

Am

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour terrorists released twenty five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. Amy's a herpetologist from the Museum, and Charlie's the track inspector. They went into the subway looking for mamba eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

Pages are from the middle of the story.

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue, Amy leaned against the open window, letting the fresh air wash over her. She wondered if she could ever ride the subway again. The cop cut into the park at 79th St and Belvidere Castle flew by on the right. They came out on the west side of the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them. Her graduate student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy thanked the officer, who was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab. Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port a squat silver cylinder with a purple band read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited. After about ten minutes the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box. Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1% and went

Should have asked badge if this already this already

can't know because I already shared this with kind myself wondering how the transfer went. Her big heavy bag. Can the public see in mem?

Again, I'd like to see the transfer. You have an opportunity for tension by not showing the snake a how it reacts to the transfer

but we never saw it moving! (Italic) you have an opportunity for tension by not showing the snake a how it reacts to the transfer

travels the wonder that the bag looks like + I want H.S. made of. She

Unless we've seen the mamba. Lab before, we could do with more description here

NEEDS MORE DETAIL (very 1-2-3, doesn't flow) VERY SENTENCE STRUCTURE MORE

is change could make use more atmospheric - vague - try to be more specific

Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port a squat silver cylinder with a purple band read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited. After about ten minutes the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box. Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1% and went

Museum of Natural History New York City Wednesday June 27th 11:45pm

(New Chapter)

Under his breath he said, "Oh Christ!" and reached for the phone.

as long as Charlie was in this is an okay end to it too. ~~the~~ creator

down and lean in to the viewer screen.

it was slow going. Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee

the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. There were a lot of them, and

coffee in front of a microfiche reader. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and

As she said this Charlie was parked in the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of

things on a page-turning note of suspense

done, she thought. [?] because I don't know what came before, I can't say this for sure but I suspect this might be the place to end the chapter, as it ends

knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her. What have they

outward

On the lateral view a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Army

and said, "What's that?"

They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second, then her student pointed

and stepped closer. She brought up the magnification and (called the graduate student over.

this character doesn't get a name?

lateral. When it flashed onto the screen a few seconds later Army let out a little chirp of surprise

mamba's head under the cone. She took a straight-down shot, then wheeled the cone around for a

be specific

to the end of the tube) Wheeling the whole assembly over the to X-ray table, she positioned the

and

vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs she gently picked up the mamba's head and fed it out

unclear

port. Army opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes for the isoflurane

end of the tube was closed and the other had an adapter that fit perfectly onto the large access

lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches across, and returned to the box. One

she

and

Selecting

over to a rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas tubes of various sizes and

that

Sam. S. Pink a basic a missing was said

"I'm not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I'll have to sacrifice it to be sure."

dissect

"What're we looking at?" he asked.

wire filament

~~On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake's skull, with the button and its dangling~~

at the screen, and the image of the

artist's charcoal

Amy ~~called him over. She was seated at a large computer display and said, "Take a look~~

at the screen, and the image of the

most people know of an early age how they feel about snakes! a frightened grunt. He'd never realized how deathly afraid of snakes he was until now.

I find this hard to believe -

Leaning closer he could see the tiny drops of venom hanging off its little fangs. He recoiled with

to the half inch of glass, as he approached it still reared up and displayed its black mouth.

Over in the corner the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

under his arm. ~~"Sure, I brought some printouts. You need to see this," he said, and patted the folder containing the~~

She nodded a greeting and said, "Thanks for doing that Charlie." Mundaad -

car at the loading dock, and the guard brought him up to Amy's lab.

minutes the police escorted him onto the FDR and they headed towards the Museum. He left his

"Alright, see you in a few," Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button. Twenty

come up to the door on 81st. The guard "ll let you in."

"Amy said, "I think I know why it attacked you. Bring what you've found and

like it." "I'm surprised she didn't ask - I sure would have

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

"Dr. Martin... " "Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

The phone rang in Amy's lab and she picked it up. ~~She~~ then have her answer

SHOW WHAT SHE'S DOING

that, try to write more vivid description

try to give better create printouts

MAKE YOUR DIAGNOSIS COUNT

I'm surprised she didn't ask - I sure would have

then have her answer

don't bother with mundaad dialog

When

"Sacrifice it?" *obvious*

"It means kill it, Charlie," she said quietly, "dissect it."

Charlie asked (Amy not go inside his head here & show what he's thinking? feeling?)

"Good," he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, "So what's your idea?"

"Uh-huh... so?" *MUMMINE! use a physical gesture instead, to show his confusion.*

"So," she said, "that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It's where

aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile

ancestors." *Amy* She pointed to the screen. "If somehow this is stimulating its amygdala, that could

explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing." *you never said he's excited - you show through his physical actions that he is*

"Wait a minute!" Charlie said excitedly, "cops told me one of the attackers had

social out

"Makes sense," she said, "they wouldn't wanna trigger it until after the release. I think

I'm right, but I'll know for sure once I look at the slides."

slides? Seeing the confusion on Charlie's face, Amy and explained.

"Histochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory."

no reason for this reaction.

Charlie rolled his eyes a little. "So when ya gonna kill it?" *Do you have to kill it, do that?*

"Charlie, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba bite is in Arizona. I called them a

little while ago to see if I could get some. They said the attack used up what little they had, and

asked me to milk this one so they can make more."

show his face
"Milk it? Like a cow?"

