We seem further away than ever from utopia. But is the ideal world just around the next technological corner?

AH, DOESN’T it look lovely? Would you like to live in this month’s cover? On the surface it looks idyllic, but dig a little deeper and we find this utopia is not as it seems; there’s something wrong in paradise. Where are the electric-vehicle charging points? That ice cream van is charming but it looks very polluted and it’s partly responsible for the rise of childhood asthma in the area. It’s also contributing to the rise in childhood obesity, which is exacerbated by the lack of a local play area where the children could get some exercise. As you can see, it was replaced by a very pretty but ultimately useless fountain. And the man with the lawn mower is so obsessed with his perfect lawn he won’t even let his own children play on it.

Note the lack of any neighbourhood CCTV cameras. That’s why the thief disguised as a postman has targeted this box to steal the identities he will sell to an international organised crime ring. Where are the eco-bling solar panels on the houses? An energy utopia would surely have each house generating its own power, wouldn’t it? And the girl in the foreground would have grown up to be a great engineer who invents a revolutionary cheap and portable water purifier for the developing world had she got that construction set she really wanted for her sixth birthday. Her parents bought someone else instead.

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