

How Rebecca Fortinbras Became a Legendary Superstar!

By Gregory T. Burns

NOTES:

Most children have big dreams of becoming famous someday. For Rebecca Fortinbras, her dream is about to become a reality. This fantasy-oriented comedy is the perfect performance vehicle for the actress (or actor) adept at playing “deadpan” or “dry” humor. Don’t push the humor; let the innocence of the lines themselves do the work for you. Rebecca is clearly the heroine of this darkly, humorous play; however, she is actually represented by two personalities: Becky, a five-year-old kindergartner, and Rebecca, her alter-ego, which, of course, is knowledgeable and mature decades beyond her years. This off-the-wall comedy may be entered in Humorous Interpretation or, with careful editing and blocking, be performed by two performers and entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting. Humor is often best punctuated by effective comic timing, so don’t be afraid of using longer pauses and letting the characters react, when applicable. This is an outstanding selection for talented comedic performers!

Characters:

Rebecca Fortinbras, the 33 1/3-year-old inner thoughts of a five-year-old kindergartner named Becky

Becky, a five-year-old kindergartner

Mr. H, Becky’s former choir teacher

Kid 1, one of Becky’s classmates

Kid 2, another of Becky’s classmates,

Mr. Armstrong, Becky’s current choir teacher

Olivia, Mr. Armstrong’s girlfriend

Rebecca: It is the very first day of the school year. I talk to myself, as I skip down the sidewalk.

Becky: This year I’ve got to get down to business. Kindergarten is not for kids!

Rebecca: I’m not wearing pigtails or braids. My hair has been pulled back into a ponytail so tight—that it stands straight up on top of my head and is held in place by an over-priced, multi-colored, unicorn JoJo Siwa bow. *(Pause)* I should feel like a million dollars, and I did, until last spring in Pre-K, when Mr. H (whom we secretly called Hitler) called my name during choir and asked me to sing the *Alphabet Song* acapella to my peers. *(Pause)* Before I continue, there’s something I think you should know. I LIVE for one class and one class only: Choir. And if I’m asked to sing, I SING. And you’d better bet your bottom dollar, Annie, that I’m going to SING like the sun WILL come out tomorrow, the next day, and every single day of the year! I sing FULL VOICE. Like I’m a legendary Superstar singing to a standing room only, sold-out performance at Madison Square Garden.

Mr. H: Becky Fortinbras, would you sing the *Alphabet Song* for us?

Rebecca: Everything is perfect. Every eye in the class is fixated on me. The kids are hanging onto every one of my carefully sung notes. With a voice so

pure—so full of *texture*—that it could win *American Idol* AND *The Voice* simultaneously in the same season, I sing—

Becky: (*Singing*) A-B-C-D-E-F-G...H-I-J-K-Armadillo-Pee...

Rebecca: (*Big pause*) How was I supposed to know? You think you're going to win a Grammy for Best Children's Recording, and then something like 'L-M-N-O-P' comes along. For the rest of the semester, when I was asked to sing aloud, I would simply move my mouth and silently lip-sync into my songbook. And now I've spent every waking moment of my summer vacation hoping that I won't be Becky "Armadillo Pee" Fortinbras for the rest of my life. But who am I kidding? What are the chances of my parents winning the Lottery and moving to a tropical island over the summer? (*Pause*) Oh, how I dreaded recess.

Kid 1: Hey, there's that girl, Becky, who sang about pee!

Kid 2: Hey, yeah, Armadillo Pee, girl! I think your armadillo needs to go number one!

Kid 1: Becky, how about singing us your version of "Tinkle, Tinkle, Little Star"? Huh?

Kid 2: (*Laughing at friend's joke*) Or how about, "Mary Had a Little Bladder"?

Rebecca: But like every other kid in the US of A, I can create a brand new identity for myself each and every September. And after the first day of Kindergarten, I'm on cloud nine. No one seems to recall anything about urinating armadillos, and I've found the best reason of all to love school: Mr. Armstrong, my new choir teacher.

Becky: (*Almost in one breath*) Mr. Armstrong, Daddy. His name is Mr. Armstrong. He told us about all the things we're going to sing this year. He placed me in the center of the front row, and he smiled at me. Daddy, he looks just like a movie star!

