

# ESCAPE THIS PODCAST

## Game Master's Notes

The notes below are a guide for game masters. They contain all required information to run the specified room, including:

- All room items
- All puzzles and solutions
- All correct (and some incorrect) player actions
- Full room introduction and conclusion
- Additional notes and tips

**Do not read these notes if you intend to play the escape room; there are spoilers everywhere.**

These notes are for people playing the rooms with friends, family, enemies or strangers.

These notes are not to be used to create recordings, videos, or other media featuring the escape room. If you want to use these notes to make something cool or creative, please send us an email at [escapethispod@gmail.com](mailto:escapethispod@gmail.com) to let us know.

These notes are free. If you paid money to obtain these notes, someone was being very rude to you. I'm so sorry.

## **JOHN BEATTY AND THE PHOENIX BRIGADE**

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## Notes

Standard escape room rules apply. No breaking, no climbing.

You can provide players with the [Standard Blueprint](#) handout or link so they have a map outline of the house. The house is divided into 4 separate rooms, each of which is locked. There is a room description, a set of observable items, and a set of actions for each room. Additionally, a list of supplemental images is provided below. You may wish to print these out ahead of time or provide your players the links so they can view them at the appropriate moment.

This room is set in the world of *Fahrenheit 451*. While the room may make more sense to players who have a working knowledge of the novel, no outside knowledge is required. If players have limited knowledge of the book, the first paragraph of the introduction establishes the setting to help players get into character.

All players together control one character, John Beatty (who is generally considered the antagonist in *Fahrenheit 451*). This escape room is essentially a fanfic prequel to the novel that tries to flesh out his character a little and explain why, perhaps, he has so much knowledge of what is inside books. Depending on player choice in the conclusion, this version imagines him as a heroic member of a secret society or as a ruthless murderer... or perhaps the players will simply choose to have him continue burning books.

### Supplemental Images:

1. [Standard Blueprint](#)
2. [Chess](#)
3. [Quilt](#)
4. [Digest Digest Digest](#)
5. [Ovid](#)
6. [Poetry Magnets](#)

## Introduction

You live in a futuristic society in which technology and entertainment have replaced all manner of critical thought. People constantly distract themselves from any unhappiness by tuning in to the programs on the parlor walls (huge, flat screen TVs that occupy multiple walls in most homes) and seashell radios (wireless in-ear headphones). Books are contraband in this society, and it is the job of Firemen to burn any books they find to ensure the happiness of all citizens.

You are John Beatty, and like your father and grandfather before you, you are a Fireman. You've never questioned your role in society--until recently, that is. Can books really be as dangerous as the Fireman's Manual claims? You wonder what it is about them that inspires people to act so irrationally that they risk their own lives to read them. At a recent alarm, you actually stole a book and brought it home with you. Too afraid to read it, you hid it in an air vent. Its presence has kept you awake at night.

And now, you're worried that Captain Brazier is onto you. He's started saying strange things to you, things that you suspect might be quotes from books. It's a little off-putting, but you haven't taken it too seriously--until just now.

You were at the fire station when an alarm was called in. Strangely, only you and Captain Brazier have been assigned to the response. He says nothing to you on the ride to the location. Pulling up to a small house, Captain Brazier tells you to go in ahead to make sure the suspect has been properly removed from the premises. Even though something seems off, you do as you're told.

When you enter the front door, you hear a click behind you, and the sound of a key turning. It sounds like you've been locked in. You have an unsettling feeling that this isn't actually a fire alarm. You'd better start looking for a way out.

## Parlor

(Optional: Provide the players with the [Standard Blueprint](#) handout or link.) You're in a small parlor, perhaps 12 feet by 12 feet. You came in through the door on the south wall. The entire wall to your left is a parlor wall--a huge flat screen TV. It is currently switched off. There are three more doors in the room--one in the middle of the north wall and two on the east wall. Assuming this house is based on the standard blueprint for a single person or couple, these should lead to the kitchen, the bedroom, and the bathroom.

