

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author’s agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, the cutting of music, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work *not included in the Play’s score*, or performance of a sound recording of such a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, cut any music, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author(s) and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that authors are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the author, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—whether or not you charge an admission fee. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY
email: info@playscripts.com
website: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

FRANKIE 4 A.M., male or female, teen short-wave radio DJ

JAKE (or JANE), male or female, a smart but isolated teen

JOGGING TEEN, male or female

ANNE, a high school girl

MONICA, Anne's friend

ROMEO, a teen in love with Juliet

JULIET, a teen in love with Romeo

SLEEPER KID, a teenager who has nightmares

MONSTER UNDER THE BED, the manifestation of the Sleeper Kid's fears and dreams, or perhaps a real entity

NIGHTMARES, dancing manifestations of teenage fears...and dreams

SIMON, male high school student

HALE, male, Simon's friend

FIRE KID, male or female, teen witness to a fire

FIRST OFFICER, a caricature of an FBI-like special agent

SECOND OFFICER, the First Officer's overly enthusiastic counterpart

SECOND JOGGER, the opposite gender of the Jogging Teen

Character Notes

4 A.M. is designed to be an ensemble piece. With multiple casting, it can make use of a minimum of roughly 6-8 performers, with a maximum of 30 or more. All characters are teenagers, except for the Officers and the Monster/Nightmares, who are meant to be played expressionistically by teen actors.

Members of the ensemble also play the teens from Scene 2 and the Nightmares. If you have a larger cast, as the script notes, you may use multiple Sleepers and Nightmares in Scene 7. All characters, with the exception of Anne/Monica, Romeo/Juliet, Hale/Simon, may be cast with either male or female actors. Stage directions may refer to characters as one gender or the other, but this is only for convenience.

Setting

The play takes place at 4 A.M. in the bedrooms of its various teen characters, as well as on the street, but the settings and production design can be as suggested or non-realistic as desired.

Author's Notes

The play should move from one scene to the other as fluidly as possible—blackouts are deadly. Area staging may be a good way to avoid them.

Acknowledgments

4 A.M. premiered in April 2009 at the Zone 2E One Act Festival in Edmonton, Alberta at the University of Alberta. It was produced by Edwin Parr High School's "For Sale Theatre" with the following cast and crew:

FRANKIE	Zakk MacDonald
JANE	Kayla Borejko
JOGGING GIRL	Shanelle Gustafson
ANNE	Brittany Sales
MONICA	Shelby Peterson
ROMEO	Marcel Bibby
JULIET	Allison Kariel
SLEEPER KID	Grant Prouse
MONSTER UNDER THE BED	Darryl Rooks
SIMON	Braden Shaw
HALE	Travis Guay
FIRE KID	Ryan Giroux
FIRST OFFICER	Patrick Mageean
SECOND OFFICER	Evan Bashir
SECOND JOGGER	Wade Percival
FEAR DANCERS	Cara Bradfield, Deanna Kretzel, Chelsea Lindballe, Janell MacGregor, Janaan Mroczek, Emily Price, Aleksy Schmidt
Director	Bruce MacDonald
Choreographer	Deanna Kretzel
Stage Manager	Kayla Helms
Lights	Sam Whitely
Sound	Davis Bradfield

Special thanks to Janet Roston, who, along with the following cast, helped with the early development of the play: Pontea Banayan, Dennis Bendersky, Nicole Levy, Barton Lewis, James W. Lynch, Dora Shamooil and Liz Sroka. Elements of *4 A.M.* were first read publicly as part of No Shame Theatre in Roanoke, Virginia. Thanks also to Matt Cuzner, Teresa Derbyshire, Rowan Emslie and Brandon Lloyd for their input during my writing of the play.

4 A.M. by Jonathan Dorf

Scene 1: Anybody Out There?

(4 A.M. A bedroom. Spotlight on FRANKIE, male or female, self-styled teen DJ, broadcasting into a microphone. The rest of the stage should be as dark as possible.)

