

Oz 9 Ep 90: Science makes me affectionate
by Shannon Perry

EP 90 - NARRATORS' BRIDGE

NARRATOR

It's raining in the bioswamp. A light fog lies over the water. Albert and their alligrets are resting quietly, snug beneath a layer of dense white. And speaking of "dense white-"

N2

Hey!

NARRATOR

I didn't even finish the sentence.

N2

You were looking right at me!

NARRATOR

Stop being paranoid. The crew are exhausted, but there's no time to rest. Mrs Sheffield, Joe, Doctors Theo and von Haber-Zetzer, Captains Madeline and Jessie, Julie, Greg, and Colin have all gathered in the kitchen.

N2

They face an array of condiments, some that expired in the mid-20th century but still managed to find their way aboard...

NARRATOR

...and a few manufactured by Leet and Dr von Haber-Zetzer from ingredients from the bioswamp and the grayhouses.

N2

Can this blood clot of a crew unlock the language of the sandwich machines?

NARRATOR

Or are they doomed to wander the Oz 9 as randomly as it seems the Oz 9 is wandering the universe?

N2

Nice!

NARRATOR

Thanks. I liked "blood clot of a crew."

N2

Thank you. I was inspired by this textbook-

NARRATOR

Don't care. Hush.

THE KITCHEN

SFX: **Jessie eating** cheese sauce from a jar with a spoon.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Jessie! No eating our samples!

JESSIE

Oh, stop knitting your knickers inside out, we've got plenty more from the Ozdyssey.

DR THEO

We've no way of knowing if the condiments from another ship work the same way. It might be a different dialect!

JESSIE

(mouth full but still audible)
"Dialect"?! Yer talking about cheese sauce.

JULIE

And if the cheese sauce turns out to be our Rosetta Stone, imagine how foolish you'll feel if you've eaten it.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Let go of ze cheese sauce, mein little Scottish perzon. I haf somethink you vill like much better. How about zis bottle of ten-year-old Glenmorangie?

MADELINE

Just pinch her cheeks until she drops it.

GREG
She's not a dog, Captain Madeline.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT
(scary voice)
DROP IT!

JESSIE
Jesus!

There's a scuffle as everyone fights for the cheese sauce.
Grunts from the fight.

JULIE
Got it!

Muttering from Jessie.

MRS SHEFFFIELD
Ahhhh, Lady Neville-Bickford, I was
hoping you might join us.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT
I suspected you might need me.

JOE
OK, I think that's enough to start
with: sweet and dill relish, mustard
both yellow and dijon, ketchup,

N2
Catsup.

NARRATOR
Shhh!

JOE
CHEESE SAUCE, mayo...

COLIN
Worcestershire sauce, Branston pickle,
mint sauce, Marmite, HP...

JESSIE
Whisky sauce...

MRS SHEFFFIELD
Marmalade...

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT
Oh, marmalade. I do miss marmalade.

MADELINE
Orange juice...

GREG
Not a condiment.

MADELINE
Pan drippings...

GREG
Nope.

MADELINE
Oreos...

GREG
Hush now. The adults are talking.

MADELINE
Oy! But hey, if these don't count...

SFX: She grabs the package of Oreos and bowl of solidified lard from the counter. We hear her putting the bowl in the microwave for a few seconds.

COLIN
So? What now?

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Think of all the sandwiches you haf requested from ze machines and list ze ingredients unt your final ... landy place. Vat is zis vurd I am missink?

JESSIE
Destination?

JOE
All the sandwiches? Good thing I kept the wrappers.

SFX: Joe taking lots of sandwich wrappers out of various pockets.

DR THEO
Good idea. We can create a spreadsheet and start to make sense of what condiment points us where and how they interact.

DR VON HABER ZETZER
Och, Dr Theodore, zis is a vunderbar
idea!

DR THEO
(constrained) Good. Ooof! Perhaps you
could demonstrate your enthusiasm
less... physically?

