

“Dear Pluto”

*(The sound of a crackling radio booms.)*

**EARTH (V.O.)** *(muffled)*

New Horizons from Earth! New Horizons from Earth! Engines burned for 76 seconds. Velocity change of one-point-one-six meters-per-second. Last scheduled trajectory correction maneuver complete. You are now on course. Godspeed as you travel the outer solar system, and don't lose sight of your mission!

*(Crackling radio sound ends. Lights up. NEW HORIZONS snaps a photo. The first image that the NASA New Horizons mission took of Pluto is projected. An accompanying slideshow is available at: [goo.gl/zqVqmV](http://goo.gl/zqVqmV). PLUTO picks up a letter and opens it.)*

**NEW HORIZONS and PLUTO**

“Dear Pluto,

**NEW HORIZONS**

I hope this letter finds you well! I am an explorer from afar! I've seen tiny worlds and massive giants, but other travelers have done the same. I'm going farther. I'm going beyond. I'm going to the Kuiper belt. I'm a huge fan of yours, and have been since birth. You're the brightest, so obviously the best, Kuiper Belt Object. You even have an atmosphere. It's so ambitious of you! What geological processes do you perform to do that?! I'll be in your neighborhood soon. Could I meet you? I feel like our meeting is destined! Admiringly yours, New Horizons”

**PLUTO**

Stupid kid.

*(PLUTO sends an envelope to NEW HORIZONS, who picks it up and opens it.)*

“Dear New Horizons, No. Stay off my circumstellar disc! As you may or may not know, we've been having a hard time out here in the outer solar system, and we do not appreciate visitors. Please stay in your own sector of the solar system. In short, go away. Sincerely, Pluto”

**NEW HORIZONS**

*(NEW HORIZONS sends an envelope to PLUTO, who picks it up and opens it.)*

“Dear Pluto, I'm sorry you're having a hard time. It is tough out there right now, I know. I'm only beginning to understand what it means to be so far from the sun. Perhaps, I could bring something with me to make you feel better? Aluminium, gold, maybe a little oxygen? I am a traveler after all, and I would like to help you. Please let me stop by. This will be my only chance to meet you. Best, New Horizons”

**CHARON** *(entering)*

Oh hey, Pluto!

**PLUTO**

What is it, Charon?

**CHARON**

Whoa, is that another letter? You've been getting a lot of those lately!

**PLUTO**

Two, Charon. Two letters.

**CHARON**

Two is kind of a lot when no one writes ever. So, what does it say?

**PLUTO**

They want to come visit.

**CHARON**

What?

**PLUTO**

I'm telling them no.

**CHARON**

Pluto, we've never had a visitor.

**PLUTO**

And we won't have a visitor. What if they're from Earth?

**CHARON**

So what if they are?

*(PLUTO just glares at CHARON.)*

Oh come on! Do you understand how huge this could be? This would be our first visitor! It would be something to brag about with Saturn and Neptune, and --

**PLUTO**

Don't mention them! Those...*planets*...

*(CHARON snatches the letter and reads it. PLUTO reacts, "hey!")*

**CHARON**

THEY OFFERED TO BRING OXYGEN?! Come on, you have to say yes!

**PLUTO**

No!

**CHARON**

Not even for oxygen?

**PLUTO**

No!

**CHARON**

*(holding up a stuffed 3-headed dog. It's adorable.)*

Not even for Kerberos?

**PLUTO**

No.

**CHARON**

How about for me? Come on, I'll help you draft a response.

*(CHARON begins to write, as NEW HORIZONS picks up a letter and begins to read.)*

"Dearest kindest New Horizons!"

**PLUTO**

Don't you think that's a bit much?

**CHARON**

"I regret that I have been so cold to you. I entirely retract my previous coldness. In fact, I'd be delighted to meet you! Please please please--"

**PLUTO**

That's enough...

**CHARON**

One more! "please stop by! I'm eagerly awaiting you! Pluto"

**PLUTO**

"P.S. As long as you are not from that trash-ball infested rock, Earth. Then forget it."

*(PLUTO sends NEW HORIZONS the letter.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

Huh, well a little lie never hurt anyone?

*(NEW HORIZONS does a little dance while writing a new letter.)*

"Dear Pluto, Thank you so much for reconsidering! Of course I'm not from Earth! Why do you even care about Earth? That rock is so... gross. I hate it too. So, do you want to hear about my journey so far?"

**PLUTO**

*(receiving the letter and crumpling it)*

No.

**NEW HORIZON**

Let's see...

