

The Kingery, episode 13x11 “Life, AKA, An Accumulation of Anguish”

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

[Light chatter in the halls of a courthouse.]

HE-B(O-mode)

What are we doing here exactly?

TYTHIA

We're waiting for your court case, remember?

HE-B(O-mode)

Of course, of course. My court case due to my treatment at the hands of the police department.

TYTHIA

Exactly.

HE-B(O-mode)

Clarifying question, if I may? Who are you?

TYTHIA

Shit! (sighs) He-B, you were just with me!

[Little mechanical whirl as He-B changes modes.]

HE-B(R-mode)

I am right here with you, Tythia. I was just explaining that I think the hunter green would look best with your – Ah. I see. Weren't we in the living room?

TYTHIA

That was... six hours ago. Okay, I need T-mode, where is he?

HE-B(R-mode)
I beg your pardon!

TYTHIA
You – the you from reticulum backup 2 years ago – you're R-mode. Factory reset is O-mode. And the you that I tried to create out of this reticulum backup and what was left of your physical memory core... that's T-mode. I need him for the court case.

HE-B(R-mode)
Well, I'm afraid you have me, Tythia. I can't exactly control what we do and when we do it.

[Little mechanical whirl as He-B changes modes again.]

HE-B(O-mode)
Clarifying question: What did the police department supposedly do to me? Your tentacles are growing more purple. That is not an expected biological reaction for your species.

TYTHIA
Shit fuck!

HE-B(T-Mode)
Oh, dear. I thought you wanted me wearing the titanium chassis, not the silicone?

TYTHIA
Oh, thank the fucking gods...
He-B, it's... it's actually you.

HE-B(T-Mode)
Ah. I take it the alternative He-B consciousness matrices have been active this morning.

TYTHIA
Way too active. And you and I spent the better part of the week trying to cobble together

something with all of these overlays that, you know, functions as you.

HE-B(T-Mode)

Yes, but I still don't remember how I ended up in Detective Gray's custody. I'm not entirely sure I'll be any help.

TYTHIA

You just need to talk about how you built the ESI Squid. My testimony will cover that we would have gladly provided that information if they had simply asked.

[Pallas walks up.]

PALLAS

Hey. He-B's attorney is running a minute late, but said we can go in without them. You ready to do this?

TYTHIA

Yup!

PALLAS

You said that way too fast.

TYTHIA

No, we're good! Let's just go, come on. You know, move, move, move.

[The Robo-Bailiff arrives.]

ROBO-BAILIFF

Case number 1-5-0-9-8-1, HE-B, PALLAS, TYTHIA
LEGAL INCORPORATION, versus the POLICE BUREAU
OF SECTOR 88G and MADELINE GRAY, you are
called to enter at this time.

TYTHIA

Okay, He-B. Ready to do this?

HE-B(O-mode)

Of course. Very aesthetically pleasing
woman I do not know.

TYTHIA

Fuck shit fuck!

[Soft music on the radio in the boss's office.]

[The door opens, footsteps approach.]

ALYSON

Wow. So glad I have locks on those doors for a
reason.

BERNICE

Oh, please. Locks are just a little side
diversion for me. The kind of mental warm-up
like a sudoku puzzle or a bit of mixed anatomy
dissection exercise.

ALYSON

... Okay, what the fuck. Did you need
something?

BERNICE

Need? No! Of course not. Unless you happen to
have a few bodies of various species around
that you could donate to one of my mixed
anatomy dissection exercises. No? No, that's
fine. I just figured... if anyone would, you wou—

ALYSON

Bernice. Why are you here? I'm clearly busy.

BERNICE

Yeah, which is odd, I figured you would have
been at the courthouse, which is where I went
first. But then they said you were here.
Working.

ALYSON

Yes, because I'm a witness and because Maddie will kill me if I show up a second before she wants me there. She's already pretty fucking annoyed about the lawsuit.

BERNICE

Ah, got it. Well, uh, hopefully this will cheer you up. Here!

[Bernice hands a box to Alyson.]

ALYSON

I want you to think very carefully about if you think I should open a box from you after you started our conversation with dissection talk.

BERNICE

Oh, no, this is nothing that exciting. Well, it is exciting, but differently. It's an engagement present for you.

[Alyson opens the box.]

ALYSON

You got me a bracelet? Wow, that is... actually very nice of you.

BERNICE

It matches your dress, but it is functional as well as fashionable!

ALYSON

And it's function is...?

BERNICE

It's a Quantum Field Generator. It creates a quantum field, as the name implies.

ALYSON

And I need this... why?

BERNICE

Uh... just... general... security. For the Kingery.
In case of... general mad... science that might
occur in your general vicinity. Since you're
the boss. Anyway, gotta go!
Congratulations!

ALYSON

Well, I'm fucking done with today and it's not
even lunchtime.

[Alyson puts the bracelet on.]

ALYSON

Damn, that looks really nice on me.

[The quiet beeping of hospital machines.]

KAYLOCK

This was hardly necessary, Karen.

MAJOR

Oo, don't you "Karen" me. You fuckin' puked. I
didn't even know you could puke those colors.

KAYLOCK

It was those sleevil tacos you insisted on
eating! With the peppers that boast to be
hotter than a star!

MAJOR

They don't taste right without the peppers,
and I will not be taking criticism at this
time. It wasn't the tacos. 'Lock, you've been
feeling weird all week. And we need to figure
out why, because every time you start to feel
weird, I start to feel really fuckin' horny
and that's a problem...

[Dr. Mattix walks in.]

MATTIX

Hello, hello, I have your test results, thank you so much for waiting. I've had a bit of a busy morning. Shirokage matches. Every time.

MAJOR

Ah, yeah. The age ole problem. People are either fuckin' or fighting.

MATTIX

People need to find new hobbies, as my spouses would say.

[Dr. Mattix looks over their chart.]

MATTIX

So, I think I have an answer as to your symptoms, Kaylock. It also explains why your reaction has been one of heightened arousal, Major. Kaylock is producing a hormone that for humans is... quiet potent. Particularly in mating rituals.

MAJOR

(laughs) Okay, but, like, we ain't about to be doing any of that while I'm stuck inside him. Not when he feels like shit on a shingle.

KAYLOCK

We do not have mating rituals that would be compatible to your physiology. I understand that I am not a common species for the Kingery, Dr. Mattix, but as a reminder, my species reproduces asexually. We bud and when said bud reaches an appropriate age of maturation, it is granted a full name.

MATTIX

True. But, it seems that while these hormones normally would never affect a partner from a different species, the unique predicament the two of you are in changes things. You are budding, Kaylock. And from the samples I

drew earlier... your bud will have the DNA of both of you.

MAJOR

... Fucking What?!

[Pallas, Tythia and He-B enter the Judge's chambers.]

PALLAS

Why didn't you
tell me He-B was fluctuating so badly?

TYTHIA

I was able to put together
the version closest to the Squids attacking
him, but I don't think he has enough RAM to
actually keep one version as the default when
the other two are still there. I'll fix it.

JUDGE

(clears their throat) All right, He-B, what
you say will stay between you, me, and the
court clerk. Your counsel will receive a
transcript of this when we're through. I am
giving you the opportunity to explain what
just happened on my witness stand, so start
explaining

HE-B(R-mode)

I can assure you that I am of sound mind, Your
Honor. My data backup from the Reticulum is a
completely functional personality matrix and
memory. I am He-B, I simply predate the event
in question further back than you realized.

JUDGE

You went from recognizing defendant Grey to
not even knowing who your lawyer was in the
span of two sentences. That hardly seems
"sound." (beat) He-B, if you expect me to take
your complaint seriously, then you need to

convince me that you are of sound mind.

TYTHIA

Your honor, this is – this is my fault. In trying to restore He-B's memory, I've had to use enough backups of his own memory that I think if I can just delete the other two, the actual He-B will be able to give you the full testimony –

[Mechanical whir as He-B switches.]

HE-B(O-Mode)

But I don't want to be deleted!

[Mechanical whir as He-B switches.]

HE-B(R-mode)

Neither do I! And I can't help but notice that when we last spoke about the nature of sentience and artificial intelligence, Tythia, you would have agreed with me. I certainly hope that this change hasn't been because of this woman's influence.

PALLAS

Oh, good, the Reticulum backup who hates me.
(sigh) He-B, we're past this.

[Mechanical whir as He-B Switches.]

HE-B(T-mode)

Of course, Pallas, I... I'm sorry. This is all very unsettling.

JUDGE

Yes. Yes, it is.

HE-B(T-mode)

My apologies, your Honor. As much as Tythia would like to see me as a singular consciousness... the reality is, she has done something I thought impossible. She has

managed to restore two additional versions of my memory. My... being. As such... none of us would want to see the others deleted. They are all He-B.

TYTHIA

Wh... when did you all decide this?

HE-B(T-mode)

This morning. I was planning to tell you, but we were running late and I... regrettably, I might have let my more stoic personality handle preparing for the hearing.

TYTHIA

You're telling me that you... you want to be like this? You want three versions of you in there? He-B, one of them doesn't even know me.

HE-B(T-mode)

Not yet. But he would love you, just like I do.

JUDGE

He-B, before you say anything else, I want you under oath and providing testimony. Because what I have just heard is a plea to be acknowledged as three sentient beings. And I want that on the record.

TYTHIA

I can't believe this...

[She storms out.]

HE-B(T-mode)

Tythia, don't –

PALLAS

Just... I'll go talk to her. Just... do as the

judge asks. This isn't about her, it's about getting justice for what happened to you.

[Mechanical whir as He-B Switches.]

HE-B(O-mode)
Of course.

[Asa walks into Doc Brigg's office.]

MATTIX
...Oh, remind me next time to have you handle Majorino. Every time I think I get somewhere with her, I inevitably have to give her bad news and she flies off the handle.

BRIGGS
Bold of you to assume anyone can give her bad news. (small laugh) Just let it go, Mattix. She will.

MATTIX
All right, well, I'm gonna try to rest for a little while. Don't let them page me.

BRIGGS
I'm sure the Nurses's station will love that.

[Mattix walks away and Asa knocks on the door.]

BRIGGS
Asa...

ASA
I won't bother you for long. I just... I, uh, I wanted to give you this.

[Hands her the bracelet.]

BRIGGS
I don't normally get to wear jewelry doing

rounds these days. Bracelets kind of get in the way when you're trying to do vitals.

ASA

I didn't reckon you'd be goin' back to walkin' floors anymore.

BRIGGS

I wanted a change of pace. And you weren't talking to me, so... it kept me busy.

ASA

Then wear the bracelet. Please. I just... I just want you to remember. That I... I love you.

BRIGGS

Where is this coming from? Are you okay?

ASA

Oh, sure, you know me. I'm fine. I'm off the sauce, so... just tryin' to work on myself.
SFX: Hospital alarm goes off

BRIGGS

(sighs) I have to go.

[She clicks the bracelet on.]

BRIGGS

But, I'll wear it, if it makes you happy, okay?

[She rushes off.]

ASA

(deep breath) I'll make all of us happy, dammit.

[In the courthouse hallway, Tythia paces.]

TYTHIA

Keep it together, fucking keep it together,
Tythia...

[Pallas catches up with her.]

PALLAS

Hey. Tythia, come on, you have got to take a
breath. He-B needs you in there.

TYTHIA

Oh, yeah? Which one? The one who
still kinda hates you, or the one that goes
back to factory settings every two minutes?

PALLAS

Don't do that. Don't think the worst about He-
B. Any of the He-Bs. That's not fair to them,
and it's not a good look for you.

TYTHIA

I just... I was just trying to fix him. That's
what I'm supposed to do and then he goes and...
and... does that.

PALLAS

They're all He-B. They don't know they're
different. You're the one who taught me
to value synthetic lifeforms. Of all people, I
thought you would be prepared to handle this.

[Time warble.]

TYTHIA

I'm – I'm trying! I swear to fucking god,
Pallas, I'm trying, but I don't know what to
fucking do here! I feel like I'm gonna fucking
come apart at the seams because everything I
did to try to make things better just fucked
it up worse!

PALLAS

That's not true! You got He-B back, just... it's gonna be different now.

TYTHIA

You have no idea what this feels like, okay? He looks at me and... and sometimes it's He-B and he loves me. And I can tell he's happy to be back to the person I know he was. And then other times... he looks through me. I'm a stranger. Pallas, he doesn't remember loving me. How am I supposed to do this? It's like losing him... over and... and over again...

PALLAS

Tythia... baby, you can't this to yourself. I know that you want to make it so that he's always there... you don't want to lose me... or him... or anyone else. But, we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. You talk about people dying in the Kingery like it's just... the morning news.

TYTHIA

But he's different... He's... supposed to be different...

PALLAS

I know. But, now... maybe he's a little more like the rest of us. And that means... all you can do is cherish the time you get with him. While you get it.

TYTHIA

I don't know... how to... deal with this.

PALLAS

Your grief is just... unexpressed love. Love you haven't gotten to share. And you'll get to share more of it than you would have a year ago. Stop trying to take us back to where we were. Let's figure out where we're going. All

of us.

[Reverse time warble.]

TYTHIA

What the heck was that?

Did you hear that?

PALLAS

Yeah, I don't know what that was, either. But, we need to go. The trial is back on. He-B has to testify that all three versions of him exist and if Nabarit is worth the salary we're paying to be He-B's defense council, they will probably spin that right into "And He-B wouldn't be in this unique position if the ESI Squids hadn't torn him apart while maglocked by the police."

TYTHIA

(teary chuckle) Ugh, I hate it when you're right about stuff like this... I just...

[Pulls Pallas into a hug.]

TYTHIA

Thank you. For being here. For all of us.

PALLAS

Well, someone has to be the calm and collected one around here. You're too busy being brilliant. So let's go back in there and be there for the stupid hover boy. Boys.

[They walk back to the courtroom.]

[Bernice tinkering.]

BERNICE

(Humming)

[Asa walks in.]

ASA

When did you get back here?

BERNICE

When did I leave here is the better question...
(chuckles) Ha. Time travel jokes. Those won't
get old. Or will they?

ASA

(sighs) Look. Is it ready? I don't mean to
rush you, but... I know this is what I need to
do.

BERNICE

It is as ready as it's going to be!

ASA

Then... turn the damn thing on. Alyson and
Maddie's wedding is in an hour, and... we need
to fix it all before then. Set everything
right.

BERNICE

Objectively speaking, "Right" is a completely
moralistic term that doesn't really apply to
timelines...

ASA

We're gonna save my brother and fix Pine
Ridge. We're gonna save Devi. And we're gonna
save Socks. If that ain't right, then nothing
is.

BERNICE

Then... let's go save... uh, everyone. And do some fun mad
science!

[Timey warble.]

[Kingery theme plays.]

The Kingery, season thirteen, episode eleven, “Life, AKA, An Accumulation of Anguish”

Featuring the voice talents of:

Josh Kibbey as He-B

Kathryn Pryde as Tythia

Alexandra Jameson as Pallas

Jillian Morgan as Robo-bailiff

Melissa Autumn Hearne as Alyson

TJ Briggs as Bernice

Jack Calk as Kaylock

M Sieiro Garcia as Major

Ashlee Craft as Dr. Mattix

Julia Eve as the judge

Kim Gianopoulos as Doc Briggs

And Edward Herman as Asa

Sensitivity Reader, Kristine Chester

Written by Kathryn Pryde

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

Kingery Theme by Tom Stitzer

All other music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com

Directed by Adam Blanford

Produced by Pendant Productions

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[Kingery theme fades out]