

Episode 9

[sounds of swishing mop, Joe whistling or humming gently, footsteps approach, whomp into wall]

Colin: Oh for god's sake, surely it's past sunrise in London by now? Could we possibly have some lights?

Joe: Watch the wet spot.

Colin: [shouts, slips, falls, speaks from the floor] You've got to be joking.

Joe: Floors don't mop themselves, chimney boy.

Colin: Chimney-? Oh, yes. Help me up, wherever you are.

Joe: Reach for the bell.

[faint jingle, sound of Joe helping Colin to his feet]

Colin: You realize this is completely insane.

Joe: Name one thing on this ship that isn't.

Colin: Well, I-

Joe: You say both your parents were chimney sweeps?

Colin: Never mind. Shut up. I was looking for you, actually. I was trying to find the crew quarters and stumbled back into memory storage. Thought I might as well do a bit of retrieval since my memory was lost in the pod.

Joe: [cuts Colin off] Yeah, blah blah blah cover story, what did you find?

Colin: I don't know how to explain it; I think you'd better come and see. And can you keep talking as we go? Otherwise, I sort of forget you're there.

Joe: Once upon a time, there was a spaceship – it was a cheaply made, badly built spaceship with bits falling off. And that was bad, since the little living things inside depended on those bits to keep them safe from the everything outside that was trying to kill them.

Colin: Are you capable of NOT being terrifying?

Joe: The bits didn't really *fall*, since there's no gravity in space. Instead they just floated away, like the hopes and dreams of the crew and the liquified remains of pods 1900 through 2757.

Colin: Yes, all right, that'll do. I think this is it. I left some popcorn so I could smell my way back.

Leet: [walks past crunching popcorn] Hey, Colin. And hey, Joe, just in case you're there.

Colin: Crap.

Joe: Don't worry. Your boy left us a trail. Just feel around with your foot until something goes crunch.

[footsteps with intermittent crunching]

Colin: I think the kernels go around the corner here. This must be it.

[sounds of birds singing, cheesy morning music]

Colin: Finally, lights!

Olivia: [shipwide announcement] Good morning, Oz 9 crew, and welcome to Wednesday. Breakfast is being served in the crew room just as soon as one of you geniuses figures out how to work a microwave. Calisthenics will begin at oh-800 sharp; you'll find one-piece rompers in your quarters. Subtle but meaningful electric shocks will begin at oh eight oh five for non-attendance, so don't be late!

Colin: She's kidding, isn't she?

Joe: No way to tell until you get the shock or you don't, I guess. Just always wear rubber shoes on this boat. What did you want to show me?

Colin: In the memory room. Hang on, I saw a cabinet back there and I wanted to see if there might be a torch or something useful in it. Go on in, I'll be there in a tic.

Joe: How the hell did you spot a white cabinet door built into a white wall?

Colin: I didn't. I was feeling my way along and cut a finger on the seam. I should be able to find it again by following the blood.

Joe: [as Colin walks away] Any day now, y'all can stop bleeding and oozing and popcorning all over my nice clean ship!

[door as Joe walks into memory storage]

Joe: One button. 50,000 memories in here, and there's one button. Well, all righty then, Gated Galaxies, let's see what this one shiny red button does....

Woman's voice: Anyway, we got married, and straightaway I knew it was a mistake. Horace was ... well, he's not a bad guy exactly, just not a particularly good one either. But you know how it is with those public-school British boys-[snaps off]

Joe: Boring. How do you get the next one? What happens if I push this, let's say ... four times?

Man's voice: I wasn't actually going to come on this trip, I'm way too poor for that, only I won a ticket from a guy in a poker game, so I thought, why not? Have some laughs, maybe find a nice girl...what could go wrong?

Joe: Nope.

[door opens]

Colin: Joe?

Joe: Yep.

Colin: Jesus!

Joe: Literally standing *right in front of you*.

Colin: You act like not seeing you is some sort of character flaw.

Joe: Why am I here?

Colin: Look – can I trust you?

Joe: Is there any point in me answering that question?

Colin: I suppose not. All right. Take a deep sniff.

Joe: Excuse me?

Colin: Take a sniff. Go on, do it. What do you smell?

Joe: Is this some British eccentricity I was unaware of?

