ARKHAM ASYLUM

“RIDDLE ME THIS..”

Written By
MICHAEL CORNELL
Ext. Arkham-Night.

A taxi pulls up to the front gates of Arkham Asylum. Someone steps out. Frank Vernon looks up at the gates as they open and the taxi pulls away.

Frank
What am I doing?
What a great job
this is going to be.

Frank walks toward this menacing structure.

Frank
This better pay good.

Frank reaches the door and enters.

Int. Arkham-continuous.

A receptionist walks up to Frank.

Receptionist
You must be Mr. Vernon. We’ve been waiting. You’re the specialist?

Frank
Yeah, kind of.
I have worked with the mentally disturbed but I’m not a psychologist. But I know the field well.
Frank (continuous)
And the school I worked for said I should come here.

Receptionist
Yes, and to start you off you’ll be working with (reaches for clipboard) Patient 122583. But let me give you a small tour.

Int. Arkham halls

The receptionist walks Frank through the halls. Frank now knows he’s in hell.

Frank looks through a window of a door they pass by. That reads: MESS HALL. Frank turns away from the door with a pall look on his face.

Frank
Can we end this tour before it gets started.

CUT TO:

Int. Arkham cell blocks.

Frank walks down a long hallway riddled with cells. He reads the clipboard. And stops at cell 122583.
Frank
Okay my first crazy
is... Edward
Nygma. (motions guard to
open door)

The door opens and Frank steps in and the door
closes behind him. He looks around the room to see
crossword puzzles all over the place. And things
written on the walls. And he sees Nygma sitting,
writing under the ONE light. Frank pulls up a
chair.

Frank
Mr. Nygma sir. I’m
Frank Vernon.

Nygma
Not a doctor?

Frank
No, no I’m not.
But I’m here to help
you Mr.-

Nygma
(cutting Frank off)
I’d prefer if you
called me Riddler.

Frank
Okay... Riddler Let’s
just talk so I can see
what’s going on with
you.
Riddler
Alright then, what do you want to know?

Frank
What are you writing?

Riddler
Take a guess.

Frank
Riddles right?

Riddler
Yes, such a bright fellow.

Frank
What kind of riddles?

Riddler
The kind he won’t solve.

Frank
Who?

Riddler
The Batman.

Frank
So you want to stump him.
Riddler
In a sense.

Frank
What’s the riddle?

Riddler
What do you break by saying just one word?

Frank (thinks for a minute) Silence.

Riddler
Correct.

Frank
A little easy for someone named Riddler.

Riddler
Exactly. That’s the real riddle isn’t it. Why would the Riddler leave such a easy riddle behind for The Batman to find?

Frank
but will you get a chance to use it? I mean you’re in here.
Riddler
I’ve been in here lots of times. We all have and you’ll come to know that.

Frank
Got anymore?

Riddler
What’s too much for one, enough for two, but nothing at all for three?

Frank (thinks about it) Secrets.

Riddler
You’re very good.

Frank
What do men want least on their hands?

Riddler
Handcuffs.

Frank
Just testing.

Riddler
What were you testing?
Frank
Your patience with me.

Riddler
Good, I was just testing.

Frank
how about a walk. Stop get some grub?

Riddler
Fine.

Int. Arkham mess hall.

Riddler and Frank sit down with trays. No one else is around except a big guard standing nearby. Frank looks at his food and gets a little green.

Riddler
What’s wrong, we eat it, why can’t you?

Frank(scoops some “food” in his mouth)
What is this stuff?

Riddler(smiles)
Now that’s a riddle even I can’t solve.
Frank
What do you do around here when you’re not in your cell.

Riddler
Eat, sit in the so-called lounge area and watch television.

Frank
Alright then, Who is in the cell...next to you?

Riddler
Why do you want to know that?

Frank
I wanted to change the subject because I felt you were getting a little annoyed with me.

Riddler
At least you understand. The rest of these idiots never understand why I ask so many questions.

Frank
Because you like to.
Frank (continuous)
questions intrigue you
because you gain
knowledge and joy from
getting an answer. But
with riddles...I’m still
a little blurry on that
subject. Hopefully by
the end of this talk I
will come to know the
answer.

Riddler
Yes maybe you will.

Frank
So what is your
obsession with The
Batman?

Riddler
He solves them to
quickly and to easy. And
it’s just fun to leave
clues behind for him.

