

GENERATION RED

by

Alexander Utz

GENERATION RED

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GENERATION RED

CHARACTERS:

ERICA. The first person born on Mars. (W/NB, early 20s.)

ALAN. The second. (M/NB, early 20s.)

TRISH. The third. (W/NB, early 20s.)

DENVER. The fourth. (M/NB, early 20s.)

TIME: Someday.

PLACE: Mars.

GENERATION RED

Generation Red was originally produced by Otherworld Theatre in Chicago, IL, featuring the following cast and creative team:

Erica.....Erin Ellis
Alan.....André Sampson
Denver.....Bo Armstrong
Trish.....Alyssa Ratkovich
MARVIN.....Andrew Robinson

Director.....Bec Willett
Assistant Director/Props Designer.....Kris Lantzy
Stage Manager/Production Designer.....Tiffany Keane Schaefer
Costume Designer.....Martina Logan
Lighting Designer.....Ben Carne
Sound Designer.....Alexander Utz

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Lights up on a room. Mostly empty. A door. After a moment, ERICA enters through the door and looks around. A computer's voice, MARVIN, is heard.

MARVIN. Subject One, you have completed your Test. Please stand by for results. *(Erica paces, looks out the window, sits. Then, TRISH enters. MARVIN is heard again.)* Subject Three, you have completed your Test. Please stand by for results.

TRISH. I guess we're officially Martians now. *(Erica doesn't respond. After another moment, DENVER enters.)*

MARVIN. Subject Four, you have completed your Test. Please stand by for results. *(Denver smiles at the others.)*

DENVER. Ha. "Subject Four," thanks for that, MARVIN. Well, I'm all done! You're looking at the next legendary space pioneer, the next Neil Armstrong. "We're not worthy!" — Are we allowed to talk?

ERICA. I don't know.

DENVER. Got it. Okay. Shut up, Denver. Ha. *(Denver sits. Pause.)*

TRISH. Do you think you did well?

ERICA. I don't know if we should be talking or not.

TRISH. Alright, sorry. Geez. *(ALAN enters.)*

MARVIN. Subject Two, you have completed your Test. Please stand by for results.

ALAN. — Are we allowed to talk?

DENVER. We don't know.

ALAN. How did it go for you all?

DENVER. Neil Armstrong.

ALAN. "We're not worthy!"

ERICA. Guys.

MARVIN. All Subjects have now completed the Test. Please stand by for results.

TRISH. *(Mocking.)* "Please stand by for results."

ERICA. Trish.

TRISH. What? I'm sure we can talk. Hey, MARVIN, can we talk?

MARVIN. Subjects are permitted to do as they please. Please stand by for results.

TRISH. Okay, we're standing by for results. We get it.

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ALAN. So we can talk.

TRISH. What did I tell you? It's fine.

MARVIN. Incoming message from MRV-Explorer. "Attention: MRV-Explorer initiating M-1 Compound return sequence."

ALAN. Explorer? Is that —?

TRISH. Our parent's ship.

ERICA. Do you think they're finally coming back? *(A message plays through MARVIN; a woman's voice.)*

VOICE. Hi kids, we wanted to send a message saying we're returning to the compound today. We'll be docking shortly, in Terminal B-2. Can't wait to see you soon!

ALAN. — Mom? You're coming back!

ERICA. Can we talk to everyone?

DENVER. We miss you!

VOICE. I'm sorry, kids, but there's a lot of work to do here. I have to go. But we'll see you soon! We're all so excited! Love you.

ALAN. Love you, Mom. *(The message ends.)*

MARVIN. Connection to MRV-Explorer terminated.

ERICA. They're coming back. After all this time.

ALAN. I can't believe it. Can you believe it?

TRISH. Why didn't they tell us sooner?

DENVER. Maybe they wanted it to be a surprise. For our Test day.

TRISH. It's been years. And they tell us now? Don't you think that's weird?

ERICA. Aren't you happy about it?

TRISH. Of course, but —

ALAN. This is incredible. They'll finally be back!

ERICA. When do you think they'll get here?

DENVER. MARVIN, how much longer until MRV-Explorer returns?

MARVIN. I'm sorry, Denver, that information is only available through Command at this time.

ERICA. Maybe we can go to Command to find out.

ALAN. Would we be allowed in? We haven't passed the Test yet.

ERICA. Yeah, but this is a special occasion.

DENVER. Plus, we're just waiting for the results. MARVIN, can we go to Command?

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MARVIN. I'm sorry, Denver, but M-1 Command is only accessible with Test completion credentials.

ALAN. See?

DENVER. But we did all *complete* the Test. So we should be allowed in!

MARVIN. I'm sorry, Denver. Test results are still being calculated.

DENVER. Come on, just this once? We won't tell anyone.

MARVIN. Please stand by for results.

DENVER. Ugh, so we just have to sit here?

TRISH. Who knows, maybe this is even still part of the Test.

DENVER. What would the point of that be? To see how well we can sit in a room?

TRISH. They're more interested in preparing us for the outside.

