

## Oz 9 Episode 36

Narrator: On Earth, mold is generally fast growing, requiring only 24 to 48 hours to germinate. In less than three weeks, there can be enough spores for the mold to become visible to the human eye. All it takes is a little moisture to get it going. The mold onboard the Oz 9 had the perfect conditions: the spot it occupied was warm and humid, thanks to Leet's exercise regimen. And, because it was near the cleaning supplies, it had gone completely undetected during the journey so far. It grew in peace, rooting, multiplying, and spreading. Like mold on earth, it started off as microscopic spores in the air. Unlike earth mold ... well, pretty much everything else was unlike earth mold, including the walking, the growling, and the wielding of a screwdriver.

Colin: Ahhhhh, back to normal.

Madeline: "Normal"? What are you talking about?

Colin: Hmmm? Oh. I don't know. I'm not sure why I said that. Explain to me again why we're in an empty pod bay?

Madeline: Because we can't practice your eye lasers in a pod bay full of carg- why do I keep saying that? Passengers. Not cargo.

Colin: Where did the pods go?

Olivia: Is that relevant?

Colin: I suppose not.

Madeline: Where did the pods go? I mean, I know the people-

Colin: Were splashed all over Jessie's windshield.

Greg: How is that even possible? Things freeze pretty much instantly in space.

Olivia: They were still steaming.

Colin: Ugh. Who the hell creates tanners that can go that high?

Olivia: Can we get started?

Colin: What's your hurry? Lunch date?

Olivia: I calculate that mold is growing at a rate of ... very fast, so unless you want to just let it have the bridge ...

Jessie: Why not? It's not like we're doing anything with it.

Madeline: Where did you come from?

Jessie: The kitchens.

Olivia: Lost again, eh? Surprise, surprise. How do you always manage to get lost near a kitchen?

Jessie: You too? Seriously? And why does it smell like my grandmother in here?

Colin: Could you go away, please? We're busy.

Jessie: Ooooo, the public relations officer is busy! I can't wait to hear. What are you up to?

Greg: We're gonna help Colin here learn to control his eye lasers so he can kill the mold on the bridge.

Jessie: Eye lasers for a patch of mold? What, couldn't get Semtex in time?

Madeline: It's not normal mold. It has ... feet.

Jessie: Feet.

Madeline: And my spanner.

Greg: Screwdriver.

Jessie: What? So it's... spacemold.

Greg: You asked for normal space stuff.

Madeline: How is hostile foliage "normal space stuff"?

Jessie: Day of the Triffids, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Attack of the Killer Tomatoes? Surely you watched all the 20<sup>th</sup> Century documentaries on alien invasions of earth?

Greg: "Documentaries"?

Colin: Could we perhaps get on with the training?

Olivia: What's your hurry? Lunch date?

Colin: Very funny.

Greg: Colin has a point. We should get cracking. How about you put those goggles on, there, Colin, and we can start.

Jessie: Smashing head gear, Spaceman. Too bad they're not night vision.

Greg: Has any of you ever seen a pair of night vision goggles?

Madeline: All right, Colin, I've set up a target over there. Just aim and blast and let's see what happens.

Colin: Right. Aiming and blasting.

[pause]

Madeline: When you're ready.

[pause]

Madeline: Nice and easy.

[pause]

Madeline: OK, not that easy.

Jessie: News flash: Nothing's happening.

Colin: Yes, thank you for pointing that out.

Olivia: Do we have to make him angry, or poke him with a sharp stick or something?

Colin: NO. Give me a minute. I'm trying to think of things that make me angry.

Greg: Need any help?

Colin: Considering three of them are in the room with me, no, thank you.

Olivia: I'll ignore that for the moment. What made the lasers fire off last time?

Colin: I don't know. Nothing in particular. I was just in my bunk. Jessie was there, and you, computer. Oh, yes. You were accusing me of murdering my wife.

Jessie: Oh, yeah! That's right. You were just about to explain how you had nothing to do with her parachute being replaced with sandwiches.

Olivia: I'm sure he thought the sandwiches would save her. Very springy bread or something.

Jessie: A completely reasonable cushion from a hundred thousand feet.

Greg: A hundred thousand feet? I thought you were the smart one.

Jessie/Madeline: Excuse me/I beg your pardon?

Colin: Could we not start this again? I had nothing to do with any of that.

[some arguing between Jessie and Colin, plz: Jessie: Which has a better return: peanut butter or ham?

Colin: Don't be ridiculous, I was just as shocked as anyone when her pack opened and lunch flew out.

