

episode 99: Put your kidneys on speaker

by

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EP 99 NARRATORS' BRIDGE

The narrators are wearing oxygen masks aboard their bridge.

NARRATOR

Things have gone very, VERY wrong on the Oz 9. The lights are out, and the only illumination comes from the now hundreds of small-to-medium fires caused by alien weapons and exacerbated by silly string.

N2

So that Olivia can suck all the oxygen out of the ship and smother the fires, the crew of the Oz 9 has been herded down to the bottom levels of the ship – sub-levels none of them even knew existed.

NARRATOR

Trapped now in the total darkness of the windowless sub-levels, the crew are trying hard not to think about the spooky things happening of late: the dead but still chatty astronaut in the Kestochalian fish tank...

N2

The moaning from the scientists that are audible on Greg's kidney phone...

NARRATOR

And the panicked behavior of the alligrets.

N2

A ship the size of the Oz 9 will take time to empty of its oxygen, not to mention filling it up again once the fires are extinguished.

NARRATOR

And so our crew huddle together in the darkness, surrounded by shapes and shadows, and listening intently for things to go bump in the eternal night of space.

N2

Soooooooo, how long is this gonna take?

Because my tank is already half empty.

DEEP IN THE SUB-LEVELS OF THE OZ 9

The space is big and full of crates and boxes. We'll want reverb here, but not so much that it's hard to hear the lines. In the room are Colin, Greg, Pipi, Madeline, Jessie, Julie, Donna, Pluto, Mrs Sheffield, Joe, and Drs Theo and von Haber Zetzer.

COLIN

I've changed my mind. I don't want to be visible.

MADELINE

You'll be all right. Plus it makes it easier to see you in a rescue situation.

COLIN

Yes. Yes, that makes sense. Wait: you made sense!

MADELINE

You don't have to sound so surprised.

JESSIE

Really? Cause I'm thinking of sending out a press release.

There's a nervous chuckle from the assemblage.

JOE

Hey.

GREG

Hey.

PIPI

He didn't scare you?

GREG

No, he didn't. Why didn't you?

JOE

I took the belt off. Figured there was enough to be jumpy about down here already.

Joe dumps a load of wood on the floor.

JULIE

What the hell was that?

JOE

I found some pallets and tore 'em up.
Figured we could make a fire for a
little light.

He begins assembling a camp fire.

PLUTO

And heat. I believe my lady is quite
chilled. There are times when even the
heat of passion is not enough.

DONNA

Now, don't you take it personal,
honey.

PLUTO

Actually, I hadn't considered taking
it as a personal affront. Should I?

MADELINE

It's a good idea, Joe. Has anyone got
a match?

PLUTO

A match would be redundant when you
have the King of Hell in your midst.
Ignitus!

He points a finger and the fire ignites.

JOE

Whoa! You might let me back off a bit
first.

PLUTO

I said "ignitus."

JOE

Yeah, thanks for the warning, there,
Hermione.

COLIN

Ahhhhhhh, nothing like the smell of
singed janitor to enliven the day.

PIPI

Perhaps we should try to get some

sleep? It's going to take at least two episodes for Olivia to evacuate the oxygen and replenish it.

MADLINE

Who knew silly string was so flammable? Inflammable? Fire-startery.

NARRATOR

Literally everyone.

N2

Everyone.

JESSIE

I think Pips there is right. Cuddle up, get comfy, get some rest.

PIPI

"Pips"?

DR THEO

It's kind of sweet. Like you.

EVERYONE ELSE

STOP.

Everyone settles in – some ooofs and move over! and other comments would be good here, **everyone**.

PIPI

No perch. No, no, it's fine. I'm nocturnal, anyway. Well, guess I'll just explore a bit.

She flies off, pinging as she goes. It's silent for a moment, just some gentle breathing, then there's a low moan.

COLIN

(whispering) What was that? Computer!

OLIVIA

"OLIVIA." Are we back to that?

COLIN

You're OK. Thank god.

