

1 A FRIEND IN NEED

2

3 Cast:

4 Ken ALEX MATTHEWS

5 Joy LYNN MATTHEWS

6 Moki BRUCE

7 Kim WALTER

8 Pat HANK

9 Kay ANDREA

10 Rhea ELEANOR HARRIS

11 Gregg BILL WHITE

12 Melinda JEANNINE WHITE

13 Beth CARPET SALESWOMAN

14 Dave DOCTOR

15 Terry ART announcer

16

17

18 **ACT I** (MUSIC) *Music Cue #1*

19

20 **ANNCR** **American Radio Theater presents an original play, written by Mary**
21 **Moore-Campagna. It's been said that "a friend in need is a friend**
22 **indeed." But what does a friend do when the need becomes greater**
23 **than anyone ever imagined?**

24

25 SCENE 1: Museum Records Library

26

27 **SFX: PHONE RINGS**

28

29 ANDREA: Archives, Andrea speaking. (pause) Oh, hi, Alex. (pause) Sure, she's here
30 – hang on a moment. (calls) Lynn? Phone for you. It's the spouse.

31

32 LYNN: Thanks, Andi. (into the phone) Hi, hon – what's up?

33

34 ALEX: (FILTER) Hi, sweetie, I have a question for you...how would you feel about
35 having a house guest for a few days?

36

37 LYNN: Sure, that would be fine. Who is it?

38

39 ALEX: (FILTER) Bill White – remember him? The guy who lives over in Morton?

40

41 LYNN: Oh, yeah, the guy with the dingey wife. What's up with him?

42

43 ALEX: (F) Well, apparently they're having trouble again, and he needs a place to stay
44 for a few days. I told him he could stay at our house, but I wanted to check
45 with you and make sure it was OK.

46

1 LYNN: It's OK with me. I think the sheets on the spare bed are clean, but I'll
2 make sure when I get home and straighten the room up a little.

3
4 ALEX: (F) Thanks, babe – I know he'll appreciate it. I'll see you tonight. Love you.

5
6 LYNN: Love you too.

7
8 **(SFX – KISSING)**

9
10 ANDREA: What was that all about?

11
12 LYNN: Apparently we're going to have a house guest. It seems that some friend of
13 Alex's is on the outs with his wife and is going to be staying with us for a
14 while.

15
16 ANDREA: You know, Lynn, you're one of the most generous people I know. I'm
17 worried that one of these days someone is really going to take advantage
18 of you, and you won't even notice it.

19
20 LYNN (laughing): Oh, Andi, that's ridiculous.

21
22 ANDREA: No, it isn't. Look at what happens here: every time Eleanor needs
23 someone to cover for her, who gets stuck with it? You do. That's not fair.

24
25 LYNN: Well, Andi, what am I supposed to do when the boss asks a favor – say
26 "no"? That's hardly the way to win friends and influence people. Besides,
27 she's overloaded as it is.

28
29 ANDREA: She's out of her depth, is what she is. She's completely over her head, and
30 that's why she dumps on you all the time...and you let her do it, so it
31 keeps on happening.

32
33 **(SFX: PHONE RINGS)**

34
35 LYNN: Archives, Lynn speaking...(pause) oh, hi, Eleanor...what can I do for
36 you?...(pause)...uh-huh...(pause) uh-huh...(pause) Tonight? I'm sorry,
37 Eleanor, but I have to leave right on time tonight. I just found out we're
38 going to have company and I have to go home and straighten up the
39 house...(pause) well, I guess I could come back and work on it afterwards,
40 if it really needs to be finished tonight...(pause) You're welcome, Eleanor.
41 I'll see you tomorrow.

42
43 **(SFX: HANGS UP PHONE)**

44
45 ANDREA: What in the world?

46

1 LYNN: (resignedly) You know that grant proposal she's been working on? The
2 one for the research library?
3
4 ANDREA: (suspiciously) Yeah...what about it?
5
6 LYNN: Apparently she spaced out on the fact that the deadline is tomorrow, so she
7 was planning on finishing it up tonight to get it ready in time for the
8 courier service to pick it up.
9
10 ANDREA: So why was she calling you?
11
12 LYNN: Well, it seems that she has to go to the school board meeting tonight.
13
14 ANDREA: The school board meeting?
15
16 LYNN: Because Fred got suspended from school –
17
18 ANDREA: Again?
19
20 LYNN: - and she's going to the meeting to explain to the board that the principal
21 has a grudge against Fred because Fred beat his son in a car race, and
22 that's why Fred keeps getting in trouble.
23
24 ANDREA: The reason Fred keeps getting in trouble is that his idiot mother has never
25 told him "NO", so he's completely oblivious to anything except what he
26 wants. For a 16-year-old, he's been in more trouble than any other three
27 people I know put together...and it's Eleanor's fault. She's always making
28 excuses for him. (growls) Aaaagh! Drives me nuts!
29
30 LYNN: Well, at any rate, that's why she called – she asked if I would make sure
31 the proposal was finished and ready to go by midnight.
32
33 ANDREA: How are you going to manage that? You just told Alex you were going to
34 go home and get ready for your houseguest.
35
36 LYNN: I know, but Eleanor sounded so desperate I just couldn't let her down. I
37 can grab a quick dinner after I tidy up the spare bedroom, and then I'll
38 come back here and put in some dedicated time. I'm sure I can get the
39 proposal ready in a few hours.
40
41 ANDREA: Are you planning on getting any sleep tonight, may I ask?
42
43 LYNN: Oh, I'll be all right.
44
45 ANDREA: I worry about you, Lynn, I really do. (defensively) I know, I know – you
46 can't refuse a friend in need.

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LYNN: That's exactly it. I can't refuse someone who needs my help.

ANDREA: OK, have it your way. But some day it's going to catch up with you, and you're going to go into overload...and I hope you come out of it. One of these days it has to be YOUR turn to have someone take care of you.

