

STL 68 — Slides and Sass

Content Warnings

- Emotional abuse
- Bullying/taunting
- Alcohol & alcoholism
- Violence & injury
- Vicarious embarrassment
- Discussion of: death, poisoning, self-recrimination
- Mentions of: trauma (inc childhood), gambling, guns
- SFX: sobbing, high-pitched sounds

TREXEL

Special thanks to Sadie Moon. Never pay for goods upfront. Or on delivery.

Ideally, avoid paying anyone, ever.

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

[Sound of chairs sliding around, followed by door whooshing]

HARTRO

(Slightly out of breath) Ah, hey, David 7. Ah—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Hartro! Uh— Okay. N—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) —there we go. I was here, I'm here. Are we less late? We're less late.

DAVID

No, yeah, I think you're roughly about exactly the same amount of late as you usually are.

HARTRO

David 7, are we less late? **(panting slightly for air)**

DAVID

I don't— I'm— I'm—

HARTRO

We're less late.

DAVID

Maybe, but by a few seconds, yes, maybe.

HARTRO

Whoo-hooo. Yeaaaah.

DAVID

W-Where's Trexel?

HARTRO

(A loooong sigh) Let me catch my breath. Ah, yeah.

DAVID

I— S-So— Where's Trexel?

HARTRO

(Sighs) Oh, he's, he's in that slide there. **(laughing)**

DAVID

Right. And is he, is he, is he coming down at all? Like, is he, is he stuck in there?
Or is it just, like, a really long slide?

HARTRO

Uh, it's a really long, intricate, swirly slide, and he's somewhere between the
top at that ladder there—

**[The sound of Trexel's screaming starts as a low, distant hum with the
occasional clanging of metal, and gains volume with time]**

DAVID

Okay, right, th— Wow, that is a— That is a big, oh—

IMOGEN

(Crosstalk) [Beep] I could close the door and crush the pipe, if you would like.
Just a suggestion.

HARTRO

He's getting— he's getting closer.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, no, this is a long— it's a long... long sli—

[Trexel crash lands into room]

TREXEL

Yeah ha ha ohh!

HARTRO

Oh!

TREXEL

Again! Again, again! **(retreating footsteps)**

DAVID

No, no, no, no, no, Trexel, come back!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) No, he's going again.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh he's— No. You've made it too fun.

HARTRO

This is, this is, this is how it's been the last five hours. The thing is, I found him so far away. It's taken me this long to get back here. **(sighs)**

(Trexel's screaming descent begins to crescendo again)

DAVID

So is this— Is this slide just something you've taken from, sort of, a public space, or did you build this slide—?

[Trexel crash lands with a gleeful cackle]

TREXEL

Again, once more! **(retreating footsteps)**

DAVID

Okay, Trexel, stop, stop. Stop, no— Oh, he's gone.

HARTRO

Oh, just let him. Anyway, I can stop him from going up. I have a way of retracting the ladder here. If I just go—

[Tapping sound, and then the ladder retracts]

HARTRO

There we go. That'll him stop him doing it again.

[Approaching footsteps]

TREXEL

(Dejectedly) I got to the ladder and it was gone. Where's the ladder gone?

HARTRO

Uhhh.

TREXEL

The ladder was my friend. It took me to Slide Town.

IMOGEN

[Beep] You have been barred from Slide Town for the safety of residents.

(Trexel sniffs)

HARTRO

Trexel?

TREXEL

The slide's over now. It was the best thing I've ever had.

DAVID

You're at work now.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I know.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You're at work now.

TREXEL

I'm not at work, I'm in **hell**. I'm in hell because I'm without slide.

DAVID

And you're saying slide was better than Percy?

TREXEL

(High-pitched) I'm not saying slide was better than— Why would you be so hostile to me, David? I just enjoyed a thing.

DAVID

You used a superlative.

TREXEL

I j— Look, now, actually— Let's, let's inspect— No, let's inspect y-your motivations here. I enjoyed a **thing**.

DAVID

Uh-huh.

TREXEL

And your immediate reaction was to say, 'Oh, so you don't love something else that's important to you.'

DAVID

Yeah?

HARTRO

Oooh, that's one point for David. I'm gonna start a little tally mark here.

