ZATHURA

A Space Adventure

screenplay by
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based on the book by
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EXT A SIDEWALK DAY

A white picket fence. Pleasant suburban neighborhood. Nobody on the sidewalk. A car MOTORS past, obscuring our view for a split-second, and when it's gone --

-- there's an OLD GUY there. Weird, the way he appeared, sort of out of thin air. He's seventy or eighty or so, dressed in a dark black suit, full beard, long hair. He walks down the sidewalk, WHISTLING a tune that is somehow both merry and creepy at the same time. He's got a long, thin rectangular box tucked under one arm, and we move in closer as he walks, get a good look at it.

It's a board game, by the looks of it. There's a space scene across the front, childlike drawings of rockets and starfields. In plain block letters, the word

ZATHURA

Beneath it, in smaller letters:

A Jumanji Game

The Old Guy makes his jaunty way down the sidewalk, TICKING a stick along the fences as he goes. As he passes one particular yard, the Old Guy hears YELLING from behind the fence, shouts of approval and encouragement and fun. He keeps walking, smiling. But then he hears another shout, a little boy's voice, irritated and jealous and *not* having fun.

VOICE (O.S.)
You guys are *boring!*

The Old Guy stops whistling abruptly. He backs up a few steps, WHISTLING his song backwards now and TICKING the fence slats backwards with his stick. He peers through the fence and sees a little boy sitting on the grass in a back yard, looking downcast.

The Old Guy furrows his brow.

OLD GUY
Mmm hmm.

We move through the fence toward the little boy, who is --

EXT A BACK YARD DAY

-- DANNY BUDWING, six and three-quarters years old. He's sitting cross-legged on the grass, staring to his left. He turns and looks to his right. Then his left. Then his right.

CONTINUED:

Sound creeps in and we hear the THWACK of ball on leather on each head turn. Danny follows the thwacks like a tennis match, left, right, left, right.

From behind Danny, we see what he sees -- DAD, in his late thirties, well okay, forty, and WALTER, Danny's nine year old brother. They both know baseball, that's for sure, healthy arms, good with the glove. They don't drop any.

Danny keeps watching -- left, right, left, right. He sighs, rests his chin on one hand. We move in tighter on his face, tighter still, that annoying "THWACK!" getting louder and louder, the high-spirited yells of his father and brother ("Nice catch!" "Great throw!" "Way to go!") rising up specifically to bug the crap out of him.

When he's all the way in close-up, Danny mutters the essence of his six year old viewpoint on life:

DANNY
Stupid game.

From offscreen comes his father's voice.

DAD (O.S.)
Okay, Danny, you're up!

Walter objects.

WALTER
I didn't get my whole turn!

DAD
Yeah, I counted, that was twenty-five. That's what we said.

WALTER
That's not fair!

DAD
It's exactly fair. Come on, Danny, time for your turn and then I gotta work for an hour.

DANNY
Walter can have my turn.

WALTER
Hey yeah!

DAD
Hey no.

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER
He said!

DAD
Come on, Dan, let's just try a couple.

Danny sighs and picks up his glove. He marches across the grass of their modest back yard as to the gallows, passing his sweaty, athletic brother, who gives him a look.

Danny reaches the middle of the grass and pushes the glove gamely onto his hand. He hits it a few times, stares in his dad's direction. Takes a deep breath.

Dad tosses him one underhand, gently.

Danny closes his eyes, turns his head away, and hears the ball THUD to the grass. He looks back, sees the ball resting by his feet.

DAD (cont'd)
Almost! Good try!

Walter just barely *begins* to roll his eyes, but Dad catches him, holds out a finger in warning.

DAD (cont'd)
Uh uh.

Walter makes an innocent face. But Danny knows the score. He picks up the ball and throws it back to his dad, gets it almost all the way there.

DAD (cont'd)
Ready? Watch the ball, not me.

Danny nods, but keeps staring at his father.

DAD (cont'd)
Danny? The ball, Dan, not me.

Danny looks down, stares at the ball hard, Superman using x-ray vision.

Dad tosses another underhand one, puts a little more on it. This one sails higher, Danny looks up, raises his glove, closes just one eye this time and the ball actually *hits* his glove, he opens his other eye in excitement, but the ball bounces off his glove and falls behind him --

-- where it's caught by a diving Walter, who has leapt in from the side. He rolls on the grass, holding the glove over his head, a spectacular snow-cone grab.

CONTINUED: (3)

DANNY
(furious)
WALTER!

Danny hurls his glove at Walter as hard as he can, it hits his brother in the head.

WALTER
DAAAAD!

DAD
Danny...

But Danny storms off across the yard and into their house.

Dad sighs and looks at Walter -- did you have to?

WALTER
What?

CUT TO:

INT HOUSE - DANNY & WALTER'S BEDROOM DAY

This is the bedroom of two imaginative, busy kids, their interests wildly divergent. The walls are covered with posters, on one side, basketball players and athletes, on the other it's heavy on space themes. There's also a pair of pet geckos in a cage and a bright red school banner for Fieldston Elementary School on the back of the door.

Danny lies on the top bunk. He's curled up facing the wall, sucking his thumb, idly flipping the pages of a favorite book, brightly colored drawings of exotic and ferocious creatures.

He hears a CREAKING sound and whips his thumb out of his mouth, doesn't want anyone to see. Behind him, Dad's head rises up as he takes a few steps up the ladder.

DAD
Hello dere.

No answer.

DAD (cont'd)
You know, when I was six years old I-

DANNY
(still facing away)
Six and three quarters.

CONTINUED:

DAD
When I was six and three quarters, catching was hard for me too.

DANNY
It's not hard for Walter.

DAD
Walter is nine.

DANNY
So? He's still better.

DAD
Hey, look at me.

Danny does, reluctantly.

DAD (cont'd)
Walter is different. He's good at some things, and you're good at some things. And they're not the same. That's how people are.

DANNY
He beats me at *everything.*

DAD
Danny, listen to me, because this is important. You know how you always want to make up games and pretend to be characters and stuff like that? You know what you have, Danny? You know what you have that's just incredible? An *imagination.*

INT HALLWAY DAY

Just outside the door to the bedroom, Walter lurks, listening to them and licking a popsicle.

DAD (O.S.)
(still to Danny)
A *great* imagination. An incredible, unstoppable, has-no-borders *universe* of an imagination.

INT BEDROOM DAY

DAD
I'm amazed by the things you make up, and, you know, I make things up for a living, so I know what I'm talking about. You're *great* at it.

Danny sits up and looks at him.

DANNY
Am I better than Walter?

INT HALLWAY DAY

In the hallway, Walter stops mid-lick, listening intently for the answer to that one.

DAD (O.S.)
What?

INT BEDROOM DAY

Danny persists.

DANNY
Is my imagination better than Walter's?

Dad smiles and lowers his forehead against Danny's.

INT HALLWAY DAY

Walter leans in closer, straining to hear.

INT BEDROOM DAY

DAD
(whispers to Danny)
You're *different* than Walter.

INT HALLWAY DAY

Walter, frustrated, couldn't hear.

INT BEDROOM DAY

DANNY
See? I'm not better at *anything.*

He flops back down on the bed facing away.

CONTINUED:

DAD
You have a future in acting. But I can tell you're not still mad.

Danny sits up, looks at him.

DANNY
I won't be mad if we play Smash Brothers.

DAD
I have to work.

DANNY
Okay, read to me.

He thrusts the book he was holding at Dad and we dimly catch the title -- "Greek and Roman Monsters & Myths."

DAD
I have to *work.*

Danny flops back down with panache.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Dad comes down the stairs and into the living room, just as a football flies at his head. He manages to catch it.

DAD
Don't *do* that.

Walter, who threw the football, is in a chair facing the TV, which is tuned to Walter's favorite show, "Carl Mayhew's Sports Roundup." Carl Mayhew is a big wild-eyed sports nut.

Walter's finished his popsicle and is drinking a big glass of red fruit punch.

WALTER
Wanna play catch?

DAD
We already did.

WALTER
No, *football* catch.

DAD
I have to work for an hour.

CONTINUED:

WALTER
(sacrilege)
But it's *Saturday!*

The phone RINGS in the other room.

DAD
Tell me about it.

He tosses the football back to Walter and walks into --

INT OFFICE DAY

-- his office, a small room off the living room. He drops down at his desk, where an array of art supplies is laid out, an ad layout in progress. Walter's behind him, in the doorway.

WALTER
All you ever do is work.

DAD
Nice try.
(answers phone)
Hello?

WALTER
This is *so* unfair.

DAD
(into phone)
Hi. Yeah, can you hang on just one second? Thanks.
(to Walter, covering the phone)
I have a meeting this afternoon, Walter, and I have to be ready. Nothing I can do about it.

WALTER
(double sacrilege)
You're going *out?!*

DAD
I'm going to a meeting. You'll already be at Mom's, she's picking you up at three.

WALTER
(confused)
We go to Mom's tomorrow.

CONTINUED:

DAD
No, today.
(into phone)
Just one more second, okay?

WALTER
But this is a four-day Dad week.

DAD
(fast)
No, three-day Dad week. Four-day last week, four-day next week, three-day this week. Four-day Mom's house this week.

Walter sets his glass down dramatically.

WALTER
That's not fair!

DAD
(thinks)
To whom?

WALTER
To anybody.

Pause.

DAD
(into phone)
I'm sorry, Richard, can I call you right back? Two minutes.

He hangs up and slides his chair across the floor, gliding to a stop in front of Walter. He holds his son by the arms.

DAD (cont'd)
Walter, I love you. And no, it isn't fair, to anyone. But you have *got* to learn another sentence.

WALTER
Do you want to play catch?

DAD
I have to work.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Danny has come down the stairs and wandered over near the door to the office. He lurks outside, listening.

CONTINUED:

WALTER (O.S.)
Ten throws.

DAD (O.S.)
I have to work!

INT OFFICE DAY

Walter is petulant.

WALTER
If Danny wasn't around, we'd have all the time we wanted.

DAD
Well, Danny *is* around.

He turns around in his chair. Walter bites his lip, but can't help himself:

WALTER
(super innocent)
Dad?

DAD
Hmm?

WALTER
Do I have a good imagination?

Dad turns back and studies Walter. This is suspicious.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Danny leans closer, outside the door, listening hard. Almost unconsciously, he puts his thumb back in his mouth.

DAD (O.S.)
You have a wonderful imagination.

Danny scowls, doesn't like that answer at *all*.

INT OFFICE DAY

DAD
Why do you ask?

WALTER
No reason. How about five throws?

He throws the football to Dad, who catches it instinctively.

CONTINUED:

DAD
I... how can I put this? Have to work.

Danny appears in the doorway, holding up two Nintendo remotes, their cords dragging behind him.

DANNY
Dad, I could play Smash Brothers if you want.

DAD
(singsong)
I have to wo-ork.

DANNY
You said you'd play Smash Brothers!

WALTER
(an overreacter)
What?! You told him you'd play Smash Brothers?!

DAD
No, I didn't.

He throws the football back to Walter, to be done with it. He is attempting to keep his patience. Walter catches the ball and Danny points hysterically at this outrage.

DANNY
You're playing catch with Walter!

DAD
(rubbing his head)
Guys...

WALTER
He might, if you weren't here!

DANNY
(to Walter)
YOU ARE SO MEAN!
(to God)
EVERYBODY WANTS TO RUIN MY LIFE!

DAD
Guys, *please...*

WALTER
(to Dad)
You never keep your promises!

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
(to Dad)
ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS WALTER!

Dad finally snaps.

DAD
THERE'S ONLY ONE OF ME! Okay?! I don't like this situation either, it sucks, is what it does, but it wasn't my idea! *None* of this was my idea, I'm just the idiot it happened to, so climb off my back and give me about two inches of space, will you please?!

They both just stare at him, wide-eyed. Walter sets the football down on a bookcase, as if to apologize for pushing so hard. Danny drops the remotes, starts to put his thumb in his mouth but catches himself and drops his arms to his sides, his lower lip quivering.

Dad feels horrible. He sits back down and stares out the window, takes a breath. When he starts talking he's still facing away from them. He talks softly.

DAD (cont'd)
Do you boys remember the time I ate that bad chicken they keep under the lights at the supermarket and I was sick all night throwing up?
(they nod)
And the next morning we had to get on the plane to go to Grandma's and I was still so sick I could barely stand up?

More nods. He turns around and faces them now.

DAD (cont'd)
Remember before we left, when I told you guys I needed you to grow up a few years, right then in that very moment, so that you could help me on the trip instead of me helping you? Otherwise we wouldn't make it?
(more nods)
Remember what happened?

Pause. Danny and Walter look at each other.

DANNY
We grew up?

CONTINUED: (3)

DAD
There are some days, guys, when you gotta grow up all at once. I need today to be one of those days.

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM DAY

SLAM! The door to their bedroom closes and Walter and Danny flop down on opposite sides. Bored. Mad. Not looking at each other.

Walter tosses the football, up and down, up and down, up and down.

DANNY
Please stop that.

Walter sighs dramatically and collapses into a chair next to the pet lizards' cage. Beside him is a picture of a cute ten year-old girl and Walter, taken at a theme park.

DANNY (cont'd)
Do you want to play Chutes and Ladders?

WALTER
No. You'll cheat.

DANNY
Stratego?

WALTER
You cheat at board games, Danny. I'm not going to play with you ever again in my life.

INT OFFICE DAY

Dad drops back into his office chair. Rubs his face with his hands. Picks up the phone and dials.

DAD
Hi, sorry about that.
(pause)
No no, it's fine, I'm not meeting him till three-thirty, I can finish by then.

INT BEDROOM DAY

Danny, back to us, is rummaging through a toy chest, tossing out boring stuff, looking for something good.

CONTINUED:

He comes up with two expensive-looking walkie-talkies, space themed. He turns one on, static comes out.

Walter turns around suddenly from the geckos.

WALTER
Excuse me, could you please put those back right now this minute? They belong to me.

DANNY
You never play with them.

WALTER
They're still mine.

Danny looks at him.

DANNY
Why are you so mean to me?

WALTER
I'm not mean, Danny. I'm in third grade. I have a girlfriend. Things get complicated when you get older.

Danny holds out one of the walkie-talkies invitingly.

DANNY
Play astronaut?

Walter heaves a theatrical sigh and takes the radio.

CUT TO:

INT OFFICE DAY

Dad is shuffling through the layout materials on his desk, talking on the phone.

DAD
I understand his concern, but I think if we foreground it we make it worse. We might want to allude to it in the copy, but the shot plays so strong I wouldn't-

There is an angry SHRIEK from upstairs. He looks up at the ceiling.

DAD (cont'd)
So strong I wouldn't want to, uh...

Still from upstairs, he hears the bedroom door BANG open --

CONTINUED:

WALTER (O.S.)
DAAAAAAD!

-- and feet THUDDING on the stairs.

DAD
(trying to wrap up fast)
...we'd be foolish to change at the eleventh hour. Uh, can I call you back one more time real quick? Small domestic emergency here. No, I know. I know. Not a problem. Not a problem. Okay. Okay. Okay. Thanks.

He hangs up the phone just as the door to the office bursts open to reveal Walter, holding one of his walkie-talkies in his hand. He displays its newly broken antenna like a prosecutor showing a murder weapon.

WALTER
LOOK what he did!

DAD
I was on the phone.

WALTER
He breaks *everything!*

Danny is behind him, hands shoved in pockets, ashamed.

DANNY
... was an accident...

WALTER
He is *such* a baby!

DAD
Walter...

DANNY
I'm NOT a baby!

WALTER
He breaks all my stuff --

DANNY
... said it was an *accident...*

WALTER
-- he can't catch a ball --

DAD
That's enough.

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER
(whirling on Danny with a flourish)
And he still sucks his thumb!

DANNY
YOU SHUT UP!

