

Masters of Horror

Episode: Sick Girl

by
Sean Hood

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INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

A large Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, striped brown and black, sits in the hand of a LITTLE BLONDE GIRL (5).

Her angelic face is filled with curiosity and wonder. She pets the insect as if it were a mouse.

Six other children crowd around her, trying to get a look.

NICK (O.S.)
He hisses by forcibly expelling air
through breathing pores.

NICK GREGGOR (25) is good looking, with a thin wiry frame and large haunted eyes. Although he's painfully shy around adults, he comes alive when talking to children.

The bug lab is a large, dimly lit room with rows of pinned bugs in display cases. All shapes and sizes.

NICK
But don't be afraid. This little
guy is very docile, and makes a
great pet.

The bug HISSES. The children all giggle with delight.

BLONDE GIRL
Mommy, can I have one? Please!

Behind the kids, all wearing expressions of disgust are a YOUNG MOM, an ATTRACTIVE MOM, and other parents.

YOUNG MOTHER
Absolutely not. Give it back,
honey. Give it back to the man.

Nick takes the roach and puts it back in its plastic bin. There are several other bins, filled with exotic insects.

NICK
(to the kids)
I'll tell you what, if you all come
back around noon, you can watch me
feed Brittany, my TARANTULA.

The children react with glee, the mothers with revulsion. As the women usher their children into the museum hall...

ATTRACTIVE MOTHER
You really keep those things in
your home?

Nick seems flattered that she is talking to him.

NICK

Sure, I have over eighty different
pet insects in my apartment.

ATTRACTIVE MOTHER

I'm guessing you're NOT married.

Now, Nick looks stung. As they exit, the women titter and
whisper like cruel schoolgirls.

YOUNG MOTHER

Melissa you are so mean!

EXT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Establish. The children and their pretty mothers exit the
museum past sculptures of dinosaurs.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

Nick catalogues rows of exotic dead insects spread out on a
worktable. Near by sits his best friend...

SANJAY

What do you expect? Roaches aren't
babe magnets.

SANJAY PATEL (27), obnoxious and cocky, speaks with a
lingering Indian accent, making his American idioms sound a
little odd. He fancies himself a lady's man.

NICK

Her kids were nice - still young
enough to be curious. No fear. No
judgement. Not like their mother.

SANJAY

Too bad. She had a nice rack, too.

NICK

I just want to meet someone I
connect with.

Sanjay pins dead wasps in neat little rows, and makes notes
on each sample on a pad.

SANJAY

A romantic.

(beat)

(MORE)

SANJAY (cont'd)
What about that grad assistant. The
redhead upstairs. You like her?

NICK
Her hair's always in her face. I
can't tell what she looks like.

SANJAY
She's not bad. I can tell all I
need to know about a woman by
looking at her feet.
(beat)
She has delicate bones.

NICK
I don't know. She seems a little
weird.

Beat. Sanjay gives him a look - you're one to talk.

SANJAY
She's just shy. I'm telling you, girls
like that are animals in the sack.

Nick examines a specimen with a pair of long metal tweezers.

NICK
I just feel like, whenever I meet
someone, they look at me like I'm
some kind of... insect.

SANJAY
My friend, let me give you some
advice. Get rid of your pets.

Nick looks genuinely shocked.

SANJAY
Take it from me. I don't even keep
BOOKS about wasps in the house - It
drives chicks away like poison.

NICK
(indignant)
I'm an entomologist. Shouldn't I
find somebody who likes me for who
I am?

Sanjay laughs.

SANJAY
At some point you make a choice.
Women or bugs. You can't have both.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick walks down the dark, vacant hallway. His bins of live bugs are stacked on a hand dolly.

He hears footsteps and he looks over his shoulder to see if he is being followed. The hall has the ambiance of a morgue.

Then he sees her, sitting on the bench near the elevator.

ALICE BANNER (22), frizzy red hair obscures her face. A frumpy sweater hangs to her knees. She's reading a book.

He slows down. Unsure if he should say something. Decides to just roll past her...

ALICE

Hi!

It startles him.

ALICE

Sorry. You're Nick right? I hear you're really good with the kids.

NICK

Oh... Thanks.

ALICE

You like to work late too?

Nick shrugs and tries to get a good look at her, but the light is dim and her hair covers her features.

She speaks in nervous bursts, talking very quickly, but then abruptly stopping.

ALICE

I'm Alice Banner. And-I-was-going-to-get-a-cup-of-coffee.

(pause)

I-don't-know-why-I-said-that-It-was-such-a-stupid-thing-to-say.

(pause)

I-hate-coffee-I-drink-tea.

She laughs nervously and abruptly stops. They have a hard time making eye contact. There is a long awkward pause.

ALICE

So, what's in the boxes?

NICK

Oh, Nothing. Just... for the kids.

Something scuttles around in the bin.

ALICE

What is it? A hamster?

NICK

No. Actually.

(beat)

You know. I'm sorry. I'm sort of in a hurry.

ALICE

Oh okay.

She brushes her hair back for a second, revealing that her face is VERY pretty. Delicate as a fairy.

As he steps into the elevator, Nick reconsiders. He opens his mouth to speak and searches for the words.

But the moment is lost. The elevator doors close.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

He trudges up the stairs dragging his bins along behind him. He punctuates each step with a curse.

NICK

Stupid. Idiot. Stupid. Idiot.

When he finally gets to the door of the apartment, he sees something sitting on the welcome mat.

A PACKAGE

A cube the size of a jack-in-the-box, wrapped in brown paper with UPS labels and holes for ventilation - a live specimen.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is lit by a single lamp. It's barren otherwise.

Nick enters and places the package on the counter, and uses a long pair of SCISSORS to cut away the cardboard.

Inside the wrapping is a plastic, translucent container. And in the container we see the shadow of some sort of bug.

CLOSE ON NICK

Excitedly, like a child at Christmas, he pops the lid and looks inside. He's shocked. Amazed.

We don't see what he sees but whatever it is, it takes his breath away. A faint green glow plays on his face.

From the box, comes a distinctive CHIRP, causing Nick to break into a wide grin.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a single couch and an old TV sitting on a crate, but the room is dominated a dozen lushly landscaped, TERRARIUMS. Each is filled with EXOTIC BUGS.

Nick dials a number on a cordless phone, and as it rings he puts his pet Madagascar roaches back in their glass box.

SANJAY (O.C.)

Hello?

NICK

So I talked to that girl.

Sanjay sounds groggy - his sleep interrupted.

SANJAY (O.C.)

What girl? What time is it? Fuck.

Nick taps the glass to say hello to his other pets. Mantids. Katydid. Colorful horned beetles. Undulating millipedes.

NICK

Did you say something to Alice
about me working with kids?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nick walks through the bedroom, past more terrariums. Again there is no furniture other than a simple, double bed.

CLOSE ON a giant, black SCORPION stalking a cricket.

SANJAY (O.C.)

I talked you up a little sure. I
was trying to do you a favor.

NICK
Well, there's something about her I
like, but she took me by surprise.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick continues to walk and talk, stopping to put his
tarantula, Brittany, back in her terrarium.

SANJAY (O.C.)
You choked again, didn't you?

NICK
Well... That's not why I called.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nick comes full circle, back to the kitchen counter.

NICK
I got a package. I thought I was
getting a mantid, but they sent me
something else.

Nick opens the plastic container. Once again, we don't see
what he sees, but he is spellbound.

NICK
It has a head like a praying
mantis, but a body like a carabida.
It also has some sort of proboscis.

SANJAY (O.C.)
Well, if it has a proboscis, it's
not a mantid. How big is it?