DAVID

Thank you.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) What? No, no, let's— What, a-what, just because he's one up on the sass marker?

HARTRO

Well, yeah, I think we should have a sass... uh, bit of a sass, uh, tally—

TREXEL

A sass-off?

HARTRO

—here going— Yeah, a sass off.

DAVID

Okay, yeah. Yeah, sass-off, I could sass-off.

TREXEL

A s— A sass-tastic sass-off. Well, you s— You, you, you, David 7—

DAVID

Uh-huh.

TREXEL

—are a worthless, slimy clone who has never achieved anything, and never will achieve anything, due to your limitations in social standing.

(Sings) Sass-off! You've been sassed by the best, sass-off!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Less ‘sass’, more ‘explaining an inequality.’

DAVID

My limitation being **Trexel**.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oooooooooohhhh!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Oooooooooohhhh!

DAVID

(Joining in) Ohhhhhhhh!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Sassed back! Back to the sass!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Flipped the sass back!

TREXEL

(Singsong) Get y— Y’got sassed right on your ass! It’s sass back! **(normally)**
Right, how about this. Try this on: if you were a fruit, you’d be a lame apple.
Burn.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Nope.

DAVID

I think that's, uh, another, another one for David.

HARTRO

Yeah. 0-3 for David.

[Writing sounds]

TREXEL

If you were a— If you were a holiday, you'd be a camping trip to somewhere your parents chose! Buuuurn-sassed!

DAVID

How would you know? Your parents never took you camping.

HARTRO

Ooooooooooh!! Tsssss.

TREXEL

That's not sass. That's mean.

HARTRO

Put it up here, David, that was a nice one.

DAVID

Number three, here we go!

HARTRO

No, four! Cos there was the other one.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Four!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You don't even have parents. At least I had some before they died for some reason.

DAVID

Well no, I-Imogen's my, my, my mummy.

TREXEL

Nope! That's just something you **think** is the case.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, it's— I'm pretty sure—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Actually, you're **alone** in the universe.

DAVID

Well, I'm, I'm in a room with you two right now, just—

IMOGEN

[Beep] Just to say, I am not your mother, and that was uncomfortable for everyone.

TREXEL

Emotionally alone in the universe!

DAVID

I mean...

HARTRO

Hmmm.

DAVID

Aren't we all really just emotionally alone in this—

TREXEL

None of my sass is landing. Oh, it's just—e-every time I do some sass, he's all like, 'Well, you know, I'm not sure I agree.' You know, you can't sass with that. This isn't a sass-back, this is a sass-sack.

DAVID

Oh—

TREXEL

Just eating up all my sass, and then chucking the sass over its shoulder so it's in the sack. Taking it to market, selling it to a sass merchant.

DAVID

Well, Trexel, you merely adopted the sass. I was born in it.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Ohhhh.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ohhhh.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I was **moulded** by the sass.

TREXEL

You do sass as a service.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

Sass!

HARTRO

You can't just say "sass" and expect to get a point, Trexel.

TREXEL

Saaaaaass? Sass! Saaaass.

HARTRO

I'm gonna g— I'm gonna round it to five.

(Trexel begins to hiss-chant "sass")

[Writing noise]

HARTRO

The sass is definitely in David 7's corner. And I'm gonna give myself six.

DAVID

What?

HARTRO

Just because of, well... I mean, look at me. **(chuckles)**

DAVID

Okay...

TREXEL

Sassy Hartro.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Right. Alright, well—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) But I'll keep the pen here. I mean, any sass at any time I can definitely tally.

DAVID

Yep, sure, fine. Okay, so, are we, are we good for the brief now? We good?

HARTRO

I'm born good for the brief.

[Pneumatic tube hisses]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Initiating.

TREXEL

Yep, and when you least expect it, I'll bring the sass cannons. Sass-bam!

DAVID

Mm.

HARTRO

We'll be waiting. Mmhmm.

IMOGEN

[Beep] I'm not holding my breath. For a start, I don't breathe.

DAVID

"Count Eugenia Rutalowska. Rutalowska?" I don't know.

TREXEL

Can't even say names. Sass Cannon! Point for Sass-Trexel.

