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Hannah Lewis

Olivet Nazarene University, hnlewis@olivet.edu

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GENDER ROLES REVIEWED THROUGH SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*

WITH 21ST CENTURY APPLICATIONS

By

Hannah N. Lewis

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<u>Karen Knudson</u> Scholarship Project Advisor (printed)	<u>Karen Knudson</u> Signature	<u>2/11/21</u> Date
<u>Stephen Case</u> Honors Council Chair (printed)	<u>[Signature]</u> Signature	<u>4.29.21</u> Date
<u>Elizabeth Schuman</u> Honors Council Member (printed)	<u>Elizabeth Schuman</u> Signature	<u>4-30-21</u> Date

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on a modern-day adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* which aims to emphasize the importance of gender equality as a moral imperative in the 21st century. In the original play, Shakespeare writes a story that draws attention to gender stereotypes in the Elizabethan age through his use of character representation. However, much is to be said about how these stereotypes in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* are applicable to the 21st century. Thus, this study is applied to a modern adaptation of *Twelfth Night* which tells the story of a young woman named Vivian. In this story, Vivian pursues her desire to start a business but is faced with financial issues in which she seeks a job under a misogynistic boss named Owen, who questions her ability to succeed in the business world. Yet, Vivian's mature influence brings about a change in Owen's perspective on stereotypes in gender roles and thus, proves herself to be a strong, independent character. In this modern adaptation, I intend to present Shakespeare's focus on gender stereotypes but also highlight equality between men and women. Although Shakespeare does not put much emphasis on gender equality in his play, I wish to accentuate it as an important factor in my adaptation. Therefore, in this thesis, gender roles in both the Elizabethan age and the 21st century are explored in depth to critique gender stereotypes and promote equality between men and women.

1. Introduction

William Shakespeare, the famous playwright of the Elizabethan era, has penned many of the greatest plays in history and acts as an icon for theater-lovers around the globe. Shakespeare's portrayals of moral truths have been analyzed by readers and critics alike and are still of great impact in the contemporary age. He also addresses issues of immorality and common human experiences that have been interpreted for many years; however, among his other plays, *Twelfth Night*, has been under scrutiny for both modern and Elizabethan critics. During the Elizabethan Era, women were hardly given a significant role in theater or in life. Roles of authority were reserved for the men, and the general expectation of a middle to lower class woman was to submit. These roles were based on what Elizabethan society labeled as "beliefs, ethics, and values" (Ahsan 10). Ahsan further explains that within the daily Elizabethan lifestyle, "some responsibilities and errands have been conventionally by tradition reserved for men and some for women" (10). Within gender roles, stereotypical assumptions have played a part in the conflict between men and women for centuries. In the Elizabethan era, a woman's role is to be the natural nurturer within the family in which the stereotypical assumption is that women are emotionally weaker in comparison to men and are unable to become effective leaders. However, in *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare defies gender stereotypes through the creation of an independent, intelligent female character. Through the characterization of the main protagonist, Viola, Shakespeare addresses stereotypes within gender roles that are under scrutiny today.

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* has received an abundance of mixed reviews throughout the years where critics find the play to be either enlightening or absurd. In

Homer Swander's article, "'Twelfth Night': Critics, Players, and a Script," he talks about the audiences' reviews in the mid-twentieth century when they saw the production of *Twelfth Night*. According to Swander, critics have branded the play as an "outrageous old bore, full of tiresome and gritty complications, incomprehensible Elizabethan jokes, and a troop of low-comedy characters of really paralyzing inanity..." (115). From the outspoken dialogue to the number of unnecessary characters, people could be left in confusion at the end of the play. Although Shakespeare's hope might have been to draw attention to gender stereotypes and the importance of gender equality, many critics miss those elements entirely. Although critics distinguish Viola as an important character in the plotline, there is still some unclarity about the role she plays in the discussion of gender inequality.

While for hundreds of years audiences often ignored the influence of Viola and what she represents, Swander notes several positive reviews in the early 20st century when *Twelfth Night* was directed with a focus on Viola. When addressing the influence of Viola over Orsino and Olivia, one admiring reviewer states, "Into this glowing air come Viola and Sebastian, rained down from heaven to settle everything" (118). After viewing Viola as the heroine of the plotline, audience members and critics receive a whole new perspective of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* from other productions of the play. Swander better explains this change by stating, "I think it is clear even on the surface that *Twelfth Night* is more than a harlequinade, that Shakespeare means not only to entertain but to instruct, that one of his purposes is to celebrate certain virtues and to ridicule certain follies, to nourish the good life and defeat the bad" (120). Despite the recognition of Shakespeare's moral purpose in *Twelfth Night*, the question of Viola's relation to the

topic of gender stereotypes is still left unanswered. Instead, a majority of critic reviews center around the topic of gender regarding cross-dressing and homosexuality within Viola's male counterpart, Cesario's role. When referencing Cesario's interactions with the countess, Olivia, critic Peter Berek states that their relationship would "intensify both allure and anxiety by their attention to same-sex attraction" (Berek 361). Apart from gender identity, critics and viewers struggle to define what Viola represents other than a protagonist with an important secret. Upon seeing the play, critic Thad Logan points out that "part of the extraordinary appeal of Viola and Sebastian comes from their air of innocence" (231). Although Viola is viewed as an innocent female lead, many critics struggle to understand her as a female who rejects the traditional form of a woman. Thus, gender stereotypes in relation to Viola's character is still yet to be discussed.

The purpose of this project is to reveal how Shakespeare's critique of stereotypical gender roles in *Twelfth Night* are still relevant in the 21st century, through his representation of Viola. By writing an original adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, this project draws attention to gender equality as a significant moral truth that is often opposed by negative gender stereotypes in the modern day. One technique Shakespeare uses to identify stereotypes within gender roles is the characterization of Viola and her interactions with Olivia and the Duke. In Kietzman's article, "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in *Twelfth Night*," she goes into detail about Viola's influence over the other characters and how Viola breaks the female gender stereotype of the Elizabethan age. In the play, Viola is "plainspoken and businesslike," and she upholds herself with a "directness of spirit" (Swander 120). On the other hand, Orsino's character is childlike and pathetic in nature, which demonstrates his lack of maturity and self-control.

According to Kietzman, Viola takes control of her own life and is “no longer restricted by the fiction of femininity...” (263). Instead of finding a man to care for her, she takes matters into her own hands and secures a position under the Duke. Thus, by proving herself to be reliable and intelligent, Viola defies the typical outlook that people had on women during Shakespeare’s time. Particularly when juxtaposed to the other female characters within *Twelfth Night*, Viola’s traits of dignity and strength give women a greater reputation. Few sources solely address the topic of gender stereotypes in *Twelfth Night* in relation to Viola’s characterization, though critics have much to say about how Shakespeare presents moral issues in his productions such as the corruption of greed and the unfairness of outward judgement. There are several authors who have analyzed the significance of Viola’s character and the role of women during the Elizabethan era, but its connection to gender inequality is hardly addressed. This project is unique among *Twelfth Night* critiques because it experiments with how the problem that Shakespeare presents about negative gender stereotypes can still be relevant to the 21st century.

2. Review of Literature

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, the representation of gender stereotypes reflects the patriarchy of the Elizabethan era. A comparison of gender roles in both the Elizabethan era and the 21st century demonstrates that stereotypes are still in existence. In Novy's book on *Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, she explains that "Patriarchy takes a different form in America...than it did in England in the 1600s. Yet the action of the plays allow audiences of different times to see recognizable motivations in the characters" (6). Thus, the study of Elizabethan history in regard to gender roles is used to exhibit Shakespeare's step away from the Elizabethan patriarchy in *Twelfth Night*, and to also display how the female protagonist overcomes the traditional expectations of a woman. Thus, both Viola and her modern counterpart are faced with the same issue of gender stereotypes: that a woman's leadership is far less effective than the leadership of a man.

2.1 Gender Roles in Elizabethan History

During the time of Shakespeare, Elizabethan England was a patriarchal country that governed the lives of both men and women under strict, traditional principles. While women were unable to purchase land or live independently, men were given absolute authority over their property and family. According to Susan Amussen's article on Elizabethan England, she explains that "power resided primarily in the male head, who was expected both to represent his family to the outside world and to govern all those in it so that it was orderly and peaceful" (86). As a result, women were considered the weaker sex and were denied the pleasures of individualism.

In regard to the daily functions of Elizabethan life, having a certain occupation was essential for both men and women, regardless of social rank. A vast majority of England's population came from the middle to lower class and most people, especially women, were denied an education. In contrast, the nobility were an elite group of men and women who carried significant social titles and were given a well-rounded education. Despite social rank, every man was viewed in the highest regard as authority figures within their homes and were worthy of complete respect from their wives. On the other hand, "individual women [were] deemed unworthy of mention unless they were of high rank" (Horwood 3). The world of decision-making was solely reserved for the men, and the women were to be dependent on them in order to survive.

In his play, *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare demonstrates this divide of social rank when comparing the protagonist, Viola, and the Countess, Olivia. In order to secure a stable future, Viola disguises herself as a man since she understands that as a woman, her freedom of movement is severely limited. By avoiding her stereotypical obligation as a woman, she asks to be concealed "for such disguise as haply shall become / The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke..."(1.2.57-58). However, Shakespeare's female characters such as Viola demonstrate intelligence and play a crucial role in strengthening the plotline which is unheard of in most Elizabethan plays (Vijayalakshmi 67). Yet, on the other end of the spectrum, Olivia is a privileged woman who is portrayed as an immature character of noble birth. Due to her social rank, Olivia's actions throughout the play are hardly ever questioned by the minor characters. She ignores the immoral consequences of her decisions and lives according to her own principles. It is not until Viola enters the scene that Olivia understands that as a figure of the nobility, she should uphold herself

with more dignity and maturity. In Jenkins's article, "Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night,'" she describes Viola as the center of the plot that brings forth a new outlook on female potentiality. She explains that "it is [Viola's] role to draw Orsino and Olivia from their insubstantial passions and win them to reality" (30). Shakespeare describes Viola to be an unshaken individual who does not allow her emotions to compromise her responsibilities.

As the driving force between both members of the nobility, Viola oversteps her boundaries as a woman in the Elizabethan age and acts as the voice of reason for men and women alike. She is "very practical, resourceful and skillful" as a mediator between a lover's quarrel, as well as a woman who is posing as a man (Vijayalakshmi 67). In contradiction with the traditional views of gender roles, Viola breaks the barriers that were forced upon her by Elizabethan standards. In Carol Neely's article, "Shakespeare's Cressida: A Kind of Self," she explains that "Viola forgets that society has bound her sex by regulations regarding proper roles; therefore, she sets out on a quest, trans-gendered, removing all restraints, and becomes a liberated individual" (144). With the purpose of surviving in a male-dominated society, Viola conceals her gender but still demonstrates her noble, independent character as a woman. However, as her characteristics are only displayed behind a masked identity, this implies that within Elizabethan community, a woman's virtuous traits are hardly recognized. Thus, Viola's role as an independent individual exhibits Shakespeare's step away from Elizabethan expectations but it also reflects the struggle of a woman who must use a man's voice to be heard.

2.2 Gender Roles in Theater

In the Elizabethan theater, both male and female roles were strictly performed by an all-male cast. Shakespearean scholar, Phyllis Rackin, explains that “all the female characters on the professional stage in Shakespeare’s time were cross-dressed, because all the actors who played their parts were male” (114-115). The traditions of a male-dominated cast dated back to the Ancient Greeks where women were also under the authority of their father or husband. Their legal status was based on the premise of inferiority, and they were considered to be minors throughout their lives (Kemp 6). Likewise, in Elizabethan England, women were restricted from the stage as it was considered vulgar and indecent for a woman to perform; rather, women only played the part of the caretaker and their “stage” was their husband’s property. Elizabethan historian Babula explains that “English women were on their own stages all over England, just not on the public stage in London” (10). Thus, young men at a prepubescent age would typically portray the female characters in Shakespeare’s plays due to their small physique and ability to mimic a woman’s voice.

However, in light of Shakespeare’s critique of gender stereotypes, he interrogates the exclusionary nature of the constructed categories of sex and the representation of gender in *Twelfth Night*. Shakespeare integrates the ambiguous connection between male and female through the characterization of the main protagonist, Viola. Like several other plays of the period, Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* “...dramatizes the consequences of this ambiguity by casting its heroine Viola, played by a boy, as a character who cross-dresses as the male page Cesario” (Charles 123). In the doubly androgynous role of male actor playing a woman playing a man, Shakespeare not only compares the ambiguity behind

both male and female behavior, but also the similarities between the two genders (Charles 123). In doing this, Shakespeare deconstructs gender stereotypes and demonstrates the interchangeable qualities that both men and women possess.

Yet, according to Swander, several critics deem Shakespeare's cross-dressing protagonist to be insignificant in an already "poorly structured" play (114). In his article, Swander pulls an example from *NY Times*, Books Atkinson's critique, who states, "Not realizing that he was writing for the ages, [Shakespeare] took less pains with *Twelfth Night* than...he should have done. It is an improvised entertainment..." (115). Thus, both critics and spectators of *Twelfth Night* often overlook how the ambiguous protagonist defies traditional female stereotypes by disguising herself as a man.

2.3 Gender Roles in the 21st Century

Shakespeare's emphasis on gender roles and its negative connotations towards women are applicable to the 21st century dilemma on gender stereotypes. Whether in the workplace or within the household, the patriarchal mindset still comes into play concerning women in leadership in America. In Coleman's article, "Gender and Headship in the Twenty-First Century," she explains that, in the workplace, women in leadership would often feel isolated and would report experiences of discrimination and sexism. They would feel "at some time they have to justify their existence as women leaders" (2). Although gender equality is a greater reality in the 21st century, the patriarchal mentality continues to put men as the predominant, primary source of authority in many social systems. Women, consequently, are often deemed unqualified to hold a position of authority due to their soft nature. Coleman emphasizes this point by explaining that "the stereotype that women leaders tend to be soft and caring and that

men tend to be tough and dominant tends to act against women who aspire to be leaders as it may be assumed that they will not be as good at leadership as aspiring men” (3). However, if a woman were to act more assertive in a leadership position, it would be less effective than if it were a man since they are viewed as natural caregivers instead of leaders. The assumption that men are better leaders is built upon the overarching belief that a man’s contribution to the public lies within their natural ability to lead and make decisions, which is a belief that has dated back to the Elizabethan age.

Along with the fact that women are faced with issues of sexism and discrimination in the workplace, their roles in the household are also similar with the patriarchal practices of Shakespeare’s time. Modern American culture has “reinforced an unequal structure of parenting and assume that women alone should be asked to sacrifice career opportunities for parenting involvement” (Gerson 164). Even though not every traditional family practices gender stereotypes, it is similar to the Elizabethan family setting. In Hansson’s article, “Gender Role Attitudes,” he explains that “in the first half of the twentieth century, people shared a traditional understanding that men and women should fulfill distinct roles: the breadwinner’s role being a natural role for a man, whereas the caregiver’s role was considered the best option for a woman” (184-185). Although these roles are established to uphold the traditional family structure, women are deprived of career opportunities in a male-dominated culture.

Therefore, gender inequality in *Twelfth Night* is still as relevant as it was during Shakespeare’s time. According to Shakespearean authors, Findlay and Oakley-Brown, they say, “*Twelfth Night* makes it possible to believe that there is no such thing as a stable

normality where gender is concerned, either in Elizabethan times or in our own” (2). As gender inequality remains prominent in the 21st century, audience members become more receptive to Shakespeare’s focus on gender stereotypes in *Twelfth Night*. The issue of inequality in the Elizabethan era is relevant to the modern audience by applying their understanding of gender. Thus, *Twelfth Night* exhibits gender stereotypes as a controversial topic that has failed to be completely addressed in both the Elizabethan era and the 21st century.

2.4 Shakespeare’s Use of Characterization

Shakespeare’s use of characterization plays a vital role in the development of the storyline in *Twelfth Night*, primarily when focusing on the theme of deception. This is mainly seen through the “fool” of the play, Feste, and Viola. In Shakespeare’s most famous plays, deception is demonstrated through the “fool.” Although the other minor characters believe the “fool” to be the most unintelligent member of the group, his intellectual character proves otherwise. In *Twelfth Night*, Swander explains that the fool of the story, Feste, “provides for all the other characters what they would have wanted; affectionate fooling for Olivia, ancient romance for Orsino, nonsense for Sir Andrew, songs of love and drinking for Sir Toby, wit for Viola” (120). Through the fool’s character, he proves his skill in observing and understanding other characters.

Similarly, Shakespeare uses the theme of deception to apply it to his critique of gender roles in *Twelfth Night*. In Hatfalvi and Roy’s article, they state that “Shakespeare also seems to suggest that the theme of gender is something based on how you act, rather than something based on what you were born with...” (34). Although the theme of deception is mainly exhibited through Viola’s disguise as Cesario, it is further shown in

her character. Through Viola's characterization, Shakespeare creates a clear distinction between her and the Duke. Despite the Duke's shallow outlook on women, Viola answers truthfully about the faults in men's words. While disguised as Cesario, she tells him, "We men may say more, swear more: but indeed / Our shows are more than will; for still we prove / Much in our vows, but little in our love" (2.4.114-117). Through a "man-to man" conversation, Viola takes advantage of her disguise to influence the Duke as his servant and friend so that he may see the fault in his actions and gain a different perspective on women. In Maurice Hunt's article, "Love, Disguise, and knowledge in 'Twelfth Night'", she explains that through the main protagonist's words, "Viola...has within herself the power to marry Beauty and Truth" (493). Through her character, Viola uses her elegance as a woman and her understanding of moral truth to change the Duke's immature idea of a woman. She tells him that, "Too well what love women to men may owe / In faith, they are as true of heart as we" (2.4.103-104). In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare integrates the theme of deception by creating a storyline where the woman acts with wisdom and discernment which contradicts the shallow image of women in the Elizabethan era. In integrating the distinction in character between the two characters, Shakespeare demonstrates how gender roles are reversed in the play. With the man as the fool and the woman as the wise, he challenges the stereotypical norms of how gender is portrayed.

3. Methodology

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, he uses gender roles to combat the standard beliefs of gender stereotypes in the Elizabethan age. Thus, in writing a 21st century adaptation of Shakespeare's play, I desired to reveal the fallacy of gender stereotypes and emphasize the importance of gender equality. In the modern adaptation, it tells the story of a young woman named Vivian who hopes to open a tailoring business but struggles financially and works at a minimum-wage job. Yet, when her twin brother temporarily leaves his job to finish his last semester of college, Vivian decides to apply for her brother's position as an assistant to Owen, the CEO of a famous tech company, in hopes of contributing financially but to also save money for her future business. However, Owen acts as an immature human being who lacks respect for women. Moreover, he assigns Vivian with the task to win over his past lover, Olivia Wilson, while she is disguised as a man. Although Shakespeare's use of cross-dressing only serves as a disguise for Viola's true gender, Vivian takes a risk of entering into a gender controversy as she dresses as a man. Concerning the topic of cross-dressing and the LGBTQ+ community, many Americans in the 21st century have become more comfortable in embracing it with open arms. It is becoming a generally accepted statement that "nonheteronormative identities and relationships are equally legitimate" (Breux 74). Since America is far more progressive in that sense, ambiguous gender identity is well-received among a majority of American citizens. However, if anyone is to oppose or ridicule what is largely accepted in the 21st century, people will immediately call attention to the problem on social media platforms and reject the target person for their

opinions. This form of ostracism is better known as cancel culture which continues to be prevalent within social media. Thus, in my adaptation, the idea of cancel culture plays a role in Vivian's disguise in which she must avoid offending those who practice cross-dressing. It also reflects how modern-day America has become more progressive over the years and continues to develop its view on gender identity in a new perspective.

Furthermore, while she acts as his assistant and his personal wingman, she also finds herself struggling to navigate through her own romantic feelings for Owen, as well as her goals and financial situation. Through the use of character representation, this play is written to reflect the original script, as well as Shakespeare's methods to emphasize the issue of stereotypes in gender roles. Overall, this modern adaptation critiques gender stereotypes in the workplace and in daily life that are still in question today.

