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23: X, Y

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Petri dishes colonize the laboratory; colleagues long lost in their jungles of microbiology.

I think I hear Kurtz calling in the distance; but the microscope screams louder and I turn to it instead.

Mitochondrial Eve whispers at my ear, the Mother of all Mothers lead me to the coarse adjustment knob: I focus it, lean closer.

In the softly guttural murmur of a one hundred fifty thousand year old tongue, she opens the field of view to me.

My fingers ineptly crowd the lens prematurely seeking the elusive iris diaphragm.

Coming upon it, I know, as Eve stays me, becoming horrifyingly tangible: she is in control.

The data buzzing before me on the slide supports such a hypothesis: in perfectly focused light, I see the weapon she has made herself from my one deformed chromosome.