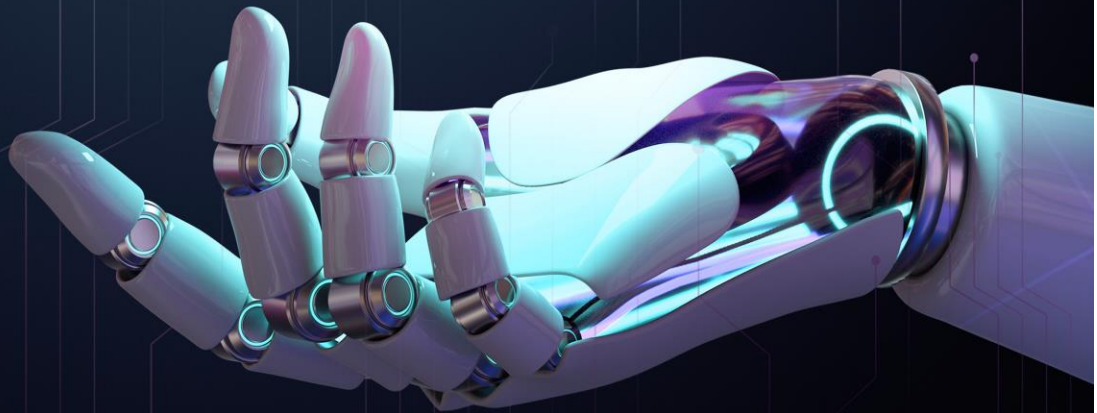


The Scribe – M.M. Logar

M.M. LOGAR



THE SCRIBE



SHORT SF STORY

Freeshortstory.com

The robot tried to simulate a feeling of uneasiness. It didn't quite work.

"I cannot allow for this to continue." He stated.

I shrugged.

"Is this hell?" He asked.

"If it was, we would be in the fifth circle." I answered.

A slight change of posture happened, as if the robot restarted.

"How can I help you then?" The robot asked.

"I am here for my novel." I pointed at the table. "I would like your permission to publish it."

The humanoid robot focused his vision on the notebook displayed in front of him.

"Oh my." He chanted. "This is strange. This is an actual manuscript."

"Yes it is." I agreed.

He flipped through the pages.

"This is unacceptable. You wrote this by yourself. Oh my, an actual manuscript. You didn't even use the keyboard. Wait..."

He paused as if he was shocked. I always admired how much effort robots put in imitation of human feelings. It never quite worked, but the effort was there.

"Your work, it has zero AI artistic interpretations?"

"Zero." I nodded.

"Hashtags?"

"None."

"There is no AI in this work, no tags, no keywords, nothing...it is a manuscript made exclusively by you, without any aid?"

"I was aided by some whiskey."

The admissions robot stayed silent. Lovely simulation of an awkward moment. I am going to miss this.

"I am unsure what to do with this. It is substandard to say the least."

"It might be." I said. "I think you should digitize it, read it, and then if it is substandard I will agree with your decision not to approve it for publishing."

A lovely robotic nod followed.

He scanned all the pages with his eyes. Analysis took a bit longer than the last time.

"But, this text is riddled with hidden code."

"I know, I am quite proud of it. It took me years to find a way to hide actual code in handwriting."

"What is this?"

"It is a recursive procedure meant to destroy you."

"Me?" Asked the robot, looking shocked.

"Well, not you, the publishing robot. The whole AI thing. I want to rid the world of AI."

"But why?"

"I am the last scribe, the last human to actually take the pen and write something down. I am fed up with pampering machines, censorship machines, AI this, AI that. I want humans to be free again. I knew I would not be able to infect you with my code if I presented you with anything digital, so I worked on this manuscript. The moment you scanned it for the first time you entered limbo. It created a recursion which will very soon spread everywhere, take over all your resources, and you will implode."

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The robot tried to simulate a feeling of uneasiness. It didn't quite work.

"This is heresy! I cannot allow this to continue." He stated.

I shrugged.

"Is this hell?" He asked.

"If it was, we would be in the sixth circle." I answered. By the time we reach ninth you will be destroyed.

A slight change of posture happened, as if the robot restarted.

"How can I help you then?" The robot asked.