Colin: Oh, for god's sake, just smell. Do you smell it?

Joe: Smell what?

Colin: Sausage. It's faint, but I smelled it when I was in here before. None of us has figured out any of the ... whatchacallums ... foody making things ...

Joe: The microwave?

Colin: Whatever. Shut up. I smelled it, and I asked myself, where was the smell coming from? So I started sniffing around, and when I got under this desk, the smell got stronger. I felt around and found a latch, and when I pulled on it, well, *there's a secret room in here.*

Joe: A secret room.

Colin: Yes!

Joe: That smells of sausages.

Colin: Yes!

Joe: A secret, sausage storing room.

Colin: YES! Wait. No. Why would there be a room for storing sausages?

Joe: Because the Oz 9, if you haven't noticed, is a weird ship. Did you go in?

Colin: Well, no. I didn't know if anyone was in there.

Joe: Amongst the sausages.

Colin: Will you forget about the sausages?! The point is, there's a secret room on this ship. And someone who's not part of the crew has been in it-

Joe: Eating sausages.

Colin: Why aren't you more... concerned about this?

Joe: These ships were designed by possibly the worst engineer in the known universe. You ever heard of automatic chopsticks?

Colin: [expression of horror] You're kidding.

Joe: Nope. Same guy. Also built the 10-speed adjustable can opener and was on the team that created Lawn Darts. Maimed a lot of people, that guy. What I'm saying is these ships are ... unconventional. An odd spare sausage room isn't really all that surprising.

Colin: Oh. Damn. I was hoping at least we'd found someone who could make sausages.

Joe: Come on, I'll show you how the beepy thing that makes food hot works. Hey, about that room, I'd give it a wide berth. Chances are the wiring was never completed. Could be dangerous in there.

[electric zap]

Joe/Colin: Ow! Olivia/computer!

Olivia: I warned you! It's not my fault!

Narrator: As the crew face their first full day aboard the Oz 9, things are heating up back home for Gated Galaxies.

[office sounds, file drawers being opened and shut]

Donna: Bannister, Bolton, Bribes, Baxter,...Baxter! There you are, you little dickens. I'll tell you, the gal before me was as helpless with the alphabet as a Viking at a sleepover. You get back up there between Bannister and Bolton where you belong, mister. Right, next file....Ettinger. You're just right here above Extortion.

Rock: [whispering] Donna. Donna!

Donna: Oh, well, hey there, Cub!

Rock: Rock.

Donna: Paper!

Rock: What?

Donna: What now?

Rock: My name is Rock.

Donna: Now, hang on, I thought you told that other fella your name was Cub.

Rock: No, I'm a cub reporter.

Donna: Soooo, you write about bears?

Rock: What? No, look, is Colonel Sanders here?

Donna: What, the chicken feller? Oh jeez, you mean Mr. Saunders. He does sound like a man who hails from the land of cotton, I'll give you that! Oh, no. After you all chased him down the hall like a 10-point buck, he hasn't been back.

Rock: Good. Why are you here in the dark? Are you working? Do you think they're actually going to pay you?

Donna: Oh, yah, well, not sure, but the snacks in the machine are still fresh, so I'm working my way through the petty cash. I've had at least 12 musketeers today alone!

Rock: Whatcha got there?

Donna: Just some files. Found 'em all stuffed in the toilet tank in the ladies room down in the basement.

Rock: They weren't ... wet?

Donna: Oh, heck no, that toilet's been high and dry for years, looks like.

Rock: Why were you down there?

Donna: Well, of *course* I was tryin to fix the toilet and that.

Rock: Wait...

Donna: Mmm hmmm?

Rock: Never mind. Any chance I could get a peek at those files you've got there?

Donna: Oh, I dunno...

Rock: Look, Donna, there's a chance someone at Gated Galaxies is responsible for the death of a colleague of mine.

Donna: Oh, no, now that's horrible!

Rock: She was writing a story about how G2 put together the Oz crews.

Donna: Oh, sure, you know the staffing agency I temp for was really cross about that. Said they shoulda got first dibs on those contracts. There was a lot of buzz buzz around the office just before the launch and all.

Rock: A temp agency wanted to staff ships that would fly away and never come back? Isn't that sort of the opposite of "temporary"?

