

Rules for the room:  
Controlled breaking OK

## INTRO

You pinch yourself as you walk down the long hallway, eyes wide with awe and heart in your throat. This can't be real. This *must* be a dream.

Since the two of you were kids, you've looked forward to turning sixteen. You fantasised about walking into that doctor's office, getting your blood tested, and being told that you were one of the handful of kids that year that tested positive... for the superhero gene.

Yes, you've fantasised about becoming a superhero for as long as you can remember. Your bedroom walls are covered with photos of the city's defenders. Zooming around the skies, throwing fire from their hands, or picking up an entire truck in their arms? It seems like there's nothing superheroes can't do.

The city has invested a lot of money into superhero research over the years, so much so that they can now pinpoint the exact gene that means someone will develop superhero powers. Soon after that, the Mayor introduced voluntary testing for anyone sixteen and over who wanted to find out whether they had what it takes to join the ranks of the superheroes.

Your day has been a complete whirlwind since the positive test result came back. You were whisked out of the testing room to another lab where they drew more of your blood for... something. And then you were taken – by PRIVATE LIMO, no less – to a secret facility near the Mayor's office. Now the actual Mayor himself is leading you down a darkly-lit hallway. He stops in front of a plain unmarked door. "Has anyone explained to you why you're here?"

The two of you shake your heads.

The Mayor clears his throat. "Ah, well, we are all obviously very, very excited that you are carrying the superhero gene. What we find however, especially with our younger heroes, is that it takes them quite some time to develop their powers. Most of them don't even figure out what their powers are for at least a couple of years. Now, you two – you want to start saving people right away, don't you?"

Of course you do! You nod your heads eagerly and the Mayor smiles. You've only ever seen the Mayor in televised broadcasts before. He looks different in real life.

"To fast track this process, we've designed – uh, shall we say, an obstacle course of a sort, to help younger superheroes really come into their power. We have a suspicion as to what they might be based on your test results, but we find that your development will be fastest when you are given the chance to discover your powers for yourselves. So, just head on in through this door, and I'll be waiting on the other side."

He doesn't really elaborate beyond that, and before you can get your thoughts straight, the door is opening and you find yourself stepping through. You have so many questions, but it's too late – the door closes definitively behind you.

When you think about secret superhero training facilities, you think about jetpacks, invisibility cloaks, rocket launchers... but this room is surprisingly... rustic? It looks more like a gym than anything else.

The room is very large and high-ceilinged. The door you've walked through is in the North-Eastern corner of the room. Right next to the door you came through, on the East wall, is a rock climbing wall.

To your right, so in the middle of the North wall, is a large motivational poster.

On the East wall, is a large punching bag. Next to the punching bag there's something in the wall.

On the South wall is what looks like a door. You suppose that's the 'other side' the Mayor talked about.

Near that second door is an electric standing fan on a turning pedestal.

In the very centre of the room, is... something. There's a weird little indent on the floor.

Finally, taking up the entire West wall and almost the entire Western third of the room, is an obstacle course set over what looks like a literal pit of lava.

Okay, so. Apparently you have to figure out what your superpowers are, whatever that means, and then get to the other side.

## RULES FOR POWERS

**FLYING:** can only levitate up and down. Strength in moving up is same as strength while walking (e.g. could lift 20kgs but no super strength or zooming). Can move a minimal amount while levitating but only by swimming through air, grabbing and pulling etc

**STOP TIME:** can only stop the movement of one item at a time. Stop time continues until it is un-cast or stop time is used on something else.

## ITEMS TO EXAMINE:

**CLIMBING WALL:** it looks like a pretty typical climbing wall. The grips vary in size from 'easy' to 'need to hold up your entire weight with one finger'. You've been rock climbing before, so you know that you are supposed to pick one colour and only use holds of that colour to get to the top. There are four possible routes – pink, green, orange and yellow. There is a top rope attached to the ceiling so

that you can belay each other and not fall off and die – but you don't see a harness anywhere to help you attach yourself to the top rope.

**DOOR YOU CAME THROUGH:** The door looked pretty normal at a glance, but when you look closer, you see that the door is covered in a faint paisley pattern which has been carved into the wood. It's very hard to see unless you look closely.

