

WHAT COMES AROUND...

A one-act drama by
Tom Smith

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JOSEPH

OLIVIA

KARLY

JOSH

FIN

MADISON

CASSIDY

ZACK

MANDY

TIME/PLACE

Today. A hip coffee house.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Although the play can be performed with 9 actors, feel free to double the roles if you like.

The character of Fin was written to be performed by either a male or female actor.

Feel free to change the gender of other characters if needed; however, please stick to the text and change just names and pronouns.

"OLIVIA"

(A hip coffee house. JOSEPH and OLIVIA seated at a table with cups of coffee, mid-conversation.)

JOSEPH: It's called La Ronde.

OLIVIA: Yeah?

JOSEPH: And it's this play written by an Austrian guy –

OLIVIA: Australian?

JOSEPH: No, Austrian. It's a country by Germany or whatever. And the whole point is in the play you see different people interact with each other in a chain or something. Like one guy talks to a girl, and then in the next scene that girl talks to someone else, like a soldier or whatever. Then that soldier talks to someone else in the next scene. It keeps going on like that until the last person finally talks to the first person.

OLIVIA: Sounds weird.

JOSEPH: It was good, actually. Dirty, too.

OLIVIA: Not it's not! They wouldn't make us read a dirty play. The school board wouldn't allow it.

JOSEPH: It's an option. It was that or *The Glass Menagerie* or *Death of a Salesman*. Maybe that's how they get away with it.

OLIVIA: We read *Death of a Salesman* in 8th grade.

JOSEPH: I didn't.

OLIVIA: I did. In Mr. Farrell's class. Bor-ing! It's like, die already!

JOSEPH: Who? Mr. Farrell?

OLIVIA: No, the salesman. Or whoever.

JOSEPH: Anyway.

OLIVIA: Anyway.

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JOSEPH: That's why I didn't call you back. I had to finish it before class. We had a test on it today.

OLIVIA: Still. You said you were going to meet up with us last night and then you didn't. And you didn't even return my text!

JOSEPH: I know.

OLIVIA: So where were you?

JOSEPH: Home.

OLIVIA: (*Staring him down:*) ...Uh-huh.

JOSEPH: I was.

OLIVIA: You sure you weren't off somewhere else?

JOSEPH: Like where?

OLIVIA: I don't know... Making out with Mandy Conn?

JOSEPH: Oh my God! That's so nasty! Can you imagine?

OLIVIA: I know... Ick!

JOSEPH: I just threw up a little in my mouth!

OLIVIA: Gross! (*Beat.*) So, anyway, why didn't you text me back last night?

JOSEPH: I don't know.

OLIVIA: ...Uh-huh.

JOSEPH: What?

OLIVIA: Nothing.

JOSEPH: Don't say "nothing" when it's obviously something.

OLIVIA: Forget it. Let's talk about something else.

JOSEPH: Like what?

OLIVIA: (*Stares at him:*) Today, in class, we were reading the

Quran, and in it, Allah says, "Truth has been made clear from error."

JOSEPH: What does that mean?

OLIVIA: Don't you think it's interesting? I've been thinking about it all day. "Truth has been made clear from error."

JOSEPH: Hey, I'm hungry. Do you have any money?

OLIVIA: I wish you would have taken World Religions with me. It's such a cool class.

JOSEPH: Too much homework. Do you want to split a muffin or something?

OLIVIA: Buddha once said, "There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting."

JOSEPH: You read too much stuff you don't have to.

OLIVIA: I like reading about different religions. It's interesting.

JOSEPH: Yeah, but what good does it do you?

OLIVIA: Maybe I'll come across one I really like.

JOSEPH: Religion has no point.

OLIVIA: Of course it does! It's supposed to make you feel, you know, less alone in the universe. Find a purpose.

JOSEPH: Whatever. All religion is crap.

OLIVIA: No, it's not! We all need things to make ourselves feel less alone. Mine is religion. Yours is...something else.

JOSEPH: (*Staring her down:*) Knock it off, Olivia! You said you wouldn't do this anymore!

OLIVIA: Do what?

JOSEPH: This. Dropping hints. Acting like you're better than me.

OLIVIA: I'm not acting: I am better than you!

JOSEPH: You know what I mean!

OLIVIA: I didn't say anything!

JOSEPH: Yes, you did.

OLIVIA: What did I say?

JOSEPH: Just...knock it off. I mean it! (*Awkward pause.*) So, do you want something to eat or not? (*She stares at him.*) What?

OLIVIA: You said you stopped, Joseph!

JOSEPH: And I did.

OLIVIA: For five days! And only because your parents busted you!

JOSEPH: So?

OLIVIA: I'd rather you were still smoking than taking pills. They're so—

JOSEPH: I'm through talking about this, Olivia!

OLIVIA: You don't even care what they are anymore! You'll swallow anything that anyone puts in your hand!

JOSEPH: You want me to leave?

OLIVIA: I want you to quit. (*Struggling.*) Everybody at school talks about it all the time. Don't you even care?

JOSEPH: The only people who talk about it are the ones too chicken to try it.

