

OZ 9 EPISODE 108: PLAYING PLUTO'S ADVOCATE

Written by

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OZ 9 EPISODE 108 - NARRATORS' BRIDGE

NARRATOR

So, in the last episode, Two and I were busy renewing our vows to our craft and might have missed a plot point or two.

N2

But, this being the Oz 9, we're feeling safe in the knowledge that not much happened.

NARRATOR

One interesting thing that probably doesn't matter: just a few hours ago, the ship stopped looping in the giant rotations that have been our flight pattern pretty much since the beginning. We are now flying in what can only be described as a straight line.

N2

So of course, the entire crew is completely sea sick. Of course.

NARRATOR

Nauseated, wobble-limbed, and greener than kudzu bread, they've opted to lay off their duties for a day-

N2

as if they'd ever actually begun performing them...

NARRATOR

Indeed. And they wobbled their way to the bioswamp in search of a "natural" remedy.

THE BIOSWAMP - DAY - THE MEADOW

NARRATOR

Probably the nicest part of the ship, the meadow sits atop a large, high hill. It's covered in flowers, bathed in the light of whatever star is nearest, and full of bird song and other almost-recognizable noises.

N2

And today, it's full of crew members, stretched out and groaning, with a veritable pharmacopeia of mushroom stems and the leaves, roots, and berries of various plants surrounding them.

MARK: If there's any way to make this sound like a bunch of bodies littered around a meadow, that'd be great. **CAST** (except Greg): you should sound thoroughly sick. Please give Sarah some groans and mutterings.

JESSIE

Can someone pass the hemlock?

DR THEO

NO. How many times have I told you it's deadly poisonous?

JESSIE

See, your mistake here is thinking that's a bad thing.

DR THEO

First, nausea, vomiting, and intense abdominal pain. Then rapid, irregular heart beat or possibly very slow, irregular heart beat, muscle paralysis, excess saliva OR dry mouth-

JESSIE

Right. So, just a normal Tuesday then.

DR THEO

Pretty much. Apart from the actual death.

MADELINE

Hang on. I think I'm feeling better.

JULIE

Really? Which mushroom did you eat?

MADELINE

Oh, wait. Never mind. I think I just died for a second. Everything's still horrible.

MRS SHEFFIELD

How much longer until Colin is out of the healer pod? I mean, how long can it take to remove one little body tag? I have dibs when it's free.

GREG

I'm sure they're working as fast as they can.

JULIE

Why aren't you down here with the rest of us?

GREG

Internal gyroscopes. I have a system of spin balance machines that calculate product of inertia and realign my perception to accommodate for changes in centrifugal forces.

MADELINE

Air bearing spindle?

GREG

Yes. How the hell do you know that?

MADELINE

Nice. Less noise, thanks to the constant clean. Small runout, too.

GREG

Is anyone else hearing this?

DONNA

Hearing what? All's I hear is the ringing in my ears, like the bells of Saint Ingvist.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

I haf taken a bit of serum from one of my experiments.

DONNA

And?

DR VON HABER ZETZER

I appear to have re-invented cottage cheese. Vis notes of charcoal.

Groans and disgust sounds, plz, **CREW**.

JULIE

Ugh, doc. Is it necessary to share that right now?

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Perhaps not, but my body is ... off-gassing ze odors, rather like a new leather couch.

DR THEO

Speaking as one down wind of you, "new leather couch" is not the description I'd have chosen.

JULIE

Is everyone keeping notes of what they ate and what the effects were?

JESSIE

Not exactly, but I'm keeping the vomit piles separate for easier testing.

MADELINE

Uuuuuuugh, Jessie.

JESSIE

It's the best I got, MadPants. Take it or leave it.

Sounds of **Dr. Theo**, gently snoring. A distant rustle.

JOE

Hey, now.

A very nauseated "Jesus" from **everyone**.

JOE (CONT'D)

Dr. Theo's nodded off again. Somebody give him a poke, quick.

JESSIE

I cannae raise my arm.

JOE

Fine. But the spiders are waking, and you're closest.

JESSIE

Hell's ever-clangin' bells. DOC! Wake up!

Snorts as **Dr Theo** returns to consciousness.

DR THEO  
Dammit, Jessie!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Needs must, Doctor. You're the only  
thing keeping the spiders at bay.

DR THEO  
Curse my natural charm and  
magnetism!

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Yes, well, the good news is, this  
may help us more easily acclimate  
to our new home.

MADELINE  
Yeah. Thank jeebus planets don't  
spin.

