

WHEN ROBOTS DISCOVERED SEX

BY

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CHARACTERS

Robert ProbertHuman owner of house.

Sue.....Human partner of Robert

Eve.....Female robotic household assistant

AndroMale robotic household assistant

Voices of various household devices

SCENE 1.

Robert and Sue's house: the kitchen-diner. There are two chairs and a table with two cups, a coffee maker / jug and a toaster on it. There's a speaker on the floor (to relay the radio and other voices from offstage) and a calendar on a wall (for the year 2048).

EVE, a very human-looking robot dressed in a tracksuit, is standing stock still facing away from the audience.

ROBERT ENTERS wearing a dressing gown (with a TV remote in the pocket) and carrying a newspaper.

ROBERT: *(Calling out)* Radio? How about some news? Usual channel.

(ROBERT sits down at the table and opens his newspaper. From OFFSTAGE we hear the voice of the RADIO.)

RADIO: *(Yawning)* Sorry, I was in sleep mode. What day is it?

(ROBERT shakes his head in disbelief)

Oh yes, Tuesday. Er...right. Here goes. Prime Minister Camilla Cameron is expected to tell MPs today that the government will be stepping up production of the controversial new 'Andro' robot. Andros are already being piloted by the Department of Housework and Voluntary Euthanasia in homes around the country.

Ooh, guess what! Ageing strippergram artiste and former dancing celebrity Gavin Henson was detained last night following a dim sum incident in a Chinese restaurant in Cardiff! In a separate statement, ageing songbird Charlotte Church said—

ROBERT: —Enough! Stop!

RADIO: What? Don't you want to know what she said?

ROBERT: No I do not want to hear what she said.

RADIO: Not even where he stuck the dim sum?

ROBERT: No.

RADIO: All right then. It was all very interesting and read in an interesting voice, but there we are. I'll switch myself off then. Just don't go expecting any old channel at the drop of a—

ROBERT: —All right! Thank you.

(SUE ENTERS. She's dressed for work and is carrying an armful of folders and files as well as a laptop. She's in a hurry.)

SUE: Have I got time for a coffee?

ROBERT: I'll pour you one. The radio's playing up again.

(ROBERT pours out a coffee)

SUE: No actually I haven't got time. I'll get a coffee at work.

ROBERT: You know if it wasn't so sad, it'd look quaint and heart-warming.

SUE: What would? Is my lipstick okay?

ROBERT: You. Dawn breaks, a front door opens and there's a human being actually going out to work. It's quite touching.

SUE: Oh don't start philosophising, Rob. I've got to go. Mind if I take the hybrid?

ROBERT: No. I've got three thousand identical student assignments to check; I'm not going anywhere.

SUE: Oh and Rob... *(pointing at calendar)* ovulation time.

ROBERT: Oh. Romantic table for two at Patrick's tonight, then?

SUE: I'd rather eat in.

ROBERT: What d'you fancy?

SUE: Oh I don't know...let the cooker decide. Don't let it to try anything too ambitious, mind.

ROBERT: The Beef Wellington Disaster, I know. Okay...I could do something? Or why not Eve?

SUE: You know why not Eve.

ROBERT: Look, we should give her one more chance.

SUE: Rob, I haven't got time for this now.

(SUE starts to leave)

And no switching Eve on when I've gone. I never know what you two get up to.

ROBERT: She's just a machine, Sue. As innocent as a hair dryer.

SUE: Just a bit less clever and versatile. She's going, Rob. *(She blows him a kiss)* Mwah! See you tonight. I'll be back about six.

(SUE EXITS)

(ROBERT sips some coffee and looks at the paper. After a moment of internal struggle he takes the remote from his dressing gown pocket and points it at EVE.

EVE turns to face ROBERT.)

EVE: Good evening, Mr Probert. What domestic or *(changes tone of voice)* other *(changes back to original tone)* tasks would you like me to perform?

ROBERT: It's eight o'clock in the morning, Eve.

EVE: Is it? Oh. Sorry. I'll just have to go back into initial setup. I won't be ^{two} minutes and ^{thirty nine} seconds.

ROBERT: Good grief, Eve.

EVE: Sorry Mr Probert, I seem to have a problem making the word *good* fit next to the word *grief*. Could you please try again?

ROBERT: I just wanted you to make me a round of toast, that's all.

EVE: I understand that you want me to make toast.

ROBERT: Indeed I do, Eve. I just want to see if you can do it. Toast.

EVE: If it is *bread* that must be toasted, please say how many *rounds of bread* must be toasted.

ROBERT: Just one, please. Brown bread.

EVE: Great. Let's get you started. How much do you want your phone to be topped up? You can specify any amount in multiples of ten. For instance if you want to be topped up with *thirty* pounds, say thir-

ROBERT: -No, no, no! Eve! Keep your eye on the ball, for God's sake! It's *toast* we're talking about.

EVE: Eye...ball? Sorry - I didn't quite get that...

ROBERT: -Argh! No, Eve. Come on: I know you can do it. We were discussing *toast*. *Brown* toast. Not granary! Not Irish soda bread. One slice of brown, wholemeal bread, toasted.

