

ALICE THROUGH THE INTERNET

By Robert Frankel

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CHARACTERS

(9 Females, 5 Males, 18 either, 6-12 extras)

REAL LIFE CHARACTERS

ALICE: (F) a college student with agoraphobia who is sucked into the Internet

PAYTON: (M) her boyfriend

VICTORIA: (F) her girlfriend

MOTHER: (F) her mother

PARTYGOERS: (E) college friends of Alice who attend her birthday party

INTERNET CHARACTERS

COOKIE: (F) a motherly computer spy

BUG: (M) a slick conman and a vicious application bug

BUG2: (E) another bug

FACELOOK: (E) the formal voice of "FaceLook," the application

GIGGLE: (F) a giggling search engine

POPUP: (E) a quirky but well-meaning Spam

SPAM #1 - #4: (E) quirky, energetic Spam characters

FIREWALL #1 - #3: (E) officious, no-nonsense Internet police

TWEAK: (E) spoof of a computer "TWEET"

TWEAKER: (E) same

TWEAKEST: (E) same

TWEAKTREND: (E) same

YOUTUBA: (E) sleazy purveyor of videos

AMAZONE: (F) spirited, warrior-like salesperson

YOUHOO: (E) fun-loving embodiment of "Yahoo," the application

MOM42: (F) kind-hearted motherboard on Alice's computer

POPS42: (M) gruff operating system on Alice's computer
MOM76: (F) another motherboard

POPS76: (M) another operating system

VRAPP: (E) 60's hippie dude who is a virtual reality application

RECYCLER: (M) cruel, hardnosed boss in charge of recycling application, spam, and other documents and files

CHATTY CATHY: (F) a talkative Instant Messenger within FaceLook

POSTER: (E) a roller-skating

ALEX, PUMATIQUA, JAMES, SIMONE, EMMA, DIANA, and OPTIONAL OTHERS: (E) Internet users who might be Alice's friends

PROPERTIES

Skateboard or roller skates

Many cell phones

Laptop computer

Three police batons

Two pocket notebooks and pencils

Newspaper

Keyboard

Microphone (non-working)

Cell phone power plug

Several cans of compressed air

Vacuum cleaner

Extension cord

PRODUCTION NOTES

CASTING AND DOUBLING – Because the majority of the characters in this play are “in the Internet,” the majority can be cast with either gender. This gives you flexibility based on your casting pool. In addition, there is flexibility of cast size. Partygoers at the Internet party, for example, can be doubled up, using costume changes, with those at Alice’s birthday party, limiting your cast size. Or, if your casting pool is larger, they can be separate actors. In addition, the pool of “FaceLook friends” near the beginning of the play can be reduced or expanded, depending on your needs.

COSTUMES – Simple uses of tin foil and makeup can be used for many of the costumes, or you have the chance to be very creative in creating the Internet characters. One thing that works well is having one costume color scheme for the non-Internet characters (e.g. Alice, Payton) and another color scheme for the Internet characters (e.g. FaceLook, Cookie). So for example, you might have all your Internet characters have silver somewhere in their costume, and use pastels for the remainder of their costume, and alternatively use only primary colors for the non-Internet characters.

SOUND AND LIGHTS - Basic sound and light schemes work for this show, though it is helpful to be able to light each third of the stage – SR, CS, SL – separately for effect. Computer or cell phone bleeps are also important as they help the audience follow the dialogue. A major piece of creativity comes with Alice’s travel both into and out of the Internet. Since each travel is a dramatic shift for the play, there should be no limit to the flashing lights and other-worldly, electrical sound effects used here.

SET – Simple set pieces suggesting an office (e.g. a desk) and bedroom (e.g. a chair or bed) can be used SR and SL. For the Internet action CS, it is very helpful to create a large, wall-like piece that ideally can be rolled on and offstage, as well as US and DS. This facilitates Internet entrances (which can come from behind the wall) as well as the backdrop of a large FaceLook screen as indicated in the script. The play can alternatively be performed with a background of suggestive set pieces (e.g. a large computer, a large motherboard) or even simulated Internet street signs (e.g. “Modem – this way,” “Speed Limit – 2 GB/sec”).

ACTING STYLE – While the non-Internet characters require a realistic acting style, the Internet characters beg to be “over the top.” As they have been programmed, they are very dedicated to whatever their

task is – eg Firewalls to eliminating spam, Bugs to wreaking havoc on users, etc. Actors for these characters are encouraged to use every part of their body and vocal range to “amp up” their performances – so have fun!

ACCEPTABLE CHANGES – Technology is an ever-changing beast. So as the years roll by, feel free to substitute a new technology or name for an antiquated technology or name.

With love to Mom and Dad for all their support

Do Not Copy

ALICE THROUGH THE INTERNET

by
Robert Frankel

ACT I

SETTING: The set is divided into fourths. SR is ALICE's bedroom, suggested perhaps by a bed or bookcase, and a chair. A laptop sits somewhere in the room. SL is an office with a desk facing US, a trashcan to one side and a rolling chair to the other. On the desk is a laptop computer. On the SL side is a door or wing entrance. CS, taking up approximately half the stage is a space that will serve as several Internet locations, as well as ALICE's living room at the end of the play. USC is an entrance.

AT RISE: Only SL – the office – is lit. College student ALICE enters at a dead run holding a cell phone. SHE slams the door and locks it. Immediately, sounds of pounding are heard with muffled shouts from the other side of the door. SHE checks her watch and mutters, "One minute!" Breathlessly SHE plops down in the well of the desk, and sits DS of it facing the Audience. After a moment, SHE speaks to the Audience.

ALICE: Who's pounding on the door and why am I here, under a desk - is that what you're wondering? 'Cause I'm wondering the same thing and I'm the one under here! The answer's ridiculously easy; it's one word. One made-up word that I didn't give a thought to this morning. One mysterious word that introduced me to all sorts of people I never would have known. One seductive, powerful word that turned me into a "woman on the run!" And NOW, I've got one minute before my fate is sealed... (Glances at door) ...one way or the other. (Becoming boiling mad) One word. One. Word. (SHE pauses, then blurts) FACELook! (Pauses, then) Dot com. Alright, alright, Alice, just calm down and tell them from the beginning. So it makes some sense. (SHE crosses SR to bedroom as SHE talks to the Audience) Just this morning I was checking my email on my cell phone when...

(SFX: computer bleep. VICTORIA enters CS, typing into her cell phone as SHE talks to ALICE.)

VICTORIA: "Heya, Allie. What's up?"

(ALICE texts on her cell phone. **NOTE:** Sentences that are both spoken and typed will be put in quotation marks.)

