

The Kingery, episode 11x08 “No Good Answers”

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

[A very chill, quiet, welcoming atmosphere]

HE-B

Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Arkell.

PAPA ARKELL

I... well, the lady here said I should, that it would help...

HE-B

Alyson. Yes, she's your emotional support individual, she's here to help as well. We're all here to help you.

PAPA ARKELL

I'm still not sure... what you're helping with? I thought I was going to get some coffee. Didn't we have coffee?

ALYSON

(sighs) Yeah, yeah, old man, I'm on it. Just... try to talk to the group.

PAPA ARKELL

About what?

ALYSON

I don't fucking know, pick a subject!

HE-B

Alyson, we don't raise our voices in group session, so I'm going to have to ask that you keep your frustrations in check. This is difficult for all of us, so it's important to be patient.

ALYSON

He doesn't even remember my name, even though I've said it every other fucking word. He doesn't know what I'm doing here and you want me to - No, you know what, it's fine. I'll go get the coffee.

[Alyson gets up, shoves the chair back and walks out.]

ALYSON

Maybe if I leave, he'll do a fucking trick.

[The door shuts behind her, there's a moment of silence]

GEPPI

Perhaps 'e should take ze support squid. Maybe eet will actually speak ze same language.

ESI SQUID

I do speak the Zee dialect of Old Centurion, the primary language of the ancient Alpha Centauri culture!

HE-B

Brilliant idea, Geppi! Mr. Arkell, would you like the hold the Emotional Support Individual Squid in Alyson's absence?

PAPA ARKELL

Well, sure, I suppose so...

GEPPI

'Ere, Monsieur. I 'ave 'ad my share of ze emotional support.

[He takes the Squid]

PAPA ARKELL

Kinda cute in an ugly sorta way. My kids would like you... Probably try to rename you something like Emotional Support Poop Squid, knowing them.

ESI SQUID

Children oftentimes enjoy employing scattological humor as a way to glean a negative or positive reaction from their parental units!

PAPA ARKELL

Well, I suppose that's true...

HE-B

Would you like to tell us about your children, Mr. Arkell? Anything you remember about them?

PAPA ARKELL

Well... I have a... a son, and I... I think I... I wanted to be proud of him... my daughter, too. But... They're both... so much like their mother in their own ways... At least, they were when I saw them last... I just... wanted things to be different for them...

[Zeff paces across the room most of this scene, pausing for effect when he hears something that really just makes him wonder what the hell he's done to deserve this special hell.]

ZEFF

OK, look, I know the décor isn't great –

REYES

This is a holding cell.

ZEFF

But, all this damn construction means there's like, no office space, and I want to hear both sides without the bullshit and without the constant buzzsaw. I think my teeth still hurt from the sound of that thing. My teeth.

REYES

This is a holding cell.

ZEFF

Yeah, I know, Reyes, they didn't have any rooms at the Paradiso, I'm so sorry for the inconvenience.

CHRIS

(Nursing a broken jaw so sounds a little drooly) This is bullshit. We didn't do anything wrong and if "Captain Grey" would just get her head out of her ass –

ZEFF

OK, that's not how this is gonna work, Chris. Eeeht! Wrong, you are done talking. No more time with the talking stick. Erin, please tell me you're going to give me more to go off of. Because what I read in the report coming in here is that you sprayed the Police captain with an illicit substance and I'm gonna need you to back aaaaall the fucking way back up so that I can A) figure out how you got here and B) Figure out which one of the five of you I'm going to shove out an airlock towards a star in supernova.

ERIN

You're not... actually going to space us, are you? Because that would be painful. And I really don't want to.

ZEFF

(chuckle and groan) Erin... so help me... Sitrep. Now. How did you end up in the street bitchslapping the Captain?

ERIN

If you want to be really technical, it started way before that because there was this case that we wanted to investigate. Because the Captain won't let us do anything, so Chris got a copy of the case file and we went to go after the combatant –

ZEFF

Erin, they're not combatants, they're suspects. Maybe perpetrators.

ERIN

Right, but anyway, this Masque yahoo is trying to make everyone be cybernetic even if they don't want to, and we thought we'd tracked Masque to their lair. And then suddenly, out of nowhere, Captain Gray shows up with her back-up and then Reyes couldn't get the shot, and then we saw Gray's partner just - WHAM - tackle Masque to the ground. And then Masque was like "TASER! I'll stop you!" or something like that –

ZEFF

Back up. Did they really say "Taser?" Like, out loud?

