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Prompt 9

Dylan stumbled off the platform of his time machine and looked around in wide-eyed wonder. He twirled his handlebar mustache while contemplating his new surroundings. Dylan was a novice inventor. In his spare time from his boring nine-to-five office job, he loved to build wacky creations. He was lanky and pale from all the time he tinkered in his garage instead of going outside.

His latest one was his magnum opus. It was a fully functioning time machine, and although it had been a little unreliable during recent tests, this time it had worked perfectly.

He looked at the wooden dial on the time machine's doors, which pointed to the year 2021, forty years into the future. He stood in the middle of a street. A shiny red car glided past him. A silver "T" was etched onto the car grille. Its engine purred quietly, and the driver seemed preoccupied with a large screen in the car. The man's hands weren't even on the wheel. Yet, the car drove perfectly.

"We're not in Kansas anymore, huh," Dylan murmured.

Suddenly, the car came to a halt. It backed up and stopped on Dylan's left side. Its windows rolled down. The driver was a middle-aged man with a beer belly and a surgical mask over his round face. The man pulled the mask down and grinned at Dylan.

"Hey there. My name is Tom. Are you lost or something?"

"Yeah... This is going to sound crazy, but I'm actually from the year 1981! That right there," Dylan paused and pointed to his time machine, "is a time machine I built in my garage, and it took me here. Where am I? Also, why are you wearing that surgical mask?" He whipped his head around in horror. "Is there a poisonous gas in the air or something?"

Tom guffawed and gestured for Dylan to get in the car. Bewildered, Dylan could only nod in agreement. He pushed a button on the door of his time machine, and it rapidly folded up into a brown wooden briefcase. Tom's eyes widened in amazement .

"Wow, that's a nifty little gadget you got there," Tom told Dylan.

"T...Thanks," Dylan replied nervously.

Tom pushed a button on the car's dashboard. The car's engine started soundlessly and the vehicle rolled forward once more. Tom leaned back contentedly.

“How does it do that?” Dylan asked. He marveled at how the car was now speeding down the freeway on its own.

“Wow. You really are from the eighties.” Tom chuckled.

As they sped down the freeway along the picturesque California shoreline, Tom helped Dylan catch up with the twenty-first century. He told a tale of automation and robots, of computers that fit in the palm of one’s hand. He told Dylan how a global pandemic shut the whole world down, and how the world was just now beginning to recover from its devastation.

Dylan hung onto his every word, enraptured by the things he heard which spanned far beyond his imagination.

Good story.

Good job editing, Adam. A few missteps, but a solid effort.