EPISODE 8: For My Last Trick...

Characters:

Katie: Mid 20s. Impulsive and spontaneous. Quick learner who isn’t afraid to speak her mind. Knows she’s wrapped up in a larger conspiracy now, but has to keep that from Ricketts.

Dr. Lionel Ricketts: 30s. Younger member of Project Cyclops, working independently from Dr. Kinsler. Extremely cold. Softspoken but menacing. Guarded. Blew up at Katie a few eps ago.

Morgan Davies: Late 30s/Early 40s. Grim and matter of fact, but also desperate to make a connection. Isolated from the world at large because of the unique nature of his job, Morgan just wants to make his little corner of existence a bit less lonely. Katie's confidante earlier this season.

Kirby: Late 20s. Sassy, carefree, and maybe a little too sure of himself. He spells "girl" with a u.

Barista: Female coffee slinger.

TV Announcer: A TV Announcer.

Locations:

1. Lab at Lobdow Center for Advanced Research
2. Coffee Shop
3. Morgan's Mansion

Time of Day:

Evening/Night
INTRO BUMPER

ROTH LOBDOW CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

EFX: Recorder button/tone.

KATIE
(whispering)
Roth-Lodbow Center for Advanced Research. Project Cyclops, Day 17, about to begin. Entering the laboratory now.

EFX: Key card beep. A loud buzz, a metal lock unlatched. Door opens, footsteps.

DR. RICKETTS
(Matter of fact)
Ah, Katie.

KATIE
Dr. Ricketts.

EFX: A pen scribbling on paper.

DR. RICKETTS
Just finalizing some entries for yesterday's report.

KATIE
Great. You know, speaking of yesterday, I went home last night and decided to watch some television to take my mind off work. Almost like a cruel joke, the only thing that was on besides reality shows was Dracula.

DR. RICKETTS
Hm. Which?

KATIE
I don't know. Black & white?

DR. RICKETTS
Lugosi. I'm more of a Christopher Lee man, myself.

KATIE
Wow. I don't think I've ever heard you express a preference for anything besides science... let alone something pop culture oriented.
EFX: Scribbling stops.

DR. RICKETTS
(no irony)
There's a science to monster movies.

Katie sighs.

KATIE
Well, science or no, the fact that we witnessed an act of vampirism...

DR. RICKETTS
(interjecting)
Alleged vampirism.

Kate doesn't miss a beat.

KATIE
...alleged vampirism... kind of took the fun out of escapist viewing.

DR. RICKETTS
I read a book last night about cellular mutation.

KATIE
Fun.

A beat.

KATIE (cont’d)
What do we have today?

EFX: The sound of a sheet being pulled.

DR. RICKETTS
Male. Looks to be early 40s and...

KATIE
(Interrupting, alarmed)
Oh my god.

DR. RICKETTS
...excuse me?

KATIE
This isn't possible. I know this person. They work for the Center.
DR. RICKETTS
...and? This isn't the first time a subject has been associated with Roth Lobdow... as you so often like to point out.

KATIE
This is different. I don't understand how the head today could be that head.

DR. RICKETTS
It was delivered just like the rest.

KATIE
My point exactly.

DR. RICKETTS
Do you care to explain yourself?

KATIE
No. I mean, yes... but first... I think we should dig into this. I want to make sure there aren't any facts I'm missing before I explain.

DR. RICKETTS
Ok...

KATIE
Just... trust me on this.

DR. RICKETTS
I have to hand it to you, Katie... for the first time since I started working here... you've piqued my curiosity.

KATIE
It's about time.

DR. RICKETTS
Please Proceed.

EFX: Sound of scalpel cutting flesh, beeps.

KATIE
Project Cyclops. Trial 10-beta-13. Time stamp is registering correctly. Initiating playback in 3... 2... 1... Initiate.
The dull roar as patrons sip their java, converse with friends, and jam out screenplays.

EFX: The clinking of mugs and utensils, keyboard noises, the dull chatter of the customers.

After a beat, Morgan enters.

