

The Elysium Project

Episode 4: Drift

Podcast Transcript

Prologue

Introduction:

The Elysium Project

Written and produced by Natalie Van Sistine

Episode 4: Drift

Prologue Scene

City sounds are filtered through James' car. There is a pause, and then James shifts and opens to the car door.

James: Emma, we're here. Let's go.

Emma: I don't want to.

James: Get out of the car.

Emma: Dad, I'm not a child-

James: Get *out*.

The door is thrown open as Emma storms out and James follows her. Susan knocks on the window.

Susan: Driver, can you bring me back to the office?

The car begins moving again and Susan's phone clicks slightly as she calls someone.

Susan: (casually, almost bored) Yes. It wasn't much of a challenge.

Susan: She's presenting symptoms. We're going to have to move things along now if we're going to keep up.

Susan: I know. Tell them they're going to have to keep a closer eye on her. She's already made one powerful ally – things are going to get messy if she makes any more.

Transitional Cut to Intro

Intro: The Elysium Project.

Intro: Written and Produced by Natalie Van Sistine.

Intro: Episode 4... Slide.

Scene 1

Door slams as Emma storms in and James follows.

James: Social services, Emma? What the hell were you thinking?

Emma: Dad, I didn't call them! It was the counselor at school – they thought I was on *drugs*! What did you let those people do to me?!

James: This has nothing to do with me! If you had just stayed home like you were supposed to, you could have been protected. The only reason you got hurt was because you left the apartment. You are not going back to that school, and I do not want you seeing that boy again.

Emma: I didn't *do* anything! The school didn't do anything, and neither did Nick!

James: It doesn't matter, it's already done. This is exactly why I've tried to keep you away from anything that would put you in harm's way.

Emma: Like having friends. Or going to school?! Dad, how the hell does my going to a stuffy private school threaten my safety!?

James: We are not going to talk about it. There is nothing you are ready to hear yet.

Emma: Ohhh no – because God forbid I know *anything* about the freakshow you've made my life. You refuse to tell me what your *job* is, or why we move three times a year, or why mom is *gone*. You think I don't care that nothing in my life makes sense?!

James: Do not bring *her* into this-

Emma: You never let me! You act like she's only *your's*, dad. But she's my *mother*!

James: We are done. Go to your room. Now.

Emma: Dad-!

James: *Now*!

Emma: No!

Companion effect rushes under and James is suddenly thrown backwards and slams against the wall with a crash.

The front door slams in as Monica charges in, full agent mode and temporarily forgoing cover in case of another attack.

Monica: James! Emma... what happened? I was in your father's office and I heard-

Emma: I... I didn't touch him...

James: It's my fault... it's my own damn fault...

Monica: Mr. Grayson, are you-

James: I'm fine, Monica.

Emma runs from the room slams the door behind her down the hall.

Monica: Does this mean she's infected?

James: Of course she is, I was an idiot to think she wouldn't be. We have to get her out as soon as possible.

Monica: You need to see a doctor first-

James: I'm fine. Just make sure security is increased and on alert. If she's developing her abilities, she'll try to get out.

Monica: Of course. What about you?

James: I need to get ahold of Evan. Emma will need the suppressant soon... or I won't be able to protect her anymore.

Music transitions the scene out.

Scene 2

The Officer can be heard over the phone, trying to calm Nick, who is trying to have James investigated or arrested. The police officer has been trying to calm him down and is unable to do much due to the UN peace talks and the higher rate of violence. He's trying to tell Nick he can't help now and has other commitments.

Officer: *Son*, now you need to listen to me. If she's not in life threatening harm, the best I can do is say we'll look into it as soon as we can. Our entire force is trying to keep the city from burning itself to the ground over this peace summit tomorrow, so if your friend is not in immediate danger, I'm afraid we can't do much for another week. Do you understand that?

Nick: No, I don't. (he hangs up the phone) And call waiting won't stop going off!

Nick's phone begins to buzz – interrupting him. He answers, still upset.

Nick: What?

Melissa: What the *hell* just happened to Emma?

Nick: Melissa?

Melissa: Yeah, Melissa. Nick, her phone is disconnected, but she sent me one text about thirty minutes ago that said “help” and I have been trying to get ahold of the police in your district ever since. You gonna tell me what's going on?

Nick: Yeah, they just shut me down too. It's her dad, he freaked. I don't know what's going on but... she looked terrified.

Melissa: You were with her?

