

23 AND HER

2018 Rod Serling Scriptwriting Competition

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is divided in two by a clear, thick plastic barrier. This wing has been transformed into a quarantined room, confirmed by the presences of TWO MEN IN HAZMAT SUITS that step through rooms only door. HAZMAT DOCTOR and HAZMAT ASSISTANT reach the plastic divider. The Hazmat Assistant unzips the plastic door entrance and steps aside.

HAZMAT ASSISTANT

Doctor.

The two enter the far part of the hospital room and seal the plastic sheeting behind them. They each find a clip board hanging at the foot of the bed of the only patient in the room and prepare to take their notes.

The Hazmat Doctor checks IV drip levels and jots numbers down as he reads the various instruments. Only after a beat does he look down to observe his slumbering patient.

DANA (18), is a young female dressed in a hospital gown. She has dark hair, pitch black like a midnight sky, with a distinguishing scar through her left eye brow. She stirs awake. Her head is in a haze as she slowly makes her self aware of her surroundings. She rolls her head left and right making it apparent she does not recognize where she is at.

She clenches her eyes tight and opens them again as if to wake up a second time. She reaches up to push her bed head hair out of her face only to lift her arm a few inches high. She discovers she is trapped and strapped to the bed. Panic sets in.

DANA

Mom? Mom! What's happening?

The doctor assistant leans over the bed. Only now does Dana fully take in the crunchy blue plastic clad doctors. This frightens Dana, she gasps.

HAZMAT ASSISTANT

We are almost done, Dana. Please lie back we are going to take some more samples. It'll be over in a....

Dana let's loose with a SHRIEK, she has spots the needle in the Assistant's hand. Dana squirms in the bed, pumping her arms.

DANA

No, no.

HAZMAT DOCTOR
(barks to his assistant)
Finish this quickly.

The assistant blindly obeys and attempts to steady Dana's arm. She's stronger than she looks as she kicks up the right side of her body. The assistant's arm flails back, and the needle in hand punctures a dollar size hole into the Hazmat Doctor's suit.

The doctor curses and covers the hole on the side of his suit. The doctor shouts out to the door.

HAZMAT DOCTOR (CONT'D)
We need back up in here, damn it!

HAZMAT ASSISTANT
Doctor Johns! Let me...

HAZMAT DOCTOR
Just stop it. Subdue the patient.

A team of hazmat men crash through the doors. One GUARD in a white hazmat suit with rifle, while another TWO MORE BLUE SUITS rush over to the bed.

Hazmat Doctor (Doctor Johns) scurries out cursing under his breath.

The guard secures his rifle to his side and reaches over Dana. He pins her down.

GUARD
I got the monster under control.
Move in.

Dana cries out as the new team of doctors load up her IV with a sedative.

DANA
Where is my mom? Somebody help me.

Dana drifts off once again.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The two Hazmat doctors are back. They've learned their lesson and sedate Dana first through her IV drip. She is awoken and mumbles to herself in a daze. The doctors undo the restraints and with no fight. She is lifted and carried into a wheel chair. They push her from the room.

INT. MRI SCANNER ROOM - DAY

The MRI Scanner takes up the center of the room. It's the large machine with the large white circular tunnel, used to scan and take pictures of a subjects anatomy. The sterile medical machine is compliment by the back wall, a calming beach mural of a tropical paradise.

The two hazmat doctors lift Dana from her wheelchair and place her onto the MRI table. They do their best to make the drugged patient comfortable. They fuss with a few switches on the device then exit the room.

The MRI machine comes to life and Dana's body slides with the automated table into the white tube.

A FEMALE DOCTOR communicates via LOUDSPEAKER.

FEMALE DOCTOR

Hello Dana, we're glad to have you with us this morning. We're going to snap a few images of you. Don't worry about the loud sounds, they are all normal. Just relax and stay as still as possible for us.

The machine whirs to life, a symphony of chirping and metal clangs.

Dana grows uneasy even in her half awoken state. Weakly, she shakes her head as if to disagree.

DANA

Stop, please stop.

