

TRICE FORGOTTEN - BELOW DECKS 10 - WRITERS' ROUNDTABLE

CONTENT WARNINGS

- Colonialism
- Racism
- Institutional Racism
- Mentions of; Kidnapping, Trauma, American Prison System, Poverty

[SHOW THEME]

RAFAELLA

Hello, lovely listeners and welcome to what is for now our final episode of Below Decks, where we dig into some of the research questions, stories, and generally tangential interesting things that went into making Trice Forgotten. I'm Raf my pronouns are she, they, and I'm the director of the series, as well as one of the writers. So by now, you will have listened to the entire series, and if you haven't, it's probably worth doing that before you listen to this episode because we are going to spoil everything. <laugh>, I'm so pleased to have with us today our wonderful guest, Morgan Givens, as well as Nemo. Morgan. Could you introduce yourself with your relationship to the show and your pronouns?

MORGAN

Sure. Uh, my name is Morgan Givens. I am one of the writers on the show, and my pronouns are he, him.

RAFAELLA

And Nemo. Would you like to say hello?

NEMO

Hi, it's me again, <laugh> Nemo. I use they / them pronouns

RAFAELLA

And the reason that we have Morgan with us today, as well as the pleasure of his company, is we are gonna round out Below Decks by doing a little bit of a writer's round table where we talk about the process of the show coming together, what it was like to break the story for this season, creating the show bible, and just generate all, all of the behind the scenes magic, the, uh, I know everyone loves. So I'm gonna kick off with asking Nemo and Morgan some questions because the show began with them. So I'm gonna give you the broadest possible question to start with. <laugh> How did this happen?

NEMO

<laugh>

RAFAELLA

Why are we here?

MORGAN

Serendipity? <laugh>.

NEMO

Yeah. Yeah. It's quite a funny one cause I was working on it for quite a while by myself in that I like pitched it and then kind of was thinking about loads of things. And then at a certain point, Rusty Quill were like, oh, you need to like

write a bible, basically like a show bible so that when you bring other people on, they'll be able to understand what the show is. And I had never written one before and had already begun talking with Morgan by then, I believe.

MORGAN

Yeah, yeah. I came on right. Yeah. I think there was a show bible. I, I'm pretty sure. Yeah. Yeah. With all your dexterity and like the d n d like Yes. Yes. <laugh>.

NEMO

Yeah, yeah. And Morgan was essentially like, just download everything that's in your brain onto a piece of paper. And I was like, okay, I can do that. <laugh>.

RAFAELLA

For those who've never heard the term show bible before, what does that mean?

NEMO

It's like a really cool template that says things like what the tone of the show is, shows that are like a comparison for it. Uh, debrief of all of the characters of the plot, the episodes, what the, like audio atmosphere is. Some other things about like marketing, but it's essentially a huge document so that anyone who's working on the show can find any information that they want about the show in it. For me, I was was writing it in a way that, because I knew I was gonna have other writers working on it, that you two could read this document and if you had a question like what would this character do in this situation that you could scroll to their like little area and be like, oh, right, okay, here's a little bit

of their voice and here's a little bit of the desires in the world. Hopefully it worked out. I mean, you guys worked very well, so it seems like it was okay.

MORGAN

<laugh>. No, I, I think it, it was far more than Okay. It was like really cool. Like, like Nemo said, I was like, whatever is in your head, let's get it on this paper. You know? And then I kind of view the show bibles as like, you know, the rough draft of the story and then you, you're able to start chiseling it. But the thing is, Nemo had all these great characters and this great story in their head, and it was like, okay, now we're gonna work together to chisel and refine. And it, it, it was more so about listening to what Nemo had to say about what the story was and who the characters are, and then working with them to make it as, as sharp as we could before we were able to bring on Rafaella, who found all the little plot holes that we had missed questions about characters.

Because at a certain point you become so into it, it's always great to have another set of eyes very creatively to come in and be like, this is really cool, but why on earth would they do? Then we're like, no, we don't know. We, we should figure that out. It's like building the background of these characters and a lot of stuff in the show bible never makes it into the show, but it allows us to create the depth for the world and who these people are so that when they do things, there's a sense of real motivation behind it. Even if you don't have the full history of these characters who are able to write the dialogue, real dialogue. Because we knew who they were, I was able to learn who they were by working with Nemo and then, you know, it was nice to add little different things to them, like, Alestes being a foodie. I'm like, yes. You know? So that's when you get to like put the decorations up. I think once you have the show bible, you get to decorate it, if, if that makes sense.

NEMO

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

As, yeah. Someone who kind of came into the show later. So the, the show bible was my onboard point into the series. I'd say a, a very successful document. It also shouldn't surprise anyone to hear at this point that as well as all of the things that Nemo listed that you would normally find a show bible, there was a PhD's worth of research <laugh>

MORGAN

So much!

RAFAELLA

So many links to so many YouTube videos and websites and like book citations...

MORGAN

I learn so much.

RAFAELLA

...so much. Um, I think that was the thing I felt most daunted by when I came with, I was like, oh God, am I gonna have to read all all of this <laugh>?

NEMO

Yeah. At one point someone was like, Hey, could you make like a shorter version of the literary document? Yeah. I was like, yeah, okay, I can do that. And it still came out to like 20k and I was like, Hmm. Interesting. <laugh>. Well
It worked out. It's fine.

