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Category: Dramatic Script

Body as Object

INT. JOSIE'S APARTMENT OF BULLSHIT, DAY

JOSIE is currently stacking her bullshit cans of garbanzo beans into a makeshift barrier between herself and our potential DEMO GUY. He's here to, hypothetically, blow up one hundredth of the mirrored building Josie and I will steal a body from in two days. A manufactured body, mind you.

This is a job interview. Like at McDonald's. Or some service that delivers bottled water for Valentine's Day.

JOSIE

Do you consider yourself a people person?

DEMO GUY

What? No.

He's not exactly wowing us. I am not wowed. The desk toy Josie helped pour my untethered consciousness into is not wowed.

The toy continues to solar-poweredly bob around on the window sill Josie cleared especially for it. For me, technically. This plastic thing was the closest container Josie could find when HR delivered to her the little bottle containing my consciousness. The official report contains both the phrase "workplace accident" and "disciplinary suspension," both of which mean nothing.

Josie frowns habitually. She doesn't like when I think too much about that period of grief, and I can't blame her; I'd feel jittery if someone kept dropping thoughts of loss into my head, too. It's not like either of us get to choose what and what not to feel.

She quietly adds another bullshit can to her barricade. She always says that she collects food in preparation for an inevitable onset of severe agoraphobia, but I think she just misses Lincoln Logs.

JOSIE

It's Link and Logs. Right?

Sure, sugar.

DEMO GUY

Was the question to her? Kinda inconsiderate of you. Talking over my head like that.

JOSIE

What? No.

I want to roll my eyes. Josie bares her teeth at me very sweetly. I like her like this.

I guess I can't blame the demo guy, either. Back when Josie held all of me in a little labelled jar, she'd cried and cried and dipped her ring finger into the liquid of my consciousness to rub a few drops into her ears. I like to think that some of her tears dripped into me, too. The demo guy is not a part of this closed circuit. It must be viciously contextualizing, to feel the weight of other people's worlds around you.

JOSIE

Anyway, you're hired. Mostly just break windows, okay?

DEMO GUY

You're kidding.

Josie knocks one of the cans in his general direction and tells him to get the hell out of her apartment. And to come back on Sunday to discuss plans.

INT. JOSIE'S APARTMENT, DAY

DEMO GUY

So, patents, huh?

Personally, I think patents aren't all they're cracked up to be. I think everyone who ever wanted to construct a

transistor radio should be able to do it freely but should have to suffer immensely for it. Builds character.

JOSIE

You're very insufferable.

Thanks, Josie. Thank you. Feel free to bare your teeth at me again. Or put them in my neck. I think my hypothetical future possibility of a neck could benefit from that.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

I'd break my teeth, y'know; all that stainless steel. But I'll do it anyway. Aw, quit sulking around, Guy. I was plotting with my associate.

DEMO GUY

You're an undiplomatic type of chick, huh?

JOSIE

What? No.

It's generally not advisable to mock a guy who blows up portions of buildings for a living.

JOSIE

Emphasis on portions. So, Guy, you'll be at the patent office. We'll be stealing a body.

DEMO GUY

Her old one?

JOSIE

What? No.

My old body, considering it never turned in its two-week notice before I was forcibly removed from its head, still works at Kroger. I miss the moles on its back. I miss how quiet the world felt when Josie had her lips pressed against them.

JOSIE

Back atcha. Do you get it? Back?

Good god. You know I can't cry like this.

INT. JOSIE'S APARTMENT OF NO BULLSHIT AT ALL, DAY

The new body, all painted and pretty, is slumped on Josie's couch. Josie herself is walking from the kitchen to the rug and back again. I am set on the windowsill again to say goodbye to my plastic flower face. The demo guy is, most likely, meeting his next clients.

Two hours ago, in the midst of our body-centric heist, Josie asked me if she was gonna die, if her heart was supposed to go so fast that she couldn't tell where one thump started and another ended. All the security guards in the building, as unavoidably as bees committing mass suicide in Sprite, had already gathered at the fractionally-destroyed patent office to protect the precious documentation of quality-of-life inventions that will never be afforded to the general public. Josie carried me and the new body home again, once she and I had suitably convinced ourselves that we wouldn't be caught like mice in a beehive.

But the new body is not mine. My hands and face and spine are still working shifts and eating eggs and sleeping in my bed.

JOSIE

This doesn't feel right. It's not *you*.

Well, not yet. Buck up, buttercup. I'll still miss being all organic matter but what's the matter with that? Are you not going to laugh at my joke? C'mon.

JOSIE

You're deflecting, y'know.

My plastic leaves bob in the sunlight.

JOSIE

Listen. Do you want this? Or are you just trying to make me feel better?

I think being in a body again is gonna hurt. It's funny, how much hurt that old thing held onto. I wonder if it still hurts now that it's all by it's lonesome.

JOSIE

Probably!

I wonder if I hurt.

Josie?

JOSIE

Probably.

I'm not even sure why I'm miles removed from my old body now; used to just be inches, or a few meters on bad days. Dunno what I did wrong. Dunno if I can go back to it.

JOSIE

To your job or the body?

Josie is holding her head in her hands and my ribs break themselves outwards with the want to be the one pressing cool hands to her forehead. She grabs a can of garbanzo beans from her towers and sets it beside me.

JOSIE

So. Maybe this doesn't count as agoraphobia.

She turns the can and me towards the window. I cannot see her but for the ghostly reflections in the dusty pane of glass, but she keeps speaking, letting me know where she is.

JOSIE

My bereavement leave ends tomorrow, you know. Three days. Jesus. I think I get what you mean, honey. And if I've got it all wrong, then I'd like to know eventually.

She cuts a one-inch slit in the top of the can with her pocketknife—which I know only from the sound—and sets the knife down by the window, and pours all of herself into that little millimeter-wide gap in the metal.

Josie once told me she could look out of a window for eternity. Spent every drive and flight and nighttime walk staring as far off as the buildings would let her, tracking the movement of dust motes under streetlights.

Josie?

I'm here. And I'm here with you, too.