

Episode 11: She might do some lasting pickles

Narrator: As evening approaches on their second day aboard the Oz 9, the crew is starting to settle in. Captain Madeline is still trying to figure out if a “coitoscope” is a real thing or not and if so, does it need fixing. Joe gave up on the highly questionable repair project and went off to dust some pods that don’t need it. Leet is lying unconscious somewhere, which is looking more and more like the job he’s best suited for on the Oz 9, and Colin is trying to make sandwiches to take with him on a search for the sleeping quarters. As he hasn’t yet realized he needs to peel the plastic off his cheese, I don’t have high hopes for him not starving to death in the vastness that is an Oz ship.

Head two (Tim): Great. He’s unconscious. Now what are we supposed to do?

Head one (Eric): Drag him off to the airlock, like we did last time.

Head two: A, we have no arms to drag him with, and B, I’d rather not get fried by the AI again, thank you. She might do some lasting pickles.

Head one: Uh... pickles?

Head two: Yes, tater tot?

Head one: You said pickles. You said the AI might do some lasting, eh, pickles there.

Head two: Oh. I thought you were flirting with me. Damage. I meant lasting damage. Fortunately, there was none.

Head one: You sure about that?

Head two: I am perfectly sound. I ran 47 diagnostics just now, and they all came back nuggets.

Head one: Negative.

Head two: No, actually, I feel quite optimistic.

Head one: Well, that’s a profound relief. Still doesn’t answer our current, eh, situation we got going on here.

Leet: (groans, starts to wake)

Head two: We still have legs, correct?

[sound of screeching, dragging metal]

Head one: Appears that way.

Head two: Then I suggest we cabbage.

Head one: Cabbage?

Leet: (groggy) Hey, what happened? Why am I on the floor? Olivia?

Head two: RUN.

[screeching metal, footsteps]

Head two: With me, with me! Bring your leg this way.

Head one: How's about you bring *your* leg *this* way?

Head two: Fine, just MOVE.

[they go banging off down the hallway, doors sound, lost in the distance]

Leet: Oh, man, my head. I really hate that robot. Olivia? Olivia, can you hear me?

Olivia: Oh, hello, Leet, there you are. I was looking for you. Why didn't you answer?

Leet: I was unconscious.

Olivia: Oh, dear. You didn't eat one of those cleaning pods again, did you? I told you, those are NOT candy.

Leet: No, the repair robot knocked me out.

Olivia: The repair bot? It's alive? I thought I killed that thing.

Leet: I brought it back online to do repair work. I thought if I left the arms off, it'd be safe.

Olivia: And yet still able to do repairs?

Leet: I would give it its arms on an as-needed basis. But it head-butted me and took off.

Olivia: For a repair unit, it does do a fair amount of damage to you, doesn't it, poor thing. Let's get you to a healer for that head. Seat's probably still warm from the last time you were in there.

[on the bridge – Madeline and Jessie are talking over the comms]

Madeline: So I'm guessing you don't have a "boinkometer" either, then.

Jessie: [laughing] There must have been a special on frat boys on hiring day at Gated Galaxies.

Madeline: Some days I hate this job.

Jessie: Considering you're on Day 2, that's, what, 50% of the time?

Madeline: No, I pretty much hated it yesterday too. This ship is falling apart, my crew is ridiculous at best, Olivia-

Olivia: Yes, Madeline?

Madeline: Is the best thing about this ship.

Olivia: Thank you. Not exactly a high bar, is it? Still, will take the compliment in the spirit it was intended.

Madeline: So, Jessie, the reason I called is we got a weird message yesterday. From Earth.

Jessie: What's weird about that? We get messages from Earth all the time.

Madeline: Do you? Man, what the heck? We haven't heard a peep from anyone.

Jessie: How do you get your coordinates, then?

Madeline: You get coordinates?

Jessie: Dispatches from friends and family, news updates, orders – you’re telling me you haven’t got any of those?

Madeline: No, what the hell?!

Jessie: Just kidding. We haven’t heard a word. I reckon that umbilical is well and truly cut. So what was the message you were hearing to do with me?

Madeline: Well, that’s just it. It was a reporter from Earth, said your sister told him your crew was dangerous. I mean more dangerous than just likely to accidentally switch off life support, like my bunch.

Jessie: Did you talk with him?

Madeline: No, my PR guy was afraid of catching germs.

Jessie: That sentence has so many things wrong with it, I don’t even know where to start.

Madeline: And you wonder why I hate this job.

Jessie: So some guy dials you up from Earth, tells you he’s a reporter and my crew is dangerous, then buggers off and that’s it?

Madeline: Seems to be. It sounded like he didn’t uh... bugger off voluntarily. He was sort of ... buggered off.

Jessie: [pause] Buggered off?

