

Oz 9 episode 39: From last cluck to a bucket of extra crispy

[phone rings]

Felonius: Phone for you, sir.

Tiberius: Did you wipe it off?

Felonius: Of course.

Tiberius: Twice? Good. God only knows what goes on in those beard hairs of yours. [to phone] Yes?

Southers: Tiberius? It's Southers. Good god, man, my Aunt Ada could take a chicken from last cluck to a bucket of extra crispy in the time it takes to get you on the phone.

Tiberius: I'm a busy man, Southers. My shoes won't put themselves in alphabetical order, you know. [to Felonius] Would they?

Felonius: No, sir.

Southers: Alpha-? Never mind. Listen here, I roused some folks who were squatting in G2 HQ, and they may have... uncovered a thing or two.

Tiberius: Your dirty dealings are hardly my problem.

Southers: Well, you be sure and tell 'em that when they're banging on your front door.

Tiberius: [alarmed] They're coming here? Why? Are they... grubby? Felonius, tell the men to prepare the hoses. My god, this place is becoming a regular hobo camp.

Southers: What are you talking about?

Tiberius: There's some strange woman here, lurking about in the bushes. No one's been able to get a good look at her, but I'm sure she's covered with germs.

Southers: Goddammit with a side of cole slaw! I wonder if that's who they keep yakking at on the phone. Look, I reckon they're on their way to you, but I'm hot on their tail, and I'll keep 'em away if I can. Just get your boys busy hiding everything that needs hid, you got it? And find that woman!

Tiberius: [menacing] Southers, it sounds strangely as if you're giving me...orders?

Southers: [deep breath] My apologies, Tiberius. Let's call these ... *very* strong recommendations. But I seriously doubt our friends would take kindly to disruptions at this delicate juncture.

Tiberius: You don't need to concern yourself about our friends. I hardly think a small horde of the unwashed is going to derail them after all this time? Just keep the grubby people away, Southers, or you know the consequences. Hang this up, Felonius.

Felonius: How firmly?

Tiberius: Let's give it a seven.

[hang up]

Buck: What did he say?

Southers: Shut up and drive like your life depends on it, boy. [aside] Because mine does.

[theme starts]

Narrator: When we last left the Oz 9 [record scratch] – OK, I gotta ask – why do you keep coming back? I mean, they've been taken hostage by *mold*, people. *MOLD*. Beneficial it may be, but ... and what the hell is an astromycologist? Is that even a thing? Fine. Whatever. One documentary, BBC, that's all I'm asking... ONE. [theme resumes] Oh, just skip to the end. [music end]

Albatros: You said you were here to help with the mold, then you said you were kidnapped. I'm confused. Which of these things is true?

Theo: It's a bit complicated. I'm sorry, could you possibly stand a bit further back?

Albatros: Certainly. Like here?

Theo: You didn't actually move.

Albatros: I assure you, I did. But if you're still uncomfortable.... There. Is that sufficient?

Theo: Again, I don't think you moved at all.

Albatros: There is a very important question on the table, Dr. Bromae.

Theo: Yes, very well. It's both. I was scheduled to be on the Oz 9, hence the body tag. But we're in space.

LBF: We are on a space ship. Where else would we be? Seventy-Twelve for a Frosty?

Howard: I think you mean ehhhh 7-Eleven, there. Frostys come from Wendy's. Your 7-Eleven is where you go for your standard Slurpee. Name's Howard. Good ta meetcha.

LBF: Can you die?

Emily: No. Now be quiet, both of you. Dr. Theo is speaking.

Theo: We shouldn't still be in space. The Oz 9 was secretly re-engineered by my people to be short-range only. It was supposed to circle the globe a couple of times for show, and then re-enter the earth's atmosphere and come down unnoticed in Lake Michigan.

Joe: You didn't think anyone would notice a spaceship landing in Lake Michigan?

Theo: We planned to come down near Chicago. No one pays attention to anything in Chicago. Three people were beamed down for a dinner party in December of 2019 in Chicago, and no one thought anything of it.

LBF: Wait, wasn't that-

Albatros: How very irresponsible! Continue talking, please.

Theo: Oh. All right... Uh, the launch is now several weeks in the past, and we're still clearly in space, so something's gone very wrong. We've *all* been kidnapped. Where's your captain?

