

JESSIE: You won't. You already respect yourself enough to take a few chances. Trying out a new dangerous life for a week or two. It's cool.

FRANK: I guess.

JESSIE: You want to go to the prom with me?

FRANK: Yeah, right.

JESSIE: No, I mean it. I didn't know who I'd go with. Turned down a couple requests. I just didn't like 'em all that much. I've never talked to someone so easily, Frank . . . without being fake and all that. It would be great. And it's fitting to our spirit changes. Makes you seem a bit more wild and me a bit more straightlaced. I like it. Do you?

FRANK: Well . . . Yeah. I just . . . well, yeah . . . Heck yeah!

JESSIE: OK. Good. That works. *(She moves in.)*

FRANK: What are you doing?

JESSIE: I'm going to kiss you. What does it look like?

FRANK: Here?

JESSIE: Yes.

FRANK: But Sister Pat.

JESSIE: You can kiss her afterwards.
(She kisses him.)

JESSIE: What's that look for? You look so serious. I'm happy, Frank. Are you?

FRANK: *(Nods.)* Yeah. Yeah. I'm happy.

JESSIE: Good. 'Cause don't look now, but Sister Pat is standing in the doorway ready to ream us.

FRANK: Oh shhhh —
(Jessie covers his mouth to stop the expletive.)

SHHHHH!

Alice and Nate, thirties, a married couple who just moved to Miami, go to bed early after a long day unpacking their house. Nate needs the sleep because he will be starting his first day of residency at the University of Miami hospital tomorrow. Alice plans to wake up early to start filling out paperwork for her job as a government social worker. They both are overly nervous about making friends, the new environment, and doing well in their positions in Miami. Alice has been particularly concerned since a friend mentioned how dangerous Miami was. She turns over. A strange look comes over her face. She tries to close her eyes, but they pop open. She sits up and begins to tap Nate's shoulder.

CHARACTERS

Alice: 30s, Nate's wife

Nate: 30s, Alice's husband

SETTING

Their brand-new house in Miami

TIME

The present

ALICE: *(Tapping quietly at first, she whispers.)* Nate. Nate.
(Louder.) Nate!

NATE: *(Springing up, panicked.)* What, what?!

ALICE: Shhh.

NATE: Shhh? Why shhh? I have to get up in less than six hours.

ALICE: Did you hear something?

NATE: Yeah, you yelling "Nate!"

ALICE: Shhh.

NATE: Don't shhh me unless you tell me why we're shhshing!

ALICE: *(Whispers.)* I heard something.

NATE: *(Whispering now.)* You did? What did you hear?

ALICE: (*Whispers.*) I don't know. (*Pause. They both look around.*) I. Don't. Know.

NATE: I don't hear anything. If you don't know, you probably didn't really.

ALICE: Shhh!

NATE: Don't do that.

ALICE: Well, I don't hear it now. Anyway, I meant before. Did you hear something before that?

NATE: You mean when I was in a deep and sound and pleasant sleep? No.

ALICE: My God, we just lay down. How do you crash so fast?

NATE: It's very easy. You lie down. You close your eyes. And then you don't speak. At all!

ALICE: I don't speak all the time. Sometimes I don't speak when we lie down now. I know you think I do it all the time. I do do it sometimes. Sometimes I talk to relax myself. I think I must be —

NATE: (*Annoyed.*) Alice?!

ALICE: Be riled up from the move.

NATE: Breathe.

ALICE: (*She takes a deep breath.*) Don't you think I'm riled up from the move?

NATE: The two pots of coffee didn't help.

ALICE: Well, I had to unpack the kitchen. I'm just worried about liking Miami.

NATE: Oh no! We cannot have this discussion now, Alice. It's midnight. I'm nervous about everything too. It's a move. Of course we're nervous. But it's my first day tomorrow. Making a good impression in a residency is really important. I need to be well rested. I need to have brainpower. I need to exude confidence and well-restedness.

