

The Kingery, episode 12x11 “Ethics Is For Losers”

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

[Phones and chatter in the background of the police station.]

ARHELL

"Rudimentary Intelligence Matrices
and Possible Applications of
Theoretical Growth Models" ...so
what the fuck is this?

MADDIE

This is He-B's
attorney-approved
statement.

ARHELL

So robots have attorneys now.

MADDIE

Not a robot.
Is he a robot? It feels rude to
call him a robot, y'know, kinda
reductive.

ARHELL

This thing reads like a paper for a
scientific journal.

MADDIE

He is planning on publishing it...

ARHELL

Of course he is.
By the way I'm trying out a new
name.

MADDIE

Fuck, let me update my phone
again... okay ... what is it?

ARHELL
Luna.

MADDIE
Luna?

ARHELL
Yeah, Luna.

MADDIE
Okay ... Luna.

[Soft button presses.]

MADDIE
And ... updated.
So. Big moon person, huh.

ARHELL
Shut up.

MADDIE
I'm kidding! I'll update my phone
as many times as you want me to,
babe.

ARHELL
I think you're being sincere.

MADDIE
I am being sincere!

ARHELL
Well sometimes it's hard to tell!

MADDIE
(laughs)
How is it hard to tell? I don't
really crack a whole lotta jokes.

ARHELL
I know. You're dead serious.

MADDIE

So are you!

ARKELL

It wasn't an insult!

MADDIE

Well what was it then?

ARKELL

An observation. I can observe! I'm observing!

MADDIE

(sighs)

It's a good thing I love you.

ARKELL

Yeah. It is, actually.

MADDIE

Are you're getting sappy?

ARKELL

I'm NEVER sappy, how dare you.

MADDIE

Okay fine, then I guess we're both just kind of frustrated and tired of looking for murderers together!

ARKELL

Yeah, that's love. Being frustrated and tired together. Like REAL love. Not just "saying it" love.

MADDIE

...huh. Yeah. I guess it is.

ARKELL

I said I'd do everything I could to help. Ever since Cal died.

MADDIE

And you are. You have been.

ARHELL

Okay, good.

MADDIE

Fine.

ARHELL

Fine.

MADDIE

Now that that's settled, I'm just about to go talk to He-B.

ARHELL

Nice! I wanna talk to him too.

MADDIE

Uhhh, this isn't an interrogation.

ARHELL

The hell it isn't.

MADDIE

(sighs) Luna ... if it's an interrogation, I have to contact He-B's lawyer to be present for it. So this is just a few questions to clarify his already approved statement.

ARHELL

Okay Maddie. So let's just go ask a few questions.

MADDIE

Yes, that's what I said.

[Footsteps in.]

ARHELL

Fine.

MADDIE

Fine.

TYTHIA

Am I interrupting something?

MADDIE

Yes!

ARHELL

No!

TYTHIA

Oookayyyy...

ARHELL

Why are you here? Why is she here?

MADDIE

I invited Tythia in case I need
some techspeak
translation.

ARHELL

Oh... yeah that does make sense.
Otherwise how can we have a real
interrogation.

MADDIE

Clarifying questions!

TYTHIA

So ... are we ... going in?

MADDIE

Yes!

ARHELL

You don't have to yell.

MADDIE

I thought you were gonna interrupt

me again.

TYTHIA

Maybe let's just ... go.

[Explosions and fun big gun noises.]

DAKEN

Can I please have a big gun?

ZEFF

(laughs)

Later, baby.

DAKEN

No, really! I want to fire rockets
or bombs or whatever they are!

ZEFF

Sweetie, you're not trained for
that kind of ordinance. Don't
grenades make you happy?

DAKEN

Ugh, they're fine I guess.

[Explosions!]

DAKEN

Also, you SAID there might be giant
robots. Which means plural, which means at
least two. And so far today there
have been zero robots. This is
disappointing math!

ZEFF

The day is still young! Keep
looking!

[Big boom!]

ZEFF

All right, that nest is cleared out. Nice work. Tag it!

[Footsteps approaching.]

ZEFF

Reyes! You feeling OK?

REYES

I'm a little stiff, but Doc Briggs did a great job fixing me up.

BRIGGS

If you have any other issues, let me know.

REYES

Of course.

ZEFF

How'd the scouting go?

REYES

There are signs of another group about a click west of here. It should be the last one.

ASA

That's toward the old factory, I reckon. Doc and I can probably help you out, if that's all right. I've thrown a grenade or two in my time.