We hear a strange CLICKING.

NICK
It's big. It's really big.
(beat)
And beautiful... in its own way.

SANJAY (O.C.)
How many segments on its abdomen?

Nick rummages and finds a pair of long tweezers.

NICK
Hold on, I'll check. It came from
Brazil, originally but -

As he reaches in with long tweezers, there is a loud CROAK and the container SHAKES.

Nick flinches, jerks back, and GASPS...

NICK
Holly shit! It's aggressive.

SANJAY (O.C.)
Hey man, I'm beat. We'll look it up
in the morning.

Sanjay hangs up. The box shakes again and Nick quick slams on the lid to keep it from escaping.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The old architecture, dark wood paneling, and HISS of the iron radiator make the space ominous and surreal.

Nick can't sleep. He's restless, tossing and turning in his patterned FLANNEL PAJAMAS. His new bug darts and jumps around in its container, making quite a racket.

He sits up in bed. The mysterious bug CHIRPS.

CLOSE ON A WRIGGLING ROACH - MOMENTS LATER

Nick drops a small ordinary beetle into the container. There is a HISS and a flurry of movement inside the box.

NICK
Wow. You're mean when you're
hungry.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Establish. A quaint little building with about eight units.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - DAY

Nick hustles out of his apartment, but just as he shuts the door, MIRIAM FOGEL (66) appears in the hall. She's a short fussy woman with a sour expression. The landlady.

MIRIAM
Mr. Gregory, I was hoping I'd catch
you.

NICK
Hi. I think I sent you a check -

MIRIAM
- Yes you did. There's something
else we need to discuss.

NICK
Sure.

MIRIAM
Your neighbors have a problem and
frankly I share their concerns.

NICK
Miriam, when I moved in, you said I
could keep pets.

MIRIAM
I meant a dog, a cat, a goldfish.

NICK
My pets are as safe as fish. Safer
in fact, because there's no water
to leak on the floor.

MIRIAM
I keep a CLEAN building.

NICK
Yes. Spotless. I agree. I promise
they will NEVER cause trouble.

Miriam looks Nick over. She's not a woman you want to cross.

MIRIAM
I don't ever want to hear that
something got out. Understood?

NICK
Yes Ma'am.

Nick hustles past her, down the stairs.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - HALLWAY - DAY

Nick walks apprehensively down the hallway.

He sees Alice, sitting on the bench by the elevator, eating a
bag lunch and reading her paperback, The Trial.

She looks up, but he looks away, pressing the elevator button and behaving absurdly like he doesn't notice she's there.

She looks back to her book.

ON ALICE - NICK'S POV

Her legs are crossed, and she has popped her sandal off one foot - nude from the toe to the ankle.

ON NICK

He is so taken by her pretty foot that he doesn't notice the elevator has arrived and the doors are open behind him.

Alice looks up at him again. Curious.

Nick suddenly notices the elevator doors closing and lunges to hit the button. Too late. He shakes his head lamely.

Alice smirks and goes back to her book.

Nick looks like a man about to take a leap into a yawning abyss. All at once, he blurts out...

NICK

Would you like to have dinner with me?

ALICE

(quickly)

Yes.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

It's a tiny hole in the wall, filled with steam and noise from the kitchen. Alice and Nick are the only patrons, eating noodles on a wobbly table.

She's anxious, talking fast. He's awkward, talking slowly.

ALICE

It's-a-really-cool-place-I've-never
come-here-before-do-you-come-alot?

NICK

I usually just. Get take out.

ALICE
I-thought-we'd-see-a-movie-but-I-
looked-in-the-paper-and-nothing-
seemed-good-so-I-rented-this-I-hope-
you-don't-think-I'm-presumptuous.

From her purse, Alice pulls out a video tape.

NICK
Okay.

ALICE
I-thought-we'd-watch-it-at-your-
place-if-thats-okay-I-mean-I-don't
want-you-to-think-I'm-this-psycho-
control-freak-or-anything.

NICK
Uh... What?

ALICE
Do you have a VCR?

NICK
Sure.

ALICE
So-after-this-can-we-just-go to
your-place?

Nick looks uncomfortable.

NICK
Actually. Well, I. It's kind of a
mess over there.

ALICE
You-should-see-my-place-I-mean-I-
tried-cleaning-up-but-I-started-to-
have-an-anxiety-attack.

NICK
Right.

ALICE
I-was-dusting-the-TV-when-I-
realized-oh-my-god-what-an-idiot-I-
don't-have-a-VCR-just-a-DVD-how-are-
we-going-to-watch this?

She giggles wildly and then abruptly stops.

NICK

Right.

Alice tucks her hair back behind her ear and SMILES.

It's the cutest smile Nick has every seen, but quickly she blushes and hides behind a curtain of frizzy red hair.

Nick picks up the cassette and checks it out. Thinks. Hesitates. Thinks. Gathers his strength.

NICK

Okay. I think that would be okay.

ALICE

Cool.

They eat their noodles in silence, making furtive eye contact.

ALICE

I'm having a really good time.

Nick nods, and they eat their noodles in silence.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

They enter stiffly. Nick in particular looks extremely uncomfortable. He takes her coat and they walk slowly into...

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The terrariums and bugs are nowhere to be seen. There is just the couch and the TV. Bare walls. Bare hardwood floor.

ALICE

I love this old building.

NICK

It's got character.

ALICE

And it's got a big kitchen.

(beat)

Is that the bedroom?

She walks towards the far door to take a peek, but Nick lunges forward and blocks her way.

NICK

Oh, wait! Don't go in there.

ALICE
(jumpy)
Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

NICK
It's just. I just don't...

ALICE
No problem.

He puts the videotape in the VCR. She sits down stiffly on the end of the couch.

ALICE
Do you have anything to drink? I'm feeling a little antsy.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nick nervously rummages through a cabinet and he finds an unopened bottle of vodka.

Then he rinses out two mismatched glasses in the sink.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He pours the vodka straight into the glasses with ice. The old, black and white movie plays on the TV.

NICK
I don't really have anything to mix it with.

ALICE
That's okay.

Nick takes a tentative sip of his drink and grimaces. She takes several thirsty gulps, finishing the glass.

ALICE
It's hot in here.

She puts down the drink and in one swift motion pulls off her big baggy sweater.

She's wearing a little white t-shirt underneath, and her body is surprisingly slender and pert.

ALICE
I'm sorry. Is this the most boring first date ever?

NICK
I'm not bored.

Nick watches her as she refills her glass.

WIDE ON THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Alice seems tipsy, giggling at the movie, and playing with a lock of her hair. Nick can't keep his eyes off her.

ON ALICE - NICK'S POV

As she leans forward to grab her glass, she repositions her legs so that their THIGHS ARE TOUCHING.

This seems to send waves of electricity through Nick. He doesn't know what to do with his hands.

ON NICK AND ALICE

She takes yet another healthy sip of vodka and leans back so that their shoulders are touching as well.

THEIR THIGHS - NICK'S POV

Her pretty hand rests on her leg.

Summoning his courage, Nick places his hand on his own thigh next to hers. Inches it closer.

And inches it closer.

He lifts his hand to put it on hers...

Then the PHONE RINGS, shattering his nerves.

WIDE ON THE LIVING ROOM

Abruptly he stands up, grabs the cordless phone, marches into the bedroom, and closes the door behind him.

Alice is left alone... and a little confused. She can hear Nick's hushed voice in the other room.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He paces back and forth in the dim light.

NICK
Why are you calling me?

SANJAY (O.C.)

I just want to hear how your big date went.

NICK

It's still going. She's here and we're watching a movie.

