

Story Review 2A

The Fun They Had by Isaac Asimov Reviewed by C. S. Lu

Introduction:

What is the title?
Who is the author?
What kind of story is it and what do you think about it?

The Fun They Had by Isaac Asimov is set in the year 2155. The author imagines a future in which children read 'telebooks' and learn from pre-programmed, mechanical teachers. I thought the idea for the story was interesting, but I did not like the way that the author portrayed life in the future.

Summary:

What is the story about?

The story begins on May 17, 2155, with a young girl writing an entry in her diary. Her name is Margie, and she is eleven years old. She writes 'Today Tommy found a real book!' Tommy is Margie's neighbour, and he is two years older than she is. The book he finds is about school in the old days. Margie hates school and wonders why anyone would write about it. Tommy explains that school was very different hundreds of years ago. Teachers were people and students sat together during their lessons. The discovery of the book makes Margie imagine what life was like when books were written on paper, teachers were real people, and learning was social and fun. It also makes her see her own life in a different light.

Personal reflection:

What do you like/dislike about this story? Why?

I like the character of Margie, but I feel sorry for her. I wouldn't want to learn from a mechanical teacher that is programmed to my brain. That would be awful. I wouldn't want to have a friend like Tommy either. He thinks he's so smart! I didn't really like this story because I think it is too negative and it is not very realistic. Real teachers could never be replaced by machines. There are also some contradictions in the author's view of the future. Why does Margie write in a diary? Why does she do her homework and tests on paper? If books are not printed on paper, why would they print things like diaries, worksheets and tests on paper?

Critical analysis:

What is the author's purpose? What is the story's theme or message?

The message of this story is that we should appreciate human interaction and not depend too much on technology. I agree with this message, but I don't think that teachers will ever be replaced by machines. I think that we will find ways to improve education by making good use of technology. In fact, technology is already helping us to improve the quality of education. We should appreciate that.

Conclusion:

Would you recommend this story to others?

I wouldn't recommend this story unless you are a real fan of science fiction. It portrays a depressing view of the future for children, which I don't think will happen. It also has distracting contradictions that take away from the plot.