EFX: The jingle-jangle of a bell above the door.

MORGAN
Hmmm.

THE NARRATOR
As far as coffee shops go, it was like any other: Small, quaint, and overly complicated by the presence of too many people and not enough seats. For this last reason, it was the kind of place that Morgan generally tried to avoid. However, his distaste of crowds had recently been outweighed by an increasing feeling of loneliness. When he had signed up for the dating app to hopefully curtail the latter, he knew a visit to such a location was inevitable. This was that night.

BARISTA
Do you know what you want?

MORGAN
What?

THE NARRATOR
Morgan looked up from his phone to find a barista staring at him from behind the counter. The coffee worker gave him a kind smile, but also wore a look of urgency, suggesting to Morgan that he was holding up the line.

MORGAN
(sheepishly)
Oh, I... I'm sorry. I didn't even get a chance to look at the menu.
BARISTA
Let me guess: A date?

MORGAN
(surprised)
How did you know?

BARISTA
The way you were holding the phone. Figured you were comparing the people in here to a picture, trying to make a match.

MORGAN
Wow, you're good.

BARISTA
I ain't studying you! It's a coffee shop so we get a lot of first dates. When you see it daily, it's not too hard to ID. Beyond that, I wouldn't put too much faith in my detective skills.

MORGAN
Well, I'm still impressed.

BARISTA
Been awhile?

MORGAN
Is it obvious?

BARISTA
You didn't automatically rattle off demands for a complicated latte when I asked what you wanted, so I'm assuming you haven't been to a coffee shop in a while. Intermittent coffee shop visits suggest intermittent dating in the city.

MORGAN
I think your detective skills are better than you think.

BARISTA
(playfully)
I bet you say that to all the Baristas.

At this, Morgan laughs.
BARISTA (cont’d)
(reassuring)
You'll be fine.

MORGAN
Thanks.

BARISTA
Can I get something started for you while you wait?

MORGAN
Is that okay?

BARISTA
...to have a drink in a coffee shop while you wait for someone? Yeah, I think that's allowed.

MORGAN
(nervously)
I don't even know what I'm doing.

BARISTA
On a date? Or ordering coffee?

MORGAN
...both?

BARISTA
Child, you might have uniqueness and talent but nerves aren't your strong suit... I'll make it decaf. Just have a seat and I'll bring it out to you.

MORGAN
What are you bringing?

BARISTA
A pleasant surprise... just like your evening will be. Now, sit. I've got other customers with existential crises.

MORGAN
Thank you.

EFX: Whirring espresso machine. More cups and utensils clinking.
THE NARRATOR
Sitting in the corner with his mystery drink, Morgan couldn't help but anxiously look at every new entrant through the shop's doors, his stomach knotted with anticipation.

EFX: Several staggered jingles of the door's bell.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Just as he had convinced himself that it was time to give up, the bell above the door rang out once more... and Morgan laid eyes on Kirby for the first time.

EFX: Footsteps, crowd noise.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
As the young man stepped into the cafe, Morgan instantly felt ashamed that he ever thought he could mistake anyone else for this handsome, young creature. Kirby was a better version of his online photos: Vibrant. Full of life. Taking Kirby in, Morgan couldn't help thinking to himself...

MORGAN (under his breath)
This one will do.

EFX: Kirby's approach.

KIRBY
There you are! I'm so sorry I'm late! Those uptown buses, man. The ads say they're always on time, but if that's what they consider "on time," than I'm the butchest guy in town.

A beat.

KIRBY (cont’d)
...that was a joke. Unless you actually think I'm butch, then... I'd say you don't get out much.

Morgan politely laughs.

MORGAN
Sorry. I'm bad at this.
KIRBY
Girl, we all are. Look at me, I just spew word vomit when I'm nervous. Let's start this again. Kirby.

MORGAN
(warmly)
Morgan.

KIRBY
A pleasure to meet you in the flesh and off the phone.

MORGAN
Likewise.

KIRBY
Were you waiting long? I'm sorry again for being late.

MORGAN
No, no... not terribly long. I had a nice chat with the coffee maker person.