(MUSIC) *Music Cue #2*

SCENE 2: Hank's Coffee Shop

EFX: CAFÉ BACKGROUND

**SFX: (SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING THE TABLE AND CHAIR
SCRAPING THE FLOOR AS SOMEONE SITS DOWN)**

ALEX: Sorry, guys – I had to make a phone call. Did you already order?

BRUCE: Yeah – we told Hank you wanted your usual, so your coffee and apple pie should be on the way...and here it comes now.

HANK: Here you are, Alex. Coffee and apple pie, just the way you like it.

ALEX: Thanks, Hank – I appreciate that. I need some sustenance.

HANK: My pleasure!

WALTER: What was the phone call about?

ALEX: You remember about twenty minutes ago, when we saw Bill White leaving as I came in behind you guys?

WALTER: Yeah...what about it?

ALEX: Well, I was saying hello to him and asking what he was doing here, since he lives fifteen miles away; and he said he was looking for a place to stay, because his wife threw him out.

BRUCE: Didn't that happen last winter?

ALEX: Apparently it's happened again. And since Lynn and I have a spare bedroom, I offered it to him for a few days while he gets on his feet.

BRUCE: Are you kidding? You invited him to stay at your house? Does Lynn even know him?

1 ALEX: Well, she's never met him personally. I was sure she would be fine with it,
2 but I thought I'd better call her just in case.

3
4 WALTER: Your wife must be a saint. I can't imagine telling Arlene that I was
5 bringing someone home to stay at our house, especially someone she'd
6 never met.

7
8 ALEX: You have to know Lynn to understand...she can never turn her back on
9 someone who needs help

10
11 **SFX: FOOTSTEPS, CLANKING DISHES**

12
13 HANK: I knew we had some ice cream! Have a scoop – you got to keep up your
14 strength.

15
16 BRUCE (Aside) More than you know, Hank...more than you know.

17
18
19 SCENE 3 – the Matthews' house

20
21 **(THEME MUSIC)** *Music Cue #3*

22
23 **EFX: ENGINE TURNS OFF, CAR DOOR CLOSES**

24
25 **SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENS.**

26
27 ALEX: Lynn? Is that you?

28
29 LYNN (breathless) Hi, honey – I'm sorry, I was at the office.

30
31 ALEX: What? It's almost midnight!

32
33 LYNN: I know, but Eleanor needed help on finishing something that had to get
34 done tonight.

35
36 ALEX: Well, I'm glad you're back. I'd like you to meet Bill White, who's going
37 to be staying with us for a few days. Bill, this is my wife Lynn.

38
39 BILL: It's a pleasure, ma'am, and I do thank you for your kind hospitality. When
40 Alex invited me to stay here, it seemed like an answer to a prayer.

41
42 LYNN: (awkwardly) Well, you're certainly welcome to stay here as long as you
43 like. If there's anything we can do to help you, just let us know.

44
45 BILL: Thank you, ma'am. I do appreciate it.

46

1 LYNN: And now, if you gentlemen will excuse me, I'm going to bed. It's been
2 one long day.

3
4 ALEX: I'll be right behind you.

5
6
7 SCENE 4: Later on that night in Lynn and Alex's bedroom

8
9 **MUSIC** *Music Cue #4*

10
11 **("SFX": DISTANT VOICES ARGUING) (DO WE HEAR BOTH VOICES?)**

12
13 LYNN: Alex?

14
15 ALEX: (asleep) Mmmmmh?

16
17 LYNN: Alex, wake up. I hear voices somewhere in the house.

18
19 ALEX: It's nothing. You were having a strange dream.

20
21 **("SFX": VOICES GET LOUDER)**

22
23 LYNN: It is not a strange dream. I'm wide awake, and I can still hear them.

24
25 ALEX (struggling to wake up) OK, it's a strange reality. Go back to sleep.

26
27 LYNN: I can't go back to sleep. I need to know what those voices are all about.

28 ALEX: All right...let me turn on the light.

29 **(SFX: LIGHT SWITCH CLICK)** At least now I can see the door. (pauses) You're
30 right; there are voices. I'll go see what's going on.

31
32 **(MUSIC)**

33
34 LYNN: Well? What was it?

35
36 ALEX: It was Bill. He was arguing with Jeannine. I guess she called him on his
37 cell phone, and they started yelling at each other.

38
39 LYNN: In the middle of the night? Is she crazy?

40
41 ALEX: Well, it sounds like she's definitely a few sandwiches short of a picnic.
42 Bill said she's threatened him on occasion, and I know there was at least
43 one time when she went completely out of control and he had to call the
44 sheriff.

45

1 LYNN: Poor guy...that sounds like a miserable life. No wonder you invited him to
2 stay here.
3
4 ALEX: Well, I told him he needed to keep it down because the noise woke you
5 up, and he apologized; so hopefully we can get back to sleep.
6 **(SFX: LIGHT SWITCH CLICK)** G'night, babe.
7
8 LYNN: Good night, sweetheart. (thoughtfully) I hope everything works out for
9 them. That sounds like a sad situation.
10
11 **MUSIC CUE** *Music Cue #5*
12
13
14 SCENE 5 – Hank's Coffee Shop
15
16 **EFX CAFÉ AMBIANT UNDER**
17
18 HANK: What can I get you this morning, Alex?
19
20 ALEX: Just coffee, Hank – lots of it. I need all the help I can get this morning.
21
22 BRUCE: What's up with you, Al? You look wiped out.
23
24 ALEX: It's the screaming and yelling in the middle of the night. It's loud enough
25 that both Lynn and I wake up and can't help hearing it.
26
27 WALTER: Is that guy still there? I thought it was going to be for just a few days.
28
29 ALEX: I thought it was too...but yes, he's still there.
30
31 WALTER: But it's been weeks!
32
33 ALEX: And every time he tries to make up with his wife, she gets mad and they
34 end up in another screaming match. So it doesn't sound like he's going
35 back there any time soon.
36
37 BRUCE: You're being taken advantage of, man – big time. That guy is using you.
38
39 WALTER: Is he even paying any rent, or is he just freeloading?
40
41 ALEX: No. Originally I never thought about him paying rent ...and now I don't
42 know how to bring it up without sounding really sleazy.
43
44 BRUCE: What do you mean, sleazy? It's your house!
45

