

The Clinic

2025, January, New York

Part 1

“Good morning, Mrs. Hoover, how have you been doing? How can we help today?”

“Good morning, Gloria. I am not too bad, though I had better days. You know, some bouts of sadness, and I can’t quite get my 8 hours sleep lately. We’ll go for UV partial lobotomy today, so my GP said.”

”Absolutely, do you have the prescription with you?”

“Oh my, I left it at home. As I said, I am not entirely focused these days,” whispers Ms. Hoover.

“All right dear, make sure next time you’ll bring it. Let’s go now and make you feel better. What plans do you have for today, Mrs. Hoover?” asks Gloria while putting a protective arm around Mrs. Hoover’s shoulder and heading to the lab together. Gloria turns towards the people waiting in line and cries: ”I will need you to be patient today as I am running the clinic by myself. Dr. Bernstein is away for a congress. I will be back for the next patient in 5 minutes. Thanks for your patience and understanding!”

“You know, Gloria,” Mrs. Hoover adds, ”I am feeling pretty weird lately. It’s like I am getting unsettled in my own body, a kind of nervousness, you know that feeling? It actually happens quite often lately. Well, pretty much all the time.”

“This, my darling,” Gloria answers, “the emotion you are feeling, this is why we chose to do what we are doing right now. You will soon forget that you even felt that way. However, if that

still bothers you after a while, I highly recommend that you talk to Dr. Bernstein and he can consider an Amygdala Extraction, which will certainly lead to ZERO weird emotions in your future." Gloria pauses and sighs. "In fact, Zero emotions whatsoever," eventually she utters.

"That sounds great," adds Mrs. Hoover enthusiastically. "I will look into that."

"All right my dear, put those electrodes on your head, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. We will proceed in 10 seconds."

Nurse Gloria was a real professional who worked quickly, neatly and precisely. Mr. Bernstein did his best to train her thoroughly, and he often took her with him to different learning venues.

He met Gloria ten years ago in the hospital he used to work back then. She came to the emergency room with a magnificent panic attack triggered by an unstoppable compulsion to kill her husband, whom, otherwise, she dearly loved. She said she felt she had 3 choices in that very moment: to kill him, to come to the hospital, or go to the police station. Hence, she chose to come to the hospital, hoping there was something to be done about her big compulsion. She insisted that she loved her husband, and that they were happy together with no marital issues whatsoever, but yet she had a strong desire to kill him. Shortly after, Dr. Bernstein started thinking more and more about ways to alter his patients unhealthy moods and emotions without changing who they were. A few years down the road, he reinvented and revolutionized the whole new concept of Modern Ultraviolet Transfrontal Lobotomy. It was milder, less invasive than the classical lobotomy, and it relied on ultraviolet light for conducting the currents.

It soon became a huge success, and a few years later, Dr. Bernstein won the Nobel Prize for medicine for his new revolutionising procedure. Bipolars, manics, depressed people, teenagers

with arising mental issues would often relied on this procedure to bring balance to their troubled brains and lives. Where the UV lobotomy failed to work, he would entirely remove the patients' Amygdala, so they wouldn't be shaken by any leftover, unsettling emotion. There were some heated underground debates among the top specialists in the country whether Amygdala extraction procedure will populate the world with psychopaths as its main side effect was a complete emotional numbness and lack of any sort of emotionality. But until further updates and medical reviews, Amygdala Extraction along with the UV transfrontal lobotomy became not just a norm for serious mental disorders, but also a very handy, trendy tool to brush off undesirable emotions and behaviours. Famous politicians, CEO-s, actors, professionals, VIP-s who felt challenged and couldn't contain their own powerful emotions like anger, jealousy, helplessness and other invalidating feelings, would require Dr. Bernstein's services. It proved to be an amazing way to boost brain power and discard negative emotions and struggles. "Brain Enema," used to be its nickname among its regular patients.

Gloria was thinking that lately way too many housewives and menopausal women came to regulate their emotions via electrodes. But if that's what it takes to keep them married with children and grandchildren, well...then that might be the answer after all. If that is the ultimate way to keep a society settled and marriages alive, so help us God with this terrific brain enema!" "All done, sweetie," says Gloria still distracted," you're all good to go. You should start feeling better by afternoon. But if those dark thoughts will still bother you, come back and talk to Dr Bernstein."

"Thank you, Gloria," Mrs. Hoover answers, shaking off her dark big curls after pulling out the tangled electrodes." I will do so."

“Now make yourself a great day sweetie, and we’ll see you soon!”