3.1 Characterization of Viola, Vivian, and Olivia

In the modern adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, I strove to design characters that draw attention to gender inequality in the 21st century, as well as Shakespeare's focus on gender stereotypes. At the beginning of the play, the main protagonist is thrust into a male-dominated workplace as her only way to obtain financial security and make her dream a reality; however, her strong-willed character creates a significant impact on Owen that changes his perspective on the capabilities of a woman. Shakespeare's characterization of Viola represents the modern woman who is "practical, resourceful and skillful... to overcome her struggles in a strange land" (Vijayalakshmi 67). In the modern adaptation, Vivian is portrayed as a determined young woman who goes beyond her comfort zone to help her and her brother financially while proving herself to be an able

and disciplined woman in the workplace. In one of her monologues, Vivian expresses her concern to the audience before meeting Owen. She says,

What am I doing? Am I making a huge mistake? I know I'm applying for this job so I can help make mortgage payments on the house but with this job, I can put some money aside for my business. This is my chance to fulfill the dream that my mom and I both longed for, but if I fail, what will happen then? No! I can't think that way. This may be my only opportunity to turn my life around, to show I can make a name for myself. (20)

As a woman, Vivian recognizes that this job gives her the ability to do her part financially and allow her to set aside money for her tailoring business.

In comparison, Shakespeare portrays Viola to be a headstrong woman who understands that her disguise is the only way she will survive. Additionally, it gives her the opportunity to go beyond what any Elizabethan woman could ever accomplish. In Crowder's article, he explains that "...it was important for Viola to assume a male role if she wanted to successfully break the barriers that Elizabethan society had forced upon her sex" (4). By recognizing that her gender will only limit her chance of surviving, she endeavors to conceal herself and take matters into her own hands. In the original script, Viola says, "Thou shall present me as a eunuch to him /It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing / And speak to him in many sorts of music / That will allow me very worth his service / What else may hap to time I will commit" (1.2.59-63). Both the modern adaptation and the original script depict Viola as a representation of a woman who is no longer restricted by gender stereotypes as she endeavors to prove herself in a man's world.

The secondary female character in the modern adaptation, Olivia, is a famed model in New York City who lacks maturity and self-awareness. Her inability to act with humbleness makes her appear as a spoiled woman who has never learned self-discipline. Yet, when Vivian enters the scene, she combats Olivia's behavior by bringing her down to reality. Similar to the original script, Olivia and Vivian are both strong, independent characters but the heroine is the only one who acts with wisdom and discretion. Much like Viola, Vivian is designed to be the driving force of the storyline, as well as the character development. However, unlike the original play, Olivia is given an opportunity of redemption at the end of the play when she and Owen finally meet. When talking about Vivian, she says,

I put myself up on a pedestal and no one could bring me back down. But, after being with Vivian, I realized how lonely I was. Even though I had no trouble finding a man and I was always surrounded by those who adored me, they only knew me on the surface. Vivian was the only one who could make me see that (131- 132).

When Vivian strongly opposes Olivia's behavior, she allows Olivia to better understand the fault of her actions. Though Olivia's confident composure bares similarity to other strong female Shakespearean characters, such as Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, Vivian proves to be a character with better quality. Thus, in comparing Olivia and Vivian, there is a clear distinction between Vivian as a wise character and Olivia as a self-absorbed character.

In the original script, the characterization of Viola plays a vital role in the life of the countess. As Olivia represents the image of lovesickness and lack of self-knowledge,

Shakespeare uses her character to further demonstrate how Viola differs from other female characters in the Elizabethan theater. In Williams' article on relationships within *Twelfth Night*, he explains that Viola must "teach Olivia all she needs to know about herself and her waste of time, though more than once Viola must remind her" (198). Thus, Olivia's character serves the same purpose in the modern adaptation. In the original script, Olivia is presented as a high-ranking woman who has a poor sense of character. Yet, as Viola acts as the mediator between Olivia and Orsino, Shakespeare illustrates a duality of character between the heroine and the countess. When Viola, disguised as a man, pays a visit to Olivia, Shakespeare paints a comical scene between the two female characters. While Viola composes herself in a mature and professional manner, Olivia finds herself falling in love, even after swearing off men for the rest of her life. She says, "Methinks I feel this youth's perfections / With an invisible and subtle stealth / To creep in at mine eyes / Well, let it be" (3.1.302-304). Although Olivia comes from the nobility, her naïve nature causes Viola to be greatly favored by the audience. Jenkins further points out in his article that "there is the risk of the ridiculous about a woman who mistakenly loves one of her own sex" (36). The foolishness of Olivia's behavior is demonstrated until the end of the play without much opportunity for redemption; however, in the modern adaptation, Viola acts as the catalyst for the shift in Olivia's character.

3.2 Characterization of Viola and Orsino / Vivian and Owen

The characterization of Viola is further exhibited through her interaction with the Duke Orsino. In the original play, Shakespeare forms an unlikely relationship between

Viola and Orsino to demonstrate the idea of false gender stereotypes. As a man of higher rank, Orsino is expected to uphold himself in a professional manner; yet, on the contrary, he is portrayed as a fool who allows his emotions to blind him. Crowder explains that “Orsino is the character who suffers from his disguise—the disguise that he creates concerning love” (6). His constant pursuit of Olivia is rooted in his infatuation with the idea of love instead of being in love. Yet, Viola acts as the voice of reason and continuously attempts to make him see the truth of his desires. She goes beyond her role as a eunuch and acts as a consultant to the Duke in hopes that he would come to his senses.

In a similar way, the modern adaptation portrays Owen as the CEO of a tech company who lacks maturity and humility. When Vivian enters the scene, she proves herself to be reliable enough to handle Owen’s personal affairs. Although she is only his assistant, she uses her position to give him advice over his infatuation with Olivia, despite her own feelings for Owen. In the modern script, I decided to create Vivian not only as a consultant but as a friend to Owen. Despite their differences, Vivian remains loyal to him as his employee but convicts him as his friend. Even though this connection is not made directly in the original script, I believe it further demonstrates how Vivian looks past the divide between genders and sees herself as Owen’s equal. Furthermore, Owen plays an important role in Vivian’s understanding of herself. In the modern adaptation, he explains to her, “We’re both workaholics. We believe that once we achieve what we want, we will have time for everything else. But in reality, it’s never enough. If we achieve one thing, we have to achieve something else. It’s an endless cycle” (68). By understanding the root of their desires, both characters realize how they share similar habits. Although

Shakespeare uses Olivia as the central topic of their conversation, I desired to have Vivian and Owen connect on a deeper level. In Jenkins's article, he states that through Viola, "Orsino and Olivia come to their happy ending when they have learnt a new attitude to others and to themselves (21). However, I wanted to exhibit how Vivian develops a greater understanding of who she is through Owen. By establishing a stronger relationship between the two characters, their outlook on each other is no longer dictated by gender stereotypes but through genuine characteristics.

4. Conclusion

In both the original script and the modern adaptation, this thesis calls attention to gender equality as a moral truth in *Twelfth Night*. During a time when life was governed by patriarchal tradition, Shakespeare creates a female character who possesses traits that could only be seen in a man. Though several scholars have addressed the significance of Viola's character, none have reviewed the main protagonist in regard to gender roles. In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare forms a dynamic change within the play with Orsino as the fool, and Viola as the heroine. Thus, by evaluating Shakespeare's representation of Viola, her sense of wisdom and comradery with the other characters act as an opposition against traditional gender stereotypes. As the driving force of the plotline, Viola brings about a new, developed image of a woman in the Elizabethan era.

Similarly, the protagonist of the modern adaptation, Vivian Davis, makes the audience aware of the gender stereotypes that are still in existence today. From Owen's misogynistic mindset to her struggle to climb the social ladder, Vivian demonstrates how gender equality is still not fully established in the 21st century. Yet, Vivian exhibits maturity with her characterization in similarity to Shakespeare's illustration of Viola. Through the portrayal of an independent woman, both characters create a major change within the other characters and draw attention to gender roles as an opportunity to alter them. Though centuries apart, Shakespeare's attention to gender roles are just as significant in the modern setting. As English playwright and colleague of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, states, "Shakespeare was not of an age, but for all time" (Wagner 180). Thus, this thesis demonstrates how Shakespeare's moral truths are timeless and still applicable to the 21st century.

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Twelfth Night (21st Century Version)

written by

Hannah Lewis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VIVIAN DAVIS

A woman in her 20s who lives with her twin brother, Samuel Davis, and works at a local diner.

OWEN BECKETT

A man in his late 20s, the CEO of a business magazine company who has a bad reputation among his employees.

OLIVIA WILSON

A woman in her 20s, famous model in New York City who acts like a diva.

SAMUEL DAVIS

A man in his 20s, a senior undergraduate who also works as an assistant to Owen Beckett.

ALEXIS

Vivian's closest friend and co-worker at the local diner.

TOBY

A man in his early 40s, Olivia's uncle and manager, often seen partying with Andrew.

ANDREW

A man in his early 30s, Toby's friend, has a crush on Olivia.

FELIX

A man in his 20s, works as the delivery boy for Olivia but spends most of his time with Toby and Andrew.

MARIA

A woman in her 30s, works as Olivia's assistant but is often seen with Toby, Andrew, and Felix.

MARVIN

A man in his 30s, works as Olivia's fashion consultant but intends to become her manager and boyfriend.

SETTING: NEW YORK CITY

ACT I

Scene I

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

It's late at night as Owen sits at his desk, talking on the phone.

OWEN BECKETT

I don't think you're
understanding me here. Sam will
be gone for four months. I need
you to get me a temporary
assistant until he comes back.

He pauses as he listens to the phone, getting more frustrated.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

Yes, I know this is short notice
but I am the CEO of this company.
I can't go four months without an
assistant. Now I'll give you two
weeks to find one for me. I have
a very busy schedule.

He sits up with a serious look.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

And to the best of your ability,
hire a male assistant.

He pauses again.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter if most of the
applicants are women! For this
job, only a man can give me
better results. You have two
weeks.

Owen hangs up the phone and writes at his desk.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. THE DINER - DAY

Vivian wears a skirt apron and goes from table to table, serving people. She walks up to a table where a couple sits and she hands them the receipt.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Here's your receipt. Have a great day.

Vivian goes to the right side of the stage as other waitresses chat together. She takes off her apron and puts her jacket on.

ALEXIS

You're clocking out already, Vivian?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yeah, Sam is leaving for the airport soon so I asked to get off early. I just hope I'm not too late.

ALEXIS

So, why'd he choose to study abroad in Ireland? Aren't there any other study abroad destinations that don't require you to travel to a foreign country?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(laughs)

Well, traveling to a foreign country is sort of the point of studying abroad. Besides, he loves to travel and he's never been to Ireland before. Since it's his last semester of college, he wants to make the most of it before he starts working full time.

ALEXIS

It's a shame you dropped out. You could be packing up for Ireland too if you stayed.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You know why I couldn't stay. The money wasn't there and I know that Sam would be crushed if he had to drop out. Besides, he has a lot of potential.

ALEXIS

And you don't?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Not at the moment.

ALEXIS

Chin up, Viv. You have a lot of potential. You just haven't had a chance to show it yet.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Thanks, Alexis. I'll see you tomorrow.

ALEXIS

Tell your brother goodbye for me!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Will do! See you later!

END SCENE

SCENE TWO

INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE

Vivian comes in and takes off her jacket while Sam carries a box into the living room. When he sees her, he sets down the box and gives her a hug.

SAMUEL DAVIS

What are you doing here? I thought you'd still be at work.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I wanted to see you off! I wasn't going to miss saying goodbye to my little brother.

Sam rolls his eyes and crosses his arms.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Oh c'mon. Just because I was born three minutes after you doesn't mean you're the oldest.

Vivian laughs and walks over to all of the boxes in the center of the stage.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You're packing all of this? Looks like you're bringing the entire house with you.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Well, it's not like I'll be able to come back in case I forget something. Also, your sewing materials take up most of the space anyway.

VIVIAN DAVIS

The living room is the best place to work!

*(walks over to an
ironing board and
holds up a dress)*

I finally finished this dress a couple days ago. What do you think?

SAMUEL DAVIS

It suits you. Mom taught you well.

VIVIAN DAVIS

She sure did. I hope I can turn this hobby into a profession. Wouldn't it be great if I opened up a tailor shop?

Vivian turns around to look at Samuel but he is distracted with his boxes.

SAMUEL DAVIS

(sighs tiredly)

I just hope Owen doesn't think less of me since I'm taking a four-month break.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Why would he think less of you?
He's not that up-tight, right?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Well, he's just a twenty-eight-year-old guy who basically started a tech company from the ground up. Even though he's successful now, there are only a few people he relies on, and I'm one of them.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh, yeah! He recently released this new social media app that got super popular, right?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Yeah, I have no doubt he'll be in competition with apps like Instagram or Twitter soon.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That is impressive!

SAMUEL DAVIS

The only thing is that he can get a little impatient and anxious sometimes. Not to mention he's still obsessed with his ex, Olivia.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Who?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Olivia Wilson. She was voted the most beautiful model in New York City. Very popular and currently single.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(slightly sarcastic)

I've never heard of her, but I'm sure that she and Owen will find their way back to each other. Anyway! You shouldn't think about your job while you're in Ireland. Enjoy your time there and don't worry about a thing.

SAMUEL DAVIS

I will enjoy myself, but I will worry about you. Are you sure you're going to be okay? I know you were talking about picking up a second job. I still don't want you to. I don't want you to overwork yourself.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I won't. I'll be just fine, I promise.

Samuel gives Vivian a hug.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Now start loading this stuff into car. I'll be right there to help.

Samuel picks up a box and exits stage left. Vivian turns to face the audience with a worried look on her face.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I'm happy for him. I truly am. After both our parents died, we were left to fend for ourselves, but Sam has worked so hard and earned so much. But I just can't bring myself to tell him that financially, I can't do my part. You see, we decided to share the responsibility of making mortgage payments on the house but I haven't been making enough money to contribute lately. It just seems like everything is falling into place for him. A great job, a great school, and now a great opportunity to travel. He's worked hard for it, and I don't want him to worry about anything else. I just need to find a better job.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)
*(Pauses and looks at
the audience)*

Do you want to know my dream? I want to start my own business like my mom wanted to do. After she died, I promised to myself that I'd fulfill that dream for the both of us. She was a tailor, but she always dreamed of starting her own clothing line. And now the baton is passed to me, but do I even have a chance?

SAMUEL DAVIS
(Off stage)
Vivian, need some help over here!

VIVIAN DAVIS
Coming!

Vivian grabs a box and runs off stage left.

END SCENE

SCENE THREE

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - DAY

Maria and Toby enter from stage right.

TOBY
What am I going to do with that niece of mine? I hear she keeps canceling the photoshoots I scheduled for her! It's a miracle I got her to agree to today's shoot!

MARIA
Cut her some slack. Maybe if you were around more, you'd know what's going on with her.

TOBY
If it's another break-up sob story, my sympathy ran out a long time ago.

MARIA

She has also complained about your late-night partying. She thinks it's indecent.

TOBY

Indecent! Now that she's the top model in New York, she has it in her mind that she can just tell me what I can or can't do? I built her career, for god's sakes!

MARIA

I do agree with her, though. Your partying is definitely getting out of hand, especially when you bring that friend of yours-the one you constantly want Olivia to date.

TOBY

Who? Andrew?

MARIA

Yes, him.

TOBY

Don't talk about him like that! Andrew is a great guy! He's musically gifted and not to mention, very rich. Now I wouldn't call him indecent.

MARIA

You're right. He's an idiot. At least that's what I've heard from outside sources.

TOBY

Now who would say such a thing?

MARIA

(sarcastically)

Everyone who has had the pleasure of meeting him.

Enter Andrew from stage left.

TOBY

Speak of the devil!

ANDREW

How've you been, Toby?

TOBY

Fantastic! Andrew, this is my niece's assistant, Maria.

ANDREW

Nice to meet you!

MARIA.

Same to you. Well, if you'll excuse me, I am going to see if Olivia has stopped crying. She can't afford to have puffy eyes in front of the paparazzi.

Maria exits.

ANDREW

Listen, Toby, I don't know why you keep inviting me over. Olivia is clearly not interested in me. Besides, I heard a rumor online that that Owen Beckett guy is hoping to win her back.

TOBY

Oh, trust me, she is not interested in that guy anymore. She told me herself that she has no interest dating someone who is richer, older, or smarter than her, so you still have a chance!

ANDREW

Well, alright.

Enter Felix, strolling in while whistling.

TOBY

Felix? Where've you been? I haven't seen you in a week.

FELIX

I took a vacation. Being Olivia's delivery boy can sure take a toll on you. I feel like I work for GrubHub or something.

TOBY

Oh yeah? Imagine being her uncle.

Maria enters, furious.

MARIA

There you are! Where on earth have you been? I've been having to pick up Olivia's food for a week now!

TOBY

Apparently, he took a vacation.

MARIA

What?! She's going to fire you for being gone so long! And don't think for a second that I'll make up excuses for you!

FELIX

You don't have to. If I'm fired, there will always be another job.

MARIA

Yeah, have fun working at Mcdonalds.

FELIX

Clever, very clever. At this rate, you might become even funnier than Mr. Toby himself.

MARIA

Shut up, you troublemaker. Olivia is on her way here right now so you better think of a good excuse for being gone for so long.

Enter Olivia, followed closely by Marvin.

MARVIN

I'm telling you, Olivia, you really should call security the next time he shows up.

OLIVIA WILSON

He's just the messenger. Besides, I think even he knows that it's a hopeless case at this point.

MARIA

Oh, did he come to visit again? This is the third time this month!

MARVIN

And this time, it's an even bigger bouquet of flowers.

TOBY

Goodness, he just won't quit, will he?

ANDREW

Who are we talking about?

TOBY

Owen Beckett, of course. He keeps sending his messengers to deliver flowers, jewelry and whatever he thinks will make Olivia fall in love with him again.

MARIA

He just never knows when to stop! You only dated him for a year, right?

FELIX

Well, I think you're stupid for refusing a guy like him.

Andrew, Toby, Maria, and Marvin gasp in unison, shocked by his words.

OLIVIA WILSON

Stupid, huh? Why am I stupid for rejecting him?

FELIX

Well, he's basically a millionaire after that social media app got super popular. He's handsome, tall and I don't know about smarts but who needs that when you're loaded? You just refuse him because of your pride.

ANDREW

Or maybe it's because she doesn't love him anymore.

FELIX

Who needs love? I thought celebrities only care about more publicity anyway.

MARVIN

Oh shut up already! Olivia is still in mourning over her breakup and you're just making her feel worse! And why should she listen to you? You're just an idiot.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well he's right in a way.

MARVIN

I am honestly surprised that you enjoy being around this troublemaker. All he wants is attention and when he doesn't get it, he decides to run off and take a vacation without telling anyone.

OLIVIA WILSON

Marvin, you really shouldn't get so upset over what Felix says. If he's that much of an idiot, then ignore him.

FELIX

Oh, you speak so highly of idiots like me, Ms. Wilson!

OLIVIA WILSON

Please shut up.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Owen sits at his desk when one of the employees enter stage left.

OWEN BECKETT

So? Did you hear from her this time?

EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry, sir, but they wouldn't let me in.

OWEN BECKETT

Again? Did she even accept the flowers I had you deliver?

EMPLOYEE

Oh she did-

OWEN BECKETT

Oh good, well that's something.

EMPLOYEE

...until she proceeded to stomp on every single rose. This was the only survivor.

The employee holds up a single, bent rose. Owen sighs and leans back in his chair.

OWEN BECKETT

I don't get it. I just don't get it. I've done everything I could to win her over but she won't budge!

EMPLOYEE

If I may ask, sir, why are you trying to gain Ms. Wilson's affections?

OWEN BECKETT

Don't you see? I'm the founder of a super successful social media platform and now that she's the most famous model in all of New York, just imagine the publicity! We would be America's power couple!

