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**Rebootilization: Competition Version**

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# REBOOTILIZATION: COMPETITION VERSION

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY  
*Alan Haehnel*



*Rebootilization: Competition Version*  
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## Characters

9M 12W 6AG + Assorted Fairytale characters

Greg: (M) Must scramble to solve the whole mess.

Pops: (W) Battle-seasoned veteran of her job.

Junior: (M) Underling of Pops who should have been a Senior Junior months ago.

Junior Junior: (W) Underling of Pops; a really good hire.

Marilyn: (W) Can't live without her electronic devices. Frantic.

Blank 1: (W) Mother character. Part of the Blank family.

Blank 2: (M) Father character: Part of the Blank family.

Blank 3: (AG) Child. Part of the Blank family.

Blank 4: (AG) Child. Part of the Blank family.

Stepmother: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Cinderella*.

Stepsister 1: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Cinderella*.

Stepsister 2: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Cinderella*.

Cinderella: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Cinderella*.

Footman: (M) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Cinderella*.

Wolf: (M) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Jack: (M) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Old Man: (M) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Little Red Riding Hood: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Little Red Riding Hood*.

General: (M) A no-nonsense military type who hates Jack.

Blank 5, 6, 7: These three characters play a cow. And then a cat. And then monkeys.

Rapunzel: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Rapunzel*.

Goldilocks: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Papa Bear: (M) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Mama Bear: (W) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Baby Bear: (AG) An advanced replica of a storybook character from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

## Additional Characters

You can add as many fairytale characters as you want for the big chaos section when all the characters break loose.

## Set

A strange-looking laboratory, a room in SynCryn Futures, Inc. Stage left is a large framed-in area. A sign across the top reads “Rebootilization Area”.

Various consoles, wires, piping and tubes complete the look of this highly technical, energy-sapping facility. People-sized parcels wrapped in paper are all around the set.

*Lights up on a strange-looking laboratory, a room in SynCryn Futures, Inc. People-sized parcels wrapped in paper are all around the set. GREG, POPS, JUNIOR and JUNIOR JUNIOR enter. JUNIOR and JUNIOR JUNIOR bring in more parcels on hand trucks.*

GREG: Pops, I hear you.

POPS: Yeah, great. You know what I hear when you say, “I hear you”?

GREG: Pops...

POPS: I hear, “You’re making noise that I don’t like, and I ain’t gonna do nothing about what you’re saying anyway.”

GREG: Pops...

POPS: But in the meantime, me, Junior, and Junior Junior here have been schlepping these frozen slabs of meat out of the freezer and bringing them in here for what?

JUNIOR: Yeah, for what?

POPS: I don’t need your help, Junior. Keep schlepping.

JUNIOR: Can we switch? You schlep and I talk?

POPS: (to JUNIOR JUNIOR) Let me tell you something – if you want to get promoted from Junior Junior, which is where you are, to just Junior, which is where he is, and then past that to Senior Junior, which is where he should’ve been six months ago, don’t get lazy like he is.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Got it.

POPS: According to my trusty clipboard here...

JUNIOR: (to JUNIOR JUNIOR) Pops and her clipboard.

POPS: You making fun?

JUNIOR: Me? Why would I possibly be making fun of your trusty ancient technology, Pops, hmm?

*JUNIOR JUNIOR laughs. POPS silences her with a withering look.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Sorry.

POPS: Anyway, according to my clipboard, which, by the way, doesn’t have any wires to break or batteries to run out, we’ve got a list of stuff to do here that looks like we’re preparing for the mother of

all projects and I, who happen to be the only one who knows this place inside and out, have been left out of the loop!

GREG: You're right.

POPS: You've got us hauling parcels out of the deep freeze that haven't... I'm what?

GREG: I said you're right. All three of you should be brought up to speed.

*MARILYN enters, face glued to her electronic device, phone earpiece in.*

MARILYN: Greg, where are you?

GREG: I'm going to do that right...

POPS: After you deal with Marilyn. Good luck with that. Keep schlepping, you two!

*During GREG and MARILYN's dialogue, POPS, JUNIOR and JUNIOR JUNIOR enter and exit, bringing in more paper-wrapped parcels.*

MARILYN: Greg, I need to speak to you.

GREG: I'm right here, Marilyn.

MARILYN: I can't see you on my screen or hear you through my earpiece.

