

## Silver Lining

When I was born, a benign tumor in my brain grew along with me. When I took my first steps, it was there. When I started school, it was there. When I learned how to drive, it was there. When I started acting courses and improv classes at OSU, it stayed dormant; but when I started having migraines and vomiting, it had had enough. It wanted out.

Shortly after, doctors found out that it wasn't a typical tooth ache that I believed it to be, but a mass the size of a grape fruit in my head. They quickly scheduled to have it taken out. It was set for November the 28th. It gave the doctor enough time to enjoy his Thanksgiving.

Surgery was quick, but painful. It left me forever having seizures, and with bodily functions that I would have to work to regain back... if ever. I was put on more than ten different pills a day for years, and this left me feeling like a zombie. No matter how much coffee I drank, I stayed this way. I slowly became disconnected from humanity. I felt nothing, I cared for nothing. I found out later that this was heavenly bliss.



Ten years later, it has finally come around. It's my turn to bake a cake for my coworker's birthday. In the past, I've kept it simple with the chips and queso, alongside the additional meat and cheese platter. I never bought the cheap stuff, but made everything by hand, and purposely wrapped each piece individually. I did this well, and I always had plenty of plastic wrap to do so. Nothing I do gets stale, and I pride myself on that. Before any party, I've always checked these

boxes before anyone else had the chance to. Everyone's always thanked me for going above and beyond. That's enough to be a hero around here.

Unfortunately, I had another late night, but I never let it show. Turning 34, it's getting harder to hide the fact, but I'm still making it work. This morning I realized that I've been beaten to the punch. Cake is the only item left to choose, but that's okay. Sarah and I have worked together for three years, so I know exactly what she likes. I've learned everything about her. I made it my job with everyone. What she likes is simple, chocolate. This won't be a problem. I can learn how to make a cake in no time. Thank God for the internet. It'll be exciting to try something new, but first I have to deal with work until then.

A full day's schedule consists of seeing the sick and scared, but this doesn't faze any employee's demeanor. People find out that they're dying all the time. It's part of the job's description. It's written somewhere between the lines. We all still joke and concern ourselves with more important issues, like ourselves. I'm with them on this fact, and I don't see it changing anytime soon. That's life.

I run one of the four MRI machines in the hospital for eight grueling hours. A patient has cancer that's progressed from their lungs to their brain. Seen it before, and legally I can't say anything, so I release her back into the wild. I go back to talking about my dogs with the tech that works alongside me. Another patient comes in later, and nothing, not a damn thing is wrong. They'll find out, in a few hours up to 4 weeks later. They'll go back to their stupid life, making stupid choices until then; and of course, I truly don't care. I go back to listening to my buddy's girlfriend's many questionable choices in their relationship. Another patient comes in at the end of the day. At some point, he'll find out that he'll die in a few months. For me, it's nothing to dwell over, because I need to focus on the bigger picture. I talk with the other tech, Sam, about a

solid plan for making a proper chocolate cake. It seems he has some experience. He contributes to my problem, and that's the highlight of my day. I learned something new; don't rush when baking. The cake needs to cool, before I frost it.

On the drive home, I stop by plenty of grocery stores. I pretend that no place has what I need. These days, cameras are everywhere, so I need to make it believable. Cheap stores only record video at most, picture only. Maybe at best, they'll be able to make out a person's facial expressions. I know it all. It's like acting, don't oversell the audience, don't undersell the audience.

The beautiful internet has shown me all the flaws in cooking, within my life, and in my facial and body expressions. From what makes a great appetizer to what's incorrect when I'm being deceitful. Thank God for the internet. School isn't needed anymore to be a great actor. I have what it takes, and I perform it well. No one has ever called me out, so I know. I smile with my eyes, I clasp my hands in front of my body; I offer solutions; I don't show anger; and I always have an alibi. There're so many tricks of the trade. I smoke out front when I know the neighbors are home across the street. I work out in the backyard, when the neighbors across the fence water their plants. I'm in a jogging group on Wednesdays, and help with sermons on Sundays. I couldn't be any closer to God.

This evening, the ingredients aren't important; being poor or well-off isn't important either. plastic wrap is. It keeps everything fresh, and also keeps anything from leaking, if wrapped well enough. When I wrap a body, it does its job like how I do mine. Thank God for the Internet, and for letting me live a little bit longer. I found my silver lining.