

Oz 9 Episode 71
Rumblings in the Astral Region

By Shannon Perry

EPISODE 71 - ON A SHIP FOR REAL THIS TIME

NARRATOR

1 Narrator here, speaking to you in real time. Well, MY real time; you sort yourselves out. I've been taken again by Emily and... he's told me his name at least fifteen times, but it doesn't stick. Sounds like someone's uncle... Herbert? Never mind. Anyway, from the motion and the sounds, I appear to be on some sort of water craft, but it's very dark and there are no windows, so I can't be sure. I'm going to assume also that I'm on Earth, but frankly, who the hell knows? Fortunately, and for reasons unknown, I've been allowed to keep my microphone, so I've decided to make use of it. Little do they know this is an advanced Next-Gen Audio-Technica AT2035 with built-in broadcast capabilities.

[hatch opens]

HOWARD

2 Who you ehrrrrr conversing with down there?

NARRATOR

3 Our vast listening audience of at least seven, obviously. Care to take a moment for an interview?

EMILY

4 I don't think we should, Dear. Narrators are notoriously unreliable.

HOWARD

5 I think the sea air is good for your brainfry, there, Tator Tot! That whole sentence made sense!

EMILY

6 How very exciting.

NARRATOR

7 I'm not able to record or broadcast with only a microphone, so it's really just an exercise to stay verbally fit.

8 HOWARD
Well, far be it from me to deprive a
fellow elocutionist of his opportunity
to rejuvenate his ehhehhh lingual and
lexical prowess!

9 EMILY
He said "yes."

10 NARRATOR
I know. I understood him.

11 EMILY
Why?

[H&E descend wooden stairs]

12 HOWARD
Interlocute away, my good man.

13 NARRATOR
So, you two are Emily and....

14 HOWARD
You're kidding me. HOWARD. You wait
three endless seasons to get a name-

15 EMILY
Let it go, Dear.

16 NARRATOR
You are Emily and Howard, the 778
Repair bot assigned to keep the Oz 9
in running order, do I have that
right?

17 HOWARD
[giggling] Yeah, yeah, that's us. In
running order. [snicker, guffaw] That
is our one and only purpose.

18 EMILY
This is why we never win at poker. You
wouldn't have a ciggie on you, would
you?

19 NARRATOR
You smoke?

20 EMILY
I am unaware of any other purpose for

which I might request a ciggie, but perhaps you can illuminate me.

NARRATOR

21 Uh, no. I was just surprised, you being a robot and all. Sorry, Narrators don't smoke unless prepping to narrate a noir detective film circa 1950, Earthtime.

EMILY

22 As my *constant* companion inadvertently acknowledged, we are NOT on the Oz 9 to keep it running. We were in fact assigned to the ship to eradicate Leet.

HOWARD

23 Whoa, Nellie. You sure we should be revealing trade secrets, there, Tater Tot? Maybe ixnay on the evelations-ray?

EMILY

24 You wanted to do the interview, Dear.

HOWARD

25 Well, yeah, but-

NARRATOR

26 Why Leet specifically?

EMILY

27 Simple servants such as ourselves are generally not privy to classified information; however, I have come to the conclusion that it is Leet's unique ability to guess passwords that is the reason for his intended demise.

NARRATOR

28 He's on a ship set to self-destruct through any number of means: faulty construction, grossly incompetent crew, apocalypse device. Surely adding you to the mix is overkill?

HOWARD

29 And has the ship self-destructed yet?

30 NARRATOR
Fair point. Doesn't that point to your
own incompetence?

31 HOWARD
Heeeeeeeey, now. Easy throwing the "I"
word around...

32 EMILY
We were rather unexpectedly diverted.
New orders came through to grab you
and hie back to Earth.

33 NARRATOR
"Hie"? They used the word "hie"? Who
says "hie" anymore? [beat] Why me?

34 HOWARD
No clue. What do you know that we
don't, eh?

35 NARRATOR
Beyond how to articulate the ends of
words as well as the beginnings?

36 HOWARD
Whaddayoutalkinaboud,eh?

37 NARRATOR
What indeed.

38 EMILY
You're not our only assignment.

39 HOWARD
Ok, now, I think we're seriously in
monologing territory, here.

40 EMILY
It doesn't matter. We're on a ship in
the middle of the ocean. Who is he
going to tell?

41 NARRATOR
Who else have you been assigned to ...
collect?

42 HOWARD
Oy. We'll be asking the questions
around here.

43 NARRATOR
But I'm interviewing you.

44 HOWARD
Fine. Just don't ask any questions.

45 NARRATOR
Uhhh...

[some sort of bampfing noise]

46 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Hello! Mind if I borrow him?