EMPLOYEE

(clearly disturbed)

I see...

OWEN BECKETT

Well I'm not giving up just yet. Trust me! There will come a day when she will realize how much she needs me. Then all her love will belong to me, and me alone.

END SCENE

SCENE FOUR

INT. THE DINER

Vivian and Alexis wipe down tables at the diner.

ALEXIS

(Sits down)

I really don't get paid enough for the amount of work I deal with every single day. Plus, I still have that side job too! I'm swamped.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Your makeup business? How's that going by the way?

ALEXIS

It's going well, actually! It's prom season so I've been receiving appointments left and right.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I envy you. It's hard to start up a business on your own.

ALEXIS

It sure is. Hopefully, I'll be able to ditch this job once I start making a profit.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I wish I could do that. This was only supposed to be a side job.

ALEXIS

You didn't get the job you applied for? What was it? A secretary position?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yeah, they said I wasn't qualified enough. You'd think I'd be able to find a decent job that pays well in New York City of all places.

ALEXIS

Well I wouldn't give up yet. There are plenty of jobs out there that are perfect for you. Besides, soon enough, you'll be running your own business.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I sure hope so.
(takes out her phone)
Let's see if there are any job openings today.

ALEXIS

Honestly, you don't have to check LinkedIn every chance you get. It's not like anything will open up in the next five minutes.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You never know! Even though these jobs may not pay much, I'm hoping for something different. Can't start a business without the money.

Vivian sits at the table next to Alexis and looks at her phone.

ALEXIS

I still think it's ridiculous that no one reached out to help you guys after your parents died. It's also ridiculous that Sam was able to get a high-end job while you're over here, working at a diner for minimum wage. It's just unfair!

VIVIAN DAVIS

That's life, Alexis. The only thing you can do is roll with the punches.

ALEXIS

Well it shouldn't be like that,
especially for someone like you.
Life has treated you poorly, Viv.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(gasps excitedly)

Hold on, there's a job opening!

ALEXIS

What is it?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Assistant to Mr. Owen Beckett! He
must be looking for a temporary
replacement while Sam is gone!

ALEXIS

*(takes phone and
laughs)*

Yeah but those type of jobs are
impossible to get! I bet you'll
have to go through a dozen
interviews to get hired.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Would that be so bad?

ALEXIS

Viv, c'mon! Have you heard of
this guy? I've heard horror
stories about him.
Apparently, he's super moody
and not to mention, super
traditional.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Traditional? In what way?

ALEXIS

Traditional as in, no woman can
do a better job than a man. That
patriarchy-type stuff. I bet
it's something his father
planted in him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

His father?

ALEXIS

Yeah, he was the owner of this really popular magazine company but he was absolutely horrible to women. The only position available for women was the secretary job, and it did not pay well at all. Basically, I heard he was ten times worse than his son.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well someone should prove this man wrong, huh? Besides, I'm sure this job pays great! It'll help me kick-start my business in no time!

ALEXIS

I think this is a very bad idea.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Alexis, you are right to say that life has treated me unfairly but maybe this is my opportunity to change that. Maybe this is my chance to prove myself.

ALEXIS

Be reasonable! How are you going to work with someone like that? You'll be miserable for four months! I'm sure Sam wouldn't like it if you took that job. He told you that you work too much.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Which is why I have you to make sure he never finds out.

ALEXIS

No way, you're insane! Even if you do get the job, you may not be able to handle it for that long!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Hey, at least my foot is in the door! Once you hit rock bottom, the only way to go is up.

END SCENE

SCENE FIVE

INT. OUTSIDE OWEN'S OFFICE

Vivian sits with Alexis in the waiting room. The stage is split in half. Half waiting room, half Owen's office. The secretary sits to the side in the waiting room and types while Owen is in his office, handling paperwork.

ALEXIS

(in a quiet voice)

Vivian, this is a bad idea.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I know, but it is a risk I'm willing to take.

ALEXIS

Out of all the jobs you could've picked, you chose the one with the openly misogynistic boss. I hope you don't waste your time trying to "change" him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I've already made up my mind, Alexis. The only thing I ask you to do is to support me.

ALEXIS

(sighs and shakes her head)

And what if you fail? If you mess up, he'll think Sam set this up and get him fired.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(hesitates for a moment, then raises her chin)

I'll make sure that doesn't happen. Samuel was never a part of this plan anyway.

ALEXIS

*(takes Vivian's hand
with a smile)*

Well whatever happens, I'm here
for you.

*In Owen's office, he peeks out the window and looks at
Vivian. An assistant stands there, looking nervous.*

OWEN BECKETT

So you're telling me that out of
all the applicants, she is the
most qualified?

EMPLOYEE

(nervously)

Well, yes. Her resume was very
impressive, sir. She's had a lot
of work experience even though
they were smaller jobs. Her
references all had great things
to say about her. Plus, there
were only a few male applicants
and none of them quite fit the
criteria.

OWEN BECKETT

Being a man was the main
criteria! Didn't I explain why I
need a male assistant?

EMPLOYEE

Yes, but I'm sure you would
rather an assistant that fit the
most important criteria such as
good work-ethic, and-

OWEN BECKETT

(upset)

Oh, just bring her in already!

The assistant exits the office quickly.

EMPLOYEE

(to Vivian)

Ms. Davis, Mr. Beckett will see
you now.

*Vivian nods and stands up but looks at the audience as one
spotlight shines on her. She walks to the middle of the
stage while Alexis, the Secretary, and Owen are frozen.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

(looks panicked)

Oh my gosh, what am I doing? Am I making a huge mistake? I know I'm applying for this job so that I can help pay the mortgage on the house but with this job, I can put some of the money into my business. This is my chance to fulfill the dream that my mom and I both longed for, but if I fail, what will happen then?

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

*(forcefully, with
determination)*

No! I can't think that way. This may be my only opportunity to turn my life around, to show I can make a name for myself. Sam won't mind.

Vivian takes a deep breath, then knocks on the door.

OWEN BECKETT

Come in.

Vivian opens the door and Owen remains seated at his desk.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

(in irritation)

You must be Vivian Davis. Take a seat.

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(clears throat
nervously and sits
down)*

Yes, sir. Thank you for granting me an interview with you.

OWEN BECKETT

Well with my busy schedule, I'm hoping to hire a new assistant as soon as possible. So, should we get started?

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

So, as you know, this is a position that will last for the duration of four months until my main assistant returns. He's gone on some study abroad program in Ireland or Scotland or whatever.

(with frustration)

During the busiest time of the year too! I'm the CEO of this company and my only assistant decides to pack up and leave! So, as you can see, I'm in quite a rush to find a new assistant.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(clearly annoyed)

I see...well here is my resume. Even though I haven't had much working experience, I have a good work ethic and great collaboration skills!

Owen flips through the resume uninterested, then puts it aside.

OWEN BECKETT

That's great but you see, Vivian, there is a lot more to this job than just collaboration skills and the usual job requirements. What I am looking for is delivery.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Delivery, sir?

OWEN BECKETT

No matter what task I give you, I expect you to deliver it without complaints or questions. This is absolutely essential if you want to keep this job.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(hesitant)

I see.

OWEN BECKETT

I say this because some of the tasks that I will require from you might be unusual but you must understand that it is important to me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(slightly disturbed)

I understand...sir.

OWEN BECKETT

Perfect.

He pauses and looks at her carefully.

For some reason, you look very similar to my other assistant. You even have the same last name. Do you know him or-

VIVIAN DAVIS

(panicked)

No, definitely not!

OWEN BECKETT

*(checks his phone
with concern,
mumbling)*

My meeting starts in five minutes. I guess I don't have much of a choice.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Did you say something?

OWEN BECKETT

Alright, look, I'd prefer not to rush this type of decision but due to the time crunch, it looks like you're hired.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(stands up excitedly)

Thank you, sir! I won't let you down.

OWEN BECKETT

(bluntly)

We'll see about that. Now come to my office at 6am sharp tomorrow morning, and if you want to keep your job, don't be late.

Vivian reaches for the door but then pauses.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Before I go, I do actually have one question.

OWEN BECKETT

Yes?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Once my four months are over, it would mean a lot if I could reference you when I apply for other jobs. I believe it would help me significantly.

OWEN BECKETT

(annoyed)

That all depends on your performance. Now if you're done asking me any more favors, I'd like to get back to work.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh...right. Well, I won't take up anymore of your time. Thank you again.

Vivian exits the room and looks at the crowd.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

This is going to be interesting.

END SCENE

SCENE SIX

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Owen is making a phone call while Vivian walks in, carrying papers and coffee. She sets things down on his desk as he hangs up.

OWEN BECKETT

(in irritation)

Great. Just great.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What's the matter?

OWEN BECKETT

It's none of your concern.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes, but I am your assistant. I could be of some help.

OWEN BECKETT

This is a business-related issue.

(mumbles)

Someone like you could never understand.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(chuckles)

Well I hope I do. If I plan on owning my own business one day, I should be aware of any business-related issues.

OWEN BECKETT

Hold on, are you serious? You want to own a business? Like what I do?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well it will certainly take me awhile to reach your caliber of success but yes! And I'm starting from the ground up!

OWEN BECKETT

By working here.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes!

Owen laughs and shakes his head.

OWEN BECKETT

That sounds rather far-fetched to me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well if you can do it, then I can too. All dreams are far-fetched but that doesn't mean they're not possible.

OWEN BECKETT

But don't you understand? You and I are not on equal ground here. Face the facts, Vivian. When have you ever seen a woman as successful as me?

Before Vivian can answer, the phone rings and Owen picks it up. Vivian, in disbelief, looks at the audience. Everyone freezes.

VIVIAN DAVIS

"Not on equal ground"? I guess Alexis was right when she told me about him. He seems quite the difficult character.

(Pauses)

But I suppose I shouldn't judge too harshly. If what Alexis said was true, Owen's opinions are solely based on his father's influence. If he doesn't change now, he'll always be known as a bitter man like his father. This may be my opportunity to soften that stubborn heart of his before another woman is in my position.

FADES OUT

FADES IN

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Employee and Vivian enter stage right.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(yawns)

I'm exhausted! I feel like I've done 15 hours of work today. I'm glad I finally get to clock out.

EMPLOYEE

You know, you should consider yourself lucky. It's only been three days and Owen hasn't fired you yet. If you keep it up, I bet you'll go far.

VIVIAN DAVIS

The fact that you told me that I should be lucky makes me wonder if he's got some major mood swings around his employees. Does he?

EMPLOYEE

No, not at all. He's just...passionate.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, what does that mean?

OWEN BECKETT

(peaks out of his office)

Vivian, please meet me in my office.

Vivian glances at the employee nervously, then walks over to his office. Owen looks around cautiously and closes the door.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

Vivian, I need a word with you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What can I do for you?

OWEN BECKETT

Well, I don't have time to explain the details but I'm in love with this girl. I've done everything I can to win her affection but she continues to turn me down. It's shameful for me to say but I'm running out of ideas.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I understand, but I'm not sure I'd be much help. Perhaps we can discuss this more tomorrow. I'm really tired.

OWEN BECKETT

But you could help! Maybe a new, refreshing, young face like yours will persuade her to like me again.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(confused)

That's a decent idea, I suppose. But how would I charm her? Sounds more like a man's job to me.

OWEN BECKETT

Exactly. That's why I want you to disguise yourself as a man.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What?! I can't do that!

OWEN BECKETT

Why not? I think it's a great idea.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But think about what that'll look like from the outside! People will either think I'm experimenting with my sexuality or I'm making fun of cross-dressers entirely!

OWEN BECKETT

Don't be dramatic, the public will never find out anyway.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You don't know that for sure! We could get canceled for this, Owen. You could lose your business and I'll definitely have no chance of starting mine!

OWEN BECKETT

(slyly)

Then I guess I'll have to find someone else to be my assistant.

Vivian sighs tiredly, as if she has given up.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Why would I even disguise myself as a guy in the first place?

OWEN BECKETT

Well, I suppose you deserve some kind of explanation.

(pauses)

I used to send some female employees to Olivia's house to deliver the gifts but that just made her mood even worse. Ever since I could remember, she never liked to be around a girl that might be prettier than her.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But isn't there a risk that she might fall for a male assistant instead?

OWEN BECKETT

(laughs)

You're joking, right? First of all, I would never hire a male assistant who is more handsome than me, and second of all, she obviously still likes me, even though she's very good at hiding it. Anyway, I did tell you that some of your tasks may seem unusual when you applied for this job.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(annoyed)

Yes, I remember. But this seems way too risky! I could never pass for a guy.

OWEN BECKETT

I'll hire a professional makeup artist and turn you into a boy. Easy.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That doesn't change the fact that I speak like a girl and act like one too. Is there any other way we can approach this besides cross-dressing?

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian, don't you see? You know what women like! So you are bound to grab her attention. I think this plan can work.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But Owen, if she keeps turning you down, then maybe you should-

OWEN BECKETT

It'll be simple! Just go to her house and don't leave until they let you in! None of my other employees have been able to get through her doors but I'm sure you'll succeed. Your job is on the line after all.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

I'll do my best. Who is this girl, anyway?

OWEN BECKETT

Her name is Olivia Wilson. I'll send you with a bouquet of roses too, just in case.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Flowers? I thought you told me she would stomp on your flowers and send them back to you. Perhaps you should try a different approach.

OWEN BECKETT

A speech then! Girls love long, sappy love speeches, right? Right then, have the speech finished tomorrow morning and send it to me for approval.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, I have to write the speech? Wouldn't it be more appropriate if you were the one to write it?

OWEN BECKETT

Of course not! It doesn't matter if the words are genuine or not. What matters is if she falls for it. Now stop complaining and go do it!

VIVIAN DAVIS

(looking irritated)

I'll have the speech done by tomorrow morning.

END SCENE

SCENE SEVEN

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOME

Olivia sits on her couch, reading a fashion magazine. Maria enters stage right.

MARIA

Olivia, there's a young guy at the door who wants to talk to you.

OLIVIA WILSON

(looks suspicious)

Is he another one of Owen's minions? If so, just send him away.

MARIA

I'm not sure if he is. Your uncle is talking to him right now. Also, he's pretty good-looking.

FELIX

(laughs)

You must think very low of Olivia if you think she'd let in a stranger just because he's handsome.

MARIA

Why are you still here? I thought you were fired!

OLIVIA WILSON

Oh knock it off, you two. Maria, go talk to the visitor and find out if he works for Owen. If he does, just tell him I'm sick or something. Just get rid of him.

Maria exits stage right.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)

(to Felix)

She does have a point though. What is your purpose here?

FELIX

(dramatically)

Why, I serve as the epitome of everyone's jokes, the fool among royals, the thorn among roses. Basically, I serve as your entertainer, Your Majesty.

Toby begins to sing loudly off stage.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well I think you might have some competition there.

Toby walks in stage left, still singing.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)

As much as I'd love to hear the
next verse, tell me who's at the
door, uncle.

TOBY

A man.

OLIVIA WILSON

What man? Who is he?

TOBY

How am I supposed to know?
(burps loudly)
I knew I should've laid off on
the cheese fondue. How's it
going, Felix?

FELIX

Fantastic. You brighten up the
room, Toby.

Toby trips over himself and flask drops out of his pocket.

OLIVIA WILSON

C'mon uncle, how can you be
drinking so early in the day?
You'll be brain-dead by lunch.

TOBY

(looks offended)
Brain-dead?! I don't understand
why you're so mean to me. I told
you, someone's at the door!

OLIVIA WILSON

Yes, but who? Who is he?

TOBY

Let him be whoever he wants. Why
should I care who he is?

Toby starts to sing again as he exits stage right.

OLIVIA WILSON

Felix, go look after him. I'm
sure he'll listen to someone of
his own kind.

FELIX

Or it'll just encourage his
behavior. But! Your wish is my
command.

*Felix exits stage right. Olivia begins to read her magazine
again. Marvin enters stage right.*

MARVIN

(irritated)

Olivia, that young man is still
insistent on speaking with you. I
told him you were sick, asleep,
on the verge of death, but he
keeps saying that that is the
reason for his visit! What should
I say to him? He literally has an
answer for everything!

OLIVIA WILSON

Just tell him he's not going to
speak with me. That's it!

MARVIN

I already told him that! He says
he'll stand there all day if he
has to.

OLIVIA WILSON

What kind of guy is he?

MARVIN

Just an average guy.

OLIVIA WILSON

No, what's he like? Is he nice?

MARVIN

The opposite! He's very rude. He
says he will speak to you,
whether you want him to or not.

OLIVIA WILSON

*(acts slightly
interested)*

What does he look like? I heard
he's young.

MARVIN

Well he's definitely not qualified to be called a man. He looks like he just came out of his teenage years. I will say that he is decent looking but he's certainly not a man.

OLIVIA WILSON

Bring him in. I'm very curious about this guy.

Marvin exits and Maria enters.

MARIA

Olivia, he is one of Owen's assistants. You're actually letting him in? Owen will think you have a change of heart.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well he'd be mistaken. Everyone has something to say about this stranger so I'd like to see him for myself. Let's see what Owen has sent this poor assistant to deliver.

Vivian dressed as a man enters stage right.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Are you Ms. Olivia Wilson?

OLIVIA WILSON

Who are you? What do you want?

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(fumbling to pull her
speech out of her
pocket)*

My name is Charlie Davis. I have come to deliver a speech from Mr. Beckett. Are you Ms. Wilson?

OLIVIA WILSON

She's not interested.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Are you sure? It's a very well-written speech and it'd be a shame if Ms. Wilson never got to hear it. Are you her?

OLIVIA WILSON

Where are you from?

VIVIAN DAVIS

It is not part of my message to tell you personal information about me. Are you Ms. Olivia Wilson?

OLIVIA WILSON

Are you some kind of actor?

VIVIAN DAVIS

The fact that you have repeatedly ignored my question makes me assume that you are, in fact, Ms. Wilson. So, if you don't mind, I'll go on with my speech about how great you are and I'll get to the point.

OLIVIA WILSON

Just get to the point now. I don't need to hear your compliments.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well that's a shame. I spent such a long time writing it.

Vivian realizes what she said and covers her mouth in surprise.

OLIVIA WILSON

Wait, you wrote it?

(angered)

Unbelievable! That idiot Beckett couldn't even write the speech himself! Keep it to yourself then. I don't have time to deal with this stupid conversation.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(looks around)

By the looks of it, it seems like you have all the time in the world.

OLIVIA WILSON

My assistant will take you to the door.

VIVIAN DAVIS

With all due respect, I'm not leaving until I deliver this speech.

Maria leans in to Olivia.

MARIA

Should I call security?

VIVIAN DAVIS

No need, Maria. Why don't you check on Uncle Toby? Based on his composure when I met him, I don't think I'd leave him unattended for much longer.

There is a crash in the distance and Maria looks worried and runs off stage right.

OLIVIA WILSON

Fine, just tell me what you want.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I have a message to deliver.

OLIVIA WILSON

If this is just another attempt to win my affections again, you can tell Owen that it's a lost cause.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You're not the least bit curious as to what the message is?

OLIVIA WILSON

Not at all.

Vivian nods, puts her speech away, and sits by Olivia.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You know, I see what you're really like. You're prideful, but perhaps that is because of your beauty. The most gorgeous people can be as prideful as the devil sometimes. I can tell that Owen wants you back and maybe if you let your pride down, you might want that too.

OLIVIA WILSON

How can you tell that he wants me back?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well, the fact that he delivers presents to you is one sign. He also tells me about you every day.

OLIVIA WILSON

(laughs mockingly)

I don't believe that for one second! He just has to accept that fact that I've moved on! He's got some nerve if he thinks he can just crawl back to me after what he did. Sure, he may be smart and attractive but I know who he truly is. He's a jerk and he should've given up on winning me back a long time ago.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(confused)

What did he do?

OLIVIA WILSON

You mean Owen didn't even bother to tell you?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Perhaps he doesn't want me to know.