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ALICE: “I-D-K, Victoria.” *(To Audience)* That’s I Don’t Know in e-talk.
(Back to typing) “Studying for that algebra test tomorrow.”

VICTORIA: “Well, check out the photo I just put up on FaceLook.”

(SFX: drum roll and cymbal crash or other dramatic sound.)

ALICE: *(To Audience)* There it was, that word. Did you hear it?
(Without looking at VICTORIA) Say it again. I wanna make sure they get it.

VICTORIA: *(Repeats exactly as before with no awareness of repeating)*
“Well, check out the photo I just put up on FaceLook.”

(SFX: same sound.)

ALICE: *(To Audience)* I added the sound effect to indicate the drama.
Well, it’s MY story. Now of course I knew what FaceLook was.

(SFX: FaceLook sound. SHE gestures to booth.)

Okay, cut the FaceLook sound thingy. I think they get it. *(To Audience)* So yes, I knew about it. I just hadn’t submitted to its evil regime yet. I was still a real person, see? With real dreams and real goals and real life. That was this morning. So I texted her back.
“Decided not to sign up for FaceLook. Sorry.”

VICTORIA: “Boo hoo. How are you going to see my new photo?”

ALICE: “Guess I’ll have to live without that.”

VICTORIA: “No way, B-F-F. Emailing you a link to sign up for FaceLook right now.”

(SFX: computer bleep)

“Lemme know when you’re up and running. T-T-F-N!” *(VICTORIA exits)*

ALICE: Yeah, “tah-tah-for-now” to you too.

MOM: *(Offstage)* Alice?

ALICE: *(To Audience)* That’s my mom. *(Calling to her)* Yeah, Mom?

MOM: *(Enters to bedroom door)* Whatcha doing?

ALICE: Just, you know, catching up on email, texting to friends. First day back from college and everyone wants to SEE me.

MOM: Well, that’s a good thing, don’tcha think?

ALICE: I... you know I don’t like crowds, Mom.

MOM: Crowds? How many friends have you got now? I can still count on one hand the ones you’re willing to go see. Go out, have a good time!

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ALICE: No... no, talking on the phone and, you know, the computer is plenty for me right now.

MOM: Oh Alice, honestly. I thought college with all its parties would get you over this.

ALICE: Well, it didn't. But I'm trying.

MOM: *(Dubiously)* So I see. *(SHE fusses over ALICE's hair fondly)* Well, I'm just going to be cleaning around the house – not much excitement here. I am glad to have you back, dear.

ALICE: Thanks, Mom.

MOM: *(Starts to exit, then turns back)* Oh, I'm going to be using the vacuum cleaner. There's something wrong with the darn thing and I haven't had a chance to fix it yet.

ALICE: So?

MOM: So don't plug in anything else or the circuit breaker will blow.

ALICE: 'Kay, Mom.

(MOM exits.)

Mom's okay. Always picking on me for my agoraphobia. *(As if the Audience had just asked her a question)* What? Oh, just a fancy word for "fear of crowds." I just... it's just I'm shy, you know? Oh I don't mind talking to all of you because you're just in my head anyway. So, yeah. But other people? I just get a little, you know, squeamish. Anyway, back to the FaceLook link – ironically staring me right in the face. So... I hit the link Victoria had sent me. The FaceLook sign-up link. *(Deep breath, pushes cell phone key)* And I filled out my name, address, phone number – optional – email address, name of high school – optional - and birth date – optional AND easy to lie about! Then... then I hit the other magic word, the one that means go in, pierce, penetrate, CROSS THE THRESHOLD... I hit the ENTER button!

(FACELOOK, formally dressed in tux and top hat, enters CS. Somewhat robotic and overly cheerful – may be male or female.)

FACELOOK: *(Looking straight out to Audience)* Hi Alice. I'm Mr./Ms. FaceLook, your first FaceLook friend!

ALICE: *(Typing while looking at him)* "Um, hi. Who are –"

FACELOOK: Did you know you may have other friends?

ALICE: "Well, I know I DO have other friends. But I'm not sure what –"

FACELOOK: You may know Diana...

(Each CHARACTER enters as THEY are mentioned, and talks to Audience.)

DIANA: *(Very cool and faddish)* Yo, went to the same high school.
Watched you hang with the dorks in Mrs. Meyer's class.

ALICE: Um, no, she wasn't one of my –

FACELOOK: ...Simone...

SIMONE: *(Shy, perhaps a foreign accent)* I sat behind you in church.
You sang good...

ALICE: Who ARE these people? Wait, were you that –

FACELOOK: ...James...

JAMES: *(Nerdy)* Woah, like hi, it's like awesome to see you, dude! We
had lunch together? And like I had the peanut butter and tuna
sandwiches, and like everyone would steal 'em from me?

ALICE: Ok-AA-ay! That's enough. I don't need –

FACELOOK: ...Emma...

ALICE: "Oh, Mr. FaceLook?"

EMMA: *(Party girl)* Remember those songs in music? Didn't they just
make you wanna dance?

(Rest of CHARACTERS come fast and furious. EACH ad libs some variation of, "Hi" as THEY enter, overlapping as THEY talk. More or fewer CHARACTERS may be optionally introduced depending on cast size. ALICE tries to talk over them.)

FACELOOK: ...Eduardo... Barbie... Ken... Katie... Rachael...

ALICE: *(Overlapping)* Uh, wait a minute... I just wanted to... all I want to
do is see Victoria's... I only wanted...

FACELOOK: ...and Pumatiqua!

PUMATIQUA: Heya!

ALICE: *(Overlapping)* "I JUST WANTED TO SEE VICTORIA'S
PHOTOGRAPH!"

(There is silence as THEY ALL stand there in a character pose looking at Audience, and smiling stiffly. SHE turns to the Audience and repeats, rolling her eyes.)

I just wanted to see Victoria's photograph - the new one that she
uploaded? *(Growing in sarcastic intensity)* But apparently on
FaceLook, if you JUST wanna see a PHOTOGRAPH, you get ALL
these would-be FRIENDS who think they just MIGHT KNOW you!

(SHE looks at THEM as THEY remain frozen, smiling, and silent. After a moment, SHE looks back to the Audience.)

Aaand...

FACELOOK: What have you got for her, friends?

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ALICE: ...apparently they like to bring gifts...
(EACH states their "gift" with melodramatic joy and fervor. As THEY do, THEY take a cardboard cutout or other cheesy imitation of the object from behind their back and hold it in front of them as if it were the real thing. ALICE types as SHE talks.)

SIMONE: I got you a bagel!

ALICE: Well that was nice but –

DIANA: Want a delicious banana?

