

EPISODE 53

NARRATOR

1 It's been a good day aboard the Oz 9.
This morning, Colin made a delicious
German chocolate cake, then cleaned up
after himself. Albert laid his giant
head on Leet's lap and they dozed
together in a sunshine-dappled swamp.
Jessie, Madeline, and Olivia worked
with each other to wrestle back
control of the ship. Dr. Theo and Dr.
von Haber Zetzer figured out how to
tame the plants, while Joe, the
Albatros and le Bichon Frise cleaned
up the destroyed crew room and made it
useful again.

[a corridor aboard the Oz 9 - Colin and LBF]

COLIN

2 If she's hurt, I'm going to shove
every bottle of decongestant in that
bandolier of yours up your nose and
tap dance on the bottles.

NARRATOR

3 Just kidding.

LBF

4 You would be assassinated before you
could remove the second bottle.

COLIN

5 Then my ghost will aerosolize you to
death. You'll be so uncongested, your
body won't stick together anymore.

LBF

6 This is so-brave talking from the
wobbly spined English person. I had no
idea the good speaking was so
important to you.

COLIN

7 What? And "wobbly spined"? What does
that even mean?

LBF

8 Ooooooooo!

COLIN
9 What? What?

LBF
10 I have found an entire trunk of swimming goggles.

COLIN
11 Goggles. Why would they give us swimming goggles? Do they think we're going to land on a planet made entirely of liquid? How about something useful, like night vision?

LBF
12 These are so heavy and so very big. I would not like to swim in them. I think my head would be sinking.

COLIN
13 Put them AWAY, Freeze. We have more important things to do.

LBF
14 I do not know why you are so worried. You did not even know she was aboard the ship!

COLIN
15 Of course I didn't know, I thought she was dead, long ago. Now that I know she's not, I'd prefer she stay that way.

LBF
16 I think you did not know her, though?

COLIN
17 Apparently not. I thought I did. I knew how she liked her tea. I knew how her mouth twitched when she was angry but amused and didn't want to laugh. I knew she had a birthmark on her neck that she wanted to remove, but I begged her not to.

LBF
18 This is all very odd. I must update the Wikipedias.

COLIN
19 What are you talking about? Never
 mind. I don't care.

[they walk in silence a moment]

20 Why did you do this? What on earth
 compelled you?

LBF
21 Nothing on earth. Only to do a special
 niceness for Leet in space.

COLIN
22 For Leet? What's he got to do with it?

LBF
23 Ah, you do not pay attentions. He is
 every day in the memory storage,
 listening to her.

COLIN
24 WHAT? My god, is there no one on this
 ship I can trust?

LBF
25 You are a strange man, Colin, to take
 this so personal.

COLIN
26 Personally. Good god, where is Grammar
 Girl when you need her? Your English
 is ridiculous.

LBF
27 Pffft. Mon dieu! And how is your
 français, eh??

COLIN
28 Just shut up and keep searching.

NARRATOR
29 The crew have been hard at actual
 work, scouring the ship for whoever
 Frise liberated from her pod.

MIGNON
[over intercom]
30 Whomever.

31 NARRATOR
Whoa.

32 LEET
Did you hear that?

33 ALBATROS
Hear what, exactly?

34 LEET
I don't know. But it sounded ...
right.

35 ALBATROS
Yes! As if suddenly, just for a
moment, the universe ... aligned. But
who was that and what were they...
aligning?

36 COLIN
What are you doing here? You're
supposed to be on level 455.

37 ALBATROS
This IS level 455. You're supposed to
be on 330.

38 COLIN
We ARE. Or were. How did we manage to
lose a hundred and fifteen levels?

39 ALBATROS
This ship is built like an MC Escher
painting forged by drunken penguins.

40 LBF
Why penguins?

41 ALBATROS
I don't know. It was the first thing
that came to mind.

42 LEET
I don't think penguins drink. Alcohol,
I mean. Maybe if they get a fermented
fish by accident...

43 COLIN
Could we perhaps carry on the search?

OLIVIA
44 Have you found her yet?

