

to be. “Mr. Grant, this conversation is over. As her doctor, for Miss Connelly’s safety and the safety of her guards I am recommending immediate sedation with lorazepam. If you have an issue with this, take it up with Judge Hawkins. But this *is* happening for now. As for your case, Mr. Grant, I recommend you take the day off. Your assistance is not needed today.” Nella turned back toward Johnson. “Do you have a supply on hand or should I request some doses from the military liaison?” Nella could hear Mr. Grant spluttering with anger and without looking could picture his round face deep red and puffed with rage, but she didn’t turn around to look. Wells, though, was trying not to smile and failing. Johnson shot him a warning look. “Yeah, we’ve got it,” she said, “Wells, go up to the Warden’s office and tell him we need a dose of lorazepam.”

“You sure?” asked Wells as he struggled to hold a thrashing Ann.

“The Doc and I can handle it. Just hurry.”

Johnson held Ann in a bear hug from behind while Nell kept Ann’s head from banging against the wall. Mr. Grant, still blustering wordlessly, skittered out of the room like a round beetle, followed by Wells.

“Do you have any idea what might have triggered this?” asked Nella over Ann’s shoulder. Johnson strained to see her. “Well, begging your pardon, but no one’s been able to get her to really talk about what happened until you. I figured this must have been from digging up all those memories. But there’s no help for it. *Someone* has to find out how all this happened.”

“I apologize,” said Nella, “next time I’ll be more prepared. I assumed her lawyer or at least the original investigators had already gone over it with her.”

Ann snapped her teeth and Nella instinctively flinched.

“No,” said Johnson when Nella had recovered, “When the investigators found her, she was even worse than this. They couldn’t get her to calm down enough to talk. And her lawyer—” Johnson scowled, “He’s just waiting for you to declare her incompetent. In fact, I’m sure his ban on sedation was in hopes that something exactly like this would happen while you were here. He just wants to get the whole thing over with.”

“He’s never talked to her about what happened?” asked Nella, incredulous.

“THE TEETH! THE TEETH MUST GNASH THROUGH THE BEAST ROOM DOORS!” screamed Ann and Nella moved her hand, but too late. Ann clamped her teeth down and twisted. Nella sucked in a sizzling breath, but managed not to yell. Ann immediately opened her mouth again and Nella quickly stepped back before Ann’s jaw could snap shut again.

“Oh God!” said Johnson, watching the skin between Nella’s thumb and finger split and swell with blood, “I forgot you didn’t have gloves on. Wells! Wells get back here!” she shouted, struggling to hold Ann still. Nella saw tears

streaming down Ann's cheek and she pushed Ann's tangled hair out of the prisoner's face with her good hand.

"It's okay Ann. It's okay, I know you didn't mean to."

The pain in Nella's hand coupled with the natural, humid heat of the blood on her skin made Nella nauseous. She tried not to imagine what it would have been like to be slowly torn apart by the teeth of several Infected. Her whole body ached in empathy even as she pushed the thought out and carefully held Ann's forehead away from the wall she was trying to smash it on. At last, Wells came running back, a capped syringe and small glass bottle in his hand.

"Jesus, Doc, are you okay?" he asked.

Nella managed a small smile. "Sure. I just wasn't paying enough attention." Wells handed Nella the bottle and syringe and took Johnson's place holding onto Ann.

Nella looked at the vial for a moment. "Sorry," she said, "I don't think I can do this with one hand."

"Here," replied Johnson, "I'll do it, I was a combat medic." Johnson filled the syringe.

"Okay Ann, officer Johnson is just going to give you something to help you sleep for a while. Is that alright?" Johnson waited for Ann to reply.

"Stop the teeth," sighed Ann, "Stop the teeth and the screaming beasts."

Johnson nodded. "Yes, Ann, we'll stop the teeth and let you rest."

Ann didn't even flinch as Johnson administered the sedative. She rocked back and forth, no longer thrashing but still frantic.

"Ann," said Nella, "Do you remember your mother and father?"

Ann stopped rocking. She looked up and to everyone's surprise, Ann's eyes caught on Nella's face.

"Did they tell you bedtime stories Ann? Can you tell me a bedtime story?"

Ann smiled. Wells and Johnson shared a shocked glance.

"Once upon a time there was a queen who wanted a little girl very badly . . ." Ann began. The queen hadn't even pricked her finger with her needle before Ann was slurring and drooping. Johnson helped her lie down.

