

The Kingery, episode 12x01 “By Any Other Name”

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

[The hustle and the bustle of the Kingery thoroughfare, packed full of guests.]

STEPHANIE

Okay but I don't want to.

MAJOR

Yeah but that's no reason not to.

STEPHANIE

Feels like it is!

MAJOR

This was your fuckin' idea, boss.

STEPHANIE

Yeah, no, I know, but... (sigh) It gets so old.

MAJOR

Runnin' the place?

STEPHANIE

No. Well I mean, yeah, sometimes, but just... having to reintroduce myself to absolutely everyone and their fucking grandmother, especially when I've known these people for years, decades, and sometimes it's just fuckin' enough already.

MAJOR

Well how else they gonna know what to call you?

STEPHANIE

You could just tell 'em.

MAJOR

But I'm not the boss.

STEPHANIE

I would have made you-

MAJOR

Uh uh, no way was I lettin' you set me up as the head of one o' the new families. Pssssh. I'd sooner stop workin' out and let my arms go noodley. I'd never do it, is my meanin'.

STEPHANIE

You know I picked up on that. Kind of surprised there's not a dumbbell grafted to your hand, honestly.

MAJOR

The day is young.

STEPHANIE

(another sigh) You know I had to tell the guy at the fucking oil change place? "This car's licensed to Tommy Arkell." Yeah, yep, it sure was, fucko. Thanks for making me have to explain I'm trans to a total stranger who I just want to fucking change my fucking oil and not explain my entire fucking gender journey to!

MAJOR

Boss... why are you even taking your car for an oil change? We got people for that!

STEPHANIE

I can do some things myself! You know, ordinary mundane things that... ordinary, non-crime boss people do.

MAJOR

Really though?

STEPHANIE

Look I spent my life living a lie, now that I don't have to do that, I... dunno, I got used to it I guess. Sometimes pretending I'm maybe not the leader of the most notorious crime family in 88G fills that void.

MAJOR

We do what we gotta, I guess. You ready?

STEPHANIE

Fuck's sake, let's just get this over with.

[Door opens, Stephanie and Major walk in. Sports broadcasts are heard in the background.]

BUCKO

Welcome to Bucko's sports book! I Major! You're early, eh?

MAJOR

That ain't a problem, is it?

BUCKO

No no, never. I just usually have the count done and ready. Let me just bundle it up, eh?

MAJOR

Take ten off the top and put it on the Valkyries to win by three, willya?

BUCKO

'course. Be right back.

[Bucko walks into the back.]

STEPHANIE

Bucko that good with the payments?

MAJOR

Oh yeah, one of the good ones. Never been late once, and I been collectin' from them, what, gotta be seven years now.

STEPHANIE

Yeah I remember when they came in, asked for help setting this place up. Needed our contacts for their customer base.

MAJOR

It's been a lucrative arrangement. 'specially since I don't have to make a separate trip to put my bets in.

STEPHANIE

Who knew you were such an expert multitasker?

MAJOR

You did, ya fucker. That's why I got this job.

STEPHANIE

(laughs)

[Bucko returns.]

BUCKO

Here you go, Maj. It's all there.

[Paper bag handed over.]

BUCKO

Count it if you want, eh?

MAJOR

Bucko, please. The day I need to count what you give me is the day I... let my arms go noodley.

STEPHANIE

You already used that one.

MAJOR

I need more coffee, leave me be.

BUCKO

So who's your friend? Didn't know you knew somebody this hot, eh?

MAJOR

OH!

STEPHANIE

Excuse me?

BUCKO

Maybe you'd like to place a bet? Or, there may be some more interesting things I could show you if you gave me your number and you let me take you to Sarah's. Then maybe Shenanigans?

MAJOR

Bucko, I swear to fuck. I JUST got done tellin' her you were on the up and up.

STEPHANIE

My name's Stephanie.

BUCKO

A pleasure to mee-

STEPHANIE

Arkell.

BUCKO

Uhhh, are you related to-

STEPHANIE

I'm the boss.

BUCKO

You're not-

[Major grabs Bucko, shoves them up against a wall.]

BUCKO

(terrified yelp)

MAJOR

She is. THE BOSS. Do you follow? Do not speak, just nod ya fuckin' head so I don't have to twist it off. Good.

[Major drops Bucko to the floor.]

BUCKO

(oof) My apologies! I didn't know, Ms. Arkell!

