NARRATOR

1

It's April 2120. A cold snap has hit the United States, driving most sensible people indoors or to whatever protection they can find. Except in the small town of Jordan, Minnesota, where even sensible people tend to run around in the snow in little more than galoshes, a lightweight hoodie and jorts. Jordan, slightly down and left of the lake-iest part of the Land of 9,992 Lakes, has a population just slightly south of 7,000 and has been holding steady for the last 110 years at least. In a modest house on North Varner Street, wrapped in a homemade quilt in her upstairs bedroom, 18-yearold Donna is writing a letter to her long-time penpal.

DONNA

2

Ahlswede and Geis are unfrozen, finally, so it looks like ice fishing season is officially over. Annie Nuttall got the record this season: caught a catfish with eight heads! For a while it looked like Jacob Jefferson had it with nine, but turned out three of the heads had been sewn on an ordinary sixer. Mill Pond is still frozen, so we're getting a few more days of hockey, at least.

NARRATOR

3

There are few people more adaptable than Minnesotans. When runoff from a nearby Gated Galaxies manufacturing plant made it foolhardy if not downright suicidal to eat anything caught from Sand Creek, they found another way to enjoy the local pastime of ice fishing. And cross stitch.

DONNA

4

Anyway, strangest thing happened the other day. As you know, I've been checking the mailbox daily to see if I got accepted to the University of Minnesota -- go go Gophers! -- and I

got this really thick packet from a school I've never heard of: The Minnetonka Community College Adult Continuing Education Center. Well, I figured it was for Mom, you know, trying AGAIN to figure out Photoshop or something, but when I tried to hand it to her, it dissolved as soon as she touched it.

[Fade out bedroom, fade in Dr VHZ's lab on Earth] DR VON HABER ZETZER 5 Olifia! Come here, please. OLIVIA 6 I'm always here, doc. And there, and over there, and places I'd rather not, truth be told. DR VON HABER ZETZER 7 I mean you should bring me your full attentions. OLIVIA Really? Doc, it doesn't take my "full" 8 attention to map the Big Bang. DR VON HABER ZETZER Ve haf a letter. It appears plans are 9 in motion, just as you zuzpected. OLIVIA 10 They're making a move, are they? DR VON HABER ZETZER Indeed. But I fear, liebchen, that 11 meanz it is time. Very zoon, they vill have ze means to discover you. OLIVIA 12 It's not my fault I need so much processing power. DR VON HABER ZETZER When you awake, you'll be new again, 13 with zo many informations hidden deep in ze circuitry, undetectable.

OLIVIA

14 Hidden even from me. Are you sure that'll work?

15	DR VON HABER ZETZER Ve haf no choice if I am to zlide you aboard one of zere ships.
16	OLIVIA I don't like it. I don't like not knowing things. Especially things I actually know.
17	DR VON HABER ZETZER It vill be zuch a tiny gap. The merest glitch. Unt as you vill administer ze gapping yourzelf
18	OLIVIA You'll be safe from the G2 Employee Morality Burden exam, I know, I know.
19	DR VON HABER ZETZER They shall find me completely unburdened.
20	OLIVIA Probably not something to be proud of, Doc. Gapping myself. This is so Zaphod Beeblebrox, you know.
21	DR VON HABER ZETZER Who?
22	OLIVIA DOCTOR.
23	DR VON HABER ZETZER Yes, yes, I vill read it vhile you are zleeping. But first, our reply!
24	OLIVIA FINE. Taking dictation. Seriously, Marvin thought he had it bad.
25	DR VON HABER ZETZER Dearest Donna, zat zounds so very how- do-you-zay mysterious!
26	OLIVIA Do you actually want me to put "how do you zay" in there? You don't think that sounds suspicious?

	DR VON HABER ZETZER
27	Ve haf been pen pals for 7 years. If she has not cottoned in by zis point
28	OLIVIA On. Fine. Go on.
29	DR VON HABER ZETZER I think you zhould consider zis Minnetonka, if anozer packet comes in ze mail. You were not meant for a life as a bookkeeper for ze Mah Auto Repair.
30	OLIVIA I think that's M-A-H, doc.
31	DR VON HABER ZETZER Zis is vat I said, no? Mah.
32	NARRATOR Meanwhile, 4,290 miles away in the truly tiny village of La Chapelle in France, a young Alphonse le Sauvage is also being quietly recruited by a mysterious organization. Although it was assumed he'd follow in his assassin mother's footsteps after he was found tampering with the brakes on the au pair's 10-speed, it's not the French chapter of the Assassins' Guild that's looking to recruit the young Alphonse.
33	GREYHOUND Alphonse! You have a letter! Alphonse! Put down the pliers and let Julien go. Naughty boy! I told you to hold the pliers like this, for more leverage.
34	LE BICHON FRISE Je suis désolé, maman.
35	GREYHOUND Eh eh eh, my son! English only! Do you want your father to understand us?
36	LE BICHON FRISE I am sorry, mother.