Huggy noises from Theo and vHZ

DR VON HABER ZETZER
I can't help it. Zience makes me
affectionate.

JULIE
Spreadsheet! On it.

SFX: Julie typing on a computer keyboard.

JESSIE
What about the fillings?

MRS SHEFFIELD
From what the bartender said, it seems
only the condiments form the language.

JOE
One thing at a time.

JULIE
Has anyone had a really simple
sandwich?

GREG
(disgusted)
Are you dipping Oreos in lard?

MADELINE
(mouth full)
YOU ATE MOLD.

COLIN
I had a mushy-peas-and-strawberry-jam
sandwich recently.

SFX: typing.

DR THEO
And where did you end up?

COLIN
On the toilet, frankly.

DR THEO
And that's helpful how?

COLIN
Now you know to avoid it. AFTER the toilet, I ended up in a pod bay on the hundred and thirteenth floor.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Fascinating.

COLIN
Is it? Nothing was happening there. Just a lot of breathing. Which was surprising.

MADELINE
Why surprising?

COLIN
Because the people in the pods are still alive.

MADELINE
All right- yeah, fair.

JULIE
Anything else?

COLIN
No. Breathing. Gurgling. Some crates of blight piston bottles.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Blight piston bottles.

COLIN
Something like that; the stamp was blurry. This ship is soggy with zombies. I didn't hang about. I did find this, though.

SFX: slight shimmering sound as he produces the object.

DR THEO
A screwdriver.

COLIN

Oh, is that what that is? It felt vaguely greasy and manual-labory, so I assumed it belonged to Joe or Emily and what's-his-name. Here. Take it.

JOE

Not mine.

COLIN

Take it anyway. It's dangerous.

JOE

Not normally. Hey, has anyone else found things lying around on your little excursions?

MADELINE

Does a sword count?

SFX: She whips out the sword and waves it around. Same shimmery sound. **All: whoa! Watch it! Careful!**

MRS SHEFFIELD

You found a sword? How interesting!

DR THEO

Captain Madeline has a sword? How alarming.

MADELINE

OY. Yeah. It was in the room with the roller coaster and stuff. I took it out of a glowing corpse in the haunted castle.

JESSIE

When did you go into the haunted castle?

MADELINE

Mmmmmmm, between the cotton candy and the tea cup ride.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

You ate zumthing in vun of zese higgledy piggledy rooms? I am not sure zis is ze best idea, mein Kapitänin.

MADELINE

Whoa there, sausage boy, "mein" what?

DR THEO

"Kapitänin" tripped you up, did it?

COLIN

Dear god. It's not another olive situation, is it? No offense, but Captain Madeline with laser eyes ...

JESSIE

Jesus.

MADELINE

Oh, sweet! First I'll sign my name on the side of the Oz 9.

JESSIE

Of course you will.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Let's all keep a close eye on our feckless leader for a few days, shall we? More sandwiches?

All: expressions of disgust throughout.

JOE

Ground turkey-

DR THEO

That sounds suspiciously normal.

JOE

Wait for it: ground turkey *beak*.

DR THEO

Ah. Of course.

JOE

With Welches' grape chutney and CHEESE SAUCE.

JESSIE

All right, get over it, Velveeta boy. Where'd you end up?

JOE

Yeah, not really sure. Felt like a 20th century small town in Iowa, Ohio, something midwesty. It was heaven.

DR THEO
Well, that's concerning.

COLIN
Why is that?

DR THEO
Ask Ray Bradbury.

OLIVIA
I watched Pluto add Jolly Rancher soft
chews to his mutton and honey
sandwich, and the sandwich machine
shifted him mid-stream.

COLIN
Astounding. He took a disgusting
misdemeanor of a sandwich and made it
a felony.

OLIVIA
Point is, COLON, it appears you can
have some control of the destination
by amending the condiments.

JULIE
You mean, like, scrape off the butter
and you end up in the compost room
instead of the old vaudeville theater?

