

STL – 004 – Bowels and Dogs

Content Warnings

- Comedic violence
- Violence to animals
- Emotional abuse
- Alcoholism

TREXEL

Special thanks to Tessa Wright for today's submission. May your limbs be long and fruitful.

[Stellar Firma Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Stellar Firma Show Theme – Intro *Continues*]

DAVID

(Groaning quietly) He's not here. I know he said he specifically wasn't going to be here, but I kind of didn't believe him... **(High pitched and anxious)** Oh, Trexel, we've only got about half an hour left. Come on... **(inhales)** I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die 'cause of an idiot. 'Cause of a late...

[Footsteps approaching, door swooshes open]

TREXEL

David!

(David yelps.)

TREXEL

David, we are running *so* short on time. David, I can't believe you've let this happen!

DAVID

What?!

TREXEL

David, I— have you *seen* the clocks? There are clocks all over the place—

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL (Cont.)

—and I've seen them, and they are saying it— we've only got about—what? — thirty minutes, a little bit less than thirty minutes to get this done? David, what— what have you been doing? What have you been doing, just sitting here in the dark?

DAVID

Yes! Tha—

TREXEL

I'll turn the light on.

IMOGEN

[beep] Access granted.

[bwoop of lights turning on]

TREXEL

See now you're just sitting here in the light as well! Come on!

DAVID

(Cries out slightly in pain) Okay.

TREXEL

David. David, do you not understand what's happening?

David

(irritated) What?

TREXEL

We have a review, David.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

With Hartro Piltz.

DAVID

Yes...

TREXEL

Tomorrow.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

And she's gonna go through *all* of the planets we've done. And I don't want to worry you, David, but thus far— thus far? Thinking back? Not good. None of them good, David. And she's gonna run through them with her judging eyes and angry face, and say, "Why? Why, Trexel? Why have you done it like this? And *David*, why have *you* done it like this?" And do you know what happens if she decides they're bad?

DAVID

...I die!

TREXEL

You die! And more importantly, I get a stern reprimand. I don't want that! I don't need that in my life! So we've got to get it together, David.

DAVID

Right!

TREXEL

We've got to get it together and we've got to do a really great job on this one.

DAVID

Well, it's good that we have a cool... about half an hour to do it then.

TREXEL

(Defensively) That's a little bit more than we've had before!

DAVID

Well... I su—

TREXEL

What do you want from me?! I'm really— I've got a lot on, David!

DAVID

(Sceptically) Mmm.

TREXEL

Come on, re— get the brief, get the brief out of the tube.

DAVID

Okay, okay. Right.

IMOGEN

[beep] Initiating.

DAVID

So, this brief is... from... oh, um, the lead singer and only surviving member of "The Winter Lettuce Collective".

TREXEL

Oh, *my*!

DAVID

Is that— I've never heard of them.

TREXEL

They're the biggest known band! Well, they were until most of them died, and there's only one left, now a solo artist, but they're pretty important, David.

DAVID

Okay, well, um, so this would be a really good one to impress...

TREXEL

Hartro!

DAVID

Yes...

TREXEL

Our line mana— did you forget the name of our *line manager*, David?

DAVID

I've never met her.

TREXEL

If you drop this kind of... cack in that room while she's talking w— you are *done*.

DAVID

(Weakly) Hartro.

TREXEL

Hartro.

DAVID

Hartro.

TREXEL

Piltz.

DAVID

Piltz.

TREXEL

Hartro.

DAVID

Hartro Piltz.

TREXEL

Piltz.

DAVID

Piltz.

TREXEL

Look at me.

DAVID

Yes...

TREXEL

Hartro Piltz.

DAVID

(whispers) Hartro Piltz.

TREXEL

Go on.

DAVID

(Relieved) Okay. So this would be a really good thing to impress Hartro with.

TREXEL

Excellent.

DAVID

Um, it says to “reflect in every sense the brilliance of the client”, —

TREXEL

Hmm.

DAVID (Cont.)

—and it must include a “mood ring sky”.

TREXEL

Right.

DAVID

So...

TREXEL

Is that *all*?

DAVID

Yes! Jus—

TREXEL

Ugh, that’s broad. It’s a *broad* brief, David, and a broad brief is like a double-edged battle-axe. One edge cuts your toast, the other edge cuts your face.

