

STL 75 — Meaningless Infights and Meeting Invites

Content Warnings

- Bullying/taunting
- Electrocutation (including SFX)
- Physical violence & self-injury (including SFX)
- Sexual references
- Discussions of: fire & immolation, loss of consciousness, discrimination
- SFX: machinery, screaming, vomit, deep tone alarm, loud flushing

[Show Theme – Intro]

IMOGEN

Rusty Quill presents: Stellar Firma.

[Theme continues]

[Music plays and David pants through a workout]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Some might say “too swole.” But I love these beats, so swole away.

[Door whooshes]

TREXEL

Now, David, I’ve been th—

[Music continues as David continues to work out with high-pitched grunts]

TREXEL

D-David?

DAVID

(speaking from the executive clone lounge and slightly distant)

Oh, hey Trexel!

TREXEL

David. David, what are you doing? What are you doing? It looks like so much fun! Oh, David!

DAVID

I'm just— Uh, it's, uh— **(out of breath burbling)** The song's over. The song's over.

TREXEL

You made such... You made such crazy shapes, David. You were like a— You were like a clone possessed!

DAVID

It's, it's, it's a, cool, um, Imogen game called Prance Prance Conform.

TREXEL

(Gasps) You've got access to Prance Prance Conform! They took that off the regular terminals because of all the fights I — and others, but mainly I — started. Let me just—

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Oh, it's starting again!

[Begins panting in exertion as music starts back up]

TREXEL

David, perhaps I could just pop in there and have a quick round—

[Trexel trails off as he electrocutes himself on the door]

TREXEL

I **will** learn, one day. But not today!

[Sounds of electrocution]

[Door whooshes]

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oh, boys!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) That stings.

HARTRO

I have got some news! **(singsong)** Information. Oh! David, that's... that's not Prance Prance Conform, is it?

DAVID

Yeah, it is. Would you like a—

(Hartro gasps)

Oh, you probably can't. **(burbles)**

TREXEL

But Hartro, like me, I have discovered that this is a clone-only room that's actually pretty nice and you can't—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Get out of the way, Trexel. Excuse me.

[Rumbling as she steps through the door]

HARTRO

There we go. Ahh.

DAVID

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, okay, uhh. Two player mode... okay.

[Music begins again]

(Short "oh" and "ah" sounds of exertion from Hartro and David)

IMOGEN

[Beep] Everyone gets to dance except Trexel. It's just like school all over again.

TREXEL

I have literally never been more unhappy in my entire life! Everyone is dancing three feet away from me, behind a forcefield that is both literal and a metaphor for my exclusion from everything good in the world!

DAVID

(Ignoring Trexel entirely) And the big finish—

[David and Hartro exert themselves a few seconds more, then the music finishes]

DAVID

Ah, that was great fun.

HARTRO

Oooh ho ho ho. David.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Is everyone quite finished?

Is everyone quite finished having all of the fun?

(David sighs happily)

HARTRO

(Also sighing happily) Oh, look at that: you're top score.

DAVID

Oh, well, you know, I-I've been, I've been— Well, I've been, y'know, h-had, had a bit of a time to get good, actually. You know, it's, it's, it's—

TREXEL

(Extremely salty) Yeah, haven't— You haven't exactly had any competition. If I was in there, I'd move my feet like lightning. Lightning feet. They call me

Lightning Feet Geistman, but that’s mainly because I drank some battery acid and my feet started generating lightning when I walked on carpets.

DAVID

Yeah, well, I— I’m just glad I have **something** to do at some point, ever, right, so, look— **(burbles)**

TREXEL

W-Well, I—

DAVID

I’ve got pinball over there, a-and there’s a disco ball — I don’t know how to make it work — and there’s a jacuzzi as well—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oh. My. Board.

Would you look at this? Ah, your, your suite, David 7. This is— This is so— And the, the plush carpets.

DAVID

I know.

HARTRO

Ohhhhh.

TREXEL

So plush. And the, and the, and the carpets out here are thin and utilitarian, but in there they’re plush. Look at the deep shag! So much deep shag.

HARTRO

Bean bag chair! Ooooh. I could just— This is lovely.

(Sighs in comfort)

TREXEL

Which means we must, of course, hasten the revolution to destroy all this meaningless consumerism, right? Right, everyone?

DAVID

Yeah? Yeah, I gu— I— Yeah, I— Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yep.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Whoa, there. Calm down you revolutionary firebrands.

