

The Elysium Project

Episode 1: Escape

Podcast Transcript

Prologue

Kate: (narration) Elysium. To the Greeks, it was heaven. The reason they strove to be good in this life. To us, it was a miracle. A synthetic drug that would allow us to manipulate the world around us - telekinetically - by thought and emotion.

They promised us a chance to be part of something big. They never said they'd get results no matter what it did to us... no matter who we lost.

Introduction:

The Elysium Project

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Episode 1: Escape

Scene 1

Two sets of footsteps exit and walk down a marble hallway.

Monica: (fading in, reading as she walks) And tonight is the Jefferson opening at the Chateau. Will you be attending or no...?

James: (distracted, almost dismissive) Probably, I said I'd at least make an appearance.

Monica: Alright then... (slight pause, then sigh) James, hold on a minute.

James: (slightly caught off guard, puzzled) What?

Monica: (coming up to him and begins adjusting his tie, spoken with a certain professional fondness) You are practically a genius, yet you still can't seem to tie a tie properly.

James: (wry, relaxing a bit) Well, that's why I have you.

Monica: (finished with the tie, patting his shoulder, grinning) And here I thought I was just your secretary.

Another set of footsteps approach.

Bastios: (friendly, as he approaches them) James, good to see you again.

James: (taking Bastios' hand) And you as well, Mr. Bastios. It's been almost three months now, hasn't it?

Bastios: I believe so. And you, miss... (trailing off)

Monica: (offers her hand) It's Monica. Good to see you again, Mr. Bastios.

Bastios: Charmed, my dear. Now James, I suppose we have a last order of business to take care of. You will excuse us... Monica?

Monica: Of course.

Bastios and James retreat into the office, the door closes.

Bastios: You'll forgive me for making this brief, James, but I am pressed for time.

James: That won't be a problem. After all, this should be the last time I have to sign anything for you.

Bastios: Quite a shame, considering how long you've been with us.

James: Yes, but I don't want to chain myself to a single project for the rest of my life. I have other interests to pursue, and I'm ready to move on.

Bastios opens a drawer, draws out a sheet of paper.

Bastios: We assumed as much. I have your contract here, though I'm afraid there have been some changes since we last discussed the terms.

James: Changes?

Bastios: James, despite it's initial successes, the long term results your formula has yielded have proven to be... (slight laugh) well, unpredictable. My clients are concerned and unfortunately that does reflect on our initial agreement.

James: What are you talking about? We already made the deal-

Bastios: Based on the original conditions. James, your formula is by far the most superior of any we have produced, but these... side effects are still proving to be a challenge for our other researchers to overcome. We have decided that the formula must be restructured and retested before it will be of full use to our clients. That will take time, and until then we have decided not to transfer all of the original payment we agreed on. We are offering you fifty percent up front, not to mention our provision for all of the extravagant expenses you have amassed during your tenure with us. Besides, we would be able to double the final payment as long as the formula prove it's worth. Perhaps in... two years?

James: I've given almost twenty years of my life to this project, Bastios – you promised me the full payment up front in our original agreement. This money is integral to my future research-

Bastios: Those are the terms we have set now, Mr. Greyson. And if you are not fond of them, then I would be curious to know who you would your argue your case to? We both know that turning to the government in this situation would be... unwise, to say the least. Besides, we have your research, the test

subjects, and the formula itself. You have nothing more we desire to negotiate further and I believe we have taken excellent care of you while you were under our employ. I must say, the offer hardly seems unfair-

James: Give me the fifty percent and keep your double.

Bastios: You're sure? You won't reconsider?

James: No. Monica will leave you with the information to have the money wired directly to my account. And in case I have not made myself clear, I want nothing more from you after this transaction.

Bastios: Of course, Mr. Greyson. It's been a pleasure doing business with you.

James: The pleasure was all mine...

The scene transitions to the building lobby, an elevator dings and the doors open. James walks into the lobby and Monica approaches him.

Monica: (surprised, confused) James, is everything alright? That didn't take very long-

James: Of course not, they were never going to settle. Not for everything they promised anyway.

Monica: How much did you get?

James: Half. And double the original fee if I were to wait for their... "investment" to prove it's value.

