

Encapsulated Season 4 - Episode 7 of 10

FADE IN:

INT. LEGO CASTLE - DAY

Among the parapets, corridors, and towers, the minifigures are standing ominously. Knights, royalty, and peasants, waiting silently, smiling with blank expressions.

INT. LEGO SPACESHIP - DAY

Similarly, the astronaut minifigures are standing at their stations and computers, eerily quiet...

INT. LEGO CITY BLOCK - DAY

Same as the others, the pedestrians seem frozen in time, locked in a pleasant but eerie state of immobility.

Suddenly, something shifts in the back alley - a shadow darts away, a masked figure with a gun.

BACK TO THE SPACESHIP

The same figure rushes in a blur past the crew members - he's the same size as them, but unlike them, he's alive, while they continue standing like statues.

BACK TO THE CASTLE

The figure is lurking in the shadow of the outer wall, checking for guards. The coast is clear. He quickly opens a secret passage in the wall, then jumps inside.

INSIDE THE CASTLE

The intruder watches the minifigures from a distance: they're sitting motionless in the banquet hall, having a grand feast, but without eating anything. None of them notice the intruder.

He slinks quietly down the hall, past ominous rows of knights with armor and axes, then climbs a staircase.

INSIDE THE TOWER

Finally, we see him in the light. He's a human, but he's wearing a Lego space helmet and holding a Lego blaster.

He looks around the room, making sure it's empty, then slowly raises the visor on his helmet. It's the boy from the previous episodes!

He surveys the room confidently, puts the visor down, and proceeds to the window. He makes a pretend static sound, then talks to his wrist (there's nothing on it).

BOY

This is Eagle Six. I'm in the main tower.  
Stand by.

He looks out and can see the courtyard below, where the knights are having a jousting tournament (well, they're standing still, but it's as if they're jousting).

The boy slowly draws the blaster, aims at a knight, then 'fires' it - which means he pretends to shoot it, recoils, and makes gunshot noises.

Obviously, the knights don't budge, but the boy ducks for cover and crouches against the wall. He lifts the visor, makes the static noise, and gives an update.

BOY

Mission control - I'm hit! They opened fire!

He gets up, glances at the window, then crouches again. Suddenly, something starts beeping in the background.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The boy grumbles, wakes up, and turns off his alarm clock. He looks around his human-sized room, looks over at the Lego sets on the floor (castle, spaceship, city block), then sighs and pulls the covers over his head.

As he lays in bed, bundled up, trying to catch more sleep, it's silent... Then his windows explode in slow motion.

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Murray and Cole are eating breakfast together. The place is still a mess, and they both look hungover.

COLE

I still can't believe we missed it...

MURRAY

Mmm...

Cole checks his phone. It's 9:43 AM. He unlocks it and browses the internet while they eat.

COLE

Let's see... Oh, apparently we had THREE days-  
(pauses)

'Days'... They estimate the whole thing lasted  
about twelve hours, so...

(does the math)

Four hour days? No, no wait, two hour days, and  
two hour NIGHTS...

(continues)

And then it reset again.

MURRAY

Mmm... I remember the first one...

COLE

Yeah, same... What did we do for the- were we at...?  
Was it just clubs the whole time?

MURRAY

Probably...

(yawns)

What's their... What are, how do they explain it?

COLE

Oh, you'll like this...

(chuckles)

Geomagnetic fluctuations.

MURRAY

Ahh...

COLE

But of course, it threw off the planet's natural 'equilibrium', so the 'resonance frequency' was rebalanced or something, I dunno... Science...

(they laugh)

Definitely not a guy named Moses on Youtube.

MURRAY

No, of course not.

COLE

Let's see if HE has any stories...

(browses)

Yeah, still just Fox.

(turns off his phone)

And the magicians did the same thing with their dark arts, so Pharaoh didn't listen...

MURRAY

Hmm? What magicians?

COLE

From the original.

(Murray is confused)

In Exodus. The OG Moses.

MURRAY

Right. I'm still waiting on frogs...

(pause)

I think I'm gonna sue.

COLE

Oh?

MURRAY

Yeah, I feel like I'm not getting the original 'Moses experience'. So I'd like my money back, please and thank you.

COLE

Your request has been forwarded and deleted. A representative will never get back to you.

They chuckle, then continue eating quietly.

