



## Fandom for Robots

*Vina Jie-Min Prasad*

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## **Fandom for Robots** Vina Jie-Min Prasad

Computron feels no emotion towards the animated television show titled Hyperdimension Warp Record (??? ??? ???). After all, Computron does not have any emotion circuits installed, and is thus constitutionally incapable of experiencing “excitement,” “hatred,” or “frustration.” It is completely impossible for Computron to experience emotions such as “excitement about the seventh episode of HyperWarp,” “hatred of the anime’s short episode length” or “frustration that Friday is so far away.”

Computron checks his internal chronometer, as well as the countdown page on the streaming website. There are twenty-two hours, five minutes, forty-six seconds, and twelve milliseconds until 2 am on Friday (Japanese Standard Time). Logically, he is aware that time is most likely passing at a normal rate. The Simak Robotics Museum is not within close proximity of a black hole, and there is close to no possibility that time is being dilated. His constant checking of the chronometer to compare it with the countdown page serves no scientific purpose whatsoever.

After fifty milliseconds, Computron checks the countdown page again.

## **Fandom for Robots Details**

Date : Published September 2017 by Uncanny

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Author : Vina Jie-Min Prasad

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## From Reader Review Fandom for Robots for online ebook

**Manny says**

**Reviewbot 9000 is currently offline for maintenance. Please refrain from entering self-referential ironic metafiction since this can damage its neural feedback mechanisms.**

**Cheryl says**

Oh that's fun. And smart & charming. And I can't say anything more because it's so short, that if I did I'd be spoiling it for you. Read it yourself (free online).

**Claudia says**

Another nominee for Hugo for this author, this time for Best Short Story.

Computron is a robot with no emotions which gets sucked in a fandom for a robot character; quite realistic and funny, but I liked A Series of Steaks better.

Still, totally worth reading; here's the link: <https://uncannymagazine.com/article/f...>

**Carlex says**

A very good robots short story :)

Read it!

**Dennis says**

A 2018 Hugo and 2017 Nebula Award nominee for Best Short Story

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Computron is the only known sentient robot. He was created in 1954 and is fairly outdated by now, because apparently android-bodied automatons are en vogue and our poor sentient robot protagonist is not.

So Computron's only tasks are to take part in the Simak Robotics Museum's *Robotics Then and Now* performance once a day where he has to answer four queries from the audience as proof of his sentience. And to answer his electronic mail, which consists of more queries from elementary school students.

A teenage girl asks him about the Japanese anime *Hyperdimension Warp Record*, a show set in space in the far future, where the two main protagonists Ellison and Cyro (a robot) escape from a galactic prison and make their way across the galaxy in hunt of the Seven Sabers of Paradise.

Computron starts to watch the show (only for research, of course) and subsequently develops an interest in modern fanfiction.

Vina Jie-Min Prasad created a protagonist that seems to be born of nostalgia for science-fiction stories from the middle of the 20th century but nonetheless presents her story in a modern way. And also with a nice sense for subtle humor.

Makes me want to read an Isaac Asimov novel now. Which I should do anyway, because my *Foundation Universe* project is far behind schedule.

The story is free online. You can read it [here](#).

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## 2018 Hugo Awards Finalists

### **Best Novel**

- The Collapsing Empire by John Scalzi (Tor)
- New York 2140 by Kim Stanley Robinson (Orbit)
- Provenance by Ann Leckie (Orbit)
- Raven Stratagem by Yoon Ha Lee (Solaris)
- Six Wakes by Mur Lafferty (Orbit)
- The Stone Sky by N.K. Jemisin (Orbit)

### **Best Novella**

- All Systems Red by Martha Wells (Tor.com Publishing)
- And Then There Were (N-One) by Sarah Pinsker (Uncanny, March/April 2017)
- Binti: Home by Nnedi Okorafor (Tor.com Publishing)
- The Black Tides of Heaven by JY Yang (Tor.com Publishing)
- Down Among the Sticks and Bones by Seanan McGuire (Tor.com Publishing)
- River of Teeth by Sarah Gailey (Tor.com Publishing)

### **Best Novelette**

- Children of Thorns, Children of Water by Aliette de Bodard (Uncanny, July-August 2017)
- Extracurricular Activities by Yoon Ha Lee (Tor.com, February 15, 2017)
- The Secret Life of Bots by Suzanne Palmer (Clarkesworld, September 2017)