As for furnishings, there is a large couch facing toward the parlor wall. In front of the couch is a coffee table. You're surprised to see on it a huge vase filled with a large bunch of flowers. As if that wasn't unusual enough, you see a bookshelf crammed full with books on the eastern end of the north wall. Just above it, a ventilation shaft lazily blows cool air into the room. Looking at it, you're reminded of the one at your home with the book hidden inside. Is this some kind of test?

There's only one way to find out why Captain Brazier has brought you here. You'd better start exploring.

### Parlor - Observable Items

**Bookshelf:** There are more books than you've ever seen in your life here. You're completely torn by the desire to burn every one of them and by the desire to discover what's inside them. You haven't heard of most of the titles or authors, although you're sure they must have been commonly known at one time in your country's past.

**Coffee Table:** The surface of the coffee table is glass. Apart from the vase of flowers, the only thing on it is a remote control.

**Couch:** It's a standard couch. Beige, with large cushions and a few pillows. It looks comfortable enough, although it doesn't show any sign of use.

**Door - East Wall (Northern):** This should be the door to the bedroom. It's locked, though, with a directional lock. You've seen one of these before--it will unlock with the correct sequence of directional input--left, right, up, and down. It could have any number of directions in the sequence, though.

**Door - East Wall (Southern):** Presumably, this door leads to the bathroom. It seems to be locked from the other side.

**Door - North Wall:** This door must lead to the kitchen. It's locked. Beside the door is what appears to be a button and a small speaker. When you push the button, you hear, "Please state

the password.” After a couple seconds, you hear a buzz. You must need a specific word or phrase to unlock this door.

**Door - South Wall:** Grabbing the doorknob, you confirm what you suspected; you have been locked in. On the other side of the door, you hear a slow, probing sniff and an exhalation of steam. There is no doubt that the door is being guarded by a Mechanical Hound—one of the tools used to catch criminals. It seems like in addition to unlocking the door, you’ll need to find a way to fool the hound’s olfactory sensors, or it’s likely it may end up hunting you. You also notice an obscure message on a sticky note on the door: *hands before parts*.

**Parlor Wall:** Judging by the fact that they have only one parlor wall, the person who lives here must either be rather poor or else rather uninterested in the shows that the source of modern entertainment offers. The wall is currently switched off, and you know the only way to turn it on is with a remote control.

**Vase:** The vase is filled with bright pink, orange, and blue flowers—lilies, you think, though you’re not certain. The vase itself is rather heavy. It’s made of steel. Engraved near the base, you see the words Matthew 6:28. Is this an artist’s signature or something?

**Ventilation Shaft:** It’s blowing out air, although the flow of air seems to be obstructed by something. Maybe there’s something behind the grate? You can’t see anything, and the grate is screwed to the wall. You’d need a screwdriver to remove it.

## Parlor - Actions

**Bookshelf - searching for Bible:** The Bible is a particularly rare book these days. It doesn’t surprise you that there isn’t a copy of it here.

**Bookshelf - searching for a book by Matthew:** Nope, there are no books by an author named Matthew.

**Bookshelf - searching for a book on rust removal techniques:** You find a guide to home maintenance. There’s a brief passage that suggests using toothpaste to remove rust.

**Bookshelf - searching for a book on unit conversions:** You find an old math textbook. You’re able to find a chapter on unit conversions. One stone is equal to fourteen pounds.

**Bookshelf - searching for Julius Caesar, Act IV Scene III Lines 70-72:** You find a copy of a book called *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare. The structure of the text reminds you of the scripts you can get to follow along with the shows on the parlor walls. It takes you a few minutes to find the Act indicated by the chessboard, but eventually you get there. The words seem to be spoken by a character named Brutus: “There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats, / For I am

armed so strong in honesty / That they pass by me as the idle wind.” You have no idea what that could mean. Books really are as confusing as your grandfather used to say.

**Bookshelf - searching for Ovid:** There’s a book on the shelf by Ovid. It’s called *The Metamorphoses*. You flip through the book, not sure what you’re looking for. After a while, you know you’ve found what you need. (Provide the players with the [Ovid](#) handout or link.)

**Bookshelf - searching for purple books:** After searching for a moment, you’re certain there are exactly four books with purple covers.

**Coffee Table - using the remote without putting batteries in it:** You aim the remote at the parlor wall and press the ON button, but nothing happens. You try it again; still, nothing. You check the battery compartment. That’s the problem; the remote doesn’t have any batteries.

