

Oz 9 episode 40

Narrator: Emergencies aboard the Oz 9 are usually “imminent death” situations – a bomb about to go off; an assassin, poised to strike; oxygen running out; fugu. A more ...leisurely sort of death, namely running out of food in a few months or even years, isn't the sort of thing this crew has dealt with. Smart money says they'll do something massively stupid, like accidentally ejecting the bioswamp and with it the only source of long-term sustenance they have. Of course, this crew has surprised us before ... although when I think about it, usually what's surprising is the dumb luck they have despite themselves. Has their luck finally run out?

[on the bridge]

Albatros: Ugh. It still smells like mold in here.

Madeline: Well, open a window or something.

Albatros: Sometimes I really can't tell if you're joking.

Madeline: Of course I'm joking. We're in *space*. It's freezing out there.

Albatros: Dear god.

Colin: Could we perhaps talk about why we're here now?

Madeline: Go ahead.

Colin: While everyone was messing about with the mold, I noticed the bichon freeze slipping away. He seemed very sneaky about it-

Madeline: He's sneaky about everything, Colin. This morning he stole one of my pancakes and blamed it on Haber Zetzer's ants.

Colin: Oh, uhhhhh.... That was me, actually.

Madeline: You know, I had calibrated the exact amount of syrup and butter for the perfect pancake-to-condiment ratio.

Albatros: Finally, it's clear why *you're* the captain.

Madeline: Very funny. You probably did me a favor. Kudzu syrup is disgusting.

Colin: I know he's sneaky, but he was being extra sneaky. So I followed him. He went to Dr. von Haber Zetzer's lab, and then to the sausage room. I stood outside and listened. At great risk to myself, I might add, since they nearly caught me!

Albatros: How? You're invisible!

Colin: The bichon freeze came darting out unexpectedly and tripped over my bucket.

Albatros: You followed him, carrying a bucket. You do know the bucket's visible.

Colin: Yes, I know. But Joe leaves that thing everywhere. I figured if Freeze turned around, I could just set it down. Is there a rule against 'carrying a bucket whilst invisible' in the Assassin's Handbook?

Albatros: No. Some things we assume are common sense.

Madeline: So, what did you hear? Did he make a phone call or something?

Colin: No. He was talking to von Haber Zetzer.

Madeline: Hey, you got his name right! Twice!

Colin: Yes, I do that now. May I get on with the story?

Madeline: Pardon me for being supportive...

Colin: It turns out the doctor is healing him.

Albatros: Yes. He has a healer pod in his lab.

Colin: You knew about this?

Madeline: He's healing the assassin? Hang on, did Doctor Theo say the terraforming equipment had been removed?

Albatros: Joe and I had a conversation about the doctor and his pet, that third-rate assassin. We were going to alert everyone, but we were trying to figure out why he was doing it first.

Colin: He's healing Freeze as a back up plan, now that Cal is gone.

Albatros: Back up plan? Back up to what? Captain, are you listening?

Madeline: Yes. Yes. What are we talking about?

Colin: The doctor wants to take over the ship. And he needs the Freeze's help to do it.

Madeline: What? Why?

Colin: I'm not sure. It got a bit hazy at that point. Lots of thick accents filling the air, I may have missed something.

Albatros: You said he was planning to use Cal. But Cal would have destroyed the ship and killed him too.

Colin: Apparently the doctor has a shuttle. He said it was big and powerful. Could he hide something like that?

Madeline: On a ship this size? Sure. Especially if all the terraforming equipment is gone. Theo did say the terraforming equipment is gone, right? I heard that, didn't I?

Colin: So what do we do? Freeze is clearly getting smarter, though considering where he was starting from, we may have some time yet.

Madeline: Are you pacing? Please stop pacing. I'm getting this weird Doppelganger effect.

Albatros: Doppler.

Madeline: Bless you.

Albatros: What?

Madeline: So von Haber Zetzer is healing the Freeze, presumably so he can kill us all. Why? And does that mean Olivia is on his side?

Colin: My god. I didn't even consider the computer.

Albatros: If Olivia were on his side, he wouldn't need Freeze.

Colin: Yes! Yes, that's true.

Madeline: Colin, can I talk to you over here for a moment?

Colin: Very well.

[pause]

Colin: Well?

Madeline: Gah!

Colin: Seriously? You ask me to come over to you and then you're startled when I do it?

Madeline: You have NO IDEA how weird this is. Are you sure it was wise to bring in the Albatros on this conversation?

Colin: If the Freeze gets back to full strength, she's the only hope we have for survival.

