

Gestalt 2012-2013

Merry
Christmas
Honors
Students.

And the Winner is...

Jessica Collier with her poem "Ode to Honors Wings." We had many fantastic submissions, but could only feature the contest winner and the runner up, Evelina Lundqvist for her short story "An Artificial Soul," which is published at the end of the Gestalt issue. No submissions have been altered for publication in the Gestalt newsletter, even for grammar and editing, so you get to enjoy these authors' creativity straight from them! Now, grab a cup of hot cocoa or coffee to settle in and enjoy Jessica Collier's "Ode to Honors Wings."

Ode to Honors Wings (Or, A Brief Episode of Wishful Thinking)

By: Jessica Collier

'Twas the night before finals, and all
through the floor
Not a student was social; not one open
door.
Our textbooks were thrown on the
floor without care
In desperate hope we had more time
to spare.
The organized ones were already in
bed
While visions of GPAs danced
through their heads.
My roommate with fear (and I with
obsession)
Had just settled down for a long study
session,
When down in the Fishbowl there rose
such a clamor,
I wanted to hit the perp's head with a
hammer!
Away to the stairwell I flew in a hurry,
Ran all the way down and then started
to worry.
"It's only a prank, another distraction.
I've blown all this time on an over-
reaction!"
Yet what to my sleep-deprived eyes
should bestow
Such a sense of relief, such a warm



fuzzy glow:
Much better than sleep or a mouthful
of toffee,
Our own Dr. Rutland with twelve pots
of coffee!
Far quicker than reindeer the students
they came,
And he smiled while he greeted and
called them by name.
"Hey handsome! Hi gorgeous! You
sure do look phat!
You know that it hurts me when you
laugh like that."
From Susie, from Michael, from Fran-
ces, from Wesley,
They way that they ran, you'd have
thought he was Presley!
As gossip on Facebook and Twitter
does fly,

Gestalt 2012-2013 Issue 2

Gestalt |gə- sh tālt; -
sh tōlt| (also Gestalt)

Noun: an organized
whole that is perceived
as more than the sum of
its parts; an instance or
example of such a unified
whole.

ORIGIN 1920s: from
German Gestalt, literally
'form, shape.'

Mission Statement

"The purpose of ORU's Hon-
ors Program is to provide aca-
demically gifted students an
educational experience at a
level that (1) transcends both
the rigor and scope of the
general curriculum and (2)
integrates the ethical respon-
sibilities of using God's intel-
lectual gifts for the healing of
humanity into the concept of
the "whole person" education.

Gestalt Mission State- ment:

Our purpose is to further the
mission of the Honors Pro-
gram by providing informa-
tion vital to the success and
growth of the students and
academically elite community.

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Masquerade

We were not able to interview President Zach Wells or Assistant Events Coordinators Raquel Cardenas and Daniel Dickie, but they send their love and will be featured in Gestalt soon.

The other dorms came in the blink of an eye.

In less than a minute the Fishbowl did swell

With the whole student body – and Rutland as well.

As one of the first on the scene I had caught

The president's eye and made off with a pot,

So I held it for life, turned quickly around

And dashed for Floor Seven with one epic bound.

Dressed all in pajamas from bottom to top,

I climbed every staircase with nary a stop

And I thought to myself, "Unless I'm amiss,

I should get some Aerobics Points from all of this!"

Our eyes – how they twinkled! Our feelings how merry!

Quite needless to say that our whole wing was very

Hallucinatorily, blearily glad.

With caffeine the night wouldn't be

half as bad!

So, giddily buzzing with new energy
We settled back down just as quick as could be.

We tried hard to focus, I promise, it's true!

But friends are distracting (as they're wont to do).

A wink of the eye and a twist of the head,

And we suddenly reached for our Nerf guns instead

Of our pencils and books; we went straight to war

Which quickly included the unlucky floor

Below us, and then a few others as well.

We fought valiantly until our doom was spelled.

I sprang to the stairs, to my peers gave a whistle,

And away we all ran like the down of a thistle.

But they heard us proclaim, ere we dove out of sight,

"Happy cramming to all, but for us it's GOOD NIGHT!"

