

Episode 27

[fire alarm, sprinklers]

Donna: Well, crap.

Narrator: I honestly thought we'd reached our saturation point for weird, but it turns out, there's a vast reservoir of weird we'd previously left untapped. Back on Earth, Donna and Glenda have joined forces to try and figure out what Gated Galaxies is up to. On the Oz 9, Leet may have revealed a very dangerous secret. Actually, he DID reveal it... the question now is, is le Bichon Frise smart enough to understand what he's been told? And what's with the sprinklers at G2 HQ?

Glenda: You knew it was bound to happen. No one can smoulder like that for what, two, three weeks and not suddenly burst into flames.

Donna: I know. The EMT said it was partly due to his recent diet of nothing but smoked meats. He was mostly nitrates. But that chin!

Glenda: Yes, I think it's over here, actually. Too chiseled to burn.

Donna: I should've known it was too good to last. Well, at least we can give him a decent burial. Hand me his chin and grab a shovel!

Glenda: You're joking.

[sounds of digging]

Donna: You said you couldn't have the police in here, doing an investigation, and you scared that poor EMT so bad, he'll be scrubbing out those scrubs when he gets home. So what would *you* like us to do with all ash and ... things?

Glenda: There's a perfectly good garbage chute. No one's looking for him; everyone thought he went up with the ship, one way or another. Bag him and bin him.

Donna: That seems awfully disrespectful.

Glenda: And burying his remains in your garbage-bag-bookshelf insta-garden isn't?

Donna: We can do it nice, like. Look, I found an office that belonged to someone named Matt, and I peeled off his name plate and snapped it in half to make a suitable marker.

Glenda: Buried in an office planter, surrounded by composted coffee grounds and leftover tuna salad, with half a nameplate as your gravestone. This is "suitable" where you come from, is it?

Donna: It's quick and it's quiet. Now — do you want to say a few words or shall I?

Glenda: Oh, do go on. I can hardly wait to hear.

Donna: Fine. You pour. [sounds of bits being poured from a bucket] Ahem. Dear Matt... something. You really were ... something. Amen. Now, shall we go through that stack of papers he found?

Glenda: I'm not sure I'll be able to read through the tears, but yes. Let's.

Narrator: Matt is gone, and even thousands of light years away, Colin feels a pang at the loss... of his tuxedo.

Colin: Ouch!

Narrator: But bigger things are afoot aboard the 9. Madeline and Olivia have gone to check on Cal to see if the explosion in Dr. von Haber Zetzer's lab messed up the countdown – and the 30-minute safety reset the crew depend on for survival.

Head 1: What are ya... what are ya looking at under there?

[bang]

Madeline: Ouch! Dammit. There are a whole lot of wires under here, but I can't see where any of them lead. I need a flashlight.

Olivia: We could get Colin to come in here and open his mouth.

Madeline: We could, but then words might come out of it. Emily, do you have a light anywhere?

Emily: I do. One moment.

[zippo]

Madeline: Why do you have a lighter?

Emily: Because I smoke.

Head 1: You do?

Olivia: Hang on, how do *you* smoke, and even more, how do *you* not know about it?

Emily: It's a little hobbit

Head 1: Habit

Emily: Habit I picked up, thanks to the Shirtless Brawntosaurus. That's b-r-a-w-n-tosaurus, in case you didn't get the joke, Captain.

Madeline: Yeah, got it, thanks. Could you hold that away from my hair, please?

Olivia: Leet got you smoking? I doubt it.

Head 1: Yeah, I could use a bit of explanation, there.

Emily: Tweedledum 9. [power down, sound of Zippo, puffing] Simple. Leet taught us our passwords. I power him down, enjoy a quiet ciggie, and when I finish, I fire him up again. Usually. Sometimes I don't for a while. It's very peaceful. I just can't move much, but that's a small price to pay.

Madeline: And he doesn't know you're doing it?

Emily: I suspect he will now. He was getting suspicious because of all the coughing in the mornings.

Madeline: Still not quite sure how a robot smokes.

Emily: Do you understand the physiology of a human smoking?

Madeline: Not entirely.

Emily: Then perhaps you can be comfortable in your continued ignorance about this as well.

Madeline: Once I get this bomb thing figured out, you and I are going to have a conversation.

Emily: Oh, good. Plenty of time, then.

Madeline: *Look*. Just... wake your better half up and shut up.

Emily: Fine. One moment. [sound of spray]

Madeline: Is that... patchouli?

Emily: It covers up the scent of smoke.

Olivia: What are you, 11? And since when do you have an aromatherapy upgrade?

