



SCENE 1 - FLASHBACK: RESEARCH

GREG

Are you watching, Stella? All the pretty little horses?

2

Stella sounds younger here. She is a child.

STELLA

Yes, I'm watching. I've been watching for the past three hours.

GREG

And? What do you see?

STELLA

The same thing I've seen for the past three hours! A bunch of boring stupid horses.

GREG

That is no way for an ecologist to talk.

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STELLA

I'm not an ecologist.

GREG

But you will be. One day. You will be an accomplished biologist just like me, and you will study the most majestic species the planet has to offer.

STELLA

Horses?

GREG

That's right.

STELLA

I just don't get what's so great about horses.

GREG

What do you mean?

STELLA

I mean, they don't do anything special. We've been watching them for hours! All they've done is prance around and eat grass. They're just fancy cows.

GREG

Stella, when I write my book-- 4

STELLA

I know, you keep saying you're going to write this book--

GREG

And I will! And you, and the whole world will see that while we think of horses as simple, domesticated creatures, the beauty of a wild horse is something unparalleled. Need I remind you that I grew up on an island. An --

STELLA

An island called Chincoteague. Yeah. I remember. 5

GREG

There is nothing like a wild horse. So completely...free.<sup>6</sup>

STELLA

Dad. I'm bored.

GREG

WELL MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T BE BORED IF YOU WERE TAKING NOTES LIKE I TOLD YOU TO.

STELLA

Right. I'm sorry.

GREG

(laughs)

You want to know what's so great about horses, Stella? You really want to know?

STELLA

Yes.

GREG

They are smart. They are so so smart. But they're not quite smart enough to realize how miserable life is.

STELLA

You're making me sad, Dad.

GREG

I'm not making you sad. Life is making you sad. I'm just bringing it to your attention. Now wheel me back to the house and I'll        7 cook you dinner.

STELLA

Yes, dad.

INTRO AND THEME MUSIC.

8 SCENE 2 - MED BAY

CAPTAIN

Hey, Stella, can I ask you about something?

STELLA

Me? You wanna ask-- You want to-- yeah, absolutely!

CAPTAIN

It's not a big deal. It's just--

STELLA

Oh. No. Yeah. I know. Totally not a big deal. Just. You know. Have a seat.

CAPTAIN

I can't sit.

STELLA

Right. Yes. I knew that.

CAPTAIN

At least, not in a chair.

STELLA

Right. Of course.

CAPTAIN

Unless you want me to...sit on the ground?

STELLA

No! No, that's...that's weird. Don't do that.

CAPTAIN

Okay so...standing.

STELLA

Yes. I'll stand too.

CAPTAIN

Okay. Great.

STELLA

So...What's on your mind.

CAPTAIN

Well, I have this pain--

STELLA

Oh. This is, like, a medical thing.

CAPTAIN

Yeah, what-- what did you think I was coming to you for?

STELLA

Oh, I thought maybe you wanted advice or something.

CAPTAIN

You're-- You're the doctor.

STELLA

Right. Yes. I know that.

CAPTAIN

We just hired you. As our doctor.

STELLA

Yes. Totally. That's me. Doctor.

(beat)

It's just, you said "Can I ask you about something" and I thought--

CAPTAIN

Yes. I'm asking you about something. Medical.

STELLA

Right. Well. Anyway. What's the problem?

CAPTAIN

Never mind. It's no big deal.

STELLA

No, I mean, if you have a medical problem--

CAPTAIN

It's not a big deal.  
(awkward silence)

STELLA

Look. We should probably talk about the elephant in the room.  
(beat)

CAPTAIN

9 What elephant?

STELLA

No, it's--

CAPTAIN

There's only you, a human, and me, a horse. I don't understand what elephants--

STELLA

It's just a thing that-- nevermind. I'm just saying...there's a weird tension between us.

CAPTAIN

Right. Because/ you're kind of annoying.

STELLA

/I'm a human and you're a horse.  
Wait, what did you say?

CAPTAIN

I said...because you're a human  
and I'm a horse.

STELLA

Right. Okay. Cool.

CAPTAIN

There's no reason our respective  
species should cause us any  
tension.

STELLA

Yeah, exactly! It's just that  
like, I grew up researching your  
species and cataloguing and--

CAPTAIN

And I grew up raising your  
species as livestock.

STELLA

Yeah.

CAPTAIN

We'll get used to each other, I'm  
sure. I mean, it's not as if I'll  
ever have to see your world  
because it's not real, and you'll  
probably never have a reason to  
visit my homeworld.

Door opening.

BAZ

Hey Captain! You'll never guess  
what planet we're scheduled to  
dock at next!

