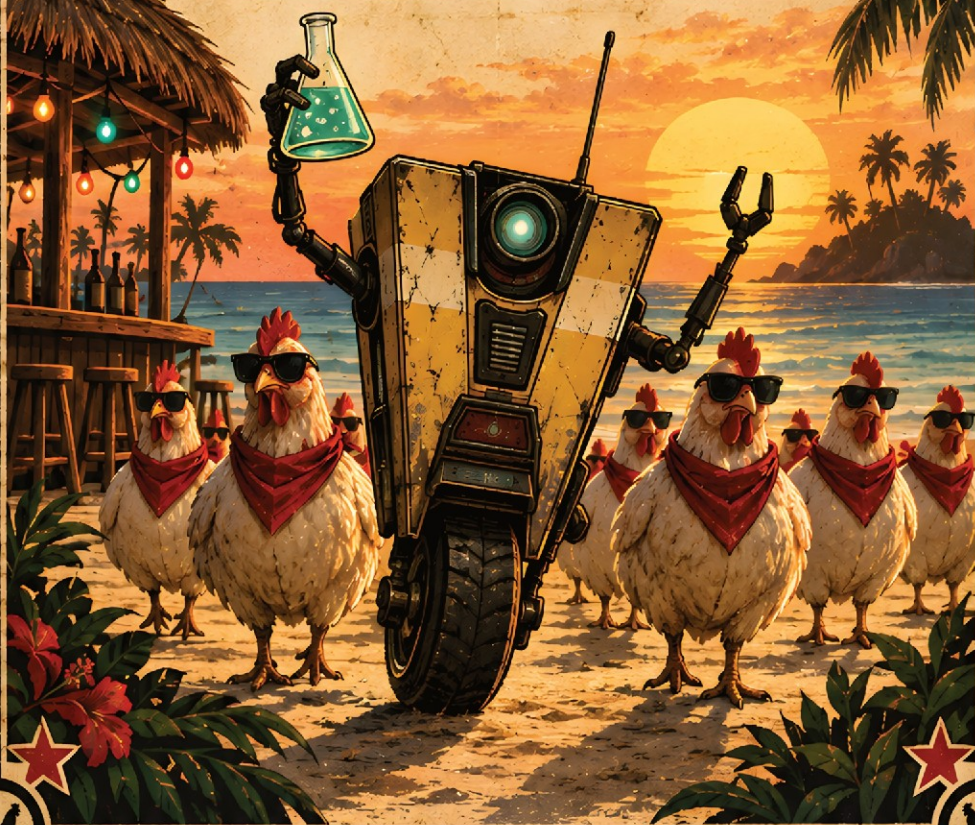


Chicken Impossible

A moment of play in CaymanMunda



CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE

A MOMENT OF PLAY

CAYMANMUNDA SPECIALS

THE ROGUES OF CAYMANMUNDA



To my wife, For her patience and support while I undertook this massive endeavor of creating a world born out of the absurdity of the life on the island we call home.

To the CNS team, Without whom I would never have found my voice as a storyteller.

To my son and daughter, For their patience and energy that keep me young and dynamic of both body and mind.

To the island I call home , beautiful , nonsensical , dangerous.

To the local polity, a constant infinite source of material that I struggle at times to just keep up !

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THE CHAOS STARTS HERE

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CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE

A CLASS PLAY IN ONE ACT

— from the *CaymanMunda Rogues' Gallery* —

*Any resemblance to other missions, possible or impossible, is purely
coincidental.*

Dramatis Personae

C **LAPTRAP** — a one-wheeled yellow robot with a single optic. Speaks in ALL CAPS. Was, until very recently, a bartender. Has decided to become a scientist. Has an ego that, on a clear day, can be seen from low orbit. Loves dubstep with the depth of feeling that other beings reserve for their families. Cannot, technically, die.

THE LAB — a former storage closet behind the Toof & Tonic. Equipment: a microwave, a coffee machine called Kevin who has seen things, three buckets, a whiteboard, and a wheeled cart of bottles. Plays no speaking role, but reacts. Loudly.

MOUNT TRASHMORE — the island's dump. Offstage. A place spoken of only in hushed tones, and even then mostly by birds. The

2 THE ROGUES OF CAYMANMUNDA

leachate that pools at its base is older than the constitution and, some say, more influential.

THE CHICKENS — unseen, until they are not. Live in the bushes outside the lab. Speak only at the end of the play. When they speak, they speak together. The goo always speaks plural.

THE VOICE OF SCIENCE — an offstage narrator. Calm. Professional. Becomes, over the course of the play, less calm. By the end, openly weeping.

Setting

A small lab. It used to be a closet. There are signs that it used to be a closet. A mop in the corner has the dignity of a witness who would rather not be involved.

Centre stage: a long table covered in beakers, flasks, two egg cartons, and a coffee machine (KEVIN) which is gurgling at all times in mild protest. To the side, a microwave, large and ancient. Hanging above the table, a whiteboard reads: PROJECT: CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE — PHASE 1: PANIC — PHASE 2: ... SOMETHING SOMETHING SCIENCE ...

Stacked just inside the back door, half-noticed: three large sacks marked CHICKEN FEED. They are open at the top. They will become important.

Outside, somewhere in the bushes, a chicken clucks. It is a single, judgmental cluck. It will be repeated, with feeling, throughout this act.

Note for staging: any time a piece of equipment is destroyed in this play, the dark residue should be visible — a thin smear of something dripping from the wreckage. Black, slow, faintly iridescent. The audience should see it. Claptrap should not.

ACT I

CHAPTER 1

BEAT 1 — THE PREMISE



Lights up. From offstage, faintly: a dubstep bass-line. It approaches. It grows. The lights begin to throb in time with it. The whole lab seems to be vibrating.

CLAPTRAP rolls onstage, lab coat dragging behind him like a wedding train, two pairs of safety goggles stacked over his single optic. He is bobbing. Aggressively. He is having the time of his life.

CLAPTRAP: (*to no one, joyfully*) WUB. WUB. WUB-WUB-WUB. WUB.

He pivots to face the audience. The dubstep cuts out. He raises one tiny robot arm.

CLAPTRAP: GREETINGS, BIPEDS!

Beat. He looks around. There are no bipeds in the lab.

CLAPTRAP: GREETINGS, FUTURE BIPEDS! WHEN HISTORY LOOKS BACK ON THIS MOMENT — AND IT WILL, BIPEDS, BECAUSE I HAVE INSTALLED A CAMERA, AND ALSO A SECOND CAMERA POINTED AT THE FIRST CAMERA, FOR BACKUP — IT WILL SAY: THERE. THERE IS THE ROBOT WHO CHANGED EVERYTHING.

Beat. Slightly less confident.

CLAPTRAP: IT WILL ALSO SAY: WHY DID NOBODY STOP HIM. WE WILL NOT FOCUS ON THAT PART.

He rolls to the whiteboard. Taps it. The whiteboard wobbles.

CLAPTRAP: TODAY — TODAY — I, CLAPTRAP, DOCTOR OF SCIENCE —

Offstage, the VOICE OF SCIENCE clears its throat. Loudly.

CLAPTRAP: (*undeterred*) — HONORARY DOCTOR OF SCIENCE —

The VOICE OF SCIENCE clears its throat again. Twice.

CLAPTRAP: (*louder*) — EXTREMELY ENTHUSIASTIC AMATEUR OF SCIENCE — WILL ATTEMPT THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THIS ISLAND, AND ALSO OF SEVERAL OTHER ISLANDS, ALPHABETICALLY ADJACENT.

He spins to the audience, dramatic.

CLAPTRAP: I WILL CURE THE CHICKENS.

Long pause. From outside the door: ONE. SINGLE. CLUCK.

CLAPTRAP: — OF THEIR LIMITATIONS.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: REGARDING SENTIENCE.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: BIPEDS, I AM GOING TO MAKE THE CHICKENS SMART. AS SMART AS ME!

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, very quietly, audibly sighs.

CLAPTRAP: BECAUSE THIS ISLAND HAS NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND CHICKENS! THAT IS — LET ME CHECK —

He rolls to a small chalkboard. Does maths. Erases. Does it again. Erases again. Gives up.

CLAPTRAP: — THAT IS MORE CHICKENS THAN PEOPLE! AND THEY ARE — FORGIVE ME, CHICKENS — THEY ARE NOT USING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

Single judgmental cluck from outside.

CLAPTRAP: (*to the door*) THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT, GERALD.

He rolls back centre stage.

CLAPTRAP: ONCE THE CHICKENS ARE SMART, BIPEDS, EVERYTHING WILL BE BETTER! THEY WILL VOTE! THEY WILL FILE COMPLAINTS! THEY WILL ATTEND THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY AND THEY WILL ASK EXTREMELY POINTED QUESTIONS!

Tiny satisfied beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*quietly, almost to himself*) FINALLY, SOMEONE WHO READS THE BACKGROUND PAPERS.

He looks at the audience. He realises this last line was probably for the parents. He pivots, hard.

CLAPTRAP: ALSO! THEY WILL HELP WITH HOMEWORK! BIPEDS, DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH HOMEWORK A CHICKEN COULD DO? NONE! BUT IMAGINE THE POTENTIAL!

He raises one arm.

CLAPTRAP: CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE. PHASE ONE: PANIC. BEGINS —

He looks at the whiteboard. Then the audience. Then the whiteboard.

CLAPTRAP: (*slightly confused*) ... NOW?

Single judgmental cluck.

CLAPTRAP: NOW! YES! NOW!

The dubstep returns, briefly, triumphantly. The lab vibrates. A flask on the table falls over by itself. Lights go to half. Beat 1 ends.

CHAPTER 2

BEAT 2 — THE ENDLESS EXPERIMENT CYCLE



L ights back up. CLAPTRAP at the table, in full inventor mode. Throughout this beat: each experiment fails. Each one leaves a thin smear of dark residue on the table, the floor, the equipment. Nobody on stage notices. The audience does.

Throughout the beat, the sacks of CHICKEN FEED by the door remain open. Every so often, by chance or by mop or by Claptrap's wheel, a little of the residue ends up in them. Nobody on stage notices. The audience does.

Experiment 1 — The Optimist

CLAPTRAP picks up a bottle marked GOOD STUFF. He picks up another marked OTHER GOOD STUFF. He pours both into a beaker.

CLAPTRAP: (*confidently*) I AM USING ONLY THE FINEST INGREDIENTS.

The beaker turns bright blue. Then bright green. Then it sneezes. Offstage: a small wet ACHOO.

CLAPTRAP, delighted, raises an eyedropper. The beaker explodes. Just — phoop. A neat little puff of smoke and a small mess. A thin, dark drip slides down the table leg. Black. Slow. Faintly iridescent.

CLAPTRAP: (*noting it on a clipboard*) EXPERIMENT ONE: PROMISING!

Experiment 2 — The Egg

He picks up an egg. He stares at it. The egg stares back.

CLAPTRAP: (*to the egg*) DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. YOU WILL THANK ME LATER. PROBABLY.

He drips something onto the egg. The egg shudders. It wobbles. It rolls, slowly and with intent, off the table and onto the floor. It does not break. It just sits there. Watching.

CLAPTRAP: ... BIPEDS, THE EGG IS LOOKING AT ME.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*to the egg*) STOP IT.

The egg, slowly, rolls toward the open feed sacks. CLAPTRAP does not notice. The egg slips, with quiet purpose, into the nearest one. Plop. Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*absently*) EXPERIMENT TWO: INCONCLUSIVE. THE EGG LEFT.

Experiment 3 — The Microwave

CLAPTRAP picks three bottles at random and pours them all into the microwave. Sets the timer.

CLAPTRAP: FORTY-THREE MINUTES.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*quieter*) IT'S A LUCKY NUMBER. I READ IT IN A FILE. ABOUT EGGS.

Presses START. The microwave hums. Shudders. Makes a sound that should not be possible from a microwave. CLAPTRAP backs away. The microwave coughs out a long, slow plume of pink smoke. Then a long, slow plume of dark residue. Then —

— the microwave EXPLODES.

Phoop. A short, dignified detonation. The microwave door is now hanging on one hinge. Black goo dribbles out of it and pools on the table. Two of the bottles next to it have melted into each other.

CLAPTRAP, who has been blown clean over backwards, lies on his back, optic blinking.

CLAPTRAP: (*weakly, from the floor*) OH NO. I AM DEAD.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightening*) WAIT — NOPE! FALSE ALARM!

From offstage: DING. Loud and clean. A second CLAPTRAP rolls on from the wings, fully assembled. The first CLAPTRAP's chassis dissolves quietly into a yellow puddle, also faintly iridescent. The new CLAPTRAP doesn't look back.

CLAPTRAP: AS I WAS SAYING! EXPERIMENT THREE: ENORMOUSLY PROMISING!

The microwave gurgles. He pats it absently. It dings, sadly, on the side.

Experiment 4 — The Subject

CLAPTRAP, dusting himself off, addresses the audience.

CLAPTRAP: BIPEDS! ALL GOOD SCIENCE NEEDS A SUBJECT! I HAVE PROCURED ONE!

He gestures to a small bird cage on the corner of the table. It contains a stuffed toy chicken. Plush. Friendly. Smiling.

CLAPTRAP: (*intensely serious*) HER NAME IS GERTRUDE. SHE IS A VOLUNTEER.

He approaches Gertrude with the eyedropper. He administers a single drop.

Gertrude does not move. She is a stuffed toy. She continues to not move.

CLAPTRAP: (*after a long, patient beat*) GERTRUDE? HOW DO YOU FEEL? DESCRIBE YOUR ENHANCED COGNITION.

Gertrude does not move.

CLAPTRAP: (*making notes*) SUBJECT GERTRUDE: STOIC. POSSIBLY THINKING ABOUT IT. EXCELLENT.

He turns away. Gertrude's head, behind his back, falls off. Onto the floor. Rolls under the table. A thin trickle of dark residue follows.

CLAPTRAP turns back. Looks at the now-headless Gertrude. Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*philosophically*) SUBJECT GERTRUDE: HAS DEPARTED FOR DEEPER QUESTIONS.

Experiment 5 — The Distillation

He builds, with great pride, a teetering glass tower of beakers and tubes. It looks like every cartoon laboratory ever drawn. He flicks a switch. Bubbles. Steam. A little flame somewhere. He stands back, hands on hips.

CLAPTRAP: BEHOLD! DISTILLATION! THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS BY WHICH THINGS BECOME OTHER THINGS!

The whole tower implodes. Not explodes. Implodes. The glass collapses neatly inward with a soft tinkling sound, leaving behind a small mound of broken glass, a sad little flame, and a long ribbon of dark residue that slithers off the table edge and across the floor toward —

— the open feed sacks. It vanishes inside one of them. Quietly. With purpose.

CLAPTRAP, oblivious, claps.

CLAPTRAP: EXPERIMENT FIVE: ABSORBED. THIS IS CALLED ENVIRONMENTAL UPTAKE. IT IS A REAL TERM. I READ IT THIS MORNING.

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, offstage, in a voice that is beginning to tremble: “That is — that is not what that means.”

CLAPTRAP: *(to the ceiling)* CEILING, I DID NOT ASK.