DAVID

No, I was just, I was just trying to be— I was just trying to be reasonable. I, I realise that I might not pronounce the name correctly, so I just wanted to allow for—

(Trexel groans loudly)

HARTRO

Yeah, he's being thoughtful.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) He's being professional.

TREXEL

Okay, fine, yeah, yeah. **(mutters)** I see how it is, I see how it is. It's a sass-spiracy.

DAVID

I'm going to go phonetic: "Ruka— Rutalowska." Apologies.

HARTRO

(Burbles) That's what I would have guessed, David 7. I would have—"Rutalowska."

TREXEL

Phonetic? More like **pathetic**.

DAVID

Actually, that was a reasonably good bit of wordplay, I'll give you that.

TREXEL

I mean, right?

DAVID

I mean, it wasn't, it wasn't effective, and I don't feel bad, but it was a reasonably good wordplay.

TREXEL

I was impressed with me.

HARTRO

I think David 7 actually has to feel bad for the sass to count?

DAVID

No, no. Give him half a point. Give him a pity point.

HARTRO

Really? Okay.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) A pity point.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) We'll him hal— We'll put him on the board.

DAVID

Yeah. We'll give him a pity half.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I don't like how this has happened, but I'll take the half-point.

HARTRO

There we go. "Rutalowski?"

DAVID

"Rutalowska."

HARTRO

"Rutalowska."

DAVID

"Rutalowska." Count Eugenia Rutalowska. He's "External Seeking Wisdom", and he's writing to us, uh, from I assume his place of business. "Count's Corporeal Carpet Cleaning Company."

TREXEL

Ah! Count's Corporeal Carpet Cleaning Company. Now I've used them many a time whilst I've got blood in the shag.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Never speak again.

TREXEL

Shag carpeting, you understand.

DAVID

Yes, no, I did understand. S'just...

TREXEL

You know, they've got a saying. D'you know what it is?

DAVID

No.

HARTRO

What is it?

TREXEL

"If we can't get it out, no-one count." Now, it used to be "You can count on us," and then they changed it, but they changed the wrong words. But I like it. It's got a certain *je ne sais* count.

HARTRO

Hmmm.

DAVID

Okay, well, the Count... he says, “Someone sh—”

TREXEL

One.

DAVID

He—

TREXEL

Two.

DAVID

No, you’re just counting.

TREXEL

Three. Is this sass? I feel like this is sass. I feel like I’m doing some sass.

HARTRO

I think this is appropriate sass. I’m going to give—

TREXEL

Yeahhh!

HARTRO

—you a point for that.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Sassng you with the numbers!

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No, that was not sass! That was talk back!

HARTRO

David, you were thrown off.

DAVID

Yeah, but that's—

TREXEL

Yeah! It affected you emotionally. Put it on the board! Back-chat wins the day.

DAVID

It didn't affect me emotionally. It just— It, it affected my ability to say words because you were talking over me.

TREXEL

David, it's getting sad now. Just accept that you have lost.

DAVID

(Mumbling) It's just unprofessional.

HARTRO

You're still way ahead.

DAVID

Oh, I know, but it's the principle of the thi— Anyway, the Count's Corporeal Carpet Cleaning Company. The Count has asked, "Someone has shipped copious casks of cabernet in the guise of carpet cleaner."

HARTRO

Hmmm.

DAVID

That's—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Mystery!

TREXEL

Right, that's not a— That's not a problem.

DAVID

Well it—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) That's a wonderful gift you've given yourself.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Well, no, it is a problem.

TREXEL

'Oh, I've got carpet cleaner. Oh, wait, it's cabernet! Glug glug glug,' then you don't know what's happening for three days. It's a— It's a— It's an ideal situation.

DAVID

Let me hit you with an alternative scenario.

HARTRO

Hit us!

TREXEL

Don't ever hit me. Don't ever hit me. Caress me with this argument.

DAVID

Yes. I, I, I will never hit you because I think you will die.

TREXEL

You know what? I think it too. I've seen what you've done to walls.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

I don't wanna be a smashed wall.

HARTRO

I want you to intellectually sock me.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Sock it to our brains!

DAVID

(Upset) Don't use that **word** with my **brain**!

