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*“What a caterpillar calls death, we call a butterfly”*

Unknown

*“That is one of the privileges here at the clinic: We provide a remedy for death.”*

Hubert Langwein, M.D., Ph.D.

*“You’re opening very dangerous doorways! Once they’re open, there’s no stopping what may come through from the other side!”*

Katherine Remington, Ph.D.

## **THE HAUENFELDER CLINIC**

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## ***THE CHOSEN ONES***

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME that either of them had been in the Clinic's formal dining area: a long room decorated like the baronial hall of a Bavarian hunting lodge.

Apart from Parsons Couldsen, in whose honor the dinner was being held, they were the only Americans. The other staff members mostly ignored them, only partly because of language.

Doug Dalby had been a medical professor, specializing in neurosurgery and brain research. That was before the scandal broke, and before the murder of his wife and daughter. In the months since, he'd lost 30 pounds and his hair had gone fully white.

Kate Remington, tall, lean, dark-haired, was a psychologist specializing in Multiple Personality Disorder, also termed Dissociative Identity Disorder. It was a topic that made other researchers uneasy, and she had lost her grants. Coming to Hauenfelder Clinic in the Austrian Alps seemed her best choice . . . until she arrived to find she had been lied to: it was not in the Alps and not in Austria, but rather in a scenic but impoverished dictatorship forgotten since the collapse of the Soviet empire.

She had been here more than two months, while he had arrived only a couple of days ago, still trying to find his way around.

The dinner was unusually spartan for Hauenfelder, where the food, and especially the liquor and wine, were plentiful, though on the heavy side. Tonight they were served fish, rice, and steamed vegetables. There had been no cocktail hour, and they toasted with mineral water.

The menu confirmed Daulby's earlier guess: Couldsen had serious heart problems.

Parsons Couldsen, in whose honor the dinner was being held, sat at the head table along with Dr. Rausch.

The five visitors who had flown in that afternoon in Couldsen's helicopter—the American Senator, the British Opposition Leader, and the three mystery men—also sat at the head table, but were not introduced.

At the end of the meal, Rausch tapped his fork on a water glass and called for attention. "We now come to a special moment. We are all very grateful to Mr. Couldsen for the tremendous encouragement and support he has given our work from the start. Without his contribution, the Hauenfelder Clinic would literally not exist."

COULDSSEN PULLED HIMSELF TO HIS FEET AND took the microphone. They had seen him when he arrived in his helicopter, and then he looked as he did in the news stories on him as the Billionaire Media Baron—tanned, seemingly fit, a commanding presence. Now he seemed shrunken, his color worse.

After a pause to command attention, he began: "Most of you know how I came to support the research here. I had my first bad heart attack a few years ago, when I was way too damned young to die. What you may not know is just how close I came to not making it. I had what they call a Near-Death Experience, and found myself up at the Pearly Gates. There was an old guy with a beard there, smelling of week-old fish. 'I'm St. Peter,' he said. 'What's that in your briefcase?'"

"My money,' I told him. 'I'm having the rest sent up later.'"

"Didn't anyone ever tell you that you can't take it with you when you come here?"

"Can't take it with me? The *hell* with that!" I told him. "If I can't take it with me, then I'll stay with it! *Hell no, I won't go!* That's when I woke up in the hospital."

He paused for the laugh, then went on. "Seriously, I started doing some serious thinking, lying in that cardiac ward realizing

what a damned close call I'd had. It struck home how final death really is. I made up my mind that I wasn't ready to go, and damned well never *would* be ready. That's when I decided to do something about it—especially when they told me I wasn't a good candidate for a heart transplant.”

He sipped some water, then went on. “We are gathered here at the Hauenfelder Clinic, this magnificent laboratory of the future, because we are the chosen ones. Self-chosen by our achievements in the course of this first lifetime.”

He paused for effect, then went on: “We of this elite cohort are here because of our accomplishments, because we are the innovators, the leaders, the ones who *deserve* to live on.

“But there is only so much we can do in this one all-too-short lifetime we've been given, the proverbial ‘three score and ten.’ Three score and ten, or five score and whatever is not right for the people who are bringing about the better reality.