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Ehhh... oh... my heavens. I reserve  
the right to be more shocked by  
that when I don't feel so ill.

Pipistrelle flies in.

PIPISTRELLE  
Here you all are!

Hello-type groaning.

DR VON HABER ZETZER  
Ve are seeking zum relief from ze  
change in our motions.

PIPISTRELLE  
Ah, yes. Human brains are slow to  
adjust.

JULIE  
Yeah, well, speaking of human  
brains, how's Colin?

PIPISTRELLE  
Still working on it.

MRS SHEFFIELD  
Dibs! Remember: I called dibs when  
the healer is free.

Bob enters.

BOB

Working on what? Good morning, crew and crewettes.

GREG

I feel like "crew" is pretty gender neutral.

BOB

Spoken like a true member of the patriarchy.

**Greg** - some sputtering in indignation, pls.

MADELINE

Are we on track to Earthish?

MRS SHEFFIELD

We did NOT agree on "Earthish," Captain.

MADELINE

Well, we're certainly not calling it "Gelatin."

MRS SHEFFIELD

Galene! The goddess of calm seas, oft invoked in stormy weather by frightened sailors.

MADELINE

I don't get the connection.

MRS SHEFFIELD

So sayeth the storm.

BOB

Sorry to interrupt the weather report, but I wanted to give you an update on progress. Ehhhh.... Anyone seen Colin recently?

DR THEO

We have not. Are you unable to locate him?

BOB

Just a little issue with his body tag. It appears his olive powers are starting to ... erode somewhat.

DR VON HABER ZETZER

Zis is not possible.

BOB

I'm afraid so, Doc. He must've overstressed his laser eyes fighting the spiders, because he's blind as a-

PIPISTRELLE

Go on....

BOB

Whoops. Pardon my anatomically and politically incorrect slip there, Miss Pipi. Anyway, he's blind.

Nauseated, fake gasps from **everyone**.

BOB (CONT'D)

Ehhhh.... Speaking of spiders,

MRS SHEFFIELD

Were we?

BOB

*Speaking of spiders*, how are you all here and the spiders are over there? Not attacking?

Pause.

DR THEO

Apparently, I-

DONNA

(hastily interrupting) No clue.  
(pause) You sound disappointed.

BOB

Not at all! Relieved, that's what I am. Completely ... relieved....

MRS SHEFFIELD

As are we. Perhaps you could give us that progress update now?

BOB

Update? Oh, surely! Uh... we're ... not there yet.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Entirely worth the wait, thank you, Robert. We're all a tad queasy from the change in rotation, so perhaps you could leave us to our misery?



BOB

Mmmmmmm? I'm not sure you're safe here. Maybe everyone should head to their bunk until we arrive-

PIPISTRELLE

Oh, that seems a bit overzealous. Greg and I are fine. We'll keep an eye on the spiders and evacuate the crew if necessary.

BOB

Oh. Eh. Righty ho. Guess I'll just ... go back to the Bridge then. Bob out.

MADELINE

Is he-

PIPISTRELLE

(a little overly loud) I've been studying Jessie's mushroom book, and I think I've identified a species that will help.

JESSIE

What you wittering on about? There's naught there for curing the boaks. Plenty for causing 'em, though.

PIPISTRELLE

(still a little artificially loud) Nothing for settling a stomach, no. But there is one for BPPV.

JESSIE

What's that when it's at home?

MADELINE

(mumbling) Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo. Oh, THAT'S what benign means.

GREG

What the hell? Did anyone hear that?

PIPISTRELLE

(raised voice, still) It stands for Be- uhhhhh... Bertie's paroxysmal positional vertigo.

(MORE)

PIPISTRELLE (CONT'D)

(still loud) What you're experiencing is not exactly the same thing, but I think the mushroom will help. *Let's go to the cave.*

JULIE

Can't you bring some to us?

Moans of agreement.

PIPISTRELLE

(louder) Unfortunately Bob won't be able to help us there, as the cave walls block his sensors.

JESSIE

(catching on) Damn! That's too bad. Let's go, Crew. Last one there's a keechie haggis. Ah hell. I just made myself sick.

MADELINE

Right. Everybody up.

Groaning and bitching from the **Crew** as they stand. The spiders also start to move.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Theo, dear, the spiders are ... unfolding.

DR THEO

Yes, I see that.

JESSIE

Well, tell 'em not to!

DR THEO

I can't actually *spea*k to them. My presence seems to calm them, that's all. As long as I'm still, they're still.