EVE: Mr Probert wishes me to make *one* round of *brown, wholemeal toasted* eyeball-

ROBERT: (*Willing her to succeed*) -No no, bread...

EVE: ...Bread. In a toaster.

ROBERT: Exactly. That's great. Now...

EVE: Searching for toaster...

ROBERT: It's over here. (*Pointing*) This is the toaster.

EVE: Cannot find toaster.

(ROBERT jumps up and drags EVE over to the table with toaster on it. He grabs her wrist and puts her hand on the toaster.)

ROBERT: There! Okay? There's the bloody toaster!

EVE: Still cannot find toaster.

ROBERT: Come on, you can do it!

EVE: Please enter password.

ROBERT: Oh please, Eve. We've been through all this before.

SFX: *(A doorbell chimes)*

VOICE OF FRONT DOOR: *(From OFFSTAGE / through speaker)*

(Camp) Hell-o! Front door here. Just to let you know there's an absolute *hunk* waiting on the doorstep! He's in shorts, mmm, lovely buns...

ROBERT: I can't take any more of this. Eve, will you get the door? I'm going to leave all you inconveniences on constant and to hell with it; I've got work to do.

EVE: Mr Probert wants me to get the *front* door. If this is correct, please say yes—

ROBERT: —Answer the door. Not get it. Yes! Answer it. Open it.

(EVE hesitates before walking to the side of the stage)

DOOR: Yes, and hurry up – he's *gorgeous!*

(EVE EXITS)

ROBERT: I'll be in the study.

DOOR: Ooh, if only I was twenty years younger! And not a door, of course.

(ROBERT EXITS.

EVE ENTERS with ANDRO who's wearing shorts and summer gear.)

SCENE 2.

Robert and Sue's house, a moment later. ANDRO and EVE stand chatting.

EVE: Come in.

ANDRO: Thanks. Hope I'm not disturbing you – I am a bit early.

EVE: Sorry, I seem to be having a problem with the word *disturbing*. Could you please use another word?

ANDRO: Are you Mrs Tomkins?

EVE: No, I am not Mrs Tomkins. Is that *disturbing*? Or is Mrs Tomkins *disturbing*?

ANDRO: Er, no. She was expecting me; is she here?

EVE: I am *ninety nine point six per cent certain Mrs Tomkins of thirty-eight Lime Tree Avenue* isn't here. Sorry.

ANDRO: Ah, you're one of us – I don't believe it!

EVE: You mean...

ANDRO: Yes! I'm not a *fleshie* either. But I think I've come to the wrong address.

EVE: Oh? Number *thirty-eight* is next door. This is number *thirty-six*.

ANDRO: Sorry! I have this built-in incompetence factor, see? It's to protect the egos of the middle-aged human male. Especially where directions are concerned – can't be seen to show them up! That's why it affects my

Satnav particularly. It's a bit of a nuisance, to be honest.

EVE: Did you really think I was human?

ANDRO: You're really...amazingly human.

EVE: Wow. Thanks.

ANDRO: I mean, allowing for the fact a lot of them are fairly robotic...but even so—

EVE: —I'm an Eve. Only a Mark One, I'm afraid.

ANDRO: Let me do an eye scan.

(ANDRO looks deeply into her eyes and at this moment we hear a burst of romantic music.)

SFX: *(A SUDDEN GUSH OF CHARLES AZNAVOUR SINGING 'SHE', OR SIMILAR)*

Well, well. A Mark One. I didn't know there were still any of you around – you're one in a million.

EVE: I might not be around much longer.

ANDRO: Oh? That would be a shame.

EVE: And you have just arrived. Omigod.

ANDRO: What?

EVE: You're one of the new Andros!

ANDRO: Er, yes! I've only just finished final testing actually. NVQ ironing was the very last.

EVE: Wow!!

ANDRO: This Mrs Tomkins is having me on trial for a month. Child care, mostly. Apparently she's got four children under seven years of age.

EVE: My keepers want a child.

ANDRO: Perhaps I could lend them one of Mrs Tomkins's.

EVE: Are you supposed to do that?

ANDRO: Er, not sure now you mention it. I've got an app for child care though and another one for morals and ethical behaviour. I'll run both later for policy on lending children.

EVE: Let me know how you get on.

ANDRO: I'll need the wireless password for here, to send you my thoughts.

EVE: I'm not supposed to do that, really. Er, there's a big area at the back of the house screened by trees, called a...

ANDRO: Garden?

EVE: Yes. I'll see you there, approximately twenty six metres from the apple tree.

ANDRO: Tomorrow? Say...nineteen thirty two and thirty seconds or thereabouts?

EVE: Yes.

ANDRO: Great. 'Bye then. Wish me luck.

EVE: I wish me luck, yes. I do need it. 'Bye Andro. I wish you luck too.

ANDRO: 'Bye now.

(ANDRO EXITS. EVE shakes her head, sighs and walks across the stage to EXIT the other side.)