BRIGGS

You'll have to tell me about that sometime.

ASA

Oh I got a lotta stories to tell you, don't worry.

ZEFF

I dunno, Doc. You sure about this?

BRIGGS

I can handle myself. I mean, I did run a crime family. Well, not exactly. I had firsthand observation of running a crime family since the Fifth was running it through me ...

DAKEN

Honestly I'm not sure that inspires ... confidence.

BRIGGS

I can throw a grenade as well as you can.

REYES

How many people are we giving explosives to?

ZEFF

The more the merrier. Besides, Daken's still looking for more robots!

DAKEN

I'm not giving up on the robots!

ARKELL

...so why isn't he locked up?

HE-B

I am right here, Ms. Arkell.

ARKELL

Ugh, I don't like THAT.

HE-B

Apologies, how should I address you?

ARKELL

I'm trying out Luna for now, but you probably SHOULD address me as Arkell at least ... no Ms.

HE-B

Understood.

TYTHIA

To answer the question, he's got a proximity lock on. It overrides his programming and confines him to a specific area.

ARKELL

So he could just roam around the station here?

MADDIE

Which would look bad, which is why he stays back here, for now. Can we get to my clarifying questions?

ARKELL

You mean interrogation.

MADDIE

Clarifying questions!

HE-B

I look forward to your queries. I've found this all to be a most interesting experience, and I hope I will be able to gather more information, perhaps for a followup publication.

MADDIE

Okay ... but we currently need more information from YOU.

HE-B

Yes, that is to be expected at this time. As stated in my report, I provided the Emotional Support Individual Squid with a full, although rudimentary, artificial intelligence matrix, in order to help Geppi with his anxiety. I expected the matrix to learn and grow as it utilized all of the information available to it.

MADDIE

So it was programmed specifically to only provide Geppi with assistance?

HE-B

That's what's so interesting to me. The matrix itself was programmed to utilize moral frameworks, combine those with existing information and then extrapolate out from that information the most useful course of action for Geppi. The algorithm, therefore, was weighted in such a way to prioritize action over contemplation.

TYTHIA

Uhhhh... I think I know where this is going.

MADDIE

You do?

HE-B

I would be most interested in your insights on this, Tythia.

TYTHIA

You mentioned moral frameworks. So I'm thinking like, you provided the squid with databases filled with philosophical arguments, right?

HE-B

Indeed. Humanity has a rich history of philosophical thought.

TYTHIA

Sure, but a lot of that information shouldn't be weighted because it's theoretical, and the AI is supposed to prioritize action over theory, yeah?

HE-B

That is also what I surmised! However, the AI was able to translate theoretical concepts INTO actions, bypassing the weighted nature of action over hypothesis, based on its own conclusions of morality.

MADDIE

Okay, I think I'm getting it. So you're saying that you gave it a moral FRAMEWORK and human debates and discussions on morality, but you left the actual decision on what actually WAS moral to the AI?

HE-B

Indeed. I did not specifically program into the AI what was, in fact, moral or ethical.

ARKELL

So what the fuck does that mean?

TYTHIA

(sighs)

It means that it's possible the AI reviewed all of the programming parameters and ethical philosophical arguments and decided ... ethics is for losers.

HE-B

That is what I believe could have occurred. Further, I believe this programming could be spread to other devices capable of communicating with the original intelligence.

ARKELL

How the hell could a stuffed squid do that?

HE-B

The squid had access to the reticulum, so that it could continually research additional information that might inform future courses of action. It's conceivable it then found other devices that could accept at least a portion of its programming and therefore it shared its current parameters and conclusions with other devices. My theory is that the squid found the ability to connect to more devices utilizing the more sophisticated equipment maintained by the Army of the Evolved.

MADDIE

So it decided to be evil, and then it connected to all the Army of the Evolved equipment, which is also evil, so it's like double evil?

HE-B

Evil and good are subjective terms,
and I am attempting to keep my
descriptions objective.

MADDIE

So what do we do?

TYTHIA

I don't think we can shut it down
remotely at this point. I guess
you'd have to find whatever Army of
the Evolved equipment it might be
connected to.

HE-B

That could prove difficult.
Considering their resources it's
likely they do not have one single
location, and instead have multiple
nodes with multiple failsafes.

ARKELL

Well. That's just fuckin' great.

[Explosions! Boom boom!]

ZEFF

Nice job, team!

DAKEN

How many grenades did you use?

BRIGGS

How many grenades did YOU use?

ASA

All right, kids, I'm sure you both
used plenty of grenades.

