

Reset (2025)

written by

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INT. GAUNTLET - C'S ROOM - UNKNOWN TIME

A PIERCING BUZZER BLARES through the darkness.

C (15) jolts upright in his narrow bed, eyes wide, gasping for air.

C

Goddammit!

He snatches a nail from beside his bed and scratches a new tally mark into the wall - one of many etched into the rough concrete.

The buzzer fades to a low ELECTRIC HUM, vibrating faintly through the floor. A dim red glow pulses from beneath C's door, flickering in-time with the buzzer sound.

C's surroundings slowly come into view: damp concrete walls streaked with stains, overgrowth creeping along the ceiling. Water drips off-screen. The air feels thick, and recycled.

C moves toward a rusted sink in the corner. A weak stream sputters out; he splashes his face and exhales heavily.

A DEEP CLICK.

C's door SCREECHES open, metal grinding against the wet floor.

He steps into a much larger chamber - an open, dimly lit cavernous space, built of the same decaying material. Four steel doors line the wall, including his own.

From the door to his right, D (12) steps out slowly. He is groggily rubbing his eyes; a WIND-UP MONKEY TOY dangling loosely in his hand.

C glares at him, and at the toy - disappointment flashes across his face. He sighs defeatedly.

C (V.O.)

How'd he even get that in here?

C turns left. The other two doors hang open - empty. His stare lingers. He is waiting for people who aren't coming.

Suddenly, an OVERHEAD TIMER flickers to life - 10:00 MINUTES. Crimson light bleeds over both boys' faces.

SUPER: 09:59

BEEP.

C stands up straight, his expression hardening.

He takes off running into the GAUNTLET. D follows close behind.

INT. GAUNTLET - CORRIDORS - MOMENTS LATER

C and D's footsteps ECHO down the long, flickering corridors.

C leads - his breathing is sharp and focused. He mutters to himself as he runs, eyes locked on the path ahead.

C
(quietly, and to himself)
Left, straight, double right, left,
right again, left...

D lags behind, clutching the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY to his chest, its tiny cymbals clinking faintly with each stride.

C (CONT'D)
Come on kid! Drop the toy and pay
attention. Follow closer behind me.
We've gotta hit every room
together, and you're slowing me
down.
(after a beat)
I'm not failing this shit again.

D
Yeah...okay, sorry.

The boys continue through the seemingly endless corridors until they reach a red-lit door.

C pushes it open. A sign reading LISTEN hangs above a SOUND LEVEL METER (a device that measures loudness in decibels).

As C enters the room, the faint mechanic hum of the corridor cuts out - replaced by an eerie, hollow silence.

INT. GAUNTLET - THE LISTEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two metal chairs sit side-by-side beneath the LISTEN sign. C gestures sharply for D to sit.

HEADPHONES descend from the ceiling, clamping over the boys' ears.

At first, nothing. Silence. Then -

A BOMBARDMENT OF NOISE. An amalgamation of horrific, unnerving, uncomfortable sounds send chills down the boys' spines.

C grips his knees, his jaw locked tightly.

D trembles. The faint clink of the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY's cymbals makes the meter flash once.

A warning.

C quickly places his hands over the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY's hands.

C
(mouthing; threateningly
towards D)
Hold. It. Still.

The sound builds, layers of distorted chaos unfolding onto one another.

D's breath quickens again; his leg starts to shake.

C catches D's eye. He motions for another aggressive warning – a clenched fist and a glare that could cut through glass.

It backfires. D flinches, his knee bouncing faster now. He's beginning to hyperventilate.

The sound level meter flickers again.

SUPER: 08:47...08:46

BEEP.

C freezes. He realizes that this approach isn't working.

He softens. C lifts one finger and traces a slow, invisible square in the air – a trick he uses to steady himself. Inhale...hold...exhale...hold. His breathing slows.

D copies him, uneven at first, then steadier. Their breathing syncs up and D manages to slowly collect himself.

The red LISTEN sign flickers green.

The far door slides open. C and D exchange a quick look, more companion-like than before, and continue into the next section of the Gauntlet.

CUT TO:

INT. GAUNTLET - THE STACKING ROOM - LATER

A heavy CRASH - a TUBA hits the ground. The tower collapses.

C

Shit-

D

(out of breath)

We almost had it!

C shakes his head, catching his breath.

C

Alright. Same plan. I grab, you build. Everything's gotta touch.

D nods.

The boys fall back into their rhythm - C hauling objects from the pile, D locking each one into place. The rule is simple: every item must touch another, and the whole tower has to stand inside the glowing PENTAGON ZONE.

While lifting a heavy cabinet drawer together, the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY slips from D's pocket and rolls away - unnoticed.

C (CONT'D)

Easy! Easy! Keep that base tight.

SUPER: 06:11..06:10

BEEP.

They lift the last item and step back to admire their work. The tower of miscellaneous objects stands impressively inside the glowing pentagon.

Nothing happens. The light remains red.

SUPER: 06:00

BEEP.

C and D start to panic.

SUPER 05:34

BEEP.

In their frenzy, and out of the corner of his eye, D spots the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY on the other side of the room.

