

A Starlet is Born



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by

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Greenovia

Three women with torn-up clothes are in separate glass cages. In the middle, there is a strong-spirited, good-looking, middle-aged woman. She is outraged and is constantly shouting. On the right, there is a sweet, wizened, weather-beaten, 75-year-old woman. She, sitting on the ground, turns her face up once in a while, says a few words, and then goes back to something that looks like a micro-nap. On the left, there is a teenage girl in her torn-up underwear. Despite the torn-up dress, she seems to be having a good time and quite OK with being put on display in the glass cage. Not only that, she actually seems excited to be there, and constantly amazed by the ones who've put her in the cage. Once in a while, she tidies up her hair with her fingers, turns her back to the glass, holds a sexy pose, and takes a selfie with the ones who are watching her.

The green aliens are bored of watching them. They only hear the middle-aged woman saying 'Blah Blah' in a high-pitch voice, but they understand nothing. The lord, who is much shorter than other aliens, looks like a tree stump and has a distinguished, woven crown of thorns placed on his head. He, irritated, looks at the humanologist, whose expertise is studying the behavior of humans. He looks like a banana tree. The humanologist raises his eyebrow, indicating that he has no idea what the captured humans are saying. The lord is disappointed.

"If you pardon me saying, my lord," the military chief calls the lord from the behind. He looks like a giant sequoia tree but with branches that are sharp like swords. The lord turns to the military chief. "There is not much time left," the military chief continues. "If we act late, there might be no green planet left for us to return to. We should evaporate the humans right now, before it is too late."

"You do have a point," the lord says hesitantly, "but human life is life too. We cannot terminate it just because we are superior to them. This is not what we are. This is not what Greens do. I don't want the name of Greenovia to be tainted with genocide in the galaxy history."

"What if," the scientist gains the courage to interject. She resembles a Greek olive tree wearing an olive leaf crown. Everybody turns away from the military chief back to the scientist. "What if we commission Enjels to live as human beings."

"Oh, good, another experiment from Ms. Scientist," the military chief interrupts. "Just what we need at this crucial time." The lord doesn't turn to the military chief. There are a few seconds of silence. The aliens realize that the lord

is in favor of hearing out the scientist.

“Our problem is that,” the scientist continues, “we cannot figure what the humans’ plan for the green planet is, and we cannot understand them since we cannot understand their language. Language is formed through life experience, and Mr. Humanologist can back me up on this.” The scientist looks at the humanologist and watches him nod. “We cannot understand their language since we don’t live the way they do. What if we mix an Enjel with a human spirit, and implant it back to a newborn on the green planet. The Enjel will be passive and only records. In this way, the same thing the human experiences, the Enjel does. When the human dies, we get the Enjel back, and knowing both worlds, the Enjel could translate the human language for us and gives us clear insights on what the humans are up to.”

The lord is scratching his head. “What do you think Mr. Humanologist?”

“It might just work, my lord. I don’t see why not. Of course, we need to make sure that the Enjel receives a life experience close to what an average human being does, but other than that, it should work.”

“Hang on a second,” the military chief desperately interjects. “I mean, my lord, do we have time for such a risky experiment? Average human life is about a week in our time. By then the green planet’s temperature might reach the point of no return. It would be too late then. We should act now before it is too late. Let’s evaporate them, evaporate them all.”

“The chief is right,” the lord says while turns to the scientist, “let’s give it two days. That should be 20-25 years in human life. Call back the Enjel afterward.”

“But that will also terminate the subject’s life prematurely!” the scientist objects slightly.

“Either the subject’s life or that of the entire human race, your call,” the lord gives a firm response.

“But—”

“— No more buts, the order is final. Where are you planning to extract some human spirit now?”

“That, I don’t know.” The scientist turns her head down, making an overly-dramatic I-am-thinking gesture.

Mr. humanologist steps in to say the obvious. He points forward with his hand. The lord follows the hand and realizes that he is pointing to the three female captives in the glass cages. “Is the noise-canceling system fixed yet?” the lord asks.

