

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

EPISODE 207

NARRATOR

Let's begin.

October and Fish are traveling across the Reddorblack sea aboard the lackluster steam ship The Agatha. The boat's beetle employee was lost to sea despite Fish's best effort, and now she and October are investigating the suspicious circumstances of his death. They just received an incriminating comment suggesting the deceased had a connection with Professor Waspington O'Connell. Also, Fish is bad cop. We now find them...

[Zzzp.]

Out on the upper deck. October is pacing.

OUT ON DECK

OCTOBER

This is a small boat, where the hex is Waspington?

FISH WITH LEGS

Wow. Those are some thick clouds looming overhead.

OCTOBER

Yeah, looks like incoming rain. Think maybe it has anything to do with someone's passive weather powers?

FISH WITH LEGS

What? Me?

OCTOBER

Yes. You.

FISH WITH LEGS

Can't be. I'm in a great mood. You only get scary clouds like that when I'm real sad.

OCTOBER

Well... You seem pretty upset about the whole Brody situation.

[thunder]

NARRATOR

It starts pouring rain.

FISH WITH LEGS

No. That's not really bothering me.

OCTOBER

If you say so. (sigh) Looks like we're not gonna find Wasington anytime soon... Let's just continue the investigation.

FISH WITH LEGS

(bad cop)

You got it partner. Let's go shake these punks.

NARRATOR

She tromps into the dining room, where Chirpy and Shelldon are sitting together. Chirpy waves brightly and pops up to walk them over, linking arms with October.

SHELLDON AND CHIRPY

CHIRPY

Hey, October! That storm came out of nowhere, huh?

OCTOBER

Yeah...?

CHIRPY

Come in, sit with us. Have some tea, it'll warm you up.

NARRATOR

At the table, Shelldon is just sitting there with tea, toast, jam, etc. Chirpy unlinks and pulls out a chair for October.

OCTOBER

Thanks.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Good day, Miss Jones. Miss With Legs.

NARRATOR

He doffs his hat as Chirpy pulls out a chair for Fish.

[Shelldon preps a cup of tea]

FISH WITH LEGS

No, thank you. (bad cop) I'll stand.

CHIRPY

Oh, okay.

NARRATOR

She sits next to Shelldon, who offers October a fresh cup of tea.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM
Tea, Miss Jones?

OCTOBER
...Sure.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM
Truly unfortunate what happened to that poor beetle.

CHIRPY SINGER
It's a tragedy, I've been inconsolable. But Sheldon's been so resilient about it.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM
It's true, she's been weeping all over the place.

CHIRPY SINGER
Yep.

FISH WITH LEGS
Well well well... If it isn't Chirpy Singer and Sheldon Spottingham...

CHIRPY
What?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM
It's Lord Spottingham, actually--

FISH WITH LEGS
Don't talk back to me, scum!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM
What are you on about?

OCTOBER
Me and Fish with Legs are trying to figure out what happened to Mr. Body. And she's--

FISH WITH LEGS
You can't tie me down, I'm a loose cannon!

OCTOBER
...taking it hard.

FISH WITH LEGS
Hard-boiled!

NARRATOR
Fish paces erratically as October takes her research journal out and sips her tea.

OCTOBER

So, the Captain is convinced what happened to Mr. Body was an accident.

FISH WITH LEGS

Or claims to be!

OCTOBER

Yes. But Chirpy, your testimony casts a lot of doubt on that claim. So is there anything more you can tell us about what you saw?

CHIRPY SINGER

You were there, October, I don't know what else I could say. It was dark, but I swear I saw someone running away after Brody fell.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

That's alright, darling. Having seen anything is help enough.

FISH WITH LEGS

Did we ask for your opinion, Lord Fancy-face?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Pardon me?

OCTOBER

Cool off, partner.

NARRATOR

Fish with Legs cools off.

FISH WITH LEGS

Aggravated sigh.

OCTOBER

That's fine, Chirpy, thank you. As for you, Mr. Spottingham--

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Lord Spottingham, please. I am a member of the peerage.

CHIRPY SINGER

Now now sweetheart, don't let your temper get the better of you.

OCTOBER

Yes, elaborate on that for me. What's a high-ranking member of Empire nobility doing on a boat like this?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Well of course my fiancée was so excited to ride the Agatha, we couldn't pass up the opportunity.