Monica: And you didn't take it?

James: No. I told you, we're severing all ties with Bastios. I want to enjoy my success, not spend the rest of my life responsible for whatever Bastios and his "clients" dream up to do with the formula. (exhaling, somewhat distracted as though he briefly stopped to think of something else and slight cough as he returns to the matter at hand) Anyway, it's not like I didn't see this coming. I've taken some "precautions" in case it did.

Monica: What are you planning?

James: Oh, nothing, of course. But since we've also turned over the network to Bastios' group, there was a chance that the security on our test subjects at the facility may be... compromised. Disconnected, even. Perhaps it's something I would have mentioned in my meeting a few moments ago. If things had gone smoother, I might have remembered to say something before I left.

Monica: I'm sure it's all been taken care of, James. Especially since it would be such an inconvenience to Mr. Bastios if the test subjects decided to... leave the facility.

James: Yes, Monica. Yes it would.

Scene 2

City street, late at night. Two sets of footsteps running fade in, then slow.

Ian: (panting) There... do you think we lost them?

Jess: (panting) For a minute. Not for much longer. (glancing around) Ian, this alleyway is a dead end. How are we-

Ian: Fire escape! There-

Jessica: (cutting him off as she moves for it) Got it. I'll go first.

Ian: (following behind) Yeah, no problem Jess...

They start climbing. The wind blows as they near the top.

Jessica: Here, wait for me to get over the edge.

Jess climbs over the ledge and drops over the side.

Ian: (after a pause) Jess, is the coast clear? Jess?

Ian climbs over the ledge and lands on the roof.

Jessica: I'm right here, Ian.

Ian: Good, I was worried something happened.

Jessica: Look, I'm just trying not to broadcast where we are to those guys coming after us.

Ian: They'd still have to make it up here. We should be fine now.

Jessica: Yeah, if they're the only ones after us. Let's just go.

Jess begins to walk away.

Ian: Where are you going?

Jessica: (turning back) Away from the guns, remember?

Ian: Yeah, but we have a rendezvous point, remember? (pause) Yeah, you don't know that at all, do you? You're not Jess.

Jessica: (laughing) Ian, what are you talking about? Of course I'm Jessica-

There is a click and whir of servos, Kate has a tranquilizer dart trained on Jess.

Kate: Actually, you're not... Mirage.

Kate tries to shoot Jessica/Mirage, but she/he jumps out of the way, and lands on the edge of the roof.

Jessica: (grunt as she leaps out of the way.)

Mirage transforms.

Mirage: And I thought I was doing so well.(nonchalant) Looks like we get to do this the hard way.

Kate: Ian, look out!

Mirage leaps at Ian.

Mirage: (laugh as he launches himself forward)

Ian: (grunt as he braces himself for the attack)

Ian and Mirage hit the ground.

Mirage: (snarling/grunting) Get off of me – get off!

The real Jessica catches up to Kate a short distance away.

Jessica: Kate, is that him?

Kate reloads the tranquilizer gun, her prosthetic arm servos whirring.

Kate: Glad you could make it, Jess – at least for real this time. Of course it's Mirage. We need to get Ian out of there!

Jessica: Right. Let's see if he can handle this.

Jess forces a column of air forward to knock Mirage back.

Mirage: (laughing, a bit out of breath) Nice try.

Mirage blocks the column and throws it back at Jess. Jess is thrown backwards with the impact.

Mirage: (low, triumphant laugh, then sinister) Now, where's the other one-

Kate: (growling) Right here.

Kate shoots him.

Mirage: (caught off guard) Oh sh-

Mirage is hit with a dart point blank and collapses.

Mirage: One day I'll rip that arm right off of you...

Kate: Yeah, looking forward to that too.

Ian: (Groan as he picks himself up)

Jessica: (standing, distant) You idiot – that looked nothing like me!

Ian: You wanna bet, Jess?

Jessica: I'd like to give you some credit that you're not that stupid-

Kate: Enough! That wasn't a lethal shot and with whatever they did to him, he'll probably recover in a few minutes. We need to get out of here. We'll have to find somewhere else to go now.

Ian: Still, we're out. That's the important thing.