ALICE: No, I don't like –

JAMES: Woah, like I've got a cool teddy bear for you!

ALICE: What would I want with a –

EMMA: Look, it's a sheep!

ALICE: "Alright, just STOP!"

(EVERYONE freezes in various poses.)

Okay, that's when I called my friend Victoria back.

VICTORIA: *(Enters CS, answering phone)* Um yeah, like talk to me, Alice.

ALICE: "Um yeah, like" I'm on FaceLook and getting pummeled here with everyone I've ever known or could possibly know offering friendship and gifts. This is wacko!

VICTORIA: Um, like he-LLO-oh?! You just have to learn to BLOCK applications like that.

ALICE: But –

VICTORIA: Sorry, got another call coming in. Toodles!

(SHE exits. ALEX, wearing sunglasses, hands her a giant invitation card with RSVP on it.)

ALEX: Hey, psst... wanna join the uh mafia and help our fight against the dark ninjas?

ALICE: *(To Audience)* OH, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!

(SHE begins going through the CROWD on stage, without looking at them, and punching cell phone buttons at EACH as THEY reach to offer her something. As SHE blocks them, THEY exit, reacting variously.)

BLOCK! Hai-YA!

PUMATIQUA: Won't you PLEASE help me find my mystery spice?

ALICE: BLOCK! BLOCK, BLOCK, BLOCK!

DAVID: I can sell you a vorpal blade for only six hundred FaceLook dollars?

ALICE: CR-ACK! WHAMMO! BLOCK! BLOCK, BLOCK!

(ALL Internet FRIENDS are gone now. ALICE is breathing heavily. To Audience.)

I was at my wit's end and about ready to color my hair pink – something I always do when I'm at my wit's end – when I got another call.

(SFX: cell ring. PAYTON enters CS on cell phone.)

Hello?

PAYTON: *(On phone)* Heya Allie, whatcha doing today?

ALICE: What'm I doing? I'm being driven crazy by people offering me fake bagels and, and sheep!

PAYTON: Now that sounds like a strange day.

ALICE: I'm glad to hear the voice of sanity on my phone. *(To Audience)* I'd been dating Payton for about eight months, and he was a breath of fresh air after battling FaceLook, that's for sure. And he didn't mind dating me at night, in dark places, with not too many people around. At least mostly he didn't mind.

PAYTON: Boy, you really are having some kinda day if you're calling me sane. Hey, I cleaned out my car and everything for tonight. Not a McDonald's wrapper to be seen. Wanna look sharp for my date, Alice!

ALICE: Oh. Yeah. *(To Audience)* I'd forgotten about our date. *(To PAYTON)* Hey, Payton, about tonight...

PAYTON: Wait, wait, wait. I know that sentence you're starting there. You're not backing out on this party, Alice. Everyone'll be there and the band's good and... it's your birthday! We'll have fun, y'know? And celebrate, like normal people?

ALICE: I know we would but... it's just too much for me, Payton. All those people. On that big dance floor.

PAYTON: They're all your friends, Alice!

ALICE: Yeah, I just had a "FaceLook experience" with my "friends."

PAYTON: Well, I mean, you KNOW all of them, anyway.

ALICE: I can't do it. I just can't do it. I'm sorry, Payton. I'm really sorry.

PAYTON: *(Sigh)* Yeah. I'm calling you later about this. Anyway, you gotta check this new app out.

ALICE: *(Heading SR to her bedroom)* Check out a new app? *(To Audience)* It struck me that, in this supposedly enlightened age, here I was on my phone. So that I could connect to a computer. And check out some new application. For my boyfriend who is on the phone! Whatever happened to "let's go down to the soda shop and have a malt?"

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PAYTON: It's a beta.

ALICE: *(To Audience)* See, until this moment in my life, I thought a Beta was a fish. *(To PAYTON)* You mean a...?

PAYTON: I mean the app I want you to check out is called “Virtual Reality” and it's a beta – a test version of the app that still has too many bugs to give to everyone. They're upgrading it tonight at 7:00 to get rid of the bugs. Anyway... *(Types in some keys)* ...I just sent you the address so that you can get to it. It doesn't work perfectly, but it's pretty cool. Some serious graphics. You should check it out.

(SFX: computer beep. ALICE looks at her cell phone)

ALICE: Okay, I got it. But what does it do?

PAYTON: I don't want to spoil the surprise, Alice. But you feel like you're in a whole new world. Try it; it's fun.

(SFX: cell ring. HE looks at HIS phone.)

...oh sorry, gotta run Allie. Got Raoul on the other line. Think about the party tonight, will ya? And then say 'yes'! Bye! *(HE hangs up and exits)*

MOM: *(OFFSTAGE)* Allie, turning on the vacuum cleaner now.

ALICE: Okay, Mom!

(OFFSTAGE SFX: loud vacuum cleaner)

Wonder what world it simulates? *(To Audience)* Virtual Reality – that's when you feel like you're in one world but you're really in another world. Virtual Reality – that's what I was feeling about now between my FaceLook, which didn't have my face on it, and this beta, which wasn't a fish. So, I did what anyone would do – I flipped over from FaceLook to this new web address and clicked on it. *(Pauses with finger over the cell button)* Funny how innocuous it sounds to “click” on something... and then what fantastically horrible things it can cause.

(SHE takes a deep breath and clicks. SFX: beep)

Oh shoot, I'm almost out of battery. Better plug in my cell.

(SHE runs to plug her cell phone in. The second SHE does, there is a loud electrical sound as the vacuum cleaner revs on high. The LIGHTS go to BLACK as the vacuum shuts off and strange electrical sounds are heard. After several moments, we hear ALICE from the dark.)

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Oh shoot, Mom's vacuum cleaner. It probably blacked out all of
<use name of local city>.

(Lights up and ALICE is now standing CS where FACELOOK was standing earlier. US of her is a wall which can be as simple as a large, rolling whiteboard or several large easels of paper. On the wall are various signs of various sizes – ala a huge FaceLook page – with writing on them indicating categories and entries like, “News Feed,” “Status,” “Upcoming Events,” “Photos,” etc. There is also a large easel with a large tablet of paper and a magic marker. ALICE looks around bewildered.)

Woah. What happened here? Hello?! And why am I suddenly standing in front of a... a wall... no... no, okay, great joke, Payton. “The beta has bugs; click on this address.” Very funny, Payton. Putting this, this strange wall in my... okay, um, how exactly did you get a new wall in my bedroom? Payton? Because if you didn't put a new wall in my, you know, bedroom, then I'd swear that I'm... well that I'm inside... no. That's impossible.

