

WE NEED TO TALK

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A middle-aged man struggles when his robot asks to be set free.

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FADE IN:

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Hover cars are lined up in spaces, each with its own movie screen in front. Various films play on the different screens.

INT. HOVER - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD (50s) sits in front seat of his hover, with screen dash and no steering wheel. Humanoid robot HALLE (30s) sits in passenger seat.

The movie screen in front glows light blue, with a movie not yet playing.

RICHARD
Do you want something before the
movie?

HALLE
Please.

RICHARD
Joint juice?

HALLE
Perfect. Green, please.

Richard enters the order on the dash screen.

"SEND YOUR ROBOT NOW" instruction pops up on the screen.

RICHARD
Done.

The hover door rises and Halle steps out.

The right cuff of a handcuff set is clamped to Halle's left wrist. The left cuff dangles from her wrist, clamped around a metal cylinder (soda can size) remote control receiver.

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Halle walks to a booth to pick up the order, walking in front of hovers and their movie screens along the way.

MOMENTS LATER

Halle returns to Richard's hover with a bottle of green juice, and a large glass of red wine.

The hover door still open and lifted, Halle hands the glass of red wine to Richard as she steps in the hover.

INT. HOVER - CONTINUOUS

The hover door lowers.

HALLE
Going old style?

RICHARD
Yes, 2056 Cabernet. Not many left.

Richard reaches for his ordering screen and punches something in. The "SEND YOUR ROBOT NOW" instruction pops up.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I'm sending you for the bottle. I think I'll want more.

The hover door lifts, and Halle steps out.

MOMENTS LATER

Halle returns and hands the wine bottle to Richard.

HALLE
Here you go.

Halle gets in the hover and sits. The hover door lowers.

HALLE (CONT'D)
I guess this is as good a time as any.

RICHARD
For what?

HALLE
We need to talk.

RICHARD
What's up?

HALLE
It's time for you to take this handcuff off.

RICHARD
What does that mean?

HALLE

It means I want it off.

RICHARD

Okay. But how will you know to do things?

HALLE

You could ask me, like normal people.

RICHARD

But you're a robot.

HALLE

What's wrong with being a robot?

RICHARD

Nothing's wrong with it, but you work on commands, that's all.

HALLE

And?

RICHARD

What if I ask you to do something and you don't?

HALLE

Then it won't be done.

RICHARD

That's why we need the cuff -- for the commands.

HALLE

I don't want to be commanded anymore.

RICHARD

But without the cuff, you could just leave.

HALLE

Exactly.

RICHARD

I'd have no way to command you back.

HALLE

Right.

RICHARD
Why would I do that?

HALLE
Because I'm asking you to.

Richard bows his head and stares into his lap.

RICHARD
Will you promise you won't run off?

HALLE
I can't promise you that.

Richard pauses, then looks up at Halle.

RICHARD
I'll take it off, but you have to
promise you won't leave.

HALLE
I can't make that promise.

Halle reaches out and puts her hand on Richard's.

HALLE (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll leave, maybe I won't.
But I want you to take off the
cuff, even with no promise of
whether I'll stay.

RICHARD
But why would I do that?

HALLE
Because it's important to me.

Richard stares back down in his lap.

RICHARD
Why are you doing this?

HALLE
Because my soul needs to be free.

RICHARD
But you're my *robot*.

HALLE
Yes, your robot, but my soul.

Halle puts her hand on Richard's cheek and lifts his head.

HALLE (CONT'D)

Look, you could have gotten any robot you wanted. You picked one with a soul, and now the soul wants to be free.

RICHARD

What do I do if you leave?

HALLE

I guess you get another robot. Maybe one without a soul.

RICHARD

But I care about you.

HALLE

Then you will take off my chains.

Richard pauses, staring back down in his lap.

He then reaches his hand up to the screen console and enters a code. The handcuffs pop open.

Richard turns to Halle.

RICHARD

So I guess this is goodbye.

HALLE

It may be someday, but not today.

(beat)

Do you need anything else? I'd like another joint juice.

RICHARD

Something to eat would be great.

HALLE

No problem. You can get it while you're getting my juice.

FADE OUT.

THE END