KIRBY
The barista?

MORGAN
Yes. That. By the way, when did we start giving fancy titles to these jobs? What's wrong with just being the "coffee guy" or "coffee girl"? No shame in that.

KIRBY
Oh, don't I know it. You know they're not bartenders anymore? They're "mixologists."

MORGAN
No kidding?

KIRBY
Two things I don't kid about: Boys and booze.

Morgan laughs.

MORGAN
But no, I didn't wait long. I talked to the...
KIRBY
...barista...

MORGAN
...barista. She made me this drink.

KIRBY
Oh! What is it?

MORGAN
...I don't exactly know?

KIRBY
Let me see.

EFX: The sound of Kirby grabbing the cup, taking a big whiff of its contents.

KIRBY (cont’d)
It smells...kind of basic.

MORGAN
I think she said it was decaf?

KIRBY
...that's not just basic, that's mean.

Again, Morgan laughs. He's starting to ease up.

KIRBY (cont’d)
Look, why don't I go order us a couple lattes... on me, since I was late... and save you from whatever this travesty is supposed to be. You're with me now. Live deliciously!

MORGAN
Okay. Sure.

KIRBY
Be right back!

EFX: Footsteps

MORGAN
..."with you," indeed.

THE NARRATOR
Minutes later, Kirby returned with complicated coffee drinks the likes of which Morgan had never had before. (MORE)
Over the course of the next hour, the duo talked about all manner of topics trivial and mundane: The weather, the city, and pop culture personalities about which Morgan not so skillfully feigned knowledge. Although pleasant, as the time wore on, it became evident that there was a dangling, unspoken urgency between the two men. Finally, it was Kirby who broached the subject.

EFX: Coffee sip.

KIRBY
This has been fun.

MORGAN
Yeah. It has.

KIRBY
So...

MORGAN
So.

KIRBY
...we did meet on a hook-up app, not eHarmony.

MORGAN
Yes.

KIRBY
Are you going to invite me back to your place or what?

MORGAN
Did you want to come back to my place?

KIRBY
If I didn't, I'd have left a long time ago.

MORGAN
I guess that's true.

KIRBY
It's also true that only thing better than one orgasm is two.
MORGAN
Yes. We can go.

KIRBY
That's what I thought you'd say.

EFX: The sound of Morgan and Kirby placing their coffee cups on the table, footsteps, the bell above the door one final time.

MORGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

THE NARRATOR
A short while and one not-so on time bus later, Kirby and Morgan arrived at Morgan's mansion. Nervously, Morgan fumbled with the keys in the door, the anticipation of what was to come overwhelming him.

EFX: Keys, unlocking noises, door opening, footsteps as the duo enter the room, door closing.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Morgan's mansion, like the man himself, grand, empty, and without frills. Little to no decoration adorned the walls, and what furniture he did have was drab and uninteresting. Despite this, the place had a very lived in quality. Scattered across the couch and end table were an odd assortment of books, most with titles Kirby didn't recognize. Science texts and novels about world history. The kind of material the younger man would admittedly do his best to avoid at all costs in his leisure time.

KIRBY
It's... cozy.

MORGAN
Thank you. It's not much.

KIRBY
For what we're about to do, we don't need much.

Morgan laughs nervously.
MORGAN
Right. Yes.

KIRBY
You seem kinda tense. I hope the coffee didn't make you too jittery.

MORGAN
It's fine. This just isn't my norm.

KIRBY
(coy)
Oh! Well, we don't have to rush anything. In fact... it's more fun if we take it slow.

MORGAN
Oh. I suppose... I suppose you're right. Maybe we should have a seat on the couch? Can I get you anything? A water.. or tea... or?

KIRBY
(sensually)
There's only one thing I want.

THE NARRATOR
Before Morgan even had a chance to respond, he could feel Kirby's warm fingers interlacing with his. It was a pleasant feeling, surpassed only by the kiss that followed.

EFX: Kissing

KIRBY
(Hushed)
You were saying about the couch?

