

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

EPISODE 204

NARRATOR

Let's begin.

Last we saw October Jones and Fish with Legs, October was in recovery from her allergic reaction to Bees in a Trench Coat's bee sting. Despite this, she defiantly decided the pair should set out in search of the Elemental Creature of Earth, who's long been lost somewhere deep in the Royal Ant Empire. Unbeknownst to them, they're racing... against the snakes.

PORT

We now find them wandering one of the Royal Ant Empire's Auxiliary Breezilian Ports. Giant Insects, about the size of adult humans or three stacked fishes with legs, bustle in an orderly fashion across the neatly paved plaza and onto jutting piers. Many sort themselves into genteel queues to get on or off a boat. They walk on two of their legs, and wear either finicky clothes--long frills, tailcoats, ascots--or rough dock-working apparel. Got some class stuff going on here.

Fish with Legs leads the way along the water, squinting with industrious cheer at every steam ship they pass. October is out of her convalescence PJs and back in her grey Jones uniform with her fuzzy pink backpack bobbing on her back. She peers suspiciously around at the crowd.

OCTOBER

Alright, Fish with Legs... Keep your wits about you. We're in enemy territory now.

FISH WITH LEGS

Audible gasp! There's fancy dresses coming out of that boat! With fancy people in them!

OCTOBER

These bugs may look fancy, but that's only because they have legions of drones doing their dirty work.

FISH WITH LEGS

And there's fancy capes too. And a walking stick! Maybe I should get a walking stick?

OCTOBER

They're slimy, cowardly, master manipulators. That's how their empire conquered Mediterrantia.

NARRATOR

Fish with Legs finds a long twig and picks it up. She starts walking with it.

OCTOBER

All in service of their disgusting ancient immortal queen who bathes in the blood of her own children to stay alive.

FISH WITH LEGS

Strutting. Strutting. Strutting. Ah snap!

OCTOBER

Fish with Legs, are you even listening to me?

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah, yeah, yeah... Giant Insects bad, humans good. But more importantly, my walking stick just broke.

OCTOBER

(bemused)

Uh huh...

FISH WITH LEGS

Okay, you know what? I was trying to find the Agatha and then you started rambling about political stuff, and I got distracted and you should've seen that coming by now.

OCTOBER

Okay... Where's the Agatha? All the ship names are written in Ant.

FISH WITH LEGS

I think I remember offering to teach you.

OCTOBER

Why would you use any alphabet other than Human? It's perfect!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Come along darling, the Agatha is just this way!

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, convenient! Let's go!

OCTOBER

Wait, Fish! Maybe we should just lurk behind them and--

FISH WITH LEGS

Too late, this fishy train has left the station.

NARRATOR

Fish with Legs locomotes away toward the convenient couple, a distinguished ladybug leading a delighted cricket through

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

the port. A spider dock porter follows them, carrying two valises in each arm. October has a harder time getting through the crowd.

CHIRPY SINGER

Sweetheart! Look! It's just like I remember.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Yes, darling.

CHIRPY SINGER

Oh, but they painted the wheel red...

FISH WITH LEGS

Excuse me! Mr. Ladybug!

NARRATOR

The ladybug turns sharply, his long green frock coat flaring. He tilts his top hat in greeting.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

It's Lord, actually-- Oh. Good day, fish... with legs?

FISH WITH LEGS

Hello. I'm Fish with Legs. I'm a fish with legs. I'm the Elemental Creature of Water and me and my soon-to-be-best friend October Jones are looking for our boat the Agatha. We're taking it across the Reddorblack Sea as part of our journey to find the Elemental Creature of Earth. Who is hidden in a long lost temple somewhere in the distant sandy land of ancient treasures... Sandlantis!

CHIRPY SINGER

The Agatha! We're taking the same boat!

NARRATOR

The cricket is in a light, flouncy plum dress, with very poofed shoulders but trim sleeves. She leans over a bit to talk to Fish, all four hands on her knees.

CHIRPY SINGER

Did you and your friend get separated?

OCTOBER

(a little out of  
breath)

Fish! Slow down. Scry, you're so slippery.

CHIRPY SINGER  
(gasp)

NARRATOR  
October looks shift and aggrieved. The cricket stands up, antennae stiff. She shrinks back behind the ladybug's shoulder.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
A human!

