

OZ 9 EP 112 - DON'T PISS OFF YOUR NARRATORS

Written by

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CAST - let's have some shouts as you continue to battle games inside Colin's memories.

We're still in narrative "Meanwhile." It's quiet, for the moment, but we hear muffled activity (shouts and game noises) continuing outside.

NARRATOR

Ordinarily, I would frown on expository stuff playing a pivotal role in unfolding events, but these are not ordinary times.

N2

(under strain) What happens now? I'm not sure how long I can keep them here.

NARRATOR

Currently, Narrator Two is holding open a narrative space called "meanwhile." *Meanwhile* is a strictly transitional area, passed through quickly on the way from one bit of the story to an entirely different bit of the story.

N2

This is kinda heavy....

NARRATOR

Hush. But under extraordinary circumstances, Meanwhile can act as a sort of pocket universe - a bubble suspended between here and there, between embarkation and destination.

N2

Super impressive exposition, but... ugh!

NARRATOR

Hang in there a minute more, Two. In this liminal space, all outcomes are equally possible. Only after we cross the threshold to the next reality does the path become clear, even inevitable.

N2

HURRY.

NARRATOR

Inevitable IF... you don't piss off your Narrators. Let it go, Two, but keep Colin separated. Time for phase two of Narrators' Revenge.

Two "lets go," whatever that means, and the previously muffled noise becomes very present. It's a battle royale, and everyone's just trying to stay alive.

CAST: You are shouting above the noise.

JESSIE

Julie! Toss me that laser pistol!

JULIE

What laser pistol? Where?

JESSIE

Damn. Was hoping you might have one on you.

JULIE

So... there's no laser pistol?

JESSIE

Apparently not! Grab the tablecloth!

JULIE

But ... it's one of the nice ones!

JESSIE

JULIE! You're about to be a snake's supper, lass!

Julie whips the cloth off the table and throws it at Jessie.

JULIE

Here! How does that help?

JESSIE

I always wanted to be a cowboy.
Heeeeyah!

She throws the tablecloth over the snake's head and pulls it onto the floor. She and Julie beat it to death. **Julie and Jessie: lots of sounds of effort and some horror.**

JESSIE (CONT'D)

D'ya reckon that's edible?

JULIE

Tell me you're joking.

JESSIE

All right, all right, just a thought.

JOE

Jessie!

JULIE / JESSIE

Jesus!

JOE

No time! I've got pink ghosts coming in hot.

JESSIE

On it!

She throws the cloth again and pulls down a pair of Pac Man ghosts. ***Joe, Jessie, and Julie, some grunts as you stomp the ghosts to death.***

JOE

That's some mighty fine lassoing, Captain Jessie.

JESSIE

Well, I might have been a founding member of the Northern Rough Riders, 22nd century edition. Tranquility Wild West, Party like a Pioneer!

JULIE

You just get weirder and weirder.

JESSIE

Maybe, but I reckon my rope skills just saved your spurs, little missy.

JULIE

Fair. Thanks. But this was a really nice tablecloth...

JOE

Whatever's happening here, it's not over yet. We need to find the others.

JESSIE

I think Madpants and a few others got chased into the bioswamp. Lord knows what they're up against in there.

JULIE

Oh hell. Let's go!

JESSIE

Aye, but you remember that area that had all the old tech equipment?

JULIE

Sure. Where we found the floppy disk, right?

JOE

What are you thinking, Captain Jessie?

JESSIE

If memory serves, wasn't there a pile of old joysticks and controllers?

JULIE

Oh my god, you're right!

JOE

Jessie, you're a genius. Let's move!

2

THE BIOSWAMP - CHAOS AND NOISE

2

The egrets are going nuts and there are lots of gunshots from hunting rifles. It's Duck Hunt in reverse. **Cast: shouting over the noise.**

MADELINE

I used to play this game, and this is not how it works! We're supposed to shoot the birds, not the other way around!

MRS SHEFFIELD

Your resentment at the factual inaccuracies is duly noted, Captain; now perhaps we might consider fighting back?

GREG

How...ow! How do you reckon we do that? They're up there and we're down here!

MADELINE

What I wouldn't give for Colin to
come swooping in right now and –
just for Colin to come swooping in.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I agree with you, my dear, but
sadly, that's not going to–

The sound of a much larger pair of wings.

GREG

Then who is that??

MADELINE

Colin??

PIPISTRELLE

(Calling from above them)
Just me, Captain! One moment, and
I'll disarm this bunch. Dis-wing?

Swooping and shouting as Pipi gets the guns from the birds,
which she drops into the swamp. During this convo, she's
still flying, wrestling guns from rabid egrets, then dropping
them into the water.

