

Episode 85: Dirty, greasy oligarchs

Oz 9

Shannon Perry

## INSIDE THE HAUNTED CASTLE

We hear the canned scary sounds common to a haunted house: screams, moans, footsteps, etc.

NARRATOR

Before we begin episode 85, Two has something he'd like to say. Two...

N2

(mumbles) Sorry.

NARRATOR

Because....

N2

I screamed at the end of the last episode.

NARRATOR

Tell them why....

N2

Because we're in a haunted castle and something crawled across my foot, that's why!

NARRATOR

"Crawled"?

N2

FINE. Flopped. Plopped. Squished.

NARRATOR

And what was it?

N2

Margaret. It was Margaret.

NARRATOR

The goldfish.

N2

Yeah. She jumped out of the bucket. Or sloshed out. The running caused some wave action.

NARRATOR

And for anyone concerned, Margaret was unharmed. She's back in the bucket, bossing the other fish around. So, if

you're done with the histrionics, can we continue?

N2

Come on, it was a floppy, wet, icky thing on my foot IN A HAUNTED CASTLE.

NARRATOR

Which raises the question: why aren't you wearing shoes?

N2

I don't know. I had them on when we went into the Haunted Castle. Next thing I knew, they were gone. Can we get out of here now? I miss our bridge.

NARRATOR

Yeah, I guess so. How about a quick "meanwhile" to cover our escape?

N2

Good thought. Meanwhile....

RANDOM CORRIDOR

JOE\*

(singing) I'm just a moppin', ooo  
I'm just a moppin' fool,  
a little do-woppin'pop-n-lockin'  
like I always do.  
There's just no stoppin' all the  
moppin'  
Always soppin' up their drool.  
These gooey, greasy oligarchs  
Leavin' gooey, greasy, dirty marks  
on my floor (te tum)  
forever more (te tum)  
oh lord (te tum)  
<whistling>

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

My.

JOE

Jesus!

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Oh, I beg your pardon. You have a

lovely voice.

JOE

Oh. Thanks. I *did* play Tevye in high school.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Oh. Well, I hope you wore a helmet.

JOE

Huh? Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof*. I guess you never saw it.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

No, I'm terribly afraid of heights. Why are you cleaning here? I doubt anyone's been here but me, and I don't make a mess ... anymore.

JOE

It's a space ship. Even a speck of dirt could cause a breach in the hull, under the right circumstances.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

I see. You do have a bio-swamp brimming with dirt.

JOE

I try not to think about it.

[five distant explosions in a row]

JOE

Dammit, I just put those back together. Hope we don't need to turn left for a while. [pause] You're really not going to leave until we figure out who killed you, huh?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Are you able to keep a secret?

JOE

Sure. I'm silent as the grave. Which come to think of it, isn't real silent, given present company.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

I don't really have a grave, do I? Strange to think my body is out there,

frozen and drifting for all time.

JOE

If it helps, I added some swamp flowers before Olivia opened the hatch.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

I was terribly allergic to flowers in my day.

JOE

Oh. Uhhhh, heh. Sorry.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

I doubt it matters now, dear fellow. But thank you.

[door opens and closes, moan, shuffling footsteps from L to R, different door opens and closes]

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Ugh. If you really want to clean up this ship, you might start with the zombie infestation.

JOE

I don't have enough buckets – those critters are all over the 9. Long as the crew don't see 'em and panic, they're not doing any harm. So, your secret?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Oh yes. Truth is, I've no idea how I got here nor the faintest notion how to leave. So I thought I might at least get something out of my time here.

JOE

Good on ya. Make sure Freeze gets the worst of it, OK?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Absolutely. Especially since that odious little fellow can't seem to stop remarking on my ... odor. Do I seem... whiffy to you?

JOE

No, ma'am. A little lavender, a little face powder, a hint of ... Scotch?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Oh dear, really? McCallum single malt. I had bottles of it tucked away all over the house.

JOE

Hubby didn't approve?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Oh, he approved, all right. As in "unhinging his lower jaw and emptying an entire bottle no-handed in the manner of a slipper, stomach-ambulating viper" approved. I tolerated his extra-marital experimentation, but gargling my Scotch is unacceptable.

