

**COMMANDER GARRITY**

Setting: Anniston Army Depot, Alabama

Project Resonance is well under way and preliminary tests on subjects with Braiden's Syndrome have gone well. The military has been pressuring scientists to test out the riot control applications. The scientists have protested that the anti-virals no longer seem to be completely effective. However, funding is at stake, with the military having threatened to withdraw funding if testing is not done soon.

As these arguments are being conducted, a water riot breaks out in Alabama following a several month drought. Military personnel have rounded up scientists, some of them against their will, and brought them to the Anniston Army Depot in Alabama. Here they are conducting debates about whether to use the virus. The governor of Alabama has joined them, trying to convince them to do something to stop the riots. Meanwhile, the riots are getting worse across the state and people are dying.

To say that you are concerned is an understatement. When the orders came to gather up four of the scientists working on Project Resonance and get them to Alabama, you could see the writing on the wall. You'd been reading about the water riots down there. Over a thousand people injured and close to a hundred dead, all in the course of a week, with no signs of it letting up.

There has been pressure for months to move the tests forward. The tests on the children with Braiden's Syndrome have gone very well. Many are showing new signs of connecting with others in a very meaningful way. The tests on control group individuals without Braiden's have shown rapid onset of high emotional intensity, followed by catatonia until the antidote is administered. The question is whether or not it is ready for application outside of the lab.

Mostly, the pressure has come from the brass at the top who want to see some results from all the money put into Project Resonance. And you would sure like to see some too. If things are as bad as it sounds like in Alabama, this may be a viable time to give it a try. With all the pressure lately though, you're concerned that this meeting will just be a rush job in the place of a real examination of feasible application. Having Dr. Solan and Dr. White, both open advocates of more rapid testing, at the meeting makes that possibility much more likely. Dr. Yu really didn't want to go and almost had to be physically escorted out of the lab. Yu and Calo will hopefully provide some counterbalance though.

You're going to do your best at what you always do: watching out for people. As much as possible, you're going to ask the hard questions, get the facts on the record, and not prejudge things. Honestly, you don't know whether or not it is time for the use of Resonance yet. You just want to make sure that the decision-makers have the best information possible about the risks as well as the rewards.

And then you hope they make the right decision...

## Early Tests (B)

# DR. SOLAN

Act 2 Scene 1  
IAB

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Finally, it is time to move Project Resonance forward. Out of the lab and into practical use. That is the only way you will finally be recognized for the ground-breaking work you've done.

To date, there have been tremendous successes. Braiden's Syndrome kids? Doing better. Individual and small groups of regular people? Put into a catatonic state. It is time to step things up and try it on a large scale. The only place to do that is out in the world.

Sure, there have been some problems along the way. That happens. The Resonance virus has shown the ability to adapt quickly to some of the old treatments. That was not unexpected really. Just because something is challenging doesn't mean it isn't manageable.

The water riots in Alabama are a perfect opportunity to try out Resonance on a wide scale. Set up a perimeter around a major city. Drop in enough to make sure the population is infected. Wait two to three days to be sure it has impacted enough of the population and then go in to administer the antidote to everyone. The whole city will have been pacified quickly and quietly.

Riots over. Lives saved. Your name out there as the ground-breaking researcher behind it all.

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The Resonance virus is ready to meet the world. All you have to do now is to stay in control of your excitement long enough to convince them that the poor rioters are a greater danger than your virus could ever be. And it is true of course, small minds are always a greater threat than your beautiful creation...

You can't let them onto you, of course. If they knew that you had been working quietly, very quietly, to build up inherent mutability and resistance to the antidotes in the Resonance virus, your work would be over. The new world you dream of might never come true.

So you must explain how the "previous instances of resistance have been overcome with the latest antidote." Sadly, that may even be true. Some of the other scientists on the project came far too close to discovering what you've done and you had to lay low for awhile. Oh, if only they hadn't found out before now, it would certainly be unleashed.

There is hope, though, if you can help convince those in power that it is ready for use. It won't be a certain thing, this time. But it may be. And if not, a successful application today will mean more applications tomorrow. Sooner or later, your creation will be free.

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They dragged you away from the lab three hours ago. You tried to explain that you were busy and that it would have to wait, but Commander Garrity would not listen. Garrity insisted that you were needed at a meeting to discuss the current status of Project Resonance. Garrity wouldn't take no for an answer.

Something like this has been your greatest concern since you agreed to participate in Project Resonance. Yes, it gave you an opportunity to continue your research into a cure for your son's Braiden's Syndrome. Yes, there have been some amazing results, indicating that there may be ways to bypass the barriers to interpersonal communication and relation that Braiden's patients suffer. There is a very real possibility that this is a viable cure for Braiden's and it just needs a little more work. The problem, of course, is that with military funding comes demands for more than just a cure for one of the greatest evils of the world.

To be fair, you've always seen Commander Garrity as an honorable person who seems to care about the value of Project Resonance to you personally, as well as to all those who suffer because of Braiden's Syndrome, directly, or because someone they care about is afflicted. However, the military that Garrity represents and is beholden to is not always so caring.

