

Roll around the electromagnetic clock ...

By Lewis CARROLL

*Foreword to my readers...*

*I was only 19 and a student at Christchurch, Oxford when I went to the Great Exhibition of London and among other inventions I came across, I was fascinated by the very first "electric" clock, an electromechanical self-winding clock... This is how it all began...*

"Shh" whispered Will, "my grand parents are sleeping. I don't want them to wake up."

"I'm sorry Will," said Liz, "but I am so excited! We are on holiday! Your grandparents are so nice! And their house is beautiful. I love the countryside, it's so wonderful!"

"Yes, they are very kind and generous, that's why I love them! But look, I want you to see one of my favourite books; "a Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens it's on the shelf. Can you help me? I'd like to climb up to this electromagnetic clock."

Liz brought a chair in the living room, next to a big new clock, and Will climbed to catch the book. They had to pay attention because it was the first electromagnetic clock that grandpa bought just one month ago. It was one of the last inventions in England, but....

"Help! I'm falling!", screamed Will

When Will caught the book, he hit the clock and it fell on the floor.

"Oh no, I hope your grand parents are sleeping," said Liz. "We have to repair our mistake!"

"Yes, I think we should open the clock to see if anything is broken"

When Will opened the clock, he saw a lot of cogs which were turning faster and faster. After a moment of hesitation, Liz decided to touch one of the cogs, but when her finger touched the golden cog, she was sucked into the clock.

"Lizzie!!!" Will yelled.

Alter that, he heard some noise...

"Oh no grand pa woke up," whispered Will, "I think I don't have any choice, I have to get into the clock and find Liz quickly!"

Finally he touched the golden cogs and he disappeared. Just after, his grandpa appeared and he just saw the clock on the ground but no sign of the children. They had vanished...

"What have you done? Where are we? Liz!!", said Will

"I don't know, I... I can't remember...", answered Liz

"Remember please, we have to go home. My grandparents are going to wake up very soon."

"I try Will!! And you, do you remember anything?"

"Hum ... Just that I wanted to catch this book, and now we are in a bubble, Liz I'm scared..."

"I'm sorry...but we can't go back! Look around... We are too far!"

There was a feminine voice: "Good Morning Liz and Will, I'm Morgan. Do you know where you are? I don't think so, I'll explain to you. Early this morning, Will, you brought down this big clock to catch this book (it appears in the bubble), and you Liz, You touched this part (it also appears in the bubble) because you thought you could stop the gearings. Now you are in the room of choice, it's..."

"It is kind to remember us, but we have to go back to our grandparents", said Will

The voice said " so, you are in the room of choice, behind you 6 doors. Among them there are five worlds where you have always dreamt to go to and a door there which will stake you home (the doors appear behind them). Now it's up to you to decide !"

*(Bends in the bubble in the direction of doors)* "We look for the house Liz !"

"Wait! We have the opportunity to visit another world"

"Well sure it is dangerous! And we warned nobody!"

"Will please! We will be back before noon I promise you."

*(Will smiles)*

The two teenagers came closer to the first cog. They saw lots of animals wearing armours and clothes.

"What is this world ?" Will asked, curious.

"No idea... Let's explore it !" Liz exclaimed, pulling Will to the cog.

The young girl touched the demi sphere, impatient. The teenagers felt a strange sensation when they crossed this sort of magic portal.

And they cried out when they discovered the new world. Around a hundred humans were carrying rocks, wood, bricks and food. They looked totally tired and a strange detail surprised the two teenagers: they were wearing chains, like slaves.

Around them, a colony of animals stood, with whips and frightening faces, bears and tigers wore armours and roared to impress the humans. Sometimes, they hit the slowest humans with a terrifying yowling.

Penguins and monkeys were lying on hammocks, with chic suits. They observed the construction site and sometimes gave orders.

Suddenly, a bird perched on a tree whistled. The human slaves froze and stopped work. Around ten pigs threw crumbs and sort of kibbles on the ground. Humans ate the food voraciously.

“This world is strange and scary Liz...” Will whispered.

“You’re right... Animals look mean and...”

Suddenly, the bird turned his head in the direction of the newcomers and screamed, like an alarm.

“Liz, we have to flee!”

But they had no time to run when spiders came out and threw nets. The kids were captured into the spider’s web, powerless. They screamed a lot, afraid. Two strange flies bit them and they got to sleep immediately.

When they opened their eyes, they realized they were in a dark prison.

“Oh! Where are we!” Screamed Liz and Will, panic-stricken.

“Sshh... Don’t be so noisy, kids!” muttered a bald man.

“Who are you?”

“and you, who are you?” Replied the man.

“My name is Will and this is Liz! We come from another world! Thanks to a clock, we discovered a universe with 5 cogs which represent 5 different worlds.”

“I don’t understand anything... But I see you are strangers... You have to flee!”

“What happened to this world?” Liz questioned.

