

The Cure

Michael stands at his desk in the lab with the results in his hand. He can't believe it. He gasps, his body deciding between the reaction to cry or scream, but the shock of it all leaves him still. The room is sterile and white, his gloves white, the cure, yellow. As he walks out clutching the negative vile in his palm he feels the little itchy feeling under his arms, the sweat, and pulse jumping. How will they react? Will they even believe him? He sits down in his office chair wondering. The next step is to pick up the phone. He leans back still clutching, fingernails breaking through, the light brown palm showing through the rips.

"Hello, Mr. President. I have the cure."

Who knew reporter could get to his location so quickly? Granted, people had turned to many different, far more ludicrous -that is before turning to the dangerous- theories and methods. This should be good for the people. They should view it as a gift-- cheap and easy to come by, it's just... Why was this making him so nervous? Standing there, the chill and surrounding army of microphones and cameras made him shiver. It was appropriate though, because this moment he knew, was going to be the biggest news of human history. The virus that spread all those years ago, killing off one third of the nation, maybe the world, -no one knew the count of numbers for sure, it was still rising and countries weren't

exactly sharing either- might be close to an end. The silence was so loud as he opened his mouth to speak.

“Bananas.” More silence. They were waiting for an explanation, but there was none.

“Bananas, people. The cure!” he held up the vial, the results reading negative for the virus.

“It’s the answer!” They stared at him and the gears in their mind must have all clicked into motion at once.

“Bananas. Is this some kind of joke?”

“Where are your credentials?”

“What if I don’t like bananas?”

“Can’t we take it in pill form?”

“Will infusing it into lotion work or is it better as a direct banana to skin smashing application?”

The questions swarmed him, but no one really heard the answer, just a banana with every meal, and maybe if they start now, if the virus hasn’t progressed enough, they will live as long as they might’ve before they got infected. The simple press conference turned into shouting and pushing until he had to get escorted away.

Michael didn't know if the ride to Washington was for a reward or a punishment. In the six months since his discovery, he'd worked with communities in 20 states to set up banana distribution centers. Greenhouses suited just for banana growth, but the people still hadn't really gotten on board yet.

He couldn't believe he was truly in the Oval Office, guards dismissed, alone with the President. He looked tired, as most do halfway into their second term, but Michael could tell after seeing thousands of cases that the watery red eyes, and pale, purplish sheen to his skin were the signs of the virus spreading, and soon there would be no coming back.

"Have you been eating your recommended amount Sir?"

President Collen sighed, "Doctor. You know as well as I do that all borders have permanently been shut down only a few days after your announcement."

"Yes, Sir." Should he feel responsible for this?

"The Russians, Koreans, Brazilians, they are all holding tight onto their supply and better yet their secrets. Now is there anything you're not telling me? Is there any other way? A

way that you can't necessarily share with the public?" He stared into Michael's eyes, the desperation really showing now.

"Sir, I understand, but no, Mr- Mr. President. One Banana, with every meal. That's all."

"Son, I just- I just don't like bananas."

Michael looked down and shook his head and stood up to leave. "I'll be going now." He walked out leaving the President with his head in his hands.

It'd been two years and Michael sat on his new porch in a loose tee and sneakers, lab coat long dismissed. He picked this house because of its view and despite of its dead owners, every house in this neighborhood had them anyways. In the last stages of the disease people became desperate and installed mini stalks outside their homes, the air becoming humid and warm. It was long ago suggested, but by the final stage it was too late. He'd buried the bodies out back throwing old and rotten peels in the dirt with the lifeless families.

It kept him busy, broke up the silence finding and burying the dead. A shame but at least he got to work out and do something useful daily. The people who actually listened were the already crazed end of worlders who were already tucked away in their dens and barricades. The sunset was especially beautiful that night, and he was getting quite used to

the sounds of the wild and nature. Who knew it would only take a few months for nature to take over a once thriving city; compounded by the fact that in those stressful times of panic, people engineered even more chaos -- animals freed, stores raided, lower levels of governments overthrown and shut down. Michael chocked down his last bite of banana for that meal, washing it down with a beer. He chuckled at the irony of a virus that gives you a sickly aversion to its simple cure. At least they weren't going to waste, these banana stalks. Every evening some of the freed monkeys from the local zoo would usually come by. He named one of them Fred.

Fred ran across the street, picking up some of the fallen fruit, peeling and munching as he went. He looked over to Michael and ran to his porch, sitting with his feet on the railing. There they sat, Michael and Fred, munching casually on lost mankind's cure, enjoying the view.