

ARMAGEDD-NOT

By Mark Bellusci

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A Comedic-Fantasy Trio & More

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SYNOPSIS: It's a race against time. When John finally develops a time travel app, he barely escapes shadowy military forces and travels to the future to try to save his world. Unfortunately, the answers he gets from the future folks are, well, not quite what he expects. But oh, the comfy couches, sitcoms and apples are to die for.

TIME: Present day, alternating with the distant future.

SETTING: Present day in a building/ Future in a living room.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1-2 females, 1-2 males, 1 either)

- JOHN (m/f) A harried, nervous, desperately driven person trying to change the world. (69 lines)
- MEGAN (f) A soldier on a mission. Dedicated to the cause, follows orders, yet retains her empathy and humanity (MEGAN can be double cast as FIONA). (17 lines)
- RICO (m) Another soldier, more aggressive than MEGAN. Will do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission, including the rough stuff (RICO can be double cast as AHMAD). (18 lines)
- AHMAD (m) Chill and relaxed. Comfortable with himself, and others. Enjoys the moment, and never rushes (AHMAD can be double cast as RICO). (60 lines)
- FIONA(f) Relaxed and content with life. Wise beyond her years. Enjoys the simple pleasures (FIONA can be double cast as MEGAN). (58 lines)

COSTUMING

JOHN – Normal attire. Young to middle aged.

AHMAD and FIONA – Casual, loose attire. Young adults; 18-22

MEGAN and RICO – Possibly some type of soldier gear, or they could be dressed in the casual athletic gear of under-cover agents. Young to middle aged.

SET

Treat the stage as two halves: the present-day half and the distant-future half. The present half is filled with electronic gadgetry in various states of disrepair. The future half looks like a fifties living room, with a couch, black-and-white TV (the TV never faces the audience, so a box will do), and a TV tray holding a plate of sliced apples.

CASTING NOTE

As listed in the character descriptions, AHMAD can be double cast as RICO, and FIONA can be double cast as MEGAN.

If you choose to double cast these characters, the opening of the play will present an interesting and potentially very funny opportunity for AHMAD/RICO and FIONA/MEGAN to literally move from one side of the stage to the other and assume their alternate roles “on the fly.” The audience should get a laugh of mellow AHMAD and FIONA quickly converting to aggressive RICO and MEGAN, and then quickly reverting back, and then converting again, and so on. If this proves to be challenging for your production, simply don’t double the characters — cast separate actors for all roles. Either option will provide plenty of humorous opportunities.

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

This play alternates between the present and the future. The stage could be split into two halves to represent the different states, with a sign for each state. Lights can come up and down on each state as needed. Consider exaggerating the frenetic tone and style of the present world versus the distant future. The present world is frantic and harried, so consider hard lights and fast-paced music to emphasize that. The distant future is much more unhurried and relaxed, so consider softer lighting, calming music and so on.

AT START:*THE PRESENT:*

JOHN runs into a building, looking back nervously.

THE FUTURE:

FIONA and AHMAD relax in an unassuming, 1950s styled family room. They're watching TV as they snack on apple slices.

THE PRESENT:

JOHN runs into a room, looks back for pursuers, then locks the door.

THE FUTURE:

FIONA and AHMAD laugh at the TV.

THE PRESENT:

Pounding at the door. JOHN frantically interacts with a phone app.

THE FUTURE:

FIONA and AHMAD enjoy their apple slices.

THE PRESENT:

JOHN continues tapping his phone as the door is on the verge of shattering. JOHN finally activates his app and the phone radiates.

THE FUTURE:

FIONA and AHMAD nod off on the couch.

THE PRESENT:

JOHN frantically taps his iPhone as MEGAN and RICO pound on the door.

MEGAN: Open this door!

JOHN: Never! It's *my* app.

RICO: You're not qualified to—

JOHN: Like I'd trust you people with something this important.

MEGAN: John, please.

JOHN: I have to do this, while there's still time.

THE FUTURE:

FIONA and AHMAD wake from their naps, turn back to the sitcom, eat apple slices and giggle.

THE PRESENT:

Pounding on the door as JOHN frantically manipulates the app.

JOHN: Come on, come on...

MEGAN: Break it down!

The door bursts open. MEGAN and RICO try to capture JOHN, but he dissolves into thin air. (Note: this can be handled by bringing stage lights down.)

THE FUTURE:

(Stage lights up.) JOHN materializes in front of AHMAD and FIONA's TV.

AHMAD: Oh boy.

FIONA: Here we go again.

JOHN: Is this... 3016?

AHMAD: Actually, our address is—

JOHN: No, the year.

AHMAD: Then yes.

JOHN: Then I must see your president, your chancellor, your ruler or whoever else is in charge.

FIONA: You're looking at them.

JOHN: You?

AHMAD: Last time we checked.

JOHN: But you're... and this room... it's straight out of the fifties.

FIONA: The perfect illusion of a golden age.

AHMAD: You like?

JOHN: The fifties were not all they were cracked up to be.

FIONA: Truth doesn't matter.

AHMAD: We enjoy the illusion.

JOHN: But you're world leaders. *(Looking distastefully at the shabby environment.)* And *this place* is—

AHMAD: Ah, another one expecting the Taj Mahal.

FIONA: Yeah, see, we ditched the whole pomp-and-circumstance thing.

AHMAD: Soon after all the petty squabbles and chest-beating of your time.

