

Boosters removed, experiment nears end

We sat in the park at least another hour, trying to figure things out. The kids who had come to the park after us were still playing.

The woman I thought had been their mother left by herself, looking again at the kids as she passed them.

It would be dark soon and we hadn't gotten anywhere. The three of us had not been experiencing the little mental intrusions we had gotten used to.

Mary and Karen had had nearly identical "dreams" about a person doing some sort of brain surgery on them or something.

We figured that 2IC, the company we went back to visit, had somehow removed the boosters they had earlier implanted. That's why we hadn't been able to make a mental link a couple of hours prior.

But what about me? I hadn't had a dream like theirs or any kind of blackout. We didn't even know whether I still could make the mental

link, since there was no one else that I could try with.

"But why would they fix you guys up and not me?"

Karen looked at me. "Were you around other people or something so they never had a chance?"

I didn't have to think about the answer. "No, I was alone almost the entire time. All they had to do was come and take it away, just like they put it in."

"What if you tried reaching out to see if anyone else is left?" Mary asked. "There were ten of us in all."

"We talked about that earlier," I said. "That could clue them to where I am. Too dangerous."

Mary shook her head. "I don't think so. They found us. Twice, in fact. And what could we do about it? If they want you, Drake, they're going to get you."

Then it was Karen's turn. "I still don't get why they didn't do anything to you guys when you went straight to the company headquar-

ters." None of us could give an answer. We leaned back a bit, looked at each other and fell silent. My gaze drifted toward the three kids, who had shifted to playing some



mutant form of tag. One of them ran straight for us and veered off at the last minute.

I looked up when I heard a familiar voice call my name.

I hadn't seen him outside of his office for years. "Hey, Dad. What brings you out?"

He stood for a moment before joining us on the grass. Introductions were made all around, but he seemed a little detached as we did so.

"Did you want to talk to me

alone?" He faintly smiled and said, "No, that's quite all right. You should all hear this."

Karen, Mary and I exchanged glances and those two remained silent.

"I'll get right to the point. I was part of 2IC's project. I chose you and your two friends here. I chose all the subjects for that phase of the study. You have to believe that I didn't want to hurt you. I wanted someone I could see the whole time."

"What about Mary and Karen? Why were any of the rest of us chosen?"

"Psych profiles mostly. Those specs came in from someone else. But it was me on the computer."

"Now wait. You work for LLT and 2IC?"

"Yes."

"And they both know that?"

"Ah, yes. It's the same company, actually. Or two different parts of it."

We all exchanged glances again. I was starting to wonder whether my father had been implanted with something himself.

"Why didn't you tell me — any of us — earlier?"

"I couldn't. This is the first chance I've had. There are other phases of the study. Much more is involved, especially since matters did not unfold as anticipated."

"We heard a little about that."

"Then you probably know that the ten subjects were not supposed to be able to contact each other. And that certain follow-up procedures will need to be performed."

"So I'll be heading back to the office with you?"

"You and I will be the last two to have the boosters removed, Drake."

Peterson is a senior psychology and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan reporter and columnist. This is the twelfth and possibly final story in a series.

HE IS OUR PEACE

Isaiah 9:6-7 The government shall be upon His shoulder. He shall be called Prince of peace.

John 16:33 These things have I spoken that in Me you might have peace -- I have overcome the world.

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