

Portfolio Scene - Dr. Anne Tillman Introduction

By James O'Hara

CONTEXT: Seven years after a pandemic devastated civilization, DR. ANNE TILLMAN, a former surgeon turned survivor, searches for supplies in abandoned settlements along "The Northern Line" - a rumored passage to safety. While scavenging an isolated house, she discovers signs that someone has been living there recently. As she tries to leave...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

DR. ANNE TILLMAN (30s) moves into the kitchen. Then stops. Sniffs. The faint scent of ammonia. *Odd...*

Her gaze drops: There's a jacket slung over a chair. A mug on the kitchen table.

She touches the jacket - no dust. Tilts the mug - damp coffee grounds within. *Someone's been here. Recently. **Time to go.***

She pivots, immediately, making for the front...

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

...and steps quickly through a doorway into the entry hall, the front door ahead - when she spots the tripwire, knee-high -

Too late.

CLICK.

SNAP.

A barbed device swings from the doorway, a jagged tangle of nails and wire, SLAMMING into her upper thigh.

She crumples to the floor, gasping.

Looks down, IN SHOCK:

Blood gushes from her left thigh, nails buried deep in the flesh, a sliver of rough plank hooked into her, a wire trailing back into a crude spring-triggered wall trap. *And she walked right into it.*

Forcing her body to move, she drags herself into a corner, propping her back against the wall, breathing hard, like a wounded animal.

Furiously, she pulls a scarf and scissors from her pack.

Then she looks back down, quickly decides - braces - and then RIPS the barbed metal from her thigh in one brutal motion.

A ragged gasp tears from her throat as blood floods from the torn wound.

She drops the twisted metal - a sickening THUD.

Slashes open her pants leg with the scissors, exposing the damage. Scans it.

Torn flesh. A deep jagged cut among smaller punctures.

Her hands move quickly, trembling but precise as she checks for lingering shrapnel. Finds none. Then cinches the scarf around the wound. Yanks it tight.

When - FROM OUTSIDE:

Distant VOICES. Male. Not far.

Anne stiffens - DREAD spiking through the searing pain.

She tries to push to her feet - SLIPS - catches herself on the wall. Can't quite do it.

The voices are getting CLOSER.

ANNE
(whispered, ferocious)
Get up. GET. UP.

Painfully, furiously, she hauls herself upright, bracing against the wall.

She's up. Barely. Now how to get out?

She quickly limps to a front window. Steals a glance outside:

Two MEN crossing the yard - twenty meters. Another perched on a broken fence, smoking. Ragged HUNTERS. Armed. Feral.

Heart hammering, she stumbles for the back of the house...

INT. HOUSE REAR - CONTINUOUS

...finds the rear door. Tests it.

It swings open.

Beyond: open ground. An exposed stretch of grass. Maybe a hundred meters to the tree line.

No choice.

She slips out, limping hard toward the woods...

EXT. FIELD - HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

...and out across the tall grass, her breath ragged. The house receding behind her. Her hand pressed to the wound. The makeshift bandage already soaking through. But no one else in sight, yet.

Then she reaches the treeline, slipping into the woods.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY

Anne limps out of the woods onto a cracked stretch of highway, a Smith & Wesson 9mm now clenched in one hand.

Ahead, she spots a half-collapsed gas station - long overgrown, vines spilling from broken windows. The fuel pumps rusted to skeletons. One corner blackened by fire.

She moves toward it, one hand pressed hard to her bleeding thigh.

It'll have to do.

INT. GAS STATION - BATHROOM - DAY

Dim daylight filters through a jagged hole in the ceiling. Vines snake from the rafters and weeds push through cracks in the tile.

Anne enters.

Half a broken mirror hangs above a long-dry sink. She steps to the mirror.

Her reflection stares back: Pale. Shaking. Eyes bloodshot.

She wraps her hand in a thick rag.

SMASH.

She drives her fist into the mirror. Shards clatter into the sink and floor.

She kneels. Picks one - long, angled.

Takes it with her as she exits.

INT. GAS STATION - MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A cold, stripped-down interior. Empty racks. Dust-covered shelves.

Anne sits on a plastic bucket, a rag laid atop, stripped to her underwear, her wounded leg stretched before her.

She lights a solar lantern and then sets the mirror shard against the wall. A crude surgical aid.

Methodically, she unwraps the makeshift bandage, starts to clean the wound with clenched breath, examines the damage with clinical detachment.

ANNE
(muttering)
Lateral muscle tissue compromised.
Vascular damage minimal. Possible
foreign bodies.

She probes the wound edges, wincing but focused.

ANNE (CONT'D)
No arterial involvement. Low risk of
compartment syndrome.

From her pack, she removes a small case wrapped in waterproof material. Opens it to reveal a compact surgical kit: forceps, curved needles, sutures, scalpel, hemostats. The tools of her former profession, meticulously maintained.

She threads a needle with practiced precision, despite shaking hands. Dips it in alcohol.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Begin with deep tissue closure. 4-0
absorbable suture. Subdermal first.

She speaks the procedure aloud as she works, maintaining focus through pain. A medical ritual like a mantra.

Then she begins to sew - using the mirror to examine as she goes, slowly, stitch by stitch, her hands shaking but persistent.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Dermal layer next. Silk. Non-
absorbable. Interrupted technique to
allow drainage.

She ties each suture with precision. Her eyes glassing from pain. But she doesn't cry.

When finished, she applies antibiotic ointment from a near-empty tube, carefully labels the date on the bandage.

Then she opens a small pill case. Studies its meager contents.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Two doxycycline remaining. One now.
(beat)
Tetanus risk high. No prophylaxis.

She takes a single pill with water, noting it in a small medical log.

The entire procedure performed with the skill of someone who has done this many times - both to herself and to others. The clinical language a shield against pain and fear.

INT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Anne lies exhausted on the floor by a cracked window, her leg freshly bandaged.

She does her best to keep her eye on the empty road outside while she eats part of a ration. Forces herself to drink water.

Then opens her notebook. Begins scribbling something. Is too exhausted to continue.

Afterward, she falls asleep on the tile floor, breath fogging in the cold.

INT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Anne wakes to dawn light through the cracked gas station window.

Her eyes open slowly. *Back in the cold world...*

Her dire reality: Lying on the dirty floor of what once was a gas station. A wound in her leg. Alone. Possibly being hunted.

Before she moves, her gaze falls on a small flower bud growing up from between the tiles - a small green thing on the verge of blossoming. The bud shrouded in morning dew, droplets of water ready to fall.

She reaches out. Touches a dewdrop. Feels the moisture on her fingertip. Life persisting.

Slowly, painfully, she rolls onto her back.

Forces herself to sit - the exhaustion well beyond just physical. But she can't stay here. The hunters can't be far.

She pulls herself up. Wills it. Gathers her pack.

Begins to limp out.

EXT. GAS STATION - ROAD - MORNING

She moves out onto the road. A slight limp in each step.

Heading northward...