

TECH TIMES

With a Tip of the Hat to Charlie Chaplin

A New Play By

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CHARACTERS

CHUCKY REYNOLDS, a technology recycling professional
BARNEY, owner of Tech Dreck, the recycling company
ASTRID HAZELTON, the CEO of a major company
ALEXANDER HAZELTON, the head of HR and Astrid's husband
NANCY, Astrid's administrative assistant, later Chucky's girlfriend

Settings

Offices of Tech Dreck, offices of Hazelton Enterprises, restaurant,
street scene, and park bench

Time

The present

At rise, office of Tech Dreck Recycling, Inc. Chucky is at desk, with legs up, hands behind head, daydreaming. Barney, his boss, enters.

BARNEY

Working hard?

(no response)

I said, working hard, Chucky?

(goes to beside him
and screams in his
ear)

Working hard?

CHUCKY

(startled)

Oh, hello, boss. I was just thinking about how I could collect more junk.

BARNEY

Chucky! How long have you worked here?

CHUCKY

(counts on fingers)

Seven months.

BARNEY

How many times do I have to tell you not to refer to this business with the word "junk"? You'd think my establishment is a common junkyard -- when it actuality it's a recycling depot, specifically, a recycling depot for technology products.

CHUCKY

Oh, I know, boss.

BARNEY

Then why do you keeping make the same mistake? Why do you think the company is named Tech Dreck Recycling?

(holds out slip of
paper)

Now, we just got a call to pick up a recently retired Apple computer at Sundown Bank. Here's the address. Drive over and pick it up. It's waiting in the mail room. Use the service elevator.

(Chucky reaches out
and takes it; yawns
and pats lips)

I said go get the damn thing!

CHUCKY

(startled)

Yes, boss. Right away.

(stands up; examines
the slip of paper)

BARNEY

I know the model. It's a real brontosaurus. No doubt it weighs a ton. So try to park as close to the pickup location as possible. And be careful with it. Let me give you a little inspiration. If you drop it, you're fired.

CHUCKY

Oh, Barney, would you really fire me? I'm very dedicated.

BARNEY

I can see that. If you were anymore dedicated, you wouldn't even come to work. It's not my fault your job at the GM factory was replaced by a robot.

CHUCKY

Please, don't remind me.

BARNEY

Look at it this way. Technology put you out of work. But it also gave you your new job. Now, go get the computer!

CHUCKY

I'm on my way.

BARNEY

Is there enough gas in the truck?

CHUCKY

I'll check.

BARNEY

If there isn't, fill it up and use the company credit card. I'll see you back here within the hour!

CHUCKY

Sure thing, boss.

(pauses)

I could never find another job in technology.

BARNEY

No chance, kid. Now, hit the road.

SCENE 2

Street corner. Chucky is holding
the computer, waiting for the light

to change. Astrid enters in a business suit, walks toward him, and stands beside him. Notices the computer.

ASTRID

Say, there, if you don't mind my asking, are you a computer technician?

(Chucky hesitates;
then he smiles and
shakes his head yes)

Oh, what luck! Would you like to make a few extra dollars?

CHUCKY

(shakes his head yes
again)

Oh, yes. I could use it.

ASTRID

Wonderful! The Apple computer in my office simply will not start. I was just on my way back to the office to call the Geek Squad. But inviting you to solve the problem is much more convenient. Follow me, young man.

CHUCKY

OK!

She starts to cross the street and he follows her, pausing a moment to adjust how he's holding the heavy computer.

SCENE 3

The offices of Hazelton Enterprises. Astrid enters with Chucky. Alexander sees them enter.

ASTRID

Oh, Alex, you won't believe our great good fortune. I was walking back to the office when I met a computer techy, and he has graciously agreed to repair my computer.

ALEXANDER

(eyes Chucky)

A computer techy, heh? How do you know what he is?

ASTRID

Oh, silly man. Don't you see? He's carrying someone else's computer back to his shop to fix it. Isn't that right? Oh, dear me, I forgot to ask. I'm terribly sorry. But what is your name?

CHUCKY

My friends call me Chucky.

ASTRID

How quaint! Chucky! I like it. Come with me.

She leads him into her office.
Points to the computer on her desk.

ASTRID

There it is. Do you suppose you can get it working again?

CHUCKY

(smiles and shakes
his head yes but
gestures to the
computer he's still
carrying)

ASTRID

Oh, yes, of course. You need to free up your hands.
(points to cabinet)
Put it right on top of that.

CHUCKY

Thank you!

Puts it down, shakes his arms to
loosen them up, puts his hands
behind his lower back and bends
backward to relax it. Then he rubs
his hands together.

CHUCKY

Let's take a look.

He examines her computer, looking
at the front, the back, one side,
the top, and then the next side;
taps on the top; listens. Goes to
front of computer and pushes start
button. Nothing happens. Puts hand
under chin and thinks.

ASTRID

I see you've got your work cut out for you, Chucky. I'm
going to take care of some other business while you work
your magic. You don't mind if I leave you on your own, do
you?

CHUCKY

Oh, no. Go right ahead.

ASTRID

Excellent. If you need me for anything, just tell my secretary. I'll be just across the hall with Alex. Do let her know as soon as you have it working again. I can't wait to get back to my spreadsheets!

She turns and leaves. He examines the computer again. Slaps it. Nothing happens. Shakes it. Still nothing. Sits down and stares at it, thinking. Swings his fist up and hits it on top. Still nothing. Stands. Walks around the desk, examining things. Picks up the surge protector with a number of plugs in it. Examines it. Pulls out each plug and puts it back in. Leans over and looks at the computer screen. Still nothing. Thinks. Holds surge protector upside down and looks at it. Bright idea. Reaches up and presses on switch. Nothing happens. Perplexed. Sees reset button on end. Pushes it in tentatively. Everything starts. So thrilled he clasps his hands. Goes to office door and exits to Nancy's desk.

NANCY

Did you get her computer to work?

CHUCKY

(shakes his head)

Yes, I did. And what is your name?

NANCY

Nancy.

CHUCKY

I'm Chucky. Pleased to meet you.

NANCY

Nice to meet you, too. Mrs. Hazleton is going to be so happy. I'll tell her right away.

(picks up phone;dials
an extension)

Oh, hi, Mrs. Hazleton. Guess what? Chucky fixed your computer....OK.