MAJOR

Yeah, that's why she's here.

BUCKO

But how did that happen, eh?

STEPHANIE

I'm the boss and that's all you need to know. Push any further and I'll call every contact in your book and tell them you're no longer vouched for, or under the protection of, the Arkells. Feel me?

BUCKO

Yes ma'am!

[Stephanie leaves through the door.]

MAJOR

Maybe next time try not to hit on every new lady you see, especially if they're with me. Or I'll reach down your throat and pull your groin out your mouth. Seeya next month, Bucko!

[Back out in the thoroughfare. Door to bucko's opens and closes as Maj exits.]

MAJOR

Sorry about that. Bucko's a good one, but y'know, we all got our faults.

STEPHANIE

(hmph)

MAJOR

You coulda just said you were Tommy, but now you ain't.

STEPHANIE

I don't want to have to say that name again. Ever. Or hear it.

MAJOR

Duly noted.

STEPHANIE

And I don't want to have to explain to another person I've never fucking met that I'm trans!
When's the last time you had to explain to your dentist that you're a cisgender woman?

MAJOR

Uhhhhhh-

STEPHANIE

(worldweary sigh)

Jesus fuck, I just want to live my life.

[At the spaceport, spaceships come and go.]

PA VOICE OVER A SPEAKER

Please remain behind the red line. The red line is there for your safety. Staying behind the red line will prevent you from getting caught in the wake of launching and landing ships. The Kingery Road Resort and Casino spaceport thanks you for your cooperation.

PA VOICE OVER A SPEAKER

If you've just arrived, do we ever have a welcome in store for you. If you're leaving, thanks for visiting and we hope to see you again soon.

[The PA announcement repeats in the background throughout the scene.]

[Banging on a vending machine.]

CHRIS

Come on you stupid piece of crap. You utterly useless machine. Your mother was a toaster, and not even a good one. I bet she burnt the bread every fucking time-

[Footsteps up.]

CAL

Problem?

CHRIS

Hey Cal. Nothing some good old fashioned marine ingenuity can't fix.
(grunts as she punches the vending machine)

[Chris punches the vending machine.]

CAL

"Chris told me punching is what passes for ingenious in the marines," just gonna broadcast that to everyone I meet.

CHRIS

What would you have me do? Bring it in for interrogation?

CAL

(small genuine laugh) May I?

CHRIS

Oh please, be my fuckin' guest.

CAL

We have one of these at the station. You just have to show it a little love.

[Gentle hollow taps on the machine.]

CHRIS

Really.

CAL

There's a built-in release, usually right next to the side wall. It's the one spot that doesn't feel hollow.

CHRIS

They built in a release in case it gets jammed, but didn't build a machine that doesn't jam or has an easy way to access said release?

CAL

Vending machines have never been the height of human technology.

[A tap that sounds much more solid.]

CAL

Aha.

[Thwap! On that spot.]

[A treat in a crinkly package is dispensed.]

CHRIS

Aaahh! Thank you!

[Chris unwraps it.]

CHRIS

(eating)

I think my blood sugar was crashing. Probably why I was so cranky.

CAL

So your blood sugar's just crashing every second of the day, I guess?

CHRIS

(still eating) It's a good thing I like you now, otherwise I'd break your other arm.

CAL

(laughs)

You just abuse spaceport vending machines for fun in your spare time?

CHRIS

(eating)

Mm, Maddie had a perp that was being transferred to Sector 90R, asked me to escort him to his transport. Why are you here?

CAL

I just like seeing Marines in their natural habitat, angrily beating on simple machinery that refuses to feed them.

CHRIS

(laughs, almost chokes) Fuck you.

CAL

I'm waiting for my parents, their transport'll be in soon. Could use some company, if you don't have anywhere else to be?

CHRIS

I mean I do, but I could also use another Frosted Crumb Comet, so if you're buying, I'm staying.

[Music on the radio in the background of the boss' office.]

[Phone rings, Stephanie picks up.]

STEPHANIE

Stephanie Arkell.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I'm still not used to that. "Stephanie." Weird.

STEPHANIE

Not even a "hello?" Fuck you too, Cass.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

It's Cassandra. You know I hate-

STEPHANIE

Not fond of people fucking around with your name, I guess.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Okaaaaay I see what you did there. I deserve that.

