

NEUTRIKA AND THE QUARKS

Episode 101

"Trouble in Particle Town"

written by

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BACKGROUND: The series takes place on the Planet Zang – life on Zang differs from life on Earth in a variety of ways, not the least of which is that, under certain circumstances, inhabitants can “project” themselves (by “Quarking”) into the quantum universe, exhibiting behavior that would normally only be possible at the quantum scale of matter – which is very, very small.

In real life, all matter (meaning protons and neutrons) is made up of quarks, of which there are six: Up, Down, Top, Bottom, Strange and Charm. The characters take their names from the actual subatomic particles. The nature of the quantum universe means that all sorts of things are possible, including traveling at the speed of light, instantaneous transportation (quantum entanglement), exploration at the microscopic scale and much more.

Neutrika and the Quarks (with two exceptions) are all approximately 15 years old and female. They attend Boson Academy, which is a live-in school with an emphasis on the arts – they’ve formed a band and their big dream is to score a galactic record deal. The two exceptions are TOP and BOTTOM, who read as adult “cat” and “dog,” respectively. TOP is female, sassy and has a high-pitched Brooklyn accent; BOTTOM is male, and very British upper-class, despite the fact he’s always sniffing around on the ground. They have their own language, which the Quarks hear as barks and meows; the viewer, however, can understand it all.

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, NEUTRIKA'S DORM - DAY

The dorm room is average in size; a twin bed sits in the center of the room. A desk and chair are against the far wall. There is a bookcase next to the bed and a large monitor hangs on the wall opposite the bed.

NEUTRIKA is the singer and unofficial leader of the group. She tries to keep a level head about her, which can be difficult with everything else that’s going on. She’s quick-witted, funny and resourceful – above all, a survivor.

Here, she lies on her stomach on her bed, typing away on her laptop. TOP is curled up asleep on top of the bookshelf and BOTTOM sniffs at the ground below the bookshelf.

Suddenly, the monitor comes on and a disembodied, male voice comes over it. It’s HEISENBERG, the group’s booking agent.

[Heisenberg is heard and never seen; think Charlie of Charlie’s Angels. The running joke is that he’ll have either a location or a time for a gig, but never both at the same time. (See Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle.)]

HEISENBERG (V.O.)
Hello Neutrika!

NEUTRIKA
Hey, Heisenberg!

Top is startled by the sudden noise and wakes up with a large "rawr," which is followed by a succession of barks by Bottom... At least that's what Neutrika hears.

Top leaps off the bookshelf to the floor, knocking over Bottom in the process, who laughs at Top's momentary confusion.

[TOP and BOTTOM'S dialogue here happens as Heisenberg and Neutrika are speaking in the background.]

TOP
Don't laugh at me.

BOTTOM
You are SO easily startled.

TOP
You would've been too! That was a terrible way to be woken up.

BOTTOM
You sleep too much, that's the truth.

TOP
I need my beauty rest.

BOTTOM
That's nonsense.

TOP
Is not.

BOTTOM
Is too.

TOP
Is not!

BOTTOM
Is too!

[This back-and-forth reads as meow and bark to Neutrika.]

Neutrika glances over at Top and Bottom.

NEUTRIKA
(to Top and Bottom)
Top? Bottom? Plug it!
(to monitor)
So Heisenberg, what were you saying?

HEISENBERG (V.O.)
Great news. I've booked you a gig!

NEUTRIKA
Ooh, stellar.

HEISENBERG (V.O.)
It's at the BaBar Arena in Particle
Town.

NEUTRIKA
Oooh, that's a nice space. Sooooo
when...

HEISENBERG (V.O.)
(interrupting)
Uh oh - that's another call. Gotta
go... Heisenberg out!

The monitor flickers off

NEUTRIKA
Zang it, Heisenberg, can't he ever
tell us both when and where a gig
is?

Neutrika jumps out of bed, runs out of her room and...

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Dashes down the hallway until she gets to a door.

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, STRANGE AND CHARM'S DORM - CONTINUOUS

Unlike Neutrika, CHARM (Lead Guitar) and STRANGE (Keyboards)
share a double room.

Charm is super-feminine - all little hearts, curlicues, and
generally very self-involved. But on guitar, she totally
shreds. Charm can also be a little boy-crazy.

Strange, on the other hand, is very "Brooklyn-hip" and
teched-out with her gear - she can be something of a
conspiracy theorist and somewhat suspicious - often with an
element of "tin foil hat."

Their room has a similar set-up to Neutrika's, but instead,
it has two twin-beds.