1 ALEX: I know...but whenever I hear them screaming at each other, I keep
2 thinking about how lucky Lynn and I are. I just don't have the heart to say
3 anything to him.
4

5 BRUCE: Alex, I understand you're trying to be a nice guy; but this can't go on for
6 ever. If you don't say something, he'll never leave.
7

8 WALTER: Bruce is right - you can't just let this drift. It's not good for either you or
9 Bill, and it can't be good for Lynn. You'll have to talk about it eventually.
10

11 ALEX: (reluctantly) I guess you're right. I'll talk it over with Lynn and figure out
12 what I should say.
13
14

15 **MUSIC CUE** *Music Cue #6*
16
17

18 SCENE 6 – Museum Records Library
19

20 **(EFX: GENERAL OFFICE NOISES, FOLLOWED BY**
21 **SFX: PHONE RINGING)**
22

23 ANDREA: Archives, Andrea speaking. (pause) Oh, good morning, Eleanor. (pause)
24 No, I'm sorry, she isn't in yet. (pause) I'm sure she'll be here any time –
25 do you want me to have her call you? (pause) OK, I'll let her know.
26 (pause) You're welcome. (hangs up phone) NOT!
27

28 **SFX: DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS, DOOR CLOSSES**
29

30 LYNN: Hi, Andi. Sorry I'm late. Who was that?
31

32 ANDREA: That was our esteemed Mrs. Harris.
33

34 LYNN: Eleanor? What did she want?
35

36 ANDREA: She wants you – and I quote – to “call her on a matter of utmost
37 importance”.
38

39 LYNN: (wearily) She probably has another revision to that draft I've been
40 working on. I think we're up to about version five now, and of course it's
41 always a “hurry-up-and-wait” situation while she figures out what's wrong
42 with what I wrote and how she's going to correct it.
43

44 ANDREA: One of these days you're going to have to tell her that failure to plan on
45 her part does not constitute an emergency on your part.
46

LYNN: (laughs) That's pretty good. Where did you hear that?

1
2 ANDREA: I think I saw it on a bumper sticker somewhere. It certainly fits the
3 situation.
4
5 LYNN: Does it ever. And the worst part is, she's completely computer-phobic; so
6 I have to read her pencil scratches and try to interpret them. I have to keep
7 reminding myself that she means well...she means well...
8
9 ANDREA: (concerned) You look exhausted. What's going on?
10
11 LYNN: We had another middle-of-the-night screaming episode again. Bill and
12 Jeannine were going at it hammer and tongs.
13
14 ANDREA: Oh, Lord...is he still there?
15
16 LYNN: Oh, yes. He's still there – and she calls him in the middle of the night and
17 starts screaming at him for leaving her.
18
19 ANDREA: For leaving her?? I thought she kicked him out.
20
21 LYNN: She did. But that doesn't seem to make any difference. She calls and
22 accuses him of abandoning her.
23
24 ANDREA: No wonder you look exhausted.
25
26 LYNN: Andi, I don't know what to do. He was originally going to stay with us for
27 a few days – that was what Alex said; a few days – and it's been three
28 months.
29
30 ANDREA: I'll tell you what you can do – you can give him his walking papers.
31
32 LYNN: How can I do that? How do I tell someone who's stuck in this awful
33 relationship that they need to leave? I'd feel like a heel.
34
35 ANDREA: You're going to feel worse than that if you have a nervous breakdown.
36
37 **(SFX: PHONE RINGS)**
38
39 ANDREA: It's probably Eleanor.
40
41 LYNN: Oh, God...just what I need.
42 **(PHONE CONTINUES TO RING)** I guess I'd better get it over with...
43 **(SFX PHONE PICKUP)** Archives, Lynn speaking. (pause) Hi, sweetheart, what's up?
44
45 ANDREA: (aside) Definitely not Eleanor.
46

1 LYNN: What?? (pause) Are you kidding? (pause) Oh, Alex, that's great! What
2 wonderful news!

3
4 ANDREA: What's going on?

5
6 LYNN: (shushing her) Just a minute. (pause) Oh, that's terrific, sweetheart. We
7 definitely have to celebrate! (pause) I'll see you tonight. Love you.

8
9 **(SFX: PHONE HANGS UP)**

10
11 ANDREA: Well???

12
13 LYNN: It seems that Bill and Jeannine have decided to try marriage counseling.

14
15 ANDREA: What?!

16
17 LYNN: He called Alex and said he's going back home and they're going to start
18 over.

19
20 ANDREA: Sounds like an exercise in futility to me...

21
22 LYNN: I know. It sounded odd to me too; but I'm certainly not going to complain.
23 It was getting to the point where if we heard one more midnight
24 donnybrook, I was ready to jump out the window.

25
26 ANDREA: Well, it's about time. Now maybe you and Alex can have your house to
27 yourselves again and try to get back to a normal life.

28
29 LYNN: Well, as normal as life can be while I'm working here, anyway...
30 (BOTH LAUGH)

31
32 **MUSIC** *Music Cue #8*

33
34 **COMMERCIAL – "BASS O MATIC"**

35
36
37 **ACT II**

38
39 **MUSIC** *Music Cue #8*

40
41 SCENE 7 – Hank's Coffee Shop

42
43 **(EFX: CAFÉ AMBIANCE DISHES CLANKING, VOICES TALKING)**

44
45 ALEX: Well, guys, it's been fun; but I think I'd better get home. It's late, and I
46 have to get up early in the morning so I can leave work on time tomorrow.