FRANKIE. This is Frankie, your 4 A.M. connection, your 4 A.M. force, and a horse is a horse is a horse, of course. No idea why I just said that, but come what may, I am here to light your way in the darkness, broadcasting to you live on 777.7—that's seven hundred seventy-seven and seven-tenths, the luckiest frequency on your A.M. dial—comin' at you old school in the magic hour, when your world is asleep and there's no one but me and maybe a zombie or three to keep you company.

(Beat.)

And speaking of the magic hour, don't you dare disappear, don't you go, because I've got a magical mystery show for you. It's true—it's true. So keep your radio tuned just right, 'cause Frankie's gonna get you through the night.

(Beat.)

Is anybody out there? Can anybody hear me? Come out, come out, wherever you are. Hello? Hello?

(Lights slowly fade on FRANKIE and gradually come up on the rest of the stage, revealing other teens, all in their own little 4 A.M. worlds.)

Scene 2: Here I Am, 4 A.M. Again

(4 A.M. The teens might be in or out of bed, in all sorts of sleep-wear, or not in sleepwear at all. While many might already be on stage, additional teens could enter as the scene continues. The lines in the scene should rotate through the ensemble, with no one delivering two lines in a row unless specified.)

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS. 4 A.M. again. Go back to sleep.
I want to go to the bathroom, but I don't feel like getting out of bed.
What's that sound?
Are there really vampires?

Did I turn the webcam off?
 Can I get back to sleep if I have to go to the bathroom?
 If I just lie on this side, there's no way I can fall out of bed...again.
 I want a big juicy hamburger.
 What will it feel like to be dead?
 A squared plus B squared equals C squared.
 I could dance in my underwear right now and nobody would see—I
 could totally dance in my underwear.
 I shouldn't be on this website.
 Stop thinking. Stop thinking.

(The speaker should say his name:)

Yes, I am the famous artist, _____.
 One two three. One two three. One two three.

(A JOGGING TEEN, male or female, in sweats or shorts depending on the season, jogs onto the stage. It's as if the JOGGING TEEN is outside. All others on stage freeze.)

JOGGING TEEN. *(Jogging in place:)* Sometimes I feel the urge to do something radical. Like run at 4 A.M. Run through the night-morning, run through the frozen world, where everything's still but me.

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS.

Why is green green? Why isn't it red? Or yellow?
 What if I just walked up to him and punched him in the—
 A big juicy hamburger, with blue cheese melted on top, dripping
 onto my tongue...
 I never heard my Dad come home.
 Did aliens land in Roswell? Are they still there?

JOGGING TEEN. Sometimes I can run for an hour, and never see another person.

(The JOGGING TEEN jogs off.)

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS. I don't think I studied enough for history.
 Why was Michelle looking at me and whispering to Jen?
 I am not afraid of tomorrow.

(With eyes closed:)

The sun is shining. There's a slight breeze. The water is blue and perfect, and I have the entire beach in Port Douglas, Australia to myself. I'm in my happy place. I am in my happy place.
 I have to wake up in 86 minutes.

FIRST ENSEMBLE KID. Is there anyone out there?

SECOND ENSEMBLE KID. There's a monster under the bed.

FIRST ENSEMBLE KID. Anyone—

SECOND ENSEMBLE KID. He talks to me.

FIRST ENSEMBLE KID. (*Finishing the thought:*) —who's thinking this thought—

SECOND ENSEMBLE KID. He's scared—

FIRST ENSEMBLE KID. —too? **SECOND ENSEMBLE KID.** —too.

(Lights down on the ensemble, who might exit, or hang around the stage, frozen.)

Scene 3: Letter to a Knife Company, Part 1

(4 A.M. JAKE [or JANE, if the actor is female] is in his bedroom, writing a letter.)

JAKE. To whom it may concern. I recently purchased your four-inch peeling knife. It was on sale, but just because it was on sale doesn't mean it should be worse than a knife that's not on sale. Right?

(Beat.)