*(NEW HORIZONS throws PLUTO another letter. PLUTO receives it with a sigh but opens it.)*

"I didn't see much right after I set off, but after a few course corrections, I took my first photo! It was of 132524 APL -- if you know them?"

*(The projector changes to display 132524 APL.)*

**PLUTO**

*(Writing.)* "I can't say I do..." *(Not writing)* Or want to... *(sends letter)*

**NEW HORIZONS** *(writing)*

"APL's a swell little asteroid. We didn't hang out much. I did get to hang with Jupiter and its moons for a little bit!"

*(Projector changes to display an array of the Jupiter and its moons. PLUTO makes a disgruntled noise.)*

"Yeah, you're right, it was kinda disappointing."

*(PLUTO gives a "ha!")*

"Man could Jupiter talk. I couldn't get a word in edgewise. It was like 'Jupiter this, Jupiter that!'"

**PLUTO** *(writing)*

“So did you two get along?”

**NEW HORIZONS** *(writing)*

“Not really. But joke’s on Jupiter. I just needed their gravity to get a boost!”

**PLUTO** *(writing)*

“Shows that gas bag!”

**NEW HORIZONS** *(writing)*

“Anyway, I’m really glad you said yes to me coming and for responding to my letters. It’s been really comforting writing to you, so I maybe just wanted to say... thank you. That’s all. New Horizons.”

**PLUTO**

Huh...

*(PLUTO sends a letter to NEW HORIZONS)*

“I just wanted to say... you’re welcome. That’s all. Pluto.”

*(NEW HORIZONS holds the last PLUTO letter over their heart, blushing. A crackling sound indicates an incoming message. NEW HORIZONS picks up a walkie-talkie to listen.)*

**EARTH V.O.** *(muffled)*

New Horizons from Earth! New Horizons from Earth! What are you doing? Your software is acting rather unexpectedly. You are drifting outside your allowed parameters. Remember: you are here to fly by Pluto and *then* travel deeper into the Kuiper belt. You can’t stay with Pluto long! You must stay detached and focused on mission!

*(NEW HORIZONS shuts down. The projector displays a blue loading screen.)*

**PLUTO**

“Dear New Horizons, I forgot to mention, and I wasn’t sure if you knew before, but we have a couple of moons, besides Nix and Hydra. They’re not too big, but I wanted to warn you about them. Sincerely, Pluto”

*(NEW HORIZONS does not respond.)*

“Dear New Horizons, I was wondering if you got my last letter. Were you put off by the moons thing? I probably should have mentioned that earlier. Kind regards, Pluto”

*(NEW HORIZONS cannot respond.)*

“Dear New Horizons, I’m worried. Are you okay? Please say something, anything. Concernedly yours, Pluto.”

*(NEW HORIZONS wants to respond but doesn’t.)*

“New Horizons, TALK TO ME!”

*(NEW HORIZONS can respond.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

“Dear Pluto, Hi, I’m here.”

*(Projector changes back to a closer, but still distant, photo of Pluto.)*

**PLUTO**

Thank the stars!

**NEW HORIZONS**

“I’m sorry for not responding more quickly. I was having a little trouble processing several inputs. I should be fine now. I’m still on track for tomorrow. New Horizons“

**PLUTO** *(to CHARON)*

New Horizons is okay!

**CHARON**

You seem genuinely excited.

**PLUTO**

So! I can look forward to stuff too sometimes. Maybe I want someone to talk to who isn’t you for once.

**CHARON**

It’s just kind of adorable to see you like this.

**PLUTO**

Shut up.

*(NEW HORIZONS approaches PLUTO’s side of the stage for the first time and snaps a picture of their home. The projector changes to the first full closeup picture of Pluto taken by the New Horizon’s mission. PLUTO notices NEW HORIZONS for the first time. They see each other, no longer through the letters.)*

Hey!

**NEW HORIZONS**

Hey!

*(Beat.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

You must be... Oh! I’m sorry, I don’t mean to... you go first. I’ll wait.

*(Beat.)*

**PLUTO**

You’re New Horiz- Whoops, look at me, all chatty... but you were saying...

**NEW HORIZONS**

It’s so great to finally meet you, I mean, physically. I never knew you were so... featured.

**PLUTO**

Featured? No, am I? I mean, other bodies have mountains and craters and ice and-- Hey, what are you carrying?

**NEW HORIZONS**

Aw, it’s nothing much really. A UV spectrometer... A power supply... Well, I am proud of one thing.

**PLUTO**

What’s that?

**NEW HORIZONS**

This is Ralph. My favorite C-C-D. It’s the best camera any explorer could ask for. Hey! Let me take your picture!