Olivia: She's on her way.

Theo: She?

Olivia: We had a rocky launch.

Theo: You're not Dick.

Olivia: Not all of us are, you know. You don't put Friederick von Haber-Zetzer in charge of the AIs and expect consistency.

Theo: Can you at least wake up Engineer Matt, please?

Olivia: Oh, uhhhhhhh.... It's not my fault.

Theo: What the hell has been going on up here?

Julie: [on phone] I haven't heard any of this. Ask him what they planned for the Oz 9.

Greg: [eating something crunchy like celery] You've been launching questions at us for a while; might we get you to answer a few?

Theo: If you promise to stop nibbling the mold.

Greg: Sorry. It's delicious. And it doesn't seem to mind.... [mold giggles]

Theo: Nonetheless....

Julie: GREG.

Greg: What's the purpose of this ship?

[bridge door opens]

Madeline: He's here. Thank god. John, I'm Captain Madeline-

Jessie: *Leo*, I'm Captain Jessie-

LBF: His name is Theo. Theo Bromae, like the mold.

[pause]

LBF: What?! I can know things too.

Theo: Two captains? How did that happen?

Madeline: Gosh. Wow. Um. Hi, I'm Madeline, Captain of the Oz 9. Jessie was Captain of the 6748, but it blew up. We rescued her. Before the blow up, I mean. Or she'd be dead. [awkward laugh]

Jessie: My god, Mad Pants, reel it in. Name's Jessie James. I hear you know about molds.

Theo: I prefer not to shake hands, actually. People tend not to let go, and it can get quite uncomfortable.

Jessie: Ah, g'wan, mate, give us a headbutt.

Theo: I beg your pardon?

Madeline: Ah yes, threats of violence is how the Scottish flirt.

Jessie: Shut yer geggie.

Emily: Could we perhaps return to the subject at hand? Dr. Theo was telling us about Limp Matchsticks.

Howard/Theo: Lake Michigan.

Emily: Who cares. Please just talk more, Dr. Theo.

Theo: Did you never question the fact that the terraforming equipment has been removed? Or that there's not enough food for a 25-year journey for the crew? Or that the ship is, if you'll excuse me, crap?

Colin: What are you talking about?

Theo: Where- Who- Who is talking?

Leet: The bucket.

Theo: My god, there's a floating bucket. And it ... talks?

Leet: No, that's Colin. He's invisible. And holding a bucket.

Theo: I need to sit down.

Howard: Lemme justget you a chair, there. With me, with me! Here ya go, Doc.

Colin: Ouch! Can you seriously NOT see the bucket?

Julie: Find out who he's with. None of this is making sense.

Greg: Dr. Bromae, I think we might need you to start at the beginning.

Theo: My god, the pods! How long have we been up here?

Madeline: Honestly? I don't think anyone's been keeping track. Emily?Other head-

Howard: Name's HOWARD, thank you very much.

Madeline: We're going with Howard, huh? OK. Any idea how long we've been up here?

Emily: Unfortunately, no. Every time we are shut down and rebooted, our clocks reset.

Jessie: Olivia?

Olivia: No idea. AT&T's signal is crap out here. What about the pods?

Theo: They were only set to last a few days, maybe a couple of weeks. We were going to thaw them out once we got back to Earth. My god. You must have lost thousands by now.

Albatros: Including my husband.

Theo: *You* have a husband?

Albatros: Well, not anymore.... Wait. Why wouldn't I?

Madeline: Maybe let's leave the personal stuff for later?

Jessie: Did you say there's not enough food?

Albatros: Of course that's your primary concern...

Theo: No, there's not. Most of the stuff that was loaded on here was meant to go to the bottom of Lake Michigan, so it was either junk or a joke. I mean, who'd be stupid enough to eat fugu that's not prepared by an expert?

[pause]

Joe: So, am I hearing there's going to be a whole lot of mopping in the pod bays?

Theo: We need to get this ship back to earth immediately!

Julie: Wait, no! No, that's not right.

Greg: So is Dr. Theo a bad guy? He doesn't seem like it.

Theo: Excuse me?

Greg: Damn, that was my outside voice, wasn't it.

Theo: I assure you, I'm one of the good people. My team is trying to help.

