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Final Report

### **The relationship between BoJack Horseman and Sarah Lynn – How they influenced each other's lives deeply**

BoJack Horseman is an American TV show about a failed 90's sitcom star living through major depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and much more. BoJack has surely influenced many people and been influenced by some, however, in my opinion, Sarah Lynn was the most influenced of all, but this was not a one-way relationship. Sarah Lynn also influenced BoJack's life profoundly. To validate my proposition, I will be using the episodes 3, from season 1, 11 and 12 from season 3, and 3 and 11 from season 4.

Sarah Lynn was a young girl who was in BoJack's Horsin' Around 90's show. She didn't have a father figure, and her mother didn't seem to care about her. Sarah Lynn saw an adult figure in BoJack. The problem was, it was 90's BoJack, and he didn't know how to deal with adults, let alone a child.

The effect BoJack has on Sarah Lynn is not immediate as she grows up, however, after leaving the Horsin' Around show, Sarah Lynn becomes even more famous as a singer and doesn't know how to deal with that situation properly. It's a time in her life when she desperately needs a friend. That's when BoJack comes back into her life. In episode 12, from season 3, BoJack visits her backstage at one of her concerts and Sarah Lynn is thrilled that an actual friend is coming just to visit her. She tells BoJack how fame is affecting her and how she really needs a friend who cares about her rather than her fame, and that BoJack is the only one left in her life. Afterwards, BoJack reveals the reason why he's there is to invite her

to his new show. This is the moment Sarah Lynn becomes truly lost, as she remembers what BoJack had told her in episode 3, from season 1 - "Those boobs and jerk wads are the best friends you'll ever have. Without them, you're nothing. Remember that. Your family will never understand you, your lovers will leave you or try to change you, but your fans, you be good to them, and they'll be good to you. The most important thing is, you got to give people what they want, even if it kills you, even if it empties you out until there's nothing left to empty. No matter what happens, no matter how much it hurts, you don't stop dancing, and you don't stop smiling, and you give those people what they want." - Everyone she thought liked her as a person, is gone, and all she has is her fans. In the same episode, fast-forward a few years, we see how the previously described moment influenced Sarah Lynn. Now in her early 30's, she is unstable, addicted to every substance possible and taking no responsibility for herself. She finds BoJack once again, but this time he's a lot more caring and welcomes her with open arms, as she moves in with him. However, he still doesn't know how to prioritize other people's needs in a relationship, instead, he prioritizes his by acting like a father to her, without setting any boundaries, as a way to resolve his deep guilt for past neglect, a way to compensate his own childhood by projecting it on Sarah Lynn and to fulfil a father fantasy. BoJack eventually realizes that he needs to set boundaries for Sarah Lynn and tries to take her back to rehabilitation, resulting in her leaving him. At this point, BoJack decides to blame society for the life she's leading, rather than himself - "Everything is society's fault, and we, as individuals, never need to take responsibility for anything? [...] I didn't do anything wrong, because I can't do anything wrong, because we're all just products of our environment, bouncing around like marbles in the game of Hungry Hungry Hippos that is our random and cruel universe. [...] yeah, it's not my fault. It's society. Everything is because of society! Everything is meaningless! Nothing I do has consequence!" - This is a

crucial moment for the idea that BoJack and Sarah Lynn mutually, intensely, influenced each other's lives, as I will explain later on.

Throughout the rest of the show, Sarah Lynn continues being reckless with her life and BoJack constantly encourages her, gives vague warnings or just watches as she destroys herself, since he thinks he can't influence her, or anyone. Eventually, their lives lead up to one final encounter, in episode 11, from season 3. On the day Sarah Lynn is 9 months sober and on the right track, BoJack calls her and asks if she wants to go party. Sarah Lynn was already desperate for an excuse to get off the track and BoJack provides one for her. BoJack and Sarah Lynn form a stronger bond in their journey of feeling sorry for themselves, consuming whatever substances they can find. Eventually they make their way to a motel, where they have a television playing the Oscars. Sarah Lynn has a strong realization - "When I was a kid, if you told me I'd win an Oscar, I'd never believe that, and now I've done it and... BoJack, I don't like anything about me." - This is probably the most important moment in Sarah Lynn's and BoJack's relationship, for Sarah Lynn. It shows that Sarah Lynn wanted to be something different and profoundly regrets the life she led, the life that BoJack encouraged. BoJack tries to distract her by taking her to the observatory, and probably the saddest scene of the show happens - "The only thing that matters is right now, this moment, this one spectacular moment we're sharing together. Right Sarah Lynn? Sarah Lynn? Sarah Lynn? (...)" - This is a wakeup call for BoJack. Up until this time, he had been living life disregarding how his actions affected others, but with Sarah Lynn's death, he realizes that his actions do have an effect on people's lives and if he doesn't take that seriously, it can lead to death - "I kept thinking I did this to her and everyone was just standing around like, well, this was bound to happen, but it wasn't bound to happen." - In this right moment, we understand how deeply Sarah Lynn is already influencing BoJack, as he completely changes his mindset and lifestyle. At first, he tries to push everyone away, believing that anyone who looks up to

him will result in another Sarah Lynn episode, but eventually Hollyhock comes into his life, in episode 3 from season 4, and BoJack continually tries to do things different with her, by prioritizing her needs rather than his. He wants to avoid another Sarah Lynn incident so desperately, that when Hollyhock is sent to the hospital with an overdose on amphetamines, a reason similar to Sarah Lynn's, he has a panic attack. BoJack changed and so did his actions, and his relationship with Hollyhock is a direct result of him learning from what happened with Sarah Lynn.

All in all, BoJack influenced Sarah Lynn's life by not taking responsibility for his actions and encouraging her to do the same, leading her to death. At the same time, Sarah Lynn influenced BoJack's life when she died, making him realize that his actions do affect people and changing his life completely from that moment on.