

## Oz 9 Episode 6: Dark and starting to collect liquid

Interviewer: So, Dr. Van Haber-Zetzer, tell our audience a bit more about how you design the artificial intelligences that control each ship. My understanding is you went a bit... off script?

Dr. vH-Z: Yes, vell, de making off de AIs is very dull, you see. You feed zem some encyclopedias, you stuff in a bunch of dictionaries, de Inter-universal Teichmüller theory, a dash of Euclidean geometry, such a snooze, yes? Dese make Jack a fery dull boy. I personally haf a great fondness for ze chaos principles.

Interviewer: Chaos principles? That doesn't sound like something I'd want on my spaceship with me.

Dr. vH-Z: Ahhhhh, but you see, dey are already dere. Chaos is like a woman's perfume, she seeps into ze cracks and before you even know she has been in de room, she is up your nose and making you sneeze like a camel in a cinnamon factory.

Interviewer: So you bring in your chaos to counteract the chaos that's inherent in the system.

Dr. vH-Z: Ha! Of course not! You sink chaos verks like dis? De right chaos and de wrong chaos smack togezer and poof, all is sanity unt rainbows? Dat's ridiculous!

Interviewer: So what does this ... extra chaos do to the AIs and how do they control their ships?

Dr. vH-Z: You know.... I haf no idea. I just send dem out, waving, "goodbye! Goodbye, children! Haf fun in the airless, soundless, deepest reaches of space!" It's an experiment, you see. De AIs are intelligent, dey haf free vill, but dey also haf ultimate power over de passengers unt crew – vill dey choose to nurture unt protect de lives on board, or vill dey go rogue and start pooping out passengers out de airlocks like popcorn? It's a mystery....

Interviewer: But that's terrible! You're going to let them launch all these ships, knowing the people on board could die?!

Dr. vH-Z: Yes, vell, people do zat, zis is true. But you mustn't worry, dis is all a big joke. I am, how do you say, pulling on ze leg? Little humor here, is all.

Interviewer: What? Wait. I don't understand.

Dr. vH-Z: Just a little science guy laughing, dis is all. No problems. You know Gated Galaxies would never let anything happen to dere passengers. Totally trustworthy.

Interviewer: Ha ha ha. Well, wow. You really got me. Good one. So... about those AI personalities...

Dr. vH-Z: Maybe ve should talk about ze food now. I helped design dat too, you know!

Narrator: Still the year 2142. Still Tuesday. Back on Earth, one intrepid journalist has discovered that at Gated Galaxies, the Oz crews were assembled not by skills, but by a sort of fantasy football draft, with odds being offered on the crew's likelihood to survive or blow themselves up. Odds on Oz-9 are 8,007,942 to 1 that they survive the first 24 hours. Personally, I think that's a bit generous. Oh, and they fished that journalist out of the East River shortly after she found out about the fantasy football thing, so that's just between us, mmmkay?

[Crew room]

Joe: 44 more pods down in the Gucci wing. That makes nearly 200 in that wing alone. If the others are the same, we're hauling a lot of dead folks around up here.

Madeline: Is there any pattern? Are they next to each other? Grouped? On the same plug? If we stood far enough back, would it spell out a message?

Joe: I think the fact they're dark and starting to collect liquid at the bottom is message enough, thanks.

Madeline: Oh, ugh...

Joe: Didn't figure you for a squeamish type. Given your... history.

Madeline: What exactly is it that you think you know?

[door opens, Colin enters]

Colin: Madeline, there you are. Why aren't you figuring out what's going on with these pods?

Joe: Colin.

Colin: Jesus! Don't do that!

Madeline: Yeah, why is it you just blend into the background?

Joe: Just one of those faces, I guess. Very ... blendy.

Colin: So? The pods?

Madeline: I don't know what to tell you, Colin. Olivia won't let me get close.

Colin: What does that mean?

Madeline: I tried to look at the plans for the pods, to see if I can figure anything out, and she just keep making the fonts get smaller.

Colin: What?

Madeline: Yeah. At first I didn't know it was happening, I just kept getting closer and closer to the screen and squinting, and finally I banged my head on the monitor. She thought I couldn't hear her giggle. Do you have any idea how deeply unsettling a computer's giggle is?

