

I'll be right back. Stay here. Don't move. Keep it safe.
Don't move. Hahaaaaa!

(RALPH kisses DAPHNE. Then he runs out. We hear him scream with happiness from offstage. DAPHNE is stunned. She holds the book to her chest. It's the treasure of the century.)

DAPHNE. Oh my God.

(Ding dong! The doorbell rings. She squeezes the book as if it's a child, then puts the book on the desk and hurries out the door.)

Coming!

(The instant she's gone, ALEKSI walks in with his cart.)

START: ALEKSI. Hello? Miss Rain? Are you still here? Good. She is gone.

(He begins cleaning the room, and by accident, his cart hits the desk and the manuscript falls into a trash can. He does not see this happen. A moment later, he notices that the trash can is full.)

Puh. Look at this trash. It is good thing I am being here, it is disgraceful.

(He empties the trash - including the manuscript - into the cart.)

And look at this book. It is very old. No wonder they are throwing it away. Wait. I have idea. I have been dying to try the paper shredder since the day I got here! Oh, just look at this baby. It is vintage.

(He turns on the shredder and we hear the loud whir of its gears. Whrrrrrrrrrr!)

OK, here goes.

(He tears a page from the manuscript and feeds it into the shredder. Grshhhhhhhunk!! It's shredded.)

I am liking the very idea of shredder because it is philosophical. It say to me that life is fragile, and that which endures in this crazy world is only love and trust, not ink and paper.

(Grshhhhhhhunk!! He shreds the second page.)

Wait. I am getting new idea. In the English Department there is even better shredder, which is doing three pages at the same time! I will shred the whole book in fifteen minutes! Haha!

END:

(ALEKSI exits. At which moment DAPHNE and the DEAN hurry in.)

DEAN. He said he was *very* excited, and I just couldn't bear to wait any longer.

DAPHNE. Well I know he'll want to tell you himself because it's quite a find and he thinks of it as...

(She sees the empty spot on the desk where she left the manuscript and freezes. Then she staggers backward. During the following she looks around the desk, picks up other books and papers, looking everywhere.)

DEAN. As what?

DAPHNE. Hmm?

DEAN. You said he thinks of it *as*.

DAPHNE. Yes, ma'am.

DEAN. As what?

DAPHNE. As what?

DEAN. Yes.

DAPHNE. Of course.

DEAN. Of course what?

DAPHNE. Yes.

DEAN. Yes what?! Daphne!

(And now she's tearing the place apart, looking through shelves, under chairs, and behind the pillows.)