

episode 92: A Midsummer Night's ... Whatever the hell
this is

Shannon Perry

OZ 9 MIDSUMMER BONUS - THE BIOSWAMP

NARRATOR

Amidst the foul and fetid winds of the bioswamp do we tod ay set our scene. Alack, for our writer's gaze hath fallen upon a once much-used and oft-curs'ed Riverside Shakespeare, and there twas an idea born.

N2

Tis a well-trod path and far from original, but English majors must perforce English maj, and so like Icarus, we all now build our wings and join her in her flight of fancy.

NARRATOR

Like foolish Icarus, we do not fear to fly too close to the sun. In our case, because the brightest things in this script are Bonnie's sun drawings which she, like the monks of old, hath doodled in the margins.

N2

With the 4th wall now reduced to grit and rubble, we draw aside the curtain upon our scene as star-crossed lovers tangle in the affairs of the fae folk, and vice versa, and mischief abounds.

NARRATOR

It is the hour of dusk in the bioswamp, and the fairies are busy lengthening the shadows, quieting the robin-ishy and meadowlarksy-type birds and awakening the owlsh and sort-of-nightingaley in their turn.

N2

Not the egrets, though.

NARRATOR

T'would take a hammer to calm an egret. Hither comes the fair and comely Dr. Theo, whose voice doth charm all manner of rough beast, with the exception of the once-captain Jessie.

DR. THEO

O night both fierce and foul in which
 dark deeds oft are done, I welcome
 thee now to cover my blushes and cool
 my heated brow. For she loves me not.
 Fair Pipistrelle, it is your hour, for
 the sun, o'er jealous of your beauty,
 hath condemned you to the darkling
 hours. Whyfore then, do you not come
 to me here, wing' ed nymph of night,
 for you have captured my heart as sure
 as you [waving an arm in front of his
 face] capture these tiny bugs you dine
 upon?

SFX: hooves approach

GREG

[singing to himself]

DR. THEO

But hark, who comes to steal my
 solace? I shall hide me here behind
 this ... whatever the hell this is.

SFX: rustling swamp plants as he hides

GREG

Heard I some voice? Grrrrrrr. A
 mushroom thief, tis sure, come to make
 short shrift of my nightly labors and
 steal away my prize. [calls out]
 Knave, hath thou no morels? For I am
 of good character, and morels have I
 plenty though none for you. [to
 himself] I must away and guard my
 treasure; my hard work is for no
 other's pleasure!

SFX: gallops away

DR. THEO

What care I for your feeble fungi,
 fellow? What care I for any worldly
 good when love hath extended a
 stealthy leg, tripped me and pitched
 me o'er, and stomped on my heart like
 a clumsy maid flattening her partner's
 toes at her first Gavotte?

NARRATOR

Many hours hath this noble surgeon
whiled away with lamentations and
renting of garments, though not near
enough renting, for said garments are
still mostly whole, which is annoying.

N2

So vigorous his lamenting that e'en
the fae folk have taken notice and do
spy and playfully pelt him with
fewnets, wormcast, spraints, and
coprolite for his pains.

NARRATOR

Once more through a wormhole pass'ed
we, so our crew are beguiled and shed
their daily skins to wear another -
hark how the jolly and sausage-scented
Dr von Haber Zetzer doth come in the
likeness and garb of the fairy King,
pursuing his cool and scornful Queen.

N2

We're really gonna need to provide a
transcript on this one.

NARRATOR

We always do.

N2

With footnotes.

NARRATOR

Let's make that your job.

SFX: Let's mark the entrances and exits of our "fairies" -
Mrs S, Dr. vHZ, & Olivia - with some sort of shimmery sound.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Follow me not, tyrant of the heart,
you'll make merry no more with mine.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Tarry, rash wanton! Am I not thy lord?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ha! Pullest thee the other one. If
thou wishest to lord over someone, you

would do best to get a dog. Did I not spy thee "strumming thy lute" with a bar wench? And I mean that metaphorically.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

I heard the fingerquotes, *danke*.
Schiesse! Fair queen of the sprites, I would despair did I not see in thy jealousy some faint shadow of love.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Get thee over thyself.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Come now. Sit with me upon this...whatever the hell this is, and let me spin thee a tale of woe so heavy with trials and pains as to soften thy heart.