**DOOR ON OTHER SIDE:** you thought this was a door but as you get closer you realise it's kind of weird looking. It's metal, with wide vertical ridges. In fact it looks like two sets of thick vertical metal bars – you know, the kind you imagine in medieval prisons? – which have been stacked one set in front of the other. The thickness of the bars is comparable to a picket fence, if it were made of thick metal. The set of metal bars at the back fit almost perfectly in the space left by the set of metal bars at the front. Still there are some small gaps and if you look through the small gaps, beyond it all you can see is darkness.

**FAN:** the fan is on. Even from all the way across the room, you can feel how strong the wind coming out of the fan is! It's strong enough to blow you away or mow you down. You can basically only approach it while the slowly turning pedestal has it facing away from you, otherwise the wind is unpleasantly strong and hard to walk into. The fan itself looks normal, you know, one of those white standing fans... but the more you look at it the more you're not convinced that that's all it is. The blades look weird.

**FLOOR DENT:** If you look closer, there is a small indent in the floor about the size of a small coin. It is perfectly circular.

**GADGETS:** okay, for a bunch of superhero gadgets, these are actually a bit boring. There's a pair of goggles. And then there's an orb?

**GOGGLES:** You put on the goggles. Most things look the same. The goggles are sepia-tinted – like sunglasses more than anything. Would you like to look at anything in particular?

**LAVA:** the floor looks like lava. In fact it's so bright that it's hard to look at it directly. But as you approach, you realise it's not really lava. It's hot, but not overwhelming. Kind of like standing over a barbecue.

**LEVER ON PLATFORM:** On this platform there is a giant lever about a metre high coming out of the platform. You tentatively prod it and discover you can push the lever up, down, left and right. On this platform, you also find a metal box.

**METAL BOX** – the box is about half a metre long each way. It seems to be metal. It's locked with a large wooden lock. The lock does not appear to have a keyhole.

**OBSTACLE COURSE:** Okay so, you know how as a kid you would play 'the floor is lava'? Well, the floor is literally lava. Or at least it looks like it. This obstacle

course takes up the Western-most third of the room. It is a four-level ropes course, each level about two metres high, with the usual tightrope, rope bridge, flying fox, poles, ladders... in fact, it looks pretty fun, other than the fact that it's set over burning lava which might melt your face off if you fall into it. In the North-West corner of the room, there is a large sign that says "START HERE AND COMPLETE THE COURSE!" You can't see where the course finishes.

**ORB:** the orb is black, heavy, and the size of a magic 8 ball. Unlike a magic 8 ball, though, it is just black on all sides.

**POSTER** – the large poster is almost human-sized and shows a superhero fighting a villain. Large text emblazoned across the top reads:

Try your best every day!

That is our top tip to stopping the enemy.

If you can't do it yet, just give it time.

**PUNCHING BAG:** There's a large punching bag suspended from a chain. It's a punching bag. Beside the punching bag, there is a glass box fixed to the wall – the kind of fixture you would expect to contain firefighting equipment. A 'break in case of emergency' type glass box. This glass box however contains a pair of boxing gloves. The glass box appears to have a door at the front, which is secured by a keypad. The keypad is a numerical keypad, and there is already something showing in the display section. [IMAGE 6]

## ACTIONS

**Climb the wall without harness or without knowing colour:** You get about two metres off the ground before the handholds begin to get very small and the footholds very slippery. You feel like it would be inadvisable to tumble to your death.

OR without knowing colour – you get very tired about five metres up and can barely imagine finishing this one climb, much less doing all four of them. if only you knew which route to climb.

**Climb the wall with harness:** You follow the orange route, as the apostrophe sign had indicated you should do, and feel very safe climbing this wall while your friend belays you. You do slip a few times on your way up but your trusty friend catches you and you simply hang in your harness for a moment, having a nice break. Finally, as you near the top of the wall, you put your right hand on a brick, place your entire weight on it – and are very grateful that you are clipped into a harness when that brick comes clean off the wall. You just manage to grab onto it before it tumbles to the ground. That's weird. You can't even see how the brick had been attached – glue, maybe? The back side of the brick, the bit that meets the wall, has something unusual printed on it. [IMAGE 2]

**Fan – stopping time (before opening second door):** You point at the fan and, feeling a bit foolish, try to... stop time? To your utter shock and delight, it works.