Jessie: And not a day in jail. You must have been a better actor back then. Colin: What the hell is that supposed to mean? Jessie: If the Albatros figures out who you are, mate, you're going to need those lasers sharpish. Colin: Yes, that would be the reason we're here, *remember?*]

Greg: Uh, Colin, could you put the goggles back on?

Madeline: What's going on?

Greg: My sensors are showing Colin's internal body temp just shot up about a hundred degrees.

Madeline: What?

Greg: The heat is gathering in... what is that, his spleen?

Madeline: That's impossible!

Greg: Don't know about impossible, but it's certainly happening. Colin? The goggles? Quickly, please.

Colin: I did NOT kill my wife!

[lasers fire, small explosions]

Jessie: The target! Aim at the target!

Colin: Where is it? All I can see are bright flashes!

Madeline: Ouch! Watch it! Look left!

Jessie: No, not at me! Look right!

Colin: For god's sake, which is it?

[something explodes]

Olivia: I hope we didn't need that.

Greg: Hey! Watch the mane!

Jessie: "Watch the mane"?

Greg: I've never had hair before!

Narrator: Actually, that's not quite true. Back when the Apocalypse Devices were originally created, they each sported a different wig. Whether that was a joke or someone actually thought that might help the giant, square, light-suckingly-black bombs "blend in" on a completely white ship is unknown. In any case, the wigs were expensive and ultimately scrapped, but more than one Paco was left with wistful memories of hair. As Colin attempts to get his beady eye-lasers under control, in Dr. von Haber-Zetzer's lab....

[Dr. vHZ's lab, sound of gentle snoring]

Joe: Excuse me, Miss?

Narrator: And isn't that a much better transition than "meanwhile"?

Joe: Excuse me, Miss?

Albatros: Didn't you just say that?

Joe: I did, but I think I was interrupted. [pause] Never mind. I don't know why I said that. May I ask what you're doing in here?

Albatros: I brought the good Doctor some eggs. You?

Joe: He's fast asleep.

Albatros: Yes. I find scrambled egret eggs to be very ... soothing. Would you care for some? He only got about halfway through before succumbing... sleeping.

Joe: I think I'll forego the pleasure this time, thank you. Were you looking for something?

Albatros: Yes, actually. I think I may have left my journal here the last time I visited. Have you seen it?

Joe: Possibly. Can you describe it?

Albatros: Small. Full of paper.

Joe: Can you tell me what color it is?

Albatros: Probably. [pause] But I'm not going to.

Joe: You can see how I might find that suspicious.

Albatros: I'm an assassin, dear. Everything I do is suspicious.

[thumping noise]

LBF: [distantly, muffled] I think I am done now! You can let me out!

Albatros: What is that noise?

Joe: Oh, the doc has a healer pod hidden in the back of his lab. The Bichon Frise is in it.

Albatros: Why would the doctor be healing him?

LBF: I have eaten all of my sandwiches and hummed all the hummy things, and I am very very bored, you see.

Joe: I'm afraid I'm not privvy to that particular piece of information.

LBF: But because I am so clever now, I have written a little poem, which I will share with you so you can see how much smarter my ferret is!

Albatros: Is any of that making sense to you? Wait. Is the doctor trying to make him ... smarter? If he is, it's really not working.

LBF: There once was a garçon from Bordeaux....

Joe: Well, this particular healer is special. It was designed for scientific experimentation.

LBF: Whose ferret was terribly slow.

Albatros: And you know this because...?

Joe: Long story. The point is, this healer goes in both directions. It's both a healer and a ... hurter?

Albatros: I see. So you're reversing the good doctor's progress.

Joe: It seemed safer.

LBF: When his poor frozen brain....

Albatros: Are you sure you haven't gone too far? If he loses any more IQ points, he's going to start drooling.

Joe: Hence the mop. One more session of reduction and I'll set the healer to neutral. That should give us a few days before the doc figures out it's not working.

LBF: Was thawed out again....

Albatros: Whose side are you on, exactly?

Joe: Ma'am, as soon as you figure out how the sides line up, could you let me know? Right now, I'm on the side of keeping our assassin count to a minimum.

[sound of pod opening]

Albatros: Does that include me?

Joe: Not at the moment. While I don't agree with your inflexibility on writing condiments, I do think you're here to protect this ship and its passengers and crew. I'm just not sure why G2 would put both you and an apocalypse device on the same ship.

[much closer]

LBF: The rest of the crew was in pain!

