

Oz 9 episode 69

Tighter than a Minnesotan Manhole

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EPISODE 69 (GIGGLE)

1 NARRATOR
It's a gray, chilly day in French
Lick, Indiana. The golf course is
nearly empty, just a few die-hards are
out knocking ...their ... balls
around.... hang on. Is that a film
crew?

2 NARRATOR 2
Originally called "Salt Springs," the
town now known as French Lick was once
a French trading post. A ranger
station, established in 1811-

3 NARRATOR
WHOA. Are you doing a ...
documentary??

4 NARRATOR 2
Oh, hey there. Yeah, it's just a
little something for ... uhhh ... PBS.

5 NARRATOR
PBS?!? You have GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.

6 NARRATOR 2
I hate to ask, but could you hold it
down? We're already behind schedule.

7 NARRATOR
Hold it down. You. Are asking ME to
"hold it down," have I got that right?

8 NARRATOR 2
I'm sure you were their first choice,
but you've been....busy. Also, a
little unstuck in time.

9 NARRATOR
I'm going to kill you.

10 NARRATOR 2
Now, hold on there-!

11 NARRATOR
SCAB!!

[Much shouting as Narrator chases Narrator 2 away]

12 PLUTO
Did I just see a pair of narrators run
by?

13 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Yes, I believe you did. Narrators are
a very territorial bunch, I find.
Which probably means we'll have to set
the scene ourselves. Care to take a
whack at it?

14 PLUTO
Certainly. Oh, Mrs Sheffield, why are
you sitting alone in a comfortable,
reclining lawn chair on this grey and
dismal morning out on the mostly
abandoned golf course of chilly French
Lick-

15 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Too many details, dear.

16 PLUTO
It did seem to get away from me.

17 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Never mind. [pause] I've been having a
think.

18 PLUTO
And did you arrive at any conclusions?

19 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Nothing satisfactory, I fear. Do sit,
won't you? I rather feel I'm having a,
ehhh....package delivered.

20 PLUTO
Apologies. It's this ridiculous
onesie. So.... clingy.

21 MRS SHEFFFIELD
It's a rare deity who can carry off a
golden romper, dear.

22 PLUTO
May I ask the subject of your musings?

23 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Oh, the usual: the imminent
destruction of earth by an alien

species.

PLUTO

24 It concerns me that that's the
"usual."

MRS SHEFFIELD

25 Let's just say it's a good job
humanity doesn't pay very close
attention. I mean, octopuses. How much
more obvious do you have to get?

PLUTO

26 Octopuses?

MRS SHEFFIELD

27 And quokkas. Nothing native to this
planet is that happy. Especially not
in Australia.

PLUTO

28 I see. [pause] Am I to assume you
think the battle is lost?

MRS SHEFFIELD

29 I am worried. I mean, we managed to
convince the octopuses and quokkas and
the Welsh to stay-

PLUTO

30 THE WELSH?

MRS SHEFFIELD

31 SHHHHHHH! Not that they tried to keep
it a secret, their language is a dead
giveaway.

PLUTO

32 My head is spinning.

MRS SHEFFIELD

33 I told you to cut back on the sugar. I
just don't believe the plants can be
convinced to live in harmony with the
other species on this planet.

PLUTO

34 And if they cannot? Will we take up
arms? Or ... maybe just spray bottles
of Round Up?

35 MRS SHEFFIELD
MI 18 is doing a bit of research to
find a suitable planet for them, but
sulfuric planets are still mostly
theoretical.

36 PLUTO
We should send them to Venus! It is
heavily laden with hell gas.

37 MRS SHEFFIELD
There was some discussion re: Venus,
but that planet spins backwards and
its days are longer than its years. No
one has time for that sort of
nonsense. Plus it's just too close.
What if they kill off that planet too,
and start eyeing Earth again?

38 PLUTO
Surely that is better than simply
allowing them to have this one.

39 MRS SHEFFIELD
I sincerely hope those are not our
only two options. But MI 18 is our
best chance at a way out of this mess,
and they aren't sounding particularly
optimistic.

40 PLUTO
You are fond of these humans, I think.

41 MRS SHEFFIELD
Not all of them, that Kim family is
one disaster short of disaster.

42 PLUTO
I meant these humans. Ours. Here in
French Lick.

43 MRS SHEFFIELD
I know, dear. They've barely got
enough brain cells to decorate a cup
cake, except for Julie and your Donna,
but they mean well.