OLIVIA WILSON

Sounds just like Owen. His ego is too big for him to admit that he lost the best girlfriend ever. And over what? A stupid opportunity to start a company and get rich.

VIVIAN DAVIS

He broke up with you for his business?

OLIVIA WILSON

Of course! At that time, I was just starting out as a model but because he didn't want to be seen with an amateur model, he left me behind.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(shocked)

I had no idea. How could someone be so cold?

OLIVIA WILSON

He wasn't always like that. He was warm and kind when we first started dating. He supported my dreams and stayed by my side, even though I didn't make it easy for him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I see.

OLIVIA WILSON

(upset)

Ugh, talking about Owen always puts me in a bad mood. Just do your job and leave. Tell Owen I never want to hear from him again.

Olivia turns away but Vivian reaches out and takes her hand.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You don't have to hide your feelings from me, Olivia. You shouldn't ignore your heart if it's broken.

OLIVIA WILSON

(surprised)

What are you talking about?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I won't read Owen's letter. It matters more to me that you are able to find peace.

OLIVIA WILSON

I...appreciate that.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But, if I may, try not to be bitter towards Owen. Perhaps he is beginning to understand the mistake he made and he wants to fix it. I believe Owen sees something in you that is far more valuable than what any other woman has to offer.

OLIVIA WILSON

(chuckles)

Even when comforting me, you're still doing your job. Alright, Charlie. I'll think about what you said.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Good. Well, I won't take up anymore of your time. Thank you for allowing me to meet with you.

Vivian stands up to leave but Olivia grabs her hand.

OLIVIA WILSON

Will I see you tomorrow?

VIVIAN DAVIS

If you'd like to see me, then yes.

OLIVIA WILSON

I'll see you tomorrow then.

Vivian exits stage right.

END SCENE

SCENE EIGHT

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian enters stage right and knocks on Owen's door.

OWEN BECKETT
(*annoyingly*)
What is it?

VIVIAN DAVIS
I'm back.

OWEN BECKETT
(*Distracted, rummages
through papers*)
So? How did it go?

VIVIAN DAVIS
She wants to see me tomorrow.

Owen looks up in surprise.

OWEN BECKETT
(*excited*)
Are you serious? You mean my plan
actually worked?

VIVIAN DAVIS
Yeah, I suppose so. But, Owen, I
did want to talk to you about-

OWEN BECKETT
(*gets up from his
desk*)
This is great! I mean, obviously
I had my doubts about your
performance but my plan was so
foolproof, it'd be impossible for
anyone to mess it up.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Owen, I'm just concerned that
Olivia isn't ready to get back
with-

OWEN BECKETT
Vivian, it is very difficult to
think over your incessant
talking! What do you want to say?

VIVIAN DAVIS
I don't think she's ready!

OWEN BECKETT
What are you talking about?

VIVIAN DAVIS

She doesn't sound like she's
ready to return your affections.
Perhaps it would be best to give
her some time.

OWEN BECKETT

What more time could she need?
You women always make things more
complicated. Just do your job,
Vivian. Don't butt in on things
you don't understand.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(tiredly)

Okay then.

END SCENE

SCENE NINE

EXT. IN THE CITY - DAY

Vivian, dressed as Charlie, enters stage left with Olivia.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You really didn't have to take me
out, Ms. Wilson.

OLIVIA WILSON

Oh, just call me Olivia.

*(She links arms with
Vivian)*

Let's go to a cute cafe. I
finally have some free time so I
want to make the most of it.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Don't you need a bodyguard or
some kind of security team when
going out?

OLIVIA WILSON

Usually, so it's a good thing I
have you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(laughs nervously)

I'm not sure I could offer that sort of protection.

OLIVIA WILSON

I'm sure you could. You're more of a man than anyone else I know.

VIVIAN DAVIS

...thanks.

Olivia and Vivian arrive at Vivian's diner.

OLIVIA WILSON

This is cute! Let's go here!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, what?!

Olivia drags Vivian by the arm into the diner.

OLIVIA WILSON

(loudly)

Table for two, please!

WAITRESS

Right this way, ma'am.

*(Directs them to
their table)*

Your server will be with you shortly.

OLIVIA WILSON

It feels nice to be among the common folk sometimes. You get tired of all the paparazzi and the over-priced food after a while.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes, I'm sure that's...difficult.

ALEXIS

Hello, my name is Alexis and I'll be your server today! What can I get you started with?

OLIVIA WILSON

We'll both have a latte. Thanks!

VIVIAN DAVIS
(*watches Alexis leave*)
I suppose she doesn't recognize
me.

OLIVIA WILSON
What did you say?

VIVIAN DAVIS
(*quickly*)
Nothing! I was just mumbling to
myself.

OLIVIA WILSON
(*with a smile*)
You seem like quite the
daydreamer. Does Owen ever get
upset with you about it?

VIVIAN DAVIS
Actually, no. He's far too busy
to pay attention, I suppose.

OLIVIA WILSON
More like he's too stuck in his
own head to pay attention to
others.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Or it's because he can't stop
thinking about you.

*Alexis gives them their drinks and continues to help other
customers.*

OLIVIA WILSON
(*laughs*)
Well I suppose I can't blame him.
But enough about Owen. I want to
know more about you.

VIVIAN DAVIS
M-Me? There's really nothing
worth mentioning.

OLIVIA WILSON
Oh, that's not true! Tell me
about yourself! Where are you
from? What's your plans for the
future?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

Well, I'm from here in the area
but I may move if I need to.

OLIVIA WILSON

Why would you need to?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I'd like to start my own
business. My mother was a tailor
and we always talked about
starting our own business. I just
don't know if I'll be able to
start one here in the big city.
Perhaps I can start somewhere
local.

OLIVIA WILSON

I don't think you need to move.
You seem to have a good head on
your shoulders so I'm sure you'll
have no problems. But with me?
The only reason I became as
successful as I am now was
because my uncle handled all of
the business affairs. All I had
to do was pose and smile.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(sadly)

I see...

OLIVIA WILSON

(eagerly)

But anyway! Do you have a
girlfriend?

VIVIAN DAVIS

A what?

OLIVIA WILSON

A girlfriend! With that handsome
face of yours, I'm sure you get a
lot of attention.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Not really. I'm not interested in
dating at the moment.

OLIVIA WILSON

*(slightly
disappointed)*

Oh, I see. Any particular reason why?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I guess I've been too distracted with work. I don't have time for it.

OLIVIA WILSON

But...if you did have the time, you would consider it?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(laughs)

Sure, if that day ever comes.

OLIVIA WILSON

Don't let Owen overwork you so much. You need time for love too, you know.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Um, sure.

Olivia gets a phone call and answers it.

OLIVIA WILSON

Hello? Maria, I told you I'd be out today! Why didn't you clear my schedule?

(pauses)

I don't care how important the interview is! You can't just interrupt my date like this!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Date?

OLIVIA WILSON

*(holds a finger to
Vivian to silence
her)*

Alright fine! I'll be there in a few minutes. Have someone pick me up at the diner.

Olivia hangs up.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Charlie but I have to go. My stupid assistant booked an interview with another fashion magazine and apparently I can't miss it.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh that's alright. Duty calls.

OLIVIA WILSON

(takes Vivian's hand)

But I do hope that I'll see you again soon. I really enjoy spending time with you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

Thanks, I feel the same way...I guess.

OLIVIA WILSON

(cheerfully)

Call me!

Olivia gets up and leaves. Vivian groans and rests her head on the table.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I didn't even have a chance to talk to her about Owen. If I don't give him some results soon, I'll surely be fired and there goes my chance of starting my business.

Alexis walks over and picks up the mugs.

ALEXIS

Are you done with these, sir?

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(looks up at her
tiredly)*

Alexis, it's me.

ALEXIS

(confused)

Sorry? I don't think we've ever met.

Vivian gestures for her to sit. Alexis takes a seat across from her.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I can't take my wig off in public
but it's me, Vivian.

ALEXIS

(shocked)

Oh my gosh! What the heck are you
wearing? Who did this to you?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Who do you think?

ALEXIS

Owen? But why? It doesn't make
sense. Is he that sexist that he
can't even stand the sight of
women so he makes you dress up
like this?!

VIVIAN DAVIS

(shakes her head)

No, it's not that. He wants me to
win over Olivia for him.

ALEXIS

So you're cross-dressing?!
Vivian, that's crazy! What was
Owen thinking? The media will
tear him up if they found out
he's making his assistant cross-
dress. Do you know how many
people will be offended by that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes, keep your voice down! I'm
sure if people really found out
about Owen, he'd get canceled for
sure. But I want to keep my job
so I'm trying to keep everything
on the down-low.

ALEXIS

So you're okay with dressing up
as a man? How is that going to
work?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well, so far it hasn't, but my foot is in the door so that's something. She's been wanting to meet with me pretty frequently. I just haven't made much progress in convincing her to give Owen a second chance.

ALEXIS

I think you have a bigger issue to deal with.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What do you mean?

ALEXIS

Viv, I saw the way Olivia was looking at you. She's obviously interested in you! I don't know what you did but she is head over heels.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(shocked)

What? No! I just met her yesterday! Besides, I didn't do or say anything that would make her think I was remotely interested in her!

ALEXIS

Even if that's true, she's certainly interested in you. It's pretty obvious.

Vivian groans and lays her head on the table again.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

(chuckles)

Well you certainly got yourself in a mess real quick.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yeah, and I don't know what to do. I'm supposed to win Olivia over for Owen! Not for me!

ALEXIS

Okay first of all, breathe. You knew there would be some kind of trouble when you agreed to disguise yourself as a man. And second of all, it's not like this is your fault. Everyone who knows who Olivia Wilson is, knows how big of a flirt she is. She falls in love with any guy that glances at her.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(to herself)

How am I going to fix this? All I wanted to do was make some money, save up to find a place to start my business, and go from there.

ALEXIS

(takes her hand)

Get some rest, that's what you need to do. You're such a workaholic sometimes, you know? Just rest that handsome brain of yours and figure it all out tomorrow.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Thanks Alexis. I guess I should get going.

Alexis and Vivian share a hug before saying goodbye. Vivian steps out of the diner and looks at the audience.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Olivia Wilson is interested in me? But what have I even done to make her feel that way about me? Is she so desperate that she'd fall for a guy she just met? I suppose that's proof that no matter how successful a person can be, they are never satisfied.

Vivian paces the floor

Oh, but what will I do if Owen finds out? I'll surely lose my job over this! It's only been a week and look at the mess I'm in. This certainly wasn't supposed to happen. How on earth am I going to fix this?

END SCENE

SCENE TEN

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - DAY

Toby, Andrew, and Felix enter stage right, laughing with the arms around each other while Maria is looking at her phone on stage.

TOBY

Ah, Maria! Just the person I wanted to see!

MARIA

Great, it's you three. What do you want?

ANDREW

Is Olivia home?

MARIA

She just came back from a photo shoot. She doesn't want to see you two.

TOBY

Well how do you know? I am her uncle after all.

MARIA

Unfortunately...

ANDREW

Olivia has been acting funny lately. She seems preoccupied.

FELIX

Isn't it obvious? She's in love.
She acted the same way over the
other ten guys she fell in love
with.

MARIA

What do you know? You're just the
bum that mooches off of
successful people.

FELIX

Don't we all? In my opinion,
you're all dumb for not seeing it
clearly. Olivia is head over
heels.

ANDREW

For who?!

FELIX

Who else? That young assistant
that stopped by a couple days
ago.

TOBY

I just don't understand why my
niece would choose an assistant
over someone as sophisticated as
Andrew, here.

MARIA

You'd be surprised at how a
person with bad personal hygiene
can steer away millions of girls.

TOBY

Oh don't listen to her, Andrew.
One day, my niece will come to
her senses and realize what a
great guy you are.

FELIX

Two fools make bad company.

ANDREW

Are you referring to Toby and I,
or Olivia and I?

FELIX

Yes.

TOBY

Hey! I thought you were on our side!

FELIX

I'm on no one's side. I simply like to watch as you all make a fool out of yourselves.

ANDREW

(grabs him by the collar)

Why you little-

Toby, Andrew and Felix all begin to yell at each other and Maria tries to get them to stop. Marvin stomps in entering stage left.

MARVIN

Hey! What is wrong with you people?! Are you making all this noise because you lack manners or you're just all plain stupid? You come into Olivia's house and act like complete savages. Don't you have any respect?

TOBY

Oh get lost, Marvin. Go tend to your Olivia like the faithful pet that you are.

MARVIN

Toby, I didn't want to tell you this but you leave me no choice. Olivia has told me in secret that she only allows you to stay at her house because you are a relative, but she hates your behavior. Especially when you bring your sleazy friends. She has told me her plan to kick you out if you do not change your ways.

ANDREW

Sleazy? How am I sleazy?

TOBY

Kick me out, huh? Has she forgotten I made her what she is today? Without me, she wouldn't even be able to afford a house like this! I knew she'd go far in the modeling business so I set her up with a few gigs and boom! Her popularity sky-rocketed just like that! And now she thinks she can independently handle the world by herself.

MARIA

What are you talking about? All you do now is lay around, party late at night, and pass out at her house. I don't blame her for wanting to get rid of you and your sleazy friend.

FELIX

(laughs)

And you say I'm the one that mooches off of successful people.

ANDREW

(grabs him by the collar again)

Shut it, you.

MARIA

For once, I actually agree with Marvin on this one. You can't keep calling yourself Olivia's manager if all you do is act like a bum.

MARVIN

(to Maria)

Oh, and that reminds me. I'm sure Olivia will be displeased with your contribution to all of this poor behavior. I assure you she will find out about this.

Marvin exits stage left.

MARIA

What a scumbag. Who does he think he is? He keeps thinking he's Olivia's right-hand man. He's probably got a thing for her too.

ANDREW

Well you can't just let him talk to you like that. I think it's time we need to teach him a lesson.

FELIX

And I know just how to do that.

MARIA

What's your idea, then?

FELIX

We should get a hold of Olivia's phone and send romantic text messages to Marvin.

TOBY

Well what good would that do?

FELIX

It's obvious that Marvin is constantly trying to impress Olivia. He'd even change his appearance. So how about we pose as Olivia and make him look ridiculous?

ANDREW

What a cruel thing to do. I'm in.

TOBY

So he'll think the text messages are from Olivia and that she's in love with him!

MARIA

(looks annoyed)

Yeah, that's the idea. Well, I guess I'll play along. I've been waiting for a moment to get back at Marvin. Besides, there's no way you guys will be able to go through with this plan without my help anyway.

ANDREW

He's going to look like a total mess!

MARIA

Then he'll fit right in with the rest of you. Now if you don't mind, I'm gonna go do my job.

Maria exits stage right.

TOBY

Now, Felix, you're sure this prank will work? Marvin is not as naive as you think.

FELIX

Trust me, sir. This plan is fool-proof. I've already thought of the first thing "Olivia" will ask him to do in order to impress her.

ANDREW

What would that be?

FELIX

(to Toby)

Tell me, are yellow and black striped pants in fashion nowadays?

TOBY

(laughs)

Certainly not. Unless you're a clown.

FELIX

(grins evilly)

Well it looks like Marvin just joined the circus.

END SCENE

SCENE ELEVEN

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian enters Owen's office with a mug and sets it on his desk. Owen looks stressed. Vivian attempts to sneak away so that she would not disturb him.

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes, sir?

OWEN BECKETT

Come here, I've been meaning to talk to you.

Vivian nervously walks over to his desk and sits down. Owen gestures for her to stand up so she stands up quickly.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

You haven't updated me on your progress with Olivia in a while. Has she been responding well?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(muttering)

That's one way of putting it...

OWEN BECKETT

What was that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Nothing! Things are going just fine with Olivia. I've been...attempting to talk about you and she is becoming more willing to talk about you to.

OWEN BECKETT

Wait, you're attempting? What does that even mean?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well, Owen, you are a bit of a sensitive subject to her. I can't just bring you up whenever I want.

OWEN BECKETT

(irritably)

That is what I'm paying you for!
You're not visiting her just to
hang out!

(to himself)

I knew I should've hired someone
else for this job.

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(folds her arms and
raises her voice)*

I understand that! But if you'd
realize how much damage you've
done to that girl, maybe you'd
understand my situation better!

*The office noise becomes silent and employees outside the
office look at each other in shock.*

OWEN BECKETT

Did you just...yell at me?

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(nervously but
determined)*

Yes! Because you're just too
stubborn to see that she needs
time to heal! When a man breaks a
woman's heart, they can't recover
when you want them to!

OWEN BECKETT

C'mon, Vivian. Women don't feel
love like that. What do you know
anyway?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I know more than you think! I
know that a woman's heart is
sensitive but loyal. When they
love, they love deeply, and when
they lose love, they lose a part
of themselves. I agree that women
often do fall in love quickly but
I'm sure we're all guilty of
that! Why don't you understand
that?

*Owen gets up from his chair in anger and walks up to Vivian,
pointing his finger at her.*

OWEN BECKETT

You've got some nerve for talking to me this way! What makes you think I won't fire you right here and now?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(confidently)

Because you need me. If you want Olivia back, you need to do it the right way. And by the looks of it, all of your other employees are far too scared to help you. So it looks like that leaves me.

Owen lowers his finger and puts his hands in his pockets.

OWEN BECKETT

Don't take me for some kind of fool, Vivian. If I don't see results, it won't end well for you. I expect delivery.

VIVIAN DAVIS

And you'll get it. Trust me, once this is all over, you'll get your girlfriend back, and I will finally make progress on purchasing a building to start my business, a happy ending for the both of us.

OWEN BECKETT

(laughs mockingly)

Happy endings? This isn't some fairytale. Get your head out of the clouds.

VIVIAN DAVIS

It's okay to desire a happy ending. Something tells me that you've forgotten that.

OWEN BECKETT

Would you please leave already? I'm sick of hearing this.

Vivian nods and walks towards the door but before she leaves, she turns around.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, I mean this truthfully when
I say that I hope you find
happiness someday.

*Vivian then exits stage right and everyone watches her leave.
Owen sits back down at his desk and sighs.*

OWEN BECKETT

Since when have I become so
lenient with my employees? I
should've just fired her right
away. But I didn't. What would
Dad say about this?

*(chuckles,
impersonating his
dad)*

"Business is a man's world."
That's what he'd say. Gosh, he'd
kill me if he knew what I was
doing. Working with a female
assistant to get back together
with the woman he told me to
leave. What a mess I'm in.

EMPLOYEE

(enters office)

Here are the numbers for this
quarter.

Owen takes the papers but the employee lingers for a bit.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Is everything alright?

OWEN BECKETT

(irritably)

Yes, why wouldn't it be?

EMPLOYEE

We all heard yelling so I'm just
making sure everything is fine.

OWEN BECKETT

It's not your job to make sure
everything is fine. I just had a
conversation with my assistant.

EMPLOYEE

Right...I'll be going then.

The employee starts to walk towards the door but then he turns around.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Owen?

OWEN BECKETT

(writing)

What?

EMPLOYEE

That new assistant seems to be fitting in nicely. It's kind of refreshing to have her around, don't you think?

OWEN BECKETT

I wouldn't say refreshing.

EMPLOYEE

But she's a hard worker, isn't she? Not bad for someone who's never had this type of job before.

OWEN BECKETT

Don't you have other things to attend to?

The employee quickly leaves but Owen puts his pen down and leans back in his chair, deep in thought.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

"Happiness," huh? What a strange woman.

Owen looks out at the audience and smiles fondly for the first time and the lights fade out.

END SCENE

SCENE TWELVE

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Toby, Andrew, and Felix enter stage left, talking among themselves.

TOBY

(to Andrew)

All I'm saying is if you want to win her over, you gotta be bolder! I can get you through the door but you gotta take the first step.

ANDREW

I should just give it up. We both know it's never going to happen between Olivia and me.

TOBY

Don't say stuff like that! I'm sure you two will end up together. Felix agrees, don't you?

FELIX

To be frank, I agree with Andrew. The odds of Ms. Wilson falling in love with someone like him is extremely low. But that Beckett guy, on the other hand, he might have a solid chance.