STEPHANIE

Oh, we're agreed! Amazing things can happen, life is beautiful.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

It's just... it's Dad's name, you know? Or close to. And I hear the "Steph" and I think of him but then it's you, and you used to be a him and now aren't a him-

STEPHANIE

I was never a him. Everyone just thought I was.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I'm really off to a good start, aren't I? Think I'll go set myself on fire and try again tomorrow.

STEPHANIE

(laughs) How're things?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Well you know, that's actually why I'm calling.

STEPHANIE

Are things not okay?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

The Cassandras keep getting tested.

STEPHANIE

There's more than one of you? This isn't a Jawbone/Fix/Richards situation-

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

FUCK NO. That's the family name.

STEPHANIE

You... you really just went with that, huh?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Well not only can I not be the Arkells, I don't want to be. I mean no offense to you (and all the offense to Mom and Dad), but if I'm gonna make a name for myself I gotta detach from the old one, you know?

STEPHANIE

Congratulations, you're figuring out what it's like to be trans and have to pick a new name.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Oh fuck! I'm growing, Stephanie! Your sister is capable of growth!

STEPHANIE

And I've never been more proud of her.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Wha- really??

STEPHANIE

Don't ruin it. But look, The Cassandras (ugh) are gonna get tested. You're new in town, at least as far as anyone knows. You're going to get push back, you're going to get people trying to skim off their payments and go back on their deals. You've got to stand firm and show them there's consequences for fucking with you.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

The consequences are my favorite part.

STEPHANIE

So Major said.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

But I can't do it all myself. You don't. Not even in the beginning, when you first took over. If I'm out there busting every kneecap, it looks like I don't command the respect of people who would willingly bust kneecaps for me.

STEPHANIE

You make a good point. So how can I help?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I need a strong, loyal, trustworthy number one. Like you have with Major. The Kingery would fall apart without her.

STEPHANIE

True enough. I could give you a few options, there are-

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I want Kaylock.

STEPHANIE

You want your old bodyguard back.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

He knows me. It will save time, he can jump right in, and we both know he's rock solid. Not literally, of course. He's a jar of jelly just waiting to jam someone up.

STEPHANIE

...really?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Look, I'm a new me, I gotta try things out and find out who this lady is.

STEPHANIE

Congratulations, you're figuring out what it's like to be-

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Yeah yeah I get it.

STEPHANIE

Kaylock makes sense. It's a good idea.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I've been having a lot of those lately.

STEPHANIE

Major's not gonna like it. You're not exactly right next door.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Oh she and 'Lock can make it work, if anyone can.

STEPHANIE

I'll let 'em know.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Thank you, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

You bet. Stay safe, and let me know if you need anything, understand?

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

I will.

STEPHANIE

Love you, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA (ON PHONE)

Love you, Stephanie.

[Phone call ending.]

KAYLOCK

That was... Stephanie. She wants you to meet her over at Geppi's for another reintroduction.

MAJOR

Yeah, no prob. You, uh, got a problem with Geppi or somethin'? You look heartbroken.

KAYLOCK

The boss has... reassigned me.

MAJOR

Well you didn't have a new permanent assignment since we got back, so that makes sense. What's she got you doin', bouncin' rowdy drunks from the casino? Look, they only barf on you maybe ten percent of the time. You gotta keep an eye on their cheeks, see, the cheeks always give it away. Catch it in time and you can redirect it.

KAYLOCK

I'm going to help Cassandra. To be her consigliere.

MAJOR

'Lock that's huge! You and me are gonna be counterparts to two Arkells, it's- Oh fuck.

KAYLOCK

Oh fuck indeed.

MAJOR

When you leavin'?

KAYLOCK

Apparently I am needed right away. My departure is... imminent.

MAJOR

I don't- I don't wanna be away from you. Not that far away.

KAYLOCK

Perhaps I could ask for another assignment.

MAJOR

That's not how this works. At all. The boss says go, you go.

KAYLOCK

I am... very concerned at the strain this will put on our relationship. And we'd only just started trying to figure out how to bud.

MAJOR

We'll still see each other. And there's calls, right? We can talk all the time.

KAYLOCK

I will call you every day. I will have to. If I could not voice the love I have for you in my nucleus, I would burst into drops of sadness and despair that could never re-congeal.

MAJOR

Why does my chest feel hollow?

KAYLOCK

We can get through this. We will have to be strong.

MAJOR

This ain't the kind of problem I can punch away, and sometimes I think that's the only strength I know.

KAYLOCK

Then it's a good thing neither of us has to do this alone.

