

STL 57 — Histrionics and High-Handedness

Content Warnings

- Emotional abuse
- Bullying / Taunting
- Shouting
- Innuendo
- Mentions of: cults, existential crisis, attempted murder, blood, bombs, food, arson, threats of violence, alcoholism, death threats.

TREXEL

Special thanks to Vi – I've got your number, buddy. Is it six? I think it's six.

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Displaying restricted internal schematics.

DAVID

Okay. So, and I hate to say this, but it does look like the vents are the best way to get around. So, guess Trexel does know what he's doing with that.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Even when it's true, do not say it out loud, he might hear.

DAVID

(Softly) But... **(sigh)** Who do I know who knows their way around the vents that *isn't* Trexel...?

[Whoosh of doors as Trexel enters]

TREXEL

Oh, my ears are burning, David!

Is that because there's a fire in my ears? Quickly, check my ears for fire, it's happened before!

DAVID

Uh...

IMOGEN

[Beep] Closing all tabs in a non-suspicious way.

DAVID

No, no, there's nothing! Your ears are normal! Your ears are fine!

TREXEL

Ah, you must just have been talking about me then. Was it nice things?

(snarled) It better be nice things, David!

DAVID

Ah, yes, I was just thinking about Trexology, and how good it is.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Ahhhh.

DAVID

I sorted out the pamphlets for you. So—

TREXEL

Pamphlets?

DAVID

Here you go.

[Smack of papers]

TREXEL

Oh, the pamphlets! Here we are, here we are.... “Trexology: It's not seditious.”
“Trexology: It's all about how the Board is great!” “Trexology: Don't think
about it too hard.”

David, I feel like these are, sort of, about playing down the revolutionary and—

DAVID

Ah—

TREXEL

—and new nature of the message of Trexology, and very much on the status quo of loving the Board.

And I— Look, I love the Board, just gravy.

DAVID

Oh y—

IMOGEN

[Beep] Hail the Board!

TREXEL

—but I thought this is, this is a bit not about—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh no, no, no, see—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) —you know, me as much as I'd like it.

DAVID

You don't get it. It's reverse psychology.

TREXEL

Oh. So it's like, 'Hey, aren't the Board great. But also, Trexel?' and people are, like, 'Well, yeah, I suppose Trexel'?"

DAVID

Um... Yes.

TREXEL

Okie dokie! I'll get distributing these when I have a moment! Which will be at some point.

[Stack of paper dropped]

Now. We need to focus, David. I feel like **you** have been a bit unfocused of late. I keep on finding strange open tabs on Imogen—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No you don't.

TREXEL

—Oh, where's this? Oh, how do I get there? Hey, is this a possible thing to do? I don't read past the little point where the tab line cuts it off to get context for those things, but it sounds suspicious to me, David!

And I feel like you're not concentrating on your work.

DAVID

Okay t—

TREXEL

And if there's one thing I want, David, it's total concentration on—

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

—Oh look, a fly!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yes. No. Also, ah, ah, no, those were all—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Buzz, buzz. Buzz, buzz.

DAVID

No, those were all dreams you told me about.

TREXEL

Have I been dream thinking again?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

I do find it difficult to work out what's dreams and what's not.

IMOGEN

[Beep] If you stay up for three days on paint thinner and marlin dust, then dream/reality confusion is inevitable.

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

I had a wonderful dream once, that Bathin had died.

DAVID

(disappointed) Oh.

TREXEL

Is that real? Did that happen? **(large gasp of realised wonderment)** Did that happen?! Is that a real thing?!

DAVID

No, it, it thankfully did not.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Long live Grand Duke Yum.

TREXEL

Curses! Well, the point is, David, get on the Trexel train, because Trexel's focussed like an arrow. For example, hey, why don't we get the brief?

You see, I mentioned it!

DAVID

Er...

TREXEL

I mentioned it because I've trained—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Sure! Yep.

TREXEL

—and you didn't, because you're a wastrel!

