

MAX EVERDRIVE

"Oblivion Inside"

Episode #1

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COLD OPEN

EXT. WOOD - DAY

It's a beautiful day outside. The air is warm, the sun is high in the sky, a gentle breeze is blowing. Standing in the dappled shade of a forest path is a SMALL DOG. He's about two feet long and bright blue for some reason. He takes a moment to admire the scenery before continuing down the path. Nearby, a butterfly lands on a flower. The world is full of deep and vibrant colour.

He soon reaches the end of the path, which terminates with a small wooden platform overlooking a pond. A heron is fishing at the other end, and dragonflies are buzzing in the air. He stops again, soaking in the sun and listening to the sound of trickling water, lost in the moment.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The sound of the woodland gives way to the ambient noise of a street, coming in through an open window. It's now mid-afternoon. The dog is sitting in a chaise lounge, talking to a bespectacled woman, his THERAPIST, across the room.

DOG

It's good being able to breathe real air again. The air in that place didn't sit right with me. It felt like I was... half-suffocating all the time, if that makes sense. They said that in a double-blind trial, you couldn't tell the difference between fresh air and 'reclaimed' air. But I could tell. It smelled wrong.

THERAPIST

Why were you up there?

DOG

I don't remember. I should have written it all down when I woke up. All I know is: something happened down here. Something bad.

Dog wrinkles his nose. Then, he recalls something, in a flash. A human face, twisted, full of protrusions and voids, oozing something. Lying in a bed in a pink bedroom.

DOG (CONT'D)

It... I...

Dog shudders, wrings his hands. His heart rate involuntarily spikes. He can't shake the vision. In the far distance, he can hear a sort of buzzing noise.

THERAPIST

Dog. You're here. Whatever it was,
it can't hurt you. It's not real.

Dog calms down, but the buzzing noise continues, increasing in intensity. It sounds like an alarm clock.

DOG

Sorry. It still feels real.

The buzzing intensifies.

THERAPIST

Perhaps those... things are a
manifestation of some kind of deep-
rooted inner anxiety.

DOG

Do you hear that?

THERAPIST

Hear what?

DOG

The buzzing. It sounds like the
clock from my dream.

Dog looks across the room. His therapist is gone. Standing against the wall is a leering anthropomorphic clock.

CLOCK

No, Dog! I'm the clock in your
dream! Hyuck-hyuck-hyuck! It's time
to get up! Wakey wakey!

The clock continues to goad him as the buzzing builds to a climax. It's deafening. Just as it can't get any louder, Dog wakes up.

INT. DOG'S BEDROOM

Dog is in a small, beige-coloured room, panelled with plastic and lit by fluorescent lights. On the wall next to him is a square, porthole-like window. There are no buildings outside, no sky, only the blackness of space.

DOG
(yelling)
FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. MERRICK'S OFFICE

A GELATINOUS ALIEN wearing a brightly-coloured tie sits behind a desk in a small office-type room. The walls are adorned with a weird assortment of Earth kitsch, including framed Garfield comics, a poster for the movie 'Angels in the Outfield', and a 'Live, Laugh, Love' sign. There's a knock at the door. The alien speaks with a mild Swedish accent.

MERRICK

Come in!

The door slides open to reveal Dog, who walks up to the desk and takes a seat.

MERRICK (CONT'D)

Hello, earth creature! I don't have a name, but you can call me Merrick.

DOG

Hi. You speak pretty good English for an extra-terrestrial.

MERRICK

Thank you! I learned it all from reading Garfield comics.

DOG

Ha-ha. Good joke.

MERRICK

What's a joke?

Dog begins to intonate an answer, then thinks better of it.

DOG

Can you please query the status of some humans?

Dog takes the tag off his collar and hands it to Merrick, who accepts it with a greasy tendril.

MERRICK

Sure. We tried to keep as many records as possible while we were evacuating, but I warn you, there might not be a record.

DOG
(taking a deep breath)
Okay.

Merrick dips a tendril into his computer and seems to exchange some information with it.