GREG: I'm not on your screen or your earpiece. I'm here, in person, beside you.

MARILYN: Please get on my screen and in my ear.

GREG: I will turn on my earpiece, but you're going to have to go without seeing me on your screen, especially since I am standing beside you.

MARILYN: That's fine. In the window where you should be, I will put videos of frolicking cats.

GREG: You know, Marilyn...

MARILYN: Greg, if you're going to suggest again that I engage with you in the real world, desist now. Interactions not digitally filtered make me highly anxious. That technology has no future.

GREG: So be it. I hope you like your cats.

MARILYN: Greg, I'm deeply concerned. According to schedules EE6 thru EE15, the General will be arriving within the next 45 minutes, and according to 13 other auxiliary schedules, we are not ready! As director of this facility, I am officially on the edge of panic!

GREG: Would you feel better if I told you we're doing everything we can to be ready?

MARILYN: Not at all.

GREG: Would you feel better if I told you all our top technicians are problem-solving at their highest rates of proficiency?

MARILYN: Still jittery as all get out.

GREG: Would you feel better if I mentioned that there is a schedule of yours I think you forgot to check?

MARILYN: What? Where? When? How? Why?

GREG: (*brushing his finger on MARILYN's screen*) Right there. Schedule PPOU8.

MARILYN: Oh my gosh! I was supposed to be in the bathroom two minutes ago!

GREG: I'm sure, if you hurry...

MARILYN: Schedule PP says I have to go right now! (*exiting*) Don't forget to...

GREG: We will be ready for the General, Marilyn, don't you worry!

POPS: General, huh? So whatever we're working on here is a matter of national security. Nice. It's probably best you don't tell me anything about it.

GREG: Pops, I've already admitted that was my oversight, which I want to fix right now. Junior, Junior Junior, stop bringing those in and give a listen.

JUNIOR: What a shame. I was just about to pop out a hernia.

GREG: Now, in order to give you a sense of the problem we're trying to solve, I'm going to bring in four Blanks.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Blanks?

GREG: Yes. They are our most highly advanced humanoid robots used to aid us in running simulations. Before I bring them in, I need to



warn you that they may look like intelligent beings, but they're not.

POPS: Like Marilyn.

GREG: Officially, Pops, I say how dare you speak of our amazingly qualified director that way? Unofficially, I say, yes, just like Marilyn. Here they come.

*Four characters dressed in black enter and stand, facing front. GREG controls them with a remote.*

JUNIOR: Do you ever get mad at them and call them Blankety-Blank Blanks?

POPS: Why don't you lie down before you hurt yourself?

GREG: First things first, we're going to move them into the Rebootilization Area.

*The four BLANKS robotically walk into the designated area.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: What is the function of that, Mr. Dawson?

GREG: You can call me Greg, Junior Junior.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Yes, Mr. Greg. I mean, Dawson. I mean, Mr....

JUNIOR: Maybe she should lie down before she hurts herself.

GREG: The Rebootilization Area contains powerful holographic imagery capabilities, so those within the area can see what I program them to see. I create their reality.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Like the holodeck on *Star Trek*!

GREG: Exactly.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: I used to love that show!

JUNIOR: And then you, what, got a life?

GREG: Just so you know, Junior Junior, among the technicians here, myself included, *Star Trek* ranks as the number one favorite TV series.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: See?

JUNIOR: Oh, big whoop. I can see the headline now: Geeks Love Bad Television.

POPS: I'm seeing another headline: Junior Gets Canned.

JUNIOR: Hey!

GREG: So, the Blanks will demonstrate a typical scene – a bedtime story. (*The BLANKS take positions on chairs in the Rebootilization Area: BLANK 1 sits as the mother; BLANK 2, as father, puts his hand on BLANK 1's shoulder; BLANKS 3 and 4, the children, lie down.*) And we begin.

BLANK 1: And now we'll pick up the story of *Hansel and Gretel* from where we left off last night.

BLANK 2: Remember what's happening?

BLANK 3: Yeah, Hansel and Gretel have been captured by the witch.

BLANK 2: And she keeps checking to see if they're fat enough to eat!

JUNIOR: Cheerful and uplifting.

GREG: There. Let's listen in at this point.

BLANK 1: Finally, the old witch decided that she would delay no further. She pulled Hansel and Gretel from their cages, and...