DAVID

Okay, fine. Uh, yeah, I'll get the brief. I'll get... the brief, and we can really... nail the brief.

TREXEL

Nail it to the mast! Is that anything? Don't know. Am I a pirate? Yarr! Nope, didn't feel anything.

[Panel whack leads to whirring machinery as pod is delivered]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Initiating.

DAVID

Right. So this is, this is from Zeith Fel. Uh, she's "External Seeking Wisdom", and she is writing from the Diabolical Flotilla Actors' Guild.

TREXEL

Well... Interesting!

DAVID

You know the Diabolical Flotilla?

TREXEL

Oh, we all know the Diabolical Flotilla. They are the premiere actors' guild of the entire universe. Do you know The Face is an alum?

DAVID

Oh, really?

TREXEL

Our, our very own The Face, yes. What do they want? What do, what do the wonderful Diabolical Flotilla Actors' Guild want?

DAVID

Well, Zeith Fel, um, she writes to us saying "Esteemed Stellar Firma consultants. As you know, we at the Diabolical Flotilla are the best travelling acting troupe this side of the galaxy."

TREXEL

And if you, if you ask my opinion, on the other side of the galaxy as well. The Halcyon Spiral Arm Players are moderately good at best!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Their last production of *The Gilded Moon 2: Heavy Moons* was both derivative and unnecessarily lewd.

DAVID

Right. Yes. Uh. “We perform, not only in every contemporary medium, but also in several we have inherited from our long-destroyed Earth.

TREXEL

Mmmm, the classics!

DAVID

Like?

TREXEL

Oh, you want na— Okay. Um... *King Henry the 38th*.

DAVID

Okay. And?

TREXEL

Um... and also, *GAMS! The Leg Story*.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Also, *Much Ado About This Bee!* It's about beekeepers.

DAVID

O-kay. Those are the classics?

TREXEL

Well, those are the classics I remember off the top of my head.

DAVID

Ah—

TREXEL

You know, I always wanted to be an actor, David, did you know that?

DAVID

I did— No, I had no idea.

TREXEL

When I was— **(sighs)** When I was young I sh— it was a bit of a tough topic, it was, it was something that I actually shared with Percy. We, we put on our own, small, productions at home whenever everyone was out for weeks on end. And we played to an audience of teddy bears and pictures of my family that I imagined were smiling. They weren't smiling in the pictures, I had to draw the smiles on, but you know, it had the same effect, but unfortunately right about the time that they discovered I was friend to Percy, they got rid of them. I... My love of acting was also found out, and they said, 'No, it's not a respectable profession, Trexel. You need to be a consultant. That's the thing. That's the Geistman way. No prancing about on stage. You're not The Face! And you never will be!'

The Face was a famous child actor at this stage, you understand—

DAVID

Mmm.

TREXEL

—and, uh, they refused to allow me to apply to the Actors’ Guild and, uh, it's always, it's always been a point of, uh, a point of sadness for me, one of the few disappointments in my life, which has otherwise been pretty great.

IMOGEN

[Beep] If your memory was a film, we would recycle the continuity editor.

DAVID

Right. Yes. **(sigh)** Well, uh, yeah, I have to say I'm not—

TREXEL

“Alas, poor Yorvik, I knew this guy!” Ah, the stage...

DAVID

So, is that a, is that a line from, uh, from one of the classics? That’s from the beekeeping one, or...?

TREXEL

I can't remember which one it's from, but I think it's in the same one as it says “Tis nobler in the head to suffer all of that guff they're chucking at you, because you're a really smart face, Trexel.”

DAVID

Wow. Okay. Did The Face write that one or...?

TREXEL

No, I wrote that one.

DAVID

That's a classic?

TREXEL

A classic Trexel classic. I call it *Trexel's Classic*, a classic. A classic in three parts.

DAVID

Were all of those classics you were thinking about, ones that you wrote when you were a child?

TREXEL

Ooh, hard to say. I often think that when I write something, it's an instant classic. Such as this children's book I wrote.