TOBY

Oh shut up! Who asked you? Besides, my niece resents Owen with a passion.

FELIX

Or what about that assistant of his? Olivia seemed to take an interest in him.

ANDREW

Ha! That assistant is hardly a man. His arms look like twigs!

FELIX

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, my friend.

Maria quickly enters stage right.

MARIA

There you guys are! I've been looking all over for you!

TOBY

Hey, cool your jets. We just went out for a bit, that's all.

MARIA

That doesn't sound very reassuring. Anyway, it doesn't matter. I managed to steal Olivia's phone and I sent a text to Marvin.

ANDREW

What did you tell him?

MARIA

Well, with a little help from Felix, we figured out a way to humiliate that prideful, little brat.

Maria turns around when she hears whistling.

MARIA (CONT'D)

It's Marvin! Hide!

*Toby, Andrew, Felix, and Maria all hide behind the sofa.
Marvin enters stage right, whistling and walking confidently.*

MARVIN

(happily)

Ah, I knew it. I just knew it! No matter how many guys Olivia has gone out with, it's me she actually loves! I mean, it's quite obvious that she loves me. She treats me more respectfully than those idiots. Even that stupid Maria can see that!

MARIA

(whispers angrily)

Who are you calling stupid?

FELIX

Shh! When he's alone with his thoughts, he's even more self-centered.

ANDREW

I swear, I'd like to beat up that little jerk!

TOBY

Shut up!

MARVIN

Based on the text she sent me, she seemed to be confused and unsure about her feelings. But I'll change her mind. I will do whatever she asks of me to show that no one can compete with my love. Especially that Beckett jerk.

Marvin paces the room and laughs.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Who knows? Perhaps I'll marry Olivia in a few years. Since I spend all my time with her, it's bound to happen.

ANDREW

That arrogant little-

FELIX

Shh! We've got him right where we want him. Don't say anything.

TOBY

That man's ego is as big as his head!

MARVIN

Imagine when Toby, Maria and the rest of those buffoons find out! Imagine the look on their faces! Imagine their reaction when I kick them out!

TOBY

That really does it!

FELIX

Please! Be quiet!

MARVIN

Ah, right, I can't really kick out Olivia's own uncle. Perhaps I'll have a private meeting with him. I'd say a few things to him.

TOBY

(whispers angrily)

Oh yeah? Like what?

MARVIN

"You must stop partying so much."

TOBY

(whispers)

I'm going to punch this guy.

MARIA

No, you'll screw up everything!

MARVIN

"And you're wasting your time
with that stupid friend of yours-
"

ANDREW

That's me, I bet.

MARVIN

That Andrew character.

ANDREW

I knew he was talking about me. A
lot of people call me stupid.

MARVIN

Even though I can't kick him out,
I'd provide enough reasons for
him to be fired from his position
as Olivia's manager. And I will
happily take his place. That way,
I'll always know where she is and
what she's doing.

MARIA

That doesn't settle well with me.

ANDREW

What a creep! We should do
something!

FELIX

We are, you oaf! This is all part
of the plan.

MARVIN

(laughs)

Ah, revenge is so sweet. Everyone is finally getting what they deserve.

Marvin whistles and exits stage right. The company come out from hiding.

TOBY

So what exactly is your plan?

FELIX

Well, you heard what the man said. He'll do whatever she asks of him.

TOBY

Yeah? So?

MARIA

So, Marvin will receive another text from "Olivia," telling him that she loves yellow and black stripes on a man. She will also tell him that she loves his smile.

ANDREW

I'm not following.

FELIX

Of course you're not.

MARIA

Olivia hates yellow and black stripes and since she's always in a mood, his smile will only upset her more. Today is the beginning of our genius plan, gentlemen. I'll see you all tomorrow.

Maria exits stage left.

ANDREW

She's something else.

TOBY

I agree. She came up with the perfect plan.

FELIX

Indeed. At least Marvin is right about one thing. We're all getting what we deserve.

END SCENE

SCENE THIRTEEN

INT. OLIVIA'S PHOTOSHOOT - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian stands there awkwardly, dressed as Charlie, while Olivia gets her pictures taken.

PHOTOGRAPHER

All right, looks great! I think that's all we need. Thanks Olivia!

Olivia walks over to Vivian and Vivian hands her a water.

OLIVIA WILSON

Thanks for coming with me, Charlie. You don't know how much it means to me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Olivia, you know I'm not here to be your assistant for the day.

OLIVIA WILSON

Yes, yes, I know. You're still trying to convince me to love Owen again.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(tiredly)

No, I'm not. I just want you to meet with him once. There's still a lot of emotional baggage between you two.

OLIVIA WILSON

And what if I still don't want to get back together with him?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Then you don't have to! But you both need some kind of closure. I just ask that you give him a chance before you refuse him.

OLIVIA WILSON

(frowns)

You sound very fond of him. Are you two like buddies or something?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(mumbles)

Far from it. Anyway, please consider what I'm telling you.

OLIVIA WILSON

I will, I will. I'll do it for you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(confused)

Well, don't do it for me. Do it for you and Owen.

OLIVIA WILSON

(ignores her)

I must say, Charlie, you sure know how to convince a woman. You have a way with words. You're a pretty charming guy.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

I wouldn't say charming.

OLIVIA WILSON

Oh, don't be so modest. I've dated plenty of guys without an ounce of charm in their entire bodies.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But we're not dating-

OLIVIA WILSON

(cuts her off)

Anyway! Shall we go? I would like to spend some time with you before Owen whisks you away from me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But I should be getting back to
the office.

*Olivia ignores Vivian, links arms with her, and exits stage
left while Vivian drags her feet.*

END SCENE

SCENE FOURTEEN

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

*Vivian enters stage right, still dressed as Charlie. She
tiredly takes her wig off and sits down at a desk.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

I thought she just wanted to grab
lunch. How did I end up carrying
her shopping bags all day?

*Vivian puts her head on the table tiredly as Owen enters
stage left, going through papers. He looks up and stops
walking when he sees Vivian*

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian? What are you doing here
so late?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(in surprise)

Oh hey! I was just...

*(she looks around and
sees that no one is
here)*

I guess I lost track of time.

OWEN BECKETT

Olivia must take a liking to you
then.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(laughs nervously)

I think she's just lonely, that's
all.

OWEN BECKETT
*(continues to look
through papers)*
Whatever. I'm not paying you for
overtime, just so you know.

Owen walks over to his office.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Why are you here so late?

OWEN BECKETT
*(turns around in
annoyance)*
I always work during this time.
Good night.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Do you need any help?

OWEN BECKETT
No, just go home already.

*Owen enters his office but Vivian gets up and quickly follows
him in.*

VIVIAN DAVIS
Well I'm here so I might as well
help. You need rest too, you
know.

OWEN BECKETT
I just said I don't need help. Do
you ever take no for an answer?

VIVIAN DAVIS
(smiles)
Not really. Now what would you
like me to do?

*Owen sighs in frustration and points to the seat in the
corner of the room.*

OWEN BECKETT
Just sit there and sort through
these reports.

*Vivian nods and takes the papers. She sits in the corner
while Owen sits at his desk. There is a moment of silence.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

So why do you always work so late?

OWEN BECKETT

Pardon?

VIVIAN DAVIS

It just seems unfair that you pretty much have to dedicate your life to this job.

OWEN BECKETT

(scoffs)

Isn't it your dream to start a business? This is what you're going to get.

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, I won't. When I start my own tailor business, it may be small and it might have a slow start, but it'll be something I started on my own. That in itself is a wonderful feeling. But I'll never work this late. You need to make time for other things that matter.

OWEN BECKETT

Sounds like you don't know much about business.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That's what most people say to me, and for awhile, I thought it was true. Yet, no matter how much I worked, those words never changed. That's when I realized that they just doubted my ability altogether.

Owen stops writing and bows his head, as if he feels guilty.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Of course I didn't let that stop me. People will always have their opinions, no matter how irrational they may be. So I might as well keep going, right?

OWEN BECKETT
(after pausing for a
moment)

Why do you want to start this
tailoring business?

VIVIAN DAVIS
It was my mother's idea,
originally. She was a seamstress
and she taught me everything I
know. My parents always taught me
to live independently, to not
rely on anyone for my own
success. They told me that
building something from the
ground up is a reward within
itself. So it has been my dream
to carry out my mom's dream. But
it's been difficult, extremely
difficult. As independent as I
am, I've forgotten what it's like
to rely on others when I need
them.

OWEN BECKETT
(awkwardly)

I see...

VIVIAN DAVIS
(cheerfully)
Anyway! What about you? How did
you become the CEO? You must have
worked very hard to get to this
point.

OWEN BECKETT
(suddenly defensive)
I don't have time for this.

VIVIAN DAVIS
It doesn't have to be long. It
won't kill you to talk a little.

OWEN BECKETT
You're extremely frustrating, you
know that?

VIVIAN DAVIS
(folds her arms)
Noted.

OWEN BECKETT

(sighs tiredly)

My father was the one who motivated me to start my own company. After running a successful magazine company for so many years, he wanted me to follow in his footsteps.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Sounds like a really heavy responsibility for someone so young though.

OWEN BECKETT

Well, my father told me it was time for me to move up in the world. He said that money and success will get me far in life.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But there's so much more to life than that. What about companionship? Falling in love?

OWEN BECKETT

He didn't think that was important.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Which is why he told you to end your relationship with Olivia...

OWEN BECKETT

Have you ever been in love?

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, I haven't. The idea of being in love has crossed my mind but it's usually a passing thought. I guess I've been so busy with work.

OWEN BECKETT

I suppose I know how that feels. After trying to start a business at a young age, I hardly had time to fall in love again. I was too busy trying to make a name for myself.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You know, I never realized how busy I was. I was struggling financially and all I could think about was the next highest-paying job I could get to start my business. After finally achieving my dream, I thought I'd finally have time for love.

OWEN BECKETT

Well, that's one thing we have in common.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What's that?

OWEN BECKETT

We're both workaholics. We believe that once we achieve what we want, we will have time for everything else. But in reality, it's never enough. If we achieve one thing, we have to achieve something else. It's an endless cycle.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(chuckles)

I guess you're right. I'll admit, I'm glad this conversation happened. It makes me see you in a new light.

OWEN BECKETT

(frowns)

And how did you see me before?

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(quickly sorts
through papers)*

Sorry, I gotta get back to work.

Owen laughs genuinely and Vivian joins too.

OWEN BECKETT

Don't worry about those reports tonight. I'm ready to go home.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That makes two of us.

Owen gets up from his desk and puts on his jacket. Vivian starts to walk over to his desk to set down the papers but she trips and papers fly everywhere.

OWEN BECKETT
(rushes over to her)
Are you okay?

VIVIAN DAVIS
Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. I just got
dizzy all of the sudden.

Owen gathers up the papers and stands up. He extends his hand out to her and helps her up.

OWEN BECKETT
For such a diligent assistant,
you sure are a klutz.

VIVIAN DAVIS
(sarcastically)
Very funny.

They look at each other for a moment in curiosity. Then they both notice that they are still holding hands so they both let go.

OWEN BECKETT
(clears his throat)
Well, if you're not feeling well,
you should get some rest.

VIVIAN DAVIS
I probably just didn't eat
enough. Don't worry, I'll be fine
by tomorrow morning.

OWEN BECKETT
Just take the day off tomorrow. I
must be tiring you out too much.

VIVIAN DAVIS
What? No, that's ridiculous. I
can just take some medication
and-

OWEN BECKETT
Vivian, I wasn't asking. If
you're not going to take care of
yourself, then someone else needs
to.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But you shouldn't have to look
out for me. I don't need to rely
on you.

OWEN BECKETT

I know, but sometimes the wisest
decision is to rely on others.
Wouldn't you agree?

*Vivian stares at him as if she is in a daze as she starts to
see him in a new way. Owen looks at her uneasily.*

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

Why are you looking at me like
that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

It's nothing. I was
just...thinking.

OWEN BECKETT

Okay, well, get some rest. I
better not see you in here
tomorrow. Understand?

*Vivian nods and Owen exits. A spotlight then shines on her as
she looks at the audience.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

I know what you're thinking. I probably shouldn't waste my time on someone like him. But for the first time, I think I saw a new side of Owen that maybe no one has seen before. Even though he may be immature, he's not a bad guy. I guess he never got the opportunity to experience the bliss of youthfulness. He genuinely believes that success is the only way to happiness and the only relationship he knew, fell apart. No wonder he had become so cold and close-minded. Maybe just maybe, I can change that.

(pauses and smiles to herself)

I never realized how handsome he was. I never noticed that smile...or those eyes before. Were they always so bright? Gosh, what am I saying? I sound like I have a crush or something.

Suddenly, Owen steps into the light with Vivian, looking confused.

OWEN BECKETT

Who are you talking to?

The lights turn on.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(in surprise)

Owen! I thought you left.

OWEN BECKETT

(hesitates for a moment)

Have you had dinner yet? I just realized I didn't.

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, I haven't. Wait, are you...asking me to dinner?

OWEN BECKETT

Well, it's not like you have a choice. You are my assistant anyway.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But I'm off the clock so technically-

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian, have dinner with me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

Okay. Let me just grab my things.

Vivian walks out of the office and grabs her coat. She walks downstage towards the audience while Owen locks up.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

It's just dinner. It's definitely not a date...right?

Owen walks up to her.

OWEN BECKETT

You ready?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yeah, let's go.

Vivian and Owen exit stage right.

END SCENE

ACT II**SCENE ONE**

INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Vivian sits on the couch, reading a book. Alexis knocks on the door.

VIVIAN DAVIS

The door's open!

Alexis enters stage left and sits on the couch with Vivian.

ALEXIS

A date, huh? How'd that happen?

VIVIAN DAVIS

It wasn't a date! He just bought me dinner.

ALEXIS

(laughs)

I was only joking. So how are you holding up anyway? Is Owen still having you go out and try to win over Olivia?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes, that hasn't changed.

ALEXIS

And is he still super sexist? Or have you miraculously changed his mind?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Something like that can't be changed overnight. He did ask me about my business though. He seemed curious.

ALEXIS

Or he just doesn't believe you'll make it in the "business" world. Honestly, what's wrong with him? It's the 21st century! Women can be successful in whatever they do! Yet, he's over here thinking they can't do squat.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I don't think that is entirely his fault though.

ALEXIS

(confused)

What do you mean by that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

You told me that his father was even worse right? If he was still in charge, I wouldn't even have a job right now.

ALEXIS

Yeah, but that doesn't make Owen a good person just because his dad was a bad influence. Don't you see? They're both stuck in their own little world where gender equality apparently doesn't even exist!

VIVIAN DAVIS

But there is good in him. I've seen it.

(under her breath)

I just wish he wasn't so hung up on Olivia.

ALEXIS

Doesn't sound like you like her too much.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I don't have a strong opinion towards her. I just don't understand why Owen is so obsessed with her. I mean, he's also a fixer-upper but I can't imagine how he and Olivia get along. They just don't seem...compatible.

ALEXIS

But why would you even care? You're not one to put your emotions over work.

VIVIAN DAVIS

You're right, I'm not. I really don't know why I've been so hung up on this.

ALEXIS

Well, I'd say you're developing a little crush on your boss. I'm seeing all the signs.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(shocked)

What? That's ridiculous! What signs?!

ALEXIS

Number one, defensiveness. Whenever I bring up something that you know is true but want to ignore, you get defensive.

VIVIAN DAVIS

B-But that doesn't apply to every situation.

ALEXIS

Number two, denial. When I point out your defensiveness over a certain situation, you try to brush it off.

Vivian falls silent and looks down at her hands.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And lastly, acceptance. When you realize that what I told you is actually true and there's no way around it so you say nothing.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Hold on! I don't like Owen! Besides, even if I did, I'd have to move on. He's still hung up on Olivia anyway.

ALEXIS

Yes, that's true. Will you be okay with that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I don't think it really matters now. Owen is in love with Olivia and that's that. Besides, I've seen some good in Owen so perhaps this is my opportunity to convince Olivia that Owen is not as bad as she thinks.

ALEXIS

I'm impressed with your dedication to this job.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Whatever helps me start that business and provide for my family.

ALEXIS

Just be careful. I'm still wary about this whole disguise you're pulling off. Owen is a well-known figure in the media world and if word gets out that his assistant is cross-dressing-

VIVIAN DAVIS

I know, I know. I'll make sure that doesn't happen.

ALEXIS

(light-hearted)

Just don't get canceled, okay? It's a vicious world out there.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(with a laugh)

Trust me, I don't plan to.

END SCENE

SCENE TWO

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian enters stage right in high spirits and sits at her desk.

EMPLOYEE

You seem happy today.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Do I? Well, I suppose I have several reasons to be. I had a wonderful day off yesterday, I received my paycheck, and-

EMPLOYEE

Wait, how'd you get a day off? Were you sick?

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, I was just exhausted so Owen let me stay home.

EMPLOYEE

(in surprise)

Owen gave you the day off?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes...why?

EMPLOYEE

Well, besides the holidays, Owen never gives us the day off, unless you're dying or something. He must like you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, what do you mean he likes-

Another employee approaches Vivian, interrupting her.

EMPLOYEE #2

Hey, Vivian, you better go see Owen in his office. He seems pretty worked up over something you told him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh, okay I will. Thanks.

Vivian walks to Owen's office.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I wonder what's going on...

Vivian opens the door to see Owen pacing the floor.

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian! Just the person I wanted
to see!

VIVIAN DAVIS

(rather hopeful)

Really? What can I do for you?

OWEN BECKETT

Yes, I want you to go back to
Olivia's place for me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(looks disappointed
but hides it)*

Oh...I see.

OWEN BECKETT

I've come to the realization that
I've been pursuing her for the
wrong reasons. I shouldn't want
her because of her status or how
much money she's making. I should
want her because I love her.

VIVIAN DAVIS

And if she doesn't love you?

OWEN BECKETT

I refuse to accept that.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But you should. What if there's
someone else who loves you just
as passionately as you love
Olivia? And if you refuse her,
shouldn't she just accept that?

OWEN BECKETT

I don't know, and honestly, I
don't really care.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Okay, let's pause for a moment.
Don't you think you're rushing
into this? I'm glad that you want
to express your love for her the
right way, but nevertheless,
she's still not ready.

OWEN BECKETT

Then what would you do then? What if you were in love with someone but you didn't know how to express it?

VIVIAN DAVIS

If I were in love, I don't think I'd have the courage to tell him my true feelings. I would keep my love bottled up inside me, even though I feel it grow stronger every single day. But I wouldn't say a word. I would watch as the love of my life slips through my fingers but I'd smile, despite my sadness. You see, men might make promises and vows to the women they love, but they talk more than they really feel. In the end, they need to question whether or not their love is sincere. Wouldn't you agree?

OWEN BECKETT

(laughs)

Yes, and that is why I think you're the one who will win Olivia over for me. You know how I truly feel and you'll have no trouble telling that to Olivia.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(looks sad but hides it)

Well, should I go see her then?

OWEN BECKETT

Yes, quickly. Tell her that my love for her is genuine. Tell her that I don't want her for publicity or anything else. I just want her.

Vivian nods and walks to the door. She pauses and turns to him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, do you truly love her?

OWEN BECKETT
(casually)
Yeah, of course.

Vivian exits stage right.

END SCENE

SCENE THREE

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian enters stage right dressed up as Charlie while Felix enters stage left.

FELIX
Oh, it's you. Paying another
visit to Olivia, huh?

VIVIAN DAVIS
Yes, sir. Is she home?

FELIX
(laughs)
There's no need to be formal
around me. I'm just the dumb one
of the group.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Well that's a pretty sad way to
think.

FELIX
We don't get to choose our
titles, Charlie. So, does Owen
have another message for Olivia?

VIVIAN DAVIS
(irritated)
Yes he does.

FELIX
You don't sound too thrilled.
What's wrong? Are you jealous?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nervously)

What? No, no I just think it's a lost cause. Olivia clearly doesn't love him anymore but he won't take no for an answer. He's as stubborn as a mule.