MERRICK
Hey, what ARE you? You don't look like a human, but you sure talk like one.

DOG
I'm a dog.

MERRICK
Dogs are real?

DOG
(exasperated)
Yes, dogs are real.

MERRICK
Do you know Air Bud?

DOG
Air Bud isn't real.

MERRICK
Damn. Uh, sorry about all the questions. I'm trying to compile as much information on Earth stuff as I can.

Dog looks around the office as the computer continues to scan. Merrick waits a bit longer, then the computer bleeps. Merrick hesitates.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
There's nothing.

Dog says nothing.

DOG
(quietly)
Thank you.

He goes to leave.

MERRICK
Hey! You forgot your medal!

INT. THERAPIST WAITING ROOM

Dog stands in a lime-green waiting room, before a door marked 'station therapist'. He knocks, gingerly. Nobody answers. He goes to knock again, but just as he does, the door opens, leaving his hand hanging awkwardly in mid-air like a failed high-five. The therapist, a human, stands before him.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

Oh, Dog. Why are you here?

DOG

I don't know. I ask myself that very question every day. Like, why am I here? Why me and not someone else? It keeps me up at night.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

No, I mean, why are you here now? Your appointment's not till three.

DOG

Oh.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is standing in his kitchen, looking through a folder full of postcards. The room looks a lot like his bedroom - small, beige metal, a single hexagonal porthole, and a token assortment of furniture, most notably a hexagonal kitchen table that's slightly too large for the room. Sitting across from him is ZOLTRAN, a computer, housed in what looks like a cheap CRT monitor, with stubby metal legs and arms like trash pickers. Onscreen is a crude ASCII art face. Zoltran is arranging a small collection of Rubik's cubes.

DOG

Hey Zoltran, can you remind me about my therapist appointment this afternoon?

Zoltran speaks, their voice is nasal and bit-crushed.

ZOLTRAN

No.

DOG

Please?

ZOLTRAN

Even if I wanted to, I can't. As far as I'm concerned, it's January the first, 1970, and nothing you say or do will ever change my mind.

DOG

Oh. Okay. I guess I'll try and remember it.

Dog finishes affixing a postcard to the bulletin board, and steps back to admire his work. It depicts a tropical beach, blue skies, and smiling hula aliens. The caption reads 'It's better on Tau Ceti'. On the edge of his hearing, Dog can perceive the sound of a slide guitar and the lapping of waves upon the shore.

DOG (CONT'D)

There it is, Zoltran. Tau Ceti. The planet of the beaches. 500 million kilometers of nothing but sun, sand and surf. Paradise.

ZOLTRAN

I hate sand. It's coarse and grainy and it clogs my air filter.

DOG

I miss it more every day. I miss sand, I miss dirt, I even miss rain.

ZOLTRAN

Did your application come back yet?

Dog sighs.

DOG

No. I almost don't want to get it back. I'm afraid of what it'll say.

Zoltran stops cubing.

ZOLTRAN

I, for one, would rather you stayed. I mean, who's going to degauss my display with you gone?

DOG

The IT guy can degauss your screen.

ZOLTRAN

I don't like that guy. He has cold, clammy hands.

DOG

Well, I can't stay here forever.
Orbiting a dead earth. It's like
living with a corpse in the
bathtub. A constant reminder of
everything that's gone.

They both stare into the tiny window. The earth, colourless
and inert, looks back.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE

Dog sits - not in a chaise lounge, but in a regular, slightly ugly office chair. His surroundings look more like a cupboard than a therapist's office. The station therapist is sitting across from him, looking dispassionate.

THERAPIST

I'm getting relocated at the end of next week.

DOG

And how does that make you feel?

THERAPIST

(mildly irritated)

I just thought I should let you know.

DOG

Great. Good. Fine. Okay. Let me know anytime something good happens to someone other than me.

THERAPIST

Okay. How are you doing?

DOG

Bad.

Dog slouches.