MADELINE
We have a vaudeville theater?

JESSIE
We have butter? (give a few
pronunciations here, plz, with ts and
without)

JULIE
Complete with animatronic actors. It's
like being in a Chuck E Cheese only
with less talent and twice the
salmonella.

OLIVIA
Before you all go galloping off to
watch giant rodents play stringed
instruments, what was on the sandwich
that got you there?

JULIE
Ehhhhhh, ham with caramel corn gravy.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Well, that's horrifying.

JULIE
You have no idea. I think I actually passed out briefly.

JOE
Did you find anything in the Chuck E Cheese?

JULIE
Yeah. Sort of. I did a karaoke number and was awarded a golden spatula.

JOE
Show me.

SFX: Faint shimmery sound.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT
What an odd device.

COLIN
What's it for?

GREG
It's a spatula.

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT
(still clueless)
Mmmmm hnnnnnn. And?

GREG
I was a bomb and now I'm a zebra and even I know what a spatula is for.

JESSIE
Hang on, though. Isn't *this* a spatula as well?

GREG
That's the scrapey kind. This here's the flippy kind.

COLIN
Wiggy once went to a fancy dress party as a member of the middle class. I

think he had one of those. He mainly used it for flipping poorly secured toupees. Lady Foppingglands was furious.

JULIE

Just think: Earth is now free of these people.

DR THEO

Yet another reason for wishing I'd stayed. (pause) Is that your hand?

JULIE

It appears to be. Wow! I'm happily married; how did that even happen?

DR THEO

Apparently I exude hormones like an uncapped fire hydrant.

JOE

ABOUT THE SPATULA.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Is it just another random element on a ship packed to the gills with randomness?

JOE

Who knows? But let's note it on the spreadsheet.

JESSIE

Maybe it's a giant game of Cluedo! Like, "Janitor Joe in the haunted castle with the flippy spatula"!

JOE

But doing what? Not committing murder, surely.

JESSIE

Dunno. You're pretty shift.

GREG

Was the screwdriver glowing too?

COLIN

It was, now that I think about it.

GREG

You didn't think we might ought to know that?

COLIN

I have laser eyes, Greg. I never know if the glow is the object or my eyes about to obliterate whatever-it-is in a stream of photons.

GREG

Hang on: does that happen??

OLIVIA

Mrs S? Anything to report?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Let's see... my Nutella, spaghetti sauce, and herring on a croissant landed me in a barber shop. A hospital might have been more useful, but still, I did get a trim.

DR THEO

I thought you were looking particularly dapper today.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I thank you. They do do a nice blow-out. Which I followed up with one of my own. Damn sandwiches.

JESSIE

Anything glimmering in the hair chair?

MRS SHEFFIELD

These sunglasses do rather de-glow most things, unfortunately, but the animatronic barber was quite insistent I take a pair of scissors with me. And a lolly. I do hope the lolly wasn't important... Or glowing...

JOE

PEOPLE. You've got to stop eating things.

MRS SHEFFIELD

As I'd just eaten a fish-and-nutella sarnie, a wad of crunchy artificial strawberry on a stick didn't seem

particularly threatening.

JOE

Anyone else? Captains?

GREG

Me. I had a few.

DR THEO

You don't eat the sandwiches.

GREG

Sure I do. Partly out of curiosity and partly because I keep hoping my scientists will come back on line.

DR THEO

And have they?

GREG

I hear a whisper from time to time, but even that's probably just wishful thinking.

DR THEO

My condolences, Greg. I know what it's like to lose the company of intelligent, reasoned, scientific minds with whom conversation can roam both broadly and deeply. (warning) Julie....

JULIE

Sorry! I can't control it!

GREG

Uhhhhh.... Thank you? I think?

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Gregory, perhaps you could enlighten us as to what was on your sandwich?

