

The Kingery, episode 11x07 “Activate Your Input Ports”

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

{High-end restaurant ambience. SFX: Occasionally throughout scene, paper rattles as Major and Kaylock examine menus, wine lists.]

MAJOR

I used to know all the places at the Kingery, but -- “Eleganza Extravaganza?” -- never heard of it.

KAYLOCK

I thought something new would be appropriate for our stay-at-home honeymoon.

MAJOR

“Appropriate?” It’s the shit, ‘Lock.

KAYLOCK

I’m gratified you approve.

MAJOR

Fuck, yeah! But, I mean, how can we afford it?

KAYLOCK

They opened just before you and Alyson returned to the Kingery.

MAJOR

Uh... “oops.”

KAYLOCK

Indeed. Given the drop in the tourist trade, they cut their prices.

MAJOR

You think of everything -- I’m the luckiest girl in the galaxy. But it looks like they never got around to hiring all the waiters they need.

KAYLOCK

I anticipated the possibility of slow service as well. Here...

[Glop, blorp, thunk, as Kaylock removes a cell phone he's been carrying and drops it on the table.]

KAYLOCK

... is your communication device.

MAJOR

Nope. Uh-uh. Not gonna work on my honeymoon. What kinda girl brings her job along with on a honeymoon?

KAYLOCK

Majorino, you are unique among human females. That is why I love you.

MAJOR

You're the fucking best.

KAYLOCK

Now, stop looking for a waiter, and manage... what you need to manage.

[Electronic sounds as Major dials.]

MAJOR

Just gotta check in on a few -- y'know -- "initiatives."

KAYLOCK

I'm sure they are important.

MAJOR

And I ain't forgetting this, babe. When we get back home, it's gonna be Light Show City!

[Electronic sound as devices connect.]

MAJOR

Hey, Vince, it's me. Gimme a status report.

[Fine dining ambience. Music, slightly tinny and/or noisy and/or distorted to suggest a damaged sound system.]

ASA

The place used to look better, Samantha. It was a rush job to fix it up for Major and Kaylock's wedding reception.

DOC BRIGGS

I'm sure the food will be wonderful.

ASA

I guess I'm a little nervous. I want this to go well.

DOC BRIGGS

You're doing fine, Asa.

ASA

Y'know, Sarah's place has always been real elegant, and I want to impress you. But it ain't what it used to be.

DOC BRIGGS

Will you relax if I agree to another date right now?

ASA

That's real kind of you.

DOC BRIGGS

Besides, I don't even remember how this restaurant used to look. I must have come here many times back when I...

ASA

Aw, hell! I really didn't want to remind you about...

DOC BRIGGS

The memory loss? The people I had killed? Being controlled by a ruthless alien?

ASA

I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to bring up that topic.

DOC BRIGGS

But we can't avoid it, can we? At least I'm with my emotional support individual.

ASA

Samantha, I really--

[Asa's phone buzzes, interrupting him.]

ASA

Aw, shit!

DOC BRIGGS

Go ahead. I still remember what it's like to be on call.

ASA

Thanks.

[Cloth rustle as Asa looks at phone.]

ASA

It can wait, whatever it is.

[Beep as Asa declines call.]

[Cass violently hangs up a phone.]

CASSANDRA

I'll fucking kill that old man.

[Furniture creak and groan, cloth rustle as Cass launches herself out of a chair.]

CASSANDRA

You pull off the biggest heist in years, and nobody wants to hear about it.

[Glass and bottle clinks, pouring as Cass pours herself a drink.]

CASSANDRA

Fucking Asa

won't even take my call. Kaylock's on some pathetic honeymoon. Tythia can't stop whining about her love life. Major won't listen -- she's always hated me. Zeff would only brag about killing somebody with his pinky finger. Maddie's out of bounds. Hooks is waaay out of bounds. Even my own sister would only lecture me about discretion.

[Cass takes a drink, slams glass down.]

CASSANDRA

Fuck 'em all. I'll give myself a celebration, because I fucking well deserve it.

[HVAC sounds, fans, rattling metal, buzzing electronics.]

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[Footsteps, tool bags clanking as Jace and Corry walk. The ambience fades a bit while they walk because they're walking toward an area where the fans aren't working.]

JACE

This'll be the one: air conditioning unit two-ninety-seven.

[Footsteps stop; clank of tool bags being dropped.]

CORRY

You sure, Jace? It looks okay.

