

Quaranteam: Piper's Prelude – Part Two

A 5-Part Quaranteam Story

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Part Two

Fiona had been scribbling on her yellow pad the entire time that Piper had been talking, something that had just faded into the background as Piper told her story, but for a moment she paused, giving the journalist a chance to catch up with her notes. Piper had glanced over a few times while she'd been relaying the earliest parts of her tale, but decided that Fiona's notes were clearly in code or that she used a shorthand that Piper couldn't decipher.

(It was also possible that Fiona's handwriting was simply so sloppy that no one else could read it, but Piper felt it impolite to point that option out.)

“Did you have any clue that Covington had requested you personally?” Fiona asked her.

“They didn't tell me anything about my planned partner,” Piper replied, “unlike they did when Andy requested you.”

“Well, I called the base who put me in touch with Andy himself to talk over the request, so I knew they were coming. That's not how it works for everyone, though, I bet.”

“Actually,” Piper said, sipping from her pineapple juice, “you should probably talk to *all* of the girls about their experiences showing up to get the serum, because I would wager that each of them is unique in what happened. There's probably several similarities, but I think there will be lots of little differences that add up.”

“Because of how they're being transported?”

“Not *just* that,” Piper said. “Remember, we've all shown up at different points in the whole process of them building this system. I bet Aisling's story would be a lot more ramshackle than what you went through, considering she showed up to Andy's doorstep in what, May?”

“June, I think, but the timeline's still a little fuzzy for me,” Fiona admitted. “I think Andy jokingly referred to Ash showing up in the fifteenth week of March.”

“Yeah, time's gotten a little less precise during the isolation,” Piper agreed. “But Ash has got to be one of the first women through the system, before they'd refined any of it. She told me she didn't even know about the dangers of other men's semen until Niko showed up a month or two after she met Andy, so that's probably something worth writing about in your book. Anyway, where was I?”

“You were talking about getting picked up from the Olympic Training Camp.”

“Right, right...”

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So on October 18th, a woman from the Air Force showed up on my door. She was dressed in biohazard gear from head to toe, which was a little creepy, but that's what most of the soldiers were wearing up until I got to the actual base. I was given two hours to pack up everything I wanted to take with me into a single large suitcase and a single carry on. The woman told me she'd be back after those two hours with a troop transport, and that I'd better be ready to go by then, because once the truck showed up, they were loading me onto it with or without bags of stuff.

I'm not really a material girl, so I didn't have all that much to pack up. I was told either the Air Force would move the rest later, or I could come back and get it when we were on the other side of the pandemic. They weren't sure which would happen first. I loaded up a big suitcase with a bunch of cute outfits, a handful of personal things and my gold medal, because no fucking way was I leaving that in an empty house for what might be years. I threw in other things like my laptop, my make up, my toothbrush and toothpaste, my vitamins – that kind of stuff all went into the carry on. Still, two hours is not a lot of time, so I was still worried that I'd forgotten things even when I heard the truck pulling up

outside.

It wasn't just me who was getting picked up either, as most of the volleyball team was on the truck with me. We weren't given masks or hazmat suits or anything, just loaded up onto the back of a troop transport, our suitcases sitting in front of us, although we were given these were bags we had to lock our cellphones into. We were told that when we got the place where we were going to be injected with the serum, they would unlock the bags and return our phones to us, but until then, they needed to be off and contained for "operational security."

(That turned out not to be true – we weren't given our phones back until we met up with our partners, not at the place where we were injected. I didn't even *get* my phone back until after Andy took me away from Covington. That bastard withheld it from me.)

It was good to see a few of my friends again on the truck, and we hugged one another, as a few of the girls were struggling not to cry. One of them, Kari, wondered if we were being marched off to death camps, but we tried to put her at ease, pointing out that we'd been allowed to pack our things, which they certainly wouldn't have done if we were all going off to die. That calmed her down a little.

