

Lovely Madness

By

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## Cast of Characters

Alicia:

A student. Intense.

Darren:

Her former professor. Weary,  
nostalgic.

ACT I

Scene 1

*A spacious apartment living room. The sound of rain. ALICIA, 20, sits stiffly on the plush sofa. Tall stacks of books cover the floor.*

*She inspects the apartment. Picks up a book, thumbs through it. Smells the pages.*

*She is startled when the door opens. DARREN, 42, enters, his hair damp with rain.*

*He flinches upon seeing Alicia. They look at each other for a few moments.*

DARREN

What the hell are you doing here?

ALICIA

I had a key. It was gross and dusty because I, um, shut it away in a jewelry box.

DARREN

Why do you still have a key?

ALICIA

We were close once.

DARREN

That doesn't explain it.

ALICIA

What, did I miss visiting hours or something?

DARREN

This isn't a joke. You can't just--

ALICIA

I can't just say hi?

DARREN

It's not the right time.

ALICIA

Night time: always the right time. By the way, I like the new décor. You guys going for the repressed Victorian look?

DARREN

This can't happen. Is this about the...?

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

Did you think I was just going to ignore it?

DARREN

You just could have *warned* me.

ALICIA

You would've said no.

DARREN

I would've said let's meet at a coffee shop, a bar,  
*anywhere* but here.

ALICIA

A bar? Don't you know I'm underage?

DARREN

Sylvia will be home soon.

ALICIA

How wifely.

DARREN

She'll be back in an hour, maybe two.

ALICIA

I'm honored to bask in your presence for so long. Shall  
I kneel at your feet?

*Darren laughs.*

DARREN

I don't miss your dramatics.

ALICIA

Everyone misses drama: they just like to pretend they  
don't.

DARREN

How are you always so certain?

ALICIA

Of what?

DARREN

Human behavior.

ALICIA

I'm not certain of anything.

DARREN

You've cut your hair.

ALICIA

You've grown out yours. You look like my philosophy professor. He used to drop acid with the *elite* students.

DARREN

Were you one of the *elite*?

ALICIA

Yeah.

DARREN

Did you do it?

*Alicia shrugs.*

DARREN

Do you know what that stuff could do to your brain?

ALICIA

The Beatles did it and they turned out pretty well.

DARREN

You could be permanently damaged, or...or--

ALICIA

No, I did not drop *acid*. I was a pussy then. Do you have any beer?

DARREN

I, uh--

ALICIA

I know where it is.

*She stands and walks off-stage. When she's out of sight, Darren collapses to the couch. Breathes like he's held his breath the entire time. He picks up the book she left and holds it to his chest.*

DARREN

So, spit it out, what did you really come here to say?

ALICIA

(Off-stage)

I was kind of annoyed to get that email.

DARREN

Not happy? Not validated? It was an apology.

ALICIA

(Off-stage)

Nope.

*She returns, two beers in hand. Darren quickly sets down the book.*

ALICIA

Annoyed.

*She places one beer on the table and starts sipping the other.*

DARREN

Well, that's not what I intended.

ALICIA

Don't get too giddy yet. You're not off the hook.

DARREN

Then explain what's going on in that head of yours, Alicia.

*She shudders.*

DARREN

What?

ALICIA

It's been so long since...I've heard my name...in that voice.

*She downs the whole beer, then opens the other one and continues sipping.*

ALICIA

But, anyway, I'm *annoyed* because I was having a great day Friday. Like, one of those functional days when you actually kind of want to do laundry and then you *do* laundry and you feel like you can do anything after that.

DARREN

I haven't had that kind of day since I was nineteen.

ALICIA

I'm twenty now.

DARREN

Twenty...That's a real age.

ALICIA

I'm as real now as I was before.

DARREN

I know, but to me--

ALICIA

Of course in your perspective maybe I've changed, maybe I glow like fucking radium, but all this time I've been me, me, me. Boring.

DARREN

You have never been boring.

*She calms herself down.*

ALICIA

So I was saying...What was I saying?

DARREN

Laundry.

ALICIA

Right. I'm waiting for my shit to get out of the dryer. I know it's gonna smell fresh as fuck. And as I watch the clothes tumble round and round like some big fabric orgy, I get a ping on my phone. I look to see what it is. It's -- *voila!* -- an email! From you! And just like that, it's like I'm nineteen again. I can't get out of bed.