- A Series of Steaks by Vina Jie-Min Prasad (Clarkesworld, January 2017)
- Small Changes Over Long Periods of Time by K.M. Szpara (Uncanny, May/June 2017)
- Wind Will Rove by Sarah Pinsker (Asimov's, September/October 2017)

### **Best Short Story**

- Carnival Nine by Caroline M. Yoachim (Beneath Ceaseless Skies, May 2017)
- Clearly Lettered in a Mostly Steady Hand by Fran Wilde (Uncanny, September 2017)
- Fandom for Robots by Vina Jie-Min Prasad (Uncanny, September/October 2017)
- The Martian Obelisk by Linda Nagata (Tor.com, July 19, 2017)
- Sun, Moon, Dust by Ursula Vernon, (Uncanny, May/June 2017) by Ursula Vernon, (Uncanny, May/June 2017)
- Welcome to your Authentic Indian Experience™ by Rebecca Roanhorse (Apex, August 2017)

### **Best Related Work**

- Crash Override: How Gamergate (Nearly) Destroyed My Life, and How We Can Win the Fight Against Online Hate by Zoe Quinn (PublicAffairs)
- Iain M. Banks (Modern Masters of Science Fiction) by Paul Kincaid (University of Illinois Press)
- A Lit Fuse: The Provocative Life of Harlan Ellison by Nat Segaloff (NESFA Press)
- Luminescent Threads: Connections to Octavia E. Butler edited by Alexandra Pierce and Mimi Mondal (Twelfth Planet Press)
- No Time to Spare: Thinking About What Matters by Ursula K. Le Guin (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
- Sleeping with Monsters: Readings and Reactions in Science Fiction and Fantasy by Liz Bourke (Aqueduct Press)

### **Best Graphic Story**

- Black Bolt, Volume 1: Hard Time written by Saladin Ahmed, illustrated by Christian Ward, lettered by Clayton Cowles (Marvel)
- Bitch Planet, Volume 2: President Bitch written by Kelly Sue DeConnick, illustrated by Valentine De Landro and Taki Soma, colored by Kelly Fitzpatrick, lettered by Clayton Cowles (Image Comics)
- Monstress, Volume 2: The Blood written by Marjorie M. Liu, illustrated by Sana Takeda (Image Comics)
- My Favorite Thing is Monsters written and illustrated by Emil Ferris (Fantagraphics)
- Paper Girls, Volume 3 written by Brian K. Vaughan, illustrated by Cliff Chiang, colored by Matthew Wilson, lettered by Jared Fletcher (Image Comics)
- Saga, Volume 7 written by Brian K. Vaughan, illustrated by Fiona Staples (Image Comics)

### **Best Series**

- The Books of the Raksura, by Martha Wells (Night Shade)
- The Divine Cities, by Robert Jackson Bennett (Broadway)
- InCryptid, by Seanan McGuire (DAW)
- The Memoirs of Lady Trent, by Marie Brennan (Tor US / Titan UK)
- The Stormlight Archive, by Brandon Sanderson (Tor US / Gollancz UK)
- World of the Five Gods, by Lois McMaster Bujold (Harper Voyager / Spectrum Literary Agency)

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### **2017 Nebula Award Nominees**

### **Best Novel**

- Amberlough by Lara Elena Donnelly (Tor)
- The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter by Theodora Goss (Saga)

- Spoonbenders by Daryl Gregory (Knopf; riverrun)
- **The Stone Sky by N.K. Jemisin (Orbit US; Orbit UK)**
- Six Wakes by Mur Lafferty (Orbit US)
- Jade City by Fonda Lee (Orbit US; Orbit UK)
- Autonomous by Annalee Newitz (Tor; Orbit UK 2018)

### **Best Novella**

- River of Teeth by Sarah Gailey (Tor.com Publishing)
- Passing Strange by Ellen Klages (Tor.com Publishing)
- And Then There Were (N-One) by Sarah Pinsker (Uncanny 3-4/17)
- Barry's Deal by Lawrence M. Schoen (NobleFusion Press)
- **All Systems Red by Martha Wells (Tor.com Publishing)**
- The Black Tides of Heaven by JY Yang (Tor.com Publishing)