Livid, Danny grabs Walter's football from the bookcase next to the door and hurls it at Walter's head as hard as he can. Walter ducks --

-- Dad's eyes pop wide, he lunges for it --

-- but the ball sails past his outstretched fingertips, SMACKS into the glass of red fruit punch Walter left on the desk --

-- and spills all over the layout.

Dad leaps to his feet.

Walter GASPS.

Danny's face turns white.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'm sorry!

Dad doesn't reply, just stares down at the desk, defeated, as the ruby-red fruit drink seeps into the layout materials.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry
I'm sorry I'm sorry!

DAD
Okay.
(pause)
Okay, Dan.

Walter just looks at Danny and shakes his head. Which is pretty much worse than anything he could say.

Dad sags into the office chair, staring at the ruined artwork.

CUT TO:

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Walter and Danny sit next to each other in the middle of the couch, watching guiltily as Dad pulls on his jacket, gets his wallet and keys, etc.

CONTINUED:

DAD
(fast)
You know my cell phone number, you know Deirdre-next-door's number. Call me if anything comes up. It's only ten minutes to the office, I just have to grab the duplicates from the art department and I'll come right back.

WALTER
Why can't we come?

DAD
Because then it'll take longer.

WALTER
No it won't.

DAD
Yes it will.

WALTER
No it won't.

DAD
Yes it will, and I don't have time.

DANNY
I don't want to go.

WALTER
It won't take longer!

DAD
Yes it will.

DANNY
There's no way I want to go.

WALTER
Why would it take longer?!

DAD
Because you will argue, much as you are doing now. You'll argue about who gets the front seat, about who gets to punch in the garage code, about, I don't know, which ocean is better. Trust me.

He stops in the doorway, turns back.

CONTINUED: (2)

DAD (cont'd)
I'm asking you guys politely -- please do not kill each other.

And he's gone.

Danny and Walter, on the couch, both turn away from the door. They look at each other. Walter rolls his eyes. He gets up, flops into the chair in front of the TV, and flicks it on, right back to Carl Mayhew's Sports Roundup.

Danny stares at him.

Pause.

DANNY
All you care about is TV.

Walter holds the remote out and turns up the volume.

Pause.

DANNY (cont'd)
I hate this guy. Can we watch SpongeBob?

WALTER
SpongeBob is for babies.

DANNY
You used to like it.

No answer, Walter just turns Carl Mayhew up some more.

DANNY (cont'd)
(a curse)
Tartar sauce.

He sits and thinks for a very long moment. He stares off into space. The gears are grinding away behind those blue eyes. The big wheel of a great imagination starts to turn.

Danny gets up and walks out of the room.

INT BEDROOM DAY

Danny's rummaging again. He's bent over the big chest, toys flying out left and right.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Danny comes back into the living room with two baseball gloves and a ball. He drops them on the floor in front of him. He stands there, hoping Walter will notice him. Walter doesn't.

DANNY
How 'bout if you and me play catch?

WALTER
(eyes on TV)
You and I. And no.

Danny still stands there, frustrated. Waiting for Walter to look at him.

But Walter won't.

Danny picks up the ball and tosses it gently into the chair next to Walter. Never taking his eyes off the TV and Carl Mayhew's incessant peppy blathering, Walter picks it up and drops it on the carpet, rolling it almost back to Danny in a most un-catchlike manner.

Undeterred, Danny picks it up. He tosses it again, a little bit harder. Walter sees it coming and takes his eyes off the tube just long enough to catch it. Again, he drops it on the carpet.

Danny marches forward and picks it up again, goes back to where he was. He looks at Walter, frustrated.

Walter just stares at the TV, eyes glazing over.

The baseball hits Walter in the head.

WALTER (cont'd)
OW!

DANNY
(sensing his imminent destruction)
I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY!

WALTER
You're DEAD, you little fungus!

Danny takes off. Walter bolts out of the chair.

Danny races up the stairs two at a time and runs down the upstairs hallway.

Walter covers the stairs three at a time and closes in.

INT BEDROOM DAY

Danny runs into their bedroom and slams the door behind him. There's no lock so he pushes against it as hard as he can.

But Walter's right behind him, now he's pushing on the other side of the door.

WALTER
Open up, Danny! You're only making it worse!

He's shoving, Danny's shoving back, but it's a losing proposition, Walter is stronger and heavier and the door's coming open so --

-- Danny jumps back, hiding behind it as it swings open. Walter tumbles into the room and Danny races around the door and --

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

-- back down the stairs. He hears Walter THUNDERING behind him, turns and runs down the hallway toward the kitchen --

-- but sees a flash of Walter through an open doorway, circling around ahead of him to cut him off in the kitchen. Danny turns around and takes off in the opposite direction, disappearing from view.

INT KITCHEN DAY

In the kitchen, Walter stops, listening. He hears nothing.

INT HALLWAY DAY

Walter comes into the hallway, still hears only silence.

He turns, finds himself at the top of a flight of stairs that lead to the basement. There is a closed door at the bottom.

IN THE STAIRWELL,

Walter hesitates at the top, staring down at that doorway fearfully, that is the *last* place in the house he wants to go.

WALTER
(softly)
Danny?

No answer. Walter takes two steps down the stairs. Darts a look back over his shoulder. Then two more. Darts another look behind him. (This is a bit of a tick with Walter, whenever he's in a dangerous situation.)

CONTINUED:

He stares at that closed door, at the streaks of uneven light coming from under it. He freezes, trembling. Hears a voice from behind him.

DANNY (O.S.)
What's the matter, Walter?

Walter whirls around, sees Danny standing at the top of the stairs, staring down at him with scorn.

DANNY (cont'd)
Thought you weren't *scared* of the basement any more?

WALTER
I'M NOT! *You* are!

DANNY
Big tough Walter, scared of a *basement!*

WALTER
Liar!

He bounds up the stairs and Danny takes off. But he's a split-second too late, Walter lunges for his foot and grabs it --

INT HALLWAY DAY

-- and Danny crashes to the floor in the hallway. He wriggles free, leaps to his feet, and heads for the kitchen door that leads outside.

EXT BACK YARD DAY

Danny BANGS through the kitchen door, Walter hot on his heels. He races across the yard and scrambles through a break in the bushes, reaching a garden wall. He climbs it.

Walter closes in. Danny reaches the top of the wall, Walter gets hold of him again but Danny wriggles free, drops over the wall and lands --

EXT CEMETERY DAY

-- in the cemetery on the other side.

Danny GASPS, realizing where he is. It's a creepy graveyard, several hundred years old, the tombstones leaning every which way like rotting teeth.

He starts to get up but Walter drops on top of him, OOFING the wind out of both of them. Walter rolls Danny over and pins his arms with his knees.

CONTINUED:

DANNY
I hate you!

WALTER
I hate you back! I wish you'd never been born!

DANNY
I DON'T WANNA BE WITH YOU ALL THE TIME, I WANNA BE WITH *MOM AND DAD* ALL THE TIME!

WALTER
Well, we're stuck with each other.

And with that he rolls off of Danny and faces the other way, chest heaving.

Danny lays there for a moment, staring up at the clouds. There are two big puffy ones, they look like they used to be one, but now they're pulling apart, headed in opposite directions.

He sits up, brushes a few tears from his cheeks. Neither of them speaks. Too tired to fight anymore, too mad to talk.

Danny notices something a short distance away. It's a shadow, leaning against one of the gravestones.

He gets up, approaches it cautiously. He circles around the grave, looks at it from the front. He cocks his head, curious.

NEARBY,

Walter is every bit as upset as Danny was, but the tears on *his* cheeks are the last thing he wants his brother to see. He barely hears when Danny calls to him.

DANNY
Hey Walter.

Walter ignores him.

DANNY (cont'd)
Hey, hey *Walter.* Look at this.

WALTER
(completely uninterested)
Look at what.

DANNY
Well you gotta *look.*

CONTINUED: (2)

Put upon, Walter drags himself to his feet and walks over to where Danny is. They're standing in front of a faded old tombstone, a big one, six feet high. Walter catches sight of the born-died years -- 1845-1956.

WALTER
So? He was old, whoever he was.

DANNY
Not him. The *box.*

Walter looks down. Leaning against the base of the tombstone is a rectangular cardboard box. We've seen this box before. In plain block letters on the front, the words

ZATHURA
A Jumanji Game

Danny sinks to his knees in the grass in front of the game. Walter remains standing, suspicious.

DANNY (cont'd)
It's a game!

WALTER
A space game? Looks stupid.

DANNY
I like it.

WALTER
Yeah, it's for babies like you.

He walks away across the cemetery and climbs over the wall.

Danny runs one hand over the game board. He looks both ways, to see if anybody's watching him. He looks around again, realizing where he is, and that he's alone now.

He shoves the game box under one arm and takes off across the cemetery.

DANNY
Walter, wait!

CUT TO:

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Walter is slumped in the chair in front of the television, watching his dumb show again. (For the record, even Walter's getting tired of his show. But habits are habits.)

CONTINUED:

Behind the comfy chair, Danny sits cross-legged on the carpet by the window, the box in front of him. He opens it.

There isn't much inside, just a folded game board, a pair of dice, and a few game pieces -- a rocket ship, an astronaut, a robot, a green lizard-lookin' guy, a weird bull with a long torso. The design is decidedly retro, this thing probably came out in the early sixties. Everything is well-worn.

Danny flips the lid over, looking for the instructions. Printed on the inside of the box top in large letters it says "The Rules." And beneath that, there are only three rules.

"Roll dice. First to Zathura wins. Once the game begins, it will not end until there is a winner."

WALTER
(staring at the TV but talking to Danny)
You shouldn't have taken that, you know. It's stealing.

DANNY
Be quiet, Walter.

WALTER
You're probably gonna go to jail.

DANNY
I can't hear you, Walter.

Danny opens the game board. It's a starfield, like on the front of the box, with a path of colored squares leading to a large purple planet labelled "Zathura."

WALTER
You might only get five or ten years, though, cause you're a kid.

DANNY
I can't hear Walter.

Danny looks through the game pieces, picks out the astronaut. He places it on the earth, which seems to be the starting spot.

DANNY (cont'd)
First one to the purple planet wins, I guess.
(to Walter)
Will you play with me?

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER
(eyes on TV)
Of course not.

DANNY
I won't cheat.

WALTER
Yes you will.

Danny sighs and rolls the dice. He gets a four. He moves the astronaut four spaces along the path, and when he places it on the fourth square --

-- a buzzing sound comes from the board.

Danny's eyes widen as a small white card pops out of the edge right in front of him with a smart little CLICK.

He looks at the board again, doesn't touch the card yet. He picks the board up and looks under it.

DANNY
Where are the batteries?

Walter ignores him. Danny takes the card and looks at it. It has a big Z on one side, words on the other. Danny furrows his brow. Tries reading it.

DANNY (cont'd)
"Meet... meaty... meetor shoe... meat or shoe..."

OVER WITH WALTER,

His view of the television is suddenly blocked by Danny's face.

DANNY (cont'd)
Read this for me?

He holds the card out in front of him. Walter sighs and takes it.

WALTER
"Meteor shower, take evasive action."

DANNY
What's "evasive action?"

WALTER
It's when you get out of the way of something.

CONTINUED: (3)

Danny looks around, takes one step to the side. Looks around again.

DANNY
What exactly am I supposed to get out of the way of exactly?

WALTER
I don't know, all it says is-

He looks back at the card for further information, but stops mid-sentence. There's a small, smoking hole right in the middle of the card.

WALTER (cont'd)
Huh?

He bends down and peers more closely at the hole. Through it, he can see another hole, also small, also smoking, in the floor between his feet.

He looks up, sees a matching hole in the ceiling directly above the card.

WALTER (cont'd)
Oh... wow.

Up above them, they hear a RAT-A-TAT sound on the roof.

WALTER (cont'd)
It's a hail storm!

DANNY
It's not hail!

He grabs the card and waves it in front of him.

DANNY (cont'd)
IT'S METEORS!

BAM! BAM!

There are two sharp raps on the roof, then --

BAMBAMBAMBAMBAMBAMBAM!

-- a furious POUNDING, like a thousand golf balls hammering down on them. Danny and Walter SHOUT to one another, but their words are lost under the cacophony.

The skies outside the window suddenly go dark, plunging the room into gloom. Walter stumbles to the wall and flicks a light switch.

CONTINUED: (4)

ZZZZZZZZ-*CRASH!*

A golf-ball sized meteor SMASHES through the ceiling, BLASTS right through the coffee table in front of Danny, and CRUNCHES through the floor below it, burrowing deep out of sight.

Danny leaps back.

DANNY (cont'd)
TAKE ERASIVE ACTION, TAKE ERASIVE ACTION!

He does, which consists of running around in circles.

But it doesn't seem to be a bad plan, as one golf-ball sized meteor after another SMASHES through the ceiling and craters in the floor. They seem to be landing right behind Danny no matter where he goes.

Walter, on the other hand, is wide-eyed and nearly paralyzed. He staggers backwards, no idea what to do, until he bumps into the TV set (which is still on), leaning against it for support.

Above them, a low whistle rises higher and higher, sounds a lot like a falling bomb. Walter stays frozen where he is, looking up in horror; Danny, still leaping around the room, looks up too and sees through one of the holes in the ceiling.

DANNY (cont'd)
WALTER!

The whistle gets louder and louder, Danny throws his whole body at Walter, hits him in the chest and knocks him out of the way just as --

-- a huge meteor, six feet across, smashes through the ceiling and crushes the television.

Actually, "pulverizes" is more accurate, it turns Carl Mayhew's Sports Roundup into so much sports dust.

Walter lands on the living room floor a few feet away from the crater, Danny on top of him. Everything goes quiet as the meteor shower stops and the dust settles. Danny and Walter sit up, chests heaving.

DANNY (cont'd)
Told you. Meteors.

Walter looks at him.

WALTER
Danny, you... you...

CONTINUED: (5)

"Saved my life" is the rest of that sentence, but he can't quite bring himself to say it. Danny puts a hand on his brother's shoulder.

DANNY
I took erasive action on you, Walter.

In shock, Walter looks at the giant meteor that is now buried in their floor. He sits there, shaking, truly at a loss for how to interpret this strange series of events. He looks up, through the gaping hole in the floor of what's left of Dad's bedroom, and out through the corresponding hole in the roof above it. Outside, there's a night sky, brilliantly dotted with starlight. He's freaked out.

WALTER
H-how'd it get so dark so fast? It's nighttime already!

Danny, on the other hand, takes this completely in stride. He stands up and dusts off his pants calmly.

DANNY
It's not night, Walter. It's outer space.

Walter looks at him, aghast for a moment, then shakes himself out of it.

WALTER
Yeah, right. Outer space. What are you talking about?

He stands up too, collecting himself.

WALTER (cont'd)
We just lost track of time, that's all. We must have got knocked out or something. We got turned unconscious for a while and now it's night, that's what happened.

He goes to the front door, throws it open --

-- and stops in his tracks.

There's no outside there anymore. At least, not the one he expected. It's as if the front door has opened up directly on the outer reaches of the solar system, like the view screen of a spaceship, if they had such things. The planet Saturn is clearly visible ahead of them, its icy, brilliantly colored rings lit up like a billion jewels.

CONTINUED: (6)

Walter's jaw drops and he teeters on the edge of the door frame. Danny reaches out and grabs his belt, pulling him back inside. They stand there, staring in amazement out the open door.

DANNY
We're in outer space, Walter. Get used to it.

WALTER
But -- but -- how -- how -- HOW?

DANNY
(shrugs)
We started playing a dead guy's board game, what did you expect?

WALTER
How did we get here?!

DANNY
(shrugs)
Some sorta space engine.

WALTER
How come we can breathe?

DANNY
(shrugs)
Some sorta space air.

WALTER
What are we gonna eat?

DANNY
(shrugs)
Some sorta space nuggets.

WALTER
WE'RE MOVING!

They turn back to the doorway. Saturn has, indeed, drawn closer, much closer, and as they watch they travel past it, right through the jade-colored crystals of its outermost ring. It' s a spectacular vision, they are both hushed, awed, wide-eyed at the sight.

