

Brain Dead City

If we suffer from brain damage, what will we forget first? What will we forget last?

“Ding”

My phone vibrates, that is a notification. I unlock my phone and read the routine message. I open my wardrobe drawer and grab a packed kit. That is a disposable protective suit. I put on the blue plastic suit, wear my surgical mask, and wrap the plastic hood around my head. I open the house wooden door, then the metal gate. I put on my shoes and wrap them with plastic. Down the gray stairs I go, and soon I am on the outside concrete road. Several boxes are outside my house. I look afar and a black square shadow is moving away. I check my code to confirm delivery, and return home asap. Once I am at the door, I take the alcohol spray next to the shoe rack and spray myself and the boxes before entering home. Inside the boxes, there is a huge bag of leafy vegetables, a pack of potatoes, some lettuce, a few packs of pork, some chicken thighs, 8kg rice, a bottle of oil, a bag of salt, a bag of sugar, protective suits, masks, alcohol spray, test kit, and more a family need for a week or two. No one buys groceries anymore, food and supplies are centrally distributed to each and every house according to the number of family members. Automatic robots developed by mainland universities and mass-produced under the command of the Motivation and Innovation Bureau deliver fresh food once a week, and daily supplies once every three weeks.

The year is 2022, November. Well, almost December, some weeks since the outbreak of Upsilon. This type of virus not only spread faster than Omicron, rumour says it is also deadlier with many unforeseen side effects. Up till last week, there are 4 billion confirmed cases with a death toll of perhaps already several million. In view of the severity of the situation, the government has announced a complete lockdown. With the implementation of robots in various industries, the government urge companies to enable work-from-home with minimum crew on deck, and citizens stay home to avoid contact.

I put on another set of protective suit, check my backpack, and leave the house again. Under lockdown, each person has one chance per week to go outside,

if they have a proper reason. Only if they fill out a form and get permission via the official text message. I got my permission to leave my house. I live in a rather rural sector of Yuen Long, with the mountain at my back and concrete main roads across the area. Reaching town centre takes 30 minutes walking. I elect to walk. I could take the bus but there is none. Perhaps that is to prevent crowd. There are no cars either. Just black box-like robots with wheels lining up and occupying the road. Government's order of lockdown comes with a promise. That is, the daily need such as food will not be one's concern. Somehow they fulfil their promise. Taking a page from high-end companies and smart cities, they make use of advanced technology and robots to collect, organize, and distribute goods to each family. After all, robots can't get infected. These moving boxes are the key to ensure logistics. Cool breeze of early winter blows, but I can't feel any. As I reach town centre and see some crossroads, the only living beings I see are peerless walking blue plastic bags scattered around the place. Most shops in town are closed, or manned with one or two soulless humanoid shapes at the cashier. Perhaps none has expected, one day in our world, there are more robots than people.

City centre is just my detour and my curiosity to see what's the world is like today. I keep walking to the school I am working in. I am a teaching assistant at Yuen Long Public Secondary School. Our school has been closed since the announcement of the lockdown. Of course, we have switched to online mode. Still, there are things you cannot do online, such as gathering teaching materials. Because the change was so rushed, many textbooks and exercise books are left at school, they all need to be scanned and uploaded for lessons. That is why I got my permission when I note that such work is **essential** to school operation and **necessary** to be done on time in my form. Also, I need to extract some files from the school's computer for the staff meeting next week.

I meet up with the security droid outside the school gate. Is it the latest model? He is wide, tall, and definitely beefed up. He is not the gate guard, it is the gate itself. From a glass piece on its chest it radiates out red lights. I display my phone to it. It says, "TAE, access granted," and tilts its body to let me in. I switch to another interface of my phone to scan the "Leave Home Safe" QR code at the entrance. I then head to the general office, search for my attendance book, jot down

my arrival time and sign my name. Unnecessary these days, just a gesture of habit. I walk to the front staircase and reach the second floor. There I take out my key card and open the staff room door with it. Last summer this school installed some electronic locks in all doors. They shall be glad, that way I don't need to call the school janitors only for opening the doors. But the lights are already on, so as the air purifiers. Someone is here before me.

"Good morning Chow sir!"

My panel head is here doing his work too. Or say, I am convinced that the man sitting in Mr Chow's seat, wrapped in blue plastic bag is Mr Chow himself.

"Oh hi...sorry you are..."