### **Best Novelette**

- Dirty Old Town by Richard Bowes (Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction 5-6/17)
- Weaponized Math by Jonathan P. Brazee (The Expanding Universe, Vol. 3)
- Wind Will Rove by Sarah Pinsker (Asimov's 9-10/17)
- A Series of Steaks by Vina Jie-Min Prasad (Clarkesworld 1/17)
- **A Human Stain by Kelly Robson (Tor.com 1/4/17)**
- Small Changes Over Long Periods of Time by K.M. Szpara (Uncanny 5-6/17)

### **Best Short Story**

- Fandom for Robots by Vina Jie-Min Prasad (Uncanny 9-10/17)
- **Welcome to your Authentic Indian Experience™ by Rebecca Roanhorse (Apex 8/17)**
- Utopia, LOL? by Jamie Wahls (Strange Horizons 6/5/17)
- Clearly Lettered in a Mostly Steady Hand by Fran Wilde (Uncanny 9-10/17)
- The Last Novelist (or A Dead Lizard in the Yard) by Matthew Kressel (Tor.com 3/15/17)
- Carnival Nine by Caroline M. Yoachim (Beneath Ceaseless Skies 5/11/17)

### **Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy**

- Exo by Fonda Lee (Scholastic Press)
- Weave a Circle Round by Kari Maaren (Tor)
- **The Art of Starving by Sam J. Miller (HarperTeen)**
- Want by Cindy Pon (Simon Pulse)

### **Mangrii says**

Computron es un robot inteligente construido en 1954 que reside en un museo. Cada semana, se involucra en un programa donde le realizan cuatro preguntas sencillas. En una de estas sesiones, una chica le insta a ver un anime sobre un humano y un robot que viajan por diferentes dimensiones. Computron se engancha a la serie, descubre el mundo del fandom, y escribe su primer fanfic. Nominada tanto al premio Nébula como Hugo, Vina escribe una historia de estructura peculiar (combina registros, búsquedas de internet, chats,...) bastante divertida y reflexiva. La autora consigue pintar todo un homenaje hacia el anime mecha, el mundo del fandom en general, y a las historias de ciencia ficción a mediados del siglo XX. Un relato encantador, donde, aunque creo que falta potencia de resolución, su desarrollo sobre la interacción social y la inteligencia emocional de una IA es de lo más interesante.

Disponible en la SuperSonic #12 con traducción de Alexander Páez

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### **Sr3yas says**

**A couple of months back**, I read a news story that made me go "*wait, whaaaaaaaaat?*". It was about an A.I. that wrote a Harry Potter fanfic, and it just really hit me how Asimov's stories are coming to fruition. Ah, what a time to be alive!

Fandom for Robots tells the short little story of Computron, an early sentient Robot from 1954 who is housed in a museum, and his *emotionless* journey through binge-watching and following latest anime which tells the adventures of a Robot and a Human. Computron also finds the fans of the show on Internet, and his interactions with them paint this funny and thoughtful tale, which YOU can read here----->  
<https://uncannymagazine.com/article/f...>

First of all, I loved the structure of the tale: The chats, the comment sections, and messages are really refreshing and funny. Plus who doesn't love a creative Robot?!

Recommended.

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### **Jim says**

A short, fun, & really interesting look at an AI & fanfic. Read it for free. It's worthy of its nomination.

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### **Bradley says**

'18 Hugo Nom for short story.

I thought this one was rather great. Funny, recognizable, and delicious. Perfect for old anime fans and fandom in general. But more so, I love the robots squeezing over each other. :) It's a nearly perfect mild meta-story for SF fans. :)

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### **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

One of my favorites of the current crop of Nebula award nominees. This story is free to read online at Uncanny Magazine. Review first posted at Fantasy Literature:

Computron, despite being the “only known sentient robot,” is dismissed by society as a quaint artifact, because it was built in 1954 and boasts a boxy steel frame and claw design. It’s now part of the Simak

Robotics Museum, and its only function, other than answering a few random student emails, is to play a role in the museum's *Robotics Then and Now* presentation for visitors, representing the "Then" portion of the program and answering four questions to demonstrate its sentience (a breakdancing android represents the "Now" segment).

Everything changes for Computron when a teenage girl asks it if it has ever watched the anime program *Hyperdimension Warp Record*; Computron reminds her of one of the characters. Instead of entering sleep mode afterwards, Computron determines that it is logical to spend some time researching this anime series on the internet, in order to better answer any future questions on the topic.