INT. COLE'S STUDIO - DAY

Cole is walking through the gallery, putting masking tape on the walls and making notes for where to put the next set of paintings: 'Plague 1', 'Plague 2', etc.

While he works, continuously rearranging the layout, he's also listening to a newscast on his phone.

HOST (PHONE)

...and we're still unsure what the common link between these anomalies are, or who, if anyone, is behind them. Professor, are we any closer to understanding the unprecedented events of the last few weeks?

PROFESSOR (PHONE)

Well, I think examining them independently, rather than assuming they're correlated, is the best position to start from. People are wired to automatically assume there's a pattern when multiple improbable events happen in succession...

As an example, if you were at a casino, and you walked down a row of slot machines, and at each machine somebody's winning a jackpot, you think, 'There's obviously a pattern, this clearly means that the machines are all broken!'

HOST (PHONE)

But you're saying they're not?

PROFESSOR (PHONE)

Correct. Because if just ONE hit the jackpot, but not the others, you wouldn't think that anything was wrong. And in most cases, there's only one jackpot at a time. It is IMPROBABLE, but not IMPOSSIBLE, that they're ALL jackpots.

Similarly, these anomalies could all feasibly have occurred at any time. It's a COINCIDENCE that they're occurring in the same month, but it's not... It isn't apocryphal. They only have meaning insofar as we GIVE them meaning. We-

Cole chuckles to himself and stops the video. He switches to the newest one from Modern Moses. The Seventh Judgment: A Throwback. As usual, it focuses on an angry bearded guy sitting against a blue backdrop.

MODERN MOSES (VIDEO)

It seems the powers at be still aren't listening. They're ignoring the truth, obvious though it is, in favor of science and rationality.

But YOU, YOU know the truth. YOU know what's really causing these... 'Anomalies'... And you know they're only going to get worse until SOMEBODY decides to DO SOMETHING!

(he pauses, sighs, and calms down)

You know, some people have told me that I'm-that these judgments aren't OBVIOUS enough. They're not INTENSE enough. That I should take more DRASTIC measures to wake up the elite and the corrupt from their stupor.

(he rolls his eyes)

Sorry for not doing more... I guess...

(he chuckles)

They're also saying that my videos are too VAGUE. Apparently my cryptic answers aren't convincing for the mainstream media.

(he chuckles again)

How's this for cryptic? At noon, Pacific time, TOMORROW - Wednesday the 11th - I will unleash a judgment that ties back to the original story of Moses. It's only fitting.

Also, lest that be too vague... I would STRONGLY, STRONGLY encourage you to BE OUTDOORS, because otherwise you're fuc- Oh, apparently I need to tone down the profanity. You know, in case they want to show me on TV... Which they won't...

Sorry I'm not more aggressive this time, this is draining me, not gonna lie, I'm sick of just preaching to the choir... Anyways... Be outside, tomorrow, noon, or you'll be... Screwed... And let's pray that our message finally gets sent to those who need it most...

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Cole and Murray are standing in the grass. There are other people nearby, but nobody seems to be waiting like them.

Cole checks his phone: 11:58 AM.

COLE

Alright. Last chance.

MURRAY

Nope. I'm sticking with frogs.

COLE

And I reiterate: why would it matter if we were outside for that?

MURRAY

Because people will freak out if they see them in their house, but if they see them OUTSIDE, it's not as gross, I dunno, man...

COLE

Yeah, see that's why I'm betting on blood water. I'm thinking the pipes will burst, and it'll be blood everywhere, but outside is safe.

(pause)

Plus, the blood came first, so it makes sense.

MURRAY

Yeah yeah...

(they chuckle)

I really just want to see a shit-ton of frogs. That would make my week.

COLE

I was gonna say, it would make your LIFE.

MURRAY

Mm-hmm. Yes it would... Not like the REST of these 'anomalies' are memorable...

COLE

Oh of course not. Completely forgettable.

They both laugh, then wait around patiently. Cole waves politely at a jogger, while Murray pulls out a cigarette.

MURRAY

Want one?

COLE

Nah. But thanks.

MURRAY

Yeah... How much time?

COLE

(checks his phone)

One minute.

MURRAY

Is it too late to change my answer?

COLE

Go for it.

MURRAY

Good. I'm gonna switch to frogs.

COLE

Excuse me, sir, you already chose that.