JACE

Sure, I'm sure. But if you want, you c'n walk around and see if anybody's hiding in the dark.

CORRY

Fuck you. That Shenanigans subbasement was creepy as shit.

JACE

Let's get this access panel off and see what's what.

[Rustles and squeaks as Jace and Corry unscrew an access panel on a large metal enclosure.]

CORRY

(With effort grunts) That surgical suite didn't skeeve you out? How about the jar with the fucking eyes?

JACE

(With effort grunts) Not my favorite memory, but--

[Ping as panel comes free; unscrewing sounds stop.]

JACE

It's coming free -- grab it!

[Metal-on-metal scrape as Corry hoists and sets down the panel.]

CORRY

(Lifting effort) I got it. Whaddya see?

JACE

Well, shee-it! Half the unit's just... gone!

CORRY

What the-- The top level looks fine.

JACE

Look at the insides.

CORRY

Whu-- Where's the coils?

JACE

And the fan, and the wiring. It's been stripped for parts.

CORRY

From the inside?

JACE

Sure didn't come out this way.

CORRY

This is gonna take forever to rebuild.

JACE

Gotta test every one of them cut wires so we don't electrocute ourselves.

CORRY

Fuck!

JACE

See, Corry, it doesn't happen often. But once in a blue moon, we agree completely.

[Music, slightly tinny and/or noisy and/or distorted to suggest a damaged sound system.]

DOC BRIGGS

This is good.

ASA

Huh? Oh, I'm glad. Yeah, mine, too.

DOC BRIGGS

(Laughs) Asa, I can tell you're not tasting what you're eating.

ASA

I guess you're right. You wanna talk about the therapy session?

DOC BRIGGS

What then, the weather? Come on, tell me what's bugging you. This date is about getting to know each other, right?

ASA

I'm sorry, Samantha. But that's part of the issue. I'm still married.

DOC BRIGGS

To someone whose mind is being controlled.

ASA

Aw, shit. I brought up that topic again.

DOC BRIGGS

Don't worry about it. Tell me what you were going to say about being married.

ASA

Well, I love Socks. I mean, in a way. Not every way. We never dated or nothin'. But when we had to get married to save our friends, we did it like a shot. I guess we trusted each other.

DOC BRIGGS

You worry about breaking that trust? Hurting her feelings?

ASA

Naw, that ain't quite right. She ain't interested in me, y'know, in bed. We're pals! Still, it feels wrong to abandon her to go on a date with you.

DOC BRIGGS

Hold your horses, cowboy. It's just a date -- not an engagement party.

ASA

But it's not the way we do things! I mean, the way we did things. Y'know, back in my day.

DOC BRIGGS

Thank you.

ASA

For what?

DOC BRIGGS

For telling me what was bothering you. Hell, for telling me who you are.

ASA

I feel better, too, now that's off my chest.

DOC BRIGGS

Okay, my turn: I'm nervous, too. No, that's not really it -- I feel disoriented... slimy.

ASA

Shit, is it somethin' I did?

DOC BRIGGS

It's everything, Asa. Everybody at the Kingery is terrified of me. For good reason, based on the stories I've heard.

ASA

That's not your fault.

DOC BRIGGS

And I like you a lot, but I don't remember why. And that's not your fault. I know I survived an extraordinary and terrible experience. I'm lucky not to remember it, but I still feel things.

ASA

There was a time -- before everything went to shit -- when we were friends.

DOC BRIGGS

I can feel that. But I don't remember why I feel it.

ASA

Oh. That is slimy, isn't it?

[HVAC sounds, fans, rattling metal, buzzing electronics. Occasional sparking and creaking from the broken machine.]

JACE

(Grunting as he crawls) This one's okay.

[Zap as Jace tests the next wire.]

JACE

This one's hot. Gonna cap it.

CORRY

Maybe you should lick it.

JACE

"Ha ha," Corry. That's more your line. (Grunt) Jesus, these are hard to reach.

CORRY

Just think thin, Jace.

JACE

Butter my butt and lick it clean, Corry. Maybe that'll help.

CORRY

Eat me. Somebody's gotta keep watch. There's no telling--

JACE

Holy shit!

CORRY

Piss off. You can't spook me.

JACE

There's something in here!

CORRY

Yeah -- your fat ass.

JACE

Shut up and listen to me! There's something in here!

CORRY

Stop fucking about and get back to work.

[A tiny motor approaches Jace inside the unit]

JACE

Here it comes!

[Metallic struggling.]

