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1G10

L.L.C.E.
DYSTOPIA:

Dreams
become
Reality

Progress. This is the word to describe the new technologies. Scientists have now made a new invention that will finally satisfy the greedy. With this invention, anything is possible for you! From your physical appearance to the annoying things of your everyday life, everything is changeable. The incorporation of the virtual world into our world is a blessing. Now, you can finally make your dreams come true. Who would want to complain in a perfect world?

Liyah put her new pair of contact lenses on and went to her kitchen to take something to eat in the fridge. She took an apple and sat on the sofa to change her settings. The young girl closed her eyes to activate the contact lenses and waited for the little sound to open her eyes. Once the lenses were on she quickly glanced at the text and pressed on the confirmation button. A woman opened the front door, making a very loud noise, she sighed when she saw Liyah eating on the sofa:

“Liyah! What are you doing here, I told you to go to the grocery store to buy bread.”

“Yes mom, I was just testing my new ICL¹, you know that I can’t go without them on!” Liyah replied, looking annoyed.

“Ah! I totally forgot... That’s OK but can you go now?”

Liyah sighed and stood up to grab a bag next to the front door.

“OK, bye then.”

The woman nodded as her daughter left the house.

Liyah stepped outside and squinted her eyes because of the blinding lights. The streets were enlightened by an artificial blue light. The city was loud and there was a lot of people talking to themselves, probably to ask their ICL for some directions. Liyah lifted her head only to see adds everywhere. She blinked twice and a screen appeared before her eyes. She then went to the settings as she walked, and deactivated men and children’s adds from her sight. A bunch of screens went totally black and turned back on to display images of women's clothing instead.

She continued her walk to arrive in front of a large mall. Before entering, she sat on a bench to reset her favorite options: dark blue hair and pink eyes that went well with her usual bag. Then she went to her new settings, the reason why she bought the new ICL in the first place. The text «BODY MODIFICATION – Full Body: New Edition» popped up, Liyah excitedly read through her choices and decided to start with a light breast augmentation with a waist reduction as usual, but this time, she added the options “Slim Face” and “Big Eyes”. Every new “body trend”, Liyah bought a new pair of contact lenses to follow the beauty standard, but it changed so quickly she had to take a while to buy these new ICL, she felt like it was never enough, but didn’t really mind. Liyah stood up to look at her reflection in the mall’s window, her face expressed the satisfaction she was feeling.

“Perfect.” she whispered with a grin.

Liyah took a quick look around her to make sure nobody saw her changing, she was too ashamed to show her “natural” body. People were too busy looking at the screen stuck to their face to pay attention to her. She nodded and decided to go in the enormous building. The mall was also covered with advertisements, almost giving her a headache. She decided to go straight to the food section, there were some pastries and bread. She grabbed a bread and just decided to leave.

When she crossed the exit of the building, her vision went totally white. Liyah, caught by surprise stopped to walk. She felt someone pushing her from behind.

“Don’t just stand there!” they grumbled, Liyah was so confused she didn’t answer “Hey? Hey, I’m talking!”

Liyah sensed her vision coming back to normal, she turned around to face the person who was complaining, and apologized:

“Oh yeah, I’m really sorry, my ICL had a slight problem.”

A middle-age man was right in front of her, frowning his eyebrows, his face was drawing a horrified expression.

“What just happened to me...” he whispered, looking very concerned.

“What?” Liyah asked.

1 ICL : Acronym for Intelligent Contact Lenses.

The man walked past her without giving any response. Liyah, first very troubled, didn't even notice what surrounded her.

The street was dark, very dark. The buildings around her were sordid, as if nobody took care of it for decades. The city was bleak compared to a minute ago. The gloomy atmosphere was almost scary.

"What's happening..."

Liyah saw the enormous amount of people around her, acting indifferent. She saw a blond woman next standing next to her and decided to ask her:

"Excuse me, do you know why the city looks like that? This isn't normal, is it?..." the woman didn't respond, "Madam?"

Seeing she wouldn't get an answer from anyone, Liyah started to panic.

"OK... let's give it a thought."

She remembered the bug she had when she left the mall. She understood they were defective and decided to remove her lenses. The same disquieting scenery surrounded her. Very agitated, she wanted to go home quickly to take back her old ICL. She started to walk, but without a map, she was totally lost. Plus, her house wouldn't even be recognizable without the virtual world "filter".

She was starting to resign herself when she saw someone staring at her : a little girl was leaning against a dirty wall and was looking at her with amusement. Liyah walked toward her.

"Can you see me?" she asked, hopeful.

"Why wouldn't I see you?"

Liyah looked at the crowd.

"Because of them? They can't see you because they're in the weird dimension." the girl explained, following Liyah's eyes.

"You mean the virtual world? But we can see people with the ICL... That doesn't make any sense" Liyah said

"Mom told me they could just not see us because they don't want to. Because we're poor and couldn't afford a house, people ignore us."

"You're... homeless?" Liyah asked cautiously, she thought homeless people didn't existed anymore, or that they were extremely rare nowadays.

"Yes." the child answered.

Liyah didn't knew it was possible to erase people from her sight, but she was wondering why nobody could see her at that moment.

"Why would they erase..."

"My mom told me the Government decided it that way." the child interrupted Liyah's thought.

"Why does the city looks like this?" Liyah asked.

"It has always been like that..." she paused before continuing, "But mom said rich people saw different things, because we don't live in the same world. She told me that they are hypnotized by technology and they can't live without. And that their world is very beautiful to hide the city's dirtiness and people's ugliness, and because they don't like anything that is not perfect... And once, she also told me that before, the world was not like that, because even if people didn't want to, they still saw us, but they decided to make us disappear because we're too dirty for them. And-"

Liyah interrupted her:

"OK, stop."

Liyah didn't say anything. Was it a joke? Because it was hard to believe. But she remembered walking into faceless silhouettes sometimes, but it never really bothered her, thinking someone was pranking her.

She turned around and saw something she didn't notice before: the sordid facades were covered with writings: "WE ARE CENSORED BECAUSE OUR PRESENCE TELLS PEOPLE THAT SOCIETY IS NOT DOING WELL", "GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT US TO TALK" "WE WILL NOT STAY QUIET", "RISE UP!", "ICL TOOK OUR IDENTITIES" the tags were everywhere, but this was the first time Liyah saw things like that in here entire life. Does

that mean she also disappeared from society ? Does she still have an identity ? Maybe everyone would also forget about her... She was terrified.

“I want to go home...” she murmured

“You need a map? I have one if you want” The child said.

The little girl grabbed a small bag next to her and looked inside. She took out a used paper.

“Here.”

Liyah expressed a pure relief when she saw the name of her street on the map.

“Thank you, really.”

“That’s OK. But can you please come back after to give it back? I need it to find Mom.” the child requested.

“Yes, don’t worry.”

Liyah came back to her house and ran to pick up her old pair of ICL. She put them on and closed her eyes to activate the contact lenses and waited for the little sound to open her eyes. Once the lenses were on she quickly glanced at the text and pressed on the confirmation button. A woman opened the front door, making a very loud noise, she sighed when she saw Liyah on her bed:

“Liyah! Did you buy bread?”

“Yes. Don’t worry I put it on the table.”

Liyah remarked the crumpled paper next to his bedside table, she took the map and stared at it for a few seconds.

“Mom?” she called.

“Yes honey?”

“Remind me to always get my ICL checked from now on.”

“Of course!”

Liyah she threw the paper in the trash and rolled over in her bed. After all, why should she care about what she can't see?