

# MIZgOt

a novel by  
HelriC



# MIZGOT

*Written by Helric*

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Artwork by Todd Gamble  
(<http://toddgambleart.com>)

Edited By Crystal Watanabe  
(<http://www.pikkoshouse.com>)

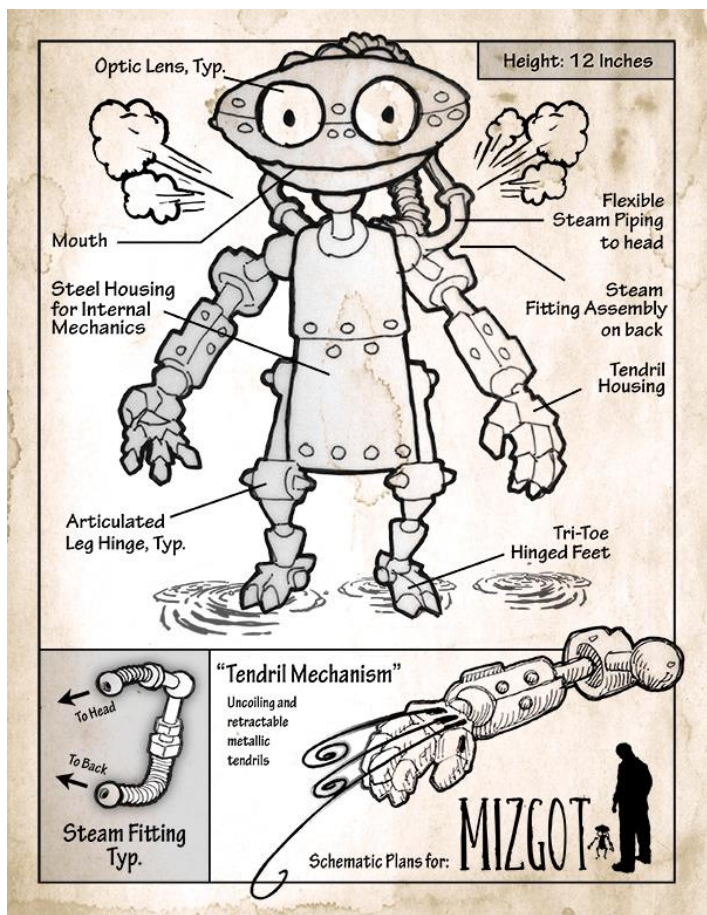
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**To my family**

for listening to me talk endlessly about this  
story and still encouraging me to keep  
writing

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**mizgot**

## *Chapter One*

Sounds of metal bits colliding echoed flat against the soft wood-accented walls of the little room. A man in unkempt clothes with frazzled hair was maneuvering thin tin plates into a small hollow cylinder about the size of a two-liter pop bottle, his chapped hands showing evidence of abuse from his work. A slip quickly formed a new red slice across his thumb. He yelped in surprise, covering the cut with an oily rag that was within reach. An old mixed-breed hound glanced up at the man from his worn red pillow in the adjoining room, curious at the disturbance.

“Compile is complete, Marvin,” said a pair of curved view screens behind the man. Marvin wheeled around. “Run program, test number five,” he said, bathed in the green glow of a holo-vid.

A rat-sized holographic wire-frame puppet appeared and began a series of motions around the room. It ran across Marvin’s workbench on two legs, leaping over some of the tools and passing right through others like a ghost. Marvin

frowned. It scaled invisible walls then jumped to the floor in complete silence, stopped, and stared into the sparse living room from the doorway. The dog looked up again, letting out a low growl. "Easy, Henry," commented Marvin, staring sullenly at the frozen wire frame creation. "End test." The hologram flicked off, and Henry's ears perked up for a moment before he lowered his head, licking his pillow nervously before relaxing.

Forgetting about the tin project on his workbench, Marvin poured over the reams of code in front of him, stepping line by line, making small tweaks here, completely re-writing chunks there. The rest of the night passed quietly in the apartment as Marvin, negligent of time, kept himself absorbed in the computer code.

*Marvin, go to bed.* Marvin snapped awake, half expecting to find himself in the shop of his grandfather, who had raised him from the age of 10. He looked around the shop to confirm he was alone. Grandpa Wesler had passed a few years back. Marvin had moved into the city shortly after that and had taken most of his grandfather's tools with him. He looked over at the bullet-shaped tin doll he had been fabricating earlier. His grandfather was long gone but his spirit and influence were everywhere Marvin looked.

Marvin's current project was to be the fulfillment of his grandfather's dream. Grandpa Wesler, known for advancing military grade prosthesis, had handed down his love of inventing to Marvin. But Marvin had since moved from mechanical engineering to artificial intelligence, which fit better in the automated world of the 2030s. Ages ago, they had laid out plans to build a dream scanner. The first models had been large and crude medieval devices that were hardly suited for someone to wear safely while they slept. But they had been good enough to eke out a few patents with. The money from these patents helped see Marvin almost completely through his doctorate in AI.



