

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

EPISODE 209

NARRATOR

Let's begin.

So last time we saw October Jones and Fish with Legs, they solved a murder mystery! Sort of. They solved like 80% of it. Long story short, the butler did it. Again, sort of-- Let's not get into that. After completing their B- detective work, October and Fish decided to team up with Wasington O'Connell, an archeology professor and former suspect who agreed to help them find the long lost Elemental Creature of Earth.

In exchange, Wasington wants to study the notebook October stole from the shady human facility Area 52, under the assumption that October wrote it. Because she lied and said she wrote it.

CASAMANTA

NARRATOR

Now they're trying to get through Casamanta, the seaside capital of Sandlantis. 70% of the street is taken up by wares and the rest is mostly people, a thick, solemn crowd. A wide variety of Giant Insects here, many of them hanging up strings of folded paper decorations or placing wide candles. Warrior Ants in wide hats with giant shields keep an eye on everything from little pedestals above street-level. A tall obelisk attached to a palace looms over the city, its white stone shining in the hot sun.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh no! Ow. Hot hot.

NARRATOR

Wasington leads the way, October eagerly at his heels while Fish lags behind, hobbling through the thick sand.

OCTOBER

So what makes you so confident your contact will be able to find a long lost, unfindable temple?

WASPIGTON

If anyone can, it's her. She's got a knack for finding things.

OCTOBER

Including unfindable temples?

WASPIGTON

Kid. You worry too much.

FISH WITH LEGS

Whoa! Whoa! I'm slipping!

OCTOBER

I just think it's important to acknowledge that the Royal Ant Empire has been here for decades and they haven't been able to find the temple. And neither has SPOOCKI. And we both know SPOOCKI's been snooping around here since the end of the Conqueror's War. What makes your contact so special?

WASPIGTON

Trust me.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, October doesn't trust easily. It has a lot to do with her family dynamic back home.

OCTOBER

Fish...

FISH WITH LEGS

She's a child of neglect.

WASPIGTON

Aren't we all?

FISH WITH LEGS

I'm not. Kinda the opposite-- Whoa! Ack--

OCTOBER

Fish?

FISH WITH LEGS

I fell and I lost my shoe!

OCTOBER

Hold on...

NARRATOR

October doubles back and digs through the sand drift for the missing stiletto. Sand drift? Like a pile the wind made. Waspiington offers Fish his hand.

WASPIGTON

Miss With Legs.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, how dashing. Thank you.

NARRATOR

Fish stands with his help and wobbles on one foot while October finds her shoe.

WASPIGTON

Anytime, darling.

NARRATOR

October puts it back on.

OCTOBER

There. All good?

FISH WITH LEGS

Honestly? I'm having a little bit of trouble with all this sand. A desert isn't exactly the best place for the Elemental Creature of Water.

NARRATOR

October looks around seekingly. Nearby, a group of protestors is holed up in a little barricade of signs. Nuns go through, handing out lunch.

OCTOBER

Maybe we should get you some more sensible shoes.

FISH WITH LEGS

Sensible shoes?

OCTOBER

Yeah, I don't think stilettos are really optimal for this climate. Maybe some sandals?

NARRATOR

October eyes a display near the protestors. The sandals look... functional.

FISH WITH LEGS

Audible sigh. I knew this would have to come up eventually, but it's... It's one of those conversations you can never really be ready for.

OCTOBER

What?

NARRATOR

Fish starts walking, and the others do too. October hunches as some Warrior Ants go by, heading towards the protestors.

FISH WITH LEGS

(deep breath)

You're a good friend, and you have great plans, and a big brain, but... I can't take fashion advice from you, October. You've worn the same boring grey tunic since I met you, you don't take care of your hair, and you don't respect capes.

WASPIGTON
(laughs)

OCTOBER
My hair?

NARRATOR
Someone had to say it.

FISH WITH LEGS
And that's okay. Fashion can be my thing. You can have conspiracies and other nerd stuff. It's healthy for us to have our own hobbies.

OCTOBER
What's wrong with my hair?

NARRATOR
No conditioner.

FISH WITH LEGS
I'm not gonna replace my sexy stilettos with sensible sandals. That's ridiculous.

NARRATOR
She takes October's hand and pats it kindly.

WASPIGTON
Sorry, kid.

