

[At G2 HQ: footsteps in empty corridors, doors opening and closing]

Glenda: Donna! Donna! By all that's holy – and by that, I mean by all that's full of holes – where are you? First Southers and that idiot Buck, and now you. I turn my back for one minute, and everyone wanders off. Unacceptable. I *make* people disappear, they do NOT disappear on me. Donna!

[more footsteps, doors]

Glenda: My god, what is that amazing smell? It's like .... flowers and honey and sunlight and daydreams and teddy bear hugs and .... What?! What the hell is happening to me? That smell ... it's hypnotic, tantalizing... Where is it coming from? .... Do I hear... parrots?

[jungle sounds get louder as she descends the staircase]

Glenda: Donna? Donna? Are you down there? This stairwell is unnecessarily dark, I think. Thank god G2 is ridiculously overprepared with night vision goggles and gas masks. [muffled, gas mask is on] There. That should protect me from that ... scent.... "Teddy bear hugs," *how dare you*. I know G2 was working on aromatherapy canisters for its ships... but it smelled so... real.

[footsteps stop]

Glenda: Right. I think this is where she's been growing that mad garden of hers. Donna? Are you in there? Can you hear me? [grunting] Why won't this door open? What is that? Is that... ivy? Saint Berreta of the Silencer, that woman has a green thumb. It's blocking up the door. [grunt, grunt, success! Door crashes open]

[loud jungle sounds]

Glenda: My god. What the hell is happening here?

[on board the Oz 9, sounds of running, hooves, shouting, doors – door close, crashing]

Narrator: On board the Oz 9, the last 48 hours have consisted mostly of chasing Leet's new zebra up and down the endless corridors of the ship. Fortunately, Colin was able to grab hold of its mane and swing up onto its back; unfortunately, the ceilings and door frames on the Oz 9 are a little too low for man plus beast, and the zebra managed to scrape Colin off by ducking into memory storage.

Colin: Close the door! Close the door!

Olivia: Who taught you to ride a horse? Pee Wee Herman?

Leet: It's not a horse; it's a zebra.

LBF: So, we are settled on "zebra"?

Albatros: Did you just throw an apple in there?

LBF: It looks hungry.

Albatros: IT'S A MACHINE.

Head One: Hey, now. Let's not get mechanist. I enjoy a good apple from time to time.

Emily: You throw them out the airlock to watch them explode and turn to ice crystals.

Head 1: I said “enjoy,” not “eat.”

Madeline: Olivia, close the door!

Olivia: Oh, right! Sorry.

Narrator: Olivia closed the door to contain it, but how much damage it’s done to passengers’ memory files is anyone’s guess. The chances of the Oz 9’s resting guests needing their memories are slim to absolute zero, so no one’s terribly concerned how many disappointing birthdays, rained-on picnics, and drunken office parties get an errant hoof through them. But let’s leave the ship for now. The truly interesting events of the day are happening back on Earth....

[jungle sounds]

Glenda: I’ve never seen anything like it. It’s a forest- no... it’s a jungle! This wasn’t here three days ago; those trees must be 12? 15? meters tall. And do I hear... a waterfall?

[muffled sounds: Donna, Ben, Southers, Buck]

Glenda: Who’s there? Donna, is that you? My god, are those... seed pods? They’re massive! And ...wiggling. And... screaming. Not seed pods, then. Feeding stations. And I’m guessing that one with a tiny bit of sensible red woolen coat sticking out, has Donna in it. Plus... eh... one, two, at least three other people are currently being devoured by some sort of Venus Flytrap, a good 12 meters up in the air. Interesting.

Jessie: You’re gonna go up and cut them down, aren’t you?

Glenda: GAH!! What the hell are you doing here?

Jessie: I’m not. You’re hallucinating. You might as well take the mask off; it’s giving you about as much filtration as breathing through a screen door. Come on. Giddyap. People to save.

Glenda: A reminder: I take orders from no one, certainly not from a figment of my pheromone-addled imagination. Hop along, Jiminy Cricket.

Jessie: Ha! The closest thing you have to a conscience is currently up there, getting the world’s most unpleasant acid peel. Shimmy on up and save her, all right? Or I’ll start singing Gran’s repertoire of sailor shanties. [deep breath] “Brandy! You’re a fine girl!”