"Come on, Doc," whispered Wells, "You need to get to the infirmary."

Nella hesitated for a moment. Johnson looked up from smoothing Ann's hair. "Don't worry, I'll be here and she's going to sleep like a log for a while. Thanks for standing up to Grant, Dr. Rider. He's been worse than useless this whole time."

Johnson grinned and Nella thought it made her look nicer. "No problem," Nella said grimly. A burst of pain splashed over her and she followed Wells out of the cell and down the hall, trying to hold her hand against the cloth of her skirt

so she wouldn't drip on the floor.

"We'll be at the infirmary in a sec and the nurse will clean you up." He looked at her hand doubtfully. "I think you might need stitches," he said.

Nella gently covered the bite with her good hand. The wound sizzled and popped, a burning flare in her mind. She said a silent prayer that the infirmary was still stocked with increasingly rare and desirable modern pain killers.

The officers in the infirmary were kind, but Nella suspected she had more actual medical training than any of the nurses. Still, she thought her hand would heal without too big of a scar. The drug cabinet had been stocked, but its pain killers were limited. It seemed even the military could no longer procure medical grade narcotics. Nella was thankful she didn't need major surgery. She looked at the two slim, white tablets in her palm. Nella was no addict, but as the pills slid down her throat, she thought that the production of a simple aspirin tablet might be what would launch what remained of humanity back into a civilization.

The nurse patted her on the shoulder and gave her a compassionate smile. "Be careful," the nurse said, "I know it's just aspirin, but if you've had the same experience as the rest of us, it's been a while since you've taken one. It will probably hit you faster than you expect and make you dizzy."

Nella laughed. "You know, I used to pop these like breath mints when I was in college for headaches."

"Didn't we all?" asked the nurse, "and now you'd be hard pressed to find anyone under twenty who remembers even having seen one." They were both quiet for a moment. Then the nurse roused herself, "Ah, but I'm sure we'll be making them again soon, don't you think?"

Nella nodded. "If they were able to bring us hot showers within a year, I'm sure someone is working on aspirin tabs after eight."

Nella felt the buzzing numbness of the aspirin spread down her arm. She looked down at herself. The side of her skirt was stiff and purple where she had pressed her hand. She looked around for her suit jacket and winced as she saw the spatter on it. At least her shirt was unstained. "Do you have a sink I can use?" she asked the nurse, "I have another appointment and I can't go like this."

"You sure honey?" asked the nurse kindly, "I think they'd understand if you rescheduled."

"No, I need to keep this one and I'm already late. Besides-" Nella laughed, "I don't think I can drive while the aspirin is working. I must be becoming a lightweight."

Nella was still desperately scrubbing the hem of her skirt with a wet towel when Mr. Courtlen walked into the infirmary.

"I heard Dr. Rider has been injured-" he began speaking to the nurse.

Nella looked up and dropped the towel into the red laundry bin. "I'm okay," she said, more brightly than she felt, "I'm sorry I'm late, I was just trying to clean up." She waved her good hand across the remaining bits of blood.

"Of course, no need to apologize."

"I'll be right there. I've just got to get some books out of the car that Dr. Pazzo wanted."

"Let me do that for you."

Nella hesitated.

"You're injured," said Mr. Courtlen, "I won't search for any case notes or anything, I swear." Mr. Courtlen held up his right hand and grinned.

Nella fumbled for the keys. "Thank you," she said, "There is a box in the trunk."

"No problem." Frank closed his hand around the keys, brushing her palm with the tips of his fingers. He was so warm. Nella kept expecting his skin to be cold and damp like an Infected. She shook her head. She had to stop thinking of the Cured as they had been when they first woke up. It had been six years since the Infected had started being Cured. Did she really know no one else who had been Cured? She was startled to realize that she did not. She didn't even know what happened to them after they left the medical camps she had worked in. Oh, she knew that a great deal of them- something like thirty percent committed suicide and almost half of those remaining had lasting psychological problems like depression and addictions. It was constantly in Sevita's broadcasts. But Nella didn't know how or where they lived, if they kept to themselves or mingled with the Immune population. But then, Nella reasoned, she didn't even know her next door neighbors.

She was late to meet Dr. Pazzo. Nella put herself back together as best she could and headed back down the hallway to the common room.