LEET
45 Nope. But we did find, like, six
crates of ski goggles.

COLIN
46 We found swim goggles. Apparently
we'll be landing on the planet
California.

LEET
47 There's a planet California?

ALBATROS
48 No.

OLIVIA
49 Well, the two beni- friendly plants
are on the move.

COLIN
50 What?!

OLIVIA
51 Yeah, heading upwards, it seems.
They're slow, which is good, because
so are you lot. With luck they'll meet
the recent pod poppers and clean up
after Madeline's most recent disaster.

COLIN
52 Is there really nothing you can do to
help? She's no doubt disorientated,
scared, and hopes for rescue.

MIGNON

[over intercom]

53 Hoping. Parallel construction...
Colin, is it?

COLIN
54 Who the hell is that?

LBF
55 I thought you knew her?

LEET

[excited... like, a LOT]

56 Is that....

LBF

57 Oui. Surprise!

MADELINE

58 Who the hell is on my bridge? And why
are you all on level 18? I told you to
go UP. Everyone to the bridge. NOW.
Olivia, round 'em up.

BRIDGE

[Dr Theo, Dr VHZ, Mignon]

DR. THEO

59 Well, that should bring them running.
Leet is going to be so excited. He's a
huge fan of the Grammar Girl podcast.

MIGNON

60 Oh, that's nice! Is he a writer?

DR. THEO

61 No.

MIGNON

62 Oh. Learning English as a new
language?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

63 Heh. Sort of. Ha!

DR. THEO

64 No. More ... lonely.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

65 Perzonally, I think he ztarted
listening because he misunderztood ze
"quick and dirty" part of your podcast
title. [giggles] I wonder if friend
Colin will be more sad or relieved to
zee you, Ms Fogarty. He vas expecting
his dead wife, you zee.

MIGNON

66 Yes, so you said. It's... a little

creepy, so if you'd care to explain that, I'd appreciate it. Also, what year is it again?

DR. THEO

67 When we left Earth, it was 2142.
Colin's wife isn't actually dead;
she's in a pod, like you were. We
thought she was who... er....whom? the
person Le Bichon Frise unthawed.
Sorry. Not sure if it's who or whom
there...

MIGNON

68 Dr. Theo, when you're in casual
conversations with friends, and they
use the wrong name for a particular
type of mold, do you judge them or
require an apology?

DR. THEO

69 Well, actually, my friends don't get
that wrong.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

70 Zat would require friends, hey, mein
Schimmel Mann?

DR. THEO

71 Ahem. So, is "Grammar Girl" an
inherited title, passed down through
generations?

MIGNON

72 Wait. You said "2142"? Oh, man, I have
such a bone to pick with Oprah.

DR. THEO

73 What happened?

MIGNON

74 Anyone who was a guest on the Oprah
Winfrey show got a gift certificate
for cryogenic freezing. I thought it
was a joke, so I went to some odd
little town in Indiana to redeem it --
I thought maybe I'd get something fun
like a car. I handed the certificate
over to the receptionist, and that's
the last thing I remember.

75 DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Zo, you are zaying... YOU are ze
original Girl of ze Grammar?

76 MIGNON
Are YOU saying there have been others?
What exactly is trademark registration
for, I ask you. Is Oprah on the ship
somewhere? I'd like to have a word
with her...

[muffled sounds of galloping, door opens]

77 GREG
EVERYBODY OFF. LEET FIRST.

[sounds of dismount from Leet, Albatros, LBF]

78 ALBATROS
We've really got to do something about
your speed.

79 GREG
You ever tried carrying Leet?

80 LEET
It really is you! Hi!

81 MIGNON
[yelp of surprise] You must be Leet.

82 LEET
Grammar Girl knows my name!

83 MIGNON
Well, yes, I do. I have one of those
too, actually. I'm Mignon Fogarty. And
you can put me down now.

84 LEET
Do I have to?

85 MIGNON
I'd prefer it.

86 COLIN
That's not Glenda.

87 MIGNON
That's a mustache.

COLIN
88 Yes. That's my mustache.

MIGNON
89 Why is it here by itself?