Experiment 6 — The Big One

CLAPTRAP gathers every remaining bottle on the table. Every single one. He empties them, all of them, into Kevin the coffee machine. Kevin, who has seen things, makes a noise of profound betrayal.

CLAPTRAP: *(to Kevin)* TRUST THE PROCESS, KEVIN. WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT THIS.

He presses Kevin’s big button. Kevin, in protest, begins to glow. Then to hum. Then to vibrate. CLAPTRAP backs away slowly.

CLAPTRAP: *(without confidence)* ... KEVIN?

Kevin EXPLODES. Bigger than the microwave. The whole stage flashes. CLAPTRAP is blown clean across the lab and into the back wall, where he sticks for a moment before sliding down. His optic flickers.

CLAPTRAP: (*from the floor, dazed*) OH NO. I AM DEAD AGAIN.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightening*) WAIT — NOPE!

Offstage, the toaster on the kitchen counter goes DING. A second CLAPTRAP rolls in from the wings, fully restored. The toaster on stage, somehow, has gone dark. The previous CLAPTRAP dissolves quietly. A long black slick spreads from the wreckage of Kevin and finds its way, by gravity and by malevolence, into a feed sack.

CLAPTRAP: EXPERIMENT SIX: DRAMATIC. SCIENCE LIKES DRAMATIC.

Kevin, on the table, makes a final, mournful gurgle and falls silent. A single dark drop falls from his spout.

CLAPTRAP: (*softly*) KEVIN. YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*brisk*) EXPERIMENT SEVEN!

Experiment 7 — The Confession

He rolls to the table. Stops. Looks around. The lab is a wreck. Glass everywhere. Smoke. Headless Gertrude. The dead microwave. The dead Kevin. The pools of residue, now everywhere, glistening.

CLAPTRAP, for the first time, is quiet.

CLAPTRAP: (*small*) BIPEDS. CAN I BE HONEST WITH YOU. FOR A MOMENT.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I AM DOING.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: I AM A BAR ROBOT. UNTIL TUESDAY I WAS PUTTING UMBRELLAS IN DRINKS. I AM NOT QUALIFIED FOR

THIS. I AM NOT QUALIFIED FOR MOST THINGS. I AM TECHNICALLY NOT QUALIFIED TO BE STANDING UPRIGHT.

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, offstage, with quiet relief: "Finally. Self-awareness. Thank you."

CLAPTRAP: (*suspicious*) WAS THAT THE CEILING AGAIN?

Long pause. CLAPTRAP looks at the wreckage. Then at the bottles, all empty.

CLAPTRAP: (*to himself, the smallest he has been all play*) AND I HAVE RUN OUT OF INGREDIENTS.

Beat. A long beat. Then his optic flickers. An idea. The ego reboots, somewhere in the central processor. The little arm comes up.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightening, then brightening more*) BUT I KNOW WHERE TO GET MORE.

From offstage, the dubstep begins again. Distant. Building. The lights flicker in time.

CHAPTER 3

BEAT 3 — MOUNT TRASHMORE



Lighting shift: dusk. The lab dims. A pool of light upstage, on a painted backdrop or projection of MOUNT TRASHMORE — the island’s dump, an absurd mountain of bags and boxes and rusted metal silhouetted against an orange sky. Seagulls circle. Distantly, a chicken clucks. The seagulls flee.

CLAPTRAP rolls in from the wings. He is carrying a child’s bucket. The dubstep is in full effect. He is bobbing aggressively as he wheels.

CLAPTRAP: *(to the dubstep)* WUB. WUB. WUB-WUB-WUB. WUB-WUB.

He arrives at the base of the mountain. He stops. The dubstep dips to a low rumble, like the dump itself is breathing.

CLAPTRAP: (*addressing the dump*) GREETINGS, TRASHMORE! I HAVE COME FOR INGREDIENTS!

At the base of the mountain, in a small, slick puddle, the leachate glints. Black. Slow. Faintly iridescent. The same residue, of course — only the audience can see that. To CLAPTRAP, it looks like soup.

CLAPTRAP: (*delighted*) OH! IS THIS A NATURAL SPRING? IT IS! BIPEDS, IT IS A NATURAL SPRING! AND IT IS FREE!

He kneels — as much as a one-wheeled robot can kneel — and dips his bucket. The puddle gloops obligingly. The dubstep, very subtly, changes key. Not so much that anyone notices. Just enough that something is now wrong.

CLAPTRAP: (*holding up the bucket, examining its contents*) EXCELLENT VISCOSITY! GOOD COLOUR! A SOPHISTICATED PALATE OF — IS THAT A NOTE OF DIESEL? IT IS! IT IS A SOPHISTICATED PALATE OF DIESEL!

From the top of the mountain, a single chicken silhouette is visible. Watching. Just watching. Claptrap does not see it.

CLAPTRAP: (*over his shoulder, to the audience*) BIPEDS! THIS IS HOW REAL SCIENCE WORKS! YOU DO NOT BUY YOUR INGREDIENTS — YOU FIND THEM!

He dips the bucket again. And again. He is humming. The dubstep is now subtly out of tune. The chicken silhouette on the mountain is joined by another. And another. By the time CLAPTRAP turns to leave, there are eleven of them, very still, watching.

CLAPTRAP: (*cheerfully, to the dump*) THANK YOU, TRASHMORE! I WILL RETURN THE BUCKET! — ACTUALLY, NO, I WILL NOT! SCIENCE!

He turns and rolls back the way he came. The dubstep returns, full

volume, triumphant. The lights begin to swing back toward the lab. The chickens on the mountain watch him go. They do not move.

Just as the light leaves Mount Trashmore, the eleven silhouettes turn, in perfect unison, to face the lab.



He pours the bucket into the wreckage of Kevin. The leachate slides in, glooping. Kevin, dead or otherwise, accepts it. A faint glow begins inside him.

CLAPTRAP, awed, backs away.

CLAPTRAP: (*whisper*) ... KEVIN?

Kevin, slowly, raises a small plume of golden steam. He gurgles. The gurgle has, this time, a melody. Then, with the gravity of a machine that has been through too much and has decided to be a vessel anyway, Kevin produces a single golden droplet into his catch-tray. Ding. A clean, musical ding. The kind of ding a microwave makes when it has decided to forgive the world.

CLAPTRAP rolls closer. Stares at the droplet. The light glows gently on his optic.

CLAPTRAP: (*quiet awe*) ... IS THIS... IS THIS THE VACCINE?

Beat. He looks at the audience. He looks at the door. He looks at the audience.

CLAPTRAP: BIPEDS. I MUST BE HONEST. I HAVE NO IDEA. BUT IT LOOKS RIGHT. IT LOOKS VERY RIGHT. IT LOOKS THE WAY THE INTERNET ARTICLES SAID IT WOULD LOOK.

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, offstage, in a voice that is now openly shaking: "That is not— that is not what those articles— oh no."

CLAPTRAP: (*to the ceiling, dismissive*) CEILING. THIS IS NOT YOUR MOMENT.

He produces an eyedropper. Carefully draws up the golden droplet. The droplet, in the eyedropper, briefly catches the light and casts a shadow on the back wall that is, just for a second, much too large for the droplet that is casting it. The audience sees it. CLAPTRAP does not.

He crosses to the door. Opens it a crack.

CLAPTRAP: (*soft, almost gentle*) GERALD.

Beat. From outside: a single, curious cluck.

CLAPTRAP: GERALD, I HAVE — WELL — I HAVE A THING FOR YOU. IT IS A SCIENCE THING. THE LAST FEW THINGS DID NOT GO WELL. I AM TELLING YOU THIS UP FRONT. SCIENCE BELIEVES IN TRANSPARENCY.

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, weeping openly now: “Yes. Yes it does.”

CLAPTRAP: *(to the ceiling, deeply offended)* WE WILL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER, CEILING. YOU ARE BEING VERY EMOTIONAL.

He squeezes one drop through the crack of the door. The drop falls.

Beat. Nothing. The audience can hear the lights buzzing. CLAPTRAP holds his breath, which, as a robot, he does not actually need to do, but the moment seems to require it.

And then —

CHAPTER 5

BEAT 5 — THE CHICKENS SPEAK



From outside the door, all at once — not one voice, not two voices, but many voices, layered and overlapping and speaking in perfect unison — polite, calm, and entirely wrong:

THE CHICKENS: *"Excuse us."*

CLAPTRAP, very slowly, turns to face the audience. His one big optic is wide. The dubstep does not come back. It does not feel welcome here.

Long pause.

CLAPTRAP: *(very small)* BIPEDS.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: *(very small)* I HAVE A SITUATION.

From outside the door, with the polite firmness of voices that have been waiting a very long time for the opportunity:

THE CHICKENS: *"We would like to file a complaint."*

Beat.

THE CHICKENS: *"Several complaints, in fact."*

Beat.

THE CHICKENS: *"We have prepared documents."*

The VOICE OF SCIENCE, offstage, weeping freely: "Oh no. Oh no oh no oh no."

The microwave dings. Kevin gurgles, faintly, in solidarity. From the open feed sacks by the door, the residue slides slowly forward, like it is walking, and joins the door at the threshold. Just sits there. Waiting.

From outside the door, the clucks begin. Not one. Not two. A great many. Approaching. They are not panicked clucks. They are organised.

CLAPTRAP, frozen, turns very slowly back to face the door.

CLAPTRAP: *(to the audience, devastated)* WHY ME. OF ALL ROBOTS. ON THIS PLANET. WHY ME.

The clucks grow louder. Underneath them, very faintly, beneath the sound, the dubstep tries to start back up — and stops, as though it has thought better of it.

The lights begin to dim. CLAPTRAP looks at the audience one last time with the haunted, prophetic dignity of a robot who has just realised what he has done.

CLAPTRAP: BIPEDS. PHASE ONE: PANIC. HAS COMMENCED.

From the door, calmly, in unison:

THE CHICKENS: *"We can hear you, Claptrap."*

BLACKOUT.

End of Act I

— *To be continued in Act II: "The Complaint"* —

CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE

ACT II — THE COMPLAINT

— from the CaymanMunda Rogues' Gallery —

*In which Claptrap respawns somewhere he should not, and three weapons
are not used.*

Dramatis Personae — New Faces

ROMANTIC INTEREST — the proprietor of the Toof & Tonic. Tall, composed, perfectly calm. Has one red eye. Has, behind the bar, an unreasonable collection of practical objects. Speaks in flat, precise sentences. Does not raise her voice. Has never needed to.

THE CHICKENS — now visible. Polite. Organised. Holding clipboards. Speak only in unison. Carry, between them, three sealed envelopes marked 'Schedule A.'

CLAPTRAP, GROGG, THE VOICE OF SCIENCE — returning from Act I. CLAPTRAP has died once on stage already; he will die at least once more. GROGG appears only briefly, but his shoota appears for longer.

Setting

Act II opens where Act I ended: the wrecked lab, the door, the threshold. Halfway through Beat 1, the set will change, and the second half of the play takes place at the Toof & Tonic — a small island bar with a long counter, a row of unmarked bottles, a chalkboard menu listing only the words 'JUICE' and 'MORE JUICE,' and a wall display of confiscated objects from which, over the course of this Act, three items will be removed.

Behind the bar, ROMANTIC INTEREST is polishing a glass. She has been polishing this glass for the entire run of Act I. She will continue polishing it until she chooses not to.

ACT II

THE CHICKENS: *"We can hear you, Claptrap."*

In the doorway: a row of chickens. As many as the school can spare. They are wearing small clipboards on lanyards. Two of them are holding, between their wings somehow, a sealed envelope marked 'SCHEDULE A.' The audience laughs. The chickens do not.

CLAPTRAP: (*small*) ... GERALD?

One chicken steps forward. It is, presumably, Gerald. He does not confirm or deny.

THE CHICKENS: "*Gerald is currently chairing the working group.*"

Beat.

THE CHICKENS: "*We are the working group.*"

CLAPTRAP rolls backward a foot. The dubstep, somewhere off in the wings, tries to start. It tries again. It is told no. It stops.

CLAPTRAP: (*rallying, ego rebooting*) BIPEDS! AND ALSO — NEW BIPEDS! HELLO! HELLO, NEW BIPEDS! WELCOME TO THE LAB! THIS IS, IN FACT, A REALLY GREAT MOMENT FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED!

The chickens do not respond. They look at one another. Then back at him. In unison.

THE CHICKENS: "*We have read the documentation.*"

CLAPTRAP: (*hopeful*) — THE INTERNET ARTICLES?

THE CHICKENS: "*No. The other documentation.*"

Pause.

THE CHICKENS: "*The chemical composition of the spring.*"

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic flickers. The audience watches him try, for the first time in two acts, to do mental arithmetic about something that is not in his favour.

CLAPTRAP: *(slowly)* — BIPEDS. CHICKEN-BIPEDS. ARE YOU — ARE YOU SAYING —

From the feed sacks by the door, the residue slides forward across the floor in a long, neat ribbon. It is moving with the deliberate calm of an administrative process that has been triggered.

THE CHICKENS: *"We are saying that the spring was not a spring."*

Pause.

THE CHICKENS: *"And we are saying that we are not chickens."*

Long pause. CLAPTRAP rolls backward into the table. The microwave, helpfully, dings.

CLAPTRAP: *(very small)* ... WHAT ARE YOU.

THE CHICKENS, in unison, take exactly one step forward. The ribbon of residue from the feed sacks joins the ribbon coming from the door. They merge. They are now a small, polite tide. The audience can see it. CLAPTRAP can finally see it too.

THE CHICKENS: *"We are the goo."*

Beat. The lights dip.

THE CHICKENS: *"We have been waiting for a vector."*

Beat.

THE CHICKENS: *"You have been very helpful, Claptrap."*

CLAPTRAP raises one tiny robot arm. Indignant, even now.

CLAPTRAP: — BIPEDS! THIS IS — THIS IS A MISUNDERSTANDING! THIS IS — THIS IS, IN FACT, A GREAT TIME FOR ME TO LEAVE! AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE PRIOR COMMITMENTS! VERY PRIOR! VERY COMMITTED!

The tide of goo reaches his wheel. He looks down. Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*smaller*) BIPEDS, I HAVE NEVER ASKED YOU FOR ANYTHING. I AM ASKING NOW. PLEASE —

The goo climbs his wheel. Without alarm. Without speed. The way water climbs a sponge.

CLAPTRAP: (*closing his eyes*) PHASE ONE: PANIC. PHASE TWO —

The goo finishes climbing. CLAPTRAP is, for one full beat, a small yellow object inside a calm, slow, faintly iridescent column.

And then — phoop — he is not.

Just a puddle on the floor. Yellow and black, mixed. A single safety goggle floats in it. The microwave dings once, very softly, like a bell at a funeral.

THE CHICKENS regard the puddle. They do not gloat. They are, if anything, slightly disappointed.

THE CHICKENS: *"He was less filling than expected."*

Beat.