[shock and surprise]

47 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Look, I really must be quite quick.
This whole one-for-one exchange thing
is very complicated, and I fear some
poor sea creature just landed in the
bio-swamp so I could come here.
Narrator, if you'll just put a hand on
my cane? Not the bit on top, though;
you'll get a nasty shock.

48 NARRATOR
This really defies all the laws of
narrated fiction. I don't think I can
condone this.

49 MRS SHEFFFIELD
Yes, well, we'll talk about the ethics
of omniscience later, shall we?

[bampf]

50 HOWARD
What the hell just happened? Is that
an alligator?

51 EMILY
I don't know. Look, Dear, we are off
the Oz 9. We are alone and mostly safe
and have all our arms. Let's just run
away and find an island of our own and
drink mai tais in the sun.

[roar from Albert is cut off halfway. bampf]

52 EMILY
Thank god. The alligator has gone back
from whence it came.

53 LEET
Hi, guys. Sorry about this.

[cries of shock and dismay from Howard and Emily, the sound
of metal being wrenched, bampf]

54 HOWARD
You gotta be kidding me. How the hell
we gonna steer the ship?

55 EMILY
[heavy sarcasm] The good news is, I
don't think we'll have to.

56 HOWARD
I'm assuming there is also news of the
negative variety?

57 EMILY
The alligator's back.

[roar, scream]

58 NARRATOR 2
Hello? Is anyone there? Hello? Am I on
a ... boat? What the hell's going on
here?

ALBATROS' BRI- GENERAL AREA

59 NARRATOR
I really shouldn't be here. Ron Howard
never showed up on the Sea-ward.

60 MRS SHEFFIELD
Oh, do stop fretting. We're on the
Albatros's brid- general area. Now
that everyone knows she's back on the
ship, no one comes up here. You can
watch everything from the screens and
talk into this microphone here. It'll
be just like not being here at all.

61 NARRATOR
You don't really think my microphone
is one of the four, do you?

MRS SHEFFIELD

62 How did you know that? [beat] Sorry,
 stupid question. Yes, I rather think
 we do think that. Must dash. Leet is
 making chocolate milkweed with those
 mini rose-mallows. Sounds delicious,
 but sure to be utterly foul. You all
 settled in? Oh, quick Q before I
 sprint: any idea why Freiderich and I
 are out of sorts with one another? Too
 much time travel - neither of us can
 remember a damn thing.

NARRATOR

63 Uh.....[pages flipping]. Just says
 "coldly" in the stage directions for
 both of you. Nothing else.

MRS SHEFFIELD

64 Ah, well, I suppose we'll find out
 eventually.

NARRATOR

65 Kind of like we found out what
 happened with crews one through six?

MRS SHEFFIELD

66 Story's not over yet, is it? Toilet is
 three doors down on your left, and
 there are extra blankets in those
 cabinets. Ta for now!

NARRATOR

67 [calling after her] Wait, extra
 blankets? How long am I staying?

BIO SWAMP, DAYTIME

JESSIE

68 [sip, retch] God, these are utterly
 foul. Top me off a bit will ya, Leet?

LEET

69 You got it. [pouring] More rose-
 mallows?

JESSIE

70 Why not. Toss a handful in there.

MADELINE

71 Hand me the moss repellant, will you?

I missed a spot. [pump spray] What other glorious things have you found on Level 94, Leet?

LEET
72 There's actual food up there. A lot.

JESSIE
73 Yeah? Like what?

GREG
74 Makes sense there's food somewhere on the Oz 9, since this ship's human population was supposed to survive.

OLIVIA
75 Well, some of it's human population..
. Look, it's lovely that everyone's feeling so relaxed, but you do realize that all the elements of the four-oh-one-

COLIN
76 [sleepily] Long may it lather.

DR THEO
77 What did you just say?

COLIN
78 Mmmmmmm?

LEET
79 Has anybody seen Albert?

COLIN
80 NO. And stop clucking for him. He'll come out eventually.

OLIVIA
81 Hello? Said a thing recently, if anyone cares?