**PLUTO**

Oh, I'm a little shy...

**NEW HORIZONS**

Come on! Please?

**PLUTO**

Well, will it just be for you? I mean, no one else will see, right?

**NEW HORIZONS** *(lying)*

Of course, just me! Me and only me and no one else.

**PLUTO**

Hmmm... Okay then!

*(PLUTO puts their hands into a heart at their chest. NEW HORIZONS snaps a photo of PLUTO. The projector changes to the famous "Heart of Pluto" photo.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

Hey! Do you want to see?

*(PLUTO and NEW HORIZONS look at the camera together. Their arms accidentally touch and they look up at each other. The projector flips to a zoomed in picture of Pluto's heart. CHARON enters carrying all of the other moons, represented by animals: Kerberos = dog, Nix = cat, Styx = fish, Hydra = lizard or snake.)*

**CHARON**

Ahoy, Pluto! Is our guest here yeeeeeeeeee-- *(notices the intimate moment)* Yup, yup! I would say they are here.

**NEW HORIZONS**

These must be your moons! Hi Charon! Hi Nix! Hi Hydra! Ohhh, and these must be the other moons!

**CHARON**

Yup, these are Kerberos and Styx.

*(NEW HORIZONS takes a photos. The projector shows photos of the moons of Pluto.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

It's so great to meet you all!

**CHARON**

Come on! There's so much show you!

*(PLUTO, CHARON, and NEW HORIZONS run offstage. They return with two sleds. The projector changes to show the Cthulhu Regio.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

Wow, where are we?

**PLUTO**

The Cthulhu Regio! We're on top of Hillary Montes.

**CHARON** (*pointing*)

If you look over there, you can see Norgey Montes!

**NEW HORIZONS**

These mountains are huge! They must be as tall as Mount Everest!

**PLUTO**

Where's that?

**NEW HORIZONS**

Oh! Nowhere. Hey!

*(NEW HORIZONS inspects a sled.)*

What are these for anyway?

*(CHARON picks up a sled, and starts sliding down the mountain with any on-stage animal-moons.)*

**CHARON**

Sledding! Come on!

**PLUTO**

It's one of our favorite pastimes. Now, we're going to go pretty fast, so you're going to have to hang on...

**NEW HORIZONS**

This is nothing! I hold the launch speed record on my homeworld. Pluto, get ready to go faster than you've ever gone before.

**PLUTO**

Wait what?!

*(NEW HORIZONS gives PLUTO a huge push and jumps on the sled, wrapping their arms tightly around PLUTO. PLUTO makes a terrified "Ahhhhhhh" of distress. NEW HORIZON's shouts in excitement.)*

**NEW HORIZON**

Woooo! That almost rivaled exiting the atmosphere!

*(NEW HORIZONS springs up from the sled. PLUTO is still in shock. CHARON helps PLUTO up.)*

Wow, Pluto! Your surface is so smooth down here. It's beautiful.

**CHARON**

Pluto's pretty active.

*(Phooooossh! The three get sprayed in the face with water.)*

**PLUTO**

Geysers.

*(They laugh together for a while. Lights change to imitate a sunset on Pluto. PLUTO is standing between NEW HORIZONS and the setting sun.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

The sun looks so stunning... and small from here.

**PLUTO**

This is how I've always seen it.

**NEW HORIZONS**

It's setting now.

*(PLUTO doesn't know what that means and gives a confused shrug.)*

That's what we call it, on my homeworld, when the sun passes over the horizon. I never thought I'd see anything like it again. It's setting behind you, Pluto. Would you like to see?

**PLUTO**

Very much.

*(NEW HORIZONS snaps a photo of PLUTO in the sunset. The projector changes to the photo of the Pluto sunset. The group sits down to watch the distant sun. NEW HORIZONS and PLUTO sit together.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

Space is really empty. Like really really empty. For a while, I was just waiting... until we started writing! Actually, I never thought you would really return my first letter. I probably seemed like some delusional fan...

*(CHARON nods in the background confirming that NEW HORIZONS came on as a little... intense.)*

**PLUTO**

Man, I was so mean to you at first... until Charon convinced me otherwise. I just got so scared and defensive. Ever since that business with Earth...

**NEW HORIZONS**

If it's not too much... I mean, if you're okay with me asking, why do you hate Earth so much?

**CHARON**

*(PLUTO does not respond. CHARON turns to NEW HORIZONS.)*

Not very long ago, they demoted us. It took Earth a while to figure out that it's not just me and Pluto out here. Once they learned about Haumea, Makemake, and all the others, they changed our status.

**NEW HORIZONS**

That's terrible!

