

MAN VS. MACHINE

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2nd Place

Children's Division

Bernard walked outside of the capsule and saw the red, barren wasteland around his home. Ever since the humans headed out to colonize different planets, people like him who left Earth chose to live at places like this. The humans took a humanlike robot called the Powerman to accompany and assist them on new frontiers. The Powermen could cook, talk, move, and dance like a human. In a way, the Powermen became the humans' best friends.

Bernard's parents had bought one Powerman to help their family who had just arrived on the planet designated Xaros 3. When Bernard got home, the Powerman opened the hatch in his family's capsule. "Hello Bernard," said the robot. "Oh, hi," said Bernard. Bernard walked down the hall and went to clean the reusable ration containers on the counter. As Bernard loaded them into the washing machine, he felt the desire to order the Powerman to come and load all the dishes. After all, these robots were designed to take over these daily chores.

While he was sitting on the couch, he started thinking about the time on Earth, where there was no Powerman. He remembered the time of his mom and dad scrubbing all the plates. They also cooked their favorite steak together. Bernard always set the table and prepared dessert. Now the Powerman did it all, and interaction with his parents became minimal. He went upstairs to check on his parents. His dad was sleepily humming to himself as the Powerman changed the capsule's solar panels outside. Mom was lounging on the couch watching TV while the Powerman was doing her

daily job of cleaning the bedroom. He felt like the Powerman was taking the purpose out of his and his parents' lives by doing the chores that once brought the whole family together.

If every day went like this, how long would it be before the entire family isolated themselves from each other? With everything being done by the machines, his family ran out of reasons to keep trying and human interaction became impossible due to imbalance. He decided it was time for a change. After his parents had already gone to bed, he walked down to the basement and disconnected the circuits on the Powerman.

As his parents walked around looking for the Powerman the next morning, Bernard walked up the stairs carrying the deactivated Powerman in his hands. "I miss the time when we spent time as a family," said Bernard. "The machines are helpful, however the last thing I want is to have them tear apart our lovely family." "Sometimes we have to chose between each other and the machines."