

GeneX - The Series

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A series of one-shot stories set in the GeneX universe. Featuring episodes centered around various characters, rather than following any particular hero.

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1 - Home Sweet Fortress

GeneX - The Series

Episode 1 - Home Sweet Fortress

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

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The story thus far:

Copter had gone to Soleanna in the hope of helping Experiment 7, Heather the Phoenix. When he got there, he found himself faced with a dire threat when the evil Mephiles fused with Heather, forming Solenix. With the help of the mysterious Dimentime, who turned out to be Copter from another timeline, Heather's free will broke through Mephiles's control, and Solenix was destroyed. Dimentime vanished, and Copter soon returned home to the United Federation and Station Square.

Now, on to the chapter!

Copter the fox was having a bad day. It was one of those days when he wondered if he should have stayed in Soleanna. Ever since he'd returned a few weeks ago, he was quickly remembering why he so willingly left the only home he'd ever known in the first place. Sergeant Gunner still had him and the other Experiments on his most wanted list, and the police would frantically chase after him every chance they got! Today was one of those days, and Copter found himself fleeing via a stolen police car one more time, using its siren coupled with his crazed driving to frighten civilians out of his way! "Come on, dummies! Clear the roads! I'm not as good a driver as my survival rate would have you believe!!" Copter yelled, looking for a good opportunity to ditch the vehicle and try to escape. Police motorcycles were pulling up alongside him, and driving one of them was a familiar green porcupine: Razor. "ARE... YOU... INSANE!?! Pull over before someone gets KILLED!!!" he shouted, horrified at Copter's complete disregard for safe driving practices. "You pull over! Then I'll try to stop this crazy thing!" Copter shouted. Razor whimpered. "Are you telling me you don't even know how to drive!?" he yelled. Copter scoffed. "No, look! I'm driving! I just don't know how to stop!" he smirked, not even watching the road. Razor bit his lip. "All units, try to lure the stolen squad car towards... um... Emerald Coast!" Copter looked around while he drove and started to get worried. "Hey... How am I gonna get outta this one? Well, I don't wanna go where they're leading me..." he muttered, making a sharp turn past Officer Razor and through a barricade the police had set up, hoping to stop him! "Whoa!!! You shoulda blocked him with cars!!" Razor shouted. "He stole my car..." the officer by the barricade grumbled, causing Razor to groan.

As Copter was driving, he heard a tap on his window. Rolling it down, he saw none other than Sonic the Hedgehog running next to the car. "Takin' a little joyride, Copter..." Sonic said suspiciously. Copter chuckled awkwardly. "There were cops everywhere and the keys were in the ignition. C'mon, you know Gunner's vendetta against me is bogus!" he grumbled. Sonic frowned. "And the innocents you put in danger?" he asked. Copter whimpered. "I'd love to stop, but I don't really know how this thing works!" he

stammered. Sonic rolled his eyes and pulled open the car door. "Move over!" he said, shoving Copter into the passenger seat and jumping into the driver's seat before the car could lose control. "Whoa! So that's what seatbelts are for..." Copter groaned as he fell over in the passenger seat. Sonic pulled over and parked the car, and Copter stumbled out onto the sidewalk. "FINALLY!! LAND!!" he cried. Sonic got out shaking his head. "You're a piece of work, Copter... Later!" he said before speeding off. Copter looked around and found a familiar sewer cover. "I wonder if Punchy's home..." he muttered.

Copter dropped down and found his way into the hidden underground ruins where Rainbow the echidna lived and Punchy the echidna hid from GUN. He found Punchy wandering around outside the buildings, and he glanced at Copter grumpily when he noticed him. "Oh, brother. Here we go again. Let me guess, you just ducked down here to lose the cops again, didn't you?" he groaned, walking past Copter and looking around tensely. "Um... 'sup, Punchy?" Copter muttered. Rainbow ran out and waved to Copter. "Hey, Two! You hidin' out again?" she asked. Copter sighed. This was becoming annoyingly routine. Punchy turned to him when he was confident the coast was clear, and then bonked Copter on the head! "What are you tryin' to do!? Lead the cops down here!? You keep ducking down here and eventually they'll follow you! This is the fourth time this week!" he shouted. Copter rubbed his head and growled. "HEY! Watch it, Punch! You're not exactly paying rent down here, either!" he pointed out. Rainbow frowned. "Hey! Cool it! There's plenty of room down here for both of you! Quit fighting!" she shouted. Punchy rubbed his forehead. "Yeah... but Copter don't wanna hang out down here... (not that I blame him) If he leads people down here, they'll... well, they'll trash the place!" he grumbled. Rainbow crossed her arms. "Geez... You have a real vivid imagination, One..." she muttered. Copter rolled his eyes. "Know what... You're right! I'm outta here! There's a crowd and all that. Have a nice life Punchy... Alooone... with Rainbow!" he grumbled, stomping off towards the exit. Punchy's eyes widened as Rainbow sighed grumpily. "Now see what you did, One? You chased him off. You better apologize the next time you see Two!" she said before turning and walking away. Punchy stared after Copter and frowned. "Can I go with you...?" he mumbled.

At the very least, the police were off his tail, so Copter enjoyed a calm walk down the road for a bit. He took a walk around the block, past the peaceful buildings and the calmly setting sun, past a few people walking along the sidewalk who actually didn't know who he was, past the police car he'd left unattended, and that more police were finally showing up to investigate... "Oh, Flickies!! Why didn't I think of that!?" he growled. "Because the crook ALWAYS returns to the scene of the crime! Freeze!!" shouted Razor, who along with a group of officers quickly had him surrounded. Copter had to think of something fast. He reached around for something. Anything. "I said FREEZE!!" Razor yelled, only to stop short as Copter pulled out his Hurricane remote! "AHA!! Look what I got! I got a remote! What do you suppose this does, hm...?" he grinned. Razor looked a bit nervous, and motioned for the officers to stand down. "I don't know, guys... Call the chief. We may need the bomb squad or something..." he stammered. Copter chuckled. "Not so big now, huh, copper? Why I could just push this little button at any moment and..." A cop tried to approach Copter from behind, but Copter caught wind of it and spun around, knocking him away with his tails! "Aha!! You sneaky little donut eaters! You asked for it!" he said, pushing the button to call the Hurricane and making the startled cops jump for cover in case a bomb was about to detonate nearby! The Hurricane didn't show up right away, and Copter was left standing there looking quite stupid for a moment. "Ummm... The explosion um... will commence in 5 seconds?" he stammered. Razor slowly got up and growled. "Something's fishy here..." he mumbled. Just then, the sound of the Hurricane's engines could be heard, and as the plane approached, Razor attempted to take a shot at Copter! "Whoa!! Sorry about the little joke, officer... It was just so practical!!" Copter shouted as he flew up out of the way of Razor's bullets and boarded the Hurricane as it flew by,

prompting Razor to throw his hat to the ground angrily as he escaped. "What a day!! Dang it... I really could use a donut about now..." he groaned.

Copter looked over the readings and dials displayed on the Hurricane's cockpit as he started gaining altitude. "Been a while, old pal... Say, is this... the... gas gauge...?" he muttered, looking at an arrow pointing dangerously close to a red letter E. "Eh heh... It's one of those days I guess..." he whimpered. Suddenly, a voice came from the Hurricane. "Fuel tank low. Autopilot engaged. Proceeding to nearest refueling stop." it said. "Huh?? Wha?! Wait!! What if that's the police gas station or something!? Don't I get a say in this!! Bad Hurricaaaaane!!" Copter yelled as the plane took him away, locking the controls so he couldn't change course. He could do nothing but sit back and watch where the plane was taking him, hoping it wasn't anywhere dangerous. He got a bit nervous as it soared out over the ocean. "Hey, dummy! We're going AWAY from society!" he complained, only to soon realize where they were going. In the distance, an island with a familiar foreboding tower came into view. "...Darkegg Fortress... Of course. But... Eggman's not there anymore. R-right...?" Copter mumbled. The dark, menacing structure was Copter's first home after escaping GUN imprisonment, and after Eggman abandoned it, naturally GUN tried to investigate the tower for anything sinister the doctor might have left behind, but they were driven away under mysterious circumstances. Copter had some ideas about what might have driven them off, one such idea being the Lost Ones that had infested the upper levels of the tower before Eggman abandoned it. Thinking about that, he started to worry about the idea of going back. "Bad plane! Let me off!!" he groaned as they neared one of the exterior balconies of the tower. The plane came to a landing at a runway that was apparently specially designed for it, and parked itself in Eggman's garage. "Great... Well... Honey, I'm hooooome." Copter sighed. He looked around and saw a few small flying robots, a couple spare Egg Mobiles, spare part racks and the like, but no sign of any Lost Ones. He slowly climbed down from the plane, and was startled by a light clanking noise. "Gwaaaaa!! Eggman's robot!! Get back! I am in no mood for stupidity!!" he yelled, only to see a rather diminutive robot cowering in front of him. "I'll thank you kindly to keep yer mitts offa me! I'm here to perform maintenance on the EE-006 Hurricane Biplane-drone." the robot yelped. Copter glanced at it. It looked like a small, red and brown metal beaver, with slightly expressive robotic eyes, rod shaped arms that might be quite bendable at the joints, and Eggman's familiar symbol on its chest and the back of its tail, which seemed to have some sort of slot in it. Copter blinked a couple times. "Uhhh... Yeah, sure... Hey, if you're in charge of my plane, how come I've never met you before?" he asked. The beaver robot crossed its arms. "Excuse me, but it's Dr. Eggman's plane, fella. Oh well, not my job to bother the pilot. I just fix 'er up. I'm E-505, designation Hoover." he said before looking over the plane, "Sweet potater's ghost! What'd you do to the old girl!?" Hoover gasped. Copter looked at the plane and scratched his head. "What...? Oh, the dings? I guess I had a little trouble when I had that dogfight with Tails a while ago... I kinda forgot about that." he said. Hoover thumped his tail angrily. "You left this sit!?! OK, OK... You go wait somewhere... I gotta operate!" he said, his tail whirring before a wrench suddenly popped partway out, similar to a tool emerging from a Swiss army knife! Hoover then bent his arm around and grabbed the wrench, pulling it out of his tail so he could work. Copter stared at him awkwardly for a moment, then walked off. "Sometimes I wonder about Eggman..." he thought.

He decided to wander the tower for a while and see just how safe it was. He needed a place to hide out once in a while, and he definitely could use a good place to park the Hurricane. Eggman wasn't using the tower anymore, so why not? He just didn't want any Lost Ones chomping on him when he let his guard down. He found his way back to the old control room after a while. The holographic projection of the Chaos Emeralds was no longer running, but there was something still turned on to greet him. "Attention! You are no longer authorized to be in here, fox face! Dr. Eggman does not appreciate you

stealing his space shuttles!" said BAS, the Base Alarm System. Copter crossed his arms. "Heeeey... I distinctly remember you helping me. In fact, you did the driving! ...Most of it." he pointed out. "Ummm..." BAS muttered, "Yeeeessss... Tell you what, since Dr. Eggman isn't home, I'll overlook it." he said. Copter nodded. "Ummm... By the way, computer... Would you know if those slimy creatures are still hanging around the tower?" he asked. "Slimy creatures... Processing... Error 404. File not found. Contact system administrator." BAS replied. Copter groaned, but then he heard another voice. "You want to know what happened after Eggman left...?" Copter looked around, but he couldn't spot the source of the voice at first. "Y-yeah... Um... Who's there...?" he muttered. "Me. I'm the only one... Safe..." said the voice in a sad tone. Copter looked behind the holographic projector and found a Chao peering around it at him! It was a somewhat large Chao, but otherwise normal looking. "A... talking Chao... Are you any relation to Char?" Copter wondered. The Chao nodded. "He's my little brother. I'm Chuck, part of Char's Chao colony. We lived on this island before Eggman decided to build his base here. Char bargained with Eggman to have him build us a home inside the tower." the Chao said. Copter nodded. "I've passed the Chao Garden before. It's pretty big." he said. Chuck nodded. "It seemed like a good idea at the time. Then, Eggman left. The monsters went loose. It got scary, so we Chao hid. Not sure how long we were hiding, but the guys with weapons came then..." he said. Copter frowned. "GUN... They came to check the place out." he muttered. Chuck continued. "Monsters chase people away... Then they left. The monsters never noticed us Chao, so I guess they got bored. Then we were left alone... Or so we thought. We were playing one day when... It got mad! It took all the Chao away! I'm the only one left!" Chuck cried, and started sobbing. Copter looked thoughtful. "It... Hey, computer. Where are the Chao?" he asked. "Processing..." BAS said. Copter frowned. "You're not gonna tell me you don't know what a Chao is... I can make things VERY uncomfortable for you!" he growled, walking over to the base's control panel and hovering his fingers over the buttons. "EEEEK!! Very well!! I'll talk!! They're somewhere in the garage!!" BAS whimpered. Copter's eyes went wide. "The garage... So... All that time alone made you crazy, did it Hoover?" he muttered, rushing out of the control room with Chuck in tow.

Copter stomped back into the garage, with Chuck nervously flying behind him. "OK, beaver-bot! Where'd you stash all the Chao!?" he shouted. Various gadgets sprung from Hoover's tail as he jumped with a start. "Dad-gum!! Do you have any mode other than agitated??" the robot grumbled. "Fess up! BAS told us the Chao are in here!" Copter said. Hoover reached back and slid his gadgets back into his tail, taking only a bar of iron, which he proceeded to munch on like a candy bar. "What in the heck would I want wit a buncha noisy, fussy Chao? Get in the way of work, wouldn't they?" he said. Copter nodded. "So, maybe you stashed them somewhere out of your way!" he growled, picking up the robot threateningly. "H-hey!! I'm warnin' you! I... I can spray motor oil from my tail! Stinks fer days, it does. Fortunately I don't have scent receptors." Hoover growled. Suddenly, Chuck yelped loudly. "L-look out! It's here!!" he shouted. Copter glanced at Hoover. "You mean... This guy's not 'it'...?" he mumbled. Looking up, he saw what appeared to be a Shadow android standing on the wing of the Hurricane. It was clearly an android, though, because part of its face and upper body had its deceptive coating melted off, revealing the robotic skeleton underneath! It's red robotic eye seemed to telescope a bit, giving it better targeting capabilities than normal Shadow androids, and it was equipped with a jetpack that had creepy black wings extending from its sides, making him appear demonic. His metallic arm concealed weapons in its frame that would likely pop out of the skeleton in order to shoot at a target. "Intruders located... Assessing danger level..." the android said, glancing at Copter, who was still clutching Hoover. "Hostile detected. Guardian Android, begin destruction protocols!" the android declared. Copter dropped Hoover and gulped. "I'm not hostile! I'm friendly! Friendly!" he protested. Hoover scrambled for the Hurricane hastily. "Now yer in for it! Nice knowin' ya!" he yelped. Copter glanced at Chuck. "Stay back!" he suggested.

The Guardian Android launched from the wing of the Hurricane, flying at Copter with its jetpack! "Target acquired..." it said. Copter spun his tails and flew up out of the way as the android whizzed past him! "Target NOT acquired!" he growled. A weapon popped out of a hatch on the android's skeletal arm, and a red light from the gun started trailing around the room, making Hoover scramble away from it until the light was pointed at Copter's forehead. "Huh...? Oh, this can't be good..." Copter grumbled. "Farewell..." the android muttered, firing a big, fearsome looking red laser straight at Copter's head! He quickly dropped out of the sky to avoid it, and the blast narrowly missed the Hurricane and blew up an Egg Mobile sitting behind it! "Aaaagh!! Not old Betsy!!" Hoover whined. "You need to get out more..." Copter muttered. Suddenly, the light from the Guardian Android's laser was pointed at Copter's chest. "You're no better than the other invaders. You will either run away like a coward or be destroyed." it declared. Copter stared at the android. "Other invaders... YOU chased off GUN? By yourself? Did you get rid of the Lost Ones, too...?" he murmured. The android clasped at its scarred face. "They tried to resist at first... But all intruders will be driven out, no matter what!" he said, firing his laser at Copter! The black fox jumped backwards, knocked away as the blast exploded against the ground! "Arrrgh!! Wait! The Chao! What'd you do to the Chao!?" he shouted. The Shadow Android dropped down and grabbed Copter by the throat with its metallic hand. "Pathetic creature... How foolish of you to come in here..." it said, squeezing the fox's neck in his grip! Chuck could take no more and flew over, kicking the robotic head of the android! "Let him go, you freak! Stop it!!" he shouted. Hoover ran over as well, pulling a carpenter's hammer out of his tail and walloping the Guardian Android in the back! "You wrecked old Betsy, ya stupid ninny! I used ta take 'er joyridin'! Errr... Don't tell Dr. Eggman..." he grumbled before slinking away. The Guardian Android glared at the Chao. "Second hostile detected. I will deal with you, too..." it growled. Copter's eyes went wide, and he struggled in the android's grip. "N-no... you won't! Chuck... back... away!" he grunted, kicking at the android to make it loosen its grip on his throat! Chuck flew back as Copter growled fiercely at the android. "Chaos... Blast!!!" he shouted, releasing a chaotic explosion that engulfed the robot! When it faded, Copter was free from its grip, but it wasn't quite over. The Guardian Android had lost all of its deceptive coating, and now appeared as a robotic hedgehog skeleton! "You infernal creature! Prepare to die!" the android roared, its voice crackling. Copter shook his head. "There's only one Shadow. And his skeleton ain't metal. Say good night, faker!" As the android aimed its weapons at Copter, he jumped at it and spun his tails, his tailband glowing as he tapped into its power! With a mighty crash, the android was smashed into pieces, and Darkegg Fortress was now safe... for all intents and purposes.

Looking around for a bit, they found a prototype of the Hurricane sitting around. It had a more primarily red color scheme, probably left unused due to how closely it resembled the original Tornado. "This is the EE-001 Egg Stormer. It eventually led to 'your' plane." Hoover explained. Copter looked it over, and then heard frightened squeaks coming from it. "Hey... Is that...?" he muttered. Chuck flew up to the cockpit and gasped. "Guys!!" In a moment, dozens of Chao came flying out of hiding in the cockpit, and even more were emerging from other hiding places around the garage! Hoover glanced around in shock. "You're kiddin' me?? They were hidin' out in here the whole time!?" he mumbled. Copter stared around in awe at how many Chao there were. Char's family was huge, and Eggman had them all living in his tower. "To think... That crazy doctor left you guys with that monster... Still, it doesn't look like it hurt any of you." he said. Hoover nodded. "The Guardian Android is only 'sposed to harm hostile intruders. Dunno why. Sounds kinda like a softy move on the doc's part..." he said. Copter smiled and nodded. "Even Eggman didn't want to hurt the Chao... There may be hope for him yet." Chuck smiled and waved at Copter. "Thanks for your help! I'm gonna get everybody back to the garden!" he said. Copter nodded. "Good... Maybe I'll visit later to check up on ya..." he replied, "Hey, um... Hoover... How's my plane?" he

asked. Hoover looked at him and crossed his arms. "It's Dr. Eggman's plane!" he insisted, "...But... well, I guess ya can use it fer a spell. It's all purtied up and fueled and ready to fly!" he reported. Copter smirked as he and Hoover headed towards his plane. This place might just do for a semblance of a home... or a base... or something. "Well, thanks for the help, bot. Sorry about... y'know... threatening ya." Copter said. Hoover shrugged. "Aw, heck. I'm an Eggman robot. Just don't be such a stranger, hear? Else that plane'll fall ta pieces." he said, reaching back and grabbing an iron bar from his Swiss army tail to munch on. "Care fer a bite?" he offered. Copter scratched his head. "Umm... I'll pass..." he sighed, "...robots..."

He wouldn't stay long, but whenever he needed to get away from the dangers of life on the run from GUN, he'd fly the Hurricane back to Darkegg Fortress, and check in with Hoover, Chuck, and the Chao.

Episode End!

2 - Festival of Romance

GeneX - The Series

Episode 2 - Festival of Romance

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
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The story thus far:

Another year had passed, and a new year was in full swing. Early every year, a festival is held in the United Federation, celebrating love and finding that special someone. It is known as the Festival of Romance. It originated in a place called Troblusk City, but since the city has declined into a place of crime and depravity, the festival gradually found its way to the more romantic locale of Station Square. Our story begins as a young hedgehog dreams of spending the festival with the hero of her dreams... Now, on to the episode!

Amy sighed dreamily as she walked along the streets of Station Square, looking at the decorations that had been set up for the Festival of Romance. It was a lot like a certain other holiday, with red hearts and red and pink streamers set up here and there, and they also featured Hero Chao decorations as well as mannequins resembling the fabled angelic Divines, which had come to be associated with romance as well. As Amy walked along, she was greeted by Cream. "Good morning, Amy! ...Huh? Anyone home?" Cream asked, since Amy didn't immediately acknowledge her. "Hm? Oh, hi, Cream... I was just thinking about the festival coming up... You think Sonic will be in town for it? He can be so scatterbrained sometimes... Maybe he forgot!" she gasped. Cream smiled. "You could always ask Tails. Maybe he could find Sonic for you..." she suggested. Amy sighed. "Aw, no one can find Sonic. I thought SPOT was a great invention at first, then I found out Sonic has to be in range for that dumb robot to detect him... As if it could ever catch him." she grumbled. Suddenly, Amy jumped as a loud voice spoke from behind her. "Hey, it's Pinky! Hi, Pinky!" She turned around to see Rainbow the echidna, who was smiling, though they really weren't on such good terms. "Hey, you're that goofy echidna who was working with Eggman along with the experiments!" Amy grumbled. Rainbow looked confused. "Huh? Oh, haven't I introduced myself? I'm Rainbow! Sorry, Pinky!" she said. "It's AMY! Yeesh..." Amy growled. "Maybe she didn't know your name either... My name is Cream and this is my friend Cheese!" Cream said, holding her Chao friend in her arms as he chirped cheerfully. Rainbow waved to them. "Nice to meet ya, Hoppy!" she said, prompting Amy and Cream to both glance at each other awkwardly. "Ummm... Do you want something?" Amy asked. Rainbow giggled. "No, I'm just being friendly. Hey, so that big festival's coming up again! I guess we'd all better go make plans, huh?" she said. Amy crossed her arms. "Hmph! Well it just so happens, I KNOW who I'm gonna take! Sonic and I are gonna have the best time ever!" she said, "I guess you're going with that green echidna...?" she asked, somewhat uninterestedly. Rainbow blushed slightly at the idea. "Huh? One? No, I was thinking of something else... Hey, isn't it kinda weird that it's girl-ask-boy around here all the time?" she stammered, trying to change the subject. Cream shrugged. "I don't mind. I think it's kind of cute that the boys around here are so shy." she giggled as Cheese giggled

with her. Amy glanced at her. "Cream...? Are you... interested in boys at your age?" she murmured. Cream blushed a little. "Huh...? Um... A lot of my friends are boys. Is that weird?" she asked. Rainbow shrugged. "I dunno. Well, I gotta go! Later Pinky and Hoppy!" she said, hurrying off. Amy glanced at Cream. "Hmmm... Well, I gotta get going, too... If you were thinking about taking a date to the festival, maybe you should ask your mom first, Cream. Bye!" she said before rushing off. The festival would be eventful...she hoped.

