

PANACEA
"PILOT"

Written by

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EXT. GREENLAND - TUNDRA - DAY

Everything is WHITE.

Wind howls and whips snow around. Gradually, a figure appears on the horizon as it walks closer and closer.

Snow covered boots tread through the snow, taking one unsteady step at a time. The boots belong to a heavily clothed WOMAN.

The woman stops. She sees something in the distance, a BUILDING of some kind. She fumbles with the goggles over her eyes and takes them off with shaky hands.

PANACEA, 55 but looks 25, olive skinned but sickly green with how pale she is, blinks through the blizzard. She puts her goggles back on and heads toward the structure with renewed vigor.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Panacea closes the door behind her. She TREMBLES as she takes off the heavy coat, boots and snow pants.

The trembling isn't just from shivering.

Panacea checks the light switch, but the power's off. She feels along the wall until she comes across the fuse box, but she can't open it because of the thick gloves she's wearing.

With difficulty, Panacea removes the gloves, revealing hands that BELONG TO AN 80 year old - they're nearly translucent, dry, cracked, and boney.

They shake as she finally opens the fuse box and flips it on.

The light reveals various computers and microscopes on the two lab tables. It is a shack, so there isn't much space.

She fiddles with the thermostat to turn it on, then goes over to one of the computers.

As soon as she sits down, she winces, grabbing her chest. The sound of her heartbeat THUDS irregularly in her ear. After a few breathless moments it resumes; ***ThudThudThudThud***.

She turns on the computer, then the router. She starts clicking and typing away. All the while her hands tremble, causing a rusting, silver BRACELET to rattle on her wrist.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

Panacea finishes setting up a camcorder on a tripod. A long wire connects it to a laptop on the bed. She presses record, then sits down on shakily on the bed. She opens the laptop and starts a BROADCAST.

She takes a deep breath, then begins to speak.

PANACEA

Hello. Today is November 3rd, 2057. I am Sally Elizabeth Creed. I'm dying. I'm currently in an old hunting shack in Greenland. Please remove my body once I am dead. Track this transmission to my location. You think you know me and what you think I have done. Whether or not you deserve an explanation, I don't know, but I will give you one. Please, I have saved up what little energy I have to speak to you all one last time. Hear what I have to say.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. - U.N. HEADQUARTERS GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING - DAY

SUPER: United Nations Headquarters, 37 years earlier.

We are watching a LIVE BROADCAST from the Assembly Hall.

On a brightly lit stage stands a podium with at least ten microphones pointing towards it. Surrounding the stage are several SECURITY GUARDS - standing so close together they create a human wall.

ALAN DANIELS, late 40's, stands at the podium. He's calm and collected on the surface in the way a frozen lake is.

He's in the middle of speaking to the crowd.

ALAN

...I am head of the Panacea Distribution Committee at the UN, and it is my honor to introduce a woman I have known since infancy. Join me in welcoming our guest of honor to the stage.

Alan steps back a step as applause ROARS throughout the audience, shaking the building.

Out walks Panacea, 18, smiling and nodding like a woman three times her age who knows she's the most important person in the room.

Alan applauds with everyone else, the smile on his face forced and tight as Panacea passes him without so much as a glance. He goes backstage.

As she takes her place at the podium, applause continues, and she waits for a moment to take it all in and to appreciate their enthusiasm.

But when she looks down at the podium and adjusts one of the microphones, it goes SILENT all at once.

PANACEA

Hello, Hola, Bonjour, Ciao, Privet,
Guten tag, Nin hao, Namaste. I am
Panacea. I have a unique ability
that allows me to heal the sick and
wounded with a touch of my hand,
and it is my honor to stand before
you all today.

The crowd applauds. She waits until it dies down to continue.

PANACEA (CONT'D)

When I was 18 months old, my parents took me to the hospital due to an abnormally high fever from a mutated form of pertussis. I was given freezing IV solutions and put in an ice bath, but the fever only increased. If you check the record books, the highest fever ever was 115 degrees Fahrenheit. Mine reached a blazing 115.7 degrees. The doctors didn't think I'd live more than a week because my heart would give out. As you can see, they were wrong about that.

The crowd LAUGHS.

PANACEA (CONT'D)

An enzyme hidden in my genes activated as a result of the fever and started. They act like proactive stem cells.

(MORE)

PANACEA (CONT'D)

The reason I can heal people by touching them is because the super-proteins have mutated the collagen on my skin, and because of my fast heartbeat, the enzymes pile up and fall off when I touch people. Any further questions can be answered by my physician and renowned biologist Dr. Ulwine. But, to put your minds at ease, I am willing to demonstrate.

