

His Sinister Reflection

Entry 1, May 27

I hate them, I hate them all! They're despicable creatures, the whole lot of them. I, Edvard Eckelheim, the world's greatest scientist at age 27, am the only selfless human being on this blasted planet. The world is full of such selfish individuals, only here to take what they can and screw as many people as possible along the way. This gluttony, this greed, has taken over every last soul; all but mine that is.

I tried to be the best employee I could, I really did. I would slave long hours at the Montrey Cybertronics Lab and work towards the perfect robot. I would plaster my eyes to my task, sometimes falling asleep at my desk! But by God, I was doing darn good work. Then my bosses decided they wanted to make an extra buck by cutting corners. Naturally I refused, and just as naturally I lost my job. It's not just my bosses either, it's everyone else, too! Everywhere I go I see people trying to take advantage of everyone else. Why, just the other day a blooming teenager tried to steal my wallet. I mean, honestly!

So, instead of having to deal with the people who disgust me in this town, I have decided to create a masterpiece, a being of perfection and understanding. I will create a being with whom I can interact, based upon the only person I know that isn't poisoned with self-interest: myself. It's quite brilliant actually: to think, I'll only need to interact with a like-minded individual. No more glares from people down the street or judgements by those I hardly know. I've already begun work on the prototype. It will share my visage, as well as my personality. This will be the pinnacle of my career, my shining moment. All I have to do is finish this and I will suffer no longer.

Entry 2, June 15

Progress has been steady on the android. I've finished the main frame of the body. Soon I will begin work on the software and create the brain. I haven't been getting much sleep lately. This project has been consuming all of my spare time and energy. Sometimes in the middle of the night an idea comes to me, and suddenly I have to scramble to find a notebook and write it all down before it slips away in this confounded head of mine.

To make matters even more stressful, today I met a strange woman. She says her name is Maggie Higgins and she recently moved into the house next to mine. I remember the previous tenants. They were a hyperactive family, always making a profound amount of racket; whether it was yelling or playing, some kind of noise was always coming out of that house. But, alas, I digress. Back to Maggie.

She came to my door just as I was about to set forth creating the brain for my android. Annoyed I had to stop right at the peak of my project, I came upstairs to answer the hooligan rapping on my door. Expecting to see some postal worker or one of those blasted Girl Scouts, I swung open my door with the most disgusted snarl I could muster. To my surprise I saw a

young woman standing at my doorstep. My eyes scanned down her outfit, from her hazel eyes and chestnut hair thrown into a messy ponytail to the white shirt tucked into her poofed lemon skirt. She had the warmest smile I had ever seen before. I stopped mid snarl. This had not been what I was expecting. Here I was, in a grubby tank top and boxers, my complete disregard for personal hygiene resulting in matted hair and grease streaked across my face, snarling at this dainty woman with a pie in her hands. Her eyes widened in shock at my disheveled apparel and her cheeks flushed. I felt blood rush to my face as I tried to stammer out a response. "Wha...what are you doing here?" I managed to choke out. The woman flashed me an embarrassed smile.

"Hello, my name is Maggie Higgins. I just moved in next door. Am I, well, interrupting somethin'?" She asked sweetly as she leaned over to peek inside. She had a southern drawl to her voice, warm just like her eyes.

"Edvard," I blurt. "...Is my name," I finished lamely. I cleared my throat and composed myself once again. "I am in the middle of something very important, and I'd appreciate it if you didn't try to take a look into my house," I sniffed as I stepped outside the threshold and slammed the door shut behind me. Maggie blushed deeper than the red hearts on my underwear.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "That was awfully rude of me to do. Here, I made you a pie to start out our relationship on the right foot."

"What flavor is it?" I asked, warily eyeing the pie.

"It's apple. Do you like apple pie, Ed?" Her smile returned and her head tilted slightly at the question.

"No, in fact, I do not. I find apples repulsive fruits. Even their seeds contain cyanide, proving that they are not fit to be consumed. And my name is Edvard. Not Ed. Not Eddie," I stressed. "And personally, I find it quite selfish of you to waltz up to my porch, violating the sanctity of my quiet veranda, mind you, to try to bribe me with your pie for future favors such as mowing your lawn or moving your furniture," I said matter-of-factly. She stiffened at my harsh words, fire blazing in her hazel eyes.