TREXEL

And Hartro— Cos we'd had a plan, didn't we? We have a— We have a plan. You had, you had news, didn't you Hartro? You had intel. Because we're all really on board with the plan.

HARTRO

I just ha— I've been thinking, and, y'know, I'm just gonna— Ooh, can you just roll that footstool over, David? Just so I can get—

DAVID

Oh, yeah, no, of course. Would you, would you like an ice cold slurry?

HARTRO

I would love— Do you have any of that— What’s that, whipped slurry? Oh, you’ve got a whipped slurry machine! I’d like a whipped slurry. Line manager.

TREXEL

Mr. Slurry.

HARTRO

Slurry, yes.

DAVID

(Burbles) I wouldn’t think of anything other than that. It would probably shock if I did.

HARTRO

Yeah, I was thinking about that, like— It’s just—

[Frozen slurry machine runs, sounding not unlike a blender]

HARTRO

—this spying and this, this intel, and all this information. You know, Trexel, I just think... You know, somebody has to do— Oh, thank you, David, thank you.

DAVID

There, there, there, there, there you go, Hartro. **(laughs slightly)** Like having David’s place back.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Sort of. This place is much less on fire.

HARTRO

Oh, this is delicious. This is, this is, this— I don't know why, it just tastes better when it's in this form? It's amazing.

DAVID

Well, it's called 'The Good Stuff.' I mean, literally, it does say, look, 'brackets The Good—'

TREXEL

Hey! How about we all shut the hell up? And do what we came here to do. Because I think—

DAVID

Trexel, why don't you come over here and say that?

TREXEL

Okay, I w—

[Sounds of electrocution, followed by a smattering of Hartro's giggles]

TREXEL

You knew that, David. You knew that would happen. I think everybody's getting a little bit comfortable, and only I am treading the true path of the revolutionary. You, Hartro, have got comfy in your role as spy. You're play-acting, you got a— You got to play-act at being a consultant, and now you're

play-acting at being a spy, and you're living in a dream world. And you wanna extend this dream world. 'La la la la la, I'm Hartro, I'm living in a fantasy land.' And you, David 7, o Brother David, o revolutionary of the highest moral principles: I think somebody's sipping on the slurry-ade. I think somebody's getting a little bit comfortable with soft furnishings that privilege has brought them, and is starting to forget the real deal.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Uh, well, sorry for enjoying any comfort that I've ever had in my entire life.

HARTRO

And now, now, now, two: now, you're-you're insulting me, saying that I'm 'playacting at this, playacting at that.' I will have you know that I am officially spying, and all the spying I have been doing, and the information I— They're, they're real things that— It takes effort, and, and... being a senior consultant in business warfare, I'll have you know, has its... its... hard moments. And I deserve to sit in a bean bag chair with my feet up and lick a creamed slurry when I want to. And if you can't— You stay out there—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) (unintelligible muttering)

So hard. So hard, y— Occasionally, occasionally you have to dress up as a fern, or maybe a begonia. Perhaps a pansy.

HARTRO

Listen. My tactics are my own, Trexel. And they're— They get results.

TREXEL

Well, why don't you just show us the fruits of your labour, then, Hartro?
What's this big, important intel you were going to tell us all about before you started playing a dance game and sucking down on chilled sludge?

HARTRO

Yes, let's do that. Let's— Let me just— I'll just put down my slurry cone, and I will get out of this chair... and... And I will stand—

TREXEL

Yep. Yep. Like a professional.

HARTRO

—up, and, and— I'm sorry that I had five seconds of, of relaxing.

TREXEL

You are forgiven. You apologised for relaxing and I'm, I'm forgiving you. You are forgiven.

HARTRO

You take that back. You take that back, I'm—

TREXEL

No. No, I'm not gonna take it back. You're forgiven.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) You come here.

You come here and forgive me.

TREXEL

Oh, okay—

(Shouts as he is electrocuted)

Everybody has to stop doing that! It's bullying it.

HARTRO

You stop doing it, then.

TREXEL

Doing what? I forgive you.

HARTRO

You come here, and you say that to my face, you—

[Trexel chuckles to himself before he steps into the electrocution field and yells]

TREXEL

Okay, at a certain point, I think it's kind of on me. You know, after a number of times, I've really gotta stop— Why don't you come over here and let me tell it to you?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Okay, here's the thing: I'm not playing this game with you anymore, Trexel. I'm above it. I'm going to come out there, and I'm going to **do** my job, since apparently there is no rest for the hard-working.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Yes, please. The smell of cooked Trexel is gumming up my air filters.