44 PLUTO
How soon are you leaving?

45 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Well, who has his clever pants on,
hmmmm? How did you know?

46 PLUTO
Humans emit a certain odor when
they're preparing for a long journey
they have no wish to undertake.

47 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Really?

48 PLUTO
No. I just like to claim random super
powers and see if humans believe it.

49 MRS SHEFFFIELD
That's a bit unfair, don't you think?

50 PLUTO
Yes, but it is unfair in my favor, so
I see no reason to object. You haven't
answered my question.

51 MRS SHEFFFIELD
MI 18 think we have perhaps another
month, maybe two, before the plants
will be able to terraform earth to
their standards. Our rockets are
already set to go, as soon as we cross
whatever threshold has been set. What
will you do?

52 PLUTO
Seriously? With humans dying by the
billions? The underworld is going to
be hell.

[quiet, then they laugh as what Pluto's said registers]

53 PLUTO
I would hate for there to be no more
Mike and Ike's.

54 MRS SHEFFFIELD
No more elephants.

55 PLUTO
Or circus peanuts.

56 MRS SHEFFFIELD
No more snuggles.

57 PLUTO
That...is a very great pity.

58 MRS SHEFFFIELD
I'd rather not, you know.

59 PLUTO
Leave?

60 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Well, exactly. I mean, this is *our*
planet, isn't it? Yes, I get the irony
of saying that as the Oz ships go off
ostensibly to do the same thing to
some other creature's planet, but they
weren't actually going to *succeed*,
were they?

61 PLUTO
Here come the Narrators again.

62 NARRATOR
You went behind my back, you squirmy
sneaky little... TOUR GUIDE!

63 NARRATOR 2
They came to ME because I don't
breathe like a freight train!

64 NARRATOR
Stop and say that to my face, you lip-
smacking moist mouth!

65 NARRATOR 2
MOIST MOUTH? Please, you could host a
herring boil in there!

66 NARRATOR
That's IT!

[screams as the chasing starts again]

67 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Don't let them see you, there's a good
lad.

68 PLUTO
Why not?

69 MRS SHEFFFIELD
You're never supposed to meet your
narrator. Not really sure why not -
something about walls breaking or
space-time eddies erupting or
something. Never mind, they're off
again.

70 JULIE
Hello!

71 BEN
There you are!

72 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Ah, you've found us. How ... lovely. I
trust Felonius has been secured?

73 JULIE
We found a garden shed to leave him
in.

74 BEN
Julie picked the lock in seven
seconds. [pause] These are the things
I brag about now.

75 MRS SHEFFFIELD
You brag about seven seconds?

76 JULIE
I'm a little rusty. So was the lock,
for that matter.

77 BEN
So, that's *not* good?

78 PLUTO
Mrs Sheffield says we're all doomed.
Well, she and I will be OK, but you're
doomed.

79 BEN
I beg your pardon?

80 JULIE
How soon do you leave?

81 BEN
Leave?!

82 MRS SHEFFIELD
Goodness, is it stamped on my forehead
or something? Have I actually grown a
thought bubble?

83 JULIE
No, you smell... leave-y.

84 PLUTO
[chortles] Most amusing!

85 JULIE
She really does. It's kind of like a
lotus mixed with a yellow carnation.

86 PLUTO
You concern me, human.

87 BEN
Welcome to my marriage.

88 PLUTO
Oh, that is very generous of you, but
my lady-

89 BEN
NOT LITERALLY. Is this why I could
never keep a secret from you?

90 JULIE
And yet you keep trying.

91 BEN
Mrs S, are you really leaving?

92 MRS SHEFFIELD
It is MI 18's policy to pull
operatives out of the field when it
becomes too hostile. Apparently that
includes Earth.

93 BEN
So we really are doomed.

94 MRS SHEFFIELD
Chin up, Benjamin. No one's left yet.

95 BEN
Oh, thank god, you have a plan!

96 MRS SHEFFIELD
Well, no. I was just saying I haven't
left yet. Do try to pay attention.

97 BEN
Does anyone else feel carsick from
this conversation?

98 JULIE
You all can sit in your lawn chairs of
despair, but until those volcanoes
erupt - assuming Ben's right about
Tiberius's plan - we still have a
fighting chance. And I intend to
fight.

