

ALL SAINTS (published in The Courier-Mail)

Tuesday April 16, Channel 7, 8.30pm

"CK and CKMB are in normal limits but the Troponin is up a bit."

Well yeah, I couldn't have put it better.

Sometimes the medical lingo in shows such as All Saints can get a bit dense for the average non-medical viewer to decipher, but you have to admit it all sounds impressive.

I know someone who writes All Saints scripts - actually, I'm married to him - and the first question people ask when they find out is, "How does he know all that medical stuff?"

Well no, he didn't do a medical degree and then decide to branch out into writing for a hospital show. All Saints has a team of medical researchers constantly sending reams of information to the writers about the conditions and procedures they have to seamlessly weave into the script. Even then it can be tough working the jargon into the dialogue so that the characters sound authentically knowledgeable. Intubation, defibrillation, BP rates, sats, BSLs - who the heck knows what it means?

Tonight, there are two medical dilemmas for the emergency staff - and writer John Banas - to deal with. Teenager Tristan, with an unpronounceable condition which means that his bones break very easily, is brought in. Apparently in a fit of pique, young Tristan jumped off a ride at a funfair. Well, you would if you were likely to break every bone in your body, wouldn't you?

It turns out that Tristan resents being looked after by able-bodied sister, Carly, and is pretty much a pain in the backside, but he's done himself serious damage with his stunt. Then there's a woman named Jennifer with blood gushing out of her nose like she's struck oil, plus a huge boot mark on her torso. She's also got a broken rib and spleen damage, making surgery a rather imminent prospect.

Dishy new doctor, Sean Everleigh (Chris Vance), and Charlotte (Tammy McIntosh) have differing views on whether Jennifer's hubby has been beating her. Charlotte is quick to judge, while the more thoughtful Dr. Dishy notices clues in hubby's behaviour that could mean there's something more than the obvious at play.

Some more of that medical jargon is thrown about and the puzzle's pieces are finally fitted into place just in time for the closing credits. All is well, at least until next week.

So next time you tune in to All Saints or any other hospital series, spare a thought for the writers who have to do more than simply have the doctors and nurses making eyes at each other over someone frothing at the mouth.

Vicki Englund