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JACE

Hey! That’s mine!

[Struggles intensify.]

CORRY

What the fuck’s going on, Jace?

JACE

(struggling grunts and sounds)

[Metallic sawing and tearing sounds.]

JACE

Pull! Pull!!! Pull me outta here!

[Dragging sounds as Corry pulls Jace out of the machine feet first.]

CORRY

Here you come-- Oh, fuck, you’re a weight.

[Metallic struggle ends suddenly.]

JACE

Get me the fuck outta here.

CORRY

(With effort) What happened in there?

JACE

I saw something -- a mini-robot.

CORRY

(With effort) So what? You’ve seen those before.

JACE

It grabbed my tester.

[Dragging stops and cloth rustles as Jace comes free of the machine and sits up.]

CORRY

I hope you grabbed it back. We've only got the one.

JACE

You're fuckin' right, I grabbed it back. And now...

[Small spark sounds as Jace holds up a sawn-in-half electronic tool.]

JACE

... we've got approximately half of one.

CORRY

What the fuck kinda robot does that?

JACE

I'm betting the kind that dismantles an A.C. unit and drags the parts away.

CORRY

Fuck me. Let's get out of here and come back with some help.

JACE

No way. I'm goin' back in there and teach that little fucker who the fuck we are.

CASSANDRA

Nobody cares what I do for the family...

MAJOR

There she is!

CASSANDRA

What now, Major?

MAJOR

Get over here, you big beautiful bitch. Lemme buy you a drink.

CASSANDRA

Me?

[Chair scrape, footsteps as Major gets up and pulls Cassandra to her table.]

MAJOR

Fuck, lemme buy you three. What you did-- Oh, you don't mind, do you, babe?

KAYLOCK

A celebration is entirely appropriate. A discrete celebration.

MAJOR

Sure, I gotcha. Dis-fucking-crete. What you did at "the thing"? You know, the (old woman voice) "Ohhh, these old bones of mine!"

CASSANDRA

Oh! I didn't realize anyone noticed.

MAJOR

Noticed?! You were amazing!

CASSANDRA

I was pretty good as the old lady, wasn't I?

MAJOR

And then, the [zzzip!], and the [Major acts out, with grunts and sound effects, "Natasha flipping Freddie over her shoulder"] Bam!! Out cold!

CASSANDRA

Easy as pie. Kaylock taught me that flip.

KAYLOCK

An entire self-defense curric--

MAJOR

Waiter! Booze! Tell me a-a-all about it. Every fuckin' detail.

[Science dive bar ambience. Music. Conversation.]

A.I. SOCKS

Friends, trans-humanists, and evolutionaries, activate your input ports.

[Crowd noise stops.]

A.I. SOCKS

I could tell you what you want to hear. But I came to tell you what you need to hear. You know the human race must evolve faster, yet the Army of the Evolved grows slowly. You reach for the stars, but your feet sink in the mud. What holds you back?

[Uncertain crowd noise.]

A.I. SOCKS

I'm here to speak truth! That's what your leader, Masque, asked me to do!

[Masque stands.]

MASQUE

My army! My friends... It was a great day when Socks first spoke to me about joining the Army of the Evolved. Listen well to what she has to say. She lives in the future! And she has great news!

A.I. SOCKS

Thank you, Masque. And thank you for devoting your life -- as well as your face -- to the cause of evolution!

[Crowd cheers for Masque.]

A.I. SOCKS

Yes, under Masque's leadership, you've made great strides. You gave Roscoe Kellet enhanced input orbs. You cured Iridium Sneed with personalized nanites!

[Affirmative crowd noise.]

A.I. SOCKS

Professor Bernice Bowerman developed a synesthesia inducer, creating a path to evolve human consciousness. Bernice, a few words, please.

[Polite applause. Bernice stands to speak.]

BERNICE

Are you bored by the world? It's not the world's fault! It's your senses -- so limited, so tediously consistent!

[Moderate crowd cheers.]

BERNICE

Mmm, applesauce. What if you could feel my words explode into colors? Hear the aftertaste of Masque's ideas? See the caress of Socks's voice? Right now?

[Stronger crowd response.]

BERNICE

Oh, God... Join my research study! Go to the bar, sign the waiver, take a whiff from the canister, and taste the golden age to come!

[Big cheer from crowd.]

BERNICE

Oh, fuuuuck!

A.I. SOCKS

You have the best technology. The winds of change are at your back. The weight of history presses you forward. Yet still you struggle against the fearful and timid who won't evolve... So, what's your fucking problem?

