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Damsels in Distress

By Whit Stillman

- Look.

- Where?

There.

Yes. I think so.

Hello.

Are you a new student?

- Yes.

- Good. We thought so.

We'd like to help you.

Help me? What do you mean?

As a freshman, it can be very tough.

You get to college and it's supposed to be great, but it's not.

University life can be pretty bad.

- There are a lot of suicides.

- Well, attempted ones.

I'm not actually a freshman.

I'm a transfer student.

- Oh, an entering sophomore?

- Yes.

You were unhappy

and are looking to recover here.

- Well, I think you will.

- Yes.

Would you welcome that? Would our help be something you'd appreciate?

Or would you rather sink or swim on your own?

- Either way is fine. We'll be friends.

- Yes, whichever you'd prefer.

Yes. Sure.

Great. We should start immediately.

Clothes can be crucial for confidence and an overall sense of well-being.

- Clothes don't have to be expensive.

- You need friends of the same size.

- You don't like my clothes?

- I'm just saying. Move it out.

What? What's wrong?

- What's wrong?

- You didn't notice that?

- No. What?

- Those guys.

That smell. That awful, acrid odor.

Have you heard
of nasal shock syndrome?
Any harsh, acrid or just disgusting
odor sends Rose into nasal shock.
Just from some BO?
"Just some BO"? Oh, my God, Lily.
You must have
a very high threshold for pain.
That'll serve you well
at Seven Oaks.

- What do you mean?
- Seven Oaks is notorious for its BO.
It was the last of the Select Seven
to go coed.
An atmosphere
of male barbarism predominates...
- ...but we're going to change that.
- Yes.

Where are you going?
Gotta get to the Housing Department.
They lost my rooming assignment.
That's terrible.
You have no place to stay?
Was it just mislaid?
No, there were more acceptances
than they anticipated...
...and not enough rooms
to go around, so....
Why don't you stay with us?
Really?
Don't think of this in the old-fashioned
sense of going to a party...
...to find someone
or not find someone.
That's not the dynamic
that we're talking about.
- What dynamic are you talking about?
- Glad you asked.
Our going to a party of this kind
is more a form of youth outreach.
- Of what?
- Youth outreach.
It's not just some moronic
frat-house social function.

Though it will be that too.
We've gotta keep in mind
that these guys are young people.
They're essentially immature
and crying out for help and guidance.

- Though they don't know it.
- No, they don't, but we do.
- Aren't they the same age as we are?
- Only numerically.

I'm a lot fatter than you are,
but I think we could pin it.
Oh, my gosh, that's beautiful.
Stunning.

Take Frank, my friend.
He's not some cool, handsome,
studly macho type.

No, not at all.
I can't stand guys like that.
He's more of a sad sack really,
wouldn't you say?

- Definitely.
- What is a sad sack?

A loser.

- You like losers?
- Very much so.

Do you know what's the major problem
in social life?

What?

The tendency, widespread, to always
seek someone cooler than yourself.
It's always a stretch.
Often a big stretch.
Why not find someone
who's inferior?

- Someone like Frank.
- Yes. It's more rewarding.

And, in fact, quite reassuring.
You mean someone you can help,
not just thinking of yourself.
Yes, that's it, precisely. But without
the goody-goody implications.
Our aspirations are pretty basic.
Take a guy who hasn't realized
his full potential...

...or doesn't even have much...

...and then help him realize it
or find more.

There's enough material here
for a lifetime of social work.

What's really worrisome
is that that was intentional.

Frank.

Frank, this is Lily.

She's just come to Seven Oaks
as a transfer student. Isn't she great?

Lily failed
or wasn't happy at her last school.

We're sure that she's going
to adapt here.

- In fact, she already has.

- Oh, good.

Oh, my God. A golden oldie.

I love these.

- Oh, my gosh. Wasn't that great?

- That was really fun.

I know that people can have
useful careers in many areas.

Medicine, government, law, finance.

- Education.

- Yes, even education.

But I'd like to do something
especially significant in my lifetime.

That could change the course
of human history.

- Such as starting a new dance craze.

- Really?

Yes. Something that could
improve the lives...

...of every person and every couple.

I'm so proud

of what you accomplished last night.

You showed those guys
a really good time.

Without anything really bad
happening. That's good.

The guys you know,
are they all Greeks?

- What?

- Are all the guys you know Greeks?
Excuse me. I don't understand.
Are all the guys you know Greeks?
- I don't think we know any Greeks.
- Greeks, like frat boys.
Oh, yes. Fraternities.
You mean members
of the Greek-letter fraternities.
Yeah. Like last night.
Actually, last night
we were at the DU house. DU.
Roman letters. Not Greek.
Seven Oaks has never had
a Greek-letter fraternity system.
It's always been
a Roman-letter system here.
It's very different.
- What house is this?
- Oh, this isn't a fraternity.
At least not one anyone
should want to join.
You probably think we're frivolous,
empty-headed college coeds.
You're probably right.
I often feel empty-headed.
We're trying to make a difference
in people's lives.
One way to do that is to stop them
from killing themselves.
Have you ever heard of
"Prevention is nine-tenths the cure"?
Well, in the case of suicide,
it's actually 10-tenths the cure.
- Those are clichés, aren't they?
- Yes, they are.
It's interesting you say that. I love
clichés and hackneyed expressions.
- Do you know why?
- No.
Because they're largely true.
The hundreds,
perhaps thousands...
...of such clichés
and hackneyed expressions...

...that our language
has bequeathed us...
...are a stunning treasure trove
of human insight and knowledge.
- Really?
- Yes. Oh, please sit down.
During these formative
college years...
...we should learn as many clichéd
and hackneyed thoughts as possible.
Furthermore, I think we will.
Speaking of suicide prevention,
do you have a boyfriend, Lily?
- Are you dating anyone?
- I don't see the connection.
- You don't?
- Boyfriends are a primary suicide risk.
You don't have
any particular friend?
No one at all?
No. Well, there's this grad student
I met over summer.
Xavier.
We became pretty good pals.
He has a girlfriend whom I've met.
She's very nice.
"Zavier." With a Z?
- No, I think it's with an X.
- No, I'm certain it's Z.
Zavier, like Zorro.
It's the same sound.
Zorro marked his name with a Z.
It's an X.
But Zorro's with a Z.
Okay, let me see
if I can figure this out.
Used at the beginning of a name,
Z and X have the same pronunciation.
- But it's Zorro with a Z.
- Actually, there were two Zorros.
One spelled his name with a Z
and made a Z mark for Zorro.
And there's Xorro
who spelled his name with an X...

...and with his sword
he'd make an X mark.
What was really unfair was
because he marked his name with X...
...everybody assumed
he was illiterate...
...when he was spelling correctly.

- Hello.

- Can we help you?

Of course we can.

No case is too challenging.

- Would you like a doughnut?

- Okay.

Please, sit down.

- Here, have some coffee.

- Thank you.

- What's your name?

- Jim Bose.

- But my friends call me Jimbo.

- Why?

- What?

- Why do your friends call you Jimbo?

Well, it's a contraction of Jim and
the first part of my last name, Bose.

Yeah, I got that. But why bother?

- What do you mean?

- Jim is already a lovely name.
It's short, simple, evocative.
Shouldn't a nickname
simplify the name that it replaces?
Jimbo doesn't really
simplify anything.
I don't know.

