

Alan Matsumoto

By

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"I first got worried when Alan stuck the cucumber up his arse," Gabby said into the phone.

"Please hold the line," came the reply.

She cast her mind back to the incident.

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"Oh, my God, Alan! What are you doing?" Gabby turned to see Alan next to the fridge, knees slightly bent, leaning slightly backwards and twisting sideways to insert the cucumber into his anus.

He froze. "But you told me to do the vegetables."

"Yes! We're making dinner, Alan. 'Do the vegetables' means cut them, not stick them up your arse!"

"Oh..." Alan pulled and the cucumber gently slid back into view. "Could you please pass me a knife?" He placed the cucumber on the chopping board.

"Christ, Alan! We can't use it now!"

"Oh, the cucumber still has its condom on." Alan examined the plastic wrapper that enveloped the vegetable. "And remember, Gabby, I am fully irrigated. My back passage is purely for your purposes, should you wish to use it..."

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Gabby's feelings about Alan had been creeping up for weeks. Alan was nothing like her husband. The hard realisation came one morning almost a week ago after he'd planted the perfect kiss on her - deep, gentle, commanding, subtle. It summoned a dichotomy of feelings. Alan was great but the 'too good to be true' feeling was

starting to really sink in for Gabby. She would touch her face, longing for the sensation of Rick's sharp stubble against her skin. At the time she would complain. "Oh, Rick, get a shave, will you?" But Rick would just cackle in her face and shout "Come here, my love!" as he pressed his face against hers.

Rick didn't use his tongue like Alan either, but even after thirty years of marriage, he could still send those little pulses up her spine. Alan was intuitive and seemed to know everything, but the more Gabby looked at Alan, the more she missed Rick.

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Why do they call this 'easy-listening' music? Gabby thought as she held the phone against her ear. There was nothing *easy* about having to endure it whilst on hold. This was supposed to be the emergency helpline. Gabby's mind wandered back again.

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"Do you think you can prepare breakfast, Alan?" Gabby asked, pulling at the duvet to shield her naked body from the crisp morning air.

"Of course." Alan headed for the door.

"Clothes, Alan?" Gabby couldn't take her eyes off his athletic, youthful body; muscles defined through his taut skin.

"Would a dressing gown be appropriate?"

"That'd be lovely, Alan. Call me down when you're done. I'd like breakfast downstairs."

Alan smiled, put on his dressing gown and his footsteps padded on the wooden stairs towards the kitchen. Gabby sunk her head into the pillow with a soft sigh and a smile. She cast her eyes sideways and gazed through the picture on her dressing table, summoning the memory from the image. Rick and Gabby were chest deep in the mud pools at Hell's Gate in Rotorua. *What would the mud pools do to Alan?*

The mild aroma of coffee crept into the bedroom, breaking Gabby's trance, followed by Alan's call to breakfast. She slid out from under the duvet, wrapped herself in a towelling robe and headed downstairs.

"Alan!" Gabby shrieked.

She was adorned with the sight of Alan, straddled across the breakfast bar, his penis in his right hand as he masturbated slowly. He maintained his inviting smile towards Gabby as he pushed his hips forward, pointing his penis straight ahead.

"Alan, please... what are you doing?"

"Last month, you said, and I quote, 'I like a little bit of cock for breakfast now and again'. Your words exactly."

"Oh, God." She picked up Alan's robe and threw it over him. It slid down his smooth torso and hooked onto his protruding penis. He reminded her of the coat hanger in the hallway. "I meant morning sex. I quite like morning sex now and again. But not on the breakfast bar... Jesus, Alan."

"Oh..." Alan put on his dressing gown and returned upstairs.

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Gabby's attention snapped back when the phone-voice broke the drone of the music.

"Hello, Mrs. Hill? Can I confirm the make and model?"

Gabby looked at her notepad. "Yes, it's a Matsumoto type three, the model is an 'Alan'. Alan Matsumoto."

"And it's been malfunctioning?"

"Well, yes, I think so." Gabby wavered. "And his penis has broken off."

Gabby painfully recalled the events of her morning.

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"I could clean the house if you like, Gabby," Alan said, climbing out of bed.

“Oh, Alan, that’s so kind of you. But this is the first time you’ve done something like this. Just use the vacuum cleaner for now.”

Alan glided out of bed, put on a pair of shorts and a t-shirt and walked purposefully downstairs. Gabby smiled to herself. You could learn anything from YouTube these days. Years ago you had to be a real technical whizz to tamper with computers. She remembers when Rick tried to install an AI module into the fridge so it would order the weekly shopping. “Oh, how hard can it be?” he’d say, “If a bunch of spotty-faced kids can do it then so can I!” Rick swallowed his words when a truck appeared at their door with sixty crates of tinned tomatoes and one capsicum.

But things had moved on from then. It was all menus and voice directed input. Hopefully, the deep-learning algorithms would kick in soon enough. The video did say it would take time for the neural net to start redeveloping itself.

She heard the clatter of cupboard doors followed by the whine and hiss of the vacuum cleaner. I could get used to this, she thought, moving her body to Alan’s side of the bed where she could still feel the warmth his body had left behind. Then suddenly, the vacuum cleaner gave out a high-pitched whine. Something was jammed in the tube. She shot out of bed. She hadn’t programmed Alan to trouble-shoot.

“I have made an error,” said Alan, as Gabby dashed into the lounge.

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“Can I ask, Mrs. Hill,” said the voice on the phone, grabbing Gabby’s attention, “how exactly did the penis break off?”

“Oh, this is quite embarrassing,” replied Gabby, “I caught him trying to have sex with the vacuum cleaner. His penis became jammed in the nozzle and he started acting all strange. His left eye was twitching and his voice was funny. I looked for instructions to release his erection, but it wouldn’t work. In the end I had to detach his penis at the base and suck it through the vacuum cleaner to retrieve it. Now it won’t reattach and he has an input port where his penis should be.”

“And you say this behaviour started last week?”

“Well, I think it’s my fault, really. See... its Rick, my late husband. I miss him so much and I thought if I could re-program Alan to do more things... you know... more than just... it’d be like having Rick around again... like a proper companion. But I think it’s all gone a bit wrong.”

“You realise that your guarantee is now invalid, Mrs. Hill. Our policy is very clear about amending the model’s operating system without tech support. You’re going to need to perform a factory reset. I’m sure if we remove the algorithms you installed, your Alan model will work just fine again.”

“But he’ll just revert back to being a sex-bot?”

“Yes, Mrs. Hill. That’s what *it* is. That’s why you bought it. It only has the one function, I’m afraid.”

“He’s pretty useless apart from in bed then...” Gabby sighed.

“Well, it can perform simple conversational routines.”

She gazed ahead, phone in hand. Then she wiped away a tear which had been welling in her eye and her lips pursed into a smile. Throughout their marriage, Rick hadn’t cooked a single meal, or ever done the vacuuming. His conversation was limited too. But she did enjoy their time in bed together!

She looked at Alan, naked with his penis on the floor.

“Well, Alan, I might just have to change your name to Rick after all.”