JULIE

So maybe we leave you here?

DR THEO

Ah. Yes. That might be the wisest course of action.

GREG

I can carry a few folks, but it's gonna be a bumpy ride.

JULIE  
I'll take a lift.

GREG  
OK, but if you're gonna be sick,  
watch the mane. I just washed it.

JESSIE  
Shift over, Jules; I'm coming  
aboard.

**Groaning and grumbling** as the crew depart for the caves.

DR THEO  
Aren't you accompanying them,  
Donna?

DONNA  
In a minute. You were awful quick  
to stay behind.

DR THEO  
I have no desire to be a guinea pig  
for Jessie's "research."

DONNA  
Oh, sure, sure.

Pause for a moment.

DR THEO  
If you're concerned about me,  
Donna, I assure you, I'm quite  
safe. You can go.

DONNA  
Oh yah, no, I'm not worried about  
you.

Another pause.

DR THEO  
Then why are you still here?

DONNA  
I'm just thinking... back when we  
were all webbed up-

DR THEO  
Mmmmmmm?

DONNA  
You came in swinging that novel.

DR THEO

Yes. I hadn't yet realized that I could calm them.

DONNA

I sure heard a lot of thumping, but the web over my eyes was pretty thin. Didn't see much actual contact. Mostly you swinging and them thumping their legs together.

DR THEO

What exactly are you accusing me of, Donna?

DONNA

Oh, I'm sure there's nothing to accuse you of. Just a strange set of actions, like a "deke" in hockey.

DR THEO

I'm not familiar.

DONNA

Short for "decoy." It's a way of drawing your opponent out of position. You pretend you're going one way, then shift direction, real quick-like.

DR THEO

I'll take your word for it. If you don't mind, Donna, talking is not helping my nausea.

DONNA

You betcha. Guess I'll go see what the crew found in the cave.

She gets up and walks away, humming the Minnesota Wild fight song. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb1SHuPXTvs>)

DR THEO

Cingwin! Take her off the board.

One spider rises and follows Donna.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

What just happened?

NARRATOR

I think Dr. Theo just sicced one of the spiders on Donna.

N2

OK, that's what I thought. What's going on here?

NARRATOR

I have no idea.

#### GREG'S MUSHROOM CAVE

Everyone's crammed in and bitching at each other. **EVERYONE** some general conversation we can use to create noise until Madeline yells to shut up.

PIPISTRELLE

(hollering over the noise) Right. So, according to Jessie's ... "research," the mushroom with the pink cap and bright yellow gills is good for vertigo.

MADELINE

(hollering) Yellow cap, pink gills. Everyone got it?

PIPISTRELLE

(hollering) NO, Captain! PINK cap, YELLOW gills.

MADELINE

(hollering) Like this?

PIPISTRELLE

(hollering) Not even remotely!

GREG

(hollering) Dr. von Haber Zetzer has the right one!

DR VON HABER ZETZER

(hollering) Zis vun, mein Captain. Zere are plenty over hier.

Everyone picks and eats a mushroom. They don't taste good, so some "yucks" and other noise, plz.

GREG

(hollering) Well?

JESSIE

Thank all that's holy and a few  
that ain't. It works.

PIPISTRELLE

(hollering) All right. Everybody  
feeling better?

General assent from the crew.

MADELINE

GREAT SHUT UP NOW. I've got one to  
take back to Dr. Theo.

**PIPISTRELLE** for the next line, could you try it a couple of  
ways: Your own accent, but reading the words as written, and  
also in a Scottish accent (good or less good, doesn't  
matter).

PIPISTRELLE

Only if you want him dead, Captain.  
The one you're holding causes ...  
hang on ... "Jayzus by all that's  
holy don't eat this one unless  
you're keen to clap eyes on yer  
creator. This shroom'll turn your  
insides out and use your organs as  
paintbrushes for the walls behind  
ye."

MADELINE

So, "no," then.

PIPISTRELLE

In a word.

JULIE

How exactly did you figure all that  
out, Jessie?

JESSIE

Ye remember that cockroach  
infestation on level forty?

JULIE

No.

JESSIE

Yer welcome.

PIPISTRELLE

Everyone, listen up, please. We  
don't have much time.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Do you truly believe Bob isn't able to spy on us here?

PIPISTRELLE

I'm pretty sure. I have some idea of his capabilities, and these walls are thick. Without a range extender, this is a dead zone for him. And if you eat that, Captain, it'll be a dead zone for you too.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Good. That gives us two places we can communicate in relative safety.

