

The Kingery, episode 11x04 "Do the Evolution"

ANNOUNCER: The following Pendant production contains mature subject matter. Listener discretion is advised.

[Low, unsettling hum.]

[Masque's voice is filtered through the screen that has replaced his face.]

MASQUE

Mr. Kellet? Wake up, Mr. Kellet.

KELLET

(waking in pain) Ugh. What the hell is...

MASQUE

Look at me, Mr. Kellet.

KELLET

Whuh... what's all this... there's words on my eyes. Where are my glasses?

MASQUE

Excellent. Your heads-up display is working properly. Now, kindly focus on my face.

KELLET

Your... is that some kind of mask?

MASQUE

Your new eyes seem to be working.

KELLET

My what?!

MASQUE

Hush now. I'm speaking to the others. Hello. I am called Masque. I represent the Army of the Evolved. I bring you good news, people of The Kingery. For centuries, the human race has refused to grow as a species. We still fear what we do not understand. We fled to the stars when we had rendered our home planet essentially uninhabitable. Here we are, light years from Earth, and I am delivering this message to a casino. But all that is coming to an end. The Evolved are coming for you. Right now, I am communicating with you through Mr. Roscoe Kellet. Last night, one of us saw him walking home from the casino, wearing these. Look how thick these glasses are. How inefficient. How... unevolved.

KELLET

Gimme back my glasses--

MASQUE

He made an ideal candidate for evolution. Now, he can see clearly, perhaps for the first time, through his cyborg eyes.

KELLET

You... you took my eyes?

MASQUE

We did. But we think you'll find the replacements an improvement.

KELLET

You took my eyes?!

MASQUE

This is our message, humanity. It is time for you to evolve. Change is frightening.

[Police station ambience. Masque's voice is heard through a speaker.]

MASQUE

Ossification is worse. Evolve, or we'll do it for you.

MADDIE

Well. That was... something.

KELLET

Is that all you've got to say? These maniacs tore my damn eyes out of my head!

[Reyes' footsteps approach.]

CAL

From the looks of it, no pun intended, they gave you state of the art replacements. They even come with closed captions.

KELLET

That's not the point! I didn't ask for any damn operation!

MADDIE

Agreed. Sergeant, why don't you take Mr. Kellet down to the lab and let's see what information we can glean from his new eyes.

CAL

If you'll come with me, sir...

[They start to walk away.]

KELLET

You don't suppose I have laser beams in these damn things, do you?

CAL

I certainly hope not, sir.

REYES

That mask was something.

MADDIE

Reyes. Yeah, I think it must be like a tablet, with the animated face?

REYES

"A face to meet the faces that you meet..."

MADDIE

Why bother relying on facial expressions when a cartoon is so much easier for people to get a read on?

REYES

I suppose it's friendlier than a Face-Eater mask.

MADDIE

"Face-Eater?"

REYES

What, you never saw “Face-Eater 3: Bowels of Terror?”

MADDIE

Haa. I must have missed that at the Scorsese Retrospective.

REYES

So how you wanna handle this, Captain Gray?

MADDIE

What do you mean?

REYES

I mean, Chris, Erin and I have been cooling our heels in the break room since we got here. Let us help.

MADDIE

Tell me something, Special Counselor Reyes—

REYES

Here we go.

MADDIE

-- what has your team done to acclimate yourself to your new situation? Have you gone out, gotten to know the area? Maybe walked a beat?

REYES

We're soldiers. We're not cops. We wait for orders from a commanding officer, Captain Gray. We're a resource waiting to be utilized.

MADDIE

Well, you're right about one thing. You're not cops. If we need you, we'll call, Reyes. At ease.

REYES

(sigh) Great.

[An electronic timer counting down to zero. Beeps and boops as everyone works on tablets, laptops, etc.]

[Door opens, footsteps in, door closes.]

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PALLAS

...oh. Hello... everyone.

TYTHIA

Pallas! You're, uh... here! Uh, early! Hm.

PALLAS

That is accurate...

[Pallas gently pulls Tythia away from the others.]

PALLAS

What are all these people doing here? What's Major doing here? I thought she just got married!

TYTHIA

She did, she did. I guess Kaylock's people don't do honeymoons.

PALLAS

So... what is everyone else doing here?

TYTHIA

We're just, uh, having a little brainstorming session, that's all. Just trying to solve a work problem.

PALLAS

Okay, Zeff, He-B, your boss and your boss's bodyguard are brainstorming? Is this crime? Are you doing crime?

TYTHIA

Tha— Uh, it's uh, hm— yes. This is crime. We are doing crime. Yes.

