

Nurse Cratchett

by Larry Strattner

Nurse Cratchett left work at five o'clock. She was not fond of patients and so worked in thoracic surgery where they were all asleep.

Her meticulous promptness guaranteed she would never see a patient awake. A Zen-like calm of aloneness was upon her soul.

She regarded open torsos, split before her by arrogant surgeons, as cosmos. Millions and millions of cells. A great frontier.

These same cells, when conglomerated upright before her in the form of a sentient being, could tie her psyche in knots in a millisecond. In contrast to her wide streak of practicality she had an extremely thin band of patience.

Even the most arrogant surgeons knew enough not to show her the almost omnipresent erections they maintained for use upon anyone even circumspectly questioning their omnipotence. Deep within their prideful hearts they knew she would catheterize them, without a thought, in an instant.

Nurse Cratchett, for her part, dreamed of skill and action. She had many of the failings of the surgeons and in many ways was more accomplished. In her hands instruments sang as they were meant to do. The surgeons knew beyond the catheter dwells the knife. None chose to visit that place.

Nurse would occasionally grant a surgical intern sexual congress. None of these liaisons had ever flowered. None of her partners had ever quite been the same again. She took pride in any craft she chose to practice. Although she was not a lascivious woman she watched the occasional pornographic movie for hints on technique. She felt Henry Miller's Bathroom Interviews enabled her to install

a veneer of normalcy over her playful depravity. She believed attention to detail inevitably resulted in a better surgeon.

Whenever she lay alone in her bed she smiled a secret smile of solitude, counting sutures on her way to slumber.