Couldsen paused for a sip of water. His face was noticeably more pale; his voice was weakening.

“We are the ones who *need* to live on, who *deserve* the remedy for death that is being manifested here. We are the trailblazers, the ones with intelligence, intellect, and creativity, the ones who *can* and *are* creating the world of the future, and we *should*, we *must* live on, for decades upon decades, for lifetime after lifetime!”

## **ATTACK**

RAUSCH TOOK THE MICROPHONE as Couldsen sat, visibly drained.

“Mr. Couldsen,” Rausch continued, “is unique in all the world. Rather, *was* unique. Until recently, there wasn’t another like him, anywhere in the universe.”

He paused, and the crowd clapped on cue.

“Then we began to think that if *one* Parsons Couldsen was such a good thing, why stop there? Why not *two* Parsons Couldsens? Better yet, why not *three*?”

Rausch’s wooden delivery made it obvious that he was reciting lines prepared for him by someone else.

A door at the end of the room opened, and five young men rode bicycles into the dining room. Daulby recognized the lead rider, who wore medical whites: Hans-Georg, the medical technician who had set him up in the flotation tank yesterday.

The other four wore tuxedos, looking strangely out of place on bicycles. Their faces were expressionless, and they seemed to focus only on the back of the rider ahead of them. The chain of bicyclists circled the long dining table once, twice, three times.

Daulby wondered why this sideshow, until he looked more closely at the faces of the four in tuxedos: all were identical. Quadruplets? He asked himself. Then the reality struck.

“It’s incredible! It’s ghastly!” Kate exclaimed at that moment. “They’re *all* Couldsen! *Four more Couldsens! Young versions of him!*”

The room erupted into applause, and Couldsen took back the mike. “Looks like them boys come from good stock. Great work, folks.”

THE LIGHTS DIED abruptly, leaving the room lit only by the table candles. As they watched, bewildered, a gust of air moved up the table, blowing out most of the candles.

“Was it something I said?” Couldsen chortled.

“This is an old building,” Von Schwalbenbach said. “Perhaps the wiring needs to be repaired.”

“Goddam it, you already *had* it rewired! I saw the damned bills. For what it cost, seems you wired the place with gold.”

If the power is off, Daulby wondered, then why is the public address system still working?

The room was pitch-black. A sudden metallic wail filled the darkness. Daulby covered his ears against it but the shriek cut through, now breaking into a sound that seemed like shrill metallic laughter.

A heavy thump by the front table, the sound of someone falling. A terrified scream, “*Hilfe! Hilfe!* Help me!” cut off by the sounds of gurgling, gasping.

The electricity flashed back on, as startling as lightning, revealing a clump of men struggling to pull one of the tuxedo-clad bicyclists away from a body on the floor by the head table.

The three other bicyclists stood by the wall, stationary, mute, faces impassive.

Hans-Georg, helped by Von Schwalbenbach and a couple of the other staff, yanked the attacker to his feet. His expression shifted from wild passion back to the expressionless mask he had worn earlier. His tuxedo was torn and rumpled. His bloodied hands gripped a leather belt. They used the belt to strap his hands behind his back, then frog-marched him to another room.

Others helped Dr. Rausch back to his face. Blood gushed from his nose, and red marks were forming around his neck where the belt had been strangling him.

Couldsen sat frozen at the head of the table, his eyes locked wide open, all color drained from his face. Daulby wondered if he was dead.

“WHAT IN HELL possessed him—the Vehicle—to do that?”  
Daulby asked.

“Yes, exactly. *Possessed*—the perfect word.””

## **ARTIFICIAL TEENAGERS**

THE LIGHTS FLICKERED off again once, twice, then came on to stay. Some of the staff ran from the room; others sat, visibly stunned by what had happened.

Von Schwalbenbach came back and called out an invitation to a party in the swimming pool.

“Feel like a walk?” Daulby asked.

“I feel like getting as far away from here as possible,” Kate replied.

They headed for the lake. It was a warm evening; the air was still, and the lake was smooth and clear as glass. The lights of the village across the lake shimmered across the water like colored party lights.