1
2 BRUCE: What's happening tomorrow?
3
4 ALEX: We've got a carpet salesperson coming to give us an estimate. I want to be
5 sure I have all the figures ready by the time she arrives.
6
7 WALTER: You're finally going ahead with the carpeting? You've been planning it
8 for ages.
9
10 ALEX: Well, you know how it is...first one thing and then another...but I think
11 the timing is finally good.
12 **(SFX CELL PHONE RINGS)** Hmm...I don't recognize that number. I guess I'd
13 better answer it. (into phone) This is Alex Matthews...(pause) What?
14 (pause) Who is this? (pause) Bill? Bill White? (pause) Where are you?
15 (pause) OK, I'll be there as soon as I can. 'Bye. (hangs up) Oh, Lord...
16
17 BRUCE: What was that all about?
18
19 WALTER: Was that our Bill White? I thought he was in Montana having some kind
20 of operation.
21
22 ALEX: He was. He was released about five weeks ago, and came back home –
23 until tonight, when his wife told him to leave.
24
25 BRUCE: Told him to leave? Where's the guy going to go if he's still recovering
26 from surgery? Can he even walk yet?
27
28 ALEX: Apparently, not very well; because he said he's got his wheelchair and his
29 walker, as well as his computer and all his clothes. He kept saying "please
30 help me, please help me" in this piteous, garbled voice. I couldn't even tell
31 who it was at first.
32
33 WALTER: So you're going to go pick him up?
34
35 ALEX: Somebody has to – he needs help.
36
37 BRUCE: And...then what are you going to do?
38
39

1 ALEX: Call Lynn, I guess. In fact, I'd better do that now.
2 **(SFX: PHONE TONES)** Hi, Lynn? I have something to tell you...(pause) I know
3 you're working till midnight...but I wanted to let you know that...there's
4 going to be someone else there when you get home. (pause) Bill White
5 just called, and I have to go pick him up. (pause) I don't know the whole
6 story yet, hon – I'll let you know as soon as I do. (pause) Yes, I know the
7 carpet salesperson is coming tomorrow. We'll just have to take things one
8 at a time. (pause) Thanks, sweetie. I knew you'd understand. (pause) See
9 you in a few hours. Love you.
10
11 WALTER: What did she say?
12
13 ALEX: I think she was a little...stunned.
14
15 BRUCE: A little?!
16
17 WALTER: For that matter, Alex, you look a little stunned.
18
19 ALEX: I guess I'd better go see what's going on over at Bill's. I'll keep you guys
20 posted. (fading in the distance) Hey, Hank, I have to go. How much do I
21 owe you?
22
23 BRUCE: You know, that guy is too nice for his own good.
24
25 WALTER: What do you want to bet Bill ends up moving back to Alex and Lynn's
26 place?
27
28 BRUCE: No takers. Come on; let's settle up and get out of here. (calling in the
29 distance) Good night, Hank.
30
31 **MUSIC** *Music Cue #9*
32
33 SCENE 8 – Museum Records Library
34
35 **(EFX: GENERAL OFFICE AMBIANCE, FOLLOWED BY**
36 **SFX: PHONE RINGING)**
37
38 ANDREA: Archives, Andrea speaking. (pause) No, Eleanor, I'm sorry, she's not here
39 yet. (pause) Yes, I know it's after nine...(pause) No, I haven't heard from
40 her, but I'm sure she'll be here any minute now. (pause) Yes, I'll have her
41 call you just as soon as she gets in. (pause) Yes, I know it's very
42 important, and I'll be sure to tell her....(pause) you're welcome.
43 **(SFX: PHONE HANGING UP)**
44

1 ANDREA: I wonder where Lynn is? It's not like her to be this late...and Eleanor is
2 going to have a fit if she doesn't come in soon. I sure hope everything is
3 all right...

4
5 **(SFX: PHONE RINGING)**

6
7 ANDREA: Now what?? The phone hasn't stopped ringing since I got here! (draws a
8 deep breath) Archives, Andrea speaking...(pause) Lynn? Where are you?
9 (pause) WHAT?? You've got to be joking...(pause), no, of course I
10 realize you wouldn't joke about that...(pause) OK, I'll let everyone know
11 you'll be here within the hour. And just so you know, The Redoubtable
12 Mrs. Harris wants you to call her as soon as you get here. She sounds like
13 she's losing it. (pause) Yes, I know she usually sounds that way; but this
14 morning she's really in top form..(pause) OK, see you soon.

15 **(SFX: PHONE HANGING UP)** I guess I'd better call Eleanor and tell her Lynn's not
16 going to be here for a while. (sigh) Once more into the
17 breach...

18
19 **(SFX: SOUND OF PHONE DIALING, THEN DISTANT RINGING)**

20 **(SFX: PHONE PICKUP)**

21
22 ELEANOR: (F) This is Mrs. Harris.

23
24 ANDREA: Hi, Eleanor, it's Andrea down in Archives. I just wanted to let you know
25 that Lynn Matthews called and said she's not going to be in for a while...

26
27 ELEANOR: (F) (SPUTTERING) What do you mean, she's not going to be in for a
28 while? She has to be here! I need her to finish this proposal by this
29 afternoon!

30
31 ANDREA: Is there someone else I can call for you, to help you out with it?

32
33 ELEANOR: (F) (SHOUTING): No! I need Lynn to do it! She's the only person who can
34 understand the Mannering project, and she knows what I'm trying to say
35 here! I need her immediately!

36
37 ANDREA: (KEEPING HER VOICE LEVEL) Well, I'm sorry, but she said she'll be
38 late and that she'll be here as soon as she can. I just thought I should let
39 you know, since you were trying to get hold of her...

40
41 ELEANOR: (F) Just tell her to call me IMMEDIATELY – as soon as she gets there! Do
42 I make myself clear?

43
44 ANDREA: (through gritted teeth) Perfectly.

45 **(SFX: PHONE HANGING UP)** What does she do, channel Attila the Hun?

46

1 **SFX: DOOR SLAMS**

2
3 LYNN: Oh, Andi, I'm so sorry. I never dreamed I'd be this late.

4
5 ANDREA: I don't think you've ever been this late before. What happened? I mean, I
6 know what happened...but -- what happened? I mean, how did it happen?
7 I mean...