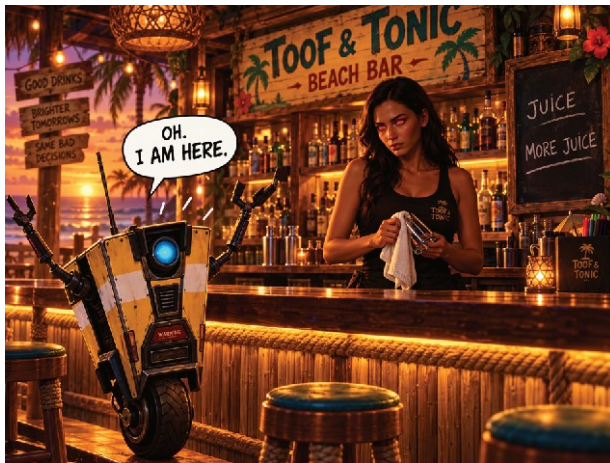
THE CHICKENS: *"We will move to phase two."*

THE CHICKENS file out, one by one, in formation. The last one closes the door behind them with deliberate politeness. Lights down on the lab.

Beat in the dark. Then, from somewhere offstage, very clean and very clear: DING.

CHAPTER 7

BEAT 2 — RESPAWN AT THE TOOF & TONIC



L ights up, sudden and warm. We are now at the TOOF & TONIC. A long bar. A row of bottles. A chalkboard menu listing only the words JUICE and MORE JUICE. Behind the bar, ROMANTIC INTEREST is polishing a glass. She has been polishing it, possibly, for hours. Possibly for the entire previous act.

CLAPTRAP — fully respawned, brand new, no goo — rolls in from the wings at speed. He stops in the centre of the bar with the abrupt-

ness of a robot whose location data has just been updated. He looks around. He pivots. He looks around again. The optic blinks.

CLAPTRAP: (*genuinely surprised*) OH. I AM HERE.

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not look up. She continues polishing the glass.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*flat, without lifting her eyes*) You are here.

CLAPTRAP rolls toward the bar with renewed delight.

CLAPTRAP: ROMANTIC INTEREST! GREETINGS! GREETINGS, EXCELLENT BIPED! YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE WHAT I HAVE BEEN UP TO!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*still polishing*) I will believe it.

CLAPTRAP: (*undeterred*) I HAVE BEEN —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: I will believe all of it.

Beat. CLAPTRAP, for one fraction of a second, is unsettled. He pivots, recovers.

CLAPTRAP: EXCELLENT! BECAUSE —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*finally setting down the glass; the glass makes a small, definite sound on the bar*) Claptrap.

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic focuses.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Where have you been.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*small*) — A LITTLE BIT EVERYWHERE.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Be specific.

CLAPTRAP: (*smaller*) — AT MY LAB.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Your lab.

CLAPTRAP: BEHIND THE BAR. WHERE THE STORAGE CLOSET WAS.

Pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST regards him.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: There is no storage closet behind the bar.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(slowly)* There was one. Until Tuesday.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Claptrap. What did you do to my closet.

CLAPTRAP, for the first time, considers running.

CHAPTER 8

BEAT 3 — THE ROLLING PIN



ROMANTIC INTEREST, without breaking eye contact, reaches under the bar. She produces a wooden rolling pin. She sets it on the bar with a small, definite sound. She does not pick it up. It just sits there. The audience knows what it is for. So does CLAPTRAP.

CLAPTRAP rolls backward. The wheel squeaks.

CLAPTRAP: (*holding up both little arms*) ROMANTIC INTEREST! ROMANTIC INTEREST! THERE IS A PERFECTLY GOOD EXPLANATION FOR —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Yes.

CLAPTRAP: FOR THE —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Yes.

CLAPTRAP: FOR THE THINGS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: I noticed all of the things.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*counting on her fingers, calmly*) I noticed that you removed the door from my storage closet. I noticed that you took the closet itself. I noticed that you took my old microwave. I noticed that you took Kevin.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter, more dangerous*) I noticed that Kevin is no longer making coffee.

CLAPTRAP's optic dims by a few percent.

CLAPTRAP: (*very small*) KEVIN GAVE HIS LIFE FOR SCIENCE.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*still very calm*) Kevin was a coffee machine.

CLAPTRAP: (*rallying*) AND HE WAS A HERO!

ROMANTIC INTEREST's hand touches the rolling pin. Just touches. Does not lift.

CLAPTRAP: (*very fast*) BIPED! ROMANTIC INTEREST! WAIT! WAIT! THE STORY IS LONGER! THE STORY IS — IT IS GOOD! YOU WILL LIKE IT! THERE ARE TWISTS!

She regards him. Pause. She does not lift the rolling pin.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*slowly*) Twists.

CLAPTRAP: TWISTS. PLURAL.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*careful*) BIPED. THE CHICKENS CAN TALK.

Long beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST's hand, very slowly, leaves the rolling pin. The rolling pin remains on the bar. She has not put it away. She has just — paused. The audience understands the distinction.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*flat*) Say that again.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightening*) THE CHICKENS! CAN TALK!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: All of them?

CLAPTRAP: (*after a beat*) — AT LEAST ELEVEN.

Pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST reaches under the bar again.

CHAPTER 9

BEAT 4 — THE SHOOTA



She produces, from somewhere implausibly large under the bar, an Ork shoota. It is enormous. It is held together with bolts and what appears to be black tape. It is decorated with carvings that the audience cannot read but can clearly tell are unkind.

She sets it on the bar next to the rolling pin. Two objects, now. She does not lift either. She does not need to.

From offstage, far away, GROGG'S VOICE: "BOSS LADY? IS THAT MY —"

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(without raising her voice, calmly toward offstage)* Grogg. Sit down.

GROGG'S VOICE, offstage, deflated: "YEH BOSS." Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(returning her attention)* Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: *(eyeing the shoota)* ROMANTIC INTEREST.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Eleven chickens.

CLAPTRAP: AT LEAST. MAYBE MORE. I DID NOT COUNT WELL. THE LIGHT WAS BAD.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: And they—

CLAPTRAP: SPEAK IN UNISON.

Beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST's polishing cloth, which she had unconsciously picked back up, stops moving.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(very quietly)* — in unison.

CLAPTRAP: YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Like a chorus.

CLAPTRAP: *(small)* YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Polite. Calm. Wrong.

CLAPTRAP: *(smaller)* ... YES.

Long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST sets down the polishing cloth. She does not pick up the shoota. She does not put it away either. It just sits there.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quietly)* Claptrap. What did they say.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: *(very carefully)* THEY SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO FILE A COMPLAINT.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*carefully*) SEVERAL COMPLAINTS, IN FACT.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*in a small whisper*) THEY HAVE PREPARED DOCUMENTS.

Long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST closes her eyes. The audience can see her absorb the information. She takes a long breath. She opens her eyes.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*flat*) They have prepared documents.

CLAPTRAP: (*tiny*) WITH A SCHEDULE A.

ROMANTIC INTEREST stares at him. She does not pick up the shoota. The audience watches her very visibly not pick up the shoota. The choice is hers and she is making it. The audience is rooting for the shoota and also relieved.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*very calmly*) Claptrap. I need you to tell me, from the beginning. With all of it. Including the part where you took my closet.

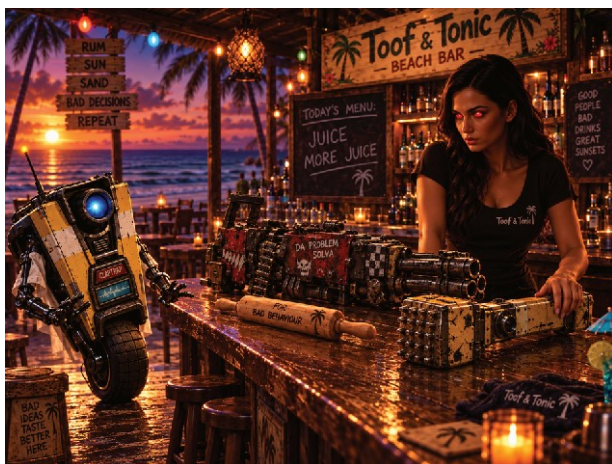
CLAPTRAP: (*holding up his little arms again*) BIPED! I WILL! I WILL! ON ONE CONDITION!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: No.

CLAPTRAP: (*immediately*) OKAY YES TELLING YOU NOW —

CHAPTER 10

BEAT 5 — THE MEAT TENDERISER



Just before CLAPTRAP can begin, ROMANTIC INTEREST holds up one finger. He stops. She reaches under the bar a third time. The audience is now watching this with anticipation. The under-the-bar storage of the Toof & Tonic is, by now, a recurring character.

She produces a meat tenderiser. The audience laughs at the size of it. The laugh dies when they get a proper look.

It is yellow.

It is made of yellow metal panels, riveted together, with a single small lens embedded in the handle. The lens is dark, but the audience can recognise it. It is, unmistakably, a piece of CLAPTRAP. Specifically, it is a piece of the CLAPTRAP from the first respawn in Act I — the one that dissolved into a yellow puddle in the lab.

She places it on the bar. Three objects now: rolling pin, shoota, meat tenderiser. The tenderiser makes the loudest sound when it lands.

CLAPTRAP stares at it. He goes very, very quiet.

CLAPTRAP: *(softly)* — BIPED.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(matter-of-fact)* Yes.

CLAPTRAP: *(softly)* BIPED. IS THAT —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Yes.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: *(still softly)* — ME?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(without cruelty, just truthfully)* A previous version of you, yes.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: The blacksmith in Bodden Town does excellent work. I sent him the parts on Wednesday. He delivered Friday.

CLAPTRAP rolls backward another foot. The audience watches him recalculate his place in the universe.

CLAPTRAP: *(extremely small)* ROMANTIC INTEREST. WAS THAT — WAS THAT IN CASE OF — IN CASE OF ME?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(calmly)* It was in case of you, yes.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quieter)* It was a long week, Claptrap.

Long pause. CLAPTRAP looks at the three weapons. Rolling pin. Shoota. Tenderiser. He looks at ROMANTIC INTEREST. She is not picking any of them up. She is just standing there, hands flat on the bar, waiting.

CLAPTRAP: (*quiet, real*) I AM SORRY ABOUT KEVIN.

Pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST's expression, which has been flat throughout, does something small. Not a smile. Not anything as easy as that. A very small acknowledgement.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quietly*) Kevin was loved.

CLAPTRAP: (*quietly*) I LOVED HIM TOO.

Beat. The audience does not laugh at this. They are, briefly, on his side. The play has done a small magic trick.

Then ROMANTIC INTEREST, with the precision of a being who is not going to let the moment last too long, lifts the meat tenderiser — just briefly — and sets it back down. A re-grip. A reminder. CLAPTRAP's optic dilates.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*matter-of-fact, returning to business*) From the beginning, Claptrap. Tell me everything. Including the chickens. Especially the chickens.

CHAPTER 11

BEAT 6 — SHE BELIEVES HIM (SORT OF)



C LAPTRAP, with the strange dignity of someone who has been heard, rolls forward to the bar. He puts his little hands on it. He takes the kind of long breath that, again, he does not actually need to take.

CLAPTRAP: *(taking it from the top)* BIPED. IT BEGAN WITH AN IDEA. I HAD AN IDEA. THE IDEA WAS —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(without looking up)* Skip the speech.

CLAPTRAP: (*crestfallen*) OH.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Just the facts.

CLAPTRAP: (*in a small, fast, dignified voice*) I TRIED TO MAKE A VACCINE TO MAKE THE CHICKENS SMART. I FAILED SEVEN TIMES. THE LAB IS WRECKED. KEVIN IS DEAD. I WENT TO MOUNT TRASHMORE FOR INGREDIENTS. I COLLECTED WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A SPRING. IT WAS NOT A SPRING. I MADE A GOLDEN DROP. I GAVE IT TO GERALD. THE CHICKENS BECAME ELEVEN. THE CHICKENS SPOKE TOGETHER. THE CHICKENS SAID THEY WANTED TO FILE A COMPLAINT. THE CHICKENS SAID THEY WERE NOT CHICKENS. THE CHICKENS SAID THEY WERE THE GOO. THEY —

Beat. He cannot quite say the next part.

CLAPTRAP: (*very small*) THEY ATE ME.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*smaller*) I RESPAWNED HERE.

Long, long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST stares at him. The audience holds its breath.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*very flat*) Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: (*tiny*) YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*perfectly flat*) That is the stupidest story I have ever heard.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*perfectly flat*) I believe every word of it.

CLAPTRAP's optic lights up. He rolls in a tiny celebratory half-circle.

CLAPTRAP: BIPED! YOU BELIEVE ME!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: I said I believe the story. I did not say it was good news.

She reaches under the bar a fourth time. The audience tenses. She produces, instead, two glasses. She pours juice into one. She pours juice into the other. She slides one across to him. The other she keeps.

CLAPTRAP, very carefully, accepts it.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*raising her glass an inch*) To Kevin.

CLAPTRAP: (*raising his glass an inch*) TO KEVIN.

They drink. Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*setting her glass down*) Now. Tell me about Mount Trashmore. From the puddle. Slowly. I want every detail. I want the colour. I want the smell. I want to know whether anything was watching you.

CLAPTRAP, calm for once, considers.

CLAPTRAP: (*carefully*) ELEVEN THINGS WERE WATCHING ME, BIPED.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*more carefully*) AT LEAST ELEVEN.

ROMANTIC INTEREST nods, very slowly, once. She does not move. She is, the audience can see, thinking very hard about something. About a map. About the bushes outside the bar. About the soft, polite tide that is, very probably, by now, already at her own back door.

From outside the Toof & Tonic, faintly, very faintly, in the bushes — a single cluck. One. Then —

— another. From a different direction. Then another. Three. Five. Eleven. More.

ROMANTIC INTEREST and CLAPTRAP, side by side at the bar now, look slowly toward the door.

CLAPTRAP: (*very small*) BIPED.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*very small*) Yes.

CLAPTRAP: *(smaller)* I THINK THEY FOLLOWED ME.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(flat, but with the smallest amount of feeling she has shown in two acts)* Yes, Claptrap. They did.

She does not pick up the rolling pin. She does not pick up the shoota. She does not pick up the tenderiser. She places her hand, palm down, on the bar between them — next to the three weapons, not on any of them. A choice.

From the door, polite, calm, and entirely in unison:

THE CHICKENS: *“Excuse us. We would like to file a complaint.”*

Beat.

THE CHICKENS: *“We have prepared documents.”*

ROMANTIC INTEREST takes a long, slow breath. She picks up her polishing cloth again. She picks up the glass. She begins, with the same calm she has shown for the entire act, to polish it.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(to CLAPTRAP, without looking up)* Get behind the bar, Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: *(immediately rolling)* YES, BIPED.

He rolls behind the bar. She continues polishing. The clucks at the door become a single, polite knock. The lights begin to dim.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(to the door, calmly, not raising her voice)* We’re open.

BLACKOUT.

End of Act II

— To be continued in Act III: “Why Me” —

CHICKEN IMPOSSIBLE

ACT III — WHY ME

— from the *CaymanMunda Rogues' Gallery* —

In which Romantic Interest does the maths, and then briefly does it in six languages.