*BLANK 1 pauses, flipping through the pages, puzzled.*

BLANK 2: What is it, Sweetheart?

BLANK 3: What's the matter, Mommy?

*All four huddle around the book.*

BLANK 1: I don't understand.

BLANK 2: That's extraordinary!

BLANK 3: Whoa!

BLANK 4: The letters are... disappearing!

BLANK 3: What's happening to the story, Mom? What's going on?

BLANK 1: I don't know, children. I just...do not know!

*All four of the BLANKS turn to look melodramatically straight out at the audience. They freeze.*

POPS: What the heck?

GREG: You have just seen a situation that is playing out in homes and schools and daycare centers around the world. Thank you, Blank Family.

*He pushes a button. The BLANKS stand, blank-faced, and walk off in the direction they came.*

JUNIOR: I don't get it.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: I think I do. For some reason, and I would be quick to suspect terrorist activity, our time-honored stories are being obliterated!

JUNIOR: Well, okay, but... so what?

JUNIOR JUNIOR: So what? What better way to undermine a culture than to rob it of its stories? This is a catastrophe!

POPS: (to GREG) Good hire.

GREG: You got that right.

*POPS and GREG high five.*

JUNIOR: (to JUNIOR JUNIOR) Show-off.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: What are we going to do?!

*MARILYN enters, speaking frantically, staring at her screen.*

MARILYN: A whole bevy of schedules is saying get ready 'cause the General is coming! If we're not ready in time he's going to cancel our contract and then we'll be up the creek, out on the street, all without a paddle, ruined, I tell you, ruined, steady, we have to get ready because the General is definitely coming!

*She exits. POPS, GREG, JUNIOR and JUNIOR JUNIOR exchange a look.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: What are we going to do?!

GREG: Well, we could follow our director's example and panic, but instead, we are going to proceed with our carefully researched plan and retoolize the stories, thus restoring and preserving them, not only for the present moment but also for all of posterity.

POPS: So how does moving all these frozen thing-a-ma-bobs figure into the (makes air quotes) "carefully researched plan"?

GREG: Why the air quotes, Pops?

POPS: Oh, I don't know. Maybe it's because SynCryn Futures is always claiming to have "carefully researched plans" that end in not-so-carefully researched messes that I end up cleaning up.

GREG: Well, Pops, I think after this demonstration, you won't feel so inclined to use air quotes.

POPS: Sure. (*air quotes*) "We'll see."

GREG: Now, we should have a set of five parcels – MM99s. Here they are. Junior, Junior Junior, would you please help Pops and me de-package the parcels?

JUNIOR JUNIOR: De-package?

POPS: It's engineer speak for 'rip the paper off'.

JUNIOR: Oh, boy. Christmas! (*JUNIOR rips the paper off the top of one package, revealing CINDERELLA*) Oh, boy. Nice Christmas.

*Once unwrapped, we see that the parcels are important characters from the old story: CINDERELLA, her STEPMOTHER, two STEPSISTERS, and the FOOTMAN. They all stand in frozen poses.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Whoa.

GREG: Whoa, indeed. These parcels are, in fact, the original characters from the classic stories we've been talking about. This particular one is...

JUNIOR JUNIOR: *Cinderella*.

GREG: That's right. One of our major responsibilities at Syncryn Futures is to gather and store the actual impulses that created the stories. Narrative DNA, if you will. We have the capability to restore and protect them, using these original characters.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: How?

GREG: What we've found is that, if we have them re-enact the crucial moment where the virus attacked, we can restore the story. Hence, the Rebootilization Area! That's where the magic will take place.

*CINDERELLA and the other characters start to move slightly.*

JUNIOR: They're waking up.

GREG: De-packaging begins the process. You can help them regenerate by moving their limbs gently.

*They proceed to help the characters get regenerated.*

POPS: Greg, a minute ago you said something like “that’s where the magic will take place”. The word “will” is what’s bothering me. You mean “will” as in we haven’t tried this yet?

GREG: Pops, we’ve run a hundred simulations...

POPS: And not one real deal yet. Beautiful!

GREG: Look, it’s not as if we’ve had a huge amount of time to put this all together. We got a call from the military only a week ago about this whole ‘story virus’ issue.

*The FOOTMAN suddenly lets out a tremendous yell and grabs hold of his head.*

POPS: What’s the matter? What did you do?

