

SPACE ZOO 22

Written by

Toby Arguello

EXT. SKYLARC

The SkyLARC floats in space with the Earth in the BG.

HAM (V.O.)
Alright, Zoo Crew 22!

INT. SKYLARC - ZOO BLOCK 22

Panning past clean zoo blocks, basically sci-fi dorm rooms filled with orderly animals. We settle on Zoo Block 22, which is an absolute mess. Empty potato chip bags and rotten leftovers litter the floor. A crude mural of a monkey, mouse and dog is smeared in cake frosting on the wall.

HAM, a capuchin monkey, goes over the plan.

HAM
We've got one shot at this. Beta!
Open the hatch!

BETA, a crude cyborg-mutt, looks around the room at the mention of his name.

HAM (V.O.)
Beta! Hatch!

Beta focuses. Two hatches open up on his shoulders.

HAM
Zoya! Load the ingredients!

ZOYA, a mouse, salutes.

ZOYA
(Russian accent)
Da!

She knocks over a bottle of soda on a table next to Beta which pours into one hatch, and grabs a bag of powder.

HAM (V.O.)
Root beer...

She hops onto Beta's back and pours it into the other hatch.

HAM (V.O.)
Dehydrated powdered ice cream...

Back on Ham, pushing their bathtub into place.

HAM

Now get ready for...a tub's worth
of root beer floats!

ZOYA/BETA

Delicious!/Tub!

Ham walks behind Beta and Zoya. They all face the empty tub.

HAM

Beta, you have the honors.

BETA

Okay Hammie!

The hatches close and two nozzles protrude from Beta. He fires a liquid and powder out gleefully. They don't look like root beer or dehydrated ice cream.

Ham reads a label on one nozzle, while Zoya reads the other.

HAM

Vinegar...

ZOYA

Bagink soda...

They look worryingly at the tub in front of them. LT. BUZZKYL, a stuffy human scientist, walks in and approaches the growing baking soda volcano.

BUZZKYL

Time to innocently walk into this
room, wearing my freshly cleaned
lab coat my grandma knitted for me!

Back on the animals. Ham covers his eyes.

HAM

This can't get worse.

A third nozzle protrudes from Beta and shoots out some mysterious liquid.

ZOYA

Vat iz zat?

BETA

Nitroglycerin!

BOOM!

EXPLOSION WIPE
TO:

INT. SKYLARC - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

A singed and sooty Buzzkyl talks to the COMMANDER, another stern human.

BUZZKYL

Commander! Those vermin in block 22
are out to get me!

COMMANDER

Spare me the whining, Buzzkyl.

She gets up and walks Buzzkyl over to a window overlooking many of the zoo blocks.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Animals are a key component of our
research here on the SkyLARC. We
need each and every zoo block to
further understand the limits of
life in space, and to mess around
with when we're bored.

BUZZKYL

I just want to replace the gross
dirty animals in *my* zoo block. Plus
I have a plan, and it's not even
evil! Dastardly at most.

COMMANDER

Fine. Out with it.

BUZZKYL

Tardigrades. Microscopic li'l water
bears, they're pretty much
invincible.

COMMANDER

So what? If you wanted microscopic
critters just check our water
supply. *Pass.*

BUZZKYL

B-but I can make these guys bigger!
They could clean our hull, eat that
moldy sandwich that's stinking up
the fridge, anything we want.

Commander thinks for a sec.

COMMANDER

I should know better, but okay. If
you can make them bigger, we'll
replace your animals.

(MORE)

COMMANDER (CONT'D)
 But this better not be another
 waste of time.

Buzzkyl fist pumps, then gathers himself and salutes awkwardly. Crash zoom in on a vent. Zoya has been watching.

ZOYA
 (gasping)
Bozhe moi!

INT. SKYLARC - ZOO BLOCK 22

Zoya is relaying the bad news to Ham and Beta.

ZOYA
 Comrades! Ve are doomed! I don't
 vant to go back to stinky brown
 Earth!

Ham looks at the neighboring zoo block. Three llamas are helping an astronaut prepare a science experiment.

HAM
 Don't worry, Zoya! We just have to
 prove we can help around the
 SkyLARC like all the other animals.

ZOYA
 Zen zey won't replace us viz turdy-
 gurdys. Ve need a...

HAM/ZOYA/BETA
 Helping montage!/Helpink
 montage!/Tub!

HELPING MONTAGE:

- Ham and Zoya are helping astronauts spray-paint a machine. Beta is painting with aerosol cheese.
- Ham takes notes for a scientist studying a mouse maze. Zoya appears and smashes the mouse maze, freeing her mouse comrades that rush the scientist.
- Zoya is replacing a lightbulb, balanced on Ham's shoulders who is on a ladder extending out of Beta. Once it's in, Beta spots a potato chip and rushes off. Zoya and Ham fall with a loud crash. Everything in the Zoo Block breaks, except the lightbulb.