Well, maybe you should ask
your friends.
Where do you live or reside?

Doar Dorm.

- Oh, my God. Yuck.

- What?

- The smell, it's notorious.

- What smell?

You're right, it's more like a stink.
Unclean clothing, I'd say, mostly.

- Vomit.

- Stale beer.
Pot. Cheap deodorant.
There might be a vermin infestation.
Did you know
a good-smelling environment...
...is crucial to our sense
of well-being?
Have you tried to find
a better-smelling place?
Wait, wait.
It's not me, I'm not depressed.
- You're not?
- No.
Are you sure?
You kind of seem on edge.
- No, I'm fine.
- That's a terrible expression. "Fine."
"I'm fine."
Something smug about it. "I'm fine."
- Why do you say that you're fine?
- I'm not depressed. I'm not suicidal.
Why are you here, then?
Are you a con man?
- A confidence trickster?
- No, there's a girl.
Her boyfriend dumped her.
She was crying but now is silent.
Oh, my God.
Why didn't you say so?
We have to go. Call the cops!
A suicide might be in progress!
- The campus cops?
- Yes, of course the campus cops.
Take this.
We have a lot of students
coming to the center...
...pretending to be depressed
to get doughnuts.
- Confidence tricksters.
- Yes, it's really bad. Really cynical.
We pledged
to the doughnut company...
...we would only give doughnuts
to students who were depressed...

...or otherwise nutty.
We're a nonprofit,
so the rules are pretty strict.
- This man could still be a trickster.
- Well, we'll soon find out.
Tell me about this girl.
Well, her name is Priss.
She's very pretty.
Oh, yes. It's very hard for beautiful
women to experience rejection.
Priss? Priss. Are you okay?
Priss! Priss, say something!
Priss! Open up!
Oh, thank God.
We're gonna have to force this door.
Priss? Are you okay?
- What?
- Please don't. Please, come with us.
Do you wanna talk about it?
What was his name?
Josh.
If you'd rather not talk,
we don't have to.
No, it's okay, I just....
I keep thinking how he used to gaze
at me with such love in his eyes.
You know what I mean?
No. No, I've never
actually seen that.
Yes. Just days ago,
he'd gaze at me.
His eyes, so blue.
He had blue eyes?
So does Frank.
Frank's the guy that I go out with.
Otherwise, he's not conventionally
good-looking, which I actually prefer.
Would you describe Josh
as handsome?
- That's a problem.
- Could I join you guys?
Yes, please.
Priss and I were just talking.
In my view,

handsome men are to be avoided.

I don't even consider good looks
to be flattering in a man.

- Do you know what I mean?

- No.

Cookie-cutter, good-looking guys,
with their chiseled features...

...running around,

full of themselves...

...getting everything they want,
never suffering or experiencing--

We suffered?

We're not under discussion. That's
irrelevant. That's besides the point.

- Is this making you feel any better?

- Yes. I think so.

Good. I hoped it would.

Okay, it's nearly 4 and The Daily
Complainer's orientation meeting...

...is about to start

and I think we should go.

The editor, Rick DeWolfe,
he's terrible. A real jerk.

Why do you think he's such a jerk?

He's one of those

that I was talking about. Tall.

Probably considers himself
very smart and handsome.

A journalist, so you can imagine the
mindboggling arrogance and conceit.

- But, Violet, don't you think--?

- What?

Well, don't you think that the way you
talk could be considered arrogant too?

I mean, a little?

Yes, of course.

But what's your point?

Wouldn't that be hypocritical,
criticizing Rick...

...for something

you could be criticized for yourself?

No. I don't see why.

We're all flawed.

Must that render us mute

to the flaws of others?
Must we tether ourselves
from comment...
...because our natures
are human too?
We've got a rebel amongst us.
That's good, I think. It's good
to be challenged and criticized.
I know your intentions are good,
it's just--
That's it precisely.
Our intentions are good.
We're seeking to help people
rescue their lives...
...from terrible sadness and failure...
...which is a worthy goal,
don't you think?
Yes. But not exactly a humble one.
No.
I agree with you there.
You're right, absolutely.
I'd like to thank you
for this chastisement.
- I'm sorry, I didn't mean to chastise.
- No, I think you did...
...and I think it's good.
It's good to have a friend...
...to put one in one's place
when that's what one needs.
Now I see that I have
that kind of friend in you.
I think that's great.
Hello, people. Listen up.
People, quiet. Quiet, people.
Shut up!
Okay, that's better. I'm Rick DeWolfe,
editor of The Complainer.
Over the next weeks, I'm the person
you're gonna hate most in the world.
You're gonna hate me because
I'm gonna work you...
...point out your stupidity
and incompetence...
...and do everything in my power

to turn you into journalists.

- Albeit barely literate ones.

- Oh, brother.

Any questions?

No?

Yes. How did The Daily Complainer
get its name?

Isn't that pretty obvious?

It comes out every day

and it's the university daily.

So The Daily Complainer.

- The Daily--

- No, I meant--

Oh, you mean,

why The Complainer?

The name dates from Seven Oaks'

earliest days as a divinity school.

The reference is to the Book of Job.

Job's complaint with the world.

Before justice can be achieved,

a complaint must be made.

That is what we do

and people don't like it a bit.

Right now, what that means...

...is extirpating Seven Oaks'

elitist Roman Letter Clubs...

...that are like a cancer

on the community.

They're not elitist in the least.

Yes, they are.

Have you met any of their members?

The guys from the DU, for example?

They're barely competent

for the tasks of everyday life.

They have to drink a quart of beer

just to talk to a woman?

- Two quarts.

- Yet you salivate at the idea...

...of taking the roof off their heads

and throwing them on the street...

...where who knows what would

happen. You call yourself a Christian.

- No, I don't.

- What unkindness and cruelty.

This is the darkness in the heart
of man, which Joseph Conrad...

...wrote about most eloquently.

- He was actually Polish.

- Oh, my God.

Unkind, self-righteous
and pedantic.

In short, a model journalist.

You should know something
about these girls.

They run the suicide center where
their preferred therapy for depressed...

...and suicidal people is...

...tap dancing.

- I kid you not.

- Tap is a highly effective therapy...

...as well as a dazzlingly
expressive dance form...

...that has been sadly neglected
for too many years.

It's moronic and barbaric.

You expect tap dancing
to solve people's problems?

No, we don't.

We're using the whole range
of musical dance numbers...

...which have proven themselves
to be effective therapies...

...for the suicidal
and the hopelessly depressed.

That really got me down.

- I thought you handled it well.

- You did? Thanks.

No, it's all this aggression
and hostility that gets me down.

Not just his but also my own.

It leaves you feeling unclean.

Have you thought of taking a shower?

Maybe you'd feel better.

You're probably right.

No, there's something else.

What Lily was saying about me
being conceited and arrogant.

- I'm sorry.

- No, I think you're right.
I'm really ashamed.

- You're joking.

- No, it's terrible how I've acted.
We're all Christians.
Or I should say Judeo-Christians.
Humility should be our watchword.
The essence of being a good person.
Humility comes from within.
If it's not there in the first place,
where do you go to get it?
I stopped looking a long time ago.
Very good, Freak.

- You really think so?

- Yes. Certainly.

- Five, six, seven, eight.

