

COLORED SKULLS

Written by

Nemo The Sixth

NOTE: This is longer than 10 pages but the script is mostly dialogue so it would be a 10 minutes or less short on screen. Aaron Sorkin would have approved. Please consider it.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

We can't see shit. We may as well be in outer space. But a faint light from an unknown source reveals:

BOB (30's) wakes up to find himself in spread eagle position on the floor. He tries to move but tight ropes tying his limbs to four pegs around him won't let it happen.

He strains to free himself but he only manages to make his face turn red.

WHITE (O.S.)

It's a nine-point-five Mammut infinity rope. The best in the market. Save your strength.

The light from a torch in the corner of room flickers to life and reveal a row of FIVE MEN in black robes standing in front of him. Panic washes over Bob's face.

They hide their faces under masks of *colored skulls*. To each a unique color. WHITE, RED, GREEN, YELLOW, PURPLE.

BOB

Who the hell are you? Cut me lose, please?

WHITE

(to the other skulls)  
Aww, he said please.  
(laughter)  
He's an "Ace Soul" alright.  
(Back to Bob)  
We can't, Bob. You are about to be part of a ritual that will serve your soul to a hungry demon.

BOB

Wha--? Is this like a prank? Scare tactics? Is that you guys? This is not funny anymore.  
(forces a laugh)  
"Serve your soul." Pfff! what a terrible script.

WHITE

Reality is terribly scripted, Bob.

Bob senses that it's all real. Bob pulls at the ropes to no avail. Tears well up in his eyes.

BOB

I know you're all finding it funny  
and all to see me cry like this,  
but this is not funny any more.  
Stop the camera and cut me loose.

WHITE

That's the last thing Jerry said.

BOB

Who's Jerry?

White points with his finger to the left.

More light reveals right next to Bob there is --

-- a burnt-to-crisp corpse tied in the exact same position.

Bob screams.

BOB (CONT'D)

Jesus fucking Christ! What's wrong  
with you? I've never done anything  
to you. Please. Let me go.

WHITE

That's quite ironic. Doing nothing  
is exactly why you're here.

White paces the room as he explains.

WHITE (CONT'D)

Six months ago, we've got an order  
from one of our top clients. He  
said it's been a while since he  
tasted an "Ace Soul." One of the  
most expensive products our company  
offers.

White pulls a handbook out of his robe. He opens it.

WHITE (CONT'D)

I will read you the definition for  
an Ace Soul.

(read the book)

It's a genuinely caring person -  
and I want you to brace for the  
second part, Bob. -

(dramatic pause)

-- that no one loves.

BOB

What? That's bullshit. I'm loved.  
I'm not an Ace Soul, I swear.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)  
Your gonna piss off your client. I  
know I'm loved.

WHITE  
Hmm, heartbreaking.

BOB  
I can prove it.

White closes the book. Rubs his nose bridge, deciding.

WHITE  
Well, chapter 13, section eight--

RED  
Oh yeah.

GREEN  
White, but the roses--

He opens the handbook.

WHITE  
-Shut up, Green.  
(off the book)  
Give you the right to dispute the  
legitimacy of being a valid  
sacrifice for the ritual --

Bob smiles.

WHITE (CONT'D)  
-- for the price of losing your  
right for anesthetics if you lose.  
(closes the handbook)  
It's a little condition we put to  
prevent the abuse of this law. I  
hope you understand.

Bob glances at burnt-to-crisp Jerry.

WHITE (CONT'D)  
So, Bob, suffer the pain of  
accepting the truth now. Or suffer  
the pain of the rituals later.  
Think about it. Are you sure enough  
about being loved to risk going  
through the rituals wide awake?  
It's not gonna be pretty.

Bob sweat bullets as he glances at burnt Jerry.

SUPER QUICK FLASHES FROM BOB'S MEMORY: A chocolate bar - A  
panting dog - A tomato clownfish opens its mouth-

BOB  
(desperate determination)  
I'm loved.

White claps his hands once.

WHITE  
Alright, Skulls. We've got  
ourselves a dispute. Get your files  
ready.

The Skulls reach under their robes and pull out files.

BOB  
Does animals count?

WHITE  
Anything count, Bob. If you can  
prove to me that your blue sock  
with the little space rockets on it  
loves you, then you are a free man.  
We'll even give you a compensation  
for your trouble.

Bob smiles, excited about the possibility. The smile quickly  
fades away.

