

Back at the house, Pam was showing her pre-programmed parenting skills to be inferior to those a human could have shown. After she had gotten her electronic 'thoughts' all sorted out she had come out of the bedroom still unprepared to effectively deal with the situation. Marcus looked remorseful but was still defiant. He was also still sad about Charlie dying the day before. Jessica was obviously very sad about that.

Pam went about the evening as usual, reheating leftovers and cooking a little bit of new food to add to it. She had barely spoken to the children, and that intrusive quietness almost drowned out the TV. She had no protocols, subroutines or algorithms to fall back on for this kind of thing. All she was able to do was to maintain configuration 6.12 on her facemask. That look was meant to convey the type of sadness called for by the recent happenings.

After the table had been set and the half new, half old meal set out, Pam told the children to wash their hands and sit down for dinner. That caused trouble right away with the boy.

"My hands are clean." he said. "I already washed them."

"Not recently." the machine replied.

"It doesn't matter!" he shot back.

Pam looked at him while Jessica went to use the soap and water. The android pulled up the appropriate files and gave him the standard line. "You have to wash your hands before you eat. It's important. If you don't, I'll tell your father."

"He doesn't care what you say too!" the boy shouted. "He wouldn't have left if he did!"

Pam's logic circuits couldn't calculate the exact meaning of all those words, but her AI knew from his expression and body language that he wasn't being friendly or polite. Her silicone facial covering reconfigured itself again, now looking mad and authoritative - expression 5.32.

"If you don't wash your hands, I'll tell your father." she said. error messages started flashing before her electronic eyes as soon as the words left her speaker. The top levels of her hierarchical AI system had caught her being overly repetitive. She froze the way she was while the processors in her chest sorted out some of this mess.

Marcus just walked away from her and sat down at the other end of the table. He made sure to be as loud as he could be as he took the covers off the pots and spooned the food onto his plate.

Pam's head turned to look at him. Her face was still set in that most recent expression, but her cognitive functions were bogged down with attempts at error correction. She needed to buy some time for herself. She pulled up the right program and ran it through her CPU.

Tears came to her eyes as she started simulated crying. She half-ran up the stairs and retreated to her bedroom. Once inside, she continued to make those sobbing sounds, though they eventually trailed off into nothing. She remained standing inhumanly straight and still just behind the door however.

Jessica was almost too scared to come out of the washroom when she heard the imitation adult go past. The kid timidly opened the washroom door and looked around the hallway. When she got to the table, she asked her brother "What happened?"

"Pam's crying because I didn't wash my hands." he said.

Things were a little more lively over at the bar. Khaled had joined Brad at a table in the corner so he could listen to his friend whine about his relationship. He too had gotten a steak sandwich, and was now forking the last of the ketchup-soaked French fries into his mouth.

"You know," Brad said "the more I think about it the less special she is."

"You said that already." Khaled reminded him.

"Yeah, but it's true." Brad said firmly. He thought now about her similarities to his deceased wife, but he wasn't ready to admit to his friend what he was just beginning to admit to himself.

"You could have lots of other women." Khaled told him. "I noticed that waitress was staring at your chest."

"That's okay, I've been staring at hers."

They laughed. Brad emptied the remaining contents of the pitcher into his glass.

"I guess we should go soon, eh?" Khaled asked.

"Why? You wussing out on me?"

"Dude, We have to work tomorrow."

"You know what?" Brad said. "Fuck it. Fuck work. I need to get drunk."

"Hey, I don't have as many sick days as you do."

"Come on Khal, take one for the team."

He looked at Brad. The man's eyes were starting to get that sloppy, happy glow.

"Sure." he said. "The long weekend starts now I guess."

"Atta boy!" Brad said. "Let's get another jug."

"Okay, we can just stare at that waitress until she comes by."

"That's an easy job." Brad said as he leaned back.

"So you pretty much made your mind up then?" Khaled asked.

Brad nodded as he looked down at nothing in particular. "Pretty much."

"When you gonna tell her?"

"I should do it A.S.A.M.F.P." Brad said. A determined look had flashed over his face once more. "It's not good to drag these things on and on."

"Good idea. You know, Pam wasn't really right for you anyway. She's kind of... big."

Brad chuckled. "Yeah, but it's not gross... she looks good naked, she doesn't have any rolls or shit like that. Her tits are pretty amazing, and I've kind of come to like her butt, it's got a really nice shape to it. And she may have big hips and thighs, but it's all firm and shaped really nice."

Khaled waited for him to finish. "More cushion for the pushin'?" he asked slyly.

"Yeah..." Brad laughed. He subdued his voice a little and continued "she fucks like an animal though... I've never seen anything like it. We could be arguing over something, and ten minutes later we're doing it... and I mean NASTY shit."

"That'll be hard to give up." Khaled said as he pushed his plate away and took a swig of beer.

"Yeah, but it's honestly her best feature. She's terrible with the kids, she's terrible with my friends, and she's terrible at conversation. She's pretty shallow."

Khaled looked at his friend as he went silent for a while.

The barmaid came over then. "Can I get you guys anything?"

"Yeah, another pitcher of Grasshopper. And can you start a tab for us?"

"Sure!" the young lady said.

"Thank you." Brad said. He watched her legs, her hips and her butt as she walked away.

"Dude, you're staring."

Brad laughed. "Yeah, I know. She's pretty nice though."

"You should strike up a little conversation with her."

"I have to finish up with the black-haired one first..." he said, "not good to work on two projects at once you know. Besides, this one's a little young. I've got those two kids to worry about."

"You know, this reminds me when I broke up with Karimah. It seems like all she was good for was sex. And belly dancing."

"For some women that's a good thing." Brad said, downing another mouthful of beer.

"Well, I'm like you... I want to be able to talk to someone without feeling like I have to dumb myself down. I still miss that sexy Arab figure of hers, but there was nothing upstairs."

"I know what that's like."

"The weird thing is, she wasn't dumb. She knew a lot... she could be very smart sometimes... I dunno. It's weird, like she was from another planet or something."

"Maybe she was from the same planet Pam's from." Brad chuckled.

"Planet of Complete Bimbos..." Khaled joked, "that would be a nice planet to visit, but I couldn't live there."

The barmaid came back around then. "Here you go guys!" she said cheerfully as she set the full frosty jug down on the table.

"Thanks." Brad said.

"Thank you." Khaled added.

"You're welcome!" she said with a practiced smile as she picked up the empty plate. She turned around swiftly and returned to her post.

"She's probably from that same planet." Brad said quietly.

"Heh heh... I wouldn't doubt it." Khaled said as he poured himself a beer. "You know I think Karimah got picked up by the aliens again, because nobody's seen her for a while."

"Maybe." Brad said as he poured the last of the old jug's contents down his throat. "Visitors from that planet can't stay long in our atmosphere."

"Yeah... too much thinking going on for them here."

Brad sat up and poured some more beer into his glass. "I tell you, I don't think Pam's gonna take it well when I tell her goodbye. I hope the aliens take her back to Bimbo Planet too."