



## *The Cattle Mutilators, Chapter 18 Excerpt, Part Three*

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"You're not listening, dammit!" Dr. Brandon slammed his fist into his thigh angrily. "If we are transplants of descendants of transplants, then we have minds that can think, reason, logic. We have emotion and feelings. We're not animals you can sacrifice. We're part of different races from God only knows where in the universe."

The Meue stared coldly, "It is our responsibility. Can you measure this emotion syndrome scientifically?"

"Well, not exactly, not in a way that would satisfy science, but it is as important to our existence as pure logic is to yours."

"How can you believe the colony earth will stabilize because of this emotion, when you can't even measure the parameter? You are a very complex and sometimes paradoxical man, Dr. Brandon. Our sight sphere has followed you many times and we have seen this emotion change your logical mind. It is very hard for us to predict if you will follow your emotion or logic."

"What's a sight sphere?"

"A sphere of particles we send out which allows us to view you while we remain here. It takes a vast amount of power to keep us in your dimension, so whenever possible we use the sphere to locate our target, then guide the target to us."

"But I came here because I wanted to," Brandon said.

The Meue countered, "You are here because I willed you. I had to meet and talk with you. I had to know why you became so involved in the test humans. I also know about the chemicals you've been taking to block our memory dissipater, but there are other ways. In three of your weeks, you will remember everything, but it won't matter. We will be gone and of course no one would ever believe you."

"No." Brandon shook his head, smiling. "You're right there. I find it hard to believe myself." He suddenly shifted the conversation, feeling his interview was drawing to a close. "Who are the men in black and what do they have to do with all this?"

"The men in black were our first attempt at genetic transfer. Have you seen them?" the Meue asked.

"No, but I've heard descriptions of them."

"Aligning and altering the chromosomes so that the transplant can inhabit earth without being radically different in appearance is a very time-consuming and

critical piece of ultra-microsurgery. The biggest problem, however, was the transformation from our anti-plane to yours. Much of the DNA became lost during transfer from the chemical changes due to high frequency. Until a short while ago, the men in black, as you call them, were the best transplants we could produce. Instead of destroying them, we used them to warn people not to talk about what they'd seen."

"But why?" Brandon asked, surprised. "What threat could we possibly be to you? You could wipe us out in the blink of an eye."

"But we are a laboratory for testing. We have no weapons. Under certain conditions, this vehicle is extremely vulnerable to your primitive weaponry. When the anti-plane is reversed to enable us to make contact with things in your plane, we are susceptible to the same laws that govern everything in your plane. There are also times when, under certain atmospheric conditions and certain speeds, the positive electrons collect on the outer shell and the ship begins to glow. Many humans have seen us traveling under these conditions. In order to shed these electrons, we must charge the ship with positive force. This makes us visible until the electrons fall away. Sometimes this might take several minutes, during which time we can be seen visually on radar. So you see, we have very critical times. We have passed into your dimension over three hundred times to collect cattle specimens and have been seen many times. If everyone who saw us talked about it, we could no longer pass through. It would be too dangerous and we couldn't finish our work here."

"Why the cattle?" Brandon was sitting on the edge of his chair. He had forgotten his own fate. Time had to be running short and he had to know all the answers. "Did you practice on them, trying to establish the transfer method for human transport?"

"Yes, that is part of it. But there is more." The Meue sat absolutely motionless, eyes blinking slowly, the veins pulsing strangely under the skin of his elongated forehead. "Being the designers of the experimental earth colony, we originally were never to implant our own species here. After much study of the colony earth, we realized we had to have our species within the colony to gain better control over the conditions of the experiment, to determine when it should be terminated. The transplants will have no idea who they are, but will relay the information through nightly dreams. Now ..."

"But the government - why are they involved?"

"A few people highly placed in the intelligence community know the whole story and keep it a secret to avoid panic. Some of them have gone mad because of it. Humans have a curious dislike of the truth. Forrestal went out a window a few weeks after he was briefed. Certain other elected officials and candidates have had to be eliminated because they threatened to make trouble. We prefer to maintain a stable environment until we're ready to terminate the experiment."

"What do you mean, 'terminate the experiment'?" Brandon interrupted, finding it hard to contain himself. "For Chrissake, you're talking about people."

"I know what I am talking about, Dr. Brandon." The Meue showed no sign of emotion. "I will explain when it is in logical sequence."

"Brandon took a deep breath, to regain his composure. He was slowly beginning to hate the creature delivering the monotone, telepathic message of doom.

"As you are aware, we are physically quite different. Genetically, many attributes had to be puffed and replaced. Some genes mutated and reinstated into the chromosome chain. We've had to conduct thousands of experiments just on the genetic level, then the dimension transfer took thousands more. We needed a place to work undisturbed without having to switch dimensions constantly; the desert gave us that. We needed a number of donors for a fresh supply of sperm and eggs from your dimension. A butchered cow in a lonely

pasture draws little attention ..."