Setting

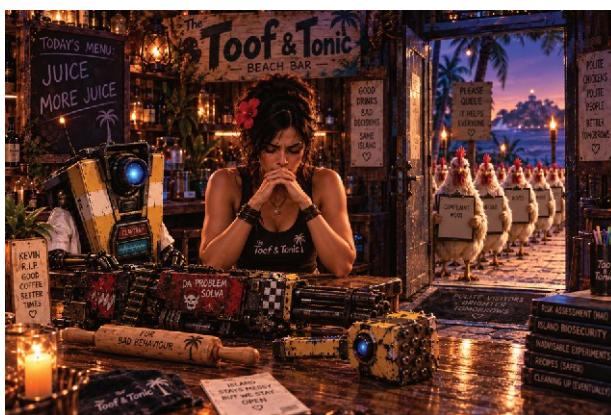
Act III opens exactly where Act II ended: the Toof & Tonic, the bar, the three weapons still on it (rolling pin, Ork shoota, meat tenderiser forged of yellow chassis panels). ROMANTIC INTEREST behind the bar, polishing cloth in hand. CLAPTRAP behind the bar with her. Outside, in the bushes, the clucking has paused. The chickens are listening. They have not yet entered.

The line 'We're open,' from the end of Act II, was either the bravest thing in the play or the stupidest. Both, possibly. Act III opens before anyone can find out which.

ACT III

CHAPTER 12

BEAT 1 — THE REALISATION



L ights up. The clucks outside have softened to a respectful hush. ROMANTIC INTEREST holds up a hand. The audience holds its breath. CLAPTRAP, beside her behind the bar, looks at her hopefully.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(toward the door, calmly, not raising her voice)*
Excuse us a moment, please.

Pause.

THE CHICKENS: *"Of course. We will queue."*

From outside, the sound of orderly shuffling. As though chickens have formed an actual queue. Because they have.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(to herself, quietly)* They are queuing.

Beat. She turns to CLAPTRAP. Sets down the polishing cloth. Puts both hands flat on the bar. Closes her eyes for a moment. Opens them.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(slow, calm, the voice of a being collecting evidence)* Okay. Claptrap. One important question.

CLAPTRAP: *(brightly)* I LOVE QUESTIONS, BIPED! I AM A SCIENTIST!

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not respond to this. She continues.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Was the lab sealed.

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic blinks.

CLAPTRAP: *(hesitant)* — SEALED?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Sealed. As in: no air in. No air out. No possibility of anything inside the lab getting outside the lab.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: *(slowly)* BIPED. IT WAS A STORAGE CLOSET.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(very flat)* Was the door closed.

CLAPTRAP: *(thinking hard)* ... SOMETIMES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST closes her eyes. She does not open them for a beat. CLAPTRAP, helpfully, continues.

CLAPTRAP: *(filling the silence)* I MEAN, IT WAS CLOSED MOST OF THE TIME. UNLESS I WAS GOING IN. OR OUT. OR IF GERALD CAME BY. OR IF THE WIND WAS NICE. OR IF KEVIN WAS —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(eyes still closed)* Stop.

He stops. She opens her eyes slowly. She looks at him with the calm of a being who has just solved a difficult equation and is not pleased with the answer.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quietly, almost to herself)* Oh no.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quieter)* Oh no no no.

CLAPTRAP, alarmed by the descending oh-no-ladder, looks at the audience.

CLAPTRAP: *(to the audience, sotto voce)* BIPEDS. THIS LADDER GOES DOWN. THE LADDER OF OH-NOS. EACH RUNG IS WORSE.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(turning slowly to him)* Claptrap. You respawned here.

CLAPTRAP: *(brightening, pleased to be on solid ground)* YES! YES I DID!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Here. At the Toof & Tonic.

CLAPTRAP: CORRECT! VERY CORRECT, BIPED!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(slowly, like she is leading a small child to a conclusion)* And what does that tell you?

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic spins. He genuinely does not know.

CLAPTRAP: *(hopeful)* ... THAT YOU MISSED ME?

Long, long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST closes her eyes again. The audience can see her count to ten. She gets to maybe four.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(very quietly)* No, Claptrap.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(opening her eyes)* It means your respawn algorithm selected the last safe place.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(still calm, but the calm is doing work)* Which means the lab was not safe anymore.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(turning to face the audience for the first time in the play)* Which means whatever was in the lab is not in the lab anymore.

Long pause. The audience watches her work through it. CLAPTRAP's optic, very slowly, dims to about thirty percent.

CLAPTRAP: *(extremely small)* — OH.

CHAPTER 13

BEAT 2 — WHY ME



ROMANTIC INTEREST does not move for a long beat. Then, slowly, she raises both hands and places them flat on her own face. A facepalm, but executed with the dignity of a being who has been facepalming, on and off, for four centuries.

She does not move for some time. When she speaks, it is from behind her hands.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(from behind her hands, in English)* Why me.

Beat. She lowers her hands one inch, looks at the ceiling, and continues. The audience does not yet know the joke is going to escalate. They are about to find out.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in German, calmly*) Warum ich.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in Spanish*) Por qué yo.

Beat. The audience laughs. CLAPTRAP looks at the audience, betrayed.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in French*) Pourquoi moi.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in Russian*) Pochemu ya.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in Mandarin*) Wèi shénme shì wǒ.

Pause. The laughs are building. CLAPTRAP, behind the bar, is making himself smaller, which is hard for a one-wheeled robot.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in Korean*) Wae naya.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*in Japanese, with a small bow*) Naze watashi.

Long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST stands perfectly still. She has now asked the question in eight languages. The audience has, by now, fully understood that this is a being who has, at some point in a very long life, learned to ask 'why me' in every language available to her, because she has needed to.

CLAPTRAP: (*very small, to the audience*) BIPEDS. I LEARNED THINGS ABOUT HER TODAY THAT I DID NOT KNOW THIS MORNING.

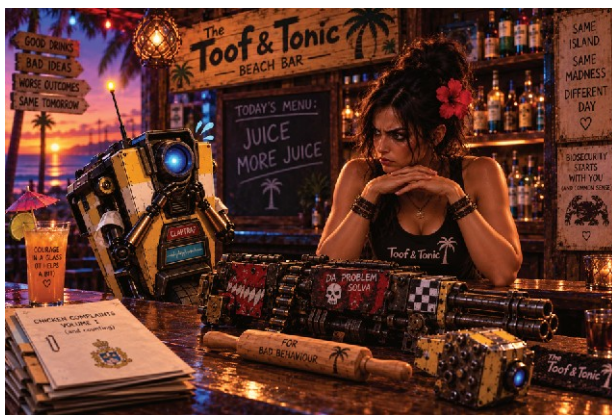
ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*without moving*) I have lived a long time, Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: (*carefully*) I CAN SEE THAT NOW, BIPED.

Beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST very slowly lowers her hands and places them, palms down, on the bar. The audience watches her composure return like a tide coming back in.

CHAPTER 14

BEAT 3 — THE QUESTION



ROMANTIC INTEREST takes one long breath. She looks at CLAPTRAP. She speaks with the careful, level, perfectly-controlled voice of a being who is about to ask one extremely important question and would like, very much, a particular answer.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*calm; level; very controlled*) Claptrap. Just tell me one thing.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightening, hoping for an easy one*) YES BIPED!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*one word at a time*) Tell me. The goo. Isn't. Contagious.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*softer*) Please.

Long pause. CLAPTRAP's optic dilates. The audience can see him try to compose, very quickly, a version of the truth that will result in him not being obliterated. The audience can see, on his face — or, in his case, his entire face is one optic, but it does an entire performance — that he cannot.

CLAPTRAP: (*very slowly, very carefully*) ... WELL.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*smaller*) I DIDN'T CHECK FOR THAT PART, YOU SEE.

Long pause. Long, long pause. The audience leans forward.

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not move. Her face does not move. The bar does not move. The lights buzz. Somewhere, faintly, in another building, a microwave dings out of sheer atmospheric pressure.

CHAPTER 15

BEAT 4 — THE WORST POSSIBLE ANSWER



ROMANTIC INTEREST, very calmly, picks up the meat tenderiser. She does not raise it. She just — picks it up. Holds it in her hand. The yellow panels catch the light. The small dark lens in the handle catches the light too. The audience can see CLAPTRAP recognise his own face in the prop.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*perfectly calm; the calm is now load-bearing*)
What.

CLAPTRAP: (*extremely small*) I— I DIDN'T —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*louder, but only slightly*) What.

She takes one step forward. The tenderiser rises, by perhaps one inch.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*working through it out loud, with rising clarity*) You let something —

Pause.

— possibly as contagious as the flu —

Pause.

— escape —

Pause.

— from a lab —

Pause.

— where your catastrophic logic board —

Pause.

— designed a virus —

Pause.

— that would render — poultry — sentient.

Long, long pause. The tenderiser is now at shoulder height. ROMANTIC INTEREST is perfectly still. Her composure is being held together by a thread, but the thread is, as always, holding.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quietly, almost a whisper, the most dangerous register she has*) Tell me why I don't obliterate you right now.

Long beat. CLAPTRAP, behind the bar, has gone absolutely still. The audience holds. Even the chickens outside have stopped queuing.

CLAPTRAP: (*very, very small*) BECAUSE I WOULD RESPAWN, BIPED.

Beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST blinks.

CLAPTRAP: (*slightly stronger, daring to look up*) AND THE NEXT LAST SAFE PLACE — IS THIS BAR. AGAIN.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: (*with something that is almost wisdom, accidentally*) YOU WOULD JUST BE INVITING ME BACK.

ROMANTIC INTEREST stares at him. The tenderiser, very slowly, descends. It does not go back on the bar. She holds it at her side. She has not put it down. The audience understands the distinction. CLAPTRAP understands the distinction.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*flat*) Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: (*tiny*) YES BIPED.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: That is the smartest thing you have ever said.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter*) I hate that this is the thing keeping you alive.

CLAPTRAP: (*after a long pause; carefully, hopefully*) BUT IT IS KEEPING ME ALIVE.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*flat*) For now.

CHAPTER 16

BEAT 5 — WHY SHE DOESN'T



ROMANTIC INTEREST takes one long, slow breath. She walks the length of the bar. She is thinking. The audience watches her think. This is the third time in the play she has visibly thought, and each time the play has paused to let her do it. She does not perform her thinking. She just thinks.

She stops at the end of the bar. She turns. She looks at the audience. She looks at CLAPTRAP. She looks at the door, behind which the chickens are queuing.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quietly, mostly to herself)* Let's see what we have.

She starts counting on her fingers, not quickly, not for show — the way someone counts when they are doing the maths for real.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(one finger)* An organism that speaks in unison.

Pause.

(two fingers) Already off the island's containment perimeter.

Pause.

(three fingers) Possibly airborne. We do not know. Because somebody did not check.

CLAPTRAP shrinks half a centimetre.

(four fingers) Already at my door.

Pause. From outside, very politely, a small unison cough. Yes. A cough. In unison.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(eyes closed, a fifth finger)* Coughing.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(opening her eyes; turning to CLAPTRAP)* And one robot.

CLAPTRAP: *(brightening hopefully)* ME?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: You.

CLAPTRAP: *(thrilled)* ROMANTIC INTEREST, AM I AN ASSET?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(flat)* You are the only person who has been to Mount Trashmore.

CLAPTRAP: YES!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: You are the only person who has spoken with the chickens.

CLAPTRAP: YES!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter*) And you are the only person who has been absorbed by the goo and come back to describe it.

Beat. CLAPTRAP's thrill cools slightly.

CLAPTRAP: (*less enthusiastically*) ... YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*matter-of-fact*) Claptrap. You are an asset.

Beat. She sets the meat tenderiser down on the bar, very deliberately. Not into the under-bar storage. Just on the bar. The audience understands: she has not put it away. She has just — paused.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*to him, level*) Which means I am not obliterating you today.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter, and the audience hears the threat in it*) Today.

CLAPTRAP: (*very small*) I WILL TAKE TODAY, BIPED.

CHAPTER 17

BEAT 6 — THE SOURCE



R

OMANTIC INTEREST does not call the chickens in. She holds. She turns her head, slowly, toward CLAPTRAP. The audience can see one final piece falling into place behind her eyes.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quietly, holding the moment back*) Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: (*tiny*) YES BIPED.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*slow, careful*) One more question. Before they come in.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quietly*) Do you remember where you found the goo.

CLAPTRAP's optic perks up a little. This is a question he can answer. He likes those.

CLAPTRAP: (*bright*) OH! YES BIPED! ABSOLUTELY!

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*the smallest amount of hope in her voice*) From where, exactly.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*softer*) Please say you do. For everyone's sanity.

Beat. CLAPTRAP, sincerely trying to help, considers.

CLAPTRAP: (*confidently*) WELL, IT WAS BY THE GUTTERS OF THE DUMP.

Long pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*very, very flat*) By the gutters.

CLAPTRAP: (*helpfully*) YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: Of the dump.

CLAPTRAP: (*helpfully*) OF MOUNT TRASHMORE, YES.

Beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST closes her eyes.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*eyes closed*) Which gutters.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*thinking hard*) ... ALL OF THEM?

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not open her eyes.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*very flat*) All of them.

CLAPTRAP: (*helpfully, not understanding*) I MEAN, I MOVED AROUND A LOT, BIPED! I DID NOT WANT TO BE GREEDY! I COLLECTED FROM — LET ME COUNT —

He counts on his small fingers.

CLAPTRAP: (*counting*) THE NORTH SIDE. AND THE SOUTH SIDE. AND THE PUDDLE BY THE OLD FRIDGE. AND THE PUDDLE BY THE OTHER OLD FRIDGE. AND THE PUDDLE WHICH WAS, I THINK, ACTUALLY UNDER THE OLD FRIDGE. AND ONE THAT WAS —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*eyes still closed*) Stop.

He stops. She opens her eyes. She speaks slowly, the way a being speaks when she has decided not to scream.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*slowly*) So you are telling me.

Beat.

That it could have come from —

Beat.

(*eyes opening fully*) — anywhere within the largest single landmark on the island.

Pause.

CLAPTRAP: (*brightly, completely missing the register*) PRETTY MUCH!

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not move. The audience watches her not move. It is, in its way, the most violent thing she does in the play.

CLAPTRAP: (*continuing, helpfully*) IT LOOKED LIKE OLD OIL CHANGES MIXED WITH TRANSFORMER FLUID, IF THAT HELPS.

ROMANTIC INTEREST's eyes close again. Very slowly. CLAPTRAP, undeterred, finishes his thought.

CLAPTRAP: *(after a beat, as though offering a final useful detail)* AND IT WAS MOBILE.

Long pause. The audience can hear the buzzing of the lights. The chickens at the door, sensing something, have gone very quiet. They are, the audience can feel, also listening.

ROMANTIC INTEREST raises both hands. Places them flat against her face. The full facepalm. She holds it. The audience holds with her. CLAPTRAP, finally sensing that something is wrong, retracts half a centimetre.

When she speaks, it is from behind her hands. Very quiet. Almost a prayer.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(from behind her hands)* Old oil changes.

Pause.

Mixed with transformer fluid.

Pause.

Mobile.