- Violet.

Is it such a good idea
to call him Freak?
What?
He's already depressed
and you're calling him Freak.
That's his name. Freak. Freak Astaire.
That's how he wants to be called.
What are you talking about?
Lily was just saying
she likes your dancing.
Five, six, seven, eight.
Are you okay?
What do you mean?
I thought you looked sad
and was wondering...
- ...if there was anything we could do.
- What could you do?
Oh, I know.
You think I'm gonna kill myself
and make you look bad.
No, I'm worried that you'll kill yourself
and make yourself look bad.
Do you have any idea
how demoralizing it is...
...to be constantly questioned
about whether you're suicidal or not?
No.

After a while, you wonder,
why is everyone asking me this?
They want me to be suicidal?
Or is it just the consequence
of your utter absurdity?

Excuse me.

What scent are you wearing?

- What are you talking about?

- The perfume you're wearing.

I'm not wearing any perfume!

You see, that could be the problem.

- I've become friends with a group.

- Really?

- Although they're perfume-obsessed.

- Oh, them? Those girls?

The ones who volunteer
at the center?

- Yeah.

- But they're terrible.

The blond one? She's notorious.

- What do you mean?

- Such a bitch. Terrible, isn't she?

- Would balsamic be okay?

- What?

Balsamic vinegar. For the dressing.

Yeah, sure.

- What's that?

- What?

- Those.

- Artichokes?

Is that what they look like?

Come on, Lily.

You've seen an artichoke before.

- You haven't?

- They look so weird.

I'm not convinced that having
a suicide-prevention center...

...prevents any suicides.

Well, the coffee's good.

If someone were determined
to destroy themselves...

- ...I don't think they'd stop for coffee.

- It depends on what it tastes like.

- Where are we going?

- I thought I'd take Priss over to DU.

Why?

It might be helpful

for her to meet some of the guys.

How would that be helpful?

They're morons.

- Oh, come on, Lily.

- No, they're morons.

No. Not medically. I like them.

They're in that sympathetic range

of being not good-looking...

...and yet not smart.

There's something likable about that.

Spending time with them, you get the

sense that you're making a difference.

For somebody suicidal, like Priss,

that could be a real boost.

- I'm not suicidal.

- Oh, that's good.

It's better not to have an identity

as a suicidal person, don't you think?

- Well, bye.

- Well....

- Where are you going?

- Over to Xavier's.

- Is that a good idea?

- Why wouldn't it be?

- Is his girlfriend gonna be there?

- Of course.

- Gosh, you're nosy.

- No, no, it's just a general foreboding.

"Foreboding"?

You know, you're absolutely right.

I was being nosy.

Terribly so.

- I've gotta watch that.

- Yes, we must improve ourselves.

- Bye.

- Bye.

Bye.

Lily.

- You were coming over?

- Hey. Yeah. Is Alice home?

Alice is working.

- Oh, she is?
- But it's not a problem.
It's good you came.
Let's go to the Oak Bar.
I'll buy you a beer.
- I thought Alice would be back.
- I'll call her. She'll join us there.
Come on.
Okay.
She's actually quite a good person.
Her entire identity
revolves around helping people.
You really think that's true?
What's she have against
The Complainer? That's bizarre.
Well, she thinks the editor, Rick
DeWolfe, is completely egotistical.
And your friend isn't?
- Hi.
- Hi.
- Hi, Lily.
- Hi.
- Great. You got the message.
- Yeah.
- Who's egotistical?
- Lily's roommate.
She sounds unbearable. She's on
a rampage against The Complainer.
Really? Why?
She thinks the editor,
Rick DeWolfe, is conceited.
- And, in fact, quite mean.
- Mean?
Yes. He wants to close
the Seven Oaks Roman Letter Clubs.
That's good, isn't it?
Everyone was against them.
- No.
- Come on.
There's no justification
for those places.
They're exclusive and elitist.
The point that Violet makes
is that they can't be elitist.

- They're morons.
- Yeah, elitist morons.
You'll grant they're morons.
That's a handicap.
Such people should be helped,
not hounded and persecuted.
- Persecuted?
- Yes, losing the roof over your head?
That's the worst thing
that can happen.
Violet thinks there could be
some risk of suicide.
Because some boy might kill himself,
Seven Oaks can't do what's right?
It's a factor to be considered.
- Yeah.
- No, it isn't.
You can't set policy that way.
- Excuse me, we didn't order these.
- Compliments of the guy at the bar.
That's a playboy or operator move.
Operators like that are to be avoided.
Why? It seems generous, sending
drinks to people you don't know.
- Drinks are expensive.
- Drinks to two gorgeous girls.
His intention was to seduce
and he assumed he could.
- Both?
- That seems a bit harsh.
You don't know what he was thinking.
Was he alone?
Yes.
You see?
He was alone and probably lonely.
He could see that Alice and Lily
were students.
Students are known
for their intelligent conversation.
They can always talk
about their courses.
That was probably
what attracted him.
Nonsense.

Perhaps his view was even loftier.
To court Lily
with a view to matrimony.
We're in the north,
but a southern gentleman...
...can wander into these parts.
Rubbish.
Seeing Lily across a crowded bar filled
with the usual undergraduate slobs.
Why wouldn't a thoughtful
young man seek her out?
She's lovely.
Isn't it incumbent on men and women
to find ways to meet each other?
Buying drinks for a person you don't
know seems to be a generous one.
Yes. Most guys won't even pay
for the women they do know.
What you've described is
a playboy or operator move.
I'll grant you that it's a tactic
or perhaps even a ruse...
...but without some of that,
would our species even survive?
The Lord said,
"Be fruitful and multiply."
Oh, my gosh.
No, this is how the world works,
seeing someone across a room.
This could be the romantic story
you tell your grandchildren.
And if you do marry
and have children...
...then he'll really learn
how to squander cash.
Isn't it good to know that
he's basically generous from the start?
Where's Priss?
Your eyes are so striking. So blue.
- Really? They're blue?
- Yes.
The most piercing blue.
You must know your eyes are blue.
- No.

- What do you mean?

What?

You must know

what color your eyes are.

Your eyes are very blue.

You know that.

I'm not gonna go around checking

what color my eyes are.

When you look in the mirror,

you see that your eyes are blue.

- Oh, come on.

- What?

I don't think my eyes have a color.

If my eyes are so blue looking out,

wouldn't everything be kind of blue?

Like, have a bluish tinge to it?

Doesn't. Just looks normal.

That's...? That's blue?

- That color?

- Yes, of course.

Then what color is that?

Green.

You're saying that chair's green

but Frank's eyes are blue?

Yes.

Then what color are the walls?

Also green.

You didn't know that?

No.

How's that possible?

You think knowing the colors

is so important?

You're in college

and you don't know the colors?

Doesn't that embarrass you?

Well, no. Why should it?

That's why the 'rents are paying

big bucks to send me here.

You know, to learn stuff.

Well, gotta go hit the books.

I don't think anyone should feel

embarrassed about not knowing stuff.

What's embarrassing

is pretending to know.

Or putting people down because
you think they don't know as much.
Look, I'm happy to admit
I'm completely ignorant.
That's why I'm here
and plan to really hit the books.
So the next time you see me,
I will know more than I do now.
I'll be older but also wiser.
Or at least know more stuff.
For me, that's education.
Cheers.