DAVID

Tha— okay. So we’re gonna make toast with this planet.

TREXEL

Don’t get lost in my metaphor, David! Don’t get lost.

DAVID

Okay. I’m back.

TREXEL

We need to make a planet that reflects. Now, the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective— Normally what we might do in this situation is take a look at the client. Who are they?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

What do they like?

IMOGEN

[beep] Winter Lettuce Collective Factfile.

DAVID

(crosstalk) So those questions to you, Trexel, because you... have not been alive... for three days... in this room.

TREXEL

Ooh, you've turned it 'round on me, David, you've turned it 'round. Okay, well, the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective, nobody knows their name or, indeed, their species. A shadowy entity.

DAVID

(hesitantly) Okay, so the planet's quite dark?

TREXEL

Well, it could be quite dar— we— we can't just have a *dark planet*, David, "Oh, we've— we've made you a black orb." Ooh! Maybe they're a *goth*, maybe they'd like a black orb. But I don't think they're— The Winter Lettuce Collective did quite upbeat sort of like... trance-y music.

DAVID

Oh right! So w— w— uh, uh, uh, they, uh, bands do singles, right?

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

What were the names of some of their singles? We might get some ideas about what the— the lead singer thinks is— is about their brilliance.

TREXEL

Well, well, we could go to the hits. You know, uh, uh, "Cosmic Loving".

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

"The Wind Beneath My Ear".

DAVID

Okay...

TREXEL

That was a— that was a *really* lovely song. It was, um, it's about, uh, the Capiens. They have, like, very long, flowing ears, and so when the wind picks up in the mountains they flow back. It's very nice. It's very nice. It's like hair for us.

DAVID

Oh! **(stutters)** So was that sung in sort of the first person or the third person?

TREXEL

No, fourth.

DAVID

Fourth person.

TREXEL

(lisps) Fourth perthon.

DAVID

So it was about... the Capiens, but from the perspective of somebody else but in the past.

TREXEL

Can you see why they were such a successful band?

DAVID

I can.

TREXEL

Who can write in the fourth person other than The Winter Lettuce Collective?

No one. No one. It's a shame most of them died.

DAVID

So the lead singer writes the lyrics?

TREXEL

Uh, unknown. Suspectful, but unknown.

DAVID

Okay, so they are—

TREXEL

They are— they are, as I say, quite shadowy.

DAVID

Right, so—

TREXEL

Quite private.

DAVID

—some sort of suspicious library, then.

TREXEL

(surprised) Sus— suspicious library?

DAVID

Well, if we suspect that they may have written the thing...

TREXEL

Oh David, yes, that— that’s a good— Okay, so. ‘Cause we need a *base* planet and then we need to talk about the— the— the mood ring, but let’s come— let’s come to that later.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

So the base planet: what does a songwriter like more, and what does any creative like more, other than the sound of their own voice, —

DAVID

Ooh!

TREXEL (Cont.)

—but a large, established retrospective of their work.

DAVID

Ah.

TREXEL

A vast library—audio, visual, text—of all of the songs and poems, and— and multimedia experiences of The Winter Lettuce Collective.

DAVID

Okay! So we could build them some sort of *massive* pod for the lead singer.

TREXEL

Ooh, a po— David, do you want to do a pod planet?

DAVID

We could do a pod planet.

TREXEL

We've not done a pod planet. We've done more regular planets, but we do—
Now, technically speaking, is a pod a planet? Who can say?

DAVID

Let's check the chart!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Let's check the chart.

DAVID

Okay.

IMOGEN

[beep] Initiating.

TREXEL

It's under "other".

DAVID

Hmm, oh! No! There it is! A pod is definitely a planet. If it's big enough!

TREXEL

If it's big enough! If it's— You know what, there's a saying we have in this business. "If it's big enough... it's a planet!"

DAVID

(Crosstalk) It's a planet. Ooh, I got it!

TREXEL

(Impressed) Well done, David! You actually got that one as we went along.

DAVID

Well...

TREXEL

It went lovely.

DAVID

Well, from context I picked it up quite well!

TREXEL

Ahh.

DAVID

It's a good rule.

TREXEL

You love a context clue.

DAVID

Yes, I do.