Honors Council

Get to know your leaders

By Jeff Gunter

Here at the Gestalt, we appreciate our leadership in the Honors Program and all they do to make our experience better. We thought we'd put them in the spotlight in this issue so you can all get to know them a little better!

Vice-President Hannah Covington
is an English Literature/
Spanish double major
with a journalism minor
and hails from Mat-
toon, IL.

Best Moment Ever at ORU: This is really hard...one moment that does stick out though is surviving Snowpocalypse 2011. Huzzah!



Honors Council (continued)

Favorite thing about the Honors Program: Working for Dr. Meyers, attending HP events, dancing with the likes of Greg Butron at Masquerade, and planning the events with the beautiful people on Honors Council.

If you could tell a freshman one thing to help them succeed and enjoy the Honors experience, what would it be? Participate in as many as the events as possible! It's how you form some lifelong friendships and get to know some of the most ambitious, classy people on the campus of ORU. Also, definitely consider living on the honors floors at some point. That's where I met my two best friends freshman year.



Events Coordinator Ashley Sweeney came to ORU from Shawnee, KS, and is studying biology pre-med.

Best Moment Ever at ORU: Every Ultimate game I've gotten to play in

Favorite thing about the Honors Program: The friends I made living on the Honors floor during my freshman year

If you could tell a freshman one thing to help them succeed and enjoy the Honors experience, what would it be? Don't be afraid to ask questions, push boundaries of what you think you can do, and have fun.

Chaplain Nicole Tucker

traveled from Wichita, KS, to study psychology and communications at ORU.



Treasurer Addison Cruz from Broken Arrow, OK is studying mechanical engineering.

Best Moment Ever at ORU: Getting an A in Artistic Expression.

Favorite thing about the Honors Program: My two favorite things about the Honors Program are meeting new friends at the quite enjoyable Honors events and getting my mind blown on a regular basis during Honors classes.

If you could tell a freshman one thing to help them succeed and enjoy the Honors experience, what would it be? If you don't want your college experience to end up a sham, get as involved as you can with the Honors Program.



Best Moment Ever at ORU: I don't think it's considered a moment, but I've really just loved dorm life in general.

Favorite thing about the Honors Program: I love that the Professors in the HP genuinely care about you and want what's best for you. They're so willing to go out of their way to help.

If you could tell a freshman one thing to help them succeed and enjoy the Honors experience, what would it be? Invest in the Honors Program. Go to events, get

to know your professors, do life with the other HP kids. There's so much the HP has to offer, you just have to be willing to dive in!



Secretary Shannon McBeath hails from Lehigh Acres, FL, and is a biology pre-med major.

Best Moment Ever at ORU: One night during finals week, my best friend and I were studying in the GC. We then received a text from our friends that said "bet you cant find out where we are studying." My best friend and I gathered up our belongings and went in pursuit of the classroom in which we thought the guys were hiding. As we were running about searching for them, we realized this was the most fun we had all finals week and started joking around with each other and calling the guys to surrender and admit they had found the best hide and go seek spot in the building. I would have to say that was the best moment I've had at ORU since coming. Although, I'm sure I'll have moments that even trump this best one in the future. That's why I love ORU!

Favorite thing about the Honors Program: The community it builds- the Honors Program is unique in that it takes students from all majors and brings them together in a way not many other clubs or groups on campus can. If I wasn't involved in the honors program I would not have met many people outside of the biology/chemistry department.

If you could tell a freshman one thing to help them succeed and enjoy the Honors experience, what would it be? Get to know your professors! They are all amazing people that want to share interesting experiences and information with you that will help you excel.

HP Speak

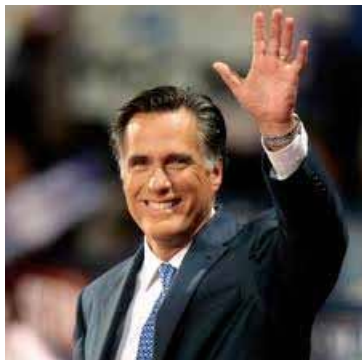
Vote Your Conscience

By Victoria Jensen

Late in October, the Honors Program hosted a town hall-style HP Speak event. Moderated by Zach Wells, the event centered on topics relevant to young adults voting in the subsequent election, and audience members were able to suggest questions via text they wanted the speakers to answer. The line-up for the event featured Mr. William Womack, Director of Financial Aid; Dr. Laura Sherwood, Assistant Professor of Communication, Arts and Media; Professor Keith Gogan, Assistant Professor of English; and Dr. Michael Hirlinger, Professor of Government and Chair of the History, Humanities and Government Department. All of the speakers gave a short introduction to their topics, and then the panel was opened to questions.