NARRATOR  
The cricket clutches her purse closer.

CHIRPY SINGER  
(quietly)  
Dear, let's go. I'm sure they can find it on their own.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Now now, darling. We can't be rude. You needn't fear, she's clearly an adolescent. No kind of warrior.

OCTOBER  
What?

CHIRPY SINGER  
But sweetheart!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Don't believe all those crass stories. She's not going to eat you. Right?

OCTOBER  
Ew, no. Obviously not. Why would I eat bugs?

NARRATOR  
The cricket peers out at October from her hiding place.

CHIRPY SINGER  
But what if she lures us into danger with a hypnotic magic light only to trap us in her sticky net and leave us to starve to death.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
That doesn't happen anymore, Chirpy. That was wartime, a hundred years ago.

OCTOBER  
Or... Never. That sounds made up.

CHIRPY SINGER

Wartime, Shelldon? Then what do you call Cactusville, ants at a picnic? Or the massacre of Antlaska? Or the invasion of Sinkhole Sewer?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Don't make a scene--

FISH WITH LEGS

Don't worry about October. She doesn't have a magic light or a sticky net. She's harmless.

OCTOBER

Well, I wouldn't say harmless...

FISH WITH LEGS

And you know what? She was all nervous about meeting Giant Insects.

OCTOBER

I wasn't nervous...

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

You see? She's just as scared of you as you are of her.

OCTOBER

I'm not scared, but I am feeling ignored.

NARRATOR

The cricket steps cautiously out from behind the ladybug.

CHIRPY SINGER

But why is it missing limbs? It's disturbing.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Darling, introduce yourself. It's embarrassing when you're rude.

CHIRPY SINGER

(speaking slowly and  
loud)

Hello. My name is Chirpy Singer. What is your name?

OCTOBER

October Jones.

CHIRPY SINGER

Is that a normal human name?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Chirpy!

OCTOBER

Oh it's fine, I already have a complex.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

I am Lord Shelldon Spottingham, Chirpy is my fiancée.

FISH WITH LEGS

Ahem. Did you say lord?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Yes...

FISH WITH LEGS

Okay, okay... Interesting stuff... So you know things like how to play polo and why wine glasses look different from regular glasses?

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Yes... I suppose.

CHIRPY SINGER

Shelldon is quite well-connected, enough to book us passage on the Agatha, the premiere vessel of the Reddorblack Sea.

FISH WITH LEGS

Wait. Is this a fancy boat? Does it have mimosas?

CHIRPY SINGER

It has everything. It's been running this luxury cruise route for over fifteen years, it's famous!

FISH WITH LEGS

What the quack are we waiting around here for? Let's get going!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM

Quite right. Come along, spider.

NARRATOR

Shelldon folds Chirpy's spindly, chitinous hands into the crooks of his elbows and leads the promenade down the pier. Wait, is that it? The boat they're heading for is a paddle steamer, with a beautifully put together water wheel on the back. But that's like its only good feature. Kinda dingy. Only one dinghy. It's covered in barnacles too. Chirpy's eyes literally sparkle, entranced by the lackluster boat for some reason.

The spider porter drops their bags and Shelldon tips her a few small copper rings on her way out. Then he and his fiancée go up the wobbly boarding ramp. At the top stands a gruff beetle, dressed all sailor-y, with a black turtleneck  
(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
and knit cap with holes poked for his antennae. Kind of bug-eyed.

THE AGATHA

BRODY BODY  
(bored and grumpy)  
Welcome to the Agatha, premiere vessel of the Reddorblack Sea. Tickets please.

CHIRPY SINGER  
Oh, Shelldon!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Yes, dear. Good day sir, I am Lord Shelldon Spottingham and this--

BRODY BODY  
Tickets, Lord Shelldon.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Ehm, it's Lord Spottingham actually. (beat) ...Right then.

NARRATOR  
Shelldon pulls out their tickets. The beetle tugs his cap lower then grabs them with a dead glaze to his eyes, punches the holes, and returns them.

BRODY BODY  
Here.

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Thank you, good sir.