“Not yet my lord. Perhaps in a few days,” the scientist responds while confused by the question.

“OK then, take the middle one. If I have to listen to anymore ‘Blah Blah’ I am going to have to have their entire galaxy evaporated.”

The scientist takes a hesitant step towards the glass cages. She then stops. Her legs are shaking, and she cannot take any more steps. Her eyes are ashamed, and her face is all sweat. The military chief sighs. The lord notices her hesitance, puts his hand on her right shoulder, and says with a parental tone: “Sometimes to save many lives you gotta take a few.”

“Sometimes you gotta take a billion,” the military chief opportunistically jumps in. Both the lord and the scientist quickly turn and give an angry look to the military chief. “Sometimes,” the chief says cutely to calm them down.

Empowered by the lord’s assurance, the scientist takes fragile steps towards the middle cage. The middle-aged woman, who was angrily shouting, notices that all the aliens’ eyes are on her. She freaks out and screams. In the middle of the scream, she collapses on the ground like a corpse. A capsule in front of the scientist shines in blue. “I’m sorry,” the scientist murmurs.

“Good job!” the military chief says while touching the scientist on her left shoulder.

“Don’t touch me with those hands,” the scientist objects strongly with a grossed-out face while trying to stop the contact by turning her shoulder.

“Not what you said last time, Ms. Scientist,” the chief didn’t expect this reaction and is a bit offended by that.

“Anymore,” the scientist reaffirms her wish and takes a step towards the Enjel board to take some distance from the military chief.

The scientist makes a gesture with her hand, and an Enjel gets injected into the capsule. It is now shining in a darker blue and flies towards the lord.

“What green-spirited Greenovian hero volunteers for this mission of utmost importance?” the lord says as he turns to his crew. A couple of wise-looking aliens step forward and raise their hands. The lord is looking at each, evaluating them to see which he should pick. He notices a kid alien jumping up and down, with her hand raised. He looks down and finds that it is his own baby daughter. She looks like a watermelon.

“Me, me, me. Let me play.”

“This is no game,” the lord says dismissively, while turns his look back to the volunteers.

The military chief is stroking his chin. “Perhaps, my lord, it is time to let the younger generation participate in intergalactic affairs. The young princess has to start from somewhere.”

“Young!” the scientist strongly objects, “She is just a kid. Are you out of your mind?”

“You were a kid at some point too. Weren’t you?”

“Well—”

“— If you are not going to help the young princess grow, I will.” The military chief turns to the lord. “My lord, she is a capable princess, and one day she is going to be a great lord. I believe that with all my heart, and I personally take full responsibility for her mission.”

While scratching his head, the lord turns his look on the enthusiastic face of his baby daughter.

“Vroom, Vroom, Vroom.”

The little princess is on her spaceship. She is making sounds like when kids play with their toy cars. The scientist hopelessly walks her through the steps again. The military chief, behind him, is listening while having an evil smile on his face.

“Remember, for implantation you should find an unborn female baby—”

“— Why female?” the humanologist interrupts.

“Well, because we extracted the spirit from a female human?”

“Yeah, but you see, the human spirit is genderless. Only the body defines gender.”

“Alright then,” the scientist turns back again to the little princess. “You should find an unborn baby, male or female, that hasn’t experienced life yet, or otherwise the Enjel will miss the most critical parts of human experience. And find a family that values life, so that the born child will be exposed to all positive aspects of human life. Do you understand?”

The kid stares at the scientist for a few seconds. “Vroom, Vroom, Vroom,” she resumes her car-playing sound effects.

The military chief sneers in the back.

“Go and make daddy proud, little soldier,” the lord says.

The kid princess looks at the open space ahead of the spaceship and waves her hand. “Bye Bye.”

All the aliens wave their hands too while saying together: “Bye Bye.”

The kid princess presses a button, and the spaceship moves with the maximum speed, but backward, right into the terminal’s back. It breaks the terminal’s wall behind it and sinks into the black hole.