(hangs up)

She's coming right out to thank you. You must be so intelligent. How did you learn how to repair computers?

CHUCKY

Oh, I went to a special school for it -- I mean, after I graduated from college. I have a PhD.

NANCY

A PhD. Now, I know you're smart. In what subject?

CHUCKY

Computer science.

NANCY

My, you must be a real genius.

CHUCKY

Oh, it always came easy to me. I guess I have a knack for it.

NANCY

Well, I think it's wonderful. Should I call you doctor?

CHUCKY

Oh, no. That's not necessary.

NANCY

OK, then, Chucky it is! I went to college, too.

CHUCKY

Oh, wonderful! What did you study?

NANCY

Sociology. But I only have a bachelor's degree.

Astrid enters.

ASTRID

Don't tell me you have it working again already?

CHUCKY

Yes, I do.

ASTRID

What about my printer? Something seems to have happened to it this morning, too.

CHUCKY

Everything's working fine now.

ASTRID

My printer too?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

ASTRID

Dear me. You must be so good at what you do. How much do I owe you?

CHUCKY

Oh, that's OK. I'm glad I could help.

ASTRID

Nonsense, young man! You must paid. Will a hundred dollars be sufficient?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. It's more than enough.

ASTRID

Excellent! Do you mind if I pay you with a corporate check?

CHUCKY

Oh, no.

ASTRID

(to Nancy)

Checkbook, please.

NANCY

Yes, Mrs. Hazleton.

(reaches into a
drawer in her desk
and takes it out;
hands it to Astrid)

Here you go.

ASTRID

Thank you.

(to Chucky)

Now, who should I make it out to?

CHUCKY

Chucky Reynolds.

ASTRID

Very good! I'm so grateful I'm going to pay you twice what I said.

CHUCKY

Oh, thank you! I appreciate it.

ASTRID

You deserve it.

(writes check and
hands it to him)

Here you are, Chucky! Two-hundred dollars -- every cent well earned!

CHUCKY

(looks at it; can't
hide his excitement)

You're so generous. Thank you.

ASTRID

Say, may I ask you something?

CHUCKY

Oh, sure. Anything.

ASTRID

Would you be interested in a full-time job as our Director of Technology? I would pay you a very handsome salary.

CHUCKY

The Director of Technology?

ASTRID

Yes. If you don't think the title is equal to your talents, you can be our new CTO. You know, our Chief Technical Officer. However, the starting pay would be the same. Two-hundred-and-fifty thousand a year.

CHUCKY

How much?

ASTRID

Oh, I see. I am asking you to give up your computer repair business. How about two-hundred-and-seventy-five thousand, plus healthcare and a 401K plan. I can't go a penny higher. But remember. It's only your starting pay.

CHUCKY

Everything considered, I have decided to accept your offer.

ASTRID

Outstanding!

(puts out her hand)

Welcome to Hazelton Enterprises. Come with me. We must tell my husband, Alex. I'm sure he'll be delighted I've been able to snag you -- and literally right off the street! This must be my lucky day!

SCENE 4

The recycling center. Barney at desk. Chucky enters, carrying computer.

BARNEY

Ah, ha! There you are. What took you so long? Do you think I pay you a salary to pick up one piece of "recycling" a day?

CHUCKY

You'll never believe what happened.

BARNEY

I don't have time to listen. Just put that brontosaurus in the warehouse. Then depart forever. You're fired! Do you hear me, fired!

Chucky drops the used computer onto the floor and dusts his hands together.

CHUCKY

I have an announcement to make.

(waves)

Goodbye.

BARNEY

What do you mean, goodbye?

CHUCKY

You just fired me, didn't you?

BARNEY

Yes, I did. And how many times have I fired you? Ten, twenty, fifty times?

CHUCKY

Something like that.

BARNEY

Do you still work here?

CHUCKY

No.

BARNEY

What do you mean, no? I didn't mean you're fired for real this time anymore than I meant it the other fifty times. I have an ancient Xerox copier for you to pick up.

CHUCKY

I'm not available. I've taken another job.

BARNEY

Another job? What kind of job?

CHUCKY

It's in technology.

BARNEY

Technology? What do you know about technology, except how to pick it up and dump it in the warehouse?

CHUCKY

Not a lot. But I was able to fix the computer of one of the top executives of a big company ...

(snaps fingers)

...just like that!

BARNEY

How did you pull that off?

CHUCKY

It's a long story. But I have been hired to be the chief technology officer of a big company.

BARNEY

The chief technology officer? Say, that's rich.

CHUCKY

You can say that again. If I told you my salary, you might be jealous. The long and the short of it is, I quit.

BARNEY

You can't do that. Not after all the times I fired you and took you back in a split second? What kind of gratitude is that?

CHUCKY

I'm sorry. But I would rather be the chief technology officer than a junk man.

BARNEY

Did I hear you say junk man?

CHUCKY

Please, don't be mad, Barney. This is a chance for me to move up in the world.

BARNEY

OK. Take the job. And when the company finds out you don't know diddly squat about technology, you'll be fired -- and not just for a split second! When it happens, I may be willing to rehire you. Now, take that computer in the warehouse and be on your way.

CHUCKY

OK. But I have a question.

BARNEY

What?

CHUCKY

I know payday isn't until next Friday. But can you pay me for this week. I need something to live on until I get my first big paycheck.

BARNEY

Of course, I'll pay you for last week. What do you think I am? A cheapskate? But only that computer is safely in the warehouse. Now, move it.

CHUCKY

Thank you. I'll be right back.
(bends over and picks
up computer)

BARNEY

My hunch is you'll be right back in more ways than one!

SCENE 5

Astrid's office. She is at her desk. Alex is pacing.

ALEX

I simply will never understand how you could hire "Chucky whatever his name is" without consulting me. Am I the head of HR or am I not?

ASTRID

Yes, you are, dear. And I would certainly know. I appointed you to the position myself. I thought it was unseemly that my husband-to-be was the head of the mail room.

ALEX

At least, there I was in charge of something!

CHUCKY enters the area between the offices and closes the door.

ASTRID

I don't know why you're so upset, Alexander. He showed great character is agreeing to come here and fix my computer when I asked him to.

CHUCKY waves and smiles to Nancy, who is sitting at her desk. Then he moves toward the open door of Astrid's office.