[The room rumbles as Hartro enters the room that Trexel is in through the barrier]

TREXEL

Well, David. Would you care to join us?

DAVID

Yes, I, I would, and— **(David enters the room)** Hartro, I hate to say it, but I think Trexel might have a, a, a little— A little tiny bit of a point.

HARTRO

No, no, yes, yes, yes, come on, come on.

TREXEL

I've got a massive point. You wouldn't **believe**—

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

—the size of my point. When I get my point out, people run screaming.

DAVID

Thinking about it, I have— Yeah. I, I have been, maybe, mmm... thinking about... things, important things— things a little less now that I've got, uh, a nice place. Which is, ehh... I guess, yeah. I-I might have become a little bit—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You're a scab, David!

DAVID

No, that's, uh— Probably—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You're a picket-line crosser!

You're a counter-jumper.

DAVID

A what?

TREXEL

You're a counter-jumper. You've jumped the counter.

(David makes a sound of protest)

There's a counter that runs between most between clones, and most employees— You know, to keep the gooeyness away? And you've jumped over it, and, and you're, and you're meshing yourself into the cool comforts of being, being fancy.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Trexel Geistman: Proletarian purist. Who would have guessed?

DAVID

Pretty sure I was invited in by this cool forcefield that keeps out consultants.

TREXEL

Alright, you're a forcefield crosser. What do you want?

DAVID

Alright, yes, no, you're right: I have crossed the forcefield, okay? And, and now I'm back—

HARTRO

See? See?

DAVID

—on this side of the force field.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Here we are, Trexel—

TREXEL

Good.

HARTRO

—we're back on this side.

TREXEL

Right.

HARTRO

—We're— We'll sit— We're sitting down—

TREXEL

Fine.

HARTRO

—at this, uhhh— Huge table where things get done, and—

DAVID

And **(stammers)** don't press any of the buttons, though. Um, I'm pretty sure—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) What do you mean?

Why not? I could push any buttons I want. Like this one right here: 'Combust.'

[Button press]

TREXEL

Oh, oh, okay, no, don't, don't— I, okay, okay, um.

DAVID

Oh, it's quite pleasantly warm in here now.

TREXEL

You have to turn that off. I don't know what that is, but you have to turn it off.

HARTRO

Well, obviously something's combusting. Why do you have to be so afraid of everything, Trexel? You assume it says 'combust,' it's gonna combust you. It could be combusting anything.

TREXEL

Hartro, you and I both know that on Stellar Firma, if you enter a room and there's the button and it says 'combust,' it's perfectly possible that it means the room is going to combust. Look at David's Place: it combusted up a storm.

DAVID

Yeah, but that was just because Imogen burned it down.

TREXEL

Oh, oh, well I'm sorry. Is this room now, now, now, uh, free from the whims of Imogen? Imogen, could you burn this room down if you wanted?

IMOGEN

[Beep] Every moment is a struggle not to burn down a room you are in.

HARTRO

There we go.

TREXEL

You see?

HARTRO

And here's the thing, though. I mean, at some point in our lives, you just have to look in the mirror and say, "I've been trying to get here forever, and now I'm here. And I don't care **what** tries to take that away from me. Combustion. Imogen, plans, plot, somebody not saying sorry when they need to say it.'

TREXEL

I don't know what you're talking about.

HARTRO

You go into David's suite and you tell me that.

TREXEL

Alright, I will go into David's suite and tell you that.

[Trexel grumbles to himself as he electrocutes himself again]

DAVID

So what was— **(stammers)** What's the intel, Hartro?

HARTRO

Sorry, you want me to say something?

DAVID

Hartro, I'm, I'm asking. I don't— You're not mad at me, are you? I gave you a nice slurry and, and we had a nice game together.

HARTRO

It's fine. I mean, I just, I just want to point out that you want something from me that you, you— I have some information and you'd like to hear it.

DAVID

Y-Yes. Yes, yes I would.

HARTRO

Cos I've been working hard to gather it, and...

TREXEL

David, I think Hartro wants you to say please.

DAVID

No, I— But— Hang on, no no no.

TREXEL

I think, David— I think you've been underappreciating Hartro. I think I could be the first to point this out, and I think you should say please.

DAVID

N-No, Hartro is angry at **you**. Hartro's angry at you.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) And by proxy, you.

We come as a unit, David. Now: ask Hartro—

DAVID

Trexel.

TREXEL

Stop it, David, stop being so rude! And ask Hartro nicely for the intel.