There has been pressure for months now. "When can we see a large-scale demonstration?" "When will the military applications be viable?" "Can you make it work faster?" "Can you make it more infectious?" It has been a never-ending barrage interrupting your work. There have even been threats of reduced or eliminated funding.

Now you're taken from your lab to a private meeting.

You hadn't even really heard about the water riots in Alabama. You vaguely remember that there was some kind of drought there. You had no idea it had gotten so bad. You've just been so busy with your research that it didn't much filter into your mind.

The thing is that there is still work to be done. As much as you want success, it has to be real success. The last thing you want is a mistaken military application that will kill the funding entirely before you've perfected the cure for your son's Braiden's. That would be... unthinkable. It just can't happen.

The Resonance virus is a tricky thing. It has already shown resistance to one previous antidote. While a new one has been made, it hasn't been tested adequately. Given the potential impact, they must realize that if the cure doesn't work, they've created a huge problem. Yes, early tests are promising, promising enough to keep working on Braiden's patients. But out of the lab in a major city?

You need to get back to your lab. You'll share your concerns, because they are quite real. At the end of the day, though, what you are most interested in is continuing your work. It will mean a cure for your son, and it is very close. They can't cut off funding, no matter what. You'll do whatever it takes to make sure that is the case. Even if it is signing off on this, despite all the risks...

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You're not really sure why you're here. You aren't one of the top researchers, as much as you could have been one if Dr. Raines hadn't stolen your research. You guess they needed to talk to some of the people doing the real work on Project Resonance, rather than just those managing it all. It actually will be nice to be heard for once.

Project Resonance is a larger realization of some of the work you did in your first post-doc. The delivery virus is based largely off of the work you did before Dr. Raines stole it. The applications to which it is being used are fairly staggering. Cures for Braiden's Syndrome, a bypass for their interpersonal communication barriers. Non-lethal weaponry.

It is the latter that has brought you here, of course. The military has been looking for an opportunity to test out the Resonance virus on a large scale for awhile now. It isn't ready, but that doesn't seem to much matter. It was only a little over a month ago that you were the one who discovered that the virus had built up significant resistance to the antidote that had been devised. While a new antidote has been created, it hasn't been as thoroughly tested as you would like.

The ramifications of a test amongst the open populace are staggering. What happens if Resonance works differently in large numbers of people as opposed to small groups or individuals? What if someone manages to escape a quarantine zone? What if the antidote isn't actually 100% effective? You simply don't think it is reasonable to take the risks.

Of course, whether or not anyone will listen to you, a junior researcher, is another matter.

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As the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, you have a duty to the nation to assure that all threats are recognized swiftly and advise the President on the best way to deal with these threats. The water riots in Alabama are just such a threat. If they are not handled both quickly and with as little bloodshed as possible, they could spread across the nation and tear it apart.

Rather than sending an underling to this meeting, you have decided to come yourself. You just got off the plane ten minutes ago, straight from Washington. It was at your behest that the meeting was called. You called it because you believe that Project Resonance presents the best possible solution for dealing with the crisis at hand, and because you want your name associated forever afterwards with its first successful use.

Nominally, the meeting is to take the opinions of the scientists who have been gathered here in order to best inform the President on whether or not to authorize the usage of the Resonance virus. That is a facade that must be maintained. However, you expect that Governor Hunt, whom you also invited to the meeting, will apply all necessary pressure. Furthermore, at least two of the scientists are known advocates of moving the project forward.

Ask questions, remind those present of the severity of the threat, and ultimately get as close to a unanimous decision as possible from amongst those present. That way, in the off chance that things do go wrong, you've got the cover you need.

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'Bama is slipping into a state of anarchy. That is what is happening and there is no denying it. A year-long drought in a major agricultural state is a disaster. Farmers are up in arms. Literally. So are the inner city ghettos, though that's nothing new. The problem is that it has spread into virtually all major cities at this point. What food and water comes in from neighboring states is hoarded or sells for more than many can pay.

A state of emergency has been called. The Alabama National Guard are trying to keep order. The problem is it just isn't enough. While normally you'd rather leave the federal government out of state affairs, there is no help for it now. They're flying and driving in what they can, but things have gotten so bad that the rioters just won't quit. It's been over a week now of violence and armed conflict. Roughly two thousand people injured and over a hundred dead according to the last report you got, just before the meeting. And there is no sign of it calming down.

Thankfully, you've got friends in Washington. You got word that the U.S. Armed Forces have been working on some non-lethal crowd control weaponry. If you can get that into play, you can calm things down long enough to restore some order. You made some calls and were surprised when the National Security Advisor called you back directly. This meeting was arranged to discuss how to proceed from here.

You've just got to get them to use whatever it is they've got. If they don't, the whole state will go up in flames. You can't let that happen on your watch. No matter what it takes or what is involved, you've just got to make sure that the water riots stop and they stop now.