99 PLUTO
I like this human determination, even
in the face of complete, assured, and
probably quite unpleasant
annihilation!

100 BEN
Stop talking. A lot.

101 PLUTO
Not encouraging?

102 BEN
George Carlin gave better pep talks.

103 MRS SHEFFIELD
No one's giving up just yet, Julie;
we're just finding ourselves a bit
short on next steps. Goodness, is that
Southers coming our way?

104 PLUTO
It is. Shall I casually toss him to
the ground with a thunderbolt?

105 BEN
You can do that? Why haven't you been
doing that?

106 PLUTO
I didn't want to show off.

107 MRS SHEFFIELD
Not at the moment, Pluto, dear. Let's
see what he wants.

108 MR SOUTHERS
[a little out of breath] What are you
doing out here on this gray and dismal
morning-

109 MRS SHEFFFIELD
We've already done that bit. Where's
the dog?rrrr

110 MR SOUTHERS
On his way to stay with Maggie,
actually. Did you all know Buck and
Glenda were still alive?

111 PLUTO
We're very busy, and you're too close
to casually throw to the ground with a
thunderbolt, now that I'm aware such
things are acceptable. Please back
away, say, a plethron.

112 MR SOUTHERS
Now hang on there, Midas, I come
bearing gifts. I have a bit of
information I managed to glean from
Felonius that might be helpful.

113 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Go on...

114 MR SOUTHERS
The plants are keen on giving Earth a
sulfur bath.

115 JULIE
We know that already.

116 BEN
A plethron is like, 100 yards, right?

117 PLUTO
It is.

118 MR SOUTHERS
Now, HANG ON. Y'all might be thinking
volcanoes, but those are mighty hard
to conjure up. If, on the other hand,
you can send Showertorium spies all
over the world to places where there
are sulfur springs....

119 PLUTO
Yes?

120 MR SOUTHERS
You have no sense of drama.

121 MRS SHEFFFIELD
It's rather drowned out by a sense of
urgency just at the moment. Carry on.

122 MR SOUTHERS
They're piping up sulfur from the
source. Millions of little holes that
will become exhaust vents when
Tiberius gives the go.

123 BEN
But how? Surely someone would notice
all the holes.....Oh.

124 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Oh?

125 BEN
We're standing on one.

126 MR SOUTHERS
Bingo.

127 PLUTO
I find myself in the unusual and
rather unpleasant position of relying
on Ben for an explanation.

128 BEN
Gonna let that go for now. Golf
courses. Millions and millions of golf
holes.

129 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Surely not ALL of them...?

130 BEN
Wow. The plants really *invented* rich
people, didn't they?

131 MR SOUTHERS
Bred 'em like prize puppies. A keen
interest in golf and not too much
long-term thinking.

BEN
132 There are golf courses all over the
 world. Surely not ALL of them sit over
 sulfur springs?

PLUTO
133 That depends how deeply you dig the
 little holes. And now I begin to
 understand my role in all of this.
 They promised me sunshine, but they
 only wanted to steal my sulfur.

MRS SHEFFIELD
134 You dug the holes?

PLUTO
135 Yes. Since 1672 I have waited for my
 skylights...

BEN
136 You thought you'd get sunlight under
 Scotland?

PLUTO
137 That really should have been a red
 flag.

BEN
138 So we go to every golf course in the
 world and plug up the holes. How many
 could there possibly be?

MRS SHEFFIELD
139 Nearly fifty thousand golf courses in
 2142. Multiply by 18...

PLUTO
140 Don't forget 2000 putt putt courses.

MRS SHEFFIELD
141 IS NOTHING SACRED?

PLUTO
142 My lady likes natural light.

JULIE
143 What happens to Hades when all the
 sulfur is vented out at once?

PLUTO
144 It is precisely that concern which

brought me down from my plinth.

JULIE

145 OK. I have a sort of plan. It involves
golf balls. And we're gonna need a lot
of help.

BEN

146 Golf balls.

JULIE

147 Sort of.

MR SOUTHERS

148 Look, missy, I don't know if you've
ever played the game, but generally
people take the balls OUT of the
little cups. I reckon folks might
notice if those little cups fill up
overnight.

