

They return to reading.

RON. I always liked Ethan.
DEBORAH. I didn't.
RON. What? Sure you did.
DEBORAH. No.
N. O.
RON. Yes you did.
DEBORAH. Why are you debating me? I didn't like the boy. Alice was far too good for him. His behavior of late only confirms this.
RON. Oh gimme a break. You don't think, on a small, micro level that this is kind of romantic?
DEBORAH. Absolutely not.
RON. Then what is it?
DEBORAH. It's creepy.
RON. Oh yeah?
DEBORAH. Yeah.
RON. Fine. Then I think our wedding was creepy.
DEBORAH. Our wedding WAS creepy. We never should have used that singer. He was so handsy.
RON. Wait—he touched you too?
DEBORAH. What do you mean he touched you?
RON. I'd rather not go into it.
DEBORAH. Hey have you looked at the dates for Maine?
RON. Honey, I can't.
DEBORAH. You can. You don't want to.
RON. I've been a very good sport about it, always—even when I had to telecommute. Why don't you go with Alice? She needs a break.
DEBORAH. We all go. Don't make me into some kind of pestering—Ron. We all go. That's how it works. And it's nice.
RON. But it's NICER here than it is in Maine. These are things Maine has: mosquitos, bears, and the house is haunted.
DEBORAH. It's not haunted.

RON. I woke up—
DEBORAH. Not this selection from Ron's Greatest Hits...
RON. I woke up. I looked up in front of me. And there was this *woman*. With a white veil. And she was leaning over me like I was a baby.
DEBORAH. You had three glasses of rosé and ate shellfish.
RON. Well, how do you explain that the driveway was suddenly covered with cobblestones and there was a horse and buggy?
DEBORAH. Three glasses of rosé and you're sort of stupid.
RON. Daniel and Sanjay need me in the city. They're doing a panel thing and want me to join. That's real, OK? So. Just this year. I'm sorry.
DEBORAH. It's fine.
RON. It takes two years for a tradition to fall apart, not one.
DEBORAH. OK.
So. Do you think Ethan actually went to her place?
RON. Huh?
DEBORAH. Do you think Ethan actually went over to Alice's?
RON. He did.
DEBORAH. No he didn't.
RON. No, I mean he *did*.
Silence.
DEBORAH. Excuse me?
RON. Uh—
DEBORAH. And you didn't tell me?
RON. Uh...
DEBORAH. How?
RON. He probably took a cab.
DEBORAH. No idiot.
I want to know how you found out what you found out.
RON. A texting message.
DEBORAH. This is a huge situation and you didn't tell me about her texting message?
RON. I felt like I absorbed the information and moved on.

DEBORAH. This is going to be a side conversation you and I have later, but at the moment, tell me what she said—
RON. The texting message just said, "He's here."
DEBORAH. Sounds like a horror movie. "He's here."

An electronic tone.

Deborah goes running for her phone. She takes it out of her bag. There's no message. She turns to Ron, who is holding up his with a smug look on his face.

Don't you dare say it's from—

RON. (*Showing her his phone screen.*) Alice.

DEBORAH. Why doesn't she text me?

RON. Because she doesn't love you as much as she loves me.

DEBORAH. You think you're being funny, but you're being hurtful. And I don't like it, Ron. OK?

RON. OK, Doctor.

DEBORAH. (*Like it's a dirty word.*) Lawyer.

What does the texting message say?

RON. I feel like I'm a newscaster with you. OK, here is what it says. "He's at dinner with us."

DEBORAH. "Us"? Who's us?

RON. I don't know. Nelson?

DEBORAH. That would make no sense. She's not at dinner with both Ethan and Nelson.

RON. I guess I'll find out. I think she wants me to come.

DEBORAH. How do you know that?

RON. She said, "Wanna come? I need someone to file a restraining order."

DEBORAH. She's joking and you're leaving out things. Do you receive lots of information that you don't relay to me? Is this normal?

RON. Normal is simply an aggregate of various social observations and what we read.

DEBORAH. So you're going? What do you intend to do?

RON. I *am* a lawyer. Maybe she needs my muscle.

DEBORAH. You have no muscles. You used to. Back when I liked you.
RON. Thank you.

Bye, Deborah.

I'm going to go save our daughter.

Scene Five.

A bit later.

Still at the pretty nice restaurant.

ETHAN. Next reason Alice is bad, she loses stuff. Constantly.

NELSON. Well. She *does* lose a lot of stuff.

ETHAN. She walks too slowly on the sidewalk.

NELSON. Yeah, actually, she does. I'm like, are you tired or?

ETHAN. A slowpoke!

NELSON. (*Giggling a little.*) "Slowpoke..."

ETHAN. And she'll talk about her day on and on and suddenly it's been, like, forty minutes—

NELSON. I'm like, "Do you want me to weigh in on this or are you just unloading? Also, I had a hard day too."

ETHAN. With the *regional manager*. She's kind of selfish, no?

NELSON. (*Considering.*) I wouldn't say selfish.

ETHAN. You pick a word.

NELSON. I dunno, man... Alice is...maybe...narcissistic?

ETHAN. Narcissistic.

NELSON. But really, we all are.

ETHAN. And Alice also smells really... Dammit, you got me there. ...She smells so good always. It's like if you took an ocean breeze, put it inside of a blueberry pie, and then put that blueberry pie inside of a baby's head.

NELSON. Wow.

ETHAN. Yeah, so you won't be dumping her because of her smell.