Not daring to take his eyes off the vista, Walter leans over to Danny and lowers his voice to a near-whisper -- we're not sure why, but his reverent tone seems appropriate.

WALTER (cont'd)
Where are we going?

CONTINUED: (7)

DANNY
(whispers back)
Zathura.

CUT TO:

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

(House in outer space scenes now referred to as night scenes.)

CLOSE ON a big purple blob, the drawing on the game board that represents the planet Zathura.

DANNY (O.S.)
First one of us has to get here...

Pulling back slowly from it, we find Danny and Walter, sitting cross-legged on either side of the game board. Walter holds his head in his hands, but Danny seems unruffled.

DANNY (cont'd)
... and then somehow it sends us back...

Danny moves his finger from the planet Zathura back to earth.

DANNY (cont'd)
... home.

WALTER
Wait a minute, Daniel. You expect me to believe that just because you rolled the dice and started this stupid *board game* that we found in a *cemetery*, just because of that our house, I mean, our house, Danny, I am talking about a *HOUSE*, for God's sake, that it's somehow flying through *OUTER SPACE* toward a planet called *ZATHURA?* And you *ALSO* expect me to believe that the only way we can get ourselves and this *FLYING HOUSE* of ours back home is if we keep playing and move these dumb, cheap little *GAME PIECES* around this dumb, cheap little *GAME BOARD* until somebody lands back on the planet earth and THAT will get us home? You expect me to believe *THAT?!*

DANNY
Yes.

Walter stares at him for a moment --

CONTINUED:

WALTER
Okay, I'll be the astronaut.

-- and picks up a game piece.

DANNY
No, I'm the astronaut.

WALTER
Okay, I'm the rocket ship.

DANNY
Your go.

Walter puts the rocket ship on earth, picks up the dice and rolls them around in his hand. He looks back over his shoulder, at the planet Neptune, which they can see approaching through the still-open front door. He looks back at Danny, shaking his head.

WALTER
You know we're dreaming, right? I mean, it's the only real explanation. And we're gonna wake up from this, I mean, you *know* that, don't you? That's the only reason I'm playing along, I just want to make sure you know that.

DANNY
Try not to roll a three, that space has a scary monster head on it.

Walter starts to roll again, then stops himself.

WALTER
You're not gonna cheat, are you?

DANNY
No!

WALTER
'Cause even though this is only a dream, I still don't like to be cheated on.

DANNY
I don't cheat! Anymore.

WALTER
Okay, then.

He starts to roll the dice again, but notices the look Danny is giving him.

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER (cont'd)
What are you smiling at?

DANNY
You're playing a game with me, Walter.

WALTER
Only to get back to earth. Or wake up. Whichever comes first.

He shakes the dice and rolls them out onto the game board.

Danny leans forward excitedly.

DANNY
Ten. Good roll. Figures. I'll move for you.

WALTER
I'll move it, Danny.

DANNY
(counting with him as he moves)
One, two, three, four, five, six --

WALTER
-- seven, eight, nine, ten.

He puts the rocket ship on a blue square. The board BUZZES and a card pops out in front of him. Walter takes it and reads.

WALTER (cont'd)
"The polarity on your...

He scoffs and tosses the card on the board.

DANNY
What's it say?

WALTER
It's stupid.

Danny picks up the card and squints at it.

DANNY
(trying to read)
"The polarity on your gr-grave-your *grave*?" That's scary. No, wait, GRAVITY, oh, that's better. "The polarity on your gravity belt is re-rev-rev-"
(looking up)
What's the last word, Wal-

CONTINUED: (3)

But Walter has vanished, he's no longer sitting across from him.

DANNY (cont'd)
Walter?

WALTER (O.S.)
REVERSED!

Danny drops the card and looks up. Walter is spread-eagled against the ceiling like a runaway balloon at a birthday party.

WALTER (cont'd)
"The polarity on your gravity belt is reversed!" I've got no gravity! Danny, they took my gravity!

Danny stares at him in shock -- and a little impressed.

DANNY
Cool!

WALTER
Not cool, Danny! Not cool at all! Get me down from here!

DANNY
How am I supposed to do that?

Walter is slowly drifting across the ceiling, despite his best attempts to claw at it to stay in place.

WALTER
I don't know, grab me!

Walter holds one hand down low, Danny jumps up to try to catch it, but Walter's too high up. Danny keeps jumping, but their hands can't reach.

WALTER (cont'd)
Jump higher!

DANNY
You jump down here!

Good idea! Walter twists himself around so his legs are beneath him and pushes off the ceiling. As he is weightless, a strong push from his legs is far more oomph than he needs and he blasts off the ceiling --

-- slams into Danny, knocking him to the floor --

DANNY (cont'd)
OOOF!

CONTINUED: (4)

-- and bounces right back up to the ceiling, which he SMASHES into --

WALTER
OOOF!

-- and bounces back to the floor, a bit softer, but still moving plenty fast to slam into Danny, who is knocked to the ground again just as he's trying to get up.

DANNY
Knock it off, Walter!

Walter BOUNCES into the ceiling for a third time, softer this time, and after two or three more bounces he comes to a rest.

WALTER
Wasn't my idea!

DANNY
Try again but not so hard!

Walter coils his legs again and reverse-jumps. This time he doesn't push as hard and he doesn't really smash into Danny so much as *bump* into him. But they don't manage to grab hands, and Walter bobs back to the ceiling.

They keep trying, a series of jumps that bring them closer and closer.

We notice (but Walter does not) that on every jump, he's drifting closer and closer to the hole in the ceiling, the one made by the meteor when it crashed through the ceiling.

WALTER
Okay, Danny, when I bump into you this time --

Danny sees the hole and points.

DANNY
Uh, Walter --

WALTER
-- I want you to tackle me, got it? One --

DANNY
Walter --

WALTER
TWO THREE!

CONTINUED: (5)

He pushes off the ceiling and shoots downward, SMACKING into Danny, who throws both arms around him. But Walter's momentum is too strong and he bounces off Danny, shoots back up toward the ceiling --

-- and sails right through the hole.

INT DAD'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Up in Dad's bedroom, we see Walter fly up through the hole, SCREAMING, feet first. Feet, legs, torso, head, outstretched hands all fly up through the bedroom (in that order) toward the ceiling.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

DANNY
WALTER!

He races over beneath the hole and looks up. Through the hole, he can see Walter fly out the hole in the roof, headed into deepest space.

INT DAD'S BEDROOM NIGHT

At the last second, Walter just manages to grab hold of a roof joist sticking out of the jagged edge of the hole in the roof, which saves him from sailing out into the blackness beyond, but unfortunately --

EXT HOUSE - OUTER SPACE NIGHT

-- he's still dangling upside-down over the house as it moves through outer space. It's a pretty funny image, actually, the house motoring along like Dorothy's in the tornado, and the little boy hanging upside-down out the hole in the roof, holding onto the broken joist with one hand, SCREAMING at the top of his lungs.

INT DAD'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Danny races into Dad's bedroom and runs over to stand beneath the hole. He stares up at Walter and puts his hands on his hips, furious.

DANNY
Walter, get back in this house!

WALTER
I'm not doing it on *purpose*, you bozo!

CONTINUED:

DANNY
You're gonna get in trouble. You're not supposed to be in outer space.

WALTER
Throw me something and pull me down!

Danny looks around for something rope-like. He takes a lamp from the bedside table and unplugs it. The outlet is a ways away, and the lamp is plugged into an extension cord, so he's got a good ten feet of length.

DANNY
Catch!

He tosses the plug end of the cord up to Walter, who catches it with his free hand. He goes to the hole in the floor and tosses the lamp --

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

-- which drops through, stopping short just before it hits the floor. Danny comes THUNDERING down the stairs --

DANNY
HANG ON WALTER!

-- and starts pulling the cord, hand over hand.

INT DAD'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Walter, both hands now on the cord, is pulled head first back down through the hole in the roof, through the bedroom --

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

-- and through the hole in the ceiling of the living room. Danny goes to the leg of a heavy armoire and wraps the cord around it several times, securing Walter in the air upside-down above him. Both their heads are at the same height, more or less, just one is upside-down and one is right-side up.

WALTER
Now what?!

DANNY
Now it's my go.

He drops to his knees in front of the game board and picks up the dice.

WALTER
You can't keep playing, get me down!

CONTINUED:

DANNY
I can't get you down if I don't keep playing.

He rolls the dice.

WALTER
Stop that!

DANNY
You're not the boss of me.

WALTER
Danny!

DANNY
You don't even have your gravity.

He checks the dice, counting the number of dots that came up.

DANNY (cont'd)
-- two, three, four.

He moves his piece four squares on the board. It BUZZES and another card pops out. Danny squints at it.

DANNY (cont'd)
"Your... your... your -- "

He gives up, holds the card up over his head for Walter to read.

WALTER
"Your gyroscope is malfunctioning."

Walter, for some reason, covers his ears.

DANNY
What's a gyroscope?!

WALTER
(panicky, ears still covered)
I DON'T KNOW!

Danny, always game, looks around. But nothing seems to be happening.

DANNY
Huh. That one's not very --

He stops in the middle of his sentence, cocking his head as he stares at the floor. Walter's baseball, which was lying in a corner of the room, has started moving of its own accord.

CONTINUED: (2)

It rolls out of the corner, across the floor, between Danny's legs, and THUNKS against the far wall.

DANNY (cont'd)
Well you don't see *that* every day.

WALTER
L-look!

Danny turns, follows Walter's pointing finger. The dining room table is moving too. Just a few inches, but definitely sliding. Toward him.

DANNY
That either.

Now the rest of the furniture starts to slide too, all in the same direction.

WALTER
The room! It's tilting!

It sure is. What started as an almost imperceptible increase in the angle of the floor is now quite apparent, the whole place is cantilevering up, up, up on one end. *Everything* is sliding, tables, chairs, lamps, Danny, and as the angle gets even bigger the stuff starts tumbling.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny, look out!

A huge china cabinet BANGS across the floor right toward Danny, who's staring at it wide-eyed, frozen with fear.

WALTER (cont'd)
Grab me!

Danny looks up at Walter, who's still dangling above him, and reaches up for his outstretched hands. Walter grabs hold of his brother's arms and lifts him off the floor.

Danny's weight pulls Walter off to the side and they swing, just out of the way of the china cabinet as it SMASHES into the growing pile of junk at the "bottom" of the room.

Walter holds on tight to his brother, holding him above the fray as the entire contents of the living room SMASH and CRASH into the far corner.

The only thing left in its original place is the big comfy chair Walter sits in to watch TV, but now that's moving too, spinning around, THUNDERING across the living room floor.

CONTINUED: (3)

The chair goes airborne, Danny loses his grip on Walter's hands just as it passes underneath him --

-- he PLOPS down into it --

-- and the whole thing, chair and Danny, SLAM to a stop on top of the pile of junk that used to be home furnishings.

Silence as the dust settles.

Danny looks up at Walter.

DANNY
Excellent!

WALTER
ARE YOU OKAY?!

DANNY
(why wouldn't I be?)
Sure.

He jumps out of the chair, clambers down the pile of junk, and climbs the heavily raked floor of the living room to the fireplace, roughly in the center of the room, where the Zathura board, dice, and game pieces fell during the chaos.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

A few minutes later, one end of the game board rests on the still-angled living room floor. Danny slides a stack of books under the other end of the board, propping it up and making it relatively level.

DANNY
Okay, I was here, and you were... here. Way ahead of me. Already. Which is *totally* not fair.

He holds the dice up to Walter, who's still hanging upside down over his head.

DANNY (cont'd)
Your go, Walter.

WALTER
Are you crazy?

Danny waves the dice enticingly.

DANNY
(singsong)
You'll get your gravity baaaaack...

CONTINUED:

Walter sighs and takes the dice.

ON THE GAME BOARD,

the dice tumble to a stop, a five and a six.

DANNY (cont'd)
What is *with* the big rolls?!

WALTER
Move for me?

Danny counts off spaces.

DANNY
One, two, three, four, five, six...

His eyes race a few spaces ahead, to where there's another space with that scary monster head on it. It looks kind of like a bull's head, but slightly more human.

Danny sucks his breath in nervously --

DANNY (cont'd)
... seveneightnineteneleven!

-- and exhales in relief as he lands Walter's piece on the square just past it.

The board BUZZES, a card pops out --

-- and Walter CRASHES to the floor right next to Danny, OOFING painfully as his gravity returns.

DANNY (cont'd)
(cheerful)
Told you!

Walter rolls over, GROANING in pain. He holds up his forearm, which has a small cut on it, a thin line of blood oozing from it. He touches the blood with his fingers, then looks up at Danny in amazement.

WALTER
(softly)
This isn't a dream, is it? This is really happening.

Danny looks around, not understanding why Walter can't grasp such a simple concept.

DANNY
Well, duh.

CONTINUED: (2)

Walter looks around at the wrecked house with new awe.

WALTER
We are in *so* much trouble.
(an idea)
We gotta call Dad!

He runs to the phone and picks it up, but of course there's no dial tone.

WALTER (cont'd)
It doesn't work!

DANNY
Well, duh.

Walter looks around, *again*, it's finally sinking in.

WALTER
This is really happening.

Danny sighs and sits down, waiting for Walter to go through whatever it is he's got to go through.

DANNY
Let me know when you're ready to play, Walter.

WALTER
Play?! We can't play! Who *knows* what might happen if we play?!

DANNY
Don't worry, I won't win. I never win.

WALTER
Win?! Who cares! We can't play this game, *anything* can happen!

DANNY
How else are we gonna get home?

WALTER
We could-
(thinks)
We could-
(thinks some more)

Coming up with no good answer, Walter turns and looks at the card sticking out of the slot in the board. He reaches out a shaking hand and takes it gingerly. He holds it up in front of his face, but closes his eyes.

CONTINUED: (3)

Can't read it that way. He opens one eye, scans the words.

WALTER (cont'd)
"Your robot is defective."

From the hallway outside comes the sound of rattling metal and a steady CLANK CLANK CLANK.

Both boys leap to their feet, staring at the source of the sound. A shadow falls on the floor in the hallway, growing larger. It's a very scary shadow, all hyperextended arms and claws, and it's growing, growing --

WALTER (cont'd)
DANNY!

DANNY
WALTER!

-- growing, *growing* --

WALTER
WHAT?!

DANNY
I DON'T KNOW!

WALTER
ME NEITHER!

-- they grab onto each other as the shadow completely fills the hallway outside the door, this thing must be absolutely --

-- well, turns out it's tiny. A shiny metal robot about a foot tall rolls into the doorway and stops.

Danny and Walter laugh in relief.

WALTER (cont'd)
It's just a toy.

The robot's upper body rotates toward them. Its eyes light up, faint red search beams come on and scan the room. The beams pass over Danny without stopping, but then they fall on Walter and fixate --

-- on the card he still holds in his hands.

ROBOT
EMERGENCY.

Walter drops the card as if it were on fire.

CONTINUED: (4)

WALTER
No no!

ROBOT
EMERGENCY.

WALTER
No it isn't! There's no emergency!

ROBOT
ALIEN LIFE FORM. ALIEN LIFE FORM.

DANNY
Walter, he's talking about *you.*

ROBOT
MUST DESTROY.

WALTER
(trying to act tough)
Okay, very funny, Robot, don't make me come over there and kick your-

Walter stops as suddenly, the robot begins to *grow,* fast, the best transformer you've ever seen. Its lower section extends, its arms telescope out, twenty-four additional layers of metal shielding WHIP-WHAP-WHIP around its midsection, its head quadruples in size, whole metal sections unfurling from within. In about five seconds, it stands six feet tall and four feet wide.

DANNY
Tartar sauce!

WALTER
Stop saying that!

DANNY
It's from SpongeBob!

WALTER
It's annoying!

The robot's clawlike hands extend, SNAP open and shut several times quickly.

DANNY
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!!!

They bolt in opposite directions, just as twin turbo jets on the back of each of the robot's feet suddenly spit blue flame and the robot rockets across the floor toward Walter.