"We're All Villains"

"Good morning, Dr. Rider. I had heard there was some unpleasantness with Miss Connelly this morning. Do you wish to reschedule?" Dr. Pazzo tried to look gentle and sympathetic, but his desiccated skull made him look sinister instead. Nella tried to sit at the plastic picnic table without thumping her wounded hand.

"No, thank you Dr. Pazzo, I'm fine."

"Good, good. I have all the time in the world of course, but the world- well, the world doesn't have all that much time left in it. So better to have this over quickly."

“You keep saying that Dr. Pazzo. Care to tell me why you think the world is in danger?” asked Nella.

“We’ll get to that,” said Dr. Pazzo and Nella swallowed a smirk at his deflection. “As I said, I hate to repeat myself, so we’ll wait for Mr. Courtlen before we go into it. I want to show you both some of the video diaries I made during the onset of the Plague. I requested that they be made available for my defense after I was Cured and taken into custody.”

“So you knew even at the beginning of the Plague that you would be arrested?”

“Come now, Dr. Rider. That’s not really the question you wanted to ask. Drop the therapist facade and have some intestinal fortitude.”

“Very well. Are you saying that you knew how devastating this Plague would be from the very beginning?”

Dr. Pazzo grinned, but it was a bitter, angry grin. His teeth glimmered like fresh boiled bone. “Yes,” he said.

“Yet you warned no one? You just waited to be caught?”

Dr. Pazzo sighed. “What could I have done? The bacteria had already been released. I had even taken Ann to the hospital during the incubation period because the symptoms didn’t match what was expected. When I realized that it was, in fact, *our* bacteria that caused her aggression and irrationality, the best I could do is isolate us and hope that we hadn’t been infectious to others yet. Of course, I didn’t know Dr. Schneider would be able to break out. I had hoped someone would find my notes, but I never dreamed we’d survive to be *put* on trial.”

“Would you have fled if you’d known you would end up here?”

Dr. Pazzo frowned and his face was filled with gothic angles, a breathing statue. “No. There was no fleeing from this. Besides, I hate it when the villains get away in the end.”

“Do you think *you* are a villain Dr. Pazzo?”

“Is anyone who is now living *not* a villain? Did you really not kill *anyone* in the past eight years to survive? Or let someone else die so you could escape?”

Nella was silent, watching the guard behind Dr. Pazzo shift self consciously. The prisoner’s voice rose and his face began to blanch. “Oh, but those were just ‘zombies’ you killed, right doctor? Just monsters without compassion, without souls. Wrong!”

Dr. Pazzo slammed his open hand down on the table and bright droplets of spit flew from his frowning mouth. Nella didn’t flinch, but sat calmly, as if she were the calm heart of a storm.

“Those people were *ill* Dr. Rider. Not only did the Immunes kill sick

people, they killed sick people who ultimately could have been *cured*. People that could have led normal lives again. People with spouses and parents and siblings. People with children. Tell me doctor, do you really think the Immune survivors deserved to live any more than the Infected?”

“Of course not,” answered Nella in a steady, clear voice, but her heart slammed angrily into her rib cage. *There wasn't supposed to be a cure*, she thought, *they TOLD us they were mindless, relentless. A victim of their own urges. Unnatural and utterly incurable. That's what the government said from the beginning. How were we supposed to know that was wrong?*

Mr. Courtlen walked into the room with the box of books. Nella looked at his open, friendly face, partly shattered with scars, and was stricken with guilt. She did not let it show.

“Don't mistake me doctor,” continued the prisoner, “I'd have done the same in your place in order to survive. My point was simply that we are all guilty now. Murderers and looters, each of us.”

Dr. Pazzo paused in time to observe Nella watching Mr. Courtlen. He squinted, making his shrunken eyes even smaller and more menacing. “Even Frank here. You wouldn't think it to see that gentle, honest face, but that's why he makes such a good criminal defense attorney. Do you know, Dr. Rider, how they found him when he was Cured?”

“Dr. Pazzo, this is neither the time nor the company to discuss my-” Mr. Courtlen began quickly, but the prisoner spoke over him.

“He was covered in infected bites and scratches from the child that originally brought the Plague into his bunker. He had a festering bullet hole through his hand and into his shoulder where his wife, an Immune, had shot him in a desperate attempt to survive and a jagged slice taken out of his face from the same battle. For months his body suffered infection, his flesh rotting around him untreated. For months his brain, that intelligent, articulate mind that he's always had, was reduced to indiscriminate rage, tormenting hunger and pain. Around him were the clean, gnawed bones of his wife and the child. He *ate her alive* Dr. Rider. You've had just a hint of that this morning. You can't imagine what a brutal death it must be. I hope he started with her throat so she didn't have to suffer long.” Mr. Courtlen dropped the box of books on the table and walked out of the room without speaking. “And when he woke up, he was so traumatized he couldn't speak for months. Who was the villain? Maybe the question should be who are the good guys? Because they don't seem to be around any more.”

