

# THE FOURTH WALL

by

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# *Characters*

In order of appearance:

Jenny Childs.....a Junior

Debbie Caries... a Sophomore

Andrea Bloom...a Senior

Suzie Lieberman.....A Freshman

Introduction.

There is an empty darkened stage. Pause . House lights down. Silence.  
 Sound of metal girders groaning under great stress. Silence. Sound of  
 thin scream of someone falling. Thump of body hitting ground. A gasp.  
 Sudden spot centre stage around huddled body. Silence. The body stirs  
 and groans. She is dressed in track pants.

### JENNY

Oh my God! I'm dead. I've trashed the car. No. I was opening  
 the fridge door. I was reaching for the bread. Where am I? What  
 is happening? Mom? Dad? Jimmy? Chris? Where are you? I  
 don't like this. I'm scared. Help!

Silence

Heeee...lp!

Silence

Have I been kidnapped? I'm in a sort of prison.

Lights go out. She screams

I'm sorry. Please put the lights back on.

Lights go on.

Thank you.

She starts snivelling.

I know. It's a dream. I'll close my eyes and I'll be back in my  
 house with my dog. Rover? Rover? Where are you?

Pause. She opens her eyes.

O.K.! That's it. That's enough. Whoever you are out there,  
 you don't frighten me. I've taken self defense. Touch me and  
 you'll be sorry .

And there's Jimmy and Chris, my brothers and my dad. Don't think you can get away with this. I don't belong in prison.

She cries

The lights flicker and go out, there's the sound of girders groaning and a strange whistling sound. The sound increases. She put her hands over her ears.

I'm sorry.

The noise dies away

Where am I?

She goes towards the 4th wall. Mimes touching it.

It feels soft..... like touching a baby

She mimes feeling along the surface.

Strange.

There's a groaning sound, the lights flicker and go out. There's the sound of girders groaning. Sound of a scream of someone falling. A thump. Single OH spot centre stage

Jenny crouches down right in fear. She doesn't move. Debbie is dressed in navy pleated skirt and white blouse.

DEBBIE

No! No! He was about to say Yes. I was going to get what I wanted. Ouch My back hurts. Let's get real here. Dad? Dad? I'm talking to you. Hello?

JENNY

Hello

JENNY & DEBBIE

Who are you?

DEBBIE

Debbie

JENNY

Jenny

DEBBIE

Where am I?

JENNY

I don't know. I just arrived here ... like you.

DEBBIE

What is this place?

JENNY

Some sort of room.

DEBBIE

This is weird. This is really, really weird. Look at that wall.  
Bricks. Nothing but bricks.

JENNY

It looks smooth to me and feels kinda warm.

DEBBIE

Weird.

JENNY

Touch it.

DEBBIE

Are you crazy? Is there a way out?

JENNY

I don't know. I haven't looked.

DEBBIE

I am getting really, really upset.

JENNY

What do you mean?

DEBBIE

Well, my dad's just walked out on my mom. He says he has to find himself. My mom won't ask him for money. She won't even speak to him. So I have to take the bus to meet him at Denny's and I'm listening to his sob story and all I want is money to go to college, you know, and he's just about to sign a check and now I'm here.

JENNY

That's bad.

DEBBIE

Why are you dressed in a tracksuit?

JENNY

I just got back from cheerleading practice and I was reaching in the fridge for some bread and then I was falling and.....

DEBBIE

This is so weird. It's like Harry Potter or something. The Chamber of Secrets. It feels like a prison.

Lights go out. They both scream.

What do we do now?

JENNY

It happened before. I just said I was sorry and

*Lights come back on*

And they came back on....

Oh, and there's all these noises....it's as if the place can hear you. There was this groaning. Listen it's starting again... it did that before you arrived....

*Sound of metal girders groaning under great stress. Lights go out.*

*Silence. Sound of someone falling.*

Look out.