DARREN

This is why I needed to make amends.

ALICIA

Then why would you ever *email* me? It's like, "Dear Alicia, I am taking on this awkwardly formal tone despite the extremely personal nature of our past--"

DARREN

What was I supposed to do?

ALICIA

Uh, call me? Like people your age do? Or better yet, don't contact me at all. I don't care about your fucking redemption.

DARREN

Keep your voice down.

ALICIA

Why? We're alone.

DARREN

If Sylvia walked in, she'd...she'd...

ALICIA

She'd what?

DARREN

Leave me...again.

*Alicia sinks to the couch. She starts laughing uncontrollably.*

ALICIA

Oh boy. Oh boy oh boy oh boy.

*She laughs until tears come to her eyes. Darren doesn't know how to respond.*

DARREN

I don't blame you...

ALICIA

I don't give a fuck if you blame me.

DARREN

...for laughing. I don't blame you for laughing.

(Beat)

I don't blame you for any of it.

ALICIA

Again, it doesn't matter if you blame me. I've been blaming myself for the whole fucking thing.

*She downs the rest of the second beer, places the can on the floor, and smashes it with her foot.*

ALICIA

My shrink says I have anger issues.

DARREN

Observant.

ALICIA

But not, like, in the way you might think. Not, like, punching walls and shit, even though that's exactly what I want to do. She says I have a ton of internalized rage. A lot of women do.

DARREN

Not everything is gender politics.

ALICIA

Not when you're a man.

DARREN

You think it's been easy for me?

ALICIA

You kept your job, everything. I kept quiet.

DARREN

What does that have to do with your "internalized rage"?

ALICIA

EVERYTHING!

*Pause.*

ALICIA

I'm sorry. No I'm not. Everything. It has everything to do with it. I have been raised to take everything in and then shut my mouth and then implode. I convinced myself I was your burden.

DARREN

It wasn't mutual?

ALICIA

How could anything have ever been mutual between us?

DARREN

We did care for each other.

ALICIA

Cuddling and watching French New Wave films after sex doesn't constitute a real relationship.

DARREN

It wasn't a relationship. How could it be? But it still meant something. To me, at least. You were a very special person in my life. Rejuvenating.

ALICIA

Oh, gee, thanks! I'm so glad I made you feel *young* again!

DARREN

I wish you had told me how you felt more.

ALICIA

You didn't even think about how I felt. How I feel.

DARREN

What are you talking about? I do! I would always try, but you would never let me in. Just tell me how you feel.

ALICIA

It's not that easy.

ALICIA

I didn't come here to bail out your emotional bankruptcy.

DARREN

It's not my fault if you're closed-off.

ALICIA

Because I'm not going to spell everything out for you? I wanted you to care enough to dig deeper.

DARREN

I did care.

ALICIA

Not enough.

DARREN

I'm trying to make things better.

ALICIA

How?

DARREN

If you would just let me...

ALICIA

Because that email really wasn't enough. I want you to know that. Maybe you thought it was a flattering gesture and all, but--

DARREN

Let me speak...

ALICIA

I'm listening.

DARREN

I can't stand the sensation of guilt. It's such a...*socialized* emotion. That being said, I feel it so intensely I get sick. So whenever it's about to hit, I suppress it, subconsciously or not. I keep myself busy enough so that I can no longer think. I fill my mind with white noise. And that is what have done all year.

(Beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DARREN (CONT'D)

It does not make me proud to admit that on occasion, for maybe an hour or two every few weeks, I could force myself to forget I...that we...

ALICIA

Fucked?

DARREN

I was going to say slept together.

ALICIA

How gentlemanly of you.

DARREN

I had returned my life to a semblance of normal. But then, a few days ago, I was cleaning out my desk and I found this, and everything came back to me.

*He pulls out a crumpled piece of paper.*

ALICIA

What the hell is that?

DARREN

The recommendation for Fine Arts Center.

ALICIA

From *last year*?

DARREN

Yes.

ALICIA

I thought you never wrote it.

DARREN

I wasn't going to.

