

1

ANDREW THE ANDROID

By K.E.Chilton  
93 Currie St.,  
Hamilton, Ont.

1. K.E.Chilton

## ANDREW THE ANDROID

Andrew first came into awareness on August 15, 2069 AD, at the great android factory in Satellite City, Ontario. He opened his eyes and gazed upward at the face of Android 41-38, who had constructed him on the assembly line of the factory. 41-38 had a kind face and Andrew's first reaction was to smile. 41-38 closed the access panel on Andrew's chest, the access panel to the complex circuitry of this robot which looked, talked and thought exactly like a human being.

41-38 smiled back and said, "There you are, 69-227!", giving Andrew's correct name. Andrew was the given name which had been programmed into his memory banks by the old couple, the Parkers, for which he had been built.

When a married couple became too old to properly look after themselves or their home, the government provided them with a human-robot, or android, to do the work of house-keeping for them. Many couples had female androids, more in keeping with the idea of having a house-maid, but Mr. and Mrs. Parker had requested a male android, for reasons known only to them.

Andrew sat up on the work bench, and then swung his legs gently to the floor. Walking a bit stiffly at first, he went to a mirror that was hanging nearby and looked at his own reflection for the first time. He had the appearance of being a young man, about 22 years of age, with slightly tanned skin, light brown hair and blue-green eyes. A scattering of light brown freckles had been included under the eyes. Andrew smiled again, obviously pleased with the appearance that he had been granted.

"Your owners are waiting for you in the reception area", said 41-38.

"Thank you!" replied Andrew as he passed through the door. Although he had never been there before, he found the reception area without difficulty, since his programming was complete and he had a complete memory and knowledge built into him.

The Parkers stood up as he came into the room. Andrew approached them and held out his hand. As Mr. Parker shook hands with him, Andrew said, "Hello, masters, how may I serve you?"

## 2. K.E.Chilton

"Heavens!" said Mrs.Parker,"Don't call us 'Masters'. You may call us by our names if you wish."

"If you don't mind, I shall call you Mr.Parker and Mrs.Parker", replied Andrew.

"Very good," said Mr.Parker. "All right, Andrew, drive us home please."

Although Andrew had never driven a magnetic air-car before, nor had he been to the <sup>Parker's</sup> ~~Parker's~~ home, his memory circuits performed flawlessly and before long, they drew up in front of the small house that was home for the old couple.

Before long, Andrew had settled into the routine of the Parker home, cooking breakfast for them, rousing them in the morning and doing whatever household chores were assigned to him by the Parkers. When not needed, Andrew plugged himself into an electric outlet and re-charged his circuits while sitting restfully in a chair in the corner.

One day, Andrew was returning from shopping for some groceries, an errand that had been assigned to him by Mrs.Parker. As he drew up in front of the Parker home, and was parking the magnetic air-car in its space at the curb, he noticed that smoke was curling out from around the doors and windows of the house. Obviously, there was a fire within!

The Prime Directive of Androids flashed through the electronic circuitry of Andrew's mind:" YOU MUST ALWAYS PROTECT THE LIVES OF YOUR OWNERS OVER ALL DIFFICULTIES!"

Andrew raced to the door and threw it open. His gaze was met by a roaring wall of flame and searing gases. Without hesitation, he dropped the bag of groceries and leaped through the flames.

"Mr.Parker, where are you? Mrs.Parker!"

There was no answer. Andrew raced from room to room, frantically searching for the Parkers, while the Prime Directive of Androids kept flashing through his electronics. "YOU MUST ALWAYS PROTECT THE LIVES OF YOUR OWNERS OVER ALL DIFFICULTIES!"

Andrew was oblivious to the smoke, since he had no lungs, and although his artificial eyes watered, he was not bothered by it. Since his plastic skin had no nerve endings, he was not conscious of the great heat of <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~



### 3. K.E.Chilton

flames which leaped and roared around him.

