

The lab. Mari walks in and sees Rudi fiddling with the monitor.

RUDI  
(Not looking at Mari.)

Good morning.

MARI

Morning.

RUDI

There's coffee if you want.

MARI

Thanks I need it.

Mari grabs some from the machine.

RUDI

Up late last night?

MARI

Indeed.

RUDI

Hitting those famous NYC bars.

MARI

And paying 7 dollars for a Heineken? No. I was actually doing some research on this place.

RUDI

Oh.

MARI

There's not a lot about it online.

RUDI

Like I said, we don't advertise to your demographic.

MARI

But you don't even have a website.

RUDI

Eh, websites are so 2006.

MARI

But nothing? At all? No advertising anywhere?

RUDI

Word of mouth is the best advertising.

MARI

I'll say.

RUDI

What does that mean?

MARI

Well, I did find some mentions of you. On forums. They said some interesting things.

RUDI

You shouldn't believe anything you read on an Internet forum.

MARI

Then maybe I can ask you a question.

RUDI

Sure. Anything.

MARI

Does this company make sex robots?

RUDI

No. Absolutely not.

MARI

Okay. Well.

RUDI

We make companions.

MARI

Ok. Is that a robot someone has sex with?

RUDI

Well, it's a human-like android controlled by a computer made for the purpose of stimulating pleasure.

MARI

...That sounds like a sex robot.

RUDI

Someone with a more rudimentary understanding of the business might say that, yeah.

MARI

And you've made companions?

RUDI

Well, we're a company who design humanoid robots. And primarily. Yes. That's what our paying customers ask for. Everyone who works here has to make them at some point.

MARI

So then, Jessica is-

RUDI

No. No. She's not a companion.

MARI

Even though she's a humanoid robot being developed at a company that almost always makes sex robots.

RUDI

(Reciting company protocol.)

I know it's suspect but the companions you're talking about are models, based off real people who gave their consent, allowing us to create anatomically correct robots based off their bodies and voices. But the companions themselves, they're not self-aware or cognitive. It's like playing a movie. Just with more simulated interaction. Jessica is different because she's artificial intelligence. She has a real, working brain. Once she's done, she'll have the ability to consent or not consent to anything on her own terms.

MARI

Or your terms. You program her.

RUDI

Well, an artificial intelligence who follows my every bidding isn't really that intelligent, is it?

MARI

But, if you wanted to, you could alter her brain to change a decision. Right?

RUDI

Yes. But we don't do it. We don't play God here.

MARI

Even if someone paid you?

RUDI

Soon there will be laws about the rights of artificial intelligence at the cognitive capacity of Jessica, but until then we treat her just as we would any human. Company code.

MARI

Jessica didn't consent.

RUDI

What?

MARI

Jessica didn't consent to being rebuilt as a robot, you said every companion model had to consent.

RUDI

Well, this isn't a companion.

MARI

No, it's something far more complicated. What if she doesn't want to be rebuilt as a robot?

RUDI

I don't know. Why don't you ask her?

Mari gives Rudi a look.

RUDI

I'm sorry. That was rude. But, Jessica's not here, and *when* we bring her back - because it is a matter of *when* - I think she'll be happy to be surrounded by friends.

MARI

What if she doesn't want to be alive. And we bring her back and she doesn't want to be alive but Allister does want her to be alive. What do you do?

RUDI

Everyone wants to be alive. You ever hear the stories of the people who survive jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge? They always regret it.

MARI

Jessica didn't jump off a bridge.

RUDI

Look. I think if the person I loved most in the world put all this money and effort into bring me back, I'd appreciate it. Wouldn't you?

MARI

She didn't love him that much.

Allister enters.

ALLISTER

Hello hello. How's it going everyone?

MARI

Morning.

RUDI

Morning, Allister.

ALLISTER

Sounds like you two were having a riveting conversation.

RUDI

Yeah. We were just talking about sex robots, actually.

ALLISTER

Oh. Well, Mari. I hope you know it's-

MARI

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I got the spiel.

ALLISTER

Ok, good. We ready to go then?

MARI

Why didn't you just tell me? About the sex robots.

RUDI

Companions.

MARI

Yes, companions. Whatever. That seems like necessary information to me.

ALLISTER

Because we're not doing that here. We're not making anything like that.

MARI

Why not?

ALLISTER

What do you mean why not?

MARI

I don't know, sex robots sound pretty great to me.

ALLISTER

Maybe for some people.

MARI

I mean, you get to skip over the shitty complications and emotions of sex with another human being, and then you can have platonic friendships that aren't dragged down by the shittiness of sex.

ALLISTER

People can fuck all the robots they want, but that's not sex. It's just realassisted masturbation.

MARI

Sure. But if it's so real why not make a robot of Jessica to simulate sex rather than go through all the trouble of recreating her brain?

RUDI

Oh well, that's a whole different moral dilemma.

ALLISTER

Rudi. She's being facetious. Obviously Jessica has meant more to me than just sex. Mari knows that.

MARI

I guess I'm just wondering, if the brain's just to find where she is, why do we need the body?