CONTINUED: (5)

He lunges out of the way just as the robot SMASHES into the wall behind where he was standing.

It pivots around.

ROBOT
ALIEN INVASION. MUST DESTROY.

Walter gets up off the still-angled floor, turns to face the robot --

-- which takes off again, straight at him --

-- and Walter leaps again, this time landing on the pile of trashed furniture.

DANNY
WALTER! WHAT DO I DO?!

Walter's too busy to answer, trying to climb out of the enveloping pile, but his foot is stuck in the torn webbing of the underside of the couch.

WALTER
I'm stuck!

Across the room, the robot has driven itself completely into the far wall and is now using its claws to extract itself from the dry wall and broken joists.

Walter pulls on his foot, harder, harder, but just when he gets it free the pile shifts, settling, and *more* junk falls on top of him. Danny lunges toward him, but --

WALTER (cont'd)
NO! Stay back!

Danny does, helpless and not happy about it. Across the room the robot pivots, its red beams search for Walter again --

-- Walter hurls stuff off himself --

-- the red beams lock onto him --

-- Walter tears himself free and somersaults backwards, rolling down the pile just as --

-- the robot BLASTS across the room, SMASHING into the pile with a deafening CRASH.

Walter jumps to his feet, breathing hard. This can't go on much longer. He looks around frantically for something, anything, thinking, thinking. He sees a door out of the corner of his eye, out the corridor near the kitchen.

CONTINUED: (6)

WALTER (cont'd)
(to Danny)
The basement door! Open it! We'll lock the thing in there!

DANNY
Right!

He turns and starts toward the door, then stops and turns back.

DANNY (cont'd)
Really? The basement?

WALTER
Danny!

The robot is out of the pile of furniture and pivoting toward Walter.

DANNY
Why don't you open it?

WALTER
I'm kinda busy here!

DANNY
How about if I open another door?

WALTER
DANNY!

DANNY
All right, already!

Danny races out of the room. Walter turns toward the robot.

WALTER
Hey. Hey *Robbie.*

The robot's torso whips around, light speed, finds Walter, and fixes its beams on his chest.

WALTER (cont'd)
Yikes.

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

Danny stands at the top of the stairway to the basement, staring down at the door. Behind him, he can hear chaos as the robot takes off after Walter again.

WALTER (O.S.)
Danny!? Is it open?!

CONTINUED:

Danny takes a deep breath and runs down the stairs to the basement door. He reaches up, puts one hand on its deadbolt lock. Starts to turn it.

But he can't. He turns and looks up at the top of the stairs.

Above, he sees Walter go running past the doorway SCREAMING, followed a second later by the robot, blue turbojets spitting flame as it pursues him through the house.

There is a tremendous CRASH from the kitchen. Danny winces.

WALTER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Really gonna need that door open, Dan!

Danny turns, determined, *definitely* gonna do it this time. He reaches up to the door, puts his hand on the deadbolt, flicks it to unlocked, puts his hand on the knob, turns that too, hey, this is going well, he's got some real momentum here, he turns the doorknob, pushes the door open a crack --

-- gets one peek into the murmuring blackness of the basement --

-- and SLAMS it shut. Couldn't do it. He turns and races up the stairs as fast as he possibly can.

INT HALLWAY NIGHT

Danny bursts out of the stairwell and heads for the living room. The robot can be heard SMASHING around in the other room.

WALTER (O.S.)
DANNY?!

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Danny races back into the living room and drops to his knees in front of the game board. He snatches up the dice and rolls, gets a six. He moves, fast.

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

Walter appears at the top of the basement stairs, breathless, and looks down at the closed door.

WALTER
Danny!

He starts down the stairs, scared out of his wits, throwing panicked looks back over his shoulder every step or two.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

The game board BUZZES, spits out a card, Danny snatches it up and leaps to his feet. The room starts to level out, the effect of the malfunctioning gyroscope apparently counteracted when Danny moved again. He tries to read the card, but can't.

DANNY
(intensely frustrated)
I don't know what this means!

We zoom in fast on the words, maybe he can't read, but we can, and what we read says:

YOU PASS TOO CLOSE TO TSOURIS 3
GRAVITY INCREASED.

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

Walter is at the bottom of the stairs, his shaking hand on the basement doorknob. He's sweating like crazy, scared out of his mind.

He turns the knob, pushes the door open just a crack. His eyes are like saucers as the blackness beyond is slowly revealed.

He turns around and starts creeping back up the stairs, throwing terrified looks back over his shoulder on every other step. When he gets halfway up --

-- he stops dead in his tracks. The robot is at the top of the stairs. No way out.

WALTER
Whoops.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Danny, still staring at the card, looks up, feeling funny.

Truth is, he looks funny too, he seems shorter and wider, like somebody went and changed the lens on us.

But it keeps going, he keeps shrinking, getting rounder and rounder until he is approximately the size and shape of a large beach ball. And *heavy* too, the living room floorboards underneath him GROAN and CRACK from his greatly increased weight.

He speaks, with an extremely low voice:

CONTINUED:

DANNY
Ooookkkaaay, soooo nooooowww I knnnoooowwww.

From the other room, he hears Walter SCREAM his name --

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

At the top of the stairs, the robot's eyes glow red.

Walter looks down in horror as the red beams find their mark on his chest. He takes a few steps down, toward the basement door, but can't bring himself to push it open, better the horror you know than whatever's in the *basement,* for God's sake.

He turns back.

WALTER
DAAAAAANNNNYYYYY! I'M TRAPPED!

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Danny calls out in his newfound baritone.

DANNY
I'mmmm coooommmingggg, Waaaalterrrr!

The living room is still moving, settling back down to a level plane, and Danny takes advantage of the change in angle, swinging his chubby little beach ball arms once, twice, three times, wobbling like a weeble --

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

-- the turbo jets on the robot's feet spit blue flame --

-- Walter covers his eyes and SCREAMS --

INT HALLWAY NIGHT

-- and Danny comes *rolling* out of the living room, CRYING OUT a massive war cry as he thunders down the hallway, CRACKING and SPLITTING the floorboards as he goes, a great big heavy six and three quarter year old bowling ball with the specific gravity of Tsouris 3.

The robot's torso pivots, it looks straight at this rolling menace, its eye beams focus on him, but it's too late, there's no stopping Danny now, he SMASHES into the robot --

-- it goes flying off the top step --

IN THE STAIRWELL,

-- and sails, ass over teakettle, down the stairs.

Walter sees it coming and hits the deck. The robot somersaults right over him and SMASHES to the cement floor of the darkened basement.

Walter bolts out of the basement, SLAMS the door behind him, and throws the deadbolt.

UP IN THE HALLWAY,

Bowling-Ball-Danny keeps rolling, end over end, caroming off the walls of the hallway away from us.

DANNY
(each time he hits the wall)
Ow. Ouch. Ow. Oh my.

He bounces off a wall at the far end and rolls through a doorway, out of sight.

Walter comes bounding up out of the basement stairwell.

WALTER
Danny, that was *awesome!*

No answer.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny?

DANNY (O.S.)
Hhhheeellllpppp mmmmeeeee!

Walter goes down the corridor toward the sound of the voice --

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

-- and finds Danny in the living room, where he has rolled into a corner, upside down. Still a bowling ball.

DANNY
(still low voice)
Diiiiddd I geetttt hhhiimmm?

WALTER
You sure did, Buddy.

He goes to pat Danny on the back, can't quite find where it is, exactly, and sort of polishes a spot on him instead.

CONTINUED:

WALTER (cont'd)
You were terrific.

DANNY
Thhhhaaannkkksss.

Danny begins to revert to normal size and shape. Legs pop out of the sides of the bowling ball, then arms, then his head, and in a few seconds he's his regular self, flexing his fingers to make sure they're all there.

He takes a deep breath of relief.

Walter slides back against the wall, exhausted. Danny drops down beside him, just as tired.

They look at the absolute wreck that is their living room. They look at each other.

They look at the room again --

-- and slide deeper down against the wall.

DANNY (cont'd)
Well... I think I get the rules now.

WALTER
What rules?

DANNY
You gotta beat whatever it is that comes out on your turn. If you don't beat it, it's still gonna be there till you get to roll again.

WALTER
Forget the rules. I quit.

DANNY
You can't quit.

WALTER
Give me one good reason why not.

Danny gets up and goes to the front door. He throws it open, revealing the depths of outer space beyond. They seem to be moving through some sort of nebula.

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
A) The game won't stop until somebody wins, it says so right on the box, B) we're a million billion miles from home, C) the house is totally wrecked and Dad'll be mad if we don't fix it, D) SpongeBob: The Lost Episode is on tonight at 8 and I gotta be back by then, and...

He stops, looking up, thinking.

DANNY (cont'd)
(singing softly to himself)
A, B, C, D-
(remembering)
And E) I'm starving.

WALTER
So what am I supposed to do?

DANNY
(isn't it obvious?)
Make me some macaroni and cheese.

CUT TO:

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

The kitchen is just about the only room in the house that is relatively intact. Over at the stove, Walter studies the directions on the side of a box of Kraft Macaroni & Cheese.

WALTER
I've seen Dad do this a million times. It can't be that hard.

He takes the packet of cheese and sets it aside, then pours the contents of the box into a pan of boiling water on the stove. He looks at it, gives it a bit of a stir. He stirs a touch too hard and a few drops of water splash up onto his hand.

WALTER (cont'd)
Ouch.

He winces, it hurts. He stirs more gently.

WALTER (cont'd)
Now Danny, I want you to be very, very careful, this is boiling water. You could hurt yourself very badly.

No answer.

CONTINUED:

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny?

He turns around. Danny is sitting up on the counter next to the sink. He's cross-legged, his chin resting on his hands, staring out the windows at the star field outside.

The stars seem to be moving, but of course it's them that's moving, sailing across the universe at the speed of light.

DANNY
What do you think it's like, Walter?

Walter steps up beside him.

WALTER
What what's like?

DANNY
Zathura.

Walter looks out at the stars too.

WALTER
I don't know.

DANNY
Guess.

WALTER
I think... I think it's this really dangerous place, and everything you're afraid of is there, because it, like, *knows* what you're afraid of.

DANNY
We'll be okay, though. Right?

WALTER
Yeah. Sure.

DANNY
We'll make it. Together. You and me.

WALTER
You and I. And who says we will?

DANNY
What do you think Dad's doing right now?

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER
Well... it's weird. It's been a couple hours, and he said he'd only be gone for twenty minutes.

Danny looks up at him alertly.

DANNY
You mean he abanbondoned us?

WALTER
Abandoned. No, I don't think that.

DANNY
Dad would never do that!

WALTER
Relax, Danny, I didn't say he did. I think he came home, and he saw the house wasn't there anymore, and...and, or he came home, and maybe the house *is* there, it's there and it's here too at the same time, and he came home to the house-that's-there but we weren't in it, so he... uh...

DANNY
He what? What did he do then?

WALTER
Well, *I* don't know, why do I have to do all the thinking all the time? What do *you* think?

DANNY
I think, I think he drove up and the house was gone and so he went and he got Mom and then they both went and got the government to give them a space ship and that they're chasing us and almost caught up to us right now, Mom and Dad both in the same rocket.

WALTER
Yeah. That'll be the day.

Danny looks at him piercingly. Walter looks back at him, trying to put on an innocent face.

WALTER (cont'd)
What?

CONTINUED: (3)

DANNY
You. Are. *So.* Mean.

WALTER
Look, I just-

There is a splash and HISS from the stove behind them, the macaroni boiling over. Walter rushes over and lowers the flame.

MOMENTS LATER,

Walter dumps the finished macaroni into a strainer in the sink.

WALTER (cont'd)
I know you think I'm kind of a jerk lately, Danny.

Danny, still sitting on the counter, just shrugs. He unwraps a whole stick of butter and tosses it in.

WALTER (cont'd)
It's just, I'm under a lot of pressure. Because this thing? This thing that happened to me at school? You know Jennifer?

Walter opens a milk carton and pours in a splash.

DANNY
(resentful as hell)
Yeah, your *girrrrl*friend.

Danny rips open the cheese packet, too hard, sending cheese dust flying all over the place. Most of it goes into the concoction, so that's okay.

WALTER
Yeah. I mean no. I mean, she *was* my girlfriend. But like about two weeks ago she told me she doesn't want to be my girlfriend anymore.

DANNY
Good.

WALTER
No, Danny, it's not good, okay?! She said she wants to be *Matthew's* girlfriend.

CONTINUED: (4)

DANNY
(is she crazy?)
Matthew has stupid hair. Matthew thinks he's cool.

WALTER
I know, so I asked her how come, and she said it's because when we had playground the other day and that one fifth grader was teasing her? That guy with the army jacket? She says I didn't say anything to him, but Matthew did. She said I was a scaredy-cat and Matthew wasn't.

DANNY
But you *did* say something! You told him to leave her alone! You told me all about it, you-

WALTER
(ashamed)
I didn't say a word, Danny. I just said I did. Anyway, I don't have a girlfriend anymore.

Danny looks at him. Puts a hand on his shoulder.

And hands him a wooden spoon.

DANNY
You can have my dessert.

They both begin to stir.

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

A few minutes later, they sit at the table with two big, sloppy, oozy, cheesy, runny bowls of macaroni and cheese, two forks, and two cans of forbidden Coca-Cola.

WALTER
What do *you* think Zathura's like?

DANNY
Okay, I think? I think it's like this place? It's like this place, where, this place where bullies aren't allowed to even go. And the guy who invented evil gets in really big trouble. And when Kobe shoots he never misses, and the Lakers never lose.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

DANNY (cont'd)
And when I play a game I don't always have to be the worst one at it, and you and me and Mom and Dad all live in one house together, and you probably don't think there's any place like that in the entire universe, Walter, but I do, and you're gonna make fun of me for it so that's all I want to say about that.

What started out beautiful and hopeful has, in the end, made him sad. He takes a big forkful of macaroni and cheese, shoves it into his mouth and chews morosely.

Walter can't think of anything to say, so he does likewise. They chew in silence for a while.

WALTER
Danny?

DANNY
Yeah?

WALTER
I *am* scared of the basement.

DANNY
Me too.

Walter watches Danny as he shovels down the mac and cheese.

WALTER
Does it taste okay?

DANNY
(through a mouthful of food)
Best macaroni and cheese I ever had.

CUT TO:

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The planet earth -- but on the game board. We fly low over it, snake along the path of colored squares (every seventh one a scary monster/bull's head).

We pass over Danny's astronaut game piece, huge and silver up close. A dozen squares ahead is Walter's rocket ship, more than halfway across the board.

We keep flying, faster and faster, until the planet Zathura swims before us in all its menacing purpleness. A pair of dice bounce into frame and come to a rest.

CONTINUED:

Walter and Danny are back in the living room and sitting on either side of the board again. Walter, who has just rolled a nine, moves his piece accordingly, even further ahead of Danny's astronaut. Danny frowns. The board HUMS and spits a card out of the slot.

Walter holds his breath and snatches it up. He moves it slooooowwwwly up in front of his eyes, cradles it in the palm of his hand, lays eyes on it --

-- AND SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS!

Danny leaps to his feet.

DANNY
WHAT WHAT WHAT?!?!?!

WALTER
I'm just yankin ya.

DANNY
You are *so* not hilarious.

Walter turns the card over and reads the words. He gets a puzzled look on his face.

WALTER
"Recharge fuel cells. Prepare for next turn." What does that mean?

DANNY
(looking at the board)
This isn't fair. You always get tens and stuff, you're way ahead of me.

WALTER
(still thinking)
"Prepare for next turn?"

DANNY
You're gonna win. You always win.

WALTER
(shrugs)
Means I don't do anything, I guess.

DANNY
This game's getting on my nerves.

Danny reaches for the dice, but Walter grabs them away.

WALTER
Wait a minute. What's my next turn?

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
What does it matter, you're just gonna beat me.