*Thump of body hitting ground. A gasp. Sudden spot centre stage around huddled body. Silence.*

ANDREA

I tell you they fit. They're Gap jeans and they've got to fit. Six months, I've starved myself. Don't they fit? Who are you? Where am I? Do they fit?

DEBBIE

They fit.

ANDREA

I told you. Just tell me where to pay. I'll leave them on. Is that O.K.? Where do I go?

JENNY

We haven't found a way out.

ANDREA

Way out of what?

JENNY

This place.

ANDREA

Gap?

DEBBIE

This isn't Gap.

ANDREA

Excuse me. I was in Gap buying jeans.

JENNY

We were both somewhere else when this happened...to us

ANDREA

Who are you?

JENNY

Jenny. I'm a Junior

DEBBIE

I'm Debbie. I was talking to my dad is Denny's and suddenly I was here. I'm a sophomore at Slipton Charter School

JENNY

I was reaching for the bread. Hi.

ANDREA

I'm Andrea. I'm a Senior ... at Makefield High School. You've heard of us of course. Everyone has. We win everything.

JENNY & DEBBIE

No.

ANDREA

Oh well... so what is this place?

JENNY

We don't know. It's really strange. It seems to react to what we say. Watch. **PRISON.**

*Lights go out.*

**SORRY**

*Lights go on.*

ANDREA

Wow. That is so cool.

*Looking round*

Oh, what a dump! Is there a bathroom? I need a bathroom.  
Have you searched the place? Are there any doors? Wow look at  
that wall. It looks kinda shiny.

*Jenny and Debbie look at each other strangely*

JENNY

I thought it... never mind

DEBBIE

I'll go off on this side to see if there's any way out.

JENNY

I'll come with you.

DEBBIE

Why don't you go and search that side.

*Reluctantly*

JENNY

But.. I'll be.... Alright

*Exit*

DEBBIE

Shout if you find anything.

*Exit*

ANDREA

I know this is some kind of joke. These are underclassmen and they do things like this.

*Sound of metal girders groaning under great stress. Lights go out.*

*Silence. Sound of someone falling. Like wind.*

What now?

*A gasp. Sudden spot centre stage. Silence. Suzie is in a pair of pajamas and clutching a floppy, well-used rabbit. She lands on her feet. She wears glasses and looks younger than her fifteen years. She blinks.*

SUZIE

Gee

*Debbie and Jenny return breathless*

DEBBIE

What's up?

ANDREA

Someone else has arrived. This better not be a joke.

JENNY

Who are you?

*Suzie starts to cry.*

ANDREA

Oh that's great. Really great.

JENNY

It's O.K. We're all in the same boat.

*Suzie snivels, wipes her face with her sleeve and hides her rabbit.*

Who are you?

*In between sobs and tears*

SUZIE

I'm Suzie... Suzie Libermann.. My dad's a businessman.. I go to a Catholic school because my mom's a Mormon, well sort of and I'm an only child, and it was a compromise, the school I mean and I don't mind really I don't and I'm sorry if I caused you any embarrassment. My dad was driving me to the baby-sitter's . Please don't hurt me.

JENNY

No-one's going to hurt you. We've just got to find out where we are. And get ourselves out of here.

ANDREA

God. I'm hungry. Has anyone got any food?

DEBBIE

— Don't you think of anyone besides yourself?

ANDREA

Look I'm the Senior. I'm taking responsibility.

DEBBIE

Mmmmm...

*She turns away.*

I'm going back to see if I can find anything.

*Exit*

ANDREA

Good idea

JENNY

I'll go and search ... my side... Suzie would you like to come with.....

SUZIE

Could I just stay here. I feel a little nauseous.

JENNY

No that's O.K . I'll ... If anything happens. I'll give a yell.

*Exit*

ANDREA

*To Suzie*

Take it easy and don't worry. I'm sure all our parents will have everything under control. There's that amber alert thing. Just a question of staying cool and not panicking and waiting for help. You'll be alright.

