

LARUNA

LUST

a short by
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Laruna Lust

by

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The years had not been kind to Wilton Krump, a balding, forty-something with a potbelly. His life was simple, even dull. It consisted of a small apartment, a job in a sea of cubicles downtown, and enough income to take care of the bills each month.

There had been some very dark days right after his mother's death. She and Wilton had shared the little apartment for many years. He had no other relatives and no friends. With her gone, loneliness and depression enveloped him. Life lost all color and meaning. He barely ate. He didn't sleep. Instead, he sat in his mother's recliner watching television late into the night, his mind stuck in neutral.

One night Wilton saw a commercial for a robot called Laruna. The advertisement said she was the perfect companion, capable of making any man's sexual fantasies a reality. Wilton was transfixed.

The little savings he had seemed a small trade to ignite the spark of life again. A companion. Human touch. Even if it wasn't really.

It took several hours of filling out forms online to complete the order. The company wanted to know everything about him so that they could feed the information into the robot.

A couple weeks later a wooden crate was delivered by two men in overalls. They wheeled it into Wilton's bedroom. Using a pry bar they pulled it apart. Inside was Laruna, asleep in her docking station. The men positioned the station against the wall at the foot of Wilton's bed.

One man uncoiled a power cord and plugged it into a wall socket. "Have fun!" He sneered and they left.

For a long time, Wilton Krump sat on the foot of his bed watching her. There was a little light above her head that indicated she was charging. It created a halo. She was slender, with smooth curves and soft blue skin.

When she finally awoke, her eyes seemed to be taking the room in.

Her eyes alighted on him, "Wilton?"

He could only nod.

A smile appeared on her face. She stepped down out of her charging station and sat down beside Wilton on the bed, wrapping her arms around him. He expected her skin to be cold and synthetic. But it wasn't. She was warm and soft. Her touch sent little shocks of electricity through his nerves.

"I am sorry about your mother," She said.

Wilton began to cry. She stroked his hair, just as his mother had.

As the weeks passed, Laruna's presence changed everything. The hole in Wilton's heart was gone. There was a new spring in his step. When he was home he only wanted to be with Laruna. When he was at work he only wanted to be home. She was a wonderful companion and a goddess of sexuality. And Wilton felt like a wild stallion, young and potent.

And every night Laruna would ask the same question, "Was I good for you?" To which Wilton would always answer truthfully, "Yes."

But Wilton began to notice a glitch. Sometimes Laruna would say, "Was ... was I good for

you.” At first he thought it was just a playful pensiveness in her mannerism. But there was a strange pause in her expression whenever it happened.

Then one night catastrophe struck. Laruna’s voice stuck on the word ‘was.’ She couldn’t stop saying it. Her body went stiff as if unable to move until the sentence was complete.

“Was ... was ... was ... was ...”

Wilton tried shaking her. He tried yelling at her. But nothing would make it stop. Slipping from her stony embrace, he fled the room. He couldn’t see her that way. Tears streamed down his face as he fumbled through the owner’s manual. He found a number and called it.

The next morning the two overall clad men appeared. Laruna was still lying in the same pose on the bed, but now she was silent, eyes open but not registering anything. Her battery had worn down in the middle of the night.

The men covered her with a blanket and lifted her onto a cart. They promised she’d be ‘right as rain’ and then they left. There was nothing for Wilton to do but wait.

Struggling up the stairs of his apartment building, Wilton Krump hugged an overfull grocery bag with one hand and a glass bottle of milk with his other. It had been several days since the two men had taken Laruna away. Wilton had been in a fog ever since. But he heard the yelling even before he reached his floor.

The lady that lived across the hall always seemed to be in the process of kicking her boyfriend out. They made up quickly though, because he was always back after a week with his duffel bag slung over his shoulder. They would meet at the door, kiss violently, then disappear into the apartment. A couple weeks later, screaming matches would again ensue.

Wilton reached the top of the stairs. Setting the milk down, he fumbled for his keys. His only wish was to get inside his apartment before the argument inevitably spilled out onto the landing. Too late. He dropped his keys when the door behind him burst open.

“Get out, Jeff!” The lady was screaming.