Madeline: No, there is another. [pause] YOU, Colin.

Colin: Well, thank you for the vote of confidence, Obi-Wan, but I prefer to count on someone who can control their powers.

Madeline: Yoda. I'm pretty sure Yoda said that.

Colin: Really? I thought it was Obi-Wan.

Albatros: If you two are finished?

Colin: She was programmed to protect this ship and its crew. That has to mean we can trust her!

Madeline: She was programmed by Gated Galaxies.

Colin: I don't think we have a choice.

Madeline: Fine. You've got something on your face, by the way.

Colin: What?! Where?

Madeline: Left side. No, your other left. Higher up.

Colin: Did I get it?

Madeline: Nope, still there. Maybe go check the mirror in the little snobs' room?

Colin: Right! Back in a tic.

Albatros: What was the point of that?

Madeline: Partly so I could talk to you alone for a second. Mostly because it's funny.

Albatros: Well?

Madeline: I need to know I can trust you. That you're here for the good of the ship, its crew, and our passengers.

Albatros: Have I given you reason to doubt that?

Madeline: You tried to fwip Jessie out the airlock.

Albatros: I do sometimes have an overwhelming urge to kill her.

Madeline: Yeah, well, we all have that. I just need to know you won't.

Albatros: Much as it often pains me, you're my captain. My loyalty is to you and this ship, and that means obeying your orders. Now, why did you need to send Colin out of the room for that?

Madeline: Because Colin isn't who he says he is.

Albatros: Oh, you mean him being my husband Horace?

Madeline: You knew that? Or think you knew that? Know that?

Albatros: I beg your pardon?

Madeline: Just go on; we'll circle back.

Albatros: I've known from the day Joe told me Horace was dead. I did an initial cursory scan of everyone's body tags the day I met you all, but for privacy reasons, I don't usually go deeper. How do I do that, anyway?

Madeline: We'll circle back. Go on.

Albatros: Colin just seemed so ... relieved. I thought at first he had a little crush. But then I looked closer at his body tag. And there it was.

Madeline: Why didn't you let on you knew?

Albatros: He tried to kill me once. I figured this was safer all round, what with the super powers and all.

Madeline: OK, circling back. You're not Glenda McRory, Colin's- *Horace's* wife. You got the wrong file in memory storage. You're Glenda James. Sort of.

Albatros: Sort of....

Madeline: [deep breath] You're the robot double of Glenda James, otherwise known as the Albatros. You're Scottish. And Jessie's sister.

Albatros: I'm.... I'm...

Madeline: I know. It's a lot to absorb. How are you feeling? Homicidal?

Albatros: I'm Scottish?

Madeline: Ok, that wasn't what I was expecting. Yes, Scottish but you spent a big chunk of your youth in an Irish boarding school for highly unpleasant girls, according to Jessie.

Colin: You told her?

Madeline/Albatros: GAH!

Madeline: How long have you been back?

Colin: Just this moment. Very funny, by the way. And why are there three women's toilets within a reasonable distance, but the nearest men's is miles away?

Madeline: Revenge.

Albatros: This does explain a lot. Like my occasional longing for haggis and bagpipes. I assumed that was just a stereotype.

Colin: She seems rather hung up on the Scottish bit.

Madeline: Yeah, we pretty much glossed over the whole "robot" thing.

Colin: Is she on our side?

Olivia: [on intercom] If you're all done with your secret conversation, we could use you back in the bioswamp. Captain-ish, Big Bird, and Colon, back to the bioswamp, please.

Albatros: I just can't believe this. I'm ... Scottish.

Colin: So what do we do about von Haber Zetzer? And the Bichon Freeze?

Madeline: You keep an eye on them for now. And Albatros, you be ready to react if either of them makes a move. I'll see what I can get out of Olivia. Albatros?

Albatros: Scottish.... Hmmm? Oh, yes. Very well.

[door]

Albatros/Madeline: LEAVE THE BUCKET.

Colin: FINE!

Narrator: While the Albatros, Captain Madeline, and Colin were attempting to sort out allegiances on the bridge, Leet, Joe, and Dr. von Haber Zetzer were checking to see how much food is left on the ship... and how many passengers are left alive.

Leet: OK, this is... uh... pod bay 11. How does it look?

Joe: About the same as the others. Looks like... at least a third of these are dark.

Leet: One third. Check.

LBF: What are you doing?

Joe: Counting casualties. What are you doing in this part of the ship?

LBF: Nothing.... I was ... looking for you to return your bucket.

