

Segment 03, Episode 19

General AI

## The Lost Robot

Script: Dr Manas Pratim Das

Concept and Coordination: Dr. B.K. Tyagi

[Four friends, all students of engineering and all in their third year are huddled together in an abandoned godown. They look worried about something.]

Characters

Afrina , Lalit Raman and Sarat ( Age 19-21)

Rupak ( Robo)

Neha ( other Students)

Sister ( Nurse)

### Scene One

Afrina: I knew this would happen. I warned you but you just ignored my words! We had been meeting here, in this abandoned godown, since our first year but it had never been so worrying in the last three years!

Lalit: This could spell disaster for us...

Raman: Calm down friends, just calm down. Panicking would not get us anywhere.

Sarat: Yeah...right...calm down...yeah...but I need to go to...you know...

Lalit: (Outraged) This is the third time in the last one hour that you want to go to pee. Hey Raman, look at this brave-heart! You want to build a great team with such members!

Sarat: Hold your tongue Lalit. Everyone is frightened here. I just want to go to...I shall be back in a minute...

Raman: Ok, go Sarat, go! But this is the last time. Just be back and apply your brain to solving this problem. I am sure that we can find a way out of this crisis if we work together.

Afrina: We have committed such a blunder! There was no need for such hurry...we could have waited for a month or two!

Raman: Ok, I admit that I insisted on letting the machine go out on to the street. Yes Afrina had warned us. Yes, Lalit and Sarat were shaky about this and it was me who justified the decision by saying that the machine should be tested for its independent decision making. But...

Afrina: (In a soft voice) Come on Raman, we are not here to put all the blame on you. We are worried about the reaction of the university administration.

Lalit: That could be taken care of Afrina. I mean we could do something about it later. But I am more scared about the reaction in general.

Raman: In general means? What are you trying to say?

Lalit: I mean the police administration, their sleuths! What would they make of such a humanoid robot walking along the street or wherever it has wandered to.

Afrina: I just cannot think about it. They will definitely think that this is some surveillance device put in action by some rogue outfit or still worse, some self-propelled suicide bomber!

(Sarat returns from the toilet. He is the most frightened among the four students. He makes some sound to express his nervousness.)

Raman: Come and sit here Sarat. (Sarat sits down) Now tell me when did you lose track of the machine? I thought your remote is working perfectly.

Lalit: Let me explain. We were sitting atop the new apartment building. No occupants have moved in yet so no trouble with our experiment.

Afrina: We know all this. Just tell us what went wrong!

Sarat: (Mumbling) The remote was in our hands but we were not operating yet since we wanted to study the independent movement of the machine.

Lalit: It had taken a straight route across the big ground on the north. There was no one during the mid-day hours and it sailed smoothly across and towards the direction of the highway.

Raman: It was not supposed to be on the highway, right?

Lalit: Absolutely right! It was programmed to act like a normal tired individual, sit for a while on the empty concrete benches at the far end of the ground, wipe its forehead as if to show that it was soaking the sweat from its forehead...

Sarat: And then return to point zero, from where it had started walking.

Afrina: So what went wrong?

Lalit: I don't know actually. It did sit on the bench but then it suddenly stood up and walked towards the highway.

Raman: Why didn't you use the remote? It could have been stopped right at that point and you two could have fetched it back. Rubbish! It was a big mistake for me and

Afrina to be in the classroom. I have bunked so many classes that my percentage is terribly poor. Just because of that...

Sarat: Raman, listen please, don't get angry. We tried our best to use the remote but somehow it was not working at that moment.

Lalit: We did not sit idle even. Since the remote was useless, both of us rushed to the spot but ...

Afrina: But what? Where did the machine vanish?

Sarat: (Clueless) Umm...it was not there...just a long fleet of trucks were passing and we had to wait to cross the road.

Lalit: When the road finally cleared Rupak was nowhere! Just vanished into thin air!

(Lalit's phone rings. Lalit takes the call.)

