

Let's rewind!

The crimson dawn has woken up the emerald-eyed automatons, colors mixing in their lenses. Snow was gracefully falling. This was a world that humanity left not long ago. No one out of the colorful machines knew where their masters went. It wasn't some grim apocalypse, not some dystopian ironic ending the humans have caused themselves. They have simply vanished, leaving traces of their lives behind for their constructs to decipher. The machines were peaceful, simple creatures, human by nature, able to think and feel, dream about secrets, and most importantly able to wander. They were curious, looking for the treasured trinkets left behind. They loved telling stories and they loved listening to stories even more.

One rather small automaton has woken up from his cozy dreams. He stretched and yawned sounding like a sleepy bell chiming. Then, he sprung up looking around for anything unusual. There he was-the automaton storyteller. The tiny machine giddily reached out to his friend that was sleeping nearby. "Milly, wake up! He is here, the storyteller, the world builder! C'mon, we can't miss out on the stories about humans!" The automaton Milly let out a grunt. "Already, it is like 8:46 in the morning, I haven't even charged up properly, Mike." Mike wouldn't miss out on an opportunity such as this one so he started dragging Milly. "Let's go, lazy, you will thank me later!" Milly let out several growls although it was clear there was no malice behind them, just mild annoyance. The automaton storyteller also known as Estrag0n was a jolly old fellow. He remembered humans and he found great pleasure in preserving their culture and sharing it with the little newer models. He was very tall and bright, ready to answer many questions his students had. Around him has formed a circle, the small automatons were jumping, laughing and even trembling from excitement. They sounded like a choir of gears turning in a metallic symphony. Estrag0n has laughed and ordered the little ones to quiet down so he could present his new findings. Milly and Mike were in the first row watching the presenter starry-eyed. "Dear kiddos, today I have a special presentation, for you see my wonderful followers and I have constructed a timeline of human entertainment! As always it is important to study human history, because understanding our creators and their motives will help us understand ourselves. I think humans called it psychology, but I am not sure." He revealed a book. Mike couldn't contain his curiosity. "What is that? Some kind of brick?" The automatons laughed, continued the symphony, Estrag0ns deep voice joining the chorus. "No silly, but this one is quite heavy, it's covers red. This is a book, you must have heard of them! It isn't that old, this one in particular, but there are some really ancient ones. Scriptures thousands of years old." The group gasped. "They

were used to convey wisdom, past knowledge! They were various kinds, adventure, stories of heroes, documentations of crimes, fantastical tales, and some even spoke of us! Science fiction they were called until they become encyclopedias. For our next item we have a cassette tape.” He swiftly pulled the cassette and a small radio from his bag. Mike teased again. “This one looks like a brick too.” Estragon replied. “Well, seems like humans liked rectangles and cubes. This one will catch your attention! It’s a magic box!” Estragon has put the cassette in. Suddenly the device started playing tunes, one usually quiet automaton raised her hand. “Mister Estragon, is that same technology that’s allowing us to speak?” Their teacher clapped his hands. “Yes, you are a smart one. I told you, to understand our nature we have to get educated about humans first! This was radio and a cassette tape reader. Sadly, we can’t listen to a radio because all of the stations are out of order, but do not fright, I have something even more marvelous in the reserve.” He clapped his hands and his helpers clumsily pushed a strange device in front of the crowd. “We will be able to watch pictures! A movie, a film!” Millie interrupted. “Is that a movie projector?” Estragon nodded. “Yes. Movies were a medium similar to books, but they also contained pictures and sometimes sound! Humans loved to tell stories, to express themselves. Ah, I see who I inherited my love for storytelling from.” He smiled. “It was a ritual; they shared their values and that is how humanity thrived. Not to mention how stunning some of the movies used to look like. I remember. So, I found a fitting movie. It’s called “It’s a Wonderful Life”. I hope you will like it. Ah, I remember when I was a small machine myself peeping through a window, my eyes locked on the screen looking at this exact movie.” Estragon’s words became filled with warmth and nostalgia. The smaller constructs asked their questions and scattered around. They couldn’t wait for the so-called movie night.

Estragon and another older automaton stayed at the same spot, snow gently falling all around, painting the canvas of the horizon pale, endless. The other automaton spoke. “You gave the little ones quite a presentation. I hope they will know to appreciate it.” They were silent, looking in the distance until Estragon spoke. “I miss them, you know, our creators. No matter how they usually made no sense I always found their imperfections oddly lovable. I wonder where they are right now. I hope they are doing well.” The other automaton replied. “I believe, no, I know they are doing great. After all they created all of these wonderful things. Wherever they are I KNOW they will stay determined, stay creative.” The two automatons smiled. The horizons were vast and bright. Humanity did survive, wherever it was. Yet humanity still lived on Earth, in the hearts and the memories of the peace-loving machines.