MURRAY

And?

COLE

Well, that's not SWITCHING... You... You PUTZ.

MURRAY

Too bad. I'm switching. Fight me.

They laugh, and Cole checks his phone again. It's 11:59. Then it switches to 12:00.

COLE

Alright... What do we-

Suddenly, they both burst into flames.

EXT. GENERIC FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

The wind is howling, trees have fallen over, and there's hail the size of golf balls battering the house. A layer of hail about a foot-deep is covering the ground.

The house windows are haphazardly boarded up with plywood. Several other houses in the suburban neighborhood are also boarded up. A few cars are outside, and they've all been completely ruined by the hail.

At first, the only sounds are from the wind and the hail. But then another sound fades in: the crackling of fire, and the unsettling screams of the dying.

SWITCH BACK TO COLE AND MURRAY

The two of them are shouting in pain as the fire brutally and graphically burns them alive. Everyone around them is also on fire, and are crying out from the agony.

Their clothes and skin are charred, and their faces are slowly and painfully melting away. Many have rushed into the nearby lake, and have no choice but to fully submerge themselves in the water. Because the moment they come up for air, they catch fire again.

As they suffer and burn, a Bible verse appears on screen:  
*The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night.*

Cole and Murray both collapse to the ground and humbly prostrate themselves.

COLE

Lord, have mercy on us, wretched sinners!

MURRAY

We are but worms, WORMS, and we know we are unworthy of thy grace!

COLE

But if thou might quench the flame, if thou dost find us righteous in thy-

The scene ends abruptly, and jumps back to the moment when Murray and Cole caught on fire.

It doesn't actually hurt. They just stand in the grass, not burning up. It's both awkward and amusing.

MURRAY

Welp...

COLE

This is... It feels like fog...

MURRAY

Yeah...

COLE

Weird...

They seem completely unfazed. Everyone nearby is also burning now, and some are panicking, but the flames aren't causing any damage. They're not actually burning anyone.

Cole sits in the grass to observe people, while Murray lights the cigarette using his flames.

COLE

Oh! Duh... The burning bush.

MURRAY

Mmm...

(he exhales a cloud of smoke)

The what?

COLE

Moses. The burning bush.

(he turns to Murray incredulously)

You can't tell me you don't know that.

Murray looks confused, then grins. Cole rolls his eyes and turns back toward the crowd.

MURRAY

Of course I know the burning bush. Please.

It's the... Bush... That burns... And it-

COLE

And it doesn't catch fire. It BURNS as if it's on fire, but it's NOT... It's when Moses first hears from God. Before the plagues.

MURRAY

Right, right right... Of course.

COLE

Do you really not know that reference?

MURRAY

I'm a Buddhist.

(chuckles and lights the cigarette again)

This is SUPER convenient.

COLE

What is?

(turns to him)

Oh. Nice. So, OTHER things can burn.

He suddenly realizes the grass is on fire. There's a slowly-burning patch that he inadvertently ignited by sitting on the ground.

He's fascinated, and he runs his hand over the flames, which don't hurt at all.

COLE

That's beautiful...

(chuckles)

I feel like I can die happy now. Like, this is exactly what I've always wanted...

MURRAY

... To be on fire?

COLE

No, just... Having something DIFFERENT, being able to experience something that nobody else has experienced before.

MURRAY

Like... Being on fire?

COLE

Yeah. Well, not DYING from the fire. Or seeing the world in black and white, having literal streets of gold, time being out of joint...

(he stands up)

And this is perfect because... It's so UNEXPECTED, like, he's like an artist, and each one is both completely original and completely logical.

(he marvels)

But it's SAFE. Like this. It's not KILLING us, it's just... It's HAPPENING, and it's neutral, and nothing like this... This doesn't HAPPEN, this is not a normal part of the human experience.

(he puts his hands on Murray's shoulders, and makes direct eye contact)

This era is destined for the history books, and WE- YOU, ME - we're privileged to-

(he catches himself)

And... That sounded VERY corny. I apologize.

MURRAY

I didn't want to say anything.

They both laugh, then Cole steps back and continues marveling at the flames, mesmerized and delighted.

Unsurprisingly, most people in the background are panicked by the fire. Murray and Cole are the only ones who aren't running away, freaking out, screaming, or trying in vain to extinguish the flames. Several people have jumped into the lake, but the water doesn't put them out.