DENVER. Right, and who knows what's out there! Aliens, probably. Deadly killer aliens. We're being bred as expendable lives in a great war of the worlds!

ALAN. If that's the case, I don't mind staying inside.

ERICA. There aren't killer aliens out there.

DENVER. You don't know that for sure. That's what their mission could have been.

ERICA. Our parents were not out fighting killer aliens. And even if they were, I'm sure they would've told us by now.

DENVER. "Alright you alien assholes, in the words of my generation: Up yours!" Right? From *Independence Day*?

ERICA. Their mission was to start work on a new landing zone for ships coming from Earth.

TRISH. No, their mission was to repair one of the backup water processing systems. Is that really what they told you? A new landing zone?

ERICA. Yeah, that's what they said.

TRISH. Why would they have told us different things?

DENVER. They didn't tell me anything.

TRISH. Alan, what about you?

ALAN. My mom just said there was an important mission that they were all going on.

TRISH. Okay, something weird is going on here.

ERICA. What do you mean?

TRISH. I mean there's something they aren't telling us.

DENVER. To be fair, they didn't tell me anything.

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ERICA. Maybe they're doing both, as a part of the same mission.

TRISH. Do you really believe that, or —?

ERICA. I'm just saying it's possible.

DENVER. Or it's a cover-up for the fact that they're fighting killer aliens.

ALAN. Whatever it is, we can ask them to tell us the truth when they get back.

TRISH. What if they don't tell us?

ALAN. I mean, I'd rather stay in the compound anyway. Not have to risk going outside.

TRISH. Really? You're not even a little curious about what's out there? What they're doing?

DENVER. (It's killer aliens.)

ALAN. I don't know. I like the compound.

DENVER. Boring.

ALAN. It's safe, though. Familiar. That's nice.

DENVER. Yeah, and boring.

TRISH. I can't wait to be out there. Actually *doing* something, like them. I wonder how long we'll have to wait for our results.

ERICA. We'll see, I guess.

ALAN. I hope I'm assigned to botany. I'd like growing the food.

TRISH. Except MARVIN takes care of that.

ALAN. I could help.

ERICA. I'd want to be assigned to be a field researcher. Sending samples and stuff back to Earth, being in contact with the people there —

TRISH. Yeah.

ERICA. How exciting would that be?

DENVER. It'd be boring. I'm bored. MARVIN, I'm bored.

ALAN. Our parents are finally coming home and you're bored??

DENVER. Yeah, because we have to *sit* in a boring *room* until the results are done. Boring.

MARVIN. Would you like to watch a film?

ALAN. I don't think I'd be able to focus on watching a movie. I'm too excited now.

ERICA. At this point, haven't we seen them all anyway?

MARVIN. No.

DENVER. It's fine, MARVIN. We won't watch a movie.

MARVIN. You're welcome, Denver.

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ALAN. Hey — I have an idea for how we can pass the time.

ERICA. What?

ALAN. Simulations.

ERICA. Oh, fun!

DENVER. Now that's an idea.

TRISH. Ha. No thanks.

ALAN. Why not?

TRISH. We're not kids anymore.

ALAN. So?

DENVER. You don't have to be a kid to have fun, Trish.

ERICA. Yeah, it's entertaining. It's something to do.

DENVER. Let's do it!

TRISH. No, we should be —

ALAN. I'll start.

ERICA. Opening?

TRISH. This is silly —

ALAN. (*Standing and exiting.*) Wild West! Um — a saloon! There's an outlaw on the loose. I'll be the brave Sheriff protecting the town.

TRISH. Ha. You're more likely to be terrified than brave.

ALAN. "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway." John Wayne.

TRISH. "It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to your enemies, but a great deal more to stand up to your friends." Dumbledore.

ERICA. Okay, okay, enough quotes, let's get it started. Places!

DENVER. MARVIN, set us up!

MARVIN. Initiating American West Simulation #553. (*MARVIN starts playing classic Western movie style music. Costumes and props appear.*)

DENVER. Ooo, what did we get? (*Denver pulls out some Western style costume pieces. And three guns. Denver, Alan, and Erica start playing dress up.*)

TRISH. Come on, really?

ERICA. Yes!

TRISH. Alan always picks Wild West.

DENVER. Yeah, because it's fun!

ALAN. Remember, "The frontier is a place —"

ALAN / DENVER / ERICA. "Of endless possibility!"

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TRISH. “Of endless possibility,” yes, of course, because we’ve only heard that a million times.

ALAN. Because it’s true.

DENVER. I’m excited. We haven’t done this in forever!

ALAN. *(To Trish.)* You can wear this cool vest, if you want.

TRISH. And a gun?

ALAN. And a gun.

TRISH. *(Taking a vest and a gun.)* Alright, fine. Let’s get it over with. *(Alan, Denver, and Trish exit. Erica mimes being a barkeep at one of the tables. After a moment, Alan enters and sits.)*

ALAN. Feel like I’ve been all over God’s creation. Hey, Sally.

ERICA. How’s the day, Sheriff?

ALAN. Long.

ERICA. See anything out of the ordinary?