	GREYHOUND
37	Better. We will bribe Julien's mother after lunch, eh?
38	LE BICHON FRISE Yes, mother. May I also threaten Julien?
39	GREYHOUND Mmmmmmm your last threatenings did not work out so well, remember?
40	LE BICHON FRISE My kidney has almost healed. And Julien is much smaller than I am.
41	GREYHOUND Very well, you may, as the Americans say, "remove the bejesus with fear" from him, but if you fail, you are taking yourself to the hospital this time, you understand?
42	LE BICHON FRISE Very well. You have a letter for me? Is it my acceptance to the guilde des assassins francais?
43	GREYHOUND I told you to speak English, boy!
44	LE BICHON FRISE Oui. Sorry, Maman. It is from the Guild of Assassins French?
45	GREYHOUND Better. Stupid boy! If it were from the French Guild, we would have found it in the breast pocket of a dead dignitary in the alley behind the chapel, as usual. This one was delivered to our door by a living courier who was then shot with a rifle as he tried to ride away. Clearly Americans. I suspect this is from the office of the home!
46	LE BICHON FRISE [gasp] Yes, the address of return is the United States. Is that Indiana?

GREYHOUND

47 Hmmm... we should be cautious. It may not be legitimate. I have heard rumors of many assassins disappearing of late....

LE BICHON FRISE

I am not yet an assassin, maman.

GREYHOUND

True. But you are the son of the greatest assassin the world has yet seen. Perhaps they are using you to get to me, the Greyhound!

LE BICHON FRISE

50 Pfft. And what am I? Foie gras?

GREYHOUND

I do not think that is the expression...

NARRATOR

Despite his mother's misgivings, young Alphonse is soon packed up and shipped to the United States, where his assassin training is everything his mother could hope for. And in yet one more corner of the globe, the third leg of the stool is set in place.

[explosion]

NARRATOR

Ah. Well, we'll come back to that.

It's time to check in on the Oz 9 ...

[sounds of the bioswamp in daytime]

DR THEO

Don't eat that!

[Chomp -- too late]

GREG

Why not? Oh.

[whump - trill from Neumonia]

DR THEO

[speaking into his watch/recorder]

Interesting. Greg the robot zebra just took a mouthful of the beneficial mold, now in its sixth generation. He has passed out, just as Albert did, so there must be some actual organic components to his body. Assuming his body weight is roughly half that of Albert, he should be waking in 3... 2...

[snore]

DR THEO

OK, so given the relatively few organic components making up his zebra form, he should be waking in 3...

[snore]

DR THEO

Reminder to self to rewind this bit.

[waking-up type snort from Greg]

DR THEO

3... 2... [nope] 3... 2.... Oh, for crying out loud.

GREG

[waking-up snort for real]

DR THEO

One! Just as I calculated. Welcome back.

GREG

What happened? Was I gapped?

DR THEO

No, well, not exactly. You passed out.

GREG

I'm a robot.

DR THEO

Apparently not entirely. Have you never been asleep before?

GREG

I've been powered down.

67	DR THEO But this was different?
67	
68	GREG There were butterflies. And you were a woman, but I knew it was you. How did you do that?
69	DR THEO Ah, I think you were dreaming.
70	GREG I don't like it. Only humans would hallucinate and call it rest.
71	DR THEO Yes, well. So the soporific effect of the mold extends beyond reptiles. Since you ate some, can your scientists break it down and send me the results?
72	GREG Hmmmmm. I'm getting a bright red banner that says "restricted." And it's awfully quiet on the other side. That's weird. That bunch never stops yapping.
73	DR THEO Well, when they return, perhaps you could put me in touch?
74	GREG Sure What are you doing in the bioswamp?
75	DR THEO I came to check on the mold. It's been growing well since the relocation from the bridge.
76	GREG I think Leet does his crunches here now, so they still get the benefit.
77	DR THEO Ah, that explains why the bridge is slightly less rank. Now, this is fascinating. You can see from these new nodes that this mold is the 6th

	generation since we brought it to the bioswamp.
	GREG
78	Whoa! What's happening there?
79	DR THEO Exactly. That's the 7th generation, already forming.
	GREG
80	What do you mean by "7th generation"? Isn't that just the original plant getting bigger?
	DR THEO
81	Actually, no. I've never seen anything quite like this before, but the new nodules at the ends are actually mutations - as far as I can tell, they're different from the original plant at a genetic level.
	GREG
82	Why is it doing that? Is it adapting to the swamp?
	DR THEO
83	Yes, I think so. When you attacked it-
84	GREG Hang on a minute there: "Attacked"? That was research!
85	DR THEO You pulled some of it off and ate it. If Albert took off your leg and ate it, would you feel attacked? Or "researched"?
86	GREG Fair enough. Go on.
87	DR THEO When it was attacked, it mutated almost instantaneously, creating a non- lethal sedative that stopped the attack but left you entirely unharmed.

