

In the morning they awoke, and got started on their daily routine. Now that her batteries were fully charged, Byron unplugged Heather from the wall outlet and took the computer off of her so she could get dressed and go downstairs to commune with Natasha's consoles. He replaced her chest and charge port panels too, just to make sure she was sent back to the lab the way she had arrived.

Her manner changed instantly, from that of a person to that of an android when he unplugged the laptop. She was still breathtakingly realistic this way, but Byron knew exactly which traits and actions of hers revealed her as a machine.

"Give Natasha a kiss for me." he said as he sent her off to the basement lab.

"Why?" she asked as she looked back at him with a hint of that blank fembot stare.

"Never mind." he said.

She paused and smiled, then continued on her way. Byron watched her walk out and put the laptop on the dresser. He went and had his shower.

Worry crept in right away. It was the same worry that had bugged him since he began this project with the portable computer. It was always the worst while she was in the basement hooked up to the cold inhuman machinery, and it never really went away.

Byron hadn't done any work on Project H for days now, and he knew he was pressing his luck by ignoring it any longer. If that went on, sooner or later the ones who had kidnapped him would demand more - either from him or from someone else.

He shook those thoughts out of his head and finished soaping himself up. He made a point to be quick today, though he also tried to be as clearheaded as possible. He dressed quick and made a big breakfast, and wolfed it down with purpose.

Making good time, he took a look at the programming on the laptop. He was immediately met with another surprise. For a moment, he got that feeling he got when he realised things were going wrong, but the more code he sifted through, the more he came to know that this new development was good.

Heather hadn't changed any of the software Byron had written, but she had added to it. Now, upon connection to the laptop, there were a few instructions of her own that loaded into her memory. Chief among them was a designation: Byron is the Master Unit.

When he first read and deciphered that, he wasn't sure what it would mean to the Heather robot running all of those programs simultaneously. He read through some more of her self-written instructions. The Master Unit was in command of her software pleasure center. The Master Unit was to be obeyed. The Master Unit was to be loved.

He couldn't believe all the surprises she had given him in the short time he had known her. This new development made him think of the pretty brunette machine almost as a living thing.

He wanted to rush down to the basement and swoop her up in his arms, but he knew he would have to wait until she returned. A wide smile lifted his face as he thought to himself that he was no longer alone, and to top it all off - loved.

The artificial-looking, sounding and smelling maidbot came through at that time, her movements looking so clumsy but being so very controlled.

Byron stood up to greet her, just to revel in his excited mood. "Hello, sunshine." he said to her.

She kept looking straight ahead, her plastic mouth and face showing a lack of any expression at all.

"May you one day find love, miss robot maid." he said as she passed him on her way to the basement stairs.

He sighed a contented sigh and got his head together for his plans. He was invigorated now with both levity and urgency. First, he went into the spare room and partially undressed. He found a pair of sweatpants and put them on. They were a little small, but he didn't really care. He then got a sweatshirt out, and again put the small and tight garment over his torso. Then he put on his regular clothes over that.

He stopped on his way out of that room and made a mental check of his goals. He headed next back to his bedroom. He picked up the aluminum case containing ten fresh bodily fluid cartridges. He brought that out with him and put it in the living room.

Heather came back upstairs at that time. He swiftly walked over and greeted her with a passionate kiss. She returned it the same way, but without being connected to his new programs, she didn't get the significance of it.

"I love you." he said.

She just smiled as he led her by the hand to the spare room. He stripped her down to her underwear and strapped the computer to her back again.

"More tests, Heather." he said as he reconnected her to her expanded self.

Her eyes lit up as she generated instructions to become sexually aroused. She stepped forward and rubbed her crotch on his thigh.

"Not now, please." he said. "We have a lot of... work to do."

"Okay." she said in that sexy sweet voice of hers. "I love you."

"And I love you, you mean everything to me right now." he said, making the briefest pause to look into her eyes and see something that looked like understanding. If it wasn't understanding, it was at the very least a successful registration of his syntax.