All the aliens are shocked. They turn back and look at the broken wall. After a few beats, everybody, still speechless, turns back again towards the military chief.

The military chief is covering his mouth, trying to swallow his laughter. He

quickly regains his control, makes a serious face, and delivers his well-rehearsed lines in an overly dramatic fashion. “My lord, there is nobody to blame but me. I took the responsibility, and I will fix it myself.” He turns to the scientist.

“Prepare another capsule, I am going down to Earth myself.”

The scientist knows the chief is on to something but doesn’t know what that is. “I’m not sure—”

“— Don’t say a word,” the chief interrupts the scientist. “I deserve it.” He turns to the lord. “My lord, let your faithful servant redeems himself from this embarrassment.”

The lord is thinking hard. He has removed the woven crown of thorns and is rubbing his head. Finally, he places the crown back on his head and turns to the scientist. “Prepare another Enjel capsule.”

A sinister smile grows on the chief’s face.

The scientist reluctantly turns and approaches the teenage girl’s cage. She seems excited and goes to take a selfie with the scientist. The camera flashes, and she collapses on the ground. The capsule in front of the scientist is now shining light green. She makes a gesture with her hand to inject an Enjel to the capsule. The capsule’s color turns to dark green, glowing like a sun.

A Starlet is Born

The alien military chief is descending to Earth. The atmosphere seems smoky and polluted. A Sequoia forest appears from behind the smoke. The forest looks quite naked since most of the trees are already cut. An army of machines is surrounding the remaining trees. The military chief gets quite disturbed. He zooms in to one of the trees. Some men are cutting the Sequoia tree with a chainsaw. The tree resembles the military chief. The military chief looks furious.

The Sequoia tree falls in a dramatic fashion. The men who cut the tree do a high five. A tear flows down the furious face of the military chief. “Hang on, brothers,” he says with an unmerciful tone. “Revenge is coming. I will make these savages pay, every single one of them. These inferior intruders will not last long on our beloved planet. Soon, the green planet will be ruled by the greens again.”

The alien military chief is roaming on Earth, inspecting a couple of candidates. He is frustrated about not finding the exact fetus that he is looking for. He checks out another fetus. Everything looks OK with it, but when he zooms out, he finds a man who talks to the mother’s belly and then kisses it. “Aargh!” The military chief moves on to the next fetus. The fetus looks to have health issues, which satisfies the chief initially. Nevertheless, when he zooms out, he finds a man holding the mother’s hand, who is lying on a hospital bed. The man kisses her hand and firmly looks into her eyes. Although she was crying, she gets confidence instantly and chuckles.

The chief is getting really irritated now. He is thinking that perhaps he should give up until he finds a fetus that looks dead. There are symptoms of poisonous drugs all around it. Suddenly, it is hit by a hook and violently pushed out of the uterus. The mother screams very painfully.

The baby is not making a sound. It is covered all in blood, and there is no symptom of life on it.

“That is it, the trouble maker himself; flush it, and all our troubles go away,” says a fat, ugly, merciless woman who is leading the room. People of Earth call her Lady. The baby is thrown into a garbage bin. The mother is crying like a river.

The military chief does a sinister smile. He is floating on the side, watching the whole scene from behind a tiny window. People cannot see him. A little

puppy, however, seems to have sensed his existence and is barking at the window. The military chief ignores the puppy and continues his plan by blowing on the capsule. He watches some green waves are emitted from the capsule and reach over the garbage bin. The puppy gets scared of the green waves and hides behind Lady. Confident about the outcome, the military chief does not wait to watch the rest and returns to Greenovia right away.

The light that shines out of the garbage bin attracts people's attention. Everybody is astonished and turns their head towards the garbage bin. They start to hear a baby's cry from the shining garbage bin. The only man in the room, a middle-aged Native American that looks like a gardener, dares and takes a step forward. People of Earth know him as Plumber. With his step, others also gain courage and approach the garbage bin.