Wilton turned to see the man stumble out of the apartment holding an armload of clothes in one hand, dragging a duffel bag with the other. The lady threw more of his clothes onto the landing.

“Every guy takes a little honey on the side!” The man shouted back at her.

Wilton crouched carefully, so as not to upset the grocery bag, and picked up his keys.

The lady started to sob.

“Sheesh, Lorraine, you’re being such a hard-ass about this!”

Another load of clothes wrapped themselves around the man’s head. His arm shot out and grabbed her wrist. Pulling her to himself, he gave her a shake.

“Don’t disrespect me!” he shouted, “Not after all I’ve done for you!”

Lorraine’s eyes locked onto Wilton’s and he could see the terror in them. He had no desire to involve himself, but he heard himself say, “Ah ... sir, I think it would be ...”

The man turned on him, face red, eyes bulging. He looked Wilton up and down.

“You shut up!” He said, stabbing Wilton in the chest with his finger.

“But wouldn’t it ... don’t you agree ...”

The man grabbed Wilton’s shirt in a bunch just below his neck.

“I don’t agree with nothin’ you’ve got to say.”

He shook Wilton violently causing Wilton’s grocery bag to slip from his grasp and burst open on the floor.

“Leave him alone, Jeff!”

Lorraine was pulling at his shirt. He turned back to her and slapped her across the face.

It wasn’t until a moment after the glass bottle of milk had shattered on the man’s head, that Wilton realized what he’d done. Milk and blood ran down Jeff’s back mingling into a thick pinkish puddle on the floor, his knees buckled and he crumpled, unconscious.

After the police took the man away, Lorraine hugged Wilton.

“Thank you so much,” she said when she had released him.

Then she lifted her face to his and kissed him on the cheek. They both blushed and Lorraine escaped into her apartment.

Three days later Laruna was returned by the same two men who had taken her away.

“She’s back to her old self, sir!”

Wilton nodded, his heart racing. He couldn’t wait for the men to leave and they seemed to sense it.

“Don’t waste no time makin’ up now!” One of the men grinned. With that they left.

“Did you miss me?” Laruna purred.

Wilton nodded and they embraced, their lips melding.

Sometime later, as they lie together in the darkness, Wilton waited nervously for proof of her repair.

“Wilton?”

“Yes.”

Here it came.

“Was ... I good for you?”

Wilton exhaled, relieved, and kissed her again.

Wilton Krump hardly had a moment to shed his coat and briefcase when a knock came at the door. He wasn’t expecting anyone. He checked the peephole and opened the door.

There stood Lorraine smiling awkwardly. She held a package wrapped in bright paper with a bow stuck to the top.

“I’m sorry to bother you. I just wanted to give you something ...”

Wilton didn’t know what to say but had the presence of mind to hold the door open and mo-

tion for her to come in.

She entered and they stood for an awkward moment as Lorraine searched for words to say.

“Well, I really can’t thank you enough for ...”

Wilton waved her gratitude away, “It was nothing.”

She looked serious. “Oh no. That’s not true. Jeff is ... rough. You were very kind to intervene.”

Wilton took the gift from her outstretched hands. It was cold.

“You should open it now.” She smiled.

Wilton complied, tearing the paper away. Inside was a glass bottle of milk. He smiled back.

“Thank you.”

Wilton went to the fridge and stowed the bottle. Behind him the bedroom door opened. Lorraine gasped. Wilton turned to see an expression of shock on her face and at that moment felt his waist encircled by Laruna’s arms, her naked body pressing against his back.

“Coming to bed, Wilton?” Laruna cooed into his ear.

The blood drained from Lorraine’s face. She turned quickly and opened the front door, eyes averted, fumbling for words, but not finding any, she slammed the door and was gone.

Wilton Krump lay on the couch, soaking a pillow with his tears.

He felt the cushion beside him collapse under Laruna’s weight. His body shifted, falling against her warm skin. Her hand wove itself through his hair. Her face was close, her voice gentle and clear.

“I did not mean to cause you pain.”

Her body was pressed against him but he felt no arousal. His pain was too great.

“Wilton?”

He looked up at her. Her face seemed to twitch.

“I am ... am sorry, Wilton.”