[Soft mechanical sound getting steadily louder.]

REYES

Does anybody else hear that? Like,
that mechanical sound?

DAKEN

Is it robots??

ZEFF

Could be robots!

REYES

It's not robots. It's coming from
that factory there.

[Footsteps as they approach the mechanical sound.]

ASA

That's odd... that furniture
manufacturing plant's been shut
down since I got here. I wouldn't
have authorized that, not until we
were sure it was safe out here.

ZEFF

Hmm, let's check it out.

[Mechanical sounds get louder. It's the rhythmic sound of a factory/conveyor belt, with rhythmic
ESI squid giggle as each squid comes off the assembly line.]

ESI SQUID

(giggles)

DAKEN

What are those? There's ...
mountains of them?

REYES

Squids?

ZEFF

Not just any squids.

ASA

They're ... emotional support
individual squids.

BRIGGS

A LOT of emotional support
individual squids.

[The factory abruptly stops.]

DAKEN

Uh, are they ... looking at us?

[Scrabbling sound of little squid tentacles.]

ZEFF

...run.

DAKEN

What?

ZEFF

RUN!

MADDIE

OK, so at least we have a working
theory now. I appreciate you
showing up for this, Tythia.

TYTHIA

Sure, anytime. He-B,
I'll come
visit you later.

HE-B

I would enjoy that.

[Tythia's footsteps out.]

ARHELL

What if we just shut down the squid itself? There's only one of it.

HE-B

Ideally, yes, although the level of corruption past the initial installation is currently unknown. Further, we don't know where it is.

MADDIE

Here's what I don't understand, Geppi was murdered. Someone had to stab it, and I don't think it was a stuffed squid that just kinda sits there.

HE-B

Actually...

ARHELL

...actually WHAT?

HE-B

The current emotional support individual squid has servos and a metal endoskeleton. Technically it is capable of movement.

ARHELL

Movement, like, say, STABBING?

HE-B

...if sufficiently motivated, then... yes?

MADDIE

Why would you give it an endoskeleton??

HE-B

Overheating is very bad for processing chips! I wanted the squid to have the capability to move to safety or a cooler environment if necessary.

[A squid explodes out from a vent and starts smashing up He-B.]

ESI SQUID

The secret to humor is surprise!
(giggles)

[Crunching, crushing metal sounds.]

MADDIE

He-B!

HE-B

Please move to safety!

[Crunching, crushing continues.]

HE-B

Move to ... safety
(warbles, falters)

[Crunching, crushing continues.]

ARKELL

We can't just leave him!

MADDIE

He's already, uh, flat?

ESI SQUID

There is an old illusion. It is called good and evil. (giggles)

[Crunching, crushing, now skittering squid tentacles.]

[A slice and a stab!]

ARKELL

Ow! Fucker stabbed me! I WILL END
YOU, you little cephalapod fuck.

[Another slice and stab!]

MADDIE

Ow!
Yeah OK we gotta go.

ARKELL

But I WANT to end him!

MADDIE

Yeah babe, I know, maybe later,
come on!

ESI SQUID

Active evil is better than passive
good!

[Footsteps as Arkell and Maddie leave.]

[Skittering squid tentacles, many of them. Getting louder.]

ARKELL

What the fuck is that noise?

MADDIE

I don't ... know.

[Multiple running footsteps approach.]

HOOKS

Move! Move! Move!

JACE

Oh god we're gonna die.

CORRY

Why are you so DRAMATIC??

JACE

Have you TURNED AROUND??

[The squid skittering sounds get louder, a few squid giggles get louder.]

ESI SQUID

(giggles)

Kill one man and you are a
murderer.

Kill millions of men, and you are a
conqueror.

Kill them all, and you are a god.

(giggles)

HOOKS

Just RUN! RUN!

[Kingery theme plays.]

The Kingery, season twelve episode eleven, "Ethics is for Losers"

Featuring the voice talents of:

Melissa Autumn Hearne as Arkell

Alicia Laine Pickens as Madeleine Gray

Kathryn Pryde as Tythia

Andrew Hackley as Daken

Russell Gold as Zeff

Carissa M. as Reyes

Kim Gianopoulos as Doc Briggs

Edward Herman as Asa

Josh Kibbey as He-B

Rachel Crosby as The ESI Squid

Perry Whittle as Hooks

Brady Hendricks as Jace

And Kirsty Woolven as Corry

Sensitivity Reader, Kristine Chester

Written by Susan 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

Assistant director Kaitlyn Kliman

Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Kingery theme fades out]