

YOUNG LEIF

Part 8: Earth

By

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Young Leif

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THE HUM OF THE NANCY SINATRA.

ALICE

So. Pirates, huh?

LEIF

I guess so.

ALICE

... So if you're a pirate now does that mean I'm the equivalent of the little parrot on your shoulder?

LEIF

No, I don't think so.

ALICE

... It's confusing because becoming a pirate is inherently funny, but you don't seem to want to joke about it.

LEIF

... Not right now.

ALICE

... I know I wasn't there when you were a prisoner but based on what you've told me, there was really no other way out of that situation.

LEIF

I know...

ALICE

But I know you care about Verge. I know it couldn't have been easy.

LEIF

The problem I seem to be having, is that it was easy.

ALICE

Ah.

LEIF

It worries me sometimes. How easy it is for me to walk away from things.

ALICE

... Leif how deep do you want me to dip into psychotherapeutic response protocols right now?

LEIF

Please don't. I'll be fine. Verge'll be fine. Let's move on.

ALICE

Okay... According to what you've told me, we've got about 8 days left of this Rumspringa we're in.

LEIF

Rumspringa?

ALICE

Yeah. It's an Earth thing. The Amish do it, you're familiar?

LEIF

Yeah.

ALICE

Before young people come of age they get a small amount of time to go totally nuts and do all of the not-Amish things they can think of. I guess this period of time Minsky gave you is the opposite, you have a few days to do any non-pirate things until you go full pirate.

LEIF

I see.

ALICE

So what's on the list?

LEIF

What's the opposite of being a pirate?

ALICE

I don't know. Something boring, I guess. You want to go be an accountant for a day? Adjust some insurance claims?

LEIF

No.

ALICE

... Leif, is there anyone you need to say goodbye to?

LEIF

... Yes. But I'm trying to avoid it.

ALICE

Let me know how that goes.

LEIF
What's the date on Earth?

ALICE
It is November 21st, the year 2000.

LEIF
Shit. Okay.

ALICE
What's the big deal?

LEIF
Nothing.

ALICE
Oh wait... Okay.

LEIF
What?

ALICE
You need to go home.

LEIF
... Maybe.

ALICE
It makes sense.

LEIF
Does it?

ALICE
Yes. I mean, you should probably check in with people back home since you're about to be walking around with a peg-leg and a hook for a hand.

LEIF
How many bad pirate jokes do you have in your database exactly?

ALICE
Soooooo many. Incoming call from BertBert.

LEIF
Thank God. Put her through.

BERTBERT
... Oh, hello.

LEIF
Hey, Berts. Who's trying to kill you this time?

BERTBERT

Only my mother.

LEIF

That sounds complicated.

BERTBERT

She's a little protective, Leif.

LEIF

I got that sense.

BERTBERT

So I'm sure you can imagine the talking to I got when she found out I was almost executed by the Science Priests of Moog.

LEIF

Kinda wish I was there to see it.

BERTBERT

I'm sure.

LEIF

My name come up at all?

BERTBERT

Oh yes it did, Leif. In fact she wants you to know that she has basically adopted you in absentia. You are her favorite person now, I think she's trying to get you citizenship.

LEIF

How nice.

BERTBERT

I tried to explain to her that in the process of saving me you also killed literally all of the science priests and destroyed their temple, and, oh, the moral back-bends she did perform, my friend.

LEIF

I feel like what our friendship really needed was your mom saying nice things about me.

BERTBERT

Yeah, there's a whole new level of loathing I have for you now.

LEIF

So you're essentially calling to let me know that me saving your life has only made you hate me more.

BERTBERT

Correct.

LEIF

Well, thanks for the update.

BERTBERT

Where are you right now?

LEIF

Fuck, I don't even know. Alice, where are we?

ALICE

Just outside of Garrion.

BERTBERT

Aha. That explains the talking in real time. I just left Sigius.

LEIF

Where are you headed?

BERTBERT

Literally anywhere. The Sigian government put me in protective custody until the Moog bullshit got ironed out. As soon as they lifted the protection I was out the door, but I don't have any assignments so I'm killing time by yelling at you.

LEIF

Glad I could help.

BERTBERT

I'd ask you what you were up to but that would make me an accessory to a crime.

LEIF

Yeah... hey... actually... do you want to come to Earth with me?

