



## CAUSE FOR ALARM

by Deborah Klayman

## A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.  
No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the  
appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at [info@smithscripts.co.uk](mailto:info@smithscripts.co.uk)

# *Cause For Alarm*

by  
Deborah Klayman

## CHARACTERS

Anya (50)

Effie (30s)

Pete (50s)

*Morning. A sparsely furnished living room. Dust sheets cover a sofa, an armchair, and a table and chairs. An empty book case stands at the back of the room with books piled on the floor beside it. An ornate clock sits on one shelf. There are boxes everywhere, half opened.*

*There is the sound of a radio being tuned. It is crackly, but we can just make out some faint music.*

*Anya enters, carrying the radio. She would be a good looking fifty were she not so tired and drawn. She extends the aerial and attempts to get a better signal. She fails. She moves and the signal improves, but as she tries to find a place to rest the radio it is lost again. Infuriated, she turns the radio off and sits heavily on the seat.*

Anya:           Effie?

*There is no answer. Anya begins half-heartedly unpacking a box and discovers a dusty photo album. She lifts it from the box with reverence and gently brushes it off. She takes it with her to the chair, removes the dust cover, and sits. She leafs through the album, occasionally pausing to linger over a page. Effie enters carrying a brown bag and balancing two cups of coffee. She is thirty-ish and trendy.*

Effie:           Sorry it took so long. Bit of a maze this place.

Anya:           You get used to it.

Effie:           It must've changed a lot though. Twenty years is a long time.

Anya:           Places like this don't change. They stagnate.

Effie:           I wasn't sure what you wanted, so I got a selection.

Anya:           Coffee's fine.

Effie:           You have to eat something. Seems like a really nice place, anyway. Dead friendly. I was chatting to the woman in the café, thought maybe you'd know her actually...

Anya:           You didn't mention me, did you?

Effie:           No. Well, I mean, I mentioned I was here staying with a friend. That you used to, you know, when you were growing up, that you...

*Cause For Alarm*

by  
Deborah Klayman

*She trails off.*

Effie: You'll have to go out eventually. And you're bound to know people. Stands to reason.

*Anya returns to the photo album. She stifles a yawn.*

Effie: No sleep?

Anya: What's new.

Effie: You should've taken a pill.

Anya: I hate those things, they dull my senses.

Effie: That's kind of the point.

Anya: Anyway, I had lots to do. First night in a new house, no one sleeps properly. Well, almost nobody.

Effie: What can I say, I'm a good sleeper.

Anya: Lucky you.

Effie: What you found?

Anya: Oh, just an old album.

Effie: Ooh, can I see?

*Anya slams the book shut.*

Anya: I've done enough reminiscing.

Effie: Yeah, you need to get settled in, before you go back. Just think, exactly a week from now you'll be sitting at that desk again...

Anya: Not that desk though. Not the same desk. I'll be sitting at an entirely different desk, surrounded by entirely different people, in an entirely different town. The town that time forgot.

Effie: You really can't think of it that way, Anya. It isn't a punishment you know.

Anya: Of course it is. We both know I'm being buried, sidelined. They can't fire me, but they don't want to have to look at me either.

Effie: That's not true.

Anya: Of course it is. I'm just an hysterical old coot.

Effie: Nobody sees you that way...

## *Cause For Alarm*

by

Deborah Klayman

Anya: You have to say that, you're the boss.

Effie: Don't be like that, Anya.

Anya: Sorry.

Effie: It isn't my fault.

Anya: I said I'm sorry. Really, Effie, I am.

Effie: Okay.

Anya: And I appreciate it, you know, you helping me get settled. It's above and beyond.

Effie: No it isn't - I'm here as a friend first, you know that.

Anya: I know. It just feels like...I feel like I'm...damaged somehow. Damaged goods.

Effie: But that's why a fresh start might be the best thing. Being somewhere where people knew you, you know, before.

Anya: Out of sight and out of my mind.

*There is an awkward pause. The ornate clock strikes ten o'clock.*

*Suddenly, an impossibly loud alarm sounds. Anya leaps up in a panic, dropping the album.*

Anya: What the...?

*Anya starts to breath rapidly. She is on the verge of a panic attack.*

Effie: Anya, it's okay. Anya, it's the escape alarm. The test – remember they told us. Mondays at ten, remember?

*Anya is gasping for air, holding on to the chair arm for support.*

Effie: Oh god, Anya, where are your pills? Anya?

Anya: Dresser. By the bed. It's... It's...

Effie: Deep breaths, okay? I should've thought. I should've... Come on, let's sit you down.

*Anya is still gasping. She lets Effie sit her down and buries her face in her hands. Effie grabs the paper breakfast bag and tips out the contents. She puts the bag in front of Anya.*

Effie: Breathe into this. *(Anya swats her away)* Seriously, Anya, it'll help.

*Anya takes the bag and begins breathing into it. Her panic starts to subside.*

Effie: That's it. Just keep doing that. I'll grab your pills, just keep breathing - in through the nose and out through the mouth.

## *Cause For Alarm*

by  
Deborah Klayman

*Anya does as she is told. Effie dashes from the room. There is a knock at the door. Anya ignores it and continues breathing into the bag. A man enters, tentatively. He is wearing the uniform of a telephone engineer.*

Pete: Hello?

*Anya is oblivious, concentrating on her breathing.*

Pete: Hello? Oh god, look, I'm sorry to just walk in – the door was open and I didn't think...

*Anya looks up. She drops the bag.*

Pete: Sorry to intrude.

Anya: Pete?

Pete: I'm sorry?

Anya: Is that you?

*Effie re-enters, carrying a bottle of pills, and collides with Pete.*

Effie: What the...?

Pete: I'm so sorry. I didn't...the door was... I shouldn't have just come in.

Effie: It's fine. We just got a bit of a shock. The alarm, you know.

*She crosses to Anya and offers her the pill bottle. Anya is staring at Pete, fixedly, but does not speak.*

Pete: Oh, of course. You're new. It takes a bit of getting used to.

Effie: Yeah. I mean they told us, it was mentioned. Forewarned is forearmed I suppose. But still, when you hear it...

Pete: It's a shock.

Effie: Right. I mean, it's not every day you hear a prison alarm going off.

Pete: No, every week.

Effie: Sorry?

Pete: You said it's not every day. You're right. We test it every week, Mondays at ten. Then the "all clear" sounds fifteen minutes after – don't forget about that.

Effie: Sure, of course. I didn't realise the time.