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VIRTUAL PLATFORM

A VIRTUAL DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Claire Broome



Virtual Platform
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Characters

8 characters (any gender)

Character names can be changed to suit the actor's initials. Characters can be played by any gender. Any gendered language can be changed to reflect the preference of the actor (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/zir/zirs, xe/xem/xir).

Student: Has no idea what is going on.

Z.H.: Always trying to avoid answering questions.

S.D.: Loves online learning because of being safe at home.

S.N.: Has lots of energy.

A.S.: Half listening.

E.M.: Seems like a friend, but really isn't.

I.L.: Always on her phone.

A.D.: Only speaks in announcements.

Staging

This play is written to be performed online. It could be adapted to be performed in person using social distancing. Actors can use a neutral background or create a background that could reflect their character. For example, S.D. could have numerous Post-it notes with lists of things to do.

Costumes

Actors should be in "neutral clothing", no logos, plain shirts.

Props List

Paper and pencils for each actor. Student needs a piece of paper with a picture of a stick figure drawn on it.

Special Thanks

The playwright would like to acknowledge the contributions from the original cast from John Fraser Secondary School. This show was first performed in May 2021, online. Thank you for believing in the play concept and having faith in me to write it for you.

Character initials are on the screen. STUDENT enters the call and turns on their camera. STUDENT looks at the screen, looks surprised and quickly turns off their camera. Long Pause.

STUDENT: *(with camera off)* Um, hello? Is anyone there? *(pause)* It's just that I don't know if I am in the right place. I got this link, and I wasn't sure –

Other characters turn on their cameras and stare at the screen staying as still as possible.

STUDENT: Oh, good, uh, hey. Oh wait. *(turns on their camera)* Does anyone know, um what class this is? I just got this link and then well, you know, everything changed and... um... Is anyone actually there?

A.D.: *(voicing the sound of entering a call)* Boop, boop, boop, boop. *(All actors unfreeze. I.L. is looking at her phone.)* Good morning, as you are aware our model of teaching has shifted... again. You should have received a link for your online course.

STUDENT: Oh hello, yes, I did, I...

A.D.: Now please rise for the playing of your National Anthem.

Everyone stands. STUDENT stands too. No anthem plays. STUDENT looks confused.

STUDENT: Is there anything playing?

I.L.: *(still looking at her phone)* Sssshhh! It's rude to talk during the Anthem.

STUDENT: But I don't hear anything.

S.D.: You're supposed to imagine it. It's your National Anthem.

A.S.: Thanks, I do look pretty handsome.

STUDENT: What? Don't we all have the same...?

I.L.: Sssshhh! Geez.

E.M.: Awe, give him a break!

I.L.: Sssshhh!

STUDENT awkwardly stands.

A.D.: Please be seated.

Everyone sits in their own time. Everyone except STUDENT takes out a piece of paper and a pencil. STUDENT notices and then looks for a piece of paper and pencil. Suddenly everyone, except STUDENT, looks like they are madly writing.

STUDENT: Wait. What's happening?

S.N.: (*enthusiastically*) Unit four test. Wooh!

STUDENT: Wait – what? We're doing unit four?

Z.H.: That's what the test says.

STUDENT: What test?

Z.H.: (*obviously*) The unit four test.

I.L.: (*still looking at her phone*) It's all right here.

STUDENT: It's on your phone?

I.L.: Yeah – like it would be on my phone.

E.M.: You're so funny.

STUDENT: I'm missing something here. What happened to units one, two and three?

E.M.: We'll get to them if we can.

S.N.: This is just a much more efficient way of learning, we're flying through this course!

STUDENT: Don't we need units one, two and three to be able to do unit four?

S.D.: They are posted in the resources section.

STUDENT: Where are you seeing all of this?

S.D.: Perfectly laid out on our platform.

STUDENT: What platform?

E.M.: You're just hilarious!

A.S.: No, no, I am not Aquarius, I was born in February.

A.D.: Ding, ding, ding.

Everyone, except STUDENT, puts their pencils down.

S.N.: That was great! Really great!

S.D.: The best way to learn.

S.N.: Isn't it? I can't imagine going back.

S.D.: No, no – we can't go back.

STUDENT: I didn't even see the test.

E.M.: We'll take it up in a moment.