Charm's bed is farther from the door - she is lying down,
with cucumbers over her eyes.

Strange's bed is closer to the door, where she's sitting
reading a book: "Haber Potter and the Prisoner of Ammonia."

Neutrika bursts in.

NEUTRIKA
Hey, hey I've got great...

Neutrika notices Charm.

NEUTRIKA (CONT'D)
Charm? What ARE you doing?

CHARM
I read that resting for one hour
every day with cucumbers over your
eyes makes their color really pop.

STRANGE
(snorts)
I can't believe you bought that.

CHARM
Says the girl who thinks Earthlings
exist.

STRANGE
Um, did you not see that picture
they just released of Earth's
surface? It totally proves the
existence of Earthlings.

CHARM
That picture was so grainy, you
couldn't see anything.

STRANGE
Well, not with cucumbers over your
eyes you couldn't.

NEUTRIKA
Hey, listen: I've got great news.
Heisenberg just called, and we've
got a gig!

STRANGE
Ooh, where?

NEUTRIKA
Particle town.

STRANGE
Do we know when?

NEUTRIKA
Nope.

CHARM
Good ol' Heisie.

NEUTRIKA

It'll work out. It always does...
eventually. But, knowing
Heisenberg, it's probably tonight.

CHARM

Do Up and Down know yet?

NEUTRIKA

No, I'm gonna go tell 'em now.

STRANGE

I'll come with.

Strange jumps out of bed. She and Neutrika rush out of the room and...

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Down the hallway until they get to another door.

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, UP AND DOWN'S DORM - CONTINUOUS

UP and DOWN's dorm is set up just like Strange and Charm's.

Down (Bassist) isn't "down," so to speak; she's just very New Age "chill." She's vegetarian, into yoga and meditation – when she meditates, she floats. She's often somewhat "spacy" and can also be a little shy at times.

Up (Drummer) is very much "up" – she's energetic, loves sports and is always positive – sometimes unjustifiably so.

Down sits pretzel-legged, hovering a few inches above her bed, meditating. Her bass sits in her lap and occasionally she moves her hand down to pluck a chord.

Up sits at the desk, her back to the door, doing homework. She has headphones on and with her free hand she taps a beat on the desk.

There is a knock at the door.

DOWN

Come in.

Neutrika opens the door and enters with Strange behind her.

STRANGE

Guess what, guess what.

DOWN

What?

STRANGE

We have a show. Guess where, guess where.

DOWN

Where?

STRANGE

Particle Town. Guess when.

DOWN

When?

STRANGE

Who knows?

DOWN

(rolls her eyes.
Sarcastically)

Oh Heisenberg, that's just groovy.

Neutrika walks over to Up and removes her headphones. Up spins around in her chair.

UP

Oh, hey Neutrika, hey Strange. You guys been in here a while?

NEUTRIKA

No, we just came in a moment ago. You didn't hear any of what we just said did you?

UP

Uh... No.

NEUTRIKA

We've got a gig.

UP

Ooh, yay!

STRANGE

In Particle Town.

Up's face drops a bit.

UP

Oh.

(beat)

That's just great.

DOWN

Where's Charm?

STRANGE

(laughs)
Don't ask.

NEUTRIKA

Okay, I've got some homework to do,
so I'll catch y'all later.

STRANGE

Good idea.

Neutrika and Strange leave. Up just sits at her desk and
stares towards the door.

DOWN

Hey Up, everything okay?

Up snaps out of her daze.

UP

What? Oh, uh... Yeah.

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, NEUTRIKA'S DORM - DAY

Neutrika sits at her desk doing homework. Bottom is eating
out of a doggy bowl on the floor. Top is once again curled up
asleep on top of the bookshelf.

There is a knock at the door.

NEUTRIKA

It's open.

Up walks in and perches on the end of Neutrika's bed.

NEUTRIKA (CONT'D)

What's up?

UP

Do you need me to perform with you
guys in Particle Town?

NEUTRIKA

Why, what's wrong?

UP

Oh, uh, it's nothing. I just... I'm
feeling kinda sick.

NEUTRIKA

You don't look sick. Wanna tell me
what's really going on?

UP

(defensively)
I just don't wanna go to Particle
(MORE)

UP (CONT'D)
Town, okay?

Up bolts out of the room. Neutrika looks worried – she knows something's wrong.

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, UP AND DOWN'S DORM – DAY

Neutrika and Down both sit on Down's bed. Down tunes her bass.

NEUTRIKA
Up hasn't said anything to you, has she? About not wanting do the Particle Town gig.

DOWN
No, but after you and Strange left she seemed a bit out of it.