RAFAELLA

And you also, Nemo provided I think a Pinterest board as well. Yeah.

NEMO

Oh yeah.

RAFAELLA

Yeah. Well see. We're working in an audio medium, but having, getting us all onto the same page visually, was I something I found incredibly helpful coming into the series, yeah.

NEMO

Mm-hmm.

MORGAN

Yeah, it was, I mean, I found it helpful because it, at least I, I realized I'm a much more visual person than I, I realized and I'm like, oh duh, you love to read. Of course <laugh>, that's a visual medium. It combined with the story bible helped me figure out the tone of their voices, the way they might carry themselves. Like seeing them all in that group picture at the top of this document that Nemo had. Like I was like, this is like the pirate family. And then I, you can start seeing some of those dynamics. You can start imagining those

dynamics into those characters. Which I think for me, as someone who did not have them, in my mind, I didn't, I could not see them in the way because I was not, their creator, allowed me, I think a, a glimpse into that, which I, I hope made it so that once they were starting to be written, again, they sounded like the essence of what Nemo had in mind for them. And also like, full, full people. cause I'm like, dang, look at them. Like, especially Siva. And I'm like, they, they all like posing and it was like, <laugh>, I want to join. Like let me in. You know, so.

NEMO

Yeah, I, I I did draw a little like character line because I was like, I need to make sure that everyone understands that Noor is big <laugh> . Like that's most of the reason why I drew it. I was like, no is like head and shoulders above everyone else and everyone needs to visually understand that

RAFAELLA

<laugh> Everyone needs to respect Noor.

NEMO

<laugh> Yeah.

MORGAN

That's right.

RAFAELLA

And Nemo, you also I think drew the ship as well?

NEMO

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

That was something I found incredibly useful because see when you're working on audio, the sort of spacial distances between things, proximity incredibly useful when it came to directing the series as well, because things like, okay, well if this scene takes place in Alestes's cabin, where is that? So how much can you hear the waves in the background? How audible are other members of the crew as they kind of go about their business? So having Nemo's sort of diagram of the ship and where everything is placed is really important. But also in terms of things like the crew, they kind of, they have their own cubicles in the lower deck, but they're just separated by probably just fabric.

NEMO

Mm.

RAFAELLA

Or something very thin. So, you know, even knowing that this is a space where everyone's on top of each other all the time and there there isn't really privacy, this isn't like a luxury kind of steamer where you have your own cabin <laugh> that that changes the dynamic in a, in another way as well. So all of that stuff in the bible then feeds back into how you write the world and how the characters move in the world.

MORGAN

For sure

NEMO

Yeah. It was, it was definitely one of those things when I was first looking at ships and I made that diagram to understand how the ship would be layered up from a skeleton kind of view, and yeah, space is something that I just couldn't wrap my head around cause I'm also very, very visual and was like, I just don't have any concept. I watched loads of YouTube videos of people like giving their yacht tours and I think the Netoansom is like closer in size to a large yacht than like, I guess a lot of the sail ships, you know, the like kind of period dramas, men on ships kind of thing. They're on very big like British imperial vessels and that's not what the Netoansom is. It's a quite condensed ship. And so kind of understanding how small everything would be and how, yeah, On top of each other they would be. And they're all like collectors. Right. And I remember writing that into the, the bible, which is that like once they start bringing stuff onto the ship, it's going to be a fight over like me or the stingrays <laugh> <laugh>. And yeah, I just thought that that was a good way to remember, even though it doesn't, I don't think it really play comes into play so much in season one. A good thing to remember that like they are people who've just met each other, they're not gonna immediately know how to live of each other and they will be tense because of it. <laugh>.

MORGAN

Oh yeah.

RAFAELLA

Yeah. We know the downstairs, the downstairs of the ship, I, I've picked up so much nautical language in the series,

NEMO

<laugh>, hey, Below Decks

RAFAELLA

Oh, the name of this show? <laugh>, we know that below deck in the ship, they're starting to buy for space. We know that. There's obviously, we've got our aquarium down there and we know that Inez is building a bit of a laboratory

NEMO

mm-hmm. <affirmative>

RAFAELLA

...down there as we find out in episode 10, an explosives laboratory, <laugh> an, an an armory <laugh>.

NEMO

Yeah. I'm very excited. Like cause I, I do think that they have a little corner in the ship, which is literally just behind curtains and nobody, everyone respects Inez's privacy enough. But they fully have just been like stealing gun powder from places and have a whole like weapons table lined up. Baker's like, you know, I'm not gonna like sneak in, look at anything <laugh>. And now I'm sure Baker's probably like, God, I wish I had like an elf on a shelf. Like,

MORGAN

Oh my God, yo, season two, you've gotta have some illusion to like Baker being like, don't let Inez behind the curtain alone. <laugh>.

RAFAELLA

Actually I wanted to ask a question. I'm taking us back a little bit in the timeline because Sure. Um, Nemo you, you talked on previous episodes about how this was started as much more of a food-based story. So I wonder what was the germ of this? The, the characters or the piracy or the sort of colonial critique? Where did, where did it begin?