*Enter Debbie dragging box thing.*

DEBBIE

Couldn't find a way out. There aren't any doors or anything just these boxes... funny shapes. There's more of them. I'll go and get them.

*Exits*

## ANDREA

They don't look like they are good for anything. If only there was a door. If we had a hammer, we could probably knock a hole in it.

*Suzie behind Andrea's back goes to the back curtain and without her seeing hides her rabbit carefully.*

What are you doing?

## SUZIE

I was just looking to see if there was anything behind the curtain.

## ANDREA

Probably just another wall. See. I was right. We're all walled in. Just like a prison.

*The lights go out.*

Woops. Sorry.

*Lights go on.*

This wall seems very different from that other wall. It's shiny.

*Enter Jenny dragging some odd shaped pieces*

## JENNY

Look what I found. Oh and Andrea. There's a little room back there and a hole in the floor. I think it's a toilet.

## ANDREA

Great. Show me. I'm going to burst.

Andrea and Jenny exit. Suzie walks to the Fourth Wall. She taps it. It sounds like glass. She feels her way along it, looking up. It's like a dance. She puts her cheek against it and whispers

SUZIE

Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all?

~~There's a light tinkling sound of breaking glass. She touches the wall~~  
 Oh wall, O sweet wall and lovely wall, that standst between her father's ground and mine; Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall show me thy.....

Enter Debbie dragging another piece. The tinkling sound fades

DEBBIE

~~I've found another bit. I don't know what it is.~~

There a sound of metal girders groaning and machinery, echoing and then the sound of an elevator. The sound of a siren. The lights go out. Andrea and Jenny rush back on stage. There's a red flashing light.

ANDREA & JENNY

What is it? What's happening?

DEBBIE

I don't know. I was just dragging this piece back and it started. Look out.

JENNY

We're sorry. Did anyone say prison?

ANDREA

We're very sorry.

*The sound fades. Lights come up. On the landing spot is a table with a large medicine type bottle on it with a large label. On one side of the label is printed the word CHANGE on the other CHANCE.*

*This is way too weird. What is it?*

DEBBIE

It's a bottle.

ANDREA

I can see that. Did anybody say anything or do anything?

DEBBIE

I was just dragging that thing in here and it started. There was only Suzie

ANDREA

*To Suzie*

Did you do or say anything?

SUZIE

Well, I was feeling the wall and I could hear this sound like one of those broken Christmas ornaments, tinkling and well, we'd just done *Midsummer Night's Dream* and I played the part of Bottom... so I was talking to the wall.

ANDREA

What did you say?

SUZIE

Just wall.... *(Lovely wall.....)*

*Sound effect of falling glass. They all listen but it fades.*

DEBBIE

Great. Really great.

ANDREA

That doesn't help much. Well at least we've got a bathroom.  
And I have just got to get out of these jeans. They don't fit.  
O.K. Let's get to the bottle.

*They gather round the bottle on the table.*  
Anyone got a pen or a pencil.

JENNY

I've got a comb.

DEBBIE

Bus ticket.

ANDREA

The comb will do. Thanks.  
O.K. Here's a label. It says CHANCE

DEBBIE

No it doesn't.

ANDREA

Are you saying I can't read?

DEBBIE

It says CHANGE. Look.

JENNY

Ladies. I think it actually says both. Look! On that side it says  
CHANGE and on the other CHANCE.

SUZIE

Alice in Wonderland

## ALL THREE

WHAT?

## SUZIE

Alice in Wonderland. There's a bottle. Alice falls down the hole after the white rabbit and there's a door but she can't get through it because she's too big and there's a key to the door and there's a bottle and a cake.

## DEBBIE

What's that got to do with anything?

## SUZIE

I thought it might help.

## JENNY

She might have something. What was in the bottle?

## SUZIE

Something that made her shrink and she cried and nearly drowned in her own tears.