REYES

Oh, for fuck's sake. Zeff, that's not really relevant. Point is, after Gray got in the way of us taking Masque down, we had to go pursue other leads. And while we were shaking down one of those leads, she showed up and wouldn't let us execute the op.

ZEFF

It's not an op! You're not on an op! You're supposed to be here to liaison with the domestic police force! You have to learn the lingo, you have to walk the walk!

REYES How are we supposed to do that when she won't even give us a foot in the door? We were trying to help! Zeff, we're marines, we need orders, and she won't even give us the courtesy of a briefing!

CHRIS

Besides, she needs to loosen the rod wedged up her –

ZEFF

I said you don't have the talking stick! Just... look, Reyes, I get it. This is... this is not what the Commandant wanted you to do here. You need orders, I expected Maddie to give you something concrete to work on, and she didn't. So... all of you stay frosty and just, for the love of all gods, do not cause more trouble. I'm going to go talk to the Captain.

[Zeff walks off, door shuts behind him.]

ERIN

It's a holding cell. Where would we even go?

[Futuristic Door chime]

PALLAS
(sighs)

[Door chime again, then again and more insistent]

PALLAS
Jupiter's hairy balls, fine!

[Pallas gets up, stalks over to the door and opens it]

PALLAS
Really? What are you, five?

TYTHIA
You've been ignoring my calls ever since my birthday. I could ask you the same fucking thing.

PALLAS
Good talk.

[she starts to close the door]

TYTHIA
Nonono, Pallas, come on! Sorry, that was a low blow. I didn't mean that. I know this is on me, but you won't let me talk to you so I can't even try to make this better.

PALLAS
You... you think this just... is what, something you can give a lecture on and I'm gonna come out of it enlightened?

TYTHIA
Of course not! But, I don't want to lose you. So, I want to at least try to work through this. I'm just asking for five minutes, all right?

[Pallas finally steps aside]

TYTHIA
Thank you.

[Tythia walks in and the door shuts behind her]

TYTHIA

OK, so I know why you're upset, I get that. And I dumped it on you, so I completely respect why you're angry, okay?

PALLAS

One: I'm not having this conversation without a drink. Two: Saying you "respect why I'm angry" isn't exactly an apology, so... you're not helping your case.

[Pallas pours herself a drink]

TYTHIA

(Frustrated, long sigh) I am sorry that I hurt you. I get that, I know it hurt. And this is a mess I made, and I am trying to clean it up, but it's not a mess for the reasons you want it to be.

PALLAS

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

TYTHIA

I'm not sorry I have feelings for him. And for you. I'm not going to apologize for caring about both of you. I have spent my entire life watching the people I love die. And I'm sorry, but I can't just live my life lying about who I love and why. I would rather you hate me because I was honest than lie to both of you just to keep the peace.

PALLAS

Wow. Just... wow. That is... profoundly selfish.

TYTHIA

Maybe. But, it's the truth. And the Kingery is a place that runs on lies. I told you I didn't want this place to ruin you, I'm not about to be the first one to start peddling that currency at you.

PALLAS

You know, the poetic bullshit doesn't really help your case, either. This isn't some noble crusade, Tythia! You're not off saving the world, you're talking about wanting to fuck and love He-B! And the worst part is? If it was just sex, I could almost get it.

TYTHIA

Oh, you have to be kidding me...

PALLAS

Because, see, you spent two whole years teaching lectures about how confirmation bias doesn't just exist in scientific experiments, but in AI! You practically gift-wrapped the suggestion to your students that you programmed He-B to fall in love with you, so if this was just sex with a programmable sex toy, I would be fine with that!

TYTHIA

Hey, fuck you, don't talk about him like that! Whether or not I thought I programmed his feelings, he's still an individual! He's a fucking person, Pallas!

PALLAS

He's a machine! He's code! He's hardware. You can have sex with hardware, but then you had to go and have feelings for him! How the fuck am I supposed to compete with someone you can literally change to suit your newest relationship need? Maybe you can program him to suddenly be fine with the idea of sharing you, but you can't do that to me!

