

Shadow of a Bone

by Tim G. Young

"I can see the shadow of a bone," he said, "not the hard white piece of the skeleton, the parts they put in the museum, but a 'shadow' the bone making its presence known through the layers of flesh, the more human part of the body it seems to me. In my mind the skeleton has more to do with the dead than the living. It's more scientific; it's more examined more pulled apart and put together. Seeing the presence of the bone, knowing it does surely exist under so many layers of skin, so many layers of flesh, is encouraging and a more subtle truth than the unblinking sensationalism of the raw bone sans the meat."

She looked at him and had to twist her head on her neck so that they both were able to hear the bones crack into place. "Honestly, Ronnie, there are times when I am almost positive that you are losing your mind. I was watching you stare at that ankle for at least ten minutes after you removed your sock. I didn't say a word. I did, however, keep my eye on the clock. Ten minutes passed and felt like a lifetime. The thought actually went through my head that perhaps you had severely damaged that ankle. Your stare is growing in intensity each time we are together."

The couple sat on the edge of the bed. Ronnie was tall and hefty and wore his blonde hair long and braided down to the middle of his back. His on again, off again girlfriend, Samantha, whose motorcycle they had rode into town on, was also tall but on the thinner side except for the muscles in her arms which nearly matched those of Ronnie. They were both expert riders and would have chosen to have two bikes but money was in short supply so the Motel 6 they were able to locate at the end of a day long ride appeared as an oasis on the dry and desolate desert.

"My ankle does hurt. I burned it on the chrome exhaust just before

we came in here. I may need some ice but I'm attempting to block the pain with my mind and my new found fascination with my bones behind my flesh. I can still feel my bones rattling inside from the constant vibrations of our ride. I always get off on those vibrations the way they literally shake up my insides like a mixed drink in a shaker."

Now they both rose from the bed and stood facing each other. Samantha reached across and began to unbutton Ronnie's shirt. He reached over to her. Samantha also had blonde hair but it was cut with a curl just below her ears; she wore long jangly silver earrings, which she loved to feel move in the breeze or when she shook her head. Her steel blue eyes were sharp enough to bring Ronnie to his knees and he knew exactly what had to happen next.

It was now the deep of the night. The air conditioner hummed and Samantha snored quietly. Ronnie woke from the throb in his ankle which he was now positive had spread to his entire right foot. He half stumbled to the window and lifted the blinds to allow the light from the parking lot into the room. The light penetrated the dark and reflected off the now swollen at least twice the size ankle. The shadow of a bone now vanished under a red throbbing pain infested ankle. He went to the door, opened it, stuck his neck out and howled like a wolf. When his voice had left him he turned around to see the shadowy Samantha sitting up in bed, silver earrings glistening, blue eyes on fire; she returned his howl.

Eventually the night was chased to its resting place. When the maid knocked on the door there was no answer so she tried the door and it was open. She was surprised to see the room as clean as a pin except for something long and white reflected off the sunshine resting across the two pillows at the top of the bed.

