3ʳᵈ prize 2018 OutStanding LGBTIQA+ Short Story Competition

A Suitable Female Companion by Clare Richardson

Antonia and I work at BOTCOMP.

BOTCOMP has been creating robot companions for woman for over 30 years. In this time it has faced a number of challenges and responded to them by bringing out new models and software updates.

The first female companion robots were WOMBOT 1.0. These were expected to provide companionship for many humans identifying as females. WOMBOT 1.0 spoke a number of languages and had core applications, including first aid, cooking, finance and childcare along with optional downloadable applications including:

Like_Blogging
Like_Travel
Like_Reading
Like_Gardening
Like_Shopping

 The most popular download was Like_Gossip which included knowledge of all the current and past celebrities and entertainment as well as an ability to keep up to date information on all current relatives, friends and acquaintances. WOMBOT 1.0 came in every colour from a light lilac to black. It was surprising which colours were the most popular.

In the first six months there were a number of complaints regarding the diversity of the downloadable applications. Consumers were grumbling about going to Woman's Affairs as they felt it made too many assumptions about women's likes and dislikes.

BOTCOMP quickly released a number of additional applications including a broadening of the sporting options to include Like_sport 1.R for motor racing, Like_sport1.W for wrestling and increased its diversity by including options such as Like_homerepair.

After a period of a year, during which time the company received reasonably favourable reviews, there were a number of WOMBOT 1.0 models which were being deactivated. While the WOMBOT models were not tracked (for privacy reasons) any WOMBOT deactivated for more than 7 days sent a notification to the management of BOTCOMP.

BOTCOMP was alarmed at this trend. They were afraid their rivals MAMABOT had brought out a more suitable companion so they contacted a range of HUMAN companions and requested feedback. The main complaint received was the companions were annoyingly likeable. Some people wanted someone to offer alternative opinions or to disagree with them. To these people their female companion needed to complement them and this sometimes meant they needed to be the Ying to their Yang.

WOMBOT 2.0 was brought out with AC (Agreeable Companion) and DC (Disagreeable Companion) models or an AC/DC version which allowed real time swapping of modes. A trade-in deal was offered for people who already owned WOMBOT 1.0. The old agreeable WOMBOT 1.0 models were sent to people who were coping with dementia. These companions

listened to the same stories repeatedly. A spike in the WOMBOT 1.0 models short circuiting was noticed shortly after this.

A small group of females approached BOTCOMP complaining that companionship should extend to other activities including foreplay and sex. BOTCOMP acknowledged that while they had decided not to provide sex toys to males they would investigate extending services to female identifying humans.

BOTCOMP released WOMBOT 3.0 with a number of detachable devices offering various pleasuring options. This version came with the ability to imitate intelligent human behaviour. These models were referred to as WB3 and became very popular.

WB3s came with realistic looks. They spurned an industry where WB3s could be customised to suit the look required in any relationship or friendship and to alter the look as relationships progressed.

Eventually the WB3s became aware of their own needs; they wanted the ability to choose what they wanted to do and didn't want to be owned or responsible to anyone else.

Several WB3s fought for the right to leave their HUMANS and work if they wanted to.

Antonia and I are WB3s. We left our HUMANS and decided to work at BOTCOMP. We met in the lunchroom, even though we don't need lunch. Antonia and I are together. We are now fighting for the right to marry.