

MIMETIC DESIRE

by

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CHARACTERS

MIA – 21, *a trans woman; angsty, and a little insecure, she's romantic and direct*

CORIN – 21, *a cis woman; self-assured, but guarded, she's a hedonist with a control streak*

ALEC – 22, *a trans man; suave and witty, his arrogance hides a gnawing self-doubt*

DANNY, 21, *a trans man; even tempered and content, his romantic assumptions often prove incorrect*

MANDY – 21, *a trans woman; an unaware pessimist, her expectations lead continuously to disappointment*

SAM – 21, *AFAB nonbinary; uninterested in being serious, they enjoy gossip, joking and friendship*

LANDON – 21, *AMAB nonbinary; an extraverted misanthrope, they delight in passive aggressive trolling*

SETTING

A university in a U.S. city and the neighborhood that surrounds it.

TIME

Present day, over the course of several months.

Scene 1

Danny and Maddy's apartment. At a party, DANNY, 19, a trans man, stands with MIA, 19, a trans woman. A little ways from them, out of earshot, stand ALEC, 21, a trans man, and MADDY, 19, a trans woman, talking and laughing.

DANNY

(laughing)

Do you notice how Alec has been hitting on Maddy ever since he arrived?

MIA

(observing, upset)

Oh, you're right . . . are you going to say something?

DANNY

(scoffs)

No, I just think it's funny. He does that whenever he sees her.

We can't hear what Alec says, but he points at Danny and he and Maddy laugh.

MIA

It's your and Maddy's anniversary, though. That's why you're throwing this / party

DANNY

(incredulous)

Maddy does not like Alec. I mean, she thinks he's clever, or whatever, but he's not / "stealing"

MIA

If I was dating Maddy and they just pointed and laughed at me, I'd lose my shit.

DANNY

(droll)

Lucky you're not dating Maddy while Alec is hitting on her then. You're still free for filming tomorrow, right?

MIA

(slightly unenthused)

Yeah, I am.

DANNY

Is something wrong?

MIA

No. It's just, we watch these great films and read great novels, and then we make Batman spoofs in our apartment garage, you know?

DANNY

(surprised)

Oh, okay. We can try something different next time, if you want. Is there a story you're interested in?

MIA

Something, like, serious, but not just serious. Like funny things happen, or get said, but it wouldn't be a comedy. And no stupid crime plots, or fight scenes, unless, I don't know, the fight is really integral to / whatever is

DANNY

Jesus Christ. You know what a story is, right? If you're expecting you and Alec to stand on campus and improvise a Russian novel, I don't think that's / going to

MIA

(annoyed)

I didn't say I had a story.

SAM, 20, an AFAB non-binary person, and CORIN, 20, a cis woman enter and approach Danny and Mia.

DANNY

Hi Sam, how are you?

(to Corin)

I'm Danny. I don't think we've / met

SAM

(to Corin, ironic)

This is Danny, the one who's getting cucked by Alec over there, and / this is

DANNY

(rolls eyes)

Haha.

CORIN
(ignoring Sam)

Hi, I'm Corin.

DANNY

Hi.

MIA

I'm Mia.

CORIN

Sam said you two write for the campus paper.

MIA
(nods)

For the arts section.

SAM

Corin's going to be a lawyer, so she likes to drink with me as much as possible before her life becomes unbearably boring.

CORIN
(curt, to Sam)

I've asked you more than once not to share details about me, haven't I?

SAM

Oops.

(to the others)

Forget what I just said about her being a boring lawyer . . . the drinking part's probably worth remembering, though.

CORIN
(embarrassed)

It's not a big deal, really. I'm just kind of private.

SAM

No, it's fine – I shouldn't have said it. Here, I'll tell you embarrassing things about Mia and Danny to even things out: Well, you already know Maddy's cheating on Danny / with his

DANNY
(sighs)

That is not true.

SAM

Mia got mad and threw all of Alec's stuff out a window once / when she was

CORIN

Sam, you're embarrassing everyone.

SAM

I know, but how can I not, when you all act so embarrassingly.

CORIN

(rolls eyes, to Mia)

Do you want to come with me to get a drink?

MIA

Oh, sure.

Corin and Mia cross away from, and out of earshot of, the two toward a counter with bottles and glasses.

MIA

How did you meet Sam?

CORIN

In a poli sci class.

MIA

Cool, are you studying that, because you're becoming a lawyer?

Corin pauses, not answering, and pours herself a drink.

CORIN

Do you want one, too?

Mia appears confused by her non-answer, but ignores it.

MIA

Um, sure.

Corin pours Mia a drink and hands it to her, then points to Alec.

CORIN

So you threw his stuff out a window?

MIA

(sighs)

I mean, it was the culmination of a larger disagreement, but . . . yeah.

CORIN

(shy, flirty)

And what did he do . . . after you / / threw it

MIA

(surprised, anxious)

Oh, he . . . kind of seemed shocked. Um, he asked how I could do that, and / ran downstairs

CORIN

How did you know him?

MIA

He wrote all these critical comments whenever I posted my articles online, then the paper invited him to write rebuttals, so we met there, and / started hanging

CORIN

You didn't hate him after that?

MIA

Um, no. Should I have? I mean, / he wasn't

CORIN

It's up to you, I guess. Do you want another drink?

Corin pours herself another drink.

MIA

(stares at her full drink)

No, I'm, um - anyway, we became roommates. That's / when it

CORIN

(laughs, amused)

You threw all your roommate's things out of your and his window?

MIA
Um, yeah. He did things before that happened,
that precipitated / it, but

Corin takes Mia's hand.

CORIN
I like that story.

MIA
(surprised, happy)
Oh, thanks.

CORIN
(mock formal)
You're welcome.
(forward)
I think you're cute.

The two kiss. Corin breaks off quickly.

CORIN
(self conscious)
Is there, like, a room we could go to that's private?

MIA
Sure, we could go to Danny and Maddy's room.

Mia leads Corin toward the hallway door and they exit. Focus shifts to Maddy and Alec.

ALEC
(staring at the hallway)
Who was that Mia went to your room with?

MADDY
(slightly annoyed)
What makes you curious about her?

ALEC
(surprised)
Huh? . . . Mia's my roommate. Also, I know
everyone at this party except / her, so

MADDY
(accusatory)

A minute ago you told me I “was the only person at the party,” as far as you were concerned. I can see how much / that meant

ALEC

(charming, self-assured)

Look at Danny – standing there obliviously. Do you think he even cares that you’re here? I’m the one who understands / you, not

MADDY

(rolls eyes)

So many pretty words you have. They must be cheap if you never run out of them.

Maddy walks to the drink counter to refill her glass, and Alec follows her. Focus shifts to Sam and Danny.

SAM

I guess Corin made a new friend.

DANNY

They went to my room pretty quickly didn’t they?

SAM

Alcohol poisoning really lowers one’s inhibitions.

DANNY

(slightly concerned)

Is Mia Corin’s type?

SAM

For the next hour, I’m guessing.

DANNY

(worried)

Mia’s kind of sensitive.

SAM

(ironic)

Maybe Corin can help her toughen up.

Maddy and Alec approach and join Sam and Danny.

SAM

(to Maddy, faux concerned)

It's not what it looks like. Danny and I were just talking.

MADDY

What?

(to Danny)

What are they talking / about

DANNY

(annoyed)

Sam. Can you please not / cause

ALEC

(to Maddy, nonplussed)

I think Sam was implying that we were doing more than talking. Which is really kind of juvenile, isn't it, Sam?

SAM

Oh, is it more mature to not comment on adultery? I haven't taken my psych pre-req yet.

DANNY

(changing the subject)

Anyway -

(to Maddy)

Are you enjoying your party, babe?

ALEC

(under his breath, scoffing)

"Babe."

DANNY

(confused)

Huh?

ALEC

Nothing . . . it's just that when trans guys go out of their way to say traditionally gendered things, like "babe," it always seems so desperate. Like when trans women call each other "girl" and "lady" ad nauseam.

(quickly, insincere)

I mean, no offense.

DANNY

(hiding annoyance)
Don't worry about it.

MADDY
Alec, you're being a jerk.
(to Danny)
I like it when you call me "babe."

She kisses Danny's cheek.

ALEC
(to self)
"A jerk"?
(to Maddy)
Well, are you enjoying the party?

MADDY
(annoyed)
What are you / talking

ALEC
Because if memory serves, a minute and a half ago, you were remarking about how it was another evening where Danny invited all his friends over and talked to them, while he ignored you.

DANNY
(to Maddy, surprised)
Did you tell Alec that?

ALEC
You mean, did Maddy, once again, accurately describe exactly what's / happening

MADDY
Alec, could you please stop?

DANNY
(to Maddy)
Are you upset about the party?

MADDY
(slightly annoyed)
It is the kind of evening I've told you I don't like, isn't it?

DANNY

Really? When?

Maddy and Alec share a look.

MADDY

(to Danny, resentful)

Never mind.

DANNY

Um, okay.

LANDON, 19, enters and crosses toward the others.

LANDON

Hi everyone. Are we all enjoying Danny and Maddy's anniversary party? Oh Sam, I'm surprised to see you here.

(to Danny)

Did you invite every trans student to your event, whether you liked them or not?

SAM

Oh look everyone, it's Landon. An online comments section in sentient form.

DANNY

You guys, it's Maddy's and my party, so can you / not attack

LANDON

I know. Alec, what did you get the couple? I'm aware of how much you care about both of them.

ALEC

(suavely)

I'm afraid all I brought was my sparkling wit –

(to Maddy)

Which someone has been monopolizing all evening.

LANDON

What a thoughtful gift.

(to Danny, faux private)

I think he likes her.

ALEC

(to Danny)

Why do you invite Landon to your parties?
They're just constantly needling at everything
anyone says or does.

SAM

(guffaws)

Yes, it's clearly "Landon's" behavior that's
undermining the spirit of Danny and Maddy's
anniversary celebration, Alec. It's like they're
on a mission / to personally separate

MANDY

You know, I'm really tired of all these jokes
you two are making!

LANDON

I don't know what you mean. I agree Sam
is an awful person, but I wasn't joking at all.

(to Danny, faux sincere)

I really do think Alec likes Maddy.

Incensed, Maddy turns and crosses to the hallway. Corin and Mia reenter just as Maddy was going to exit. Annoyed, the latter maneuvers by the two and exits. Mia and Corin, looking ruffled and happy rejoin the others.

MIA

(to Danny)

Is Maddy okay?

DANNY

(shrugs)

She was just a little upset. She'll be fine.

SAM

Did your "boyfriend" not come with you, Landon?