SANJAY (O.C.)

Did you get rid of the bugs?

NICK

Yeah. Well. I just moved them all into the bedroom.

Beat. Reveal that the missing terrariums are stacked everywhere, filling the room and blocking the bed.

SANJAY (O.C.)

Nick. The point is to get HER into the bedroom. What are you thinking?

NICK

Damn it. I didn't think.

SANJAY (O.C.)

Nick. Breathe deeply. Listen to me. Go in there and make your move.

(beat)

But DON'T LET HER SEE THE BUGS.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick comes back into the room and sees that Alice is lying down on the couch.

As he gets closer he realizes that she has passed out. The vodka bottle on the floor is half empty.

Timidly, he touches her shoulder, but she doesn't wake up.

He shakes harder, and she sits up, spilling her glass.

ALICE

Oh... where am I. Okay. Oops.

She giggles and tries to take another sip, but Nick takes the glass away. She seems MUCH drunker than she was a minute ago.

NICK

You don't want more of that.

ALICE
Something happened. I was just
sitting here and WHAM... and then I
was asleep.

NICK
Are you okay to drive?

ALICE
Ohhh... sure. Do you want me to go?

She tries to stand up but is unsteady on her feet. Nick
catches her by the arm and sits her back down.

NICK
I think I should drive you.

ALICE
Can't I just stay?

Beat. Nick nods sheepishly.

NICK
Okay. You can sleep here.
(qualifying)
Right here on the couch.

She notices he is still holding his arm. She takes his hand.

ALICE
You must think I'm such a freak.

NICK
No you're... exquisite.

ALICE
Exquisite? What kind of word is
"exquisite?"

She breaks into a wide, grin. Their eyes lock. If ever there
was a time to kiss her, it's now.

But he doesn't. He stands up lamely.

NICK
Okay, you're going to need pajamas.
And a blanket.

He walks off, leaving her alone on the couch.

CLOSE ON ALICE

She looks sleepy, embarrassed... and disappointed.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick pulls a comforter down from high in the closet.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He walks back in with the blanket, and sees that she is asleep again, lying on her side with her back to him.

She wears his pajama top, and her face is hidden by hair, but her legs, bare and lithe, stretch out over the cushions.

Nick covers her with the blanket. Switches off the light.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick enters, lost in his thoughts, and he flips off the light. It's pitch black.

Click! He turns the light back on. He does a double take. He stares at something off screen.

REVEAL the container for the new bug. The top has been chewed up and pushed away. Nick looks closer.

The box is EMPTY. THE BUG HAS GOTTEN OUT.

From somewhere else in the apartment he hears it CHIRP.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He enters with the long tweezers, listening for the sound.

He hears the chirp and the scamper of little legs.

CLOSE ON NICK

He pushes aside a trash basket, and IT SPRINGS OUT AT HIM.

He jumps back and falls to the ground. We hear the scuttle as it runs out of the room. We just miss seeing it clearly.

NICK searches through a drawer and finds a flashlight.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quietly and cautiously he walks down the hall, scanning the baseboards with his flashlight beam.

He flinches, hearing something, and he whips his light to the ceiling, but there is nothing there.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He enters quietly, trying not to wake her. In the dim light she looks like a mermaid floating on dark water.

The beam searches the floor... then the walls. There is no sound other than her gentle breathing.

Crack! He bumps into something. The TV.

He turns just in time to glimpse something scurry under the couch where she is still dead asleep.

He tip-toes over. He crouches down to peer under the couch.

NICK'S POV

He shines the flashlight up and down. He's startled by an old COOSH BALL but there's no sign of the bug.

He sees an old hole in the wall, about three inches wide.

ON NICK

He hears it scuttle through the wall like a rat.

NICK
(whisper)
Fuck.

He sits up and turns off the flashlight...

...Just as something JUMPS ON HIS SHOULDER.

Nick SCREAMS...

... but it's not a bug, it's a HAND.

ALICE
It's just me. I'm sorry. I didn't
mean to scare you.

She pets his hair, touches his cheek.

ALICE
Calm down. It's okay.

His heart racing, he leans forward and kisses her.

For both of them, it's as if a damn has finally broken. They fall upon each other, ripping at each others clothes.

We don't see much in the darkness, just glimpses of luminous flesh and writhing arms and legs.

As they make love, we PAN down her calf to find...

AN INSECT BITE. Right on the top of her foot.

Their moans get frenzied as they get close to climax...

SMASH CUT:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Nick sits bolt upright on the couch, as if awakening from a particularly shocking dream. He's alone.

Then he looks down on the floor and sees Alice's rumpled clothes and purse. It wasn't a dream.

But there's no sign of her. He looks around and finally sees... The OPEN BEDROOM DOOR.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Tentatively, he walks into his bedroom and sees Alice, still wearing his pajamas, peering into a terrarium, her face twisted in an expression that could be DISGUST.

Nick tenses up. She's found his secret in all its creepy-crawly splendor. His mortified.

ALICE

Oh... my... GOD.

NICK

I'm sorry. I... I... I...

ALICE

What is this?

NICK

It's just... I'm getting rid of them -

ALICE

- It's a Lucanus laetus right? From Thailand?

Beat.

NICK

No. You're thinking of Lucanus
laminifer coronatus. Leatus is from
China.

ALICE

(dubious)

Doesn't coronatus have a brown back
and longer mandibles?

NICK

(testy)

No, it doesn't. Look closer at the -
(catching himself)
You know about stag beetles?

ALICE

Not really, but my dad was once an
entomologist with the museum.

NICK

Your dad is Professor *Nelson*
Banner?

ALICE

Yeah. I know. Total nepotism.

NICK

So. You're not bothered by them.
Some women are bothered by them.

She turns, steps forward, and the light catches her hair like
a halo. She looks supernaturally pretty.

ALICE

No. When I was a girl, my house was
filled with terrariums and insects.
(smiling)
It doesn't bother me at all.

CLOSE ON NICK

He struggles to contain his unadulterated wonder and joy.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

Sanjay looks over several DRAWINGS. Each of a very bizarre
looking bug. It has long arms like a praying mantis, but a
fat body like a beetle, and a strange long needle-like nose.

SANJAY

This is absurd. No insect looks like this. It's science fiction.

NICK

I'm telling you. That's what it looks like. Exactly.

SANJAY

Okay. Bring it in. Prove it.

NICK

I can't. It got loose and now I can't find it.

SANJAY

Who drew this?

NICK

I described it to Alice and she did it for me. She's a great artist.

Sanjay puts the drawings aside.

SANJAY

(mocking)

She's a great artist. A great cook. Speaks three languages. Alice this. Alice that. Alice. Alice. Alice.

NICK

What's your problem?

SANJAY

No problem, man. I'm glad to see you're attracted to something besides mantids.

NICK

You don't like her?

SANJAY

Just be careful. Don't let her take over your life just because she gives a good blow job.

Nick bristles.

NICK

Watch it. I could see having kids with this woman.

SANJAY

Hey. No offence man. I'm just
saying, it's only been a week.

(beat)

You're a young guy. Take it easy.
Don't let it get too... serious.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAY

SLAM! The door bursts open. Nick and Alice fall into the
apartment against the wall in a wildly passionate kiss.

They look deeply in each others eyes, overcome with
excitement. Suddenly, she frowns and touches her forehead.

NICK

Are you okay?

ALICE

Yeah... I think I'm just hung over.

She shakes it off. He picks up her TWO SUITCASES.

ALICE

Are you sure about this? It isn't
too fast?

NICK

I have never been so sure about
anything.