She picks up a small RAZOR from the podium and holds her right hand in the air.

She then **SLICES HER WRIST** with the razor. The audience GASPS and some SHOUT as blood immediately spills from the wound.

Panacea is unperturbed, however. The camera operator ZOOMS IN on her wrist as it KNITS ITSELF BACK TOGETHER in SECONDS.

The audience quiets as they look on in wonder. Panacea can't help the small satisfied smirk that creeps onto her face.

PANACEA (CONT'D)

I apologize for the lack of warning, but as you saw, it only lasted for a moment. The way I heal myself is just as easy and quick as I will be able to heal you.

Applause again, not as uproarious as before because of the lingering shock of what they just witnessed.

Panacea takes a pause. She looks up from her speech at the audience, then back down. It's obvious hesitation.

A quiet CLINKING noise gets picked up by the microphones, but stops as soon as Panacea removes her hands from the podium.

PANACEA (CONT'D)

I promise you all, whichever corner of the earth you live, however old or young or helpless you are, to share this gift I've been given with you. I promise that I will do everything in my power to return as many vices as possible back into Pandora's Box. I will adhere to the charter and only deviate with the permission of the people. As God as my witness, I vow to forever change the human race for the better.

Thank You.

Applause erupts from the audience, people stand. Panacea puts her hand over her heart and takes a bow. She goes offstage.

As she comes up, we follow her as she turns to go offstage, no longer in the BROADCAST, but in her POV.

She passes by Alan again as he goes back onstage, but she once again ignores him. It's not malicious. The look on her face shows clearly that she has a destination in mind.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Panacea is surrounded as soon as she gets offstage, and immediately her expression changes, her face back on. Various UN officials offer congratulatory remarks. But they die down as Alan starts to speak.

She listens with them for a moment, her hand with the a SILVER BRACELET shaking and CLINKING, but she holds her hands behind her back to hide and silence it.

ALAN (O.S.)

...Although born a U.S. citizen, Panacea is not allowed to show any loyalty or preference to her country of birth, or any country she visits. She will be in a country for one month, with two Sundays off in each month...

Panacea slowly backs away from everyone. The sound of her heartbeat takes over her hearing. Someone tries to talk to her, but she makes a beeline to her...

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

NOTE: FROM THIS MOMENT ON, WHENEVER IN PRIVATE, PANACEA WILL GO BY HER REAL NAME - SALLY CREED

She slams the door shut, locks it, and VOMITS into the trash bin by the door. She picks it up and moves to the far corner, retching all the while, not wanting anyone to hear.

Once that episode is over, she still SHAKES all over. Tears run down her face and she tries to calm her breathing.

She grabs a cushion off the sofa and places it on the floor, sitting on it in rest pose and does a strange breathing technique for 15 seconds.

By the time she's done, she looks as composed as she was before, apart from the tears and clammy skin.

There's a KNOCK on the door, but before Sally can respond, an X-MEN COMIC is slid under the door. She smiles.

SALLY

Thanks, Ren.

REN (O.S.)

Alan's almost done with his bit,
and your parents are backstage.

SALLY

I'll be right out.

She picks the comic book up off the floor and looks at the cover. Her thumb lingers on bottom corner, but she doesn't open it. She tosses onto the sofa.

OUTSIDE THE DRESSING ROOM

REN BAKER, late 30's, British, and with a cheery demeanor that shows he's used to working with people, gives a worried look back to DR. BARBARA ULWINE, 40's, a woman who's face expresses as much as marble.

DR. ULWINE

Well?

REN

I think she got sick, but she sounds fine now.

DR. ULWINE

Pulse check, please.

Ren turns back to the door.

REN

Hey Sally, me again. Can you do a pulse check please? You really made a great impression on everyone, by the way. I mean my phone is practically exploding with emails and calls -

SALLY

Stable.

Dr. Ulwine approaches the door.

DR. ULWINE

A number, please.

The door SWINGS open and Sally stands in front of them, face cleaned up and composure completely regained.

SALLY

120. Like I said. Stable.

REN

Good, good! I'm going to take some of these calls and... Thomas, Esther!

Ren waves down THOMAS AND ESTHER CREED, Sally's parents. Esther, late 40's, of Asian origin, waves and smiles as she tugs Thomas, a Afro-Latino man in his 50's, over to their daughter. Thomas looks at his phone the whole time.