You advertise it as—and I quote—"the chef's ultimate weapon. The ergonomically designed handle offers maximum comfort, giving way to a razor sharp carbon steel blade." You also note that it cuts through fruits and vegetables like hot butter, standing up to the demands of the busiest professional kitchens, with no need for sharpening for three to five years. Three to five years. Not weeks. Not months. Years!

(Beat.)

I've had your knife for six days. And in these six days, I've cut a half-dozen tomatoes, two onions, one each red, yellow and orange peppers, and two cloves of garlic. Not bunches—cloves, and not even big ones—and kind of goin' soft.

(Beat.)

And therein lies our problem. Last night, I take your knife, your knife that doesn't need to be sharpened for three to five years, and thirteen vegetables later, it punks out. When it comes to two puny wrists, your razor sharp carbon steel isn't up to the job. It cuts like a butter knife, and the blood is dripping so slow it could be hours before I even lose consciousness. But my parents are the only parents I know that don't have a lethal pharmacy in their medicine cabinet, and they're out with the car, so that's not an option either, which means that now, because

of your carbon-steel disappointment, I have to sit around and wait and hurt. The whole point of your knife is so I don't have to hurt anymore.

(Beat.)

Do you know what it's like to have people smear egg yolks on your lunch table just before you get there, so you don't have anywhere to sit? Don't worry—they didn't waste the whites: those went into my lunch bag. And both of those were better than the rotting mouse in my locker.

(Beat.)

I used to cry about it. I stopped. What's the point?—unless you're too busy crying to think.

(Beat.)

That might be something.

(JAKE freezes at the desk as the lights dim.)

Scene 4: Sleepover, The Girls

(4 A.M. ANNE and MONICA, her guest, both mid-teens, lie in a dark bedroom. ANNE is awake, but MONICA sleeps. ANNE stands over her, trying to decide if she's awake.)

ANNE. Monica, are you awake?

(Beat.)

Monica?

(Beat.)

Monica!

MONICA. What?

ANNE. Are you awake?

(MONICA groans.)

MONICA. What are you doing?

ANNE. What are *you* doing?

MONICA. Sleeping.

ANNE. You can't.

(MONICA turns over and tries to ignore her. Beat. ANNE turns on the lights. MONICA groans.)

ANNE. This isn't working for me.

MONICA. What? Turn off the lights.

ANNE. This is supposed to be a sleepover, but you're just...sleeping.

MONICA. It's...what time is it?

ANNE. Four. And we should be up, talking about guys and dyeing each other's hair purple, texting our friends to tell them what an amazing time we're having—

MONICA. Sleepover. Sleep.

(MONICA tries to cover her head with a pillow, but ANNE pulls it off.)

ANNE. It has nothing to do with sleep. If you wanted to sleep, you should have stayed home.

MONICA. What's wrong with you?

ANNE. Me?! Did we cross into an alternate universe where up is down?

MONICA. What time did you say it was?

ANNE. Four.

MONICA. Everybody's asleep at four.

ANNE. Not at a sleepover. By four we should be confiding our deepest, darkest secrets, secrets so secret that we have to swear on the grave of an A-list celebrity never to tell.

(MONICA tries to hide under the covers, but ANNE starts to pull them off.)

MONICA. Hey!

ANNE. *(As they struggle:)* What if people found out that we...slept?!

(MONICA, with a forceful pull, comes up with the blanket.)

MONICA. *(Beat.)* I won't tell anyone.

ANNE. Once you're on the list, do you know how hard it is to get off?

MONICA. I promise.

ANNE. It's like a big black lipstick smudge of Cain on your forehead. No one's gotten it off in the history of *(ANNE should say the name of her school:)* _____.

MONICA. I promise I won't tell. What if I got up extra early—

ANNE. It is extra early.

(Beat—starting to pack Monica's things.)

I never would've invited you if I'd known you'd be like this.

MONICA. Wait—

(Beat.)

I want to swap secrets and talk about guys...

ANNE. *(Stops packing.)* Yeah...? I'm listening.

MONICA. We could set a time—eight. Nobody's gonna' be up at eight on a Saturday. We could do all that, and they'd never know.