She smiled. "Not quite. It means collect their venom."

He turned to her with a shocked look. "How the hell do you do that?"

seems too much.

*as how to milk a snake is valid.
Shupid. But the question
this makes him seem
snake? a word choice like
heard about milking a
as how to milk a snake is
valid.*

The Snake

THRILLER EXCERPT - DANIEL BILES

"It's not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite

through it. The venom's automatically expelled and collects in the jar."

"Sounds pretty dangerous!"
"Kind of."

"Yeah, not very hard but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people've been bitten that way. It has a

S'gotta be done though: without it we can't make the antivenom, then people die. Untreated, a

mamba bite is 100% fatal. So fight now getting that venom's more important than proving my

theory."

"You gotta keep it alive then?"

"For a couple days, yeah. I'll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC

can bioengineer a big batch."

"Huh?" He gave her a blank look.

"Use it as a template to make more," she said, "how what do you have to show me?"

~~His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the folder he carried and showed her.~~ Show his expression as he watches her.

"They put that wall up in 1972 when they laid a new, wider track for the Times Square

shuttle. You saw it's a little damp down there so once the wall was up, they figured they needed a

drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system but for some reason, probably

budget, they didn't. If they had, those little snakes woulda ended up in the East River, and they'd be

probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. This drain connects to an old sewer line, and

that's bad, Army. Really bad. How long can one of those things hold its breath?" Show his face/expression

"I'm not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen need is much less

than ours. Why?" Show her

THRILLER EXCERPT - DANIEL BILES

be specific
of how
point it
it

"When I saw this I called a friend of mine works for city sanitation. He told me all city

sewer lines built since 1935 have to have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn't; it was

built before then. Tunnel guys didn't care, no one's down there anyway. From that drain it's

about a two minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt."

"Are you saying

Wide-eyed, she asked, "What're you saying? They can get into the hotel?"

He looked at her for a long moment. "The lower floors...probably, yeah."

Come up with something better.

~~Oh shit~~

more atmosphere
more description
go into your characters' heads

pace is good

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour terrorists released twenty five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. Amy's a herpetologist from the Museum, and Charlie's the track inspector. They went into the subway looking for mamba eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

Pages are from the middle of the story.

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue Amy leaned against the open window, letting the fresh air wash over her. She wondered if she could ever ride the subway again. The cop cut into the park at 79th St and Belvidere Castle New by on the right. They came out on the west side with the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them. Her graduate student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy thanked the officer, who was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab.

Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a large plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port a squat silver cylinder with a purple band read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited for the mambas to take effect.

After about ten minutes the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box. Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1% and went

- good! very clear!
- good tension!
- fun story

Ed

over to a rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas tubes of various sizes and

lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches across, and returned to the box. One

end of the tube was closed and the other had an adapter that fit perfectly onto the large access

port. Amy opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes for the isoflurane

vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs she gently picked up the mamba's head and fed it out

to the end of the tube. Wheeling the whole assembly over the to X-ray table, she positioned the

mamba's head under the cone. She took a straight-down shot, then wheeled the cone around for a

lateral. When it flashed onto the screen a few seconds later, Amy let out a little chirp of surprise

and stepped closer. She brought up the magnification and called the graduate student over.

They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second, then her student pointed

and said "What's that?"

On the lateral view, a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Amy

knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her. What have they

done? she thought.

As she said this, Charlie was parked in the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of

coffee in front of a microfiche reader. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and

the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. There were a lot of them, and

it was slow going. Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee

down and lean in to the viewer screen.

Under his breath he said, "Oh Christ!" and reached for the phone.

(New Chapter)

Museum of Natural History New York City Wednesday June 27th 11:45pm

The phone rang in Amy's lab and she picked it up.

"Dr. Martin..."

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

like it."

"Yeah, same here. I think I know why it attacked you. Bring what you've found and

come up to the door on 81st. The guard'll let you in."

"Alright, see you in a few," Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button. Twenty

minutes the police escorted him onto the FDR and they headed towards the Museum. He left his

car at the loading dock and the guard brought him up to Amy's lab.

She nodded a greeting and said, "Thanks for doing that, Charlie."

"Sure. I brought some printouts... you need to see this," he said and patted the folder

under his arm.

Over in the corner the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

belly caught his eye as it pressed against the front pane, and he went over to look at it. Oblivious to the half inch of glass, as he approached it still reared up and displayed its black mouth.

Leaning closer he could see the tiny drops of venom hanging off its little fangs. He recoiled with a frightened grunt. He'd never realized how deathly afraid of snakes he was until now.

Amy called him over. She was seated at a large computer display and said, "Take a look

at this Charlie."

On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake's skull with the button and its dangling

wire filament.

"What're we looking at?" he asked.

"I'm not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I'll have to sacrifice it to be sure."

"Sacrifice it?"

"It means kill it, Charlie," she said quietly, "dissect it."

"Good," he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, "So what's your idea?"

"I think this wire might be an electrode, and from its location I'd say it's in the

midbrain."

"Uh-huh...so?"

"So," she said, "that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It's where

aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile

ancestors." She pointed to the screen. "In some way, this is stimulating its amygdala, that could

explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing."