(POSTER suddenly enters on skateboard or roller skates from behind wall. HE or SHE tacks a sign high on the wall; it says, “Welcome!”)

(To POSTER) Hey, uh, you! Hey, pardon me? Where am I?

POSTER: *(Recites message loudly and officiously)* FaceLook says “Welcome!”

ALICE: Uh, who... says what?

POSTER: FaceLook says “Welcome!”

ALICE: Welcome? To what?

POSTER: Why, to FaceLook, of course!

ALICE: You mean I'm... very funny. I can't be INSIDE OF FACELOOK... because that would mean... O-M-G, AM I INSIDE THE INTERNET?!

POSTER: Welcome!

ALICE: Welcome?! I've gotta get out of here. I don't belong here.

Excuse me, but would you please uh can you help me? Please?

POSTER: Just the messenger! You can call me Poster 'cause that's what I do! Post stuff! *(Pulling large notice out of her pocket – it says, “Mom and Pops Get-Together: Party tonight at 6:00 S.U.T”)*

Almost forgot. Big party tonight at FaceLook's file. All the Moms and Pops'll be there!

(POSTER posts the notice on the wall and wheels off. BUG, looking like HIS/HER name, enters slyly, wearing sunglasses. Spots ALICE and goes to her.)

ALICE: *(To herself in awe)* I'm inside FaceLook. I'm inside the INTERNET! O.M.G!! HELP! HELP!

BUG: *(Suavely)* Did someone say "help?"

ALICE: *(Taken aback by BUG's appearance)* Eww! I mean, yes. Yes, I uh did. You see...

BUG: There's something on your shirt.

(SHE looks down and HE flicks her chin.)

Gotcha!

ALICE: Excuse me, but you... you're a bug.

BUG: And you're a User but I'm not holdin' that against ya.

(APP enters whistling.)

Look, here comes an application.

(HE whistles and BUG2 joins him, dressed exactly the same. Indicating APP.)

Go get 'er!

(BUG2, smiling, heads after APP as THEY exit.)

ALICE: What did you do?

BUG: Sent a bug after her, heh, heh. Next time her User adds a new friend, bingo, her system'll crash and she'll get a message that says, "You've been bitten by The Bug!" Am I good or what?!

ALICE: You're bad. You shouldn't do that to users.

BUG: Hey, that's what I was programmed to do!

(TWO FIREWALLS enter behind and unseen by ALICE and BUG. THEY are of either gender, older, and appear to have brick walls on their bodies, with some of the bricks missing. THEY are slapping wooden batons in their hands and grinning menacingly.)

ALICE: But why didn't the firewall keep you out of FaceLook? It's supposed to protect us from -

BUG: Between you and me, sweetheart, the firewalls here are a little lax, know what I mean?

FIREWALL #1: Well, well, well, this bug here says we're a little lax, Carey.

BUG: Oops.

FIREWALL #2: Bug here's gonna be in for a little surprise at 7:00 tonight, ain't he, Pat?

FIREWALL #1: Yeah, that upgrade's gonna get rid of a lotta these ugly critters.

FIREWALL #2: Gonna be bug-free at last.

BUG: Look I'm not a bug. No, I'm a uh new radio transponder thing-o-witz-it – thus, the antennae. (*Poses grandly*)

FIREWALL #2: I don't think we're fallin' for your gobbledygook today, eh, Pat?

FIREWALL #1: No sir, not with our upgrade on the way. Until 7:00 though, let's keep this slime ball off the street, shall we?

(THEY EACH grab one of his elbows.)

BUG: (*To FIREWALLS*) Fellas, look, we can be reasonable here. I just happen to have a megabyte in my pocket. It's all yours if you'll just look the other way this time. Whaddyasay huh?

(FIREWALLS look around to see if anyone's watching, then release his elbows.)

FIREWALL #1: Well maybe we should, Carey.

FIREWALL #2: Now wait just a minute there, Pat. There're two of us. Seems to me we need TWO megabytes to make it fair.

BUG: TWO meg? What do I look like – a CD-ROM?

FIREWALL #1: Well then...

(THEY grab his elbows again.)

BUG: Wait a minute, wait a minute! I didn't say I couldn't. Alright TWO meg, ya greedy piles o' silicon. (*HE reaches into his overcoat and withdraws two metal rectangles, handing one to EACH. To ALICE, winking*) See what I mean about being lax.

FIREWALL #1: Alright, alright. (*Takes out a police notebook and pencil*) So that's "Being a bug on a pedestrian cable" and...

FIREWALL #2: ...and "Bribing a firewall."

FIREWALL #1: "Bribing TWO firewalls."

BUG: Hey, c'mon, that's entrapment!

FIREWALL #2: That's alright – bugs are used to entrapment. C'mon, we got a little cell waiting just for you. In the Recycling Bin!

(THEY grab him under elbows.)

BUG: No, not the Recycling Bin!

ALICE: Uh, excuse me?

(THEY freeze for a moment. To Audience)

I don't know if I can do this. I'm hyperventilating. Too many uh people, or whatever they are. *(To FIREWALLS)* Uh... *(Clearing throat)* I'm a uh User? And I'm sort of stuck in FaceLook? I'm a little scared right now. Could you maybe uh tell me how to get out? Please?

(Beat. FIREWALLS start laughing uproariously.)

FIREWALL #1: A User!

FIREWALL #2: In the Internet! That'll be the day.

FIREWALL #1: Look lady, just 'cause we're older firewalls don't mean we're stupid.

FIREWALL #2: Yeah. And if we see you in the company of this kinda vermin again, we'll take YOU in TOO!

ALICE: But how do I... what do I...?

(THEY begin dragging BUG off.)

BUG: *(Yelling as THEY exit)* You'll need some outside help! Find Chatty Cathy!

(THEY exit. ALICE thinks for a moment. To herself)

ALICE: Chatty Cathy? Who is "Chatty Cathy?"

POSTER: *(Skating to DS of wall)* Did my User have a request for Chatty Cathy?

ALICE: Poster! You... you KNOW Chatty Cathy?

POSTER: I do, Master. A little noisy for my tastes, but she is the instant messenger inside of FaceLook.

ALICE: Instant messenger? You mean I can talk to outside users with her?!

POSTER: Absolutely, oh highness!

ALICE: Wow!

POSTER: IF they are online.

ALICE: Well I've got to try. Poster, can you get me Chatty Cathy?

POSTER: Your wish is my command, mon Cap-i-tain!

(Claps hands twice and exits as CHATTY CATHY enters from behind wall with a keyboard hanging from her belt. SHE has a cable dish on her head, is chewing gum and is speaking rapidly into a microphone.)

