

# Welcome to Celebration City (or, putting the fun in dysfunctional)

By Christopher Rife

Characters:

Son

Dad

Charlie Chinchilla

The Controver-Seal

A Hologram

1985 Housewife

A Girl

Spiro Agnew

Walt

A Malnourished Child

*Scene: A father and son driving in a car*

SON. Hey, Dad? Can I ask you something?

DAD. (talking on the phone, unbeknownst to his son) Of course. Talk to me.

SON. I don't know... I feel like you don't pay attention to me.

DAD. What do you mean?!

SON. Well, I mean, this is the first attempt you tried to-

DAD. I don't care! Do what you have to do!

SON. ... Dad? Hello?

DAD. No, I need that Thompson account, Jerry! Goodbye! (pulls Bluetooth out of his ear) Sorry buddy. Now what were you saying?

SON. (sighing) Nothing.

DAD. Well cheer up! We're almost there! Next exit, birthday fun!

SON. (sarcastic) Oh boy.

DAD. I hope you're ready for that surprise.

SON. (sighing) Yeah, whatever.

DAD. I don't know where you got that attitude. Probably from that step dad of yours.

SON. His name is Frank, Dad! And he's a great guy!

DAD. Well let's see if that "great guy" can top what I got you this year!

(He hands package to his son, son opens it)

SON. Cool, Pokemon cards, I used to love these, when I was nine. I guess I can use these for target practice with the BB gun Frank bought me.

DAD. That's only part one of the surprise. I worked really hard this year, to make up for not being there last year.

SON. And the year before that, and the year before that, and the year before that (counting on his fingers) AND the year before that.

DAD. Alright! Look, I'm trying to do my best here, son. I managed to scrape up a few bucks. I can't exactly say how or where my left kidney has gone, but I'm taking you to Celebration City!

SON. The theme park? I'm 16; I don't want to go to a theme park with my Dad

DAD. Don't I deserve a big ol' hug for trying at least?

SON. Frank already gave me one today, I'm good.

DAD. (under breath) Frank...son of a-

SON. What's that Dad?

DAD. (changing the subject) Well, here we are, Celebration City, the world famous theme park! By the way, that's an, uh, interesting shirt you got on there...

SON. Oh this? Frank and I made it together!

DAD. Are you sure you don't want to change before you go?

SON. No, Dad.

DAD. I'll meet up with you a little later.

SON. You're not even coming with me?!

DAD. No, there's some "things" I need to take care of. I'll see you later.

SON. (disappointed) Ok. Bye Dad.

(looking around in shock and awe)

Aw man, this is amazing! All my childhood memories are flooding back to me! (Dreamily) Getting lost in a large crowd of potentially violent people, eating cotton candy till I got scurvy, not having a strong parental figure around... All warm and fuzzy inside, like I swallowed a kitten.

CHARLIE. Hiya, kid! Welcome to the greatest place on earth!! I'm your best pal Charlie Chinchilla! The gang's all here, and we're excited to see YOU dropped by! Look, Sammy the Sickly Sloth! The crusty crustacean! And- oh god, here he comes.

SON. Who?

CONTROVER-SEAL. Arf arf arf! Condoms should be distributed in schools!

CHARLIE. Ugh, it's the CONTROVER-SEAL. No one likes him. I don't even know why we created him. Oh god, just look away, don't make eye contact.

CONTROVER-SEAL. Arf Arf arf! Human life begins at conception!

CHARLIE. Oh god, he's doing it again.

CONTROVER-SEAL. Concealed handguns save lives!

CHARLIE. I'll distract him. Look, there's an interracial gay couple attempting to clone an illegal immigrant!

(Seal excitedly starts running)

CHARLIE. (calling after him) And they're PAGANS! Phew, that was a close one. Anyway, your Dad arranged a whole day's worth of fun and excitement!

SON. I guess I'll have to make the best of this.

CHARLIE. Come on! This is FUN! Our first stop on the tour will be The World of the Future!

SON. That's lame. Do you guys have like a rollercoaster or anything cool here? My step dad Frank takes me on roller coasters every weekend.

CHARLIE. I'm sure that's nothing compared to the fun you have with your REAL Dad!

SON. Not really, he not around that much.

CHARLIE. Well, he's probably just trying to make up for lost time and trying to give you the best present ever today, huh?

SON. Eh, whatever.

CHARLIE. (Visibly more frustrated) Look, your real Dad worked really hard on this. Not just the money, but all the time and the organs and the energy... So (nervous laugh) be a pal and just go on the ride, OK?

SON. But I don't want to! Frank says-

CHARLIE. I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR FAKE Dad SAYS! (Suddenly happy again) It's mandatory fun time. Just go on the ride!

SON. You're not a very nice chinchilla!