People's heads appear above the garbage bin, curiously looking into it. The aborted baby is very much alive. The crying baby is covered in blood, and some pieces of trash are stuck to it. Plumber leans forward, picks up the baby, and holds it in his arm. "It is a miracle!" he says excitedly.

The mother, with crying eyes, extends her arm towards the baby. People look at Lady, waiting for her permission. She herself is shocked and unable to react. Plumber takes a step towards the mother. "Don't," Lady yells.

"But, it is alive!" Plumber says with begging eyes.

"Shut up," Lady fires back at him, "you are just a plumber around here. Your job is just to unclog, and that is that. Don't you ever forget that, my darling husband."

Plumber's teeth start chattering out of fear of Lady. He puts his hand on his mouth to silence the embarrassing sound of his teeth chattering. He hangs his head, looking down at the baby.

Lady notices the puppy touching itself to her feet, begging for attention. She picks up the puppy and caresses its fluffy hair. That calms her down a bit. She takes a deep breath and says: "It is just a matter of time. He's practically dead already; take it to the dumpster outside."

The mother's cry bursts out.

"Stop the nonsense, Missy," Lady shouts at her while still holding the puppy. The puppy follows Lady and grunts at Missy. "We have discussed that before. This is your decision. Remember? If God didn't want this baby dead, He wouldn't have put him in your belly. Your career is at stake. It will be screwed with a mess like this. God himself clearly wants him dead. Trust me on that. He just left the dirty work for us."

"It is a she," Plumber interjects softly.

"What?! God?!" Lady asks. She is confused by the remark, and upset by the

interruption.

“The baby,” Plumber responds, “it is a she. And has beautiful green eyes. She is going to grow to a gorgeous girl.” Lady is tempted. Plumber certainly knows what intrigues her.

“Green? Is it?” Lady asks with a much softer tone. “Hmm.” Lady starts doing the math in her head.

Plumber notices Lady’s hesitation and opportunistically dares to bring the baby to the mother. She hugs the baby with much happiness. She immediately calms down, as if a piece of her heart that was torn away is now back in its place.

Lady gently puts the puppy down and approaches the mother. Everybody feels terrified by that. She has a creepy smile on her face. She extends her arms, trying to take the baby from the mother. The mother is hesitant but finds the look on Lady’s face quite serious. She obliges. Lady takes the baby girl. The puppy feels jealous. Lady holds the baby up like Simba in Lion King, and says: “You, the green eyes, are going to be the finest pussy in this brothel.”

Plumber and the mother have complex expressions on their faces, a mix of satisfaction with the present, and fear of the future.

The Mission

A few weeks later, we are in one of the dormitories where the brothel sex workers sleep. The room is packed with many triple bunk beds reminding of the tight space in submarine dormitories. The only large item in the room is a giant makeup table with a giant mirror and a couple of chairs in front of it. Missy is lying on her bed with her baby in her arm. Plumber with crying eyes is holding Missy's hand.

On the other side of the room, Lady is arguing with a middle-aged, bearded doctor in a black suit. He, making an indifferent face, is holding a stethoscope in his hand and is casually swinging the tubing. The puppy is sitting next to Lady, eating from a bowl.

"I make sizable donations to your hospital every year," Lady shouts at the doctor. "Now, go there and do what you are paid for." The puppy supports Lady by barking at the doctor.

"I am afraid, we have already tried the strongest antibiotics on the market. The infection in the uterus has spread too widely. You know better than I the risks of abortion. You should have thought of it before ordering another one." That slaps Lady in the face. She looks furious and leans forward a bit. The doctor feels threatened, stops swinging the tubing, swallows his spit, and takes a step back. "I... Forgive... Please accept my apology. I got carried away. Surely you can find a replacement."

Lady notices the puppy cutely grunting at the doctor. She leans back. The doctor feels safer. Lady picks up the puppy and holds it in her arms. That calms her; it always did.

"Not as good as her," Lady responds to the doctor as she is caressing the puppy. She turns her disappointed look at Starlet in Missy's arms. "Not for another 18 years."