LEET
90 Oh, yeah, Colin's invisible. Mostly.
That toe down there is his too.

MIGNON
91 Wow. On second thought, maybe you can
keep me up here for a bit.

LEET
92 Yay!

MIGNON
93 You might have mentioned that whole
"invisible" thing, Doctors. You know,
before I encountered the floating
mustache with an English accent?

DR. THEO
94 Apologies. We've sort of gotten used
to it.

LBF
95 Happy Birthday, Leet!

LEET
96 Awwwww, that's sweet!

MIGNON
97 Is it your birthday?

LEET
98 Sure!

MIGNON
99 Oh, uh....was that a "yes" or a "no"?

MADELINE
100 We have no idea what day it is up
here. It doesn't really matter, so we
stopped trying to keep track. He's
had, like, four birthdays in the last
six months. Hi, I'm Captain Madeline.

MIGNON
101 Oh, it's lovely to meet you, Captain.

Leet, would you mind shifting me a bit
so I can shake hands with the Captain?

LEET

102 Sure.

ALBATROS

103 Colin is perfectly safe, I assure you.
If you'd care to be put down.

MIGNON

104 Actually, Leet is surprisingly
comfortable.

OLIVIA

105 AHEM.

MIGNON

106 Oh dear. Another invisible Brit?

LEET

107 That's our AI, Olivia. She's in charge
of the ship.

MADELINE

108 HEY.

COLIN

109 [whisper] She's also extremely fond of
Leet. Dangerously fond.

MIGNON

110 I appreciate the warning, but could
you please lean back? And take your
mustache with you?

LEET

111 This is the best present EVER!

OLIVIA

112 Well, you can't keep her.

MIGNON

113 Excuse me?

OLIVIA

114 You're nearly out of food already; how
are you going to feed her?

MIGNON

115 She knows I'm not a puppy, right?

116 MADELINE
Freeze, you really can't go around
unthawing people.

117 MIGNON
I'm pretty sure that's "Free-zay."

118 MADELINE
Are you an English expert or a French
expert?

119 MIGNON
Is everyone on this ship always so
cranky?

120 LEET
Yeah.

121 DR. THEO
Whatever you do, don't refer to
yourself as "benign."

122 MIGNON
Well, I hadn't planned to, but now
you've planted it in my brain!

123 DR. VON HABER ZETZER
All right, mein kinder. Back to ze
matter at hand. Or in Leet's arms, in
zis case.

124 OLIVIA
Yeah, about that...

125 LEET
It's funny, but today is a day of
impossible things happening.

126 MIGNON
What do you mean?

127 LEET
Well, you're here because Freeze did
something nice. That's not just
unusual, that's impossible. He's an
assassin.

128 MIGNON
Beg pardon, WHAT?

LEET

129 Two, my breakfast tasted good this morning. Not grandma-made-it-good, but at least not swampy, which is pretty impossible. And number three, you're still alive after ... a long time. That's three!

MIGNON

130 It's interesting you include breakfast but not the invisible Englishman in that-

[soft pop]

LEET

131 Awww. She disappeared.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

132 Ahhhhhhhhh. I was wondering if perhaps zat might happen. Unt now I know zo much more zan I did zis morning. Has anyone zeen Joseph rezently? Unt please, everyone, try to keep ze impossible things to a maximum of two in any 24-hour period, mmmmmmkay?

ALBATROS

133 What the hell just happened?

DR. THEO

134 Oh, darn it. I was planning to ask her about "another thing" versus "another think."

LEET

135 Actually, both are acceptable, but "think" is the older expression and more commonly used in the UK. She covered that on December 31st, 2020, episode 804.

COLIN

136 Clearly, there wasn't much going on in 2020. May I assume my wife is safe in her pod in pod bay 3?

LBF

137 But of course! So fussy Englishman, you think everything on this ship is about you. Pfft.

ALBATROS

138 So, we're just going to gloss over the
fact that a 200-plus-year-old woman
vanished out of Leet's arms, are we?

DR. THEO

139 I think that's probably best. Leet,
does she have a position on the phrase
"resting on your laurels"?

LEET

140 I think so, actually. We can check
memory storage.

DR. THEO

141 Yes, show me, will you? While laurels
are a shrub, not a mold, I still think
they get a bad rap, though I doubt
resting on them would be very
comfortable. They're usually quite
prickly...