Emily: Tweedledum 9. [firing up]

Head 1: So about this smoking, eh? Ah, man, I smell wet hippie again. I'm tellin' ya, something is wrong with my sensors!

Madeline: Let's just concentrate on Cal, OK? Is the countdown clock showing yet?

Head 1: Not yet.

Madeline: Dammit! Olivia, call Jessie. Get her to bring me a flashlight, will you?

Olivia: Oh, absolutely, Jessie's a huge improvement on Colin. [on intercom] Freeloader formerly known as Captain Jessie, can you grab a torch and hightail it to Cal's room, please?

Madeline: Do you know what the counter was at when it went off? Any clue at all? Do I have 15 minutes, 15 seconds, what? How long has it been since you last entered the code?

Emily: Unfortunately, my ability to calculate elapsed time was fried along with my citrus.

Head 1: Circuits. AndI'm sensing several unauthorized interruptions to my consciousness – what's going on here?

Madeline: Hang on, hang on, I think I've got something. If I can just reach..... there! What can you see? Is the countdown back?

Olivia: Oh, yes! It says 3 seconds.

Madeline: What? [bang] Ow!

Olivia: Just kidding. Nothing new up here.

Emily: That was funny.

[door]

Jessie: Did someone quite rudely ask for a torch, then?

Madeline: Under here. Shine it there. Not there, there!

Jessie: Not to be alarmist or anything, but you are rummaging around in the undercarriage of a massive bomb.

Head 1: With wire cutters. Very sharp, highly cutty... wire cutters.

Jessie: With wire cutters! That's reassuring, as I saw you nearly poke your eye out saluting yourself in the mirror the other day.

Madeline: I did not!

Jessie: God, this thing is brand new. It's all shiny and that.

Emily: It's a bomb. They're pretty much single-use.

Jessie: Mind your manners, lefty. I'm saying, the microwave dates back a few generations, and most of our engines have been around the block and put away wet.

Head 1: I, eh, don't think that's how that saying goes.

Jessie: But this still has the price tag on it and the bubble wrap it came in.

Madeline: Ooo, bubble wrap! Gimme!

Head 1: Hey, I am hearing some humming I didn't hear before.

Jessie: What I'm saying is, all you have to do to bring down a ship like the Oz is put a hole in her side; you could do that with something much smaller and cheaper. This is overkill.

Head 1: Overkill! HA! I get it. There it is again. You hear that?

Jessie: Like a fan or something?

Head 1: Nah, nah, more like... Africa.

Madeline: What? The country?

Head 1: It's eh, a continent? And how would that work? I'm talking about the song. Toto. I bless the rains and what-have-you. Some interesting trivia about that song-

Jessie: What the hell are you babbling about? And FYI, the words "interesting" and "trivia" rarely belong together.

Emily: He's right. There is a faint humming coming from Cal. Though I believe that's "The Lion Sleeps Tonight."

Cal: It's actually "Under African Skies" by Paul Simon. Oh, and you've got about 40 seconds left.

[hums in the stunned silence]

Cal: So, you might want to type in the code.

[silence]

Cal: Any of you can type it, the numbers are on the wall right there.

[silence]

Cal: I'd type it myself, but I don't have hands.

[silence]

Cal: Hello? 25 seconds? [intercom] Albatros to Cal's room, please. Albatros to Cal, thank you.

[footsteps]

Albatros: There are four... three and a half of you in here with five arms amongst you, and I have to come running? What's with the frozen faces? You look like a cliffhanger for a 1970s detective show.

[pause]

Albatros: Hello? I'm assuming I'm here to type in the code? Hmmm? Whose voice was that on the intercom? Computer, are you here?

Olivia: Right now, sentient computers pretty far outweigh semi-sentient human beings in this room, so I'd ask you to be more specific, but we don't have time. Type in the code, please, quite quickly.

[code]

Olivia: Grace period initiated. Countdown reset to 30 minutes.

Albatros: Explanation, please?

Cal: They're stunned.

Albatros: I can see that. Who is speaking?

Cal: Well, hello there! I'm Paco. I think you folks refer to me as "Cal," so you just go ahead and holler out whatever handle suits your fancy.

Albatros: Yes, well, I tend to keep my "handle hollering" to a minimum. Have you always been able to speak?

Cal: Nope, seems I just woke up thanks to your friend there poking around in my innards.

Madeline: You talk.

Cal: I surely do.

[running, door]

LBF: I am demanding ze explanations!

Cal: Now, just hold on there, handsome, this lady was asking me a question.

LBF: Wait. Who is it I am hearing ... Santa Claus? Mon oncle Victor? How is this possible?

Cal: I am neither of those fine fellows, so why don't you just hang tight a minute, and we'll get to you shortly.