Alice beams.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY - MONTAGE

We cut over various images of Alice moving in and re-
decorating Nick's sad, empty apartment.

KITCHEN

Alice unpacks bags of fresh fruit and vegetables, while Nick
unpacks dishes, pots and pans. She pops a plum in his mouth.

BEDROOM

They paint drab walls with vibrant color. Nick works the
roller. Alice creates texture with a sponge.

BATHROOM

With the long, sharp scissors, Alice cuts Nick's hair. He's getting as much of a makeover as his apartment.

LIVING ROOM

Terrariums are now interspersed with Alice's hip antique furniture and exotic wall hangings. A room that had been as bare as a cell is now lush with throw pillows and chotchkies.

Nick carries in her boxes while Alice holds and pets Brittany, the tarantula, as if it were a kitten.

HALLWAY

Wearing his baggy pajamas, she kisses him like a 50's housewife as he leaves for work. It's pure domestic bliss.

END MONTAGE:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Still in pajamas, she sits down on the bed and peels back a large band aid on the top of her foot.

The insect bite has gotten larger. A big red lump.

She winces. She pokes at it with her finger and BLUIISH WHITE LIQUID oozes out of it.

Quickly she swabs it with a tissue and presses the band aid back into place. She shivers.

Then from somewhere, she hears something CHIRP.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

She walks down the hall carrying the missing bug's container and the long tweezers.

ALICE

Come here you little rascal.

She hears it CHIRP and SCUTTLE in the next room.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

She walks in and searches for it, pushing aside a chair, lifting up an ottoman.

Then something catches her eye.

ALICE
Ha. I see you.

CLOSE ON ALICE

She crouches down to snatch it up with her tweezers. But at the sight of it, her smile turns shock.

Her eyes widen, and she backs away slowly. She's scared.

We don't see it, but we hear it HISS at her.

All at once she turns and RUNS.

BUG POV - CLOSE TO THE FLOOR

It races after her down the hall, but she makes it to the bathroom just in time and SLAMS THE DOOR.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She's shaking. Covering her mouth. She can't believe it.

CRACK UNDER THE DOOR - ALICE'S POV

Little green arms reach under the crack and wriggle around, trying to get in.

ON ALICE

She grabs a pair of scissors and stabs at it through the crack. It retreats...

She takes a few moments to breathe, to regain composure. She talks to herself in the mirror.

ALICE
It's just a bug.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LATER

She whips open the door, holding a BROOM HANDLE like a spear. She's duct-taped scissors to the end to make a point.

But the bug is nowhere to be seen. Cautiously, she ventures out and walks down the hall.

Checking the floor. Checking the walls. Where is it?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Alice enters but she can't see it anywhere.

She picks up the cordless phone sitting on the counter and punches out a number. Behind her we see a blur of movement.

BUG POV

It races across the floor directly at her other foot.

ON ALICE

She SQUEALS, spins around, and grabs her foot in pain.

Dropping the phone, she stabs wildly with her makeshift spear, but whatever bit her has scuttled out of sight.

She stands for a second. Her face frozen in shock.

Then she drops to her knees...

NICK (O.C.)
(over phone)
Hello? Alice?

She falls flat on her back and begins CONVULSING and SHAKING in a hideous way.

She tries to speak but only manages choked gargles.

NICK (O.C.)
Is everything all right?

Then the tremors subside.

CLOSE ON ALICE'S FACE

She breathes freely again. Her expression changes from pained to relaxed...

... then waves of euphoria ripple over her. She's like a junky feeling the rush.

She touches her lips, and her fingers trail down to her breast. She gasps.

NICK (V.O.)
Alice? Talk to me.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Alice, still in the pajamas, drags Nick into the room by his hand. She seems high, as if on ecstasy.

NICK
Are you sure you're okay? You
sounded weird on the phone.

The bed has new pillows and a new comforter.

ALICE
I wanted to show you... These are
down pillows. A down comforter and
here...

They sit down on the bed.

ALICE
A down mattress pad. I'm never
getting out of this bed again.

NICK
Cool. I like it.

As she pulls him down close to her we see she is wearing big
RED WOOL SOX.

CLOSE ON the terrarium with its writhing insects. The pajama
top flies away from the direction of the bed.

NICK (O.C.)
I have to go back to work.

ALICE (O.C.)
Take the rest of the day off.

Then the pajama bottoms are tossed...

ALICE (O.C.)
Wait! Leave my sox on.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

As CAMERA CREEPS through the HALL, KITCHEN, and LIVING ROOM,
we hear the sounds of lovemaking from the bedroom.

NICK (O.C.)
Your skin is ice cold.

ALICE (O.C.)
I'm fine. Don't stop.

NICK (O.C.)
What's gotten into you?

Something CHIRPS. Scuttles just out of view. Just a streak of motion as it runs up the wall in the corner of the frame.

ALICE (O.C.)
Wait... let's switch.

NICK (O.C.)
Like this?

ALICE (O.C.)
No the other way. Like this.

NICK (O.C.)
Are you sure?

In the terrariums, as we hear the squeals of pleasure and creaking bed, millipedes writhe and beetles dance.

Again something zips by in the background. It's BIG.

ALICE (O.C.)
That's it...no higher... just a little... okay. Okay. Harder. Harder now. That's it... I... okay... yes... YES.

Curtains billow from the open WINDOW. We hear Alice SCREAM in delight, it echoes throughout the courtyard.

INT. BEDROOM - CLOSE ON NICK AND ALICE - DAY

Exhausted, tender afterglow. They stroke each other's cheeks, rubbing the tips of their noses.

Then Nick has a thought...

NICK
Hey... have you seen that missing mantid.

Beat.

ALICE
No. I haven't.

NICK
I keep hearing it chirp.

ALICE
It'll turn up sooner or later.
Forget about it.

She kisses him again. True love.

Suddenly there is a loud POUNDING at the front door. It shatters the mood.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Nick opens the door a crack to find his landlady standing there with a dour expression.

MIRIAM
Nicholas, there are children in this building.

NICK
I'm sorry, Miriam. I -

MIRIAM
- Maybe you could explain that to your lady friend.

NICK
We'll close the windows. Sorry to disturb you.

MIRIAM
Am I to understand this person has moved into the building permanently?

BEDROOM - INTERCUT

Alice lounges half-asleep, satisfied, relaxed. The sheets drape her nude body like some decadent French painting.

We can hear the conversation in the hall.

MIRIAM (O.C.)
- Because there WILL be an adjustment to your rent. It's clearly stated in the lease -

REVEAL the MISSING BUG crouched on a pillow near Alice's belly. This is the first time we've actually seen it.

It's exactly as we saw it in the drawing, but BIGGER. Vibrant green, bizarre, and strangely beautiful. She seems unaware it's there. It lies with her like purring cat.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

Nick sits at a worktable reading a LETTER. He reacts with shock and disbelief.

SANJAY
What is it?

Nick hands the paper to Sanjay, who starts reading...

NICK
The mystery man in Brazil who sent
me that unclassified insect.
(beat)
I guess he made some sort of
mistake.

SANJAY
You mean some sort of joke.

NICK
No. He seems to think it's
dangerous... poisonous maybe.

SANJAY
(reading)
He's crazy. Who wrote this?

NICK
He doesn't identify himself, but it
isn't a prank. I SAW it. It's real.

SANJAY
An insect that hunts and kills
birds? There's no such thing.

NICK
Well he's probably not a scientist.

SANJAY
He's probably a crackpot.

Nick takes the letter back in a huff.

NICK
If he sends the museum any more
letters or packages let me know.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Through the front door walks Nick, looking chipper. He carries groceries.