Sonic was making one of his occasional visits to Tails's Workshop to see what was going on while he had been away on his journeys. Tails quickly filled him in on what time of year it was. "WHAT!? It's Romance Festival time!? Shoot, I'd better bail before Amy catches me around here and drags me over there for the week!" he stammered. Tails scratched his head. "The festival's only three days..." he said. Sonic gasped. "She LIED to me that year! But then... how...? That was really elaborate..." he muttered. "She hired Team Chaotix to run the Chili Dog stand to keep you from fleeing." Tails explained. Sonic scratched his head. "I thought that lizard looked familiar... It was Espio! With a moustache and a sombrero!" he growled. Just then, there was a knock at the door. "Don't answer it, Tails! It could be Amy!" he yelled. Tails sighed. "I'm not getting in the middle of this, Sonic. Last time I did Amy wrecked the Tornado 5." he said. Sonic ran to the next room to hide, but as Tails opened the door, Cream came inside! "Hi, Tails! How are you?" she asked. "Oh, hi, Cream! I'm great! I was just talking to... Um... The wall, I guess..." he muttered. Cream looked into the room slyly. "Sonic! Amy's looking for you!" she shouted. "Gah!! How'd she know I was back here!?" Sonic yelled. Tails chuckled. "Thanks for that! I hate being in the middle of those two." he said. Cream nodded. "I know the feeling." she said. Sonic came out from hiding and crossed his arms. "OK, so you know I'm here... What's it gonna take to keep this quiet from Amy?" he asked. "I don't think that'll be possible." Cream said. Just then, Amy pushed past her and Tails and charged into the room, throwing her arms around Sonic! "There you are!! I knew I'd find you before it was too late!!" she cheered. Sonic struggled for a second, but then collapsed to the ground in a heap, leaving Amy standing in shock. "Oh! The power of my love overwhelmed him!" she gasped. Tails and Cream both chuckled awkwardly, glancing at each other.

At the Hidden Ruins beneath Station Square, Punchy watched Rainbow running to and fro anxiously, getting ready for something. She kept brushing her multicolored quills and going through her closet full of identical green dresses, trying to pick one for an occasion. He scratched his head and whimpered. "I sure hope this has nothing to do with me... Um... Rainbow? What's going on?" he asked her. Rainbow glanced at him. "Eeek! Outta my room, One! I might be trying on clothes! I have a date coming up... OOOPS!!" she shouted loudly, realizing something, "I forgot to invite him! Silly me! How can I have a date with no date!" she giggled, rushing out of her room. Punchy sighed. "Well, apparently it's not me..." he said. Suddenly, she grabbed his arm and dragged him off! "C'mon, One!" she shouted. "Argh!! What do you need me for!?" he stammered. Rainbow dragged him to the entrance hall of her temple home and released his arm. "OK, One, stay there... Just stay... Ahem... HEY!! MOUSY!!" she shouted loudly. Punchy covered his ears. "Gaaah! Huh?? You mean... Illusi?!" he mumbled. Rainbow continued shouting. "WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE WATCHING ONE! COME OVER HERE A SEC, OK?" she screamed. Punchy stared at her like she was insane. "You really think that'll work!?" he grumbled. Suddenly, Illusi the shrew appeared in the middle of the room in a puff of smoke, startling Punchy into falling onto his back! "AAARGH!! I'm... I'm okay... Slight heart attack... But keep freaking me out, you two." he groaned. Illusi crossed his arms and glanced at Rainbow. "For the record... I am not ALWAYS watching the Dark One. I do have a life outside of it." he said. Rainbow giggled. "But I got your attention,

didn't I?" she grinned. Illusi frowned. "Yesssss... Um... Why?" he asked. Rainbow blushed, looking at the ground and clasping her hands behind her back shyly. "Well, um... I was thinking... There's this romantic festival thing going on in the city soon, and um... Would-you-be-my-date-Mousy?" she asked really fast. Punchy had just stood up, but then fell over again, and Illusi was taken aback as well. "Huh... M-me!?" he gasped, "You... want to go out... with me??" he asked, dumbfounded. Rainbow nodded shyly. "I... I think you're cute... And I love your cape." she giggled softly. Illusi looked a bit nervous. "I think I'm a little old for... Um..." he glanced at her and saw her giving him the cutest puppy dog eyes. "Gah!! Um... Oh... All... right..." he said. "Yaaaay! Thanks, Mousy! It's gonna be great!" Rainbow cheered, running off to resume getting ready. Punchy stood up again and glared at Illusi. "Hey... how old ARE you?" he asked. Illusi looked thoughtful. "Carry the one... adjust for dimensional time zones... hmmm... does time spent in dream worlds count, since you don't age?" he muttered. Punchy groaned. "Enough! I'm sorry I asked... I'll come up with an appropriate response when my heart starts again..." he grumbled.

Soon, the first day of the festival arrived. There were a number of activities for couples to participate in, including games, rides, romantic outdoor meals by the beach, and of course, dances. It was sort of like a carnival with a romance theme. Somehow, Tails and Cream had found themselves escorting Sonic to Station Square, making sure he'd show up so Amy wouldn't be disappointed. "It won't be so bad, Mr. Sonic. Really, sometimes you're TOO shy." Cream grumbled. Sonic looked around uncomfortably, but his eyes soon stopped wandering as he caught sight of Amy. She was dressed up in a long, red dress that covered her legs, and had a small red bow tied in her hair beside her left ear. She looked nice, and Sonic at least seemed to take notice. "I'm ready, Sonic! So, what shall we do first?" she smiled. Sonic glanced at Tails and Cream nervously. "Have fun, Sonic!" Tails smirked. Sonic gulped, turned around, and started off with Amy. She pulled him over to the Ferris wheel that had been set up for the festival, and gazing out the window during the ride, Sonic managed to calm himself a little. "Well, at least she's not choking me..." he thought, noticing how gently Amy cuddled up to him while they rode the Ferris wheel. After the ride, they started trying out some games, but all too soon, the festivities were interrupted by a scream! "Get away! Get awaaaaay!!!" Sonic glanced at the screams to see Mia the cat backing away from a familiar blue and green robot, Alpha! Oddly, Alpha was holding a heart-shaped box of chocolates. "What? Allergic to shellfish? Well, ya never know what you're gonna get!" the robot said. Mia nodded. "Yeeeeeah... Because you look ABSOLUTELY nothing like your picture! I'm never dating over the internet again!!!" she shrieked. Amy frowned. "Oh, no... Come on, Sonic... We don't have to get involved in this... We were having such a... beautiful tiiiiiiime!!!" she wailed, tearing up. Sonic growled. "That robot could go berserk any moment and hurt lots of people! I have to do something!" he reasoned, running off! Amy sniffled, watching him go. "I... I know... Grrrr... EGGMAN!!! YOU ALWAYS TEAR MY SONIC AWAY FROM ME!!!" she snarled furiously. Sonic ran up to Alpha and waved. "Hey, buddy. Blind date?" he asked. "You don't know the half of it..." Mia said, "Wait, SONIC!? Will you be my date? Pretty please?!" she asked giddily. Amy came up behind her with her Piko Piko Hammer. "He's TAKEN..." she growled. "Huh? Oh... rats..." Mia whimpered awkwardly.

Just then, lasers shot throughout the festival, causing the couples to flee in panic! Dr. Eggman flew into the area with an Egg Mobile ringed with laser turrets. "THERE you are, Alpha!! How dare you wander off on me! You're getting to be a security risk!" he shouted. Alpha turned around. "Agh! Dad! I had a date! And she broke my heart! Can I have a cookie?" he asked. Sonic tapped his foot and crossed his arms. "Well, Eggman, you just broke up the festival. I don't know whether to clobber you or thank you." he said, having really not been looking forward to the dance Amy was going to try to drag him to. Just then, he heard someone sobbing behind him. He turned around to see Amy, sitting on the ground holding her

knees. Mia was sitting beside her and patting her head. "Chin up. There are still two days left. Maybe the damage will get fixed real quick and... you can try again on day three to spend time with your sweetie." she said. Amy just kept sobbing, and Sonic couldn't help feeling bad. Eggman, however, was only concerned with himself. "Alpha, when we get back, I'm refitting you with a new restraining mechanism. And don't you dare try to distract me from it this time!" he growled. "Can we order Chinese food for dinner?" Alpha asked. "Fine!" Eggman replied, "Wait, STOP THAT!! No randomness for 12 hours! Stay quiet!" he yelled. Sonic turned to Eggman. "Hey! Doc! I got a bone to pick with you!" he shouted. Eggman glared at him. "What do YOU want?" he said. "You made Amy cry!" he shouted, making Amy perk her head up. "Huh...? S-sonic...?" she gasped. Eggman scoffed. "Ooooooh, I made her CRY! How diabolical! That's almost as bad as when I blew up half the moon! Grow up, Sonic!" he taunted. Sonic quickly jumped into action, bouncing off Alpha and launching a homing attack straight into the Egg Mobile! "Ouch!! You blue pest! Take this!" Eggman growled, firing lasers in every direction from the turrets on his vehicle! Amy and Mia hurried behind cover while Sonic gracefully ran between the shots, taunting Eggman while Alpha clapped for his skill. "Wheee! Dinner and a show! Wait, I missed dinner! Worst date ever! I'm breaking up with you!!!" he shouted, presumably to Mia. Sonic jumped into the air again and struck the Egg Mobile from below, frustrating Eggman further. "Rrrr... I didn't come equipped to deal with you right now... I'll cut my losses here. I'll just be satisfied with RUINING your day!" he said, sticking out his tongue. "Grrr!! THAT'S IT!!" shouted Amy, who ran out from her hiding spot and charged Alpha, jumping off his head in order to reach the Egg Mobile as it started to fly away! "Whaaa!?! Amy???" Eggman gasped. "Stay away from me and my Sonic!!!" she yelled, smacking the Egg Mobile with her hammer hard and sending it soaring away like a baseball! "Yaaaaaaaaaaa!! You'll be sorry, hedgehooooooooogs!!!" Eggman shouted as he disappeared into the distance. "Hey! Wait for me, Santa!" Alpha yelped, chasing after him. Sonic looked around awkwardly for a moment, then nodded. "I better make sure everyone's OK after all those lasers going off. Later, Amy!" he said, taking off in a rush! Amy stared after him for a moment and then frowned. "The date's a disaster... As usual..." she sighed. Mia placed a hand on her shoulder. "I get the feeling he ran off just now because he didn't know what to do, not because he wanted to get away from you... If that at all helps." she said. Amy nodded. "Maybe next time..." she sighed.

The festival had been heavily damaged, but people still tried to celebrate in their own ways. On the second night of the festival, Rainbow had prepared for her date with Illusi. Considering her choice of clothing, she really didn't look much different than usual, but she had put a white flower in her hair and tied her ribbon into a fancy bow. Punchy took her aboveground to Station Square, having an uneasy look on his face the whole way. "I don't know about this, Rainbow. I think there's a... generation gap between you and Illusi..." he said. Rainbow chuckled. "Don't be silly, One. Besides, I'm a grown echidna and I can take care of myself!" she said. Punchy blinked a couple of times. "You ARE?!" he stammered. From her behavior, one often expected she was younger. Illusi appeared in a puff of smoke, dressed in a tuxedo and a black cape with a top hat. "Oh... I wasn't sure if this was formal or not, so I thought it best to overdress than underdress..." he said. Punchy rolled his eyes and hopped down the sewer hole leading to the Hidden Ruins. "I'm getting outta here before the cops spot me. Don't say I didn't warn ya!" he shouted. Illusi removed his hat, and it vanished into thin air. "Shall we, madam?" he said, offering his arm. Rainbow giggled and took his hand. "You don't have to be so formal, Mousy! We're friends, right?" she said. Illusi glanced around, feeling slightly embarrassed to be out in public like this, with her. "Um... So, where are we going?" he asked, blushing. Rainbow looked thoughtful. "Hmmm... I dunno. The festival was wrecked by Tubby or something. Kinda messes things up a bit. Maybe the burger shop is open?" she murmured. Illusi stared at her. "That's not very romantic, is it?" he pointed out, "I'm a bit

overdressed for a place like that." he said. Rainbow giggled. "You'd stick out like a sore thumb, huh? I know! Let's go to Twinkle Park!" she suggested. "Um... Hmmm... Maybe I'd better get out of this suit regardless..." Illusi mumbled, snapping his fingers to dispel the illusionary suit, leaving only his cape. Rainbow chuckled. "Now, that's cheating!" she said. So, they went off to Twinkle Park's entrance, but were stopped at the gate. "Hey! Couples get in free, don't they? We're a couple!" Rainbow protested. The ticket and couple-scanning machine at the entrance wasn't letting them in. Illusi sighed. "It says CUTE couples get in free, Rainbow. Listen, I have to be honest with you... I really don't think we work. I dress up for a date, you wear that same green outfit you always wear. I like salad, you like burgers. I like a slow dance, you like amusement parks... we're pretty different. Honestly, Rainbow... I always thought you were better suited for the dark one... At least your differences might... balance out." he said, turning around. Rainbow turned to him. "Huh... Mousy... I..." she murmured sadly. Illusi didn't say a word. He simply vanished in a puff of smoke, leaving her alone. "Awww... That stunk... One was right..." she sighed. "Maybe... He'd like to go to... Twinkle Park...? Eh, we probably wouldn't get past the gate..." she muttered.

By the third day of the festival, people had attempted to put things back together to an extent, but managed only to restore a few of the game booths. Enthusiasm for the festival had dropped significantly simply out of fear that Dr. Eggman might come back, and only a few couples were out. Among those couples was Cream, who had taken Amy's advice and asked her mother if she could go. Now, she was out and walking with Tails by her side! They'd had some laughs while playing "cupid" for Sonic and Amy, so they decided to take a chance and go out together. "Seems like Eggman left a mess when he was here. Well, who needs a boring old dance, anyway? What should we do, Cream?" Tails asked. Cream looked at some of the game booths set up. "Want to see if we can win something?" she asked. "Let's go for it!" he replied. They hurried over to a booth that housed a sort of water gun shooting game, where you had to knock down metal Chao targets moving across the shooting range in the time limit. They could attempt the game as a team, so Tails handed the man some rings as payment and they each grabbed a water pistol. "Hmm... The trick is to aim a little ahead of the target..." Tails muttered, shooting carefully while Cream simply sprayed water all over the place. "There!! No there!! Ha ha!! I got one!!" she giggled. "Aaaah!! We're running out of time!" Tails gasped. Cream glanced at Tails mischievously. "Hmmm..." She then sprayed him with the water pistol, giggling as he yelped. "Yaaaah!! Real mature, Cream!" he grumbled. "Hee hee! You're a much easier target!" she chuckled. "Time's up!" the guy running the game said. He handed Tails a small stuffed Hero Chao as a consolation prize. "Well, close enough. Here you go, Cream... You shot me dead, so I can't take care of it." he said, chuckling. Cream accepted it and smiled. "Aww, I'm sorry. Maybe we can find a way to bring you back to life." she joked. They tried a few more games, and when they got tired they went for a walk on the nearby beach, Emerald Coast. "Thanks for coming, Tails. I had lots of fun." Cream smiled. Tails held her hand as they walked. "Of course I'd come, Cream. We're friends, right?" he said. Cream glanced at him somewhat uncertainly, like there was something on her mind. Tails noticed and looked around. "Hey, um... Cheese hasn't been with you all day. Did he get lost?" he asked. Suddenly, Cream wrapped her arms around Tails tightly, giving him a big hug! "Let's just sit here and watch the sunset and be happy, OK, Tails?" she asked. Tails looked startled at first, but slowly sat down with her and returned the embrace. "So... Cheese just stayed home, huh?" he mumbled. Cream sat in his arms, smiling and blushing. "I have to be home after sunset... I hope... we can do this again sometime, Tails..." she whispered. Tails watched the sunset silently, thinking about what had just happened. He cuddled the rabbit next to him and smiled. "Same time next year... maybe..." he sighed, "...if not sooner..."

Amy would renew her efforts to make Sonic notice her. Rainbow was content to let romance find her rather than pursue it from this point on. What of Tails and Cream? Their story is only just beginning. Where it will end, only time will tell.

Episode End!

3 - Mysteries of the ARK

GeneX - The Series

Episode 3 - Mysteries of the ARK

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Fifty years ago, a terrible incident occurred aboard the Space Colony ARK. Full details about the event were never released to the public, though it eventually came to light that it was most likely an operation meant to capture the Ultimate Life Form, Shadow the Hedgehog, shut down all "potentially dangerous" research going on aboard the ARK, and silence all who knew anything about these events.

During the shutdown of the ARK, many died. The military organization GUN had called their deaths the result of a horrible accident. Shadow the Hedgehog knows this to be false, but over time has come to see the modern incarnation of GUN as a separate entity, and begun to find some semblance of peace now that the Black Arms are no more. On this day, exactly 50 years after the shutdown of the ARK when so many died, Shadow finds himself at a memorial erected to honor the memories of those lost souls... Now, on to the episode!

The Space Colony ARK memorial. Etched on this large, single grave stone were the names of all who died on that fateful day when the military landed on the colony and shut it down... by force. Shadow stood over the stone, glancing over the unfortunately long list. His eyes froze over one name. Maria Robotnik. He heaved a heavy sigh. "...Maria..." he heard himself whisper. His eyes saw a shadow cast over the name, and he knew he wasn't alone. Shadow glanced to his right and saw, of all people, Bucky the rat. His lab coat was buttoned up, which was unusual for him, and he carried a single rose. He set it down in front of the stone silently. "You..." was all Shadow managed to mutter. Bucky stepped back and glanced at the list. "...Gerald's name should be here... A part of him died that day, too." he said, "I wasn't lying when I said I knew him, Shadow. I was there... I was aboard the ARK." Bucky sighed. Shadow stared at him suspiciously. "You don't look like you're over fifty..." he muttered. Bucky chuckled at this. "Neither do you." he said, glancing over the list of names a bit longer. "Well... I must be going. Personally, I'm amazed GUN hasn't swarmed my position yet. I guess old Gunner doesn't get us sentimental types, huh, Shadow?" he said, walking away slowly. Shadow turned towards him thoughtfully. He only had time for one question, it seemed. "Did you know her? ...Gerald's granddaughter?" he asked. Bucky glanced back. "Maria...?I saw her around. Sweet girl." he said before leaving. As the rat left, an elderly man walking with a cane approached the grave. He had gray hair and a pair of blacked out spectacles. Shadow glanced at him and nodded. "This one looks over fifty..." he thought. The man looked back to be sure Bucky was gone, and then leaned towards Shadow. "The ARK yet holds secrets... If one has the nerve to dig them up..." he whispered. Shadow crossed his arms. "I'm listening..... Hmmm??" he expected the elderly man to talk more, but he'd turned and started walking away. "Hey, where are you going??" he asked. "Yes! It's tragic! Oh, how I miss my Elizabeth!

We had such chemistry!! And she was a brilliant assistant!" the man shouted, almost crazily. Shadow scratched his head curiously. "How strange... But it's not as though I can just fly up to the ARK and look around. Besides, would it really be worth my time?" he muttered.

Shadow was on his way out of the graveyard, when he saw something going on beyond the gate. Flashing police lights were surrounding some commotion. "Hmm... Trouble." Shadow muttered, running out the gate to check it out. At first, it appeared to be a simple car accident. An old red car was run into a tree on the side of the road. Some people were gawking nearby, and police officers were questioning them. "Wait... if this is a simple car accident, what's with all the questioning?" Shadow wondered. He crept over towards the car to examine the scene of the accident, when Officer Razor the porcupine appeared and stopped him. "Hold it, Shadow! This is a crime scene! You can't just barge in like this!" he said. Shadow glanced at him. "Crime scene? And... do I know you?" he muttered. Razor crossed his arms. "No, sir, but everyone knows you, Shadow. I'm Officer Razor of the SSPD. Though I'm getting transferred to Troblusk City in a few weeks... Never mind that. And yes, crime scene. Someone was murdered here. According to eyewitnesses, a winged figure flew in front of the car and zapped the driver with some kinda magic. Old guy didn't have a chance..." he said, turning back to resume his work. Shadow kept his distance and thought about this. "Old guy... Could it be...?" He had to be sure about this. "Officer! Can I see the victim? I might... know something..." he shouted. Razor turned back and took off his police cap awkwardly. "Umm... It's not a pretty picture. There's not much... left of him. However, we've recovered a cane and... this." He produced an evidence bag containing a familiar pair of blacked out spectacles, stained with blood. Shadow gasped. "I knew it... The old man who spoke to me in the graveyard... He's been murdered!" he realized. Razor took out a notebook as if he was about to question Shadow. "You don't say... Can you... describe him? Like I said, there's not much...left." he mumbled.

After telling Razor what he knew, Shadow tapped his foot impatiently. "Now, can you tell ME anything useful?" he asked. Razor put his hat back on and closed his notebook. "Sounds like the guy... Might've been killed because he said too much. Or it could just be a coincidence. This isn't the first case involving this winged character to come across our books." Razor admitted. Shadow crossed his arms. "Is it a serial killer?" he asked. Razor shook his head. "Not unless this is a special kinda wacko. We're having trouble finding any link between the victims so far. It's possible this might be some sort of murder-for-hire deal, but we can't find any real evidence to back up that theory, either. The victims don't have mob connections or anything like that. I don't understand it..." he sighed, "Well, I'm just a beat cop, I'm no detective. The detective cases fascinate me, though. That's why I know so much about it." he chuckled. Shadow nodded. "Winged killed... Do you know anything else about the killer?" he wondered. Razor shrugged. "Witnesses say he always wears a hood. No one knows what he looks like." he explained. Just then, an alarm went off in Shadow's mind. A hooded, winged mystery being... he'd seen it before! He thought back to Darkegg Fortress, when he was in battle with Sgt. Gunner's ultimate weapon, the Diablotron. A mysterious being suddenly appeared and finished the Diablotron off, allowing Shadow to move on and catch up with Sonic deeper in the fortress shortly after. "That... that's the Deathbringer!" he gasped. Razor pulled out his notebook again. "Wha-wha-whaaat? Could you repeat that, Shadow?? Do you know something?" he asked. Shadow shook his head. "Not really... Just a... fake name. The Deathbringer. Can't be his real name." he said. Razor wrote it down. "No, but it's something to go on... Thanks! Hey, need a lift anywhere?" he asked. Shadow shook his head. "I need time to think about all this..." he said, running off to mull over all this information he'd just soaked up.

Wandering through Central City, Shadow soon found himself at the Night Babylon district, a place of flashing neon lights and various clubs and casinos. Shadow spotted Club Rouge at the back, arguably

the flashiest place in the district. He crossed his arms and looked thoughtful. "I need more information, but the police don't like working with 'civilians...' I suppose I'm in the right place..." he muttered, heading for Club Rouge. A man at the door stopped him at first. "Hold it, buddy. You on the list... Oh, Shadow! I-I didn't recognize you at first, sir! ...please don't hurt me..." the rather large and brutish looking bouncer whimpered. A familiar voice called out angrily. "What's going on!? Why are you cowering like a big baby!?" Rouge the bat emerged from inside, and smirked when she saw Shadow. "Oh, of course. Well, I guess you did do a number on him the last time he tried to bounce you out of here. Come on in, Shadow." Rouge winked, leading the black hedgehog through the busy casino to her office in the back, a room decorated with dozens of precious gems and priceless knickknacks, also studded with jewels. She sat down on top of her desk and crossed her legs, picking up a large sapphire and admiring it. "So, Shadow, what brings you here?" she asked. He crossed his arms. "I'm trying to catch a murderer... Can you help me?" he asked. Rouge promptly put down the sapphire and stared at Shadow. "Murderer? Now that's messy... Personally, I'd rather not get involved in such a thing... Unfortunately, Gunner's got me tracking down a psycho right now, too. I'll get right on it once I get past my disgust that that guy's giving ME orders. I work for the president! Not him!" she grumbled. Shadow nodded. "Seems Gunner has some clout with the President, huh? But why would he be concerned with a murder case...?" he wondered. Rouge shrugged. "I don't know... Something about it being a 'winged freak' bumping off humans. Ouch. Say winged freak to me while you're asking me to do something. I hate that guy. I love this sapphire he gave me, though..." she muttered, conflicted. Shadow stared at her with wide eyes. "Wings? He put you on the same case! Rouge, can you tell me anything about the victims? Do they have anything in common?" he asked. Rouge stood up and glanced at him curiously. "Hold up... Why are you so interested in this case?" she asked. Shadow sighed. "The last victim tried to tell me something... I think he was killed because he said too much." he explained. Rouge frowned. "Oh, boy... I guess we're in this thing, huh? Well, come on, then... We'll need my BATT-computer..." Shadow raised an eyebrow, and she chuckled, "Basement Assistant to Thieves... for some reason it came with that name." she said.