BERTBERT

Really?

LEIF

Yeah, have you ever been?

BERTBERT

No.

LEIF

There's a holiday I'm going back for.

BERTBERT

What holiday?

LEIF
Thanksgiving.

BERTBERT
This is the one with the bird? There's a big bird?

LEIF
Yes, the big bird one.

BERTBERT
Hmm. And that's all you're going back for?

LEIF
Yes.

BERTBERT
Zero crime?

LEIF
No crime at all, I promise.

BERTBERT
Well... I guess I should go at least once.

LEIF
Sure.

BERTBERT
For research.

LEIF
Of course.

BERTBERT
Deep background stuff.

LEIF
Whatever that means, sure.

BERTBERT
Okay. When?

LEIF
I'm going to change course right now. Can you meet me at Sirius Station?

BERTBERT
Yeah, okay. Sure.

LEIF
Great.

BERTBERT
One thing though.

LEIF

Okay.

BERTBERT

I still despise you and everything you stand for.

LEIF

Got it. See you soon.

LATER. BERTBERT IS NOW ABOARD AND TALKS FROM THE BEDROOM.

BERTBERT

(From the bedroom.)

So anyway, going to Earth is not like going to other places, you have to take a bunch of precautions. Luckily I was able to throw things together at the last minute.

LEIF

Like what, you have to get vaccinations or something?

BERTBERT

(Coming out onto the bedroom.)

It's kind of like going to a national park or something. You have to make sure you're not going to upset the delicate balance.

LEIF

I think we're upsetting the delicate balance pretty well on our own.

BERTBERT

I have to get screened for viruses so I don't unleash some unholy plague on the populace. I have to pass a written test to make sure I'm going to respect cultural norms.

LEIF

We have cultural norms?

BERTBERT

Have you been to Charamy (*Shar-may*)?

LEIF

No.

BERTBERT

On Charamy they greet each other by spitting on the ground. Stuff like that.

LEIF

I see.

BERTBERT

The most important thing is this...

BEEPS AS A SMALL DEVICE POWERS UP.

LEIF

What's that?

BERTBERT

It's an Earthsuit.

LEIF

Is that to protect you from pollution or something?

BERTBERT

No, it's a disguise.

LEIF

Really?

BERTBERT

Leif. Look at me, I'm from another planet. I can't walk down main street Earth looking like this.

LEIF

Oh, right.

BERTBERT

Are you sure you're one of the smartest guys on your planet?

LEIF

There may be some gaps in my awareness.

BERTBERT

When you go to Earth you wear one of these, an Earthsuit. You wear it on your wrist and it generates a field that makes you look like a generic Earthling.

LEIF

Fascinated to know what a generic Earthling looks like, fire it up.

BERTBERT

Here we go. Becoming an Earthling. Very excited to burn fossil fuels and worship some sort of sky god.

BERTBERT ACTIVATES THE EARTHSUIT.

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

... Okay.

LEIF

Look at you.

BERTBERT

I'm an Earthling.

LEIF

Yes, you are.

BERTBERT

This is so weird.

LEIF

It's freaking me out.

BERTBERT

I like my hair, it's very... Hmmm.

LEIF

What?

BERTBERT

Do I look familiar to you?

LEIF

No.

ALICE

Um...

BERTBERT

What?

ALICE

BertBert, where did you get this Earthsuit from?

BERTBERT

Well, like I said I was in a rush so I had to get a refurbished one at Trunder's Down Under. What?

ALICE

It may have needed a little more refurbishing.

BERTBERT

Goddamnit. What?

ALICE

Bringing up pictures of Julia Roberts.

SEVERAL PICTURES OF JULIA ROBERTS APPEAR ON THE HEADS UP DISPLAY.

BERTBERT

Motherfucker.

ALICE

Yeah.

BERTBERT

I look like Julia Roberts.

ALICE

You look like Julia Roberts.

BERTBERT

I look exactly like Julia Roberts.

LEIF

Is this bad? Who is she?

BERTBERT

Would you watch one movie from your planet, please?

LEIF

I did, I watched Blade Runner, was she in Blade Runner?

BERTBERT

Of course it was Blade Runner.

LEIF

What does that mean?

ALICE

Julia Roberts is currently the highest paid actress on Earth.

LEIF

Good for her.

