

Just Think...

4: AUTOMATO TOMATO... OR WHAT IS A GOOD LIFE?

BY WILL FORD

- NARRATOR** Welcome to the future. It's twenty one thirty. But I find 24 hour clocks confusing, so let's say half past nine. The year is actually 2129. And Princess Felicity is fed up.
- PRINCESS** I'm fed up.
- NARRATOR** You see? You can take my word for it. Now, no-one knows why she's fed up. She is Princess of Automato. A planet where technology has built the perfect lifestyle and made almost anything possible. Where all your homework and chores are done for you by robots. Where a sniffing cold is cured by eating six bars of chocolate - specially designed to be good for you. Where pretty much anything you want can be delivered to you in an instant. And yet, Princess Felicity is fed up.
- PRINCESS** Butler!
- BUTLER** You called, Ma'am.
- PRINCESS** I didn't call 'Ma'am.' I called 'Butler'. L.O.L.
- BUTLER** That is correct, Ma'am.
- PRINCESS** Lighten up, Butler. That was a joke.
- BUTLER** My apologies, Ma'am. Please allow me to correct my response.
- PRINCESS** Go ahead.
- NARRATOR** Princess Felicity hasn't laughed for years. Her father has bought her every kind of gadget to make her life better. Like her moodfood machine...which makes everything from Automato potato to Automato tomato, calculating and cooking whatever matches your mood. It even puts it in your mouth...





- PRINCESS Doughnuts. Mmm.
- NARRATOR The problem is, sometimes you get too much.
- PRINCESS Hang on. I haven't finished my - I can't eat all...stop! Stop the machine!
- NARRATOR She's also got the fastest maker-upper, with settings to make up her bed...and her face...though sometimes she presses the wrong buttons...
- PRINCESS YELP!
- NARRATOR And when she wants to post on the interplanetary web, her robot butler does it for her. Every update getting an immediate 123 likes, from the 123 robots working for her father.
- PRINCESS Butler, when's father coming home?
- BUTLER That is undetermined, Ma'am. His Royal Highness is touring the outer regions of the universe on very important business.
- PRINCESS Umph. Father's very important business: making people happy. I don't get it, Butler. I've got everything I could possibly want. Why aren't I happy?
- BUTLER Music should suffice, Ma'am. My software has been programmed to produce sounds in tune with the workings of your brain.
- PRINCESS Yeah, that's not really doing it for me.
- BUTLER Has Ma'am tried being naughty?
- PRINCESS Naughty?
- BUTLER Perhaps, shouting too loud?
- PRINCESS Tried it.
- BUTLER Jumping on the furniture?

PRINCESS Until it broke.

BUTLER Talking with your mouth full? Try it. Here's a banana.





PRINCESS Nope, no fun.

BUTLER Food fight?

PRINCESS You asked for it.

BUTLER Good shot, Ma'am.

PRINCESS It's no good. It's just no fun being naughty if there's no-one to tell you off. Thanks, but you can go and finish my chores.

BUTLER I'll throw this food down the waste chute.

PRINCESS I wonder where that goes? The waste, the rubbish? We send tonnes of it into space every day. It must all land somewhere.

BUTLER I'm afraid that's a secret, Ma'am.

PRINCESS A secret? Did you say a secret?

BUTLER Regulation 1746.27. Ma'am is not permitted to know where the garbage is transported to. It's in my programming. If you'll excuse me, Ma'am, I have other chores to attend to. Do I have your word that you will not attempt to discover where the garbage goes?

PRINCESS What? Oh, erm, yes. Of course.

PRINCESS A secret?

PRINCESS Now that is interesting. Blimey, this pipe is massive. It goes on for ever. Wait, I think I see an end to it. If I can just climb in a short way, I'll get a better look. There. Wait. What are those noises? Is that? Butleeeeeer! Heeeeeeeelp!!!

PRINCESS Weeeeeeeee!

NARRATOR Princess Felicity was starting to enjoy her trip down the rubbish chute. As tubes of dirty, filthy rubbish go it was a fairly comfortable one. It twisted and looped the loop like a slide at a waterpark. Only a million times faster. Until finally...





