

ADD/DROP

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A Play in Two Acts

by Terry Glaser

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## ADD/DROP

### Cast of Characters

<u>Fern:</u>	21-year-old college senior; dresses in the latest style; always has her face fully made up; female.
<u>Luna:</u>	21-year-old college senior; Fern's suitemate; dresses in an arty fashion; has short blue hair; female.
<u>Cooper:</u>	21-year-old college senior; wears a backwards baseball cap and cargo pants; male.
<u>Atticus:</u>	25-year-old Doctoral candidate; Classics major; always dresses in a three-piece suit and wears a pocket watch on a chain; enjoys speaking in Latin; <b>male, female, or non-binary. If this role is cast as female or non-binary, the pronouns in the script can be changed to reflect the change in gender.</b>
<u>Oliver:</u>	21-year-old college senior; dresses in a self-conscious, old-fashioned, romantic style, including a poet's shirt with flowing sleeves; male.
<u>Damien:</u>	21-year-old college senior; dresses in preppy clothes; male.

### Setting

The common room in the college dorm suite shared by FERN and LUNA.

### Time

The present day, final exam time – toward the end of the spring semester.



LUNA

(Standing and speaking the last word to the audience at the same time as FERN, mimicking her voice and body.)

Bummage!

(FERN screams and jumps in fright; that frightens LUNA, who jumps and screams, as well.)

FERN

(Turns and sees LUNA.)

Seriously, Luna, that is like so extra. Go back to your books and let me enjoy my misery solo.

LUNA

I thought misery loved company.

FERN

No, Luna, misery is its own reward, and I have earned it big time.

LUNA

That doesn't sound very rewarding.

FERN

Well there's where you're wrong. I love gnashing my teeth. Just stick your nose back into Socrates and leave me in peace. Now where was I? Um ...

(She tries to strike an exaggerated pose of melancholy but can't seem to get it right.)

Oo ...

(She tries another pose but still can't get it right.)

Er ...

LUNA

(Helpfully.)

Blarg?

FERN

Now look what you've done! I forgot what I was gnashing about.

LUNA

(To the audience.)

Mission accomplished.

FERN

Oh, now I remember.

(She strikes a successful melancholy pose.)

Zachary, Zachary, wherefore art thou, former love of my life? Where have you gone, you scheming, slobbering, simping toolbox? Two weeks of heavy flirting: “Oh, pooky-pie, let’s get cuffed – “

LUNA

(To the audience.)

Let’s get stuffed is more like it.

FERN

A month of non-stop necking: “Oh, Bae, you’re my only and forever – “

LUNA

(To the audience.)

Or at least until mid-terms.

FERN

Then the mega love bomb, and I’m one catfished kitty.

LUNA

What are you complaining about? I know a sister who got ghosted after two days. At least you got a month out of Zach.

FERN

I’m telling you, when I lost Zach, I lost everything.

LUNA

Oh get over yourself. This campus is swarming with available guys.

FERN

What are other guys to me? Just randoms looking for a hot flash in the pan.

LUNA

(To the audience.)

Does she even listen to herself? If I don’t get her out of this emo mood, I’ll never get any studying done.

(To FERN, suggestively.)

You know what they say. A bird in the hand ... And speaking of birds, you know you’ve got Damien wrapped around your little finger.

FERN

Oh, Damien. Yeah, he's sweet, all right, but these days, all I want to do is jump in a hole and never come out. I would have done it already, except I've got this really big zit, and I have to pop it first.

LUNA

You don't fool me. I see a sparkle in your eye.

FERN

Tears!

LUNA

And a spring in your step –

FERN

Ready to jump!

LUNA

Not to mention the fact that you ate two pizzas with extra cheese for lunch, washed them down with a peanut butter kale smoothie, and topped it all off with a ginormous hot fudge sundae.

FERN

(Tossing the hand mirror into a chair.)

I have to keep up my strength. I've got lacrosse this afternoon.

LUNA

All right, let's look at the situation. When everything in life was handed to you on a silver platter and every guy you met fell at your feet – like Damien - you let yourself go to pot. But now, there's a glow on your cheeks that's totes adorbs.

FERN

That's ridiculous. I was up all night with a migraine, and I'm sure I look totes savage.