Lalit: Hello! Yes Neha...I shall be there...oh, you have already reached...I shall be there soon...no-no, don't worry, I am on my way...yeah we would do it together...right Neha...love you...(Lalit concludes the call)

Afrina: Neha? Professor Sukla's daughter? Your new girlfriend? So what is this project lovebird?

Lalit: Shut up! Neha is going to donate some money to the children's hospital. She wants me to be with her when she hands over the cheque.

Afrina: Excellent! Raman, you lose one member to a philanthropic cause!

Raman: It's ok Lalit. You go. Go and catch up with her. Neha must not get any hint of this crisis. Prof Sukla is an influential person in the university. If the news gets through to him by any chance then we would be in real trouble!

Sarat: (Mumbling) Remember Raman, it was Prof Sukla who had issued the order that no student in the campus should pursue any project on artificial intelligence independently and...

Afrina: And anyone caught violating the order would be immediately rusticated!

Raman: I know, I know. This was because of the last year's accident. That outgoing student Piyush had tried to operate some peculiar drone and it crashed into the water tank of the staff quarters! Piyush had a very poor algorithm!

Afrina: We are not doing any better Raman!

Lalit: I have to go now. I am calling back as soon as I can.

Raman: Listen! We are going to break for now but all of us have to remain extremely alert. Keep monitoring the news on tv and radio. Afrina you look out for any odd photograph on the social media. Someone could capture Rupak's photo on their cellphone. Once we get some news we have to rush to the spot. Understood? Now back to our hostels.

Lalit: I have to get my scooty. I have parked it in the backyard. Bye buddies!

**Everyone: (Sombre) Bye.**

(Scence change music)

[Lalit riding his scooty on the highway and talking to himself]

Lalit: I am just hoping that Rupak does not go far...he can generate his own energy from walking but that is not the issue...I am worried about how he faces so many different situations out there...his memory space has splendid vocabulary but he is yet to learn a wide range of application...

**(a small van honks from behind, wants to overtake Lalit. He is irritated. Shouts to the van driver.)**

Lalit: You rowdy chap! You have all the road left to you and still you want me to budge! Go, go you dirty buffoon! Here I move and Go!

(The van passes him and Lalit resumes speaking to himself)

Lalit: Sophia is to blame for all this...huh! Intelligent robot! nonsense...the media blew it up and everyone started to believe that the dream of having an intelligent machine has already materialised...how dumb could people be...Sophia impresses with her facial expression and tonal quality...all else is pretty old stuff...

(traffic noise, honking, Lalit moves on)

Lalit: Ahh! There is the hospital. I think I am not too late. There...there is Neha in the front yard...she has seen me...(loud) hey Neha...

(Lalit enters the hospital and parks his scooty)

Neha: Come fast Lalit, the superintendent will be leaving soon. Let us move!

Lalit: Sure. Which way is the staircase? Or is there a lift as well?

Neha: I believe there is a lift. Must be adjacent to the staircase. Come.

Lalit: Ok, let's go.

Neha: Wait! There is a small crowd in front of the life. See!

Lalit: Right. What could have happened? Let's ask. Sister, what is the problem? Why are people assembled there?

Nurse: It's very interesting you know! Our superintendent leaves at this time everyday. As he took the lift it suddenly got stuck.

Neha: This cannot be something interesting sister!

Lalit: Ah Neha, don't interrupt. Let me know what has really happened. Carry on sister.

Nurse: The lift is stuck between the third and fourth floor for the last half an hour!

Neha: (To herself) Oh! All the time I was waiting out there, the superintendent is stuck there!

Nurse: We called the company that looks after the maintenance of the lift but they said that no one is available and it would take at least two hours to send a technician.

Lalit: Hell no! He would be terribly sick by then. Is he alone?

Nurse: Yes he is alone but I tell you what happened...

Lalit: Happened means? What else?

Nurse: A smart chap, around 18 to 20 years of age came forward. Or he could be older you know...has a peculiar face...sharp cheeks...This is just about ten minutes ago and he volunteered to help.

Lalit: Does he have a stiff neck? As tall as I am?