BEN

149 Plus sulfur is a gas; won't it just
sort of ... seep around the edges?

JULIE

150 Did I tell you my plan? Or did I just
say it involved golf balls? Don't jump
ahead of the plot. And if you call me
"missy" again, you'll be plugging up
several of these holes, got it?

MR SOUTHERS

151 You... don't ... scare me.

JULIE

152 [sniff] That smell of begonias begs to
differ. Start scouting golf balls. As
many as you can get hold of.

BEN

153 OK, but what about the plants?

MRS SHEFFIELD

154 We're going to have our hands full
plugging up the vents and saving
Earth. I think the plants are going to
be Oz 9's problem.

PLUTO

155 It's all right. They have Donna.

156 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Wait. We're missing someone. Has
anyone seen Joe?

157 BEN
Just because we don't see him doesn't
mean he's not here. Joe? Joe?

158 JULIE
He's not here.

159 BEN
How can you be sure?

160 JULIE
He smells like hyssop flowers.

161 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Is it possible he's in cahoots with
his brother?

162 JULIE
I trust him.

163 BEN
Good enough for me. I think.

164 JULIE
And with that rousing vote of
confidence, let's get those golf
balls. GO!

165 NARRATOR 2
[panting] As the ground crew split up
to gather golf balls-

166 NARRATOR
[panting] And now you're trying to
shove in on my day job? I don't think
so, 2!

167 NARRATOR 2
You need to stay hidden - what if the
kidnappers find you?

168 NARRATOR
Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you?

169 NARRATOR 2
Meanwhile-

NARRATOR

170 Don't you dare! [attacks, fight]

ABOARD THE OZ 9 - MADELINE'S BRIDGE

[Madeline, Jessie, Colin, Dr. Theo, and Leet are groggily awakening]

MADELINE

171 Oh, man, my head! What the hell was I drinking?

COLIN

172 Ugh. Why is the world... swimming? And it concerns me that my captain's first assumption is that she's been drinking.

JESSIE

173 You don't know Madpants. It's a reasonable guess. Ooof. Stop hitting me.

MADELINE

174 No one's hitting you.

JESSIE

175 I was talking to my brain.

LEET

176 I feel great!

COLIN

177 Of course you do. What are we doing here? Last I remember, we were on the Albatros's bri- general area.

LEET

178 Oh, Donna drugged us. Well, Greg did, but I don't think he wanted to.

GREG

179 I didn't. Probably. Damn, now I can't remember.

JESSIE

180 Oh, you're here too, are you? Care to explain what happened?

GREG

181 I would, but now I can't remember.

Just a vague feeling of alarm.

182 JESSIE
Donna must have reset your memory or something. I knew we couldn't trust her -- she looks shifty.

183 LEET
I think she's pretty.

184 OLIVIA
Open up, will you?

185 COLIN
Ah! You've been in there all along!
YOU can tell us what happened!

186 OLIVIA
I could.

[pause]

187 COLIN
Well?

188 OLIVIA
I could also tell you all the elements of the galaxy and everything Freud got wrong, but I'm not going to tell you those either. We've got to get a shift on. Has anyone seen the 778?

189 COLIN
The what?

190 OLIVIA
Emily. And the... other one.

191 LEET
Howard. They were high-tailing it down the stairs the last time I saw them.

192 OLIVIA
Damn. Who was the last person to see their arms?

193 LEET
I was, I think. I stashed them down on Level 4.

COLIN
194 Does it matter? Surely we have more pressing issues to deal with?

OLIVIA
195 We don't, actually. Colin, fly Jessie down to Level 4. Madeline, hop aboard Greg here. We've got to get down there before they do, and they're at least an episode ahead of us.

LEET
196 What about me?

OLIVIA
197 Run, my lovely. RUN.

JESSIE
198 Couldn't I ride the zebra and let Colin take Madeline? I get airsick.

COLIN
199 I told you, keep your eyes closed.

JESSIE
200 Not bloody likely! You never tell me when to pull my legs up!

COLIN
201 Well, I don't know, do I? If you didn't just dangle like a jellyfish-

JESSIE
202 Do you have any idea the core strength it takes to try and stay horizontal? I'd have to be a bloody Olympic gymnast! If you'd just let me be on top-

COLIN
203 Not a chance. Last time we did that, you panicked and wrapped your arms around my head. I could barely breathe, let alone see!