Rouge pulled a slot machine lever on her wall, and a hidden door opened leading to her basement. Shadow glanced at her. "What if someone wants to try that slot machine?" he asks. "The machine takes 20s." Rouge explained. They headed down to the BATT-computer, a device with several screens with a frame around it shaped like a bat. Rouge sat down and started typing at the keyboard. "The police have the information... Luckily, my computer should have no problem hacking into their files... Just don't tell Gunner, he doesn't like when I mess with protocol, it's only OK when HE does it." she grumbled. In no time, she had a list of the known victims, but like Razor had said, there didn't appear to be much connection between them, if any. Shadow scratched his head. "Maybe we're thinking about this wrong. The old guy who talked to me said something about the ARK. Are any of the other victims from the ARK?" he asked. Rouge did some typing and nodded. "Seems two of the victims were old guys that worked on the ARK... Warren Techa and Gregory Frederickson... There they are on the screens." she said, displaying the victims. Shadow recognized one of them as the man he'd seen at the graveyard. "There... Gregory. He said something about the ARK having secrets..." he said. Rouge nodded. "Gregory was... One of Professor Gerald's assistants on the ARK... when it was operational 50 years ago!" she gasped. Shadow stared at the image. "What...? But... I don't know him..." he muttered. Rouge glanced at Shadow. "And how many of Gerald's assistants DID you know...?" she asked. Shadow was silent. He tried to remember, but his memories of the ARK were all but gone. Only Gerald and Maria remained in his mind. Rouge checked the other file. "Warren was one of Gerald's assistants, too... They worked on the prototype of the Ultimate Life Form. The Biolizard. They were imprisoned for years, until you escaped. When you helped stop the Biolizard, you essentially cleared their names and they were

freed. They were thought to be Gerald's 'accomplices...' she said. Shadow shook his head. "Something doesn't add up... Did any other of the Professor's assistants escape the ARK fifty years ago?" he wondered. Rouge started typing. "I'll look into it.... There are mostly lists about who died, but... If I cross-reference that with a list of those who were on board... Here we go. Give me a minute." It took Rouge a bit, but she managed to work out the survivors of the ARK. "OK, Shadow... You owe me a Chaos Emerald for this. There were six members of Professor Gerald's team who survived, not counting the professor himself." she said. Shadow sat down on a nearby chair, completely astounded. "That many?! They made it sound like most everyone died... And... Exactly how many people were on the professor's team, anyway?" he muttered. Rouge shrugged. "That was a big lizard. Must've took a lot of people. Anyway, along with Warren and Greg, there was Nevin Crimm, who disappeared some years after escaping the ARK... According to this, the government was hunting for him, too, but never found him." she said. Shadow rolled his eyes. "They may have covered their tracks..." he muttered. Rouge sighed. "Next one died of natural causes, no good to us... Next is Bartholomew Wheeler and... Nesbitt Prower??" she mumbled, displaying the next two assistants onscreen. Nesbitt Prower was an elderly fox, with a bit of a resemblance to a certain two-tailed friend of Sonic's. Shadow nodded. "Are they alive?" he asked. Rouge glanced at him. "Alive and retired. We'd better get to them before a certain hooded angel of death does!" she warned.

Shadow and Rouge decided to split up so they'd reach the two old assistants quickly. Shadow took the address of Bartholomew Wheeler from Rouge and hurried to Station Square as fast as his feet would carry him. However, when he reached the city, the blaring of police sirens told him all was definitely not well. He sped past the sirens to the hotel by Emerald Coast. "Chaos Control!!!" he shouted, warping up to a second story window and smashing his way inside with a quick Chaos Spear! A woman inside screamed as he jumped in, and Shadow hurried to the door, trying to hide his embarrassment. "Sorry... wrong room..." he grumbled, hurrying out the door. Looking at the room numbers, he quickly found Wheeler's room and banged on the door. "I'll only open for the police!" An elderly voice shouted from inside. "Wheeler... You're still alive?" Shadow said. The door slowly opened a crack. "Is that... Shadow...?" the old man mumbled. Shadow crossed his arms. "Are you gonna let me in?" he asked. Wheeler closed the door. "How do I know you didn't kill Techa and Frederickson?" he stammered. Shadow tapped his foot. "You know I could just break down the door if I wanted..." he pointed out. Wheeler thought about this for a moment. "...Good point. Get in." he said, opening the door hurriedly. Shadow walked in and sat down just as Officer Razor was coming to the door. "Police! What's the emergency?" he asked. Wheeler glanced out. "You guys are so slow... I could've been killed by the time you got here!" he said. Shadow cleared his throat. "Um... Bart... Do you know why anyone would want to kill you?" he asked. Wheeler glanced at him. "...No... Well, maybe... I don't know so much about the others, but... I know too much..." he stammered. Razor scratched his head under his hat. "Really? Could you give us some details?" he asked. Wheeler sighed heavily and sat down on the hotel bed beside the window. "After the accident at the ARK... No respected science team would have us. Do you know what it's like to be treated like criminals when you've done nothing?" he said. Shadow crossed his arms. "Was everyone on the ARK blamed for the 'accident?'" he asked. "The scientists were... So, some of us found other work... Some of us got on GUN's radar... Me... I found the rat." Wheeler said. Razor's eyes went wide. "The rat... Bucky??" he mumbled. Wheeler nodded. "That's right. Nevin Crimm and I, and some others... We all went with Bucky on his little venture... He had a plan, you see... And he'd discovered the perfect place to set up his lab. Crimm and I went to check it out, but... Something terrible happened... Those creatures... The... the slime..." Wheeler became lost in a horrific memory, stammering and whimpering as it all came flooding back to his mind. "No... don't go in there, Nevin!! NEVIN!! He... he's gone..." he stammered, making Shadow and Razor start to approach him. "Bart...? Wheeler, are you all

right!?" Shadow gasped. "The slime... Devouring him... It took his face! Now... his slimy face says... 'I am... Lucifer....!!' Aaaaaahhh!! Nooo!! I can't go back there, Stein! I quit!! There are demons in that place! Your mad science will be the death of us all!!" Wheeler shrieked. Razor backed away and pulled out his police radio. "We may need a straightjacket up here..." he said. Just then, a powerful energy blast crashed through the window, smashing into Wheeler and leaving a hole in his chest! He was killed instantly! "What!? No!!" Shadow gasped, running to the window. Flying outside, he could see the winged, hooded being known as the Deathbringer! This was his chance to catch him!

Razor talked into his radio again. "Never mind the jacket, get a body bag..." he sighed. Shadow nodded. "I'll catch the Deathbringer!" he shouted, leaping from the window! "Chaos Control!" he warped towards the Deathbringer as it flew away, and as he emerged, he tried to land on top of the murderer. However, the Deathbringer spun around and kicked him back! "Dare not interfere with me!" the hooded being warned, its voice a distorted jumble, likely concealed by a machine. Shadow fired Chaos Spears at the Deathbringer, only to have them blocked by a shield of dark energy! Shadow landed on the ground below and shouted up to the Deathbringer. "What's your game?! Why would you help me before, only to start killing senselessly later?" he asked. The Deathbringer stared down at him. "Help you? Ah, you mean destroying that machine... It had nothing to do with helping you. I just sent you on your way afterward so you would leave me alone... Does that explain enough for you? Farewell..." Before Shadow could do any more, the Deathbringer flew off at rapid speed. He rubbed his chin curiously. "If not to help me... Then why?" he wondered. Just then, Razor caught up to him. "Shadow! How'd you know to show up here?" he asked. Shadow turned to Razor. "Um... Lucky guess?" he muttered. Razor crossed his arms. "I'm not dumb, Shadow. You know something. Based on all this, I'm guessing the murders now have a connection to Space Colony ARK somehow..." he said. Shadow nodded. "OK, not bad..." he said. Razor smirked. "I've been reviewing the victims' cases. Turns out a bunch of them have some connection to the ARK." he said. Shadow raised an eyebrow. "A bunch...? Not just Gerald's assistants?" he said. He then shook his head, "Never mind. We have to get to Nesbitt Prower over at Emerald Town. He might be the Deathbringer's next target." he warned. Razor nodded. "Come on. I can fill you in on what I dug up on the way." he said. "No time." Shadow insisted, running off as fast as he could. Razor sighed. "Speedy hedgehogs are so impatient..." he muttered.

Nesbitt Prower was old, and was living at a relative's home, unable to care for himself anymore. Shadow hurried to the building shaped like a large fox's head, Tails's house. He found Rouge outside the door, tapping her foot impatiently. "Hey, Shadow. The old guy won't let me in. Apparently, Tails told him ALL about me..." she grumbled, rolling her eyes. Shadow smirked. "He thinks you're here to burglarize the place? Doesn't Tails know you're a jewel thief?" he asked. "If he ever comes home I'll ask him... Any news on the other guy?" Rouge asked. Shadow stared at the ground. "...Dead..." he grumbled. Rouge glanced at the door. "We gotta get in there..." she said. Shadow tried banging on the door himself. "Open up! Wheeler, Techa and Frederickson are all dead!" he shouted. The metal door quickly slid open, and an elderly, brown furred fox with a yellow tufted tail stepped to the doorway. "...Shadow... You're too late, I'm afraid..." he murmured. "Nesbitt... What do you mean, too late?" Shadow wondered. "Hey, where's Tails, anyway?" Rouge asked. Nesbitt motioned for them to come in, and as they hurried inside, he looked like he was trying to gather his thoughts. "Tails... Tails... Miles? That's my great nephew. He's more brilliant than I was, I think... He has so many labs and workshops... Oh... I sent him away, that's right. He will be safe..." the old fox mumbled. Shadow and Rouge glanced at each other briefly, then Shadow continued to question Nesbitt. "You said it was too late. What did you mean?" he asked. Nesbitt sat down in a rocking chair in the corner, pulling a blanket around himself. "Right, right... Those horrible murders... First, the engineer. Then Techa... This person, whoever it is, was killing us off

one by one. I had to take precautions. If... if IT were to fall into the wrong hands..." he mumbled. "It?" Rouge asked. Nesbitt glanced at Shadow nervously. "...I'm sorry, Shadow... I may have made a mistake... I thought I could trust him, but... Maybe he was the wrong man to tell..." he stuttered. Shadow walked over and tugged at Nesbitt's blanket. "Focus, old man! What did you say, and who did you say it to?" he demanded. Nesbitt groaned. "He... was part of our team... We were going to change the world. I should have known he was changed. Now he's with GUN... But... his grandpa was murdered, too... Why would he turn on us?" the old fox mumbled. "Nesbitt!!" Shadow shouted. "Where is he, Nesbitt?" came a voice behind Shadow and Rouge! Turning around, they saw the Deathbringer at the door! "You! Stay back!" Shadow warned. Nesbitt looked at the Deathbringer and gasped loudly. "H-he's come for me...! Th-the angel of... death!!" he yelped, wheezing loudly as terror swept over him. The shock was too much for the old man to take, and he stumbled out of his chair, apparently succumbing to a heart attack! "Whoa! Nesbitt! Hang in there, old guy!" Rouge gasped, hurrying over to him. Shadow rushed towards the Deathbringer, but it simply jumped out the door and flew off. "He's no good to me dead! Farewell!" the Deathbringer yelled.

Razor arrived with the Central City police moments later. While the local police dealt with Nesbitt and began seeking out Tails to notify him of what had happened, Razor talked things over with Shadow and Rouge. "So... Got a spy on your side, eh, Shadow? That's how you did it." he chuckled. Rouge winked. "That's right, I'm the brains of this outfit." she said. Shadow sighed. "I think I'd better hear what you know now, officer. Nesbitt said something about an engineer... and someone who works for GUN who may be the Deathbringer's next target." he explained. Razor nodded. "Okay... Does this mean we're gonna work together, then?" he asked. Rouge chuckled. "Get serious. Shadow works alone." she said. Razor crossed his arms. "If we were all on the same page, these people might stop dying." he pointed out. Shadow looked thoughtful for a moment. "The Deathbringer may be after something. But so is the guy we're looking for. We have to track him down, quickly." he said. Razor smiled. "Now that wasn't so hard... Well, the engineer was the first victim. He worked on the engines used to get Space Colony ARK off the ground... Marvin Spizzweld, I think his name was." he said. Rouge raised an eyebrow. "Spizzweld? That's... um... Well, I'm not supposed to say, but that's Spy's last name. I didn't know he had a relative that worked on the ARK..." she muttered. Shadow shook his head. "Spy's not smart enough to tie his own shoes. He can't be our culprit. Anyone else who works for GUN have a relative murdered by this guy?" Shadow asked. Razor looked unsure. "I don't have the files with me..." he sighed. Rouge grinned. "I have a wireless version of my BATT-computer... The B stands for Blackberry in this version." she said, pulling out a small handheld computer. In a few moments, she pulled up the files again and looked through the list of victims, this time cross-referencing it with people currently on GUN's payroll. Along with Spy, another name came up. "Aha... Look here! Seems Gerald's old assistants aren't the only ones being killed. An old assistant of one Professor Buck Stein was killed, too. Igor Nammad. His grandson currently works for GUN as a scientist... Ivan Nammad." she said. "That must be our guy!" Razor realized. Shadow looked at the image of Ivan Nammad on Rouge's screen. He was a man with messy black hair, a pair of small glasses, and wearing a white lab coat over a blue shirt. "All right, Nammad... Let's find out what you're after..." he muttered. "Where to?" Razor asked. Shadow thought about it. "...The ARK yet holds secrets... If one has the nerve to dig them up..." he muttered. "Huh?" Rouge asked. "Gregory Frederickson said this to me... Maybe he was saying more than I thought. But... I think he meant a place connected to the ARK... The graveyard!" Shadow gasped.

Shadow hurried to the graveyard, the place where this whole mystery started, with Razor and Rouge following in Razor's police car. Shadow had to get to the Space Colony ARK memorial quickly. While he was heading there, a man approached the grave stone, only to find a rat already waiting for him. "Even a

fugitive like me watches the news. The old team being murdered one by one. It could only be by someone who didn't know where it was buried... And who would have ambition to equal my own... Dr. Nammad." Bucky said, turning around and growling at the wild-haired scientist in front of him. "Bucky... I, uh... I didn't, uh... Think you'd come." Nammad stammered. "You killed my old friends and associates and you think I'd just ignore it?!" Bucky snarled, sparks flying from his fingers. "Wait! Wait one, uh, minute! You've got it all, uh, wrong! I didn't kill, uh... anybody. I only came for, uh... the..." before he could finish, Bucky fired a bolt of lightning into the air! "What do you take me for!? Did Gunner put you up to this, Ivan!? You were still loyal enough when I was captured! You even helped me stow data into Guard's mind as I recall! What prompted this complete change of character?" he shouted. Nammad produced a fancy looking ray gun from his pocket. "You, uh... never change, Bucky. You glory hogging, uh... hypocrite! And, uh, just why are you the only scientist fit to hold, uh, the secrets of life?" he growled. Bucky chuckled. "You think you can kill me as easily as you killed those old men?! You forget... I don't age!" he shouted, firing bolts of electricity towards Dr. Nammad, only to hear someone call out "Chaos Control!" Shadow emerged in the path of Bucky's bolts, saving Nammad from being fried to a crisp! "Arrrgh! Bucky, STOP!!" he shouted. Bucky ceased his attack and stared in surprise. "You defend this murderer?!" he gasped. "...He's not the murderer..." Shadow muttered. Bucky raised an eyebrow. "Then who??" he asked. As Nammad looked around nervously, he suddenly heard another voice yell "Get down!" just before Rouge flew in and tackled him to the ground! She was just in time, as an energy blast seared through the spot where Nammad was standing a moment ago! The Deathbringer flew down and growled. "I will not let him acquire what he seeks! He is a dangerous man, and I will stop him now!" it shouted. Bucky immediately fired bolts of electricity at the Deathbringer, which it flew up to avoid! "So! You killed my old partners! You wretched demon! Why!? What business is it of yours!? They were my friends! They took me in when the government wanted my head! They gave me a family when mine cast me out!" he shouted with tears in his eyes. "How could you take that away from me!?" he roared, taking to the sky and firing a huge burst of lightning and electricity towards the Deathbringer! The hooded being brought up a shield of darkness, trying to defend itself from his rage-fuelled attacks. Razor arrived at this point and, seeing this, fired a warning shot into the air. "Stop!! No more murder!! Shadow, we gotta do something! Bucky and the killer should be arrested!" he said. Shadow nodded. He had to keep Bucky from killing the Deathbringer, that much was sure. It would only make things worse for him. "Chaos Control!" He warped up towards Bucky, looking for an opening in all the bolts of electricity to hit him through. Finding none, Shadow tried the next best option. "Chaos...BLAST!!" Creating a chaotic explosion, he managed to knock Bucky away and force him to cease his attack until he got his bearings. The Deathbringer took this opportunity to look for Nammad, but he'd bolted in the confusion. "Blast..." it muttered, then glancing at Bucky. He'd dropped to the ground, and was sobbing. "...." The Deathbringer hung in the air for a second, looking contemplative, and then flew off, a couple of its ruffled feathers fluttering to the ground as it escaped. Shadow, Razor and Rouge approached Bucky at first, but then Razor realized something. "Shoot! Nammad flew the coop! I'd better find him before the Deathbringer does!" he gulped, rushing off to protect his fleeing eyewitness. "Don't let Bucky get away!" he shouted back. Rouge crossed her arms. "I'm not getting barbecued if he puts up a fight..." she muttered. Shadow frowned. "The Deathbringer got away... It was all for nothing..." he sighed, "But... maybe not. Was he really... After Nammad all this time? I wonder... I wonder if Nammad built the Diablotron... This may explain everything... But then why kill the others?" he muttered. Rouge looked puzzled. "Well... Nammad works with GUN. Maybe it was to lure him away from GUN's forces. Maybe he knew Nammad would leave to go after whatever was hidden here..." she said, turning to leave. "Unless it's jewels, I'm not interested. See ya, Shadow."

Shadow turned to Bucky. "What's here, old man?" he asked. Bucky chuckled. "A memorial. Nothing

more." he said, standing up to leave. "If... you were to find anything... Keep it out of the wrong hands." he added, walking away. Shadow turned and watched him. "You're just going to walk out of here?" he asked. Bucky nodded. "I've done nothing worse than I've ever done before. GUN can take a hike." he said. As Bucky left, Shadow looked at the memorial, his eyes resting on Maria's name for a bit. "...No bodies... The bodies were left on the ARK. So... what's buried here?" he muttered, noticing that the ground looked like it had once been dug up.

As Dr. Nammad made his way to his car, he chuckled to himself. "Winged murderer... How, uh, convenient..." he muttered, "Even if this, uh, character was out to get me, too... Now that we're on to him, I'll, uh, be well protected. And no one will ever, uh, suspect..." he stopped short, looking around in case someone was listening to him talking to himself. "Old Spizzweld wouldn't, uh, talk... I had to send the others a, uh, message... Hehehe... Unfortunate that I leave with, uh, nothing... But at least everyone suspects, uh... the winged one as the only, uh... culprit." he smirked. As he opened his car door, he heard Razor's voice behind him. "Dr. Nammad!" he shouted. "Eeep... Why do I always talk to, uh, myself...?" he whispered, slowly turning around. Razor had a look of concern. "Come on, we gotta get you some police protection. The Deathbringer could still be after you." he said. Dr. Nammad sighed with relief. Razor hadn't heard his mutterings. He smiled to himself. One day, he'd get the recognition he sought after. No matter what it took.

Meanwhile, Shadow had been busy digging for whatever was hidden beneath the memorial. He had to work fast, so he used his hands and some occasional Chaos Spears to loosen the dirt. Eventually, he found a box. It was a metal box, actually an odd sort of container. "What is this... It feels cold..." he muttered. Whatever it was, it had a refrigeration unit of some sort, apparently running on powerful batteries considering it was buried. He found a latch, and pulled it open. Inside there were several test tubes containing samples of something. Pulling one out, Shadow could see what it was. "Blood samples... Why kill over this... Unless..." He looked for a label on the test tubes. One of them did have a label, which read: "Ultimate Life." Shadow placed it back in the cooling container and stood up, backing away a few steps. "Samples... of my blood, or the Biolizard? Either way... Doesn't matter... Bucky's team stole them from the ARK. What were they doing with them? What happened to Nevin Crimm? Are these events related? Is the Deathbringer covering this stuff up, or Nammad?" he stammered, confused. Then, he remembered what Bucky said. "...Keep it out of the wrong hands. He's right. This could be used to find the answers to these riddles, but... In the wrong hands, it could be used to create an army of Ultimate Life copies, possibly. In the wrong hands, such an army could be disastrous, and yet... Hmm..." Shadow thought for a moment and closed the refrigeration unit. "To simply destroy these samples would be to destroy what's left of Professor Gerald's work. I need to leave it somewhere safe..."

The refrigeration unit containing the DNA samples of the Ultimate Life form was last seen resting in a safe beside the BATT-computer. First the safe was closed, and then, as Shadow and Rouge exited the basement of Club Rouge, the hidden slot machine passageway slid shut as well. No one but he and Rouge know where the DNA samples are hidden, and Shadow aims to keep it that way, for now.

Episode End!

4 - Catch That Virus!

GeneX - The Series

Episode 4 - Catch That Virus!

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Tails is a tinkerer. He builds various gadgets and gizmos, takes care of Sonic's planes and Extreme Gear boards, and works out of several workshops in various locations. One of his promising inventions is a robot dog known as SPOT (Sensor Puppy - Optical Transmitter). This robot rivals Dr. Eggman's badniks, having various helpful abilities including sensors that detect various energy signatures, shields and weapon systems for combat, and even some modes for transportation. The robot has become a sort of assistant to Tails in his workshops, helping in his tinkering. However, neither of them were prepared when the Deathbringer showed up at Tails's house while he was away, frightening his uncle, Nesbitt Prower, into having a heart attack. Now, Tails copes by doing what he does best, tinkering. Now, on to the episode!

Tails was busy at his Central City workshop. His hands were deep inside a robotic shell, tightening something with a small wrench that could easily maneuver inside what he was working on. "Well, SPOT... How's the upload going?" he asked, glancing at the nearby robot's monitor. "Upload at 73%." it read. Tails nodded. "Keep it up... Gotta get this done..." he murmured. SPOT beeped a little and displayed a new message. "You could do with some sleep. I suggest resuming after a nap." it suggested. Tails yawned but shook his head. "No... I know what you're thinking, SPOT... I'm fine... I hardly knew Uncle Nesbitt. I... I'll be okay... But I... I want to be able to protect the people important to me next time... Somehow..." he said. SPOT crawled next to Tails and sat down. "I will do my best to aid you no matter what." it's monitor read, "However, I beseech you get some rest." Tails chuckled. "Know-it-all... Fine..." he mumbled.

