

Petr Hudský: World number 33

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Characters and cast:

Captain: Jiří Štrébl

Lieutenant: Matouš Ruml

Mary: Kateřina Rathouská

Singing: Jiří Štrébl, Matouš Ruml, Ondřej David, Nairi David, Nina Rudišová

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Captain and lieutenant are on a journey through the universe. Soon we'll learn that they are supernatural beings.

Introductory music – a Christmas carol How Beautiful You Are (only music)

CAPTAIN: *(space ship sounds)* So number 32 is... done. *(space ship sounds)*

LIEUTENANT: Yes, Captain, sir.

CAPTAIN: Continuing.

(the ship flies through the universe)

CAPTAIN: Thirty-three is quite far away, isn't it?

LIEUTENANT: It's light years away... We're almost there, captain.

CAPTAIN: I can see. Give us the report, Lieutenant.

(0:37)

LIEUTENANT: So... *(sounds)* here it is... *(reading)* Station number 33. World: Dry land, ocean, air. The highest form of life: mammals, primates.

CAPTAIN: *(sounds)* Hold on, primates?

LIEUTENANT: Yes.

CAPTAIN: The highest life form in World 33 are primates?

LIEUTENANT: Precisely.

CAPTAIN: God blimey...

LIEUTENANT: It says it here, captain. Thirty-three, primates.

(short pause)

CAPTAIN: Can you hand me the list?

LIEUTENANT: Sure. Here you go. *(sounds)* You see, here it is.

CAPTAIN: That must be a mistake, surely? *(sounds)* *(he's trying to remember)*

Thirty-three... The highest form of life there were dinosaurs...

LIEUTENANT: Yes, Captain, you have excellent memory, it used to be the dinosaurs. But there were terrible problems with behaviour.

CAPTAIN: I remember now... Clever, but they wouldn't listen. *(LIEUTENANT: Hm.)* It has been some time now.

LIEUTENANT: I was just beginning my career.

(1:40)

CAPTAIN: What happened to them?

LIEUTENANT: I'll look in the files... *(sounds)* oh, here it is. Rocket Universe-Earth, the Sodom-Gomorrah type, used twice. *(sounds)*

CAPTAIN: Sodom-Gomorrah? Not much could have been left of the dinosaurs but a few bones.

LIEUTENANT: It was a real whack. Well, and after that the primates took over.

CAPTAIN: Primates... I don't know anything more stupid and aggressive. *(short pause)* And what about the second rocket? When did we drop that?

(2:13)

LIEUTENANT: I'll check... *(sounds)* Recently, a few thousands local years ago.

CAPTAIN: Recently? It wouldn't be looking like this here.

LIEUTENANT: The explosive charges were lowered to three thousandths of a percent and the target were just two smallish settlements. Hm, a classic educational exemplary lesson. (*sounds*)

CAPTAIN: Now I get it. Because after a standard Sodom-Gomorra we would have had to introduce a second batch. And with an interval. (*short pause*) I can see number thirty-three has lots of problems.

LIEUTENANT: Unfortunately, Captain, it's just as you say. They are as stupid as they are wild.

CAPTAIN: I agree. I simply don't get it, how a world like this could have got on our list for the landing of the BIG J.

LIEUTENANT: You're right, they were not on the original list.

CAPTAIN: Were they?! I thought that if there were primates, I would have noticed.

(3:10)

LIEUTENANT: They added them later. (*sounds*) Here, you see, the appendix: add two worlds on the list for the landing of the BIG J: number 33, Earth – primates, and number 51, W9 – boulders. (*sounds*)

CAPTAIN: I can understand why the boulders, but primates.... Such an experiment. (*sounds*) Well, it's their decision and the two of us can't do anything about it now. Poor J-33, I wouldn't want to be in his shoes.

(*sounds of landing*)

LIEUTENANT: Here we are.

CAPTAIN: Wait a bit I'll just... get my bearings... those are the three?

LIEUTENANT: Yes.

