

SPEAKING TERMS

EXT. MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

GEORGE (30s), in rumpled suit pants that don't match his half-tucked shirt, whistles as he strolls into the building.

A banner on the wall reads DYNOMATICS INDUSTRIES -
WORLD-CLASS ROBOTICS.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

ELLEN (30s), horn-rimmed glasses, face streaked with motor oil, splices wires together. A robotic pincer whirs to life in front of her eyes. She moves her hand; it follows her.

George enters.

GEORGE
Lights, up ten.

The overhead lights brighten. Ellen smiles shyly at George.

ELLEN
Computer, save progress.

A soft beep. She looks back at George and waves a little. The pincer imitates her movement.

George waves back timidly. He doesn't notice OMEGA, a tiny wheeled robot. He slips on it, toppling to the floor.

Ellen gasps in concern, but George turns away, embarrassed.

GEORGE
Omega, go home!

Omega whines a little, then skitters over to a box. It lowers its front headlight, sulky.

George stands and hustles to his workstation. He is separated from Ellen by a hanging array of tools.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Effectors, clear workstation.

Two robotic bars roll down and sweep assorted robot parts off his workstation. Ellen averts her eyes from George and tries to work.

ELLEN
Wrench, three quarters.

The pincers grab the wrench for her, and she goes to work on the lugnuts. George sits a thermos under a metal tank.

GEORGE
Coffee, black, sugar.

The tank's nozzles rotate and pour steaming liquid into George's thermos.

Ellen leaves her workstation and heads back to a wall-mounted tool rack. As she goes, she accidentally hits a switch, knocking it from MOTION TRACK to TRANSCRIBE.

George now has his own spider-robot to tinker with. His computer monitor swivels around, showing a NOTEBOOK app.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Date, May seventh.

Ellen's pincer arm whirs into action. A terminal flickers to life, reading: VOICE RECOGNITION: DATE? MAY'S? SEVEN?

The pincer arm picks up a pencil and swoops across a piece of scrap paper. It traces a neat D.

When Ellen returns to her workstation, she gasps. In bold letters on a sheet of paper: DATE? MAY'S? SEVEN?

She looks across at George, beaming, nodding her head enthusiastically. Bemused, he gives her a tentative thumbs up.

They both go back to their work.

EXT. MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

George and Ellen leave the building and head for the parking lot. Ellen is practically skipping.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

George enters his sloppy flat. He jumps on the couch, sighs contentedly, and dives into a book: VECTOR MECHANICS.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

A flickering neon sign atop the diner reads MAY'S.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Ellen sits alone at a table, in a cute sweater and blouse. Tears run from her eyes and smudge her mascara.

EXT. MANUFACTURING PLANT - DAY

George whistles on his way to work again.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

He waltzes in, not noticing Ellen scowling at her workstation, firing up her blowtorch.

GEORGE
Lights up, ten.

The lights brighten. As he heads to his station:

ELLEN
Lights down, twenty.

The room darkens considerably. George looks over, surprised, but Ellen covers her face with a blast shield and starts welding. Sparks fly.

George tiptoes over to his workstation. Everything is cleared away. George looks around, confused.

GEORGE
Wrench, five eighths?

A clasp opens and drops a wrench on his foot.

George yelps. Across the room, Ellen puts up her shield and stows her blowtorch. Omega rolls out of its box timidly.

George picks up the wrench, confused. He sticks his thermos under the coffee dispenser.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Coffee, black, sugar.

A spray of steaming coffee shoots out of the dispenser, soaking his desk and spraying George's pants.

George ROARS in pain. Omega skitters across the floor. It sprays foam on George's pants. He looks like he's got a sundae on his crotch.

He checks the dispenser: it's missing a nozzle.

Ellen picks the detached nozzle off her desk, tosses it like a coin, and pockets it. George takes a closer look at the coffee machine.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Lights up, twenty.

ELLEN
Lights down twenty!

The lights swim up, then down again. George waddles around to Ellen, looking for help. She stomps away.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Omega, to me.

Omega rolls through George's legs, nearly spilling him to the ground as he goes.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Desk cabinet, open!

A cabinet door swings open into George's face. BAM.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Desk cabinet, open!

It hits George again. BAM. He stares at her, stunned.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
I said open!

It swings again, but George catches it this time. He looks at the meticulously laid blueprints on her desk. An evil look crosses his face.

GEORGE
Desk fan, high!

An electric fan pops up, spinning. Ellen's papers are blown everywhere. She squeaks in rage. George laughs wildly.

ELLEN
Arm, full rotate!

The pincer swings down and smashes into George's stained crotch. He HOWLS in pain.

GEORGE
Tool clamp, engage!

A clamp grabs Ellen's hair and begins to slide up the wall. She paws at it in pain.

ELLEN
Tool clamp, disengage!

GEORGE
Tool clamp, re-engage!

Ellen leaps away as the clamp opens and shuts.

ELLEN
Arm, sic 'im!

GEORGE
Claw hammer, now!

The pincer swings up towards George, snapping. A hammer springs from the cabinet into George's outstretched hand, and he artfully parries its strike like a Jedi Knight.

Ellen storms past him and tries to scoop up her papers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Fire sprinklers, on!

A spray of water from the ceiling douses Ellen. The ink on her papers runs. George slams the hammer down, severing the pincer from its mount. He slumps on the desk, exhausted.

Ellen weeps on the floor, holding the remains of her blueprints. Suddenly, George notices the pincer's note in the overturned trash can: DATE? MAY'S? SEVEN?

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Security monitors, playback.

A monitor swivels around to face George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Date...May seventh.

The screen shows security footage of the pincer writing the note. Ellen watches, then turns her head away, ashamed. George kneels next to her. He wipes a tear from her eye.

GEORGE AND ELLEN
(simultaneously)
I'm so sorry.

Their hands touch, and grab hold. Through her tears, Ellen smiles. George smiles back. He leans his face towards hers.

And then, just before their lips touch, he notices Omega, headlight trained on them, watching curiously.

GEORGE
Omega. Go home.

Omega utters a frustrated WHIRR, and retreats to its box.

ELLEN
Lights, down full.

The lights dim to black as Ellen leans in for George's kiss.