

Episode 24: a “podcast” in air quotes

Narrator: As dawn rises on ... whatever day this is And it isn't really “dawn,” but apparently it's dawn in the increasingly irrelevant Earth city of London because the morning music is playing and the aromatherapy is churning out the scents of iced sticky buns and inky black coffee rich with whole cream ... I might be getting a little off-track here. Anyway, the crew is thundering in the general direction of the memory-storage-slash-sausage-room to stop the Albatros from downloading the memory dump of the *real* Albatros, Glenda James. Whether she'll realize those memories aren't her own, or whether she'll just have a whole lot more ideas on how to kill people and decorate Christmas trees with their organs, or both, stopping the process is the first good idea this crop of turnips have had in days.

LBF: [panting] Is this it? Are we finally here? Mon dieu, this ship is enormous!

Olivia: Or possibly you're tired because you and Leet ran in a circle for half an hour before I showed you the way?

vHZ: Don't be mean, Olifia, zis ship is very very big.

Olivia: Doesn't make them any less stupid.

vHZ: Fair point.

LBF: What is happening with your hairs?

vHZ: I vas run to zis place like a child in ze arms of our Colin here. It vas very very fast. Very windy. And a little alarmink, he is not zo careful vis the turnings.

Colin: What are we waiting for? Open the door, computer!

Olivia: Before I open that door, I need to say something very important and central to the existence of every person on this ship.

Leet: What is it, Olivia?

Olivia: It's not my fault.

[door opens]

Albatros: Well, that was ... illuminating.

Madeline: [arriving] What's happening? Where are we?

Leet: We're right outside memory storage.

Madeline: Yes, I know that, Leet, thank you. I mean 'where are we' in terms of ... what's happening. Look, no offense, but shut up. What's happening?

Olivia: Where have you been? I've been calling and calling.

Madeline: Well, I'm here now.

Leet: [slowly] But do you know where you are?

Madeline: Leet?

Leet: Yes, Captain Madeline?

Madeline: Was it the “shut” or the “up” that confused you? So, Albatros...how do you feel?

Albatros: Do you mean “Albatros”? Or ... “Glenda”?

vHZ: Schnauzers in himmel, zis is zo unfortunate!

Albatros: Why? I now know more about my life and my work. Why is that “unfortunate,” hmhhh? I can certainly be more effective at my job aboard this ship.

Colin: But do we really need you to be more effective? I mean, at the moment, there’s not a whole lot for you to do. Once we get to a planet, certainly your services will be in great demand, helping us survive until we get established, but now?

vHZ: Oh, so z ensible, Colin. How do you feel right zis moment, my boy?

Colin: Surprisingly good! Calm. Clear.

vHZ: Nervous? Afraid?

Colin: No! Not at all. How strange.

vHZ: Get out ze notebook, my boy. Write zis down!

Colin: Oh, right!

Madeline: You two mind if we carry on with our most recent crisis?

LBF: There is no need for two such *fantastique* assassins aboard one ship...

Albatros: Do you think it’s a good idea to remind me of that?

LBF: I was going to suggest you might like to go back to your pod. No fwipping *necessaire*!

Albatros: Why in heaven’s name would I go back to my pod? When I have only just watched a month of my life and remembered that my fiance — I suppose he’s my husband by now — and the love of my life is right here aboard this ship?

[gasps – Madeline, Leet, Colin, LBF, vHZ]

Leet: You have a husband? That’s allowed?

Albatros: Allowed? Why wouldn’t it be?

Leet: Because you’re a ro[bot]-oof! Hey!

Madeline: An assassin. Because you’re an assassin. I guess we all kind of assume assassins don’t get married. Or have kids. Please don’t have kids.

LBF: This is ridiculous. Of course assassins marry! And our divorce rates are extremely low.

Leet: Aw, that’s sweet. Assassins mate for life!

vHZ: Yes, and zere partners usually haf a very short one. Zo convenient.

[door opens and Jessie walks out]

Madeline, Leet, Colin, LBF, vHZ, Albatros: Jesus!

Jessie: Wow, that is unpleasant! Is that how it felt for you?

vHZ: Please. Experience it a couple hundred times and zen let's talk.

Jessie: What's everyone doing here?

Olivia: Hang on, where did you come from? Have you been messing with Joe's concealer?