ALICE: In other words, "I need you to shut up."

NATE: Exactly.

ALICE: OK. I understand.

NATE: I love you, honey, and I'm sorry I have to tell you to shut up.

ALICE: I love you too, sweetie. (*She smiles.*) And you're right. If I hear any more strange noises, I'll just pretend I don't.

NATE: Thanks honey.

ALICE: Or just cover my ears. (*Beat.*) I'll think — (*Covering ears.*) La, la, la, la, la. I know it's an iffy neighborhood, but how iffy can it be, right? I'm sure it's nothing. It's so weird because everything we own is scattered all over our living room and the window is wide open —

NATE: (*Getting up.*) Uhp, I'm going to go down!

ALICE: No! (*Grabbing him.*) Wait! I don't want you to go down there.

NATE: Oh come on!

ALICE: I just wanted to see if we heard anything together.

NATE: I know you, Alice, and you are not going to let me get any sleep unless I go down there.

ALICE: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. (*She grabs his hand.*) Lie back down. You're right. I'm being ridiculous. The only reason I'm paranoid at all is because of Sue.

NATE: Sue?

ALICE: She pointed out that a disproportionate amount of cops-and-robbers shows take place in Miami, signaling that it's a high-crime area.

NATE: What are you talking about?!

ALICE: *CSI Miami, Miami Vice* —

NATE: That's ridiculous — *Miami Vice*?! That's been off the air for years. Besides, did it ever occur to you that the reason they chose Miami over a place like Detroit, which you survived for twenty-two years, is because stars can wear sexy clothes and look good in a very beautiful setting? That it has nothing to do with crime at all? It's Hollywood.

ALICE: Well, actually it's Miami. But a lot of weirdness goes down in Florida. You have to admit. Anthrax was here. Lots of riots. Terrorists *like* Florida.

NATE: So do geriatric people. Are you scared of them too?!

ALICE: Occasionally. OK. I see your point. Let's just go to sleep, honey.

NATE: (*Holding out his hands.*) Why don't you wear your earplugs?

ALICE: But then if something does happen, I won't hear it.

NATE: Exactly.

(*She reluctantly takes them and puts them in her ears. They both lie down and close their eyes. Nate opens his eyes suddenly. He looks around the room. He closes his eyes again, but they pop open surprised by something. He sits up.*)

NATE: Huh!

ALICE: (*Loudly because she can't hear herself with the earplugs in.*) What's the matter?

NATE: Shhh.

ALICE: (*Pulling the earplugs.*) Oooh, I told you! I told you. You heard something, didn't you?

NATE: Shhh! (*They look around. Whispering.*) It's mumbling. Like people talking.

ALICE: (*Whispers, terrified.*) There's two of them?!

NATE: Ya know, I think it's just coming from outside.

ALICE: What are you talking about?! You don't know. You have no sense of sound direction. Remember when we were at that house and we heard that dog and you told me he was chained up and that he wasn't in attack mode and the lady with that hair agreed, but then the mean dog ran after me? Remember that?

NATE: That wasn't a sound direction problem! It was a sight problem. And it wasn't a dog. It was a poodle.

ALICE: Well! All your senses are pretty lousy. Remember the smelly green thing in the attic?

NATE: OK, OK, you're right. But shhh. I want to hear it for a sec. (*They are silent.*)

ALICE: I think it stopped.

NATE: Wait, shhh . . . (*Beat.*) There. There it is again. Mumbling. Do you hear?

ALICE: (*She nods.*) Definitely in the downstairs direction. Oh my God! My *Wham* —

NATE: Shhh!!

ALICE: (*Whispering.*) My *Wham* CD collection is down there!
NATE: Oh please God let them take it.

ALICE: (*Hits him.*) Hey! How mean!

NATE: What I meant is I have a brand new Sony digital stereo with a mega sound system, which you use regularly to play your collection on, if you remember. I think my stereo system is worth a little more than your girlie eighties techno band crap.