Nurse: You are right. Do you know him?

Lalit: Just tell me where he is now. Fst sister>>

Nurse: (a little frightened) Well he said something like, there is a problem with the counterweight buffer...and

Lalit: (Tensed)And?

Neha: Why are you taking so much interest in that fellow? He must be some technician who has knowledge about this lift. He might be seeking work and so...

Lalit: Please keep silent Neha. My life depends on this. Where has he gone sister?

Nurse: (Mumbling) He has entered the channel from behind the building...

Lalit: Oh no! He doesn't know enough about the system. It's all because of that seminar. But his knowledge is incomplete...

Neha: What are you speaking Lalit? What seminar? What is incomplete?

Lalit: I can't explain to you Neha. I have to bring him out...

(Lalit shoots off to rescue Rupak. A music denoting tension fades in to convey the mood.  
Lalit enters the channel where Rupak is doing something.)

Lalit: (very careful with his words) Hey Rupak! It's me, Lalit.

Rupak: (the voice is a little mechanical but still human-like) Welcome Lalit.

Lalit: What are you trying to do here?

You see they have a problem with the lift and I have come here to help. A friend in need is a friend indeed, you know!

Lalit: That's ok Rupak but...

Rupak: The problem is with the connection here. The counterweight buffer...

Lalit: We do not know enough about these things. We would better leave it to the concerned technician. Come out Rupak! Please.

Rupak: They said that the superintendent has a heart problem. If he remains there for some more time then he might faint. So we must attend to this problem.

Lalit: Have you identified the problem?

Rupak: Yes it's just a mechanical glitch. Must not take more than ten minutes.

Lalit: You do not have a toolbox with you, how are you going to rectify the fault?

Rupak: The company has left a toolbox. It's a small one. I could locate it through my camera vision. I have bit...but...bat...

Lalit: Brought it along. (to himself) Oh, that mechanical stammering still remains.

Rupak: You are so right. I am going to use it.

Lalit: Rupak, try to understand, you did not attend the second session of the seminar on elevators. Your knowledge is incomplete. So, please come out of this place. Let us wait for the technician.

Rupak: A friend in need is a friend indeed. We must try.

Lalit: But how do you know what to do? The first session was of an introductory nature. All the technical details were discussed in the second session on that day.

Rupak: I met Jenny. (Then, referring to the lift) The maintenance is very poor. No lubrication of the rails.

Lalit: Jenny? You mean the expert who spoke on that day? You learnt from her separately? I just cannot believe.

Rupak: Brain to brain transmission. All the knowledge was copied to my memory. (Referring to the lift.) The maintenance providers should be penalised. Very poor maintenance.

Lalit: But why should Jenny allow data flow from her brain.

Rupak: Software created by Raman. Can overcome resistance in some cases. Worked well on that day. I am almost done here.

Lalit: Done means? You have repaired it?

Rupak: Success cent per cent. A friend in need is a friend indeed. The lift should be moving in a few seconds.

Lalit: Oh gosh! Then we need to move out fast or we will be crushed! Come Rupak, hurry!

Rupak: A friend in need is a...

Lalit: Damn it! You just come out!

Rupak: A gentleman is known by his manners. He does not use harsh words.

Lalit: To hell with your gentleman! I shall drag you out. (a mechanical sound of dragging is heard. The lift also starts to move.)

Rupak: The air is fresh outside.

Lalit: You are measuring the freshness of air with your pollution sensor Rupak. But I need some real fresh air at this moment. But wait...once we go to the front they will mob you. You will receive a hero's welcome but I shall be in trouble.

Rupak: We have left the toolbox at the base. Waste not want not.

Lalit: I can't stand your sermons any more Rupak. (Thinking for a moment) But I shall have to devise some means to get you out from here without any hassle. How to do that? You have to be very tired and need to get some rest. Only then I shall be able to wish you away without any trouble. Come...

(They make their way back to the front of the lift.)

Crowd: Ah here they come. Thank you! Yeah, thank you so much.

(Superintendent Mr Chatterjee comes forward to shake hands with Rupak.)