Mr. Womack explained the impact changes in federal financial laws might have on students in the future. Womack discussed the consequences a reduced education budget could have on Pell grants and Perkins loans. He also encouraged the students to consider non-education bills, such as transportation, budget, and healthcare bills, which often have a substantial impact on higher education. "Bills that appear not to impact you do," Womack said, "It may not be a major impact initially, but it certainly will have an impact in subsequent years."

Dr. Sherwood described the influ-



ence media has on voters and outcome of the election. Sherwood claimed we are all at risk of being influenced by the media: "The question is not if media affects you," she said, "but how does media affect you?" According to Dr. Sherwood, susceptibility to media influence decreases with higher education level and greater critical thinking skills. She illustrated her point by showing President Obama's "First Time" Ad likening a girl losing her virginity to voting for President Obama. Sherwood, who was "highly offended by the ad," urged the audience to process all media, especially election advertising, through a Chris-



tian worldview.

Professor Gogan discussed the environment and alternative energy. He explained the dilemma of creating energy laws that would restrict job growth or refusing to take action to protect the environment. "The question you need to ask yourself," Gogan said, "is 'what kind of world do I want to leave my children and grandchildren?'" Gogan outlined the issues regarding the environment to illustrate the polarity between the candidates. "We need to have a paradigm shift in terms of renewable energy," Gogan said. He suggested a hypothetical middle road in which alternative energy sources could be used to produce new jobs.



Dr. Hirlinger explained the impact the new healthcare law will have on college students. The law allows parents to keep their children's coverage up to age 26 rather than 24 and prohibits denial of coverage to children based on pre-existing medical conditions. There are, however, many concerns with the mandate; as the audience expressed, the law requires employers to cover employees, includes many earmarks, and increases rather than lowers premiums for some citizens. Hirlinger also expressed the difficulty of repealing the law in its entirety and emphasized the need for bipartisan cooperation in order to affect substantial change.

Most of the panel members agreed that the economy and employment are the most important issue currently facing the country and no one person will be the solution. "I don't think either side has the full answer," Wolmeck said, "There has to be greater cooperation between the two [parties] and more moderation."

Sarah Dinwiddie attended the event to find out more about the political issues as she considered voting and weighed her options. "It's important that we wrestle with issues to come to legitimate conclusions," Sarah said, "that we actually know what we believe and don't just fall back on assumptions." Each of the students in attendance came away from the event with a little greater understanding of both sides of the political debates as they prepared to vote in the election the following week. "We have Obama. We have Romney," Professor Gogan said, "Vote your conscience."



Student Profile

David Bedinghaus: Aspiring Accountant

By Jeff Gunter

David Bedinghaus is a junior here at ORU from whom we can all learn a thing or two. David is a Fellow in the Honors Program, and is among the many students who manages to shine among this academically strong student body. Between his dedication to school, his compassion for others in the community, and his ability to make sense of the world around him, David truly exemplifies what it means to be an Honors student at Oral Roberts University.

An analytical person by nature, David chose accounting as his major. He chose it, among other reasons, because he “likes the fact that everything about accounting has to make sense and be logical.” Indeed, it is certainly nice when the correct path always takes you to the only right answer. David describes himself as “a strategist who goes to great lengths to make sure that things are done right.” A frequent partaker in strategy games, David enjoys being presented with a challenge and

deciding on the necessary action to solve it.

David’s answer to the question, “where are you from?” is not as clear-cut as most people’s would be. When I asked him this question, the best way he could sum it up was, “I am from the Air Force.” Since his father works for the Air Force as a dentist, David lived in many different states, including Illinois, North Dakota, Texas, Hawaii, Missouri, Ohio, Arkansas, and Virginia. This journey of thousands of miles was cut short, however, when he found himself here at Oral Roberts University. Like so many of ours, David’s tenure here at ORU has been enjoyable, challenging, and so far, successful.