It wasn't long before he went back to work, however. He was tightening a screw when a knock came at his door. "Uh oh... Um... I'm gonna cover this up. Sonic might think I'm not getting out enough if that's him." he said, tossing a sheet over his project. "SPOT, unlock the door." he commanded. The robot beeped and sent a signal that caused the door to slide open, revealing Guard the gargoyle at the entrance. Tails sighed. "Oh, you again. Come in." he mumbled. Guard stepped in and exchanged growls with SPOT. "Grrr... Routine interrogation. As you know, Sgt. Gunner believes you know where Copter is." he grumbled. Tails sat down and pouted. "And as YOU know, I have no idea where he is. Sorry, Guard... I really can't do this right now... I'm going through a bit of a rough patch." he explained. Guard nodded. "I heard. Grrr.... Gunner was interested in the case. The creature broke into your house. Grrrr... I'm sorry." he said, trying as hard as he could not to sound gruff like he normally does. Tails stood up slowly. "I'll be okay..." he said. Just then, he noticed that Guard had his eyes closed, and his wings were

twitching. "Sorry... I have wireless signals bouncing around in here. Are they affecting your robotic brain?" he asked. Guard grumbled softly. "There's always a little wi-fi in the air. Grrrr... Sometimes hot spots give me a headache..." However, SPOT suddenly gave an alarm. "Virus detected!! Virus detected!!" the text on its monitor read. Tails ran over and checked it out, quickly sighing with relief. "Whew... SPOT found a virus and blocked it." he said. However, Guard suddenly started growling loudly. "RRRRrrrrrrRRRRRaaaaaaAAAAAaaaarrrrghh!!!" Tails glanced up at him nervously. "...Guard?" he muttered. His eyes were flashing yellow, and his body was convulsing violently while sparks flew from his horns and fingertips! Tails backed away slightly, unsure of what to do. "SPOT, any idea what's going on?" he asked. "He appears to be malfunctioning. Suggest contacting customer support." SPOT's monitor read. "Very funny!" Tails snapped. Suddenly, an unfamiliar voice came from Guard's mouth. "Meooooowr!! Hey, this isn't any of Tails's junk! Ooooh, cool! I'm in an android! Sweet!" the voice said. Guard's voice came through next. "Grrrr!?! What!? Stop! Release me! Grrr! This is MY body!" he shouted, flailing his scythe angrily. "Heh heh! That won't do any good! Meowr! This is MY body now!" the other voice said, taking control of Guard and making him wave to Tails. "Yo, fox boy! I'm Firepaw, and now I'm a gargoyle instead of a silly computer cat! So long!" he said, controlling Guard's body and making him run out of the workshop through the front door! SPOT beeped and displayed some information. "Guard appears to have been corrupted by the virus." it said. Tails ran for the door hurriedly. "SPOT, come on! We need to catch him and purge that virus! No telling what it plans to do with him!" he said.

Outside, Tails saw that Guard was flying away, but his flight was a bit sloppy. He seemed to be struggling against the virus! "Grrrrr!! You can't get away... with this! Grrrr... How is this even... possible!?" he snarled. Firepaw chuckled as Guard's eyes flashed yellow again. "Silly dog-bat. Your robotic parts are easy for me to control. I just need an access point. Those goofy horns get wi-fi, and a hot spot like Tails's Workshop was where you were most vulnerable. Your pitiful antivirus software is no match for the Eggman Empire!" he taunted. Guard growled and forced them to flip in the air. "Grrrr!! I'll never serve Eggman!!" he yelled. Firepaw steered them toward a building. "I'm flying! I'll crash us! It'll hurt you worse than it'll hurt me... Meowr... in theory." he warned. "Stop, Firepaw!!" shouted Tails, who was riding on SPOT's back while the thrusters in its paws kept them airborne! Guard nodded, and flapped his wings hard, smacking him and Firepaw into a flag pole to slow them down! "MEOWR!! Wise guy! I'll have to burn you down! Take this!" Suddenly, Guard's body started to become cloaked in flames, forcing Tails and SPOT to back away while the gargoyle fell off the flagpole, setting the flag on fire! "SPOT! Put that flag out!" Tails shouted. SPOT flew them over and opened a nozzle on its tail, spraying water at the flag from it! Meanwhile, the fire around Guard faded, but a small flame still covered the tip of his tail, while his eyes now glowed red! "Guard's on a little vacation now, fox boy! Meowr... Now Firepaw's in charge! I think I'll celebrate by setting some fires around town before heading back to Eggman's base! Meowr ho ho howr!!" he laughed, flying off and swinging Guard's now flaming scythe at a few cars as he went, causing some small explosions! Tails watched in shock. "All right, SPOT... Can you track him?" he asked. SPOT beeped in acknowledgement. "Then let's split up and try to corner him!" he suggested, flying off SPOT's back and heading for the street in the direction Firepaw was going. SPOT's monitor displayed a message. "Be careful, Tails." it said before flying off in another direction.

It was a nice day out, and Agent Spizzweld, better known by his unimaginative codename, "Spy," was out on a coffee run for Sgt. Gunner. Because it was such a nice day, he was taking his sweet time, humming to himself. Gunner was going to yell at him for something when he got back anyway, so why hurry? However, as he was crossing the street at an intersection, he noticed the explosions as Firepaw approached, still controlling Guard! "Holy macaroni! Guard's gone bonkers!" he yelped, dropping the

coffee and diving behind a car hastily. He fumbled under his coat and wrestled a gun out of its holster. "Geez, I don't think I've ever had to use this before!" he mumbled as Firepaw and Tails went right past him. "Huh!? Hey! Wait!! GUN Agent!! Freeze! Stop! In the name of Sgt. Gunner! Or Col. Thade? Whatever... the Commander's name is...? Awww... I'll catch up with you..." Spy yelled as he tried to run after them but started to get tired. However, Firepaw stopped in midair and turned around. "Hey, meowr... Did he just tell me to 'freeze?'" he smirked. Tails glanced back and thought about it. "Ummm... No, that was me." he muttered. Guard's eyes flashed red again as he wore a crooked smile. "You're a bad liar, meowrrr... I'll show him freeze!" Firepaw snickered, flying towards Spy with Guard's flaming scythe extended! Spy shrieked and started shooting randomly, too scared to look! "Hey! Watch what you're doing!" Tails yelled, running to do something. Spy turned to run, so Firepaw swung the scythe and fired a fiery energy blast at him, forcing him to dive out of the way! Before he could do it again, Tails jumped up and smacked him with his tails! "Cut it out, Firepaw! Get out of Guard's head!" he shouted. Firepaw turned and growled at Tails, Guard's eyes flashing bright yellow. "Meowr!! Make me!" he hissed, spinning and whipping Guard's flaming tail at Tails! Before it could hit him, however, SPOT flew by and fired a laser at Guard, knocking him away from Tails! "SPOT! Good timing!" Tails smiled. "That's what I need, a laser!" Spy mumbled as he dashed for cover. Firepaw flew up and glared at Tails and SPOT with glowing red eyes. "All right, I'm gonna make a point to fry both of you before I go! Meowr!!" he yelled.

Firepaw cloaked Guard in flames and charged at Tails, forcing him to fly out of the way! "SPOT, we gotta get him to stay still and then force him outta Guard's head!" Tails shouted. SPOT nodded and tried spraying some water from its tail at "Fire-Guard," but he just spun around swinging his scythe and kicking up more flames! "Meowr ho ho howr!! I'm a scorching fireball! You can't just put me out!" he laughed. Tails flew down to a fire hydrant and looked at it thoughtfully. "Hm, I can't get it open myself..." he muttered. SPOT was busy firing lasers at Fire-Guard, but he was blocking them with the burning blade of his scythe. "Hisss! Stupid robo-mutt! I can't believe I almost took over you!" Firepaw said. "You could never get past my firewalls." the text on SPOT's monitor replied. Firepaw paused to read it and got even madder. "Why you...! I AM fire! A pitiful firewall can't stop me! I just... uh... went looking for better hardware! Meowr!!" he shouted, swinging the scythe to send numerous beams of fire at SPOT! "Lure him over here, SPOT!" Tails shouted, pulling out a golden ring he'd been carrying with him. "Not sure this is a good idea... The city sure won't like the hydrant being busted..." he thought. SPOT beeped loudly and opened a hatch on its side, shooting off a flare at Firepaw to get his attention! "Meowr!? Did you just try to hit me with fire!? Dumb dog, get over here and I'll show you a flare!" he shouted, chasing after SPOT. They were soon over the hydrant, so Tails slipped the gold tailband on one of his tails. "This better work..." he said, tail whipping the fire hydrant and smashing it with the power of his Tailband of Chaos! A powerful jet of water gushed up towards Fire-Guard and SPOT, but Firepaw simply chuckled. "Nice try! Here, doggy!" he said, slipping the scythe around SPOT quickly and dragging the robo-puppy into the path of the water! "Ahh! SPOT!!" Tails gasped. The powerful jet of water struck SPOT hard, knocking it into a spin and sending it crashing to the ground! "Ha ha ha! You seriously didn't think I could tell what you were doing?! I thought you were smart!" Firepaw laughed, firing a jet of flames at SPOT from his free hand to damage the robot further! "Stop it!" Tails shouted, running over in a hurry. A gunshot from Spy made Firepaw stop his attack. "Um... I didn't do it?" Spy said awkwardly as Fire-Guard slowly flew towards him. Tails checked SPOT's monitor as he reached it. "Damage catastrophic... I am sorry..." it read. Tails wiped tears from his eyes and nodded. "It's okay, SPOT... Progress?" he asked. "Upload completed." its monitor displayed. Tails patted the robot's head and pulled a remote from a hatch on SPOT's side. "All right. I hope it's ready. Thanks, buddy..." he said, pressing a button on the remote.

At Tails's Workshop, the object covered by the sheet began to stir. Some beeping could be heard, and then a voice. "Power on... Good morning!" It was a simple digital voice. In a moment, something went flying out the open door, leaving the sheet falling to the ground! Whatever it was, it was on its way...

Fire-Guard growled as he approached Spy. "Umm... You look thirsty, pal. Want some coffee? I could go get some..." he stammered. Just then, Guard's voice came through again. "Grrrrr!! Spy, get out of here!! I... can't control...!!" he growled. Firepaw slapped him with his own hand and meowed angrily. "Cut it out! Slapping hurts us both right now! Do I have to suppress you again!?" he threatened. While Spy watched this, Tails crept up behind them intending to try to take them by surprise. However, Guard's tail snapped into him like a whip and knocked him over! "Excuse me, human. Fox boy doesn't know when to quit!" Firepaw said, turning to swing the burning scythe at Tails again. However, he rolled out of the way and got up quickly, tossing some dummy rings at Firepaw while he was busy swinging his scythe in the wrong direction! "Yeow!! What the!?" Firepaw yelped as he flew away from the exploding rings. "Rats... I only had a couple of those with me..." Tails grumbled, flying after him. Firepaw started shooting a jet of flames at Tails from his free hand, not wanting to let him get close again. "You might be strong enough to break that hydrant, but I'll never let you strike me! Meowr!" he said. Tails tried to work his way around, but Firepaw shot a blast from the scythe as well, catching him from two directions and knocking him out of the sky! As Tails tumbled to the ground, Firepaw pointed his scythe down and smirked. "I think this body's a keeper. Heh heh heh..." he sneered. However, at that moment, something came flying their way fast. It resembled an Extreme Gear board. Firepaw glanced at it, but shrugged and raised his scythe to attack Tails. As the board approached, it started to transform, sprouting four legs, a tail, and a familiar canine head with a monitor! The mechanical canine flew between Tails and Fire-Guard and opened a hatch on its back, with a pair of cannons emerging from it! Firepaw stopped short, but soon found his face sprayed with fire extinguisher foam! "MEOWR!! Not funny!! How'd you come back, you dumb mutt!?" he shouted, dropping down to shake the gunk off. Tails got up to greet the robot. "Ha ha! I see the Tails Tracker is functioning perfectly! I'm glad you're here, SPOT Mark 2!" he smiled. SPOT's robotic voice spoke up. "Alert!! Alert!!" it said, glancing at Fire-Guard. His body became cloaked in flames again, and his eyes were glowing just as red. Tails glanced at SPOT. "OK... Convert to hover-scooter mode! Let's get him!" he said.

"Whooo!! Go, Tails!" Spy cheered from behind a car. "Shut up!! I'm gonna kick his nerdy butt!" Firepaw snapped. SPOT started to turn back into an Extreme Gear mode, only this time its tail bent upward and the tip of it opened into handlebars, making it a hover scooter. "This should be safer in a tough spot like this..." Tails said, hopping on and grabbing the handlebars. As they flew into the air, Fire-Guard followed with his scythe at the ready. Tails glanced at SPOT. "Try to interface with Guard's wi-fi while I distract him. See if you can weaken Firepaw's hold on him!" he suggested. "Acknowledged!" SPOT replied with his new voice. Fire-Guard flew at them and swung his scythe wildly, trying to hit Tails, but he swung around the handlebars and kicked him away! "You'll have to do better than that!" he taunted. "Meowr! Hold still!" Firepaw yelled, tossing fireballs at them from his free hand. Tails skillfully dodged them while flying around Guard, sticking close so SPOT could try to get a connection. Fire-Guard tried to duck under them to attack the robot Tails was riding on, but SPOT's head glanced down and displayed a message. "I see you. This is for wrecking my old body!" it read. A laser fired from SPOT's mouth, forcing Firepaw to fly higher and aim for Tails again. "That lousy, stinking... H-hey... What's goin' on... Meowrrrrrrzzzz!?" While Firepaw clumsily fired a flaming beam from the scythe at Tails, Guard's eyes started flickering between red and yellow and their normal, non-glowing state! Guard's own voice started to come out of his mouth again. "GrrrrrrRRRR!! Land us, or I'll crash us myself!" he threatened.

"Impossible!! How did you...?! Gah! I won't lose like this!" Firepaw yelled, flinging flames in several directions that forced Tails to back away and that struck the car Spy was hiding behind, forcing him to flee! "Grrrr!! I will NOT submit to you! Never!" Guard growled. Tails smiled at SPOT. "It's working!" he said. This caught Firepaw's attention. "What!? YOU!!" he snarled, directing his furious, uncontrolled attacks towards Tails even though Guard was making him stumble and tumble in the air! In his haste to dodge, Tails flipped the board and fell, causing him and SPOT to have to fly away in different directions! They landed in separate areas nearby, and SPOT reverted to its normal form. "Rats... Now Firepaw won't let us get close..." Tails groaned. Firepaw laughed as he regained control of Guard. "Dumb fox. Okay, I'll cut my losses and head for Eggman's base now." he said. Tails knew he was out of time, so he had to think fast. "Ummm... SPOT! Try a static pulse!" he shouted. "Attack! Attack!" SPOT said, racing after Fire-Guard while the hatch on its back opened again, this time revealing a sparking weapon that looked to be charging. SPOT shifted into Extreme Gear mode to give chase as Fire-Guard started to fly away, and soon fired an electric burst that, upon striking Guard, knocked him out of the sky and seemed to render him unable to move! Spy peeked out from behind a dumpster and stared. "No... THAT'S what I need... A super-taser." he stammered.

With Guard's robotic parts temporarily overloaded, Tails was able to hook him up to SPOT to have Firepaw purged from his system. What Tails found interesting was that Guard's tail doubled as a plug, and he was able to insert it into an outlet in SPOT's side to do the job quickly, without fear of disconnecting. When the job was done, Tails unplugged Guard and closed the hatch to SPOT's outlet before having SPOT run a diagnostic on himself to make sure Firepaw hadn't hitched a ride. Guard seemed a bit embarrassed by the whole thing. "Grr... Um... Thank you..." he muttered, hardly looking at Tails. Spy was still nearby when he realized something. "Oh, shoot! I should've brought Gunner's coffee over an hour ago! C-can I borrow your scythe, Guard? ...Or your dog, Tails?" he whimpered, "Just to feel secure, y'know?" Guard glanced at Tails and sighed. "Grrr... I would want to repay you for your help, but I fear instead that this incident will only make my boss more suspicious of you..." he said. Tails nodded. "I know. Smashing that hydrant didn't help my case... Could always say you did it. Still... Best I pack up and get outta here. It's too close to Gunner, and if I'm not careful, he'll find an excuse to arrest me, just like Copter." he reasoned. Guard sighed. "Grrr... I'm sorry..." he said. Tails shrugged. "It's all right. At least I know SPOT Mark 2 is working okay. I'm just glad I got him fully uploaded into the new body before..." he murmured, glancing at the remains of the old SPOT. He then walked over to it and picked it up before he and Mark 2 started on the way back to his workshop. "You'll understand if I don't say where I'm moving." he added. Guard nodded. "Understood. Grrr... I can't keep a secret, after all..." he said. Tails smiled at SPOT as they walked along. With an upgraded ally on his side, he'd be better prepared the next time a crisis came his way. "SPOT, you remember where the other Workshop is, right?" he asked. The robo-puppy wagged its tail and barked playfully. "Home. The Mystic Ruins." its monitor read. Tails nodded. "Good to know you're in there, old pal." he said.

Dr. Eggman awoke from a nap suddenly as one of the screens at his control room flickered on. A certain red furred, saber-toothed cat with razor sharp claws and a spike-lined tail appeared onscreen. "Firepaw... Can't you see I'm busy! Why are you back without the robo-dog?! At least tell me you got into Tails's computer or SOMETHING!?" he growled groggily. Firepaw had escaped SPOT by heading through a wi-fi access point in a nearby house and going through the internet. Their firewalls were no match for him. Now, with Eggman glaring at him, he twiddled his claws and chuckled awkwardly. "Well, you see, sir, meowr... I had managed to get into this cool android, but Tails followed me and... well, meowr... I uh... s-siiiiir...?" he rambled, seeing Eggman start to grind his teeth as his frustration built up more and more. "YOU'RE USELESS!!! I thought maybe I could sabotage Sonic so he'd be less of a pain

the next time I ran into him! Well, I guess THAT won't be happening! Why don't you cool off for a while in the Recycling Bin and think about how you fouled this up!!" he snarled, clicking his mouse and sending Firepaw screeching off-screen. "MEEEEEOOOOOWWWWRRRRR!!! I WANT MY MOMMYYYYYY!!!" he cried. "Shut up you big baby. I'll let you back out... just before I need to delete something." Eggman grumbled, "Ohh... I hate that fox boy!" he groaned.

After Spy reported on the situation, and Guard shared his own report on what had happened, it became painfully clear that steps had to be taken to ensure that such a thing never happened again. So, Guard found himself strapped to a medical table, despite his protests. "Grrrr!! Wait! Don't I get any say in this!? Isn't this dangerous!?" he growled, struggling against the straps in vain. The physician, Dr. Ivan Nammad, slowly approached him with a syringe. "Now, now... It will neither, uh, be dangerous nor hurt once you're, uh, sedated. Just bite your lip and think of, uh... kittens." he said, making Guard glare at him. "Do you know why I'm here?" he growled. Dr. Nammad injected him with the syringe and set it down, picking up a scalpel. "Yes... You need a, uh, antiviral update. So I need to install a, uh, firewall in your, uh, brain. And a 'waterwall,' just to catch that Eggman off, uh, guard." he chuckled, "Never thought I'd say that." Guard started to struggle again, but the sedative was starting to take effect, and he was getting drowsy. "Take it, uh, easy, fella. It's only some harmless, uh, brain surgery and, uh, computer programming... Relax and it'll be over, uh... soon...." Guard heard him say as he drifted off to dreamland...

Episode End!

5 - Kosmo's Dawn

GeneX - The Series
Episode 5 - Kosmo's Dawn

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Kosmo the Morph was a creature created by Bucky the Rat. Known as Experiment 3, he was the most powerful of all the creatures Bucky created, a shapeshifter. Unfortunately, for some reason or other, he came to despise beings not created as he was. His anger made him appear dangerous, so Bucky had him sealed away in suspended animation, where he could only grow more and more resentful in his sleep. One night, he was awakened, and his rage led him to threaten the world with the power of fake Master Emeralds that were nearby. However, he was stopped by the efforts of Super Tails and Super Copter, and they all landed on the roof of Shadow Arc, the lab where he was created.

"N-no... How can it be... How could you... beat me?" Kosmo cried out in despair. Tails couldn't help pitying him. "Kosmo... There's no reason for all the hate you have for us." he said. Kosmo looked away from him. "I can't... stay here..." he whispered, morphing into his gargoyle form, "Farewell, Copter... And... Tails the Fox..." Kosmo hurled himself off the roof and flew into the dark, vanishing from sight. "Kosmo!" Tails shouted, to no avail. "I guess he needs to find his own place in the world..." Copter suggested.

As the dawn is breaking, Kosmo flees into the jungle. He attempts to make sense of how he could be defeated, and what he should do now.

Now, on to the episode!

Sergeant Gunner wasn't about to let himself be made a complete fool of by Kosmo the Morph. As dawn was breaking after the defeat of Kosmo's dragon form, Gunner did not wish to waste any time. "Guard! You have a long-range communication device in that head of yours, don't you?" he grunted as he paced back and forth, waiting for the Mystic Ruins train station to open. "Grrrr... You know that I do, sir." Guard grumbled. "Stand straight! What are you, sleepy!?" Gunner yawned, quite tired himself, "Put in a call to Death Row. Get me Corporal Drol!" he ordered. Guard nodded, and in a moment, a light shot from his android eyes, displaying a hologram of a blue haired man in a GUN uniform, wearing a cape. He had a noble bearing about him. "What's this? Who's there? How did you get this number??" Drol questioned. "It's ME, Drol! Pay no attention to the Gargoyle. I need troops dispatched to the Mystic Ruins jungle, emergency response speed! The creature that attacked Station Square is still here! I want it buried! Send Hot Shots or Flying Dogs or something!" he shouted. Drol's hologram glanced at him. "Are you sure that's wise, Sergeant? Already, yesterday, we've lost Techno Sonic, Diablotron, the Meta-Mammoth, dozens of androids and mechs, and a GUN Warship. Might it not be more... prudent, to consolidate our forces and gird ourselves for this creature's next attack?" he suggested. Spy, who was still nearby, nodded. "I like the way you think!" he said. Gunner sighed. "You might be right, Corporal.

But I don't WANT that freak to get the chance for another attack! I want him stopped here and now! I want this nightmare finished!" he snarled. Drol's hologram nodded. "You do make a compelling point... Reinforcements are on the way!" he said before the hologram vanished. Spy scratched his head. "How do we keep getting reinforcements after wrecking all that stuff??" he wondered. Gunner shrugged. "I outrank Drol." he muttered.

Kosmo the Morph stumbled down into the trees. He crashed into a thicket of bushes, shifting into his normal form on the way down. He was a furry purple creature, with a tan muzzle, wearing red gloves and turquoise shoes. Between his fox-like ears, four spiky hairs stuck out in a row. He had a long, slim tail, and his most notable feature was his glowing yellow eyes, with black pupils. He thrashed in the bushes, frustrated. "How... could... I... LOSE!?! First Bucky tricks me into that cage, then those little dweebs make a monkey outta me!!" he groaned, falling out of the bushes and shifting into the form of an ape. "Whooop!! Well... I thought of it..." he sighed, lumbering off. He started to climb a tree, morphing back to normal as he neared the top and resting on a branch. "...I guess power isn't everything... So what the heck do I do now?" he wondered. "That's a good question." Kosmo glanced down and saw Shadow the Hedgehog, who was staring up at him from the ground. "What do YOU want?" Kosmo growled. Shadow crossed his arms. "Nothing. I was just wandering the jungle. Good morning." he said, starting to walk away. Kosmo hung upside down on the branch from his tail, watching Shadow. "That's it? You're just gonna walk away?" he wondered. Shadow stopped in his tracks. "Hmmm... What do you think, Maria?" he whispered. Kosmo scratched his head and dropped to the ground, turning his arms into wings to slow his descent and enable him to land on his feet. Shadow turned to face him. "I know what it's like, Kosmo. Feeling like the whole world is against you." he said somberly. Kosmo scoffed. "Sure. That's why you jumped at the chance to fight me with that other hedgehog... Sonic." he growled. Shadow smirked at him. "Are you still looking to pick a fight, Kosmo? You took a beating from two super forms. Even though it was Tails and Copter instead of me and Sonic, I think you're still in no condition to fight. For once, why don't you try calming down." he suggested. Kosmo snarled and morphed into a form resembling Vector, attempting to grab Shadow with the crocodile form's powerful jaws! However, Shadow simply sidestepped him and did a spin, kicking him to the ground swiftly and easily! "You're tired, Kosmo! Quit this nonsense, you'll just embarrass yourself." he said, while Kosmo growled in frustration.

