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Interview

Johannes Schiller on escape rooms and the new ESCAPE puzzles

In Germany's Upper Swabia region, Johannes Schiller has carefully turned several rooms into what are known as exit or escape rooms. If you book the room for an hour with a group, you'll experience a very special kind of game. But what are exit rooms exactly, and what motivated Ravensburger to turn them into ESCAPE puzzles?

How did you come up with the idea to turn a room into an escape room?

Johannes Schiller: "I'd already heard about the trend ten years ago. It's tough to say where the first rooms were built; perhaps in Japan, maybe in Hungary or Switzerland. During a vacation in Thailand, I experienced one with a friend and was totally inspired. I had a lot of ideas about how to make my own room and wanted to actually do it."

What happens during an escape game?

Johannes Schiller: "A group meets up in an escape room and has to solve a mystery together. They have 60 minutes to solve it. One room might be furnished like a doctor's office, and another might look like a prison cell. Because the rooms are furnished so authentically, the players actually feel like they're in a real doctor's office or whatever the room should represent. They also put on doctor's coats, which means they're filling in for the resident physician who is on vacation. They take on the role of the doctor."

Do they then, much like in an adventure computer game, have to find clues and objects, combine them and solve mysteries to complete the game?

Johannes Schiller: "Yes, escape rooms emerged from the world of computer games. But you can only solve the tasks in a group. You don't stand a chance on your own and will give up. Working in a group means that different mindsets come into play, and you only find answers because everyone contributes. That's what's great about it. You don't have one person taking the lead and everyone else following them. Instead, everyone plays together."

How popular are escape rooms?

Johannes Schiller: "I think the trend is just getting started. People want to get out and do something. They don't want to just sit and play in front a screen but want to actually do something themselves. The groups that book escape rooms include bachelor parties, families and companies. Many companies come to promote their employees' ability to work in a team. Being able to cooperate and work in a team are important prerequisites for solving the mystery."

How did the escape room-trend turn into a puzzle?

Johannes Schiller: "It was a total coincidence. Ravensburger's editor-in-chief for adult puzzles was here as a player. That's how the idea originated to combine the concept with a puzzle. My initial reaction was: 'Great, I'm on



ESCAPE Puzzles
by Johannes Schiller

For 1–5 players
12 years and upwards

MSRP 13.49 euros
Release date September 2018

Picture data and press release text
can be downloaded at
www.ravensburger.de/presse

Further Information
on Ravensburger puzzles can be
found at www.ravensburger.de



Press Release

Ravensburger



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board.' The next thought was: How can we turn an escape game into a puzzle where you don't get stuck. The first few weeks were really tough. But then we came up with the idea that was used to actually make them."

What can you expect from an ESCAPE puzzle?

Johannes Schiller: "It basically works as follows: First, the story is presented. Then you put the puzzle together. Mysteries are hidden in the puzzle that need to be solved. It's best to not play alone. It's a lot more fun in a group, and you'll also reach your goal faster. The solutions to the mysteries point out what needs to be combined to complete the story and your mission."

Thank you.

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