

He knew, of course where each end of that electrical cord would end up. He got a nervous excited feeling as he thought of what lay ahead for him. He came back on to the main floor and saw the blonde robotic maidbot walk past. He listened to her loud beeping speakers and constantly whirring motors as it strutted about mechanically on its preprogrammed path.

He walked past Melanie as she efficiently and methodically put the groceries away. He kept telling himself that Heather was different. He was right in many ways. She was more advanced than the standard issue maid robot, but slightly less advanced than Melanie. Byron was able to convince himself that falling in love with Heather was like falling in love with a person.

Soon, he was back in the living room, back in the warmth of the fire. For a moment, he tried to decide just how to broach the subject. This was something he hadn't done for more than two decades, so it didn't exactly come naturally.

He sat back down next to the pretty brown haired android and tried to relax. She was still holding on to the half emptied glass of port. A flurry of processor activity conjured up a smile that was only slightly more than friendly on her facemask as he sat next to her with the power cord coiled up on his lap. Her electronic eyes scanned the scene, and her software isolated and refined the image to deduce the presence of a recharge cord. For all its sophistication, her AI could not at this point come up with the necessary set of computations that would make her curious as to why he had brought it up from the lab.

A change in track on the CD introduced a welcome distraction.

"Oh..." he said, suddenly entranced by the beautifully sculpted melody. "Arabesque N°1. Just listen..."

Heather turned her gaze away from him and stared out ahead at nothing in particular. It now looked as though she listened along with him, though her microphones and audio processors worked at the same rate as they had before. Only the circuitry that handled the highest of her artificial cognition systems changed their focus. In that respect, she did listen - recording and systematically analysing in real-time.

The beauty and feeling of the melody was no better than meaningless to her however. The emotional context in which to place the music existed nowhere within her chest like it did in Byron's brain.

His eyes were closed now, as he let the series of notes caress his eardrums. The pattern was all too familiar to him, but still quite emotive and moving. Gradually opening his eyes, he saw that Heather appeared to be listening, but surely not getting the message the music conveyed.

While the last gentle notes tumbled out so perfectly over themselves and the piece came to an end, Melanie came out of the kitchen.

"All tasks have been completed." was all she said. She put her coat back on, and just as fast as she had shown up, she was off again.

To where she was headed, Byron didn't know or care. He did feel envy at her relative freedom, though. And he found the irony quite bitter. The slave-like robot could leave but he couldn't.

He sighed and turned around to face Heather again. She was looking at him once more.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"About what?" she said.

"The music. How did you like it?"

"I don't know." she said. She looked down into the dark sweet wine she held.

He couldn't get over that. It looked like she was ashamed of her non-human status. He wondered if he could get a better look at that particular section of programming later.

As the romantic piano music continued, he looked down to the cord he held on his own lap.

"Heather," he said, trying hard to choose the right words, "You don't need to charge in your booth, do you?"

She looked back up at him, showing the kind of confidence that came with certainty. "No, I can use a recharge cord plugged into a standard wall outlet."

He tried to calm his nervousness, and wondered if her electronic mind could make the connection between what he said and what he held.

"Uh," he said as he moved closer. "What I'm saying... is, I'd like you to recharge in my room tonight."

She looked at him blankly. Just what kind of calculations were going on inside her chest, he could not tell.

"Why?" she said after a strange pause.

"I want to share my bed with you." he said.

He looked into her eyes, looking for a sign of comprehension.

He waited a moment, then said "Will you sleep with me tonight?"

She kept looking at him while her processors sifted through binary pulses of electricity at near light speed.

She eventually answered. "I don't sleep, Byron."

He was sort of ready for an answer like that. "I want to make love to you." he said, as sweetly and sincerely as he could.

Then she looked back down to her glass. "I don't know how to do that." she said. He could hear embarrassment in her voice again. This was some sophisticated programming indeed.

He took hold of her hand. His fingers stroked the warm artificial skin. "Drink your port." he said.

She looked back at him, then raised the glass to her lips and poured the rest of the fluid into her sturdy rubber 'stomach'. He watched her lick her top lip and appear to swallow, then took the empty glass and put it aside.

"I want to kiss you." he said. He moved close and put his arm around her waist while he leaned forward and pressed his mouth against hers.

She kissed him right back, acting upon dormant files in her Fembot Command supplied software. She not only knew how to kiss, she was very good at it. The sweet taste of the port was still on her lips, and made the wet silicone parts of her mouth even more pleasurable to touch.

They kissed for a long time, periodically shifting on the couch to make it easier. Several minutes went by, with Byron's hands finding and feeling the more interesting parts of Heather's torso.

Byron hadn't kissed a woman like this in a very long time. Heather wasn't programmed to go any further, but that wouldn't stop the determined human.

When they finished that first deep kiss, Heather aimed her cameras right at Byron's eyes and said "I don't know what else to do. I'm not programmed..."

Byron cut her off with another kiss. He pulled back after a little while and said "I'll tell you what to do. Don't worry."

They looked into each other's eyes for a long time in silence. The processes going on inside each of them were so different, yet they were as close now as they had ever been. What the man saw as love, the artificial woman experienced as coded acquiescence and a type of programmed obedience.

But it was a moment of beauty, with a male and a female doing what they were meant to do.

"Shall we finish in my bedroom?" he said sweetly.

Heather slowly nodded, showing her realistic glass eyes to him in all their seductive loveliness.

They stood up, and held hands as they walked down the hallway and into the room where Byron slept in his captivity.

"I will do what you tell me to do." Heather said as Byron turned on the light and closed the door behind them.