Joe: Oh, thanks. [suspicious, fishing] Where did I ... leave it?

LBF: [same] I do not remember... Where do you think you leaved it?

Leet: Why are you looking at each other all side eye like that?

vHZ: Vell, I zuzpect ve are in for a little tightening of ze beltz. Many of the rooms which should have food stores for ze voyage unt for ze time of ze terraforming are full of thighmasters, zauna pants, unt copies of *Twilight 54: Waxing your moon*.

Leet: Oooo! I read that! I think she's really hitting her stride in that one.

Joe: How long do you think we have?

Leet: Have?

vHZ: Ehhh, if we stretch out our zupply from the ze bioswamp, ve haf long enough.

LBF: Of course we do, eh, monsieur doctor?

vHZ: [a little menacing – shut up, LBF...] Yes, ve do, sank you, mein friend. Now, how are our quiet companions?

Joe: "Of course we do"? What's that supposed to mean?

vHZ: I am zure he means only zat ve haf plenty of food, and zere is nothink about which ve must worry, eh?

LBF: What do you think he means, eh?

Leet: OK, now all three of you are doing it. You know, your faces could freeze like that.

Joe: It'll be faster if we split up and everyone take a level. Your Oz body tags have a tracking device if you push really hard just behind your ear. Activate them so Olivia can find you if you get lost.

Leet: I thought she could find us everywhere.

vHZ: Not entirely. It is a good idea. This ship is vast unt it is very zimple to get lost. When ze tracker is alife, you should zee a little light blinking chust under your skin.

LBF: Is it on?

Joe: Not yet. Hang on.

LBF: Ouch!

Joe: Now it's on. You're welcome. Leet, you stay on this level, I'll go down one. Doc, take the one above us; Bitchin' Freeze, you go up two. Let's meet at the bioswamp in one hour.

LBF: This is not so much time for the whole level.

Joe: Just get a general idea. We'll do a more thorough recon later.

vHZ: Das is gut! Vun hour! [walks away, whistling]

Leet: Uhhh..... Which way did we come from?

Joe: We already did that bit, so head that way.

Leet: Right!

Joe: Leet?

Leet: Yes, Joe?

Joe: Follow my finger. That way.

Leet: Oh, got it!

Joe: Puppy...

LBF: Hheeeehhhhhh, yes?

Joe: That thing I activated behind your ear? It's not just a tracker. See you in an hour.

Narrator: Back in the bioswamp, the mold was almost immediately attacked by the swampgator. Jessie, Howard, Emily, Dr. Theo, and Greg leaped to the plant's defense, only for it to wrap up the angry beast in its tendrils. A moment later, the gator was fast asleep, making happy little grunting noises as the mold hummed to it and rocked it gently.

Theo: Fascinating.

Greg: Is this ... normal?

Theo: Are you actually asking me that, or just making conversation?

Greg: I don't know.

Julie: OK, the mold is safe, the gator is contained for now, can we talk?

Howard: Hey, uh, some of us are kinda sinking in this soft stuff. How's about we head for some higher ground, there.

Emily: There's a lovely hill just over there. It is relatively free of wild boar scat.

[walking, squelchy sounds]

Theo: This is very strange. This swamp is much bigger than the biosphere I remember.

Jessie: Big enough for the big green beastie?

Theo: I'm not sure yet. I've never seen a *Sulfurophilus mesotrope* this large before.

Jessie: But you knew about it. You're here because of it, aye?

Leet: Welcome! Join us! We've got swamp sandwiches.

Jessie: "Swamp" sandwiches? How are they different from the usual horrors?

Leet: The bread is a little less green. The cattail jelly is nice. Sedgewich?

Jessie: Yeah, all right, I'll try to wrestle it down. Got anything to chase it with?

Leet: Brackandry. Or Brandyken...

Jessie: Beg pardon?

vHZ: Bracken brandy. Absolutely disgusting, but potent. Be prepared to lose body hair.

Jessie: Make mine a double.

LBF: Oh, you are not so hairy, I think.

Jessie: Was that you trying to be nice?

LBF: This is not "trying," this is "being." I never try. I only succeed.

Jessie: You reckon?

Theo: Are we safe here? You don't have a herd of rabid cassowaries about to stampede over the horizon?

Leet: Do melons stampede?

Theo: Melons? No, cassowaries are... never mind.

Joe: No worries. I did a quick recon. The cassowaries are on the south 40.

Theo: You're joking. Right?

Joe: I dunno. Am I?

Jessie: All right, Mold Man, spill it. Why are we here?