"Oh it is hard to tell who's who in these suits," I head to my seat and spray alcohol around it, "I am Tim."

"Tim...who?"

"The teaching assistant. It's my second year here."

"Oh really. If you need a recommendation form for your PGDE feel free to ask."

"Umm...Chow sir, I already am studying a PGDE, part-time. Anyway, I think I need to work now."

Mr Chow got affected by Upsilon last month.

"Umm Tiffany," he talks to my direction when I am downloading some files. There is no one here named Tiffany, so I guess he is calling me.

"Yes Sir."

"Come here. Can you scan and print this for me? This Longman Book 3A T25 to T36, print out as A3."

"Longman 3A T25 to T36 print as A3. Got it."

A while later I approach Mr Chow with a pile of paper.

"Longman 3A T25 to T36, Mister Chow."

"T25...wait, to where again?"

"Oh I got the wrong range? So it is..."

"Wait!" Mr Chow scans his table, with tons of notes stick on it, "yes T25 to T36. Thanks Ti...m."

"You're welcome."

I return home again, dispose my protective suit outside the door, spray myself with alcohol and a few more spray on my bag, then enter.

“Boy, stand!”

My father shouts to me once I open the door.

“Ba?”

“Son, put mask on.”

“Ba, what’s happen?”

I can hear distant coughing from my parent’s bedroom.

“Your ma just got infected with the...the...Up...Up what?”

“Upsilon. When?”

“From this morning. Now stay away from her room.”

For the rest of the day, father travels a lot in and out of mother’s room, sometimes carrying water, sometimes thermometer, sometimes duvet. He forbids me to get into her room, even outside the door. Yet he himself with nothing but a mask frequently dashes into the poisonous chamber. Is that what men would do for women? At the beginning of the month when the sixth wave first started, Hanna got infected. I met Hanna when we were both Teaching Assistants. That afternoon when I got her message saying she was tested positive, I left school once I finished my work, and visited some supermarkets. In the evening I rang their doorbell. Auntie was at the door.

“Who’s there?”

“Auntie, it’s me, Tim.”

“Tim?”

“I worked with Hanna in a secondary school before.”

“Oh Tim. Sorry I cannot let you in. Hanna is...”

“Tested positive. I know. I just want to give these to her.”

I reached for my bag.

“I managed to get some Panadol, lemons, Vitamin C supplements, and some fresh lettuce from Long Ping Market.”

“Oh thank you so much.”

“I will just put these here next to the door.”

“Mum, [cough] who’s there?”

It was Hanna, wrapped in her quilt, mask on her face.

“Sweetie, get back to your bed and rest,” her mother said to her.

“Mum I [cough] need a cup of [cough] water,” she sounded weak.

“Hanna...” I unconsciously took a step forward to the door.

“No! Tim Away! [cough cough] Sorry I don’t mean it. [cough cough] I don’t [cough] want to infect you.”

“That’s okay. I understand. Get well soon.”

“I will. Haha.”

Finally I heard that soft laugh that always warm my heart.

“I leave these here then. Bye Hanna. Bye Auntie.”

I volunteer to cook for the family. Mum is sick and dad is busy, so I guess I’m the only one left. As I am boiling some potatoes, someone calls.

“Hello?”

“Hey Tim, you got a minute? I am Ze...”

“Oh Zedekiah. Well...I am just...cooking.”

“You? Cooking?”

“You want some? I can mail you some overcooked steak.”

“Nah man. None can survive your dish.”

“Not up to my choice. Zed, my mum has just tested positive. Dad is really busy taking care of her. I am the only one who can cook.”

“Oh sorry bro. Is she okay?”

“I don’t know man. Hope she’s fine. [silence]. By the way are you calling me for something? I am overcooking my potatoes.”

“You cannot overcook potatoes, that’s impossible!”

“Never underestimate human incompetence.”

“Tim, are you good at keeping secrets?”

“Is it the first day you know me?” I switch off the stove.

“The government is going to launch the compulsory universal test system. Again,” he announces.

“I thought they are just going to deliver quick test packs and order people to report positive cases.”

“Those are called rapid antigen test kits, Tim. And clearly that is just an honest system. Sooner or later they are going to issue a manual one.”

"You mean the mode to turf everyone out of house, go to certain places to get nose-violated kind of test?"

"Yes exactly that."

"Well that's just stupid."