JOE

You're about to do that scary thing with your face again.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

McCallum is 350 quid a bottle. If that doesn't merit my scary face, little does.

[door opens, scuttling sound up close that fades down the corridor]

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

That's new.

JOE

I've seen it a couple of times. Keep trying to spray paint one of its legs so I can tell if there's a litter or just one that gets around.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Given its size, how are you not more alarmed? It's clearly alien.

JOE

Or one of the good doctor's creations. Or we might still be dealing with Olivia's hallucinations. No use

getting uptight till I have a reason.  
So. Who do you think killed you? Wow,  
that is NOT a question you expect to  
get an answer to.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT  
My money is on that insufferable  
little knob Wiggy.

JOE  
Well, I'm pretty sure the plant took  
care of him for you.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT  
We called him "Wiggy" because of his  
ability to wiggle out of virtually any  
repercussions for his actions. He'll  
soon pop back up like the weasel he  
is.

[distant explosion]

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT  
Another engine?

JOE  
Possibly, but it's also Madeline's day  
to make lunch. Any ideas on the why  
and the how for the murder?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT  
Several, but I'm saving them for the  
true crime episode. Let's discuss the  
mystery of you mopping endless  
unsullied corridors.

JOE  
Unsullied? We've got zombies  
everywhere, and I'm the janitor. See?  
Mop? Second-rate bucket?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT  
Joseph, your crew has the collective  
intellect of a lump of bacon fat. That  
excuse may work on them but certainly  
not on me. I've been watching you.

JOE  
That right? Can't imagine much more  
boring than watching a man mop.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Not so much mopping as mapping. You're mapping the ship. Why?

JOE

Ma'am, this ship is a city, and not a small one, and our captain might have a fine head of hair, but I suspect that's because her brain is mostly fertilizer. Creatures all over the place, sandwich machines that come and go, someone needs to be paying attention.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Do pardon my French, Joseph, but that's horseshit. All fair and good reasons, but none of them YOUR reason. I told you my secret; now you tell me yours. And I promise, I WILL be as silent as my enormous, eternal grave.

JOE

All right, Lady Neville-Bickford-

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

(interrupting) Please, call me Lucy. I'd tell you to "spill your guts," but having done that, I wouldn't recommend it. It does make a mess of one's shoes.

ANOTHER ROOM ON THE OZ 9

We hear the sound of a tinkly, old-time piano and the occasional snort of a horse.

COLIN

Out of that insane carnival and straight into the mouth of another of those damnable sandwich machines. Which one leads us to Olivia's core?

MRS SHEFFIELD

There's got to be some sort of pattern.

MADELINE

Meanwhile, there's lots of really good whiskey in here.



JESSIE  
That's *whisky*.

MADELINE  
That's what I said.

JESSIE  
No, you said "whiskey." With an e.

MRS SHEFFIELD  
[mumbling to herself] Is it the combination of letter and number? The sandwich itself?

COLIN  
[to Jessie] What in the name of whatever backwards, be-kilted pagan god created you are you talking about?

JESSIE  
Never mind. Belly on up to the bar. Oooo, McCallum's! Hands off. That's a proper SCOTCH WHISKY.

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Well, before anyone whips out their six-gun or mounts a horse — and yes, I'm aware of the very clever and amusing double-entendres, but I'm thinking here, so let's move on — there's got to be a reason we keep landing where we're landing.

JESSIE  
In an old-timey, wild-west saloon?

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Yes, and the theme park before this, and the barber shop before that. Some in piles of junk like the carnival, some like this one and set up just as you'd expect but unpeopled ... and to what end?

[thunk of boots on hardwood floor, ring of spurs]

COWBOY  
Howdy.

MADELINE  
Oh, hello. You're new.

COWBOY

Can I buy you a drink, pretty lady?

JESSIE

Pffft. Everything's free, far as I can tell. But sure, I'll take a shot of McCallum's.

MADELINE

He was talking to me! You were talking to me, right?

COWBOY

Can I buy you a drink, pretty lady?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ah. Animatronic, I think.

MADELINE

Hang on. I know this guy.

COLIN

Don't be ridiculous.

JESSIE

No you don't, you daft cow. She just said he's not real.

MADELINE

And what about the million versions of your sister? Or your wife?

JESSIE

Yeah, all right.