Jessica: "Out" doesn't mean we're safe. We have these crazy abilities and we're basically escaping with stolen property for all the experimental drugs they've got in us. They even sent... him after us...

Ian: And he's on the ground right now and won't be getting up for a while.

Kate: But there could be more. This entire escape might be another one of their experiments – they deactivate the tracking bracelets for a few minutes, see if we can get out of the academy, then how far we can run...

Jessica: Then we run and let them just try to catch us.

Ian: I think Jess is right this time. This could be our only chance to really get away from the experiments.

Kate: Yeah, I know. And the others are waiting for us. Let's meet up with them at the rendezvous point and we can figure out what to do from there.

Ian: Sounds good.

Jessica: Sure. We're just a couple of escaped test subjects. What could possibly go wrong?

Scene 3

A cell phone connects internally.

Melissa: (over the phone) Emma?

Emma: Heeey... Melissa. Um... I'm sorry, you're not still at work, are you?

Melissa: Well I am, but since when does that matter? They make me work on Friday nights, I take my sweet time and answer B-F-F support calls. It's all good. So what's up?

Emma: Not a whole lot, just had some time...

Melissa: Oh, by the way, you have got to be getting better weather than here – I swear Chicago has hidden wind tunnels installed in every other street and it's not even winter any more. I thought we were done with this nonsense.

Emma: Uh, the weather's fine, I guess-

Melissa: Hey, I didn't realize it's this late already. I get to go home in a few hours! (slight pause) Wait... is Nick not there yet? I thought you had your date tonight. Or I could be getting time zones wrong again – you need to stop moving so I can keep track of you better.

Emma: Uhh, well no... Nick's here...

Melissa: Okay... and you're on the phone with me because...?

Emma: Melissa I can't do this.

Melissa: No... Emma, no – you are not doing this. I'm not going to let you.

Emma: I changed my mind!

Melissa: No, you're being a coward. Okay, where are you? Have you even left the apartment?

Emma: (embarrassed) ... I'm in the bathroom.

Melissa: (low and flat, absolutely deadpan) You're pathetic.

Emma: Just... tell me how I can get Nick to leave and not think I'm a total freak?

Melissa: Well, I'm kind of thinking the normal way? You go out with him and have a good time!

Emma: (groaning)

Melissa: Emma, there is no way things can be that bad already. Why do you even want him gone? You told me he's the one who asked you out! And you said 'yes,' so now you have to live with the

consequences. Just trust me on this, this is one of those rare times in life when that is not a bad thing. Especially when the guy is as hot as Nick was in the pictures you sent me!

Emma: Well it's not so much that I don't want to go out with him... in theory.

Melissa: ... you're beating around the bush again.

Emma: (frustrated) There's too much that could go wrong. I mean... you know what I'm up against!

Melissa: Well, the damage is kind of already done if the guy is standing in your apartment. Enjoy the consequences!

Emma: (mumbling) Except Nick probably thinks I'm a freak for locking myself in the bathroom to talk to you...

Melissa: (smug) Two words: False bravado. Just act confident and don't acknowledge it happened. Everyone BS'es the first night. You're already on the right track!

Emma hits the wall.

Emma: You hear that? That's my head. Against the wall.

Nick: (through the door) Emma...?

Emma: (calling) Coming, just a sec!

Melissa: Emma, I'm your friend, but this can't possibly get any worse with or without my help. (chipper) Can't wait to hear about it tomorrow!

She hangs up.

Emma: (hissing, panicked) Melissa-

A few minutes later, the bathroom door opens and closes, Emma steps out.

Nick: Is everything... okay? I thought I heard you talking to someone.

Emma: No, umm... well I wasn't- I wasn't talking to myself, if that's what you meant... it's all good. (nervous cough, laugh)

Nick: Uh, right. Anyway... you've got quite the place here. You know, I used to think we both went to a rich kid's school, but after this I might need to re evaluate my life.

Emma: Oh, yeah. It's... kind of overkill, really. All my dad's idea, I don't think we need so much of...all of this.

Nick: Well I can take the flatscreen in the living room off your hands if you really twist my arm.

Emma: Well, I'm sure you could come over... if you want to use it sometime.

