

Like I'm Made to Save

This is from a completed novel set in a near-future Vancouver about a man that sells morality by prescription.

Fireworks weave transient blankets of blue and red over False Creek, marking the fifth anniversary of Accession Day. Marking that quiet, lubricated feast of ten million square kilometres that few seemed to notice.

Hundreds of people go woo and yeah as the light explodes and sifts through the ever-thickening air. Two young men, two thin trees bending to a weak breeze, shove each other to see if something sticks. A small girl in a yellow overcoat stares up to heaven and rotates calmly in place. A circle of naked men are seated directly on the crabgrass-choked ground and I'm wondering how far their junk's dangling, whether there's grazing.

So many people and so much activity until the fireworks end and it all comes to a stop—like a slap in the face, that's how change always arrives. That's how one brings change. I call for my kitchen blinds to close and slump onto the counter, just for one second but then it's [six twenty-nine in the morning]. My neck is stiff and the bottom of my Kontakt Lens is glowing pink. "Who is it?"

"Sent via Urgently," answers my lens, answers everybody.

"No, who sent it?"

"The ID is private."

My initial reaction is to trash the message because last time I greeted the digital unknown my reward was a severe eye infection. Back then Lisa called me paranoid, saying it was impossible to get an infection from a message and that I probably just hadn't been washing my lenses properly. I reminded her that she always told me nothing was impossible so she apologized, two times, for crushing my spirit.

Stop stalling, just decide, okay. I won't open it. But would the message know that I ignored it and does that carry legal consequences? Could I pretend to be asleep? Could I pretend to be rolling on the floor in scandalous pants, twisting my body to the sounds of the temperate rainforest? No, the message wouldn't buy it. My heart rate is [eighty-six beats per minute], which is too high, and too low, respectively.

"Alright, open up," I say, pressing my thumb to the scanner on my wristwatch. The pink glow expands upwards, covering my field of vision with (an infection? no) an ad for Drolexith. Just a stupid advertisement.