FISH WITH LEGS
This guy gets it. Look at that hat.

NARRATOR
Waspington tips his hat with a flourish.

OCTOBER
Whatever...

WASPIGTON
Come on. Left here.

NARRATOR
They turn. This street is less busy but has more kids. They're clustered, quietly doing something with some green fabric. The buildings are getting shorter, great view of the obelisk from here. October pulls out her book and sketches, lagging behind Waspington with Fish with Legs.

FISH WITH LEGS
Whoa!

NARRATOR

Fish tripped again. October distractedly offers her an elbow, which Fish takes.

FISH WITH LEGS

It's all good. I'm okay.

NARRATOR

She waves at the kids, who aren't sure how to react. Waspington peeks over October's shoulder.

WASPINGTON

So what's the book for?

OCTOBER

(distracted)

Um... It's my research journal.

WASPINGTON

Research journal?

FISH WITH LEGS

AKA scrap book. Ah--

WASPINGTON

What are you researching?

OCTOBER

All kinds of stuff.

WASPINGTON

SPOOCKI?

NARRATOR

October half closes her book.

OCTOBER

Yeah...

WASPINGTON

(quietly)

I spotted some notes on Acular and Area 52 in there earlier.

OCTOBER

Oh. Yeah, we were there.

WASPINGTON

In Area 52?

OCTOBER

Briefly.

WASPIGTON

Hm.

OCTOBER

(glossing over that)

Anyways... Um... Yeah, I'm writing a book.

WASPIGTON

A book?

OCTOBER

About SPOOCKI. And Herovia... and Elemental Creatures and, um... our adventures? It's a work in progress.

WASPIGTON

Been there. Research is tough. You think you've got one theory, come out with the opposite.

OCTOBER

Yeah. Same thing. We're peers.

WASPIGTON

Fish, we're making a right.

FISH WITH LEGS

(to self)

Just one sexy foot in front of the other...

NARRATOR

October helps Fish around the corner, half-mounting some shallow steps that splay out from a church with golden doors.

WASPIGTON

So how's it looking?

OCTOBER

Good. When I go back home, I'll show it to the High Council and they'll be so impressed with all the new information that I'll probably get a high ranking position in the military. And a pardon... And they'll have to put all my countless discoveries in the National Schmuseum Museum in Herovia City. Y'know... hopefully.

WASPIGTON

Your plan is to go back to Herovia. After all this?

OCTOBER

Yes? Obviously.

WASPIGTON

Don't take this the wrong way, kid... but there are bigger things to aspire to than Herovia's approval.

OCTOBER

Like what? The Immortal Queen's approval?

WASPIGTON

No. The Royal Ant Empire and Herovia are two sides of the same system. I'm talking about real stuff, like what we're doing right now. Finding the Elemental Creature of Earth. Discovery. Making history.

OCTOBER

Oh...

WASPIGTON

Why settle for one museum when you can be in all of them? You've stepped into a larger world now, don't get so caught up with the petty stuff.

NARRATOR

He flicks the brim of his hat and keeps walking. October doesn't.

FISH WITH LEGS

You know, October, he might have a point about Herovia. Plus, he's got such a can-do attitude! And a great hat!

OCTOBER

Yeah... great hat.

WASPIGTON

(calling)

You two coming? We should pick up the pace.

FISH WITH LEGS

You know it! Ow. Ouf. Ah.

NARRATOR

Fish does her best trot forward. October follows-- does not follow Fish. She puts her book away and points her little nose towards a stall... selling hats.

OCTOBER

(self-hype breath)

NARRATOR

October slinks past someone selling cold drinks out of a hole in their house, cheap printed leaflets scattered on the counter. She passes the hats briskly and casually snatches one from a stack without breaking stride. Despite being the only human around and wearing that regrettable outfit, no one seems to notice. She keeps going and ducks under an awning hung with carpets, then flips the stolen hat onto her head.

OCTOBER

You still got it, 10-19...

NARRATOR

She catches up with Fish and Waslington, who are just going down a cramped side alley. There's a wooden lattice set across the second-storey windowsills above, covered in fruit vines. It paints a grid of shadow that moves across their bodies until Waslington pauses at the other end.

WASPLINGTON

Alright, this is-- Nice hat.

FISH WITH LEGS

What? When did you get a hat?

OCTOBER

...Just now.

