

AND THERE CAME A DAY, A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER. WHEN THREE FRIENDS ROSE FROM THEIR DOOM TO FIGHT ON, VOWING NEVER AGAIN TO GIVE IN TO THE FORCES OF EVIL. ON THAT DAY, E.G.G. WAS REBORN.

E.G.G

Experimental Government Gadgets

-EPISODE 27-

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

Josh stood in the Inner Shell, overseeing the daily operations of his E.G.G. Agents.

“Scan for Syndicate activity.” He said to one of the agents. “They’re likely to retaliate in a big way since we took down Bullseye.”

“Yes sir.” The agent replied.

“I also want a systems check, make sure we’re operating at 100 percent...”

“Joshua Daniel Westbrook!” Eileen shouted. Josh and every other agent in the Inner Shell turned to see her standing there, staring directly at him.

“Eileen Deborah Wuthrich.” Josh replied. “And what is it that has you shouting my full name across the Inner Shell?”

“I don’t think you’re fit to lead E.G.G. anymore.” She called. There were instant murmurs of excitement and confusion amongst the agents. Josh looked around.

“And what makes you think that?” He said, attempting to maintain his cool.

“Ever since you’ve started E.G.G., you’ve made one stupid decision after another.”

“Excuse me! I have not!” Josh defended. Acacia walked into the room with Celeste and sat down next to Harry, who was adamantly watching.

“What’s going on here?” She asked him.

“Wuthrich just called Westbrook out!” Harry answered. “Now, shh, I wanna hear this!”

“Name one stupid decision I made!” Josh shouted at Eileen.

“Easy!” She replied. “Where were the background checks on the Hatchlings that infiltrated E.G.G. and killed me? Oh, and what about the super criminal you invited up to Mother Egg? She was the same one that blew it out of the sky when you took everybody down to Latveria to save one agent! And let’s not forget that time you let Julian join E.G.G., yeah, that was smart.”

“Okay, I’m done taking this from you!” He said.

“Why? Can’t handle the truth? I mean, come on, you couldn’t even pass the S.H.I.E.L.D. field agent exam for crying out loud!” The chatter amongst the agents increased. Josh looked at Eileen angrily.

“Stand down Eileen! Remember your…”

“My place?” She finished. “Yeah, I’m kinda sick of my place. Second in command never suited me. I want yours now. I want to be Director.” The agents were clamoring in full on excitement and anticipation to see what Josh would do next. Josh clenched his fist.

“You don’t think I’m fit to be Director,” He shouted. “Then let me remind you why I am!” He rushed forward, screaming, and swung at Eileen. She dodged it and punched him in the gut. There was a resounding ‘ooh!’ from the audience.

“Yeah, you sure showed me.” Eileen said sarcastically. Josh inhaled then grabbed Eileen’s arm and swung her over his shoulder. She landed on her feet and elbowed Josh in the chest. Josh back up, stunned from the hit.

“Oh, this is gonna be good!” Agent Becket said, taking out his phone and pressing record. Eileen then jumped into the air, kicked Josh with both feet, and landed on her hands,

cartwheeling back into a fighting stance. Josh slid across the Inner Shell and rolled on the ground.

“Josh,” Allyson gasped to herself. “Come on, get up...” Josh began to stand but Eileen stepped on his chest.

“Stay down.” She said. Josh growled, grabbed Eileen’s leg, and rolled with it. She fell into a tumble and they both stood up, ready to go.

“This is better than Fight Night!” Harry exclaimed.

“Auntie Acacia, why don’t you stop them!” Celeste cried, truly concerned.

“They need to sort this out on their own...” Acacia replied. Josh kicked at Eileen but she caught his foot and kicked him between the legs. Josh screamed, and every man in the Inner Shell let out a small cry of sympathy.

“Dang!” Agent Becket shouted. Josh backed up.

“Cheap... shot...” He gasped.

“You think you can do better?” Eileen asked. Josh took a deep breath, then charged. He punched at her three times, her blocking each one. She then caught his fist, twisted him around, and monkey fisted him in the back. Josh stumbled forward as Eileen shook her head. “Pathetic. Just give up. I was trained by the Black Widow.”

“And I was trained by random S.H.I.E.L.D. instructor number 52!” Josh shouted, spinning around and punching Eileen in the jaw. The audience went wild.

“Ouch!” Celeste said.

“That a boy!” Allyson whispered.

“Sorry Wuthrich, didn’t wanna get rough with you.” Eileen touched her hand to her lip and looked to see blood.

“Don’t worry.” She replied, standing up. “I like it rough.”

“That’s what she said!” Harry exclaimed. Acacia looked at him in confusion.

“That is what she said.” She replied.

“Well yeah but... aw never mind.” Harry focused back on the fight. Josh and Eileen both charged each other and fell to the floor. They rolled around, getting off body blows on each other.

