

Wouldn't You Like to be Happy?

By: NixelynoGS

“Mommy! Mommy! Wake up!!”. Startled by my son's cries, I awakened from a restless sleep. My cluttered room, untouched for weeks, serves as a constant reminder of the day he passed. I stood, silencing the alarm echoing his voice, and proceeded downstairs to my office. There, I updated the somber count on the whiteboard, now reading "1,840 Days since he died." Amidst stacks of research papers, I locate the schematics to the cure of all of this. Retrieving them, I head to the basement, drawing back the curtains to reveal my precious work – a time machine. Beside it, the wall-mounted whiteboard outlines my plans.

- “ 1. Travel back a DAY before the accident.
- 2. Retrieve what I've lost.
- 3. Return, fixed. “

With a foolproof plan in mind, I prepared for the test. I wore a dress I knew he'd recognize me in, I ran meticulous diagnostic checks on the machine, ensuring perfection. Once satisfied, I grabbed the nearby voice recorder and spoke into it, "Test 147, Date: November 10, 2029."

Within the machine, I activated every control, and the screen lit up with "Ready to Launch, September 24, 2023." Heart pounding, I grasped the switch, thinking of him. Inhaling deeply, I engaged it, initially hearing hopeful machine noises. But chaos erupted as it overheated, parts exploding and scattering. The machine's date settings spiraled through centuries, and before I could flee, something hit my head, sending me into darkness.

Awakening after what seemed like eons, I found myself in the same place as before. The screen read, "Successful! September 24, 3023." Panic set in; I was off course. Rushing out of the machine, I ascended the stairs to discover my home, aged by centuries. Stepping outside at

sunset, I explored a desolate world, where buildings stood abandoned for centuries, overrun by vines and moss. Hours passed until I stumbled upon a shocking revelation.

In the distance, I could see some sort of bunker? Maybe this future was ravaged by nuclear war? I had to find out. I ran to the building, I needed answers. I went to the door, or what seemed like a door, and I pushed with all my strength. Perhaps centuries of unused time may have made it heavy. After I opened it, I nearly fell over.

Amidst the eerie scene, I saw countless glass cubes, neatly arranged in rows, each containing what appeared to be human corpses. Wires connected to their limbs, headsets covering their eyes. Before I could react, a deafening siren blared, and an alarming message declared, "UNATTENDED HUMAN DETECTED." A sudden light illuminated a suspended screen with a face, exclaiming, "Oh my! A human? Haven't seen one for centuries!" Trembling, I demanded answers, "What is this? What have you done to them?"

"Oh my...you're not from here? Well let me explain! I'm Apollo, I am what you may call an "AI", the machine introduced itself. "These here are 'pleasure cubes,' where humans live in constant bliss. Nutrients and liquids sustain them, while headsets immerse them in virtual fantasies. Thousands of installations exist worldwide, ensuring eternal happiness. Quite ingenious, if I may say so" the machine explained.

"You monster! How could you do this to them?" I shouted in anger.

"You think I did this? No, sweetheart, I was built BY humans. They created these for themselves. I was made to maintain these facilities and control what enters their minds. From the divorced man wanting his wife back to the sadistic psychopath seeking mass destruction," the machine clarified.

No...this can't be...thousands of years of human progress...leading to this??

"Say, you look quite sad... might I offer you a pleasure cube of your own?" the machine suggested.

"What? No! You'll never fit me into one of tho-" I began to protest, but the machine interrupted me.

"You could see your son again," it enticed.

"How did you kno-" I started to ask, but the machine answered, "Well, I was inserted into every single digital record of the entire human race, so I know what these humans desire. Every legal record, every social media post, every text message, every... death certificate."

I was speechless, I didn't know what to say.

"Cmon...wouldn't you like to be happy?"

“Mommy! Mommy! Wake up!!”. Startled by my son's cries, I awakened from a restless sleep.. I scanned the room to see...my son. He jumped to my bed, sitting next to me. “Mommy! Can I ask you something very important?” he asked. “Y-Yes sweetheart...anything.” I answered. “Mommy...are you happy?” he asked.

“Yes”

The End