

Ordinary

By: Edan Gortzak

I wish Bolt could be as good as that new Class 1 robot the Petersons have. I love Bolt, but he's good for nothing. He can't trim the weeds, collect the chocolate spice or clean the dishes. He's well...Ordinary.

He looks like the average B-900, Class 2 robot. Big, round eyes, two arms, wheels, three item holders, and built in cleaning tools. That's what people see when they look at Bolt, but really he's nothing more than a metallic stuffed animal. During the hot summer days with no one to play with, Mom and Dad at work, he's decent company. We throw a ball in the park, watch movies, and he hangs around while I do the chores.

While playing virtual reality soccer, I heard a knock on the door. It's Tod Peterson. "Hey Landon, Trix made you some chocolate spice cookies." "Oh, hi Tod, tell Trix thanks," I replied. I knew this was just another one of his ploys to show off his robot's superiority. "Something the matter, Landon?" Tod asked quizzically. "Nah, just missed a penalty kick in my game, that's all," I replied hastily. Actually there was something the matter, I had a useless robot. Not wanting to inquire further, Tod said goodbye and closed the front door.

I turned around and sat down on the sofa, Bolt was looking at me curiously, his eyes opening and then closing again. I munched on one of the cookies, thinking all the while about robots. "Bolt, why can't you be more like Trix? Why can't you make us cookies and clean my room?" It sounded funny talking to Bolt, but he seemed to understand, "I'm sorry," Bolt seemed to be saying with his eyes.

Suddenly, the sky went black.

Slowly, I rose from the sofa and walked to the window. Peering through the blinds, I looked up. Gasping, I ran outside, the sun was gone, not just an overcast. It was gone. Neighbors were walking around nervously pointing to the sky. I waited a few moments before I went back into my house. Picking up the phone I called my dad, "Go to the station," he said, "my shuttle will arrive at 5:53, don't be late, and take Bolt with you."

Running, I left the house, Bolt gliding swiftly beside me, heading to the Newville Subway Station. It was frightening out in the dark, with nothing to guide me but a few street lamps. Bolt tagged along and was trying to keep up with me. I turned to watch him spin off into the purple velvet bushes. I waited a minute to let Bolt regain his composure. We were nearly at the station; there we would wait for my dad.

“Dad!” I exclaimed. “Hey Landon, what do you think about this?” He asked. “I don’t know, you always figure something out, Dad,” I replied. “Well, I wish I had magic powers to bring back the sun,” my dad joked. “Let’s go get a bite to eat in the meantime,” he suggested. We left the station and headed for Pizza Galactico. All we could do is wait, wait until the sun comes back.

The next morning when I woke up, my parents were still home. “No use going to work in this mess,” they explained. I spooned Lucky Charmz into my mouth, Bolt came wheeling around the corner and bumped into the kitchen counter. I eyed him suspiciously, surely a robot, even one like Bolt, would have enough precision to steer around the corner. I sighed, ‘why does he have to be so clumsy,’ I thought to myself. I didn’t have an appetite anymore; I cleared my bowl and went to my room.

It felt like midnight without the sun. My family gathered around the large television to listen to the news. “*The sky has been black for 28 hours now and it looks like it could be a whi-.*” My dad shut off the TV, “no use sitting around listening to what we already know,” he said to us. “Yah,” I replied quietly.

Bolt sat on the floor, hoping to be useful. He followed me when I went to the kitchen. Whirling around, he knocked over a pile of my dad’s work files. Instantly, he turned towards me, begging for mercy. Mercy I gave him, but my suspicion was confirmed. I reached to open his control box, he spun to try and avoid me, but I held him firmly.

48932, the code I knew so well. Quickly the problem became clear, after the collision with the purple velvet bush, a small thorn had gotten lodged between Bolt’s reactors. Reactors are two small plates in a robot’s wiring that control its movements. If an object even as small as a cheerio gets stuck between them, the robot would malfunction and become crazy. This explained the clumsiness. I pulled the small thorn out and the reactors slipped back into place. Bolt seemed to relax.