TREXEL

Okay, so we make a massive pod. So, so this will be, um, this will be planned where it's not on the outside, it's on the inside.

DAVID

(Softly) Right.

TREXEL

You walk in, the gravity shifts, you expect to be walking along the surface's the planet, you open a door, you walk in, **(David gasps)** you— you do that flip round the door, you know, where, where your feet sort of curve 'round the door— it's really cool, **(stutters)** and y— and your heels curve round the door and then, BAM, and you're upright inside a pod.

DAVID

Okay, and your legs don't break. Which is good.

TREXEL

No, no, it's a very nice tr— Well they *can*, but what do, is you have a lovely— lovely gentle transition on the gravity.

DAVID

Also, we don't even know if the lead singer has legs, so...

TREXEL

It's a good point! I've just assumed that. You know what? That's my prejudice. That's my prejudice assuming that they have legs. I've got legs, most of the people I know have legs, and I've just gone, and I've assumed. **(high pitched and confident)** I'm pretty sure they have legs because of their song "Look at My Legs," brackets, "of Love?"

DAVID

Ohh, okay. Well then—

TREXEL

So you'd think, you'd think probably legs.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) So the— Probably lovely legs.

TREXEL

I mean, obviously you can sing about legs and not have legs but—

DAVID

In the fourth person.

TREXEL

On the fourth or— even in the sixth—

DAVID

Ooh!

TREXEL (Cont.)

—if you— if you really want to go for it. But probably... has some legs.
Anyway...

DAVID

Ok, so now they've got in the door *with their legs...*

TREXEL

With their legs.

DAVID

What are they met by? **(pause)** They are met by— you said so their— all of their greatest hits? Playing at them...

TREXEL

What, all at once?

DAVID

Well...

TREXEL

Would that be discordant, or would that be transcendent?

DAVID

The Winter Lettice Collective, were they at all— um— anti-establishment? Did they play with the— the— the limits of music?

TREXEL

They definitely played with the limits of music.

DAVID

So...

TREXEL

They would tease the limits of music; they would hide the limits of music's bag and say **(deepens his voice)** "Where is it? Where is your bag?" and the limits of music would be like "I don't know!"

DAVID

So maybe this is like punching the limits of music in the face?

TREXEL

Yes! Yes. So how'd— Wait. So how're we representing that? We'll just— we'll just play everything?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) By playing all of their songs, all at once.

TREXEL

That would be *horrible*, wouldn't it?

DAVID

Maybe.

TREXEL

Would it— it'd be discordant because they did many styles. Multi-instrumentalists, multi-stylists, playing different— at different times in their— Their career lasted at least, *gosh*, 100 Cycles?

DAVID

(Makes indecisive noise) Okay, well, actually hang on a minute, I think— I've been playing around with some of the— the console stuff. I think I can get a thing that will give me access. If you put on these headphones...

[Trexel putting on headphones]

DAVID

(Whispers) The Winter... Lettuce... Collective...

TREXEL

You're just gonna play it straight to headphones? Just play everything straight into my headphones.

DAVID

Straight into your headphones. Um, I won't be able to hear it, nor will the builders who are recording this, but, uh, it will definitely— I just want to see your reaction when I hit the play button.

TREXEL

Okay, okay. I just, uh, pop these on.

DAVID

Yep! And I'm just gonna press, uh— Give me your thoughts. Just let me know what you hear. **(Trexel noises of agreement)** I'm going to press play... now.

IMOGEN

[beep] Initiating.

(Beat)

TREXEL

Okay, I'm just going to pop these off. I have voided my bowels, David. I have— I have entirely voided my bowels. Now—

DAVID

Was it a good void or a bad void?

TREXEL

You know what, David, I'm not entirely sure. I don't know if it was because it was transcendent and beautiful, or because it was terrifying and reminded me of the limits of my own life and existence, but either way, I am now sitting in a pile of my own filth. So, I'm not entirely sure, and correct me if I'm wrong but for goodness sake *do not correct me if I'm wrong*, that whatever the reason for a void boweling— or a bowel voiding... not— not ideal. Not what you want when you've— you've designed a planet, so—

IMOGEN

[beep] Project deleted.

DAVID

So that's a no.