They settled at a small gazebo on the end of a dock. They more sensed than saw the dark mountains that ringed the lake, great brooding presences in the night.

Daulby knelt on the dock and dipped his hand into the water. It was icy.

“Forget about swimming away from here,” Kate said. “It’s fed by glaciers, and never gets warm enough.”

“How did you know I was thinking that?” he whispered, settling back on the bench.

“Because I’ve been looking for a way out of here, from my first days. Not that I’d swim away, even if it were possible. I couldn’t leave Karen here with them.”

“Even if we could, there’s no safe place to swim to—we don’t even know where in hell we are—not even what *country* we’re in. is.”

“‘Where in hell’—you got it right first time. I think we *are* in hell, *trapped* in hell, with no way out.”

THE FULL MOON emerged from behind a cloud, throwing an eerie blue light on the dark mountains that surrounded them. The lights of the village across the water seemed tinier and more insignificant than before. And even farther away.

They sat quietly for a while, each lost in thought. Then Kate turned to him and asked, “What do you think about that incident at the end—the Vehicle going berserk and attacking?”

He shook his head. “I don’t know what to think. You tell me.”

“There are a number of possible explanations. First, of course, was the possible coincidence with the lights going out, and so forth, leading to some kind of mass hysteria. It *could* be that, but I don’t think so. You and I weren’t the only ones who felt it. Everyone experienced something— that was obvious from the faces.”

“People couldn’t wait to get away—away from that.”

“It seems that something tangible *did* happen, the question is just *what* it was. You comment then still seems totally on target. Remember what you said? ‘What in hell possessed the Vehicle to do what he—it—did?’ Underline the word ‘possessed’”

“I’m not . . . what is it you’re you suggesting? That he—the Vehicle—was possessed by some kind of . . . of malevolent spirit?”

“Isn’t that what the work here is all about? Facilitating just that kind of move—so people like Couldsen can move over and come back into fresh young bodies complete with all of this lifetime’s smarts already waiting there.”

SHE WAS SILENT for a while, then said, “That first day, when I arrived at Hauenfelder, I was enchanted by the place. With the mountains, the lake, the clear air, it seemed like I was living in a postcard fantasy. But then,” she shook her head and her voice dropped, “then I began to get very different feelings. As beautiful as it is here, I think there’s also a dark side.”

“Dark side?”

“The work being done at Hauenfelder is unnatural, and I think very dangerous. We saw that tonight. But even apart from that, I find there are strange, troubling . . . Let’s just say I feel strange *energies* operating here. *Malevolent* energies. *Angry* energies. Haven’t you felt things?”

“Neurosurgeons aren’t trained to recognize ghostly energies.” He didn’t want to talk about the strange sounds he’d heard, the strange sense of intruders in the night.

“The electrical effects, the lights flicking on and off, the noises on the sound system—those resemble the hallmarks of classic poltergeist activity.” She turned to him. “And certainly that bizarre episode with the Vehicle we all saw. You *are* familiar with the term poltergeist?”

He shrugged. “I half-watched a TV show on that stuff when I was wandering around after . . . after I lost my family. It got into poltergeists— phenomena like knocking in the walls, things flying through the air, strange malfunctions with electrical and electronic equipment. I remember a case that occurred in a law office in Germany. Among other things, the office phone supposedly dialed numbers on its own doing, hundreds of calls in an hour to the phone company’s automatic time clock. They were dialed much faster than any individual could punch in the numbers. Most of the time, the calls were made when no one was near the phone.”

She nodded. “That was probably the Rosenheim case, back in the late 1960’s. It’s a classic poltergeist effect, carefully researched by a university team. Even the skeptics agree that something extraordinary happened. But nobody is sure what really was going on. I could talk your ear off with other cases like that, investigated by competent scientists, most of whom arrived as skeptics.”

A cloud passed over the moon, and it suddenly seemed chilly. Kate continued: “In the majority of cases, poltergeist manifestations take place around early teen-agers.”

“Why teenagers?”

“There are no definitive answers, only theories. According to one theory, the material force to achieve these effects is gained from tapping the frustrated sexual energies of adolescents.”