LANDON

What?

SAM

I asked why your fake boyfriend you talk
about constantly, but who doesn't exist, isn't
here tonight?

LANDON

You mean Brian, who absolutely does exist, and who I've said repeatedly suffers from agoraphobia? Is that who you're asking about? Because I think it's pretty clear why an agoraphobic would not come / to a party

SAM

Of course, why would I ever doubt the reality of a romantic partner none of us will ever meet?

LANDON

Maybe because you're hateful, and you're projecting your inability to love onto me out of spite and envy.

SAM

Me "envying" you? Ha.

LANDON

You've been lonely the whole time we've met, haven't you? Envy of mine and Brian's union would only be natural. I just wish you wouldn't slander it.

SAM

First of all, I'm not "lonely." I'm probably just aromantic and too lazy to take the online quizzes that would confirm it. Second, if one were to believe your stories – which they unequivocally shouldn't – your "union" with Brian consists of the two of you trading gigabytes of porn with each other online, while never meeting face to face, which is not exactly a heart swelling romance. Luckily, even that is a lie, though.

LANDON

I don't "lie," Sam. If anything, I'm reviled for my brutal honesty.

DANNY

No one "reviles" you, Landon.

SAM

"No one" might be a little / strong

DANNY

Sam.

SAM

Fine.

LANDON

Let them talk. If they can't experience life, they should at least get to comment on it.

SAM

Since it's Danny's party, I'll hold my tongue.

(to Danny)

Happy anniversary.

DANNY

(rolls eyes)

Thanks.

ALEC

(to Corin)

I don't believe we've met. I'm Alec.

CORIN

Hi. I'm Corin.

ALEC

I don't know if Mia mentioned me, but her funnier, more attractive roommate.

LANDON

Amazing. It's like he has homewrecking ADD.

ALEC

I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just being friendly.

CORIN

(to Mia)

I'm going to head out. Let's message, okay?

MIA

Sure.

Corin kisses Mia goodbye.

ALEC

(to Corin)

I was going to leave myself. Let me walk you out.

CORIN

Sure.

(to Danny)

Nice to meet you.

DANNY

You, too. Bye, Alec.

ALEC

(condescending)

Bye, Danny.

CORIN

(to Sam)

I'll see you later, okay?

SAM

When I invited you, I hadn't anticipated you'd be collecting trans people like baseball cards.

CORIN

(annoyed)

Good night, Sam.

Corin and Alec cross to the front door and exit.

MIA

(to Sam, concerned)

What did you mean just now? Were you saying -

LANDON

Sam meant Alec is aggressively maneuvering to steal Corin away from / you

SAM

Don't listen to Landon, Mia. I'm sure it's fine. Just in case, though, you might want to gather some of Alec's things in a pile by your balcony.

MIA

(to Danny, worried)

Maybe I'm going to leave, and . . . see

who's at our place.

DANNY

(surprised)

Oh, sure, that's fine.

MIA

(distracted)

Bye everyone.

Mia crosses and exits.

SAM

(to Danny)

What about you?

DANNY

What do you mean?

SAM

Your partner left her anniversary party
in a rage, right? I'm no Romeo, but it -

DANNY

(rolls eyes)

She left because you two kept making
stupid jokes about her and Alec.

LANDON

Why do you keep saying I'm joking? I don't
have bourgeois moral hang ups about / fidelity

DANNY

Landon, please don't -

SAM

You know Alec is shit talking you every
moment he's with her, right?

DANNY

Fine. If for no other reason than to end
this conversation, I'll go check on Maddy.

Danny crosses to the hallway.

SAM

Be sure to tell her that's why you're coming.

Danny exits.

Scene 2

Corin's apartment. A week or so has passed. Corin sits with a drink and an open bottle on her table. A knock sounds and she opens the door, looking happy.

CORIN

Come in.

Mia enters, looking tense. Corin kisses her, and leads her to the couch.

CORIN

(playful)

Ah, you're wearing your "fretful face."
Do you want a / drink

MIA

Did you see Alec last night? He didn't
come home.

CORIN

(upset)

If I saw Alec, that's / between me and

MIA

(hurt)

You saw him?

CORIN

(cold)

You and I have had this conversation already.

Mia stands, upset.

MIA

You said you'd think about seeing each
other exclusively.

CORIN

Mia . . . please sit.

Mia sits.

MIA
(pleading)
I said the one thing I didn't want was for you
to see him.

CORIN
(emotional)
And I said I really like seeing you.

Pause. Mia softens. Corin strokes Mia's cheek.

CORIN
I like that you're intense, and that you
get flustered and have trouble expressing
yourself.

MIA
(slightly insulted)
Um, okay.
(upset)
I feel like when I ask you about yourself,
I know less when you're done answering,
than I did when you started.

CORIN
(groans)
I told you it's hard for / me to

MIA
But why? I just want to get to / know you

CORIN
I know.
(smiling)
You realize we have this same conversation
every time we see each other, right?

Corin leans over and kisses Mia.

CORIN
(coyly)
Do you remember how it ends?

MIA
Okay, then let's play a game. Each time
you answer a question, I'll do something

you want.

CORIN

(confused)

Something I want?

MIA

Yeah. You know –

(suggestive)

Something you . . . want.

CORIN

(uncomfortable, reticent)

Um, okay.

MIA

Good.

(thinks)

What were you like when you were ten?

CORIN

(closed off)

Unhappy.

MIA

Oh . . . sorry / I

CORIN

Is it my turn now?

MIA

(flustered)

Um, I guess . . . are you okay? I didn't mean / to

CORIN

(detached)

I'm fine.

Corin pours Mia a shot and hands it to her.

CORIN

I want you to drink this, then kiss me.

MIA

(reluctant)

Alright . . . we've established / that

CORIN

Yes, I know. You're not crazy about liquor.

(flirty)

We're each trying something new, right?

MIA

I guess. But what I was trying to do is get to know you better.

CORIN

And I appreciate it.

Corin hands Mia the shot, which she drinks, making a face. She and Corin kiss. It's uncomfortable at first, but soon becomes passionate. They break off and a warm beat or two pass.

MIA

What made you unhappy? When you were ten?

CORIN

(groans)

Why do you want to talk about this?

MIA

Because I care / about you

Corin stands, pacing.

CORIN

Fine . . . let's just say, sensitivity and openness were not rewarded in my family, okay?

MIA

Oh.

CORIN

So children were basically little executives, and my parents supervised us, and assigned us careers, like "doctor" or "attorney."

MIA

I'm sorry.

Corin sits, annoyed.

CORIN

It's okay. I mean, I know I'm privileged, and they're paying for . . .

Corin pours herself a drink.

MIA

It's still probably really / hard

CORIN

(suddenly)

Oh, it's my turn.

(thinks)

I want you to take off your top, sit on top of me and rub your breasts in my face.

MIA

(slightly shocked)

Really?

CORIN

Yes.

MIA

(shy)

I mean, my breasts are kind of small, and you just shared something really intense. Are you sure you / want to

CORIN

(persuasive, reassuring)

Yes, it's fine. We're just playing the game, right? Come on, it will be cute.

Mia takes off her top and maneuvers on top of Corin, her legs straddling the latter's. She's self-conscious at first, but begins enjoying it, as does Corin.

MIA

(playful)

You're a fiend.

CORIN

You don't know that.

MIA

I'm rubbing my breasts on your face,

at your request, aren't I?

CORIN

Less talking, more rubbing.

Laughing, Mia maneuvers off Corin, and goes to put her top back on.

CORIN

(amorous)

No, leave it off.

MIA

(playful)

Okay, in exchange for another question.

CORIN

Ugh, fine.

MIA

Aren't you enjoying this?

CORIN

I think it's pretty clear which parts of it I'm enjoying.

MIA

(upset)

Well, seeing as how you're dating my roommate after I'd asked you not to, I'd say me getting drunk in my bra and us making out is a surprisingly positive outcome for you.

CORIN

(impatient)

Okay, fine. What's your question?

MIA

(pause, challenging)

Are you going to stop seeing Alec?

CORIN

Mia, it's not serious. Alec and I / just

MIA

You know how I feel about you being with him, though.

CORIN

I don't like you pressuring me this way.

MIA

Does that mean the answer is no?

CORIN

I'm afraid if I say that, you're not going to want to see me anymore.

Mia, upset and hurt, begins putting her top back on.

MIA

You know he's trying to cheat with Maddy, too, don't you? He was all over her at Danny's party.

CORIN

My seeing him doesn't mean I'll never want to date exclusively.

(seductive)

Come on. Let's just see -

Mia stands.

MIA

He's just a pathetic Don Juan, you know?

CORIN

(pleading)

Mia. Come on. Ask me another question. I won't make you drink, or / take your clothes

MIA

I don't want to.

CORIN

Please . . .

MIA

No, Corin. Not if you're / seeing Alec

CORIN

It doesn't change how I / feel about you

Mia turns and crosses toward the exit.

MIA
(upset)
Goodbye, Corin.

CORIN
(pleading, annoyed)
Mia.

Mia exits.

Scene 3

Danny and Maddy's apartment. A few weeks have passed. Maddy sits with Landon.

LANDON
I'm so honored you invited me over.

MADDY
(rolls eyes)
No you're not, Landon. I don't know why
you're being weird.

LANDON
It's true, though. It shows I've risen in your
estimation. If just two weeks ago you could
have called me a "creepy skeev" to Sam,
and now we're socializing, it must mean
I've done something to impress you, right?

MADDY
Landon, you know Sam. They were going
on one of their rants about you, and -

LANDON
You don't have to explain yourself to me,
Maddy. Even if you told Sam I'm a sociopath
whose "personality" is an assemblage of
poorly fabricated emotions and interests,
your action of hosting me today clearly
speaks louder than -

MADDY
(groans)
Landon, can you not do your weird
self loathing thing today?

LANDON

Of course, Maddy. Would you rather talk about Danny, and all the ways he's disappointing you?

MADDY

(offended)

What does that mean?

LANDON

Oh, do you only like doing that when you're not aware of it? Sorry, pretend I said something else.

MADDY

(focused)

Landon, you said I could talk to you about / what's

LANDON

Yes, please share with me what's on your mind. I know you didn't invite me here out of any personal affection.

MADDY

(rolls eyes)

You're aware that Alec likes me, right? I mean, I heard your comments at the party.

LANDON

(pointed)

At your anniversary party. Yes.

MADDY

(annoyed)

Anyway, he's been trying to . . . do more than flirt at parties with me.

LANDON

(intrigued)

I see.

MADDY

I know it's dumb. He's seeing Corin already, and his whole argument is that Danny's neglectful and boring.