ALLISTER

If we want this Jessica to be able to think like the one we knew, we have to make her the same in every way.

MARI

That includes recreating her body, *everywhere*.

ALLISTER

She's not a sex robot. She's an android. And androids work best when they're anatomically correct. Right Rudi?

RUDI

I prefer not to partake in this part of the conversation.

MARI

No, Rudi, I'm really interested in what you have to say. I mean, what if fucking robots really is as good as fucking a human? It's only a matter of time before every person on earth is hooking up with robots instead of each other. I mean, what if people like it so much they don't bother having children and then we all just die out?

RUDI

Are you implying that the companions at Lyfe are going to cause the end of the world?

MARI

I mean. It's possible, right?

RUDI

Honestly. I think if that's truly how the world does end, with humans fucking robots until there's no one left. I'd be relieved. I think that's actually probably the best case scenario in terms of the extinction the human race right now.

MARI

There you go. Maybe it's not so bad after all, Allister.

ALLISTER

This is not a replacement or a consolation. This is the pathway to finding Jessica. Let me show you. Rudi.

Rudi and Allister go to the monitor. Rudi begins to type furiously.

MARI

What are we acting out?

ALLISTER

Nothing. You're going to have a conversation.

MARI

With the android?

ALLISTER

With Jessica, yes.

MARI

I didn't know it can do that.

ALLISTER

Well, it's time I showed you. This is the difference between a companion and Jessica. She can build her brain through conversation.

MARI

What do I say to her?

ALLISTER

When she wakes up, she'll think it's only you two in the room. Just act like it's the two of you hanging out. If she forgets something, remind her. Try and shift the conversation into stuff from before college. That's what we need the most.

MARI

And what if I want to stop?

ALLISTER

Just say "Usher. Two" and she'll go into sleep.

MARI

Is that a Bradbury reference?

RUDI

You know it.

MARI

Don't those robots kill the humans at the end?



RUDI

Yes well, he also thought we would be able to breathe the air on Mars.

ALLISTER

She will take everything you say as the truth, so don't lie.

MARI

I won't.

ALLISTER

Ready?

MARI

Yes.

RUDI

Oh, Mari, one more thing.

MARI

Yeah?

RUDI

In her mind, she's the real Jessica. So if you do anything to indicate that she's actually an android or this isn't a casual conversation between friends in the year 2013, some really bad stuff could happen.

MARI

Like what?

RUDI

We're not exactly sure. But all we know is it would be really bad. So uh, don't do it.

MARI

Uh. Ok.

RUDI

Waking her up now.

Rudi enters a few keys. Jessica wakes up, appearing almost perfect human. There's still some uncanniness in her body and movements: small irregularities that separate humans and machines.

JESSICA  
Hi.

MARI  
Hi, Jessica.

JESSICA  
Do you have any syrup for these waffles?

MARI  
...What?

Jessica falls asleep.

RUDI  
(Over Intercom.)  
Sorry, that's a glitch. She keeps asking for syrup for her waffles.

MARI  
What? Why?

RUDI  
We're looking into it. Just say no and carry on.

Jessica awakens again.

JESSICA  
Waffles?

MARI  
No.

JESSICA  
Okay. Hey, have we met before?

MARI  
Yes. I'm Mari. Your best friend since Kindergarten.

JESSICA  
Mari! Oh my god, hi. I'm sorry, I don't know what's wrong with me today, it's so good to see you. You look so good!

MARI  
Thank you.

JESSICA

Ugh, sorry this place is such a mess.

MARI

(It's not a mess.)

Oh. It's fine.

JESSICA

Ok so remember that weird guy, Issac. From that creepy midtown bar we went to.

MARI

(Bad at acting normal.)

Yeah. That guy was the worst.

JESSICA

So Allister and I go to this stand up show for Allister's friend Jay, and-

MARI

Isaac is hosting it. Tells a joke about getting rejected by you and doesn't realize you're in the audience.

JESSICA

Yeah! Oh no, did I tell you this story?

MARI

Yeah.

JESSICA

(Half Laughing.)

Oh no. I must be drunk or something. I need more sleep.

MARI

You're fine.

JESSICA

Hey, are you feeling okay?

MARI

Yeah, sorry.

JESSICA

Don't be sorry. Is it your dad?

I'm sorry?  
MARI

Your dad. Is he still in the hospital?  
JESSICA

How do you know about that?  
MARI

What do you mean?  
JESSICA

Did you tell Allister?  
MARI

What? No. You told me not to tell anyone.  
JESSICA

Then how do you know?  
MARI

Mari, you talk to me about it all the time.  
JESSICA

Usher. 2.  
MARI

Jessica falls asleep. Mari enters the control room.

You need to be more careful about your language. You're confusing her.  
ALLISTER

How does she know about my Dad?  
MARI

Because you told her.  
ALLISTER

No. I told the real Jessica. She would never have told another soul. So how does this one know?  
MARI

RUDI

Building Jessica's brain we used home videos, social media posts, every piece of available information.

MARI

Yeah, well she wasn't making Facebook posts about my dying father.

ALLISTER

It was probably just casually mentioned at some point.

