

a study in anatomy

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a study in anatomy

by Anonymous

Summary

itemizing what princezam is made of

Dissecting PrinceZam is not an easy task. Nor is dissecting Zam, nor is it easy to dissect Prince, Zam. There is no easy way to say that doing a precise anatomical study on Prince Zam has been an impossible task for years now. Scientists can list a variety of excuses, but it all boiled down to the fact that it was difficult to dissect a body that simply did not exist.

The Medical Community greatly respects, appreciates, and compensates persons such as Spoke, who was there to deliver the body for the dissection table.

Now, there was a heated debate over how it should be handled. Who would write the reports, the theorems, the comparisons. Who would hold the knife to the young corpse and slide it in?

There were a lot of theories even before the body was even delivered, you see. Many suspected his blood was yellow, that he had more than one heart. Many scientists spent their evenings modeling skull after skull after skull, hopelessly grasping at straws, trying to comprehend the structure of his bones.

The Body, as it was, hesitated to reveal any of its secrets. Moving it this way and that revealed scant signs of rigor mortis. It lay on that table as if it were sleeping, one scientist noted. (This was before they'd even stripped and bathed the corpse, in a room this scientist was never supposed to be in, but no one could stop a sharp mind and a poet's heart.) The Body was not handled by the usual staff, who might respectfully clean it before it was sent to the cold analytical eyes of the dissection

hall. Instead it was scientists who clinically, methodically took off all its clothes. Taking measurements, writing down rips and tears, signs of wear. This was all so fascinating to them- the armor especially- to write down how the body had lived, how it had breathed and walked and moved and talked. All signs of life, of which the body currently had plenty, were catalogued and archived in a way that was almost loving, but always hungry.

Next was the bath. One of the scientist swore up and down that the moment the hot water touched skin the body had flinched- Another wrote down that it sighed in relief. All of these were discarded in official reports. The Body was dead. The Body was unmoving. The body was of closed eye and stilled brain. Scientists had taken samples of its nailbeds, skins, cuts and bruises. The dead skin on its heels, scrape on its knee, the callouses on its knuckles, dead skin on its lips and split ends of its hair. All signs that the body had lived, that it existed. All evidence that it was real, and that its name was Zam.

Out of respect for the dead- and for a dramatic flair, they covered the freshly washed body with a plain white cloth before rolling it out into the hall..

Lights, cameras, scalpels. The hall waited with baited breath as they rolled it into the middle. Not a single soul breathed in that room, except for that of the body, who was long dead anyway.

The body didn't care about how many doctors waited around that table hungrily, holding scalpels like cutlery, and it didn't care how many more sat in the auditorium above them, watching. It wouldn't have recognized them anyway, with their masks and surgical caps. The only thing was the two stenographers in the room, who with their constant clicking irritated the body's ears, which picked up sound even though there was no PrinceZam, or Zam, or Prince, Zam, to hear them.

Well, that answers that.

The first incision revealed yellow blood. The skin, which revealed nothing of this fact with its red flush, gave way almost too easily. As if the body had desperately desired any sort of touch. As if the cold steel of the scalpel was instead a shy lover's hand.

One scientist, sitting high above it, waited with baited breath for the body's hand to reach out, grasp the hand that cut it and push it in deeper.

But the body was a body and remained unmoving.

They noted scar tissue - from injury. One long clean line going across from its left shoulder down to the last right vertebrochondral rib. One scar, between the fourth and fifth vertebrosteral rib on his left side, which on further inspection showed that the injury had barely been subdermal. As if the attacker had planned to kill the body, but shied away at the last second. That was all for the notable injuries that the scientists holding the scalpels called out, which saddened one of the stenographers, who could have written novels and epics on the history of the body's perfectly imperfect skin. Freckles, moles, a healed over piercing that looked just like their own.

The stenographer was promptly taken out of the hall. Now there was only one.

This would suffice.

The skin was normal. The blood was yellow. The pectoralis muscles strained and fought against the knife, but the scientist whispered sweet nothings to them, begging, pleading, gently prodding until they gave way. Until all of them gave way. This was the first sign that the body had been tampered with. Whether before or after point of death, the scientists weren't sure. The experiment was bound to be botched from the beginning. Their only reference point was the human body, and

that meant nothing in their line of work.

So the body was changed. So what? They proceeded.

The ribs unfurled like butterfly wings under the touch of their saws and wanting hands. The body's lungs were perfect lungs - modified. An added bronchus here, expanded capacity there, and it became a pair of lungs that worked perfectly well even in death. Unfortunately, the scientist that swore he saw the body sigh in relief was no longer in the room with them. The scientist who held the scalpel could not claim that he was unbiased about this body, but never had it been so clear than when he dropped his scalpel and raised one of the lungs to reveal the three dead hearts in the body's cavity.