ALAN. Stopped a bank robbery before the bank had the chance to be robbed.

ERICA. No need for Wanted posters, I guess.

ALAN. I need a drink.

ERICA. The usual?

ALAN. Make it stiff. *(ERICA mimes making a drink.)*

ERICA. I’ve heard tell that Crazy Wes Wyatt’s makin’ his way through these parts. You run into him yet?

ALAN. Not yet. I’m keepin’ my eye out.

ERICA. I’ll let you know if I see him, Sheriff.

ALAN. We ain’t lookin’ for any more trouble around here.

ERICA. No, sir.

ALAN. Simple folks tryin’ to lead simple lives, ain’t that right?

ERICA. That’s right.

ALAN. *You* certainly are. When’re you gonna settle down, Sally?

ERICA. I’ve got no plans.

ALAN. You could make plans with me.

ERICA. Sheriff, stop.

ALAN. Call me Bill. Ever since your daddy passed on and you took this place over, seems like you think of nothin’ else.

ERICA. Why should I?

ALAN. There’s more to life than runnin’ a bar, Sally.

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ERICA. Not for an enterprisin' woman like me.

ALAN. Is that right?

ERICA. Yes, sir.

ALAN. You'll come around to my way of thinkin' one of these days.

ERICA. Don't sound so sure of yourself, Sheriff.

ALAN. I told you to call me Bill.

ERICA. I'm choosin' to ignore that instruction. That won't get me arrested, will it?

ALAN. You're testin' your luck.

ERICA. I don't think it'll run out anytime soon.

ALAN. And why's that?

ERICA. Just a hunch. Would you arrest Crazy Wes Wyatt, if he came into town?

ALAN. I'd shoot him on the spot.

ERICA. Oh yeah?

ALAN. Yeah. We don't need his sort of trouble.

ERICA. Wouldn't you be causing "his sort of trouble" by shooting him?

ALAN. Not if you do it in the name of the law.

ERICA. And that's what you'd be doing.

ALAN. It's why I have this badge, ain't it?

ERICA. I suppose you're right.

ALAN. Damn right I'm right. Why d'you ask?

ERICA. Just curious.

ALAN. It's not a woman's business.

ERICA. Neither is runnin' a bar.

ALAN. You better be careful, never knowin' who's going to walk through those doors.

ERICA. I know, I know.

ALAN. Some of Crazy Wes Wyatt's cronies shot up a tavern in Redwood just last month. Barkeep was killed.

ERICA. I know it's dangerous, Bill. I can take care of myself.

ALAN. — What'd you call me?

ERICA. Nothing, Sheriff.

ALAN. I think you might be getting fond, Sally.

ERICA. Don't get any ideas.

ALAN. Don't you worry.

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TRISH. (*Off.*) Alright, I'm coming, but only because I don't want to listen to this crap anymore.

ALAN. — Sounds like old Slim is grumblin' outside. (*Trish enters and sits nearby, quiet.*)

ERICA. How're you doin' today, Slim?

TRISH. Yeah, I'm not interested in full participation, thanks. I'll just sit here.

ALAN. — You alright, Slim? You're actin' a bit off.

ERICA. Slim's always quiet like that. Lots on his mind, I bet.

ALAN. Did you hear about his wife leavin' town?

ERICA. Everyone was talkin' about it.

ALAN. No note, nothing. Just up and disappeared.

ERICA. Maybe she got spooked by Wes Wyatt's gang roamin' about.

TRISH. Oh my god. Are you idiots having fun yet? How much of this do I have to sit through?

ERICA. Now that's no way to speak to a Sheriff, Slim.

ALAN. Stand down, Sally, it's alright.

TRISH. I mean, this might be the dumbest one we've ever done.

ALAN. Hey, I like it.

TRISH. Yeah, because it was your idea.

ALAN. Come on. Trish. Play along.

TRISH. Why should I?

ERICA. It's our tradition.

ALAN. "You gonna do something —"

ALAN / ERICA. "Or just stand there and bleed?"

TRISH. We're not children anymore.

ALAN. So?

TRISH. So I don't see the point.

ERICA. The point is that it's making us happy. Isn't that enough?

ALAN. Plus we have the time to kill.

ERICA. So let's keep going. Yeah?

TRISH. Fine. Whatever. I can hear you idiots talkin' about my wife, you know.

ERICA. What are you drinkin', Slim?

TRISH. Whatever the Sheriff's havin'.

ERICA. Comin' right up. (*Erica mimes making a drink.*)

ALAN. Didn't mean to offend, Slim.

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TRISH. Don't mention it.

ALAN. It was a real shock when Clara left.

TRISH. Yeah.

ALAN. She was used to the city, though, I guess.

TRISH. I guess.

ALAN. It's dangerous for ladies in these parts.

ERICA. (*Handing Trish the "drink."*) It's dangerous for ladies everywhere. No different here.

ALAN. That's not what I meant.

TRISH. She said she missed "civilization." Probably just meant she missed the pretty shop windows downtown.

ALAN. Would you ever live in a city, Sally?

ERICA. That life's not for me.