I.L.: Six hundred and twenty-two.

S.D.: Nineteen, ninety-four.

STUDENT: Is this Math class?

A.S.: Depends on the eyeglass.

S.N.: Oh, oh, oh, I know this one! Forty-two!

S.D.: The answer to everything.

Z.H.: Why should I know the answer – you're the teacher!

S.N.: Isn't there a teacher in all of us?

Z.H.: Are you asking me?

S.N.: It's a fair question.

Z.H.: Is it?

STUDENT: Is there a teacher here? I mean, like a real teacher?

E.M.: You are so funny!

S.D.: Of course there's a teacher here.

STUDENT: Where?

A.D.: Beep, beep beep. Mandatory Physical Activity.

STUDENT: What?

S.D.: Okay team, we need to get a practice in before our big game.

STUDENT: When's the game?

S.D.: In less than a minute!

S.N.: Okay A.S. send me a chest pass.

A.S.: Yeah, I don't know the atomic mass.

S.N.: Okay – A.D., I am going to send you a chest pass.

S.N. looks A.S. if they are going to send a chest pass.

Z.H. looks A.S. if they are trying to block the pass.

A.D.: Mandatory Physical Activity time is an opportunity to take care of our physical health and wellness.

E.M.: Go team go!

STUDENT: You can pass me the ball.

S.D.: You're benched!

S.N. and Z.H. stop pretending to play.

STUDENT: What?

E.M.: Come on coach – let him play!

STUDENT: I just want to play.

S.D.: No, you're benched if you're going to be on my team, you're going to follow my rules.

STUDENT looks disappointed.

A.D.: Game time! Come and support your team!

S.D.: Okay, let's show them what we're all about!

STUDENT: (*Looks around*) Who?

S.N.: Okay, I.L. get ready for a chest pass. (*S.N. and Z.H. continue to pretend to play*)

I.L.: (*looking at her phone*) Ewe! No!

S.N.: E.M. – you're open.

S.N. "throws" an imaginary chest pass to E.M. E.M. catches the chest pass.

E.M.: A.D.! Catch (*sends a "bounce pass" to A.D.*)

S.N.: Shoot! Shoot!

A.D. "shoots" and Z.H. tries to block.

S.D.: Nice shot! Come on Z.H. block it, block it!

Z.H.: I'm trying.

S.D.: Come on Z.H.! Get your head in the game.

S.N.: Pass it, pass it!

A.D. sends a chest pass to E.M., E.M. sends a chest pass to A.D., A.D. pretends to miss the ball and looks around behind him for it. STUDENT pretends to pick up the ball.

STUDENT: I got it! Ready S.N.!

S.N. looks as if he is ready to catch the ball, Z.H. looks as if she is blocking. Student pretends to send a chest pass which “hits” Z.H. in the head. Z.H. “falls” out of frame. Everyone reacts.

I.L.: Ooohhh, that’s gotta hurt!

S.D.: Z.H., you okay?

Z.H. mumbles something, then comes back into the frame rubbing her head.

S.N.: Are you okay?

A.D.: Bleep. Concussion Protocol training sessions are happening now.

S.N.: (to STUDENT) What was that all about?

S.D.: Yeah – I said you were benched!

A.D.: Concussion Protocol step one. Ask if the person is okay.

Z.H.: I’m fine.

A.D.: Step two, if the person says they are fine, then keep playing.

STUDENT: I don’t think that is how the Concussion Protocol goes.

S.D.: Great! There goes our best player! Thanks a lot!

S.N.: Yah, thanks! There goes the championship game.

STUDENT: What are you talking about? I don’t even get how she got hurt.

E.M.: You’re so funny.

STUDENT: Can you please stop saying that!

E.M.: But you are, you’re hilarious!

A.S.: I’m not a Sagittarius, I was born in December.

Z.H., S.D., S.N., A.S., I.L. and A.D. all look disappointed and shake their head and turn off their cameras.

STUDENT: (*notices E.M. still has her camera on*) Hey, I'm really sorry, I didn't know that was, well, a game. I'm sorry.

E.M.: Yeah, you say that a lot. That's why we're best friends.

STUDENT: We are?

E.M.: You're so funny. Just one of the things I like about you.

