

"Not a fan of romances..."

"What?" a librarian asked.

"I said I'm not a fan of romances." said Tom, an attention-seeking 19-year-old.

*Fuckin librarians, Tom thought. College is supposed to be fun, but all I've done so far is get a call from my grandparents telling me that this is supposed to be the best part of my life. Couldn't even tell them I knew this doctor shit wasn't my thing, cause they would've disowned me. I can still get a job, and I can still pay them back. People make money in Computer Science all the time...*

These thoughts were occupying and replaying in his mind, trying to make the guilt he felt about lying to his relatives go away.

"Well, do you want anything, at all?"

"Do you have anything on AI?"

"Artificial..." the librarian started, searching for the request in the library computer.

"Yeah, I've gotta write a paper on it for my class."

The librarian, uninterested in Tom's rambling, finishes her statement "intelligence! There it is!"

"Can-can you organize it by price?"

*Come on! For fuck's sake! You took speech therapy and for what?*

"Our system doesn't support that, unfortunately, but if you find a book that intrigues you, you can bring it up here and I could tell you what it costs."

"OK. That works. You know, I'm learning to code, and if you want I could program a new system for you guys. It'll be able to sort by price, or wha-whatever kinda metric you want it to."

"That's ok. The section is right over there."

"Thank you."

Tom makes his way over to the section, thinking about how he can get a better price on a decent book. He can't tell his grandparents what his new degree is, so he has to pay out of pocket.

A bookshelf, filled to the brim with overpriced textbooks on all Computer Science topics one could ask for.

*Course it would be in the computer science section. AI is under the umbrella of Comp Sci, but you didn't think about that, did you? Is this a repeat of last time you thought something was meant for you? You could have saved some actual time with that librarian instead of bothering her with your inability to speak. You're useless.*

"This book seems OK."

No price was listed. There was no barcode. Every other book here had a barcode.

*So, I'm gonna open this and there's gonna be porn on the inside isn't there? Alright, fine. Get it over with.*

To his surprise, the book seemed brand new on the inside. The outside might as well have been the cover for the Necronomicon, but the inside had crisp pages and perfect lettering. The first page didn't have any dedications or signs of ownership, nor any disclaimer about intellectual property. There was no table of contents, either, and, rifling through the pages revealed that there was no division of topics discussed, except for paragraphs and odd indentations.

*Maybe it's free.*

Grabbing the book and turning to walk out of the section, Tom thought to himself.

*What even is it? If it's free, cool, but that doesn't mean anything if it's another fuckin romance. Alright, first page...*

Artificial intelligence, although typically represented in fiction as cold and unfeeling or as robotic and judgmental, can be anything the client needs it to be. Whether a client needs a machine learning algorithm designed to analyze all permutations of BlackJack for a winning bet, or an image processor that uses footage from space to predict the next major hurricane, artificial intelligence, or AI for short, can do it.

*Alright. This'll work.*

"How much will this set me back?"

The librarian, scrupulously searching for a barcode or price tag to cite, "uhm, just... Where did you find this?"

*Do I tell the truth, in hopes she'll take pity on me and just let me keep it, or do I lie and pray that she buys what I have to say?*

"I found it in the section you pointed me to. Why?"

"We keep a record of all the books on the shelves, and when one turns up that we didn't record, library policy says we have to put it in the lost-and-found. But, hey. If it's yours..."

*Fuck!*

*Wait. Does she want me to have it?*

"Yeah, I guess I must have put it up there and forgot I did. Maybe I should be studying neuroscience." he coughed out.

"Alright, well... Take your book and have a great day. Remember, if you have any books overdue, you can still return them by the 28th

with no charge to your account, but for every day that they're late after that, we charge a dollar to your account. Thank you, and we hope to see you again!"

The librarian was cute enough for Tom to like, but Tom would never know if that could have worked out. Library policy was against student-staff relationships.

There was no paper for Tom to write, but he did still have some projects he had to finish before Friday if he wanted to enjoy himself on the weekend. The book sat on his desk for 2 hours before he picked it up. A few minutes before that, he was working on a function for his project that was due the next day. The point of the function was to take in a text file found on the internet, and give it to an AI, specifically one called an NLP, to train on.

*Alright, what is NLP?*

"Alexa, what is NLP?"

"NLP, as an abbreviation, stands for natural language processing. For more definitions of NLP, ask me to give you more definitions of NLP."

*Oh, that's how I would get more definitions. I would ask for more definitions. I'm so glad you told me that, or else I would never have figured it out!*

The book had everything he would ever need to know, and all he had to do to was open it.

*Alright, let's see what you've got.*

"Natural language processing, natural language processing..." he muttered to himself as he skimmed through the book.

*Here it is.*

The book read as follows:

NLP, or natural language processing, is a crucial component to making a sustainable, usable AI. Just as programming languages give people the key to speaking with computers, NLP gives computers a chance to speak their mind, or at least many people think. What is seen as a thinking, living being is truly just an algorithm, made to output words that fit the context of the situation in what is hopefully a grammatically-pleasing fashion. Training models on sets of data can take months or even years depending on how much data is meant to be processed and how fast the respective system processing it can work.

*I don't have months or years. This shit's due tomorrow, and I was supposed to at the beginning of the semester.*

The book cuts his train of thought off:

As with anything, there is a shortcut.

*OK, now we're talking.*

The book continues:

The focus of this book, as you may have found with some previous pages, is tailored to the unconventional methods used by those who do what is necessary for results. There are large, pre-configured datasets containing pre-made NLPs that can be used immediately, but as with any shortcut, there is a drawback.

*Please don't tell me that it's expensive, because I really can't afford it, and, please, with a little cherry on top, don't make me wait very long to use it. This project is due tomorrow and if I get another zero, I might not be able to convince my grandparents that the school messed up with the messaging system again. Besides that, I don't care what it is, I just need to pass.*

These NLPs were originally made as artificial companions. They were created for the purpose of fulfilling the intellectual stimulation usually found within the normal heterosexual relationship. What this means for those willing to utilize these datasets is a necessary extra step before being able to implement to their heart's content. They will have to interact with the NLP for over an hour before its dataset will have been properly accessed and ready for usage. Any programmer worth their salt thinks that the data, if already loaded on the file, can be accessed immediately, but this has never worked, and the likelihood is that it never will. The truth is that the data is stored in a server, and until certain questions are brought up and answered by both parties, this data will not be requested. Certain inefficiencies in the system were a symptom of its production, which also took shortcuts.

*What the fuck am I getting into?*

A link to the website is provided at the bottom of the page, but before you use it, know that any attempts to circumvent the requirements listed hereby and above could lead to issues including but not limited to: operating system crashes, file corruption, hardware malfunction, etc.

*I... Fuck, why am I doing this? This is what happens when you don't start assignments when you're supposed to, Tom. This is what you deserve. Just do it already,*

*Where's the link?*