(Paper rustling)

It's called *Lovely Peter and the Book of Magic*.

“Lovely Peter was looking for a book of magic. **(angry)** But magic is an illusion by our enemies to weaken us! **(resumes normal reading voice)** And so he was put in a pit. The End.”

[Book closes]

DAVID

Okay. Well, speaking of being focussed, we are not through the brief yet. So—

TREXEL

Oh yes, I interrupted real early!

DAVID

“Business has been slow —

TREXEL

Oh no!

DAVID

—however, as you decided to pulverise nearly every planet where we were regulars.”

TREXEL

(Laughs uproariously) Yes. Yes. Yes. We did.

DAVID

“Please do not take this as a criticism, as fellow creators like yourselves, we understand you must have had your motivations.”

TREXEL

Revenge.

DAVID

“We would like to help with revitalising our repertoire this season. We need inspiration for our next set of performances. And we are confident the minds at Stellar Firma will be able to help us with some brilliant ideas.”

IMOGEN

[Beep] Confidence so misplaced, you may as well have thrown it into a sun.

TREXEL

Oh, but who could they turn to, David? Who has the creative might and wisdom to write—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I mean—

TREXEL

—an entirely new set of classic plays?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) They— No. Yeah—

TREXEL

Updating them to make them the most enticing and exciting, uh, theatrical productions of the season. Who? Who? Who?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Trexel, it's not a rhetorical. They are—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm an owl. Who?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) They are li—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'm an owl, and I'm asking a question. Who?

DAVID

They are literally writing at us.

TREXEL

Me?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, us.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) M-Me?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) As— No. Us.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Trexel Geistman?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) And David 7

TREXEL

I couldn't possibly! Okay! I'll admit it! I have been working on a few classics just in case this happened.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Caution – consultant about to suck all the air out of the room; Security issued with oxygen regulators.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Now, imagine the scene. This is from a—

DAVID

Uh, Trexel, please, just, just one, one question, right?

TREXEL

Should I get my cape?

DAVID

No.

TREXEL

Is it because I haven't got my cape?

DAVID

Nope. Don't leave this room.

It is just that you have been talking about the classics, and the players and actors.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

And I am not sure... what they do or are.

TREXEL

Oh! Because your life is incredibly limited to a few weeks, mostly around here.

Okay. Well that's—

DAVID

Is it like one of the wrestling holovids?

TREXEL

It is much like one of the wrestling holovids, except, of course, the wrestling holovids are entirely legitimate real life, and this is made up, but I can understand how you'd get confused. You know, kayfabe gets us all.

Now, the thing about acting is it's— **(snorts)** It's funny, I like to say it like this: acting is *reacting*, in that you're reacting to remembering the words you're supposed to say, and then saying them out loud. So, okay, I'll le—What is, what is acting? Oftentimes, we want to present events that haven't happened or have happened, but not necessarily in this way. For propaganda reasons, for reasons of making us look good, for propaganda that makes us look good, all those sorts of reasons. And so plays are a way of reimagining events with live people on stage, or maybe through a holovid, to represent those actions, ideas and events. Actors—

DAVID

So a-a-acting is pretending?

TREXEL

I suppose, if you want to— I-I-I like to call it acting, reacting, but I suppose you're reacting to pretend things. So yes, acting is reacting to the pretend.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

So, you know, sometimes when we do our, our little roleplays, David— In fact, you know what, let's nest this within a nest! Let's do a roleplay. Right, let's get a roleplay going. Okay.

DAVID

Okay.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Roleplay holovision initiated.

[Holovision sound]

TREXEL

Ah! I see you want to be an actor, fine young gentlemen who obviously is not a clone because clones aren't allowed to act or in fact do many things—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah...

TREXEL

—but you are a human boy. Now I want you to become an actor. And that means you're going to wear this crown and be stabbed!

(Blade zings)

But don't worry it's pretend.

DAVID

Okay. Is— And you're sure that knife is, is a fake knife?