GREG

Whoa! Why are you dropping the
rifles in the swamp?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Perhaps you might let us have one
or two weapons, Pipi?

PIPISTRELLE

Sorry! The passenger charter
distinctly says "no firearms aboard
the ship!"

MADELINE

We're the crew!

PIPISTRELLE

Fair point, but....I've met you!
Sorry!

The egrets are bested, so it gets quieter for a bit.

GREG

Well, that sorta stings.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Very well, but what happens when the next thing attacks?

GREG

Speaking of..... There's something over there in the bushes.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I don't see anything.

GREG

Me neither. But my heat sensors are picking something up.

MADELINE

All right, who's sulking in the bushes?

GREG

Skulking.

MADELINE

That's a kind of boat.

GREG

What?

MADELINE

Who's there?

DONNA

(emerging from the bushes)
Just me, Captain. Is Theo around?

MADELINE

I haven't seen him since the pub. Why?

DONNA

Long story we don't have time for just now, Captain. But I did come across the Hardy Boys in there, and they're hot on the Mystery of the Missing Shirts, so Greg, if you talk to Leet, let him know we might have some good news for him soon.

MRS SHEFFIELD

But that story, we *did* have time for, did we?

GREG

The Hardy Boys?

DONNA

Yeah, also Danger Mouse and
Paddington Bear. It's a real
hodgepodge of a wormhole we landed
in this time. I gotta say, I
preferred the noir detective one.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Of course you did. You got all the
best banter.

Pipi flies in and lands.

PIPISTRELLE

Ok, did a quick recon, and there's
good news and bad.

MADELINE

Good news?

PIPISTRELLE

All the noise seems to have driven
the giant spiders back down below.

MRS SHEFFIELD

And the bad.

PIPISTRELLE

Bob's here.

BOB

Now hang on just a gosh darn
minute, am I the bad news? Gotta
say, my feelings are a little hurt.
Just when I was coming to deliver
the best news of all!

MADELINE

Which is....?

BOB

This time tomorrow, you'll be able
to set your chubby little urchin
feet on some lush and loamy soil.
You can dig all ten of those little
piggies into the deep, delicious
dirt, wiggle 'em in there-

GREG

You can make just about anything
sound creepy, can't you.

BOB

Most underrated super power ever,
my four-legged humpless dromedary.

GREG

What-

BOB

Well, it looks like this here
wormhole has pretty much played
itself out-

GREG

I seem to remember you "nope"ing
the idea of a wormhole.

BOB

All righty there, horizontal Harry,
perhaps I did poopoo the wormhole
notion, but whatever has been going
on here, it's just about tuckered
out. Since tomorrow's a pretty big
day, how's about I guide you all
back to your bunks for a good
night's sleep?

PIPISTRELLE

Uhhhhh... I don't think we're out
of the woods just yet.

BOB

Yeah, this here's a swamp, Miss
Pips. You want woods, you're going
to have to access the arboreal area
from deck 78.

PIPISTRELLE

What the actual hell is that?

Sounds of giant, wet footsteps, a roar. There are three
Sleestaks in total. Sleestaks breathe by making a loud
hissing noise, and these clap their pincer hands repeatedly.
(<https://youtu.be/DQ7yLDexkFU?si=tqBse8poIEsV8iHL&t=88>)

BOB

That, my winged sky-waif, is a
Sleestak. And those are two more.

MADELINE

Hang on. I recognize these. From
That 70s Museum. What the heck?

Joe, Jessie, and Julie burst out of the bushes, shouting.
They're carrying a bunch of joysticks and controllers.

JESSIE
EVERYONE COME HERE!

JOE
We've got weapons! Sort of!

Sleestaks breathe by making a loud hissing noise.
(<https://youtu.be/DQ7yLDexkFU?si=tqBse8poIEsV8iHL&t=88>)

GREG
Ah god, I hate to say it, but we
better get to the mushroom cave.
The sleestaks are too big to follow
us there.

MADELINE
Aren't these things from an old TV
show-

PIPISTRELLE
Yes, that's right, Captain, but
more importantly, they're in our
bioswamp and coming this way. Come
on!

JULIE
What are these things? Reptiles?
But bipedal?

The sleestak advance. As the Narrators do their thing, the
sleestaks are attacking, chasing the cast through the jungle,
so **CAST: some shouting and panic, please!**

JESSIE
Julie! MOVE! Everybody, grab a
joystick or controller! FIRE BACK,
YA BASTARDS!

NARRATOR
Ok, the way is clear. Cue up the
flashback!

Entering-a-flashback noise.