- NARRATOR ...she landed. On a pile of rotting brown rubbish. Which was lying on an enormous mountain of rotting brown rubbish. And there wasn't just one mountain but a mountain range, stretching in every direction. Brown, sludgy mess piled up from the ground to the sky. And a good chunk of it covering the princess.
- PRINCESS Oops. Butler's going to have a tough job cleaning my dress.
- BILLY I can help you there. Hold still.
- PRINCESS Who said..? No don't squirt me with tha...
- BILLY Don't worry, we'll wash that off in no time.
- PRINCESS Stop! Please stop!
- BILLY Woah! That's some dress. You're not from round here, are you?
- PRINCESS Well, that kind of depends where round here is. I have no idea where I am...
- BILLY This boring and filthy little planet is called Earth.
- PRINCESS Ah, then I'm definitely not from round here. I'm from Automato.
- BILLY Wow! That's the place with all the technology. Where you can have everything you want at the touch of a button!
- PRINCESS Yeah yeah, I know. Anything you want as long as it's something you can buy. Earth. Yes, I think I remember Earth from history lessons.
- BILLY History lessons?! You go to school?!
- PRINCESS It's not that exciting. School's all done at a drive-thru.
- BILLY Cars! How I wish we still had cars!
- PRINCESS Yeah but mostly driven by robots.
- BILLY Oh, what we could do with robots here on Earth!



PRINCESS You really need to get out more.

BILLY A drive-thru school!



- PRINCESS Yeah, you get driven up to the window, robot plugs a memory stick into your brain and uploads a load of facts and statistics. It's all over in five minutes. Hurts your head a bit though.
- BILLY Amazing! What's a memory stick? Is it magic?
- PRINCESS Not quite. So you don't go to school?
- BILLY I wish. A hundred years ago I might have done. We have to work here now, now that the planet's ruined.
- PRINCESS Ruined?
- BILLY Yes. We're the universe's rubbish tip! Rubbish from planets all over the universe gets dumped here.
- PRINCESS They missed that bit out of my history lesson.
- BILLY Well, that's what happens. And it's my job to root through the rubbish and find anything we can sell. Although I don't think we'll get much for the used nappies you fell in.
- PRINCESS Eeeuw! Was that what that was? I think I'm going to be sick.
- BILLY I'm just kidding. Blimey, you proper fell for that one. Brilliant.
- PRINCESS Not funny. Not funny at all.
- BILLY I'd love to live on Automato. Anything you want at the touch of a button...
- PRINCESS Anything you can buy at the touch of a button. There's not much on Automato that's free. Or real.
- BILLY Well it's all real here. Real and rubbish! Listen, you'd better be getting home. It's late.
- PRINCESS Oh. I - er. I'm not sure how to get home. I'm stuck. What should I do?
- BILLY Hey. Don't panic. You can stay with us. As long as you don't mind it being a bit crowded. You're the second new friend we've taken in today. The other's a really nice old fella. You'll like him.
- PRINCESS You'd do that? For a stranger?





- BILLY There's nothing I like more. I'm Billy, by the way.
- PRINCESS Prin - Felicity.
- BILLY Prin-felicity. Never heard a name like that before.
- PRINCESS Erm, it's short for...Karen!
- NARRATOR So Billy took Princess Felicity back to his home. As she walked along she felt the breeze on her face and in her hair. Her legs felt tired by the time they got to Billy's house. These were things which Princess Felicity – who had always had everything she wanted at the touch of a button – had never felt before.
- BILLY Er, right. Here we are!
- PRINCESS This is your home?
- BILLY Yeah. No better feeling than getting home after a day's work.
- PRINCESS You enjoy work?
- BILLY Urgh. No, it's horrible. But, when you've finished and you see what you've done, you feel kinda proud. Like when you've cooked a great portion of ratchips, you know?
- PRINCESS Ratchips?
- BILLY You've never had ratchips? It's mostly rat-based food around here. But by the time you've deep fried a bit of rat and put a sauce on it, it's deeee-licious. Here we are. Home sweet home.
- PRINCESS What's that noise?
- BILLY It's only music.
- PRINCESS That's not the music I know. That's - that's magical.
- BILLY Ha! You won't think it's so magical when you see my dad dancing. He's so embarrassing. Come on in.



BILLY Everyone, this is Prin-felicity.

PRINCESS Felicity will do. Hello.