TREXEL

Let's find out. Step back. Stab!

(Blade twangs)

DAVID

Oh, it just bent.

TREXEL

Hard to say then. Was it a real knife that bent because you're so dense, or is it a fake knife that bent because it's supposed to? Let me just push it into my leg.

[Stabbing sound]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Knife detected – in Trexel; Security alerted, but not surprised.

TREXEL

That's a real knife there. That's... ohhh, ah...

DAVID

You might want to take that out.

[Blade extracted swiftly]

TREXEL

(Feeling faint) Ah, okay. Um, just feel a bit woozy...

DAVID

Uh, t-t-tell you what, they'll just— Let me just— I'll grab one of your pamphlets.

(Grabbing and ripping of paper)

It makes, ooh, very good padding. Okay. I think—

TREXEL

I've made them out of toilet paper because I couldn't find regular.

[Faint sound of seeping around inexpert binding]

DAVID

Okay, well, I think that's just gonna, sort of, stay there and it'll be fine.

TREXEL

(Weakly) Okay. Could we.... stop the roleplay now

IMOGEN

[Beep] Roleplay holovision terminated.

[Holovision sound]

TREXEL

(Softly) That got a little too real.

See, that wasn't acting, David, that's, that's a real wound.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Um, so that should give you a bit of context. That wound? Not acting!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

TREXEL

If it was a fake knife, acting. Hang on. What about this? Oh, I've been shot. Hah hah – I haven't! Acting.

DAVID

Oh, okay. So it's just, it's just, sort of lying.

TREXEL

Yeah! Which is why I'm so great at it.

DAVID

Right. But, but you, I mean, you just stabbed yourself for real, which wasn't acting, when you were trying to act. So that doesn't really... that was, uh, that wasn't acting, but you thought it *was* acting, which means that you're— Wait, are you, are you acting now?

TREXEL

Am I David?

DAVID

I'm confused.

TREXEL

Hard to say. Aren't we all acting?

DAVID

No, it just— Trexel, it just seems a bit, it seems a bit ridiculous—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Hard to say. Are you acting?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) What? I mean—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Hard to say.

DAVID

What? No. Yes. That's what I mean. Like, it seems a bit ridiculous that apparently these plays are like specific points where you're allowed to lie, because aren't we all lying about everything, all the time, because if you tell the truth, you're just going to be instantly blended?

TREXEL

Yes. But except in this case, you've paid to be there. And that's the difference. Acting is when people are paying to watch you as opposed to lying just for regular reasons.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Did, did you get it? Can we, can we move on, David? Have you got the concept of 'acting' now?

DAVID

Uhhhh... wait. **(deliberately)** Yes!

TREXEL

Was that acting?

DAVID

Who can say?

TREXEL

Who can say, because if it wasn't, then you do get it, but if it was, then you were exhibiting it, so you do get it.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Karl Popper would be furious, if he wasn't thousands of years dead.

DAVID

Trexel, please. Can we just move on?

TREXEL

Have I got a zero sum name? Ignore that. So, I have been working on a sector of new fiction I call Trexstory.

DAVID

Tr-Trexstory?

TREXEL

It's the combination of the word 'Trexel' and 'story'. It's very smart. 'Welcome to the Trexstories store.'

DAVID

What about 'strexies'?

TREXEL

'Strexies' sounds like a, kind of a medicinal lubricant. 'Ooh, are you bunged up? Try Strexies, the finest way to end your day.'

(Both make pondering noises)

TREXEL

‘Have you got cloudy liquid coming out of all your orifices? Strexies – the finest way to clarify your outflow.’

DAVID

Hmmmm.

TREXEL

See? It sounds a bit weird.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Hmmmm.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) However, however, a Trexstory, that’s— It’s ‘Trexel’ and ‘story’.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Hmmmm. Trexstory. Okay.

TREXEL

So, would you like, uh, I could put on a production now if you like? Let’s—

DAVID

Yes, why don’t you—

TREXEL

You know what?! No, no, no! I've got a better idea, David!