Frank
Why is it fun?

Riddler
I like testing him.
Frank
What is neither inside the house, outside the house, but no house is complete with out it?

Riddler
Windows. Enough with the kids stuff.

Frank
But giving you the kids stuff gives me joy. And I like testing you.

Riddler
I see your point.

Frank
I may not be a doctor, but I’m still clever.

Riddler
Where did you live before coming to Gotham?

Frank
Keystone City.

Riddler
So you’re used to the lighter side of my world.
Frank
I don’t know what you mean.

Riddler
Crime. We’re psychotics and have a weird creature of the night stalking us. So we’re a lot different than most cities.

Frank
You don’t think I could last.

Riddler
I think you could last but spending your time here is not going to go well for your sanity.

Frank
You think I’m going to go insane?

Riddler
Maybe. But we are very difficult.

Frank
I know it was on your chart.
Riddler (smiles)
    Very funny. But you’re no Joker.

Frank
    Is that a good thing, or a bad thing?

Riddler
    Now that’s a riddle.

Frank
    Funny. But you’re no Harley Quinn.

Riddler
    Nice one. If I do say so myself.

Frank
    Thanks.

Riddler
    Anything else you want to know?

Frank
    Lots.
Riddler
Than ask away.

Frank
What do you think of me right now?

Riddler
You seem okay. You’re not trying to convince me about anything.

Frank
I told you I’m not a doctor.

Riddler
What do you think of me right now?

Frank
Intriguing. And a little crazy and smart.

Riddler
Fair judgment.

Frank
What can you hold without ever touching or using your hands?
Riddler
Your breath.

Frank
You’re never off guard are you?

Riddler
Never.

Frank
Have any family?

Riddler
I rather not answer that.

Frank
Didn’t think you would, but hey it was worth a shot.

Riddler
Do you have any family?

Frank
No.
Riddler
Let us hope you stay
sane long enough to have
one....Frank.

Frank
You called me Frank.
Why?

Riddler
Why not?

Frank
No it’s fine, I just
didn’t expect it.

Riddler
You should leard to
expect a lot of things in
thus place Frank.

Frank
How do they treat you in
here?

Riddler
How would you expect
them to treat me?
Frank
Horrifically.

Riddler
Your catching on to this
place.

Frank
Why do you commit
crimes?

Riddler
Good question.

Frank
And what’s your answer.

Riddler
What good is a riddle
is everybody knows it?

Frank
Useless. What do you
feel like doing when
you’re in here?

Riddler
Getting away.
Or killing myself.
Frank
A little harsh don’t you think?

Riddler
Not for someplace they call The Living Hell.

Frank
I understand.

Riddler
Good. But remember, you will learn to hate this place even if you can leave. You will learn to fear this place and dread this hell hole they throw us into. And you will learn to trust this place.

Frank
Trust it?

Riddler
It’s a sanctuary for us, It’s protection. Even if it doesn’t work all the time.
Frank
Protection from what?

Riddler
From him.

Frank
The Bat.

Riddler
Yes.

Frank
But don’t you feel his treatment of you is justified.

Riddler
Is that what you feel?

Frank
I was asking you a question.

Riddler
Well some back bone emerges.
Frank
I was asking you a question.

Riddler
Well if it makes you feel any better than....I won’t answer that.

Frank
What would be the first thing you do when you get out of here?

Riddler
Same thing I always do when I get out of here.

Frank
Do something that gets you thrown right back in here.

Riddler
You will come to know the answer to questions such as that one soon, Frank.

Frank
Well-
Riddler (interrupts)
Are we almost done?
Even though I am grateful for the company and getting me out of my cell for a few.

Frank
We’re almost done just a few more questions.

Riddler
Good.

Frank
What are you doing tomorrow?

Riddler
Having lunch with The Ventriloquists.

Frank
I’ve heard of him.
I’ve been wanting to talk to him too.

Riddler
Really?
Frank
Yeah, why?

Riddler
Well just to let you know, I might be the sanest one in here right now. So have fun.

Frank
I will. And I’ll keep that in mind.

Riddler
Want me to introduce you around?

Frank
No. I’ll learn about everybody when I talk to them.

Riddler
Okay, I was just making sure.

Frank
Don’t you find it ironic that your name is E. Nygma and you like riddles?
Riddler
Never really thought about it. And I love riddles.

