

NATHAN (Mac Rogers): Don't lie.

ALICE (Rebecca Comtois): I totally wasn't thinking that. I totally wasn't thinking that!

NATHAN: Why not? It's after 9 p.m., you see any presents?

ALICE: I'm not like one of those people who's all "Oh my god, the whole world must stop for my birthday." Let's just hang out.

NATHAN: Maybe I think the whole world *should* stop for your birthday.

ALICE: (laughs) Well, then, that's stupid. Let's just spend time together.

NATHAN: Oooh. See what you just did?

ALICE: (laughs) What?

NATHAN: You guessed.

ALICE: Okay, what did I guess?

NATHAN: As of the end of last week, Rootkit became the official vendor providing installation and IT services—

ALICE: You landed Empyrean?

NATHAN: Well, of course, now you're interrupting me, so... (Laughs.)

ALICE: My bad, my bad (laughs)—but did you land Empyrean?

NATHAN: Providing installation and IT services for Empyrean Solutions—

ALICE: Yes! Boom!

NATHAN: ...throughout the contiguous United States.

ALICE: And there it is. Congratulations, babe.

NATHAN: And so today they brought me in to talk about the bonus.

ALICE: Wait, there's a bonus?

NATHAN: Of course there's a bonus.

ALICE: It's not just "For he's a jolly good fellow"?

NATHAN: No, th-there's a bonus.

ALICE: God, I don't think they've even heard of bonuses at my job. Just the word "bonus" sounds like a thing that used to happen in the eighties. (Chuckles.)

NATHAN: Do you wanna ask how much it is?

ALICE: No, or... do you want me to?

NATHAN: We live together, you can ask how much it is.

ALICE: Ah...

NATHAN: (laughs) The point is, it's enough to, you know, do something interesting.

ALICE: Okay... wait.

NATHAN: Like I was looking at the—not a check, it was a direct-deposit confirmation, and I was like, this is an opportunity to really *do* something. And as it happens... someone is having a birthday.

ALICE: Okay, I swear to God—

NATHAN: And at first it was like, "Clothes? Jewelry?"

ALICE: Oh God please, no clothes, no jewelry—

NATHAN: But then I was like, "What's better than any of those things, better than the most luxurious gift in the world?"

ALICE: O-O-Okay this is freaking me out, if you like got me a *car* you need to—

NATHAN: *Time*. Having more time.

ALICE: You got me... time? For my birthday?

NATHAN: I looked at the number on that piece of paper, and I divided it by 12. And then I divided it by 24, and it was *still* good. And then I factored in utilities and groceries, and it was *still* good.

ALICE: W... 24 what?

NATHAN: Months. Twenty-four months. Of your half of the rent. Of your share of utilities. Of your share of groceries. Two years of your life expenses, bam, *covered*.

ALICE: But... (laughs nervously) it doesn't need to be covered. I have a job.

NATHAN: That's what I'm saying: not anymore.

ALICE: But... (laughs nervously) *yes* anymore, I still currently have a job.

NATHAN: Which you hate.

ALICE: Well, not *hate*, it's more like—

NATHAN: You do, you hate it. They take you for granted, they go to lunch without you, they don't notice when you save everyone's asses—

ALICE: Well sure, but everybody gripes about their—

NATHAN: They don't give bonuses. You just said. They don't incentivize good work.

ALICE: Okay, yes, those things are true, I guess what I'm saying is—

NATHAN: So quit. Give notice. Or-or-or just walk out, what do you care? You're covered.

ALICE: Well I don't think I can just...

NATHAN: Of course you can. Why not? You're covered. You don't need severance, you don't need another penny from those assholes, I've *got you*.

ALICE: Well I mean I-I don't know if they're *assholes*, I mean we—

NATHAN: Haven't you told me, like on numerous occasions, that they always expect you to save the day and then never appreciate it when you do?

ALICE: W-Sure, I've said that—and that definitely *happens*—

NATHAN: I'm not trying to tell *you* how it is, this is you telling *me* how it is.

ALICE: But it's like... (sighs) even on bad days... we all have these jokes, we have these fun rituals, we go out to Chimichanga—

NATHAN: But that's how they get you. Right? That's how they get you.

ALICE: (laughs) How they get me?

NATHAN: That's how they get you. It's like, "Oh, such-and-such complimented me, I-I-I have a running joke with such-and-such, such-and-such bought me a margarita, I guess I owe them all my energy for the rest of my life." What I'm saying is: what if you don't owe anything to anyone but yourself?

ALICE: I can't just let you support me.

NATHAN: Why not?

ALICE: I've-I've never let anyone support me, I've always—

NATHAN: You think this is a burden to me?

ALICE: I've always taken care of—yes, of course it would be a burden.

NATHAN: How can you say that?

ALICE: Because paying all my expenses... would be a *burden*. I mean, right? What am I missing?

NATHAN: It would be the total opposite of a burden, are you kidding? To know that you could finally take some time for yourself?

ALICE: But like, I have no idea what I'd do with the time.

NATHAN: Don't you want to find out? Don't you want to find out who Alice is away from all this crap?

ALICE: But like... I can't even picture it. I mean my alarm would go off in the morning, and then what?

NATHAN: Don't set your alarm. W-Why would you set your alarm?

ALICE: You want me to just... sleep... until...

NATHAN: I want you to do whatever you want. I want you to have all day long to do whatever you want. Y-You know how happy it would make me to be at work, dealing with whatever bullshit, to think of you here at home just doing whatever you goddam want? It would light up my heart like a Christmas tree.

ALICE: I'm not saying it doesn't... mean a *lot*... that you want this for me.

NATHAN: I think you want it for *yourself*.

ALICE: But like... I can't just walk out on them.

NATHAN: Give 'em two weeks' notice.

ALICE: There's way more than two weeks of... we're in the middle of so many things right now.

NATHAN: There again, right there, that's how they get you. You're always in the *middle* of things—you notice the choice of words? They want to keep you in this permanent *middle* that never quite comes to an end, and that *binds* you to them. It's wrong. It's wrong, and I love you, and I can't stand it.

ALICE: Well I'd have to... like write everything down so they know what to...

NATHAN: So write everything down.

ALICE: And call in sometimes to make sure—

NATHAN: Maybe once. Maybe once. Any more than that and they'll start pulling you back in.

ALICE: I just...

NATHAN: Right now your life is *theirs*. I want your life to be *yours*. And today is *your birthday*. Please let me give this gift to you. Please let me show you that I love you this much.

[Beat.]

ALICE: Okay, but, for like six months. That's all I think—

NATHAN: We have enough for two years.

ALICE: Yeah but I don't think I could stand—

NATHAN: Let's compromise, let's say one year. One year for you. One year for Alice to be Alice.