

ANDROID ASSISTANT

Elaine, an aging woman, begrudgingly relies on an android to help her recover after suffering multiple injuries.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

ELAINE, an elderly woman, wakes up in her bed and slowly throws the sheets off. Her right hand is in a cast, and the falling sheets reveal a second cast on her left foot. She checks her phone as if expecting a text. Nothing.

She grabs the cane leaning against her bed and tries to get up. Her foot says otherwise. She sits back in bed.

ELAINE

Cher... Sean! Could you help me?

Rhythmic footsteps approach the bedroom door. It opens.

SEAN

What do you need ma'am?

Standing in the doorway is SEAN, a male-type android with a blank smile on his face. He walks over to the bed. His movements are human, but still a bit robotic; like he is a few generations from getting out of the uncanny valley.

ELAINE

Can you help me to the bathroom?

SEAN

Right away.

Sean's programmed optimism contrasts with Elaine's glumness. He gestures with his elbow out for her to grab on to.

They walk over to the bathroom and Sean sets her down on the toilet. She gives him a look. He puts both his hands over his eyes in a child like motion and turns around. Elaine chuckles. After she's done, he helps her over to the vanity.

Elaine pulls out some black hair dye. Her roots have gone gray since her time in the hospital.

ELAINE

Don't think you could help with this at all?

SEAN

No ma'am, I was not programmed with a salon module. I could try, but the results may be... less than satisfactory.

She thinks about applying it, but decides to put the dye back.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The house has a warm and welcoming air even though it's under construction. New wooden planks are piled up on the floor of the living room, a third of the flooring has yet to be laid.

Sean walks cautiously behind Elaine as she walks of her own accord, her cane aggressively grasped. She bobs over to the couch. Sean sits next to her, posture perfect and straight.

SEAN

Elaine, are you sure you do not want me to finish the flooring. It is dangerous to leave these materials scattered.

ELAINE

No! No, that is for Cheryl and me.

Elaine's voice is dejected and lonely, so much so that even Sean picks up on it. She looks down at her phone again.

SEAN

Has she messaged you back?

ELAINE

Not yet. I'm sure she's very busy.

SEAN

Why do you not just call her and ask her to come over?

ELAINE

If she wanted to make time to see me she would. A mother shouldn't have to beg to see her kids.

Sean's brows furrow into a set position.

SEAN

If you had called her before trying to work on the house yourself, you may not have gotten injured.

ELAINE

Enough, Sean! Can you start breakfast please?

Sean's demeanor changes back to a blank smile. He gets up from the couch, his body moves all in one motion.

SEAN

Right away ma'am.

Elaine grabs the remote and turns on the tv.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Elaine has barely moved, only shifting slightly around the couch. The TV illuminates the unfinished room. Sean steps in front of Elaine, breaking her trance.

SEAN

Are you sure you do not want to  
move around.

ELAINE

No, I think I may just finish this  
episode and go to bed.

Sean's brows furrow again to the same preset concerned look. He sits down next to Elaine on the couch and gives her a hug. She embraces him after a moment's hesitation. He feels metallic and rubbery, cold almost; opposite the feeling of the house.

SEAN

You seemed like you needed a hug.

Elaine appreciates the gesture, but her forced smile is not believable.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Is something still wrong?

Elaine checks her phone again, still nothing.

ELAINE

I just didn't think I would be  
spending my recovery with, well,  
you. No offense.

SEAN

Oh none taken. Actually I am not  
capable of taking any. That is one  
of the nice things about us, you  
can be brutally honest.

ELAINE

Thank you. I'm sorry, I appreciate  
the gesture, really. I think I  
would just like to go to bed if you  
don't mind helping me?

Elaine turns off the tv and Sean helps her to her room.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sean hovers his hands behind Elaine, like a parent watching their child ride a bike without training wheels for the first time. She stumbles over and plops on the bed.

ELAINE

Can you put my phone on the charger  
for me?

Elaine points to the charger on her nightstand. Sean takes the phone. He meanders to the nightstand. When he goes to set the phone down, his brows raise like he's got an idea. Elaine drifts to bed.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

BANG. BANG. BANG. Someone knocks feverishly on the door, jolting Elaine awake. Elaine calls out to Sean. No response.

The banging continues, followed by a muffled female voice. Again Elaine calls out; again no answer. The lock starts to jiggle. The door flings open.

CHERYL (O.S.)

Mom! Mom, is everything alright?

ELAINE

Cheryl? Is that you?

CHERYL runs into the room in a panic. Elaine looks confused.

CHERYL

Are you alright?

ELAINE

Yes, yes I'm fine! What's going on?

Cheryl rubs her forehead in relief, wiping away a bit of perspiration.

CHERYL

I got an alert from the Android Assistant app. It said there was a malfunction with Sean and then you weren't answering your phone. I just didn't know what was going on.

ELAINE

Oh no honey I'm fine. I've just been asleep, but I don't know how I didn't hear it ring. Sean was working last night.

Elaine looks over at her nightstand, her phone isn't plugged in. Cheryl helps her mom up, extending her arm for Elaine to balance on. Elaine grabs hold, clutching on tight; forgoing her cane. They walk into the living room.

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cheryl drops her mom off on the couch. In the back of the living room stands Sean, motionless. He's upright, but his upper back and head are slightly dipped. Cheryl inspects him.

CHERYL

I spent a shit ton of money on this just for him to conk out. I'll call to get a new one over here.

Elaine quickly interjects, taking advantage of this chance.

ELAINE

I think it would be better if you could just stay. What if the next one breaks down when I need help?

CHERYL

Mom, don't worry. These androids are very reliable. I'm sure this is an anomaly.

ELAINE

I want you to stay.

Elaine lets out a pent up exhale, finally getting this off her chest. There is a beat of silence, Cheryl looks caught off guard. She looks back at Sean's lifeless body.

CHERYL

Yeah. You're right, you never know with these things. Um, let me make some calls and I'll come back in and we can get something to eat?

ELAINE

Yeah, yeah I'd like that.

Cheryl gets on her phone and steps out the front door. Elaine cracks a quick smile she couldn't contain anymore. She glances at the construction materials on lying on the ground and visualizes finally finishing this room.

Her eyes eventually land back on Sean, his frozen body still hunched over. As Elaine starts to look away, she hears a slight zip. Sean, body still hunched over, tilts his head up for just a moment and winks. He goes back offline.