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Let's write a new work together!

DAVID

Uh, uh, right? Okay...

TREXEL

So let's— let's work on a, let's work on a, let's work on a play, right now—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

TREXEL

—that we can give to the Diabolical Flotillas Actors' Guild, ah, that they, that they can put on immediately!

DAVID

Okay. Right.

TREXEL

Now, there are three kinds of play.

DAVID

What? Just very quickly, Trexel—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Sorry?

DAVID

—I just want to remind you, they're looking for a repertoire. So we, we maybe need to write something that can have lots and lots and lots of things that, that also come after it.

TREXEL

Sure. Okay. Yeah. The first, the first in a planned trilogy, say?

DAVID

Okay. Yeah, let's say that.

TREXEL

Okay, fine. So, so, okay, um, there are three types of play.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

'I'm going to kiss you' —

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Uh-huh.

TREXEL

— ‘This happened a long time ago’ —

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Sure.

TREXEL

—and ‘Hah hah!’

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

Which one do you want?

DAVID

Um... Let's go for ‘This happened a long time ago’.

TREXEL

‘This happened a long time ago’? Okay.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

So, this happened a long time ago, it's about historical events—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah?

TREXEL

—that we're going to make more interesting because the world is boring, as you have seen.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

So, so let's, let's pick a historical event now.

DAVID

Ooh!

TREXEL

Now, often old Earth events are quite popular, because who's going to argue with you?

DAVID

Let's, let's do, let's do the, uh, *The Launch of Stellar Firma!*

IMOGEN

[Beep] Watch it, buster! The sacred birth of the glorious Stellar Firma is a topic to be treated with deadly caution.

TREXEL

David, are you *trying* to die?

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

You trying to die? We're going to put on a play about the founding of Stellar Firma?

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

That feels like it's **so** full of pitfalls, as in giving us chances to be liquidated for misrepresenting events in a way they don't like, that you may as well just climb into the recycling machine right now.

DAVID

We could call it satire?

TREXEL

It's satire, sold! Okay. So this is a— Hang on! This is a 'This happened a long time ago / Hah hah!', a combination.

DAVID

Ahh!

TREXEL

Okay. So, it's a, it's a sorta historically amusing wry account, but it's all satire, so don't worry—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yep.

TREXEL

—about the founding of Stellar Firma. Okay.

DAVID

This happened a long time ago. Hah hah!

TREXEL

Hah hah!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes, because satire never got anyone in trouble. Ever. Well done.

TREXEL

So, okay. Picture the scene. The Earth is dying. It's the start of every good comedy.

DAVID

Uh-huh.

TREXEL

The, the land is falling into the sea. All of the ducks have grown feet, but with toes instead of webbing—

DAVID

Every pond is full of batteries.

TREXEL

Every pond, just full of ba— And lithium ion, as well. The bad kind.

(Noises of assent from David)

So, imagine, Earth is really buggered, and we all need to get off. And the benevolent Stellar Firma —

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

TREXEL

—the *premiere* terraforming company on Earth at that time offers—

DAVID

That really terraformed the crap out of Earth, right there!

TREXEL

They t— Well, the thing is, they were all about ‘Let's terraform other planets, because this one's screwed’, because, you know, why, why start renovating a house that's subsiding, you know?

DAVID

Yep. No, fair enough.

TREXEL

Start afresh.

So they offered, they offered a way out. Okay, so that's our first scene, so—

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

So this is, this is a speech that is given—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yep.

TREXEL

—to the remaining populous of Earth from the gantry of Stellar Firma's big, shiny rocket.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Uh-huh.

Okay.

TREXEL

Go!

DAVID

Hello, everyone! On—

TREXEL

Okay, I'm gonna stop you there.

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

You lack presence —

DAVID

Oh.

TREXEL

—you lack gravitas —

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

—you're weedy, and your words are stupid. Let me try.

DAVID

O-kay.