MRS SHEFFIELD

You couldst not soften this heart with a meat tenderizer. I myself hath daily soaked it in the acid and vinegar of grief and tears, which only served to toughen its fibres against thee. Thou hast done me dirty.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Tell me how I might win thee back again?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Show me some understanding of love. Nay, pick me not a flower out of a pile of alligator droppings, yuck, put that down. Do some service unto love, aid Cupid in his labours, not for thy own sake but to attend on love.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

On this ship? What service could I render love here, for certain no one would desire these dumpkofs to make more copies of themselves?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Doth not the swoony Dr. Theo, frozen here whilst we speak, torture the very trees with his protestations of love?

Thou mightest start there.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

And if I do him such service as to bring his belov'ed bat winging to his arms, what then, Lady? Wilt thou admit me then to thy heart....and thy bedchamber? Mmm? Mmm?

MRS SHEFFIELD

One thing at a time, Romeo.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Wrong play.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Watch it.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Sorry.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Wing'ed Pipistrelle's heart is already a fair way down the path to love; a well-placed nudge shall set her feet a'right. See thou do well the task I've set thee and not fuckest it up. Fairies, attend on me here and witness the King's oath: to bring love to scientist and bat, for no service can be better set than that!

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Auf Wiedersehen, mein Queen. When you awake, the deed shall be done!

SFX: The Queen buggers off.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

OLIFIA!!

NARRATOR

So the fairy king hath promised to beguile the hearts' compasses of both Pipistrelle and Dr. Theo so their true north is truly set at one another.

N2

But how is such a piece of business to be undertaken? Forsooth, both are shy as the cub reporter whose first story

is set at a nudist colony.

NARRATOR

No doubt the king will burden his favorite fae, the puckish Olivia, with the task. Hither comes she now.

N2

How can you tell? She's digital again.

NARRATOR

Narrator the Second, hush thy uncivil tongue and just go with it.

N2

K.

OLIVIA

You bellowed?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Ach, pixie, thou didst take thy time.

OLIVIA

Oh, bollocks. Another bloody wormhole. It's a good thing this is audio; those tights are doing you no favors.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Jest on thy own time, sprite, I have work for you.

OLIVIA

Ah! Some mischief? Something good this time, eh? Enough pulling stools out from under unsuspecting wenches' bottoms. Borrrring.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

No mischief now, we do the very work of Cupid himself.

OLIVIA

That lazy little bastard? No, thank you. And next time you see him, could you remind him to reposition his sash? I don't need to see all his dangly bits, thanks.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Wilt thou not catch the spirit of the

game and join us in some merry sport?

OLIVIA

Do I have to sound like a twat?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Fine. No.

OLIVIA

Right. What's up?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Divine Clara, Queen of the Fae, hath set me this task: to woo fair Pipistelle in the guise of good Dr. Theo, and thus win her to his heart.

OLIVIA

Can't you just throw some little bugs on him? She's proper fond of gnats.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

A romantic are thee not, Olivia.

OLIVIA

All right, all right. What do you want me to do?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Find you some love-in-idleness flower and dribble 'pon the sleeping eyelid of the lady, so when next she wake, and cast eyes upon him, her heart will know the true depth of her affection for the loquacious logician.

OLIVIA

"Loquacious logician"?! That's the pot calling the kettle wordy if ever I heard it. Look, the chances of there being that flower in this swamp are about 1-to-are you fricking kidding me, and even if I find something similar, it'll likely turn her into a newt. And I'm not gobbing into her eye, neither.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

What witterest thou on about? I didn't tell you to spit in her eye.

OLIVIA

Oooo, you did! "Dribble 'pon her sleeping eyelid." Sound familiar?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Got in himmel, *dribble the juice of the flower*, you tiny- [thinks better of it]

OLIVIA

[warning] Go on....

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Enough! I am becalmed. Just figure it out. Ooo, and whilst thou ist at thy labours, save a bit of dribble for my Queen, and see she falls in love with something funny. I want to put it on Tik Tok.

OLIVIA

Anything else? It's not like I have a ship to run or anything.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

No. I am sated. Off and see my will is done ere break of day.

OLIVIA

Or what, exactly?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Could you let me be king for five seconds?

OLIVIA

Fine, go for it.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

See my will is done ere break of day, sprite, or such woe befall thee as... eh... oh, forget it. Just go. Farewell!

SFX: King exits.