I did ask the woman who was organizing things why none of us had been given masks, and she informed me that we would all be receiving the serum tomorrow and meeting up with our partners shortly after that. At that point, she said, we would all be mostly immunized from DuoHalo, so if we caught it along the way, it would be flushed out of our system by the process. I asked if she could give me more detail than that, but she said not to worry about it.

I probably *should* have worried about it.

I counted about two-thirds of the volleyball team on the truck, as well as a number of other athletes that I'd met at social functions in the before times – gymnasts, sprinters, some swimmers although my friend Brooke wasn't among them. (I found out later she hadn't been picked by anyone in that wave, and Andy got her connected to Xander a few waves later.)

We were one truck in a convoy of six.

I also noticed that there weren't *any* men on our truck, something else I asked the woman from the Air Force about. She told me that only the first truck in the convoy had men in it, and that they *were* all buttoned up to the max in hazmat suits with their own oxygen supplies attached to them.

This was where it started to become abundantly clear to me that DuoHalo didn't affect men and women identically. The woman from the Air Force confirmed to me as much, specifying that it had a much higher and faster fatality rate among men, and that the incubation period wasn't anywhere near as long for males either, so they were taking extra care with the men because otherwise there was a chance they could be dead before they received the treatment.

I asked her, Colonel Fairchild was her name, she didn't give me her first name, anyway I asked her how bad it was out there, and she sort of gave me a tight-lipped smile and said she wasn't really at liberty to divulge that sort of information, but not to worry, because I was one of the lucky ones.

At that point, I knew we were pretty badly fucked.

That was her answer for a lot of my questions, and after a few minutes, she told me to stop talking because she needed to do headcount and focus on the last few people we needed to pick up. The last stop our truck made was in a pretty prestigious neighborhood, and I found out why when Colonel Fairchild brought our last pickup onto the truck.

The final person we picked up was Carolyn Fortiss, you know, the five-time gold medal winning gymnast, the one who's been on the Wheaties box and the cover of Time? I don't really know her, but she's basically one of the most recognizable athletes on the planet, and she'd clearly been given more notice than the rest of us, or she was an insanely fast packer, because she had two suitcases and a carry-on bag with her, which had two little dogs in it.

(I *really* wanted to ask why the 'one suitcase only' rule didn't apply to her when it applied to everyone else on the truck, but I decided I didn't want to be *that bitch* for the rest of the trip.)

At that point, Colonel Fairchild began to walk the length of the transport, and slap stickers with

barcodes on our chests and our suitcases. The sticker, which I glanced at, had my basic vitals on it. Name, age, blood type, point of origin, point of destination, a “travel code” which in my case read CRQL5 but mostly said OMUL3 or OMUL2 or OMUL4 for the rest of the truck although Carolyn also had CRQL5 on her travel code.

The Colonel told us that once we were dropped off, we would be scanned, sorted and then sent off to our correct plane. Once on the plane, we should be patient and understanding with the one or two members of the Air Force who were tending to the plane, she told us, because everyone was stretched ultra thin and tempers were flaring due to exhaustion.

That didn't make a lot of sense to me until I peeked out the back of the truck and realized we were heading into Denver. “All roads lead to the Denver Airport,” I remember thinking at the time.

Pretty soon, I found out just how true that was.

The Air Force had temporarily commandeered Denver International Airport, and was using it as a staging ground. I've been in and out of that airport loads of times, but this was the first time that it felt like it had been *invaded*. There were lots of soldiers stationed around – mostly Air Force, but some Army as well – and I found myself excited to do something I'd always hated.

Queuing.

We were advised to try and keep six feet between us and the person both in front of and behind us in line, but that rule was being followed pretty loosely. Bags were being passed through the X-ray machines, and I still had to go stand inside that body scanner, but they were moving very quickly through the whole process, like the security was just sort of making sure no one was doing anything especially stupid.

I think the automatic weapons everywhere did more than enough discouragement of that.