## ANDREA

Nice try but there's no key and who knows what this stuff is.

*She pokes it with the comb. Nothing happens. The others stand back.  
Seems to be O.K. It didn't explode.*

*She nervously lifts it up.  
Looks kinda harmless.*

## JENNY

Be careful.

*Andrea takes the cork out.*

ANDREA

I'll sniff it.

*She sniffs it.*

Smells like turkey.

DEBBIE

Turkey? Here let me smell it.

*She sniffs it.*

No it doesn't. It smells like pineapple. Here.

*Offers it to Jenny.*

JENNY

No way. I'm not sniffing that. That could be poison.

*Lights go out.*

I'm sorry.

*Nothing happens.*

I'm sorry!!

*Nothing happens.*

ALL

WE'RE SORRY

*Nothing happens.*

ANDREA

It's not working.

DEBBIE

We'll we can't sit here in the dark.

ANDREA

Wait a minute. What word did you use?

JENNY

I said it could be ..

*She whispers, half mouthing..*

Poison.

ANDREA

O.K.

*She whispers and signs so that the room can't hear.*

If you say PRISON ..lights go off.... If you say SORRY they go back on. If you say POISON... the lights go off so it's like one of those SAT things... you know... SHARK is to FISH as TIGER is to ANIMAL

JENNY

Got it. Prison is to Sorry as Poison is to ...

DEBBIE

Hell.

ANDREA

How can it be hell?

DEBBIE

No I just meant Hell I couldn't think of anything.

JENNY

I've got it. Blame.... Prison is to Sorry at Poison is to Blame.

ANDREA

Why?

JENNY

Well if you go to prison you should be sorry and if you poison someone you should get the blame.

DEBBIE

It can't be that.

JENNY

Why not?

DEBBIE

The lights are still off.

JENNY

*Disappointed*

Oh yes.

SUZIE

It's got to be something like Sorry. Story.

*Tiny flicker of light then it goes off.*

ANDREA

Why story.

*Lights flicker again.*

SUZIE

The letters. Change the R in prison to an O and it becomes POISON .

DEBBIE

Wow.

SUZIE

Change the G in CHANGE to a C and you have CHANCE

JENNY

O.K.

SUZIE

SORRY , STORY... you change one letter.

*Lights flicker.*

ANDREA

Come on. PORRY, DORRY, CARRY, LORRY?

DEBBIE

LORRY?

ANDREA

It's a British word for truck. My step dad uses it. He's British.  
He talks about lorries all the time.

JENNY

Well it's not that.

SUZIE

WORRY

*Lights go on. They cheer and clap*

ALL

Yeah, that's it!

*Lights go out.*

DEBBIE

Darn.

JENNY

Don't worry we'll....

*Lights go on and stay on.*

ANDREA

Don't worry. Don't you get it? Poison.

*Lights go out*

Don't worry.

*Lights come on and stay on. They cheer.*

O.K. Now. Someone has got to try this. Volunteers?

DEBBIE

You're the Senior.

ANDREA

If I die, I'm leaving everything to the Salvation Army.

*She sips. She puts down the bottle.*

JENNY

What does it taste like?

ANDREA

Toffee.

*She starts to twitch more and more violently.*

My head. My head. I wish, I wish.

*She sinks to her knees.*

I wish we could get outta here.

*She cries out loud. There's the sound effect of a pulley and then a window frame appears partially from the flies.*

8

SUZIE

Look. It's a window.

JENNY

But it's too high. We can't reach it.

DEBBIE

Perhaps she needs to drink more.

ANDREA

It's someone else's turn. I've had enough.

DEBBIE

I'll do it.

*She takes a big swig and then starts giggling and then laughing uproariously. Pointing to the window and clutching her sides. The window frame lowers.*

JENNY

It worked. It's coming down.

SUZIE

It stopped.

JENNY

We still can't reach it. Drink some more.