NARRATOR  
Shelldon tugs Chirpy to step into the boat, but she's now examining the beetle, entranced. He is keeping his eyes down and scowling. She reaches a hand out--

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Come along, Chirpy, leave the man to his work. You can bother him with your questions later.

CHIRPY SINGER  
Yes. Sorry. I'm just so excited to be on the Agatha!

SHELLDON SPOTTINGHAM  
Miss With Legs, I hope you and your companion will join us for afternoon tea once we're underway?

FISH WITH LEGS  
Yes. Tea and mimosas!

NARRATOR

They exchange waves, and October and Fish mount the ramp as the insectoid couple vanish into the cabin area, abandoning their bags on the dock.

BRODY BODY

Welcome to the Agatha, the premiere vessel of the Reddorblack Sea. Tickets please.

FISH WITH LEGS

Wow, what an elaborate and involved story have we got to tell you. It all started when I ran away from my home the glbclb--

OCTOBER

Long story short, we don't have tickets. But--

BRODY BODY

I can't let you on without tickets, so I don't know what you expect me to--

OCTOBER

--But our friend Dr. Stickman spoke with your captain.

BRODY BODY

Well no one told me about that, so... I need to see some tickets.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

Brody, please!

NARRATOR

A cicada hurriedly lumbers up behind the beetle. He's dressed in a sharp white coat with epaulets and matching brimmed cap.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

They're guests of the Agatha! There's no need to be so stern with them.

BRODY BODY

Yes, but they don't have tickets. My job is to check if guests have tickets. I can't do that if they--

HUMPHREY HUMMER

Hush. October Jones and Fish with Legs?

FISH WITH LEGS

Yes! That's us!

NARRATOR

He pushes himself in front of the beetle and shakes her fin, then October's hand.



OCTOBER

Our friend Dr. Stickman said he spoke with you.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

Indeed. Dr. Stickman's letter was certainly a surprise. Quite a predicament you're in! I'm Captain Humphrey Hummer. And this here is Brody Body. But please don't mind him, he's out of practice with the social niceties. Usually we keep him below-decks, but we're a little short-staffed today.

OCTOBER

Short-staffed?

HUMPHREY HUMMER

For regular reasons.

OCTOBER

Regular reasons?

HUMPHREY HUMMER

Yes. As in there are no suspicious circumstances tied to my recent cutbacks.

OCTOBER

Suspicious circum--

FISH WITH LEGS

Why do you keep repeating what he says?

OCTOBER

Because he keeps saying things that warrant repeating.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

If you would follow me Miss Jones, Miss With Legs... I'll bring you to your room. Only the finest for friends of Dr. Stickman. Brody, deal with those bags.

NARRATOR

Captain Hummer gestures to Chirpy and Shelldon's abandoned luggage at the end of the ramp before leading Fish and October past him onto the boat. Brody slumps as he heads down to get the bags.

Captain Hummer leads Fish and October past an open hatch in the centre of the foredeck. Foredeck? Like, the front. Deck. The rest of the deck is taken up by the main cabin, with a strip of covered walkway around the edge. The front of the cabin has a set of stairs going to an upper deck. They stop in front of a door on ground level.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

You're number 3, here is your key. Upstairs are the lounge and the dining room, as well as a luxurious cabintop

(MORE)

HUMPHREY HUMMER (cont'd)

veranda. We'll be serving tea every day, and dinner is at six. There's a schedule in your room. I hope you enjoy your time with us on the Agatha, the premiere vessel of the Reddorblack Sea.

FISH WITH LEGS

Thank you, you're so nice. We've been all kinds of places lately and you never know if the people you meet are gonna be fun wacky therapy dogs or dangerous evil skeleton sorcerers. But I have a good feeling about this boat.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

Only the best of luxury craft for the Elemental Creature of Water! And of course we welcome your human as well.

OCTOBER

Thanks. Feeling included.

NARRATOR

Humphrey Hummer nods amiably, then heads out. Amiably? Friendly-like.

HUMPHREY HUMMER

(calling) Unpack, relax, get yourselves settled! We'll be casting off soon.

NARRATOR

And he disappears around the back of the cabin, next to the water wheel.

FISH WITH LEGS

Alright, let's see this room.

#### FISH AND OCTOBER'S CABIN

NARRATOR

Fish with Legs throws the door open and her jaw drops.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh. My. Moon goddess...