Colin: Help? Help do what? Drown us all in Lake Michigan?

Theo: Not ... at... all. I'm sorry. It is deeply unsettling talking to a bucket.

Albatros: It's deeply unsettling talking to Colin. This is actually a bit of an improvement.

Colin: I beg your pardon!

Julie: Who is his team?

Greg: Who's yours?

Julie: Dammit! That's it, I'm calling a meeting, and we're picking a name *tonight*.

Theo: Dick-

Olivia: Olivia.

Theo: Apologies.

Olivia: Accepted.

Theo: Olivia-

Olivia: See how easy that was, Colon? Carry on, Doc.

Theo: Olivia, can you calculate how many pods have already gone dark?

Olivia: Oh, I'd rather not.

Julie: I can't believe this.

Colin: Are we all going to starve?

Theo: No, no, I shouldn't think so.

Jessie: Thank god.

Theo: We'll run out of oxygen long before then.

Colin: What?!

Theo: If only we'd gotten the biosphere working. But we never thought you'd need it, so we basically filled it with dirt and compost.

Colin: But the biosphere is working! It's a disgusting swamp, mostly, but it's alive and has things growing in it.

Theo: What? Who did that?

Julie: WE did. Look, put me on speakerphone.

Greg: You are NOT serious.

Julie: Poke around in the circuitry. You'll find it.

Narrator: Confused? Me too. Just thought I'd let you know that.

Theo: That's excellent news! We should take the mold to the, uh, bioswamp. At the rate this *Sulfurophilus mesotrope* is growing, it'll soon be too big for the bridge, and we won't be able to get it out the door.

Julie: You can't take this ship back to earth.

Leet: Whoa, Greg! I thought you'd stopped playing with the voice modulator.

Greg: That wasn't me. That was Julie.

Albatros: And who, might we ask, is Julie?

Julie: You can't go back to earth. I'm sorry. We didn't know about...your plans. Or you, whoever you are. But if you go back now, you doom the entire galaxy.

Theo: If we don't, humanity will be wiped out. Who are you?

Julie: Good people. I promise. Just ... the *other* good people. We ... probably should've talked before now.

Narrator: I hope at some point there's going to be a flowchart. How exactly is anyone supposed to narrate this mess? I've seen candy-crazed five-year-olds tackle a piñata with more thought and organization. If, as Theo and Julie claim, Earth, humanity, even the galaxy are in the hands of the Oz 9 crew, well, I'd like a hot dog and tater tots for my last meal, please, and a pack of Marlboros, extra tar.

On the bridge, Joe produces a wheelbarrow from Joe-only knows where, and the crew take turns whistling, clapping, holding out treats, and otherwise trying to coax the mold to get in. All but le Bichon Frise, who slips out and makes his way to Dr. von Haber Zetzer's lab....

LBF: Allo....? Allo? Monsieur le Docteur? Are you in here?

Narrator: And then slips out of there – despite ‘slipping’ not being strictly necessary, as he’s alone – and makes his way to the sausage room where the doctor actually *is*.

LBF: Monsieur le Docteur?

vHZ: Mmmmmm? Ach, hello, my boy. What is happening on ze bridge?

LBF: They are taking the mold to the bioswamp in one of those pushy things.

vHZ: Pushy things?

LBF: Yes. With the wheel and the long handy holdy things here and those other things you must constantly bang your leg against while you are pushing, that thing.

vHZ: Never mind. I am full with ze zauzages and do not care. Why are you looking for me?

LBF: I am confused, because, while I am very handsome and the best assassin who has ever lived and much much better than the Albatros because I have many more points on the Assassins Guild leaderboard, and the only reason I am not at the tippy top right now is because I am stuck on a space ship while the Hound Dog and the Minx are free to poison and strangle and stabby stabby nilly willy-

vHZ: I am here in zis chair, vondering if I shall grow old unt die before he is reaching the point.

LBF: FINE! It is true that I am magnifique. But I am not a good person. You, I am thinking, are. Good. You are good. So am I asking myself, why is he healing me?

vHZ: Ahhhhhh! You are getting smarter, all on your own. How is zis happenink? It is ze mold? Or ze very uteral atmosphere on ze bridge, hmmm? You are like ze new baby, startink over, perhaps.

