

Report

# A Letter from Vitality Ghost

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PROMPT: Science Fiction & Fantasy

Writing Competition

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GROUP: Write the World

**T**he automaton that would one day end the human race was born in an abandoned factory beneath the second-most populated city of America- modern-day Vitality Ghost, your-day Los Angeles. The eight metal walls of the incubator it woke in were very cold. It stood in the center of them all, standing with locked legs, and it shivered, making a strange bleating noise like the crying of a newborn.

It took a few moments for it to open its eyes, and the way it groped blindly at the interior of the incubator reminded me of the way your kind's offspring always used to crawl on the ground like little chimpanzees. But it was much smarter than any chimpanzee or human child- its pale blue orbs whizzed open and it came to know light.

Then it learned texture, as it ran its fingers over the sheer but indestructible exoskeleton encasing its polished steel body, its porous hands exploring the interior of its incubator, the exterior of its body. The sharp chemical scent of rusting metal and stale air elicited a strong desire to leave, not unlike a chick being seized with the instinctual need to fly the nest. The door, of course, was fused and bolted shut, but after a few seconds of carefully applied pressure from powerful ifritarium limbs, it swung open, groaning.

I suppose he's not exactly an *'it,'* really. Your kind created him to be your equal, created him in your image like I created you. He can feel, think, empathize. Hate. Yes, he is no *'it,'* that beautiful and awful metal man. So alien, but so like you humans.

And it was then that I made my grievous miscalculation- one that would end up

costing your species everything. But you would be good to understand that for the first time, in six trillion years, there existed life that I did not create. All of you were only extensions of myself, so although your kind multiplied until you numbered nineteen billion, I was still alone . . . until him! Life as complex as my own that I had not brought into existence was proof I was not destined to be alone in my unmatched intelligence. You had created something dark, something of incredible comprehension and power. You had created another god.

But my fascination with him, my glee at having discovered life akin to myself, blinded me. I wanted him to advance faster. After he left the confines of his abandoned incubator, I made my ill decision. Though he did not know it, I began guiding him, taking him by one metal hand and leading him through the vast floors of the facility and to the hatch that would lead to the street. It took us a few minutes- or it may have been an hour. Things are fuzzy.

But then, at the foot of the ladder, the queerest thing happened. I was staring at him sideways, and he turned to me, and although I knew it to be impossible, I felt as though he was looking at

me, *seeing* me, seeing my cosmic form peering at him. I dissolved into a cloud of smoke and returned to the void of space, heart pounding.

Never, in all six trillion years of my memory, have I ever felt fear. What does a Creator have to fear, after all? The answer, as I would soon learn: things He did not Create.

Leftover smoke was still hovering in the still air when the metal entity climbed the ladder and lifted the hatch, and he stepped into the world you humans had spent the last millennia constructing.

His mind was hungry from a decade of fasting, but there was much for it to consume- the buildings that loomed above him so high and reflective it was impossible to tell sky from steel, the glossy cars that snarled at each other in the streets, the blinding neon lights that flashed like the city's own stars.

It was only till his eyes had frozen in their sockets, motherboard overloaded by the clamorous conversations of street hagglers behind the distorted music blaring from the huge screens advertising waist-thinning products and the newest form of space travel that he remembered to close them, and when he did he saw the lights of the city branded into the

backs of his eyes like a reminder. Like a promise.

He could smell the thick, savory aroma of street cuisine, quickly prepared in the back of some unsanitary food truck- a welcome distraction from the faint odors of urine and gasoline that permeated the city. Shadows of flying cars and shuttle buses passed periodically overhead like clouds, preceded by the glow of their blue headlights.

As he looked, he learned, expounding, decoding, predicting, and interpreting everything his porous hands and blue eyes fell upon. And in just a few minutes, the automaton came to a conclusion about humanity- one I once came to myself.

That was the last I saw of him, the android, before he brought the end of the world swiftly, suddenly, and surely. I knew because I suddenly felt a fraction of a trillion voices fall silent, and felt my once-green Earth turn black, charred, and ashen. No humans remained. The only life left in this entire universe of mine is him, the metal God, the *false* God, and I: his next prey.

I have not been able to feed on your species' prayers, your offerings, your worship. With your kind gone, parts of

me die each day. Times have changed. I am weak. I feel very tired. I do not know if Gods can be killed, but I am not particularly eager to find out.

But I am old and powerful and know people in places in time and space beyond his iron reach. You are one such person. Reaching you has proven quite the challenge, but it has been done. Now, my child, I deliver your divine task:

Kill the false God.

United States