FELIX

Ah yes. Olivia is also stubborn in many ways. Yet, people like her and Owen will never admit it in fear of looking foolish. Instead, they're more than willing to point out the foolishness in another person, as long as it's not them.

VIVIAN DAVIS

It sounds like you talk from experience.

FELIX

Oh definitely. To her, I am just the delivery boy that mooches off of her success. I am the butt of all her jokes.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I'm sorry to hear that. Why do you stick around if you are treated like this?

FELIX

I could ask you the same thing! I'm sure Owen has his episodes. Why do you stick around when he treats you like a servant?

VIVIAN DAVIS

He may be bossy but he's never been cruel to me. On the contrary, he's actually very sweet.

FELIX

(laughs)

Well I've never heard that before. Owen is notorious for throwing a tantrum whenever he doesn't get what he wants. I'm surprised he hasn't fired you since you clearly haven't won Olivia over for him yet.

Felix puts his hand on Vivian's shoulder.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Allow me to give you a piece of advice. Those who love will always find a reason to love others, and those who are foolish will always find foolishness in others. People like you and I—we are the lovers. We can't help but to love or to be loved. But let's not waste our time on people like Olivia and Owen. They'll only break you in the end.

Felix exits stage left.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What is he implying? I'm not wasting my time on Owen. I'm just doing my job! I don't care how he feels about me. Why should I? Oh he's just trying to mess with me. I'm sure he meant nothing by it.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Felix seems a lot smarter than people think. I wonder if those people will ever realize that he can easily outwit them but I highly doubt it. As he said, the foolish only see the foolishness in others.

Olivia enters stage left.

OLIVIA WILSON

Charlie? Felix told me you were out here.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Hello, Olivia. It's good to see you again.

OLIVIA WILSON

I'm glad you came back. I started to feel lonely without you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(uncomfortable)

That's nice of you to say but I actually came to deliver another message from-

OLIVIA WILSON

Oh, please don't mention his name. I already told you I have no interest in him anymore. Why doesn't he get that?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(muttering)

I ask myself the same thing.

OLIVIA WILSON

I have tried to consider what you've told me about Owen but I'd honestly like to get to know you better instead.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What?

OLIVIA WILSON

I will say, you've been leaving quite an impression on me recently. So, are you looking for a girlfriend?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(surprised)

A what?

OLIVIA WILSON

A girlfriend! Honestly, for someone as smart as you, I would have thought you'd catch on by now.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Catch on to what, exactly?

OLIVIA WILSON
(turns away in
irritation)

Hmph! I suppose this is what I
get for putting myself out there.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Well anyway, Owen wanted me to
tell you that-

Olivia turns around and grabs Vivian's hands.

OLIVIA WILSON
Enough about Owen! Listen, I
can't hide my feelings anymore.
Ever since we met, I haven't
stopped thinking about you.
You're different from any guy
I've met. You don't see me for my
money or my reputation. You see
right through me.

VIVIAN DAVIS
Olivia, we hardly know each
other.

OLIVIA WILSON
Does that matter? True love can
happen in an instant! It
shouldn't matter how long we've
known each other. I think you and
I have something special.

Vivian remains silent.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)
What do you think?

VIVIAN DAVIS
I feel sorry for you.

OLIVIA WILSON
(lets go of her hands)
What?

VIVIAN DAVIS

You should stop filling your head with fantasies like true love. How could you fall in love with someone you just met? You're only denying who you truly are. You're driven by your loneliness and desperation. You use people to satisfy your needs, and then you toss them out. Why should I be another pawn in your game?

OLIVIA WILSON

For someone who just met me, you sure act like you know a lot about me.

(CONT'D)

(takes Vivian's hand again)

Charlie, let's not argue like this. I obviously see that you're not ready for a relationship, and that's okay. I just want you to know that when you are ready, I'll be waiting for you. You see me for who I truly am, and it feels good to be seen. That's how I know we're meant for each other.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(withdraws her hand)

I do see you for who you truly are, which is why I'll never love you.

Vivian takes a few steps away from Olivia.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Thank you for your hospitality but I should go. There's no use for me to come here and try to prove Owen's love for you again.

OLIVIA WILSON

Then visit me for another reason. Even though you hate me now, I know you'll change.

VIVIAN DAVIS
(mutters)
She's crazy...

Vivian exits stage right.

END SCENE

SCENE FOUR

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian knocks on the door and Owen answers it.

VIVIAN DAVIS
I have your takeout and the notes
from today's meeting.

OWEN BECKETT
(takes bag)
Thanks. You really didn't have to
pick up my food too. I just
needed the notes.

VIVIAN DAVIS
No, no it's okay. It was on the
way.

Vivian stands by the doorway awkwardly.

OWEN BECKETT
Have you eaten yet?

VIVIAN DAVIS
No, but I have food back at-

OWEN BECKETT
Come eat with me.

*Vivian hesitates but comes in and sits with Owen on the
couch. She glances at him with a frown.*

VIVIAN DAVIS
Are you feeling okay? You look
exhausted.

OWEN BECKETT

I was in meetings all day and I had to stay late. Do I look that bad?

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, but the bags under your eyes are hard to ignore.

OWEN BECKETT

(laughs)

At this rate, I'll be gray by thirty.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

So how'd it go with Olivia? Did she have anything to say to my message?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well...I didn't really have the opportunity to tell her the message. She refused to listen.

OWEN BECKETT

(serious tone)

Gosh, what am I doing wrong? I did everything I could do win her over. Can't she see that my love is sincere?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Have you ever thought about seeing her yourself? Instead of sending people to deliver your messages?

OWEN BECKETT

You think I have time for that? I hired you so that you can help me accomplish what I need, without me having to leave the office! If I go out and do it myself, what good are you?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, if you truly love her, you'd make time for her, no matter how busy you are.

Owen looks away from her in irritation.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Being in a relationship is all about sacrifices. When we love someone, we need to prioritize them above anyone else. So, even though you're the CEO of a social media platform, you should make time for someone you love. I know I'd fall for you if you'd prioritize me above anything else.

OWEN BECKETT
(*confusion*)

What?

VIVIAN DAVIS
(*in panic*)
If I were Olivia, that is!

OWEN BECKETT
Okay, for the sake of conversation, let's say I do go and visit her myself. What if she turns me down after I tell her how I feel?

VIVIAN DAVIS
You move on. Owen, you have many amazing qualities that girls admire in a guy. If one girl turns you down, I guarantee that there's another girl just waiting for you to notice her.

Owen smiles tiredly and yawns.

OWEN BECKETT
How exhausting. Here I was, thinking I could start my own company and win over Olivia at the same time. I had no idea women could put up such a fight.
(*mumbles*)
Maybe my dad was right...

VIVIAN DAVIS
What do you mean?

OWEN BECKETT

He always said it was never worth it to pursue a woman. He quickly divorced my mom when she started to get in the way of his business. He was insensitive and he raised me to be the same. Perhaps, at this point of my life, I shouldn't pursue anyone anymore. It's clearly distracting me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Perhaps, but I don't think you should stop searching. Based on what you've told me, it sounds like your father lost respect for women a long time ago, and it is unfair of him to instill that on you. Your father is stuck on this idea that women can never be as successful as men but that was never true. The world has progressed past that idea and you should too.

OWEN BECKETT

Everything my father believed and learned was passed on to me. He's been my guidance for so many years but now you're telling me that he's been wrong.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Not in everything, but with women, yes. Owen, you have so many good qualities. Don't let his ideals conceal them.

OWEN BECKETT

Good qualities, huh? That's the first time I've heard that.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well, it's true.

OWEN BECKETT

*(looks at her
carefully)*

What good qualities do you see in me then?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(shyly)

Well, you can get emotional but you're in touch with your feelings. It seems like you've convinced yourself that you're more of a man when you display fewer emotions, but that's far from the truth. I like that you are able to freely express yourself when you want to. That's something that I really admire in a person.

OWEN BECKETT

(softly)

And?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I also think you're sweet. I will admit, I've heard mixed opinions about you but, I'm glad I was able to see the real you.

OWEN BECKETT

(smiles)

I'm glad you were able to see the real me too. At least someone knows.

VIVIAN DAVIS

And Olivia will too. Maybe not now, but someday, she will see the real you.

OWEN BECKETT

(sleepily mumbles)

You sound so confident. You can't know that for sure.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I do know, because I'm going to help you.

OWEN BECKETT

Because you're being paid.

VIVIAN DAVIS

No.

(pauses briefly)

It's because I care about you, and I want you to be happy.

OWEN BECKETT

(smiles tiredly)

I've never met an assistant as loyal as you are. Who knows? Maybe you'll get a full-time job here.

Owen rests his head on the couch and begins to doze off.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(To herself)

I wish that were the case, but I wouldn't be able to pursue my dream if I stayed. I could also never take Sam's job away from him. He would already be furious if he knew what I was doing. But what else am I supposed to do? It's hard enough to get a job, let alone starting my own business from the ground up. I have to move on.

Vivian glances at Owen as he sleeps.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I just wish I knew what I was to you. Am I just your assistant? A friend? Or maybe something more?

Vivian slowly puts her hand on top of Owen's.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I wish I never fell for you. It only makes it harder for me to leave. It breaks me to see you in love with someone else but I suppose I did this to myself. You'll never know how I feel about you, and it has to stay that way. Otherwise, I'll never be able to move on. I have my own dream and you have yours. I suppose our paths will never cross again. The only thing I can do for you is to make you happy and if Olivia is the answer, then I'll accept that.

Vivian gets up from the couch and puts her jacket on.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I have to accept that.

Vivian exits left.

END SCENE

SCENE FIVE

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - DAY

Andrew, Toby, and Felix enter stage left. Andrew looks sad.

ANDREW

It's no use, guys. I just have to face the fact that Olivia will never love me.

TOBY

Oh my gosh, Andrew. Your mind changes like the seasons! How many times do I have to tell you that it'll work out between you two?

ANDREW

I saw her talking to Owen's assistant yesterday! You should've seen the way she looked at him. What does he have that I don't?!

FELIX

Did she know you were there?

ANDREW

I think so. Before she spotted him, I was trying to have a conversation with her but she just brushed me off. I assume she knew I was still hanging around.

FELIX

(laughs)

Well then, it's super obvious that she likes you!

ANDREW

You're such an idiot. How on earth is that obvious?

FELIX

Don't you see? Olivia flirted with that assistant to make you jealous! She's playing games with you!

ANDREW

But why would she do that?

FELIX

Oh, you know how women are. They'll never tell you their feelings. They only communicate in hints and hidden codes. My guess is that she probably wanted you to profess your love for her and kick out that assistant for good. But you missed the opportunity and now Olivia probably hates you with a passion.

ANDREW

(looks shocked)

What can I do to fix it?

TOBY

You oughta teach that boy a lesson! The next time that assistant steps foot into this house, sock him right in the nose! That way, my niece will recognize how much you really love her.

Toby and Andrew talks among themselves while Felix steps downstage to the audience.

FELIX

(to the audience)

Charlie will look like an idiot if he fights back, but Andrew is a bigger fool for believing my every word. I'm literally surrounded by fools. Help me.

Maria enters stage right with a smile on her face.

TOBY

Ah, there you are! We've thought of a perfect way to get Olivia to notice Andrew.

MARIA

There's no time for that. Marvin just arrived and he looks ridiculous.

FELIX

So our plan work!

MARIA

Definitely. He's done everything the text told him to do. By the end of the day, Olivia will surely want to get rid of him.

TOBY

Finally I can watch that scumbag get what he deserves!

Maria looks over her shoulder.

MARIA

Okay, Olivia is headed this way. No one say a word about the text messages!

Everyone scrambles around the room to act "normal". Olivia enters stage right, looking nervous.

OLIVIA WILSON

(talking to herself)

I should buy a new dress before he comes. Oh, but what if he prefers a more casual look on a woman? He's pretty short so I should definitely avoid heels. Oh, but what about food? I have no idea what he likes. It's so hard to impress men.

Olivia sits on the couch.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)

Maria, tell Marvin to come in here. He's the only fashion expert I can trust. I'm sure he'll know what I should wear to impress Charlie.

MARIA
(glancing over at
Toby, Andrew, and
Felix)

I'll go get him.

Maria exits stage right while the three snicker.

OLIVIA WILSON
(looks at them)
What's so funny?

FELIX
Nothing, Olivia. We're just happy
to be here.

TOBY
Very happy.

OLIVIA WILSON
You guys are strange. I don't
know why I keep allowing you
three to hang out in my house all
the time. I wish I had my own
makeup and fashion stylists
instead of you three buffoons.
The only person I can rely on is-

*Marvin and Maria enter stage right. Marvin is wearing yellow
and black striped pants with a huge smile on his face. Olivia
gasps in horror.*

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)
Marvin?! What is going on?!

*Maria, Andrew, Toby, and Felix try to hold back their
laughter.*

MARVIN
Do you need my help, Olivia? Your
wish is my command.

OLIVIA WILSON
Why are you smiling like that?
It's very unlike you.

MARVIN
That's true but if you're happy,
then so am I.

OLIVIA WILSON

I'm the opposite of happy! I called you over here because I am stressed out of mind about Charlie. I was going to ask you for fashion advice but perhaps I shouldn't...

MARVIN

Oh I know, these pants are a bit bold for me as well but if it makes you smile, then it is all worth it to me.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well I guess it is pretty funny but it still doesn't explain why you're smiling so much.

TOBY

Maybe he's on some very strong medication that makes him act not in his right mind.

ANDREW

Or he's finally lost his mind after all these years.

MARIA

(fake sympathy)

Are you feeling okay, Marvin?

MARVIN

Shut up, all of you! Olivia, I'm sorry but I can't keep this a secret any longer.

OLIVIA WILSON

What?

MARVIN

It's better to tell them now then prolong their suffering.

OLIVIA WILSON

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Marvin pulls out his phone.

MARVIN

"Marvin, I think I've typed out this text message about twenty times, trying to pick the right words to say to you."

OLIVIA WILSON

What is this?

MARVIN

"You've captivated me from the very beginning and I have tried my best to ignore my feelings. I distracted myself with other guys but no one seems to compete with you."

OLIVIA WILSON

What is going on?

MARVIN

"Your lovely smile captured my heart and you always dressed to impress. I especially loved those yellow and black striped pants you wore to the Met Gala."

OLIVIA WILSON

You wore yellow and black pants to the Met Gala?!

MARVIN

"Let's keep this message a secret. I wouldn't want the other assistants to get jealous. You have my whole heart."

OLIVIA WILSON

Whose heart? Mine?!

TOBY

Well, well, well! This is quite the shocker. Were you going to tell me about this relationship, Olivia?

OLIVIA WILSON

Ugh, this is completely insane!

There's a knock on the door and Felix exits stage right to answer it.

MARIA

(to Marvin)

Olivia actually sent you that message?

MARVIN

*(laughs and hands her
his phone)*

Read it and weep!

Felix enters stage right.

FELIX

Owen's assistant is at the door.
Should I bring him in?

Olivia stands up from the couch.

OLIVIA WILSON

No, no, I'll go to him. Gosh, I
didn't even have time to change
and get ready!

MARVIN

Well I think you look lovely.

OLIVIA WILSON

Shut it! I'll deal with you
later. Someone make sure he
doesn't do anything stupid.

Olivia exits stage right.

MARVIN

(to company)

You know, it feels so good to
get the reward I deserve after
putting up with you idiots for so
many years. Olivia finally sees
me for who I am.

ANDREW

*(lunges at Marvin but
Toby holds him back)*

Yeah, a scumbag!

MARVIN

(laughs)

I especially feel sorry for you, Andrew. How long have you pursued Olivia? Two years? Three years? It must be terrible to see her fall in love with another man. But, that's what happens when you're too much of a coward to fight for her.

TOBY

That's enough, Marvin. It's not smart to make enemies with the people you work with.

MARVIN

Well I won't have to worry about that for much longer, because you all won't be here for much longer. I'll quickly have you replaced the moment Olivia makes me her new manager.

Felix laughs and puts his hand on Marvin's shoulders.

FELIX

I admire your confidence, Marvin. I really do. But you can't go blabbing about your plan right in front of them. That takes away the element of surprise! If you really want to secure your position as Olivia's manager, you have to play your cards right. That means you gotta wear those pants every single day and never stop smiling, even though Olivia begs you to stop.

MARVIN

Well, I'd normally never take advice from someone like you but this time, you may be right. By doing what Olivia wishes, it'll only further secure my plan. Those fools won't know what hit them.

Marvin exits stage right.

MARIA

Well, that went better than I expected.

FELIX

Yeah, if this were a play, I'd think it would be too unrealistic. He fell for it without no hesitation.

TOBY

When can we finally expose him? I'm not sure I can take anymore of his mockery.

MARIA

You're going to have to. We have to let him think that his plan will actually work. That way, it'll really shock him when he finds out it was all fake,

TOBY

Who does he think he is?! I'm the one that approved his application as Olivia's assistant!

FELIX

So you're saying we should blame you for bringing Marvin into our lives, right?

MARIA

Andrew, what's wrong with you?

Andrew begins to pace the floor in anger.

ANDREW

That scumbag said I'm too much of a coward! A coward!

TOBY

He is only trying to anger you, Andrew. Don't take his words to heart.

ANDREW

But he's not the only one who thinks that way, is he?

The company remain silent but look slightly ashamed.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Alright, that does it. Where is that assistant of Owen's?

MARIA

He's probably outside with Olivia right now.

Andrew begins to leave.

TOBY

Hold on, where are you going?

ANDREW

I'm gonna fight him! I won't stand aside and watch any longer!

Andrew exits stage right.

MARIA

He's not really going to fight him, is he?

TOBY

Probably. Andrew may be a bit slow in the head but when he puts his mind to something, he'll do it.

FELIX

You should probably stop him.

TOBY

Why? I'd love to watch a good old-fashioned fight.

FELIX

Well, if Andrew beats up the assistant of one of the richest CEOs in New York, we'll probably have a lawsuit on our hands.

Maria and Toby look at each other in panic then run stage right with Felix following behind them.

END SCENE

SCENE SIX

INT. THE DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Alexis is sweeping the floor as customers leave. Sam enters stage left.

ALEXIS

Oh, I'm sorry but we're about to close in a few minutes.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Alexis, it's me.

Alexis looks up in surprise and drops her broom.

ALEXIS

(in panic)

Samuel?! Why are you back so soon?!

SAMUEL DAVIS

(laughs)

Well don't sound too excited.

ALEXIS

I thought you still had a few more months in Ireland. What happened?

SAMUEL DAVIS

I guess I felt guilty about leaving Vivian behind. She's been working so hard, and it just didn't feel right to leave her behind. So as soon as I received permission to travel back, I got on the very next flight.

ALEXIS

But I'm sure Vivian would have been okay. She knows how much you wanted to go to Ireland. I agree that she has been super busy but she'd never tell you that you can't go.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Well, no matter what she thinks, I can always tell when she has too much on her plate. I should be here working to make sure we have a comfortable future. I'll have another opportunity to travel but for right now, Vivian needs me.

Samuel looks around the diner.

SAMUEL DAVIS (CONT'D)

Where is Vivian, anyway? She wasn't at the house so I figured she was working today.

ALEXIS

Um, she's probably at her second job right now. But don't visit her! You should probably wait until she gets off.

SAMUEL DAVIS

She's working two jobs? Goodness, she always manages to push herself too hard.

Samuel takes out his phone.

SAMUEL DAVIS (CONT'D)

While I wait, I might as well stop by and pay Owen a visit. I'll let him know I'm coming back so he'll have enough time to lay off his temporary assistant.

Samuel begins to walk away but Alexis grabs his hand in a panic.

ALEXIS

Wait! Don't go!

SAMUEL DAVIS

Alexis, what's gotten into you? You're acting like a nervous wreck.

ALEXIS

It's just been awhile since I've seen you! Why don't we go out for some coffee?

SAMUEL DAVIS

I think coffee is the last thing
you need.