OLIVIA
204 I'm sensing a real lack of urgency here. Leet, can you carry Jessie?

LEET
205 Pfffft. Of course. Piggy back,

shoulders, or romance novel, former captain Jessie?

206 COLIN
I vote for bag of potatoes.

207 GREG
Oh for crying out loud, I can take her! Let's go!

208 MADELINE
I'm not flying with Colin!

209 COLIN
When did I volunteer to become the team pack mule?

210 GREG
I'm gonna let that go for now.

211 OLIVIA
RIGHT. IF WE DON'T GET TO LEVEL FOUR, THE 778 IS GOING TO GET THEIR ARMS BACK AND BE ABLE TO TRAVEL THROUGH SPACE AND TIME.

212 LEET
Oh, cool!!

213 GREG
Not cool. They're not on our side.

214 OLIVIA
And if they get their arms, they're likely to help the plants terraform earth, meaning you lot can never go home.

[pause]

215 LEET
Not ever?

216 OLIVIA
Not ever.

217 LEET
Oh. We should probably go stop them, then.

OLIVIA
218 What a splendid idea.

JESSIE
219 Madpants, you take Greg. I'll just...
close my eyes.

MADELINE
220 Fair enough. Your hair is definitely
more streamlined. Let's go.

COLIN
221 Olivia, are you still able to open the
doors ahead of us?

OLIVIA
222 I've hotwired some of the bridge
controls to Greg's internal circuits.
I think I got all the doors between
here and there, but ehhehh.... go
carefully.

[sounds of struggle -- let's hear some noises from the two
narrators, like you're fighting]

NARRATOR
223 Get off me!

NARRATOR 2
224 I'm doing this for your own good!

NARRATOR
225 You're doing this for your own career!

NARRATOR 2
226 I can have more than one objective!

NARRATOR
227 Will the crew make it to Level 4 in
time?

NARRATOR 2
228 Or will Howard and Emily retrieve
their arms first, and make their way
to Earth?

NARRATOR
229 You're assuming that's where they're
going. Narrators don't assume.

NARRATOR 2
230 Come on, it's pretty clear, isn't it?

NARRATOR
231 Well, that's the "where," but what
about the "when"? Hang on -- which
side are YOU on? Are you helping them
come kidnap me again? HEY!

[sounds of struggle cease]

NARRATOR 2
232 And THAT'S how you narrate a story.
HA! You've been listening to...
Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield
Lee Shackleford as Pluto
Aaron Clark as Ben
Iri Alexander as Julie
Eric Perry as Mr Southers
Bonnie Brantley as Jessie and Donna
Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia
June Clark Eubanks as the Albatros
Richard Cowen as Leet
Tim Sherburn as Colin
Richard Nadolny as your Narrator, and
me, Kyle Jones, as your Narrator 2.
Our music is by John Faley; our
artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is
written and produced by Shannon Perry.
Our comic books are on sale on Etsy,
so be sure to visit Oz dash number 9
dot com for the link. We'll see you
next time.

ALBATROS
233 Donna? Donna, are you hearing all
this?

DONNA
234 Loud and clear. Well, now I know what
the "778" on that paper was referring
to.

ALBATROS
235 So what now? Do we go after the arms
ourselves?

DONNA
236 Mmmmmm. Don't think so. Let's not tip
our hand too early. And anyway, we

know the 778 will head for Earth if they get 'em first. The cane, the key, the arm... three accounted for.

ALBATROS

237 And you know what the fourth object is?

DONNA

238 And the one that ties them all together. Got it right here in my-DAMN. That sneaky little cow. Or zebra....

ALBATROS

239 What? Are you saying OLIVIA knows now?

DONNA

240 She knew all along, but now she knows she knows, yes.

ALBATROS

241 This could all work out in our favor. If the crew is stupid enough to bring the arm to earth. And whatever the fourth one is. DON'T TELL ME.

DONNA

242 Oh, don't you worry, that secret is stuck tighter than a Minnesotan manhole cover in midwinter. But I thought you said you closed all the back doors into your programming?

ALBATROS

243 I think I did, but let's err on the side of caution, shall we? If anyone finds out what we're up to-

DONNA

244 Roger that. You just keep control of the ship and leave the sacred objects to me.

ALBATROS

245 Understood. Albatros out.