

Title: The Abyss Within

Synopsis: A Medical Examiner and his new assistant cut open a John Doe and find a horrifying mystery. “The Abyss Within” was inspired by The Autopsy of Jane Doe and House of Leaves.

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The Abyss Within
By Jeremiah Dylan Cook

The following is a recording recovered from the Hazel Peak autopsy of a John Doe. If you have any knowledge of what occurred, please contact the Hazel Peak Police Department. This audio has not been edited in any way.

Medical Examiner (ME) Creed: “This is Hazel Peak Medical Examiner Creed starting the autopsy of an unidentified white male. Subject was delivered by Hazel Peak police after being found incapacitated outside school playground. According to police, subject was alive and talking about a ‘shadow man’ he met. Subject was pronounced dead by arriving EMTs. Cause of death is presumed to be a heart attack. Subject was wearing a suit upon arrival. Black pants, jacket, and a white dress shirt. Underneath were flannel boxers. Subject has no tattoos or piercings. Weight is approximately 320 pounds, and he measures six feet in length. Nothing of note regarding male genitalia and anus shows no sign of injury. Hair is greying brown, and eyes are dull blue. No facial hair. Rigor mortis is not yet present. Proceeding with examination of chest cavity.

Medical Assistant (MA) Shelly: “Doesn’t the microphone hanging above the body ever get distracting?”

ME Creed: “You get used to it. Why don’t you make the Y incision to get us started?”

MA Shelly: “Are you sure? I haven’t been here that long.”

ME Creed: “If you’re going to take over for me one day then you’ll need to start doing this kind of stuff.”

MA Shelly: “Okay.”

ME Creed: “Don’t forget to narrate for the record.”

MA Shelly: “Starting the incision. Cutting from the right shoulder to the middle of the chest. Now cutting down to the belly button. Struggling due to this guy’s huge gut.”

ME Creed: “Let’s keep it respectful.”

MA Shelly: “Sorry, this guy’s, uh, enlarged intestinal area.”

ME Creed: “Not bad. You’ll get better as you go.”

MA Shelly: “Completing Y incision with cut from left shoulder. Setting aside my scalpel and peeling back the subject’s skin.

ME Creed: “Here, I’ll help.”

MA Shelly: “Thanks. Subject’s rib cage is below. Should I get the saw?”

ME Creed: “Not until you’ve got your skin flap secured.”

MA Shelly: “My mistake. Now I’ve got it.”

ME Creed: “Good. Now you can start the saw. Remember to stop the saw before you try to narrate again.”

MA Shelly: “Starting the saw now.”

For a moment there is nothing but the sound of sawing.

MA Shelly: “Halfway cut, but there’s something strange.”

ME Creed: “Don’t be shy. Put it on the record.”

MA Shelly: “It feels like there is a draft coming from inside the body.”

ME Creed: “I noticed a chill myself, but I doubt it came from the body. Our air conditioner probably kicked on while you were sawing.”

MA Shelly: “That must be it. Resuming saw.”

There is more sawing for another moment.

MA Shelly: “Sawing complete. Proceeding to remove the rib cage.”

The sound of cracking occurs.

MA Shelly: “My god. Can you verify what I’m seeing?”

ME Creed: “I, it, it can’t be.”

MA Shelly: “Should we get someone else in here?”

ME Creed: “No. Not yet. Not until we know this isn’t some kind of wild joke.”

MA Shelly: “A joke?”

ME Creed: “Is there another plausible explanation?”

MA Shelly: “Help me try to get him on his side.”

ME Creed: “Good idea.”

MA Shelly: “Almost got him up. Damn.”

ME Creed: “The table is all that appears under the subject. Good god, how is that possible?”

MA Shelly: “Let’s drop him back down.”

ME Creed: “I don’t understand how it’s possible.”

MA Shelly: “Should we narrate it for the record?”

ME Creed: “Yes. I’ll do it. Medical Assistant Shelly has just completed the removal of the subject’s ribcage. Inside is, well, all of the subjects’ organs are missing, and…”

MA Shelly: “And there’s a fucking staircase leading down inside of this guy. It doesn’t make any sense. And when I stick my arm inside the cavity it goes beyond the point where it should hit the table.

ME Creed: “What Medical Assistant Shelly says is accurate. The stairs appear to be some kind of black stone. They feel cold to the touch, and the chill Shelly previously noted is coming out of the staircase. I can’t see the bottom. Can you?”

MA Shelly: “No, but it’s so dark. I count fifteen stairs before I can’t see anymore. Are you sure this isn’t some kind of ritual hazing? The old, ‘scare the new staff member with the MC Escher corpse’ bit?”

ME Creed: “If only. Do you think one of us could fit inside.”