A large, flying assault vehicle was searching through the jungle. It resembled a large Flying Dog mech, but more heavily armed. R-6/A was written on its side, and it had a red and yellow color scheme. "Firefly to HQ, we've made it to the jungle." said the pilot. The Firefly was accompanied by several Flying Dog mechs. GUN was serious about stopping Kosmo now, before he could try anything again. "Beginning thermal scan of the area. Searching for any abnormal heat signatures. Chances are, that'll be the experiment!" the pilot stated. Firefly was specially chosen for this mission, due to its heat related technologies. It would be able to detect Kosmo based on his body heat, no matter what form he decided to take, in theory at least. The scanner picked up a heat signature from a rather large body right away. "Get ready, men! We may have already found it!" The Flying Dogs followed Firefly as it sped through the jungle, anxious to catch the morph before it could change forms. The mechs dodged and weaved between the trees, until they neared a clearing. A large, purple creature was sitting by a stream near a small shack. A small frog was resting beside it. Firefly's pilot caught a glimpse of the creature's eyes, which seemed to glimmer yellow in the dim light. "That's gotta be it! Purple and yellow eyed! And it's armed!" he said, seeing that the creature was holding... something. "Take him!" the pilot ordered. As the mechs charged into the clearing, Big the Cat shouted with alarm, raising his fishing rod over his head in a panic, which had a small fish hooked to it! Froggy jumped behind him fearfully as well. "Okay, okay!! I'll

get my fishing license renewed!! Soorry!!" Big shouted frantically, while the Flying Dog pilots started laughing at Firefly's pilot. "Grrrr... It was an honest mistake!!" he growled, "Um... As you were, citizen..." he mumbled.

Kosmo was walking through the jungle now, rubbing his elbow while Shadow walked beside him. "Since we've established you have the advantage here... Why don't you finish me? Aren't you worried what'll happen when my strength returns?" Kosmo grunted. Shadow frowned. "Maria wouldn't want me to..." he muttered. Kosmo glanced at him, blinking curiously. "Huh? Mar...ia? Why would she care if I live...?" he asked. Shadow stopped walking and looked up, possibly looking for where he thought the ARK was orbiting. "She felt... that everyone deserved a chance to be happy... She would have felt the same about you, were she..." his voice trailed off, not wanting to revisit the horror of her death yet again. Kosmo glanced at him. "...Happy..." he mumbled, his glowing eyes tearing up a little, "Look at me, Shadow! LOOK AT ME! I'm the only one of my kind! All others hate and fear me! How... how could I ever be happy in this world!? I will always be alone... Even if I had succeeded in my plan... I would have been alone..." he shouted, starting to run away from Shadow. The black hedgehog watched him go and then glanced up at "the ARK" again. "How am I doing, Maria?" he whispered before chasing after Kosmo. The morph had shifted into hedgehog form, trying to mimic Sonic's speed, but he was still weak, and he stumbled over a tree root, curling into a ball and rolling towards the ruins of the echidna pyramid at the center of the jungle. Shadow quickly caught up with him and crossed his arms as Kosmo dizzily sat up. "You don't have to worry... I won't bother trying to destroy everyone again... What's the point? They'll just unite against me and destroy me... They might do that anyway. My only chance is to disappear... Find a place to hide out alone..." Kosmo grunted. Shadow shook his head. "That's a coward's solution. You didn't strike me as a coward before." he scoffed. Kosmo got up and growled at Shadow. "Why are you following me!? What do you want from me!?" he snapped. "I didn't find my way to Shadow Arc just to find you and then watch you vanish into the shadows like a craven! You're the first life form I've seen that might almost be my equal... You have to have been meant for more than that!" Shadow shouted. Kosmo's eyes narrowed. "What...? Just who are you...?" he asked. Shadow turned away from him. "No, Kosmo... Who are YOU?" he said, walking away. Kosmo took a step after him, but didn't follow. "...Who am I...? What's that supposed to mean...?" he mumbled.

Sitting on a ledge of the echidna pyramid, Kosmo pondered what had happened since he'd been freed from his containment cell. Initially, all he could think about was getting revenge. "That prison... It wasn't fair... So, I was a bit tempermental. So, my powers make me stronger than pretty much everybody. That meant I had to be... put to sleep?" he mumbled, shifting his hand into various claws, wings and hooves to keep occupied. "I was so angry... But... was that me? Was that who I am? This... angry guy, who would rather kill everyone than... anything else? I can't remember... I don't think that crossed my mind before I got trapped in the cell. Maybe right before then? Was that why I was put in the cell? Why don't I remember!?" he groaned. Suddenly, he heard some rustling in the foliage below. He glanced down, morphing his hand back to normal. "...Shadow?" he muttered. In a moment, Big the Cat burst into the clearing, with Froggy clinging to his head! "Gwaaaaa! This place hasn't been so crazy since that earthquake a few hours ago..." he mumbled. Kosmo scratched his head. "Earthquake? Hm... He must've felt Shadow Arcangel take off." he muttered. Just then, Firefly burst out of the trees, followed by several Flying Dogs! "Arrrgh! That cat again!! Stop moving around, you!" Firefly's pilot yelled. "Sir! Up there, on the pyramid!" shouted one of the Flying Dog pilots. Kosmo stood up and gulped. "Crud... I knew they'd come to destroy me! I should have moved faster to find a hideaway!" he growled. "Experiment 3! In the name of GUN, we have orders to take you into custody! If you do not give yourself up, we are authorized to use lethal force to bring you in! Do you understand?" Firefly's pilot warned. Kosmo morphed into

gargoyle form and sneered at them. "You'll have to catch me, first!" he shouted, leaping into the air and flying around to the rear of the pyramid! "Pursue the fugitive!" Firefly's pilot shouted. "We know that!!" the other pilot grumbled as they all scrambled after him. Big watched them fly off and sighed with relief. "At least they're off my back now... I wanna take a nap after that..." he groaned.

Kosmo was still weak, and he couldn't fly for long. He broke into a glide and headed for the nearby trees, but the GUN attack vehicles quickly caught up with him! The Flying Dogs began to circle around and cut off his escape, while Firefly moved in to attack him directly. "You had your chance! Now you'll have to deal with GUN's ultimate combat mech!" the pilot shouted. The nearby pilots snickered. "Yeah, only because Diablotron, Meta-Mammoth and Techno Sonic were all wrecked! Don't get too used to that title!" someone said. "You're all just jealous!" Firefly's pilot yelled. Kosmo was sneaking away while the pilots were distracted, and Firefly's pilot finally noticed. "Hey! I'm not done with you! Take this!" he shouted, firing missiles at Kosmo hastily. "That doesn't look friendly..." Kosmo mumbled, having never actually faced missiles before. He morphed into the more armored form of Metal Sonic, speeding away from the missiles quickly as they exploded around the area! "Whoa! He transformed! Did you all see that!?" Firefly's pilot gasped. "Way to go, Mr. Ultimate." one of the other pilots said mockingly as they started pursuing Kosmo's Metal Sonic form. All of the GUN vehicles were firing missiles at him now, and the explosions heating up his armor. "Think, think... What can I do in this state..." Kosmo grunted, unsure of how to get out of this. Suddenly, as some missiles came flying towards him, several energy spears flew through the air and blew them up before they could reach him! "Hey! What happened to our missiles!?" Firefly's pilot stammered. Just then, Shadow came running alongside Kosmo. "Having problems?" he asked. Firefly's pilot stared in bewilderment for a moment before calling out to Shadow. "H-hey! That's not Sonic, Shadow! It's not even Metal Sonic! It's a dangerous... creature! Please stand aside!" he shouted. Kosmo glanced at Shadow. "They started it! They came after me!" he insisted. Shadow stared at him. "And if you hadn't tried to destroy the world... do you really think they'd give you a second thought?" he said. Kosmo was panting, even though he was in a robotic form. "Wh-what are you saying? You think I started it...?" Firefly was gaining on them. It was very fast for its size. Kosmo morphed into his normal form, realizing he couldn't outrun the machines. "Fine... I brought this on myself. So what do you want me to do? Let them execute me?" he growled. Shadow stopped and crossed his arms. "Hmph... No... Right now, we'll have to fight our way out." he said.

Firefly was shooting off a pair of flamethrowers as it approached them, but Shadow jumped out of the way and hurled Chaos Spears at the mech, targeting its missile launchers. Kosmo backed away from the flamethrowers and tried to think of what he could do. "You want me to fight it?" he mumbled. "You destroyed the Meta-Mammoth. You must be able to do something, tired or not." Shadow said. Kosmo glanced at him. "Wait... That's brilliant. Wasn't the Meta-Mammoth fireproof?" he asked. Shadow glanced at Kosmo as he backed away from Firefly's flamethrowers. "What exactly are you getting at...? Kosmo??" Suddenly, Kosmo's body began to glow brightly, and he began to expand and change, his glowing silhouette taking the form of a certain machine. When the light faded, Kosmo resembled a purple version of the Meta-Mammoth, only a bit smaller and possessing glowing yellow "visual sensors." Shadow stared in disbelief. "Do you really have the energy to maintain that form?" he asked. Kosmo stepped in front of Shadow and started blocking the flames being shot from Firefly, his fireproof robotic hide doing its job perfectly. "I can frustrate the heck out of him for a bit... You think of something now!" Kosmo shouted. "Can you fire a weapon in that form? One good shot might be all you need." Shadow said. "I never saw its weapon systems in action." Kosmo pointed out. Shadow rolled his eyes. "I hope that form can withstand missiles, 'cuz the other mechs will be here any moment!!" he shouted, hurrying around Kosmo while the Firefly was distracted. He fired some Chaos Spears directly at the Firefly, but

they simply bounced off its armor. "Hmm... It's a tough one." Shadow mused. Kosmo grunted. "Getting... hot... Better improvise..." he said, opening the tips of the Meta-Mammoth form's tusks that served as weapons of some sort, and in his improvisation, he fired jolts of lightning similar to what he'd used while in Bucky's form when he fought Copter on Shadow Arcangel! The attack seemed to mess with the Firefly's electrical systems for a moment, making its steering malfunction and causing it to spin out! Kosmo and Shadow took advantage of this chance, and Kosmo morphed back to his normal form so they could escape into the jungle!

They took cover in a nearby cave, where Kosmo sat down on a strange sort of structure that seemed to be left by the ancient echidna tribe that used to live in the area. It looked like a basin or something similar that had been filled with dirt over the years, and Kosmo just sat on the dirt. Shadow leaned against the wall of the cave, his arms crossed and eyes shut, looking contemplative. "Why... did you come back...?" Kosmo asked after a bit. "I heard explosions." Shadow said without opening his eyes. "You know what I mean." Kosmo said. Shadow sighed. "You remind me of myself, all right? Your story is almost mine... Only it lacks Maria. I'm trying to decide if that's good or bad..." he said, opening his eyes, "You haven't had to experience... What it's like to lose someone..." Kosmo twirled around some of the dirt with his finger, looking bored. "No kidding... You saying everyone hated you and decided to lock you up?" he mumbled. Shadow rolled his eyes. "Unfortunately, it seems you also don't know what its like to have a friend, either." he groaned. Kosmo slapped his hand across the dirt in frustration. "YES! I know that! I'm fully aware! I'm a freak, and no one will ever like or tolerate me! You don't have to point that out!" he growled. Shadow glanced at him. "And here I thought I was tolerating you right now." he grumbled. Kosmo stared into the dirt he was digging a hole into with his hand, and then blinked at it curiously as he noticed something sparkle. "Hey... what's this?" he muttered, digging a bit deeper until he pulled out something. It appeared to be a small, gold coin. There were designs etched on it similar to the sorts of imagery that could be found in the echidna ruins. Shadow walked over and glanced at it. "It's some sort of old coin... It might have archaeological value, but probably not much. Maybe you should keep it as a lucky charm." he suggested. Kosmo glanced at it. "A... lucky charm?" he muttered. Shadow nodded. "With Sergeant Gunner on your tail, you'll need luck. I don't think he'll stop hunting you." he realized. Kosmo frowned. "Gunner... He set the dogs on me... Suppose rather than take out everyone, I should just focus on eliminating him." he murmured. Shadow wore a slight smile. "Well, everyone needs a hobby. But once you've done that, what's next? What will you do with your life?" Shadow wondered. Kosmo slipped the gold coin into his sock, sighing. "Why do you ask so many tough questions? What's with you?" he grumbled. Shadow chuckled. "Just want to make sure I don't have to fight you again. Come on, Kosmo. Sonic fights for justice. Knuckles fights for his silly duty. Silver fights for the future. I guess you could say I fight for truth. With all your power, Kosmo, what will you fight for?" he asked. Kosmo scratched his head, and Shadow started toward the exit. "Don't answer that now. Let's just try to figure out how we'll get by those GUN agents." he said. Kosmo thought for a moment. "You know... I think I got an idea about that..." he said.

The Firefly searched the jungle for any sign of Kosmo's heat signature, determined not to allow him to make a fool of GUN. The Flying Dogs were searching the jungle as well; there would be no easy way to sneak by. Soon, Firefly picked up a heat signal and hurried toward it. "There's nowhere to hide now, freak! I'm gonna burn you to cinders and take your ashen pelt back to Gunner!" the pilot growled. However, as he approached the heat signature, he yelled in aggravation as he found Big the Cat once again! "Aw, for the love of!! Stop moving all over the jungle!! Geez, you're fast for a fatsu!" he yelled. "Gee, sorry mister GUN agent, sir. I'll be more careful." Big said, recoiling away from Firefly a bit. The pilot groaned a little before flying off, muttering something about overtime not paying enough. Once he

was out of sight, Big snickered a bit and glowed white, transforming into Kosmo! "That went well." he smiled. Shadow emerged nearby using Chaos Control. "Big's eyes are naturally a little yellow... The added glow from your eyes is difficult to pick up on. You could use that disguise to terrible effect." Shadow mused. Kosmo shrugged. "I don't think he has clearance in many useful places. I'll need more useful disguises... And a way to hide those eyes." he said, picking up his gold coin and giving it a flip. "Well, guess I'll see you later, Shadow. But you might not see me." he chuckled, walking off in disguise as Big. Shadow nodded. "Funny... I was going to say the same to you. Chaos Control!" Shadow replied, vanishing using Chaos Control. As Kosmo made his escape from GUN's pursuit, he watched the sun finish rising and smiled. "I'm... free... Thanks, Shadow..." he thought as a new day finally dawned for him.

Episode End!

6 - Spiny the Outlaw

GeneX - The Series

Episode 6 - Spiny the Outlaw

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Experiment 9, Spiny the Porcupine, has spiky blue quills that cause him to be frequently mistaken for a certain famous hedgehog. Everywhere he goes, people constantly mistake him for a hero. He can't stand it. Sonic has a squeaky clean, always the good guy image, and Spiny finds it sickening. He wishes to create his own identity, separate from Sonic's, and he'll do anything short of changing his look to do it! He's the unmistakable, inimitable Spiny the Porcupine! And he'll prove it by becoming the most feared outlaw in the nation!

Now, on to the episode!

Spiny drove down the calm and quiet streets of Central City in the jet black armored vehicle he'd acquired a few weeks ago from some sketchy gargoyles in a less pleasant city. It was early in the morning, and not many people were out and about yet. He stopped at a parking lot by a burger joint and turned to someone sitting in the passenger side seat, a twitchy looking frog who was wearing a black jumpsuit. "Okay, 'Mister Toad'... Let's go over the plan." Spiny murmured. The frog clenched his fists and glared at him. "You KNOW my name! It's Corky! Corky da Frog! Don't be disrespectin' da frog!" he stammered. Spiny rolled his eyes. "Right, 'Croaky.' You got those floor plans memorized? I wanna be out before the human police show up... Just to show that I got the smarts to do it." he said. Corky puffed out his throat angrily. "Croaky!? How'd you like frog tongue in yer eye!?" he threatened. Spiny stared at him. "Uh... Ew." he said, shaking his head. Corky nodded. "Just drive. We'll get in, get out. Everyone will know yer the fastest crook in town..." he said. Spiny slammed the brakes before the truck got far out of the parking space. "FAST!? Let's get one thing straight!! This has NOTHING to do with speed! Smarts... or strength... But NEVER speed! I am SPINY the porcupine! And it's time this world learned it!" he growled, half reaching for the frog's throat. Corky backed away slightly, extending his tongue up to lick a tear away from his eye. "...Dude, you're gross." Spiny grumbled. "Well, you can't pull this job without an accomplice!" Corky reminded him. Spiny shrugged as he drove the armored car on its way. "I'd like to test that..." he muttered.

Their truck soon pulled up to a building that still appeared busy despite the early hour. It was the First Bank of Central City, possibly the busiest bank in the United Federation, barring some in more commercial cities here and there. Spiny grinned as he stared out the window of the truck, but Corky seemed to get even more nervous and twitchy. "Th-the place is packed! I thought we came early to avoid da rush!" he stammered. Spiny snickered. "We picked this bank because it's always busy. I'd like an audience... We came early so the roads would be clear for our getaway." he explained. Corky

shuddered. "All those humans... I hate humans. They're half furry, half... nekkid. It's nasty!" he said, slurping his long tongue over his eyes as though washing the very sight of them away. Spiny stared at him a moment before cracking open the truck's door. "I'll be announcing myself. You get ready to crack the safe." he said. Corky reached beside him and grabbed a ski mask shaped for a frog's head, slipping it on. Spiny rolled his eyes as he did. "Exactly what's the point of that?" he asked. "I don't want my ma to know I'm knockin' off banks with a crazy hedgehog..." he said. Spiny grabbed him by the mask and raised his fist. "That's porcupine!! Now shut up and get moving, 'Mister Toad!'" he snarled. They both exited the truck, Corky hopping alongside Spiny in an acrobatic fashion. "Yes, very discreet." Spiny grumbled. "I'm hopin' ta get you shot before we get there." Corky teased. "Right, because they'll miss you and hit me." Spiny grumbled. They split up as they neared the bank, and Spiny entered the front door, immediately drawing the attention of several adoring Sonic fans who started whispering in excitement, mistaking him for the famous hedgehog, as people normally do. Spiny frowned at this, but waved politely as he glanced around, looking for the security guards. "Hellooo..." he muttered as he spied them out. He then cleared his throat. "May I have your attention, everyone? Blue spikeruped speaking... Let me introduce myself... Because you see, many of you believe I am a certain... hero..." he announced, quickly surrounding himself with Chaos Spears, which he then proceeded to fire at each security guard, systematically knocking each of them out! "...Well, from now on, no one will mix us up! I am Spiny the Porcupine!! And I'm here to rob this bank! Feel free to flee in terror...now!" he sneered.

While crowds in the bank started panicking, a group started to approach the building outside. They were all various species, none of which were human. Most of them were wearing black uniforms, which featured a red star with thirteen points on the front. Leading the group was one who was not wearing a uniform, just a black cape and a gray fedora. He had a sheathed sword attached to his black, gold buckled belt. It was Conan the Raccoon, a treasure hunter turned criminal who had vanished from the grid for some time. Now, he was back, ready to make himself known once again. He reached for his blade's handle as he approached the door to the bank. "Ready yourselves. It seems we're not the first ones here." he said. "Should we try another bank?" a uniformed cat asked. Conan shook his head. "This mission is as much about intimidation as it is about raising capital. Let's show that we will not back down." he declared. He then drew his sword and began pointing in different directions, sending his minions off to different sides of the bank. A female wolf at the back of the crowd remained, watching everything intently with her one good eye, her right eye concealed by long strands of hair.

Spiny was busy showboating, keeping the remaining bank security distracted watching his Chaos Spears shoot around in acrobatic displays before chasing after them! He laughed as those remaining guards frantically tried to anticipate the moves of his controlled Chaos Spears. "You can't outwit me, pigs! I've thought of everything!" he smirked. Just then, Corky hopped on to one of the desks in the back, startling a teller as he jumped over her! "B-b-boss!! I can't get da safe open! It's a real state of da art setup!" he stammered, "...Oooh, is that a mint?" he added, lifting his mask so he could flick his tongue at a bowl of candy, swallowing it wrapper and all. Spiny rolled his eyes. "Do I have to do EVERYTHING???" he grumbled, stomping towards the desk and knocking over a guard with a Chaos Spear as he was slowly standing up. While the two of them went back towards the safe, animals in black uniforms stormed their way into the lobby through the doors and windows! Conan stepped through the door seconds later, but looking around, saw only the few frightened civilians that remained and a bunch of unconscious security guards. "You either worked very fast... Or it was like this when we got in here." Conan mused. "Does this mean I don't get to stab anybody?" said a colorful fox in a very disappointed tone. The female wolf stepped past Conan and addressed the crowd. "Listen up... All of you... I don't know who got here first, but we're taking this human currency. And we will use it to fund our noble

mission... to end humanity's destructive reign over our planet! Fear our name, humans! We are the Covenant of Despair!" she roared. The uniformed animals clapped and cheered at her words. "You tell 'em, Fera!" shouted a random animal in the crowd. Conan stood there with his arms crossed, looking bored. "Troops rallied enough? Can we go now?" he muttered. Fera started towards the door, smirking. "I'll be the lookout. And make no mistake... I'll be watching you, too." she said. "How flattering." Conan replied, marching further into the lobby to look around.

Spiny marched to the safe, finding the bank manager standing in the way. "This bank hasn't been robbed in 200 years and it'll be a cold day in a warm place before I see that streak broken!" he warned. Corky chortled, raising his mask so he could flick his tongue at the manager and slam him against the wall hard! "Looths lipe ooo broth sthomethin' elthe, firsth!" he sneered, his tongue still hanging out. Spiny held his hand to his forehead as he shook his head hopelessly. "A sidekick. I hired a sidekick. I should have hired two people to avoid this situation. Then they'd be minions." he growled, looking at the safe door. "All right, then... Spear Storm!!" He fired a massive barrage of Chaos Spears from his back, assaulting the door with all his might! Corky, not knowing he was going to do that, was blasted aside by a few stray spears at the start of the attack! "Yeowch!! What's da big idea!?" he yelled. The spears aimed for the joints in the safe, bashing them until they weakened and were smashed! Spiny backed away as the safe crashed open, and Corky stared inside, jumping up and down excitedly. "Ooooooh, who needs smarts when you can just blast down da door, eh?" he chuckled. Spiny scowled at him. "Finally make yourself useful and start loading the loot onto the truck!" he ordered. "Huh? I thought you was gonna do it..." Corky muttered. "Well, change of plans. I did everything so far! You do something!" he snapped, stomping off. Corky stared at him, baring his creepily sharp teeth. "That's not true, I took out dat dude... Ya putz." he said, slurping his eye in frustration.

While Spiny was heading off to check that the route to the truck was still secure, he quickly ran into Conan! "Hm? Why are you out of uniform?" Conan said at first. Spiny backed away and struck a defensive pose. "I am NOT Soni-- wait... uniform?? That's a new one." he said. Conan glared at him. "You're not with the Covenant of Despair... Who are you!?" he asked suspiciously. "No one... I'm just here to make a withdrawal." Spiny said slyly. A crash was heard behind him, and they looked back to see Corky stumbling around, hurriedly grabbing stacks of money as they went flying all over the place! Conan rolled his eyes as Spiny shook his head. "You're the ones who got here before us! Sorry, simply put, we have you outnumbered. You're not getting out with that money." Conan said bluntly. Corky glanced at them nervously. "Wat?! We prepared for cops, not da mob! Let's bail, man!" he yelled. Spiny shot a Chaos Spear in Corky's direction. "Load the money ON THE TRUCK! I'll handle this!" he growled. As Corky hopped away frantically, his eyes darted all around. "I gotta get outta dis gig..." he whimpered. Conan drew his sword as Spiny turned to face him. "Well, well... Someone who can use the power of the Chaos Spear! Then let me introduce my blade... the Chaos Sword!" he said, pointing it at Spiny and firing a Chaos Spear from that blade at him! Spiny tumbled back a bit, mostly from the surprise, and growled at Conan. "You think that's funny, do you? Then you'll think this is hysterical!" he snarled.

While Corky was looking for a way out, he found himself surrounded by animals in black uniforms! "Yipe! You'll never take me alive, mafia!" he yelled, hopping around as they tried to grab him, only to be knocked over by a swift tongue lashing! "Uh huh huh!! Ake pthat!" he laughed with his tongue sticking out. Then, he heard someone chuckle "Hee hee!" behind him in a psychotic tone. Spinning around, he saw the colorful fox, mimicking how he was hopping. "You're neat, froggy! I'm tryin' to decide if I should kill you... Or slice your tongue! Or poke your eyes...with my knife! Or..." Corky's face turned white while the fox was talking, and he dropped to his knees. "No, no don't!! I don't even LIKE Spiny!! Can't we work

somehin' out? Animal ta animal??" he begged. The fox stifled a chuckle. "Well... We could go see what Fera says..." he said.