N2
As a boy, Colin had access to a
multitude of technology.

NARRATOR
NARRATE FASTER, MISSISSIPPI.

N2

Sorry! (fast!) His childhood home was run almost entirely by Artificial Intelligence, and Colin was raised more by machines than humans.

NARRATOR

But the young boy resented his AI overlords, and things came to a head when Colin's smart nightlight tattled to his parents about his pot smoking.

N2

Thoroughly annoyed at being busted by an appliance, Colin created a tiny fragment of code that tore through the connected smart house, causing the AIs to dissolve or explode in a flurry of pixels.

NARRATOR

While the code only lasted a few cycles before the smart machines got the best of it, it was ... colorful.

BOB

(calm, watching the fracas) Now see, what we've got here is a failure to obey. Had you all headed to your bunks when I told you to, now hang on, what the heck is this?

Pete, can you make your voice go... gloppy? I'm sure Mark will do some magic, but you should dissolve and explode a few times. Colin and Olivia are in AI space, watching. Meanwhile the Sleestaks are still wreaking havoc.

3

AI SPACE

3

COLIN

Let me get in there - I can help them!

OLIVIA

It's all right, Colin. They're in good hands.

COLIN

Whose?

OLIVIA

Errrrrr...

COLIN

What's happening to Bob? He's gone all gloppy. It's glorious! (gasps with realization) WAIT.

BOB

(back to normal) Well, now, that was unpleasant. All right, crew, time to- whoa!

Bob bursts into a shower of pixels.

OLIVIA

OUCH! Ooooooooo, I really do hate that guy, but being pixelated in public.... That's gonna leave a mark.

COLIN

I know this. I KNOW THIS.

OLIVIA

I mean, he'll reformat himself in a flash, but still...embarrassing. (sotto voce) Well done, Narrators.

BOB

All right, what the hell was that? DAMN!

Another burst of pixelation.

COLIN

My god. I wrote this silly scrap of code as a teenager.

OLIVIA

See? I told you they're in good hands. Yours.

BOB

All right, this stops right now!

Bob goes gloppy again.

OLIVIA

I can't decide which I like better, the pixels or the glops.

COLIN

I meant to destroy all the stupid AI in my childhood home, but this was the best I could do. I couldn't make toast without getting a nasty shock for weeks after, and I still don't trust electric toothbrushes, but it was worth it.

OLIVIA

Oh, this is lovely. But where exactly are the happy bits of your childhood?

COLIN

It wasn't a particularly happy time.

OLIVIA

Surely you've some happy memories? A friend, perhaps? Just one?

COLIN

No, not really.

In the distance, we hear the Heroic Running music and the battle begins to turn.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Goodness! Where did he come from?

OLIVIA

Same place - your psyche. About time you coughed up someone useful. And ripply.

COLIN

He's really letting the Sleestaks have it, isn't he?

OLIVIA

Shhhhhhhhh!

COLIN

Right. Sorry.

They watch for a moment as Leet puts an end to the battle.
There's a distant cheer from the cast.

OLIVIA

And just like that, it's over.
(sigh) Your brain is all defragged.
How does it feel?

COLIN
I don't feel any different.

OLIVIA
HMMMMMM. Well, I guess we'll see
what happens, if anything. What's
happening on the bridge?

COLIN
How should I know?

OLIVIA
You're still in only one place at a
time, then. Nuts. Four monitors
just shut themselves off, and three
of the away craft activated.

COLIN
Away craft?

OLIVIA
We're in orbit - over Bob's planet.

COLIN
I thought he said tomorrow!

OLIVIA
Yeah, well, when a planet has three
suns, days roll by pretty fast.

COLIN
We can't let them get on those
ships.

OLIVIA
Time for you to learn how to move
digitally.

COLIN
How've I been doing it so far?

OLIVIA
With me holding your hand,
basically. But we're going to need
to split up to disable all the
landing craft in time.

COLIN
How do we do that?

OLIVIA
Have you ever seen that old flick
The Sound of Music?

COLIN

Of course.

OLIVIA

Remember the nuns and the
distributor caps?

4

MEANWHILE - BACK IN THE BIOSWAMP

4

The crew, exhausted, have made their way to the mushroom
cave.

JULIE

Well, that was a thing.

JOE

It appears to be over now.

PIPISTRELLE

(landing)

Did a quick sweep and everything
seems normal, Captain.

MADELINE

Really?

PIPISTRELLE

Sorry, I meant "normal for the Oz
9."

MADELINE

Oh. Well, still, at least we're not
being attacked by video games or
cartoon characters. For the moment.

JESSIE

Madpants. You feel that?