Mrs. Sheffield: Hello? Hello?

Julie: Hey! Get out of my zebra!

Greg: Your zebra?

Julie: Yes. MY zebra. How did you get this number?

Mrs. S: You really should know by now the futility of trying to hide things from me. Ben, have you found my sunglasses yet?

Ben: [background] Still looking!

Greg: How many phone lines are in here?

Theo: Why does my sandwich have a bow on it?

Leet: Don't you like it?

Mrs. Sheffield: Ahem. It's lovely to chat with you all, but I'm looking for Dr. Theo Bromae. Is he awake? And still breathing, one hopes, though there's certainly no guarantee with you lot?

Donna: [in background] Did we lose Southers?

Ben: [in background] Nope. They're still back there. Go left at the next light, Glenda. Left here. Left!

[tires screech, "Whoa" from Ben and Donna]

Glenda: [background] You could give me a bit of warning next time.

Theo: I'm here, Mrs. Sheffield. You know we're still in space, right?

Mrs. S: Yes, I heard. Pity about poor Matt, as well.

Leet: Doctor Theo was just about to tell us everything.

Julie: Doctor Theo doesn't *know* everything. And now that my mime is gone....

Mrs S: Who is this mime everyone keeps banging on about?

Julie: He is... *was* my team's cosmobotanist.

Theo: "Cosmobotanist." Pffft.

Julie: Yeah, well, "pffft" all you want, he was the guy who was going to save the galaxy.

Joe: I'm just going to cut to the chase here. Who brought the mold on board?

Theo/Julie/Mrs. Sheffield: We did. [surprise] What?

Joe: OK, since all the self-proclaimed "good" people brought mold on board, I'm going to guess it's a good thing.

Theo: Wait. Your team planted mold as well? Where?

Julie: On the bridge. Where's yours?

Mrs. S: On the bridge. I suppose that could explain why this one grew so big, so fast.

Leet: Awww, I thought I did that.

Mrs. S: You helped, dear. Now pipe down and eat your sedgewich. Julie, you're a botanist as well, yes?

Julie: Yes, but I didn't work on the mold. I don't know much about it, other than it kills the pod plants.

Leet: Is there going to be a long, boring conversation now? Because there's a patch of daisies over there that I want to go sit in.

Julie: Long story short, then: Gated Galaxies developed a pod plant that is basically an eating machine. They seeded all the Oz ships with these pod plants to take over the galaxy.

Theo: Developed? No, they didn't *develop* the pod plants.

Julie: I've seen the greenhouses. Ben was a part of the project.

Greg: Your husband is one of the bad people?

Julie: No, he was a plant.

Leet: Ewwwwwww. Ben's a plant? Is he mold or pod?

Joe: 'Plant' like spy, Leet. Not plant like green thing.

Madeline: [calling] They're over here! We've been looking for you.

Leet: [whining] Awwww, man! Now we have to start over!

Joe: So Gated Galaxies is using killer plants to take over the galaxy. Where did the killer plants come from?

Julie: French Lick, Indiana.

Joe: French Lick? Are you sure?

Leet: It's called "French Lick"? What are you people doing there?

LBF: Why are you looking at me? I am not all the French peoples!

Julie: It's where I am now. There's a resort here called the Showertorium.

Joe: Showertorium.

Theo: You know it?

Mrs S: Of course he does.

Madeline: Of course he does? His memory starts, like, a month ago.

Mrs S: You do rattle on with the most absurd nonsense.

Madeline: Hey!

Jessie: Ehhhh, there's a circle of daisies coming our way.

Colin: It's a crown. And it's me. The Albatros made it for me.

Jessie: Did she?

Madeline: Wait. Stop. Everyone stop. God, I'm hungry. Leet, hand me a sandwich. Thanks. What's in this?

Leet: That one is Blackgum tapenade with filleted cypress knees and crispy-fried shed diamondback skin.

Madeline: Will I ever be that hungry, I ask myself? OK, look, we really need some answers. Who's got 'em?

Julie: I'll start. I was hired to work at G2 about six years ago. They sent me a bunch of seeds to study but told me not to plant them. So I did.

Jessie: You planted them.

Julie: Well, yes. But I did study them too. It didn't take long to figure out they were very hostile and very aggressive. I figured G2 wanted a kinder, gentler version, so I started working on that.

Olivia: Um, look, I'm not sure you should be having this conversation.

Colin: Whyever not?

Olivia: Because I don't like it.

vHZ: It is all right, liebchen.