ALICIA

You said it would be "inappropriate." Like who the fuck do you think you are? Humbert Humbert reformed? But I bet you just didn't want to write another recommendation, because I know you hate them, but, dude, that summer would have been so dope. It would've just been me, my notebook, and sap. Not emotional sap, obviously, but, like...trees. I spent that summer working in my dad's office instead. I had to read over hundreds of pages of Excel spreadsheets until my eyes went numb. Some douchebag intern tried to snake his hand down my pants.

DARREN

I'm sorry. I did write it...two days after the deadline.

ALICIA

Why would you do that?

DARREN

I was seized by inspiration.

ALICIA

Wow. I should've known what a weirdo you are!

DARREN

Shh!

ALICIA

No one's here.

DARREN

You're still too loud.

ALICIA

Now I can say anything as much as I want.

*She leaps to her feet.*

ALICIA

MY TEACHER SCREWED ME! IT WAS CONSENSUAL BUT HE WAS MY TEACHER SO IT WAS HIM SCREWING ME NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND! MY VIRGINIA WOOLF PROFESSOR LIKED TO SLAP MY ASS!

(Beat)

Dudes shouldn't teach Virginia Woolf anyway.

DARREN

Are you done?

ALICIA

I'll never be done.

DARREN

I feel nauseous.

ALICIA

*Nauseated.*

DARREN

I never would have contacted you if I knew it would make you this upset.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

You should have said it to my face.

DARREN

Is it not enough that I gave up everything? Did you want to see my shame, too?

ALICIA

Yes. I wanted to taste the embarrassment.

DARREN

Satisfied now?

ALICIA

No. Relive it for me. What did the school say?

DARREN

They essentially called me a disgusting old pervert.

ALICIA

What did *she* say?

DARREN

She explicitly called me a disgusting old pervert. And then she stormed out and said she never wanted to see me again.

ALICIA

And yet here she is, running your errands.

DARREN

Yes. Here she is.

ALICIA

She's an idiot for that.

DARREN

She's loyal.

ALICIA

Or just lazy. Divorce papers are a lot.

DARREN

I don't want to talk about her like this. All I want is for you to know that I am...that I do feel...

ALICIA

You don't have to prove anything to me. It's not like I blame you. I'm hot, I'm young.

DARREN

Let me read it to you.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

I don't care about the stupid rec anymore. I don't need it, I'm not even reapplying to the program. Fuck poetry. Fuck nature. I hate nature poems. I wish you were going to give me something I actually want, like my underwear.

DARREN

I don't have your underwear.

ALICIA

I'm 99% sure you took one of my super nice, special-occasions-only Victoria's Secret bras.

DARREN

Maybe it fell under the bed or something?

ALICIA

I already checked.

DARREN

When I wasn't here?

ALICIA

Yes.

DARREN

That's very invasive.

ALICIA

Like you have a good grasp of boundaries.

DARREN

If it's not here, it might have been at one of the hotels.

ALICIA

You mean the fucking Campus Inn? Two stars on Yelp? Well, that would *suck*, and now you owe me fifty bucks.

DARREN

Fifty dollars for a *bra*?

ALICIA

You don't become a mistress without putting in some effort.

DARREN

Okay, okay, okay. I want to read you my letter.

ALICIA

Why do you *care* so much? Can't we just let things die?

DARREN

You didn't want things to die.

ALICIA

What are you saying?

DARREN

At the end. I would see you by my classroom all the time, looking in.

ALICIA

I was passing you on my way to class.

DARREN

You never had morning classes.

ALICIA

I was sleepwalking.

DARREN

I could see your sadness. You said you didn't want things to end.

ALICIA

Maybe at the time I didn't have as much going on. But now I couldn't care less.

DARREN

If you couldn't care less, then why are you here?

ALICIA

I wanted to see how you looked.

DARREN

Are you happy?

ALICIA

You look middle-aged. That makes me happy. I don't know why, but when I used to picture you, you looked...cleaner. Either I romanticized you or you let yourself go.

DARREN

A little of both. You still have so much to learn.

ALICIA

Okay...?

DARREN

You were endless in your fascination, always taking in everything. That's what I loved about you.

ALICIA

Wait, what you...loved?

DARREN

If that's what it will take to convince you, I'll admit it. I wrote this when I realized I loved you. But by then I had pushed you away.

ALICIA

Something something, "You don't realize what you had until it's gone," am I right.

DARREN

Are you trying to quote Joni Mitchell? It's "you don't know what you got 'til it's gone."