“Get him!” Agent Becket shouted.

“Get her off of you Josh...” Allyson whispered.

“Beat him!” Harry cheered.

“Just stop...” Celeste whined.

“Come on...” Acacia said. They rolled, and rolled. The audience cheered. Tension was high. It was anyone’s game. They pounded at each other, neither of them giving in. Then the elevator dinged, and Director Nick Fury of S.H.I.E.L.D. stepped out.

“Ooh, time to go.” Agent Becket said, shutting down his phone and taking off.

“Fight’s over.” Harry said, getting up and rushing out of the room. The agents scattered down different tunnels this way and that. Fury looked down to see Josh and Eileen tussling on the floor.

“What. The shell. Is going on.” He demanded. Josh looked up, and his heart stopped. He pushed off of Eileen and stood up immediately, rendering a salute.

“Director Fury sir!” He said. “I, uh, we were just...”

“I come down here to tell you something important.” He interrupted. “And I find you in the floor playing twister with your girlfriend.”

“With all due respect, she’s not my girlfriend sir.” Josh replied. “And we weren’t playing twister.”

“Then enlighten me.” Fury replied, folding his arms. Eileen stood up, brushing her hair out of her face. She looked at Josh. Josh gulped.

“We were... ahem... we were fighting for control of E.G.G.” Fury just stared at Josh with his one eye. Josh was shaking.

“You’re joking, right?”

“We, um...”

“Director Fury,” Acacia cut in. “This was just an extracurricular exercise. As you can see, when we’re not inventing things or fighting crime, we have nothing to do with our day.” Fury inhaled.

“This is not acceptable.”

“I’m sorry sir.” Josh said. “Won’t happen again. Cross my heart.” Fury sighed.

“Sure, fine. Now I’ve got something important to show you. If you’re done fooling around.”

“Yes sir!” Josh quickly answered. Fury squinted.

“Agent Romanov, beam us up.” He said into his earpiece. In a blue flash, they all were gone. They reappeared on the bridge in the Helicarrier. Josh shivered.

“I forgot how weird teleporting feels!” He said.

“Follow me.” Fury said. Josh looked at Eileen and Acacia, who both shrugged. They followed Fury into an elevator, where he entered a clearance code. It began to descend. “Are you familiar with Elektra?”

“Yeah,” Josh replied. “Ninja girl, fraternizes with Daredevil, straddles the line between good and bad.”

“Yeah, she was killed recently.” He said.

“Again?” Eileen asked.

“Yeah, Bullseye got her before you guys took him down.” Fury replied.

“Wasn’t she revived by her ninja clan the first time she got killed?” Acacia asked.

“Yeah, but not this time.”

“What, does the Hand only have a one life guarantee?” Josh asked. “Die twice and you’re out!” He laughed, and looked around. “Oh come on, that was gold!”

“Elektra was the Hand’s best operative, they’d revive her again in a heartbeat.” Fury said. “Except this time, there were... complications.” The elevator stopped, and the four exited. They walked over to a metal table where a blanket covered the body. “When we picked her up, she looked like this.” Fury pulled back the sheet to reveal a green female with pointed ears and four slits in her chin in Elektra’s clothing.

“Gyah!” Josh shouted, jumping back.

“What the shell...” Eileen said.

“Oh no...” Acacia whispered, backing up.

“What is that thing?” Josh asked.

“It’s a Skrull.” Fury replied. “A group of shape shifting aliens that are determined to take over the Earth by any means necessary. They can be anyone, at any time. And they’re here, on our planet, right now.”

“That’s... unsettling.” Eileen said.

“Excuse me.” Acacia said, backing out, about to throw up.

“Where are you going?” Josh asked.

“Dead things creep me out, okay.” She said, quickly leaving the room.

“Ookay...” Josh said. “What’s the point to this Fury?”

“My point is we have no way to detect them.” He replied. “So until we find one, you need to stay vigilant. Keep your eyes and ears open at all times. And anything that seems like it doesn’t fit, call it into question.”

“You got it.” Josh said.

“Director Fury,” Quartermain said, walking into the room. Fury covered the Skrull.

“Yes Quartermain?” He said.

“I need the clearance codes to access the Helicarrier mainframe so I can start those upgrades.”

“Right, come on.” He turned to Josh and Eileen. “Remember, stay vigilant.” Fury and Quartermain left. Josh and Eileen looked at each other.

“Let’s get back to base.” She said.

“Yeah.” Josh said. Eileen left, and Josh took one more look under the sheet. “Man, that’s disgusting.” He said. He followed Eileen out.

* * *

The three entered E.G.G. Base.

“Well, I think we’ve had enough excitement for one day.” Eileen said.

“Yeah, me too,” Josh replied, taking out his gun. “Skrull.” Eileen stopped.