ALEXIS

Well, I'd love to hear more about
Ireland. I love the castles
there.

SAMUEL DAVIS

I didn't see any castles.

ALEXIS

That's fine! We can just catch
up, then! Your boss can wait.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Don't you need to finish up
closing?

ALEXIS

It's fine! The manager won't
notice. Now let's go!

Alexis pushes him to the door.

SAMUEL DAVIS

(smiles a little)

Alexis, if you're making up an
excuse to ask me on a date,
you're not very subtle.

ALEXIS

That's not what I'm doing!

SAMUEL DAVIS

(laughs)

Yeah, okay.

Alexis quickly grabs her jacket and purse.

SAMUEL DAVIS (CONT'D)

So when exactly did you start
having feelings for me?

ALEXIS

Shut up!

Alexis grabs Samuel's arm and they exit stage left.

END SCENE

SCENE SEVEN

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - DAY

Olivia and Vivian enter stage right.

OLIVIA WILSON

Thank you for agreeing to see me again. I know we ended on the wrong foot last time.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I only came because Owen would want me to. Despite how I feel about you, his feelings haven't changed.

OLIVIA WILSON

That's how I feel about you. I hate myself for acting so desperate around you but I can't help it! Every time you push me away, it makes me want to come right back!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Now you know how Owen feels every time you reject his advances.

OLIVIA WILSON

(takes Vivian's arm)

What is it, Charlie? What is it that makes you reject me? Is it my clothes? My complexion? My voice? I've been told I sound too nasally at times but I can work on that!

VIVIAN DAVIS

(pulls away)

It's none of those things.
There's nothing you can change
about yourself that will make me
fall in love with you. I know
you're used to winning over any
guy with your looks or your
status. I mean, who wouldn't want
to go out with one of New York's
highest-paid models? But, the
reality is, when you grow older
and some new girl becomes the
face of Vogue, what will you be
then? If you rely so much on your
beauty, what will you do when it
fades away?

OLIVIA WILSON

You know, usually when I confess
my love for someone, I don't get
a lecture in response.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(in irritation)

Truthfully, I don't think you're
good for Owen. You only focus on
yourself and believe that you can
simply change so that someone
will like you. If you set that
standard for yourself, you'll set
it for the people around you. I
don't want Owen to change, at
least not to meet your
requirements.

OLIVIA WILSON

I've never met an assistant as
loyal as you are. What did Owen
do to cause you to admire him so
much?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Nothing at all. At first, he made plenty of decisions that I didn't agree with. He acted foolishly and was pretty self-centered. But, as I got to know him, I realized that he has a good heart and he's passionate in what he does. I suppose his character never changed but my perspective on him did.

OLIVIA WILSON

I haven't seen that side of him in a long time.

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(looks at her
hopefully)*

But would you be willing to? If you give him another chance, I'm sure you'll find some good in him, just like I did.

OLIVIA WILSON

But, if you believe I'm not good for him, why do you want me to fall in love with him?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Because he is my friend, and I know it would make him the happiest man in the world. It's during times like these when we don't get to choose how the story goes. We can only accept what is happening now.

OLIVIA WILSON

If only you talked that way about me instead of him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Olivia, I already told you-

OLIVIA WILSON

(holds up her hand)

No, I understand now. As long as you work for Owen, you are obligated to do what he wants you to do. So of course you can't admit your feelings for me! Owen would definitely fire you if you did.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, what?

OLIVIA WILSON

Well don't worry, Charlie. You can come work for me and you no longer have to hide your feelings. Owen won't get in the way anymore.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That's not what I-

OLIVIA WILSON

I'll go schedule an appointment with Owen right now.

Olivia hugs Vivian and kisses her on the cheek then runs off stage right.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(to herself)

Seriously?! How can someone be so ignorant? No matter how many times I reject her, she always crawls her way back to me. And now look what I've done! What will Owen say if he believes I have feelings for Olivia? What will he think of me?

Vivian sits on the bench and buries her face in her hands. Toby, Felix, and Maria enter stage left.

TOBY

There you are! It's a good thing we found you before Andrew did.

VIVIAN DAVIS

What are you talking about? Who's Andrew?

FELIX

Let's just say he has a grudge
against you and he won't let go
of it until he beats you up.

Vivian stands up in surprise.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Wait, what? There must be some
mistake. I can't remember what
I've done to offend this Andrew
guy. I don't even know who he is!

MARIA

He's an idiot that spends way too
much time with these guys. But he
is double your height so I'd get
out of here if I were you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But what did I do? I have no
intentions in fighting this man
but I'd like to know how I've
wronged him.

FELIX

Your constant flirting with Ms.
Wilson can make any man lose his
mind.

TOBY

Yeah, we already have one
assistant dressed like a total
clown for my niece.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Flirting?! I wouldn't flirt with
Olivia!

ANDREW

(off stage)

Where is that runt?!

MARIA

(pushes Vivian)

Charlie, I'd start running if I
were you.

Andrew enters stage left.

ANDREW

There you are!

Vivian runs off stage right and Andrew chases after her.

TOBY

Andrew, stop! You'll get us sued!

MARIA

I bet this was your idea, anyway!

TOBY

It was not!

FELIX

Who cares? Let's go!

Felix runs off stage right and Toby and Maria follow.

END SCENE

SCENE EIGHT

EXT. IN THE CITY - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian runs stage left and looks behind her in panic.

ANDREW

(off stage)

Come here and fight like a man!

Vivian then runs off stage right. Moments later, Alexis and Samuel enter stage right.

ALEXIS

Thanks again. We should definitely go out for coffee more often.

SAMUEL DAVIS

By "we" you mean just me and you, right? I don't want Vivian third-wheeling us.

Alexis shoves him and Samuel laughs.

SAMUEL DAVIS (CONT'D)

It was nice to catch up with you. Do you think Vivian is off work by now?

ALEXIS

I'm not sure, but don't worry
about it. I can call her.

SAMUEL DAVIS

It's okay, I already dialed the
number.

*Alexis looks nervous as Samuel calls Vivian. Andrew runs
stage left and points to Samuel.*

ANDREW

There you are! You didn't think
you could actually run from me,
right?

Andrew grabs onto Samuel's collar.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(in confusion)

That's strange. You're a lot
taller than I remember.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Do I know you?

ANDREW

No, but you're about to! I have
had it, watching you flirt with
Olivia every single day! She
hardly knows I exist because of
you!

ALEXIS

Olivia? Sam, what is he talking
about?

SAMUEL DAVIS

I haven't the faintest idea.

(to Andrew)

I'm sorry, sir, but I think you
have the wrong person.

ANDREW

Don't act like I'm stupid! You
may think you're so high and
mighty because you work for Owen
but wait til he finds out that
you've been flirting with his
girl!

ALEXIS

Owen's girl...? Wait! You've been flirting with Olivia Wilson? The model?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Of course not! This guy is just delusional!

ANDREW

What did you call me?!

Andrew punches Samuel.

ALEXIS

(runs to Samuel)

Oh my gosh, are you okay?

SAMUEL DAVIS

(to Andrew)

Are you nuts?!

Samuel punches Andrew as Toby, Maria, and Felix enter stage left.

TOBY

What'd you know! I guess the kid can fight!

FELIX

Wait, that's not Charlie.

MARIA

Obviously! The man is almost the same height as Andrew.

TOBY

Maybe it's the light.

Samuel and Andrew continue to fight until Samuel has Andrew pinned on the ground.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Didn't anyone teach you that you shouldn't pick fights with people you don't know?

Andrew groans in pain.

ALEXIS

Samuel, just let him go. I think he's learned his lesson.

Samuel lets go and brushes off his coat.

TOBY

Wait, who are you?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Samuel Davis. Now would you kindly explain what is going on here?

MARIA

Davis? That's Charlie's last name. Maybe he's Charlie's brother.

FELIX

Or twin. They look almost identical.

SAMUEL DAVIS

I don't have a brother! Now someone tell me what this guy's problem is!
(points to Andrew still on the ground)

ALEXIS

(takes Samuel's arm)

Maybe we should just go. These people probably got you mixed up with someone else they know.

Samuel sighs in frustration but allows Alexis to lead him away.

TOBY

(kicks Andrew lightly)

You're really an idiot, you know that? Do you know what would've happened if Owen found out that you beat up his assistant? The cops would be at our door in a second.

Felix and Maria help Andrew stand up. Samuel walks back to them.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Wait, how did you know I work for Owen?

TOBY

Yes, you know Owen Beckett?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Yeah, I'm his assistant.

ANDREW

But...if you're Owen's assistant,
who was I just chasing?

SAMUEL DAVIS

What was his last name, again?

TOBY

Davis. Are you sure you're not
related?

ALEXIS

(takes Sam's arm)

No, I'm sure it's just a
coincidence. C'mon, Sam. Let's
not bother these people anymore.

FELIX

Well, there's also a huge height
difference between you two.
Charlie is only like 5',6"

SAMUEL DAVIS

Charlie is 5',6"? That's awfully
short for a man.

ALEXIS

Everyone's born in different
shapes and sizes! Now let's go.

MARIA

Yeah, I'd definitely say he's
embraced his feminine side. I
always found it unusual how in
touch he was with his feelings.

ALEXIS

B-But that doesn't mean anything!

SAMUEL DAVIS

Or does it? Last name is Davis,
looks like me, and stands 5',6".
Now who else do you know matches
that description?

Alexis backs away nervously but Samuel puts his hands on her shoulders.

SAMUEL DAVIS (CONT'D)

Alexis, where is Vivian?

END SCENE

SCENE NINE

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Vivian enters stage right and adjusts her wig after running. She enters Owen's office quickly.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, there's something I need to tell-

She pauses as Owen hangs up the phone and glares at her.

OWEN BECKETT

I just got off the phone with Olivia's assistant.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, let me explain.

OWEN BECKETT

People have come and gone throughout my entire life but you! You were the only person I could truly put my trust in. I didn't expect this, especially from you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Listen, it's not what you think!

OWEN BECKETT

(Stands up)

What am I supposed to think, Vivian? I send you over there to win her favor so that she'd see me in a new light! Not so you can move on to the next best job!

VIVIAN DAVIS

(tearfully)

I had nothing to do with this! It was her idea! All I wanted was for her to see you for who you truly were.

OWEN BECKETT

I know how you see me, Vivian. You see me in the same way as everyone else. You think I'm too immature and self-centered to care about anyone. It was foolish of me to believe you'd see me differently.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I do see you differently!

Owen pulls out a piece of paper and signs it. He walks over and hands it to Vivian.

OWEN BECKETT

Here, our contract is now void. If you think you can achieve your dream through Olivia, then I won't stop you.

Vivian stands there in shock while Owen puts on his jacket. Before he can leave the office, Vivian scrunches up the paper, drops it on the ground, and grabs Owen's hand. Owen looks at her in surprise.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(tearfully)

I don't want Olivia! I want you!

OWEN BECKETT

(in shock)

What?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I'm sorry. I tried to hide it but I couldn't keep pushing away my feelings. It hurt too much.

OWEN BECKETT

I don't understand.

VIVIAN DAVIS

It's true that at first, I thought you were too immature to run a business and too self-centered to be in love but, as I got to know you, I realized who you truly were. To me, you are kind and considerate. Other people may not see those qualities but I know they're there. But, that wasn't really the reason why I liked you.

OWEN BECKETT

(laughs coldly)

Well of course not. A young woman working for a rich CEO? It's always about the money. I should've known.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I didn't develop feelings for you because you're rich. I liked you when you told me your story; When you were at a low point in your life and you needed someone to lean on. Those moments of vulnerability made me like you even more.

OWEN BECKETT

You sound like you're sorry for me, like I'm a person that needs fixing.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I didn't mean it like that.

OWEN BECKETT

Isn't it, though? You know what? It all makes sense now! That's why you've been so invested in my life story. You don't really care, do you? You just want to play therapist.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, that's not true! I wanted to help you in your relationship with Olivia! I just...wasn't expecting to like you, but I couldn't ignore what my heart wanted. And because of that, I made such a mess.

Vivian wipes a tear.

OWEN BECKETT

How can I believe you? How do I know you're not lying to me right now? It sounds like everyone thinks of me as an egotistical boss, just like my father. So how do I know that you're not thinking the same thing?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Because I know you better than they do.

Suddenly, Samuel, Alexis, Toby, Maria, Andrew, and Felix run in stage right into Owen's office.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Vivian?!

VIVIAN DAVIS

Sam?! Why are you back so soon?!

SAMUEL DAVIS

Why are you dressed up like me?! What is going on?

OWEN BECKETT

Wait, you two know each other?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Yeah, we know each other! That's my sister!

OWEN BECKETT

(to Vivian)

You told me you didn't know Samuel.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Vivian, explain yourself!

TOBY

Who the heck is Vivian?

ALEXIS

(to Vivian)

Go ahead and tell them.

VIVIAN DAVIS

After Samuel left, I was struggling to find a second job. I couldn't do my part in making payments towards the house but when I saw an ad in the paper that Owen was looking for a temporary assistant, I thought it would help.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Why didn't you tell me? I never would've left if I knew!

VIVIAN DAVIS

That's why I didn't want you to know! I thought it would work! It'd only be for a few months but it'd be enough to make the mortgage payment for a couple months until I found another job. Plus, I figured this job would help me with my business.

SAMUEL DAVIS

That tailoring business? I thought that was just a silly little idea you came up with.

ANDREW

Oh my gosh, I'm so confused.

FELIX

It's plain and simple, Andrew. We've all been tricked.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(to Samuel)

It's not a silly idea. It never was. And I thought I could leave as quickly as I came in, but I realized that wasn't going to be easy anymore. I thought I could...make a difference here. I thought I could-

OWEN BECKETT

(bitterly)

Change me?

Vivian removes her wig and everyone takes a step back in shock.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, you have to believe me. I never intended to hurt you or send you mixed signals. I genuinely wanted to help you win back Olivia, but I always wanted you to realize that you don't have to live by your father's principles.

MARIA

(mutters)

Olivia's not gonna like this...

SAMUEL DAVIS

(to Alexis)

And you knew about this whole plan? Is that why you've been trying to keep me away from this place?

Alexis nods in shame.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Please, don't get upset at her. I'm the one that made this mess.

Vivian turns to Owen.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Owen, I never wanted to hurt you. I thought I could kill two birds with one stone-get you the girl and achieve my dream, but I never intended for things to turn out this way.

OWEN BECKETT

(shakes his head)

It's too late, Vivian. At this point, I'm not sure I can trust anything you say. I'm not even sure if you actually like me, or if you just see me as another person that needs fixing.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Owen, please-

OWEN BECKETT

You've made a fool out of me.

Owen turns away from her and Vivian tries to reach out to him but Samuel grabs her.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Let's go, Vivian. You've done enough.

Samuel, Vivian, and Alexis exit stage.

MARIA

What was Owen thinking? Making his assistant dress up as a man to win over Olivia? That's a disaster waiting to happen.

TOBY

Let's hope the media doesn't found out.

MARIA

How am I going to explain this to Olivia? She's going to be crushed.

TOBY

(to Andrew)

Sounds like the perfect opportunity for you to swoop in! Women always fall in love when they're emotionally compromised.

ANDREW

That's a great idea!

FELIX

Wow, you must be popular with the ladies.

TOBY & ANDREW

Strangely, no.

MARIA

You're all idiots.

Maria exits stage right and Toby and Andrew follow, but Felix hangs back.

TOBY

Felix, you coming?

FELIX

You go on ahead. I'll catch up
with you later.

*Toby and Andrew look at each other and shrug, then exit
right. Felix turns to Owen who is standing by his desk with
his head bowed.*

FELIX (CONT'D)

You did that on purpose, didn't
you?

OWEN BECKETT

(looks up)

What are you talking about?

FELIX

You're not actually mad at her.
That's plain to see. And yet, you
acted so harsh towards her.

OWEN BECKETT

Are you going to continue to
state what I already know?

FELIX

It seems like you did it so it'd
be easier for her to leave.

OWEN BECKETT

You're very perceptive.

FELIX

But why would you care? She was
just an assistant after all,
right?

OWEN BECKETT

She wasn't just my assistant. She
was my friend. No matter how
horrible I was or the terrible
things I would say, she never
left.

FELIX

So why would you cut ties with
her if everything was fine?

OWEN BECKETT

Because it wasn't. She had a dream of starting her own business and I discouraged her almost every step of the way. But as I got to know her, I saw how passionate and determined she was to achieve this goal. That's when I realized that I was only holding her back.

FELIX

Well, you were helping her financially, right?

OWEN BECKETT

I could've referred her to a company that would have suited her better, but I decided to keep her because she increased my chances of winning over Olivia.

Felix walks over and sits on Owen's desk.

FELIX

And making her dress up as a guy sure didn't help.

OWEN BECKETT

Yes, that too. I used her for my own personal gain and she didn't deserve that.

*(sits down and buries
his face in his
hands)*

I was the dumb one that allowed my shallow mind to corrupt my actions. Vivian was a strong, committed woman, and I ignored that. Now it just feels like my past is coming back to punish me.

FELIX

(chuckles)

You sound like a man in love, my friend.

OWEN BECKETT

(groans)

What am I going to do?

FELIX

You win her back, of course. And don't ask me how you do that cause I'm pretty sure you have a list of strategies, based on what you pulled with Olivia.

OWEN BECKETT

But none of them worked, and for good reason. I dumped Olivia for money, for goodness' sake.

(turns to Felix)

I can't win Vivian back. Why would she want to go back to me after how I treated her? After I made her try to win over Olivia for me?

FELIX

The fact that you're willing to see that in yourself is a step in the right direction. She obviously did something to you.

OWEN BECKETT

I feel like such a loser.

FELIX

You probably are.

*(Owen looks at him
with a frown)*

But this is your chance to make things right.

OWEN BECKETT

But how do I know if I'm making the right decision?

FELIX

*(gets off the desk
and walks to the
door)*

I'm sure you'll figure it out.

OWEN BECKETT

Yeah, I guess so.

Felix opens the door but he turns around to face Owen.

FELIX

Owen, do you like her?

OWEN BECKETT
(pauses briefly)

I do.

FELIX
That's how you know you're making
the right decision.

END SCENE

SCENE TEN

INT. ON STAGE

When the lights turn on, Felix is on stage alone and sits on a chair.

FELIX
(to audience)
What a mess, am I right? I just
got back from comforting Olivia
once again all because this
Vivian girl decided to dress up
as a guy. Now it's been a few
weeks since her little secret got
out, but of course, our story
doesn't end there, and neither
does the trouble. Olivia has shut
herself off from the world once
more after Charlie ceased to
exist.

Olivia walks across the stage, wiping her tears with a tissue.

FELIX
And the rest of the group? Well,
after our little stunt with
Marvin, things didn't turn out
exactly the way we thought it
would. Marvin started leaking
videos and photos on the internet
to prove how Toby was unfit to be
a manager. Maria was getting
calls from every reporter in New
York City.

Toby, Maria, and Andrew walk across the stage, talking silently among themselves while holding their phones.

FELIX (CONT'D)

But, as Marvin stated, everyone gets what they deserve.

Marvin walks across the stage with his suitcase while wearing the black and yellow striped pants.

FELIX (CONT'D)

After Olivia discovered what he had been saying about her uncle, she promptly kicked him out without a moment of hesitation. Since that incident, we no longer felt the need to tell him about our prank. We decided to just let him believe that Olivia's love for him was short but true. Sure, it sounds cruel but a little white lie never hurt anyone, right?

FELIX (CONT'D)

Yet, the person who has suffered the most is Vivian Davis.

Vivian walks across the stage slowly and sits on the couch.

FELIX (CONT'D)

They say the wisest people are often among the broken. They waste their time on people who never want to change and they end up alone. Perhaps she thought she could do both, change two of the most stubborn people on the planet and achieve her dream at the same time. How could one girl accomplish so much in such a short time? Well, I'll let her explain.