NEMO

Good question. So it came through a couple of different things, which was because I was working at the Natural History Museum and I was looking at all these fish all the time. And I believe this fun fact, I've already said that I was looking at this jar and it said Alestes on it because that is a type of fish. I was thinking about collections and I was thinking about a vehicle to talk about exploration and travel and I thought that food would be a great way into that. I have to say quite because I really liked anime <laugh>, um, like One Piece and Toriko, which are like adventure shows where they do go to places and they eat food and that is a big like, aspect of it. And I thought, but one thing that they don't really talk about in those is like how food links up to colonization and imperial expansion.

And as we've seen an episode eight, tea is where that kind of lies I guess like calcified a bit in that tea was brought by the British to India and South Asia from China on plantations. So the idea of Alestes and to an extent Baker being interested in food is the kind of remnant of that in that they are the kind of people who are able to travel between places and eat new food. I mean, you

know, that's not something that a lot of people could do at the time. And even though I wouldn't say that either of them are privileged people, they do have the privilege of trying new foods in different places. And I thought that that would be a, a fun way to give us story arc <laugh>. And then everyone was like, you should actually talk about the colonization and the museum stuff. And I was like, ah, yes. That is probably the, the bigger story here than the food. So the food gets to be the fun stuff <laugh>.

RAFAELLA

And were they, were they always pirates? Was it always a pirate story in your head?

NEMO

They were always merchants I think and other people would make them pirates. And the fact that they can't exist as like nautical merchants, the fact that they have to survive doing criminal activity or like what people see as criminal activity, I think yeah, that's where the change became.

RAFAELLA

It's just, I find that so interesting cause see when, well whenever I'm telling people about the podcast, I'm like, oh yeah, it's a queer pirate adventure. That's is what I go to first. And again, I don't wanna kind of retread too much stuff, but Nemo you've talked before about your kind of love for the nautical epic, but also this slightly queasy relationship with it. And that was wasn't the way that it was sold to me how I came on board with this project, cause as you've said, Nemo and Morgan, you'd already been working on this for some

time. I was writing for Cry Havoc, which is yet to come out and April one of our executive producers messaged me and said, "Hey, do you like Pirates?"

MORGAN

<laugh> Why does that sound like the email that I got from April? That was like, "what would you think about working on a pirate show?" And I was like, who are you? Hello. Lovely to meet you. What?

RAFAELLA

But no, it's fun to think of the show and instructive to think of the show as in the pirate genre because I think that's the thing that alerts you to so many of the differences between this story that we're telling and you know what and who usually occupies the foreground, yeah in a pirate epic. And yeah, as soon as you sort of go into, well what if these characters are forced into, you know, being on the, you know, the quote unquote the wrong side of the law kind of <laugh> through necessity that then I think it's a much more interesting way of exploring the kind of that the moral side of pirate essentially.

MORGAN

Mm-hmm. Yeah, for sure. It feels like it has a lot of parallels I think, to the things that people go through today. You know, because I can at least speak to the United States, you know, they'll criminalize behavior and it's like, but you're saying this is criminal behavior, but maybe if you actually gave people the food they need it. Cuz there's no reason that people shouldn't have food. Like it's, a lot of times they'll look at the action without viewing the entire picture or the intent behind the action and just be like, oh, you're a bad person when it's really about maintaining power over these people who have quote unquote

less than by design. And so it's, it was really interesting for me to see these people attempting to get out from underneath the yolk of like this life and then constantly kind of getting pulled back in by the forces from their past. You know, Alestes is trying, you know, this whole, it's, it's her trying to escape so many different forces from her past, physical and mental and constantly just those tendrils kind of keep coming back and, and grabbing her almost by the ankle and slowing her down, pulling her back. And I, I see that with a lot of folks, you know, with our, our prison system. I mean, there's, there's that, that parallel is for sure there when we think about recidivism and incarceration, it's almost like she's incarcerated in her past and every time she tries to get out it's like mm-mm, hey, hey, row your boat. You know? And it's like, I don't want to do that. So, um, that was one of the ways it kind of resonated, at least with me while writing. I'm like, you know, just tonally, thematically, I'm like, I, I feel like there are a lot of folks who are marginalized by society and aren't marginally by any means, who, who could kind of, if it's not immediately recognizable, can feel that. I mean at least, at least I felt it while writing, which was dope, you know, in a sad way. But dope <laugh>.

NEMO

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

The capitalism side of the equation as well resonated with me in terms of, you know, we know what Alestes wants, which is a big pile of money and a nice beach, and she's been set up to fail by the system that she's in. There's no way she's gonna achieve the life that she wants, you know, I legally kind of by going

through the, you know, just, just go through the proper channels. <laugh>, which is a very, that's a, that's a very UK bit of racism. Like

NEMO

Yeah, yeah. Like Alestes at the beginning of the show, they are starving, you know, and I, and she's trying really, really hard not to steal from people. And it is that decision in episode six, question mark, where she tries really hard to haggle, but there is just no money because any trade that she's been doing, she's disadvantaged in and Gammon, as we find out, has had this choke hold on markets. He's like a very successful pirate. He's doing what he's supposed to be doing, which is like making sure that nobody can succeed without his saying so. And like able to keep people from succeeding and that is what he is doing.