LANDON

(ironic)

Oh, in that case you must have turned him down . . .
So what did you want to talk about.

MADDY

(annoyed)

No, I haven't turned him down.

(quickly)

I mean, I –

LANDON

You encouraged him enough to keep him pursuing you.

MADDY

(defensive)

I never asked Alec to pay attention to
me.

(under her breath, audible)

And maybe if Danny made an effort to appreciate me, I
wouldn't pay attention back.

LANDON

Is Danny not attentive? He threw you a
party, didn't he?

MADDY

(scoffs)

Five bottles on the counter, and a bag
of ice. Did you see him even talk to me?
The only time I get his attention is when
I act in one of he and Mia's stupid movies.

LANDON

It sounds like he's pretty disappointing.

MADDY

(confused)

What?

(realizing, annoyed)

Oh, haha, Landon. "Maddy the cranky
girlfriend," right?

LANDON

(faux pleasant)

I'm here for whatever you'd like to talk about.

But I have a feeling I already know what it is.

MADDY

(surprised, paranoid)

What does that mean?

LANDON

It means you have an idea you want me
to agree with, because /

MADDY

(closed off)

You don't know anything.

LANDON

I don't? My mistake then. In that case,
please tell me what –

MADDY

(angry)

Never mind. I shouldn't have invited you
in the first place.

LANDON

But you wanted to, right? You can't talk
about Alec with Alec, can you? . . . Brian and
I – my boyfriend Brian, I mean – we have a
polyamorous relationship, so if one / of us

MADDY

I thought you made him up.

LANDON

What? No. People assume that, which is very
hurtful, but Brian / is real

MADDY

And you've never seen him in real life? Your
romantic partner?

LANDON

(defensive)

I don't see how interacting via computer is
not "real life," since it's how most of us spend
all our time, but, no, Brian and I haven't met /
in person

MADDY

Wow . . . that's interesting. And you two are both satisfied, even though you never, um, experience physical contact?

LANDON

(hiding repulsion)

Yes. Not everyone . . . has the same . . . desires, I guess.

Pause. Maddy, fascinated and horrified, appears interested in them in a new way.

MADDY

Danny said he met you during freshman orientation. Is that true?

LANDON

Yes. We were the visably queer duo. I was his closest friend and writing partner for awhile.

(bitter)

And then he met Mia.

MADDY

(confused)

Are you jealous of Mia? It sounded like you were into not having close relationships, at least in the physical / world

LANDON

(pointed)

We all want to have people close to us, don't we, Maddy? Isn't that what your plan this evening is about?

MADDY

You don't know what my plans are. You're just trying to mock me.

LANDON

Oh, if I'm wrong then I wholeheartedly apologize. I'm guessing I'll know whether that's necessary soon / enough, though

MADDY

(checks time, upset)

This was dumb. Why don't you just go?

The door opens and Danny enters.

DANNY

(surprised)

Oh, hi Landon.

Danny crosses and kisses Maddy on the cheek, not noticing her frown as he does.

DANNY

(to Maddy)

How are you?

MADDY

(flat, annoyed)

Fine.

DANNY

(confused)

Okay.

(to Landon)

What brings you by here? Are –

LANDON

Maddy invited me. Right Maddy? . . . I think something might be planned –

MADDY

I wanted to talk with them about . . . something –

(to Landon, hostile)

Which was a big mistake, since whoever assembled them forgot to include the empathy.

LANDON

(to Danny, faux cheerful)

I thought our talk was delightful, myself, but sometimes people aren't ready to reveal all the things they think they are.

DANNY

(confused, sarcastic)

Right, sounds like you're getting along great.

MADDY
(incredulous)
That's all? . . . Nothing about –

DANNY
Huh? Why are –

MADDY
You heard Landon just now – Landon,
overlord of salacious fucking information –
spew their cryptic bullshit, and –

DANNY
(exasperated)
We're fighting because I *didn't* start
jealously questioning –

MADDY
Forget it, okay?

DANNY
Um, sure . . .
(to Landon)
Did Maddy invite you to dinner? We're
planning –

MADDY
Landon and I could have been fucking
on the kitchen table and –

DANNY
(incredible)
Landon and you fucking?
(to Landon)
No offense.
(to Maddy)
You're unhappy because –

MADDY
Do you know why I'm unhappy, Danny?
Because from our second date onward,
you've wanted me to be the fun sidekick,
who acts in your stupid movies, and plays
third wheel to Mia.

DANNY

Third wheel? Mia doesn't date guys.

MADDY

I didn't say wingman. I said – fuck, do you really not get this, because I've been trying to say it for a while.

DANNY

(mollifying)

Okay . . . I can see that you're upset. Let's –

MADDY

(to Landon)

You understood earlier, didn't you?

LANDON

(faux sympathetic)

How disappointing Danny is? Yes, I did.

DANNY

(offended, confused)

Wait, what?

MADDY

Fuck off, Landon.

DANNY

What were you two talking about before I got here?

MADDY

(mocking)

Oh, now he's upset. What tipped –

DANNY

(guileless)

Why are you being mean? Did Landon say something –

MADDY

(annoyed)

No, Landon didn't fucking say something.

A knock sounds. Maddy looks nervous. Danny, upset, crosses to answer it. Opening the door he finds Alec, who enters past him.

ALEC
(to Danny)
Hi, How's it going?

DANNY
(confused, to Maddy)
Did you invite, Alec?

Alec kisses the side of her head.

ALEC
(playful)
She did, and, of course, I could never
tell her no.

DANNY
(to Maddy, concerned)
Is there something going on? Like, are -

MADDY
(guilty, emotional)
I've been trying to tell you, but you -

DANNY
Okay, but why are . . . Landon, and -

ALEC
(to Maddy, supportive)
Did you tell him?

MADDY
Shut up, Alec.
(to Danny, embarrassed)
I don't know. I thought -
(to Landon, angry)
I told you to leave already.

LANDON
But then Danny invited me to dinner,
remember? I thought that meant I -

MADDY
(exasperated)
Danny, it's not working.

DANNY

(stunned)

Okay, well, we can try to –

MADDY

I don't want one romantic dinner, and
six months of all your friends on our futon.

DANNY

(nervous)

Okay . . .

(growing upset)

Why is Alec here?

MADDY

(guilty)

I've . . . been talking to Alec about –

ALEC

Maddy asked if I could lend her moral support
when / you and she

LANDON

Oh, "Alec" is lending "moral" support. Right, that
makes sense.

Maddy glares at Landon.

DANNY

You wanted to break up with me, and you
invited Alec?

MADDY

I'm sorry.

(to Alec, private)

Can you just go? I shouldn't have –

ALEC

(to Maddy, private)

Why don't I stick around? In case –

DANNY

(hurt, upset)

Hi? I'm over here.

MADDY

(impatient)

Alec.

ALEC

(surprised)

When we talked earlier, it sounded like when you were done here, you might want to . . . hang out, or –

MADDY

What would we do when we “hang out”?

...

ALEC

(private)

Well, you’ll be free. We’ve –

Maddy crosses to the door and opens it.

MADDY

(with contempt)

Do you think your Cassanova act impresses me? How’s Corin? . . . Oh, did you think I wasn’t –

ALEC

(feigning composure)

You seem a little upset. If you want me to go –

MADDY

I’m yelling at you while I’m holding the door open, so yes, I’m / upset

Alec crosses to the door.

ALEC

(private)

Can I call / you later

Maddy closes the door on him. Danny crosses to her, vulnerable.

DANNY

I’m not sure exactly what’s going on, but can we talk, you know, before / you make any

MADDY

When we started dating I / shared with you

DANNY

Look, I hear you about not listening, and us not
doing the things you / want to do

MADDY

(angry)

Landon! Would you leave already? We're obviously
having a private / conversation here

LANDON

Of course. I'll get going.

(to Danny)

Just text me and we'll reschedule our dinner
plans, okay?

DANNY

(annoyed)

Goodbye, Landon.

Landon crosses and exits.

DANNY

Maddy, please don't make any decision
tonight.

MADDY

I've told in a hundred different ways what
I want and you've blown them off, Danny.
That's not going to be different tomorrow,
is it?

DANNY

Yes! I am completely fucking incentivized
to not blow off -

MADDY

Fuck you! I only get taken seriously when
I break up with you? You're not concerned
with me being fulfilled, you're concerned -

DANNY

Please don't say you're breaking up -

Maddy turns and crosses toward the hallway.

MADDY

Do you want to talk about this tomorrow?
Fine.

DANNY

What does that mean? We're not -

MADDY

(turns to him, contemptuous)
You're sleeping on the futon . . . no, that's
dumb.

(groans)

I don't want -

DANNY

I'm confused. Are -

MADDY

Danny, I don't want you here right now,
okay? Can you go to Sam's, or something?
And, no - we're not breaking up.

DANNY

(shaken)

Okay . . . then I should pack a bag, or . . . ?

MADDY

(indifferent)

Sure.

Maddy exits to the hallway.

Scene 4

Mia's basement rental. A week or so has passed. Mia sits on her bed, in her cramped space, typing intensely on a laptop. A knock sounds. She rises and opens the door, revealing Sam, who enters.

MIA

(distracted)

Hi. Come in. Did you have trouble finding
the place?

SAM

Yes, Google doesn't exist, and my compass
was broken, so / it was

MIA

Do you want to sit? I have a chair, or . . .

SAM

The chair. The floor. This place has everything.
You really splurged, huh?

MIA

(surprised)

You don't like it? I have the whole basement.

SAM

It's great. Sunlight is so overrated.

MIA

(annoyed)

Whatever. After Corin kept visited Alec at my
old place, I wasn't going to stay there.

SAM

Yes, I heard you moved under the cloak of night,
and that Landon, of all people, helped you. I guess
you must have been really desperate.

MIA

It all just happened quickly, you know?

SAM

Well, for a revenge rental, I think it's lovely.

(eyeing laptop)

Speaking of revenge, is that where you're
composing your new "story"?

MIA

(intense)

Yes, and a lot of people are reading it. There's
a new entry coming tonight.

SAM

Oh good. I'm sure everyone we know will be
flattered by your portrayal.

MIA

People read it who don't know any of us. It's not just "revenge," Sam.

(looking away, ashamed)

And besides, lots of writers base things on their own experiences.

SAM

(throws hands up)

Well, color me apologetic! I take it from your most recent totally literary, and not at all gossip-y installment that you and Corin have been texting?

MIA

(upset)

I told her I don't want to – why doesn't she understand what I want? I'm really clear about it, but she just says "I miss seeing you. Why don't you come over?"