He shook his head. “But there aren’t any teenagers here.”

“There *are* the Vehicles, which, in a sense, are *artificial* teenagers. They could be providing the energy. Or they might simply provide the *doorway* for other entities to come through.”

Daulby felt a chill in the still night as a ripple of wind moved across the lake. Another cloud moved across the moon, and it became very dark.

## **FOUR MONTHS EARLIER**

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## **CANNIBALS**

### **University Hospital. Chicago. 6:10 P.M.**

*Take me to the cannibal, Daddy. Please!*

Jenny's words echoed in Doug Daulby's mind. By now, Jenny and Jackie would be headed to the carnival. He wished he had gone with them to see the big smiles as Jenny swept past on the rides. She was already seven; how many more years would the carnival interest her?

He pushed the thought away to focus on the tiny creature on the operating table. Draped so that only the top of the head was exposed, it could almost pass for a human infant.

They were calling it Chimp Donnie.

He sliced across the shaved skull from ear to ear, then loosened the fascia, teasing the scalp to separate from the bone.

Daulby's prematurely white hair, his size — 210 pounds spread over six feet — and his booming voice, had earned him the nickname Doc Polar Bear.

But he still moved with the grace of the athlete he'd been, and his fingers, long and supple, had a sensitivity that amazed students. They seemed to function independently of his mind, allowing him to work fast in close tolerances without missing a beat in a conversation.

Tonight, he didn't feel like conversing. Tonight he just wanted to finish and get the hell out of there. He was wishing now that he'd never gotten into this, never even come up with the idea.

But now there was no going back.

When the incision was complete, he lifted the entire top of the chimp's skull free and put the skull section in a pan of Betadine solution to keep it sterile for replacement when the operation finished.

*Take me to the cannibal, Daddy.*

**REPLICA**

**Evanston, Illinois. 6:15 P.M.**

JENNY WAS Mrs. Benson's last student of the day, and when she saw her mother, she begged to stay "just another minute" to play the new piece she had learned.

Jackie blinked away tears as Jenny played. It was such a privilege to see a replica of herself as she'd been at seven, the same golden hair, the same angelic face she knew from her own old photos.

But Jenny, thank God, didn't have her tendency to chubbiness; that would make her life easier.

Jackie loved the elements of Doug she saw blended into their little creation. Definitely Doug's eyes, everybody said so. Maybe that meant she'd grow up to have Doug's intellect. But hopefully without his compulsive career drive. That would really be the ideal combination.

"She has remarkable talent for someone so young," Mrs. Benson whispered to Jackie. "She's such a wonderful little girl, such a wonderful personality, such a bright future ahead of her. You and Dr. Daulby must be very proud of her."

"We are," Jackie said, "she's the most wonderful thing that's ever happened."

"LET'S HAVE DINNER at Baskin-Robbins, then we can go to the cannibal," Jenny said as they left Mrs. Benson's. It was a quiet, tree-lined street of older, well-kept homes. There was little traffic here away from the main commuter routes.

"We need vegetables with our dinner," Jackie said, thinking how much she and Jenny would miss Doug tonight.

"We can have banana splits. The bananas and cherries will be our vegetables. Then we'll go to the cannibal."

Jackie dug out her car keys. What difference would it make if they lived it up on junk food for one night? Life is short. "Okay, sounds good to me. But it's just this one —"

She broke off when she saw two men materialize from behind a van. One held a gun.

This can't be happening! a voice inside her head screamed. It can't be! Not to us!

"Just give us your purse," one of the men said. He was thin, almost frail, with light blond hair and wire-framed glasses. We just want your money. Give us that and we won't hurt you or little Jenny."

Jackie fumbled for her wallet. Then it struck her: Jenny! Why did a mugger know Jenny's name?

She kicked, connecting with the man's leg, and he went down. She dove to swoop up Jenny. The second man grabbed her from behind and slapped a white cloth over her face. She sniffed the bite of ether. She tried to scream, but it was no use.

As her world went dark, she saw Jenny struggling against the grip of a third man, dressed in black. He pushed a white cloth against her face, and Jenny's movements slowed. Then her body went limp.