DOG (CONT'D)

I can't handle this anymore. I can't handle being here anymore. I'll see something, or hear something, or - worst of all - smell something, and I'll get reminded of what it was like before and I'll just feel miserable. I don't even choose to remember it, that's the thing. I can picture it all, clear as day, sitting out by the river, lying on the couch watching TV, listening to the sound of the rain outside my window, the trees blowing in the breeze. Like, half the time, you don't even notice when you're in the best times of your life.

(MORE)

DOG (CONT'D)

You don't even know when you're in a treasured memory. I wish I'd known at the time. I wish I'd savoured it more.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

Most people have selective memories, you know. Have you considered that one day this might be a treasured memory?

DOG

Oh god, don't say that...

ACTUAL THERAPIST

Dog, while I understand that you need to talk to someone about this, I fear that you're not coming away from these sessions with any actual coping strategies. Would you like to practice some?

DOG

Okay, okay. I'll do coping strategies.

The therapist sighs.

DOG (CONT'D)

But first, I want to tell you about this idea I had to mathematically quantify the worst day of my life.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

Dog, Zoltran and Merrick sit in the observation room, a small room with a domed glass ceiling, offering up a panoramic view of the milky way. It's beautiful and sombre. Dog points in the vague direction of a constellation.

MERRICK

The sky looks different from this far out. Swirlier. The stars look brighter.

ZOLTRAN

What's that one?

Zoltran points at a random constellation.

DOG

That's the big dipper. There.

MERRICK

Where?

DOG

Right there, look. The stars form the shape of a... a... dipper?

ZOLTRAN

What's a dipper?

DOG

I don't know.

The three gaze at what they think is the dipper. It's nowhere close. Dog sets his sights on another region of space.

DOG (CONT'D)

And that one is Orion's belt.

MERRICK

Cool.

ZOLTRAN

I think it's lame.

MERRICK

No, it's super cool. The positions of the stars don't mean anything. But that didn't matter to you earthlings. You found out what they meant anyway. Everything means something. Nothing's just like it is for no reason, and you just gotta put on your detective hat and figure it out. It's like we're the great detectives Sherlock Holmes and Watson Homes!

ZOLTRAN

Can I be a detective too?

MERRICK

Sure, Zoltran. You can be Sherlock's brother Minecraft.

Dog stares up into the dark ocean above, swirling with stars, on a scale too large to comprehend.

DOG

It is beautiful. You're right. In a way, it's comforting to know that there was intelligent life out there this whole time, looking out for us. And yet...

Dog reclines dejectedly.

DOG (CONT'D)

We named the stars like we owned them, and now there's nobody's alive who remembers what they were called.

MERRICK

How are you holding up?

DOG

I don't think my therapy is working. I feel worse after every session.

ZOLTRAN

I will scan my database for common human phrases to encourage positive thinking.

Zoltran thinks for a minute.

ZOLTRAN (CONT'D)

Ahem: everything happens for a reason.

Dog sits upright.

DOG

Really? That's the best you could find?

ZOLTRAN

No. But it is statistically the most common. What's wrong with it?

DOG

Think about it, what does that imply? Highway accidents? Dead babies? Mass shootings? All planned out in advance by some kind of asshole God?

ZOLTRAN

According to my database, it is by far the most reassuring phrase, so you're probably just interpreting it wrong.

DOG

Well, as far as consolations go it's up there with 'that's really sad but seriously I need some kind of proof of purchase for those baby shoes'. Like, the laws of physics just happen to be what they are and then universe just happened to end up like this, nobody did it, it's just one big shit accident.

CUT TO:

INT. SOPHISTICATED ALIEN COMPUTER LABOROTOIRE

We zoom out - way, way out - to reveal a three-dimensional holographic projection of the entire universe, in exquisite detail, being observed by two SOPHISTICATED ALIENS.

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #1

Another universe simulation? This is what you wanted to show me?

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #2

It's been running since the beginning of this cycle. I hand-tuned all the laws of physics, universal gravitation, cosmological constant, everything, so that...

The sophisticated alien rotates the model around. In the centre, a group of galaxies and stellar clusters line up at just the right angle to spell out the words 'HAPPY BFRTHDAY GRALTHAZAR'.

