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The Operation of Carlton Rodrigues

by Richard Rewell

James Hesqueth-Jones was the hospital's most senior consultant. A man who never entered a ward; he invaded it, his loud voice proclaiming his knowledge and expertise all mixed with a healthy balance of good humour and wit. Nature had built H-J, which was what everyone called him, in a way that he had to stoop to get through a doorway or ease sideways through it.

H-J's understudy was Amin Shah an elegant mid-thirty-something whose stature was superior to most male models and whose smile would have been a Hollywood sensation.

The two clinicians were in operating room four. H-J shot a glance at his colleague who was staring at the open chest cavity of the man they were operating on.

"H-J, it's Carlton Rodrigues."

"I know. What about him" said H-J picking up the saw.

"He's the drug dealer. "

H-J held the saw a few millimetres from Rodrigues sternum, saying "That bastard. God I've been dealing with him for the last three months. How, did I miss that?" Steel cut through bone.

H-J remembered how he and his wife raced to the hospital one night after the call they got from the police, their daughter had been admitted; a suspected drug overdose. Turned out her drink had been spiked. Sophie survived. As did the other twenty people. Rodrigues got a disgustingly short prison term. Three months. But was not there a kid somewhere still in a coma?

"Its him." Said the anaesthetist Dave Evans, the squat former hospital rugby club captain. "A cousin of mine nearly died because of Rodrigues. Sold impure stuff called Inca's Revenge it was".

"Look let's get this chap fixed up shall we everyone" ordered H-J recalling how his poor wife Pamela suffered a breakdown during Sophie's recovery period and thinking how many others did this lump of slime cause pain and anguish to, before H-J briefly peered at his patient. Rodrigues's face gave nothing away. He looked so ordinary.

"More blood" said Amin.

"Thank you" said H-J as he manoeuvred his hands around Rodrigues heart while a dark evil thought slithered into the surgeon's mind. He could end this man's life. Revenge for all the misery he had dished out.

"There it is Amin" said H-J "You snip. And the cancer's gone."

The two surgeons looked at the growth and then at each other. They did not need to say a word as both knew that if they were to do something unethical, then this was the time to act. They were clever respected men. They could cover up. Easily. And there would be no one too keen to ask awkward questions about the demise of a notorious drug boss.

H-J felt the looks of the three nurses staring at him. 'God' he thought 'Bridget's husband had been the cop on the case of Dave Evan's cousin.'

"Cut it out Amin. Stitch him up and wheel him out. It's our job. To save lives. Regardless. Isn't it everyone?" Said H-J looking at his colleagues before adding "And thank you. All of you."

It was nine pm by the time H-J got home.

'Have you heard" said Pamela.

"Heard what love?"

"It's on the TV. Apparently that awful man who nearly killed our daughter, who nearly got me sectioned and God knows what else. You know Carlton Rodrigues? He's helping the police. Already they've smashed most of the drug gangs in London and the south-east."

H-J stood opened mouthed, eyes transfixed upon his wife as she continued speaking while hauling from the Arga his favourite, venison casserole but which he ignored, intent only on listening to his wife.

"Rodrigues claims that while undergoing surgery and out cold with the anaesthetic, he heard voices and sensed thoughts. Made him reevaluate his life and so went to the cops. H-J! H-J where are you?"