



J. SARAMAGO

Death with Interruptions (2005)

awards

- **Best pop culture reference:** Alex, for Zayn and Taylor Swift's "I Don't Wanna Live Forever", in I don't wanna live forever- Death With Interruptions
- **Best blog post:** Jennifer, for The Book of Chameleons: Kafka if He Were a Gecko
- **Best memes:** Gabby, for Death With Interruptions – A Permanent Curse Suspended In Limbo
- **Most beautiful, moving, and brave** blog post: Page Pioneer, for The Reality Catfisher – My Connections to The Book of Chameleons

Activity 1: character and plot setting

1. Join your assigned group
2. Describe what each of these groups did/thought/reacted to after death's disappearance
3. Make sure to provide at least 3 supporting **quotes**
 - **How does this group react?**
 - **What is their main concern? Secondary concerns?**
 - **How would you guys react differently?**

RELIGIOUS
PEOPLE

ADMINISTRATIVE
GOVERNMENT

MONARCHY

MAPHIA

NEARLY
DEAD

FAMILIES

Activity 2: quote search

1. Join your assigned group
2. Look at your paragraph and find:
 - a. find its general location number
 - b. discuss the context in which its found
 - c. place it in the plot timeline created in the board.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 82

hey asked him if he knew the expression and he said, yes, he did, they asked if he knew what it meant and he said, yes, he did. Explain it then, said the editor-in-chief, A splint, gentlemen, is a piece of wood used to hold a broken bone in place, That much we know, but what has it got to do with the frog, It has everything to do with the frog, because no one could ever put a splint on a frog's leg, Why not, Because a frog never keeps its legs still for long enough, So what does the expression mean then, It means that there's no point in trying, because the frog won't let you, But that can't be what the reader meant to say, Well, it's also used when someone is clearly just playing for time, that's when we say they're trying to put a splint on a frog's leg, And that's what the church is doing, Yes, sir, So the reader who wrote this is entirely right,

Activity 2: quote search

p. 110

but the strange thing about illnesses is that human beings always hope to shake them off, and so only when it's too late do they realize that it will be their final illness, anyway, from now on everyone will receive due warning and be given a week to put what remains of their life in order, to make a will and say goodbye to their family, asking forgiveness for any wrongs done and making peace with the cousin they haven't spoken to for twenty years, and that said, director-general, all I would ask is that you make sure that, today without fail, every home in the land receives this message, which I sign with the name I'm usually known by, death.

Activity 2: quote search

p.116

Another phone call revealed that the gravediggers were demanding a substantial salary increase and triple the going rate for any overtime. That's a problem for the local councils, said the president, let them sort it out. And what if we arrive at the cemetery and there's no one to dig the graves, asked the secretary. The debate raged on. At twenty-three hours and fifty minutes, the president had a heart attack. He died on the last stroke of midnight.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 182

These are the dangerous consequences of working on automatic pilot, of stultifying routine, of doing the same job for too long. A person, or death, it really doesn't matter, scrupulously fulfills her duties, day after day, encountering no problems, no doubts, concentrating entirely on following the rules established by those above, and if, after a time, no one comes nosing around into how she carries out her work, then one thing issue, that person, and this is what happened with death, will end up behaving, without her realizing it, as if she were queen and mistress of all that she does, and not only that, but of when and how she should do it too.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 189

Death wonders where amphitrite is now, the daughter of nereus and doris, where is he now, she who may never have existed in reality, but who nevertheless briefly inhabited the human mind in order to create in it, again only briefly, a certain way of giving meaning to the world, of finding ways of understanding reality. But they didn't understand it, thought death, nor will they, however hard they try, because everything in their lives is provisional, precarious, transitory, gods, men, the past, all gone,

Activity 2: quote search

p. 192

One day, in conversation with some colleagues in the orchestra who were talking jokingly about the possibility of composing musical portraits, genuine ones, not just pictures of types, like Mussorgsky's portraits of Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuryle, he said that, assuming such a thing really were possible in music, they would find his portrait not in any cello composition, but in the briefest of Chopin études, opus twenty-five, number nine, in G flat minor. When asked why, he replied that he simply couldn't see himself in any other piece of music and that this seemed to him the best of reasons. And that in the space of fifty-eight seconds Chopin had said all there was to say about someone he could never possibly have met.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 211

What is harder to grasp, and what is confusing death as she continues to peer over the cellist's shoulder, is that a human skull, drawn with such extraordinary precision, should have appeared, who knows in which period of creation, on the hairy back of a moth. Of course, little moths and butterflies have been known to appear on the human body too, but they have never been anything more than a primitive artifice, mere tattoos, they were not with the person from birth. There was probably a time, thinks death, when all living beings were one, but then, gradually, with increasing specialization, they found themselves divided up into five kingdoms, namely, monera, protista, fungi, plants and animals, within which, within those kingdoms that is, infinite macro specializations and micro specialization occurred over the ages, although it's hardly surprising that, in the midst of all this confusion, this biological *mélée*, the particularities of some would be repeated in others.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 220

You look very pretty, said the scythe, and it was true, death did look very pretty and she was young, about thirty-six or thirty-seven just as the anthropologists had calculated, You spoke, exclaimed death, There seemed to me to be a good reason, it isn't every day one sees death transformed into the species of which she is the enemy, So it wasn't because you thought I looked pretty, Oh, that too, that too, but I would have spoken even if you'd emerged in the guise of a fat woman in black like the one who appeared to monsieur marcel proust, Well, 'm not fat and I'm not dressed in black, and you have no idea who marcel proust was,

Activity 2: quote search

p. 220

You look very pretty, said the scythe, and it was true, death did look very pretty and she was young, about thirty-six or thirty-seven just as the anthropologists had calculated, You spoke, exclaimed death, There seemed to me to be a good reason, it isn't every day one sees death transformed into the species of which she is the enemy, So it wasn't because you thought I looked pretty, Oh, that too, that too, but I would have spoken even if you'd emerged in the guise of a fat woman in black like the one who appeared to monsieur marcel proust, Well, 'm not fat and I'm not dressed in black, and you have no idea who marcel proust was,

Activity 2: quote search

p. 222

When the taxi stopped, the cellist said before he got out, I simply can't understand what's going on between you and me, and I think it would be best if we didn't see each other again, No one can stop it now, Not even you, the woman who always gets her own way, asked the cellist, trying to be ironic, Not even me, replied the woman, So that means you'll fail then, No, it means I won't fail.

Activity 2: quote search

p. 235

As for you falling in love with me, you can hardly expect me to respond, there are certain words my mouth is forbidden to speak, Another mystery, And it won't be the last, Once we've said goodbye, all the mysteries will be resolved, Others might take their place, Please, go away, don't torment me any more, The letter, Look, I don't want to know anything about the letter, The fact is I couldn't give it to you even if I wanted to, I left it at the Hotel, said the woman, smiling,

Class discussion

1. What are the different kinds of death?
2. What is the difference between living to die and dying to live?
3. Is there a government criticism?
4. Connections with other deaths