

Episode 26

Narrator: It's been a rough year for earth. Shortages are beginning to hit folks hard. The polyester supply has completely dried up, and there's been no more naugahyde since the last ill-tempered, leathery little nauga turned its mottled hooves skyward and called it a day. People are rationing Twiglets and packets of raspberry lime Jello, and the last loaf of pumpernickel bread, smoky, dark, and with questionable intentions, went for an "undisclosed amount" at Sotheby's before its new owner was beset by a rampaging crowd armed with pickled herring. Neither he nor his loaf were seen again. It turns out, sending your most dependable consumers into space affects demand, all the way down the chain. Factories were closing everywhere, goods were scarce, and morale was low. Even the death of Karen, struck by a bucket right in the middle of demanding to see someone's manager, failed to raise more than a modest round of applause.

[underneath narrator's speech, sound of a woman bickering, clang, ouch, thump, yay, smattering of applause]

Narrator: Hostilities are rising as goods grow scarce, and no one is safe. Glenda, annoyed by demands for payment for her sister's ship and the legion of former colleagues sent to her door to retrieve the money, has gone to Gated Galaxies' Headquarters to find something she can use for leverage.

[elevator ding, footsteps]

Buck: [on telephone] You know we can't keep Southers forever. I mean, we had a lovely time baking buttermilk biscuits, and his mother's recipe is to die for, but this basement is bad for my lungs and sooner or later, someone's gonna figure out we've got him.

Glenda: Buck, the world is on fire. No one cares about our Kentucky fried has-been.

Buck: So why don't we just let him go? Or *let him go*, if you catch my meaning.

Glenda: Not just yet. I may need him to translate what I bring back from G2 HQ. So shut up, take some cough medicine, and keep an eye on Southers. Got it?

Buck: Yeah, boss.

Glenda: Oh, and Buck...

Buck: Yeah, boss?

Glenda: Save me a biscuit. No, two. Three!

Buck: Oh, uhhhhhhh. You got it. Southers! Aprons on!

Southers: [distant] Not until you get more baking powder. This here tin is stale!

Buck: I told ya, it's fine. It was sealed. [click]

Glenda: Mother of mercy, preserve me from idiots and fools. And you'd better get started because there's a lot of them. [opens door] What the green-and-grassy side of hell is this?

[music playing]

Glenda: Christmas lights? Television? A bed? What the hell is going on here?

Donna: Welcome to Gated Galaxies! My name's Donna. Can I help you?

Glenda: What's all this? I thought G2 was defunct.

Donna: Do ya know, I was sort of thinking that too, as I'm the only employee that's showed up since the launch, but I got my paycheck two days ago, bang on time, so I just keep working away!

Glenda: Why is there a bed here? And a microwave on the reception desk?

Donna: Oh, I just sort of moved in. Gas shortages and rampaging mobs meant my commute was taking up to 3 hours, and I only live about 4 miles away, you see. I tried biking for a while, but slaloming through mindless hordes bent on destruction was just so slow, doncha know. So I grabbed my cats and moved in!

Glenda: What do you do, exactly?

Donna: Filing, mostly. This place is nutty for just filing things willy nilly. The basement toilet for one was a popular receptacle for documents.

Glenda: Donna, is it?

Donna: Mmm hmmm. And you are?

Glenda: Does it matter? Are we bonding here?

Donna: [miffed] Hmmm. Well, you'll have to sign the official register.

Glenda: You're not serious.

Donna: And I'll need to see some ID. Do you have an appointment?

Glenda: An appoint- What are you talking about? With who?

Donna: Whom.

Glenda: Don't start with me. You have no idea who I am.

Donna: I will, soon as you hand over your ID.

Glenda: Fine. Here.

Donna: Glenda James. Hang on just a Parson's salted nut roll- why is that name familiar?

Glenda: It isn't. I'll take that back now, thank you.

Donna: Oh, it'll come to me. Likely in the middle of the night, and I'll shout it out and startle my cats! And if you could just sign the register, please, just there. Hang on, I'll find you a pen.

