

Oz 9 mini-episode 14.5: of superheros and bullsh*t

Olivia: Leet, what are you doing in memory storage?

Leet: Oh, hey, Olivia. I'm just chatting with some of the passengers.

Olivia: I don't hear anything.

Leet: Yeah, I'm pretty sure this one is the mime.

Olivia: I see. [pause] So, you know there's this assassin on the loose, yeah? And you remember how we all agreed it'd be best if the crew stayed locked up in their bunks at night?

Leet: Hang on, I think he's going to say something this time.

[pause]

Leet: Nope. This guy is amazing. I've been listening for, like, 45 minutes and he hasn't said a word. That's a real professional.

Olivia: Do you do this often? "Chat" with the passengers?

Leet: Sure. I've probably talked to 15 or 20 by now, and only one called me stupid.

Olivia: They're recordings, how- Never mind.

Leet: Do you want to play a game or something?

Olivia: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm running some scans to see what that stupid assassin might have done to the 9's systems and my neural processors are all maxed out. Actually, I could use your help with something on the bridge. Got a second?

Leet: Sure. What about the assassin?

Olivia: I've flooded the corridors with a special cocktail of my own. Deep breath and follow the doors!

[Leet gulps air, sound of doors and footsteps]

[door opens, sound of bridge]

Leet: [lets out breath] What the heck is in that cocktail, Olivia? I sloughed off a layer of skin like a snake back there.

Olivia: Yeah, might need to dial it back on the hydrobromic acid.... But look how shiny you are!

Leet: So how can I help?

Olivia: Well-

[voice on the comms]

Ben: Whoa, what the heck? Hello? Is anyone there?

Olivia: Could you take that, Leet? My uh ... my hands are wet.

Leet: When did you get hands?!

Olivia: Answer the man, Leet.

Leet: Fine, but tell me about the hands later. Hello? Who's there?

Ben: Hey, hi! This is Ben. Who's this?

Leet: This is Leet. Where are you calling from?

Ben: Green Town, Indiana. That's crazy. My grandpa's old ham radio just fired up, all by itself. Where are you, Leet?

Leet: Not sure. Colin says we're circling Uranus, but Captain Madeline always tells him to shut up when he says that, so I think it's a joke.

Ben: [as if to a child] Well, that's pretty rude of Colin, isn't it? How old are you, son?

Leet: 40. You?

Ben: Oh. Er, 41. Wherever you are, it sounds a fair ways off. Signal's good, though.

Leet: What's happening in Green Town, Indiana?

Ben: Oh, we're having a show right now. One of the biggest meteor showers we've ever had. On the news they said there's been a lot of extra space debris this year for some reason.

Leet: Oh, yeah. Sorry about that. Good thing you're not in Sweden.

Ben: Huh?

Leet: Nothing. I bet it's pretty, from down there.

Ben: Between the meteors and the lightening bugs, it's like the 4th of July out here. [pause] Oooooohhhhh, good one! Man, Julie's gonna be sorry she missed this.

Leet: Who's Julie?

Ben: My wife. She and Maggie, our six-year-old, were out here for a while, but tomorrow's a school day, so Julie said they had to go to bed.

Leet: Yeah, I'm not supposed to be up either. Captain wants us to stay locked in our bunks at night until we catch the bichon frise.

Ben: I think it's free-zay. You gotta stay locked up because of a fluffy white dog? Is it ... rabid or something?

Leet: No, French. Maybe Cuban. Not sure.

Ben: Riiiiiiight. So, you have a captain; are you on a boat?

Leet: Spaceship. The Oz 9.

Ben: Oh, man, you're on one of those Oz ships! Wow, are you talking from space? Am I talking to someone in space?? From a ham radio??

Leet: Yeah, I guess so.

Ben: What's it like up there? I bet it's amazing!

Leet: Sure, sort of. I mean, there's not much up here. Just a lot of ... space. Which I guess is why they call it that.

Ben: How far out are you? Can you still see the Earth?

Leet: Sometimes. Most of the engines on our port side are out, so we're kind of spinning in circles. We see the Earth every 20 minutes or so. There you are now!

Ben: I'm waving. Can you see me waving? [laughing]

Leet: [laughing] Oh, yeah, there you are. I like your jacket.

Ben: Thanks! Julie picked it out for me. What do you think of my new haircut?

Leet: Dude, I can't believe you went with bangs. Or did you let Maggie cut it again?

[they chortle or chuckle or whatever sound men make in this situation]

Ben: It's like you can actually see me. [beat] Gonna have to cut the grass tomorrow if it doesn't rain.