OLIVIA

I'm not, actually. Dumping the air and refilling it is taking all my processing power. And seriously, I'm trying to put OUT all the fires, and you lot start another one?! Oh hell, what's-

Interference, then Olivia disappears and a wild cackle comes over the intercom, waking everyone.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Zat.... is alarmink.

GREG
Olivia? Olivia!

Pause. Nothing.

DR THEO
Actually, THAT is alarming. Pipi?
Where's Pipi? I'm going to go look for
her.

MRS SHEFFIELD
No, let's not do that. Of all of us,
Pipi is best suited to this situation.
Let's not have more of us wandering
off. Strength in numbers and all that.

DONNA
Wow, those pallets must have been wet
or something. They sure are making a
lot of smoke.

GREG
Uhhhhhh.... that's not smoke.

PLUTO
Greg is correct. Smoke generally does
not have arms. Or a face.

SPECTRE 1
Something is coming.

Gasps and other expressions of fear, y'all.

COLIN
Lady Nibble-Biscuit?

SPECTRE 2
Something is coming!

JESSIE
Bollocks to that, something is already
here and it has arms!

JULIE
Should we run?

MRS SHEFFIELD

No! No. Stay together. They can't hurt us.

SPECTRE 1

Really? Who told you that?

Whump. The fire goes out.

DONNA

(nervous, but contained) Pluto, honey?
Wanna fire that up again?

Nothing.

DONNA CONT

Pluto? Pluto!

MADELINE

No one move. Roll call, right now.
Jessie?

JESSIE

Here.

MADELINE

Julie?

JULIE

Here.

MADELINE

Colin, Greg, Donna?

COLIN

Here.

GREG

Yep.

Nothing from Donna.

MADELINE

No Donna? Drs Theo and von Haber
Zetzer?

Nothing.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I'm here.

MADELINE
Disembodied voices?

No response but the sound of thunder and wind.

GREG
Why is there *weather* down here?

A distant scream.

COLIN
I'm rather more concerned with the
screaming.

JOE
Maybe this is more pranks from the
fellows who loaded the ship....

MADELINE
Doesn't feel like it, though, does it?

JOE
No.

COLIN
Some of our number are missing. We
can't just do nothing!

JULIE
Colin has a point. Maybe we search for
them together?

MRS SHEFFIELD
Move around in a sort of shuffling
rugby huddle, you mean?

JESSIE
I think we're better off sitting
still.

GREG
While whatever it is picks us off one
by one? Captain, what do you think we
should do?

Pause.

GREG
Ah hell, is she gone too?

MADELINE

No, I'm here. Just ... thinking.

Low moan from the distance.

JULIE

Please think faster.

JESSIE

Something hurts.

GREG

Hurts?

JESSIE

Yeah. I can feel it, like, out of the corner of my eye.

JULIE

Your eye hurts?

MRS SHEFFIELD

No, no. She's sensing it. Correct?

JESSIE

I ... guess? Something's in pain. It's trying to get our attention. *My* attention?

COLIN

What is it?

JESSIE

I don't know. I don't know. But I think it's been trying for a while.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

I really don't like the sound of that.

NARRATOR

Same. Others missing from the campfire have found themselves suddenly in other parts of the ship's sub-levels.

OTHER PARTS

Donna - give us a long whooooooaaaa so we can make it sound like you come from a long way away, fast.

DONNA
Wowza! That was unpleasant.

PIPI
Hello, Donna.

DONNA
(whoops with surprise) Goodness! You might give a gal a warning.

PIPI
Apologies. I forget others don't see the way I do. How did you get here?

DONNA
Don't rightly know. I was just standing by the fire, then something just picked me up and whooshed me here, real fast. Couldn't see a damn thing.

PIPI
Then it just left you?

DONNA
Yeppers. Is it just you and me here?

PIPI
Of the crew? Yes.

DONNA
I guess I'm asking about folks *not* of the crew.

PIPI
Oh. Then no.

DONNA
Hoooo, boy. Who you picking up on your radar, there?

PIPI
I don't know. It's hazy. But whatever's in charge must have brought you here for a reason.

DONNA
Yeah. Divide and conquer, I reckon.

PIPI
Then why bring you to me?

SPECTRE 1
Something is coming.