Thor's great.
He's very clear about his objectives.
He really wants to learn things.
Frank?

What a jerk.

- He's a monster.
 - Oh, my gosh, Violet.
- You did everything for them.
They're nothing without you.
- What a rat.
 - He's a moron.
 - Don't waste a tear on that creep.
 - Don't waste a single breath.
 - Jerk.
 - Stop.
 - Please.
 - What?

I love Frank.

I love him.

Come on, Violet, Frank's a moron.

You are well rid of him.

- Don't say that.
- Frank's not a moron?

You know, Lily, you're a bit harsh.

This obsession with intelligence.

Do you think it has some magical
quality transforming everything?

The intelligence line

is not an immutable barrier.

Love can cross it.

You can love someone

whose mental capacity is not large.

I know. I have.
- Well, there's a mutable barrier, then.
- Frank's stupid, we knew.
That he's a rat playboy operator,
I hadn't realized.
I don't want to turn bitter.
- I worry for Frank. I care about him.
- Well, I'd stop.
No.
I love Frank.
I always will.
If that's the case,
why not fight for him?
- Against Priss? I'd never win.
- Sure you would.
Priss is a rat. A bitch.
A rat bitch.
Don't blame Priss.
She was crushed
when her blue-eyed Josh left her.
I should've known.
Of course she'd fall for Frank.
Josh and Frank
are both blue-eyed heartbreakers.
Poor Violet.
She's the roommate
who's so self-confident?
Yeah. But now she's a wreck.
But there's no logic
to the algebra of love.
"The algebra of love."
That sounds like the title
to some lame book.
It's a title,
but the book's not lame at all.
Love's algebra?
I thought it was more geometry.
Okay, the title's not good,
but the book is.
What's it say?
Well, that while we're all perverse
in our romantic preferences...
...there's actually this logic
or algebra to our perversity...

...and it has something to do with how the species has evolved.

- The survival of the species?

- Yes.

And whether it will continue to do so.

No booze?

Just to find the nearest package store, you had to drive 40 miles.

- These aren't so strong.

- No, they're really strong.

I think I'd like another.

- That wouldn't be a good idea.

- Why not?

- Well....

- Are you trying to stifle me?

- Lily?

- Oh, hi.

Listen, we're gonna get something to eat. Why don't you come with us?

- I'm with Charlie.

- I can see that.

- But you really should come.

- Why?

I just think it would be a good idea.

- But why?

- You really must come. I insist.

Lily?

Lily, are you angry?

Lily, this is it. We're here.

What's the matter?

That was so rude. He's a nice guy and you embarrassed him.

He's not nice.

He was trying to get you drunk.

- No, he wasn't.

- Plying you with martinis?

- I was plying myself with martinis.

- Come on, the guy's a total sleaze.

- A creep.

- You don't know anything about him.

The way he sent drinks over to our table?

Alice.

Alice, what's wrong?

I had no idea

that Xavier could be so mean.

Sounds as if he was just trying
to protect you.

This Charlie Walker sounds like
an operator or playboy type.

No, he's not like that.

He's actually a really nice guy.

I thought he was

a slick businessman.

No. He dresses well,

but he works in strategic development.

- What?

- Strategic development.

He works at SDA.

Strategic Development Associates.

- He's an associate there.

- What he is, is a strategic operator.

Violet, are you okay?

Hey, miss, rain's coming!

Better get back!

- Polly, have you seen Violet?

- No. Is something wrong?

We're not sure.

Violet!

- Violet!

- Violet! Oh, my gosh, what happened?

I don't understand.

What were you doing?

How long were you gone for?

I'm sorry, I don't know.

I lost track of time.

But you feel better now?

Well, cleaner.

She'll say anything

to get in the show.

- She'll want doughnuts.

- You don't have to be suicidal...

- ...to get doughnuts, just depressed.

- Clinically depressed. From a clinic.

- Would you say you're depressed?

- I don't like the term.

- I prefer to say I'm in a tailspin.

- Oh, my God. A tailspin?
She can't even say
she's depressed.
She's gotta say something special.
Priss was honest.
She was depressed
and she had a right to be in the show.
Now every silly tailspinner's
trying to get in.
- The show is for everyone.
- No, it isn't, Freak.
To be in the center's programs,
you have to be clinically depressed.
That means
that you've been to a clinic...
...and they've said
that you're depressed.
Have you been to a clinic?
Have you been to a clinic?
Then you're not clinically depressed.
Violet. Violet. What is it?
Where are you going?
All I wanted was to make Frank happy.
I had all these plans.
Things we could've done together.
I never even got to tell him.
Hey! Where all your boyfriends at?
Come on!
They don't wear bikinis.
They're ladies, they wear thongs.
I can't imagine
where she could've gone.
Wherever she went,
she should be back by now.
How did she seem
when you last saw her?
Really sad about Frank.
- Still?
- Yeah.
How can someone so smart continue
mooning over a dope like that?
People aren't exactly as you assume.
The Violet you know...
...bears little resemblance

to the girl I met in seventh grade.

- You met Violet in seventh grade?

- Well, her name wasn't Violet then.

What's your name?

You can tell us your name.

We won't bite.

What's your name? Tell us.

Are you retarded?

Tell us your name.

Emily Tweeter.

- Tweeter? Like a bird?

- That's ridiculous.

Tweeter? Like a bird?

- Not an easy name to have at that age.

- Not at any age.

What was she like?

Timid. Bookish.

Classic scholarship student.

Her parents were writers.

They didn't have a dime.

Finances were the least of her worries.

- What do you mean?

- Well, she was crazy.

I got stuck rooming with her
on a trip when no one else would.

- It was awful.

- Did she smell bad?

No. Obsessive cleanliness
was part of her insanity.

- You were nice to her.

- No.

The idea of being nice
to weird kids hadn't arrived.

- Why was she so unpopular?

- Well, she was very strange.

Constantly setting herself odd,
repetitive tasks.

Tasks?

For example, on that trip she had
with her a little square suitcase.

The idea came into her head
she had to move it...

...in a precise pattern
over and over again...

...and if she didn't execute this movement flawlessly 10 times...

...she'd start over.

Another was to slide her hand across her forehead...

...trying not to touch her hair or eyebrows on either side...

...also repeating it 10 times.

Any niggling thought she'd touched the hair, she'd start over.

- My God, that is insane.

- Why would she do that?

She had the conviction that if she didn't complete these tasks...

...her parents would die.

- Was she Catholic?

- No.

But what made the whole thing really sad...

...was that her parents did die.

Oh, my God.

Violet!

Violet?

Violet!

Violet, where are you?

Something's wrong, isn't it, dear?

You mind my asking?

Well, I do mind a little.

- Excuse me, Your Highness.

- I'm sorry.

- It's just kind of awkward to talk about.

- No matter.

I hope you haven't come to get run over on the highway.

- What do you mean?

- Suicides.

They come down from the university.

Jump out in the road.

Get hit by the blind curve.

Hope you're not one of them.

Do I look like one of them?

I don't know.

Maybe.

Messy people, suicides.