Leet: Here I am!

Cal: There you are!

Leet: You talk!

Cal: I do!

Colin: What's going on? I heard the call, are we in trouble?

Leet: He talks!

Colin: Who talks?

LBF: The blowy uppy fellow!

Colin: We have a blowy uppy fellow?

Leet: I thought Colin was our blowy uppy fellow.

Colin: Astonishingly, I agree with Leet. What's going on?

Cal: Funny how they say I talk, then don't give me a sliver of sunlight to do it in.

Colin: My god. It talks. Has it always talked?

Leet: I don't think you should call Cal "it."

Colin: Whyever not? It's a machine!

Leet: Why don't you ask Cal what pronoun is correct?

Colin: You're being ridiculous.

Leet: You're being insensitive.

Colin: Oh, for- *fine*. Cal, how would you like me to refer to you?

Cal: Now my understanding is the best way to ascertain proper pronouns is to introduce yourself first. So – I'm Cal; I reckon "he" is closest to the mark and I'm all right with "they." How should I refer to you, Colin?

Colin: How long until we all blow up? Because suddenly it doesn't seem that bad.

LBF: *May I say something now, I have been waiting.*

Jessie: Oh, sure, why the hell not? We just discovered the giant bomb that's been threatening our lives every 30 minutes not only speaks but sounds a little like my paternal grandfather, but by all means let's hear from YOU.

[pause]

LBF: That is just hurtful.

Jessie: On behalf of all the people you've assassinated, dear god, *assassinated*, might I suggest something in a ... *get over it*.

LBF: I would like to understand something Leet has just been saying.

Leet: I didn't say anything about him being ... you know....

Olivia: French?

Colin: Tall?

Jessie: Poorly dressed?

Leet: No, a ro-

Madeline: Hey, did you notice that the bomb talks?

LBF: Uh uh uh... you will not be distracting me from my question. Leet said my language skills — which are *parfait*, but this is not the pointing just now — had something to do with my programming. PROGRAMMING, ehhhh? What does this mean?

Leet: Well, programming has to do with how we give compu-

Olivia: Shut up, dearest.

LBF: And so I am thinking...there is some explaining here. Why do I not remember my *histoire* so good? And why am I not needing so many times going to the little monseieurs' room, eh? I And why did the bad air only make me a little sick, and even though I was in a pod, I have utterly escaped the MRDR protocol, eh? How do you explain all of these things? It must be that I am....a robot!

Olivia: Ummmm.... I don't think you are, actually...

LBF: Do not be talking to me, computer girl; I know you must pretend it's not true.

Olivia: Sophisticated scanners, actually, but never mind.

Jessie: You certainly smell human.

LBF: Ah, yes, this is so crafty! But the two-heady fellow....fellows there also has a stinking, eh?

Head 1: Eh now, no need to get personal. Ha! *Person-al*. Geddit?

Albatros: They smell like rust and WD40.

LBF: Exactly! They have a smell!

Albatros: Of *machines*.

LBF: I will not be talked sideways! I am a machine — it is the only explaining of my fantastic strength, my heroic endurance, my perfect physique, my steely calm....

Leet: You smell like cheese.

Narrator: Now, before this goes much further, I'd like to step back to a time before the launch, when the assassins program was being hotly debated by the folks at Gated Galaxies. The debate wasn't about whether or not to put assassins aboard each ship — everyone was pretty gung ho on that idea — it was how to do it on the cheap.

[flashback]

Southers: Now looky here, having assassins on board every Oz 8000 to do clean-up in case every other plan goes farther south than my accent, that's gonna put a dent in my Rolodex. Four hundred is a lot, and I'm not sending up a bunch of biscuit heads to do the job. One of my research monkeys has a plan to kidnap the world's best assassins, copy 'em, and stick 'em in the deep freeze until I need 'em again. She reckons she can outfit every Oz with its very own killer clone, so real no one can tell they're not human, not even the critter itself, for about eight dollars a ship. [muttering] And I'll still have my assassins to take care of all of you....

Narrator: When one of the scientists created a cloning method that was cheap, fast, and produced robots as lethal as the originals but far less inclined to die on the job, the decision was made. However, the G2 clone lab was crippled by an escaping assassin just as the last robots were being made. Because launch was so close, the scientists patched up a bunch of real but half-frozen assassins, packed them into pods, and crossed their fingers. And flippers.

[flashback]

LBF: My flawless skin, my lustrous moustaches that never get crumbs in them. HA! What about when my sweet breaths could not operate Cal's biolock, hmmmmm?

Cal: Actually, I can explain that; there's a little chunk of styrofoam-

LBF: My fantastique eyesight! I can even see that olive rolling around on its own all the way over there by the door!