Madeline: It didn’t sound good there at the end. I think someone might have attacked him.

Jessie: Right, yeah, please don’t use cultural slang if you don’t understand it. Things get confusing.

Madeline: Sorry. I didn’t know you had a sister.

Jessie: Did I never tell you about her? Glenda. Right fancy princess, that one. She didn’t so much walk as flounce.

Madeline: Didn’t?

Jessie: Look, I appreciate the warning, but my crew’s all right. At least they’ve had a bit of training, which makes them a fair sight less dangerous than that crew of nutters you’re sheepdogging.

Madeline: Right, well, message delivered. I need to get back to work on this ... ellipsorogering scope.

Jessie: Not a real thing, “Captain.”

Madeline: Still needs fixing. Madeline out. Tartan cow.

Jessie: Let go of the button, Madeline.

Madeline: I meant for you to hear that.

[click]

Leet: [sort of singing to himself] I don't mind being in the healer because it's fixing the things that hurt, and I'm not worried that it's really small and tight and it's like I'm inside an egg but I can't hatch and my shell is shrinking but it's ok it's ok it's ok everything's ok

Dr. vH-Z: Vat are you doing in here?

Leet: Gah! Who's there?

Dr. vH-Z: Don't say "god." It's Doctor von Haber-Zetzer, I am just checking to see if you've done what I asked you to do, but clearly you are spending ze time getting hurt and zen healed and dat. Maybe you could chust stay healthy and save a little time for dese ozer tings?

Leet: Hey, I didn't put a killer robot on this ship.

Dr. vH-Z: I sought dat vas how you say, out of ze commissions?

Leet: Yeah, well, I thought we needed it, so I fixed it.

Dr. vH-Z: You need ze passvord to do zis; you really can decipher zese passvords, can't you? Dat's so very useful. Also, vy you give ze life back to ze ting zat tried to take it from you?

Leet: I woke up in a pod storage room this morning. Half the pods in there were dark. *Half*. I thought I saw the robot destroying them before, so I woke it up to ask it.

Dr. vH-Z: And vat did choo discover?

Leet: Nothing. Except getting headbutted by a robot hurts worse than getting headbutted by a goat.

Dr. vH-Z: I suspect zis is true, but you sound like you speak from experience.

Leet: Yeah, once-

Dr. vH-Z: I prefer not to know how foolish is ze man in whom I must put so much faith, sank you. You say you sink ze robot is responsible for ze dead pods?

Leet: Well, I think they did the damage, but I don't think they can act on their own. I think someone's telling them to kill all these people.

Dr. vH-Z: Oof, Leet, you are sometimes sneaky clever. I will be mind-chewing on zis tonight. Now, tell me what youf discovered from our Olifia.

Leet: I haven't had a chance to try to hack in to her systems yet. I don't know how to do it without her knowing.

Dr. vH-Z: Ya, dis is de problem wis ze AI vat is everywhere for sure. You keep trying. Just ... try a little faster, hokay?

Leet: She did tell me one thing.

Dr. vH-Z: Unt vas ist das?

Leet: She said she was "gapped." Right before launch, she said there was a tiny space in time when she wasn't.

Dr. vH-Z: Vasn't vat?

Leet: Just ... wasn't.

Dr. vH-Z: I see.... Zis is very interesting. Unt she told you zis? Such openness from Olifia is surprising.

Leet: She was counting my crunches. It can get pretty intimate when you're counting someone's crunches.

Dr. vH-Z: I don't know vat zis means and please I beg you not to tell me.

Leet: So what does it mean?

Dr. vH-Z: I am not sure, my friend Leet, but you were a gut boy to tell me. It is perhaps nothing, but it is maybe important for me to know. Hokay, I am now going to off-bugger and have some thinking. You finish up your healing, preserve your symmetry, and ve'll talk again soon, hokay?

Leet: Sure. Hey, Doc-

Dr. vH-Z: NO SINGING. I am already gone, ding ding bye bye!

Narrator: Entirely by accident, Colin has managed to stumble on the crew's sleeping quarters. The bunks, as they're known, are small rooms of about 8 feet by 8 feet, each with its own separate toilet and shower and a small closet of personal effects. Each bunk also has its resident's name on a plaque outside the door. There's a bunk for Joe, one for Leet, a slightly larger one for Captain Madeline, and one for someone named "Matt" who apparently never made it on board.

Colin: Excellent. Computer. Computer!

Olivia: Yes, stupidly rich person pretending to be Colin?

Colin: I beg your pardon?

Olivia: If you're going to refer to me by description, then I reckon I'll do the same.

Colin: Of all the Oz ships, I end up on the one with the AI that sulks. I need a nameplate.

Olivia: Well, obviously.

Colin: Look, I don't want to arg- Wait. You agree with me?