GREG

Two slices of dark rye. A pretty thick slatherin' of carmelized coffee grounds. Extra mayo. Pimento loaf - at least I hope those speckles were pimentos - a thin layer of whipped topping. That's it.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Well. As we have the assemblages here for a sandwich, I suggest we make a few of our own and see where they take us, mmmmmmm?

JULIE

We should start simple. Establish a baseline. Bread and butter.

DR THEO

Yes, and add one condiment at a time. My god, the possible variations and iterations are endless. Julie, I really must insist. You're getting olive oil all over my shirt.

JULIE

Stand on the other side of the counter, then!

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, it's really not helping the rest of us concentrate.

COLIN

Oh, for heaven's sake. I'll start.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Are you able to make a sandwich?

COLIN

Leet's been gone for ages. How exactly did you think I've survived?

GREG

He left you a stack in the freezer with your name on them.

COLIN

And I've studied them carefully.

SFX: Bread wrapper, opening a container of butter, etc.

COLIN CON'T

Must you all watch so closely? (sounds of irritation with the process)

JESSIE

I've never seen someone struggle with butter quite so much.

COLIN

It's cold! And tearing holes in the bread -- how exactly do you stop that happening?

MADELINE

Use a vegetable peeler.

COLIN

What? One must "peel" vegetables?

LADY NIBBLE BISCUIT

Don't ask, Horace. It's barbaric. Like flaying them alive.

MADELINE

If you use a vegetable peeler, you get super thin slices of butter that melt faster and spread more easily. Here.

SFX: She hands him a vegetable peeler.

COLIN

What an odd device.

JESSIE

Have you ever even been in a kitchen?

JULIE

Just make the sandwich! Greg could do it faster!

GREG

I am both offended and flattered.

JULIE

Sorry, you're welcome.

COLIN

Ha! Triumph!

DR THEO

Two slices of bread with butter on all four surfaces. You have led a sheltered life.

COLIN

Envy is unattractive, Dr. Th- Oh, who am I kidding. You even make THAT work.

SFX: Rumble as a sandwich machine appears. A laser blast

evaporates the sandwich from Colin's hands. **Shouts and alarm from everyone.** The machine folds up and disappears.

COLIN

What the hell? That damn thing nearly took my hand off! And it took my sandwich!

MADELINE

Welcome to the receiving end of your stupid laser eyes.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I suspected as much.

GREG

Of course you did.

MRS SHEFFIELD

AHEM. Apparently, the machines want to dictate where we go and when. I suspect we now know why the Albatros was so concerned about illicit condiments.

GREG

We've been making and eating sandwiches for ages. Why didn't all this getting yanked around the 9 happen before?

JOE

I want to test a theory.

MADELINE

I'm hungry.

JOE

Ooooooaaaaay, Captain Madeline, how about you grab the bread and fix up whatever you're hankering for.

SFX: Sounds of rustling bread bag, various jars being opened and condiments spooned out. Also typing.

DR THEO

(aside) Joe, while I appreciate your efforts to put someone else at the helm of the Oz 9, getting a sandwich machine to debilitate her-

JOE

(aside) Doc, sound reasoning though that may be, that's not my aim. I think the reason Colin got fired on was because he WASN'T hungry.

GREG

You're not serious. You're putting horseradish on that?

MADELINE

"Whatever you're honking for," Greg. Those were my instructions.

GREG

Not exactly.

JULIE

OK, I got horseradish, chutney, grape jam, and wasabi. I also threw up in my mouth a little bit.

MADELINE

Do you mind? I'm trying to eat.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, I imagine "trying" is the operative word. Though I must admit, that's looking quite ... tempting.

MADELINE

Is it? 'Cause I kinda lost my yen here.

JOE

Hand it over. Let's see what happens.

Madeline hands it over. SFX: Mrs S takes a bite. Pause while **she chews**.

GREG

Nothing.

MRS SHEFFIELD

(mouth full) Bloody disgusting, Captain.

MADELINE

Yeah, well "dobrou chut" as the Japanese say.

JULIE
Japanese?