LUNA

(Examining FERN critically.)

Hmmm ... Well, your hair is a little limp. We could ...

(Finding a can of hair gel on a shelf, spraying it on FERN'S hair, and quickly re-arranging the curls.)

There! A perfect balance between a sophisticated baddie and an unpopped cherry. Take a look for yourself and see if you don't think you have some sincerious cake.

(LUNA picks up the mirror and tries to get FERN to look at herself .)

FERN

(Pushing the mirror away in horror.)

What are you doing?

(Petulantly.)

I won't look!

LUNA

(To the audience.)

She won't look in a mirror? We got some remedial narcissism to work on.

(To FERN.)

So you won't look in the mirror? Maybe you *are* sick. Don't make me call the health center. You remember what happened the last time. You couldn't –

FERN

I remember, I remember!

LUNA

For a whole week.

FERN

I don't need the health center. I already lined up Doctor Atticus.

LUNA

Atticus, that nerd? He's a Doctor of Philosophy. The only thing he can cure is insomnia.

FERN

*Candidate* for a doctorate in Classics. I figure he can help me pass my exams.

LUNA

(Holding up the mirror again.)

Whatever. Just take one tiny little peek. It'll be over before you know it. And then I can get back to Socrates.

FERN

What difference does it make whether I look cool or cray? I'm through with boys! I'm going to stay in this room and study my brains out. I'll get *two* doctorates, one in Women's Studies and one in ... in ... Wildlife Conservation. I am so over the male gender!

LUNA

Not if you're studying wildlife. Haven't you got any self-respect? Don't you feel any responsibility to the female gender?

(To the audience.)

If she thinks misery at the expense of vanity improves her appearance, she's making a big mistake.

FERN

(Melodramatically.)

I am done with petty earthly affairs! Look, I'll prove it.

(Waving her cell phone in the air.)

I'll turn my phone off!

LUNA

(Sarcastically.)

OMG!

FERN

Done, done, done.

(Ostentatiously turning her phone off  
and throwing it into a corner.)

And I won't turn it back on till like never. Periodt!

LUNA

Fine. If that's the way you feel about it, there's nothing more to be said.

(Waving the mirror around in a  
threatening manner.)

I'll break this mirror into a thousand pieces so you can't catch even an eensy weensy  
glimpse of your sun-kissed cheeks, your bouncing curls, your pouty pink lips.

FERN

No way! Sun-kissed?

LUNA

Cheeks.

FERN

Forget it! Bouncing?

LUNA

Curls.

FERN

No, no, no! Pouty pink?

LUNA

Lips.

FERN

(Grabbing the mirror.)

Oh, all right, I'll look, but only so you can get back to work.

(She examines her image critically.)

Hmmmm. I've let myself go, you say?



LUNA

It's written all over your face.

FERN

You're right, Luna. I look totally shook.

LUNA

Trust me. Leaving nature to its own devices is the swiftest road to ruin.

(She picks up various makeup pots  
and brushes from a shelf and dabs at  
FERN'S face.)

All we need is a little puff of powder here, a dab of blusher there, some minor contouring,  
a quick flick to your Cupid's bow, and you're all glowed up!

(There's a knock at the door.)

FERN

I can't see anyone! Send them away!

LUNA

Let's at least see who it is. Maybe it's Damien!

(FERN dives into a chair and covers  
herself with a throw. LUNA opens  
the door and COOPER enters.)

COOPER

Hey, Lunes, sup? Had a little extra time before soccer, thought I'd check in with my  
favorite snack.

LUNA

Awks, bro. Fern's under the weather. Got curved by Zach.

COOPER

Karma crap-ola.

FERN

(Sitting up from under the throw.)

What do you want, Cooper? Can't you see I'm busy being miserable?

COOPER

Incoming, incoming – ego trip to the max! I came to see Lunes anyway.

FERN

Okay, you've seen her, now go away.

COOPER

And to give you a message from Oliver. But if you're not interested ...

LUNA

That's Ollie the Hunkster, Fern. You know, the Creative Writing major who's been coming by every afternoon to chuck his rhymes at you, in case you haven't noticed. But if you're not interested ...

FERN

(To COOPER.)

Why couldn't he text me?