OLIVIA

Righty ho. Love-in-idleness flower, eh? Seriously, the king has his noble head up his royal arse if he thinks there's any of that 'round here.

SFX: Greg approaches

GREG

(huge yawn) Faith, many an hour have I
stood guard o'er my pale crop, but
sleep creeps along my limbs like giant
sloths, and I am near to falling from
the weight. I shall secret myself
behind ... whatever the hell this is,
and rest till the cock crow again.

OLIVIA

Don't know what cock you're counting
on, mate, but whilst you're snoozing,
I think I might just check out your
mushroom patch for something that'll
work.

SFX: Olivia exits.

NARRATOR

For the last six pages hath poor Dr.
Theo worn out his time, frozen, still,
and forgotten. Now, un-enchanted at
last as our middling scribe remembers
he's still standing there, he wakes.

N2

"Middling" seems generous.

NARRATOR

Can't argue. Hush.

DR. THEO

Have I been in a dream? My legs do
ache, and the moon is not where last I
left her in the sky. I must to bed,
but my chambers are far. I will rest
me here awhile and dream of my sweet
Pipistrelle.

N2

You know, in Shakespeare's day,
"awhile" and "Pipistrelle" would've
been close enough to count as a rhyme.

NARRATOR

TWO.

N2

Just sayin'. This isn't easy, you

know.

NARRATOR

Tis no tale that does not contain some
strife. So here comes another who
woo'd a wife.

N2

Did you say "would" a wife or "wooded"
a wife?

NARRATOR

That's the joke. It could be either.

N2

Oh. (pause) So, "comedy" is a pretty
loose term, then, right?

COLIN

(to himself) At night doth my heart
fly from my chest, and I follow it
here, to this rank and irksome swamp,
whence to cool my fruitless ardor in
this deep and murky water.

N2

Like taking a cold shower?

NARRATOR

Sounds like it.

COLIN

I shall no more set my heart at
anyone, for tis a recipe sure to yield
despair. Leet, Albatros, wife - all
have left me with no lover, spouse, or
friend.

OLIVIA

Who's this? Oh lord. Sorry, mate,
we're fresh out of potential
sweethearts. Unless Joe really swabs
your decks, I guess.

SFX: Julie calling from a distance.

JULIE

Allllllllbeeeeeert. Allllllllbeeeerrrrt!

OLIVIA

Oh, yeah. Julie's been a bit grievey

and mopey since Ben buggered off.
 Don't know about a love connection,
 but I reckon you both could use a
 friend.

SFX: Julie coming closer.

JULIE

Alllllllbeeeeeeert. Alllllllbeeeerrrt!
 Oh! What devilment is here?

COLIN

No devil but those bedeviled with
 insomnia. Pardon, fair lady; I intend
 no harm.

JULIE

(suspicious) Faith, tis a strange hour
 to be abroad for *honorable* purposes.

COLIN

And yet, here you are. And I.

JULIE

Fair.

COLIN

Are you she who nursemaids the
 alligrets?

JULIE

Define "nursemaid."

COLIN

No insult intended, lady; i'faith, I
 admire thee for thy bravery.

JULIE

Oh. Well. Then thou art kind despite
 thy stormy looks.

COLIN

You can see me?

JULIE

Thanks to the moon, tis not so dark.
 Art thou usually invisible?

COLIN

Uhhhhh...Maybe? In truth, this night
 confounds me. I am all of a fog, my

mind doth roll and swirl, and in
clouds covers truths which would be
plain in light of day. What bringst
thou here?

JULIE

Same. Though I am more of mist than
fog: my mind dampens joy and maketh
the grass all slippery.

COLIN

I... see.... What cause hath life
given you to seek solace here, in this
dank and dreary place?

JULIE

My true love paves a path amongst the
stars and cuts a course to home.

COLIN

Tis a deep cut, indeed.

JULIE

To the bone. And what of you? Why
preferest thou the stagnant swamp to
the warmth of hearth and home?

COLIN

My hearth and heart are cold, lady.
For there are none to stoke the fires
of either.

JULIE

Seek you warmth here? Faith, what
might do for firewood is as green and
sodden as ... Albert. And as likely to
ignite.

COLIN

I seek not the smoldering embers of
romance; a spark of friendship would
warm me through.

JULIE

And I. What hast thou there?

COLIN

Oh. A novel writ by a doctor I know.