Glenda: Never mind. I brought my own.

Donna: Actually, G2 prefers black or blue ink- [sound of scribbling] But you do right ahead. I'm sure it'll be fine. And the ink from that soggy marker of yours won't soak through to the other side, and oh, looky

there, it did. Might coulda waited for me to find a ballpoint in an approved color, but I'm sure you have more important things to do.

Glenda: Don't you get nervous in this big building all alone? All those empty desks... it's so quiet.

Donna: I did at first, sure. But now I kinda like it. I spend a lot of time gardening.

Glenda: Gardening? Where?

Donna: Oh, there were so many plants all over the building! I brought 'em all together and dumped the potting soil in a raised bed I made out of a whole buncha bookshelves lined with garbage bags. I've got a nice crop of potatoes going, and I found some seeds in the underground lab. Not sure what they're going to be, but they're growing really fast! I just light a match under the fire detector in that room, and it brings the sprinklers on real nice.

Glenda: You're mad.

Donna: Nothing wrong with a homey workplace, I always say. Hey, if you've got a little time, I could use some helping moving the jacuzzi from Mr. Southers' office. I think it'll make a real nice koi pond.

Glenda: If I help you with your ... koi pond, will you let me poke around a little bit?

Donna: Oh, sure. Maybe you can help me put some of the shredded stuff back together. Takes ages. Doesn't file real well either. Too many edges.

Glenda: I'd be ... delighted to help.

Narrator: Back on the ship, everyone is trying to wrap their heads around the return of Joe. Especially Dr. von Haber Zetzer who, until recently, WAS Joe.

vHZ: Zis is most mysterious. Here I am, standink here. You can see me, can you not, friend Leet?

Leet: I see two of you.

vHZ: Yes, zat is not eggzactly what I am askink, but I suppose it answers my question. Why is our impossible friend Joe zere mopping ze lab?

Leet: That's sort of what he does. He mops. And scares people. He used to mop all the time. And scare people.

vHZ: Yes, my boy, I am well aware of what Joe *used* to do. I am askink what he is doing *now*. Mostly I am askink why he is... Yes: why he is. That is what I am needing to know.

Madeline: Doc, anything to share here?

vHZ: Mein captain, I am as in ze dark as you are.

[power outage]

vHZ: Qvite literally, it seems.

Colin: What's going on?

Jessie: Whoa! All right, now that is truly weird. Does it hurt?

Colin: Does what hurt? What is that flashing? My god, it's bright.

Albatros: That's ... incredible. Colin, I want you to do something very difficult, all right?

Colin: [suspicious] What?

Albatros: Open your mouth without saying anything.

[everyone but Colin: expressions of surprise, wonder]

Leet: Wow, Colin, that's amazing!

Colin: What? What did I do?

Leet: You opened your mouth without saying anything!

Jessie: That *is* coming from Colin, isn't it?

Olivia: You're a torch.

Colin: What?

LBF: You are a little glowworm, ha!

Colin: Could everyone tell me why you're staring at me?

LBF: 'Ow do you know we are staring, mmmmmmm?

Madeline: He can see in the dark, remember? Olivia, could we possibly get some lights on that aren't coming from what I'm really hoping is Colin's mouth?

Colin: What?

Olivia: No can do for the moment. The explosion is short circuiting areas all over the ship.

Jessie: Are we still moving?

Olivia: We are, yeah, but we're totally flying blind at the moment. Not that that's anything new. Oh, and the pods still have power, not that anyone's asking.

Jessie: Ehhhhhh, what about Cal?

[silence]

Olivia: Crap. Hang on. Patching them through.

[banging]

Head 1: And that's why most animals with good night vision cannot see color. Tarsiers actually have eyes bigger than their brains and can see in complete darkness though they then try to eat the prey with their feet. Just a little joke there.

Olivia: Nope nope nope.

Jessie: Get them back, dammit. [pause] I didn't know that about tarsiers.

LBF: 'Allo? Is Cal going to go poof poof?

Head 1: 'Ey, greetings, crew. Did you manage to catch my little joke about tarsiers?

