

Encapsulated Season 3 Episode 3

FADE IN:

INT. CENTER FOR ALIEN RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

ATHENA (38) is sitting at her desk, sipping her coffee, and looking out the window pensively. Her alien double is sitting next to her, also drinking a cup of coffee, and also looking out the window.

They're on the tenth floor, but they can still clearly see one of the spaceships not far from the building, with an array of tents and canopies positioned all around it.

There are also dozens of technicians and scientists bustling about (they look like ants from Athena's view). They're conducting tests and researching the exterior of the monolithic flying saucer.

ATHENA

Think they've found a way in yet?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

ATHENA

Yeah, you're probably right, doesn't stop them from trying though.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Athena grins back at the alien, then they both gulp down the rest of their coffee in near unison.

ATHENA

Alright, let's see what we have today...

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Athena logs in to her computer. The alien pantomimes logging in on a non-existent keyboard.

While Athena looks through her email, the alien double pretends to look through hers, even though there's no actual computer, keyboard, or mouse.

Athena is focused as she works, while the alien keeps grinning, 'typing', and 'clicking' alongside her. Soon, her co-worker, GAVIN (28), shows up.

GAVIN

Morning.

ATHENA

(without looking)

Morning.

ALIEN ATHENA

(also without looking)

Mrr mrr.

GAVIN

I don't know if you got the memo, but it's not 'bring your alien to work' day.

Athena chuckles, finishes typing, then turns to face him (as does her double).

ATHENA

And let me guess, Gavin 2.0 is still locked in the dungeon?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

He's using his body for science. Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing?

ATHENA

(to the alien)

I mean, Athena Sr. has taught me quite a lot, haven't you?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

ATHENA

Besides, you wouldn't want anyone to think that you're a HUMANIST, would you?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

She and the alien both stare at Gavin; he groans.

GAVIN

First of all, why is she a senior, and mine is just a 2.0?

Athena and the alien both shrug, as if to say, 'there's no reason why'. Gavin sighs.

GAVIN

Second - is that what they're calling it now, being a HUMANIST?

ATHENA

Mm-hmm. I guess the term 'anti-alien-rights' didn't test as well in focus groups.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

I'm not anti-anything, like I said, I'm donating MY alien for science. I'm just very pro being left alone and keeping my sanity.

(Athena looks unimpressed)

Oh, please. What's YOUR side called?

ATHENA

The equalists.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

Figures. That actually does have a nice ring... Shit, that'll be hard to top. Speaking of which, any consensus for what we're calling them?

ATHENA

So far, it seems to be 'mimic'. 'Dupe' and 'Double' are too generic, 'Doppel' got some traction. I personally liked 'better angels'.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

But, mimic is winning out. It's kinda cute.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

Interesting pick... Mimic, mimic...

There's a lull. Athena and her mimic turn back to resume their work, but Gavin has more questions.

GAVIN

Work-related, you learn anything new?

Athena and the alien slowly swivel back around, trying to make Gavin feel as guilty as possible. He glares at them, they just laugh to themselves.

ATHENA

Well... if you MUST know...

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr... Mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

Not really. Mostly I've just verified what we already know. They imitate us, they follow us. Unless we TRAP them.

(Gavin groans)

Only thing they don't seem to copy is when we're mean or cruel or just... bad... but they'll do all the good and neutral stuff.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

Ooh, and they can do sign language! Which is actually not that ground-breaking, but at least it's one more thing I can mark off the list of 'observed behaviors'.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Athena signs out 'M-I-M-I-C', and the alien signs it back. Then Athena starts signing 'G-A-V-I-N I-S A D-I-', but Gavin cuts them off.

GAVIN

Alright, very funny.

He stands there, waiting. Athena sighs dramatically.

ATHENA

Gavin, what have YOU learned?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Since you asked...

(Athena rolls her eyes)

Actually, you want to go to the dungeon with me? I mean, the lab? Please? It's SOOO boring, and I'm in the same boat, NOTHING new.

ATHENA

Well, I guess we could take a break from work... I do feel bad for Gavin 2.0. He needs to know that there's more to life than... You.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

We just need to freshen up quick.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Athena and her mimic get up and walk towards the bathroom. Gavin stares at them in bewilderment - he stays in place, they keep walking away.

GAVIN  
You can't be serious...

ATHENA  
(pauses)  
What? Something wrong?

ALIEN ATHENA  
(also pauses)  
Mrr? Mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN  
Isn't that a little TOO equal?

ATHENA  
Oh, hush. You're telling me you've never let your dogs watch you use the bathroom?

ALIEN ATHENA  
Mrr mrr. Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN  
No! I don't! That's weird!

Athena sighs, then keeps walking. Her mimic follows her, grinning the whole time. Gavin shakes his head

GAVIN  
It's not natural!

ATHENA  
Says the raging humanist!

