see that he has climbed the tall tree. He has climbed it even though he has been told not to. He has, in fact, been warned.

But he is a boy, and boys will climb trees.

And I see that this boy has climbed very high in this tall, firm tree. But as high as he has climbed, he wants to climb higher still, until he has reached the very top.

So, he continues to climb, the boy does. He continues his youthful quest to reach the top, the top of this very firm and tall tree.

But he does not succeed in his effort to reach the top. The boy falters. His foot slips, and at the same time, his hand loses its grip on the limb, and he falls, falls into the tall, green grass below.

But he did not fall well, this boy. He did not, as one would hope, land on his feet. Instead, his head hit the ground first, and in doing so, bent his neck. Bent it in a bad way. Very bad, and now he is injured. He is injured, but still lives. He is still alive. He still breaths and his heart continues to beat.

And I see this.

I see it clearly.

I walk up to the boy and stand next to him. I stand and look. I look down at the broken form lying before me at my feet. His eyes are closed, so he is unaware of my presence. He does not know I am here. He does not see me.

But I see him.

And I see that he does not move. He just lies still in the swaying tall grass of the green field.

Where it's peaceful and quiet.

Like the boy, now.

Like the grass in which he lies.

Like the warm light of the sun that shines upon his face and the gentle breeze that blows across his youthful, yellow hair.

He is peaceful.

And quiet.

...and injured.

He needs help, this boy does, or surely, he will die. He will become like me, without life.

So, I kneel down at his side and look at him. And as I look at the boy, I extend my hand outward, toward him, and gently lay it on his chest. Through my hand, I can feel him breathing, but only for a moment, and then the breathing stops.

Also with my hand, I can feel his heart beating. But again, only for a moment, and then it, too, stops as well.

The boy no longer breathes, nor does his heart continue to beat.

So, I remove my hand.

As I remove it, my hand, I watch the boy's eyes as they slowly open. They open and he looks at me, this boy does, with his youthful, blue eyes.

He can see me now.

And because he can see me, he now knows who I am.

The introduction is made.

I know him, and likewise, he now knows me.

He looks at me, peacefully and calmly, and then whispers my name. He whispers it, and a moment later, his eyes close, gently and slowly.

I watch them as they do, knowing my image is the last thing they will ever see.

And then I stand.

My business with the boy is now completed. I no longer wait.

I am done here.

I look around, and a new direction becomes clear to me.

There is somewhere else I need to be.

So, I turn and walk away.

Because that is what I do.

I walk.