Nick: Sure, I'd be down for that. (pause) So, you want to get out of here?

Emma: Uh, leave? I mean, we don't have to go right away. Maybe we could just hang out... here or something?

Nick: I thought we made plans to go out? You know, the always classic dinner and a movie? I already bought the tickets...

Emma: Oh, right... I... uh, I...

Nick: Did something happen since school?

Emma: I'm sorry... I'm so sorry. I can't do this.

Nick: (stepping towards her) Hey, hey... are you okay? You don't look so good.

Emma: No, it's just so stupid... (sigh)

Nick: Emma, you seem like you're dealing with some kind of intense moral dilemma, but I have... no idea what's going on here. What happened?

Emma: I'm not allowed to leave this apartment.

Nick: So... you're grounded?

Emma: As in, I can't leave without a driver or an escort or someone to protect me. Because my dad makes his living doing something I'm never allowed to talk about and apparently that puts me in danger. Or he's just that psychotic and paranoid...

Nick: All right... not my first guess, but okay. So your dad works for the government or something?

Emma: Maybe? I'm dead serious, I have no idea what he does or why it's such a big secret. We just don't talk about it. Ever. I don't think I'm actually allowed to.

Nick: Right. But you still said you wanted to go out with me anyway...?

Emma: I wanted to... (sighing) I don't know, what else was I going to say? "No, my psycho secret agent and or mafia dad would never let me?" I hate this.

Nick: So, what do you want to do then? Would it be better if I just left?

Emma: Maybe that'd be best, yeah... And you don't have to talk to me at school or anything after this too – I'll probably be moving in a few months, so it's not like it'll be for forever.

Nick: Wait, now you're moving again? I thought you just got here like two months ago.

Emma: (like that's totally normal) Yeah? I always move after a few months. I've lived everywhere.

Nick: Everywhere? Is that part of the whole secret agent mafia thing too?

Emma: You you know, since you're here, it'd be just easier to show you.

A minute later, Emma and Nick step into Emma's bedroom.

Nick: Is this your room?

Emma: Yeah, I pretty much live in my room no matter where we are.

Nick: Wow... that's a lot of pictures on the wall. Okay, you weren't kidding, that really does look like everywhere. And you took them all yourself?

Emma: I've moved twenty-eight times in seventeen years. I take a lot pictures and keep them hung up like this because it all blurs together in my head after a while. It's the only way I can remember things – my favorite things, and if that was my life in France or Colorado.

Nick: But not people.

Emma: Hm?

Nick: The pictures. I was just noticing... there aren't any people in them. At least, not people you were with when you took their picture. Just some people on benches, in crowds... kind of like they're part of the scenery.

Emma: I don't... really know anyone to take a picture of. I have one friend... my best friend, Melissa – she's in that picture there - who lives in Chicago, but I met her on online through a forum and we can't exactly take pictures together.

Nick: Okay, well, how about me? I'm here, you know me... well, you kind of bailed on our date, but that's not really the point. What else do you need?

Emma: I guess...? Did you want me to take a picture in here? I just use my phone. It's really nothing fancy-

Nick: That'll work. And we could even try this-

Nick stands next to her and takes the phone, pulling her next to him.

Emma: (startled gasp)

Nick: And if I hold the phone up like this, we can both be in it together. Alright, smile... (he takes a picture) ... there. What do you think?

Emma takes the phone from him.

Emma: I... I like it.

Nick: Good. (pause) Well, this is probably the shortest date I've ever had, but definitely one of the more interesting ones. I guess I'll see you at school?

Emma: I don't know...

Nick: About... seeing me? Or the date?

Emma: I'm... not sure of what I'm doing anymore. Or even why I'm doing it. But I do want to go with you. I think I will.

Nick: Good. Because right now I'm just waiting for you.

Scene 4

Monica enter's James office.

Monica: James, it's nearly ten. Do you plan on leaving this evening, or should I have the suite prepared?

James: No, I should be done soon. I might even spend tomorrow at home, or do something with Emma. It's been odd the past few days, not having Bastios breathing down my neck, but there's so much I'm behind on.

Monica: Any new projects?

James: A few ideas, but I'm still tying up loose ends left from Elysium. They keep surfacing everywhere when I thought they'd been taken care of.