ASTRID

And he clearly demonstrated his remarkable competence by getting my computer to work again. It hasn't malfunctioned for a moment since he worked his magic on it. Not only that, he has generously agreed to give up his lucrative computer repair business to join us.

Chucky arrives at the doorway in time to hear the above comment. Smiles and nods in agreement with her statement.

ALEX

Humph! I will simply say this. When our new CTO arrives, I insist on processing him as I would any other new employee.

ASTRID

Of course. And you shall have your opportunity even sooner than you expect. He is currently standing in the doorway behind you.

(to Chucky)

Good morning, dear Chucky!

CHUCKY

(gives her a little wave and smile)

Good morning, Mrs. Hazelton.

(looks at ALEXANDER; waves)

ALEXANDER

(disgruntled)

Good morning, "Chucky." I have the usual forms for you to fill out as a new employee of Hazelton Enterprises. It's SOP here.

CHUCKY

(uneasy)

SOP?

ALEXANDER

Standard operating procedure, young man.

ASTRID

Don't forget to show him to his new office.

(to CHUCKY)

I've decided to put you in the office between Alexander and myself. That way I can be confident that you'll always be nearby when I am, as the saying goes, technically challenged.

ALEXANDER

Excuse me. I was supposed to assign the office to him.

ASTRID

Of course, you were, darling. Now, please, process our new CTO in your expert way.

ALEXANDER

(to Chucky)

Follow me, Mr. Whatever. You do have a last name, don't you?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. I'm Chucky Reynolds.

ALEXANDER

Good. Come along now.

Leads Chucky across the lobby to his office.

CHUCKY

(points to the office, center rear)

Excuse, me. Is that my office?

ALEXANDER

Apparently. The questions is, for how long?

Continues into his office and Chucky, after waving one last time to Nancy, follows him. Alex goes to his desk and motions to the chair in front of it.

ALEXANDER

Have a seat.

CHUCKY

Thank you.

Both sit.

ALEXANDER

(leans forward on desk and puts his hand out)

May I have your resume.

CHUCKY

My resume? I thought I already had the job.

ALEXANDER

It's simply a formality. I need it for my files.

CHUCKY

I didn't bring it with me.

ALEXANDER

Please, put it on your to-do list. Now, tell me a bit about your prior positions as a highly placed technology executive.

CHUCKY

I was in the computer business.

ALEXANDER

I see. So you were self-employed?

(CHUCKY shakes his head yes)

How many years have you had your own business?

CHUCKY

Oh, many.

ALEXANDER

How many?

CHUCKY

(counts on his fingers)

Ten.

ALEXANDER

And before going out on your own, where did you work?

CHUCKY

MacDonald's.

ALEXANDER

MacDonald's?

CHUCKY

I worked there to pay for my education.

ALEXANDER

Oh, then you were in college at the time?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

ALEXANDER

Tell me, what is the highest degree you attained?

CHUCKY

Well, a bachelor's degree. Oh, and a PhD, too.

ALEXANDER

In what?

CHUCKY

Computers.

ALEXANDER

Computers?

CHUCKY

(thinks; uncertain)

Computer science.

Astrid shows up in the doorway.

ALEXANDER

Tell me, exactly where did you earn your degrees in computer science?

ASTRID

Oh, Alexander, stop tormenting the young man. We're fortunate to have him. Just give him his new employee packet and show him to his office.

(to Chucky)

It contains information about your 401K plan and your health plan, which includes dental and eyeglass coverage. Then, after one year of successful employment, you'll be eligible for profit sharing, and, after two years, you'll be awarded a handsome block of our company's stock. Isn't that right, Alexander?

CHUCKY

(to Astrid)

Thank you so much.

ALEXANDER

I was coming to those things.

(reaches into his
desk drawer and
takes out a binder)

Here's your new employee packet. Fill it out as best you can and get it to me at your earliest convenience. We do at least require your social security number. You do have one, don't you.

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

(takes it)

Thank you!

(admires it)

ASTRID

(to Alex)

Please, show our new Chief Technical Officer to his very spacious office.

ALEXANDER

As long as you're standing, dear, why don't you do it?

ASTRID

Delighted. Come with me, young man!

Chucky gets up, gives Alex a little wave, and then follows Astrid. They cross the area between the desks to the center office.

ASTRID

Here it is. Don't you just love it?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. It's big.

ASTRID

Excellent! Now, as soon as you're settled in, please come to my office and put some paper in the printer.

(coyly)

Don't forget to fan the paper before you insert it. Toodle-oo!

(she departs)

Chucky looks over his office.
Admires the computer on his desk.
Then he puts down his employee packet on his desk and heads for her office. Stops at Nancy's desk.

CHUCKY

Mrs. Hazelton asked me to put some paper in her printer.

NANCY

Oh, sure, Chucky. Go right in. The reams of paper are in the closet.

(hits her computer)

CHUCKY

What's wrong?

NANCY

Oh, I wish I had a new Apple. Mine is rotten.

CHUCKY

What kind of apple would you like? My favorite is a Macintosh.

NANCY

(laughs)

Oh, you're so clever, Chucky. Of course, it's a Macintosh. Do you mind if I confess something to you?

CHUCKY

Oh, not at all. What?

NANCY

I like you.

CHUCKY

Thank you. I like you, too.

NANCY

Good. If you really want me to like you, can you tell Mrs. Hazelton I need a new Macintosh.

CHUCKY

Oh, of course. I'll make it a point. Now, I better load the paper into her printer. See you later.

NANCY

See ya!

Chuckie goes into her office and crosses to the closet. Opens it and looks for the paper. Removes a ream and looks it over. Crosses to the printer. Looks it over. Puts his chin on his hand and thinks. Tries to figure out where the paper goes. Lifts the printer and examines it. Puts it back down and pulls here and there. Lifts the lid and takes out ink cartridge and examines it. Puts it back in. Pulls on the input tray. It comes off. He's concerned. Tries to put it back. Has difficulty but finally discovers where it's hooked. Examines the paper tray. Pulls off the output tray. Looks in at it. Sees the paper tray. Picks up the ream of paper. Tears the wrapper off with a flourish and drops it in the trash. Looks at the ream and ponders. Sees fan on her desk. Puts the ream down and picks up the fan. Turns it toward the ream of paper and flips it on. The paper flies all over the place. Turns off the fan nervously and starts to gather up the paper. When he has it all, he taps the edges till they're even. Then he attempts to slip the paper into the printer tray. It won't fit.

