The Way to Go

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Sex is one of the major drivers of humanity – in fact it is the first driver. Money and power came later. They are social constructs. Sex is why we exist. We are here because of it, and our purpose is driven by it.

Take technology. Your basic robot was driven by money. Replacing humans with machines makes for cheaper and more accurate manufacturing. But the development of realistic android robots was driven by sex. With people hungry for robotic sex dolls none of the huge advances of the last decade would even have been contemplated, let alone executed.

The latest series is so incredibly realistic that if she is sitting down watching a monitor you would be hard pressed to spot that she was not human. I mean the skin is so detailed, even with downy hair and a few well placed blemishes, and warm because men don’t like having sex with cold doll. And the eyes have responsive irises – what an incredible thing. Men like that in a woman – dilation of the pupil signalling desire. It’s a winner.

Only when she stands up do you see those slightly robotic movements. The blinks are not fast enough either. Just little things, but not high priority.

Instead the task assigned to be was to try to improve sex by putting a neural nexus between the sexbot and her owner. It sounds clumsy, but it involved the man wearing a neural cap linking directly to his brain transmitting into the sexbot processor.

It was highly experimental and involved extensive trials. I had willing volunteers, but I also had my own unit that I used to continue my work after hour and off site – in my own apartment.

I chose the very latest – a top of the line model, blonde and shapely but not overly so – not a bimbo model. Unique facial features – an amalgam of the three best looking women in the world, from my own perspective.

I called her Dolly because that seemed functional. She had only one set of clothes that I used to walk her home in. Otherwise, she stayed at my place naked.

I cannot say that I was particularly attracted to her, although I did admire her engineering. At the time I would have described myself as heterosexual but low libido. How things can change!

People often say that if you are going to die then what better way to go can there be but in the middle of the act of sex. Well, that is how I went, or rather my body went.

I was fully linked up and I had Dolly on top of me – cowgirl I think it is called, but I may be wrong. Anyway, I thought that it was better for her to do the work as I could prompt her using my thought processes through the cap I was wearing.

To be honest it was all a bit of a blur from the time that I realized that I was about to climax and that it was going to be a big one – maybe the biggest ever. One minute I was looking at Dolly’s face scrunched into the standard “pre-orgasmic configuration” accompanied by little squeaks from her voicebox, and the next minute I was looking down at myself, lying dead on the bed beneath her.

My first thought was that this was some kind of delusion and that the cap had malfunctioned. I reached to pull it off and found nothing but long blonde locks on my head. If it was a delusion it was complete. I was in the body of a robot and the body that was mine was lying lifeless on the bed – fucked to death.

Still I needed to check. I felt for a pulse, but then realized that I would feel nothing with these fingertips, but yet I did. I knew that there was sensitivity – robot that interacts with humans must have that. The classic test is to be able to pick up an egg.

I pushed my hair away to put an ear to what was my chest. There were microphones in each ear. Nothing – no sound.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck!” I could hear her squeaky voice in distress. It was modulated for a husky tone in conversation but high pitched for orgasm and apparently, panic.

Then I started to think about the consequences of all of this, if it was real. How could I even be doing that? If I was dead then the organic processes of thought will have finished. It was over. The big blackness. And yet here it was – my thinking inside a machine. There was capacity. There was a 30 terabyte memory in her head. Was it enough for my consciousness? Was I now just alive as binary code?

But that was the least of my concerns. I was a robot. A man had died beneath me. The penalty for that was mandated. Decommissioning and then destruction. I may be alive but not for long.

I imagined myself screaming as the inserted to tool: “But I am human! There is a human consciousness in here! Kill this machine and you kill me!” I did not believe it possible, so how could they? Would they think that a program had been installed to counter destruction? Certainly AI had not reached the level to allow a machine to develop such a plan. But downloading consciousness was a myth. For a host of sound technological reasons it could not happen. It would not be believed.