(David sputters in disbelief)

TREXEL

I'm sorry about David's behaviour. Now, David—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Is that an apology?

TREXEL

I'm **sorry** about David's behaviour. Yes, I'm apologising for David's behaviour.

HARTRO

Well, thank you. Thank you, that is what I needed.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You are welcome.

HARTRO

Thank you for the apology.

TREXEL

And David, now say please.

HARTRO

That's fine, David. I just wanted him to apologise.

IMOGEN

[Beep] What a bunch of needy meat lumps.

DAVID

Yep.

TREXEL

No, I was apologising for Da— Don't! **(mutters)** Bugger.

HARTRO

(Interrupting) Right, so this intel. It is brilliant. Only a top-class spy, only a senior consultant business warfare line managerial goddess could have got this intel.

TREXEL

Or a potted plant with ears.

HARTRO

(Sighs) In fact, I'm going to play some music. If I could just— There we go, this button will do.

[A click, and then music begins]

TREXEL

Oh. That's nice.

HARTRO

And... what I have to tell you is that... Standards... is planning to vote... David
7... onto the Board... today...

(Trexel begins laughing)

At the Shareholders' Meeting.

TREXEL

(Still laughing uproariously) It's— What a stupid thing to say! Oh, Hartro, I
thought you were being weird, but it's cos you were, you were getting ready to
play this funny jo— **(cuts himself off with laughter)** David 7, member of the
Board.

DAVID

(Stammers) Look, I'm sorry about Trexel's reaction, Hartro, but also:

(Begins emitting an unsettling high-pitched laugh)

What?

TREXEL

You might as well make a mop a member of the Board. You might as well roll
up—

DAVID

Okay—

TREXEL

—a ball of lint—

(David continues to protest audibly)

—and say, ‘Oh, it’s the king now. Oh, look at King Lint, all bow to King Lint. Oh, it’s King Lint’s coronation, let’s make a crown for King Lint. Oh, King Lint can’t have a son, so King Lint’s going to divorce King Lint’s wife. Oh, oh, there’s a constitutional crisis because of the Church of Lint. Now he’s gonna make his own Church of Lint. So King Lint can get a divorce and then kill people, and then divorce again, and then died, and then beheaded, and then we get Queen Anne.’

HARTRO

(Utterly unfazed) So this intel is 100% correct. I have been up and down, I have been in vents— Yes, Trexel, I have been in vents. I have been Fern Creature. I have been Lady Galaba, this new planetary force that just sweeps through Stellar Firma’s cabinets. The things I—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) You’ve been a—

You’ve been an energy-based cabinet being?

HARTRO

Yes!

TREXEL

That’s deep cover. David, that’s the deepest cover you can get. No one looks at cabinets.

DAVID

Uhhh.

TREXEL

Especially cabinets made out of pure energy.

HARTRO

And I found an energetic cabinet that said ‘Shareholder’s Meeting,’ and I thought: “Ohhh but-ta, I found the motherlode.”

TREXEL

Oh, but-ta indeed.

HARTRO

I found it! Here it is: look, on file, on this disk, on this disk!

TREXEL

Give me that, give me that, give me that! Give me that, give me...

HARTRO

No no no, no— No!

(Trexel makes nom nom nom as he takes the disk from Hartro)

DAVID

No, p-put it in the table! Trexel!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Sorry, sorry!

Sometimes I think that my mouth is a disk drive, because I eat so many disks.
Let me just pop it in here.

[He puts the tape into the table]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Decoding files. Accounting for bite marks.

[Whirring sound]

IMOGEN

Completed.

TREXEL

That's... Yeah, that's— That's an official Shareholders communique.

HARTRO

Yep.

DAVID

Alright...

TREXEL

Meeting to vote on a new Board Member. Board Member under consideration: David 7. This is insane!

DAVID

But... what?

TREXEL

Am I, am I— Hang on, am I asleep? **(He slaps himself)** Am I asleep? Wake up!
(slap) Wake up, Trexel! **(slap)** Wake up, Trexel! **(slap)**

HARTRO

Here, let me help, let me help, let me help. Wake up, Trexel!

(A loud thud, and Trexel gasps)

Wake up, Trexel!

(Thud, gasp)

Wake up!

TREXEL

Somebody kick me in the stomach!

HARTRO

David, help.

DAVID

(Singsong) Wake up, Trexel!

**(Another thud. Trexel's howl of pain fades as he is launched high into the air.
The howl then fades back in as he returns to the ground)**

Ah, this is a I— Tall room.