INT. MRI CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A trio of doctors observe Dana from their control room. DOCTOR JOHNS (50's), we recognize him even without the Hazmat suit. He has grey hair and a permanent stern grimace.

As well we recognize his Assistant, DOCTOR ELLIOT (Late 20's), a youthful looking bright eyed attendant sits at the control panel. Elliot eagerly looks back at Doctor Johns before turning back to man the MRI controls.

At the opposite end of the control panel sits DOCTOR LILLY (Late 30's). She has a short practical hair cut, rolled up sleeves on her lab coat, and several types of pens hanging from her pocket. She leans forward ever curious to see what will happen with her patient Dana.

Dr. Lilly observes the weak struggle of her patient through the monitor and frowns. She swivels in her chair to the other doctors.

DOCTOR LILLY

We are not going to get any results if she keeps moving like that.

DOCTOR JOHNS

This patient is proving ever difficult to work with.

DOCTOR LILLY

I'm shutting it down.

DOCTOR ELLIOT

Wait, what do you mean?

DOCTOR LILLY

For god's sake, this is not the right approach.

Dr. Lilly in an flips a few switches on the panel and the MRI powers down.

Dr. Lilly exits the observation room alarming the other Doctors as they pursue.

DOCTOR JOHNS

What's going on here? You can't go down there.

DOCTOR ELLIOT

You don't have a suit.

INT. MRI SCANNER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Lilly enters the room. Through the doorway after her steps the armed guard in his white hazmat suit all but powerless at this point to intervene.

The Doctor punches some buttons on the machine and table slides back out.

DOCTOR LILLY

Dana, we're gonna take a break here and get you back to feeling like yourself again.

Dr. Lilly lifts Dana off the table and back into her wheelchair. As Dana is seated she gives Dr. Lilly's hand a grateful squeeze.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dana sits up in her hospital bed her arms wrapped around her knees up to her chest. She no longer wears the hospital gown but has found her street clothes, jeans and T-shirt.

Assistants clear out the heavy plastic while the guard looks on. The guard and assistants wear basic respirator masks but gone are the hazmat suits.

The room is nearly cleared out with the exception of the windows covered with heavy nailed shut boards.

The assistants carry the last of the folded up plastic exits the door leaving only the guard.

DANA

I would like to see my mother now.

The guard sneers.

GUARD

You don't have a mother.

Dana furrows her brow as the guard promptly exits and locks the door behind him.

Dana tries the remote for the TV in the room. Flipping through the channels nothing but static. It's a communications black out.

She flops back onto her bed. The restraints are gone from her bed post but it is still a prison.

Dr. Lilly enters and sits bedside with Dana. Dr. Lilly

DOCTOR LILLY

I had them take down the bubble, I see no reason for it, you were never infectious, viral, or anything before. I think we proved that with Doctor Johns damaged protective suit. And I see you found the clothes we left our for you.

DANA

Thanks for that Doctor Lilly. But what happen to me? I was home at one moment and then gone.

DOCTOR LILLY

There was a neighbor of yours caught up in the hype of your "situation" They believed in their head you were suddenly the spread of a disease, some kind of a outbreak. It was discovered to be psychosomatic symptoms and any other reports were deemed false. But still the nation reacted as your story continued to grow in popularity.

DANA

Was it Mr. McNamara? He never liked me, I parked in front of his house a few times and he would chase me out of there. The old bag always found something to go off on. Is he okay?

DOCTOR LILLY

From what I am told, I believe so.

Dana pauses as she seems sad to think about her neighbourhood.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

With your permission we would like to take more samples, and continue with some tests. We do think you are truly unique and a remarkable individual.

DANA

That's a nice way of putting it. But what are you all trying to say that I am?

DOCTOR LILLY

We don't know. That's what I am going to figure out.

Dr. Lilly puts a comforting hand onto to Dana's nearby ankle. Dana nods.

DANA

What about my mother?

DOCTOR LILLY

She can't be here right now, but we are working on that.

(MORE)

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
 I'm sure you've realize this has
 become a big deal gaining national
 attention. We do know she misses
 you very much.