TYTHIA

That is not what I did! Or didn't do! I've been talking with He-B for months, trying to figure out what happened. I didn't - I didn't program him. I don't think so. Even if I introduced an unknown element to his code, the Reticulum would have allowed him self-corrective subroutines. Just like the organic brain does. Obviously.

PALLAS

Oh, is it that obvious?

TYTHIA

Yes, it is. Because I introduced to you the concept of me being with the both of you and you lost your shit for an extended amount of time. So clearly, people are capable of ignoring or disregarding a suggestion.

[Pallas finishes her drink and quickly slams her glass down]

PALLAS

Why did you come here, Tythia? What is the point of all of this? I am not going to be okay with you loving me and him. You're not a toy I have to share, okay? You're my girlfriend, you're supposed to be my partner. And the fact that you are letting your head get turned by... I don't know, by a glorified toaster, is really making me wonder what the hell you're thinking. I mean... god, He-B is not a flesh and blood person, I don't know what you see in him!

TYTHIA

Oh, yeah, of course, how could the pansexual fall in love with the person on the inside and not the outside, that's sounds so unnatural, says the lesbian.

PALLAS

Are you done?

TYTHIA

With us? No, I don't want to be. With the idea that He-B is somehow not worthy of my love because he doesn't happen to be built with the same parts as you? Oh yeah, I'm very fucking done with that conversation, we're not having that again. I am not asking you to fall in love with him. I'm not asking you to even... really like him. I'm just asking for you to... to not make me choose one of you. My heart just... it doesn't work that way. And if it were you asking me the same thing, I would let you. Can you at least try to see it from my point of view? I don't want to get jealous, I don't want to hold people back, and life is too goddamn short to get jealous over the fact that people might care about other people. You don't get pissed I have too many friends, why is this different?

PALLAS

I can't give you the answer you want to hear, Tythia. Even if I thought for two seconds that I could... go along with you dating other people –

TYTHIA

One other person, I'm not putting myself on the market here.

PALLAS

One other person, I can't... just forget what he did to you. I don't see why I would want to.

TYTHIA

If I forgave him, why can't you? I'm not asking for you to become best friends, I'm just asking you to be open to the idea that maybe I recognize there's more to him than his worst day.

PALLAS

You can't make this better for me, okay? You just can't. I think you should go.

TYTHIA

(sighs)

[She heads towards the door, stops]

TYTHIA

Will you please at least pick up the phone next time I call?

PALLAS

No promises.

TYTHIA

I'm not giving up on us.

PALLAS

Not your call to make.

[Door shuts behind her]

[In another holding cell]

CAL

(groans) Please tell me you're joking. He's joking, right? That emotional toddler broke my arm!

ZEFF

Yeah, and Maddie broke her jaw. I think you're even.

MADDIE

Hardly.

CAL

Also, this is a holding cell. You wanted to talk to us so you put us in a holding cell?

ZEFF

OK, well, Maddie, why don't you start since Cal seems to just want to sulk over there?

CAL

This is a holding cell.

ZEFF

I'm trying to help, but Reyes and the gang didn't quite seem to understand the gravity of the situation. Because, from where I'm standing, I should throw away the key on both these holding cells until the construction's done on the precinct.

MADDIE

Zeff, those marines have gotten in the way of literally every investigation I've been running on this... Army of the Evolved, and they've somehow managed to do that... concurrently. As in all of the investigations. At the same time. The statistical odds of screwing up all my investigations on one subject have to be higher than anything on the tableball boards right now. I told them to stay out of the way and they didn't!

ZEFF

Still trying to figure out how that ended in you getting spritzed in the face with a drug.

MADDIE

First, I told them to go learn the beat, go talk to people and just... blend in. Easy beat cop shit. But, no, that's not good enough. They hack into my case files and try to take out Masque without probable cause or evidence or - hey, you know, a warrant, the shit I need to have to do my job. So, they fuck up our sting and the guy gets away.

ZEFF

Yeah, about that. Did he really shout "Taser?"

CAL

Oh, good, glad to see you're focused on the right details, Zeff.

[Cal shifts in his chair.

CAL

Ow.

ZEFF

Just academic curiosity, that's it.

MADDIE

So, after I tell them to cool their fucking heels, I find them harassing some Professor who's doing some weird experiment with... what did they call it, Cal?