ANNE. I'd know, and what if it just slips out? I see how you look at Ryan. Your mouth opens—you look like a whale from science class feeding on plankton. Yeah—you get all whale mouthy, and something might just slip out.

MONICA. Four hours. That's all I ask.

ANNE. You ask too much.

(Beat.)

I could maybe do it, if I had some kind of proof that you won't say anything.

MONICA. Proof?

ANNE. Like a hostage.

(Beat.)

Yeah. If I had a hostage, maybe we could make this work.

MONICA. But I promised—

ANNE. Just cause you're on honor roll doesn't mean you don't lie. I mean, it's not like I know you.

MONICA. We've been best friends since kindergarten.

ANNE. I thought I did, but then this, and now you're like some stranger from off the street. Speaking Russian.

MONICA. Come on—we were green tea goddesses. You can't tell me you don't remember the Green Tea Goddess Green Tea Tickle?

(Singing—sort of:)

Green Tea Goddesses forever...

It's the Camp Teatotem way—

ANNE. Your cat.

MONICA. What?

ANNE. If I had Captain Snuffles as a hostage, I'd feel better.

MONICA. You want my cat?

(Beat.)

You can't take my cat.

ANNE. Not take. Just take for a little while. Until I'm sure.

MONICA. Of what?

ANNE. That these four hours aren't going to blow up in my face.

MONICA. I'm not giving you Captain Snuffles.

ANNE. Then stay up.

MONICA. I can't. Even if I wanted to, he's at my house.

ANNE. *(Pointing at the box:)* Actually...

MONICA. You psycho! You kidnapped—

ANNE. He chases after Eddie.

MONICA. Oh yeah—he chases after your little brother for two miles right into a box in your room.

ANNE. It helps when Eddie rubs tuna fish all over his body and stands outside your window.

MONICA. *(Getting up:)* I'm coming, Captain Snuffles...

(ANNE blocks her way.)

ANNE. You don't look so tired now.

MONICA. Give me my cat.

ANNE. Give me a secret first.

MONICA. You're not being a good goddess.

(Beat.)

I'm not in love with Ryan. I don't even like him that much. I like Jerome, and since they're always standing next to each other, it looks like I'm in love with Ryan. Now give me my—

ANNE. I still have nightmares about that clown.

MONICA. What?

ANNE. The clown.

MONICA. *(Beat.)* The one holding the cotton candy?

ANNE. He won't stop chasing me.

MONICA. But that's—

ANNE. Don't laugh at me. I should've never told you I—

MONICA. Did you know Captain Snuffles was specially trained as a clown-fighting cat?

ANNE. *(Beat.)* Really?

MONICA. No.

ANNE. Oh. You're making fun of—

MONICA. But I'm not so bad at clown fighting.

ANNE. *(Beat.)* Yeah?

MONICA. Yeah.

(Beat.)

My turn for another secret?

(The lights dim on ANNE and MONICA, as the lights come up on FRANKIE.)

Scene 5: Frankie Interlude, Interview and Commercial

(FRANKIE, broadcasting in his "studio," aka his bedroom.)

FRANKIE. This is Frankie 4 A.M. in the studio, so don't be rudio. I am live with a special guest. You all think about him when you're lying there alone: he's the merchant of death, he'll take your breath away—literally. Put your hands together and give it up for the man who'll make you a permanent sleeper—it's the big guy in the hood, the Grim Reaper.

(Sound of audience applause.)

Hey Grim—may I call you Grim?—thanks for coming by. I know you're a busy man...er, entity. And you're very tall. The pictures do not do you justice.

(Beat.)

So, uh...Mr. Reaper, how does it feel to be the taker of lives, the stealer of souls, the harbinger of doom?

(Long pause.)

The silence is really scary—and I mean *really* scary, but...

(Beat.)

Uh—the finger wagging in my direction is about to make me wet my pants, but nobody can see it.

(Beat.)

This is radio! You can't gesture silently on the radio!

(Beat.)

We're going to a commercial, and we'll try to get a word, any word, after the break.

