

THE WHYLIGHT ZONE
Episode 15: "The Invaders (from the Spice Dimension)"

[OPENING MUSIC: A frantic, dissonant orchestral stab that resolves into a jaunty, cooking-show bossa nova]

NARRATOR:

This is Bernice Bland. A woman whose last name is not an insult, but an accurate descriptor of her culinary output. Bernice lives in a farmhouse far from the nearest grocery store, isolated, alone, and armed with a pantry full of dehydrated sadness.

She is a woman who believes that boiling is the only cooking method and that salt is "too spicy."

But tonight, Bernice is about to receive visitors. Not from outer space, nor from the deep ocean. These visitors come from a place much smaller, yet infinitely vaster. A place where the Scoville scale is the law of the land and oregano is a currency.

Bernice is about to go to war. But she doesn't know that the enemy isn't trying to take her life. They're trying to save her dinner.

You have just crossed over into... the Whylight Zone.

ACT ONE: "The Blandness Before the Storm"

[SCENE: A rustic, farmhouse kitchen. It is messy. There is a pot of gray, bubbling liquid on the stove.]

Bernice moves through the kitchen with the grim determination of Agnes Moorehead in a silent film. She wears a stained apron. She is sweating.

She reaches for a jar. A jar of *pre-minced garlic*. The kind that has been sitting in the fridge door since the Bush administration.

She unscrews the lid. The sound is wet and unappealing.

BERNICE (Muttering):

"Good enough."

She dumps a spoonful of the beige slime into the gray soup.

[SFX: A high-pitched, mechanical WHIRRING sound descending from the ceiling.]

Bernice freezes. She looks up.

On the roof? No.
In the attic? No.

The sound is coming from the kitchen island.

She turns slowly.

Descending from the air is a silver object. It looks like a flying saucer. But upon closer inspection, it looks suspiciously like a chrome-plated, high-tech pepper grinder.

It lands on the wooden cutting board with a heavy *THUD*.

Bernice gasps. She grabs the nearest weapon: a dull paring knife.

The saucer hisses. A ramp descends.

Two figures emerge. They are six inches tall. They are wearing tiny, luminous white chef's coats and tall toques that glow with an ethereal light. They are holding what look like laser rifles.

Bernice screams. It is a primal scream of terror.

She lunges, swinging the knife.

TINY FIGURE #1 (High-pitched, squeaky voice):
"Target acquired! The palate is compromised! Initiate Protocol Umami!"

The figure fires its weapon.

PFFT!

A cloud of red dust hits Bernice in the face. She coughs. She expects acid. She expects poison.

She licks her lips.

BERNICE:
"Smoked... paprika?"

She is confused. But she is also a warrior. She grabs a cast-iron skillet.

****BERNICE:****

"Get out of my kitchen, you varmints!"

**ACT TWO: "Battle of the Bulge (in the cheek)"**

The battle rages. It is chaotic. It is messy. It is seasoned.

Bernice chases the tiny chefs across the counter. She swings the skillet, shattering a ceramic butter dish.

The invaders are fast. They tuck and roll behind a canister of flour.

****TINY FIGURE #2:****

"Flank her! She's reaching for the iodized salt! We need sea salt, stat!"

One of the invaders sets up a mortar-and-pestle cannon.

BOOM!

A projectile launches across the kitchen. It lands in Bernice's gray soup.

PLOP.

Bernice screams in horror. "You're poisoning my stew!"

She grabs a dishrag and snaps it at them. The invaders scatter. They are professional. They move with the coordination of a kitchen brigade during a dinner rush.

One invader rappels down from the spice rack. He is carrying a tiny flamethrower.

****INVADER:****

"The onions! They aren't caramelized! They're just... sweaty! CHARGE!"

He fires the flamethrower. A jet of blue flame hits the sauté pan. The onions sizzle. They brown. The smell changes from "wet dog" to "French bistro."

Bernice smells it. She falters.

****BERNICE:****

"What... what is that smell?"

****TINY COMMANDER (Through a tiny megaphone):****

"It's called the Maillard reaction, you philistine! Surrender the ladle!"

Bernice shakes her head. "Never! This is *my* house! *My* slop!"

She grabs a can of non-stick cooking spray. She aims it like pepper spray.

****BERNICE:****

"Take this, you tiny demons!"

She sprays. The invaders cough, slipping and sliding on the greased counter.