(Trexel and Hartro begin to repeat alarmed 'ohs')

TREXEL

Hartro!

HARTRO

I, I'm— Oh— I'm just gonna give myself a point for sass because... **(chortles)**

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Well that's—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) My brain has never socked anybody! There will be no socks near my mind, my body, or my soul! Damn these socks! Damn these socks to hell!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: clone temperature rising.

TREXEL

Hartro. Just want to check something. You've got your craft box again. **(lowers voice)** I just want to check: you've not got any, y'know?

HARTRO

(Whispering) Sock puppets?

TREXEL

(Whispering) Sock puppets in there, have you?

HARTRO

(Whispering) I, I do. But I'm— They're, they're near the bottom.

TREXEL

(Whispering) Just...well, dig one out and slip it to me. I've got some, got—

HARTRO

(Whispering, overlap) That's so mean.

TREXEL

(Whispering) Well— I wanna get up on that sass board.

[Hartro digs through her jingling crafts bag]

HARTRO

(Whispering) H-here you go, here you go, here you go. I wanna see how this plays out.

(Trexel chuckles)

DAVID

Wh-wh-whatever, whatever, whatever, whatever you're talking about, I'm gonna, I'm gonna—

HARTRO

Oh, no, we're talking about the brief.

DAVID

I'm going to present you...

(Hartro hums assent that dissolves into barely contained giggles)

DAVID

Present you with an alternative...

TREXEL

Yeah?

DAVID

Scenario.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) (still in the throes of laughter) Okay, do it.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Please.

HARTRO

Tr-Try.

TREXEL

Please.

DAVID

(Muttering) Don't like your giggle. Anyway. No. "Hello. I—"

HARTRO

Hello!

TREXEL

"This is rubbish!"

(Jingling sounds)

Who was that?

HARTRO

(Faux gasp) What? I heard that too!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) "This is rubbish, I hate it!"

Who is— What's that?

DAVID

Why are you—

TREXEL

Who's saying that?

DAVID

What are you—

TREXEL

“This is all rubbish, and I hate it!”

[Puppet jingling]

TREXEL

It’s Julius C. Sockenstuff—

(Hartro gasps)

“Hello!!!”

DAVID

(Roaring) No!

[Trexel screams in agony as jingling rings out]

HARTRO

He’s crushing your hand!

TREXEL

(Anguished) My hand!

IMOGEN

[Beep] Your comeuppance is sweet, sweet nectar to me.

TREXEL

(Pleading as David squeezes the puppet and his hand) Please, David, let go of my hand!

DAVID

(Growling) Julius C. Sockenstuff, is it?

HARTRO

D... David. David!

DAVID

Why, how about Julius C. Deadenstuff?!

TREXEL

No!

DAVID

Hi-ya!

TREXEL

(In pain) Ooooooooooooooh!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) David, David! Trexel's hand's under there!

TREXEL

He's just socked me with extreme prejudice! I am now a nude and battered hand. Ashamed. Ashamed.

DAVID

Julius, is it?

[puppet jingles]

DAVID

“Yes.” Not so verbose now that your skeleton has been destroyed. Well, how about you have one of **these!**

[Puppet jingles, then ripping sounds]

(Hartro gasps)

TREXEL

I hope that sock puppet wasn't important to you, Hartro. Because it's now just sock shreds.

HARTRO

(Sighs) It's for team building... and business-related enterprise.

TREXEL

Oh, so basically worthless, then. Not to worry. Um, David—

DAVID

Wow, one for Trexel!

TREXEL

You need to work— You need to— Yeah, that really, you need to work through some stuff because I expected to, you know, like razz you with that sock puppet? I felt like I got you right where you lived.

DAVID

You know how I feel about socks, Trexel.

TREXEL

But **why?** Why do you feel this way about socks?

DAVID

They're disgusting. They're monstrous.

HARTRO

I think this is a really, really good train of thought. I think this would be the perfect time, David 7, for us to delve into this. This is obviously something that's bothering you, and I think it's getting in the way of your work.

DAVID

Well there's nothing— No, there's nothing too deep-seated about it. The only valid piece of clothing is the onesie, and all a sock is, is it's like a 'whuh.' If you, if you, if you start from the bottom, and you go up, and you see a onesie, you're like, 'Onesie, lovely!' If you look at a sock, 'Whuh.' This is not even anything.