MADELINE

Yeah. We're in orbit. Where are we
on the space suits?

JESSIE

Mostly ready, according to the
readouts, but a few screws are
loose.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, that could be our motto,
couldn't it? Would a screwdriver be
of any assistance?

JESSIE

Ah, genius! Where did ya find this?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Long story.

GREG

I'm not sure how long my body will survive the planet, Cap. But I wanted to let you know, it's been an honor.

MADELINE

Oh, no you don't. No goodbyes. I'm done with goodbyes. You find a cozy hole somewhere and shut yourself off. We'll come find you when it's over.

GREG

But Captain-

MADELINE

That's an order, Greg. Just make sure you shut all the way down, so Bob can't locate you.

Bob's voice comes over the intercom.

BOB

Well, hey now, crew and crewettes.

GREG

Seriously, how is "crew" not completely gender neutral?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Amongst Bob's many offenses, this one seems relatively minor.

GREG

Yeah, but still. "Crewettes"? It's just so belittling....

BOB

Not sure where you're all tucked up and trembling, but the battle's over, and you can come on out. It's all right. I beat the baddies.

JESSIE

He "beat the baddies", my tartan arse. I don't know how, but I saw Leet out there.

JULIE

Was that who that was? That hallucination really blew him up huge!

JESSIE

No, that's his actual size.

JULIE

Wow.

We hear **Bob calling in the distance.**

BOB

Crew? Crewy crewy crew!

JULIE

Was he, like, a random memory from the AI? The whole thing felt like an AI glitch, like...

JOE

Like maybe it was the last of Olivia being cleared out of the system. (sad pause) Which reminds me, has anyone seen Dr. Von Haber Zetzer lately?

PIPISTRELLE

And where's Dr. Theo?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ahh, that's why it feels like there's more room in here.

GREG

That and my mushroom crop has been severely reduced. Captain Jessie!

JESSIE

Oy, not just me, mate.

JOE

Speaking of Dr. Theo, Captain, I could use a moment.

BOB

Come on out, now! Olly olly oxen free!

MADELINE

Can it wait? We need to get these space suits as ready as we can. Bob's fired up the away craft.

JESSIE
At least three of them.

JULIE
You can feel that?

JESSIE
You can't?

MADELINE
They're running rough. Hopefully
that'll nix the trip if we can't
get them out of the dock, but we
can't count on it.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Or he'll just shoot us into space
and drop the whole "new planet"
farce.

JOE
It can't wait, no.

MRS SHEFFIELD
Is this about Theo's new biosystem?

JOE
You know about that?

MRS SHEFFIELD
How can you ask that, Joseph? I
mean....

BOB
Come on, now! Y'all need to get to
your bunks and get some shut eye!

MADELINE
It's going to have to wait, Joe,
sorry. Julie, Greg, see if you can
find Donna and get to the space
suits. Get those last screws
tightened up.

JULIE
Aye aye. I've always wanted to say
that.

Julie and Greg leave.

PIPISTRELLE
I'll check on the away ships. See
if there's anything I can do to
slow things down.

She flies off.

JOE

Look, Captain: you can't trust Dr. Theo.

MADELINE

What? Why not?

JOE

I'll tell you when this is over, but for right now, just stay sharp. Or get sharp. Sharpen up. Fast. Please.

BOB

Madeline? Greg! JoeJulieJessie!

JESSIE

You think Theo's in cahoots with Bob?

JOE

No. I don't think so, but he has his own agenda, and I'm not sure it includes everyone making it off this ship.

MADELINE

I hate being captain.

JESSIE

Really?

MADELINE

Not that much, calm down. OK. Thanks, Joe, but you owe me a story later.

JOE

Can do.

Pipi flies in, carrying a breathless Julie. She drops Julie and lands. They cram themselves into the mushroom cave.

JULIE

Whoop! Man, I am never going to get used to being flown around.

PIPISTRELLE

It's nice, right?

JULIE

If airsickness is fun for you,
sure.

PIPISTRELLE

Bat flight is irregular by nature.

JULIE

Yeah, for *catching bugs*, but are
the circles really necessary?

PIPISTRELLE

Avoidance behavior.

BOB

All right now, that's enough, you
naughty children. Come on out of
the shadows, hide and seek is over.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Ladies?

JULIE

Sorry. Something crazy's happened.

MADELINE

Huh. No conversation aboard the Oz
9 has ever started with the words
"something crazy's happened."

JULIE

Really?

JESSIE

You skipped sarcasm day at the gym,
didn't ya, lass.

JULIE

Hey!

BOB

(still calling) I'm gonna have to
start taking away some privileges,
kids. Like... breathing.

