


DEATH

WITH A

VIEW



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DONALD LEWIS STEVENSON



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HOPE FOR BRAIN-DAMAGED PATIENTS

Recently (2005) an encouraging article appeared in the *New York Times* about brain-damaged patients. Excerpts from the article, authored by Benedict Cary, stated that, “Thousands of brain-damaged people who are treated as if they are almost completely unaware may in fact hear and register what is going on around them but are unable to respond, a new brain imaging study suggests....

“...Research showed that brain-imaging technology could be a powerful tool to help doctors and family members determine whether a person has lost all awareness or was still somewhat mentally engaged.

“...These people are there...they’ve been there all along, even though we’ve been treating them as if they were not,” said Dr. Joseph Fins, Chief of Medical Ethics at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

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A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

Life is unpredictable. One day a person may be in perfect health, and the next day smitten by disease, disability, or death. No one is exempt from the possibility of misfortune. Only God truly knows our tomorrows and what they hold.

What would you do if you were suddenly made bedfast by an accident and unable to move or communicate with the world around you?

The natural thing would be to give up and wish for death. Right?

The purpose of this story is to make you aware that you have an alternative in Jesus Christ, regardless of your misfortunes, losses, or disappointments.

Physical disability is not the end of life. The body is only a house in which our spirits dwell. If the windows suddenly get closed and the power and phone lines are torn down, we are no less alive. We simply have to find a different way of communicating with the outside. In the case of Christians, the Holy Spirit is ever at their sides to become a two-way channel of communication. If the spirit wholly submits to the Holy Ghost, then the communication is one of power, both with God and for man.

—Donald Lewis Stevenson

Chapter One

DEAD AT THE SCENE

Victor was the epitome of self-confidence. He had everything a man could hope for—a lovely wife, a beautiful three-year-old daughter, an expensive suburban home, and a good job as assistant CEO of a prosperous finance corporation. Furthermore, he was only thirty-two and endowed with a great physique, perfectly tailored on a six-foot frame. A full head of wavy brown hair, deep blue eyes, and a perfect set of teeth accented his dazzling good looks.

But he was a workaholic.

It was Friday and nearly midnight when he left the office to go home. His nerves were raw and stretched to the limit as he pulled out of the parking garage in his late-model Miata.

Patience was not his greatest virtue.

He pulled up to the red light at James Street and waited. It was the last light before the on-ramp to I-5.

“Aw, come on, stupid light. Change!” he fumed. “Not another car within miles, and I have to sit here like a ninny and wait. I should go anyway. But if I did, there’d probably be fifty cops bearing down on me.

“Shish! It’s about time!” he growled, laying a patch of rubber across the intersection and half way up the on-ramp.

“Come on, Miata baby, take me to Momma!

“Hey! Watch it, sucker! An empty freeway and you have to cut me off? Dingbat! Get a life!

“I can’t believe it! First, a maniac cuts me off. Now an old man in a hat decides to creep along like he’s on a Sunday drive in the Olympic Rain Forest. I wish there was a law against old people driving. Oh well, it’s either stay behind him or miss my exit.

“About time!” he sighed, turning onto the Michigan Street exit. He made it to the Burien Freeway without having to wait for another light.

“I’ll be there in eight more minutes, Jackie honey.”

As he cruised to the First Avenue exit, he looked toward the moonlit horizon and prayed, “Oh, God, I’m sorry for being such a grouch, but these petty driving pressures get to me. I’ll work harder on it, Lord. I promise.”

Suddenly, just before he came to his turnoff, he clutched his chest with one arm.

“Oh! Oh! My chest!” he cried. “What’s happening to me?”

“Now, my arm’s feeling tingly and numb.

“Got to...get...off...the...road...before...I...”

His car shot through the guardrail, rolled over, and landed upright in a ditch.



Where am I? It’s so dark. My eyes, I can’t open them. I can’t move. Sirens... people talking. Someone’s right at my face. What’s he doing? What was that noise? Sounded like a rifle shot.

“Keep up the CPR, men. Forget about that cracked rib. His life’s what we’re trying to save right now. Hey, Lieutenant, send that backboard over here. Quick!”

Firefighters! They think I’m dead. Stop, guys! I’m alive... I can hear you. What’s that? Another siren. Oh, God in heaven, don’t let me die.

“Sorry for taking so long, captain. What happened?”

“Well, officer, it appears the poor guy had a cardiac on the freeway. His car shot through that guardrail up there and rolled before crashing in this ditch. Some Thanksgiving his family’s gonna have next week.”

“You getting any response?”

“Nothing. Been working for most of an hour. May as well call the coroner. He’s a goner.”

No! No! I’m not dead. Got to show them somehow. My left eyelid: I think I can move it.

Look, you guys. Look at my eye. My eyelid’s moving. See! See it? I’m alive. Please!

Someone, look!

Oh, dear God, please make them look. I beg You, please make them look. Don’t let them give up.

“Officer, is it okay to move the body now?”

“Go ahead, doctor. I think I can complete the investigation without it.

“Lieutenant, send a couple men up for the coroner’s gurney. And here’s his ID, doctor. Just in case you’d like to copy some of the info before you go. According to the driver’s license, his name is Victor Vita. I can’t believe he was only thirty-two. Pretty young for a heart attack.”

“Victor Vita, huh? You know what that means, officer?”

“No, doctor. What?”

“It means *life’s conqueror*.”

“How ironic that death should overtake him so early.”

No! Not the morgue! I’m not dead!

What’s that sound? Oh, no, they’re zipping me in a body bag...No! Please don’t zip me in! Please!

Got to save my strength...try again at the morgue. Oh, God, please let them see I’m alive.

In Jesus’ name, I beg you.