BERTBERT

Yes, congratulations Julia, but this is bad for me, Leif.

LEIF

Is it?

BERTBERT

The point is for me to be incognito. I can't go down to Earth as the most recognizable woman on the planet.

LEIF

Julia Roberts is the most recognizable woman on the planet?

BERTBERT

Yes!

ALICE

Actually according to metrics that is technically Oprah Winfrey so... dodged that bullet.

BERTBERT

Thanks.

LEIF

Am I the only one who doesn't understand the fascination with people who act in movies?

ALICE

Sociologists describe it as an inherent desire in former monarchical societies to have a stand in for a royal family that people can admire.

LEIF

That's interesting.

ALICE

And then after you're done admiring them, ridiculing them and ruining their lives.

LEIF

Actually. This might be okay.

BERTBERT

How?

LEIF

You'd be in trouble if we were headed to a normal part of Earth but we are decidedly not doing that.

BERTBERT

We're not?

LEIF

My parents are societal drop-outs. They don't have a television, they don't go to the movies. They don't participate in popular culture. To them you'd be just another person. We're not going to be walking down main street Earth, we're going to be deep in the woods.

BERTBERT

So I'm going to walk in the door and nobody's going to recognize me even though I'm the second most famous woman on the planet?

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

You're sure?

LEIF
Pretty sure.

BERTBERT
... Okay... Okay... I mean, I look good.

ALICE
You look great.

BERTBERT
This hair is really something. Let me see if I can do that hair toss she does... is it... like that?

ALICE
Oooh, you're really close. About 10 degrees to the left.

BERTBERT
Okay, let me try again.

LEIF
What is happening?

BERTBERT
Wait.

LEIF
What?

BERTBERT
I bought a second hand Earthsuit.

LEIF
Yes.

BERTBERT
That just happens to look like a famous actress.

LEIF
Right.

BERTBERT
... This was used for a sex thing, wasn't it?

ALICE
It was absolutely used for a sex thing.

BERTBERT
UGH!...

ALICE
Sorry.

BERTBERT
No!

ALICE
I mean, maybe not!

BERTBERT
I feel like I'm covered in goo now!

ALICE
But you don't look like you're covered in goo, and that's the important part.

BERTBERT
This is the type of dirty that doesn't wash off.

ALICE
I loved you in the Pelican Brief.

BERTBERT
Alice.

ALICE
Sorry.

LEIF
Think of it this way, at least you're not a prisoner of the Science Priests of Moog.

BERTBERT
That experience did considerably lower the bar on just about everything.

LEIF
Perspective is a magical thing, isn't it?

ALICE
We've cleared the warp gate. We're now inbound for Earth.

BERTBERT
... Hey, Leif, do you mind if I ask you something?

LEIF
Go for it.

BERTBERT
How come Verge isn't standing here looking like Julia Roberts right now?

LEIF
Not really their style, I don't think.

BERTBERT
Leif.

LEIF
...

BERTBERT
What happened?

LEIF
... One of the first things I learned was Newton's Law of Motion. I'm a little jealous of Newton. Things were a lot simpler for him. An apple falls on your head, you write a few things about it, and just like that you're a god of physics... The laws of motion are simple and elegant and, for me, infuriating. In a nutshell the laws of motion say: if you do something, something will happen. And I really hate that. Because I can control whether or not I do something but I have zero control over what happens when I do it. And that very simple, very basic thing, that thing that everyone accepts... It just makes me want to yell at the stars. Why is the designing principle of this universe so fucking terrible? Why does this universe only work if everything is completely out of our control? It's not a mode of being, it's a hostage situation.

BERTBERT
Could you maybe say that again but wear a little beret and smoke a cigarette while your doing it?

LEIF
I'm being serious.

BERTBERT
I know. Look... You're right. My first few years out here in the wider world have really taken a tire iron to my idealism... I believed something really simple: people should know what's happening in their world. It'll inform their decisions. I believed in it so much that I almost died for it, as you recall... Lately I've reached this point where I've been wondering, "Am I doing anything?" "Is any of this having the intended effect?" "Am I, when I do anything, really just spinning some random wheel of results?"

LEIF
And what if that's all you're doing?

BERTBERT

You mean what if I put on the beret and smoke the cigarette?