CHIRPY

He was so sweet to bring me.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

That said... to tell the truth, we don't have much money. The title is hereditary, but other than that my wallet has been thin ever since my late brother gambled away the family fortune. We suspect he was killed over his debts from the tiger beetle races.

CHIRPY SINGER

Yes, that was truly tragic.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Indeed. Life since Baldwin's death has been difficult. Living without our family's money has been an adjustment, but... Living without a brother... I still can't believe it.

CHIRPY SINGER

But things haven't been all bad since then.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Of course not. I have you with me. And it was a happy coincidence that a ticket for the Agatha was so affordable.

OCTOBER

Sorry for your loss.

FISH WITH LEGS

Uh huh. Where were you when Mr. Body fell?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

I was retrieving Chirpy's purse from our cabin. I-- Hang on. Surely you don't think that I--

FISH WITH LEGS

We're asking the questions, buddy!

OCTOBER

We're just trying to place everyone at the time of the incident.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Well I saw him here, in the dining room. Then I went to our cabin to find Chirpy's purse. She's so generous to the less fortunate. But darling, you should really try to be neater with your things. I had a devil of a time finding it.

(MORE)

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM (cont'd)

Brody came by our cabin and asked if he could help, but I respectfully declined. He was a tad persistent, it was off-putting. No one wants overly eager help. But after a moment, he left. Then I heard the shouting but paid it no mind. Boat workers are rough people, it all seemed usual. Though all the commotion afterwards drew me out.

OCTOBER

So he just came and left? That's weird.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Truthfully, the man seems socially inept. I didn't want him in our cabin, pawing through Chirpy's delicates.

OCTOBER

Hm. Did you see the professor?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

He came up behind me as I reached the group. After the splash.

OCTOBER

And your cabin is located?

CHIRPY SINGER

It's the last one on the left! Oh, sorry. But I wanted one with a good view of the wheel.

OCTOBER

Thanks.

FISH WITH LEGS

Interesting stuff... We'll have to see if your friends can confirm your story. Unless, of course... there's something you'd like to just tell us right now?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

What?

OCTOBER

Fish, calm down. (to Shelldon) We'll see if your story checks out.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

It should, it's true.

OCTOBER

So if you and Wasington were running up the left, Captain Hummer was running up the right, and we were on the upper deck... how could anyone get to or from the bow without being seen? Brody was working on a crane... Is that something? Swing on the crane to get around-- No. He was dismantling it.

CHIRPY SINGER

And what about the yelling?

OCTOBER

Yeah, we heard two voices, right?

FISH WITH LEGS

But Captain Hummer said Brody fell alone. All alone... Into the cold, dark water...

CHIRPY SINGER

And there was that strange pause before the splash.

OCTOBER

So someone's lying.

FISH WITH LEGS

Maybe multiple someones!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Miss With Legs, are you suggesting... an accomplice?

FISH WITH LEGS

Maybe that's exactly what I'm suggesting! Where were you yesterday evening?

OCTOBER

Fish, we just did that. Are you okay?

FISH WITH LEGS

I'm a wildcard! Yargh!

OCTOBER

Okay... It's about time we get back to looking for Professor O'Connell. We have reason to suspect that he had a motive.

CHIRPY SINGER

Oh, good luck. There's something sinister about him, it makes me uncomfortable.

OCTOBER

Really? Does he have a bad reputation? The Duchess mentioned something about that.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

You can't trust anything that old molt says. He's in good standing at the university. Always going on research trips when he's not teaching classes. You need grant money for that.

CHIRPY SINGER

Yes, but there's something a bit... off about him. Don't you think? I don't know, it's just a feeling I get.

OCTOBER

Any idea where he is? We've been looking all afternoon.

CHIRPY SINGER

He's probably in the cargo hold.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

He does seem to be down there a lot.

OCTOBER

We'll check there again. Thanks for the tip. Come on, Fish.

NARRATOR

October stands and heads for the door. She stashes away her book and pulls out Fish with Legs' Dracula cape. She drapes it over herself and her bag as she heads outside. Fish lingers behind, eying Shelldon.

FISH WITH LEGS

I'm watching you, Lord fancy-face...