Dr. Pazzo coolly picked through the books. Nella sat in silent shock for a moment.

“You think I'm naive,” she said quietly, “But if you've done your research,

you know I've worked with the Cured for six years now. The conditions they survived in no longer surprise or frighten me, they just make me sad. I realize you are feeling powerless and are frantic to change the dynamic by shocking me or withholding what you seem to think is vital information. And I know you are trying to feel more powerful by exposing Mr. Courtlen, but I'm warning you, it's going to backfire. It's in your best interest at this point to be civil toward anyone who is trying to help you. The world isn't on your side. Mr. Courtlen is."

Dr. Pazzo stared at her. He turned toward one of the guards. "Would you please fetch my lawyer? I want to have this over with as soon as possible. Thank you." He smiled sweetly at the officer and Nella felt a stone growing cold and tight in her belly.

When Mr. Courtlen returned, Nella blushed in empathetic embarrassment. He sat next to her without looking at her. Dr. Pazzo sat alone on the far side of the table. Nella stood up abruptly. "You know," she said, "I think I *will* postpone this meeting. After everything that's happened, I don't think I'm comfortable continuing today. Dr. Pazzo, I will see you tomorrow instead," she turned to Mr. Courtlen and held out her unbitten hand. "I'm so sorry for wasting your time Mr. Courtlen." She tried not to flinch as the rough scar tissue in his palm brushed against her. Dr. Pazzo sneered and pretended to ignore them, his face ugly with anger.

Nella was halfway down the hall when Mr. Courtlen caught up. "I would have told you, eventually. Everyone knows the story," he said, and she stopped and looked at him. "It's not even that original of a story, I'm sure hundreds of people have a story that's similar." He blushed as he met her eyes, "Still, I wish he hadn't told you that way. I'm sorry."

Nella was quiet for a long moment. "Are you hungry?" she said at last.

"What?" asked Mr. Courtlen, confused.

"It's been a pretty awful day. For both of us." Nella held up her bandaged hand. "I'm done for today. How about you?"

Frank smiled and the tension seemed to slide out of his limbs. "Yeah, I'm done feeling like a punching bag for today too."

"Come on," she said, and pulled out the extra dose of aspirin the nurse had given her. "I'll buy you lunch if you'll drive."

The Diner

They ended up at a diner. Nella hadn't ever been inside before, and it was

busy, catering mostly to the electric plant's workmen and laborers from the Farm. She was surprised and pleased to be surrounded by so many others. Frank worked his way through the crowd to the back and found them a table. Nella sat down, her head a little dizzy.

"Are you okay?" asked Frank, leaning over the table toward her.

Nella grinned in genuine comfort. "Yes, I just haven't heard this many voices talking at once in- I don't know, years? Do you eat here a lot?"

Frank shrugged, "Once in a while. They have good food and I know many of the regulars." He looked around with a smile. "Not the kind of place you'll be able to talk confidentially though," he said, raising his voice to be heard. They were late for the lunch rush and the diner soon emptied, but the comfortable bustle of the waitstaff and kitchen still filled it with life and warmth and Nella was happy they had come.

"How's your hand?" asked Frank. She opened and closed it gently.

"Sore, but not too bad. It should be okay in a few days."

"Look, I'm sorry for how Dr. Pazzo acted today. He's not usually like this."

Nella shook her head. "You're his lawyer, not his mother. You aren't responsible for what he says. Besides, he's just flexing his muscles, trying to make us both uncomfortable."

An older lady with an eyepatch and a clawmark wriggling down her arm gently laid a cup of grain coffee in front of them. Nella smiled at her and Frank thanked her. He turned back to Nella, absently stirring the cup although there was neither sugar nor milk on the table.

"Aren't you?" he asked.

"Am I what?"

"Uncomfortable."

"I worked in the Cure camps for two years. It was my job to listen to far worse stories than yours. Before that, I worked in a mental hospital where I heard stories beyond anything Dr. Pazzo has up his sleeve. He's going to have to try a lot harder to shock me." She leaned forward and put her hand near his on the table. "You shouldn't let him make you uncomfortable either. He's only trying to make himself feel more powerful."