Joe: Jesus! [pause] Wow. That was weird.

Albatros: That doesn't work.

[pause]

LBF: What do you mean "that doesn't work"? And why aren't you frightened?

Albatros: Of you? You haven't mastered the rhyme scheme of a limerick. How frightened should I be?

LBF: This was a perfect limerook!

Albatros: A limerick's rhyme scheme is classically A, A, B, B, A. Yours was A, A, B, B, B.

Joe: He could just be deviating from societal norms to draw attention to the limitations placed on the creative imagination by arbitrary rules of form and structure.

Albatros: Sometimes you sound a lot like ... the other head.

Joe: Maurice?

Albatros: Maurice? Is that what we're going with?

LBF: Perhaps we could get back to my limerick? And to the ... *pain*?! I have a great deal of hurting and damage to be distributing, I think.

Joe: The doctor must have changed the settings on the pod again. [from a distance] Yep. Looks like he cranked it up to full in positive territory.

Albatros: Does that mean he's on to you?

Joe: Not necessarily. This thing returns to factory settings every time there's an upgrade. Annoying as hell, but hopefully he thinks that's why the settings keep changing.

LBF: I do not think the two of you are responding appropriately to the peril you are facing. There should be much more gasping and even wetting of the pants.

Albatros: If we take the Bichon Frise of when I was awakened as baseline, where do you think this version rates? Above? Below?

Joe: Above. "Peril" is a dead giveaway. There are definite fluctuations, but currently, I'd say above.

Albatros: Mmm. I agree.

[brief struggle, sound of the pod doors, beeping of controls]

LBF: GRRRR! When I am free of this pod, there will be a reckoning! A mighty, mighty, oooo, that's a pretty color.... Come here, little butterfly.... I have jelly beans....

Albatros: It's that fast?

Joe: The brain is very malleable. Especially his, for some reason.

[snorting sound of DvHZ starting to awaken]

Albatros: Hmmm... perhaps we ought to go. Will that oversexed croissant remember any of this, do you think?

Joe: Hazy images at best, I should think.

Albatros: Good. And Joe, about my notebook....

Joe: I'll keep an eye out for it, miss. [pause] You might want to take the rest of the eggs.

Albatros: Oh, yes. It's so strange leaving people alive behind me....

Joe: Does it seem like a feeling you could get used to?

Albatros: I'll be honest – I don't love it.

Narrator: So while part of the crew is fighting mold, and le Bichon Frise is becoming mold, down on earth, the group at G2 HQ is deciding their next move. Right after they figure out their current move.

Julie: Mrs. Sheffield, is that you?

Mrs. S: Hello, dear. How very nice to talk with you again.

Ben: You know each other?

Julie: Sort of-

Mrs. S: We're colleagues, aren't we? After a fashion?

Julie: "Colleagues" is a bit of a stretch....

Ben: I don't understand. I thought you worked in IT?

Mrs. S: I thought I was the cleaning lady?

Donna: No, you got a promotion, remember? You were just telling us about it.

Mrs. S: Was I? That seems like... weeks ago. Never mind.

Julie: What are you doing at Gated Galaxies?

Mrs. S: Is that where I am? I wondered why all the desks were made of cardboard and held together by old chewing gum...

Julie: Mrs. S....

Mrs. S: Oh, very well. I'm actually here to find you, my dear. I had a few questions about these plants of yours. Sounds like one of them very nearly ate up your fellow here. Though admittedly, he does look quite delicious.

Ben: Julie, who is this woman who keeps ... stroking my arm?

Julie: Ok, so first, Mrs. S., please stop petting my husband.

Mrs. S: Right!

Julie: Second, Ben ... we need to talk.

Ben: Uh... OK. Taking you off speaker.

Julie: No. No, don't do that. What I have to say is ... big. We're going to need some extra help.

Ben: Where's Maggie?

Julie: At home. Your mom is with her. I told Maggie to spray her with the water bottle if she gets mean.

Ben: You didn't.

Julie: I'm not leaving that poor child defenseless.

Leet: Hello?

Ben: Who's that? Is someone there with you?

Julie: No, he's not on my end. Is he on yours?

Olivia: Hello!

Mrs. S: Goodness, this conversation is getting crowded. I do love a party line.

Olivia: Who's that?

Leet: Hi, Olivia!

Olivia: Hello, dearest. Please stop shouting; we're on the same ship, remember? Earth people, I'm looking for Ben, is he there?

Ben: I'm here. Who's this?

Leet: Oh, hey, Ben! This is Leet, the astronaut. Remember?