So I've been so excited, like to be able to talk about Gammon slash Graham obviously, because he's like at the end and, and he is kind of the big boss, but also like, oh my God, he's such a piss baby <laugh> more people kicking him while he is down

MORGAN

<laugh> But isn't that Al always is, it's always the biggest blustery is folks and like you just poke 'em a little bit and they'd be like, <laugh>, like a balloon just <laugh>. You know, people like Gammon are puffy because they're not actually puffy, you know, that's what we say here. Like, oh, you getting puffy, like you swelling up and he walks around constantly swelled up. But it's like you're threatening to the folks who have yet to be able to see you for who you are. At least it's how I kind of saw it. And then once Alestes, from my view, once she started seeing him for what he was, that was a threat to him as well. But he, he's so nasty he couldn't let her go, you know,

NEMO

Desperate to like keep the only person who like still saw him as anything good or positive and well if I can't have her be thinking of me as positive, then she will still think of me. She's like, gross man.

RAFAELLA

But you have heard of me <laugh>. Yeah. I loved writing Gammon slash Graham because all of those things are absolutely true and at the heart of him, but he also has to be an effective villain. Um, cause I think very often you end up defining the central kind of concern of a series through it antagonist. Like they end up kind of embodying the kind of bigger existential forces that you're kind of fighting against. And it was so fun to write the flashbacks to Alestes's past with Gammon and write that kind of slightly queasy parental relationship that's going on. And then of course write everything that comes after that as very heavily, I think modeled on like an estranged parent-child relationship of like, you know, you can't pretend that the relationship never existed and it's this specter that kind of haunts all of their conversations. And so, you know, it's real when Alestes digs up the treasure and kind of finds the note from Gammon going, oh, better luck next time. That's a real betrayal. So that to, to stick giving, giving it emotional stakes as well as obviously Gammon is representing a lot of political forces that are antagonistic. Yeah. I so enjoyed writing his episodes.

MORGAN

That was great, like those scripts were so cool. And my question I, I was wondering if for, for like the two of you was, is that the first time that in y'all's minds or within the, the show that he kind of turned his cruelty on Alestes in a

way that perhaps he hadn't before? Because yeah, that's, that's just interesting that that would be like, the thing for her that is like, I can't do this with you no more, for it to have been like the treasure for that to have been such a big thing. But I, I guess I was just wondering about how that would've landed for her if, like, internally?

RAFAELLA

I, I think there's, it's up for interpretation in the, you know, we don't see a lot of Alestes and Gammon's past together, so you are kind of allowed to infer in the gap and I think this is sort of my, my personal kind of canon about it. This is the place that I was writing from was, you know, it's quite possible that Gammon has kind of been casually cruel to Alestes cause that's sort of who, who he is as a person, but also he holds her up to feel so special. Which is such a powerful thing, especially I think, you know, when you are at quite a formative age, which we know that she was when she joined the crew and it's such a calculated bit of cruelty when he sort of betrays her with the treasure hunt and the turtles because it's harking back to what I think was a meaningful moment for, you know, in the past, this kind of moment of just the two of them on a treasure hunt.

He's asking her about, you know, what do you really want? Like he's kind of, that's the beginning of him being like, oh, she's gonna be my heir and kind of, you know, she's gonna, she's sort of my daughter that I never had. And then to take that moment and use it to just kick her when she's down, I think, yeah, it's a very deliberate bit of cruelty and I don't know, this is maybe where I get more kind of, this is my head cannon. I don't know how much Gammon would've thought that through as to how it would land on her. Like I don't think he's like a master chess player or anything. I think he's just sort of like this girl I'm so

pissed at her, I'm gonna, you know, run away from my crew. Will you? Well how about this, maybe a bit of an attempt to kind of remind of like, you know, you are, you are not better than me. You belong down in the dirt with

NEMO

Me? I do like as well that like this episode with the turtles, I remember at some point someone was like, can we change the turtles to something? And I was like, no, absolutely not. Like part of it is A estes being quite desperate about something with a very child likeness. And I think I've mentioned before that Alestes hasn't been allowed to be a child <laugh> like ever.

MORGAN

Yeah.

NEMO

And like has always had to be fighting and always had to be an adult. And the fact that Gammon effectively ruins the one kind of like child, like Alestes is on a pirate treasure hunt with someone who is being really nice to her and is about the like share loads of money with her and she's like, hell yeah, this is like a child's every dream, right? Like we've got these turtles and they're magic and we're gonna take them to the treasure. And we found this huge amount of treasure and it made everyone really like me and it was really cool. And to specifically use that memory against Alestes, I think was really pivotal when I was reading these scripts and being like, that is the most knife in the back thing that Gammon could do to her. Which is take the one good memory of being allowed to be childish and to completely ruin it for her forever.