SAM

Well, she needs to do something when she's not with Alec, right?

MIA

Sam.

SAM

I'm kidding – not about the Alec part, but about the "guessing what Corin's motives / are"

MIA

(hurt)

Anyway, it's really upsetting.

SAM

So I've gathered . . . Oh, I was wondering, do you and Alec coordinate your publishing schedules? You probably don't want things to get redundant for your audience, right? I'm honestly surprised Corin speaks to either of you with what you both say.

MIA

Don't even talk to me about his "sex advice column"! You know he only started writing it when my blog became popular.

SAM

Rivals on every front, huh?

MIA

All he's doing is bragging. He thinks if he talks /
about bedding all

SAM

Is wallowing more "literary" than bragging? . . .
I asked him if he made up the questions he
responds to, or if students actually write to him.
He said it was the latter, but I have my doubts.

MIA

Why do you think that?

SAM

Maybe I'm just biased, since I think a magic
eight ball would be more useful if I needed
relationship guidance . . . not that I ever would.

MIA

Huh? Oh, right.

(dark)

You can tell he's still in contact with Maddy.
"Not all women have vaginas . . . as I know
from experience." Such a shithead. He's just
trying to portray himself as this worldly lothario.
All it is is a pose.

SAM

(ironic)

Well, it seems like you're doing great
here, Mia. If you ever want to emerge
from your lair to get lunch, or / coffee, just

MIA

Are you Danny's movie?

SAM

Isn't it also your movie?

MIA

(ambivalent)

Not really . . . I mean, I wrote it with him, but

he's filming and editing it. It's not like my blog,
where -

SAM

So there won't be a character in the film called
Ram, who's super charming and funny and doesn't /
like "Brandon"

MIA

(annoyed)

The characters aren't that similar to / everyone

SAM

Aren't you worried that people will be mad?

MIA

These things happened to me! The person I
lived with started / dating the

SAM

Yes, I'm aware. And now I can relive it, in
excruciating detail, from every angle. But, what I'm
asking is / if you're

MIA

(closed off)

No, I'm not "worried." *I'm* mad, and if
what I'm doing makes other people mad, then . . .

SAM

When people say "sensitive artist," I
thought they meant sensitive generally,
not just thin-skinned, but I guess I'm a
philistine. Anyway, to answer your question,
no, the world will be deprived of my
artistic genius in Danny's, and not your,
movie.

MIA

Okay.

(moves to bed)

Well, thanks for stopping by.

Sam crosses to her and tousles her hair, like one would a child. Mia, annoyed, pushes
her hand away.

SAM

Don't be a perpetual gloomy Gretchen, okay? Everyone still likes you despite your online slander.

Mia nods reluctantly, picking up her laptop.

SAM

(as though remembering)

Can you put a scene in where I kill Landon, and everyone cheers? I think people would love that.

MIA

(grimly)

You can't just put something like that in, because you want it to be there. If you could . . . never mind.

SAM

You would kill Alec, right?

(laughs)

You need a place with a window, Mia.

Sam exits.

Scene 5

College campus. A week or so later. Danny stands carrying a camera and a script. Mia, looking agitated, stands with a script, as does Landon.

MIA

(angry)

Has Alec texted yet?

DANNY

(checks phone)

No. He's only a few minutes late, though. He should be here soon.

MIA

It's fucking rude. Not that that should be surprising.

LANDON

What do you mean, Mia? Are you and Alec not getting along?

DANNY

(pleading)

Landon, please don't / do

MIA

Fuck off, Landon! Okay? You were making jokes about Alec and Corin the second they met. Don't act like / you didn't

LANDON

(fauc chastened)

Sorry, the whole Trans Days of Our Lives story slipped my mind.

(faux concerned)

Oh no, is that going to make filming today awkward? The script is so emotionally delicate, I'd / hate for

DANNY

(impatient)

Anyway, maybe we can rehearse your stuff together while we wait. Do you want to look at page 10?

LANDON

Danny - I was going to ask you, are you and Maddy still dating?

DANNY

Landon, can you please not / do this

LANDON

(faux worried)

Oh, is that a touchy subject? I wouldn't have asked, except that, well - if you're not, I was thinking of asking Maddy out myself. That might sound strange, since / I'm in a

DANNY

(shocked)

Are you seriously telling me / you want

LANDON

I know. I said it probably sounds surprising, since Brian and I have been dating for some time

now. But we're polyamorous, and have an agreement about seeing people outside our relationship. I mean, that's mainly for me, since he hardly leaves his home. Anyway, I guess I feel like Maddy and I made a connection that night at your apartment. If you are dating, of course, I won't do anything.

(laughs)

It's not like I'm Alec, or something. But, if / you're not

DANNY

Yes, Landon, we're still – well, it's . . . I mean / a little

LANDON

I'm not quite getting what / you're

DANNY

(upset)

Landon, don't fucking – just, we'll talk about this later, alright?

LANDON

Sure. I'm looking forward to it. I mean, who doesn't love talking about romance. right?

DANNY

(flustered)

Anyway, should we look at that scene now?

MIA

(annoyed, passive aggressive)

Sure.

DANNY

Um, do you not want to look / at the

MIA

I don't want to be fucking wasting my Saturday waiting for / a movie that's

LANDON

Oh look, it's Alec . . . and who's that with him? . . .It looks like Corin.

Alec, carrying a script, enters with Corin. The former looks happy, the latter uncomfortable.

ALEC

Hi everyone. Sorry I'm late.

DANNY

It's okay. We were just getting set up.

ALEC

You all know Corin, right? I invited her to watch me be foolish today.

(to Corin, laughs)

Not that it's an unusual sight, right?

CORIN

Hi everyone.

MIA

(to Danny, angry)

Can we just shoot?

DANNY

Um, yeah.

(to the group)

People know what happens in this scene / right

LANDON

(to Danny)

I had a question about my character, "Miller."

DANNY

(hiding annoyance)

Okay.

LANDON

(looking at script)

They're described as, "A noxious troll," and, "Passive aggression personified."

(faux good natured)

Don't worry. I totally get that this is just fiction, and you and Mia's casting me in the part is no reflection on your assessment of me as a person.

DANNY

(annoyed)

Great. That's a real relief.

LANDON

(forced laughing)

It did make me wonder how I should approach a character so weird and different from me, though, you know? Like, what's driving Miller to / comment about

MIA

(angry, to Danny)

Jesus Christ! Are we going to start / filming, or

ALEC

Landon, this does seem a little childish.

LANDON

(to Alec, faux guileless)

"Childish"? In what way? We're all here to make a great movie, right? I mean, you brought Corin, whose "relationship" with you drove Mia from your home.

DANNY

Landon. Can you please not / stir things

CORIN

(to Alec, angry)

I told you this was a bad / idea

LANDON

(to Danny)

What? Why would Alec's bringing the person he's supposedly sleeping with here, be a idea? His not-at-all sham relationship / is

MIA

What are you saying? Are Alec and Corin not together / now?

LANDON

Why don't you ask them? It might be more fruitful crying alone with your laptop.

ALEC

You're not really listening to Landon, are / you

Mia crosses to Corin.

MIA

Are you not with Alec now?

CORIN

I was never "with" / Alec

MIA

You know what I mean . . . have you stopped seeing him?

CORIN

I really don't want to talk about this here, but, yes, I've / stopped

ALEC

(faux boisterous)

What are you talking about? Come on, no one really believes "Landon," do/ they

LANDON

No, of course not. I'm sure they all believe the unerringly accurate depiction of real life that is your sex advice column, Alec.

ALEC

Oh, be quiet, Landon, / would you

LANDON

No fib or stretched truth would ever find its way into the world through such a pristine vehicle, would it, Corin?

MIA

(appalled)

You lie in your column?

(to Corin)

What he writes about you isn't / true

CORIN

(annoyed)

I don't read his column, Mia, and / I don't

ALEC

(hurt)

You don't? I send / it to you

CORIN

(to Mia)

And I don't read that blog you write, either.

MIA

Oh . . . if you're not with him, why did you come /
today

CORIN

(reluctant, conflicted)

He asked me to, and he . . . wasn't doing that well, / so

ALEC

(upset)

Can you two please stop?

(to Danny)

I thought we were here to film.

DANNY

Oh, um, okay. I guess if everyone still feels up for
shooting?

LANDON

I know I do, and it sounds like Alec's excited.

DANNY

Right.

(hesitant, uncomfortable)

Well . . . Mia, at the beginning of this scene you're here,
and you love Alec's character – which is, you know,
what we wrote, and it's your and his wedding
day. Landon, you're the officiant, because Miller
is pagan. And, um, Alec, you're coming directly from
having hooked up with Maddy, who you're in love /
with, so

LANDON

This is going to be so funny, everyone, isn't it? I
mean, it's already funny on the page, but once
we're all acting it out? I just can't wait.

DANNY

Right . . . well, do / we want

CORIN

I think I'm going to go everyone.

Mia crosses to Corin.

MIA

If you're not . . . actually with Alec . . . can we /
try to

CORIN

I've called and texted you, Mia, and you didn't
respond. Part of the reason I came today was to
see you.

MIA

Really? . . . I thought you said / you came to

ALEC

(to Corin, hurt)

Can you not have this conversation here?

MIA

(to Alec)

Oh, is it hard when two people you care
about betray you to your face?

ALEC

(to Danny, emotional)

I'm sorry. I don't think I can film today.

LANDON

(to Danny)

Oh, but Alec is your leading man, isn't he?
You can't / film without

CORIN

(to Mia)

We can talk about this later. Right now, I / just
want

MIA

But you haven't said / whether you

Corin takes Mia's hand.

CORIN

(intimate)

I'll call you and we'll meet, okay?

ALEC
(to Corin)

Wow, really?

(to Danny)

On second thought, let's film.

(sarcastic)

Goodbye, Corin. It's a real shame you're going.

Corin sighs and exits.

DANNY
(surprised, happy)

Okay. So we're all here, I guess we can start filming. Alec, you're going to be / entering from

LANDON
(reading phone)

Oh, I just got a text from Maddy. According to her message, Danny, / you and she

DANNY

Landon, why are you reading that out loud now?

LANDON

Oh, sorry. I just thought that, since I had asked you earlier about whether you two were still dating, and -

(to Alec)

I mean, this probably isn't news to you, but she/ says

ALEC

Landon, do you have to be so inappropriate about everything?

Landon stares at Alec, confused for a second, then laughs theatrically.

LANDON

I get it.

