

Characters:

Katie - Mid 20s. Fresh out of college. Impulsive and spontaneous. Quick learner who isn't afraid to speak her mind.

John - Late 50s. Long-time scientist at the Center, a few months from retirement. Kind heart and a systematic brain.

Daniel - 18. Son of Lucas from Hostile Takeover

Receptionist - lady

Chet - interviewer

Vivian - Head of the center

Voice (loud speaker/headphones) - male or female voice

Axe man -

Locations:

1. Inside a parked car
2. Walking through a parking garage
3. Corporate lobby
4. Elevator
5. Strange lobby
6. Interview room

Time of day:

Morning

INTRO BUMPER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Efx: recorder button/tone.

KATIE

(whispering)

Roth-Lodbow Center for Advanced
Research. Project Cyclops, Day 9,
about to begin. Entering the
laboratory now.

Efx: keycard beep. A loud buzz, a metal lock unlatched.
Door opens, quick footsteps.

JOHN

Morning. Some traffic today, huh?

KATIE

Oh my God, tell me everything.
Every detail.

Efx: A purse is plopped down on the table. The audio
fuzzes for a moment.

JOHN

Hmm?

KATIE

The meeting with Robert. How did
it go?

JOHN

It was fine.

KATIE

You know, for someone whose actual
job is precise data collection,
you are surprisingly vague.

JOHN

He just wanted an update on
Project Cyclops. Whether or not
there's anything else he needs to
know about.

KATIE

Hasn't he been reading the
reports?

JOHN

He has. He just wanted to verbally
touch base on how everything was
progressing on our end.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

He didn't mention our report about him and the serum?

JOHN

He didn't bring it up. Even when he was digging for my opinion, I stuck to the facts.

KATIE

The facts? What we have is a week and a half of the craziest shit imaginable. I can't believe you didn't let on that you think it's all absolutely nuts. God, I would've folded for sure.

JOHN

Look at it from Robert's perspective. It's not as crazy as you might think. We're taking heads out of boxes, popping out their eyeballs and watching other people's memories. Relatively speaking, what we see in those memories might be the least crazy thing going on here.

KATIE

So he was just trying to get a read on you? To see if you could be trusted?

JOHN

Like if I mentioned I thought there was a company-wide conspiracy going on? I left that part out. You haven't forgotten our rules, have you?

KATIE

I know. I guess I'm just impressed.

JOHN

You don't last thirty-five years without learning how to play the game. Although my remaining time here at the Center is shorter than I thought.

KATIE

I'm sorry, what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

It turns out my retirement is being moved up. I'm out the door tomorrow.

KATIE

John, I...was this Robert's idea or yours?

JOHN

It doesn't matter. It's for the best.

KATIE

Not for me. I can't do this on my own.

JOHN

You already have been. I'm just observing at this point anyway.

KATIE

That's not true.

JOHN

Sure it is. And right now I feel like observing an extraction.

Efx: sheet being thrown off a box.

KATIE

If you say so.

Efx: wet popping noise.

KATIE

Okay, depositing sample into the cube. Annnnd...done. Ready for documentation.

JOHN

Project Cyclops. Trial 5-charlie-5. Timestamp is registering correctly. Initiating playback in 3...

2...

1...

Initiate.

THE INTERVIEW

INSIDE OF DANIEL'S PARKED CAR.

NARRATOR

Daniel sat inside his parked car on the fifth floor of the parking garage. Taking up his entire windshield was the main building of the Roth Lobdow Center for Advanced Research.

DANIEL

(deep breaths. Words below spoken like a mantra/pep talk.)

If you believe it, you can do it.

If you believe it, you can do it.

I can do this. This job is mine. I'll make my father proud. This job is mine.

(Decisive short breath. Mantra stuff over.)

Okay. Time to ace this interview. I got this.

Efx: car door opening and closing. Walking in a parking garage. Car alarm chirping locked while walking.

NARRATOR

Walking across the skywalk that connected the fifth floor of the parking garage to the Center's main building, Daniel couldn't help but look out across the sprawling campus. He'd made it this far on his own. Getting an interview was hard enough, now all he had to do was ace it.

He couldn't wait to see the look on his father's face when he told him he had the job.

Efx: corporate lobby sound effects

DANIEL

(under breath)

One thing at a time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Gotta kill this interview first.
(to receptionist)
Hi. I have an interview at nine
thirty.

