

How Do You Like Your Blueeyed Boy...

"How do you like your blueeyed boy, Mr. Death?" [e.e. cummings]

by

Michael Bettencourt

67 Highwood Terrace #2, Weehawken NJ 07086

201-770-0550 • 347-564-9998 • michaelbettencourt@outlook.com

<http://www.m-bettencourt.com>

Copyright © by Michael Bettencourt

Offered under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

DESCRIPTION

Lilah Lawton hunts down Dr. Jeremiah Kissov, an active proponent of "dignicides," when she learns he has helped her mother end her life.

CHARACTERS

- Dr. Jeremiah Kissov (the emphasis is on the second syllable: kis-SOFF)
- Lilah Lawton

Note: Physically, LILAH must match KISSOV.

Note: The ethnicity of the characters does not matter.

SETTING

- Abandoned room

PROPS

- A folding chair
- A desk chair, with two arms, similar to government issue
- Roll of duct tape
- Automatic pistol that can fire
- Pen knife or Swiss Army knife
- Stage blood (if needed)

* * * * *

A light from overhead, a single bulb covered by a tin shade. KISSOV is taped to the chair in which he sits: arms to the arm rests, a band of tape around his chest. A roll of tape under the chair. LILAH stands there, holding a pistol.

KISSOV

Let me go!

No answer.

KISSOV

You don't know how much trouble you're in.

No answer.

KISSOV
(slightly less strong)

Let me go.

LILAH

Dr. Jeremiah Kissov.

KISSOV

Let me go.

She puts the gun behind his left ear.

LILAH

Shut up. You've been summoned. So shut up until I need you.

Shifts sides, holds the gun behind his right ear.

LILAH

Okay, now you can talk. Oh, suddenly mute? That's actually all right—I was getting tired of your whininess.

KISSOV

Please put the gun away. Put the gun away.

LILAH circles around him during the next speech. She says nothing and remains impassive.

KISSOV

You are in a lot of trouble! I'm sure someone saw us leave and knows where we are. And I know where we are since you didn't even bother to blindfold me. And when they get here—assault, kidnapping, emotional abuse—my lawyers—do you know who I am? I'm known all over the world! You won't get away with this, whatever it is you're doing. Release me. Now. Right this minute. Immediately.

KISSOV runs out of steam. LILAH sits on his knees, facing him.

LILAH

Finished?

KISSOV

Yes.

LILAH

Keep adding if you want to—we have time.

KISSOV

No.

LILAH

Sure? Good, then we can get started.

KISSOV

Started?

LILAH

Why I've brought you here.

Stands up, gets the folding chair, and sits, but soon gets up and walks around.

LILAH

Dr. Jeremiah Kissov. a.k.a. DeathMaster. Murderer. Résumé correct so far?

KISSOV

I don't kill people.

LILAH

That's right—you have a new name for your assassinations.
Remind me? Come on.

KISSOV

Dignicides.

LILAH

Right. You perform dignicides.

KISSOV

What are you doing to me? Why have you—

LILAH hits him with the pistol on the back of his head, just hard enough to remind him.

LILAH

Don't ask questions. Just obey. Now, what is a dignicide again?

KISSOV

What?

Slowly presses the gun against his temple, forcing him to cock his head to one side.

LILAH

What did I just tell you about questions?

KISSOV

Dignicide. Uh, death with dignity.

LILAH releases him.

KISSOV

I help people die with dignity.

LILAH

And just how do you do this?

KISSOV

How?

LILAH taps him lightly with the gun as a reminder.

KISSOV

Uh, they do it themselves—

LILAH

With a device—

KISSOV

With a device I've put together—they make the choice when to die.

LILAH

A device.

KISSOV

An injection device—they push a plunger—

LILAH

I know how it works. I do, very well. Very well.

There is a moment of silence.

LILAH

Dr. Jeremiah Kissov, I want to question you about the death of one Alice Lawton, the most recent victim of your—circus. I can't wait for the courts or the talking-heads or the Last Judgment to get around to it. You will answer now for her death. And admit what an infection you are, what a running sore you are, what a disposable creature you are. Agree?