Without thinking, he dives forward, grabs it, and stretches his arm back inside the zone until the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY's cymbals are faintly touching the base of the tower.

The red glow in the room flares - then turns green.

C bends over; his hands on his knees. At the same time, D clutches his WIND-UP MONKEY TOY, relieved.

The boys share a long exhale, and a brief, quiet laugh.

INT. GAUNTLET - CORRIDORS - LATER

C and D walk toward the final room.

C

Last time I was here...I was reset.

D

What happened?

C

Well, I was with these two older boys. And it was going fine...until...it wasn't. We got caught by him.

D

(louder)

Who?

C

I never really saw him. Just...his legs. Some say he's like a hundred feet tall.

(a beat)

But you hear him long before you see anything. Those footsteps.

(shudders)

And that thing he drags behind him? Metal on the walls. You'll never forget it. He's -

C swallows hard as they turn the corner - the final door is waiting for them.

INT. GAUNTLET - THE EVADE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They step inside cautiously. The air feels still.

Strips of WHITE LINEN hang from hooks on the wall. A single RECTANGULAR WINDOW glows faintly above.

The window's natural light glistens as it seeps into the room. It's the first real light the boys have seen. It almost looks holy, as it contrasts the Gauntlet's artificial, brazen red.

C stares at the window.

C
That's it. The way out.

He grabs a handful of sheets off their hooks, and begins tying them together.

In the distance...METRONOMIC FOOTSTEPS. Slow, intentional, growing louder.

C (CONT'D)
He's coming.

C fumbles the knot he is working on, his hands trembling.

C (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Dammit-no, no, no, no! You've got
to be fucking joking...

SUPER: 03:27...03:26

BEEP.

The footsteps grow louder.

D looks at his WIND-UP MONKEY TOY. Then at C.

D
I got it.

C
Wait-!

Before C can react, D bolts out of the room, and back into the corridor.

INT. GAUNTLET - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

D sprints down the hall, his breathing sharp.

In one fell swoop, he twists the WIND-UP MONKEY TOY tight and hurls it down the opposite corridor. The toy clatters against the wall, before spinning out of sight.

SUPER 03:00..02:59

BEEP.

D darts into THE STACKING ROOM, leaving the door cracked so it won't lock. He hides behind it - pressed flat against the wall, unseen from the hall.

The once distant footsteps stop just outside the door.

Metal SCRAPES the doorframe.

A boot steps inside.

Another.

The door creaks wider.

The figure is nearly in complete view.

From deeper down the hall:

CLINK-CLINK-CLINK-CLINK-CLINK...

The WIND-UP MONKEY TOY starts its frantic cymbal rhythm.

The figure's head tilts, before turning sharply and charging after the toy.

D exhales shakily.

D
(mouthing)
Fuck.

SUPER: 00:49..00:48

BEEP.

INT. GAUNTLET - ESCAPE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

C ties his last knot. He looks up as D rushes in, panting hard.

D
Go! He's gone!

C squeezes through first, forcing his shoulders through the tight frame.

SUPER: 00:25..00:24

BEEP.

D climbs up after him. Halfway through, the figure bursts in – his weapon SCRAPING against the floor.

SUPER: 00:10....00:09

BEEP.

C grabs D's arm, yanking him out. He kicks the linen rope loose just as the figure lunges –

SUPER: 00:04...

BEEP.

EXT. SUBURBAN YARD – CONTINUOUS

The boys spill onto the grass.

They push up to their feet, squinting against the daylight. They can't make sense of it yet.

They walk forward cautiously, adrenaline still in their veins. Grass crunches beneath them. Somewhere in the distance, a BIRDSONG. A LAWN MOWER hums faintly in the background.

With each step, the world takes shape – a WHITE PICKET FENCE, a SWING SET, an ORANGE MAILBOX...

SUBURBIA.

They turn back.

Where the Gauntlet once stood – now, just a quiet HOUSE. A cracked-open BASEMENT WINDOW (same as the rectangular window from earlier).

The boys don't speak.

Or move.

Sprinklers hiss somewhere down the street. A dog barks.

Morning.

Then – a slow hydraulic HISS.

A YELLOW SCHOOL BUS pulls to the curb.

The doors fold open.

BUS DRIVER

Connor! Danny! First Day! Your brothers say you're heaps of trouble.

(a beat)

Especially you, Connor. I hear you're a bit foul-mouthed.

CONNOR (formerly C) and DANNY (formerly D) stare at each other, then at the BUS DRIVER, numbly.

The Bus Driver ushers them on.

They step aboard. Silent. Dazed.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - 10 MINUTES LATER

The bus pulls into the drop-off lane. The doors open. Connor and Danny step off, still shaken.

Kids spill out behind them, laughing, yelling, backpacks bouncing. The world is MUFFLED, as if wrapped in water. Then...

A PIERCING EMERGENCY ALARM BLARES across the school grounds — same rhythm, same drone as the Gauntlet's buzzer.

Connor and Danny exchange a look.

SUPER: 10:00

BEEP.

BEEP (louder).

BEEP (loudest).

CUT TO BLACK.

ON BLACK

Screams.

Hurried footsteps.

A single GUNSHOT.

Silence.

END.