

The car rumbled along on the highway, driven by yet another woman with a mission. Elaine was responsible for making sure her passengers made it to Robot Control Station 17. Her plastic-covered metal hands gripped the wheel while her CPU processed the software necessary for her to drive and look like a person at the same time.

The blonde android wore classy business attire over her expensive electromechanical body, along with a waterproof ecru overcoat. She had a slight, friendly kind of smile set on her facemask as she watched the road and calculated streams of incoming data.

After a rough patch that made the car rattle slightly more, Byron snapped forward into some kind of consciousness again. With his eyes still closed, he first heard and then tried to identify the sound of the vehicle. When he realised it was a car and he was a passenger, he opened his eyes.

That wasn't easy, as the gas that Robot Control had used on him made his eyelids feel like leaden weights. But he managed to get them open and focus his eyes on the scene in front of him. He first saw the winter landscape through the windshield, and soon he figured out that he was in the back seat of a vehicle.

He looked at the driver. She was not familiar to him. He looked beside him.

There she was. His heart recognised his woman before his brain did. She had been dressed in the same style of overcoat as the woman behind the wheel. He tried to say her name, but his mouth was too dry, so he woke himself up even more and cleared his throat.

"Heather?" he said quietly.

The driver looked in the rearview mirror at his reflection. "Hello Byron," she said. "My name is Elaine. I will drive you to Robot Control Station 17."

Byron just looked at her, then looked back at Heather. "She's not damaged, is she?" he asked.

"No." Elaine said. "Your robot is deactivated. You may activate it if you wish."

Byron liked the sound of that. He looked at Heather, and at the coat he would have to unbutton to get to her chest. He looked back at Elaine. "You're a robot too, right?" he asked.

"Yes." she said.

Byron smiled. He now remembered all that Maria had told him before he had been gassed again. Ottawa and Heather sure sounded like home to him.

He was thankful and relieved. Then he thought about his friend. He felt worried and guilty.

"Elaine," he said, "what will happen to Mike?"

She stared out ahead for a while then looked at his reflection. "Mike is undefined," she said.

Byron hoped for the best. He realised that was all he could do for his fellow human now.

He turned his attention now to Heather. He smiled as he undid her coat enough to get to her power button. He was grinning in anticipation as he pressed the red square in the rebuilt access panel.

The thought of Tammy and Anya fixing Heather flashed through his mind as he listened for the cues of beeps and clicks that told him Heather was waking up again.

Her eyes opened and she poured the monotone version of her voice from her speaker. "Heather robot number 742655A-FC activated. Loading peripheral extensions.... loading.... loading.... "

Byron's heart beat fast as he waited for his girlfriend to become herself again. He saw that she had when she blinked and looked around the vehicle.

"Byron!" she said. She leaned over, almost throwing herself on him, and started to passionately kiss him.

"Mmmmm!" he said.

She pulled away and smiled at him.

"Heather, we're going back to Ottawa!" he said.

He saw that she didn't seem to share his enthusiasm.

"We're going home!" he said.

"As long as I'm with you." she said, and kissed him again.

They kept kissing for a long time. They didn't care that Elaine could see them as they held each other and showed their love to each other in romantic, physical ways.

"Are we going to go back to the archive?" Heather asked.

"I don't know. I don't think so." Byron said. "But we can live in my house, and I'll work on making you and robots like you as real as I can."

Elaine spoke up. "Byron, you will live at Robot Control Station 17."

Byron held Heather out of the way to look at the rearview mirror. Elaine's glass eyes were looking right at him.

"I can't live at my house and commute?" he asked.

"No." she replied simply.

Heather looked back at Elaine. "Byron wants his own house." she said.

The driver said nothing.

Byron knew he shouldn't push the issue. "Heather, darling, it's okay." he said to her as he stroked her chin and gave her another kiss.

"Byron will live at Robot Control Station 17 with the Heather unit." Elaine said.

"Is Karen still there?" Heather asked.

"Yes." Elaine said.

"Oh, Byron, you have to meet Karen. She's really cute!"

Byron grinned and chuckled. "I'll be sure to say hi." he said.

"Come here." he said as he pulled Heather close to him. He held on tightly to her as she stroked his arm with her mechanical hand.

He had mixed emotions for sure. There was still a little trepidation in all of this too. He knew that for now his fate was still in the hands of inhuman, emotionless machines. But it seemed like he would have some freedom, and maybe it wouldn't be so bad with his beautiful lady friend by his side.

He sighed as he felt his body relax into the seat. Maybe he could even learn to love all that circuitry.