

Sample of a Manuscript in Need of Copy Editing

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--Previous text has been truncated for sample purposes--

Phiniaie's hands shook delicately as she opened the cedar door and teetered into the dimly lit relaxation chamber . The air was sickly sweet with the scent of lavender and eucalyptus and candles flicked in the spindly arms of a chandelier that hung low above a massive marble soaking tub. Exotic flute music echoed dimly from a distant unseen source, adding a nostalgic allure to the anachronistic atmosphere. There was nothing of the sharp-edged, sleekly metallic metropolis here - nothing of the endlessly bright lights, incessant flash of products and progress, or the ubiquitous visual assault designed to assure all people at all times that they are never ever alone.

With measured exhalation, Phiniaie steadied herself as she visualized all of her cells rejuvenated - each one soon to be completely regenerated and new. She slid off her pillowy bathrobe and stood stark naked and perfectly innocent, staring into the whirring, bubbling water before her.

“Loia, I'll be ready for my treatment in 5 minutes”, she said aloud to the empty wooden walls.

Phiniaie noiselessly exhaled a gentle stream of air from her nostrils as she stepped down into the tub and paused on the top ledge, her ankles barely covered. She savored the sensation of the water lapping at her skin, the steam rising and coaxing her to soften. Step by step, she descended the submerged stairway, immersing herself until she stood

in the center of the bath with only her eyes and nose above the surface. She reveled in the simplicity of this ritual; to her, it felt pure and ancient to envelop herself in water, the exiler of life, just as humans had done since time immemorial. 'If only', she thought to herself, knowing that this simple ritual was only a preparation. The real treatment was yet to come, but first she had to open her skin and make her self ready.

Holding her breath, she released her legs and allowed her body to sink slowly downward. She was weightless and free, without strength, unable to resist. In this moment, she felt that she was home, as though she were in a womb - safe and unblemished, her every need cared for before it arose. Phiniaie held her bitter-sweet remorse in suspension, for this individual moment, she was able to push out of her mind the impending desperation that would surely follow. Inevitably even in the soft under water hum that surrounded her, she began to feel the familiar, unwelcome prickle -- the hunger and the frenzy. 'Just a few more minutes of peace!' She felt the customary aches begin to course through her body. Her very anatomy was conditioned to recognize that as her pores opened in the soft warm water, something more potent was to soon come. 'Why can't this be enough?' Her torment grew into a burning, physical craving. She futilely tried clinging to the stillness of the water that surrounded her. Please... But it was time, there was no delaying the inescapable. Phiniaie burst upwards out of the water, grasping and broken. Loia's hand quickly came to rest on her shoulder, calming her with the unspoken knowledge of what was to come.

It was not only Phiniaie who was ready. Loia's eyes were greedy as she led Phiniaie from the soaking tub to the treatment table, which was low to the ground and disguised as a days of relaxation. Phiniaie, devoid of any remaining will, pliantly reclined on the

table. Loia trembled, almost in tears, as she lifted the wand. With a touch of her finger, Loia activated the fine metal rod, and though no visible change occurred, both she and Phiniaie exhaled with relief. The unseen pulses emitted by the wand conferred the gifts of complete cellular re-habitation and the deferment of the aging process. The effect was utterly irresistible, and anyone near the pulsing wand would be drawn to it like moths to a flame.

Loia began to slowly trace Phiniaie's body from head to tow, passing the wand over each of her meridian points. The treatment produced a buzz in Phiniaie's head like the noise of some far-away spacecraft hovering over all human civilisation. Instantly intoxicated, she lost herself in fantasy and power, her pleasure heightened by the edge of pain that electrified her muscles. She leaned into the sensation, pounding with each pump of her heart, riding the crest of control and recklessness. Yet Phiniaie knew even then that this crest would ultimately crash and she would be left flailing in the fray.

In some guarded corner of her brain, Phiniaie mourned. 'How long will these euphoric effects last this time? A month?' She should be so lucky. 30 days was now nearly agony for her. If she didn't receive her treatment right on schedule, she would shake and reel with dizziness. The one time she waited 3 days too long, she was horrified when she looked in the mirror and saw her carefully preserved youth quickly deteriorating. Had the aches and pains that coursed through her not been excruciating, she might have cared to see how gaunt and deathly she looked. Now, for the first time during a treatment itself, Phiniaie was aware of the damage she was doing to herself, the price she was paying for her perceived perfection. There was no way to keep this dependency under wraps, and every month she was now a slave to the treatments that

she once thought would grant her the fame and fortune she had longed for. Wretchedly, Phiniae now now wondered how long would it be until the agony of withdrawal arrived within a weeks time, within a single day. Even while soaring in ecstasy of her treatment, Phiniae suddenly felt she was looking directly in the eye of her own demise.

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