

PARASITECOLOGY

S01E04 - "I Hate to Sleep Alone"

written by

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ACT 3 - OTHER HUNGERS

INT. JAVIER'S PLACE - LATER

The pair is stuffed on pizza rolls but Cher is still hungry for... something. Javier doubts reality again.

JAVIER

(stuffed)

Ugh, ok. No more port-wine cheese.  
Ughh, I'm so full I could [burst].

CHER

[Go for a smoothie].

JAVIER

WHAT? How can you still be hungry?  
Look at all the packaging and  
cellophane lying around, it's like  
a bachelor Thanksgiving.

CHER

Oh, don't get me wrong -- it's been  
a culinary whirlwind, especially  
the items from this miraculous food  
machine, what's it called again?

JAVIER

The FryBaby XL with Internet-of-  
Things support and Godfrey  
integration. Here, check this out:  
"Godfrey, pre-heat the FryBaby XL  
to default setting."

GODFREY

Pre-heating to <break  
time=".3s"/>Twinkie. Say "yes" to  
play music related to <break  
time=".3s"/>'Twinkie frying'<break  
time=".3s"/> from your free  
Soundblare streaming account.

CHER

Yes, quite superior to our food  
replication devices, which produce  
edibles that are really quite bland  
and unappealing and do not curate  
playlists. As for hunger... you  
and I simply have slightly  
different vitamin and mineral  
requirements, that's all. I just  
need a little more to top me off.

JAVIER

(suspiciously)

This sounds like another excuse to put off telling me more about you and the small matter of humans not being alone in the universe. What secrets are you hiding, Cher?

CHER

Hiding? No, no... And here's a secret - the secret to a good partnership: compromise. So, let's say I tell you whatever you'd like to know while we set up the old blender. Deal?

JAVIER

(positive)

Deal.

CHER

Alright, what would you like to know?

Sounds of cabinets and pots.

JAVIER

Let's start with your world.

CHER

Of course! My homeworld is located roughly 22.32 light-years away from here, on a planet we call Earth.

JAVIER

Earth?

CHER

Well obviously, I mean most alien homeworlds are called Earth. What else would "that dirt thing we live on" get translated as?

JAVIER

I guess that makes sense, actually...

(fiddling)

I'm not sure where the cap is. Oh there it is.

(returning to conversation)

There must be some kind of universal naming convention, though.

CHER

Well, I happen to know, as you do, that there is a human convention we could use if you happened to have extensive knowledge of stellar cartography...? Just riffling through the old file cabinet here. No? Well we could use my people's technical naming system for it.

JAVIER

Ok.

CHER

One.

JAVIER

One?

CHER

Well that's obviously where we started counting... Milk?

JAVIER

In the fridge. Okay, so what is life like on Planet One? Tell me about your people, and society, and whether you've cured cancer or  
(mumbling)  
Have very advanced sex robots.

CHER

Sorry, advanced, uh...? Well, as I've stated before, we have two sentient species on my planet: the Bearers, who are bipedal mammals, not completely dissimilar to humans, and the Spirits... co-evolved symbiotic beings like myself.

JAVIER

So, the naming on that seems kind of... one-sided, maybe? Like one of those species thought it brought just a little more to the table on the deal?

CHER

Nonsense. The combined race of Bearers and Spirits, or as my species terms them -- "people" -- live harmonious lives in equality.

(MORE)

CHER (CONT'D)

In fact -- let's grab some ice -- conflict and warfare have been completely unknown on my world for tens of thousands of years, well before we met other alien species, oh, many millenia ago. We covet knowledge and most of us spend centuries engaging in esoteric scholarship. In fact things change so slowly and smoothly on my world, it's all a bit boring, really. Ah, we'll need quite a bit of zest of orange now.

Sounds of ice dumping and rasping.

JAVIER

Okay... but if your world is so harmonious, then how are you some kind of political refugee?

CHER

(sighing)

I don't understand it myself, fully. All I know is that things have changed recently. My people used to value freedom and justice as our core tenets, and now -- it's different. Political shifts on a world that barely has politics. Old friends acting strangely. I don't know -- sometimes I think it's me that's changed.

JAVIER

How so? And that's way too much orange peel.

CHER

No, it's just right. And I know you don't know me very well, Javier, but on my planet I was known to have a bit of a rebellious streak. I've...

(embarrassed)

Well, I've been known to... hitch.

JAVIER

I'm sorry?