PALLAS

What kind of crime?

TYTHIA

Honestly, babe, you're better off not knowing, y'know plausible deniability and all that shit.

PALLAS

Tythia.

TYTHIA

...we're trying to rob an artificial intelligence.

PALLAS

Really.

TYTHIA

Our friend Socks had sort of... merged with this malevolent AI and it turned out that she stole all the boss's money. And apparently she was helping us with our previous heists through Hooks, so we had to do this somewhere that, y'know, he wouldn't normally show up.

PALLAS

I see.

TYTHIA

Are you mad?

PALLAS

No. Maybe. No. (small sigh) It's kind of hot.

TYTHIA

Yeah?

PALLAS

As long as no one gets hurt.

TYTHIA

No, absolutely not.

[Ding!]

ALYSON

All right, pencils down, people. Let's go clockwise around the room. No idea is too outlandish. Major? Whatcha got?

MAJOR

Uhhhh we could use Saley, Onks, & Liddle to put our brains into robots and pull the heist that way?

ALYSON

Do you know how to do that?

MAJOR

Uhhhh, no! I do not! But we never know how to do this shit at the beginning, right? (laughs)

[Alyson writes that down.]

ALYSON

Robot... bodies. Okay, He-B?

HE-B

We assemble a grifter, hitter, hacker, thief, and mastermind to pull off an impossible heist and return the proceeds to the wronged party. Which is us.

ALYSON

Yeah that's not a plan, He-B, that's a goal.

HE-B

...I'm not a creative thinker.

ALYSON

Zeff?

ZEFF

We get a tunneler, bore through the floor of Socks' compound, rip it off from the inside.

ALYSON

Huh. Where are we getting the tunneler?

ZEFF

Fuckin' I don't know. This whole thing is a pain in the ass. I say we find some little planet in another sector and rob one of their banks, one that doesn't have a crazy AI in charge of it.

ALYSON

Absolutely not. She's got my money.

MAJOR

Mm. Money's money.

ALYSON

You don't get it. It's my money.

MAJOR

It's not even cash! It's just a bunch of beeps and boops in Socks' network!

ALYSON

They're my fuckin' beeps and boops! I earned those beeps and boops! And some computer asshole thinks she can body snatch a friend of mine and hold my wrench hostage and take my beeps and boops?! Fuck that! I want my beeps and boops back!

ZEFF

Please stop saying beeps and boops.

ALYSON

...the point still stands.

[Door chimes. Enter Cass.]

CASS

Oh, sorry I'm late. I had to check on something.

ALYSON

You didn't miss much. Tythia, you got anything?

TYTHIA

Uh, what if we performed a DDOS attack?

ZEFF

A what now?

TYTHIA

Uh, distributed denial of service. Basically, we would, uh, get into her network and just flood her with data, I mean completely overwhelm her. It's actually a pretty old-fashioned way to screw with someone. Most networks have defenses for it in place, but uh, I'm willing to bet Socks doesn't. So while she's trying to get out from under that, we could rob the place blind.

ZEFF

It's not a bank, though. She doesn't have cash on hand. We're talking about money that only exists on Socks' server.

MAJOR

Okay. So we steal the server.

HE-B

We can't.

ALYSON

The constant bellyaching outta you.

HE-B

If anyone gets in the same room with that server, Socks will transfer the money somewhere else.

CASSANDRA

Suppose she can't?

ALYSON

What exactly were you "checking on?"

CASSANDRA

I'll show you.

[A very chill atmosphere, some white noise.]

GIB

...no, I have dataport access at the base of my skull, but there's nothing in there right now.

MONK

No cyberglamors or face hacks?

GIB

What you see is what you get.

MONK

Very well. Follow me.

[They walk.]

MONK

Please forgive the probing questions, Mr. Gib, but it's very important that we have as little technology in here as possible. The Oasis of the Real is meant as a tech-free zone for those suffering from ether poisoning, nervous exhaustion, or Ashpool Syndrome.

GIB

It's certainly much quieter here than the rest of The Node. What do you charge your visitors?

MONK

No charge. We're funded by the Aleph Corporation.

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GIB

Not bad. I believe I see the person I wanted to find.

MONK

Please do your best not to upset him. He's been drinking since he got here. I prefer him as a quiet drunk.

GIB

I'll do my best.

[Gib ambles over to an empty seat.]

104. GIB

Afternoon, Mr. Arkell. Or are you still going by Apho Arlo?

PAPA ARKELL

(low-key drunk throughout) Seat's taken.