David is no stranger to challenge; neither is he a stranger to achievement. His ability to rise to a challenge and devote himself to being the best that he can be has led David to several academic honors, which, besides being a Fellow here at ORU, include Co-valedictorian and National Merit Commendation. These honors are nothing to sneeze at, and David accomplished them while staying involved in his church and learning what it takes to be a leader. While here at ORU, David is involved in Alpha Lambda Delta as well as the Accounting Society.

If there is a student whose advice you should take on surviving

ORU, this is him. When David was asked if he had any advice for incoming freshmen in years to come, he said, “My advice for surviving while at ORU is to keep up with everything. Do things early if at all possible. Go daily over the good notes that you take attentively in class. Pay attention in class. Remember that, if you are a Fellow like me, somebody is paying for your education, so go to every class in honor of those who are sponsoring you. If you are a scholar (and this goes for everyone in general), then realize that every class is worth a video game system, so go to each one!” Using all of this as a philosophy, David has established himself as an example for all of us.



Professor's Perspective

Dr. Dominic Halsmer: Uniting Faith and Learning

By Victoria Jensen

"Engineering research is very intense. You're burning so many calories, it's almost like working out." That is how a professor at Purdue University described it to his sport-loving undergraduate student, Dominic Halsmer, in 1985 when encouraging him to pursue a higher degree in engineering. Three degrees later, Dr. Halsmer is now Dean of the School of Science and Engineering and still an avid athlete and leaner.

Halsmer's late college years were a time of searching for answers to his questions about life and purpose. Seeing the transformation and love of his parents who were filled with the Spirit about a decade earlier, Halsmer turned to God with his questions. He began to uncover the scientific evidence for the Bible and Christian worldview and went through a time of spiritual renewal. The Purdue professor who tapped into Halsmer's love of athletics, talked to him about the joys of teaching and researching, and encouraged him to earn higher degrees. After finishing his Masters at Purdue, he moved to California to complete his Doctorate at UCLA where he first discovered his love for teaching as a teacher's assistant. He served seven years as a dynamics and controls engineer for Hughes Aircraft Company in L.A. then moved to Tulsa to begin teaching at ORU. Halsmer, who never imagined he would get a degree in literature, will finish his MA in biblical literature in May.

Now in his 20th year of teaching at ORU, Halsmer is still thrilled with his role as a professor. "I love being with students," he said. Halsmer's favorite part of teaching is seeing his students experience a light bulb moment: "There are certain times

when you are teaching and, if you've prepared well, it excites and motivates them. If you're lucky, students get the 'ah-ha' experience." Halsmer wants his students to understand that their professors are for them, not against them. "We want to see our students succeed and are praying for them," he said, "We're called here to bless our students." Halsmer views himself as an advocate for his students rather than their adversary. He explained the challenge of being an advocate while still setting a high bar for academic performance: "We want them to gain confidence and expertise so they'll be ready for what God's called them to do."

As Dean of Science and Engineering, Halsmer has enjoyed working with deans of other departments and developing his leadership skill, but his true passions are research, teaching and apologetics. In January he will begin a new position as Director of the Center for Faith and Learning. Housed in the Holy Spirit Research Center, this new center will help students and faculty integrate faith into their area of study. Halsmer describes it as a "hub for students and faculty to learn to hear God's voice. God told Oral to 'Raise up your students to hear my voice.' The very context of that quote was 'Build me a university.'" The incorporation of a Christian worldview into academics is what sets ORU apart from other universities, and Halsmer is devoted to teaching students to steward the knowledge they gain and preparing them to give an answer for their hope. Halsmer is convinced that as members of a Christian university, we must be conscious of God more than just in Chapel. He will encourage faculty and students to write and speak



on how their area of study interacts with a Christian worldview. As director, Halsmer will have less administrative duties and more time to return to and continue teaching -- including co-teaching History of Quantitative Thought.

Dr. Halsmer advises all students to "get to know your teachers. Take advantage of the relationship and learn more from them than what you learn in the classroom." Halsmer treasures the time he is able to spend with students in the classroom and outside, hanging out and playing sports.

