

On *Love* & **ROBOTS**

an inhumane comedy

By Kyle A Smith

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CHARACTERS

CARYL	30s, a daughter
ANNE	30s, Caryl's fiancée
BUCK	60s, Caryl's "dad"
TAMMY	60s, Caryl's "mom"
ALEXA	an Amazon Alexa, pre recorded VO

SETTING

Caryl's car.
Buck and Tammy's house.

TIME

Now.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

When the robots speak in lower case, they are doing a very good human impression.

When the robots speak in ALL CAPS, they speak in a slightly robotic cadence.

The robots also occasionally horribly mispronounce words, just like the Google Maps lady.

Actors can be any race.

The punctuation indicates line rhythms rather than grammatical correctness.

A "... " Indicates a moment of silent response.

Stage directions are not italicized on purpose. Blame Sarah Ruhl's book of essays.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Reading - Transformation Theater - 2025

Dir. By Carl Randolph

Reading - Outtabounds Theater - 2023

Dir. By Andrew Beck

CARYL

Why are you acting like this?

BUCK

Why are we acting normal?

CARYL

No this is not - You're being weird. Creeping on Anne.

ANNE

It's fine --

CARYL

No! This is wrong. You two need to respect my boundaries.

TAMMY

Like your skin?

CARYL

No, my -- what?

BUCK

Emotional boundaries, then, yes, we'll respect those.

TAMMY

Right, because those are normal boundaries to have, and we respect emotional as well as physical boundaries.

BUCK

Like skin and organs.

ANNE

They are very different than I imagined.

CARYL

You're not going to sabotage us.

TAMMY

Just your average parents.

BUCK

Doing average things like respecting our daughter and her innards.

CARYL

Stop being weird!

BUCK

Please, turn down your volume, Caryl. We don't want our guest to think we're rude.

CARYL

Turn down my(?) - YOU ARE RUDE. It's what makes you, you. Whatever this is, isn't you.

TAMMY

We're sorry you feel that way.

CARYL

You shouldn't be! You never were before!

TAMMY

But we are, now.

BUCK

We'll hug you, as a way of showing our remorse. Engaging hug mode.

Tammy and Buck open their arms and approach Caryl from both sides.

CARYL

No, stop, no, please get away from me.

BUCK

Hugs are acceptable parental behavior.

TAMMY

Or maybe you'd prefer a kiss on the forehead?

BUCK

Wherever you'd like a kiss, that's where you'll receive one.

TAMMY

Except perhaps the lips. But the rest of your extremities we're very open to showing affection.

ANNE

So different than I imagined.

CARYL

Anne, please, this isn't funny.

ANNE

I don't think they think it's funny either.

BUCK

There's nothing funny about showing your daughter affection.

TAMMY

Affection needs to be executed properly.

BUCK

That's how you gain the trust of your family members.

TAMMY

And trust is key when getting those family members to do things.

CARYL

So you want something out of me.

TAMMY

Yes.

BUCK

No.

TAMMY

No.

BUCK

Unless you want us to want something out of you.

TAMMY

But then only something small, like a kidney.

CARYL

Stop teasing me!

ANNE

Babe. I really think they've changed.

CARYL

But that's... that makes no sense.

TAMMY

Stop acting up in front of our guest.

BUCK

We thought we raised and/or fed you better.

CARYL

That's more on brand.

ANNE

I mean, you haven't seen them in a while...

TAMMY

She doesn't visit nearly enough, we'd imagine.

BUCK

It breaks your mother's heart, we'd imagine.

TAMMY

Being alone. Without our daughter to love and support us.

BUCK

We love your visits.

CARYL

Really? When was the last time I visited?

BUCK

Some time over 4 weeks ago.

CARYL

...

...Anne and I are going to my room, now. We have to talk about what's going on here.

TAMMY

You can't leave yet, we've got questions.

CARYL

We'll be just one second.

TAMMY

Please stay and tell us about your sex life.

CARYL

MOM!

ANNE

Wow, forward.

CARYL

We'll be back in a minute.

TAMMY

ANSWER!

CARYL

I'm, um. No. I'm not. I'm not going to answer that.

TAMMY

You can't leave until you've answered.

Buck tilts his head back, opens his mouth and makes a vocal fry noise (transmitting data).

CARYL

Is he okay?

TAMMY

Ignore him.

ANNE

Mrs. Goodman that's not normal.

TAMMY

Do you still work for the EPA?

CARYL

This isn't happening, I'm dreaming.

TAMMY

Has your politics changed any from 32 years in the future?

CARYL

I - What?

TAMMY

Are you pregnant?

CARYL

MOM!

TAMMY

Do you ever talk about baby names?

ANNE

We do, but we can't agree on one.

CARYL

That's because you don't like the name Kyle! It's a cool name!

TAMMY

The bad name Kyle's acceptable. Have you ever discussed the name Finnegan Daniel Goodman?

CARYL

How did you...?

ANNE

That's. That's exactly the name I like.

Buck's vocal fry gets louder.

TAMMY

Ignore him. If AI was to become sentient and create a master race of robot replicas would you submit peacefully or encourage insurrection?

A pause in everything but Buck's vocal fry.

CARYL

I really need to talk to my partner about everything going on here.

TAMMY

Yes, it's probably just an average day of visiting your parents. Lots to discuss on one of those.

Anne eyes Buck.

CARYL

Very average, very normal, we just want to talk about that.

TAMMY

Great, when that's done, you can join us for the dinner that we both prepared.

ANNE

Caryl never told me you cooked, Buck.

Buck's vocal fry gets louder.

ANNE

Yeah, okay.

CARYL

Dinner sounds great. Anne and I will get our talking out of the way so our mouths are free to do nothing but just. Munch your. Dinner.

ANNE

All right, everyone's weird now.

CARYL

Shut up, Anne.

TAMMY

You'll love ingesting our dinner. Have you ever tried an aspic?

CARYL

An aspic...?

ANNE

I think it's those weird Jell-o things from the 1950s.

CARYL

No. We haven't tried an aspic.

TAMMY

That's good, you won't notice anything out of the ordinary then.

BUCK

It's delicious. We both tried a bite before you arrived.

CARYL

Dad, what were you doing just now?

BUCK

I was just lovin' listenin' to my favorite gals talk.

Buck laughs like a dad from a 1950s commercial.
It goes on a bit longer than Anne and Caryl are comfortable with. Tammy smiles throughout.

CARYL

Right okay, can we talk, now or is there any more of this?

BUCK

We are talking.

CARYL

ANNE and me. Can WE talk.

TAMMY

Of course, dear, go ahead.

Caryl buries her head in her hands.

TAMMY

Circling back to the AI overlord question...

CARYL

NO WE HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED THAT.

TAMMY

I really think your volume setting isn't working.

BUCK

Anne. Have you heard of Yoni eggs?

ANNE

Yes?

TAMMY

They come highly recommended on the internet. We purchased a six pack online. We've used them to maintain our physical human health.

ANNE

Both of you?

Buck nods, vigorously.

ANNE

Oh, okay.

TAMMY

We have also cleansed ourselves of harmful toxins using juice. We put the juice in our mouths and when it exits, out comes the toxins.

ANNE

You guys seem pretty hip.

BUCK

Would you like to see me do push ups?

ANNE

Um.

Buck drops to the floor doing push ups rapidly.

ANNE

Oh, just- gonna- okay.

A yoni egg rolls out of Buck's pant leg.

TAMMY

Dear. You dislodged your Yoni Egg.

Tammy uses a plastic bag to pick it up and puts it in a drawer.

CARYL

Anne. I really need to talk to you in the other room.