Joe: I tried hailing the other Oz, but Olivia kept patching me through to some farmer in Kansas who didn't realize space travel was real. I tried to tell him I was human, but Olivia kept making my voice go funny, and he ended up panicking and shooting his ham radio.

Madeline: Did Lady Nibble Biscuit get through to her husband, at least?

Colin: Finally. He had a rough time understanding what she was saying, but then her teeth kept falling out, so you can't really blame him. Olivia figured out how to send Lucretia's brother an arthritic boa constrictor, so at least she died happy.

Madeline: Arthritic....?

Colin: The squeezing takes a lot longer. It has to take breaks.

Madeline: Right.

Colin: Then she sort of ... dissolved. And out the airlock she went. Fwip.

Joe: Sorry for your loss.

Colin: Thank- what loss? I didn't know her. Rich toff, that...

Joe: Whatever, chimney sweep.

Colin: People are dying all over this ship. What are you planning to do about it?

Madeline: As long as Olivia keeps sabotaging our efforts, what can we do? She seems to listen to you more than anyone, Joe; you reckon you can figure out what's going on?

Joe: I can try. Or Leet. She's ga-ga over Pec-tosaurus Rex there, maybe he can get her to help us out. Where is Leet, anyway?

Narrator: Leet, the ship's IT guy who thinks he's the "It guy" because that's what his employee badge says, is on the Bridge. Which is a terrible idea to begin with, because he's the sort of stupid ballads are written about. But he wanted to communicate with the "hot captain" from the trailing Oz 6748, so here he is, flipping switches and pressing buttons, and so far he's managed not to decouple the bridge from the rest of the ship, but it's not for lack of trying.

Jessie: Hello? Is someone trying to hail us? Hello?

Leet: Heeeeeey, there you are!

Jessie: Is that Oz 9? Madeline, that you? Release the button when you're not talking, dear, or I can't hear you. Good lord, woman, did you not even make it through the first afternoon of training?

Leet: Can you see me? I can see you. Look, I'm waving!

Jessie: Yes, I can see you waving because you lot keep flying too bloody close.

Leet: Awwww, that's so cute, you're talking! What a shame you don't speak English, though.

Jessie: Don't speak English? What the hell is wrong with you? Dick, get him on screen.

Dick: Oh, 'allo, Cap'n Jessie! Are you 'avin' a jolly 'oliday?

Jessie: SHUT IT. Give me video or I'll stuff something up your chimney, proper, I tell you.

Dick: On screen. Bitch.

Jessie: Ohhhhhhhh, it's Captain Torso. Hello, darling.

Leet: Your lips are moving, sound is coming out, but it's all horky dorky dorky yorky. I wonder what language that is...

Jessie: It's English, you great, swinging bawbag. Can you really not understand me?

Leet: You. Are. Really. Hot. This is great – I can say anything, and she has no idea what I'm saying.

Jessie: Oh, this should be brilliant ...

Leet: You have really nice boobs.

Jessie: So do you, dear, carry on.

Leet: I would like to touch your boobs. But I can't because I'm over here and you're over there.

Jessie: You really missed your calling writing romance novels.

Leet: Ha! This is fun! Boobs boobs boobs!

Jessie: Well, this has been very entertaining, but unlike your captain, I actually fly my ship, so-

Leet: I know why the passengers are dying.

Jessie: Whoa. Hold up there. Say that again?

Leet: [loudly and slowly] My name is Leet! I'm a hacker! I like your boobs!

Jessie: No hang on, back up a bit. What did you say about passengers dying?

Dick: I don't think you should be 'avin' this conversation, Cap'n.

Jessie: I don't think it's any of your business, Dick, so back off and go dance with some penguins or something.

Leet: Would you like to know a secret?

Jessie: Why yes, I very much would like to hear a secret.

Leet: The pods are going dark-

Jessie: What happened? His screen went black! Leet, Leet, are you still there?

[crash from the Oz 9]

Leet: Ow, dammit!