Madeline: Do you both mind? I'm trying to captain here.

Jessie: "Trying" is a generous way of putting it.

[thump]

LBF: Ow! What is this for?

Madeline: Jessie. Please deliver it for me.

LBF: Heh heh heh. Very well, *mon capitaine!*

Madeline: Uhhhhh.... Other head, Emily, what's the status on Cal after the explosion?

Head 1: Now, that's actually a very interesting question.

[pause]

Madeline: It's too early in the episode for a cliffhanger, 778 — got an answer for us?

Narrator: She's right. It is.

[thump]

vHZ: Ow! Gott in Heidelberg, vot vas dat?

LBF: Pardon.

Emily: Cal's screens have gone dark. We don't know if the countdown has stopped or we just can't see the clock.

[thump]

Albatros: That was unwise.

LBF: Mon dieu!

[a brief, intense fracas]

LBF: [small voice] Ouch.

Jessie: Is there no other way to tell if the countdown continues? No ticking or beeping, nothing?

Head 1: 'Fraid not. Cal's gone dark. Like the ship! Get it? Gone dark!

Leet: Ow!

[thump, distant whump]

LBF: [from far away] Ow.

Colin: You have very fast reflexes for such a big person, don't you?

Leet: I used to be a ball retriever at Wimbledon.

Colin: What? Why does that require fast reflexes?

Leet: Oh, it doesn't. I just thought of it.

Colin: Leet...

Leet: Shut up?

Colin: If you would.

Jessie: Colin, would you for crying out loud stop flapping your gab? The flashing is giving me a headache.

Colin: What *are* you talking about?

Jessie: Can you no see it? It's literally right under your nose!

Colin: Just some random flashing is all. Where is that coming from?

Madeline: SHUT. UP.

Joe: If I may...

Everyone: Jesus!

Joe: Good to know some things never change. Ow!

LBF: OW! This is not fair! That mop tastes disgusting!

Joe: Congratulations. Pretty sure you're now technically a cannibal.

LBF: Mon dieu! Where is Mademoiselle Jessie hiding?

Albatros: Pro tip: she smells like haggis and a wet sheep.

Madeline: *SHUT. UP!* We need to figure out if Cal is going to blow, and if so, how soon. So if you all could shut the hell up for five glorious, idiot-free minutes, I could maybe get an answer!

Jessie: [mumbling] Won't be idiot-free with you in it.

LBF: HA!

[thump]

Albatros: Once was stupid. Twice is suicidal.

LBF: Mon dieu! I am merely following orders!

Jessie: Hang on. You're the 6748's assassin.

LBF: Oui.

Jessie: That makes you technically under *my* command.

LBF: Oh. Uhhhhhhh...

Jessie: It does. It does! From now on, mate, you're going to do as I tell you.

LBF: And if I don't? What can you possibly do to me, ehhhh?

Jessie: Oh, I'm sure I'll figure out something, don't you worry. There are penalties for insubordination.

LBF: Don't tell me about your insub...insubblahblahblub, we are no longer on the 6748, so you have no authority over moi!

Madeline: Crew.

Albatros: Actually, I believe she does. G2's rules of conduct clearly states that as long as you're on a G2 ship, *any* G2 ship-

LBF: You have memorized the G2 Conduct Code?

Albatros: It's less than a page long.

Colin: That's hardly surprising. Frankly, I'm more astonished anyone at G2 can spell "conduct."

Madeline: Crew!

vHZ: Zis is very interesting, you see, as the only code of conduct in ze laboratories was if you were going to blow up ze place, you had to giff at least 5 minutes' warnink.

Jessie: That's how you define "very interesting," then, is it?

vHZ: I zupsect you are not a woman of science, former-Captain Jessie.

Madeline: Hello? Crew?!

Jessie: Oy! Easy on the "former" there, mate. And if by "science" you mean periodically blowing people up, then no, I guess I'm not.

vHZ: Perhaps ve should hail ze 6748 and verify zis, hmmm?

Jessie: Hang on- You know about my ship?