WALTER
Why do I have to prepare?

DANNY
(reaching for the dice)
I don't know.

WALTER
What's my next turn?!

DANNY
I don't KNOW!

He lunges for the dice now, but Walter holds them as far away as he can.

WALTER
WHAT'S MY NEXT TURN?!

DANNY
I DON'T KNOW!

Danny tackles Walter and they roll around on the carpet, Walter's hysteria rising.

WALTER
IT'S GONNA BE SOMETHING HORRIBLE I CAN JUST TELL!

DANNY
Walter, let me GO!

WALTER
NO THEN IT'LL BE MY TURN WHY DO I HAVE TO PREPARE WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN WHAT'S GONNA-

DANNY
What are you, *afraid?*

Immediately, Walter stops wrestling and becomes one very cool and collected pre-teen.

WALTER
No.

He tosses Danny the dice.

CONTINUED: (3)

WALTER (cont'd)
Not even.

Danny picks up the dice.

DANNY
Okay, then.

THE DICE

tumble across the board and roll to a stop. Danny gets a lowly three.

DANNY (cont'd)
Roll over!

He snatches up the dice.

WALTER
Hey!

DANNY
One of the dice was on the carpet! I get a roll over, it's the carpet rule.

He rolls the dice and gets an eleven this time.

DANNY (cont'd)
Eleven! All right!

WALTER
Wait a minute, what carpet rule?

DANNY
We always play the carpet rule!

WALTER
No we don't.

DANNY
Yes we do. Everybody knows it.

WALTER
No they don't!

DANNY
Yes they do! Everybody!

WALTER
I don't know it!

DANNY
Okay, *fine!*

CONTINUED: (4)

He picks up his astronaut and STOMPS him down three spaces ahead, landing on a green square.

DANNY (cont'd)
One two three. Satisfied?

The board spits out a card.

Danny rips it out and reads this one himself. It takes a while, he has to move his lips and sound out the words.

WALTER
Oh, let me.

He reaches for the card but Danny pulls back; he wants to figure this one out himself. Finally, he looks up.

DANNY
What's a Zorgon?

Walter doesn't answer, but his eyes pop wide, staring at something over Danny's shoulder.

WALTER
Uh...

DANNY
I don't suppose it's a *good* thing, is it?

WALTER
I DON'T THINK IT IS!

Walter points and Danny whirls around.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW,

he sees what Walter sees -- a sleek, nasty-looking spaceship has pulled up alongside the flying house and is measuring its pace. Bizarre guttural SQUAWKINGS are blasting from external speakers, somebody's trying to tell them something in tones so loud the windows rattle.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM,

Danny stares in shock and the card slips from his hand. We swoop in to read it:

ZORGON PIRATES ATTACK YOUR VESSEL.

The barrel of a laser cannon emerges from a porthole on the side of a ship.

CONTINUED:

DANNY
(another curse)
Fish paste!
(Walter looks at him)
I didn't say tartar sauce.

A white hot light glows from within the laser cannon and a ball of searingly bright light fires out, headed straight for the house.

WALTER
TAKE COVER!

He grabs Danny and they dive into the only place that looks remotely like cover -- the fireplace.

The photon blast SLAMS into the chimney at the top of the house. Walter looks up, sees a cascade of bricks dropping right towards them.

WALTER (cont'd)
TAKE COVER SOMEPLACE ELSE!

They both dive out of the chimney just before the bricks CRASH to the hearth where they were crouching.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW,

the laser cannon adjusts its aim and fires another blast at the house. Danny and Walter throw themselves to the floor and cover their heads. The blast --

INT UPSTAIRS BATHROOM NIGHT

-- EXPLODES through the wall of the upstairs bathroom.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Back in the living room, a spray of water springs from a new hole in the ceiling.

Terrified, Danny and Walter uncover their heads and look out the window. The Zorgon ship rises up, toward the second story of the house, out of their field of view.

DANNY
They're going away!

Walter narrows his eyes. He isn't so sure.

It's suddenly quiet, except for the sound of the now-dripping water.

CONTINUED:

DANNY (cont'd)
They're-

WALTER
Shh.

He stands, listening carefully. Not a sound in the house other than drip-drip-drip.

Then, *very* soft, a THUD from upstairs. Barely audible.

WALTER (cont'd)
(whispers)
You hear something?

DANNY
(whispers back)
No. I only heard a thud.

WALTER
(still whispering)
That's what-
(oh, never mind)

Holding out a hand for Danny to be quiet, Walter creeps over to the hole in the living room ceiling and peers up through it, through the second floor bedroom and through the hole in the roof.

THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE ROOF,

he can't see the stars anymore. What he sees instead is a hatchway on the underside of the Zorgon ship. The hatch irises open silently and a dark shape slithers out of the ship, through the hole in the roof, THUDS to the carpet upstairs, and crawls quickly out of sight.

DANNY
(regular voice)
Now *that* I heard.

WALTER
SHHH!

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

In the basement, the robot is still sprawled out on the floor. Moving in close on its face we see its eyes light up, glow a fierce bright red. Suddenly --

-- the robot sits up.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The boys cower under a table as another THUD comes from upstairs, a *second* intruder has made his way into the house.

DANNY
What do we do?! What do we do?!

WALTER
I don't know! I don't know!

Above them, they see the dark outlines of two reptilian heads, eyes glowing bright and green. The heads peer down through the hole in the ceiling and GRUNT at each other with their horrifying guttural voices.

This one is just too much. For the first time since the adventure started, we see Walter and Danny revert to the little boys they are, absolutely scared out of their minds.

Danny slides backwards on the floor, pushing up against his brother, who puts his arms around him.

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

At the bottom of the basement stairwell, the door handle glows red, then white-hot --

-- and then drops off entirely. The door swings open to reveal the robot, who looks fiercer than ever. As if things weren't bad *enough...*

INT LIVING ROOM OFFICE

In the living room, two ropes drop down through the hole in the ceiling. The boys are quivering with fear, unable to move.

The Zorgons turn around, to crawl down the ropes. First things through are their long lizard tails, thick and muscled, green with slime.

Danny puts his thumb in his mouth.

Zorgon lizard-legs start to slide through the holes, blood-encrusted swords hanging at their sides.

Walter begins to cry.

There is a BLAST of turbojets and the robot suddenly appears in the doorway to the living room.

ROBOT
ALIEN LIFE FORM. MUST DESTROY.

CONTINUED:

The robot's red beams fall squarely on Walter's chest. Walter looks down at them in horror.

WALTER
DANNY, I-

Suddenly the beams shift, and split, they land on two *new* targets --

-- the Zorgons, still just halfway through the hole in the ceiling.

ROBOT
ALIEN LIFE FORMS! MUST DESTROY!

The robot's tentacle arms shoot out, its heavy metal claws CLAMP down hard on the Zorgon tails and take hold, biting in.

The Zorgons SCREAM in fury and pain.

The robot's turbo jets blast to life, the robot ROCKETS across the room, its arms telescoping in as it SLAMS into the Zorgon tails.

FRANTIC SCREAMS come from the Zorgons as they're rapidly pulled back up, through the hole, the robot still clamped onto their tails.

Walter lets go of Danny and rushes over underneath the hole, just in time to see the Zorgons and the robot pulled all the way up into the belly of the Zorgon ship. The hatchway irises shut and the ship blasts off.

Walter and Danny run over to the window in time to see the Zorgon ship as it flies away into deep space, twisting and turning, barely in control as the robot wreaks whatever havoc it's wreaking inside. Two problems flying away at the same time.

The boys breathe a huge sigh of relief. But it soon turns to blame as Walter turns and looks at his brother accusingly.

WALTER
(sarcastic)
Nice roll, Danny.

DANNY
Well, I didn't do it on purpose.

WALTER
I wish you'd never picked up this stupid game.

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
Yeah, I know, and you wish I'd never been born too, 'cause then you could have Dad all to yourself, and that's all you care about.

WALTER
(feeling guilty)
Look, I didn't... that's not what I...

Furious, Danny gets up and stomps across the room, settling down in front of the game board again with his back to Walter.

Walter sighs.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER,

Walter comes over and sits down at the game board. Danny has his arm extended, holding the dice out.

Walter just stares at them. He doesn't want to take them.

DANNY
You have to.

WALTER
(snappish)
I know.

He takes the dice and looks down at the board. His game piece is now just two squares ahead of Danny's. He starts to roll the dice, then stops, squinting down at the board.

WALTER (cont'd)
That's funny.

DANNY
What?

WALTER
I thought I was farther ahead of you.

DANNY
(super innocent)
No. I'm there. That's like it was. Go ahead, it's your turn.

WALTER
Are you sure?

DANNY
Positive. Here.

CONTINUED:

WALTER
(highly dubious)
Okay.

He picks up the dice and shakes them around in his hand. Danny looks down, trying to keep a devious little smile to himself. He watches as Walter hurls the dice, they skip once across the board --

-- and freeze in midair!

Danny stares at them, flabbergasted. The dice are suspended right over the board, defying gravity.

DANNY
Walter, look at-

He stops abruptly, staring at Walter, who is acting very strangely. Or *not* acting strangely -- in fact, he's not acting at all, he's not moving, he doesn't seem to be breathing, he's just frozen, suspended in time, his hand extended over the board where he just threw the dice.

DANNY (cont'd)
Walter?!

He runs a hand in front of Walter's face, but he doesn't react. Pushes him, but Walter is frozen stiff as a board.

DANNY (cont'd)
What's the matter with you?!

VOICE (O.S.)
Nothin' the matter with him.

Danny GASPS and whirls around to the source of the voice. AN OLD GUY is sitting cross-legged at the game board with them, and how in God's name did he get there? We know this guy, it's the Old Guy who appeared on the sidewalk at the beginning.

Danny SCREAMS and falls backwards.

DANNY
What are you doing in my house?!

The Old Guy gestures to the board game spread out on the floor.

OLD GUY
What are you doing with my game?

Danny's eyes widen.

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
Your game? Who are you?!

OLD GUY
Name's Schotz. Doctor Schotz.

DANNY
You made up Zathura?

DR. SCHOTZ
Yep. Made up lots of games. *Special* games. Not the kind you've played, I expect.

DANNY
I don't know, I've played a lot of games.

DR. SCHOTZ
Ever play Jumanji?

DANNY
I don't know.

DR. SCHOTZ
You'd remember it. Trust me.

DANNY
I love games.

DR. SCHOTZ
Smart man. Anything worth learning, a person can learn from a game.

DANNY
What did you do to Walter?

DR. SCHOTZ
Nothin'. I just stopped the proceedings here for a second. He'll be fine once I start things up again.

DANNY
Why'd you stop us?

DR. SCHOTZ
Why do you think?

DANNY
I don't know.

DR. SCHOTZ
Don'tcha?

CONTINUED: (3)

DANNY
Nope.

DR. SCHOTZ
No idea?

DANNY
Huh uh!

DR. SCHOTZ
Didja cheat?

DANNY
No way!

DR. SCHOTZ
Didja?

DANNY
Huh uh!

DR. SCHOTZ
Didja?

DANNY
I swear!

DR. SCHOTZ
Didja?

DANNY
Little bit.

Dr. Schotz picks up the top of the Zathura box and scans the rules written on the inside.

DR. SCHOTZ
Let's see, roll dice, first to Zathura wins, once you start you can't stop... Huh, that's funny, don't say nothin' about a "carpet rule." What kind of nonsense is that?

Danny looks down, ashamed.

DANNY
I'm sorry.

DR. SCHOTZ
Rules are made for a reason, Small Person. Break 'em again and... trust me, you won't like what happens.

CONTINUED: (4)

DANNY
I said I was sorry.

Suddenly, the dice decide to obey the laws of physics again and finish their tumble across the game board.

Danny looks up. Dr. Schotz is gone and Walter is moving again. It's as if nothing ever happened.

DANNY (cont'd)
You're back!

WALTER
Huh?

DANNY
(looking around)
Where'd he go?

WALTER
Who?

DANNY
Um... nobody. You know, now that I think about it, maybe my astronaut guy was back here after all.

He puts his astronaut back where he belongs, eight or nine spaces behind.

DANNY (cont'd)
I musta accidentally kicked the piece of something accidentally.

WALTER
Yeah, right. Anyway, I got a seven.

He picks up his rocket ship and starts moving it across the board, counting to himself.

WALTER (cont'd)
... two, three, four...

He stops, his hand frozen in mid-air, but this time it's from fear. He looks at Danny, wide-eyed. Danny looks down at the board and draws in his breath sharply.

WALTER (cont'd)
... five, six... seven.

He sets the rocket down on a certain square. Unlike the others, which are multi-colored and blank, this square has a symbol on it.

CONTINUED: (5)

The head of the monster.

They've passed over it before, but this time there's no getting out of it. The board BUZZES and spits out a card.

The card is red.

Walter picks it up with trembling hands and reads it aloud.

WALTER (cont'd)
"Your ship crash lands on planet Minos."

DANNY
Is it getting hot in here?

It's not only getting hot, there's an orange glow flickering in the room, and growing brighter.

The boys turn, look out the windows, and GASP.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOWS,

the house is almost completely engulfed in flame, huge wild tongues of it licking up around the windows. The boys SCREAM, and on the scream we cut --

EXT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE NIGHT

-- outside the house. The boys' screams can be heard out here too, all the way out in space, but we're not in outer space anymore, the house is plummeting through deep blue sky now, through an *atmosphere*, searing flames licking all around it as it enters the gravitational pull of the brilliantly green and blue planet below.

The planet Minos!

The house spins and twirls, buffeted by the flames.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Bright light suddenly bursts through the windows of the falling house, flooding the living room. But it's not fire anymore, it's *sunlight.*

Squinting and shielding their eyes, the boys stagger through the crazily bouncing house, rush to the windows and peer outside.

Through the windows, they see the house is still falling, but it's through the outer atmosphere now and dropping fast toward the massive ocean far below.

CONTINUED:

WALTER
WE'RE GOING INTO THE OCEAN!

DANNY
HOLD YOUR BREATH!

And he does. Holds his nose too. You can't take any chances.

Through the windows, they watch helplessly as the house falls, drops, plummets toward the endless expanse of bright blue sea below, no hope now, they'll drown for sure --

WALTER
DANNY, LOOK!

-- but wait, maybe not, there's a green speck in the middle of all that water, it's just the size of a penny, but then it's a quarter, then a baseball, then a basketball, that is definitely an *island* down there, and that's where they're headed!

The island suddenly grows huge and before they know it the sky is gone and the house is dropping through foliage, dense green rainforest, branches and leaves and vines and stuff all SLAPPING at the windows.

Danny and Walter are thrown off their feet as the house BASHES through the jungle canopy, bouncing off the final branches before SLAMMING to ground on the jungle floor.

All at once, it's quiet.

Danny and Walter sit up. It's *not* quiet. Now that they listen, jungle sounds surround them -- birds, animals of all kinds.

DANNY
Wow.

Walter looks down at the board, sees his rocket ship resting squarely on the monster's head.

He scrambles across the room, scoops up the dice, and shoves them into Danny's hand.

WALTER
Okay, go.

DANNY
What?

WALTER
GO, it's your turn, come on, go, go.

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
Are you sure you're done?

WALTER
Yes, I'm done, it said "Crash land on planet Minos," and we crash landed already. Now go.

DANNY
Don't you want to look outside?

WALTER
(imitating him)
"No, I don't want to look outside."

DANNY
Well, I do.

He starts to get up, but Walter yanks him back down roughly.

WALTER
Roll the dice.

DANNY
I don't think that was your whole turn.

WALTER
Roll the dice!

DANNY
All right, already.

He throws the dice listlessly onto the board. Two threes.

DANNY (cont'd)
(moving)
One two three four five six. There.

He looks down at the board.

But no card pops out.

He moves his piece back where it was, moves it again.

DANNY (cont'd)
Onetwothreefourfivesix.

He places it down more firmly. Looks at the board again. Still nothing.

He looks up at Walter.

