

LET'S REWIND!

The English Challenge

If only it was that simple...

Have you ever gotten tired of social media? The news was once again negative, your boss reminding you of the deadline, friends living their best lives... We can simply link these problems to our most used device; the phone. Its main purpose is to make information more accessible, communication, easier education as well as work and of course, entertainment. All modern technology is expected to tend to our needs, that's how they're advertised. That sure is working for Amelia; a 16-year-old girl who loves her devices as much as any teenager. Unluckily for her, her mother, a well-respected scientist, seems to have a different perspective...

Amelia has gotten home from a tiring school day. Boring studies and not enough screen time. Taking off her shoes, mom calls out from their kitchen:

'Hi, honey! Dinner will be ready in a few. Don't forget to leave your phone on the counter!'

Amelia protests: 'Mom, I'm grown now... is following this stupid rule really necessary?'

'Missy, don't you start! You know no phones allowed before finishing your homework!'

Amelia's mother, besides studying quantum mechanics, has done research on the effects of technology so she's aware of its influence. Now technology doesn't just include your telephone or laptop, rather everyday objects, such as a fridge! Most of it is controlled by the internet. When we throw around the word 'internet' on a daily basis, we don't ponder about it. I mean... we've gotten so used to it. And for a reason! It has improved many, many lives from helping with math to someone reaching their full potential. Therefore, you can see why we might purposely overshadow some harmful subjects. Not to mention that everything stays on the internet forever. Shocking that something so catastrophic developed on the side lines in a short period of time while still evolving to this day.

After dinner, the girl heads to her room. This time she decides to linger across the hall, she's had enough. There stood a door with the sign 'LAB' in big, bold letters. 'I don't suppose mom's keeping my phone here...' she thought. Inside the high-ceiling room were machines, beakers, goggles... She looked around until she saw something resembling a...

time machine. Yes, you've heard it right, a time machine. I mean, there was another sign suggesting so.

'Amelia! Where are you?' she noticed footsteps getting closer by the second. Her initial thought was to enter the futuristic contraption. After stepping in, a thud was heard. The doors closed behind her. She started punching the door with the intention of opening it, but it was too late. Bright rings in a tunnel started flashing, changing directions and colours. Amelia didn't even think of screaming; she was too stunned, so she closed her eyes.

Suddenly, she felt the floor beside a shop. Opening her eyes, she observed her surroundings: big city, old cars and buildings. Everyone was wearing formal clothing, though not many were in a hurry. It looked like a picture from her history textbook, approximately 100 years ago. Confused, she decided to walk around. The more steps she took forward, the more glares she received. And for a reason; while she was in comfortable sweatpants and a vibrant T-shirt, the strangers were dressed for an event! She passed the movie theatre with a couple outside reading the lists of screenings:

'Look, darling! Doesn't this appear exciting? It has sound, too!'

'Sound? Why wouldn't it have sound...' Amelia thought. She continued walking and encountered a gentleman buying newspapers. On the cover was the most basic information known to man; a pie recipe. Beside him was a boy talking to his friend about writing a letter.

'I've even gotten a new dip pen!' he exclaimed whilst showing it.

'Oh, you've got to be kidding me.'

This world truly seemed different from her own; movies without sound, physical newspapers and written letters. She's informed about them, but it still felt unnecessary for it to be the standard.

The girl travelled further. She thought of calling someone, yet no one around had a smart phone. Nonetheless, they seemed happy and present. Defeated, she closed her eyes for a moment.

'Sweetie, time for a new day!' someone familiar called.

Amelia had woken up in her bed. She looked at the calendar: Saturday. Relieved, she greeted her mother. Did she manage to escape? No. It was all a dream. There was no top-secret contraption she didn't know about.

She continued her day, paying more attention to her habits with a new mindset: if they could go without electronics, why can't I? Amelia hadn't checked her notifications

immediately, rather went to eat breakfast. For a break from schoolwork, she went for a quick walk. She picked up her painting supplies and finished her projects. She even helped her mom with cleaning. At last, she fell asleep peacefully because no blue light interrupted her sleep cycle.

Amelia felt accomplished, her day wasn't wasted on doomscrolling. Of course she checked her phone from time to time, but not for long. She had more time to pursue her passions since the number of distractions were reduced.

The next day she wrote a letter by hand, bought a newspaper and went to the theatre to see an old black and white movie with friends. It wasn't all that hard.

Nevertheless, there are understandable reasons why technology manipulated the human population. People value easy accessibility and practicality, sometimes to the extent where they forget what's ethical. I assume the part where the internet is supposed to connect and unite us all got lost in translation. Although, I do feel like it is better now since every problem listed can be solved, starting with restricting our usage. Having that in mind, Amelia shared her conclusion with her mother:

'Mom, I've learned something valuable', she announced.

'And that would be?'

'I've took today's technology for granted.'

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'But still, ease up on the rules, would you?'