Realizes he has too much paper and puts half aside. Slips the paper in successfully and puts the cover back on. Admires his handiwork. Wipes his forehead with his hand.

Just then ASTRID enters.

ASTRID

Hello, Chucky. Have you put a new supply of paper in my printer?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. It's all ready for you to print whatever you like.

ASTRID

Excellent! I can already see that you're going to be quite an asset!

(puts out her hand)

Delighted to have you on board!

CHUCKY

Thank you. I'm very happy to be here. Can I make a recommendation?

ASTRID

Regarding technology, I assume?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

ASTRID

Then go right ahead.

CHUCKY

I was looking at Nancy's computer.

ASTRID

And?

CHUCKY

I think it's time to recycle it -- I mean, to replace it.

ASTRID

Why?

CHUCKY

I think she could do a much better job for you.

ASTRID

Excellent reason! I assume you'll make the perfect choice. The ideal balance of power and cost to suit the job.

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

ASTRID

Very well then. I authorize you to make the purchase.

CHUCKY

Thank you. I'll do it right away. If you need me, I'll be in my office.

ASTRID

Good, Chucky. You're such a dear young man. I'm simply crazy about you.

Gives her a little wave and goes out. Nancy is staring at him, adoringly. He stops to smile at her.

NANCY

Did you find the paper?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. Job's done.

NANCY

Did you ask her about my computer?

CHUCKY

Of course. She said I could order you one. Do you happen to know what model you'd like?

NANCY

No, but I can to the Apple store and pick one.

CHUCKY

Good. Let me know what model it is.

(relieved)

Say, I have an idea. Would you like to have a bite after work? My treat!

NANCY

I would love to, Chucky.

(indicates Astrid's office)

But we have to be careful. The company frowns on romantic relationships among the employees.

CHUCKY

Oh, I didn't know. In that case ...

(MORE)

CHUCKY (cont'd)
(leans over and
writes note on pad
on her desk and
points to it)

NANCY

You're so clever.

(softly)

See you there.

Smiles and heads for his office
with a special swagger.

SCENE 6

The same. Later. Employees have
departed. Astrid crosses to
Alexander's office and taps on the
door frame.

ASTRID

Dear me, Alexander, you've been working with extraordinary
diligence all day. Do you know it's past 6 o'clock?

ALEXANDER

I know perfectly well what time it is, Astrid. I have to
speak with you about a matter of immediate concern.

ASTRID

Oh. Well, what do you say we do it over dinner?

ALEXANDER

I do not want to take my work home with me, particularly the
matter we must discuss. Please have a seat.

ASTRID

If you insist.

(crosses to his desk
and sits)

Now, whatever is it that's so urgent.

ALEXANDER

I've been doing due diligence on our new employee. And I
believe he is a fraud.

ASTRID

A fraud, Alex? That's rather strong language.

ALEXANDER

I might have used stronger. To the point. I have been
researching Chucky online, and no matter how I Google Chucky
Conlin, I can't find a single post about him.

ASTRID

Really?

ALEXANDER

Not a single search result. Now, if he had any sort of career in technology -- any sort of career whatsoever -- there would certainly be a trail in Google search.

ASTRID

How many pages did you visit?

ALEXANDER

I did the search with my usual thoroughness -- and did not discover a single mention of Charles or Chucky Conlin.

ASTRID

That is rather odd. Did you look into LinkedIn? He must have a profile there.

ALEXANDER

Yes, I did. He does not. In fact, I can find nothing whatsoever about him on the entire Internet, including prior positions or his education, advanced as he claims it to be, and, most curious of all, he does not even seem to have a profile on Facebook.

ASTRID

No profile on Facebook?

ALEXANDER

None. I assume you agree that the total lack of information about him is decidedly odd, particularly about a man who has supposedly conducted his entire career in technology.

ASTRID

Well, experience is the best teacher. And I can confirm that he has proven his technological expertise beyond any doubt. As a result, I can only assume that he is a very private person, who has, until now, single-mindedly dedicated himself to his own private computer-repair enterprise.

ALEXANDER

I did not find a single listing or customer review for a local computer repair business where the name of Charles or Chucky Conlin is mentioned.

ASTRID

I commend you for your diligence, Alex. But I dispute the significance of it. To date he has given us absolutely no reason to suspect that he is not a man of the highest moral character and technical competence. You may, however, continue your search for evidence that would indicate otherwise.

ALEXANDER

Thank you. I require no special encouragement.

ASTRID

Very well. Now, shall we close up shop and go to dinner?

SCENE 7

Table-cloth restaurant. Nancy and
Chucky are at a table.

NANCY

You picked such a nice place, Chucky. Do you eat here often?

CHUCKY

Only on special occasions.

NANCY

I love the wine you picked, too.

CHUCKY

Thank you. It's a family tradition.

NANCY

How so? Don't tell me your family owns a winery!

CHUCKY

No. I mean, my father used to drink wine, and once in a while, he gave me a sip.

NANCY

It's so sweet you remember. I bet you have a photographic memory or close to it.

CHUCKY

My teachers often said they thought so.

NANCY

Did they ever tell you you're a genius, I mean, with technology?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes. When I was in undergraduate school and graduate school.

NANCY

It's so nice to have professors who appreciate who you are. When I was in college, I made the dean's list twice.

CHUCKY

I'm not surprised. It takes one genius to know another one. What do you have a degree in?

NANCY

I didn't finish college.

CHUCKY

You didn't? Why not?

NANCY

I didn't have enough money. So I had to go to work. Later, I went to secretarial school at night.

CHUCKY

Good for you. Now, look how far you've come. Mrs. Hazelton's secretary.

NANCY

Administrative assistant.

CHUCKY

Of course. I really do like you.

NANCY

I really like you, too. I would love it if we decided to be together, maybe even forever.

CHUCKY

You would? It's a little soon to decide, isn't it?

NANCY

I guess. But I think I loved you from the moment I saw you. I know I'm not a genius and I certainly don't have a PhD. But do you think you could ever love me, too?

CHUCKY

I feel very good just being near you. So I may already love you, too.

NANCY

I feel absolutely wonderful when I'm near you, Chucky.

CHUCKY

(raises his wine
glass)

To feeling wonderful together.