(There's a musical interlude, one of FRANKIE's cheesy radio fill-ins.)

(Trying to disguise his voice:) It's been called ergonomic. The chef's ultimate weapon. Four inches of drop dead sexy. But don't take our word for it that this four inch tower of chopping and peeling power will give your knife life the edge it's been missing. Ask our customers.

(As the First Customer:) I love this knife. It couldn't peel a boiled potato, but it looks so beautiful.

(As the Second Customer:) If I had a kid that was as bad as this knife, I'd kick his lazy butt out of the house and change the locks.

(As the Third Customer:) Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you...for making such crappy knives.

(The lights fade on FRANKIE as they come up on...)

Scene 6: Romeo and Juliet, Part 1

(ROMEO and JULIET, teen lovers, sleep in very separate bedrooms, cell phones in hand, contemplating.)

ROMEO. I wonder if she's up.

JULIET. I wonder if he's up.

ROMEO. If I call her—

JULIET. If I call him and he's sleeping.

ROMEO. And she's sleeping. And I wake her—

JULIET. What if I wake him?

ROMEO. She'll hate me—

JULIET. What if he hates me forever?

(They continue to contemplate the cell phones they hold in their hands as the lights dim on them and come up on...)

Scene 7: Fear Dance

(A bedroom. The SLEEPER KID, who could be the member of the ensemble who said the “monster in the bed” line in Scene 2, tries to sleep and finally seems to drift off. With a large cast, feel free to have multiple sleepers. Enter the NIGHTMARES, dressed in masks, maybe even in black body suits, fluttering around the room like ghosts.)

(They hover on either side of the SLEEPER KID’s head, while others dance around them. They should be frightening, yet playful with each other.)

(The SLEEPER KID starts to twist and turn as this continues, then wakes with a start and turns on the light.)

(The NIGHTMARES race upstage and freeze, their backs toward the SLEEPER KID. The SLEEPER KID gets up and walks around, checking under the bed, in the closet and finally looking out the window. The NIGHTMARES move with him, always staying out of sight, even when they are literally behind him. Every time he turns, they move.)

SLEEPER KID. *(If multiple actors do this role, let each take a part of the sentence, so it feels like one person speaking.)* There is no one under the bed, in the closet, or at the window.

(The SLEEPER KID turns out the light and gets back into bed. The NIGHTMARES return to their dance, dancing all over the room, competing against each other for space with their various dances. The SLEEPER KID gives up, perhaps pulling the covers over his head. He could clutch a stuffed animal and curl into a ball, or put a pillow around his ears, as the lights fade on him and the NIGHTMARES dance away.)

Scene 8: Letter to a Knife Company, Part 2

(JAKE writes the same letter as before, as if no time has passed since his last scene.)

JAKE. I can never fall asleep, because I know I’m going to wake up the next day, and we both know what an upper that’s going to be. So I put off sleeping as long as I can, which means thinking about the last day, and we both know what an upper that already was. And my grades are circling the bowl, because it’s hard to be smart in school when you only sleep between 5 and 6:30 every morning.

(Beat.)

So I'm sitting there, bleeding really slowly because you guys are incompetent, and I'm trying to get my mind off the pain, because it isn't supposed to be like this. And the power goes out, so now there's no TV, no computer, no light, no nothing. My parents are away as usual—even when they're home—so it's just me, totally alone. And I should be free by now, but I'm not, thanks to you, and I'm on the floor bleeding in the dark.

(Beat.)

But I'm leaning against the wall by my closet, and in the closet is this old battery-powered radio I got at a junk shop. It's the only thing in the whole house that works—no, I don't have a cell phone, and they make fun of me for that too, thank you for asking. But the radio works, 'cause I guess they made things better in the old days before they started importing lead from China. It's only A.M., but that's better than silence. Better than what's in my head.

(Beat.)

And there's a talk show about sports, but I don't really get sports—I want to, but I'm not good at it, and whenever I talk about it, it feels fake. And there's music in a language that's not English—but it's not Spanish either—and some scratchy religious guy trying to save my soul if I'll send him fifty dollars, but your knife pretty much cleaned me out.