SMALL CROWD Hello, Felicity. Welcome!



BILLY Felicity, this is my mum, dad, Granny, my brothers and sisters...

ALL Hello!

PRINCESS Wow, how lucky you are to have such a big family.

BILLY And here's our other guest...Reggie.

KING Well...well. I always heard Earth was a small world.

PRINCESS Father!

BILLY He's your dad?

KING King Reginald the 37th of Automato, at your service.

BILLY King? Father? So you're a...

KING/PRINCESS Princess!

BILLY Why didn't you tell me you were a princess?

PRINCESS I don't know. I think I just didn't want to be different. I wanted to be like you.

BILLY That makes no sense. We've got nothing. For us, you being here – royalty! – is the best thing since...liced bread.

PRINCESS You mean 'sliced' bread.

BILLY No, we once found some bread with lice in it. Much tastier.

KING My apologies for lying to you. I am indeed the king of Automato. However I travel around a lot though, going from planet to planet looking for...ingredients.

BILLY Ingredients for what?

KING Ingredients for a good life. You see it's my mission to improve the life of everyone in the universe. Make all the worlds better places. This is my first time on Earth. There's a few things I'd change here.





- BILLY I'd love the chance to live on Automato. Everything you want at the touch of a button. It sounds perfect to me.
- KING I don't mind if you go there, Billy. Whatever will make you happy. If it works out and you love it, your whole family can follow.
- BILLY Wow! That's so kind, Your Tallness.
- PRINCESS Highness.
- BILLY Your Highness. This is the best news I've ever had! Let's celebrate!
- NARRATOR They danced. And laughed. And ate ratchips. Princess Felicity danced too. She'd never heard real music before. It hypnotised her. She'd never felt this happy.
- PRINCESS I've never felt this happy.
- NARRATOR You see? I was right again!
- PRINCESS I don't want to go back to Automato, Father. I want us to stay here. I want us to live on Earth. Now, just hear me out -
- KING Fair enough.
- PRINCESS Yes! Really? Wait. That was easy.
- KING Oh, my dear, I just want you to be happy. To have a good life, whatever that means to you.
- PRINCESS Dad, I think you should stay here for a while too. I've been thinking for a while now that there's a lot more to a good life than just having everything you want. I think we can learn some things from Earth.
- BILLY Woah, steady on, Felicity. Are you sure you know what you're getting yourself into? Earth is not all dancing and laughter, you know.
- PRINCESS I like it here.
- BILLY We have disease and hard work. Cold days, with colder nights...



- PRINCESS But you have warmth in your hearts. From your music, from your big family and from all the work you do. What you achieve.



BILLY That's because we have no choice. We make the best of the rubbish life we have. Now I can have a happy life. In sunshine, in comfort, without work. With friends, school, rat-free food. I can't believe you'd give all that up.

PRINCESS And I can't believe you'd leave.

NARRATOR But he did leave. And, one year later, the robots of Automato had become used to serving a new master, with new food fights.

BUTLER Marvellous shot, sir. Shall I prepare another bowl of custard for you to throw at me?

BILLY Nah. Thanks Butler. But it's not really much of a challenge if you don't fight back. I'm going to go and make my bed.

BUTLER Your bed is made, sir.

BILLY Clean the car.

BUTLER The car is cleaned, sir.

BILLY Throw out the rubbish?

BUTLER The rubbish has gone, sir.

BILLY Butler. I need some work to do. I'm going out of my mind, here. No wonder Felicity jumped down the rubbish chute.

NARRATOR Billy stared at the rubbish chute, thinking about his old life. He didn't know, at the other end, a young princess sat on a mountain of rubbish looking back up the chute... She sat there every day. For, much as she loved the riches of her poor surroundings, it was hard work doing everything for yourself. Work was hard work! So, there she sat, hoping Billy would follow her journey down the chute. Every day getting covered in banana peel, fish heads and toe nail clippings. That would be human toe nail clippings, of course. Fish don't have toes. Anyway, one day came a larger rubbish dump than usual...

PRINCESS What was that? I heard a voice. Billy? Is that you? He's under here somewhere. Where are you? This is amazing. My prayers have been ans...what on earth..?

BUTLER Good evening, Ma'am. Would you care for a food fight?

THE END

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