

TODD: *(Beat.)* I'll go to school today. It might be fun. I'd like to play you.

HELEN: But you don't know what I do.

TODD: Come on, you're a school counselor. I'd love to hear all the juicy stuff about teenagers and their parents and their love angst. It would be fun.

HELEN: That's not all it is.

TODD: I know. I know. You're very sympathetic. I know you're good. How much damage can I do in one day?

HELEN: Well, if you get to do that, then I get to go give a bunch of gynecological exams. I'm sure your assistant can help me through it.

TODD: I know what you're thinking, but it's not like that, Todd. You're imagining a bunch of twenty-year-old knockouts that you might like to see a little more fully. Trust me, my day is half full of middle-aged women with sagging everything.

HELEN: I'm not that shallow. I don't mind sagging women.

TODD: Thanks. Is that a hint?

HELEN: So do you have any twenty-year-old knockouts? *(She gives him a look.)* I'm kidding. Actually, I'm just curious how women interact with women.

TODD: So now you're curious?

HELEN: Sort of.

TODD: Well, it's too dangerous. We can't do it. However, your mother and my mother have been begging me to do a girl's day out — hang out at the museum, go to the beauty parlor. This is a perfect opportunity to see how women interact with women.

HELEN: Uuh! I don't want to do that.

TODD: *(Flirtatiously.)* On the other hand, there are plenty of interesting things we could find out right here at home. Maybe without even leaving the bedroom.

HELEN: Really? That's not a bad idea. *(Eyebrows raised.)* I always wondered what I'd be like in bed. *(They smile at each other flirtatiously.)*

FLY RUDOLPH, FLY!

Tyler, thirties, has agreed to bring his wife, Alison, late twenties, on his hunting trip with a couple of friends. In the past, he has gone on these trips by himself because Alison isn't exactly the type to stay still and be quiet in the forest all day. This weekend Alison begged Tyler to take her along. She feels left out and wants him to know she can do it. She also believes that doing more activities together will bring them even closer as a couple. Tyler reluctantly agrees.

CHARACTERS

Tyler: 30s, a recreational hunter, Alice's husband

Alison: 20s, Tyler's wife

SETTING

The woods

TIME

The present

TYLER: *(Quietly.)* This looks like a good spot. What do you think, hon?

ALISON: It's all right. That was so rude. I still can't believe they made us leave.

TYLER: Yeah. Well, this is a nice spot too.

ALISON: The other was better.

TYLER: I know, I know, the caverns. The gorgeous waterfall.

ALISON: The proximity to indoor plumbing.

TYLER: I know. I know.

ALISON: Well, I just don't understand it, do you? We had a perfectly happy breakfast at the cabin. We were all happy. We were laughing —

TYLER: Yeah, but I'm not so sure Jeff thought that incident with the chipmunk and the air mattress was so funny.

ALISON: He didn't? So why did he tell it?

TYLER: He didn't. Susan did. Because you wanted an outdoorsy story.

ALISON: Well, I'm sure they have other outdoorsy stories besides the first time they slept together. I mean, they camp together every weekend. It's not my fault she chose that one.

TYLER: It's just guys get sensitive about their very first time.

ALISON: That was his first time? Ever? *(He nods.)* And the chipmunk . . . ? *(He nods.)* Oh my God! I feel terrible! That's awful. No wonder he's frightened of rodents.

TYLER: You should have seen him with the squirrel last week.

ALISON: Oh my God, that is so cute. That is so cute!

TYLER: Do me a favor. Don't tell him that.

ALISON: Anyway, it seemed like we were all having a great time. We're all admiring the gorgeous view and suddenly they were like, "Find your own spot." Out of the blue — "Find your own spot."

TYLER: Well you were dancing around quite a bit.

ALISON: So! I was happy. I felt like, like Laura in *Little House on the Prairie* but more slutty. *(Realizing.)* Hey, you don't think it was *me*, do you? *(Tyler shrugs, not sure what to say.)* You do?! Why?! I was just kidding around.