NICK

Sweetie?

(no answer)

They didn't have Nyquil so I got you this generic stuff.

Nick pulls out an assortment of COLD AND FLU remedies out of the bag. But on the table he finds something strange...

A POOL OF LIQUID

Iridescent and blue/white, it's sticky and viscous.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice is curled up and completely covered by a mountain of blankets. Her body is shaking. She is breathing weirdly.

NICK

The guy at the pharmacy said it's the same... Hey, are you alright?

Nick reaches for the blanket but he hesitates.

The body underneath continues convulse oddly. It spooks him. Slowly he bends and grabs the hem of the blanket...

Abruptly he pulls the cover back from her head revealing...

... she is shaking with LAUGHTER. A mad cackle erupts from her - nothing like her usual girlish giggle.

NICK

What?

ALICE

Nothing. I had the most perverted dream.

NICK

Was I in it?

She shakes her head. She sits up and thinks.

ALICE

I dreamt that I was a tiny fairy
lying naked on a lily pad.

(beat)

Then a giant mosquito landed on me,
held my arms above my head and
pierced my belly with its
proboscis.

(beat)

And I just lay there as it sucked
out my life's blood and pumped me
full of its poison.

(deadpan)

What do you think it means?

Nick just stares at her, struck dumb. He has no idea what to
say to this. And then...

NICK

Maybe... the bug symbolizes me.

ALICE

HA HA! Not everything is about you,
honey bun.

(beat)

I think it's about my job. I really
hate my supervisor. Maybe I should
just work at Starbucks.

Nick nods.

NICK

Are you feeling better?

Alice, her skin as white as bone and her eyes bloodshot, nods
enthusiastically.

NICK

Well you look like death.

Alice's mood changes abruptly.

ALICE

Gee thanks. Thanks a lot.

Nick approaches the windows. Starts to open the curtains...

ALICE

DON'T DO THAT!

Her voice sounds different. Lower in pitch. Mean.

NICK
Okay. Okay. Jeez'.

ALICE
I like it dark in here.

NICK
Look, I'm going back to work, so
I'm putting this by the bed.

He drops the medicine on the side table. Alice crawls back under the covers.

ALICE
Whatever.

NICK
You should at least take some
ibuprofen.

He touches her shoulder but she pulls away from his touch.

ALICE
(croaking)
Nicholas. Leave me the fuck alone.

CLOSE ON NICK

He's disturbed. Confused. It doesn't sound anything like her.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

Sanjay scans the sexy newspaper ads for bras and panties.
He's wearing an I-told-you-so-grin.

SANJAY
What can I say? Once they move in,
their personality completely
changes. Everything changes.

NICK
We all have mood swings.

SANJAY
I'll bet you didn't have sex last
night, now that she's settled in.

NICK
She's not feeling well.

SANJAY

Hey, hey. Don't get upset. Maybe
she's different. Maybe I'm wrong.

Sanjay smirks again, and Nick fumes.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is very dark, but a shaft of moonlight lights
Nick's face on the bed.

There is a CREAK and a soft MOAN. Nick's eyes flutter open.

He listens as Alice groans more loudly and mutters in her
sleep. She tosses and turns, making the bed creak.

Nick can't see anything; it's too dark. But, he hears her
breathing. Little wheezing gasps and snorts.

Nick tries to sleep, but he's startled by a loud HACK.

Now he's wide awake, disturbed by the sounds. The bed creaks
in syncopation with her bizarre gasps.

Suddenly the creaking gets faster and it sounds like Alice is
struggling for air. CHOKING...

NICK

Alice!

Beat. The sounds stop. She lies completely still.

ALICE (O.C.)

What?

NICK

You're breathing weird.

ALICE (O.C.)

You should talk. You snore like a
lawn mower.

She flips on the light. Nick is STARTLED BY THE SIGHT OF HER.

ON ALICE

She looks feverish, DRIPPING with sweat. Her flimsy pajamas
cling to her clammy skin like wet rags.

Her face gaunt and white as a skull. Her expression is
unbalanced... scary.

ALICE
(croaking)
I can't sleep. I itch all over. I
could chew off my own skin.

She bolts up and hustles out of the room.

ON NICK

Unsettled. He doesn't know what to make of this.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Slowly he walks down the hall.

In the kitchen he hears her hacking COUGH - like the BARK of
a dog crossed with the CHIRP of a bird.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Nick enters to find her drinking cranberry juice in wild
gulps. Red liquid runs down her chin, staining her shirt.

Nick looks at her like she's raving mad.

ALICE
What? I'm thirsty. It's hot in
here.

NICK
Well, if you're hot, why don't you
take off those wool socks?

On her feet she's still wearing the thick, RED WOOL SOCKS.

He touches her shoulder. She pulls away like he had stuck her
with a pin.

ALICE
(croaking)
Don't touch me!

NICK
Sorry... I was just trying to be
affectionate.

Alice's voice returns to normal.

ALICE

I'm sorry, sweetie. I feel sick and disgusting and I don't want to be touched right now.

(beat)

I love you.

NICK

I love you, too.

Beat. Her face brightens, excited. Her voice is sweet.

ALICE

Oh god, OH GOD, that was it. That's the first time you said it. Say it again.

NICK

I love you.

ALICE

I love you too.

They stare at each other warmly. Then suddenly she holds her temple as if hit by a crippling migraine.

ALICE

I'm sorry. I have to go back to bed. I feel SO... gross.

NICK

I'll sleep on the couch for now.

ALICE

You're so good to me.

Alice walks back to bed. As she exits, he catches a glimpse of her feet. SOMETHING BULGES UNDER THE SOCK LIKE A SPUR.

ON NICK

Did he really just see that? He rubs his eyes. Couldn't be.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAWN

In his slippers, Nick picks up the morning paper.

He's not quick enough to avoid Miriam who corners him at the top of the stairs.

MIRIAM
I've had complaints. They heard it
crawling in the walls.

NICK
I admit I'm missing one specimen.

She's so upset her lips quiver and her hands shake.

MIRIAM
Understand me. I think bugs are...
(like a curse)
dirty, and anyone who would keep
them is just perverse.

NICK
I am truly sorry. But I swear...

MIRIAM
Don't make trouble with me. I want
you out in thirty days.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick sits in on the couch reading his books. Alice talks to
him from the bedroom.

ALICE (O.C.)
I don't want to move. We just fixed
the place up.

NICK
She just hates me. Always has.
There's nothing we can do about it.

ALICE (O.C.)
(sunny)
You know, I feel better today. I
think I'm finally getting over it.

NICK
Good! That's great.

Alice enters and she doesn't look better. She looks WORSE.

Her baggy sweats can't hide that she's lost A LOT of weight.
Once curvy, she is now bony and emaciated.

There is something unnaturally jerky about her movements. Her
skin looks veiny and green.

ALICE
What?

NICK
Nothing.

ALICE
Is something wrong?

NICK
Sweetie, you might want to wash
those clothes. You've been wearing
the same socks for a week...

ALICE
(croaking)
Maybe YOU should do a dish once and
a while. I'm not your fucking maid.

Nick is stunned. That came from nowhere.

She coughs. It's like tearing sheet metal.

NICK
Alice, you don't sound better. I
think I need to take you to a
hospital.

ALICE
I have the flu. I don't need to pay
a doctor to tell me I have the flu.

NICK
You're not eating anymore.

ALICE
(croaking)
Food just looks repulsive to me
right now.

As she sits down on the couch and tucks her foot under her,
and her LEG BENDS LIKE SHE HAS TWO DOUBLE-JOINTED KNEES.