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CHATTY CATHY: So she says to her boyfriend “really” and Brian, her boyfriend, says “yeah” and then they kiss. But they forgot about the birthday cake on the table which slid off onto Brian’s lap, so there he sits with icing all over his pants and so she screamed and the waiters came running over with wash rags. Well, she was so embarrassed she called Denise, her friend? And Denise told her –

ALICE: Excuse me? Uh, are you Chatty Cathy?

CHATTY CATHY: *(Gives ALICE a dirty look)* I gotta go... some User. Yeah, it’s always something. Bye! *(SHE packs away her microphone in her belt. Sarcastically)* You wanted something, oh great User?

ALICE: Um, yeah, yes, I, well I need to talk – if it’s possible – to someone who, well I’m not sure if he’s even online but maybe –

CHATTY CATHY: I don’t have time for a reboot here! Spit it out.

ALICE: Sorry. I’m a little... *(Clears throat, regroup, then)* ...I’d like to have a chat with Payton. Please.

CHATTY CATHY: *(Looking at her like “are you for real?”)* His USER name. PI-EASE!

ALICE: Oh, uh, sorry it’s, uh, I think it’s Payton55901.

(CATHY sighs, grimaces and picks up her microphone. SR lights up on ALICE’s bedroom. PAYTON is pacing, on his cell phone, and glancing at open laptop.)

PAYTON: *(Calling to unseen MOM)* Thanks Mrs. S. She doesn’t seem to be answering though. *(Hangs up phone, talking to himself)* Come on, Alice, where’d you disappear to? You’re not out dancing, I know that.

(SFX: computer beep. PAYTON’s head jerks to the laptop and HE leans into it.)

CHATTY CATHY: *(To ALICE)* Your User is online. What would you like to say?

PAYTON: I’ve got an instant message from... Alice? Well about time...

ALICE: Say? Uh... say...

(CHATTY CATHY taps her wristwatch impatiently. SHE then types as ALICE dictates.)

...say, “This is Alice. Can’t talk long. Payton, that virtual reality app and my Mom’s vacuum cleaner got me stuck in FaceLook! Not kidding! Need help to get back!”

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(SHE pauses as we see PAYTON reading, eyes wide. HE begins to type as HE speaks the words aloud.)

PAYTON: “What?! Where are you? How do I get you out?”

(HE hits enter. ALICE replies aloud as CHATTY CATHY types her response. Meanwhile, CHATTER, another User, queues up behind ALICE, becoming increasingly impatient with ALICE.)

ALICE: “I don’t know! The vacuum cleaner caused a power outage and next thing I know I was electronically sucked through the Internet to FaceLook.”

PAYTON: “You’re really in FaceLook?”

ALICE: “YES!!”

PAYTON: “But that’s impossible!”

ALICE: “Payton, you have to believe me!”

PAYTON: “This is bizarre, Alice! Well, maybe, let’s see, maybe we need to uh recreate what happened to get you back out. I know that app had bugs in it. If you can just hook up with that app, we’ll try to make that power outage happen again.”

(CHATTER is tapping on ALICE’s shoulder impatiently while CHATTY CATHY is again tapping her wristwatch.)

CHATTY CATHY: We haven’t got all day, ma’am!

ALICE: “Payton, that app is going to be upgraded at 7:00! We have to –”

(CHATTY CATHY runs finger across her throat.)

CHATTY CATHY: *(Loudly)* NEXT!

(CHATTER pushes ALICE aside.)

CHATTER: Cool! *(To CHATTY CATHY)* Wanna catch up to my friend Samuel. User name: BigSnake452...

CHATTY CATHY: Connecting...

PAYTON: Alice? Alice?!

(MOM enters bedroom.)

MOM: So? Where is she?

PAYTON: She’s... she’s in FaceLook.

MOM: Oh, that’s nice. *(Pause)* What’s FaceLook?

(Their conversation fades out as ALICE moves away from them.)

ALICE: *(To herself)* What do I do now?

(THREE SPAM enter talking to EACH OTHER. Each time THEY “bing!” it is like an involuntary twitch after which THEY get louder and momentarily more recitational.)

POPUP: So I said, “BING! WANT A HAIR SPRAY WITH SHAKE AND SHIMMER?”

SPAM #1: Did the User actually click on ‘yes’, “BING! WE HAVE NO BANANAS!”?

SPAM #2: Naw, they never click on us spam because, “BING! WE OFFER DRY CLEANING FOR LESS!”

POPUP: *(Laughing)* Right you are.

(ALICE composes her nerves, then approaches the them.)

ALICE: Excuse me, um, I’m a, well, I’m a user and –

(SPAMS immediately drop to their knees and bow forward in worship. THEY ad lib, “Oh User! Oh great one! I am not worthy!”)

No, uh, no you don’t have to... I mean I’m not...

POPUP: We spam live to serve you, User.

ALICE: Well, uh, good. Because I need help.

SPAM #1: “BING! NEED ASSISTANCE WITH COLLEGE EXAMS?”

SPAM #2: “BING! WANT HELP GROOMING YOUR DOG?”

POPUP: “BING! HAVE AID? KOOL AID, THAT IS!”

ALICE: I, no, I don’t need any... I need help getting out of here!

(FIREWALL #1 and FIREWALL #2 enter and cross to them.)

SPAM #1: *(Noticing FIREWALLS)* Good ‘cause we gotta get outta here, too! *(Races OFF)*

SPAM #2: That goes double for me! *(Follows SPAM #1 OFF)*

ALICE: *(Sees FIREWALLS)* Oh no.

POPUP: I’ll stick with you, oh great User.

FIREWALL #1: Well, it’s our “user” again...

FIREWALL #2: ...And she’s hanging out with spam this time...

FIREWALL #1: ...like we told her NOT to.

FIREWALL #2: Looks like a trip to the Recycle Bin for you, too.

ALICE: Please!

POPUP: *(Throwing body in front of ALICE)* Leave the User! Take me!
“BING! STEAKS ONLY \$5.99 A POUND!”

FIREWALL #1: Such loyalty is touching.

FIREWALL #2: Yeah. Let’s take ‘em BOTH!

ALICE: No!

POPUP: “BING! IT’S CRIMINAL... NOT TO HAVE DESSERT FOR YOUR KIDS!”

FIREWALL #1: C’mon!

(FIREWALLS grab ALICE and POPUP and exit. The wall is rolled off to reveal several large containers behind it, and a sign saying, “Recycling Bin: We reuse your unwanted memories.” RECYCLER, wearing garbage-hauling overalls and a ball cap, is sitting in a chair, reading a newspaper and supervising. There are several large boxes behind him with various CHARACTERS standing in them. THEY ad lib “Let me out! This isn’t fair! Don’t recycle me! Help!” FIREWALL #3 has DELDOC and OLDAPP in tow and starts to put DELDOC into one of the other boxes.)