TREXEL

So you feel like it's a, it's an unfinished onesie. A betrayal of the idea of a onesie by its very existence.

HARTRO

A gesture of a onesie.

DAVID

It's not even a h— Look, at least a thigh-high boot is sort of a 'Waaaah.'

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oh, I like a nice thigh-high, I do.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) You know, you almost get the one. Some trousers is a 'one.'

And a shirt's obviously a 'sie.' So you know, you've got a 'onesie,' which is everything. A 'sie' for the top, a, a 'one' for your bottom, a wh—

TREXEL

What d— How do you feel about hats? What's a hat, then?

HARTRO

Yeah.

DAVID

Oh, that's— Well, ac— **(stammering)** The punctuation of the body. You know, you're wearing a—

TREXEL

Oh, so it— Certain hat's a question mark. "Onesie?" So, other hats, exclamation. "Onesie!"

DAVID

Precisely. Precisely.

TREXEL

Or... a semi-colon. "Onesie;" and then you have a list of things.

DAVID

Yes, and you're inviting people to come up and ask you, "Hey, so what about this onesie that you've got?"

TREXEL

What about it? List, list things to me with commas.

DAVID

Precisely. So, socks, socks are uncomfortable. They get gooey unreasonably quickly.

HARTRO

I think yours get gooey.

DAVID

They are useless, only covering your feet.

HARTRO

They're great for training purposes.

DAVID

Waste of resources. There's a perfectly good glove. Why are people sock puppets? What about a glove puppet?

HARTRO

Hmm.

DAVID

Gloves are great, they keep your hands warm.

TREXEL

Well, you put a sock over your hand, it's sort of like a mitten.

DAVID

Then use a mitten!

TREXEL

Ooh, he's got a point. Hartro, he's got a point.

HARTRO

He does.

TREXEL

You know what, I'd like to— I'd like to sign this up to some sort of deep-seated trauma by the fact that his skin is his clothes and therefore his identity, but he's making some pretty good points about socks just being a bit rubbish.

HARTRO

Well I—

DAVID

Yeah.

HARTRO

—think he’s got a pretty bulletproof definition of hate.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Please do not buy into this gooey clone’s onesie fundamentalism.

HARTRO

I don’t think I’ll be wearing socks.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) One for David.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) One for David. Okay.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Yeah, put it up there.

DAVID

Point for them.

TREXEL

Now, let’s get back to this brief.

HARTRO

What?

TREXEL

I feel like we should get back to this brief. We've done the thing, we've done the that—

(David stammers in confusion)

—there's the sass points let's just get back to—

DAVID

Why?

HARTRO

Wait, something's, something's not right.

TREXEL

No, everything— it's j— I just— I just— I was— I was a little bit het up after the audio-visual experience that was Hartro's last brief submission, and I very much saw that David over here sided with Hartro, so I felt like I would try and, you know, come back with a new effort. Fighting fit.

(Hartro sighs)

See if I can get something over the line that people don't—

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

—think is a pathetic embarrassment.

HARTRO

So, I inspired you, did I? Heh. I have that effect.

TREXEL

No, no, no, no, you— It's not inspiration, it's more sort of like a competitive hate.

DAVID

Well alright— Well let's see— Let's, okay, yeah, no, no, yeah, you do it.

HARTRO

Yeah, you do it.

DAVID

Let's see, let's see. Let's see what that Consultant heritage of yours—

TREXEL

Thank you.

DAVID

—that **great** bloodline stretching back, that inexorable structure within which you exist, that allows nothing to change, and n-nothing, nothing to develop. Yes, yes, Consultant. Consult.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Let's watch, let's watch this, this like, handed down to you when you were a baby—

DAVID

Yeah.

HARTRO

—absolutely never, never had to try for a day in your life, to be wheeled into a job of comfort for the rest of existence, that's, y'know, didn't deserve anything, but, look what your— **(trails off)**

DAVID

(Crosstalk) You trained from child.

HARTRO

Hmm?

DAVID

You trained from child for this.