CAL

Synesthesia. Oh, and they glowed, but that seemed to be cosmetic.

MADDIE

Right. And instead of checking to make sure the Professor had the right paperwork, a permit, waivers signed, all the shit we have to do when it's not an already scheduled illegal controlled substance, they start shaking her down. You can't just fucking do that! I know it, Cal knows it, pretty sure you know it, Zeff, and they sure as shit should know it.

ZEFF

Did it ever occur to you to give them some guidelines, training? Anything?

MADDIE

I don't have time to train them on how to do my job and also do my job. It's why I went to the fucking Police Academy! They want to learn to be a detective, they can go to school, too, instead of the Commandant throwing her weight around! We don't work for the Marines!

ZEFF

Seriously?! That's what this is about? Holy shit, Maddie, they were here to help and you're treating them like they're there to spy on you? They're under my command! You think I'm here to spy on you now, too? I really thought you knew me better than that. That is... that's some Arkell-levels of paranoia right there.

MADDIE

Tell me you feel 100% sure they couldn't have another reason to be here. Absolutely, 100%, not a doubt in your mind. You look me in the eye and try to tell me that you don't think maybe, just maybe, they are here to catch Alyson or Cass or me or you in the kind of shit the Commandant would just eat up. I'll wait.

ZEFF

(growls) Oh my god, you fucking children! Fine, fine! Let's do it your way!

[Zeff stomps out and shuts the door]

CAL

Ow.

[Light music in the background, as always here in Alyson's office]

[Door chimes]

ALYSON

Jesus, what?

[the door opens and He-B hovers in]

HE-B

Terribly sorry to bother you, Alyson, but I wanted to see you. You didn't, um, you didn't return to the group session. Mr. Arkell was... well, a bit upset by it, I believe. I wanted to ensure that nothing serious had happened.

ALYSON

Seriously? (little disbelieving laugh) No, it's fine, I'm only running an empire here, I've got plenty of time to hear my dad wax poetic about the person I haven't been since I was a fucking toddler. That was sarcasm, in case you were curious. I don't normally feel the need to explain myself, but you're staring at me like you just froze, so in case you need to know how much I don't have tolerance for bullshit right now.

HE-B

No, no, I absolutely did not misinterpret the statement. I'm afraid I can recognize sarcasm all too well, Tythia is quite versed on the subject.

[He hovers over to Alyson's desk]

HE-B

But, I do have to ask: what do you hope to accomplish in your father's time in therapy? The therapy isn't just for him to regain his memories and to move past what the Fifth did to him, it is also to help you come to terms with who your father was and who he is now. The Fifth took a great toll on him –

ALYSON

Oh yeah, "Member-of-the-Fifth-who-was-double-crossing-them?" No, no, go on. Tell me more about the Fifth and why I shouldn't trust you with this. You do realize you owe me a fuck-ton for what I did for you, right? I extended a huge amount of trust to you even letting you back in this sector, much less to open a therapy practice for victims of a group you worked with. Believe me, I understand what it's like to play both sides, but before Tythia vouched for you, I wouldn't have given you the time of day. When she told me about your plan for that clinic, I genuinely worried about her judgment.

HE-B

I was... unaware that Tythia had spoken to you about my plans ahead of time.

ALYSON

Yeah, well, her faith in you is the only thing keeping you in that building right now. So, don't push it. You want to try to fix my dad, have at it. But, I don't know who he is. And he sure as shit doesn't know me. I lost decades with him. And now, I have to do that all over again with even less of a fucking baseline to work with.

HE-B

With all due respect, how is he supposed to know you if you don't attend?

ALYSON

He-B, he thinks he has a son and a daughter. I'm not about to take his relationship with Cass away. How am I supposed to explain that I'm his other kid while I'm trying to make sure no one knows about it? Besides, every time I talk to him, it's a reminder of who I'm not. I don't have the energy or the fucking time to listen to him talk about "Tommy".

HE-B

There is a reason for you to attend as well, Alyson. He is not the only one who is coming to grips with what has changed about the Arkell family. Your sister went from trying to kill you to helping you, and you - well, we both know my part in helping you become Alyson, minimal as it was –

ALYSON

And that's exactly why I don't have time to be in there! I have shit to do, I have to figure out plenty without singing fucking Kumbaya over it. We are not in a good position with the other families right now. I can't give any of them a single bit of fuel to use against me. My invalid dad and our "bonding sessions?" Oh, they'd run wild with it. So, you know what? You want him to go to therapy with some support so badly? I'll take care of that right now. I'm hiring him a caregiver.