OLIVIA: Oh my God!

JOSEPH: They have nothing else to do with their boring little lives but gossip about everything and everyone. They're idiots!

OLIVIA: Yeah, they're the idiots.

JOSEPH: You're not one to talk. You did it with me.

OLIVIA: Only a few times.

JOSEPH: It doesn't matter.

OLIVIA: Of course it does!

JOSEPH: Still. You're not above it. You did it too.

OLIVIA: Like, only two or three times. Until they made me feel dumber! Not remembering anything, not—

JOSEPH: So, what, I'm an idiot? I'm dumb—

OLIVIA: I didn't say you were. I said they made me feel—

JOSEPH: This! This is the reason we broke up. Maybe we shouldn't have gotten back together again.

OLIVIA: We didn't. We're just "hanging out," remember? That's what you said you wanted. No commitment.

JOSEPH: You said you'd drop it, but you can't! You're so stuck on—

OLIVIA: I have a right to be! You're getting so—

JOSEPH: You think I don't know that you're keeping tabs on me all the time? You send me texts, like, a thousand times a day. You call me late at night. You're always asking people where I am...

OLIVIA: I am not! And, besides, I wouldn't have to text you so much if you'd just text me back!

JOSEPH: It's getting annoying! You're getting all clingy again!

OLIVIA: It's not like that. I mean... Look, there's something you need to know...

JOSEPH: There's no way we can ever get back together if you're going to be like this. You have to like me for who I am—not who you want me to be! And I'm not going to stop doing what makes me happy just because you want me to!

OLIVIA: Joseph, no! I...I don't want to get back together. I don't—I'm going out with Michael.

JOSEPH: What?

OLIVIA: I didn't want to tell you like this. Here. It's just... I was tired of waiting around for you to decide. It's been over a month...

JOSEPH: ...You and Michael? Huh. Since when?

OLIVIA: Since, like, a week ago.

JOSEPH: Were you ever going to tell me?

OLIVIA: I am. Now.

JOSEPH: Michael's cool, I guess.

OLIVIA: Yeah.

JOSEPH: He and I used to hang out a lot.

OLIVIA: Yeah. (*Beat.*) Before you started partying so much.

JOSEPH: So then why do you keep checking up on me? Why do you keep—

OLIVIA: I'm worried. You're getting worse.

JOSEPH: No, I'm not!

OLIVIA: Yes, you are! It's bad, Joseph. It's getting really bad...

JOSEPH: Whatever!

OLIVIA: I just want you to—

JOSEPH: Hey, Olivia! We aren't going out anymore. You don't get to tell me what you want.

OLIVIA: But, I just—

JOSEPH: Michael, hunh? Well...good luck with...that.

(He starts to exit.)

OLIVIA: Joseph, wait!

JOSEPH: See ya around!

(He exits. A moment later, She texts him. She stares at her phone, waiting for a reply that doesn't come.)

"KARLY"

(Immediately following. KARLY crosses over and sits at the table.)

KARLY: Well?

OLIVIA: No luck.

KARLY: You did what you could. That's how it goes, I guess.

OLIVIA: ...Yeah.

KARLY: Anyway, I've got to be at work at nine, so we should start on our project.

OLIVIA: God, Karly, how can you do that? Bus tables from nine to midnight every night, then get up in time for school?

KARLY: I have no choice. My dad is a total freak about grades.

OLIVIA: Mine too. Well, my mom more than my dad.

KARLY: *(Grabs two pills from a vitamin bottle from her purse and swallows them:)* I've got a ton of afterschool activities that my dad says will help me get into a good school. So the late shift is all I can do. Anyway, I pulled this off the web. *(Lays down a huge stack of research she's pulled from her bag:)* I think we just need to skim it so we can organize the major points of our presentation.

OLIVIA: Wow! This is a ton of stuff!

KARLY: I really need to get an A on this project.

OLIVIA: You get an A on everything.

KARLY: No, I don't!

OLIVIA: Well, you seem to, anyway.

KARLY: I wish I did. Then maybe my dad wouldn't—*(She stops herself:)* Hey, where's your stuff?

OLIVIA: What stuff?

KARLY: I told you to bring all your research.

OLIVIA: I don't have any.

KARLY: Why not?

OLIVIA: The book I wanted from the library was already checked out. Probably by you.

KARLY: What about stuff online?

OLIVIA: Look at all this. I don't think we're hurting for information. This is a lot of material.

KARLY: That I brought.

OLIVIA: We don't need more than this!

KARLY: Fine. Whatever. Did you at least read anything about him?

OLIVIA: A little. I mean, I know the big stuff. But, I mean... Well, what do you think we should talk about?

KARLY: I think we should focus on Fremont's five expeditions, then end it talking about his bid for the presidency.

OLIVIA: Sure. That sounds good.

(She quickly sends another text.)

KARLY: Don't.

OLIVIA: What? Text?

KARLY: Don't not work hard on this.

OLIVIA: I'm doing my part. I'm here, aren't I?

KARLY: I'm not dumb. You only wanted to meet here because he would be here. But you can't do anything about it.