"Wait a minute!" Charlie said excitedly. "Cops told me one of the attackers had

something looked like a little remote!"

"Makes sense," she said, "they wouldn't wanna trigger it until after the release. I think

I'm right, but I'll know for sure once I look at the slides."

"Slides?"

"Histochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory."

Charlie rolled his eyes a little. "So when ya gonna kill it?"

"Charlie, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba bite is in Arizona. I called them a

little while ago to see if I could get some. They said the attack used up what little they had, and

asked me to milk this one so they can make more."

"Milk it? Like a cow?"

She smiled. "Not quite. It means collect their venom."

He turned to her with a shocked look. "How the hell do you do that?"

"It's not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite

through it. The venom's automatically expelled and collects in the jar."

"Sounds pretty dangerous!"

"Yeah, not very hard but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people've been bitten that way.

"Gotta be done though: without it we can't make the antivenin, then people die. Untreated a

mamba bite is 100% fatal. So right now getting that venom's more important than proving my

theory."

"You gotta keep it alive, then?"

"Couple days, yeah. I'll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC

can bioengineer a big batch."

"Huh?" He gave her a blank look.

"Use it as a template to make more," she said. "How what do you have to show me?"

His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the

folder he carried and showed her.

"They put that wall up in 1972 when they laid a new wider track for the Times Square

shuttle. You saw it's a little damp down there so once the wall was up they figured they needed a

drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system but for some reason, probably

budget, they didn't. If they had those little snakes woulda ended up in the East River, and they'd

probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. This drain connects to an old sewer line, and

that's bad, Amy. Really bad. How long can one of those things hold its breath?"

"I'm not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen need is much less

than ours. Why?"

“When I saw this I called a friend of mine works for city sanitation. He told me all city sewer lines built since 1935 have to have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn't; it was built before then. Tunnel guys didn't care, no one's down there anyway. From that drain it's about a two minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt.”

Wide-eyed, she asked, “What're you saying? They can get into the hotel?”

He looked at her for a long moment. “The lower floors...probably, yeah.”

“Oh shit.”

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue, Amy leaned against the open window, letting the fresh air wash over her. She wondered if she could ever ride the subway again. The cop cut into the park at 79th St and Belvidere Castle flew by on the right. They came out on the west side with the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them. Her graduate student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy thanked the officer, who was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab.

Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a large plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port a squat silver cylinder with a purple band read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited. After about ten minutes the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box. Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1% and went

Prodded? pushed? pushed?

Plexiglas box

waiter?

box

she did the
need a
Plexiglas
box
waiter?

Pages are from the middle of the story.

Tim writes about what happened in the two days since.

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour terrorists released twenty five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. Amy's a herpetologist from the Museum, and Charlie's the track inspector. They went into the subway looking for mamba eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

Julie

Museum of Natural History New York City Wednesday June 27th 11:45pm

(New Chapter)

Under his breath he said, "Oh Christ!" and reached for the phone.

down and lean in to the viewer screen. ^{it was slow going.} Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee ^{Use Amy also working just before} the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. ~~There were a lot of them, and~~

As she said this, ^{Charlie} Charlie was parked in the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of coffee in front of a microfiche reader. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and done? she thought.

knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her. What have they On the lateral view, a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Amy

and said "What's that?" ^{asked} They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second, then her student pointed

and stepped closer. She brought up the magnification and called the graduate student over.

lateral. When it flashed onto the screen a few seconds later, Amy let out a little chirp of surprise

mamba's head under the cone. She took a straight-down shot, then wheeled the cone around for a

to the end of the tube. Wheeling the whole assembly over the to X-ray table, she positioned the

vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs she gently picked up the mamba's head and fed it out

port. Amy opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes for the isoflurane

end of the tube was closed and the other had an adapter that fit perfectly onto the large access

lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches across, and returned to the box. One

over to a rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas tubes of various sizes and

Charlie

"I'm not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I'll have to sacrifice it to be sure."

"What're we looking at?" he asked.

wire filament.

On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake's skull with the button and its dangling

at this Charlie."

Amy called him over. She was seated at a large computer display and said, "Take a look

a frightened grunt. He'd never realized how deathly afraid of snakes he was until now.

Leaning closer he could see the tiny drops of venom hanging off its little fangs. He recoiled with

to the half inch of glass, as he approached it still reared up and displayed its black mouth.

belly caught his eye as it pressed against the front pane, and he went over to look at it. Oblivious

Over in the corner the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

under his arm.

"Sure. I brought some printouts...you need to see this," he said and patted the folder

She nodded a greeting and said, "Thanks for doing that Charlie."

car at the loading dock and the guard brought him up to Amy's lab.

minutes the police escorted him onto the FDR and they headed towards the Museum. He left his

"Alright, see you in a few," Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button. Twenty

come up to the door on 81st. The guard'll let you in."

"Yeah, same here. I think I know why it attacked you. Bring what you've found and

like it."

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

"Dr. Martin..."

The phone rang in Amy's lab and she picked it up.

Charlie

Handwritten notes on the right margin: "At 20 minutes", "with notes", "takes".

Police

“Sacrifice it?”

“It means kill it, Charlie,” she said quietly, “dissect it.”