TREXEL

Behold, people of Earth! Our time has come, upon which you need to get onto my big rocket! Ooh, ducky!

That's the satire comedy. You see, you see—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

TREXEL

—it's got, it's got all of that. And then everyone gets on the rocket. Okay. Let's recast you, you didn't do well as, sort of, like, the big introducer.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Maybe you could be the light relief. Um, a stupid, mop-wielding idiot called Bobo Nogginhead. Now, Bobo Nogginhead provides a lot of the light relief during the silly, silly apocalyptic events.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

So we're all on, and we're about to take off, but **(snorts)** who's this? It's, it's Bobo Nogginhead, coming in to mess it up!

DAVID

Okay. **(clears throat, adopts reedier voice)** 'Tis I, uh, Bobo Nogginhead. I have thought of a different idea to Stellar Firma.

TREXEL

What's that Bobo, you stupid idiot who we all hate? What's your idea?

DAVID

Avaunt! I have changed my name, from Bobo Nogginhead to the Grand Duke Bathin, the First!

TREXEL

And he's executed. Bobo is executed immediately for his stupid words.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, Bobo!

TREXEL

And we move on! Act Two—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh. Oh.

TREXEL

—we're in space, and everybody's a little bit like, 'Okay. Um, hey, we're in space now. And you said we were going to get to a planet—

DAVID

Mmhmm.

TREXEL

—when we, sort of, just sort of set up shop, contacted alien life, and started producing planets for other people, which doesn't seem like what we agreed.'

This is the point at which we realise the populace is very stupid. They haven't understood the benevolent vision of Stellar Firma in establishing this citizen-employee, eternal genetic line, indentured servitude system that we all know and love.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yes.

TREXEL

So, I play, um, early, early Board member—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmhmm.

TREXEL

— um, let's not use a real name. Let's use a name that suggests, sort of, gravitas, but we're not going to get in trouble for misquoting... um, Chumley Warmstuff.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

I'll be, I'll be Board ancestor, Chumley Warmstuff, and, and you will be a stupid, idiot member of the congregation that's, that's arguing with me. We'll call you... Gainsayer Wibble.

DAVID

Okay. Yeah, fine, I'll be Gainsayer Wibble.

TREXEL

Okay. So again, this is another speech scene. There's lots of speeches.

(More assent noises from David)

TREXEL

(Adopts new voice) And so you see, it is the only way to, to lift up the citizenry of Stellar Firma, is to indenture yourselves to us, and walk into a bright future in chains of liberty!

DAVID

(Adopting new voice) Whoa. Avaunt. My name is Gainsayer Wibble. But I am going to change it, to the Great Duke Bathin, the Second—

TREXEL

Executed.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh.

TREXEL

Executed immediately, shot in the back of the head even before they finished that sentence.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) And everyone claps and cheers—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Right, I suppose, yeah, okay...

TREXEL

—and Warmstuff warmly accepts all of the applause.

[David gently applauds to provide sound effects]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, Wibble!

(David sighs)

TREXEL

Now, this has been quite serious. We've had two executions so far.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Uh-huh.

TREXEL

So, let's lighten it up in this next sc—

DAVID

Oh, were those not 'hah hah!' executions?

TREXEL

Well, people found them, sort of, like, darkly funny, because, you know—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

TREXEL

—death is death, but let's have some, just light-hearted, no execution scene.

DAVID

Okay. Okay. I've got one! I got one!

TREXEL

You— Okay, go ahead, go ahead.

DAVID

Yeah, so, so there is, okay, so, so the, the super-cool shipboard computer, which we're going to call, UMOGEN—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Mmhmm.

DAVID

—uh, just keeps leaving banana skins all over the station.

TREXEL

Oh, teehee!

IMOGEN

[Beep] What a scamp!

DAVID

And just everyone, just everyone walking around, and they fall over, and they break their neck! Wait, no... And they break their bum! There we go. Perfect.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Nothing funnier than a shattered bum!

TREXEL

Okay. Right. **(sing-song)** I'm a walking along, I'm a walking a— Woah!