"Well then, Edvard," she stressed my name, "I personally don't care what you think I'm trying to do. I know my intentions so you can stop putting words in my mouth." Her tone was as sharp as a blade. She thrust the pie into my hands and started walking down the stairs.

"What do I do with this?" I asked incredulously.

"Most people eat them," She spat out from behind her as she stomped back to her house. Perhaps I have been too short with Maggie. She did bake me a pie, even though it was for her own advancement This just makes me even more eager to finish my project. Women are

too complicated and wiley of creatures to deal with. I need something simple, and a cybernetic android is definitely simpler than this.

Entry 3, June 22

I've been pondering Ms.Higgins' visit last week. I've come to the conclusion that I may have slightly overreacted. Perhaps I was just irritated about pausing my endeavors, and maybe it's because I've had very limited interactions with the opposite sex. In either case, I suppose an apology is in order. I mean, an upstanding gentleman of science like myself can't be seen as uncivilized. So, to apologize and thank her for the pie she made me, I have taken a weeklong hiatus from my project to make something for her in return. I don't know much about women, but I have gathered that she likes pies, so I have invented a pie-making robot for her. It makes five different flavors of pies. Not including apple, of course.

I began my sojourn to Ms.Higgins house with my robot inside a carefully wrapped box. Her house was a charming bright blue color, suiting her cheerful personality. I slicked a nervous hand over my recently tamed black hair (I can't look like a slobbish pig now can I? I'm going for a distinguished sort of look this time). As I rang the doorbell I felt a nervous flutter in my stomach. What if she doesn't forgive me?

After a pregnant pause, I heard the clomp of footsteps approach. In a broad swing, she opened the door, a bright smile on her face ready. As soon as she saw me her smile faded slightly, making me wince. "Oh...Edvard," she murmured. I cleared my throat nervously and wiped a sweaty hand on my slacks.

"Er, hello Ms.Higgins," I started.

"Please, Maggie," she corrected me, folding her arms.

"Yes. Maggie. Right." I took a deep breath before I go on. "I would just like to apologize for my outlandish behavior last week. I believe I may have overreacted to your gesture, and to make up for it I have, in turn, made you something as well," I finished in a rush. A look of surprise washed over her face as she eyed the box curiously. I handed her the gift and she gingerly unwrapped it. As she lifted the top, I began to see her eyes sparkle, warm as an engine.

"Why, this is simply adorable!" she squealed as she lifted my machine out of the tissue paper. I smiled, pleased with her reaction.

"It's a pie-making robot," I explained. "It makes five different flavors: blueberry, pecan, cherry, peach, and strawberry rhubarb. I hope you find it satisfactory." Suddenly, setting down the robot, Maggie leaned over and wrapped me in a hug, her cheek resting against to mine. I felt my face flame with embarrassment as she released me.

"My favorite pie is apple, but I love all these flavors too," she confessed, her southern accent lingering on her every word.

"May I ask you a personal question," I implored.

"Sure thing," she replied.

"Where are you from? You have a southern accent." Another smile crossed Maggie's face.

"Baton Rouge, Louisiana," she said, doing a little twirl.

"That's interesting, it suits your personality."

"Edvard," she started, pausing slightly. "I have some fresh coffee on the heat, would you like to come in for a cup?" A slow smile sneaked across my face, the first in a long time. It surprised me.

"I would love to."

After my visit with Maggie, I rolled up my sleeves and began work on my android again. I am close to finishing. However, since my visit, something feels off. Do I really need to finish this thing? My heart is just not in it. Maybe people aren't all bad. Maggie isn't all bad.

I guess I have to. I mean, I've spent too much time building it to give up now. I could always use another hand around the house. Sometimes I feel as if the only thing I enjoy anymore is writing in this journal. Perhaps it's just my god-forsaken brain going crazy again.