INT. SKYLARC - ZOO BLOCK 22

Back where they started, with the fresh mess around their block.

HAM
Well we might be doomed.

BETA
Yay!

ZOYA
We tried nice way. Now we overzrow
human overlords viz tasteful,
considered sabotage.

HAM
Zoya, every plan doesn't have to
end with--

ZOYA
Onwards to sabotage!

INT. SKYLARC - BUZZKYL'S LAB

Buzzkyl's lab is filled with big sleek machines of unknown function and other sci-fi gizmos. The animals jump in and check that the coast is clear. Ham and Zoya approach the petri dish filled with tardigrades.

HAM
Let's be thoughtful about this.
Don't twist any random knobs.

On Beta in front of a random knob. There are three settings. "Big", "Large", and "Upsettingly Huge". It's currently set to the former.

BETA
Like this?

He gleefully sets it to "Upsettingly Huge".

Alarms ring and a beam of energy hits the petri dish. Ham and Zoya duck for cover. Beta smiles and wags his tails, oblivious as always.

Then, all the commotion stops, as suddenly as it started. The petri dish is unchanged. Ham opens his eyes and gets up.

HAM
I guess the machine doesn't work
after aaaaAAAAAAA!!!!

BOOM! The tardigrades explode in size, stretching out to almost elephant size. *Boy* are they ugly.

Buzzkyl walks in, leading the Commander.

BUZZKYL

Let me show you my work which I'm sure is exactly the way I left it and *oh my goodness what is that!?!?*

COMMANDER

This isn't what I agreed to, Buzzkyl.

BUZZKYL

It's--it's okay! They're harmless.

The giant tardigrades waddle towards Buzzkyl and the Commander so she can get an even closer look at them.

COMMANDER

You failed to mention your experiment would be this ugly.

TARDIGRADES

(muffled gibberish)

<What? Did she say "ugly?" Why I oughta...>

Angered, the rampaging tardigrades smash Buzzkyl's machine, bash a hole in the wall, and leave.

COMMANDER

Well if you want to keep your job it's your problem now. Stop them.

She leaves.

BUZZKYL

You can't! That's like their whole thing!

As Buzzkyl cowers, a piece of debris launched by the tardigrades narrowly misses our heroes.

HAM

I've got a plan. Zoya, head to the air-lock. I need to head to the canteen.

Ham bravely rushes off. Zoya calls out after him.

ZOYA

Ham! Now iz no time for snack!

Beta lifts his head out of the trash can he's eating out of.

BETA

Disagree!

INT. SKYLARC - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Astronauts run around screaming as other animals flee the tardigrades. Ham ducks under the legs of some flamingos and jumps up and swings on the neck of a giraffe which launches him into

INT. SKYLARC - CANTEEN - CONTINUOUS

Ham rushes to the fridge and opens it. It glows green.

INT. SKYLARC - AIRLOCK

Ham comes rushing into the airlock, panting.

ZOYA

Where did you go?

HAM

Tardigrades eat algae and mold and stuff, right? So look what I got!

Ham holds up a gross, moldy sandwich.

ZOYA

(gasping)

Moldy sandwich zat stinks up fridge?

HAM

(calling out)

Hey you death-defying creeps! Come eat this garbage!

On the tardigrades, who stop their destruction to look over at Ham.

TARDIGRADES

<Garbage? I love garbage!>

They rush over. Ham drops the sandwich and runs away as the tardigrades munch on it.

HAM

Beta! Root beer float!

BETA

Okay Hammie!

Beta's nozzles shoot out and fire the vinegar, baking soda, and nitroglycerin mix at the tardigrades, which blows up and launches them against the airlock doors.

HAM

Zoya! Launch them out!

Zoya hits some buttons. The safety doors close and the airlock doors open, shooting the tardigrades are launched out into space.

HAM/ZOYA/BETA

<CHEERING>!

The animals group hug as the Commander walks in.

COMMANDER

Unbelievable work, Zoo Crew 22. I could almost smile. It feels weird.

ASTRONAUTS

<CHEERING>!

COMMANDER

Lieutenant Buzzkyl, make sure these animals get whatever they want! They're indispensable heroes!

Buzzkyl furiously stammers and exits, pulling his hair.

ZOYA

I do feel bad for zose tardigrades.

HAM

It's okay, Zoya. Tardigrades can survive the vacuum of space! They'll be fine.

They exit. In the background, the shrinking silhouettes of the tardigrades are smashed by a speeding comet.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.