Jessie: Eh? I was in the phone booth.

Olivia: That what?

Colin: The sausage room.

Olivia: The what?

vHZ: Yes, perhaps we could have just one of ze crazy things happenink at one time, mmm? It is better perhaps to focus on ze lady Albatros just now, all righty zen? Hokay.

Madeline: OK, everyone stop. Let's move this conversation to the bridge. Lead the way, Olivia.

Olivia: Do you really need me? I've led you from the bridge to the memory room at least a couple of times, how about Leet leads you back with his map, all right? Just need to nip off and check on something...

Jessie: "Nip off"? I thought she was omnipresent. Dick never did that. Oh! Speaking of Dick...

Madeline: When we get to the bridge, Jessie. Leet?

Leet: Right! OK, soooooo.... Left here, then take the first left.

[they move off]

Narrator: You know, there's nothing a Narrator loves more than a bit of time to really narrate the heck out of a moment. It also helps to have something to talk about. Unfortunately for me — and that's a sentence I use a lot — the only thing happening on the ship right now is the crew not quite managing to realize that four lefts generally bring you back where you started. So we have a bit of time together and not much to talk about. [sighs. Hums. Whistles] Actually, this might be a good time to check in on the 778 and see how Emily and ... the other head are doing with Cal.

[Cal room – metallic banging noise]

Head One: So what people often fail to recognize is that there are there two kinds of pea species edible for humans. You got your *pisum savitum*, which includes both your sweet peas and your snow peas, and then there's *pisum macrocarpon*, which are....ehhh... colloquially known as snap peas. Look if you're gonna be banging your head there, maybe do it away from Cal's control panel, OK?

Narrator: Nope. Nope nope nope. Back to the crew...

LBF: I am telling you, we came from *that* way.

Jessie: Yeah, but was that before or after Olivia was guiding you?

Leet: Before.

LBF: After! I am sure it was after! Remember, you said I should make the sneaky marks, so I was deciding do I want a fleur de lis and perhaps I am wanting the logo of the Boy Scouts — I am very fond of both — and then you said we should go right again.

Leet: Yeah, and that's when Olivia showed up and led us to the bridge.

LBF: And we went that way. So we came from that way!

Albatros: There are marks all over this door! Is that [sniffs] ketchup?

LBF: Certainly not. This is *sauce Tomat*. It is very different! Much ... chunkier. More like ... how do you say...salsa.

Leet: Uhhhh... let's go this way! This way!

[running]

Narrator: Oh for crying out- You know, this might be a really good moment for a flashback. Let's do that.

[flashback noise; sounds of a restaurant or wine bar]

Colin: You're really going to do it, hmmmmm? Imagine that: little Spotty Bosh, flying through space, ready to start an entirely new life on a pristine, perfect, shiny new planet.

SB: You could toddle along, you know. You can certainly afford it. And the ships are all top notch, excellent crews, they bung you in a posh little pod to snooze away the hours until the ship lands and out you pop to subdue the masses or what-have-you.

Colin: Oh, I don't know. I'm not much of a one for adventure. It's the quiet life for me.

SB: No adventure? Aren't you and the little wifey going skydiving soon or something?

Colin: God, don't remind me. She wants to do "something big" for our anniversary, she says. I suppose splatting ourselves all over the tarmac of the M16 qualifies.

SB: Just think about it, at least. This planet's about to snuff it. A bunch of the lads are coming along: Hugo, Terry, GoGo, Jacks, Wiggy... Tried to get NibbleBiscuit to join, but her husband's not up for it.

Colin: Too damn bad. Get that nob off the planet, and I'll breathe easier.

SB: Yeh, why does he hate you so much?

Colin: No clue, I'm sure.

SB: Come on, Horace.... It'll be a lark! Look, you've got six months to think about it. It's your round, by the by.

Colin: Little Spotty Bosh, the astronaut. No, I don't believe I will. I like my feet right here on old terra firma, thanks all the same.

SB: All right then. Your funeral.

[flashback noise]

Narrator: Ironically, Spotty Bosh's pod was one of the first to melt down, and he did most of his space travel across the windshield of the Oz 6748, along with Hugo, Terry, GoGo, and Jacks ... though oddly enough, not Wiggy.