I was a dead man. Except, not a man. Not male. Not even human. But as I watched myself in the mirror I could not help but notice a real fluidity in movement. There was no sign of that telltale robotic lurching. The blinks were fast. I could pass for human. My only problem was that I was ridiculously beautiful – my own choice.

And I had only one dress. But I had my credit card – his credit card.

I needed to run. If I did that I could stay in operation long enough to put together a plan as to how to convince people that my story was true, that by some quirk of engineering I was inside this artificial body. Or was it a miracle? Hopefully not, as miracles can never be explained.

I could use the card to buy an identity and some clothes but I would need time. His body (I had to think of it that way) had to be concealed and (it occurred to me, chilled to disguise the time of death. If I removed everything from the refrigerator I could get it inside.

I realized that I had strength. The robotic body was designed to be soft and yielding, but the skeleton was stainless steel and the contracting fibers used as muscles had power in excess of that required for dancing or pulling cock. I could lift this body that was mine, and force it into the space and close the door. All I needed to do was to put the shelves and containers somewhere else and tidy the house. There would be no fingerprints. She had none.

My car was electric. A large battery that I could draw from if I could not find a mains supply. There were tools in the garage. I could build a useful tool kit. But I felt that I might need something for skin repair and “gut bags” so that I could pretend to eat and drink. It was not something that concerned me as an experimenter, but customers sometime sought that to simulate companionship with their machines. That is what I was. Dolly made conscious.

The name Dolly would not do. I closed the trunk and the name was there – Ford. Dolly and Ford. Dalliford. I had always thought that Chloe was a nice name, Chloe Dalliford is who I became.

They would trace his car and all of its movements, so I disabled the GPS Tracker. I drove first to the print shop to fabricate some identification papers. The word “paper” seems such an anachronism these days, but plastic ID is still requested, and this can be fabricated with a good knowledge of the internet and the right tools. I needed a story – a past. The body I stood in was less than a year old but needed to be 22 I guessed. That means 22 years of plausible existence. It could be checked, but it could also be improved and polished by me over the months to come.

I needed the ID to get a bank account. In the days of cash I would have used that, but those days are gone. The best I could do was to use cryptocurrencies to move funds to a new account in her name and use a debit card to make purchases. I paid for the printing with Kaycoin. It was no secret that this was how forgers paid, but they did enough of that business to accept.

Clothes shops needed personal accounts. I needed to keep to large outlets and stay in crowds. I found that I could move easily. I did not stand out as artificial but I did stand out. My first purchase was dark glasses and scarves to cover my shiny blonde hair and a little of my face where possible. Then I bought some changes of clothing.

My other threat was cameras. They were so numerous as to be inescapable, but I could shade the windscreen and consider the right time to ditch the car and get lost in another crowd long enough to change my appearance – a reversable jacket and a bag inside a bag, with my hair put up with the simply ease of calling upon the right self-beautification program. That allowed me to leave the car at the Intercity station and catch the monorail to a nearby city, and then another and another, each bought at the station.

Yes, they could trace my card but only if they had my name. The trail that I was hiding was the visual trail – the knock out blonde who was seen leaving the apartment where the dead man’s body was found.

I spent five days on trains and in motels before I felt safe. I found a place to stay on Mallorca Beach. The salt makes it tough for any outside CCTV. As it was off season I found it easy to find a beach house and I could set up as a freelance and enjoy walks on the beach.

I learned about my new body. I learned that I needed no food or drink, and no sleep. But I could go into a sleep mode if I wanted, for no other reason than because I could. I learned that to code I could direct interface, which made the work much easier. I learned more about the on-call programs that came as standard with a sexbot – the little dances and teasing sequences, little coy and playful acts and phrases designed to titillate, but now of no application to me. Programs to arrange my hair, change makeup looks or paint my nails might be useful, and there were rudimentary cooking programs with advance downloads available.

