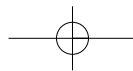


PITUITARY PUREE



1.

Leyton, East London December 1995

Common wisdom remembered brain paste. The old ladies of Silvertown would tell you. The porters at Smithfield market would tell you. No doctor would tell you, but what do they know? Any idiot can read a book. And knowledge is not the same as wisdom.

Cockney women used to mash up the pituitary glands of cows and smear the paste on toast. They said it helped people with mental illness, that it made their minds more alert. In the days before the National Health Service and the pick and mix drug cocktails of modern psychiatric healthcare, such remedies were commonplace in the East End. Ideas spread by chatter in the doorways of terraced houses and the corners of gloomy pubs, through anecdotes and recipes: mother to daughter, father to son.

Science had failed the Garrods. To Bartholomew, the brain paste was a desperate measure. Although it had its compensations: when mashed up with

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boiled potatoes, milk and oil it tasted vaguely of corned beef. He hoped the strange pituitary chemistry would help his brother's screaming fits, his lapses of memory and behaviour. Raymond's outbursts were making him a liability and his prescription pills were useless. Bartholomew knew that his brother needed full time care but refused to have him committed. Besides, the government were closing psychiatric hospitals across the country – he had researched the subject. Ray would have to be cared for in the community.

Bartholomew tried to be optimistic. This new mash was stronger, more concentrated than his previous efforts. And the pituitary glands it contained were not only taken from cows.

'Put your bib on Ray. I don't want no mess today.'

'Yes Bollamew,' said Raymond Garrod, unable to enunciate the complexities of his brother's name. 'Ah ate some bit of this mash before I think.'

'This is better mash – stronger mash.'

Bartholomew Garrod used a serving spoon to scoop a large serving of mash for his brother. Ray's eyes glowed with excitement as the grey pile of food slapped onto the plate in front of him. Ray ate happily, oil running down his chin.

'Delicious Bollamew,' Ray grinned between mouthfuls.

PRIMAL CUT 19

Watching his brother eat made Bartholomew hungry himself. He felt a sudden desire for steak. He left his brother at the table and headed down the narrow staircase to the rear of his butcher's shop. He pulled back the handle on the door of the freezer and turned on the light.

An hour previously, he had placed some unsold beefsteaks on a shelf at the back of the freezer. They were still soft. He picked the largest he could find and licked the cold surface of the meat. The tang of beef blood was unmistakable. Beef was his favourite. Beef was noble. He drew strength from it. Chicken flesh gave him speed and flexibility. Pork gave him cunning. Beef gave him power.

Lying against the wall of the freezer was the decapitated body of the woman he had killed. Most of her blood had ebbed down the drainage duct at the centre of the freezer room although some had frozen around her. Bartholomew looked at the body wondering what to do. He had always been surrounded by death. She was just another carcass, albeit a headless one. He realised that her continued presence in his freezer was becoming problematic. The council often did spot checks on butcher's shops. Their inspectors could close down disreputable establishments and he did not want to sully the good name of 'Garrods Family Butchers'. Besides, it was probably unhygienic.

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He slammed the freezer door shut and returned upstairs.

Common wisdom remembered brain paste and other horrors too. It also recalled saucy Jack cutting the whores of Whitechapel and the murder of Jack the Hat. Common wisdom remembered the firestorm of September 1940 that incinerated hundreds on the Silvertown Way. It recounted the 'Bermondsey Horror' and the crimes of John Christie.

Now there was another story to tell.

The Leyton Ripper was murdering people for their meat.