TRISH. I thought I could buy her whatever she wanted, keep her happy, but —

ALAN. She wanted more.

TRISH. Let's change the subject.

ERICA. I was never one for fancy clothes or jewels.

ALAN. Never thought of a pretty ring on your finger?

TRISH. Seriously, Alan?

ALAN. What?

TRISH. Just, give the marriage thing a break. Geez.

ERICA. It does seem like we're going in circles.

ALAN. Well, excuse me for playing the role.

TRISH. Oh, is that what you're doing?

ALAN. We're just starting out. We have to establish character. Denver hasn't even come in yet.

TRISH. Yeah, what's the holdup with that?

DENVER. (*Off.*) I'm waiting for the perfect moment!

ERICA. Okay, don't tell us, or you'll ruin the surprise!

DENVER. (*Off.*) Don't worry!

ALAN. This isn't going well.

TRISH. I told you, that's because it's a dumb idea.

ERICA. Let's just see it through, okay?

TRISH. I know, I know, I'm cooperating.

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ERICA. Thank you. I mean, this used to be your favorite thing to do, what happened?

TRISH. Yeah, *used* to be. People are allowed to change.

ALAN. Can we please continue?

TRISH. Maybe we can come up with a different game. One that will actually be useful in the real world.

ALAN. Sounds super fun and not at all soul-sucking.

TRISH. You know what would be fun? Playing a Simulation that everyone enjoys, and isn't just fulfilling some weird power fantasy for dudes.

ALAN. It is fun for everyone.

TRISH. I hate to break it to you, Alan, but you're not John Wayne.

ALAN. I never said I was.

ERICA. Okay, let's keep going. Where were we?

TRISH. Alan was asking you about getting a ring on your finger. See, I'm paying attention.

ALAN. I never said I was John Wayne.

ERICA. Alright, alright, let's pick it back up.

ALAN. — You've never thought of settling down, Sally? Or would you just run away, like Slim's wife?

TRISH. Sally doesn't want a pretty ring on her finger. She's been propositioned by plenty of men better than you already, Sheriff, so don't go makin' a fool of yourself.

ALAN. — I'm just havin' some fun, Slim.

TRISH. Your idea of fun, Sheriff.

ERICA. Now come on, no hard feelings here.

ALAN. I ought to take you in to spend a night behind bars for talkin' to an officer of the law that way, Slim.

TRISH. Try that business on me, Sheriff, and I'll knock that jaw of yours clean off.

ALAN. Alright, that's it, let's go.

TRISH. You're not really gonna lock me up for usin' my right to free speech, are you?

ALAN. I said let's go.

ERICA. Hey —

TRISH. I ain't goin' anywhere, Sheriff.

ALAN. That's what you think. (*Alan lifts Trish out of her chair.*)

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TRISH. What do you think you're doin'?

ERICA. Listen here, that's enough —

ALAN. Sorry to be disruptin' your day like this, Sally.

TRISH. Get your grimy hands off of me!

ERICA. You can't arrest him, he's done nothin' wrong!

ALAN. He's done plenty.

TRISH. Alan, this is kind of bullshit.

ALAN. Oh, now you're sorry, is it?

TRISH. Dude, it's just a stupid game. Calm down.

ALAN. Nope. You're goin' behind bars, Slim.

ERICA. Sheriff — Alan —

ALAN. I said call me Bill.

ERICA. This is getting out of hand, I think. *(Denver bursts in.)*

DENVER. Everybody shut your goddamn faces! *(Alan lets go of Trish. Alan, Trish, and Erica drop to hide.)*

ALAN. Crazy Wes Wyatt —

DENVER. That's damn right, Sheriff.

ALAN. How do you —

DENVER. Oh, I know you. I've been waitin' on meetin' you for a long time.

ERICA. You're not welcome in my establishment, Wyatt!

DENVER. Well, well, well. Who's this pretty little thing?

ERICA. You don't speak to me that way.

DENVER. Then I don't speak to you at all. *(Denver points his gun at Erica.)*

ALAN. Wait —

DENVER. *(“Shooting.”) Pow! (Erica drops to the ground.)*

ALAN. Sally! No! You son of a bitch! *(Alan points his gun at Denver. Denver drops and hides.)*

DENVER. What're you gonna do, Sheriff?

ALAN. You're not gettin' away with that, Wyatt.

DENVER. Please. Call me Crazy.

ALAN. I'm gonna put you away for a long time.

DENVER. Ha. Good luck with that.

ALAN. Slim, help me capture this outlaw and I won't lock you up.

TRISH. Why would I agree to that?

ALAN. Because —

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TRISH. Yeah, no thanks. (*Trish stands.*) Hey, Crazy. Go ahead and shoot me so I can be done with this.

DENVER. — Really? But that's not as much fun.

TRISH. Denver. What would Crazy Wes Wyatt do?

ALAN. Wyatt, you shoot that man and I shoot you.

DENVER. What good am I to you dead? Don't you want the reward money for my capture?

ALAN. — Reward money?

DENVER. Yes sir. (*Out of character.*) How much was a lot back then? Like, 500 million dollars?

