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Fiction

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KITTENS

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By

Robert P. Herbst

I was diagnosed diabetic way back in 1986. Since then I have had regular checkups by my doctor at the Veterans Administration Out Patient Clinic, near where I live. As part of this examination I'm usually given one of those innocuous looking brown paper bags with all the little goodies in it for collecting "Samples" of — you know what.

As the years went by I have followed the instructions on those little bags to the letter and I have never once seen any results come back from their testing. I never really knew if they did anything at all with all those samples. I made up my mind to pull a spot check on the doctors and find out if there was really something they did with all those samples, except maybe to use them as fertilizer in their gardens.

The very next time they send me home with one of those little bags I was determined to see if they really did test the stuff I sent them. Naturally the place where all this sample collecting is done is in the privacy of the bathroom. Our cat uses the same bathroom and the litter box is right there in front of me to remind me to keep it clean or suffer the consequences.

On this particular day, kitty and I each had a call of nature at the same time. The stage was set. I snatched my trusting, loyal little kitty off her litter box and collected all the required samples from her. Then without further delay I mailed the samples off to the Mount Perry Military Laboratory where the testing is done.

I was a bit disappointed as the days slipped by and nothing happened. It confirmed my suspicion about the doctors using the samples as fertilizer. This was not really a good feeling for me, as part of the doctors recommendations for medication is supposed to be based on these tests.

More days slipped by and I began thinking in terms of speaking harshly to my doctor about this apparent lack of interest in my medical condition. After three weeks I was really getting kind of hot about this idea. I was to the point of getting on the phone and really chewing someone out.

Friday was one of those really hot Florida days when the humidity goes through the roof. Naturally, this is the kind of day when everything that can go wrong, does go wrong. There was no business, it was just plain too hot to do anything but sit in front of a fan and hope things cooled off. The air conditioner broke down because of the load. Because there was no A/C the computer fried and belched smoke and sparks. The refrigerator quit and all the food in it went

bad. The only thing that still worked was the telephone. It was time to do the only thing left that I could do, I'd call the doctor and vent my pent up hostility on him.

Just as I was about to dial the first number, two large black cars pulled up outside my shop here in the very middle of Mount Perry, Florida. The car doors opened and four uniformed and armed soldiers rushed into my shop and grabbed me. Before I could protest the four were escorting me out the front door of my shop as a fifth man grabbed the keys from my belt. In passing he said, in a stern voice, "Don't worry sir! We'll lock up the store for you."

I was thrust into the first of the two cars and it bolted from the curb before the door was even closed. No one said a word. There were two armed and very stern looking soldiers across from me and one on either side of me. No one smiled or spoke a single word. They just sat there staring at me. The car had darkened windows so I had no idea where we were going and any attempt at conversation was met with stony silence.

We drove on for what seemed to me to be hours. I know we turned one way or another from time to time but I had no indication of where we might be or where we were going. At long last we stopped. I was blind folded and lead from the car by two of the armed soldiers. They didn't hurt me but there was no doubting that they wanted me to go with them and about this there was absolutely no question.

We walked a ways then up some steps and I was placed firmly into a seat and buckled in place. Still no one spoke to me. There was a sudden roar and I realized we were in a plane of some kind and we were rolling down a runway. I tried to remove the blindfold but this was not to be allowed. My requests for information of any kind were met again with stony cold silence.

Hours later the plane landed and I was guided to another vehicle still blind folded. This vehicle was quite comfortable but not knowing where I was or where I was going took all the enjoyment out of the ride. The vehicle stopped several times before I got the feeling we were no longer going forward but down. The door opened and I was pulled gently from whatever it was. Someone off to my left said, "Room 32" and I was ushered along what seemed like a long hallway.

We stopped and the blindfold was pulled from my face. We were in a white room with a bed, a chair and a desk. Nothing more, just the door I had come in through and a door to a small bathroom. The bright white paint on everything almost hurt my eyes. I heard the door behind me slam shut and I realized I was suddenly quite alone in the room.

Before I could even reach for the doorknob the door opened again and a white clad man stepped into the room with some clothing. Without ceremony he told me to strip naked, take a shower and put on the white uniform he handed me. There seemed little use in arguing with him, he seemed as resolved to his duty as the soldiers who brought me here. I showered and put on the white stuff he had brought. When I came out of the bathroom the man was gone and so were my clothes.

A little while later someone else came in and said, "You're hungry, eat this." Here again, argument seemed fruitless so I sat at the desk and ate what they had given me. I really wasn't hungry but there seemed little latitude in the instructions.

After eating I had a few minutes to move about in the room and explore. As I suspected the door to my room was locked tight. The bathroom door worked freely but there were no other doors or windows anywhere. I began to feel drowsy, I climbed into the bed and fell sound asleep almost instantly.

When I woke, there were four white clad men in the room with me. They had white clip

boards and they seemed to be observing my every move with great interest. Once over my initial surprise, I asked them, "Where am I?"

The one closest to me said, "You're in a safe place and no one is going to hurt you. We just want to ask you some questions."

With this answer, a fifth man entered the room and sat down at the desk. They began asking me questions. Then they asked more questions and yet more questions. The questions began to center on my sex life and eating habits. At last they said it was enough for the one day and assured me they would be back again after I had rested.

Once again I woke to find people in the room with me. This time they had tubes stuck into every part of my body and it looked as if they were going to drain me. The man at the desk began asking questions again after he assured me I was quite safe and in good hands. This time the questions not only included my sex life and eating habits but also my relationship with my house cat.

I couldn't stand it any more. Yanking the tubes out of my body and making quite a mess on the floor I demanded to know, "What the BLOODY HELL is going on here!" My sudden violence seemed to put them back a step. After a hurried consultation amongst themselves, one of them hurried out of the room.

Moments later a man with a stethoscope around his neck rushed into the room with us. He said without introduction, "Mr. Herbst! Please calm down. We need to confirm some things about you. It will only take a little longer and we'll take you back to your home."

The other men left the room and the man with the stethoscope introduced himself as a doctor of some sort. He sat down at the desk and began an explanation. It seemed he was the doctor who's job it was to analyze the samples people sent in. When they got to mine they found I had been eating way too much grass, I had a bad case of round worms, I had recently passed a hair ball and I was pregnant with kittens.