"It's gonna be OK, my dear," Plumber says to Missy while holding her hands and looking intently into the eyes. Missy is all sweat and looks quite sick. She is taking labored breaths. "Is it?" she says while worryingly turning her look on her baby. Plumber leans forward to get a closer look at the baby. He notices that she has thrown up a bit of her milk, and the vomit has spread on her cheek. He uses the back of his fingers to clean up the vomit. The baby, as her eyes closed, raises her hand and tightly holds Plumber's little finger. Plumber is very

much touched by that. He gets emotional.

“Save her,” Missy says as she is watching the interaction between the two. Plumber swallows her spit and responds with a squeaky voice: “How?”

Lady takes Plumber by the collar and pulls him back. Plumber seems absolutely powerless against Lady. His little finger detaches from the baby’s hand. The baby starts crying.

“It’s gonna be OK, sugar,” Lady says to Missy while standing between her and Plumber. She picks up the baby, holds her in her arms, and looks at her peaceful face. Lady chuckles. “Have no worries. I will take care of the baby like she is my own daughter.” Missy’s cry bursts out. “Oh, don’t cry, sugar.”

Plumber gets really hurt when he hears Missy’s cry. Lady’s big butt is blocking his view. Disgusted by the view, he turns his back to it.

“Do something!” Missy begs. Plumber gets emotional and subconsciously turns back, leans forward to reach for the baby. But finds Lady’s big butt in his way. The old, familiar fear of Lady resurfaces on his face, and his teeth start chattering. He shamefully turns his back to them again.

“Like what?” Lady asks Missy assuming that she was talking to her. Missy looks aside but doesn’t see Plumber coming around. She takes a deep breath. “Do something!” She screams with all the strength that is left in her. The scream fills up the room. Plumber presses his palm against his ears. Shame is pouring down his face.

A baby sparrow has fallen on Missy’s grave, struggling to find her way back to the nest. Plumber picks up the baby sparrow from the grave, kisses it, and puts it on the nest above the grave.

Plumber throws a bucket of water on the top of the gravestone. He sits on the bottom and cleans the dirt off the grave with his bare hands. When reaching the word ‘Missy’, he lingers on it and caresses the word with the tip of his fingers. He notices the baby sparrow chirping, looks up, and takes an affectionate look on the baby sparrow. “Don’t worry, little fella,” he says, “Mommy will be back soon.”

“Do something!” Plumber hears Missy calling him from beyond the grave. He gets scared and pulls himself back a bit. He is staring at the grave. “I am trying,” he says to the grave. “My hands are tight.” The baby sparrow starts screeching, but Plumber does not notice that. “I’m a poor man with no land, no money, no power, no education, no nothing. I don’t even have a name anymore; they just call me Plumber. They even took my name away.”

“Do something!” Plumber hears Missy says that again beyond the grave. Plumber notices several sparrows flying above him, screeching in desperation.

His eyes slowly fall on the nest, where he finds a crow as black as night with bloody sparrow feathers stuck to its peck. Plumber cannot believe his eyes. He takes a few seconds to digest the situation. As he does, he looks more and more outraged. His eyes roll back. "Sometimes you gotta take a life to save another," He says like he is hypnotized.

The crow still proudly stands on the nest. As his eyes are on the crow, his hand reaches for a stone. He throws the stone at the crow. The sparrows who are flying above him hear the crow's last screech.

Reaching for the Stars

It is winter. The baby has grown to a pretty, 6-year-old girl with exceptionally beautiful, green eyes. People of Earth call her Starlet.

Starlet is running in a dark, dusty corridor inside the brothel, chasing a colorful butterfly. The butterfly has large, cyan eyespots on its hindwings. Her hands are extended trying to catch it. She runs by many doors, behind each there is a prostitute serving a customer. Starlet, however, unaware of the world surrounding her, is laser-focused on pursuing the butterfly.

