

NEXT MINUTE DELIVERY

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

RALPH Simple, straightforward thinker.

YVONNE Practical and down-to-Earth, except until she isn't.

SETTING

A modern-day apartment living room.

SCENE

(Ralph is sitting at his computer, clearly struggling over a decision. After a moment Yvonne enters and sees him.)

YVONNE

Ralph? *(No reply.)* Ralph.

RALPH

What? Oh, hi.

YVONNE

What's got you so—

RALPH

I was trying to decide if I should order this blender. You know how the old one is getting pretty temperamental.

YVONNE

We talked about this, hon. Get the blender.

RALPH

Right, and I was going to, but then I saw this.

(He points to the screen, and Yvonne comes over to look.)

YVONNE

Next Minute Delivery? That has to be a joke. Someone probably hacked Amazon and changed the text.

RALPH

But look, it also lists Next Day Delivery, and Standard Delivery. Besides, you can't hack Amazon, they're like the Fort Knox of the internet.

YVONNE

So go ahead and click it. It's only ten bucks more. See what happens.

(Ralph completes the order, and with a grand flourish...)

Annnd... buy.

RALPH

(An instant later, there's the sound of a doorbell. Ralph and Yvonne exchange surprised glances.)

Were you expecting anyone?

(Yvonne shakes her head, then walks to the door. She opens it, and receives a box. She and Ralph meet at a table, put the box down and open it. They take out the blender.)

Whoa.

RALPH AND YVONNE

That's...

RALPH

YVONNE
Creepy.

RALPH
Amazing.

(They look at each other.)

Yeah.

RALPH AND YVONNE

(There's a long pause as they stare at each other, then they simultaneously rush to the computer and do a frantic search.)

There. Click that.

RALPH

(Yvonne clicks a link, and they scrunch their faces, reading. Then...)

Amazon Precogs.

YVONNE

This is...

RALPH
(Reads for a moment, then...)

YVONNE
Creepy.

RALPH
Amazing.

(They look at each other.)

Yeah.
RALPH AND YVONNE

This is just like Minority Report.
RALPH

What?
YVONNE

The movie where Tom Cruise.... Never mind. We need to buy stock in Amazon.
This is freaking awesome! This is going to totally change our lives.
RALPH

(Lights go down, and a moment later they come up on the same room. Ralph is sitting at the computer, and Yvonne is reading on the couch.)

Hey, Yvonne, look at this. Amazon updated their Next Minute Delivery service.
Now it's some kind of Opt In thing.
RALPH

Yeah, it was on the news yesterday. They said that since the Amazon Precogs knew what you were going to buy anyway, there wasn't much point in making their customers go through all the clicking.
YVONNE

Makes send. Should we opt in?
RALPH

I don't know...
YVONNE

Oh, come on. It's Amazon. What could go wrong? Besides, they say you can still return stuff if you didn't want it.
RALPH

(Yvonne considers it, then shrugs.)

YVONNE

Sure. Why not? If you can still return things, how could it hurt? Go ahead.

(He scrolls, and then clicks majestically while saying...)

RALPH

Accept!

(Yvonne makes an unenthusiastic little twirly “yay” gesture, shakes her head, and goes back to reading.)

Should we try it out?

YVONNE

Whatever.

RALPH

What should we order?

YVONNE

Ummm... I think we're running low on dish soap.

(The doorbell rings. Ralph goes to the door and returns with a box. He goes to the table, and opens it. Yvonne pulls out a bottle of dish soap.)

RALPH

That is sooo...

RALPH
Amazing.

YVONNE
Not the brand we use.

RALPH

What?

YVONNE

I swear, Ralph. Do you even have your eyes open when you walk around the house? Why do I have to do everything myself?

(The doorbell rings. Yvonne gets it, and returns with another box. She opens it and pulls out the “right” brand of dish soap. She gives him a smug look, sits down, and returns to reading.)

Ralph gets an annoyed look, and a moment later there’s another door bell. Ralph suddenly looks panicked. He rushes to the door, and receives a small box.)

