Dexter pulled out a cigar and bit off one end. Lighting it he started smoking the Cuban Delight. In front of him were several video monitors. Each monitor was trained on a bed in the living complex. Ten monitors watching ten different people. As he smoked his cigar, Dexter smirked. Ten people all his for the molding. In due time he would find out what made each of them tick, what would cause them the most pain and what their breaking point was.

Zooming in on an empty bed, Dexter tilted his head. His hand hovering over the call button. He loved the call button. In a minutes notice he could have a squad rush into each room for a complex wide search. The sponsors of the race expected perfection. It was up to him to deliver that perfection. Inching closer to the button his fingers felt itchy. He was about to press it when another monitor caught his eye.

Susan and John were on the screen making love. Dexter laughed. If that is what they called it these days. What they were doing was more than making love. He moved his hand away from the button and relaxed. They deserved a moment of pleasure. Who didn't? He watched them for a while longer like a little kid who had just found their father's issue of Playboy. Finally turning his attention away from the monitors, he moved across the room to other displays.

Dexter read over the output of the displays. He printed off copies meant for his superiors and the media. Opening a nearby safe, he put the printouts inside and locked it up. Dexter then walked back over to the video monitors and made a backup copy of video 24 and erased the footage. He didn't have to provide data about the race until it actually started and that wasn't until tomorrow. His superiors didn't need to know about certain indiscretions of a few prison parolees. It was good to be in charge. He could do whatever he wanted. Feed people what he wanted them to see.

Dexter felt like a king. True he wasn't an actual king, but from his palace of data feeds. It sure felt like it. Dexter took another puff of his cigar and sat back down in his chair in front of the video monitors. He had a feeling it would be a long night. Kinda of like Christmas Eve. He was like a kid waiting to see if Santa was real and awaited on the presents that would be waiting for him in the morning. In this case, the presents were people. Oh how he would enjoy this round of the race.

Dexter had been in charge of the race for the past four years. His predecessor, who had been his wife for ten years, had entered the race herself and lost. Dexter remembered how his wife had died. Tripped on a landmine. The news feed and anchors had depicted her the winner. It was an unfortunate accident.

He pulled the cigar out of his mouth and pressed the lit end into his palm. It hadn't been right for her to die the way she did. It just wasn't right in his eyes. Dexter looked back to the video feed of 24, back to the couple making love. They didn't deserve any of this. He thought. Prisoners didn't deserve a second chance.

Dexter picked up a picture of his wife and looked into her eyes. Happy and full of life. Talk about a premature death. In all the years of the race, more dangers came into existence. This year was different. Much different. Prisoners were allowed in the race, as were other surprises. Dexter put the picture back down. He focused back on the couple.

They were carefree. Hell they were free. Free from the labor camps, the hazing rituals from the other inmates that was common in institutes of detention. They were happy. Too happy. Dexter knocked the picture of his wife off the desk, it went flying and landed on the ground with a crash.

He looked to the floor where the picture had fallen. The glass was cracked. Leaning down he picked it up. Scraping a piece of glass against his artificial leg, it made a scraping sound. It reminded Dexter of fingernails against a chalkboard.

If it were up to him, he would introduce a few surprises of his own into the race. In time maybe he would. Someone would have to pay for his wife's death.

Dexter hated the screens. Hated the peaceful look on people's faces. Especially the excited and peaceful look on that of 24. They deserved to be punished or at least embarrassed. It was his job to do so. That was one thing he enjoyed about his job. He didn't have to report to anyone. He placed the picture back on the desk, he would fix it in the morning. Noticing his finger shooting in pain, Dexter closed his hand into a tight fist. Almost knuckle white.

Blood started to trickle down his hand. Dexter looked over the damage. Nothing too serious just a light scratch from the glass. Looking at his artificial leg, Dexter chuckled. He had been through so much worse.

Dexter wrapped a handkerchief around his hand. He looked up at the monitor. The two people making love to each other. They would pay. His eyes scanned the rest of the monitors. They would all pay.

Looking back to the button Dexter grinned. He pressed it.

It was good to be king.