Rebecca: Mr. Armstrong DID look like a movie star. He looked like—a cross between Chris Hemsworth, the Rock, Pee Wee Herman and one of the Jonas Brothers. And every day Mr. Armstrong wore a button-down sweater to school. Each sweater was monogrammed with a little 'c,' a big 'A' and a little 'd.' (*Beat*) I knew the big 'A' stood for Armstrong, and I just had to find out what his first name was—little 'c,' little 'd.' (*Beat*) One day, when I should have been warming up my vocal instrument, I looked up from the risers—to see Mr. Armstrong peek up from his music stand at the exact same second. His eyes caught mine, and for a moment, I, like my hero, Idena Menzel, was being lifted off the ground and defying gravity. (*Beat*) Move over, Katy Perry, because I saw fireworks going off like the Fourth of July. Angelic choirs were singing in my heart. I glanced down to see goosebumps—where hundreds of tiny Cupid's had shot arrows up and down my arms. (*Beat*) After school that day, I walked Mr. Armstrong to his car, a slightly used Toyota Prius—another sure-fire sign that Mr. Armstrong and I are simpatico. He drives an environmentally-friendly hybrid automobile. My favorite color is green! Coincidence? I think not.

Mr. Armstrong: Is there something you wanted to say, Becky?

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Becky: (*Hesitantly*) Is your name Chad Douglas?

Mr. Armstrong: Hahahahahaha, why how in the world did you know that? Are you psychic?

Becky: No, it was just a lucky guess. Can I call you Chad?

Mr. Armstrong: Well, I think it would be more appropriate if you just called me Mr. Armstrong.

Becky: (*Looking down at the ground, obviously disappointed*) Oh. Okay. I guess you're right. (*Trying to differentiate herself from the other kids in choir*) Would you mind calling me Rebecca?

Mr. Armstrong: Why, of course. So—*Rebecca*—your last name is Fortinbras? It's very—*unique*.

Becky: It's Shakespeare. Do you know him?

Mr. Armstrong: Of course. I—why I *love* Shakespeare.

Becky: (*Shocked, slightly gasps*) Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know. I thought you liked—*girls*. I'm sorry. It's really none of my business—*Love is love*, right?

Mr. Armstrong: (*Obviously misunderstood*) What???. Nooooo! No, no, no, no, no. I think you misunderstood me. I didn't go to college *with* William Shakespeare. I studied his works in my English class.

Becky: (*Smiling*) Well, then you, no doubt, are fully aware that *Fortinbras* is a minor character in Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. Fortinbras, of course, is a notable Norwegian crown prince who delivers the final lines in the play that gives the monarchy of Denmark and its subjects a somewhat hopeful future.

Mr. Armstrong: (*As if seeing her in a new light for the first time*) Rebecca, you're—very mature—for a kindergartner.

Becky: Trust me. You have no idea.

Rebecca: In my mind, Chad Douglas Armstrong and I were the best of friends. True, he was much taller than me—by several feet. But it was totally against school dress code for young girls in primary education to wear high heels. (*Pause*) In class, if I interrupted one of his lectures on '*The Importance of Articulation While Singing Hip-Hop*,' he'd stop and say—

Mr. Armstrong: Remember, Rebecca, patience is a virtue.

Rebecca: And then he'd laugh.

Mr. Armstrong: Hahahahahaha.

Rebecca: If I wanted to, I could always make Chad laugh. And if I'm being completely honest with myself, I always wanted to. If he was exhausted at the end of the school day, I could totally empathize. It wasn't a walk in the park trying to teach twenty kindergartners how to use their diaphragms properly. And please, don't get the wrong idea. Even though I know he appreciated the French cherry tarts, imported wine and assorted cheese I left on his desk each Friday afternoon, I never once considered myself to be the teacher's pet. Let's be honest though. Obviously, I had nothing in common with a group of off-key, *Kids Bop*-wanna-be kindergartners. (*Beat*) I knew Chad had a girlfriend, and I had a strong hunch her name was Olivia.

(*The following is to be performed as a dream sequence. Perhaps add a 'dream sequence' sound effect here.*)