OLIVIA: I don't want to talk about Joseph.

KARLY: Fine. Then let's talk about John Fremont. Did you do anything for this project, Olivia?

OLIVIA: I already told you I did some stuff.

KARLY: Like what?

OLIVIA: I Googled him, and I got some pictures of him. I thought maybe we should include some maps.

KARLY: Cool.

OLIVIA: Then we could talk about that whole cannibalism thing.

KARLY: I don't know. We only have 10 minutes, and there's so much other stuff...

OLIVIA: It's the best part of the story, though. He had to eat people to survive.

KARLY: He didn't eat anyone, Olivia. His men did. When he left them to go get help.

OLIVIA: Still: it's totally gross.

KARLY: What could they do; they didn't have any food. They got trapped in a cave for months during a huge blizzard. They needed to live.

OLIVIA: They could have done something else. They didn't have to eat each other.

KARLY: If you need something bad enough, you'll do almost anything.

OLIVIA: ...What do you think he needs?

KARLY: I just said: food. They were starving and—

OLIVIA: No: Joseph. What do you think he needs? That I can't give him? I just don't get why he does what he does...

KARLY: Who knows? Let's get back to the project!

OLIVIA: Look, I totally understand that we're not friends, Karly. I mean, we've had classes together and everything but we're not...you know.

KARLY: Yeah.

OLIVIA: But, still, I don't know who to talk to about all this stuff. I mean, my friends just keep telling me to let him go. But how can I? We dated for over a year. I can't just watch him continue to mess up his life.

KARLY: Maybe they make him happy. The pills. It's not that big a deal.

OLIVIA: How can you say that?

KARLY: It's no secret he was on ADHD meds in elementary school. I just think that if your body gets used to the idea of drugs, maybe it makes sense that when you first try pot or whatever that it somehow feels right too.

OLIVIA: But he's changed so much. They are really screwing him up.

KARLY: Maybe he was screwed up already. Maybe the drugs actually make him feel ok about things.

OLIVIA: You don't know him, Karly. He's different now. He used to be really nice and laid-back and sweet and now he's totally...not.

KARLY: He was that way because he was taking ADHD meds. Face it: you've never known Joseph when he wasn't on drugs; who's to say who he really is.

OLIVIA: Why are you defending him? I would have thought that with your grades and whatever that you'd totally be... Oh.

KARLY: What?

OLIVIA: I get it. No wonder you can stay awake during school.

KARLY: I take caffeine pills, Olivia, not drugs. God! You're so judgmental...

OLIVIA: That's what Joseph said.

KARLY: Well, he's right.

OLIVIA: Don't be mean!

KARLY: It's true! (*Mimicking her:*) "I get it. No wonder you can stay awake during school." I mean, what is that?

OLIVIA: I don't know! I don't mean to be like that. I just... Maybe it's too many religion classes.

KARLY: Let's get back to our project. We should both cover the five expeditions. And then you can cover his early life, and I can do his later life and the whole presidency thing. Fine?

OLIVIA: Fine.

KARLY: Good. Why don't you go get some information and then call me and we can find a time to go over stuff.

OLIVIA: We probably don't need to meet any more.

KARLY: Why not?

OLIVIA: Well, you know what you're doing. I know what I'm doing. We can just meet right before and put it all together.

KARLY: Yeah, but we should do a dry run to figure out the transitions, and make sure we don't go too long, and –

OLIVIA: (*Rising:*) We can just meet right before.

KARLY: ...Oh, I get it. You're all mad at me. Fine, whatever. Anyway, just do your half; I'm not going to cover for you.

OLIVIA: You won't need to!

KARLY: I'm going to be very clear with Mr. Andrew which parts of it you are responsible for.

OLIVIA: Fine! (*Starts to leave:*) Hey, Karly?

KARLY: Yeah?

OLIVIA: Don't get used to them, ok? The caffeine pills, or whatever you say they are. At some point, you're going to crash.

KARLY: I'll crash in the summer, when I can afford to. But right now, they keep me going, and they make me happy.

OLIVIA: I don't think they do. I think they just make your parents happy.

KARLY: If my parents are happy, then I'm happy.

(Olivia exits.)

"JOSH"

(Karly gathers up her research and starts to go. JOSH stops her.)

JOSH: Stop. Sit.

KARLY: What?

JOSH: Big drama.

KARLY: Who?

JOSH: Olivia and Joseph. *(Karly looks around:)* They aren't here.

KARLY: What's going on?

JOSH: Olivia wants to upgrade.

KARLY: To who?

JOSH: Michael.

KARLY: Anderson?

JOSH: God, no! Tompkins.

KARLY: Really? *(Thinks it over:)* I can see that.

JOSH: So...?

KARLY: What?

JOSH: Joseph's available. Or will be, like, any minute. As soon as she breaks up with him.

KARLY: So?

JOSH: Jump on it!

KARLY: No way.

JOSH: Why not?

KARLY: I don't know.

JOSH: You've liked him for, like, a hundred years.

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KARLY: Yeah, when I thought there was no chance!

JOSH: That makes no sense.

KARLY: You wouldn't get it. You're a guy.

