

Parallel Darkness

Entering the pale cliff about halfway up its face his teeth chattered. In front of him was a cleft wide enough to squeeze in if you were lean and agile.

He went in, no light or sound but a smell, rank and rotting. He felt his way cautiously along the wall. His knife held in his poised hand. His heart beat sporadically fast and then laboured as if it were an effort. Then light shone brightly and there it was exposed, the odious growth which must be taken now before it claimed a life.

He lifted his knife and without damaging the surrounding mass he excised it completely.

Mervyn heard a voice: 'Well done. It's all over. The op' went well.'

He opened his eyes and there was a smiling nurse taking his blood pressure.

'I thought I was still in that cave.' He muttered.

'Just the effect of the anaesthetic.' she said. 'People have the strangest dreams but not many remember them. You're special.'

Back in the scrub room the surgeon removed his mask with a sigh.

'I'm glad it's over. I was not looking forward to that one. No room for error.'

His anaesthetist smiled.

'I thought you were quieter than usual.'

'Yes. I had a weird nightmare last night. I woke up in a sweat. I was halfway up a cliff when I came to a cleft in the rock and I went in. I don't remember anything else.'