TREXEL

So that's a no on all of the music together. I'm going to— **(sighs)** We haven't got time to change, so I'm just gonna have to sit in this and, uh, **(quiet squelching)** just if it starts to— **(squelching continues)** starts to smell, David, just... just keep it to yourself.

DAVID

Yes, Trexel.

IMOGEN

[beep] Air purification initiated.

[Gentle sound of a fan]

DAVID

Okay, so not that.

TREXEL

No.

DAVID

So what happens when you come into the lobby?

TREXEL

Maybe there's just, like, a nice— a nice butler.

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

A nice butler with a fresh pair of trousers—

DAVID

Maybe.

TREXEL (Cont.)

—saying “Good morning, Sir, Madam, or Entity. Would you like a fresh pair of trousers that you haven’t soiled?”

DAVID

I feel like your personal experience is— **(stammers)**

TREXEL

No, no, no, no.

DAVID

—is intruding into the design of this planet.

TREXEL

No, everybody wants a fresh pair of trousers when they come and— come home, because maybe somebody’s **(through gritted teeth)** *caused them to void them.*

DAVID

I'm still getting a sense that this is more about you than it is about the *planet*,
Trexel.

TREXEL

Maybe a shower! Maybe a shower in the lobby.

DAVID

Again, is that to wash—

TREXEL

A fresh shower!

DAVID (Cont.)

— the filth off of Trexel?

IMOGEN

[beep] Air purification system overloaded. Increasing power.

[Fan spins faster]

TREXEL

Or.

DAVID

A.

TREXEL

Nice.

DAVID

Big.

TREXEL

Thing.

DAVID

Which.

TREXEL

You.

DAVID

Can.

TREXEL

Have.

DAVID

For?

TREXEL

A.

DAVID

Dessert.

TREXEL

You know what, that's nice. That's nice. Alright, okay, I won't make this all about me and my horrendous trousers.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

You walk in, somebody goes, "Here's— here's a treat.

DAVID

Yes!

TREXEL

Here's a sweet treat." You can choose what that sweet treat is.

DAVID

Is the treat related in some way to the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective?

TREXEL

Yes, yes, yes. Okay, we're gonna get into the reflection. The treat is coated **(whispers)** *with crystals*.

DAVID

So you see yourself?

TREXEL

So you see yourself. You see yourself a million times reflecting back. Ooh! Take a spoonful of the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective. Mm! Mm! Mmm! So unctuous, so tasty, so *me*, you know?

David

Mm! Okay.

TREXEL

That'd be nice. And then— and then you— you're going to walk into, um, uh, into— into sort of a, a storage facility, because all of— all of these audio recordings, video recordings, so and so forth, they've all got to be stored somewhere, David!

DAVID

Rebrand!

TREXEL

Rebrand?

DAVID

The Grand Atrium.

TREXEL

The Gra— Oh, David! You walk into *The Grand Atrium*, and there in the finest and rarest woods are housed all of your recordings throughout your entire career. Music, songs, dance moves, uh, advertisements, promos, everything.

DAVID

Right, they— Well, they've done a lot, they— You said they were around for a hundred cycles, —

TREXEL

A hundred cycles.

DAVID (Cont.)

—so there must be enough to— to fill it full of it!

TREXEL

Absolutely. Absolutely.

DAVID

Do we— do we know anything about wha— what else the lead singer likes except for The Winter Lettuce Collective? Some sort of memorial to their dead bandmates?

TREXEL

Well, this is where it becomes a little bit difficult, David, because th— the circumstances under which The Winter Lettuce Collective became only the surviving member of The Winter Lettuce Collective is— is a dark and, uh, not entirely clear tale.

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

They began after their massive international and interspatial success to, uh, disappear.

DAVID

One by one?

TREXEL

One by one. Like a dime store novel.

DAVID

Like a rotting lettuce.

TREXEL

A tour bus would fall into a sun. A promotional shoe would explode on a foot taking somebody with them. A— a van full of cheering fans would— would pull up to their house and let them in at night, and they'd just *tear* them apart. And one by one, The Winter Lettuce Collective became but one singular entity left... The one we have today... So what I'm saying is, I'm not sure if they orchestrated the murders and therefore wouldn't *want* a constant reminder of— of that thing they did.

DAVID

Ah! Okay!?