"It is! Tim, consider that Upsilon can be spread widely, this is just city-scale suicide. And if the entirety of Hong Kong becomes infected, it will be the government's fault. Some fault that we need to let the government know."

"Especially when the numbers are stacking up day by day and nowhere is safe," I comment.

"Yes exactly, plus the lockdown."

"I really want to argue and say that the government has a lot of stakeholders to consider when it comes to policies. But this time, I cannot see anything beneficial other than perhaps to cope with the Chinese Government?"

"Tim, they are the government, think of what that means! They make decisions. And in this case, they should have done better. See, our government is a strange one which, they oftentimes ignore the actually important things, and only meddle with meaningless things which annoys people. And complicate things whenever possible. See, this wave of pandemic started with tourists when they launched the travelling bubble. Yet they had done nothing about the boundaries or the airport. Took them 4 days to seal all the relevant places. They don't care about or act really slow on the actual significant problem. Yet orders citizens to line up and do tests daily and make everyone suffer. For what?"

"Zed...I..."

"Because to make data and proof to the Chinese Government that they are actually accomplishing things?"

"Zed, when will the compulsory universal test start? And how did you know about it?"

"Just this afternoon the company head has had a Zoom meeting with us, notifying since the government has used some hospitals and clinical centres as testing centres, we might be arranged to help with the programme. Well, they don't have a specific date for that. Whenever government decide things, it would only be medical men like me who suffer."

"I thought you are just a field medic at St.Johns."

"All hands on deck."

"I thought they are just going to use robots as part of their manpower."

"Oh yea they do. Several dozens per hospital as nurses. I have met them first-hand. Despite being just prototypes, they sure are effective. Medical information of each patient can be input into them and they can give precise types and amounts of medicine to each one. They can, quite amazingly, respond to certain needs, based on different buttons. I mean as not liking robots as I do, I see this as a wise move. But they still can't improvise much and human crews are still necessary."

"Zed, do you think robots can make better decisions than our government?"

"You're kidding! Well, at least they won't lie or filter certain statistics."

"Sure sure."

Meanwhile my pot screams steam and a stimulating smell catches my nose.

"Oh shoot, the pork. Zed I'll talk to you later."

"So up till this lesson we have gone through the philosophy of teaching in the ancient Greek and Roman society, ancient eastern society and modern western society, which means we are finally halfway through our course," Professor Tong is concluding his lecture, "next time we meet, I will talk about some contemporary education thoughts. Read the articles I gave you before you join so that we can have some...discussions. If you are healthy stay healthy. If you are not, get well soon. See you guys next time."

I close my Zoom and check the clock behind me. 10:15. Mum should have received her doze but dad hasn't moved from his room for hours, like me who study PGDE at night.

"Colleagues, as for the arrangement of the first term Uniform Test, the Assistant Principals and I have proposed...[looks at the clock in the living room]...can you excuse me for a second? I will be back very soon."

And he leaves his room, glances back to his computer looking confused.

"Umm...Mo Tin, you have finished your lesson right?"

"Yes dad."

"Can you give your mum the pills? Should be the fifth and sixth pill."

I put on a mask and wrap myself in plastic, and enter my parents' bedroom. I see the opened box of Panadol on the table. The batch is half-finished, there are no fifth and sixth pills. Why are these two missing? Perhaps father got the numbering wrong. I pop out the seventh and eighth ones, and fill the cup with warm water.

“Mami, get up,” I pat my mum, “time to take your medicine.”

Slowly I hold her up, hand her the pills. She glubs those in, and takes the cup. Then she goes sleeping again.

“Son,” dad comes out of his room at 11, “your mum finished the pills yet”

“Done. But dad, that shall be the seventh and eighth ones.”

“What? No. Wait.”

We open the bedroom door and see mum sitting straight, popping pills from the silver packaging.

“Hung!”

“Ma!”

We finally know where the fifth and sixth pills are.

“Sorry brother, I have just got the news. Time here works a bit different in Cambridge. How is Mum?”

“Sleeping, sis. Dad is looking after her. Good thing the heat is going away.”

“Oh thanks God.”

“But she’s still coughing hard, and...”

“And what bro?”

“I dunno Jocelyn, she...Oh wait, the TV is playing. Ba, can you turn up the volume?”