MORGAN

Yeah. Thank you for explaining that cause, yeah, that's like, it's like a very psychic, yeah. Especially knowing he would've known what happened to her as a small person. He would've gotten that even though as you said, he's, he's barely playing checkers, you know, <laugh> but <laugh>. Yeah, that makes total sense. And I totally understand why you were like, Uhuh them, turtles aren't going. And I was like, all right, bet <laugh>, even just, just hearing you kind of say that, I'm like, I get that there's that magical that that sense of childishness that, you know, he, he, he ruined it and whatever good memory she had, so man, Alestes needs a break. Yeah. I just wanna like, but I wanna bake her a cake or something, you know, like some cookies, some glazed potatoes, I don't know, like she needs something

RAFAELLA

Well we talked in our, um, episodes with Sam, our composer about composing the kind of different bits for different characters and one of the conversations I had with Sam early on was when it came to Alestes, like, look, there is something deeply childlike that's still within, there is still a spark of that in her as much as well. So, but that she's never, you're absolutely Nemo that she's never been allowed to be a child, but holding onto the hope of it. And we see that so much in, you know, she's hearing the song that her father used to sing her and kind of finding the play and it's, it's all about, you know, this is a very big like, hero's journey, Joseph Campbell that's kind of like, but kind of so much of character's journeys often is like trying to find a route back to childhood, which kind of never really existed in the first place for her, which is really just. But like, you know, even her thing of like, I wanna, I wanna retire on a beach

with a big pile of money. Like again, that's like what a 10 year old wants, that's, you know?

MORGAN

That's true. It's like she got arrested where things began to go terribly wrong. You know, because I, that's what trauma does. It kind of arrests part of you, you know, and you continue to grow, but then you build all these defenses to protect that little traumatized part and it's like she just kept getting parts of her internally arrested. And I think yeah, that's, those, those parts come out, you know, despite her attempting to act like she has a hard edge

NEMO

<laugh> and every time she tries to trust someone or like allows herself to trust someone, eventually miscommunications happen and it takes her back two steps again. And [sighs]

MORGAN

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

Uh, well, well while we're talking about traumatized characters, I was gonna ask you about Siva next. Especially because Nemo, you, you said that Siva was, oh, maybe the first character that you kind of conceived or the were the second character maybe, but like very early. So he's really intrinsic to kind of the heart of the show. So yeah. Tell, tell us about Siva and where he came from.

NEMO

Hmm. <laugh> Siva comes from, I think my, as you said in the show bible, there is a PhD level of research, and I've said this in quite a few things, in that I have this love-hate relationship with finding out about information <laugh>. And I think that Siva came from that, like desperately wanting to impress people that he should not have to impress and their like interpretations of him, like the, the more intelligent he can seem and the better his maps are and the more research that he can do. He can grow in like people's estimation or like, he just like has that like hierarchy in his head where he is like, this is what I'm reaching for Queen's Museum gonna get there. And like, that's what everyone, that's not even what everyone wants from me. Just like, that is where I should be aiming for because that is the ultimate of knowledge and experience and coolness and yeah, I, I think that Siva came from there.

MORGAN

It sucks to realize in some ways when people kind of take advantage, I think, again of the innocence of children, and start to mold them in that way. And, and that's kind of what that does when they, cause they're like, they're trying to put boxes in constraints on the possibilities we have for ourself. And so it's, you know, looking at Siva even throughout this show, it's like he's pushing towards these boxes that they've put to, you know, and he's pushing towards the edge of this while also it seems like he doesn't even realize he's also kind of simultaneously starting to dismantle that and it internally I can sense some of that. You can, I could at least sense him starting to begin even if he didn't realize he was questioning it to question it.

NEMO

Mm-hmm. I like even though Nani actually was kind of like hinting at those things, didn't have the confidence to be like, to, to fully say it out loud what she wanted to say. And, and you see like hints of her being like, you shouldn't trust them so much, but also she's not in a great situation herself. And I think there was a weighing up for her with like, well maybe he can kind of quote unquote get out, or like, make some money or, or make his life more than it could be here where Yeah, there's loads of stuff in, in that as well um, and like the belief in the Imperial system. But at this point in time, like Siva, like possibly did have an opportunity to not live in poverty his entire life by subscribing to these things, but that, that through this series he has people now like Alestes and Baker and Inez and Noor, not telling him what to do, but to give him the fuller context of why people are saying these things to him. And he can go to them and ask for advice and even his like, you know, autistic realization in episode seven and eight where Baker is like, people aren't saying what they truly mean to you, uh, and he has to be like, oh, right, okay, that's weird <laugh>, why wouldn't they?

MORGAN

Like, why wouldn't you say what you mean?

NEMO

Yeah, exactly. And all of those kind of things. And yeah, I I I think he was a good vehicle for the screwed up nature of how it's still happening in the 21st century <laugh>.

MORGAN

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

And he and Alestes are a situationally the same, right. Because they're completely opposed in temperament, but they are displaced children.

NEMO

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

Like they both have parental figures, but they are displaced children and that's sort of what the, this system does of, kind of removes you from your roots. And then in the case of Siva kind of goes, oh, but you, you could, you could be the special one. Like you could try, you could try and assimilate into, um, into whiteness essentially into imperialism and, and then we'll hold you up as an example to everyone else to kind of go, you look, you see, it's, it's a, it's a very like power protecting itself system that I think is present in both of those characters, which maybe is part of why they're both so central.

NEMO

Mm.

MORGAN

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

Even though temperamentally poles apart

NEMO

<laugh>. But yeah, they, I think they do both see each other in each other, even if they're not, they're a hundred percent not aware of it. I'm sure they are not aware of it, but they work together as good season one characters. That is why the focus is mostly on Alestes and Siva in this first season because they are coming from the same place and they need to get to a similar place, but the way that they've got about it is <laugh> completely opposite.

MORGAN

I guess that's why Alestes get so annoyed with 'em.

NEMO

Yeah.

MORGAN

Like, if you don't get out my face reminding me of me...