FISH WITH LEGS

It looks familiar...

OCTOBER

Maybe you remember it from Cape Cap? We make hats just like these back home. High crowned, wide-brimmed sable fedora.. Snapped down in the front, up in the back. It's just a classic look. I've always loved it. Plus, now you don't have to worry about my hair.

WASPLINGTON

You know your hats.

OCTOBER

Yeah... I'm kind of an expert.

FISH WITH LEGS

No, where have I seen that hat before...?

OCTOBER

(changing subjects)

So your contact's this way?

WASPLINGTON

Yeah, come on.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

NARRATOR

Waslington leads them to a sketchy shop with boarded-up windows, and shoves at the shabby door to open it. Fish stares at October's hat. Inside is just packed with stuff. Everywhere you look, even the ceiling, is completely covered

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)
with full hooks, shelves, piles, etc. A totally overwhelming mass of oddball junk. Reminds me weirdly of October's room? I can't even see the walls.

FISH WITH LEGS
Wow, this place is... Um...

OCTOBER
Whoa! Fish with Legs, look at this!

NARRATOR
October runs to a huge piece of curved metal mounted on the wall.

OCTOBER
Do you know what this is?

FISH WITH LEGS
A... sled?

OCTOBER
This is formal armour for a Herovian General's riding iguana. Oh Herovia, I think it's actually real. It must be a hundred years old!

WASPIGTON
Looks like it's seen some action, judging by the pit marks.

NARRATOR
He inspects the aged metal as October strokes the engravings on the surface.

WASPIGTON
The patina looks right. Good eye, this is from the War.

OCTOBER
This is incredible. They don't make these anymore. They had a replica at the recruitment fair two years ago, but--

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
(with a cartoonish
Russian accent)
Phalanges off the artifacts.

OCTOBER
(mousey noise)

NARRATOR
October spins as an ant in a shapeless jeweled dress creeps eclectically into the room.

FISH WITH LEGS
Oh!

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
Humans and their oils... Your fingers spread disease.

OCTOBER
Um... I didn't...

NARRATOR
Washington pushes her aside and opens his arms.

WASHINGTON
(grandiosely)
The Astonishing Antoni!

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
Washington O'Connell!

NARRATOR
She takes the invitation, hugging him.

WASHINGTON
I got something for you... Eau de Hedgehog.

NARRATOR
He presents her with a small bottle of perfume.

WASHINGTON
I have a whole crate for you back in the port.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
How generous. I hope you had no trouble acquiring it for me.

WASHINGTON
Anything for the illustrious, astonishing Antoni.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
(laughs)
You are a flatterer.

WASHINGTON
Only with you.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
We both know that is not true, Washington O'Connell.

NARRATOR
They step out of the eight-armed hug and turn back to
October and Fish.

OCTOBER
So this is the contact?

WASHINGTON
Yeah, meet The Asotnishing Antoni.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Where I come from we don't let humans roam free. We lock you up and we eat you.

OCTOBER

Uh...

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

(laughs)

I am only kidding, little human. I will not eat you.

OCTOBER

...Neat.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

What was that?

OCTOBER

I said--

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Sh! Not you!

NARRATOR

She plucks a gem from her dress and listens intently to it.

OCTOBER

Ookay.

NARRATOR

She lunges at Fish.

FISH WITH LEGS

Ah!

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

You! You are the Elemental Creature of Water. And a fugitive! The crystal told me everything. And you have excellent taste in footwear. My eyes tell me that.

FISH WITH LEGS

Your crystals talk to you?

OCTOBER

What? There's no way--

WASPIGTON

You might think so. But she's never wrong.

OCTOBER

What exactly do they tell you?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The past, the present. When danger is near, or when I might be called upon to help a friend. Secrets.

FISH WITH LEGS

Can you hear what I'm thinking right now?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

(Mysteriously)

No.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, okay. Hi! I'm Fish with Legs. I'm a fish with legs. I'm the Elemental Creature of Water and me and my potential future best friend, and current regular friend, October Jones are searching for the Elemental Creature of Earth! So we can warn them an evil two-headed snake is trying to release Mamamorbis!

NARRATOR

The Astonishing Antoni consults her crystal.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The snakes... They have already found the Creatures of Fire and Air.

FISH WITH LEGS

And me. But I escaped!