ALICIA

Dude, don't dare criticize my Joni quotage at this point in time.

DARREN

I can't help it; a professor of Modernist literature is just an English teacher at heart.

ALICIA

That's such a weird image. That's just, like, two layers of lame.

DARREN

Enough; sit down.

ALICIA

Don't tell me what to do.

DARREN

Please.

*She does so.*

*Darren begins to read his letter.*

DARREN

"Dear Vermont Fine Arts Center Summer Poetry Institute. The first time I truly spoke to Alicia Segal was when she approached me after class, inquiring about further reading for the course. Some students take classes to check off requirements for their major; others genuinely savor what academia has to offer. I could immediately tell Alicia was one of the latter."

*He looks up at her.*

ALICIA

Sounds like you've written this a few times before.

DARREN

There is a structure to these things.

ALICIA

Keep going.

DARREN

"We spent over two hours discussing literature. As it turned out, she has impeccable taste: Nabokov, Conrad, Beckett rolled off her tongue like...like..."

ALICIA

Like what?

DARREN

I couldn't think of something.

ALICIA

"Like letters of the alphabet." Now move on.

DARREN

Right. "They are a part of her basic language. This is apparent in her writing. Her papers were always lucid and thoughtful, and on the rare occasion she would allow me to glimpse her poetry, I caught sight of a burgeoning Sylvia Plath."

ALICIA

Oh God, don't compare me to Sylvia *Plath*.

DARREN

You like Sylvia Plath.

ALICIA

Yeah, I love her. *Ariel's*, like, a book we must preserve if the world was destroyed.

DARREN

So what's the problem?

ALICIA

All women poets who write women-y things are compared to Sylvia Plath. You'd never say your male student was like her.

DARREN

Well, she was a woman poet, and you're a woman poet, and you might happen to have similar styles. I see nothing wrong with that.

ALICIA

Look, I don't have time to get into the history of how we've romanticized "lovely madness" in women, or how female confessional poets suffered from gender-biased ridicule, but just pick a different poet, okay?

DARREN

I think you do have time.

ALICIA

I thought your wife's coming home.

*Darren pulls out his cellphone from his pocket. Alicia scoffs but doesn't stop him as he dials a number.*

DARREN

(To phone)

Honey? Yeah...Looks like I'll need a few more things than I thought...Can't you just run back in?...It won't take too much more time. I just thought we could use a few more scented candles for the bathroom. And I was thinking of baking a spongecake tomorrow or the day after, so the ingredients for that. And maybe some shampoo? I just saw I'm running low...The ocean breeze kind...That's my girl. I'll see you tonight.

*He makes a kissing sound and hangs up.*

ALICIA

I bet she does all her grocery shopping with a loopy little smile on her face and, like, hums when the cashier rings her up.

DARREN

Keep going.

ALICIA

Okay, it's like, for a millennium men have tried to make melancholia and mental instability look beautiful and tragic and *feminine*. Ophelia's the mascot, drowning in all her sweet little mania. Insanity is a sign of genius in men--in women, it's prettiness.

DARREN

Fine. I'll go with Anne Sexton.

ALICIA

Basically Americana Plath.

DARREN

Plath was American.

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA

I'd say Mid-Atlantic. Try again.

DARREN

Which poet would suit you? Eliot? Shakespeare? Chaucer?  
How far am I allowed to go in singing your praises?

ALICIA

Ancient Greece. Sappho.

DARREN

And you don't think it's cliché to compare a woman poet  
to *Sappho*?

ALICIA

It's not as...fraught.

DARREN

What about Elizabeth Bishop? Can you stomach that?

*Alicia thinks.*

ALICIA

Yeah!

DARREN

I'm just thinking about what I can say about your  
imagery that would suit your taste.

ALICIA

You called it "free-flowing" once.

DARREN

Yes, but it's something more, something in the  
descriptions...Synesthetic.

ALICIA

Like colors being linked with, like, scents?

DARREN

The senses intermingled.

ALICIA

You think my poetry's like that?

DARREN

Of course. You see the world through an iridescent  
lens.

ALICIA

That's nice. I was always so nervous to show you my  
poems, but you would hold them like they were  
illuminated manuscripts and notice things nobody else

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

would. Maybe you were seducing me. You knew what worked.