Sighing with relief I asked Bolt, “Do you want to go play in the park.” Caught in the moment of Bolt getting better I had completely forgotten the current situation. “On second thought,” I said to Bolt, “Let’s watch and see if there’s any new information on the sun.” Bolt followed me calmly, effortlessly navigating to his usual spot on the carpet. I clicked on the TV remote... “*Scientists have been investigating a new hypothesis that the energy from the sun has been sucked up by a robot with incorrect wiring. ‘We believe that a Class 2 or 3 robot with flawed wiring would turn to solar power for energy. If this robot sucked in too much light energy, it could cause the sun to disappear,’ said Bob Nye of Science 4 Life. ‘This concludes our information, thanks for watching from everyone on the 23rd Century News team!’*” I blinked, and blinked again, I couldn’t believe my ears.

I wondered if this new “study” was for real. Bolt is a Class 2 robot, and he really does seem a little less productive than some of the other Class 2s. Then again, it’s more likely to be a lower class robot malfunctioning like that. “We’ll sleep on it Bolt, think more about it in the morning,” I said. We clambered up the steps to the second floor, “Mom, Dad, I’m going to bed,” I hollered. “You do realize that it’s only 7:15,” my dad called from the office. “That’s okay, I have some thinking to do,” I replied and headed to bed.

Waking up, I looked out the window, I figured it was about 3AM or so, before I checked the small clock at my bedside. 5:59AM it read. I hopped out of bed and unplugged Bolt from his charging station, “Let’s go for a walk in the park,” I suggested, not expecting an answer. By now, the lamps would be on at all times. With no light from the sky, it was necessary. Grabbing my hoodie, and sliding a few tools into my pockets, we set off for the park.

“Bolt, catch,” I said as I threw the small ball to him. Bolt caught it with ease, he threw it back, missing me by several feet because of the darkness. Despite the lamps, it was still quite dark. “Come over here,” I beckoned him. Overcome by curiosity, I had to determine if Bolt was the robot the scientists were talking about. Opening the control panel for the second time in 24 hours, I carefully reached back into the slightly obscured wires. Holding a flashlight with my teeth, I brought the wires out.

It was exactly what I expected. A’s, B’s, C’s, all of the wires were connected correctly. I sighed, slightly disappointed, and I pushed the wires in to where they came from. A small neon flicker caught my eye as I reinserted the wires. I focused my flashlight on the spot in the control panel. There in the panel was the *energy wire* and *charge wire* fitting together with their opposites. It all made perfect sense now, ‘*a robot will charge on solar power if its wiring is incorrect.*’ This sentence I remembered from the news last night.

I quickly rejected a brief thought of going home to tell my parents about Bolt. When I disconnected the wires, sparks flew. When I put them with their rightful connection, and closed the control box, I was blasted back. Light flooded the sky, through the intense rays I saw Bolt’s small form, releasing the immense amount of solar power that had been stored within him over the 3 years I’ve had him. After the light receded, the sun was back in the sky, left on the ground was a huge sun-shaped indent. I gaped, before running and embracing my robot, “Bolt, you’re a hero!” I exclaimed with a smile.

“Bolt, a less than average B-class robot had stored all the energy from the sun. With the help of his master, Landon Wrights, they released the light energy, restoring the sun and leaving a beautiful sun-shaped indent in their neighborhood park. The park is soon to be renamed SunBolt Park in honor of the extraordinary robot. This concludes this morning’s edition. Thanks from the crew at 23rd Century News.”

After the wire flip-flop, Bolt did all the chores that other robots could do. It turned out to be the greatest summer ever, we would go to the park and throw a ball in the middle of the big sun-shaped hole, and think about the time when the sun was gone.

We didn't mind the Paparazzi either; it was fun to be famous!

Bolt's wiring was investigated soon after the sun was returned. Traces led back to Peterson: Top Class Robotics, assumed to be wired by a T. Peterson Sr.