[fade out on Dr. Theo's voice]

NARRATOR

142 I'm not even going to comment on
whatever just happened there except to
say... did she hear me? It seemed like
she did, right? Never mind. Forget it.
She popped out of Leet's arms and off
my list of problems, so let's just
carry on like the world no longer
needs to know if it's further or
farther or why flammable and
inflammable mean the same thing and
whether or not irregardless is a word,
and I may be hyperventilating, but
that was GRAMMAR GIRL and she's sort
of a hero at the Ron Howard School of
Expository Sciences.

[Back in French Lick, the caves. A soft pop]

MIGNON

143 Well, that was weird. Did that just
happen, or was I dreaming? Man, I have
got to cut down on the circus peanuts.

PLUTO

144 Welcome back, fair lady of letters.

MIGNON
145 Hello, tall man painted gold and
wearing short shorts. This seems like
a stretch, but can you point the way
to ... sanity?

PLUTO
146 Not reliably. But the exit is that
way.

MIGNON
147 Thank you. Ummm... what year is it?

PLUTO
148 I am a god and infinite!

MIGNON
149 Does that answer my question somehow?
Well, whatever year it is, I hope
Oprah's still alive. She owes me.

NARRATOR
150 Despite the fact that her phone is a
century and a half old, the Lyft app
still works, and Mignon Fogarty,
otherwise known as Grammar Girl, is
soon on her way to Montecito,
California and a long overdue
rendezvous.

SOUTHERS/FELONIUS
151 Long may it lather....

SOUTHERS
152 Now that's the last time, and I mean
it!

DONNA
153 It's not my fault you're puppets to a
master race.

FELONIUS
154 Your time is coming.

DONNA
155 Well, until then, four hundred-

JULIE
156 DONNA. Let it rest a bit, OK? Our last
showers were a dip in the campground
lake which is probably 80% Junior

Camper pee, so why don't you locate
the ladies' section-

[schoolboy laughter from Southers and Felonius]

SOUTHERS

157 "Ladies" section? [snorts] Sweetheart,
the ladies section is 458 stairs
thataway, turn left, and straight on
till you hit the kitchens.

FELONIUS

158 Because that's where the women make
the food.

SOUTHERS

159 Felonius, you ruin a sweet little
smack down faster than an unforeseen
technicality in a pre-nup. Take a
seat.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

160 We'll come back to your "kitchen"
comment later, but let's for a moment
pretend you're not talking rancid
dugong bollocks-

BEN

161 Dugong?

MRS. SHEFFIELD

162 It was the first thing that came to
mind. May I?

BEN

163 Sorry.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

164 Thank you. As I was saying ... dammit,
I've lost the thread. There are times
when you just need a narrator to
remind you, aren't there?

NARRATOR

165 I like her. She gets it.

DONNA

166 Rancid dugong bollocks.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

167 Yes, before that bit. Right. Nope. No

good. Have you seen my cane?

FELONIUS

168 That stick with the fluorescent light
at the end? No.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

169 Never mind, it'll turn up eventually.

DONNA

170 Mr. Southers. Are you meaning to tell
us the plants are the architects of
this place?

SOUTHERS

171 Not exactly. They were the first ones
down here and had it to themselves for
millennia. Then I believe some
explorers stumbled on it.

JULIE

172 And they built the Showertorium?

SOUTHERS

173 Ah, hell no, they were Miracle Gro ten
minutes after they stumbled in. After
the explorers came some prospectors.

BEN

174 And THEY built the Showertorium.

SOUTHERS

175 Wouldn't say so. They didn't so much
"lay the foundation" as "lay down and
become the foundation," so ... not
really.

FELONIUS

176 Is it wise to tell them the entire
story of this place?

MRS. SHEFFIELD

177 I think the more important question
is: is it interesting? Because I could
use a cuppa and a lie down, if
anyone's offering.