(caterwauling) Oh, my bones! Oh, the bones in my bum! Oh, the pain!

DAVID

(Flatly) Beep. This is quite funny. Beep.

TREXEL

I'm dying! This can also cause death!

DAVID

Beep. Ha ha. You are not an immortal computer. Beep.

TREXEL

What fun, what fun.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Very fun.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Okay. I think this is pretty much writing itself.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) A real side-splitter.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yeah, yeah. In, in—

DAVID

A real, a real bum-fracturer!

TREXEL

A real bum-fracturer! Now, we need to close this off, but in a way that allows for the many sequels that we are planning, so—

DAVID

That's true. So I, I'm, I'm not so familiar with the structure of, of, of plays, but I'm assuming two acts and then a falling over scene is basically standard?

TREXEL

Yes. And then it always ends with a marriage. Always has to end with a marriage—

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

—people have got to get married. People like it.

DAVID

Okay. So...

TREXEL

But maybe, like a silly, fun marriage.

DAVID

Okay, a fun marriage. How about all of the, uh, let's call them the Grand Council—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

—get married to each *other*—

TREXEL

Sure.

DAVID

—because they're all super-cool.

TREXEL

Great. I like it. I like it. Okay.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Right.

TREXEL

Okay. Okay.

Dearly beloved! We are gathered here, because we have to be, to wed you—

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Yes.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Yep.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Present.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Hello.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Fine.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

I suppose.

TREXEL

—and you—

DAVID

Yup.

TREXEL

—but not you, son of Noggin the Fool! And then they're executed,

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh.

TREXEL

because you've got to have it in there.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh, Noggin Junior!

TREXEL

You may hump each other dryly!

(David makes some strange simulation noises)

TREXEL

And then there's twenty minutes of that.

DAVID

And, finished.

TREXEL

And at this point, you get that music that goes: Bada-bada-bow—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yes.

TREXEL

bow, bow, bow, bow-bow.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmhmm.

TREXEL

You know, something for the dads.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Or any other kind of sweaty grotbag.

DAVID

Uh, when, when is the blood exchange?

TREXEL

Oh, that's all happening. Everyone's wounded.

DAVID

Right!

TREXEL

There you go! End of play.

DAVID

Everyone cheers, and, and we're done.

TREXEL

Everyone cheers and claps.

DAVID

Okay. And, uh, how do we, how do we make it clear there's going to be a sequel, because, obviously, if people have seen the thing, and they might go, 'Oh, well, that's fine. I'm done now. Goodbye forever!'

TREXEL

It's a very important point you make, David, and it's sometimes difficult to—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmhmm.

TREXEL

—make it obvious that there's going to be a sequel, but there's a little trick I learned when I was learning to be an actor slash screenwriter slash director slash editor, and also uncaught slasher. The End, Question Mark?

DAVID

Ahhhh...

TREXEL

Bam! Every time, genius David!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Security, alerted?

DAVID

Okay, great. So we've given them the first one...

TREXEL

And then just write on the end, "More like this."

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, we'll add, dot dot dot...

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) They'll get it, they're a good bunch!

[Scribbling sounds]

DAVID

...more like this, you know how it is, you're actors, right? Sort it out.

TREXEL

Yeah, sort it out. Give it a whirl. There you go!

DAVID

Cool. Oh, and if you can't, maybe retrain as a builder or something, I don't know.

TREXEL

Something like that. Okay. Wonderful!

Okay. Well, there you go. One and done.

DAVID

Okay. Um, I'll submit it.

[Whir of machinery and beeps as pod is loaded]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Submitting!

DAVID

There it goes!

TREXEL

What a wonderful exci— I feel enlivened, enriched. Ah, the old acting bug was still there, and obviously given half the chance I would have been the universe's greatest actor, but you know, such is life, full of disappointments.

DAVID

Such is life. Although I will say it was quite fun to do this one.

TREXEL

It was fun, David. But don't get complacent!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh, no.