8
9 LYNN: Calm down. I know what you mean, and I'm not entirely sure myself. All I
10 know is that Alex called last night to say he was going to pick up Bill
11 White; and when I got home, Bill was back in the guest room. It sounds
12 like he got out of the hospital about a month ago and came back home, but
13 then last night Jeannine told him to leave.

14
15 ANDREA: (appalled) Told him to leave? When he'd just gotten out of the hospital?

16
17 LYNN: Oh, it gets better. Alex said Bill called him and begged him to come and
18 rescue him. When Alex got there, Bill was sitting in his wheelchair out on
19 the front porch with his suitcase, his computer, his walker and a bunch of
20 protein shakes...and the front door was locked.

21
22 ANDREA: Good grief – his wife sounds like a real psycho. I mean, how could anyone
23 do that to a sick person?

24
25 LYNN: I don't know...and neither does Alex.

26
27 ANDREA: Which, I assume, is why you found Bill in your guest room when you got
28 home?

29
30 LYNN: Exactly. At least Alex called me ahead of time, so it wasn't a complete
31 surprise...but I'm still appalled that anybody could be that heartless.

32
33 ANDREA: Not to be indelicate under the circumstances, but did Alex happen to
34 mention how long Bill is going to be there?

35
36 LYNN: Well...no, not exactly. I got the impression that it's sort of up in the air,
37 depending on how quickly he gets better. I mean, we can hardly turn out
38 someone who can't even walk, let alone take care of himself.

39
40 ANDREA: (sighing) Somehow I don't have a very good feeling about this...

41
42 LYNN: Frankly, neither do I. It's only been six months since Bill left and moved
43 back home, and Alex and I were really enjoying having the house to
44 ourselves again. (sighs) I guess all we can do is take things one day at a
45 time and see what happens.

46

1 ANDREA: Well, as much as I hate to add insult to injury, the first thing that needs to
2 happen is for you to call Eleanor. I let her know you were going to be late,
3 and she just about pitched a fit.
4
5 LYNN: Let me guess...the Mannering project, right?
6
7 ANDREA: She did say something about Mannering. Why?
8
9 LYNN: (wearily) Remember I mentioned some proposal where we were on the
10 fifth draft?
11
12 ANDREA: (cautiously) Uh-huh...was that Mannering?
13
14 LYNN: It was indeed – only now I think we’re up to about the twelfth draft. I’ve
15 learned to attach the previous copy with all her penciled corrections every
16 time I give it back to her, otherwise she ends up changing it back to what
17 she told me to fix before. I can’t win. (groaning) I guess I’d better call her
18 before she goes even more ballistic.
19
20 ANDREA: Just tell her you have a sick friend you had to take care of, and that’s why
21 you were late.
22
23 LYNN: (short laugh) Actually, the real reason I was late was when I got up to go
24 and get ready for work, Bill was already in the shower...and he stayed
25 there for half an hour.
26
27 ANDREA: HALF AN HOUR???

28
29 LYNN: If I’d know he was going to do that, I would have gotten up earlier. By the
30 time I finally got into the shower, I was already late.
31
32 ANDREA: I hope you told him that in your house, you and Alex have first claim on
33 the shower. Period, end of discussion.
34
35 LYNN: Alex told him after he finally came out. I was so mad at that point I
36 couldn’t see straight; so I thought I’d better just get out of the way until I
37 cooled off.
38
39 ANDREA: Oh, Lynn...all this and Eleanor too. It really doesn’t seem fair.
40
41 LYNN: (morosely) I know. Sometimes it makes me wonder if maybe I did
42 something terrible when I was a child...At least Alex understands,
43 otherwise I think I’d go crazy.
44
45 ANDREA: (sternly) Considering he brought the guy home in the first place, I’d say
46 that’s the very least he can do!

1
2 LYNN: (sighing) I know...but what can we do? You have to help people in trouble.
3
4 ANDREA: Well, I'd say Bill certainly falls into that category...and so do you, for that
5 matter. Come on, let's go and get some coffee before you tackle Eleanor.
6 You look like you could use it.
7
8 LYNN: (hesitating) I don't know – I mean, I just got here. Maybe I shouldn't be
9 taking a break so soon.
10
11 ANDREA: Lynn, for once in your life would you please think about doing something
12 for yourself? Another fifteen minutes is not going to make any difference
13 in the grand scheme of things, and it will do you a lot of good. Come on.
14
15 LYNN: (jokingly) O.K., Doctor Andrea.
16
17 **(MUSIC) Music Cue #10**
18
19 SCENE 9 – Alex and Lynn's living room
20
21 **(SFX: DOOR OPENS, THEN CLOSSES, FOOTSTEPS)**
22
23 ALEX: Hi, honey, I'm home.
24
25 LYNN: Where were you? I was beginning to worry. The carpet person's supposed
26 to be here any time now.
27 ALEX: I'm sorry - I had to stop and pick up the measurements. I had them this
28 morning, but I left them at the office by mistake.
29
30 **(SFX: DOOR OPENS, THEN CLOSSES; SOUND OF SQUEAKY WHEELS)**
31
32 BILL: Hi, folks.
33
34 ALEX: Hi, Bill.
35
36 LYNN: You're getting really good with that wheelchair – you made it through that
37 door like a pro.
38
39 BILL: Thank you kindly, ma'am. The doctor says I'm doing better. I'm hoping I
40 can move up to a walker before long, so I'm not trapped in this chair.
41
42 ALEX: Bill, we've got someone coming to see us tonight, so we'll be in the
43 kitchen.
44
45 BILL: No problem. I'll just hang out in the dining room and stay out of y'all's
46 way.

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(SFX: DOORBELL)

LYNN: That must be the carpet person.

ALEX: I'll get the door.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS)

CARPET SALESWOMAN: Is this the Matthews residence?

ALEX: Yes, it is. I'm Alex Matthews, and this is my wife Lynn. Come on in.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS)

C.S.: Thank you. You have a lovely home – so peaceful and quiet.

LYNN: (meaningfully) Well, we try to keep it that way.

ALEX: Why don't you come into the kitchen and we can take a look at what you've got?

C.S. That sounds good. (pauses) Will we disturb the gentleman in the other room?