Nick: She was having lunch with my *family*. He sent a lawyer up here to just... *collect* her. Something's wrong.

Melissa: She's not online anywhere, and her phone still won't connect. I'm really scared.

Nick: My parents are trying to talk to social services, but they said they already opened a case and they're pursuing it as quickly as they can. Since her situation isn't considered life threatening, we have to just... wait.

Melissa: I can't believe this.

Nick: Yeah, me either.

Melissa: Thanks for trying. I'm glad there's someone there for her, trying anyway.

Nick: I'll let you know if we hear anything.

Melissa: Yeah, I'd appreciate that. Maybe I can try a few things here too. I've got some ideas. But thanks, Nick. I'll talk to you later.

Nick: No problem. Bye.

The phone disconnects. Nick rolls over, and soft footsteps are heard behind the door. There is a knock and the door opens.

Catherine: Nick? Can you come out here? Your father and I want to talk to you.

A brief transition is indicated. A coffee pot simmers in the background and a few mugs are set down off to one side.

Nick: ...And her friend said she can't get ahold of her either. I think her dad cut her off completely.

Greg: It wouldn't surprise me. I think we stumbled on something big.

Nick: What kind of big?

Catherine: Enough that I've been asking about Emma's father around work, trying to use a few of our contacts. Mr. Greyson's handling of your attack was borderline illegal from the beginning, and many of the details of your attack have already been erased or lost while we've been fighting the police to get to them. The Peace Summit, of course, has made getting any information very difficult – everything is chaos right now.

Greg: The one thing I've been able to uncover so far is that Emma's father is connected with some names we've seen associated with the extremist groups fueling the New Eastern Coalition. These are the same people who are getting a lot of attention for opposing the peace summit tomorrow. They've been labeled as a potential terrorist organization and this morning we found out that they have been known for their involvement in developing new methods of biowarfare. The fact that you were injected with some kind of unidentifiable substance was why we were going to come pick you both up from school.

Nick: Then why haven't we nailed this guy?

Greg: We were trying to, but I received a full cease and desist order just after Emma left.

Nick: What?! From who?

Catherine: Not her dad's lawyer. It was a classified government agency. We don't know who exactly, but in our department there are some very specific orders that come from one place and mean exactly one thing. We just received one of them. We have to stop.

Nick: But Emma's-

Catherine: I know, but it means that the government is either already aware of what her father is doing and preparing to stop him, or they're waiting for someone else to reveal their hand. Intervening now might actually put Emma in even more danger.

Nick: That's not fair to her!

Catherine: But there's nothing I can do. I'm sorry, I have to take this. I should be at work prepping for tomorrow and I've already been away longer than I should be. Hello? Yes?

Catherine leaves the room. Greg steps closer to Nick.

Greg: Nick, I'm sorry, but we can't go after her.

Nick: But we know where she lives. If we could just get the police-

Greg: We told you about the order.

Nick: She's my girlfriend! I *care* about her.

Greg: And this is national security now – this is *our* world! We're not talking about just Emma, but hundreds, maybe thousands of people. We've done our best to give you as much freedom as possible, but kids like you and Emma don't get the luxury of autonomy in our world and I'm sorry, son. I'm so sorry...

Nick: So now what?

Greg: You're mother is a very powerful woman and right now, she's in the other room and she is fighting with everything she has to put that bastard away. That is everything we can do right now and *both of us* have to trust her.

Nick: So we just wait?

Greg: Yes...

Scene transitions out.

Scene 3

Rustle of fabric as Emma rolls over. She attempts to dial her phone, but it is no longer connecting, as James has cut off her phone and internet.

Emma: (hollow, to herself, reading the name in her contacts) Melissa...

The phone beeps as she presses call, there is a brief ring tone, and a sharp tone.

Operator: We're sorry, but the number you have dialed cannot be connected. Please try again.

Emma: Already did.

The phone beeps as she presses call, a single ring tone, and a sharp tone.

Emma: He cut the phone and the internet. Ben... I already tried everyone else. You got me off that fire escape... maybe you can help me again.

She presses call, and the single short ring tone rings once, followed by a longer than normal pause, and finally a second ring tone. There is a rustle as Emma sits up.

Click as the phone connects from the other line.

Ben: Hello?

Emma: Hello?

Ben: Emma?

Emma: Hi... I'm surprised you remember me.

Ben: Why? It hasn't been that long.

Emma: I guess... I know you gave me your number after what happened, but I guess you probably weren't expecting this. I didn't realize it was two already. I'm sorry if I woke you.

