

Would You Peek?

An attractive person is lying in a hospital bed, the sheets pulled up to their knees. They are a stranger to you. They have been in a coma for some time, and there is no hope that they will come out of the coma any time soon. They are wearing only a hospital gown, with no underwear, and it is a private room. The room is empty of nurses and staff, and that section of the hospital is also empty of personnel.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that you are certain that no member of the hospital staff will ever witness your actions. No visitors will be walking by the room. All of the other patients are asleep and will never notice your behavior. There are also no security cameras in the hospital. Not even the patient is aware of your actions.

In addition, let us also imagine that God is not paying attention. He is busy watching a sporting event, making sure that the ball bounces in favor of His team (now you know why some teams always seem to get the lucky bounces).

No one will ever see you, hear you, or find out about you. You are completely free to act as you wish. You look down at the attractive coma patient, knowing that by simply raising the bottom of the gown, you will be able to see their private parts.

Would you peek?

I suspect that many people would lift the gown and peek at the patient. Tragically, some would even go further than just looking.

Let me be clear that I am not referring to health care professionals. Of course doctors, nurses, and their staff see us in all manner of undress. And I have no doubt that they do glance in that direction – it is only human nature. But they do so only as a secondary act, probably without thought and without arousal, while performing their primary task. The coma patient must be changed and cared for, so naturally the staff performing that task will see them when they do their job.

For others who are certain they would not peek, remember the initial assumptions that no one, not even God would ever know. We are never faced with this “opportunity” in reality, just in this scenario. To add to the original argument, let us pretend that the coma patient is someone you admire – perhaps someone famous like a model, a professional athlete, or a powerful politician. Perhaps it is someone

about whom you fantasized – an attractive coworker or neighbor. Are you sure you would not peek?

It could be claimed that the patient would not care if you peeked – especially in the case of a male patient and an attractive female voyeur. However, without the man's consent it is impossible to be sure.

It might also be argued that it would depend on the culture. Some cultures are more reserved than others. In modern Western culture there tends to be less modesty toward nudity.

Another argument can be made that no one is actually hurt here. The victim will never know they are a victim. The only actions that occur are someone is purposefully exposed, and the exposers' curiosity is satisfied. If no one is ever hurt, can it be wrong?

Whether or not you would peek at the coma patient comes down to personal values. Which do you value more: that patient's personal privacy or your personal desires, curiosity, and even titillation?

Will you forego your curious inclinations in deference to the patient's privacy? Is your respect for another human being's privacy greater than your desire to steal a quick glance at their nudity?

And what, if anything, do you think this reveals about you?

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