

Manifestation

by JC Rodriguez

The scrutinizing eyes of peers ransacked John Haven's workshop. The nails of the worn and splintered tables pulled, the screws of every device and gadget unfastened; nothing was safe from the surgical critiques. John had not even begun his rehearsed speech before being met with mockeries and judgments.

"Why waste our time?" they would protest to their summoning, "We already have 3D printing!"

John, a mortal wanting to sit with the gods of scientific progress, had made a place for himself on their board with a fluke of technicalities. To the others, he was no more qualified for the position than a primary school student. Not wanting to be confined to their prejudices, John worked tirelessly night after bloody night, recalibrating and fine tuning his invention.

"It's in early phases..." John paused to wipe the sweat of nerves from his brow, "But I assure you, I have something far more impressive than a 3D printer."

"Well, let's have it!"

A moment of anticipation echoed in the dusty workshop. The silence resonated within John, creating a knot in his chest and he felt like vomiting. He swallowed that feeling and took a

deep breath, guiding their eyes to a sterile glass platform with a slender metal arm sporting a laser.

“I’d like to introduce to you,” John swallowed the last of that sickly feeling, “Manifestation!”

More silence was to follow. Not a sliver of excitement or wonder.

An obese man stepped forward and spoke through his double chin, “And what does this contraption do exactly?”

This was John’s opportunity to make his mark. Hello, Nobel Prize.

“Imagine: anything ever wanted,” John declared, “created from thin air! Want food? There it is. Money? Presto! Diamonds? Have at it! What would you manifest?”

John awaited the gasps and praise to follow. He waited too long when the obese man spoke, “Anything, you say?”

“Anything.”

“Make me,” the obese man lingered on a thought, “A cup of coffee.”

John typed into the nearby terminal with frantic but precise strokes. The metal arm moved. A visible laser struck the glass platform. Like a 3D printer, it started at the base, crafting the cup for coffee. A ceramic model on a far shelf shattered, but none paid it any mind as expectations were focused on the cup finishing its form.

Someone from the crowd heckled, “It’s a bloody 3D printer!”

“I must say,” the obese man wipes the wetness from his lips with a handkerchief, “I’m most unimpressed.”

“Wait for it,” John instructed as the crowd looked to the platform. Steam began to rise from within the cup. Inch by inch, the cup was filled with piping hot coffee. The obese man, nay, the crowd were bewildered by the wizardry performed. A cup of aromatic coffee sat on the glass platform, a miracle from the mundane.

“My God!” the obese man exclaimed, “It defies the laws of physics. Phenomenal!”

The rest of the crowd nodded and commented in an indecipherable wave of noise.

The obese man pondered the applications, then proposed a challenge, “I am, it pains me to say, an ill man.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” John said.

“Thank you,” the obese man retrieved the cup and tasted the coffee, “Delicious. I have a bad heart. Doc says I need a transplant. Can you –?”

“Manifest a human heart?” John eagerly interrupted, “Watch.”

John typed away at his terminal, with enthusiasm dripping from his pores onto the keys. He felt as if he unlocked the secrets to the universe, to life! No one would second guess him again. No one would ever look down their nose at him with disdain. He would be one of the greats in science; a revolutionary!

John hit the “Enter” key and the arm moved. The light shone at the end of John’s tunnel with laser precision. His eyes widened as a miniscule slab of meat began to form on the glass.

The crowd gasped. But, when the gasping faded, one member continued to gasp, not out of impression, but lack of air. The attention from the heart being formed turned to the gasping man. He collapsed and they made way.

There was John's moment of triumph, stolen by a medical emergency. John decided to speed things up, knowing the night would soon conclude with a 911 call. He typed and the intensity of the laser grew.

The heart grew a vein. The man coughed up blood.

"This man is dying!" the obese man declared, "Quick, an ambulance!"

"Wait!" John begged as the heart grew a valve, "One more moment. Please."

Another member collapsed, this time clawing at his stomach in agony. Then, another man screamed in pain regarding his liver. One by one, the entire board fell in suffering.

John watched the heart, unmoved by the blood, waiting for it to be completed in its fleshed-out glory. An artery. Another valve. A chamber. It was almost done.

The obese man quickly linked the chaos to the heart, "Stop this at once, you mad —"

The sound of the obese man's words devolved into a primitive grunt; saliva flung with it. John stared in horror at the sight of the obese man's face, completely devoid of a tongue and lower jaw. The flesh where they would connect with his face, smoothed over with skin, like an amputee's stump.

John typed furiously at his terminal, trying to abort the abomination, when his index finger vanished, replaced with a searing amount of anguish as nerves realized the dismemberment.

A cold silence soon befell the workshop. No more screaming. Features were missing from bodies sprawled on the floor. Some soaked in blood, others dry as a bone.

The heart was finished. The organ sat on death wetted glass, ready to pump with life.

John rested on his console. Blood trickled from both ears, nose, and eyes which had rolled into his skull. His mouth curved upward. He rested with the gods of scientific progress.