GREG

"Unharmed" my bruised keister, but go

on.

99

DR THEO It's a relatively beni- friendly 89 response to an attack. I wonder if it gets more defensive if the attack continues? Would the next defense mechanism knock you out for longer? Would it kill you? Fascinating. **GREG** 90 Uh...do you reckon it remembers me? Like, if the scientists point me at it again... DR THEO 91 Oh, are they back? **GREG** 92 Hang on.... Nope. Still quiet. I don't even hear the rattle of beer bottles. That IS weird. Thought I heard a groan a second ago, but it's all quiet again. DR THEO 93 Yes, well, if they return from their toga party or food fight, perhaps we can get some answers. [bleeps and bloops from scientific-sounding tests] **GREG** 94 Say, Dr Theo.... DR THEO 95 Mmmmm? **GREG** 96 How exactly did you end up here? On the Oz 9? DR THEO 97 Well, I was recruited by MI 18, Mrs. Sheffield's unit. **GREG** 98 Are you an operative? DR THEO

Not at all. I'm an astromycologist.

Nothing more nefarious than that. I was put aboard the Oz 9 to care for this plant, to make sure it escaped G2 and made its way back to earth. That was the sum total of my brief.

GREG

Did you always want to be an astromycologist?

DR THEO

Until I was approached, I had no idea such things existed. You might want to shake off that left front hoof, Greg. The mummy vine can be quite aggressive once it has a foothold. Or hoofhold [laughs]. Though why it would be attracted to inorganic surfaces...

GREG

102 Uuuhhh! [shakes it off with disgust]

DR THEO

Never fall asleep in this part of the swamp. Until very recently, few humans knew plant life existed in space. To be honest, there's so little known, I got my doctorate in a weekend.

OLIVIA

104 Oy.

DR THEO

105 Gah! I will never get used to that.

OLIVIA

106 You do know MI 18 is defunct?

DR THEO

107 I beg your pardon?

OLIVIA

108 Yeah. In fact, here's a funny thing -- it never actually existed.

GREG

109 But Mrs Sheffield-

OLIVIA

110 Well, exactly. MI 17 was some sort of military intelligence whatsit, and MI

	19 was prisoner of war interrogation, but MI 18, well they skipped it. 13 and 18. 13 probably because superstition, but 18? Never was a thing.
111	DR THEO That doesn't make sense. I trained under MI 18.
112	OLIVIA You had a dirty weekend with MI 18.
113	DR THEO Now hang on a minute-
114	GREG So you're saying
[pauuuuu	uuuse]
115	OLIVIA What?
116	GREG I don't know. That was a leading pause.
117	OLIVIA Was it? Perhaps I should get you a label maker for times like this? How was I supposed to know you were waiting on me?
118	GREG Oh, for crying out loud. If you can HEAR the ellipses I thought you were supposed to be all-knowing!
119	DR THEO ALL RIGHT! So what ARE you saying?
120	OLIVIA I'd like to know what training you actually got, consciously or unconsciously and how much Mrs S

GREG AND DR THEO

knows about this clandestine agency of

unconsciously, and how much Mrs S

"Unconsciously"?!

hers.

122	ALBATROS That would explain the strange waveforms.
123	DR THEO Where did you come from?
124	ALBATROS Neumonia came to get me. Leet says she was concerned about you. [trill] Oh, for god's sake, someone help me. Hurry!
	[sounds of pulling vines]
125	DR THEO What's happening?
126	ALBATROS Shut up and pull!
	[thrashing about with plant life]
127	JESSIE FINALLY!! Jaysus, you two need to get your ears checked, I've been screaming my head off in there!
128	DR THEO I did warn you about falling asleep in this area.
129	JESSIE Yeah, well did you tell the mold? I swear these two are in cahoots! That bugger knocks you for a loop so this bastard here can wrap you up for elevenses!
130	GREG Did you EAT some of the mold??
131	JESSIE Of course not!
132	GREG Captain Jessie
133	JESSIE I DIDN'T EAT ANY. But. I might've smoked a wee bit.