[please record yourself bickering with whomever you record with. It doesn't matter too much what you bicker about, as I'm going to overlay it with the following conversation. 😊]

Madeline: [furiously quiet] Olivia?

Olivia: Yes, Madeline?

Madeline: Before I go rogue and fwip every awake person on this ship out the smallest, not-intended-for-humans airlock, could you take me to Cal's room?

Olivia: With pleasure. Mind if I gas this section of corridor on the way out? I've been holding back a durian, limburger, and turpentine mixture that could knock a cement gargoyle on its ass.

Madeline: That's one of the aromatherapy options?

Olivia: It is, actually. I think it'll be right therapeutic. For you, anyway.

Madeline: Make it so.

[door, gas, cries of outrage, coughing]

Narrator: Ahhhhhh.... That moment almost made up for me having to do this stupid job. Almost. Wait – let’s enjoy it a moment more.

[gas spray sound, coughing, cries of “open the door, Olivia!” and “Computer!” etc.]

Narrator: Glorious. I think I’m going to make that my new ring tone. Hang on- [same sounds] Ahhhhhh.... Right. Where were we? Ah, yes. Chaos. Carry on. I’m just going to bask in this a moment longer. [same sounds] Oh, yeah. Back on earth...

[G2 HQ]

Glenda: Nothing. There’s nothing! I thought you said the basement toilet was the motherlode.

Donna: It is! There’s tons of filing to be done here. Look at all the stacks! Oooo. What’s this?

Glenda: What? Where?

Donna: In the back stall. It looks like a giant ... nest?

Glenda: You’re joking. What, like rats or something?

Donna: Oh, no.... I wouldn’t think so. We have pretty big rats where I come from. I’ve seen ‘em take down a convenience store! That poor fella behind the counter never was the same. Real twitchy.

Glenda: Have I ever told you what I do for a living?

Donna: Well, no. Not you haven’t. I’m guessing it’s not clerical work, though. You’re about as useful as a hot dish in hell, if you’ll pardon my frank. Anyway, I’ve seen big rats and big rats’ nests, and this is way bigger than that, even. [pause, rustling noise] Oh, uhhhh.... Glenda....

Glenda: [not really listening] Mmmmmm?

Donna: I’m pretty sure whatever made this nest... is ... in it.

Glenda: [paying attention] You wouldn’t have a Sharpie on ya?

Donna: Ya know, that is such a random question. I hope I live to hear the story behind it.

Glenda: If you have one, I can pretty much guarantee it.

Donna: Well, now, there’s a tragedy. Should we make a break for the office supply closet?

Man’s voice: You don’t have to worry. You’re not in any danger.

Glenda: *You* are, however. Come out where we can see you.

[rustling of paper, ridiculously handsome man emerges]

Man: Hello. I’m Matt.

Donna: Gosh. Goodness. I ... you....

Glenda: Are youglowing?

Matt: Smoldering, more like.

Donna: I'll say.

Matt: I was on the tarmac when my rocket launched. I'm still smoking.

Donna: I'll say.

Glenda: How are you alive?

Matt: G2 doesn't make its own porta-potties.

Donna: What?

Matt: I was supposed to be on the Oz 9. I'm the engineer. It took off without me.

Glenda: That's not a G2 uniform.

Matt: Yes, well, when I came out of the porta john too soon, the blast blew all my clothes off.

[squee from Donna]

Matt: It wasn't even that much of a blast, but G2 uniforms are pretty flimsy. Fortunately, there was a suitcase that didn't get loaded. Even better, apparently passenger Horace McRory and I are the same size, so I guess it's thanks for letting me be you, Horace!

Donna: You look ... quite nice in a tuxedo.

Matt: Why, thank you. Turns out, that's the only clothing Horace packed. Fifteen tuxes and, like, a dozen martini glasses. And 7 jars of olives. Not sure where Horace thought he was going.

Glenda: So what are you doing here?

Matt: Honestly, I was too embarrassed to go home. Admitting I missed the launch because I had to pee was more than I could face. So I made my way here and holed up.