CONTINUED: (3)

DANNY (cont'd)
(an ominous singsong)
It's still your tu-urrrrn.

THE FRONT DOOR,

and we're moving toward it. It's been thrown a bit off its hinges in the crash and there's light spilling around its edges and through its cracks.

Walter approaches it warily, puts his hand on the knob, and throws it open, revealing --

EXT JUNGLE DAY

-- the moody, dripping jungle beyond. Exotic birds CAW. Strange animals HOWL and MOAN in the distance. Long shadows fall from ancient trees, sunlight fanning out between the branches.

They're in a clearing, and directly in front of them is the front of an ancient, forbidding walled structure, something like a temple, but vast. It appears as if it's been there forever and the jungle has grown around and into it.

DANNY
Coooool!

WALTER
Yeah, terrific.

They wander forward to get a closer look, climbing over a moss and vine-covered rock that blocks their path. As Walter goes, he snaps his head back every two or three steps, checking over his shoulder.

As they draw closer they see an entrance to the structure, wide and black and gaping, a huge toothless mouth. And over the entrance is the carved head of a bull, the same one that was on the Zathura game board.

Walter sees it, GASPS --

WALTER (cont'd)
Okay, we looked.

-- and turns to run back to the house. But as he climbs over the boulder again he hooks a foot in the snakelike vines and trips.

WALTER (cont'd)
Gah!

CONTINUED:

He falls, tearing the interconnected vines off the rock as he goes down. Danny turns around and runs back as Walter pulls himself to his feet.

DANNY
Walter, are you okay?!

WALTER
I'm fine. Can we just go?

DANNY
(cocks his head)
That's weird.

Walter looks at what Danny sees. In the fall, he's cleared all the foliage off the boulder and wiped a big smear through the moss, revealing the original surface of the rock itself.

DANNY (cont'd)
There's something carved in it.

He wipes some more of the moss off, revealing four deep, connected gouges in the rock.

DANNY (cont'd)
It's a letter! Somebody carved a big W in the rock!

Walter, who is on the opposite side of the boulder, looks up at him, wide-eyed.

WALTER
That's not a W.

DANNY
Sure it is! W! For Walter!

WALTER
No, no, no, no, no. It's an M. For somebody else. Got nothing to do with me.

DANNY
Walter, it's a W.

WALTER
It's an M.

DANNY
W!

WALTER
M!

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
Come on this side and look at it!

WALTER
(knows perfectly well it's a W)
I don't *wanna* come on that side and look at it!

DANNY
There's something under it!

He drops to his knees, his attention drawn by something small and shiny that protrudes from under the rock. He clears around it, but yanks his hand back suddenly.

DANNY (cont'd)
OW!

He's cut his finger. Walter, intrigued now, drops down next to him, gently pushes Danny back.

WALTER
Careful, Danny.

He spits on the bit of protruding metal, rubs it with his sleeve. Now it *really* gleams.

DANNY
Gold!

MOMENTS LATER,

two pairs of feet kick in midair, Walter's and Danny's.

They're hanging over a large branch that they've wedged under one end of the boulder. They've put a log under the middle of the branch and are using it to pry up the boulder.

Clearly, there's something buried in the dirt underneath it, the rest of that golden tip that was sticking out.

Hanging off the branch, Walter stretches out an arm, reaching, reaching, almost close enough to grab whatever it is, but he has to keep his weight on the branch.

WALTER
... almost...

Danny starts bouncing on the end of the branch, the boulder tips up higher, higher, Walter's fingers are

WALTER (cont'd)
... almost...

CONTINUED: (3)

there, Danny makes one final bounce --

-- the branch SNAPS --

-- Walter falls, making one lunging grab as he drops --

-- and the rock SLAMS back down to earth.

Danny, who's fallen into the undergrowth, rolls over, but his view is obscured, he can't see Walter anywhere.

DANNY
Walter?!

He leaps to his feet and sees Walter bent over the ground next to the boulder, holding something in his hands.

DANNY (cont'd)
Walter, are you okay?!

Walter stands and turns around --

-- holding a gleaming golden sword!

He looks at Danny, looks at the sword. They are awestruck. Danny speaks with awe and reverence.

DANNY (cont'd)
Are you allowed to have that, Walter?

WALTER
Look at it, Danny. It's so... it's so *beautiful!*

DANNY
Because I could hold it for you.

Walter is transfixed, his eyes locked on the sword as he slowly passes it through the air.

WALTER
No thanks.

DANNY
You know, if you get tired.

Walter raises the sword up over his head, catching a beam of sunlight as it falls through the trees. The blade's glow is blinding.

WALTER
(rapturously)
This sword is mine!

CONTINUED: (4)

A GASP comes from the trees behind them and they whirl around to see --

-- an eleven year old girl of such fair beauty that she takes our breath away. She's the kind of girl a boy falls in love with in fourth grade, which pretty much ruins all his relationships for the next sixty years or so.

The girl, ELENA, steps forward to Walter with hope in her eyes.

ELENA
Have you come to kill the Minotaur?!

WALTER
Who, me? Oh, no, I'm just... we're playing a board game.

ELENA
(confused)
But you said the Golden Sword is yours.

Walter quickly holds the sword out to his brother.

WALTER
Actually, it's his.

Danny puts his hands behind his back.

WALTER (cont'd)
(hisses to Danny)
Take it!

DANNY
(hisses back)
No way.

WALTER
Take it!

DANNY
(imitating Walter)
"This sword is mine, this sword is mine."

Elena turns away from them. She leans against a tree, staring at the entrance to the scary structure, and begins to cry.

Walter and Danny, concerned, step forward.

WALTER
What's the matter?

CONTINUED: (5)

ELENA
My sister and I were playing here this morning. Ariadne dared me to walk ten steps into the labyrinth. But we've all been told, warned since we were babies almost, *never* to go into the labyrinth, so I said no. But Ariadne wanted to prove she was braver than I am. She went inside and hasn't come out. I'm afraid the Minotaur...

She can't even say it. She dissolves into tears.

WALTER
What's a Minotaur?

ELENA
A horrible monster. Half man, half beast. It feeds on human flesh. And the flesh it craves most is the flesh of *children.*

DANNY
I'm gonna go wait in the house.

He turns to go but Walter grabs him by the collar and pulls him back.

ELENA
There's a legend that the Minotaur will one day be slain by the man with the Golden Sword, and I thought... for a moment...

She gestures to Walter, who still has the sword, now hanging limply at his side. He doesn't look like much of a hero.

WALTER
(to Danny)
This is so unfair. My turn is really *long.*

ELENA
Never mind.

She takes a few steps away from them. Danny tugs on Walter's sleeve urgently. They speak in hushed whispers.

DANNY
Walter, you gotta do it! You're brave!

WALTER
No, I'm not!

CONTINUED: (6)

DANNY
Well, can you pretend you are?

WALTER
It's a *monster*, okay? I'm nine years old! I'm barely strong enough to carry this sword, I'd never be strong enough to stab the thing with it!

DANNY
Well it's not like you're gonna die.

WALTER
Why is it not like I'm gonna die?

DANNY
It's only a game. You don't die in games. Or if you do, you get two more lives.

WALTER
You have *got* to get a grip on reality.

DANNY
Fine, *I'll* do it.

He grabs the sword with both hands and starts to drag it toward the steps that lead to the entrance to the labyrinth, pulling it through the dirt behind him.

WALTER
Danny...

Danny stops, looks back. But Walter can't make himself follow. Danny turns around and keeps going, dragging the sword behind him.

Elena turns and looks at Walter pleadingly.

Walter squirms. But still won't go.

Elena turns away from him and hurries over to Danny. She gives him something.

ELENA
Take this spool of thread. Lay the thread behind you as you enter the labyrinth, it will leave a trail to follow so you may find your way out. Otherwise you'll be lost forever in its passageways.

CONTINUED: (7)

She turns and hurries away, leaving Danny alone. And scared out of his wits.

He takes a few steps forward and finds himself directly in front of the spooky entrance. Remembering Elena's instructions, he takes the spool of thread and unfurls a length of it, laying it out behind him as he steps inside.

INT LABYRINTH NIGHT

It's dark as night inside the labyrinth. Danny squints as his eyes adjust. There is some light, irregular beams thrown by torches along its walls. The walls of the labyrinth have many doors in them, but which one to open? It's hopelessly complex.

DANNY
(softly)
Ariadne?

No answer. Danny screws up his courage and starts walking. But that sword is getting *really* heavy, much too heavy for him. We stay where we are, near the mouth of the corridor, as Danny starts down its seemingly endless length.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

as Danny comes around the corner and confronts another infinite row of doors and passageways.

DISSOLVE TO:

YET ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

it goes on and on.

DANNY
(a bit louder)
Ariadne?

Still no answer. Still, Danny keeps moving.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT LABYRINTH NIGHT

CLOSE ON the spool in Danny's hand as the very last bit of thread comes off it. He drops it on the ground where he's standing. Finds a couple rocks and piles them on top of the end of the string.

CONTINUED:

He takes a few tentative steps into the gloom ahead. Stops and looks back. Then keeps going, turning right at the next end.

IN THAT CORRIDOR,

Danny turns back, looks at the corner he just turned.

DANNY
(making a mental note)
Left to string.

IN THE NEXT CORRIDOR,

Danny comes around another corridor, from the other direction.

DANNY
(another mental note)
Right, then left to string.

IN THE NEXT CORRIDOR,

another turn, from the same direction.

DANNY
Left, then right, then left to string.
(catching himself)
No, *right*, left, right.

He's getting tired. And the sword is extremely heavy, much too heavy for a little boy. He drops it on the ground so he can rub his shoulders, which ache terribly.

Exhausted, he sags to the ground and pulls his knees to his chest. He looks down at the ground, at that immense sword lying in the sand, and as he stares at it --

-- another hand picks it up!

Danny GASPS and looks up, we watch his face as it suddenly brightens into a broad smile.

DANNY (cont'd)
I *knew* you were brave!

It is, of course, Walter who is now holding the sword.

WALTER
Actually, I'm pretending.

Danny jumps up and hugs his brother, so excited to see him. And there is much rejoicing. Until --

SNORT.

CONTINUED:

Danny and Walter stop hugging and listen.

DANNY
Did you hear something?

They listen some more. Silence.

WALTER
Guess not.

SNORT.

Definitely heard it that time. Danny and Walter back into the middle of the corridor, spinning around and around, trying to place the source of it.

We rise up above them, higher and higher, above the very tops of the walls themselves. We keep rising, we see the hopeless maze of corridor upon corridor, way that leads to way, we see the tiny figures of the two boys standing dead center in the middle of it --

-- *and the dark black spot that's slowly moving toward them.*

IN THE HEART OF THE MAZE,

the boys spin around, horrified, still trying to face the source of the sound. Walter mutters softly to himself, over and over:

WALTER (cont'd)
... we're brave... we're brave... we're brave...

Suddenly, we're

CLOSE ON A BULL'S NOSTRILS

as they flare wide and snort, sand and blood and mucous flying out of them.

BACK IN THE HEART OF THE MAZE,

Walter's courage breaks --

WALTER
WE'RE OUTTA HERE!!!

-- and he and Danny take off running as fast as they can, back into the mouth of the last corridor they came out of.

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

Danny and Walter barrel around the corner, Walter carrying the sword and Danny SCREAMING out directions.

DANNY
RIGHT LEFT RIGHT! RIGHT LEFT RIGHT!

They barrel around a corner, but we stay where we are, because that's not the way it went, is it?

Danny and Walter reappear at the end of the corridor, running the other way, because as we know it's supposed to be:

DANNY (cont'd)
LEFT RIGHT LEFT! LEFT RIGHT LEFT!

They barrel around that corner --

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

-- we're with them, running behind them now, and Walter dares a look back, but he shouldn't, because he misses the entrance to another corridor, but Danny catches him by the shirt sleeve and drags him the other way --

DANNY
RIGHT LEFT! RIGHT LEFT!

-- and they keep going.

BEHIND WALTER AND DANNY,

we're close on the MINOTAUR'S HOOVES, four of them pounding the sand hard as they chase him.

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR,

they boys run past us, Danny SCREAMING --

DANNY
LEFT LEFT LEFT LEFT LEFT!

-- because they can hear the hooves too, so they go even faster, come around a corner and see Danny's pile of rocks, see the end of the spool of thread.

They follow it now, running right over it, and we race ahead of them, impossibly fast through the labyrinth, our eyes fixated on that string on the ground, following it at amazing speed through turn after turn in the labyrinth. We make a final turn and come into

THE ENTRANCE CORRIDOR,

the one Danny first came into, and we still follow the string, and now we see the boys' eyes as they run, and they're staring down at the string, following it, following it all the way to the entrance arch where the end of the string is just feet from freedom but suddenly the boys slam on the brakes, stop so hard they nearly fall, dead in their tracks, because --

-- *the string runs right between the legs of THE MINOTAUR!*

Half man, half bull, it stands about six feet tall and twice as long. Its thick, rippled black flesh must go a couple thousand pounds and its fierce, oddly intelligent head is crowned by curling horns a foot and a half long.

Danny and Walter quiver in their shoes. The Minotaur paws the earth and lowers its head.

WALTER
I'm still brave... I'm still brave...

DANNY
Brave is good, *BUT DON'T BE STUPID!*

He turns and takes off running in the other direction. Walter follows.

And the Minotaur charges.

Danny and Walter race away down the corridor and turn --

INT ANOTHER CORRIDOR NIGHT

-- but this is a losing proposition and they know it. So when they round this corner they turn to the first door they find and throw it open. They duck inside --

-- just as the Minotaur rounds the corner behind them and hurtles past.

INT SAND ROOM NIGHT

Danny and Walter race into the middle of the room, looking for another door to get out, but there isn't one, this is a large walled-in area with only one exit. The ground is covered with sand (like a bull ring) and there is a large tree growing in the middle with long, spidery branches.

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

The Minotaur stops, realizing the boys gave it the slip. It SNIFFS the air. Turns around and prowls back the way it came.

INT SAND ROOM NIGHT

Danny and Walter turn in a circle, looking at this odd room they're in. They pass a large red banner hung on one of the walls, and as they walk past it --

-- *an arm* reaches out from behind it and grabs Walter.

WALTER
GAAAHHH!

He drops the sword and leaps back as a figure emerges from behind the banner. It's Elena, the girl from outside.

DANNY
What are *you* doing in here?!

ELENA
I... I got lost! I've been hiding!

WALTER
You followed us in?!

ELENA
(confused)
No.

WALTER
Why'd you tell us to go find your sister if you were just gonna do it yourself?!

ELENA
Huh?

DANNY
What?

ELENA
Elena is here?

WALTER
Huh?

ELENA
What?

Danny and Walter look at each other and both realize it at the same time -- twins!

WALTER
Ohhhhhhhh...

DANNY *
Ohhhhhhhh...

CONTINUED:

ARIADNE
I'm Ariadne!

SLAM!

They whirl. The Minotaur has smashed itself into the door the boys came in through. The door holds, but barely.

WALTER
(to Ariadne)
How do we get out of here?!

Ariadne points to the door they came through.

ARIADNE
That door!

SLAM! The bull hits it again as she's pointing at it.

WALTER
How *else* do we get out of here?!

ARIADNE
There's no other way!

DANNY
Walter?! Walter, what do we do?!

Walter looks around, desperate for an idea.

SMASH!

The Minotaur does it again. The door cracks.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'm sorry! I'm sorry I got us in here!

Walter spots a large crack in the wall behind him. Wide enough to shove something in. He looks at the sword on the ground at his feet, the sword he can barely hold.

SMASH! The door begins to buckle.

ARIADNE
The bull is coming through!

DANNY
It's my fault! It's my fault!

WALTER
(thinking)
A bull... a bull... a bull...

CONTINUED: (2)

Walter sees the red banner. He looks up, sees the overhanging branches of the tree above them.

His eyes widen with an idea.

INT CORRIDOR NIGHT

In the corridor, the Minotaur paws the dirt. It lowers its head and charges the door, nearly taking it off its hinges.