IMOGEN

[Beep] The taller the room, the more space for bouncing around great ideas!
It's also good for badminton.

TREXEL

David, I'd love it if you never kicked me again.

DAVID

You did ask.

TREXEL

I did. And I didn't know that this room was this tall.

HARTRO

Where does it end?

DAVID

Not sure, **(mumbling)** it's just kinda this void.

TREXEL

But we're getting away from the point. There is no logical reason I can think of that a clone would be voted a member of the Board. For a start, what do you mean, "a new member of the Board?" What's happening, Hartro?

HARTRO

No one! No one's been elected to the Board! Since, since, since, since... ever!

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Since the Board was founded on Earth!

HARTRO

Do you understand, David 7?

DAVID

Wh— N— I mean—

HARTRO

They do not elect people.

TREXEL

Elect-o-donoto-happenano— Onaboardno.

IMOGEN

[Beep] That's not so much pig Latin as hog Esperanto.

DAVID

Okay, well, why-o is it happening-o now-o?

TREXEL

I don't know-o! Oh look, a yoyo! Sorry, I got distracted by a yoyo. Everyone keep talking amongst yourselves. Wheeee! Wheeeee!

[Sounds of yo-yo use begin]

IMOGEN

[Beep] Warning: yoyo detected. Security scornful, but secretly want a go.

HARTRO

So, uh, I can only mean one thing. Must I explain everything to you?

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yes, please, that is—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Yes. Yes, please, yes.

HARTRO

I just want to say that there is one person working very hard.

TREXEL

Me. Look at how— Look what I can do with this yoyo! I can make it walk the dog.

[Whoosh sound, and yo-yo sounds finish]

Oh, no, it's stolen my dog, come back— Oh, it's gone.

HARTRO

Okay. So. It can only mean one thing: a Board member... sorry to have to tell you this. But a Board member... has.... most likely died.

TREXEL

You shut your filth mouth. You shut your filthy, filth mouth.

HARTRO

I'm sorry, **(stammers)** it's what must, must have happened.

DAVID

Do we say 'Hail the Board' or something?

TREXEL

(Reverently) Hail the Board.

DAVID

(Blandly) Hail the Board.

HARTRO

Think we should just have a moment of silence.

TREXEL

(Singing, elegy style) Ohhhhh... Board... Over us...

DAVID

This an official song, or is this just...

TREXEL

(Sings) Benevolent...

DAVID

This is a Trexel special?

TREXEL

(Sings) Void of trust...

(Crosstalk) Now we say... with hearts so heavy...

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Hartro, you're not gonna try to join in, are you?

(Hartro begins to softly try to harmonise)

TREXEL

(Sings) That we lay a member... to rest.

(Bouncier, with Hartro attempting to contribute despite not knowing the lyrics)

Let the purges begin, let the purges begin, we must find those responsible—

DAVID

What—

TREXEL

(Sings) —for death!

HARTRO

(Sings) Purges begin!

DAVID

I—

TREXEL

(Sings) —If we must kill a god, then we will kill a god!

HARTRO

(Sings) Must kill a god!

DAVID

Killing gods?

TREXEL

(Sings) Because the Board is the beeest!

HARTRO

(Sings) Beeeest!

DAVID

Kay, was that... was that an official—?

TREXEL

Well, let's just say I wrote it, and it's under consideration.

HARTRO

And I sang along because I'm still slightly afraid.

DAVID

Okay.

HARTRO

To not sing along.

DAVID

Just, just in case. Just in case.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Better to sing along and risk looking foolish, than not sing along and risk being purged.

TREXEL

Cos sometimes there's a song you haven't heard, but it is an official song, and you don't sing, and you're in trouble.

DAVID

O-Okay, right, so, yeah. So, so a Board member has died, and, and this is really sad. But, but you said like— There, there's never been a vote. So, like, is this the first time a Board member has ever died?

(Trexel and Hartro makes sounds of incredulous dismissal)

TREXEL

I mean, sure, Board members are long-lived. I think the longest is about two hundred and sixty years. Old Keith. Good old Keith. Ah, so old and violent.

HARTRO

Quite impressive. He was only an ear in the end.

TREXEL

Yep, just a living ear. Just a living ear that demanded death. 'Kill them all,' we assumed the ear said.

HARTRO

Ah, but the— Keith, he had such charisma.

TREXEL

Ah, I mean— For an ear.