CAPTAIN: Can they see us?

LIEUTENANT: All of them can see us. I've turned on all the lights.

CAPTAIN: It's just whether they've understood they are supposed to follow us. Turn on the AUDIO.

LIEUTENANT: In a sec.

We hear the sounds of Earth – distant men singing: “We are the three kings, we’re coming to you, wishing you health and happiness. Health, happiness and a long life, we’ve come from far away.”

LIEUTENANT: Ah, it’s okay, they are following us, they got it.

CAPTAIN: Great. What about J-33, has he got down already?

LIEUTENANT: A little while ago. The small building over there, it’s called a stable in the local language.

We hear a distant crying of a newborn and Mary’s soothing voice:

(4:29)

MARY: *(from a distance)* Baby Jesus, don’t cry...

CAPTAIN: A stable? Quite a primitive construction.

MARY: *(from a distance)* He’s beautiful, isn’t he, Joey. Like an angel.

LIEUTENANT: It’s a dwelling for a lower form of mammals.

CAPTAIN: Even lower than primates?

LIEUTENANT: Yes, there are quite a few. For example the white ones, can you see the group?

Sheep bleating and a carol sung by children: “How beautiful you are, innocent, in the midst of poverty, we fall down in front of you, we bring you our presents...”

CAPTAIN: I can see them. They are saying something.

LIEUTENANT: No, these creatures... sheep... don’t speak.

CAPTAIN: But their jaws are moving.

LIEUTENANT: They are chewing grass, that’s one species of the local flora.

CAPTAIN: They eat each other. That’s awful. Well, otherwise it seems everything is okay. Turn off the AUDIO.

The sounds from Earth stop.

(5:24)

LIEUTENANT: I’ll put it in the logbook.

CAPTAIN: All we can do now is keep our fingers crossed for J-33. It will be tough for him. I have no idea how he can explain some of the things to them.

LIEUTENANT: He's done the training, he knew what he's up to.

CAPTAIN: If he were to simplify it... like really simplify...

LIEUTENANT: How about using fairy tales?

CAPTAIN: Maybe...

Short pause.

CAPTAIN: What do think about leaving the checking term at 75 local years?

LIEUTENANT: You mean like doing them more often? I don't know if we can manage, you know how many worlds we are responsible for. And the budget is tight.

CAPTAIN: I meant just the opposite. I thought of moving it to 100 or 110?

LIEUTENANT: I wouldn't do that, sir, leaving them so long without supervision seems risky to me. Especially with primates.

CAPTAIN: You're right, Lieutenant. We'll stop by according to plan, better safe than sorry.

LIEUTENANT: *(agreeing)* I've put it down. *(sounds)*

CAPTAIN: So that's number 33... done.

LIEUTENANT: Thank God.

CAPTAIN: And now off we go.

(the ship flies off, it continues moving through the universe)

(6:44)

CAPTAIN: What's next?

LIEUTENANT: We're getting closer, I'll find the file... *(sounds)* Here it is...
(reading) Habitat number 34. World: Ocean, air. Highest life form: seaweed.

CAPTAIN: Finally someone intelligent.

(the ship lands)

LIEUTENANT: We're here.

CAPTAIN: Those three are swimming after us?

LIEUTENANT: Yes. No doubt about that. As soon as we appeared, they started following us.

CAPTAIN: Turn on the AUDIO.

LIEUTENANT: Just a sec.

We hear distant splashing and the same song as before “We are the three kings, we’re coming to you, wishing you health and happiness...”

CAPTAIN: What about J-34, has he descended already?

LIEUTENANT: He’s splashing over there, captain. That little seaweed.

CAPTAIN: Fantastic. *(audio from Earth turns off)* So that’s number 34... done.

LIEUTENANT: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: That was quick. Let’s continue.

A short break.

CAPTAIN: How many more worlds do we have to visit?

LIEUTENANT: Myriads, Captain.

(Sounds of the universe at the end.)