HARTRO

Mmm.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Mocking Stellar Firma's inheritance-based management system is prohibited. However, in Trexel's case, I don't think can anyone argue that the system is perfect.

TREXEL

Well, I mean, thank you so much for your full-hearted supports. Let's go. Okay.
Right. So.

HARTRO

Oh, I'm just gonna sit over here, in fact. I'm just gonna lay on this...

(Collapses into soft furnishings)

pouffe.

DAVID

Hey, and I'm, I'm just gonna, I'm gonna sit on the desk. I'm gonna sit on the desk, I'm gonna get— Have you got any— **(whispering)** Have you go— Have you got a pair of glasses?

HARTRO

Of course I do. Here you go. **(clatter of glasses unfolding)**

DAVID

I'm gonna just, I'm gonna just gonna perch them on the end of my nose. And I pop on the desk, but I cross my legs, and I'm gonna stare down you at them. What have you got, Geistman?

IMOGEN

[Beep] If I were to guess, I would say that it is incoherent nonsense.

TREXEL

Okay, okay, so, the brief is—

HARTRO

Hmm.

TREXEL

—they wanted carpet cleaner, they’ve got cabernet. Oh, no. Well, how about this. Paradigm shift. Laser show! Uh, rave music! **(beatboxing poorly)** A new experience from Geistman Enterprises, care of Stellar Firma! You thought you were a carpet cleaning company? Well, guess what, buddy: you’re a bar now. **(bad beatboxing continues)** Mystery wine tasting, from the Count’s new corporeal bar! We’ve got cans of stuff that are mislabelled. It is a glass of cleaner? Is it a glass of the finest cabernet? It’s a Russian Roulette of taste. Mmm, that’s got a good robe, and a wonderful profile. Ow, that one’s taken off of most of my skin.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Called it.

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Laser show!

DAVID

Couple a— Couple of notes.

HARTRO

Mmmhmm. Couple...

TREXEL

Okay. I'm open to f— I'm open to feedback.

DAVID

Okay, so first of all: 'bar' begins with 'b.' You could have gone with 'café,' you could have gone with 'club,' but it's a bar, fine.

HARTRO

Yeah, it's v— **Obvious** they want 'c's.

DAVID

Second.

HARTRO

Mmmhmm.

DAVID

They've only got cabernet. They haven't got any carpet cleaner, otherwise this wouldn't be a problem. So where are they getting the carpet cleaner from?

TREXEL

No no no no no no no no no no, David, David, David, David, David, David, David, David, David, David, David, you're an idiot. They've got a delivery—of cabernet.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmmhmm. Mmmhmm.

TREXEL

What, do you think they're entirely out of carpet cleaner? They're a carpet cleaning business. One delivery does not a carpet cleaning business make. They've got a warehouse.

DAVID

Well, then why are they writing to us?

HARTRO

Yeah, why are they writing to us? They obvious—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I dunno, I ass— I assumed it's— They were like, 'What do we do with all this cabernet?'

DAVID

Obv— Well, obviously, their entire supply chain has been completely replaced by cabernet. It's cabernet all the way down.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Obviously? Obv— Why obviously?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) So there's absolutely no mystery.

TREXEL

Why obviously?

DAVID

Cos they've commissioned Stellar Firma to consult. This isn't 'Oops, I've ended up with a warehouse full of cabernet.' They'll just drink it. Wouldn't you?

TREXEL

Well, I would, but I'm just aware that I'm not everyone, David. I'm not that conceited.

HARTRO

So basically, I, I, I buy my expensive tickets to go to the Four C Mystery Drinkathon, and—

DAVID

Well, the Three C and a B.

TREXEL

The Count's Corporeal Cabernet Clubhouse.

HARTRO

And guess what?

DAVID

Better.

HARTRO

‘Oh! Cabernet. Ooh! Cabernet. Ooh! Cabernet. Hmm, the mystery seems to be that, hm, every drink is cabernet.’

TREXEL

No, no, no, but what I’m saying, **(bubbles)** they **must** have some—

(Hartro hums doubtfully)

—knocking around somewhere. Maybe you squeeze it out of an old carpet. You take ‘Ooh, cabernet, ooh, cabernet, oh no, I’m now dying, please inform the emergency services—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, so that was—

TREXEL

—because I’ve got a gut full of cleaner.’