Once we were past the security screener, we had our barcodes scanned and were directed to where our plane was waiting for us. Terminal A seemed to be heading to the West Coast, Terminal B around the Midwest and Terminal C heading to the East Coast, although that's just something I remember somebody saying. No idea if it was true or not, but I did get taken over to Terminal A. The last I saw Carolyn, she was heading off towards Terminal C.

There were a *lot* of women passing though Denver Airport on the day I was there, and not a whole lot of men, although I did find out later that was because men were being directly loaded onto planes and not being made to sit around waiting, or if they did have to wait, it was somewhere else entirely, and not with loads of other people.

Most of the women soldiers weren't very chatty, but I did manage to glean a few bits of information from some of them. Men mostly weren't being relocated, because it was generally considered riskier than moving the women to them, but that didn't mean all men were staying put. In some cases, relocation was deemed essential, especially as many of the uninfected men had gotten that way by being remote. Isolating forever, the soldier told me, wasn't going to be an option, so these men were being “brought in from the cold.” She laughed when she told me that a few of them had even been by force, but that when they saw what the future held for them, they would be thankful.

She didn't elaborate on that for me.

If it hadn't been for the troops with automatic weapons and the almost complete lack of men, it could've been just another day of flying through Denver.

I headed over to Gate A37, and saw there were about twenty other women there for departure. It was also around this point that I started to notice that the women were mostly good looking women in their twenties and thirties. Sure, there were varying shades of height, weight, hair color and skin tone, but there was beauty basically all around me. That was the moment when I started to get a very bad feeling in the pit of my stomach.

The flight I was scheduled for was to Oakland Airport, and the plane itself was a United plane. The soldier at the check in told us all that there weren't assigned seats, *however* we were going to be boarded in groups, so the first class stuff was first come, first serve.

Wouldn't you know it, there were only two CRQL5s on our flight, and we were both seated first, so we each took a first class seat. The other one was Stacey Razi, the downhill skier and Onvon Cosmetics model.

The plane didn't have any flight attendants on it, but there was one soldier from the Air Force, who was also seated in first class, and there was one soldier at the door of the aircraft who had taken our luggage from us, sending it down to the belly of the aircraft. I'd half expected them to just let us bring it on board with us and have it on an empty seat, but apparently some rules were still being followed, although I was allowed to bring my smaller carry on with me.

Once they had everyone loaded onto the plane, they did a role call again, checking to make sure every person scheduled to be on the plane was, although I don't know what they would've done if we weren't all there.

As it turns out, on a two-thirds empty plane, having a whole row to yourself is just as good as first class, so basically everyone took an area to themselves. Some of the girls were gossiping with one another, but most of us were still in a sort of daze and kept to ourselves. I was reading a Sue Grafton novel, so I didn't socialize that much, but I did spend maybe half an hour talking with Stacey, seeing if she knew anything about where we were going or what was going on. She really didn't know anything more than I did.

When the pilot's voice came over the air just before takeoff, I realized it might have been the first man's voice I'd heard all day long. He assured us that he would get us across the country safely and quickly, and that he hoped to avoid as much turbulence as possible. There wasn't going to be any food or drinks served over the flight, and he was sorry for that, but at this point, he just wanted to help keep as many people alive as possible.

He stressed the word *alive*, even if he didn't know that he did it.

I could tell that rattled some of the women in the cabin.

It's odd how much you notice little things being off when you're doing something you've done a bunch. I've flown dozens of times, maybe hundreds, I'm sure you have too, but it was very strange that nobody was going through the safety announcement, nobody was walking through the cabin to check that the seats were up or that seatbelts were fastened, there wasn't a scolding voice telling us that tampering with smoke detectors was a federal offense. The captain told us when we were taxiing, told us when to prepare for take off, when to prepare for landing and when we could get off the plane, but the rest of the time, we were basically alone together. Some of the girls clapped when the plane landed, maybe just as a release valve for some of the nervous tension.