[Sarah's Restaurant ambience as before.]

ASA

Look, maybe we can talk about something we both remember.

DOC BRIGGS

Oh, I like that idea.

ASA

Good. What's a happy memory from before the ... y'know.

DOC BRIGGS

Hmmm. I remember opening my practice. That was a happy day.

ASA

You liked having your own office, huh?

DOC BRIGGS

My own staff. People I could hire and fire. And not share with other doctors.

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ASA

That'd make a big difference.

DOC BRIGGS

Of course, it was also frightening. The insurance, the payroll, the bills. With the constant threat of one mistake burning it all to the ground.

ASA

But you did it anyway.

DOC BRIGGS

By that time I was confident I was good at my job.

ASA

I wish I coulda seen you then.

DOC BRIGGS

Oh, my, that was thirty-some years ago, Asa... What do you remember from back then?

ASA

Ah. Well. Let's talk about your thing.

DOC BRIGGS

Asa, we had a good discussion earlier. But only because you told me about your feelings. Please let me get to know you.

ASA

(Sigh.) Here goes... That was about the time I walked away from my family business. While I was away, I kept hearing that my brother couldn't handle things. And then... when I decided to return to Pine Ridge...

DOC BRIGGS

Oh, no.

ASA

I was too late. Lucky for me, I heard the gunfire a long way off... I hid and watched my whole family get slaughtered.

DOC BRIGGS

Oh, God. I'm so sorry.

ASA

I started running and didn't stop til I washed up at the Kingery. 'Cause in my line of work, a mistake can end up even worse than a malpractice lawsuit.

DOC BRIGGS

Asa, I had no idea.

ASA

It's not your fault. Like you said, it's impor--

[Cloth rustle, chair noise, dishes clatter as Doc Briggs suddenly stands up.]

DOC BRIGGS

Stop saying it's not my fault.

ASA

It's okay, honey. Sit back down.

DOC BRIGGS

My memory gaps forced you to relive the worst moments of your life. It's too much to bear.

ASA

C'mon, we can find something to talk about.

DOC BRIGGS

I'm so sorry, Asa. Nobody deserves talking to a conversational time bomb. Least of all you. Good-bye.

[Doc Briggs's footsteps away.]

ASA

Samantha!

[Science dive bar ambience. Music. Uncertain crowd noise.]

A.I. SOCKS

Your fucking problem is money.

[Disappointed crowd reaction.]

MASQUE

Hold it! The evolved must value the truth -- no matter how painful!

A.I. SOCKS

Thank you, Masque, but I've got this. (To crowd) Of course you're disappointed! You know you need money -- you've always known it. But you focused on the details and forgot what really matters.

[Uncertain crowd noise.]

A.I. SOCKS

Well, I never forget the importance of money. And that's good news for you! Money speeds creation of new technology, and I'm filthy rich! Money spreads your message, and I'm filthy fucking rich! And I want to fund your work!

[Crowd goes crazy.]

A.I. SOCKS

Just one small problem -- a minor delay. Somebody stole my fortune from me.

[Uncertain and mixed crowd reactions.]

A.I. SOCKS

Oh, don't worry. With The Army of the Evolved behind me, I'll get that money back -- and more! Enough to fund every project you ever dreamed of!

[Crowd cheers.]

A.I. SOCKS

Who wants more options for augmented biology?

[Affirmative crowd reaction.]

BERNICE

Yesss.

A.I. SOCKS

Who wants better cognition enhancements?

[Affirmative crowd reaction builds.]

BERNICE

Ooooo. Syrup.

A.I. SOCKS

Who wants the galaxy to evolve?

[Affirmative crowd reaction builds.]

BERNICE

Ohhh, yeahhh. Soft.

A.I. SOCKS

Join me, and we'll transform the world. And we'll start right here... right now!

[Crowd goes bonkers.]

BERNICE 189

Yesssssss!!

[HVAC sounds, fans, rattling metal, buzzing electronics. Sharp metallic clank as the mini-robot bites Jace's wrench.]

JACE

Gotcha now, yuh sumbitch!

[Jace and the robot struggling and fighting, ending suddenly with a hammer-on-robot impact.]

JACE

Hah! How'ja like them claw-hammers, ya little fucker?

[Cloth rustle and slide as Jace backs out of the unit.]

JACE

(Effort grunts) I got him.