DONNA
(whoop!) Look, you can either be more specific or shut the heck up.

SPECTRE 2
Six thousand....

PIPI
Six thousand?

DONNA
We're gonna need a bigger boat.

ANOTHER PART

PLUTO
Unhand me, foul spectre!

SPECTRE 3
(trailing off into the distance) Who are you calling foul.....?

PLUTO
They used to obey me!

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Yes, vell, perhaps you could encourage zuch behavior again, mmmmmmm? Zis being whooshed from ze cozy fire is most unpleasant!

Dr. Theo - give us a long whoooooaaaaa so we can make it sound like you come from a long way away, fast.

DR THEO
(arriving fast) Whoooooaaaaaaaa! What the hell? Who's there!

PLUTO
Greetings, Dr. Theo. You needn't be alarmed.

DR THEO
"Needn't be alarmed"? I was just picked up by ghostly hands, zipped through the darkness and delivered here. What is your definition of the right time to be alarmed?

DR VON HABER ZETZER
You are unharmed, yes?

DR THEO
Yes. Is it just us three?

DR VON HABER ZETZER
For ze moment. Zo. Vat do ve zink is
happenink here?

PLUTO
Supernatural beings of unknown origin
are moving us about.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Yes, thank you, Pluto. Zis vas not
exactly my question.

DR THEO
Moving us like pawns on a giant chess
board.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Indeed. Unt vy?

PLUTO
To separate us?

DR THEO
Then why bring the three of us
together?

PLUTO
You believe there is purpose and
intention behind all this?

DR THEO
I think it's a reasonable supposition.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Let us think, gentlemen. Vat is ze
thread that connects us three?

Sizzle of lightening, rumble of thunder. It begins to rain.

DR THEO
Yes, why should we three meet-

PLUTO
In thunder, lightening, and in rain?

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Does that zound familiar?

DR THEO
No. Should it?

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2
Seriously? The Scottish play?

NARRATOR
English majors gotta English maj. How
are you doing on oxygen?

N2
(checks) Probably half an episode
left. You?

NARRATOR
Same. I think there's a pony keg under
the desk if we need it. Let's hope it
doesn't come to that.

N2
You know it will though, right?

NARRATOR
Yeah.

BACK IN THE BOWELS

Lots of creaking, drips, and splashes. **Greg** - give us a long
whooooooooaaaa so we can make it sound like you come from a
long way away, fast.

GREG
Oh hell. Anybody there? Hello?

JULIE
Greg?

GREG
Julie?

JULIE
Man, I could use a pair of those night
vision goggles right about now.

GREG
You know about those?

JULIE

Know about them? They're all over the ship!

GREG

THANK YOU. I've been telling Captain Madeline that for ages, but she just doesn't seem to understand me.

JULIE

You're talking about a captain who tried to roll down a window to let a bee out. IN SPACE.

GREG

I know, I know.

JULIE

Do you hear... water? Like, dripping?

GREG

Yeah. And lots of creaks. Sounds almost like we're aboard a ship. A water ship, not a space ship.

JULIE

I thought that too. Should we try to find our way back to the others?

GREG

I dunno. It feels kinda like we're together for a reason.

JULIE

Yeah! But ... what reason?

GREG

No clue. But some of those moans we've been hearing...I'm hearing them on the inside too. Like they're nearby *and* on my kidney phone and someone left the phone off the hook.

JULIE

Ugh. I don't know that I want to find the source of that sound.

GREG

Same. But I think maybe we're supposed to.

JULIE

OK. You want to put your kidneys on speaker?

GREG

Ha! Ten bucks says that becomes the title of this episode.

JULIE

You're on!

BACK AT THE CAMPFIRE SPOT

They've managed to get the fire going again.

COLIN

Goodness, that cane is useful.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, even I was unaware of the flint in the tip. Very handy for starting fires.

JESSIE

Just don't lose the cap, eh? We've got enough fires without you starting one every time you go walkabout.

JOE

So, what are you thinking, Cap?

MADELINE

Mmmmm? I was thinking we need to get to a window.

MRS SHEFFIELD

You haven't spotted another wasp, have you?