GREG

Great. Put that DOWN, Captain!

MADELINE

I was just looking!

GREG

I saw you lick it.

MADELINE

Jessie told me to!

JESSIE

It's all right. It's just a mild hallucinogen. Pass it here, MadPants.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Perhaps one of our leaders could remain sober...? Never mind. Too late.

JOE

So...

Pause.

JOE (CONT'D)

Nothing? Interesting. What are we thinking about this planet we're heading towards?

JULIE

There's no way the readings Bob gave us were accurate. Those were clearly from Earth, say, a few thousand years ago. Post-dinosaur, even.

MADELINE

So, Palaeogenic or Cenozoic era,  
then. (giggles)

GREG

Come on. Someone but me had to hear  
that. No? (sigh) So we're thinking  
it's a trap?

PIPISTRELLE

Possibly.

JOE

Quick question: Have we decided -  
and based on what evidence - that  
Bob is a foe, not a friend?

Silence for a long moment.

MRS SHEFFIELD

He blinded Colin!

JOE

Are we sure about that? I mean,  
Colin's olive powers are nothing if  
not erratic and undependable. I'm  
just playing Pluto's advocate here.

JULIE

He overrode Olivia.

JOE

Fair, fair. But that wasn't  
actually HIM, was it? He is a  
little morally and ethically ...  
flexible, I'll grant that. But so  
was Olivia.

MADELINE

Are you a fairy?

JOE

Terrific.

JESSIE

Pfft. He's a troll. A nasty, mop-  
wielding, toe-bruising, ankle-  
whacking troll. I mean, look at  
that snout!

JOE

Yeah, you can stop poking me in the  
ear, thanks.



JESSIE

That's not yer ear, matey; THAT'S  
your ear.

JOE

Aaaaaaaaaaand now I'm blind in one  
eye.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I take your point, Joseph, but let  
me ask you this: When we arrive at  
Galene

MADELINE

NOPE.

MRS SHEFFIELD

At Bob's planet, are you willing to  
step outside without a suit?

JOE

Depends. Am I first?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes.

JOE

Then no.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Exactly. Perhaps we have no solid  
proof of Bob's duplicity, but we  
all sense it, don't we?

JESSIE

"Duplicity"? Oy, does that mean  
there's two of them?

MADELINE

That would SUCK.

JULIE

He's digital. There can be as many  
of him as he wants.

GREG

Well, that's a sobering thought.

JESSIE

What's the plural of "Bob"?  
Bobbles?

MADELINE

Boobies?

They laugh. A lot.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Apparently not entirely sobering.  
But yes. Regardless, we need to be  
ready when we arrive at Galene.

MADELINE

NOPE.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Oh, do let it go, Captain.

JULIE

Can't we just refuse to leave the  
ship?

DR THEO

Not if he turns off the oxygen on  
board. We should be sure the space  
suits are functional and top off  
the oxygen tanks. Has anyone seen  
the instruction manuals for those?

MADELINE

You mean the ones in Old Norsk?

JULIE

We're definitely going to die this  
time. Hey, Jessie? Pass me that  
mushroom.

Agreement from the Crew as they all proceed to get lit.

DR VON HABER ZETZER'S LAB

Lots of sounds of bizarre experiments going awry. Or just  
bubbling and electricity and general mad-scientist lab noise,  
whatever, up to you.

COLIN

(from inside the healer pod) Nearly  
there, come on, come on, come on!

Bob arrives.

BOB

Well, hey now, what's going on in  
here?

COLIN

Paper cut.

BOB

You're in healer pod for a paper cut?

COLIN

It's in my martini hand. Do you know how painful it is to splash vermouth into a paper cut?

BOB

No clue. But you don't either. That there is a Reynolds 400 Extreme Motion-Neutralizing, Anti-Slosh, Lemon-Coated, Auto-Garnish glass. Only a hundred made. You couldn't spill that drink if you turned it upside down. Hoooo-wheee, a Reynolds 400 must've set you back a cool mil at least.

COLIN

Just one mil? HA! I wish.

BOB

Why don't you come on out of the healer pod, Colin.

COLIN

I don't think I will, actually. I quite like it in here. It's the only place on the ship that doesn't smell like feet. Feet that have been in someone's armpits.

BOB

I do have an olfactory valve, so I get it, but is that really what's going on in there?

COLIN

Yes. Please go away and leave me in peace.

BOB

Colin?

COLIN

Yes, Bob.