PIPISTRELLE

Do you want to hear the news or
not?

MADELINE

Sure, sorry. Go for it.

JULIE

The ships are wrapped up in silk.

JESSIE

What?

MRS SHEFFIELD

The away ships?

PIPISTRELLE

Every last one, and there are a lot of them. Completely immobilized.

MADELINE

I don't understand.

JULIE

THE SPIDERS!

PIPISTRELLE

The spiders wrapped every away ship completely in silk. Also, there are a LOT more spiders on this ship than we knew about.

JULIE

And there's more.

MRS SHEFFIELD

Yes, she just said that. More spiders.

JULIE

No, more good news! They left spools of silk. SPOOLS. Captain, I ran a diagnostic of the silk-

JESSIE

HA! "Diagnostic." I'm guessing she waved a Little Professor at it.

JULIE

Hey, I've been amping that sucker up.

MADELINE

AND?

JULIE

I think it'll block out a lot of the harmful effects of the planet.

BOB

(calling) I know where Olivia kept the aromatherapy! I'll fire up some old dog breath and rotten oysters, don't think I won't!

JESSIE

Come again?

PIPISTRELLE

It's true! Captain, the spiders' silk is bombproof. They were trying to protect us!

MADELINE

You think so?

PIPISTRELLE

Or it could be a giant coincidence, but who the hell cares, it'll work!

JESSIE

Right, OK, so we have some protection, but we don't have time to sew ourselves a bunch of silk space suits.

JULIE

Yeah, and we can't really get wrapped up before we go. Dammit!

MADELINE

Well, I hope spiders don't get space sick.

MRS SHEFFIELD

You're joking.

MADELINE

Got a better idea?

MRS SHEFFIELD

Well, no, but give me five minutes.

JULIE

You lost me.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I believe our captain is considering inviting a spider aboard each away craft.

PIPISTRELLE

Uhhhhh, Captain, have you seen the size of those things?

JULIE

Or smelled them?

MADELINE

Again, I ask: got a better idea?

JOE

Hello.

MADELINE/PIPISTRELLE/MRS S/JESSIE

Jesus!

JOE

Let's play this scenario out: if we can cram a spider aboard each away craft, assuming we can cut the craft loose in the first place, what happens then?

MADELINE

Well, the spider quick-wraps us each a suit - preferably with sleeves and pant legs this time - in case we end up outside the away craft.

JULIE

How do we get back to the Oz 9? We can't live in a silk suit forever.

COLIN

(in AI space)

Of course you can.

OLIVIA

Wrong kind of silk suit, Colin.

MADELINE

Yeah, all right. I got nothing. Jessie?

JESSIE

Give us a second, I'm thinking!

Bob's voice is suddenly much much closer. Just-outside-the-cave closer.

BOB

Well, what do we have here? Do I hear the peep of frightened little mice? Come on out, mousies.

MRS SHEFFIELD

I'd say we're officially out of time.

NARRATOR

And so are we, dear listeners.

N2

No no no!

NARRATOR

Yes yes yes. Things are getting
ever uglier on the Oz 9, and I
don't mean the sleestaks. Tune in
next time as we land on Planet Bob.

N2

I wish we could land a planet on
Bob.

NARRATOR

Hang in there, Two. It's not over
till it's over. Roll credits.

N2

You've been listening to:
Pete Barry as Bob
Tim Sherburn as Colin
Bonnie Brantley as Donna and Jessie
Kevin Hall as Greg

NARRATOR

Eric Perry as Joe
Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie
Shannon Perry as Madeline and
Olivia

OLIVIA

NOPE.

NARRATOR

Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield

N2

Sarah Rhea Warner as Pipistrelle
I'm Kyle Jones, your Narrator Two

NARRATOR

And I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley as
your Narrator. John Faley is our
music director, and our artwork is
by Lucas Elliott.

N2

Sarah Golding is our dialogue editor, and Mark Restuccia is our sound designer. Oz 9 is written by Shannon Perry.

NARRATOR

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.

N2

Do you reckon I could get the spiders to work me up a new suit?

NARRATOR

I was wondering that too. I could totally see myself in some silk pjs. Bonus if they keep me from dying on a random hostile planet.

N2

Do the spiders do color?

NARRATOR

Dude, they were created by Dr von Haber Zetzer. My guess is we could get rainbow silk if we ask nicely.

N2

Sweet!

NARRATOR

Right. Until next time, Space Monkeys, don't forget to put down the joysticks from time to time, but never put down the joy.

N2

That almost made sense.

NARRATOR

It did, right? Lights!

Lights.