“We would like to make clear here, the new Covid variant Upsilon may not only affect our lungs, it affects the whole body too. There might be a chance that the virus might cause brain fog and even brain damage such as delirium, agitation, and stroke. We don’t have enough data to draw the relationship between Upsilon and brain fog, but there are reports of Upsilon patients suffering from persistent impairment in sustained attention. Still, there is no absolute co-relation between them. However, we shall also point out that, according to studies from Havard, with proper exercise, food and treatment, such effects shall be gone around 35 days. citizens do not have to panic much...”

“Hello? Tim, talk to me, how’s mum?”

“I will update you via WhatsApp. Bye sis.”

I search for another contact.

“Hello?”

“Zed, it’s Tim. You got a moment?”

“Yes.”

“Mum has been acting strangely. She starts to repeatedly take the same pills over and over.”

“Oh, that must be stopped.”

“I know Zed. The thing is, she doesn’t seem to be convinced that she has taken the pills, and had tested temperature.”

“Tim, you may act the same when you are severely sick.”

“I know. I am just, concerned.”

“Of the brain damage?”

“I...don’t know. The government says there might be co-relation between Covid and brain fog. They are not certain.”

“You forgot what I always tell you? The government is always ambiguous. But auntie’s situation is...I have read related articles and it may not be good.”

“They said it can be cured,” I say

“Really? Cured. Yes, brain damage can be cured. But the government officials are in high places where they don’t know it is close to impossible. I mean, I don’t trust a chief executive who doesn’t know how to use an Octopus card and thinks one can buy toilet papers in convenience stores, knows how things practically work. Wait, I fetch my term paper first. Let’s see, cure...brain...Okay. Mediterranean-style meals are recommended because of...many scientific reasons. See, now that foods are centrally distributed, we cannot shop for ourselves, let alone cooking. Besides, there is nothing you can cook well.”

“Damn you Zedekiah.”

“You also need to avoid alcoholic drinks and drugs, especially those which may affect your brain. I mean, do you think I know which drug is not harmful to our brain.”

“But you are a medical man!”

“I am medical man, not medicine man. I know how to use bandages and seven ways to treat wounds, but not medicine. And, I don’t think panadol is safe, I mean, they make you sleep, who knows what else can it do to your brain.”

“Oh scheisse, mum took like a box of it yesterday.”

“You shall worry. Let’s see what else have I written. Borrowing some social science and neuroscience, engage in social activities. Well, they are all banned.”

“[Sigh]. Is there really nothing I can do?”

"I...Tim, there is no absolute in the medical world. Bro, I know someone who specialized in it. I can consult for you."

"Thanks bro. I owe you."

"That you really do. Hey, stay safe man."

"You too Zed."

Hi Han

Who's Han?

Oh My bad 😊

Hi Hanna 🙌

Haha

hi

Are you feeling better?

I finally negative

Woo 🎉

But my head still hurts

What matters is you are healthy 😊

haha

yes



Something happened yesterday.

What is it

I had my presentation yesterday

Really? How was it?

I forgot where my ppt is,
and searched for like 5 mins



You found it?

My classmate sent me mine



Then it is solved 😊

I...feel like wasting my
class's time



If it is a wonderful one, searching
for ppt is just digging the treasure 😊

The professor liked it?

She likes it

Then it shall be okay 😊



Are you busy these days

Schoolwork on day,
lessons at night,
happy things are online mode 🙌

Do you need to guard the computer
room like we did last year?

Very lucky 🙌 Dont have to 🙌
They instructed teachers to login
with the host link and set the next
teacher as host before leaving 😊

Good



Exactly what Shum Sir
suggested last year 🤖
But Ba is really busy taking care of Ma

Auntie is sick?

Tested positive three days ago



Are you okay?

I am negative 💪 I am strong 💪

that's very good
haha
nice



Mum recovers fast and tests negative on the seventh day. Things quickly go
back to normal. Dad work from home. I work from home, learn from home.

Mum...work from home.

“Mo Tin, come here,” she is sitting at the dinner table,

“Yes,” I leave my desk in the corner of the living room. I have no tasks today
anyway.

“Son, look here. I have entered this class, and there is another teacher here,
and then they kick me out. Why?”

“Which class is this?” I take her mouse.

“4C.”

“4C?” I look at the timetable she put next to her notebook, “but you just had
4C class an hour ago. Your class now shall be 2B.”

“Ohh...”

I leave the computer to her.

“Good morning boys and girls, this is Miss Tsang. Yes, Miss Tsang is back! Say hello to Miss Tsang! If you can hear Miss Tsang, give me this hand sign...”