ALICE: So! Mr. Fancy-Pants Doctor. Is this how it's going to be from now on? I'm the lowly social worker wife with the silly eighties CD collection?

NATE: No! No, I'm just saying the stereo is more expensive than anything we have.

ALICE: And expensive is everything? Nothing has sentimental value?

NATE: OK, you're right. You're right. I'm sorry. I'm going down there.

ALICE: (*Pulling him out of the way.*) No, you don't! I'm going down!

NATE: (*Grabbing.*) You certainly are not!

ALICE: Why not?

NATE: Because it's dangerous. I love you. And I am going down.

ALICE: No, you aren't. (*Pulling him out of the way.*) I love you too!

NATE: Ow!

ALICE: What?

NATE: You pinched my arm when you did that.

ALICE: Sorry. I survived in Detroit for twenty-two years. You said it yourself. I'm the tough one.

NATE: Yeah, but I'm the guy.

ALICE: From a suburb! Fair Oaks. That even sounds pansy. I was born to walk tough. I was stuck in a closet at seven when a burglar broke into the neighbor's house.

NATE: So what does that prove?!

ALICE: I don't know! What do a bunch of teenage geriatric-muggers got over me, huh?

NATE: Guns.

ALICE: *(Beat.)* Good point.

NATE: And who says they're teenagers? I think we ought to call the police.

ALICE: And say what? We hear mumbling in the direction of our living room. We think.

NATE: Why not?!

ALICE: 'Cause we just moved here.

NATE: So!

ALICE: Well, I don't want them to think we don't like the neighborhood.

NATE: Who cares?!

ALICE: When I lived in Detroit, and people in the suburbs came to the city, they were always calling the cops. It was really insulting.

NATE: I don't care if it's insulting! If you get mugged on the street, you don't hand over your wallet and say, "Don't worry, I won't mention anything about this. I don't want to ruin your neighborhood's reputation."

ALICE: Well . . . no.

NATE: I'm going to go down there.

ALICE: Oh no you don't!

NATE: Why?!

ALICE: A few minutes ago, you didn't even hear anything, Mr. Fancy Pants! Give me one good reason I shouldn't go down first?!

NATE: I have a more expensive insurance policy on me.

ALICE: Like that would mean anything to me! *(Beat.)* How much are we talkin' about?

NATE: It's big money. Will you let me go down by myself now?

ALICE: *(Beat.)* No! I'm going with you. I don't care how much you leave behind. I don't care about your stupid money. I'm crazy about you, you big lug!

NATE: Aww. I love you too, honey. This does actually make me scared. Like what if something . . .

ALICE: No, don't think that. I love you too! Huge bunches of

love! *(She bugs him.)* Umm! *(He goes to kiss her.)* Don't start now! We've got to strategize. Now, once you get to the bottom of the stairs, grab the chair in the hallway. I'll grab one of your golf clubs by the hall closet.

NATE: Grab the iron, not the putter. *(She looks at him.)* It's better for this kind of thing.

ALICE: If you see something or hear something, move quickly. You'll be closest to the phone, so grab it.

NATE: Where is the phone now?

ALICE: Right next to the radio in the nook.

NATE: Oh. OK . . . Radio?

ALICE: *(Realizing something.)* Ray-dee-oh.

NATE and ALICE: The radio!!

NATE: Did you turn off the radio before we went to bed?

ALICE: I thought you were going to do it?!

NATE: I was . . . but . . . I was listening to the weather and . . .

ALICE: You forgot.

NATE: Nothing's stolen. Your Wham collection's safe. We're alive.

ALICE: Thank God. *(Beat.)* OK. Well, try and get some sleep sweetheart. *(She gives him a quick kiss.)* Good night.

NATE: Good night.

ALICE: *(Beat.)* How come there's no big insurance policy when I die? I'm not worth it to you?!

NATE: Alice!

ALICE: What?

NATE: Stuff in your earplugs!