“You have seen... animals dominate the world. They control everything. Humans work for them, they build houses, luxury hotels and kennels. They also cook and do the housework. They are human pets”

“Why? How have animals become stronger than us?” Asked Will.

“It’s a long story... But to summarize, scientists tested products on animals. One day, a monkey, more intelligent thanks to a potion, stole the potion and ran away. He distributed this potion to lots of animals and a rebellion began...”

“And?” Liz said.

“And a war broke out. Humans versus animals. You can guess who has won...”

“How long has his world been dominated by animals?”

“50 years... Now, the children are educated like animals’ slaves. They think this situation is normal... “

“It is horrible...”

“Yes but in fact if we reflect, the animals treat the humans as we have treated them... And they don't eat us, it's a good thing...”

“Ugh!” Grimaced the teenagers.

“Why were you arrested?” Will asked.

“Because I wanted to start a revolution. Each night, I join a group of resistant. We make arms and reflect about strategy. We tried to recruit people. But the animals discovered that...”

“What will they do of you?!”

“They will release me in few months. They don't kill humans, generally.”

“Phew... And how can we...”

Liz was stopped by footsteps. A lion approached the cell, escort by a pet. The lion roared, looking in the direction of the bald man.

“Bart, come on.” The human pet said.

“What will they do?” Panicked Will and Liz.

“Don't worry, it's just my judgement,” said the bald man. “Wallas, help the children to flee, please.”

“Hey, but there is a lion just next to us! He is listening!” Noticed Will, anxious.

“Don't worry, the animals don't understand our language.”

The lion, impatient, roared and Wallas opened the door.

Bart got out the cell and whispered:

“Good luck kids”

Wallas didn't close the door completely but the lion didn't realize that. They left the jail.

When they were sure there was nobody, the teenagers got out the cell, discreetly.

Wallas waited for them and gave them slave clothes.

The teenagers thanked him and put the clothes on.

“Take woods, like if you work for the construction!”

They obeyed and finally arrived to the construction site, where the portal was. In the way, they saw crocodiles, chickens and hedgehogs with human pets. It was very strange.

They managed to cross the portal and burst with joy when they appeared in the cog's room, safe and sound.

Liz and Will stayed a moment, deeply moved by what they had discovered, speechless. Both seated on the floor, in this large room with strange cogs. They didn't know how to react in this situation. They were asking themselves millions of questions: what's in the other worlds? Can we travel forever through time and space? Must we go back to earth and tell the others? Or keep the secret? Stop here, or continue their epic through the worlds? Without mentioning anything, the 2 teenagers could understand each other: they had to follow and discover the mysteries of those other worlds. So, they decided, to go to this little world for kids, cute, and marvellous with many colours that they had seen in the centre of the cog situated on the right of the room.

While they were coming closer to the cog, and touching it, they felt once again that they were sucked into another parallel world. They were surrounded by millions of cogs and then, were carefully left on a very bouncy surface which seemed to be the ground of this world. Little by little, the cogs scattered and a shiny sky appeared in front of them. They immediately saw huge green mountains covered by hundreds of toys and enormous candies. For a moment, no sign of life in this area, only billions of colours and textures which were like when children open their presents for Christmas and discover the long-awaited toy. They looked at each other, amazed and struck by all these childhood marvels. They started walking, discovering at every step new unusual things. Mushrooms were in chocolate, every wooden toy, in wood, was taller than them, the sea was a huge puddle of lemonade. Nearly everything was edible. For the moment, there weren't any signs of house, not even a human or an animal. And while they were worrying about being alone in this perfect world, they caught sight of a little yellow and blue goblin who was running in a big field with pink and purple grass. When they went closer, they saw many other fairy creatures: little girls were flying in the airs with shiny wings, other little elves were feeding plants who seemed to be magic vegetables, or brilliant flowers. All of them were smiling, as if it was the best day of their life! Liz who was probably the bravest one, wanted to come closer and try to speak with them, but Will said that it was too dangerous, because they could be frightened by humans. Finally, they decided to go into hiding, watch them in their everyday life, and then try to speak with them. Liz was a little bit impatient, because when she was a little child, her parents used to tell her fairy tale just before she went to bed. Finally after maybe 2 hours observing them, they realized that those creatures weren't violent or impulsive. Their life was strictly

organized, like a real community. There were leaders, workers, timetables for each fairy, things to do for every elf. Will, reluctantly, decided to follow his sister. They went down to the entrance of the village. It was a small town, covered with flowers, trees, butterflies and many toys. The houses were in chocolate or in candy a little bit like in the German tale : Hansel and Gretel. As they knew this tale, the kids were aware that the 2 children of this story fell into a trap. They began to be afraid of this perfect world, this "Utopia" which maybe wasn't a real paradise. Many goblins saw Liz and Will, and started to approach. One of them, wearing red and green clothes, asked if they would like to play with them, in the central area, they discovered that they could speak English. Liz was really happy and would have loved to play but Will stopped her, and said :

"You can't do that, it's a trap! They aren't nice people! We must go back to the main door, and explore another world!"

