

HIGHER THAN THE SUN

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FIRST MATE: black, dreamer, fighter. yearns for
freedom. believes in destiny. driven. open heart. open
gender.

SECOND MATE: black, fundamentalist, loyal. yearns for
security. believes in legacy. focused. closed heart.
open gender.

The legacy of the land we inhabit/inherent

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The inner bowels of a ship. A big metal mouth. crew's quarter, think teacher's lounge. a safe space.

FIRST MATE

I don't give a FUCK if he's the Captain, I ain't scrubbing SHIIIIIT.

SECOND MATE continues to scrub the floor

FIRST MATE

Do you know how big this celestial ship is?!

Without stopping

SECOND MATE

887.2 feet in running length. Beam: 108.2 feet. Draught: 28.9 feet...

FIRST MATE

Fucking. Huge.

SECOND MATE

Mmm-hmm.

FIRST MATE

Massive.

SECOND MATE

"The GAIA is the biggest deep space commercial vessel this side of Jupiter". That's what Cap said. "Travel Corp certified".

FIRST MATE

Nah this motherfucker ATE Jup, you know what I'm saying?

SECOND MATE

Shut up. Jupiter is too big to be consumed by anyone.

FIRST MATE

Tell that to Travel Corp. You couldn't pay me enough to fly outta Jup'. The L.A.U.N.C.H fees ALONE are worse than PLUTO.

SECOND MATE

At least Travel Corp pays you to fly. You were at the helm 7 dawns ago.

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FIRST MATE

Barely.

SECOND MATE

They pay you.

FIRST MATE

They pay dirt.

SECOND

And?

FIRST MATE

I need soil.

SECOND MATE

Don't we all? Hand me the vinegar.

FIRST MATE

Are you listening to me?

SECOND MATE

What?

FIRST MATE

Fuck the Captain!

SECOND stops scrubbing

SECOND MATE

So. You too good to clean?

FIRST MATE

Nah. Don't put words in my mouth.

SECOND MATE tosses a mop towards FIRST MATE

SECOND MATE

Can I put this in your hands then?

FIRST MATE

You can try putting it in my hands.

SECOND MATE: I could.

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FIRST MATE

Fucker. *I* should be flying.

SECOND MATE

You *should* be cleaning.

FIRST MATE

I'm the FIRST MATE. I'm practically the Captain.

SECOND MATE

And here I thought the Captain was the Captain.

FIRST MATE

And here I thought the SECOND MATE was *my* mate.

SECOND MATE

Let me do my job.

FIRST MATE

I am.

SECOND MATE

In peace.

FIRST MATE

Now you talkin' my language.

SECOND MATE

I don't speak incompetent.

FIRST MATE

Hey! Give me a break.

SECOND MATE

Give me some help! I'm only here because of you.

FIRST MATE

You didn't have to defend me.

SECOND MATE begins to scrub again

SECOND MATE: Well. What are mates for?

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FIRST MATE hands SECOND MATE the vinegar

FIRST MATE

Apparently scrubbing the entire second deck for 'subordination.

SECOND MATE

Apparently. You have a sharp tongue.

FIRST MATE

Or a dull Captain. You can't fight all my battles.

SECOND MATE

Just the ones you can't win.

FIRST MATE

Or the ones I can't lose.

SECOND MATE gets up to take the vinegar

SECOND MATE

What the hell were you thinking? You don't talk back to the Captain. You're paid to obey.

FIRST MATE

I wasn't.

SECOND MATE

Figures.

FIRST MATE

I'm serious. Has your body ever moved on its own? Like something in you that *screams* resist?

SECOND MATE

Like some zombie shit? You been watching those old holos again?

FIRST MATE

Not recently. I need more data on my holoslot.

SECOND MATE

I can't stand that retro shit. Anything before the 2050's is so dated. They used to own people like currency. So arcane. Can you believe that?

FIRST MATE

I feel like they still do.

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SECOND MATE

What you mean?

FIRST MATE

I mean... Technically I'm "free". We free. It be a free universe. I don't have to be here, right?

SECOND MATE

(Bombastic sigh)

FIRST MATE

I can quit my job, cuss out the Cap...

SECOND MATE

Mmm-mmm

FIRST MATE

...find some other gig that gives my wings. Spend time with my nephew, call my sister. Unblock my mother. Take an art class, stare at the moon like the poets do. I can do whatever I want.

SECOND MATE

Hmm.