Conan and Spiny tumbled back to the entrance of the bank, locked in an all out brawl! However, Conan soon threw Spiny away from him. "Off me, you brute! I see you have no sense of humor, despite your appearance. Very well, I'll just have to skewer you from..." before Conan could finish speaking, Spiny started hurling spears at him. "Shut up! The long-winded monologue is MY thing! And I got here first! I'm robbing this bank! I'm going to prove that I'M a worthy villain, and NOT a stinkin' HERO!" he yelled, hurling spears as he spoke so as not to be interrupted. However, Conan simply started parrying the spears with his sword. Being a blade of chaos, it could not be damaged by it. "Um... Mister villain? Is this your entire plan?" Conan said. Spiny looked, and realized Conan was getting closer to him. "What? Oh, fine..." Spiny shot a Chaos Spear and controlled its flight path, surprising Conan, but only briefly. He still managed to turn around and smack it with his sword, but the distraction gave Spiny an opening. "Now I got you..." he muttered. However, before he could attack, he felt himself slapped across the face with a wet object! "Consider dis my resignation, ya putz!" Corky had smacked him with his tongue! Spiny shook his head and looked around. The Covenant of Despair was surrounding him, and he was on his own. "Ready to surrender?" Conan asked. Spiny looked all around, then shook his head. "NEVER!!" He built up as much Chaos energy as he could as quickly as he could, as the Covenant of Despair came at him! "SPEAR STORM!!!" He fired a massive hurricane of spears erupting from his back, and soaring all around the room, striking away the uniformed goons and Corky before coming after Conan! "No you don't!" Conan started spinning his sword to block the incoming spears, moving it as fast as he could to keep each one away from him! It was an intense moment, and when the dust settled, the covenant was quite battered, and both Spiny and Conan were exhausted. Panting, Conan kept his sword clutched until Fera entered the room. "I think we got the message across... Let's go." she said. Conan then sheathed his sword and picked up his hat, which had been knocked off during the fighting. "Stay out of my way in the future..." he grumbled.

As the Covenant of Despair fled the scene, Conan slowly looked around and considered trying to grab the money himself. However, the few remaining conscious humans in the area started to crowd him! "He did it! Hooray!!" they cheered. A child went up to him and gave him a hug. "Huh...?? Wha???" Spiny muttered. "Thank you for saving us from those bad guys, Sonic." the youngster said sweetly. Spiny's eyes twitched and his ears drooped. "S-sonic...?" he stammered. "Three cheers for Sonic!!" the crowd roared as they hoisted him up and started to carry him out. Spiny sighed as "Sonic" was smothered with praise for saving the day. "Yup... hooray for Sonic..." he groaned. Not far away, a familiar blue hedgehog raced by and thought he heard people chanting his name. "Huh...? Nah, couldn't be." he muttered, patting his obviously mistaken ears before taking off in the opposite direction.

Episode End!

7 - Lessons of the Past

GeneX - The Series

Episode 7 - The Lessons of the Past

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Many years ago, much of the United Federation was ruled by a number of echidna tribes. The most powerful of these were the Knuckles Clan and the Nocturnus Clan. Unsatisfied with their prosperous lives, each clan sought to overcome the other, and the threat of war between them was ever present. Pachacamac, chief of the Knuckles Clan, seeks the power to defend his people from the Nocturnus Clan tirelessly, leaving the raising of his daughter, Tikal, to his mother. Now retired from duties as chief, the elderly mother of the current chief spends her days tutoring the young princess, and in her free time, attempts to sway her son away from the path to war. But Pachacamac is driven by more than mere duty, and it will not be so easy to turn him from his dark path...

Now, on to the episode!

Tikal sat politely on the floor of her grandmother's hut, waiting to find out what today's lesson would be. The elderly, golden hued echidna was looking over stone tablets on a shelf, thinking. "Hmmm... So remind me, child... What was yesterday's lesson?" she chuckled. Tikal smiled. "It was why the hedgehog curls into a ball." she said, "And some boring numbers..." Granny pulled a tablet from the shelf and nodded. "Oh? Boring numbers, eh? Very well. I'll try something a bit more interesting today... Have I ever taught you of the various mystical races that exist in our world? The echidna are mighty, yes... But there is a much wider world out there." the elder said. Tikal looked quite curious. "Other races...? But... Father says the echidnas are the strongest force on the planet." she said. Granny nodded. "What does physical strength matter, child? Remember, compassion is far more important. Take these creatures, for instance." Granny showed Tikal a stone tablet depicting several creatures with broad, feathered wings on their backs. Some were cats, some were foxes, and one was a bird. "I don't understand... These are all different species." Tikal observed. Granny nodded. "Once, they were. Now, due to their great compassion and purity, they have been reborn as part of the Divine species. The Divines are magical beings that live in the sky. They occasionally come down to our world to help others, and sometimes, they select creatures here on our world to grow wings and become one of them. If one were to become a Divine, they would gain magic powers, too... However, some say you must have powers in the first place to be selected." she explained. Tikal looked at the tablet in wonder. "Have you ever seen such beings, grandmother?" she asked. Granny shook her head. "No... But I know they are there. For some things, you must have faith, child." she said. "Like how you have faith that father will see the light one day?" Tikal asked. Granny looked a bit taken aback by the question, but nodded. "Yes, child... Now, your numbers..." she said. "Awww..." Tikal whined.

Though she wasn't thrilled with every subject, Tikal loved her grandmother's lessons. She took particular interest in learning about the magical beings told of in the stone tablets she had collected. "The dragons are a mighty, greedy race, building fortresses and hoarding treasures in their dark strongholds." Granny said during one lesson, showing Tikal an image of fearsome winged beasts whose breath held the powers of the various elements, such as fire and ice. "What sort of treasure?" Tikal wondered, eyes filled with curiosity. Granny chuckled. "Well, none know for sure. Some say it is actually the dragons' own immense knowledge that is the true treasure. For it is believed that they know ways to wield the power of the Chaos Emeralds that no others know of. Yet even the dragons dare not take the emeralds, they know they do not belong to them." the elderly echidna said. Tikal looked thoughtful. "Then... who?" she asked, unaware that her father had come to the door, and was observing with a look of disapproval. Granny saw him and frowned. "That's... a lesson for another day. Run along, child." Tikal nodded, hurrying outside to play, though stopping suddenly when she found her father. "Oh! Hi, Daddy!" she giggled. Pachacamac softened his expression a little when she spoke to him. "Go outside, little one. I have grown-up matters to speak of." he said. "Oh... Okay." Tikal said quietly. As she reached the door, however, she remained on the other side in order to listen to what was being said. "What ideas are you filling my daughter's head with!?" the chief growled. "Only true things." Granny said simply. "If the seven emeralds become necessary, then they are ours to take! Do not tell her otherwise! I'll not have you turn my own daughter against me!" Pachacamac warned. Granny was silent for a moment, and Tikal heard her father turn to leave, so she got ready to run for it as well, when her grandmother spoke up. "If she turns on you, it will be by your own hand. I promise you that." she said. Pachacamac sighed. "I suppose so. The medicine echidna says you're not long for this world, after all..." Distraught upon hearing this, Tikal ran off with tears in her eyes.

Her grandmother still seemed in good shape, and Tikal's lessons continued, though at her next lesson Tikal was noticeably distracted. Granny was showing her a tablet depicting shape-shifting creatures known as morphs, though even she confessed they might be folklore, since they had only been seen briefly in the past, and never seen again. However, she soon noticed how upset Tikal seemed and questioned her. "What's troubling you, child? You could scarce write your own name when we were practicing your letters." she asked. Tikal looked at her with tears in her eyes. "I heard... that you will be gone soon. Like mother." she whimpered. Granny sighed. "I am sorry, Tikal... I'm old. I would have told you sooner, but I did not wish to burden your young mind..." she said sadly. Tikal hugged her grandmother tightly and sobbed. "I don't want you to go away!!" she cried. "I know, dear. I shall just have to teach you all I can in the time I have." Granny promised. Suddenly, Pachacamac burst into the room! "Nocturnus marauders! Tikal, you must hide in the shelter!" he shouted. Granny stood up defiantly. "Pachacamac, let me speak with them! There must be a way to avoid bloodshed! We mustn't start a war!" she said, though she suddenly burst into a fit of coughing. The chief glared at her. "THEY are the ones calling for war! I must protect my people! And if they need a demonstration of our might, then we'll kill all who cross our borders!" he snarled before storming off! "Daddy... Father... He's gone crazy, hasn't he?" Tikal gasped. Granny took Tikal's hand. "Let's get to the shelter..."

To pass time in the shelter, Granny told Tikal of the phoenixes, special birds that could not die. Instead, their bodies would burst into flame upon their death, and they would be reborn from their ashes. Still, they are quite rare despite being unable to die. She also spoke of the gargoyles. "A race that hides in the shadows, the gargoyles are secretive and don't get along with other races. Some say their skin is as stone, others say they are furry like us. They often have wings and can fly." she said. Tikal nodded. "So, since they hide in the dark, that's why we don't see them? Tell me more, grandmother..." Tikal asked, scared while hiding in the shelter. "Well... I don't want to scare you further, but while we're on the subject

of darkness... There are the Darks. Creatures born from evil, they are shadows brought to life. They tend to have purely malicious intent, and are in a sense, the opposite of Divines." Granny said. "That is scary... Something else, please..." Tikal whimpered. Granny nodded. "Okay... Hmmm... Mirages. Odd looking beings. Some say they don't exist. In point of fact, they can APPEAR not to exist. They can turn invisible, and some say they can walk through walls. They are not to be mistaken for illusions, which actually do not exist, but appear to exist!" she said, "Now, does that confuse you?" Both of them chuckled a bit, feeling a bit more at ease now.

Eventually, some soldiers came for them and said that the marauders had been driven off. Tikal hurried out, but as she did, she noticed her grandmother fall over! "G-grandmother!!" Several echidnas rushed over to help her, but Pachacamac, who was standing nearby, just stood with crossed arms and a vacant expression, as though he didn't care. Tikal pulled at his arm. "Father! Help her!" she begged. "They'll take her to her hut. I'm sorry, Tikal, but your grandmother will pass within a few moons, and there is naught I or anyone can do about it!" he said coldly. Tikal watched helplessly as her grandmother was carried off, not sure what to do.

When it was time for her next lesson, she visited her grandmother's bedside instead of keeping her appointment with the new teacher her father had swiftly found for her. The medicine echidna was busy chanting over her, but they all knew that that wouldn't do any good. Granny beckoned her over to her. "Tikal... I need to tell you something." she said. "What is it?" Tikal asked. "I'm going to be gone... You must listen to this, and never, ever forget it..." Granny said seriously. Tikal nodded with tears in her eyes. "Yes, grandmother..." she said. Granny coughed, then began: "The servers... are the seven Chaos. Chaos is power. Power is enriched by the heart. The controller serves to unify the Chaos... That's it... Do you need me to repeat it? Write it down if you must. You cannot forget it..." she said. Tikal stared at her in shock. "But... what does it mean?" she asked. Unfortunately, her grandmother had grown very weak, and fell asleep, so she was forced to leave.

Stricken with grief and confusion, Tikal wasn't sure what to do. She saw her father, moving about with war on his mind, and it seemed his plans would go unopposed now. Granny was the only one willing to stand up to the chief. Tikal couldn't let her die. So what could she do? She thought over everything she'd learned. Something HAD to be useful! Then she remembered the Divines. Magical creatures! Surely they could make miracles happen! "But I'll never find a creature like that here in the city... I need to sneak away..." Tikal thought. So, she started to look for a way out of the city she knew. With the echidnas so busy readying for war, no one really seemed to notice what she was up to, anyway!

She rushed out of the city, running as fast as her legs would carry her into the jungle. Tears started to form in her eyes as she ran, clouding her vision, but she didn't care. Her grandmother was dying. Without a miracle, there was nothing she could do about it. She tripped and fell, and started sobbing in the soft pile of leaves where she landed. As she cried, however, a soft voice called out to her. "H-hey... Uh, are you all right?" the voice asked. Tikal rubbed her eyes and sniffled her nose. "What does it matter? I might be okay, but I can't do anything to help anybody..." she whimpered. "Oh..." the voice replied, "Hey... I don't want to be a bother, but... c-could you help me down from here?" Tikal stopped crying and looked up with alarm. Looking around, she spotted a winged creature tangled up in some tree branches! Its wing appeared to have been bent a little, and seemed injured. Its body was a mix of fur and feathers, its feet ending in talons, though its arms were quite furry. It had the face of a bird as well, and indeed, broad wings, much like the Divines! Its fur was a golden hue, while its feathers were white. Tikal gasped upon seeing him. "You... you're a Divine!" she said. The creature whimpered from his

entanglement in the trees. "How's that? Please, my wing hurts!" he groaned. Tikal hurriedly climbed the tree, and carefully pulled the branches apart. "Easy... easy...! Whaaaaa!" The creature stumbled out of the tree and landed on his tail, but still shakily stood up afterward. "Oh... I'm sorry! Are you all right?" Tikal asked. "Y-yeah... Thank you. My name's Icarus. I kinda had a crash landing and hurt myself there. I was stuck for more than a day! Boy am I hungry..." he sighed, turning to leave. Tikal didn't want him to rush off quite so fast, though. "Wait! Come back to my city! I can find you some food! And... maybe you could help me?" she asked. Icarus shuddered. "The echidna city?! Sorry, no offense, but you guys scare me when you're in a group." he said, "You're all preparing to start the war to end all wars... or something." he shivered. Tikal scratched her head. "Wow, he's a cowardly Divine..." she muttered, "Then I'll help you find food out here, then! Please... My grandmother is dying..." she begged, bowing down on her knees before him. "Wha? What are you doing?" Icarus stammered. "You're my only hope..." Tikal pleaded, "You must help me..." Icarus blushed. "Wow... No one's ever thought of me as... helpful before." he mumbled, "All right, deal. You help me find food, and I'll go with you, Miss..." he said, holding out his hand to help her up. "I'm Tikal." she said, taking his hand and smiling.

They roamed deep into the jungle, and as they did, Icarus was moving his injured wing, shaking feathers off it as they went. New feathers were growing in rapidly. "Now that I'm down from there, my wing finally has a chance to heal up." he sighed. "So, where were you off to in such a hurry?" Tikal asked. Icarus shrugged. "Bad doings around here. My people say many disasters await this area. So we must leave for a new land. I was meeting my family..." he said. Tikal raised an eyebrow. "But... Hm... Never mind." She wondered what could drive away the Divines, but she was holding on to her hopes. She couldn't bear to hear more bad news right now. Soon, they found a tree with very large, delicious looking fruit growing on it. "Looks like the sort of fruit we give to Chao, but I'll eat anything right now!" Icarus chuckled, flying up to grab one. Tikal rubbed her chin curiously. "...Chao?" she muttered to herself. While Icarus was busy eating, Tikal noticed a creepy looking building nearby. A black-walled structure, which she recognized from her grandmother's tablets. "A dragon fortress!?" she gasped. Suddenly, she found herself surrounded by dragons! Icarus hid high in the treetops as the hulking, winged lizards grabbed Tikal and dragged her back with them! "Aaaah!! Let me go! What do you want!? Icarus!! HELP!!" she cried. Icarus watched, shaking like a leaf. "She... She's done for!" he gasped.

Tikal soon found herself locked in a dungeon, staring through the bars at a crowned black dragon. "L-let me go! Do you know who I am?!" Tikal said feebly. The black dragon chuckled. "I know exactly who you are. Welcome to the Arcangel, princess! Few have ever set foot in the dragon stronghold and lived... but perhaps your father would make a deal, hm?" he growled, turning to leave. Once she was alone with her single dragon guard, Tikal started to cry. "I've only made things worse... I should have known better than to leave the city..." she sniffed. "Hey, don't cry, sweetie. It's all my fault." Hearing Icarus's voice, Tikal looked around. She saw him peeking through a barred window to the outside. "Icarus! Can you break through those bars?" she asked. He frowned. "Look, Tikal... I'm not magical like you think I am. I'm a griffin. And a pathetic griffin at that. Want to know the truth? I was on my own because... My family ditched me. Messed things up once too often, I guess." he sighed. Tikal couldn't listen to this right now. She WOULDN'T. "Look, I don't care what your family thinks! I'm the princess of my tribe. The dragons holding me means that they're going to ransom my father. I need to get out. I mean it, Icarus. YOU are my ONLY hope! So you have to find a way!" she insisted. Icarus looked unsure. "I... I don't..." he stammered. Tikal reached through the bars and took his hand. "You can. I believe in you." she said. Icarus blushed and backed away a little, thinking. "Well... if you say so... Then I'll give it a try!" he said. He then flapped up and gripped at the bars of the window with his talons. "I've seen other griffins do things like this before!" he said, flapping with all his might. He pulled and pulled, but he just didn't seem

strong enough. Soon, the guard dragon took notice. "Hey! What's going on!? I'll fry that intruder!!" he snarled. "Icarus, look out!" Tikal shouted. The dragon blew a powerful fireball into the cell, which Tikal and Icarus hurried away from! To their surprise, it melted the prison bars! "Huh... Aw, I told 'em we should just EAT the prisoner!!" the guard groaned. Tikal gulped, but then Icarus flew over. "Hop on my back! Quick!" he yelled.

Tikal quickly hopped on to Icarus, but as they flew off, the dragon smashed through the wall in pursuit! "Yikes!! We gotta get outta here!" they both yelled. Icarus flew like lightning, doing his best to evade fire blown at him by the dragon! Tikal watched behind them so she could call out where the dragon was blowing fire. "Left! Okay... Dodge right! Yikes!! Pull up!!" she shouted as Icarus frantically tried his best to follow her direction. Finally, he'd had enough. "All right... Follow me, dragon..." He swooped down into the jungle, heading for the trees. "Icarus? What are you doing??" Tikal gasped. "Pulling up... NOW!" Icarus pulled up right around the trees where he'd been stuck before, and the dragon gasped in surprise as he stumbled into the tangle of branches. "AAAAAARGHH!! This isn't funny!! Get me down! Get me down RIGHT NOW!!" the dragon screamed. "Ha ha! I did it! I actually did it! You were right, Tikal!" Icarus smiled. Tikal hugged him. "Thank you... Now could you do me one last favor? Please take me home..." she sighed tiredly.

When they arrived at the echidna city, Pachacamac was addressing what appeared to be every able-bodied soldier in the city! "What's going on? We better check it out..." Tikal said. Pachacamac looked crazed with rage. "The Nocturnus filth have abducted my daughter! Our own princess, Tikal! This must not stand!" he roared. Tikal gasped. "Uh oh... Father noticed my absence and assumed the Nocturnus were behind it. I'd better do something before war breaks out..." she realized. "Can... Can I help?" Icarus asked. Tikal looked at him and smiled. "Actually..." While they discussed what to do, Pachacamac continued. "Their forces may be great, but ours are mightier! We will overwhelm their numbers with sheer power! Who's with me!!" he shouted, answered with cheers from the echidnas. Just then, Tikal stepped up to her father. "STOP!" she shouted, loud enough for her voice to echo to every echidna ear in the assembly! Pachacamac was taken aback. "T-tikal! S-such a relief to see you have escaped!" he stammered. "The Nocturnus did not capture me! I went forth seeking guidance, and I have returned with a messenger of the Divine!" she announced, bringing gasps and murmurs from the crowd. "It's true! A winged beast!" one echidna said. "The Divine are real!" gasped another. Icarus stepped forward. "The Divine have observed your people, and they are displeased! There is to be no further bloodshed, or you will suffer the consequences! So says I, the messenger of the Divine!" he proclaimed. Pachacamac frowned. "But, you can't seriously..." Before he could say much more, Tikal spoke up. "The messenger of the Divines has spoken! No further bloodshed!" she announced, prompting Icarus to take to the sky in dramatic fashion! As he flew off, the echidna warriors laid down their arms, and Pachacamac wore an enraged scowl. "She thinks I don't know a griffin when I see one? Just like her grandmother..." he grumbled with contempt.

With the drama over, Tikal went with Icarus to visit her grandmother. "You know... I can't heal her..." Icarus said. "I know. Thank you for all you've done anyway." Tikal said, "I just wanted to meet you once more to say goodbye. I'd let you stay with us, all things considered, but now that you've given a 'Divine proclamation,' maybe it's best that you go." Icarus gave her a hug. "I'll be okay. I'll show my family a thing or two, you'll see. Well, goodbye, and good luck." he said before leaving Tikal with her Granny. The old echidna wasn't in good shape, but she smiled. "I've heard such things, dear. You've driven your father up a tree. Good job." she smirked. "It should stop the war." Tikal smiled. Granny shook her head. "He wants it... His greed and desire for power makes him strive towards this war... Greed is terrible.

Once it starts, you always want more." she said. Tikal frowned. "Grandmother, I'm sorry. I wanted to find a Divine to cure you. But it was only a griffin." she said. Granny sighed. "Divines don't do that anyway, child. We all must meet our ends someday. That is the way of it. Tikal... I have one final request of you... Your father will seek what the Chao protect. The Chao... are gentle creatures. They must not be harmed. It would be... disastrous... Remember... The servers... seven... chaos..." And with these final words, Tikal's Grandmother passed away. Tikal wiped a tear from her eye. "The servers are the seven chaos... I remember, grandmother..." she said sadly.

Pachacamac stood outside the door contemplatively. "Fine. No more bloodshed. By our hands! I will instead seek a power that may defeat our enemies with a single swift blow. I'm nothing if I'm not flexible." he muttered. "If it becomes necessary to take the Chaos Emeralds, then I will take them. And if that old crone thinks my daughter or some fake proclamation from a griffin can stop me, then she has died a fool!"

Tragedy would strike the echidnas, but Tikal's spirit would always hold her grandmother's lessons even for centuries beyond. They would never be forgotten.

Episode End!

8 - Another New Beginning

GeneX - The Series

Episode 8 - Another New Beginning

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Pursued by GUN forces after his defeat at the hands of Tails and Copter, Kosmo the Morph was aided in his escape by Shadow the Hedgehog. Seeing a bit of himself in Kosmo, Shadow posed an important question to this wayward soul, "With all your power, Kosmo, what will you fight for?" Pondering this question, Kosmo keeps out of the world's sight, knowing that they would hate and fear him. Of course, it wouldn't be long before the incident at Shadow Arcangel would catch up with him, and the other experiments. As Copter's world seems to be crashing down around him, Kosmo's answer to Shadow's question may be more important than ever...
Now, on to the episode!

"And now, it's time for an important SSTV News Bulletin!" Kosmo was walking by an electronics store with TVs in the window when the news came on. He didn't like always being transformed into another shape, so he was hidden by a brown trench coat instead. "Argh, must they have their merchandise so noisy?" he muttered, hearing Katie the Coyote's report through the glass separating him from the TVs. "Today, the military has released a list of dangerous fugitives that are loose here in the United Federation. The list was compiled by GUN's very own Sergeant Richard Jackson Gunner, who is here with us to provide further details." Katie reported, prompting Kosmo to double back, his yellow eyes becoming glued to one of the flat screens. Sure enough, the hateful face of Gunner soon emerged onscreen. "Him...! That slime..." Kosmo growled. Spy was standing behind Gunner, holding up a sign that read "Hi Mom!" The sergeant cleared his throat and began speaking, each word making Kosmo feel sick. "Citizens of the United Federation. I come today with a dire warning. In the past few weeks, a terrible threat has been unleashed on our great nation. The most sinister manifestation of which was the giant dragon that nearly destroyed Station Square recently." he began. Kosmo growled angrily. "That is taken completely out of context! He forgot to mention how he was the one who drove me so mad!" his snarls fell on deaf ears, and Gunner continued. "Shortly prior to that, similar forces, led by one who escaped military custody, stole the Chaos Emeralds, which were used to release that abomination!" Kosmo snarled louder. "Abomination?? Look who's talking!!" Now people were curiously gathering around him, but Kosmo didn't notice. "These six menaces have been known to work with the notorious Dr. Eggman, and are to be considered a great threat. Therefore, I beseech each and every one of you out there watching; If you happen to see any of the five GeneX Experiments or their sinister creator, call the police immediately. I fear to think what would happen if they were left to accomplish their dark, malicious goals..." As Gunner's speech concluded and the camera returned to Katie, Kosmo couldn't watch anymore. "He... he's not just coming for me. For the other experiments as well?" he stammered.

