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I Move Heaven & Earth

by Saffron Swansborough

I am an angel in bare-knuckle white with pearls ground by my teeth.

The whites of your eyes are my flashcard. When you are afraid or in danger, I stub out my cigarette, crack my back, trying not to tangle my wings and bend my spine 45 degrees to protect you.

Just now, you shot across the road to school in a heavy downpour with your headphones on under your woolly hat while mum was double-parked. You didn't look both ways but I did. I'm omniscient, aren't I? The approaching cyclist, I pushed into the road to cause an oncoming car to slam on its brakes. Out of the corner of my eye you'd clocked your friend waving to you by the gate and as you ran towards her, you looked right but not left. I'm a saint so I reserve the right to do what I did next. That bastard lorry driver who was texting felt the metal crunch under his cab as a freak wind blew a dustbin below the chassis. You laughed as your friend called your name and didn't look back. I'm glad. It was carnage.

You have a scar on the inside of your upper lip across which you run your tongue when you are tired. I sort of let that happen, but it could have been much worse. When you were two you fell down the stairs. What you couldn't see was me holding the solid pine four-storey bookshelf back - into which you'd rammed your stocky cannonball of a body - which was about to crush you. I held it back until dad arrived; I knew he had broad enough shoulders to take the raining blow of books. No wonder I chain smoke.

There are statues of me on bridges, at airports and pictures of me on sympathy cards. But not the stubble, the sunglasses and the machete, which I only carry for emergency purposes, such as if I had to cut you out of a car crash or rough up an attacker.

By the way, that first boyfriend who is going to dump you at college when you're 17 after only a month and 13 days? He's not right for you. Lacks ambition. I'll need to turn his head the other way, darling, because otherwise you'll have a year of thinking things don't feel quite right...

And when you get cancer, I'll make sure you read something which makes you check for the lump so it can get sorted.

You're completely ungrateful for everything I do and that means I am doing a great job. When you sob, "Why does this always happen to me?" I light a cigar on those days. It means you don't see the joins in the universe. We get performance related pay up here and my preference is for the Cuban currency.

When you are little and you think the world revolves around you, it does. Call on me in the day of trouble. I will move Heaven and Earth for you.