TREXEL

We could make it optional.

DAVID

Yes, the—

TREXEL

Make it optional.

DAVID

Wait! Ooh! We could have the— two rooms! Two galleries—

TREXEL

Okay.

DAVID (Cont.)

—which is one is the “I Murdered the Other Members of My Band” gallery—

TREXEL

Excellent.

DAVID (Cont.)

—and the other one is the “The Members of My Band Were Tragically Killed in a Series of Unrelated Accidents” gallery.

TREXEL

Exactly. Exactly. And then what you do is you walk into the Grand Atrium, you know, first day in, you choose one door, you lock the other one, never look at it again.

DAVID

Exactly!

TREXEL

Maybe put a— maybe put a shelf over the— over the plaque that we'll put there.

DAVID

Ooh! Maybe we, um, we can rig it with explosives and give them a button.

TREXEL

Oh, and they just explode it right there and then.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

Just demolish— demolish the memories like they destroyed the evidence. Or! Like they destroyed the completely unrelated accidents that they were nowhere near at and have an absolutely fantastic alibi for.

DAVID

Exactly.

TREXEL

Wonderful. Wonderful! Well— Okay, well, that's a good *start* then. That's a good start. So— so, what we're saying here is the reflection of the— the individual that lives here is their work. You *are* what you *do*.

DAVID

Yes, Trexel, you are what you do.

TREXEL

Yes, you are— you know, what you produce in this life, wha— your— your output of, you know, apart from anything else, really reflects who you are as a person, and your— and your quality, so you really want to make sure that, at the end of your life when you look back at all the things that you’ve done and made and—

DAVID

Hypothetically, planets that you’ve built.

TREXEL

—hypothetically planets that you’ve built, really reflect who you are, and I think that’s something that— Oh, God I just had a little bit of a think about that. That’s depressing, isn’t it? That’s gonna be a cavalcade of failure for me, isn’t it?

DAVID

Or! Or!

TREXEL

(Getting louder) What have I done with my life?

DAVID

No, but— No! No, Trexel!

TREXEL

Oh, I'm spiralling.

DAVID

Trexel! Trexel, no no no no no!

TREXEL

David, I'm spiralling! David, I'm going down the drain!

IMOGEN

[beep] Warning: consultant spiralling.

DAVID

The—Th—Th—The Grand Atrium! No. Wh-What does the pod look like? Is it a big winter lettuce? What on Earth does a winter lettuce look like?

TREXEL

Well, if you know a lettuce—? No, of course you won't.

DAVID

No, I've never seen one.

TREXEL

Right, um— How far back— I don't know how— how many fundamentals you were given when you were created.

DAVID

Okay, I theoretically know what a lettuce is.

TREXEL

Okay, okay.

DAVID

And I also theoretically know what a winter is.

TREXEL

Okay.

DAVID

Those two together? Not a clue.

TREXEL

Really cold lettuce.

DAVID

Really cold lettuce?

TREXEL

Like a block of ice! Like if you— for example, if you were going to murder someone with a lettuce— And that is incidentally how one of them died. A lettuce just hit them right in the face and it— it just destroyed their brainstem. But if you imagine a lettuce, and it's been frozen solid, you know, inedible? That's a winter lettuce.

DAVID

Okay, so, oh— that theoretical lettuce?

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

That but hard.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

Still don't know what the theoretical lettuce looks like.

TREXEL

Oh! Like, uh, do you know leaves?

DAVID

...Yes.

TREXEL

Well, just like lots of leaves all just piled into a big ball...

DAVID

So sort of like a bush. Like a—

TREXEL

Yeah, like a really— a really, like, dense bush.

DAVID

A really dense bush. Okay. Well, what if we made the pod look like a really dense bush!

TREXEL

And you peel back one of the outer leaves and that's how you get in.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

Although, having a think about that— Oh my god! That would be fantastic, because I just thought, if you did that, the way a lettuce works is the outer leaves— there's like two or three covering the whole of the outside—

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

—so if you have to open one, you just open the whole side— this is *thousands* and thousands of metres, just all opening up as you pull away one leaf door exposing The— The Grand Atrium to the— to the outside elements. You're in a— you're in a space, uh, suit! And you're floating in there through and then you close it, and then the air hisses back in— That would mean we'd lose that thing around the door that I really like, you know when you put your foot around the door and then gravity kicks in and then— and then it sort of swings 'round—

DAVID

Well, what if you did that and then there was a— you had the big door—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID (Cont.)

