

## JEN CURRIN / Before Midnight

Some weird angels showed up. They were weird angels because they didn't look like angels. They looked like devils. But Johanna knew they were angels.

One with short, curly blonde hair and pink eyes put a record on. Punk.

Two angels started to dance, slowly, out of sync with the music.

Johanna sat up on the couch; her favorite yellow blanket slipped to the floor. She slept on the couch because her bed had started to give her nightmares. She was so sick of all these divine presences. Maybe she had taken too many vitamins the night before. Or maybe it was all the holy books she'd been burning.

"I read them before I burn them," she explained vaguely.

"You'd better call your mother," the curly angel said.

"If I had a mother, I'd call her *right now*," Johanna replied.

"That's what I said." Curly handed her the phone. "Call your mother."

Johanna heard the hiss of the burner as an angel put on coffee. The dancing angels were now using her kitchen towels to polish their short horns.

Her apartment seemed like hell. But Johanna knew it was heaven. She started dialing.