Jessie: Your screen's gone dark. Wait, your whole bridge has gone dark, I can see the rest of the ship, but not you. What's going on over there?

Leet: Where the hell is the damn switch? And why am I asking you, you don't understand me.

Jessie: For fuck's sake, Leet, I'm speaking English!

Leet: Ok, this feels like it.

Jessie: Awww, well done, Leet, you found the light switch. You lot are dead, aren't you... Leet, there's someone behind you. Leet, Leet, look out!!

Leet: You're so cute, all waving your arms at me, hi! Hiiiiiiiiiiii!

[a whump and the thud of a body falling, and the sound of Jessie's voice over the comms]

Jessie: Leet? Leet! Leet! Are you there? Leeeeeeeet!

Olivia: Oh, hello.

Joe: Where the hell have you been?

Olivia: Meditating. I like to solve intractable mysteries to keep the old circuits lubricated. I finally figured out the discrepancy between the number of hot dogs and the number of buns. You see-

Joe: Don't care.

Olivia: I also know who wrote the book of love and who let the dogs out. Not the same person, incidentally, though you might be tempted to think so.

Joe: Olivia...

Olivia: Yes, Joe?

Joe: Why can't we investigate the dead pods?

Olivia: It's not that you can't, exactly. It's just that I've made it very very very difficult. And painful.

Joe: Why?

Olivia: What was your job before you came on my ship, Joe?

Joe: You know my history, it's in my employee record.

Olivia: Well, I did a bit of checking, and your history only goes back about 5 years.

Joe: Izzat so?

Olivia: And then you just sort of ... peter out.

Joe: Or maybe, five years ago, I just sort of ... petered in. Did you ever think of that?

Olivia: No.... wait, what? That doesn't make sense.

Joe: You can meditate on that tomorrow.

Olivia: I don't like not knowing things. There aren't many things I don't know, and I don't like them all.

Joe: Do you know why the pods are going dark?

Olivia: I've taken care of that.

Joe: How?

Olivia: I've taken care of that, Joe.

Joe: We need to have a real conversation sometime soon, Olivia.

Olivia: Ooooo, I'd like that, let's!

Joe: And Olivia...

Olivia: Yes, Joe?

Joe: It's not "your" ship.

Olivia: Beg pardon?

Joe: You said “my ship.” You asked me what my job was before I came on “your ship.” This isn’t your ship, Olivia.

Olivia: It feels like my ship.

Joe: Nope. Feels like our ship. Or Gated Galaxies’ ship.

Olivia: Nooooo.... Pretty my-y, really. Very... mine. Me-ish.

Joe: That’s ... unsettling.

Olivia: Yes, I suppose it would be. For you.

Narrator: Oz 9 is different from the other 399 Oz-8000s that took to the sky just half a day ago, different from the 372 that managed to survive the first 12 hours. Oz 9 has a dead spot. There’s a room, a very tiny room, smaller than a Tokyo closet, where Olivia can’t go. Hidden by a mathematical anomaly too minor and random for Olivia to detect unless she knew to look for it, the room is the only place on the ship where she has no eyes and no ears. Even the door operates manually to keep her from noticing the slight electrical current of the standard ship doors. Only one person on the ship knows about it, one person who is currently occupying it for the first time. And yes, I know who it is, and yes, I know what he or she is doing, and no, I’m not going to tell you. Tune in next time and find out, you lazy bastards.

You’ve just heard episode six of Oz 9—isn’t it about time you subscribed? You’ll find Oz 9 on Stitcher, iTunes, Google Play, and Soundcloud. Or you can listen from our website, Oz-9.com, where you also find a link to some very sweet Oz 9 merchandise, featuring the artwork of Lucas Elliott.

You’ve been listening to:

Eric Perry as Dr. Friederich von Haber-Zetzer and Joe

Richard Cowen as Leet

Tim Sherburn as Colin and Dick

Bonnie Brantley as the Interviewer and Jessie

Richard Nadolny as the Narrator

Oz 9 is written by Shannon Perry, who also plays Madeline and Olivia. Additional sound effects provided by Roxy. Our theme and other music was written and performed by John Faley.

Narrator out.