Nick does a double take. Did he really see that?

ALICE
Why are you looking at me like
that?

NICK
What's wrong with your leg?

ALICE

Nothing?

(off his revulsion)

Do you think I'm fat?

Nick opens his mouth to speak but he can't find the words.

ALICE

You do. You think my thighs are fat. You think I'm repulsive.

NICK

No. No. It just looked like... for a second... your leg bent in like three places...

ALICE

What are you talking about?

NICK

It was just, the angle or the light, it just looked odd...

Alice is shrill and hysterical.

ALICE

You know I'm going through a really hard time right now. You could be a little more supportive and not CRITICIZE me so much.

NICK

Okay. I'm sorry. I apologize.

(beat)

Look, I want to contact your dad.

ALICE

What for? Why would you do that?

NICK

I just want to ask him about the missing insect. Get his opinion.

ALICE

My father's somewhere in Brazil. No one's heard from him in years.

CLOSE ON NICK

Brazil? He's rolling this over in his head.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick carries a blanket and pillow to the couch, but he hears Alice's voice from the other room.

ALICE (O.S.)
Ouch... not like that. It hurts.
Not like that.

He pushes open the door and peaks in the bedroom.

BEDROOM - NICK'S POV

It's dark. All he can see is a mound of blankets. Alice wheezes and gargles in her sleep disturbingly.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

NICK
Sweetie?

Alice talks more delirious nonsense in her sleep.

Nick enters and slowly approaches the bed. He looks down at her leg sticking out of the mound of pillows and quilts. It's still covered in baggy sweatpants and a RED SOCK.

He reaches down to pull down the fabric of her sock and see the flesh underneath.

But just as he touches her, she stirs in her sleep, and her leg retracts into the bedding like a turtle in its shell.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick sits back down on the couch and puts earplugs in his ears. Alice's hacks are as loud and sharp as ever.

He pops a pill, fluffs his pillow and tries to sleep.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's late. Almost everyone is sleeping.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Miriam lugs a trash bag down the stairs, a cigarette hanging from her mouth. She fusses and curses as she goes.

Behind her, in the shadows, we can see A FIGURE - blurry, but we recognize a mop of frizzy red hair.

ON MIRIAM

She stops walking, and listens to the footsteps coming down the stairs behind her. The footsteps stop.

Miriam turns around and looks back up the stairs. Nobody is there. There is no sound but chirping crickets.

VIEW FROM THE CEILING

Something looks down at her from above.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Miriam throws her trash in a dumpster. Suddenly the chirping of the crickets abruptly stops. It spooks her.

She hears a different kind of CLICKING and CHIRPING.

A bizarre, undulating SHADOW moves behind her, but she turns around too late to see it.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The old woman rushes up the steps. Panicked. She stops abruptly and looks at the bottom of the stairs.

MIRIAM
Who's there?

CLOSE ON THE STEP

There's a pool of blue-white goo, milky and viscous, on the stair. She steps right into it.

And SLIPS.

She falls backwards, tumbling down the steps, snapping hips and breaking joints, until she lands at the bottom.

CLOSE ON MIRIAM

She's barely conscious, but as a shadow passes over her face, her eyes widen in raw, instinctual terror.

Then something rips her violently out of frame.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAWN

Nick sits in the kitchen, fuming. As he hears the latch of the front door open, he checks his watch.

NICK
Where have you been?

Alice appears, her dirty sweats covered by a long, black raincoat. Her oily strings of hair, skeletal features, and yellow teeth give her the look of a wraith.

ALICE
I couldn't sleep. I just went to a coffee shop to read.

NICK
You could have told me so I wouldn't worry.

ALICE
(croaking)
I'm not one of your insects Nick.
You can't keep me locked up in a fucking glass box.

She pushes past him and slams the door of bedroom behind her.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nick follows her into the bedroom as she drops the coat and crawls back into bed. He's really angry.

NICK
Sanjay's cousin is a doctor. I'm having her come and look at you.

ALICE
You can't make me do that.

NICK
Take off your sweats.

ALICE
Why?

NICK
I want to see your legs.

ALICE
I'm not in the mood.

NICK
I want to see what you're hiding.

ALICE
You're crazy.

He grabs the waistband and tries to pull down her pants, but she HISSES at him in a way that makes him jump back in fear.

Her voice is not her own. She crouches in the darkness like something inhuman.

ALICE
Touch me again and I'll rip out
your eyes.

Nick backs away in shock.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - NIGHT

Sanjay sits at his desk and sorts his mail. He is surprised to see....

A PACKAGE

It's exactly the same as the box sent to Nick weeks ago. The UPS label says it's from Brazil.

ON SANJAY

He opens it with a pen knife, ripping open the top recklessly. But inside, instead of a bug, he finds rolled up paperwork and little yellow Kodak boxes.

And the little boxes are filled with SLIDES.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Nick sits at the table, looking at the drawings of the missing bug. He has several books open filled with pictures of every kind of bug imaginable.

Nothing matches. Nick rubs his eyes in frustration. Then...

He is surprised to hear the water running in the bathroom.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

As he approaches the bathroom, Nick sees her pajamas and the RED SOX in a heap on the floor by the hamper.

He picks up one of the RED SOCKS. He turns it inside out and finds that it's slick with the blue-white goo.

He's revolted. He drops it and peeks in the bathroom door.

NICKS POV - THE BATHROOM

He sees her dim reflection in the mirror as she steps in the bathtub, but the glass is fogged over.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He opens the door wider, peering inside.

NICK'S POV

He's trying to catch a glimpse of her legs or feet, but there is too much steam. He sees just the outline of her mop of hair and chest as she slips down into the water.

ON NICK

Inching closer inside, trying to get a better look without her noticing that he's there.

NICK'S POV

She runs the soap over her arm and then her leg, but her skin is covered in bubbles. It's hard to see.

Then her leg extends up out of the water, and there is a flash of something green and segmented, but her leg sinks back into the bubbles before he can really make it out.

All he can see is her mop of hair above the rim of the tub.

Suddenly, sensing she's being watched, she sits up and turns to look directly at him.

ALICE'S EYES

... Are big black orbs, like the eyes of a bug.

Nick SCREAMS!

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He stumbles backwards into the hallway and overturns a terrarium, which hits the hardwood floor and SHATTERS.

He falls on the shattered glass cutting himself.

Alice appears at the bathroom door, a long towel draping her body. Her eyes look completely normal. She gasps.

ALICE
Oh my god. You killed Brittany.

Nick looks down and sees the tarantula is dead, crushed by the edge of the overturned table.

NICK
I think we need some time apart.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - RAIN

The windows are open and outside it is raining. Blue light fills the room, giving it the look of an aquarium.

Alice sits up in bed as DR. SAHGAL (40), a no nonsense woman with a matronly authority, looks in down her throat.

DR. SAHGAL
Besides the coughing, have you had any fever, chest pain, diarrhea...?

ALICE
No nothing like that.

The doctor places a stethoscope on her back.

DR. SAHGAL
Can you cough for me please?

Alice makes a soft, ordinary sounding cough.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY - RAIN

Dr. Sahgal comes out. Nick sits at the table nervously expecting the worst.

NICK
Well?

DR. SAHGAL
I could prescribe antibiotics but I think it's just a cold virus.

NICK
A cold?

DR. SAHGAL
Her throat is a little red.

Nick is beside himself. He can't believe what he is hearing.

NICK

Well she's a lot worse at night. I
mean A LOT worse.

DR. SAHGAL

Did you two just move in together?

NICK

Yes. What has that got to do -

DR. SAHGAL

- It's quite a transition. Very
stressful.

