

MIRIAM. We take good care of him. She wanted a dog but ... (*A shrug.*) This was cheaper. (*She moves away.*) I don't know, Warren. I get angry at her and at the same time I can't entirely blame her. I grew up in this house, but back then there were ... people around. For most of her life it's just been the two of us up here. And she's always been a misfit at school — partly by choice. I even enrolled her in Sunday School one time to try and find some friends for her. Lasted one week. She's the only kid ever got bounced from Sunday School. Kept asking the teacher how the ark managed to stay afloat if Noah had brought on two termites.

WARREN. Not a bad question when you think about it.

MIRIAM. Yeah, well it was probably Randolph's. He's always the instigator — especially when there's a man around. It was Randolph who invented the Encyclopedia Game — and that managed to intimidate any guy who came within a mile of the place.

WARREN. What's the Encyclopedia Game?

MIRIAM. Don't ask and don't worry. She's been warned — you won't be subjected to it.

WARREN. Let her.

MIRIAM. No.

WARREN. I'm serious.

MIRIAM. So am I. No.

WARREN. Why not?

MIRIAM. Because I said so.

WARREN. You can't force her to like me, Miriam. Look at it from her point of view. Before she even meets me, she finds out I spent the night. Not exactly a great first impression for a kid. And it's my fault; I forgot the watch.

MIRIAM. It wasn't just that. I could tell by the way she acted this morning. She probably heard us.

WARREN. (*Embarrassed.*) Oh no ...

MIRIAM. I don't mean she heard *that*, I mean ... (*She glances around.*) Can I ask you a personal question?

WARREN. Sure.

MIRIAM. After you ... make love ... do you always laugh like that?

WARREN. Well, I don't smoke. (*She looks at him a second, then laughs.*) I laugh when I'm nervous or relaxed and at that point in time I was ... relaxed. Very relaxed. (*He begins to laugh.*) Incredibly relaxed. (*He stops laughing.*) Too relaxed. I fell asleep, didn't I?

MIRIAM. (*A shrug.*) You're a man.

WARREN. I got so mad at myself today when I thought about it. I didn't want to fall asleep first.

MIRIAM. It was late —

WARREN. I wanted to watch you sleep. I wanted to see if it was how I'd pictured it.

MIRIAM. (*Wary.*) How had you pictured it? I hope it wasn't with my mouth open or anything.

WARREN. Oh, I've pictured you lots of ways. You probably noticed last night that I'm a pretty sound sleeper. You can put half a sticka' dynamite right in the bed with me — I'm not wakin' up. Well, that's a recently acquired talent. (*He sits on the fence rail.*) I'd been a terrible sleeper since I was a kid. And then I got out of the service and ... my marriage broke up, and it got even worse. And then — and I feel really stupid saying this — but my whole life was changed by Reader's Digest. I don't subscribe or anything. I was at the dentist's. So I read this article about sleep problems and I realized that all these years, I had been picking bedtime to worry about things. And the article said to think about pleasant things — what a revelation, huh? (*He laughs.*)

MIRIAM. Was that nervous or relaxed?

WARREN. Relaxed. Mostly. Eighty-five percent. (*He laughs again.*) Think pleasant things — it's so simple — and all those years ... (*He shrugs.*) Anyway, I started to think about you. (*He hops off the fence, crossing to her.*) You would not believe some of the places we've been together. I'm talking two full passports. And you should see the presents you've gotten. Miriam, you are the best dressed woman in this town. (*He catches himself. Points to his head.*) Up here.

MIRIAM. You really do that?

WARREN. Couple years now. Five, six nights a week.

MIRIAM. What do you think about on the other nights?

WARREN. Fishing. I don't want you to get spoiled.

MIRIAM. I don't get it Warren. Why did you wait all this time for me to invite you out?

WARREN. I was afraid of screwing up what I already had.

MIRIAM. Which was?

WARREN. Lunch. Come on, tell the truth. Have you ever seen anyone who enjoys his lunch as much as I do? (*She shakes her head.*) And if I had asked you out and you'd said no then — well ... things might've changed. You might've felt awkward ... avoided me — like you did today ... or something — who knows. And, I felt funny because I'm older —

MIRIAM. Not that much —

WARREN. I didn't want to chance it. I had forty-five great minutes a day with a woman. There's a lotta married guys can't say that. And then today when you were ... ya know, kind of ... ignoring me ... well, I got a little scared.

MIRIAM. What about?

WARREN. Losing my lunch. (*He realizes.*) Oh God, that sounded awful. I don't mean it like that I just ... well, not that I'm that experienced with these things but when you spend the night with someone you either get ... involved or you don't. But ... ya never seem to go back to just bein' friends. (*Silence.*)

MIRIAM. (*Shivering.*) Gettin' colder.

WARREN. Supposed to rain tonight.

MIRIAM. Really? (*He nods.*) Hope it holds off. Have to finish your present.

WARREN. It can wait.

MIRIAM. (*Shaking her head.*) Nope. Have to catch the moon tonight at the right time. Otherwise it ... (*Catching herself.*) That's just the way it is. It sounds goofy —

WARREN. You're an artist.

MIRIAM. (*Smiling.*) I love having that for an excuse. You can get away with almost anything if people think you're an artist. (*Silence. Then, they both try and speak at the same time.*) Go ahead.

WARREN. No, you.

MIRIAM. I was just gonna say ... we can use the rain. What were you gonna say?

WARREN. I love you. (*She is unsure how to react.*)

MIRIAM. (*Shaking her head.*) No ...

WARREN. (*Unsure.*) What?

MIRIAM. Just no ... don't ...

WARREN. Why not?

MIRIAM. Just don't — that's all.

WARREN. I wanted to say that to you last night. Wanted to say it about a hundred times. I just ... just didn't want you to think I was saying it to get you into bed.

MIRIAM. (*Gently.*) Warren, you didn't get me into bed. I got you into bed.

WARREN. Well, yeah. But next time it's my idea, okay? (*He takes a ring box from his pocket.*) This is just a little something for taking the initiative. (*He hands it to her. She holds it — wary.*)

MIRIAM. What is this?

WARREN. Shoes. I wasn't sure of the size, I think they're

gonna be small —

MIRIAM. (*Moving away.*) Cut it out Warren.

WARREN. Open it. (*She doesn't.*) I know, I know ... I must look incredibly pushy —

MIRIAM. Little bit, yeah —

WARREN. I don't want an answer tonight. (*A nervous laugh.*)

Who'm I kiddin'? I would love an answer tonight. I just ... understand if I don't get one ... (*She moves away, looking up at the house.*)

MIRIAM. It's just that it's very complicated —

WARREN. Why?

MIRIAM. Because I still have to get my daughter's approval.

WARREN. (*Smiling.*) Besides that —

MIRIAM. I'm serious.

WARREN. You're a grown woman Miriam —

MIRIAM. And she's my daughter. (*Touching him.*) I'm sorry ... believe me, I'm sorry, but I have to think of her too. So we have to ... see how things go. (*Silence.*)

WARREN. Okay. (*He holds out the box.*) Least take a look at it.

MIRIAM. No.

WARREN. Go ahead.

MIRIAM. (*Slightly irritated.*) Warren, don't push, okay — (*He*