

For Byron, the night didn't pass smoothly at all. Many times he got up to turn up the thermostat, which didn't seem to work. Many times he rolled over on one side then the other, which was no help in getting comfortable.

When he wasn't thinking about Heather, he was wondering how warm Anya could get. He still didn't lay so much as a finger on her out of stubbornness and pride. She could have kept him very warm indeed had he let her.

Instead, he lay there listening to the sounds of this unfamiliar town. They came in too easily through the motel's walls, but they did distract him a little bit from replaying that one scene over and over again.

Over and over again the heartless blonde fembot took aim, and over and over again Heather was knocked down by the blast. In torturous repetition he saw the moment her simulated life went out of her eyes.

He started wishing he had never left the cabin. There he could still be, in a very warm room with his artificial companion by his side instead of that raven-haired computer. The way she acted, Anya to him was not much better than the strikingly unreal maid he had left behind.

Byron even thought about going back. He wondered what would happen if he just showed up at the door, and asked Natasha to let him in again and fix his broken lover.

On top of all that, the darkness and the coldness was maddening. He turned once more away from Anya under the covers and pulled his body closer in on itself.

Dawn came early, and unwelcome to him. Loud children ran back and forth in front of his room, yelling their childish things to each other as they waited for their mother to take them away.

Byron opened his eyes and looked at the clock. It was just after six. He closed his eyes again and tried to sleep some more, but the hole that had been torn into his psyche let in too much howling wind and icy frost.

Mike was waking up around then too, thanks to the hyper kids outside. He held on to the soft and warm body of his own robot, and had stayed comfortable through the night thanks to her heat.

"It's cold in here." he said as he got up. He looked over at the thermostat, which was already set all the way up.

He looked across the room to the other bed. Heather was under a blanket, with most of the front of her abdomen opened up.

"You got that list of more parts we'll need?" he asked Tammy.

"Processing." she said, just because he liked hearing it. "I'll write it down when you're in the shower."

"Ok." he said after a yawn. "Let's let Byron sleep."

"Are you going to go shopping by yourself?"

"No, you come with me."

"I calculate that there's enough work to do on Heather and her parts for both me and Anya to do. I think you should take Byron with you."

He thought about that for a while. "Sure. I should have known you would be computing the best use of our time."

Tammy got the covers out of her way and unplugged herself. She stood up and started to coil up her recharge cord. "I'll start from where I left off last night after I get dressed."

"Oh, don't get dressed on my account." he joked. "I think that would look neat - you naked and repairing another android."

Tammy put one hand on her hip and pointed at the washroom with the other. "Go shower, filthy human."

Mike laughed. "Give me a kiss." he ordered.

Tammy turned around and picked her facemask off the nightstand. She held some hair out of the way and snapped it back on to the front of her plastic and metal head.

Mike went toward her and gave her a quick kiss and a quick feel between her legs.

"Brush your teeth too, stinky." she said.

Mike stuck his tongue out at her and walked into the washroom. With luck, the hot water tank would have something left in it.

While Mike was washing up in there, the phone rang. Tammy instantly computed the meaning of the noise and sat down on the bed to answer the call.

"Hello?" she said sweetly.

"Hello, Tammy? It's Byron."

"Good morning!" she said with bright cheer. "How did you sleep?"

"Not too well. How did you charge?"

"Good." she said as she laughed. "What's on your mind?"

Byron paused for a while before he answered. He found himself thinking of how Tammy had been programmed. "Um, you said yesterday we need more parts to fix Heather. Do you have a list made up yet?"

"In my chest I do, but I'll write it down on paper for you and Mike."

"Okay. I really need to have Heather fixed as soon as possible. Can I talk to Mike?"

"He's in the shower. Why don't you take a shower, get dressed and come over here?"

Byron felt like he should be the one giving the machine suggestions, but that was his plan anyway.

"Sure." he said and hung up.

Tammy's AI expected some friendly words of parting, but she knew he had hung up when she heard the clicking from the phone. She put her end back on the hook and in a flash processed the instruction sets necessary for writing down that list of parts needed.

Byron stayed sitting on the edge of the bed, wrapped up in the blankets that were so much warmer where they had covered Anya.

Anya stood naked and motionless off to the side after receiving a curt order to move from the stressed-out human.

Byron stood up with the covers still over him and looked at Anya. "I'm going to have a shower now. I guess you're going to stay right here?" he said, adding "in that same fucking spot?" in his thoughts.

"Yes." she responded.

He turned away and went to have his shower. He immediately felt bad for treating Anya so inhumanely, and then immediately reminded himself that she wasn't human.

He thought only about Heather the whole time he had his shower. Back at the cabin, she would have been downstairs and hooked up to the massive supercomputer there while he washed up. He wondered if he would ever have her back like he had before.

There were a couple of favours he needed to ask of Mike. One of them was for money, and the other was for a chance to look at Tammy's programming.