CHER

Hitching. It's not something people on my world approve of; it's not prohibited exactly, just frowned upon -- sugar? As you know, the Spirit species lives a considerably longer time than the Bearer, and when the current Bearer dies it's traditional for the Spirit to join with another Bearer and so on... But when my people first came into contact with aliens, some of us chose to... temporarily "hook-up" with species not of our world, sort of like our trial period, and explore the cosmos.

JAVIER

Are you saying, that you have quite LITERALLY HITCH-HIKED the GALAXY aboard any space-faring alien species that would have you?

CHER

Well, local cluster. Hey, don't hitch-shame me, what past hosts I've melded with are not relevant to our relationship. And no - not any species - intelligent ones who agreed to experience a true connection. Uh, hand me some pine needles.

JAVIER

Here. But don't change the subject, I'd like to know more about these aliens you... Wait a minute, we're NOT eating pine needles.

CHER

(loudly over sound of  
blending)  
No, we're drinking them.  
(pitch changes as blender  
gets faster)  
Chop. Blend. Frappe! That's fun!

JAVIER

(sound cuts)  
I'm not...

CHER

Frap.

JAVIER  
Drinking.

CHER  
Frap.

JAVIER  
Pine needles.

CHER  
Frap. Frap. Frappe! Sure you are,  
here take a whiff of that. Wait a  
minute, let me unleash your  
nostrils for a moment. There, now  
doesn't that smell good?

JAVIER  
It actually sort of does. Why  
is... why is my mouth watering?

CHER  
Because we need it - well I need  
it. Not all of a Spirit's  
essential nutrients can be derived  
from the host's biology. I require  
a strong source of alpha and beta  
pinenes in order to survive. On  
your world, that's orange peels,  
pine needles, eucalyptis oil.  
Mmmm. Hmmm Mhmm. Mhmm! Eucalyptis  
oil? Gimme gimme gimme.

Glass fills.

JAVIER  
Okay, I can do this. It's just a  
terrible health shake filled with  
green muck. I'll just pretend that  
I'm at a fancy juice bar in  
[California].

CHER  
[Some place so poor they eat pine  
needles]! Yes. Salud, Kanpai,  
ETCETERA!

Sound of gulp.

JAVIER  
Uhghhh... god. I don't know what my  
stomach hated more... the taste of  
fresh Christmas Tree or drinking a  
quart of milk on top of a seven  
course fried food tasting menu.

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Oh, I got to lay down. This is just... too bizarre.

CHER

You'll get used to it.

JAVIER

Will I? I'm starting to think I really am crazy. Talking to myself, shoving crazy things down my throat. Maybe this really is all a dream. Or maybe I've got that... condition, pico, poco, something... the one where you get a craving to eat chalk or dirt. Some kind of mineral deficiency, that's all. Just some elaborate psychosomatic response because I keep forgetting to take Centrum.

CHER

Emm, no.

JAVIER

No? I'm doubting that you exist at all and your best response is "no"?

CHER

Come on, Javier, this isn't my first "do you even exist" rodeo. I'm quite sure I exist, so we're at least half-sure about it, no matter what. And at any rate, I think you're ready for the next step.

JAVIER

What's that?

CHER

Proof.



AD - BETTYFRESH

HI FOLKS, THIS IS ALAN/ROB FROM PARASITECOLOGY AND OTHER FINE INTERRUPTED TALES PODCASTS SUCH AS INTERRUPTED TALES.

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Cutie pies, I want to get you back into the show, but first I want you to do one thing for us: Leave us a review on iTunes. How else are people going to find our podcast? That's not rhetorical, we're really asking, how else? Does someone know the guy from Lore? Anyway, it's just that one thing that got us tripping: leave us a review on iTunes, we would really appreciate it.

Thanks and back to the show.

ACT 4 - SPACE STUFF

INT. JAVIER'S PLACE - MORNING

Cher proves his existence by finding his tiny spaceship and then recharges, leaving Javier alone with his thoughts for the first time in days - where he hears a mysterious droning sound.

CHER

Well, how did you imagine I came here? Astral projection?

JAVIER

I don't know, maybe some kind of Stargate?

CHER

Stargates aren't real Javier, any more than, let me see here... Furlings, whatever the crap that is, or the Goualoud race of parasitic lifeforms that take ov... we're getting offtopic, here. SPACESHIP. I came in a spaceship.

JAVIER

Well, where is it then?

CHER

Right outside.

JAVIER

Right outside? Like just hidden in plain sight of everyone? My nosy neighbors, the cops, umm, raccoons?

CHER

Yes!

JAVIER

Does it have some kind of illegal cloaking device or a secret phase shifting field?

CHER

(chuckling over  
ridiculousness)

Do I look like I'm made of cosmocredits? No, it's just a regular high-end spaceship, fast sure, but you know, you sacrifice comfort.