(The JOGGER jogs on as the lights dim on JAKE.)

JOGGING TEEN. I run, and I want to witness something amazing, but there's no movement. I feel so powerful, but here in this eerie silence of a world that's asleep, I'm the king of a kingdom of one.

(A SECOND JOGGER, male or female but the opposite gender of the JOGGING TEEN, jogs on, passing by him seemingly without a glance.)

JOGGING TEEN. *(Beat.)* Wait!

(The SECOND JOGGER exits. Beat. The JOGGING TEEN exits in the direction of the SECOND JOGGER.)

Scene 9: Sleepover, The Boys

(4 A.M. Hale's bedroom. HALE, mid-teens lies in the bed, and SIMON, same age, is on the floor in a sleeping bag downstage. The lights are on dimly.)

SIMON. The White Stripes.

HALE. White Lion.

SIMON. Great White.

HALE. James Brown.

SIMON. That's not a band.

HALE. It still counts.

SIMON. We said bands.

HALE. I meant musical acts.

SIMON. Fine. Whitesnake.

HALE. Black Sabbath. Band—happy?

SIMON. I am Iron Man.

(HALE and SIMON play air guitar and vocalize the opening notes of "Iron Man" by Black Sabbath.)

SIMON. I'm tired.

HALE. Do you want to go to sleep? It's four.

SIMON. No—let's keep going.

HALE. OK.

SIMON. Uh...Barry White.

HALE. Who's that?

SIMON. The love song guy.

HALE. K. Blue Oyster Cult.

SIMON. Nice. Deep Purple.

HALE. King Crimson.

SIMON. Pink Floyd. *(Beat.)* How come everything we come up with is so old?

HALE. White Stripes aren't old.

SIMON. That's the only one.

HALE. I don't know. Old souls.

SIMON. What's that?

HALE. My Mom says that. You're an old soul, Hale.

SIMON. What's it mean?

HALE. No clue. I think 'cause I'm named for some guy from the Revolutionary War.

SIMON. She thinks he's like...in your body?

HALE. (*Makes ghost noises:*) Ooh wee oo... (*Beat.*) You wanna keep going?

SIMON. I can't think of anymore.

HALE. Was Purple Haze a song or a band?

SIMON. Dunno. But I can't think of any more colors in—

HALE. Simply Red!

SIMON. Stop—it's my turn!

HALE. I thought you couldn't think of—

SIMON. So? It's still my turn.

HALE. You want to try a different one?

SIMON. Like?

HALE. I dunno. Vegetables?

SIMON. Vegetables?

HALE. Or whatever.

SIMON. Vegetables are stupid.

HALE. It was just an idea. We can do whatever.

SIMON. Whatever is good. Just keep talking.

HALE. About...?

SIMON. I just need the noise.

HALE. OK. Noise. Things I can say that'll make noise.

SIMON. (*Beat.*) Every time I shut my eyes, every time it's quiet, the movie starts playing.

HALE. What about cars?

SIMON. And I keep trying to cover my head—

HALE. Or sports teams.

SIMON. And I'm trying to block it with my hands and with the pillow and then with this mini-refrigerator—you know like the kind

people get in college—and then with the Barbie Dreamhouse my sister had when she was seven—before he broke it.

HALE. I didn't know he broke her Barbie Dreamhouse.

SIMON. But no matter what I put in the way—

HALE. (*Continuing with the Dreamhouse:*) That's just cold.

SIMON. —he always gets through, and the whole time, the soundtrack keeps getting louder and louder, this sound of screaming and thwacking and breaking...

HALE. It's OK now. It's done.

SIMON. Is it?

HALE. You're here, right?

(*Beat.*)

What do you want to play?

SIMON. Vegetables is good.

HALE. You sure?

SIMON. Here is good.

(*Beat.*)

Carrot.

HALE. Asparagus.

SIMON. (*As the lights dim:*) Spinach.

HALE. Tomato.

SIMON. Tomato's a fruit.