JOSH: I'm just saying, if you don't go for it now, you'll lose your chance.

KARLY: Why? Because someone better looking will swoop in?

JOSH: I didn't say that.

KARLY: I can get guys, you know. I don't have to only get them when they're on the rebound, or whatever.

JOSH: Don't freak, Karly. I didn't say anything.

KARLY: You always make me feel so good about myself, Josh.

JOSH: Ever hear of the word "projection?"

KARLY: Why don't you go for it?

JOSH: Um, because I'm not into guys!

KARLY: Uh-huh.

JOSH: Our making out at Deborah's party should have proved that to you!

KARLY: It proved you like making out. It didn't prove that you don't like guys.

JOSH: You want proof that I'm straight? I'd rather date creepy Mandy Conn than Joseph.

(They laugh and creep out at the thought of it.)

KARLY: I'd pay you a hundred dollars if you did.

JOSH: Make it a thousand!

KARLY: It still wouldn't be worth it!

JOSH: Suddenly I show up at school one day with black lipstick all over my neck!

KARLY: (*Laughing uncontrollably:*) Stop it!

JOSH: My lip all torn up.

KARLY: Josh! Oh God...!

JOSH: Smelling like smoke and pee.

KARLY: Oh my God! Oh my God!

JOSH: Not even for a thousand dollars!

KARLY: Poor Mandy!

JOSH: Don't "poor Mandy" her. She peed her pants back in fourth grade.

KARLY: I know. And she'll never live that down.

JOSH: I saw it happen!

KARLY: I smelled it happen!

JOSH: I'm surprised she's not here tonight. She's always here.

KARLY: She's probably changing her pants!

JOSH: So, anyway, I've got big news.

KARLY: Bigger than Olivia and Joseph breaking up?

JOSH: Much bigger. (*Hums a little fanfare:*) I'm quitting the tennis team!

KARLY: So we can spend more time making out?

JOSH: I'm serious, Karly.

KARLY: What? Really? Why?

JOSH: I need to change things up. I'm going to be a senior next year and I have no identity outside of tennis.

KARLY: Because you're nationally ranked.

JOSH: So?

KARLY: It's impressive. Last year they had that whole assembly just for you.

JOSH: Yeah. But so what?

KARLY: What else would you do?

JOSH: I don't know. Just take the year off. I'm so tired of getting up at 5 every morning to go train. Then 6 a.m. practice. School at 7:30. Practice again after school, then another workout before I get home. Homework. I mean, that's my life. There's nothing else!

KARLY: But you've been doing it for years.

JOSH: Exactly. Which is why it's time for something different. Something new.

KARLY: You wouldn't know what to do with yourself. You'd go crazy.

JOSH: No way! There's so much I haven't done in, like, forever.

KARLY: Like what?

JOSH: See a movie the day it came out. Hang out at the mall. Play video games. Meet people.

KARLY: People are over-rated.

JOSH: I just feel like I've given up a huge part of my life for something that may not pan out. I mean, if it's going to happen, I should already be on my way. I should be training in Florida year-round. But I'm not.

KARLY: You're nationally ranked!

JOSH: Not high enough. And if I'm not the best now, then when is it going to happen?

KARLY: I think you're just tired. Maybe you should take a week off. Sleep in. Eat whatever you want. Party.

JOSH: I wish.

KARLY: Just do it.

JOSH: Sure. But explain that to my coach, my nutritionist, my trainer, my parents...

KARLY: There are worse things than being known for playing tennis. At least people know who you are.

JOSH: I guess.

KARLY: It's something. You wouldn't want to be...invisible.

JOSH: I guess not... *(Beat.)* Hey, you don't really think I like guys, do you?

KARLY: Of course not.

JOSH: Ok. Good.

KARLY: It's the tennis thing. Everyone always says all the guys on the team are gay. It's just a joke.

JOSH: Yeah, I know. And the women's basketball team—

KARLY: Are lesbians. Although, frankly, I think more than a few of them actually are.

JOSH: Hey, maybe I should get a job here.

KARLY: At The Bean? When would you have time?

JOSH: When I quit the team. If I quit the team.

KARLY: Get up at 5 a.m. to serve coffee, go to school, work a shift after school, then homework. Yeah, your life would be so much easier.

JOSH: At least I wouldn't have to run suicides.

KARLY: There is that.

JOSH: There is that.

KARLY: I'm going to take off. I've got to drop this stuff off at home then go to work.

(Grabs a few pills from her vitamin bottle and swallows them quickly.)

JOSH: I can't believe you work so late at night!

KARLY: You have your routine, I have mine.

JOSH: Give Joseph a call!

KARLY: You give Joseph a call!

(She exits.)

"FIN"

(Watching Karly leave. FIN, dressed alternatively, crosses to the table.)

FIN: Hey.

JOSH: Oh, hey. *(Looking around, nervous:)*

FIN: Is it cool if I sit here?

JOSH: Sure.

FIN: *(Noticing Josh looking around:)* We can move to one of the tall booths so no one can see us.

JOSH: What? No. I don't care.