Think only of themselves
and their own deaths.
Not what comes after.
They leave quite a mess.
They don't stick around
to clean it up.
So you're not one of those depressed
students from the university?
I don't like the word "depressed."
I prefer to say that I'm in a tailspin.
A tailspin?
- Does this tailspin involve a man?
- Yes, it does.
But I'm not as crazy as I was
up till yesterday.
Apparently that's due to the salutary
effect of scent on the human psyche.
Its importance is, I believe,
almost incalculable.
At the motel,
I happened to use this soap.
It was provided to me as a courtesy
as one of the guests.
That an economical motel...
...would provide such good soap
is quite unusual.
- The scent is very precise.
- Really?
Tell me if it provokes any particular
reaction in your psyche.
A state of mind.
I always knew she was unstable.
They're gonna have her photo
at the registrar's.
Violet! Violet!
You're back! You're okay!
Not really.
Oh, my gosh, Violet,
we were so worried.
Why didn't you tell us
or leave a note?
I did leave a note.
Would that be a suicide note?
- I wouldn't leave without a note.

- Where did you go?

I took the train to Villafranca
and checked into a motel there.

- The Motel 6?

- No, the Motel 4.

- It's even less expensive.

- The Motel 4 in Villafranca?

- My God, you really were suicidal.

- Why'd you go?

I had to do something.

And you really thought you were
gonna find the answer in Villafranca?

I'm not sure what I expected,
but I might have found it.

What?

Soap?

This scent and this soap...

...is what gives me hope.

Hello?

Is anyone here?

Hello?

Lily?

- Hello?

- Oh, my gosh.

I couldn't understand
where everyone was.

Sorry, I just went out
to get some things.

- Where's Alice?

- Gone.

What do you mean?

Left.

We broke up.

- But when you called, you said--

- I know, I'm sorry.

I thought it better
to tell you in person.

Alice couldn't control her jealousy.

It completely overwhelmed her.

Really? What was she jealous of?

Come on.

No, what?

You.

After a while,

I just couldn't handle it.
Things became impossible.
She was jealous of me?
Of course.
Would it be okay if we watch a film?
Yes.
What would you like to see?
I thought maybe Truffaut's
Baisers vols. Stolen Kisses.
Do you know it?
No, is it new?
It's a classic
of French New Wave cinema.
I think you'll like it.
- But it's in color?
- Yeah.
- You don't know Truffaut?
- No.
Do you know Godard,
bout de souffle?
- Why was Alice so jealous?
- What do you think?
She was jealous
because Lily's lovely.
I don't know.
They had a lot of problems.
Of course.
You wouldn't break up
a happy couple.
- What's that?
- A note Frank left.
- Really? Recently?
- No, when we were together.
Now that most correspondence
is electronic...
...it's rare to be left anything
written by hand.
Frank can write by hand?
- What is it?
- It's not very important.
It's just all I have.
- What's it say?
- "Out for brewskis. Back in a giff."
What's a "giff"?

One of those little motor scooters,
isn't it?

I'm sure he meant to write "jiff"
with a J. "Back in a jiff."
But he wrote "giff."

- Could Frank be dyslexic?
- No. Dyslexics are intelligent.
- What's that?
- Frank's bean ball.
- He gave you his bean ball?
- Not exactly. This is an extra.

He thought he'd leave it here
just in case he lost his other one.

Gosh, Violet, you've really
gotta stop thinking about Frank.

Why? I don't wanna stop
thinking about him.

Recently I had a thought
that cheered me up a lot.

Life is like a long, flowing river...
...and as a long, flowing river, some
debris you never expect to see again...

...is almost certain to reappear
floating to the surface.

Frank and I may very well
be together again one day.

Maybe it'll take years,
but somewhere down the line...

...he's very likely to pop up again,
and I'll be there to catch him.

I don't think
we've spoken about this.

What?

Have you been to the south of France?

To the walled city of Carcassonne?

- I've never been anywhere.
- But you've seen pictures of it.

No, I don't think so.

Oh, it's fascinating.

- I'd like to visit.
- You never studied the Cathars?

They were a religious movement...

...very idealistic...

...located mostly

in the southwest of France...
...that the Catholic Church
repressed.
Oh, my God. The Catholic Church is,
like, always bad.
Ideas can't be killed
as easily as people.
Especially such enlightened ones
as the Cathars held.
In recent years, more and more people
have returned to their beliefs.
So you're a Cathar?
Yes. I aspire to be.
I'm trying to follow the path
the Cathars marked out.
That's so impressive.
I can tell you we didn't have
any Cathars back home.
I think you'd be surprised.
In the Cathar view...
...the highest form of lovemaking
avoids procreation entirely.
Sure. Condoms, right?
Well, according to Cathar ideas...
...sex with condoms is just a parody
of the procreative act.
What do you mean?
The standard, cliché form
of sexual intercourse...
...is for the man to approach
a woman from the front.
Cathar lovemaking,
I think you'll find very fulfilling.
I'll be very careful, we'll go slowly.
It'll be a new experience...
...but one which I think you'll find
brings an inexpressible closeness.
Might your drinks-buying friend
be around?
It would be great
to get complimentary cocktails.
- Charlie? No.
- Do you still see him at all?
- He calls from time to time.

- He does?
- Why don't you introduce us?
- Why should I introduce you?
Because you know him,
and we don't.
So?
"So?"
"So" is probably the unkindest word
in the English language.
I can't bear it. I think it should
be outlawed. "So."
You're crazy.
Come on, Lily, you have Xavier.
- You can't keep two guys for yourself.
- Guys do that all the time.
We're not guys, fortunately.
It's unconscionable for you not
to bring him and introduce us.
Charlie is a friend. He's a nice guy.
What do you mean?
I hate to think what'd happen
if you got your claws into him.
That's outrageous.
We're perfectly nice.
We've met lots of pathetic guys
and nothing bad's happened.
- Charlie's not pathetic.
- Well, all the better, then.
The Roman Holidays
will be coming soon.
- What's that?
- A festival Roman Letter Clubs put on.
A kind of moron jamboree.
The Roman elements are the worship
of Bacchus, Beerus and Blotto.
- It could've all been so uplifting.
- Charlie.
Hey, Charlie.
Hey. What are you doing here?
- Have you the day off?
- Yeah.
This is my friend Charlie,
whom I think I've mentioned.
And, Charlie,

these are my roommates. This is....

This is Rose.

And this is Heather. And Violet.

Charlie works

for Strategic Development Associates.

He's an associate there.

You work in strategic development?

- You've heard of it?

- Of course, yes.

My cousin Jay in Philadelphia works

in strategic development.

Something business-related?

Mostly business,

but any kind of organization.

- Only businesses pay the big bucks.

- Nonprofits and government pay well.

That's how they keep

from having profits...

...by paying lots of money

to companies like yours.

Excuse me, but aren't you in Professor

Ryan's course at the Ed School?

No.

You're not in Professor Ryan's

Flit Lit course?

No.

- Flit Lit?

- The dandy tradition in literature.

- I'm sure I've seen you there.

- Yeah, I'm sorry.

I'm not in any courses

at the Ed School. Good to meet you.

- It was great to see you.

- Bye.

God, Violet, what was that about?

That guy is definitely

in Professor Ryan's class.

Not possible. He has a fulltime job

for Strategic Development Associates.

He never got his coffee.

- Why lie about something like that?

- He's lying.

I find that very attractive.

What are you going to do?