Well, at least – you manage to stop the fan from turning on the pedestal. The blades continue to spin rapidly, sending that wild and forceful gust of air your way. But hey, you’ve discovered your superpower!

**Fan – stopping the blades specifically:** to stop the blades, you have to unfreeze the pedestal. Apparently your new power only works on one thing at a time. But after a few false starts where you accidentally stop other parts of the fan, you finally do manage to freeze the rapidly-spinning blades in their place. You did think the fan looked weird, and now that the blades have stopped spinning, you can distinctly tell that each blade is a different colour. Their quick spinning made the colours blur into white, but now that they’re stopped, you can see what colour they are. There is a rectangular yellow blade. A pink blade shaped like an elongated star. An orange blade shaped like a single quotation mark. And a green blade which is a long oval.

**Fan – try to turn off:** this fan is not plugged into anything and there is no discernable on/off button.

**General – flying:** well, they did say you were a superhero, didn’t they? Maybe you can fly. You concentrate as hard as you can... and you feel yourself lift off the ground. This is incredible. You’re flying! Well okay, flying isn’t the best word for it. You’re actually just uh, levitating. You can move straight up and down but not really fly in any particular direction. Maybe that will come later. Still, this is cool!

**General – stopping time:** You lift your arms into the air and, feeling a bit silly, incant, “umm... I stop time?” You think it didn’t work. But then you notice that the second and minute arms on your watch have stopped moving. Excellent, you... literally stopped time. Well, it seems like what you’ve done is you managed to stop two individual tiny objects. You’ve been told that it’s not unusual for superpowers to be a bit weak when they’re first discovered. Maybe you should start by trying to stop more specific objects.

**Glass box – enter any digits:** You enter [digits] and there is a sad beeping noise. To your surprise, a mechanical voice booms out of the device. “Press 1 to troubleshoot.”

[Press 1]

“When troubleshooting, always remember that what cannot be seen is just as important as what can be seen.”

FURTHER HINTS IF NEEDED:

“When troubleshooting, try to remember what you usually see.”

“When troubleshooting, try inverting your expectations.”

**Glass box – enter 4589:** the keypad beeps affirmatively at you as the door to the glass box swings open. Ta-da! You reach in and retrieve a pair of normal-looking boxing gloves.

**Goggles – look at lava:** the lava floor had been very difficult to look at directly because of how bright it was. Now that you have the tinted goggles on, you can look at it closely. There is definitely something very hot covering that entire

section of floor. But also, there is a small fenced off section of the lava – on the floor, buried underneath the lava, seems to be four flat pieces of metal forming a square fence within the lava itself, maybe one square foot across. Within that square fenced off box is lava as well.

**Ice:** basically, the ice keys will always fall from the corner of the room furthest from the players. If the players stand on opposite ends of the room it will fall just between them. They are not fast enough to catch the ice. The correct solution is to use stop time on the ice as it's falling, run underneath it (make sure it's not over the lava), then unstop time. If they find something to cushion the ice (e.g. take all their clothes off) this is fine too but obviously not the correct solution. The ice will fall at a rate of one per ten seconds.

**Ice – to melt lava:** you gather up the pieces of ice from the floor, but most of it has melted into water and you can't quite scoop it up.

**Ice – waiting for it to gather:** yeah, this seems to be working, but because the ice shatters as it hits the floor it is just kind of bouncing all over the floor and melting before it has a chance to gather.

**Ice – waiting with box under ice:** this is great! The ice falls into the box and while it may bounce around a bit or shatter, all of that loose ice and cold water is collected in the box. Within a couple of minutes, you have a metal box which is 80% full of ice cold water and some pieces of ice.

**Ice – pour onto lava generally:** there's so much lava, the ice has no effect.

**Ice – pour into fenced off section:** with a mighty sizzle and lots of smoke, the icy water manages to put out the fire in that small section of lava. You look into the fenced off section. It's kind of gross, like sooty coal bathed in water – but in the middle of it all underneath the soot you see a little trapdoor in the floor with a teeny tiny little keyhole in it. You wrench open the little trapdoor in the floor and spy a little device.

**Ice – time stop:** you aim very carefully and try to cast time stop at the piece of ice as it's falling. You miss a few times, but then finally, you manage to freeze one of the ice shards as it falls through the air. You run towards it and unfreeze it just as you arrive underneath it, hands outstretched. The shard of ice falls into your hands. It's a little key! It's tiny and delicate and already starting to melt.

