

Bit, Byte, and Bat blazed through their geometry papers and rushed to show dad. Sure, Mr. Mechano could have basically downloaded a full college course into their robot minds, but, they need to go to school anyways, might as well let them learn there too. Rather than just sitting there bored.

Dad was out back, tending to his garden, but Manfred was willing to look their work over. Being a machine that Mr. Mechano did in fact upload knowledge plenty into, he could quickly see the kids got all of it right. The trio cheered and ran off to play games, while Manfred set the papers onto their backpacks so they'd not forget to take their work to school tomorrow.

Mr. Mechano finished replanting and watering his beets, and brought his modest harvest in. As he worked to put beets away, he elected to speak some with Manfred.

"So, I miss anything?"

"Just the kids' homework, all was well." Manfred replied. "Still stopping by Chaos Gems later on today?"

"Of course!" Mr. Mechano gleamed. "Officer Cool mentioned he'd had his eye on that rainberry necklace in the window, and I'll have a good chance to double-check that Mania's cuckoo clock she loves so much hasn't broken apart again."

"Well, I hope business is going well with the repair shop. I know that Mania's wares aren't exactly mass-produced to be low cost." Manfred took a seat and oiled his wheel he rolls all about on.

"Hah! Well's not half of it! Why, even now Motey's probably sneaking in working on a couple of things. We even got a *big* job from the force, turns out a lot of their duty weapons were... defective, to say the least. Needless to say, they paid well once we were finished. Of course, just fixing up people's various appliances is more than enough, but I'll never say no to a good job that pays a bit more!"

Manfred smiled. "Well, can you blame the concern? You didn't even charge the library for fixing their turnstyles, and you fixed a stoplight in exchange for new gloves!"

"Hey now, they're quality gloves! Easily worth more than I would have charged for the fix! It's *investment* in keeping myself in good working condition."

"...and the turnstyle, then?" Manfred questioned.

"Reputation. Librarian even called me two weeks after to help him with his front door lock."

"Alright, you have me there suppose. Any other plans for the day?"

Mechano thought for a moment... "...how's your oil?"

"Quite plentiful."

"...then I guess not. Just sit in my rocker and watch the kids play their vampire game."

"The one with no vampires? That vampire game?"

"...is there more than just one?"

"I suppose not." Manfred chuckled precisely once, before returning to his maintenance.

And with that, Mr. Mechano swapped his garden boots for his walking shoes and started his pleasant walk off. Sure, he could have taken the car, but his legs needed the stretching, and he wasn't in any rush.

He enjoyed a pleasant walk, a cool breeze with a calm seemingly permeating the very air. For a time, he forgot his journey's purpose, and by the time he recalled, he'd walked past his destination. But, Mr. Mechano only had to turn back the way he came, what's more steps to a man with more hours than he can fill?

Chaos Gems, Mania's business and household alike. Mechano smiled as he stepped inside, the bell over the door ringing as the door glided, Mania briefly glancing from the customer she had been helping before turning right back.

Mr. Mechano looked to the window displays, only recalling then that twas the window Officer Cool said the necklace had been in. Fortunately, it still was there, made of beautiful rainberyls with a small knot between each pair. No wonder Officer Cool's eye was caught, as the necklace seemed to have a strange shimmer about it, one that made the mannequin head it was set on sparkle to the point of almost seeming alive. Mr. Mechano found himself wondering how much more beautiful it would look once worn by a real, actual person.

"Heya Mr. Mechano!" Mania shouted slightly as the other customer left, bell ringing behind him.  
"What brings ya? Necklace catch your eye?"

"Well, yes." He stepped to the counter. "But, it won't be my neck it fits around."

"Ah! Manfred then?" Mania's face gave away that she knew better, a joking, jovial smile.

"Officer Cool told me of how beautiful he found it, and I figured it might make his day to have it. Besides, gives me a good excuse to ask how the old timepiece is."

"Oh, ticking away as always. In fact, I think we ought to hear it soo-" And the six calls of the mechanical cuckoo interrupted.

The pair shared a brief laugh at the timing, before Mr. Mechano pulled out his checkbook. "So, I couldn't quite read the price tag, how much should I put down here?"

And but a few moments later, the man stepped out, with a very sturdy hinged box, wrapped in silver wrapping, holding perhaps the most expensive gift Mr. Mechano's bought for someone since Motey's birthday a few years prior.

He was ever cautious with his precious cargo on the way home. Sure, rainberyls weren't known for fragility, but Mr. Mechano did not like to take chances with other people's possessions, and far as he was concerned the necklace was already Officer Cool's from the second the check was handed over.

His family greeted him at the door, Bit, Byte, and Bat all asking what was in the box, and Manfred taking it to set someplace safe for the time being. Mr. Mechano could give it to Officer Cool when he came to visit the next day, no need to rush it right to him. Once the kids' questions were through, from "How much was it?" to "Why's the box so so big?", the three went back to their games, and their father took a seat in his rocking chair to watch them enjoy themselves. To simply enjoy the life he's made for himself, and the joys that surrounded him.