

## Chapter 2 – The Lab

### Description

Few updates before we get to the meat of this post.

“ I had my 25th birthday on July 24th. Went to work, but ended up going out with people afterwards, and had a good time. Thanks to everyone who was there, you guys rock!

“ The weather in Ottawa is f-ed up. We have had rain almost every day for 2 weeks.

“ I have discovered scientist tweeters on Twitter. LOVE IT!

And now, after a much delayed release, here is the third part in my ongoing web-novel series entitled, “The Black.” I have decided to name the posts in which they are featured the titles of the chapters (for easier reference).

Here are the [Prelude](#) and [Chapter 1](#)

Enjoy!!

Chapter 2

I finally arrived at work, a full 20 minutes late, but there was a huge line at the security checkpoint.

“Shit, Dr. Thomson is going to be pissed,” I said to myself.

*Quick side note: Security was always such a big deal for ANUBIS. I mean, it’s understandable, as we dealt with many pending patents and experimental drugs. Seems like such a waste of time, as nothing ever happened – that is, until today.*

“Hi John!” I said, as I passed through the metal detector to the next line, where John was examining everyone’s employee IDs.

“Hey Roger. Man, you look like shit,” said John with a sly smirk on his face as he took my ID and scanned it into the machine.

*John Johnson was a black man in his prime. His face was inviting and friendly, but his body would have made Achilles jealous. He was a very intimidating figure, and god help you if you got him angry. As John himself was so fond of saying, “elf someone really pissed me off, I’d break them into three separate pieces.” And, the toothy smile that always followed that, made you really believe that he could, and probably would.*

Naturally, I laughed and said, “Yeah, my alarm kicked my ass this morning. It was a tough night, you know?”

As if sensing my demeanor, John put his right hand on my left shoulder and said softly, “You ok man?”

“I mean, I don’t want to pry, but heard about you and Rachel. I’m sorry. I know you loved her, and I feel terrible for introducing you to her.”

“You didn’t deserve what happened to you.”

*John introduced me to Rachel at the Halloween party last year. Our costumes matched perfectly, I was Sherlock Holmes and she was Watson. It was like it was fate, which I never believed in before.*

*But, after all that happened next, how could I not?*

“I’m okay man. It sucked for a bit, but the pain has slowly subsided,” I said, staring at the floor.

And John, in all his wisdom, knew not to press the issue and just gave me a pat on the back.

“You should hurry up,” he said. “I mean, you’re really, really late. Doctor Thomson is going to have your ass!!!!”

And with that, I bolted down the hallway and down the stairs to the underground Thompson lab. I jumped down the stairs as fast as I could, feeling the bones and tendons in my legs straining under the repeated movement. When I reached the sub-basement, I threw open the door and ran down the hall, took a left and then a right, finally reaching the lab door.

“Well Roger, I’m glad that you finally decided to show up,” said Dr. Thompson, with a visible scowl on his face.

That wasn’t anything new, as the balding man always scowled.

“I’m sorry sir,” I said, biting my tongue at the verbal abuse that my brain was screaming back at him. That was something I learned after a few very similar occurrences to these, when I was punished for my “disobedience.”

Honestly, you’d learn to hold your tongue too, if you had to clean out the monkey laxative experiment cages.

“Well, get back to work,” shouted Dr. Thompson. And he retreated to his office, where he slammed the door.

I then, after a sigh of relief, walked to my station and began getting ready for the day. I washed up, put on my lab coat, affixed the goggles to my head (for easy access should I need them), lay out my dissection kit, put on gloves and sterilized my work area.

I walked into the adjoining room and spoke to Jen, our other lab technician, whose sole responsibility is taking care of the animals.

*Ahhh, Jen. She was very pretty, with light brown hair and caring eyes. As biologists, we’re not supposed to name the animals, but she always did (usually after celebrities). We had flirted back and forth occasionally, and I considered asking her out. But, then Rachel came into the mix.*

Ever since Rachel and I broke up, thereâ€™s been a little bit of a resurgence in the flirting, but not by much. But, my attitude did perk up a little when I saw her.

â€œHey Jen!â€ I said, smiling.

â€œHey Roger!â€ she said in her lovely sing-songey voice.

â€œWow, you look like shit.â€

â€œHahahaha,â€ I laughed. â€œJohn said the exact same thing.â€

Jen smiled mischievously, which made her look even more attractive, and said, â€œYeah, I know. He texted me a minute ago, and told me to tell you that.â€

I gave her a mildly flirtatious grin, followed by a punch in the arm, with a dash of more force than was probably warranted.

â€œLetâ€™s get back to work, shall we?â€

â€œFine, fine, you party pooper,â€ said Jen, rubbing her shoulder. â€œWe have a few trials on tap for today, mostly with the Partridges and Bradyâ€™s.â€

After noticing the confusion on my face, she added, â€œRemember, the P and B mice for the memory drug trial? I named the families the Partridges and the Bradyâ€™s.â€

â€œRight, I remember.â€ I said. â€œWhich are the control, and which are the trial mice?â€

â€œThe Bradyâ€™s are the trial mice, and they are located on lab bench 1â€, said Jen.

â€œThe Partridgeâ€™s are located on lab bench 2. The trial drug is located in the fridge with a â€˜Pâ€™ label, and beside that is a vial of saline for the control mice with a â€˜B.â€™â€

â€œThanks, darlinâ€™,â€ I said with a smirk. â€œSame old deal, one shot into the spinal?â€

â€œNo problem, itâ€™s my job! And you are right, 15 ccâ€™s into the spinal cord,â€ she replied with a smile, as I turned and walked back into the main lab.

Seeing the two cages filled with rats, I grabbed both and placed them on my bench, before grabbing the medication.

In the fridge, there were two vials, B & P.

B was a new test drug called Agent 3266. Not the most catchy name, but if it works, the marketing guys would have a go at it. Beside it was the P vial, containing good old saline, for the control rats.

I took both vials out, put the in a holder and transported them to the lab bench.

Looking around, I realized I had forgotten where I left the most important piece of equipment.

â€œHey Jen!â€ I yelled.

“Yeah?” came the voice from the other room.

“Where’s the auto-injector?”

“In the drawer with the orange tape on it!”

“Thanks!” I yelled.

I opened the drawer and saw it: the new painless auto-injector.

*It was specifically purchased to eliminate unnecessary pain in lab animals, and as I was about to realize, humans too.*

### Category

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