

Inside the suburban Fembot Command station, the frantic minutes turned into hours as the electronic beauties in the basement worked to fix one of their kind. Though they could move and work at superhuman speeds, they still weren't able to repair the Pam unit until over six hours had passed.

It was only at the end of those seven hours that the Master Computing Device attempted to generate an excuse Pam could use for her absence. While the robotic soccer-mom was getting her batteries replaced, the supercomputer was stuck in the worst way on what to make her say.

Another 20 minutes went by before the vast artificial intelligence encased in all those consoles simply gave up. It figured that the generation of such an elaborate excuse would take another three hours, after which an entirely different excuse would be required to explain that further delay. So it sent Pam on her way without any guidance at all in that area. She would have to come up with her own excuse and apology routines.

She got back into her SUV at around half-past five. Her own comparatively basic AI had only just then started to process the need for an explanation. As she loaded and ran her driving programs, she set aside a small portion of her processing power to find a way of mollifying Brad. She calculated success of that task to be somewhere around 2%.

Colin had changed vehicles by then and now tailed her home in a pickup truck. He had sent an email update to Brad, but there wasn't much now to add to it. Colin could think of his own excuses for Pam, and he was sure his client would come to many of the same conclusions. He always felt a little bad about these failing relationships, but he always got over it quick.

When the black-haired fembot got back to the house, she had made no progress at all in thinking of a way to explain why she had suddenly disappeared for half the day. She fell back on her most reliable defenses - her artificial sex hormones and pheromones. She walked with a moist plastic crotch from the vehicle to the door and reached into her purse to get her keys.

Brad opened the door, triggering the generation of a startled response from the robot. She scanned his face and read the expression. She saw that he was mad.

He glared at her a second longer, then moved in so she could enter. She walked through the threshold and made some more scans with her newly repaired and rebuilt optics system. Her freshly fixed microphones had picked up the sound of the television, and her eyes verified that it was on. The two human children were sitting in front of it.

She looked back at the other human. He was still furious. He waited for her to kick off her shoes and grabbed her forcefully by the wrist. He led her by that plastic and metal appendage to their bedroom. After closing the door a little harder than he should have behind them, he turned to look at her.

She stared back with a blank look. Her processors couldn't quite figure out what kind of facial expression her facemask should make.

He just shook his head as he looked at her. "Well," he said, "what do you have to say for yourself?"

She automatically searched through her system files to find any kind of excuse at all. No data was found. "I..." she said hesitantly, "I don't know."

"You don't know?" he said, even angrier now. "YOU DON'T KNOW??!"

The anger she detected from him made her load some preliminary crying procedures. He saw her eyes flutter, and saw the moisture as it collected between her silicone eyelids. He too was speechless now. He wanted to ask her where she had been, but he knew. He wondered if he should reveal to her that he had hired a PI to follow her.

"Marcus got kicked off the team, by the way." he said, trying desperately to calm himself. "Your friend Annette took him to her place, and picked up Jessica too."

Pam's AI 'knew' she should say something, but her overtaxed logic circuits couldn't keep up.

Brad looked away, bit his lip and shook his head. "We'll talk about this tomorrow. I'm going to the bar."

The highly advanced android stood there stumped and speechless as Brad turned his back on her. He removed his tie and threw it to the side, then stormed out of the bedroom, slamming the door this time.

Inside Pam's chest, her computations had started to crash and hang. There were too many calculations going on at once. She had to remain motionless for several minutes while her system got itself back in order. The best she could do with these issues now was to file them away for later processing by the supercomputer at Marcia's house. She would have to make another visit tomorrow.

By the time his fiancée had gotten herself moving again, Brad was already walking into the bar a few blocks away. He sat on a stool close to one of the TVs and tried to let the video and audio wash his rage away. He looked over at the barmaid. She was new, and this was only the second time he had seen her. He needed to talk to someone, so he decided to call one of his single friends.

Brad pulled his phone out and dialed up the number. "Hi, Khaled?"

"Hey B-Rad, what's up?"

"Wanna meet me at Morgan's?"

"Uh, sure, how come you're drinking tonight?"

Brad forced a laugh into the phone. "I'll tell you when you get here."

"Okay, see you in a bit."

"Bye." Brad said and closed his phone.

He looked at the barmaid again. She was almost done with another customer, so he just enjoyed looking at her young tanned legs for a while.

"Hi." she said when she came over.

"Hi," he said, "jug of Grasshopper please? Two glasses."

"Sure."

He sighed and turned his attention back to the game on the screen. He wasn't too fond of soccer but he knew Khaled was. When the jug of draft was in front of him, he paid and left a nice tip for the cute blonde girl behind the counter.

"Can I get a steak sandwich too please?" he asked her. "Rare."

"Okay." she said cheerily. He watched her walk back toward the kitchen and poured himself a glass of the creamy wheat ale. He thought about what it would be like to be single again.