JAVIER

Just a regular spaceship that came from 22 light years away using some magic faster-than-light drive?

CHER

What kind of physics do they teach you? No, OBVIOUSLY it goes slower than light - it's got a modern hybrid VSL drive.

JAVIER

VSL?

CHER

Variable speed of light. Yeah, you got your traditional volatile fusion drive, with a VSL afterburner. You want to go faster, you just locally raise the speed of light a bit. Just bump up the old speed limit sign. It's... very handy.

JAVIER

It's almost... unbelievable. Why don't you show it to me.

CHER

Well, it's almost morning -- let's get these slippers on and step out on the balcony.

Sound of door sliding and slight outdoor noises.

JAVIER

Huh, I guess I must have left it open a crack.

CHER

Yes.

JAVIER

Well, my vision is still pretty bad, but I definitely don't see a spaceship. You sure you remember where you parked it?

CHER

Mmm, technically umm, crashed it. And it should be about... there.

JAVIER  
(seeing the tiny spaceship  
and laughing a bit, then  
more loudly)  
Are you...

CHER  
What? Careful, we don't want to  
pinch too hard now. And best to  
take it back inside before the  
lookie-loos get too interested.

Sound of door sliding again.

JAVIER  
(still laughing)  
Are you kidding me? THIS is proof?  
THIS is your spaceship? THIS is a  
gelcap dunked in silver Rustoleum.

CHER  
...obviously, limiting mass is an  
important part of accelerating to  
interstellar speeds...

JAVIER  
(still laughing)  
It looks like a Barbie's-First-  
Vibrator she got from a  
bachelorette party giftbag.

CHER  
(increasingly put out)  
... doesn't really make sense to  
have anything bigger than  
necessary...

JAVIER  
(laughing/crying)  
No, no, I'm really happy we found  
this, I'm gonna call my middle  
school friend Bryan and let him  
know we can finally play Crossfire  
again.  
(faked dialing noises)  
"Hey Bryan, you know how we lost  
all the little shooty pieces in  
your backyard? Good news, I met  
this alien..."

CHER

... kind of seems like the species  
with access to interstellar travel  
would be the one with the  
superiority complex here...

JAVIER

(catching breath)

Haa... Seriously, though, this is  
errant nonsense.

CHER

Say, how well can we whistle?

JAVIER

What?

Several clear whistle notes in quick succession (notes are  
the main theme notes). Suddenly, the spaceship softly hums  
to life, with whirring of opening doors and soft interior  
warning beeps in code.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Gall and brimstone!

CHER

Catastrophic drive failure.  
Irreparable hull damage. It's a  
total write-off. Better shut it  
down. If you let it keep running  
the fusion by-products will build  
up and

(yawn)

You know, implode with a massively  
devastating energy. Here...

Whistle again for shut-down.

JAVIER

Cher, it's AMAZING.

CHER

(yawning)

Yes.. it's...

(yawning again)

Amazing. You haven't rested in a  
while, Bearer and the dramatic  
increase in pinenes have made me a  
bit... sleepy.

JAVIER

I didn't know you ever slept.

CHER

Only for a few hours every couple weeks or so, usually. But this has been a difficult transition for both of us and I require rest, as do you.

JAVIER

Sure... it's just, it's kind of hard to sleep right after you see something like that. What should I do with this?

CHER

(mumbling)

Mmm?

JAVIER

I guess I'd better hide it away just in case.

(pause)

Here...

Foot steps and cabinet opening and rustling noises.

Keep it secret, keep it safe --  
Quaker Oat Man.

CHER

Need to lie down.

JAVIER

Yeah. Here we go...

More steps.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Off to the bedroom, then... nice and comfy under the covers.

(pause)

Cher, you awake?

CHER

Mmmm.

JAVIER

Strange. Strange to be alone with my thoughts again, finally. I think. I'm not sure I really believed any of this was real until today... but... Cher?

No reply.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
But somehow... I'm here and I'm  
alive, and I have to believe that's  
better than the alternative.

A heavy droning buzz passes by outside with weird alien  
noises, going away, coming back and then going away again.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
What was that? Sounded like it was  
coming from outside. CHER, did you  
hear that? Cher?

No reply.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
Whatever it was, it's gone now.  
Wait, I hear something else.

A very faint intermittent sound gradually gets louder.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
It's getting louder.

The volume rises to the point of recognition. A soft snoring  
noise grows intensely loud.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
Yeah. Yeah, this is real. Ah,  
Kowakian monkey-lizard balls.

OUTRO PART 2