**Coffee Table - using the remote after putting batteries in it:** With the batteries in place, the remote works. The parlor wall springs to life. Loud, cheerful music blasts, and you see the title of the show come up on the screen: *Dance of the White Clown*. You’re familiar with the White Clown; he’s a rather popular character. Three White Clowns appear in the middle of the screen. They look at each other and grin. A tinny laugh track plays in the background as the central White Clown pulls out a pair of machetes. You’re not at all surprised by this; in fact, you’re sure you’ve seen this segment before. As the clowns begin to dance, the central clown swings his machetes. First, he chops off the left arm of the clown on his left; then, he chops the right arm off the clown on his right. After that, he chops off the right arm of the clown on his left, and then the left arm of the clown on his right. Next, he chops off the head of the clown to his right, the legs of the clown on his left, the head of the clown on his left, and the legs of the clown on his right. After the other two clowns fall, he swings both machetes upward and chops off his own head. Pretty gruesome, but that’s entertainment.

**Couch - searching through the cushions and pillows:** You thoroughly check the couch, and you find a single coin.

**Door - East Wall (Northern) - entering the sequence LLRRLRRLRULDLURDU:** It takes you a few tries to enter the combination correctly--these directional locks are tricky! At last, you input the sequence correctly, and the door to the bedroom swings open. (Refer to the [Bedroom](#) introduction).

**Door - North Wall - saying anything other than “honesty” after pressing the button:** You haven’t said more than a word or two, but the speaker buzzes at you. The password must be a single word or short phrase.

**Door - North Wall - saying “honesty” after pressing the button:** A chime rings, and you hear a click. The door to the kitchen is now unlocked. (Refer to the [Kitchen](#) introduction.)

**Door - South Wall - using the key before dousing self with the concoction:** You reach to unlock the door, but you hear a fierce growling on the other side. You forgot all about the Mechanical Hound! You can't leave here without doing something to disguise your scent.

**Door - South Wall - using the key after dousing self with the concoction:** Refer to the [Conclusion!](#)

**Vase - counting lilies:** There are five pink, six blue, and three orange lilies in the vase.

**Vase - spinning the vase or its base:** You're not sure what you're trying to do exactly, but you're pretty sure it involves spinning the vase. You set the vase on the table and give it a spin. As you do, it feels like something is unscrewing. You pick the vase up and realize its base can be detached. Giving it a few more twists, you find a hidden compartment. Inside it, there is a pair of AA batteries.

**Ventilation Shaft - using the coin to unscrew the grate:** The coin is a perfect substitute for a screwdriver. You're able to remove the grate with ease. Now, you can find out what was blocking the airflow. It's a copy of the Bible. You know this is one of the rarest books in existence; almost all known copies of it have already been burned.

**Ventilation Shaft - Bible - looking for Matthew 6:** You flip through the Bible and find a list of all the books contained in it. There is indeed a book called Matthew; in it, you find the 6th chapter. You think the 28 on the vase refer to lines in the chapter. "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin." That last word is highlighted, for some reason.



## Bedroom

You're in the southwest corner of the bedroom. There's a single door on the south wall, which should lead to the bathroom. There's also a closet in the southeast corner of the room.

In the northwest corner, there's a bed; beside it is a nightstand. On the west wall near the bed you notice a photo collage. Along the opposite wall is a dresser; on top of it is a strange statuette. Between the dresser and the closet is a small side table on which a chessboard is set up.

You don't see any windows or any other way out of this room. You'd better continue your search.

### Bedroom - Observable Items

**Bed:** The bed seems pretty ordinary. It's queen-sized and is covered in a colorful quilt. There's also a teddy bear resting neatly on the pillows. (Provide the players with the [Quilt](#) handout or link.)

**Chessboard:** There's a chessboard set up on the table, but the layout doesn't look correct to you. You notice a single piece shaped like a horse--the knight, you think. You flashback to a memory from your childhood. You are sitting on your great-grandfather's lap, and he is explaining how the piece moves (*If players don't already know, it must move two squares in any direction vertically followed by one square horizontally, or two squares in any direction horizontally followed by one square vertically.*) At this moment, your father storms in. "Chess?" he says. "Chess is a thinking man's game. No son of mine will play chess!" He knocks the chessboard to the floor. This is the last time you remember seeing your great-grandfather. (Provide the players with the [Chess](#) handout or link.)

