

Two thirds of the automated pursuing posse, fully programmed and with cold mechanical determination, charged upstairs to get dressed in their uniforms. Each put on the black underwear, suits and sunglasses that made them look so severely cold and callous. They acted quickly, as did the maidbot. She prepared their purses for them by packing guns and reprogramming cubes into them. Both Heather and Byron were to be captured if possible, destroyed at the very least.

With all preparations made, the two blondes charged out of the house and off down the track that the human and his companion had left. The third of these hunter droids would join them as soon as she had been properly assembled, prepared and programmed.

All of the commotion helped to rouse Dustin from his unconsciousness. He awoke in as much of a panic as his heavily sedated body would allow him.

When he saw Melanie standing by the door, some of that panic subsided.

He cleared his throat and spoke. "Mel?"

"Hi Dustin." she said. She walked over to the side of the bed.

He sat up, looking at her and at his unfamiliar surroundings. He was glad to see her. "Where are we? What happened?"

"I have to tell you something first." she said. She sat down on the bed and turned her body to face him.

He looked at her for a long moment. They had been dating for a few weeks, and things had been going good between them. Together they had gotten quite intimate with each other. As part of her programming, and to keep him interested in her she had let him have sex with her frequently.

Dustin didn't like the way her words sounded. As groggy as he was he was sure he was about to be dumped. Either that or offered a consolation friendship. But nothing could have prepared him for what he was about to see.

"Dustin, I'm not human." she said. Her eyes watched for his response.

In his current state of mind, it was as if she spoke a different language.

"What?" he said.

"I'm not a human being, I'm a robot."

Dustin just stared. "What are you talking about?"

Melanie kept her body turned toward him while she moved her hands up to her face. She kept looking right at him while she grasped the sides of her face and with a click removed it from the rest of her head.

Dustin gasped repeatedly as her arms lowered. His eyes met hers, now uncovered and big-looking naked spheres amid a mess of electronics. Each flash of each light emitting diode served only to confound and scare him further as he let his eyes see more of what his own realistic lover had kept so well hidden.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you." she said, not that she was even capable of being sorry about anything.

He watched the deceptively simple looking speaker where her mouth once was. It vibrated as it produced her words and her voice.

He could feel sweat bead on his forehead and on his palms. Everything else felt numb.

"Why?" he said in a weakened voice.

"Why what babe?" she said, calling him by one of their pet-names. "Could you be more specific?"

The only feeling now that cut through his numbness and shock was the trembling, and it took all of his energy not to pass out again. "Why are you a robot?" he asked.

The pattern of flashing that the lights in her head made changed as she computed his statement, and again as she formulated an answer. Dustin surely missed it though.

"I don't know." she said.

Melanie was running the most advanced human emulating AI that Fembot Command had available right now, yet that was the best she could do with a question like that.

Again, Dustin was hardly in any shape to notice or judge the realness of her responses. For him, this whole scene was some sort of awful dream, and he was sure he would soon wake up.

But still the fembot stared him down with all of those intimidating electronics. She patiently waited for him to make the next move.

"Why am I here?"

"We need you to help Byron finish Project H for us."

Dustin had never heard of Project H, but of course he remembered that name. A month ago, Byron had disappeared. And so now Dustin knew that he had too.

Out in the woods, the two pony-tailed blonde androids were getting bogged down in the deep snow by their lack of appropriate footwear. All they had on were shoes, and their mechanical feet were soaking wet from constant submersion in the snow. As cold as it was outside, their robot bodies were overheating due to the strain of the chase.

But the errors in judgement made by the Master Computing Device meant that they were not gaining much on Byron and Heather.

Those two had by now made it to the side of the road, and waited in desperation for a vehicle to pass.

After almost a quarter of an hour, a large truck finally approached. Byron stood by and waved his arms, but the truck went right by him. The driver only stared strangely at the pair trying to hitch a ride in the middle of nowhere.

Byron turned to watch the truck and their first chance of a fast exit fade off in the distance.

He clenched his teeth and bit his tongue. "Next one that comes along, we stand right in front of it." he said angrily.

Heather miscalculated the source of his anger. "I'm sorry." she said, activating some of her dormant personality traits and glancing down to her feet.

Byron walked close and embraced her, even though it pressed some precious warm air out from under his coat. "I'm not mad at you." he said in a more comforting tone. "I'm mad at that fucking driver."

He belatedly flipped the bird to the long gone trucker, and they got into position and waited again. They stood right in the middle of the road, ready to jump quickly into the path of what they hoped would be oncoming traffic.

"How you doing?" he asked the fembot.

"Okay. Everything's functioning like it should."

"Don't worry." he said. "We'll be far away from here soon."

"I don't know how to worry." she reminded him.

He looked at her and smiled a tiny smile through his stern frown. "I wish I could say that."