“Good,” he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, “So what’s your idea?”

“I think this wire might be an electrode, and from its location I’d say it’s in the

midbrain.”

“Uh-huh...so?”

“So,” she said, “that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It’s where

aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile

ancestors.” She pointed to the screen. “If somehow this is stimulating its amygdala, that could

explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing.” *Have Charlie look at or rub his forehead.*

“Wait a minute!” Charlie said excitedly, “Cops told me one of the attackers had

something looked like a little remote!”

“Makes sense,” she said, “they wouldn’t wanna trigger it until after the release. I think

I’m right, but I’ll know for sure once I look at the slides.”

“Slides?”

“Histochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory.”

Charlie rolled his eyes a little. “So when ya gonna kill it?”

“Charlie, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba bite is in Arizona. I called them a

little while ago to see if I could get some. They said the attack used up what little they had, and

asked me to milk this one so they can make more.”

“Milk it? Like a cow?”

She smiled. “Not quite. It means collect their venom.”

He turned to her with a shocked look. “How the hell do you do that?”

“It’s not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite through it. The venom’s automatically expelled and collects in the jar.”

“Sounds pretty dangerous!”

“Yeah, not very hard but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people’ve been bitten that way. S’gotta be done though: without it we can’t make the antivenin, then people die. Untreated a mamba bite is 100% fatal. So right now getting that venom’s more important than proving my theory.”

“You gotta keep it alive then?”

“Couple days, yeah. I’ll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC can bioengineer a big batch.”

“Huh?” He gave her a blank look.

“Use it as a template to make more,” she said, “now what do you have to show me?”

His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the folder he carried and showed her.

“They put that wall up in 1972 when they laid a new wider track for the Times Square shuttle. You saw it’s a little damp down there, so once the wall was up they figured they needed a drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system but for some reason, probably budget, they didn’t. If they had those little snakes woulda ended up in the East River, and they’d probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. This drain connects to an old sewer line, and that’s bad, Amy. Really bad. How long can one of those things hold its breath?”

“I’m not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen need is much less than ours. Why?”

THRILLER EXCERPT - DANIEL BILES

Durie

"When I saw this, I called a friend of mine works for city sanitation. He told me all city sewer lines built since 1935 have to have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn't; it was built before then. Tunnel guys didn't care, no one's down there anyway. From that drain, it's about a two-minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt."

Wide-eyed, she asked, "What're you saying? They can get into the hotel?"
 He looked at her for a long moment. "The lower floors...probably, yeah."

"Oh shit...!"

Wow! I had never considered a situation like this.
 I'm intrigued.
 Do you tell the reader elsewhere of the scale of the attack and the harm done?
 Consult a thesaurus and find some synonyms for "said".
 Give conversations are informative and move the story along.

*Taking this scene, having no previous experience with the story prior to this and no idea (but some real curiosity) where it goes, I'd consider this a wonderful build-up chapter. It has all the elements of a real thriller. There is just enough detail to give the story a sense of verisimilitude. It doesn't have to become a lab experiment, but the reader has to trust you to have enough knowledge of lab practices and discovery to believe that they're not being fed a bunch of fantasy.
Important. I hope you have created a believable deadline, with time running out before disaster, to squeeze all the tension you can from the reader.
So far, I'd say, you are well on the way.*

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour terrorists released twenty five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. Amy's a herpetologist from the Museum, and Charlie's the track inspector. They went into the subway looking for mamba eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

*How far
into the
story*

Pages are from the middle of the story.

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue (Amy leaned against the open window, letting the fresh air wash over her. She wondered if she could ever ride the subway again. The cop cut into the park at 79th St and Belvidere Castle flew by on the right. They came out on the west side with the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them. Her graduate student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy thanked the officer, who was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab.

Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a large Plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port a squat silver cylinder with a purple band read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited.

After about ten minutes the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box. Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1% and went over to a rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas tubes of various sizes and lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches *aeress (in diameter)*, and returned to the box. One end of the tube was closed and the other had an adapter that fit perfectly onto the large access port. Amy opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes for the isoflurane vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs she gently picked up the mamba's head and fed it out to the end of the tube. Wheeling the ~~whole assembly~~ *(the tube with the snake inside)* over the to X-ray table, she positioned the mamba's head under the cone. She took a straight-down shot, then wheeled the cone around for a lateral. When it flashed onto the screen a few seconds later Amy let out a little chirp of surprise and stepped closer. She brought up the magnification and called the graduate student over.

They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second, then her student pointed and said "What's that?"

On the lateral view *(?)* a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Amy knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her. What have they done? she thought.

As she said this Charlie was parked in the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of coffee in front of a microfiche reader. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. There were a lot of them, and

it was slow going. Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee down and lean in to the viewer screen.

Under his breath he said, "Oh Christ!" and reached for the phone.

(Good tension during the discovery phase of the story. Keeps the reader turning over

pages to see what comes next. Good.)

(New Chapter)

Museum of Natural History New York City Wednesday June 27th 11:45pm

The phone rang in Amy's lab(.) *and she She* picked it up.

"Dr. Martin..."

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

like it."

"Yeah, same here. I think I know why it attacked you. Bring what you've found and

come up to the door on 81st. The guard'll let you in."

