

2040 Essay Contest: Hybrid

Essay 2: A typical Wednesday in the life of a chemistry Professor in Singapore in 2040

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Wednesday 12 October 2040, Singapore, around 8 am.

Maria is in her office at the university. It is located at level 2 and she has the privilege of having a window. Even if the window is tinted in blue to protect her from UV, she can still see the storms and lightnings that happen every other day or so.

Maria is sitting in her ergonomic soft organic chair, stretching her feet under the desk made of recycled wood and plastic, a tube of 3D printed solid coffee-vitamin D in hand. Today the tube has a drawing of a squirrel, to bring awareness about this endangered species. Maria needs her daily shot of vitamin D since she rarely goes outside as it is nearly impossible to breathe with the combination of high temperature and high humidity. She is wearing casual smart wear, a beige ensemble made of kombucha fabric and a bamboo fiber dark pink jacket. Her hair is short and light brown. She had cut her hair a few years back to make a new handbag by the company Recyclair.

Deexiwala is Maria's office dipterobot, produced by the multinational company 10M. Deexiwala looks like a tropical tree from the diptercarp family with a human-like face in the middle of the trunk. Deexiwala stands proudly in the back corner of the office, its branches spreading through the ceiling and the walls to connect with the other dipterobots of the university and with the outdoor space too. Deexiwala purifies the air of Maria's office, distills water, but also records all data and information that is generated in Maria's office and laboratory. Deexiwala is also connected to GA which is the Grande Armillaria. The GA is the organic grid that connects all robots of all kinds using one single DNA-enhanced fungus from the *Armillaria gallica* species. Deexiwala was programmed to talk with Maria's mother voice.

Maria (stretching) Deexiwala, what is my agenda for today?

Deexiwala (monotone voice) 9 am, lecture 6 to Seattle's students on biofuel synthesis by dragonflies at the hologram recording center.

Maria (still stretching) How do I go to HRC again?

Deexiwala (still monotone voice) From office, take lift to level B10. Take understreet 13 on the left until the aeration conduit Lee Boon Chan. Then, turn left to understreet highway A3. At the JEM undergate, take lift to level B5.

Maria (suddenly sitting up, looking at Deexiwala) Why not understreet 14?

Deexiwala (now speaking with intonation) Understreet 14 is under renovation. The ground temperature in this area has exceeded 40 degrees Celsius yesterday, leading to condensation in the aeration conduit Van Nam Pong and the entire understreet got flooded.

Maria Oh, ok. (short pause, licking her tube of solid coffee-vitamin D for a while then looking at the digital board that hangs on the wall.) And after HRC?

Deexiwala (bored voice) At 12 you are to take the Woofrail to the Daycare center for lunch and your daily child-parent bonding activity.

Maria Is it this week we go to the indoor park?

Deexiwala Today's activity is virtual walk through ancient Singapore, when temperature and humidity levels allowed to be outside during day time.

Maria (suddenly excited, stops licking) Great, I love this! And in the afternoon?

Deexiwala (speaking fast) 2 pm, making visuals for the Food on Mars grant. 5 pm: meeting PhD student Amoolyia. 6 pm, Woofrail to Daycare.

Maria (now scrolling through the digital board by making up and down gestures in the air.) Is Amoolyia coming to my office?

Deexiwala (normal voice) She said she preferred to meet in the lab so she can monitor her running experiment. Apparently, some locusts have an anti-social behavior which makes them increase the secretion of fuel.

Maria (still reading) And what was the latest value she got for the power generation with the locust-salmonella system?

Deexiwala 160 Wh per insect.

Maria (excited again) Not bad! Remind me to ask her to make predictions of how many insects we need for charging the Woofrail for a day.

Maria quickly stands up, takes her handbag and exits the room in a rush.