JUNIOR: Nothing! I didn’t touch him!

JUNIOR JUNIOR: I was just moving his arm a little.

FOOTMAN: Someone hath placed a demon inside my head!

JUNIOR: Uh-oh. Wasn’t he the one that was stored upside-down? Somebody must’ve thought he was a WW66 instead of an MM99.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Here, here, maybe I can help.

*She goes to the FOOTMAN and takes the slipper from his hand.*

FOOTMAN: Nay – I have been charged with keeping the slipper safe at all costs!

JUNIOR JUNIOR: It’s all right. Just for a second. (*handing the slipper to JUNIOR*) Do not drop this or you’ll destroy this classic story forever.

JUNIOR: Sheesh, no pressure. Nice shoe.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: (*to the FOOTMAN*) Now, just lean back and relax your hands. Relax. (*rubs his temples*) Is that better?

FOOTMAN: Oh, thou art a goddess. I thank thee.

JUNIOR: Goddess? Come on.

CINDERELLA: Oh, where am I?

POPS: Welcome to the Kingdom of Chaos, Cindy.

STEPMOTHER: Where is the glass slipper?

STEPSISTER 1: Oh, he's got it!

STEPSISTER 2: It's mine!

JUNIOR: Whoa, whoa! Back off, sisters! Don't mess with the shoe dude.

FOOTMAN: Ah, thou hast driven the demon from my brain, dear Angel. My immeasurable thanks.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Don't mention it.

FOOTMAN: (to JUNIOR) Now, I shall ask you to relinquish your burden, dear sir.

JUNIOR: Huh?

POPS: Give him the shoe, Junior.

JUNIOR: Oh, right. Careful with that.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: I like how he talks.

JUNIOR: Wouldn't have anything to do with him calling you angel, would it?

STEPMOTHER: I demand that you fit that shoe to one of my daughters, post haste!

STEPSISTER 1: Me first!

STEPSISTER 2: I want to be first! I want to go! Mommy, Mommy, make the mean man put it on my foot first! It's my turn, my turn, my tuuuuuuurnnnnn!

GREG: We need to get them into the Rebootilization Area now.

POPS: You heard the man, everybody – this way, please, right over here.

JUNIOR: Here, Cinderella, let me help you.

CINDERELLA: You're very kind, thank you.

JUNIOR: And you're very cute, thank you.

STEPSISTER 1: I get to try it on first, right, Mother?

STEPSISTER 2: Why do you get to? I'm going to...

POPS: Hey! No glass shoe trying-on until all you characters get into the Rebootilization Area, you got me?

STEPMOTHER: Well, I never...

POPS: First time for everything, Lady. Vamoose!

*The STEPMOTHER indignantly goes into the Rebootilization Area with the rest of the characters.*

GREG: So, the Footman for the Prince has brought the glass slipper to determine the identity of the fair woman with whom the Prince fell in love at the ball.

STEPSISTER 2: That's me!

POPS: Fat chance.

STEPMOTHER: Oh! I demand an apology!

POPS: You're right. I'm sorry your daughter has a fat chance.

GREG: Pops! Everyone! Now, I'm just going to set this up...

*GREG pushes a few buttons. The characters suddenly "see" familiar territory.*

CINDERELLA: Home! It looks wonderful!

STEPMOTHER: Soon our home will be the castle.

GREG: I just need to cue it up, here. There.

STEPSISTER 2: Why didn't it fit me, Mother! I was sure it would fit me!

STEPMOTHER: Footman, I demand you try that slipper on my daughters again!

FOOTMAN: M'lady, I assure you, unless you are willing to have some portion of your daughter's foot removed, I shall never be able to fit this shoe upon it.

STEPMOTHER: The insolence!

FOOTMAN: I have been expressly instructed by the King himself to try this glass slipper upon every maiden in the Kingdom. Thus, Cinderella, if you might be so inclined...

CINDERELLA: Why, thank you.

*CINDERELLA puts her foot forward. The FOOTMAN tries to put the slipper on her, but it seems to be too small.*

STEPMOTHER: There, you see! Try it on my daughter's foot again! It shrunk!

GREG: What the... what's going on?

POPS: You don't mean to tell me your simulations didn't predict this?

CINDERELLA: I'm sorry. Perhaps I should remove my wool stocking?