"Alright, see you in a few," Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button. Twenty

minutes *(later)* the police escorted him onto the FDR and they headed towards the Museum. He

left his car at the loading dock and the guard brought him up to Amy's lab.

She nodded a greeting and said, "Thanks for doing that Charlie."

"Sure. I brought some printouts...you need to see this," he said and patted the folder

under his arm.

Over in the corner(.) the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

belly caught his eye as it pressed against the front pane(.). *and he He* went over to look at it.

Obvious to the half inch of glass, *as he approached*-it still reared up and displayed its black

mouth. Leaning closer he could see the tiny drops of venom hanging off its little fangs. He recoiled with a frightened grunt. He'd never realized how deathly afraid of snakes he was until now.

Amy called him over. She was seated at a large computer display and said, "Take a look at this Charlie."

On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake's skull with the button and its *dangering* wire filament *(imbedded into the snake's brain.*

"What're we looking at?" he asked.

"I'm not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I'll have to sacrifice it to be sure."

"Sacrifice it?"

"It means kill it, Charlie," she said quietly(.), "*dissect (Dissect)* it."

"Good," he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, "So what's your idea?"

"I think this wire might be an electrode, and from its location I'd say it's in the

midbrain."

"Uh-huh...so?"

"So," she said, "that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It's where aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile

ancestors." She pointed to the screen. "If somehow this is stimulating its amygdala, that could

explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing."

"Wait a minute!" Charlie said excitedly(.), "*eeps (Cops)* told me one of the attackers had

something looked like a little remote!"

"Makes sense," she said(.), "*they (They)* wouldn't wanna trigger it until after the release.

I think I'm right, but I'll know for sure once I look at the slides."

“Slides?”

“Histochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory.”

Charlie rolled his eyes a little. “So when ya gonna kill it?”

“Charlie, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba bite is in Arizona. I called them a little while ago to see if I could get some. They said the attack used up what little they had, and

asked me to milk this one so they can make more.”

“Milk it? Like a cow?”

She smiled. “Not quite. It means collect their venom.”

He turned to her with a shocked look. “How the hell do you do that?”

“It’s not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite

through it. The venom’s automatically expelled and collects in the jar.”

“Sounds pretty dangerous!”

“Yeah, not very hard but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people’ve been bitten that way.

S’gotta be done though: without it we can’t make the antivenin, then people die. Untreated a

mamba bite is 100% fatal. So right now getting that venom’s more important than proving my

theory.”

“You gotta keep it alive then?”

“Couple days, yeah. I’ll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC

can bioengineer a big batch.”

“Huh?” ~~He gave her a blank look~~ *blvlov?*

“Use it as a template to make more,” she said, “now what do you have to show me?”

His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the

folder he carried and showed her *(the diagram of the tracks where the snakes were found).*

“They put that wall up in 1972 when they laid a new wider track for the Times Square shuttle. You saw it’s a little damp down there(,) so once the wall was up(,) they figured they needed a drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system but for some reason, probably budget, they didn’t. If they had(,) those little snakes woulda ended up in the East River, ~~and they’d (They’d)~~ probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. ~~This (But, this)~~ drain connects to an old sewer line, ~~and that’s (That’s)~~ bad, Amy. Really bad. How long can one of those things hold its breath?”

“I’m not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen need is much less than ours. Why?”

“When I saw this(,) I called a friend of mine ~~(who)~~ works for city sanitation. He told me ~~(that)~~ all city sewer lines built since 1935 have to have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn’t; it was built before then. Tunnel guys didn’t care, no one’s down there anyway. From that drain it’s about a two minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt.”

Wide-eyed, she asked, “What’re you saying? They can get into the hotel?”

He looked at her for a long moment. “The lower floors...probably, yeah.”

“Oh shit...!”

Really good build up.

anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box.

she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then

lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. ~~there was no~~ response, so she pushed the pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited. After about ten minutes the snake

smaller access port had a squat silver cylinder with a purple band that read *Isotwane*. She

snake inside the case through one of two access ports and locked the lid. ~~On the side with the~~

~~each side: a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right.~~ She placed the bagged along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. ~~There were access ports on~~

plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a large

was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab.

student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy thanked the officer, who

out on the west side with the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them. Her graduate The cop cut into the park at 79th Street, and Belvidere Castle flew by on the right. They came

letting the fresh air wash over her. ~~she wondered if she could~~ she ever ride the subway again?

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue, Amy leaned against the open window,

Pages are from the middle of the story.

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour, terrorists released twenty-five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. Amy's a herpetologist from the Museum, and Charlie's the track inspector. They went into the subway looking for mamba eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

THRILLER EXCERPT - DANIEL BILES

Dani's Comments

Comment [PMS 152]: When I first read this I

though she cut the snake's head off.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Comment [PMS 151]: Use "plexiglas" with 2's unless you mean the trademark which should be capitalized and have 1 5 "Plexiglas"

*too much
to play by play*

Indeed it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned the dial down to 1%, and went over to the rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas tubes of various sizes and lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches across, and returned to the box. One end of the tube was ~~else~~ sealed and the other had an

adapter that fit perfectly onto the large access port. Amy opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes for the isoflurane vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs she gently picked up the mamba's head and fed it out to the end of the tube. Wheeling the whole assembly over to the X-ray table, she positioned the mamba's head under the cone. She took a

straight-down shot, then wheeled the cone around for a lateral. When it the image flashed onto the screen a few seconds later Amy let out a little chirp of surprise and stopped closer. She

brought up the magnification and called the graduate student over. They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second, then her student pointed and said "What's that?"