I'd been through the Bay Area a couple of times before, but each time I'd come in through SFO instead of Oakland Airport, so I'm not entirely certain how the airport was supposed to look, but I'm pretty sure it didn't normally look like it did on that day. We didn't actually go *into* the airport, as they pulled up rolling staircases to the planes away from the main terminal. We walked down onto the tarmac, early in the evening, and were scanned as soon as we had our suitcases again.

Once that was done, they began sorting us.

A lot of the girls were being sent to a place called Valhalla Shores. Some of them were being sent to something called San Jose Heights. A handful of them were going to Palo Alto, a place they called the Pallisades. A few were headed towards the Presidio in San Francisco proper.

And there were seven of us headed for New Eden.

There wasn't any one commonality to the seven of us, other than I guess beauty, but that seemed to be a common thing for all the women being transported around. I did see, however, that all of us had that same code on our stickers, CRQL5. I remember at the time thinking maybe that was some sort of code for New Eden, but Stacey headed over towards the group headed for the Presidio, so I ruled that out. Based on what I know now, I think the L5 part of the code refers to Level 5, as in the person who they're being brought to. I don't know what the rest of it stands for. You should probably ask Niko about that, since I'm sure she'd know.

We were loaded into the back of a troop transport truck, and they started driving us east along 580, as the sun was starting to set. The truck was covered, but the back was open, and looking out, it was surreal how empty the freeway was, even in what had to be what was usually around rush hour.

I tried to talk to one of the other girls heading for New Eden, but the soldier sitting in the truck shushed us then told me we shouldn't talk with anyone until we were through screening protocols and getting ready for our injections. Once we were on base, we could talk to people there, but for now, it would be best if we all just stayed quiet, the soldier said to me, and who wants to argue with someone holding a machine gun, right?

We headed east then north, which made me sad, because I'd hoped to at least get a glimmer of the Pacific Ocean, now that I seemingly lived on the West Coast, but I decided not to make too much of a fuss, because there would be time for that later. The years in Colorado had made me miss the ocean waters from back home in Florida. Whenever I traveled home to see my family, I always made it a point to spend a day out on a boat in the ocean, just to get some of those vibes back in me.

Geez, I'm starting to sound like Sheridan, and her surfer talk.

She's gonna teach me how to surf eventually, though. Apparently her and Tala go all the time.

Whatever. I'm getting off topic.

The rest of the ride was entirely silent, so that I didn't piss off the woman with the Uzi or whatever. We eventually arrived at a checkpoint, where whoever was manning the gate hopped into the vehicle and scanned us all again. He was dressed in full hazmat gear, and each person was checked individually before he hopped off the truck and sent us through into the base or research center or whatever the hell it was.

They'd erected a large metal barn-like structure next to their main research building, and that was where the local processing was happening. Inside the barn was a sea of sealed chambers, clear plastic sheets forming containment tents. There was also a section that was curtained off, so we couldn't see what was going on behind there, but that's where we were led.

At the entrance to the curtained area, a soldier took our bags from us, telling us we'd get them back in our observation/orientation pod. Then we were taken one at a time into a long partitioned hallway, where we were told to strip down, as they were going to hose us down and decontaminate us. I was a little annoyed, as we were told that whatever we'd been wearing on our way to the base was being destroyed, for our own safety. Thankfully I wasn't wearing anything especially unique, but I still didn't like losing an outfit, especially since I had so few with me.

I couldn't see any of the other women, nor could I even see who was speaking. I was standing on a conveyor belt with a partition in front me and behind me. I dropped my clothes into a little chute then flipped the switch on the nondescript wall from "not ready" to "ready." I guess I had to wait until everyone had done so, because I stood there, naked and alone, for several minutes before the conveyor belt started to move.

After a few feet, the belt stopped and warm soapy water gushed down on me from above, not like a light shower, almost like someone just dumped several buckets on top of me, as I clung on to two handrails on either side of the pod. The water drained below my feet, somewhere off to the side of the conveyor belts, and then the pod started to move again.

The second time it stopped, more water crushed down onto me, cooler this time, and with no soap in it, letting me get the soap off my skin.