ALL

[laugh]

NEMO

She's like shudders like, oh god, that could have been me. I could have been the uncool version of myself. <laugh>

MORGAN

<laugh>, Sivas'. Cool. Okay. Siva is cool. That's not fair to Siva.

ALL

<laugh>,

NEMO

I I wanted to say like, this is a tangent to, to something which is that like, I think that a lot of people maybe have underestimated how much you Morgan and Raf have done on this show as well because, uh, and I basically wanted to highlight how much both of you have have done for it because I for sure needed so much help with, like Morgan, you had such a great way of conceptualizing audio that was really helpful at the beginning.

MORGAN

Oh good.

NEMO

And when we were first sort of drafting out the episodes, making outlines, Morgan was there basically being like, but how can we make that into good audio? And I was like, yes. Yes. That's a good point. Things like the underwater scene, uh, the beginning with Ndiliswa, like drowning and the like canons or the, the thunderstorm above, like whatever we hear above you being there and being like, it needs to be a like statement piece of audio. And I was like, hell yeah. <laugh>. And then Raf coming in after the show bible had been created and, and Morgan and I had made these like outlines together. Raf basically sat down with me at one point and was like, okay, it has so many plot holes and I don't understand it. <laugh>, we need to go through and just Nemo you just need to tell me the answer to all of these questions. And I was like -

RAFAELLA

I, I would like to just say I did not phrase it in that way!

NEMO

<laugh> You did it a lot nicer than that. And I am thankful for that. But that is basically what it was. And I am, uh, I openly admit that it was like me being like, oh god, I don't know <laugh>,

MORGAN

That's why writer's rooms are important.

RAFAELLA

No, but I say honestly it felt like, it felt like I got the easy job of kind of coming in and being the, yeah. Being sort of fresh pair of eyes and just sort of going, because what was so apparent is, you know, the world is so rich. Like I said, the show bible is this massive impressive, like brilliant document and the outlines so detailed. So if I, I came in at a stage where it was like, these are all the pieces that we have on the table and there's loads of them and they're all great. So it was kind of, and there were things I think through those conversations that we ended up going, you know, okay, maybe we don't have room for that in this season. Maybe we'll like, we'll put that aside for the future or kinda actually we don't have to tell all of our stories at once.

Um, you know, we can sort of keep our powder dry on some of this. And also just, you know, the plot of Gammon is Graham Graham is Gammon and like, where does Nani fit into all of this? And kind of, you know, that's, it's a, a complex political thriller that you've been created <laugh>, it's kind, you know, it's kind of a spy story you know Alestes becomes a bit of a detective in in

episode eight. So I was also thinking, yeah, just putting my like my genre goggles on and kind of going, how do we make this the most entertaining possible thriller, adventure, spy story as well as it being already a very fun science pirate story <laugh> I'm gonna make it happen. I'm gonna make Science Pirates a thing.

NEMO

Yeah, yeah. Science Pirate, Uhhuh, we're the science pirates,

MORGAN

I believe it.

NEMO

And yeah. And it was like really, it was really cool working with you two on this because I essentially, like before doing this show, had only been in like a couple of writers' rooms before and had never show run or like been the lead writer on things. So I definitely listened to podcasts which were like, how to be a showrunner. And I was like, oh, <laugh>. And the, the two pieces of advice that I definitely was like the most in my brain about was like, treat other people how you wanna be treated, which is just a good way of doing it in life. And to be quite decisive about things <laugh> and just make sure you know what you're being decisive about. But then allowing the writers to have flexibility when it's their episodes.

RAFAELLA

I learned just about the writing process cause the, the episode outlines that you provided were massively helpful, but then you were also very generous

about kind of being like very non precious and kind of going like, but you know, but do what you want. And what I found, you know, when you're writing essentially a 20 minute episode, you can't always fit in a c story in that time. So it's sort of, what do we have room for? How is our a and b story going to, so these are really like basic writing things, so I apologize, um, for this, but kind of how are our a and b story going to interact if they do at all? And if they don't interact, are they going to thematically compliment each other? Which again, you know, all of these, none of these are rules. All of these things can be played around with.

I remember one of the things I was most worried about writing the, again, it's the, the Treasure Hunt episode because we also just knew like also this is the episode where we need to find out about Baker's backstory. And I, that was one of the things I was like, how am I gonna tie together what is happening with Alestes and an Inez on the island and what is happening with, uh, with, you know, why do we get find out Baker backstory and I think Nemo you'd or you'd already suggested kind of, well, you know, Siva leaves the island cause I can Siva have a conversation with Baker. But again, I was like, how do we tie together these as essentially we've got the two main relationships of the episode are Alestes and Gammon and Baker and Gabe, and neither of those relationships are in the present tense.

MORGAN

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

Like nei... like neither of them are happening like in the same but in like in the end and this is something you're gonna ask both of you as well. I think, I think

that's my favorite episode of the, the three that I wrote. So that makes it sound like I was gonna ask you, what's your favorite episode of the ones I wrote? Um, not what I was going to ask! <laugh>.

MORGAN

[overlapping] All of them, okay? All of them.

ALL

[laugh]

RAFAELLA

No. What I want to ask both of you is what is the thing that you enjoyed writing the most in the series? Because for me it's the Baker and Gabe scenes, which I wasn't expecting, but they just flew onto the page. They were just...

