

Mike and Byron got into the green car and took off down the well kept streets. They could still smell the smoke from the burnt plastic in the vehicle. Mike had been around this charming town earlier, so he knew exactly where to go. Most of their shopping could probably be done at the big office superstore a few miles away.

The two humans didn't say much to each other on the way. They were both pretty exhausted, and both very hungry. But they both knew that if any progress on Heather's repairs was to be made tonight, they would have to worry about filling their stomachs later.

As the two men were slowly checking off items on the list, Tammy and Anya were preparing Heather for a major set of repairs, and some improvised rebuilding as well. When they had gotten the damaged robot's clothes off her, Mike's girls had decided to unstrap the laptop from her as well. It was also damaged, as Heather fell with the weight of all her machinery on to it when she had been shot.

The double hinge of the portable computer was busted, and the two parts remained connected only by the current carrying ribbon that had once been concealed. The screen was smashed, and the other side had cracked open.

The fembots who examined this scene had heard Byron explain the reason for connecting Heather to this laptop. Tammy computed its importance and had Anya scan it. They compiled another list of things Mike and Byron would need to buy on a second trip.

The evening went by fast. Byron did all the talking while Mike pushed a red cart full of expensive memory sticks, motherboards and other gizmos. Byron had thought of the excuse that all the computers in their office needed upgrades, and that seemed to explain their odd purchases to the curious staff.

When they were done at the office store, they headed to a mall in search of an electronics boutique, where they could find the miscellaneous tools, wiring, switches and circuits they would need. They finally managed to wrap up their shopping trip by closing time, and hurried back to the car and back to the motel.

Anya hid and Tammy covered up Heather with a blanket as a key unlocked the door. Mike and Byron walked in with their shopping bags, and the fembots greeted them with the news.

"We need you to get more parts." Tammy said as she handed Mike another list. "Heather's laptop is busted too."

"How bad?" Byron asked. He feared that all of his work on her extended personality and personhood might be lost.

Tammy calculated the reasons for his worry and interest. "The hard drives are intact, but the laptop won't work the way it is." she said. "It got squashed pretty good."

Mike looked at the list as his stomach growled. "Shop tomorrow. Pizza now." he said caveman-like.

Byron surely agreed, but he was silent as he slumped himself down into the chair against the wall. He looked at the still damaged and partially disassembled woman on the bed. Anya had come out of hiding and pulled the covers away from Heather once more.

"Get the food delivered to Byron's room." Tammy said. "We'll start repairing what we can.

"Okay." Mike said. "Just knock on the wall if you need help."

"Or I can phone you." Tammy said as she started going through the shopping bags.

"That'll work too." Mike said. "Byron," he said to pull him out of his trance, "Let's go."

Mike hugged and kissed Tammy, who still wore Anya's face. Byron stood up and together the men went over to the room next door.

They silently got in and turned on the lights. "Can you order?" Mike said. "The only French I know is 'j'ai une boîte de stylo'."

Byron didn't laugh or even smirk as he sat down and opened up the yellow pages.

"C'mon, I'm just trying to lighten things up." Mike said.

"I don't see how they could be much worse." Byron said without looking up.

"You could be dead." Mike paused a bit as Byron looked at him. Mike pulled his collar aside and leaned forward. "See this?" he asked as Byron studied the pinkish scar on Mike's shoulder. "This is a gift from another one of those blonde fembots. She was aiming at my head. Tammy saved my life."

Byron looked at the scar. He looked back into Mike's eyes. "You're right. Sorry. Tell you what, I'll laugh tomorrow."

Mike sat down on the bed and looked at the CDs Byron had put on the table. "There's some good stuff here." he said. "It's too bad my CD players are in the other room."

Byron was silent again as he zeroed in on the pizza restaurant section. He looked for a while at the pages in front of him then put his finger on an ad. "What kind of pizza would you like?"

"Doesn't matter to me." he said. "I'll eat anything on a pizza."

Byron picked up the phone and punched the right series of numbers into the keypad. Mike sat silently by as Byron spoke in fluent French to the person at the restaurant. When he was done, he hung up the phone and put his head in his hands.

Mike let him have some more time alone, and went to the washroom. He wondered how well he could stay composed if it were Tammy lying damaged from a gunshot on the bed next door.

