

The Last Human

by

Harriet Riley

INT. SCRUB ROOM - DAY

Late afternoon at a deserted London hospital. Stolid DR HALL (47) and antsy DR PATEL (29) scour their arms under running water.

PATEL

Are we really going to do this?

Hall says nothing, he simply meets Patel's eye, and they stare at one another, as NURSE SOOMIN KIM (28) and NURSE PETE BRADY (32) tie on their masks, concealing all but their eyes.

INT. OPERATING THEATRE - DAY

MARIA (24) screams on the table, deep in the throws of labour. Kim holds her hand tight and speaks soothing words.

MARIA

Oh god! Oh god!!

KIM

It's alright darling. It's alright.

DOCTOR ANNE CONWAY (45) sits near Maria's head with the oxygen mask. She speaks to Hall as he takes his position.

CONWAY

Failure to progress. Dilation stopped an hour ago.

KIM

This is Dr Hall and Dr Patel, they're going to perform an emergency c-section. Okay?

Maria nods and winces. Brady, shaking, places a tray of instruments beside Hall. Hall narrows his eyes.

HALL

Are these sterile?

BRADY

Does it matter?

HALL

We do this properly or not at all.

PATEL

I vote not at all.

KIM

So the last thing you'd ever do is leave a mother and baby to die?

Suddenly in tears, Brady breaks for the door.

BRADY

I can't. I can't! I have to be with my family!

HALL

Brady! Get back here!

But it's too late. He's gone. Patel looks around.

PATEL

He's right. What's the point? We should leave, it doesn't matter!

CONWAY

But it never mattered! Every baby you ever delivered every person you ever helped, they were all going to die anyway. But you did it anyway. Because it was the right thing to do.

Patel sighs. Agreed. Resigned.

HALL

Clamp.

PATEL

Clamp.

The room begins to shake, outside there are shouts of distress and sirens. Patel trembles. Kim cries. Sweat drips from Hall's brow as he glares fixedly at his task. The rumble builds 'til they can take it no more, then...

...a baby CRIES.

The rumble seems to die. Hall hold up the infant, bloody and squirming, suddenly the only thing in the world. Patel cuts the cord and they hand the tearful, smiling, Maria her child.

MARIA

Hello, my love. Hello.

The doctors and nurses pull down their masks, revealing their faces at last in full. They gaze at the baby, and each other.

HARD TO BLACK.

The heart monitor beeps. The baby cries. Then... silence.