But not quite. It backs up for one last charge. Paws the dirt. SNORTS a few times. And it takes off.

We're on top of the thing this time, its horns in the foreground, pounding toward the door, and then SMASHING into the door, *through* the door --

INT SAND ROOM NIGHT

-- and into the sand room. The Minotaur stops, searching for fresh meat, and it's not hard to find.

Walter is standing not far away, under the tree branches, over which he has draped the banner he must have torn down from the wall.

The *red* banner.

The Minotaur sees the red, its eyes widen, it *fixates* on the red. But it doesn't move.

Ariadne, who is at the edge of the ring with Danny, calls to Walter.

ARIADNE
Taunt it! You must taunt it!

Walter, terrified, turns and looks at the bull.

WALTER
You're ugly!

ARIADNE
Not like *that!*

Walter shakes the red banner, which infuriates the Minotaur.

WALTER
(still shaking the banner)
Well what else am I supposed to-

CONTINUED:

No preamble this time, no ground-pawing, no head-lowering, the Minotaur just takes off at top speed, straight toward Walter, who's standing right in front of the red banner, and as we draw close we see he's got *no sword,* he must have dropped it, is he crazy?!

It would be nice to say Walter is full of bravado, but let's face facts, he's nine, and this is a *Minotaur*, for God's sake. Faced with this charging mass of death, Walter... well, Walter SCREAMS like a girl.

WALTER (cont'd)
YEEEEEAAAAHHHHHHAAAIIIEEEEE!!!

All at once the Minotaur's on him, it drops its head --

-- Walter leaps up, grabs hold of the branch above him and lifts his legs out of the way --

-- the Minotaur plows right through the red banner --

-- *and straight into Walter's sword* --

which sticks out at a ninety degree angle from the crack in the wall where he wedged it!

Walter lands in the sand and rolls over in time to see the Minotaur's huge bulk, now wrapped in its red shroud, as it twists over and collapses to the sand, the golden sword protruding from where its head must be.

Ariadne and Danny run forward from the edge of the ring, looking at the dead beast, then at Walter.

DANNY
YOU DID IT!

Ariadne smiles -- happy, of course, but puzzled by him.

ARIADNE
You're an odd kind of hero.

WALTER
(exhausted)
You're welcome.

CUT TO:

EXT LABYRINTH DAY

Walter, Danny, and Ariadne emerge from the mouth of the labyrinth. Elena races forward and embraces her twin sister, they hug and cry.

CONTINUED:

Walter looks at Danny, spent.

WALTER
Your turn.

Elena and her sister turn and swarm over Walter now, offering delirious thanks.

ARIADNE
He is the one! He's the one who saved me!

ELENA
Thank you, thank you, thank you...

Danny, who has been shoved aside, is irritated by this.

DANNY
Well, I was in there too...

But nobody hears him, or if they do, they pay no attention.

ARIADNE
What is your name?!

WALTER
Wal-
(voice cracks)
Walter.

ELENA
Walter, *thank* you!

ARIADNE
(rapturously repeating it)
Oh Walter... Walter, Walter, Walter!

Danny, off to the side, is really getting annoyed.

DANNY
He wouldn't even have gone in if it wasn't for me...

ARIADNE
I've never in my life seen such bravery!

ELENA
People will tell the story of Walter for years to come!

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
(grumbling bitterly)
It was just a MinuteTower. I coulda done it, but I'm too little.

ARIADNE
You must come home with us and meet our father!

DANNY
All right, already. We gotta go.

He grabs his brother by the arm and starts dragging him toward the house. The girls come along with, hanging off of Walter, completely infatuated.

ELENA
Can't you stay, Walter? Can't you stay to tell the story in our village tonight?

WALTER
Well, I suppose I could tell it *once...*

ARIADNE
"The Story of Walter."

DANNY
Ai yi yi...

Finally, Ariadne notices Danny.

ARIADNE
Oh! And of course, his little helper!

DANNY
Yeah, sounds great. Wish we had time.

They get to the front door of the house and Danny throws it open.

Walter stops, looking back at Ariadne. She looks at him. Both are smitten. Between them, we can see Danny standing in the doorway to the house.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Walter!

WALTER
(to Ariadne)
I-

CONTINUED: (3)

She blunts all conversation by kissing him, full on the lips. It's a tender kiss, doesn't last too long, completely age-appropriate. But Walter's gonna remember it the rest of his life.

Danny slaps his forehead in frustration and grossitude. He turns and goes into the house, leaving the door open behind him.

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Danny drops to his knees in front of the game board, muttering to himself.

DANNY
(mocking)
"Walter, Walter, Walter."

Behind him, we can see Walter through the open door, still having a tender moment with Ariadne. Danny hurls the dice.

DANNY (cont'd)
Time to come in the *house*, Walter!

The dice come up five and Danny BANGS his astronaut down on the squares angrily.

DANNY (cont'd)
ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE! We're leeeeeaa-ving!

He lands on a space, the board BUZZES, a card comes out, Danny snatches it up --

WALTER
(noticing)
HEY!

-- the front door begins to swing shut, Walter tears himself away from Ariadne and leaps through it --

-- the door SLAMS shut behind him, the daylight streaming into the room fades suddenly --

-- and once again, only starfields are visible outside their windows. Walter picks himself up and looks at Danny.

WALTER (cont'd)
That wasn't very nice.

DANNY
(mocking)
"Walter's a hero, Walter's the greatest, everybody loves Wal-ter."

CONTINUED:

WALTER
Knock it off.

DANNY
"Danny's a loser."

WALTER
Nobody said that.

DANNY
Practically! You do *everything* better than me!

WALTER
That's stupid, Danny.

DANNY
(he's just getting warmed up)
No it isn't, *you're* stupid! This game is stupid! Our whole stupid family is stupid and I'm sick of it and I hate it!

WALTER
Will you just read your card? I want to go home.

DANNY
I don't!

Frustrated, Walter grabs the card and shoves it at Danny.

WALTER
Take it!

DANNY
(gets up and runs away)
I won't play!

WALTER
(chasing him)
Take the card, already!

DANNY
You can't make me!

Walter corners him next to one of the living room windows (an unbroken one). There is a white speck visible in the distance outside the window, a white speck that is growing larger.

WALTER
Take the card, Danny, I want to get home!

CONTINUED: (2)

The white speck, unseen by either of them, is larger still. It's a human form.

DANNY
I don't! I don't want to go home if you're there!

WALTER
Fine, *I'll* read it! "Rescue stranded astronaut." There.

DANNY
What stranded astronaut?

BOOM BOOM BOOM!

They whirl and see the white speck we've been watching, but it's no longer a white speck, it's an ASTRONAUT in a space suit, his life line dangling behind him.

And he's knocking on their window.

DANNY (cont'd)
Who is it?!

WALTER
How should I know?!

The astronaut keeps POUNDING on the window.

WALTER (cont'd)
We have to let him in!

DANNY
No we don't!

The First Astronaut tries to open the window, to no avail.

DANNY (cont'd)
He could be a bad guy!

WALTER
Well how do we know?!

DANNY
Don't take any chances! Roll your turn, roll your turn!

Walter turns and hurls the dice. He gets a seven --

-- which puts him on the same color square as Danny, but a dozen spaces ahead. The card comes out, Walter grabs it and reads it, panicked.

CONTINUED: (3)

WALTER
"RESCUE STRANDED ASTRONAUT!" I got it too!

They turn and look out the window, and now there's a SECOND ASTRONAUT, floating behind the first one, drifting up toward the second floor.

WALTER
AHHHHHH!!!

DANNY
AHHHHHH!!!

DANNY
You made it worse!

From upstairs, they hear more POUNDING. The Second Astronaut is at an upstairs window.

WALTER
The other one's upstairs!

DANNY
Go lock the window!

Walter takes off.

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

Walter dashes up the stairs.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Danny yells to the First Astronaut.

DANNY
Go away, you're scaring everybody!

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

Walter runs into their bedroom and sees the Second Astronaut at the window, also trying to open it. He runs over and flips the lock at the top.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The First Astronaut starts tugging at the window.

DANNY
(shouting at him)
Go back to your ship!

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

The Second Astronaut is waving to Walter, come closer, come toward the window.

WALTER
What? What are you trying to say?

He leans closer to the window but he can't see the astronaut's face through the reflective visor on his helmet, he just sees a big, distorted image of himself.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The First Astronaut presses his helmet right up against the window near Danny. His visor reflects Danny back too.

Suddenly, Danny is struck by a thought.

DANNY
Dad?! Is that you?!

He reaches up to unlock the window.

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

Walter sees a flashlight in the toy box next to him. He grabs it and flicks it on, and points the beam at the Astronaut's visor, which illuminates the face inside, the face --

-- of a ZORGON PIRATE!

Walter SCREAMS.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

In the living room, Danny whirls when he hears Walter's scream from upstairs.

DANNY
What? What happened?!

Behind him, the Astronaut at his window reaches up and flicks on a light inside his own helmet.

The *other* Zorgon pirate!

Danny looks back, now he SCREAMS too.

The Zorgon starts tugging on the window, which strains at the lock.

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

As the upstairs Zorgon starts tugging at Walter's window, Walter turns and bolts out of the room.

WALTER
DANNY! DANNY, DON'T LET-

INT STAIRWELL NIGHT

Walter races down the hallway and bounds down the steps, two at a time, calling out to his brother.

WALTER
(continuing)
-IT IN! GET AWAY FROM IT WHATEVER YOU DO!

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Danny is running toward the stairs, SHOUTING at Walter at the same time.

DANNY
WALTER, WALTER THEY'RE ZORGONS, THEY-

He comes around a corner and he and Walter SLAM into each other at the base of the stairs.

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

In the bedroom, the Zorgon SMASHES the window with his elbow and fumbles for the lock. Glass skitters across the floor.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The boys hear the sound.

DANNY
THEY'RE COMING IN!

WALTER
ROLL YOUR TURN, ROLL YOUR TURN!

The boys crawl frantically over to the game board.

SMASH! The first Zorgon smashes the glass of the living room window.

Danny scoops up the dice and looks at the game board. He's still behind Walter, but now just a dozen squares from Zathura.

The Zorgon starts crawling through the window.

CONTINUED:

WALTER (cont'd)
GO! IF YOU GET A TWELVE YOU WIN AND IT'S OVER!

Danny looks at the dice and MUTTERS to himself.

DANNY
... sick of this stupid game...

He gets a suspicious glint in his eye, darts a glance at Walter, and hurls the dice. He throws them just a bit too hard -- on purpose.

They fly through the air, tumbling over and over in space, then land hard on the board with a SMACK and bounce back up into the air.

INT KIDS' BEDROOM NIGHT

The upstairs Zorgon hurls himself through the window and whips off his helmet, revealing his snarling lizard head.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The dice, still in mid-air, collide with one another and bounce wildly, off in opposite directions... one toward Walter and one toward Danny.

The one near Walter bounces off his leg and comes to a stop in front of him, six white dots showing on the red face. But the other die bounces right past Danny and rolls across the floor.

DANNY
I'll get it!

He turns and crawls after the other one, fast, he's hovering right over it as it spins and comes to a stop.

A one.

But Danny's body is between Walter and the die, and the living room Zorgon is now SMASHING through the window behind them, and there's no way Walter could see...

He reaches out toward the die...

OVER WITH WALTER,

Walter is looking at Danny's back.

WALTER
What'd you get?!

CONTINUED:

Danny turns around, holding the die in one hand. He places it softly on the floor, next to the other one.

The one that he rolled is now a six.

WALTER (cont'd)
Two sixes! That's it, you got Zathura!

The living room Zorgon climbs to his feet and removes *his* helmet, the lizard head SNARLS --

-- Danny picks up his rocket ship piece, moves it twelve spaces with a fast series of CLUNKS and sets it down smack in the middle of Zathura.

DANNY
(a bitter smile)
I win.

The board doesn't buzz, no card spits out of the slot, but --

WHAP! The front door flies open and a powerful wind blows inside.

Danny and Walter recoil, but out the door they can see a giant purple blob in the distance, a planet, a *huge* planet, growing bigger all the time.

Zathura!

The house flies straight toward it, Danny covers his face, they're going to crash, the house flies *into* it and starts spinning, around and around, the contents of the house flying everywhere, it's a Pottery Barn tornado.

Walter grabs onto the leg of a chair and holds on for dear life, he closes his eyes and all of a sudden --

-- everything is quiet. Still clinging to the leg of the chair, Walter opens his eyes and looks around.

The house is perfectly restored!

It's still night outside, but everything is the way it was before the adventure started, unbroken windows, furniture just where it ought to be, nothing smashed, nothing ruined. Maybe a little messy, but that's the way it always is. And Walter's sitting in front of the still-set-up Zathura board.

WALTER
Danny?! Danny, we did it!

He runs into his dad's office --

INT OFFICE NIGHT

-- and finds the ruined artwork, juice still spilled all over it. He's overjoyed.

WALTER
HAH! We're back! Danny, we made it!

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Walter runs back into the middle of the house.

WALTER
We made it, Danny! We made it!

But there is no answer from the empty house.

WALTER (cont'd)
(soft)
Danny?
(softer)
Danny?

Uh oh.

From behind him, Walter hears a sound and he whirls around.

Dr. Schotz is seated at the dining room table. He's got a glass of milk in front of him and a plate with Oreos on it. Next to him is another glass of milk and another plate, also with Oreos.

Walter GASPS.

WALTER (cont'd)
Who are you?!

DR. SCHOTZ
Name's Schotz. Made up this here game you've been playin'.

WALTER
What are you doing in my house?!

DR. SCHOTZ
(an impatient wave of his hand)
Been through all this with your brother, don't feel like coverin' it again. You're just gonna have to take my word for things.

He pops a whole Oreo in his mouth. Walter looks at him and sighs.

CONTINUED:

WALTER
I've heard weirder things today. Where's Danny?

DR. SCHOTZ
Right here in the game.

WALTER
But the game's over.

DR. SCHOTZ
Not exactly. Take a look out the window.

Walter turns. It's not just nighttime outside, they're still in space, racing toward distant stars.

WALTER
But it's over, Danny won!

DR. SCHOTZ
The boy cheated. I warned him, but did he listen? Nooooo. What we have on our hands now is a forfeit situation.

WALTER
What happened to him?!

DR. SCHOTZ
Zorgons got him.

He pops his only remaining cookie in his mouth.

WALTER
What?!

DR. SCHOTZ
Yep. You weren't there to help him fight 'em off. Zorgons took over the whole house.
(eyeing Walter's cookies)
You gonna eat those?

WALTER
Where did they take him?

DR. SCHOTZ
Don't feel like tellin' ya.

He takes Walter's cookies and starts in on them.

WALTER
Why not?!

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. SCHOTZ
Don't like cheaters. All you got to do now is say "Forfeit" out loud and you win the game. I send you back home, your brother stays here with me till he's learnt his lesson.

WALTER
How long would you keep him?

DR. SCHOTZ
Dunno yet. Twenty, thirty years oughta scare the cheat out of him. Wouldn't be the first time, I know how to deal with his type.

Finishing the cookies, he dusts off his hands.

WALTER
That's all I have to do?

DR. SCHOTZ
Yep. Say the word and the game's over, you win, case closed.

WALTER
And Danny stays here.

DR. SCHOTZ
Yep.

WALTER
But he'd be okay?

DR. SCHOTZ
I'm fine, aren't I?

WALTER
And I go home... just me.

DR. SCHOTZ
You got it.

WALTER
To Dad's.

DR. SCHOTZ
Uh huh.

WALTER
By myself.

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. SCHOTZ
So go on, then.

Walter looks at him. Thinking about it. Tempted. But not speaking.

DR. SCHOTZ (cont'd)
(helpful)
"Forfeit."

Walter chews his lip. *Really* thinking about it.

DR. SCHOTZ (cont'd)
Go ahead.

WALTER
Ffffffff-

DR. SCHOTZ
You want me to write it down?