MANDY MANDEL

Oh Mant, I'm so sorry. I was meant to be done before you boarded.

FISH WITH LEGS

What? No, not you. The stuff! I wanna touch everything!

NARRATOR

Fish rushes into the room. The outside of the Agatha could honestly use some work, but this guest cabin can only be described as fluxurious. Wood gleams, glass sparkles,

(MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
pillows plush. All the furniture is bolted to the ground,  
but there's probably a boat reason for that.

OCTOBER

Um... Who are you?

NARRATOR

Also there's a mantis there with a bunch of cleaning  
supplies.

MANDY MANDEL

Sorry, Miss Jones--

OCTOBER

And how do you know my name?

MANDY MANDEL

You're the only human on the manifest.

OCTOBER

Oh.

MANDY MANDEL

I work here. My name is Mandy Mandel. I was cleaning the  
room for you.

NARRATOR

October scrutinizes her. She's wearing a mustard yellow work  
dress, an apron, and a gold pendant around her neck. She  
twists it nervously in a big ol' mantis claw. Unlike the  
others, she has four legs and only two arms.

FISH WITH LEGS

--touch, touch, touch--

NARRATOR

Fish is touching everything, leaving fin prints on glossy  
surfaces.

OCTOBER

Okay... thank you. Could you please leave now? It's clean  
enough.

MANDY MANDEL

Yes! Of course! Sorry again. I'll just get out of your  
antenna.

NARRATOR

She grabs her stuff and leaves, closing the door gently  
behind her.

FISH WITH LEGS

--touch, touch, touch-- (panting) Oh blarg, this is gonna take a while.

OCTOBER

I don't know how much I like being locked up on this boat with all these bugs, Fish with Legs.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh. Hm... This is always a hard conversation to have with someone, but... I think that's because you're a teeny bit racist.

OCTOBER

No, it's not that.

FISH WITH LEGS

You made some progress with Crab Crab M.D., but you have a lot of ingrained biases...

OCTOBER

You don't feel weird at all about this whole situation? A boat with this reputation just happened to be available this short notice? I smell something fishy.

FISH WITH LEGS

You know... Maybe a boat is the perfect place for us to have that talk about marine sensitivity.

OCTOBER

Maybe I can take advantage of this though... Do some some research... Gather some intel for when we get back to Herovia.

FISH WITH LEGS

Back to Herovia?

OCTOBER

Yeah, after we save the world, we'll be heroes. Our long list of crimes won't matter anymore.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, I don't--

OCTOBER

Let's take a look around.

DUCHESS ANTINGBURG  
(indistinct outrage)

OCTOBER

What was that?

NARRATOR

October heads straight for the door.

FISH WITH LEGS

Wait, October are we leaving? Ugh... Hm... I guess I can finish touching everything later...

NARRATOR

Fish with Legs reluctantly follows October out onto the deck.

SETTING SAIL

A stately old ant in a luridly peacock blue frock and paisley shawl is haranguing Brody Body, who is almost buried in a pile of matching luggage. He dealt with the old bags at least.

DUCHESS ANTINGBURG

Is this any way to treat a member of the peerage? I tell you! And another thing--!

BRODY BODY

Ma'am...

DUCHESS ANTINGBURG

Ma'am? Ma'am?! How daaaare you, I am Duchess Antingburg of Antcaster and I will not tolerate being addressed with such disrespect for my station!

NARRATOR

The ant's big hoop skirt keeps whacking him in the shins as she paces beside him.

BRODY BODY

Your grace...

DUCHESS ANTINGBURG

Hmph. That's better. Now hurry up.

NARRATOR

She bustles around the other side of the cabin, trailing the unfortunate beetle.

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeesh. October did you see...

NARRATOR

October is inspecting a very large crate near the nose of the ship, with a symbol like four interlocking circles burned into the side.

OCTOBER

What does this say?

FISH WITH LEGS

Uh... I dunno. It's not Ant.

OCTOBER

Hmmm.

NARRATOR

She flips open her book and starts scribbling. Heh. Anthropology. ...You have no taste.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, is this your plan to find The Elemental Creature of Earth?

OCTOBER

What? Oh, yeah...