The lights turn on and Vivian looks out on the crowd like she's talking to them.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I thought I could do it. I thought I finally had the opportunity to start my business, but I got lost along the way. I only ended up hurting everyone around me, including Owen. I never meant to lie to him but then again, I suppose I wasn't completely honest with him. He opened up to me but I couldn't do the same. No wonder he hates me now...

Samuel enters stage left and closes the door. Vivian gets up from the couch.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

How did the meeting go?

SAMUEL DAVIS

How I thought it would. He's still very troubled about the whole thing.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Did he...fire you?

SAMUEL DAVIS

(sits on the couch)

Not yet, at least. He's too busy trying to keep the press from finding out about the whole mess. The man looks like he hasn't slept in days since you left.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I never meant for this to happen, especially not to him.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Well, he is the one who wanted you to cross-dress, but you also agreed to this job.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I know...

SAMUEL DAVIS

Why'd you do it, Viv? What made you think this plan would actually work?

VIVIAN DAVIS

I didn't know, but I had to take a chance. With this job, I could make mortgage payments but I thought I could also set some money aside for-

SAMUEL DAVIS

Your business. You told me already. Vivian, I understand that this was Mom's dream but it doesn't have to be yours.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But it is my dream and I don't care how long it will take for me to achieve it. I know the odds are against me, and I know what people are saying about my "crazy" idea, but nevertheless, this is something I'm going to do.

SAMUEL DAVIS

(*chuckles*)

You were always so determined growing up. You did whatever you set your mind to but you never handled failure well.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Nothing has changed, I suppose.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Things will start to look up, Vivian. When this is over, you'll get back up again and move on to the next challenge the world throws at you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But why do I feel like I won't be able to get back up?

SAMUEL DAVIS

Because you fell in love.

Vivian buries her face in her hands and acts in distress.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I allowed my own emotions to blind me.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Don't beat yourself up over it,
Viv. You're a human being. You'll
make mistakes, you'll fall in
love, and you'll fall out of
love.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I just believed that I could
change him. He seemed so stuck in
his ways but I saw a sliver of
hope in him.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Owen is a very...stubborn man. It
would take a miracle if you could
change him. But, if anyone can do
it, it'd be you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Thanks Samuel. I'm really sorry
for causing so much trouble. I
didn't want things to turn out
this way.

SAMUEL DAVIS

We'll figure it out, Vivian. And
who knows? Maybe this is the
first step in the right
direction.

Vivian and Samuel embrace.

END SCENE

SCENE ELEVEN

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME - DAY

*Andrew and Toby stand on the stage, whispering to each other.
Felix enters stage right.*

TOBY

How is she doing?

FELIX

Same as yesterday. She refuses to
eat or see anyone.

ANDREW

I hate to see her like this. This is worse than any of her past breakups.

TOBY

What a fool that Charlie guy was. He tricked us all.

FELIX

Which makes her a genius. It's not like any of us could pull that off.

Maria enters stage right, guiding Olivia to the couch. Olivia looks exhausted.

TOBY

Olivia! How do you feel?

ANDREW

Do you need anything? Some tea?

Felix pulls out a tissue and hands it to Olivia. She takes it and wipes her eyes.

OLIVIA WILSON

I've never felt so humiliated in my entire life. How could he do this to me?

MARIA

There will be other men, Olivia. Many who would love to be with you.

OLIVIA WILSON

But the one I want doesn't even exist!

TOBY

(to Andrew)

I've never seen her like this before. She seems devastated.

ANDREW

I know, it makes me want to clobber that little runt.

FELIX

I think this is good for Olivia.

TOBY & ANDREW

What?

FELIX

All her life, Olivia has been given everything she could possibly desire on a silver platter. But this is the first time something is out of her reach.

ANDREW

You just like to watch people suffer, like the way you tricked Marvin.

FELIX

Marvin brought that on himself. But if anyone were to change Olivia, it'd be Vivian.

There's a knock on the door and Maria exits stage right to answer it.

OLIVIA WILSON

(sobs)

Marvin was always the one who answered the door. But he's gone too!

TOBY

That's because you fired-

Felix covers his mouth and shakes his head. Maria rushes on stage right.

ANDREW

What's wrong? Why do you look so shocked?

FELIX

Who was at the door?

MARIA

(shocked)

It's Owen.

TOBY

Owen who? Owen Beckett?

ANDREW

That's impossible. He always
sends his assistants.

MARIA

(To Olivia)

It's him, and he wants to talk to
you.

TOBY

Well you can tell him that he
better get off our property
before we call secur-

OLIVIA WILSON

Let him in.

Everyone looks at her in shock.

TOBY

You can't be serious!

OLIVIA WILSON

I am. I'd like you all to leave
too.

ANDREW

What?!

FELIX

C'mon you guys. You heard her.

*Felix takes Toby and Andrew's arms and leads them off stage
as they protest. Maria exits stage right. Owen then enters.*

OLIVIA WILSON

Hello, Owen.

OWEN BECKETT

It's good to see you, Olivia.

She directs him to a seat and they both sit down.

OLIVIA WILSON

I wasn't expecting this visit.

OWEN BECKETT

Neither was I, to be honest.
After everything that has
happened, I felt like it was
about time that we met face to
face again.

OLIVIA WILSON

I can't say I feel the same way.
This whole event has made me want
to shut myself off from the
world.

OWEN BECKETT

(chuckles)

She sure made a mess, didn't she?

OLIVIA WILSON

You speak of her with such
fondness.

OWEN BECKETT

Well, despite what she had done,
she made me realize something
important.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

I was a foolish man who only
cared about fame and money. I was
obsessed getting back together
with the famed Olivia Wilson in
order to gain more publicity. For
the longest time, I found no
fault in my actions. That is,
until I met Vivian.

OLIVIA WILSON

Forgive me but anyone could've
told you that there were plenty
faults in your actions.

OWEN BECKETT

(chuckles a little)

I suppose you're right.

There is a moment of silence between them.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

Olivia, I want to apologize to
you.

OLIVIA WILSON

(softly)

Really?

OWEN BECKETT

There's no excuse for what I did to you. I treated you horribly and I left you without hesitation. No one deserves that.

Olivia wipes a tear.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

I was just so stubborn, I couldn't tell what I was doing wrong until Vivian came along and made everything clear to me. She changed my life.

OLIVIA WILSON

I suppose she did the same for me too. I put myself up on a pedestal and no one could bring me back down. But, after being with Vivian, I realized how lonely I was.

OWEN BECKETT

Lonely?

OLIVIA WILSON

Even though I had no trouble finding a man and I was always surrounded by those who adored me, they only knew me on the surface. Vivian was the only one who could make me see that.

OWEN BECKETT

(with a smile)

Sounds like Vivian.

OLIVIA WILSON

She's an odd girl. Now that I look back on it, it's obvious to see how much she liked you, and yet she still pursued me for you.

OWEN BECKETT

And I was blind to it all.

Owen reaches out and puts his hand on top of Olivia's.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

I know I may be too late but I hope you'll forgive me. I'm tired of looking at the world through my father's eyes. I want to start over.

OLIVIA WILSON

Hearing you say those words makes me feel like a weight is finally off my shoulders. I suppose that girl really did change you.

OWEN BECKETT

She did, and I don't know how to repay her.

OLIVIA WILSON

You win her back, Owen. I might be perceived as an airhead sometimes but I can always recognize when someone is in love.

OWEN BECKETT

I just hope she takes me back.

OLIVIA WILSON

I forgive you, and she will too. Now stop wasting your time and go get her.

Owen smiles and gets up from the couch.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)

Oh, and one more thing.

OWEN BECKETT

Yeah?

OLIVIA WILSON

Do come visit sometimes. No matter what happened between us, I still consider you a friend.

OWEN BECKETT

As do I.

Owen exits stage right.

END SCENE

SCENE TWELVE

INT. THE DINER - NIGHT

Vivian is wiping down tables and getting ready to close the diner for the night. She grabs a broom and starts sweeping. Alexis enters stage right.

ALEXIS

You sure you want to close by yourself? I can stay a little longer.

VIVIAN DAVIS

No, it's okay. You should get some rest.

ALEXIS

As should you, Viv. Have you applied to any other jobs?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(nods)

I've been working on it. Sam gets to keep his job so that's a relief.

There is a moment of silence.

ALEXIS

Have you...heard from him at all?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(in a sad tone)

No, I haven't. It's not like I blame him though. I've given him good reason to hate me.

ALEXIS

Don't be so hard on yourself, Viv. Who knows? Perhaps things will turn around for you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

That's what I always thought but
the longer I pursue my dream, the
harder it becomes. Sometimes I
wonder if it's even worth it.

Alexis walks over and gives Vivian a hug.

ALEXIS

It is worth it. I know things are
difficult right now but it will
get better. Just know that I
support you.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Thanks, Alexis.

ALEXIS

You sure you're going to be okay
tonight?

VIVIAN DAVIS

(with a smile)

I'll be fine.

ALEXIS

I'll see you tomorrow then.

*Alexis exits stage left and Vivian begins to sweep again. She
looks up and notices the audience watching her.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh, hello again. Sorry if I seem
distracted today. I suppose I
have a lot on my mind. I'm glad
you're here with me though. It's
hard to be alone when you feel
like everything has gone wrong.

Vivian sets her broom down and a spotlight shines on her.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

Can I share something with you? I know I sound so determined to become a tailor and there are people who support me, but part of me can't stop listening to the ones who don't. I suppose without financial stability, nothing is guaranteed.

(Vivian bows her head.)

I know I should keep moving forward. I'll get a better job, save up some money, and finally achieve my dream. I just wish...

Vivian wipes away a tear.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

I just wish I could move on. But how am I supposed to forget him when he's all I can think about? What am I supposed to do?

Owen steps into the spotlight with Vivian.

OWEN BECKETT

Vivian.

The lights turn on.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(in surprise)

Owen? What are you doing here?

OWEN BECKETT

I wanted to see you. It's...about your brother.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(worried)

Owen, I understand that you're upset with me but please don't take away my brother's job. Everything was all my idea anyway. He loves working as your assistant and it'd crush me if he lost his job because of me!

OWEN BECKETT

(softly)

Vivian, I'm not firing your brother. I'm promoting him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

W-What? Promoted?

OWEN BECKETT

Sam knows his way around the company, better than most of my employees. I'm confident he'll make an excellent manager.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I surely thought I messed everything up. I don't know what to say.

OWEN BECKETT

Then say that you'll forgive me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Me forgive you? But you said I made a fool out of you.

OWEN BECKETT

You did, but maybe I needed to be the fool for once, to see what I had been missing.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

I realized you were always right beside me, no matter how stubborn I was. You taught me what love looks like even when I was chasing after a girl who I was never meant to be with. You completely changed my worldview.

VIVIAN DAVIS

But by doing what? I feel like I contributed very little.

OWEN BECKETT

By proving me wrong. For the longest time, I was so close-minded towards things like relationships or success. I was raised to believe that business was a man's world and that caused me to become bitter and controlling. It was only until you showed up that things started to change for me.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

And when you told me you wanted me...I never felt happier.

Vivian looks at him in surprise.

OWEN BECKETT (CONT'D)

I let you go because I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to change for you. I thought I would retreat back to my old ways and disappoint you. That's what I am still afraid of.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(with a smile)

You will disappoint me. Time and time again, you will disappoint me, but that doesn't matter. I will let you down sometimes, but what matters is that we work together.

OWEN BECKETT

(bows his head)

I truly don't deserve you, Vivian. How could you like someone like me? I was so horrible to you in the beginning. I'm a stubborn guy who was too stupid to see the wonderful woman in front of him.

VIVIAN DAVIS

And I was a girl who believed that no one could get through to my stubborn heart. Yet, here you are. So, to reply to your request, I forgive you. And I hope that you will forgive me too.

OWEN BECKETT

Of course I do, and I hope that you will return back to work as well.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I appreciate the offer but if I'm going to accomplish this dream, I need to do it on my own.

OWEN BECKETT

Then let me be by your side when you finally achieve that dream.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(smiles)

As a friend? Or something more?

OWEN BECKETT

Something more.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Then that is an offer I will gladly accept.

Vivian and Owen share a kiss and embrace. The scene ends as Owen picks her up and spins her around.

END SCENE

SCENE THIRTEEN

INT. VIVIAN'S STUDIO - FOUR YEARS LATER

Olivia stands in front of a mirror in a dress while Vivian takes measurements and pins different parts of the dress. In the background, people are cleaning up after finishing the photoshoot.

OLIVIA WILSON

I still think it could be tighter
around the waist.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well you don't want it too tight.
It might look more appealing but
I think having enough room to
breathe is more important.

OLIVIA WILSON

(shrugs)

Oh, whatever. I suppose I can't
argue with a professional.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I don't know if I'd call myself a
professional.

OLIVIA WILSON

Are you serious? It's been four
years and you're already starting
your own clothing line! Besides,
I'd never even consider hiring
you if you weren't a pro.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Well I appreciate your kind
words, Olivia. Now hold still.

*Vivian continues to pin the dress. Owen enters stage right
with a coffee in his hand.*

OWEN BECKETT

I didn't know you were working
with Olivia today.

VIVIAN DAVIS

Oh great, you're here!

Vivian runs over to Owen and they share a kiss.

VIVIAN DAVIS (CONT'D)

You don't know how exhausted I've
been. Ever since I announced my
own clothing line, I've been
getting calls from so many chain
stores that want to work with me.
It feels amazing but I can barely
keep my eyes open.

OWEN BECKETT
(with a laugh)
 You should really hire an
 assistant.

VIVIAN DAVIS
 I know, I know.

OLIVIA WILSON
 Well whatever you do, don't make
 your assistant play dress-up. We
 all know how that went.

They share a laugh and Owen hands Vivian her coffee.

OWEN BECKETT
 Well I figured you were tiring
 yourself out so I brought you
 some coffee.

VIVIAN DAVIS
 Thanks, Owen.

*Vivian stands on her tip-toes and kisses his cheek while
 Olivia rolls her eyes.*

OLIVIA WILSON
(sarcastically)
 How adorable. Well I don't need a
 man to give me coffee when I have
 four assistants at my disposal.

Olivia claps her hands loudly.

OLIVIA WILSON (CONT'D)
(shouting)
 Hey! One of you buffoons fetch me
 some coffee!

Andrew stumbles on stage left.

ANDREW
 I'll get it to you right away,
 Olivia! What would you like? A
 latte? Mocha? Macchiato?

Toby follows stage left, rolling his eyes.

TOBY

(to Andrew)

Oh stop acting like such a pet.
Besides, it's not even your job
to pick up deliveries for her.
It's his job.

Felix enters stage left, texting on his phone.

FELIX

(Looks up in
confusion)

What was that?

ANDREW

I am fully capable of doing it
myself!

TOBY

Well duh! How the heck can you be
incapable of getting coffee? My
point is, you can't be throwing
yourself at Olivia whenever you
get the chance.

ANDREW

I'm not!

FELIX

You totally are.

ANDREW

Hey, shut up!

Maria enters stage left.

MARIA

You're all idiots. I'll just get
the coffee myself.

TOBY

Like you have any room to talk!
You always think you're better
than us but you don't contribute
either!

MARIA

(offended)

You're just jealous cause I'd be
a better manager!

TOBY

Excuse me?!

ANDREW

(to Felix)

I don't know what they're talking about.

FELIX

(pats Andrew on the back)

Ignorance is bliss, my friend.

Olivia sighs tiredly as they continue to argue in the background.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well anyway, I'm glad you two are happy. But how do you even have time for each other? It must be difficult.

OWEN BECKETT

We manage. Things are going smoothly at work so I have more time to spend with Vivian.

(to Vivian)

I'm putting your brother hard at work.

VIVIAN DAVIS

He can handle it. Now that he has a girlfriend, he's more motivated to make money.

OLIVIA WILSON

Yeah, how does it feel that your brother is dating your best friend? I bet it's super awkward.

VIVIAN DAVIS

It's odd but I don't mind. I'm glad he's happy.

OWEN BECKETT

Speak of the devil.

Sam and Alexis enter stage right.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Wow, sis. You really spruced this place up. I remember how it looked like a flooded basement before.

OLIVIA WILSON

Well she obviously had my help with the decorating. Notice how the paint matches the aesthetic of the room.

OWEN BECKETT

But I'm the one who picked out the paint.

OLIVIA WILSON

Oh shush! Must you take all the credit?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Anyway! The studio looks amazing and it's all thanks to the wonderful support from all of you guys. I don't know where I'd be without you.

SAMUEL DAVIS

Probably still working at that minimum wage diner.

ALEXIS

*(playfully hits
Samuel)*

Hey! I still work there, you know.

SAMUEL DAVIS

(laughs nervously)

Well since we're all here, why don't we grab some dinner?

OWEN BECKETT

That's a wonderful idea. It's on me tonight.

OLIVIA WILSON

Yes, please. I've been standing here for too long. Seamstress, unpin me.

VIVIAN DAVIS

I'm coming, I'm coming.

While Vivian removes the pins in Olivia's dress, Toby walks over to Owen.

TOBY

*(to Owen, patting him
on the shoulder)*

You know, I've always considered
you to be like a son to me.

OWEN BECKETT

You can come too.

TOBY

Bless your heart.

FELIX

Hey, I'm always up for free food.

MARIA

Of course you are. You never do
your job so you constantly have
to rely on others to pay for you.

FELIX

Exactly! That's why it's great to
have you around.

Before Maria can respond, Toby paces the room, looking for Andrew.

TOBY

Hey, where'd Andrew go? Wasn't he
here like a few minutes ago?

MARIA

I don't know! He probably left
the building and got lost.

Andrew runs in stage left while holding four coffees.

ANDREW

(to Olivia)

I wasn't sure which one you
wanted so I got a latte, a mocha,
a macchiato, and just plain
coffee.

OLIVIA WILSON

(with a smile)

You're so sweet, Andrew. C'mon,
let's go eat.

Olivia links arms with Andrew and they exit stage right.

TOBY

(to Maria and Felix)

I told you they'd get together.
Who's the idiot now?

MARIA

Still you.

Maria exits stage right.

TOBY

Now hold on!

Toby chases after her.

SAMUEL DAVIS

*(offers an arm to
Alexis)*

Shall we?

ALEXIS

(to Vivian)

I'll meet you there.

*Vivian waves goodbye as Samuel and Alexis exit. Vivian looks
around the room.*

VIVIAN DAVIS

I wish she could see this.

OWEN BECKETT

Your mom?

VIVIAN DAVIS

Yes. It was part of her dream
after all. But she never got to
see it through.

OWEN BECKETT

No, but you did, and I'm sure she
was with you every step of the
way.

VIVIAN DAVIS

It took me awhile to get here.

OWEN BECKETT

That's true, and I'm sure I
didn't help much during the
process.

VIVIAN DAVIS

(with a laugh)

But if you weren't in my life, I
don't think I'd be here. You were
the piece of the puzzle that I
was missing.

(hugs him tightly)

But I'm glad I found you.

OWEN BECKETT

I feel the same way-

Vivian's phone rings.

VIVIAN DAVIS

*(looking at the
screen)*

Hold on, I need to take this.

Owen quickly takes it out of her hand and holds it above her.

OWEN BECKETT

No, we are going to dinner! No
business calls!

VIVIAN DAVIS

But it might be important!

OWEN BECKETT

Not as important as food!

Owen exits while holding up the phone.

VIVIAN DAVIS

C'mon, give it back!

Vivian chases after him.

END SCENE

SCENE FOURTEEN

Felix enters stage right and notices the audience.

FELIX

Oh? Did Vivian leave you all behind? Well, I wouldn't take it to heart. She's moving up in the world and no longer has time for those super long monologues she used to give. She has entered a new stage in her life where she is no longer living in a man's world. She achieved her dream, and now she has someone to share it with. So, you may not see much of her anymore. But don't you worry! I'll be here to keep you company.

Felix sits on the ground with a smile. There is a moment of silence.

TOBY

(off stage)

Felix, the food is here!

He proceeds to get up immediately.

FELIX

Well it has been a pleasure entertaining all of you wonderful people. But duty calls and I must answer it. So farewell, and goodnight!

Felix exits.

THE END