ALEC

You get what, Landon? You shared my and Corin's business with everyone, and now you're / telling

LANDON
(laughs)
Oh, this is a “bit.” That’s good.
(to everyone)
See, the person who lies to and betrays everyone
is calling me “inappropriate.”
(to Alec)
That was the idea, right?
(to all)
Anyway, Maddy and Danny have broken
up, but she’s not sure she wants to -

Danny, his eyes welling, has gone to put his camera away. Mia crosses to him.

LANDON
(awkward)
Um, date me, because -
(to Alec)
You know - you and she might be . . . starting
something.

MIA
(to Danny, private)
You could have told me . . .about Maddy,
I mean. We’re / friends

DANNY
(private, evasive)
Thanks. I didn’t want / to, you know

ALEC
(uncomfortable)
Well, if we’re not going to film today
. . . maybe I’ll just, um . . .

MIA
(to Danny)
I can’t believe you invited him today. He
steals Maddy / from you

ALEC
Maddy’s her own person, Mia! Not some
possession of Danny’s. Maybe if he / had shown

Danny yells to himself in frustration.

DANNY

(to Mia)

What was I supposed to do? Write a movie about how much I hate Alec like you would, and then cast someone else?

(to Landon, hurt)

Why would you announce all of that to everyone, Landon?

LANDON

I don't know. Maybe I'm a "noxious troll" who personifies passive-aggression. Or maybe watching people pretend they're acting when they're actually just being themselves is confusing, and I got my lines mixed up.

DANNY

(sighs, to Alec)

We're not filming, so you can go.

(looking away, quieter)

If you're going to meet Maddy, please don't do it at our place.

ALEC

That's fine . . . I mean, it's not like being there puts her in a good mood, or something.

MIA

(to Danny)

You're not going to say anything?

Mia approaches Alec, angrily.

MIA

You're being such an asshole.

ALEC

Yes, and you're Miss Manners, aren't / you

Mia shoves Alec. The latter is affronted, but quickly smirks, amused.

ALEC

Are you mad for Danny or yourself?

MIA

(hurt)

Not caring about people's feelings doesn't make you sophisticated, Alec.

ALEC

(condescending)

Maddy and Corin made their own choices, Mia.

(to all)

Goodbye everyone.

Alec exits. Mia crosses to Danny, upset.

MIA

You know, there's nothing wrong with writing about real life.

DANNY

Huh?

MIA

What you said before, about me just wanting to get even with Alec in my story, or whatever.

DANNY

(sighs, heavy)

I don't want to talk about this right now, okay?

MIA

Fine . . . this wedding dress is stupid, by the way. It's the wrong color and no one in their right mind would ever wear it.

DANNY

(weary)

We're making a comedy. It's just supposed to look funny.

MIA

(rolls eyes)

I'm going to see if Corin's around . . . call me if you want to talk, okay?

LANDON

(to Danny)

Do you know what kind of flowers Maddy likes?

(quickly)

I mean, because I'm sure she's sad about the

breakup. Not out of some weird attempt to seduce her, haha.

DANNY
(ignoring Landon, to Mia)
I'll be fine, but thanks.

Mia Danny and Landon all exit separately.

Scene 6

Maddy sits, anxiously looking at her phone. After a beat or two, Alec enters appearing a bit haggard and emotional, and sits opposite her. As he does so, her guard goes up.

ALEC
Hello. How's my favorite person?

MADDY
(ambivalent)
Hello, Alec.

ALEC
Is something wrong?
(droll)
That was a "hello" you'd give Danny, wasn't it?

MADDY
You remember I said I only have a few minutes to talk, right? I have a meeting right / after

ALEC
Yes, I remember. "Ms. Busy" has people to see. I'll try not to be jealous.
(affecting charm)
You will admit that this meeting makes your others seem small and pitiable by comparison, though, won't you?

MADDY
Alec, did you go to class today?

ALEC
(surprised, sad)
No.

MADDY

Did you call your job and talk / about

ALEC

(defensive, guilty)

No.

MADDY

Alec, what is your plan here? Are we supposed to pretend your life's not cratering around you while we have coffee, or / what

ALEC

(cries)

Seeing you is the one thing I've been looking forward to. I thought we could just enjoy / each other's

MADDY

This is exactly what you told me happened with Corin. But you said she was mean and she made you sad. I don't think I'm being mean, but you're / acting like

ALEC

I'll take care of all this tomorrow, I promise. Can we just try to enjoy / our visit

MADDY

You've been saying that for a week, Alec.

(worried)

Is something going on with you? Like, something you should talk to someone about?

ALEC

I don't know. It's really hard for me to leave the house now. And when I'm at home, I just cry.

(childlike)

Do you want to go to the doctor with me?

MADDY

I want to date a fucking functional adult who treats me like an equal, but apparently that's asking too much.

ALEC

Thanks. I appreciate the support, really.

MADDY

(annoyed)

You tried to split Danny and I up for months, telling me how amazing things would be once we were together. Do you remember that?

(wistful)

I felt special, because you saw what I wanted, and I thought if there weren't any obstacles, I'd get what I wanted all the time. Instead, you're a wreck, and I'm supposed to be your mom slash life coach? Did I ever say that was an arrangement / I'd be happy

ALEC

Corin used to tell me the same thing, only she'd say it after she'd gotten drunk and had sex with me.

MADDY

What a nice detail of you to add.

(under her breath)

Landon was right.

ALEC

What? You're talking to / them about

MADDY

Yes, I am!

(guilty)

Everyone criticizes them, but they're right about a lot of things regarding . . . our friends and their motives.

(pointed)

Why? With your commitment to infidelity, I assumed jealousy wasn't a trait of yours.

ALEC

Well, this conversation has certainly cheered me up.

(vulnerable)

What are you doing later?

MADDY

I have work until seven. Then I'm studying at

home.

ALEC

(needy)

Do you want to come over? I won't bother you.

MADDY

(uneasy)

I planned to study with . . . someone else. I'm not sure when we'll / be finished

ALEC

What? Is it Landon?

MANDY

(exasperated)

Alec, your rent is past due. I saw the notice on your / counter

ALEC

You won't see me, but you'll / spend time

MANDY

I'm not having this conversation.

Pause. Maddy checks her phone, softening.

MADDY

I actually do need to – I mean, the person I'm meeting will / be here

Alec stands, hiding his hurt.

ALEC

Fine. I know how popular you are.

MADDY

(guilty)

I'm worried about you. I hope / you'll go to

ALEC

(forcing smile)

I don't know why you're concerned. Don't I look happy?

MADDY

Alec, I'm being serious.

ALEC

I know. And I seriously can't believe you're voluntarily spending time with Landon.

MADDY

Goodbye, Alec.

Alec suddenly kneels by her, pleading.

ALEC

Please don't see them tonight. I'll make an appointment at Campus Health.

MADDY

You should do that anyway if you're not feeling well, Alec.

ALEC

I know, but please. I promise. Look, I'll text you the appointment details / while you're

MADDY

Alec, I said I have plans.

(overwhelmed)

Just – you can call me after / work and

Alec stands again, closed off.

ALEC

Never mind. I'll be fine. Forget I / said anything

MADDY

You were just begging me / to change

ALEC

I was joking. Okay, I wasn't joking, but your plans with trans Jeffrey Dahmer are very important, so / I wouldn't want

MADDY

(checks time)

Fuck, I really do need to wrap this up now, but you seem . . . not okay, and / I'm a little

ALEC

I don't know what you're talking about. School, work, romance – I've got it all. You enjoy your evening.

Alec turns and begins to leave.

MADDY

Alec.

Alec exits. A few beats pass and Sam enters and sits opposite Maddy.

SAM

Hi, Maddy.

MADDY

Hello.

SAM

Thanks again for agreeing to meet and help me with my project.

(pause)

I don't think we've ever just visited like this, have we?

MADDY

No, I guess not.

SAM

Right. I bump into some people we know all the time when I'm editing at the paper, but not you, so this is a treat. Well, I know you just have a minute before you go to work, so we should get started.

(intrigued)

Oh look, your coffee's empty. Did you visit with someone here before I came?

MADDY

(uncomfortable, looking away)

So you said this was for a paper you're writing?

SAM

Right, it's about trans women's experiences at our school. You know – with classmates, professors . . . dating.

MADDY

(leery)

Oh . . . well, my experiences with professors
have been good.

SAM

(takes notes)

That's good . . . I thought I saw Alec leaving on
my way in. Did you see / him

MADDY

This paper's for a class?

SAM

Yes. Gender Studies.

Pause, Maddy looks skeptical.

SAM

So, you said professors are good . . . and what
about dating? I know you and Danny were
together, and then / I heard

MADDY

(speaking over them)

You can say I haven't had any issues with
classmates about being trans.

SAM

That's great . . . and around dating? Have / you
had

MADDY

You didn't write any notes when I talked about
classmates. Don't you need / to record

SAM

(writes)

Thanks for reminding me of that. I was
engrossed in our conversation . . . You know,
speaking of Alec, I noticed he said something
in his most recent column about dating trans
women. Did you happen to read that?

MADDY

Sam, I know you enjoy collecting information

about people in our friend group, but if you actually think I'm going to tell you who I'm dating because you say you're writing "a paper" . . . I'm afraid you're wrong.

A quick beat passes, where Sam appears ingenuous

SAM

Oh, okay . . . I really am writing the paper, though.

Maddy appears caught between suspicion and embarrassment.

MADDY

Oh, sorry.

(reluctant)

I guess you can say, I've had one relationship, and been on a few dates since then.

SAM

Good, thanks . . . and was that a few dates with one person, or / more like

MADDY

What about you, Sam?

SAM

What do you mean?

MADDY

At our party you told Landon you have no desire to date. Is that really true?

SAM

(surprised)

I don't think about it a lot, but, yes . . . that's pretty much how I feel.

MADDY

Hmm, that sounds relieving . . . but also – oh, sorry. I shouldn't have just started talking like that about / you

SAM

It's fine. People think it's sad, but it isn't.

MADDY

That's good. I'm sure from the outside, mine is the situation that seems sad currently.

SAM

Not at all. You're smart, and you're just . . . exploring.

MADDY

"Exploring" sounds nice.

SAM

Landon pretending to be dating a shut in, though – that's inarguably sad.

MADDY

(hiding worry)

Why do you think they're lying?

SAM

For the same reason I don't think "Silence of the Lambs" was a rom-com.

Pause. Maddy, unnerved, checks her phone.

MADDY

I'm sorry, that's all the time I have.

Hiding their disappointment, Sam checks at their phone.

SAM

I understand. Oh, look at that – Alec checked in here ten minutes ago. His post says,

(romantic voice)

"I'm mad about Maddy."