NICK

Yeah... I guess. Did you look at
her legs? Her feet?

DR. SAHGAL

I examined her from head to toe and
I found nothing abnormal.

(beat)

Frankly it's you I'm worried about.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - RAIN

Nick looks out the window, watching the rain.

Alice joins him at the window. Calm. Inscrutable.

ALICE

What did she say?

NICK

She's says you have a cold.

ALICE

Not about me. About you.

NICK

She suggested an anti-anxiety
medication.

ALICE

And?

(beat)

A psychologist?

NICK

She gave me a name.

ALICE
Are you going to see him?

NICK
There's nothing wrong with me.

They look at each other. Alice shrugs.

ALICE
Me neither.

She leaves him alone at the window.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - BUG LAB - DAY

Nick enters the lab to find Sanjay, and two other researchers JOSEPH and PHILIP, both nerdy young men, huddled around a slide projector and laughing wildly.

They're all drinking beer.

NICK
What is this a frat party?

SANJAY
You have to see this. Your mystery man in Brazil has quite a sense of humor.

Joseph clicks the button and slides appear on the wall. They look old, bubbly and faded, as if taken decades ago.

The first slide is of the missing bug. It's the same bug we saw but it looks a little fake, as if molded from plastic.

SANJAY
Wait you have to hear the explanation that goes with it.

Sanjay reads aloud as several slides click by of the bug crawling into a bird's nest lined with feathers.

SANJAY
"The insect is known to inhabit the nests of birds, where it behaves like a parasite..."

Two birds with colorful feathers land in the nest. Again the images look faded and somewhat contrived.

SANJAY

"Inserting its proboscis and
drinking the animal's blood."

Joseph and Philip begin to giggle. More slides show the bird
growing SICK in its nest. Stray feathers float in the air.

PHILIP

That looks so FAKE! It's like a
hand puppet.

SANJAY

Wait... wait. "As it feeds it
injects a protein into the
bloodstream which...
(laughing)
...causes mutations."

The next couple slides are surreal. The birds feathers are
oily, and its body seems segmented. Along with its scraggly
wings it has four more black legs. Like an insect.

PHILIP

That's not even physiologically
possible. You can't mix an
exoskeleton and an endoskeleton.

Sanjay and his two buddies guffaw, but Nick is horrified.

SANJAY

And this is the best part.

The next slides are just of the nest, and THREE SPOTTED EGGS.

SANJAY

"This protein invades the host's
DNA. The bird becomes a surrogate
mother for the insect's young."

Then the most disturbing slides of all. The eggs begin to
crack, but instead of little chicks pecking their way out,
THOUSANDS OF LITTLE BLACK INSECTS BURST FROM THE SHELL.

SANJAY

(mocking)
Actually, I think that one's good.
It looks real to me.

PHILIP

Fucking great. It's so Art Bell.

NICK

What if it's not a hoax?

The laughter dies down, and the three men look at Nick. He's dead serious.

NICK
What if the man who sent me this
was Nelson Banner, Alice's father?

There's an awkward pause.

SANJAY
Professor Banner? That's
ridiculous, Nick. You sound
completely insane.

PHILIP
He's joking right? You're fucking
with us.

Beat. Nick backs off.

NICK
I had you going for a second
though.

CLOSE ON NICK

As the laughter of his friends gets louder and LOUDER, He looks like he might pass out.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Dead silence.

Nick enters and softly shuts the door behind him. Terrified. Filled with dread about what might be waiting there for him.

NICK
... Honey?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She's in the kitchen chopping vegetables with her back to him. A long nightgown reaches to the floor; a single lamp makes the fabric glow like a ghost.

NICK
(a whisper)
Sweetie?

Eerily she doesn't turn around. Just continues chopping.

Nick approaches her slowly, frightened of what he's going to see when she does turn around. He loses his voice...

NICK
Swww...sweetie?

He gets closer... reaches out to touch her shoulder.

But when she turns, he doesn't see the face of a grotesque bug, but the face of an angel. Her voice is sunny.

ALICE
Hi honey bun. Want some salad?

As she carries the big bowl of greens to the table, she is backlit by the lamp and her nightgown becomes transparent.

Her body is smooth, healthy, and voluptuous. Nick pulls up the gown a few inches to look at...

HER NAKED FEET - NICK'S POV

They are completely normal.

ALICE
(coy)
Off me, horn dog.

NICK
You look... better. Really better.

She speaks quickly, in her old hyper, girlish way.

ALICE
Yeah-I'm-feeling-better-actually-
And-my-appetite-is-back-Hey-you
know-I've-been-thinking-that-you
need-a-BREAK.
(beat)
You-should-go-out-with-one-of- your-
friends-or-something-you-know?

NICK
Yeah. Maybe you're right.

ALICE
You-shouldn't-have-to-worry-about-
me-all-the time.

She smiles adorably. And Nick, in spite of himself, is charmed.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The TV is tuned to an international soccer game. Sanjay sheers loudly. Nick looks a little bored.

Sanjay jumps up and howls at the screen when a kick misses the open goal. He guzzles his beer and crushes the can. Nick drinks but it's clear he doesn't like the taste.

They hear the front door open. A jangle of keys. Footsteps in the hallway.

ALICE (O.C.)
Don't mind me! I'm just going to
sit in bed and read.

They hear the bedroom door open and shut. The two men exchange looks and speak in hushed tones.

NICK
She never had a fever. Now I'm
starting to wonder if it was food
poisoning.

SANJAY
Right. Maybe it was PMS. Finish
that and let's get out of here.

NICK
No. I think it's better if I
stay... just for a while.

SANJAY
You said she was better.

NICK
I just want to be sure.

Sanjay pulls out a tequila bottle and pours two shots.

SANJAY
I thought you said you were getting
rid of her, man.

NICK
Shhhh... She'll hear you.

INT. BEDROOM - INTERCUT

Sitting with her ear against the door, Alice is listening to their every word. She has an eerie, heartbroken smile.

NICK (O.C.)
I haven't said anything to her yet.

SANJAY (O.C.)
Here, you need a drink.

In her hands are strings and gobs of the blue/white goo. She plays with it like a child fingering Elmer's glue.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a growing pile of empty beer cans. The boys are relaxed and talking freely.

SANJAY
So you're saying she's bulimic?

NICK
No anorexic. She didn't eat a thing for a week.

SANJAY
No. I know what it is, man. You're telling me she can't sleep, her personality changed.

NICK
Yes.

SANJAY
And the marks on her skin? What's wrong with you? It's obvious.

NICK
What?

SANJAY
Drugs. She's been shooting meth... or maybe smack.

NICK
Shut up Sanj'. You're talking out of your ass.

Nick knocks back a shot, chases it with a beer, and burps.

NICK
I feel GREAT. I haven't felt this great in a month.

Sanjay bursts into laughter. He raises his bottle.

SANJAY
Cheers, my friend!

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice lies on the bed. She moans loudly, fusses and rustles under a single white sheet.

Nick enters, concerned.

NICK
What is it? Do you need me?

ALICE
Come here and sit on the bed.

Nick obeys.

NICK
Do you want anything?

ALICE
Yes. Kill me, Nick.

NICK
Huh...?

ALICE
I said kiss me.

Nick takes her hand, and he is dismayed.

NICK
My God. You're ice cold again.

ALICE
No. I'm feeling much better. I swear.

She leans forward to kiss him but he pulls away. He sees that the pillows are torn open, exposing the down.

Then the sheet falls away, revealing the pajama top she used to wear when she first moved in. Buttoned only once.

ALICE
Make love to me.

NICK
What? No. Sanjay's here.