The people gathered around Kosmo saw his face as he turned from the TV. "Aaaaaugh!! A monster!!" several of them yelled! Kosmo grunted and morphed into a gargoyle, smashing through the window of the store and breaking one of the TVs with a lashing of his powerful whiplike tail! "The monster's at GUN! And he'll pay for this!" Kosmo growled, flying off.

He wanted to head straight for Gunner and tear him limb from limb! But it occurred to Kosmo that he had no idea where he was. So the best thing he could do was find someone who might. He flew around for a little while until he found a police car, which wasn't hard after the fuss he kicked up at the store. He then crashed down onto the hood of the car, forcing the officer to make a sudden stop! Kosmo shifted his hands into large hammers to smash the windshield, then changed them back to pull the scrawny police officer out of his seat! "Yaaaah!! Wh-what do you want!?" the officer yelled. "Tell me where I can find GUN!!" Kosmo yelled back. The officer looked around nervously. "G-gun? You want a gun? You can have mine, just don't shoot me!!" he whimpered. Kosmo groaned. "Not A gun!! GUN, you ninny!! That military bastard is gonna get what's coming to him!!" he growled. The officer shook nervously in Kosmo's grip. "I... I'm just a cop! I dunno nothin' about GUN's secret military bases!!" he stammered. Kosmo morphed his face into a fearsome dragon's to intimidate the officer. "TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW!!!" he roared. "Chaos Spear!" A single bolt of Chaos energy smacked Kosmo's hand, making him drop the officer and spin around. "Huh? Shadow!?" he grunted. The officer scampered back into his car and nervously locked the car doors. Shadow was standing nearby, staring up at Kosmo seriously. "I understand your rage. All too well... But attacking innocent people is not the answer." he said. Kosmo growled. "How else am I gonna find that scumbag!?" he yelled. Shadow shrugged. "Who says you have to? He's just made five other enemies." he pointed out, turning to leave. Before going, he stopped to consider something. "I'm taking a little trip. It'll take me all the way to Soleanna. If you'd like, I'll bring you there... You'd be safe, away from GUN." he offered. Kosmo hopped off the police car. "Thanks but no thanks, Shadow. I'm hiding enough already. Gunner's not going to dictate where I'm allowed to live!" he said. Shadow nodded. "Good answer... See you around." With that, Shadow was on his way.

Kosmo left the freaked out police officer behind, who was busy mumbling about how he should have been a dentist. Unsure of what to do and where to go, he started to wander the city aimlessly, flying swiftly between the buildings, avoiding getting caught more than getting seen. In a short while, he came across the building where the news was filmed, and found a GUN patrol getting ready to leave! Before he could be spotted, he dropped down and ducked behind a dumpster. "Hey... This could actually be where Gunner is RIGHT NOW..." Kosmo realized, "...I've got to get over there!" Glancing around the edge of the dumpster at the GUN patrol, he realized there were too many of them for him to approach without causing a commotion that would put numerous innocents in the city in danger. "Dang, your way is complicated, Shadow... But I guess if I put more innocents in danger, someone else will come after me for that, and I'll just keep having to fight endlessly... Sounds exhausting." he murmured. Thinking it over, he morphed his body to mimic the GUN agents. Only he had purple hair and glowing yellow eyes. "I've seen humans with all sorts of weird hair, so that's no problem... If I can just get ahold of one of those guys' blackened glasses..." He tried morphing his own sunglasses, but they glowed, too! "Yeah... Need real ones..." he grumbled.

He decided to sneak his way to the fancy looking black car at the front of the patrol, avoiding eye contact with the GUN agents as best he could along the way. He had to get past an armored truck first, which seemed to be crawling with guys in black suits or military gear. Kosmo's disguise was a black suit so that he wouldn't get pulled away for any crazy military drills or nonsense like that. All he figured he had to worry about was his eyes getting noticed. He started to creep past the truck, glancing away from the

vehicle and the TV station as much as possible to keep the glow of his eyes out of sight. As he cleared the truck, however, one of the GUN agents walked over and patted him on the back! "Phil!! I didn't know you were here! Where have you been hiding? Did you... ride with the Sarge??" the agent asked. Kosmo froze. He was clearly caught. The agent frowned at his silence, but then chuckled. "Okay, sorry. 'Agent 16!' Some of us are so touchy when we're on duty... I guess old big-nose Gunner could put anyone on edge, huh?" he joked. Then, he stepped in front of Kosmo and saw his eyes. "Holy... You gotta see a doctor about those--" Kosmo promptly punched him in the face hard, careful not to hit his glasses. "I'll take that under advisement!" he grumbled, swiping his sunglasses and covering his glowing eyes. "Agent 16, huh? Guess I have an alias." he mumbled as he hurried to the black car.

As he reached the car, he saw that Sergeant Gunner and Spy were exiting the building and heading for that very car at that moment. They were busily talking about something, and Kosmo stopped to listen. "Those experiments have made a fool of me for the last time. Now we see who has the last laugh!" Gunner sneered. "Well, I'm glad we're putting someone besides me in the line of fire for once, sir." Spy sighed. Gunner nodded. "I thought you'd appreciate that, you sniveling coward..." he said. Spy opened his cell phone, having received a text message. "Well, it's all good news! Those wanted posters are working like a charm! The police are already chasing one of the experiments right here in Station Square!" he smiled. Kosmo jumped in alarm upon hearing this, while Gunner laughed. "It's like I said, Spy! Broaden our search, broaden our manpower, and this'll be over in an instant! Those experiments are finished!" he snarled. Kosmo growled a bit. "The other experiments... Gunner's after them... just like me... He has no right to do this! I will not allow it!" he thought. Yet Gunner was right there. Kosmo could stop him once and for all... couldn't he? "Grrr... There's no telling how much trouble that experiment's in... If I waste time with Gunner, I may be too late to save it... I... I have to choose...!" Kosmo made a fist, glaring at Gunner. He wanted so much to end that miserable man right there... but, "You'll still be around for me to thrash when I'm finished... And I promise you, one day I will finish this!" Kosmo snarled.

In a sudden flash of light, Kosmo had become a falcon, and began flying off at high speed! However, Gunner saw this, and despite his shock, he composed himself quickly and called to his patrol. "E-experiment 3!!! That FREAK is HERE!! Deploy robots NOW!! After him, you incompetent NINNIES!! Someone WILL get fired over this!!" he roared. In moments, Kosmo was being pursued by several bomb-covered hornet robots, which seemed to be specially customized for Gunner's use. They were fast, and they were hurling bombs recklessly in an effort to vaporize Kosmo quickly! As he attempted to avoid the bombs, Kosmo noticed that they were exploding against nearby buildings, causing collateral damage and surely endangering the people. "Where's your regard for lives, GUN?! If you're the good guys, and I'm the bad guy, why is it I'm more concerned with the safety of the people than YOU are!?" he growled, barely dodging another volley of bombs! This time, they blew the side of a building open, and some people were clearly hurt in the blast! One woman even fell out of the building! "What!? No!!" Seeing this, Kosmo swooped down to chase the falling woman. As he did, the robots started to fire lasers at him, another modification made for Gunner's hornets. Kosmo evaded the laser fire as much as he could, but his falcon wings got singed a bit. He quickly caught the falling woman and dropped her off on the ground. "Y-you... saved me...?? Eeeek!! Look out!!" the woman shrieked as lasers came at Kosmo! He hurried out of the way, now growing enraged. "You asked for it, bots... You're all goners..." Kosmo glowed brightly, and anything the robots threw at him seemed to bounce off uselessly as he transformed! With a terrifying roar, Kosmo had once again become the mighty dragon known as the Kosmogon! Without anything to power the transformation, it was smaller, but it was still quite fearsome, and Kosmo quickly eradicated the robots with some explosive blasts from his eyes! "Kosmos might be overkill for you guys, but I think you earned it..." he growled.

Officer Razor the Porcupine had had a heck of a chase, and now he'd cornered Copter the Fox on a bridge. Copter had crashed the motorcycle he'd stolen, barely avoided plummeting to his doom, and simply didn't have any energy left to resist arrest anymore. As Kosmo arrived, Razor was about to slap the cuffs on him. "It's... Experiment 2. Copter. The one who... stopped me..." he gasped, feeling a bit conflicted. However, he smirked and blew a jet of flame to get their attention anyway! When the two of them looked up, Kosmo quickly flew under the bridge! Kosmo heard Razor rushing to look for him at the other side, so he morphed into gargoyle form and slipped back the way he came to sneak up on them. Upon landing on the bridge, he reverted to his normal form. "Run for it, Copter. I'll distract him!" he whispered. Copter nodded, "Just don't hurt anyone. You don't want me to have to kick your rear again!" he said. "Hmph... I'm definitely over that..." Kosmo thought, pointing away from the area. "Just get going! Don't make me reconsider this!" As Copter began to run away, Razor spun around and aimed his gun at him, then at Kosmo once he noticed him. "Freeze, monster!" he growled, having decided Kosmo was the greater threat. Kosmo held out his arms. "All right. Cuff me, officer, I've been baaaaaad..." he said. Razor slowly stepped over to Kosmo and cuffed him, when Kosmo suddenly transformed into a bee! "Whoops, they don't fit me!" Kosmo chuckled, tossing the cuffs aside. "Aw well, better luck next time, constable!" Before Razor could fire a shot, Kosmo flew off over the bridge! Razor tried, but couldn't manage to hit the morph. He was further frustrated by the realization that Copter was long gone now. He tossed his now empty gun to the ground in frustration. "They're gonna love this back at the station..." he muttered. Leaving them behind, Kosmo hurried back to the TV station as fast as dragon wings could carry him, but Gunner was long gone by the time he got there. "Blast! Now that he knows I'm here, Gunner will be out of town, I bet..." he realized. Another realization dawned on him as he hovered in the air dejectedly. "With everyone looking for me... I'll have to find a place to hide. I can't stay here... Too many people could get hurt. I may not care for the people who would call me a freak, but there may be some, like Shadow and Copter... who are not so bad. And they don't deserve to be caught in my battles..."

Kosmo left Station Square. It wasn't hard to exit the city disguised as Agent 16. He traveled around for a time, and eventually came upon a place called Troblusk City. It was a dark place where dark beings could easily hide out and thrive. Even Dr. Eggman was busy constructing a small base there when Kosmo arrived. On the outskirts of the city, he found an old mansion that seemed to be abandoned. The grounds around it were like a dreary swamp with lots of dead and dying trees. It was a very creepy place, but Kosmo felt strangely at ease here. The sign on the door read "Hollow Manor." Kosmo reached into his shoe and pulled out the strange, gold coin he'd found the night he met Shadow and started to flip it in his hand. "How about that. An empty mansion far away from people? Too good to be true. Must have rats or something. Well, at least I'll have company." he said to himself, opening the door and taking his first step inside. "Ah... Home, sweet home... Look all you want, Gunner. I'll be sure to find you first!" he growled, "I'll never be free as long as that human still lives, so though I'm safe for now, I can't rest too long. I must find Gunner, and take revenge for all the experiments!"

Episode End!

9 - Sonic Boom Breaks the 4th Wall

GeneX - The Series

Episode 9 - Sonic Boom Breaks the Fourth Wall

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

Sonic Boom is... Cartoon Network? Who really knows. This is more informative than using their characters directly anyway.

The story thus far:

The year is 2014. The GeneX series is trapped in a time loop due to a hole between "Soleanna Struggle" and "Generations," requiring our cast to work on filling that gap in time with our own lengthy storyline. Suddenly, out of Sega comes word of a new revolution in the Sonic the Hedgehog series! The television show, Sonic Boom, branches out into the games as well, which the GeneX universe has always drawn its inspiration from. As our heroes are hard at work, the news is about to reach them. How will it impact them? And who is going to get fired over this sudden shattering of the fourth wall??
Now, on to the episode!

Sonic the Hedgehog faced down Dr. Eggman's latest creation, the Arachnoegg 3! It was looking more like a crazy scorpion now, but apparently Eggman was tired of thinking up new names for things. "Say your prayers, hedgehog! This time, I'm ready for you!" he sneered, having the robot hold up the capsule containing the once-again kidnapped Amy. "Who do you think I am, Eggman!?! Peach!?! Lemme outta here so I can bash you with my hammer!!" she yelled. Sonic pointed defiantly at Eggman. "If you think that's gonna slow me down, you're dumber than your robot looks!" he said. Eggman stroked his moustache. "Don't think Tails can help, either. I know he's circling around in his little biplane... but let's just say I've got it covered." he grinned. People started to clear the streets of Station Square as Sonic and Eggman got ready to have their battle right in the middle of the city. However, a big screen on the side of a building suddenly came on with a news report. "We have a breaking story from SSTV News! Stop the climactic showdown!!" shouted Katie the Coyote. Sonic and Eggman both glanced up in surprise. "How did the media know about this!?" Eggman stammered. "I'm betting camera-phones." Sonic chuckled. As Katie appeared onscreen, she had a look of distress about her. "We just got word through the grapevine that Sega, in association with various corporations and faceless beurocrats, are rebranding Sonic the Hedgehog." she gulped. Sonic's smirk quickly turned to an indignant look of shock. "This... is not our regular newscast, is it?" he murmured. Katie shook her head. "No, it isn't. As you can tell by the fact that I can hear you. Anyway, the rebrand is called Sonic Boom, and features new designs for the featured characters, and an overall rebooting of the franchise. No definitive word yet on whether or not the original series has a chance of continuing, but those of us who remember Spyro and Rayman 2-3 should prepare for the worst." she reported, "Pictures of the redesigns and additional info are being distributed across GeneX Prime as we speak." With that, the report concluded. Sonic frowned. "I like

Rayman Legends, but Rayman 2 was epic... Wait, AM I GETTING FIRED!?!?" he shouted.

Since the fourth wall had been broken, a temporary truce was called, and Eggman released Amy from the capsule. Tails landed the Tornado nearby, and Knuckles climbed down from a nearby rooftop. "We knew Eggman had tricked you again, Knuckles." Sonic said. Eggman frowned. "You KNEW!? Err, I mean... Oh, get over it, Knuckles. You should know the deal by now." he grumbled. Knuckles shrugged. "Who cares. What's the deal with this reboot!? Does it affect us!? I was getting my own story FINALLY!!" he whined. Tails ran over with a photo. "I got the image of the... uh... new guys. It looks pretty grim." he said. Sonic snatched the photo and looked it over first. Only Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Eggman were present. Not a single soul from the rest of the series was confirmed to make the jump to Sonic Boom. Sonic and his friends had bandages all over their hands and feet for some reason. Sonic's arms were now blue; he had a few new quills and a brown cloth around his neck. "What am I, a mummified cub scout?? What's with the ascot? And why am I all extra hairy!? Who is this nerd!?" Sonic growled. Tails sighed. "I don't see why they didn't just call me to come in. I don't look much different." he said. Tails basically just had a pair of goggles on his head, sort of like...

"I'LL SUE!!!" Copter was stomping over with his own copy of the photo in hand, followed by a nervous-looking Punchy and Rainbow. Copter stomped over to Tails and sneered at him. "What's the big idea ripping me off so you could get on TV!? I had goggles first! Also, that new Tornado looks decidedly EGGMAN-built!" he snarled, pointing out the more modernized plane the new Tails was accompanied with. Tails backed away a step. "I had NOTHING to do with this! I-I might be fired!" he said frantically. Copter glared at him. "It's just awful COINCIDENTAL, is all I'm saying..." he grumbled. Punchy saw Knuckles and snickered a little. "If it isn't Captain America before he got pumped fulla super serum." he joked. Knuckles looked at him quizzically. "What...? Hey, someone lemme see that picture!!" he shouted, grabbing the photo out of Sonic's hands. The new Knuckles was a hulking beast, looking like someone chopped off his old head and put it on a monster's body. Knuckles crumpled the photo, his teeth grating and his eyes filling with fire. "What... the... %#@*!!!" he screamed, forcing censorship into an already controversial episode. Amy grabbed Copter's copy and blushed at Knuckles's look. "Actually, I don't think you look bad..." she said. Knuckles glared at her. "I look like a freak! Why do guys have to look like Frankenstein to 'look' strong, or even BE strong in today's cartoons! I'm a normal-size guy, and I'm as tough as any dumb football player... tougher! Why isn't that MORE impressive!?" he snapped. She shrugged. "You're just not attractive." she said. Then, everyone gathered around and checked out Amy's new look. She was dressed in a tighter, more revealing outfit, and just generally looked more attractive. Even Sonic seemed a bit attracted to the new Amy. "Wow... Now this one I can get behind..." he murmured. Amy looked around at everyone gawking at her replacement and growled. "HEY!! STOP THAT!!" she shouted, swinging her hammer around and knocking everyone away until she was left holding the photo! "She... doesn't even look like me! And why do women have to be depicted all demeaningly all the time!? Whatever happened to modesty!?" she growled. "You have to be the new Rouge since she's apparently fired." Knuckles smirked, only to get smacked by the hammer again.

Eggman sat in the Arachnoegg, looking quite angry. "Replace me, just like I replaced me before, will they?" he growled. "The new Eggman looks better!!" Sonic shouted. "The new Eggman is a joke! He's a Wario-fat slob with an offensive military uniform that has no special functions!" he shouted. Tails scratched his head. "Special functions?" he asked. "Umm... Wait until we reach the Lost World time frame, kiddo." Eggman mumbled, "I'm a genius! This guy's a phony! And I'm not going to take this lying down!!" he said, punching some buttons on the Arachnoegg. "Uhh... What exactly are you gonna do?" Sonic asked. "I'm going to find the two-faced hack in charge and MAKE him give us our jobs back! OR

ELSE!!" he growled. "Yuji Naka??" Knuckles asked. "Who's Yuji Naka?" Eggman asked, having replaced Dr. Robotnik before him, "Look, I'll figure it out. So stay out of my way!" he shouted. Sonic crossed his arms. "I'm not likin' the 'or else' part, Doc. My inner hero is compelling me to stop you!" he warned. "How about your sense of self preservation!? Bye!" Eggman yelled, taking off.

Tails, Knuckles and Amy scrambled aboard the Tornado. Copter called the Hurricane. Sonic wasn't about to let Eggman make matters worse by making their boss SCARED of them. "Bye, Speedy. Good luck with your job and all." Rainbow said. "C'mon, guys, we gotta find out what all this means for US!" Copter said as he, Punchy and Rainbow flew off. Sonic tore through the streets after the Arachnoegg, soon joined by Shadow, who was being followed in the air by Rouge. "Sonic... We've heard." he said. "They can't do this to us, right?" Rouge asked. "Well, they can do it to you. Your game stunk, Shadow." Sonic remarked. "It did NOT! It was just different! Maybe we'll be better off without YOU." Shadow growled. Sonic shrugged. "Well, no one but me would try to save the guy trying to end my existence. Think on that." he said. "Yep, clearly you're too stupid to survive." Rouge remarked. "I'd like to point out that, of the three of us, I'm the only one that's GETTING INTO SONIC BOOM! So don't lecture me." Sonic pointed out. Shadow sighed. "Very well... I'll be around if anyone needs me. Maybe this won't be the last anyone sees of me, who knows?" he said, turning away. Rouge frowned. "I think he's hurt by this more than he lets on... Poor guy." she said, flying off.

The Arachnoegg fired a strange beam from its tail, opening a warp hole through which Eggman started to escape! Sonic jumped through it, followed by the Tornado, and found himself running through an island in the Sol Dimension. "Huh? Why come here...?" he wondered. As he kept up the chase, Blaze the cat emerged beside him. "Sonic! The strange man in the gator suit was here with news! Are we to be fired?" she asked. Sonic shrugged. "Easy come, easy go... I gotta stop Eggman from hurting the ones responsible." he said. Blaze nodded. "I must see Eggman Nega does not try the same. I am deeply saddened that our adventures may be at an end... It feels like they hardly began, to me..." she said. Sonic sighed. "Think how Marine must feel. And Silver, and heck, Shade..." he said. Blaze scratched her head. "Who's Shade?" she asked. "Exactly. This isn't fair. Our world still has WAY too much gas in the tank!" he grumbled.

Eggman fired another beam and created another portal. "THIS time I have it! This time I'll get those little pests!" he growled. When Sonic jumped into the portal, however, he found a real mess. Eggman wasn't the only one using portal technology to try to find the ones responsible for this, and now they arrived at a strange dogfight taking place in the Final Rush areas of Space Colony ARK! Shadow Arcangel was there, shooting it out with a GUN Warship. Now that Eggman was here, he started firing at the GUN Warship, too. "Out of my way, Gunner!! I have great, big fish to fry!" Eggman shouted. Sonic stopped on a platform and stared out in disbelief, glancing over to see Kosmo and Gemini standing nearby. "What's the deal?" he asked. "I was following Gunner." Kosmo said. "Hunting Lost Ones on that ship." Gemini added, "Then Bucky got the idea that he was going to stop your reboot and secure the future of our fanfiction." she said. Sonic looked utterly confused. "Riiight... and GUN?" he asked. "Just listen." Kosmo muttered. Gunner was screaming so loud, he could be heard from inside the warship. "I REFUSE to live in a world where the FURRY FREAKS have completely TAKEN OVER!! Where GUN is no more and only EGGMAN remains!! I'LL KILL YOU ALL, YOU MONSTERS!! You'll all pay for what you've done!!" he roared. The Tornado flew over to the platform Sonic was waiting at, and Tails looked at them worriedly. "This is totally out of hand, Sonic! What do we do?" he asked. "I told you we should've grabbed the Chaos Emeralds before flying into the portals." Knuckles remarked. Amy shrugged. "It says in the info packet that there ARE no Chaos Emeralds in Sonic Boom, so we may as well learn to live

without them." she muttered. Kosmo morphed into a mouse with giant round ears. "Well, I'm gonna see if Disney will give me a job. Later, guys!" he giggled, skipping away. Gemini sighed and shook her head. "I for one have had enough. Last time we broke the fourth wall, our creator fixed it, so let's call him. 2BIT!! Get in here!! ALAKAZAM!!!"