**PLUTO**

Yeah, and now they treat all us Kuiper Belt Objects like second-class solar-system citizens.

**NEW HORIZONS**

I don't know why anyone would treat you like that. You're first-class to me.

*(NEW HORIZONS hugs PLUTO with all the genuineness in the solar system. PLUTO accepts the hug.)*

**PLUTO**

I know when you first wrote, you said you were a traveller, destined to go very very far into the Kuiper belt, but I'm so happy you're here right now. And I was wondering... would you like to join Charon, and Nix and Styx and Kerberos and Hydra and... what I'm trying to say is... would you like to orbit with me?

**CHARON**

We'd really like to have you.



*(The moons look adorable. NEW HORIZONS hesitates. NEW HORIZONS hears crackling.)*

**NEW HORIZONS**

I can't.

**PLUTO**

Oh, well, I er-, I didn't mean to...

**NEW HORIZONS**

I want to! I really do, but-- *(crackling)*

**PLUTO**

It's fine. I think I was just being too forward. I know I know, you're an explorer--

**NEW HORIZONS**

Pluto, it's...*(crackling noise.)* I need to be honest with you. It's more than just that... *(crackling noise.)* I have to keep going, because it's my mission. I'm a spacecraft from Earth!

**PLUTO**

You...

**NEW HORIZONS**

But that doesn't change anything. I really care about you --

**PLUTO**

But you lied to me!

**NEW HORIZONS**

No! I mean I did, but I only wanted --

**PLUTO**

How could you? I trusted you, and you... you're one of them! I'll bet you shared my photos with all of those people on Earth! I'll bet there are memes about me.

**NEW HORIZONS**

Well...

*(A picture comes up of a meme on the projector.)*

**PLUTO**

What will their articles read? "New Photo Shows Pluto's 'Heart' Actually a Vast Frozen Wasteland"?

*(Pictured article appears on the projector.)*

This is a mockery!

*(PLUTO storms offstage in anger.)*

**CHARON**

I think you should go.

*(The projector goes black.)*

### NEW HORIZONS

I think you're right.

*(CHARON and NEW HORIZONS start to part ways. NEW HORIZONS pulls paper and pen out of their adventure pocket, starts to write, and then turns to CHARON.)*

Hey, could you give something to Pluto for me?

### CHARON

Sure.

*(NEW HORIZONS finishes writing and gives all the moons a hug and starts to leave.)*

### NEW HORIZONS

Goodbye Charon. And thanks.

### CHARON

Hey! We'll miss you.

*(NEW HORIZONS exits. Lights down.)*

*(Lights up. A grumpy PLUTO is on stage. CHARON enters and hands PLUTO a letter. PLUTO opens it.)*

### NEW HORIZONS

"My dearest, Pluto, I'm sorry I lied to you. I don't want you to remember me like that, and so, I would like to tell you my story. My true story. Once, there was a lonely spacecraft sent by Earth, to travel where no spacecraft had gone before. This spacecraft was excited, but also very very scared. One day though, it saw a glimpse of something in the distance that gave it hope. It reached out to it. That cold, faraway body was at first unreceptive, but the two grew closer and closer. Their trajectories were bound to intersect. The spacecraft wanted to stay, forever joined in orbit, but its momentum would not let it. And so, it traveled onward and onward, into the lonely void. But this time, it brought with it some data, some pictures. They were a reminder that there are true wonders in the universe worth exploring. I promise that I will not share any more photos of you with Earth. I will keep you on my disc forever, until the day I shut down and lose my memory. I love you. New Horizons"

*(PLUTO is heartbroken. They give CHARON a hug. CHARON leaves. PLUTO writes.)*

### PLUTO

"My dearest, New Horizons, Even though you're from Earth... and even though you lied to me... and you shared pictures of me without my permission, I wish you were still here. I miss you. You taught me how to love my place in the solar system again. I'm sorry I made you feel like you had to conceal your origins from me. I'm glad that my pictures will be with you, and, before you are too far away to see me, I'd like to give you one last one. If you turn and face me, you may snap one last photo. In fact, I want you to. I want you to share it, along with all your other photos of me, with Earth. I want your photos to inspire Earth the same way I inspired you... and you inspired me. I'll never forget you. When I look at the stars, I'll know that you are one of those dots, and smile. I love you with all my heart, Pluto"

*(NEW HORIZONS enters. NEW HORIZONS and PLUTO turn to face each other. PLUTO makes a heart with their hands <3 and NEW HORIZONS snaps a photo. The projector displays the photo that the NASA New Horizons mission took of Pluto eclipsing the sun.)*