GIB

I know. I took it. Usually people ask me how I found them. I like explaining to people how I found them. I don't often get asked about my process. (sigh) I figured you'd return to The Node after that fiasco back at The Kingery. But I thought I'd find you in The Undercroft, doing your wetware thing.

PAPA ARKELL

I don't know what you're talking about. Tell Sylvia to quit sending you guys. I'm not coming back.

GIB

...Sylvia. As in your wife.

PAPA ARKELL

Who- who else would I be talking about? Sylvia Arkell. I assume she kept the name. The bitch from hell who's probably gonna turn my babies into monsters just like her.

GIB

Your...babies. Mister Arkell, do you remember how you got here?

PAPA ARKELL

You followed me, didn't you? I took a flight from Earth, bummed around a little while, took a berth on a smuggler's ship and now I'm here. ...wherever here is.

[Bottle handling, liquid pouring.]

GIB

So you don't remember being here a few months ago, calling yourself Apho Arlo.

PAPA ARKELL

...fuckin' what?

GIB

I was here with a client, Ms. Chausette. She needed to have some tech extracted from her brain. You were going to help her.

PAPA ARKELL

...no. No, I just left a few months ago, I couldn't stand Sylvia anymore and I had... to...

116. GIB

Mr. Arkell--

[Chair pushed back.]

PAPA ARKELL

I need a terminal.

GIB

You sure about that?

PAPA ARKELL

Fuck no, but my head... you say things like that and it's like there's something in my head telling me 'don't think about that.' I don't like that. Not at all.

GIB

Okay. I know a nice little place. It's probably still there, unless there was, uh, another gang war since I've been gone.

[Alley ambience.]

CHRIS

Ugh. This is so stupid.

ERIN

(over commlink)

Keep quiet, Chris. You don't want to spook the target.

CHRIS

What target? I've been making the rounds for an hour now!

REYES

(over commlink)

Shut up and limp.

CHRIS

Uggggh. For fuck's sake...

[Chris limps along.]

[Rooftop ambience.]

[Chris's footsteps heard over the commlink.]

ERIN

She has a point. Maybe we're in the wrong place.

REYES

I took a look at Gray's files. The guy with the eyes wasn't the first vic. Last week, some lady with a smoker's cough got herself some brand new lungs. A few days later, a guy tried to pick somebody's pocket, and woke up with a robot hand where his old one used to be. The attacks are moving in this direction.

ERIN

How'd you get Gray to show you the files?

REYES

Erin, how are you still this naïve?

ERIN

You hacked her?

REYES

Of course I hacked--

CHRIS

(over commlink)

Ssshhh! Something's coming...

ERIN

What the hell is that?

REYES

That's our target.

[Alley ambience.]

MASQUE

Good evening, my friend.

CHRIS

Uh... hello.

MASQUE

I couldn't help noticing your limp.

CHRIS

Yeah, you know, I used to be in the service, caught a little shrapnel in the line. Docs say they can't get it out without replacing the whole thing.

MASQUE

Why not replace it, then?

CHRIS

I dunno... it's my leg. I don't wanna grow a new one. You seem awful interested.

MASQUE

Oh, but I am. You see, my friend, this is your lucky night.

[Pssss! Chris gets gassed!]

CHRIS

(moans, falls)

MADDIE

POLICE! FREEZE!

REYES

(heard from the rooftop) HANDS IN THE AIR, FUCKER!

MASQUE

Ah, I see I have some new friends.

REYES

(heard from the rooftop) Get out of the way, Gray, you're blocking my shot!

MADDIE

Stand down, Masque! It's over!

MASQUE

I hardly think so, Captain Gray. You are blocking the path of the future.

REYES

(heard from the rooftop) She's blocking my damn shot is what she's doing--

ERIN

(heard from the rooftop) Gray, move!

MADDIE

You're not a futurist, you're just another freak who gets off on hurting people. Put your hands in the air or I will fire.

MASQUE

I think not--

CAL

On the ground! Now!

[CAL TACKLES MASQUE!]

REYES

(heard from the rooftop) Where did that asshole come from?

MADDIE

Hold them! Hold them--

[A sound like something being pulled out of a wound.]

MASQUE

(through crackling speakers) AUGH! MY FACE!

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MADDIE
GUN!

[BZZZT! CAL AND MADDIE ARE SHOCKED!]

MASQUE
TASER! You'll pay. You'll PAY for this!

[MASQUE RUNS FOR IT!]

REYES
(heard from the rooftop) Get eyes on the target--

ERIN
(heard from the rooftop) They're gone! What the hell!

REYES
(heard from the rooftop) That's great. That's just great! (Thanks for the help!

MADDIE
Get your asses down off the roof!

