

Nick

She's just being neighborly.

Brian

She's at the door all the time. And she's visiting your mom all the time. I see her at the hospital every day. She's always everywhere. And she wants to fuck you.

Nick

That's just in your head and she can probably hear you.

Four knocks again.

Brian

Well you can talk about it at one of your cute little lunches.

Nick

She's a good listener.

Brian

\$20 says she opens with, "I heard shouting..."

Nick

Fine.

Brian

Shouting, \$20.

Nick

I said fine. Stop trying to bet me when I already took the bet.

START

Four knocks again. It's not more intense. It's almost infuriatingly exactly the same every time. Brian grunts and loudly whispers...

Brian

Ugh, even her knock drives me crazy.

Nick opens the door to reveal Olive. Smiling. A tight smile, but it's unclear if Olive has an easy smile. She has the wrapped up book under one arm.

Nick

Hi, Olive. How are you?

Olive

I'm so sorry to bother you, but I heard yelling?

Everything's fine. Nick

It was just the yelling, or else I wouldn't have [come up.] Olive

[Hello,] Olive. Brian

Hello. Olive

How's downstairs? Brian

Fine. Olive

Good. I'm sorry I didn't dress up for your visit. Brian

You didn't dress at all. Olive

It is early. Brian

That's maybe why the yelling scared me; the walls are just so thin, Nick, I can't help but overhear things, you know? Olive

It'd be the ceiling wouldn't it? Your ceiling is too thin? Brian

Nick, I want you to know that I specifically said "yelling" instead of "shouting" so Brian would lose the \$20 bet I shouldn't have overheard but did anyway because it was so loud. Olive

You overhear a lot. Brian

Hard not to. Olive

Nick

We're not used to having neighbors so we're still calibrating our volume.

Brian

You tell her the same thing every time.

Nick

Brian was almost attacked by a bear last night, so he's cranky.

Olive

Oh my, was he hurt?

Nick

No.

Olive

Oh.

Brian

Try not to sound too disappointed.

Nick

The bear looked at him.

Brian

No dangerous bears in Portland.

Nick

No dangerous meth addicts here.

Olive

Oh, I've read about that, the "meth amphetamine," what an awful drug. Don't you ever just wish people could be nicer to themselves?

Brian

You know what? I'm gonna take a shower.

Brian exits into the back of the apartment.

Nick

He's really not that bad.

Olive

It's none of my business. But you've been so nice since you moved in, I just feel like if I hear something it's my job to check it out. And based on the stories you've told me during our lunches at Soup and Sides, he just seems volatile.

Nick

You shouldn't worry. No one should have to worry about anything at Soup and Sides, except eating too much.

Olive laughs too aggressively and touches Nick's arm.

Olive

It is delicious.

Nick

Oh, and Brian mentioned you've been visiting my mom in the hospital?

Olive

It's just so sad. I know it must be hard for you, all of this. And I know you can't be there all the time and Brian can only stop in for a few minutes now and then, barely any time at all. But I'm happy to be there with her. Watch her go through this. She was always so very kind to me, you know?

Nick

And you are very kind to her.

Olive

It's nothing.

Nick

All right, I should probably finish making the coffee now. Or Brian will be even more of a grump [and I can't...]

Olive

[Oh, of course,] but actually I did come up for another reason. It almost seems silly now, but I brought this for Brian, believe it or not. Almost slipped my mind.

She holds out the wrapped book.

Nick

Oh, it's heavy. For Brian? Really?

Nick takes it.

Olive

I just don't know how long you'll be here and I hate having tension, any kind of tension at all, so I thought maybe this could be an olive branch of sorts. And it's important to me that he opens it himself, so the gesture is pure. That sounds so sappy. Just don't be sneaky and peek for yourself. Promise?

Nick

I'll put it right here on the table for him. That's very sweet of you.

Olive

Have a great day.

She leaves. Nick closes the door. Brian peeks his head back into the room.

Brian

She's a total psycho.

Nick

I thought you went to take a shower?

Brian

"Oh, oh my, you've just been so nice since you [moved in...]"

Nick

[Well, I have] been nice to her. Why do you have to be so hateful?

Brian

I'm not.

Nick

She's been a big help to my mom. She goes to the store, brings up the mail, fucking makes her tea. You're just not used to having neighbors who give a shit.

Brian

How am I the [bad one here?]

Nick

[And you like not] having neighbors. Because then no one ever says, "Hey, Brian, why are you such a complete bitch to your boyfriend all the time?"

Brian

How's that coffee coming?

Nick

Go fuck yourself.

Pause. Nick fixes a cup of coffee for himself and sits down and sips it. Brian watches him, waiting for more. Nick is pointedly disengaged.

Brian

I'm doing my best.

Nick

No, you're not. And you're being very dramatic.

Brian

Maybe... maybe I was overreacting. A little bit.

Brian steps up behind Nick and wraps his arms around him.

Nick

Huh.

Brian

Okay, I really didn't mean to bring up moving again.

Nick

Sure.

Brian

And the bear thing was just one of those, it was just a fluke, right?

Nick

I did put the trash out early.

Brian

I'm trying to apologize [to you, okay?]

Nick

[I know, but] you're just not very good at it.

Nick steps away from Brian and crosses to the other side of the room.

Brian

Whoa.

Nick

Stay over there, thank you. Look, Brian, obviously I don't want you to be unhappy. I'd be sad if you left, but this is the reality of [our situation.]

Brian

[I'm not going] anywhere, who's saying anything about me leaving?

Nick

You just did. It happened literally minutes ago. And you bring it up a lot.

Brian

No, I was just talking.

Nick

We've always been good at fighting. So it's fine and all, but I'm not going to keep having the same fight. Maybe some couples do that, but it sounds sad.

Brian

I don't do it on purpose. And I'm... here.

Nick

I guess... I think you should take some time to think about it. About whether this is where you really want to be. Because I don't like how this feels between us; it shouldn't feel like you're doing me a favor by being here.

Pause.

Brian

Fine.

Nick

Good. Oh, Olive left that for you, she's trying to build a bridge or something.

Brian

What is it?

Nick

Am I psychic? Open it.

Brian

I'll open it later. That's weird. Why's she giving me things?

Nick

You certainly don't deserve anything.

Brian

Oh my God, I really heard you. Don't start again.

Nick

And listen, if you want a gun, get a gun.

Brian

Okay.

Nick

But please don't keep it in the car. That's really fucking idiotic.

Nick heads into the back of the apartment.

Brian

Fuck.

END SCENE