MORGAN

Isn't it magic when that happens and you're like, I don't know why, but I'm gonna run with it.

RAFAELLA

Yeah.

MORGAN

Oh gosh, my fav, see I don't, I don't know if I have a favourite. I, I ended up with the episodes I think with a lot of random humour <laugh> and now I don't know, I really liked the Siva trying to find the rays, you know, that that scene where we can hear them in the water and then we kind of go back to Alestes

and, and Baker talking and then we hear them and it was actually Nemo's idea to combine that a bit more than initially so that we could make that scene feel larger as though they were, they're literally on the edge or somewhere on that ship watching you can hear these clowns in the background. And Nemo was like, no, we need to hear 'em. And I was like, you're right, you're right. They cause that they're, they're in the same space and so I, I really love that.

RAFAELLA

And a nightmare to direct and sound design, so thank you both.

MORGAN

Sorry. But if y'all look, when I listen to it, I was like, oh my God. I was like, I can hear. I was like, yes,

RAFAELLA

It was the right decision.

MORGAN

You, you all like, really because it, it, it is so hard I think especially for folks who are learning to write into audio cause it, it's writing is writing, but it's, there's just like little things that you do kind of differently when you're writing audio primarily or audio forward. And I was like, yeah, this is gonna be a nightmare scene. But I was like, I can hear the sound design, I can hear that sense of movement, I can hear that shifting back and forth. And so I really, I really enjoyed that just because it, it made me laugh. Especially when they come back up on there and like they've got it, you know, and they're like looking, I think it was just the moments of random bonding, you know, without them

perhaps realising that they were bonding. It was like team building while laughing and you trying to catch rays. And I really like, this is a cheat but I, I lo I love the fact that Alestes wanted to row that boat, you know, and that <laugh> cracked me up and it still cracks me up cause you know I'm right. I'm like, you think you're going a row a boat, <laugh>, you know, you're like

NEMO

Holding a knife up. My favourite thing is like, yeah, the like cat of knife or like crab with knife just being like, ha ha ha!

MORGAN

Just like chasing after, you know, <laugh>. Yeah. So I guess those are, they're like kind of my favourites to write.

RAFAELLA

That catching stingray scene, a quick sidebar, is a really good example of, again, the beauty of a writer's room because to make that working together, kind of the size and the scale of that, I, when I was doing my kind of preparation for recording, remember looking at that scene and going like, okay, we have to establish these two different locations super clearly, cause they're in the same, they're in the same space but they're not in the same space.

MORGAN

Right.

RAFAELLA

And we're gonna be cutting back and forth. So I ended up, I think like on the fly almost in the recording session, just scribble down a couple of extra lines

MORGAN

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

To just kind of slide in just to kind of just to plant it. Cause this is also something I've, something I've found with audio is you can get away with being more explicit about kind of where you are. Then you need to be on screen, you know, your listeners are kind of primed for, you know, a character walk in and go, ah, well here we are in my granddad's old shed. And like not as <laugh> not, you know, not as baldly quite as that.

MORGAN

Right.

RAFAELLA

But perhaps, but like that was a, I would say a collaborative effort. Nemo, this is almost an impossible question for you.

NEMO

Yeah, I was trying to like narrow it down, but I feel like because I have the luxury of now talking about episodes nine and 10, I do think that I really enjoyed writing Gammon's like cricket scene where there's like the cricket in the background and he's also like being a piece of crap to Siva and Siva is trying to like, haha, yes, I'm a servant. Ha haha. And also all of the scenes with Mary, I

found I really enjoyed writing her. She's a character that I really, I have fleshed out quite a lot. Her kidnapping, Siva, <laugh>, every time they are together, <laugh>, I am really like Cat with knife just being like, <laugh> Siva, how are you gonna get out of this one? <laugh>?

MORGAN

Yo, when Siva got kidnapped again, I laughed so hard when I was like, again?!

NEMO

<laugh>, I have to say like at the beginning, Siva did not get kidnapped this much, but every time that Morgan and I would have a conversation, Morgan would react like that and I'd be like, <laugh>, I'm gonna make Siva be kidnapped again. So it's Morgan's fault that Siva gets kidnapped so much cause I just have so much joy

MORGAN

It was so funny, like at a certain point you're just like, oh, this is the joke. Like you, the joke is you are always getting kidnapped <laugh>.

RAFAELLA

I, I mean there are some characters who were just so good for, like, ah, we need to show peril we gonna put this character in danger. Guys, we're gonna have to wrap this up. Any final thoughts?

MORGAN

No, I had a, I had a blast in the writer's room. It was, it was a lot of fun to just be creative with like other fun, creative folks and like, you know, to, to be

trusted with something that you created Nemo as well. Because I think we're all creative people here. We've all made our own things and it can be hard to allow others to partake in something that you've created and to give that freedom that, you know, you did allow us to have. You know, there were moments where you were like, ah ah ah, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope. But there <laugh> and that's like, that's your job as like the lead writer as a person who knows this story. But you did give us a fair amount of freedom within those episodes to bring our voice to the episode while keeping it sounding like what Trice Forgotten was starting to sound like. So nah, I mean I enjoyed working with both of you. I learned a lot working with both of you and like, you need a writer for season two. You know where to find me. [laugh]

NEMO

Yeah. Similar, I mean this, Below Decks has always been just a love fest, but the ability to have writers come in and fully understand who these characters are and to basically, yeah, please write me some things. And I got to have the content delivered to my desk and was like, ha ha ha ha really talented people are writing things that I want to see or listen to. So...