NARRATOR

Fish zips away and joins October out on the slippery upper deck. Despite the roof, water courses in sheets across its surface, blown by the wind. They go slowly towards the stairs, October shuffling and clutching the railing with both hands.

FISH WITH LEGS

You didn't ask them about the whole 'she dated his dead brother' thing...

OCTOBER

Well that's not really relevant to the case...

FISH WITH LEGS

Right! We can't let your feelings get in the way of the case, detective. This job requires a tough stomach and a calloused heart.

OCTOBER

Calloused h--

FISH WITH LEGS

Calloused!

OCTOBER

Let's just go. I wanna get out of this rain.

BELOW DECK

[Vrrrt.]

NARRATOR

The pair slosh along the upper deck and down the drenched stairs, then around the back of the main cabin and down to the lower deck. To the left-slash-port is a long kitchen counter type thing. To the right-slash-starboard are a series of metal doors, most of them ajar. The end of the short hallway has another, probably the cargo hold.

FISH WITH LEGS

Hold me back. I wanna get my fins on that murdering wasp! What kind of a sicko does murders?

NARRATOR

Fish stomps her foot and drags it like an enraged unicorn, then barrels forward at-- whoop, October snatched her.

FISH WITH LEGS

Wait, no! October! Put me down!

OCTOBER

You told me to hold you back.

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah, but you weren't supposed to...

NARRATOR

October tucks her friend under her arm and saunters drippily to the cargo hold.

FISH WITH LEGS

Put me down!

NARRATOR

The cargo hold is empty of other life. Kinda messy though, there's bits of seaweed strewn about and a big clump dangling from a porthole. Probably a leak, there's some water too.

OCTOBER

Where is he?

FISH WITH LEGS

Probably off doing more murders because he's the murderer and we need to bring him to justice for the murders he did!

OCTOBER

This wasp guy is so elusive...

FISH WITH LEGS

What's our next step, partner? Going into a violent rage and messing up the crime scene?

(MORE)

FISH WITH LEGS (cont'd)

(doing two voices)

You're out of control, Fish with Legs! I'm a loose unit who gets results! But you damage crime scenes, and your rampant substance abuse damages your personal relationships! I don't need love, just the thrill of the chase; look at this, I found the most important clue of all: exhibit A! But at what cost... at what cost...?

OCTOBER

Let's go check out those quarters. Brody must've had a room down here. We can search it for clues.

FISH WITH LEGS

Okay, but can you put me down?

OCTOBER

No. Did you not hear what just came out of your mouth?

NARRATOR

October heads back into the hallway. Only three of the doors are closed.

OCTOBER

Three doors, three crew members... Which one do you think is Brody's?

FISH WITH LEGS

The left one.

OCTOBER

You sound very confident.

FISH WITH LEGS

I'm a good luck talisman. I know these things.

OCTOBER

Okay. Sure. Let's bet bad cop on it.

FISH WITH LEGS

What!?

OCTOBER

If you're right, you can continue being bad cop, but if you're wrong, I'm bad cop and you're normal Fish with Legs.

FISH WITH LEGS

Chief, I'd bet my badge on it. You got yourself a deal.

OCTOBER

Okay then.

FISH WITH LEGS

Ow!

NARRATOR

October dropped her. She's not as bouncy as you think! Bad October. October turns the big wheel on the front of the door to unseal it and pulls it open.

OCTOBER

Yes!

FISH WITH LEGS

Ah snap.

NARRATOR

It's definitely Mandy's room. The small, rectangular room is scrupulously neat and tidy except for a big pile of dirty laundry in one corner, a mix of yellow and black. There's a triangular symbol like a stylized mantis head with two claws under it mounted on the wall next to the door, a small altar in the corner with some rocks, and a rack of mustard yellow dresses. The symbol is a larger version of Mandy's pendant. There's a photo of a group of mantises in habits on the bedside table.

OCTOBER

Sorry, Fish. Guess I'm bad cop now...

FISH WITH LEGS

But... My luck! I'm a good luck talisman! This should be the right room.

OCTOBER

Do you think that maybe there's something else on your mind that might be affecting you?

FISH WITH LEGS

Nope. Guess I'm just a little off today. Enjoy being bad cop.

OCTOBER

I will.

NARRATOR

October tries the middle door, but it's locked. She pulls some lock picks from the boot without a knife in it and gets to work.