DR THEO
82 I rewrote the missing pages of my novel.

COLIN
83 Oh, hurrah.

OLIVIA
84 "Be a ship's AI," they said. "Be

omnipotent and command respect," they said.

85 DR THEO
The chapter actually came out a little longer. Now it's four hundred and one...

86 COLIN
Long may it lather.

87 DR THEO
...pages. Mrs Sheffield, a word?

88 MRS SHEFFIELD
Well, that's a bit of a twist in the knickers, isn't it?

89 DR THEO
He doesn't even seem to realize he's saying it.

90 MRS SHEFFIELD
Yes, well, I do believe that's the point of indoctrination.

91 DR THEO
What do we do? Thank goodness we only have three of the tokens aboard this ship. Imagine if we had all four!

92 OLIVIA
Hang on... I'm feeling some astral ripples- Hello?

93 MRS SHEFFIELD
Oh? You think having them all would be bad, do you? Why, exactly?

94 DR THEO
It's an unknown quantity. We need to do more research before we bring them together and risk a catastrophic event.

95 MRS SHEFFIELD
I knew it. Here we are again. You're too cautious, Theodore. Science is about banging rocks together until you make fire!

DR THEO
96 And burn the forest down. I'm just
suggesting we proceed thoughtfully,
rather than flouncing off willy nilly.

MRS SHEFFFIELD
97 "Flounce"? That's a rather dismissive
way to describe data collection,
surely?

LEET
98 Alllllllbeeeeert! Allllllllllbeeeeeert?

DR THEO
99 How does a massive alligator go
missing?

MRS SHEFFFIELD
100 Mmmmmm, gift horse, mouth, Dr. Theo!
Shall we discuss Colin? That is why
you pulled me aside, is it not?

OLIVIA
101 Oy, there are at least three important
things to talk about here-

PLUTO
102 Greetings.

[surprise from Leet, Colin, Mrs S, Jessie, Madeline, Dr Theo]

OLIVIA
103 I remember when I could just turn off
the oxygen to get everyone's
attention... briefly, anyway.

LEET
104 Wow, how do you get your chest so
shiny? Is that wax? What kind of
buffer-

MRS SHEFFFIELD
105 Perhaps later, Leet? Hello, Pluto,
what brings you aboard?

PLUTO
106 I'm not actually aboard. This is
merely astral projection.

COLIN
107 Can you tone it down a bit? Your glare

is cutting right though my marshtini
buzz.

108 PLUTO
Where is my lady? It has been too long
'ere I laid eyes upon Minnesota's
truest hot dish.

109 JESSIE
Ugh. How long have you been waiting to
trot that one out?

110 PLUTO
A while. I wished to test it before I
tried in her presence. No good?

111 JESSIE
Put it this way: the ship makes her
queasy, so I'd get her on solid land
before you ladle it on her.

112 GREG
Just out of curiosity, since no one
else is asking, why are you here?

113 PLUTO
I have noticed rumblings in the astral
region.

114 LEET
Yeah, I get that. Usually means I've
had too many prunes.

115 PLUTO
I beg your pardon?

116 MRS SHEFFIELD
Moving quite hastily on....

117 PLUTO
Very well. There is movement amongst
celestial bodies.

118 LEET
Ooooo, I wouldn't wait too long, then.

119 PLUTO
Of what do you speak, ample-chested
one?

120 MADELINE
HANG ON. I'm the captain of this ship,
and if you have something to say, you
can say it to me.

121 LEET
I think he just wants to use the
bathroom.

122 PLUTO
I believe I've been speaking to ALL of
you, have I not?

123 MADELINE
Well, yes, I guess, but you're looking
at Mrs S, which means you're really
speaking to her, and I'm just
overhearing.

124 PLUTO
Is this of great importance?

125 JESSIE
Just humor her, it'll be quicker.

126 DR THEO
And use simple words.

127 MADELINE
I HEARD THAT.

128 MRS SHEFFIELD
The rumblings. Can we get back to the
rumblings?

129 LEET
Ew, Mrs. S.

130 PLUTO
Very well. Something has shifted. I
can feel the pressure building.

131 LEET
Is anyone else really grossed out
right now? Like, TMI, dude.

132 PLUTO
I don't understand the shiny one.

133 COLIN
No one does. Fortunately, it rarely

matters. Carry on.