SOUTHERS

178 Long after the prospectors turned into
the kind of thing a dust-covered nerd
digs up with a toothbrush and

tweezers, along came the settlers.

DONNA

179 And they died too?

SOUTHERS

180 Well, eventually, most of 'em, but generally of dysentery and ripe old age. They settled up top, and most folks didn't even know about the cellar dwellers down here. They'd lose a cow or an idiot son time to time, but they mostly didn't question it.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

181 So who DID build the Showertorium, then? Surely not the plants themselves?

JULIE

182 Wait. Did you say "most of them" died?

SOUTHERS

183 Well, now. Looks like at least one of you is paying attention.

[pause]

BEN

184 Well?

SOUTHERS

185 Ladies and gents, while I do appreciate your rapt attention, my tongue is crying out for a whiskey that's neat as a dandy's sock drawer and nearly as old as this place. So I'm going to head on upstairs. Why don't the rest of you take advantage of the showers -- it surely smells like you could use a good hosing down.

MRS. SHEFFIELD

186 Well, it's not what I asked for, but I wouldn't mind a quick mop up before lunch. There will be lunch, at some point?

FELONIUS

187 I'm posting guards outside that door. We can't have you flailing about,

telling everyone about the
Showertorium!

BEN

188 So we're prisoners. AGAIN.

SOUTHERS

189 Whew! Bring that whine down an octave
afore this place is overrun with dogs.
You're our guests, Benny boy! Come and
go as you like. But run away or bring
down the law, and you'll never find
out what's truly going on here. And
what it means for every human being on
this brown and scabby and balding
knuckle we call Earth. Let's go,
Felonius.

[Southers and Felonius walk away]

FELONIUS

190 Why do you continually undermine me? I
said I'd post guards.

SOUTHERS

191 Felonius, the best guard you've got
left is Wild Eye Charlie, and he could
fire at the ocean and miss. Most have
gone up already. [sniff, sniff] Why do
you smell like chocolate milk?

[door]

BEN

192 So now what do we do? Mrs. Sheffield,
should you really be rifling through
the cabinets?

MRS. SHEFFIELD

193 My god, these soaps: sandalwood,
blueberry, apple oatmeal, honey and
thistle, strawberry and cream. These
boys know how to SHOWER.

DONNA

194 Check out the towels. It's like
rubbing a baby rabbit on your skin.
And look at this!

[turns on shower briefly]

195 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Now, that's what I call absorbent! It
doesn't so much dry up moisture as
attack it and make it beg for mercy.

196 JULIE
Are you two finished? OH MY GOD WHAT
IS THAT SMELL.

197 DONNA
Uhhh huh! That's the ... hang on...
"peppermint, crested peacock honey,
and lotus flower essential body oil
for replacing lost fluids after use of
a Showertorium towel." You'd think
they'd just make the towels less
aggressive.

198 JULIE
That smells incredible. Look at that!
I put it on my skin, and I can feel
the cells regenerating.

199 BEN
HEY.

200 MRS. SHEFFIELD
I've never known peacocks to make
honey.

201 DONNA
Uhhhh...oh, I read it wrong, there's a
comma between crested peacocks and
honey.

202 BEN
HEY!

203 JULIE
Ben's right. We should at least
explore this place.

204 DONNA
Does that mean peacocks are an
ingredient?

[moment of uneasy realization]

205 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Ah. Well, perhaps I'll shower another
time, when I can bring my good old

peacock-free Yardley bar.

JULIE
206 Let's spread out and see if we can
find anything useful. Does the
Showertorium connect to the caves,
somehow?

BEN
207 It has to, right?

DONNA
208 Then why did Felonius bring us the
long way round?

MRS. SHEFFIELD
209 Perhaps he was just hoping we'd set
off the alarms?

BEN
[calling from a distance]

210 I think the showers get older as you
go back. The ones up there are all
stainless steel, but these are made of
wood. I think some of the ones back
there are stone.

JULIE
211 Southers did say they're ancient. I'm
not finding anything useful. Anyone?

