

SCENE 1

A museum gallery. There are several 17th/18th century oil paintings on the wall. In the centre of the gallery is a elaborate and very small Rococo chair that is roped off and has a sign beside it saying 'Please Do Not Touch.'

MADDIE enters. She is wearing the uniform of a Front of House employee. She is carrying a fold up stool and has a radio clipped onto her waistband of her trousers.

MADDIE
(entering)

Morning!

She speaks to the paintings as she sets up her stool.

MADDIE
Lovely to see you Marie. Have you done something different with your hair? Hi Debbie, nice to see you too, you keep practicing with that harp and you'll be performing on stage in no time. Did you go out last night? No. Oh, yeah I imagine it's hard to get out when you are stuck to a wall.

Maddie looks at her watch.

MADDIE
5 minutes till open.
(She speaks into her radio)
This is West Gallery Entrance to Control, please can I have a radio check?

Static comes from the radio.

MADDIE
Control, are you receiving?

More static.

MADDIE
Stupid radio. Bet it wasn't charged properly. West Gallery Entrance to Saturn 2, please could I have a radio-

The radio makes several popping sounds then a woeful fizzle as it dies.

MADDIE

For god's sake!

Maddie sits down in her chair, looks at her watch again and takes out her thermos.

Mario enters behind her. He is wearing the black and white uniform of a security guard. He treads carefully and sneaks up behind her.

MARIO

Intruder!

Maddie jumps, almost spilling her thermos over herself.

MADDIE

Mario! You scared me!

MARIO

Because you weren't watching the exits! Remember Maddie, constant vigilance must be maintained at all times to protect yourself and the objects in the gallery. Every two minutes you need to do a full sweep of the room and check all exits for potential security threats.

MADDIE

We are not even open to the public yet! Who are you even looking for at this time of the day? The cleaning lady?

MARIO

I am doing my surprise checks to stress test the museum's security operations. Didn't you read my emails about this?

MADDIE

All five of them? Absolutely not.

MARIO

Danger can come at any time and in any form. You might see a innocent American tourist, I see a high art thief. You see a group of school children, I see operatives for a terrorist cell. You never know what could happen. It's why I am always prepared.

Wherever I am, I will always have a First Aid Kit and my emergency scenario binder. I used to be able to carry around a weapon-

MADDIE

Your nunchucks?

MARIO

But they are “technically illegal.” It’s fine because I carry these weapons at all times.

Mario holds up his fists.

MARIO

The ultimate weapon of my body. I am trained to use non-lethal force.

MADDIE

The free jiu jitsu classes you take at the community centre? Anyway, my radio is broken can you get me a new one?

MARIO

We’ve run out of batteries and we don’t have the budget for new ones.

MADDIE

How can I call for help, if there is a actual security incident?

MARIO

Just shout. I have been honing my senses with my sensei and I can hear a pin drop from the other side of the museum. I am going to continue my rounds. But just know, you failed my test, and if I had been a environmental activist, you would be dead right now.

MADDIE

That’s not even what they do...okay fine.

Mario exits. Maddie sits back down and looks at her watch.

MADDIE

And we are open.

GRETA enters. She is huffing and puffing, and is already carrying several carrier bags from London tourist attractions.

MADDIE

Hi, welcome!

GRETA

(panting)

You - are - on top of - a - large hill.

MADDIE

Um, yes we are.

GRETA

It's really inconvenient for me. Why would anyone build a museum here?

MADDIE

There is actually a reason for that. It wasn't always a museum. The original owner of the house had a young daughter who loved the view, most of the items in here belonged her when she was child and if you look out the window you can see all the way to Ess-

GRETA

Can't you move it?

MADDIE

Move? The whole museum?

GRETA

Yes. So, people don't have to walk up the hill.

MADDIE

I think that would be difficult to do. If we moved the whole collection to a new space, people would be disappointed because so many people come just to see the building, it was designed by Christopher Wren and-

GRETA

So? Move the whole building. Like those flat pack houses that they put on trucks.

MADDIE

Well, those building are made from wood, and this building is made of stone so it would be quite a bit more expensive.

GRETA

I bet you would have more visitors. I bet most people only make it half way up that hill and turn around.

MADDIE

There is a buggy service people can use at the bottom of the hill if they have difficulty walking.

GRETA

I saw that but they only come every 20 minutes and I couldn't wait that long. And I bet most people wouldn't. No wonder your sales are down

MADDIE

Actually our sales are u-

(She catches herself)

Thank you for your feedback. We will take it under consideration. Do you want learn anything about the items in our gallery? There are some really amazing items in her from the Rococo era-

GRETA

Where is the cafe? I need to sit down.

MADDIE

So, you will just want to head to the corridor, then up the set of stairs.

GRETA

Stairs! I can't walk any further.

MADDIE

There is also a elevator as well. I can get you a map-

Maddie turns around to grab a map. By the time she turns around Greta has already wandered off and is looking at the paintings. She shrugs.

Maddie begins doing the security checks.

MADDIE

(Muttering)

Sweeping the space. Checking the exits. This is so stupid.

While Maddie's back is turned, Greta spots the chair. She sighs and puts down his bags. She steps over the velvet rope and sits in the chair.

Maddie turns around and gasps.

MADDIE

Um, miss, I am so sorry but you can't sit there!

GRETA

What do you mean? It's a chair of course I can sit here.