Super: I am the Superintendent. You just saved my life young man. I shall remain indebted.

Rupak: A friend in need is a...

Lalit: Sir, sir, my friend is very tired. He should get some rest. So you see that we must leave...

Super: Of course! He must take rest. We have a good rest room there. Both of you can take rest. In the meantime I shall send some coffee.

Lalit: Coffee! Yes...I mean no...I mean he has a gastric problem and the doctor has strictly forbidden any hot drinks.

Nurse: Such are the days sir! A wonderful young man like him has gastric ulcer! Should we order some fruit juice?

Lalit: Fruit juice? No! That could be equally harmful. We just need to leave..

Super: Ok then, if you insist. I thought we can compensate for the time and labour that your friend has put in...

Lalit: So nice of you sir. We have to leave now. Come my friend.

Rupak: A man is known by the company he keeps! Good night sir!

Super: Good night dear!

Lalit: Let us not waste time. Come, you must take rest. Get on the scooty. Quick.

Rupak: A man is known by the company he keeps!

(Lalit starts his scooty and speeds past the standing crowd.)

[It's nine o'clock. A hurried meeting has been convened and all except Afrina are there.]

Raman: It's impossible for Afrina to come now. Gates of the ladies hostel are locked at 8pm. We have to do without her.

Sarat: Let's call her and put on speaker mode!

Lalit: That would be great. Let's do that.

Raman: Why don't you call?

Lalit: Please do not ask me to switch on my phone. Neha has been calling me constantly. I can't explain my behaviour to her any more. The last time she called I said that there is some problem with my cell and it's getting switched off all of a sudden.

Sarat: Good excuse! He he...

Lalit: Shut up! You call Afrina. We don't have much time either. Shall have to return to the hostel.

(Sarat calls Afrina. Phone rings. The call is put on speaker mode.)

Afrina: Hey, what is the situation now? Have you deactivated Rupak?

Lalit: Yes it has been deactivated, folded and put into the box. Safe now.

Raman: But how did Rupak get to the hospital? Any clue Lalit?

Sarat: Must have climbed on to some truck, I suspect.

Raman: But the trucks were moving! Do you think Rupak can generate such speed as to get on to a moving truck?

Sarat: Not impossible. It has been programmed to acquire new capabilities depending on the situation.

Afrina: (On the phone) Think deeply Sarat. What stimulated it to do such a heroic stunt? We have to find that out.

Lalit: But one faculty is really missing and I am worried about that.

Raman: What? We should work on that carefully.

Lalit: Rupak failed to understand that the lift could come down and it was in danger of being crushed. That means the programmes, in a combined way, are not able to provide the sense of danger.

Afrina: You scare me Lalit! This is the first sense that a human being should have.

Sarat: But Rupak is not a human being!

Afrina: Oh ho ho, so clever you are Sarat! Aren't we experimenting with General Artificial Intelligence? Haven't we taken this risk for producing intelligence comparable to that in human brain?

Raman: Afrina is right! A living being or an intelligent machine cannot survive unless it is able to sense danger to its existence very fast.

Lalit: So what do you suggest? We must reprogramme? But that could interfere with the capabilities that Rupak has already acquire!

Raman: Hmm...can't ignore that. We have to think about it.



Sarat: Look there Raman.

Raman: Where? What?

Sarat: To your right, around that corner, that shadow...

Lalit: A shadow, yes, but I can't see the person.

Raman: (Alarmed) Look carefully Lalit, it's Rupak. It has come out of the box. How could this be possible?

Afrina: What happened? Why are you so alarmed? What has happened to Rupak?

Raman: Rupak has reactivated itself. It's learning very fast. He is moving out of the campus!

Lalit: Run Sarat! We have to get hold of him!

Sarat: (Frightened) Could it ignore our instructions one day Raman? Could it become a rebel?

Raman: I don't know my friend! But for the moment we have to catch it! Run Lalit, fast!

(All three runs to get hold of Rupak. A music denoting tension rises and then fades. The docu-drama is concluded.)