WALTER
No.

DR. SCHOTZ
Okay, then, just-

WALTER
No, I mean... *No.* I won't say it. I want my brother back.

Dr. Schotz looks at him over the tops of his glasses.

DR. SCHOTZ
Really?

WALTER
Yes. I just want Danny back.

DR. SCHOTZ
Thought you wanted him gone. Thought you wished he'd never been borned.

WALTER
That was before! Now it's... well, it's different. Please?

Dr. Schotz eyes Walter carefully, thinking. Finally:

DR. SCHOTZ
Tell you what. I'll make up a little game for us. You like games, don't you?

CONTINUED: (4)

WALTER
(skeptical)
Sometimes.

DR. SCHOTZ
Well I got a new one for you. Here's my game -- I tell you where the Zorgons took your brother. Now, knowing Zorgons, this place is none too pleasant. But he's there all right. You go and get him, lead him back here.

WALTER
Fine! Where is he?

DR. SCHOTZ
But... on the way back, you can't run, and *you can't look behind you.* He'll probably follow you, but he won't be able to say anything. If you get all the way back here with him, you win. But if you *do* look back, even one time, to make sure your brother's behind you... I win. And if *I* win, *you* stay here with me. In my game. Forever.

He takes a big drink of milk, leaving himself with a milk moustache, which he wipes off with his sleeve.

DR. SCHOTZ (cont'd)
I could use the company.

WALTER
Fine. That's easy. Big whoop.

DR. SCHOTZ
Looks like you and me got ourselves a game.

WALTER
So where is he?

DR. SCHOTZ
Well now, that's the part you're not gonna like, young fella. Your brother...

He leans forward and grins, revealing a mouthful of yellowing teeth.

DR. SCHOTZ (cont'd)
... is in the place you fear the most.

CONTINUED: (5)

WALTER
The place I fear the...?

He stops. His eyes widen. He throws his hands over his mouth in horror.

CUT TO:

INT STAIRWELL DAY

Walter stands at the top of the stairs to the basement, staring down at the locked door he was too afraid to open earlier.

He takes a deep breath.

And starts down the stairs. As he nears the bottom, he sees light seeping from around the edges of the door, an eerie green glow.

Walter reaches the bottom. He unlocks the deadbolt. He turns the knob.

And he throws open the door.

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

Walter stands at the entrance to the basement. He flicks a light switch on the wall next to him, but no lights come on, they must be burned out.

Walter squints into the gloom. Wouldn't you know it, there's *another* flight of stairs leading down. But this one's short, five or six steps at the most. He sets one foot on it --

-- and it grows, extending down, down, down, right along with the basement, turning into the longest staircase we've ever seen.

WALTER
Tartar sauce!

He takes another deep breath and starts down the endless steps.

HALFWAY DOWN THE STAIRCASE,

Walter pauses, turns around and looks up. The open doors that lead up to the house are visible from here, but tiny and far, far away.

Down below, the green glow is getting brighter all the time. He marches on.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS,

Walter's foot steps off the very last step --

-- just in time to see a *Zorgon tail* disappear around a corner beside him. He leaps back into the staircase to hide and peers out.

He's in an unfinished basement, a leaky, gloomy, nasty basement under the best of circumstances, but this one IS CRAWLING WITH ZORGONS!

Must be a half dozen of 'em down here, huddled on the other side of the room, shoving Zorgon food into their Zorgon mouths and RASPING at each other in their Zorgon language. The green glow is from their hides, it's phosphorescent and emanates the light that fills the basement.

Walter hears a CLANK and a THUMP from a door on the far side of the room. The Zorgons hear it too and BARK at it, one of them picks up a rock and throws it at the door, as if to say shut up in there.

WALTER
(to himself)
The machine room!

He waits till the Zorgons turn back to their food, then starts creeping across the basement toward the machine room. Halfway there, a ROAR next to him makes him jump out of his skin, he whirls --

-- and sees the furnace BLAST to life beside him, its hot blue flames licking through a grill.

He freezes, makes sure the Zorgons aren't watching, then scurries the last few feet to the door to the machine room. He eases it open.

INT MACHINE ROOM NIGHT

It's an ordinary machine room, jammed with water heaters, electrical cables, the gas meter, that sort of thing. And in one corner of it, a little boy is huddled, sucking his thumb.

WALTER
Hsssst!

Danny looks up at him, his face streaked with tears. Old habits die hard, Danny pulls his thumb out of his mouth quickly, not wanting to be busted, no matter the situation.

CONTINUED:

Walter puts a finger to his lips, "Shhhhh" and comes over, crouching in front of Danny.

WALTER (cont'd)
Hey, cheater. *Now* look what you got us into.

Danny stands up and opens his mouth to speak, but no words come out. He tries again, puzzled.

WALTER (cont'd)
Oh yeah, the Weird Guy said you couldn't talk till we got back.

Danny looks at him, mouths -- "Dr. Schotz?"

WALTER (cont'd)
Plus I can't look back at you, otherwise I gotta stay in the game forever. I shoulda known better than to play a game with you. So just stay behind me, okay?

Danny nods, terrified. Walter steps up and stares at him, taking one good last look.

WALTER (cont'd)
This is it, Danny. I can't look back again. You ready?

Scared, Danny nods. Walter takes a deep breath, turns around --

WALTER (cont'd)
See you up top, you little fungus.

-- and slips through the door of the machine room.

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

Walter slips across the floor of the basement, unseen by the Zorgons, and reaches the base of the looooooong staircase that leads back up to the house.

He puts his foot on the first and begins his climb.

We stay with Walter, close, looking at his feet or at his face, but we never get a glimpse of Danny. And neither does Walter, because he is *determined* not to turn around.

He climbs. He's up ten steps.

CONTINUED:

WALTER
Well, I can't hear you back there, Danny, but I know you're there.

He keeps climbing, steadily. Further. Further.

WALTER (cont'd)
It's just kinda weird that I can't hear you, is all.

Step. Step. Step.

WALTER (cont'd)
But I guess that's part of the game, right?

No answer, of course. Step. Step. Step.

Walter is starting to get rattled.

WALTER (cont'd)
You did follow me when I turned around, right?

No answer. Step. Step. Step.

WALTER (cont'd)
'Cause what if that wasn't, like, when the game *actually* started? What if I was supposed to wait a second?

No answer. Step. Step. Step.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny, can you like step harder or something? So I know you're there?

Walter is starting to crumble. He *really* wants to turn around. In fact, he puts his hands on either side of his face to keep himself staring ahead, so he must be going through something awful.

He looks up. He's more than halfway. But this is getting impossible.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny, are you mad at me?
(no answer)
Is that why you're not making any sound?
(still no reply)
Danny, I'm sorry.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALTER (cont'd)
I'm sorry I told you I hate you, and I'm sorry I said I wished you'd never been born, and... just don't be mad at me, okay, Danny?

Close to the top now, only twenty steps away.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny? Danny, *please*, can you make a sound?

Fifteen steps. Walter doesn't notice as he kicks a stone, it bounces off the step in front of him and falls to the next one, teetering on the edge of a precipice.

WALTER (cont'd)
Danny, you *have* to be there...

Ten steps. Walter is shaking, but the basement door is so close. On the step behind him, the stone is still teetering.

WALTER (cont'd)
(with growing panic)
You *have* to be. I've been thinking about it, Danny, and what I think is I'm lucky, we're both lucky, because... Danny because maybe we only get Mom half the time and we only get Dad half the time, but we get each other *all* the time... do you see, Danny? Danny, you're the only one I have that's always there and I don't want you to go away! Please, please, *please* don't be gone!

Eight steps away!

And the stone falls, BANGING off the stone steps. Walter hears it --

WALTER (cont'd)
DANNY?!

-- and whirls around!

Danny is standing there, just three steps behind Walter, he *was* there, he was there all the time.

DANNY
Walter, *NO!*

From down in the basement, we can hear the Zorgon outcry as they hear the boys' shouts. They race over to the base of the steps, their shapes are visible far below.

CONTINUED: (3)

DANNY (cont'd)
We were so close!

WALTER
Wait! That didn't count!

The Zorgons aim weapons up at the top of the stairs, a green glow fires out and begins to wrap around Walter. Walter sees it and his face fills with sadness.

WALTER (cont'd)
I'm sorry, Danny.

DANNY
No! This isn't fair! It wasn't your turn!

The green glow whips around Walter faster, up to his chest.

WALTER
See you later, Buddy.

DANNY
IT'S STILL MY-

He stops suddenly, as if the thought is occurring to him for the first time, and speaks quite calmly.

DANNY (cont'd)
Hey, it's still my turn.

And as the green glow closes over the top of Walter's head, imprisoning him completely, Danny bolts up the last ten steps.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'LL SAVE YOU, WALTER!

INT BASEMENT STAIRWELL NIGHT

He races up the stairs of the basement, two at a time --

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

-- and falls to his knees in front of the game board for the last time.

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

In the basement, the Zorgons BARK up at the green dot that is Walter at the top of the stairs.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS,

Walter starts to be pulled backwards, down the stairs, flying toward the Zorgons. Walter SCREAMS, the Zorgons ROAR.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Danny picks up the dice --

DANNY
Come on twelve, come on twelve, come on twelve!

-- and hurls them onto the board. They fall and roll.

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

Walter flies toward the Zorgons, closer now.

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The first die lands, it's a six, Danny's eyes dart to the other, which bounces --

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

Walter's almost to the bottom of the stairs, still SCREAMING, the Zorgons cluster around, SNAPPING their jaws --

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

-- the die falls, spins around twice, and settles --

-- *ON A SIX!*

DANNY
TWELVE!

He BANGS his astronaut over the squares all the way to Zathura, SMACKS him down in the center of the purple planet, and leaps to his feet, SHOUTING.

DANNY (cont'd)
I GOT A TWELVE!!!

INT BASEMENT NIGHT

But Walter can't reply, he's got problems of his own, he lands in the middle of the Zorgons and they close around him, God knows what they're going to do to him, we can't even see Walter anymore...

INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The Zathura board spits out its last card, all the way out this time, it spins onto the floor and the slot SNAPS shut with finality.

Danny snatches up the card and reads it (perfectly this time).

DANNY
"Take nearest black hole back in time to planet earth!"

Danny looks down, sees he's standing in the middle of a black disk which is rising quickly up his body, *erasing* his body.

The hole rises fast, past his waist, up to his head, which just floats there for a second, just long enough for Danny's disembodied head to SCREAM, we go in tight on Danny's face as black closes in all around it, the disk begins to shrink, smaller and smaller and smaller, Danny disappears and *we* get sucked into the hole too, we dive right *into* it --

INT BLACK HOLE NIGHT

-- and, in the elongated black space of a wormhole, we see Danny, stretched out like crazy, tumbling head over heels through the backside of the universe, we go in tight on his face because he's still SCREAMING and then --

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

-- we pop out, but we're still tight on Danny's face and he's still SCREAMING, but he's sitting on the living room floor now, and the living room is brightly lit like it was at the beginning, sunlight and trees out the window, and Walter's sitting with his back to Danny like *he* was at the beginning, slumped in the chair in front of the TV set, that dumb sports show playing again.

Danny stops screaming and looks around, *completely* disoriented. He looks down.

His astronaut game piece is resting on the planet earth again. Walter's rocket ship is back in the box. The board is spread out in front of him, and Danny's got the dice in his hand, holding them out over it, ready to roll his first roll.

He turns, his hand frozen in mid-air, and looks at Walter in the chair.

CONTINUED:

DANNY
Walter?
(no answer)
Walter?!

Walter turns around slowly and stares at him. Walter's eyes are as wide as saucers.

WALTER
Don't. Roll. Those. Dice.

Veeeeeeeerrrrry carefully, Danny places the dice back in the game box.

He stands up and backs away from the board.

Walter gets up out of the chair. They stare at the board for a second, then at each other.

Then they both SHOUT at the same time.

DANNY
I DID IT!

WALTER
YOU DID IT!

Danny hurls himself at Walter and tackles him, they both fall backwards onto the carpet.

DANNY
I saved you, I got you back, I did it!

He's hugging Walter so hard they're both rolling across the carpet.

DANNY (cont'd)
I won a game, I finally won a game and I didn't cheat or anything, Walter, I didn't have to cheat and I won I won I won!

Walter wrestles Danny off of him and they roll around on the floor, but it's playful this time, Walter is laughing, they're both laughing --

-- when Dad hurries through the door.

DAD
I distinctly remember asking you guys not to kill each other.

DANNY
DAD!

CONTINUED: (2)

They both get up and hurl themselves at their father, each tackling a leg, and now *he* goes down to the carpet and all three of them are down on the floor, rolling around like crazy people. Danny and Walter talk at the same time, a mile a minute.

WALTER
Dad there was this game we played this game and it sent the house into outer space and everything got wrecked and I almost had to stay in it forever and-

DANNY
It was so scary there were these Zorgons they're like lizard guys and I went through a black hole and Walter had to kill a MinuteTower and I rescued him at the end and Dad I won and-

DAD
(laughing)
Guys! Guys, please! Tell me all about it later, your mom's gonna be here any minute! Go grab all the books and games and whatever you wanna take to her house, it's almost three!

And he gets up and breezes out of the room, dashing upstairs.

The boys stop wrestling and look at each other, realizing there's no point in telling Dad later, or anyone else for that matter, no one would ever believe this.

DANNY
But you and me know, right?

WALTER
(nods)
You and me.

CUT TO:

INT KIDS' BEDROOM DAY

A book lies on Danny's bed, where it was at the beginning -- "Greek and Roman Monsters and Myths." Danny picks it up and tosses it in his backpack. He walks over to his desk, picks up his Game Boy from where it sits next to the cage with the pet lizards, and throws that in too.

He hears a HONK from outside.

DANNY
Mom!

He races to the window and sees a car pull up.

EXT HOUSE DAY

MOM parks in front and comes around to the sidewalk. She waves, friendly, at the front door --

INT HOUSE DAY

-- where Dad waves back, standing in the open doorway. He turns, bends down to help Danny put on his backpack.

DAD
Got everything, buddy?

DANNY
Yep.

DAD
Attaboy. I'll miss you, Kiddo, but I'll see you on Wednesday.

Danny is having trouble zipping his jacket, so Dad helps. He brushes Danny's hair out of his eyes and kisses him on the forehead. Walter hurries up, zipping his own coat, backpack already on. Dad kisses him.

DAD (cont'd)
I love you.
(kisses Danny)
And I love you too, exactly the same amount.

Danny turns and heads out the door, walking down the sidewalk toward his mom, who waits smilingly at the car.

He looks back over his shoulder, to see if Walter is following.

WALTER
Don't worry, Danny. I'm right behind you.

DANNY
I know.

He turns around, smiling, happy.

DANNY (cont'd)
I know you are, Walter.

CONTINUED:

We pull back across the yard to take in the whole scene -- Dad standing in the doorway, Mom waiting at the car, and the two little boys walking down the sidewalk, closing the space between.

CUT TO:

INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Dad's at home alone now, in the living room cleaning up the mess that follows in the kids' wake. He sees some brightly colored something on the floor behind the couch. He goes and looks at it. It's the Zathura game board, still spread out where it was. In the excitement the boys forgot to put it away.

Dad sits down, curious, and looks at it. Doesn't remember this one. He picks up one of the game pieces, the robot. Puts it on planet earth. Picks up the dice and --

-- checks his watch. Whoops, late for the meeting. He tosses the game piece and the dice back into the box and puts the board in on top of them.

INT TOY CLOSET DAY

A door opens on a jam-packed toy closet and Dad flicks on the light. One whole wall of shelves is board games -- Monopoly, Chutes and Ladders, Candyland, Stratego, Snail Pace Race, Hi-Ho Cherry-O, Clue, the list could go on forever, there must be a million of 'em.

Dad finds a sliver of room, shoves Zathura in with the rest of them. He looks fondly at the games, pulls the chain on the light bulb and we --

CUT TO BLACK.