Over in that room, the two robots worked fast, without the need to act as slow as humans would. No one would see them move their parts around so fast, so they were safe. Tammy worked with a soldering gun on her own facemask while Anya began removing sections of burnt and cracked circuit boards from Heather's fully exposed abdomen.

While the pizza delivery guy was knocking on Byron's door, Tammy fastened her own facemask back into place and started up some diagnostic programs as she snapped Anya's facemask back on the front of her open head for her.

When those tests were done, and with no problems detected, Tammy went over to help Anya. She connected a long cord from Anya's chest to her own so they could act in unison during the repair process. They now were as one mind with four expertly moving arms to get the damaged parts out of heather's chest and rebuild what was missing.

Mike and Byron were stuffing the bland but much needed food into their mouths as that went on. They gulped down ice-cold watery soda from large plastic cups and tried to talk about things other than fembots - damaged or otherwise.

It didn't work too well.

"I'm going over to that liquor store after this." Byron said. "I need a drink tonight, how 'bout you?"

"I'll pass." Mike said. "I don't drink anymore. And believe me, it's not like I couldn't use one right now."

Mike saw a smirk come on to Byron's face finally. "So, what are you going to do when we get Heather all fixed up?" he asked.

"Do you really think that will happen?" Byron asked before lifting another wedge from the box.

"I do." he said. "If anyone can fix her, it's my girls."

"I try not to get too optimistic about things." Byron said. "I'll wait and see. I really don't like that laptop being damaged."

"That'll be the easiest to fix, once we get the right parts tomorrow."

"What if all my data is gone?" he asked. "Sorry, I don't mean to sound so upset, but I worked for a very long time on getting Heather the way she was. If anything goes wrong..."

He didn't finish his sentence. They were both getting very tired. Byron finished eating and went to wash up.

Mike wished he was better at conversation. He thought about some things and waited for Byron to emerge from the washroom.

"You're going for that drink now?" he asked.

"Yes." Byron said as he got his coat.

"I'm going to send Anya here tonight. She'll protect you." he said.

Byron looked at him. When he thought about it, he was glad Mike could spare one of his women for that. "Thank you." he said.

"I'm going to bed now, so goodnight." he said. He offered Byron his hand.

"Goodnight." he said. "Let's hope tomorrow is better."

"We'll make it better, Byron." Mike said, having no idea of how that could be done.

They exited the room together. Byron walked around the building and across the street to buy his booze while Mike went back to his room.

He called out "It's me." as he put his key into the door lock. Tammy checked the peephole this time, so there was no need to hide any exposed android circuitry.

Mike immediately saw that Tammy's facemask had been fixed. That made him happy. He went up to her and gave her a kiss.

"It's nice to have you all fixed up." he said. "How's everything coming along?"

"Good so far." Tammy said, using her advanced AI programming to compress the myriad details of a potential status report into three words.

"Anya," Mike said to the exotic robot beauty, "Stay in Byron's room tonight. Protect him."

The other fembot looked up from what she was doing and registered his command. "Yes Mike." she said.

He watched her finish up, unplug herself from Tammy's chest and fetch her purse. He looked at her sexy body and thought about something as she walked toward the door.

"Anya," he said.

She halted and looked back to him.

"He's out buying something right now. But when he comes back..." Mike thought it over to be certain, "offer your company to him."

Anya stared back at him. He didn't know if she could comprehend.

"Do you understand?" he said, trying to banish the illogical feelings of jealousy that came to him along with his order to the robot. "Offer to sleep with him. But don't rape him if he refuses."

Anya's electronic circuits computed his words. "Yes Mike." she said.

She stood there waiting by the door. He gave her butt a squeeze and reminded himself that she was not capable of choosing Byron over him. "Play some of his CDs for him too, if he wants."

"Yes Mike." she said again.

Not long after, the sound of Byron's door opening and closing was heard. Mike wondered now if Byron would be offended by his unusual hospitality, but decided to let the tall brunette android go to him with her current orders intact.

"See you tomorrow." he said.

Anya stared back blankly and walked out the door.

Mike turned his attention to Tammy, who was putting things away and preparing herself for bedtime. He looked at her beautiful eyes as she unwound her recharge cord.

"Now," he said "you protect me."