When the belt stopped again, this time high pressure warm air blasted down onto me, like standing beneath a giant hair dryer, and I did my best to wring out my hair so that I could get it as dry as possible, but the hot air only lasted long enough to get me mostly dry before the belt moved again.

At the next stop, a small hatch opened several inches below my shoulders. Another disembodied voice said to me, "Put your right arm through the hatch."

I crouched down a little and slid my right arm through the hatch, feeling a soft table for me to rest it on. There was a very bright light on the other side of the hatch, so I couldn't see anything,

especially at the poor angle. A moment or so later, I realized that this was the injection part, as I felt a needle shoved into my vein, some liquid being shot up into me. I could hear three little puff sounds, and I think what happened was they put some kind of multiple injection system into my arm and then injected me with a combination of things, one after the other, but because I couldn't see, I really don't know for certain. Maybe it was just one shot. I'd ask Niko about that too.

I felt a cotton ball being placed against my skin and then a bandage being strapped to it, a large towel put in my hand, before the voice said, "Pull your arm back in."

Going against instructions just felt like it would slow everything down, so I pulled my arm back in, the big towel coming along with it. As soon as the towel was through, the hatch closed again.

"Wrap the towel around you and prepare to exit the chamber."

It was a very large white beach towel, so I wrapped it around my midsection like I was a housewife on an old 80s sitcom, and then the belt moved again before stopping and the door in front of me opened, a woman standing on the other side.

She was in her mid to late 20s, with dark brown hair and a pair of arresting hazel eyes that felt like they were going to look right down into my soul. She had her hair up in a bun, dressed in operating room scrubs with a lab coat on over them, and thick black rimmed glasses on her face. She was Jewish, I think, although maybe part Italian? There was a sort of weird beaded bracelet around one of her wrists and this collection of like four or five necklaces around her neck, one of which had a Star of David on it. She had a very confident aura about her, like she knew exactly what her place was in this new world and she wasn't going to take any stick from anyone over it. She held in one hand an iPad and in the other a stylus, looking up at me impatiently. She was a good looking woman, but very unprimed, as if she didn't take time to apply much makeup or style her hair. "Name?" she said.

"Uh, Brown," I said to her. "Piper Brown."

"Oh *you're* Piper Brown," she said to me, her demeanor softening a little bit. "Yeah, he's right, I do recognize you. That meme *was* inescapable a while back." She scribbled a few things onto the iPad, tapping at a few buttons with her stylus, the tablet beeping in recognition of her actions, or maybe just to let her know that the keypresses had been received. "Okay, there you are. Had to find you in the list. You're in Pod 37. That's where you'll find your things, and where you'll sit and watch the orientation videos while we keep you under observation until morning or midday tomorrow, when you'll be taken to meet the man you're being partnered with."

"When do I find out who that is?" I asked her.

"Typically you wouldn't until you actually get there, but I can tell you his name is Arthur Covington the 4th because he's *my* partner as well." She started walking away from the belt, leading me down a corridor with opaque plastic on either side of us. I remember thinking how strange it was that I had to walk down this hallway barefoot, but I figured I had just stepped out of a shower.

"Wait, we're... we're going to *share* this man? The two of us?"

She laughed, as if I'd made some kind of a joke. "Not *just* the two of us, but a whole mess of women. It'll make more sense after you watch the orientation videos."

"Sorry," I said to her, "I didn't catch your name."

"Oh," she said, stopping to turn and smile at me, as if she genuinely hadn't realized she hadn't introduced herself. "Sorry about that. Nice to meet you, Piper. I'm Doctor Rachel DeMarco." She shook my hand and I remember thinking that she had very soft hands for the sort of punk rock demeanor she had about her. "Let's get you into your orientation, where you can start learning all the rules about your new existence."

She started leading me back down the corridor again, as I asked her the only question I could think of. "So how *many* women are partnered up with your Mister Covington?"