FISH WITH LEGS

This is very measured work for a bad cop, not gonna lie... Maybe you should tap into old October. Remember the super racist October who would arrest people on a whim? Use that.

OCTOBER

There, got it.

NARRATOR

October wheels the door open. This room is consistently messy. The clothes strewn everywhere are beetle-proportioned and all black. It has a bookshelf, unlike Mandy's, with bars to keep the books in place when the ship rocks. No pictures, but there is a dried sprig of almond blossoms in a bottle glued to the table by the bed. This is Brody's room.

FISH WITH LEGS

What are we looking for?

OCTOBER

I dunno... Evidence?

NARRATOR

October sifts through the clothes on the open wall bed as Fish rummages through the mess of papers on the small, battered desk.

OCTOBER

This guy sure liked black turtlenecks...

FISH WITH LEGS

Well you don't see me commenting on your grey tunics...

OCTOBER

What?

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh! I found a letter! A very unpleasant letter.

NARRATOR

October leans to look over her, let's say shoulder.

FISH WITH LEGS

Bet you wish you could read Ant now.

OCTOBER

You're being very snarky for a good cop.

FISH WITH LEGS

It's a death threat! It says it's from "you know who"... Ominous.

OCTOBER

I recognize that symbol!

NARRATOR

October grabs the letter and runs out of the room.

FISH WITH LEGS

What? Where are you going?

(MORE)

FISH WITH LEGS (cont'd)

Okay, okay. Now this is some loose unit stuff! You've got an attitude problem, Detective Jones, but you get results!

WASPIGTON

NARRATOR

Fish runs after October and catches up with her in the cargo hold, where October is kneeling in a pile of seaweed by Waspiington's crate. She compares the four overlapping circles burned into the side with the letter. There's a matching symbol at the bottom.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh my moon goddess...

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Hey! Get away from that!

NARRATOR

Fish and October twist around. Waspiington O'Connell is standing in the doorway. October stands quickly, hiding the letter behind her back.

OCTOBER

Well, if it isn't Professor Waspiington O'Connell...

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

If it isn't October Jones.

Don't mess with my stuff.

NARRATOR

October starts a casual pace toward him, stepping through the water leaking from a damp crate.

OCTOBER

My partner Fish with Legs and I have been looking into the death of one Brody Body, and I have questions.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

(skeptical)

Uh huh.

OCTOBER

Where were you when Mr. Body went overboard?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

(amused)

Okay, I see. You're a detective?

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah, and she's the bad cop now, so watch out.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I was down here, keeping an eye on my cargo. Then I got hungry and made myself a sandwich. Humphrey came down here for a while, we talked shop. Saw that mantis girl go by. She's not doing so well. Heard a commotion through the cargo hatch and went up to see, and nearly ran into Lord Ladybug on the way. And then after that whole mess I came back down here.

OCTOBER

Okay... But care to explain this!?

NARRATOR

October dramatically reveals the letter with uncoordinated flair.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

What?

OCTOBER

This symbol appears on both your cargo and this death threat letter sent to Mr. Body.

NARRATOR

Waspington takes the letter from October and scrutinizes it.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

It's Mothia code.

OCTOBER

Mothia?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

A criminal organization run by moths. It seems Mr. Body owed them some money. The notches in the circle on the lower right, those mean gambling debts. Tiger beetles, if I had to guess. He was that type. He owed me money too, as a matter of fact. A lot of it.

OCTOBER

So you did know him?

NARRATOR

He hands the letter back to her.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

We did a job together a few years back. But he double-crossed me and made off with the money. Honestly, I thought he was dead. He had different name back then... Norm. Norm L. Beetle. It should surprise me that he was stupid enough to come back here after that, but I guess that's Norm...

OCTOBER

So why is there Mothia code on your cargo?

NARRATOR

Washington walks over to his cargo. He taps on the symbols burned into it.

WASHINGTON O'CONNELL

Now this one here, this means 'illegal cargo, repeat customer, international, paid for'. You see, I work with the Mothia too.

OCTOBER

So you knew Mr. Body before this voyage, you work for the criminal organization that sent him a death threat and you were on the very boat he died on...

WASHINGTON O'CONNELL

I didn't kill him, if that's where you're going.