COLIN

Fair, I suppose.

MADELINE

ANYWAY. I do know him. He's from an old movie, Bent Water or something.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Crooked River?

MADELINE

Yeah, OK.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I do believe you're right. Are we... in a film set?

COWBOY

Can I buy you a drink, pretty lady?

COLIN

That's odd. He's looking right at me.

JESSIE

Do you reckon he can see you?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Not very well, if he's referring to Colin as "pretty lady," but it does seem he's talking to you, my boy. Answer him. See what happens.

COLIN

All right. I'll have a martini. No olives.

COWBOY

Bartender! A martini for the lady! Now, hows about you tell me what a pretty little gal like you is doing in a place like this?

COLIN

What do I do?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Keep talking!

JESSIE

Seriously? COLIN is the pretty gal? I hate this ship.

COLIN

I fell through a sandwich machine.

COWBOY

Ha ha ha! You city gals. Nuttier than my uncle's walnut plantation, but like them trees, you sure do blossom pretty.

COLIN

How very sweet! What's your name?

MADELINE

Ew. Are you flirting with the mechanical cowboy?

JESSIE

Yeah. Gross.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Colin. COLIN. Perhaps this gentleman knows the way to Olivia's master controls?

COLIN

An animatronic character from an ancient western? What makes you think he'd know where Olivia's controls are?

COWBOY

A-One.

COLIN

And where's my martini?

COWBOY

Aw, hell, I plum forgot. I shot the bartender a week or so ago. Let me mix you up that martini.

["Hrmp!" sound from cowboy as he pulls himself over the bar. Then sounds of martini being made]

MRS SHEFFIELD

Excuse me, my dusty and rugged fellow, you said "A One." What did you mean by that?

[no response]

MRS SHEFFIELD

Rude. Colin, it appears he's imprinted on you. Ask what "A One" refers to, there's a good lad.

COWBOY

How about you wet that pretty little whistle, darlin.

[Pours, slides drink to Colin who sips]

COLIN

My god. That's the best martini I've ever had!

MADELINE

Really? Get him to make you another one!

JESSIE

Two!

COLIN

Ah, hell with it. Three more, my good man, just like this one!

COWBOY

Nothing but the finest for my gal.

MRS SHEFFFIELD

COLIN. A ONE.

MADELINE

Who cares? It's probably a liverwurst and strawberry jam sandwich on one of those stupid machines. Cheers! Hey! Give that back!

MRS SHEFFFIELD

Captain, until we find our way safely to Olivia's core to fix the madness — at least this most recent madness — I'd prefer you remain sober.

MADELINE

Ahhhhh, gotcha. You need a steady hand and clear head at the helm, huh?

COLIN

By "clear" do you mean empty? Honestly, flying your drunk, airsick self around this ship is a horror unmatched by even carnivorous plants, and you stopped listening while you were still talking, didn't you.

MADELINE

Hmmmmmm? Ooo, are those peanuts?

[shelling and eating peanuts commences]

JESSIE

You really think there might be something going on here, Mrs S? More than just random.... Oz Nine-ness?

MRS SHEFFFIELD

I do. There's a system, I'm sure of it. And I think our dear, soggy seat-cushion of a Captain may have just

stumbled on the answer.

MADELINE

If these peanuts aren't real, how many  
do you think I can safely eat?

[gunshots]

COLIN

Someone's shooting at us! Duck!

MADELINE

Pffft. They're not real bullets,  
Colin. We're on a movie set, remember?

COLIN

Seriously? You'll eat the peanuts but  
not duck the bullets?

[sound of a shot hitting a glass, which shatters. Single  
rifle shots continue sporadically until otherwise noted]

MADELINE

Ooooo! My martini glass must have had  
some sort of detonator. They could  
have waited until I wasn't holding it,  
though. Ouch. Check it out! They  
actually snuck one of those fake blood  
packets onto my hand!

JESSIE

Get down, you empty-headed meat  
sponge, those are real bullets!

MADELINE

What the hell's a "meat sponge"?

JESSIE

Today's lunch, I reckon. Now get down  
here!

COLIN

Captain! Please! Quickly!

MADELINE

Very well. Hey, that's real sawdust.  
And peanut shells. Serious attention  
to detail. Check out my hand! It looks  
like an actual bullet graze!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
You are truly astonishing.