Astrid and Alexander enter the
restaurant. Chucky sees them.

CHUCKY

(alarmed, holds the
menu up beside his
face and points)

Don't look now but ...

NANCY

(looks; shocked)

Oh, my, they would come to the same restaurant.

(holds up the menu to
block her face too)

What are we going to do?

Astrid sees them and waves with a
smile. Alexander notices them, too,
and frowns.

CHUCKY

(waves back, smiling
weakly)

Too late now.

NANCY

I hope we don't lose our jobs.

CHUCKY

Let me take care of it.

(stands, bows, and
gestures to them
with a flourish)

Welcome!

Astrid goes to their table and
Alexander follows her.

ASTRID

What a pleasant surprise to see you two here.

(to Nancy)

I assume you're welcoming him to the company.

NANCY

Yes, I thought it was the polite thing to do.

ASTRID

How commendably proactive! Don't you agree, Alex?

ALEXANDER

No romantic involvement, I assume?

NANCY

Oh, no.

CHUCKY

How could you even think such a thing?

ASTRID

Never in a million years.

(to Alex)

(MORE)

ASTRID (cont'd)

Nancy knows the company rules as well as I do. She's the one who typed them up for me. Isn't that right, Nancy?

NANCY

Yes, Mrs. Hazleton.

ASTRID

Excellent! Now, we'll leave you to enjoy your welcome to Hazelton Enterprises dinner. But don't you dare pay for it, Nancy. I shall tell the waiter to give us the tab.

NANCY

Thank you, Mrs. Hazelton. But you don't have to do that.

ASTRID

Oh, I insist. Such a thoughtful girl.

ALEXANDER

(to Astrid)

Can we just go sit down and have dinner?

ASTRID

Of course. See you two at the office first thing in the morning. Meanwhile, don't do anything a Hazelton employee wouldn't.

SCENE 8

Sidewalk. Night. CHUCKY and NANCY are walking along and approach her building.

NANCY

Thank you for inviting me to dinner. I loved every moment.

CHUCKY

So did I.

NANCY

(stops; looks at him)

Oh, Chucky, I'm crazy about you.

(puts her arms around him and kisses him)

CHUCKY

(fans himself with his hand)

Woohoo! I'm crazy about you, too.

(MORE)

CHUCKY (cont'd)
 (kisses her again)

SCENE 9

Office. Morning. Chucky arrives.
 Comes to glass door with lock that
 requires him to use his pass.
 Reaches for knob. It doesn't open.
 Thinks about it. Sees square panel
 for pass card. Knocks on it.
 Nothing. Backs up, rushes at it and
 twists knob, just as Alexander
 arrives behind him.

ALEXANDER

Having difficulty with the door, Chucky?
 (holds up pass card)

I assume you forgot your pass to the executive suite? In
 case you didn't notice, it's included in your welcome kit!
 (holds card against
 reader; door makes a
 clicking sound;
 Alexander opens it)

Enter! And remember -- never leave the executive suite
 without your pass card!

As they enter and walk along.

CHUCKY

(takes his pass card
 out of his pocket
 and holds it up)

I forgot I had mine with me. I was thinking about... about
 how to build the world's fastest computer.

ALEXANDER

Of course, you were. The mark of an absent-minded genius, I
 presume?

The enter the suite and Astrid
 confronts them.

ASTRID

Oh, Chucky, I'm so glad to see you. For some reason, the
 Internet is down. Can you attend to it immediately?

CHUCKY

Oh, right away.

(looks down and
 around the floor)

Where is it?

ASTRID

Oh, what a wonderful sense of humor! The networking center for the entire company is just down the hall, third door on the right.

(holds out key)

Here is the key!

ALEXANDER

I'll show you where it is.

ASTRID

I'm sure he can find it, Alex. Please, allow the the dear young man to work in peace. Go to it, Chuckie!

CHUCKY

Right away, Mrs. Hazelton!

ASTRID

(to Alex)

Please, come to my office. We must talk about a new business opportunity!

SCENE 10

Door to the networking center. Chucky opens it and enters. Sees the networking setup, which consists of servers, modems, routers, and a maze of wires. Closes the door and goes to the equipment. Stands back and looks at it. Scratches his head. Examines it.

Sees desk with computer. Goes to it and turns it on. Tries to logon to the Internet. Hits fists on desk and gets up. Goes to equipment. Examines it again. Unplugs one wire and waits. Then plugs it back in. Goes to computer. Tries to logon. Fails again. Gets back up and goes to the equipment. Unplugs one connection after another. Looks at the maze of wires. Plugs them back in as best he can. Goes to the computer and tries to logon again. Success. Slaps the desk with triumphantly.

CHUCKIE

Woohoo!

SCENE 11

Entrance to Astrid's office. Chucky approaches with swagger. Nancy at her desk.

NANCY

Did you fix it?

CHUCKY

Of course. Try to logon.

NANCY

(attempts to logon)

Oh, great! You did it! You're so accomplished, Chucky.

CHUCKY

Thank you, Nancy.

(heads for Astrid's office; taps on door frame.)

All fixed!

ALEXANDER

You don't say?

ASTRID

Wonderful, Chucky. Let me attempt to logon.

(taps a few keys)

Oh, you did it! Thank you. And so quickly.

CHUCKY

Oh, it was nothing.

ASTRID

(to Alexander)

I assume you too are delighted we have Chucky on board?

SCENE 12

Chucky's office. He's shooting paper wads with a rubber band. Alexander enters.

ALEXANDER

Busily occupied thinking about how to build the world's fastest computer? My printer is out of ink. Please, replace the cartridge immediately.

CHUCKY

Right away, Mr. Hazleton.

They cross to Alexander's office and enter. Alexander opens a supply closet and points.

ALEXANDER

The new ink cartridges are right there.

Chucky reaches up and takes down a large cartridge for a laser printer. Looks over the box.

ALEXANDER

The printer is on my desk.

CHUCKY

Thank you!

Chucky crosses to it and begins to examine it as Alexander looks on.

ALEXANDER

Don't mind if I observe a genius at work, do you?

CHUCKY

Not at all.

Chucky smiles meekly at him and continues to eye the printer. Decides to open the box with the new cartridge. Sees a pair of scissors on Alexander's desk. Picks them up, holds them up, and then goes to work on the box.

