

DISASTER

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I can't see, I can't move. Why won't my eyes open? Ugh my eyes hurt. What happened? There is a weird burning smell, what's burning? Is it wood, paper? No, the smell's stronger, it burns me inside when I breathe. I think it might be some sort of chemical substance. I'm starting to open my eyes, everything's blurry. Ugh my head hurts. What happened?! I'm able to move. I turn around, there's someone on the floor, it seems to have long hair, maybe it's a girl, yeah, she is totally a girl. Who is she? I can't remember anything; I think she has a white lab coat. Everything hurts, but I'm able to slowly get myself straight. I look at myself, I'm covered in blood, full of scratches and cuts, I still don't get what happened to me. I start looking around, I think I'm in a lab, but everything is destroyed. The computers are glitching, there's lab equipment everywhere, scrapes on the walls, what happened here? How did I end up here?

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I wake up at 5:00am like every other morning and go to the bathroom. I brush my teeth, wash my face and head back to my room. I open my window blinds and stare at the dark New York City. The only thing I see are the colorful billboards, the cars passing by; the stars starting to fade, and the sun starting to rise. I sigh thinking that today will be like just any other day, the same bullshit. After I take a shower, I wipe the foggy mirror and stare at my reflection. I look for something, a tiny bit of self-awareness, a bit of light or happiness, but nothing, just the same emotionless face. I go to my room, put on some clothe, do my hair and put on my glasses. I went to the kitchen, but I find myself just staring at my fridge, looking for something to eat knowing that I'll end up just drinking coffee.

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Work is just the same, the security guard greeting me asking how I am, and I just answer, "trying". I go straight to my lab, I don't really like talking to people, they always ask stupid question faking they care about you but at the end they just want to know your weaknesses and judge you. I hear people ask around if I've always been like this, the truth is haven't I used to have friends, but they just used me for knowledge, took credit for the things I did, while I stood one the dark with zero recognition.

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I've been working on the development of a drug that causes a mutation in your body that can fight any type of disease, from the simplest cold to the worst cancer possible. It's been hard to get this project approved, find the needed materials, but most importantly someone I can trust, or who can just respect my work enough to not sabotage it or take the credit from me and be my partner. One day I found my assistant, she is a lot like me, well in the part where no one accepts her or respects her, because personality wise, we are nothing alike. She is way to happy, and colorful, it sometimes irritates me, but she does the work, so I deal with it. This project might be the one that changes everything for me, I am so close to getting it done, but there is still something missing.

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I'm working on my project, making calculation, adjustments, observations, I've tried every single substance combination I can think of, but nothing has worked out. I feel like I'm going nuts. I'm heading into a horrible mental block when suddenly my assistant speaks, I jumped surprised and ask her what she wants. Because of my tone she shyly tells me about a compound that might work. I hear her out and start making calculation, I draw possible structures, I think about every possible outcome, until I'm left with the only option of trying it out. Before trying it out I look under a microscope and see how the molecules of this compound behave, and it has a pretty good chance of working, so I decide to try it out. We start creating the mixture carefully, combining the necessary solution, now the only thing that its left is add the key command. When we added it, I had the reaction we wanted. Is this it? Was this all I was looking for? I need to do multiple tests to confirm that everything is correct.

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I run the test multiple times and I obtain the same result. This means I'm close, close to my goal, finally, I will be known. I start running the test on lab rats. I insert the drug to a healthy rat and wait for a while to the insert the virus it needs to prevent from developing. After a few days of observation there is no change, the rat does not develop the virus. Am I finally done? I take it to my boss, but it is not enough for him. What else am I going to do? I've proven everything, done every experiment the correct way. Does he have something against me that he just doesn't want to hear me? Or is he just too

dumb to see that in-front of him is the opportunity to change the world and medicine forever? I need to do something; I need him to see.

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I'm in my apartment, staring at my ceiling thinking what I'm going to do about all this. I need to find a solution. I think about other animal subjects, maybe changing the rat bread but nothing. I still think it's not necessary because it is all proven. The only thing left is to try it on a human but it's not that easy, it must be approved by the FDA. I felt like I was going crazy, my head would not stop so I took a sleeping pill that I created for situations like this and went to sleep.

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I had a nightmare. I was on my lab floor and my whole body was aching. The lab was destroyed. I looked around and saw a girl on the floor and she couldn't move, I think she was my assistant, was she dead? Is this a sign that I should stop? I think it's stress and the pill together, everything will be okay. I left for my lab like every other morning but when I arrived, it's closed. There's a lot of people, news reporter, FBI, SWAT, paramedics everything. I try to get through the people and that's when I see on one of the billboards the live news reporting what happened. There I was, on the camera footage from the company going crazy on my own lab and killing my assistant. The only thing that I could think of was the dream, or I should say nightmare that I had last night. I left that place before anyone could saw me. I ditched my phone and work laptop.

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I arrived at my apartment and start pacing around trying to remember what happened. I bang my head on the wall, drink some water, try to calm down but I can't, I need to remember what happened. I decide to go to my bathroom and get inside the shower. The water's cold, it's helping me calm down. I sit there for I while, I don't know how much time but it suddenly all comes back. I remember arriving to work and telling my assistant that I found the solution to everything, I would just use myself as an experiment subject. She said that it was a bad idea, that I shouldn't do it, but I didn't listen. I was still her boss, I told her to inject the drug, she had no other option. I remember feeling a burning sensation rushing through my veins, and suddenly I had no control of my body. It was as if I was possessed or something. I remember my assistant trying to help me calm down, but I suddenly pushed her and hit the wall and didn't wake up again.

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I open my eyes and I'm screaming. I'm panting and all sweaty. What was that horrible nightmare? I get ready for work and leave my apartment. When I arrive there it is, the same scenario, lots of people, FBI, SWAT, paramedics, the news, and I start running away again. What is going on with me? What disaster have I caused?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniela E. Delgado Montalvo is a 20-year-old college student from the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez. She is currently working to get her bachelor's degree in chemistry. Since she was a kid, she had a strong passion towards writing. Most of the time her stories are based on real life experiences with a small dark twist.