

SENSELESS [EXCERPT]

Written by

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INT. CHANCE-CREAGAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION -
CONTINUOUS

Down the hall from the nurse's station, the Men In Green speak in HUSHED TONES to a DOCTOR in front of a patient's room- ROOM 2-04.

A freshly arrived Rosie looks on with a tired BETH (late 50s, overnight nurse, blunt and overworked).

Marta walks up to them, taking the last bites of a small canteen croissant.

MARTA
What's happened then?

BETH
You can't eat out here, Marta.

MARTA
Relax, Bethy. It's not yet seven,
it's 6:56.

ROSIE
(re: the green men)
Porters. From Keldburn. Had a
stowaway on the ferry.

MARTA
What, a patient, like?

ROSIE
Poor thing was out of her wits.
Been committed for years, they
said. Made a break for it soon as
they docked, ran into the road-
then bam. Flew 20 feet, landed on
her head.

One of the Men In Green- the shorter, stockier of the pair- tries to enter Room 2-04 but is stopped by the Doctor. A CONFRONTATION between the two appears to be HEATING UP.

The other Man In Green- lankier and bespeckled- looks up SUDDENLY.

He and Marta LOCK EYES.

Marta looks away first, slightly disturbed.

BETH
Clever girl, she must've been.
Nobody leaves the isle.

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)
Better off comatose here than awake
out there if you ask me.

ROSIE
(defensive)
And yet nobody did now, did they.

CUT TO:

INT. CHANCE-CREAGAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM 2-04 - CONTINUOUS

The Men in Green have departed, leaving just the Doctor- NOEL HAMMOND (mid 50s, seasoned and stern) in Room 2-04 attending to the COMATOSE KELDBURN PATIENT.

Marta knocks lightly on the door.

HAMMOND
Marta, good morning. Come in.

She enters, getting a better look at the patient:

A woman, early 30s, BRUISED, fitted with a NECK BRACE and a BREATHING TUBE. The right side of her face is DROOPY.

MARTA
This is a new one.

Dr. Hammond doesn't smile.

MARTA (CONT'D)
(re: the green men)
Gave you a hard time, did they?

HAMMOND
They wanted to take her back.

MARTA
What, now?
(beat)
She wouldn't make it a minute in
her state, never mind two hours.

HAMMOND
That is exactly what I said.
(handing her the patient's
file)
Don't try to deal with them
yourself if they come back. Paunchy
bloke was a right old prick.

Dr. Hammond exits.

As Marta parses through the file, we pull back and see the bottom of the patient's feet peeking out from her blanket- they are SCRATCHED and HEAVILY SCARRED.

CUT TO:

INT. CHANCE-CREAGAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - SMALL LECTURE HALL - AFTERNOON

A DIMLY LIT lecture hall in a smaller wing of Chance-Creagan.

TRUMAN (early 60s, animated, smart but scatterbrained) stands at the head, assisted in his lesson by a small slide projector displaying a labeled diagram of the BRAIN- the HIPPOCAMPUS is HIGHLIGHTED.

A class of 80 - 90 YOUNG ADULTS takes notes diligently.

Marta sits in the front row, with Egan on her right.

Garth is seated a few rows back.

TRUMAN

...flooded with stress hormones,
killing cells in the hippocampus.
Over time, the brain is conditioned
to default to self-doubt- the areas
responsible for threat assessment
become hyperactive and unreliable.
Now, you'll do well to remember the
phenomenon coined by our friend
Wilhelm Stekel in 1924- anyone?

Marta raises her hand, along with a couple other students.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

Marta.

MARTA

That's somatization.

TRUMAN

Right, somatization, not to be-

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

-conflated with somatic
disorder. Caused by
psychological distress,
somatization is characterized
by...

EGAN

(hushed)
Sodomization, is it. That
what you like, Marta?

Ignoring Egan, Marta raises her hand again.

Truman points to another student, who begins to answer-

STUDENT #1

They're-

STUDENT #1 (CONT'D)

...nerve- and a shortness-

MARTA

(clipped)

Excessive fatigue, pinched nerves, gastrointestinal issues, and/or shortness of breath not directly linked to a physical malady.

Truman nods at her awkwardly, carries on with his lecture.

EGAN

Never met a lass who'd open her back door 'fore her front.

MARTA

(hushed)

Fuck are you on about, Egan?

EGAN

(amusing himself)

Oh come off it, don't be acting all coy now. Garth sings your praises. Said you were so taut he could hardly get it out.

COLD REALIZATION sets in.

Marta turns to look at Garth- did he really?

He can feel her gaze but can't bring himself to meet it.

She turns back to face the front. Bites her tongue.

CUT TO:

INT. CHANCE-CREAGAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - OFFICE HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Marta MARCHES BRISKLY down the hall, books bursting from her shoulder bag.

She's got tunnel vision.

Beelines for-

CUT TO:

INT. CHANCE-CREAGAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - TRUMAN'S OFFICE -
CONTINUOUS

-and BURSTS in, letting the door SLAM behind her.

MARTA
I'm not workin' with him.

Truman, seated at his desk, is mid-conversation with Student #1.

Both of them look at her.

TRUMAN
Yes, Ms. Walsh?

Beat.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)
(to Student #1)
Go on. Only be a minute.

STUDENT #1
What, you're not serious?

MARTA
Oh piss off, Brendan.

Truman gives Marta a warning look.

Student #1- BRENDAN- snivels and stomps out.

Truman sighs, leans back in his chair. Waits for Marta to continue.

Beat.

She doesn't want to cry.

MARTA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry- for my- entrance.
(beat)
I realize it's not recommended, but
if it's- amenable- I'd prefer to
complete the presentational portion
of our summative assessment. Alone.
Garth can do as he pleases, join- I
don't believe Egan's found a
partner yet- or his partner's-

Truman puts a hand up, stopping her.

TRUMAN

Whatever's gone on between you and Mr. Winslow outside of the classroom is to stay... outside. Is that understood?

Marta nods, humbled.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

Have a breath.

Beat. She does.

He clears his throat.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

Now, typically... the answer'd be no. But, given that Mr. Winslow made a similar- if, less passionate- request this morning...

His words hang in the air.

They come as both a wave of relief and a punch in the gut.

MARTA

He'd- requested not to work with me.

TRUMAN

He says you don't respect him.

Marta's incredulous laugh comes out like a BARK.

TRUMAN (CONT'D)

And while I personally wouldn't go so far as to call you "disrespectful," you do have a certain way of... cutting in.

(beat)

But you are correct, Mr. Runza did not have a partner and was happy to have Mr. Winslow.

(tiny beat)

And given your consistently high performance, if you are willing to take on the added responsibility of a second person's work-

(gestures openly)

-you are free to do so. So long- as you understand you'll be graded by the same rubric as everyone else.

MARTA

Yes, yes, that is perfectly fine, I
will- blow them all out of the
water, I swear it.

TRUMAN

(allowing a small smile)
I don't doubt it. Send Brendan back
in, will you.

Marta opens the door to leave, revealing an impatient
Brendan.