ALEXANDER

May I demonstrate?

(grabs package away from him and points to tab on it. Pulls it, opening the box. Pulls out cartridge, which is sealed in a cushioned plastic wrapper; hands it back to him)

Now, you may use the scissors.

CHUCKY

Thanks. May I have the cardboard box, too? I can use it to recycle the old cartridge.

ALEXANDER

Into recycling, huh?

CHUCKY

Oh, yes.

CHUCKY holds up the scissors again and cuts the end off the wrapper. Takes out the cartridge. Holds up the wrapper.

CHUCKY

This is good for recycling, too.

ALEXANDER

I'm certain it is. Now, please, remove the empty cartridge and insert the new one. I have work to do!

CHUCKY

Yes, sir. Right away.

He turns and looks at the printer. Examines it.

CHUCKY

They're all different. Do you know where the lid is?

ALEXANDER

You mean the cover to the ink cartridge?
(leans forward and
flips it up)

Go on.

CHUCKY looks in at the old ink cartridge and then looks at the new one. He reaches in and, after a bit of a struggle, lifts out the old cartridge. He hands it to Alexander to hold, who immediately sets it on the desk and dusts off his hands. CHUCKY attempts to insert the cartridge but it won't go in.

ALEXANDER

Experiencing an unexpected difficulty?

CHUCKY

Are you sure it's the right cartridge?

ALEXANDER

Of course, it's the right cartridge.

(MORE)

ALEXANDER (cont'd)

(looks over the
cartridge and points
to the orange
plastic tab to the
removable tape)

Being the technology guru you claim to be, I would think you would know to remove this.

(grabs the tab and
pulls out the tape)

You may now insert the cartridge.

CHUCKY

Sure thing, boss!

He inserts the cartridge. Alexander leans forward and closes the cover.

ALEXANDER

All done, eh? Excuse me.

Strides out of his office and into Astrid's office. She is at her desk.

ALEXANDER

I must tell you, Astrid, that man you hired, Chucky, is no more a technology guru than I am. In fact, I know more about technology than he does.

ASTRID

Whatever do you mean?

ALEXANDER

He didn't even know how to change the cartridge in my printer. I had to show him how to do it.

ASTRID

Well, he was certainly able to fix mine. You were probably breathing down his neck and making him nervous. Additionally, every printer is different, and yours is no exception. Why, in fact, there are so many kinds of printer cartridges I sometimes think it would be expedient if we all had the same printer.

ALEXANDER

I tell you he's a total fraud.

ASTRID

I have yet to see any proof of that, Alex. Remember, he also got the Internet back and working just like that!

(snaps her fingers)

I suggest you return to your office and print something useful with your new ink cartridge.

SCENE 14

Night. Chucky and Nancy are walking along.

CHUCKY

I got my first paycheck today. I'm so happy.

NANCY

I'll bet.

CHUCKY

Tell me anything you would like me to buy for you, and I'll do it. A new dress, a necklace, a fur coat -- anything.

NANCY

You're so generous, Chucky. You should save some of your money.

CHUCKY

I will, after I buy you something.

NANCY

Thank you. I'll think about it. Right now I'd rather think about how we feel about each other.

CHUCKY

Oh, me, too. I just want you to have the nicest things I can buy for you.

NANCY

Well, the nicest thing is something you might want to think about.

CHUCKY

Hmm, what might that be?

NANCY

(holds up her ring
finger)

Maybe something that might fit right there.

CHUCKY

(kisses her hand)

Let's go shopping for it tomorrow.

NANCY

I can't wait!

CHUCKY

What a dear soul you are.
(kisses her hand
again)

SCENE 15

Chucky's office. He's sitting at his desk but has nothing to do. He assumes different postures. Take out his cellphone and looks at it. Puts it down and places his hand on his chin. Nancy enters with her smartphone.

NANCY

Hi, Chucky.

CHUCKY

What's up, darling?

NANCY

My cellphone did an automatic update, and now I can't find any of my contacts. Can you help me?

CHUCKY

Sure. Let me see it.
(as she hands him the
phone; he looks at
her hand)

I like your ring.
(takes her hand and
admire the ring)

I think it's the most beautiful ring I ever saw.

NANCY

I just love it, Chucky. I've never been engaged before.

CHUCKY

Neither have I.

NANCY

I better get back to my desk. Please, tell me when you find my contacts.

CHUCKY

I'll bring the phone right to you.

NANCY

Thanks you.

(MORE)

NANCY (cont'd)
(throws him a kiss
and exits)

He looks at her smartphone. Turns it on. Taps it a few times to access her contacts. Frowns. Shakes it and looks again. Rubs it hard and fast. Looks. Still nothing. Balances it on his finger and spins it. Puts it on his desk and stares at it. Has an idea. Picks up his own phone and dials. Taps selection buttons.

CHUCKY
Hello. I just have a question about my cellphone. It updated and now I can't find my contacts.

(tucks his cellphone
between his cheek
and shoulder and
picks up her
cellphone; clicks to
follow instructions)

OK. Yes. Sure. Great. Thank you! Good job!

Alexander enters. Chucky looks up.

ALEXANDER
When you finish your phone call, please, come to my office. I have someone I want you to meet.

CHUCKY
Just finished.
(hangs up)
Who is it?

ALEX
You'll know momentarily.

Chucky gets up, taking Nancy's cellphone with him, and follows Alexander. As they pass Nancy's desk, Chucky veers toward her and holds out her cellphone.

CHUCKY
All fixed.

NANCY
Great.
(takes phone)

Thank you!

Chucky winks at her and continues to follow Alexander. They enter Alex's office. See Astrid and smiles. Sees Barney and is startled.

BARNEY

Chucky! Long time no see! How ya doin'?

Chucky is speechless. Manages a little wave.

ALEX

So you do know each other, eh?

(to Astrid)

My suspicions are confirmed!

(to Chucky)

And so much for your story as a computer scientist. Why, you're nothing more than a junk man.

BARNEY

Excuse me, Mr. Hazelton. That's not correct. My company is not in the junk business. It's in the recycling business.

ALEX

I don't care what you call it. He's no more qualified to be a chief technology officer than I am to be a brain surgeon.

(to Chucky)

You're fired! Do you hear me? Fired! Now, pack up your office and leave the premises!

ASTRID

I'm sorry, Chucky. I do still like you.