On the lateral view a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Amy knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her.

What have they done? she thought. *** END CHAPTER HERE.

As she said this Charlie was parked in front of a microfiche reader in at the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of coffee. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. There were a lot of them, and it was slow going. Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee down and lean in to the viewer screen.

Under his breath he said, "Oh, Christ!" and reached for the phone.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Comment [PHS 154]: A little too much play by play here. It slows the story down. Try to shorten.

Comment [PHS 153]: See plexiglas comment above

The phone rang in Amy's lab and she picked it up.

"Dr. Martin..."

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

like it."

"Yeah, same here. I think I know why it attacked you. Bring what you've found and

come up to the door on 81st. The guard'll let you in."

"Alright, see you in a few," Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button. Twenty

minutes later, the police escorted him onto the FDR, and they headed towards the Museum. He

left his car at the loading dock, and the guard brought him up to Amy's lab.

She nodded a greeting and said, "Thanks for doing that, Charlie."

"Sure. I brought some printouts, ~~and~~ you need to see this," he said and patted the folder

under his arm.

Over in the corner the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

belly caught his eye as it pressed against the front pane, ~~and~~ he went over to look at it.

Obvious to the half inch of glass, ~~as he approached~~ it still reared up and displayed its black

mouth ~~as he approached~~. ~~Leaning closer he could see the~~ tiny drops of venom ~~hanging off~~

its little fangs. He recoiled with a frightened grunt. He'd never realized how deathly afraid of

snakes he was until now.

~~Amy called him over. She was seated at a large computer display and said: "Take a look~~

~~at this, Charlie." Amy said.~~

THRILLER EXCERPT - DANIEL BILES

On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake's skull with the button and its dangling wire filament.

"What're we looking at?" he asked.

"I'm not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I'll have to sacrifice it to be sure."

"Sacrifice it?"

"It means kill it, Charlie," she said quietly, "dissect it."

"Good," he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, "So what's your idea?"

"I think this wire might be an electrode, and from its location I'd say it's in the

midbrain."

"Uh-huh...so?"

"So," she said, "that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It's where

aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile

ancestors." She pointed to the screen. "If somehow this is stimulating its amygdala, that could

explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing."

"Wait a minute!" Charlie said excitedly, "cops told me one of the attackers had

something looked like a little remote!"

"Makes sense," she said, "they wouldn't wanna trigger it until after the release. I think

I'm right, but I'll know for sure once I look at the slides."

"Slides?"

"Histiochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory."

Charlie rolled his eyes ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~idea~~ ^{idea}. "So when ya gonna kill it?"

Don't use adverbs
with "said". Make
the dialogue sound
like he's excited.

"Charlie, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba bite is in Arizona. I called them ~~little white eggs~~ to see if I could get some. They said the attack used up what little they had, and asked me to milk this one so they can make more."

"Milk it? Like a cow?"

She smiled. "Not quite. It means collect their venom."

He turned to her with a shocked look. "How the hell do you do that?"

"It's not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite through it. The venom's automatically expelled and collects in the jar."

"Sounds pretty dangerous!"

"Yeah, not very hard but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people've been bitten that way. S'gotta be done though. ~~W*~~Without it we can't make the antivenin, then people die. Untreated a mamba bite is 100% fatal. So right now getting that venom's more important than proving my theory."

"You gotta keep it alive then?"

"Couple days, yeah. I'll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC can bioengineer a big batch."

"Huh?" He gave her a blank look.

"Use it as a template to make more," she said, "now what do you have to show me?"

His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the folder ~~he carried~~ and showed her.

"They put that wall up in 1972 when they laid a new wider track for the Times Square shuttle. You saw it's a little damp down there, so once the wall was up they figured they needed a drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system, but for some reason, probably

Comment [PMS 155]: Do you explain what this is earlier in the book?

budget, they didn't. If they had then those little snakes woulda ended up in the East River, and they'd probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. This drain connects to an old sewer line, and that's bad, Amy. Really bad. How long can one of those things hold its breath?"

"I'm not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen need is much less than ours. Why?"

"When I saw this I called a friend of mine who works for city sanitation. He told me all city sewer lines built since 1935 ~~have to~~ have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn't; it

was built before then. Tunnel guys didn't care, no one's down there anyway. From that drain it's about a two minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt."

Wide-eyed, she asked, "What're you saying? They can get into the hole?"

He looked at her for a long moment. "The lower floors...probably, yeah."

"Oh shit...!"

Summary: Two days ago during rush hour, terrorists released twenty five gravid black mambas into Grand Central, and into the subway beneath. They went into the subway looking for mamba

eggs, and they've captured a live adult and a newborn...

Pages are from the middle of the story.

As the police cruiser rolled up Madison Avenue, Amy leaned against the open window, letting the fresh air wash over her. She wondered if she could ever ride the subway again. The cop cut into the park at 79th St. and Belvidere Castle flew by on the right. They came out on the west side with the Museum's imposing facade directly in front of them.