Between watching the series, viewing the online bulletin boards, and perusing the extensively footnoted fan encyclopedia, Computron does not enter sleep mode for ten hours, thirty-six minutes, two seconds, and twenty milliseconds.

So web surfing can be a timesuck for robots too ? good to know! Not only does Computron become a fan of the series, it decides that ? other fans' depictions of the robot character Cyro being inadequate ? it should take a shot at writing fanfiction itself. Computron's first *HyperWarp* fanfic story is met with a fair amount of confusion by other fans ... but one enthusiastic fan, bjornruffian, sees potential in its writing, and they begin communicating online.

"Fandom for Robots" is both charming and insightful in relating how an intelligent robot finds a way to develop into something more, even if the path it chooses seems an odd choice. We are assured that Computron can feel no emotion, and yet there is *something* of that nature bubbling beneath Computron's logical surface. The fanfic community and online discussions are depicted with humorous affection, and there's a poignancy to Computron's eagerness to being a productive member of its newfound community that has stuck with me.

Content notes: A couple of F-bombs and a little erotic slash fanfic.

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### **Caitlin says**

In this short story (nominated for a Nebula award and available to read for free), an older robot at the Simak Robotics Museum gets involved in writing robot fanfic. Computron is in one of the older exhibits at the museum (having been built in 1954) and its boxy design has many labeling it as an obsolete curiosity. Computron lives at the museum, taking part in the *Robotics Then and Now* performance at the museum and answering students' questions via email. When a student asks Computron about an anime, it causes Computron to get sucked into the show and it delves deep into the world of fanfiction.

I'm a sucker for robot fiction and thoroughly enjoyed this little short story. In some ways, it reminded me of Murderbot from Martha Wells but significantly less violent. Instead of being a security bot, this old robot lab assistant gets obsessed with an anime and ends up interacting with other fans via message boards and fanfiction to a degree I really appreciated. Its attempts to write its own fanfiction and collaborating with others to create more material for the show felt like such a fun capture of the love that fans feel for shows and series and how much that love can contribute to the lore even when it gets silly or over the top.

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### **Cathy (cathepsut) says**

Very odd. I went back to Uncanny to check if I had downloaded the entire story or if I was missing a page or two. This felt a bit like an unedited first draft. More likely, I just didn't get it.

Nice idea to see a sentient robot caught up in fanfiction and a fandom. But the writing felt very disjointed. I liked the story, the writing wasn't really for me.

Of the Hugo Awards 2018 Short Story Nominees I liked this the least so far.

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### **Lata says**

Robot Computron is an artifact from the past, residing in a museum. A fan urges Computron to check out an animated show about a person and a robot, and becomes hooked, and begins writing fanfic -- how perfect! I loved Computron's awkwardness and literal-ness in conversation, and how the anonymity of the online world allows Computron the freedom to become quite the hit as a writer and collaborator of fan fiction.

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### **Jen says**

I...I'm speechless. This was beautiful and I want MORE!! 5, you need to read this right now, stars!

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### **Mitticus says**

#### **2.5 robotics stars**

A sentient robot is the protagonist of this short-short story about a solitary existence as an obsolete object in a museum whose non-existence sees a change for an iniquitous question of a girl about an anime series. From there, the fandom consumes it.

**During the wait for episode eight, Computron discovers a concept called “fanfiction.”**

I think that many fanfiction fans will be very recognized in some lines and will start more than some smile. However, the idea, despite being charming and ingenuous, does not manage to catch me in a revealing way, maybe because the metafandom is something very seen in my case.

Computron es un robot creado en los 50s cuya única ocupación es responder emails de niños de primaria y

contestar 4 cortas preguntas pre-establecidas en el museo *The Simak Robotics Museum*. Una de esas preguntas acerca de una serie anime donde un personaje se asemeja a este, le lleva a investigar el asunto. Cuando queda esperando la proxima temporada de la serie descubre esa cosa llamada ¡'fanfiction' ! y además es ¡fanfiction slash! jaja. Bueno es una idea simpática y entretenida con los que los adeptos al fandom y fanfiction se identificarán , pero a pesar de ello no alcanza un nivel de genialidad que me lleve a asombrarme.

Queda la idea sí, del aislamiento y la soledad del personaje, y la parte más conmovedora es cuando realiza la investigación en el museo para ayudar a la chica dibujante. Eso convendria explorar.

here: <https://uncannymagazine.com/article/f...>

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