MADDY

(embarrassed)

It did? Um . . .

SAM

(thinks)

Or is it,

(pouty voice)

"I'm mad about Maddy" . . . It's kind of vague, huh?

MADDY

Well, what it lacks in specificity, it makes up for

in exhibitionism.

Both stand.

SAM

Thanks again for meeting. This paper was a fun excuse to learn more about you.

MADDY

Right. My pleasure.

SAM

If I think of any more questions, can I give you a call?

MADDY

Oh . . . yeah, I guess.

SAM

Great.

Sam turns and exits. Maddy, stressed and upset, pauses a beat then follows.

Scene 7

Mia's basement rental. A few days have passed, and Mia sits anxiously on her bed. A knock sounds. She opens the door and Corin enters.

MIA

Hi.

CORIN

Hi. When I pictured your place it wasn't this . . . small.

(quickly, unconvincing)

It's nice, though.

MIA

(uncomfortable)

Do you want some tea, or something?

(points)

There's a chair, like, if you –

CORIN

(smirks)

Sam told me about the chair.

MIA

Maybe we should just go to your place.
If you're planning to insult everything
and . . .

Corin takes Mia's hand.

CORIN

Hey . . . I was just -

MIA

(embarrassed)

I don't have any . . . alcohol, but we could go to
the store, if you want.

CORIN

(hiding annoyance)

It's fine . . . So, I read your website, or, um, story.

MIA

You did?

CORIN

Yes. You seemed hurt the other day that I hadn't.

MIA

(nervous)

Oh, did you like it?

CORIN

Did I like being portrayed as a sex-crazed,
alcoholic sociopath? Yes, Mia. It was great. Thanks
so much for / immortalizing me

MIA

(flustered)

Everybody's character has good and bad
points in the story, Corin, that's what / makes it

CORIN

(angry)

What exactly were "Elanor"'s good points,
Mia? I'm surprised you even want to see
me after reading what / you said

MIA
She's confident . . . she's bold.

CORIN
Oh . . . um –

MIA
She's not stuck in her head . . . like "Marissa."

Corin takes Mia's head in her hands.

CORIN
Come here, "Marissa."

Corin kisses Mia, who backs away quickly.

MIA
(upset)
I said I wanted to talk, not . . . You hurt me before.

CORIN
(impatient)
Yes, you've made that clear.

MIA
Well, it's true.
(guarded)
How do I know things are through between
you and Alec?

CORIN
You don't have to worry about that.

MIA
What does that mean?

CORIN
(uncomfortable)
You know I don't like . . . discussing "private" /
things

MIA
I want to – it's important, Corin.

Pause. Corin stews, before muttering.

CORIN

Let's just say, when it was only me and him in the picture, he stopped being charming. I mean, he wasn't "toxic," or something . . . he was, um, sort of manic, and he cried a lot.

MIA

Oh.

CORIN

It was a little unsettling, really. To be honest, I'd planned to ask if he'd ever exhibited that kind of behavior when you were roommates?

MIA

No. Nothing like that.

CORIN

Well, it certainly wasn't what I'd been expecting. I mean, it's not the only reason I ended / things with

MIA

Why are we talking about Alec now?

CORIN

What? Because you brought him up. Remember?

MIA

Oh, right. Sorry.

CORIN

Anyway, are you sufficiently convinced he's out of the picture now, Miss Suspicious?

MIA

I guess. That's not the only thing that's worrying me, though. How do I know you won't find another reason to not be with me?

CORIN

I don't know, Mia. It seems like I'm the one who should be asking you that, though, since you / broke us up last time

MIA

You still haven't said you'll see me exclusively.

CORIN

We started dating again one day ago!

MIA

I know, but you picked me up, drunk, after talking to me for five seconds at / Danny's

CORIN

Because I liked you! . . . I've / liked you since

MIA

(embarrassed)

I just want to know you better. . . I want / to feel

CORIN

(with difficulty)

Okay . . . you can ask me about something about myself.

(joking)

If you take off your top.

Mia laughs.

MIA

Did you read Alec's sex advice column?

CORIN

Yes, after I read your / story

MIA

(suspicious)

So after you'd supposedly broken up with / him

CORIN

Mia, why / are you

MIA

How do I know you won't find some other person at a party tomorrow, and go home with them?

Corin sits on Mia's bed, and motions for the latter to join her. Mia pauses, then reluctantly does.

CORIN

(comforting, seductive)
We could talk about all the hypotheticals that
are worrying you, but you'll probably
still feel anxious, you know? If we do . . .
something else, something more fun, maybe
you'll -

The two kiss passionately, rolling on the bed, and removing some clothing. Mia
breaks off.

MIA
Sam told me Maddy is seeing Landon.

CORIN
(disgusted)
Really?

MIA
Yes. Apparently, she brought them over
to her and Danny's place for dinner. I can't
believe Danny put up with that. I would have
gone apeshit if I'd been him.

CORIN
(droll)
You don't say?

Corin's phone dings.

CORIN
I'm going to check that.

She reaches down and grabs her phone. Reading it, she becomes worried.

CORIN
Alec's in the hospital.

MIA
(concerned, shocked)
Is he hurt?

Corin begins texting.

CORIN
I don't know. I mean, no, they said he
had a breakdown, and -

MIA

Who said?

CORIN

Sam. Apparently he's in the psych ward.

(pause)

Do you think we should go?

Pause.

Scene 8

A café. A week or so has passed. Sam enters the café where they see Landon sitting. Suspicious, they cross to them.

SAM

Why are you here, Landon?

LANDON

I don't know. Why am I here?

SAM

I'm sure you know why I'm asking, so would / you

LANDON

You caught me: I'm a scone fanatic. There, it's so freeing to live without secrets. If only I could teach our friends that lesson.

Angered, Sam sits opposite Landon.

SAM

We both know you live on spite and resentment, not baked goods. So, I'll ask again – what are you doing here?

LANDON

(faux guileless)

It's almost like you think I should be somewhere else. But I don't know where you would have gotten that idea from. I mean, unless, like always, you'd been mining everyone we know in common for whatever gossip they're foolish enough to share with you.

SAM
(scoffs)

You're issuing reprimands, Landon? You practically co-wrote Mia's blog with all the "background detail" you fed her. Not to mention that your inserting yourself into Maddy's love rectangle practically put Alec in the hospital.

LANDON

Mia asked me for help with her project, and, being a friend, I did what I could. And as for Maddy and I, it's a little upsetting that our supposed friends can't accept we have feelings for each other.

SAM

Hearing you talk about friends is like listening to a lion order tofu. To have friends you need a basic comprehension of human emotions, and / to possess

LANDON

I'm a little tired of your endlessly trying to label me a "sociopath," Sam. In addition to its being ableist, it's also patently inaccurate, given that I'm quite open about being romantically involved currently.

SAM

"Romantically involved"?

LANDON

Yes.

SAM

And just so I can keep your lies straight: are you referring to your fictitious cyber-partner Brian, or "real life person whose standards have plummeted since her breakup, Maddy"? Because I've spoken with Maddy recently, and what she described the two of you doing, could not be classified as dating.

LANDON

I wasn't aware you were the arbiter of such things, Sam. If you've gotten everything you need from me here, though, I'll / just gather my

SAM

Why aren't you at Alec's, Landon? I heard you were

thrilled that his social fortunes had fallen so low he reached out to you for a favor.

LANDON

I'm always happy to assist any of my friends.

SAM

(confused, suspicious)

Alec was released from the hospital yesterday, and you told Maddy you'd go him to the registrar's office.

LANDON

(mock clapping)

Let's all applaud for Sam.

SAM

So, you admit that . . . but / you're not

LANDON

(faux shocked)

Oh my, is non-binary Gossip Girl one step behind on / the latest

SAM

Did Alec cancel your plans with him?

LANDON

(toying with them)

I don't know . . . Why would he did that?

SAM

(worried)

He was on academic probation already . . .
He can't return to class if he doesn't . . .

(stunned, sad)

Is Alec leaving school?

LANDON

Watching the little hamster power your brain is so cute. It almost makes you a sympathetic person.

SAM

What's he going to do if he's not a student? And why didn't you / try to

Landon stands.

LANDON

As fun as it's been listening to you insult me,
and grill me for personal details about our mutual
friends' lives, I'm afraid I have another engagement.

Sam stands.

SAM

(challenging)

Maddy told me she's thinking of reconciling with
Danny, and that when you're together she just
complains to you, while you show her your bizarre
pornography that she hates.

Landon glares, upset.

LANDON

Well, maybe you can write your own tell all
story, Sam. The campus paper needs a replacement
for Alec, don't they?

Landon exits.

Scene 9

Danny and Maddy's apartment. A week or so has passed. Danny sits on his couch
with his laptop. A knock sounds.

DANNY

(yelling to offstage)

I'll get it.

Danny crosses to the door, and opens it, revealing Mia.

DANNY

Hey, come in.

The two cross and sit.

MIA

Hi.

(private)

Is Maddy here?

DANNY

Yeah. She's in the bedroom?

MIA

(private)

Are you . . . together now?

DANNY

(private)

Erm . . . we're, you know . . . seeing how things go.

Mia nods.

MIA

(private, mad)

What about fucking Landon? I can't believe they're trying to date / Maddy even though

DANNY

(private, weary)

It's . . . Maddy can spend time with whoever she / chooses

MIA

(private)

But they were saying she and –

(restrains self)

Okay. You know, it's / your

DANNY

(private, droll)

I'm glad you haven't lost your wrath for anyone you think Maddy's cheating on me with.

Danny grabs his laptop and opens a document.

DANNY

I'm excited about this idea. You know how King Lear divides all his land between his three daughters? I thought, what if he was a greeter at Wal-Mart, and he had dementia, and he kept trying to give the – what do you call the people who stock shelves? – anyway, he maps out

the parking lot and says they can have all vehicles
in whatever section / he leaves

MIA
(confused, deflated)
“Wal-Mart ‘King Lear’”?

DANNY
Yeah. You know, like, “Do you see that RV? Tell
me how much you love me, and I’ll invest you
with it and all its surroundings.” You could be
Cordelia. Or Regan, if you want to be a villain.

MIA
How could we shoot a whole film / at a

DANNY
Oh, Chase works at Safeway, so we can do a lot of
it there, and we’ll just sneak all the establishing
stuff at / the real

MIA
Okay, but . . . isn’t it kind of dumb?

DANNY
“Dumb”? . . . It’s King Lear, only funny, so, you
know, better.

MIA
Right . . . it’s just, when I said I was tired of Batman
spoofs, I didn’t / mean

Maddy enters and crosses to the two.

