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Incident in a Rose Garden Gardener: My master, I saw Death right now amongst our roses. He was wearing his black coat on, five black gloves, and had a broad black hat, just like the pictures of him. His mouth stood open big, with white teeth, and when he beckoned, I ran. Master: You must be that stranger who threatened my gardener, sir. This is my property, sir. I welcome only friends here. Death: Sir, I knew your father. And we were friends at the end. As for your gardener, I did not threaten him. Old men mistake my gestures, I only meant to ask him to show me to his master. I take it you are he? Incident in a Rose Garden by Donald Justice: An Exploration of Human Hubris and the Power of Death ###ARTICLEDeath appears in the rose garden, emphasizing the place of death in the natural world. He encounters both the Gardener and the Master, highlighting that death's dominion is nature itself. A rose garden, with its beauty, is seasonal, much like human life. Death can come unexpectedly, even to those who think they are exempt, as seen in Justice's encounter with his Master. ###ARTICLEThe revised poem "Incident in a Rose Garden" by Donald Justice transforms from a sparse, elliptical narrative into a richer, more nuanced exploration of mortality, beauty, and the human condition. Through this revision, Justice not only updates the poem's language but also deepens its themes and characterizations. Death's presence is felt throughout the poem "Incident in a Rose Garden" by Donald Justice. Justice masterfully weaves together the voices of the Gardener, the Master, and Death to convey a sense of mortality and the human experience. By incorporating elements of traditional mythology, such as Thanatos and Orcus, Justice adds depth to his narrative, highlighting the universal fear of death that transcends cultures and time. The heart of the Gardener beats with a mix of excitement and trepidation as he confronts the reality of Death. Though his emotions are palpable, they remain under control, devoid of wordlessness. The phrase "Thin as a scythe" cuts through the air like a sharp blade, leaving an indelible mark on the Gardener's psyche. However, it is interesting to note that the Gardener perceives Death not through personal experience but rather through a visual representation he has come across. This detachment serves as a vital buffer, allowing Justice to distance the Gardener from his emotions and rendering him less mesmerized by the specter of mortality. By framing Death as an idea, rather than an immediate, visceral encounter, Justice skillfully softens the blow, making it seem as though the Gardener is witnessing this phenomenon for the first time. As the confrontation unfolds, Death's mouth opens wide, revealing a cavernous expanse adorned with "white teeth" that gleam like polished ivory. This stark contrast to the image the Gardener had previously seen highlights the chasm between perception and reality. The wolf-like figure from "Little Red Riding Hood" comes to mind, its voice dripping with menace as it utters, "The better to eat you with." The sudden shift in atmosphere serves as a stark reminder that this is no fairy tale, but rather an unflinching portrayal of the harsh truth. With this new understanding, the Gardener turns to his Master and tenderly expresses his intention to leave. His thoughts now revolve around indulging in activities he had long put off, much like a gardener tending to a neglected plot. The mention of California, often associated with the mythological Garden of Paradise, serves as a poignant reminder that time is fleeting. As the Gardener makes his exit, Justice skillfully weaves together disparate threads, binding them into an intricate tapestry of human experience. His masterful prose imbues the Master's response with a tone that oscillates between humility and indignation. The once-meek gardener now stands tall, as if to underscore his own presence in this hallowed realm. One cannot help but wonder where the Gardener was when his father succumbed to Death's silent grasp. Justice skillfully crafts an epiphany for the Gardener, allowing him to seize the day with a newfound sense of purpose. By doing so, he liberates himself from the shackles of complacency and invites us to contemplate our own existential realities. The contrast between the Master's recitation of "I welcome only friends here" and Death's counter statement - "I was a friend of your father's" - serves as a striking dichotomy. Justice masterfully subverts expectations, upending the Master's carefully constructed facade. By doing so, he leaves us with a profound question: where has the Master been throughout his life, waiting for Death to arrive? The Master's Hubris and the Unintended Lesson from Death Is it possible that the Master, who claims to welcome only friends here, was actually blind to his own arrogance? Was he so confident in his immortality that he never considered the possibility of mortality? In a clever twist, Death reveals himself as a humble counselor, assuring the gardener that he did not mean to frighten him with his gestures. The Master, on the other hand, misinterprets these same gestures, thinking them to be those of a stranger seeking favors. However, it is Justice that ultimately turns out to be the punchline, making fools of everyone involved. Through this poem, Death takes center stage, explaining himself in humble terms and reminding us that we are not as self-important as we often think. The Master's arrogance is his own undoing, while the gardener, though mistaken, is given a chance to leave. This lesson from Death serves as a reminder to us all - no one is immune to the power of Justice, and even readers can be fooled by its simplicity.

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