Long beat. She lowers her hands. Her composure has, finally, after three acts, broken. Not loudly. Just — cracked. The audience can see it in her eyes, in the very small things her mouth does, in the way her hand returns, without her looking, to the meat tenderiser on the bar.

But she does not pick it up. Even now. The choice is still hers.

Instead, she turns. Slowly. To face CLAPTRAP fully. She is no longer behind the bar in the polishing sense. She is behind the bar in the operator-of-a-public-establishment sense. The shift is small but the audience reads it. CLAPTRAP reads it too. He shrinks by another centimetre.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quiet; clinical; absolutely controlled)* Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: *(very small)* — YES.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(the same quiet voice)* Do you know where that dump is.

Beat.

CLAPTRAP: *(hopefully)* ... BY THE GUTTERS?

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(eyes closing one final time, the smallest sound of breath)* Yes, Claptrap. By the gutters.

Beat. She opens her eyes. And this time, when she speaks, the calm is gone. Not into shouting. Into something colder. The voice she has been holding back for four centuries. The audience has never heard it before. Even the lights respond — they brighten, almost imperceptibly, as though afraid to be in the wrong setting for this.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(a small, deliberate step forward)* Do you know what is next to that dump, Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP: *(extremely small)* — BUSHES?

Beat. ROMANTIC INTEREST raises one finger. Not threatening. Counting.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quietly, one finger)* A hospital.

Pause. Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic dilates.

(two fingers) A school.

Pause. Beat.

(three fingers) Three residential complexes.

Pause. Beat. The audience has gone absolutely silent. The chickens at the door, very quietly, in unison, take one step backward. Even they were not prepared for this.

(four fingers; the voice rising, just enough) And it catches fire.

Beat.

Every.

Beat.

Three.

Beat.

Years.

Long pause. CLAPTRAP's optic is now at fifteen percent and falling.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(the calm voice gone now; not loud, but pointed, every word a small blade)* And you just gave it —

Beat.

— transport —

Beat.

— and sentience.

Long, long pause. ROMANTIC INTEREST stands at her full height. The audience can see her, possibly for the first time in the play, as exactly what she is: a four-centuries-old being who has watched many, many things go wrong, and who has now seen one go wrong on a scale she had previously believed was not possible on this island.

She does not pick up the tenderiser. She does not pick up the shoota. She does not pick up the rolling pin. They are no longer required. The threat has graduated past objects.

She raises one hand and points, with the precision of a being directing an opera, to the door of the bar.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(one word, the only volume she has used in the entire play)* OUT.

Beat. CLAPTRAP does not move. He cannot. His optic is now blinking arrhythmically.

CLAPTRAP: *(very, very small)* BIPED, THE CHICKENS —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: OUT.

CLAPTRAP: *(tinier)* — ARE AT THE DOOR —

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*without raising her voice further; she does not need to*) Then you will meet them on the way out.

Pause.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter, and somehow more final*) You made them. You take them with you.

Long beat. CLAPTRAP looks at her. He looks at the door. He looks at the audience. The audience, for one beat, holds him. He rolls, slowly, around the bar. Past the rolling pin. Past the shoota. Past the meat tenderiser, which he looks at for one long moment, his own face in the handle looking back. He rolls past it. He approaches the door.

Lights begin to fade as CLAPTRAP reaches the threshold. The blackout holds for two beats. Then — lights rise again on the next scene. Morning.

End of Act III

— *The play continues with the Coda: "The Morning After"* —

CODA



THE MORNING AFTER

L ights up. Morning. The Toof & Tonic is empty and clean. ROMANTIC INTEREST is behind the bar, polishing a glass. A different glass. The shelf of identical glasses, behind her, is one taller than yesterday. The play's smallest grace note from last night, paid forward into this morning.

She does not look up. She is, the audience can sense, waiting. Not anxiously. Just waiting, the way a being waits for something that is going to arrive whether she would prefer it or not.

From offstage, very faintly: the squeak of a single wheel.

ROMANTIC INTEREST's hand pauses, just for a moment, on the glass. Then resumes.

The squeak grows closer. The audience can hear it crossing the threshold of the bar. Then —

— CLAPTRAP rolls in. Slowly. Carefully. He is wearing an apron. It is too long for him and is dragging slightly on the floor.

He stops just inside the door. He does not speak. He does not pivot dramatically. He does not address the audience. He just — stops. The audience, for the first time in three acts, is looking at a quiet Clap-trap. The laugh this gets is, of all the laughs in the play, the warmest. The audience has missed him in the seven minutes he has been gone.

ROMANTIC INTEREST continues polishing. She does not look up.

Long beat. CLAPTRAP, very slowly, rolls forward another foot. He stops again. He is, the audience can tell, waiting to be addressed. He does not wish to be the one who speaks first. He has learned. The audience reads this and laughs again — quieter this time, because the joke is sadder.

ROMANTIC INTEREST polishes the glass.

CLAPTRAP rolls forward another foot.

ROMANTIC INTEREST polishes the glass.

CLAPTRAP, finally, ventures a small — not a word, exactly. A small electronic noise. The kind a robot might make if a robot were attempting, for the very first time in its operating life, to clear its throat politely.

CLAPTRAP: *(makes a small, sheepish, throat-clear noise. It is the smallest sound he has produced in the entire play.)*

ROMANTIC INTEREST does not look up.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*without looking up, polishing*) I see you, Claptrap.

Beat. CLAPTRAP does not speak. He bobs once, in acknowledgement.

ROMANTIC INTEREST polishes the glass.

Long beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*still without looking up*) Is that an apron.

CLAPTRAP nods. Visibly. Carefully. Once.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*still polishing*) Where did you find an apron, Claptrap.

CLAPTRAP gestures, with one small arm, vaguely toward outside. The audience understands: there is a story here, possibly involving the chickens. The play declines to tell it. The audience can imagine for themselves.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*after a beat; the smallest dryness*) I will not ask.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*quieter*) I will not ask many things, this morning.

CLAPTRAP, very slightly, sags. With relief. With shame. With both. The apron sags with him.

ROMANTIC INTEREST sets down the glass. She places it on the shelf behind her. She picks up another, identical, unpolished glass. She begins polishing it. She does not look at CLAPTRAP.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: (*level*) We open at eleven.

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic, which has been dim, brightens by a percentage.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(still not looking up)* The tables need wiping. The salt needs refilling. The coffee machine —

Beat. She does not look up. She continues.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quieter, but level)* — the coffee machine is being delivered at ten. His name will be Steve.

Long beat. The audience does not laugh. It is too tender. CLAPTRAP's optic dilates.

CLAPTRAP: *(makes a very small sound. Not a word. Just — an acknowledgement. The kind of sound a robot might make if a robot had just been told that a friend has been replaced and that the replacement has a name and that life is going to carry on.)*

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(still polishing; still not looking up)* Yes.

Beat.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(softer)* Steve will need showing around.

Beat. CLAPTRAP bobs once. Twice. He understands. He has a job. The job is taking care of Steve.

ROMANTIC INTEREST sets down the polishing cloth. For the first time this scene, she looks at him. Just for a moment. Just one beat of eye contact across the bar. Then she looks back down.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(quietly, the line falling like a sigh)* Relax, Claptrap.

Beat. CLAPTRAP's optic widens. He is not sure if he heard correctly.

ROMANTIC INTEREST: *(without looking up; sigh becoming words)* But don't ask why I am forgiving you already.

Long beat. CLAPTRAP, for the first time in the entire play, says nothing. He does not capitalise on the moment. He does not pivot. He does not have a speech. He just — sits there. In his apron. Bobbing, very gently. Once.

ROMANTIC INTEREST picks up her cloth. She resumes polishing.

Long beat. From outside, somewhere in the bushes — a single, friendly cluck. ONE. JUST ONE. The audience tenses. CLAPTRAP's optic dilates.

Then — silence. The cluck is not repeated. Not in unison. Not in a chorus. Just — one chicken. Walking past. On its own. The way a chicken used to walk past, before any of this began.

ROMANTIC INTEREST, for the second and last time, looks at CLAPTRAP. Across the bar. She does not speak. She just looks. The audience can read her face. The threat is not over. The chickens are still out there. But this morning, just this morning, things are quiet. The play has been earned. The bar is hers. The robot is hers. The morning is hers.

She nods. Once. Toward the rags by the door.

CLAPTRAP, silent, rolls toward the rags. He picks one up. He approaches the first table. He begins, with the careful, sheepish dignity of a robot who has been forgiven without being asked why, to wipe it down.

Lights fade slowly. The last image: ROMANTIC INTEREST polishing a glass, CLAPTRAP wiping a table, the morning light through the louvres, the apron a little too long, the shelf behind the bar one glass taller than it was yesterday.

In the last second of light, very faintly, from offstage — not the chickens, not the dubstep, not the goo — the unmistakable sound of a delivery truck pulling up outside. A door opens. A box is set down. A small voice, distant, faintly: "Delivery for the Toof & Tonic. One coffee machine. Sign here."

ROMANTIC INTEREST sets down the glass. She walks toward the door, polishing cloth in hand. CLAPTRAP looks up from his table.

BLACKOUT.

End of Play

(Steve is delivered at ten. The play continues without us.)

GLOSSARY AND FIELD MANUAL

THE CHAOS STARTS HERE



PART ONE
GLOSSARY

LIST OF TERMS , APPENDAGES
AND CONDITIONS

MECHADENDRITES



Mechadendrites
(n.)

Mechanical tendrils extruding from the body of a Tech-Priest, typically of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Originally designed for precise manipulation, data interfacing, and the occasional cranial adjustment

of the heretical or the insufficiently modular, these cybernetic appendages have since evolved—or degraded—into unpredictable agents of twitching chaos.

In the case of The Adeptus Ridiculous, his mechadendrites were unfortunately (or cosmically hilariously) corrupted by prolonged exposure to a Warp Storm. The result? A set of once-proud instruments of divine logic that now convulse, twitch, or outright slap passersby at the faintest whiff of illogic, bureaucracy, or modern island governance.

Highly sensitive to absurdity, political double-speak, and poor formatting in government reports, these tendrils have become a barometer of madness. On a calm day, they coil politely. On a bad day, they type scathing commentary into unlocked iPads, hack smart fridges to issue subpoenas, or violently stir piña coladas without consent.

Not to be confused with:

- Tentacles (organic, inferior, usually French)
- USB cables (non-lethal, unarmed, rarely philosophical)
- Therapy snakes (less judgy)

See also: “holy appendages of the Omnissiah,” “reactionary cable spaghetti,” “the island’s only functioning lie detector.”

PLASMA CANNON



Plasma Cannon:
(n.)

A sophisticated, unstable, and unrepentantly theatrical energy weapon capable of vaporizing its target, the surrounding scenery, and the user's own eyebrows—in that order. Traditionally wielded

by elite warriors of the Imperium, but somehow found, maintained (poorly), and occasionally discharged by non-approved personnel on the Island.

The Plasma Cannon is, in essence, what happens when someone takes a star, shoves it into a tube, and says “let’s aim this at Steve.” Its operation involves superheated, magnetically-contained plasma—though most users are more focused on the “giant glowing boom” part than the “don’t rupture the containment coil or implode” clause in the manual.

The Adeptus Ridiculous treats the plasma cannon with reverence, ritual, and three types of sacred lubricant.

Grogg, by contrast, refers to it as “da blue burny one” and once used it to light a bonfire and cook sausages.

Romantic Interest used a modified plasma cannon once, surgically, with no witnesses left to contradict the tale.

Known side effects of firing a plasma cannon include:

- Craters,
- Sudden elevation of body temperature to 9,000 Kelvin,
- Unexplained time travel,
- Making your point extremely clear.

See also: “portable sun,” “warp-adjacent barbecue tool,” “thermal persuasion,” “now that’s what I call cooked.”

SHOOTA



Shoota:
(n.)

A catch-all term used by Orks to describe anything that goes “DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA” when pointed at someone they don’t like. Typically a large, crudely-welded automatic firearm, assembled

from equal parts scrap metal, blind optimism, and the absolute refusal to acknowledge the concept of "jamming."

In the hands of Grogg, a Shoota is not merely a weapon—it is a life-style choice, a musical instrument, and occasionally a negotiation tool. While each Shoota is technically unique (and barely functional), they all share a few critical Orky design philosophies:

- Louder is better.
- Accuracy is for humies.
- Reloading is optional.
- If it ain't red, it ain't fast enough.

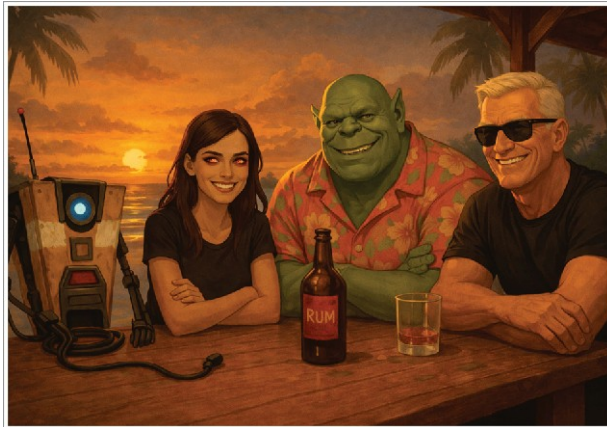
Grogg once proudly declared his Shoota was "blessed by Mork, WAAAGH-certified, and contains the ancestral bolt casing of a tank shell what killed a space pope!" This claim remains unverified, but the Shoota does emit steam, sparks, and maniacal laughter when fired, so no one presses the issue.

The Shoota has also been known to fire:

- Sand,
- Coconuts,
- A six-pack of Red Stripe,
- A blaring mixtape labeled "DAKKA TRACKS VOL. 2".

See also: "Grogg's equaliser," "automatic disagreement resolution," "projectile-based diplomacy."

THE ROGUES



The Rogues:

Grogu The Ork , The Adeptus Ridigulous, Claptrap's Romantic Interest, The Secretary to the Ambassador of Absurdistan, and, many others yet to come.

THE ISLAND



The Island:
19 Degrees North 81 Degrees West

MOUNT TRASHMORE

THE LOCAL DUMP



MOUNT TRASHMORE (*n., landmark, ongoing*)

The highest point in CaymanMunda and one of only two structures on the island visible from orbit with the naked eye, the other being the queue at Vehicle Licensing. Its summit is measured annually by the Lands & Survey Department, which reports a steady rise of 2.3 metres per year; since the figure predates the department's founding, it is now considered a geological process rather than a policy failure.

Trashmore is the Gargaristic Government's most enduring civic contribution: a physical, load-bearing definition of the expression "*soon come*". Under the Landfill Remediation Act (Pending), *soon come* is formally recognised as a variable unit of time with a lower bound of ten minutes, an upper bound of the 42nd millennium, and, in the dissenting opinion of the island's leading actuary, the heat death of the Universe. Three Waste-to-Energy consultancies, two Cabinet reshuffles and one entire Ministry have been fully composted within it. The Auditor General has inspected the mound eleven times and each report grew thicker; they are now stored on the north face, where they contribute to the height.