DANA
 But why not?

DOCTOR LILLY
 She's not authorized to be here.

Dana is not getting the answers she wants.

Dr. Lilly wanders over to the tray of hospital food off
 Dana's bedside. It has barely been touched, likely because it
 doesn't look that appetizing at all.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
 You hungry?

Dana nods.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Dana enters the near empty cafeteria. The tables and chairs
 are unoccupied, a few staff members mill about while guards
 cover the exits. The door eases shut behind Dana and produces
 an echo in the cavernous room.

Dana's guard points her to the cafeteria's pick up window.
 She passes by a few workers cleaning and sorting trays. As
 Dana walks by, one worker suddenly remembers to place on his
 respirator mask.

At the pick up window she is greeted by a COOK.

COOK
 What can we make for you Miss Dana?
 We can whip up for you just about
 anything.

Dana is taken back that the cook knew her by name, but shrugs
 it off. She pipes up with an idea.

DANA
 How about mac and cheese?

COOK
 Mac and cheese, cheese and mac.
 Yeah, I think we can get that going
 in no time!

(MORE)

COOK (CONT'D)

We can dress it with some green beans and a brownie for desert. Go have a seat and we will bring it right over.

Dana says her thanks, and turns around. She catches several employees staring at her. They quickly avert their eyes and get back to clean up. Dana looks down embarrassed and finds a seat in the empty cafeteria.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - LATER

Dana finishes up her brownie desert and for the first time looks content after having a full meal.

A JANITOR approaches the table with his rolling garbage can.

JANITOR

May I take you tray miss?

Dana nods.

The Janitor leans in to collect the tray but pauses to whisper.

JANITOR (CONT'D)

We are really pulling for you. You know they got all those protestors outside and they are trying real hard to get you out of here. Government ain't got know business keeping you locked up in here. That's false imprisonment and no matter what they say you got rights.

The guard shouts from the other side of the room upon seeing the conversation going on. He charges over gun clutched tight ready to be raised at a moments notice.

GUARD

Back away from the subject, I will not ask you twice.

The janitor pops his hands up and steps back.

JANITOR

I ain't mean to cause no trouble. Just working here.

The guard puts himself between the Janitor and Dana. He leans over the janitor.

GUARD
Get out of my face.

The guard turns to Dana.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Dana complies and stands despite the concerned look on her face.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark except for the creep of light pouring from the hallway through the cracks of her room's door.

Dana slides out of bed. Careful not to make any noise.

She grabs a metal butter knife off her old dinner tray. It's a dull utensil but stiff enough for the task to come.

She approaches the nearest boarded window and finds the corner nail. She wedges the knife under the nail head and slowly pries out the nail. She loosens up a half dozen more nails and discovers she can bend back the plywood just a bit.

Through the corner of the window a sliver of moonlight creeps in. Dana peaks outside through the window.

POV DANA

Dana can see that she is several floors up in the tall hospital building.

She can see the front of the hospital, the roundabout car drop off that leads to the main entrance. A series of police barricades have been erected. All while two military policemen stand guard at the entrance.

Far from the entrance stands a guards booth and a fence past there that wraps around the whole facility and grounds. She can't read the gates sign but recognizes the Army's medical insignia.

On the other side of the fence is a shanty town constructed by pop-up tents. Dana can just make out a small buzz of activity and what seems to be protest signs that hang behind the fence. One sign says "Take me to your leader", another says "Free Dana", while the next is not supportive at all "Genetic Freak."

BACK TO HOSPITAL ROOM

Dana startles when she hears foot steps out side her room and a muffled conversation.

She lets the plywood bend back flat against the window and pushes the nails back into their holes.

She soars back over to her bed as she hears the lock on the door turn.

A rifled man quietly enters the room, It must be the night shift guard.

From the corner of her eye Dana can see the guard step over to the window. He heart soars as she sees the knife she left on the floor. She closes her eyes shut as the guard steps on the flat blade.