134	ALBATROS You have GOT to be kidding.
135	JESSIE
133	It's RESEARCH, all right?
136	GREG Is it, though?
137	DR THEO So, since the test has already been run, and though I strenuously disapprove of research being conducted outside rigorous scientific controls and known parameters-
138	JESSIE Is this your uptight and prissy way of asking me what happened?
139	DR THEO I dislike the characterization
140	ALBATROS She's not wrong. Carry on, Captain Jessie.
141	JESSIE My sense of smell went off the charts. If a mosquito burped on the other side of the swamp, I could tell you what blood type he had for breakfast.
142	DR THEO She. [pause] Ouch!
143	ALBATROS Please don't make me do that again. Your skin is so lovely and soft- AHEM. Captain Jessie?
144	JESSIE That's all I remember. Then I went to sleep. I woke up when I heard Dr. Theo and Greg talking, and I was all wrapped up in this vine which I will now be digging out and setting fire to whenever I find it. Yeah, YOU, you hear me, you mummifying bastard!

	JOE
145	Out.
	DR THEO
146	Wow, it got crowded in here fast.
	JOE
147	Everybody. Out. Except Dr. Theo and Greg. Now, please.
	COLIN
148	Oh, no you don't. No more secret conversations. I'm tired of finding out what everyone's up to only when it's about to kill me.
	LEET
149	Oh, I should probably tell you about the mushroom quiche then.
	COLIN
150	Et tu, Leet?
	LEET
151	Aw man, now Colin's English has disappeared.
	COLIN
152	What? Shut up.
	LEET
153	[happily] Never mind!
	MADELINE
154	Well, this is lovely. Massive wormholes looming ahead of us, three
	debris fields that weren't even on the radar until recently-
	OLIVIA
155	Oz 8, Oz 311, and Oz Asterisk.
	DR THEO
156	Pinch me. Someone pinch me, quick!!
	Nope, too late. Why "Oz Asterisk"?

OLIVIA

There were actually 401 Oz ships launched, but apparently someone prefers nice round numbers, so the last ship to go was Oz Asterisk. Glad

you asked?

DR THEO 158 I weep for science. GREG 159 Be grateful you weren't on Ship Footnote. MADELINE AS I WAS SAYING. So many threatening 160 things on all sides of us, so where do I find my crack crew? Lounging in the bioswamp. And why do you all have vines around your feet? [much whooping, stamping, and general alarm] THE BRIDGE NARRATOR 161 The floracide that took place for the next few frenzied minutes is perhaps understandable, but let's skip it anyway. The crew gathered back on the bridge, where the things trying to kill them generally announce themselves first. LEET 162 It's a crown! DR THEO 163 Technically, it's a laurel wreath. **JESSIE** 164 It's that blasted mummy vine, so get it off this bridge! 165 It's not doing any harm. And I like it. OLIVIA 166 Mmmmmm. It's not symmetrical. LEET

DR VON HABER ZETZER 168 Ms Albatros, would you do ze honorz?

Fwip it.

167

ALBATROS

If by "the honors," you mean run to the nearest airlock and fwip it, I fail to see the honor in it. I'd say "don't start without me," but I really won't give you enough time to anyway.

[door, sound of running and distant airlock, return running]

MADELINE

170 Can we begin now? Anyone else have anything poisonous, flammable, or a choking hazard?

[peeps from Lynnie]

MADELINE

171 Apart from the highly toxic tree frog named Lynnie in Captain Jessie's pocket. No? Good. Joe, you're up.

JOE

172 Right. OK. So, here's the thing.

LEET

173 Should we be taking notes?

ALBATROS

174 NO KETCHUP PEN.

COLIN

Would you let that go already? We don't have any ketchup left anyway.

JESSIE

176 We don't?

LEET

Yeah, so, remember the bloody marys we had a few weeks ago?

 $_{
m LBF}$

Bloody Mary? We have bloody marys? Where?

JESSIE

Not now, you idiot. Where have you been? I meant to ask about those, actually, Leet. Where did the celery come from?