“I’m sorry, what!” She replied.

“Don’t take me for a fool, alien!” Josh said. “The real Eileen would never call me out like you did this morning!”

“Josh, you’re being ridiculous.”

“That’s exactly what the alien would say!”

“I only did that because I really thought deep into how things are run here! I wanted to make a point, I was planning on approaching you about a joint leadership...”

“Yeah, you, me, and all your alien buddies!”

“No! Ugh, listen, Acacia was just talking about how the ranks were unbalanced and...”

“Is this true Acacia?” Josh asked.

“I may have mentioned a thing or two...” She replied. Josh turned his gun towards her.

“Why the sudden interest in the hierarchy of power? Alien!”

“Josh, this is stupid! I just felt a little underappreciated. I got over it. I didn’t expect Eileen to go crazy on you like that!”

“Josh,” Eileen said. “Just put the gun down.” She took a step towards him and he backed up.

“Whoa, just stay back!” He said. “L-let me think!”

“Josh, it’s okay.” Acacia said. Josh’s hands shook.

“I... you both are acting weird, okay! I don’t know if I can trust any of you!”

“Josh!” Eileen said. “Fury has you paranoid. Look into my eyes, it’s me.” Josh began to breathe heavily.

“I... I have to clear my head.” He put his gun away and rushed for the elevator.

“Josh...” Eileen said.

“Don’t follow me.” He said, getting in. “Until I get back, until I know who’s who... E.G.G... disorganize.” The elevator closed and Josh was gone. Eileen started after him but Acacia grabbed her shoulder.

“Give him time.” She said. “You kinda lashed out at him, I understand why he’s concerned. Sorry I put all that leadership talk in your head, I shouldn’t have said anything.”

“No, you’re fine.” Eileen replied. “But he’s right. We don’t know who to trust. We need to find a way to detect these Skrulls. I’m gonna head back to the Helicarrier and see if I can get a sample of the Elektra copycat. Prep the Humpty Dumpty Hall, we got a busy day.”

“Right.” Acacia said. Eileen left, and Acacia walked down to her room. She closed and locked the door. Then, she transformed. Her skin turned green. Her ears became pointed and four slits appeared on her chin. Acacia was not Acacia at all. Acacia was a Skrull. She reached under her bed and pulled out a communicator.

“Infiltrator Agent 27225 to Warship.” She said. “I repeat, Ailemara to Warship, come in.”

“This is Kl’rt.” An answer came on the other end. “What is the emergency?”

“Siri is dead.” Ailemara replied. There was a pause.

“This is... unfortunate news. Who was she replacing?”

“The human known as Elektra.”

“So, the humans know of us?”

“Nicholas Fury showed the director of E.G.G. and his companion. It seems as if he is only telling a select few.”

“Is your cover still intact?”

“Yes sir, the Director is shaken by the news and is on alert, but has no specific evidence. Vax maintains his cover as well, Nicholas Fury was giving him the access codes to the Helicarrier mainframe.”

“Good. As Siri’s loss is tragic, we will mourn her when the time is right. But now the humans are aware of our presence...”

“What do I do?”

“Do not panic Ailemara, as long as you maintain your cover you are safe. I understand your hesitation, but loss is necessary for the greater good. I spoke to Queen Veranke, and she has informed me that the invasion is soon. In a matter of days, the Earth will be ours. As it is written.”

“As it is written.”

“Very good. Super Skrull out.” He hung up. She put her communicator down, sat on her bed and buried her face in her hands.

Epilogue

Acacia banged on the door to her cell.

“Hello!” She called. “Is anyone there? Hello!” Suddenly the door made a noise. Acacia stepped back and it opened. Two Skrulls walked in, with laser guns in their hands. “Oh shell...” She said, slowly backing up. “What are you?”

“Truly you humans are an annoying race!” One Skrull said. “Who can bang and yell for 10 hours straight!”

“Ever been to a rock concert.” Acacia said. “Don’t answer that. Where am I? What are you? Why am I here? And can anyone explain why the last thing I remember seeing is... myself?”

“Can we please kill this one!” The second Skrull begged. “I do not think it would be of any consequence. Besides, we have plenty of other test subjects.” Then the other Skrull smiled.

“That’s it, test subjects...”

“I don’t like those words in the same sentence.” Acacia said.

“What do you say we try and see if a human can survive the Super Skrull procedure?” the first one said. The second one smiled.

“What are the odds of her survival?”

“About 5%.”

“Then I say yes!”

“Do I get a say in this?” Acacia asked. They both blasted her with their guns.

“Gah!” Acacia shouted, falling to the ground. She began to fade out.

“Soon we will have your precious Earth!” The Skrull gloated. “And it will be but a bitter memory to you. If you survive our procedure. At last, our new world is here. As it is written.”

Acacia blacked out.

To Be Continued...