DAVID

That was point three. The, th-the—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

—the unique selling point of this clubhouse is that you might die.

IMOGEN

[Beep] To be fair, that is also the unique selling point of life in general.

TREXEL

And you don't think that's attractive to people?

DAVID

Well, you might also die in a quite boring and painful way.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

You know, it's not like you're playing The Most Dangerous Game.

TREXEL

Well, you are playing the most dangerous game: Mystery Drink.

DAVID

Is that the most dangerous game? I thought—

TREXEL

Well, if we think about how many people have died over history.

(David mumbles)

How many people have died, in history, because they drank something and it turned out they shouldn'ta? I think loads.

DAVID

I-In all, i-in, in all of space, you're n— you're not, you're not black hole surfing—

TREXEL

Yep.

DAVID

—you're not star marlin hunting—

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

—you, your mystery drinks is the most dangerous game.

(Hartro hums uncertainly)

TREXEL

In the same way—

DAVID

You're not even having a dinner party with the lead singer of the Winter Lettuce Collective.

TREXEL

In the same way, David, that on Old Earth, they concerned themselves an **enormous** amount of time about people in big, fancy rooms, playing card

games, and then if they get something wrong they get taken to a back room and shot. And I mean, an **enormous** amount of time and effort was, was circled around these ideas. Films. Books. Uh, uh— Roleplays. Everything was based around the idea that you're playing a game of cards, and then, and then someone shoots you because you got it wrong.

HARTRO

That was obviously because they had that giant eye in the sky that could just shoot a laser at you at any point.

IMOGEN

[Beep] We've all saw how the Great Prophet Groshenko was laid low by hubris in the Temple of the Golden Eye.

TREXEL

Well, yes, we all know about the Giant Sky Laser from that one piece of footage that survived, but I don't think that was the only thing going on. I think it also had something to do with that weird badger-like thing that loved mashed potato. Which we're pretty sure was their Pope.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Everybody knows Pope Badger loves mashed potatoes.

HARTRO

I think there's a lot of 'I think's going on, Trexel. And—

TREXEL

Well, I—

HARTRO

—I don't think you can build a solution with 'I think'. Now—

TREXEL

Do you want to consult *The Big Book of Things We Think We Know About Earth*? I'm willing to consult it.

DAVID

Yeah, fine, let's consult The Big Book of Things We Know About Earth.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Let's do it.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) I'll get it out.

(Burbles) Bring it up a copy here.

[Computer screen whirrs up]

TREXEL

Okay, so. Let's just, let's just take a few things we think we know about Earth—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Let's do it.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay.

TREXEL

—and then put them against the idea that lots of people drank mystery fluids that killed them, and see which seems more reasonable—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Mmmhmm. Mmmhmm.

TREXEL

—shall we? Shall we? Shall we?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, okay.

HARTRO

Okay, and, and if it seems more reasonable, we'll send your solution, and if it doesn't, we'll send David's.

DAVID

A-Anything else, yeah.

HARTRO

Yes.

TREXEL

Literally anything else at all—

HARTRO

Alright.

TREXEL

—it doesn't really matter. Okay. Fine, right, let's have a look here. Okay, okay, fine. There was an enormous man called "Big Ben" who yelled at you if you voted the wrong way. That seems weird.

HARTRO

Mmmm...

DAVID

Yeah, but how is that relevant to mystery drinks? He, he, he didn't force you to drink a mystery fluid if you voted the wrong way. He just shouted at you.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Okay, good point, good, good... let's have, let's have a look at something else, let's have a look at something else. Okay! Okay, okay.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I want f— It needs to have a fluid, or mystery. Look under the 'm's. Look under the 'm's.

TREXEL

Okay, und— For, for 'mystery'. Okay. Uhhh. Okay. Okay. There was one cavern in the middle of a continent called 'Ameriquoi?' that they called 'The Big Fancy Hole,' and nobody knew quite how it formed, except it was in the shape of a canyon.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Hmm...

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay...

TREXEL

And so they assumed a canyon fell over, and crushed that shaped hole in the earth.

DAVID

Right...

HARTRO

Can you drink a canyon?