JESSIE

Yeah, let's not go through that again.

MADELINE

No, not a wasp....

COLIN

So what ARE you thinking?

MADELINE

You ever heard of the *Mary Celeste*?

COLIN
No. Who is she?

JESSIE
She's a ship. Madpants?

MADELINE
Or the *Flying Dutchman*?

COLIN
What is that - a painting? A race horse?

JOE
Also a ship. Those are both ghost ships. Captain?

MADELINE
Mmmmmm? Sorry... just a thought.

COLIN
Ghost ships?

JESSIE
Ghost ships are ships that have sunk and risen again as spectres.

JOE
Or empty ships who've lost their crew but still sail under unknown power.

COLIN
My god. You think the Oz 9 is a ghost ship.... and we're all.....dead?

MRS SHEFFIELD
That would explain a lot.

COLIN
Like what, exactly?

JOE
Think about it, Colin: how many times have we escaped death? A hundred? More? Does that make sense?

COLIN
Perhaps we're just ... lucky?

JESSIE
Or we've already snuffed it.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Caught in some existential loop,
experiencing death over and over, only
not quite enough to know it's
happened.

MADELINE

Maybe....Feel the floor.

COLIN

Oh, god, not this again. You've just
told me I'm dead and basically in
hell-

JOE

That would explain Pluto being here.

COLIN

- and now you want me to feel up the
ship again.

MRS SHEFFIELD

What are you sensing, Captain?

MADELINE

I don't know if we're alive. But she
is.

JOE

Couldn't that be ghostly vibrations?
Mimicking what they were in life?

MADELINE

No. That's the 9. Blood pumping, heart
beating. Uhhhhhhh.... where's Jessie?

BACK TO ANOTHER BIT

DONNA

Six thousand of what? Hello? Why are
ghosts always so ... ambiguous?

PIPI

Do you talk with ghosts often?

DONNA

Well, no, but ... never mind. Do you
reckon this could be one a them
whaddyacallits ... side quests?

PIPI

Perhaps. I suppose if we see anything glowing, we should pick it up.

DONNA

(scared) Anything glowing like, say... that fella over there?

YET ANOTHER BIT

DR THEO

Is anyone else seeing all these people?

PLUTO

Yes. Fear not, Dr. Theo. These are mere denizens of Hades. Perhaps I have abandoned my realm for too long. Return to the underworld!

Pause.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Zey don't appear to be movink.

PLUTO

Yes, well, give me a moment. I'm a bit rusty. You have strayed from your appointed place – return to the Underworld and your eternal rest!

DR THEO

They don't look rested.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

More... agitated, actually.

PLUTO

Just hang on. My subjects – I am your King, and I demand you return to Hades!

DR THEO

Does that usually work?

PLUTO

Go home! Shoo!

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Vell, now ve're just gettink silly.

PLUTO
What is wrong with you people?

DR THEO
Uhhhhh... they're coming towards
us....

PLUTO
Do not fear.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Vy not? Because zey are so under your
control, eh?

PLUTO
Point taken. Run!

BIT THE THIRD

Greg's speakerphone is on, so we hear odd moaning first IRL,
then a moment later, echoed on his phone.

GREG
Sounds like we're getting closer.
(bumps into something) Oof!

JULIE
You OK? (bumps) Ow! This room is like
a maze!

GREG
No kidding. (pause, thinks) Yeah. It's
EXACTLY like a maze.

JULIE
You think this is on purpose? Like,
trying to keep us lost and separated?

GREG
Or trying to get us to go a particular
direction. Forget about the kidney
phone for a sec. Let's just see where
the path leads us.

JULIE
You trust it?

GREG
Aw, hell no. But I think it's best to
be... cooperative.

JULIE

Good point. There's an opening here.

Scream, up close.

JULIE

No, no, no! Other way, other way!

GREG

Opening here. Let's see...

Nothing.

GREG

OK, nothing herding us away from this direction. Let's go.

JULIE

I dunno.... I'm a scientist. Blind faith is not my forte.

GREG

Well, call it an experiment.