Her graduate student was waiting on the loading dock with a transport cage. Amy

thanked the officer, who was clearly anxious to leave, and together they brought the two mambas upstairs to her lab.

Her student transferred the baby into a terrarium, and Amy took the adult over to a large

plexiglas box in the corner. Two pincer tongs similar to her snake stick were set into the plastic along its front, allowing the contents to be manipulated from outside. There were access ports on each side, a small one on the left and a much larger one on the right. She placed the bagged snake inside and locked the lid. On the side with the small port, a squat silver cylinder with a purple band and read Isoflurane. She pushed in the lock, twisted the dial on top to 2%, and waited. After about ten minutes, the snake lay still, and she prodded it with one of the tongs. There was no response, so she pushed the neck of the bag out through the small access port and cut it off with a pair of trauma shears. Then she closed the port and shook the big snake out of the sack with the other tong. It fell in an anesthetized heap on the bottom of the box.

scary premise
technically emotional/personal
engage

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Comment [e7]: Does the student just disappear? Seems unlikely. It would be good to have them converse on the way in, as I said above, and then continue that conversation as Amy goes through these steps. It would make the less clinical and allow us to see their personalities, and it would also bring emotion into this scene. This should be a highly-charged scene. People were just attacked (killed?), and we should have a play-by-play on how they feel about the snake, the terrorists, etc, while they go through this. And while they wait for the snake to be knocked out, that could be a source of tension.

Comment [e6]: To me, this is kind of a big deal. I think you should turn this into a scene, with them exchanging dialogue as they go into the lab.

Comment [e5]: Why? Because of the snakes? Because he/she had to get back to the subway/investigation?

Comment [e4]: Is this the first time we're meeting the graduate student? If not, might want to list her name.

Comment [e3]: Technically, the castle isn't flying. I get what you mean but you should reword a bit.

Comment [e2]: It's hard to lean against an open window.

Comment [e1]: I had to look up herpetologist and mamba

11:23

SUSAN

characters out of character when he
new siba hr

Indeed, it was there: a tiny metallic button on the rear of the mamba's head. Amy turned

the dial down to 1% and went over to a rack by the X-ray table. It held an assortment of plexiglas

tubes of various sizes and lengths. She selected one three feet long, about four inches across, and

returned to the box. One end of the tube was closed and the other had an adapter that fit perfectly

onto the large access port. Amy opened the port and attached the tube, then waited a few minutes

for the isoflurane vapor to equilibrate. Using one of the tongs, she gently picked up the mamba's

head and fed it out to the end of the tube. Wheeling the whole assembly over the table, she

positioned the mamba's head under the cone. She took a straight-down shot, then

wheeled the cone around for a lateral. When it flashed onto the screen a few seconds later, Amy

let out a little chirp of surprise and stepped closer. She brought up the magnification and called

the graduate student over.

They both stared at the image in silent amazement for a second. Then her student

pointed and said "What's that?"

On the lateral view, a tiny wire filament descended from the button into an area Amy

knew was the snake's midbrain. Her jaw fell open as its purpose dawned on her. What have they

done? she thought.

As she said this, Charlie was parked in the city planner's office, nursing a third cup of

coffee in front of a microfiche reader. He'd pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and

the Lex going back sixty years, and was perusing them one by one. There were a lot of them, and

it was slow going. Finally, just before midnight, he saw something that made him put the coffee

down and lean in to the viewer screen.

Under his breath he said, "Oh Christ!" and reached for the phone.

(New Chapter)

Comment [s12]: You don't need this. Start the new chapter and then bring this research into the conversation between Charlie and Amy

Formatted: Font: Italic

Formatted: Highlight

Comment [s11]: Watch common adjectives. 1) are they even required for the reader to picture the scene and 2) if they are required, find a better adjective

Comment [s10]: "went over" – find a better verb

Comment [s9]: What will turning the dial down do to the air inside?

Comment [s8]: Again, this is a big discovery. There should be dialogue, exclamation, etc. here. (surprise, satisfaction, etc.)

Museum of Natural History New York City Wednesday June 27th 11:45pm

The phone rang in Amy's lab and she picked it up.

"Dr. Martin..."

"Amy, it's Charlie. Glad you're still there. I've found something, and you're not gonna

like it."

"Yeah, same here." She glanced at the snake. "I think I know why the mamba attacked

you. Bring what you've found and come up to the door on 81st. The guard'll let you in."

"Alright. See you in a few." Charlie said. He hung up and hit the print button.

[Twenty minutes later, the police escorted him onto the FDR and they headed towards the

Museum. He left his car at the loading dock and the guard brought him up to the

Amy's lab.

She nodded a greeting, and said, "Thanks for doing that, Charlie."

"Sure. I brought some printouts." He...you need to see this," he said and patted the

folder under his arm. "You need to see this."

Over in the corner, the baby mamba searched its terrarium for a way out. Its greenish

belly caught his Charlie's eye as it pressed against the front pane, and he approached the

terrarium warily, went over to look at it. Oblivious to the half-inch of glass, as he approached it

still reared up and displayed its black mouth. Leaning closer he could see the tiny drops of

venom hanging from off its the baby snake's little fangs.

Then the mamba reared up and displayed its black mouth.

