CHAPTER ONE

November 2012

 ‘Would you like to follow me?’ It wasn’t so much a question as an instruction. My inner voice, my mind worm abruptly woke and began to chirp faintly. ‘Lead the way swine features’!

Whilst it was fair to say that the similarities between the woman standing before me, and that of a Gloucester Old Spot were remarkable I suppressed my desire to repeat the whisper having learned that a thin voice avoids a thick ear. Rather, I simply nodded and vacated my seat.

The corridor leading to the torture chamber was neither green, nor a mile, however it was never the less daunting.

In a bid to calm my nerves, I concentrated on the sound of the Old Spot’s trotters, which echoed ominously from the polished floor and began counting them.

My anxiety was briefly alleviated as I became overwhelmed, trapped within a small envelope of concentrated flatulence, which had silently wheezed from the Old Spot, and hung where it lay. I found the stench somewhat oppressive.

Darn it, I lost count! I immediately regretted my decision to remain a few steps behind her.

At the end of the corridor, in a well-practised move, piggy tugged at a retractable key chain, which was clipped to her belt, and reaching forward she swiftly unlocked the torture chamber door. She turned to me with a knowing smile and winked as she simultaneously released her grip, allowing the key to snap back to its original position.

In that second, I had her weighed up and mentally tagged her as one of society’s ‘low hanging fruit’. A dream come true consumer for the mail order industry, and partially responsible for keeping the inventors and suppliers of ‘We sell all kinds of shit’ publications in business.

I wasn’t in the slightest bit impressed with her gadget. I considered grabbing the retractable key chain from the flatulent pig, and imagined swinging her around on the end of it before releasing her back down the corridor we had since walked. How far would she slide? I wondered. I felt slightly better, just for a second.

Upon entering the torture chamber, my eyes swept the room. It was ugly, to the point of hurting my eyes. There were no windows here to climb out. My frivolous thoughts of escape were futile.

The walls were parched white, clinical, lined occasionally with apparatus, which I instantly wanted to touch and fiddle with. In the middle of the room, was a bed? Some joker had propped a shoji screen in one of the corners, allowing a clear point of focus from the bed. ‘Very funny you twisted fuck,’ whispered mind worm. The screen has one purpose, that of protecting the modesty of the person undressing behind it, before they emerge exposing parts of or all of their body that they were protecting behind the screen in the first place! Am I missing something here?

A grunt bought my attention back to the pig. ‘If you would like to remove all of your clothing to your waist and lie down, someone will be with you in a minute’.

‘If I would like to?’ How many confused souls had been given that instruction, and sat there naked from the waist down to the astonishment of the ‘someone’ who walked in on the scene? I have learned to never ever underestimate the capacity for stupidity, which some humans are capable of. It must have happened to someone!

I turned to face pig, observing how perfectly round her face became when she smiled, despite the fact that the smile was only in the mouth, and a little bitter.

Mind worm began to whisper. ‘Snide, stinky little swine’! As if she had somehow heard, she abruptly turned and left me alone.

In my preparation for ‘someone’, I removed all of my upper clothing and sat on the side of the bed. I acknowledged an increasing feeling of detachment as it began to creep up on me seemingly out of nowhere. Mind worm reassured me, that it was ok to feel weird in this instance.

After what seemed like quite a long time, I began to daydream. I envisioned myself on a steep windy hillside. In my hand was an endless length of string, which disappeared into the clouds above me. There was no pig on the end of it this time. I wished in that moment, that I were on that hillside, flying a kite with my kids. I wished in that moment that I were anywhere but sat here battling my feelings of degradation.

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The sound of approaching footsteps prompted me to release my grip on my comfortable virtual reality, and swing my legs up onto the bed. As I lay back, I was faced with a distorted reflection of myself in a huge surgical headlight, which was suspended from the ceiling above me.

I cursed my twisted image for not preparing for this moment with extra caution, especially since I was so completely aware of the torturous, barbaric procedure, which was about to take place.

I had stored all recollections from previous core biopsy tests in the attic and left them there dormant alongside the box labelled broken dreams and aspirations, but now the ceiling was caving in under the weight of it all.

The memories I had hidden away, showered down on me, burning my brain as if acid rain. ‘What a fucking glorious feeling!’ worm chided.

I wished now that I had taken a double dose of xanax washed down with a decent measure or two of brandy, the perfect cocktail treatment when suffering disturbances of the mind. But it was too late for that now. Panic was setting in. The footsteps were right outside the door.

Forget butterflies in the stomach. I had a hippopotamus stuck in my throat. That coupled with the knowledge that I was here today of my own free will was a fact that even I found quite difficult to swallow.

The door swung open, and my executioner entered the room pursued by a spectator to the event. Mind worm shrieked, and covered me up. I however just lay there feeling totally ridiculous.

Stepping forward he shook my hand and introduced himself as “the radiologist”. ‘You’ve got to be fucking kidding me’ mind worm scoffed.

In his late forties, his face had a decidedly shifty appearance to the point of acquiring equine attributes. He could look in two directions at once and had about as much charisma as the Angel of Death I thought.

From a side drawer, he removed a small box, which he placed on a shelf at the side of the bed. Next to it, he laid a square of soft material. Just before opening the box, I noticed him rubbing his thumb over his fingertips as if in eager anticipation. His eyes began to glint.

There was something in the calm and orderly way he did all these things that I recognized. ‘For fucks sake, that’s just about my luck, an obsessive-compulsive torturer with ritualistic tendencies.’

From within the box, he removed a silver pistol and held it lovingly in his hand. ‘It’s not a penis’, hissed mind worm. I am sure, I saw him visibly grow in stature slightly, as he held the gun up, inspecting it with obvious admiration. I had to suppress my desire to burst out laughing at this spectacle. ‘Christ almighty, its Dirty Harry’!

“Curse you mind worm, shut the fuck up”. Laughing at inappropriate moments had cost me jobs, friends and even relationships.

The angel of death snapped out of his transfixed state of adoration and placed the pistol down onto the square of material.

Mind worm began to chant. ‘Not nice, not good, oh god, Oh god’!

My eyes darted to the corner of the room, where the spectator had perched herself, and I looked at her with pleading eyes. Although not actually chewing gum, she moved her jaw monotonously, which made her appear somewhat infantile and cunning. Rather than race to my rescue, she smiled at me and raised her hand, giving me a little wave.

Should I wave back? I wondered. My world suddenly felt quite surreal.

Leaning in now, the Angel of Death took my right breast in his moist hand, and worm erupted in full singing voice as if in acknowledgment. ‘Here we go, here we go, here we go. Here we go, here we go, here we go-oh’! ‘What the chuffing fuck’? I don’t even like football!