TYLER: Because you're too loud.

ALISON: Loud?! I'm not loud! *(He looks at her. Getting much softer.)* I'm not. All the time.

TYLER: Oh and singing a jazzed-up version of *(Sings.)* "The hills are alive . . ." is quiet?

ALISON: Well, I wouldn't call it especially loud. Especially retarded, maybe, but not loud.

TYLER: Well, I'm sure banging "We Will, We Will Rock You" on a Tupperware container didn't help either.

ALISON: Umm. Well, they don't seem to usually mind my "loudness." In fact, we've always had a great and sometimes "loud" time together. Jeff and Susan are usually so fun and sociable.

TYLER: You don't want to be sociable when you're hunting, Alison.

ALISON: You don't?

TYLER: No! I keep telling you that.

ALISON: Well that doesn't seem very vacation-like. If I wanted to be antisocial, I'd sit in our den in the dark with the TV on eating candy all day. Molding away like some weirdo with a lisp.

TYLER: What are you talking about?

ALISON: I know what you think. "What's her problem? Susan can hunt. She doesn't have a problem with not being loud." Great! Maybe you should have married Susan.

TYLER: I didn't want to marry Susan. I didn't even know Susan. Again, what are you talking about?

ALISON: You know, my loudness is very convenient sometimes. When you wanted to call out to a college buddy in the stadium, who did that for you? What got his attention? Who?!

TYLER: You did, honey. I just don't know what the hell you are talking about right now.

ALISON: How you're ruining my vacation. How you want me to be all different than I am.

TYLER: I don't want you to be all different. I just want you to be part different. *(Beat.)* Well why did you come then?! Because I warned you about this, this quiet thing with hunting.

ALISON: No, no, don't start up again with that. We decided! I want to come with you and share in your little hobby with you. It shows love and devotion. I mean, you hate shopping. You hate big parties and amusement parks. But that doesn't stop me from dragging you along. Why should you stop me from being miserable with the things you like?

TYLER: I know we've been married awhile because that somehow made sense.

ALISON: Of course. I just don't understand all the insider rules yet. I have to get acclimated to this hunting thing. Like I have to remind you over and over not to rush the shopping experience. You, apparently, have to remind me not to talk too loud when we're hunting. OK? I'll just, I'll just talk

quiet. I know how to whisper. And if it was so bad for all of you “experienced hunters,” why didn’t someone tell me straight out?

TYLER: I did!

ALISON: Well, not *you!* You always say I talk too much.

TYLER: Well, *they* aren’t going to tell you to shut up. Whether they want to or not.

ALISON: Why not?

TYLER: Because they’re our friends. What are they going to say? “This is so great. Having a great time. You know what? Shut up, Alison!”

ALISON: Well, that’s what friends are for. It’s better than, “Isn’t this a great spot — get out!”

TYLER: OK, OK. Technically, I don’t know exactly why they told us to find our own spot. The point is, Alison, ideally you don’t want to be talking. At all.

ALISON: (*A bit wounded.*) OK! Fine!

TYLER: Sometimes it’s even *fun* not to be talking.

ALISON: In what way?

TYLER: In a non-talking-fun way. I don’t know. I can’t explain it. It just is. Trust me.

ALISON: OK. OK. Fine. I’ll try. OK?

TYLER: OK, honey, I’m sorry this is so hard. I don’t have any desire to change who you are.

ALISON: It’s not hard for me not to talk. It’s just hard for me to understand why that’s fun.

TYLER: (*Patting her back.*) OK, OK.

ALISON: (*Pulling away.*) Just get our gun thingies. Let me stand here for a second. I’ll lean against this tree.

TYLER: OK. That’s a good spot.

(*Tyler goes to get the guns. Beat.*)

ALISON: And I have never been, in my whole life, accused of being loud. (*Tyler looks at her.*) Oh. OK. Once. But that was because Miriam asked me to sing for the wedding. I told her I wasn’t a professional.