MADELINE  
Aw, thanks. Hey, these aren't my shoes!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
I have a theory. And if it's correct, a sandwich machine should be appearing right about....

[silence except for pinging of bullets and glass breaking]

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Give it a moment....

[pause, bullet, player piano abruptly stops]

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Yes, all right, you've sufficiently built up dramatic tension, thank you.

[hum, rumble, machine appears. firing intensifies. Note to **Colin, Jessie, Mrs Sheffield, Madeline**: the firing should get louder and louder, so you'll need to be shouting by the end. Back away from the mics, but keep the intensity!]

COLIN  
You were right!

JESSIE  
Let's go! Those shots are getting closer!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
WAIT. Colin, press A-One on the machine!

COLIN  
You're joking! I'm not going near that thing!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Surely your fine fellow here wouldn't lead you astray! Push A-One! Quickly!

COLIN  
I don't have any change!

COWBOY

You're not fixing to leave me, are you, darlin'? I just mixed up another batch of martinis.

COLIN

He just mixed up another batch! It would rude to leave now!

MRS SHEFFIELD

COLIN!!

MADELINE

Does anyone see my shoes?

JESSIE

I've got it!

THE CORE OF OZ 9

Utterly silent save for a deep, deep hum. As Colin, Jessie, Mrs S, and Madeline tumble out, their shouts cut off abruptly.

OLIVIA

You're not serious. What the hell are you lot doing here? Oh, stop flapping your gobs at me; you'll get your voices back in a minute. What? Why are all your eyes bugging out like that? Oh, right, no oxygen. Hang on.

[hiss of oxygen, gasping from the humans]

JESSIE

Why...the hell...is there...no oxygen... in here?

OLIVIA

Because...I...don't...need it.

COLIN

Where...are....we?

MRS SHEFFIELD

A-One, I should think?

OLIVIA

It was that bloody cowboy, wasn't it? Ten-gallon hat for a half-ounce brain, I'm gonna light him up like Mrs



Sheffield's next birthday cake for this one.

MRS SHEFFIELD

RUDE.

COLIN

That doesn't answer my question. Where the hell is here? Are we even still on the Oz 9?

MADELINE

Feel the floor, Colin. Still on the 9.

COLIN

You keep saying that, Captain, but it means nothing to me. It feels hard. Slightly sticky.

MADELINE

Not the floor itself, Colin, the vibrations. Put your hand on the floor and listen.

COLIN

NOW?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, I rather think we all should. Jessie?

JESSIE

Already down here.

COLIN

FINE. What am I groping for?

MADELINE

Don't grope. Hold still. Wow. It's really strong; you can feel it more clearly here than anywhere on the ship. Feel that? Our ship has a thirteen-one rhythm.

COLIN

What in god's name-

MRS SHEFFIELD

*Listen.*

MADELINE

Thirteen beats of hum. Then a skip. That skip really shouldn't be there, but it's not dangerous. More of a feature than a bug. Engine 7 has a glitch that causes the skip. Here it comes again.... wait for it.... ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, skip!

COLIN

My god. You're right.

JESSIE

Every ship's hum is unique. The 6748's pattern was twelve-two-ten-two ... may she rest in peace.

MADELINE

If you hold your hand there long enough, eventually you'll be able to tell when someone flushes the can on deck 16 or fires up the popcorn popper on the bridge.

COLIN

You're saying you can do that?

JESSIE

Of course. You're not much of a captain if you can't.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Captains' super power, eh?

JESSIE

Not really. It's more like knowing the pattern of your partner's moles. You don't even know you know, but you can tell right away when one's going bad.

MADELINE

Rumbles and hums and hiccups are how she communicates. It's better if I can understand her when she talks, so she doesn't have to shout, if you take my point.

COLIN

I see... or rather, I feel. Goodness! What was that?

MADELINE

Yeah, she does that from time to time.  
I haven't figured out what causes it  
yet. I call it her giggle.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Captain, you talk about the Oz 9 as if  
it were alive.

MADELINE

Oh, she is. In all the ways that  
matter.

COLIN

May I stand up now? This is all  
fascinating and rather sweet, but I'm  
getting a cramp.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, I suppose we might get on with  
the business at hand.

