

The Eye

By Daniel Roe

Andrew woke up to the sound of his watch alarm sounding. He quickly reached over to his nightstand and pressed the button to shut it off. He hoped he was quick enough that his wife hadn't woken up.

He listened for her movement, and breathed a sigh of relief when heard her continuing to snore softly.

Andrew smiled. Alice always playfully fussed at him for being such an early bird, but he insisted that it was one of the main contributors to his success. Most days he was up before the sun and usually still awake hours after it went down. But of course either way, today was not like most days.

Andrew went over the events of the coming day in his mind, as he had done a thousand times before. Him and his team had been preparing for this moment for years and it had finally arrived. They would be revealing their new product to the world.

As quietly and quickly as he could, Andrew got himself ready for the day. He was quite accustomed to completing his morning routine in the dark. He showered and brushed his teeth and got dressed, donning his signature leather vest and furry boots. He couldn't even remember how this outfit became his brand, but the outfit had become so iconic that it was not uncommon for Andrew to meet other people wearing something that was clearly inspired by him.

Andrew made his way down the stairs, the house still in complete darkness. He used his hand to guide himself down the stairs. "I should put a handrail up, since I do this so much" Andrew whispered to himself.

He arrived in the kitchen and began making coffee. The smell filled the room, and just the aroma was enough to start perking Andrew up for the day.

He reached into one of the cabinets for a mug, but as he pulled it down, another mug that had been stacked on top of it fell and shattered on the ground.

The sound might as well have been an explosion. The morning peace and quiet was as destroyed as the coffee mug. Andrew cringed. Alice was surely awake now.

Andrew set the intact mug on the counter and went over to the pantry, where the broom and dustpan were stored and began to clean up the aftermath of the accident. He grinned sheepishly as he heard his wife arrive from upstairs.

“I’m so sorry darling, I was trying as hard as I could not to wake you.” He said, still finishing sweeping the shards of mug into the dustpan. “Be careful, there might still be some pieces of glass on the ground.”

Alice smiled groggily and massaged her neck. “Its fine, I wanted see you before you left

anyways. Today is the big day, after all” She shuffled over to the coffee pot “Can you hand me a mug?” She said sweetly.

Andrew reached up and pulled down another mug, this time checking first to make sure there wasn't another one stacked on top of it. He laughed at himself, as he was the one who did the dishes and put the mugs like that in the first place. The couple fixed their coffee, Andrew with a lot of cream and sugar. Alice took hers with a little bit of milk only. They sat down and sipped their beverages quietly.

Andrew's watch beeped again. It was almost time to leave for the day. He again thought about the events that were set to happen that day. He had rehearsed it so many times before that he was concerned he would be forgetting something obvious and given, when his wife interpreted his thoughts.

“Are you sure you want to go through with this?” She said, her tone shifting from light to serious.

In truth, Andrew wasn't sure. He knew what he and his team developed was innovative and impressive, and surely would improve the lives of many people. But he also worried that he would be permanently changing the increasingly delicate tech market.

Alice was one of Andrew's biggest supporters, as well as his biggest critic. Her suggestions have not only been the inspiration for many of Andrew's team's products, but any changes in existing products she was responsible for created a noticeable increase in sales. He often told friends and colleges that she was the only person he was sure he was not as smart as.

Andrew had founded the company 25 years ago in his garage, designing software and computers that were more easily usable and accessible than anything the world had know at

the time. Of course, now those innovations were industry standard.

“FORALL” was the name they chose for the company, a fitting goal for a brand aimed at making technology that the common man can use.

But the new product was different, it was truly something that the world hadn't encountered yet. Andrew wasn't sure if it would be rejected by the people and not sell very well, or sell out immediately, and create an entirely new market with a new set of demands that would need to be met with supply. Either way, things were going to change.

Alice's concerns were bigger than that, however. She and Andrew often discussed the greater societal impacts of this kind of technology being available to the public. The people with access to the tech would be almost super-powered, while those without it would be akin to being disabled, Alice would argue. To call the new

device “revolutionary” was an understatement. They would be studying this moment in history for generations to come.

Not to mention the psychological affects of the product on the individual that was using it. There was no precedent for how this would impact a person day to day. Would they become reliant on it? Unable to function without it? Could someone be negatively impacted from using it? Or being around someone using it? There was no way to know.

Andrew’s watch beeped again. “Its too late to think about that now.” Andrew finally responded to his wife’s question. It was time to head out.

Most days Andrew would go straight to his office, which was short train ride away. Today, however, he would be going to the university, or more specifically the convention hall at the university, which was actually within walking distance.

As he stood up to head out the door, his wife stood up too. “Its going to be like touching everything in a room at the same time. That can’t be a good thing.”

Andrew kissed his wife. “Its going to be okay.” He assured her. “Are you going to be there to witness the announcement?”

She hugged him back, not quite convinced but supportive all the same. “Maybe.” She said, hesitantly.

He made his way to the door and shut it behind him. The cool morning air and warm sun rays felt good. Andrew breathed in deeply and began the walk towards the meeting hall, where he would be reveling the new product.

As he walked, he continued to rehearse his presentation in his mind. He reached a crosswalk just as the train was finished crossing. He bumped into someone who was also waiting

for the train to pass. “Excuse me.” He apologized.

“No problem.” The young man responded, and in a quieter tone to someone else, “I think that’s him. I think that’s Andrew Rent”.

Andrew chuckled to himself. The leather vest and and furry boots gave him away all the time.

“Walk” the stoplight chirped. The university was just on the other side of the tracks. He made his way over and began to walk up the steps.

“Mr. Rent!” A voice called out from a few feet away. It was Andrew’s assistant, Carol.

“Good morning, Carol!” Andrew responded warmly, and made his way over. Together, they went into the building and back around to the backstage area. “You can sit here while you do any last minute preparations. Andrew sat down and relaxed, enjoying the last few minutes before he would be in front of the crowd.

Carol was one of the most reliable and trustworthy employees Andrew had ever worked with. She was getting close to retirement age and Andrew dreaded losing her, although he had a huge party planned for her last day, which she didn't know about yet. Andrew worried that she was so good at her job, that he might accidentally ask her to help him arrange her own party, but he had successfully not revealed it yet.

After a while, Carol returned "Everything's ready to go, sir!" She said, excitedly. "The rest of the team is in the crowd. Also, Alice just made it and she's sitting with them. The demo products are on the podium." As she said this she clipped a small microphone to Andrew's leather vest.

Andrew smiled. Of course everything was ready. Carol never forgot anything. And he was relieved that Alice had decided to come after all.

“Lets do this.” Andrew responded, everything was perfect, there was nothing more to prepare.

Carol pulled out a walkie talkie and pressed the side button. “Mr. Rent is ready to go.”

“Coming to the stage now, please welcome ANDREW RENT” a voice boomed over the speakers.

The crowd roared. The hall seated 5,000 people, but it sounded like more. There were journalists from every major media outlet, as well as several minor ones.

Andrew made his way to the podium and found the demos sitting on top, right where Carol said they’d be.

He picked one up. It felt round and smooth in his hand. “Good morning, everyone!” He said into the microphone.

The crowd roared again. Andrew took deep breath in and out, careful to blow away from the mic.

He held out the device. “Ladies and gentlemen, presenting the latest innovation from FORALL...”

Andrew paused for effect and smiled.

“THE EYE.”