"Doug! Help us!" Jackie gasped as she blacked out.

## **CROSS-SPECIES CHIMERA**

*Take me to the cannibal, Daddy. please!*

Jenny's voice still echoed in his head. That had never happened before, never broken through his concentration, and he wondered why tonight.

Cannibal — carnival. The last vestige of her baby-talk, a family joke now.

But he couldn't take her to a carnival tonight. Not tonight, of all nights.

Tonight's work had taken months to set up. It *had* to be tonight. Tonight, or maybe never. The window of opportunity was open, and he had to slip through that window before the politicians and bureaucrats slammed it shut again.

Take me to the cannibal. Please!

*Cannibals!* The word struck him. Is *that* what we are tonight, feeding on one for the sake of another?

"Dr. Martinson is extracting the donor tissue now," one of the surgical nurses said.

He glanced through the glass wall to the second operating room where Martinson was working on the other subject, a human fetus aborted minutes earlier.

Martinson's role in opening the tiny soft head of the fetus was as exacting as his own. The fetus was 18 weeks, and weighed about a half-pound, with a head smaller than an orange. It would provide the material to implant into Chimp Donnie's brain.

The operation itself — implanting the human fetal brain cells into the brain of a young chimp — was certain to succeed: the two little creatures were nearly 99% genetically identical, so the human tissues should quickly grow into and become part of Chimp Donnie's brain.

Cross-species implants, human to animal and the reverse, were becoming common in the scientific community. There was even a term for the living creatures that resulted: *chimeras*, creatures with living parts from multiple species.

As far back as the 1980's there was the "geep"—an animal created in the laboratory by combining the embryos of a sheep and a goat. It grew up to look like a goat, though covered in patches of sheep's wool.

In another lab, they successfully grafted part of a quail embryo into a chicken embryo, resulting in a chicken with a quail's brain and characteristic sounds.

Who could forget the picture that went around the world of the mouse with the human ear growing on its back?

More recent experiments with chimerical creatures included the lamb fetuses into which human stem cells had been infused, resulting in the possibility that in time human livers could be grown in sheep for transplantation to ill humans.

Other researchers had transplanted human stem cells into the brains of baby mice, and the human cells had grown to make up about one percent of the mouse brain.

A team had implanted human stem cells into the brains of monkey fetuses and allowed them to grow there for a month. Autopsies conducted after the monkey fetuses were aborted revealed that the human neural cells had spread and grown throughout the monkey brains.

Most of those experiments had involved creating the chimeras at an early, fetal stage. But that would mean finding a pregnant female chimp, opening her under anesthesia, and operating on her fetus while it was still in the womb. That added layers of complexity that Daulby was not prepared to deal with now.

Daulby resolved to vault several steps, and implant from a human newborn, just aborted, to a chimp newborn.

Since human and chimp were genetically so close, it was virtually certain that the human cells would grow within the chimp without rejection. Hence the real question was whether the *larger* experiment would succeed. Would Chimp Donnie grow up to prove Daulby's hypothesis?

And if the experiment *was* successful? What then? What doorways would that open?

He knew he was risking his career as a researcher. He had set this experiment up in secret, he had not followed the protocols, he had not gotten clearance from the ethics committees and the layers of university and federal bureaucrats — and the politicians to whom they were beholden.

“Let’s just do it!” he’d finally decided at the end of the meeting with his core group. “If it succeeds, then our transgressions will be forgiven.”

The members of the team had laughed at the joke — hoping he was right.

THE IMPLANTS WERE IN PLACE, and Daulby was fitting the piece of skull back into Chimp Donnie’s head when the phone rang in the OR. Betty Reed took the call. They were short-staffed tonight — just the core team, for security — so work paused for the moment.

“Oh God!” she said, stumbling back against the wall. She looked across at Daulby, the color draining from her face. “It’s for you, Dr. Daulby. It’s about your wife.”

“A divorce lawyer at this time of the night?” he joked, hiding his concern.

“It isn’t that. Two policemen are outside to see you.”