CAPTAIN

Strangely enough, Baz, I think  
will guess, and I will guess  
correctly.

## SCENE 3 - BRIEFING

10 NARRATOR

There is a little known planet on the outer edge of the Western Spiral entirely made up of horses. Horses are, on the whole, a reclusive people. Most spend their lives in quiet obscurity, farming or studying or painting or some other solitary occupation. Only a few horses go out and try to make a name for themselves. This planet is called Chincoteague, and the wild horses of Chincoteague are in fact not very wild at all. They are free, and they use their freedom to bake bread and sometimes knit, two activities that are actually very difficult when you have hooves. Chincoteague is not the kind of place anyone visits unless they need to collect its trash, or for some reason they just really like horses.

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CAPTAIN

Okay everyone, I think we should just get this out in the open. The next planet we are collecting from is, in fact, the planet on which I was raised.

BAZ

Do we get to meet your parents?

CAPTAIN

Absolutely not.

PUPPET

12 Can we go to your house?

CAPTAIN

No.

THEED

Can we go to Wendys? 13

CAPTAIN

N-- I mean, I suppose.



THEED

Yay. Wendys.

CAPTAIN

This trip to my home world has nothing to do with me or my personal life, so you will leave that whole matter well enough alone. We are going to do our job, and that job is to pick up trash. Nothing more.

BUTTERCUP

It's just, to be honest, Cap, we don't really know anything about you our your childhood.

CAPTAIN

That is very much intentional.

BUTTERCUP

Maybe it would be nice to, I don't know, meet some of your friends?

CAPTAIN

It's a whole planet! We're probably not even landing anywhere near my old-- no. I shouldn't even be answering your unprofessional questions. You all are not going to learn anything about my personal life and that is the end of it.

SCENE 4 - ARRIVAL

Sounds of ship landing.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Okay everyone, this should be a quick one. It's a small planet that doesn't produce a lot of trash. The loading zone should be--

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MOTHER

Sweetheart? Is that you?

CAPTAIN

Oh no.

FATHER

I think it is honey!

CAPTAIN

This cannot be happening.

MOTHER

Hi dear! Can you see us? Hello!

BAZ

Captain, are those your parents?

BUTTERCUP

Because they're two horses that look exactly like you.

CAPTAIN

Nope. Must be someone else's parents.

MOTHER

It's us!

FATHER

Your parents!

PUPPET

So we do get meet your family after all!

CAPTAIN

No, you don't! Just-- just give me a minute.

Sound of hooves.

Mother, Father-- what are you doing here?

MOTHER

We heard your ship was going to come by and we wanted to say hi.

CAPTAIN

Well, hi. Now that we've exchanged greetings like you wished--

FATHER

Is that your crew?

CAPTAIN

Please don't interact with my--

PUPPET

Yes! We are their crew!

CAPTAIN

Puppet!

FATHER

Why don't you invite your friends  
over for dinner?

MOTHER

15 I made lasagna!

CAPTAIN

First of all, they are not my  
friends, they are my colleagues--

PUPPET

But also friends!

CAPTAIN

And second of all, inviting them  
over would be incredibly  
unprofessional.

BAZ

No it wouldn't! I want lasagna!

PUPPET

I can't eat and even I want  
lasagna!

CAPTAIN

Could you all just...stand  
further away, please?

BUTTERCUP

Nope.

CAPTAIN

How would you feel if I tried to  
invite myself over to your house?

BUTTERCUP

My house is made for cats. You  
wouldn't fit.

MOTHER

Well you could all fit at our  
house! And you're all invited!

CAPTAIN

No you are not. Mother, Father--  
it has been neutral to see you,  
as always. Now we have a job to  
do and we are going to do it.  
Good bye.

FATHER

Well don't be a stranger!

CAPTAIN

I wish I could.

SCENE 5 - LOADING AREA

Sounds of trash being loaded.

BUTTERCUP

That was kinda cold, Captain.

CAPTAIN

What was I supposed to do? Be  
nice to them?

BUTTERCUP

Yeah. They're your parents.

CAPTAIN

Oh, and you're so nice to your  
parents?

BUTTERCUP

Yes actually. I am.

PUPPET

I wish I had parents.

STELLA

You don't have anything that  
counts as a parent, Puppet?

PUPPET

Well, there's the sad lonely old man who crafted me in his workshop one day as a marionette for the circus but then cast me aside when he realized that I could never love him like he loved me, but I never actually got to meet him. I didn't gain sentience until I was pulled out of the garbage but Benevolent Robots Corporation, who manufactured my circuitry.

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Music cuts out.

STELLA

Wow there's a lot to unpack there.