[door opens, bridge noise]

Albatros: If we could speed this up, I'd like to find my husband and thaw him out.

LBF: But this is madness! Why not let him sleep peaceful and quiet, and you can have your own life aboard the Oz? Mmmmmm?

Albatros: Oh, what a wonderful idea. And when he wakes up to a wife that's 25 years older than he is and who spent the last two-and-a-half decades having an affair, I'm sure he'll be perfectly fine with it.

Leet: [aside to Jessie] Is your sister's husband an assassin too?

Jessie: No clue. We weren't exactly close. Honestly, I didn't even know she was married.

Leet: So you didn't get to be her maid of honor? That's sad.

Jessie: Ha! Knowing my sister, she probably kidnapped the minister or did some sort of ceremony herself involving the blood of chickens or virgins or something. If her groom was conscious of the time, I'm sure he was screaming.

vHZ: Yes, zo, how much of your previous life did you actually zee?

Albatros: About 45 days.

vHZ: How is zis possible? You weren't in zere zo long?

Albatros: I'm a skimmer. I got the gist of it. Computer!

LBF: This "marriage" of yours, was it happy?

Albatros: Excuse me? I heard those quotes.

LBF: Eh?

Albatros: Around "marriage" – I heard the quote marks. Are you implying my marriage wasn't real?

LBF: What "quote marks"? There were no "quote marks"!

Madeline: Wow, yeah, I heard them that time.

Albatros: Twice, even.

Madeline: I mean, same phrase both times, but I definitely heard them.

LBF: I am simply asking if the "marriage" is happy!

Leet: Yep, even I heard them that time.

vHZ: Vat is zis you are doing vis the wagging of ze two fingers on each hand zing?

Madeline: Air quotes.

vHZ: Vas ist dis?

Madeline: They're called air quotes. Like this: Your "marriage" – was it happy?

vHZ: Like zis? Your "marriage."

Jessie: Bend your fingers at the knuckle and pull your arms down a bit. Like this: your "marriage."

vHZ: Your "marriage."

Madeline: Whoa, easy there, cowboy. Only two times with the wagging. Wait. He's European, would he only do one? You use single quotes, right?

Leet: I think twice is pretty universal for air quotes, actually.

Colin: Until recently, you thought Jessie was speaking Japanese. What do you know about "universal"?

vHZ: Zo, like zis? Your "marriage."

Jessie: A little less elbow, mate; you're gonna put someone's eye out. [pause] That's it. You've got it!

vHZ: Oh, jes, zis is ze perfect name, air quotes. Your "marriage." Zo dizmizzive.

Albatros: Are we all quite through?

LBF: Yes, please stop!

Albatros: I assure you my marriage was quite genuine. Computer!

Olivia: Why do "people" always think hollering louder is going to get my attention?

Albatros: It worked, didn't it?

Olivia: But you have to ask yourself: is this the sort of attention I really want?

Albatros: I want to see the pod map, please.

Olivia: There isn't one.

Albatros: There must be. They wouldn't just chuck 50,000 pods on here without a map.

Olivia: Oh, wouldn't they? We're talking about Gated Galaxies here, Most of the instruments on this bridge were bought off Craig's List. Well, I say "bought"...

LBF: Ma petite oiseau, I have already spent many hours aboard zis ship looking through ze pods. I can help you to find your *amour*.

Albatros: You would do that? You would help me find him?

LBF: Mais oui! I am French! We are passionate! Romantique! Of course I shall help you to find him!
[aside] And then ... I shall kill him.

Leet: You might want to bring the volume down on those asides.

LBF: You heard that?

Jessie: Everyone heard it, ya burk. You hoot like a howler monkey.

Olivia: Might as well use the intercom, just sayin'.

Albatros: I'll accept your assistance, but once he's located, if you make one move toward him, I'll pull your "esophagus" out your left ear. And I use quotes there, because once it's hanging over your shoulder, is it really an esophagus any more?

LBF: [whimpers] I don't want to go now.

Olivia: Oh, go on. I'll keep an eye on you.

LBF: But you don't like me.

Olivia: I didn't say I'd save you. But I will keep an eye.

LBF: [whimpers]

Albatros: Come along.

[door: voices fading]

LBF: What is his name? Perhaps I have seen him already?