Frank smiled, but it wasn't a happy smile. "Nothing he's said isn't true." He put down the spoon and slid back, his legs brushing by hers as they stretched out.

"Just because he aired your dirty laundry doesn't mean nobody else has any. Including him. And Mr. Grant." Nella frowned at the bad taste his name left in her mouth. She looked up and saw Frank watching her. She smiled gently. "And me," she said.

He was silent, but he continued to watch her. She blushed. The waitress brought their food.

“Why did you agree to do this trial?” he asked.

“The simplest answer is that I was asked to do it. You don’t really say no to the Military Governor if he asks you for a favor. And he told me about Ann. I hope that I can help her. He told me it would be one of the most important trials in history we needed to be sure that it was fair.” Nella sighed. “Although, from the attitudes of the people I’ve spoken with, that seems to be an incredibly optimistic view.”

“Dr. Rider, I know I said that acquitting Dr. Pazzo wasn’t my goal-”

Nella shrugged. “You were just being realistic,” she interrupted.

“I hope this world is still as decent as you seem to think it is. I hope that, whatever the outcome, the trial is fair. I just don’t expect it.”

They ate in a comfortable silence. The waitress brought their check. Nella sighed. “What’s wrong? Is your hand hurting?” Frank asked.

Nella smiled. “No, I just don’t want to leave yet. This was nice. Well, this part of the day anyway.”

Frank laughed. “Really? I haven’t just depressed you more?”

“It’s nice to just be able to be me and not a psychiatrist for a while. Even if our conversation wasn’t light. It’s nice to be around normal people, doing normal things.”

“We can come back.”

Nella smiled and paid the bill.

The day had turned gray and dull as they returned to the prison. Yesterday’s snow was slithering into the gutters in dirty silver slumps. Frank stopped the car next to hers. “Has the aspirin worn off enough? Will you be okay to get home?” he asked.

Nella slid out of the car. “I’m fine,” she said, “and I’ll go slow. It’s not like there’s much to run into any more.”

“That’s true. But if it snows-”

“It’s okay, I’m just down the road. I’ll see you tomorrow.” She began to shut the door and changed her mind. She leaned down to see Frank’s face. “Mr. Courtlen- maybe it’s not my place to say- we don’t know each other that well. But since no one else seems to have told you, I guess I will. You don’t deserve to be treated the way Mr. Grant and Dr. Pazzo did today. What you did when you were sick- none of us can say we were any better. Not the Cured or the Immunes.” Nella blushed. “Okay, good night,” she said and shut the door before he could respond.

She found he had parked in the same spot the next morning and half

expected him to be sitting in his car in the same clothes as the day before. But he was inside already, laughing with Officer Kembrey. Terry, the nervous soldier, was nowhere in sight.

“Good morning Dr. Rider,” said Stan, “I heard you were injured. Are you feeling better today?”

“Yes,” Nella lied. The pain had been flashy and sizzling all morning and the willow tea she’d had was a very poor substitute for the little aspirin pills she’d run out of.

“Good. You’ll be glad to know that Ann has been doing fine today, thanks to your orders and we haven’t heard a peep.”

“That’s great news. Maybe we’ll start to make some progress now.”

Stan exchanged a quick glance with Mr. Courtlen. Nella ignored it. “I guess you’ll be wanting Frank then,” he said.

Nella smiled. “If you’re ready Mr. Courtlen.”

“As I’ll ever be,” said Frank, “Have a good day Stan.”

Officer Kembrey waved them off. “How long have you two known each other?”

“Stan? He was at the prison before I even got here. We play poker sometimes with a group. And I introduced him to his wife. She was in the same Cure camp as me. He’s a good friend.”

They had reached the dented metal door. “Last chance. You can go home and call in sick if you want,” said Frank with a grin.

“No,” sighed Nella, “let’s get this over with.”

Dr. Pazzo was already sitting at the plastic picnic table as if he’d never left. Nella sat down across from him. Mr. Courtlen sat next to her rather than crossing to his client. She guessed that he hadn’t forgiven him for yesterday yet.

“We’re all ready then?” Dr. Pazzo asked brightly, as if nothing had happened, “Good, let’s start the show.”

A guard wheeled in an old black television set and Nella took advantage of Dr. Pazzo’s distraction. She lightly squeezed Frank’s arm and gave him a comforting smile when he looked over at her. She was relieved that he smiled back.