COOPER

He says he's done with petty earthly affairs and he turned his phone off. Says he won't turn it back on until like never.

FERN

Well, what's the message? And try to talk like a human.

COOPER

(In an affectedly high-toned  
manner.)

Oliver, my bosom frat bud, wants me to tell you that, due to unforeseen circumstances that he didn't know about ahead of time, he is unable to, and furthermore can't, stop by and give you a high five super dive this afternoon because he has only this morning free from his many pressing academic obligations, and he hopes that it's okay with you that he should drop in sometime in the next few minutes instead.

FERN

Why don't you just tell me what he wants so I CAN GET ON WITH MY MISERABLE LIFE?!

COOPER

Hey, guess what?! It turns out he's miserable, too. You can have a fun cry together!

FERN

Oh, all right. Tell him he can come by for five minutes. Then Atticus is coming over to help me prep for exams. Which reminds me – I better get rid of that zit.

(Mumbling to herself as she exits  
into the bathroom.)

Blarg, blargaricious, blarganacious ...

LUNA

You're a big help. I was trying to cheer her up, not get her blarging again. You can tell Ollie he better keep his misery to himself. Why's he so miserable anyway?

COOPER

He just got curved by Angela.

LUNA

Oh, a big boo-hoo.

COOPER

And I got curved by Maddy. So I got time on my hands.  
(Suggestively, holding his hands  
out.)

Wanna see?

LUNA

(Slapping his hands away.)  
Yeah, you wish. Go get Ollie and tell him to leave his hankies at home.

COOPER

(As he exits.)  
Thank you, next.

(As he exits, he bumps into  
ATTICUS in the doorway.  
ATTICUS doesn't see him because  
he's hidden behind a towering stack  
of books.)

LUNA

(To the audience.)  
This walking library has to be Candidate Dr. Atticus. What a dork! There's nothing worse than voluntary education. I don't know what got into Fern, making Atticus her intellectual in residence. Well, not gonna lie, actually I do know. Her parents told her she either has to find some solid husband material or pass her exams, whichever comes first. And we all know what college is really for, so my plan is to help her in the Mens Department and forget the books, which she won't remember anyway.

(Going to ATTICUS and knocking  
on the stack of books.)  
Knock, knock.

ATTICUS

(Lowering the stack of books and  
looking around vaguely.)  
Come in.

(Seeing LUNA.)  
Good morning, Luna. Where's Fern?

LUNA

Popping a zit.

ATTICUS

I have written a poem in her honor, but if she's busy –

LUNA

(Squeezing an imaginary zit.)

Pop!

ATTICUS

I could try it out on you.

LUNA

Why not? I was just killing some time with Socrates.

ATTICUS

(Looking at LUNA with sudden  
interest.)

Socrates? You're interested in the Greeks?

LUNA

Yeah, and I don't mean the frat boys. Those ancients knew a thing or two, and, besides, I got an exam coming up in my senior seminar: "Greek Antiquity and Modern Dialectical Syllogisms: From Aristotle to Timothy Leary."

ATTICUS

(Dropping the books and taking a  
large sheaf of papers from his  
pocket.)

In that case, I have something that may be of interest to you. It's a little syllogism I came up with myself. Would you care to hear it?

LUNA

No way! What kind of girl do you take me for?!

ATTICUS

But it's a model of logical cogitation. Just listen:

(Reading from his papers.)

All women have hearts, all hearts are made for love, *ergo*, all women are made for love.

LUNA

Major props, dude! I feel inspired to return the favor with a syllogism of my own: all men are human, all humans are animals, *ergo*, all men are animals.

(FERN enters from the bathroom,  
checking her face in a compact.)

LUNA

I'll leave you two to it. You can syllogize to your hearts' content.

(To FERN, as she exits.)

Posse out, girlfriend.

ATTICUS

(Frantically searching through his  
papers.)

Wait a minute, wait a minute! I've got another one here you might like better. "All lovers are obsessive, all obsessions are crazy, *ergo* –

FERN

What are you talking about? I thought we were going to go over the exam questions for the senior seminar: "The Ten Big Questions: Philosophy and How to Avoid It."

ATTICUS

(Quickly stuffing the papers back in  
his pocket.)