FIN: What's up?

JOSH: Nothing. I was just talking to—

FIN: Karly. Yeah. She's pretty, hunh?

JOSH: Oh, do you think...? We're just friends.

FIN: I know.

JOSH: Nothing's going on.

FIN: I know.

JOSH: So, what's up with you, Fin?

FIN: Nothing much. Killing time.

JOSH: Before what?

FIN: Before nothing. Just killing time. I'm surprised to see you here. Don't you have practice or training or whatever?

JOSH: Usually. My coach called a short practice today so we could rest before the match tomorrow.

FIN: Won't you get in trouble if he catches you drinking caffeine?

JOSH: Probably. But I don't think anyone will tell him.

FIN: I guess not. Not many jocks come here. *(Josh laughs:)* What?

JOSH: No one ever calls tennis players "jocks."

FIN: Well, then, no one from your team ever comes here. You guys usually just meet in secret somewhere to drink beer and make-out with each other, right?

JOSH: That's not funny!

FIN: Sorry! I'm just kidding!

JOSH: Just shut up about that. We're not—I'm not.

FIN: I know. *(Beat.)* So.

JOSH: So.

(Drinks, and glances around quickly.)

FIN: Geez, am I that much of a freak?

JOSH: What?

FIN: You keep looking around, trying to see if anyone sees us together. I can go, you know. If you're so embarrassed.

JOSH: I'm not. Sit down.

FIN: People who come here don't really care if the freak and the tennis star are drinking coffee together. In fact, that's why they come here.

JOSH: Fin, you're not a freak.

FIN: No? Then I guess I'm not doing my job. *(Josh smiles. Beat.)* You said you were going to call me. After you left Deborah's party.

JOSH: Yeah, well, I was there pretty late.

FIN: Oh.

JOSH: I was.

FIN: I said you could call anytime. My grandma was already asleep.

JOSH: It would have been, like, 2 a.m.

FIN: I said anytime. (*Beat.*) ...Look, Josh, are you freaking out about it?

JOSH: I don't want to talk about this here!

FIN: Then where? And when? On the tennis court during practice?

JOSH: Stop it, Fin!

FIN: I don't want to talk about it either. I just want to know if it was a one-time thing.

JOSH: Yes!

FIN: Oh.

JOSH: It was nothing. It meant...nothing.

FIN: ...Cool.

(Gets up.)

JOSH: Wait!

FIN: What?

JOSH: Sit down. Sit. (*Fin does.*) Did you...tell anyone about it?

FIN: You mean, aside from posting it on the school's website?

JOSH: I'm serious!

FIN: No, I didn't tell anyone about it! That's my specialty, you know. Keeping quiet about stuff like this. You're not the first, Josh. I've done it a lot. With guys and girls. Everyone thinks I'm, like, some kind of loner or whatever. But I get more

action in one week than most people get in a year. I'm just discreet about it.

JOSH: Oh.

FIN: Don't look like that!

JOSH: Like what?

FIN: Disappointed. You were...different.

JOSH: Sure...

FIN: I'm not just blowing smoke. You really were... I like you, Josh.

JOSH: Oh.

FIN: Don't freak out about it. I'm not going to stalk you. If it was a one-time thing, cool. Whatever. We had a moment. It's all good.

JOSH: Cool.

FIN: But, if you ever decide that you want to do it again, I'm cool with that too. *(Grabs Josh's hand:)* I don't make that offer to everyone. Very few people actually.

JOSH: *(Pulls away, embarrassed:)* ...Thanks.

FIN: Just don't freak out about it.

JOSH: I'm not... *(Awkward pause. Both rise to leave:)* No, you stay. I've got to go.

FIN: So do I. I've got to meet up with someone.

JOSH: Oh.

FIN: Not for that. I'm not a—

JOSH: Just...can you just stay at the table for a minute, though? Just until I...

FIN: So no one sees us walking out together?

JOSH: No. I mean...

FIN: It's cool. I get it.

JOSH: Don't. Don't be like that. Now I feel like a jerk.

FIN: Then stop acting like one.

JOSH: ...You swear you didn't tell anyone?

FIN: Go! I'm not going to sit at this table forever.

(Josh exits.)

"MADISON"

FIN: *(Dials a number on cell. The other person picks up:)* Madison, where are you?... Put it out, and come in here... I'll buy you a new pack, just put it out and come on in here.

(Hangs up. Texts someone.)

MADISON: *(Entering:)* What?

FIN: Did you see him walk out?

MADISON: Who? Josh?

FIN: Yeah.

MADISON: Get over him, Fin. He's a stuck-up jerk.

FIN: He's so hot.

MADISON: Only if you're drunk.

FIN: I wish.

MADISON: You're so much better than him!

FIN: Yeah, right.

MADISON: You are.

FIN: In what parallel universe?

MADISON: Don't make me feed your ego.

FIN: Where were you?

MADISON: Outside in the parking lot.

FIN: You were out there for, like, 20 minutes. You smoke too much.

MADISON: So?

FIN: Your dad's a doctor.