Part 2

“Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. Tate! I haven’t seen you in a while. How are you all doing?”

“Good Day Gloria, nice to see you! We’re doing good. Busy, school, working, you know... That whole family affair.”

“Of course, of course! How can we help you today, Mr and Mrs. Tate?”

“Well,” the Tates holding hands and smiling, “we decided we want to have another child.”

“Oh dear, that’s wonderful! I was looking forward to the day you decide to expand your beautiful family. Great news! Mr. Bernstein will be thrilled to hear that. Did you decide about the details?”

“We did, we did. It took us about a year to decide, but yes, here’s the brief.”

“Great, thank you! I will make a copy and attach it to your file, then I will send it to the lab. We do have all the specimens we need from your last year’s collection, so no further samples are required. I will need the prescription from your practitioner, a signature, and that’s it. Things are way more simple today, as you can see.”

“Great, thank you Gloria. Indeed. When shall we come back?”

“It’s up to you and when you wish to do the transfer. You need to wait at least 1 month to make sure everything is safe, but after that or you can come anytime between the 1st and the 9th month

to do it. Or you can just leave it here. But be mindful, in case you wish for any revisions, come back in the next two weeks while we can still work on the genetic information.”

“Awesome, thanks Gloria. Could we take a look the Maternity and the amenities?”

“Of course dear, let’s go quickly. I am alone today, and there are lots of grumpy people lining up, as it’s Monday. I will be back in 5 minutes!” cries Gloria towards the crowd of people in the waiting room.

Nurse Gloria and the Tates took the elevator to the third floor where the Maternity and the nests were located. They entered an enormous bright room, all built in large windows and marble tiles. Bright neons were hanging from the ceiling, with a dozen of voluminous speakers hanging in between. Classical music was playing softly in the background. The Maternity room boasted about 50 cubicles, and each cubicle boasted its own artificial womb, called *Nest*.

“These are the Nests!” whispered Gloria proudly. The embryos are placed in the Nest as soon as they become viable. As you can see, a baby has all the conditions to thrive in here. We feed the nests every 3 hours with the best organic food available on the market, play soothing classical music, and read them stories twice a day. Also, we have recently introduced a foreign languages program as the embryos start to assimilate language since as early as 2 months. Comparing to the old fashioned way of carrying, the Nest shelters and protects the baby against any unwanted sources of stress, over-stimulation, conflict, pollution of any sort, offering him the best possible start in life. More and more parents are starting to opt for the Nest as a healthier, safer alternative to a stressful pregnancy. For instance, Sarah Jessica Parker’s twins are currently nested in our clinic for six more months. The Minister’s first grandchild as well as Leonard Cohen’s granddaughter are currently under conception in the lab these days. The Maternity is currently

fully booked, so we need to take a look at the future bookings and plan ahead in case you decide to nest the baby here. Furthermore, some mothers choose not to transfer their baby from the nest, as they find the labour an unnecessary stress for the baby. And as you are probably aware of, science confirmed the birth trauma on a child's life. However, this is a personal choice and we are flexible on that matter. It is a family decision, and we will do our best to accommodate it. Are you having any further questions at this point? I will need to run downstairs and take the next patient.”

“That looks fantastic, Gloria! It sounds indeed like a good start in life. We will give it a thought, and will let you know as soon as possible.”

Part 3

“Next!” shouts Gloria politely. How can I help you, Sir?”

”Good morning!” A pale, tall man in his late fifties approaches the desk nervously .

“It is my first time at the clinic. My name is Robert Dawn, and I am here because of my poor mood and low output at work. My GP thinks I might suffer from depression, however I am not sure about that... However, I lost my humour, my focus and my vitality. Other than that I'm good, I am never late for work, I'm jogging every day, I clean my house, take my grand-kids to the park, walk the dog....”

“We will help you with that right away, Mr. Dawn,” Gloria interrupts him with a flat expression on her face. “I need your prescription from your GP, please. Make yourself comfortable, take off your coat, and get ready to join me. Let me just make a short announcement, and we'll head off.”

Gloria clears off her throat, gathers her smiles and cries out loud: “Good morning, everyone! As I mentioned earlier this morning, today is going to be a slow day at the clinic as Dr. Bernstein is away, and I am the only one taking patients. I will need you to have patience, and I promise I will not leave before seeing all of you. To make things faster for everyone, please form two different line-ups: one for physicals, and one for emotional and psychiatric requests. I will make sure that each and one of you will leave the clinic healthy and happy. In five minutes I will be back and take the next patient. Thank you!”

The End