

## 1-5 Death is a Calling

Ever watchful, the Guardian stands by your side, evaluating the threat level... you're drifting in and out, haunted by the waking nightmare of today's battle.

Your M-4 rests comfortably on your chest, and the smell of blood lingers on your body armor, the blood of your Brother Warrior and Friend, Corporal Eddy Jones.

“No water to wash it off,”

You think, as exhaustion takes over. The dog flea collars around your waist and ankles are helping to keep those blood sucking parasites at bay.

“I've got five more months in this fucking shit hole.”

You've already been here seven. Seven miserable months in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, “The Valley of Death” as they call it. Thoughts of riding your Harley back home bring a moment of reprieve.

Suddenly and without warning, the image of a beautiful Woman appears! “What the Hell! Am I dreaming? But my eyes are open!” You click the safety off your weapon.

“No shit, I'm awake!”

She stands motionless, looking straight into your eyes. Better than six feet tall, piercing blue eyes, jet-black hair, and a long black, shimmering gown, “Damn! What a Babe!” you think as your M-4 moves slowly in her direction.

“Hate to have to waste this one!”

She smiles and begins to glide slowly toward you. The

air becomes electrified, your hair standing up on the back of your neck. Without a word being spoken, there's a calm whisper,

“It will be alright Robert, it's not as bad as it seems.”

Without giving it a thought, you click the safety on and slowly place the rifle back on your chest while looking around. The rest of your fire team is sound asleep.

“They need to be. We've got a long, shit-bath patrol tomorrow”.

You're stunned by the absolute beauty of this Woman... Her pale skin, perfectly proportioned body, and Her powerful yet calming presence.

She's now standing by your right side, your Guardian standing on the left. Both look down into your eyes, as you lay motionless. Your skin prickles by the power of this Being, yet you're not afraid. There's a calming grace about this magnificent Woman, a peace about Her that reaches deep into your soul.

Slowly turning, She points to one of your Brothers about ten feet away, sleeping quietly near the wall of the bunker. Then gliding to his side, She looks back to you. With the kindest smile imaginable, She gently touches him on the forehead. Moving back slowly, She holds out her hand to him.

The image of Taylor, in crystal clear exactness rises up and grasps Her hand. In an instant, they are both gone.

“I'm gonna shit or go blind” you mutter, reaching for your smokes.

Since your eyes have been open the whole time, it's damn obvious you weren't asleep, and you're still shaking from what had to be an electric shock! Confused and alarmed while reaching for your smokes you mutter...

“None of this makes any sense, but I got plenty of cigs for the night, and I sure as hell ain’t goin’ to sleep!”

Moving out the next day, making your way down into the valley on what had to be a goat trail, that same prickly feeling hits you like a wave.

You freeze! And a single shot rings out, breaking the morning stillness. You yell out,

“Taylor!” But it’s too late. Taylor is gone.

Somehow you knew this last night, what the Angel meant; but you denied the truth of it, the horrible reality of it until now. And remembering the beautiful Woman, the Angel of Death, you whisper softly,

“Take care of my Brother, please take care of my Brother.”

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We briefly discussed the Angel of Death in “*The Warrior’s Guide to Insanity*.” Now let’s look at the whole picture a bit closer. Let’s look at Death through the eyes of the Warrior. And by the way, some of you may think that story is bullshit. It ain’t. It’s as real as it gets. It happened in my time, and it’s happening right now with our Troops in harm’s way.

About a year ago, I talked with a young Soldier who explained to me how he felt about Death. He said,

”To me, Sarge, Death is a calling. Nothing is more intimate, more personal than walking onto the battlefield and facing Death with someone you love, with the Brother or Sister Warrior you love more than life itself. And when that true Friend is killed, you feel cheated.”

He went on to explain, “I loved my Friends with all my heart. I wanted to continue to be by their side, to

protect them, to face anything they faced, but I couldn't. I felt guilty they were gone, that I had abandoned them.”

The Soldier also said that although he longed for Death to be with the only ones he loved in this world, he would not take his own life. He felt that suicide would dishonor them. He feels that he was allowed to live so that he could help the new Veterans of War, the new Warriors that walk off the battlefield as he once had, feeling only half alive.