At noon I cook lunch, and lay the dishes on the dining table. As I finish my meal at my desk (we seldom have lunch together), I take my bowl to the kitchen. Mum stands in the middle of the living room with a bowl of rice in her hand, seemingly thinking of something. I receive mission from school and busy for an hour or two. Finally all is done and I head to the toilet. On my way I see a few filled plates on the dining table.

“Dad?”

“What is it, son?”

“Have you had lunch yet?”

“Had plenty.”

“Then why is no one eating the dish?”

“Go ask your mum in kitchen.”

Mum is frying some vegetables.

“Mum, lunch is ready.”

“Give me a second son, lunch is almost ready.”

“No ma, I mean lunch is ready like two hours ago. Have you eaten them?”

“Ah, here we go,” mum pours the cooked vegetables onto a plate, “what did you say, son?”

I let out a sigh and show her the table. I lift a plate of green leaves,

“This is lunch. I made.”

I go for another plate,

“This is lunch too. I don’t know who made. And ma, how many have you made?”

She looks confused.

“Mami, relax, I can cook now. Leave the cooking to me and dad. Have lunch ma, have lunch.”

“Then what am I supposed to do with these?” she raises those she has just made.

“Ma, give these to me. I go and see if the old Chung couple needs them.”

I put on a protective suit, and walk to my neighbour. On the way, those black moving carts still fill the scenery. I see one opens a house's gate all by itself, and the wheels change shape, and it...goes up the stairs. I find the Chung house. A car robot stops at their door. The side of it opens as hatches and reveals several cardboard boxes. Metal claws reach out at the side and grab two boxes from the compartment and place them on the floor, alongside many boxes already there. And the robot leaves. I walk closer, there are already dozens of boxes stained with red outside their house. A thin scent of rotten flesh flows around them. I have a bad feeling about it.

"Mr Chung, Mrs Chung, I am Mo Tin, open the door!"

There is silence after the doorbell. It is not usual. They are old, but Mr Chung has been healthy and jogging each morning. Mrs Chung always knit by the door. At least that is before the pandemic. They will never leave the door unanswered.

"Mr Chung! Mrs Chung! Are you there?"

I put away the glass box I am holding and dash to the side of the house. There is a thin lane between houses and there are windows. I look one by one but each of them is covered with curtains. I run to the back of the house where there is a small garden. I can see the garden through the rails, it looks dry. I rush back to the front door and swing the metal gate,

"Mr Chung! Mrs Chung! Can any of you hear me! Please, say something!"

I wait anxiously for 30 seconds, one minute, two minutes, five minutes. No one is there. I pull out my phone.

"Yes, is this the emergence hotline? I am at an old neighbour's door. Their supplies pile up outside and their door is locked. I want to see what happened to them. The address is Yuen Long, Tai Tong, Tsui King Garden, 36 ground floor."

"Did you say the government supplies pile up," a robotic sound utters.

"I mean there might be people dying!"

"Am transferring your case to The Transport Department."

"Not the Transport Department damn it."

I then being switched to the Motivation and Innovation Bureau, then the Department of Health, then Hospital Authority, then the Fire Service Department. It takes an hour or so until someone comes and breaches the door. In the living room, Mr and Mrs Chung sit still on the sofa, holding hands, dead with their eyes opened. They conduct a Covid test for them, positive.

I stay until their sons and daughters arrive, and return home devastated. I dispose my protective suit outside the door, and spray myself. I collapse into the sofa, not sure how shall I react. In the end, I burst out laughing and then sob loud. Mum sees me and sits next to me. She takes my left hand, places it on her palm and starts to wipe it.

“Son, these are some sea buckthorn oil and lavender oil. They can cure your hand.”

For some time, perhaps because I wash dishes without gloves on, I suffer from skin problems on my hand.

“Thanks ma.”

“And your hand looks good, it is already smooth and cured.”

“Ma, because it is the wrong hand,” I raise my coarse right hand with several scratch wounds on it, “this is the hand that has problem.”

She then proceeds to oil my right hand.

“You look sad son, what happened?”

“Mr and Mrs Chung died.”

“On sorry. Who are they anyway?”

“Ma, sorry, I...I want to be alone for now.”

I lock myself in my room. I message Zed to talk about my experience.

“Told you Tim, our government is a strange one. Only them would argue if Hospital Authority or Fire Service Department shall respond when there is a hospital fire. Too many departments to confuse people.”