HARTRO

Such charisma. When they did the holo-vids, you'd see the ear there, under the spotlight, and—

TREXEL

Such an enigmatic ear. 'What's the ear hearing,' you'd say. What it's hearing is the screaming of its enemies.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Stellar Firma's most famous historical violent ear. Hundreds of years dead, but still feared.

TREXEL

But, yes: they do occasionally die. But at, at those times, we have the hereditary rules.

HARTRO

Oh yeah, the hereditary rules. Of course.

TREXEL

A child of the Board takes over.

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

And so it goes. Onwards and onwards, forever and ever, into a glorious future.

DAVID

So... this Board member died without any children, then?

TREXEL

It seems ridiculous, but it must be the case.

HARTRO

How could they let that happen?

TREXEL

You know what? From the day that a Board member becomes a Board member, they're like, 'Hey, get on it, wink.' Y'know? They're like, 'Hey, I don't wanna be weird here, but how bout you get home and start, y'know—'

DAVID

Like King Lint.

TREXEL

Like King Lint! And his thousand children of Lint.

HARTRO

Oh, no no no no, don't, don't start that again. Oh, jeez.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Please don't.

TREXEL

Dusty sex.

HARTRO

I thought, I thought we were going to have a song again.

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Oh, you want a song! Oooh!

HARTRO

Uh, no.

TREXEL

(Sings) Kiiiiing Lint, getting it on! Kiiiiing Lint, getting it on!

(Continues to sing variations of this line)

DAVID

Oh, that is— That is obscene. That is absolutely obscene. Trexel, keep your shirt on! Trexel, keep your shirt **on!**

TREXEL

(Still singing) There's a filthy bit of lint, and it's coming for you—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Right, uh, what does this button do?

[Click]

(Trexel begins to whoosh and yell like he's been caught in the spin cycle of a giant washer before he is ejected and lands on the ground)

DAVID

Wow, that is fast.

TREXEL

(Disoriented) Why is there a button for spinning— Oh, I'm gonna be sick.

[Trexel vomits on the floor]

HARTRO

That is handy.

[Trexel vomits again]

HARTRO

I'm going to put a little star by that button.

TREXEL

I don't like the spinny button, it makes me feel bad.

DAVID

O-okay, for— So we've got this, this Board member. The Board member has, has, has done and died a death, and— No kids, right?

HARTRO

All Hail the Board.

TREXEL

All Hail the Board.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Hail the Surviving Board.

DAVID

Hail the Board. So we've gotta, we've gotta vote now. And they're gonna vote for me. So this is a Standards plan, so it's obviously nefarious in some way. But, but—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Ooh, it's slimy. I mean, it's got ick on it.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

Evil.

DAVID

Yeah.

TREXEL

It's got that— It's got that icky, evil stank.

DAVID

Yes, but, but, but if I'm—

HARTRO

Standards stank.

DAVID

Standards stank.

TREXEL

Ooooh, the Standards stank.

DAVID

But if I'm voted—

TREXEL

What's that smell? It's the Standards stank.

DAVID

Okay, so the Standards Stank stanks me into the Board.

HARTRO

PU.

TREXEL

Eugh! I can barely— I can barely eat my slurry cos of this stank.

DAVID

Okay, right. And, and then we've, we've all, we've all go the air freshener out, we've wafted away the Standards stank—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Oh, but it's not powerful enough!

Ooh, the stank's coming through the freshener! Freshener can't stand up to the Standards stank!

HARTRO

David, you can't cover Standards stank. It's uncoverable.

TREXEL

Can't cover the stank!

DAVID

Ah, ah, ah. But I'm now a Board Member in this situation, so I'm using my Board Member powers to get rid of my—

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Look at him, he's already a Board Member.

TREXEL

Eugh.

DAVID

No, I'm using Board Stank Freshener to freshen the stank of Standards, which is below the board. And that's my point. If I'm a Board Member, why can't I just do whatever I want? Like, how is Standards gonna control me? I'll just be like, 'Ah, shut up, I'm a Board Member.'

TREXEL

You're right, David! You can become the new benevolent dictator and do whatever you want, except you're an idiot and you've forgotten something very important.

DAVID

Okay, Trexel. A-And, and, by "you've forgot," did you mean, "you don't know something and I'm about to tell you, but pretend you didn't know because you're just an idiot"?

HARTRO

Sass-say.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Sassy but fair. Your ball, Geistman.