The guard pays know mind to his heavy boot on the knife and only takes notice that Dana appears to be soundly asleep. He exits and locks the door once more. Dana let's out a sigh of relief.

INT. PEDIATRIC WAITING ROOM - DAY

Dr. Lilly enters the dark room followed by Dana. Dr. Lilly turns on the light switch to reveal a sizeable waiting room with colorful murals. Toys and playthings are organized in one corner while a stacks of magazines are piled on top of other end table.

DANA

This is not an examination room.

DOCTOR LILLY

I was thinking we could use a little break. Not only is the pediatric wing available to us, but they got puzzles and games too!

Dana rolls her eyes.

DANA

Kids games?

DOCTOR LILLY

Oh, they're not that bad.

Dr. Lilly walks over to the game shelf. She finds two games to hold up.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

We got Guess Who or Connect Four.

Dana examines the games.

DANA

Please, not... Guess Who. Sensitive subject.

Doctor Lilly let's out an awkward chuckle.

DOCTOR LILLY

Connect Four it is.

MOMENTS LATER.

We rejoin Dr. Lilly and Dana again after a few games have passed.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

You got another win.

DANA

Are you losing on purpose?

DOCTOR LILLY

Absolutely not, I'm trying my hardest here. Did you have this game growing up?

DANA

Actually I did, I got Christmas morning. I must have been five or six years old. One of those Christmas's where mom went overboard, lots of wrapping paper every where.

DOCTOR LILLY

You remember quite a lot from your childhood?

DANA

Yeah, of course I do. But I know that's what you all have been driving at. I grew up like any normal kid, I am who I am. But I'm no dummy, you all still don't know what you think you may have found. It's bunch of nothing and you know it.

DOCTOR LILLY

You may be right, Dana. I understand your frustration.

Dana gets fired up.

DANA

Then tell me what's going on!

Dana slams her fist down, some of the connect four checkers fly off the table. Then a brief silence.

DOCTOR LILLY

Okay, you're right to want to know. Dana, you should hear what we're trying to figure out even if we don't have all the answers.

Dr. Lilly reaches down to pick up the checker pieces.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

Every person on earth has biological markers, as set of blue prints, I'm sure you learned in school about DNA.

Dr. Lilly examines the checker piece in her hand and demonstrates to Dana.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

Think of these checkers like DNA. We can stack them and they fit neatly together, and you can mix one red between the black checkers, put them in any kind of order and pattern. You make enough stacks you can create millions of these strands. Put them together and you can make wonderful creatures and human beings. Those strands in human beings make up our molecules called chromosomes. Everyone has 23 pairs of those.

DANA

But I don't exactly have that, I know this from the test I took. But why does it even matter?

DOCTOR LILLY

Those home tests are really quite wonderful. It's a modern day wonder to be able to trace back our ancestry to thousands of years and more, just from our saliva.

(MORE)

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

But that test discovered that you're not only an anomaly but something we've never seen before, a phenomenon.

DANA

How can that be?

DOCTOR LILLY

So think of it this way, your test when it came back it's like instead of neatly stacked checker pieces we saw stacks jigsaw puzzle pieces, nothing seems to match up, bent in patterns we don't recognize. We can't see how those pieces come together to make any kind of picture, it looks absolutely strange to us nothing we've ever seen on this Earth. You have nucleotides that are similar but nothing that we can readily recognize. And we don't know what the whole picture is but it somehow comes together to make you.

DANA

But I'm still me, I live and breathe the same as you or anyone else.

DOCTOR LILLY

And we want to figure out why that is. We've tested your mother, found your father, extended relatives and nothing abnormal. We have your birth tape and you came out just as naked as anyone else. Your health records were clean as ever, you've gotten sick just like us. Even that scar on your eyebrow when you were seven, and tried to do that flip off the swing set, you even have scars like us.

DANA

Then why don't you let me go home. Please.

DOCTOR LILLY

The government moved in to protect you. The ancestry testing company, as you know, leaked your discovery. That's when you saw the reporters on your doorstep.

(MORE)

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)

The military felt it necessary to move in as a protective measure.

DANA

To protect themselves.