ALEX: No, not at all. He's just working on his computer.

C.S. Now, here's what we have in the colors you had specified...

(SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS IN THE DISTANCE)

C.S. What's that?

ALEX: Oh, it's just a cell phone. Nothing to worry about.

BILL: (from a distance) Hello? (pause) Hello, Jeannine.

LYNN: (quietly) Uh-oh...

BILL: Jeannine, I did not abandon you! You may remember that you threw me out!

ALEX: (raising his voice) I was thinking about putting this tan and gold pattern in the dining room, and maybe the dark brown in the living room.

1 BILL: (louder) Jeannine, if you want to talk like a civilized human being, I'll be
2 happy to talk. But if you're going to scream at me, I have nothing to say to
3 you.
4
5 C.S. (uncertainly) Oh, dear...maybe I'd better come back another time.
6
7 ALEX: (firmly) There's no need to do that. We can continue our discussion right
8 now.
9
10 C.S. Well, if you're sure...
11
12 LYNN: (emphatically) We're very sure. Now, I really like this speckled brown
13 color here for the entrance hall...
14
15 BILL: (getting louder and louder) Jeannine, there is no call for you to use that
16 kind of language! (pause) Don't you swear at me, Jeannine! I can see you
17 and raise you when it comes to swearing, and I will! (shouting) Jeannine,
18 I'm going to hang up now!
19
20 ALEX: (determinedly changing the conversation) ...and this forest green would
21 look perfect in the den.
22
23 LYNN: Can you show us a list of prices?
24
25 C.S. Oh, yes – I have one right here. (uncertainly) Are you sure you wouldn't
26 like me to come back later?
27
28 **(SFX: CELL PHONE RINGING)**
29 ALEX: No, I think we're done here for now. Lynn and I will look over the prices
30 and call you when we decide on the colors.
31
32 C.S. Wonderful! We can order the carpet within 48 hours after you make the
33 decision, and then we'll set up an installation date.
34
35 BILL: (shouting) I told you I was going to hang up, Jeannine! That meant DO
36 NOT call me back! I will not answer the phone again! (pause) You too, you
37 stupid witch!
38
39 C.S. (flustered) Oh, dear...I'll write this up and send it in tomorrow. Thank you
40 for your time.
41
42 LYNN: Thank you for coming, and I'm sorry about the interruptions.
43
44 ALEX: Be careful of the porch step.
45
46 LYNN: Good night.

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C.S. Good night.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS, DOOR CLOSSES)

LYNN: Well, that was monumentally embarrassing.

ALEX: The poor lady looked as if she wished she were anywhere but here.

LYNN: Do you blame her? With Bill and Jeannine carrying on like that, where everyone could hear? It was awful.

ALEX: I know.

LYNN: Alex, we've got to do something. It's bad enough in the middle of the night, when it's just us; but when we've got other people in the house, it's really unacceptable.

ALEX: I know, sweetie, I know. I'll talk to Bill about it tomorrow.

LYNN: I mean, I understand he's having difficulties, but...

ALEX: (comfortingly) I understand too, but I don't want you to have difficulties. Let's sleep on it and tomorrow we'll have a better perspective.

(MUSIC) *Music Cue #11*

SCENE 10 – Hank's Coffee Shop

(EFX: CAFÉ BACKGROUND)

(SFX: DISHES CLANKING, VOICES TALKING)

BRUCE: Where's Alex? He's usually here by now.

WALTER: Maybe the traffic is really bad this morning.

BRUCE: Could be...or maybe he's just running a little late. I don't think he's been sleeping very well recently.

WALTER: Would you be, if your house had turned into a hospital overnight?

BRUCE: I guess you're right. I still can't understand how he lets himself be taken advantage of like that.

1 WALTER: Well, in all fairness, Bill isn't exactly in a position to do anything for
2 himself. I mean, he's just barely out of the wheelchair and onto the walker,
3 and he's still having trouble eating. Alex said he has to cook these really
4 weird soups and things, and their kitchen smells terrible.

5
6 BRUCE: Oh, boy...I'm sure Lynn is thrilled about that.

7
8 **SFX: TELEPHONE RINGING**

9
10 WALTER: I think Alex finally told Bill he couldn't cook in the kitchen any more. If
11 he was going to make that kind of stuff, he'd have to do it on the hot plate
12 out on the back porch.

13
14 **SFX: FOOTSTEPS**

15
16 HANK: Guys, I just got a call from Alex. He asked me to tell you he's sorry, but
17 he's not going to be able to meet you here this morning.

18
19 BRUCE: Did he say why? I hope nothing's wrong...

20
21 HANK: Apparently the guy staying with them was cooking something out on the
22 back porch, and it fried the entire electrical circuit. They didn't know
23 anything had happened until Lynn was getting ready for work and her hair
24 dryer wouldn't go on. So Alex went looking for the problem, and it turned
25 out to be the hot plate on the porch.

26
27 WALTER: Oh, man...I'm sure she wasn't happy.

28
29 HANK: Alex did say he's seen her in better moods before.

30
31 WALTER: I'll just bet he has. Poor Alex...

32
33 **(MUSIC) Music Cue #12**

34
35 SCENE 11: Later on that night in Lynn and Alex's bedroom

36
37 LYNN: (calling) Alex?

38
39 ALEX: (calling back) Just a minute, hon.
40 **(SFX: DOOR OPENS)** I was in the shower. What's up?

41 LYNN: Alex, I don't know how to say this – especially since I was the one who
42 originally said it was all right...

43
44 ALEX: ...but you want me to tell Bill he has to find someplace else to go.

45
46 LYNN: That's right. (surprised) How did you know?