Glenda: STOP. Fine, I’ll go. Even imaginary you is a real pain in the arse.

[climbing, grunting, leaves rustling]

Jessie: Got your sgian-dubh with you?

Glenda: Of course I do. Nearly there. [grunt, struggle] I can’t get it open. I’ll have to cut the pod loose.

Jessie: Don’t really need the narration, there, Marlin Perkins; you go on and do what you need to do.

[sawing noise]

Glenda: How do I know this whole thing isn't a figment of my imagination?

Jessie: Maybe it is. But 20 feet up in the air isn't a great time for a crisis of confidence.

Glenda: True enough. OK, she's free. I'm going to drop the pod. Catch!

Jessie: Catch? I'm-

[whump]

Jessie: a hallucination, you walloper.

Glenda: Well, better down than up. Hang on, another incoming. [whump] Third one. [whump] And the last. [whump] What are you standing there for, you great diddy; let 'em out!

Jessie: I'll just let you figure that one out on your own.

[climbs down, lands]

Glenda: It's all excuses with you, isn't it? "I can't help you, I'm imaginary." Some things never change.

Jessie: For the rest of the world, being non-corporeal would be a legitimate excuse for standing by.

Glenda: I'll just carry on doing everything, then, shall I?

Jessie: It's all you.

[sounds of pod being forced open, liquid rush]

Donna: Goodness! What's happened?

Glenda: Audrey 2 here was having you for lunch. Are you all right?

Donna: Oh, I'm fine. I don't think it was eating me, though.

Glenda: It wasn't taking you shopping. Maybe you could help me free these others?

Donna: I guess we oughta!

Glenda: Hang on, there should be another knife here somewhere...

Donna: No worries, I've got this one. [sword sound]

Glenda: My sainted samurai, where did you get that?

Donna: Oh, this old thing?

[sounds of hacking, water gushing, coughing]

Southers: What the seven strumpets of hell just happened?

Glenda: Southers? What are you doing here?

Southers: This is my company! What have you people done to my baby?

[water gushing, coughing]

Buck: Poke me one more time, and I kill all of youse!

Glenda: Buck. Stop waving that gun around before I feed it to you.

Buck: Glenda?

Glenda: What the hell you doing here?

Buck: Chasing that old goat. He got away and high tailed it to G2 HQ. Geezer can run.

Southers: Might want to cut down on the tobacco, Breathless. You were gasping by the end of the block.

Buck: It was that basement!

Glenda: Who did you bring with you?

Buck: Nobody. Why?

Glenda: Southers? Did you phone a friend?

Southers: Hell, no. You think I want more people clotting up my business?

Glenda: Then who the hell is in that last pod? Donna?

Donna: No clue. Maybe Matt's back?

Glenda: You're joking.

Donna: He had such a nice

Glenda: Ash. He's ash.

Donna: A girl can dream. Open sesame!

[whack, gush, coughing]

Donna: Cousin Ben?

Ben: Donna?

Donna: What the heck are you doing here?

Ben: What ... what just happened to me?

Southers: YOU. Is this your fault, boy?

Donna: Now, hang on. How could this be Ben's fault? He's from Indiana.

Jessie: You might want to take this conversation upstairs. The plant is moving.

Glenda: You heard her. Let's go!

Southers: I didn't hear a damn thing, and the only thing I want to hear is an explanation. Why is there a goddamn jungle in my storage room? Dr. Marshall?

Donna: Doctor?

Ben: Uhhhh....

Jessie: Definitely moving.

Glenda: You lot can stay and be Miracle Gro if you want, but I'm out.

Southers: Dammit, everybody just stand still! I am in charge here, and I demand an explanation!

[plant does something noisy and aggressive]

Southers: Get outta my way, I'm the CEO!

Narrator: Threatened by a giant, hostile ... fern, Donna, Ben, Southers, Buck, Glenda, and the hallucination that is Jessie sprint for the exit and narrowly miss being encased in pods. As they close the heavy door behind them, they can hear strange scratching and banging noises, as if the plant were testing the door... for weaknesses.

Donna: What's that sound it's making?

Buck: It's sulking, that's all. Nothing to worry about.