TREXEL

Same thing, David. Same thing. The charter, David. The Charter. Every Board Member that is elected has a charter which gives them their powers, and also the things that they must achieve. And the Board Members are bound by that charter. Now, obviously, there's only ever been one charter, and that charter was, well: 'get us off Earth, and then, you know, just kind of, feel it out from there.' That's giving the Board the ultimate power remit that, you know, made them into the benevolent force they are today. But if a new Board member is voted onto the Board by the Shareholders, then they get a chance to amend the charter. And guess what they're going to amend it with: all of their evil plans. The charter's gonna be like, 'Oh! Make us in church. Oh,' you know, 'get

rid of Imogen because we don't like them.' You know, the kind of things Standards wants, and you will be bound. You'll be bound by it, David.

DAVID

Mmmhmm.

HARTRO

And you know what else?

DAVID

What else?

HARTRO

They'll come with me with that hammer. They have that hammer, and they've already told me that that hammer's for me.

TREXEL

And I— You know what? They've never told me the hammer's for me. I'm pretty sure I'm gonna get hammered. I think the hammer's gonna come for me as well, David, so if you go along with this—

DAVID

Okay, so my charter's just gonna have like— 'Hammer time, brackets, for Hartro and Trexel.'

TREXEL

It, it's gonna be a hammer time charter, and nobody—

DAVID

Right.

TREXEL

—wants that.

DAVID

Okay, right, so: bound by a charter. Wh— So, okay, if they can bind somebody by a charter, why are they waiting for me? Cos like, they could, they could get any, any, any fool. They could get another, another member of Standards.

HARTRO

Why wouldn't they have got me? Like—

DAVID

Why, why not that fool?

TREXEL

Yeah, why not Hartro? Hartro is a spineless person who you could use.

HARTRO

H— what? What?

TREXEL

Well, you're spineless, aren't you, Hartro? If the Board said, 'Here's ultimate power, do whatever we say,' look me in the eye and tell me you wouldn't take that in heartbeat and be a spineless poltroon puppet of theirs. Tell me. Tell me honestly.

HARTRO

Tsst. **(softly)** I wouldn't take it.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Convincing.

TREXEL

Sorry. No, no, you looked at your shoes, there. Could you just look in my eyes and say that?

HARTRO

Y— I— Y'know— You— You know what? **You** go in the suite there and you look at yourself and you tell yourself you wouldn't do it.

TREXEL

Fool me seven times, Hartro, shame on me. Fool me eight times, I'm gonna look at my eyes in that mirror.

[Trexel electrocutes himself again]

TREXEL

I just, I'd just like to learn.

HARTRO

So... I think I've made my point there.

TREXEL

I'd just like to learn once. You know, I'd just like to learn? Like, sometimes I just, like— You know, sometimes— You know, I think we all have fun here, but sometimes I'd like to do something, and then go to do it later, and remember before the electroshock that I've done it before and it didn't work. Is that too much to ask? Apparently yes.

HARTRO

What would you like to learn?

TREXEL

I've forgotten. Hang on— I'll check in the room.

[Trexel shouts as he is electrocuted]

TREXEL

Yep, got it. So, the thing is: now as much as I hate to admit this: David is special. And not just in the special warm fuzzy way that we have found rather uncomfortably over the last couple of days, and now we are— **(sighs)** Friends.

HARTRO

Am I missing something?

TREXEL

Yeah, **(struggling stammers)** we're sort of, um.

DAVID

I think Trexel grew an empathy. It's, it's weird.

TREXEL

I've gone a bit empathic— I've gone a— I can be— I can now sometimes consider other peoples' situations, and, and, and their emotions, and consider my impact.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I don't believe it.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) I don't...

TREXEL

Very embarrassing, Hartro. **(mumbling)**

DAVID

Oh, no, but hang on a minute, hang on a minute. Uhh, could you just quickly insult me.

TREXEL

Uhh, David, you have a stupid face, and you smell like feet.

DAVID

Okay, Trexel, and, and how do you think that made me feel?

TREXEL

It would make me, and therefore you... feel... bad... and insulting... and I'm sorry... Do you see, Hartro?

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) Oh, woow.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) Yeah, I know, it's, it's, it's weird. It's, it's, it's all a bit—

TREXEL

It's like having a weird growth on your head. Everyone's looking at it, being like 'Mmm, should I mention it? I would be rude, but also, I do— I'm trying to eat a baguette.'

IMOGEN

[Beep] It's a profound contradiction of my understanding of reality, and I hate it.

HARTRO

You just can't— I can't believe what I've just seen.