1
2 ALEX: Because I've been feeling the same way. It's gotten to the point where I
3 can't deal with it any more.
4
5 LYNN: I feel really bad about it, because I know he's still recovering from surgery
6 and all...
7
8 ALEX: I know he is. And I never would have said anything to him before, when
9 he was barely able to get around on his own. But his doctor thinks that
10 pretty soon he may actually be able to use a cane instead of a walker.
11
12 LYNN: The thing that really bothers me is that I know how heartbroken he is
13 about Jeannine being so mean to him. I feel terrible even thinking about
14 asking him to leave.
15
16 ALEX: I do too. But Lynn, he really needs to figure out what he's going to do.
17
18 LYNN: What do you mean?
19
20 ALEX: He keeps talking about wanting to get back together with Jeannine, and
21 then he talks about finding another place and moving somewhere else.
22 Then she calls and asks him to do something, and he goes over to help her.
23 And then she yells at him because he didn't do it right, and they get into
24 another fight, and he leaves and comes back here.
25
26 LYNN: It sounds like a vicious circle.
27
28 ALEX: One way or another, he needs to make a decision about what he wants and
29 follow through on it. He can't just stay here in limbo.
30
31 LYNN: I really hoped things were going to work out on their own...
32
33 ALEX: So did I, hon, so did I. But it doesn't look like it's going to happen...and
34 in the meantime it's driving both of us crazy.
35
36 LYNN: (thoughtfully) You know, I keep thinking about how my mother always
37 took care of people and never seemed to run out of energy. I always
38 wanted to be like her, to have people love me...
39
40 ALEX: (affectionately) You do.
41
42 LYNN: I know, and I really do appreciate it. But I keep thinking that somehow I
43 should be stronger - that I should be able to cope with all this, and get past
44 the fact that Bill and Jeannine wake us up in the middle of the night
45 screaming at each other...
46

1 ALEX: ...and that he shorts out the electricity when he cooks that witches' brew
2 of his on the back porch...
3
4 LYNN: ...and that he stays in the shower for half an hour at a time...
5
6 ALEX: ...and that he doesn't seem to feel any urgency about moving on.
7
8 LYNN: (sighs) All those things – I should be able to deal with them, and it makes
9 me feel sort of inadequate that I can't any more.
10
11 ALEX: Inadequate?? Sweetheart, you are more than adequate. You've just been
12 under a tremendous amount of strain over the past few months. Between
13 having Bill here and dealing with your psychotic boss, it's a wonder you
14 haven't gone completely over the edge.
15
16 LYNN: That's what Andrea says too. She even said I should ask the doctor for
17 some sort of tranquilizer or something.
18
19 ALEX: That might be a good idea. But the most important thing is to reduce the
20 stress...and I think the only way to do that is to tell Bill he has to move on.
21
22 LYNN: Will you do it, Alex? I'm not sure I could face it.
23
24 ALEX: You shouldn't have to. Remember, I was the one who originally invited
25 him here. I'll say something to him tomorrow.
26
27 LYNN: Thank you, sweetheart. You're always such a comfort to me.
28
29 ALEX: (gently) I try, dearest. I do try.
30
31 **(MUSIC) Music Cue #13**
32
33 SCENE 12: The doctor's office
34
35 **(EFX: GENERAL OFFICE AMBIANCE, SOME BACKGROUND VOICES)**
36
37 DOCTOR: Good morning, Alex. Come on in.
38
39 ALEX: Thanks, Doctor.
40 **(SFX: CHAIRS SCRAPING)**
41
42 DOCTOR: So, you probably wondered why my nurse called you and asked you to
43 come in, right?
44
45 ALEX: Well, yes, I did wonder...
46

1 DOCTOR: I'll come right to the point. In the last two months, your blood pressure has
2 skyrocketed and your cholesterol count has almost doubled. At the rate
3 you're going, you're a heart attack waiting to happen. What's going on?
4

5 ALEX: Do you remember a year or so ago, when I mentioned a guy who was
6 staying with us for a little while?
7

8 DOCTOR: The friend who was having domestic difficulties?
9

10 ALEX: That's the one. Well, the "little while" turned out to be four months.
11

12 DOCTOR: My goodness...

13

14 ALEX: And then he came back this year.
15

16 DOCTOR: Came back?
17

18 ALEX: It's sort of a long story, but he ended up staying with us again. And now
19 both Lynn and I are trying to figure out how to tell him he needs to find
20 somewhere else to go.
21

22 DOCTOR: What's wrong with telling him just exactly that?
23

24 ALEX: Well, it sounds sort of cold. I mean, he's had a lot of trouble and all...
25

26 DOCTOR: And you haven't? Listen, Alex, one of the things I have to keep reminding
27 my patients is that they need to keep themselves healthy, especially if
28 they're taking care of someone else. Otherwise, they get run down and
29 then you have two sick people, which doesn't do anyone any good.
30

31 ALEX: But I...
32

33 DOCTOR: You know what they say on the airplanes about "put on your own oxygen
34 mask first"?
35

36 ALEX: Uh-huh...
37

38 DOCTOR: It sounds to me as though you may have been losing sight of that idea.
39

40 ALEX: (ruefully) I guess you're right...no, I know you're right. That's exactly
41 what's been happening. The good news is that Lynn and I haven't broken
42 up over it, but the bad news is that we're both nervous wrecks.
43

44 DOCTOR: Well, if you needed any further justification, you just gave it to me. You
45 can't afford to jeopardize your health and your happiness – or Lynn's,
46 either.