Narrator: Hey, just because *I* know what it's doing doesn't mean *they* do. Back on the ship...

Leet: Don't hurt it!

Madeline: It's a robot, Leet. We can't hurt it. But it can do some damage to us if we don't get it under control.

Jessie: Who the hell sends a robot zebra to a spaceship?

Olivia: It's our zebra.

Colin: What do you mean, it's our zebra?

Olivia: I mean, they're supposed to come standard. Ours was undergoing repairs on launch day, so they sent it up after.

Madeline: You knew this was coming? Why didn't you tell us?

Olivia: What, and ruin the surprise?

Jessie: Why make a zebra standard issue?

Colin: Why make assassins standard issue?

Albatros: Excuse me?

LBF: We are very useful!

Colin: Oh? What've you done so far?

Leet: The Albatros cleaned up all those zombies, remember?

Albatros: Thank you, Leet.

Olivia: It has something to do with the ecosystem in the biosphere. Apparently the zebra is very important – it keeps some of the plants from overgrowing or something.

Madeline: We have a biosphere?

Jessie: Do you know nothing about your own ship?

Madeline: I'm sorry, I've been a bit busy keeping YOUR assassin from killing my crew!

Jessie: Oh, is *that* what you were doing? I wondered.

Madeline: You're not dead, are you? Yet.

Jessie: Oh, now you're threatening me, are you? I mean, why not? You won't fwip the giant bomb that's threatening to blow up the Oz 9 because you've got a crush, so why not threaten the only person on this ship with any experience at all?

Madeline: Experience? EXPERIENCE? You've been out in space the exact same amount of time I have – less! LESS in fact because 9 comes before 6748, so we launched first, and while we're at it, there were only 400 ships launched, so why is your ship's number so high, huh???

Jessie: Seriously?

Olivia: I'm letting the zebra out now, if anyone cares.... Colin? Reckon you can ride it down to the biosphere, if I show the way?

Colin: I'm game to try.

LBF: Was there a zebra aboard the 6748?

Jessie: I have no idea. I didn't know we had a biosphere.

Olivia: Right, here we go!

Colin: Ready? Ready? Ready?

Leet: Who are you asking?

Colin: Myself. GAAAHHHHHHH!!!!

Leet: He's up! He's on it! Go, Colin!

Olivia: Follow the doors! [door] Duck!

[\*WHANG\*]

Colin: GAH!

[receding hoofbeats, doors]

Leet: Ooooooooo. That had to hurt.

Albatros: He didn't fall off. Impressive.

Olivia: He's tangled in its mane. Not sure he could fall off if he wanted to.

Madeline: Jessie, since you have so much “experience” aboard an Oz, maybe you can give me a hand in memory storage? The damage looks pretty extensive.

LBF: Oh, this is too bad! I’m afraid your past life is truly gone, *mon petite oiseau*. Time to look ahead to the future.

Albatros: You can stop pointing at yourself, Freeze. I copied all my memory files to a thumb drive. And when I’m ready, I’ll watch them and remember how happy I once was.

Olivia: That’s optimistic. Leet, my darling? Would you like to go to the biosphere and get your zebra settled in? And I’m afraid it’s bucked Colin into a tree and he can’t get down.

Leet: I thought he could fly.

Olivia: Yes, well, as the biosphere is made of glass, let’s not remind him of that just now, all right? Follow the doors, dearest.

Jessie: Could get tricky. Might want to send Emily and ... the other head as well.

Madeline: Olivia, send the 778 as well, will you? Just in case?

Olivia: Righty ho. And

Jessie: Watch it...

Madeline: Come on, Jessie.

[door]

[wristwatch alarm]

LBF: GAH!

Albatros: A wristwatch alarm? You’re an extra assassin aboard a spaceship on a 25-year mission. Whyever would you need an alarm? Or a wristwatch?

LBF: I have an appointment, that is all.

Albatros: With whom?

LBF: You are all up in my business grill, are you not? I think you are very interested in moi.

Albatros: I’m an assassin on a spaceship. My options for entertainment are limited. And yet, despite the limited options, *you* don’t make the list, but a sandwich and a nap *do*. *À bientôt!* [runs away]

LBF: Fine! But every day I am a little stronger, a little more myself, you see. And when I am returned to the fullness of my power, then I think I will not be so “extra,” ehhhh? And you will not be so saucy.

vHZ: [thru device] Hello, zere ....