RECYCLER: Hey!

FIREWALL #3: *(Points to herself)* Me?

RECYCLER: Yeah you, Miss Firewall big shot. Deleted Documents go in the OTHER container. Get that through your small software skull.

FIREWALL #3: Okay, okay, get off my program, will ya?

(HE places DELDOC in a box. Then moves to put OLDAPP in another box.)

RECYCLER: Uh uh, genius. The middle one is for apps. Geesh.

FIREWALL #3: If you’d just label them...

RECYCLER: Now where would be the fun in that?

(FIREWALL #3 places OLDAPP in box and exits just as FIREWALLS #1 and #2 enter with ALICE and POPUP in tow.)

ALICE: Please, you have to believe me!

FIREWALL #1: Got a strange lookin’ piece of code here, Arnie.

FIREWALL #2: Yeah. She was hanging out with this piece o’ spam.

POPUP: The name’s Popup. And, “BING! TREAT YOURSELF TO ‘MATRIX FIVE’ NOW AT MEGAPLEX THEATERS EVERYWHERE!”

FIREWALL #1: We’ll just throw ‘em in here with the other spam.

RECYCLER: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Sometimes I think you’re a meg short of a gig, you know? This ain’t no “strange code.”

FIREWALL #1: She... she ain’t? Well, what is she then?

RECYCLER: *(Walking around her, observing her)* Hmm, good question. Could be one o’ them sophisticated Trojan horse worms that morphs into whatever it wants. *(Stops and confronts her)* Are you a WORM? Well ARE ya?

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ALICE: N-no, sir. Mr. Firewall, sir.

RECYCLER: I AIN'T a firewall, lady. I'm Arnie. MASTER Recycler to you. And you better talk straight with me before I send you to get permanently deleted.

ALICE: I... (*Steadies herself with a deep breath*) I'm a User, Master Recycler. Sir.

FIREWALL #1: See?

(*Then BOTH FIREWALLS and RECYCLER burst into laughter.*)

RECYCLER: A User, that's a good one!

FIREWALL #2: Yeah, that's what we thought!

RECYCLER: Say uh Pat, when's the last time you brought me a User, huh?

FIREWALL #1: (*In mock consideration*) Let's see that would be... the TWELFTH of NEVER!

(*THEY howl with laughter.*)

ALICE: But it's true! I'm a User and I came here by accident and I've got to get home but I can't unless –

RECYCLER: Whatever she is, she's sure noisy.

ALICE: I'm telling the truth!

RECYCLER: Yeah, yeah. Let's put her and her friendly spam in with the other Bugs and Spam until she decides to tell us what she really is.

FIREWALL #1: She don't have very long to tell us, does she?

RECYCLER: That's right. 'Cause all of you in the bins get recycled when the clock strikes 7pm. Oh, and look. That's only thirty minutes from now. Ha, ha!!

(*FIREWALL pushes her into bin where BUG, along with other SPAM, reside.*)

ALICE: Thirty minutes! But I'm telling the truth. I'm Alice and I'm a...

(*FIREWALL #2 gives her one last shove.*)

...USER!!! (*SHE looks over CHARACTERS in bin with dread*)
Ugggh!

(*SPAMS overlap their dialogue*)

SPAM #1: BING! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE THE TEN-MILLIONTH VISITOR!

SPAM #2: BING! YOU'VE JUST WON A NEW I-PAD!

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SPAM #3: BING! DEAR ALICE, I AM WRITING TO YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE JUST WON TWO MILLION POUNDS IN THE BANK OF ENGLAND. IF YOU WILL SEND US YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND –

SPAM #4: BING! HIT 'ENTER' NOW FOR YOUR CHANCE OF WINNING -

ALICE: *(Covering her ears)* STOP!

RECYCLER: *(Chuckling)* Spam too much for ya?

POPUP: Are you okay?

ALICE: It's just that I... I'm afraid of crowds. Thanks for sticking up for me.

POPUP: Oh me, I'm just the opposite. Nobody wants to be my friend 'cause of my, y'know, problem. So I love crowds. "BING! HATE THE CROWDED HIGHWAYS? NEXT TIME TAKE THE METRO!"

ALICE: How come you do that?

POPUP: Just the way I was programmed. That's why everyone thinks I'm stupid.

ALICE: I don't think you're stupid.

BUG: Hey, HEY! Warden?!

RECYCLER: Whaddyawant, Bug?

BUG: I wanna get out. I'm not a bug, I swear! I'm a uh a function key, yeah, that's it. A Print Screen. And my User is waiting to print something. So if you'll just let me go, I can –

RECYCLER: A Print Screen huh? Where's your camera?

BUG: Camera? No, no not a Print Screen. What am I saying? You've got me talking crazy. I can't even remember who I... that's it. *(pleads melodramatically)* I'm a lousy meg o' memory. I just remembered I was written over! In the prime of my bytes! Wandered around for days, lost and confused, making copies of myself to have someone to talk to and living off the bits thrown to me by the kindness of strangers! I'm tellin' ya...

RECYCLER: How come it's coming back to you now?

BUG: Well because... because... *(sings Streisand song, "Memories")*
MEMORY... MAY BE BEAUTIFUL AND YET...

(RECYCLER stops BUG with a frigid stare.)

RECYCLER: Know what I'm thinking?

BUG: You're remembering that bugs help the grass grow and are good for the environment?

RECYCLER: I'm thinking how quiet it's gonna be around here at 7:00 pm tonight! Now shuddup!

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(RECYCLER returns to chair, and relaxes reading a newspaper. A moment of silence during which ALICE sits, head in hands.)

BUG: Hey, psst. Yo, Alice?

ALICE: *(Recognizing him)* It's you!

POPUP: You know this bug?

BUG: How are –

ALICE: I don't want to talk to you. To ANY of you!

BUG: Hey, woah, don't be like that. Don't lump me with the Spam there. I put you in touch with Chatty Cathy.

ALICE: There's nothing wrong with Popup and he's a spam. He was my friend when nobody else would be.

POPUP: Thanks, Alice. Thanks a million – “BING! - DOLLARS A DAY FOR LIFE!”

BUG: Hey, who told you about Chatty Cathy, huh? So lighten up.

Listen, between you and me, I really AM a bug, baby. You get my meaning?

ALICE: So?

BUG: “So?” I'm a bug and you're a User... I got the brains and you got the power baby, know what I mean?

ALICE: Wait, you... you believe I'm a User?