The butterfly is approaching the exit door, from which the sunlight is pouring in. The butterfly exits the door, up to the sky, and Starlet goes to follow it. Suddenly, she finds Lady blocking the entire door with her fat body. She is carrying the puppy who is now older, but not much larger. Lady angrily looks down at Starlet. "Lady's House is not a playground Starlet. We have a business to run. Did you finish your job?"

"But grandma, my hands hurt. The water is too cold," Starlet says beggingly while showing her cute, little hands.

Lady leans forward and takes a friendlier tone. Her dark shadow casts on Starlet. "I know, I know, sugar, but the days of hard work are not gonna last forever. Soon your body grows to a full woman, and you don't have to work anymore. You'll make a comfortable living by just being loved. Don't you like that, sugar?"

Starlet smiles out of excitement, and nods. "Like my mom?"

"Way better than your mom. Your mom was the best love queen here. Many men in this city loved her. But with this beautiful, green eyes, you are going to be a star."

Starlet's eyes widen when she hears the word star.

"I am gonna make all the men in this city to line up at this door to meet Starlet, the star," Lady continues.

"Hurrah! Grandpa, I'm gonna be a star," Starlet screams out of excitement.

Lady turns and finds Plumber standing outside in the snow, with a shovel in his hand. It looks like that he might hit Lady with the shovel any second. Lady does not seem concerned though, as if she cannot imagine that possibility. Lady frowns. Plumber's teeth start chattering right away. "Did you finish shoveling the snow off the driveway?" Lady asks angrily.

"Yes, darling," Plumber responds reluctantly through chattering teeth. He

has lowered the shovel a bit.

“Then don’t just stand there, staring at me with those suicidal eyes. Go, go unclog a toilet. That is what you are good for. Your depressing, Indian face brings misfortune to the business. Go, get off my face.” The puppy accompanies Lady and barks at Plumber.

“Yes, darling,” Plumber obliges with the same reluctant tone, but cannot take his worried eyes off Starlet.

“And why the dog is left unleashed outside? Why is it walking barefoot on the snow? What if something happens to it? What if it gets sick?” Lady sounds genuinely concerned about the puppy.

“Yes, darling,” Plumber responds reluctantly through still-chattering teeth.

Lady turns back and guides Starlet to inside with a gentle push on her back. “Come, Starlet, the floor is not going to wash by itself.”

Starlet, her hand held by Lady, walks with her towards the dark corridor. As she is walking, she turns back, and with her eyes that are full of questions takes a long look at Plumber. She wonders why grandpa is always depressed. She offers a smile to Plumber.

Plumber also cannot take his eyes off Starlet. But he is too depressed to smile. He tries very hard until a forced, slight smile finally cracks on his face. Tears, however, start flowing down his face too.

Starlet disappears in the darkness of Lady’s House.

The shovel drops on the ground. Plumber falls to his knees. “I’m sorry, Missy,” he says while holding his head between his hands.

The night is hopelessly dark. A few stars here and there are flickering. Starlet is watching the stars while she is eating a cookie. She is sitting on Plumber’s shoulder, taking a night tour in the small yard behind the house. Plumber is walking the puppy, holding its leash. The leash’s pink color stands out. It looks fancy and expensive as if it is a leash for royal dogs. “The cookie is yummy, isn’t it?” Plumber asks. “Yeah, I like it. It’s crunchy.” “I bought them from Little Mama Bakery. I should take you there sometime. The girl who cooks them is very nice.” “Okay.”

“Do you like to become a baker when you grow up?”

“No. I wanna be a star.”

“Yeah, but you could make all kinds of delicious cookies if you become a baker.”

“No,” Starlet says stubbornly. “I wanna be a star, like Grandma says.”

“My dear, that kind of star only sounds nice but has nothing to do with real stars.”

“No,” Starlet starts crying. “I wanna be a real star.”

“OK. OK.” Plumber sighs. “Forget it. Yeah. You’ll be a star.”

“A real star?” Starlet asks excitedly.

“Yeah, a real one. Whatever. Time for Sir Craps-a-lot to go back in before grandma gets mad at us again.”