I'm gonna stop cutting
Professor Ryan's class.
It can be argued that Firbank
was too little disciplined...
...too unserious
in his unseriousness...
...to create works of enduring value.
But as a liberating influence
on later writers such as Waugh...
...his importance
should not be discounted.
It's not Firbank's work itself
but the idea of his work...
...that so helped later writers...
...as Thomas Love Peacock
did in the previous century.
I'm not gonna come anymore.
- What a waste of time.
- Charlie.
Charlie.
- Charlie?
- Charlie, you are taking the course.
Charlie?
Who's Charlie?
- Fred, what's going on?
- Fred?
Fred. sounds like you got
some explaining to do.
- Well, you were lying.
- I wasn't lying, I was making it up.
Why were you making it up?
If you were an eighth-year Ed School
student, would you advertise that?
Eighth year. Impressive.
But your whole life was a lie.
Dressing up in suits.
Buying people drinks.
The suits were real.
The drinks, real.
Not just drinks for people.
They were for cute girls.
There's a perfectly rational,
easily explainable agenda.
So it was a playboy

or operator move.

- Of course. Transparently so.

- I admire that. Drinks are expensive.

But strategic development,
that was made up too?

- You said your cousin Jay was in it.

- What cousin Jay?

- In Philadelphia.

- I don't have a cousin in Philadelphia.

You said your cousin Jay

was working in strategic development.

I was just saying that to be friendly.

To make a kind of link.

- So your name's Fred something?

- Yes. Fred something.

- Packerstacker?

- Oh, my God. How crazy.

He's completely insane.

I almost dated him.

- You can say that about a lot of guys.

- I don't think he's crazy.

Making up an entirely fictitious
identity, that's not crazy?

- It's insane. It's psycho.

- Violet's identity is made up.

- I don't think she's crazy.

- No, I am.

No, this is different.

It's crazy and pathetic.

All that about strategic development
he just made up.

Don't tell me that's not weird.

I've heard of strategic development.

I think it's something
pretty important.

Violet, you're not gonna
start going out with him.

You're not, are you?

Well, we had planned
to go to the library.

- Not to the stacks, I hope.

- Yes.

Oh, my gosh, do you realize
how dangerous that is?

- Dangerous?
- Yes, the stacks.
They're dark and deserted.
Anything could happen.
It's true.
With the study habits
at Seven Oaks...
...your body won't be found
until spring.
Promise you won't go with him
to the stacks. Please.
Okay. I'll suggest
the Randall Room.
- Don't suggest. Insist.
- And please not at night.
Okay.
What are you reading?
Have you chosen a topic
for your final paper?
The decline of decadence.
You think that decadence
has declined?
Definitely. Bigtime.
Major, major decline.
How?
How or in what ways?
Either.
Well, take the flit movement
in literature, or homosexuality.
It's gone completely downhill,
right down the tubes.
What do you mean?
Before, homosexuality was
something refined, hidden...
...aspiring to the highest levels
of creativity and often achieving it.
Now it seems to be musclebound
morons running around in T-shirts.
It's pretty disillusioning.
Are you gay?
Not especially, but in another era,
it might have had some appeal.
- Now I just don't see the point.
- You might be romanticizing the past.

We'll never know. The past is gone,
so we might as well romanticize it.
You could be right.
I wanted to ask, how's Lily?
Lily.
She's okay.
Here, check it out.
A.L.A. Nope. Hello. Good afternoon.
Check it out. The A.L.A. Heard of it?
We have a meeting on Tuesday.
- You should come by.
- What is the A.L.A.?
Just join us. Come Tuesday.
I think you'll really like it.
So....
A fellow was passing these out, and
invited us to a meeting on Tuesday.
The A.L.A.?
Oh, my God.
I thought it was something related.
No?
The A.L.A. has got
nothing to do with us.
Can't you see that?
The way we express love
has meaning.
It's in the context
of something beautiful.
We're following our creator's
teaching. Aspiring to an ideal.
A beautiful one that brings
an inexpressible closeness.
Not just to each other, but....
For the A.L.A.,
and those like them...
...the love act
is just hedonistic pleasure-seeking...
...of a perverted nature.
I can't believe you'd think we had
anything in common with them.
We don't.
Nothing, not an iota.
My God, can't you see that?
Lily. Lily, come back.

Please. Don't be that way.

- Oh, my gosh, Lily. Are you okay?

- It's all right.

You don't wanna talk about it?

I don't understand.

- You don't understand what?

- What is non-procreative lovemaking?

- It could be a lot of things.

- Yeah, but in this case?

- We don't have to talk about this.

- I don't mind.

Could somebody explain

what this is about?

Well, if--

Cathars don't believe

in procreative sex.

They don't have intercourse

the usual way.

The usual way?

- You don't have to talk about this.

- No, it's okay.

It's the normal way, from the front

where you can have procreation...

...not from the other side,

where you can't.

The other side?

That's their religion?

No, but it's the direction

their beliefs head in.

When they express love,

that's what they do.

How horrible.

You poor girl.

What?

That's terrible...

...what he obliged Lily to do.

Violet.

Can we talk?

You must be pretty mad at me.

No.

You're not?

Not really.

But it was so terrible

how everything happened.

Your walking in on us.
Maybe it's easier that way.
That bitch!
I can't believe it. what a bitch.
- Priss?
- Of course Priss.
"I'm so stressed. Sad. Depressed.
I'm so tired. I'm fatigued."
She was so depressed...
...she had to get everything
her own way.
"I'm so stressed.
Frantic."
Man.
What a bitch.
Priss dumped you?
No. It was mutual.
Oh, listen, I have a question.
You remember that bean ball
that I left in your room?
Yeah.
Do you still have it?
Yeah.
Do you think I could get it back?
I lost the other one,
and with everything that's happened...
...I'd really like to have it.
Nothing like some bean ball
after a breakup.
Yeah. God, you're smart.
You always get it.
Whatever I say...
...you understand.
Man.
Hey, Heather.
- Hey.
- Hey.
Hey.
Violet.
Violet, what's wrong?
I'm sorry. Lily's lovely.
Now she's free. Go. I understand.
Latin! Et cetera!
- Yeah!

- Yeah!

This is what comes
from not teaching Latin in the schools.
Yeah, it's moronic and boorish, but
it's also kind of fun, don't you think?

No.

What's that stench?

I suppose this is what happens when
decadence rots society from within.

And from without.

Such a society is, I fear...

...destined to fail and be overrun.

Maybe that's good.

Finally. It's about time those cesspools
were drained.

What color would you say
that chair is?

That's a chair?

I have no idea.

- Guys have preferences.

- You're going to accept that?

- You're not going to do anything?

- There's nothing to be done.

- Fred must know his own mind.

- Oh, really?

- I seriously doubt that.

- Come on.

Lily's got that slender,
delicately swelling beauty...

- ...that no man can resist.

- Okay, you're probably right.

Poor Lily. Just think of all Xavier
put her through.

He just used her body.

And not even the right side.

Have you noticed that good people
tend to have large posteriors?

Not everyone, by any means.

I know it's not logical.

But it does seem to be true.

The genetic link between morality
and large posteriors?

Yes, I think that's well known.

You and Violet have that build.

It's nice.

You're still very attractive,
but also sensible and moralistic.
I don't. I have narrow hips,
but also no very strong principles.

Yes?

Oh, hi.