MADISON: And your grandma's a cosmetologist. (*Fin laughs:*) See, this is better. You shouldn't get so caught up on him. It was nothing.

FIN: So he says.

MADISON: Really? Oh, sweetie...!

FIN: He said it was a one-time thing. I mean, I kinda thought it might be. But still...

MADISON: You wouldn't want to date him anyway. You'd have to, like, go to the gym if you wanted to see him. Can you imagine you on a treadmill?

FIN: Or in a Pilates class?

MADISON: Doing yoga?

FIN: Working out would get in the way of me doing nothing with my life.

MADISON: I totally need to get in shape.

FIN: Why?

MADISON: Hello? I'm fat.

FIN: You are not!

MADISON: I totally am. Look at this! (*She shows the underside of her arm and wiggles it around:*) This is what old ladies have.

FIN: You're such a freak about your weight.

MADISON: Because the world is a freak about it! My mom is a smaller size than me. As my sister likes to remind me every day of my life.

FIN: Still, you're not fat.

MADISON: Well, I'm not skinny. God, I hate the gym. I'll diet. I'll take pills. I'll get lipo... Just don't make me go to that smelly, awful place where everyone is already totally fit.

FIN: I hate to break it to you, but everyone at the gym is fit because they go to the gym.

MADISON: Bull! They've worked out at home for three years to get fit, then they go to the gym to show off how fit they are.

FIN: You should at least take P.E. I mean, if you're worried about your weight.

MADISON: No one takes P.E. anymore. Just the meatheads looking for an easy A.

FIN: At least there's good eye-candy there.

MADISON: Maybe I should go into the military. After high school, I mean. That'd get me in shape.

FIN: Oh, God!

MADISON: My brother is in the Army, and my cousin was in the Marines. There's nothing wrong with the military.

FIN: I know, but I thought you were going to go to community college?

MADISON: What's the point? It's like, high school part two.

FIN: No, it's not.

MADISON: I can't bear the thought of going to school for four more years. Maybe I should just move to New York or something. L.A. Somewhere cool.

FIN: And do what?

MADISON: I don't know. I'm just so sick of school.

FIN: Everybody's sick of school.

MADISON: Not that one chick. Whatsername. In Spanish.

FIN: Karly?

MADISON: She loves school.

FIN: Well, everybody's gotta love something.

MADISON: Like you love Josh?

FIN: Shut up!

MADISON: It's true! (*Fin reads a text, obviously quite pleased:*) Who's it from?

FIN: No one.

MADISON: Show me!

FIN: No!

MADISON: (*Grabs phone and glances at the text:*) Oh my God! Speak of the devil. (*Reads it:*) What's he sorry about?

FIN: I don't know.

MADISON: What did he say to you?

FIN: Nothing.

MADISON: (*Another text comes in. She reads it:*) He wants you to call him.

FIN: (*Grabbing the phone quickly:*) What?

MADISON: Look! (*Fin reads text:*) Well?

FIN: Let him wait.

MADISON: Don't be all hard to get. You like him.

FIN: So?

MADISON: He's the first person you've ever —

FIN: Shut up!

MADISON: Well, it's true.

FIN: He doesn't know that.

MADISON: Call him back. (*Fin writes a text:*) What are you texting?

FIN: None of your business.

MADISON: Are you going to meet him? (*Fin sends message:*)
Well?

FIN: I've got to go.

MADISON: You are!

FIN: No. I've just got to go.

(Gets up to leave.)

MADISON: Liar! You're totally going to meet him
somewhere and do it all night long.

FIN: I am not!

MADISON: Have fun! Don't end up pregnant or with herpes
or anything!

FIN: Shut up!

MADISON: Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

FIN: I don't know what that could possibly be.

(Fin exits.)

"CASSIDY"

CASSIDY: (*Rushing over:*) Madison! I thought that was you!

MADISON: Oh, hey, Cassidy.

CASSIDY: You were late to tech yesterday. You know we can't do the show without everyone there and ready to go!

MADISON: I'm just crew.

CASSIDY: Crew is important.

MADISON: Says the star.

CASSIDY: Not as important as the actors, maybe. But still important.

MADISON: They wouldn't let me off at work.

CASSIDY: It's fast food. You should just quit. It's not like you couldn't find another job someplace else.

MADISON: The play is not more important than my job!

CASSIDY: Yes it is!

MADISON: Again, says the star.

CASSIDY: Says everyone. Do you know how many seniors got turned down for roles in this show? In their final year of high school? It's become, like, a total junior showcase! We've got to prove to them that there was a reason we got cast and they didn't!

MADISON: I didn't get cast.

CASSIDY: What?

MADISON: You said we had to prove to them why we got cast. But I didn't. Get cast.

CASSIDY: Oh. Did you even audition?

MADISON: Yes.

CASSIDY: Oh. Well... Just tell me you're going to be there on time tomorrow!

MADISON: I was on time today, wasn't I?

CASSIDY: I know, but tomorrow's the last dress. We open on Saturday!

MADISON: Calm down. God, you'd think it was Broadway!

CASSIDY: It is. For this town. It really is.

MADISON: I'll be there on time. *(Pause.)* Well?