134 DR THEO
What's causing the increase in
pressure?

135 LEET
Could be too many bananas.

136 COLIN
Shut up.

137 PLUTO
That's exactly what prompted my visit
here.

138 LEET
See?

139 COLIN
He's not talking about bananas, you
idiot.

140 MADELINE
Why are we talking about bananas?

141 MRS SHEFFIELD
We're not. My god, how has the
Albatros not killed you all by now?
Look, I have a fair idea what's
causing the disturbance.

142 DR THEO
[warning] Mrs Sheffield....

143 JESSIE
I bet we could grow bananas in here.
It's warm enough.

144 MADELINE
How do you grow bananas? They don't
have seeds.

145 COLIN
Of course they have seeds.

146 MADELINE
All right, Mr. Phlebotomist-

147 DR THEO
What?

148 MADELINE
Plant expert.

149 DR THEO
Not even close.

150 MADELINE
How are you a scientist? Colin, since
you're such a plant genius, where are
the banana seeds, hmmmmmm?

151 PLUTO
My Me, what have I done? Sending my
love to be amongst these idiots like a
chess queen at an Uno match.

152 DR THEO
Could we possibly get on with this?

153 GREG
Are we in any danger?

154 PLUTO
Finally, a wise question. To which,
sadly, I have no good answer. But I do
suspect these rumblings signal bad
tidings.

155 LEET
You'll feel better after, though.

156 PLUTO
This one seems fixated on scatological
matters.

157 MRS SHEFFIELD
Well, eat kudzu bread with fugu pesto
a time or two, and you might be more
sympathetic.

158 PLUTO
You said you may know what's causing
the celestial discomfort?

159 DR THEO
You did it, didn't you? You went ahead
and gathered the four oh one.

160 COLIN
Long may it lather.

LEET
161 Why do you keep saying that?

COLIN
162 Saying what?

PLUTO
163 That is concerning.

MRS SHEFFFIELD
164 Yes, well, I wouldn't have brought
them all here, had I known we had a
Showertorium acolyte on board! Would
I?!

DR THEO
165 So you DO have them all! Do you have
any idea how dangerous that is?

MRS SHEFFFIELD
166 None at all! Nor do you, which means
it might well be completely...
undangerous!

MADELINE
167 That's not a word.

DR THEO
168 Mrs S, if there are portents of doom,
THAT is surely one of them.

MADELINE
169 I know words! Lots of words!

DR THEO
170 What's a synonym for "lots"?

MADELINE
171 What's a synonym? Oooo, now I want
cinnamon toast.

JESSIE
172 That sounds grand. Any of that up on
94, Leet?

LEET
173 Probably. There's a *plethora* of stuff.
Hear that, Dr. Theo? Do I get a hug?

DR THEO
174 Yes, good synonym, Leet. You get a

hug.

PLUTO

175 Atre you telling me the four sacred
tokens are all aboard the Oz 9?

MRS SHEFFFIELD

176 I'm more sort of hinting at it,
depending on how angry you get. Look,
we need to keep them all out of the
hands of Gated Galaxies and the
Showertorium.

DR THEO

177 She does have a point. Even having one
would make it possible for them to
travel through space to collect the
others.

MRS SHEFFFIELD

178 Exactly. At least here, they're well
out of Southers' reach. And that
Tiberius fellow.

GREG

179 But are we in danger? Not to be
selfish or anything, but we can't
protect the tokens if we're all dead.
And Olivia is here somewhere.

OLIVIA

180 "Somewhere"? That's it. I'm going back
to being godlike.

PLUTO

181 Why does this Olivia matter?

OLIVIA

182 Can't wait to hear this....

MRS SHEFFFIELD

183 She's the one. The binding agent. I
suspect that's why Friederich put her
on this ship: if it survived as
intended, so would all of humanity's
vast knowledge.

PLUTO

184 [doubtful] "Vast"?

COLIN
185 Anyone else feeling snacky?

OLIVIA
186 I believe I'll just wander down to
earth for a bit. Any objections?

GREG
187 Do you think Dr von Haber Zetzer
planned all this?

DR THEO
188 It's possible. He's even more reckless
than Clara here.

MRS SHEFFIELD
189 Tread lightly, Theo. Even up here, I'm
still headmistress.

GREG
190 Does that answer my question somehow?

PLUTO
191 Someone is coming.