OCTOBER

We need to work quickly to catch up.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Your name is bad, but I enjoy your determination, October Jones.

WASPIGTON

Yeah, this kid has a lot of potential.

OCTOBER

I do? I mean, yeah!

WASPIGTON

Show her your book, October.

OCTOBER

Oh, uh... Okay.

NARRATOR

October pulls out the Area 52 book and hands it over. The Astonishing Antoni flips through.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
You wrote this?

OCTOBER
Yes.

FISH WITH LEGS
(lying poorly)
She absolutely did. Yep. October wrote that book.

OCTOBER
Thank you, Fish.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
Much of this is accurate.

WASPIGTON
Impressive, right?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
How do you hold such knowledge of the Scientific Program for the Observation of Organisms Concerning Known Interests? You are a spy?

OCTOBER
(panicking mildly)
What? No! I... Uh... I'm a nerd. A conspiracy theorist? Research journal!

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
This is a gift for me?

OCTOBER
No!

NARRATOR
October snatches her book back.

WASPIGTON
I'm helping them search for the temple and the Creature. In return, she's letting me look through the book and pick her brain. I'm sure she'd be more than willing to let you have a look too. Right?

OCTOBER
Um... Yeah, sure.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI
I can help you.

OCTOBER
Really? I thought no one knew where the temple was.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The crystals say many things.

NARRATOR

She turns and rummages through her bookshelves, plucking out books to open and then discard.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Washington O'Connell, does October Jones know how the temple was lost?

OCTOBER

Yes actually, I've done some reading on that. The Elemental Creature of Earth, or Child of Durt as the Sandlanteans say--

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Hm. She shows promise, but she is arrogant.

OCTOBER

Excuse me?

WASHINGTON

It's part of her charm.

NARRATOR

Antoni pauses and moves on to another shelf, removing a flurry of books she hands off as she speaks.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

We begin with the Conqueror's War.

142 years ago, the Giant Insects of Mediterrantia work together with the Mystical Creatures of Breezil to fight against the invading Herovians. Except the elves, who fold like stack of cards. Together, they form the MAGI Coalition and they banish Herovia's greatest weapon, Mamamorbis.

OCTOBER

Greatest weapon...?

NARRATOR

Antoni moves to a new bookshelf.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

This leaves Herovia very upset. So they begin searching for the newly reincarnated Elemental Creatures to bring it back.

OCTOBER

That can't be right... Herovia wouldn't want to bring back Mamamorbis.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

You have been fed lies, October Jones.

WASPIGTON

Haven't you ever wondered why your government buries all traces of Mamamorbis? It's Herovia's great shame. They thought they could control the most dangerous monster to ever exist.

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah... That makes sense.

OCTOBER

Herovia must have had a reason.

WASPIGTON

Yeah. Win the war.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Ah there it is-- Oh, perhaps not...

NARRATOR

Antoni shoves a book back into the wrong shelf and continues scanning the room.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The humans come to Sandlantis. And they attack Casamanta. The city calls to the Guardians of Durt, the protectors of the Child of Durt... and ferocious warriors.

The Guardians send half of their forces to defend Casamanta, leaving the rest at the Temple of Durt with the Elemental Creature.

But it is a trap. While the Guardians are divided and distracted, the Scientific Program for the Observation of Organisms Concerning Known Interests attacks the Temple of Durt. The battle is short. The Guardians defend their home bravely, but the Herovians are ruthless.

Just as the battle nears its end, the Child of Durt emerges. He is furious over the disturbance to his home. He calls to the ruler of the desert sands, Durt, most destructive of the five gods. Together they bring a terrible sandstorm through the desert, burying the temple and all who fought inside.

Now the Child slumbers deep inside the temple... Waiting to be awakened when the people of Sandlantis require his aid once more...

FISH WITH LEGS

He's just waiting?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

So the story goes.

OCTOBER

The temple, all the people... all that history just... wiped out?

WASPIGTON

Gone. Lost to the desert.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Only the Guardians know where to look. But now they too are gone...

FISH WITH LEGS

What happened to them?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Governor Tarkant.

WASPIGTON

After the Royal Ant Empire helped push the Herovians out of Sandlantis, they left their own ruler here. An ant governor. The Guardians opposed her, so she wiped them out.

FISH WITH LEGS

(gasp)

OCTOBER

She killed them?