[More spaceships coming and going.]

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[PA announcements continue repeating intermittently in the background.]

CAL

(eating) I've never had a Frosted Crumb Comet before.

CHRIS

Holy shit, Cal. You haven't lived.

CAL

Well, I'm allergic to nuts. And dairy. And sugar.

CHRIS

AAahhh! We gotta get you to the hospital!

CAL

No no it's okay, I have these pills I can take beforehand. They don't last forever, but long enough to eat something small. Destroys the allergens before they can get into my system or something? I don't really understand it, but it works. They're kind of expensive, especially on my salary, so I don't use them too often. But I thought I could splurge.

CHRIS

Feels like you maybe should have saved it for going out to eat with your parents or something!

CAL

That was why I brought it, but then I thought, why wait? I'm here, enjoying the company of a friend who really really loves Frosted Crumb Comets, so why not?

CHRIS

So we're friends now?

CAL

I mean, it seems that way to me.

CHRIS

Yeah it works, most of my friends have mean right hooks and have also broken my jaw at one time or another.

CAL

(laughs)

CHRIS

You know I used to love coming to the spaceport as a kid. Watching the ships land is so cool, but especially on takeoff... heading out into the galaxy, unlimited potential at their fingertips. It filled me with so much hope.

CAL

It's too easy to take things like that for granted. We come and we go and the days roll by, but sometimes-

CHRIS

Sometimes you've got to stop and watch the ships rise up to the stars with a friend.

CAL

You talk a big game but your insides are so squishy.

CHRIS

Tell anyone and I'll break your legs.

CAL

Duly noted. Though being bedridden would give me more time to gorge on Frosted Crumb Comets.

CHRIS

See, there's an upside to everything.

MAJOR

Geppi, this is the boss.

GEPPI

Oui, I know.

STEPHANIE

Yeah, Geppi's one of the few I make sure to see in person.

GEPPI

Zee boss likes zee rarest most exotic chocolates, and Geppi always reserves the best selection for her!

STEPHANIE

Just want you to know it's Stephanie now. Not Alyson.

GEPPI

Eh, whatever. You're still "boss" to me.

MAJOR

Right, so we're all cool. Why am I here again?

STEPHANIE

You okay?

MAJOR

No. I am not fucking okay. You're sending my husband halfway across the galaxy to- I am not okay.

STEPHANIE

Y'know you can quit if you want. This isn't the old days, I'm not gonna put a hit out on you.

MAJOR

Nah, you know I can't, I'm a lifer. And no, I'm not okay, but I will be okay. I just need some time.

STEPHANIE

I understand. Take it. I'll catch up with you tomorrow.

MAJOR

Yeah, right. Thanks.

[Major leaves.]

ESI SQUID

Those suffering from separation anxiety often cannot think about anything other than the fear of being apart from the ones they love.

STEPHANIE

This squid is still here?

GEPPI

It was a gift, it would be rude to dispose of it.

ESI SQUID

It may induce nightmares or manifest as physical ailments such as body pains, headache, hair loss, and in some rare cases a complete mangling of the toes.

STEPHANIE

Major's just going to miss her husband, it's not separation anxiety.

ESI SQUID

Refusing to accept the truth is also known as "denial." Galaxy wide, fourteen million, seven hundred and sixty thousand, one hundred thirteen deaths have been attributed to denial. Perhaps soon there will be more! (giggles)

GEPPI

Zat doesn't make any sense you obtuse stuffed animal!

STEPHANIE

(makes cell phone ringing noises with her mouth) Beep bloop bee blop. Hello? Sorry I have to take this.

[Stephanie dials her phone.]

MADISON (on phone)
Hey Stephanie, what's up?

STEPHANIE
Madison! Uh... talk to me.

MADISON (on phone)
About what?

STEPHANIE Anything!

[Stephanie exits the shop.]

GEPPi
Now look what you did, you scared the boss off you stupid squid.

ESI SQUID
I'm not quite sure she got my point.

GEPPi
What point? Why must you always babble about inappropriate things?

ESI SQUID
Appropriateness is in the eye of the beholder, Geppi. You would do well to remember that.
(giggles)

[More of the Kingery thoroughfare hustle and bustle.]

MADISON
I'm not sure there's much new to report since yesterday. We're still setting everything up, getting the new family established.

STEPHANIE
The people I sent working out okay?

MADISON
Yeah, so far, though we haven't asked them to do much yet.