DARREN

I wasn't seducing you. Not when it came to your words.

ALICIA

Write that down.

DARREN

This has become you complimenting yourself.

ALICIA

We all should write our own letters of rec.

*Darren laughs.*

DARREN

"In essence, your program would greatly benefit from the presence of Miss Segal. She brought a refreshing vivacity and lust for life into my classroom, and I have no doubt she would do the same in your workshop."

*He folds the letter and puts it in his pocket.  
Waits for her reaction.*

DARREN

Well?

ALICIA

Well, what?

DARREN

What do you think?

ALICIA

You wrote a rec you never even finished and never bothered to send in. Pat on the back.

DARREN

Did it mean nothing to you?

ALICIA

I liked the compliments.

DARREN

It didn't...affect you at all?

*Alicia doesn't answer.*

DARREN

I don't know what else I can do. I'm sorry. Maybe that makes me a repressed old man in your eyes, and I will forever regret that you see me that way, but I should have expected all that bitterness to set in. I did not treat you as you should have been. But I gave up my job, risked my marriage, because you meant so much to me. And I should have told you all of that in person, but I knew you would decapitate me with your eyes, that's your skill. I can still feel hurt.

ALICA

I know.

DARREN

In some ways, I have to thank you. I'm as free as when I came into the world.

ALICIA

You feel *free*? Not scared?

DARREN

I thought I would feel that way. I didn't realize it until I told everyone, but my mind has been eating itself alive since the day I ended it with you. I felt so much *shame*, and I kept turning over in bed and hoping you'd be there. I thought of you in pain from what I did and couldn't stomach it.

ALICIA

I thought after it was all over you figured I'd just go away and disappear into the distance and you'd be free of me and go back to your cozy tenure-track, and your wife, and your fucking domesticity. And every day it pissed me off, the thought of you sleeping so easily. Never even thinking of me. I guess I was wrong...I'm not used to saying that.

DARREN

It's refreshing.

ALICIA

But...Sylvia. You still have her.

DARREN

I do. She rushed back to me after three days, crying about how she didn't want to be alone, and I didn't have the energy to push her back.

ALICIA

Do you not love her?

DARREN

It's more about being...used to her. Truth be told, I like having someone around.

ALICIA

Wow. I remember she would come after class sometimes and bring you lunch. You guys would walk hand-in-hand across the quad, looking so...tender. I had to pretend it didn't feel like I'd been suckerpunched every time I saw you together. Because the weird thing is, in that kind of situation, you know you've signed up for shit like that, but you still feel entitled to be loved.

DARREN

Love?

ALICIA

It's dumb, but I always told myself I would never let me love you. At the same time, I needed you to love me. My head would be reeling with so much anxiety that I'd have to pinch myself, all because I thought if I didn't get you to see me that way, I'd be a failure of a person. Maybe it wasn't about love. Maybe it was about power.

DARREN

Did you write a lot of poems about that?

ALICIA

Yeah. It just really sucks that I like to think I'm this person who doesn't need men but all my poems are so much better after my heart gets broken. You know?

DARREN

It has nothing to do with not needing men, or not needing anybody. Look at Keats, Donne, Auden--

ALICIA

Men, men, men. I want to be the kind of woman who never writes love poems. One day I will be.

DARREN

Are you not now?

ALICIA

No. I feel too much. I'm sensitive.

DARREN

I can't imagine anyone knowing you and calling you "sensitive."

ALICIA  
Why?

DARREN  
You have a belly button piercing.

ALICIA  
"Sensitive" and "pain tolerant" are two different things.

DARREN  
I miss your spark.

ALICIA  
I'm still sparky.

DARREN  
I miss lying next to you and talking into the night. I never had so many ideas as when we were together.

ALICIA  
You liked someone who would listen.

DARREN  
No, no. Many people listen to me. You...you challenge me.

ALICIA  
I've never been good with authority. Maybe that's why I got with you. Literally *fucking* authority.

*She picks up the book from earlier.*

ALICIA  
I see you still have my *Pale Fire*.

DARREN  
I like your marginalia.

ALICIA  
Silly speculations of a freshman.

DARREN  
No, the risky thoughts of a bold, beautiful young woman too wise for her age.

*They look at each other. Darren grabs Alicia's face and begins kissing her. She is rigid, then seems to give in, then pushes him away.*

ALICIA  
What are you *doing*?

