

Heart pounding, breathless and nowhere to hide, Janelle was alone, scared and running for her life.

Thirty minutes ago, Janelle, who for some time, suspected two colleagues of foul play had her worst fears validated. Earlier in the evening, Janelle decided she needed to know one way or the other what the two were up to. They had been acting exceptionally strange, even nervous.

After quietly creeping up the dark external staircase used as a fire escape, situated at the back of the stark grey laboratory building, she gently opened the heavy door, making her way stealthily past rows and rows of Bunsen burners and saddle chairs adorned with white laboratory jackets, until she reached the corner of the room that opened into the centrifuge alcove. This building Janelle had entered was a research laboratory, used by medicos for research on cadavers, mice and rats and always had an eerie feeling, let alone late into the evening.

Just as she suspected, her two colleagues, Ben and Jack were there, heads bowed over a computer screen which gave the room a blue hue. Janelle knew instantly that she was witnessing patient data being extracted from the internal server to an external drive. Ben and Jack were in deep hushed discussion.

Janelle also knew she was witnessing something she should not be and her senses were heightened, her heart was racing, she knew the severity of what she was witnessing could only mean one thing – she must get out without being seen, her safety depended on her getting away.

Her mind raced, she wanted to flee as fast as her legs would allow but she also knew she needed to retreat carefully and quietly. As she turned to leave, her hip accidentally bumped a saddle chair which in turn swung the arm rest into a Petri dish, glass smashing on the tiled floor breaking the silence of the night like a major explosion. Janelle ran, her heart thumping in her chest while she made her escape back towards the dark stairwell, the same way she had entered ten minutes ago.

The clamour of the falling glass instantly triggered panic for Ben and Jack. Their united fear of somebody stumbling upon their conspiracy had been an ongoing tension for the pair for the last two months. Heated arguments, sleepless nights and finally the decision to protect themselves guaranteed that both were now armed, it was their justification for their security, both knowing if they failed in this hair brained scheme, there wouldn't be a tomorrow for either.

The two men turned from their seats, recognising Janelle and yelling for her to stop. Terror and the realisation that their worst fears had now come to life, both tripping over each other and the chair Ben had been sitting on in their attempt to race after Janelle. She had to be caught.

Jack yelled for Janelle to stop, giving chase as the first silenced shot landed into the wall above Janelle's head. Janelle, with adrenalin racing through her veins managed to open the stairwell door and escape into the grounds of the hospital.

The pathway at the back of the laboratory was slippery with moss, that side of the building never felt the warmth of sun either in winter or summer. Mould grew in every crevice and along the pathway. Janelle knew staying on that path meant a fall would be imminent, she turned and fled like a gazelle,

long legs pounding into the garden that was overgrown with tall shrubs and blackberry canes. The canes barbed with thorns, tore at her clothing as she raced to the safety.

Behind her she could hear Ben and Jack yelling, it felt as though they were gaining on her escape trail, Janelle powered on with all her might reaching the sanctuary of the wooded area that housed a rotunda and five paths all leading in different directions. Janelle turned immediately to her right and fled almost parallel to the path she had just left, she knew that at the end of that path was a laneway, taking her to the top car park where it would be difficult for her pursuers to find her. She was hoping also that basically turning and running parallel to the area she had just left would totally sway the thoughts of Ben and Jack, she hoped they would continue straight ahead and not consider a sharp right turn to back track.

As her long legs pounded the pathway, she was thankful for the fact she was wearing her running shoes, not only did they give her speed and agility, but apart from her erratic breathing, her escape was also silent.

DRAFT