TYLER: Nope, not a professional — a professional probably

wouldn’t have shouted the S-word in the middle of the ceremony at the top of her lungs.

ALISON: I can’t believe you’re bringing this up now. I’ve told you before it just came out when the organist shot me a dirty look for forgetting to come in. And all I could think of was like “oh sh . . .” — S-word. I didn’t mean to have that echo throughout the chapel in stereophonic. And I certainly didn’t know she videotaped it for posterity and plays it over and over. (*Beat.*) You know some people think that was the best part of the whole damn wedding.

TYLER: I know. (*Chuckles.*) It really was. It had a complete sincerity that other parts of the wedding sorely lacked.

ALISON: Well, I don’t say my S-word willy-nilly, honey.

TYLER: I know you don’t, honey. (*Kisses her.*) I love the way you say your S-word.

ALISON: Thanks. (*Beat.*) OK, I’m going to be quiet now. You won’t hear a sound. Not a peep.

TYLER: Good. You’ll see how fun it can be. We’ll just watch for deer and you’ll notice how peaceful it all is.

ALISON: Shh. (*Putting her finger to her lips.*) Be quiet now. (*They are silent for a few seconds. She clears her throat.*)

ALISON: (*Quietly.*) Phlegm. (*Silence.*) It’s cold, huh?

TYLER: (*Quiet back.*) Well, we are north.

ALISON: I can see my breath. (*Blowing out her breath.*) Haa. Haa. See?

TYLER: Yes. (*Putting his hand to his lips. She rolls her eyes and complies.*)

ALISON: I’m cold, Tylie. Maybe we should go to the clearing down there. There seem to be less trees.

TYLER: Alison, where there are less trees, there are also less animals.

ALISON: I’m sure there are some animals there.

TYLER: Not many.

ALISON: Well so? How many do you need? There’s probably smarter animals there who perhaps prefer the sun. Know how to get out of the cold. Smarter is more of a challenge.

TYLER: I'm not looking for smarter animals or more of a challenge.

ALISON: You have something against smarter animals?

TYLER: No! It's just there's more deer in the inner forest here and I told you you might get cold. Why didn't you bring my fleece like I told you?

ALISON: It's plaid.

TYLER: So?

ALISON: Well, I — it makes me look fat.

TYLER: Who cares? No one is going to see you out here anyway?!

ALISON: *(Singsongy.)* Look who's being the loud one now? Let's all take note. *(Pause. He gives her a look.)* Well, I didn't know it was going to be like this exactly. I thought there might be fellow hunters on the road milling about. OK? I wanted to look all cute — my best for you, honey. Now that I know it's all unsocial, yet "fun," I'll wear the ugly plaid fleece, but for right now —

TYLER: OK, OK, we'll move up toward the clearing where all the *smart* animals are in a few minutes so you can warm up. But please, for a moment, for five minutes let's be completely quiet. And see what happens. *(Angry as hell.)* It'll be very fun to see what happens! We'll wait patiently and have fun!

ALISON: Are you OK? Your forehead is doing that crinkly thing it does when you get all tense.

TYLER: *(Shushing with vigor.)* Shhhhhhh!

ALISON: OK. *(Under her breath.)* In amusement parks you don't have to *wait* for fun, it just is. *(He looks at her.)* All right. You like waiting.

(They are silent. Tyler watches in a fixed position. Alison stretches out her hands quietly. She cracks her knuckles. Then she stares out with him. Suddenly she takes a deep long breath, like a sigh. He looks at her.)

ALISON: *(Quietly)* What? What? What's with the look? I'm breathing. I can't breathe?

TYLER: *(Quietly.)* No. *(She shrugs. Silence. Suddenly, Tyler sits up straight like he's seen something.)* Look. *(He points.)* *(Alison gasps and looks lovingly at the thing.)*

TYLER: *(Whispers.)* I can't believe it. We were so loud and . . . it's a deer.

(Alison looks at Tyler and her mouth drops open mouthing "He's so cute.")