HALE. Seriously?

(*Beat.*)

I got it—soybeans.

(*Blackout. End of scene.*)

Scene 10: Romeo and Juliet, Part 2

(ROMEO and JULIET are still in their distant beds.)

ROMEO. Can true love be cast asunder by an errant—

JULIET. cell phone call? I love him so much.

ROMEO. Juliet, I love you so much. We complete—

JULIET. each other's sentences. You are the close parentheses—

ROMEO. to my open. You are the quid to my pro quo.

JULIET. Whenever you are near me, I hear a symphony. A tender melody.

ROMEO. To call or not to call, that is the question.

(Both stare at their cell phones as the lights fade and come up on FRANKIE...)

Scene 11: Frankie with the News Interlude

(FRANKIE is back broadcasting from his bedroom.)

FRANKIE. It's Frankie, your 4 A.M. news guru, catching you up since you can't catch any Zs.

(Beat.)

Hours ago, polar bears were sighted wandering the streets of several major American cities. According to eyewitnesses in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit and Seattle, the polar bears appeared confused, and as one elderly woman put it, "They look pretty gosh darned cranky, dearie."

(Beat.)

Anyone coming across one of these 1400-pound predators is urged to avoid looking like a seal. Or an ice floe.

(Beat.)

A spokesperson for the White House conceded that the polar bears' migration out of their usual territory was probably the result of global warming but denied that it was a sign of imminent apocalypse.

(Beat.)

In other news, a tree fell in the forest, but no one was there to hear it.

(Lights dim on FRANKIE and come up on...)

Scene 12: Fire on the Street

(A bedroom. Just past 4 A.M. The FIRE KID, male or female, is dressed for bed, and possibly staring out a window, which could be real or suggested.)

FIRE KID. I was awakened by a “boom” at 4 A.M. At first, I thought I just dreamt it, but then I see some light seeming to dance against my wall when the blinds flutter from the fan. I look outside and it turns out a car is literally on fire across the street. The flames are shooting 15 to 20 feet in the air, with new little explosions—and more booms—that send the flames shooting higher each time it hits a new pocket of gasoline or something flammable. I swear I can feel the heat in my room.

(Beat.)

I call 911. I tell them what’s happening and where, and then I hang up. That’s it. I want to stay on the line. I want them to say, “Stay on the phone until help arrives,” but it isn’t my car. They don’t even ask for my name. I’m just out. All of them having their private emergency, and I’m no longer a part of it.

(Beat.)

Some tiny piece of me—just for a second—wishes I started it, because there would be police and reporters and...I could still be part of it. I don’t really wish I’d started the fire. I’m not the kind of person who starts fires or even wants to start them, except when I was in fifth grade and I set an ant on fire with a magnifying glass...

(Beat.)

But don’t they see? I’m not asking for a lot. Just a gesture. So maybe staying on the phone with me would tie up the line. Maybe some little kid’s dad is having a heart attack, or a woman is giving birth on her kitchen floor or a motorcycle lost an argument with a 16-wheeler and someone at the scene needs to be talked through CPR. Of course I’m not as important as that. But maybe when the fire truck gets here—and the good thing about living 6 blocks from a fire station is it takes two minutes for them to get here—maybe a little nod to my second floor window, maybe a “thanks, kid” under your breath... I’d feel a little included and maybe just a tiny bit less alone.

(The lights dim on the FIRE KID, and come up on the SLEEPER KID.)

Scene 13: Me and My Monster

(The SLEEPER KID lies in bed, awake. Then pounding at the door. Two OFFICERS, though officers of what is anyone's guess, burst inside.)

FIRST OFFICER. Is it here?

SECOND OFFICER. Of course it's here.

FIRST OFFICER. Step aside—we'll take it from here.

SLEEPER KID. What are you—

FIRST OFFICER. Use force if necessary.

SECOND OFFICER. Can I use it anyway?

FIRST OFFICER. I don't see why not.

(Pulls out a manual and checks.)

Nothing in the book about "only" if necessary.