With an impossible flash of lights and special effects that make HD look like poop, 2BIT the fox appeared on the platform before them! "For the record, that only worked because I allowed it!" he said. Sonic rubbed his eyes. "I... vaguely... think I..." he muttered. "No, you don't remember me. 2BIT & GeneX at the Olympic Winter Games never happened. So I decree! Deus ex machina!" 2BIT announced. Gemini crossed her arms. "Then why did I remember you?" she asked. "Because I like you. Now, what's all the hubbub? Oh... yeah, I see. That's really something up close..." 2BIT muttered, gawking at the dogfight going on. Sonic tapped his foot impatiently. "So, you're the boss? Are we fired or not, then!?" he asked. 2BIT cleared his throat. "Lemme stop this fighting first. I know just the thing. Watch this. WRITER POWERS!! ACTIVATE!!" he shouted. Just then, the Biolizard appeared among the ships at about double its usual size, causing Eggman to spin out in his panic and making the others wet themselves as it roared. "That gets a brief cease-fire. Now, we teleport back to Station Square and swiftly close all the portals. ABRA-KA-LAZY-WRITING-DA!!" With a lot of flashy and comedic flourish including some 8-BIT video game sprites and sound effects, the entire cast of GeneX suddenly found themselves assembled at Station Square City Hall, where the mayor handed the key to the city over to 2BIT. "About time if you ask me." he said, teleporting the mayor back to hammerspace from whence he came. "OK, enough troll-esque comedy." he said, approaching the podium. "When was any of this funny?" Gunner asked from the crowd. "Hey, how'd we get here!? It's a MYSTERY!!" Vector shouted. "Stuff it, Vector. If we're fired, we're not detectives anymore!" Espio growled. 2BIT banged a gavel to get everyone's attention. "Order! Order in the cast! I knew letting you know about this would create chaos and anarchy, but I felt you deserved to know. Let me just say: It IS perfectly possible that Sonic Boom could be a mere spin off and not a reboot. But Sega has to know that people still want the old Sonic series, and all that comes with it, which I hope we got some memories of through watching you guys go through your little bouts of desperation." he said. Cream hugged Cheese tightly. "A world without Chao seems sad..." she sniffled. Sonic sighed frustratedly. "No one's gonna go to Sega and ASK for us to come back. Anyways, not enough for Sega to think it worthwhile. I think folks kinda... take us for granted." he said. The crowd all looked a bit crestfallen. 2BIT nodded, but then shrugged. "Your Sega selves may end up fired. Maybe, who knows for sure right now? But I'm the boss here at GeneX. Don't any of you worry. As long as I'm around, no one is getting fired! Our series will be back to its regular schedule without delay!" he announced. A cheer, followed by a collective sigh of relief was heard from the crowd. "HEY! Why didn't you say that in the first place!?" Copter shouted. 2BIT chuckled. "Just to see what you'd do..." he said. Eggman aimed some missiles in 2BIT's direction. "Did you think I'd find it FUNNY!?" he growled. 2BIT snapped his fingers, and Eggman vanished. "Anyone else mad?" he asked. The crowd started to disperse nervously, but Sonic walked over to 2BIT. "Excuse me... What was the point of all this?" he asked. 2BIT looked out over the crowd. The crowd of extreme gear flying birds, fishing cats, experimental life forms, Chao friends, badnik robots, military spies, and fancharacters with a familiar, awesome style. "People need to know... What they might lose..." he said, disappearing in a subtle burst of light. "Don't mind the mess, I'll see it retconned by the next chapter!" his voice called out even after he had vanished.

Back at the ARK, Eggman emerged in a daze, looking around angrily. "Why that smart-alecky fox! Who does he think he--" A loud roar interrupted his thought, and as he turned, he saw the giant Biolizard was still kicking its legs and swimming through space! "Oh...no..." Eggman whimpered, frantically grabbing at

his controls to flee for his life! "Bad Prototype!! Bad! Sit! Down!! Why can't you quit cameoing!?!?
Aaaaaaaugh!!" Eggman wailed.

Note From 2BIT: This Episode Has Been a Non-Canon Commentary about the Negative Possibilities Presented by Sonic Boom.

Episode End!

10 - The Sergeant Strikes

GeneX - The Series

Episode 10 - The Sergeant Strikes

Note: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?
GeneX and related fanchars are (c) 2BIT (TheGreatGator), the author.

The story thus far:

Kosmo had found a home at Hollow Manor. Copter had found a new home in Darkegg Fortress. Yet, even as they were settling in, dark forces started to move. A mysterious being known as the Deathbringer made its presence known to the people of Central City. Even more unsettling, a group known as the Covenant of Despair declared its intentions to take control of the planet away from humankind. All of this following hot on the heels of the Kosmogon incident and the appearance of Solenix in Soleanna, GUN certainly cannot ignore these developments...

Now, on to the episode!

Sergeant Gunner slammed his coffee mug down on his desk in frustration. "Furry FREAKS! They're everywhere, Spy!" he snarled, startling his spy into paying attention. "Uh, yes sir!" he babbled. "Our good friend Dr. Nammad saw his share recently. We're lucky no harm came to him." Gunner grumbled. Spy nodded. "I heard that Deathbringer is even a match for Shadow!" he said. Gunner rolled his eyes. "Get Guard and that bat in here!" he growled. "You mean Rouge?" Spy asked. "How many bats do we have flitting around here??" Gunner groaned as Spy scurried out of his office. The old sergeant sipped his coffee and sighed. "The Covenant of Despair... Can't wait to tell all the sniveling idiots around here 'I told you so.'" he muttered. Soon, Spy escorted Guard and Rouge into the room, and Gunner gave them an unenthusiastic salute. "Agents... Listen well. With this so-called covenant on the loose, war is right around the corner." he began. "You always do have a way with pessimism, sarge." Rouge remarked. "Did I say you could speak!?" Gunner snapped, "As I was saying... Since war is brewing, I don't want those blasted experiments in my hair during those battles! Can you imagine those freaks teamed with a whole army of their kind!? ...Well, Spy?" he asked. Spy shuddered. "We couldn't even handle Experiment 1 and 2 teamed with Eggman." he whimpered. Gunner glared at him. "Very funny! But you see my basic point. We must put an end to those freaks here! Fortunately, we know a couple were in Station Square during my last visit. It is likely that at least one of them stuck around. That morph has plenty of gall. I want you two to go ahead. I'll assemble a team and meet you with backup. Spy, place a call to Corporal Drol!" he ordered. Rouge shrugged. "For a handful of jewels, I'll try just about anything. C'mon, grumpy." she said. "Grrr... It's Guard..." her grumpy companion corrected as he followed her out. Spy looked at Gunner awkwardly. "Doesn't Drol have his own sergeant that he's very busy working for?" he muttered. Gunner grinned widely. "I think he'll be glad to make the trip to work for me..." he said.

It was a cloudy, dreary day in Station Square. Punchy and Rainbow the echidnas were riding the train

back from the Mystic Ruins, dejected over another failure to nab the Master Emerald. "Chin up, One. At least the big gem's in good hands, right?" Rainbow said as they got off the train. "When do we get to the part where you make me feel better, Rainbow?" Punchy groaned as they headed outside. Suddenly, they found lights flashed in their eyes! "Experiment 1! Stay where you are! You are under arrest, by order of GUN, and duly enforced by the Station Square police!" It was Razor's voice, that much Punchy knew. With his eyes quickly adjusting to the lights, he saw swarms of GUN Beetles, Hunters, police cars, and also Guard the gargoyle and Rouge the bat! Rainbow threw up her arms and started to inch away from Punchy. "I'm not with One! I'm an innocent handstander!" she yelled. "Give it up, colorblind, Gunner's seen your face, too!" Rouge shouted. Punchy glanced at Rainbow. "Start running... This is gonna be chaotic..." he warned. Rainbow nodded and tore off as Punchy shouted "Chaos Avalanche!!" He ripped the front of the train station apart with his chaos power, hurling chunks of it straight ahead at the law enforcement blocking his escape! "All units! Take him! Don't make the mistakes we made with Experiment 2!!" Razor shouted, taking cover behind his car as the robots started to swarm Punchy's position, only to find that he'd used the chaos as a chance to run for it! All the while, news vans arrived on the scene, with Katie the coyote one of the first to start reporting. "Great to be back on TV... Way to start with a bang." she muttered before the camera was on her, "This is Katie Coyote for SSTV News! A dramatic spectacle is unfolding here in front of the very station that gives our city its name! Police and military forces are hot on the trail of one of the GeneX Experiments from the dragon incident that rocked our city almost a year ago!" Suddenly, Rainbow appeared and took the microphone out of Katie's hand! "If you're watching, hi, sis! Miss you!" she giggled before handing back the mic and running off!

At Darkegg Fortress, Copter had just gotten his new TV hooked up, and was watching with the Chao when Katie's breaking news report came on. "You always ruin TV for me, Katie..." he whimpered, not at all liking what he was seeing. Immediately, he ran for the garage, where E-505 Hoover was pulling an iron bar to munch on from his swiss army tail while wiping the Hurricane with a damp rag with the other hand. "Time to shut down the car wash, Hoover! Punchy's in trouble!" Copter shouted. "What? What in tarnation's a panchie?? You can't take the Hurricane now! I just waxed 'er wings!" Hoover protested. Copter hopped into the plane and started it up anyway. "Open the doors or you REALLY won't appreciate what happens to the paint!" he warned. Hoover emitted a high pitched beep, which signaled the doors to open, but he continued grumbling in aggravation as Copter took off!

Once the plane was over Station Square, Copter could feel the controls yanking him away! "What the!?" he grunted. Hoover's voice came over the radio. "Right, yer over land now! Gimmie back mah poor ol' girl! She needs a bit more TLC!" he insisted. Copter growled in frustration. "If I find this plane painted white and you painted with a tuxedo, I'm taking you to a psychiatrist." he grumbled, hopping out of the plane and spinning his tails to land safely at the boat dock below. The plane then turned around and headed back toward Darkegg Fortress on its own. "Now how do I find Punchy? He's not here. Katie's not here. How late am I?" he muttered. Just then, a familiar yellow taxi cab pulled up next to him. "Thought you'd turn up, skunky." Mia the cat smirked at him from the driver's seat. "Must you call me that?" Copter sighed. She nodded. "Considering you aren't likely to be able to pay the fare, I'll call you what I want. Gonna hop in?" she asked. Copter opened the front seat and jumped in. "Hey, I usually only let dates ride up front!" she chuckled. Copter glared at her. "I need to find Punchy. Are ya helpin' me or not?" he asked. Mia grinned at him. "You're lucky you're cute. I love how your tails get even spikier when you're annoyed." she joked, revving up the cab. "Punchy had better appreciate this..." Copter grumbled, looking out the window as they drove off.

Punchy and Rainbow had stolen some kids' bikes, and were trying to get to the entrance to the Hidden

Ruins, but the intense pursuit by GUN and the police was making it impossible unless they wanted their hideaway discovered. Some police cars started speeding towards them from up ahead, having cut them off, while robots were swarming from behind! "These scuzzbags!! They never came at Copter like this before!" Punchy growled furiously. "Yeah, what'd you do, One?" Rainbow asked. "NOTHING! ...new..." he snapped. As robots began to fire at them, they ditched their bikes and started looking for a way out. Razor leaned out of his car with a megaphone. "Give it up! We came ready for Experiment 3! You haven't got a chance!" he warned. Punchy rolled his eyes. "You think this'd be enough to stop Kosmo? Did you SEE Kosmo?" he remarked. Rainbow stepped forward angrily. "You all back off! We never did anything to anyone! Sergeant Gramps is just a senile old jerk!" Suddenly, a Hunter robot, seeing her as hostile, fired its laser at Rainbow! She shrieked and collapsed to the floor as Punchy watched in disbelief. "R-rainbow!! No!!!" He hurried to her side. She wasn't moving, and he started panting, filling with rage! "Stand down!! No one gave the order to start shooting!!" Razor yelled. However, Guard flew over with a cold expression. "Grrrr... Sergeant Gunner said dead or alive. They made their choice." he growled. Then, something snapped in Punchy. Before lasers could begin firing at him, darkness erupted through his body, changing him! His fur changed black, except for his arms and rings around his eyes that remained green. His eyes turned red, and the crescent mark on his chest turned cyan. He had transformed into Dark Punchy! Immediately, he leapt at the robots as they started to fire at him, a shield of darkness protecting his body as he smashed the robots one at a time! "I think this city owes me a debt... And I say now it's payback time!!" Dark Punchy roared, leaping to one of the police cars in his way, smashing it as the driver fled in terror, and then proceeding into the city to commence his rampage! As the remaining GUN forces and the police scrambled to chase him, Rainbow started to stir. "Owie... What happened, One? ...One?" she murmured, gasping in horror as it dawned on her exactly what WAS happening.

Following the path of mayhem and destruction, Mia's cab started to close in on Dark Punchy, but first caught up with the swarms of GUN beetles. "Hold on... I don't think those bots will be happy to see you!" Mia said. Copter held on tight as Mia's cab started swerving erratically in an effort to dodge the shots of the attacking robots, but soon he couldn't take it any more. "My stop!! My stop!! I'll call you the next time I wanna vomit!" he yelled, opening his door and leaping out of the cab while it was still moving! "Oh, real nice!" Mia yelled as the open door's window got blasted to pieces seconds later, "Your tab just tripled!!" As Copter stumbled out of the cab, he dizzily looked up to see someone blue standing nearby. "Oh, goodie... Sonic's here..." he mumbled. "Spiny... SPIIIINY!!! Gah, just for that, I'm not helping you guys!" the agitated porcupine grumbled, stomping away. Copter shrugged it off and started running ahead, to where he could see shockwaves of dark energy knocking robots and cars into the air! "Cripes... What's all this now?" he mumbled. "One's gone all dark! We gotta talk him down!" said Rainbow from behind him, making Copter jump. "Where'd you come from?? What do you mean dark??" he asked. Just then, both of them were forced to scramble out of the way as Mia's cab came flying at them, landing upside down, its wheels popping off and rolling down the street! "COPTER!! Pull me out so I can kill you and your friend!!" Mia shrieked. Copter glanced inside the cab nonchalantly. "Whooo... Those are some mighty fine seat belts. The air bags, on the other hand... Where are they?" he wondered. Just then, the air bag popped into Mia's face, muffling what was certainly not a nice word from her mouth. Luckily, Katie had arrived and pulled open the door from the driver's side. "Holy smokes, Mia... Your cab..." she gasped. Things were about to get even worse, though. As they were helping Mia out of the cab, Copter dropped her and pointed up at the sky. "This can't be good!" he exclaimed. "I'll say... I fell on my keys!" Mia growled. However, what Copter was referring to was the GUN Warship that had just emerged in the sky! "Experiment freaks!! Prepare to meet your end at the hands of GUN!" came the unmistakable voice of Sergeant Gunner over a loudspeaker!

The GUN Warship fired several shots down at Dark Punchy, getting his attention! "Graaaaaah!! You want me, you old sack of bones!? YOU ASKED FOR IT!!!" he roared, leaping to a building and beginning to climb like a raging ape! Copter, Katie, Mia and Rainbow watched in shocked awe as Dark Punchy rapidly caught up to the GUN Warship. "No, One... Don't do it..." Rainbow whimpered. "We gotta stop him!" Copter said. Suddenly, Guard swooped down and tackled him to the ground while he was distracted! "Got ya, Copter!!" he snarled. "Ow!! Get off me, Guard!! Haven't you seen what Punchy's doing!?" Copter yelled. Rouge flew up beside them and nodded. "I'd listen to him, fido." she said. "Grrr... Fido? Why can't you just call me Guard..." he grumbled, glancing up at the sky just in time to see the dark energy shockwaves reaching the GUN Warship! "Grrr!? What in the...??" he gasped, standing and letting Copter up. "You boys have fun. I'm not getting tossed around by Dark Green again." Rouge frowned, flying off. "As much as I hate Gunner, we can't let that ship crash on top of Station Square. Can you take me up there, Guard? My plane's... unavailable..." Copter grumbled. Guard grunted in annoyance, but leaned down to let Copter climb onto his back. "Grrrr... I better not regret this..." he growled, taking off. As they left, Rainbow ran up hurriedly. "Waaaaait! ...One needs me..." she whined, though it was too late. Katie nodded. "I wanna go, too. It's a heck of a story." Looking around, they spotted Sonic and Tails arriving on the scene. "Oooh, speaking of stories..." Katie grinned. However, before she could run over to them, the Tornado swooped down, and they hopped aboard! "Let's go, Sonic! We can't let that ship crash into Station Square!" Tails shouted as they flew off! "For cryin' out loud!!" Katie shouted. They then heard another plane engine nearby, and as they turned around, they saw the Hurricane! "Huh? Two's plane???" Rainbow gasped. "Good! He owes me a cab, and this'll do for compensation!" Mia grumbled. "Hold yer horsies!! Ya can't touch Dr. Eggman's plane! Now where's that two-tailed menace?" shouted Hoover, hopping over the edge of the cockpit in order to lean on the door! Katie, Mia and Rainbow stared awkwardly at him, not sure how to react at first. "Um, can we all get a ride?" Katie asked. "How many seats you think dis 'ere contraption's got? Ehm... Hey, who's the owner of the no-wheeled pile-a junk ov'r there?" Hoover chuckled. Mia raised an eyebrow. "What of it, flat-face?" she said. "Eh? That don't make no sense..." he said. "C'mere and it will." Mia threatened. Hoover started to look nervous, and popped several tools out of his tail, grabbing a screwdriver defensively. "Watchit! I'm armed to the tail!" he said. Mia looked at him and grinned. "No kidding..." she said.

On top of the GUN Warship, Copter and Guard had begun trying to stop Dark Punchy from doing too much damage, but already they were getting tossed around by his dark powers as though they were mere playthings. Fortunately, a diversion had emerged to draw Punchy away from them. "Knave! Surrender or be slain!" Corporal Drol had led a team of shield carrying Hunters up to the top of the ship. Hordes of different varieties of Beetle robots were also swarming out from various places on the ship, and the Tornado was arriving with Sonic and Tails! However, Dark Punchy was unfazed. He spun around, aiming his hands around and firing balls of dark energy at everything, blasting many of the robots effortlessly! Sonic hopped down from the Tornado and landed beside Copter. "All right, what'd ya do this time?" he asked. "Huh? Why do you assume this is MY fault!?" Copter snapped. "...I was talking to the gargoyle." Sonic replied in annoyance. Guard shrugged. "Grrr... Don't look at me. I had a cat in my brain last month. Just got over it." he grumbled, running ahead scythe first, screaming. "Uh...huh... He looks like he's over it." Copter muttered. "Well, we'd better keep that crazy echidna away from this ship's engines, or its game over!" Sonic said. "Thanks for pointing out the obvious." Copter retorted as Guard came flying back, once again smacked by Dark Punchy. "Grrrrr!! Coward!! Fight me without your magic, I dare you!!" he snarled. Sonic and Copter ran over next. Dark Punchy was tearing through GUN's forces, and Drol was forced to retreat. "I must evacuate the sergeant... This brute will be made to pay in

the future." he vowed. Sonic started to circle around Dark Punchy while Copter ran straight for him. "Hey, Punch!! You through throwing a hissy yet!?" he yelled. Dark Punchy turned around and zapped him with a lightning of darkness, making him dizzily reply "I guess not..." During the diversion, Sonic came at him, but as he struck Dark Punchy, he was immediately repelled by a shockwave of dark energy!! "Yow!! Ooof!! No fair! And I'm not sure I even made a dent!" Sonic grunted. Tails tried shooting Dark Punchy with the Tornado, only to get zapped with the same lightning as Copter! "Whaaaa!! I'm losing control!! Nooo!!" he wailed, spinning out for a few moments. However, he soon regained control and started circling the ship again. "Whew... Close one..." he sighed.

With Dark Punchy getting closer and closer to the back of the warship, it seemed they needed a miracle. After having stalled him for a bit longer, what they got was definitely a surprise. An engine roared as a vehicle flew up to join them in the air, hurrying to catch Dark Punchy before it was too late! It wasn't the Hurricane, though. A glimmer of yellow, with black checks along the sides, made Copter, Guard and Sonic stare in confusion for a moment. It was Mia's taxi cab, and yet it wasn't. It now had wings, and a high powered engine, enabling it to fly! Mia was at the driver's seat, with Rainbow frantically searching out Punchy in the passenger side, and Katie and Hoover were sitting in the back, Hoover still trying to smooth out a few dents in the ceiling, with great difficulty. The cab soared over the warship, then dove down, having a bit of a rough landing, but its newly reattached wheels enabled it to start driving like a normal car once it was on stable ground. The cab stopped next to Copter, who stared in disbelief. "Anyone need a cab?" Mia smirked. "Hoover, really, you need a new hobby." Copter muttered. Rainbow jumped out of the cab and ran towards Punchy straight away! "Hey, wait! It... It's dangerous!!" Sonic yelled, ready to chase after her. "Leave her go. She knows what she's doing." said Rouge, who had also just returned. "Grrr? What are you doing back??" Guard mumbled. "Saw Sonic was here. Decided the entertainment value was worth it." she grinned. As Rainbow neared Dark Punchy, she called out to him. "One!! One, I'm over here!!" she shouted. He looked over at her and stared in shock. "Y-you... you're dead!!" he yelled. Rainbow shook her head. "No, I'm not. Aw, One... You poor thing..." she sniffled. However, Dark Punchy wore a look of rage. "No, I said you're DEAD!!!" he roared, hurling dark lightning at her! She shrieked in pain, and Sonic was about to move in, but before he could, Rainbow forced her way forward and threw her arms around Punchy as she lost her balance! "You can't push me away, One... I'm here for you..." she cried. Suddenly, as Punchy blinked, his eyes returned to their normal, cyan color. "R-rainbow...?? N-no!! What have I done!???" His body quickly began to return to normal, and Rainbow smiled. "It wasn't you, One... It was Dark One..." she said sleepily.

Before Gunner could muster a counterattack, they all hurried aboard the cab and the Tornado and fled the GUN Warship. Upon landing in Station Square, far from the warship, Mia pulled a lever that caused the cab to transform back into a normal taxi. "Well, skunky, in light of the upgrade your little robot friend did for me, I'll just overlook the trouble you put me through today." Mia said to Copter. He nodded. "I'll say the same to him, I guess." he muttered. Punchy was looking a bit depressed as he exited the cab. "I can't believe all of this... I gotta work on controlling my rage..." he sighed. Rainbow patted his back. "Aw, One, it's okay... It's not your fault. I could be a bit more careful, too." she said. Katie also looked miserable. "My camera guy bailed when you went all crazed, so I got nothing. Great day for my career..." she groaned. "Yeah, me, too..." said a bruised-up Razor as he walked by, rubbing his back, "I'm off duty right now. As you were, guys." he sighed. Copter shrugged. "Well, look on the bright side. Imagine how this fiasco's affecting Gunner right now..." he mused.

That night at Gunner's office, the GUN Commander himself burst through the door. "GUNNER!! Exactly who ordered a military strike on Station Square today!?" he snarled. Gunner sat at his desk and gently

set down his coffee. "That... would be me, sir." he answered. The Commander was clearly a bit flustered. "I have had it with you, sarge! Station Square is not your personal warzone! I realize you have a personal grievance with those experiments... Perhaps TOO personal. I know what that's like. It clouds your judgment." he said. Gunner stood up. "Now, sir, you go too far! My judgment is NOT clouded!" he snapped. Spy snickered from outside the door, getting Gunner even angrier, but he was forced to suppress it. "...Be that as it may, I'm ordering you to drop it. Leave the experiments to the police." the Commander said. Gunner had protest in his eyes, and the Commander could see it. "Maybe this will help. I'm transferring you to work under Colonel Thade. He'll find you something to occupy your time other than blowing up cities." he said, which Spy found hilarious. As the Commander exited the office, Gunner beckoned Spy into the room. "Laugh it up, you're coming with me!" he growled, making Spy's face turn white. "He thinks he can stop me from stopping those freaks? Ha, we'll see. Spy, start cleaning up my office. I need to prepare to meet Colonel Thade." he said, storming out. Spy whimpered slightly. "Why is it, even when he gets punished, somehow it only seems to mean bad news for me and not him!?" he sighed.

Episode End! BZZ BVZZZ ZZTZ!!!

A dark shadow began to creep over the coastline. The people of the city of water all gradually gazed in the same direction, looks of shock and panic washing over them, the likes of which hadn't occurred since the Solenix incident. A massive object was hovering off the coast of Soleanna. It was, amazingly, an island! An ominous looking island, shrouded in a dark atmosphere, anyone near the coast was so filled with dread by it that they fled away from it! Deep in a dark corridor somewhere on the island, a hooded figure sat upon a throne. His hood had three red stripes going along the sides and top, the collar of his cloak also red. He wore dark red gloves, red and grey shoes, and he had a grey tail with a red furred tip. His glowing red eyes pierced through the darkness. A blue hyena in a black uniform entered the room and knelt before him. "Eeee hee hee... The aquatic unit has retrieved the objective. They will be back on the island soon." he reported. The hooded figure's eyes narrowed. "Bring me to her..." his voice boomed.

Outside, the people of Soleanna watched as the mysterious floating island soared off into the distance, leaving them puzzled and nervous, but they soon went back to they usual business, any danger seeming to have simply passed them by. At least for now...

REAL Episode End!