*Bene.* Luna and I were just sharing syllogisms.

FERN

Sketchy. Let's hit the books. No more drama, it's cram-o-rama.

ATTICUS

(LUNA sticks her head in the door,  
and shoves OLIVER into the room.)

LUNA

Ollie, ollie, oxen free.

FERN

(To ATTICUS.)

Duty calls. Come back later and we'll cram it from there.

ATTICUS

*Ave atque vale.*

(ATTICUS picks up the stack of  
books and staggers off with them.  
OLIVER shuffles his feet  
awkwardly.)

OLIVER

Sorry for busting in like this. Luna said you were busy feeling crappy, and I thought, as I'm feeling crappy, too, we could spread the crap around and have a field day.

FERN

Spill the tea. What's your particular brand of crap?

OLIVER

(Declaiming dramatically.)

Fern, you see before you a man weighted down with grief, a man whose heart is heavy with despair, a man for whom life holds nothing more than a cheerless succession of days followed by a mirthless misery of nights, a man who, in short, intends to forsake the deceitful gaiety of the frat house for the forthright gloom of the study hall, where he will live out the remainder of his wretched life in a hopeless miasma of remorse. Or, better yet, I'll take a gap year and go flip burgers in Indiana.

FERN

Is something wrong?

OLIVER

Wrong? Wrong?! You cannot imagine, you cannot conceive, you cannot comprehend the magnitude of the disaster! It is beyond repair. Angela has curved me, and I have lost her forever.

FERN

Geez, you mean she's dead?

OLIVER

She is dead to me, Fern. You know how two months ago she ghosted her friends, catfished her frenemies, gaslit her mom and dad, even traded in her BMW for an electric scooter, all in the hopes of persuading her mushy-headed parents to let her switch from her Accounting major to something useful like Communication Studies?

FERN

Yeah, I remember. Disastrophy.

OLIVER

Well, it laid a runny ostrich egg, and now her parents have sent her to an ashram to chill out and get some religion.

FERN

Oooh, big yikes.

OLIVER

Giga-yikes. I've been writing to her every day, laying my bleeding heart before her, and begging her to tell her parents where to stuff it and come back to me. But my tears, my pleas, my ardent imprecations – all, all were in vain, because the ashram forbids all communication with the outside world, so she never even got my letters, and that was the worst blow of all because I used the biggest words I could think of and made everything rhyme. And besides that, I hear that Angela's taken a liking to the solo lifestyle and has sworn off men altogether. So anyway, here I am, with no-one to read my poems and dying from a broken heart.

FERN

Well, Ollie, all I can say is oof.

OLIVER

Sorry, Fern. I shouldn't bore you with my problems. I hear you're the CEO of crap these days.

FERN

Hey, listen, it's nice to know somebody you care about is unhappy, too. Why don't we just zap a couple of bowls of ramen and eat ourselves into a food coma.

OLIVER

Gluten-free?

FERN

(Reaching under a pillow, taking out  
a couple of chocolate bars, and  
handing him one.)

Never mind. Have some chocolate.

OLIVER

Seventy percent cacao?

FERN

Facts.

(They eat their chocolate bars  
morosely.)

FERN

Have you tried sneaking into the ashram?

OLIVER

Yeah, but it's women only, and ...

(Modestly.)

I hardly think I qualify. But here's Plan B.

OLIVER (CONT.)

(Taking out a letter from his pocket.)

I wrote her my best letter yet – don't worry, no rhymes – and I was thinking maybe *you* could sneak in, you know, pretend to be a yoga teacher or something, and give her the letter yourself. I know if she reads it, I can get her back again. And, in return, if you want me to punch out Zach for you –

FERN

No swaperoonies necessary. But, Ollie, the letter isn't sealed.

OLIVER

Oh, I'm so upset I forgot! Well, if I'm honest, I hate licking envelopes. All those germs ... But seeing as it's open already, why don't you read it? You can tell me, from the woman's point of view, if you think it's got any mojo.

FERN

(Starting to open the letter but then stopping.)

You know, this is the first time in a month that I've been happy.

(Opening the letter but then stopping again.)

It's such a gas to be miserable together.

(OLIVER clears his throat meaningfully.)

FERN

But let's see what we've got.