“Jesus! Get that fetal tissue out of sight,” Martinson said. “Don’t let the cops see that.”

“That — that’s not the problem,” Betty said, slumping against the wall. “They found your wife’s car, and she’s — she and Jenny. Oh God!”

## **SEXY SALLY**

### **San Diego, California.**

THE JOURNEY TO HAUENFELDER had begun a month earlier in San Diego, the final day she worked with Sexy Sally.

*“But I don’t want to go! I like it here!”* Sexy Sally said. “I like partying and drinking and screwing. I don’t *want* to go, and you can’t *make* me.”

“But that life as Sally is finished,” Kate Remington said gently. “It finished in the car crash. Now you must leave so that Linda can be healthy. Your mother and sister are waiting to guide you over. Just relax and let it happen.”

“Sally” was stretched out on a recliner chair in the darkened office, while Kate—Katherine Remington, Ph.D.—sat at the edge of the room. Her doctorate was in psychology and counseling, with a specialty in what was termed Dissociative Identity Disorder, also known as Multiple Personality Disorder.

Kate was 32, tall and lean, with an attractive, gentle face, striking high cheekbones, warm brown eyes, and shoulder-length dark hair. She wore one of her trademark jogging suits, today pink. Jogging suits were comfortable to wear, and comfortable for the clients to be around.

Kate’s friendly smile and easy manner put patients at ease, so rapport built sooner. She gave no indication of the way her life had been shattered a few months earlier when Karen, her twin sister, was mugged outside her apartment. Days later, Kate’s fiancée was killed in a drive-by on his way home from the hospital.

KATE HAD BEGUN THE SESSION by leading Linda through the usual hypnotic induction, first relaxing her until she was almost oblivious to her present body and the present time, back to when it had all begun: A stepfather she called “Newdaddy.” A little girl, then aged eight, who hated the things Newdaddy did to her.

Then that little girl, the child Linda, found herself outside her body, watching what was happening. It didn’t hurt now, didn’t shame her any longer, because now it wasn’t happening to her.

Now it was happening to someone else, to someone who called herself Sally. Sally didn't mind the things Newdaddy did. Sally was always ready to step in when Newdaddy was doing the bad things. Once Sally arrived, Linda could go away.

"Now I'd like to speak to Sally," Kate said.

"The hell you want?" came the reply from Linda, but it wasn't Linda's voice, nor was it Linda's tone. Linda's normal voice was soft, so gentle and sweet it could barely be heard. This voice was brassy, the pronunciation coarse. This was the voice associated with the Sally personality.

"How long have you been with Linda?" Kate asked.

"You heard her, ever since Newdaddy started messing around with her."

"Why did you come to Linda?"

"The hell you think I came for? To have some fun again, get drunk, get laid."

"Where were you before you came to Linda?"

"Don't know *where* the hell I was. Lost somewhere, all confused, like some crazy dream."

Kate held a mirror in front of Linda's face. "Sally, I'd like you to open your eyes and look into the mirror. Is that your face you see?"

She pulled back from the mirror. "Hell, no, that's not me, not really me. That's Linda."

Kate eased back to her chair. This was the crucial step in bringing them out. "Tell me about the last time you saw your other body," Kate prompted.

"It was all . . . all tore up in the car, all bleeding and twisted. My – the face – it went through the windshield, and the head, it got turned almost clear 'round to the back."

She broke off and sobbed, convulsing in the chair. "It hurt so much at first, it was terrible. It was like I was being just tore apart. So I just kinda let go, y'know what I mean? Then it didn't hurt no more."

"I'd like you to look again at the body there in the car," Kate said. "Why is the head twisted around?"

"I don't *want* to look. That's *my* body, my *old* body. It's weird seeing it all tore up like that, a real bad dream."

“I’m sorry, but it’s very important for you to look closely. Why is the head twisted around?”

“I think the neck’s broke. But it *can’t* be. I mean, I feel all right. My neck’s not broke, *hell no!*”

“Now go in closer, and look at the eyes of the person in the car.”

“No! I can’t look at them eyes — they’re . . . awful. Spooky!”

“What is it about the eyes?”