CHUCKY

Thank you. I'm sorry I disappointed you.

BARNEY

Don't worry, Chucky. You can have your old job back...

(with a look at

Alexander)

As a highly experienced technology recycling professional.

SCENE 16

The restaurant. Chucky is at the table by himself. He has been waiting some time. He checks his watch. Taps the table with his fingers. Picks up the fork and

considers flipping it across the room. Twirls it on his fingertip or some such trick. Sulks. Takes a sip of wine. Sulks some more. Nancy finally enters.

CHUCKY

(rising to meet her)

Thank you for coming.

NANCY

I don't know why I did. Mrs. Hazelton told me everything!

(sits)

CHUCKY

Oh.

(puts out his hand
and places it on
hers)

I'm sorry.

NANCY

(pulls her hand away)

You should be! Oh, Chucky, you're no more a computer genius than I am. How could you lie to me like that?

CHUCKY

No one has ever thought as much of me as you did. I didn't want to disappoint you.

NANCY

That's no excuse. I mean, I admired you so much. I loved you and wanted to marry you and spend the rest of my life with you.

CHUCKY

I felt the same way about you, Nancy. If you can forgive me for saying so, I still feel that way about you.

NANCY

Thank you very much. But really? How can I be married to a junk man?

CHUCKY

Excuse me. I am not a junk man. I am considered a highly experienced technology recycling professional.

NANCY

Let me just put it this way, Chucky. You are not the incredible genius I thought you were -- and with a PhD in computer science! Do you know how inferior I felt when you told me that and I didn't even finish college.

CHUCKY

I didn't mean to hurt you.

NANCY

Well, you did. You hurt me very much.

CHUCKY

I'm sorry.

(reaches under table
and comes up with a
single rose)

Here. This is for you.

NANCY

Thank you. That's so sweet, Chucky. Now what am I going to do? I am heartbroken.

(decisively)

I'm sorry.

(hands him back the
flower)

I cannot love anyone who would lie to me the way you did.

(stands; takes off
engagement ring and
puts it on the table)

Goodbye, Chucky. Goodbye forever!

She turns and runs out, as he stands and holds the flower out toward her. Then he sits back down and throws the rose over his shoulder. Takes another sip of wine. Picks up the engagement ring. Looks at it. A tear comes to his eye. Wipes it. Puts his head down. Sulks.

SCENE 17

Office of Tech Dreck. Chucky is sitting at his desk. Makes a paper airplane. Crumples it up. Sulks. Barney enters.

BARNEY

Chucky, my man, what's the problem? You haven't been the same since I gave you back your job. You not only daydream during working hours. You mope around here like you're the saddest man on the face of the earth. What's wrong? Don't tell me you miss your job as a chief technology officer?

(MORE)

BARNEY (cont'd)
(Chucky just looks at
him and sulks some
more)

Do you miss your his the big salary? I can't afford to pay
that kind of money.

(shakes his head no
again)

Is it the prestige of being the chief technology officer?

(shakes his head no)

Then what is it?

CHUCKY

I miss my girlfriend.

BARNEY

You found a girlfriend?

(Chucky shakes his
head yes)

Tell me about it, son.

CHUCKY

She works at the same company I did.

BARNEY

Oh, a fellow techie?

CHUCKY

No, the boss's administrative assistant.

BARNEY

Oh. Did you have a falling out with her?

(Chucky shakes head
yes)

CHUCKY

Want to tell me how it happened?

CHUCKY

I broke her heart.

BARNEY

Why on earth would you do that?

CHUCKY

I didn't mean to. When she found out I'm not a computer
genius, she was heartbroken.

BARNEY

I'm sorry to hear that, Chucky. My advice is to chill out.
Give yourself some time and you'll get over it. Remember,
she's not the only woman on the planet.

CHUCKY

She is for me. I still love her with all my heart.

BARNEY

Oh. Well, did you tell her that?

(Chucky shakes his
head yes)

And what did she say?

CHUCKY

She said, I love you, too. I even bought her an engagement ring. We were so happy. But when she found out the truth about me, she said she could never forgive me. She gave me back the ring and told me she could never marry a junk man.

BARNEY

Chucky, I'm surprised at you. Didn't you explain that you're not a junk man.

CHUCKY

Yes. But it didn't change her mind.

BARNEY

I'm sorry to hear that. Can I make a suggestion? It may cost me a long-time employee, but I can't stand to see you like this.

CHUCKY

What?

BARNEY

Why don't you go to night school and study computer science? Then when you graduate, you can send her an email.

CHUCKY

Study computer science? I'm just not smart enough.

BARNEY

Don't sell yourself short, Chucky. You can't know how smart you are until you try your best to do something, at least, until you know for sure it's not for you.

(grandiously)

Never underestimate the infinite capacity of the human mind!

CHUCKY

Do you think I can get into night school? I wasn't at the top of my class in high school.

BARNEY

Let me repeat. You can't know till you try. Did you study hard in high school?

CHUCKY

No. I never took a book home. I got by just with what I could remember from class, I mean, when I wasn't looking out the window, daydreaming.

BARNEY

Well, you see there? You never gave your brain a chance to do its best. Think how many billions of brain cells you have. I'll bet you haven't even used one percent of them.

CHUCKY

You may be right. I was pretty good in math. But where can I find a school that teaches computer science?

BARNEY

What do you mean, where can you find a school? Who has all the little bits of information but none of life's big answers? Google! Do a search!

CHUCKY

Good idea. Now all I have to do is work up the courage.

BARNEY

Let me put it this way. The road to success is littered with failure. The sooner you start to fail, the sooner you'll succeed. Besides, you don't have a choice, unless you want to be miserable for the rest of your life.

CHUCKY

You're right, Barney. I'll start looking tomorrow.

BARNEY

No, you won't. Just having you around being the way you are even depresses me. Carpe diem! Come to my office, and we'll do the search together.

CHUCKY

All right.

(stands)

How about if we search for best computer science school near me?

BARNEY

Sounds right. See? Using your noggin already.

CHUCKY

You're a real friend, Barney.

BARNEY

You got that right, even when it's not in my best interests. The question is, how can you be generous when you only do something when it's in your own best interest?

SCENE 18

Hazelton Enterprises. Nancy is at her desk, sad. Astrid is standing near her, looking over some paperwork.