KISSOV

What?

LILAH hits him in some way that is moderately painful.

LILAH

No questions! Now that I have your full attention, we can begin. I hope you're uncomfortable. Now, tell me what you know about Alice Lawton.

KISSOV is silent.

LILAH

Oh, all right, you can ask some questions—for clarification.

KISSOV

What are you doing to me?

LILAH

Why, Dr. Kisson, I am treating you to death with undignity. Just like you do to all your victims. Don't you recognize it, my blue-eyed boy?

KISSOV

That's not what I do. Let me go.

LILAH

Soon released. Tell me about Alice Lawton first.

KISSOV

Age 65. Beginning stages of Alzheimer's. She wanted me to help her die because she didn't want to face the "dissolving"—her word.

LILAH

And the allegations in the press that you may have "nudged" her along?

KISSOV

She made her own choice. I am in pain—I need your help.

LILAH

You said in one news story you had contacted all next of kin.

KISSOV

I always do. She didn't have any—just some close friends.

LILAH

Wrong. Daughter. You missed her daughter Lilah. Me.

KISSOV

She never mentioned you. No one mentioned you.

LILAH

I was the daughter “given away,” a youthful—lapse—of hers. I never knew the father—I really can’t attach the word “my” to “father.” So, technically, according to her, she was telling you the truth—I was not “mentionable.” Points out the research deficiencies of your staff, though, doesn’t it?

KISSOV

Her daughter?

LILAH

Trust me. And I know she was not sick. This is when you squeal in protest and say, “How could you know that?”

LILAH taps him on the head again.

LILAH

Hold up your end of the interview.

KISSOV

How could you know that?

LILAH

I also work in the health “industry,” though as a real doctor—not some lower level grunt like, say, a forensic pathologist—oh, yes, I forgot, that’s what you are! I was a doctor without borders. Some of my operating theatres: Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda. I could write a Michelin Guide to a killing field. And I can also get access to records, just like you. I know all about her medical history. Her whole history. Did you know about her recent treatment for melancholia? Don’t answer—I already know you don’t know.

KISSOV

Why are you doing this?

LILAH

I loved—I love—my mother, even if she erased me.

KISSOV

She never mentioned you.

LILAH

Because she was so disgusted with her own life. And because of your ambition—

KISSOV

It's never been about ambition.

LILAH

—you have stolen my only chance to bring this prodigal daughter back to her.

KISSOV

Prodigal daughter?

LILAH

Do you have any idea the life I've lived?

KISSOV

How could I?

LILAH

Blood up to my elbows in places you can't even pronounce!

KISSOV

What does that have to do with—

LILAH

The defense does not get—

KISSOV

—your mother? Or me?

LILAH

—equal time. Shut up.

KISSOV

I won't!

LILAH

Death has no dignity! It's a messy, smarmy business, and no one needs a charlatan like you telling them different!

KISSOV

You haven't seen death—you've seen slaughter. That's not what I do. We're not different—

LILAH

Not different?

Lines overlap.

KISSOV

I don't know what it's like where you've been—

LILAH

You've never seen such filth!

KISSOV

—but I'm sure that you did everything you could to reduce their pain—

LILAH

Have you ever seen a leg torn from a body?

KISSOV

No, no, listen to me! If they were dying, you wanted them to die with dignity, yes? Just a difference in degree with me—

LILAH

The defense does not get equal time.

KISSOV

— but the same point: no one needs the kind of pain that eats away their pride. We're alike.

LILAH

Shut up! Shut. Up.

KISSOV

She never mentioned you.

LILAH

Shut up. The truth is, the Alzheimer's was a ploy to get you to do a low-rent suicide, and you obliged, to up your own score.

KISSOV

That's not who I saw. She didn't do this for attention.

LILAH

What do you know?

KISSOV

I know I saw a woman who did exactly what she wanted to do. She wasn't weak.

LILAH

You're saying she wanted to die?

KISSOV

She chose to die. Freely. Calmly.