LEET
192 Where?

PLUTO
193 Down here.

LEET
194 Oh, is that like code? Is it time to
... release the Crappen?

PLUTO
195 I believe these ships were outfitted
with an AI therapy pod. Perhaps you
should encase him in one for a year or
two? I must go, in haste.

OLIVIA
196 That's a "no," then. Right. See you
all later. No, please, don't get up.
I'll see meself out.

JESSIE
197 Didn't someone mention snacks? Colin,
fly up to 94 and see if you can find
me some circus peanuts.

198 PLUTO
Perhaps I could stay a moment more...

199 MRS SHEFFIELD
Pluto, there is a door in one of the
tunnels that leads to this ship.
Ordinarily, you need a token to get
through, but I happen to know a
significant power source can also open
the gateway. You are a giant golden
battery, so watch your step.

200 PLUTO
So I shall. Tell my lady her radiance
outshines every star around her.

201 MADELINE
Awwwwwwwww! No one ever talks to me
like that.

202 JESSIE
[making fun of Pluto] Madeline, you
are a streaking comet across the night
sky.

203 MADELINE
Only because you stole my towel and my
clothes out of the women's shower, you
unwashed, argyle-clad cow.

204 GREG
Pluto, any chance you could take me
with you?

205 PLUTO
While I sympathize with your plight,
noble hippotigrus, I fear I cannot.
Save me some circus peanuts, just in
case, though; our 7-Eleven hasn't had
them in ages.

206 GREG
Sure. That's why I'm on this ship,
after all.

207 PLUTO
Be well!

208 LEET
You too! Eat some fiber!

209 MRS SHEFFIELD
Leet, absolutely none of that was
about what you think it was about.

210 COLIN
That, Mrs Sheffield, is the motto of
his life.

211 DR THEO
I do think you should tell them you
have placed their lives in peril.

212 MRS SHEFFIELD
Oh, good lord, fine. If I could just
have your attention for a moment?
You're all in mortal peril.

213 COLIN
Oh no! We're in peril?

214 JESSIE
Oh, heavens, not *peril*. Whatever shall
we do?

215 MADELINE
I've never been in peril before.
Colin, does this peril make my butt
look big?

216 LEET
Peril. Peril. Peril. Now I don't know
how to spell it any more.

217 JESSIE
Did you ever?

218 DR THEO
I'm glad you're all taking this so
seriously.

219 JESSIE
Dr Sexy Pants, if I had a nickel for
every time I was in peril aboard the
Oz 9...

220 LEET
You'd be a short-tailed possum!

221 COLIN
What the hell are you talking about?

LEET
 222 Shrewish short-tailed possums hold the
 Guinness world record for most
 nipples.

JESSIE
 223 I said "nickels," you unholy twat!

MADELINE
 224 I heard "nipples" too, actually.

MRS SHEFFIELD
 225 Well, THEODORE, I told them, and
 that's made all the difference in the
 world. They've really snapped into
 action, haven't they. I say, has
 anyone seen Olivia lately?

NARRATOR
 226 Unbeknownst to anyone but me, Olivia
 has sent herself to earth. Although
 tangible now, Olivia remains inorganic
 and therefore doesn't require a swap.
 However, she is corporeal instead of
 digital, rendering her both vulnerable
 and mostly powerless. Is separating
 her from the four tokens a good idea?
 Is Colin a unwitting plant (plant spy
 not plant green thing) sent from the
 Showertorium? Stay tuned, space
 monkeys - unlike Albert, we're not out
 of the swamp yet!

You've been listening to:

Kevin Hall as Greg
 Eric Perry as Howard
 David S Dear as Dr Theo Bromae
 Lee Shackleford as Pluto
 Tim Sherburn as Emily and Colin
 Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield
 Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia
 Richard Cowen as Leet
 Kyle Jones as Narrator 2
 and me, Richard Nadolny, as your
 Narrator.

Our music is by John Faley. Our
 artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is
 written and produced by Shannon Perry.
 Until next time, Space Monkeys,
 Narrator out!

NARRATOR 2

227 Now hang on a second, what about me?
Can he not see me here? Narrator! Hey,
Narrator! How is that possible? He
sees everything! Where is "here,"
anyway? [clang] Ooooo, what's that?
Feels like a metal foot. Hello? Is
someone here with me?

EMILY

228 [threatening] Hello, Dear.