“They don’t focus, they’re just staring off into space!” She rocked with sobs. “Oh God! There’s nobody *there* behind the eyes! It’s *empty!*”

“Watch Sally’s body there in the car. What happens next?”

“The men, they come’n put me—I mean, back then, after the accident, they put that body onto a stretcher and. . . ” She broke off sobbing.

When she got control again, she went on, “And they put a sheet over it all, even up over the face.”

“Do you understand what that means?”

Moments passed, and Kate was about to repeat the question when the reply came, “It means she’s dead, don’t it? But how can that be? *I’m* Sally, and *I’m* still alive.”

“Look around you,” Kate suggested softly. “Do you see any people you know?”

“Yeah,” she said, and now her voice was softer, brighter. “Yeah, I see my mom. And my sister. They’re there, just like —” She shook her head. “*But that can’t be! They’re dead! They been dead for years! The hell’s going on?*”

“Ask them why they’re there.”

“Something about they’ve come to guide me.”

“Guide you where?”

“Across, to the other side — that’s what they tell me.”

She jerked in the chair. “But I don’t *want* to go! I like it here! I like having fun. I like partying and drinking and, hell, I like screwing. I don’t *want* to leave here! *I don’t want to go!*”

“But that life as Sally is finished,” Kate said gently. “It finished years ago in the car crash. Your mother and sister have come for you.”

“You stop this! I don’t want to go, and you can’t make me! Leave me alone!”

“Is anyone else with them?”

“I don’t *want* to go! I don’t! I *don’t!*”

“Do you see a tunnel? Do you feel the energy pulling you into the tunnel?” Kate asked.

“It’s pulling me, it’s pulling me, and there’s a light way up at the end. Mom has her arm around me now, and it’s so good to see you again, Mom. It’s pulling me up and —”

## **MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES**

AFTER THE SESSION, Kate stopped by her office to check messages. Only one: a call from a Dr. Rausch of the Grafton Foundation. She had never heard of either Rausch or the Grafton Foundation, but foundations funded grants, and she desperately needed a grant.

She was on contract at the Clinic, and the contract was up for renewal next month. Not a good time, with talk of major cutbacks coming soon. Her approach to treating Multiple Personality Disorder, also known as Dissociative Identity Disorder, was controversial, and likely would be one of the first to be cut . . . unless she could come up with independent funding.

When she returned Dr. Rausch's call, he mentioned that he was intrigued by what he had heard of her "unorthodox but very intriguing therapy for Multiple Personality Disorder," and "believed they had some shared interests, based on her very interesting work."

He suggested lunch on Friday to "discuss some career possibilities that you may find of extreme interest."

IT HAD BEEN the prospect of a way to provide for her twin, Karen, that clinched it when Rausch made the offer at that first meeting.

"You haven't told me where the project is located," Kate had said after he had offered her a one-year contract, at a salary nearly half-again more than she was earning at the clinic.

"You will work in Austria," she had heard him say. She was sure he'd said Austria.

"Austria? I don't speak German, not a word."

"The other staff members speak English. It is a very scenic area, nicely secluded. The American media will not be forever looking over our shoulders, as they do in this country."

That was when it all fell apart. She couldn't leave Karen behind. Even though there really wasn't much *of* Karen left to leave. "Unfortunately, there's a problem. I can't—"

Karen had been in a coma since the mugging, an empty shell of the person that Kate had always felt was her alter ego. Even for identical twins, they had always been particularly close, each intuitively aware of what the other was doing and thinking.

The doctors told her there was no hope of recovery: Karen had come back as far as she ever would, and that was barely more than a vegetative state. For Kate's sake, for her peace of mind, they told her, the best thing would be to release her to an institution and get on with her own life.

But that was out of the question: she could no more sign Karen away to an institution than she could sign away half of her own body. They were identical twins, from the same ova. It almost seemed like a single personality spread across two bodies, so close, so attuned that they had often thought and said the same thing at the same moment.

But now Karen never spoke. Was she even capable of thinking now? There was no way to know.

Kate couldn't release her to an institution, and she certainly couldn't leave her behind and go work in Austria. But the insurance was running out: what then?