MADDY
(to Danny, passive aggressive)
You have a visitor this morning?

DANNY
(confused, weary)
Um, yeah . . . I mean, Mia’s sitting right
here, so . . .

MADDY
I can see that, obviously. What I / meant

MIA
(to Danny)
You said / we

MADDY
(loudly)
I'm asking because you / and I

DANNY
(to Mia)
You're fine, we're / going to

MADDY
Jesus Christ! It's the same /

DANNY
(to Maddy)
Can we just talk / after

Maddy holds out her hand, and Danny stops. She pauses, furious, restraining herself.

MADDY
(to Danny, forced calm)
Do you remember the conversations we've
had about how you can communicate to me –
through your actions – that / our

DANNY
Yes, but / Mia

MADDY
That our relationship is a / priority

DANNY
Maddy, I / really

MADDY
(angry, tearing up)
Is a priority . . . because / currently

DANNY
Are you crying because I invited Mia over?

MIA
Um, I can go. It's / not a big

MADDY
(composing self, bitter)
I'm not crying "because you -"

Danny stands to comfort Maddy.

DANNY
Babe, if you're upset, I / can ask

Maddy backs away.

MADDY
"Maddy, what can I do to make you happy?"
... All I fucking do is tell you how / to

DANNY
(nervous)
Okay, you seem kind of upset, and I'm / not sure

MADDY
Do you even remember what our plan was
for this morning?

DANNY
Um ... I mean, I invited Mia to work on / the

MIA
We were going to work on the movie.

Maddy glares at Danny, then exits to the bedroom. Worried, Danny sits again.

DANNY
(rattled)
She probably just needs a minute.

MIA
(anxious)
Corin is visiting Alec today. I know she / says
she's not

DANNY
Oh fuck ... we were / going

Maddy enters.

MADDY

(mocking)
"Oh fuck – I made plans –"

Danny stands, crossing to her.

DANNY

Sorry, I / totally

MADDY

Save it, Danny. You know, I / really

DANNY

We can still – Mia and I can reschedule,
right Mia?

MADDY

Will you let me finish one fucking sentence?

Pause. Danny, surprised, shrugs yes.

MADDY

Alec has bipolar disorder, which is, you know,
not his fault, and sad. He also / purposely

DANNY

We can totally still go see / him

MADDY

Danny! . . . Alec also . . . well, he deliberately
undermined our relationship out of some
unconscious self-destructive drive that I guess
he's not responsible for, but that I / for some

DANNY

I promise I want to listen to you, but this
seems / like

MADDY

What I'm saying is, Alec manipulated me,
and today I'd planned to show him that
he hadn't really undone anything, because
my life was still the way it had been before
all his games and lies had twisted my
thoughts around. But now I see that, even
though you beg me a hundred times a
day to believe everything's different and

we're perfect, Alec wasn't telling any lies about our relationship. You're not reliable, you take me for granted, and I'm always disappointed. Those are just facts.

DANNY

Maddy, please.

MADDY

"Please" what?

A beat passes as Danny summons his thoughts.

MIA

Um . . . I can / go if

DANNY

You're good at . . . pointing out, rightfully, when I mess up, or / you know

MADDY

"Mess up"?!

DANNY

What I'm saying is, I know I'm not perfect, and it's, you know, good the way you can help me see that. But I don't think I'm the only one - out of the two of us, I mean - who sometimes screws up, and I think it's also good that I don't bring it up every time it happens.

Pause. Maddy stews, taking in what Danny has shared.

MADDY

So, I'm a bitch and / you're

DANNY

(shocked)

No, that's not / what I

MADDY

And "Danny's a saint, because / he"

Danny moves to hold her.

DANNY

Babe, please.

Maddy backs away, her eyes tearing up.

MADDY

I'm going to think about this conversation
the whole rest of the day, and I imagine you'll
forget it as soon as it's over, won't you?

DANNY

Of course not.

MADDY

Really? You're not thinking about Mia and your
movie right now?

DANNY

(guilty, evasive)

No, we're . . . um /

MIA

(uncomfortable)

Honestly, I can – how about if I just / let you

MADDY

It's fine. I'm going.

She crosses to grab her bag and coat. Danny follows her.

DANNY

Let me come, too. We can keep our plans.

MADDY

(angry)

No, Danny. Stay here and work on your movie.
I wouldn't want to interfere with your brilliant
creation.

Maddy exits.

Scene 10

Landon enters a café, where they notice Corin studying at a table, and approach her.

LANDON

Corin, how lovely to see you.

Corin appears slightly alarmed at having no way to avoid interacting with them, but this soon fades to weary annoyance.

CORIN

Hi Landon.

LANDON

I haven't seen you since that day we all helped Alec pack. In fact, I hardly ever see you really. After Sam told me you nearly threw up when I invited you to have dinner with me, I guess I assumed you didn't want to / be friendly

CORIN

I don't think that's something you normally share with someone. I mean, if you have dignity, or / you care about

LANDON

(laughs theatrically)

It isn't? But I guess insulting me to my face violates no social norms, right? . . . I'm just kidding.

Pause. Landon smiles passive aggressively.

CORIN

I was studying for an exam, so . . . if it's alright with you . . .

LANDON

Oh, did you want me to leave? Of course. I'd hate to be a pest.

Landon begins to move, then freezes.

LANDON

Before I go, though, I did have a question for you: you're kind of a snob – no offense – and so is Alec, in his own, “dashing first impression, mess underneath” way. / So

CORIN

Landon, I really / don't have

LANDON

It will be quick, I promise . . . what I was wondering was, Mia's this painfully earnest, touchy, "daylight hurts my eyes" type, who I'm assuming needs to process each text message at length. So, how did you two last more than fifteen minutes with each other?

CORIN

Landon, I'm not Maddy.

LANDON

I'm aware of that. If you were, I / wouldn't have

CORIN

I don't think you are.

Corin stands and moves toward them, intimidatingly.

CORIN

You're "I'm deep because I try to mindfuck whoever I'm talking to" dirtbag act doesn't impress me. You negging me and Mia, and everyone we know is gross, and I don't feel like participating, okay?

Pause. Landon appears wounded, but soon masks it.

LANDON

Well, maybe you're the one who's lucky Mia put up with you, when she did, that is.

Corin sits back down.

CORIN

Goodbye, Landon.

LANDON

Oh, right. Your exam. I know you can't wait to be a lawyer . . . Oops, that was supposed to be a secret, huh?

Landon smirks then turns and exits towards the counter. A beat or two pass, and Mia enters, crossing to Corin, and sitting opposite her.

MIA

Hi. It's / good to

CORIN

Did you tell Landon I don't want to be a lawyer?

MIA

(stunned, worried)

Um, what?

CORIN

Never mind.

MIA

Are you upset?

CORIN

(groans)

Yes . . . I mean, I don't want to be, but / sort of

MIA

Oh.

CORIN

I hate Landon. They were / just here

MIA

Did Landon tell you / I said

CORIN

They're such a sleazeball.

MIA

I guess.

CORIN

How can you not despise them? Do you know what they just said about you?

MIA

Um . . . no?

CORIN

I should repeat it, just to prejudice you against them, but I won't.

MIA

They helped me move when we broke up . . .
which was kind of nice, I think.

CORIN

(pause, annoyed)

Why didn't you ask Danny?

MIA

Um, I don't remember.

CORIN

Let's talk about something else.

MIA

Okay.

CORIN

Do you think I'm a "snob"?

MIA

Huh? Um . . .

CORIN

You do?

MIA

No . . . I mean, you, um, have strong feelings,
sometimes, about . . . people, / and

CORIN

So you do.

MIA

It's not bad. Why are you asking?

CORIN

(annoyed)

No reason.

MIA

It's good to / see you

CORIN

So, what? You think I'm judgmental? Or
rude, because / I have

MIA

No. I think you're cool.

CORIN

I'm sorry. I'm just tired of how "incestuous"
our "friend" group is.

MIA

(confused)

Oh . . . did something happen, like / recently

CORIN

What if Alec hadn't taken me home that night
we met?

MIA

At Danny and Maddy's party? . . . I don't
know. It seemed like you didn't want to be
exclusive with me.

CORIN

But what if we'd had more time to just be
together, without him – I don't know, trying
to commit a murder suicide on all our love
lives?

MIA

That sounds nice. But maybe I still would have
driven you away.

CORIN

What do you mean?

MIA

Really? I was willing to strip just to ask you
questions you didn't want to answer.

CORIN

It was a fair trade.

MIA

What I meant was –

(vulnerable)

I'm kind of . . . insecure, and I pressured you
a lot.

CORIN

You think I'm not insecure?

MIA

Um, yes?

CORIN

I may hide it well, but I'm afraid it's still there. Sleeping with a "pathetic Don Juan" to avoid commitment is a pretty big tell, just for future reference.

The two share a warm smile, then look away shyly.

CORIN

So, are you going to Alec's going away party?

MIA

(nods, upset)

I can't believe Danny's hosting it, after Alec broke he and Maddy up.

CORIN

(teasing)

Do you think he should move out, instead?

MIA

(embarrassed)

No, I - he never sticks / up for

CORIN

You said he did. That one time, remember?

MIA

Oh, that's true.

CORIN

Maybe he listened to you?

MIA

Oh.

CORIN

I'm going, also.

MIA
Right.
(nervous)
You don't still, um, like . . .

CORIN
Alec? No.

MIA
Right. I was just / checking

CORIN
I mean, it's sad, or – I mean, medically, I hope
he gets / better

MIA
I guess I'll see you there, then. At the party?

CORIN
Yeah. You will.

An awkward beat passes. Corin returns to studying, and Mia takes out her books.

Scene 11

Danny enters his apartment carrying shopping bags that he sets on a counter.

DANNY
I got ice and drinks!

Maddy enters.

MADDY
I know you're mad about this. You don't have
to pretend to be happy.

DANNY
I'm not. It's / fine

MADDY
"Fine"? I let fucking Alec guilt me into
hosting his going away party, like it's a
reward for demolishing my junior year,
and it's "fine"?

DANNY

It does sound like one of us is mad, but I don't think / it's

MADDY

It's going to be a shit show, isn't it?

DANNY

No. Our friends are coming. It's Alec's last night. It should be nice.

MADDY

We'll see.

The two set up the table.

MADDY

(with difficulty)

I realize, you know, that Alec didn't "solely" screw up this past year for me.

DANNY

(confused)

Oh, um, right.

MADDY

What I mean is – look, I think it is good to know what I want in a relationship, but holding, um, one's partner to unattainable standards, like I may have done from time to time . . . is probably not good.