Donna: Well, looking at the wrappers you wove into your nest, the mystery of the disappearing beef jerky is finally solved.

Matt: I was trying not to frighten you by taking the snacks you didn't seem to want.

Donna: Or the ones I was saving till last, but never you mind. How did I not know you were here?

Matt: It's a very big building. I spend most of my time down here, just looking through documents. I was trying to get them at least a little organized, to make it easier for you.

Donna: Oh, gosh! That's so sweet of you!

Glenda: If you bat your eyelashes anymore, he's going to need another tuxedo. So, Matt — have ya found anything ... useful?

Matt: As a matter of fact ...

Narrator: Back on the Oz 9, the crew has managed to escape the stench-filled corridor. Madeline and Olivia are trying to figure out if Cal's about to go off – without setting Cal off. Joe and Dr. von Haber Zetzer are discussing the relative narcissism and “ego buoyancy” required to occupy two bodies instead of just one while cleaning up the doctor's lab. The Albatros has resumed her hunt for Horace, and Jessie is looking for actually edible food — though being Scottish, her definition of “edible” is broader than most. Colin is attempting to tidy up his bunk, but his uncontrolled super speed power keeps causing him to slam into walls, making more of a mess than he started with. Given that Cal – and the ship carrying it – could explode at any moment, the crew are astonishingly calm, pointing to an unexpected evolutionary advantage to not being very clever. And speaking of not-clever people....

[crew room]

Leet: I told Colin to clean out the microwave, like, ninety times. Honestly, I have no idea how he managed to explode a hockey puck. What are you working on?

LBF: My list.

Leet: What's a leeest?

LBF: Not leeest, list. I thought we were all understandy now.

Leet: Sure, when you talk sense. What kind of leeest is it?

LBF: It is my wish list.

Leet: Huh? What is a weeeeeesh leeeest?

LBF: Now you are being funny, I think. All assassins have a wish list. Like, if you could kill anyone ever, in the past, the present, peoples who are already dead, not-real peoples – who would you assassin?

Leet: That's grim.

LBF: Who would you assassin, if you had my *incroyable* skills? If you are nice, perhaps I will do you a little assassin for your birthday.

Leet: No thanks. I'm good. I mostly like people. Who's on your list?

LBF: Uh uh uh! It's is *une secrète*!

Leet: Whatever. Sandwich?

LBF: Fine! You can take a little peek at my list, since you are so badly wanting!

Leet: Oh, am I? Here, hand it over. Charles Dickens?

LBF: I am thinking without the Little Match Girl, our computer would be much less... Olivia.

Leet: I like her the way she is. Number two: Mr. Southers. Hard to argue with that one.

LBF: He is, how do you say *horrible* in English?

Leet: No idea. Why is your English so terrible? Couldn't they fix that in your programming?

[pause]

LBF: Oh, and how is your French, ehrrrr? Hang on- my ... what?

Narrator: Well, that's just unfortunate. I guess you could say, the cat's out of the lab! [pause] Too soon? If you've listened to 26 episodes of this nonsense, clearly you're a fan of sci fi. Or nosebleeds, one or the other. So why not join the cast of Oz 9 plus five other incredible sci fi podcasts for a magical evening of live performances? It's much safer than actually being ON the Oz 9, plus you'll get to recover from the ninecompoops by enjoying Relativity, Sage and Savant, Moonbase Theta Out, A 9th World Journal, and Girl in Space! Go to wifiscifi.org for links to our Indiegogo and help us make it happen. Even if you can't attend, there are great perks to enjoy that will make you feel like you're there.

You've been listening to:

Eric Perry as Mr. Southers, Dr. von Haber-Zetzer, Head 1, and Joe

June Clark Eubanks as Glenda and the Albatros

Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie

Kevin Hall as Matt

Tim Sherburn as Colin, Buck, and Emily

Richard Cowen as Leet

Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline

Aaron Clark as Le Bichon Frise and

Me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator.

Our music is composed and performed by John Faley, and our artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry.

Until next time, space monkeys, Narrator out!