FOOTMAN: Perhaps, dear girl. Wool stockings, while very attractive upon thee, are generally not the fashion at the ball.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Wool stockings? I don't remember that part.

GREG: Wait a minute, wait a minute... Cinderella, are you ready for your fitting now?

CINDERELLA: Oh, yes, quite ready, thank you.

GREG: Fine. I'm just going to back this up again. *(He pushes some buttons. The characters move quickly back to where they were when the following lines came up the first time, then freeze.)* Okay. Let's see if we can do this this time.

JUNIOR: What's to keep another virus from getting in and making a mess of it again?

GREG: When we rebootilize the story at the crucial point – as we're about to here, I hope – we also put in some high tech fixative and anti-virus technology. It'll make this story foolproof.

POPS: Why do I get so nervous whenever somebody says "foolproof"?

GREG: And... go!

FOOTMAN: I have been expressly instructed by the King himself to try this glass slipper upon every maiden in the Kingdom. Thus, Cinderella, if you might be so inclined...

CINDERELLA: Why, thank you.

*The FOOTMAN tries the slipper on CINDERELLA; it fits perfectly.*

FOOTMAN: We have found the chosen maiden!

CINDERELLA: Oh, my!



STEPMOTHER & STEPSISTER 1 & STEPSISTER 2: Oh, no!

GREG: And – cut! Perfect! Thank you, everyone! That’s all we’ll need.  
The classic story of *Cinderella* has been successfully rebooted!  
What did you think of that, Pops?

POPS: I’ll tell you what I thought of that: wool socks.

GREG: Come again?

POPS: With all these character-sicles and all these stories to restore,  
how many wool socks are we gonna come across to throw a  
wrench in your (*air quotes*) “carefully researched plans”?

STEPSISTER 2: Mother, I’m hungry! If I don’t get to be the princess, at  
least I want to be fed!

GREG: Junior, would you please take Cinderella and company to the  
cafeteria?

JUNIOR: Happy to. Cinderella and Company, right this way.

CINDERELLA: Why, thank you.

JUNIOR: No, thank you.

POPS: Give ‘em some grub and get right back here, Junior!

FOOTMAN: (*to JUNIOR JUNIOR*) Will you not be accompanying us,  
then?

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Oh, I, I...

GREG: Junior Junior, we’ll need your help here.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Sorry.

FOOTMAN: I will sorely miss you, my healing Angel.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Oh wow. Me too. ‘Bye.

*JUNIOR and the CINDERELLA crew exit.*

GREG: All right, next we need to find parcels JB12 and JB13 and get  
them unwrapped.

*MARILYN enters, looking more frantic than ever,  
glued, as always, to her screen.*

POPS: I’ll look for the JBs, Greg, you deal with the la-la.

GREG: Thanks.

MARILYN: Greg, I have important news. Are you listening? Greg?

GREG: Yes, I'm listening.

MARILYN: Please get in my ear.

GREG: Marilyn, I'm not going to get in your ear or on your screen. I am extremely busy. If you've got something to tell me, just come out with it!

MARILYN: The General.

GREG: Yes, what about him? Have you had an update on his arrival?

MARILYN: (*still glued to her screen*) I think I might have maybe had an update on his arrival. Whose arrival? The General's arrival. That's the General idea. That's the General idea about the General. Schedule C, that's what I want. Schedule CC. Sea to shining Schedule C. Schedule C refers me to Schedule A which refers me to Schedule B which refers me to... now I know my ABCs, next time won't you sing with... (*continues mumbling these next lines underneath the following lines, starting with JUNIOR's entrance*) No, no, that's not the General idea. Have to keep it private. Have to keep it captain. Have to keep it second lieutenant. Was that what I was going to say? Oh, say can you see? What? Cold front coming. Have to remember that. Chili today, hot tamale.

JUNIOR: (*entering, this line starts after MARILYN says "next time won't you sing with me"*) Just so you all know, I introduced the lovely Cinderella to a carbonated beverage, which she is happily sipping in the cafeteria. And the rest of them are all right, too.

POPS: Congratulations. Now help us find and unwrap JB12 and I3, pronto!

JUNIOR: (*regarding MARILYN*) What's with her?

GREG: Her brain has turned into a carbonated beverage.

*JUNIOR JUNIOR brings a parcel forward on a hand truck.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Here's JB12.

GREG: Excellent. De-package it and find I3.

