

Chapter 4

Harris felt more settled after the proffered synthi-hol, probably angrier with himself for losing some of his control in view of the team. It was though, not every day that you have your memories edited. He thought back to Becky's doll and felt nothing. No guilty conscience, just watching his memory with the sound turned off. 'Mr Harris, are you okay?', was the question from Quintain, his personal assistant, with a slightly nervous undertone. 'We brought in your assistant, Mark, just to be sure you will be in a good place to return to work or home,' stated Gonzalez. '*I'm fine*, nothing to be concerned about,' he broadcast in a stronger voice to all in the room. This was not the lab, but he could not recall moving to this new room. With that Harris, shrugging, stood upright to reassert himself.

'We'll be in close contact, Mark, and just a thought away if you need us,' Gonzalez reinforced. And then he and Quintain were whisked away to their waiting limousine, courtesy of *capabilité*. It had been a further two hours of observation following the demonstration, not to mention the reinforcement of all the instructions, guidance, and of course, the NDA. I'll get the corporate legals to look at *that*, he thought. Quintain kept a respectful silence in the seat next to him. 'Arrange an appointment with Femi Ade today, Quintain, by the end of business, *please*,' he quietly requested. 'Of course, Mr Harris, I assure you he'll be in your adjunct office so you're undisturbed,' replied Quintain, with a reassuring glance.

Following arrival at their corporate offices, the *capabilité* team were already ahead of them, installing a miniature version of their laboratory in a space near his office, and with additional entry security. With a little trepidation, Harris noted the slight blue glow from one of the machines being installed, smaller than the Oracle he saw, but clearly the brains of this system. He could not concentrate well that afternoon, reflecting on his experience and of Becky, so little contact recently. Ironically, he felt a pang of guilt.

Femi Ade was seated and started to rise when Harris entered the adjunct office, the door closing quietly behind him, sealing the room from the outside world. 'Mark, how are you doing, I was a bit taken back by the summons from Quintain earlier!', and Harris gestured to him to stay seated. 'culpabilité, Femi. You're going to tell me everything you know, *and what you're, we're, into now*, and perhaps you may explain how *you* can *afford* them, bearing in mind I know *full well* you can't,' Harris requested, steel in his voice, standing over the table, arms supporting him like pillars, opposite his friend and employee. Femi's facade fell slightly, his mouth opening and closing like a valve. 'Ah, right, I see,' Femi said.

'Well, I'll jump over the intro and trial stuff, I suspect it was similar. That was seven months ago, and yes, it's pricey, but I have a 50% *reduction* for introducing some colleagues, and some consultancy,' Femi outlined flatly. 'Oh, so some big fish like me, *I presume?*', Harris retorted. He was thinking Femi had broken so many corporate rules, he'd be lucky not to end up incarcerated. And where is *your* lab, by the way, I don't see any approval for *that!*', he snapped. 'I don't need one, I have a neuro-filament inserted,' Femi stated, surprisingly strong of voice suddenly. For the second time in a day, Harris gaped, even wider.