

THE HALLOWEEN VISITOR.

3rd Person version of Hamilton Lord IV

By Patrick Harris.

Cazz knew the voice long before she entered the “Singapore Lounge”. She and her second husband David had agreed to meet in their favourite haunt for afternoon tea and cakes. That was one of the problems with cruising. The colossal amount of food. But, as David her husband pointed out, they had damned well paid for it, so eat and drink they would.

Cazz used the on-board gym every day to combat the calorie overload, indeed she had spent the previous hour with her personal trainer Emma, squatting, crunching and pounding both the treadmill and the cross trainer, sweat coursing down her spine and collecting in small lakes under ample breasts, the wetness staining her T-shirt and sweatpants.

After showering, she dropped her gym kit in the stateroom’s ali-baba basket, to be dealt with by the on-board laundry. That was sheer luxury. Their garments were returned next morning cleaned, pressed and perfectly presented. She dressed quite casually in one of her favourite cotton sundresses. She favoured the daffodil-yellow number today with matching canvass deck shoes. Cazz paused briefly on the companionway outside the lounge to allow the sharp Atlantic breeze to completely cool and freshen her body before she entered.

David looked up.

‘Ah Cazz,’ he smiled, ‘this young man shares my passion with motor bikes. This is my wife Cazz.’ He glanced over at the visitor.

The young man looked up and peered at her from under an unfashionable long fringe, his handsome, boyish sun-tanned face framed by equally unfashionable heavy sideburns.

‘Hamilton Lord the Fourth,’ he said in a soft Texan accent, so reminiscent of those southern states of America. He did not make an effort to rise or even offer to shake her hand.

Cazz did not reply but nodded her acknowledgement. She slumped into the vacant chair. The tea pot, milk jug and sugar bowl seemed far away, as did the two-tier cake stand. They all seemed to sway in a sudden heat haze.

David, who all their married life ate and drank as much as he pleased, whilst annoyingly staying at a trim eleven stone, had today massacred the delicate éclairs, ravaged the French Fancies and annihilated the donuts. He knew his wife did not appreciate cakes in the way he did. There was always one jam tart left. Cazz knew David would offer the humble pastry to her before enveloping it with his ample mouth in one bite.

Her heart was thumping heavily in her chest as the whole lounge swayed once again. Cazz thought she may have over done the exercise. Maybe, she thought, her blood sugar had dropped. She took the tart and delicately bit into it. David was still chatting to the young Texan about motor cycles. Somewhere in the distance she overheard her husband stating.

‘Cazz doesn’t like me motorcycling. She has never even ridden on with me!’ He laughed along with the young American, who shook his head in agreement, the unfashionably straggly hair caught in a sudden breeze from the vast Atlantic, exposing his face.

Cazz suddenly felt very ill. Ice cold fingers seemed to grip her body. The crumbs of the tart stayed in her mouth dry and unmoving. She wanted to tell David that their Halloween outfits rented earlier from the on-board fancy dress shop, would soon be delivered. She wanted to tell him they needed to check the fit and style were right before that night’s Halloween Ball.

All was in vain. She stood up. She felt somewhat better now. Hamilton Lord the Fourth had also arisen. She looked into the cool ice blue eyes of her first husband.

She remembered that day long ago in the pits at Jarama, as the loudspeakers told that the world champion in waiting for 1974, had crashed out of the Spanish grands prix. The news of his death in the last race of the season, was released next day. But Carolyn Lord, twenty years old, knew that Ham her handsome, debonair playboy husband would not survive as she waited by his hospital bed.

She knew why he was there today, on the cruise ship ploughing through the mighty Atlantic. She turned to look at David as Ham gently took her arm to guide her away. David was supporting his Cazz’s head. A steward looked on impotently and spoke into his two-way radio. Carolyn knew it would be in vain.