Ben: No, I've been awake. What's wrong?

Emma: I just needed to talk to someone. I know that we met once... but my phone isn't connecting to anyone else and I don't know who to talk to... *honestly* talk to.

Ben: What happened?

Emma: I don't think I can stay with my dad anymore. I don't know what to do... but I can't stay here.

Ben: Are you hurt?

Emma: No... but it feels like it. Something hurts, I don't know what it is.

Ben: Can you tell me what happened?

Emma: I think I hurt my dad... we were yelling and then he just flew across the room, but I swear I never touched him! I don't know how, I'm not that strong... I was so mad and it just happened!

Ben: So you have super powers.

Emma: Sure. No big deal, huh?

Ben: I never said it wasn't.

Emma: I don't know if there's anything I can do.

Ben: Couldn't you contact the police?

Emma: But what if those people that attacked me came back? The counselor at school thought they drugged me. If my dad couldn't stop them-

Ben: Then you need someone to protect you.

Emma: Like you? Heh, I don't know why I just said that...

Ben: I have my... resources. You'd be surprised.

Emma: So... are you with the people that attacked me?

Ben: What makes you say that?

Emma: Well, it's pretty convenient that you were there to help me after the attack, and now your number is the only one that will connect to my phone. You didn't even ask why I thought I was able to throw my dad across the room. And I saw the guy that attacked us do that to Nick.

Ben: That does sound highly incriminating.

Emma: So are you?

Ben: You don't have any way to prove I'm lying if I say I'm not.

Emma: Maybe I think you'll tell me anyway.

Ben: Okay. I'm not. I'm not with your father or the people who attacked you, or even the government or the police. I'm just Ben.

Emma: Then who is Ben?

Ben: Whatever you need me to be.

Emma: Should I be afraid of you?

Ben: Possibly.

Emma: That's reassuring.

Ben: You wanted honesty, not reassurance, Emma.

Emma: That's true.

Sound of Emma laying back down on her bed.

Ben: Do you think you can sleep now? Or are you still thinking about leaving?

Emma: It's not like I could do anything tonight. I don't know if I'll stay, but I can't leave right away either. I think you helped, though. Maybe I'll fall asleep?

Ben: That's good.

Emma: Would it be weird to leave the phone on until I do?

Ben: (I didn't scare you enough? I expected you'd hang up by now.

Emma: Ben, I'm not sure there's anything you could do that would scare me right now. I just need to not feel alone right now. That's the only thing I think I'm really afraid of anymore.

Ben: Then I'll stay.

Music transitions out.

Scene 4

The next morning, Jess has just woken up and walks to the bathroom. Kate is already working in there and has locked herself in. Jess knocks at the door.

Jess: Kate? Are you done yet?

Kate: Yeah, hang on. I'll be done in a minute.

Jess: Ugh...

Ian: Ow... Alex! You're making my ears ring.

Jess looks up and realizes that Ian and Alex are sitting cross legged on the ceiling, hanging upside down.

Jess: Really you two? How long have you been sitting up there?

Alex: This round? Ten minutes?

Jess: And you just wait to see who falls off the ceiling first? Or whose head fills up with blood the fastest?

Ian: More the first than the second. Blood to the head is more of an unavoidable consequence.

Alex: But the rules say nothing about sabotage.

Jess: And I'm sure rules were a crucial part of developing this game.

Ian: We're really bored.

Alex: You think you can do better, Jess?

A small burst of air force explodes behind Alex, sending him flying and crashing into the wall with a heavy thud. He slides to the ground.

Alex: Aaah!

Jess: So where's the scoreboard? I think I need to give myself a point.

Ian: That one should have been mine.

Alex: You both suck...

The bathroom door opens and Kate sticks her head out.

Kate: For five minutes. *Five minutes*. Can you just not?

Ian: It was Jess.

Alex: It was Jess.

Jess: Bah...

A second burst of air knocks Ian off the ceiling, and he begins to fall.

Ian's abilities flare and Jessica is thrown violently back against the sink and mirror. The mirror shatters and Jess hits the ground with a solid thud.

Kate: (rushing to her) Jess... Jess are you all right? Jess?!

Alex: Damn... that's a lot of blood...

Ian: God... it was an accident! Jess, I-

Kate: Not now, Ian.

Ian: I can help!

Kate: We're good here.

Alex: Dude, it's cool. She's got it.

Jess: My head...

Kate: It's already healing. Keep concentrating and let your abilities do the work.