—and then there was a second smaller door—

TREXEL

(excitedly) Yes.

DAVID (Cont.)

—that you then do the foot thing.

TREXEL

Just sort of, like, hanging, just sort of in the gap there, so that you can just sort of float up to that door, engage some gravity, flip around the door, close it back up, then you're inside.

DAVID

Yeah, sure.

TREXEL

You know, this is for a rich person.

DAVID

We wanted to give them options.

TREXEL

We want them to have frivolity.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

And you know, we want to distract them or remind them of all those murders they did or didn't do!

DAVID

Yes, well, speaking of frivolity was— what is the lead singer— mysterious and suspicious as they are, did they— do we know anything that they have done? Are they frivolous? Or— or— or are they very, um, stoic and, uh, and ascetic?

TREXEL

Well, let's have a little look at their credit card details, shall we.

IMOGEN

[beep] Client financial records.

TREXEL

Okay, they make a lot of purchases of ruched fabrics.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

That's a decadent fabric, David.

DAVID

Ah.

TREXEL

So like ruched— that's for, uh, for like maybe a frilly jacket or perhaps if you have a shirt and it has all those plumes just under the neck.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

I don't know. Anything else? Dogs. Lots of dogs. They purchased lots of dogs.

DAVID

So—

TREXEL

Small dogs.

DAVID

Dogs in frilly shirts.

TREXEL

Well— David, I don't know what they do with it. I'm just going down a list.

DAVID

No, I'm saying *we* could make dogs in frilly shirts.

TREXEL

We *could* make dogs in frilly shirts.

DAVID

What's the third thing?

TREXEL

The third thing, um, is... knives!

DAVID

Dogs in frilly shirts... with knives?

TREXEL

I mean, how would you get it to pick up the knife? Dogs are lovely!

DAVID

Sellotape it to its head.

TREXEL

(Shocked stuttering) David! Are you a monster? Sellotape a knife to a dog's—
To do wha— Do you know how terrible— The dog would be like, "Oh hello,
friend! Hello lovely friend! I'm going to come and say hello. But guess what?
I've got a knife tied to my head but I'm a dog so I don't have any concept of
what that might mean." And you jump up and then you're *stabbing* your
owner—

DAVID

What does that—

TREXEL (Cont.)

—in the neck and face!

DAVID

Well, this is why I'm saying— so d—does the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective, um, like a little bit of danger? I mean, if they did all of those *murders* they probably did, because they did all of those murders,—

TREXEL

It's possible.

DAVID (Cont.)

—so maybe they want to have some pets which engage in little, li-light knife play.

TREXEL

But then, on the other hand, as we're building in options, they might not have, so again I'll— David, we need to go for options.

DAVID

Okay. A knife with a sheath.

TREXEL

(crosstalk) Half the dogs.

DAVID

Halve the dogs?

TREXEL

Halve— No, half *of* the— No, don't halve the dog— We're not King Solomon! You're not halving dogs so you've got two— two sides of a dead dog, and then say, "Well, there's your choice! Choose two sides of this dead—" That's no choice, David! That's a *false* choice! No, what I'm saying is you put a knife on half of the dogs' heads, —

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL (Cont.)

—and then you have different call signals, so you've got a choice. You know, uh, **(stammers)** you have options for the calls. You say, "Here, Knifey!" And all the dogs with knives, they come running up to you with knives, you know. If you don't like that? "Here, Friendly!" All the lovely dogs come up, and then you've got options. And then, obviously, if you wish to, to go for one over the other, you should herd the half of the dogs that you don't like into the room you're gonna explode, and then *Kaboom!* **(David yelps)** Dogs gone.

DAVID

Right! Okay, um, and if you wanted a mix? Like, Knifey-Friendly? Friendly-Knifey? Ooh. Will the dogs end up maybe fighting one another?

TREXEL

(Solemnly) Very probably. Very probably. **(David hums)** Dogs left on their own—and I know this from experience and a small apartment and a lack of morals—the dogs left alone on their own for too long will just fight each other.

