
DARK MEN, DARK MACHINES

Posted by rockefeller - 2018/09/20 14:49

Rocks read in the local paper that there's a new brothel in town staffed by high-end fuck dolls. The proprietor, who is human, reported that some of these models can cost upwards of fifteen grand, and that he has a lot of regulars, guys who avail themselves of their services on a weekly-or-more basis. He spends a lot of his time going from room to room re-posing his "ladies" between johns, and also cleaning and straightening their hands, which apparently see a lot of use. Although it might not be reflected in some of Rocks' critiques here, he is not one to judge his fellow man, especially where no one is hurt. But still, he has to thinkâ€"gross!

Rocks read the cap under review here a week or two ago, and remembers its holding his interest in perhaps the upper five percentile of stories he reads, getting over halfway through before he was even remotely tempted to not so much skim as just start reading in bigger gulps.

He knew it'd be, at worst, a close call, and so decided to apply the test of time, to let it ferment and fester in the storm drains and sewers of his subconscious. Names and nuances have faded, but he remembers the gist. In the world built, home helper bots are common, but not yet that authentically human. So some doctor/engineer working for some big company like Apple is developing new, improved models that look, feel and taste just like people, but that exist only to serve. Think slave in a box. There've been some setbacks. One individual prototype in particular seems to have acquired a will of its own. There's another that's basically a fuck doll, who eventually becomes his wife. Natch snatch. No surprise there.

But then, as it turns out (or as Rocks remembers it turns out), they aren't machines at all, but just real human beings (immigrants mainly) that the good doctor has somehow commandeered and brainwashed, kind of the way the CIA once tried to do with Canadian mental patients through LSD and sensory deprivation, or how some cultures make zombies with blowfish toxin and datura.

So now, instead of a sci-fi addressing issues like android and AI rights, you have this (to Rocks anyway) totally unbelievable horror/thriller thing. Like, really, they're just going to start selling them with no one the wiser? What happens when they age, sicken or die? No regulating or governing agency? No blogger or you-tuber ever tries to take one's head off? Like, hello? Customer support? Your cleaning lady bot just took a very credible dump and plugged up my toilet? She's also gained 40 pounds since I bought her.

So, despite some fine prose and narrative, Rocks is going to thumbs-down this bad boy. Really, maybe only thumbs sideways, like very enthusiastically (or desperately) hitchhiking with both hands. Don't misunderstand: still a no. But open to, even faintly hopeful of, his colleague in this esteemed realm, known only as The Bull, deciding otherwise.

Re:DARK MEN, DARK MACHINES

Posted by bulldust - 2018/09/24 14:13

While the Bullmeisterâ€™s schedule is frequently filled with tasks delegated to him by his sweet Bessie, he does get occasional downtime. When he is down, frequently, he and Bessie enjoy some brain numbing time in front of the television. Bessie is a brilliant creature. She has created an entertainment experience with minimal cost that rivals many prebuilt systems on the market. While the experience is not Imax quality, it is sufficient to get a bovine or two to sit still and veg out for a few hours.

The problem is that Bessie gets comfortable after a long day of work and she does not want to get back up. Then the Bull becomes the remote control. The arguments usually devolve to, â€œYour legs are not broken, if you want a robot, build oneâ€•. To which Bessie complains about the lack of materials in the house needed to build a robot and how if she had the materials, she could build a lot more things that the Bull would like. At this point the Bull just gets up and gets whatever Bessie wants, knowing there is no winning the argument.

The Bull has some strong sentiments regarding artificial intelligence and robots. On one hand, he loves the idea of making life easier by handing off basic tasks to a mechanical assistant of some kind. On the other hand, he hates the idea of enslaving anything. In fact, when a tool breaks beyond repair (which is rare with Bessie around, as she can fix many things), he feels guilty about just throwing it away. Usually, he finds himself muttering, â€œthank you for serving me wellâ€• as he drops the broken device in the trash.

The Bull is a sentimental fool when it comes to things electronic.

So here we are with "Dark Men, Dark Machines". At first, I was put off a little by the tone of the cap. Trini felt like any other bimbo robot I had read out there. She was perky and pretty and built for enjoyment. And after her conversation with Blue Hanc, I expected some kind of moral conundrum regarding the rights and freedoms of AIs. Then the cap got darker.

The robots were not actually robots but repurposed people. While the idea is creepy and disturbing, it seemed impractical. Why bother making them into robots, when you could just repurpose them with the promises and lies we already use to bait people to work shit jobs for little pay? But I digress. The robots are not really robots but human slaves that are sold as robots rebranded refugees, packaged to appease and a nation who has become weary of immigration.

This cap has an obvious political message and is well written. However, I lacked any connection to it. It felt empty. I had little sympathy for any of the characters. Yeah, I felt bad for the people/robots, but I didn't have that sense of anger and loss I would expect after reading about their appalling situation. I think this cap could use some more character building to make the impact of the truth harder hitting.

So I agree with my colleague, it is a no.

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