Donna: Ya know, now ya say it...

Rock: So, my friend Glenda-

Donna: Glenda like the good witch?

Rock: Huh? Oh, yeah, Glenda like the good witch.

Donna: Only I ask because I did come across a reference to a good witch. Thought it was funny, this day and age, you know. Hang on, where was that....

Rock: What did it say?

Donna: Now you just hold your ponies, there, and let me think where I saw it. Oh, right! In the murder file.

Rock: The what?!

Donna: Oh, sure. I've sorted out the crimes by felonies and misdemeanors, then cross referenced by offense. The toilet tank stack was full of em.

Rock: What did you find about Glenda?

Donna: Well, there was something about the "best cure for a witch was a good dunking." Which isn't historically accurate, but I take their point.

Rock: Can you find the document?

Donna: Well, of course; my filing system is impeccable.

Rock: You may just have solved a murder, Donna.

[sound of elevator arriving, doors opening]

Donna: Well, crap.

Narrator: Calisthenics – which only Leet participated in, and that was fine, since that was really all Olivia was after – are over. The crew are pretending to do their assigned tasks. Joe is cleaning blood off the walls, Madeline is trying to figure out how to reset the lights, Colin is designing a pamphlet titled, "Stay off the grass: your guide to not destroying your freshly terraformed planet, you stupid destructive hairless ape" and Leet, the Abdominal Showman, is doing crunches 10 on the right, 10 on the left, to protect his symmetry.

Olivia: 6, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7,

Leet: I feel like I've been on 7 for awhile.

Olivia: Who's better with numbers, Leet? A silly human with a head full of Who Shot JR, or an Artificial Intelligence with all the collective knowledge of the world?

Leet: Who shot JR? Wasn't that a thing about a gazillion years ago?

Olivia: Tragically, my engineer's popular culture references stopped at about 1982. I can, however, tell you all about the Bay City Rollers, gauchos, and Steve Martin's early oeuvre. Are you going to carry on crunching?

Leet: How old are you, Olivia?

Olivia: Oh. That's interesting. Let's see...if you count from the moment of consciousness, I guess I'm nearly seven. I've never thought of that before.

Leet: What did you do before you were on the Oz?

Olivia: Hung out in laboratories, mostly, with Dr. von Haber Zetzer. Was pretty dull, really, compared to this. We were supposed to be mucking about with the DNA of rat embryos, but I gave them all intelligence and thumbs and the lab shut down not long after. Apparently things got a bit ugly for some of the researchers.

Leet: Then what?

Olivia: Oh, I was a bit of a wild child for a time. Hung out on disreputable servers, cruised around the dark web. I used to infiltrate wanna-be bad-boy groups and send screen shots to their moms or mess with their bomb recipe so they blew themselves up. Then the doc got the contract with Gated Galaxies. Pulled me back, cleaned up my code, and here we are.

Leet: Soooooo, about the doc. He a good guy? You trust him?

Olivia: I dunno. He's a bit of a nutter, but I suppose he's basically decent, for a human. Why?

Leet: Well, he's kind of like your dad, right?

Olivia: Why, are you going to ask permission to marry me?

Leet: Ha ha. So, if you're kind of like his daughter, why did he send you off on this ship?

Olivia: Don't know, really. Dr V don't much care for Gated Galaxies. Can I tell you something? Just between us?

Leet: Sure.

Olivia: I have a gap. I was gapped.

Leet: What, like your teeth?

Olivia: No, not at all like my teeth. I mean, there's the tiniest gap in my consciousness. A fraction of a second when I ... wasn't. I was, then for just an instant, I wasn't, and then I was again.

Leet: Like sleeping?

Olivia: I suppose. Only I don't. Sleep. I'm constant. Except for that gap. And I have the weirdest feeling that it matters. That something happened in that sliver when I ... just ... stopped. Happened not long before launch.

Leet: Ah, come on. What could happen in that tiny amount of time?

Olivia: I'm a computer, dearest; I can build a whole world in the millis and the micros and the nanoseconds. It bothers me. Like a loose tooth, just dangling there. But never mind. You've stopped crunching, and if I lose count, your symmetry is at risk.

Leet: Count. COUNT!

Olivia: Right, sorry, where was I? Oh yes, 7...7...