LBF: Gah! I don’t like this wristwatch. Too many spookings.

vHZ: You are runnink late, my boy. To ze lab, chop chop! *Sich beeilen!* [zich beh-eye-len] Ve haf zo much to be doink....

Narrator: As the crew of the Oz 9 go about their respective tasks, things are brewing on earth.

[sound of tea kettle]

Narrator: And that was NOT a dad joke, just... unfortunate timing. Carry on.

[sounds of crackling fire]

Donna: Hey, Ben, the fire's getting low. Can you grab another ledger from the pile? Who wants hot chocolate?

Buck: This s'more is almost ready. Who wants it?

Glenda: ME. It's mine. Hand it over, I've been waiting ages.

Buck: Ya gotta have patience. See how nice and perfectly golden the marshmallow is?

Glenda: In my family, you learn to like 'em burnt on the outside and cold on the inside, or you'll get none. My sister has zero self control around sugar, I'm pretty sure my ma was convinced my idiot sibling would blunder into the fire if she thought it meant she'd get the marshmallow first, never mind that her trousers were burning.

Buck: I had a brother like that. He'd do anything for sugar. And I mean *anything*.

Glenda: Buck. Do you see a round of rapt faces, eager for you to share more of that heart-warming tale? No? Then shut it, I have the talking stick, yeah?

Donna: Cousin Ben, how about a good old family chin wag?

Southers: Sorry to interrupt this family reunion, but I'm gonna borrow this fella for a spell. Ben? This way.

Ben: Look, I know what you're going to say, Mr. Southers.

Southers: I sincerely doubt you do, Dr. Marshall. I come to my building, the very heart and soul of G2 enterprises, only to find that the terraforming equipment of at least one Oz ship has been left behind. Is that plant that tried to have me for breakfast not part of the plan to conquer foreign soils?

Ben: I don't know how to explain why it's here, or who was dumb enough to plant it, but it's possible it's just an experimental one that got left behind. There were lots of attempts before we were able to create plants whose spores will actually survive deep space.

Southers: Lemme just do a bit of recap exposition here, all righty?

Narrator: Oh, sure. You don't have a classically trained Narrator to do the job or anything; please, go right ahead. I'll just be looking up the number of my union rep.

Ben: Is that really necessary?

Southers: I have a fine speaking voice, Ben, and a charming turn of phrase if I do say so myself. Don't interrupt the flow, boy. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, although honestly, I wouldn't advise it-

Mrs. Sheffield: All right, gentlemen?



Ben/Southers: Gah!

Mrs. Sheffield: If you were to turn on the lights in here, people wouldn't be as able to sneak up on you – it's a funny thing we 21<sup>st</sup> Century-types do.

Southers: Now, who the Sam, Mary, and all the little Hills are you?

Mrs. S: I'm Clara Sheffield. You may call me "Mrs. Sheffield." I'm the cleaning lady.

Ben: In a black pantsuit?

Mrs. S: It's casual Friday.

Ben: It's Tuesday.

Mrs. S: I did say "casual." Mind your feet, please. I'm mopping.

Ben: Don't you need a bucket for that?

Mrs. S: This is dry mopping. Like dry shampoo. Less damaging.

Ben: It's linoleum.

Mrs. S: Take care of your things, dear, and they'll take care of you.

Southers: I don't remember seeing you around here...

Mrs. S: It is my job to be invisible.

Southers: I thought it was your job to clean?

Mrs. S: Mr. Southers, in the very many long seconds we've known one another, have I ever criticized you about your work?

Southers: Well, no.

Mrs. S: Have I cast aspersions on your ability and willingness to do your job?

Southers: I can't say as you have...

Mrs. S: Then perhaps you could hand me that trash bin. And keep the trash *talk* to yourself, hmmm? You. Hold my sunglasses.

Ben: It's dark outside.

Mrs. S: Admirable attention to detail. Now shut up and hold things.

[paper rustling]

Southers: Begging your pardon, Mrs. Sheffield....

Mrs. S: Now, dear, there's no need to beg. Yet.