ESTHER

That was fantastic darling. Although I thought we decided against the razor presentation.

Sally gives her mother a kiss on the cheek, then her father, who briefly looks up from his phone to receive it.

SALLY

You decided that, but Ren and Alan said it should stay in the speech.

THOMAS

They're the experts. Where is Ren anyway? I've got to ask him to facilitate an interview with CNN...

SALLY

He's probably already on it. But do you really think it went well?

ESTHER

Well you did pause for a second -

THOMAS

You showed a crack in your armor. You'll have to remedy that in your press conference later today.

Sally's face pinches in self-admonishment.

SALLY

I know. My hand started shaking and I got distracted. I'll fix it.

THOMAS

Good girl.

INT. BACKSTAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

Ren tries to find a quiet place to take a call, but seeing the large line of people trying to get through makes him think twice about this location. But a man arguing with the SECURITY GUARD stops him.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, if you don't have prior authorization, I cannot let you pass, no matter who you are.

ELIAS CREED, Black, early 70's, stands toe-to-toe with the Security Guard, FURIOUS.

ELIAS

Listen well, young man. I have been excluded from every press conference, every gala, every goddamn doctor's appointment for the past 5 years. I'll be DAMNED if they stop me from seeing my granddaughter today -

REN

Mr. Creed? Is there a problem?

Elias sees Ren and his demeanor shifts from exasperated to relieved.

ELIAS

Ren, good to see you. Can you please tell this poor young man who he's stopping right now?

REN

(to the Security Guard)
He's not on your list?

The Security Guard, who looks sheepish, shakes his head.

Ren doesn't look surprised. He holds out his hand and types in Elias's name.

REN (CONT'D)

There. Now he is.

Elias steps past and joins Ren.

ELIAS

Thank you for that. I'd normally keep my mouth shut and let it go but today...

REN

No need to explain. I completely understand. Go through the door just there and you should run right into her.

ELIAS

Bless you, Ren. I'm glad at least one of her retainers has her best interests at heart.

Ren just nods as Elias walks away. He turns around and sees Alan standing not too far away, watching.

REN

Today, Alan? Of all the days to try and keep him away...

ALAN

You know why. And I'm tired of you ignoring that protocol.

REN

Well, not much to be done about it now. If you'll excuse me, I have to coordinate several interviews over the next two days.

Ren walks away, Alan glaring at him the whole time.

BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Elias rounds a corner and sees Sally along with his son and daughter-in-law. Sally spots him right away.

SALLY

Papa!

Sally runs over and gives him a hug.

ELIAS

Hello Sal Pal, great job up there.

SALLY

I thought you were going to see me before hand?

ELIAS

I was, but I got stopped by some dumb ass who didn't have the right list.

SALLY

Again? That's happened a lot. Let me talk to someone...

ELIAS

Don't worry peanut, we adults can handle it.

He gives a pointed LOOK at Thomas and Esther, who act like they don't know what he means. He leads Sally to the side, out of view.

He looks around then pulls a flask out from his jacket, offering it to Sally.

SALLY

You know I won't feel anything if I drink any of that.

ELIAS

This is strong stuff! Strongest I could find. You might feel it a little bit.

Sally rolls her eyes but takes the flask. She opens it and gives it a sniff and recoils.

SALLY

Is this disinfectant?

ELIAS

It's what alcoholics would drink during prohibition.

Sally takes a drink and almost spits it out.

SALLY

That's got a kick.

Thomas and Esther Creed spot her with the flask.

ESTHER

Sally Elizabeth!

THOMAS

Dad what did you just give her?

He snatches the flask away from Sally, who feels it a little bit. She lets out a long breath.

ELIAS

Alcohol.

THOMAS

She's 18, she shouldn't have this!

SALLY

18 is the legal age everywhere
else, Dad.

THOMAS

Not another word from you!

ELIAS

Ah, so NOW you're treating her like
a child...

Thomas gets closer to his father as Esther scolds a cowed Sally in the background.

THOMAS

She's not our child, she's so much
more. Esther and I have done
everything to prepare her for this.
She can't be normal.

ELIAS

You have made her entire life about
this moment. What's she got that's
not about all this? Parents? No,
more like managers.

THOMAS

You want to know why we don't let
you come to anything of hers? This.
At this point, who cares what
Esther and I did, it's done.
Confusing her and making her
nostalgic for a life she never had
does nothing to help her now.

Thomas goes over to his wife and daughter without another word, and ushers them away. Elias stands alone, watching them as they leave.