

READ GLOBAL BOOK GROUP

Death with Interruptions by José Saramago

Questions

1. Discuss how the politicians, bureaucrats, trade groups, and black market respond to the practicalities of people not dying.
2. How is the emotional reaction to the absence of death portrayed?
3. Saramago does not use many of the conventions of punctuation in this book or in some of his other writing. What effect does this have on the story?
4. Death is described as female ("of course she is female") – do you know of other personifications of D/death that are female? How do you think the entity's gender fits into the book?
5. The narration switches from an all-seeing third-person narrator to the first-person speculations and comments from the narrator. What other changes are there and how do they affect the story?
6. Since other living things in the country continue to die and people in other countries continue to die, it is implied that there are other deaths. How do you think this all works?
7. What time is the book set in? There are references to computers but many things, such as the way the various government ministers communicate, that make it seem to be set in the past.
8. Why do you think the envelope for the cellist kept coming back?
9. What do you think happens next? Will the cellist die eventually? Will death?

Explore

Works with Death as a Character

A Dirty Job, by Christopher Moore [FIC MOO]

Gods of Jade and Shadow by Silvia Moreno-Garcia [FIC MOR]

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak [YFIC ZUS]

The Masque of the Red Death in Great Tales and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe [818 P]

The Sandman series by Neil Gaiman [FIC GAI]

The Discworld series by Terry Pratchett [SF PRA]

Works with Surreal Answers to "What If?" Questions

Einstein's Dreams by Alan Lightman [FIC LIG]

Ficciones by José Luis Borges [FIC BOR]

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