SECOND OFFICER. Good. I like force. Keeps me from having to have a reason.

FIRST OFFICER. *(Finishing the Second Officer's thought:)* Explain things.

SECOND OFFICER. No fuss, no muss.

SLEEPER KID. But what are you—

FIRST OFFICER. Silence!

SECOND OFFICER. I love that.

FIRST OFFICER. Makes me all tingly. Silence!

(Both OFFICERS enjoy a tingle.)

SLEEPER KID. But you can't just come in here and—

SECOND OFFICER. Why not?

SLEEPER KID. It's four in the—

FIRST OFFICER. When else did you expect us to come?

SECOND OFFICER. Noon?

(The OFFICERS share a laugh.)

FIRST OFFICER. We're here to help you.

SECOND OFFICER. We're on your side.

FIRST OFFICER. You won't be afraid anymore.

SECOND OFFICER. Not with us controlling—

FIRST OFFICER. *Protecting.*

SECOND OFFICER. Right. *Protecting* you.

SLEEPER KID. From what?!

FIRST OFFICER. From the monster under the bed, of course.

SECOND OFFICER. We assumed you knew that.

FIRST OFFICER. We'll just be a minute.

SECOND OFFICER. Go back to sleep.

SLEEPER KID. I wasn't sleeping.

FIRST OFFICER. Done before you know it.

SLEEPER KID. But I don't—

SECOND OFFICER. We crush people's dreams all the time.

(Beat—To the FIRST OFFICER:)

I'm going to enjoy this way too much.

FIRST OFFICER. We have a job to do.

SLEEPER KID. But—

SECOND OFFICER. How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

FIRST OFFICER. *(To the SLEEPER KID:)* So go back to sleep.

SECOND OFFICER. Practice!

SLEEPER KID. Wait.

FIRST OFFICER. Prepare for Entrapment Scenario B-12.

SECOND OFFICER. What's that one again?

FIRST OFFICER. Lots of beating and stomping.

SLEEPER KID. You can't do this.

FIRST OFFICER. Stand back.

SECOND OFFICER. This is going to get messy.

(The OFFICERS start rattling their batons around the bed.)

SLEEPER KID. Stop.

FIRST OFFICER. Come out, come out, wherever you are.

(The MONSTER UNDER THE BED comes out of hiding, and the OFFICERS corner it.)

SLEEPER KID. Stop it!

(The SLEEPER KID gets between the OFFICERS and the MONSTER.)

Don't hurt him!

FIRST OFFICER. *(Beat.)* What are you, some kind of monster lover?

SLEEPER KID. No, it's not that.

SECOND OFFICER. Sympathizer.

SLEEPER KID. No.

FIRST OFFICER. You're one of *those*.

SECOND OFFICER. People like you make me sick. Now step aside. I didn't come all the way out here to be deprived of a good monster bashing.

SLEEPER KID. No—you can't!

(Beat.)

He—she—it's like...a memo.

FIRST and SECOND OFFICER. *A memo?*

SLEEPER KID. Uh...

FIRST OFFICER. *(To the MONSTER:)* You some kind of secretary?

(The MONSTER shakes its head.)

SECOND OFFICER. *(Brandishing his baton:)* That's settled then.

SLEEPER KID. No! Not a memo...

(The MONSTER encourages the SLEEPER KID to come up with the right word, almost like it's charades, as the OFFICERS close in on the MONSTER.)

SLEEPER KID. A reminder! That's it—a reminder that every day we're afraid, every day there's a monster under the bed, and yet we get through. You can't run away from it, or hide from it. You certainly can't beat it senseless and then drag it out, bound and gagged. You need to embrace it.

(Beat.)

You can't have dreams without a little fear—right?

(The MONSTER comes closer to the SLEEPER KID, both for protection and now, possibly out of affection.)

SLEEPER KID. Treat it like your pet.

(The MONSTER puts its head in the SLEEPER KID's lap, or sits at his feet, depending on your staging.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, this free sample is not complete.

To purchase the full text, and to obtain performance rights, go to:

www.playscripts.com