NEUTRIKA
She told me she doesn't want to go.

Up enters. Neutrika and Down look at her.

UP
Oh, hey.

Up goes over to and flops down on her bed. Neutrika gets up and goes to Up's bed. She sits down.

NEUTRIKA
Hey, Up would you please tell us what's going on. Maybe we can help.

DOWN
Please tell us.

UP
Okay, okay, okay.

Up sits up in her bed.

UP (CONT'D)
Remember the last time we had a gig in Particle Town?

NEUTRIKA
Yeah, we amped it like crazy.

UP
Yeah, we did. But after the concert, this girl came up to me and she told me that the band was really good and all...

NEUTRIKA

Okay...

UP

...But she didn't like me, 'cause she could tell that I was from Pionville and that people from Pionville don't belong in Particle Town.

NEUTRIKA

What?

DOWN

Oh, Up, I'm so sorry. Some people...

UP

Not your fault. But I just don't want to go back there.

Strange and Charm walk into the room. Top and Bottom scurry in after them.

CHARM

Hey, hey. Who's excited for the Particle Town show? We're gonna crush it!

DOWN

Not now, Charm.

STRANGE

What's going on?

NEUTRIKA

(to Up)
Can we tell them?

UP

Yeah.

NEUTRIKA

(to Charm and Strange)
Last time we were in Particle Town, some girl said some totally harsh things to Up and now she doesn't want to go back.

STRANGE

Aww, that stinks, but Up, I'm sure she was just mondo jealous of your rad drum skills.

CHARM

Yeah, that was one of our best shows.

STRANGE

That WAS our best show.

UP

It was really good. But I still don't want to go back.

STRANGE

What did she say to you?

Down goes over to Strange and Charm and whispers to them.

STRANGE (CONT'D)

Oh! What the...

CHARM

That so cruel.

NEUTRIKA

Yeah, it's awful. But Up, you can't let people like that get to you

CHARM

Yeah, I've been told some really mean things before. Like the time I used different color nail polish on each fingernail and everybody made fun of me – that was terrible!

STRANGE

(interrupting,
exasperated)

Look – we've all had people say mean things to us. But you can't not play because of one loser – that's just not... Quark.

DOWN

She's right. Can you really resist playing? Music's in your DNA.

UP

DNA?

NEUTRIKA

Yup. DNA is what we're all made of, and what makes each of us different... and special. You've got music... and spunk.

CUT-AWAY: BOTTOM LOOKS STRAIGHT INTO CAMERA

BOTTOM

I hate spunk!

BACK TO SCENE

UP
 (to Neutrika)
 That is so corny.

NEUTRIKA
 So what?

STRANGE
 And smarts.

CHARM
 And great looks... Oh, wait - that
 would be me!

The girls giggle.

CHARM (CONT'D)
 Okay, yeah, you too.

DOWN
 (beginning of song track
 starts as she speaks)
 Music's in your DNA

UP
 But what does it do?

NEUTRIKA
 It's a recipe for who you are...
 (pointing individually at
 the others)
 and you, and you, and you!

STRANGE
 It's made of Adenine, Thymine,
 Cytosine and Guanine.

CHARM
 Or just A, T, C and G.

UP
 Well, I guess that's good to know...

DOWN
 (to Neutrika)
 Tell her how it goes...

MUSICAL FANTASY TIME

CLOSE-UP: NEUTRIKA SINGS

The camera pans out to reveal the entire band. We are now in
 "fantasy land." The band performs on stage, graphics

illustrating the wonders of DNA flash behind them.

NEUTRIKA
(singing)
INSERT DNA SONG HERE

INT. BOSON ACADEMY, UP AND DOWN'S DORM - DAY

The song is over and the girls are all back in Up and Down's dorm.

NEUTRIKA
So, will you do the gig?

STRANGE, CHARM AND DOWN
Please, please, please.

UP
On one condition.

NEUTRIKA
What's that?

UP
If we ever find when we're supposed
to perform, I'll be there!

The girls all laugh. Neutrika's phone starts to buzz, she looks at the screen.

NEUTRIKA
(to girls)
It's Heisenberg.
(into phone)
Hello?

HEISENBERG (V.O.)
(over phone)
Where are you? You guys were
supposed to be at sound check an
hour ago!

NEUTRIKA
(into phone)
Uh...no problem...we're on our
way... Quark out!

Neutrika puts her phone back in her pocket.

NEUTRIKA (CONT'D)
(to girls)
Let's go... we've got a show to do!

They all rush off in chaotic fashion.

FADE TO BLACK