

ACT TWO

"Rowdy"

4 INT. ESCAPE ROOM - LOBBY -- LATER (D1) 4

SC.1

The family, excited to begin, sits in the waiting area. They're greeted by a young girl with the word "ROWDY" printed on her shirt. She starts her instructions, a speech she's given many times before.

Start →

ROWDY

Welcome to Escape Orson. First of all, does anyone have any medical conditions that would prevent them from participating in the Escape Orson experience?

MIKE

We probably all have high cholesterol.

ROWDY

(checks clipboard)

Yeah, that's not on my list. Okay, the escape room experience is designed for groups of six, so you'll be paired with this gentleman here, Milt.

In the corner, a mild-mannered man in his fifties with gray hair and glasses, MILT, puts down a magazine and stands up.

FRANKIE

Hi, nice to meet you. Just so you know, we're trying to beat a minute-eight.

MIKE

But we got a secret weapon, our daughter, Sue, here.

FRANKIE

Any board game or puzzle we play, she always wins. She's just got a mind for it. She's so good.

SUE

No, I'm not.

FRANKIE

Yes, you are. See? Social contract.

AXL

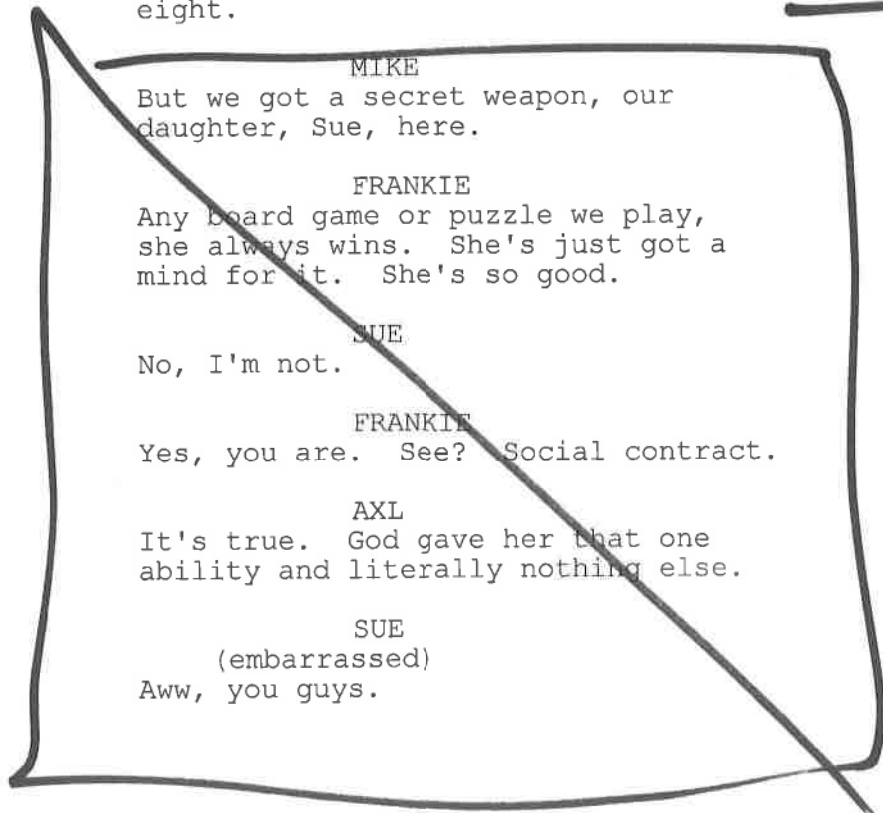
It's true. God gave her that one ability and literally nothing else.

SUE

(embarrassed)

Aww, you guys.

7pgs  
3 scenes



1/7

The Middle

G. Charles Wright  
Casting

**Cont.** →

MILT

Well, sounds good to me. I'm just here on my lunch hour.

ROWDY

Your team will be entering the laboratory of a mad scientist who has created a virus that, if released, will unleash an army of zombies upon the Earth. You'll have to decipher the clues left behind in order to get out in under the one-hour time limit. You can ask for up to three clues, which I will give you on this walkie-talkie.

She hands them a walkie.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Now before you enter, I strongly suggest you use the restroom.

take a  
beat →

Everyone looks at Sue.

SUE

I don't have to go, I promise.  
(presses on stomach)  
See?

AXL

Okay, let's do this. The Donahues are going down!

FRANKIE

Hands in. One, two, three...

FRANKIE/MIKE/AXL/SUE/BRICK

Go Hecks! / Go Hecks! / Go Hecks! /  
Go Hecks! / *The Red Badge of Courage!*

SUE

Brick!

BRICK

Well, I'm sorry. It's no "Go Hecks."

Everyone files inside. Milt crosses by Brick, who stops in his tracks, grabbing Frankie's arm.

BRICK (CONT'D)

Mom! Did you see that guy? That's David S. Rosenthal!

(off her blank look)

Author of the *Planet Nowhere* book series, as well as the official *Out of This World Cookbook -- How to Get Your Silligan to Eat Their Vegetables?*

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FRANKIE

No, it's not. It's Milt. Brick, I don't think a billionaire author is gonna be doing the Orson Escape Room on New Year's Day. Why would he be here?

BRICK

We're here.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but we're nobodies.

She and Brick head inside.

5 INT. ESCAPE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER (D1)

5

The family and Milt stand in the middle of a dim, old-fashioned mad scientist's office. There is a desk, cabinets and shelves with medical instruments, brains in jars and beakers of bubbling liquids. Rowdy points up at a large digital clock on the wall with one hour on it.

Cont.

ROWDY

Okay, you've got one hour. Your time starts... now.