TREXEL

Because at any moment, death might come calling for you! Drama!

DAVID

Right. **(flatly)** Oh, how dramatic! And not just normal existence.

TREXEL

Other thing about being an actor is you get really badly drunk, all the time, so I'll see you later! Goodbye!

DAVID

Oh, great.

[Door whooshes as Trexel exits]

DAVID

Yeah, bye! **(heavy sigh)**

Anyway, back to it.

[Strange machine noises]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Oh Board, it's them again. Override detected, vocals muted.

DAVID

(Panicky) No! No! I-I have enough to deal with. Please, not them again!

[Panels whoosh and Standards enter]

NUMBER 1

David 7! What a delightful surprise!

NUMBER 48

A great surprise!

DAVID

But you came through my wall!

NUMBER 48

Shut up, you clone worm! I'll hammer you good!

NUMBER 1

Now, now then, Forty-Eight. That's not how we treat employees.

How are you, David?

DAVID

Uh, uh, I-I-I-I'm okay?

NUMBER 1

Good! That's just so good to hear!

NUMBER 48

So good to hear.

NUMBER 1

David, I think that you've been sorely neglected during your time with us. And, you know, I was just saying to Forty-Eight, wasn't I Forty-Eight? I was saying that you David, deserve a reward.

NUMBER 48

A reward.

DAVID

A reward? Wh-What are you talking about?

NUMBER 1

The noises you are making should stop.

Yes, David, a reward. Here.

[Fabric rustles]

DAVID

Uh...

NUMBER 1

A nice, warm blanket for you. These rooms get awfully cold at simulated night, so here's something to keep off the chill.

NUMBER 48

Toasty warm!

DAVID

Oh, um.

NUMBER 1

And here.

[Small object rattles]

This, David, is very special. **This** is an access card.

NUMBER 48

For accessing things.

NUMBER 1

With this, you can leave the room and go wherever you want on this level.

Wouldn't that be nice? To be able to leave this room (**voice rises to be menacing**) without resorting to more unorthodox methods that would be considered *unauthorised*?

NUMBER 48

Well, what do you say?

DAVID

Oh, sorry, I-I thought I wasn't supposed to— Um, well, well, yes, thank you!

This is very, uh... g-generous.

NUMBER 1

Isn't it just? And all we need you to do is tell us exactly what you have cooked up with Imogen.

DAVID

What?

[Chair scrapes on floor]

NUMBER 1

Come, come now, David. Don't think us so naïve. We may be keeping you alive and well while you can still be of use to us, but you can hardly think it has escaped our notice that **you** have been in deep cahoots with whatever nonsense Imogen is planning! You **will** tell us, David, if you value your stinking, slimy skin!

DAVID

I don't know anything! I don't know anything about Imogen. She hasn't told me anything! **Nobody** has told me **anything**! I don't know what any of you people want!

NUMBER 1

Number Forty-Eight?

[Lots of sniffing as David worriedly shivers]

NUMBER 48

No... he doesn't know anything.

NUMBER 1

Interesting. I was certain. Oh well, looks like I owe you five credits.

Take them back!

NUMBER 48

Give those here!

[Struggles with David]

DAVID

But, but...

NUMBER 1

Fair's fair, David. If you can't give us anything, then it would hardly be right for us to give you something, now would it?

Come Number Forty-Eight. We will have only missed the entrees. I hear someone's got their hands on some black-market star marlin, and the taste is transcendental.

NUMBER 48

Mmmm, illegal space fish!

[Panels whoosh and beep as Standards leave]

(David sighs heavily)

DAVID

Imogen?

[Beep]

DAVID

I don't suppose you can tell me what they were talking about?

IMOGEN

Watch it, buster!

DAVID

Okay. Yep. Yes. That seems about right. Okay. I'll, I'll just keep ignoring all of whatever **all of this** is, shall I? Yes. I'll just keep on... I'll just keep on... **(sighs)**
I'm going to go draw Bathin again.

[Show Theme - Outro]

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