BOB  
Wait. How do you know about my blue  
socks?

WHITE  
Sock. Single, not plural. You lost  
the other one two years ago and it  
broke your heart. We know  
everything. That's why you are not  
winning this dispute and going home  
free. You're just saving us  
anesthetics.

RED  
(loving it)  
Oh yeah.

WHITE  
One rule you need to keep in mind.  
You've only got the right to three  
arguments. Like baseball. If you  
strikeout --

RED  
OUT!

WHITE

Pick your arguments wisely. Come at me with your best.

BOB

I've got a pet fish.

Purple makes a fist pump. Victorious. Yellow begrudgingly slams 10 bucks into Purple's hand.

WHITE

(holds his hand out)

Red, the file.

(to Bob)

Go on.

Red hands him a file.

BOB

I take good care of it. It's --

WHITE

-- Amphiprion frenatus. A tomato clownfish you call Nemo. What about it?

CUT TO: A FOOTAGE OF A RED CLOWNFISH SWIMING IN ITS BOWL.

BOB (V.O.)

Well, it loves me. It loves me very much. It even mirrors my emotions. It's sluggish when I'm feeling down. Hyper and energetic when I'm happy. This means it cares. It means it loves me, because I'm good to it.

WHITE (V.O.)

You're right. Animals generally love the person who takes "Good care" of them. Except we're not talking about a Nemo here. It's more like Nemo the fifth.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Bob's face goes white.

WHITE

Oh, yeah, we know. We know your little dark secret. About being away from home for days because of work and not having anyone check up on little poor Nemo.

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)

So when you get back home and find it floating on the surface. You just dump it in the toilet. We know about your secret nightly journeys to the pet-shops. Finding Nemos. Which is such an odd behavior for a kind person like you. Red, who happens to be one of our best investigators, has an interesting theory about this. You seem to be addicted to the process of making the fish love you.

BOB

Shut up. You don't know anything. It doesn't matter anyway. Nemo, Nemo the fifth, whatever the fuck you wanna call it, it loves me. End of the story.

White stares at Bob. Getting a read on this.

WHITE

That doesn't matter either. Because Nemo the fifth died today, while you were out of city. That's when I gave the green-light to grab you.

BOB

You sonsofbitches!

WHITE

The Nemo issue almost made me eliminates you as a candidate. But green came up with the brilliant idea of simply waiting for it to die again.

Yellow pats Green on the shoulder. Green nods proudly.

BOB

The neighbor's dog loves me.

Purple does a little victory dance. Yellow does a double-facepalm. He hands Purple another ten bucks.

WHITE

Green.

Green hands him a file.

BOB

It always barks at everyone. But not me.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

It always run to me and lick my hand and my face. It doesn't do this with anybody else.

WHITE

That's not love. You got the unhealthy habit of passing by the donuts shop every time you get back from work and buy marble-frosted donuts and eat them while on the bus.

BOB

So?

WHITE

So what the dog is doing is simply licking off the traces of those donuts off your hands and lips.

BOB

Bullshit!

WHITE

No, it isn't. Green ran a little experiment to ascertain his conclusion.

CUT TO:

A bakery window. A marvelous show of tasty, unhealthy treats.

SOMEONE puts a "Closed for inspection" sign on it.

WHITE (V.O.)

You remember the day the bakery was closed for inspection? You even wrote about it in your journal. Also about how the dog wasn't as affectionate as it used to be. Just sniffed you up and walked away.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Bob's lips tremble. A tear run down his cheek. He looks away. Heartbroken. Then squints. Thinking intently.

WHITE

This is gonna be your last. Make it count. Dig deep. Maybe we missed something after all.

BOB

Three years ago.



Yellow holds his fist in the air in excited anticipation.

BOB (CONT'D)  
Someone left me a gift in the mail  
room.

Yellow lowers his hand. Not winning this one.

CUT TO: A hand, with a butterfly tattoo on the wrist, put a beautiful chocolate bar on the table. She buries it under a bunch of letters to hide it.

BOB (V.O.)  
It was valentine. It was very  
expensive chocolate bar. It had my  
name written on it with a beautiful  
handwriting.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Bob stares at White. Challenging.

WHITE  
Who's on the case?

Everyone looks at each other. Seems nobody on the case.

WHITE (CONT'D)  
I said who's on the case!

Bob laughs in triumph.

BOB  
You missed this one! I knew it.