ALIEN ATHENA  
Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr!

GAVIN  
Oy vey...

He shakes his head again, utterly perplexed.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

All three of them are descending in the elevator. Athena and her mimic are smiling contentedly and staring directly at Gavin (one on each side). Gavin looks grossed out.

INT. HIGH-TECH LABORATORY - DAY

The elevator doors open. They enter the lab, a spacious, brightly lit chamber with several dozen technicians, and an array of mimics strapped onto operating tables.

The mimics are all smiling and wriggling slightly, but they don't seem particularly uncomfortable. Most of them are silent as the humans operate on them. Gavin leads Athena and her mimic through the maze-like layout.

GAVIN

Will she need a trigger warning?

ATHENA

See, you ask questions like that, but you still have no problem working down here.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

(to the mimic)

You okay? Does this bother you?

(she smiles obliviously)

She'll be fine.

ATHENA

Probably.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr.

They finally arrive at Gavin's mimic, whose arms and legs are tied to the table. His mood doesn't change even though the real Gavin is there. He just keeps smiling and shifting around, trying unsuccessfully to break free.

GAVIN

Hey buddy, you miss me?

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

I brought some friends.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Gavin reaches under the table, grabs a roll of duct tape, and prepares to put it on the alien's mouth. He turns to the women casually.

GAVIN

Do you mind? Kinda hard to focus.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr? Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Athena is taken aback; she and her mimic are speechless. Gavin starts laughing.

GAVIN

I'm just kidding, lighten up! Could you imagine the PR shitstorm if we ever actually did that? Talk about bad optics...

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

We can, however, do THIS.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

He puts the tape back, pulls out a scalpel, and slices the alien's hand clean off, like he's cutting through a block of styrofoam. Athena jumps and shrieks.

There's no blood though, and the hand grows right back.



GAVIN

Neat, huh?

ALIEN GAVIN

(completely unfazed)

Mrr mrr?

ATHENA

What the hell is WRONG with you?

Her mimic doesn't repeat the angry outburst, and Athena takes this as a cue to calm down.

ATHENA

Sorry, I just - I don't like sharp things.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Gavin chuckles and holds up the severed hand. Athena is still not amused, but she tentatively takes it. As she and her mimic examine it, it quickly crumbles into fine powder and spills onto the floor.

GAVIN

We still don't know what exactly it is, but they're like a cross between a starfish and memory foam. Also, their clothes...

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Gavin cuts off part of the alien's shirt and hands it to the women. Like the hand, the fabric crumbles to dust.

ATHENA

It's the same material...

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Mm-hmm. We've found virtually no difference in composition between their body and the clothes.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Fun fact, their ships have a similar property, except they're metallic, not organic. They can regenerate if something breaks off. So there's some overlap, they probably have the same base elements at their core...

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

And you said the other day that there's nothing under the clothes, right?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Right. It's like they're just one solid chunk of whatever this is. We even cut one in half, it's like gray foam on the inside.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Athena looks horrified. It takes Gavin a second to realize what she's concerned about.

GAVIN

Oh, sorry, he's fine, he regenerated completely, didn't even flinch when we did it.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Athena looks relieved. Just for fun, Gavin slices off his mimic's arm. Athena is aghast, and she recoils when he tosses it at her.

It crumbles within seconds of hitting the ground, and the mimic smiles blithely as the arm rapidly grows back.

GAVIN

So yeah, they be hard to kill. It's almost like they're not even alive... We don't see any cells, tissue, nerves, anything. It just looks like melamine foam under a microscope, like a sponge. Kitchen sponge, not a living one.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

They also don't change appearance. We haven't observed any discoloration, aging, or shifts in... Anything, really. Like they're frozen in the exact form as when they arrived.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

I am curious, have you studied their clothes? Specifically, why they're 'wearing' the outfits they're wearing?

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

ATHENA

I haven't myself, no. But from what's been published so far, their outfits are like a generic sample of what's in your wardrobe.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

So that blouse and those pants-

(she points at her mimic's outfit, and her mimic points back)

I do own those. But I wasn't wearing them the night they arrived.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Interesting. Yeah, same with mine, I wear that polo shirt a lot, and the jeans too. But not the night it happened. Odd...

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

What else do we know...? I'm not joking when I say they don't die. We've tried everything, we even blew one up, she just grew right back.

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Gavin takes his mimic's hand and smushes it against the operating table. Athena shrieks and smacks him, he laughs and keeps pressing.

Finally he stops. The mimic's hand is flattened and misshapen, but within a few seconds, it returns to its original shape. The mimic is unconcerned.

GAVIN

Anyways... You still good to come over later?

ALIEN GAVIN

Mrr mrr mrr... mrr mrr mrr mrr?

ATHENA

Shoot, it's Friday, isn't it?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

ATHENA

Fiiiiine. But I'm bringing a friend.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Gavin looks confused, then realizes Athena is referring to her mimic. He groans, she stares him down comically.

INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is a typical bachelor pad: cheap furniture, clutter, dim lighting, huge flat-screen TV, and a comfy bean bag chair that takes up a third of the living room.

Athena and her mimic are on the couch opposite Gavin, who's engulfed by the bean bag. He's smoking a joint.

GAVIN

You sure you don't want one?

ATHENA

I'm good, it's not for me.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

I know YOU don't smoke, duh, I was asking your... Mimic... That word is WEIRD if you say it a lot... Mimic, mimic, mimic... Mimic...

ATHENA

Mimic... Mimic... Can they even smoke?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Probably. They can eat and drink, but get this, the food just dissolves, like it disappears in their mouth, and there's no waste. They don't need it to survive. They don't feel the effects of food, right? So they probably can't get high...

ATHENA

Fascinating.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr.

Gavin takes a hit and exhales slowly. Athena and her mimic seem oddly relaxed. Gavin is VERY relaxed.

ATHENA

So, why are they here?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Easy. They're invaders.

ATHENA

Wow, what a well-reasoned, evidence-based conclusion. Care to elaborate?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

Gavin sits up excitedly.

GAVIN

Okay, hear me out, I DO have evidence. I'm not a completely uninformed humanist, contrary to popular opinion. One: they follow us unless we force them not to. That's active, not passive, and it's creepy as hell. If they came in peace, they would leave us alone.

ATHENA

Maybe following us IS peaceful to them, like they're scientists themselves, and they need to observe everything we do.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

Besides, it's not as if they ATTACK us, and they don't HARM us. They just copy us. And they don't even copy the BAD stuff we do. That seems benign if you ask me.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

Gavin rubs his chin and thinks it over.

GAVIN

I'll see your good point, and raise you an observation. They seem to know a LOT about us. One, they know who all of us are. Two, they know what we wear. It's like they're planning to replace us by becoming us.

ATHENA

First: if they studied us, why would they be following us around? Shouldn't they already know how we behave? What would be the point of them observing us? Maybe all they know about us is what we look like, and now they're visiting so they can learn the rest.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

But exactly! That's my point, is that they're eventually going to take over and BE us.

ATHENA

But why wouldn't they just kill us?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Because then they wouldn't know how to act!

ATHENA

Fair enough.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

Also, have you seen the stories about people whose mimics keep living after they die.

(both Athenas nod)

So THAT'S suspicious. Because eventually, we'll all die, and our mimics will still be here, doesn't that sound like the perfect invasion?

ATHENA

It sounds like the perfect imitation, but why would they want to just COPY us?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

I mean, to be fair, that is the only instance that we know of where the mimic can act as an independent agent, basically they just live on like they're the human that died.

ATHENA

But that's the point, they live as if they were the person. They behave the same as them, they don't have their own personalities, they're just copying us.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

Even the way they mimic us. Like right now. Notice that she's not trying to sit in the exact same spot as me. At work, she doesn't try to drink out of the same mug as me. So she's not trying to COMPLETELY substitute me with herself, she's just trying to EMULATE me.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

ATHENA

And come on, do you really think she understands what's going on? They feel like... like robots... They don't seem to have any awareness.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

There's a lull. Gavin takes another hit and sinks into the bean bag. Athena and her mimic lazily extend the footrests on the couch. There's a gentle hum as the couch reclines.



ATHENA

Here's another thing you forgot. Babies.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

Babies?

ATHENA

Babies. There haven't been any NEW mimics since their arrival. So any humans born afterwards don't have a mimic.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Don't have one YET.

ATHENA

But if they want to invade, wouldn't they need to repopulate somehow?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Maybe they have enough of them as it is, like they don't need more.

(he sits up)

And and and, okay, so they can regenerate their limbs and body and ship right? It would be easy to make copies of themselves. They already made copies of US.

ATHENA

So... There'd be duplicates of duplicates?

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr?

GAVIN

Yeah! Like mitosis.

ATHENA

But that hasn't happened yet. There haven't been any more of them than when they first arrived.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Maybe they're waiting until all of us, like, everyone who was here when they arrived, maybe they're waiting until all of that group dies.

ATHENA

But there would be new people... Maybe they're trying to teach us something... Maybe they're here to be like a mirror of us at our best.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr...

GAVIN

Like better angels.

ATHENA

Exactly. They're our good twins.

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr mrr.

GAVIN

Or maybe... They're here to torture us, kill us with kindness and drive us slowly mad. Maybe... Maybe they're here to SERVE MAN.

ATHENA

It's a COOKBOOK!

ALIEN ATHENA

Mrr mrr mrr mrr!

Athena and Gavin burst out laughing, while Athena's mimic 'laughs' by giddily repeating 'mrr mrr mrr'.

FADE OUT.