

CHAPTER 3 - The Cataclysmic Miscalculation

NARRATOR. Vit-0-Pep presents the Spaceship Zero Adventure Hour!
Episode Three: The Cataclysmic Miscalculation!

Intro music

NARRATOR: in our last episode, the crew of Spaceship Zero activated Professor Ashton's miracle engine, The Better Than Light Drive. But all did not go as planned.

GEARBOX (straining) Great Jumpin' Space Catfish...did anyone get the number of that starcruiser?

STACKHOUSE Is everyone okay? Mensa?

MENSA I'm alright, check on Ashton

GEARBOX Robot, ship status?

ROBOT Better-Than-Light Drive Deactivated

STACKHOUSE Ashton?

ASHTON oh...I say...

MENSA Is the viewscreen broken? I've just got static here

STACKHOUSE Robot, what is our current location?

ROBOT Location unavailable

STACKHOUSE Elaborate

ROBOT Current star patterns do not match with known astro charts. Unable to locate navigation beacon for position, Cap-cap-captain.

GEARBOX Current star patterns? I don't see any star patterns, period! These readings are gobbledygook! It looks like we haven't moved at all

STACKHOUSE Professor?

ASHTON These readings indicate that we did reach the speed of light. However...

MENSA However?

ASHTON The vessel has not moved, per se. We are not at Ice Station Pluto, nor have we overshot, light years away from Earth.

GEARBOX Then where are we?

ASHTON As we attained the speed of light, we gained infinite mass, and everything around us...gasses, asteroids, planets...stars...everything was pulled towards the ship like water sucked down a drain.

STACKHOUSE What are you saying, Ashton?

ASHTON Based on these readings, there's a very good chance that the entire universe has collapsed into the BTL's gravity nexus. When the BTL was deactivated, that energy was again released. In essence we are the center point of a second Big Bang.

GEARBOX(angry): What?

CAPTAIN: You're telling me that Earth and everyone we ever know has been destroyed?

ASHTON: Matter cannot be destroyed, Captain...it has simply changed. Observe these figures...

GEARBOX: Figures? I've had enough of this! Your facts! Your figures! What are they worth now? Are they worth the lives of seven billion people? You knew this was going to happen, didn't you? YOU

STACKHOUSE: Gearbox, get back in your seat

GEARBOX: You're a cold-blooded madman, and I'm going to enjoy this!

STACKHOUSE Plug your jets, cowboy! Ashton I don't see how

that's possible, wouldn't all that matter and energy converging on the BTL effect have destroyed Spaceship Zero?

ASHTON Not necessarily, the Bendall Field draws on the energy from the Better-Than-Light Drive, it would have shielded the ship while the BTL was active.

STACKHOUSE And wouldn't it have taken billions of years for the entire universe to collapse at the speed of light?

ASHTON That's true, but while we exist within the BTL effect, we don't experience time normally.

MENSA Now *my* head hurts

GEARBOX That's is a load of space gas...that's what that is! This egghead has been sniffing too much xenon.

STACKHOUSE: Gearbox, I want you to go down to the engine room and check on the BTL Drive, the xenon thrusters and the Bendall Field. I'll see if the robot can corroborate Ashton's ...theory.

GEARBOX Yeah I get it. I don't think I wanna be in the room with this "genius" anyway

SFX sound of hatch opening, closing.

MENSA ...second big bang... so everything's...gone?

STACKHOUSE (concerned) Miss Mensa...

Beat

STACKHOUSE Heidi! Let's focus on our next step. Robot, put all sensor readings to my console.

ROBOT Affirmative, Cap-cap-captain Sir

STACKHOUSE Professor, what are our options? Can we fix the BTL?

ASHTON: My drive is not broken

MENSA. But we can't use it to get anywhere.

STACKHOUSE: Where would we go?

ASHTON: Captain, we are at the center of this universe that's being created around us. The matter and energy converted in the event is now being pushed, away from us, in every direction, at the speed of light. It will be 380,000 years before atoms form and another 1.6 million years before gravity pulls together stars. We will simply have to wait."

MENSA: Wait? Wait for what? Wait for atoms to form? Sure, I'll put the kettle on..."

ASHTON The good news is, according to Nasburg's Theory, the life and death of the universe is cyclical and predictable. In about 11 billion years, there will be another Milky Way Galaxy and another Earth, with all our friends and colleagues.

MENSA Even if that's true, how does that help us now?

ASHTON We simply predict the location of the evolution of our solar system, and drift along with this universe as it expands until we arrive thereat.

STACKHOUSE Those are some hefty space calculations, even for a robot.

MENSA That's fine for the robot, but how do you propose we humans survive an 11 billion year journey?

ASHTON In the deconstitutor, of course!

STACKHOUSE You're suggesting we go into the deconstitutor, become converted into a dehydrated pellet of our essential elements, and hope nothing goes wrong over 11 billion years? What if Nasburg's Theory is wrong, and the universe doesn't evolve into a duplicate of the previous incarnation?

