

LIMBAWAY 12: PURPLE PASSIONS

by Paul Watson

"Drone! Get over here! We need you!" Hemmings shouts as they push into the lab.

Drone doesn't move from her seat.

"Drone! Didn't you hear me?!"

Drone lifts its head, turning to Loretta. "This Drone has not been commanded to not ignore Hemmings. Previous commands are still in place."

Loretta smiles as Hemmings fumes, "Drone, go over and help Jennifer with her new experiment." she instructs. Drone immediately rises, walking across the laboratory floor.

"Very funny. How long are you going to keep this up?"

Drone does not reply. Hemmings scowls, "Ask her!"

"Drone, how..."

"Until this Drone's commands are revoked, this Drone must obey them. That is the nature of commands for a Drone."

"So you can hear me!"

Drone continues to address Jennifer, "This Drone can hear perfectly well. It is, however, commanded to ignore Hemmings. So it is." there is a slight pause as Hemmings fumes, "What do you require this Drone to do, Jennifer?"

Jennifer looks around wildly, seemingly caught in a panic before she takes a deep breath, "Get a sample of purple from the corner. 500ml. Do not get any on you. Bring it back here."

"This Drone understands."

"So I'm going to have to go through you to get results, Pussy?"

"You...you could work on the mice." He glares at her, "Es-establishing the...the...the stability of the compound may be more im-important than the psychoresponsive effects."

"Fine." he sweeps away, "Foster! Where do you keep your other rodents?!"

Loretta gives a thumbs up from across the lab.

Drone returns, a carefully measured sample of purple goop in a jar. "This Drone wishes to inquire the purpose of its work."

Jennifer looks at her quizzically. "Purpose?"

"This Drone would...like to know why it is doing what it's doing."

"I...uhm..."

Drone waits.

"Telling you now would...would invalidate part of the testing. It is important the subject does not have expectations formed beforehand."

Drone tilts its head. "This Drone thinks it understands. Please inform this Drone of its purpose when possible. What do you require this Drone to do?"

"Glove on. Take a sample on one finger and apply it to your other hand. Talk me through what you feel as it happens."

"This Drone understands." it dips its gloved finger into the jar and smears the purple goop over its hand. "This Drone's hand feels...melty." she looks down as her hand swirls and bubbles, "There is no pain, but the sensation is unlike using LimbAway or Ahoy." As Jennifer watches, the fingers pull into its hand, and the palm bloats until Drone has a breast on the end of its arm. "Drone's hand feels as it looks, like a breast." Drone pokes her former hand and then her chest. "Sensations are confused. This Drone feels it is poking its hand as far as the location of the sensation occurs, but the sensations are more like poking this Drone's breast. There appear to be no bones in this Drone's hand. It does not feel unusual. This Drone feels that having a breast at the end of its arm is... correct."

"Oh my, I didn't, sorry, I, do...do you feel...aroused?"

"This Drone cannot feel aroused. It requested that be added to its routine commands."

"You made a request?"

"This Drone has...preferences. It is...strange to be brainless but to have preferences, but this Drone

does."

"Right, right. What were you thinking before you applied the gel?"

Drone pauses, tilting its head. "This Drone was feeling...satisfaction."

"Satisfaction? Why?"

"Because this Drone...enjoyed Hemmings' frustration. That is odd. This Drone should not have such feelings. This Drone should not have any feelings. This Drone requests this to be investigated when possible. It wishes to understand it's full nature as it is not what it thought."

"Ok. Try thinking about something else, like...an arm. Then apply more purple to your...hand."

"This Drone's hand?" it holds up its still normal right hand, "Or this Drone's former hand?" and then holds up its left arm, the breast jiggling on the end.

"Oh, former hand. You'll still need a hand to..."

"This Drone understands." it takes another sample, smearing over its newfound breast. The breast wobbles and stretches, elongating into a second, masculine arm with lean, well-defined muscles emerging from Drone's wrist.

"That...that's...how?"

"This Drone does not know."

"What...what were you thinking of?"