In the kitchen, he found Mrs.Parker, a little grey heap slumped on the floor in front of the stove. Obviously, the old lady had tried to cook something for herself. Something had gone wrong, and the fire had begun. Andrew scooped up the frail body of the old woman and made his way through the fire-filled rooms of the house to the front door. As he stepped outside into the fresh air, the fire-trucks arrived with the screaming of sirens, and ringing of bells. Evidently, they had been summoned by the neighbours.

Andrew placed Mrs.Parker gently on the ground, well away from the blazing building. He turned toward the house. Great plumes of black smoke poured from the windows, whose glass exploded outward in great showers of splinters as the pressure within the building grew. Tongues of flame shot from the roof and into the sky, and a great roar filled the air as the fire grew into a holocaust.

"Don't go back in there, man!" yelled one of the rubber-clad firemen.

"I must obey the Prime Directive!" shouted Andrew and he leaped back into the house.

The draperies in the living room flared as fresh oxygen from the broken windows reached them. Part of ceiling collapsed sending a shower of sparks winging upward like so many luminous butterflies. The beams of the the roof crashed down around him, bringing with them great hunks of plaster and shingles.

Andrew raced up what was left of the stairs to Mr.Parker's bedroom. Logic dictated that Mr.Parker would likely be there. As Andrew opened the door, another great blast of flame met him. The sight of his right eye suddenly ceased although there was no pain. Groping through the black acrid smoke, Andrew made his way to Mr.Parker's bed. His hands touched the figure of Mr.Parker all wrapped in smouldering blankets. Evidently, Mr.Parker had been taking a nap when the blaze began, and he had never regained consciousness as the gases from the fire filled the room.

Andrew scooped up Mr.Parker easily, employing the great strength of his mechanical limbs, turned and retraced his footsteps to the outside.

#### 4. K.E.Chilton

As he came out, a great cheer went up from the firemen who had begun to pour water into the blazing building. A torrent of water from a hose hit Andrew in the face, and extinguished the flames from his clothing which were beginning to leap upward around him. Andrew staggered forward and gently laid Mr.Parker on the lawn next to his wife.

"I must obey the.....".

Andrew never completed the sentence as a spark leaped from his chest and black smoke began seeping from the access panel on his chest. He slumped to the ground.

"Good Lord" said one of the firemen,"look at that!"

Andrew's face was distorted, the right side of his plastic head being melted into a formless mass of lumpy foam. Most of the synthetic flesh of his right arm had melted away, exposing a jumbled mess of electric wires and steel rods.

"How are the owners?" asked another fireman.

"Just barely alive",replied another who was applying oxygen masks to the faces of the old couple. "They're sure lucky they had this android."

A week and two days passed before Andrew again became aware of his surroundings. Once again he saw the kindly face of 41-38 smiling down at him.

"69-227, you sure were messed up," said 41-38."I've been a week trying to repair you."

"My owners! How are they?" demanded Andrew as the memory of the fire passed through his memory circuits.

"Just fine," answered 41-38.

Andrew sat up and then made his way to the reception area where he knew that the Parkers would be waiting for him.

"Andrew!" they shouted together as he entered. They rushed toward him and threw their arms around him warmly. "How are you?"

"I am repaired. Android 41-38 is a fine mechanic," answered Andrew.

"We can never thank you enough, Andrew," said Mr.Parker.

"Thanks are not necessary. I was simply obeying the Prime Directive

5. K.E.Chilton

of Androids" replied Andrew.

"Nevertheless, we have appreciated what you have done. Now, open your shirt, Andrew," ordered Mrs. Parker.

Andrew obeyed and unbuttoned the buttons on his shirt. There, emblazoned on his access panel was a golden star, with the word HERO, printed on it. Although Andrew's electronic circuits were incapable of emotion, something akin to pride passed through him. He put an arm around each of his owners, and together they made their way slowly out of the reception room, each smiling with happiness.