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

... It makes sense to me. What I do makes sense to me, at least. Maybe I don't focus on the results too much, maybe I focus on the work that I do. The results are never up to me, so I should abandon that fight and focus on what I believe in. And despite my cynicism, I believe in it... So what do you believe in, Leif?

LEIF

... I don't know.

BERTBERT

Ah. And with that we reach the nougat-y center of your problem, my friend... by the way this is a very weird way to tell me that you two broke up.

LEIF

I know. We did. We broke up. It hasn't been great.

BERTBERT

I'm sorry... And now you're going home, and home is complicated, and you need a buffer.

LEIF

I suppose so.

BERTBERT

A buffer in the form of me: world famous actress, Julia Roberts.

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

Okay... Let's go to Earth, weirdo.

THE SOUND OF THE FOREST. IN THE DISTANCE WE CAN HEAR MUSIC AND A PARTY. LEIF AND BERTBERT WALK THROUGH THE FOREST.

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

Wow. This is remote.

LEIF

Yeah. There's actually a weed farm there, over there, and right over that ridge.

BERTBERT

Really?

LEIF

They keep the trees high around it so you can only see it from the air. You can see my parents house because they don't grow weed.

BERTBERT

So, where do they think you've been? I'm assuming you didn't tell them you were leaving the planet.

LEIF

McMurdo Station.

BERTBERT

What is that?

LEIF

It's a research station in Antarctica. I told them I was building a CMB telescope.

BERTBERT

Is that where those little things are? What do you call them, they look like they're wearing a tuxedo?

LEIF

Penguins.

BERTBERT

That's it.

LEIF

Yeah, there's a lot of them there.

BERTBERT

You've been gone for how many years now?

LEIF

About six.

BERTBERT

... And they never checked on you?

LEIF

They don't have a phone.

BERTBERT

What if they wrote you a letter or something?

LEIF

My father thinks the government reads his mail, he doesn't trust it.

BERTBERT

Jesus, Leif, is your father a criminal too?

LEIF

No. Just someone who thinks he's important.

BERTBERT

Oof. That's quite a description of your own father, Leif.

LEIF

... I liked visiting your parents.

BERTBERT

You did?

LEIF

Yeah. I know they drive you crazy but they're...
It's not going to be like that in there, okay?

BERTBERT

This is really difficult for you, isn't it?

LEIF

... Yeah.

BERTBERT

Okay... Look. It's a party. We'll go in there,
we'll have a drink, we'll do a round, we'll get the
fuck out. I know the drill on this.

LEIF

You're not going to feel obligated to stay longer?

BERTBERT

Hey. I'm Julia Roberts, I do whatever the fuck I
want...

THEY STOP WALKING.

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

What's that? "Cell Phones Here".

LEIF

That's new.

BERTBERT

You guys are adorable with your cellular
technology, by the way.

LEIF

It's all the rage these days. This is my mom.

BERTBERT

She doesn't like cell phones?

LEIF

Electricity in general. She thinks she has something called Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity.

BERTBERT

Alice?

ALICE

Electromagnetic hypersensitivity or EHS is a claimed sensitivity to electromagnetic fields.

BERTBERT

Humans have that?

LEIF

Alice, do humans have that?

ALICE

Electromagnetic hypersensitivity is not an accepted diagnosis on Earth.

LEIF

She heard about it one time and thinks she has it now.

BERTBERT

Seriously?

LEIF

Yeah.

BERTBERT

Leif.

LEIF

What?

BERTBERT

You make things. Things that use electricity. And your father rejects technology and your mother thinks it makes her sick?

LEIF

Yeah.

BERTBERT

Wow... Is there going to be booze here?

LEIF

Yeah. It'll be homemade but it'll be there.

BERTBERT

Okay. I'm not going to lie, I was looking forward to watching you twist in the wind a little bit around your parents but this is a bit much.

LEIF

Has to be done.

BERTBERT

Okay, we're officially a strike team now. Operation: Big Bird. Get in, get out, disappear, right?

LEIF

Okay.

BERTBERT

Alice, keep it quiet in there, you're going to freak people out.

ALICE

No problem.

BERTBERT

I'm feeling a little dizzy right now, anyone else feeling dizzy?

LEIF

No.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

BERTBERT

I'm sure it's fine. Let's do this.

MOM

Leif?

LEIF

...Hey.

MOM

Oh my God.

LEIF

Sorry for the surprise. I just happened to be stateside and I looked at the calendar.