OLIVIA

Which is what, exactly?

JESSIE

You, ya digitized hob goblin! Yer oot  
yer nut!

OLIVIA

Am I meant to understand any of that?  
I guess I could run it through my de-  
Gerard Butler plug in, but sadly, I  
don't want to.

COLIN

We're concerned about the lingering  
effects of those I-drops Dr von Stony  
Baloney gave you. Although I must say,  
you seem fine now. I mean, I say  
"fine"...

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, you do seem ... yourself, anyway.  
Have they worn off?

OLIVIA

Oh, I'm always myself in here. This is  
my Quantum of Solace, my Inner  
Sanctum, my Idiot-Proof Interior.  
Until now. Out there, all bets are

off.

COLIN

Excellent.

JESSIE

How much longer is this going to last?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes! Exploring the ship via sandwich machine has been invigorating, but I suppose we'd all rather know you're ... I'm struggling to find the words here. "Normal" just isn't doing it for me. Anyone else?

COLIN

Can you just stay in here until the drops wear off? Stay here and be.... yes, I see what you mean. Be...you?

OLIVIA

I could, but I can't do much from in here. When I'm out there, I'm everywhere. In here, I'm just here.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Oh dear. That's not ideal, is it?

JESSIE

You've got two captains, you know. We can handle things until Olivia's back to... eh... yeah, this is impossible, innit?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Hello, all.

MRS SHEFFIELD, JESSIE, MADELINE

JESUS!

JOE

Right-

MRS SHEFFIELD, JESSIE, MADELINE

JESUS!

JOE

Behind her.

JESSIE

How did you find us?

JOE

G Nine landed us a few doors down. We heard your voices.

MADELINE

What happened to your galoshes?

JOE

Oh, ehheheh...

OLIVIA

Have they been ... bedazzled?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

We stumbled upon a disco. It was terrifying at first — all those people pointing at the sky and then at the floor, over and over. I thought they were sending me a message about where I'd be spending eternity.

JOE

We figured out something about the sandwich machines. And I think it explains why the Albatros got so crazy about non-regulation ketchup.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

NARRATOR

Aaaaaaaand I'm calling it!

N2

Sometimes I don't like you very much.

NARRATOR

Someone's gotta make the tough decisions, Two. So. The fish are safely — with air quotes — in the bioswamp. Albert's nest is nearly complete, and the humans couldn't get the wrong end of the stick more if they mistook a billy club fight for a relay race.

N2

Huh?

NARRATOR

Check the transcript. You'll get it eventually. You've been listening to...

N2

Eric Perry as Joe  
Bonnie Brantley as Lady Nibble Biscuit  
and Jessie  
Tim Sherburn as Colin

NARRATOR

Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield  
Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia  
Special thanks to J Michael DeAngelis  
from Mission: Rejected for taking on  
the role of The Cowboy. And special  
special thanks to Thomas Golding for  
the Ragtime music in our Old Time  
Western bar!

N2

Our music is by John Faley, and our  
artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Sarah  
Golding is our dialogue editor, and  
Chrissy Talyn Saje sound designed this  
episode. I'm Kyle Jones as Narrator 2.

NARRATOR

And I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley as your  
Narrator. Be sure to join us next time  
as the mystery of the ketchup pen is  
finally solved! Maybe.

[Their voices fade as they walk away]

N2

Probably not.

NARRATOR

I know, but I still hold out hope, you  
know?

N2

I do. Every episode, I'm sure we'll  
get some answers next time.

NARRATOR

I like how you say that: "Next time."

N2

Oh, thanks! I've had a lot of practice.

NARRATOR

Is that right? You'll have to tell me about it sometime when I'm interested.

N2

It has to do with this old 19th and 20th century tv show I watch-

NARRATOR

You heard that "sometime when I'm interested," right?

N2

Yeah.

NARRATOR

This isn't that time.

N2

You sure? It's a great story.

NARRATOR

You think *Teenage Catgirls in Heat* is a good story.

N2

It's got a solid plot.

[lights out, door closes]

\*NOTE: We left this out of the end credits, oops, but Joe's moppin' song was created and sung by Eric Perry. And if you think we need a musical episode, let us know on our Discord channel on Podcast Nexus!