FISH WITH LEGS

Hey, buddy. No one's accusing you. We're just looking for the truth.

WASHINGTON O'CONNELL

Listen, I appreciate what you're doing --it's very entertaining-- but I need to tend to my cargo.

OCTOBER

Not yet.

NARRATOR

Fish backs up to block the door.

FISH WITH LEGS

Just relax, buddy. My partner's only got a couple things left to say.

WASHINGTON O'CONNELL

(sigh)

NARRATOR

Washington leans on the crate to listen.

OCTOBER

Here's what I'm thinking... Mr. Body owed you a lot of money. You knew he was working here, and you wanted him to be afraid. So you made sure you'd be on the manifest. But then you didn't say anything when you boarded, playing mind games to throw him off. Yesterday you snuck up to the bow where he was working alone. You confronted him, argued, knocked him out. Then you took a rope, tied one end to Brody

(MORE)

OCTOBER (cont'd)

and the other to the dismantled crane, dropped the crane over the edge, and ran.

You hopped over the edge and clung to the barnacles on the outside of the Agatha, then climbed back up and came in after Shelldon to deflect suspicion.

The extra rope is why Captain Hummer didn't see anyone when Mr. Body went overboard. And Fish with Legs couldn't find him because he was dragged down so far and so fast by the crane that he was already at the bottom when she jumped in.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Are you done?

OCTOBER

Yeah. I think so. Feeling guilty?

NARRATOR

O'Connell pushes off the crate and steps forward. October backs up. He keeps approaching.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I have a question too, kid. If you really think I'm a vicious murderer who bashed someone's brains in and threw him down to the bottom of the sea, then what are you two doing confronting me alone, somewhere no one else can hear you?

NARRATOR

October bumps against the wall. She slowly reaches for her boot knife. Fish gets ready to karate. Waspiington takes another step then crosses his arms and points to the side with a clawed finger.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Also, look over there.

NARRATOR

Everyone looks. Leaning against another crate is the crane arm Brody removed, wrapped in dry oilskin.

OCTOBER

...Wait, but--

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Hey, maybe the detective thing won't work out. But I think you'd make a great novelist. That was a fantastic story.

FISH WITH LEGS

But--

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Like I said, I didn't kill him. I respect a guy who can con a con. Norm got away clean, so I call it square.

OCTOBER

But... You work for the Mothia!

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I work with the Mothia. I've got a less-than-legal package to bring to Casamanta. That's why I'm on this sketchy boat.

FISH WITH LEGS

Uh, excuse me, I've been reliably and repeatedly informed that it's the premiere vessel of the Reddorblack Sea.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

There's a human, a smuggler, and two broke nobles on it. It was raided last month by Imperial investigators, and again two weeks ago. The crew's made up entirely of fugitives and rebels. And the captain helps the Mothia smuggle supplies into Casamanta through the Prayers of Mant.

OCTOBER

What's your package?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Eau de Hedgehog, for a friend. It's Herovian, like you. Sensitive to moisture. And illegal to export, especially for a foreign national.

OCTOBER

So you didn't do it?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Sorry, kid.

OCTOBER

Scry. We have every passenger's alibi. The two voices. Someone running away, but... No one could've been there with Mr. Body. The crane is useless. What am I missing?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Give it some time.

OCTOBER

What? Oh my moon goddess... Fish with Legs. I know who did it.

FISH WITH LEGS

What!? What!? How!? Already!? Oh Fish with Legs are you ready to look into the eyes of the person who killed Brody Body? The gift of life is so precious to mortals, but they are so willing to take it away from one another. While you

(MORE)

FISH WITH LEGS (cont'd)

watch from the side, mourning each death without every truly understanding what death means to them.

(beat)

You know what? I think you may have been onto something, October... Not being able to save Brody may have affected me a tiny bit...

OCTOBER

It definitely did.

FISH WITH LEGS

You're such a good friend, noticing subtle things like that.

OCTOBER

So, do you wanna... talk? Or--

FISH WITH LEGS

Yes. But first: the denouement! I'll go gather the passengers!

NARRATOR

Finally, she figured it out! Yeah, I know for sure who it-- Oh. No that's not who I thought... Why would-- Oh! That makes sense... I'm not sure. Maybe you're right. We'll find out next time I guess. Let's stop.