**Closet:** The closet is stuffed full of clothes of all sizes, colors, and styles. You notice nine empty hangers off to one side, labeled numbers 1 through 9.

**Door - South Wall:** Based on the layout of the house, this door should lead to the bathroom. It's held shut by a standard combination lock, with numbers 0-39.

**Dresser:** The dresser is pretty ordinary looking. It's wooden, with three drawers. On top is a statuette. It's about a foot tall and is cast in bronze. It appears to be a young boy with feathery wings--an angel, perhaps? He appears not to be flying, but falling, as the wings are spread beneath him and his legs are above the rest of his body. If you look closely at the wings, you see the letters *O-V-I-D* etched into the largest feather.

**Nightstand:** It's a small wooden nightstand with one drawer. There's a magazine on top of it, or what passes for a magazine these days. It's a single page. (Provide the players with the [Digest Digest](#) handout or link.)

**Photo Collage:** It's one of those frames that contains multiple slots for pictures of various sizes. In the top left there is a photo of three boys, similar in age. The photo in the center shows a young woman in profile. To the right of her is a picture of an elderly gentleman. On the bottom left is a snapshot of a young couple. On the bottom right, there is a photo of a baby girl. At the bottom of the frame is a brass plaque that reads *Photos of my Loved Ones*.

### Bedroom - Actions

**Chessboard - moving a pawn:** That's odd. The pawn is stuck, like it's glued to the board. In fact, all of the pawns are stuck in place.

**Chessboard - struggling to solve the puzzle:** It seems reasonable to assume that you will need to move the knight repeatedly, and that it will spell out some message. It also seems reasonable to assume that you will use each square on the board once, except for the squares occupied by pawns.

**Closet - searching for a particular color of clothing:** There are articles of just about every color in the closet.

Color	Clothes item
brown	pants (size 38) [also pants, but much larger]
green	pants (size 0) [also pants, but much smaller]
yellow	sweater
purple	evening gown
pink	camisole
orange	overalls
black	nightgown
red	dress
blue	suit

**Door - South Wall - entering the combination 19-16-15:** You enter the combination carefully, and the lock opens. As expected, you've opened the door to the bathroom. (Refer to the [Bathroom](#) introduction).

**Dresser - searching the drawers:** The drawers are mostly filled with socks and underwear. Tucked among the socks, you find a seashell radio.

**Dresser - Seashell Radio - turning it on:** It crackles a little bit, emits a weak squeal, and dies. It seems the battery is dead.

**Dresser - Seashell Radio - turning it on after replacing the battery:** The sound is clear this time. "Noble looks like he's about ten times taller than Hoag." "Yeah, and Hoag is kind of fat, isn't he? I wonder how many stone he weighs." "Noble's appearance and fashion are also superior. Noble will win for sure!" "Well, that's it for Political Minute. Brought to you by Denham's Dentifrice. Denham's. Spelled D-E-N-H-A-M-S. Denham's Dandy Dental Detergent. Denham's Dentifrice!"

**Nightstand - checking the drawer:** You find batteries in all shapes and sizes here. Well, except the AA batteries. Whoever lives here really loves batteries.

**Nightstand - searching for a battery for the seashell radio:** You have to dig a bit, but you find one eventually.

## Bathroom

The bathroom is very small and occupies the southeast corner of the house. In addition to the door you came through, there's a door on the west wall that leads back to the parlor.

The bathroom is furnished the way you'd expect a bathroom to be. There's a toilet on the east wall. North of the toilet is a sink; above it is a mirror. A bathtub occupies the south wall; near it, along the west wall, is a hamper for dirty clothing.

### Bathroom - Observable Items

**Bathtub:** This is an ordinary white bathtub, the old-fashioned kind with claw feet. Near the bathtub, you see a small bucket of bath toys--tugboats, rubber ducks, things of that nature.

**Door - West Wall:** This door must lead back to the parlor. You can see now why it wouldn't open earlier; it's deadbolted shut.