Olivia: Ooooooooooooo..... I dunno...

vHZ: What would make you think G2 wanted a nicer version of anything?

Julie: Pie-eyed optimism? And of course, I was wrong. I sent back the ones I hybridized from their plants plus umbilical cells from golden retrievers and DNA from Tom Hanks' hairbrush at the Smithsonian, and my contact went ballistic.

Madeline: Who was your contact?

Julie: I don't know. We never met, never even spoke. That's why, when they called me in, I was able to send Ben in my place.

Colin: What did they want?

Julie: They wanted the pod plants to be bigger, grow faster, and be even more aggressive. Then they put seeds from those plants on the Oz ships.

Jessie: But they're blowing up all their ships. What's the point?

Theo: The killer pod plants need a great deal of heat to germinate. When the ships blow up, the blast pops the seeds open. The seeds land on the nearest planet and kill everything that moves so the *next* ships can terraform it for humans. Captain Madeline, could you please get off my lap?

Madeline: Oh, is that your lap? Sorry.

Olivia: Ow ow ow ow ow. Can we stop now, please? I've got a lot of built-up electricity here, so somebody's going to get wolloped, and news flash: I'm not taking one for the team, all right?

Albatros: So this ship was originally engineered by G2 to blow up in space.

Greg: Correct.

Albatros: And that was your job.

Greg: Appears to be.

Colin: So what happened?

Julie: We did.

Theo/Mrs. S: We did.

Albatros: Oh, for goodness sake. Really?

Julie: My team removed the killer pods from all the Oz ships – hopefully – and replaced them with my kinder ones.

Joe: Hopefully?

Olivia: Now, please!! Shut up shut up before I have an accident... on purpose. Ish.

Julie: There were 400 ships all over the globe. We got to as many as we could find. The Oz 9 was our back up plan, in case we didn't get them all.

LBF: Again with the back up plan.

Jessie: You're an assassin. Aren't you always someone's back up plan?

[low rumble of thunder]

vHZ: Olifia....

Olivia: Sorry!

Greg: Quick summary?

Julie: We pulled the bad seeds off and replaced them with good seeds and put the mold on board because it kills the bad kind of pod plants when it finds them.

Colin: Hooray!

Theo: Wait. We pulled the seeds off because we thought they were bad and we knew we would be crash landing on Earth. We brought the mold to keep it safe from G2. There's more to our side of the story, however.

Mrs S: Yes, a great deal more.

Olivia: Oh, come on, I can't hold it! I'm serious!

Joe: So, there are no seeds aboard this ship? No bad pod seeds, no good pod seeds, just happy mold?

Theo: Yes.

Julie: Right.

Mrs. S: Well done, all!

Olivia: Great. Now if everyone could just stay away from any metal for a moment....

Greg: Uhhhhh...

Joe: Pod bay 1344 is full of seeds. And they're growing.

[boom]

Narrator: In *Twilight 38: Sincere Apogeas*, Bella and Edward's adventure involves wandering around in a dark forest, unable to see anything, not even each other. They stumble a lot, spend a lot of time

shouting for each other, and the book is full of immortal lines including “What’s going on?” “What the hell was that?” and “Why are we here?” I’m generally not a huge fan of the series, not being in its target audience, but I do find that particular book really resonates with me, for some reason.

This concludes Season 2 of Oz 9, so if you were betting on the ship to crash and burn by now, well, you – and I – are out a little cash. We’ll be on a hiatus from regular episodes until Sunday, July 19, but we do have some fun things planned for the break, so stay with us.

In Season Two, our cast consisted of:

Iri Alexander as Julie

Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie

Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise and Ben

June Clark Eubanks as Glenda and the Albatros

Richard Cowen as Leet and Tiberius

David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae

John Faley as Brandon the YouTube guy

Sarah Golding as Mrs. Sheffield

Kevin Hall as Greg, Felonius, Spotty Bosh, Tour Guide, and Radu the Handsome

Eric Perry as Dr. von Haber Zetzer, Joe, Howard, and Mr. Southers

Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline

Tim Sherburn as Colin, Emily, and Buck

And me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator.

Guest appearances in Season Two included Jessica Vest from “Cassie and the Spectral Shade,” Kyle Jones of “The Discussing Network,” Raymond Morse of “5 and Thirty with Ruk,” Karin Heimdahl of “Y2K Podcast”, Travis Hull, Susan Franzen, Eric Davis, and Barbara McGarry. Thank you all!

Thanks so very much to all our patrons and supporters

Until Season 3, space monkeys, Narrator out!