Ben: Oh, yeah, we talked over my ham radio!

Olivia: Not even remotely, don't be ridiculous. But you did talk. Look, Ben, Leet's so bored he's listening to cooking shows-

Mrs. S: There's nothing wrong with a good cooking show. I'm quite fond of them.

Olivia: We don't have much actual food to cook, and those shows are giving him ideas. Brackenstrudel is a crime against humanity, I'm fairly sure.



Julie: Look, I really need to talk with Ben and Mrs. Sheffield-

Olivia: Mrs. Sheffield, is that you?

Mrs. S: It is, who's this?

Olivia: It's Olivia the AI! We met when you broke into Dr. von Haber-Zetzer's lab, what, almost a year ago, wasn't it?

Mrs. S: Are you the one who turned on the big magnet and nearly trapped me behind a metal bookshelf?

Olivia: That's right. Then released the ammonia and hydrochloric acid to obscure the exits.

Mrs. S: Oh, yes, the fog! A stroke of genius that very nearly worked!

Olivia: Yeah, well you still got away and it took ages to clean up all the salt. You're amazing.

Mrs. S: I was lucky, I admit. You were very clever.

Julie: OY. As much as I'm enjoying the mutual admiration society, I do have things to say, remember?

Mrs. S: Go on, then.

Julie: I have reason to believe these ships aren't what we think they are.

Leet: Giant space arcs to a better future?

Donna: Homicidal insurance scams?

Ben: Galaxy seed distribution and takeover schemes?

Mrs. S: International plot to undermine supply lines and topple capitalism?

Julie: Good grief, what are you all doing over there?

Mrs. S: More to the point, my dear, what are YOU doing? Aren't you up to your regulation sunglasses in all this? Those are your plants, correct?

Julie: Not ... exactly. Look, I need your help. I- Crap. Hang on.

Ben: Julie? What's happening? Julie?

Leet: So, how's Maggie?

Ben: What?

Leet: Maggie? Still learning the dulcimer?

Mrs. S: Proficient, or so rumor has it.

Leet: That's awesome. I always wanted to speak a foreign language.

Donna: Foreign language?

Leet: Dulcimer. What Dutch people speak.

Mrs. S: Wherever did you get that idea?

Leet: I wanna say... Boy Scout manual?

Mrs. S: There's a certain genius to your ignorance.

Leet: Thank you!

Mrs. S: "Thank you"?

Olivia: Wait for it....

Ben: Julie!

Leet: [insulted] Hey!

Olivia: There it is!

Ben: Would everybody shut up?!

Julie: [a little out of breath] Well, I *was* going to tell you what I found...

Ben: Not you!

Julie: I know. Dork.

Ben: Are you safe?

Julie: Mmmmmm... I'm going to take a pass on that one, but there's something you can do to make me safer.

Leet: Would it help if I sing?

Ben: Leet, sshhhhh! What can I do? Anything!

Julie: I need you to come to me, and there are some things I need you to bring. Make sure you get them all. Don't come if you're missing a single ingredient, got that?

Leet: What's a mugget?

Olivia: She didn't say mugget, dearest.

Mrs. S: Has she always spoken like that? In fits and starts?

Donna: I think she's breaking up. Normally she speaks in full sentences and that.

Ben: Ssssh! What do you need us to bring? And where? [pause] Julie?

Julie: Listen up, I have to make this quick. I need vinegar, 10 gallons at least; tea tree oil, let's say 4 or 5 gallons. Baking soda, as much as you can get your hands on. Hydrogen peroxide. Bleach. Lots of bleach. I hope we won't need it, but it's a good back-up plan. Scrub brushes.

[She's breaking up a lot, so those listening to her, please give me some individual comments like "What was that?" "What did she say?" "Did anyone catch that?" "Can you move to get a better signal?" "You're breaking up, dear." Etc.]

Tyberius: [at a distance] Hello, good fellows, well met. Have you found our comely intruder yet?

[lots of shhhhhing]

Ben: What's going on? Who was that?

Julie: [whispering] I have to go.

Ben: Are you in danger?

Julie: Ummmmmm, pass. He did call me "comely," though; that's nice.

Ben: Where are you?

Tyberius: Fellows! I think that patch of tall grass is speaking...

Julie: Dammit! I'm in French Lick, Indiana. Hurry!

Ben: What? You're breaking up! Say it again.

Leet: Did she say she's going to lick someone?

Ben: Julie? Julie!

Mrs. S: She's gone, I'm afraid.