CAPTAIN

Nowhere is it written that I have to be nice to my parents!

BUTTERCUP

Okay, but why aren't you?

CAPTAIN

Um, have you met them?

BAZ

Yeah, they were really sweet.

CAPTAIN

They were annoying.

STELLA

And adorable.

PUPPET

I mean, I don't know much about parents, but they seem pretty great.

Tragic music.

The closest thing I have is the old man who tenderly carved my very bones by hand, only to discard me and hand me over to a heartless corporation.

Music cuts out.

STELLA

Puppet we definitely need to talk about this but I think need to take one parental crisis at a time.

CAPTAIN

There is no crisis! Can you all just shut up and do your job please?

ALL

No.

CAPTAIN

Fine! We'll go over to my childhood home and you'll all see once and for all why I can't stand to be around my parents.

BAZ

Woohoo! Emotional vulnerability! 18

CAPTAIN

I am not being emotionally vulnerable! I am simply proving a point!

BAZ

By showing us a glimpse of your childhood!

SCENE 6 - THE WALK OVER

Sound of footsteps on grass.

STELLA

Hey, I have a weird question.

BAZ

I have a weird answer. 19

STELLA

20 Why did the Captain's parents call them "Captain?" I mean, don't they have a name?

BAZ

Oh, no one's told you about that?

STELLA

What?

BAZ

No. They don't.

STELLA

They don't have a name?

BAZ

Most horses don't.

STELLA

Are you serious? Then how do they refer to each other?

BAZ

By occupation.

STELLA

So the Captain's name is--

BAZ

Literally The Captain, yes. In horse culture, you have to earn your name by achieving something important. Until then, people only refer to you by your job title.

STELLA

So when the Captain said they went into space travel to make a name for themselves--

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BAZ

They meant it literally. It's pretty tough for horses to get names. I mean, even their parents don't have names. They're literally Mother and Father.

STELLA

Wait, so are all horse parents called Mother and Father?

BAZ

Yeah.

STELLA

Doesn't that get confusing?

BAZ

Yeah.

CAPTAIN

Alright. This is it.

STELLA

Oh.

CAPTAIN

What?

STELLA

I just...I forgot that you said  
you grew up on a human farm.

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Sound of humans braying, saying the word "moo."

STELLA (CONT'D)

I know I've been saying this a  
lot of lately but this time I  
mean it from the bottom of my  
heart: This is weird.

CAPTAIN

Right. Yes. I supposed I should  
have warned you that you might  
find seeing your own species as  
livestock to be a bit...uncanny.

STELLA

It could be worse. I mean,  
imagine if you were a cow.

CAPTAIN

I actually have a lot of good  
friends who are cows.

STELLA

Oh.

CAPTAIN

Wait, what do you mean?

STELLA

Nothing.

CAPTAIN

What did your people do with  
cows, Stella?



STELLA

Nothing! Respect them! Even, um, worship them. Once. We got in trouble for that though.

CAPTAIN

I will ask you again: What did your people do with cows, Stella?

STELLA

We ate them.

CAPTAIN

You WHAT?

STELLA

I mean, I didn't! I was a vegetarian! And, I mean, they weren't even real cows, they were just-- simulation cows. So it doesn't even count for anything.

CAPTAIN

YOU ATE COWS?

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BAZ

Now Captain, Stella can't be held accountable for the backwards world that she came from.

CAPTAIN

THIS WOMAN IS NOT ALLOWED IN MY HOUSE!

MOTHER

Welcome! Welcome all!

FATHER

Please! Come into our house!

CAPTAIN

HER PEOPLE ATE COWS.

MOTHER

Well, now she can eat some pasta.

Door.

SCENE 7 - AT HOME

Domestic sounds. Fire maybe, gentle harp music. 24

MOTHER

Please, have some lasagna.

PUPPET

I can't eat it, but can I can  
take some and pretend so I don't  
feel so left out.

MOTHER

Of course.

PUPPET

Great!

NARRATOR

Puppet began smearing the lasagna  
all over his face in a strange  
semblance of eating.

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PUPPET

Mm. Good lasagna. Thanks Mother.

MOTHER

No problem!

CAPTAIN

Please don't call her that.

BAZ

That's her name.

CAPTAIN

It's still weird.

MOTHER

It's been so long since you came  
to visit us, dear! There's so  
much to catch you up on.

CAPTAIN

I doubt that. Nothing ever  
happens here.

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MOTHER

Did you hear about your friend?

CAPTAIN

What friend?

FATHER

Oh you know! You only had one  
friend.

BAZ

Oof you just got roasted by your own dad.