...

“Sorry. I mean, sorry for your loss mate. If you need a talk or a walk or even a drink, you know where to find me.”

Hey Hanna

Mr and Mrs Chung died

(I see that the message is delivered and read, but no response.)

They are an old couple living around me

Oh that's very sad.



They must be good people.

hug hug

I...just happen to know them

Sounds romantic
and sad



I still can't forget the scene.
They die together, on their couch.

It is

At night, mum is suddenly hysteric, screaming and roaring, counting my father's wrong deeds.

"How do I get this fuking thing off!" she takes off her wedding ring.
My father rushes to hug her.

"Who are you?"

"Darling, it's me! It's okay. All is fine. Look," he takes off his wedding ring, "I have the same thing too. It happened when we married. Look, give me yours. Now don't blink, they automatically stick together! Come, tell you a story."
And he pushes her into the bedroom.

In the evening, I get a phone call from Jocelyn.

"Yo sis, what's happening?"

"I just broke up."

"Joce, I am the worst guy you can talk to when it comes to relationships."

"With Anthony."

"Because he tried your mango pudding?"

"He...he can't even recognize me when I walk to him."

"Oh I see."

"Tim, he didn't even say hi to me now. After all these. After I still being with him when he is infected."

"So, it is you who initiated break-up."

"What can I do? I told him let's leave each other and he didn't even move an eyebrow."

"And you regret it now?"

"Regret it? No, I don't regret it. But [sobs], he doesn't know me anymore."

"You regret it."

"I...I..."

"You regret it."

"I..."

"You regret it."

"Alright bro [cries] I regret it. I have finally found the fitting man for myself, and I let him slip away [cries]."

"Sis, you want opinion?"

"From you?"

"Do you feel good being with him?"

"Yes."

"Does he like staying with you over anyone else?"

"I guess."

"Is he the only one who can endure your hell-brand mango pudding?"

"Darn you Tim."

"Sis, if anything the adults have taught me, best relationship is making each other comfortable when together. True love is staying with each other against all odds. Like Ma and Ba recently. Sis, stick with Anthony, and you might get him back."

"Will that work?"

"Do I look like an expert?"

"Oh thanks bro. You are a lot more helpful than the girls."

"Yea, someone has to eat all the mango pudding you make."

"..."

"Sis?"

"You know what, once I return home, the first thing I do is kill you..."

"Bring it on! [ends call]"

Several days passed. I am listening to a peer presentation. Suddenly mum appears from behind and rubs my head.

"Ma," I check if my mic is muted, "not in front of my classmates."

"It's time for my boy to go to bed."

It's just 8 pm.

"Come come sweetie!"

She grabs me by my shoulder and attempts to lift me, ignoring the fact that I weigh some tens kg.

“Time...for...bed...”

I give a look to my dad who's sitting on the sofa. He giggles and nods. I grab my Macbook, slowly stand as if she could really lift me, and walk at her pace to my bedroom. I lie on the bed and let mum toy me like a puppet, allowing mum to pat and kiss my forehead, turn off the lights, and close the door. Immediately, I turn my computer back on to continue the lesson. Ma, I am not two years old.

“You are Tsang Siu Hung. I am your Husband Lam Yu Tak,” I peek into their bedroom and see father revising the family tree with mum, “we have two children. The elder one is Lam To Yan, we name her Jocelyn. The younger one is Lam Mo Tin, we name him Timothy. My father, your father-in-law is Lam Shun Yi. My mother, your mother-in-law is Zhu shi Kam. Your father is Tsang Wei Shing. Your mother is...”

At dawn, I wake up to see father equipping himself.

“Ba, what happened?”

“Oh you're here. Great, I don't have to wake you. It's your grandfather. The hospital called, he might be going soon.”

“Wait, you're going now?”

“Yes I am. I am his son.”

“You cannot just drive, dad, the road must be full of robots.”

“Make sense. Lend me your motorcycle.”

I throw him a bunch of keys,

“She's all yours.”

He takes mum out, takes the helmets, and go.

I walk to the city centre to see if I can catch a taxi and join father. I receive a text message from my dad,

“It is ridiculous son, I didn't even manage to get into the hospital. Inside is swamped with moving robots. They need me to show 5 consecutive days of negative test results to get into it. Your grandfather is away. And I did not see him.”

Drafted on 12th March 2022

By The Sapient Sabre