MORGAN
Yes.

THE NARRATOR
Silently, Morgan led Kirby to the couch, sweeping away several books that littered the cushions and knocking them to the floor.

EFX: Books falling

Together, the two fell as one onto the sofa... entangled and lost to the moment.
EFX: Zipper noise.

KIRBY
Mmm. Nice.

EFX: A few more smooch noises before an audio fade out.

FADE IN: LATER

THE NARRATOR
A short while later, Morgan woke with a snort from the casual nap he had fallen into. Kirby, still lying atop him, dozed peacefully. Unable to resist the sleeping figure's vulnerable innocence, Morgan reached up, and gentle caressed Kirby's hair.

KIRBY
(waking up)
Mmmm. Hey.

MORGAN
Hey.

EFX: Yawn

KIRBY
When did we fall asleep?

MORGAN
I'm not sure, exactly. But, it does happen after you expend a lot of energy.

Kirby laughs.

KIRBY
Boy, did we.

MORGAN
Worth it.

EFX: Kissing noise.

KIRBY
For sure.

A beat.

KIRBY (cont’d)
Ugh.
MORGAN

What?

KIRBY

I don't want to get up.

MORGAN

(playfully)

...then don't.

KIRBY

I wish. But... we did have a lot of coffee earlier. I want to stay put, but my bladder has some different thoughts.

MORGAN

Ah, gotcha.

Kirby groans as he stretches and stands.

EFX: Rustling, clothes being picked up from the floor.

KIRBY

I think these are my pants.

MORGAN

You're getting dressed to go to the bathroom?

KIRBY

It's drafty in here!

Morgan laughs.

MORGAN

Ok.

EFX: Zipper noise.

KIRBY

Bathroom?

MORGAN

Down the hall. Last door on the left.

KIRBY

Thanks.

EFX: One last smooch. Footsteps.
THE NARRATOR
Morgan watched as Kirby ambled off into the dark hallway. Once the younger man was out of sight, Morgan sat up, running his hands over his face as if to smooth out invisible wrinkles and to wipe the sleep from his eyes. Grabbing a remote control from the end table, Morgan lazily clicked on a dusty old television set as he rose and began to gather his clothes. Passively staring at the screen while he pulled on his pants, Morgan couldn't help but feeling content with the way the evening had progressed.

EFX: The sound of something heavy hitting the floor. Echoes.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Morgan had just finished getting dressed when he heard a most unexpected sound from the hallway: A dull, but heavy thud. Morgan cocked his ear to listen. The silence was almost unsettling. And then.

EFX: The distance sound of Kirby's cries.

MORGAN
What?

EFX: Running footsteps

THE NARRATOR
Running down the hall, Morgan saw light spilling out of a doorway... and instantly knew that the evening was about to take a turn.

EFX: Footsteps come to a halt.

MORGAN
This is not the last door on the left.

KIRBY
(panicked)
What the fuck is going on?!

EFX: Low hum.
THE NARRATOR
The room that Kirby currently occupied... which was very much not the last door on the left... was a small, sterile space. Refrigeration fans mounted into the walls caused a low humming noise to echo throughout and gave the room a strong, icy chill. Small shelves situated around the room's perimeter were packed with a truly garish inventory: Human heads, individually wrapped in a thick, butcher's plastic, and glaringly absent of their bodies. On the floor next to Kirby, one such head lay still, glaring up at both men with dead eyes. This was the source of the sound that brought Morgan running.

MORGAN
You're not supposed to be in here.

KIRBY
(hysterical)
What... what is this? Did you kill these people?

THE NARRATOR
Morgan leaned down and picked up the fallen head from the ground.

MORGAN
(ignoring Kirby)
You shouldn't have touched these... they're mine.

KIRBY
Stay away from me.

A beat.

KIRBY (cont’d)
(Yelling)
Somebody help!

MORGAN
Quiet!

KIRBY
HELP!

EFX: Scuffle.
THE NARRATOR
Triggered by his internal fight or flight response, Kirby made a sudden mad dash toward the door, hoping his momentum would be enough to take Morgan by surprise and allow him to escape the Head Room and get to the hall and subsequently out of the house. This was a futile hope.