JULIE

Experiment. Right. It's a double-blind study, that's all. You've done lots of those, Julie.

They start to move.

GREG

(calming) What is a "double-blind study"? I've always wondered what that term meant.

JULIE

Neither the subjects nor the researcher know who got the treatment or who got the placebo until the trial is over.

GREG

Well, that's perfect. I reckon that's the situation we've got here.

JULIE

Yeah, sure. But are we the researcher? Or the subjects?

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

Do you know? Tell me you know.

NARRATOR

I don't know.

N2

Crap.

NARRATOR

Calm down, Two; you'll use up your oxygen faster if you panic.

N2

I'm not sure telling me that was helpful.

NARRATOR

Fair. Meanwhile...

CAMPFIRE

MADELINE

Jessie? Jessie!

COLIN

Captain... what is that?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ah. That would be a ghost.

COLIN

My god.

JOE

Now, we've had Lady Neville-Bickford on board for quite some time, and she's a ghost. And there's Steamboat Mary down in the pub, and while both of those can give me the shivers, that thing hanging there is different.

COLIN

It is completely different. I need a drink.

MRS SHEFFIELD

You have a drink.

COLIN

I do! (gulps) That...tasted like a fish tank. Ugh!

MADELINE

It's another astronaut. Isn't it?

COLIN

She's right! It's wearing a space suit.

MRS SHEFFIELD

That's not just any space suit, is it?

DEAD ASTRONAUT

Something.... is ... coming.....

JOE

Man, I wish they'd stop saying that.

DEAD ASTRONAUT

Something is ... here....

COLIN

Oh, perfect. Now look what you did!

MADELINE

Who are you?

DEAD ASTRONAUT

Look ... at me....

MADELINE

Do I... know you?

COLIN

Captain! Stop! Don't go any closer!

MRS SHEFFIELD

It's all right, Colin.

JOE

You sure about that?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Not in the least.

DEAD ASTRONAUT

Seeeeeee.... meeeee.....

MADELINE

I'm trying, but it's like trying to find shapes in the clouds. Hold still!

DEAD ASTRONAUT

Seeeeeee.... meeeee..... Help....
meeee.....

JOE

Captain... is that-?

MADELINE

I think it is.

COLIN

What? WHAT????

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

Don't. You. Dare.

NARRATOR

Tempting, but we kind of need to know what's going on before we run out of air.

CAMPFIRE

MADELINE

My god. I'm so sorry.

COLIN

Sorry? Why are you sorry? What did we do?

MRS SHEFFIELD

I don't believe it.

JOE

You were right, Captain.

COLIN

"Right"? We're dead??? WILL SOMEONE
TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?

MADELINE

The astronaut. Is from the 6748.

A voice comes over the intercom, fuzzy with static, exhausted and terrified.

JESSIE

Oz 9? Oz 9, do you read?

Silence, then the room fills with scary noises.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

You've been listening to:
 Tim Sherburn as Colin
 Shannon Perry as Captain Madeline and
 Olivia
 Bonnie Brantley as Jessie and Donna

NARRATOR

Eric Perry as Joe and Dr. von Haber
 Zetzer
 Kevin Hall as Greg
 Sarah Rhea Werner as Pipistrelle

N2

Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie
 Lee Shackelford as Pluto
 Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield

NARRATOR

David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae
 Special guests John, Faith, and Emmet
 Dowgin as our Spectres and the Dead
 Astronaut

N2

I'm Kyle Jones, your Narrator 2,

NARRATOR

and I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley as your
 Narrator. We'll be doing a live
 listen-along of our season 5 finale,
 so eventually you'll be able to find
 details on our website, Oz-9.com.

N2

Again, that's Oz-9.com.

NARRATOR

We'll see you there, Space Monkeys,
 and until then, if you have any spare
 oxygen tanks, please overnight them to
 Oz 9, Bugle Galaxy, deep space, the
 universe. Lights!

N2
They're not on.

NARRATOR
I know. I was hoping they might come
on.

N2
Oh. (pause) It didn't work.

NARRATOR
You know the best way to conserve your
oxygen?

N2
Hush?

NARRATOR
Hush.