

The Policeman and the black-haired android both sat down on the clean living room couch, marking the first time it had ever been used. The basic AI software inside Karen dealt with her new emergency programming well, if a tad slowly. To the very human cop, it all looked quite natural.

He relayed as much information as he was allowed to Karen, showing as much sympathy and understanding as he could. The pretty robot dabbed at her cheeks and eyes with a tissue, soaking up the stream of accurately formulated artificial tears.

The circuitry just underneath her flesh-toned silicone exterior was working as hard and as fast as it ever had, and thankfully the Main Computer had not yet passed on any of its newly acquired flaws. The more the officer talked to the sobbing and despondent looking machine, the more he felt sorry for it.

Her microphones picked up all the sound in the room, immediately passing on the raw data to a series of dedicated audio processors within her head. These custom-designed chips used the latest and best software available to Robot Control to filter out all the background noise, including the sounds made by the fembot's own operation. After the real-time filtering of the sound stream, the binary code that represented the officer's spoken voice reached her main logic processors.

That power intensive procedure analysed the speech bit by bit, assigning probable meanings to each and every phoneme and syllable, then to the words and phrases that made up each sentence. AI filters acted on the collected data, eliminating the unlikely and spurious meanings to arrive at last at a digital kind of understanding of what the man was saying.

That in turn spurred new action in the circuitry that controlled her body, making her react physically and more or less realistically to his words. In this situation at least, her body language was even more important than the words her speaker would produce.

It was a testament to Robot Control's amazingly advanced technology that this all happened on the fly and in realtime - in an android built only to operate as a cashier.

Soon, the Policeman had finished with Karen, and left her crying on the couch. He told her that there was still hope that Heather and Byron would be found, but he didn't really believe it or care about it himself. It was no matter to the fembots in the house anyway. The robot that had been designated 'Heather' had already been written out of the Main Computer's plans, and that was that.

Now alone again, Karen got up and phoned the office supply store where she had been stationed up until her missed shift. With the help of the sad and true story that her roommate had suddenly disappeared, her supervisor's heart was softened. She let her keep her job, even without being disciplined.

The Maid came stiffly and loudly back upstairs to prepare Karen's garments for her shift, while Karen went back down to the lab to have her facemask re-done.

Downstairs, Maria received instructions from the computer to take Karen's face over to the makeup changing station. With no time wasted, the technician - still without the human-looking covering attached to the front of her electronic head - walked over to Karen and asked her politely to remove her own facemask.

Karen silently reached up to her head and pulled the silicone mask away from the wires and circuitry that lay beneath. She extended it out to Maria, who took it swiftly over to the waiting

table. The rounded part fit snugly into matching connectors, which held the mask in place while the technician pointed her open head at one of the monitors.

The Main Computer's detailed instructions appeared as streams of ones and zeroes flashing very quickly by on two screens, which Maria read simultaneously. When the instructions had been digitally internalised by the still sexy if a little tarnished technician, she used the provided tools to clean the mixed tears and makeup from the cute eyeless face.

Due to the precise spatial feedback and control in her hands and arms, Maria didn't even need to train her cameras at what she was doing. She watched the monitors the whole time while her manicured fingers sponged and wiped the silicone clean. In the same way, the fresh coat of cosmetics was applied. The assigned patterns and colours of lipstick, rouge, eyeliner, and other accents were expertly filled-in. They went on faster than humanly possible, and still Maria hadn't even glanced down at the face she was colouring.

The end of the process came with the last stroke of Maria's delicate machine wrist to Karen's long eyelashes. The faceless technician picked up the mask as the LEDs inside her own head kept blinking and flashing in complex patterns. She walked and carried the mask over to the waiting Karen robot, and pressed it firmly into the corresponding connectors.

Nanosopic locking mechanisms pulled the edges shut into a waterproof and invisible seal while the CPU in her chest found and reintegrated the facemask back among its long list of installed hardware components. Karen emotionlessly went back upstairs to get ready for work, fully programmed to deal with almost any question her unsuspecting friends could ask her about her disappeared roommate.

Just as quickly, Maria walked over to the table on which Anya layed. She took hold of the table by its steel handles and rolled that synthetic woman of unsurpassed beauty over to where the Renegade Robot Detection System had been found after the crash. To the Main Computer and its duct-tape wearing half-oriental input-output device, Denise was still nowhere to be found. There was currently no analogous set of heuristics algorithms installed within the supercomputer that would tell it she was lying right in front of Maria's electronic eyes.