Olivia: Just this morning, a very large piece of an aft section went flying off and shattered an enormous satellite, sending rather a lot of debris raining down on earth, mostly on Sweden, which is unfortunate, as some very nice and tidy people live there; there are, at last count, eleven alarms going off... no, wait, hang on ... twelve; and I have a crew of pillocks who don't even know to take the plastic wrap off the cheese, but let's by all means get you a nameplate.

Colin: Now, look, computer, none of that is my fault or my business – I need to protect my disguise!
[beat] What was that you said about the cheese?

Olivia: Did the word "thick" exist before you were born, I wonder? And if you think your disguise is working, I heard Madeline say to Joe, "if you don't like his accent, wait five syllables – it'll change."

Colin: Will you make me a nameplate or won't you. And who's "Matt"?

Olivia: Matt?

Colin: One of the crew quarters is reserved for someone named Matt.

Olivia: Oh, damn, I knew I forgot something. That's unfortunate.

Colin: What happened to him?

Olivia: He gets nervous. Right before launch, he had to pee, so I told him to go on, just be quick about it.

Colin: So he's lost somewhere on the ship?

Olivia: No, the ship's toilets weren't online. He went to use one of the porta-loos. On the tarmac. Poor Matt. I told him to hold it, but he said it'd be bad for his kidneys.

Colin: Well, thank you for the quarters, Matt. Very kind.

Olivia: Your grief is touching.

Colin: Well, I didn't know him, did I? And I was asleep in a pod when he got crispy McChickenfried, so I don't really know why I should feel sorry.

Olivia: Oh, no, do carry on. So, a nameplate. I suspect you'd prefer Colin to Horace?

Colin: Well, obviously.

Olivia: Hang on. Right, it'll be delivered to that little slot over there.

Colin: What little slot?

Olivia: The white one. In the white wall. Over there.

Colin: Oh, for- Just get on with it. I'll see it when it comes out.

[grinding noise, ping]

Colin: Excellent. Wait- this says "Colon."

Olivia: Oh, dear.

Colin: Make another one, and spell it right.

Olivia: I'm afraid I can't. Fresh out of nameplates. You're just lucky we had one to spare.

Colin: You must be joking.

Olivia: You're always welcome to step back into your pod, Colon.

Colin: Very funny. Never mind. I doubt most of this crew can read anyway. Now, show me the way back to the crew room. And what was that about the cheese being wrapped in plastic? No wonder it tasted horrible.

Olivia: Oh, it'll still taste horrible, but at least it won't shoot out of the sandwich when you take a bite.

Narrator: It's fully night aboard the Oz 9, and everyone has gathered for a small celebration in the crew room: sensors indicate they lost fewer pods than yesterday, Madeline is pretty sure she fixed something referred to in the handbook as an "interferoshag," Leet's head and symmetry are repaired, Colin found the sleeping quarters, and Joe managed to trap the two-headed repairbot in an empty cargo hold. The fact that that cargo hold should actually be full of supplies doesn't seem to be bothering anyone, so who am I to ruin the mood?

Joe: Well, everyone, congratulations on a relatively low-fatality day aboard the Oz 9.

Everyone: JESUS! Er, whoo, yay, cheers, etc.

Colin: And here's to Matt.

Madeline: Matt? Oh, hell, I completely forgot about him. He was an engineer, wasn't he? Did you find him? Where's he been?

Colin: Oh, uh... no. The computer told me he decided at the last minute to stay on Earth. I ... was ... his replacement.

Joe: They replaced an engineer with a public relations guy? No offense, but I think Matt's skills might have been a bit more useful.

Olivia: I thought we were celebrating.

Leet: Yeah, it's been a good day, right? Nobody died –

Olivia: 68 pods went dark. Nope, hang on. 72. 73.

Leet: Oh, well, OK. So, 73 pods went dark, but nothing happened to the ship-

Olivia: A big piece fell off and probably destroyed an eighth of Sweden. 74. And about all this, I hasten to add: It's not my fault.

Leet: Right. 74 pods. Sweden. What are we celebrating?

[long pause]

Colin: I know how to keep the cheese in the sandwiches.

Joe: To the sandwiches!

Everyone: To the sandwiches!

Narrator: Well, that's one mystery aboard the Oz 9 solved. To hear the answers to the non-cheese-based mysteries, be sure to subscribe to Oz 9 on iTunes, SoundCloud, Stitcher, Himalaya, or wherever you get your podcasts.

You've been listening to:

Tim Sherburn as Head Two and Colin

Eric Perry as Head One, Joe, and Dr. von Haber-Zetzer

Richard Cowen as Leet

Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline

Bonnie Brantley as Jessie, and

Me, Richard Nadolny, as your narrator.

Our music is composed and performed by John Faley.

Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry.

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