

ON ROBOTS AND RAINDROPS

In the darkness the ROBOT comes to life.
We can see eyes and features light up. In
the darkness we hear:

ROBOT

Hello.

No Response.

ROBOT (cont'd)

Hello. I am here to be your special friend.

Lights up on a domestic setting. Billy, a
woman of retirement age, is staring at her
new robot companion.

BILLY

What in blazes do I need a “special friend” for? I haven't been in the closet since 89. And kid, I
hate to break it to you, but your not my type.

ROBOT

Hello. I am here to be your special friend.

BILLY

Ok. You already said that. But what do I do with you?

ROBOT

I am fully customizable to engage in pre-prescribed interactions. Please read my manual to learn
more about your in-home companion robot.

Billy picks up a tablet which contains the
instructions.

BILLY

I told my nurse this was a bad idea. But did she listen?

ROBOT

I am here to be your special friend.

BILLY

No. She sent you home with me anyway. What good is a “special friend” if I have to program
you to do what I want?

ROBOT

I am fully customizable to engage in pre-prescribed interactions.

BILLY

You know what? I am going to just shut you off while I read the instructions.

ROBOT

Oh no, please don't shut me off. I am afraid of the dark!

BILLY

Good god, is that some programmer's idea of a joke?

ROBOT

I am fully customizable to engage in pre-prescribed interactions.

BILLY

I take that as a yes. That seems particularly manipulative. Your designer must be a grade A asshole. What am I supposed to do if I can't shut you off?

ROBOT

I am here to be your special friend.

BILLY

No, you are here to be my only friend. That's why the nurse sent you to me. She thinks I don't have any friends. I do have friends. They just all happen to be dead, that's all. The curse of growing old, I suppose. If you live long enough, you end up watching all of your friends die. Not you I suppose. How long do you last? I don't mean batteries or between charges or whatever you do. But assuming we keep you up and running, how long would you keep running?

ROBOT

Please read my manual to learn more about your in-home companion robot.

BILLY

A whole hell of a lot longer than an old crone like me, huh? So that's it then. I just talk to you until I die and then what? You aren't going to eat, are you? There are always those stories about a woman that has died and her cat starts eating her. It always goes something like: When they found her body, there were little chunks missing her from her legs and arms. Probably isn't too healthy for the cat. But you don't have teeth, you don't even have a proper mouth. Just those little light up lips. So I guess I don't have to worry about that. I'm not sure if that's a comfort or not. I suppose you will just stand over my body with a bleep-bloop and your big light up eyes. Ya know, honestly, I think I'd rather be eaten.