*JUNIOR JUNIOR starts to rip off the paper.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: De-packaging, Mr. Greg. (*doesn't get very far before the person inside the paper wrapping – an OLD MAN holding a handful of beans – becomes animated and steps forward*) Whoa!

OLD MAN: Greetings! Might I interest you in these beans? They may appear ordinary, but I think you will find that they are, in fact, quite magical.

JUNIOR JUNIOR: I guess he doesn't need any help getting started.

GREG: That's a bit surprising.

POPS: "Carefully researched plans."

*A hairy arm suddenly breaks through the paper of another parcel. Everyone lets out a startled response, except for MARILYN, still mumbling and pacing in her fugue state.*

JUNIOR JUNIOR: What's happening? They're breaking out on their own!

POPS: I think you answered your own question, Junior Junior.

OLD MAN: (to POPS) These beans will change your life forever! Or if they don't, they make a very nice lentil soup. Some garlic, a little parsley...

POPS: Yeah, no thanks. Beans make me very anti-social.

*JUNIOR comes forward with JACK.*

JACK: Greetings.

OLD MAN: Would anyone like to buy some beans?

JUNIOR, JUNIOR JUNIOR, POPS & GREG: No!

JACK: I might have some interest.

*A growling comes from the parcel with the hairy arm.*

POPS: All right, Greg, you've got your JB12 and 13; let's get on with whatever's supposed to happen next before we have to bring in animal control.

GREG: *Jack and the Beanstalk* is the General's favorite childhood story – he said so in a speech I heard – so I wanted it to be the story we used for the demo when he arrived.

*Another hairy arm pops out of the parcel.*

POPS: The Wolf is at the door!

GREG: Okay, okay, we can't wait any longer. Jack, Bean Seller, if you would...

OLD MAN: They're top quality magical beans.

GREG: I have no doubt.

OLD MAN: (*referring to MARILYN*) Perhaps the gentle woman talking to her plate would be interested?

JUNIOR JUNIOR: Oh, no, she's allergic to beans. Um, would you step this way, please?

*MARILYN suddenly snaps out of her trance-like monologue.*

MARILYN: The General will be here any second!

GREG: What?

MARILYN: That's the update I was looking for! The General is now scheduled to arrive at 11:45 and 13 seconds, and it is now 11:45, so he should be here in 13 seconds. 12, 11, 10...

*She continues as GREG speaks.*

GREG: All right, then, this is working out perfectly. The General is about to arrive and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, his favorite story, is about to be rebootilized. Excellent!

POPS: We'll see.

MARILYN: 3... 2... 1! (*pause*) He's late!

*MARILYN smashes her face down on her device as if she is trying to get inside it. THE GENERAL strides in and strikes a pose.*

GENERAL: I have arrived!

*A tremendous, long wolf-howl comes from the hairy parcel and the WOLF emerges fully from its wrapping.*

GENERAL: Is this your idea of a military welcome?

GREG: Uh, no, General.

POPS: Junior, take care of the Wolf, will ya?

WOLF: (*howls, long and loud*) Man, that feels good! (*launches into another long howl when RED RIDING HOOD suddenly bursts from her wrapping and slaps him on the snout*) Ow! What'd you do that for?

RED RIDING HOOD: Quit the noise!

WOLF: What? I was just howling. I'm a wolf.

RED RIDING HOOD: You're a talking wolf. Control yourself, for heaven's sake.

WOLF: Just because I talk doesn't mean I don't have instincts.  
Awooo...

*RED RIDING HOOD grabs his snout, stopping the howl.*

RED RIDING HOOD: When you're in an enclosed space, you'll control your instincts, you flea-bitten excuse for a noble ancestor of the canine kingdom. Do we understand each other? *(the WOLF mumbles assent through his muzzled muzzle)* Good. *(she releases the WOLF)* Behave. *(turning to everyone else)* I'm Little Red Riding Hood. I could use a drink of milk. Who's in charge?

GENERAL: Well, now, Little Red, I like your style. Have you ever thought of enlisting?

RED RIDING HOOD: Enlisting who?

GENERAL: Oh-ho, you're a firecracker.

GREG: Uh, General, my name is Greg Dawson. Welcome to SynCryn Futures.

GENERAL: Right. Is this the standard mode of operation around this place? Howling wolves?