Dr. Halsmer remembers "playing school" with his twelve siblings on their 5-acre property, dreaming of the future and thinking, "Wouldn't it be neat if I could teach alongside my brothers and sisters?" He views his position at ORU as a fulfillment of that dream. Each day he has the privilege of working with his brothers and sisters in Christ: "I see this place as a big family, a big home." He's motivated by the higher calling of ORU and doesn't take lightly his ability to "have an influence on young people's lives in a way that has an impact on eternity."



Alumni Profile

Stephen Knier: Realizing a Med School Dream

by Victoria Jensen

Roasting marshmallows over the Holy Spirit flame behind the GC is just one of the fond memories Stephen Knier has of his time at ORU: “It tasted like propane, but it was still fun!” Now a first-year medical student at Des Moines University, Stephen is making new memories and big plans for the upcoming years.

Knier set his mind on becoming a doctor during high school, and he is well on his way to realizing that dream. Stephen spent his time at ORU studying biology in preparation for his medical career. He worked as an Honors Research Assistant with Dr. Reed and chemistry teacher’s assistant. In addition to his participation in the Honors Program, Knier was involved in TriBeta Biological Honors Society and served as president of the Environmental Stewardship Club where he worked with Dr. Herr to raise awareness of environmental issues and promote a Christian response to them.

After living on an honors floor for three years, Stephen is

convinced the best part of the Honors Program is the quality people; he is thankful for the opportunity he had to get to know the HP professors, peers, and his three-year roommate and closest friend who was an HP member. Knier enjoyed the honors courses, especially Science and the Imagination, and cannot envision his college experience without the Honors Program, which encompassed his whole experience at ORU.

Knier earned his degree in biology from ORU in 2010 with minors in English literature and biochemistry. He married his wife Annie the summer after graduation and moved to the Twin Cities where both he and his wife grew up. There Stephen had the opportunity to work as a medical scribe in the ER and observe doctors first hand.

Stephen began medical school a few months ago and found it to be much more challenging than he expected. Although he recognizes ORU prepared him well, he discovered medical school is “like study for finals all the time” and is thankful to have his supportive wife alongside him. Knier advises undergraduate med-school hopefuls to “get as much exposure to and experience in the medical field as you can.” He suggests shadowing or working in a clinic

to get a grasp on the reality of a medical career: “It’s too much work to not have it be what you love.” Looking forward to getting settled into a career and having “a normal life,” Knier hopes to practice pediatrics or general family medicine in the Twin Cities after he finishes school and residency.

Stephen encourages students to pursue what truly interests them. “I don’t think there’s anything I could see myself doing other than being a physician,” he said. Get involved in a clubs and events, take advantage of the opportunities that come your way, and, like Stephen, realize your dreams.



Contest Runner-Up

“An Artificial Soul”

By Evelina Lundqvist

I was merely four days, thirteen hours, three minutes and fifty five seconds old when my creator made me feel fear. It was a feeling most unpleasant. I may be a strong machine, made of steel with titanium alloy, coated with titanium nitride, but the way my inner workings reacted as she fell... I shouted out like... like I... cared? No, how could I? Lying on the floor, still in obvious pain from the fall, my creator looked at me quite surprised.

- How are you, Tinker? Everything ok?
Tinker? Oh, right. My newly adjusted knees! I looked down at the clogs that made a clinking sound as they moved into place. Tink... Tink... Tink... Tink. This sound had obviously inspired my new name. I nodded my approval.

- Yes, Creator.

- Katie, she corrected.

- Registered.

She laughed, that strange, spontaneous sound that resounded inside her and left her mouth vibrantly. Not much logic to it, yet somehow pleasant.

- A simple 'yes' is quite all right, Tinker.

- Yes... Katie,

She responded by flexing the muscles on both ends of her mouth to form a smile. Again, a quite illogical behavior, but yet fascinating. I had never yet tried that, but what if I would? No, I deleted that thought. I didn't want to feel what humans call joy, or anger, or any other feeling! Those were the very reason why she had been hurt. Angry and frustrated with what had seemed to be a technical problem in her latest construction she had moved too fast on the bridge, slipped and fallen some six feet down on the concrete floor. I examined her and found a shallow flesh wound in her leg. I used the aerosol can with healing serum, for as crazy as that sounds – humans heal. It's nothing like changing a clog or a sheet of metal on an android like myself, they had inner, spontaneous mechanisms taking care of that.

