

NOTES

This selection contains mature subject matter. In the following essay, inspired by his autobiographical one-man show, *Ball*, author Brian Lobel takes us on an emotional journey, as he traverses through the medical system after being diagnosed with testicular cancer at the tender young age of twenty. This selection must be performed by a male and may be entered in either Prose Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. While this story possesses a dramatic theme, there is also abundant humor and sarcasm found within this text; however, don't push the humor. Let the humor be a natural extension of the literature. Play the moments with complete honesty; after all, this is a true story. Ultimately, it is Lobel's determination, courage and strength that make him not only a cancer survivor, but one of life's most inspirational champions. If used in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages in his manuscript. This is a tour-de-force for the mature performer!

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

It feels weird to have someone else performing from this excerpt of *BALL*. After all, it is *my* body that is being written about, my scars, my ball. And yet, it isn't. The Brian Lobel who wrote *BALL* at age 20 is very different from the Brian Lobel at age 30, with different opinions, different politics, and even a different body. Sure, it shares the same scars, but they have different meanings now. When I perform *BALL* (which I still do, on occasion), I now feel the need to channel 20-year-old Brian who wrote these words. This is all a way of saying that perhaps it isn't so weird to have someone else perform the text. If even I have to interpret it, why can't someone else? Enjoy performing the text, and be sure to perform self-examinations regularly for cancer—we don't want anyone copying the script too closely.

Cancer, what a loaded word. Those two little syllables make me see sickness, bald-headedness, and death. I was one month past my 20th birthday. And I had cancer.

“Well, I can't say for sure, but I think that they are going to have to perform an Orchiectomy and remove that right testicle.”

That right testicle. That silly, pesky little testicle.

And just like that, I was One Ball Lobel.



People think that the greatest possible achievement for a testicular cancer survivor is to win the Tour de France like Lance Armstrong did. In reality, however, the greatest possible achievement is to be fruitful and multiply.

Which brings me to the sperm bank. Now, you're saying to yourself, "Ah, sperm bank—now it's getting good." See, Lance Armstrong was able to have his two miracle children by banking sperm before his chemotherapy.

People always think that when it's their turn to go to the sperm bank, they'll be really funny about it. You know, cracking jokes, loudly moaning. It's not like that. All you want to do once you get there is leave.

After a brief welcome, I was taken down the hall to get an HIV test. "I don't have HIV."

"Well, one can never be sure, and—we have to know—"

"I don't have AIDS."

"One can never be sure."

They know you're a virgin, Brian. They're laughing at you. Virgin! Virgin!

"Besides, it's protocol."

She said "besides" as if she knew I was a big virgin just from looking at me.



I was taken upstairs to a room that had no official name other than... Room A. I felt like I had been transported into some low budget homemade movie. Soft, musty lighting. Piles of magazines with the pages ripped out, and one huge, sexy leather chair. So, I'm sitting in the sexy chair—fondling the leather—until I realized that hundreds of grown men had sat in that very same chair!

You never think about your fertility at 20 unless you get a girl pregnant or unless you find out that one day it's no longer there. My sperm's prognosis: Abnormal. Infrequent.