A PINK SKULL steps forward sheepishly and raises her hand.

White exhales. As she hands him the file, we notice a butterfly tattoo on her wrist.

WHITE  
(proudly)  
We don't miss anything.  
(reads the file)  
I see. So the chocolate bar was  
waiting for you in the mailing room  
the night you stayed late in the  
office. It did had your name on it  
and you chose to ignore it of  
course. Typical Ace Soul behavior.

BOB  
Doesn't matter. Someone loves me  
and left it for me in there.

WHITE

Why did you ignore it though?

BOB

I thought this is a goddamn satanic cult not a psychiatry clinic.

WHITE

I'm offended. We're not a cult. We're entrepreneurs making an honest living in the underworld market. But I'm not trying to be a therapist here, I'm just curious. If you only picked it up, you probably wouldn't be here in the first place. The chocolate was from an colleague who admired you but had trouble confessing her love to you. The chocolate wasn't her first attempt. You tell me the reason why you ignored her and I'll use my authority here to allow the skulls to vote for your right to get back anesthetics. And don't misjudge them. They're really a bunch of softies despite the nature of their work, except for red. He's an all-around asshole.

RED

(proudly)

Oh, yeah.

BOB

I don't want it. I'm walking out of here. Someone loves me and that's all you need to know.

WHITE

She loved you. Past tense. Pink got to the bottom of it and got an undeniable proof that she doesn't love you anymore. An excerpt from her diaries says --

SECRET ADMIRER (V.O.)

I'm sure he didn't just miss it this time. He even read his name on it but put it back anyway.

(getting emotional)

I'm now sure he knows who I'm and he must have noticed my other gestures before. He just doesn't like me.

(MORE)

SECRET ADMIRER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He doesn't want my love, so I'm gonna take it back, like I did with the chocolate. Today I will say what I should have said a long time ago.

WHITE

(finishing her sentence)  
"Fuck you, Bob. You will regret this one day." Karma is a bitch.

RED

Oh, yeah.

BOB

Fuck you. This is bullshit. This doesn't prove anything. She could still be in love with me. This just means she was sour when she wrote that.

WHITE

You make a very good point. But we got our magical roses.

A light reveals a tree of roses. They're all black and dying.

WHITE (CONT'D)

Its soil was collected from your shoes. It's a living indicator that no one loves you. The last rose died when Nemo the fifth died. It's true.

Bob shakes his head. Doesn't want to believe it.

BOB

(crying)  
Why then? Why make me go through this. I thought you were bunch of softies.

WHITE

A performance test for my employees. I wanted to see if I'm still running a tight ship. And they keep making me proud.

Purple sticks his hand under his mask to pinch tears.

WHITE (CONT'D)

Pink is the man of the match though. A new comer.

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)

She really pulled her weight after her promotion. She was the one who brought your file to us.

The Skulls clap their hands for her. She bows down.

WHITE (CONT'D)

So I'll be giving her the honor of starting the ritual.

Pink holds her chest. Touched. They pat her shoulders.

BOB

(surrendering)

Can I still get the vote thing if I tell you why I ignored it?

White holds his hand up: let's hear what he has to say.

WHITE

Of course.

BOB

I-- I didn't want it to go away. Her love. I thought if I dated her she'll get to know me better. Knows how fucked up I'm.

(getting emotional)

Know that I don't deserve a girl like her. Brilliant. Hardworking. She even has a beautiful voice when she sings. It was a bubble to have such a girl takes interest in me. I didn't want to burst it. I wanted it to float around even if I'll never get to touch it.

Purple sticks his hand again under his mask to pinch a tear.

WHITE

Ok. This is sad. We're done here. Give him the best anesthetics we have. Then light him up.

RED

(sotto)

Fuck.

White turns to leave when he hears a loud collective gasp from the Skulls. He turns back to investigate.

A rose on the tree comes to life. They all look at each other. What the fuck? Then they turn to pink.

She shrugs.

FADE TO BLACK

AFTER CREDIT

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

The skulls are as we left them. The whole room shakes. Dust pour down from the ceiling.

WHITE

Fuck. The client is pissed. We need a replacement on the double. Quick!

Everyone looks at each other. Then they all look at Red.

WHITE (CONT'D)

Red, you always strike me as a lonely soul.

RED

Oh, yeah.  
(doubletake)  
Wait what?

CUT TO BLACK.

**THE END**