Frank
sorry, didn’t mean to insult you.

Riddler
You did not insult me. It was just a mistake. And do not let it happen again.

Frank (looks to see if guard is still there)
Alright.

Riddler
Are you afraid?

Frank
Wouldn’t you?

Riddler
Yes.
Frank
Then don’t get so
annoyed.

Riddler
Okay, Okay, back off.

Frank
I wasn’t backing on.

Riddler
That’s I phrase I’ve
never heard before.

Frank
I couldn’t think of
anything else to say.

Riddler
I’ve had that happen
before.

Frank
I’m sure you have.

Riddler
What is it you do?
Frank
I worked at a certain kind of school in Keystone where I talked to the mentally ill and tried to understand them.

Riddler
Is that what you’re doing now Frank?

Frank
Yes, but I think I’m going to have a much harder time here at Arkham.

Riddler
I think you will to Frankie boy.

Frank
Frank, don’t call me Frankie boy.

Riddler
Sorry, just being friendly.

Frank
We’re not friends.
Riddler
Good.

Frank
Hmm... so I think we’re done here. (motions guard over)

CUT TO:

Int. Arkham cell block.

Frank walks behind the guard, he looks at all the cells. The guard has a gun to Riddler’s back. They reach his cell. Riddler walks in. Then stops turns around.

Riddler
Although broken, they will always exist and surround us. We don’t like being confined in them and they will outlive us all. What are “they”?

The guard closes the door.

Frank has a small smile.

Frank
Now that’ll take some thinking. But that’s the best riddle I’ve heard all day.
Int. Frank’s office.

Frank walks into his NEW office. He sits, puts his feet up on the desk. Looks around.

Frank V.O.
I’ve been thinking about it. And he was right. I would have a difficult time. The crazies here are a lot different than the ones back in Keystone. I can’t understand his mind and how it works. I defiantly have my work cut out for me.

Frank
Wonder who I have for tomorrow?

Int. Arkham cell block.

Six guards surround a man who is tied up on a Gurney, shackled and chained wearing a muzzle. Guards are armed very well for any kind of “situation”. They wheel the man into a empty cell. They inject him with something to knock him out. Then they unstrap him but leave him chained. They proceed to throw the man on his “new” bed. And then they all get the hell out of there. And close and lock the door.
The man is knocked out on the bed. He is scrawny and blonde. Strange marks on his body. We leave the cell to look at the name on the door. It reads: 055187 VICTOR ZSASZ.

Two guards walk up and post themselves on either side of the door.

Int. Frank’s office.

Frank is dusting off a table in the corner of the room with an old rag.

Then the phone rings. He walks over and answers it.

Frank
Hello, yes, it’s in the left cabinet. Okay, you see it, is that all. Okay, bye Lenny.(hangs up the phone) Left Keystone two days ago and the place went to hell already. Oh well, (looks at watch) time to go home.

Int. Taxi-morning.

Frank is in the back trying to keep himself awake. Looking at all the buildings and amazing structures. And looking for something else.
Frank (to driver)
He doesn’t come out
during the day does he?

Driver (looking in
rear view mirror) No.
(Slides the partition
window closed)

Frank
Okay then.

The taxi pulls up to Frank’s building. Looks nice,
but not the nicest looking place, even by Gotham
standards.

Int. Frank’s apartment.

Frank enters. Throws himself on the couch.

Frank
What an
interesting
night I just
had.

Frank sits himself up. Reaches in to a bag on the
coffee table. Pulls out a tape recorder and turns
it on.
Frank (into recorder) Well my first night at Arkham was an...educational one. My first person was Edward Nygma A.K.A. The Riddler. I don’t know what to make of him. He is very smart but also obsessive. He enjoyed the talk. But I did not—at least to my knowledge—earned any of his trust. Which was easy back home. But will be harder here. But trust won’t do much good anyway. But the way I see it is Riddler’s mind is a riddle in it’s self. So maybe that’s the real riddle. But the only sure thing is his obsession with The Batman. And so I don’t forget about it:
Frank (continuous)

Although broken, they will always exist and surround us. We don’t like being confined in them and they will outlive us all. What are “they”? (turns off recorder) Back in Keystone I never thought I would end up here. Which brings up another riddler, one of my favorites: What can’t you see that is always before you?

FADE TO BLACK

Frank V.O.
The Future.

END