

Dr. Nishad

by Shelagh Power-Chopra

The nurse left work at five o'clock with the bag of medical waste she had intended to throw away for Dr. Nishad during the laparotomy but he kept whistling that old Bing Crosby song, "Empty Saddles" and fiddling with the clamps and she got distracted and put the little red bag in the pocket of her uniform instead of slipping it into the refuse container nearby. And now it was too late, she was already driving home and she dug the bag out of her pocket and placed it gingerly on the passenger seat.

Oh, how she hated to disappoint Dr. Nishad, whose nimble, little fingers smelled of lemons and Chlorhexidine. Dr. Nishad, who had seduced her on a cot in the Hematology wing and had made long house calls to her apartment bearing Macchiatos and lime chutney. Dr. Nishad who refused to leave his wife of twenty years and who now strolled into the hospital like a bejeweled ferret; fingers donned in diamonds and slippery chest draped in salmon shirts. Oh, dear, terrible Dr. Nishad.

She had forgotten what the resident had put in the bag before he handed it to her; no doubt something dark and neat Dr. Nishad had extracted from the abdomen, something that had rested deep within the patient and had wished to remain there, nestling itself further causing random strife and misfortune. In this case the operation was exploratory, they really had no reason to cut into the abdomen as the pain had started more near the lungs but Dr. Nishad had a knack for exploring, liked to call himself the "Cortez" of surgery and wield his scalpel about like a medieval lance during most surgeries. He disliked anything pulmonary (and was an avid smoker as if to spite the lungs) and always seemed to weasel his way down to the abdomen like a stomach parasite.

Sometimes she imagined the piles of Dr. Nishad's medical waste at

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the end of productive day at the hospital. Stacks and heaps of connective tissue, lung matter, gristle and bone, cancerous clumps of tongue and stomach and ropes of bad muscles like wrung, wet socks. She imagined these to be dumped into the ports of third world countries where they would be ground up for fertilizer and then abundant, colorful crops would spring forth from the refuse of the Western world. But this had little to do with Dr. Nishad now, who had just passed her in his Volvo, his profile looking so stoic and proud like a bust of Hippocrates.

She wanted to run him over and then cover his body in sweet kisses as she stitched up his bloody wounds. She reached over to the seat and tore open the bag: inside was a rubbery piece of pink flesh. God, had he taken a piece of the Jejunum? The bastard! That was pretty nervy of him, just like him to take what the body really needed and leave us girls with nothing but a pile of simple, silly flesh. She held the bit of tissue in her palm and steered with the other, bearing down hard toward Dr. Nishad in the next lane.