- Hi, Frank.

- Hey, Heather.

So I guess you guys all heard.

University's closing
all the Roman Letter Houses.

Sorry. This year's Roman Holidays
did seem like the end of civilization...
...but when civilization ends people
are going to need a place to stay.

Man.

It's bad.

It's that bastard
from The Complainer.

Someone from the administration's
been reading it.

Hard to believe.

Bastard.

Listen...

...we were wondering...

...if you thought it would be okay
if we stayed at the suicide center.

Okay, sure. That sounds like
a good stopgap measure.

Thank you. Thank you.

So there's one more thing.

Remember that bean ball
we talked about?

Yes.

You think I could pick that up?

Just after everything
that's happened, it--

I could really use it right now.

Yes.

- What's that?

- What?

The note.

One gets so few things written

by hand anymore, I guess I kept it.
"Out for brewskis, back in a giff."
What's a giff?
It's the scooter.
Like a Vespa, right?
- That's what I thought.
- I was thinking about getting one.
You must've meant "jiff."
"Back in a jiff."
And then misspelled it,
or spelled it in a nonstandard way.
Yeah. Not a good speller.
Thanks.
You're great.
Priss was such a bitch.
Damn.
Hey, Heather.
Bye.
- Bye.
- Bye.
Heather is really cute.
She going out with anyone?
There might be something
between her and Thor.
Thor?
Damn. Heather and Thor?
Damn.
I'm worried about Thor.
It's hard for us to imagine...
...how upsetting it is
not knowing the colors.
It's impossible for me to imagine.
When Thor sees a rainbow,
it's so much gibberish to him.
There was one this afternoon.
Oh, my gosh, he took it hard.
Recently, there was a parade
in the city...
...where the marchers carried
rainbow-colored flags and banners.
Thor was so upset.
He had no idea what it meant.
What kind of retard is he?
See, that's the conclusion

people jump to.

- Well, it is somewhat understandable.

- Not if you knew the full story.

What's the full story?

You know how parents

love bragging...

...about how precocious

their children are?

Thor's parents

had become precocity addicts...

...constantly needing

an ever-greater precocity fix.

He should've entered kindergarten.

They pushed him into first grade.

"Thor skipped a grade,"

they could tell.

What Thor's parents failed to consider

is the work done in nursery school.

Key being the study of colors.

I suppose they just assumed...

...that colors are knowledge

people pick up.

Like, for example,

not stepping on sidewalk cracks.

What's that?

I think Rose is sleeping.

Am I boring?

No, not at all.

When you have problems, it's great
to hear someone else's idiotic ones.

Please go on.

- What?

- What you said about...

...depressed people being mean,

you weren't joking.

I'm sorry, you're right. Please go on.

No.

I'm sorry. You know how I am.

Please continue.

Thor decided he absolutely

had to learn all the colors.

Both primary and mixed.

He's been hitting the books hard,
and thought he'd mastered them.

Then, in town, he said,
"That traffic light's blue."
I had to say, "No, it's green."
He was really upset.
Oh, hi, Lily.
Hi.
We were worried about you.
I can't bear this tension with Lily.
It's terrible to have the group
divided this way.
Better not next to Robertson.
What?
Didn't you hear?
Ed students have been going
up to the roof...
...and throwing themselves off.
- But it's only two stories.
- Yes, I know.
It's terrible. Not high enough to kill,
but high enough to maim.
And particularly dangerous
for anyone below.
I've got to forget about Fred.
But you really liked him.
This whole thing of a person meeting
someone else first, it's so arbitrary.
- It's terrible and cruel.
- I have to say, I was wrong about Fred.
I thought he was a playboy
or operator type.
In fact, he's just another guy
rendered helpless...
- ...by the attentions of a pretty girl.
- Cary! No, don't! I love you!
- Why did you do that?
- Oh, my God!
Cary, I love you!
Isn't the Ed School
essentially a teacher's college?
Yeah.
If they can't even
destroy themselves...
...how are they going to teach
America's youth?

- What do you think you're doing?
- Sorry. Did I disturb you?
Why are you wearing tap shoes?
You out of your mind?
- I think that's pretty clear.
- I'm so sick of that.
Oh, really? I think it's cute.
Since you won't be treating us to
one of your incompetent tap routines...
- ...why don't you take those things off?
- No. We'll do the routine. Rose.
- Madge wants to see the routine.
- I don't want to see your routine.
- I asked you to take those off.
- We need a break.
Just briefly, please.
It's helpful to have an audience.
Rose, the music.
I'm gonna report you.
Suzanne.
For me, it'd be Madame Curie,
Simone de Beauvoir...
- ...and Margaret Sanger.
- Good.
Violet.
I would say...
...Richard Strauss,
Roderick Charleston...
...and Chubbard Checker.
- Richard Strauss? The composer?
- Yes, that was one of his posts.
I'm not familiar with the others.
Could you tell us who they are?
Yes. Each one of these men
started an international dance craze.
Richard Strauss, the waltz.
Roderick Charleston, the Charleston.
Chubbard Checker,
known as Chubby...
...the dance we know as the twist.
Why do you consider
a dance craze important?
Dance crazes enhance
and elevate the human experience...

...bringing together
millions of people...
...in a joyous celebration
of our God-given faculties...
...and passing these modes
of physical expression...
...down through the generations.
Though not so much anymore.
I thought--
Well, I assumed that the Charleston...
...was named after
the city of Charleston.
No. Though that misconception
is quite widely held.
It was Roderick Charleston.
Usually, behind some
great creative phenomenon...
...there's a person, not a town.
This is so exciting.
It's really great, isn't it?
- Hey, could you guys help?
- Sure. What's up?
We need help packing soap...
...which we'll distribute
to Doar Dorm residents.
Cool.
What would you say are effective
means to fight depression?
Maybe some of your DU brothers
have an idea?
- Beer?
- No. Beer's a downer.
Cocktails. Hard liquor and spirits
is what really gives you a lift.
It's interesting what you say.
My cousin Jay is a medical officer
in Philadelphia.
He says that alcoholism...
...by which I mean chronic,
excessive consumption of alcohol...
...is the primary self-administered
treatment for depression.
- Cool.
- No.

It leaves you much worse off
than before.

Oh, no, not me.

I just boot and then I feel fine.

- By "boot" do you mean vomit?

- Yes.

No. None of the effective anti-suicide
treatments involve vomiting.

- Hygiene?

- Exactly.

It's very important.

That's why we have such hope
in the wonder bar.

Do you know its scent?

Transformative, we think.

This is so exciting.

When should we go over there?

- I don't think there's any rush.

- I'd like to go soon.

Doar Dorm has the highest fatality
rate, as well as the worst hygiene.

Highest suicide rate.

Fatality rate. It's uncertain
what percentage were intentional...

...and how many were just due
to unawareness of gravity's laws.

I can just see those guys getting
the gold packages, opening them...

...and finding
the good-smelling soap inside.

The cute packaging
should prove irresistible.

And once clean, they'll start
to see the world with new eyes.

The change could be dramatic.

Doar Dorm
could soon become Dior Dorm.

I doubt that,
to be perfectly, absolutely honest.

I love the idea. Dior Dorm.

I adore optimism,
even when it's completely absurd.

- Perhaps especially then.

- Great. Ready? Let's go.

Let's hurry.