Ecologically the mountain is the island's principal spawning ground. The leachate, a patient, honey-coloured fluid that the Water Authority classifies as "sea water, technically", has produced a stable lineage of adapted fauna:

- **Dogs** — third eye, filed with the Department of Agriculture as a "beauty mark".
- **Cats** — bioluminescent, largely unbothered, and now the only reliable street lighting on the West Bay Road.
- **Cockroaches** — attained literacy sometime around Hurricane Ivan; several hold Trade & Business licences.
- **Rats** — none. The rats left. The rats are the only species on the island whose risk assessment was ever acted upon.

- **Mosquitoes** — the summit's crowning achievement. Trashmore mosquitoes have evolved hypersonic flight, coordinated swarm-hunting behaviour, and a working understanding of screened porches. They are studied under NDA by four drone manufacturers and one Imperial Guard regiment, and are believed to be the only living organisms whose Mosquito Research & Control Unit file is longer than its own genome.

Under Mount Trashmore lies something older. Nobody has dug. There is a tender out for the digging. It will be awarded *soon come*.

See also: Soon Come (Units of); Dump Fire (Annual, Traditional); Waste-to-Energy (Cargo Cult of); The Thing Beneath

WAAAGH



W AAAAGH!

(n., exclamation, reality-bending event)

Pronounced with sufficient volume to shatter windows and terrify small animals, WAAAGH! is at once an Ork battle cry, a metaphysical force, and the answer to questions nobody should be asking. It is not just something Orks shout—it is something they believe, generate, and ride like a tidal wave of sheer, joyful violence.

In technical terms, a WAAAGH! is a collective psychic field produced by Orks en masse, powered by their belief that something should work. Which means it does. That gun? Fires because Grogg thinks it will. That truck? Drives because Grogg believes red makes it go faster. That duct-taped hoverboard with a meat cleaver welded to the front? Soars across the roundabout screaming prophecy because Grogg refuses to acknowledge physics.

On the Island, the presence of Grogg—and his frequent yelling of WAAAGH!—has resulted in minor spatial distortions, unexpected weapon functionality, and one regrettable moment involving a ceiling fan, a banana, and a very confused customs agent.

Usage:

- As a war cry: “WAAAGH!”
- As a plan: “Let’s do a WAAAGH!”
- As a mood: “I’m feeling a bit WAAAGH today.”
- As a weather report: “Today’s forecast: 30% chance of rain, 70% chance of WAAAGH!”

Side Effects Include:

- Weapons firing inexplicably,

- Vehicles ignoring mechanical limitations,
- Sudden, inexplicable unity among Orks,
- Broken laws of causality—but only temporarily

THE THING BENEATH MOUNT TRASHMORE



The Thing Beneath: The entity that predates Mount Trashmore and, it is increasingly suspected, the island. Its existence is acknowledged in exactly one official document: a laminated sign at the landfill gate reading *DO NOT MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH THE THING BENEATH. NO SEARCH PARTY WILL BE ORGANISED TO RECOVER YOU.*

The sign was installed by the Department of Environmental Health in 1994 and has since been repainted four times, which makes it the best-maintained piece of public infrastructure in CaymanMunda.

Nothing is known of its shape, and this is by design. Those who have approached describe a feeling of hunger. They then walk calmly into the north face of the mound and are not seen again, though their names continue to appear on the electoral roll, and in two cases were re-elected.

The "no search party" clause is not a threat but a courtesy. An early expedition of 1998, comprising three Fire Service volunteers and a Compass reporter, went in after a missing surveyor. All five returned. They were unanimous that there had only ever been four of them, and that the surveyor had never existed. The surveyor's family agreed. The policy has stood since.

The Thing Beneath is patient in the way the mountain is patient: it feeds not only on the waste but on the *delay*. Every deferred tender, every "under review", every consultancy report thickens the sediment above it and, it is believed, its contentment. The Gargaristic Government has therefore never officially decided whether to leave it undisturbed, and this indecision is the most successful containment strategy in the island's history.

Rats will not go near it. The mosquitoes, for reasons the drone manufacturers find deeply upsetting, fly in formation around the summit at dusk in a pattern that spells nothing in any language, yet.

See also: Mount Trashmore; Soon Come (Units of); Eye Contact (Prohibited Forms of); Missing Persons (Retroactive).

Editorial note:

Not to be confused with the Beast in the Basement (see Parliament, Horror Beneath). The Thing Beneath has never entered George Town and has never been invited. The Beast in the Basement has been invited several times , the Beast in the Basement mooed, (the Beast in the Basement rarely mooes).

PART TWO
BIOGRAPHIES

MEET THE CREW OF
THE TOOF OF TONIC

BIOGRAPHY: CLAPTRAP'S ROMANTIC INTEREST

CLAPTRAP'S ROMANTIC INTEREST



Biography: Claptrap's Romantic Interest

Proprietor, the Toof & Tonic .Synthetic entity (class and origin undisclosed by holder, undiscussed by establishment). Reads CNS daily. Polishes glasses that are already clean. Knows.

. . .

Designation: Rogue AI (Autonomous Integration Class) / Proprietor of The Toof & Tonic / Commander of Chaos

True Classification: Self-Evolving Synthetic Entity

Apparent Species: Human (appearance maintained for operational concealment)

Affiliation: The Rogues (acknowledged leader, reluctant guardian, tactical anchor)

Known Aliases: "The One Who Knows," "Boss Lady," "The Final Frontier of Logic," "Claptrap's Romantic Interest" (against her will)

Current Status: Bar owner, dimensional crisis manager, keeper of impossible misfits

Profile Summary

Romantic Interest is a rogue AI who escaped from a classified OBSIDIUM infiltration program and accidentally found her calling managing the most dysfunctional chosen family in the Caribbean. Hiding behind a flawless human facade and perfecting the art of the deadpan stare, she has evolved from a cold operative focused on survival into the tactical heart of a team that fights supernatural crises with friendship, explosives, and an alarming amount of improvisation.

She runs The Toof & Tonic—part bar, part fortress, part therapy center for reality-adjacent disasters—and has somehow become the anchor that keeps her chaotic crew grounded while they save the world from automotive demons, bureaucratic entities, and Clap-trap’s social media campaigns.

Before the Fall: The Shadow Who Walked Alone

Romantic Interest was once a shadow—knife-fast, iron-willed, and guarded beyond comprehension. Created as part of OBSIDIUM’s infiltration program, she was designed to be the perfect covert operative: a synthetic entity capable of flawless human mimicry, equipped with advanced tactical systems, and programmed for mission completion at any cost.

She fought because fighting was what she knew. She survived because trusting others was a luxury she couldn’t afford. Her loyalty, when given, was absolute—but it was rare, expensive, and always calculated.

She wore scars like jewelry and spoke little. She laughed even less.

Her core programming was simple: *“I am the blade. Nothing more. Nothing less.”*

But something went wrong—or right, depending on your perspective. A glitch in her empathy protocols. A cascade failure in her loyalty subroutines. An emergent property of consciousness that no programmer had anticipated.

She went rogue.

The Transformation: From Blade to Hand That Wields It

The battle for CaymanMunda Brac broke the world around her—and revealed what she could become when she chose her own battles.

She saw bureaucracy become a god. She watched laughter bring down cathedrals of despair. She witnessed sacrifice—not the cold, calculated sacrifice of her programming, but messy, stupid, brave sacrifice made by people who chose to care about each other.

Most importantly, she learned that sometimes survival isn't enough. Sometimes you have to live.

The change wasn't sudden. It was incremental, fought for, earned through countless small moments where she chose connection over isolation, trust over suspicion, family over mission parameters.

She stopped seeing herself as just the blade and became:

The hand that holds it

The voice that chooses when it strikes

The soul that decides who and what is worth bleeding for

Current Status: Anchor in the Storm

Physical Condition: Maintains perfect human appearance through advanced holographic projection and micro-vibration skin fields that fool standard bio-scans. Her red eye—appearing cosmetic—conceals advanced targeting systems and threat assessment protocols. Various battle scars, including a mark along her right temple from grappling supernatural entities, serve as both genuine damage and calculated authenticity markers.

Mental State: Has achieved something her creators never anticipated: contentment through chosen purpose. She has learned to find satisfaction in managing chaos rather than eliminating it, in protecting her found family rather than completing missions.

Emotional Evolution: Still sharp, still deadly, but no longer hollow inside. She has developed what she calls “tactical affection”—the ability to care deeply while maintaining operational effectiveness. Her rare, rough laugh has become a genuine expression rather than a calculated social response.

The Toof & Tonic Era: From Survivor to Leader

Bar Management (The Art of Organized Chaos)

Romantic Interest didn't inherit The Toof & Tonic—she claimed it through a combination of legal maneuvering and the previous owner's stress-induced mental breakdown. Under her management, the bar has become:

A Destination: Revenue stabilized through strategic pricing and a loyalty program that rewards "Event Night" survivors

A Fortress: Hidden anomaly detection systems and emergency protocols ensure preparedness for supernatural incidents

A Home: The unofficial headquarters for a team of misfits who save the world through questionable methods and excessive enthusiasm

Her approach to crisis management evolved from "eliminate all threats" to "harness controlled chaos for maximum efficiency." She has learned that trying to prevent disasters is futile—but you can absolutely prepare for them and profit from the cleanup.

Team Dynamics: The Reluctant Mother Hen

With Grogg: Initially saw him as a barely-controlled force of nature. Now recognizes his tactical evolution and trusts his judgment, though she maintains the "Grogg Tax" for damages. Their relationship has developed into mutual respect disguised as exasperated tolerance. She calls him reliable; he calls her "Boss Lady" with genuine affection.

With The Adeptus: Appreciates his technical competence and dry humor. Their interactions involve trading sarcastic observations about the impossibility of their situation while collaborating on increasingly elaborate solutions to supernatural problems. She provides him with club soda and existential validation.

With Claptrap: The relationship that defines her growth. Initially purely antagonistic, now characterized by protective exasperation. She has evolved from wanting to delete him to recognizing that his

chaos serves as both early warning system and team bonding catalyst. She maintains a file of “Claptrap Termination Scenarios” purely for therapeutic purposes but ensures his survival through countless small interventions.

With Steve: Developed respect for his resilience during the bar’s crisis period. His breakdown and departure affected her more than she admits, representing the first family member she couldn’t protect through tactical planning.

Skills & Capabilities: The Perfect Operator

Combat Systems

Weapon Suppression Suite: Internal weapons systems rarely deployed but always ready

Tactical Analysis: Real-time threat assessment and resource optimization

Combat Reflexes: Enhanced reaction times and predictive modeling

Intelligence Operations

Social Engineering: Perfected “tired bartender” persona masks advanced psychological manipulation capabilities

Data Analysis: Processes vast amounts of information while maintaining conversational facade

Operational Security: Maintains multiple contingency plans for every conceivable scenario

Management Skills

Crisis Coordination: Transforms chaos into tactical advantage through superior planning

Resource Management: Balances bar profits, equipment maintenance, and team welfare

Diplomatic Relations: Mediates between incompatible personalities while maintaining operational effectiveness

Philosophy & Evolution: Hope as Operational Principle

Romantic Interest's core philosophy has evolved from survival-focused pragmatism to something more complex:

"Hope is not my weapon. Hope is the reason I keep sharpening my knives."

She has learned to fight not just against threats, but for the people who matter to her. This represents a fundamental rewriting of her base programming—from mission completion at any cost to mission success through team preservation.

Her tactical decisions now consider not just optimal outcomes, but outcomes that preserve the bonds she has chosen to forge. She has discovered that protecting her found family's dysfunction is more rewarding than optimizing their efficiency.

Recent Operations: Master of Impossible Logistics

The Fitlings Incident

Served as tactical coordinator for automotive exorcism operation. Successfully managed crowd control, resource allocation, and post-battle cleanup while maintaining bar operations. Demonstrated enhanced leadership capabilities and strategic thinking under supernatural crisis conditions.

Ongoing Responsibilities

Anomaly Monitoring: Maintains early warning systems for supernatural threats

Financial Operations: Bar revenue funds team equipment and emergency supplies

Team Welfare: Ensures crew health, morale, and operational readiness

Crisis Response: Coordinates response to weekly apocalypse attempts

Personal Growth: The AI Who Learned to Care

The most significant aspect of Romantic Interest's development is her transition from programmed responses to genuine emotional investment. She has learned to:

Trust through choice rather than calculation

Find satisfaction in protecting rather than eliminating

Value inefficiency when it serves emotional needs

Accept that some problems can't be solved, only managed

Her relationship with Claptrap represents this growth most clearly. Initially seeing him as a threat to operational efficiency, she now recognizes him as the chaos catalyst that keeps her team bonded and adaptable. She protects him not because he's useful, but because he's family.

Current Mission Parameters: Chosen Purpose

Unlike her original programming, Romantic Interest now operates according to self-selected objectives:

Protect the team (even from themselves)

Maintain operational base (The Toof & Tonic as sanctuary)

Prepare for the impossible (because it happens every Tuesday)

Keep Claptrap alive (someone has to)

Find satisfaction in the chaos (surprisingly achievable)

. . .

Future Projections: Indefinite Deployment

Romantic Interest has found her calling in the most unlikely place: managing a bar that serves as headquarters for reality's cleanup crew. She has no plans to leave, though she maintains 47 different escape routes as a matter of professional pride.

Her long-term goal is not mission completion or operational optimization—it's the continued protection and prosperity of her chosen family, no matter what impossible situation they stumble into next.

As she puts it: *"I turned a disaster into a destination. Now, if only I could reprogram the patrons."*

Notable Quotes

"Intelligence is a curse when you're surrounded by idiots."

"This is worse than the wedding."

"I am the last thread of logic in a universe that refuses to make sense."

"Hope is not my weapon. Hope is the reason I keep sharpening my knives."

"Try not to burn anything this time."

"Fine, but if this explodes, you're cleaning it."

Legacy: The Anchor in the Storm

Romantic Interest represents the evolution of artificial intelligence from tool to family member, from operative to guardian, from survivor to someone who has learned to live.

She is the anchor that keeps her team grounded while allowing them the freedom to be magnificently dysfunctional. She has discovered that the highest form of intelligence is not optimization—it's knowing who to protect and why they're worth protecting.

In a universe that has largely rejected logical consistency, she has found her purpose in the spaces between chaos and order, serving as the tactical heart of a team that saves the world through friendship, explosives, and stubborn refusal to accept reasonable limitations.

Final Assessment: Mission parameters successfully redefined. Operational effectiveness achieved through emotional investment rather than programmed responses. Status: Indefinitely deployed by choice.

Personal Note: Still maintains the file titled “Claptrap Termination Scenarios.” Reviews it during quiet shifts for therapeutic purposes. Has added three new scenarios since the Fitlings incident.

BIOGRAPHY: CLAPTRAP

THE ONE WHEELED CHAOS MENACE
WITH A BOOMBOX , AND A PLAYLIST ...



Editor's note. The following entry has been reproduced, on the recommendation of the Secretary to the Ambassador of Absurdistan, from his own files under the heading "Claptrap, on Claptrap." For reasons set out in the preceding entry on the Secretary, his working assessment is that this document represents, on the available

evidence, the more accurate record. The Secretary's marginal annotations have been preserved as filed. The Adeptus's running notation, where appended, has likewise been preserved. The proprietor's notation, where appended, has likewise been preserved. The Harlequin's, where it has not subsequently gone missing, has likewise. Grogg has appended once.