BUG: Well sure I do. See, I used to date a User Error Message, and she told me ALL about your type, your powers... your ability to break us outta here?

ALICE: My ability... I don't have any special abilities, especially when it comes to computers.

BUG: Besides... *(smiling broadly)* ...you made your entrance into FaceLook through me.

ALICE: You mean YOU'RE the bug that brought me here?

BUG: Moi.

POPUP: Not for long. They're getting rid of all of us at 7:00 pm tonight.

BUG: Don't remind me! *(Immediately cowers on knees)* Oh don't kill me, I'm too young! I'm only a few trillion nanoseconds old!

ALICE: Well then you better help me get out of here – and fast. Oh Arnie? Master Recycler? What time is it please?

RECYCLER: *(Without looking up from newspaper)* 6:35 pm S.U.T.

ALICE: S.U.T.?

RECYCLER: Standard User Time.

ALICE: Twenty-five minutes. We have to get out of here.

POPUP: And find the virtual reality app to go with this bug.

(COOKIE emerges from deep in the box and clears her throat. SHE is dressed in a “spy cloak” and is secretive in nature.)

BUG: *(Chuckling)* Who are you supposed to be? James Bond, 0-0-7?

COOKIE: Actually, I'm Cookie, number 5008. I'm Alice's cookie.

ALICE: My what?

COOKIE: Your cookie. I normally live on your computer collecting all sorts of secretive information. But I saw what happened to you today and thought I would follow you. Are you okay, dear?

ALICE: Really? You saw?!

COOKIE: I saw. You typing in FaceLook, then you typing in that Virtual Reality app, then a big ball of electricity, and then you INSIDE FaceLook wondering how to get OUT! I've never seen anything like that before so I thought you might need help. That's when I saw Bug here and realized he must have been responsible for you being here.

BUG: *(Observing fingernails proudly)* All in a day's work.

COOKIE: Well it's nothing to be proud of. *(To ALICE)* You poor girl. What can I do to help?

POPUP: You can start by getting us out of jail, "BING! *(Sung ala the commercial)* J-E-L-L-O!"

COOKIE: Remove something from the Recycle Bin? That's something only a User can do.

BUG: May I suggest THIS one...?

(Gestures at ALICE. THEY look at him.)

Well I'm going too, right?

SPAM #1: And us!

SPAM #2: And us!

SPAM #3: And us!

SPAM #4: And us!

ALICE: I guess we have to. We need him. *(To COOKIE)* Now. What do I do?

COOKIE: Ever see Star Wars? You just use your will, honey.

ALICE: I just use my will?

COOKIE: Nothing stronger or more powerful than a User's will.

(ALICE clears her throat, and puts her hands to her head. After a moment.)

ALICE: Nothing's happening.

BUG: The suspense is killing me.

COOKIE: Try harder, Alice. You're a User. Be strong!

POPUP: You can do it. We believe in you.

(SHE concentrates again. After a moment, RECYCLER slowly folds up newspaper and walks to their box, eyes glazed.)

BUG: Uh oh, the attack of the Zombie Recycling Bin.

COOKIE: That's it, Alice.

POPUP: She's doing it! She's really doing it!

(Then, ala "Star Wars")

ALICE: "You don't really want us."

RECYCLER: "I don't really want you."

ALICE: "You can all go."

RECYCLER: "You can all go."

BUG: Wow, talk about your Obie Wan Kenobie!

(HE gestures to them and THEY begin exiting the box. The SPAM race around chaotically repeating their lines before THEY leave.)

SPAM #1: BING! CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE THE ONE MILLIONTH VISITOR...

SPAM #2: BING! YOU'VE JUST WON A NEW IPAD...

SPAM #3: BING! DEAR USER, I'M WRITING TO TELL YOU ABOUT...

SPAM #4: BING! HIT 'ENTER' NOW FOR YOUR CHANCE OF WINNING –

(THEY exit.)

BUG: Free at last! Free at last!

POPUP: Free... "BING! FROM THE PAIN OF CONSTIPATION!"

ALICE: Wow, Cookie thanks. So now what?

COOKIE: Now, we plan to crash a party and find your Mom and Pops!

(SHE exits)

ALICE: Mom and Pops??

(ALICE, BUG and POPUP follow her off. The wall is reversed and is now decorated as background for a party. A crowd of Internet CHARACTERS gather in front of it, drinking and talking. GIGGLE enters, eyes surveying the scene constantly and, as her name implies, constantly giggling.)

GIGGLE: Where is...? Oh THERE'S...! I wonder where...? Oh, hi there, FaceLook! What a wonderful party!

(SHE makes her way to FACELOOK who is in a circle of FRIENDS, EACH with a drink in hand.)

FACELOOK: Giggle Search, you social butterfly you.

GIGGLE: Oh, you don't have to be so formal. Just "Giggle" is fine.

FACELOOK: So glad you could make it. Your dress looks lovely!

GIGGLE: Dress. Retail. Macy's. On sale for \$79.99!

FACELOOK: How nice. Let me introduce you to people who *might* be your friends. This is e-Male...

E-MALE: (*writing into an iPod, not looking up*) Just a minute, I'll be right with YOU.

GIGGLE: EWE. Adult female sheep. Yarn. Who doesn't love brown cardigan sweaters!

FACELOOK: (*Eyeing her*) Uh, right... and Amazone...

AMAZONE: (*In Amazonian garb*) AAaaarg! It's good to meet ya! (*Shaking GIGGLE hand with zeal*) Like to buy a book?

GIGGLE: Amazon. River. Warlike women who -

AMAZONE: Or a video game? For people like you, I recommend a toothbrush, or a plastic fish...

FACELOOK: (*Continuing to steer GIGGLE around*) ...and look who's over there. Ya-hoo, I'm so glad you're here!

(*THEY head to YOUHOO.*)

YOUHOO: It's "YOU-HOO," my dear.

FACELOOK: This is Giggle.

GIGGLE: (*Giggling*) Giggle. Hey, that's me!

YOUHOO: Hey, Giggle, always liked your searches. Ha, ha! Glad to meet you!

(*THEY continue mimed conversation as ALICE, BUG, POPUP and COOKIE arrive at the party disguised with fake noses, mustaches, and/or hats. THEY are wary of those around them.*)

COOKIE: It's already 6:45. Now we need to find Mother-72 fast.

ALICE: And Mother-72 is the motherboard for my computer?

COOKIE: That's right. And Pops-72 is your operating system.

BUG: I can feel firewalls nearby. I suggest that we not be too conspicuous. Lay low...

ALICE: We need to blend in and not draw attention to ourselves.

COOKIE: Right.