**Hamper:** This clothes hamper is made of wicker and it has a lid. The lid is latched shut, but the latch is all rusted. You aren't able to open it.

**Mirror:** The mirror over the sink seems ordinary. Your reflection appears a little harrowed. You notice this is one of those mirrors that houses a medicine chest behind it. The medicine chest is locked, though. There's a hole for a small key.

**Sink:** There's nothing special about the sink. The water runs normally, and there's a small cake of soap and a hand towel nearby.

**Toilet:** The toilet seems ordinary enough, although the water in it is a dark blue color. It seems functional, too. When you give it a flush, you notice that it flushes for an unusually long time.

### Bathroom - Actions

**Bathtub - counting the bath toys:** There are four tugboats, three rubber ducks, and an assortment of other toys, each of which is unique.

**Door - West Wall - unlocking the deadbolt and opening:** You release the deadbolt and the door opens easily. A small, folded piece of paper that had been wedged between the door frame and the door flutters to the ground. You open it and find a handwritten note. It says *Password hint: The knight's defense*.

**Hamper - using dentifrice on the rust and wiping it away with the hand towel:** You aren't really sure whether it will work, but it's worth trying. You apply a generous amount of dentifrice to the rusted latch. You leave it there for a moment and then wipe it away with the hand towel. The latch still has a little bit of rust on it, but at least now it's functional. You open the hamper and immediately are knocked back by the smell. Ugh! It smells like a gym locker in there! There's no way you're going through that hamper unless you absolutely have to.

**Hamper - searching for "the scent of two people" after opening it:** You really don't want to go digging through there. The smell is terrible, but it's easy enough to find the source. You find some old, sweaty exercise clothes. It's quite clear that some of it is men's clothing and some of it is women's.

**Mirror - using the key from the refrigerator to unlock it:** The key fits perfectly in the small hole. The medicine chest swings open. It's practically empty. The only thing inside is a tube of Denham's Dentifrice.

**Toilet - timing the flush:** You feel like the toilet will never stop flushing. You're able to count to nine-Mississippi before it finally stops.

## Kitchen

This is the last room. The only door here is the one you came through. The kitchen floor is black and white tile. On the north wall, straight ahead of the door, is an oven. To the right of the oven is a long countertop. Left of the oven is a liquor cabinet. There's a refrigerator on the east wall. In the southeast corner, there's a kitchen table. Along the west wall, you see a microwave. You're not sure how anything in here will help you escape this house, but you're certain you must be getting close.

### Kitchen - Observable Items

**Counter:** There's nothing too unusual about the long wooden countertop. It has the normal kind of things you might expect to see on a countertop: a spice rack, a toaster, a fruit bowl... There's also a recipe book, open to a rather unusual recipe: "A Concoction to Mask One's Smell."

**Liquor Cabinet:** It's full of bottles of all different kinds of alcohol.

**Microwave:** There's nothing unusual about it. It's just an ordinary microwave. There is a microwave-safe bowl inside.

**Oven:** It's an ordinary oven. There's a dial to set the temperature for the oven. The temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit, and they range from 100 degrees to 500 degrees. There are also dials for the stovetop burners, and there are a cookie sheet and a potholder on the stovetop.

**Refrigerator:** The first thing you notice are the poetry magnets scattered on the surface of the refrigerator door. (Provide the players with the [Poetry Magnets](#) handout or link.) If you look inside the refrigerator, you notice it's crammed full of foods of all types.

**Table:** The table is a simple wooden table with two seats. The only thing on the table are two rather green and leafy potted plants.

### Kitchen - Actions

**Counter - counting the fruit in the fruit bowl:** There are 3 bananas, 6 oranges, and 1 apple in the bowl.

**Counter - reading the recipe:** Combine the scent of two other people in whiskey. Bring to a boil and simmer for several hours. Cool and apply generously to the entire body. - There's a handwritten note in the margin: *Takes too long, put in the microwave and take a nap.*

**Liquor Cabinet - searching for whiskey:** You're able to find an unopened bottle of whiskey. It looks like the cheap stuff, but that shouldn't matter. It's not like you're planning to drink it.