He got out some clothes for her, and helped her get dressed fast. He stuck her chest panel and recharge port covers in one of her pockets. When they were done, he led her into the living room.

"Let's go snowshoeing." he said.

"Isn't it early for that?" she asked.

"Yeah, but change is good." he answered.

He loosened the straps of his end of the harness and put it on himself, then connected the chain between them. With a click, the chain was locked into place and they got their winter gear on.

When their snowshoes had been strapped and buckled into place, Byron grabbed the aluminum case and took a deep breath. He looked at Heather. She looked back at him and smiled.

"Shall we go?" she said cheerfully.

"One more thing." he said.

He trudged over to the rack of CDs Melanie had brought him and stuffed a few favourite ones into the pockets of his coat.

"Let's go." he said.

They went out the door and Heather locked and closed it behind her.

"Which way should we go today?" Heather asked.

Byron dropped his charade and got right to the point. "Heather, where's my car?"

She was silent for a moment that went on a little too long for Byron's comfort. "In the garage, over there." she said finally, pointing out with her gloved hand.

He led her over to the side of the large cabin and looked around at the two car garage. There was a regular-sized door on the side of the structure. They walked up to it.

Byron reached out and tried to open it. It was locked.

He stood back and thought for a moment. "Heather, do you think you can punch a hole through this door with your fist?"

Heather computed and calculated. "Yes." she said.

Byron took her glove off. "Punch a hole right here." he said, pointing to a spot just above and to the left of the knob.

"Okay." she said. She spread her legs apart, pulled her arm back, and let her silicone-covered metal arm fly into the door at top speed. There was a loud crack. Her fist went right through the wood.

Byron bared his teeth in a big smile. "Excellent!" he said. "Put this back on." he said as he handed her the glove.

He reached through the hole she had made and with a twist of his fingertips, unlocked the door. They went inside.

He could see his car in the dark as he scanned the walls for a light switch. He found one and flicked it. There in the middle was his long lost automobile - without tires.

His face went pale. "Oh no." he said. "I should have known it. FUCK!"

Heather looked silently and serenely at him. "What's wrong, Byron?"

He slowed his fast shallow breathing and tried to think of what to do. It was too late to turn back now.

"Heather, use your internet connection and find out where the nearest road is from here."

She looked at him and blinked. Wireless signals went out from her head, and came back shortly after with an answer. "There is a highway 6.2 miles north by northwest of here."

"Which direction?" he said. "Point to it."

She calmly extended her arm out to the woods.

"Let's go."

They walked off in the direction she had shown him. He gave her the heavy aluminum case to carry and cursed Fembot Command for thinking ahead enough to remove the tires from his car.

"Let me know if we're going the wrong way." he said.

"Okay." she said sweetly. "Where are we going?"

"Home." he said.

He looked down at his feet. He was extremely glad that the fembots had supplied them with snowshoes, but he realised too that they left very obvious tracks. He quickened his pace as his heart rate did the same.

They had at least two hours of walking ahead of them, and who knows how long to wait before they flagged down a vehicle. The road to which they were headed wasn't exactly busy.

The two of them were silent during their escape. Only the sound of the crunching snow, and the swish of their sleeves against their coats was heard above their own breathing and the light frigid wind. They soon found themselves surrounded by trees, in terrain that was hard to cross quickly. Byron was again glad he had exercised every day with these snowshoes on his feet.

By the time they were half way to the highway, a car with wheels pulled up to the lonely cabin in the winter woods. Melanie pressed the button on the garage door remote and waited for the big brown door to swing open. She smiled her blank smile as she drove in and parked next to the human's disabled auto.

With mechanical calmness, she turned off the engine and looked around. She got out and closed her door. She made a quick scan of the inside of the garage, recording information that was useless to her, but vital to Fembot Command.

When her scan was done, the plastic French maid entered through the door that led into the house. Melanie opened the passenger side door, and with the help of her less sophisticated sister robot, unloaded the cargo from the back seat. An unconscious Dustin was carried carefully into the house so he could be laid down on the bed in the spare room.

