

### 3. It (from a grave)

The Surgeon is back at her laptop. She's strolling the still streets. 2 clicks north, and so on.

As is always the case when churning up the clayey earth body, it releases a background noise of Roman remains to contend with. Their litter is strewn throughout the majority of the bit under the grass and tarmac. Endless litter of empire. What the hell to do with that. She's filing it in the yellow and black Hazardous Waste folder and having tripped over a deceptively big chunk She's found herself in front of a pit of stuff. Pots and cups and bowls and jugs all laid out with the anatomical precision decreed by the catalogue.

She wonders just how far she can go. Scrubbed up, gloves on, fingers poised ready to make the first incision. She begins the rehearsed and sacred process; forefinger tip meet thumb pad, rest on surface, mime them apart then together as if prising open a tiny orifice. Repeat until burrowed in as far as necessary. She's reached beyond the visible surface, She's inside. No wait, She's gone too far, it's just a plane of red dirt. No hollow interior, no delightful cavern, no romantic hollow, no sumptuous, ringing darkness. Just scratchy brown outer.

From her pit-side view, The Surgeon eyes The Archaeologist in there in the pit with It, rather than out on the edge with her and us. Somehow She's able to be rolling around with it. (Gently) bumping and grinding. Pressing Her flanges against the hardness, press molding Herself against it so as not to spill out of any gaps. No room for escapes, just a lovely snug nestling, lip to lip, mouth to mouth. In to in to out to out. Ahh. We should know more about The Archaeologist than we've been allowed to imagine so far. Build up a sense of her in more dimensions. She's right on the cusp. She's full of bursting with her firstborn and is a big, tort mass still getting used to her shifting centre of gravity.

This It is borrowing all kinds of bits of bodies. Headlike, bellylike, liplike, womblike, mouthlike. But the bit The Surgeon wants is the bit that isn't body, is the absent nothing. We're stuck with her at the outer, the protective case. And we neeeeeed the gaps. Not just hardness in front of another hard shell. No contours, no gentle curves, no seductive cupping, turning and admiring from all angles.

(pregnant pause – jk)

(delicate pause)

The Surgeon has removed her tongue. Just taken it out. It might be more useful that way. She rubs it around her screen. Her laptop absorbs none of her saliva, actively repels it, instead leaving rainbow traces of spit droplets as they refract the fake light. Again no curvature. And no delicately imperfect topography of surface, just plain old flat. She runs it over the helpfully cushioning IN-FOR-MAY-SHUN. Great.

Perfect for an actual bodily experience. Bumf bumf 'from a grave'. She wipes it around and traces the shapes of an A and how the forms slot around the edges of It, a nicely tessellating mosaic, and then She's taken out of this moment by a bastard blue bottle that keeps coming in. Keeps narrowly avoiding the open window and the wide open door it came in through - She should've followed the recommendations and taped the theatre door shut.

Returning to face her workstation, she sees The  
Archaeologist nestled up against It, probably tired  
from her efforts, fallen asleep.