DOCTOR LILLY

I would like to think to protect you. In truth, you are scientifically significant. There is so much we can learn about the world from your physiology. It could lead to medical knowledge, breakthroughs, new medicine, or even discover truths about the universe and our very origins.

DANA

You really think all that?

DOCTOR LILLY

With all my heart, you are one very special person.

Dana thinks long and hard.

DANA

But don't you have enough samples?

DOCTOR LILLY

There's always more work to do. But I sense your trepidation.

DANA

The science of it all, I don't care about it much anymore. None of that seems to matter to me. I feel that it's my body, my choice, and all these people want to make decisions for me. But I want to be home, I want my freedom, and to be left alone, I want to be normal again.

Dr. Lilly nods even though it's not the answer she wants to hear. She begins to pack up the game.

DOCTOR LILLY

I understand where you're coming from. It is a tough decision to make, hopefully we can get you to turn around in time, but I'll do what I can to get you back to where you belong as soon as possible.

Dana nods, but something didn't seem quite right about that response.

DANA

Okay, May I use the bathroom? The guard really has been making me hold it, be nice to get a stop in.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Dana washes up her hands in the sink and stares at her self in the mirror. She studies her reflection. Who is she?

She snaps from her own glare, Dana seems to get an idea.

She looks over her shoulder, first time she has really been by herself for days.

She opens up the cabinet drawers and searches for anything she can find. Rolls of toilet paper, towels, but she discovers something else: a flashlight. She holds it in her hand for a second, with a click it turns on, and another click off.

She tucks it into waist line and uses her baggy sweatshirt to conceal the rest.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

DANA is back to her bed. The lights are off. She is tucked under the covers, but she is wide awake.

She tip toes over to the paneled window. She pries out the loose nails from the night before and looks back out the window.

POV DANA

The tents are still out side the gate as the shanty town still stirs with activity.

BACK TO HOSPITAL ROOM

Dana reaches for and pulls from her sweatshirt the flashlight.

She sticks the flashlight right up to the window crack and clicks the light on and off. There is no discernible pattern to her flashing but she spends some time dedicated to the practice.

Dana's arm tires but she continues on, half asleep hanging on the window sill when suddenly a FLASH is sent back to her.

POV DANA

Dana takes a look to the fence line and spies a small group of protestors with their own flashlight, signalling back to DANA.

BACK TO HOSPITAL ROOM

Her heart leaps in her chest, but foot steps outside her door signal once again she must cover her tracks.

She sets the nails and hides the flashlight. She slides back to bed and shuts her eye.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dana awakes to a loud thud just outside the door.

She observes several feet shuffle about just outside her hospital room. A set of keys jingle and door lock cranks open.

A group of three enters the room, clad in black street clothes and handkerchiefs. They kind of look like crunchy bank robbers. The RESCUE LEADER (mid 20's) pulls down his handkerchief. Dana is taken away with how handsome he is with wavy golden locks of long hair, eye brow piercing, and tattoo's just slightly visible above his wrists before his black jacket covers them up.

RESCUE LEADER

Dana, we saw your signal and knew it had to be you. There is no doubt now that they were holding you captive. We're here to rescue you. That is, if it's okay with you, you want to go?

DANA

Yes, let's go!

Rescue Leader smiles and reaches a hand out. Dana slides out from her bed. Quickly she puts on her sweatshirt, and shoes. Finally, she takes that offered hand.

They exit the room.

INT HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dana steps over the body of her guard, he is face down fallen from his chair. Her rescuers lead her down the hallway.

DANA (CONT'D)
Is he okay?

RESCUE LEADER
We used a tranquilizer dart, non-lethal tactics, he should pop right back up any minute.

They turn down another hallway only to see personnel at the far end. They quickly turn back around.

RESCUE LEADER (CONT'D)
Damn it, we will have to find another route.

INT. STAIRWAY - CONITUOUS

The group of four escapees barrel down the stairs as fast as they can.

RESCUE LEADER
We will have to make a run across the lawn but our people will be there to help.

