

# Warts

by Jamal H. Iqbal

Marie and Mary lay side by side, partitioned by flimsy blue vinyl on cheap plastic rollers. Recovery room 1, Saudi German Hospital smelled of the curious mix of sterility, somehow made palatable by the whiff of lemon flavored lozenges Marie chewed on, 3 at a time, faking incessant coughs alternating with lo timbered French, “Où est Monsieur Dottore? Ooh I old lady! Ooh”.

On the other side, Mary puffed up her single sagging breast as much as she could under the lemon paisley cardigan, aided by the remote controlled motion of the back half of her bed, propping her torso in place.

Nurse Hershey, the jolly Filipina grinned at this daily ritual she had become accustomed to each time Dr. Hussam, with his salt and pepper hair and that perfect Mediterranean tan entered recovery room 1. Her grin though, quickly dissolving as she recollected his first comments after the back to back Mastectomies he'd wrapped up on Marie Livolsi and Mary Pepper, one 70, the other 67, one losing both and the other losing one breast. Ameer Hussam M.D. had turned to his Anesthetist and murmured, “Warts. Nipples like warts and they all want to hold on to them. All.”