- Here, let me help you.

I lifted her up and carried her back toward our house as skyscrapers hovered over us like golden gods in mahogany frames, turning their shadowed backs to the field of trash that represented its past and was now our home. Katie didn't seem to mind. She was born and raised on this junkyard.

A technical genius from childhood, she had

never thought twice about what she was created to do. Construct. Create. Time and again experience the pondering sensation of brining life, if yet artificial, to material. Trained well from early age by her father, one of the best, yet most misunderstood and underestimated, engineering minds of our time, Katie had caught the torch and had now, though only in her late 20's, exceeded her late father's life's work by far.

This was her destiny. The one of my own, I did not know of. Katie had not told me, she simply said that it was for me to find out.

- We're back!, Katie called out as we entered the house. I put her down carefully.

- How did it go?, Daisy asked from the kitchen.

- Oh great, just great.

Not one word about any accident or injury, just like Katie. If there are dark clouds, ignore them. If there is sunshine, tell the world.

Katie took off her working belt and threw it on the floor. A loud groan could be heard from the sofa, where only the back of a golden tinted head and the middle spread of a digital newspaper could be seen.

- I just cleaned that.

- Sorry, Katie said, smiled and hung the belt on a hook, then quickly made her way to the sofa and snatched the paper.

- Hey!

- Hello to you too, Katie giggled. Oh, looks like more business for us – they've raised the taxes on trash again.

- I know, the android stole the paper back, I was reading it.

Katie smiled at him and kissed his forehead. Edward laughed in return and shook the dark locks on her head with his hand before returning to his favorite seat. The laughs of androids were quite different from human ones. Katie had had a hard time replicating it. But since laughter was Katie's favorite sound, she didn't give up until it became a resonance through their whole body and rang out like a note in music, though sounding quite... rehearsed.

Adding to the sound, Katie walked to the bell rope by the door and pulled it, making the whole house echo with the loud sound of the alarming, quite eerie signal. Answering the calling, all of its inhabitants gathered in the living room. Daisy was the first to arrive. The only female robot, and the first



one Katie ever built, her name expressed Katie's obsession with flowers, which Daisy now shared. Edward, who didn't bother getting up from his seat, was her second robot, named after Katie's late father, and apparently he shared similar traits with him, even though they had never met. The third robot, and last to arrive, was Teddy, the strongest, tallest and most powerful of us all, still very silent and gentle in his personality, inspiring his somewhat awkward name. I was the newest, and smallest of them all, and Katie the only human, but no one really thought twice about that. We were probably as close to what would be considered a family community as we could ever be.

- Everyone, I have an announcement, Katie said excitedly. We're going to get a visitor today.

- Really? Edward looked up from his paper. We haven't had a visitor since... since before Teddy.

- I know, but now we do. His name is Dr. William Neville, and he's coming because he wants to meet you guys.

There was a unanimous feeling of shock.

- Us?

Katie nodded.

- I think he saw Teddy when he unloaded some trash the other day. He asked me a bunch of questions; apparently he has got several of the new state models, but was more impressed by what he heard about you. It seems he wanted our help with something. Maybe moving stuff, I don't really know. I couldn't help but feeling a bit uneasy about it, though I did not know why at the time.

Later that afternoon the man arrived, and his appearance betrayed his importance. He seemed to be in his late 40's, dressed in an impeccable navy blue suit, and a light blue tie that intensified his ice-blue eyes. But the way he acted was in no way close to a gentleman.

“An Artificial Soul” (continued)

Katie wore one of her nicest (and few) dresses and greeted him with her nicest smile, still he barely gave Katie a glance, rather almost shoved her out of his way as he went straight for the subjects of his interest. Us androids, apparently. But the doctor did not bother to socialize with us, no. He was musing at the sight of us, with strange desire in his eyes. Eyeing us up and down, he probably would have loved to cut us open and dissect us if he could. It was becoming obvious that this was not a social visit. Daisy kept her composure, Teddy kept his hand on Edward's shoulder, keeping him from letting his anger loose on the unexpected human. Dr. Neville stopped in front of Teddy.