"Cannot leave your sister behind?" Rausch said. "Of course you cannot, we understand that, and have provided for it. We will have her flown to our clinic in a hospital plane, and she

will be there with you. Your work will be in a hospital setting where we are exceptionally well-equipped to care for coma patients. Indeed, part of our research there focuses on therapy for coma patients and others with similar handicaps. Our past successes lead me to believe that we may be able to help Karen very significantly. All of her medical expenses will be taken care of, naturally.”

Kate felt relief, and even something like happiness for the first time in what seemed a very long while. She smiled. “It seems I really don’t have a choice, do I?”

“Exactly so,” Rausch said.

A COUPLE OF DAYS after Kate arrived at the Clinic, an early morning jogger noticed a damaged guard-rail at a park along the Danube.

Police divers found a red Volkswagen, a rental car, on the bottom a couple of hundred yards down-river, with two suitcases in the trunk, and a purse wedged under the seat. The passport bore the name of Katherine Ann Remington, of Kingston, California. The car had been rented at the Vienna airport by woman showing ID as Katherine Ann Remington.

The door on the driver’s side was open. They dragged the river for a day, but no body turned up. At nightfall, the search was called off. They had found from experience that the body might float to the surface in a few days as the gasses built up inside.

Unless, of course, the body caught on something underwater. When that happened, they were never found. That was not unusual in the Danube.

The American consulate was notified of the accident and missing driver. The information was cabled to Washington. A clerk pulled a copy of Kate’s passport application to find who she had listed as her emergency contact.

As Kate and Karen had no close family still living, the contact was Debbie Whalen, her best friend.

At first, Debbie couldn’t believe that Kate was really gone. She checked back with the State Department a couple of times over the next week, expecting to hear that she had turned up alive.

Finally, she notified the lawyer who had drafted Kate’s Will only a few days earlier, and learned for the first time that Kate had released Karen to the care of the Grafton Foundation.

## **DANGEROUS DOORWAYS**

### **Hauenfelder Clinic**

ON THE MORNING Kate Remington arrived at the clinic, Dr. Rausch and Dr. Langwein took her on an orientation tour of the work in progress.

It went well, until she saw Vehicle 27.

She was stunned. Horrified. Sickened. Her flesh crawled as the Vehicle stared back at her with its vacant eyes.

She backed away from it until she felt the wall behind her. “This isn’t *at all* what I expected when I agreed to come here! This—*whatever it is!*—isn’t even human!”

“Vehicle 27 is advancing medical science,” Rausch said.

“This isn’t *science*, it isn’t *medicine*. It’s something . . . It’s the kind of thing . . ., the kind of thing that *Mengele* might have done at Auschwitz!”

“Your comment is out-of-order,” Rausch snapped, then walked out of the room, turning back to add, “I would remind you that you—and your sister—are *guests* here. You must keep that in mind.”

Not guests, *prisoners*, she wanted to say, but cut it off. Already she knew that this was a strange place, an *evil* place, from the vibrations she was picking up. Karen, her twin, was vulnerable.

Dr. Langwein took over the orientation.

Langwein was short and puffy, with thick glasses that he polished constantly on his necktie. His eyes bounced around behind the thick lenses, unable to meet and hold contact with hers. He spoke English reasonably well, though in an accent inflected with what she sensed were traces of both German and Spanish.

Overall, a strange person. A creepy person. *Beyond* creepy.

He explained what her role would be, and how her experience with Multiple Personality Disorder tied in with the work at Hauenfelder.

“But don’t you understand? You’re opening very dangerous doorways!” she pressed. “Once those doors are open, there’s no telling what kind of . . . what kind of *things* might come through!”

“Your twin sister is comfortable here at Hauenfelder, yes?” Langwein replied, then walked out, leaving her alone with Vehicle 27. It sat at the table, staring at her with empty eyes. She turned and ran to get away from the thing.

***End of the sample of A Remedy for Death.***

Thank you for reading this sampler. I hope you will want to read the complete book, which is available via various sellers, including Amazon. It is available in both ebook and print editions.

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