

## KALEIDOSCOPE OF BOJACK HORSEMAN

Bojack Horseman is an animated Netflix TV series (2014-2020) which takes place in an alternate universe where humans and animals are more alike and live together as equals in society. The plot is centered around Bojack Horseman, a celebrity from the 90's who got his fame from a successful sitcom (Horsin around) where he played the leading role as a single father to three adopted children but now is a known alcoholic and drug addict with self-destructive tendencies

Events take place at Hollywoo. The D was stolen by Bojack on a whim when he was black out drunk as a romantic gesture to his ghost writer Diane Nguyen who in season one wrote an autobiography for Bojack, to be seen as more than just a washed up celebrity. We get to view characters like Princess Carolyn, Bojack's manager and former lover a cat who struggles to maintain balance with her personal and professional life. Mr. Peanutbutter optimistic and oblivious to his decision making but a famous celebrity dog that Bojack finds irritating and is married to his ghost writer and Todd Chavez a human who is a clueless question mark, but a lovable character, he attends a party at Bojack's home and never leaves, later on would struggle with being asexual. The show gives each character through season's insight, development and understanding while having every turn of events connect to a person "Bojack Horseman"

Merriam Webster defines the word *KALEIDOSCOPE* an instrument containing loose bits of colored material between two flat plates and two plane mirrors so placed that changes of the bits of material are reflected in an endless variety of patterns. Have you ever used a kaleidoscope? The wonder on how little broken, scattered pieces put together when looked through the lens creates beautiful colored infinite patterns. In relation every action made by each character and events played out where bits which would make out for a bigger picture! In fact the concept of Bojack Horseman is the perfect analogy for a kaleidoscope that tells an amazing story and each character has a funny way of representing something in us.

At this point we address the most important question on our mind, what are these bits of material that made Bojack Horseman? Each character, each story in Bojack Horseman represents Nihilism, death, ugly truths and love only people who have watched the show can understand.

**Nihilism:** Some characters in Bojack Horseman struggle with existence crisis and you see how they take different stances on it and the bigger picture it creates, for instance; Bojack sees the world as meaningless, he values nothing and himself inclusive. Which comes as no surprise in season two, he had a conversation with his mother on a phone call and she says "you were born broken. That's your birthright" Bojack had to deal with verbal abuse from his parents which traumatized him and made him doubt the value of his own existence as seen in season two episode nine, as a child Bojack saw his idol "Secretariat" smoke and copied his actions by stealing a cigarette from his mother's purse eventually caught by his mother, Bojack was made to finish it in order to not waste a perfectly good cigarette, After failing to smoke, Bojack asks if he

is being punished for smoking or stealing. She says “I’m punishing you for being alive” do you understand the ripple effect of this flashback?

Let’s look at nihilism from the perspective of Mr. Peanutbutter, with a famous quote from him “The universe is a cruel, uncaring void. The key to being happy isn't a search for meaning. It's to just keep yourself busy with unimportant nonsense, and eventually, you'll be dead.” Although Mr. Peanutbutter looked happy and healthy on the outside and all thanks to his philosophy, he crafted the art of blissful ignorance and impulsive nature but of course if you can’t find meaning, you are bound to trap yourself in a cycle of repetitive mistakes. Just like Bojack but unlike Bojack, Mr. Peanutbutter constantly failed at marriage and relationships because he never listened and refused to grow up he is what you would call a “man child”

Lastly Todd Chavez who shows traces of nihilism tells princess Carolyn in season four “I do love having my picture taken, it’s proof I exist “

The show broke fragments of existential crisis through the seasons and the struggle to avoid meaning or search tirelessly for one, as we watch characters build, break and build again what that “Meaning of life” is to them.

**Ugly Truths:** the show had its share of ugly truths and each character had to hear it;

Todd Chavez wasn’t ready to be called asexual talk less of fully understanding what it meant to him by accepting it.

Bojack although consistently having a lot of moments like this as the show developed, the one that stood out most as the show gave us a twist in season one. It came from Herb Kazzaz, Bojack’s former best friend and mentor, he created and wrote Horsin around, but was fired when he was exposed as gay in the 90’s and Bojack broke his trust and loyalty by throwing him under the bus and choosing his career. Bojack went to make amends with Herb who had cancer, for his autobiography. “I’m not gonna give you closure. You don't get that. You have to live with the shitty thing you did for the rest of your life. You have to know that it's never, ever going to be okay! I'm dying! I'm not gonna feel better! And I'm not gonna be your prop so you can feel better! Do you know what it was like for me? I had nobody. Everybody left! I knew all those showbiz phonies would turn on me, sure. But you? I don't care about the job! I did fine! I had a good life, but what I needed then was—a friend. And you abandoned me. And I will never forgive you for that. Now get the fuck out of my house!”

Ana Spanakopita a ruthless Hollywood publicist in season three she represents Bojack after the success of his role as Secretariat she got Bojack an academy award for his role and tried to help him get an Oscar. Her parting words to a self-destructive Bojack “After I almost drowned, I decided I would never be weaker than water. So, I became a lifeguard. On my first day of training my instructor told me that there are going to be times when you'll see someone in

trouble, you're going to want to rush in there and do whatever you can to save them, but you have to stop yourself. Because there are some people you can't save”

**Death:** The major death of Bojack horseman that tugged the hearts of each viewer Sarah Lynn, the last adopted child from the show *Horsin around* who became a pop star and Hollywood sensation. Sarah Lynn was troubled, lonely, reckless and selfish. She was seen constantly high and suffered with substance abuse. She always wanted to be an architect but couldn't cause she was forced into a life of fame and had a stage obsessed mother, she idolized Bojack off screen and flashbacks indicate Sarah Lynn's self-destructive tendencies is as a result of Bojack neglecting and influencing her negatively as a child and will still later on have a sexual relationship with her in season one. Sarah Lynn's last appearance on the episode “That's too much man” was named after her catchphrase from the show *Horsin around*.

After nine months of sobriety she got a call from Bojack and they both spend nights doing drugs as they have numerous black outs and carry out several plans and finally end up at the planetarium where they watch the stars and Sarah Lynn is impressed by the dome shape of the building she rests her head on Bojack and says “I wanna be an architect.”

**Love:** I'll leave the love story for Princess Carolyn who put her time and effort into her work despite wanting to have a family of her own, she struggled to stay on top and was always impulsive into relationships which inevitably will have a bad end, she was desperate to be a mother but had complications and couldn't conceive, in so many ways she made so many mistakes which made her feel like she was running out of time to have a family and although it seemed life was meant to rain down on her, she never gave up hope and she never stopped working, in season five she adopted a porcupine and named her Ruthie. In season six she started her own production company and married Judah her former and most competent personal assistant and right hand. Her story perfects the saying slowly but surely

These bits of materials are the constant mistakes characters in *Bojack Horseman* made and were rewarded with especially Bojack, who in a haste to abandon moral truth and find his existence senseless with the constant need to run away from his problems will later realize in the last season that in this terrifying world all we have are the connections we make.

The kaleidoscope of *Bojack horseman* under a magnifying glass would show how every step was made for a bigger picture, he couldn't get away with being a bad person in the present, throw the blame at his past and run to have a new future. He couldn't see the bigger picture cause he suffered from a nihilistic mind, the last episode “*Nice while it lasted*” when he shared his worries on understanding life, and fear of relapsing and Todd quotes a famous song as an illustrative metaphor to life “you do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around – that's what it's all about”