

The sign on the door said **EXTRACTIONS** and, like all the doors in the laboratory building, it opened with a security card. Ed Regis slipped the card in the slot; the light blinked; and the door opened. Ed Regis introduced Henry Wu, a slender man in his thirties. “Dr. Wu is our chief geneticist. I’ll let him explain what we do here”.

Henry Wu smiled; “At least I’ll try”, he said. “Genetics is a bit complicated. But you’re probably wondering where our dinosaur DNA comes from.”

“It crossed my mind,” Grant said.

“Tree sap¹,” Wu explained, “often flows over insects and traps² them. The insects are then perfectly preserved within the fossil. We find all kinds of insects in amber – including biting insects that have sucked blood from larger animals.”

“Sucked the blood,” Grant repeated. His mouth fell open. “You mean sucked the blood of dinosaurs...”

“Hopefully yes.”

“And then the insects are preserved in amber...” Grant shook his head. “I’ll be damned – that just might work.”

“I assure you, it **does** work,” Wu said. He moved to one of the microscopes, where a technician positioned a piece of amber containing a fly under the microscope. On the video monitor, they watched as he inserted a long needle through the amber, into the thorax of a prehistoric fly.

“If this insect has any foreign blood cells, we may be able to extract them, and obtain paleo-DNA, the DNA of an extinct creature. We won’t know for sure, of course, until we extract whatever is in there, replicate it, and test it. That is what we have been doing for five years now. It has been a long, slow process – but it has paid off”. [...] “Any other questions? No? Then we’ll go to the nursery, where the new-borns are”.

It was a circular room, all white. There were some incubators of the kind used in hospital nurseries, but they were empty at the moment. A young woman in a white coat was seated on the floor, her back to them.

“What’ve you got here today, Kathy?” Dr. Wu asked.

“Not much”, she said. “Just a baby raptor”.

“Let’s have a look”.

The animal on the floor was about a foot and a half long, the size of a small monkey. It was dark yellow with brown stripes, like a tiger. It had a lizard’s head and long snout, but it stood upright on strong hind legs, balanced by a thick straight tail. Its smaller front legs waved in the air. It cocked its head to one side and peered at the visitors staring down at it.

“Velociraptor,” Alan Grant said in a low voice.

Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*, 1991

¹ Tree sap = sève

² Trap = emprisonner