CAPTAIN

I don't remember having any friends.

BAZ

Never mind. That's way worse.

MOTHER

The Farm Hand! At least, that's how you used to know her.

CAPTAIN

We weren't friends, we just-- Wait. She...got a name?

FATHER

Bethany.

CAPTAIN

How? What did she do?

MOTHER

Well, honestly none of us had high hopes for her. But she went off world and joined the Politicians' military. Once she made the rank of General, the Horse Council gave her a name.

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CAPTAIN

That's...good for her.

FATHER

And don't forget about Brian!

CAPTAIN

Who's Brian?

MOTHER

The Guy Who Sold Frozen Yogurt Downtown.

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CAPTAIN

Are you serious? The Guy Who Sold Frozen Yogurt Downtown got a name? And the name he chose was Brian?

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FATHER

He saved some children from a fire.

CAPTAIN

I can do that!

BUTTERCUP

But you didn't.

CAPTAIN

This is exactly why I didn't want you in my house.

MOTHER

Honey--

CAPTAIN

Don't call me that in front of my crew.

BAZ

It's okay honey.

CAPTAIN

Just eat your lasagna.

FATHER

You're not upset because you don't have a name, are you?

CAPTAIN

(yes)

No.

MOTHER

Your Father and I don't have names and look at us.

CAPTAIN

I am looking at you. You're two aging horses who have never accomplished anything and are content to live out the meager remainder of your lives wasting away on a farm.

FATHER

Oh, you always were a joker!

CAPTAIN

No I wasn't. I was never a joker  
and that wasn't a joke.

MOTHER

You don't need a name for us to  
be proud of you. You're the  
captain of a ship!

CAPTAIN

A garbage ship!

FATHER

There's nothing wrong with a  
little garbage.

PUPPET

Well, to be fair, we deal with a  
lot of garbage. Like, a lot of  
garbage.

MOTHER

So Stella! Must be funny to see a  
human farm, right?

STELLA

Yeah. It's...um, it's funny.

FATHER

How did you end up being so,  
well, intelligent?

BUTTERCUP

Don't go crazy, she's not  
actually that intelligent.

STELLA

I was made as an experiment. For  
a simulation. Well, a joke  
experiment. For a joke  
simulation.

FATHER

That's sounds delightful.

STELLA

It wasn't. Everything I ever knew  
was a lie. Even my own father.

MOTHER

Well then wasn't it so generous  
of our little Captain--

CAPTAIN

I'm not little. I'm the same size as you.

MOTHER

--to take you in?

STELLA

Um. I mean, yeah, I guess it was.

CAPTAIN

No it wasn't. It wasn't generous. It was purely practical.

BAZ

It was a little generous, though. Actually, none of us are really qualified to be on this ship--

CAPTAIN

Of course you are.

THEED

I'm not.

CAPTAIN

Stop saying that.

THEED

I'm not qualified. I can't read or count.

PUPPET

**31** I'm not either.

FATHER

How kind of you to let all these poor people work for you!

CAPTAIN

I don't-- they're not-- I don't "let them" work for me! We're a real crew! An actual crew on an actual ship! A...garbage collection ship.

MOTHER

Right. Of course you are. Your crew is very real.

PUPPET

And very under qualified.

CAPTAIN  
Puppet! Shut up and eat your  
lasagna. 32

PUPPET  
I physically cannot.

CAPTAIN  
Mother, Father, we're going to be  
leaving now. It has not been a  
pleasure. I hope it's a very long  
time until I see you again.

MOTHER  
Safe travels!

FATHER  
Here, take some leftovers!

CAPTAIN  
No one take those.

BAZ  
I'll take them!

CAPTAIN  
You people are the worst crew  
imaginable.

BUTTERCUP  
And we take pride in that.

Door sound.

PUPPET  
I don't get what you were  
complaining about. They were  
really nice.

CAPTAIN  
Okay, yes, they seemed nice. But  
beneath that outer layer of  
kindness is a-- forget it. It 33  
doesn't matter. Can we just get  
back to the ship and leave,  
please?

CAPTAIN

Stella?

STELLA

Hm?

CAPTAIN

You know how early I had a problem, and then I told you it wasn't a big deal. Um, actually it is a big deal. So, if you could look at it.

STELLA

(terse)

Yeah. Sure. Fine. Whatever.

CAPTAIN

Are you okay?

STELLA

Yeah. I'm fine.

CAPTAIN

Have I done something wrong?

STELLA

No. Nothing.

CAPTAIN

Alright. Good.

STELLA

I just think it's funny that--

CAPTAIN

Oh no.

STELLA

You have two whole non-simulation parents, and you don't even appreciate them.