DARREN

I want it to be like it used to be.

ALICIA

I, uh, have a boyfriend.

DARREN

You're lying.

ALICIA

No.

DARREN

What's his name?

ALICIA

Lionel...Ramsay.

DARREN

Why would you come here if you have a boyfriend?

ALICIA

Why not?

DARREN

Would he be glad to know you're visiting the professor you--?

ALICIA

He doesn't know about any of that. Nobody does. I did what you said.

DARREN

If you told him, how would he feel?

ALICIA

That's not any of your business.

DARREN

Who is he really?

ALICIA

He's 6'2 and listens to Miles Davis on vinyl and carries a messenger bag.

DARREN

One of those faux-Kerouac boys you hang around with.

ALICIA

No way, man. I'm done with literary types.

DARREN

Giving up?

ALICIA

"Jealousy is visceral. It's beyond apprehension." You told me that.

DARREN

Don't fling my post-coital proverbs back at me.

ALICIA

Darren, you fucked up. You don't just give up your entire life for a girl without checking if she's single first.

DARREN

You act so cynical now, but you used to say things like "I'll wait for you" and "I've never felt like this with anyone else."

ALICIA

I was *nineteen*. Of course I'd say shit like that.

DARREN

You haven't changed that much in a year.

ALICIA

I better have changed. I sure as hell tried.

DARREN

I don't want you to change.

ALICIA

Too fucking bad, old man. I'm sorry you didn't appreciate what I gave you. But you know what? I can't even remember why I cried over you for all those weeks, and I'd like to keep it that way.

DARREN

You cried over it?

ALICIA

I cried a lot. I slept through a week of classes. It was so dumb.

DARREN

I had no idea.

ALICIA

Because I fucking fooled you.

DARREN

This is what I was talking about: I wish you would have just told me how you felt.

ALICIA

You know, in relationships, or whatever the fuck people get into these days, I feel like there's always the one person who wants to be *told* how the other person's feeling, thinking, existing. But that's not how it ever works. Nobody ever just tells you how they're feeling. You of all people should know how to close read a difficult text.

DARREN

I wanted to know you.

ALICIA

But you thought I was unknowable.

DARREN

Possibly.

ALICIA

You thought because you couldn't get past my exterior I was this mystical creature. So lovely, so untouchable. I'm not that mysterious.

DARREN

It can be us again. Reading poetry, taking strolls around the park, seeing foreign films.

ALICIA

You say you wanted to know me...

DARREN

Going to the opera, my hand on your back.

ALICIA

...you say you tried...

DARREN

Reading each other's papers, sleeping with our books scattered on the bed.

ALICIA

...but all along you just preferred this image of me as enigmatic and sexy and fucking intangible.

DARREN

It *can* be us again.

ALICIA

No, it *can't*.

DARREN

Why not?

ALICIA

Besides you being married?

DARREN

Yes.

ALICIA

Besides me having a boyfriend?

DARREN

Temporary situations.

ALICIA

It was never real.

DARREN

Of course it was.

ALICIA

No. *We* were real, but not to each other. You're real now, I'm not. You won't like what you see when I am. How do you not see that?

DARREN

I see you.

ALICIA

That might have worked on me before. I have to go.

DARREN

Why?

ALICIA

Normal, healthy plans with people *my own age*.

DARREN

With your boyfriend?

ALICIA

Yes. I'm seeing his experimental production of *Wicked* where everybody but Elphaba is green.

DARREN

You can't leave now.

ALICIA

I have to. I want to.

DARREN

But you're the one who fought to be here.

*She stands, holds out a hand to him.*

ALICIA

Goodbye, Darren.

DARREN

Do you expect me to shake that?

ALICIA

Yes. It's only appropriate.

DARREN

Go to hell.

*Alicia looks stunned for a moment, then laughs.*

ALICIA

You wish.

*She walks to the door. Turns back to him.*

ALICIA

Enjoy your freedom.

*She exits. Darren sits in silence. He looks at the recommendation in his hand. Crumples it into a ball and throws it across the room.*

DARREN

I can't...I can't even remember...why...

*He grabs Alicia's copy of Pale Fire, smells it. Stares at the door, shaking his head.*

DARREN

It was real...Wasn't it?

*Blackout.*