****TINY FIGURE #1:****

"Canola oil! It's coating my tongue! I can't taste the zesty notes!"

Bernice grins triumphantly. She grabs a heavy wooden bowl. She slams it down over the Commander, trapping him.

The kitchen goes silent. The other invaders retreat to the saucer.

Bernice breathes heavily. She taps the bowl.

****BERNICE:****

"Gotcha."

**ACT THREE: "The Taste of Defeat"**

Bernice leans down to the bowl. She hears muffled shouting from inside.

****COMMANDER (Muffled):****

"You don't know what you're doing! The stew... it needs acid! A splash of vinegar! For the love of Escoffier, release me!"

Bernice lifts the bowl just an inch.

****BERNICE:****

"Who are you? Are you Martians? Did the government send you?"

The tiny Commander steps out. He brushes flour off his tiny apron. He looks up at her with eyes full of pity.

****COMMANDER:****

"We are not from Mars, madam. We are from the Spice Dimension. The Realm of Zest. The nebulas of flavor."

****BERNICE:****

"Why are you attacking me?"

****COMMANDER:****

"Attacking you? We are on a rescue mission!"

He points a tiny finger at the pot on the stove.

****COMMANDER:****

"That stew... it was screaming. It was crying out in blandness. We heard its plea across the galaxy. 'Help me,' it said. 'She didn't even bloom the spices!'"

Bernice blinks. "I... I like it bland. It's safe."

The Commander shakes his head. He gestures to his troops. They emerge from hiding. They aren't holding weapons. They are holding tiny whisks, micro-planes, and bouquets of fresh thyme.

****COMMANDER:****

"Safe? Madam, jarred garlic isn't safe. It is a crime against humanity. Look at yourself. You are fighting flavor. You are resisting joy."

He motions to the pot.

****COMMANDER:****

"Taste it. We added the bay leaf while you were trying to smash us with the colander."

Bernice hesitates. She looks at the pot. The gray sludge has turned a rich, deep brown. The smell is intoxicating.

She dips a spoon in. Her hand shakes.

She tastes it.

****[SFX: A harp glissando. A choir of angels sings a major chord.]****

Bernice's eyes widen. A tear rolls down her cheek.

****BERNICE:****

"It's... it's tangy. It's savory. It has... depth."

****COMMANDER:****

"That is the taste of a life lived, Bernice. Not a life preserved in a jar."

Bernice drops the spoon. She falls to her knees. She looks at the tiny chef.

****BERNICE:****

"I... I was the monster. I was the giant trying to crush the flavor."

****COMMANDER:****

"It is not too late. The recipe can be saved."

Bernice nods, weeping openly now.

****BERNICE:****

"Teach me. Teach me how to mince."

**ACT FOUR: "The Alliance"**

****NARRATOR:****

The farmhouse kitchen is quiet now. The screaming has stopped. The violence has ended.

Bernice Bland stands at the stove. But she is no longer fighting.

On her shoulder sits the tiny Commander.

****COMMANDER:****

"Now, fold in the butter. Gently! Do not bruise the emulsion!"

Bernice obeys. She moves with grace.

On the counter, the other invaders are busy. One is zesting a lemon with a laser beam. Another is kneading dough with tiny, powerful boots.

The "spaceship" is parked permanently next to the toaster. It turns out, it makes excellent espresso.

Bernice tastes the sauce. She smiles. A real smile.

****BERNICE:****

"In-flavors," she whispers. "They must be enjoyed."

The Commander nods.

****COMMANDER:****

"Indeed, Chef. Indeed."

**CLOSING NARRATION**

****NARRATOR:****

Bernice Bland, formerly of the United States of Apathy, currently a resident of a much richer territory. She learned that the things that scare us—the sharp spices, the bold choices, the unknown ingredients—are often the very things that save us from a life of gray soup.

She discovered that you cannot keep the world in a jar. Eventually, you have to pop the lid.

The invaders have landed. They have conquered. And the terms of surrender are delicious.

Case filed under 'Y' for Yummy... in the Whylight Zone.

****[MUSIC: The bossa nova swells. A tiny voice yells "ORDER UP!" Fade to black.]****

**— THE END —**

****Twist Analysis:****

* ****Original:**** Aliens are humans; woman is a giant alien.

* ****Parody:**** Aliens are Flavor Sprites; woman is a "Culinary Giant" terrorizing ingredients.

****Key Pun:****

"In-flavors must be enjoyed!" (Delivered with tearful realization).