(Reading aloud from the letter.)

“My dearest Angela, I tried to see you again, despite the ashram's strict regulations and even knowing that you've totally blown off the male of the species, but they stopped me at the door, so I will content myself with this brief missive. And, after all, what would it have served to throw myself at your feet and swear that without you my life would be a steamy pile of dog doo, except to augment my anguish to the point of self-annihilation?

(Interrupting her reading to repeat the last words.)

“The point of self-annihilation.” Wow, Ollie, that's some heavy shit. And what a coincidence! I've thought the very same thing myself in re Zach. But you put it so much better than “Bugger off, you scumbag loser.”

FERN AND OLIVER

(Together.)

Vibe check!



FERN

Moving right along ...

(She reads from the letter again.)

“But what’s done is done, and I write only to implore forgiveness for the rash words that bitterness tore from my lips when last we spoke. Each reproach I hurled at you, each entreaty to admit your fault, was an offense against Virtue itself. My sense of desperation overcame my sense of justice, and I closed my eyes to your tears. Farewell forever, Angela. My love for you will never die, and I swear to foreswear all new honeypots. Cupid’s dart will never again bloody this boy’s tender heartstrings. And may these words I write, this ultimate expression of a soul stretched to the moon and back, be worthy of the love you once had the benevolence to bestow on me. This is the last request I make of you. Farewell, Angela, farewell.”

(She starts to fold the letter, but OLIVER turns it over so she can read what’s written on the back.)

FERN

(Reading from the back.)

“Farewell.”

(Folding the letter and giving it back to OLIVER.)

Well, Ollie, all I can say is that this is one yowza of a letter, and if Angela doesn’t melt into a slimy puddle of salty eyedrops when she reads it, you can scrape her off like a rotten dungbunny.

(Starting to cry.)

In fact, it’s making me cry, myself!

OLIVER

(Crying.)

I don’t think I can live without her!

FERN

No, Oliver, you gotta hang in and suffer. If Angela’s not gonna cry for you, I’ll cry in her place.

OLIVER

Thank you, Fern. Your friendship is much better than a bowl of microwave ramen. If it’s okay with you, I’ll write to you from Indiana, and, if you aren’t too busy, you can write me back.

FERN

Say, listen, Ollie, don’t go. It feels so good to share our crap that you can’t disappear on me now. Who else am I going to get down with?

OLIVER

So, I guess I *could* stick around, but I swear that, except for going to class and saying “Here,” I’m not gonna talk to anyone but you.

FERN

Yupsolutely! And this way, you’ll be closer to the ashram in case Angela reconsiders.

OLIVER

And we can talk about Angela and Zach together!

FERN

The pain we share is the pain we bear.

OLIVER

Not to mention the senior seminar.

FERN AND OLIVER

(Together.)

Panguish!

(They sigh in unison.)

FERN

So Ollie, do you like to read?

OLIVER

(Confused by the change in subject.)

Huh?

FERN

Just jammin’ with Atticus for a little catch-up cramming before exams. He’s gonna come over every day and read me some stuff he’s picked out so I can practice scamming the profs. You wanna kibbitz?

OLIVER

Fer sher! Atticus can help me cram, as well. God knows, I can use all the help I can get. Good thing I checked in with you before I crossed the Rubicon.

FERN

Where’s that? Indiana?

OLIVER

You know, I feel better already. Thanks, again, Fern. And if you don’t mind my saying, you’re much better than tranks. You’ve blown off love, I’ve blown off love. So now we can blow it off together!

## FERN AND OLIVER

(Together.)

Vibe check!

FERN

Make yourself at home, bro. I gotta fix my face before Atticus comes back.

(To the audience, as she exits into  
the bathroom.)

That Ollie has some serious drip!

OLIVER

(To the audience.)

Wow! Who'd have thought Fern could be so boujee? She's sweet and tough and cute and a true friend in need. She reminds me a little of Angela. But Angela's out of the picture, so Fern will be my bestie!

(LUNA enters.)

LUNA

Still here, Ollie? Can't you find something useful to do, like mowing your chin?

OLIVER

Fern invited me to stay and cram with her and Atticus.

LUNA

So where is Fern?

OLIVER

She said something about fixing her face.