- I'll take him, he said and looked him over again. Yes, yes, he'll do very nicely.

He took a step back and turned to the baffled Katie.

- Name your price.

- He... he is not for sale, Dr. Neville!, she said sternly. He is family, as are the rest of them. For a split second, it seemed to me his face resembled metal.

- I see, he looked over at Teddy again. Are you sure? I mean, after all, to the right price even families tied by blood have been known to...

- Yes!, Katie said and went on, emphasizing every word: I am very sure.

- Pity.

There was a brief and not very comfortable silence.

- Then how about this: you come and work for me, building personalized robots like this.

Katie shook her head and the normally so lively green eyes had darkened.

- I have not the slightest desire to work with 'building robots', sir. It is not building them that I love; it is them in their own right. No money you could ever pay me could take them away from me, or me from them. Now if you would be so kind....

- Then you're a fool, his voice conveyed his disdain as he interrupted her, clearly used to getting what he wanted and not being questioned.

- Good day, Dr. Neville!

The man turned around and walked out the door without closing it, just before the fumes from the overheated Edward was quite visible.

- That rusted piece of metal scrap, he shouted.

- Language!, Daisy exclaimed.

- Didn't you see it, Daisy? How he looked at us? Oh, we were marvelous tin cans, weren't we? Edward was just getting started, but then a soft voice interrupted his rant.

- I'm so sorry.

We all turned to see Katie sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall with her hands covering her face and its ruined makeup.

- Why are you sorry, Katie?, I couldn't help but ask.

- I guess I should have foreseen this might be what he was after, but... I just don't see you that way. You know you mean so much more to me than that, right? Please say you do.

- We know, and that is all that is important, Daisy said.

Teddy sat down next to Katie and put his arm around her, and she leaned her head against his shoulder. We all stayed for a while without knowing what more could be said or done, then went to bed one after the other, all of us anxious to put this day behind.

As I lay down in my bed and thought through the events of the evening I realized something. In the light of reason, wasn't Dr. Neville right? Wasn't that what we were? Metal sculpted to fabricate working machines. Katie had once told me that just because I was made of metal didn't make me a machine. But what else could I be? I was a robot. I started powering off to disrupt further thoughts of the subject, but before regenerating and data analyzing started, I felt a slight notion that this was far from over. The piercing alarm went off just before the sun fully had set on the sooted horizon. I answered the call as fast as I could, rushing down to see Edward.

- She's gone!, he shouted.

- Edward, what happened to your arm?

His left one was severely damaged, twisted just like a corkscrew, and I reached out to touch it. In rage, Edward pushed me out of his way.

- Who cares? Can't your hear me? She's gone!

I could hear Teddy join us behind me.

- What happened? Where are the others?

- He took her!

- Who?

- That doctor! His androids got to her first. She was up early and on her way to the front door, and they just... snatched her in a second.

Teddy grabbed him with both his hands to calm him.

- And where is Daisy?

Edward closed his vision lenses hard and a look of intense pain crossed his face. Teddy released him in shock. Then slowly turned to me and said:

- Let's go.

We made our way through the door and started moving toward the city. We tried to stay away from people, who were often made uneasy by the sight of free ranging robots. Other androids however proved very useful since most of them are unable to lie or conceal information when asked a direct question (except for governmental secrets), and it was not long until we had managed to assemble the information we needed about Dr. Neville.

As we set off, it was painstakingly obvious that we were not made for speed. Our stamina way surpassed humans, naturally, but it seemed our purpose was not dependent on something that required high-speed transportation. It took us 51 hours to reach our goal, a manor located seemingly in the middle of nowhere, but it took no time at all for us to break in. Three guardian state model robots immediately showed up and even if I was ready to fight, between Edward's great rage and Teddy's strength I could hardly get a steel fist in the game. We left the floor littered with distorted metal pieces and ripped off cords as we silently began searching the house. Nothing useful was found in the upper floors except some maps and articles on killer robots, but when we climbed the uncomfortably narrow staircase leading to the basement we heard sounds telling us we were on the right track. A massive door opened into a huge room filled with advanced construction tools, and robot parts. I saw Katie right away, sitting by what seemed to be a gigantic steel cylinder with a power tool in her hand, but shaking so hard she could hardly use it. I felt a strong hand on my shoulder, and saw Teddy's other hand on the fuming Edward, undoubtedly to stop us from doing anything foolish before he could finish his visual search of the room. Looking back at her again, I made a mental note of a golden bracelet around her right wrist, which she would never choose to wear. There was also an unusual shadow around her eye - no, a black eye! For some reason, beyond my own understanding, that made me feel something - fear, anger and something else collided with many other seeds of emotion, and all I could do was call out her name.