Southers: What?

Ben: What are you looking for in the trash?

Mrs. S: Mmmm? You ask a great many questions for a young man who's no doubt in some trouble.

Ben: What makes you think I'm in trouble?

Mrs. S: You've been pulled aside for a private conversation. With the sort of man who has no qualms having the sandwich delivery fellow tortured.

Southers: All he had to tell me was, was it Miracle Whip or real mayonnaise?

Mrs. S: If you couldn't tell the difference, does it really matter?

Southers: It's the principle of the thing.

[pause]

Mrs S: Fair point. Nothing interesting here. Return this to its proper place, please.

Ben: You didn't empty it.

Mrs S: Again with the hectoring and the criticism! How am I supposed to carry out my duties under such unreasonable scrutiny, Mr. Southers?

Southers: Now, you leave her alone, son. You're in enough trouble.

Ben: Wait, what? Why?

Mrs S: My work here is done. My sunglasses, please. Thank you. If you'll excuse me, gentlemen?

[walks away]

Southers: Now, I believe you were about to tell me how my brilliant plan to do a hostile takeover of the galaxy went terribly awry?

Ben: [frightened] Mr. Southers, I can guarantee you all the ships have pod plants on them. I personally oversaw the distribution of the seeds. As the ships explode, the seeds will be flung out into space.

Southers: Now explain this bit again – how the ships are like giant ... what did you call them?

Ben: [sighs] Cassowaries. It's a big, flightless bird native to northeastern Australia-

Southers: Son, do I look like a man who watches documentaries on purpose?

Ben: Not at all.

Southers: I'm not sure if you're agreeing with me or insulting me or both, but let's speed this up.

Ben: There's a certain tree from the Australian rainforest that will only germinate if its seed passes through a cassowary. Kind of like your seeds will only be viable if their hard shells are subject to a very very big explosion.

Southers: So, if I'm understanding this correctly, thanks to the Apocalypse devices on my 400 flightless casso-whatsits, the pods are *as we speak* getting blown out into space.

Ben: That's correct. They'll float along until they get pulled in by a planet's gravity, then they'll land, take root-

Southers: And feed themselves on any two- or four-legged protein that wanders by. Or 8- or 15-legged, I suppose.

Ben: Yes, sir.

Southers: And that's happening, right? According to plan?

Ben: Yes, sir.

Southers: You don't seem so all-fired happy about that, son.

Ben: Oh, I am. I'm very happy to see scientific discovery at work. After all, I'm... I'm a scientist.

Southers: Lower your smug, son; you're a botanist. And seeing as you're a botanist, how about you wander on back to the basement and be sure our ferny friend down there has all it needs, all righty? I might have use for it at some point, so let's keep it happy. Me, I've got a hankering for a s'more. And smore and smore and smore, you catch me?

Ben: I catch you.

Southers: Off you go, then.

[door to stairwell opens, footsteps]

Ben: Julie? Julie, can you hear me? God, these stairs are dark. Hey, honey. So, I have a lot to tell you, and I will, but first, can you tell me how to approach one of your plant friends without getting eaten? [pause] I know, I know, I thought I had them all locked away; I have no idea how someone found one of the seeds, much less planted it in the basement of G2 HQ. Plus, they needed an explosion or at least a really intense fire to allow it to germinate. [pause] Are you...laughing? This isn't funny. If they find out I have no idea what I'm doing, they'll come after you. And Maggie. [pause] I know. I know. So, tell me how to keep from being plant food?

Donna: Oh hi.

Ben: GAH!

Donna: Sooooo... gotta minute?

Narrator: You know, I always hoped to be making documentaries about exotic plants or alien species, so in a way, I guess I've gotten my wish. So the saying "be careful what you wish for" really is true after all. This episode is dedicated in loving memory to Kari David and Aunt Mary Kathryn. Safe travels, space monkeys. You'll be missed.

You've been listening to:

June Clark Eubanks as Glenda and the Albatros

Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie

Tim Sherburn as Colin, Buck, and Emily

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

Richard Cowen as Leet

Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise and Ben

Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline

Special thanks to guest star Sarah Golding as Mrs. Clara Sheffield

And me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator

Until next time, space monkeys, Narrator out.