WASPIGTON

Like I said. Herovia and the Empire are two sides of the same problem.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Ah ha! There it is! Before the Guardians were destroyed, they left one clue.

NARRATOR

Antoni tugs a big dusty book free from a pile and clears a desk with her free arms. She drops the book for everyone to crowd around. WaspiGton and Antoni are maybe more crowded than necessary.

She flips to a page with scratchy squiggles and an old sketch of a medallion. It has squiggles pressed in rows into the metal rim that houses a huge, smooth gem in the middle. It's kind of shaped like a carrot.

OCTOBER

What language is this?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

This is Ancient Locust.

FISH WITH LEGS

The Amulet of Haht? What does that have to do with the Temple of Durt?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

You know this medallion?

FISH WITH LEGS

No, I just read the name.

OCTOBER

You can read this?

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah. Hop hop bounce bounce, hop bounce chirp. I had Ancient Locust classes back home with the glbclb.

OCTOBER

How many languages do you know?

FISH WITH LEGS

At least two!

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

This medallion was kept by the Guardians of Durt, blessed by Haht, the merciless god of the desert sun.

NARRATOR

She points to the vegetable-shaped amulet in her book. Well I was thinking it also kind of reminds me of asparagus, so now I'm less confident about the carrot thing.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

You see the centre of the medallion here? It is a gem...

FISH WITH LEGS

Oooh. Is it shiny?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The Amulet is a map. If you shine the light of Haht through this gem, the path to the Temple of Durt will reveal itself.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oooh! So it *is* shiny!

OCTOBER

So we just need to get this amulet and hold it up to the sun... Then we'll know where the temple is?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

That is right, young scholar with the silly name.

OCTOBER

Okay... So any idea where it is?

WASPIGTON

I got an idea.

OCTOBER

Really?

WASPIGTON

Yeah. An old friend, it's her statement piece. But I thought that thing was 25 years old, tops.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Its true purpose is a secret known only to the Guardians of Durt.

OCTOBER

Then how do you know about it?

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

The crystals say many things...

OCTOBER

Right.

WASPIGTON

Okay, it shouldn't be too tough to get our hands on this.

FISH WITH LEGS

Yay! Quest!

WASPIGTON (CONT'D)

But first, you two mind if I have a... *private* word with The Astonishing Antoni?

OCTOBER

Oh, sure.

THE ASTONISHING ANTONI

Indeed. We have much to discuss, WaspiGton O'Connell...

NARRATOR

She beckons him over to the back room, closing the door behind them.

FISH WITH LEGS

It's nice to have a quest again.

OCTOBER

Yeah. Thanks for going along with the book stuff by the way.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh no problem. You said it was a plan!

OCTOBER

I'm just afraid that if we tell Wasington the truth, he might not help us anymore. What use are we to him without the book, right?

FISH WITH LEGS

What?

OCTOBER

Well that's why he's helping us. So he can read the book. If he found out I didn't write it then he could just take the book and abandon us.

FISH WITH LEGS

Audible sigh... October, I think I remember a certain group of draculas telling you to be careful not to see relationships as transactional, right? I don't think Abby will be happy to hear about this relapse.

OCTOBER

You do realize we're not seeing Abby again, right? I feel like I should make sure you know that.

FISH WITH LEGS

Personal growth doesn't happen overnight, October. You have to keep working at it. And that means seeing Abby again.

OCTOBER

Whatever. Wasington seems really smart and useful to have around, so let's not let him down okay? At least for now.

FISH WITH LEGS

Fine.

OCTOBER

Plus he's just cool.

FISH WITH LEGS

And he has a great sense of fashion-- Wait a second!

NARRATOR

Fish spins around and points at October's hat.

FISH WITH LEGS

October! Have you noticed that your hat looks just like Wasington's!?

OCTOBER

What? Oh. Is this-- Ha. I guess we just have similar taste.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, that's a funny coincidence.

OCTOBER

Yeah. Neat.

NARRATOR

Boy oh boy, someone has issues. Anyways, I think-- Did you fall asleep?

Oh no! It's okay, you had a late night. Did you catch the-- Yeah if you caught the stuff about the vegetable amulet, you're good.

Well I think it looks vegetable-y.

I guess it doesn't really matter, but I like to be accurate.

Yeah, I was about to say... Let's stop.