LILAH

I can't believe you. I know she wanted me to come home. I know she wanted to see me before she died. She just never got a chance to say it because you rushed her. You took her away from me.

KISSOV

Prodigal daughter. You wanted to come home—

LILAH

Home!

KISSOV

Home. After all you've seen—and no one there to greet—you—

LILAH ignores him, paces fitfully, as if deciding. Decides.

LILAH

She must have wanted me back. She must have.

KISSOV

Let me go.

LILAH

She just never had the chance to say it because you killed her. Prosecution rests.

KISSOV

Wait.

LILAH

Your greatest sin, Herr Kissov, is not killing my mother. What I indict you for is not making her have second thoughts so that she might think of me again. I'll never escape that hunger. And if I can't escape—neither should you.

LILAH takes out a pen knife or a Swiss Army knife and opens it.

KISSOV

What she didn't say is not my fault!

LILAH

Right- or left-handed?

KISSOV

What?

LILAH

Right or left?

KISSOV

Left.

LILAH cuts the tape holding down his left arm. KISSOV flexes his hand.

LILAH

Leave it on the armrest.

LILAH gets the roll of tape from under the chair.

LILAH

Don't move, or I will stick this in your neck.

Puts the gun in KISSOV's hand, his finger through the trigger guard, and tapes it to his hand.

LILAH

A good doctor always finishes his work.

LILAH puts the tape down and closes the knife, kneels, lifts the gun against her temple.

Finish what you started. LILAH

I can't do that! KISSOV

Grabs the gun and replaces it against her temple.

Do it! Finish it! LILAH

I can't! KISSOV

Grabs the gun and turns it on KISSOV.

I don't need you to do this. I want you to do this. Complete the circle. LILAH

You'll have to shoot me because I won't do it. KISSOV

It's my free choice— LILAH

—you haven't made peace— KISSOV

—you're the device— LILAH

—with yourself— KISSOV

—what's the difference? LILAH

You have—a life to live. KISSOV

LILAH

Even the hesitation in your voice shows you don't believe that.

Presses the gun against KISSOV.

LILAH

Do it—or I'll kill you and do it to myself anyway. Do it!

KISSOV

No!

LILAH

Do it.

KISSOV

No, no, no, no, no—

LILAH slowly lets go of his hand. She gives his hair a stroke.

LILAH

Mama, mama, mama—it's a long list. Long. I don't want to add his name.

LILAH opens the knife and cuts him free, including the gun. She holds the gun.

LILAH

Go.

KISSOV

Let me breathe first. Just breathe. I forgot to breathe.

KISSOV takes off tape, straightens clothes, etc. Shaken but in control.

KISSOV

I think I'm breathing again. Please put the gun away.

LILAH

You should go.

KISSOV

Honestly, I don't want turn my back on you. You've done some damage.

Grief— LILAH

—it can't just— KISSOV

Go. LILAH

— end this way. KISSOV

Do what you have to do. LILAH

KISSOV hesitates.

KISSOV
I don't know what to do. I should get out of here.

LILAH
(waving gun)
Crazies on the loose!

KISSOV
Please put the gun down. I would never have done it. It's not the same.

LILAH
Grief cuts—I still hate you for what you did.

KISSOV
The gun—? Good. What I do—it's not the best way. For some, it's the only way. I am going to go.

LILAH
Tell me about her. You were the last.

KISSOV
I have to go.

LILAH

Bring me home to her. You were the last to see.

KISSOV indicates that he wants LILAH to hand him the gun. She does.

KISSOV

She was never treated for melancholy.

LILAH

I made that up.

KISSOV

I never doubted her. She was quite extraordinary.

LILAH

Tell me. Bring her home to me. Help me remember what I never knew about her.

KISSOV

Alice Lawton, mother of Lilah Lawton.

LILAH

The prodigal daughter.

KISSOV

What do you want to know?

LILAH

Begin with when she never mentioned me. Our last common point.

KISSOV

The final words of Alice Lawton.

LILAH

The first words for me.

BLACKOUT