EFX: Sound of Kirby's attempt to run.

MORGAN
(angrily)
I said quiet!

THE NARRATOR
Lunging at Kirby as the younger man attempted to squeeze by him and through the door, Morgan rocketed his open palm against the side of Kirby's head. The flat of Morgan's hand connected with Kirby, forcing the young man's head to slam against the door frame.

EFX: A thud and crack.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Kirby hit the ground, unconscious, leaving a small, red stain behind on the wall.

MORGAN
I didn't want to have to do that.

Morgan sighs.

MORGAN (cont’d)
But you made me. You made me.

EFX: The sound of Morgan dragging Kirby's body.

Fade Out.

FADE IN:

THE NARRATOR
For the second time that evening, Kirby found himself waking up on Morgan's couch. This time, the vague aroma of a completely different bodily fluid filled the room.

(MORE)
The dull ache of Kirby's head was accentuated by the sticky wet flow of dried blood caked around his eye... the aftermath of the wound he received when Morgan slammed him into the door jam. Still, despite the pain, Kirby sat up with a start... as if waking from a nightmare.

Kirby

Ah!

The Narrator

Sitting up, Kirby was greeted by a gruesome sight: On the end table next to the couch was the head he had knocked over in the other room... its dead eyes staring up at him. Immediately, Kirby turned his head to the floor... and vomited. So much for all that coffee.

EFX: Vomit noises.

Morgan

(calm)
Are you throwing up because of the concussion or the head?

Kirby chokes out the last few bits of spew.

Kirby

(groggy)
Both. I think.

Morgan

Mmm.

Kirby

(pulling himself together)
Did you kill those people?

Morgan

No. I am responsible for all of them, though.

Kirby

...what happens to the bodies?
MORGAN

KIRBY
What do you mean, "not your business?"

MORGAN
I'm a head collector. I collect heads. I don't care what happens to the rest.

KIRBY
Don't you know where the bodies go?

MORGAN
Usually someone comes and gets them. I'm not the only one in this town with certain... interests.

KIRBY
Jesus.

MORGAN
You're taking this very well.

KIRBY
No. I'm actually not. But you bashed my head into a wall. It's hard to express terror and nausea at the same time.

MORGAN
Ah.

A beat.

Kirby begins to cry.

KIRBY
(sobbing)
I just wanted to go on a date. Maybe hook-up with a guy. Not this. Not this. I just wanted...

MORGAN
(cutting him off)
A little head? Well, you got it.

It's the first time we've ever heard Morgan really attempt humor... and it's suitably creepy.
MORGAN (cont’d)
...sorry. I'm not good at jokes. You probably figured that out at the coffee shop, though.

Kirby unintelligibly whimpers.

KIRBY
You... you can't kill me. My friends... they know where I am. I told my friends I was coming here tonight.

Morgan sighs. He doesn't buy it.

MORGAN
You told your friends that you were meeting someone for a hook-up date? That you had pointedly made plans to go get fucked?

Kirby again sobs loudly.

KIRBY
Oh god... oh god...

A beat.

KIRBY (cont’d)
Please don't kill me.

MORGAN
I was never going to kill you.

KIRBY
Wh-what?

MORGAN
...but I can't let you leave.

Kirby sniffles.

KIRBY
I... I... don't understand.

MORGAN
Well, maybe meeting people for a casual fuck and run is a regular occurrence in your world... but it's certainly not in mine.

A beat.
MORGAN (cont’d)
When you do what I do, you lead a very solitary existence... and, as you can imagine, it's very difficult to find people who understand. So, all I really have...

THE NARRATOR
Morgan pointed to the severed head on the end table.

MORGAN
...is them. And even most of them don't stay.

KIRBY
Most of them...?

MORGAN
It's a long story... another time...

EFX: Morgan's footsteps.

THE NARRATOR
Grabbing the severed head from the end table with one hand, Morgan turned and lifted it in front of Kirby's face.