CAPTAIN

Appreciate them? You don't get it. You're *lucky*, Stella. Your old life doesn't bother you.

STELLA

Lucky? What do you mean lucky? I lost everything.



CAPTAIN

You never had anything.

STELLA

That doesn't make it any better!

CAPTAIN

Yes, it does. You don't have the weight of other people's expectations hold you down.

STELLA

Okay, first of all, neither do you. All of the "pressure" that you feel is coming from you. And second of all, I did deal with other people's expectations my whole life! It just so happened that some of them weren't real!

CAPTAIN

So the pressure you felt was coming from you, too.

STELLA

No, it was-- it was coming from other people.

CAPTAIN

Other fake people. Face it, Stella, your issues are just as self-inflicted as mine. You just want to play the victim.

STELLA

That is not true.

CAPTAIN

Really? Because I hear you complain about your fake home planet every day.

STELLA

Oh my god. You insensitive...  
 (it's hard for Stella  
 to say any form of a  
 curse)

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asshole! I can't believe I got duped into staying on your ship. Of all places. The first chance I get, I am getting off the Raccoon.

CAPTAIN

Really, baby-woman? You're really going to do that?

STELLA

Yeah! Watch me!

CAPTAIN

Well then good luck out there without us! You want make it two days!

STELLA

Well as Puppet reminds me constantly, days don't mean anything in space!

CAPTAIN

Well you won't make it two seconds! You need us and you are lucky that we put up with your complaining.

STELLA

I have a right to complain! Because I'm traumatized!

CAPTAIN

We're all traumatized!

STELLA

Oh, I'm sorry your perfect parents traumatized you!

CAPTAIN

They didn't! Seeing my brother killed traumatized me!

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STELLA

Wait, what?

CAPTAIN

Nothing.

STELLA

Hold on, we're not just gonna skirt past that. How did you not mention that this whole time?

CAPTAIN

I made an active choice not to mention it and I am making an active choice not to mention it again.

STELLA

Wait--

CAPTAIN

Stella Thomas, as per your own wishes, you are hereby relieved from your duties as the Starship Raccoon's doctor.

STELLA

You're joking.

CAPTAIN

I never joke. We'll drop you off at our next port.

STELLA

But--

CAPTAIN

Good bye, Stella.

Door sound.

#### SCENE 9 - DEBRIEF

STELLA

I just got fired.

BAZ

Sucks, doesn't it?

STELLA

Well at least *I* didn't commit a crime.

BAZ

Okay, okay! Someone is touchy!

STELLA

Of course I'm touchy! They said that I was lucky that nothing in my life was real, and then they fired me.

BAZ

Well, were they wrong?

STELLA

What do you mean?

BAZ


I mean, don't get me wrong, getting into a fight with The Captain sucks. I've been there. But I think there might be some truth to what they said.

STELLA

I don't get it.

BAZ

Think about everyone on this crew. None of us are really here because we want to be here. I mean, The Captain's parents were right, it is pretty kind of them to let us work here. Buttercup is here because she got booted from engineering school, Puppet is here because he can't seem to make it as a writer, Theed is here because ze lost all hir friends in the Snail War, Gerald is here because-- actually I don't know. Maybe Gerald just likes it here. And I'm here because I'm hiding! No one actually wants to be a trash collector. But you, Stella. You have all the choice in the world. Because nothing follows you.



STELLA

I thought you were *just* saying that everything in my life *did* matter.

BAZ

Yeah, of course it does. It shaped who you are. But now that you're not in that world, you don't have to let it get to you anymore.

STELLA

I'm confused. Are you saying that it does or doesn't matter?

BAZ

Both! I mean, obviously your dad and Dan and Mel all had an impact on you. But out here? You can be whatever you want. You might miss them, but I bet a part of you is also glad to be rid of them. I mean, I know I sure was when I left my family.

STELLA

Well, maybe I-- wait, you what?

BAZ

Nothing that ever held you back on Earth can hold you back now.

STELLA

I guess you're right. No family, no friends.

BAZ

Yeah. What else?

STELLA

No rules. No laws.

BAZ

Well, there are those, but you can feel free to ignore them.

STELLA

No gender. No sexuality. No race.

BAZ

Keep going.

STELLA

No one telling me what I'm supposed to do or who I'm supposed to be. I mean, I don't even have a job any more!

BAZ

Now we're getting somewhere!

STELLA

I'm freer than I've ever been!

Door opening.

PUPPET

Hey gang, not to be an alarmist,  
but it looks like we're maybe  
being pursued by the  
intergalactic police?

STELLA

I take it all back.

END OF EPISODE