

FUTURE PERFECT
by Sabina Piersol
{for Shotz: Future Fantasy, 11/11/2015}

The year: 2065

Dr. K (Sean), a genetic counselor dressed all in gray, stiff demeanor at first as he tows company line

Harrison (Jeff), dressed all in black. A high ranking employee at The Sphinx, a giant tech company whose product/purpose isn't known even to its employees. He has a fratty and entitled air at first, then shows signs of human vulnerability.

A Health and Wellness clinic at a corporate headquarters that reads more like an interrogation room. Mood is sterile and monochromatic, Gattaca-esque.

Accompanied by a Massive Attack song, lights up on Harrison waiting in The Sphinx's Health & Wellness Clinic, looking slightly anxious. Gets up from his chair and checks his 'iphone' (implanted in his hand). Nods head (as if turning a device on, such as google glass) and starts moving things around/swiping an invisible screen in front of him. Then places his finger behind his ear and starts talking (through an implanted cell phone device).

HARRISON

Yeah, that'll work. I gotta ping you later. Over at Health and Wellness. *(beat)* I dunno -- feeling great. The appointment showed up on my grid *(looks at left hand, swiping palm to no avail)* but I couldn't decline it. It just says 'Dr. K'. *(laughs nervously)* Uber weird.

DR. K enters with forced peppiness.

They greet each other wordlessly with a weirdly elaborate handshake (you guys invent, but I'd love it to look like a stiff and robotic corporate attempt at camaraderie).

HARRISON

Hey Doc, so, I didn't make this appointment and I've got a cloud call in 5, so if you could lemme know --

DR. K

(gestures for him to sit down at counseling table) Wonderful news. You're eligible for a Fitness Enhancement! I'll need your thumbprint approval first. *(holds up his palm tablet/phone thingy, but HARRISON doesn't approve yet)*

HARRISON

Fitness Enhancement? I didn't get that cloudburst. Unless this is about the personal trainer I ordered. Is she here yet?

DR. K

No. *(gets out huge needle and starts priming it)*

HARRISON

Uh, what the hell is that for?

DR. K

We'll need a sample for your Genetic Upgrade -- it's in the fine print. (*spoken quickly like in those pharma ads*) Fitness Enhancement subclause 93, effective today, November 11th, 2065. May cause irreversible disposable memory loss, phantom limb tingling, and intermittent sadness. (*normal speed again*) Your thumb, Mr. Scott.

HARRISON

You can take *your* thumb and shove it up your ass. I didn't request a Genetic Upgrade, but I do need my sexy new workout-bot. Can you follow up on that for me? (*tries leaving*)

DR. K

I can do that right now! (*checking hand screen*) You'll actually have a female occupational therapist after the surgeries.

HARRISON

Surgeries? Those are probably for Scott Harrison -- the dumbass programmers still haven't untangled our grids. I'm HARRISON SCOTT. (*fidgiting as he checks hand, ear, elbow crook, his wireless ear phone*) I'm getting pinged all over the place, I gotta run. Cloud blast me later.

DR. K

Mr. Scott, I need to let you know *in person* that The Sphinx has generously slated you for leg extensions and increased cerebral data storage.

HARRISON

I'm calling my lawyer.

DR. K

He spritzed his approval last night.

HARRISON

I see.

DR. K

I'm now obligated to inform you that --

HARRISON

(*now more vulnerable*) Is this because I took my vacation day last year?

DR. K

(looking at hand, reading from the rules; we start to understand that he's personally horrified by the news he's delivering) -- if you refuse this mandatory upgrade, you will be dismissed from The Sphinx and all its affiliated companies. A deportation order has been issued just in case. The country currently accepting deportees is (checking his hand)...New Syria.

HARRISON

Or it's because I went off my grid for a few hours last month. But that wasn't my fault --

DR. K

(after a pause) It's because they know what you are.

HARRISON

(asshole-y again) What I am is an effective, efficient Cumulus Systems Manager. *(beat)* You know I'm not the only homo sapien in this place!

DR. K

You are now. The others have already undergone the required changes. But you can't be anymore. It's time to reboot. *(Dr. K puts out his hand for the thumbprint, holds needle in other hand)*

Hold this quiet moment for several beats: instead of offering his thumb, Harrison puts his hand in Dr. K's and holds it. They drop their posturing, body language softens, they seem more human.

HARRISON

(wistful yet still braggy) I graduated first in my class at Yale 3.0. My reviews have always ranked in the Triple Ubers! They told me I was perfect. *Without genetic edits.*

DR. K

(still towing company line) You are. According to The Sphinx, however, you're not 'future perfect'. *(beat)* They found something in your last screening.

HARRISON

How did they find out about the mole...? It doesn't affect my performance!

DR. K

They found Homo Sapien Cognitive Deceleration. The new recruits just don't have that. Let the company help you. Please.

HARRISON

(a bit panicky) But I'm fine. Did you know my natural IQ is higher than most of these... *(trailing off)* And *leg extensions?* You're are a bunch of corporate voodoo doctors or some shit.

DR. K

(resigned) We are. *(Dr. K turns off all the devices so they're not being recorded or watched; he becomes more of an ally here. can lights shift to help signal this?)* And if I may say off the record: homo sapiens are fucked if we don't merge with homo evolutis. *(beat)* You know I'm still one too, right?

HARRISON

The whole short and redheaded thing kind of gives it away.

DR. K

They'll make me do legs and scalp by the end of the year, if I'm around that long. I may go back and work with the last tribe. There's a clinic --

HARRISON

The one in south Florida.

DR. K

You know about it.

HARRISON

Duh, I was born there.

DR. K

That's where I did my residency. People would come in with failing livers! Imagine.

HARRISON

Did you ever see any of those glass eye things people wore on their faces?

DR. K

Yeah. Eyeglasses, attention deficit disorder, epileptic seizures -- you name it. Every erasable genetic flaw you can think of.

HARRISON

I can barely picture it. I always wondered what it would be like to, you know, struggle. I've just been lucky to be so perfect. You know, without needing the procedures. Those other kids, the ones like that--they all kind of went away after a while.

DR. K

Well, if you engage in Selective Nostalgics, it can look romantic. Getting braces, for example. That was a rite of passage. I had them, and I couldn't eat salt water taffy for a year! *(beat)* But we don't have time for that now. It boils down to whether you want to be part of the new operating system.

HARRISON

Do you? *(beat)* How much disposable memory storage do they delete?

DR. K

Everything under age 13. The upside: no more traumatic childhood memories! *(forced smile/empty laugh)* Although then you can't tell where the sadness is coming from. They're working on a gene therapy for that.

HARRISON

(Dr. K silently approaches Harrison, who is facing away) Does the needle hurt? *(beat)* I've always wanted to see the New Middle East.

DR. K

I need a decision, Mr. Scott. We're coming back online in 5 - 4 - 3
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Blackout