ALICE
I don't want to lose you, Nick.

He retreats from her touch.

NICK
I think you're still sick.

ALICE
(desperate)
I'm fine. I'm all better. Please
don't leave me.

NICK
I'm right here. Listen. Why don't
you try to get some sleep.

Nick backs away from her, out the door.

CLOSE ON ALICE

She stares off into space like a madwoman. Feathers from the
down pillow float around her head.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two men are clearly drunk slurring their words.

SANJAY
So what's it going to take to get
you to dump this girl?

NICK
... the truth is that I'm in love
with her.

SANJAY
She's mean. She orders you around
like a butler. She's a drug addict.

NICK
She's struggling right now but...

SANJAY
You realize that when she stayed
out all night last week she was
probably fucking some other guy.

NICK
I don't know that's true.

SANJAY

Oh come on.

(beat)

I just don't like to see you
treated this way.

Nick looks exhausted and depressed.

NICK

Yeah, I know you're right, and as
soon as she gets better I'm going
make some changes...

REVEAL that behind them, Alice is standing at the bedroom
door listening to every word.

They have no idea she's right there behind them.

SANJAY

You know what we really need to do
is get our asses over to Jumbo's.

NICK

(smirking)

I don't go for strip clubs.

SANJAY

What's not to go for? A little
music. A little lapdance -

Nick shushes him as he realizes Alice is in the room.

NICK

(slurring)

Hey sweetie. How'ya feeling?

Alice's eyes are wide and piercing. There is an otherworldly
glow about her. For a moment she just stares at them.

ALICE

I think I need an ibuprofen.

NICK

I'll get that for you...

Nick staggers to his feet and weaves down the hall towards
the bathroom, leaving Sanjay and Alice alone.

Sanjay downs his shot and looks at his best friend's
girlfriend.

She doesn't look sick at all. She looks sexy in the pajama
top that barely reaches the top of her thigh.

She stares back at him. Secretively. Seductively.

ALICE
You guys got a beer for me?

SANJAY
(intrigued)
Yeah... sure.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sanjay follows Nick down the hall.

SANJAY
Hey you need to make a beer run.

But when he gets to the bathroom, he finds that Nick has passed out on the floor near the toilet.

SANJAY
Oh... you lightweight.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Sanjay saunters back in, his eyes light up.

Lounging on the couch, taking a shot of tequila, is Alice. She looks directly at him with a predatory smile.

She unbuttons the pajama top and runs her finger down from her collar to her bellybutton.

Then, she turns off the light.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Nick wakes up on the tile floor next to the toilet. He looks at his watch and groans.

He holds his head and tries not to throw up. He's completely disoriented.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick stumbles into the dark room but the bed is empty and the sheets are on the floor. Just a bare mattress and torn pillows. Feathers scattered in the moonlight.

He flips on the lamp.

NICK'S POV

The room spins in the bright light. He's seeing double. He shakes his head and the image resolves.

This is the first time we've seen underneath the blankets since he started sleeping on the couch.

He sees something strange in the middle of the mattress.

A LUMP

It's the size of a volleyball, bulging up under the fabric.

ON NICK

He steps closer to the bed. Confused.

CLOSER ON THE LUMP

Something is sticking out of it. It's about 8 inches long, slender and sharp, like a single quill of a porcupine.

ON NICK

He reaches out and tentatively pokes the bulge.

To his disgust, something moves under the surface of the mattress. The PROBOSCIS retracts back into the mound.

WIDE ON THE BEDROOM

Nick freaks. He grabs his scissors from the bedside table.

He punctures the surface of the mattress and cuts away the fabric. A long gash like a surgical wound.

Then it bursts out, extending its long green legs, its throbbing thorax engorged with Alice's blood...

THE BUG that escaped weeks ago.

It had burrowed down deep into the down mattress pad as if it were a birds nest. It CHIRPS at him, hideously.

Nick's mouth drops open in horror.

THUNK! He plunges the long scissors into its back. Blue/white slime squirts out of it like a fountain.

He stabs it again and AGAIN in a wild frenzy, until its legs stop wriggling, and the chirping ends.

ON NICK

He sits down on the floor. He's in shock.

ON THE BED

The bug has been torn to pieces. Slimy fragments are scattered about, staining the white feathers.

CLOSE ON NICK

He breathes in and out, trying to calm himself, but he looks like he might cry.

Then he hears a different sound...

A GROAN... coming from the other room.

Nick stands up.

He hears the groan again. Louder this time.

Nick opens the door to the living room...

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...revealing mostly DARKNESS, but the light from the bedroom door outlines a murky form writhing on the couch.

He hears Alice's distinctive squeal of pleasure.

NICK
(voice breaking)
What's going on?

The noise stops. All is still.

ALICE (O.S.)
(from the darkness)
Close the door.

NICK
Alice, what are you doing...?

ALICE (O.S.)
Nicholas, I said CLOSE THE DOOR.

Nick flips on the light revealing.

THE UNSPEAKABLE

Crouched over the dead body of his friend is a monster.

It has the hips, chest and head of a girl, but the six long green legs of a mantid. Black round bug eyes stare out of curly red locks of hair.

Its elegant sleek form is both beautiful and terrible.

Blood runs off her lips down her chin over her chest to stain her pajama top. She has been feasting on Sanjay's flesh.

ALICE
(croaking)
Turn off the light!

Nick stumbles backwards, knocking over the floor lamp. It hits the ground and goes off with a POP.

WIDE ON THE ROOM

It's dark again. And still. For a moment, nothing happens.

ON ALICE

She slinks into the half-light.

Her eyes are human again and angelic. One of her long insect arms retracts, and reforms into its human shape.

ON NICK

Horrificed and revolted, he raises the scissors, prepares to strike the *thing* that slaughtered his friend.

ON ALICE

She speaks in her old voice, soft, sincere, and vulnerable.

ALICE
Wait. Please listen to me. Before
you do something we'll both regret,
I need to tell you something.

She holds out her hand imploringly.

ALICE
I'm pregnant.

Nick is totally overwhelmed. His lover makes her final plea.

ALICE
No one will ever love you like I
do, Nick. No other woman will ever
understand you.
(beat)
(MORE)

ALICE (cont'd)
If you kill me you'll spend the
rest of your life alone.

Beat. Nicks hesitates.

He takes a step closer. His hand shakes.

Then suddenly, he drops the scissors, point-down on the
hardwood floor where they stick like a dart.

CLOSE ON ALICE

She smiles sadly.

CLOSE ON NICK

He stares dumbly at the girl of his dreams.

ALICE
I'm your soulmate.

FADE OUT.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Through the windows comes a soft bright light. We hear birds
chirping and children playing in the courtyard. It's summer.

We move through the various rooms. The hallway is decorated
with a vase of lush white roses.

The kitchen has the remains of delicious lunch of pasta,
salad and ice tea.

The bedroom has new floral bedding and matching drapes.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick and Alice, the happy couple, sit on the couch together.
She's knitting a blanket and he's reading a textbook.

It's pure domestic bliss.

CLOSE ON ALICE'S HAND

On her finger there is a diamond engagement ring.

ON ALICE

She looks perfectly human. Perhaps nothing strange ever
really happened. Her belly is big and swollen.

Nick pets her head and strokes her cheek. He looks completely satisfied and at peace.

NICK

Do you think it's a boy or a girl?

His lover smiles.

ALICE

Actually, about a thousand of each.

She pulls up her shirt...

ALICE

Put your hand on my tummy. You can feel them moving.

CLOSE ON HER STOMACH

He feels her naked, undulating belly and we CUT TO BLACK.