

Long Term Medical Plan

by sam cicero

"It's going to be hitting around the mid-90's tomorrow" said the television expert.

"So what? Like 1995?"

"Maybe, perhaps even '96"

"Does this mean I should break out my Backstreet Boys record?"

"I fucking hate line dancing"

"What does that have to do with anything?"

Our two heroes were locked in a cellar full of old motor oil cans waiting for the signal. They weren't told what the signal would be, but they knew they would understand when it happened.

"What are we supposed to do when we get the signal again?" asked the first one, the television expert.

"We open up all these cans and pour them on ourselves and then press the button for the machine. It will transport the rest of them to at least the middle part of the 23rd century."

"And after that?"

"How the hell should I know? I've never been to the middle part of the 23rd century myself but that's what Gene told us to send them to."

"I don't know man, there's something kind of mean about that."

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“What do you mean?”

“Do these people even know what's going to happen to them?”

The television expert had asked the crucial moral question of the evening. While the party went on overhead our heroes sat in the dark. The rest of them were above in a polished room of marble with fancy drinks watching a dropper drip Merlot into a brass fountain. Some of them were dressed in fancy dresses with mink stoles. Others were dressed in fine tuxedos. All eyes were fixed on the fountain. Like most people all the time, no ones minds were thinking of what was happening beneath their feet.

“We could go on a long term medical plan.” said one partygoer. He was an older man, speaking to the room.

“What would that help?” replied a young woman who was rubbing her breast through her dress to relieve an itch.

“It would fix our symptoms” said the older man who scratched behind his ear.

“We wouldn't feel the cold like we do, either” said the younger man, the closest to the fountain.

Underneath them the television expert opened a cooler and took out a bag of frozen vegetables. Craning his head back and letting his mouth open he poured the peas and carrots into his mouth and chewed them while they melted.

At the party the woman asked “Aren't we doing this for our health?”

"Of course not; this is our new television. We live for this. Every drip means something new. One may mean heartburn and the other may mean there'll be a car crash outside. Scientists study this for years and years to determine exactly the effects of the various kinds of drops" said the older man.

The younger man looked over at the woman and then scanned the room. It was rather a bit of an exaggeration to call it a party as it was just the four of them (though he didn't really think that the ancient woman they travelled with should really count as she didn't move or speak or contribute much of anything). He sighed and tore his eyes away from the brass fountain and walked to the other side of the room, crossed his arms and sighed again.

The young woman walked over to him and touched his elbow. She said to him quietly "I still don't know about it"

The young man sighed again. "I just want to know if it's going to happen for sure."

"I told you, I don't know yet. It doesn't feel like my body anymore. Maybe that's a sign." she said. "Remember that argument we had in the truck?"

"What was it about?" he asked.

"Basically the same thing"

"About whether you were pregnant?"

The second man in the basement coughed. The television expert shook his head no.

"Yeah, do you remember what you told me then?" she asked.

"No, you know I don't remember anything. That's how the operation works."

The young woman took a break from the conversations to bite her fingernails. "Yes you do, you told me you would. You said you had worked it out so that you could."

"Oh come on, not with my dad so close."

"What was that? Did I hear you mention someone?" asked the older man.

"No Roy," said the younger man. His tone was sharp and his eyes narrowed. He looked at the fountain again and when the drop hit the fountain he felt a pang of regret.

"Roy is feeling neglected" said Roy.

"Aww Roy, you know it'll be all right. It'll be just like when those Indians were moved in North America" said the young woman.

"I know, but what if the medicine doesn't work this time? They've planned this out for us, it's very expensive. I knew several of the doctors personally." He stood there, tapping his foot quickly.

"Tell me Roy Jr., why do you take so many of the photographs? Can't you share the responsibility?" asked Roy.

"Of course I don't know what you're talking about. And if I did I would say that no one else could handle the responsibility." answered Roy Jr.

"What about Lillian?" asked Roy.

"She only enjoys the sports games." said Roy Jr.

"I only enjoy the *advertisements*" said Lillian. "Fucking jackass" she added for herself under her breath.

Roy Jr. tore his eyes away from the fountain again and walked over to Lillian. "I think I remember now, what I said to you, in the truck." He was panting. There was no reason to pant.

"You're not a dog." said Lillian and Roy Jr. stopped.

"Ok, I remember the last time you said it was just a test. I need to know if this was." said Roy Jr.

"Why? Would you stop loving me?" she sighed and looked away. She thought about a place without the Merlot. She felt a twinge of blood rush to her right leg. Briefly, she wobbled; briefly, she fell.

For those readers who do not know, marble makes a bad pillow but a great cracker of skulls. Lillian lay on the floor as her head gushed. Her eyes became dark marbles in her head. "Can technology make a better community? Will machines save us?" she asked.

Roy Jr. had rushed down to the floor. The rest of the party remained staring at the Merlot.

"These aren't the questions I can answer, dear. I am sure about the best records of the mid 90's though."

The television expert in the basement moved to open a can of motor oil but the second person held him back.

"Oh, that's rather useless though You never believed in the Colorado Rockies." said Lillian. With that, everyone but Roy Jr. faded away in front of her. Roy Jr. lay on the floor facing her. She coughed, closed her eyes and stopped breathing. He covered part of himself

with her mink stole. "She was the first, the alpha" he said. "Why is this happening?" he whispered. His eyes had clouds.

Roy walked over and surveyed the team. "The blood looks like a question mark."

Roy Jr. was Crying. "There there, son. Let's take the medicine now." and Roy led Roy Jr. to the fountain. He took a ladle out of his tailcoat. He began to fill it up and put it to his lips when the older woman began to move.

"Miss? What are you doing?" asked both the Roys.

The old woman moved her dress to expose her stomach. She shouted "You have sailed around the world with Joshua Slocum! Prepare for our greenest years, begin the fight for our restoration. The springtime will hammer home like a punch!"

With that our heroes in the basement introduced the motor oil to their bodies and began the sequences for new time.