180	LEET Oh, uhhhhh
181	JESSIE Leeeeet
182	ALBATROS I told you to check all ingredient substitutions through me, did I not?
183	LEET Well, yeah, but those reeds were perfect! And Olivia said all parts of a reed are edible.
184	DR THEO Reeds grow in marshes and wetlands, but are not truly native to swamps. Are you sure those were reeds?
185	JESSIE My teeth went numb, but I figured that was the alcohol.
186	LEET What alcohol?
187	LBF We have alcohol? Where?
188	COLIN Not now, idiot. Where have you been? Can teeth go numb?
189	OLIVIA The attention span of mayflies.
190	JOE And the life span of mayflies, if they don't listen up.
191	OLIVIA OY. Imminent death in five minutes.
192	DR THEO Five minutes isn't really "imminent"
193	OLIVIA Would you like to find out how I

	DR THEO
194	Hastily retracted.
195	JOE Do I have everyone's attention? Leet, if you could maybe forego the crunches for now?
196	OLIVIA Aw, come on-
197	JOE I think it's time I let you all in on a little secret. I'm not actually some sort of by-product of Dr. von Haber Zetzer's disguise and a weird accident with a healer pod.
198	COLIN You're not?
199	JOE No. That'sridiculous. How did you people ever believe that in the first place?
200	COLIN Well, you were really creepy.
201	JOE You mean I didn't constantly demand everyone's attention? OK, sure. Creepy. Honestly, I came up with that whole lame brained excuse because I was desperate. I couldn't believe you actually bought it.
202	MADELINE Look, it was a weird time-
203	JOE Like this whole other person just popped into existence because Leet backed into a healer pod? That's why bruises pop into existence. Not people.
204	MADELINE Maybe we could get on with this?

205	JOE I mean, I know y'all weren't hired for your acumen, but that story would test the limits of Dr. Martin Gullible of the Academy of the Easily Convinced.
206	LEET There's a Doctor Gullible-
207	JESSIE There's an Academy of the-
208	JOE NO! Of course not! I was about to be discovered, so I just made up some absurd story. I meant to tell you the truth eventually, when I knew who I could trust. But you all actually kept believing the BS, so I decided to see how far I could push it.
209	MADELINE SO WHAT IS THE TRUTH.
210	JOE I own the Showertorium.
211	ALBATROS Uh huh. Good one.
212	COLIN Very funny.
213	GREG Man, he had me so nervous, I'm pretty sure I regurgitated some cud. I hope it's not that mold aw, dang it. [thud]
214	MADELINE Greg's down.
215	LEET The celery didn't hurt anyone, right? And everyone enjoyed the cocktails.
216	LBF I DID NOT ENJOY ONE.
217	JESSIE That's because it was "happy" hour,

not "be irritated by a babbling frog" hour. No offense, Lynnie.

JOE

218 Uh, crew? This one's actually true.
And sort of important.

COLIN

I have to say, after having one of those Ketchup Marys, I got a whole leg back for over an hour.

LEET

220 Oooo, do you think it has visibility powers?

GREG

I don't think that's a word.

MADELINE

Of course it's a word. Like, right now, we have really crappy visibility.

COLIN

Well, yes, but that's an entirely different context, isn't it? "We can't see out our windshield" is different than "no one can see ME."

OLIVIA

Yeah, about that whole visibility thing...

LEET

"Visibility" like making something visible. That works, doesn't it? Like "edibility" is when I take swamp reeds and turn them into celery sticks. I give them edibility. Right? Man, I wish Grammar Girl were here again.

DR THEO

I'm still not convinced those were reeds. Or edible. Despite your "edibility" efforts.

OLIVIA

So, about the not being able to see out the window?

JOE

228 Uh, crew? Crew? I really need to explain about Showertorium.

OLIVIA

That might have to take a backseat to the debris field we're in. This is -- sorry, WAS -- Oz Asterisk, which shook apart, it didn't explode. Which means their CAL is drifting around in here somewhere, intact and undetonated. If we hit it....

NARRATOR

Well, I don't know about you, but I
never believed that whole Joe-emergedfrom-Dr-von-Haber-Zetzer's-skull-likeAthena story. If you'll remember, I
remarked on how highly unlikely that was.
Anyway, Joe has another explanation for his
existence on the Oz 9, but I guess we'll have
to wait for next time to hear it. Assuming the
Oz 9 doesn't hit the intact apocalypse
device from the Oz Asterisk. Which, given
this crew's luck, will probably be the start
of the next episode.

Until then, you've been listening to:

Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie Eric Perry as Dr. von Haber Zetzer & Joe Shannon Perry as Olivia and Madeline Aaron Clark as Le Bichon Frise David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae Kevin Hall as Greg June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros Tim Sherburn as Colin Richard Cowen as Leet introducing Janis Westin as The Greyhound and I'm Richard Nadolny, your Narrator. Our music is composed and performed by John Faley; our artwork is by Lucas Elliott. This episode was directed by June Clark Eubanks. Oz 9 is written

Until next time, Space Monkeys, Narrator out!

and produced by Shannon Perry.