

With his hands on his hips and his shoulders back, Brad looked around the basement to see where he should start first. It was a mess down there. Lots of stuff could probably just be thrown out, but for a moment he thought the best thing to do would be to hold a garage sale. Brad imagined a "Garage Sale" sign stapled to a pole, then mentally inserted a 'b' after the 'r'.

He decided to go upstairs for some trash bags and a beer. He also brought a radio down with him as the game would be starting in about twenty minutes. He cracked open the can and poured some of the satisfying drink into his mouth, then began to sort through all the junk. A cloud of dust flew as he undid the lid of the first box. He resigned himself to getting dirty at that point.

A little later as Brad was draining that first can, his robotic fiancée was parking that big blue SUV in their driveway. The kids were rather more animated than usual, and started tearing through the house and stomping up and down the stairs. Brad now regretted not ponying-up the cash for summer camp.

He heard Pam open the basement door and come down a few steps.

"What do you want for lunch, dear?" she asked.

He looked over and up at her from his place behind a stack of boxes in the corner. All he could see right now were her legs and hips. Her curves got him aroused again.

"Uh," he stammered when he realised he was staring too long, "Whatever you make for the kids I'll have some of that."

"Chef Boyardee?" she asked, awaiting his confirmation.

"Sure, why not." he said.

"Okay, I'll open two cans." she said and turned around to go.

He watched her legs and her butt move as she disappeared from view. He got back to work.

Pam went to find the kids outside and told them to wash up before lunch. After negating their complaints with impeccably processed logic, she went to go set the table and prepare their meals. She called down to her man in the basement and told him lunch was ready.

"Can you bring it down?" he asked.

Pam computed the parameters of the situation. "Why don't you come up and have lunch with us?" she asked.

He rolled his eyes. "Okay." he said. He climbed the stairs while Pam looked a little vacantly at him. "For you." he said quietly as he passed her.

He went to wash his face and hands while Pam took care of lunch and the kids. From the washroom upstairs he could hear her raising her voice to Marcus, telling him not to bring the super soaker into the house. Brad would be glad to go back in to work tomorrow.

He admitted he didn't know how Pam put up with those kids all day. He figured it was all part of being a woman. Little did he know it was because as a machine she had no limits to her patience. But she put on a good act when she calculated that she needed to.

As the family shared their lunchtime meal, Brad was a little silent and subdued. He couldn't help but be preoccupied with thoughts of the man he had just hired to tail his fiancée. He hated this kind of indecisiveness that seemed to always tag along with those major choices he had to make.

That reminded him of his second thoughts about marrying Pam. He looked at her as she talked to his daughter. He didn't know why she never seemed to emotionally connect with the kids. Now that he thought about it, she didn't connect that way with his friends, or with anybody for that matter.

He picked up a napkin and started to wipe some sweat from his forehead.

"Something wrong dear?" Pam said as she trained her video cameras on his image.

"No." he said as a reflex. "Just... a little worried about that client. I was supposed to do all that stuff yesterday. I hope today wasn't too late to be doing all that for him."

Brad shut up when he realised he was over-explaining. He looked over to his son. "So how was your night, Tiger?"

Marcus smiled "We played Halo 2! Neil has a new X-Box. Dad, can we get a new XBox? Please?"

Brad wanted to laugh, but kept an authoritative straight face. "Maybe." he said. "I don't know if you're old enough for those kind of games yet."

The boy rolled his eyes. "Dad! I'm almost eleven!"

"I know how old you are." he said. He shoveled the remaining pieces of dough and meat into his mouth and got up from the table. "I have to finish up in the basement."

He turned his back on the three still sitting there as he went to go get another beer. He didn't want to admit it but one of the main reasons he wanted to marry Pam was just so he didn't have to deal with the kids so often.

For the next 90 minutes, Brad slowly picked away at his chores downstairs while Pam watched the kids and kept working on some of those difficult calculations. She still couldn't figure out her man's recent behaviour, but that issue would in time be settled by a powerful supercomputer.

Eventually, the time came for her to get her near-daily maintenance session at Fembot Command. She went back down a few of those basement stairs and called out "Brad honey, I'm off to get my hair done now."

"Okay." he said as he put the trash bag down and turned off the radio. He picked up his beer and went to go watch the rest of the game on TV. He got upstairs and saw Pam hug the kids goodbye. She smiled seductively and waved at him from across the room, then walked out the door.

Brad turned on the TV and picked up his phone. He surfed up to the right channel and waited until he heard the sound of the SUV's engine fade out into the distance. Then he put the remote down and walked back to the basement to make that phone call.

"Hi, Colin?" he said "It's Brad."

"How's it going?" Colin asked.

"Pretty good." he answered. "You?"

"Not bad"

"Hey," he said in a hushed voice, "she just left."

"Okay."

"Email me later, tell me what you saw."

"Got it." Colin said. "I'm on my way. Talk to you later."

"Bye." Brad said and hung up. He looked around and went to go see the remainder of the ball game.