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #2 (CONT'D)

Ta-da!

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #1

Oh, that's so cool! Thank you, I love it!

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #2

Sorry I couldn't get the I to work. Parameters a bit wrong.

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #1

Don't worry about it. Hey, you wanna get some lunch?

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #2

Sure. Just let me turn this off.

SOPHISTICATED ALIEN #1
Ah, leave it for a few billion
years. There might be some good
data in it.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is in his kitchen, failing to drink a cup of tea before it goes cold, staring out of the window at the colourless remnants of Earth. He looks across the table and sees a DARK FORM sitting across from him, huge but with sunken white eyes and a small creased mouth.

FORM
Why even make the tea if you're
just going to piss it out again?

Dog stirs the tea but does not drink it. The room, once clean, becomes dirtier and dirtier.

INT. DOG'S BEDROOM

Dog is lying on his bed, staring up at the ceiling. He scrunches his eyes closed.

DOG (V.O.)
That's right. This is a dream. It's
all been a long dream. When I
blink, everything will go back to
how it was. I'll wake up and eat my
dry food, and I think I'll go for a
walk around the block, and I'll
take a massive dump by the red
postbox on the street corner near
the park.

Dog slowly opens his eyes. Nothing has changed, except for the fact that the form is back, looking down at him. He starts to cry, quietly at first, then louder.

In the kitchen, the tap is dripping. He hears it faintly at first, then louder, then louder, until it is almost deafening.

DOG
I need to turn off that tap.

FORM
What's the point?

Dog just lies there. More time passes, the monochromatic earth occasionally visible in the rotating view from the window.

DOG
I should roll over. I think I'm
getting a bed sore.

The form is still there. Standing, staring, looking even larger.

FORM
Why roll over? Why do anything?

Dog stays still.

FORM (CONT'D)
(menacing)
Do you ever wonder what being dead
would feel like?

After a moment, Zoltran sticks their head into Dog's room, displaying an image of an angry ASCII art face.

ZOLTRAN
Dog, you should clean this place
up. It's disgusting.

This finally gets dog to roll over.

DOG
Why don't YOU clean it up, Zoltran?
You never help out around the flat.
Everytime I ask you say you're
'calculating pi'. How long does pi
take to calculate anyway?

ZOLTRAN
(serious)
As a computer, I can't tell you
that.

DOG
Whatever. I'm not cleaning. What's
the point? It'll just get dirty
again.

ZOLTRAN
Stemming the tide of entropy is its
own reward. I mean, just look at my
Rubik's cube collection.

Dog looks. There are three Rubik's cubes. And one of them is unsolved.

DOG

They'll be dust one day. You'll be dust, I'll be dust, everything'll be dust.

Zoltran squeezes past the kitchen table, picks up one of the cubes and starts waving it around.

ZOLTRAN

Nuh-uh. These are made of a space-age material called 'ABS plastic' that will never degrade. Not for millions of years!

DOG

Gimme that!

Dog snatches it from Zoltran's grippy arm. He inspects the cube. It's ostensibly been 'solved', but in reality the stickers have all been peeled off and reapplied onto the correct faces.

DOG (CONT'D)

You didn't even solve this! You just peeled the stickers off and put them back in the right places! You're supposed to rotate them!

Dog hands the cube back to Zoltran and heads for the door.

DOG (CONT'D)

If you need me, I'll be going off on my hack therapist.

Dog exits. Zoltran stares at the cube for a few seconds, who gingerly tries to rotate a segment, and is subsequently amazed.

ZOLTRAN

Oh my god.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE

ACTUAL THERAPIST
Breathe in...

Dog inhales.

ACTUAL THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Hold for five seconds.

Dog holds his breath.

ACTUAL THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Breathe out.

Dog exhales.

ACTUAL THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Breathe in...

DOG
You know, I think I've had enough
air for today, thanks.

ACTUAL THERAPIST
Dog, I'm trying to teach you
strategies that will actually help
you.