LUNA

(To the audience.)

Props to Fern! She's getting with the program.

(COOPER enters.)

COOPER

Hey, Oliver, I been looking for you. I thought we were going to grab some lunch and bitch about Angela and Maddy.

OLIVER

Another time, dude. I'm turning over a new leaf. Fern and I are now best bud studymates, and I'm waiting for Atticus to slip us an ace for our exams.

(DAMIEN sticks his head in the  
door.)

DAMIEN

Ollie, my man. I thought I'd find you here.

LUNA

Damien! It's about time!

(DAMIEN comes into the room.)

DAMIEN

(To OLIVER.)

I wanted to offer my condolences for your recent loss. There's a game of Strip Twister out on the quad, and I thought it might take away the sting of blighted passion.

OLIVER

No way. I'm nerding. And I'm not going to Indiana.

DAMIEN

What's Indiana got to do with it?

OLIVER

Fortunately, nothing. I've decided to give up my burgeoning career as a burger flipper and stay in school, study my brains out, ace my exams, and *then* become a burger flipper. And Fern's gonna help me. We're study buds with Atticus!

COOPER

(With a strangled sob.)

Aaaarrggggghhhhh!

DAMIEN

What's his problem?

OLIVER

Maddy curved him and he's high-key emo.

COOPER

(With a big smile.)

No, I'm high-key happy.

(To LUNA.)

And it's all because of you, Luna.

LUNA

(To COOPER.)

You are so sus, Cooper. Get a life.

(To OLIVER.)

LUNA (CONT.)

And, as for you, Oliver, you know how devoted I am to Fern. I want to see her happy again, but I really don't think you're the cure for the disease. So I say to myself, Luna, I say, what about Damien? And I answer myself, what a good idea, Luna!

OLIVER

(Suspiciously.)

What about Damien?

LUNA

Let's get real. Everybody knows Damien's been over the moon about Fern ever since freshman year when she spilled hot coffee in his lap. And everybody also knows that Fern does not exactly throw shade Damien's way. So the answer is obvs.

COOPER, OLIVER, AND DAMIEN

(Together.)

It is?

LUNA

Of course, you dimwits! Fern and Damien have to get cuffed! So, I'm going extra all out to unite the happy couple.

(To the audience.)

And then the rest of us can go about our business.

(LUNA takes COOPER and OLIVER aside and whispers to them, while DAMIEN furtively takes out a comb and runs it through his hair.)

LUNA

And anything you two guys can do to help the cause would be much appreciated.

OLIVER

So, Damien, Fern does not exactly throw shade your way!

DAMIEN

Not throwing shade is not what I would call a mark of high esteem. Fern's just too sweet to dis a guy, and I think she still feels guilty for that spilled coffee.

LUNA

It's more than sweetness and guilt, Damien. If Fern wanted to throw shade, she'd throw it, no cap!

OLIVER

(To DAMIEN.)

Well, okay, so does she know you love her?

DAMIEN

I believe she does.

OLIVER

How can you be sure?

DAMIEN

Well, she looks me up when she can't do her math homework.

OLIVER

And you don't see this as an ulterior motive?

DAMIEN

I don't think so. Math is hard.

OLIVER

(Brusquely.)

Then it's clear as day, Damien. You don't need me to help you win Fern's heart.

DAMIEN

I don't?

OLIVER

Not in the least. Let us examine the facts. A woman curved by her main man, in the depths of grieving emo, stuffing herself with pizza and hot-fudge sundaes – you thought I missed that one – staying in her room as much as possible but emerging to check you out when equations roll around, and deliberately not throwing shade when shade could be tossed a mile wide. Wake up, crackerhead, she likes you, and I'm not gonna stick my nose in and mess up a rom-com in the making.

LUNA, DAMIEN, AND COOPER

(Together, to the audience.)

What a strange reaction.

OLIVER

(Stiffly.)

Trust me, Damien, I have only your best interests at heart, and to prove it, I'll put in a good word for you with Fern, and let the chips fall where they may.

DAMIEN

(Equally stiffly.)

Forget it, dude. It's a nice offer, but I'm perfectly capable of cuffing myself, thank you very much. Anyway, it seems that Fern has a lot of face-fixing to do, so I'll come back later.