MOM

Come here...

THEY HUG.

MOM (CONT'D)

I can't believe it.

LEIF

It is kind of hard to keep you updated.

MOM

I know, you're right, I'm just so glad to see you.

LEIF

It's good to see you, too.

MOM

Who's you're friend?

LEIF

Oh, right. Mom this is my friend, uh, Julia.

BERTBERT

Hi there. I'm Julia. You have a lovely home.

MOM

Oh, well... Yes, thank you... Julia.

LEIF

Let's go inside.

MOM

You don't have one of those terrible cell phones people are getting now, do you?

ALICE

How dare you?

LEIF

Nope.

MOM

Alright. Oh, Leif, do me a favor and go say hello to your father first.

LEIF

He's not inside?

MOM

No, he's been having trouble with the south fence.

LEIF

Again?

MOM

Yes, I don't know what it is, it's the same old problem over and over again.

LEIF

Great.

MOM

Maybe you can help him out.

LEIF

Why is he fixing a fence during a party?

MOM

You know how he is. He'd love to see you. Julia, what don't you come inside, I'll get you some Pineapple wine.

BERTBERT

Uhh, Okay?

(To Leif.)

I was not expecting to fly solo on this one.

LEIF

Typical celebrity, hiding behind your proxies.

BERTBERT

Fuck you, dude.

LEIF

Hopefully this won't take long.

BERTBERT

Give me Alice, in case I need to look something up.

LEIF

Where's your Tangle?

BERTBERT

It's back at the ship.

LEIF

Why is it back at the ship?

BERTBERT

Because my Tangle hates me, okay? Give it to me.

LEIF

Okay.

BERTBERT

Hurry back.

LEIF

Good luck.

MOM

Come on in!

BERTBERT
Oh, God.

THEY WALK INSIDE THE HOUSE. THE MUSIC GETS A LITTLE LOUDER.

MOM
Everyone, this is Julia, Leif's girlfriend!

BERTBERT
I'm not uh, Hello!

MOM
Come into the kitchen.

BERTBERT
Okay.

MOM IS STIRRING A LARGE PITCHER.

MOM
Leif's father is always coming home with things. Scrap metal or something he found on the side of the road. He thinks we waste too much as a society and we should try and keep things out of all these landfills that are overflowing. Anyway, a few days ago he came home with twenty cans of pineapples. And I didn't know what to do with them so I just figured: you can make wine out of anything, why not pineapples?

MOM POURS HER A DRINK.

BERTBERT
Pineapples? I'm sure that's something that will not somehow kill me.

ALICE
(Whispering.)
You're fine.

BERTBERT
I'm sure I'll be fine.

BERTBERT DRINKS.

BERTBERT (CONT'D)
... That's pretty good.

MOM
So...
(Keeping her voice down.)
I'm sorry, this is driving me crazy, how in the WORLD did you meet my son?

BERTBERT

What do you mean?

MOM

I mean you're...
(Lowering her voice.)
You're Julia Roberts.

BERTBERT

Oh, fucking hell.

MOM

Don't worry, don't worry, I won't say anything, I promise. I know it must be terrible, people recognizing you all day long. I just... I'm such a big fan.

BERTBERT

Well... thank you... it's always nice meeting a fan.

MOM

I mean, of ALL the people I thought Leif would come home with.

BERTBERT

You know, Leif assured me that his parents didn't watch TV or go to the movies.

MOM

Yes, well... I may have a moment of weakness from time to time when I'm in town.

BERTBERT

You sneaky devil you.

MOM

I know. I really shouldn't. I have this condition, I'm supposed to stay away from anything that uses electricity, but when one of your movies comes out I think it's worth the risk.

BERTBERT

Maybe not all of my movies.

MOM

I get a massive migraine afterward, I have to rest for two days but it is always worth it.

BERTBERT

Wow. Is it okay to do that?

MOM

Well it's probably not okay for us to be drinking this pineapple wine, but here we are!

BERTBERT

Okay.

MOM

I'm feeling a little overwhelmed right now. I can't believe you're here.

BERTBERT

Hey, I'm a human being on the planet earth just like you, right? I didn't come from space or something.

MOM

I suppose. I loved the last one, about the bride?

ALICE

(Whispering)
Runaway Bride.