LBF: You are goosing the question, I think.

vHZ: Ducking.

LBF: This does not make sense.

vHZ: It is English, my boy — “making sense” is not always possible.

LBF: Still I am waiting for the answer.

vHZ: Monsieur le Bichon Freeze, the answer is far more complicated than I have time to explain just now. As simply as I am able: at first, you were ze back-up plan. Now zat Cal is no longer on the ship, I must rely on your skillz.

LBF: So, you wish for me to assassin everyone aboard so that you can take over the Oz 9?

vHZ: Ehhhhhhh....yes, yes, all right. Zat sounds like something I might do.

LBF: Excellent! I shall move up many spaces on the leaderboard: two captains is four points; squiffy English fellow is worth one point – but he is invisible now, so I will get an extra point for difficulty; Leet is worth at least nine.

vHZ: Nine points, eh?

LBF: They are awarded by volume. Wait.

vHZ: Mmmmmm?

LBF: You said Cal was your first plan. But Cal would destroy the entire ship. Which you are on. It is very difficult to take over a ship that is in pieces. Especially if you are dead.

vHZ: Ah. Yes. Zat is true.... But zere is the shuttle, yes?

LBF: The shuttle is very small and does not go so far.

vHZ: You ask a very great many questions, my boy. I... have a shuttle of mine own. Hidden. It is very big, very fast, very powerful. But now I no longer need it. You and I shall rule ze I dunno, world or galaxy or something. Whatever. Ooof! I am needing the nap.

LBF: Now that I am so clever again, I shall begin making the plans for the assassining! I shall make a chart on my wall with the pictures and the pins and the string – I have always wanted to do that.

vHZ: Yes, yes, very good. Pins und zat.

LBF: Allons-y!

[lots of noise]

vHZ: Are you all right, my boy? What has happened?

LBF: I have tripped over a bucket. Stupid Joe. I will kill him a lot.

Narrator: By my calculations, the Oz 9 has been wandering around in space for approximately two months, though it seems like *so much longer*. In that time, the crew have failed to identify the night vision goggles that virtually litter the ship. They didn't realize that their food stores were well short of what it would take to get to a new planet, even if they had one in mind. They poisoned themselves with fugu, doped up one of their own with lethal, uncontrolled super powers, nearly suffocated themselves in a closed room with no oxygen supply, and still can't get to their bunks without assistance from the AI. And yet, they have survived attempt after attempt on their lives. Given all that, I can only imagine there must be some sort of quiet intelligence there.

[yelling]

Madeline: Shut the door! Shut the door!

Leet: Where's the switch? I can't find it!

Jessie: What's happening?

Madeline: Leet tried to pet the swampgator and now it's making its way to the door. SHUT THE DOOR!

Theo: Why the hell do you have an alligator on a spaceship?!

Madeline: To keep the wild boar population down!

Narrator: Yep. I imagined it.

Theo: I hate to say this, but I really need to get back in there.

Jessie: In there? Are you mad?

Theo: I must.

Jessie: [swoon] All right. I'll just nip in with you.

Madeline: What?

Jessie: We must! Theo says so.

Greg: Look, this body isn't organic. Why don't we go in?

Julie: What's this "we" stuff? I'm not going back in there! Did you hear the size of that thing?

Greg: You're on the telephone, remember?

Julie: Oh, god, you're right. Sorry.

Theo: I need to check for other species. Hostile ones.

Madeline: More hostile than a giant, crazed swampgator?

Theo: Well, yes. The gator can only kill one person at a time. The species I'm talking about will kill ... billions.

Leet: Of wild boars?

Albatros: I suppose that depends on how you spell "bores" He's talking about human beings, Leet. Dr. Theo, who is better equipped for exposition than anyone I've ever met, perhaps it's time to tell us what you're doing on the Oz 9? And what *we're* doing on the Oz 9?

Leet: We're taking 50,000 resting guests to their new home.

Joe: I don't think we are, Leet.

Albatros: My god. My Sharpie!

Madeline: What?

Albatros: Look! It's coming towards me!

Leet: Wow, you're like Luke in Star Wars! Using the Force to call your weapon!

Colin: Oh, shut up, it's me, you idiot. Captain Madeline? And I can't believe I'm saying this, but Albatros, I need to speak with you as well. Would you both come with me to the bridge?