1
2 ALEX: So what do I do now?
3
4 DOCTOR: (sagely) I think you've already answered your own question.
5
6 ALEX: Yeah, I guess I have. Now I just have to do it.
7
8 **(MUSIC) *Music Cue #14***
9
10 Scene 13: Alex and Lynn's living room
11
12 **(SFX: COMPUTER KEYBOARD CLICKING, FOOTSTEPS)**
13
14 ALEX: Bill, can I talk to you?
15
16 BILL: Sure, Alex. Just let me turn off the computer.
17 **(SFX: DIMINISHING COMPUTER KEYBOARD CLICKS)** What's on your mind?
18
19 ALEX: Well, I wanted to talk to you about your plans.
20
21 BILL: Plans?
22
23 ALEX: Yes...like what have you decided to do about Jeannine? Are you going to
24 go back home, or go somewhere else?
25
26 BILL: Oh, God! Jeannine! I was supposed to call her! I'm sorry, Alex, but I have
27 to do this or she'll have kittens. Hang on just a moment...
28
29 **(SFX: CELL PHONE DIALING TONES)**
30
31 JEANNINE: (F) Hello?
32
33 BILL: Hello, Jeannine.
34
35 JEANNINE: (F) (screaming) YOU! It's about time you called! You were supposed to
36 be here half an hour ago! Where are you? You lazy good-for-nothing!
37
38 BILL: (uncomfortably) Please, Jeannine, I'm sorry. I didn't realize it was so late.
39
40 JEANNINE: (F) (screaming) Sorry! Sorry! I'll say you're sorry! You can't even keep
41 track of when you're supposed to be here! You can't even make one lousy
42 phone call! You can't...
43
44 BILL: (determinedly) Goodbye, Jeannine. I'll talk to you later.
45 **(SFX: PHONE HANGS UP)** Much later. Now, Alex, what were you saying?
46

1 ALEX: What I was saying, Bill, is that I think the time has come for you to find
2 somewhere else to live.
3
4 BILL: (faltering) Somewhere – else?
5
6 ALEX: (uncomfortable, but determined) Yes. Somewhere else...as in other than
7 here.
8
9 BILL: I'm sorry. I don't mean to be a burden. Maybe I can go and visit my sister
10 for a couple of weeks...
11
12 ALEX: No, Bill. I'm not talking about a couple of weeks, and I'm not talking
13 about you visiting your sister. I'm talking about the fact that you need to
14 figure out what you're going to do with the rest of your life.
15
16 BILL: The rest of my life?
17
18 ALEX: You can decide to stay and try to work things out with Jeannine, or cut
19 your losses and start over again somewhere else. But whatever it is has to
20 be your decision – and you have to act on it.
21
22 BILL: You mean...
23
24 ALEX: (Takes a deep breath) Look, Bill, it's not that I regret having asked you to
25 come here. Lynn and I are really glad we were able to help you out when
26 you needed it.
27
28 BILL: And I'll never be able to thank you enough. You saved my life.
29
30 ALEX: But you're getting a lot better. You can walk pretty well, and you can eat
31 regular food. So it's time for you to move on to the next phase of your life,
32 and let us get on with ours.
33
34 BILL: (slowly) I suppose you're right.
35
36 ALEX: If you need help moving, I can get a couple of guys and a truck. We can
37 do it any time next weekend.
38
39 BILL: Next weekend? I don't know if I can find a place to go by then...
40 ALEX: Well, you certainly can't if you don't start looking.
41
42 BILL: (even more slowly) I guess...not.
43
44 ALEX: Let me know when you're ready to go, and we'll help you pack up.
45 (pause) And Bill, I owe you a vote of thanks...for helping to teach me
46 about boundaries.

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(MUSIC) *Music Cue #15*

Scene 14: Museum Records Library

(EFX: OFFICE AMBIANCE)

LYNN: (happily) Hey, Andi! Guess who has their house back again!

ANDREA: You're kidding! He's really gone?

LYNN: Well, at least on the way. Alex talked to him three weeks ago; and when there was still no evidence of progress, Alex put an eviction notice on the bedroom door. It was sort of crude...

ANDREA: ...but, I gather, effective.

LYNN: Pretty much. By the end of the day, most of his stuff was out of the room and he was coming back for another load.

ANDREA: I bet that's a huge relief.

LYNN: It certainly is. I feel like I've been let out of a cage.

(SFX: PHONE RINGS)

ANDREA: Here, I'll get it...Archives, Andrea speaking. (pause) Yes, she's here. Hold on a minute. (pause) It's for you...do you want me to say you're gone?

LYNN: Let me guess...Eleanor?

ANDREA: That would be correct.

LYNN: Tell her I'm...no, wait; on second thought, I'll talk to her. (pause) Hello? (pause) Tonight? I'm sorry, Eleanor, I can't do it tonight. I already have plans. (pause) I know that must be a disappointment... (pause) I understand it's got to be done tonight; but unfortunately I'm not available...(pause) No, Eleanor, that's definite. I need at least two days' notice in advance to be able to do something like that. (pause) Yes, I know I've done it in the past. But this isn't the past, this is the present – and I can't do it tonight. (pause) I'm sorry you feel that way, but I'm sure you can find someone else. (pause) You're very welcome.

(SFX: PHONE HANGING UP)

ANDREA: Whoo-hoo! The worm turns!

1
2 LYNN: Or, at least, the woman finally learns to set boundaries.
3
4 ANDREA: That I should live to see the day!
5
6 LYNN: (Wonderingly) Wow, it actually feels pretty good...
7
8 ANDREA: Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty you're free at last!
9
10 LYNN: (laughing) Exactly!
11
12 ANDREA: This calls for a celebration. Come on, let's go get some coffee.
13
14 LYNN: And the biggest, gooiest cinnamon rolls we can find?
15
16 ANDREA: Absolutely! (both laugh, fading out)
17
18 **(MUSIC)** *Music Cue #16*
19
20 ANNOUNCER: You have been listening to a production of "A FRIEND IN NEED",
21 presented by American Radio Theater. In our cast, you heard:
22
23 Ken Liesse as Alex
24 Joy Jackson as Lynn
25 Kay Lutz as Andrea
26 Michael "Moki" O'Reilly as Bruce
27 Kim Turner as Walter
28 Pat McNally as Hank
29 Gregg Porter as Bill
30 Rhea Lutton as Eleanor
31 Beth Schlansky as the Carpet Saleswoman
32 Melinda Mains as Jeannine
33 Dave Liesse as the Doctor
34
35 Sound effects were done by Dan Schindler.
36 Engineering was done by Ron Aley.
37 Playbacks were done by Mike Wheeler.
38 Music was composed and performed by David Helfand and Justin Lader.
39 Technical advice was provided by Ivan Cury.
40 The production was directed by Mary Moore-Campagna.
41 I'm Terry Elder, your announcer; and this is A.R.T. – the American Radio
42 Theater.