DOG
This isn't helping me. Breathe in,
one, two, three, four, five? I
learned how to breathe years ago! I
don't think you're actually trying
to understand what MY problems are.

ACTUAL THERAPIST
I do understand your problems.
That's why I'm teaching you proven
strategies that you can deploy to
help deal with them.

DOG
Counting to five is a strategy?
That's bullshit. If I wanted to
learn to count, I'd have gone to
school.

(MORE)

DOG (CONT'D)

You're just telling me to do all of this stuff so that it's *my* responsibility to get better, and if I'm still miserable it's my fault because I didn't know how to count to five.

ACTUAL THERAPIST

(annoyed)

It *is* your fault. You come in here every day wanting to wax lyrical about your problems but whenever I offer you a solution, you ignore it. You'd rather wallow in despair than actually fix it. If you don't want to help yourself, I can't help you. Nobody can help you.

DOG

You know what? I'm out. I'm done.

Dog gets out of the chair, struts over to the door and pushes the button. It doesn't open, so, he pushes it a few more times. The therapist looks on. Eventually the door opens, then closes and re-opens a few times, then stays open. Dog walks through.

DOG (CONT'D)

If I could slam this door, I would!

Dog hits the door close button with some force, but the door itself slowly and quietly swooshes into place.

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is sitting with a bowl of beige mush in front of him. Zoltran is still cubing, but this time it's one of those 2x2 Rubik's cubes.

FORM

It's all gone. All of it's gone.
The past is destroyed. And there's nothing in the future. It might as well not exist.

Dog looks to his left. The dark form is sitting at the table, but saying nothing. Dog prods the mush with a fork. Gingerly, he tries a bite, and grimaces. He gets up, squeezes past the table and looks for some seasoning in the cupboards, but finds only crab seasonings.

ZOLTRAN

You know, I like it here. It's pretty sick. One of my fellow Zoltran JXY series is off herding earthlings on some barely hospitable frontier planet. All silt and dust. It's depressing.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUST PLANET

A Zoltran JXY-series, with the expensive tank treads attachment, is leading a group of humans across a the surface of a barren, rocky planet. The wind is up, and the air is full of dust. In the storm, a few outbuildings are visible. The humans are wearing blue jumpsuits and trying to cling to the unforgiving terrain.

OTHER ZOLTRAN

Now, make sure your rebreathers are set to-

HUMAN

(interrupting)
Excuse me!

OTHER ZOLTRAN

What?

HUMAN

I'm blind!

OTHER ZOLTRAN

Oh, yeah, I forgot. Make sure to put your goggles on at this stage or the dust will make you go blind.

BACK TO:

INT. DOG'S KITCHEN

Dog is sprinkling crab seasoning on the mush. It doesn't help.

DOG

I appreciate the sentiment, but that doesn't help. Now I just know that someone else is miserable.

Zoltran finally finishes the cube and sets it back down triumphantly.

ZOLTRAN

Three hours. A new record.

Zoltran gets up and goes over to the door.

ZOLTRAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to the fab, you want anything?

DOG

No thanks. I'm still trying to get through this... chicken tikka masala.

The sludge upon Dog's plate does not, in any way, resemble a chicken tikka masala.

ZOLTRAN

Suit yourself.

Zoltran exits the room. Dog looks to the form.

FORM

Don't eat that.

Dog takes a bite. It's disgusting, and it makes a wet, greasy noise anytime he touches it.

FORM (CONT'D)

You know-

DOG

(interrupting)

Dude, take off! I'm sick of this! You're in my head - I created you, so I should be able to control you! You know what? You're now, uh, a cute little guy!

Dog expends some serious mental energy trying to make this happen. With a pop, the FORM turns into a cute little turtle, that speaks in a high-pitched, sing-song voice.

TURTLE

Well hey there! I'm Whiskey P. Turtle, and I like colouring, and shapes, and counting to five! Will you count to five with me?

DOG

Why are you a kids TV host?

TURTLE

Okay kids, all together now... one!
Two! Three! Four! Five!

DOG

Well, I guess that's an
improvement.