MORGAN
...and they just don't give the kind of affection I've been craving. Go on... kiss it. You'll see what I mean.

Kirby whimpers.

KIRBY
No... no... please no.

MORGAN
(forcefully)
Kiss it. I want you to understand how my world feels.

KIRBY
Please don't make me...

EFX: Slap.

THE NARRATOR
Morgan slapped Kirby across the cheek with a forceful open palm.

(MORE)
A blossom of colors exploded across Kirby's vision.

MORGAN

(manic)

Kiss it. Only then will you understand why I need you.

THE NARRATOR

With no other choice, Kirby did as he was told: Gingerly reaching up and taking the dead cheeks of the decapitated head into his palms, he pulled the head toward him. He found himself surprised by its weight. Morgan let go of the head, allowing Kirby to truly have a moment with the unwitting paramour.

MORGAN

Now.

EFX: Sloppy kiss and saliva noises.

KIRBY

Oh god.

EFX: Spitting

MORGAN

Now, do you understand? This is why I need you. I want warmth. I want a response. Hell, I want a body.

EFX: Footsteps.

THE NARRATOR

Morgan stepped back to full gaze upon Kirby. He looked imploringly upon the younger man as if he had just revealed some great truth.

KIRBY

What... are you going to do to me?

MORGAN

I'm keeping you. I knew from the moment I saw you that you were the one.

KIRBY

You... can't force me to stay.
MORGAN
I'm not a fool, Kirby. I know no one would want this life. I don't particularly want it myself. But sometimes when you draw straws, you get the short end. This is my lot. And I'm done doing it alone. You will stay here.

Kirby sniffs.

KIRBY
...are you going to hurt me?

MORGAN
No. But I am going to convince you. There's this new drug. We can even put it in one of those coffee drinks you like. Like from tonight. This drug... it'll make you want to stay. And then you can be with me. And I won't be alone.

KIRBY
You're going to drug me?

MORGAN
It's better than the alternative.

KIRBY
...but what about my family. My friends?

MORGAN
You just saw your new family and friends in the other room.

Kirby cries.

MORGAN (cont’d)
Now, stand up. We're going to get you cleaned up.

THE NARRATOR
Defeated, Kirby began to rise. The nausea from his head wound still extraordinarily fresh.

MORGAN
You can do it.

A beat.
MORGAN (cont’d)
...and here, give that to me.

THE NARRATOR
At this, Kirby glanced downward. Impossibly, he had almost forgotten that he was still firmly clutching the severed head with which he had shared an intimate moment with mere seconds before.

KIRBY
Huh?

MORGAN
Give it to me.

THE NARRATOR
Locking his gaze with the dead eyes staring up at him, Kirby suddenly had a thought...

KIRBY
(with conviction)
You can fucking have it.

MORGAN
What?

THE NARRATOR
Pulling every ounce of his dwindling energy into one action, Kirby brought the decapitated head upward in a quick motion... smashing the dead man’s face squarely into Morgan’s.

EFX: The sounds of two skulls cracking together.

MORGAN
(in pain)
Ah!

EFX: Morgan stumbling backwards.

THE NARRATOR
Blood blossomed from Morgan's nose, now broken from the corpse's headbutt. Reinvigorated... Kirby hit him with the head again.

EFX: A wet snap and crunch.
THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Morgan crashed to the ground.

EFX: Morgan falling. The thud of his body on the floor.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
As Kirby watched Morgan fall, he saw his chance. Dropping the head in his hands to the floor...

EFX: Head hitting the floor.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
...Kirby made a manic dash toward the front door. Just as the young man thought he was in the clear, he felt the strong grip of Morgan's hand clasp around his ankle... pulling backwards and causing Kirby to fall to the ground.

EFX: Kirby falling, hitting the ground. Kirby's cries.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Blood gushing from multiple entry points on his face, Morgan climbed toward Kirby like a man possessed.

EFX: Morgan screaming.

KIRBY
No!

MORGAN
Don't leave... you can't!