HE-B

Pardon?

ALYSON

Full-time. They'll go with him to therapy, make sure he doesn't do something stupid. And then when he's all buttoned up, I will go see him. Not that I imagine he will do anything more than stare at the ceiling and talk about constellations or that time that Cass blew a snot bubble or some other inane shit.

HE-B

I hardly think that –

ALYSON

None of what I just said requires you to say a fucking word, He-B. I don't need you to think. You came to me with a problem. Problem fucking solved. Very expensively, I might add, because the one I was about to click "Accept Application" on before you hovered in is gonna cost me every bit of liquidity I have right now, so it better be worth it. Now get out.

[Back in the first holding cell]

[Cal and Maddie are brought into the other holding cell, shuffling and huffing until everyone's settled]

MADDIE

Watch the hands...

CAL

Ow, ow, what part of broken elbow is hard for you to - ow!

ZEFF

OK, now, everybody just keep your mouths shut for a minute, okay? I have the talking stick. Now, I brought all of you together because I really don't want to have to give testimony for three courts martial or 2 IA investigations. You are all supposed to be on the same side here, so

here's what I propose. Maddie, you get the marines some beat cop training so that they can work with due process, the kinds of questions they need to ask, all that good jazz. Reyes, you guys stop hacking into Maddie's files and try to remember that when you're on "domestic" soil, you don't attack the civilians. Enemy combatants only, which means only people that Maddie tells you are actually enemies. Sound fair?

MADDIE

(crosstalk) Are you fucking kidding me?! I don't have time to train them to do my job! I need them out of my hair so I can catch this transhumanist weirdo before they kill someone else!

CAL

(crosstalk) I've taken a lot of flack in the line of duty, but I'm not about to put my ass on the line for any of them! And she broke my elbow! MY elbow! Do you have any idea how painful that is?!

ERIN

(crosstalk) We've been trying to help this whole time and they won't let us! This isn't our fault! What is so hard about just letting us help! If you all weren't too busy dick-waving around and peeing on every street like it's your damn territory, maybe we'd get something done –

REYES

(crosstalk) You can't possibly think that I'm just going to roll over on this, do you? We didn't do anything wrong, and if they don't like how we're doing it, then the "Captain" should maybe do something about it like give us something to do instead of telling us to just sit there with our thumbs up our asses –

CHRIS

(crosstalk) They broke my jaw! And I didn't hack anything, you can't prove shit! Just because someone tells you we did it doesn't mean you can prove it! So, don't use that against us, we were just helping with the cases! This is bullshit, I'm not getting court-martialed for trying to do my job!

[Zeff slams his hand on something and they stop arguing]

ZEFF

If that's how you're going to be, then fucking burn in a fire, you stubborn sons of bitches! I have spent the last fucking hour trying to find out from all of you what in the hell we could possibly do to help with this mess, but the fact is, none of you fucking care, do you?! I can't help you if you don't want help! So, you know what? Fine! Be assholes! Be stubborn! I don't fucking care! You don't deserve my help! So sit here and stare at each other and you let me know how that goes! I'm getting a drink!

[Zeff leaves and slams the door behind him]

CHRIS

You broke my jaw.

CAL

You broke my elbow!

[Kingery theme plays.]

The Kingery, season eleven episode eight, "No Good Answers"

Featuring the voice talents of:

Jason R. Wallace as He-B

Justin Fife as Papa Arkell

Melissa Autumn Hearne as Alyson

André Vernot as Geppi

Rachel Crosby as ESI Squid

Russell Gold as Zeff

Carissa M. as Reyes

Kaitlyn Kliman as Chris

Kristine Chester as Erin

Alexandra Jameson as Pallas

Kathryn Pryde as Tythia

Christopher Gilstrap as Cal

And Alicia Laine Pickens as Madeleine Gray

Sensitivity Reader Kristine Chester

Written by Kathryn Pryde

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

Kingery Theme by Tom Stitzer

“Elf Meditation,” “Cryptic Sorrow,” and “Music for Manatees” by Kevin MacLeod at
incompetech.com

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Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Kingery theme fades out]