

Black Humor

An autopsy-room tale about the tattoo I AM IMMORTAL

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ABSTRACT

In this brief piece of black humor, the author recalls a pathology class on a Thursday morning, led by Professor Orlando in the autopsy room. He describes the body of a middle-aged man laid out on the table, covered by a sheet, while the professor began the class by reading the patient's case and raising diagnostic hypotheses. Once the theoretical part was over and the necropsy was about to begin, the professor pulled back the sheet, and the class was confronted with an enormous tattoo on the dead man's chest reading I AM IMMORTAL. The ironic contrast between the inscription and the situation seals the anecdote, capturing the black humor so typical of the medical-training environment.

KEYWORDS: *black humor; medicine; pathology; autopsy; medical anecdotes; medical training*

*P*athology class, Thursday morning, with our professor Orlando. We were in the autopsy room, waiting for the class to begin. A body lay stretched out on the autopsy table; it appeared to be a middle-aged man, though it was covered with a sheet. When our professor arrived, he

began the class by reading out the patient's case and putting forward diagnostic hypotheses. Having wrapped up the theoretical part and deciding to begin the necropsy, he pulled the sheet off the patient, and we saw an enormous tattoo on his chest: I AM IMMORTAL.