**Microwave - putting whiskey and the sweaty clothes in the microwave-safe bowl and microwaving it for 380 seconds:** You combine the ingredients according to the recipe and put the concoction into the microwave, setting it for 380 seconds. The microwave hums, and you wonder whether a trick as simple as this can really fool the Mechanical Hound. At last, the timer bings to let you know the concoction is ready. You open the microwave door. The smell is pretty unpleasant, but not as bad as the smell of the laundry hamper. You give it a few moments to cool, and then you apply the stuff all over yourself. Now it's just a matter of walking out the front door.

**Oven - turning the temperature dial to anything other than 450 degrees:** The dial clicks as if it's about to do something, but no matter how long you wait, the oven doesn't get hot. It seems like it's broken.

**Oven - turning the temperature dial to 450 degrees:** When you turn the dial to 450, the heating element almost immediately glows red.

**Oven - putting the statuette of Icarus inside after turning the temperature dial to 450 degrees:** You put the statuette of Icarus on the cookie sheet and put it in the oven. You're not sure exactly why you're doing this, but it does seem to be what the Ovid book suggested. You wait a few moments and open the door. The bronze statue looks exactly the same except for one thing: the wings have melted off completely! They are there on the cookie sheet in a bronze-colored, waxy puddle. And in that blob of wax, you notice something: a house key. Using the potholder, you dig it free from the rapidly cooling wax.

**Refrigerator - searching inside the turkey:** Sure enough, there's a whole turkey inside the refrigerator. You reach into the cavity and feel around. After a moment, you find a small key.

## Conclusion

Covered in the foul-smelling concoction, you cautiously unlock the front door, listening for any sounds on the other side. It is silent. You slowly open the door; you see the Mechanical Hound poised on the other side. As if on cue, it perks up and extends its probe toward you. The hound cocks its head to the side, as if uncertain, then it retracts its probe, turns in a circle, and lays down.

You exit the house and walk past the Mechanical Hound, confident that you are now free. But you soon realize you are not. At the end of the sidewalk stands Captain Brazier, who is aiming the kerosene hose directly at you. He has a crazed look in his eyes.

“Well, Beatty, you got out. That means you’ve seen what’s inside ‘em.” His laughter makes the muscles in your neck tighten. “So, what do you think? Now that you’ve seen it with your own eyes? These books, do you want to keep burning them? Are they as crazy and dangerous as they would have you believe?”

Something in the way he’s talking makes you think that maybe he is really opposed to burning books. But then again, he’s aiming a kerosene hose at you. If you say something he doesn’t like, he might just douse you and light you.

So what will you do now? Will you tell him you want to keep burning books ([conclusion A](#)) or that you want to protect books ([conclusion B](#))? Or maybe you want to attack him ([conclusion C](#))?

### Conclusion A: Burning Bright

You only hesitate a moment before saying what you’ve been trained your whole life to say. “There’s nothing worth reading in books. The thing to remember is we’re the Happiness Boys. We stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought.” You remember your father’s implication all those years ago: *No son of mine is going to be a “thinking man.”* You promise yourself you will burn that book that you have hidden in the ventilation shaft at home.

The crazed look in Captain Brazier’s eyes is extinguished. He looks almost disappointed, though you can’t understand why he would be. After all, he’s the fire captain. He should want his men to be committed to burning books, shouldn’t he?

You get in the fire truck without saying anything, and the two of you ride back to the station in silence. The next few days are awkward. But then, Captain Brazier stops showing up. A rumor goes around the firehouse that he left the station to join one of those hobo camps out in the countryside.



You're chosen to be the new captain at the firehouse. Captain Beatty. You like the sound of that. And your first act as the new chief is to hire your replacement, a young man named Guy Montag. He seems as obsessed with fire as you are. You think he'll make the perfect addition to the team.

Back at home, you retrieve the book from the ventilation shaft. Without thinking twice, you toss it in the fireplace and light it on fire. As you stare at it, you can't help thinking how lovely fire is. And its real beauty, you realize, is that it destroys all responsibilities and consequences. You reflect on this for several minutes until the flames die down and the book is nothing but ash.