James' cell phone vibrates.

Monica: James, your cell...

James: Not now. I'll take it later.

Monica: James, it's Bastios.

James takes the phone and answers it.

James: Yes?

Bastios: Hello, James.

James: What do you want, Bastios?

Bastios: I was wondering what you might consider a fair course of retaliation for five missing subjects?

James: You let five of them get away? That doesn't sound like your company's spotless track record at all.

Bastios: It wasn't expected, but we've chosen to consider it... an experiment. It's provided invaluable insight into their resourcefulness and the skills we've given them. All the same, your meddling was inexcusable. You've raised more than a little hell for me, and I don't appreciate that.

James: I didn't appreciate you crossing me either. I'm sure we'll both have to manage.

Bastios: My affairs are the least of your worries, James. I chose to call about your daughter...

James: Emma?

Bastios: Yes, I'm afraid this little game may have tipped the scales of her neutrality.

James: You promised she would be protected! You and I know exactly why he can't know that she-

Bastios: Oh she's still under my protection - I'm not an idiot, James. But I have decided that we're going to change the playing field. One subject in exchange for five? That's more than gracious of me. It might confirm a few suspicions, but of course it's just as likely that nothing will happen at all!

James: Bastios, we can come to an arrangement-

Bastios: Of course, James. Why did you think I called? Thirty minutes isn't much time to find her, but it's a head start all the same. Best not waste it.

Scene 5

Emma and Nick are in a local park, Emma takes a picture as they walk.

Emma: There. What do you think?

Nick: About the picture? It's a pretty shot, I guess... for a wall.

Emma: I've never been down town like this before. Everything is so different up close everywhere you look. Even the people!

Nick: So you've never just gone walking somewhere?

Emma: Well yes, but in private gardens or parks. I always have an escort in the city, and then we usually drive too. You should have seen me when he finally agreed to let me go to school instead of getting another tutor – that was back in Seattle, last year, but it was like Christmas.

Nick: The way you keep describing your dad's security plan, I'm surprised I wasn't tackled by a SWAT team when we left the building.

Emma: (laughing) Me too.

Nick: Wait, what?

Emma: (laughing harder) I'm kidding! You should see the look on your face!

Nick: I'm not sure if I'm more surprised by the fact that I believed you, or that you just made that joke.

Emma: I think my dad just assumes I'd never do anything so he doesn't always have people watching me around the clock, but that is why we took the side door, just to be safe.

Nick: Right. But he does realize this isn't going to last forever? Aren't you going to move out after you graduate?

Emma: I haven't really thought about it, and Dad's never said anything either. I mean, I can afford to go anywhere, so it's not such a big deal to get in to whatever college I want. It's just more school... probably like it's always been.

Nick: That sounds depressing.

Emma: Why do you think I don't think about it much?

Nick: Point taken.

Emma: Maybe this is a dumb question, but... what is it like to be normal?

Nick: Normal? I wouldn't exactly say I'm normal. I don't think anyone really considers themselves "normal".

Emma: You seem normal to me.

Nick: If you want to compare, maybe, but I think the more you get out, the more you realize normal just... doesn't really happen in real life. But to humor your question, I mean, what do you want to know?

Emma: Well, I really just know you a little from school. You play soccer, you have really good grades-

Nick: Eh, that's the boring stuff. You can look that up anywhere and slap it on a report card. It doesn't tell that much about me.

Emma: Okay. So, what are you going to tell me about yourself?

Nick: Well... I still eat Fruit Loops for breakfast, I got a pretty sweet bike last year for my birthday, but that's in the shop because of some reckless driving and speeding tickets I may have picked up, and I'm partially fluent in Mandarin because my family lived in Beijing until I was eight.

Emma: Beijing? I lived in Nanjing a couple years ago!

Nick: Seriously? I think we visited there once, but I don't remember too much of it. Except the humidity. All the time.

Emma: Ugh, I don't miss it. Did your whole family live in Beijing?

Nick: Oh yeah. My mom specializes in international law, so up until a couple years ago she was one of the chief aids to the American ambassador there. Initially the move was to cut back on travel, but it was really impossible to avoid either way. When the trade tension started getting worse, my parents eventually just decided to come back.