This Soldier now dedicates his life to just that. He lives each day with the horrors of War so that maybe, by example, our young Brothers and Sisters will realize their strengths.

I've had a number of Troops explain similar feelings about Death and about the Angel of Death. One described his feelings of comfort on the battlefield.

He said, “It was the Angel of Death that always comforted me.” She said, “Everything will be alright, no matter how it seems at the moment.”

Now some of you may say, “Oh sure! That's just your imagination. The brain makes shit up like that to make itself feel better”. Well, my un-believing friends, that may be true. Or, it may be denial? Look at it this way.

We Warriors don't give a rat's ass what anyone thinks, so are thousands of us makin' up the same illusion? I guaran-damn-tee you that people who face Death every day, who have embraced their own mortality, who are willing to die every day, think about Death a whole lot different from someone whose only concern has been their 401K or the next sale at the mall.

Since most people are afraid to even consider Death, that's what makes it so hard to accept the possibility of a magnificent Angel waiting to guide you in to the Big LZ...

you know, heaven, hell, or whatever you believe in.

“So what’s the point?” you ask patiently.

Well then, the point is that once you see Her (or Him), it affects you for the rest of your life. How? In several ways.

For me, She became my standard of perfection in women. It also made me look forward to making the passage. You know, kickin the bucket, checkin’ out, getting your ticket punched, headin’ to the land of the Big PX. In other words, it made me look forward to dying. In another way, it made me a bit jealous of my dead Friends. Hell, She could touch them, but She couldn’t touch me.

Sounds like the Old Sarge has a round jammed in the chamber, or he’s a couple cans short of a six-pack? Doesn’t it? Sure it does, unless you’ve been there, felt Her power, had premonitions of your friends dying (which came true), and could feel Her around every time before a firefight. I’ve talked with Corpsmen and Medics who saw a white globe-shaped mist leave the body when you check out. Are they all padded-cell candidates, too? Don’t think so.

So how do you describe this stuff to someone who hasn’t been there, done that? How do you describe the E-ticket rides at Disney Land unless you go on ’em? How do you describe the feeling of a canopy opening unless you jump from a perfectly good aircraft, or the magical undulations of kelp forty feet below the surface of La Jolla Cove unless you’ve been down there?

When I felt the Angel of Death for the first time, it was the most fantastic feeling of calm, peace, and joy I’d ever felt. The smell of blood and urine didn’t matter; the filth, leaches and insects didn’t matter; the stench of rotting flesh didn’t matter. All that mattered was that I

knew then, and sure as hell know now, that there's at least one fine looking woman on the other side waitin' for this old Jar Head!

If you believe in a Power greater than yourself, this Being is an extension of that Prime Source. And if She is only an Angel, you know, like a Lance Corporal, then what's it like up the Chain of Command? What's the ultimate Commander-in-Chief like?? It's gotta be good.

So you see, us Warriors are not afraid of death at all. Most of us look forward to it. But it's our duty, our mission, to live with Honor, burning the shitters of life until we get our permanent liberty pass.

Warriors fight to the Death with Honor, we live by the Code of Honor, and we leave this world with Honor as our Standard. The more you understand this Code, the more you will understand our Young Warriors coming back from the battlefields of Death.

Over the past FIVE Topics, are you beginning to see just how complex the struggle is for your loved ones?

Let's refresh your memory a bit:

Our lives are changed forever in war; we can never, ever return to who we were.

We fight the Angelic side and the Demonic side of our human nature; it's a battle that rages from moment to moment.

We are caught between the two distinct and separate worlds; the Warrior World of Black-and-White that we love, and gray Civilian World we have little use for.

We are pulled by the forces of Nature to survive, and yet we often long for Death.

Our battlefield friendships are the standard for all

future relationships.

Our guilt over our actions in War is compounded by our guilt over having survived War, and over those who didn't.

By now, you're probably asking yourself,

“Why in hell would anyone choose to be a Warrior?”

The answer to that is real simple:

“We didn't choose to be Warriors, we just are Warriors.”

**Alright then, Stay Frosty!**  
**We've got two clicks to the Firebase.**  
**Hostiles up ahead!**  
**Fix Bayonets!!**