Leet: She's dead?

Ben: WHAT?

Donna: Oh no!

Mrs. S: Who's dead?

Leet: Julie!

Mrs. S: I shouldn't think so.

Donna: But you said she's gone?

Mrs. S: Well, yes, the phone's hung up. Out of range, I imagine.

Ben: Oh, thank god. Mrs. Sheffield, I need some answers. How do you know Julie? What is she up to? Where is she? How do I get to her?

Mr Southers: Yes.

[gasps from Leet, Ben, Donna, Mrs. S]

Mr. Southers: If you're planning on carrying on a co-vert conversation, you might want to move to another room in this extremely large, very empty building. It's not like you're hurting for choice.

Buck: I told ya they was up to something.

Mr. Southers: Yes, you're a good boy, Buck. I'll give you a cookie later. Now step back, you're crowding my triumph.

Buck: Sorry, Sir.

Mr. Southers: Now, I do believe you know where our fair spy is currently reconnoitering?

Ben: Spy?

Donna: Ooooo, that's exciting!

Mrs. S: You didn't know? How long did you say you've been married?

Mr. Southers: EXCUSE ME. The man with the goon and the gun was speaking...

Mrs. S: Oh, yes, just like a man to interrupt. Do carry on....

Ben: I don't know where she is. The signal was breaking up; we couldn't understand her.

Mr. Southers: You'll have to pardon my skepticism, there, Benny boy. All right, everyone, saddle up. Say good bye to G2 HQ. Soon as it gets dark, we're headed out. Buck, watch 'em. I'm gonna go call a driver.

Buck: You tried that already. Nobody came.

Mr. Southers: You're right. Congratulations, Buck, you've been promoted. Now, I have a few things to tend to before we go. You got this?

Buck: I got this, Sir!

Mr. Southers: All right son, hammer the testosterone down a notch or two, this ain't Alcatraz. [walks away]

Buck: Soooo... let's all take a seat right here, nice and cozy together where I can keep an eye on youse.

Ben: [aside] Do you know where she is?

Mrs. S: Haven't the foggiest. Pistachio?

Donna: Ooo, I'll have one! Ben, check your phone.

Ben: Why? She disconnected.

Buck: Hey! Can the whispering.

Mrs. S: Just sharing 'round some pistachios. Care for one?

Buck: Yeah, all right.

[the following Buck/Mrs. S. convo will be murmurs underneath the Ben/Donna/Oz 9 convo. Mrs. S. is distracting him]

Mrs. S: I do like a good pistachio, don't you?

Buck: Yeah, but sometimes they don't open enough, and my fingers are too thick, so I lose like, half the bag.

Mrs. S: Well, that's not necessary. A good whack with something solid will do the trick.

Buck: Yeah? Like what?

Mrs. S: Oh, I find an empty bottle is ideal. Just set the pistachio on a hard surface and give it a solid crunch from above. Opens a treat.

Donna: Julie disconnected. But I don't think Leet did.

Ben: What? Leet? Leet, are you there?

Leet: Still here. How can we help?

Ben: Not sure yet. Maybe nothing. But can you stay on the line?

Donna: Oh, they can help right now. Their AI was tracking Julie's call. She knows exactly where Julie is.

Ben: Oh thank god!! Olivia, right? Where is she?

Buck: Maybe something like this Pepsi bottle?

Mrs. S: Yes, that's ideal. May I demonstrate?

Buck: Of course!

[bong!]

Buck: Hey!

[whump]

Mrs. S: All righty, then, let's be off. Sharpish, please. My car's in the garage.

[running]

Ben: So, Olivia, where are we going?

Olivia: To the home of the devil himself.

Narrator: With that rather ominous comment, we leave you. And I'll go ahead and apologize now, in case the group here on earth tears up your garden on their way to wherever they're going, or if the space cadets drop a satellite on your shed. Just know ... it's not personal. They're just not very smart.

You've been listening to:

Bonnie Brantley as Jessie and Donna

Richard Cowen as Leet and Tyberius

Iri Alexander as Julie

Sarah Golding as Mrs. Sheffield

June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros

Tim Sherburn as Colin and Buck

Kevin Hall as Greg

Eric Perry as Joe and Mr. Southers

Aaron Clark as le Bichon Frise and Ben

Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline, and

Me – and ONLY me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator

Our music is composed and performed by John Faley. Our artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry. Thanks to Allan Hopfensperger for this episode's Naming Head One contribution.

These are some crazy times, Space Monkeys, so take care and be well. Narrator out!