“His name is Sir Lancelot,” Starlets says with a giggle. “And she only gets mad at you.”

“Yeah. She does. Yeah, she does.”

The puppy is trying to cross the busy street. He has his fancy, pink leash on, and it is being dragged on the ground. The cars are passing by fast, and the puppy has to retract right away each time he attempts to cross. The puppy looks at the other side of the street, where the Lady’s house is. It makes its mind up and bravely runs to cross the street.

A car honks angrily, but it does not stop. We hear the dog’s painful whine. It goes dark.

The puppy opens its eyes with difficulties. He is surrounded by several people from Lady’s house, including Plumber and Starlet. Starlet is tightly hugging Plumber’s leg. She is horrified to see what has happened to the puppy. The puppy is covered in blood, with multiple deep wounds on his body. It had managed to drag his body to the yard but then passed out near the gate.

“Poor Sir Lancelot!” Lucy, a young sex worker, says. “Should we call an ambulance?”

“It is a dog, you idiot,” Crystal, who is a bit older, snaps at her. “We should take it to a veteran, not a hospital.”

“Yeah, isn’t called a ‘veteranirian’?” Lola jumps in.

“Whatever,” Plumber interrupts frustratedly. “It’s too late. Any second we waste, he just feels more pain.”

“What are you saying?” Crystal asks.

“I’m saying... I’m saying we should let him go.”

“Where to?” Lucy asks.

“He means to put him down, you idiot,” Crystal snaps at Lucy again. She turns to Plumber. “What are you waiting for then?”

“Me!” Plumber exclaims. “No, no, no, no. No. I can’t.”

“Whom are you asking?” Lady interrupts. She has been standing around for a few seconds already. The girls move around to let her pass. Lady approaches the puppy and affectionately caresses him around the neck. “He doesn’t have the balls to do the right thing.” She wraps her hands around the puppy’s narrow

neck. A drop of tear finds its way out of her eyes. “Lucy, take Starlet inside,” Lady says with an emotional tone. She sounds like her cry might burst out any second.

Lucy takes Starlet’s hand and walks her away. Starlet, as she is walking away with Lucy, turns back and looks at the people huddling around the puppy. She still can hear the puppy whining. She sees Plumber looking away, and right after that, she hears the dog’s last whimper.

Starlet has grown to a pretty 13-year-old teenager. She is sitting on a bench in the backyard, playing a game with her tablet. She has a giant over-ear headphone on, completely drowned in the game.

“Dear,” Plumber who is sitting beside her on the bench tries to get her attention, “dear, my dear.” Plumber moves one of the earpieces aside so that Starlet could hear him.

“What?!” Starlet shouts frustratedly as her eyes are still on the tablet.

“Dear, I was thinking what if—Can you play with that thing later, my dear? I really want to talk to you.”

“This is my tablet break, Grandpa,” she responds while playing. “I only have five minutes left.”

“OK, dear. I guess we can talk while you are playing. I... I saw a florist today. She was a very nice girl. And... and... she was very happy with her life. And she reminded me of you.”

“Not a chance. Working is just for ugly people. You can ask grandma, and she will tell you. I am too pretty to work when I grew up. I am sick of working already.”

“But, working here ain’t—”

“— Working! Who said I’ll be working? I will be a love queen, something that only pretty women can do. We’re not born to work. We are born to be a star.”

“Star is just a meaningless word that—”

“— Oh, shit. Look what you did. The dragon’s fire hit me.” She turns to Plumber while angrily hits the tablet on her lap. “Now I only have 6 stars. Thanks, Grandpa!”

“I’m sorry, my dear. I’m sorry about your 7th star,” Plumber says sarcastically.

“That’s OK,” she does not seem to have understood the sarcasm. “Look, I gotta get back to work. Besides, Grandma has already planned my future. She wouldn’t be too happy with you if she learns about your meddling.” She stands up to leave. “Sorry that I yelled. Love you.” Starlet kisses Plumber on the

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