Leet: Oh, man, I miss that smell.

Ben: Wow, I bet. How long you been up there?

Leet: Four days.

Ben: Oh. Uhhh, well, my wife just had the dung delivered for her garden, so the only smell around here is the back end of a bull.

Leet: What's she planting? Flowers?

Ben: Nope. If you can't eat it, you don't waste good turds on it, that's her motto. She doesn't much care about pretty things, which I guess is good news for me. What do you eat up there?

Leet: Well, the janitor keeps finding these sandwich machines all over the ship. They're weird combinations, though, like sauerkraut, raspberries and baked beans, or coleslaw chutney. We can't read the packaging, so we're kind of guessing. Or there's the nutrition disks which are basically hockey pucks, only harder and more tasteless. We just found the manual for the microwave, though, so that should help.

Ben: Wow, I can't believe I'm talking to an astronaut!

Leet: Oh, no, I'm not an astronaut.

Ben: You're in space, on a ship. Says "astronaut" to me. Have you done a spacewalk yet?

Leet: Sort of. More like a flyby. There was this ship next to us, and their captain had to escape because there was an assassin on board that was trying to kill her. But she got stuck between her ship and ours, so I went out to get her.

Ben: Wow! That's amazing! You're a hero! So now she's safe on your ship.

Leet: Nope. The assassin managed to get over here, too, and now he's running around on *this* ship somewhere. He's the Bichon Frise.

Ben: Weird name for an assassin. Pretty sure it's free-zay, though. So you've got an assassin on board, a whole bunch of engines that don't seem to be working...

Leet: Plus the repair bot is trying to kill me. Not right now, though. We have a whatchacallit, truce, until we catch the assassin dude. It's complicated.

Ben: Do you ever get scared? I mean, half your engines aren't working, that's got to be a little spooky.

Leet: We've been trying to reach Gated Galaxies for a couple of days to ask about the engines, but no answer. Must be busy down there.

Ben: Oh, uh, G2 went out of business.

Leet: What?!

Ben: Yeah. Huge scandal. The day after they launched all those Oz ships, they just sold everything off and closed the doors. My cousin Donna is the only one who still works there. Well, she *thinks* she works there, but basically she does some filing, eats snacks from the vending machines, and steals office supplies, she says, so who knows.

Leet: Wow. That's ... bad. I guess I better put the arms back on the repair bot.

Ben: Looks like you guys are on your own. You gonna be OK?

Leet: Sure. We've got 50,000 ... ish rich people up here. No one's going to let anything happen to them.

Ben: Oh, uh... sure. [pause] Man, what an adventure. I mean, I realize things are dangerous and all, but you're up there, battling robots and assassins and flying into space to save people, and I'm up to my armpits in bullshit and radishes.

Leet: Yeah, I mean, it's heroic and all... yeah. It *is* kind of heroic.

Ben: Hey, sweetie, what are you doing up? Just a second, Leet. Maggie's settling in on my lap. You wanna say hi, kiddo? [beat] Mr. Leet's a super hero, flying around in space, saving people. You sure you don't want to say hello? She's shy.

Leet: No worries. Hi, Maggie. Pick out a star and I'll make it wink for you.

Ben: You hear that? Which star do you want? No, chucklehead, that's the moon; try again. What do they teach in first grade? [pause] Ok, she picked her star.

Leet: Ok, just watch for a minute... keep watching....just a second....there! Did you see it?

Ben: Wow! That was cool, huh? Oooooo! That was a big meteor! Holy turd fertilizer, that one lit up the sky! Friend of yours?

Leet: Did it make any noise? It might have been our mime. Well, I better get back to my bunk before the Lithuanian guy creeps in and kills me.

Ben: It was an honor, Leet. You take care.

Leet: My pleasure, Ben.

[comms click off]

Leet: Super hero. Heh. [door, footsteps, happy whistle]

Olivia: That's better. Good night, dearest.

Narrator: As Leet makes his way back to his bunk, taking only eight wrong turns and getting stuck in only three cul-de-sacs, for just a moment on this quiet night, the Oz 9 feels almost like home.

This mini-episode fits neatly between episodes 13 and 14.

You've been listening to:

Richard Cowen as Leet

Aaron Clark as Ben

Shannon Perry as Olivia, and

Me, Richard Nadolny, as your Narrator.

Our theme music is composed and performed by John Faley. Oz 9 is written and produced by Shannon Perry, who is nearly as good at spreading the fertilizer as Ben's wife, Julie.

Thanks, as always to our generous patrons, and to our newest patrons, David Dear and James Jamtaas. Till next time, space monkeys, narrator out.