**How To Do Laundry**

Trudy plopped a red plastic basket of clothes on the shelf in the laundry closet, then ran her palms across the cold, hard steel of her new washer and dryer.

“I will never, ever again go to a laundromat,” she vowed, shaking her dark curly head. She flipped open the instructions that came with her appliances, but there was no reason to read them. The salesman had walked her through running the washer, emphasizing its ease of operation.

“These new machines are water-efficient,” he had said. “Use only HE detergent, and only as little as possible.” His fingers danced across the control panel. “Start with A*utomatic* for most loads. Don’t select the water level. Sensors will do that. Choose your water temperature and load type.” He smiled. “Then press *Start*. It’s as easy as that. But if you have any problems, call our help line.”

He handed her his business card as she handed him her credit card.

Trudy channeled his positivity as she poured detergent into the plastic cap that doubled as a measuring cup. Resisting the urge to add more, she did wonder how a dribble of detergent could adequately clean her clothes. But she was starting with underwear, which wasn’t that dirty to begin with. Layering the lingerie around the center nub, she resisted the urge to photograph the still life of pastel bras and undies to post on social media.

Instead, Trudy clasped her hands beneath her chin for a moment before choosing *Delicates* and *Cold*. Then, with a deep breath, *Start*.

Electric gears whirred and stopped. She waited. Nothing. She repeated the sequence. Again, nothing. She fumbled through the instructions and tried again. Still nothing. With tear-brimmed eyes and trembling fingers, she found the service card and punched the number into her phone.

“You’re in luck, ma’am,” the customer rep assured her after she explained her problem. “We have a service tech in your neighborhood. I’ll send him over on a courtesy call. No charge.”

Trudy exhaled slowly, not realizing she had been holding her breath.

Not an hour passed before Ring announced a man at her doorstep. She opened the door to a six-foot something man with wind-blown mahogany hair, over-sized hazel eyes, and a square jaw.

“I’m Troy,” he said. “At your service.”

Resisting the urge to stare, Trudy ushered him to the laundry room, explaining what she had done. Troy opened the lid of the washer and saw the lovely display of lingerie.

“Okay, delicates,” he said, fluffing the items around the non-agitator. Trudy blushed, wishing she had washed her underwear before washing it. “Did you add detergent?”

Unable to talk, she nodded. Troy then pressed *Automatic,* and *Cold.*

*“Delicates?”* Still unable to speak, Trudy nodded. “Now press *Start*. Here, you do it.”

Trudy’s fingers hovered over the control panel. Troy gently guided Trudy’s pointer to the button. Sparks whirled in her heart as the electric sensors whirred in the machine.

“I bet you forgot to select *Automatic* first,” Troy said. “It’s a common mistake with these new models.”

Feeling the need for more instruction, Trudy nodded. *This*, she calculated, *is how to do laundry.*