

## Designer Babies (narrative)

New NARRATIVE: "The Duplicate City"

Science Topic: "Designer Babies"

Jargon: genetic, modifications, genes, disease, disaster, technology

I was heading towards my office, looking by at the buildings. My town just wasn't the same anymore. Trying to forget what had happened a decade ago was all I could do. The town used to be old-fashioned as it could get. Now there was buildings that were brighter than before, and their light blocked the stars I would use to watch. Now the cars were even louder, they blocked the tweeting of the birds I would love to listen to. That wasn't the worst though. The town was a place of diverse people when I was young. That was long gone. It all goes back to one historical moment in history.

### 15 YEARS EARLIER

"Breaking news!" The people gathered around the t.v. at the cafe to get a better look. "Scientists have made a revolutionary discovery! There is now a way to design your future child, with the help of new technology that helps insert specific genetic codes into baby genes to change your baby." The people at the cafe were awestruck, as they had never heard of anything like this. The news reporter continued, "I am here with Dr. Perry, who has been a leader in developing these methods," she said, "Dr. Perry, can you please explain what could be the benefits of designing you own child?" Dr. Perry was a tall skinny man with a long beard. He reminded me of those crazy scientists you would see in those films about Franksteins and monsters.

"Well there are many benefits, and they certainly outweigh the disadvantages or risks," he said, "we have mastered the technique, and there's absolutely no space for accidents. The benefits include being able to get rid of a disease and increase beauty and intelligence; although we are still finding new benefits." All the people in the cafe gave each other an uneasy look.

The owner, Owen he was called, said, "This is madness! Back in my day, we had nothing close of this technology." All the people settled down back to what they were doing. It was a cold, dark and windy day; the streets were still as busy as could be. I wasn't feeling too good-and these news didn't really make my day feel better. As I walked past all the shops, I got a feeling that this was important, and would affect the town someday. Not necessarily in a good way.

A few months went by until I heard about the topic again. I was sitting on my couch on a snowy, Winter day while drinking hot chocolate. I had gotten back from my office and turned on the television. Once again, it was

that crazy scientist-but this time he was indeed acting crazy. "This right here, ladies and gentleman, is the first genetically modified baby in history!" I took a good look at the child. He had black hair, beautiful brown eyes, and tan skin. **Even though there seemed nothing unusual about the baby, I still got that feeling.** In fact, the feeling of something bad approaching made my head hurt like crazy, so I went to sleep. The next day, the whole town was talking about the "designer babies". I went over to talk to my good, old friend, Jason, to see what he thought about the news.

"It's extremely wrong!" he said, "what if all of a sudden the genetic modifications go wrong and there are babies all over the place with never before-seen diseases?"

"I agree, Jason, I really don't get a good feeling about this," I said. We were able to chat a little more before he went to watch his friend's football game. Later that night, I went home and did a little research on the "designer babies". I then discovered something new. The scientists were using machines to do the genetic modifying! I couldn't believe it, they were already doing something super risky, and they decide to leave in in the hands of technology! I was outraged. Supposedly, there was millions of women already appointed for the process. This month they said, was going to be one of the biggest events in history, as there was millions of babies expected to be modified.

One more month went by, and there was the bad news. Almost one million babies had been modified, and there had been a disaster. The "artificially intelligent" machines had done their job wrong. **As a result, three million babies had been modified in the exact same way-so they all looked identical.** Now there was going to be a lack of diversity: and my city was definitely populated enough for many of those babies to live here. The disaster was so great, that the president had to speak about the matter.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you have heard the news, and I want to tell everyone that there's nothing to worry about," he stated, "I want to remind you all that those babies are still babies, and that their lives matter. We don't want any child thinking he was a genetic accident when they grow up." At that moment, I turned off the television and threw the book I was reading at the wall. I had known something bad was going to happen. If only I could have done something about it.

#### BACK TO THE PRESENT

It was all because of this accident that my city was ruined. Almost all the people I knew had either passed away or moved away. **I didn't move for one simple reason: I had nowhere to go.** And so everyday, I would stare out my window in sadness at the futuristic city, and at the people all around who all looked the same. After the disaster, nobody ever modified another baby. It

was almost as bad as having a city of all human-like robots. I had feeling that all this time the government was keeping something from us. The people just acted strange, and I never found out who they really were; or maybe *what* they really were.