Robot with a Virus

Educational Value

Tidiness and Solidarity

Moral of the story

Treating things well, with care, is also a sign of respect to those who cannot enjoy such things, and who – given the chance – would surely treat them well.

Story

Ricky lived in a lovely, futuristic house, which had everything you could ever want. Though he didn't help much around the house, Ricky was still as pleased as punch when his parents bought him the latest model of butler robot. As soon as it arrived, off it went; cooking, cleaning, ironing, and - most importantly - gathering up old clothes from Ricky's bedroom floor, which Ricky didn't like having to walk on. On that first day, when Ricky went to sleep, he had left his bedroom in a truly disastrous state. When he woke up the next morning, everything was perfectly clean and tidy.

In fact, it was actually "too" clean; now Ricky couldn't find his favourite t-shirt, nor his favourite toy. However much he searched, the two items did not reappear, and the same was starting to happen with other things. Ricky cast a suspicious eye on the gleaming butler robot. He hatched a plan to spy on the robot, and began following it around the house. Finally he caught it red-handed, picking up one of Ricky's toys to hide it.

Off he went, running to his parents, to tell them that the butler was broken and badly programmed. Ricky asked them to have it changed. But his parents told him absolutely not; it was impossible, they were delighted with the new butler, and it cooked like a dream. So Ricky needed to get some kind of proof; maybe take some hidden photos.

He kept on at his parents, about how much good stuff the robot was hiding. This outweighed however good a cook it was, Ricky argued.

One day, the robot was whirring past, and heard the boy's complaints. The robot returned with one of the boy's toys, and some clothes for him.

"Here, sir. I did not know it was bothering you," said the butler, with its metallic voice.
"How could it not, you thief?! You've been nicking my stuff for weeks!" the boy answered, furiously.

"The objects were left on the floor. I therefore calculated that you did not like them. I am programmed to collect all that is not wanted, and at night I send it to places other humans can use it. I am a maximum efficiency machine. Were you unaware?" the robot said, with a certain pride.

Ricky started feeling ashamed. He had spent all his life treating things as though they were useless. He looked after nothing. Yet it was true that many other people would be delighted to treat those things with all the care in the world. And he understood that the robot was neither broken nor misprogrammed, rather, it had been programmed extremely well!

Since then, Ricky decided to become a 'Maximum Efficiency Boy', and he put real care into how he treated his things. He kept them tidy, and made sure he didn't have more than was necessary. And, often, he would buy things, and take them along with his good friend, the robot, to help out those other people who needed them.

Author: Pedro Pablo Sacristán