The rescue leader pulls out a walkie and barks into it.

RESCUE LEADER (CONT'D)
We're coming quick, plan B!

They reach the bottom blast through the exit door.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The foursome escape out of an alleyway. They dive through a hedge and reach the hospital's vast lawn. Dana recognizes it from her hospital window's view.

They dash across the lawn towards the fence line.

A group of protestors cut through the bars of the fence with large lock bolt cutters. The groups several members with all their might pull back the fencing to make a three foot gap in the fence.

Flashlight beams spread across the lawn as the four rescuers have been discovered by the gates guards and military police.

Dana is last to reach the fence gate. Protestor hands reach out to her to pull her to safety. She takes a quick glance back to her chasers.

She sees the GUARD from her room. He raving mad as he points his rifle directly at the crowd. The GUARD fires SHOTS into the crowd.

The bullets zoom over the crowd. All the creatures of the night break into a mass hysteria.

Dana is thick into the crowd now surrounded by a sea of bodies. She is pulled at from all sides. People yell hateful words "She'll be the end of us", "The Aliens are here", "She's the Devil's Child" while some ask for praise "Save us all" "We are sinners".

The crowd suffocates Dana, and she falls down to her knees disappearing into the rising crowd. Her eyes flash a brilliantly otherworldly yellow before we lose sight of her.

Another GUN SHOT rings out. This time it's a warning shot as MP's attempting to punch their way through the crowd. Dispersing the crowd the best they, the MP's push protestors back with their rifles.

Dr. Lilly arrives and shouts for the crowd to move back. She quickly makes her way to where Dana was seen last.

DOCTOR LILLY
Move back you maniacs!

Dr. Lilly dives down to find Dana. The crowd finally parts.

Dr. Lilly kneels over Dana. Dr. Lilly checks Dana's vitals.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
We need a crash team over here!

Dr. Lilly attempts to revive Dana. But Dana remains lifeless.

The crowd steps back and the noise fades away. This is it for Dana whomever she was.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Johns sits behind a grand wooden desk, his visitor on the other side is Dr. Lilly.

DOCTOR LILLY
We were quickly able to move the
body to our off site morgue.
(MORE)

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
The military was tremendously helpful with the task.

DOCTOR JOHNS
Excellent to hear doctor. I'd imagine she will be studied along side the mother's body now?

DOCTOR LILLY
That is correct. So far we have found no significant relationship between the mother's body and Dana's genetic make up other than the uncanny resemblance to the mother from a younger age.

DOCTOR JOHNS
That's fine, it still proves important that we detained the mother as well. Do we still think the subject is alien in origin?

DOCTOR LILLY
I think no conclusion can be drawn yet, but thankfully with the subject disposed we have plenty of years to study and test our hypothesis.

Very pleased with the answer, Johns stands and paces.

DOCTOR JOHNS
I agree, this truly will be one sciences most significant studies, invaluable to the continuation of mankind. Although you do understand the confidentiality of it all Doctor Lilly, History may not remember you Doctor for taking the steps necessary.

DOCTOR LILLY
Perhaps, it's for the best.

Dr. Lilly palms a medicine vial from her pocket. She glances down at it and fidgets with it in her hand.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
I was thankful I got to her in time before those deranged activists could steal here from us. It saddens me but the lethal injection was the only way to secure the specimen.

Dr. Lilly drops the vial back in her lab coat pocket and stands.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
Sorry, I mean Dana.

DOCTOR JOHNS
We all understand that the body
could not be let go.

Doctor Lilly stands and almost as if saying the next words to herself rather than Dr. Johns.

DOCTOR LILLY
We swear to our fellow peers to do
that of the Hippocratic Oath but I
don't think many have looked at
those words in a long time. "First
do no harm", that phrase, does not
actually exist in the oath as we
know it. It is rather said "to help
the sick according to my ability
and judgement, never with a view to
injury and wrong-doing."

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
Yes, she belongs here with us, for
the future...

Dr Lilly opens the door to exit.

DOCTOR LILLY (CONT'D)
And for all humankind.

She exits.

THE END.