RECEPTIONIST
(Friendly, but just
going through the
motions of her job.
A bit sassy even?)
Hm. Interviews start at eight
thirty.

DANIEL
What?

RECEPTIONIST
They start at eight thirty.

DANIEL
Ah, the man I spoke with said nine
thirty.

RECEPTIONIST
Did he now...

DANIEL
Yes.

RECEPTIONIST
Well, I don't know what to tell
you. Did you get his name?

DANIEL
Ah-
(pause)
No... I didn't.

RECEPTIONIST
Maybe your interview wasn't for a
position here?

DANIEL
No, this is the only place I
applied. When the man called me he
was very specific about the time.
He said that my appointment was at
nine thirty-three.

RECEPTIONIST
Why didn't you say that to begin
with?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANIEL

I assumed he meant nine thirty.

RECEPTIONIST

First tip about working here:
don't assume anything. It's safer
to do exactly what you're told,
when you're told.

DANIEL

O-kay.

(pause)

So what do I need to do now?

RECEPTIONIST

Let me check.

(Efx: fast keyboard
typing)

Male applicant.

Nine thirty-three appointment.

Male interviewer.

(Efx: computer beeps.
Ominous sound.)

Oh...

DANIEL

What?

RECEPTIONIST

(suddenly cold)

Go up to the thirty-third floor.

DANIEL

What's wrong?

RECEPTIONIST

You heard my tip for working here,
right?

DANIEL

Yes.

RECEPTIONIST

Then do what I'm telling you to
do: go up to the thirty-third
floor.

DANIEL

Alright, alright. I'm going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RECEPTIONIST

Use the elevator with the red doors.

DANIEL

Sure.

RECEPTIONIST

Good luck, Daniel.

DANIEL

Thanks.

Efx: walking through busy corporate lobby towards elevator

NARRATOR

Daniel walked to the bank of elevators, but none of them were red. All the doors were shiny and gold. He turned back to look at the receptionist, but she was no longer sitting at her desk.

DANIEL

(to self)

Okay. Find the red door. I can do that.

NARRATOR

After walking to the end of the long bank of elevators, Daniel realized that there was a quieter lobby with very little foot traffic. He turned right and all the way at the far end, he saw an elevator with a red door.

Efx: footsteps to elevator. Pushing button.

DANIEL

Thirty-third floor, here I come.

Efx: Ominous tone as elevator arrives. Doors open. Daniel steps on.

NARRATOR

It wasn't until he was on the elevator that he realized he'd never told the receptionist his name, yet she'd wished him luck.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He didn't pay that thought much attention as he stared at the buttons inside the elevator.

There were only a few.

DANIEL

Open door. Close door. Thirty-three.

Well, that makes it easy.

Efx: button push. Elevator moving. Maybe strange clanks and whirrs? Ominous tone as Daniel arrives at floor thirty-three. Doors open. Footsteps off elevator. Doors close behind.

NARRATOR

Daniel found himself in a long hallway. The floor was made of black tile and the walls and ceiling were pristine white. At the far end of the hall was a red door.

Daniel glanced behind him to see that on this floor of the building the door to the elevator was black.

And there was no call button on either side.

DANIEL

(calling out)
Hello?
(Efx: footsteps in hallway toward red door)
Is anyone here?
(to self)
O-kay. I can do this. Maybe this is one of those crazy tests places like google use, except here at the Center they use... Ohhhhh. Maybe this is like an escape room. Okay.

(Efx: footsteps stop at red door. Daniel opens door.)

Hello?

Efx: footsteps into room. Door closes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NARRATOR

Daniel stepped into the room on the other side of the red door. He looked behind him and saw that, once again, the door was painted black and had no handle.

At the center of the room was a chair. Painted on the wall in crisp, clean letters were the words: Please take a seat. Put your arms on the armrests and ankles against the chair legs.

DANIEL

This is nuts.

(Efx: footsteps to chair. Sitting down.)

Alright. Let's get this-

(Efx: sudden clamping noises.)

Hey!

NARRATOR

Before Daniel knew what was happening, his wrists and ankles were clamped to the chair.

VOICE (LOUD SPEAKER)

Welcome to the Roth Lobdow Center for Advanced Research. As part of your interview, you will be shown a great many things. We must insist that you keep these things confidential. As you already signed a non-disclosure agreement when you applied, if you disclose any of the things you see today, we will have no choice but to come after you with the full force of the law. Also keep in mind that the Center will be firmly involved in all penalties.

