

The Hungry Stargazer

Garret Blake is King of the meat industry, where you have to be cruel - not to be kind, but to become rich. While some on Earth protest his methods, there are gourmets in the galaxy who appreciate all he's done to bring fine food to their plates.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Aerial view over green fields, with cows mooing. Lambs leaping and baa-ing, sounds of pigs oinking, the noises rising in volume and distress. Till it merges with ...

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

... the roar of a plane taking off at a busy city airport.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Airline attendants greet passengers as they board. WOMAN, 40s, smiles and flashes her boarding pass to LULU, 30s, attractive airline attendant.

From WOMAN's POV, she sees the luxurious seats of First Class, where an attendant tops up champagne glasses for those seated. She smiles and moves towards the dream.

LULU

I'm sorry, Ma'am. I'm afraid your seat's back there.

Woman looks to where she's pointing. Economy passengers shuffle about in the cramped cabin, struggling to squeeze past each other and get their bags into the crammed overhead lockers. Woman nods sadly and heads that way.

GARRET BLAKE, portly, rich, 50s, hands LULU his boarding pass. She notes his gold ring with large diamonds inset, and gives him a sparkly smile.

LULU (CONT'D)

Welcome aboard, sir. Let me show you to your seat.

Lulu leads him to a seat on the aisle.

LULU (CONT'D)

Would you care for some champagne, Mr Blake?

GARRET

I thought you'd never ask. And as we're going to be cooped up here together for a while, why don't you can call me Garret?

LULU

I'm Lulu. Pleased to meet you, Garret.

Garret watches her walk along the aisle, admiring her close-fitting skirt, smiling smugly to himself. His phone lights up, with a picture of a well-preserved middle-aged woman, MEGAN, on the screen. He answers.

GARRET

(in phone)

Hi, sweetie. Yes I made it. No thanks to those animal rights protesters.

EXT. BLAKE MEATS - DAY/FLASHBACK

A contingent of 50 or so protesters block the entry for workers and trucks at the large windowless factory of BLAKE MEATS. Protesters wave signs FACTORY FARMING IS ANIMAL TORTURE, WELFARE BEFORE MEGA-PROFITS, ANIMALS ARE SENTIENT BEINGS, ANIMALS DESERVE RESPECT.

As a fancy car drives out of the factory, protesters follow.

INT. CAR. - DAY/FLASHBACK

Garret Blake is in the backseat. From his POV we see the protesters' ugly expressions as they peer through the window and thump the roof and doors.

One PROTESTOR stands in front of the car and flings paint from a can onto the driver's windscreen.

PROTESTER

How can you treat sentient beings like that? Cramminig them in to cages so they can't even turn around. Docking their tails and genitals without anaesthetic?

The driver pulls up the vehinckle.

GARRET

Don't stop. Keep going.

DRIVER

I can't see properly. I might hit someone.

GARRET

That's their lookout. I've got a flight to catch.

A factory employee emerges and turns a high-pressure hose on the crowd. They reel back, screaming.

While he's at it, the worker blasts the paint off the car's windscreen. The driver gives a thumbs up and continues on. A Protestor chases them, screaming

PROTESTOR

How would you like that done to you, Blake?

INT. PLANE - DAY

Garret watches Lulu fill his glass with champagne as he talks on the phone.

GARRET

(in phone)

If that paint doesn't come off, I'll sue them for criminal damage. They'll have to cut down on their tofu rations for the next six months to pay for it.

MEGAN (O/S)

Well, enjoy the flight, my love.

Garret accepts the champagne from Lulu with a big smile.

GARRET

(in phone)

Thanks. I intend to.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Later, attendants deliver the meals to passengers. Lulu squats down at Garret's knee to consult with him.

LULU

Would you prefer chicken or beef?

GARRET

The beef for me, please. I like a nice rare piece of meat. Rrrr.

Lulu giggles girlishly.

INT. FACTORY FARM - NIGHT/FLASH FORWARD

From the POV of an animal bound up and terrified. We don't see them, but hear the noises they make. A WORKER clad in plastic gear with a mask covering their face, moves them towards a blood-covered butcher's table.

A BUTCHER in blood-spattered plastic overalls, with full face mask awaits with a shiny meat cleaver. In buckets on the ground are hacked-off tongues and testicles. The creature squeals as the worker drags them forward by rope chains.

Their screams morph into the sound of a plane's engine.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Garret savours the last piece of rare meat on his plate. The juice trickles down his chin and he pats it away with a white napkin. He looks over at Lulu, who smiles.

LULU

Would you like to see our cheese platter?

GARRET

Go on, then. Tempt me.

She gives him a sultry look and he slugs down the red wine and licks his red-tinged lips slowly.

INT. FACTORY FARM - NIGHT/FLASH FORWARD

From the animal's POV as it's prodded into a cage so small it has to hunch down. The animal whimpers, pitifully. But the plastic-suited worker just kicks the cage.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

It's late, people are sleeping stretched out in the cabin.

Garret drinks a brandy in a glass as he chats with Lulu.

LULU

So, do you enjoy being in the food production business? Well, not just in the business, but the leader in your field?

GARRET

I used to. But these days people want all their meat for nothing. And they complain about the methods we have to use to provide it for them. But you can't have it both ways.

