

'Fake': Robert Costa

You know them so well, those fake true stories; you call them novels. Fake novels, you call them literary forgeries.

We live in a world of fakedom, the sense that a bargain is all around us, and you just need to reach out and grab it. Who doesn't want to believe in that pill that will restore your 60-year-old self to a 21-year-old upstart or that elixir restoring your thinning hair?

What about fake news? You don't believe everything you read, do you? You don't actually believe they landed on the moon or that a certain ex-US president is intelligent?

The world is full of fake people; the superficial, the arrogant, the judgemental, and the self-absorbed surround us every day. We work with them, they are our neighbours, sometimes our friends, and we could be married to them as well.

Fake advertising, It's this big. How tall is that? How exaggerated is that? It will do wonders for your sagging arms. It will enhance your performance. It will make the bags under your eyes vanish. Why are chip packets half full when they clearly show otherwise?

Or fake products. Is that really a Louis Vuitton bag you bought for \$20? Is that cheap Chanel No.5 perfume bought for a bargain price real or just made from goat piss and flavouring?

Maybe fake events. Do you really believe that your fourth marriage of yours is the real one and that the other previous three were fake? No, no, the fake flowers, the fake speeches, the fake smiles, whilst everyone mutters under their breath about what a mistake you're about to make. They can all see it, but can you?

I yearn to create the perfect falsehood, a lie so fakily flawless that it would become so indistinguishable from the truth that it becomes the truth. Fake truth is hard. You need to maintain the lie through thick and thin, never wavering, never contradicting, never recounting the story. The less you speak, the easier it may be. I've never been able to do it. Just like a bad poker player, I have too many tells, that slight flinch of the eyelid or that twitch of the hand. Maybe it's just that dribble of sweat running down your temple as you avoid eye contact.

No matter, It's too hard, and you don't bother. I look down at the real Rolex on my wrist that I bought for \$30 and wonder why I was so lucky!