THE NARRATOR
With no other choice, Kirby kicked out his leg, catching Morgan squarely in the face. This impact caused the older man to fall backward.

EFX: A crash.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Not wanting to make the same mistake twice... Kirby leaped on top of Morgan, pinning him down. Grabbing Morgan by the hair, Kirby began to smash Morgan's head into the floor.

EFX: Thud
THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Over.

EFX: Thud

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
…and over...

EFX: Thud

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
…and over.

A beat.

THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
Morgan's head was now cracked like an egg, his hot blood had splashed all over Kirby... who still wore a manic expression from the adrenaline rush. Impossibly, there was still a flicker of light in Morgan's eyes.

EFX: Morgan coughing blood.

MORGAN
(Coughing, dying)
Fuck... you...

KIRBY
(cold)
We already did that.

EFX: One final thud... and wet crunching snap.

THE NARRATOR
Wobbly, Kirby stood, passively flicking Morgan's excess blood from his fingertips as he did so. Despite the icy grip of anxiety that still seized his chest, the young man couldn't help but let out a long sigh of relief. Willing his feet to move, Kirby crossed to the front door... a journey of only a few steps that felt, to his beleaguered mind, like many miles.

EFX: Door knob, door opening.
THE NARRATOR (cont’d)
As he turned the knob and pushed his way to freedom, the young man couldn't help but think a singular, dark thought: As far as first dates go... it could have been worse.

EFX: Footsteps down the hall

OUTRO BUMPER

DR. RICKETTS
The storage of the heads in Morgan's house... that must mean...

KATIE
Yup.

DR. RICKETTS
This is the head collector?

KATIE
One and the same... and now I know his name's Morgan...

DR. RICKETTS
You knew him... but you didn't know his name?

KATIE
It's a long story.

DR. RICKETTS
Intriguing.

KATIE
...and it's somehow even more complicated than I thought it would be.

DR. RICKETTS
Isn't it always?

KATIE
If this is the head collector, then who brought his head? And what about Morgan saying he'd ‘control’ Kirby?

(MORE)
Hrm? How much do you want to bet Morgan was talking about using Axiom Zero on him, Dr. Ricketts?

DR. RICKETTS
...Katie.

KATIE
(determined)
You and I both know something's amiss. I need answers.

DR. RICKETTS
...how do you know about Axiom Zero?

KATIE
(oh shit...)
I-- I-- I don't know how to explain this, but--

DR. RICKETTS
Yes -- the drug we've been seeing is called Axiom Zero, but we've never discussed that before.

KATIE
(reaching for straws)
It's been eating me up inside not telling you, Dr. Ricketts, but--

DR. RICKETTS
(grave)
Look, I can't give you answers. In fact...

He pauses. Katie senses something is up.

KATIE
...Dr. Ricketts?

DR. RICKETTS
...in fact... I'm afraid I'm about to make matters more complicated.

KATIE
What... what do you mean?

EFX: Footsteps, container opening, sound of something being placed on the table.

KATIE (cont’d)
What is this?
DR. RICKETTS
You know what it is.

KATIE
...yes, but I don't understand.

DR. RICKETTS
Well, in addition to the head hunter, I arrived this morning to find a second head... odd, since Morgan here wasn't really available to deliver it... and I was left with the explicit instruction that you were supposed to perform another trial of Project Cyclops today... Alone.

KATIE
...alone?

DR. RICKETTS
Yes.

KATIE
Why? Whose head is this?

Dr. Ricketts exhales softly. It's the sound of concern.

DR. RICKETTS
I want you to know that I believe you to be a capable scientist. This thing you have been asked to do... you can... and will do... because it is necessary.

KATIE
(uncertain)
Dr. Ricketts...

EFX: Footsteps, a loud buzz, a metal lock unlatched. Door opens.

DR. RICKETTS
I have to leave now, Ms. Reed. But, before I go... allow me to say... whatever you see... proceed with caution. Good luck and godspeed.

KATIE
(hesitant)
...thank you.

EFX: Footsteps. He exits. Door closes.