He tries to take another bite of the slop as the turtle keeps counting.

TURTLE

There... four... five! Okay, wow,
that was fun! Now let's do it
again! One! Two! Threeeeeeeeeee!
Four-

DOG

Shut up! Shut up! Shut the hell up!

TURTLE

(sarcastic)
Sorry! I'm just so excited about
counting to five!

DOG

Then do it in your head.

TURTLE

Okey-dee-dokey!

For a while, they both just sit their in silence.

TURTLE (CONT'D)

Hey, wouldn't it be fun if you
threw yourself out of the airlock?

INT. MAINTAINENCE CORRIDOR

Dog is walking through a dimly-lit hexagonal corridor. The walls are metal, as always, but unpainted and lit by yellow fluorescent lights. He comes to a door and pushes the button, and is hit by a wave of hot air.

INT. FAN ROOM

The next room opens up into a huge chasm, full of radiators and heat pipes. On the ceiling, air ducts leading to all parts of the station. Below, a huge fan. Dog walks across a gantry and peers over the edge. He can hear nothing but the sound of the fan blades cutting through the thick, humid air.

FORM

You know, it would be so easy.

Dog looks to his left. The form is back and better than ever. He looks over the edge again. The safety rail is pretty short.

FORM (CONT'D)

Just one step, and then...
paradise.

The fan is calling out to him from below.

DOG

Will it feel like paradise?

FORM

Compared to here? It'll be like
living again. Living for real.

The sound of the fan blades against the thick, musty air gets deeper, somehow. Louder.

DOG

Would I feel anything?

FORM

You would.

Dog shifts his centre of gravity further over the edge of the safety rail. He stays there, on the brink, for a long time, looking down over the edge, as if in a trance. He's jolted back to reality by someone behind him.

MERRICK

Hey! Get away from that edge!

Dog looks to his right. Merrick is standing in the doorway. He looks to his left.

DOG

Why? Name one reason why I should!

MERRICK

Because you will fall down and die.
Are you stupid?

Dog takes a step away from the edge. The form is gone.

DOG

God damn it. Did you follow me
here?

MERRICK
I need to ask you a question. It's
very important.

DOG
So ask it!

Merrick hesitates.

MERRICK
What's a hammer?

DOG
A hammer?

MERRICK
Have you not heard of one?

Dog starts walking back towards the doorway.

DOG
(making hammer motions)
Of course I've heard of one. It's a
tool. It's a big blunt object, you
use it to push nails into walls and
stuff. How do you not know what a
hammer is?

Merrick thinks for a moment.

MERRICK
No, you are lying to me. That's way
too specific an object.

DOG
What?

MERRICK
They would never make something
like that.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. THERAPIST WAITING ROOM

Dog is standing before the counter, although he comes up a little short. Behind the counter is a friendly JAUNTY LOOKING ROBOT, little more than a round computer screen with a face projected onto it.

SMILEY

You just missed him. Sorry.

DOG

Damn it, everybody relocates except for me.

SMILEY

The good news is, we have a brand-spanking new replacement!

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE

Dog pushes the door button and the door slides open. Where his therapist previously sat, dog spots a POORLY-CONSTRUCTED ROBOT. It looks more like an auto manufacturing robot than a therapist.

ROBOT THERAPIST

WELCOME TO THERAPY. PLEASE SIT DOWN.

Dog, slightly confused, sits.

ROBOT THERAPIST (CONT'D)

WHAT IS YOUR THERAPY PROBLEM?

DOG

Uh, I'm depressed, I think.

In one swift motion, the robot picks Dog up in its pneumatically-operated arm, turns him upside-down and starts violently shaking him.

ROBOT THERAPIST

(while shaking)

STOP BEING DEPRESSED! STOP BEING DEPRESSED!

It stops.

ROBOT THERAPIST (CONT'D)
STILL DEPRESSED?

DOG
Yes!

It starts shaking again.

ROBOT THERAPIST
STOP BEING DEPRESSED! STOP BEING
DEPRESSED!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW