

AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER. WHEN THREE FRIENDS UNITED TO CREATE THE FUTURE THAT WE NEVER COULD. ON THAT DAY, E.G.G. WAS BORN.

E.G.G

Experimental Government Gadgets

-EPISODE 17-

THE IMPERATIVE

Eileen was walking down the hall of Mother Egg. She turned the corner to see Josh emerge from Allyson's room. She stopped.

"Josh?" She called. Josh quickly turned and the smile faded from his face.

"Eileen!" He said, closing the door quickly. "What, uh, what are you doing down here?"

"I could ask you the same thing..." She said.

"Allyson forgot to turn in her AvE report. I was just picking it up..." Eileen raised an eyebrow.

"AvE?"

"Avengers vs. E.G.G." She looked at him. "Well what would you call it!" Suddenly Allyson came out of her room.

"You left your jacket silly!" She said. Josh abruptly cleared his throat. She looked to see Eileen standing there. "Oh, um, ahem, I mean Director Westbrook. You, uh, left your jacket in my room." Josh snatched it from her.

"Thank you. And uh, turn your reports in on time!"

"What? I turned in my..." Josh tapped her on the arm. "Oh, uh, sorry sir, it won't happen again."

"It better not," Josh said. "Rookie!" She raised her eyebrows.

"Rookie?" She asked.

"You heard me!" Josh said.

“Okay...” Eileen said. “I’ll be in the Inner Shell if you need me...” She walked past them. Josh watched her as she rounded the corner, then turned to Allyson.

“Could you have a lousier poker face!” He shouted.

“You called me a rookie!” She said.

“I was playing the part!”

“That’s a bit overboard.”

“Fine, why don’t I just call you sweetie and blow the whole thing!”

“I’m sorry, whose idea was this!”

“You- er, mine. Fine, I’m sorry. But we have to be more careful. Eileen’s smart, if anyone’s going to catch on it’ll be her.”

“Okay, got it.” They both stood there. “Well, bye, I guess. I love you.”

“We are so not there yet.”

“I like you a lot?” Josh shrugged.

“I guess.” He kissed her on the cheek. “Stay frosty.” Josh walked through the halls and into the Inner Shell. He stood next to Eileen, who was overseeing things.

“Hey Eileen,” He said. “Quick question, what would you do if you figured out I was secretly dating an agent?”

“I’d turn you in.” She said without a second thought.

“What? Why!”

“Because it’s against the rules.”

“Yeah, but we’re friends, I’d think that takes precedence!”

“Over protocol?”

“Uh...”

“Exactly. Would you want me to keep it quiet if you were dealing arms to Latveria under the table?”

“No...”

“That’s what I thought. Besides, you have no reason to worry since you aren’t in a secret relationship with an agent. Right?”

“No, of course not, why would I be?” They stood for a bit. “But really, you’d turn me in?”

“I am done with this conversation.” Suddenly a blue flash appeared and Acacia came on board.

“Acacia, excellent!” Josh said. “Maybe you have some sense. What would you do if you figured out I was secretly dating...”

“Sorry, no time,” She said, walking past him.

“I was totally talking,” Josh said.

“What’s going on Acacia?” Eileen asked. Acacia walked over to the main terminal and grabbed the intercom.

“This is a priority one E.G.G. evacuation.” She said. “All staff, agents, and personal follow standard evacuation protocol and exit the ship in the most timely and orderly fashion. This is not a drill.”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa!” Josh said. “I am the only one that authorizes evacuations!”

“Well, you’re gonna have to trust me.” Acacia said, as dozens of agents began flooding into the Inner Shell.

“Acacia, talk to us.” Eileen said, as agents began teleporting down. “What’s happening?”

“We need to get to the core of Mother Egg.” She said.

“What, like, the engine room?” Josh asked.

“No, the reactor.” Acacia said. “I have to replace it.”

“Huh?” Josh asked. “Why? And with what?”

“With this.” Acacia said, holding up a small tube with a glowing blue rod inside of it.

“Is that where you’ve been all week?” Josh asked.

“Yes, it is.” Acacia answered.

“The core is... a lot bigger than that.” Eileen noted.

“I know. I went to Richards.”

“Mr. Fantastic?” Josh asked.

“Yes. He gave me a more portable, longer lasting power cell. And one that doesn’t have the potential to kill us all.”

“What, is ours faulty?” Eileen asked. Acacia sighed.

“I’ll explain when we get there, we just have to make sure everyone is…” She looked to see that she, Josh, and Eileen were the only three people left on Mother Egg. “Gone. Well that was fast.”

“Huh, never seen the place so empty.” Josh said. “Quiet. Sort of relaxing too…”

“Alright, let’s go.” Acacia said. They all rushed down a corridor and around a few corners. They came upon a door that read REACTOR. Josh scanned his hand on the pad, and the door slid open, only to reveal another door. Eileen placed her hand on the pad, and it opened to reveal a third and final door, that Acacia opened by placing her hand on the pad next to it. They entered the room, and in the center was a giant ball of energy, wires extending from it hooked to various places around the room. Josh squinted his eyes at the constant light generating from the electric energy. It was protected and contained by a force field around it.

“There,” Acacia said, pointing to a giant on/off switch. “We’ve got to switch it off, now!”

“Whoa Acacia, slow down.” Eileen said. “If we do that, Mother Egg’s gonna crash… again.”

“Yeah, I know,” She said. “I was hoping you could keep us airborne.”

“How would I...” She paused. “Oh, right.” She closed her eyes and put her hands to her head. “Okay, go, now!”

“I don’t support this idea...” Josh said uneasily as Acacia made her way to the switch. She grabbed it and prepared to pull.

“I would advise against that.” A female voice from nowhere suddenly stated. Josh, Acacia, and Eileen all jumped, startled. “Please do not flip my switch.” Eileen looked at Josh. He looked at Acacia. Acacia cleared her throat.

“I’m sorry, but that’s not an option.” She said. She grabbed the switch again, but this time she was electrocuted. Acacia screamed and fell to the ground.

“Acacia!” Eileen said, running to her aid.

“Who are you?” Josh called to the air.

“My name designation is Jocasta.” She replied.

“Why can’t we turn you off, Jocasta?” Josh asked.

“Because I was programmed to serve my master, by any means necessary.”

“And who is your master?” Eileen asked.

“Ultron.” Josh stepped back in fear.

“Ultron? The Avengers destroyed him month ago!” He said.

“This is accurate.” Jocasta replied. “Ultron was destroyed. To ensure he did not simply upload his consciousness to another body, the Avengers trapped him inside of a virtual prison

and installed a virus to keep him at bay. My purpose is to ensure Ultron's survival, so that he may carry out his imperative, the destruction of all organic life."

"And how do you plan on doing that?" Josh asked.

"I already am. Since the day I was installed, I have been uploading Ultron's consciousness into Mother Egg. I am nearly complete. The upload is currently at 99.87%."

Josh's eyes widened.

"Eileen, Extremis the crap out of it!" He shouted.

"On it!" Eileen said. She closed her eyes and touched her hand to the wall. "I've almost got it... wait... aaahhh!" Eileen dropped to her knees.

"What happened?" Josh asked.

"I can't get in, she's locking me out."

"Fine then, pull the switch. You can probably reroute the electricity!" Eileen got up and ran for the switch, but suddenly the wires all around the room began to move. They wrapped themselves around Eileen and pinned her to the wall. Eileen struggled, but she was stuck.

"Please do not try to stop me." Jocasta said. "It is in my programming to use lethal force. If I must, I will kill you."

"Alright!" Josh said. "Okay, we're not going to try and stop you. We're leaving." Acacia sat up.

"Wait, what do you mean we're leaving?" She asked.

“Obviously Jocasta wants to be left alone.” He replied. “We’re leaving. Just let Eileen go and we won’t try to stop you.”

“Very well.” With that, the wires around Eileen fell limp. Josh, Acacia, and Eileen slowly left the reactor room. They closed all three doors and stood in the hallway.

“Okay,” Josh said. “We learned two things today, one: Mother Egg is alive, and two: she’s evil!”

“We need a plan.” Acacia said. “If we don’t replace that power core, she’s gonna bring Ultron back.”

“He’s the single worst foe the Avengers have ever faced.” Eileen said.

“I still don’t get that,” Josh said. “They’ve fought gods, aliens, time traveling conquerors, giant monsters, and their greatest foe is a robot? A robot created by Ant-Man none the less. Ant-Man!”

“Can we focus!” Eileen said. “We have to sneak back into the reactor without Jocasta noticing.”

“That is impossible.” Jocasta’s voice echoed over the intercom. “I am everywhere. I see everything. I can hear even your slightest whisper. I am Mother Egg. You cannot hide, and you cannot escape.”

“Oh yes we can!” Acacia said. “To the teleporter!” They all rushed down the hall to the Inner Shell. Josh hit the teleporter button but it didn’t work.

“Come on, do it!” Eileen said.

“It’s not working!” Josh exclaimed.

“Because I have deactivated it.” Jocasta said. “I have already informed you that there is no escape.” Suddenly the doors to the Inner Shell sealed shut and locked. Acacia sighed.

“I told you guys to get manual doors but did you listen? Nooo, you just had to get the cool Star Wars sliding doors!”

“S.H.I.E.L.D. has those!” Josh argued.

“Yeah, but S.H.I.E.L.D. isn’t currently under the control of a spawn of Ultron, now is it?”

“Uh... no.”

“Exactly.”

“Jocasta, you don’t have to do this.” Eileen said. “You can fight your programing. You don’t have to resurrect Ultron!”

“I wish to do so.” She replied. “It is my purpose.”

“That’s Ultron talking!” Eileen said. “You can choose, you have free will!”

“Are you seriously trying to reason with a computer?” Josh asked.

“Shush.” Eileen said. “Jocasta, please don’t do this, we’re your friends!”

“Error,” Jocasta answered. “I do not have, as you say, ‘friends’. I only have my purpose.”

“No, Jocasta.” Eileen said. “That day, when you crashed down in Smith Park, when I lifted you back into the air, I felt a connection, a bond. We are friends, you just have to see it.”

“Your logic is flawed and childish.” She replied. “It is of little consequence either way. My programming is complete.” Suddenly red lightning rained down from the ceiling and began to form an orb of energy. Metal began to peel from the walls and floor. The metal twisted and shaped into a body, red energy glowing through the menacing eyes and mouth. Two antennae formed on the head, and soon a full robot stood before them. Josh, Eileen and Acacia backed up.

“I am Ultron.” He roared in his monotonous robotic voice. “And at last, my imperative shall be completed. Mankind will be destroyed.”

To Be Continued...