GREG: No, no, not at all. Pops, maybe we could take our latest guests... ?

POPS: Junior, Junior Junior— chop, chop with Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.

JUNIOR: Chop, chop it is. To the cafeteria. This way, Miss Red.

*WOLF, JUNIOR JUNIOR, JUNIOR and RED RIDING HOOD all exit.*

MARILYN: *(staring at her screen)* Greg?

GREG: Yes?

MARILYN: I can't find the General. *(staring at her screen)*: I look here, and he's not there.

GENERAL: *(to POPS)* Who is that insane woman?

POPS: Well, as a matter of fact, General, that happens to be our direct... (*catching GREG frantically shaking his head and mouthing "no, no"*) ...direct experiment in some high tech robotics we've been working on here.

GENERAL: Seems to be malfunctioning, isn't it?

POPS: Why don't I just take W3WXYZ – Loo-Loo, for short – into the...

GREG: Technicians' Suite.

POPS: Technicians' Suite, right.

GREG: Thank-you, Pops.

POPS: (*mumbles as she exits with MARILYN*) Foolproof, right.

GENERAL: I have to say, I've been here a good five minutes, and I've yet to come across one clear indication that the United States Government should be investing the millions of dollars you people here propose for this Reshoeing Project.

GREG: Rebootilization, actually, General. And I think, in just a moment, you're going to be convinced. As it so happens, we have one of your favorite stories here, that we're just about to set straight.

GENERAL: What story is that?

GREG: *Jack and the Beanstalk*, sir.

GENERAL: I hate that story! That fee-fi-fo-fum nonsense used to give me nightmares.

GREG: I... well, I heard a speech you gave where you referenced the fight between Jack and the Giant. I thought you said...

GENERAL: Oh, I didn't write that speech. As soon as I got back to base, I demoted the soldier who did, and I had him court-martialed to boot!

GREG: Be that as it may, General, the story itself is, of course, a crucial part of our culture.

GENERAL: I understand the threat. Show me what you're going to show me, man! Stop stalling!

GREG: Yes, of course. Jack, Old Man, are you comfortable?

JACK: Very much, thank you. We seem to be on a familiar road. (*to the OLD MAN*) Why, greetings, Venerable Old Man.

OLD MAN: Greetings to you, noble youth.

GREG: As you can tell, General, the characters are seeing...

GENERAL: Standard holodeck technology – I know my *Star Trek*.

OLD MAN: Young Man, what a fortuitous day this will be for you!

JACK: Well, I am glad to hear of that, sir. My name is Jack, and I could certainly use some good luck in my life.

OLD MAN: Good luck is precisely what I am bringing you, in the form of these excellent, magical beans!

JACK: Magical beans? Begging your pardon, sir, but they don't look magical.

OLD MAN: Oh, but they are!

JACK: I thank you very sincerely, sir, but, you see, I am going to market with my... (*he turns to refer to his cow*) My cow is gone! Oh, dear, someone has stolen my cow! Mother is going to kill me!

*GREG pushes a button, freezing JACK and the OLD MAN.*

GENERAL: I don't remember that as part of the story.

GREG: Uh... well, you see, this isn't exactly an exact science...

GENERAL: For the money you're proposing we spend, it darned well better be an exact science!

GREG: No, it is! I mean, what I mean is – we need a cow! Simple as that! We need a cow. (*pushes some buttons, and BLANKS 5, 6 and 7 enter*) Voila! One cow.

BLANK 5 & BLANK 6 & BLANK 7: Moo.

GENERAL: What kind of shenanigans are you trying to pull here? Those people are your cow?

*GREG pushes more buttons, and the BLANKS walk into the Rebootilization Area to stand next to JACK. The BLANKS pose to assume more of a cow shape.*

GREG: Actually, they're part of our small but growing fleet of highly-advanced robots. For our purposes in story re-creation, we call them Blanks.

BLANK 5 & BLANK 6 & BLANK 7: Moooo.

GENERAL: I'll believe it when I see it.

GREG: On we go!

*The story proceeds in the Rebootilization Area.*

JACK: I thank you very sincerely, sir, but, you see, I am going to market with my cow.

BLANK 5 & BLANK 6 & BLANK 7: Moo.

JACK: That's all right, Genevieve. Steady on, Old Girl.

*The story freezes.*

GREG: As you can see, General, Jack has no problem accepting the Blanks as his cow.