DANIEL

(to self)

What does that mean?

(Efx: luggage carousel/conveyor belt type noise)

Whoa!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

NARRATOR

The chair spun to the left and began moving toward the wall with the letters on a conveyor belt. Daniel could see the edges of a smaller door, edged in red, as the chair got closer to the wall.

The wall depressed inwards and opened to allow the chair to pass through.

The long hallway Daniel now found himself travelling down had glass walls to either side that he could see through. There were labs and people working within. At the end of the glass hallway was a gigantic, white room with a table at the center. Behind it sat a man and ten feet behind him sat a woman. To the right of the table was a large red box.

Daniel's chair arrived at the table and the clamps released his wrists and ankles.

CHET

Hello, Daniel. I'm Chet. I'll be conducting your interview today.

DANIEL

Ah, alright.

CHET

As you can already tell, interviews at the Center are a bit different than at other companies. We want to ensure that everyone we hire displays the correct qualities before we hire them.

DANIEL

Of course. That makes sense. Who is she?

NARRATOR

Daniel had to lean to the side to see the young woman that sat behind Chet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

CHET

That's Ms. Lobdow.

VIVIAN

Hi, Daniel. How are you?

DANIEL

I'm good. Thanks for asking. How are you?

VIVIAN

(laughing)

He's polite, that's for sure.

Do you have any questions before Chet begins?

DANIEL

Are you the same Lobdow that the Center is named after?

VIVIAN

The same? No, but related. We've got time for one more question.

DANIEL

Why the clamps?

VIVIAN

We had a young man manage to dismember himself on the first door. He panicked and thought that he could grab the wall and keep himself in that first room.

DANIEL

Oh.

VIVIAN

Right.

So we instituted the clamps to keep anyone else from ever doing that again.

DANIEL

That makes sense.

VIVIAN

Anything else?

DANIEL

No, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

VIVIAN

Wonderful.

Chet?

CHET

Yes, Ms. Lobdow?

VIVIAN

Proceed with the interview.

CHET

How old are you, Daniel?

DANIEL

Eighteen.

CHET

How did you find out about the Center?

DANIEL

Oh, I think everyone knows a bit about the Center.

CHET

Do they?

DANIEL

Yes, sir. The Center is known for its cutting edge technology in modern warfare.

CHET

What sorts of things have you heard about?

DANIEL

All I know is that the Center works closely with all branches of the military to create custom solutions for any problem.

CHET

Do you know anything about Project Cyclops?

DANIEL

Cyclops? Uh, no. I've never heard of that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

CHET

That's the project you would be assigned to if you were hired.

DANIEL

I thought this was an internship?

CHET

You applied for an internship, but we thought you had special talents that would be better suited for Project Cyclops. Interns just push numbers around and make coffee runs. Is that what you want to do?

DANIEL

No, sir. I'd like to hear more about Project Cyclops.

CHET

Wonderful. Before we begin though, I want to make something clear.

DANIEL

Alright.

CHET

If, at any time, you wish to decline this job, the interview will stop. All you have to do is stand up and walk to the elevator behind you.

NARRATOR

Daniel turned around to look and frowned.

Efx: elevator bing noise. Doors open.

DANIEL

I just came through a long tunnel. How is there an elevator door there now? And a wall?

CHET

All you have to do is stand up and walk into the elevator behind you.
(pause)
Do you understand?

DANIEL

Ah... yes. Yes, I understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

CHET

Wonderful. Moving along then,
we'll begin your test.

DANIEL

Test?

CHET

What number am I thinking of?

DANIEL

What?

CHET

What number am I thinking of?

DANIEL

Are you being serious?

CHET

Focus. Tell me the number in my
head.

DANIEL

I have no idea.

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET

Alright.

Fail.

DANIEL

Fail? How? Because I'm not
psychic?

CHET

That's exactly why...
(pause)

DANIEL

Oh. Okay.

CHET

What animal am I thinking of?

DANIEL

I... a bird?

CHET

Are you guessing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

DANIEL

Yes.

CHET

Don't. What animal am I thinking of?

DANIEL

I don't know.

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET

Alright.

Fail.

What color am I thinking of?

DANIEL

I don't know.

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET

Fail.

Can you tell me how old I am?

DANIEL

No.

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET

Fail.

Any of my relatives names?

DANIEL

No.

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET

Fail.

Alright. That ends the first section of the test. The next section will be hands on.