Lulu nods and offers a small box of four treats.

LULU
Exactly. Belgian chocolate?

GARRET
I'm sweet enough. But okay. You've
twisted my arm.

They smile at each other. Garrett's starting to breathe heavily in anticipation.

INT. FACTORY FARM - NIGHT/FLASH FORWARD

Heavy breathing continues. From the POV of the animal in the cage, a masked worker holds the creature's jaw open, while a second guides the tube into its throat. White liquid comes down the tube. Glugging/gagging sounds.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Lulu perches on the arm of Garret's seat. He fiddles with his flashy diamond ring.

LULU
The last chocky?

GARRET
Are you trying to fatten me up? Go
on then.

He opens his mouth, and Lulu puts the last chocolate out of a small box on his tongue. His lips caress her fingers as he begins to eat. Lulu smiles knowingly.

LULU
Oh, look, you've spilt some red
wine. You really should wash it off
straight away so it doesn't stain.
The bathrooms are this way.

Garret dabs his mouth and nods, and heads towards the bathrooms, glancing back at Lulu as he enters a cubicle.

Looking around, to make sure no-one's watching, Lulu follows. The door locks shut.

INT. AIRLINE TOILET - DAY

Lulu and Garret are kissing and undoing each other's clothes. Garret enters her, closes his eyes and gasps with ecstasy. Lulu's eyes remain wide and unblinking. She puts a hand to her ear.

LULU
 (in comms)
 Locked and loaded. Ready for
 extraction.

Garret opens his eyes.

GARRET
 What the-?

He tries to pull back but can't. He watches in horror as the side of the plane disappears and Lulu, still legs wrapped around him, launches them out.

EXT. AIRSPACE - DAY

The plane flies on, as the parachute opens and they flutter down, before entering a vortex in the sky.

INT. SPACE TRANSPORT LANDING PAD - DAY

Lulu parachutes through the stars, setting down gracefully on a runway outside a large building in space.

In a smooth movement, she hands the unconscious Garret to the factory WORKER we saw earlier in plastic suit with face mask. As he puts Garret into a wheelbarrow, MR LORNE, alien in gold suit, emerges from the building. Mr Lorne greets Lulu as she tidies her parachute away with practised efficiency.

MR LORNE
 Lulu! Good to see you. What have
 you brought us today?

He regards the unconscious Garret in the barrow.

As Lulu looks up, she has morphed into a similar but different form. She has a pretty cow-like face, lamb fur on her arms and a pig-snort laugh.

LULU
 Evening, Mr Lorne. You said you
 wanted rich meat for a special
 client. I supply to order.

MR LORNE
 You always come up with the goods,
 Lulu. And just in time. A reviewer
 from the Galaxy Gourmet is coming
 in next week.
 (to worker)
 (MORE)

MR LORNE (CONT'D)

We need this specimen docked, caged
and force-fed until the liver is
the requisite size.

Worker wheels Garret in the barrow into the factory.

Moving up, we have a birds eye view of the factory from above
in space. We now see that the front of the building is a
restaurant, The Hungry Stargazer. Small spacecrafts deliver
diners to a fancy entry dock before the crafts are parked in
rows in space.

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

INT. THE HUNGRY STARGAZER - NIGHT

The place is swanky with big windows overlooking space. All
manner of well-dressed aliens enter to eat here.

A WAITER shows GASTON GLISSADE, alien reviewer, to a table
with a view. He puts a glass of blood before him.

WAITER

On the house, Monsieur Glissade.

Gaston takes a big drink, and enjoys his surroundings

Mr Lorne, in silver suit, approaches with a platter of pate
and crackers.

MR LORNE

Gaston, delightful to see you
again. How's the bloodtini?

GASTON

Delicious, as ever. Tastes like a
... 55.

MR LORNE

It's 57 Earth years. I wanted to
bring you this, myself. We sourced
it specially for customers, like
you, with more discerning palates.

He waves a hand at the platter for Gaston to try. He sniffs.

GASTON

The scent of ... anguish is quite
strong. Well-deserved, I hope.

MR LORNE

Oh yes.

Mr Lorne watches Gaston bite into the pate and biscuit.

GASTON

Ooh, very rich. I detect traces of red wine, very good red wine, lots of it. Cheeses, chocolates, rare meats. The best and bloodiest cuts.

Mr Lorne claps his insights sycophantically. Gaston takes a second bite and frowns.

GASTON (CONT'D)

And there's a spicy aftertaste. Greed, if I'm not mistaken.

Mr Lorne nods encouragement. He fiddles with his ring - formerly Garret's ring.

GASTON (CONT'D)

(shudders)

There's cruelty - some quite strong flavours and...

(licks the pate)

... adultery - creamy. Mmmm. As a whole, it produces the satisfying taste of comeuppance.

MR LORNE

This was a human from Earth who caused untold misery to many beings, for his own personal gain.

GASTON

(regards the pate)

The liver. The repository of all things vile. Tell me, Lorne, why does evil taste so good?

MR LORNE

I can't answer that but I assure you, there are plenty more specimens out there to be sampled.

(gestures to the window)

Greedy, malevolent creatures ripe and ready to be the next Galaxy Gourmet treat.

GASTON

I'll drink to that.

Gaston raises his glass of blood in toast.