STUDENT: Hum, okay. Listen, I really need your help. I have no idea what is going on and I don't know what I am supposed to do. Do you think you could...

Pause. E.M. stares blankly at the screen. STUDENT waits for E.M. to say something. Let it get awkward.

E.M.: Are you going to finish that sentence? Oh wait, I get it, you're so funny.

STUDENT looks defeated. A.D. turns on his camera.

A.D.: Br-ring!

Z.H., S.D., S.N., A.S., I.L. turn on their cameras. Next set of lines are delivered clearly, but as quickly as possible.

S.D.: Alaska is the Westernmost and Easternmost State in the US.

S.N.: At 12.:05 am.

I.L.: (*looking at her phone*) I have twenty thousand followers.

Z.H.: Hey, it's not my job to supply all the answers. Isn't that what you get paid for?

S.D.: The human eye blinks an average of 4.2 million times a year.

S.N.: Seven hundred thousand and two.

I.L.: (*looking at her phone*) This is the greatest platform.

Z.H.: I'm not answering that!

S.D.: Dolphins sleep with one eye open.

S.N.: As they say, you can bring a horse to water...

I.L.: Banned! How can I be banned?

S.D.: In 1867!

S.N.: To be or not to be!

A.D.: Moving to breakout rooms in (*everyone except STUDENT and S.D. turn off their cameras during the countdown*) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

S.D.: Oh great, you're my partner.

STUDENT: Sorry.

S.D.: It's fine.

*S.D. looks like she is looking for something online.
STUDENT sits awkwardly.*

STUDENT: (*hesitantly*) So, do you know what we're supposed to do?

S.D.: Yes.

STUDENT: Well, I'd like to help, what can I do?

S.D.: It's not my place to tell you what to do. Pick what you want to do.

STUDENT: (*pauses*) So, huh, this online learning is terrible, right?

*S.D. stops and looks up and stares at STUDENT,
STUDENT looks uncomfortable.*

S.D.: Are you kidding me? This is fantastic!

STUDENT: Really?

S.D.: Do you know how many steps were part of my commute this morning? (*slight pause*) Seven, seven steps.

STUDENT: Well, I guess, yeah, you can just roll out of bed.

S.D.: Roll out of bed? That sounds pretty dangerous.

STUDENT: Well, not literally roll, you know, figuratively.

S.D.: Do you know how many steps it is for me to go to the bathroom?

STUDENT: No.

S.D.: Twenty-eight, and to get food from the kitchen?

STUDENT: Forty-eight?

S.D.: What?

STUDENT: I'm guessing, forty-eight steps.

S.D.: No, I text my Dad. He brings me what I want. I haven't had to walk more than twenty-eight steps to get where I need to be in months.

STUDENT: And that's good?

S.D.: It's not good, it's amazing. Do you know how many steps I have to take during in-person school?

STUDENT: Do you want me to guess?

S.D.: Eight thousand, seven hundred and fifty-two. And do you know what could happen with each one of those steps?

STUDENT: Better health?

S.D.: Yeah, right. During my seven step commute, I step easily, nothing in my way, nothing to worry about. But going to in-person school, I have a one in a two-hundred and fifty million chance of dying from a falling coconut, or a three-hundred million to one chance of dying from a shark attack, or a ten million to one chance of being hit by lightning! That's only ten million to one!

STUDENT: Yeah, I guess, it's possible...

S.D.: What if I get hit by an asteroid? Or attacked by a goldfish, or get a paper cut?

STUDENT: A paper cut walking to school?

S.D.: No thank you! Why would I want to go back to any of that?

STUDENT: Don't you miss your friends?

S.D.: Miss my friends? I can just text them.

STUDENT: But it's not the same, wouldn't you rather see them in person?

S.D.: No. Why would I want to do that?

STUDENT: I kinda miss hanging out with my friends.

S.D.: I can see them on my screen.

STUDENT: It just feels...

S.D.: Safe? Exactly. Here I'm safe. In these four walls, I can control the temperature, I can decide how much lighting I want, I can talk to who I want and when. I can eat what I want. It's safe, I don't have to worry about anything.

STUDENT: But aren't you lonely? I mean, I know life comes with risks, but at least you get to...

S.D.: Why should it?

STUDENT: Risk is just a part of life.