Also, there are sirens in the background. And there are plumes of smoke coming from multiple buildings, although none are fully burning yet.

But Murray and Cole are in their own world, happily and carefreely examining their clothes, amazed that their shirts and pants aren't burning up.

Suddenly, Murray has a realization. His eyes go wide.

MURRAY

Shit! My apartment!

INT. GENERIC FAMILY HOUSE, PARENT'S ROOM - NIGHT

The storm is still raging outside, but the son (the boy from the Lego scene) is sound asleep in their bed.

INT. GENERIC FAMILY HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Downstairs, the mother is sitting at the table. The TV is turned off - she's just thinking. The father walks in and sits next to her.

FATHER

He's finally asleep.

MOTHER

Good. Thanks for staying up with him.

FATHER

Of course.

(he glances at the TV)

You taking a break?

(she nods)

No more updates from the 'powers at be'?

MOTHER

(chuckles)

Yeah... Hard to believe...

(they both laugh)

I think I just hit a wall. In a good way. But...

I realized, what's the point? Right?

(he nods)

I mean, we know they won't agree, and we already know what the next ones will be... Maybe not the, I'm still worried about the last one, obviously... But the others... I don't want to say 'trivial'... They're more manageable. Especially since we know exactly what to expect, right?

FATHER

Yeah. I know what you mean...

MOTHER

And I hate to... It's like with Covid. I felt like I couldn't tell anyone: 'I'm not panicking'...

FATHER

Right. It's our patriotic duty to panic.

MOTHER

Honestly though...

(they chuckle)

And like, of course, we DID panic, I'm not saying we're above that. But... It passed. I've made my peace with it... And we're surviving now, but I'm not worried WHETHER we'll survive.

(she sighs)

Until we get to the last one... I think I'm also saving my stress for that. Like, hail, locusts, darkness, we can do that. We're set.

FATHER

Yep. We'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

MOTHER

Exactly...

(looks at the TV)

But yes. In the meantime, THEY are not helping... Either of them...

FATHER

Oh? I mean, I agree, but I thought you liked-

MOTHER

I'm done, honestly. I'm with her in spirit, but, in reality, I want this to be over.

(chuckles)

Which, AGAIN, you can't SAY that... But...

FATHER

Right...

MOTHER

Although apparently, I think this was just the last few days... They both have almost identical disapproval ratings. Like, if you ask people, 'whose fault is it?', it's split.

FATHER

Oh? Interesting...

MOTHER

Mm-hmm. So maybe I CAN get away with saying it...  
But then I think, it's not even worth it,  
complaining just to complain... Like, that's where  
I agree with her, I don't want to TALK about  
fixing this, I just want to...

(she sighs)

And now I sound like them... Sorry...

FATHER

No no, you're fine. Let it out.

MOTHER

What about you? How you holding up?

FATHER

I'm here.

(they laugh)

Nah. I'll be fine. I've got a house, power,  
water, food, money, car, YOU...

(he kisses her on the cheek)

We'll be okay...

She leans toward him and he embraces her. Despite the incessant hail, thunder, and wind, they sit peacefully and tenderly together...

EXT. CITY BLOCK - DAY

For the rest of the episode, the audio keeps cutting out: there's a siren here, a scream there, a crowd shouting, fire crackling... Chaos intercut with silence.

Murray and Cole are racing to his apartment building. People all over are on fire. Confused, annoyed, impatient, and unable to put out the flames.

They finally reach his building, but they're too late. It's all engulfed in flames.

Dozens of residents are standing outside, on fire but not being burned. Murray rushes inside, into the flames, and Cole hurries after him.

INT. MURRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The piles of boxes are like towering infernos, and there's thick smoke everywhere. Murray runs into his bedroom and grabs his laptop, which hasn't burned yet.

Nothing else is salvageable - his clothes, books, decor... It's all up in flames. Murray looks around in despair.

Cole, meanwhile, is entranced that he can be surrounded by the flames without dying. He sits on the burning couch and seems relaxed, even at peace.

He's jolted back by the sound of Murray shouting - he goes into Murray's room and sees him throwing things angrily at the wall while yelling profanities.

Cole doesn't try to stop him. He just stands in the door and watches sympathetically. Murray finally breaks down crying and sits on the floor. Cole walks over and sits next to him.

FADE OUT.