*Debbie laughs hilariously.*

DEBBIE

O.K.

*She drinks but nothing happens.*

## SUZIE

It's got to be someone new. Here give it me.  
Come vial.

*She drinks*

What if this mixture does not work at all?  
God knows when we shall meet again.

## JENNY

It's working; it's coming down.

*The frame moves down.*

There's a light from the window. Look!

*A light shines through the window.*

But it's still not low enough.

## ANDREA

Let's take all those blocks, put them together. Come on. Do something with them.

*They all try frantically to put them together. After much coming and going and with the help mainly of Suzie they make a staircase but even with Suzie balancing on Jenny's shoulders, they are two feet short.*

## DEBBIE

It's no good. We need another two feet.

## ANDREA

There's still some mixture left.

## DEBBIE

But we've all. .... No we haven't... Jenny?

JENNY

No, definitely not. I'm not taking it. I saw what it did to you.  
I'm not....

ANDREA

Jenny. I understand but sometimes in life, we have to sacrifice  
our own dislikes for the greater good of the community.

JENNY

But....

DEBBIE

We all did it.

JENNY

All right.

*She drinks a tiny sip and the frame comes down an inch.*

ANDREA

More.

*She drinks more and finally the frame is within their eyesight.*

JENNY

To Suzie

Get on my shoulders.

*Suzie peeks up into the frame to look out over the audience. She ducks  
down.*

ANDREA

What can you see?

SUZIE

There's a lot of people.

ANDREA

What are they doing?

*Suzie glances up again over the inside edge of the frame.*

SUZIE

They're watching something.

DEBBIE

What are they watching?

SUZIE

The other side of the wall.

*She ducks down.*

There's lights. I think they may be watching a movie or something.

ANDREA

Have a look at them again. How are they dressed?

*Suzie peers into the audience.*

SUZIE

They look O.K. Reasonably respectable.

ANDREA

Can they see you?

SUZIE

I don't think so. They seem to be laughing at something.

DEBBIE

Try to attract their attention. Maybe they can get us out of here.

SUZIE

I'm frightened. I don't know who they are. They could be terrorists.

ANDREA

Wave to them. See if they're friendly.

DEBBIE

Smile. Let them know we're friendly.

JENNY

I can't keep this up forever.

*Suzie waves.*

SUZIE

They're waving back.

ANDREA

Talk to them.

SUZIE

*Through the window.*

Hi!

*Suzie then ad-libs with audience.*

We're kind of stuck. In this strange place. And we need some help. We're terribly sorry to bother you.

ANDREA

Ask them if they've got a ladder.

JENNY

My back is killing me. Hurry up!

SUZIE

Have you got a ladder?

*There's a ladder propped against the front of the stage. Members of the audience are encouraged to prop it up and help. They help each other out. Lots of thank yous and explanations. Actors ad lib about their experiences. "We thought we were going to be in there forever." etc. When they are all out, suddenly there's the sound of grinding metal and whistling and breaking glass.*

SUZIE

The Wall! The Wall. It's disintegrating. It's going to fall this way. Look out. Everyone get out of the way.

*Jenny, Debbie and Andrea all flee towards the exits encouraging everyone to leave. The wall continues to disintegrate and sound effects grow.*

ALL

Get out. Get out. Before it's too late.

*Suddenly in the middle.*

SUZIE

My rabbit. I forgot my rabbit.

*She goes back to the base of the ladder and then mimes as if the wall is falling on her. Her body convulses as the glass bricks shatter on top of her. The sound effect stops as if she is buried beneath the bricks. Then there's the sound of the lift. A large white rabbit clutching a large watch is running across the stage. Freezes mid way. Looks out to the audience. Comes to the front.*

RABBIT

The Queen will definitely have something to say about this.

*Picks up the empty bottle . Rushes off.*

SUZIE

*Slowly awakes. Looks around.*

*Oh, I've had such a curious dream.*

*Lights out.*

END