"Will, could you please stop this , I'm sure that they are friendly, look at them, what's your problem?"

"Ok, if you want to play with them, you can, but, I'm leaving this strange place. If you want to find me, I will probably explore the futuristic world."

"No! We can't split up, we must remain together! Please, stay here, and if we have a problem, we'll go back to the "room of choice"."

Finally, Will accepted, and tried to speak with the other creatures. Liz walked to the main place, and started playing with big wooden toys. All the elves were climbing and playing together. Liz was like in a fairy tale, she played one hour with them. The 2 teenagers were really enjoying themselves. After those games, the chief of the village came and said that they had to visit his house, to learn more about the history of their world.

Both of them followed the villagers, and arrived in front of a big house. The wood was in reality a chocolate sculpture. The door was in gingerbread, grass smelled of mint, windows were bordered by cotton candy and fudge. Attracted by all this cute and yummy food, they went inside the house and saw many sweets hanging from the walls and the roof. They didn't had any suspicion or doubt, but in a few seconds, the creatures closed the main door and turned the key. They were trapped. Forever. They would not go back to England. Liz started crying. Will was really angry, at the

beginning he felt something, but later, he fell in the trap. Maybe they would be attacked by the “creatures”.

2 hours passed. They were totally lost, they didn't have hope anymore, but suddenly, a little fairy appeared behind a window, smiling. She broke the window open and came closer to Liz and Will, frightened by her. She explained that, if the “creatures” do that sort of things it's because, a very long time ago, they were living on Earth, but humans were hunting them. There were only 30 left while they were 200,000 in the middle ages. So, they discovered this world and moved here. Their purpose was to attract humans like them, and catch them, to invert the roles. For 500 years, they have been known by the other inhabitants of the other worlds as the “destroyers of humans”. That's why sometimes, when somebody dies, there is no scientific explanation. They are just killed in this world. Little by little, elves fairies and goblins destroyed their soul and their appearance changed. Now, they are forced to change this appearance to attract humans. Dory, the little fairy is the only one who's not like the others, she's innocent and pure.

After, she helped Liz and Will to escape, she created another portal and they finally arrived in the huge cogs room. Everything happened so fast that they couldn't remember all the events. After all, they understood and tried to erase this world from their minds. Fully unsettled, they weren't sure to continue their adventure. Even Liz, usually optimistic and enthusiastic, had many doubts. Finally, they thought that they would maybe never be able to go back to this incredible place, so they decided to go on...

For the 3rd time, they decided to come closer to another cog, the one which was the door to the futuristic world. Inside the semi-sphere, they could see many iron monsters, very high buildings, and some “things” flying very fast.

Totally disconcerted by this world, stranger than the others, they touched the semi-sphere and were sucked into the new world. A few seconds later, they arrived in the centre of a kind of city. Everything around them was gigantic. Will and Liz were really impressed by those very unusual and modern streets. All the city was very different from England. They weren't any plants but millions of humans walking in many directions. But...they weren't really humans because their skin, their hair, their clothes were in steel. It seemed that rich people had shiny metal on them like silver, and the poor wore rust metal clothes. Moreover, their eyes were two red flames. They met

one of them and asked if he could speak English. The man in metal explained few things about his world. They speak many languages because their brain was transformed by a chemical substance which makes them cleverer than other humans. Their eyes can show how old they are : the flames die away year after year, and the colour of their flame changes according to the feelings of humans. This man was called 26-43. Surprised to hear that his name was a code, Will asked if everybody had the same kind of name. 26-43 agreed and told them :

“This world was like yours but one day, a man called “number 1” took control of our world and decided to transform humans in machines influenced to be only intelligent. But his experience didn’t work completely. Iron replaced every part of our body except our eyes. It’s the only part which can show our feelings“. Then, Liz asked if 26-43 could show them the main buildings of the city, and his house. He accepted and led them to the front of a huge tower in silver and glass. He said that it was the political government and the place where every decision was taken. Then, he took them to the “central factory” which was the biggest building of the city. It was an underground factory, where everything was made, or produced. Thanks to millions of pipes, each good was distributed all over the world. Liz and Will were totally stunned, “how can this world exist?” said Liz.

“I think that we should go to my house, said 26-43, because the night will come soon.”

They walked in the city, which was crawling with people, and arrived in front of the “National Bank Service Unity”. The two teenagers asked if it was his real house, and 26-43 said that yes, they live where they work, to maximize their productivity. They went into a large metal box flying inside of the building. They arrived in a white room, where beds and desks were lining up. Each family who worked in the bank, was living there. Everybody had purple flames, and 26-43 explained: “this colour means that they are really concentrated on what they are doing”. Will was worried and asked if it was possible for them to go back in the huge cogs room, because they were completely lost and they were too many strange things in this world. They went out of the bank but while there were walking in the street, the two teenagers, saw a glass cube with the same clock as in their grandparent's house. Just next to the clock, there were two persons. When they came closer, they realised that it was their grandparents...