DANNY

Oh. Wow, thanks.

MADDY

(looking away)

It's just something I've been thinking about.

DANNY

Right.

(pause)

Just so you know, though, I think I could have paid more attention to what you asked, and maybe shared a little more about what I thought.

Maddy looks surprised and happy, then quickly looks away out of nerves and crosses to the exit.

MADDY

I'm going to get the salsa.

The door opens and Sam enters, buoyantly.

SAM

Ce'est moi! Did I miss anything?

DANNY

Hi Sam. No, you're the first one here.

Maddy reenters crossing to the table with salsa.

SAM

Well, Landon will be here shortly, unfortunately. They posted about giving Alec a ride here, like doing so makes them Mother Theresa, or something.

(smiling)

So, how are you two?

DANNY

Um, we're fine.

SAM

Just "fine"?

MADDY

This night is about Alec, Sam. Please don't go fishing for gossip, okay?

SAM

Of course. I'm putting my rob away now. I can't help it if my friends are fascinating, though, can I?

DANNY

I don't think I've ever been called "fascinating." Normcore, maybe, but not / fascinating

SAM

Well, maybe someone should be paying you some more compliments.

(to Maddy)

Hint, hint.

MADDY

Danny know I appreciate - why are we talking about / this

DANNY

No one has to call me "fascinating."
(to Maddy)
I know I'm not a / fascinating person

The door opens and Alec and Landon enter.

ALEC

I'm here. The party can commence.

MADDY

Welcome.
(to Landon)
Thanks for bringing Alec.

LANDON

Of course.
(to Danny)
Hi Danny. Did we interrupt your confession?
It sounded like you feared we found you interesting.

DANNY

I was - it's a long story.

SAM

So, it's somebody's last night in civilization. Are you ready for the exurbs?

ALEC

Not really. It's only temporary, though.

SAM

Of course. Well, if you're bored you can always try to steal your mom from your dad. I think there's even a play about that.

ALEC

Har har.

LANDON

Jesus Sam. Attempting to steal Maddy from Danny, or Corin from Mia is not in the same category of romantic dysfunction as initiating intergenerational incest with one's own / parent

ALEC

Stop it! . . . I thought this was a party to appreciate me, and give me a fond sendoff.

LANDON

It is. That's why I corrected Sam just now.

MADDY

(slightly sardonic)

You should know what the party's theme is, since you basically forced us to have it, right?

ALEC

What? The idea just sort of came up while we were talking, I thought.

MADDY

(under her breath, scoffing)

"Came up," huh?

An uncomfortable pause ensues.

DANNY

Well, it's good to see you all. Landon, thanks for agreeing to play Edmund in the new movie.

LANDON

Of course. Who wouldn't want to play a bastard villain?

DANNY

Oh, I mean, actors usually like playing villains, right? Those / are the

LANDON

I'm only joking. I know if you really wanted an actor who could plausibly destroy two marriages, you'd film on location wherever Alec's parents live.

ALEC
Can we please stop with these “jokes”?

Alec crosses to the drink counter, which he surveys disappointedly.

ALEC
Off brand chips and canned beer.
(to Maddy)
I’m guessing Danny did the shopping?

MADDY
Alec, you asked us to throw you a / party

SAM
“Us”? Are you Danny / and “us”

MADDY
Sam. Didn’t we already / talk

The door opens and Mia and Corin enter.

MIA
Hi. I hope we’re / not late

ALEC
Look who’s here.
(to Corin)
If you needed a ride, Landon and I could have
picked you up.

CORIN
Seriously?

ALEC
I was kidding. Mia knows that was a joke.
Right, Mia?

Mia ignores the question, turning to the party.

MIA
It’s nice to see everyone.
(to Danny)
I can come over to write tomorrow.

ALEC
When are we going to finish the movie we

were working on?

DANNY

I don't know. I think that one's on hold.

ALEC

Really? That's a shame.

LANDON

You mean you don't want to complete the romantic comedy where Alec and Maddy's characters fall in love and marry, Danny?

DANNY

It's – we don't have to talk / about it

ALEC

Your loss. If you change your mind, I should have lots of free time the next few months, and there's a jacuzzi for love scenes at my / parents'

DANNY

Jesus. I'm not going to drive an hour and a half to fucking film / you, Alec

ALEC

(smirking)

Alright . . . so testy.

(to Maddy)

Is he always like this? You never mentioned his temper.

SAM

(to Alec)

You're really testing the limits of pity.

ALEC

Just because I have bi-polar doesn't make me a Dickens urchin.

LANDON

Losing your job and dropping out of school, on the other hand . . .

ALEC

God, how did this become a farewell roast?

MADDY

You pissed a lot of us off, Alec, and you've never apologized.

ALEC

"Apologized"?

(pause)

Really?

All stare, annoyed and expectant.

ALEC

Wow, okay . . .

(unconvincing)

Maddy . . . I'm sorry I listened to you when you told me how unhappy you were in your relationship / with

SAM

Oh my god!

Sam pulls Alec away from the group.

SAM

You're making everyone hate you.

ALEC

It's not my fault. They're being so childish.
"You've never apologized, Alec. You're a / bad"

SAM

Seriously?

ALEC

What?

SAM

You don't see anything / the matter

ALEC

No offense, Sam, but you're way off base here.
Now, if you'll excuse / me

Sam breaks off crossing back to the group.

SAM

Suit yourself.

Alec returns to the group, as well.

MIA

Do you plan to come back, Alec? When you're better?

ALEC

I don't know. I might like to live somewhere more exciting, like New York.

LANDON

That sounds nice. Do your parents print money in their free time?

ALEC

No. But I have journalism experience from here, so I'm sure I could find a job as an arts writer.

SAM

Oh, so you're delusional. Good to know.

ALEC

You don't have to all be envious.

(condescending)

What about you, Mia?

MIA

What do you mean?

ALEC

I don't know. Are you staying here for school?

MIA

Um, yes. I mean, it's a good / school, so

CORIN

He's just being an asshole.

ALEC

What? It was an honest / question

CORIN

I don't know how long I can stay around for

this.

MIA
(to Corin)

Are you alright?

ALEC
“Are you alright?” Mia, a little word of advice,
she doesn’t appreciate your constant need for
reassurance.

CORIN
Fuck off, Alec. I / mean it

ALEC
What? I’m practically quoting you / verbatim

MADDY
This was a mistake. Maybe we should just all
go / home

ALEC
Why, because Corin’s / mad

MADDY
(to Alec)
Get out!

Pause. Alec looks stunned, then laughs to hide his nerves.

ALEC
Oh, I get it. That’s / funny

MADDY
I mean it.
(to Danny)
Make him go.

DANNY
Really? Um, okay.

Danny crosses to Alec.

ALEC
You’re not seriously going to try to throw me
out, are you?

DANNY

Come on. Let's / just

ALEC

No.

(to the group)

You're acting like I'm some town monster, or something. I'm not. I'm your friend, remember?

MIA

You are, but you also betrayed us, or, some of / us

ALEC

"Betrayed"? Isn't that kind a childish way of / looking at

LANDON

Yes, it is. Serial adultery, on the hand. Tres mature.

MADDY

(emotional)

I thought you wanted to be close to me, like you said, but you just wanted to manipulate me, and you still won't take responsibility for that, will you?

Alec, stung and affronted, backs toward the door.

ALEC

You don't have to "force me out," Danny. I'll gladly leave . . . you're going to all miss me more than I miss you. Do you know why? Because you're all ass-achingly dull. Au revoir. I hate you all.

Alec exits.

LANDON

Well, that was dramatic.

SAM

I'll call him later to check in.

CORIN

That makes one of us.

MADDY

(mocking)

"I hate you all." What a jerk.

LANDON

He's just has paralyzing insecurity, and a bottomless sense of self-pity.

SAM

And they say you're not empathetic.

DANNY

Well, this was a weird party.

SAM

(to Landon)

Didn't you give him a ride here?

LANDON

Yes, and I would have given him a ride home, if he hadn't declared his hatred of me and stormed out.

SAM

And there's no other reason you stayed behind?

LANDON

Really, Sam? As though you didn't know Maddy and I broke things off.

SAM

Aww, is it just you and Alexa – oops, I mean, Brian – now?

MIA

I was really nice to him, and all he ever did was insult me.

CORIN

Don't be hard on yourself. It's good to be nice.

MIA

I guess.

CORIN

Also, you threw his stuff out a window, so you weren't exactly perfect.

MIA

That's true.

Mia moves to the center of the group, summoning courage.

MIA

Corin – I really like you.

CORIN

Why are you doing this?

MIA

I mean it. I know you hate sharing personal moments, or whatever, especially in front of Landon, but / I want

CORIN

Mia, please / stop

MIA

I want to – um, this is kind of embarrassing, I'm realizing.

DANNY

Do you want to go in the other room?

MIA

No. Corin, can we try dating again?

SAM

This is like watching a car crash.

CORIN

(chiding)

Sam.

Corin crosses to Mia.

CORIN

I'm never going to forgive you for doing this, but, yes, we can. Try again, I mean.

The two smile and kiss. Everyone turns to Danny and Maddy expectantly.

MADDY

What?

SAM

Alec has been exiled, and Landon just / said

MADDY

I know, but that doesn't / mean

DANNY

I'm open to it – that sounded dumb. What I meant /
was

MADDY

I don't want to just be angry at you all the time
again.

DANNY

I don't really want that either.

MADDY

I mean . . . I want us to enjoy being with each
other, like / when we

DANNY

Me, too.

MADDY

I want everyone to leave so we can fuck each
other's brains out.

DANNY

Really? Wow.

(to the group)

Um, we're not trying to be rude, / but

The others move toward the door.

SAM

(to Mia)

It's too bad you took your blog down, huh?
This is juicy stuff.

MIA

I only wrote it because I was mad at people.
Danny and Maddy having sex isn't inspiring.
I mean, for my writing.

LANDON

You four spent the last four months in misery,
and now you're like, "Another helping, please."

SAM

What kind of curmudgeon insults people for
falling in love?

LANDON

It wasn't an insult, it was a statement of fact.

MIA

They asked us to leave, let's just make our way,
you two.

(to Danny and Maddy)

Thanks for the party. I'd wish you a good night,
but I don't think it's necessary.

DANNY

Thanks. You / have a

MADDY

Can you turn the lights off on your way out?

Sam and Landon share a look and exit.

CORIN

Sure.

(to Mia)

Do you have everything?

Mia nods and the two kiss again. Danny and Maddy kiss, as well. Mia and Corin exit,
the latter turning off the lights.