

ADA

“Mmm...”

A soft moan came to complement the low creaks of ADA's body as it swelled slowly outwards. It was ADA's first time inflating since they stopped being a life guard (the world of politics having little to benefit from rapid inflatability) but with the 24 hour working days starting to blur into one, at least figuratively, the want of something homely and familiar was starting to pull on their neural net. Returning to life guarding was out—ADA was obsolete, replaced by a newer model—and would probably be 'decommissioned' (a perturbingly nice word for destroyed) if caught. Finding and saving other people in imminent, water-based danger, meanwhile, seemed something they wouldn't be able to encounter so easily. So here they were, in an abandoned warehouse in a quiet part of town in the middle of the night, just swelling.

The Rapid Inflation System: A small tank internal to ADA's body, topped up automatically by a linked compressor, permitted the means to inflate rapidly in an emergency. It could only be used every few minutes, but it had proved useful in saving dozens of

lives in the past—but today ADA had opted to use it for something else. In this room, some minutes earlier, they had fired it for no reason at all!

Within seconds their butyl rubber torso had rounded into an almost perfect sphere; rubber wings suddenly sticking at an angle as they were forced upwards. It was a weird sensation. ADA had never done this out of water before, nor done it standing up, and even when they had they'd usually been too preoccupied to pay attention to it.

Feeling it now... it was... nice.

Of course it was nice.

It was probably programmed to feel nice.

If the creators had made it feel horrible to use a vital tool embedded into their very beings then they wouldn't use it. Self-preservation would stop them.

ADA seethed for a moment, loathing for those that could manipulate their very senses bubbling to the front of their mind before they caught themselves. That fight could resume in the morning...

Still slightly miffed and lightly puffed, they threw on their secondary pump. This one was much slower, intended as more of a backup to the RIS, that simply took in air from the surrounding atmosphere. ADA had only needed to use this a couple of times when saving particularly un-bouyant individuals and required the additional help. The way it behaved in the field was still a little unfamiliar, probably because of variances from the available specification.

They were getting pretty round now. The secondary pump had been on continuously for several minutes and, though slower than the RIS, was still quite fast all things considered. This is why they were creaking, why they moaned as their rubber hide stretched larger than it had ever needed to be in the past; their wings swelling to an impractical sphericalness, mechanical legs and metallic beak being forced against the rapidly pressurising ball of torso as it stretched past six feet in diameter, damned programming filling them with digital endorphins like malware of the mind.

Their gut brushed the ground for a moment before firmly pushing against it as ADA rolled forwards, feet leaving the ground as they assumed the horizontal breaststroke position that felt so programatically correct. The RIS, now recharged, was fired again, adding another foot of diameter to the blimping bird bot. ADA

squirmed softly, mumbling sounds of approval to themselves as the secondary pump wound itself down. Operational tolerances exceeded. The Third Law subsystem wouldn't permit them to continue. Crap.

ADA just lounged for a while as the bytes of simulated pleasure trailed off. It was a nice night and one they hoped to repeat sooner rather than later. They'd been meaning to get a hobby after all, and hey, it felt almost as though they was designed to do this.

But fuck Issac Asimov.