DAVID

Okay. So we're gonna have to have some sort of system in place to make sure the dogs don't just fight each other and kill each other *before* the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective get there.

TREXEL

They're sedated.

DAVID

Ah! And, actually, as we all know, lead singers love drugs!

TREXEL

They love drugs!

DAVID

Love drugs!

TREXEL

All of them!

DAVID

So give them sedatives, give the dogs sedatives, give the dessert sedatives—

TREXEL

Everybody's got sedatives.

DAVID

—give the lead singer sedatives. Exactly.

TREXEL

Wonderful stuff.

DAVID

Constantly.

TREXEL

Lovely. David, David, I've just realised something. We've absolutely reflected and given options to reflect this individual's personal state. But we've made a pod. We've made it focus inside. We need a sky.

DAVID

(Realisation) The mood ring!

TREXEL

The mood ring in the sky— How— The m— The sky has to be mood— We've— We've made it internal!

DAVID

Ah!

TREXEL

Can you have a sky inside?

DAVID

Well—

TREXEL

Inside sky?

DAVID

Yes, inside sky. You could have The Grand Atrium as so big and you said all of their work is so— there's so much, it goes off into the clouds.

TREXEL

Oh, I see!

DAVID

Into the cl— into— into— it's artificial clouds, and we can have like, a laser show which, if they're feeling particular things—

TREXEL

Mm-hmm.

DAVID (Cont.)

—like murderous,—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID (Cont.)

—or sad because of those accidents that happened, —

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID (Cont.)

—or sad because they blew up some of the dogs, or murderous because they
blew up some of the dogs or—

TREXEL

Or just happy because there's dogs.

DAVID

Yeah, maybe! Or sad because there's knife dogs, um, then we can have a laser
show that reflects that and reflects— refracts off of the clouds!

TREXEL

But, David, the emotions of an individual are so complicated. How are we
going to be able to *read* them from an individual and then reflect that in some
sort of algorithm to lasers in the sky reflecting their mood? How, David? How!?
How! How!

DAVID

A complex and detailed questionnaire every time they enter the building.

TREXEL

Moment after moment, question after que— You make a cup of **(stuttering)** tea, or a drink, uh, and then it says, “How’d you feel about that? Here’s 20 questions about that.”

DAVID

Exactly!

TREXEL

Then you sit down, and they go, “How was that chair? How does that chair make you feel?”

DAVID

You’ve seen that dog get knifed. How does that make you feel?

TREXEL

Happy? Sad? Excited? Other? You know, and then at any given point the lasers know that, based on the weighting of the questions, what you need to be reflected in the sky. Excellent, David! I don’t think that’ll be massively annoying at all!

DAVID

No, no, probably not!

TREXEL

Well, you know—

DAVID

I mean, I imagine that lead singers are quite introspective— **(Trexel hums)**— and want to examine their feelings and thoughts quite a lot—

TREXEL

Ah, yes.

DAVID (Cont.)

—given the beauty of their lyrics, so maybe that sort of questionnaire would help crystallise that sort of emotion into, let's say, a sky that's a colour.

TREXEL

Tell you what, David, let's frame this. Let's pretend it's an interview for some sort of magazine.

DAVID

All the time.

TREXEL

It's not a questionnaire, you just have somebody in there full time saying that they're from some sort of, you know, uh, intergalactic, uh, uh, uh, a style or glamour magazine and they're just really interested to find out, you know, what are the real you's like.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

And then that makes it a fun thing, 'cause lead singers, they love to talk about themselves!

DAVID

Yes, w— we— well, we could, actually— Maybe we could actually stream it! Create a publication that's all about, you know, when the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective—

TREXEL

Yes!

DAVID (Cont.)

—gets in the pod, they can answer these questions and broadcast their thoughts out to the universe!

TREXEL

You could have their fanbase sign up to notifications. You know, the lead singer of The Winter Lettuce Collective is feeling hungry or sad or introspective or murderous—

DAVID

(Gasps) It could be a subscription service **(Trexel gasps)** which would help pay for all the dogs that get killed!

TREXEL

(Excited) It can pay for the dogs that get killed! And maybe some other things as well, but probably mainly for all of the dog upkeep!

DAVID

Yeah!