MARI

What else did you use?

RUDI

We used all available information.

MARI

Like what? Be specific.

RUDI

I mean there's a lot. It could be anything, school papers, emails, her diary.

MARI

Her diary?

ALLISTER

Mari.

MARI

You're not supposed to read her diary. That's why it's called a diary.

ALLISTER

We needed it.

MARI

You're not supposed to know the things she wrote in there.

ALLISTER

There was nothing in there that-

MARI

You're not supposed to know about my dad. That's personal.

RUDI

You're being irrational. If you apply that same logic to Anne Frank // then-

MARI

(To Rudi.)

Shut up Rudi.

(To Allister.)

You shouldn't have done that. That's so disrespectful.

ALLISTER

All I want to do is find her. We needed every piece of information we could find. Now we have memories and ideas we wouldn't have had otherwise.

MARI

No. You have secrets. You have things Jessica never told you because it was her choice not to tell you.

ALLISTER

Well that was before she disappeared. Now we have to find out what happened to her.

MARI

Once again, assuming she even wants to be found.

ALLISTER

Mari, that's unnecessary. Look, I'm sorry. I felt weird about it too. You think everything she said about me in there was nice?

MARI

I don't know. Let's find out.

ALLISTER

Maybe we should take a break.

MARI

No, I'm fine. Like you said, there's a lot to get done.

ALLISTER

She retains everything you say to her.

MARI

I know.

Mari exits the control room and reenters the room with Jessica.

MARI

Start it up again.

RUDI

(Looking at Allister.)

Should I-

ALLISTER

Just do it.

RUDI

Ok. Rebooting. 3. 2. 1.

Jessica wakes up.

JESSICA

Hello.

MARI

Hi.

JESSICA

Do you have any syrup for-

MARI

No.

JESSICA

Your dad.

MARI

He died.

JESSICA

Oh my god. When?

MARI

A while ago. It's ok. I'm fine.

JESSICA

I'm so sorry. I feel like he was only diagnosed yesterday. Do you want anything, need anything? I can make you something.

MARI

I'm okay.

JESSICA

I know you were close and you loved him even though you hadn't seen him in a while.

MARI

Yes. That is true.

JESSICA

Can I hug you?

MARI

Uh.

JESSICA

Please?

MARI

Ok.

Jessica hugs Mari. Mari embraces her.  
They separate.

MARI

You feel like her. How do you feel like her?

JESSICA

I'm sorry.

MARI

Nothing. You're just, warm.

JESSICA

Uh, thank you?

MARI

Can we talk about something else?



JESSICA  
Yeah. Yeah of course.

MARI  
Let's talk about you.

JESSICA  
Yeah. Ok.

MARI  
How's Allister?

JESSICA  
Oh. He's good!

MARI  
That's all?

JESSICA  
Oh I mean, don't worry about me, let's talk about your Dad.

MARI  
It's ok. I want to hear about it.

JESSICA  
Okay. Well, honestly? Really good. I feel like things are getting better between me and him.

MARI  
Is that so?

JESSICA  
Yeah.

MARI  
You guys didn't seem so hot at Tanya's party last week.

JESSICA  
Oh? I don't recall.

MARI  
You don't remember? You guys were fighting.

JESSICA

We were?

MARI

Yeah. He was upset because he thought your clothes were too revealing.

JESSICA

Oh. Were they?

MARI

No, Jessica. They were clothes. You were wearing them. You wear whatever you want, you've always worn whatever you want. Remember at St Ann's you got in trouble for wearing pants?

JESSICA

Oh. Right.

MARI

Do you think your boyfriend should have a say in what you wear?

JESSICA

I'm not sure.

MARI

No. He shouldn't. You've never let someone you were dating control what you wear. Remember?

JESSICA

I don't-

Jessica falls asleep.

MARI

Hey!

ALLISTER

(Intercom.)

We're taking a break.

MARI

Right now?

ALLISTER

Yes, obviously we need to calm down.

MARI

I was helping her remember.

ALLISTER

You were feeding her false information.

MARI

What do you mean? Are you saying you guys *didn't* have that fight?

ALLISTER

It's off-topic.

MARI

Off-topic? Of what?

ALLISTER

If you want to help bring Jessica back, you need to follow the instructions. We have big memories to fill, life altering events like her first time driving a car or something. These small fights you reference, whether or not they happened, only confuse her.

MARI

Well considering that fight happened a week before she disappeared, I figured it's kind of a big deal. Right, Rudi?

RUDI

(Sheepishly.)

If that's the case, we would want that information.

ALLISTER

We're taking a break.

MARI

Allister you do want to find her right? Because she needs to know everything. I mean, if you just pick and choose the information that goes into her brain, than she's not really Jessica, is she? She's just another companion.

ALLISTER

(outburst.)

MARI! STOP!

Allister walks over to Mari. He towers over her.

ALLISTER

I paid for the construction. I paid for the engineer. I paid for your fucking hotel room. We do it this way. You can work with Jessica the way I plan or you can go back to Chicago. Understood?

MARI

You need me.

ALLISTER

Not as much as you think.

She stares him down. He storms out.