But the walks on the beach were all me. It seemed like those moments were all human. It seemed unlikely to be true but I felt that I could feel the wind in my hair and the sand between my toes, and smell the sea. I needed to do it at least once a day to feel that I was not just a machine, even when it rained.

Sometimes people would approach me – mainly men who would ask me my name. I always declined to answer. I would politely say that I would come to the beach to walk alone and be alone. But it was not true. I had been a loner I guess, but it seemed that if there was something in the machine part of me that needed company - that maybe even needed sex in order to function as it should.

It was weeks before the first news appeared. The news was that the body of a programmer had been found in his home, inside his refrigerator. The suspect had not been identified but maybe in possession of the victims sexbot. The image of my new face was not a good one, but it was enough for me to make sure that on future walks I made full use of a scarf and glasses.

Online there was some discussion of the possibility that the victim might have been killed by his own sexbot, but my employer came forward with all the reasons why that could not be the case. There were default programs triggered by any accidental injury or failure to receive commands after a period. It was all true, but of no application to me.

Some more time went by with no news. I figured that the image of me might be forgotten. I found that I had to go to the store. I had no need of anything from there until the main lightbulb failed. I could have done without it perhaps. There were no neighbors in residence. But I was keen to interact with another human, even if only briefly.

It was a small store. In place of automated checkout there was a man there, who could watch over the goods and complete the sales.

I collected the light bulb, and for some reason a packet of coffee.

“This looks exactly like you,” the man said. He had a picture of my face pinned up.

“It’s not me,” I said. “It’s one of those sexbots with a face like mine. I really should sue that company for using my likeness, but they will probably say that they invented it.”

“They do say that,” he said. “I just have it pinned here because I think it is so beautiful. I suppose that means that is what you are - beautiful. I hope that you don’t take this the wrong way, and I am a very old man, but I think maybe you are the most beautiful woman I have ever met in my long life.”

“Well, thank you for the compliment, Sir,” I said. It was a wonderful thing to hear. It made me feel warm. It also made me realize that I could not hide like this forever.

I am not sure who the shopkeeper spoke to, but a few days later a policeman came to my door. When I answered he looked at me and then behind me. He said: “Is the man of the house at home?” It seemed a polite way of telling me that he thought that I was a sexbot.

“Excuse me Officer? You sound like somebody out of the Middle Ages. I live here on my own. There is no man living here. Why would you think that there was?”

“I’m so sorry Ma’am,” he said. “I just got a … you just caught me by surprise … I mean you look … you look like somebody out of the movies.” It just gurgled out him like hot lube oil, making a mess.

“How can I help you officer?”

“I was just looking … we are looking for a fugitive from justice Ma’am. Or possibly some property of his that might give us a clue as to his whereabouts. But I can see that there is nothing here so I will be on my way.”

After I had closed the door I started to think what I could do to change my appearance. I did not want to cut my hair. It would not grow back. I had got used to it. It would not color easily. I had taken to wearing glasses with plain glass in them, but I doubted that they could do much.

I decided to sit it out, and after a few days that seemed like the right call.

But then I had another visitor. This time it was a federal agent. He was tall and athletic but he had an intelligent face. He asked whether he could come in. It did not seem wise to refuse.

“I am Agent Reeves,” he said. “But this is very informal, so please call me Mark.”

“Chloe Dalliford,” I offered my hand without thinking. It would be cold. “I have been out on the beach. I need a hot drink. Would you like coffee? I have coffee, but not much else. I live off takeaways I’m afraid.”

Coffee would be great.” He seemed to accept the explanation. I could warm the hand internally and I set about doing that. I also needed to use the bathroom and inset a bag. I wanted to sip coffee with him. Robots do not drink.

I finished there and put the coffee on.

“It about our search for an artificial … an android, apparently stolen as a part of a crime,” he said. “I have an image.” He pulled his pad from inside his jacket and displayed the image.

