

I'M LEAVING MY BODY TO SCIENCE
By Brian Daly

JIM is at home writing on his laptop—maybe at the kitchen table—when his wife LESLEY enters and takes her jacket off.

(Note: The two characters can be any genders, and their names can be changed.)

LESLEY
What are you doing?

JIM
Writing a living will. I'm leaving my body to Science.

Lesley's heart stops.

What???

She's distraught, but Jim doesn't notice because he's writing.

JIM
Listen to this: "I, Jim, leave my body to Science. XO. Jim."

LESLEY
Are you dying?

JIM
Oh, Lesley! No no no. No, darlin'. I feel fine.

Lesley is relieved. A lot.

She crosses to Jim.

LESLEY
Don't scare me like that. For a second there, I thought our first anniversary was going to be our last.

JIM
I'm sorry, honey. Just thinking ahead.

LESLEY

I don't want to think that far ahead.

They share a tender moment, and Lesley calms down.

But now something is on her mind.

LESLEY

What do you think Science will do with your body?

The question breaks the mood.

JIM

I don't know.

LESLEY

I do. The answer is nothing. They're not doing much of anything at all these days.

JIM

Really?

LESLEY

Science is on its way out. Think about it. Everything has already been discovered or invented, hasn't it?

JIM

I guess so.

LESLEY

And all the big names in science are dead, aren't they? Galileo, Copernicus, Mendel, Darwin?

JIM

Good point.

A thought occurs to Jim.

JIM

But I wonder if Bill Nye the Science Guy could drop by the house and pick me up after I die.

LESLEY

Not a chance. He's too busy. Production meetings. Rehearsals. Lines to memorize. Answering fan mail.

JIM

Bill Nye the Science Guy is still making new TV shows?

LESLEY

Oh, yes. Definitely.

JIM

But doesn't he have an assistant or an intern who can answer fan mail?

LESLEY

Probably, but he can't just drop everything he's doing at the studio and go pick up a body.

JIM

No, I guess not.

LESLEY

Not going to happen.

JIM

You sure know a lot about TV.

LESLEY

Thank you, Sweetie Pie. But just for the sake of argument, let's say Bill Nye the Science Guy does have a little time on his hands. Maybe the show is on hiatus.

JIM

Hiatus. Wow.

LESLEY

The show is on hiatus, and he gets the call that you've shuffled off this mortal coil.

JIM

Will he know what the caller is talking about, with the shuffling? 'Cause I don't.

LESLEY

That you've died.

JIM

Ah.

LESLEY

Right. So Bill Nye the Science Guy gets the call that you've shuffled off this mortal coil, and he happens to have some free time, so he swings by and picks you up. Where's he going to take you?

JIM

I don't know.

LESLEY

I don't know, either, but that's the question, isn't it? Which science is going to get your body?

JIM

Do I have to pick just one?

LESLEY

I think so, but I don't know for sure. I've never written a living will.

A thought occurs to Lesley.

LESLEY

Wait a minute. Aren't all wills living wills? How can a dead person write a will?

Jim thinks.

JIM

A dead person cannot write a will. That's why you never hear about dead wills. They're all living wills.

LESLEY

Then we don't need the "living" part of it, do we? We can just call them wills.

JIM

Yes. So that's settled, but I'm still stumped about what to do. What's going to happen if I pick the wrong science?

LESLEY

What do you mean?

JIM

Like in the olden days. I feel so sorry for people who left their body to a science that turned out to be not so scientific. "I'm leaving my body to phrenology." How sad was that?

LESLEY

That's the one about the bumps on your skull?

JIM

Yup.

LESLEY

Then that would be very sad.

JIM

And think about all the boxers who got killed in the ring and left their body to The Sweet Science. Let me tell you, there's nothing sweet about boxing. If we ever have kids, I'm going to tell them, "No hitting. Use your words."

LESLEY

I'm with you on that. Definitely. No hitting.

JIM

Wait a minute. Could somebody from The Dismal Science end up with my dead body?

LESLEY

Over my dead body. No economists are going to get their hands on you until they can explain increases in the sale of durable goods. If these goods are so durable, why do people have to buy more of them?

Jim and Lesley think.

JIM

Here's a thought: My body could be cut up into little chunks the size of cocktail wieners and doled out to a whole bunch of sciences. That might work.

That image upsets Lesley.

LESLEY

No. Don't say that. No, honey.

She has another tender moment with Jim.

LESLEY

One big gift donated to one science would do more good than the shotgun approach.

JIM

So what should I do?

Jim and Lesley think.

LESLEY

I've got it. Leave your body to the science department at the high school. Keep it local.

JIM

Yes!

LESLEY

Remember Mrs. Keeler's science class? The one that covered anatomy and physiology?

JIM

I loved that class. What was it called?

LESLEY

Anatomy and Physiology.

JIM

Right. I learned so much, and Mrs. Keeler was so nice.

LESLEY

Such a good rapport with the kids.

JIM

Breezy.

LESLEY

And a good sense of humor. I can imagine the day when she unwraps your carcass in her lab and introduces you to the kids. "This is Jim. He used to be a student here at the high school, and he sat right over there at that desk. What say we open him up and look under the hood?"

Jim and Lesley share a chuckle.

JIM

"Look under the hood." I can hear her saying that.

He thinks of something.

JIM

Hold on. What if I die while the kids are on summer vacation? My body will be rotten and useless by the time the school year rolls around.

LESLEY

You're right.

JIM

Maybe I'd better put the living will aside for now. I'm having second thoughts about leaving my body to Science.

LESLEY

Good. Let's not think that far into the future. I'd rather make the most of the time we have together right now.

JIM

Good idea, darlin'.

They have another tender moment.

LESLEY

But I wonder if you could leave your body to Home Ec.

END OF PLAY.