"And," Brandon interrupted, "high enough on the evolutionary scale that at least you knew the method would be correct."

"Exactly!" The Meue's head nodded slowly. "And when the genetic method was correct, human donors were taken from desolate places where we could go undetected."

"I assume, then, that you've mutilated more humans than the ones I've seen." Brandon fought to contain his heightening anger.

"Many more. While the method was correct, we found great differences in germ layer development."

"What happened to those people?"

"Many were attended to by people like yourself, which was not necessary. The donors were treated with a substance that would have healed the incision completely without a scar in four days. Others could not withstand the trauma and had to be transferred to other planes or dimensions."

"You mean they died," Brandon grunted.

"I guess that's what you call it."

"How close are you to having this creature perfected?"

"The Meueman is as close as time will permit. Our power source is running low. There is only one vehicle like this, and it cannot be left on your side of the dimension."

"Why not go back, recharge it, and come back again?" Brandon asked.

"It's not that important to us. The earth colony project appears to be a failure. We have many other important things that must be done. The Meueman is close enough to your form to carry out the objectives he was developed for. Look!"

Before Jerry Brandon had an opportunity to again argue the importance of the fate of earth, the Meue's hand pushed a button on a small console sitting on the table between them. The wall to Brandon's left illuminated a dull milky-white, then quickly cleared like window glass. Brandon's mouth gaped in disbelief.

"My God, what ..." His voice stuck in his throat. Beyond the window was a line of cylinders, filled with an aqueous solution bubbling life into the beings within. Meue technicians took notes, adjusted valves and hooked up electrical connectors to attachments on the tanks.

"Nine, Dr. Brandon. The cube of the perfect number. Nine Meuemen will be implanted into various positions in your society. Endowed with greater knowledge than anyone in their fields, they will of course be greatly respected."

"But they're all albinos!" Brandon glanced quickly at the Meue, whose neck craned awkwardly, scanning his prized life forms, watching as they floated in the liquid. The mouths opened and closed, expelling a stream of bubbles from their nostrils. Their skin was creamy white and their white hair floated around their smooth faces like seaweed. "Yes," the long wrinkled gray neck of the Meue twisted back and his hideous face returned to confront Brandon. "Albinos. Note that they all have different appearances."

"Why albinos?" Brandon kept glancing at the cylinders (with beings in them.)

"An anomaly. An anomaly we thought would be a disaster to the project, but don't have time to correct. In our plane, they would be removed immediately, but in your society with this caring, emotion thing, their difference will mean

nothing. After thousands of tests, we decided to use almost all human chromosomes with the exception of the nervous tissue. You shouldn't be appalled by what you see because with the exception of the nervous system and the brain, you are looking at a basically human form. To develop a Meueman brain and nervous system that would fit inside the small, primitive brain case of the human, we had to carefully select specific amino acids and synapses, the exact chromosomes we needed. The Meueman has a totally Meue ectoderm, brain and nervous system, but we've been able to reduce the brain size enormously."

"If you used nonhuman ectoderm, how did you derive human facial features from the epithelium?" Brandon asked, astounded by the capabilities of the Meue's advanced science.

"The face, especially the mouth and lack of teeth, kept appearing until we used a human counterpart and crossed the genes. The teeth aren't perfect, but the Kuma organ is active and we'll be able to communicate with the Meueman through his dreams, without his knowing it."

"Is that the appendage between the hemisphere of the frontal lobe?" Brandon nervously asked.

"Yes. The Meueman's is only a rudimentary stalk, not a full appendage, a small bump covered by his hair. It took much longer than we expected to resolve the problem in the epithelium. We had only a short time to work on the epidermis level in the ectoderm, and so the Meueman will have to remain an albino."

"But albinos - they'll stick out like a sore thumb," exclaimed Brandon, trying to suppress the idea of destroying them.

"These transplants will be leaders in their mental field." The Meue calmly continued, showing no emotion. "While they might act slightly differently than most humans, the advanced knowledge they will possess in fields like science, mathematics, government and the humanities will make them unapproachable. Take this man Einstein you spoke of; was he normal according to human standards?"

"He was a little eccentric, but he was brilliant," Brandon replied.

"Exactly. His knowledge made him acceptable and the Meueman will be accepted in the same way. So you see, Dr. Brandon, to think about killing a man with the status of an Einstein is ridiculous. The Meueman will be looked up to as eminent contributors for the betterment of man."

Brandon thought for a moment. The Meue was right; albinos or not, they would be heroes at a time when the world needed a few. "And these creatures won't have any knowledge of you or any of this? They'll just suddenly appear in our midst?" Brandon asked, looking for a flaw in the diabolical scheme.

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Continued in - ***The Cattle Mutilators, Chapter 18, Part Four.***

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