MADDIE

That is a very expensive and very old chair, so actually you can't. It's very fragile. Please I am going to ask you to stand up.

GRETA

No.

MADDIE

Miss, if you will need to stand up now.

GRETA

Why? I am comfortable and I am not moving.

Maddie pauses. She grabs Greta's bags.

MADDIE

I have the power to confiscate all unattended bags. And while you are sitting in that chair these bags are unattended!

GRETA

That's mine, give them back!

MADDIE

If you damage the chair, you will have to pay.

GRETA

How are you going to do that? Hundreds of people are going to visit today. You don't even know my name.

Maddie takes out Greta's wallet.

MADDIE.

Lovely to meet you, Greta Green. Now please, I am asking you nicely for the last time, get out of the chair!

GRETA

Or what? What are going to do?

MADDIE

I am going to call our elite security team.

Maddie turns on her radio and it makes another dying sound.

MADDIE

Shit.

She goes to the gallery entrance.

MADDIE

Mario! Mario!

There is no response.

MADDIE

Mario, there is a Just Stop Oil protestor in the West Gallery!

Mario comes barreling through the door,
brandishing his radio like a gun.

MARIO

Stop! I am authorized to use non-lethal force.

(He pauses)

There aren't any protestors.

MADDIE

This lady has sat down on a chair that she isn't supposed to and is now refusing to get up.

MARIO

Ah! You need to get up now. That is a very very old chair.

GRETA

Who is even coming to galleries to look at a old chair? Chairs are for sitting.

MADDIE

Didn't you notice that it was roped off?

GRETA

I thought it was decoration.

MARIO

What about the sign saying 'Please Do Not Touch'?

GRETA

It didn't say 'Please Do Not Sit'! Sitting is different to touching.

MARIO

Miss, if you don't get up now I am going to have to use non-lethal force, which I am authorized to use, to remove you from the chair. I am going to count to three. One. Two. Three.

Greta stays in the chair.

MARIO

Okay, well don't say I didn't warn you!

Mario grabs under Greta's armpits and pulls.
Greta does not budge. Mario pulls again,
grunting with effort, but Greta does not move
from the chair.

MARIO

Oh my god. Are you-

MADDIE

Oh, you're stuck. That's why you wouldn't move.

GRETA

It's so embarrassing. Ever since the divorce I've really let myself go. I been eating terribly and not exercising. And now look at me, I am stuck in a chair.

MADDIE

If it makes you feel better, I don't think you being stuck has anything with you gaining weight. More than this chair was built for a child in the 18th century and you are a grown woman in the 21st century. Anyone would get stuck, hence why we have a sign telling you not to sit in it.

GRETA

Telling me not to touch it-

MARIO

When you sit in things you are touching them!

MADDIE

Listen, me and my colleague are just going to have a quick chat about the best way to get you free.

Maddie and Mario walk away from Greta.

MARIO

So, what are we going to do?

MADDIE

No idea. I was hoping I would have thought of something by the time we walked over here. But my mind is blank.

MARIO

We've got to do something quickly. Before other visitors arrive. Or worse, the curators! They don't even like people looking at the objects let alone sitting in them.

MADDIE

We could use some type of lubricant.

MARIO

Where would we get that from? It's not like I just carry that around with me.

MADDIE

Really? I thought you were always prepared.

MARIO

What about if we remove some layers of her clothing?

MADDIE

Creepy.

MARIO

But covering her in lube isn't?

MADDIE

Look, I think we are going to have to the most simple option.

Maddie and Mario walk towards Greta.

MADDIE

Okay, Greta. Here's the plan. Mario is going to hold your hand and pull you towards him. I am going to hold the chair and pull it towards me.

Mario takes Greta's arms. Maddie grabs the legs of the chair.

MADDIE

One, two, three, pull!

Maddie and Mario pull in opposite directions, but the chair still doesn't budge.

C'mon, put some more effort in.

MADDIE

GRETA

He's going to dislocate my arms!

MADDIE

One, two, three, pull!

GRETA

Ow! Ow! Ow!

MADDIE

I can feel the chair loosening. Keep pulling!

The chair comes lose. Greta falls on top of Mario. Maddie flies off stage with the chair. Off stage there is the sound of crashing and splintering.

MARIO

Maddie! Are you okay?

Maddie enters.

MADDIE

I'm fine. The chair is not.

Maddie holds up a chair leg.

MARIO

Oh, we are so fired.

MADDIE

I know.

MARIO

I am never going to work in security again. I'll have to go back to hospitality.

GRETA

Listen, I've been thinking. I do think you are right and I do bear some blame for what has happened.

MARIO

Some-

Maddie hushes Mario.

MADDIE

Thank you for realizing that.

GRETA

And I would be happy to pay for repairs to the chair. I had to get my dining room chairs reupholstered recently, and it was a few hundred. So, should we say 250 and call it a day.

MADDIE

It might cost a bit more than that.

MARIO

Let me look it up.

Mario takes out his phone.

GRETA

Really? It's a chair.

MARIO

It has it's own Wikipedia page and-

(whistles)

That's a lot of zeroes.

MADDIE

Let me see! I am sure we could work out a payment plan.

(Maddie looks and phone and gasps)

Oh my god!

GRETA

Well, in that case. I am just going to go. If you think about it, I wasn't holding the chair when it broke.

Greta runs off stage.

MARIO

Hi! Come back here! I can use non-lethal force!

Maddie and Mario pursue Greta

BLACKOUT.

The end.