CASSIDY: Well, what?

MADISON: You can go. I said I'd be there on time.

CASSIDY: I didn't come over here just for that.

MADISON: Right! What, you came over to just sit and chat?

CASSIDY: I did! I think we should get to know each other better.

MADISON: Why?

CASSIDY: You're a mystery. No one knows much about you. You're always hanging with those weird kids.

MADISON: Actors?

CASSIDY: Ha. I mean Fin. And Mandy Whatsername. All those other people who wear black and smoke and hang out together all the time.

MADISON: Actors?

CASSIDY: You know who I mean!

MADISON: They're my friends.

CASSIDY: I know. But you're not weird.

MADISON: What does that mean?

CASSIDY: You know... You don't look like them.

MADISON: And that's a problem?

CASSIDY: No! But, it's...different...that's all. I mean, look at you. You're normal. And they're...

MADISON: Freaks?

CASSIDY: To some people. Most people.

MADISON: To you?

CASSIDY: Oh, yeah, me, too. But, you know, I get them. I'm an actor. Everyone's a little strange in the theatre. But, I mean, we have a reason to be. They're just kinda...freaky for the sake of being freaky.

MADISON: God, Cassidy!

CASSIDY: What? I'm not being rude! I mean, you look at them and they look weird. Whatever. I mean, to each his own. Anyway, this isn't about them. I want to know more about you. I mean, like, why did you take Theatre this year?

MADISON: I needed an elective.

CASSIDY: But why Theatre?

MADISON: Because I needed an elective.

CASSIDY: I know. But, you didn't take Computer Science or P.E. or whatever for your elective. So, why –

MADISON: Look, Cassidy, you don't have to do this.

CASSIDY: Do what?

MADISON: Try to make nice because you're worried I'm going to be late and ruin your big role. I get it. I'll be there on time. I'm off at four tomorrow, so there's plenty of time before the show.

CASSIDY: I just don't want anything to go wrong. They're going to record the show and I want to be able to send it out with my college applications next year.

MADISON: I said, don't worry! I'm not going to screw anything up. I need a good grade in this class, too. You're not the only one applying for college.

CASSIDY: You're applying to college?

MADISON: Does that surprise you?

CASSIDY: College college or community college?

MADISON: Community college is college.

CASSIDY: Of course it is. (*Awkward pause.*) So...what exactly is it that you do? Backstage during the show?

MADISON: I make you look good.

CASSIDY: I'm serious.

MADISON: So am I.

CASSIDY: No, really. I have no idea what happens back there because I'm on stage for the whole show.

MADISON: I set out the props, I help with some quick changes, I move some scenery, then I put away everything at the end of the night. What exactly do you do?

CASSIDY: What do you mean?

MADISON: What do you do on stage? While I'm backstage making you look good?

CASSIDY: Seriously? (*Madison nods sarcastically.*) Well, I do a ton! I memorize my lines and my blocking. I do a physical and vocal warm-up before the show. I go to rehearsals. I perform the show.

MADISON: You get the attention. And the applause.

CASSIDY: Well, sure. I'm on stage.

MADISON: So where's the applause for the crew?

CASSIDY: Oh, you guys get part of it. Like, when everyone's clapping at the end, part of that is yours.

MADISON: Lucky me.

CASSIDY: Well, if you wanted applause and to be on stage, you could have auditioned.

MADISON: I told you: I did!

CASSIDY: Oh, right.

MADISON: I didn't get anything.

CASSIDY: Not even the chorus?

MADISON: Am I in the chorus? No, I'm crewing backstage. So, no, I guess not even the chorus.

CASSIDY: Oh. Well, lots of people don't get cast their first audition.

MADISON: It was my third.

CASSIDY: Well, it's a musical and maybe you're just not a strong singer.

MADISON: I'm not a strong anything.

CASSIDY: Don't say that!

MADISON: It's true. But, I mean, I'm ok with it. I don't mind being in the middle. No one has any expectations of anyone in the middle.

CASSIDY: Still. I mean, you shouldn't feel bad. Acting isn't for everyone. (*Madison stares at her:*) I mean, some people are good at sports, or in school, or whatever. Acting's probably just not your particular thing.

MADISON: But crewing is?

CASSIDY: Maybe. I mean, in the real world, stage crew gets paid, too. And someone's got to do it. Maybe you're destined to be a really famous crew person!

MADISON: Sure.

CASSIDY: Seriously. I mean, think about it. You make other people look good. You make me look good. That's must be your thing. Making other people look good. And, I know it's not the same as acting or whatever, but, still, it's good to have...a thing. No matter what it is.

MADISON: I need a smoke.

CASSIDY: Can I...can I use your table? I'm meeting Zack here, and this is the only table left that's close to an outlet, and we need to do some research on his laptop for this project we're working on...

MADISON: (*A bit disappointed:*) ...Sure. I should probably head out anyway.

CASSIDY: Oh, you don't need to leave! I think there are some tables in the back you could sit at. They just don't have any outlets.