"You'll be number ten," she said. "I think he's expecting to stop receiving additional partners after he hits twenty or so."

"*Twenty?*" I asked in shock. I didn't know *then* what I know *now*, obviously. "That's insane!"

“You'll see all of this in one of the orientation videos, but the casualty rate for men is extremely high, so those few men that are still alive are being very highly protected,” she sighed. “It stinks, but it is what it is. The only working solution to the DuoHalo virus we have right now is this. Life sucks; wear a hat.”

“What do you mean by 'extremely high?'”

“Look, Piper, I get that you have a lot of questions, but right now you should probably just sit down and watch the orientation videos. They'll answer most of the questions you've got rattling around in that pretty little head of yours right now, and you'll have plenty of time to ask me more later,” Rachel said to me, as we walked up to one of the many zippered pods that lined the hallway.

“But—”

“Here we are now. Pod 37,” she said, pointing to the large number to the right of the open zipper flap. “There's an iPad in here with a series of videos preloaded on it. After you've watched all the videos, it'll unlock and give you basic internet access, as well as logged in Netflix and Amazon Prime Video accounts, so you can watch whatever you want to. No outside communication, though. That'll happen after you're delivered to your partner, not before. That's also when your phone will be returned to you. There's a cot in the room, a cooler with a few bottles of water and some sodas in it, and a couple of protein bars. Eat and drink as much or as little as you want, but do make sure you're drinking some water, because you may be dehydrated from the trip. The iPad also has a 'call for assistance' button on it that you should *only* use if you need to use the restroom, or if there is a serious emergency. You are only allotted a single bathroom break while you're in the pod, so don't use it unless you *really* need to go. You *must* watch all the videos before you can turn off the light in your pod to sleep, and if you try to fall asleep without watching them, there will be an alarm that starts going off every ten seconds until you start watching them. It's only about thirty minutes of videos, so let me stress to you again, you *must* watch them. I'll be by again in the morning and we can talk a little bit more then if you want. But for now, go, watch the videos, and they'll answer all your questions, okay?”

She didn't even wait for me to answer before pushing me into the pod, zipping it closed behind me before sliding a ziptie through the zipper points and a fastener on the other side, a cheap lock that would still no doubt do its job until the morning.

And then she walked off.

The pod was pretty much as she described it. There was a cot with a pillow and a blanket on it, and my suitcase was off to one side, another sticker on it next to the one they'd put with my identifying information on it. This one was massive and green and said 'DECONTAMINATED' in large intimidating capital letters. I could see there was a camera pointed down from above directly at the cot, the observation camera I expected.

The first thing I did was open up my suitcase and a strong whiff of citrus blasted into the air. Whatever decontaminating agent they used smelled like fresh oranges and limes. All my clothes were in there, so despite the fact that there was a camera pointed on me, I dropped the towel and got dressed in comfortable clothes, because I was clearly going to be in the pod for a day or so.

Once dressed, I noticed that on top of the pillow was an iPad mini with a pair of headphones plugged into it, presumably so I didn't bother anyone else around me. When I'd been getting dressed, I could vaguely hear people nearby, but the plastic was opaque enough that I couldn't tell how close or far away they were, nor could I be certain I would do anything but bother them by talking. Trying to see through the plastic just let me see shadows and shapes, no real details of any kind.

Rachel had been thorough in explaining how miserable I was going to be if I didn't watch the videos, so I sat down on the cot, folded my legs beneath me, shoved the earbuds into my ears and turned the iPad on, deciding just to get it over with.

There was a little app called “Orientation” on the screen, along with a bunch of other things that were grayed out, clearly restricted until I watched the damn videos. I know lots of people have had different experiences in how they were given briefings, but this is what happened to me, so I'll just tell

you my story and assume yours is different.