Albatros: [a bit love-struck] Horace. Horace McRory.

[doors close, thump]

vHZ: Vat just happened here?

Leet: Colin passed out again!

Narrator: So, I'm gonna stop you here for a second to remind you that "Colin Smith" isn't Colin's real name. Hear the air quotes? In fact, if you go alllllllllll the way back to episode one, you'll be reminded that his real name ... is Horace McRory. [pause] No quotes.

[flashback noise – same bar or restaurant]

Spotty Bosh: Make sure you specify the Oz 9, so all the crew can be together again.

Colin: Where do I put that?

SB: There. Where it says, "Top three ship requests."

Colin: Why is 13 already filled in?

SB: It was like that on my form as well. Typo, I suppose.

Narrator: Actually, it was a secret warning from Sandra, assistant to Jeremy, G2's Ethics Division, and quite possibly the only person in the building with any ethics at all.

SB: Just scratch it out. So... what changed your mind, Horrible?

Colin: Let's see.... My wife's just died in a gruesome accident, the world blames me for her death, and it turns out, Lord Neville Neville-Bickford is her godfather, and I'm rather certain he's put a price on my head.

SB: Bad luck, old man.

Colin: Rather. There's not a lot to stay on Earth for, is there? She'd have loved this, the adventure, the excitement. I think she was rather bored with our life, to be honest.

SB: Really? What makes you say that?

Colin: Travel brochures strewn about the house, a survival course... do you know, she could eat a tablespoon of rat poison with no ill effect? She used to do it at parties. Money well spent, I say.

SB: That doesn't mean she was unhappy with you, does it?

Colin: Perhaps not. But then there were eight or ten times a day she'd say, "Colin, I'm bored, I want a divorce." Bit of a giveaway, really. So, my darling girl, I hope you've found the adventure you sought. This is for you. To Glenda McRory.

SB: To Glenda!

[chink of glasses – flashback noise]

Narrator: Ohhhhh, OK, this is starting to make sense. Oh, ahem. Sorry, didn't hear the "end flashback" sound. Back on the ship, Colin's been carried to his bunk, unconscious, AGAIN. At least that's one place on the ship the crew are starting to remember how to get to.

[Colin's bunk music]

Colin: Oooooohhhhhh.

Jessie: Hey there.

Colin: Jesus!

Jessie: You can see me, right?

Colin: Of course I can see you. You just surprised me. Why are you in my bunk? Why am I in my bunk? Oh god...

Jessie: What?

Colin: The last conversation I had that started with "why are you in my bunk, why am I in my bunk" didn't turn out well for me.

Jessie: Really? Tell me about it.

Colin: Really? Well, Dr. von Haber Zetzer-

Jessie: Yeah, I was being sarcastic, I don't care. Listen. What happened back there? I'm pretty damn sure my sister wasn't married. And the last thing I heard her describe as "the love of her life" was a really dry martini.

Colin: I continue to have such mixed emotions about your sister.

Jessie: Look, you know something. Spill it.

Colin: All right. I guess since you weren't originally on this ship, you probably aren't trying to kill me.

Jessie: Speed up this explanation, and it'll stay that way.

Colin: Really? Threats?

Jessie: Sorry. They work for my sister; thought I'd give it a go. Nothing?

Colin: Pre-olive, maybe.

Jessie: What?

Colin: Never mind. Look, and this stays strictly between us – I'm not actually a member of the crew.

Jessie: Uh huh, and?

Colin: I'm a passenger. Originally, I mean.

Jessie: Yeah, so what's your big secret?

Colin: That's it. I'm a passenger [whispers] in disguise.

Jessie: [laughs a lot]

Colin: When you're ready.

Jessie: [still laughing]

Colin: So, am I to assume my disguise isn't working?

Jessie: [gasping] What "disguise" would that be, actually? You're not in uniform, you're in a posh tuxedo that still smells a bit of preservatives. You talk like a toff, and I saw you staring at a screwdriver the other day like it might attack you. And didn't you have a different accent when I came aboard?

Colin: Occasionally. OK, look, I didn't say it was a good disguise. The truth is, I don't know why I'm alive. All the friends I came aboard with were in the pods around me, and not one of them survived the first day! In fact, I'm not sure they survived the first hour.

Jessie: What's any of this got to do with Glenda?

