

Once you finish reading the brochure, Taya calls in Rebecca Waber and leaves the room. Rebecca, wearing the white coat of a lab technician, with a stethoscope hanging from her neck, asks you a set of questions about your medical condition and your family's medical history. She listens to your heart and measures your blood pressure. Then she hooks you up to a complicated-looking machine. The electrodes running from the machine, greased with a green electrode gel, encircle your wrists. This is an electrical shock generator, she explains, and it is how we will test your perception and tolerance of pain.

With her hand on the switch, Rebecca sends a series of electrical shocks through the wires and into the electrodes. The initial shocks are merely annoying. Then they become painful, more painful, and finally so painful that your eyes fly open and your heart begins to race. She records your reactions. Now she starts delivering a new set of electrical shocks. This time she administers a set of charges that fluctuate randomly in intensity: some are very painful and some merely irritating. Following each one, you are asked to record, using the computer in front of you, the amount of pain you felt. You use the mouse to click on a line that ranges from "no pain at all" to "the worst pain imaginable" (this is called a "visual pain analog").

When this part of the torture ends, you look up. Rebecca is standing before you with a Veladone capsule in one hand and a cup of water in the other. "It will take about 15 minutes for the drug to reach its maximal effect," she says. You gulp it down, and then move to a chair in the corner, where you look at the old copies of *Time* and *Newsweek* until the pill takes effect.

Fifteen minutes later Rebecca, smearing the electrodes