DONNA
212 Oh, goodness!

MRS. SHEFFIELD
213 Find anything interesting, Donna?

DONNA
214 Looks like what's left of a "DB
Cooper," according to the wallet on
the chair. I'm afraid there's just not
much down here.

[creepy music]

BEN
215 No wonder Southers left us alone down
here.

JULIE
216 I might have found something...

MRS. SHEFFIELD
217 It wasn't made out of an endangered
species, was it?

JULIE
218 I guess that depends on your
definition. I opened the furnace and
found a piece of a sweatshirt.

MRS. SHEFFIELD
219 Sweatshirt? Down here? I found 11 gold
cufflinks in shower drains and a Rolex
someone dropped. When this is all
over, I must remember to come back
with a metal detector. I can't imagine
anyone coming near this place in a
sweatshirt.

JULIE
220 Well, given the charred bone fragments
inside it, I don't think sweatshirt-
person came here willingly. And I'm
damn sure they never left.

BEN
221 What's that on the front?

JULIE
222 I was trying to make that out. It
looks like a crest -- like from a
university?

BEN
223 You think a college kid stumbled into
this place and got themselves killed?

MRS. SHEFFIELD
224 I've seen that crest somewhere before.

DONNA
225 Oh! Oh, no, surely not. Why, you can
barely tell what it says.

JULIE
226 There are letters on it, but they're
so burned...

227 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Is that first one an M?

228 BEN
Looks like it. This one looks like an
E, doesn't it?

229 DONNA
What was that?

230 BEN
What was what?

231 JULIE
I didn't hear anything.

232 DONNA
I did. A sort of scraping noise. There
it was again!

233 JULIE
I don't hear it. Do you, Ben?

234 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Oddly, Donna, only you seem to be
hearing this.

235 DONNA
I do have exceptional hearing. My bird
watching club used to send me out as
the advance scout.

236 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Did they indeed.

237 JULIE
That makes sense. You hardly make a
sound when you walk, too.

238 DONNA
Uhhhh, dance lessons?

239 MRS. SHEFFIELD
Donna, I suspect there's something
you're not telling us.

240 PLUTO
Excuse me.

[yelps of surprise from Julie, Ben, Mrs. S., Donna]

DONNA

241 I told you I heard something!

MRS. SHEFFIELD

242 My god. It's a good thing I had that
cardio booster installed. Where did
you come from? And what the devil --
sorry, that's probably a bit close to
home, isn't it? What are you carrying?

PLUTO

243 I wanted some candies from this small
device at the 7-Eleven, and now my
hand appears to be stuck. Could one of
you unburden me of this machine?

NARRATOR

244 The tiny Thunburg Warbler, with its
bright, clever song and long silky
feathers, is the first one up and
singing on this stark winter morning
on the mountain. Soon it will begin
its daily search for small bugs to
eat, ridding the surrounding forests
of minor pests and nuisances.

Ah. Sorry. Just completing an audition
tape for the BBC. I've been watching
these people for months now, and I
have to think their luck is about to
run out. If anyone hears of an opening
that's at least a level above carnival
barker, would you let me know?

Many thanks to our very special guest,
Mignon Fogarty, educator, author,
speaker, and host of the brilliant,
award-winning *Grammar Girl's Quick and
Dirty Tips to Better Writing* podcast!

You've been listening to:
Lee Shackelford as Pluto
Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield
Bonnie Brantley as Donna
Iri Alexander as Julie
Aaron Clark as Ben and le Bichon Frise
Eric Perry as Mr Southers and Dr. von
Haber Zetzer
Mignon Fogarty as the Mime
Kevin Hall as Felonius and Greg
David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae

Tim Sherburn as Colin
Richard Cowen as Leet
June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros
Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia,
and me, Richard Nadolny, as your
Narrator.

245 Our music is composed and performed by
John Faley; our artwork is by Lucas
Elliott. This episode was directed by
June Clark Eubanks. Oz 9 is written
and produced by Shannon Perry.
Until next time, Space Monkeys,
Narrator out!