MADISON: No, I should go. Get some rest before the big dress rehearsal tomorrow. (*Muttering as she exits:*) God forbid people should see you talking to the fat backstage girl. Got to make sure you look good...

CASSIDY: Thank you! (*Madison exits:*) You'd better be there on time tomorrow!

(She waves across the room.)

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"ZACK"

ZACK: *(Walks over and sits down:)* Nice score!

CASSIDY: I know!

ZACK: What did you say to her?

CASSIDY: Nothing. She just offered to go.

ZACK: Cool.

(Plugs in his laptop. Takes out his phone. Takes out his mp3 player and starts to put his headphones on.)

CASSIDY: No! No way! I do not want to spend another night with you sitting there online, listening to music. I want you to talk to me.

ZACK: Right!

(He laughs. She reaches over and pulls his headphones out of his player.)

CASSIDY: I'm serious, Zack! Put your music away! Now!
(He begrudgingly does so:) And your phone!

ZACK: What if someone texts?

CASSIDY: It won't be important. It never is.

ZACK: You don't know! You have no idea what kind of texts I get.

CASSIDY: Can't we just talk?

ZACK: ...Hang on, my laptop's getting hung up. *(Presses a few buttons. It continues to boot up:)* I totally need a new one.

CASSIDY: Zack! What did I just say?

ZACK: We're supposed to be working on our English homework! We're gonna need my laptop.

CASSIDY: Look... Olivia told me you said you didn't like her.

ZACK: I don't. She's a skank.

CASSIDY: She's my best friend!

ZACK: Then you shouldn't make friends with skanks.

CASSIDY: Zack...

ZACK: Listen, I don't care what you say. She totally screwed over Joseph and that's not cool.

CASSIDY: She called him and said she wasn't coming.

ZACK: She said she was sick. Then I see her out with you.

CASSIDY: She felt better.

ZACK: Don't lie for her! She just wanted to back out on Joseph so she could go make out with Michael. She's a skank!

CASSIDY: Quit saying that!

ZACK: I call it like I see it. And Olivia is a big ole skank.

(He pulls out his phone. He replies to a text with lightning-fast fingers.)

CASSIDY: Put your phone away!

ZACK: Make me!

CASSIDY: Zack!

ZACK: What? It's two seconds.

CASSIDY: Put your phone away! Now!

ZACK: I already have a mother, thank you very much!

CASSIDY: God, Zack, stop acting like a jerk about everything! What's with you tonight?

ZACK: Nothing.

CASSIDY: You have absolutely no people skills whatsoever.

ZACK: Thanks.

CASSIDY: It's true! If you're not on your phone, you're online. If you're not online, you're playing video games. Or watching TV. You don't interact with anything that doesn't have a screen.

ZACK: Are you just going to nag all night? 'Cause, if so, I'm gonna go.

CASSIDY: I'm not nagging. I just want to talk to you.

ZACK: About what!?!

CASSIDY: I don't know. Stuff. *(Beat.)* How were your classes after lunch?

ZACK: Are you serious?

CASSIDY: How was Physics?

ZACK: Great.

CASSIDY: Calculus?

ZACK: Great.

CASSIDY: Spanish?

ZACK: Maravilloso. All my classes were great.

CASSIDY: Good. *(Long pause.)* You know, you could ask me some questions. How I'm doing. How my day is going.

ZACK: What is with you today?

CASSIDY: Olivia said that Michael was bringing her a huge bouquet for Opening Night. And a card.

ZACK: He can afford it.

CASSIDY: Roses.

ZACK: *(Opening a browser on his computer:)* Yippee.

CASSIDY: Did you even think to get me anything?

ZACK: Like what?

CASSIDY: Flowers? A card? Anything?

ZACK: Nope.

CASSIDY: Turn off your computer!

ZACK: Why?

CASSIDY: Look at me! We're talking!

ZACK: No, you're yelling. And I'm working.

CASSIDY: See? You can't even—

ZACK: What? We're here to work on a paper. You said.

CASSIDY: It's a book review. There's nothing you can find online that will—

ZACK: (*He shows her the screen.*) Over one thousand sites to choose from.

CASSIDY: It's supposed to be a personal response to the book.

ZACK: Thousands of personal responses.

CASSIDY: Your response. Zack...

ZACK: I'm not going to plagiarize. Look. (*He does the following:*) Cut. Paste. Replace every third word using the thesaurus.

CASSIDY: That's plagiarizing.

ZACK: Rearrange a few sentences. Rephrase the first line. And the last one. Spell-check. Voila! A new paper.

CASSIDY: It's still cheating.

ZACK: No, it's not! I have the same opinion as this guy. Why should I have to come up with different words? Besides, I've totally protected it from a Google search. She's not going to care anyway. She spends, like, three seconds on each paper. You've seen her grade.

CASSIDY: Still. I don't know why you even came down here if you can do it so easily at home.

ZACK: I wanted to hang out with you.

CASSIDY: Really? *(He nods. She brightens up. He puts back on his headphones:)* So, you're coming to the Opening. Right? Right? *(Zack ignores her:)* Zack? *(He ignores her, engrossed in an online game:)* Zack!

(She storms away, angry.)

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