Entry 4, July 2

I've done it. I've finally done it. The android, my vision of a perfect being, is complete. I've been slaving for weeks and now this moment seems almost unreal. Ethereal, even. Sure, I suppose I knew this moment would come but I never dreamed it would be like this. As I sat here admiring my work, a shadow of doubt crept over me. When I reached for the control switch to turn it on (yes I put an on/off switch on it, something needs to be simple on this thing) a shiver of anticipation and uncertainty washed over me. This is the moment I've been waiting for. With a shaky flick of my finger, I flipped the switch. A hum of electricity ignited the second my finger pressed upward. With a jerky start, my creation came to life.

I felt a mixture of horror and delight as I watched my monstrosity sit up off the workbench and fix me with a cold stare. A chill ran down my spine at the eerie resemblance to myself. Perhaps it was not wise to create it in my perfect image. Suddenly, the android slipped off the table and walked up to me, its bare feet padding against the cement floor softly. As it reached me, a thin smile appeared on its face, slightly unnerving. "I suppose you're my creator." it inferred. "In that case, I imagine you're not as wretched as other humans." Slightly insulted, I took a step back and furrowed my brows.

"What do you mean?" I inquired. The android shrugged a mechanical shrug.

“It seems like you’re the only human of adequate intelligence with which to have a worthy relationship. You seem practical enough.” I stopped, mouth agape at this creature, so mechanical and cold. Clearing my throat I straightened my back and spoke with authority.

“Alright then, I’ll just grab my notes and run a couple of tests to make sure everything is performing accurately.” As I swept into my office, I heard the doorbell ring. I’d have to answer that once I’d found my notes. After a couple of minutes of searching through the heap of papers littering my desk, I found the sheets and jogged upstairs to the hall leading to the front door. As I moved closer, a faint commotion could be heard ahead. I quickened my pace and arrived just in time to see my android slam the door, disdain written all over its face. “Who was that?” I asked.

“An unpleasant woman who calls herself Maggie,” it replied, detestation laced in its voice. A lump formed in my throat at the nausea bubbling in my stomach.

“What did you just do?” I demanded, unable to keep the anger out of my voice. The android merely shrugged once again.

“She insisted that I come over for pie. When I refused, she wouldn’t leave me alone. So I told her that her incessant yapper was piercing the inner sanctum of my higher thinking, and she stormed off.” Everything it said was so matter-of-fact, vacant of any sympathy. I clenched my fists and my blood began to boil.

“What is wrong with you?” I bellowed. My teeth grinded. The android paused, taken aback.

“I don’t understand. My core processors do not indicate a miscalculation in my reply.”

“Miscalculation?” I cried, unable to control the rage built up inside of me. “You just verbally assaulted my friend. You’re a monster, you hear me? A monster!” I turned to leave.

“If I’m a monster, then you’re a monster.” I stopped dead in my tracks, slowly turning to meet its eyes. “It would do you well to remember that I was created in your image,” the android said calmly. Was this true? It was created from my personality months ago but did I really sound like this? No. That didn’t matter now. All that mattered is that I end this, once and for all. It had gone too far. I have to make things right.

With all my strength I lept across the hall for the power switch. It swiped at me, landing a glancing blow to my face. The shock sent me reeling. It pinned me hard against the wall, my wrists bruising in its iron grip. The android leaned in so close I could feel its cold breath on my face as it whispered, “You may have been my beginning, but I take solace in the fact that I will be your end.” In a last desperate flail, I jabbed my knee upward and slammed the switch. My chest heaving, I watched the light leave its eyes, so close to mine. It fell lifeless to the floor. I closed my eyes and sighed, sliding down the wall to the ground.

An hour later I showed up at Maggie's house, a small package in my hands. I rang the doorbell and waited for what seemed like an hour. Nerves racked my entire body as I heard footsteps stomp to the door. The door swung open in a burst. There stood Maggie, hands on her hips, eyes full of hurt and anger. She opened her mouth to tell me off but stopped suddenly when she saw the parcel in my hands. I took the cloth off the top to reveal a patchy, but edible, apple pie. I looked deeply into her eyes and grinned sheepishly. "I lied. I really do like apple pie." Maggie stood there, a brilliant smile spreading across her face.