MA Shelly: “You can’t actually be considering going down those stairs.”

ME Creed: “Well, I for one want to know what the hell is going on here.”

MA Shelly: “Yeah, but why don’t we get a police officer or someone to go down there? This isn’t exactly in our job description.”

ME Creed: “Maybe you’re right.”

Female Voice: “Jack, is that you? It’s so dark down here. Jack?”

MA Shelly: “Holy Hell. Did you just hear someone shouting up from down there? Or was that in my head?”

Female Voice: “You’re not Jack. Whose there?”

MA Shelly: “That’s your name, isn’t it? She’s asking for you?”

ME Creed: “It’s not possible. I know that voice.”

MA Shelly: “None of this is possible. I’m sure we’ll wake up at any moment. Who is it?”

ME Creed: “My wife.”

MA Shelly: “But isn’t she?”

ME Creed: “Dead. For eight years. Drunk driver sent her off a bridge.”

Female Voice (now identified as Mrs. Creed): “Jack. I’ve got Emily down here. She’s doing great now. Come down and see.”

MA Shelly: “Wait, stop. What are you doing?”

ME Creed: “I have to go down there.”

MA Shelly: “You’re crazy, we need to call the police, or better yet, the FBI.”

ME Creed: “No one but my wife knew the name we’d picked out for our unborn child.”

MA Shelly: “Your wife died pregnant? I didn’t know. I’m so sorry.”

ME Creed: “I have to check if she’s really down there.”

MA Shelly: “I can’t stop you, but I highly recommend you reconsider. Just think for a second. This is all insane. What are the chances your wife has returned from the grave with your unborn child inside a deceased stranger?”

Mrs. Creed: “Jack, it’s so cold down here. And it’s dark. I can hear you, but I can’t find my way out. I need light. Emily needs you.”

ME Creed: “I’m coming honey. Hold on. Shelly, hand me that flashlight.”

MA Shelly: “Here. But be careful. Do you need anything else from me?”

ME Creed: “Just stay here in case I need you to throw something down. For the record, I’m climbing atop the man and squeezing inside the cavity now.”

MA Shelly: “I’m going to keep talking because I don’t know what the hell else to do. Jack, er, Medical Examiner Creed is descending the stairs inside the corpse. I can see his light growing dimmer. Are you okay, so far?”

ME Creed: “Yes, nothing to report yet. Just stairs. Honey? Are you near?”

Mrs. Creed: “I can see your light. You’re almost to me.”

MA Shelly: “Medical Examiner Creed’s light just vanished abruptly. Sir? Jack?”

ME Creed: “It’s fine down here Shelly. Come down. You won’t believe it.”

MA Shelly: “I already don’t believe it. I don’t need to come down there. Why don’t you come up?”

ME Creed: “I need another light. Please, bring me one.”

MA Shelly: “I can toss one down. Wouldn’t that be good enough?”

ME Creed: “It would break. Please. Help me get my wife and child out of here.”

Mrs. Creed: “Help us.”

MA Shelly: “No. I can’t. It’s too weird for me.”

ME Creed: “You’re going to let me, and my family die down here lost in the dark?”

MA Shelly: “I, okay, I’m coming down, but I’ll meet you halfway. I’m not going to the bottom of the stairs. I’m just going to the edge of the light.”

ME Creed: “That’s fine. That’ll work.”

MA Shelly: “I’m crawling inside the body now. Descending the stairs. I’m stopped on the fifteenth stair. Can you see my light?”

ME Creed: “Yes, just wait there. Can’t you see how grand it is down here?”

MA Shelly: “I don’t see much of, wait, it’s getting brighter. I can see walls. It’s enormous down here. It’s like a cavern. There’s something white a few steps below me. Did you notice that on your way down Jack?”

Mrs. Creed: “Jack fell. We need you to come down further. I can’t support him without you.”

MA Shelly: “No. I’m going back up now. I won’t come down any further. The light is brighter now. I can almost make out whatever is on the steps, it looks like, oh my god.”

Mrs. Creed: “Join us down here in the dark. We need company.”

ME Creed: “Come on Shelly, it feels marvelous.”

MA Shelly: “You can’t be. I’m staring at what’s left of your...The body’s chest cavity is closing above me. No. Help!”

Silence reigns for a long moment.

Secretary: “Jack, do you and the newbie want me to order lunch? Jack?”

After several hours, Medical Examiner Creed’s secretary reported him and his assistant missing. A search of the facility discovered nothing out of place. The John Doe’s corpse remained on the table with the ribcage removed. The organs were present inside. An additional examination revealed the man died of a heart attack, as assumed. The body remains unidentified, and the medical examiner and his assistant remain missing.