RAFAELLA

You were the Sickos meme, you were like yes, yes!

NEMO

Yes. Yes. And we got to talk about really cool things and, and I don't think that we talked in Below Decks about disability yet, but like, well we talked a bit about autism, but like physical disability is something that hopefully we can explore more in season two and, and all of these kind of things that, like the

pirate genre, the nautical genre is full of, and hopefully we're, we've been able to talk about them in a way that we are all coming from, from a like more lived experience perspective.

MORGAN

Yeah.

NEMO

And a way that like, hopefully people see themselves in and, and yeah, I've, I've been having a blast getting like messages from people who are just like really loving the your guys' work and your episodes and yeah. The, the writing and the humor and, ah! Love fest. I love this show. <laugh>. Um, yeah. And I love everyone who's worked on that, so. Yeah.

RAFAELLA

I, I love you too!

NEMO

Ah! <laugh>.

RAFAELLA

Gonna ask one more question before we wrap up, which was the on on our crew, you know, everyone kind of has a particular skill. <laugh> a very special set of skills. So I want to ask you, if you're in Alestes' crew, what are you bringing to the table? What's your, what's your position in the crew? What's your special skill?

MORGAN

Oh, I am, I'm gonna have to be the comedic bard <laugh>. Like, they're just gonna have to, I'm gonna be like, look, Alestes, if you feed me, I'll make you laugh. I'll make others laugh and we'll get paid. I'm just gonna be the pirate comedian. You put me on the stage. I don't know, whatever that, that I think is what I'd end up doing. It's just like, I'm there for the chuckles [laugh] Like, I'm the guy, they're like, we don't know how you got here, why you're still here, but you're funny. So cool. You know, <laugh> like the Joxer, I don't know if y'all watch Xena, you know, I don't know. But Joxer would always show up randomly and they were like, why are you here? And he's like, comedic relief, you know?

So I'm Joxer...

NEMO

I mean, yeah, you you've done that perfectly for the show already. So <laugh>, I think that I would attempt to convince Alestes that PhD's a totally marketable and that she should definitely give me like three gold coins to do loads of research. And I will a hundred percent have like three books to sell and loads of people will buy them. A hundred percent loads of people will buy them.

MORGAN

<laugh>

NEMO

Raf?

MORGAN

Yeah. What about you?

RAFAELLA

Oh, okay. Well I am a a white femme person, so I mean, I'm sorry I'm Italian and Jewish, so I'm a like a, a bit of a spicy white, but like what doesn't you like <laugh> definitely white enough. I think that maybe I could be there like weaponized Karen.

NEMO

Yes! A hundred percent, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!

MORGAN

Oh man yeah! Next time Mary shows up, y'all get ready

ALL

<laugh>

NEMO

Our defensive white, quick, quick!

MORGAN

We got to get our Karen.

ALL

<laugh>.

MORGAN

That is brilliant. Go get our spicy white. Y'all, we need her.

NEMO

I do think like, I, you know, I I I think that, um, we could definitely have you kind of be the first person to step off the ship, um, to talk to all of the like import export people and just shed a little bit of a tear <laugh> and be like, oh, it was so hard at sea as a femme <laugh>.

MORGAN

Oh God. So terrible. And then everybody else comes off the boat after you've gotten all the paper, they're like, now wait a minute <laugh> It's too late now.

RAFAELLA

Too late, you signed it, run away!

NEMO

What a great way to end.

RAFAELLA

Oh, great. So we will wrap up there. Um, before we go, Morgan, where can we find you? And do you have anything to

MORGAN

Plug? You can listen to my podcast Flyest Fables. It's a fiction podcast...

NEMO

So good!

MORGAN

...season two finish... Thank you. Season two finishes, you know, end of this year starting in about two weeks. Don't know when this is airing. So I'll say season two finishes this year and you can find me on Twitter if I stay there at Optimus_Mo, like the Transformer.

NEMO

<laugh>

RAFAELLA

Amazing Nemo, where can we find you? And do you have anything to plug?

NEMO

You can find me as ever on Twitter or on Tumblr. You can send me asks on Tumblr at Zeus underscore Japonicus. And I don't know, you can hopefully make my PhD marketable <laugh> at some point. I'm finishing it and I've gotta sell books. So <laugh> one day you should buy them <laugh>.

MORGAN

I will, I I will actually buy one of those books.

NEMO

Thank you. <laugh> Raf. Where can people find you?

RAFAELLA

You can find me for now on Twitter at Rafaella Marcus. I have nothing to plug at the moment. That's very nice. I'm just, I'm back to my desk, I'm back to writing

at the moment. So maybe, maybe there'll be, maybe there'll be things in the future. So for now, it has been such a pleasure sharing these behind the scenes context episodes with all of you gorgeous listeners.

NEMO

So beautiful.

RAFAELLA

Spiritually blessed. Your skin is clear, your crops are flourishing <laugh> as are ours. So Morgan, Nemo, join me and say goodbye to our listeners for the last time. For the moment. Bye

MORGAN

Bye!

NEMO

Goodbye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

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