**Lever – trying “East, South, East, South”:** you push the lever [direction, direction] and for a moment nothing happens. And then, clang! There's a sound that reminds you of glass shattering in the opposite corner of the room. You quickly descend the obstacle course and the two of you make your way across the room to find that on the floor is a few shards of ice. If you pick up the shards of ice, you can see that possibly the shards had formed a shape at some point – but the impact of hitting the floor has caused it to break into pieces. Szzss! As you examine the pieces of ice, a loud sizzling noise greets your ears. You run over to the lava pit to see a small plume of smoke disappear, as if a small

amount of water – or of ice – had just fallen into it. You look up. The ice is very clearly falling from the ceiling, but you can't see exactly where it's coming from.

**Metal bars – trying to stop them:** this time, before the metal bars can slam shut again, you concentrate really hard to try and stop them. And uh... you do succeed on ONE of the bars. It would appear that the bars are not connected. So while you're successfully stopped one bar from slamming back down into the ground, the rest of them are now back down on the ground again.

**Metal box – burning the lock:** You approach the obstacle course carefully. The ground sure looks like lava. In fact it's really hard to look at it too closely because of how bright it is. But as you approach, it becomes clear that the ground isn't actually lava. Whatever it is, it's hot, but not overwhelming. It's like standing over a small barbecue. You try to tip the lock into the lava pit without falling in yourselves – and just as the metal box is starting to get a bit hot, the wooden lock catches on fire. You quickly back away from the lava pit and watch as the lock bursts into flames and burns away until it becomes nothing but cinders. The box can now be opened! Inside the box you find two items.

**Obstacle course – attempting it:** You follow a short walkway up to the “START HERE AND COMPLETE THE COURSE” sign and stand on the platform underneath. You are now in the North-Westernmost corner of the room. There are two bridges made from ropes and wooden planks. One is going South, and marked with a single word, “LAND” as well as a big cross. The other is going East, and marked with the word “SEA” and a big tick.

[If player goes for LAND, first plank of bridge is clearly loose and tumbles off into the lava. Looks like the correct course is SEA.]

You make your way quickly across the wooden planks and find yourself on another platform. This time, you can see that you should be trying to get to another platform directly above you. There are three ladders that you could try to climb, lined up in a row to the side of the platform you're standing on. They are marked, “ $2+2=?$ ”, “ $2/2=?$ ”, and “ $2-2=?$ ” You feel like you could definitely have a tug on these ladders and check if they're sturdy enough. Still, it would be nice to know for sure.

[If player goes for  $2+2$  or  $2/2$ , the ladder doesn't hold up under even a normal amount of weight, and falls into the lava below.]

You clamber up the ladder marked “ $2-2=?$ ” and find yourself on a platform directly above the one you were on before. Your next obstacle is a set of monkey bars. Well, not one set. There are three sets of monkey bars. The one going South is marked ‘You’. The one going West is marked ‘Me’. And the one going East is marked ‘Us’. Now, you know by now that whatever the wrong path is, the monkey bars will fall into the lava, taking you with it. It's going to be pretty hard to test the strength of the monkey bars without actually leaning out over the lava. Maybe if Player 2 came up here to hold on to you, you could test the

strength of one or two of them, but it would be great to just actually know which one is the right path.

[Choose You]

You aren't really the strongest sixteen year old, but monkey bars, you still can do. Despite the stomach-clenching fear of hanging by only one arm over a pit of lava, you manage to climb across the monkey bars, moving South, until you hit another platform.

This time, there are two options. Each option features a tightrope, with another hip-height guidance rope that you can hold on to as you cross. Again, this seems like one where you want to be pretty sure before you place weight on it. The two options are, going West, "Diametre", and going East, "Radius".

Following Radius, you find yourself on another platform, with a ladder leading up marked 'South', and a pole sliding down marked 'North'. Climbing up the 'South' ladder, you find yourself on another platform... with nothing around it. On the platform, there is a harness. However, you don't really immediately see anything coming off the platform – no rope bridge or ladders or anything.

Looking up: there is a platform directly above the one you're standing on. And if you squint, you can kind of see that there are markings on the underside of that platform. [SEE IMAGE 1]

Now that you're on this platform, you can see four different flying foxes going in four different directions. The four directions say:

North –  $\sin + \cos$  equals?