TYLER: *(Whispers.)* We'll both aim.

(Alison shakes her head no fiercely.)

TYLER: We've got a great shot?

ALISON: *(Whispers.)* Look at his nose. *(Sounding all sweet.)* Look at his big cute nose.

TYLER: *(Whispers.)* So he has a big nose.

ALISON: It's Rudolph. I think it's kinda like he's Rudolph.

TYLER: *(Whispers.)* No, no, he's definitely not Rudolph. He's a yucky deer. Cruel to his fawn.

ALISON: How do you know?

TYLER: He just is! Besides, he's a deer, not a reindeer.

ALISON: Oh. Is there a difference?

TYLER: Yes. *(Lifting his gun.)* He's not going to be celebrating Christmas! *(Alison's pushes his gun down.)* Alison! There's a surplus of deer in the United States and they'll only suffer if they all live. *(Alison gives him a boo-boo look.)* Don't do that look. Stop with the look. Would you rather he get hit by a car or starve to death? *(He aims his gun.)*

ALISON: *(Suddenly yelling.)* Fly! Fly Rudolph — fly!

TYLER: What are you doing?!

ALISON: You can't kill Rudolph! Even if he isn't . . . Rudolph. His eyes were all big and sad-like and he was saying, "I'm Bambi's best friend. Bambi needs me even if I'm not Rudolph."

TYLER: You are a crazy person! You are insane! Bambi? Bambi?! What has Bambi got to do with Rudolph?! Bambi is Disney! Rudolph is . . . Santa! And this is not a cartoon! We're hunting. We're hunters. We're merciless. We're fierce. We're strong.

ALISON: We're cold. *(He looks at her.)* But we're hunting. We are. You want to shoot something. We will. It's all good. I'm sure some ugly rat or something will wander by eventually, why don't you shoot that instead?

TYLER: I have a better idea. *(He raises his gun.)*

ALISON: *(She giggles and pushes his gun down.)* You're funny. You know, I'm really hungry anyway. Why don't we go back to the cabin and have a hot mug of cider and something yummy to eat? We can refuel. Come back here and have more fun after we shop in town a while. I'm sure they'll be some mean-looking nasty deer out here later.

TYLER: Alison, I am going to kill something before we leave today.

ALISON: Sure you will, honey, but no Bambis, Rudolphs, or Easter Bunnies. Or any of their friends. Anyway, I'm so glad you invited me along. I really understand why you like this so much. It's peaceful out here. All these cute animals around. I like hunting. I'm going to come with you as much as I can. Isn't that great?

TYLER: *(Beat.)* Run!

ALISON: *(Beat.)* Umm . . . OK, race you there. *(Running, singing.)* "The hills are alive with the sound . . ."

HOUSING TO SHARE

Dorrine, late twenties, and Cal, early twenties, have both gone to a roommate agency to find their perfect match. Dorrine is trying to find a roommate to fit her present apartment. The only problem is that she has control issues, which have driven three roommates away in the past year. Cal is laid-back, but a bit irresponsible. He is trying to find a place where he won't be shot at again and where the roommate is willing to, at least, pay rent regularly. Today, they are explaining their potential wants to Cheryl at the agency. At the beginning of the scene, they are speaking to the offstage agent, not to each other.

CHARACTERS

Dorrine: late 20s, in search of a roommate

Cal: early 20s, potential roommate

SETTING

Dorrine's apartment

TIME

The present

DORRINE: *(To audience.)* I jotted down a few notes to help you help me, Cheryl. Let's start with age. I'm looking for a female roommate who is approximately twenty-six to thirty-two years —

CAL: *(To audience.)* I got a couple of IDs here that'll say I'm anywhere from twenty-one to twenty-five.

DORRINE: I think new-to-the-city, sociable, but not too sociable. Female. Definitely female.

CAL: Sex? *(Grin.)* Well, I uh . . . *(Realizes.)* Oh? You mean like male or female?

DORRINE: Well educated is important.