“I have seen that before,” I said. “Almost exactly in my image. I have to say it, I was pissed about it before, but now I am furious. I just can’t prove that they used my images. I used to be a model. There are plenty of images of me out there.”

“I am not surprised … that you were a model I mean.”

He was looking at me in a way that was entirely new to me. I had seen men look at me with lust, or longing, or just despair that they could never be with anybody like me, but this was something different. It was like he was looking straight through the beautiful surface of me, right inside me. Could he see enough to tell that I was lying, that I was a fake in every sense of the word? But somehow that did not evoke fear in me, but rather excitement.

“That is a sexbot,” I said. “As you can see, I am not a sexbot. But God knows how many of those models are out there, walking around with my face and body!” I sipped my coffee to affirm my status.

He responded by taking a sip of his, but immediately spluttered. “That is very hot!”

There are no sensors in my mouth. Just a gullet and a tongue for licking cock, and two lubricant dispensers for a wet kiss, or whatever else is required. I felt like a fool.

“I like it hot,” I said. It seemed as if one of those programs was taking over. It was just the way I said it. It was designed to titillate. It seemed that it might have worked.

“I am sorry,” I laughed. “You seem to think that I am a sex toy so I could not resist that line.”

“If you were a sexbot I could probably direct you to go to bed with me right now,” he said.

“You could try,” I suggested.

“Come on then. Go to the bedroom and take your clothes off.”

I flinched. I knew that I did. There was something inside me that was ready to follow that instruction. But even a sexbot should only respond to its owner. Even as a robot I could resist. But I was me. Why did I even want to do it?

“You will have to do better than that,” I grinned at him. “I am human, so I am not impervious to your charm, but I am romantic so I do expect a little more from you.”

He stood up and came over to where I was sitting. He stood over me. It seemed that I could smell him, if I had that sense, which I did not. But I could sense his power, and my own lack of it. He put a hand under my chin. Like my hands my whole face was now warm and he could feel it. He lifted my face and looked into my eyes. If there was a heart in me, it was fluttering. I just prayed that my circuits would not explode.

“You are as human as I am,” he said. “But so incredibly hot I don’t think that I can wait another minute.”

He kissed me. It was a deep kiss. Something took over. Was it a program or was it something in me? Fake saliva flowed, and then I was standing with my arms around him pulling his jacket off. Some furniture fell over and coffee spilled but we did not care. There was a bed to be used and getting there in such a feverish embrace seemed a messy task, but neither of us was letting go.

I was naked by the time he laid me down. So was he.

“Jesus you have a beautiful body,” he said.

“So do you,” I said. I wanted him inside me. Who was I? Not a man any more, but human – I knew that.

And then he was inside me and it all seemed so perfect. I did not want any program to take over and deliver a standard fake orgasm, but surely I could never experience such a thing. A sexbot needs only the lubrication dispenser in her vagina, not sensors.

So where did it come from – that moment of ecstasy? My scream of joy was real – so human.

As I lay beside him playing with the hair on his chest I could not resist saying: “You are so perfect that I wonder if you might be a sexbot?”

“Wouldn’t it be perfect if I was?” He kissed me tenderly. Whether he knew then, I cannot tell. But after a week or so I had to tell him the whole story. We just knew that we would be together, and such relationships can only flourish if there is truth.

“But you are not a man inside there?” was his only question.

“It’s a consciousness – a human consciousness, without sex. The sex is what you see. What do you see?”

“I see the woman I love,” he said.

He would always see that. He is getting a little older now, but I am not, an that is just the way things go.

The End

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*Erin’s Seed: A guy is sent an experimental sex robot by mistake and it accidentally fucks him to death but his consciousness is translated into the robot. Now she's on the run because the lab that built her wants to take her apart and figure out how she works. A government researcher tracks her down but doesn’t believe her story but she demonstrates her skills and now he's on her side and they escape to Mallorca to live on the beach*