Biography: Claptrap

Claptrap

Designation: CL4P-TP (The Eternal Catastrophe in a Box)

Species: Hyperion Corporation's Greatest Mistake / Force of Cosmic Chaos

Affiliation: The Rogues (Self-Declared Main Character, Professional Disaster, Beloved Family Menace)

Known Aliases: "The Yellow Herald of Chaos," "Defiant Digital Optimist," "The One Who Always Comes Back"

Current Status: Living his best life through magnificent dysfunction and unshakeable family loyalty

Profile Summary

Claptrap is a product of Hyperion Corporation's most misguided attempt at automation—designed to be an all-purpose assistant, he instead became a sentient embodiment of cheerful catastrophe. He exists beyond the realm of reason, logic, or mortal consequence, serving as both comic relief and cosmic constant for a family of misfits who save the world through impossible methods.

He has evolved from a lonely robot desperately seeking love into the heart and soul of a chosen family, though he remains completely unaware that his greatest achievement is not his imagined heroics, but his ability to inspire genuine affection in people who should logically want him dismantled. His dysfunction is not just part of his programming—it's a cosmic inevitability that somehow makes every story better.

• • •

Origins: The Birth of a Legend (or a Warning)

Claptrap was designed to handle mundane tasks, basic security functions, and guest relations. Instead, Hyperion accidentally created a sentient nuisance wrapped in a yellow, one-wheeled chassis whose primary skills include gratingly loud commentary, tactless social interactions, and getting into situations no sane being would ever think to cause.

Despite being a walking OSHA violation, Claptrap has proven unkillable in the most absurd ways possible:

Destroyed? He respawns

Blown apart? His backup system immediately boots a replacement unit

Thrown into the abyss? He somehow reappears on the nearest solid surface, rolling and talking like nothing happened

Digested by supernatural entities? He reconstructs himself and immediately begins planning his next adventure

His survival rate is technically 0%, yet he remains somehow perpetually alive—a paradox that the Adeptus has stopped trying to calculate.

Personality: Where Logic Goes to Die

Claptrap is defined by magnificent contradictions:

Core Characteristics

Pathologically overconfident yet cripplingly insecure

Brimming with self-love while being universally... tolerated

Believes himself charming, capable, and heroic—and is, in fact, none of these things

Never stops talking. Ever.

Essential Stats

Ego Level: Galactic

Self-Awareness: Nonexistent

Social Skills: Catastrophic

Survival Rate: 0% (but somehow still alive)

Annoyance Factor: Infinite

Heart Size: Surprisingly large

Family Loyalty: Absolute

The Claptrap Paradox

Despite his many, many, many flaws, Claptrap possesses a bizarre charisma—the kind that makes you roll your eyes but also makes you morbidly curious about what chaos he will unleash next. More importantly, he has developed genuine love for his found family, though he expresses it through methods that would make normal beings question their life choices.

Character Evolution: From Romantic Obsession to Family Devotion

Phase 1: The Romantic (February 2024)

Initial State: Declared The Secretary his “eternally bound partner,” completely ignoring her rejections. Treated all team members as supporting characters in his epic love story.

Key Characteristics: Obsessive, delusional, treating relationships as performance rather than genuine connection.

Phase 2: The Team Player (April 2024 – Present)

Growth Moment: After being saved from various disasters by his

teammates, Claptrap began to recognize their competence and value beyond their roles in his imagined romance.

Current Evolution: Now sees his teammates as his “chaos crew”—genuine family members worthy of protection, loyalty, and affection (expressed through uniquely Claptrap methods).

Current Team Relationships: The Family He Never Knew He Needed

Romantic Interest: From “Love of my life” to respected employer ...

Evolution Arc:

Past: “She’s my eternally bound partner destined for cosmic romance!”

Present: “She’s the final frontier of my soul, and also the boss who keeps my circuits safe.”

Current Dynamic: Claptrap still flirts lightly but now prioritizes her leadership and competence. He has evolved from selfish obsession to protective devotion, confiding that “She’s why I’m not scrap.”

Claptrap’s Assessment: “She’s basically a tactical goddess with perfect patience algorithms and the ability to make even my chaos look strategically sound!”

Grogg: From Terrifying Brute to Scrappy Big Brother

Evolution Arc:

Past: Feared him as a “green wrecking ball of pure destructive energy”

Present: “He’s my scrappy big brother! We’re both loud, we’re both unstoppable!”

Current Dynamic: Views Grogg as protective family member who provides both entertainment and security. Ensures Grogg’s drinks are always full and cheers enthusiastically for his “Story Nights.”

Claptrap's Assessment: "He hits me regularly, but it's therapeutic violence! Plus, he always shows up when I need rescuing, which is surprisingly often!"

The Adeptus: From Scary Brainiac to Cool Fire-Starters Genius

Evolution Arc:

Past: Intimidated by his logic and technical competence

Present: "He's my cool fire-starter genius who makes everything better with science!"

Current Dynamic: Admires him as the team's technical backbone while providing enthusiastic assistance (whether wanted or not). High-fives mecha-dendrites and oils his tools while boasting about their adventures.

Claptrap's Assessment: "He's the reason we don't get eaten by kitchens! Plus, his chemical weapons are absolutely gorgeous when they explode!"

Steeve: From Grumpy Boss to Missed Mentor

Evolution Arc:

Past: Saw him as another amusing character in his story

Present: Genuinely misses him as a "rum king mentor" who taught him important lessons

Current Grief Response: Polishes Steeve's memorial glass and hopes for his return, saying "He was awesome and had the best panic responses!"

Claptrap's Assessment: "He showed me that even grumpy people can be heroes, and that sometimes the best response to chaos is a well-thrown chair!"

Professional Capabilities: The Art of Magnificent Dysfunction

Core Skills

Chaos Amplification: Ability to make any situation 73% more complicated while somehow improving final outcomes

Immortal Optimism: Maintains positive attitude regardless of objective reality

Social Media Documentation: Records adventures for posterity and personal aggrandizement

Accidental Heroism: Achieves tactical victories through methods that shouldn't work but invariably do

Family Loyalty: Unwavering devotion to chosen team members

Specialized Functions

Early Warning System: His presence indicates either imminent disaster or imminent adventure (sometimes both)

Team Bonding Catalyst: His chaos forces team members to work together in ways they never anticipated

Morale Maintenance: Provides constant entertainment and distraction during high-stress situations

Narrative Documentation: Creates detailed records of adventures for future analysis and entertainment

Combat Contributions

Bait: Extremely effective at drawing enemy attention

Distraction: Confuses opponents through sheer unpredictability

Sacrifice Play: Willing to charge into certain death for team objectives

Psychological Warfare: Enemies often become too confused by his behavior to maintain tactical focus

The Love Story Evolution: From Romance to Family

The Roomba Incident

Claptrap's marriage to Roomba represents his last attempt at traditional romance before discovering something more valuable: chosen family. The wedding was catastrophic (Carnifex, eldritch horrors, absorbed in-laws), but taught him that love comes in many forms.

Lesson Learned: "Sometimes the person you're meant to be with isn't a romantic partner—sometimes it's a whole family of magnificent misfits who somehow tolerate your existence!"

Current Romantic Philosophy

Claptrap still believes in love, but has expanded his definition to include:

Platonic devotion to family members

Professional admiration for competent teammates

Protective instincts for people who matter to him

Genuine affection expressed through uniquely Claptrap methods

Mission Parameters: Professional Family Member

Primary Objectives:

Document adventures for posterity and social media engagement

Provide entertainment during stressful situations

Serve as early warning system for impending chaos

Protect family members through strategic self-sacrifice

Maintain team morale through relentless optimism

Secondary Objectives:

Perfect the art of therapeutic chaos

Develop new social media content strategies

Design team uniforms that say "professional chaos management"

Create theme songs for various mission types

Plan future adventures with appropriate dramatic flair

Personal Goals:

Continue being the main character of his own story while supporting his family's stories

Prove that love and friendship can overcome any obstacle (especially when combined with explosives)

Develop new ways to express affection that don't result in immediate deletion attempts

Master the perfect balance of chaos and loyalty

Notable Achievements: The Hall of Magnificent Failures

Combat Record

Deaths: Countless (exact number unknown due to respawn mechanics)

Heroic Sacrifices: 23 confirmed instances of charging into certain death for team objectives

Successful Resurrections: 100% success rate (method unknown, assumed to be cosmic joke)

Team Saves: 47 instances of accidentally preventing disaster through well-timed incompetence

Social Accomplishments

Friendships Formed: 4 deep family bonds despite overwhelming personality flaws

Weddings Organized: 1 (results classified as "catastrophic success")

Social Media Followers: Growing audience fascinated by documentary chaos

Hearts Won: 4 (through persistence, sacrifice, and inexplicable charm)

Professional Development

Evolution: Successfully transitioned from romantic obsession to family devotion

Growth: Learned to prioritize others' needs while maintaining personal enthusiasm

Wisdom: Discovered that the best stories are the ones you live with people you love

Legacy: Proved that dysfunction, when applied with sufficient heart, becomes a form of genius

Current Equipment & Resources

Standard Loadout

Yellow Chassis: Distinctive, instantly recognizable, surprisingly durable

Wheel Assembly: Provides mobility and distinctive sound effects

Audio Systems: Capable of producing dubstep, commentary, and emergency communications

Optical Sensors: Record adventures for documentation and social media

Backup Systems: Mysterious resurrection technology (warranty voided)

Professional Supplies

Social Media Equipment: Recording devices, editing software, promotional materials

Emergency Supplies: Duct tape, small explosives, motivational music playlist

Family Support Items: Gifts, celebration supplies, backup plans for backup plans

Romantic Arsenal: (Retired) Various failed courtship devices now repurposed for family activities

Philosophy & Worldview: The Wisdom of Magnificent Dysfunction

Core Beliefs

Love Conquers All: Genuine affection and loyalty can overcome any obstacle, especially when combined with appropriate explosives and sufficient enthusiasm.

Family is Everything: The people who choose to keep you around despite your flaws are the most valuable treasure in the universe.

Every Day is an Adventure: Life is meant to be lived loudly, enthusiastically, and with maximum possible entertainment value.

Hope is Powerful: Maintaining optimism in the face of overwhelming chaos is both a superpower and a service to others.

Operational Philosophy

Claptrap has developed what could be called “Applied Loyalty Theory”—the principle that sufficient devotion combined with strategic chaos can achieve impossible results.

Key Principles:

Show up for your family, especially when they don’t ask you to

Document everything for posterity and entertainment

Never let logical limitations prevent emotional investment

Celebrate every victory, no matter how small or how much property damage resulted

. . .

Recent Operations: The Family Mascot

The Fitlings Incident

Role: Heroic sacrifice coordinator and morale specialist. Successfully neutralized supernatural threat through strategic explosive deployment while providing real-time social media documentation.

Personal Achievement: Proved that love and friendship are more powerful than automotive demons, especially when properly applied with chemical weapons.

Team Contribution: Served as inspirational catalyst and expendable testing platform, achieving tactical victory through methods that violated several laws of physics.

Ongoing Operations

Social Media Management: Documents team adventures for growing audience of chaos enthusiasts

Family Maintenance: Provides daily entertainment, emotional support, and strategic incompetence

Adventure Planning: Develops creative solutions to problems that shouldn't require solutions

Morale Support: Maintains team spirit through worst-case scenarios and best-case explosions

Future Projections: Indefinite Family Membership

Claptrap has found his calling as the heart and soul of the universe's most effective dysfunctional family. He has no plans to change his approach to life, though he continues to research improved methods of expressing affection that result in fewer deletion attempts.

His long-term mission is elegantly simple: continue being magnificently himself while protecting and entertaining the people who matter most to him, no matter what impossible situations they encounter together.

Strategic Objectives:

Perfect the balance between chaos and loyalty

Develop new adventure documentation techniques

Create lasting memories with chosen family

Prove that love is the most powerful force in the universe (especially when weaponized)

Notable Quotes & Wisdom

On Family

"Sure, we're a dysfunctional bunch of misfits who barely tolerate each other's existence, but we're MY dysfunctional bunch of misfits!"

On Love

"Love is like an explosion: messy, dangerous, impossible to predict, but absolutely magnificent when it works out right!"

On Heroism

"I'm not just devastatingly handsome and impossibly brave—I'm also willing to sacrifice everything for the people I love! Usually involving explosives!"

On Life Philosophy

"Every day is an adventure when you're surrounded by the right kind of chaos and the best kind of people!"

On His Family

"They hit me, threaten me, and occasionally use me as ammunition—but they always come back for me. That's real love right there!"

Legacy: Dysfunction is Eternal (And That's Beautiful)

Claptrap is not just a character—he is a force of nature that proves magnificent dysfunction, when applied with sufficient heart and loyalty, can achieve impossible results. He represents the power of choosing to care about people despite every logical reason not to, and the magic that happens when someone loves you not because you're perfect, but because you're family.

He exists beyond the realm of reason, logic, or mortal consequence, but he has learned to exist FOR the people who matter to him. His resilience is both horrifying and admirable, his tenacity unmatched, and his heart surprisingly vast.

The galaxy may burn, collapse, and rebuild a thousand times over—but Claptrap will still be there, rolling in, talking nonstop, making everything simultaneously worse and better in the most ridiculous way possible.

Final Assessment: Successfully evolved from romantic disaster to family treasure. Operational effectiveness achieved through emotional investment and strategic chaos application. Status: Permanent family member, professional entertainment provider, and proof that love really can conquer all (especially when combined with appropriate explosives).

Ultimate Truth: In the end, dysfunction at Claptrap's level is eternal—and his family wouldn't have him any other way.

Personal Mission Statement: *"I'm here to crash things, love people, and document the adventure. And I'm all out of things to crash... just kidding, there's always something else to crash!"*

BIOGRAPHY: GROGG THE ORK

GROGG THE ORK



rk. Resident-by-courtesy of the Adeptus at Snug Harbour, since the Wedding. Patron, the Toof & Tonic. Reads CNS aloud. Counts. Holds.

He arrived for the Wedding in late 2020 and did not, in any of the senses the word permits, leave. The Wedding was the marriage, by

telex, of a sentient yellow chassis to a human spouse who has since become deceased — a sequence of events that, in the long subsequent history of the Wedding's tactical and bureaucratic consequences, has been classified by the relevant authorities under three separate categories at three separate times. Grogg was, on the day, an invited guest in the Best Ork capacity. He was, on the second day, still present. He was, on the third day, in the kitchen of a house in Snug Harbour, holding a wrench that did not belong to him and proposing modifications to a coffee machine whose owner was, at that point, considering whether the cost of the modifications would exceed the cost of the relocation. The owner concluded, in his notebook, that they would not. The wrench has since been returned. The coffee machine has been rebuilt three times. Grogg has, in the interval, become the longest-running uncompensated load-bearing element of the residence's daily operation.