COLIN
(sighs) It's almost like having Leet
back. Only with less shoe-polishing
and breakfast-making.

SFX: Rumble of machine appearing and abruptly taking Mrs S
away. **Mrs S shouts, briefly, and is gone. Gasps and shouts
from others.**

MADELINE
Whoa. Where'd she go?

GREG
I'm gonna assume that's hypothetical.

MADELINE
YOU'RE hypothe...saurus.

GREG
Mmmmm hnnnnnn.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2
So?

NARRATOR
Go ahead. It's probably your turn.

N2
Meanwhile....

PIPI'S BUNK

This is a new space we've not been in before. I feel like it
would be a place a bat would be comfortable. Maybe distant
dripping, vaguely cave-like. SFX: Ambience, quiet snoring,
and then suddenly the machine barfs up a startled Mrs S.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Goodness!

SFX: At the sound of her voice, a flock (herd? school?
colony!) of bats fly out and off to somewhere else.

PIPI
(from somewhere above)
Oh, hello, Mrs Sheffield.

MRS SHEFFIELD

AUGH! (a tad embarrassed to be caught off guard) Oh, hello, Pipi; all right?

SFX: Wings, Pipi lands nearby.

PIPI

Very well.

SFX: Pipi losing balance and falling over.

PIPI CON'T

Apart from the balance issue. As you were expelled from a sandwich machine, I assume you didn't come here voluntarily.

MRS SHEFFIELD

You are correct. We're testing condiments in the kitchen. I've never been in your bunk before.

PIPI

You are, in fact, my first guest. If you don't count the bat colony.

MRS SHEFFIELD

There are a lot of them.

PIPI

Hence the industrial aromatherapy machine and the deluxe roomba. Guano is not for the faint of heart or the sensitive of nose.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I wasn't aware there was a cave on the ship. Wherever does it lead?

PIPI

Honestly, I'm not sure. It's bit of a tight fit for my wing span, and I don't walk well, so I haven't explored it much.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Do I see something glowing down there?

PIPI

Interesting. I don't see anything.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I do rather think I've been summoned here to collect it, whatever it is. Care to join me? I spy a rather convenient wheelbarrow; I'd be delighted to give you a lift.

PIPI

Yes, all right.

SFX: Pipi lands a bit awkwardly in the wheelbarrow. As they wander deeper into the cave, their voices can become a bit more echoey. Sound of squeaky wheel on a gravel surface. They move in silence for a moment.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Is it just me, or do I note a frisson of electricity betwixt you and good Doctor Theo?

PIPI

You aren't much for small talk, eh?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Apologies. Was that too personal?

PIPI

It's all right. I admit to being ... drawn to Dr. Theo, but then, isn't everyone? Can I trust it's my feelings and not just his pheromones?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Aren't we all the victim of pheromones, ultimately? Or, one might say, the "grateful recipient"?

PIPI

Perhaps.

They walk in silence for a moment.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I must say, however, you appear to be the only person Dr Theo responds in kind to. I rather hoped he and Leet might find their way to one another, but sadly that sapling didn't have time to grow before being uprooted.

PIPI

I wouldn't have pegged you for a romantic, Mrs Sheffield.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Oh, I keep my feelings close to my chest, my dear. And my nunchucks and several false mustaches. Also a Guinness. It settles faster at body temperature.

PIPI

That's a lot of information. But it does explain the fruit flies.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, might I just borrow one of your bat friends from time to time?

PIPI

I'll ask around.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Congratulations, Pipi!

PIPI

Sorry?

MRS SHEFFIELD

You've quite expertly dodged the question. As nimble in conversation as you are in flight.

PIPI

I barely know the doctor. I find him...intellectually stimulating.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Very well, Jane Austen, but we'll be coming back to that. And here's my glowy thing.

PIPI

What is that?

MRS SHEFFIELD

A jar of (SFX: slight shimmery sound as she picks it up. Then she shakes it) dice?