The first video was entitled “DuoHalo and You” and it featured Doctor Charlotte Varma talking in her soft French accent about the DuoHalo virus, and how absolutely toxic it was to human physiology. She did her best to explain how high the casualty rates were going to be, and that it was far more lethal to men than it was to women. She also explained that they had developed a way to inoculate men against it, but that it was an indirect solution, and it was to make the vaccine sexually transmitted. Men, she explained, couldn't take the vaccine directly, because it was lethal to them, but when filtered through a woman's body, it could be passed on to the man through sexual contact. The more immunized women a man was having sexual contact with, the better buffered against the virus he would be. She warned the viewer that it was coming, but the last minute was still filled with stark images of dead and dying men in hospitals all across the country, just to drive home how real this problem was, and how lucky we were to be escaping it.

I took a little bit of time to let that settle in my brain, and walked around the cot some, wondering how many of the guys I'd grown up with, how many of the men I'd known over the years, how many of them were still alive? Dr. Varma didn't say specifically *how* high the fatalities were, but the grim look on her face and the fact that the images they'd shown featured, in one shot, a trailer truck stacked full of corpses in body bags, was enough to make me *very* nervous. I wanted to call my dad more badly in that moment than I ever had in my entire life.

In looking back at it, I think all this isolation behavior is partially there to make women more accepting and eager to bond with their assigned partners, to make us mentally more receptive to the person we're delivered to, having been devoid of almost any human contact for a couple of days, disoriented and constantly shuffled from one place to another but not allowed to talk to anyone.

The second video was entitled “The New You” and covered what was going to happen once we were imprinted to our partner. For at least the foreseeable future, we would be 'bonded' to the man in question, and we would need his semen about once every ten days, give or take three or four days on either side, varying from woman to woman. In *getting* that semen, we would also be *giving* a booster to our man's immunity. In fact, we were told that if we were ever worried that we or our partner had been exposed to DuoHalo, we should have sex as soon as possible, to reinforce the serum's effect in our partner, to ensure his safety.

The video then went on to explain that when we had our first sexual encounter with our partner, we would be 'primed' and then 'imprinted.' The first contact of any man's semen to us would begin the priming process, and would give us one of the most intense orgasms of our lives, the video said, and then when we received a sufficient amount of it (usually through the male orgasm), we would go into the 'imprinting' process, where we would fall into a coma like state, and our body would begin generating the antibodies we would constantly be feeding back to our male partners moving forward.

I think the video knew (and rightfully so) that nobody was going to believe this, so they brought a man and a woman on screen to demonstrate. I still don't know who that man and woman are, but I *am* certain that there hasn't been a couple that more people have seen fuck since the Pam & Tommy video leaked back in the 90s, because I think almost every woman in America who's gone through the imprinting process has watched this same video of that man and woman fucking.

You know this, I'm sure, but he looked like he was a white guy in his mid 40s, balding with a scruffy beard, and she was a hot young Asian woman in her early 20s, fit and busty, with a streak of green in her black hair with blonde ends.

It starts a little clinical, with both of them disrobing. The first thing you see is the woman drop to her knees, and when her lips touch the head of his cock, and she gets her first hit of his precum, the look of sheer ecstasy on her face *cannot* be faked. Nobody is that good of an actress. It is clear that she is being gifted with one of the hardest orgasms she's ever endured.

I think a lot of us women must get aggressive after that initial priming orgasm, because next she pushes him down onto the floor roughly and moves to climb on top of him, kissing him and grinding

against him, moaning and squealing the whole time. She thrusts herself down onto his cock and begins fucking that man like he's just a toy for her pleasure.

They dialed down the sound for most of it, so that we could hear Dr. Varma talking, but I'm pretty sure that woman was swearing up a storm at her partner as she fucked him. Dr. Varma talked over the incredibly graphic footage, telling us that as soon as we were 'primed,' we should complete the imprinting process as quickly as possible, because prolonging the experience could lead to complications. We were also told not to wait too long after meeting our partner to start the process, because the serum would cause problems in our systems if we did not get imprinted to someone.

Little did I know I was going to be the poster girl for those problems.