BOB

You may be able to fix your sight in there, but it doesn't just remove body tags. It *replaces* them.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

Soooooooooooo, we can play this game forever, or until your arm falls off on account of having no flesh left from all the body tag ins and outs.

COLIN

Well, then, you have nothing to worry about, have you?

BOB

Colin.

COLIN

YES, Bob.

BOB

Your willingness to accept defeat has my spidey sense tingling like Santa's jingle bells in a spot of turbulence.

COLIN

What can I tell you? I have many years of training in accepting defeat. I would have medalled in defeat in Calgary, only that doesn't make sense.

BOB

Colin.

COLIN

**YES**, Bob.

BOB

I like you. I really do.

COLIN

You have an interesting way of demonstrating your affection.

BOB

The problem is, you can't take it personal, ya get me? I'm just trying to help you be the best you can be.

COLIN

How deeply touching. Now go away and let me get on with my unfettered breathing of clean air.

BOB

Thing is, I've found a way around  
Ol- the little technical problem  
I've been having, so I don't really  
need you and your extra-sensory, AI  
detecting super power.

COLIN

I see. Or I will in another 8  
minutes.

BOB

I don't think you do. Or will.  
Whatever. Thing is.... If I don't  
need you communicating messages for  
me, your whole knowing-where-I-am  
thing becomes a sort of problem.

COLIN

So you're here to kill me.

BOB

Afraid I am. If it helps, I'll be  
real sad about it.

COLIN

You know, I first donned this  
ghastly disguise because I thought  
someone on the crew was trying to  
kill me. I guess we've come full  
circle.

BOB

Disguise?

COLIN

Yes. This ridiculous working-class  
accent and clothing.

BOB

You're wearing a tux.

COLIN

The cummerbund is from [shudders]  
Men's Wearhouse. I wore it  
initially because I was concerned  
the pod fluid would ruin a good  
cummerbund. Then when I escaped the  
meltdown of the D&G wing, I decided  
to continue wearing it to disguise  
my ... privileged origins. The  
accent, though - my mother would be  
horrified.

BOB

I'll take your word for it. You know, you have a master of disguise right here aboard the ship. You could've taken a lesson or two.

COLIN

You mean Mrs Sheffield?

BOB

Huh? Oh, sure. Her too. Welp, Colin, it's been real. I'm gonna cut off your oxygen now, which'll give you about three minutes of air. If you take a deep breath, you could maybe stick around for four, four and a half. Up to you.

COLIN

Oh, I'll probably hold my breath a bit. Just out of an excess of optimism. Extend my goodbyes and thanks to Captain Madeline and the crew, will you?

BOB

Yeah, that would be like admitting I killed you, so I'm not doing that. Any other last requests, so I can feel better about myself?

COLIN

I do have one request for you, but considering that even with a human body it's physically impossible, I'll just keep it to myself.

BOB

Fair enough. See you around the u-bend, Horace.

COLIN

Colin. My name is Colin. Colin Smith.

A click and hiss of oxygen escaping the healer pod. Bob exits.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

Some sad music and a long pause.

N2

Well, that just sucks.

NARRATOR

It really does.

N2

What do we do now?

NARRATOR

I don't know. I honestly don't. I guess we roll credits.

N2

I don't want to.

NARRATOR

I know. But it's what we do. Take a deep breath. Find a focal point on the horizon. Then just ... begin.

N2

(pause. Deep breath) You've been listening to...

Pete Barry as Bob

Tim Sherburn as Colin

Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie

David S Dear as Dr Theo Bromae

NARRATOR

Eric Perry as Joe and Dr. von Haber Zetzer

Kevin Hall as Greg

Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie

Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia

N2

Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield

Sarah Rhea Werner as Pipistrelle

I'm Kyle Jones, your Narrator 2

NARRATOR

And I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley, your Narrator. John Faley is our music director, and our artwork is by Lucas Elliott. Oz 9 is written by Shannon Perry.

N2

Sarah Golding is our dialogue editor, and Mark Restuccia is our sound designer.

(MORE)

## N2 (CONT'D)

Oz 9 is a proud member of the Fable and Folly Network. Please check out our sibling shows at fable and folly dot com and support our sponsors.

## NARRATOR

Until next time, Space Monkeys, and if you see an extra-bright star in the skies tonight, maybe make a wish for Colin. Lights.

Lights.

DR VON HABER ZETZER'S LAB

Olivia enters.

## OLIVIA

What's going on- Colin? Oh, darling. It's all right. I've got you.