END SCENE

He locks them in and the clock starts counting down.

SUE

I have to pee.

Everyone groans, annoyed with her.

SUE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't know there were gonna be bubbling beakers.

FRANKIE

Okay, everyone spread out and start looking for clues.

Frank and Sue head over to one of the walls to a framed, wooden maze with a sliding chain with a key on the end.

ANGLE ON -- Frankie and Mike, who approach a file cabinet.

MIKE

What are we even looking for?

FRANKIE

I don't know. We'll know when we find it.

She tries the drawers, but they won't open.

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AXL

Hey! Everybody! I've discovered two things in this mirror. One -- whatever this lighting is, I look great in it. And two -- I think that's "Brain" written backwards on the wall back there.

He turns around and points to the wall behind him.

FRANKIE

The brains in the jars! It must be a clue!

Everyone rushes over to the jars, except Mike, who watches Frankie with a troubled look on his face.

6 INT. ESCAPE ROOM - LOBBY -- LATER (D1) 6

Rowdy sits at her desk in a booth off the lobby, playing on her phone. On the computer screen in front of her is a black-and-white video feed of the escape room. The Hecks can be seen running around, looking for clues.

7 INT. ESCAPE ROOM -- LATER (D1) 7

The clock reads 40:07 and counting. Milt is opening and shutting the drawers of a file cabinet, looking for clues. Brick approaches, casually pretending to also look for clues.

BRICK

So... Milt. Is that short for anything? Like... David?

Milt looks confused.

ANGLE ON -- Frankie and Mike, who are each trying to open combination locks while Sue picks up items, reading random numbers off them.

SUE

Uh... five, seven, six, two!

Frankie and Mike try their locks, but it doesn't work.

FRANKIE

Where are you getting these numbers from? Are you just making these up?

MIKE

I'm just gonna say it. At this point, is the zombie apocalypse really that bad?

FRANKIE

Sue, what's going on? Usually, you're all over this stuff.

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SUE  
(laughing nervously)  
Yeah, I am. I usually am.

FRANKIE  
Well, we need a plan. Why doesn't  
this family ever have a plan? We  
can't just be trying everything willy-  
nilly.  
(picking up items)  
We're just going, "What's this?"  
"What's this?"  
(picks up magnifying glass)  
Wait, what is this?

Scene  
2  
Start

The magnifying glass has a red lens in it. Frankie starts looking around the room through it, inspecting a tattered chart on the wall of the Periodic Table of Elements. Sue picks up the walkie-talkie.

→ SUE  
Should we ask for a clue? I'm gonna ask for a clue.

~~FRANKIE  
Oh my God! When I look at the chart through the red lens, you can see numbers underneath. Try 3-1-8-4!~~

Mike starts to work the combination padlock on the door.

SUE  
Wait, wait, wait. So if you hold the magnifying glass over the chart, something happens?

ROWDY (O.S.)  
(through walkie)  
Yes. You use the red glass to decode the numbers. You have used your first clue.

FRANKIE  
Sue! We already figured that out! You just wasted a clue.

SUE  
I'm sorry! I didn't know my finger was on the button.

Meanwhile, Mike has opened the combination lock.

MIKE  
Never mind, we're in. Suck it, Donahues.

Scene 2  
END

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SUE

He's right. I don't know what I'm doing. The zombies are gonna eat us and it's all my fault. I may not be good at games, but I'm also not a liar, so here's the truth... I am a cheater. I loved that rush of winning, but after a while, I didn't love it so much as need it. I had to have it. There's not a game in our house I haven't cheated at. But that ends today! I am not gonna let my past define me. I'm gonna go forward with confidence, with honor. Starting now, Sue Heck wins for real!

ENNGGH! A buzzer sounds and zombie snarling can be heard through the P.A.

VOICE (O.S.)

You have not succeeded. The zombie apocalypse has begun. Mankind is doomed. Please exit through the fail door.

Everyone looks up to the clock, which reads zero. Sue falls to her knees.

SUE

Noooo!!

Beaten, they start to shuffle out, but Frankie stops them.

FRANKIE

No! We are not entering 2017 through the fail door! We've done it every other year and I'm sick of it! Not this year!

AXL

Mom, we suck.

MIKE

Hey, we were doing fine. If anyone sucks, it's Rowdy. We asked for that clue and she didn't get back to us for like two minutes. We could've been out of here and back on the couch where we belong.

Everyone ad-libs agreements -- Yeah! That's right!, etc.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Which camera is she watching through?

Mike finds the camera on the wall and looks into it while using the walkie-talkie.

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Scene  
3  
Start

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MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey! Rowdy! I don't know what you were doing when we asked you for that last clue, but you owe us two minutes.

Everyone agrees. Finally, Rowdy's voice comes over the P.A.

ROWDY (O.S.)

Fine.

The clock on the wall counts back up to two minutes and starts again. Everyone CHEERS.

FRANKIE

Okay, let's do this! Axl, you're up!

AXL

(moving levers)

C-L-A-R-A...

Once the levers are aligned, the plexiglass door opens and the key drops out. It worked!

AXL (CONT'D)

Yes!

Frankie grabs the key, runs to the exit door and puts the key in the lock. Everyone follows, whooping in excitement. She turns the key and the door starts to open...

FRANKIE

Ha-ha! Suck it, Donah--

The door opens fully to reveal... a brick wall. Graffiti is scrawled across the bricks, which reads, "Zombie Population Explodes Now."

EVERYONE

No!!

AXL

Wait -- it's fake!

Axl takes a running leap into the bricks, bounces off and hits the floor.

AXL (CONT'D)

Nope. It's real.

The family is crushed.

MIKE

I hate escape rooms. I hate Groupo. Never again.

END

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