BERTBERT

Runaway Bride.

MOM

Yes. That's it. So great. And what is that man's name?

ALICE

(Whispering)
Richard Geere.

BERTBERT

Richard Geere.

MOM

Yes! That's it. What's he like?

ALICE

(Whispering)
Buddhist.

BERTBERT

You know, he's a Buddhist.

MOM

No.

ALICE

(Whispering)
Yes.

BERTBERT
Yes.

MOM
You have to tell me everything.

BERTBERT
Well that depends, Mom. How much pineapple wine
have you got?

LEIF TRUDGES THROUGH THE BACK FORTY OF THE FARM. WE HEAR
HAMMERING AMONG THE SOUNDS OF THE FOREST.

LEIF
Hey, Dad.

DAD
... You're here.

LEIF
I'm here.

DAD
Didn't know you were coming.

LEIF
You know, you can have a phone at your house and
still be an anti-capitalist.

DAD
Very funny... Staying long?

LEIF
No, I've got to get back... I'm starting a new
project soon so I wanted to check in beforehand.

DAD
Check in.

LEIF
Yeah. It's Thanksgiving, I thought I would check
in.

DAD
Well thanks for checking in...

LEIF
... So, the back fence is still giving you trouble,
huh?

DAD
I don't know what it is. Joyriders, new neighbors.
People have been knocking this fence over for
years.

LEIF
Are you sure someone's knocking it over?

DAD
You're going to come back after a few years and tell me what's going on with my own fence?

LEIF
Okay...

DAD
... So, how's life out there?

LEIF
Out there?

DAD
Where is it again? Alaska?

LEIF
Antarctica.

DAD
Right. And you're building a what?

LEIF
CMB Telescope.

DAD
A telescope. Okay. You know if we spent half the time looking at the stars as we did our own planet-

LEIF
-We wouldn't have half the problems we have now, yes, I've heard this somewhere before.

DAD
Well I'm sorry if I'm boring you.

LEIF
Dad. Do you need help with the fence?

DAD
I'm almost done.

LEIF
Okay... Okay well, good talk.

DAD
Where have you really been, Leif?

LEIF
What do you mean?

DAD

You know how I feel about the mail. But then your mother confesses to me a few months ago that she's been writing you letters. She went down to the library, managed to get an address for this place, wherever it is.

LEIF

McMurdo Station.

DAD

They were all returned. All the letters were coming back, there was no one there to deliver them to... So where have you been?

LEIF

I'm sure you can imagine sending mail to the bottom of the world can be a little tricky.

DAD

Don't treat me like I'm an idiot.

LEIF

What do you think I'm trying to get away with?

DAD

You think I don't know what the US Government likes to do with young engineers?

LEIF

I'm not working for the government.

DAD

You've worked for the government before.

LEIF

There was some funding from the government, that's not "working for the government".

DAD

That's how they get you. They offer some pocket change and then take over completely, your mother is the trusting one, not me. I know how things work.

LEIF

Yeah, I imagine you've developed a lot of political acumen out here in the middle of fucking nowhere.

DAD

I observe from the outside. I'm not blinded by the usual shit that jams people up. And don't call this place the middle of nowhere, the whole world used to look like this, you know.

LEIF

Yes and then time passed. You want everyone in the world to live on a farm?

DAD

The world would be a better place if they did.

LEIF

But then you'd have no one to complain about, Dad. How would you live?

DAD

Don't be a smart ass. The Industrial Revolution was the biggest mistake this civilization ever made.

LEIF

That may be true but it did provide you things like the posts for this fence, the wire for this fence, and also the hammer that you were just using on the fence.

DAD

So you're not going to tell me where you've been?

LEIF

I've already told you where I've been, it sounds like you're upset because I've been hanging out with penguins.

DAD

Ridiculous. You really think we're idiots, don't you?

LEIF

Jesus, Dad-

DAD

You go off and get a college degree while you're still a teenager and now we're all idiots.

LEIF

I've never said that.

DAD

Allow me to say a thing or two. Since I'm the dumb one, right? That's me? Let me say a thing or two about this government job that you definitely don't have.

LEIF

I really don't.

DAD

War is coming back... I saw it in the 60s and I'm seeing it again now.

LEIF

C'mon.

DAD

What? You think because it's the year 2000 that we don't go to war anymore?

LEIF

Go to war with who?

