

Jedrt
Lapuh Maležič
**Heavy
Mental**

*Translated by
Rawley Grau*



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As soon as I presented myself they were dumping on me again, those two doctors, a man and a woman. Their first question was the same as always: 'Were you maybe ... ?' I know exactly what is coming and it bugs me a little so I finish the sentence for them: 'Hearing voices? Oh sure, lots of voices, absolutely. They were coming from the TV just before the news and told me what time it was!' Of course I was being sarcastic as shit, quite obviously angry-sarcastic, but the doctors, after exchanging triumphant glances with each other, began manically studying my file and inscribing their own vision of the world in it. They conferred with their eyes, nodded to each other, and then the male doctor, as is only proper in an undemocratic environment, took the lead: 'We think you will soon be ready for the open unit.' From straps to freedom? That was all it took? 'Right after your injection, the nurse will escort you to I-5, to Dr Mrzlikar.'

I know Dr Mrzlikar. That is, I know his patients. We shared the same balcony. All of them died, one after the other, even if they are still running around. Like the lady whose husband doesn't want to sleep with her any more so every week she tries to commit suicide; or the young fortune-teller, who used to overflow with medicinal wisdom but now sits in a corner like a pile of misery and gets fatter and fatter; or the guy who has been unable to get out of bed ever since they caught him hacking banks; or the insanely brilliant chess player on whom they used Ruggelj's self-realization methods, which made it possible for him to walk the entire Slovenian Mountain Trail and run a marathon but at the same time his mental abilities deteriorated to the point where, convinced of his own illness and incapacity, he is now unable to produce even one measly seminar paper, which might eventually allow him to finish his studies, become independent, and move out of his parents' place. I need to think for a moment. It could be a while before I'm offered another chance at the open unit. But as it is I'm already at a disadvantage, so screw it. 'There's no point in me seeing Dr Mrzlikar,' I say emphatically, and add, 'Thanks very much, but I'd rather stay with you.' It seems I am

capable of a sarcastic smirk, a fairly crooked one perhaps, but a smirk nonetheless.

The doctors are astonished. The woman, gaping at me, appears slightly more moved. Her eyes seem to be misting, or maybe it's just the light coming through the blinds and drawing pearls on her irises. I decide that the first break I get from the reception unit I will go to her office and lay out my side of the story to her. Maybe there is still some sensitivity left in her and she will understand. After all, she wasn't the one who had them butcher me; she was just a bystander. It's the male doctor whose hierarchical position makes him think he can claim all the decision-making strings. 'So what is it you actually want?' the woman exclaims brusquely. It sounds less like a question than a reprimand for not accepting her kindness. It dawns on me that she must have fought hard on my behalf. As if I had rehearsed it a hundred times, and without stumbling over a single word, I intone: 'I would like to go back to I-4, which I left voluntarily. To Dr Gržinič in I-4. There are some things there I need to clear up.' The woman is disappointed. 'What, for example?' It's none of her business, so I use the sentence I've so often uttered in answer to the question if maybe I'm a lesbian; I learned it one drunken evening from a professor when I inquired if she had ever tasted human flesh. 'What is the purpose of such a personal question?' I ask the doctor, and it occurs to me that the professor must have definitely eaten human flesh at some point in her life. The female doctor waves her hand as if she is dumbfounded, as if somebody should pinch her, at such impudence from a drugged-up patient.

I adore it when people in power are shocked. If they give you something they naturally assume you want, they expect you to hop like Roberto Benigni at the 1999 Oscars and kiss their feet. I expect Roberto Benigni knew this, and his stunt in fact, whether or not he meant it as such, seems like an excellent mirror held up to the Academy. You wanted grovelling, well, we'll give you grovelling with a full measure of irony – here, have it, and may it

remind you of the hypocritical pricks you really are. And besides, I actually do have things to do in Unit I-4. I need to apologize to the nurse I offended in a moment of rashness. I said something really ugly to her. There was a bed rail I couldn't reach across. I howled at her that I couldn't see a thing because her udders were always dangling in front of my nose. And also that if she was as professional as she appeared to be, she would simply shrug off what I said and leave me alone. They are things that need clearing up. It's called karma; it ties you to another person with a silver thread so you can't die in peace. 'There are things I have to do in I-4. That's all that should interest you,' I tell the two doctors, who exchange doubtful glances. 'But there's no room in Unit I-4,' the woman says. I keep insisting, despite the little angel shouting over my shoulder: 'Be careful, John Wayne! Watch your back! Careful!' It's clear they feel insulted, for which in all likelihood they will have their revenge on me. 'You can go. We need to consult about what to do with you,' they say, and when I leave I have the feeling that I screwed up a little all the same.

I stumble into the day room and out onto the veranda, where at the moment we're allowed to go. As I step along the mini-trails on which, a few weeks ago, I was being dragged, kicking and cursing hysterically, it occurs to me that that was not absolutely necessary, although I certainly cannot agree with the dose I received for my childish disobedience. It wasn't insanity; it was resistance. I wasn't being manic; I was coolly determined to prove to them that I was right – that the boundary between the day room and the veranda was a fiction that existed solely in their deluded minds. That I could go anywhere I wanted, since everything here had once been meadow that didn't belong to anybody, since all their therapeutic machinations had once been without a name, and wouldn't have a name in the distant future either, since all of this, everything they see and we see, will one day again be covered in weeds.

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