"This Drone was thinking of one of Sindi's sexual partners. He had very nice arms. This Drone remembers Sindi enjoying how they felt around her body when they hugged after..."

"That's...ok, ok, let's not get ahead of ourselves. Drone, repeat while thinking of something non-human."

"This Drone requests an example."

"Something from an animal."

"This Drone understands." it spreads more purple over its lengthened arm and as it wobbles and shrinks, fur sprouts along the skin. Thick pads form on its palm as its fingers pull inwards until what looks like a tiger's paw from its wrist.

"That's...how is that possible? It...how..."

Drone turns the paw over, "This also feels...natural, correct to this Drone. This is what is...supposed to be there." muscles flex and long sharp claws emerge from between her stubby fingers. Jennifer steps back. The muscles flex again, claws pulling inwards.

"Wow! How..."

"Has this Drone done something wrong?"

"What? No, but...that shouldn't be...it's not...how?"

Drone stands there. "What do you need this drone to do?"

Jennifer pulls herself together. "Wipe your...paw with Away and then Ahoy to restore it."

"Should this Drone expect a hand or a paw?"

Jennifer stops, staring, "I...have no earthly idea."

Drone nods and turns to the bottles of blue and pink, restoring her hand as if nothing had happened.

"Oh, that's a relief. Can you detect any side effects?"

Drone curls and opens its fingers. It twists its hand at the wrist. It presses a finger into its palm.

"This Drone can detect nothing abnormal. It appears this Drone's hand is just this Drone's hand."

"Good."

"Is this an appropriate time for this Drone to ask..."

"We discovered the gel is psychoresponsive, it reacts to the subject's thoughts. If I'd told you what to expect we wouldn't know how it reacted to...unfocused thoughts."

"This Drone understands. Or thinks it does. And this Drone was chosen for this as this Drone usually has few thoughts to react to."

"I wouldn't..."

"This Drone is not offended. This Drone is unsure if it can be offended. Is there anything else this Drone should do?"

"Can you write up the tests? As much detail as possible about what you were thinking, what the changes were, what the sensations of the changes were."

"This Drone can. This Drone shall." it turns to the spare computer, and starts to write.

Hours later, Jennifer stares at her hand, sprouting extra fingers, and soft stripes of pigment across the back of it. But definitely no claws. "Why doesn't this work?" Drone continues writing up the notes, one hand sprouting tentacles instead of fingers but losing no dexterity as they curl over the keys. "It's possible. It worked for Drone so why doesn't it..."

"Can I try something?"

She looks up, "Oh, sure, Loretta. Might as well. I'm getting nowhere. Using it just produces regular human bits. This..." she holds up her hand, "...is as close as I've got to replicating it. I can't even produce male versions. I'm..."

"Shhh." Loretta rubs the gel over her hand, replacing it with a more slender, feminine hand, retaining the gel-nails she wore beforehand.

"It...how did you do that?! Why can't I?"

Loretta pulls her gaze away from her hand. "I think, think mind, that it's about your mental body map."

"What? How?"

"You know how the brain has a mental map of the body."

"Yes. So? How does that...oh."

"Right." Loretta replies, flexing her new hand, "My mental map doesn't quite line up with my body, that's what dysphoria is. Your mind knows it's female and knows it's human so it can't really trigger the psychoreactive response, no matter how much purple messes with the map. Mine...has different expectations."

"But Drone..."

"Drone's mind doesn't work the same way ours does. If it was anyone else, even Sindi, I doubt we could get the same effects, but Drone is...Drone. I'm not sure if her, its mental self-image is infinitely plastic, but it's certainly a lot more malleable than a normal person. Maybe we could do something with hypnosis? First, I think we need to find out the limits Drone has."

"Oh, Brad knows hypnosis."

"Why am I not surprised? Ok, but it's...too early to bring him in. We might be wasting his time. Until we're sure, let's keep it between us. You know how Hemmings can get. There's no need to bother him with it just yet. He has Foster's mice to be dealing with."

"I...I guess."