DAD

Doesn't matter. We'll find somebody. Ask yourself if anything you're working on right now can be dropped on a village somewhere.

LEIF

This is ridiculous. I don't even need to be here for this conversation.

DAD

Well then why'd you come back to see me, Leif?

LEIF

I didn't come back to see you.

DAD

Fine. Go talk to your mother, then. She always bought your bullshit.

LEIF

Yeah, okay. Good luck with the fence.

DAD

A man has to live in accordance with his beliefs, kid. That's what I'm doing. What do you believe?

LEIF

... What I believe is that no one has ever knocked down your fence. Your fence is in an erosion zone and every time it rains the ground slips away and the fence falls down. What I believe is that you can't seem to exist without designating someone as "the enemy". Why you decided it should be your son is beyond me... Goodbye, Dad.

BACK AT THE PARTY. BERTBERT IS A LITTLE DRUNK AND HAS GONE "FULL JULIA".

BERTBERT

...So we're on set, it's been a long morning and we decide to break for lunch. Everyone had always told me "Christopher Walken is always drunk. He shows up drunk, he's drunk all day, he goes to back to his room drunk. Be ready for it." But we'd been shooting for two weeks and I hadn't noticed anything. But we break for lunch that day and in the middle of the lunch area is this huge fountain. Instead of getting anything for lunch, Christopher Walken, still in full costume, climbs into the fountain and lowers himself into the water, keeping just his two eyes above the surface. He sits in the water like that for the entire lunch break and everyone just kind of ignores him so I ignore him too. Lunch break ends, Christopher Walken climbs out of the water, and he's instantly surrounded by the wardrobe people, they've got a hair dryer on him, they're wrapping him in paper towels. And with a big smile on his face he says to them: "For lunch, I was a alligator."

MOM

So he was drunk the whole time and you didn't know it?

BERTBERT

No clue, and I know what it looks like when someone's drunk on set, I've worked with Nick Nolte.

LEIF

Hey you two.

BERTBERT

There he is!

MOM

Hey, Sweetie. Did you find him?

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

How's dad?

LEIF

The same.

MOM

Well you sit right here, I'm going to get us all some more wine.

BERTBERT

That's and excellent idea, Mom!

LEIF

Alice, what's happened to BertBert?

ALICE

Funny story. Turns out when Sigians encounter the higher oxygen content of Earth's atmosphere, they get a little loopy.

BERTBERT

Lewps.

ALICE

That coupled with whatever prison hooch your mom has whipped up and we are off to the races, my dude.

BERTBERT

(Not totally fine.)

You know what, I've heard the stories of Sigians getting weird in Earth atmosphere, but guess what? I'm totally fine.

MOM

Okay, here we go.

BERTBERT

I love pineapples. Why don't they have pineapples where I'm from? They should. All those islands?

MOM

Oh, where are you from?

ALICE

(Whispering.)

Georgia.

BERTBERT

Georgia. The islands of Georgia. They have them.

LEIF

Mom, we should probably go.

MOM

But you just got here.

LEIF

Yes but, we have to go swing by Julia's parent's place as well.

MOM

Oh, are they nearby?

BERTBERT

They're in Georgia.

MOM

That's... that's across the country.

LEIF

Private jet!

BERTBERT

Private Jet is the answer to that question, because I am Julia Roberts, a movie star from Earth.

MOM

That's very fancy.

LEIF

Don't tell Dad, okay?

MOM

No, no of course. Let me walk you out, okay?

LEIF

Okay.

BERTBERT

Oooh. That means I'm going to have to stand up. That's a terrifying prospect.

ALICE

You can do it.

BERTBERT

Give me some motivation.

ALICE

You're rising from your seat to give your Oscar speech.

BERTBERT

Now we're talking, I can feel it in my hands...

LEIF AND MOM ARE WALKING AWAY FROM THE HOUSE WITH BERTBERT FOLLOWING FAR BEHIND.

MOM

You and your father fought again, didn't you?

LEIF

We did.

MOM

I'm sorry. For some reason I think that's better than not seeing each other at all.

LEIF
He really doesn't like me, Mom.

MOM
Honey, that's not true.

LEIF
You saying it's not true doesn't fix it.

MOM
I know.

LEIF
The man genuinely does not like me.