DANIEL

I don't get it. How did I fail?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

CHET
You're not psychic, Daniel.

DANIEL
No one is though.

CHET
Are you ready for the hands on
portion?

DANIEL
(sighing)
Sure.

CHET
Wonderful. Please stay seated.

NARRATOR
Chet picked up the large red box
and placed it on the table,
removing the lid before Daniel
could ask what was in the box.

Efx: boxes being removed from the larger box and placed
on the table

DANIEL
What are you doing?

CHET
Removing boxes for the next test.

DANIEL
Any tips on passing?

CHET
No. Alright. Box number 1.

Efx: box lid removed. Baby's cries heard.

NARRATOR
Chet removed the box lid and
stared at Daniel who looked down
into the box, not believing what
he was seeing.

DANIEL
What the hell?

VIVIAN
(clears throat)
You forgot a step, Chet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

CHET
(flustered)
Right. Sorry. Here.

DANIEL
Why are you handing me a knife?

CHET
This is the hands on portion of
the test.

DANIEL
No!

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET
Alright.
Fail.
(Efx: box lid
replaced)
Next box.
(Efx: box lid
removed)

DANIEL
A puppy?
(pause)
No!

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET
Fail.
(Efx: box lid
replaced)
Next box.

Efx: box lid removed

DANIEL
I'm not killing a kitten either.
What's wrong with you people?

Efx: pencil writing an X on paper.

CHET
Fail.
(Efx: box lid
replaced)
Last box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

Efx: box lid removed

DANIEL

Ugh. Is that a severed head?

CHET

Yes.

DANIEL

From a cadaver?

CHET

What are you going to do?

DANIEL

I...

(Efx: Daniel feeling
sick noises as he
slowly stabs the
severed head in the
eyeball)

Ugh...

Efx: pencil writing a check mark on paper

CHET

Pass.

DANIEL

I don't know if this is for me.

VIVIAN

Are you Center material?

DANIEL

Yes.

VIVIAN

Then continue.

DANIEL

(deep breaths)
Okay. O-kay.

CHET

Remove the eye.

DANIEL

What?

CHET

You heard me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

DANIEL

Okay. I can do that.

Efx: removing eye noise. Pencil writing a check mark.

CHET

Pass.

Now put it in your mouth and
swallow.

DANIEL

No.

Efx: pencil writing a check mark on paper

CHET

Pass.

Remove the other eye.

(Efx: removing eye
noise)

Great job.

(Efx: pencil writing
a check mark on
paper)

Pass.

You can put the knife in the
bigger box now.

NARRATOR

Chet packed the smaller boxes back
into the bigger box, removing a
pair of headphones that he placed
on the table.

DANIEL

What sort of test was that?

VIVIAN

The sort that weeds out people we
don't want working here.

DANIEL

Oh... what happens to the baby and
the animals?

VIVIAN

Nothing.

How badly do you want to work
here, Daniel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

DANIEL
More than anything.

VIVIAN
Wonderful. Tell me a little about
your family.

DANIEL
My family?

VIVIAN
Yes. How do you feel about your
father?

DANIEL
Is this like a psychological test?

VIVIAN
Something like that.

DANIEL
Oh. Uh, I like my father.

VIVIAN
How often does he talk about the
Center?

DANIEL
What?

VIVIAN
Did you not understand the
question?

DANIEL
I understood it, I just don't get
why you asked.

VIVIAN
No reason, just curious.

Are you going to answer?

DANIEL
Yes... my father talks about the
Center quite a bit.

VIVIAN
And why is that?

DANIEL
Because he's on the board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

VIVIAN

Why didn't you disclose that on your application?

DANIEL

I wanted to surprise him by getting this job without his help.

VIVIAN

That's a very noble goal. I'm sure Lucas would be happy to hear that.

DANIEL

So I get the job?

VIVIAN

One more question and then one more test to find out.

Did you know that your father wants full control of the Center?

DANIEL

No, ma'am.

VIVIAN

(suddenly angry)

Did you know that he wants to take what I earned through blood and sweat?

DANIEL

No, ma'am.

VIVIAN

(calm again)

Interesting...

Go ahead, Chet.

CHET

This is the last part of the interview. Are you ready?

DANIEL

Yes.

Efx: electronic gizmo motor

NARRATOR

A tiny door opened on the table from which a small, black cube appeared.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (18)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Chet plugged the headphones into the cube and handed both to Daniel.

DANIEL

Put them on?