ASHTON Why would it deviate? There's no outside stimulus affecting this big bang that didn't affect the

previous one.

ROBOT Correction, Suh-suh-sir. There is one new element.
Spaceship Zero.

DRAMATIC MUSIC

ANNOUNCER Did you know that 90% of germs come from your
mouth? But don't worry. VIT-O-PEP Radium Tooth
Cream sterilizes your mouth, brightens teeth and
gives you that tingling fresh mouth feeling all day
long! Yes, 9 out of 10 oral scientists agree, for
long-lasting mouth healthfulness...it's Vite-0-Pep!

MUSIC

Act 2

CAPTAIN Alright crew, everybody strip down to your birthday
suit, as you know the deconstitutor gets touchy
with any inorganic components like metal or plastic

ASHTON Oh, yes, my retainer

GEARBOX It's too bad Miss Mensa didn't give us more notice
before she decided to join the crew. I could have
rigged up a ladies change room.

MENSA Believe me, Gearbox, it's a decision I wish I could
change.

STACKHOUSE Alright, alright.

GEARBOX Great jumpin' space catfish, Skipper. I still can't
believe you're going along with poindexter's
cockamamie scheme. I know I'm a level 2 engineer...
but on this ship, with *present company*, I'm having
trouble placing my faith entirely in the hands of
technology. One tiny mishap with with the Decon
matrix and I might reconstitute with an extra eye
or something.

ASHTON On the contrary, Mr Gearbox, it is far more likely
you would reconstitute missing a body part than
suddenly sprouting an extra one. The deconstitution

process consists of mapping the biochemical makeup of any subject, recording the data then extracting all moisture from that individual. The tiny pile of remains is then formed into a compact hexagon, instantly freeze dried and sealed for storage. Most deconstitution accidents involve not from the deconstitution process but rather through human error. I can assure you recent advances in deconstitution technology have resulted in an 87.5% reconstitution success rate.

GEARBOX Well that's reassuring. Only 1/8th of people die horribly.

ASHTON Closer to 1/9th, really...

SFX ALARMS SOUND

ROBOT Warning! Warning! Bendall generator is losing power.

GEARBOX What? How?

MENSA What happens if the Bendall field collapses?

ASHTON Impossible to say, this vessel's sensors are not configured to interpret the matter and energy outside the ship during this volatile time in the universe's formation

GEARBOX The radiation could bake our brains

ASHTON More likely that we will be crushed and immolated.

ROBOT Warning! Unidentified particles are penetrating ship's hull.

STACKHOUSE That's it, everyone into the deconstitutor chambers, pronto! It's our only chance

GEARBOX Ladies first

MENSA No arguments here

SFX - DECONSTITUTOR DECONSTITUTING

ASHTON You fellows do as you wish, I will stay and monitor
the sensors

STACKHOUSE Into the chamber, Ashton, that's an order.

ASHTON But we simply must know more about these mystery
particles. Science demands it!

GEARBOX Oh I feel kind of...funny

ROBOT Particle density increasing by factor one zero
zero.

GEARBOX Captain let me hop down to the engine room and take
a look at the Bendall generator

STACKHOUSE There's no time, Gearbox, grab the professor and
put him in the deconstitutor.

GEARBOX With pleasure

ASHTON Unhand me you simpleton! Captain I protest! Need I
remind you that...

GEARBOX You asked for this, egghead

SFX punch

ASHTON ugh...

SFX - DECONSTITUTOR DECONSTITUTING

STACKHOUSE You're next

GEARBOX What about you?

STACKHOUSE I'm right behind you

GEARBOX Skipper...

STACKHOUSE NOW Gearbox

GEARBOX Your ring. No inorganic components, remember?

STACKHOUSE Thanks pal.

GEARBOX See you later. I hope.

SFX - DECONSTITUTOR DECONSTITUTING

STACKHOUSE (sighing/labored) Robot! Open the locker to the
astro-suits

ROBOT You're not deconstituting Suh-suh-sir?

STACKHOUSE (labored) I can't. Gearbox was right. If we can't
get the Bendall field working, this ship will never
survive the trip to Earth. But I suddenly feel
so...so weak...

ROBOT Cap-cap-captain sir, do you require assistance.

STACKHOUSE got to...uhn

ROBOT Cap-cap-tain? Your vital signs are fluxuating
dangerously. What are your orders, suh-suh-sir?

Suh-suh-sir? Cap-cap-captain?

MUSIC: Dramatic sting

NARRATOR Will Captain Stackhouse survive the mysterious
energies from the birth of the universe? Will
Spaceship Zero find Earth 2? Find out in the next
exciting chapter of The Spaceship Zero Adventure
Hour, brought to you by VIT-O-PEP!

End music

End of episode