After the patent money ran out, Marvin started a rapidly advancing career in the field of APS--adaptive-predictive security--to support Grandpa Wesler's health care. Marvin gained fame as a leading expert in this field right up until his grandfather's death. After that, his longing to fulfill his grandfather's goals made it impossible for Marvin to focus on his career. His grandfather's lawyer had helped him move into this rundown apartment, and Marvin had set up shop, cutting himself off from the physical world as much as possible.

Dream scanners were nothing new nowadays. But Marvin's latest creation combined a chaotic quantum processor with a dream scanner. The resulting creation, Marvin hoped, would be a dream companion, capable of seeing and talking about a person's thoughts and dreams. Someone who would be there to discuss your deepest thoughts with you. Someone who would learn, grow, and conform to the user. Someone who wouldn't leave.

He felt as though he was finally on the cusp of realizing this goal. He had a drawer full of prototypes that showed off different abilities. His composite-metalsmithing had improved greatly over the past year and he found the art almost as fulfilling as his work with coding. But he knew that given his lack of business acumen, he needed help. He needed someone who could help bring his vision to market. And he dreaded what he needed to do, or more directly, he dreaded the man he needed to work with.

Marvin had self-diagnosed himself with agoraphobia in his late teens, and this disorder had escalated over the years since his grandfather's passing. He could barely stand to even see or talk to another person. For that reason, the world of 2039 suited him well. He was endlessly coddled and rewarded for his reclusiveness by the soulless world of technology with which he surrounded himself.

Alan Touser was supposed to be the voice he couldn't be in the outside world, and they were scheduled for a conference later that week. Despite the likely positive outcome of such a meeting, the idea of having to spend his precious energy, to expose his fragile self to one such as Alan, was almost too much to bear. Almost, save for the desires of his dreams.



Alan grimaced as Marvin talked endlessly about the wire-frame figure dancing atop his antique mahogany desk. He was intrigued at the invention, especially at the brain Marvin had supposedly developed, but the idea of limiting this creation to a toy rubbed against Alan's basic business sense.

"Marvin, the technology in your virtual mock-up is truly amazing." Then Alan paused, picking his next words carefully. "But the application seems lacking. There are many more areas that such an AI could be useful. Many more *profitable* areas."

Marvin's excitement died down and he avoided Alan's gaze. He had barely remembered to get dressed for this video conference and had almost used an avatar to avoid visual contact with the condescending and imposing lawyer in front of him.

"We could part this invention out and sell patents. Like we did with your grandfather so many years ago."

Marvin winced at hearing Alan bring up his grandfather. But it steeled him to his goals. "No," said Marvin, staring down. "This invention is for kids. And adults with mental troubles." Marvin cleared his throat, gaining confidence. "It won't be used in other areas."

Alan leaned forward, visibly agitated, and held up a sheet of shiny e-paper. "Marvin, look at your Turing-Kurzweil

test results. These are off the charts compared to existing AI. Your invention would leap-frog modern tech." Alan set down the paper and continued, his eyes staring paternally from beneath his white bushy brow. "Now, let's get serious. You need me to throw as wide a net as I can to secure as much funding as possible for your work. I'll set up some meetings with reps from other fields, like finances. I even have some contacts in the government..."

"No!" Marvin shouted, red-faced. "This is for children! Not a device for making money or-or a weapon!"

"Marvin," Alan began. But Marvin cut him off by ending the call and Alan found himself staring at a blank screen. "Damn it!" Alan said, slamming his fist on his desk.

Over the next few days Alan watched the virtual wireframe play over and over while re-reading the Turing test results. This was the chance of a lifetime for Alan. He needed the money desperately and found Marvin's level of incomprehension completely inconceivable to a point of recklessness. Alan looked at his email history with disgust. Over the past week since their conversation, Alan had sent no fewer than twenty emails to Marvin. He had pleaded with him and raised the offer nearly tenfold. Marvin had answered a paltry few, all negatively, and ignored the rest.

"Idiot," Alan said, standing and yelling into his view screen. Then more stately, "Marvin, you know not what you have. I could make us fucking rich." Alan leaned down onto his desk, exasperated, his long dyed black hair falling into his face. His suit felt sticky and his mouth was dry. Alan looked over the test results laying on his desk, as he had a dozen times before. This was too much, he thought. Too good to pass up. He would have to save Marvin from himself. The idiot would understand someday, and he wouldn't die penniless like that fool grandfather of his.



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*The struggles of a little robot named Mizgot, and her agoraphobic creator, Marvin, in the cold, calculated, and greedy world of 2039.*

*Marvin fights to keep himself and his creation from being sucked into the seductive criminal mire surrounding them. While Mizgot, addicted to information, must overcome her own limitations to fulfill her desires, regardless of the costs involved...*