CHET

Yes.

DANIEL

Okay.

Efx: headphones being put on

DANIEL (MUFFLED)

Now what?

CHET

Press play.

DANIEL

Oh. Right.

Efx: beep in headphones to signify playback

VOICE (HEADPHONES)

Please close your eyes and relax. This is the last test of your interview. If you've made it this far, you've done well.

NARRATOR

Daniel closed his eyes.

VOICE (HEADPHONES)

You are going to hear a series of sounds now. Tap the knee that corresponds with the ear in which you hear the sound.

Opening your eyes will disqualify you from this interview so please take care to keep your eyes shut.

The test will begin in 3...

2...

1...

Testing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

Efx: tone in right ear
(pause)

Efx: tone in left ear
(pause)

Efx: paper crumpled in left ear
(pause)

Efx: paper crumpled in right ear
(pause)

Efx: match struck on both sides
(pause)

FEMALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(whispered in left
ear)
Is your favorite color red?
(pause)

MALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(hissed in right ear)
Yes.
(pause)

FEMALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(whispered in right
ear)
Is your favorite time of year
fall?
(pause)

MALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(hissed in left ear)
Yes.
(pause)

FEMALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(whispered in left
ear)
Are you going to make it to the
end of this interview?
(pause)

MALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
(hissed in right ear)
No.
(pause)

DANIEL
(mumbling to self)
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (20)

FEMALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
 (whispered in right
 ear)
 Are you going to make it to the
 end of the day?
 (pause)

MALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
 (hissed in left ear)
 No.
 (pause)

DANIEL
 (mumbling to self)
 What is this?

FEMALE VOICE (HEADPHONES)
 (whispered in left
 ear)
 Control is best taken...
 (pause)

MALE AND FEMALE VOICE
 (HEADPHONES)
 (spoken deeply and
 louder. One in each
 ear)
 Without your head, Daniel.

DANIEL
 What the fuck?!

NARRATOR
 Daniel's eyes flew open. Both Chet
 and Vivian were no longer sitting
 in the room. The room, which had
 previously been white was now
 black except for the table. It was
 red and sitting at the center of
 the table was an axe.

Not knowing or caring how they'd
 changed the color of the room and
 table, Daniel tossed the
 headphones away and stood.

(Efx: headphones
 being pulled off
 head and tossed)
 To his left was a black door.
 (Efx: running and
 door opening)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (21)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The first step on the other side of the door sent Daniel sprawling down a long, curving slide.

Efx: sudden bangs + sliding noise + terrified yelling + a final thump at the bottom

DANIEL

Ah, God. What was that?

NARRATOR

Daniel reached out in the dark, searching for a wall or door. He found a circular button which he pushed.

(Efx: ominous chime,
elevator door
opening)

Daniel stepped into the quiet part of the lobby again.

Not wasting time he immediately began walking, then running.

(Efx: quiet ambience
+ walking builds
into busier ambience
+ running)

The receptionist waved to him as he passed her.

RECEPTIONIST

Goodbye, Daniel.

Efx: crowded ambience fades, still running. Echoes as he hits the parking garage + heavy breathing?, keys fumbling, dropped, picked up, inserted into lock.

NARRATOR

As Daniel pulled the car door open, he saw a man walking towards him. The man was wearing a uniform.

DANIEL

(to self)
Oh, thank god.
(to man)
Sir! Sir, I need your...

NARRATOR

The words died in his throat when he saw what the man was carrying in his hand.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (22)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The same axe from the table.

DANIEL

(defeated sigh)

I'm sorry, dad. I tried.

AXE MAN

Don't worry. You'll be seeing your father soon enough.

Efx: axe chops and screams

OUTRO BUMPER

Efx: distinctive noise.

JOHN

Was anything about that interview process familiar?

KATIE

You think I'd be standing here right now if I'd been interviewed like that?

JOHN

Back in my day there was just a stack of paperwork. Nothing like what we just watched.

KATIE

Are you starting to think this might be real?

JOHN

I'm starting to think I should use a sick day tomorrow.

Efx: buzz of Katie's phone.

KATIE

Whoa.

JOHN

What is it?

KATIE

A text from Henry. The first payment has been wired. Holy shit.

JOHN

Making it worth your while?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (23)

KATIE

I'd say so. And now he wants more.

JOHN

How much more?

KATIE

In his exact words: "Send me
everything."

Efx: rummaging through purse. Recorder button press/tone.