JOHN: This is crazy. How could two... *children* run the world? Unless you're... wow, you've finally figured out the eternal youth thing!

FIONA: Well, apples help.

AHMAD: But no, we're still in our twenties.

FIONA: All the world leaders are young.

AHMAD: By law.

JOHN: So, only young people rule?

AHMAD: Considering the track record of old leaders, um, duh?

FIONA: The wars they got us into, knowing they'd be safe on the sidelines.

AHMAD: But if *we* do the saber rattling?

FIONA: That's our butts on the line.

JOHN: This can't be. My time travel app must've screwed up.

AHMAD: Nope, you're in the right place. Sit down, Seinfeld's on—the Elaine little kicks episode.

JOHN: (*Frantic.*) There's no time!

FIONA: There's always time.

JOHN: You don't understand. We're about to—

JOHN looks at TV for the first time, then does a double take.

JOHN: (*Continued.*) The screen is blank.

FIONA: Of course it's blank.

JOHN: So you've developed... visual telepathy?

FIONA: Um, no.

AHMAD: We can choose either sound or picture.

FIONA: But not both.

AHMAD: By law.

JOHN: Why would you make a law about—

AHMAD: It was either us...

FIONA: ...or the TVs.

JOHN: So our greatest enemy *is* the machines?

FIONA: No, just the TVs.

AHMAD: They used algorithms to create shows that addicted everyone.

FIONA: Then the algorithms began collaborating.

AHMAD: And became their own version of a singularity.

FIONA: The Boobtubularity.

JOHN: So you banned TVs?

AHMAD: Actually, they banned us. The Boobtubularity created a universal fake news campaign that knocked politicians out of office.

FIONA: Who the boobtubularity then replaced with reality TV stars.

AHMAD: It was only a matter of time before President Kardashian initiated the spandex booty war.

FIONA: Years of battles between the TV-free freedom fighters..

AHMAD: ...and The Housewives of New York, New Jersey, and Atlanta.

FIONA: Until the Housewives of Atlanta cheated with the *Novios* of New Mexico.

AHMAD: Wait, I thought the New York Housewives got busy with the Hunks of Hawaii.

FIONA: No, it was Hawaii housewives connecting with the Jigalows from Jersey.

AHMAD: You sure? I thought—

JOHN: Everyone cheated on everyone, I get it! Then what happened?

AHMAD: All that reality series infighting was the Achilles Heel that destroyed the Boobtubularity.

FIONA: No amount of artificial intelligence could overcome the stupidity of reality.

JOHN: That's when TVs were banned?

AHMAD: Well, yeah...

FIONA: Until the people realized they couldn't live without them.

JOHN: After a war like that? Geez, I would have expanded libraries or something.

AHMAD: We tried.

FIONA: But by then, no one could read.

AHMAD: Other than texts and emojis.

FIONA: So the TV ban was amended.

AHMAD: No more original programming.

FIONA: Just reruns.

AHMAD: That could either be listened to.

FIONA: Or watched.

AHMAD: But never both.

FIONA: The addictive power of full-frontal TV is indefensible.

AHMAD: So now, we listen to Seinfeld and other sitcoms.

JOHN: Yeah, well, I'm glad you've solved your earth-shattering, boob tube tempest in a teapot. But in my time, we've got problems that can end it all.

FIONA and AHMAD both laugh.

FIONA: Unless you're Alice and this is Wonderland, you can see that the world's still here.

AHMAD: Even if someone's always trying to blow it up.

FIONA: So take a load off.

AHMAD: This is the episode where Costanza's pants swish.

JOHN: With everything at stake, you expect me to watch—listen to—reruns?

AHMAD: Not just listen to. Learn from.

FIONA: Be one with.

JOHN: But when I return to my time, what am I supposed to say?

FIONA: Um, that it all works out?

AHMAD: One way or another?

JOHN: Not with the Armageddon we're facing.

FIONA: How many times have we heard that before?

AHMAD: Like when the Roman dude played violin while his empire burned?

FIONA: Or the little French dude stuck his hand in his jacket while the Russians ended his empire?

AHMAD: We get, like, a hundred world-is-ending visitors a week.

FIONA: From all times in history.

FIONA: First thing we tell them?

AHMAD: Breathe.

FIONA: Have an apple.

FIONA: And listen to Seinfeld.

AHMAD: All is as it is.

JOHN: New age mumbo jumbo? That's all you're giving me?

AHMAD: Okay, fine.

FIONA: Then tell them to study the hidden passages.

JOHN: In the bible? The Koran? The Talmud?

FIONA: The sitcom.

JOHN slams the snack tray.

JOHN: Enough!

FIONA: Whoa.

AHMAD: Dude, we're... like... pacifists.

JOHN: I better start getting answers, or I'll—

FIONA pulls out a taser and immobilizes JOHN.

JOHN: *(Continued.)* Can't... move.

AHMAD: Nope, not for awhile.

JOHN: Thought... you... were... pacifists.

FIONA: We are. But our taser's not.

AHMAD: Look, we know you're stressed.

JOHN: We're... on... brink of—

AHMAD: There's a time for disaster.

FIONA: And a time for laughter.

FIONA and AHMAD reposition JOHN near the TV. They all listen to a sitcom. FIONA and AHMAD laugh. JOHN starts to regain his functions, then starts giggling at the sitcom.

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