

“Thank you for agreeing to our test! This is the latest development in dating tech. Aimed at finding and making compatible couples quickly and easily. Ideally it’ll take just one session, but that’s what the tests are for!” The representative of Date-co was holding open the door.

You stepped inside, feeling trepidatious. This felt... A little skeezy. The office had seemed almost empty, except for a few people on phones. But Date-co were paying well, and all you needed to do was try out some new tech. What could go wrong?

You recalled the representative showing the certification that it was safe for human test subjects, and you put your worries aside, looking at the machine before you. It looked like a giant cradle, with a headset attached, and several monitors on the outside.

“I’ll be in the room with you, monitoring things. You just take your seat, and I’ll secure the neural interface and eye mask.” The representative said. You did as they asked, taking a seat in the admittedly very comfortable chair. You could feel your whole body being supported.

They stepped forward, lowering the headset, and slipping down a small visor. “Okay, that should be covering your vision, can you see anything at all?” They said. You shook your head. “Great stuff. Right, we’re going to be booting up in a few seconds.”

You waited as you heard them typing at a keyboard, and then a pause, and a sigh. “Ugh, sorry, just got to wait for the software to load. The hardware never seems to have enough processing po- ah, there we go.” A soft light appeared in the visor.

“Right, the test is beginning now, I’ll speak to you once it’s done, cutie.” They said. You didn’t have time to really register the last word before an electrical whine emanated from the headset, and then the visor really came to life. Your body slumped, suddenly limp.

The visor was at first just a swirl of colour, pulling your attention, but after a while, it began to show you pictures of people. And then just a person. The representative of date-co. All the while, words were slipping into your ears, impossible to ignore, or resist.

You lost track of time, of your body, mind, and thoughts. You were being reprogrammed, reshaped, remoulded. But eventually, the pictures and words faded. And then the headset was being pulled off your head. Your partner was there, before you, smiling.

You sat up, feeling a little dazed. “How’re you doing, honey?” They asked.

You blinked a few times, before smiling at them, heart fluttering. “I-I’m great, my love.”

They returned the smile. “Excellent, now, come on, time for our date!” they said, taking your hand.

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