

"The first thing we have to do," Mike said while he watched the road ahead, "is get Anya some clothes."

"I agree." said Tammy. "I compute that there is a high probability that Anya's current attire will arouse suspicion and unwanted attention."

She was right, of course, and Mike loved it when she talked like that - machine-like. He had trained his fembot companion well during the last three weeks. She acted completely human when they were in public, but flaunted her artificialness for him when they were alone. She made quite a body guard too, operating like a sentinel, never sleeping and always watching.

They had settled into somewhat of a routine together on the lam. Mike made sure she was sufficiently maintained and charged, and she used her super-human senses of sight and hearing to make sure no hostile 'persons' could get near him. The lines of programming that he and she had refined within her chest amounted to an unwavering adoration of him. Serving and protecting her master was now the reason for her existence. Her pseudo-sentience was based almost entirely on this digital love.

And he loved her back more than she could ever calculate. If it weren't for the threat of killer androids hunting him down, he would be having the time of his life right now. His beautiful robot companion was the woman of his dreams, and he savoured every moment they shared.

Mike looked at Anya's reflection in the rearview mirror. She reminded him of Tammy when he had first met her. She was so mechanical, so empty of emotion. Tammy put on an act like that for Mike sometimes, but Anya's genuine lack of any sense of self was a huge turn-on for him.

His eyes shifted to look at his girlfriend. She was staring straight ahead, obviously in the middle of some complex computation or another. He knew her well enough to wait until she was done.

Moments later, she was, and she spoke. "Mike, I have obtained maps of the nearest population center. There is a mall where we can buy clothing just 78.2 kilometers away."

"Ok." he said. "How much cash do we have left?"

"Eight-thousand and forty-five dollars and sixty-three cents." she said.

"I think we can spend a little on making our new friend fit in a bit more." he said.

So far, they had been extremely lucky with their financial situation. Tammy had access to a secret Robot Control bank account, and they had withdrawn as much as they could through automated tellers across the country. For safe keeping, the bundles of crisp bills were kept inside Tammy's head, wrapped around the cylindrical power supply in the back.

In about 40 minutes, they had pulled into the parking lot of the small-town mall. Mike had already gotten a plan for what would happen next."

"Tammy, you go into a clothing store and buy some things for Anya. Don't forget a nice thick winter coat."

"Understood." she said with a nod.

"I'll watch Anya." he said. "You have enough cash in your purse?"

"No, I'll need to take some out of my head." she said. She reached behind her head and grabbed her ponytail. With a tug and a soft clicking sound, a square panel opened up. She deftly plucked a bunch of fifty dollar bills out of the roll, got some stray hairs out of the way and patted the panel closed again.

"All set?" he said as he parked the car in a spot far away from the entrance.

"Charged and ready." she answered.

"You got your French language skills loaded and running?"

"Oui. Robot de Tammy prêt à obéir vos commandes, Maître."

"Be back soon." he said.

She blew a kiss his way and got out of the car. He watched her sexy walk as she quickly strutted toward the entrance, purse full of cash and chest full of data.

Mike looked back to Anya again. "Anya," he said, "you don't mind if we change your programming a bit, do you?"

"That does not compute." she said flatly.

"Should have guessed." he said quietly.

He looked around the empty part of the parking lot. The mall had probably just opened a while ago, so things were quite busy near the door. As he waited, he found himself worrying that someone would see Anya half naked in his back seat and figure out that she was an android. He then had to laugh at the stupidity of his distress.

Still, he felt uneasy. During their time together, he had never been separated from Tammy for more than a few minutes. He found that the time crawled by painfully slowly while he waited for her to finish shopping. Worried thoughts came, like what if she malfunctioned, or ran out of power, or had her facemask dislodged?

He tried to tell himself that he was worrying over nothing, but he was still troubled. He tried talking to Anya to get his mind off Tammy.

"So, Anya, you're the same model as Tammy?" he casually asked.

"Yes." she replied.

He just nodded, finding he didn't have much to say. He just kept thinking about how beautiful she was.

"You know," he said, "you're quite a good looking machine."

"That is a qualitative judgement. I am not programmed to calculate qualitative judgements."

He chuckled to himself. "Just wait till Tammy gets through with you. You'll be a whole new woman."

Anya sat silent for a while, then said "That does not compute."

Mike sighed and looked at the clock. Time was going very slowly.

"Anya, do you know anything about Fembot Command?"

She searched her hard drives for a while, then said "No."

"What about Robot Control?"

"Your query is too general. Please increase specificity."

"Never mind."

"That does not compute."

Mike rolled his eyes. normally that kind of talk would get him very horny, but in the current situation all he could think about was Tammy.

He turned on the radio and flicked through the dial. After some searching, he settled on the classic rock station. At least he had music now. Tammy usually provided the soundtrack to their times together by downloading music he requested to her hard drive and playing it through her amazingly great sounding speaker.

His toes and fingers began tapping to the rhythm as he let the familiar song work on relaxing his jangled nerves.

"You a big fan of Deep Purple, Anya?"

"That does not compute." she stated.

"You know, 'Slow Walking Walter... Fire Engine Guy'?"

"That does not compute." she said again.

"If you were human you'd be laughing right now." he said.

Almost an hour went by, and by the time Mike saw Tammy walking back to the car, he could almost feel an ulcer growing inside his gut.

"Here she comes!" he said, his mood instantly changing.

The black-haired fembot was weighted down by several large shopping bags. He was a bit surprised at the amount of clothing she had bought.

He popped the trunk for her as she came near. With his guidance, her AI had advanced to a point where she knew just what to do. She packed most of the bags into the trunk and brought two of them into the car with her.

"I got some nice clothes for you Anya." she said.

"I am wearing nice clothes." she pointed out.

"Yes, but these are more fitting for the weather." Tammy said as Mike pulled the car out of the lot.

"That does not compute." Anya said yet again.

"You know, I never thought I'd say this, but I'm getting sick of hearing that." he said.

Tammy made eye contact with him in the mirror and went stiff. In a cold robotic monotone she said "THAT DOES NOT COMPUTE."

Mike laughed out loud and drove the car once more on to the highway. He was so proud of Tammy.