Ian: Kate-

Kate: Ian. Go.

Ian backs out of the room, the door slams behind him. As the door shuts, he lets out a frustrated yell and leans against the balcony railing, breathing heavily after, trying to calm himself. He then turns and spots Rachel.

Ian: Rachel! When did you-?

Rachel: Sorry. I came out here when you and Alex started playing. I figured you'd be fighting eventually.

Ian: Jeez, Rachel, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry... I hate this. We should be better than this.

Rachel: But we're not.

Ian: What do you mean?

Rachel: We're not better than this. This *is* who we are. Everything still happens because we want it to, we just can't hide it anymore. That's why... I'm scared of *existing* now. You know? Just thinking the wrong thing could hurt someone.

Ian: Doesn't it matter if we *want* to be better? Doesn't that make a difference?

Rachel: Not for me. Not when the things I do just go wrong.

Ian: I'm so sick of this. If this is how things are then we aren't any better than when we left the academy. The only difference is that we'll probably kill each other rather than let James do it for us. I don't know. Maybe Kate's right. Maybe we are ruined.

There is a long pause and finally a low ambiance or music cue begins to grow. Ian straightens up.

Ian: Rachel?

Rachel: Yeah?

Ian: If I don't call or I'm not back in an hour, tell the others that they need to move again.

Rachel: It's the peace summit today. Where are you going?

Ian: If we're ruined, then there really isn't much of a reason to keep running. At this point, I don't have anything left to lose. I'm going to go after James Greyson myself.

Scene Ends

Scene 5

Emma's door opens and closes. She starts walking down the hall and into the living room. Her foot hits tile and abruptly stops as Monica shifts in the living room.

Monica: Emma.

Emma: *Jeez!* Monica! Dad made you stay here? Really?!

Monica: Put the backpack back in your room. You're not sneaking out.

Emma: You can't force me-

Monica: Yes, I can.

Emma: You can't honestly think that what my dad is doing is right! This isn't-

Monica: Emma, I'm not paid to think about whether or not he's right. But for what it's worth, you really are safer here. Your dad isn't wrong about that.

Emma: He still won't listen to me.

Monica: And you're surprised?

Emma: No. No I'm not. Can we get take out?

Monica: No. Everything's closed. Today's the Peace Summit.

Emma: Ughhhhh...

Emma storms back to her room and slams the door behind her. Her backpack slides to the ground and she walks over to the window.

Emma: How is this safe? Why can't they just tell me what all of this is about?

Emma slumps back on the bed and lays there for a long moment. Suddenly through the wall, the sound of a slight glass shatter breaks the silence. Emma sits up.

Emma: Monica? ...Monica?

She stands up and walks to the door. She opens the door and walks into the hallway, pausing in the entrance to the living room, where she sees Monica collapsed on the ground from where Ian left her. She runs forward.

Emma: Monica, are you okay? Monica?

Ian: Don't move.

Emma: Ahh!

Ian: Who are you? What are you doing here?

Emma: Please. Please don't hurt me again.

Ian: Again?

Emma: You keep coming after me! I don't know what's going on.

Ian: Look, I don't know who you are. What are you doing here?

Emma: I'll tell you! Just promise you won't hurt me.

Ian: I'm looking for James Greyson. Does he live here?

Emma: Barely. He lives at work - he's almost never here.

Ian: That's his secretary there, I recognize her. Who are you?

Emma: I'm Emma. I'm his daughter.

Ian: His... what?

Emma: His daughter.

Ian: He has a daughter?

Emma: Are you with the guy who attacked us?

Ian: No. And I'm not here to hurt you.

Emma: Okay. Is... is Monica all right?

Ian: She's fine - just unconscious. I'm here to... well, I *was* here to find your... father.

Emma: Why would you be looking for my dad?

Ian: We... worked together.

Emma: Worked? But you're not any older than I am.

Ian: Do you know what it is he does, exactly?

Emma: No clue. But a lot of crazy stuff has been happening lately and now I'm kind of hoping you can tell me.

Ian: He specializes in genetic research. I was part of a test group for something called the Elysium Project.

Emma: Elysium? That's greek, isn't it?

Ian: It means eternal paradise for those who chose to be reborn and achieved heaven in three consecutive life times.

Emma: Right, but what does it have to do with my dad?

Ian: I'm honestly not sure if you'd believe me.

Emma: Trust me. I'll believe just about anything at this point.

Ian: It's a formula that allows people to manipulate the world around them based on thought and emotion.