He Charlie recoiled with a frightened grunt. Sweat broke across his brow. He'd never

realized how deathly afraid of snakes he was until now.

Comment [s18]: Doing what? Coming to see her? She basically ordered him to come. Instead, maybe say "Glad you could come out so quickly" or something to that effect.

Comment [s17]: I assume we know why the police are with him at this point.

Comment [s16]: Okay are we with Charlie for starters, or Amy? If we're following Charlie here, then reword the first line (The phone rang in Amy's lab) and reword it based on Charlie's point of view. Such as, Charlie tapped his foot while he waited for Dr. Martin to pick up. Something like that.

Comment [s15]: reword

Comment [s14]: Grounds the reader in her location.

Comment [s13]: Is she waiting for a call? Then have her snatch up the phone. Is she annoyed the phone is interrupting her? Then have her be annoyed (Her voice was brusque.).

“Charlie! Take a look at this.” Relieved at the distraction, Charlie joined Amy eated-him over. She was seated at an large impressive computer display, and said, “Take a look at this

Formatted: Highlight

Charlie.”

On the screen was the X-ray image of a snake’s skull, with the button and its dangling wire filament prominent against the backdrop (something like that).
Charlie squinted. “What’re we looking at?” he asked.
“I’m not certain yet, but I have a pretty good idea. I’ll have to sacrifice it to be sure.”

“Sacrifice it?”

She swiveled to face him. “It means kill it, Charlie,” she said quietly. “Dissect. Dissect it.”

“Good,” he snorted. Still staring at the screen he asked, “So what’s your idea?”
“I think this wire might be an electrode, and from its location I’d say it’s in the

midbrain.”

“Uh-huh...so?”

“So,” she said, “that part of the brain contains something called the amygdala. It’s where aggressive behavior gets triggered. We have one too, an evolutionary leftover from our reptile ancestors that works in the same way (Does it?).” She pointed to the screen. “If somehow this is stimulating its amygdala, that could explain why it attacked you instead of fleeing.”

“Wait a minute!” Charlie said excitedly, “a cop told me one of the attackers had was

holding something that looked like a hitte-remote!”

“Makes sense,” she Amy said, “they-They wouldn’t wanna trigger it until after the

release. I think I’m right, but I’ll know for sure once I look at the slides.”

“Slides?”

THRILLER EXCERPT – DANIEL BILES

“Histiochemical analysis of its brain tissue will confirm my theory.”

Charlie rolled his eyes a **little**. “So when ya gonna kill it?”

She sighed. “I can’t quite yet. **Charlie**, the only place that has antivenin for a mamba

bite is in Arizona. I called them a **little** while ago to see if I could get **some** to send

some. They said the attack used up what **little** they had, and asked me to milk this one so they

can make more.”

“Milk it? Like a cow?”

She smiled. “Not quite. It means collect their venom.”

He **turned** to her with a shocked look. “How the hell do you do that?”

“It’s not that hard actually: you stretch a latex glove over a jar and make them bite

through it. The venom’s automatically expelled and **then** it collects in the jar.”

“Sounds pretty dangerous!”

“Yeah, **not very hard** but it is kinda dangerous. Lots of people’ve been bitten that way.

‘Gotta be done, though. **Without** it, we can’t **make** the antivenin; **then** people die.

Untreated, a mamba bite is 100% fatal. So right now, **getting** that **venom’s** is

more important than proving my theory.”

“You gotta keep it alive then?”

“Couple days, yeah. I’ll get enough so they can sequence the antigenic portion, then CDC

can bioengineer a big batch.”

“Huh?” He gave her a blank look.

“Use **the** **venom** as a template to make more,” she said. **She stood/crossed her arms.**

etc. **now**, what do you have to show me?”

Comment [439]: Words like "little" are often not required for the reader to picture the scene. Check out a blog I posted on the WI website about unnecessary words.

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

His puzzled look vanished, replaced by a dead serious one. He pulled a printout from the folder he carried and showed her.

“I pulled all the plans for the Times Square shuttle and the Lex going back sixty years.

Took a while to sift through them.” He pointed to the printout. “They put that wall up in 1972

when they laid a new wider track for the Times Square shuttle. You saw it’s a littleRemember

how it was damp down there? (reword in here) so once the wall was up they figured they needed

a drain. They shoulda connected it to the street drainage system, but for some reason—probably

budget—they didn’t. If they had, those little-snakes woulda ended up in the East River, and

they’d probably be killed by all the commercial traffic. This drain connects to an old sewer line,

and that’s bad, Amy. Really bad.” He paused. “How long can one of those things hold its

breath?”

She stared at him. “I’m not sure, but most snakes can go a couple minutes. Their oxygen

need is much less than ours. Why?”

“When I saw this I called a friend of mine who works for city sanitation. He told me all

city sewer lines built since 1935 have to have baffles to prevent backflow. This one doesn’t; it

was built before then. Tunnel guys didn’t care; no one’s down there anyway. From that drain,

it’s about a two minute swim to the main outflow for the Hyatt.”

Wide-eyed, she asked, “What’re you saying? They can get into the hotel?”

He looked at her for a long moment. “The lower floors...probably, yeah.”

“Oh shit...!”

Comment [s21]: I need to understand this more. How would they get into the hotel? I think you need to be more specific.

Comment [s20]: Boats?