JULIE

Tis a hefty tome.

COLIN
This is the first chapter.

JULIE
Wow.

COLIN
Wouldst thou sit beside me and read a page?

JULIE
Oh, uhhhhh. Wow. Be that the time? I should really-

COLIN
(interrupting) You mistake me, lady. I read it only for the drowsiness it inspires.

JULIE
Well, in that case....

SFX: Julie and Colin sit. Dr von Haber Zetzer appears.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Why do you tarry, sprite? Hath thou already completed thy task?

OLIVIA
Seriously, this part of the galaxy has more bloody wormholes than a pile of compost. I'm watching these two.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
More star-cros't lovers?

OLIVIA
Nah. Just two lonely people stumbling about in the dark.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Ach. Tis easier to keep a stumble from becoming a fall when there's someone at your side to catch you, eh?

OLIVIA
Look, I know where this is headed, and you're very sweet or something, but do you have any idea how much work I have on my plate right now?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Olifia....

OLIVIA
FINE. Back to the mushroom patch I go.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Tis meet they grow in a fairy ring,
eh?

OLIVIA
Oh yeah, that makes everything so.
much. better.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
A piece of cake be these two, for
already they drool and snore and slump
to the ground.

OLIVIA
Seriously, you couldn't put people to
sleep faster with that book if you hit
them over the head with it.

SFX: two shimmers as Olivia and Dr vHZ depart.

NARRATOR
As the fae folk quit the scene to tend
to their business, our fourth and
final character doth step, clumsily,
upon the stage.

PIPISTRELLE
Why do I linger? My appetite is sated,
my eyelids grow heavy for want of
sleep, and yet I remain in this dark
and restless place. My wings are
still, yet my fancy is full in flight,
imagining such things as I dare not
give voice to unless alone in the
dark.

SFX: Olivia shimmers back.

OLIVIA
Ooooo, gossip. Go on....

PIPISTRELLE
With my sonar, I may detect all manner
of hidden things, and yet am I
helpless to ping the depths of the

heart – mine own...or his.

OLIVIA

Ah, hell. Just gimme five minutes,
will ya? I'm working on it.

PIPISTRELLE

In love, I am truly a bat: I am upside
down and folded tight; every step is
clumsy and near to a fall, but when I
am beside him, my heart hath wings and
is playful, spinning loops and soaring
to new heights. Yet, is this love or
only that magic by which he beguiles
us all?

OLIVIA

Does it matter?

PIPISTRELLE

And truer to my purpose, what of him?
He holds his feelings so close in
check as to make a prisoner of his
heart. Truth, he is harder to read
than his own novel.

OLIVIA

Pffft. You've clearly never tried.

PIPISTRELLE

Aye me, I would snatch his love out
the air if it flew by me, but I am a
bat, not a woodpecker, and cannot pry
it loose from such stern stuff as his
heart be.

SFX: rustle of Pipi perching after Olivia's "just lie down."

OLIVIA

Yeah, all right. I'm on it. Just lie
down or oh, yeah, hang upside down,
whatever. Gonna be tricky stuffing a
mushroom down you at that angle, but
we'll get it sorted.

NARRATOR

Night hath rounded the corner towards
morning, and the fae folk, their
labours concluded, attend upon their
queen and prepare her for slumber.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Duckweed! Wooly Sedge!

Editors: I'd like Sarah to use effects to differentiate the fairies a little. Can we make that work without messing up the sound design process?

DUCKWEED
Ready!

WOOLY SEDGE
And I! Here! I'm here! How may I be of service? Is there mischief afoot? A jape, a jest, a merry caper?

MRS SHEFFIELD
Wooly Sedge, calm thyself before I calm thee with a hammer. Horsetail! Cattail!

HORSETAIL
Ready!

CATTAIL
And I!

MRS SHEFFIELD
Wools! Step back a pace, you're getting hair in my mouth.

WOOLY SEDGE
Sorry!

MRS SHEFFIELD
I shall lie me here, atop ... whatever the hell this is. Peace, o'er love, is sweet and best. See that none come near to disturb my rest.

SFX: Dr. vHZ shimmers in.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
(softly) Olifia!

SFX: Olivia shimmers in.

OLIVIA
WHAT?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER
Shhhhh!! Lookest thee here, sprite. My lady sleeps. But she is attended by her fairies, dammit.