- Katie!

She looked up and saw me. Her eyes started to convey something different, and she got up on unsteady legs. She barely took one step before she was down again, for a moment shaking violently with her teeth

“An Artificial Soul” (continued)

clenched tightly, grabbing the bracelet but seemingly unable to pull it off.

- I thought you had learned.

Dr. Neville came into view behind her. We all stepped back, hiding in the shadow of the door. He grabbed her shirt and pushed her up against the metal tube.

- You are not allowed to rest or leave this room until you are done!

He backhanded her and she fell to the ground, groaning in pain. He pulled a little hand-held device from his pocket, undoubtedly the mechanism that had brought on the seizures.

Was this fury? I could barely focus or stand still because of the intense hatred I felt for this man. Suddenly there was no hand to stop me. I rushed off. Edward was faster. The unsuspecting human barely caught a glimpse of his attackers until the first and only strike hit him, sending him flying across the room, smashing into the wall, then silently sliding to the floor.

As I turned to Katie, electricity was once again rippling through her body, violently trying to ravage it. Edward saw it too, and ran to get hold of the device that had fallen out of the doctor's hand.

- It is broken! It... It's not working, he shouted.

- Just make it stop, I called back to him desperately.

I went down on my knees by her side and reached for the bracelet that apparently worked as a receiver, but Teddy stopped me.

- Don't touch her, he said as he grabbed my hand. It will fry your hard drive.

I could see the pain in his eyes, for both of us knew it was frying her hard drive too. As her body trembled, I found myself so utterly useless. How could I be this great machine, carefully designed and created into something so close to perfection, but still unable to even remove a bracelet? If only she had been a robot, we could probably have taken the whole arm off without any problems! I looked at her trembling face; eyes wide open in shock, mouth screaming without a sound. It would be a matter of seconds now.

I looked down at my own arm, grabbed the outer metal covering and pulled it off. Using its razor sharp edge, I threw it down with all my strength over her wrist just above the golden accessory. I closed my vision lenses as it cut through her arm and as I opened them again, it was to the sound of Katie's screams and the sight of blood, lots of blood. Her cut-off hand was still seizing with elec-

tricity, but the bracelet had come off and lied a few feet away. Edward pushed me out of the way and carefully studied the wound as he sprayed it with healing serum. He opened the test kit from the medicine supply that every robot of Katie's carries, grabbed her dismembered hand, looked at me firmly and said:

- Keep her conscious.

I nodded.

Katie looked at me but with eyes so pale I wasn't sure if she saw anything at all.

It seemed she didn't have the strength to scream anymore, she just made strange, stuttering noises and kept her teeth tightly clenched.

- It's going to be all right, I assured her. Just hang on.

I continued to talk to her as Edward worked. He was extremely fast, but he was a perfectionist and wanted all the nerves and blood vessels in place before he sealed her up. When finally done, Katie was ash white, but still alive. I felt so exhausted, but lifted her up and left the house, Teddy and Edward walking behind me.

- Thank you, Katie mumbled with her eyes closed.

I didn't know the proper response, so I just kept quiet. Katie leaned in to rest her head against my chest, hearing the clogs and pipes working frenetically and yet so smoothly beneath the surface.

- You're welcome, she whispered.

- Welcome to what?

- No, that's what you... reply to a 'Thank you'.

- Oh.

I felt the corners of my mouth being pulled upwards as I formed my first smile.

- You're welcome.

I was seven days, four hours, eleven minutes and fifteen seconds old when my creator made me feel anger, hatred, and joy. And with these feelings discovered, I have begun to doubt if I was created to be simply a machine. She awakened my artificial soul to feel, and for her I'll feel for the rest of this existence.



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