Emma: It doesn't ... does it work like telekinesis? Moving things with your mind?

Ian: Yeah, actually. A lot like that. James... er, your dad, he needed human test subjects. He found me and some other kids... he used us in his experiments.

Emma: Were there any other boys from the group? One with long hair and his face was always shifting somehow, like a...a...

Ian: Mirage.

Emma: What?

Ian: That's what he's called. But he hasn't been part of the test group for months. Where did you see him?

Emma: I was downtown and he attacked me. He injected me with this stuff and... you don't think... it was my dad's formula...?

Ian: Has anything weird started happening to you... anything at all?

Emma: Just my grades getting better... and Dad. Last night I... I pushed him back, like I was suddenly so strong. Is that what the formula does?

Ian: Usually. It starts like that. Things begin to work in your favor, then you start doing things in the physical world you shouldn't be able to do.

Emma: Then what does that mean for me now?

Ian: I don't know. I don't know why you would have been injected, it doesn't make sense. Mirage has always been on a leash, he isn't let out on his own. And James was always careful to keep things contained at the academy where the tests were run.

Emma: Except he's not running the project anymore.

Ian: What?

Emma: He said that he'd finished up a major project a few weeks ago.

Ian: So that means that someone else could have wanted you injected...

Emma: He was working for someone. Would you know-?

Ian: No idea. And I need to tell Kate.

Ian begins moving towards the door.

Emma: Wait, are you just leaving?

Ian: Yeah...?

Emma: You can't just tell me I have superpowers and then leave!

Ian: (Look, I don't think you realize exactly what I am. I am a *test subject*. That means your father locked me up, tortured me, and used the money he made to buy you both this fancy apartment. I already had to escape from him once - I sure as hell don't owe *you* anything.

Emma: *Please!* I can't stay here!

Ian: Really? Because your life is just so terrible?

Emma: Yes! With *him* as my dad? This isn't my home, this is my prison. My dad has kept me locked away here my entire life, lied about his job, and now he's lied about what's happening to me. Just... I don't need you to fix me, just get me out of the apartment and I'll leave you alone.

Ian: Why do you need me? There's the door, just walk through it.

Emma: I tried to leave - to *really* leave yesterday and my dad just sent his lawyer out and dragged me back here. That's why Monica was out here to "watch" me.

But there are people that said they could help me - I just need to get to them without being attacked or caught. Please. I need someone to help me.

Ian: How far?

Emma: The UN.

Ian: You do know what today is, right?

Emma: I know. But I think if I'm in the building, at least no one can come after me. I just need to find this one person and they'll make sure I'm safe.

Ian: Ah... well. That'll be a challenge, but I could probably make it happen.

Emma: Thank you. Let me just go get my bag.

She turns around and starts towards her room.

Ian: Uh, Emma?

Emma: Yeah?

Ian: I'm.... My name, it's Ian.

Emma: Ian. Nice to meet you.

Music fades scene out.

Scene 6

A dial tone fades in, followed by the sound of the line connecting. Both voices are filtered through the phone with minimal ambiance in the background.

Mirage: Bastios? Bastios, he's here. One of your test subjects just waltzed into James' apartment.

Bastios: Just one?

Mirage: Please. Please let me do *something*.

Bastios: What is he doing?

Mirage: Ohhhhhh, he's just talking to the girl. Who cares? You said to wait until something happened – and *something happened*.

There is a long, uncomfortable pause.

Bastios: Wait.

Mirage: What?

Bastios: I said wait. You have your orders. Let them go for now. We're not ready yet.

Mirage: Bastios-

Bastios: Do not disobey me again.

The line goes dead with a click.

Music transition

Scene 7

A phone ringing or buzzing slowly fades in. Nick groans and rolls over on his bed and grabs it.

Nick: ... Phone. No. Bad phone. I have the rest of the week off of school for the peace summit and this is not how you repay me.

He grabs the phone.

Nick: Dad? Dad? What's up?

Greg: Nick, call your mother right now. We were right about Emma's father's connections. The peace talks were a set-up.

Nick: What? Dad, hang on-

Greg: They might have been trying to get to us through you and Emma. Call your mother - she'll know what I'm talking about and she'll know what to do. Just make sure she doesn't go-

Several muffled gun shots through the phone go off and the phone quickly goes dead. Completely stunned, Nick finally drops the phone, cutting off the automated voice.

Nick: ... Dad...

Music builds up and out quickly.

End of Episode 4