Infection

“This is video diary number thirty-five in the Recharge Project. I am Dr. Gerta Schneider. Assisting is Dr. Robert Pazzo and Anne Connelly.”

Nella stared at the attractive blonde woman on the screen. She could swear

she'd seen the woman somewhere, but she couldn't place the memory.

"As previous videos have stated, the goal of the Recharge Project is to develop a vector that can administer both a dopamine pre-cursor and amphetamine to the brain for a very specific amount of time. The goal being to provide those with high pressure occupations such as police officers, medical personnel or soldiers with a safe and effective alternative to pharmaceutical substitutes."

A very young Dr. Pazzo spoke up from the background. "We also want to address long term treatments for post traumatic stress. Don't forget to say that."

"Yes Robert, I was just going to get to that," said Dr. Schneider, but Nella thought she looked anything but gracious. Dr. Schneider turned back to the camera, her arms crossing her chest. "We have encountered numerous pitfalls while choosing a vector, trying to find a harmless bacteria that is resistant to most commonly prescribed antibiotics, so that it will be effective in a majority of cases without complications. We also needed to find a bacteria that could easily infect the central nervous system without causing inflammation which could cause side effects. At last, we have chosen a weak strain of antibiotic resistant streptococcus. It should not make the host ill, but can withstand courses of almost all antibiotics on the market today, ensuring that this will benefit almost everyone. This video diary is being made to document our first animal test."

The screen blinked for a minute and was suddenly focused on a window into a room filled with cages.

"Wait, can you pause this please?" asked Nella.

The guard paused the video and Dr. Pazzo looked at her expectantly. "Are you having trouble with the jargon Dr. Rider?" he asked.

"I don't think so," she said, "From what I understand you were trying to make a natural drug that caused euphoria, alertness and extra focus without causing side effects."

"That's correct."

"But you chose a virtually unstoppable bacterium as your delivery system, why?"

"Well, we chose to use bacteria in order to get a more natural bump in delivery as opposed to a huge spike that would come from injecting a drug. It was meant to be used to aid people, not for recreation."

"No," said Mr. Courtlen suddenly, "I don't think Dr. Rider was asking why you chose bacteria, I think her question was why you chose an *incurable* one."

Nella could see the scar on his cheek flashing red against his pale face. His voice was steady but she could see his anger rising.

"If we'd chosen something susceptible to antibiotics it would have been

wiped out before it even had a chance to work. Anytime it was given to someone who had caught an STD or the flu and went to the doctor and was given a round of medicine, it would have killed a more vulnerable strain. Besides, it was supposed to be weak, so the host's body would naturally defeat it, but not until after the amphetamine and dopamine precursor were delivered. It was incurable because it was *supposed* to be harmless."

"So what happened?" Mr. Courtlen hissed.

Dr. Pazzo shifted nervously in his seat. "Watch and see," he said and indicated that the guard should start the video again. The screen again showed the window into the room with animal cages. Two figures in light blue biohazard suits came into view. One of them pressed a button near the window and spoke into the intercom.

"We are administering the first dose via injection. After today, this room's air will be filtered in a closed system where the streptococcus bacteria that the animals breathe out will be refreshed with more amphetamine and dopamine precursors. The goal is to monitor both short and long term effects of exposure." The speaker was Dr. Pazzo. The other figure was busy opening one cage door after another and administering the bacteria.

"For this series of tests we are using Macaque monkeys."

A young woman stepped in front of the camera smiling. "For all my animal rights friends, I just want you to know for the record, we've done our research, this should be completely harmless to the monkeys. They should feel happier and more alert. Also, they are only in the cages for the administration of the injections. You'll be happy to know that the room behind me opens into a communal living area for the Macaques once they have received their injection."

"Thank you Ann," said Dr. Pazzo.

Nella could actually hear the eye roll in his voice. She felt a pang of sadness as the pretty young woman walked out of frame. So that was Ann as she had once been. The video reeled on, silent now as the two doctors administered the injections.

"Was Ann your student?" she asked.

"No, she was Gerta's intern. She was in all ways the responsible party when it came to Ann's fate." Dr. Pazzo's mouth twisted, as if he'd tasted something rotten.

"Ann's fate?"

"Just watch," Dr. Pazzo spat.

Someone focused the camera more closely on the cages but the animals seemed calm and Nella was unsurprised when the screen went black a few moments later.