TRISH. I think like one million would've been a lot.

DENVER. Ha. That's it? Insane. Okay. (*Back in character.*) Don't you want the reward money, Sheriff? Think of what a million dollars could buy.

ALAN. I ain't tempted by money, Wyatt.

TRISH. He doesn't care if you're alive or dead, Crazy. So go ahead and shoot me.

ALAN. Trish —

TRISH. That ain't my name, Sheriff.

DENVER. I could shoot both of you here and now before either of you even blink.

TRISH. Then why don't you?

ALAN. He's not as crazy as his name suggests.

DENVER. Want to try me? "Go ahead, make my day."

TRISH. Where are your cronies, Wyatt? Don't you usually travel with a gang?

DENVER. I didn't need them hangin' around anymore.

TRISH. They're not waitin' for us outside?

DENVER. Nah, they're all dead. I killed 'em. They do call me Crazy for a reason, Sheriff.

ALAN. I don't believe you.

DENVER. Hey, we all meet our Maker one way or another, ain't that right?

TRISH. I bet they're waitin' outside to fill us with lead.

DENVER. Would I lie to you, Slim?

TRISH. Wouldn't be the first time, Crazy.

ALAN. What're you talkin' about?

TRISH. Don't you know, Sheriff? Crazy Wes Wyatt's my brother. (*Alan gasps.*)

DENVER. (*Laughing.*) That's right. Good to see you again, brother.

ALAN. Is that why your wife up and left, Slim?

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TRISH. She knew Crazy'd be back for me.

DENVER. And here I am. I want my face to be the last thing you ever see.

TRISH. Not if I have anything to say about it.

DENVER. Oh yeah?

TRISH. Yeah. *(Trish moves to draw her gun, but Denver is faster and "shoots.")*

DENVER. Pow! *(Trish drops to the ground. Alan "shoots" Denver.)*

ALAN. Pow! *(Denver, stunned, looks at Alan.)*

DENVER. You son of a bitch. Did you just — *(Denver grabs his side, as if he's been shot.)*

ALAN. "You gonna do somethin', or just stand there and bleed?"

DENVER. You missed, though. *(Denver points his gun at Alan. A moment of standoff. MARVIN plays "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" theme.)*

ALAN. Crazy Wes Wyatt. Killed your own brother. Why?

DENVER. He stole my horse.

ALAN. — And?

DENVER. That's it. I told you, they call me Crazy for a —

ALAN. *("Shooting.")* Pow! *(Denver pauses, then drops to the ground.)* Didn't miss this time. *(Denver makes a show of dying. Alan surveys the bodies and goes to Erica.)* Oh, sweet sweet Sally. You didn't deserve this. Why, God, why???

(MARVIN stops the Simulation music.)

MARVIN. American West Simulation #533 has concluded. *(Trish gets up.)*

TRISH. Well that got very violent very quickly.

ALAN. It might've lasted longer if you hadn't *asked* to be shot. *(Erica and Denver get up.)*

ERICA. I thought it was cool.

DENVER. Yeah, Crazy Wes Wyatt was — well, crazy!

ERICA. You were convincing, Denver. I felt like I was really there.

DENVER. Why thank you.

TRISH. Except there's no such thing as "really being there" for the Wild West.

ALAN. Okay, why do you keep saying that my Simulation was dumb?

TRISH. Because the Wild West didn't happen like the movies. They're made up.

ALAN. How do you know? You weren't there.

TRISH. Because it's pretty common knowledge. In real life, those sheriffs and outlaws you idolize so much weren't actually that cool.

ALAN. But you didn't live at that time, so you can't know for sure.

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TRISH. I'm pretty sure.

ALAN. Anyway, can't I just enjoy it? It makes me happy.

ERICA. The Simulations *are* just a way to have fun.

TRISH. I know, I know. **MARVIN,** how long until we find out our results?

MARVIN. Test results are currently being calculated. Please stand by.

DENVER. — Are you guys nervous about it? I'm a little nervous.

TRISH. I hope I do well. The first ones to ever take it, that's a lot of pressure.

DENVER. Hence, nervous.

TRISH. "You'll be one of the first to take it, so don't let us down."

ERICA. I think we'll be okay.

ALAN. We're about to have our futures basically decided for us, how can you be relaxed about that?

ERICA. We're all competent, so I don't think we should be too worried. Plus, it's our parents. They designed it. And they already know we're all capable.

TRISH. Ha. Have you met my parents? "Don't let us down."

ERICA. You know what I mean.

TRISH. Yeah, and based on how they prepared me for this, passing isn't a guarantee just because we're their kids.

ERICA. We'll be okay. It's going to be fine.

TRISH. Do you not understand, or something? If we don't pass, we're still stuck in the compound until the next Test. Five more years of not being able to go outside. Or seeing anyone else.

DENVER. I can't imagine.

ALAN. You say that like it's a bad thing.

ERICA. I'm sure they wouldn't make us wait that long.

TRISH. How do you know?

DENVER. I just want something different. Than this. Something exciting!