STEPHANIE
Well put them to work, I'm not paying them to stand around. The sooner they start earning for you, the sooner you can pay them.

MADISON

Uh, yeah, absolutely, we'll get right on that.

STEPHANIE

How's my dad?

MADISON

He's, uh... well-

PAPA ARKELL

Give me that.

[There is a tussle for the phone.]

MADISON

Sit down and eat your fucking tapioca old man.

PAPA ARKELL

I asked for lime jello!

MADISON

This was all they had! Why can't you just-

[The tussle ends.]

PAPA ARKELL

Stephanie! Hello! This is your father!

MADISON

I'm not getting paid enough to fight with a fucking loon and now there's tapioca in my hair!

STEPHANIE

Dad?

PAPA ARKELL

And I am 100% your real father, Stephan Arkell, who is a human that impregnated your mother Sylvia. Twice.

STEPHANIE

EW WHAT THE FUCK.

PAPA ARKELL

And to prove how genuinely I am indeed your father, I can also 103% assure you that no final remaining vestige of The Fifth still resides in me, nor is it controlling my actions.

STEPHANIE

Wha-

PAPA ARKELL

Further, The Fifth (who does not exist) is now in control of the family you set your father up as figurehead of, and wants you to know that it's the last mistake you'll ever make. That's what The Fifth would say, were it still in control of me. Which it 108% is not.

STEPHANIE

Are you telling me-

PAPA ARKELL

The group serves the one. Be seeing you, Stephanie.

[Phone call ends.]

STEPHANIE

He's not even really my dad? He's still the Fifth? WHAT THE FUCK DID I NAME MYSELF "STEPHANIE" FOR THEN?! Jesus fuck!

[A spaceship is approaching the spaceport at high speed.]

CAL

That's my parents' flight on approach.

CHRIS

It's been great catching up. We should do it again sometime.

CAL

Next time you're buying the Frosted Crumb Comets.

CHRIS

Uh excuse me, that wasn't the- the...

CAL

What is it?

CHRIS

Your parents' ship, it's- that vector is all wrong for landing.

CAL

It's moving way too fast. It's not slowing. Why isn't it slowing!?

CHRIS

This place is packed. We've got to get everyone out!

[Cal and Chris run toward the ship sounds.]

CAL

Sector 88G police! Clear the spaceport! Now!

CHRIS

On the authority of Commandant Browning's Marine Corps, I order you to evacuate the area immediately!

[People yelling and running, chaos and commotion!]

CAL

No, run AWAY from the landing zone!

CHRIS

Get out of here!

CAL

Remain calm!

CHRIS

There's no need to panic! Just remove yourself from the premises in a quick and orderly fashion!

CAL

Is it clear?

CHRIS

The landing crew... that ear protection, they can't hear us.

[Chris runs, Cal follows.]

CHRIS

Get out of here! That ship is going to crash!

CAL

Go! Go! Don't look back, just run!

CHRIS

(panting) I think that's everyone.

CAL

(panting) We're out of time. Go! (he grunts)

[Cal shoves Chris out of the way, her body tumbles down.]

CHRIS

(oof)

Cal?

PA VOICE OVER A SPEAKER

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[The ship crashes into the ground, wrenching metal, crumbling walls, MASSIVE EXPLOSION.]

CHRIS

CAL!

PA VOICE OVER A SPEAKER

If you've just arrived, do we ever have a welcome in store for you. If you're leaving, thanks for visiting and we hope to see you again soon.

[Kingery theme plays.]

The Kingery, season twelve episode one, "By Any Other Name"

Featuring the voice talents of:

Melissa Autumn Hearne as Stephanie

M Sieiro Garcia as Major

Bonnie Calderwood Aspinwall as Bucko

Indrid Alistair Bird as PA Voice

Kaitlyn Kliman as Chris

Christopher Gilstrap as Cal

Kristen Bays as Cassandra

Jack Calk as Kaylock

André Vernot as Geppi

Rachel Crosby as ESI Squid

Bridget Guzewicz as Madison

And Justin Fife as Papa Arkell

Sensitivity Reader Kristine Chester

Written by Tilly Bridges

Story by Tilly Bridges, with Susan Bridges, Rene Christine Jones, Kaitlyn Kliman, Pete Milan, and Kathryn Pryde

Kingery Theme by Tom Stitzer

All other music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com

Directed by Jillian Morgan

Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Kingery theme fades out]