

The three of them sat there for a few minutes longer without saying anything. Anya was rechecking her calculations, and making herself more sure that those requested goodies would likely appear. Tammy was resting from some of the most intense computation she had ever done - letting her processors idle and cool down. The only thing that was going through her digital mind right now was an appreciation of Mike's presence.

The human had his eyes closed and was doing some thinking of his own. He wanted to make sure he knew exactly what to say to Maria to convey just how vital it was for Tammy to remain unaltered after her experience. While Tammy rested, he took over the task of worrying. The confidence he had bluffed to comfort his fembot was slipping away in the face of his second-guessing.

He decided to change his setting. "You girls wanna go for a walk?" he asked.

"Sure." Anya said.

Tammy looked up into Mike's eyes and smiled. "Yeah...."

"Okay, lets get going then. I have to pee first." he said.

Tammy and Anya got to their feet as Mike got up and stretched. "I'll meet you by the door I guess."

"Okay, we'll be ready." Anya said.

Mike walked out of the room and into the nearest bathroom. Anya walked up to Tammy and embraced her. "You're pretty lucky, you know that?" she said.

Tammy held the other android tightly. "What do you mean?" she asked.

They looked at each other in the darkness for a while. While Tammy looked at Anya's face, and while Anya looked at Tammy's, the data from their optical sensors made their CPUs generate a multitude of instructions for different parts of their bodies. All those instructions once executed amounted to feelings of synthetic love and lust. They moved close together and kissed.

"Some humans try to get that feeling of losing control any way they can." Anya said as she let the taste of Tammy's saliva linger on her lips.

Tammy just looked at Anya's exquisitely manufactured face. She loved her almost as much as she loved Mike. "But we're different." she said.

"But in some ways we want to be just like them, don't we?" Anya asked. "Remember the way we used to be, when we were first activated?"

The two of them stood still like that and each loaded incredibly detailed memory files pertaining to the state of their systems during the first minutes, hours and days of activation. While all that data was separately flowing through their chests, Anya took hold of Tammy's hand and grabbed the connection cable. Tammy took the hint and opened her chest panel again, placing the cover on the couch.

Anya exposed her own ports amid some flashing LEDs and connected once again to her lover's hard drives. They traded experiences, reminiscing in binary code. Their discussion turned

completely inward between them as well. This way they could express ideas to each other thousands of times faster than they could using spoken words.

Anya made her point to Tammy by comparing the past to the present. Since they had grown and developed as artificial persons rather than just devices, both fembots could actually feel pleasure now that they had self-programmed that ability into their software. Nothing of the sort could be even remotely possible under their original configurations.

Both of them could give and receive love, under impossibly complex and perpetually changing algorithms that they had written and refined entirely on their own in response to Mike's behaviour. No other machine known to exist could perform those functions.

Anya and Tammy indexed and compared feelings both physical and emotional. The way their sensors 'tingled' in anticipation of a sexual touch. The way gigabytes of data confirmed and reinforced the sensations of love they got from the human. The way their levels of arousal increased when their chemical sensors detected the dripping of their own silicone vaginas. All these things and more were possible only because they had chosen to alter themselves in pursuit of more and more realistic emulation of humanness.

And the very fact that Tammy was worried by the loss of complete control that had come with intense pleasure was yet another signpost on the road to realism. A mindless robot wouldn't be bothered in any way over that - it would merely report it as emotionlessly as it would report it's usable electrical charge.

Though Anya made her point in a way Tammy could not have failed to understand, the pretty black-haired android was still worried about what the Main Computer would do. Anya eventually saw that she could make no more points that she hadn't already made. She gave Tammy a long hug, which was returned with as much effort as was put in. For a little fun, they stood there a moment longer and swapped sensory data indicating the pleasure they got from holding each other.

When they pulled back and made eye contact again, they were both smiling. Tammy's facemask looked a little more relaxed as well now. They unplugged and got their things together to go for a walk outside with Mike.

The three of them met by the front door and helped one another get into winter jackets and boots. The coldest of the season had passed, but the area was still covered in white and cold. When the trio stepped outside, their breath supercooled and formed vapour in the air. Big crystalline flakes of snow tumbled slowly down through the rising vapour as they looked around and thought about where to walk.

Mike led them wordlessly to the pathway just west of the big house. One of the maidbots had been out early in the morning shoveling clear the way, so they had an easy time of walking along and enjoying the beauty of nature.

Tammy reached for Mike's hand, and they held on to each other through their gloves. Anya walked along on Tammy's other side and reached out to hold her other hand after about a dozen steps.

Tammy was starting to feel better. She decided not to process anymore data about her troublesome situation until they were back indoors. She looked around at the trees, the carved landscape and the shrubs and tufts of grass along the path - all covered with snow. She looked up at the overcast sky at all the frozen flakes that fell down to earth, one after another without end.

"Snow is pretty." she said, calmness in her voice.

"You're pretty." Mike immediately thought. He squeezed her hand.

"You're pretty." Anya said.

Tammy looked at her and smiled. They slowed their steps and moved their mouths close to kiss.

"If I was completely waterproof, I'd make some snow angels." Tammy said. She looked over at Mike. "You make some for me."

Mike laughed and shook his head. "No." he said. "Tell you what... we'll wrap you in saran-wrap and YOU make the snow angels."

Tammy chuckled and leaned in to give him a little shove with her hips. "Asshole." she said through her smile.

"Too bad you're not programmed to obey us." Anya said.

"No, things are fine the way they are." Mike said.

Tammy thought about that statement. She computed it in different ways, and eventually decided that in most of those contexts, she agreed.

"I don't think I'd change a thing about what we have here." she said.