South -  $Mc^2$  equals?

East –  $a^2 + b^2$  equals?

West –  $\log x + \log y$  equals?

**Orb – aim laser at dent in floor:** The laser goes straight down into the dent and hits the bottom of the floor. The front set of metal bars on the South wall jostle a bit but don't move.

If players fly up, they can uncover a dent in the ceiling which is covered by film. Once the film is removed the laser shoots into the centre of the indent and the front set of metal bars slides up noisily into the doorframe.

**Orb – sideways lasers:** At least at eye level, you don't really see any dents to aim the lasers into.

**Orb: two lasers in ceiling and floor, or in East and West wall:** one of the metal grated doors guarding the exit retreats into the floor with loud metallic clanging. If players move lasers away from dents: the doors immediately spring back into place.



**Orb- four lasers:** The front grated metal door retreats into the floor while the back grated metal door creakily rolls up into the top of the doorframe. However, if you move the lasers from their targets, the doors immediately spring back into place.

**Punching Bag** – shaking or examining it: it looks like a normal punching bag. It's heavy and filled with punching bag stuff.

**Punching Bag – punching it:** You don't have boxing gloves but it can't hurt to get in a few hits. You line up your jab and... well, it's a bit embarrassing. You hit the bag but there's almost no impact. The bag doesn't react in any way. If the bag could stare at you in disdain, it would.

**Punching Bag – punching with gloves:** You put the gloves on. Yeah, this feels right! However, you only manage to land one solid punch before a very loud buzzer interrupts you. Startled, you look around trying to see the source of the buzzer but... no luck.

**Punching Bags – punching them again:** This time, you punch the bag more cautiously but no buzzer goes off. In fact, you manage to get in seven punches before once again you're interrupted by a loud and obnoxious buzzer. If you try to punch the bag again, this time, you manage 10 entire hits before the buzzer. [Then it starts again – 1, 7, 10]

**Remote control:** it's a little remote control! You sure hope it's a waterproof and fire-proof remote control. There are three buttons on it – 1, 2 and 3.

**Remote control – press 1:** You press it, and... at first you think nothing has happened. And then you see a laser dot on one of the walls near you. Confused, you follow the trail – and see that the orb you'd picked up earlier now has two laser beams coming out of it. One aimed at the wall, and the other coming out of the directly opposite side of the orb, aimed at the opposite wall.

**Remote control – press 2:** now there's a laser coming out of the top of the orb, and one coming out of the bottom.

**Remote control – press 3:** Click it again – and now there's four lasers, coming out of the four places before – forward, back, top and bottom.

#### AFTER FIRST DOOR

You walk through the now-open double-layer bars. All you could see between the bars before was darkness. That's... still the case. You enter what appears to be a pitch black room, with the only light coming from the still-lit gym behind you. Not only that, you seem to have walked out onto a platform extending out into a black abyss. The platform is about five metres long, but there is nothing on either side of it, above it, or most worryingly, underneath it – other than pure darkness.

Just as you begin to wonder what you're supposed to do now, blinking your eyes to try and adjust to the dark, a man in what can only be described as a cartoonish single-person hovercraft descends from the ceiling. You suppose it's possible he had been there the whole time. As he comes into view, you recognise him as the Mayor.

"Well done," he begins saying, a huge smile on his face. "I always believed – "

"STOP RIGHT THERE," shouts an authoritative and, well, familiar voice. You follow the sound of the voice to see a second hovercraft crossing the room from the other side. Inside the hovercraft is.... Uh, it's the Mayor. There are two Mayors. And they look identical. If you'd only been shown one of them, you would have sworn up and down that that's definitely the Mayor. Weirdly enough, though, when faced with both of them at the same time, both faces look distorted, strange, absurd; you can't be sure at all if either of them is the Mayor. It doesn't help that it's so dark in here.

"He's an imposter here to kidnap you and force you to do his bidding!" shouts the second Mayor who had descended, whom you dub Mayor Two: Electric Boogaloo. "Quick, destroy his hovercraft before he can do it."

"Nonsense," says Mayor One. "Don't you remember coming here in my limo? I don't even know who this clown is and why he looks like me, but I promise you, I'm here to protect you."

