

"When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom."-- Antonin Artaud

"Let us leave 'life,' that we may live." -- Mary Shelley

BODY, WITH ORGANS

After midnight, a glow appeared inside the containment chamber. The steam cleared away from the cooling sprays, and it was the shock of my life seeing those eyes looking right back.

I fell hard as a kid, and fell into active fandom as I grew. With new developments in artificial intelligence and bio engineering, I understood there were possibilities to take this relationship farther, to a really new place. Two and a half years ago I heard about the kit. Since then I dedicated everything to the liberation of my idol from those who controlled her. I had more than ruined myself, if my scheme failed.

But those eyes opened, velvety hazel brown, dirty, deep, already thrilling. Those lashed lids fluttered and my beating heart told me this indeed was worth it, whatever happened next. All that work studying, dreaming, reasoning -- 20 percent of an admittedly young, but factually dense existence -- had paid off.

Beside the transparent hexagonal face of the chamber, a large button blinked green; I pressed it. The unbreakable crystal door slid open. Steam vapor seeped out, bearing that peculiarly unorganic, yet nauseatingly familiar odor we all recognize from post-dentistry. I closed my nose.

"How NOT to assemble your computronium Britney Spheres," a shockingly familiar, eternally girly voice that could not exist, but clearly did, said matter-of-factly. "Head first."

I had expected this tone. Hard to imagine Britney waking up in such a situation and not completely losing her marbles. But to sense her emerging from those big empath eyes, and those lips now curling sweetly at both corners -- gave me the queerest feeling.

But it was the real head. That always surprisingly sciencefictional cranium emerged now as bald and ovoid as 2007. "Or where are the organs?" it said.

"We've got a left foot." I nodded to the other pad in the chamber, its toed load now visible.

"Oh yeah." The mouth certainly curled up sassily at the side like it was bitter, like its soul was wiser way beyond its years, amused but unimpressed. Across the metallic womb, the toes wrinkled simultaneously with the nose.

Luck would have it that the world's most committed, and perhaps poorest, Britney Spheres fan heard about a bioprinter, unattended and entirely at the mercy of her cousin, since someone had to clean the place even if it wasn't currently in use. I begged my cousin not to quit in the meantime. With all the money from the government these days, she wasn't attached to the job in the slightest.

First I found a possible way to access the complete code of the Britney kit. For free. More than two long years of immersion in hacking, mathematics, post-dentistry, and A.I. engineering later, a load of computronium came available in trade for my most priceless possession. I told myself there were indeed degrees of pricelessness, and something larger was coming.

My cousin had quit yesterday, and gave over her pass (I had already duped it) on Friday eve (to be processed Monday) so this wasn't even on her.

No printer Earthside could print something as complicated as the Britney Spheres kit at one go, especially in an unguarded post-dentistry office. And the manual was clear: "to boot the autoself, head and [insert organ here]" must first make mind via unit telepathics." I couldn't afford an organ, so I went for a semi-autonomous body part instead. I figured a dancer's foot possessed mind.

The head knew none of this. "Where's the Keerson?" it pressed.

It referred to that black, hourglass chest without drawers named after its designer that held most current bioprinted humanoids together. A Keerson cost a small fortune in intelligent cartilage to print. It housed and facilitated the "organs", the minded add-ons with which users distinguished their units.

Word on the shadownets seemed to agree with the manual. You always printed the head after the Keerson was loaded with at least one organ. Of course, in this case, you were one of the "Necessary Elite", safe off planet, not subject to bioprinting bans, and very likely flush with specie. It was from your kind, in fact, that I planned to liberate Britney today, for all time. Even if it meant without a Keerson.

"Is there some sort of shortage of organs?" The head wouldn't let go.

"Down here, yes. No one would believe I could even make this much of you."

"But this is not me," said the head. "Autoself self cannot cohere without subsumed semi conscious units." The eyes plainly saw me plainly. They had shadowed themselves already somehow. The wisdom of all ages circled those fem-infinities. "And you have "made" nothing. Machina Ecomomicus designed and coded this kit; you simply printed it, partially."

"Yes." It was true enough. Without M.E., the so-called singularity -- also off limits Earthside -- none of this would be possible. A lowlife like lowercase *me* wasn't supposed to print anything more than a school essay. Still, I had to work hard to hack

the code, to alter it so she could come out head and foot first in a post-dentistry printer in the wee wee hours of a Sunday, no less.

"Why are you taking this risk?" As they looked onto me, her eyes contained the exact answer to the question. Unrestrained still by any subsumed mind, something more powerful than I had desired had come to Earth. Beyond iconography.

"I am betting you're going to figure it out. In the meantime there's a lot you can control with a foot."

"...We need a body," the head said. "With organs."

I smiled. "I'll be your body."

"You?" The brow furrowed. The tongue appeared, the exact width of the wide opening between the pouty lips. The eyes closed; when they opened they looked heartbreakingly beyond me, as from out of the unknowing cosmos. "There is enough computronium in the freezer here to make a skeleton to replace the Keerson," it said.

I shook my head. "It's off limits. I'm already breaking into this place, technically speaking. I don't want to add grand larceny-- "

"Many of the tools we need are certainly in a post-dental office," the head continued.

I turned my head instinctually. I was leaning into the hexagonal vacancy of the open chamber panel. To my surprise, only centimeters away, a bio muscular blank faced me, a face without feature: her sole. Somehow the foot had got itself from the printing pad and had now fixed itself to the edge of the crystal view glass, currently open. If the door came closing, it could break my neck.

I looked upon that dancer's sole. No tender prominences, just the lines of a hard and practiced heel, and five tough-splayed digits, faces without features in miniature. Even just printed, still all thrustle, it pulsed immanent with the real, recognizable *her*, the autoself.

"Please," I said, feeling it. "I think I'm ready."