### **Conclusion B: The Phoenix Brigade**

You only hesitate a moment before voicing the thoughts that have been troubling you lately. "No, sir. They don't seem dangerous at all. Foolish, maybe. Unimportant. But not dangerous. I'm curious about them."

The captain lowers the kerosene hose. "I thought you might be a thinking man. I'm glad my instincts were right. This whole thing was a test, and you've passed my boy." His eyes are glistening. "I'd like you to join the Phoenix Brigade. We're a secret organization, dedicated to dismantling the firemen and protecting books."

You begin protesting that he has been burning books for years. "It can't be helped," he admits. "I save books when I can. But it's time for me to move to another area. I'd like you to take over as Captain in my stead. And I'd like you to find young recruits who will join our cause. You'll have to test them in some way, of course, just like I tested you. Why, with some effort and the right people, I believe we can bring literacy back to the world! It can't be worse than the mindless drivel that passes for entertainment these days."

Captain Beatty. You like the sound of that. And your first act as the new chief is to hire your replacement, a young man named Guy Montag. He seems bright. You wonder whether someday he would make a good member of the Phoenix Brigade.

Back at home, you retrieve the book from the ventilation shaft. Without thinking twice, you light the fireplace and settle down in front of it. You open the book and begin to read. This will be the first of many nights you will spend, secretly defying the will of your society and discovering the mysteries bound in those pages.

### **Conclusion C: The Salamander in the Flames**

You aren't sure what Captain Brazier wants to hear from you, but you don't have time to think about it. You rush toward him and tackle him before he can turn on the kerosene pump. Brazier seems surprised by your response. Before you know it, he's on the ground beneath you.

The Mechanical Hound perks up, but does not attack you. You take this as a positive sign, and you wrestle the kerosene hose away from Captain Brazier.

"What are you doing?" he asks, even though the answer is clear. You turn on the pump and douse Brazier completely. Then, you reach into your pocket for a book of matches. You strike one and drop it to the ground. It traces the line of kerosene straight to Captain Brazier, who ignites completely. You can scarcely hear his pained screams over the seductive crackling of the fire. As you stare at the burning man, you can't help thinking how lovely fire is. And its real beauty, you realize, is that it destroys all responsibilities and consequences.

You head back to the fire station, alone save for the Mechanical Hound. The other firemen are so dumb that they scarcely notice you're not Brazier. It takes a few days before they call you by the correct name: Captain Beatty. You like the sound of that. And your first act as the new chief is to hire your replacement, a young man named Guy Montag. He seems as obsessed with fire as you are. You think he'll make the perfect addition to the team.

Back at home, you retrieve the book from the ventilation shaft. Without thinking twice, you toss it in the fireplace and light it on fire. As it did when you burned Captain Brazier alive, the fire destroys all responsibilities and consequences. You reflect on this for several minutes until the flames die down and the book is nothing but ash.

## GM's Explanation

**To get into the bedroom:** The players should find the coin in the couch cushion and use it to open the ventilation shaft and find the Bible. When they check the vase and find Matthew 6:28, they should figure out to check that verse of the Bible: "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin." The players should spin the bottom of the vase and it will unscrew from the top; they will find a small compartment that hides a pair of AA batteries. Using these on the remote, the players can start the parlor wall and watch the White Clown dance. The arm he swings followed by the body part he cuts off in the dance indicates the input for the directional lock (LLRRLRRLRULDLURDU)

**To get into the bathroom:** The players will need to find the battery in the nightstand drawer to use with the seashell radio in the dresser. The broadcast on the seashell will give three clues that can be solved in combination with the Digest Digest Digest magazine on the nightstand. The first clue is that Noble looks 10 times taller than Hoag. Noble's height (1.9 m) times 10 is 19. The second clue is that Hoag looks fat, and the broadcaster wonders how many stone he weighs. Hoag is 224 pounds. With 14 pounds equaling 1 stone, Hoag weighs 16 stone. The last clue is that Noble's fashion (stylish) and appearance (handsome). The number of letters in these words combined is 15. The lock combination is 19-16-15.