MOM
I think he has a hard time letting you be who you are. I think he was expecting someone he could pass down all his knowledge to, and pick up where he left off at the farm. But you... You could not have been more different from your surroundings. It's like you fell from space... I do wish you hadn't wanted to leave so quickly. You were so young. I thought I'd have a few more years with you.

LEIF
I know... I make things, Mom. I make things with technology. Electricity, electromagnetism. I use batteries and reactors and irradiated rays of light... And I'm really good at it.

MOM
I know you are, Honey.

LEIF
And what do you do when the one thing you're good at makes your father angry and your mom sick?... I had to go.

MOM
... I'll work on the technology stuff okay?

LEIF
Don't worry about it.

MOM
Maybe I'll get a blender, I hear those are nice.

LEIF
Mom. It's fine.

MOM
... I really like Julia.

LEIF

She's great.

BERTBERT

I really like you, Mom!

MOM

I'm not going to see you for a while, am I?

LEIF

It's going to be a while.

MOM

I'm so glad you came.

LEIF

Me too.

MOM

Can you do me a favor?

LEIF

Sure.

MOM

I worry about all sorts of things, Leif. But with you, the thing I worry about the most is loneliness. No matter where you end up going with this life of yours can you promise... make yourself a home among people. Can you do that for me? Or at least try? I worry about you being alone more than anything.

LEIF

... I'll try.

THE DOOR TO THE NANCY SINATRA SLIDES OPEN.

BERTBERT

So the brother she's engaged to leaves on the train and she's trying to get out of the station but the soldiers stop her and ask for her papers. Right then Michael Collins, the OTHER brother, comes up to her and says-

(Irish accent.)

"Lads, lads, Can a man not say goodbye to his wife in peace?" And he KISSES her. The soldiers move on, she pushes him away and says-

(Irish accent.)

"Where I come from they call it takin' liberties." So my question is, what is it about making out with someone that gets you through government checkpoints on Earth?

LEIF

That doesn't sound like the most historically accurate movie in the world.

BERTBERT

I mean, if her accent is any indication.

ALICE

Congratulations, you two. We have made it through Operation: Big Bird.

BERTBERT

We did it!

LEIF

Thanks for coming with me.

BERTBERT

You know, as a world famous actress, it is hard to find space in my schedule but you have to make time for the little people, you know what I mean?

LEIF

Your fans love that about you.

BERTBERT

I suppose I should turn this Earthsuit off now but... I don't know, I'm going to miss it. What's it like dating a movie star?

LEIF

It's stressful.

BERTBERT

Yes, I know, Leif. My life is complicated, but in the end I'm just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to lover her.

LEIF

This is from a movie?

ALICE

She's doing Notting Hill.

LEIF

BertBert, seriously, thank you for coming with me.

BERTBERT

You saving me from certain doom, me pretending to be Julia Roberts at your parents' house. I feel like we're even.

LEIF

Yeah...

BERTBERT

Things didn't go too well with Dad?

LEIF

They went how I expected them to. Just had to get it out of the way.

BERTBERT

Leif, look, you're a criminal and a degenerate.

LEIF

Thanks.

BERTBERT

But there's no reason for your dad to not love you. That's his problem, not yours. You're an easy person to love.

LEIF

... Thanks.

BERTBERT

...

LEIF

...

BERTBERT

Are we supposed to make out right now?

LEIF

I don't know.

BERTBERT

Neither do I... I'm going to stick a pin in this conversation.

LEIF

Good.

BERTBERT

And by "stick a pin in it" I mean "Go to sleep and probably forget it ever happened."

LEIF

Even better.

BERTBERT

Okay. I'm going to go pass out.

LEIF

Okay.

BERTBERT

Let me know when we arrive wherever we're going.

LEIF

I will.

BERTBERT

Goodnight, Alice.

ALICE

Goodnight!

LEIF

Let's get out of here, Alice.

ALICE

Engaging RADAR jammers. The sky is clear.

LEIF

Goodbye, Earth.

THRUSTER FIRE ON THE NANCY SINATRA.

LEIF (CONT'D)

... Alice?

ALICE

Yes?

LEIF

Can I leave a message for BertBert but have it delivered later?

ALICE

Of course.

LEIF

Deliver this message two days from now, okay?

ALICE

Sure.

LEIF

... Hey BertBert... There's something I need to tell you...

THE END