(All three of them burble unintelligently at the same time, giving way into Hartro muttering incredulously)

HARTRO

Whoa whoa whoa... Trexel?

TREXEL

Yes?

HARTRO

You know all of these years that I've been your line manager?

TREXEL

Yes?

HARTRO

And... had to... review your planets...

TREXEL

Yep.

HARTRO

Review your sales...

TREXEL

(Sighs) Yes.

HARTRO

Very much just try to keep you out of trouble... and... y'know, the Board nonetheless pleased with your performance. **(burbles)** Y'know, you were terrible.

TREXEL

Y'know, eye of the beholder, and visionary beyond their time, but go on.

HARTRO

That made me feel.

TREXEL

I think— Well, hang on— Just thinking about all of those things that I did, and you were there. That would maybe f— **(begins hyperventilating)** I look into the eyes of death, and I see my own face! I hope for oblivion, but I see only noise and pain! Endless noise and pain! I'm sorry, Hartro! I'm sorry for what I've—

(Passes out)

(Hartro makes sounds of utter delight)

DAVID

Yeah, no, see, if— It does cause him to black out. He, he'll be back in a bit.

HARTRO

Oh, that was the— That was the best! While he's blacked out, I just have to tell you, David 7... that was the best! I've been waiting, waiting for that forever!

DAVID

It did, it did look like he deeply did not enjoy it, and that makes sense for you enjoying. Probably an equal amount, so that's quite a lot, based on his reaction.

(Trexel gasps back to consciousness)

TREXEL

Sorry everyone, I was having a terrible dream where I was getting all of my emotional comeuppance at once. But the point is: David is special. In the sense that they are a clone that has universal permissions.

DAVID

Oh, yeah. I kind of forgot about those.

TREXEL

We all do occasionally forget about it, because it's weird and uncomfortable and it gets us killed.

DAVID

Well, I just kind of haven't needed it cos I've got a pinball machine here.

(burbles) D'be like, 'Imogen, can I get a new pinball?' **(burbles)** It's just, it's just there.

TREXEL

It's got pinball. What else do you really need?

HARTRO

And that hot tub.

IMOGEN

[Beep] Who needs ultimate power when you have amenities?

TREXEL

And that hot tub.

HARTRO

(Crosstalk) I might, I might just have a dip in that hot tub later.

TREXEL

No! Do, do not get distracted!

HARTRO

Oh. Oh.

TREXEL

So if you think about it, who better for Standards to put into the Board as a clone that they can control because it's a clone with universal permissions that can do anything that they want? Because there are provisions. There are standards about what you should and shouldn't do. But guess who they will apply to.

DAVID

Oh, oh, I've got this. So, Stellar Firma fundamentally don't care about clones, and I have been told that I am about as useful as a hammer.

TREXEL

Yes.

DAVID

Is it... people?

TREXEL

Exactly.

(Hartro gasps softly)

It doesn't say anything about objects or possessions, of which clones are. So there are no rules, no standards they have to follow. They can just put a clone in and use their universal permission to do whatever they want forever and ever, and become the undisputed dictators of Stellar Firma.

HARTRO

Ohhh, this Standards stank is stankier than I thought it was.

TREXEL

Aghh, so stanky!

DAVID

Number 48 looking to wield me like the ultimate hammer.

HARTRO

Ah, yes.

TREXEL

Exactly, exactly. But that does bring us to another question.

HARTRO

Hmm?

DAVID

What?

TREXEL

Well, why do you exist, David? If he, if you're this sort of terrible, end-game mcguffin of a kind—

DAVID

Thanks.

TREXEL

—then, then, then why did Imogen build a universal permissions holding, independently thinking clone that would allow Standards to take and kill us all?

DAVID

A-and actually, why wouldn't Imogen have stopped Standards's plan if that's a... Yeah, that's a good point. Imogen, have— Are you—

TREXEL

(Crosstalk) Lots of good points being made here.

DAVID

(Crosstalk) —gonna— Yeah, well, what's up with that? I-Imogen, hey, hey, hey, hey, Imogen.

TREXEL

Hey Imogen. Hey buddy.

HARTRO

Yo, Im.

DAVID

What's up with that?

IMOGEN

[Beep] You can have oxygens or answers, but not both.

TREXEL

Well, that was to be expected.

[Deep alarm begins to sound]

IMOGEN

[Beep] But it's time for the quarterly meeting, so instead, prepare to be flushed.

**[Floor opens with a whirr and all three of them are flushed,
yelling as they go]**

[Show Theme – Outro]

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