CHARLIE. ...Just.... do.... it!

SON. Ok, ok, jeez! If it'll get you to stop yelling at me.

(walks into ride) Whoa, it doesn't look like anyone has been in this building for years.

HOLOGRAM. Hello, and welcome to "The World of The Future. I am your holographic guide. Please step on moving walkway and see the future right before your eyes!

(steps onto walkway, walkway starts moving)

HOLOGRAM. Many wonders await us in the future. Hey here's, little miss housewife 1985, the woman who has it all.

1985 HOUSEWIFE. Oh my future's so bright. I gotta wear shades! I'm mother of 2 Lunar University graduates and wife to a hardworking husband who jetpacks his way home to me every night and makes me a gourmet Pill Dinner! Mmmm! Yet even if my husband stopped being so wonderful and we had a no-fault divorce and I remarried, I would be sure my 2 perfect children continued to love their REAL FATHER. For even in the utopian future no FAKE STEP Dad could ever take the place of a REAL FATHER! And I would never let them wear an awful t-shirt like that!

SON. What's wrong with my t-shirt?

HOLOGRAM. And now a word from our sponsor: 4 out of 5 Doctors don't recommend smoking. But that 5th doctor smokes Royal Brand. Royal Brand Cigarettes! The smokes chosen most by doctors! Now is the point in the tour where any little boy or girl out there get to ask me any questions. Little boy or girl, do you have a question for me?

SON. My social studies teacher told us that in 50 years, all fossil fuels will be used up...and I was wondering, what will the future use for power?

HOLOGRAM. The future will run on Girl Power! Come take a look!

(Hologram pulls back a curtain revealing a girl running in a hamster-wheel)

GIRL. (sobbing) I've been running in this wheel for forty years! I need a water break! Can't anybody hear me!

(Hologram Pulls back down the curtain)

HOLOGRAM. (Chuckling) Oh the possibilities. Here's where I turn you over to your next guide.

Spiro Agnew. Welcome to the Hall of Vice Presidents! You're the first person to come see us in a long, long time.

SON. Who are you?

SPIRO. I'm Spiro Agnew, Nixon's Vice President. It's my job to show everyone that the Vice Presidents are just as important as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. Take me for example. I was the first Greek-American in the white house. There's Hannibal Hamlin over here, Lincoln's Vice President, and he's got a pretty cool name! He had three sons, and they all loved their biological father very much and they would even if Mrs. Hamlin fell passionately in love with Honest Abe and married him. Yes, they would love their biological father more than Abraham Lincoln.

SON. What are you talking about? Wait a second, Spiro Agnew? Aren't you that guy who resigned because of tax evasion?

SPIRO. Yeah. I guess there weren't enough pardons to go around. If only my REAL FATHER had been there to guide me... Anyway, Hannibal Hamlin and I have been discussing that shirt of yours and we were wondering if you could settle this little bet we've got going. I say those are "sparkles" on it, but he calls them "glitter." Either way, any sensible child would never be caught DEAD in a shirt like that!

SON. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH MY SHIRT!

SPIRO. (breaking down) I don't know about that, it's a little g-g-g-girly

SON. I'm getting out of here. Which one of these doors?

(opening a door)

WALT. (skiing) Come join us for Cryogenically Frozen Disney on Ice! With a special tribute to REAL DADS.

SON. AHHH!

(Slams Door. Moves on to the next one)

MALNOURISHED CHILD. (singing, softly and pathetically) It's the third world after all! And we love our real Dads!

SON. WHAT!

(slams second door)

This is the most oddly coincidental theme at a theme park I have ever seen. Maybe this one...

(opens third door)

CHARLIE. Ah ha! There you are! You've caused enough problems for one day.

SON. But I didn't do anything!

CHARLIE. One: you broke the mandatory fun time rule. And TWO: you committed a fashion crime with that little shirt you're wearing. You should've listened to your father and changed before you came.

SON. ...How did you know my Dad said that?

(Charlie takes off his character head with a whooshing sound)

SON. Dad?! Why are you here? Around this time you're usually drinking your fifth scotch and crying outside your old High School.

DAD. It's your birthday! I wanted to do something special for you, something exciting. Something better than Frank could ever get you. He always gets you such nice gifts and you show him love and respect...I just wanted to show you that I cared for you, but I didn't know how. So now here I am. I guess I screwed up again, didn't I...

SON. Dad, nothing Frank could get me could change the fact that I love you. Not even this shirt that says "I Love Frank More Than My Real Dad." I'm sorry; I know you're trying your best. I'll give you another chance.

DAD. (smiles) Thanks, son. Hey, let's go get some ice cream. And maybe later we could make our own shirt... together.

CONTROVER-SEAL. Arf Arf! Those shirts are made in sweatshops!