TRISH. I want to know what's out there. And I'm so ready to have some semblance of freedom.

ALAN. We're pretty much free to do what we want here.

TRISH. Yeah, but aren't you tired of the same thing every day? Being cooped up in the compound your entire life?

ALAN. It's for our own safety.

TRISH. Right, of course. I forgot the manly man needed to stay safe.

ALAN. Anyway, there's probably nothing out there.

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TRISH. What about the labs, the farms, and all that?

ALAN. I mean there's probably nothing outside of what our parents built.

ERICA. Sometimes I think, I wish I grew up on Earth instead.

TRISH. Why? So you can grow up and inherit a dead planet? Both options suck, but at least here you have a future.

ERICA. But do you ever think about it? Like, if your parents hadn't chosen to come here?

DENVER. I've thought about it.

ERICA. We could be on Earth right now. Outside. We didn't get a say in the matter.

TRISH. Neither did the kids on Earth. I think, in the long run, we're in the better place.

ERICA. But how long is the long run? (*MARVIN interrupts them by playing "Don't You (Forget About Me)" by Simple Minds, which seems to calm them in a Pavlovian way. The song stops, and the tension in the room has gone. A pause.*)

ALAN. You know what I just realized? We didn't do a Closing.

ERICA. You're right, we didn't. Who wants to go first?

MARVIN. I imagine that to a human, the climate of the American West in the 19th century would feel like —

DENVER. No, MARVIN. You don't get a Closing.

MARVIN. I'm participating.

ERICA. We should let him do one sometime.

DENVER. But he's not an actual part of this.

ERICA. It might be interesting, though. To hear what he thinks.

DENVER. You know what's even more interesting? To hear what I think. Okay, what do I imagine — ? Oh! I imagine that horses would be soft, and huge, bigger than they look in movies. I imagine that their eyes are full of loneliness. Wait, MARVIN, can you get us a horse?

MARVIN. No I cannot.

DENVER. Damn it.

ERICA. Trish? What about you?

TRISH. I don't have anything.

ALAN. Come on.

ERICA. There has to be something.

GENERATION RED

TRISH. Fine. I imagine that being inside a bar is dark and cool and isolating, even on a hot day. I imagine that having a stranger come to town is exhilarating, like taking a breath too quickly.

ERICA. Thank you, Trish. Those are good ones. — I imagine that looking into a row of shop windows, all lined up on a city street, must be better than watching anything on TV. I imagine seeing all the people in the stores, shopping for clothing and food and presents for their families. I imagine the nervous and excited feeling of running away from one place to go somewhere else, even though you might not know where you're going. I imagine being in a city, surrounded by all those tall buildings and people going places. Maybe they're running away somewhere too. I imagine owning a whole building and a piece of land that you can call your own, something that's been passed down through generations until it reaches you. I imagine being in charge of a place. That must feel nice.

ALAN. Yeah.

ERICA. What about you? This one was your idea.

ALAN. This is going to sound dumb, but — I imagine living in a small town like that would be a lot like living here. You'd see the same people all the time. It'd probably feel like the rest of the world was just part of your imagination, some distant made-up idea outside the borders of what you know.

ERICA. That doesn't sound dumb.

DENVER. You could go *crazy* thinking like that. — Get it? Crazy Wes Wyatt?

TRISH. We get it, Denver.

DENVER. Pow! Pow! Ha.

TRISH. You all having fun acting like children?

ERICA. When are we going to get to feel like kids again?

DENVER. I hope I feel like a kid all the time.

TRISH. We know, Denver.

ERICA. Anyway, who wants to do the next Simulation?

DENVER. Ooo, I'll have to pick something good.

TRISH. You really think this is worthwhile? We could be doing *anything* else.

ALAN. I do. It's a great idea, Erica.

DENVER. Spies. No, nuclear apocalypse. No, spies in the nuclear apocalypse!

ERICA. We need something to take our minds off the Test. Something to do until our parents get back.

TRISH. Until they can tell us what's going on.

GENERATION RED

ERICA. *Plus*, it'll be fun.

DENVER. Yeah, come on, Trish.

TRISH. I'm not trying to be the bad guy here, but —

ERICA. We know.

DENVER. She's just jealous that I got to be Crazy Wes Wyatt.

ERICA. What I'm saying is, it's something we can agree on. We all like it. It's like our last hurrah.

TRISH. — Okay. Yeah.

ERICA. Yeah?

TRISH. Yeah, a last hurrah. That's something I can get behind.

ERICA. Perfect! Sound good to you guys?

DENVER. I'm going to think of the best Simulation ever.

ERICA. So you've got the next one?

DENVER. Yeah! I still have to decide though. Nuclear apocalypse spies who are also robots?

ERICA. Actually, let's give you some more time to make up your mind.

ALAN. You should come up with the next one, Erica.

TRISH. Yeah, that'd be good.

ERICA. Sure, if you guys think so.

DENVER. Just don't choose nuclear apocalypse robot spy dinosaurs.

ERICA. I don't think I would've thought of that anyway. But how about this — a daughter and her date come home late from a high school dance.

