

## GSA National Writing Competition 2026

### Annabelle W, 5M (through to the final 3)

#### Static Connection

The lab was silent. It had been that way for many years, apart from the lonely sound of the thick oil that dripped from the old, rusty pipes. The smell of oil was so sharp, the kind that hits the back of your throat... Click. An old clock flickered on, like it had been woken up after hibernation when spring had finally arrived. The light wavered and it murmured for the first time ever as the pipes settled. The dripping oil froze. Then... a deafening clank. It seemed the clock, cracked and shaken, switched back off, like it was ready for another 1000 year nap. As the pipes returned to their old, rusty, and damaged selves. And for the oil, it continued dripping like nothing had ever happened.

Power on.

My circuits started to whirl. It felt like fizzing lemonade. My eyes blinked open. The light was so bright. My eyes slowly began to adjust as I observed my surroundings. It was icy and bleak. It was isolated yet I didn't feel alone. I didn't feel anything. I knew that robots like me could never feel emotions.

I scanned the landscape, where I noticed a silver door handle. My curiosity took over. Turning the metal handle, to my surprise it opened creakily... into a dull and quiet laboratory. Data seeped through me as my scanners searched the room. Nothing was there except scraps of rusty metal, bent tools, a pot of navy blue paint and a few aprons and goggles. I noticed something out of the ordinary, though that was how my day was going so far, so I skated over and...

What was this...there in front of me stood another robot. It looked just like me. A dark metallic colour. The subtle light reflected on the robot which made me go into some sort of trance.

I stared at her and she stared right back at me so deep that it felt like I could see into her soul. Then I lifted my left glistening blue wing and she did the same then I lifted my right wing and she did the same. Soon after we were touching she felt cold and dusty. We moved together as if they were one. Then we raced. We were neck and neck, I felt something deep within me. Something that I could not understand. Something that made me feel fuzzy and warm inside. Then unexpectedly the robot so sleek and polished vanished into thin air and I felt something else. It felt like I was hollow inside, maybe this was loneliness. Then in shock I waited and waited and waited for something that never came.

### Youran Q, 5M (through to the final 6)

A ray of light shone into the basement of an old, abandoned house as a tiny mouse pushed open a door. The beam reflected onto the dark face of a robot. In the darkness of that forgotten room, the tiny mouse crept in, its whiskers twitching as it stared at the lifeless silhouette leaning against the wall. The robot was rusted and frayed pieces of wire hung at its side while its head was slanted on a nearby table.

The mouse clambered onto the tabletop. Protruding from the Robot's head was a metal sensor, which the mouse patted with his paw. It swayed a bit. He patted it again. And again. Bored, after the lack of response, the mouse turned its attention to the robot's eyes. Screens, each one as big as the mouse, sat in the robot's skull, with rows and rows of lights behind it. He felt like there was a story behind all this, the cobwebbed arms, the rusted cogs, it didn't feel right. So many unanswered questions circled in his head while he curled his tail around the table-leg. He leapt off the table, staring at the massive figure looming over him. He placed a warm paw on the machine's calf. No response. He started to walk away. Click.

Time seemed to slow down as the robot began twitching, its bright, blue lights flickering. Everything went silent, like the whole world was holding their breath. It tilted its head towards the mouse. The terrified creature looked up at it with huge eyes and opened its mouth. No sound came out.

The robot crouched down and reached out one of its giant hands. The mouse hesitated before sprinting to the exit of the basement. He stared back at the robot. The robot stared back. Its hand was still outstretched, but its eyes were now shimmering dully and its hand trembled ever so slightly. The mouse felt a painful tug in his heart. The robot was desperate for a friend. Its mouth stretched into something that looked like a smile as the mouse cautiously walked over to the lonely Bot. It was still weak, given it had just awoken, but managed to clamber up. The mouse skittered onto its shoulder. The robot collapsed!

Beep. The sudden sound shimmered off the dust-choked walls. The device blinked three times. Everything went silent like the whole world was holding its breath. With his paws trembling in shock and fear, the mouse began to edge away from the helpless robot and back towards the entrance. Without warning, the robot's screens burst to life with a quick flash and it sat up. "Where am I?" it thought. It turned to the pipes that creaked and groaned as water rushed through it. It turned to the table, dodgy with the uneven leg. It turned to look for the mouse who was now outside in the dark basement. The mouse widened his eyes and rushed to its feet. Something was triggered in the robot's memory. The mouse joyfully scurried onto its shoulder and looked at it. 'Hi,' the robot chimed, 'I'm Drone 24756.' The mouse smiled, 'I'll just call you Felix.'