TREXEL

You can if it's full of can...yams...

HARTRO

Hmm...

TREXEL

Which was the kind of fruit that grew in the canyon. A canyam.

DAVID

You're saying you can drink canyam juice...

HARTRO

From a canyon.

TREXEL

We think so. But the mystery is how does it grow without the sunlight at the bottom of the canyon?

DAVID

No— After, after the, after the canyon falling down and creating, you know, the hole—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Hmm.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yes?

DAVID

—it all got a little bit improvisational there, Trexel. Are there canyams?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, no, no, it's all written here. It's all written down here.

DAVID

Can I, can I see?

TREXEL

No, I— No, I, I— It's, it's just here. Th-There. Okay. So, there, yeah, you saw it there.

DAVID

C-Canyams don't exist, do they, Trexel?

TREXEL

No.

DAVID

You just made them up because, because you, you can see your argument crumbling in front of your eyes. Falling apart like out-of-date slurry.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Expected as it is, it is still so very embarrassing for you.

HARTRO

I'm just going to put a point up for David 7 there.

DAVID

I actually— No, I think that was more of a self-sass. I think Trexel should just lose a point.

HARTRO

Yeah, cos you didn't really do the sassing, you just sort of pointe—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Canyams could be a thing.

DAVID

They could be. But they're not.

TREXEL

(Sighs) O-o-okay David, so looks like you've, you've beaten me in sass, you've beaten me in, in logic, you've, you've found out my canyam ruse. And that— Fine, fine, let's just use something, y'know, just use anything else, because I suppose at this point, what's the point. Y'know, clearly Trexel doesn't know anything. Clearly Trexel isn't good enough to even merit consideration, so, you know—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Okay, okay, but— Well, hey, no— But— Look, no, no, no, but, but—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) No, no, no, fine, it doesn't matter, Trexel. It doesn't matter.

DAVID

No, but if we look at the—

TREXEL

Trexel doesn't matter, Trexel. Did— Does he, Trexel? No, Trexel doesn't—

DAVID

But—

TREXEL

—does he? So why don't you just climb into a pit, and drink until your head falls off?

DAVID

Okay, but consider this: we don't really have time to do another one, so let's submit your idea.

HARTRO

What— Trexel's one?

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Really?

DAVID

Well, yeah, cos, I mean, we, we— I know we **literally** don't have time to write anything else. This is all we've got.

HARTRO

B-b-but—

TREXEL

S-so, so we're using the cabernet club?

HARTRO

But if that follows the one that I did, they're gonna **know** something's weird, cos they're gonna be 'Oh, wow, it was so amazing, and... what, now, it's like this? And the discrepancy?'

[The room begins to rumble]

DAVID

(Crosstalk) No— Wh— But—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Well, what do you want?

Inconsistent, or not submitted on time, because we're getting a—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ahh—

TREXEL

—bit short on that.

DAVID

Also consider: this is Trexel. Wild inconsistency is the only consistent thing about him.

HARTRO

(Groans) You're right.

TREXEL

A win! Is a win!

DAVID

Okay.

TREXEL

Let's unload the slide ladder!

HARTRO

(Sighs) Actually, I do need to get rid of him, don't I.

DAVID

Yeah. I'm just gonna—

IMOGEN

[Beep] Submitting.

DAVID

There we go. Gone.

[Pneumatic tube hisses, room rumbling stops]

[Hartro clicks button to deploy the ladder]

HARTRO

Slide ladder, here we go... there you go.

(Trexel makes childlike sounds of excitement)

[Sounds of Trexel running to the ladder of the slide]

DAVID

Is there maybe an alternative track we can send him down?

HARTRO

Ooh, yes, I can reroute this thing! There we go.

[Mechanical shifting]

TREXEL

(Distantly) Wheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

HARTRO

Right, David 7, I'm gonna push this somewhere where it's not gonna cause **too** much of a problem. **(chortles)**

DAVID

Okay. Well, see you tomorrow, Hartro!

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Byyyyyeee! Good work!

DAVID

Byyyyyee.

[Door whooshes]

[Sound of slide being dragged away]

DAVID

And y-you, too.

(Sighs contentedly) I'm the sassiest.

[Show Theme – Outro]

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