ALAN. I see what you're going for, yeah. Kind of like a John Hughes thing.

DENVER. Ooo, those are good ones. "Don't mess with the bull, young man—"

ALAN / DENVER. "You'll get the horns!"

DENVER. Classic.

ERICA. Right, so they come home, and her parents are waiting up for her.

TRISH. Isn't that a bit cliché?

ERICA. Maybe, but —

ALAN. It's her decision, we do whatever Erica decides.

DENVER. Who's who? Can I be the boyfriend?

ERICA. If you want.

ALAN. Does that make me the dad?

ERICA. I guess so. Sure. That works out. Trish, do you want to be the mom?

TRISH. Do I have to?

GENERATION RED

ERICA. You could be the daughter instead.

TRISH. I don't really like when Simulations feel like they're ripped straight from movies we've seen.

ERICA. It isn't, though. We get to make it our own.

DENVER. That's the fun part!

ERICA. I tried to pick something simple, so everyone would be happy. And we can take it wherever feels right. Is that okay?

TRISH. It's fine.

ERICA. It isn't ripped straight from movies.

TRISH. Okay. I get it. Let's start. You doing the Opening, Erica?

ERICA. Are you the mom?

TRISH. Sure. I'll be the mom.

ERICA. Great. Thank you. And yes, I'll start the Opening.

DENVER. Yeah, set the stage. Paint a picture.

ERICA. Alright. We're in the living room of a house. Like a traditional, all-American house in a — um — suburb? Am I thinking of the right word?

DENVER. MARVIN, is suburb the right word?

MARVIN. A suburb is an outlying district of a city, typically residential.

ERICA. Right, so, a car in the driveway, a couch and chairs across from a TV, that sort of thing. I'm thinking somewhere like Ohio. Or Michigan? Maybe Illinois. They're all in that same Midwest region. But that sort of idea.

DENVER. Is that close to Texas?

ERICA. No.

DENVER. Oh. I have no idea where that is, then.

ALAN. Didn't you ever pay attention in Earth History?

DENVER. Honestly, listening to your mom talk about that stuff kind of put me to sleep. MARVIN, where is the Midwest?

ERICA. It's literally in the name, it's in the midwest of America —

MARVIN. The Midwestern United States is a region which occupies the northern central part of the country. It comprises twelve states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas —

TRISH. Okay, MARVIN, that's enough.

ERICA. I think it would be cool to live in the Midwest. It seems so interesting. And all-American. I'm pretty sure my mom told me once that she's from Kansas.

TRISH. You'd *want* to live there? Why?

GENERATION RED

ERICA. I don't know. I just like learning about that sort of thing. What different places on Earth are like.

TRISH. It doesn't matter, though. It's not like it makes a difference to us, we'll never go to those places.

ERICA. Who's to say we won't?

DENVER. My parents were from Denver! Which is a — state.

ERICA. City.

DENVER. That's why they named me —

TRISH. Denver, yes, we know.

ALAN. Anyone have more details they want to add?

ERICA. Um — family photos on the walls going up the stairs.

ALAN. Maybe a fireplace?

ERICA. Could be.

ALAN. Where they put knick-knacks and candles and things on the mantle. And where they hang their stockings for Christmas.

TRISH. Maybe they don't celebrate Christmas.

ALAN. Sure, but you think all-American living room fireplace and you think stockings.

DENVER. I like the fireplace. The dog curls up in front of it during the winter, when it gets cold out.

ERICA. But this is the spring.

DENVER. I wish I had a dog.

ERICA. What else?

DENVER. A cat, too. And an elephant!

ERICA. No, what else is in the living room? For the Simulation?

ALAN. A big window that looks out onto a front yard where the kids used to play when they were little.

ERICA. Yes. Perfect.

TRISH. How many kids do they have?

ERICA. Two. But only one's living at home. The other one —

DENVER. Ran away. To work in the circus.

ERICA. Absolutely not.

DENVER. Why not??

ALAN. The other one's away at college.

ERICA. Yes, that sounds right.

GENERATION RED

DENVER. Essays and toga parties and, um — hangovers! “Toga, toga!”

ERICA. But that kid isn’t here. They’re not a part of the Simulation.

DENVER. Maybe I’ll do a toga party for mine. Dinosaur spies in the zombie apocalypse take a night off and throw a toga party!

TRISH. That isn’t a cliché, at least.

ERICA. What else? We’ve got the living room, couch, TV, fireplace, family photos...

DENVER. Dog —

ALAN. And a “Home Sweet Home” sign. Or, “Home is Where the Heart Is”. Something like that.

TRISH. Oh my god.

DENVER. Ooo, that’s good. That’s perfect.

TRISH. It’s awful.

ALAN. Do you think everything I suggest is bad, Trish, or —

TRISH. No, awful in a good way. Ha. Like it’s so vague and terrible that it tells you exactly who these people are. It’s great.

ALAN. Oh. Thank you.

ERICA. Is that everything? I think we have enough to get started.

ALAN. It’s up to you. It’s your Simulation.

ERICA. Alright, I’m calling it. We’re ready to start.