**To get into the kitchen:** The players will need to solve the chess puzzle to reveal Julius Caesar Act IV Scene III lines 70-72. Combine the selected lines with the password hint found in the bathroom door to find the solution to the voice input to unlock the kitchen door (honesty)

**To open the door to outside:** Players will find the statue of Icarus in the bedroom and notice the letters O-V-I-D etched into one of the feathers. This leads to Ovid's *The Metamorphoses*. A quick flip through takes the players to page 450, where they find an image similar to the appearance of the statue. At the top of the page, where it usually says the name of the author, the word is smudged, so it appears as Ov■■■■. Players should put the statue of Icarus in the oven at 450°F. The statue's wings will melt and a key will be revealed.

**To get past the Mechanical Hound:** The players have to disguise their smell by covering themselves with "A Concoction to Mask One's Smell." Combine the scent of two other people in whiskey. Bring to a boil and simmer for 24 hours. Cool and apply generously to the entire body. - There's a handwritten note in the margin: *Takes too long, put in the microwave and take a nap.*

The players will need the scent of two other people. This comes from the hamper in the laundry room, which is rusted shut. They'll need to use the Denham's Dentifrice from the medicine chest in the bathroom, but the chest is locked. They'll need to solve the refrigerator magnet poetry puzzle (*THE MEDICINE CHEST KEY IS INSIDE THE TURKEY*) to find the key that opens it. Once they retrieve the key, they can get the dentifrice and use it and a towel to wipe the rust off the hamper. They can open it and find sweaty exercise clothes.

The whiskey is easy enough to get—it's simply inside the liquor cabinet.

The handwritten note in the margin leads the players to the quilt on the bed. Each image on the bedspread corresponds to an object in the house the players will need to count. The corresponding number tells the players the order to put the colored items of clothing in the closet.

Image on Quilt	Object in house	Location	Clothes item	Solution
brown bear	1 teddy bear on the bed	bedroom	brown pants (size 38)	38
green leaf	2 potted plants	kitchen	green pants (size 0)	0
yellow duck	3 rubber ducks in the tub	bathroom	yellow sweater	S
purple book	4 purple books in the library	parlor	purple evening gown	E
pink flower	5 pink lilies in the vase	parlor	pink camisole	C
orange orange	6 oranges in a bowl	kitchen	orange overalls	O
black pawn	7 black pawns on the board	bedroom	black nightgown	N
red heart	8 people in loved ones frame	bedroom	red dress	D
blue swirl	9 second flush in toilet	bathroom	blue suit	S

The first letter in each item of clothing then spells out, in order, "PPSECONDS." Players should realize PP doesn't make sense, and look for a corresponding number - the size of the pairs of pants. This tells the player how long to microwave the whiskey and sweat solution-- 380 seconds. After covering themselves with the completed recipe, the players can exit the front door and pass the Mechanical Hound without incident. Then they just have to choose how to deal with Captain Brazier. Will they burn him alive, ending his secret movement? Or will they join him in trying to gain an understanding of books and attempting to subvert the mission of the firemen?

## Credits

This escape room was inspired by Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Several words and phrases and even allusions to other works of literature are drawn directly from the source material.

### Image Credits

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## About the Author

Jesse Birnstihl is originally from Minnesota, but currently resides in Gastonia, North Carolina, where he teaches high school English. He is an avid tabletop gamer and an escape room novice. He enjoys projects that allow him to express his creativity, especially writing and coding.

### Jesse's other creative projects

[Ashley Fizzer and the Sorcerer's Trial](#) (free Windows PC Download) - a mix between an escape room and a JRPG

[The Witch's Tower](#) (free Windows PC Download) - a JRPG version of The Witch's Tower (*Escape This Podcast* Season 1, Episode 5)

[Flash](#) (free PDF) - Roland can see ten seconds into the future. But can he change it? - a fiction novel I wrote during National Novel Writing Month in 2015 and the only one I have ever "published"

[The Silver River](#) (tabletop game) - a 4x game set in space (I did not design the game but was contracted as the game's creative writer) - see reviews of the game on [BGG](#)

I am generally averse to social media, but if you live in the Charlotte area, come play tabletop games with me in the [Carolina Tabletop Gaming Club Meetup group](#). You can also email me at [jwbirnstihl@gmail.com](mailto:jwbirnstihl@gmail.com) or find me on Discord ([Jesse#5259](#)).

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