CORRY

Brilliant. What you gonna do with it?

[Rustling stops as Jace comes free of unit.]

JACE

Here it is!

CORRY

You really need to hold it with pliers?

JACE

Hey, it's been cutting parts out of this ventilation system! I don't want to know what it can do to --

[Tiny motor(s) as the robot suddenly starts wriggling.]

CORRY

Hold it still, I'll bash it anuvver one.

JACE

(With effort) All I c'n do to hold on!

[The robot stops wriggling and starts talking with Masque's voice (through a very small speaker throughout).]

MASQUE

Greetings from the Army of the Evolved. I am called Masque.

JACE

Pleased to beat you.

MASQUE

Ha. Ha. You showed great skill catching my scout.

JACE

"Scout?!" It ate half an air conditioning unit.

MASQUE

All for the greater good.

CORRY

Fuck you -- you just made a month of work for us.

MASQUE

Of all humans, you must see the need to evolve -- you're wrenches.

CORRY

Watch what you call us.

MASQUE

No offense intended. But that's what others call you, right?

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JACE

Sometimes.

MASQUE

Others... who don't value the way you repair ailing machines every day.

CORRY

What the fuck do you know about our work?

MASQUE

Hard work in poor conditions. For low pay and a total lack of respect.

JACE

That's what I'm talking about.

CORRY

Don't start that shit again.

MASQUE

Would you like to evolve beyond all that?

CORRY 2

The fuck does that mean?

MASQUE

Embrace the future -- a future in which you can communicate directly with the systems you repair.

JACE

Shit, we already do that.

MASQUE

Today you clumsily translate between an emotional swamp of chemical impulses and elegant digital computations. It's inefficient. Unevolved.

JACE

And you'd fix that?

CORRY

Don't believe that shit, Jace.

MASQUE

Imagine how efficient you could be: Your most useful tools always in reach! Never drop a tool again!

CORRY

You're gonna replace our hands?

MASQUE

Just the fingers. It's time to evolve -- your fingers and your minds. Imagine you could jack into any machine and get a system report instantly.

JACE

You wanna fuck with my head?

MASQUE

You would issue orders in any machine's native language. Tell it to repair itself or increase its capacity!

JACE

Machine code brain mods -- holy shit!

MASQUE

Yes! The world will be yours! Join the Army of the Evolved! Embrace the f--

[Smash as Corry hits the mini-robot with a big fucking wrench.]

CORRY

Haaaah!!

[Smash, smash, smash, clatter -- much smashing and parts flying everywhere.]

CORRY

(Grunting as she hits the robot over and over)

JACE

Fuck a faucet, Corry. What got into you?

CORRY

(Panting) I'd had enough of that wanker.

[Science dive bar ambience. Bonkers crowd all around Hooks. Electronic beeps as Hooks dials a number on his device.]

HOOKS

I hope you can hear me. I had to tell somebody! I mean, I wouldn't dare call, except for the noise. Socks did that! I mean, y'know, the A.I.-- It just gave a speech, and listen!

[Crowd continues while Hooks pauses.]

HOOKS

What the fuck? It never even seemed human, and now this? This is bad -- really bad! Look, I gotta go, but... It's coming. And it's got an army.

[Swirly electronic sounds as A.I. Socks takes control of the device.]

A.I. SOCKS

(On phone) Oh, Michael. You thought it was loud, and therefore I would lose track of you? (Sad laugh) You're such a disappointment. I'd never let that kind of message get through. Not to anyone. (Even sadder) And now I'm worried... What happens when you cease to amuse me?

[Electronic power-down as device shuts off.]

[Kingery theme plays.]

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Featuring the voice talents of:

M Sieiro Garcia as Major

Jack Calk as Kaylock

Edward Herman as Asa

Kim Gianopoulos as Doc Briggs

Kristen Bays as Cassandra

Brady Hendricks as Jace

Kirsty Woolven as Corry

Rene Christine Jones as AI Socks

Adam Blanford as Masque

TJ Briggs as Bernice

And Perry Whittle as Hooks

Sensitivity Reader Kristine Chester

Written by Perry Whittle

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

Kingery Theme by Tom Stitzer

“Back Bay Lounge”, “Night in Venice,” “Cuban Sandwich,” Pleasant Porridge,” “Division,” Samba Isabelle,” “Complex,” “In Your Arms,” “Bittersweet Crusade,” and “Satiare” by Kevin MacLeod at incompetech.com

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Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Kingery theme fades out]