SFX: She unscrews the lid and shakes them out on the cavern

floor. There are perhaps 20 die in there. (might get help from Tim or Kevin to make this sound effect!)

PIPI

Careful!

MRS SHEFFIELD

I doubt they're explosive, dear.

PIPI

I'm not worried about them exploding, but generally throwing dice makes things happen in a game. And wasn't it you who theorized that might be what all this is?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Mmmmm, good point. I'll just gather these up and pop them safely back into the jar, then, shall I, before we're attacked by Orcas or something?

PIPI

Orcs. Orcas are the dolphins.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Whales, I think?

PIPI

Actually, both. Dolphins are a subset of *odontoceti*, or toothed whales.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Goodness, you and Dr. Theo are a match made in hhhhhappy days, nothing seems to be coming to get us!

SFX: A sandwich machine appears, grabbing **Mrs Sheffield, who hollers in surprise**. She's sucked in and disappears.

PIPI

Whoa! Oh hell. She's gone, and I'm in a wheelbarrow. Hello? Anyone?
HELLOOOOOOOO??? Too tight to fly.
Guess I'm perambulating.

SFX: flops gracelessly out of wheelbarrow, starts walking back.

PIPI CON'T

Ugh. Even *I'm* creeped out.

SFX: the sound of her crawling fades away into the distance. Moment of silence, then we hear **Mrs S expelled, shouting,** from the machine somewhere else.

SOMEWHERE ELSE

SFX: lots of breathing and gurgling.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ah. Sounds like this must be the pod bay on the 113th floor Colin was rattling on about. (complaining) Gated Galaxies has more money than God AND the Beatles, they couldn't spring for an occasional light?

SFX: She claps her hands twice.

MRS SHEFFIELD CON'T

Well, that didn't work.

SFX: Rustling and moaning as the sound of her clapping awakes the zombies.

MRS SHEFFIELD CON'T

Crap.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

Hooo boy. She's in more trouble than a Yankee turning up his nose at a sweet tea in Mississippi at the annual Nestea Festival.

NARRATOR

Now, hang on, Two. We can't see what's going on in there any better than she can.

N2

Did you hear all that moaning? Those are zombies, sure as I'm wearing white on Easter Sunday.

NARRATOR

Look at who woke up all home-spun.

N2

I had grits for breakfast. Nice and thick, with sharp cheddar and sausage-

NARRATOR

Two.

N2

Yeah?

NARRATOR

Please look at my face and describe –
IN BRIEF – what there gives you the
idea that I'm interested?

Pause.

N2

Nothing.

NARRATOR

Indeed. Credits?

N2

(sullen) Fine. You've been listening
to:

Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield
Bonnie Brantley as former Captain
Jessie and Lady Nibble Biscuit
David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae

NARRATOR

Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie
Eric Perry as Dr von Haber Zetzer and
Joe
Shannon Perry as Captain Madeline and
Olivia

N2

Kevin Hall as Greg
Tim Sherburn as Colin
Sarah Rhea Werner as Pipi

NARRATOR

Kyle Jones is your Narrator 2, and
I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley, your
Narrator.

N2

Our music is by John Faley, and our
artwork is by Lucas Elliott.

NARRATOR

Luuuuuuuucas Elllllllliooooooot. Still

fun, even sober. Sarah Golding is our dialogue editor, and Chrisi Talyn Saje is our sound designer. Oz 9 is "written" – in finger quotes – by Shannon Perry.

N2

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NARRATOR

We're out, Space Monkeys. Keep reaching for the stars but don't trip over the blight piston bottles!

SFX: They begin walking away, voices fading but audible.

N2

What even are those?

NARRATOR

No clue.

N2

Should we go check?

NARRATOR

Why would we do that?

N2

They could be useful.

NARRATOR

Name one useful thing you've found aboard this ship.

Pause.

N2

Fair.

NARRATOR

Mmmm hmmm. Lights!

SFX: Click.