REYES
(heard from the rooftop) Oh, we're comin'!

MADDIE
Ugh. Jackbags. You okay, Cal?

CAL
Uh... yeah. I managed to grab this off 'em.

MADDIE
Hey, you got the mask! Good job.

CAL
Yeah, but look at all these inputs on the other side. See how these would fit into eye sockets?
And this here, that would go into the nostrils. And these are way too big to fit over someone's
face. I think... I think this is their face.

MADDIE
...damn.

CHRIS

(stirring) That's so gross.

[Doors pulled open. Lights turned on.]

CASSANDRA

Welcome back to the asteroid formerly known as "Gorlock."

ALYSON

Wow. I kinda forgot this thing was still up here, just hoverin' around.

CASSANDRA

I pulled Dad out of here right before everything went to shit. I guess The Fifth didn't have any use for a big flying rock.

TYTHIA

You're not going to suggest we drop this thing on Socks, are you? Because I mean A, that won't work, and B it'll probably also destroy the planet.

CASSANDRA

Yeah, I think I heard that somewhere. No, I came here because of what's in this console. Do you remember, T— Alyson?

ALYSON

...holy shit. Holy shit.

MAJOR

You wanna let us in on this little eureka moment you're having?

ALYSON

I was up here, waving around a Worthington, threatening to blow up the whole asteroid rather than let it hit the people below, and then Eddars triggered--

CASSANDRA

--an Electromagnetic Pulse big enough to knock out power to this whole asteroid.

TYTHIA

Ohhhh, that's sexy.

ALYSON

That is brilliant, Cass! Nice pull!

CASSANDRA

Eh, just one of my usual brilliant ideas.

MAJOR

Ohhhh. So we take the EMP from here and sneak it into Robo-Socks' funhouse?

ALYSON

You know what? We do both. Tythia, you can do the DDOS thing, right?

TYTHIA

All right, so I've been thinking about that? Here's what I've got. The AI is merged with Socks, right? So random information will tip off the AI that a DDOS is coming. So we need to fill her brain with information she's going to want to engage with.

ALYSON

What do you have in mind?

TYTHIA

We're going to need at least 30 petabytes of high-quality lesbian pornography.

CASSANDRA

...is that a lot?

TYTHIA

Oh, you can never have too much high-quality lesbian pornography.

ALYSON

I've always said that.

[Cafe ambience.]

[Boop! Terminal deactivated.]

GIB

So. Now you know.

PAPA ARKELL

(sobered up) Yes. Now I know. My wife is dead, my children are criminals, and I have apparently forgotten a significant portion of my life due to some... organism that may still be inside me.

GIB

I'm sorry.

PAPA ARKELL

(sigh) I still don't remember most of it. Some of it's coming back, but...

GIB

Mr. Arkell, my name's Gib. A friend of mine asked me to find you. I think there's a good chance you might be able to help her. Will you come?

PAPA ARKELL

(laughing) Why not. I can drink myself to death just as easily there as I can here.

GIB

That's the spirit.

[They get up and leave.]

PAPA ARKELL

Do you know my Cassandra, Gib?

GIB

In passing, sir.

PAPA ARKELL

What about my son, Tommy?

GIB

...I've never met anyone by that name, no, sir. Don't worry. I'm sure your family will be happy to see you.

PAPA ARKELL

Heh. You've never been to an Arkell reunion, young man.

[Kingery theme plays.]

The Kingery, season eleven episode four, "Do the Evolution"

Featuring the voice talents of:

Adam Blanford as Masque

Patrick Earl Phillips as Kellet

Alicia Laine Pickens as Madeleine Gray

Christopher Gilstrap as Cal

Carissa M. as Reyes

Alexandra Jameson as Pallas

Kathryn Pryde as Tythia

Melissa Autumn Hearne as Alyson

M Sieiro Garcia as Major

Perry Whittle as Hooks

Jason R. Wallace as He-B

Russell Gold as Zeff

Kristen Bays as Cassandra

Shawn Traill as Gib

The Pan Pixel as the Monk

Justin Fife as Papa Arkell

Kaitlyn Kliman as Chris

And Kristine Chester as Erin

Sensitivity Reader - Kristine Chester

Written by Pete Milan

Story by Tilly Bridges, with Susan Bridges, Rene Christine Jones, Pete Milan, Kathryn Pryde,
and Perry Whittle

Kingery Theme by Tom Stitzer

“Marty Gots A Plan”, “Kalimba Relaxation Music”, “Stoneworld Battle”, and “8 bit Dungeon Boss”
by Kevin MacLeod at incompetech.com

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[Kingery theme fades out]