YVONNE

What’s that?

RALPH

(As he’s ripping into a package...)

Probably... uh...

(He pulls out a gag or muzzle of some kind.)

Air freshener.

YVONNE

Air freshener?

RALPH

(Very nervous.)

Yeah. Air freshener.

YVONNE

We don’t need—

RALPH

For... work. The office. I got it for the office. For work!

YVONNE

Okay, relax. It was just a question.

(She goes back to reading. Ralph breathes a sigh of relief, and looks for someplace to conceal the gag. In his contemplations he looks back at the gag, and a naughty smile comes to his face. The doorbell rings, and suddenly his face drops back into panic.)

YVONNE

Now what?

(She gets up and goes to the door. Ralph rushes to beat her there, but is too far away. They get to the door together. Ralph still has the gag in his hand.)

What's the matter with you?

(She retrieves a package.)

RALPH

I'll take that!

YVONNE

Wha—

RALPH

It's a gift. For you! For your birthday!

YVONNE

My birthday was six weeks ago.

RALPH

Oh, right. I meant... uh...

(Yvonne brushes him aside, and opens the package. She pulls out a leather/latex corset or some other kinky article of lingerie. She looks at him shrewdly, an eyebrow raising.)

Valentine's Day?

YVONNE

What's that?

(Ralph hides the gag behind his back.)

RALPH

What?

YVONNE

That. Whatever you just put behind your back?

RALPH

Behind my... Nothing. Nothing. Just... Just the air freshener!

(Yvonne's look grows hard.)

YVONNE

What are you, a four-year-old? What is it?

(Ralph fumbles, but realizes there's no way out of this. He reveals the gag. Yvonne looks between the corset and the gag.)

Valentine's Day?

RALPH

Uh huh.

YVONNE

Well, I can guess who's supposed to be wearing this *(indicates the corset)*, at least I think... but *(turning to the gag...)* who is—

RALPH

Oh no! No no! You see I was just thinking...

(Yvonne's eyebrow arches to Olympic heights.)

I didn't...

YVONNE

Now I know you weren't thinking of gagging me, sweetheart.

RALPH

Of course not.

(Yvonne gets a mischievous look in her eye, and an instant later the doorbell rings. Now it's Yvonne's turn for her jaw to drop in panic.)

What's that?

YVONNE

What?

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RALPH

You just ordered something, didn't you?

YVONNE

No!

(Ralph gives her a "come on" look.)

Yes. Maybe.

RALPH

Well?

YVONNE

Well?

RALPH

Are you going to get it?

YVONNE

I... I don't think so.

RALPH

You have to get it.

YVONNE

I really don't.

RALPH

You can't not take a package you ordered. It's a universal law.

YVONNE

Watch me.

RALPH

I'm going to see what you got on the receipt, you know.

(Yvonne looks at him, then down at the lingerie, then at the gag. Finally she decides it's all or nothing, and opens the door. She gets a package.)

Well?

(Yvonne shrugs, and opens it. She pulls out a pair of fur-lined handcuffs and/or whatever else the director's propriety will tolerate. There's a long pause as Ralph and Yvonne alternate between staring at each other and staring at the accoutrements.)

RALPH (CONT)

And who...

(Yvonne smiles seductively, and starts to push Ralph towards the bedroom.)

YVONNE

You'll see.

(Ralph gets a confused look, a combination of worry, intrigue, and anticipation. When they get about halfway across the stage, we can see from a change of expression that Yvonne gets a great idea, and suddenly there's another ring of the doorbell.)

RALPH

What's... what's that?

YVONNE

You don't need to worry about that.

RALPH

And yet, I really am.

YVONNE

That's... for later.

(Ralph swallows hard.)

I'll get it. You just go wait for me in the bedroom.

(With a nervous look, he exits into the bedroom. Yvonne goes to the door, and retrieves a package. She opens it and looks in, but the audiences doesn't get to see what's inside. She smiles an unreadable smile, and then heads toward the bedroom. Lights out)