Leet: Everyone can see it.

LBF: Ahhhhh, but can you see its little legs?

Leet: Yep.

LBF: Fine! My super ears can detect your not-believingness!

Albatros: You want to prove you're a robot?

Jessie: Oh, let's not. He doesn't need to prove anything.

LBF: I have just given you a very long list of proofs.

Albatros: Your impervious moustache isn't proof. It isn't even true — I can see hollandaise sauce from here.

LBF: [gasps] Of course *you* can, because if I am a robot — you are too!

Albatros: Don't be absurd. No machine has this level of fashion sense, I assure you.

Leet: Ooooo! I know, I know!

LBF: What...

Leet: Sniff your own decongestant.

[surprise sounds]

Colin: Congratulations, Leet, on your very first Good Idea!

Leet: Thanks, it felt really good, really right, even as I was saying it. I could just tell it was going to be a good one, you know?

Madeline: Guys! We don't want him to figure it out, remember?

Colin: Oh, right. Uhhhh... look here, Freeze, you're clearly human. Who'd make a robot that can't tell a bechamel from a bordelaise?

LBF: This proves nothing. They are very similar!

Colin: They most certainly are not. Except when Leet creates them, fair point.

Leet: Hey! You try making a white sauce with flour and dry wall.

Head 1: Now, just hang on there; do you know what a lethal dose of pseudoephedrine works out to? [laughs] I mean, a toxic dose from a nasal vasoconstrictor is, eh, highly unlikely. Now, your ophthalmic drops can lead to systemic toxicity, particularly where there are other contributing factors such as heart disease.

LBF: I can assure you, my formulation is always fatal.

Olivia: I could end the debate right here, only I'm not entirely sure I want to.

Cal: You know, being a machine isn't all its cracked up to be. Why not just stay human and maybe eat more fiber?

LBF: Quiet! I am decided. I shall use my own decongestant and prove to you all that I AM A MACHINE! Now, where is my favorite little spray bottle, eh? Ahhh... hello, Nezzie. You and I have had many adventures together, eh? Or so my artificial memories are telling me! Now you shall help me prove, once and for all, that I am not a mere man.

[long sniff, thump]

Olivia: Could've told you that.

Leet: Is he dead?

Jessie: Ehhhh, doesn't seem to be, but he's not going to be any smarter than he was, that's for sure.

Leet: He's *not* going in my healer pod. He always makes a mess in there.

Colin: He's looking pretty ... colorful. Maybe we should take him to Dr. von Heffalump.

Albatros: Robot assassins. What an idiot. Oh, move back, I'll take him.

[ooof, footsteps]

Leet: Well, I'm not missing this. I bet he drools a lot from now on.

Madeline: Hang on, I thought he was a robot?

Olivia: He's supposed to be, but I ran a quick scan a bit ago, and he's human. Mostly.

Jessie: He's human? That's fantastic!

Olivia: Hang on, I said "mostly." It looks like something went wrong in the process – his brain's half frozen and they patched him up a bit here and there.

Colin: Still, this is good news right?

Olivia: Not entirely. The original le Bichon Frise is pretty ruthless. And it seems like maybe his brain is healing – we might want to limit his time in the healer pods to ... well, never, really. Plus, I don't know what the neural patch-up is doing to him. It's quite... messy in there.

Colin: What about the Albatros? Is she human too?

Olivia: God, no. She's the terminator in a pencil skirt.

Madeline: Right. Let's get down there and make sure Dr. von Haber Zetzer doesn't heal him too much.

Cal: Eh, excuse me? Did you say Dr. von Haber Zetzer is on this ship?

Madeline: Yeah, sorry, Cal, we'll get back to you in a bit, OK? Just don't blow up if you can help it.

[footsteps]

Cal: Well, Dr. von Haber Zetzer.... We meet again.

Head 1: You know, bechamel and bordelaise really are two very distinct sauces. One is a white sauce, primarily used for casseroles or even your humble mac 'n' cheese, while a bordelaise is actually a classic red wine and shallot reduction sauce mostly employed in the preparations of meats, there.

Narrator: Matt is dead but le Bichon Frise, it turns out, is very much alive. Or was, until he decided to prove he was a robot by abruptly proving he wasn't. And now that Cal's awake, does that change anything? Does it change ... everything?

You've been listening to:

Tim Sherburn as Colin and Emily

Eric Perry as Head 1 and Mr. Southers

June Clark Eubanks as Glenda and the Albatros

Bonnie Brantley as Jessie and Donna

Kevin Hall as Cal

Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia

Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise, and

Me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator.

Special thanks this week to Jaime Price for the sensitivity read. 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.