GENERAL: As I can see, yes, so why are you talking to me about it?

*POPS, JUNIOR and JUNIOR JUNIOR enter.*

JUNIOR: What story is this, *Jack and the Blankety-Blanks?*

*The story continues.*

OLD MAN: Noble Jack, you look like a young man ready to grasp a new opportunity.

JACK: Do I?

OLD MAN: A young man with imagination, a visionary! And these beans will unlock an incredible future.

JACK: But sir, I have nothing to give you for these wonderful beans. Until I sell this cow...

BLANK 5 & BLANK 6 & BLANK 7: Moo.

GREG: We're almost to the rebootilization moment, General. It's very exciting.

GENERAL: Pardon me if I don't faint. Get on with it.

OLD MAN: I have it! As an investment in the great future of a visionary young man, I am willing to trade you these beans for your cow.

JACK: You would be willing to do that?

GREG: Now, once they make the exchange...

OLD MAN: I would. One old cow for five magical beans. You'd be getting the better end of the bargain!



JACK: Well, thank you, kind sir!

BLANK 5 & BLANK 6 & BLANK 7: Meow.

OLD MAN: What... what is that? I don't want a cat.

JACK: Genevieve? How did this cat get here?

POPS: Foolproof.

GENERAL: What is the meaning of this?

GREG: I think I got it! (*presses some buttons*) There!

*BLANKS 5, 6, & 7 shriek and chatter like monkeys.*

OLD MAN: Monkeys! Young man, you can keep your monkeys!

JACK: They're not my monkeys! I was bringing a cow to market, not monkeys!

*GREG freezes everyone in the Rebootilization Area.*

GREG: Sir, may I offer you my humblest apologies. If I could have 15 minutes, I'm sure...

GENERAL: 15 minutes? You should have taken those 15 minutes two months ago, Dawson!

GREG: I'm just going to un-cow the Blanks. No problem.

*He presses some buttons. The BLANKS go back to neutral, non-bovine poses. JACK and the OLD MAN unfreeze.*

JACK: Who stole my cow?!

GREG: Um, General, perhaps you'd like to take a tour of the rest of the facility while we get things sorted out.

GENERAL: The only tour I'm taking is the one taking me straight back to the White House, Dawson, where I'm going to tell them...

*RED RIDING HOOD enters, followed by all of those who have been in the cafeteria – the WOLF, CINDERELLA, the STEPSISTERS, the STEPMOTHER, and the FOOTMAN.*

RED RIDING HOOD: All right, I've had about a gallon of milk and a dozen half-stale cookies and now I'm feeling bloated and pretty darned impatient.

STEPMOTHER: I do not like to be kept waiting! Enough is enough!

CINDERELLA: Might I expect to go to the castle and reunite with my Prince Charming soon?

STEPSISTER 1: She's rubbing it in, Mother! She's being mean!

WOLF: The cookies were all right, but how about some raw meat?  
Awooo!

STEPSISTER 2: Would you stop that howling? It's so annoying!

*Suddenly, all of the parcels in the room burst through the paper, revealing a whole host of fictional characters including RAPUNZEL, GOLDILOCKS and the THREE BEARS. Directors should feel free to add others as well to make the stage very crowded.*

POPS: Whoa! What's this?

JUNIOR JUNIOR: They've been out of the freezer for too long.  
They're all thawing at once!

RAPUNZEL: Does anyone have a curling iron?

GOLDILOCKS: I'm feeling quite hungry. Might I have some porridge that is just the right temperature?

PAPA BEAR: Yeah, well, I get mine first, and I like it hot!

MAMA BEAR: You better keep your paws away from mine, little girl.

BABY BEAR: You can have some of mine, but stay off of my bed!

OLD MAN: (*crossing to the GENERAL*) Pardon me, good sir. I have here some magic beans...

GENERAL: That's all I've had since I arrived – a whole hill of beans!

*MARILYN enters, looking bewildered and bedraggled. Her pad and earpiece are gone.*

MARILYN: I think I'm dreaming. A bunch of pirates met me in the hall and took my computer. They said, "Aargh, that be ours now, yarr scullery maid, and that fancy earring, too!" And they stole my Bluetooth and my cellphone. Isn't that funny?

GREG: Uh, Marilyn?

MARILYN: Oh, look! The General! I'm dreaming that the General is here!



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