

Dana turns 40

40th birthday — a printable escape room, made from your own facts

There are 5 stages. Each one hides a single word. Solve them in order: stage 3 needs an earlier answer as a key.

Write each answer in that stage's boxes. One box on every stage is outlined and marked with a star and the stage number — copy that one letter onto the Final Lock card at the back. When all stars are filled in, the card spells the word that ends the game.

Stages in this kit

Stage 1. Shift cipher — a decoder strip is on the page

Stage 2. Word search — find the odd one out

Stage 3. Keyword cipher — the key is an earlier answer

Stage 4. Fill-in grid — your own clues

Stage 5. Shift cipher — a decoder strip is on the page

If you get stuck

The Game Master pack has three hints for every stage, from a nudge to the answer, plus the full solution. Ask for hint 1 before you ask for hint 2.

Printing

Print at 100% (not “fit to page”) on plain paper, one page per sheet. Cut nothing. If you want it to feel like a real escape room, put each stage page in its own envelope and number the envelopes.

Stage 2 of 5

Word search — find the odd one out

Five of the six words below are hidden in the grid — across, down or diagonally, forwards or backwards. Exactly one is not there at all. That missing word is the answer to this stage.

Y	L	M	K	H	M	O	A	W	R
G	C	N	U	S	L	K	X	W	M
T	A	N	M	B	B	U	A	I	Y
K	R	A	H	B	Q	P	M	L	Z
W	D	O	K	R	Y	I	I	L	M
W	A	T	M	A	I	O	G	O	T
U	M	F	A	B	Y	L	L	W	N
A	O	T	A	U	O	A	F	N	D
K	M	W	M	H	T	N	K	V	H
W	Y	M	B	R	B	A	E	K	L

- ☐ Cardamom
- ☐ Kayak
- ☐ Pemberton
- ☐ Rhubarb
- ☐ Trombone
- ☐ Willow

The missing word is: The street she grew up on

Working space

Answer

★ 2

Copy the ★ letter into box 2 on the Final Lock card.

Stage 3 of 5

Keyword cipher — the key is an earlier answer

This message uses a keyword alphabet. The keyword is the answer to stage 2. Write the keyword's letters (each one only once) under A, B, C ... then continue with the letters of the alphabet you have not used yet, skipping any already written. That strip decodes the message.

SNR IHFY BPY QNR WAFF PHQWRL SNR JNHR ERTILR HAHR

[illegible]

top row: the alphabet • bottom row: write your keyword alphabet here

Working space

Answer

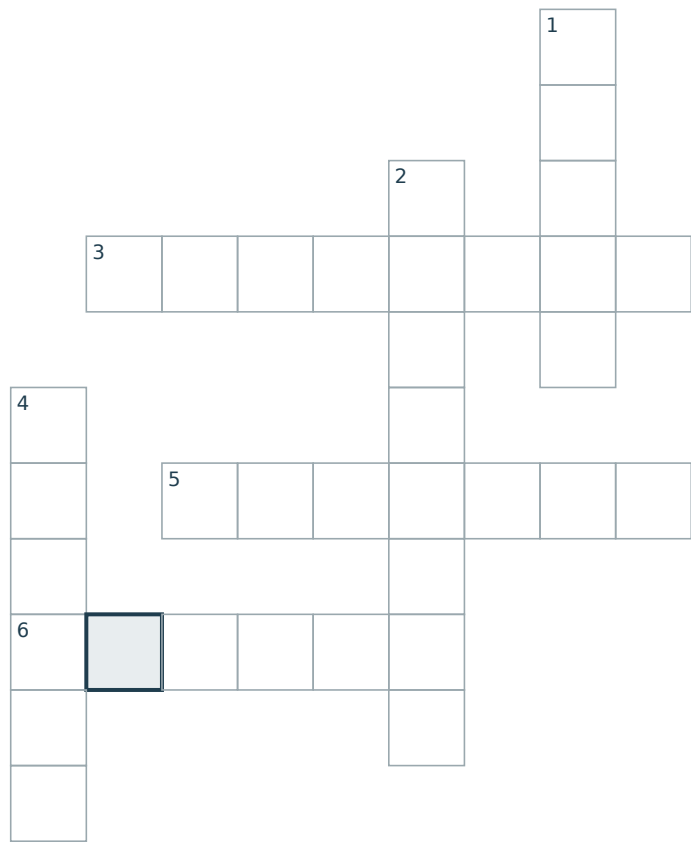
		★ 3					
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Copy the ★ letter into box 3 on the Final Lock card.

Stage 4 of 5

Fill-in grid — your own clues

Fit every answer below into the grid. Each one goes in once, across or down, sharing letters where they cross. The shaded square is the one you copy to the Final Lock card — it belongs to the answer whose clue is marked ★.



Clues

- 3 across (8) The only day she will answer the phone before nine
- 5 across (7) What grows faster than she can cook it
- 6 across (6) ★ Where the two of you got lost looking for a bakery
- 1 down (5) The red thing on the roof of the car every July
- 2 down (8) The instrument abandoned after one school term
- 4 down (6) The tree at the end of the garden on Beech Road

Working space

Answer

★ 4

Copy the ★ letter into box 4 on the Final Lock card.

Stage 5 of 5

Shift cipher — a decoder strip is on the page

Every letter below has been moved 15 places forward through the alphabet. Move each one back to read the clue. The strip under the message does it for you: find the ciphertext letter on the top row and read the plain letter underneath.

IWT RPI LWD HXIH DC IWT LPGB APEIDE

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K

top row: the letter in the message • bottom row: what it really is

Working space

Answer

★ 5

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Copy the ★ letter into box 5 on the Final Lock card.

Final Lock

One letter from every stage, in stage order.

Write the starred letter from each stage in its numbered box. The word you get is the answer to the whole game — the Game Master has it, and knows what it opens.

stage 1	stage 2	stage 3	stage 4	stage 5

Nothing else goes on this card. If a box will not fill, go back to that stage — the starred box is the only letter from it that matters here.