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The electric delivery truck slowed to a quiet stop. The rear door slid up and the Jonnie-Bot descended the ramp to the street. Two bio-degradable cellulose bags full of groceries were in the robot's rear tray. A loaf of bread balanced on top of the heavier items. The robot rolled to the side entrance of the house and stopped. Cameras mounted on its two eye-stalks swiveled back and forth.

Each customer received a storage bin from the grocery store. The Jonnie-Bot could then deliver the goods and lock them in the bin against animals or theft. The robot circled the residence without finding the bin. It communicated with the van which checked the grocery store's database. The RFID tag for the bin was inactive, however the address was correct.

The robot separated its wheels for all terrain mode and ascended the stairs to the side door. It used the grappling arm to rap on the door and noted that a mark had been made on it. The new software program subtracted five points. The program was written to rate the actions the robot made and help it learn to make better strategic decisions.

The grappling arm knocked again, this time using less force. When the door opened the robot scanned the person and calculated, based on facial, arm, and leg hair, a 94% chance that the person was a male.

"What the hell are you?" the man asked.

"Good morning, sir," the robot said through its speakers in a cheerful masculine voice. "I am Jonnie-Bot, the versatile delivery droid. Please indicate the location in which to deposit your grocery order."

"Groceries? I didn't order any groceries. You got the wrong house."

"Your residence has been verified. Please indicate the location in which to deposit your grocery order."

"I...Didn't...Order...It," the man said. "Now piss off!"

The robot shot out its grappling arm to keep the door open.

"Hey!"

The door frame was slightly marked which would subtract another five points from the robot's rating. A failed delivery would subtract 50 points.

"I am capable of delivering indoors. My self-cleaning rubber wheels will not mar, scuff, or dirty any floor surface. Please indicate the location in which to deposit your grocery order."

"Deposit this!" the man said, aiming a kick at the grappling arm.

Sensing danger, the robot retreated. Avoiding physical contact with animals and humans added three points. However, the door was now shut. The robot rapped again without result.

The delivery van transmitted an update. Successful deliveries were down 2% for the day. All Jonnie-Bots were instructed to develop any strategy that would improve the store's statistics.

There was a window next to the side door that appeared to be unlatched. Rolling into the bushes, the robot reached up with the grappling arm. The fingers dug into the soft wood (subtract 5 points) and the arm started to pull the robot up. The man, realizing what the robot was attempting to do, latched the window to secure it. He pointed to a cell phone in his hand.

"I'm calling the cops!"

"Police involvement," the robot said, "is only required in the event of dismemberment or death. Please indicate the location-"
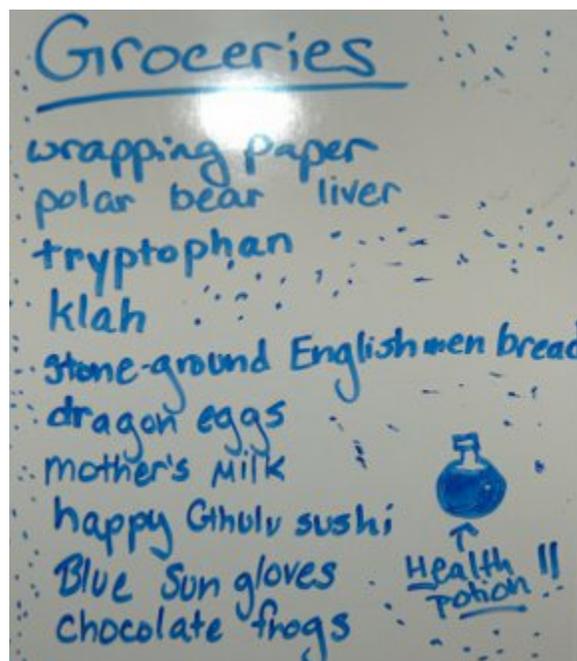
"I'm calling right now!"

The robot released the sill and climbed the stairs again. The grappling arm deployed several thin metal tines which were inserted into the lock. After a few jiggling attempts the doorknob lock was sprung. The deadbolt lock would not turn.

"You're not getting in!" the man said.

The robot calculated the cost/benefit ratio using the point system of the new software. Successful delivery was worth 75 points. Store efficiency was now down 3%. One last strategy could be tried.

The robot rolled around the house to the back yard. It climbed the steps of the deck. The man was talking on the cell phone before a set of sliding glass doors. The grappling arm reached into one of the grocery bags and extracted a can of baked beans. The arm whipped forward, sending the can through one of the sliding glass doors (subtract 15 points) without harming the man (add 3 points).

"Holy shit!" the man said.

The robot moved in closer and tossed boxes of pasta, other cans, and a bag of pretzels through the shattered door. The fruit, bread, and eggplant would have to be placed on the floor to avoid bruising and squashing. The man picked up a can of succotash and threw it at the robot.

"Get away, ya bastard!"

The robot retrieved the can and aimed carefully. The grappling hand twisted as it threw. The can spun and hit the man in the forehead (subtract forty points) with the rounded side

instead of the edge of the can (add 1 point.) The last few items were placed next to the unconscious man. The delivery was successful (add 75 points.)

Total score was positive 12 points. Store efficiency went up a tick. The robot rolled back to the van and they started off for the next residence.

The End