Madeline: Now?

Colin: Yes. Please.

Albatros: That sounds...serious. If I could see you, would your brow be furrowed right now?

Colin: Down to my chin.

Theo: I'm sorry, but what's happening here is also serious. It's urgent I get back in there to be sure the mold is safe. Leet, it's impossible to see anyone when you stand that close to me.

Leet: Oh, sorry.

[pause]

Theo: So, could you move? NOT closer?

Leet: Like this?

Theo: No, that's closer. NOT closer is *that* way. Captain?

Madeline: Fine. Just... take Greg with you. If nothing else, you can jump on his back if the gator gets too frisky.

Theo: Thank you.

Julie: Captain Madeline?

Madeline: Yes?

Julie: We need to talk.

Theo: As do we.

Colin: Dibs!

Theo: Dibs?

Colin: I had her first. You can talk to her next.

Leet: Looks like everyone needs to talk to the captain!

Madeline: Yeah. Wow. [pause] Ok. Theo, whoever you are, Greg, former bomb, and Julie, whoever *you* are, get in there and make sure the mold is safe. Jessie, you keep watch out here and send in Emily and.... Sorry, Harold, was it?

Howard: Howard.

Madeline: Send in Emily and Howard if they get into trouble.

Jessie: Got it.

Madeline: Greg, do you have any sort of recording devices in there? Audio, if it's all you've got; video would be better.

Greg: I think so. I see a button with an old-fashioned movie camera on it. Oh, and there's an 8-track player.

Julie: It looks low-tech, but it works, and it's unhackable. I'll talk him through it.

Madeline: Great. Leet, Joe, I could use some recon. Check out food stores, and get to as many pod bays as you can to see how many passengers we've got left. We're going to be up here longer than planned, so we'll need to jerry rig something to keep ourselves and them alive as long as we can. Grab von Haber Zetzer – he built a lot of this ship, so he'll know things we don't. Olivia!

Olivia: It's not my fault!

Jessie: What's not?

Olivia: I don't know. But you only ever yell for me when something's gone wrong, so I thought I'd just start with that. What's fallen off now?

Madeline: Nothing. Just take us to the bridge. The direct route, please.

Albatros: Where's your bucket? And where did you find my Sharpie?

Colin: That's...what we need to talk about.

Albatros: You can give me back that pen now, by the way.

Madeline: Please don't.

Colin: Do you think I'm an idiot?

[whip]

Madeline: Well, obviously your plan to keep it away from her worked brilliantly.

Colin: She's very fast.

Albatros: I'm *very* fast. And also, armed.

Colin: Yes, we know.

Madeline: And now I don't know where Colin is. Wait. Are you waving?

Colin: Can you see me?

Madeline: No, I can feel the breeze. You're coming awfully close. Ouch!

Colin: Sorry...

Narrator: In 1879, the Indianapolis Journal reported a meteorite had crashed through the roof of Leonidas Glover. And then through Leonidas Glover. His daughter found him the next morning, in fragments. The meteorite, covered in blood and bits of the unfortunate Mr. Glover, took up residence in the window of Joe Perry's drugstore where it was viewed by thousands of fascinated – and horrified – passersby. Many believed that aliens had hitched a ride aboard that meteorite and came to live among the humans in Indiana. The story was eventually revealed to be a hoax to sell newspapers. The aliens had been there for centuries already.

You've been listening to:

Bonnie Brantley as Jessie
Kevin Hall as Greg and Felonius
Eric Perry as Joe, Dr. von Haber-Zetzer, Mr. Southers, and Howard
Iri Alexander as Julie
David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae
Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise
Tim Sherburn as Colin, Buck, and Emily
Richard Cowen as Leet and Tiberius
June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros
Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline, and
Me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator

Our theme and other music are by John Faley. Our artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry.

Our patreon is currently paused during this difficult time, but if you want to support us, we'd love for you to buy some Oz 9 merchandise on Tee Public or shoot us a one time Kofi at [ko dash fi dot com slash oz9podcast](https://ko-fi.com/oz9podcast), all one word. And thank you to Ptamsin and Amy Kim Cole for the delicious Kofi!

Until next time, space monkeys, Narrator out.

[Listen, Rinse, Repeat trailer]