

The Cooperative Robot

Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Lea. She lived in Virginia with her Mom, Dad, and so many fun toys. Lea loved to play with all those toys, but one recent birthday present, Carley the Robot, was her favorite! They both liked to sing and dance, so the two had become great friends. Just like Lea, Carley also needed to go to sleep every night—to recharge her own batteries for another exciting day together.

One dark and stormy night, Lea was putting a very, very tired Carley the Robot to bed, helping Dad plug her friend back into the hallway outlet. Lea was tired, too, so Mom got her down quick and easy. The hard rain having lulled girl and robot (as well as Mom and Dad) fast to sleep, suddenly, a loud clap of thunder made their whole house shake! The louder echo woke up everyone inside. With the lights flickering and fans starting to sputter, a curious Lea yelled to her friend just down the hall.

“Carley, was that thunder *and* lightning?”

Carley the Robot, programmed to answer Lea’s polite questions, was silent. Nothing. More worried, Lea jumped out of bed to find the cord she’d plugged into her friend’s back was not blinking green this time. In fact, it wasn’t blinking at all! Then, the lights throughout Lea’s house shut off entirely. It was really, really dark now, and Lea didn’t do well in darkness. Even worse? An exhausted Carley the Robot was powerless to help her. Literally!

After what seemed like forever for a kindergartner, with a snap, a crackle, and a pop, electricity was restored, and the outage was finally over. Everything—lights and fans and, most importantly, a little girl’s robot—was “cooperative” once again. In celebration, Leah and Carley sang and danced together in the glow of their newly lit room.

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