NARRATOR

October continues copying the symbol, as Fish looks over the list of squiggles above it.

OCTOBER

It's kind of just random notes about the Temple of Durt... It's in the desert, but there's no map or anything in here...

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

A map to the Temple of Durt?

FISH WITH LEGS

Ah!

OCTOBER

Son of a witch!

NARRATOR

A wasp sits up on top of the crate. He's wearing a scarlet buttondown unbuttoned halfway down his chest, tucked into tight tan pants. And a brown hat. Scruffy, but dashing. He's smirking at them.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I think all of history is looking for a map to the Temple of Durt.

NARRATOR

The wasp leans down and snags October's book out of her hand.

OCTOBER

Hey, give it back!

*[pages flipping]*

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Interesting... Where'd you get this?

NARRATOR

October swipes her book back.

OCTOBER

That's personal.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I was just sitting here waiting for someone to work the crane so I could finish with my cargo. You're the one who walked up and started blabbing.

OCTOBER

Oh yeah, which is obviously an invitation to steal my journal.

NARRATOR

He hops off the crate, his antenna cocked.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

You wrote that?

NARRATOR

October crosses her arms.

OCTOBER

Maybe. None of your business, thief.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Hm. I'm just curious... How'd a young Herovian and the Elemental Creature of Water end up looking for the Temple of Durt?

OCTOBER

Also none of your business.

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah... Stealing October's book was definitely a misstep. She doesn't really trust strangers. And she also has issues with Giant Insects, Mr...?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

O'Connell. WaspiGton O'Connell.

FISH WITH LEGS

Hi! I'm Fish with Legs, I'm a fish with legs. And you already know I'm the Elemental Creature of Water...

OCTOBER

Yeah, how exactly did you know that?

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

I'm a professor of archeology at the University of Atlanta. My interest is academic.

OCTOBER

Right, because if you had an agenda, you'd tell us.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Fair enough.

NARRATOR

October stares him down. He casually examines her, then turns his attention to Brody the Beetle who comes back around the main cabin.

DUCHESS ANTINGBURG

And don't you dare scuff a single valise!

BRODY BODY

(grumbling)

I'll show you scuffs, you withered old molt.

NARRATOR

He spots them, and goes out of his way to avoid them on his way back to pick up more of the old ant lady's stuff. Wow she brought a lot of stuff.

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Maybe we can help each other out. I have some business in Casamanta... and you have some pretty compelling stuff in that book. Think about it.

OCTOBER

Yeah. Sure...

WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

You seen that mantis girl lately? She was supposed to help me load my cargo.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, she went that way.

NARRATOR

She points toward to back of the boat.



WASPIGTON O'CONNELL

Well then. Ladies.

NARRATOR

He gives them a lazy salute with his hat, then walks away.

FISH WITH LEGS

He seemed... nice?

OCTOBER

Nice?

FISH WITH LEGS

Well he has a nice hat.

*[horn noise]*

NARRATOR

Brody Body the beetle appears once again, scanning the deck before hoisting the docking ramp over his shoulder.

BRODY BODY

Miss Jones, Miss With Legs. We're casting off. Enjoy your voyage and so on...

FISH WITH LEGS

Thank you, Brody Body.

BRODY BODY

Uh huh...

NARRATOR

He continues past them to open a locker in the cabin and stows the ramp. He has to do some shoving, it does not want to stay in there. October stares out at the port as it slowly recedes.

OCTOBER

Goodbye, Breezil. Goodbye, Herovia...

FISH WITH LEGS

Yeah, very exciting. Lots of new friends! New adventures, new places.

OCTOBER

I'm not really interested in making friends with a bunch of posh bugs.

FISH WITH LEGS

Oh, right. Lots of new resources for spying and history and nerd stuff.

OCTOBER

(sigh)

FISH WITH LEGS

Come on. Let's go have some virgin mimosas. Mimosas always make you feel better.

OCTOBER

No, they always make you feel better.

FISH WITH LEGS

Which makes you feel better.

NARRATOR

As Fish skips away, October reluctantly pushes off from the railing and follows her toward the upper deck. Oh. I think technically any covered structure on the deck of a boat is called the cabin. But the rooms inside are also called cabins. Right? I don't know, I'm confused now. Let's stop.