Let's not get our hopes up too high,
Heather.

No, you said yourself,
the wonder bar is transformative.

- Hey, Violet. Hi.

- Hi.

- Where you going?

- Doar Dorm.

- Fred, hi.

- Hey.

Good one.

Oh, no.

Oh, my God.

I guess it wasn't realistic
to expect Doar Dorm...

...to turn into Dior Dorm overnight.

They wouldn't even open them.

They said without the soap,
the discs wouldn't fly properly.

Are you coming Friday?

Violet's launching her dance craze.

Oh, really? That's great.

- What's the dance?

- The Sambola.

The devil's dance.

- Oh, cool. We'll go, right?

- Yes, I'd like to.

But I have several papers to finish.

But I'd like to.

Great. Thanks, Gus.

I don't see how we're going to start
a dance craze if no guys show up.

Most guys aren't very good
with the dance-craze thing.

Very good news. I was just
in my procrastination seminar...

...and the two guys

from Doar Dorm had showered.

It was clear they'd used soap.

Oh, my gosh, what a difference.

Seems they'd been throwing packages
so energetically, a soap bar fell out.

The unfamiliar ivory-like object

intrigued them...
...and one thing
led to another, and, well....
It was just as you said.
Isn't that great?
- Oh, look, here's Jimbo.
- Jimbo doesn't count.
Where is everybody?
Aren't we gonna be late
for Violet's dance craze?
You wanna go to that?
Yeah.
- You're kidding.
- No, I love dance crazes.
Gosh, you're strange.
But aren't we already late?
No, it's later on. Like 10, I think.
I have to confess, I've started
losing patience with Violet.
Depression calls
for serious treatment.
Medication.
Psychopharmaceuticals.
Talk therapy.
Are those approaches effective?
Despite the medication and therapy...
...Ed School students are still throwing
themselves off Robertson Hall.
Violet's ideas
might seem a little offbeat--
A little? Oh, my God. I don't know
how much you know about Violet...
...but there's some
pretty weird stuff.
You know, Violet. Violet Wister.
It's not even her real name.
- It isn't?
- No, it's Emily Tweeter.
When she was 11,
she went completely crazy...
...and has had several
relapses since.
So it's a little worrisome to have her
counsel nearly suicidal individuals.

I can't believe it.

- What?

- Emily Tweeter.

In first grade, I had an enormous crush on a girl with that name.

- And you remember that?

- Yeah.

Pretty huge Dr. Zhivago stuff.

Any idea or even mention of her filled me with emotion.

I had a strange perspective on the world.

I don't think my brain was functioning properly.

Everything was a bit of a dream.

You think this was Violet?

You have any idea if Violet attended Willamette Montessori?

In Portland?

- We didn't order these.

- Compliments of the guy at the bar.

It was so brutal

how it ended between us.

I know I was too angry and a bit crazy...

...but I thought that what we had was stronger than that.

That you would not just walk away after one disagreement.

It wasn't just that.

You mean my Cathar beliefs.

Well...

...I am no longer a Cathar.

How is that possible?

It's been very difficult.

You've dropped your adherence to the Cathar faith?

- Yes, I have.

- Good.

Normally I'd be reluctant to comment on anyone's religion, but....

What?

I'm sorry. I guess--

I guess I'm a bit of a bigot. I just--

I could never take seriously any religion that worships on Tuesdays. Major religions require worship on the weekend. Friday, Saturday or Sunday. I find it just really laudatory...
...that people sacrifice their weekend time to worship God. Having the Sabbath on Tuesday always seemed very bizarre to me. It's not right.
You know what?
We'd better get to the Lone Star. Why are you so concerned about that?
Well, it's not as if international dance crazes start every day. We'd better hurry.
What's wrong?
Another fiasco. Sometimes our struggle reminds me of the myth of Sisyphus.
- Who?
- The myth about the guy...
...who pushes an enormous rock only to have it keep rolling back. Oh, yeah. What a knucklehead. The important thing to remember is that he was mythical. He never really existed.
Violet? Did you spend any part of your education...
...at Willamette Montessori?
In Oregon?
Why?
Sound like "tweaker."
Would you say today is very gray?
I'd say so. Maybe blue-gray.
Yeah, no, that rings a bell now.
Bye.
I'm sorry. Her name wasn't Emily Tweeter, but Lucy Wurlitzer. They're not similar. I'm beginning to realize that the human memory...
...is not the foolproof instrument

we sometimes imagine.
What's worse, everyone knew about
my obsession, including my parents...
...those from whom
I most wanted it kept.
So from your earliest years, you were
already a playboy or operator type?
Yes. I suppose that's why secrecy
seemed so desirable.
Violet, can we talk?
- What's the plural of doofus?
- Doufi.
Not doofuses?
You can say either.
"Doufi" respects the Latin root
and is preferred.
"Doofuses" is also correct,
although a bit inelegant.
- You've thought a lot about this.
- Yes, I've had to.
Why? What is it?
I like Fred, he's a nice guy.
And I can see why you like him.
When I first met you and Rose,
I thought you were the cool crowd.
And in many ways you are. I find your
perfume and fashion sense excellent.
Thank you.
But there's a reason, I think...
...why you are
so strongly attracted to...
...doufi.
And it's not an accident
how different groups divide up.
Isn't that a rainbow?
- That's a rainbow!
- Thor.
No, Thor! Thor, no! Stop!
Please, stop!
He's headed for Robertson Hall!
Red. Orange.
Yellow. Green. Blue. Indigo.
Hallelujah! Lord God, thank you.
Education. Education.

We can learn the subjects
we set out to master...
...no matter how hard
or impossible they may seem.
Thank you.
Thank you.
I wasn't sure I was gonna make it.
Magenta.
Pink. Mauve.
I miss my nice American friend.
No, you're mistaken.
- You go to London for four weeks?
- Six.
It's dangerous,
parents letting children travel.
They send them off and they don't
know what they'll be getting back.
I don't know what you're referring to.
You're not from London.
I'm from London.
I was there, now I'm here.
I'm from London.
I just miss my nice American friend.
Nice?
Nice? Fine. I'm fine.
Those are not adjectives
I like to use.
God gave us abilities.
He requires that we use them.
Good, better, best,
excelsior, higher.
Only excellence
can glorify the Lord.
Vulgarity is, in essence,
blasphemous.
I'm sorry
for what I was saying before.
Of course you're not linked
to the doufi...
...or even
that such distinctions are valid.
No, don't apologize.
I probably do have a doufi orientation.
But behind coolness,

isn't there a certain repressing...

...squashing down, or lack
of cultivation of one's humanity?
Oh, so you think that cool people
have less humanity?

No, I don't think cool people
are entirely inhuman.

Just enough to be cool.

In our society,
there's all this propaganda...

...in favor of uniqueness,
eccentricity, et cetera.

But does the world really want
or need more of such traits?

Aren't such people
usually terrible pains in the neck?

What the world needs
to work properly...

...is a large mass of normal people.

I would like to be one of those.

Sorry.

But you'll still do the part?

Yeah, of course.

So do you know every number...

- ...in every Fred Astaire movie?
- There were two in our school musical.
- I know those.
- Did performing those two numbers...

...help you overcome feelings
of discouragement and despair?

Absolutely.

Freak.

Hey, everybody,
let's do the Sambola.