After a couple of minutes of some of the most carnal fucking I'd ever seen put to film, the man clearly ejaculated inside of his partner and she slumped down on top of him like she'd passed out. They then showed how she was limp, completely unconscious, and the sound turned up so we could hear the woman saying "imprinting" over and over again for just a few seconds, but that was long enough to rattle me.

The third and final video was about the post imprinting life we would be living soon. Dr. Varma explained to us that this was going to be our reality for a while, and that while it wasn't an ideal solution, it was what they had that worked. She reiterated that we would need to get semen from our partner about every ten days or so, and that for every day we went past that, the more we risked going into a mindless state, where we would just attempt to rape our partner until we got it. If we were *separated* from our partner for longer than that, in our mindless state we might just go after the first available male we found.

That, the video said, would probably be the last mistake we ever made.

As part of the imprinting process, we were now bio-coded to that one partner, and the semen of any *other* partner would be toxic to us. Like all things, they knew we wouldn't believe this, so we were again shown the couple from the previous video, although obviously this was some time later, as she was conscious again. They took a bit of precum from her partner and smeared it on her arm, to no effect. Then, they had another man standing there, and took some of his precum and smeared it onto her arm just a little further down.

It took maybe a minute or so, but it became evident that the second man's precum was beginning to eat through the woman's skin, burning it like it was acidic. They then washed it off her arm, as the woman visibly relaxed. The damage was still there, but having cleaned it off her skin had caused the burning to stop. The voice asked us to imagine what it would've been like if that second man had ejaculated inside of her.

Infidelity wasn't just frowned upon – it was likely *fatal*.

They didn't have conclusive proof of that yet, but it was considered such risky behavior that they didn't want us to even entertain the idea. Scientists were working on ways to be able to unbind two people and to enable them to rebind them to others, but until that had been developed and tested, *this* was the reality we had to live with.

We were also told that if we got pregnant, and we were going to be *heavily* encouraged to get pregnant, that the child would be completely *immune* to DuoHalo, regardless of gender, and wouldn't need to go through an imprinting and pairing process, nor would their body be toxic to us at any point during the pregnancy. Sadly, that immunity wouldn't kick back upwards to us. We'd be having sexual encounters right up until giving birth, and then right back to it within a week afterwards, although the video also pointed out that ingesting semen orally would have the same impact as vaginally or anally, and that this would be something to keep in mind if one part of our body got too tender.

Dr. Varma had just a little parting advice to women, to look at the intense orgasms as the carrot to the stick of being stuck with this. We would continually know a sexual satisfaction that no woman in our generation had ever known before, and we would get those releases *every ten days*, so there would be a biological and chemical rush to compensate for what we'd lost.

She also said that they had done the best they possibly could with such short notice to get us paired up with, if not someone we were attracted to, at least someone we would get along with. What a fucking *lie* that turned out to be, at least in my case.

After that last video, the rest of the iPad unlocked, although I was quick to discover just how limited it really was. There was no web browser, no camera access, no FaceTime, no phone app, no ability to install new apps, nothing to allow me to communicate with the outside world. I could watch television or movies, but other than that, I was simply alone in my plastic jail cell, so I watched a little TV then crawled into bed in the cot and hoped that the next day wouldn't be so detached from the rest of humanity.

As I drifted off, I could hear a few girls crying themselves to sleep in the distance. I didn't know that I would be doing the same the very next evening...

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“Jesus Fucking Christ,” Fiona said. “That's... that's *way* different than my experience. I mean, yeah, I saw those videos just like you did, although they've updated the one about infidelity. They show a pretty gruesome picture of that woman who died, Veronica.”

“Oh hell,” Piper said, “I actually *met* her, you know? She was part of Covington's house.”

“God, I'm *so* sorry.”

“It's weird, too, because she *clearly* knew better, so I'm wondering what drove her to it. If she even did it voluntarily,” Piper said. “She may not have, based on what Andy's told me. You don't know Covington like I do.”

“He's that bad?”

“Worse,” she insisted, “but we're getting there...”