DENVER. Can I say “places” this time?

ERICA. Go for it.

DENVER. Places, everyone! **MARVIN**, take it away! (*MARVIN dims the lights to make it look like night. A drawer in the wall opens, with high school dance type costumes for Denver and Erica, who take them and exit. Alan and Trish set up a few chairs to represent a living room. Alan and Trish sit.*)

ALAN. Honey, relax.

TRISH. I’m fine.

ALAN. I can feel how tense you are.

TRISH. I’m not tense.

ALAN. It’s going to be okay.

TRISH. How do you know?

ALAN. Just relax.

TRISH. How am I supposed to relax? Have you seen the time?

ALAN. I have, but —

GENERATION RED

TRISH. She was supposed to be home from the dance by midnight. It's almost two in the morning.

ALAN. I know when she was supposed to be home.

TRISH. It's not like her. Being this late isn't like Liz. We should try calling again.

ALAN. What makes you think it'll work this time? (*Out of character.*) — Wait, we didn't say when this was. Do they have cell phones?

ERICA. (*Entering.*) Sorry, sorry. Um — yes. Let's make it the beginning of last century. So they have cell phones. But no virtual intelligence yet. Right?

DENVER. (*Off.*) So no MARVIN?

MARVIN. How can I help, Denver?

ERICA. Never mind, MARVIN. Did we miss anything else?

ALAN. I don't think so.

ERICA. Cool. Let's keep going. (*Erica exits.*)

ALAN. So. Calling her didn't work.

TRISH. I know that.

ALAN. Let's go to bed, then. She'll come home.

TRISH. I'm worried.

ALAN. Ricky's a good kid. I'm sure they're fine.

TRISH. But what if they aren't?

ALAN. — She isn't answering her phone, so we don't have a way of knowing for sure. I say let's go to bed.

TRISH. I don't think that's a good idea.

ALAN. Well, what do you want us to do?

TRISH. I'm taking the car, I'm going to find her.

ALAN. Alright, no.

TRISH. Greg. *We don't know where our daughter is.*

ALAN. And I'm sure it won't be the last time, Karen! I need you to relax, please.

TRISH. Stop telling me to relax!

ALAN. You're stressing me out.

TRISH. You *should* be stressed! You know what, Greg, I'm going whether you like it or not. If you don't care about Liz's safety, then I don't know what to say to you.

ALAN. Can't we just go to bed? I'm sure she'll be here in the morning.

TRISH. It *is* the morning, Greg. The time is two. *In the morning.*

ALAN. You know what I mean.

GENERATION RED

TRISH. I'm not doing this right now. I'm going to get our daughter.

ALAN. From where?? You don't even know where she is!

TRISH. *Well I'm going to try to find out!*

ALAN. I won't let you do that!

TRISH. Why do you insist on being the one in charge all the time??

DENVER. (*Off.*) Ding dong!

ALAN. — Hello?

ERICA. (*Off.*) Mom? Dad? Sorry, it's me. The door's locked, I forgot my key.

TRISH. One second! (*Trish lets Erica and Denver in.*)

ERICA. Sorry it's so late.

TRISH. (*Sweet.*) Don't worry about it, sweetheart.

DENVER. Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Remington-Waters-DeMille.

ALAN. — Remington-Waters-DeMille?

DENVER. Yes sir. It's your name?

ALAN. Oh. Great. Of course.

ERICA. We lost track of time. You were probably worried sick.

TRISH. Don't mention it. We knew you'd be okay.

ALAN. Your mother was definitely worried.

TRISH. Greg.

ALAN. What?

ERICA. Sorry, mom.

TRISH. No, no —

ALAN. She was going to take the car and scour the city to find you.

TRISH. I wasn't that bad. Greg, I wasn't —

DENVER. It was my fault, anyway. Don't get mad at Liz.

ERICA. Ricky.

ALAN. — Why? What was your fault, Ricky?

ERICA. Nothing.

DENVER. Well, we had to talk about —

TRISH. Greg, they're home. It's okay.

ALAN. No, I'd like to know.

TRISH. Honey, relax.

ALAN. Ha! I hope you recognize the irony in *you* telling *me* to relax, Karen.

ERICA. Dad —

DENVER. It's okay. They know. We should tell them.

GENERATION RED

ALAN. What do we know?

TRISH. Tell us what?

ERICA. The dance was fine. Okay, goodnight!

ALAN. Not so fast, young lady.

MARVIN. (*Interrupting.*) Attention: Incoming message from MRV-Explorer to M-1 Compound Command. “Cue Compound Emergency Simulation #4481, to be initiated in —” (*The message abruptly cuts off.*)

ERICA. — What was that?

ALAN. Simulation? Is MARVIN trying to play a Simulation with us?

DENVER. MARVIN, no.

ERICA. MARVIN, play the full message.

MARVIN. I’m sorry, Erica, you do not have the proper authorization to access this message.

ERICA. Not authorized?

DENVER. Access message, MARVIN.

MARVIN. I’m sorry, Denver, you do not have the proper authorization to access this message.

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