

Lobotomy

a play by Ryan M. Bultrowicz

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Two doctors, ELLIE and PENNY, are performing a lobotomy on a patient. The patient is hidden behind some type of surgical partition.

PENNY

I bought a lobotomy cake.

ELLIE

A lobotomy cake?

PENNY

For after – to celebrate our first successful lobotomy together.

ELLIE

Oh. Well, what if it isn't successful?

PENNY

Then it'll be to celebrate our first unsuccessful lobotomy together.

ELLIE

What kind?

PENNY

It's strawberry. Because-

ELLIE

Brain matter smells like strawberry.

PENNY

Right! Pass me the sponge, please.

ELLIE passes PENNY the sponge from a surgical tray beside her.

ELLIE

That's good.

PENNY begins scrubbing the brain.

PENNY

Although, I have to say...this brain-

ELLIE

It stinks, right?

PENNY

For real. What's up with that?

ELLIE

It's like musty couch and cigarette smell.

PENNY

It's got to be these memories. They're rotten or something.

PENNY returns the sponge.

ELLIE

Should we take a peek at one?

PENNY

Isn't that unethical?

ELLIE

Oh, come on. What's he going to do? Sue us?

PENNY

No, I guess not. Seeing as he'll be lobotomized.

ELLIE

Then just reach in and pull one out. It'll be stealthy.

PENNY

You do it.

ELLIE

But it really stinks and you know my hands are like smell magnets. Once I get a scent on them it takes forever for it to go away.

PENNY

My hands are smell magnets too!

ELLIE

I have a condition! You're being very insensitive right now.

PENNY

Oh, fine.

ELLIE

Pick a good one.

PENNY reaches her hand down into the patient's skull, she digs around for a bit.

ELLIE

Hurry up!

PENNY

You want a good one, don't you?

ELLIE

Yes – but we also have to do this pretty quickly. We've got another lobotomy at three and another at four.

PENNY

Anyone important?

ELLIE

Just some more political enemies.

PENNY

They can wait then – we'll just say we got caught up in some complications here.

PENNY grabs hold of a big memory.

PENNY

I got a big one!

ELLEN hands her a surgical knife.

ELLIE

Crack that puppy open!

PENNY cuts open the memory, a bright white light shines from the patient's head. PENNY and ELLIE gaze into it.

PENNY

What do we have here?

ELLIE

Oh my god. Look at that.

PENNY

That's despicable.

ELLIE

Disgusting.

PENNY

Dog-fighting? This guy was into dog-fighting?

ELLIE

Look at his laugh. Look at that evil little grin across his face.

PENNY

Man, this guy sucks.

The light goes away.

ELLIE

You know, not that I ever feel bad about the array of inhumane surgical procedures we're asked to do— but I especially don't feel bad about lobotomizing this guy. I like dogs.

PENNY

I like dogs too! And, yeah. You should never feel bad. This is your job.

ELLIE

My living.

PENNY

It's how you live – why would you feel bad?

ELLIE

A morally ambiguous living at the very best and that's even a stretch – but, seriously, what do we have to feel bad about?

PENNY

Remember the hairy guy last week?

ELLIE

The one who's arms we replaced with feet-

PENNY

And took out all the teeth and sewed his mouth shut – right. That's the one.

ELLIE

What about him?

PENNY

I heard-

ELLIE

From who?

PENNY

The higher-ups. They told me he was a tax evader.

ELLIE

He didn't pay his taxes?

PENNY

Nope. Not a penny.

ELLIE

Horrendous.

PENNY

Outrageous.

ELLIE

We should've lobotomized him too.

PENNY

Hey, we do as we're told. There are some fates worse than lobotomization and those have to be reserved for tax evaders. We just have to put some faith in the higher-ups.

ELLIE

I know, I know. Just...I'm kind of enjoying this lobotomy. It's fun.

PENNY

Yeah, it's kind of like a puzzle. Usually, they don't have us work on the brain.

ELLIE

Usually, we just remove it.

PENNY

What do you think they do with all those brains?

ELLIE

Hmmm.

PENNY

Maybe they mash them up into one mega-brain, ripe for the harvesting of information!

ELLIE

Well, that's hardly scientific.

PENNY

You're right.

ELLIE

Maybe they just like the taste?

PENNY

Yeah, they probably just like the taste. Probably like how they smell.

ELLIE

Strawberry.

PENNY

Which explains why we're just lobotomizing this one!

ELLIE

Because his brain stinks!

PENNY

Your brain sticks you dumb dog dueler!

ELLIE

Let's look at another.

PENNY

Another memory? The first was kind of upsetting, don't you think?

ELLIE

Yeah, but I have kind of a morbid curiosity about it.

PENNY

I don't know...

ELLIE

Oh, come on! You like to look at pictures of dead people on the internet.

PENNY

Only on holidays!

ELLIE

That's a morbid curiosity in its own right.

PENNY

No, it's research. But fine. Whatever. But you have to get it this time.

ELLIE

No, please. My smell magnet hands.

PENNY

If you want to see another so bad, you grab it.

ELLIE
Pennnnny, pleaaaaase.

PENNY *crosses her arms.*

PENNY
I'm standing my ground here.

ELLIE
You're getting blood all over yourself.

PENNY
I don't care – I'm standing my ground!

ELLIE
Fine! I'll do it, jeez.

PENNY
Enjoy!

ELLIE sticks her hand deep inside the patient's head, wriggles around for a bit, and pulls out another memory.

PENNY
Don' be shy. Open it up.

ELLIE grabs the surgical knife and opens up the brain. A bright red light shines across their faces.

ELLIE
Wow!

PENNY
Look at all that!

ELLIE
That's a lot of shame we're seeing!

PENNY
Wonder why, though? He's just eating cereal...

ELLIE
Maybe someone else comes and he does something horrific to them?

They lean in and watch for a bit longer. After a moment, they both turn away in disgust.

PENNY
Oh my god!

ELLIE
I can't...I can't-

PENNY
Fucking Christ!

ELLIE
That's the worst thing. That's...

PENNY
He didn't add any milk.

ELLIE
HE DIDN'T ADD ANY MILK.

The light fades away.

PENNY
What a sick, sick fuck.

ELLIE
That's even worse than letting the cereal soak in the milk for too long.

PENNY
That's bad too, though. Let's not get crazy.

ELLIE
That was way worse than dog-fighting.

PENNY
And way worse than tax evasion!

They both continue the lobotomy.

PENNY
Some people in this world truly disgust me.

END OF PLAY