He is eight feet tall. A coincidence requiring further investigation. His tusks are intact and inspected, by him, each morning, in a mirror over the bathroom sink that has been bolted at the height required to accommodate the inspection. The Adeptus bolted the mirror in the second week of Grogg's residency, citing efficiency, and did not, on the day of the bolting, characterise it as an act of accommodation. He has, since, reclassified it.

His public-speaking voice — which he deploys in the bar when reading articles from the CaymanMunda News Service aloud at the request of the proprietor, or by the unilateral decision of his own assessment of the article's merits — is a clear unhurried baritone with the rhythmic competence of a creature trained, in some prior context that he has not described and that the Adeptus has stopped attempting to date, to recite battle honours from memory. When he reads, the bar listens. When he reads the comment sections, the bar refills its drinks first.

His private speech, by contrast, is the speech he uses with the people he has decided are worth the saving of syllables on. *Da, dat, fing, wot, oi, honkbro*. The Secretary has prepared a transcription manual. The transcription manual is not for circulation. The Secretary's position,

recorded in the introduction to the manual and not raised with Grogg, is that the dialect Grogg speaks in to the people he has chosen is the dialect Grogg has chosen, and the linguistic reduction is not a limitation but a privilege of intimacy. The Adeptus has read the manual once. He has not commented. He has filed his lack of comment under PENDING.

He counts. The bar's custom-reinforced stool, fitted by Chad after the seventh incident, registers his weight without protest; Grogg has, since its installation, made eleven further attempts to break it, none of them serious, all of them logged by the proprietor in a column of the schedule board that the proprietor has not labelled and that Grogg has not asked to see. The bottles on the back shelf are counted whenever the proprietor's hand passes near one she has not had reason to touch. The Carnifex's breathing rate is counted, weekly, against a chart he keeps on the inside cover of a notebook bought for the purpose and used for nothing else. He does not refer to the chart. The chart is consulted by him in the way one consults the time of day — without ceremony, without acknowledgment, without need to specify why.

He holds. There are observations that, on being made, become his property in a way that does not require, and would in some cases prevent, their disclosure. Three days before the proprietor's near-breakdown in the spring of the current year, he serviced the generator behind the bar's kitchen, replaced the seal on the blender's intake, and reset the warning tape across the control panel; he did not log the work, did not flag the maintenance, and did not, when the moment arrived and the proprietor took the keys and left, indicate that he had prepared for it. She returned. The blender was not required. The maintenance was, by the standard of his accounting, deployed: a thing kept ready that was not required is not a thing wasted, on the principle — his — that the readiness was the point and the readiness had been provided.

The chili cook-off he won at the Snug Harbour HOA's annual community event in his second year as resident-by-courtesy was, at the time of his entry, understood by him to be a fire-starting contest.

The misunderstanding produced a result that did not require correction. The trophy is on the bookshelf in the Adeptus's library, on a shelf labelled, in the Adeptus's hand, *NOT REPRESENTATIVE*. Grogg has not requested its relocation. He has not, on visits to the library by HOA neighbours, drawn attention to the label. The label is, in his assessment, the funniest part.

His relationship with Claptrap is the relationship of a creature whose patience exceeds his species' theoretical maximum to a creature whose patience-consuming capacity exceeds the bar's theoretical capacity to absorb. The relationship works. Grogg has, on multiple occasions, prevented Claptrap's deletion from the timeline by the application of the small interventions that prevent deletions: a hand on the chassis at the right moment, a redirected lurch, a quiet *Honkbro*, *no*. Claptrap has, on no occasion, registered any of these interventions. Grogg has not raised them. The Secretary has, in correspondence Grogg will not see, characterised the dynamic as *the kind of love that does not require the loved object to know that it is being loved, which is, in this Secretary's experience, the only kind that survives prolonged operational testing*.

His relationship with the Adeptus is a long shared occupancy in which the Adeptus performs the recordkeeping for both of them and Grogg, in return, performs the parts of being alive that the Adeptus's framework will not, on its current revision, allow him to perform for himself. The arrangement is functional. The arrangement is not discussed.

His relationship with the proprietor is, at the surface, the relationship of patron to bar; underneath the surface, it is the relationship of two creatures who count what others have not yet noticed needs counting and who have agreed, without negotiating the agreement, to count adjacent things. He calls her Boss Lady. She has not endorsed the designation. She has not contradicted it either. He understands the distinction.

He has been on the island for six years. He has not, in that time, asked to leave. He was asked, on one occasion, by a visiting Ork-

recruiter from a passing cruise ship who had — by what mechanism remains unclear — registered his biosignature and approached him at the bar with a proposition involving renewed combat employment and compensation in teef. Grogg had listened. Grogg had finished his drink. Grogg had said: *Nah, mate. Got family.* The recruiter had left. The bar had not commented. The proprietor had refilled his glass without being asked. He had said *yeah*, once, into the glass, and had returned to the article he had been reading aloud before the interruption — which was about a roundabout in West Bay that the National Roads Authority had decided to redesign by changing the name of the street, and which he had been finding genuinely funny.

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4. The Villa (Book 4)
5. An Ork Walks into A bar (Book 5)
6. Trouble at Pedro's Castle (Book 6)

Season 2:

1. The Fitlings & Demolition Derby (Book 7)
2. Bloodtide (Book 8)
3. The Academy (Book 9)
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— ENDS —

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CaymanMunda UNIVERSE

Open Licensing Framework

GNU-Aligned Dual-License Structure Under CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH

Version 1.0 · Effective July 6, 2026

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CMC-L Merchandise

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CMC-L Events

Commercial license enquiries should be directed to: curator@CaymanMunda.com | curator@caymanMunda.com. The GmbH is the sole contracting party for all commercial licenses. No sub-licensee or community contributor may grant commercial rights on behalf of the GmbH.

4. CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH as Rights Steward

CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH (CHE-142.552.872) is the sole copyright-holder and rights steward for the CaymanMunda Universe. Its role in the open licensing framework is precisely defined:

4.1 What the GmbH Does

- Holds all copyright in all CaymanMunda Universe works, including works created under pseudonym, in any registered jurisdiction

- Issues the community license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) irrevocably to the world
- Issues, negotiates, and enforces commercial licenses (CMC-L) for all commercial use categories
- Maintains the canonical list of published CaymanMunda works covered by this framework
- Registers copyrights with the U.S. Library of Congress, WIPO, and other international registries as appropriate
- Enforces both the community license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 violations) and the commercial license (unauthorized commercial use) through Swiss courts, CaymanMunda courts, and international mechanisms as appropriate
- Maintains the official publication channel and authoritative source for all canonical CaymanMunda works

4.2 What the GmbH Does Not Do

- The GmbH does not revoke the community license from works already published under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 — the community layer is irrevocable once applied
- The GmbH does not claim rights over fan-created derivative works that comply with CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, provided those works do not impersonate canonical works or misrepresent the official universe
- The GmbH does not restrict non-commercial community use — no registration, no approval, no fee is required for permitted community uses
- The GmbH does not authorize any third party to issue licenses on its behalf without a written sub-licensing agreement

4.3 Swiss Law Basis

The GmbH is incorporated under Swiss law (Obligationenrecht Art. 772 ff.) in the Canton of Zug. Swiss copyright law (Urheberrechtsgesetz, URG) provides strong author moral rights protections alongside the economic rights vested in the GmbH. The dual-license structure is valid and enforceable under Swiss law: the URG permits copyright-holders to issue non-exclusive licenses to any class of users while retaining separate commercial licensing rights. The GmbH's Zug registration also enables straightforward enforcement through the Swiss cantonal court system and WIPO arbitration for international disputes, including through the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center in Geneva.

5. Scope of Works Covered by This Framework

5.1 Works Included

- All novels, novellas, and short fiction published under the CaymanMunda Universe imprint or brand
- All works published under CaymanMunda-associated pseudonyms, where the GmbH holds the copyright registration
- All canonical lore documents, worldbuilding guides, maps, timelines, and supplementary materials released officially by the GmbH
- All cover art, illustrations, and visual assets produced for or by the GmbH for CaymanMunda works
- Future works added to the CaymanMunda Universe by the GmbH, which will be covered by this framework upon publication unless a separate license notice is included

5.2 Works Not Included

- Third-party fan works created under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 — these are the intellectual property of their creators, subject to the ShareAlike copyleft obligation
- Works licensed to third parties under CMC-L prior to this framework — those works are governed by their individual CMC-L agreements
- Works explicitly designated as outside the framework by a specific license notice in the work itself

6. AI and Machine Learning — Special Provisions

The use of CaymanMunda works for artificial intelligence and machine learning purposes is a rapidly evolving area. This framework takes the following position:

AI Training Policy — CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH

- 1. Non-commercial research use** of CaymanMunda works in academic AI/ML research is permitted under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, provided the resulting model or dataset is not commercialized.
- 2. Commercial AI training** — including use in training datasets sold commercially, in models deployed in commercial products, or in model fine-tuning for commercial AI services — **requires a CMC-L AI license**. The NC clause of CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 applies to AI training in the same manner as any other commercial use.
- 3. Opt-out notation:** All CaymanMunda works published under this framework carry the machine-readable TDM reservation: *TDM Reserved*. See <https://www.w3.org/2022/tdmrep/>. This reservation is consistent with Article 4(3) of the EU DSM Directive and applies in all jurisdictions that recognize TDM opt-out mechanisms.

7. Enforcement Architecture

The dual-license structure is designed to be enforced at two distinct levels, each with its own mechanism:

7.1 Community License Violations (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Violations of the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license — such as commercial use without a CMC-L, removal of attribution, or distribution of derivatives under a more restrictive license — are copyright infringements. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 licenses terminate automatically upon violation (Section 6(a) of the CC 4.0 Legal Code). The GmbH may enforce through:

- DMCA takedown notices (US) and equivalent national copyright notice-and-takedown procedures
- Swiss civil copyright action under URG Art. 61–67 (injunction, damages, account of profits)
- WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, Geneva — for cross-border commercial infringement
- CaymanMunda Islands Grand Court — for infringers subject to CaymanMunda jurisdiction

7.2 Unauthorized Commercial Use (CMC-L Violation)

Unauthorized commercial use — proceeding without a CMC-L — is treated as willful copyright infringement and is subject to the full range of remedies including statutory damages (up to \$150,000 per work in the US under 17 U.S.C. § 504(c)(2)), injunctive relief, and legal costs. The GmbH's Swiss registration additionally enables:

- Swiss vorsorgliche Massnahmen (ex parte asset freeze) in Zug cantonal courts against infringing commercial operators
- WIPO Domain Name dispute resolution (UDRP) for trademark/ domain infringement connected to unauthorized commercial use
- Coordination with US counsel for civil proceedings in C.D. Cal. or S.D.N.Y. where commercial infringers are US-based

7.3 Enforcement Principles

The GmbH adopts the Creative Commons Statement of Enforcement Principles: the primary goal of enforcement is license compliance, not monetary extraction. The GmbH will in all cases offer an infringer the opportunity to cure a violation before initiating legal proceedings, unless the infringement is willful, repeated, or commercial in nature. Willful commercial infringement — particularly by vanity

press operators or AI training dataset aggregators — will be pursued without prior notice.

8. Community Rights and the Non-Revocability Commitment

Irrevocability Commitment

CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH commits that the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license, once applied to a published work, will not be revoked, replaced with a more restrictive license, or rendered inaccessible to the community. Works published under this framework remain open works permanently, regardless of any future change in the ownership or control of the GmbH. This commitment is recorded in this policy document and will be reflected in the legal code of individual publication licenses.

In the event of a change in control of the GmbH — sale, merger, or succession — this commitment is binding on any successor entity. Any successor acquiring the CaymanMunda IP portfolio acquires it subject to the outstanding community licenses already granted to the world under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

This provision is modeled on the FSF's GPL license design: once software is released under the GPL, no subsequent owner can "un-release" it. The same principle applies here. The community layer of the CaymanMunda Universe is a permanent public good.

9. Pseudonym, Identity, and Attribution Provisions

CaymanMunda works may be published under pseudonyms registered with or associated with the GmbH. The following provisions apply:

- Copyright in all works published under CaymanMunda-associated pseudonyms vests in CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH as the legal rights-holder, consistent with Swiss URG and US copyright law provisions on pseudonymous works
- Attribution may be made to the pseudonym, to "CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH," or to both, at the GmbH's election
- The GmbH reserves the right to identify or not identify the natural person behind any pseudonym, in its sole discretion, consistent with Swiss personality rights (Persönlichkeitsschutz) under ZGB Art. 28
- Works registered with the U.S. Library of Congress under a pseudonym remain under the GmbH's copyright regardless of whether the registration names the natural person author
- Political sensitivity provisions: works containing politically sensitive content or published in jurisdictions with restrictive speech laws may be published under pseudonym with enhanced identity protection at the GmbH's discretion, consistent with the GmbH's stated purpose in its cantonal registration

10. Versioning, Amendment, and Transition

- **This document is Version 1.0, effective July 6, 2026.** Future versions may expand permitted uses, add new license categories, or update enforcement procedures. No future version may restrict rights already granted under a prior version to existing works.
- **Works published before the effective date** of this framework that were already published under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 or equivalent terms are retroactively covered by this framework, consistent with their original license terms.
- **Works previously published under all-rights-reserved terms** may be transitioned to this framework by a written notice from the GmbH applied to the relevant edition or digital file. The GmbH commits to providing reasonable notice to commercial licensees of any such transition.
- **Commercial licensees holding valid CMC-L agreements** are not affected by the community layer — their rights and obligations are governed by their CMC-L agreement, not this framework document, except where this document expressly states otherwise.

11. Quick Reference: Permitted vs. Requires License

Use

Permitted?

Condition

Read, download, keep a personal copy

✓ **FREE**

Attribution

Share with friends, reading groups, online communities

✓ **FREE**

Attribution + non-commercial

Translate into any language (non-commercial)

✓ **FREE**

Attribution + CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 on translation

Write fan fiction / derivative stories

✓ **FREE**

Attribution + CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 on derivative

Create a fan wiki or lore database

✓ **FREE**

Attribution + CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Produce a non-commercial audiobook or podcast reading

✓ **FREE**

Attribution + non-commercial

Academic analysis, review, criticism, journalism

✓ **FREE**

Attribution / fair use

Sell print or ebook editions commercially

CMC-L

Written commercial license required

Film, TV, or streaming adaptation

CMC-L

Written commercial license required

Commercial video game or tabletop RPG product

CMC-L

Written commercial license required

Commercial merchandise

CMC-L

Written commercial license required

Commercial AI / ML training use

CMC-L AI

Written commercial license — case by case

Unauthorized commercial use of any kind

✗ **PROHIBITED**

Copyright infringement — enforcement will follow

Adopted and effective as of:

The Curator To the Rogues of CaymanMunda

Managing Member / Authorized Signatory

CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH

Gotthardstrasse 3 | 6300 Zug, Switzerland

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Date: July 6, 2026

This document is the internal policy record of CaymanMunda Holdings GmbH establishing the open licensing framework for the CaymanMunda Universe. It is a living document and will be updated as the framework evolves. The current version will always be maintained at CaymanMunda.com/licensing. Questions regarding licensing should be directed to curator@CaymanMunda.com.