FIRST MATE

But is that true?

SECOND MATE

Mmmuhhmm *(I don't know)*

FIRST MATE

Technically I'm a *slave*.

SECOND MATE

So you say.

FIRST MATE

We're slaves.

SECOND MATE

There it is.

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FIRST MATE

It's true!

SECOND MATE

I ain't no slave.

FIRST MATE

We wear different collars, but we have the same master. God, Captain, Travel Corp, this ship...

SECOND MATE

What about this ship?

FIRST MATE

I can't afford to be anywhere else but here.

pause

SECOND MATE

Same.

FIRST MATE

How is that different from "I'm not *allowed* to be anywhere else"? I'm free to leave, but I'm "free" to starve? Nobody *chooses* to go hungry, you're *starved*. Who the fuck would choose that? Freedom doesn't exist without captivity 'cause what exactly are you freed from? You're forced to work. You're compelled to. Your wage *is* your master. Your Hourly is your leash. At least for Travel Corp. They don't even call us workers, just LABORERS. Have you heard the Cap' talking? "Labor is too high! Labor is too high!" How did my body, and the work that I PRODUCE become a separate entity from ME? See how they disappear your body! See how they clip your wings!

SECOND MATE

I get it. Being born is like a debt you can't pay off 'cause the interest is too great. Have you looked into transferring to Core Transit though? They have a pilot program too. You could work your way up. I know a few Cosmo Boys...

FIRST MATE

Travel Corp owns that! Travel Corps owns this entire quadrant! Travel Corp owns ME. Travel Corp owns everything, man.

FIRST MATE looks out at the audience/space

FIRST MATE

I was meant to fly. That's what my body says. I was meant to be free.

SECOND MATE hands FIRST MATE a cloth and some solution

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SECOND MATE

How you supposed to fly if you can't see where you're going? Huh, "Captain"?

FIRST MATE begins to clean the "space" window

FIRST MATE

Navigate with your heart.

SECOND MATE

Sounds like another incident report I have to fill out. Bet the ship's Doc loves you.

FIRST MATE

Nah, I keep taking all the Starbursts in the Med Bay.

SECOND MATE

SO IT'S YOU.

FIRST MATE

Oop.

SECOND MATE

Stop leaving the orange ones.

FIRST MATE

I was just taking, uh, "inventory". I thought they were your favs?

SECOND MATE

NOBODY LIKES ORANGE.

FIRST MATE

I didn't think folks still even ate them. They're so *dated*.

SECOND MATE

I'M FOLKS.

FIRST MATE

My BAD.

SECOND MATE

Wish I could be free FROM you! Damn!

FIRST MATE acknowledges the "space" window.

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FIRST MATE

Oh hush. Who else would you travel the void of space with? The Bosun?

SECOND MATE

Hey. The way they handle those solar winds... Hmm, HMM, that's a SAILOR.

FIRST MATE

Hush! Look at this. Look how pristine that is.

SECOND MATE

Scoundrel washes one window, now I gotta inspect every shutter.

SECOND MATE looks outta the "space" window.

SECOND MATE

You missed a spot.

FIRST MATE

Pristine.

SECOND MATE

Several spots. Oh.

*a moment / actors should take the opportunity to make eye contact w/ the audience / each eye is
a star*

SECOND MATE

Do you remember that saying?

FIRST MATE

Which one?

SECOND MATE

"Eyes are the windows to the soul".

FIRST MATE

I haven't heard that one in a minute.

SECOND MATE

Several minutes. It's something my Great Grandma would say often. Like a mantra or whatever.
Or a reminder. But I never really got it.

FIRST MATE: Seems simple enough.

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SECOND MATE

Yeah, but isn't everything a window to the soul? What if each star was a sun?

FIRST MATE

It is.

SECOND MATE

No. Every sun is a star, but not every star is The Sun. The Sun has a different soul. There's only one of those. Just like Earth. My Grandma was born on Earth so maybe it's just an Earthling thing. You know how strange those people get.

FIRST MATE

Strange?

SECOND MATE

Yeah. Strange. Earth folks look up into the sky to remember legacies or deities. Or souls. Their cities are their stars. Their metal are their ancestors. This ship is their lineage. I wonder... Have they ever tried looking into... someone's eyes? Hey... have you ever tried looking into someone's eyes, rather than up? You might find a place, higher than the sun maybe, a place where we're as free as the land used to be.

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