

Harsh beeps, buzzes, tones and clicks came slowly but steadily from the many consoles as the Main Computer performed its careful diagnostic scans on Maria. Bright flashing lights blinked at differing rates all around the inside of her body. The areas of synthetic skin that had been sliced away showed off nearly half of her electronic and mechanical insides.

Even though it was slow and badly corrupted itself, the Main Computer managed to find out all that was wrong with the pretty brunette worker and conjure up a detailed list of fixes for the basic looking maidbot to perform.

As the maid stood straight at attention off to the side, the many lights that flashed both from the console and the horizontally positioned technician reflected in her glossy plastic skin. They also shone off her highly reflective glass eyes, framed as they were by her dark, long artificial eyelashes.

No effort had been made to mask the robotic appearance of the maid series. All human senses would be able to instantly detect their artificialness. Even from a distance, they easily and starkly stood out as machines in human form. When they moved, that effect was even stronger. Aside from their strong plastic-like smell, the very loud sounds their motors, actuators and pneumatics made - interlaced with constant computerized tones and beeps - were as far from organic as could be gotten.

Standing by and awaiting commands, this exceedingly artificial lady recorded all that the Main Computer needed to see and to hear until it was done scanning Maria. At that time, the technician was disconnected and readied for repairs. Incapable of speech, the standard issue maidbot downloaded the computer's orders and started to work on the prescribed repairs. After again deactivating her subject, the maid's plastic-coated mechanical hands instantly became like an expert's tools as they disassembled the cute Maria robot's body even further.

Because the diagnostic scans had ended with many inconsistent results, the now faulty supercomputer had calculated that Maria was in worse shape than she actually was. The prescribed repairs called for many replacement parts, but time was short. Quickly, the mechanical maid retrieved the necessary components from metal storage cupboards below the consoles. Some of these parts were specific to the Maria series, others not. After sorting and verifying them, they were replaced one after another into the damaged fembot.

Among the first tasks completed was the total replacement of Maria's right hand with a brand new one, fresh out of the box. After some work, the delicate and feminine looking device was fastened and attached to the corresponding machinery at the end of her wrist. The maid tested the new hand by connecting and supplying electrical current to the conduits inside Maria's arm. The deceptively strong mechanical and manicured female fingers at the end flexed and curled in direct response to the current while the maidbot watched and informed the computer.

When that was all done, the parts on the inside of the technician's body became the focus of the repair session. Cables were unplugged and plugged back in, bolts were unscrewed and re-tightened, solder was cut and reapplied. All of the ingredients that went together to make up a Maria unit were eventually fitted back together, along with all the missing swaths of silicone skin. Those were held back in place by a comparatively low tech method - duct tape.

In the whole course of the many extensive repairs, and after being flipped from front to back and vice versa, the sexy technician looked almost fully like herself once more. The only differences now were the two inch wide strips of silver tape that ran over her body and the absence of a facemask. The supercomputer had calculated a low probability that the facial covering would be

needed - it wasn't integral to Maria's operation after all - so it ordered the maid to scoop it up and store it in a drawer.

Then, with time running against it, the Main Computer had the maid activate the freshly fixed Maria unit.

"MARIA SERIES 032 TECHNICIAN ROBOT SERIAL NUMBER 00208 ACTIVATED." came the emotionless announcement. The monotone words beamed forth as crisp and clear sound waves, generated by the same type of high-definition speaker that was installed in all those lifelike female humanoid agents.

The oval shape of the head's opening nicely framed the realistic glass eyeballs that sat connected to the expensive circuitry above and around that speaker. The electrically charged microchips, wires and transistors visible in that skin coloured frame were surrounded by many bright LEDs. Rapidly flashing and in brilliant shades of red, green, orange, yellow and blue, they indicated the status of the electronic components to which they were connected.

The maid aimed her pretty cameras at those patterns, relaying the video as a coded signal to the Main Computer and providing it with even more data on the status of its automated technician.

Once the faceless and duct tape covered beauty was ready, the signal receivers inside her opened head began once more to receive instructions from the basement supercomputer.

Maria stood up and walked away from the table. Her newly installed motors weren't the exact type of smooth, quiet and expensive ones she had been built with, and she now made some of the same clicking and whirring sounds as the maid when she walked. A clearly visible stiffness also pervaded her gait, making her appear to be a less advanced model than she was.

As she strutted in that way over to where Karen stood, trailing the power cord behind her and still finalizing the choice of drivers required for her movements, the fluorescent lights of the basement lab reflected off the strips of silver tape as patches of cool white luminescence on dark curved tracks. The shape of her sexy machine body seemed to stand out more, as did the sparse patch of curly hairs that were inlaid into the pink-hued silicone of her delicate and sensor laden crotch.

The maid was walking toward Karen as well, with an extension cord to supply her with electricity. When the connection to the wall socket was made, Karen beeped loudly for a few seconds and rebooted. Maria ordered her to sit next to the data exchange console so she could be reprogrammed.

At this late stage, there was no time for diagnostic scans on Karen. The Main Computer would just have to take the chance that she was functioning normally in order to have her ready and able to talk to the police when they dropped by, as they surely would. They would have questions about Heather, and in time the android named Karen would have answers and the newly programmed behaviour algorithms to go along with them.

After receiving and installing the new sets of instructions from out of the console, Karen was ordered on to a nearby examination table so she could have her depleted batteries replaced. Her sexy thighs were opened by Maria's plastic hands so that fully charged battery packs could be fitted around the metal support structure inside.

As soon as the new batteries were installed, Karen was quickly reactivated and reprogrammed. While this went on, the maid went to one of the bedrooms to select a fitting set of garments for

Karen to wear. With that done, and with Karen walking naked and human-looking upstairs, the maid retreated to the basement so that she would be safely out of sight.

No sooner had the black-haired and blue-eyed electromechanical beauty finished dressing than a police officer knocked on the door. Karen activated some of her new subroutines so that she would immediately appear distraught over Heather's disappearance. The expensive agent, along with her boss Byron, had been missing for a day and a half now. That was more than enough time for her 'roommate' to become sick with worry over her.

When Karen opened the door, and when the data relayed by her optic sensors identified the uniformed man as a member of the police force, she began to release drops of a saline solution from her silicone tear ducts.

This action was calculated both to evoke pathos and to allay suspicion. It worked better than had been computed. The probability that the secret robotics lab in the basement would be discovered by the local law enforcement agency diminished at once to nil.