Mayor Two lets out a snarl of rage and charges at Mayor One in his hovercraft! Mayor One dodges and flies high, out of range. Mayor Two charges again, and this time Mayor One retaliates by trying to ram into Mayor Two with his hovercraft.

Mayor Two is now shouting. "Well, come on! Surely you can tell which of us is the real Mayor!"

Well? What do you do?

THINGS TO EXAMINE:

Hovercrafts: Like I said, these are cartoonish. They are metal pods with a glass dome roof which only fit one person. They appear to be hovering by virtue of two large fans rotating furiously underneath the pod.

ACTIONS:

Remote control – click 1 or 2: when you click the remote control, two of the four lasers on the orb go out. You don't actually see this because it's quite far away, but you do see its effects immediately: the first metal barred gate you'd walked through before slams back down into the floor. And now that you're on the other side, you can see that on the bars, someone's written one letter on each bar in

white chalk. From left to right, the first metal bar has the letter T. The second metal bar has the letter E. Then R, B, T, E, and I.

If you click the remote control again, the two other lasers on the orb go out. The first metal gate opens back up while the second one rises back out of the floor and shoots up to the top of the doorframe. Once again, on this metal barred gate, there are some letters written in chalk. The first metal bar on the left has the letter H, the second one Y, then E, O, H, V and L.

FIGHTING THE MAYOR/S: Fairly flexible how they do this as long as they use both powers. The Mayors are both high up in the air above the chasm. My solution is for the flier to carry the time-stopper up (to get within range), and the time-stopper to stop the fan blades. Other solutions include trying to get them to crash into each other, etc.

GO BACK INTO ROOM: you begin to walk back into the room and one of the Mayors veers and lands his hovercraft directly in front of you! “Nuh-uh,” he says, wagging a finger at you. “You don’t get to walk out of this without solving this once and for all!”

#### POTENTIAL ENDINGS

Killing only one Mayor:

“I knew you’d make the right choice,” the Mayor – the *real* Mayor – says with a wide smile, landing his hovercraft beside you on the platform. “I’m proud of you. Let’s go get you cleaned up.”

You sigh with relief. This kind, gentle, congenial man must be the real mayor, right? He must. You each step onto his hovercraft, balancing on either side very precariously... and hope that you made the right choice.

Killing two Mayors:

Suddenly, the black chasm is no longer dark. It’s like someone’s suddenly switched on every single light in this room. It is bright in here, and it takes your eyes a moment to adjust. When they do, you can see a couple of things: first of all, although the floor of this room is quite a few storys down, it does exist and isn’t an endless chasm. More reassuringly there’s a fireman’s net only one story down to catch you if you fall. That’s where the two hovercrafts are currently sitting, with both Mayors – fake Mayors, you suppose – laughing as they climb out of the wreckage. On the other side of the room is a second platform, where a third man who looks like the Mayor – but this time, indisputably so – is waving at you with a huge grin on his face.

“You did it! You actually did it! Oh, kids, I’m SO proud of you. Now come on over here.”

You look across. There is no ladder leading up to that second platform from the fireman's net. How are you supposed to cross the chasm?

**ACTIONS:**

Trying to fly across without fan: you can kind of 'swim' through the air but you can't do it with your friend's weight on you.

Trying to fly with fan – no time stop: it's working! The fan is so strong that when you're levitating off the ground, the force of wind from the fan does blow you... but it is blowing you all over the place because of the turning pedestal.

Trying to fly with fan – stopping time: with some difficulty, you aim accurately enough to stop the pedestal, without stopping the movement of the fan blades. You aim this carefully at the second platform on the other side of the room, and the two of you take off again. It's slow going – and in fact it feels a little silly – but the force of the fan does reliably blow you all the way across the chasm and you finally land on the other side.

The Mayor is there waiting for you, a glint in his eyes and a happy smile lighting up his face. "Well done, kids, well done," he says, in that familiar voice you've heard on the tv time and time again. "I'm really proud of you. Come with me and I'll introduce you to the other superheroes."

Well, here it is. The moment you've been waiting for all this time. The two of you look at each other and nod. You've come this far. Whatever is waiting for you on the other side of that next door – superhero allies, superhero foes, another four identical mayors – you know that you can conquer it all with your newfound powers. Well done! You have escaped the room.

[Crosses: top left right bottom]  
crosses clockwise