

Dreamy Poppy Pink

Category: Naked

written by Marilyn Barton | September 14, 2016

In nursing school, to learn about human anatomy, we dissected stray cats. The tiny blobs and structures inside them looked more like toys than organs; at times I had difficulty telling one part from another.

When our instructor got us invited to the medical school's Anatomy Lab that studied real people, I was excited to finally see a complete human body. Maybe there would be straight pins with little flags for each section of the heart and brain. I expected the experience to be like our Cat Lab: clinical and unemotional.

On entering the doorway, I glimpsed a naked, young, Caucasian female laying on the cold, steel table surrounded by promising, future physicians. They kindly moved so we could get a closer look at their cadaver. She was beautiful: picture-perfect bone structure, with thick blonde hair, clear skin and firm breasts which were proportional to her hips.

The fact that she was unclothed and dead didn't bother me. What shocked me was the pretty nail polish on her fingernails that I recognized as *Dreamy Poppy Pink*, the same color I wore. This wasn't a lab specimen, she was someone's lovely wife, mother or friend. I imagined her to be fun-loving, smart and social.

The medical student reviewed her features with us. He reached into her abdominal cavity and pulled out a liver the size of a basketball then held it up. She died from ovarian cancer, and her liver weighed 40 pounds. That's ten times normal. Isn't that amazing?"

My eyes glanced back to her fingernails. She had passed away before her next manicure—among other things. The future nurse in me wanted to ask if he had any acetone so I could remove the pink polish that was badly chipped in places. In my mind, giving her clean, natural nails again would restore her dignity, even in death.

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