Colin: Glenda, your sister?

Jessie: Yeah.

Colin: Or Glenda, my wife.

Jessie: What?!

Colin: Well, exactly. There must have been some confusion in memory storage: she's listening to memories from the wrong Glenda.

Olivia: Not my fault.

Colin/Jessie: GAH!!!

Colin: How long have you been listening?

Olivia: Uhhh... from "really dry martini."

Jessie: Any chance you could announce when you're eavesdropping?

Olivia: If I announced it, it wouldn't be eavesdropping, would it?

Colin: Is that what happened? She got played my wife Glenda's memories instead of Glenda-her-sister's memories? Hang on. Why are my deceased wife's memories in memory storage?

Jessie: And how the hell did they get my sister's memories? She wouldn't just give that up. How do you know she heard your wife's memories?

Colin: On the way out with the Bichon Freeze, she said my real name: Horace McRory.

Jessie: Horace Mc-hang on a minute... wasn't your wife the one who jumped out of a plane-

Colin: With a backpack full of sandwiches, yes. It was an *accident*.

Jessie: Is there anyone on this ship besides me who hasn't murdered anyone?

Olivia: Technically, the Albatros. And le Bichon Freeze, come to that.

Colin: What? They're assassins!

Olivia: They're *copies* of assassins. They're brand new. About the only thing aboard this wreck that is, and that includes the food.

Colin: Look, she doesn't know *I'm* Horace.

Jessie: Why didn't she recognize you?

Colin: After Glenda died, I ... made some changes. Lost weight, changed my hair color, the moustache is new. I guess my disguise isn't so laughable after all, eh? The point is, she can't find out.

Olivia: Why not? Could be useful. Having the most dangerous ... critter aboard this ship – including Cal – in love with you seems a good plan to me.

Colin: It wasn't a particularly happy marriage.

Jessie: I guess not, since you chucked her out of an airplane with a rucksack of ham sammies.

Colin: It was an ACCIDENT! But if she decides it wasn't.... She's only seen, what, 45 days of my wife's life, right? We just need to stop her seeing more.

Olivia: I dunno... Better her seeing that than assassin Glenda's memories.

Jessie: Have to say I agree with Olivia. What happens when she finds your pod empty?

Colin: That's it! Can't we just say Horace McRory died with all the rest of his mates and went out the airlock alongside Spotty Bosh?

Olivia: We can try, but she's pretty clever. What if she finds out you were here all along, lying to her?

Colin: She's not my Glenda! Can't you ... I don't know, erase that bit and start over? Surely there's a nice Glenda in there, one with three children and a golden retriever?

Jessie: Whose husband didn't try to off her?

Colin: [angry – like, really angry] I didn't try to off her!

[pew pew pew]

Jessie: My god, what's happening?

Olivia: It's Colin! He's firing lasers? Get out, I'll seal him in his bunk! GO!!

[door, muffled pews]

Olivia: Are you all right?

Jessie: I think so. That bunk gonna hold him?

Olivia: It's a Gated Galaxies ship. Of course it's not going to hold him. [intercom] Madeline and Dr. von Haber Zetzer to the bridge, please. You've all got about ... 8 minutes to live.

Narrator: As Colin's olive-enhanced powers threaten to tear the ship apart, let's take a moment to go on an Easter egg hunt. We've heard from Colin's wife before, remember? If you figure out where and when, drop us a line on twitter to @oz9podcast. We'll pick someone at random from the correct answers to get a nice little prize package. Or an utterly worthless prize package, depending on your attitude towards stickers and things.

You've been listening to:

Eric Perry as Dr. von Haber Zetzer and Head One

Tim Sherburn as Colin

Bonnie Brantley as Jessie

June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros

Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise

Richard Cowen as Leet

Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia

And introducing Kevin Hall, as Spotty Bosh.

I'm Richard Nadolny, your narrator.

Our theme and other music were composed and performed by John Faley, with additional arrangement by Elliott Faley. Our artwork is by Lucas Elliott, and Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry.

We hope to see you at PodTales on October 20 in Boston, and we really hope to see you in Seattle next April for the WiFiSciFi science fiction live podcast extravaganza! Check out [wifiscifi dot org](http://wifiscifi.org) for more details!

Until next time, space monkeys; Narrator out!