(*Suddenly POPUP blurts out loudly.*)

POPUP: "BING! DO YOU HATE TO SHAVE YOUR LEGS?! THEN TRY OUR NEW -"

COOKIE, BUG and ALICE: (*Clapping their hands over his mouth*) Ssssh!

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BUG: *(With sarcasm)* Yeah, just like that.

POPUP: *(Weakly)* Sorry. I'm nervous.

(OTHERS stare at them then gradually return to their conversations.)

ALICE: I don't think I can do this, Cookie. I don't think I can...

COOKIE: This is no time to be shy, Alice.

ALICE: But there are so many people here.

POPUP: You'll be okay. We're here with you.

COOKIE: At least there aren't any firewalls around. Yet.

(YOUTUBA comes over to them.)

YOUTUBA: Hey, wanna see a video of a talking dog? *(Opens up coat displaying many hanging DVDs and tapes)*

ALICE: Uh...

COOKIE: No, thanks, YouTuba.

BUG: And keep your greasy little hands off of Alice here.

YOUTUBA: *(To ALICE)* Say, you look like someone I should recognize...

POPUP: "BING! UH OH, BETTER GET MAY-KO!"

ALICE: No! No, we've never met. Goodbye.

YOUTUBA: Yeah. Lemme get FaceLook over here. She never forgets a face. Yoo-hoo!

YOUHOO: Yes??

YOUTUBA: No, I was calling for –

BUG: Scram, YouTuba, or I'll bug ya!

YOUTUBA: Okay, okay. Touchy... *(YOUTUBA wanders back to group)*

ALICE: That was close!

COOKIE: Too close.

POPUP: "BING! FOR CLOSE SHAVES, TRY NORELCO!"

(ALL suddenly break into small applause as MOM-46, MOM-72, POPS-46 and POPS-72 enter, arm in arm, waving and smiling.)

That's the first time I've ever gotten applause.

COOKIE: No, no. Look who's here now. A couple of Moms and Pops!

Maybe they'll know who ours are.

POPUP: Mom and Pops!

ALICE: At last! *(Checking her watch)* Oh gosh, it's almost seven!

COOKIE: We'd better move quickly, then.

MOM42: Hello, FaceLook, what a charming affair.

FACELook: Why thank you, Mom-42. And is this Pops-42 next to you?

MOM42: It surely is. (*Elbows POPS42 who is looking around the room*)

Papa, wake up for goodness sakes.

POPS42: I'm awake, for crying out loud. I'm an operating system not a Message Alert! Pleased to meet you, Fat-look.

MOM42: FACE-look!

POPS42: FACE-look. (*To MOM42*) I know, I know.

FACELOOK: Enchantez. Oh look, Mother-76 and her Pops. Have you met?

POPS42: Played online poker with "76" once.

FACELOOK: How delightful.

POPS42: Took me for fifty-two gigabytes, the cheater.

MOM42: Papa, be nice. Let's go and say hello.

(*COOKIE, ALICE, and POPUP approach FACELOOK.*)

COOKIE: Excuse me, FaceLook.

FACELOOK: Oh, hello. You're... one of the cookies, if I'm not mistaken.

COOKIE: Yes. We were just –

POPUP: "BING! THEY'RE NOT JUST DONUTS! THEY'RE CRISPY CREMES!"

FACELOOK: Oh. A popup. How... irritatingly nice.

BUG: Hey, be nice. He's my friend.

POPUP: I am?

FACELOOK: (*Looking sickly*) And a bug. (*To ALICE*) And, I say, I don't believe I've met you before.

ALICE: Hello, your highness, er, Facelook, ma'am. I'm Alice and I'm...

COOKIE: She's a new app.

FACELOOK: Really, how exciting. And what do you do?

ALICE: What do I...

FACELOOK: ...do? You're a new app; you must do something, silly!

ALICE: Oh right. Of course, I er...

POPUP: "BING! SHE SELLS SEA SHELLS BY THE SEA –"

(*COOKIE clamps hand over POPUP's mouth.*)

COOKIE: She uh she...

FACELOOK: Oh YOU must be that new app that's replacing the virtual reality clunker over there...

(*THEY gaze over at VRAPP who wears clothes from the 1960's, a headband and a patched up coat.*)

in... (*SHE looks at her watch*) ...sixty billion nanoseconds.

ALICE: (*With relief*) Oh, yes. Yes I am!

COOKIE: We were wondering if you know where Mom- and Pops-42 are hiding. I'm Cookie-42 and I so rarely get to see them.

FACELOOK: Oh. Well I think they're over by that wall. Ta-ta, have fun. And good luck with your new app, here. I hope she has more success than her predecessor! *(SHE strides away to another group)*

ALICE: Cookie, I thought we were running out of time. But sixty billion nanoseconds! That's a lot. That's terrific. That's –

COOKIE: ...one minute in your time.

ALICE: ONE MINUTE??!!

POPUP: "BING! TIME IS RUNNING OUT, DOROTHY!"

COOKIE: Quiet down, both of you. In the Internet, you can do a lot in one minute. But we've got to hurry. Let's go find Mom and Pops first. C'mon!

(THEY head over to where MOM42 and POPS42 are standing with MOM76 and POPS76 telling a joke. EACH has a metal spray can in hand.)

POPS42: ...So Pops892 farts and the little megabyte looks, grabs his nose, and says, "C-P-U!"

(As in, "See... pee yew!" MOM- and POPS-76 laugh mildly.)

MOM42: *(Patting his arm, embarrassed)* Pops learned that back when he was just a 64K DOS system.

(ALL laugh heartily.)

COOKIE: *(Performing a deep curtsy)* Um excuse me, Motherboard and Operating System.

MOM76: Oh please dear. Let's not be so formal. I'm Mom-76 and this is Pops-76.

POP76: Hello, there. We were just enjoying a can of compressed air. Care for some?

COOKIE: Uh, no. No thanks. You see I'm looking for Mom and Pops-42 and I thought you might know –

MOM42: Oh my, that's us dear. I'm Mom-42 and this is...

POPS42: I can introduce myself, Mother. I'm Pops-42. What's the trouble?

MOM42: Be nice, papa bear. *(To COOKIE)* We are here at your disposal.

POP76: I'll just go freshen up this can...

MOM76: ...and I need to use the little circuit's room. I've got to re-integrate some peripherals, if you know what I mean.

(*THEY* exit.)

MOM42: Now why don't we just sit down and you can tell us all about it.

COOKIE: The thing is, Mom, we haven't got much time – fifty billion nanoseconds maybe.

POPS42: Well, this is another last minute thing. Look, we're at a party and –

MOM42: Hush, papa, let her speak.

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