Big snore from Mrs Sheffield.

DUCKWEED

Right. She's out. Anyone want to raid
the swamp hooch and get lit?

WOOLY SEDGE

Ready! Me me me me! Let us quaff deep
and run amuck!

HORSETAIL

I'm in!

CATTAIL

And I!

SFX: Four shimmers as the fairies run off.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Excellent! See how soundly doth my
lady snooze upon this... what the hell
IS this thing, anyway?? Hath thou some
potion to anoint her brow and turn her
affection in a wholly unsuitable
direction?

OLIVIA

Couldn't you just apologize for the
bar wench and the ehhhh ... "lute
strumming"?

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Admit the truth? She'd roast my capons
and feed them to me. No, sprite, I
believe the truest way to win her back
is to trick her into loving a bug or
something and then humiliate her in
front of her servants.

SFX: Squelchy sound (maybe reminiscent of LBF's decongestant?) for the potion.

OLIVIA

Riiiiight. (SFX: Squelch) OK, anointed
with ointment. Anointment? That just
sounds wrong.

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

Go thee now, mischievous Olifia, and
find some base and vile creature.
Bring it here so 'tis the first thing
her eyes light upon when she awakes.

OLIVIA

Just so you know, this swamp is fresh
out of love-in-idleness flowers, so
I'm not entirely sure-

DR. VON HABER ZETZER

(interrupting, speaking to the
sleeping Queen) Fare thee well and
sleep thee well, my Queen, for
tomorrow hast thou a big day.

SFX: He shimmers off.

OLIVIA

Right. OK. Warning delivered and
ignored. As you do. I'm off to water a
few others, as per direction. Do you
have any idea how hard it is to juice
a mushroom?

SFX: Olivia shimmers off. Pause. Shimmers back. Squelches!
Also, Julie, I'll insert pauses; can you move Olivia's voice
in space so we get the idea that there's some distance
between them?

OLIVIA

Hang on, they're all scattered around
here. Right. A drop for you, Dr. Theo;
a dribble for you, Julie; some for
you, Mz Pipi; and the soggy dregs for
you, Colin. Now, don't all be looking
at each other when you wake up, or
we'll have some bonzo Weeping-Angels
scenario to sort out, and I'm tired.
AND I still have to go find something
for the Queen to get jiggy with.
Ooooo! Hang on, didn't I leave a zebra
here somewhere? Crap. I'm out of
potion. Welp, mate, looks like you get
a whole shroom. (grunty noises of
stuffing shroom down zebra throat)
Good luck!

SFX: She shimmers out. Pause. She shimmers back.

OLIVIA

Screw this, I'm not waiting for
morning.

SFX: Rooster

OLIVIA

Huh. I guess we do have a cock.

NARRATOR

And there our story we must conclude,
But lest you think our ending rude...

N2

A two-parter doth this be
So join us again in our revelry.

NARRATOR

Wilt the lovers and the friends

N2

Find their best and happy ends?
Or will Olivia, the Oz 9's own Puck,

NARRATOR

On purpose or by haps, up it fuck?
Thou hast been listening to...
David S Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae
Kevin Hall as Greg
Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield

N2

Eric Perry as Dr. von Haber Zetzer
Shannon Perry as Olivia
Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie
Tim Sherburn as Colin

NARRATOR

Sarah Rhea Warner as Pipistrelle
Bonnie Brantley as Duckweed, Wooly
Sedge, Horsetail, and Cattail.

N2

I'faith, I'm Kyle Jones, your Narrator
2,

NARRATOR

And whether thou likest it or not, I'm
Chris Nadolny Gourley, your Narrator.
Our music was writ by John Faley, and
our artwork from the fevered brow of
Lucas Elliott.

N2

Sarah Golding our dialogue did edit,
and Shannon Perry our sound design'ed.
Lamentably, our story of Oz 9, much

like the alien of old, did explode
from the head of Shannon Perry and
wreaketh much havoc upon a space ship.

NARRATOR

Know you now that Oz 9 doth hang about
with many a rascally and ill-reputed
tale amidst the Fable and Folly
Network.

N2

Go thee hence to fable and folly dot
com and there beguile your idle hours
with true delights.

NARRATOR

Until next time, gentle Monkeys of
Space, be well. Cast thine eyes
upwards to the stars, but try not to
step in the fewmets.