ASTRID

Is something the matter, Nancy? You haven't been your usual happy self for some time now.

NANCY

Oh, I'm OK.

ASTRID

Don't try to fool me, Nancy dear. Why, I have never seen you so dreadfully sad!

NANCY

I'm sorry, Mrs. Hazelton. I'll cheer up soon.

ASTRID

Oh, sure you will. I'll tell you what, just to cheer you up, I'll give you a ten-percent raise. How's that?

NANCY

(sadly)

Thank you.

ASTRID

Oh, I was going to do it anyway. You're an absolutely wonderful admin.

NANCY

Thank you, Mrs. Hazelton.

(almost breaks into
tears)

ASTRID

Oh, my, Nancy. The I gave you was intended to cheer you up, not bring you to tears, unless, of course, you're shedding tears of joy.

(Nancy shakes her
head yes while
continuing to cry)

Then they are tears of joy?

(Nancy shakes her
head yes again)

Good! Now, wipe the tears from your eyes and let me see a nice, big smile on that lovely young face.

(MORE)

ASTRID (cont'd)

(takes out a small
pack of tissues and
hands her one)

Here's a tissue.

(Nancy starts to wipe
her eyes and begins
to cry harder than
ever)

Now, now, my child. No need to have such a grand emotional
response. After all, it's only money.

(Nancy starts to wipe
her eyes)

Good, good. Now take my advice. Tonight I want you to go
out on the town and celebrate.

(Nancy shakes her
head yes and then
really breaks)

Oh, my, if money only still affected me so deeply!

(thinks; idea)

Or could something else be the cause of your tears?

SCENE 19

Tech Dreck Recycling. Chucky is
sitting at his desk, reading a
textbook and making underlines.
Barney enters.

BARNEY

Studying during work time again, Chucky?

CHUCKY

Oh, sorry, Barney. I have a big exam tonight.

BARNEY

Oh. Well, in that case, I'll excuse you.

(holds out package)

This package came for you.

CHUCKY

For me?

BARNEY

Via overnight UPS. Must be important.

CHUCKY

Thanks.

(takes package and
looks it over)

BARNEY

How is school going?

CHUCKY

What can I say, Barney? You were right. I never thought I could understand computer science. But I can. One of my teachers even said I seem to have a special talent for it.

BARNEY

That's great, Chucky. Take it from me! You've got a great future ahead of you. All I can say is, I'll be happy to have you as an employee as long as I can afford you.

CHUCKY

Thank you, Barney.

BARNEY

Let me ask you a practical question. How much longer do you have to hit the books?

CHUCKY

Can I have another hour? Then I'll do anything you want.

BARNEY

Good. Take your time. But as soon as you know you're ready to ace the exam, come to my office. I'll have a list of recyclable items for you so you can head out immediately.

CHUCKY

I'll be there in one hour.

BARNEY

Good.

(starts to leave;
stops)

Say, I just had a thought. When you graduate, maybe we can start a division that specializes in computer maintenance and repair. I could make you a partner. What do you think? Or are you set on becoming a chief technology officer in a big company?

CHUCKY

That's a great offer, Barney. I'd like to be in business with you.

BARNEY

Love it! Now, resume your studies!

BARNEY leaves. CHUCKY looks over the package and then opens it carefully. There's a rose inside. He looks at it with great affection. Holds it to his chest.

Then he picks up the phone and dials. Lights come up on Nancy, sitting on a park bench, drying her eyes. Answers phone.

CHUCKY

Nancy?

NANCY

Yes. Is this you Chucky?

CHUCKY

Yes. Thank you for the rose. Does it mean you forgive me?

NANCY

No. It means I miss you.

CHUCKY

I miss you, too. Can we have a bite and talk at our usual place?

NANCY

I would love that.

CHUCKY

Good. I have to do something earlier. Can we do it at eight-fifteen?

NANCY

Why not right after work? Don't tell me you have a date with someone else?

CHUCKY

I would never do that, Nancy. I still love you.

NANCY

Good. Maybe I still love you, too. See you at 8:15.

(hangs up; smiles and hugs herself)

CHUCKY

(hangs up; pumps both arms in the air)

Yes!

Picks up the rose and kisses it.
Jumps up and starts pacing.

Barney enters.

BARNEY

Suddenly you're happy. Is it because we're going into business together?

CHUCKY

Oh, I'm happy about that, too. But the package was from my girlfriend. She wants to make up.

BARNEY

Say no more, young man. I know how that can be. You don't look like a man who's going to do anymore studying.

CHUCKY

I'm too excited.

BARNEY

Good. I just completed the list for the pickups I need you to do. Might as well get started so you get to your exam on time.

CHUCKY

You bet, boss.

(takes list)

I'm so happy!

BARNEY

Good. Now go pickup the junk. I mean, the recyclables.

SCENE 20

Usual restaurant. Nancy is seated at a table. Chucky enters, his books in a backpack. Waves to her, and she waves back.

CHUCKY

I'm so happy to see you.

(leans over and
kisses her cheek)

NANCY

I'm happy to see you too, Chucky.

(takes his hand)

I missed you so much.

CHUCKY

(sits)

I missed you, too, Nancy.

They hold hands and stare at each other for a few moments.

CHUCKY

I feel so great being close to you again.

NANCY

I feel the same way, Chucky. Did you like my gift?

CHUCKY

You made my day! Maybe my whole lifetime.

NANCY

Good. I sent it because I decided something very important.

CHUCKY

(gazes at her, lost
in her eyes)

What, dear?

NANCY

I don't care if you're not a computer genius. I don't even care if you're a junk man. I still love you.

CHUCKY

You are such a dear. I have a confession to make.

NANCY

You do? What?

CHUCKY

I am a computer genius.

NANCY

Oh, Chucky, don't lie to me again.

CHUCKY

OK, maybe I'm not a computer genius yet. But I'm studying to be one.

NANCY

You are?

CHUCKY

(takes off backpack;
pulls out textbook)

See. Books. Computer science. I'm decided to go to night school to study computer technology.

NANCY

Really?

CHUCKY

Yes. You see, you bring out the best in me.

NANCY

Oh, Chucky, you bring out the best in me, too! I'm so happy now. I love you today and I'll love you forever.

CHUCKY

I'll love you forever, too, Nancy. You're my perfect soulmate.

NANCY

And you're mine, Chucky.

They kiss.

THE END