TREXEL

Wonderful stuff! David, you're really nailing this sort of, like, double-edged marketing plus service. You know, you wrap it into one big thing and then when the customer looks at it, they're like **(higher pitched voice)** "Do you make some money off that?" And you're like, "No, don't look at that! Look at these dogs with knives! And yes, we make money!"

DAVID

Well, there's the thing, we're not making planets as products, we're trying to make planets as a *service*.

(Beat.)

TREXEL

(Threateningly) David, if... If you start... If you start spewing consultancy stuff to *me*...

DAVID

|— |—

TREXEL (Cont.)

—to Trexel Geistman, King Consultant, Big Boy, Big Boss, Consulting Boss, Daddy with the Consulting Stick, things won't go well for you, David. This is my patch.

DAVID

(quietly) Okay.

TREXEL

And you're living on my patch rent free. But if you start to trim *my* grass and tell me that *my* hedges need looking at, then I'll turn 'round to *you* and say, "Get off my lawn!"

DAVID

(Slightly scared) Okay! Tell you what. Trexel! So, going forward? **(Trexel stutters over him)** I— I— I— I mean, in the future... **(Trexel stutters over him)** ... I mean... Yes?!

TREXEL

Thank you!

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

That's all I ever wanted from you, David, was just total and utter compliance. Well, you know what, David? I— I think— I think this planet— I think this planet, this pod planet, is pretty good. I think it's pretty good. I think— I think Hartro's gonna like this one. It reflects all the things we needed in the brief, it contains a lot of dogs that murder each other, and saying that out loud that sounds bad now, but we've run out of time. Submit it!

DAVID

Oh! Oh— I, uh— Okay.

IMOGEN

[beep] Would you like to submit?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Submit it, David! Submit it!

DAVID

(Sobs) Okay.

IMOGEN

[Chime, pneumatic tube hissing] Submitting.

TREXEL

There we go. Isn't that good? Job well done. And you said we needed more time! We absolutely nailed that one possibly, maybe, probably not! We'll find out tomorrow.

DAVID

So are you gonna turn up on time to the review?

TREXEL

Ah... I probably should.

DAVID

It will reflect well on both of us if you did.

TREXEL

It would.

DAVID

And you said yourself, it's very important.

TREXEL

It's incredibly important, David, you know fo— for— for my continued success and I suppose also for your continued existence it's... it's incredibly important. So, I'll... what about 2 o' clock I'll see how I feel, and, uh, you know I'll— **(quickly)** I'll see you when I see you.

DAVID

(Slightly panicked) But— but it starts at 9!

TREXEL

(Yelling over David) Anyway, David, have a lovely time! Okay, see you with Hartro tomorrow. Bye!!

[Door swooshes closed, David sighs defeatedly]

IMOGEN

[beep] Air purification system shutting down.

DAVID

(Talking quietly to himself) Okay. I need to keep myself busy. Yes. That’s it. If I— if I have something to do while he’s gone, maybe this crushing *fear* will go away! Yes. Yes! Um, le— let’s have a look.

IMOGEN

[beep] I.M.O.G.E.N. online. How can I help you, **[David’s recorded voice played back]** “Um... David 7?”

DAVID

(Stammers) Well, I— I— I suppose I’m looking for a way to, um, keep myself busy. To take my mind off of things.

IMOGEN

Searching... Search complete. Results:

[Stellar Firma Ltd. theme playing in background]

Stellar Firma Ltd. internal memorandum to all consultants—Top ten ways to keep stress free at work. Number one: Giving thanks to the Board.

DAVID

(Quickly) Praise to the Board, um—

IMOGEN

Number two: Light physical exercise on the solar deck.

DAVID

(Mumbles to himself) Can’t get out of here.

IMOGEN

Number three: Embroidery.

DAVID

That's needles...

IMOGEN

Number four: Tabletop roleplaying.

DAVID

Oh, that— that's for nerds.

IMOGEN

Number five: Record a blog on the internal employee entertainment system.

DAVID

(Hesitantly) Uh...

IMOGEN

Number six: Take your chances in the fighting pits.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Wait! Wait, wait wait wait wait wait wait wait! **[music stops]**

Record on the employee entertainment systems? Hmm. Now there's an idea.

[Stellar Firma Theme – Outro]

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