Emma: Wait... if your mom was still an aid to the ambassador, then two years ago... was she part of the hostage crisis?

Nick: Yeah, she was there. Actually, the guy who was killed by the extremists group that's trying to influence the government there... she has his job now.

Emma: Doesn't that freak you out? With all the threats they've made lately – that has to be dangerous for your mom... for you too.

Nick: (trying to add a dry edge to it, but still very serious) For my parents sure, but they keep me under wraps, kind of like your situation. As far as I know, I haven't been targeted before. Anyway, it's not like I know any "national secrets", but it's safe to say we've probably avoided almost six different wars in the past year and a half because of the extremist cell and how they're gaining more influence in the different governments. If the public knew half of how strained things are right now – beyond what they already know, I think more than the economy would be crashing. And both my parents are in the middle of it. My dad used to be my mother's translator – that's how they met, but he works with some of the other aids now. Anyway, that's about as normal as I get.

Emma: Wow... I had no idea.

Nick: But it sounds like we have a few things in common.

Emma: I'm glad you told me. Actually, I think that makes me feel better about all this. And not so... alone.

Nick: It's not a big deal, don't worry about it. And don't we have a movie to catch? We're starting to veer off course a bit with your picture taking.

Emma: Yeah, because the girl who's never been to this part of town knows exactly where we're going?

Nick: Well, then I will get you a map and teach you how to use it-

Little Girl: (calling, from some distance away) Hello? Is anyone there? Please? Can you help me?

Nick: Huh? What the?

Emma: Is that a kid? Why would she be out here alone?

Nick: I have no idea. Let me go see what it is. Why don't you get your phone out and have nine-one-one ready just in case.

Emma: Okay.

Nick enters the alley alone.

Nick: Hello? Hello?

Little Girl: Who's there? Are you coming to help me?

Nick: Yeah, I can help you. What happened?

Little Girl: There was a scary man. He tried to hurt me.

Nick: Emma, call them now and stay here. I'm going to go get her, but there's a chance this guy could still be here.

Emma pulls out her phone.

Emma: (to Nick) Okay. (she attempts to make a call) What's going on? I swear I had a bars a few seconds ago...

In the alley, Nick approaches the girl.

Nick: Hey. Are you alright?

Little Girl: (giggles) I'm fine.

She vanishes. Nick leaps back in surprise.

Nick: Where did she-?! What the hell-

Nick is suddenly lifted into the air and thrown against the wall. Seeing this, Emma runs after him.

Emma: Nick! Nick-!

Mirage materializes in front of Emma, who screams.

Mirage: Hello, Emma.

Emma: Where did you come from? What did you do to Nick and that girl?

Mirage: What, her? Oh she's just in my head. Don't worry about her... or your boyfriend for that matter. It's just the two of us right now.

Emma: Who are you?

Mirage: Something your father's been hiding for a long time, Emma. I'm one of his mistakes. Always wanted to meet you though. I wonder if you're just as unwanted.

Emma: I don't understand.

Mirage: You're not going to yet, it's alright. Unfortunately, that doesn't do much to improve this situation for you. I'm surprised... you haven't started running yet.

Emma: My legs won't work... Is this a dream?

Mirage: Sorry, but no. And this syringe I'm holding is very real and I'm afraid it's really going to hurt when this formula kicks in.

Nick charges Mirage before he can step forward and both of them stumble to the side.

Nick: Emma, run!

Emma: Nick!

Nick: (to Mirage) You wanna screw with us? I'm gonna- (he stops and gasps)

Nick pulls the syringe intended for Emma out of his side and drops it to the ground.

Nick: ... you sick bastard, what is this thing?

Nick collapses, gasping and choking.

Mirage: Well, that wasn't supposed to happen. Whoops. Good thing I've got another one just in case, right Emma?

Emma: Please... please don't kill me.

Mirage: I'm not going to kill you, this is just revenge. And believe me, Daddy's going to love you when this is all over. Be sure to tell him... it was personal.

Emma: No! No – stay back! I'll... I'll-

Mirage: You'll do what? Scream?

Emma screams.

End Credits.