The stenographer waited with baited breath. They saw, of course, but they were not supposed to write anything other than what they were told to write. Three hearts, two underdeveloped aortas, scar tissue surrounding the veins and arteries. One scientist in particular could not hold herself back, leaning as far as she could on the balcony, almost salivating at the sight. None of them could have known what lead to this mystery, three hearts that - evident from the strain in the veins and arteries - had never once beat in sync.

One of the scientist holding a scalpel stepped back, removed his mask so he could speak clearly.

"The heart shows to have regenerative qualities. Heart labeled as "Heart A" shows a scarring on the right atrium that doesn't continue to the right ventricle, which implies a wound that destroyed the ventricle completely. We've seen signs of scar tissue on the lung that support this," this caused a quiet discussion in the hall, mostly in agreement. The scientists had seen such properties in bodies before. "Standing theory for multiple hearts is a mutation from birth-"

This caused a riot.

A mockery was made of the scientist - this study was meant to be an unbiased report! And even disregarding that, had he not seen the scar tissue surrounding the pulmonary arteries? Clearly those hearts were grown as a result of oxygen saturation in the blood!

Another shout. How could you be so foolish? We haven't even tested what the blood is made of! How could you ever assume it was a lack of oxygen saturation?

Another. You are all fools! That heart is a hydra - you cut one out and two grow back!

The scientist who proclaimed this moved faster than anyone could stop them, and severed all the veins holding Heart C in place. From the balcony a body fell, the heart hungry scientist breaking her neck on the tile floor, and nobody watched as the corpse on the table regrew its hearts.

The riot was quelled, the hall emptied except for the stenographer and two standing scientists, who had shown a cool head throughout it all.

"The heart can regrow," the first scientist said, and it was the first time he had said a word. The stenographer noticed his voice was unsure, untrained, far from the cold professionalism of the scientists they'd listened to so far. "Current heart count is four. One aorta, strong. Three further aortas, underdeveloped. The blood dries golden brown, signs of iron and oxygen, despite my colleagues previous claims." He took a deep breath in. "Scalpel please," the other scientist handed him one.

"My first mistake was going for the heart - stenographer I trust you know this report will not be going into the hands of the medical community - I believed that by retrieving Zam's heart I could

understand what he wanted. Let it be known for the record that Zam consented to this procedure."

"You should clarify which procedure you're talking about," said his partner.

"Right!" The scientist exclaimed, jovially. "Prince Zam, that is, the body we are currently dissecting, agreed to have one of his hearts removed by me," the stenographer purposefully excluded his name. "This experiment lead to us finding out his heart can regrow. He then agreed to a further procedure to remove the second heart - which only led to the hearts multiplying once more. The current procedure would result in my medical license being revoked. If I had one."

"Regardless, putting his heart in a violin would not make it sing. The attempt to understand Prince Zam's heart's desire failed spectacularly. We will now be moving on to the face," the scientist put his hands to the body's face in a way that was almost romantic. His index fingers pressed along its jaw bone, middle and ring finger under it, thumbs pressed on the chin, and the scientist pulled down, opening the mouth. "Prince Zam keeps so much in his sinuses, beneath the bone. His mouth is Frankenstein's first attempt at a perfect speech apparatus, before he learned that vocal chords belong in the throat."

The stenographer swallowed the bile rising in their own throat.

"There is a second mouth behind his teeth - never ask Zam to keep your secrets, stenographer, - and make sure to note down that Frankenstein didn't know humans only had one tongue either." For a litany of reasons, the stenographer has decided that they will keep the true identity of Frankenstein a secret.

"The body has a lovely face," the second scientist remarked. "Round, soft cheeks. Acne scars and a cut across its right eyebrow when an ally turned foe got too close. Past its nose is an intricate system of alerts that reminds it to breathe. Two eyes only, eyelids that blink at regular human pace - when alive. "

"Important to note is that its second mouth exists on a different plane of existence. Another important note is that the body is not human," this did not surprise the stenographer. Perhaps it was curious as to how the scientists had come to know this, but their relationship with the body - with Prince Zam - was beyond them.

"There are theories as to how Prince Zam came to be-"

"Are you *really* going to include those?" chipped in the first scientist, who had been rummaging around the body's mouth for something all the while. The stenographer couldn't quite see nor hear except the occasional twang of of stainless steel against molar teeth.

"Yes. While my colleague looks for the body's speech apparatus, allow me to add a note on the origin of the body." The scientist looked at the stenographer, and they nodded.

"Prince Zam is-"

The medical community would like to wholeheartedly apologize to Prince Zam, and retract its

previous statement about the inquiry into his anatomical structure.

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