S.D.: What life? Everything has changed.

STUDENT: What will you do when things go back to normal?

S.D.: Normal? Nothing about what happened before was normal? Why would anyone want to go back to that? I don't think that is something I have to worry about.

A.D.: (*camera off*) Closing the breakout rooms in (*everyone except STUDENT and S.D. turn on their cameras during the countdown*) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

S.D.: Ready to present?

STUDENT: We're presenting?

S.D.: I sent you the doc?

STUDENT: Where?

E.M.: Check your email.

STUDENT looks at email, looks disappointed not to find anything.

S.D.: So, do you want me to start or should you?

STUDENT: No, go right ahead!

S.D.: Are you sure, I don't want to take credit for your ideas.

STUDENT: My ideas?

S.D.: Why don't we let A.S. go first then.

STUDENT: A.S. was in our group?

A.S.: Don't you remember the hula hoop?

STUDENT: What?

A.S.: Was that cut?

S.D.: Not according to my note.

A.S.: Does it sound like I need to clear my throat?

S.D.: Why don't you start.

A.S.: Okay. (*this monologue is supposed to sound like the wifi is cutting out*)
I was so excited to see this class on my timetable. (*sound cuts out,*
A.S. just moves mouth) is my favourite subject, I have always loved
(*sound cuts out*)

STUDENT: Agh, your sound is cutting out.

S.N.: Don't interrupt! Go ahead

A.D.: We all hear you just fine.

A.S.: I love the way you get to (*The sound cuts out. A.S. moves their mouth as if they are talking passionately. Z.H., S.D., S.N., E.M., I.L. and A.D. all start nodding, and appearing to be impressed and touched by what A.S. has to say.*) And that is why, I am going to dedicate my life to the study of (*The sound cuts out. A.S. just moves their mouth.*)

E.M.: Well said!

S.N.: That was just, just, wow!

Z.H.: You actually made this all make sense, this entire course!

S.D.: I am so touched by all that. I am so glad you went first for our group. (*pause and sigh*) Are you going to go?

STUDENT: Who me?

S.D.: Well, I think you're next.

STUDENT: I don't even know what we're...

A.D.: Ding dong!

STUDENT: What's that, the door?

E.M.: The door! You're so silly. What kind of a door sounds like "ding dong?"

STUDENT: You know, like "ding dong," the bell.

E.M.: Well, that is a bell, not a door! You crack me up.

STUDENT: What is happening?

E.M.: Class change.

STUDENT: That was one class? What class was it? Wait – what class is next?

E.M.: Visual Arts.

STUDENT: Awesome, okay, thanks, I got this.

Everyone except STUDENT takes out a piece of paper and a pencil. STUDENT notices and then looks for a piece of paper and pencil. Suddenly everyone, except STUDENT, looks like they are madly writing.

STUDENT: Is it another test?

S.N.: That would be the greatest! Tests in Visual Arts! Yes!

Z.H.: You're supposed to be working on your drawing assignment. We have to share soon.

STUDENT: Oh, what are we supposed to be drawing?

Z.H.: Don't ask me, I'm not your teacher.

A.D.: Bing! Pencils down. (*STUDENT panics and quickly draws something.*)
Bing! Pencils down!

STUDENT puts their pencil down and raises their hands to indicate that they have stopped drawing, then puts their hands down.

S.N.: I am really proud of this, can I go first?

Z.H.: No one's stopping you.

S.N.: This is my greatest work! I can't believe it. It was just like being one with the universe, life, you know all of it.

I.L.: (*looking at her phone*) Can I take a screenshot for my followers?

S.N.: Thank you for asking first, and yes! This should be shared with the world.

S.D.: Well show us already.

S.N.: Okay. I am so excited!

S.N. takes a deep breath then holds up a blank piece of paper. Z.H., S.D., A.S., E.M. and I.L. all react as if they have seen the greatest piece of art ever. STUDENT looks confused.

S.D.: Oh, S.N., you, wow! You've outdone yourself.

S.N.: Oh, go on.

E.M.: That's absolutely beautiful.

Z.H.: I love the undulating line in balance with the primary and complementary colours.

S.D.: And the value with the different greens!

I.L.: (*looking at her phone*) My followers are going to love this!

STUDENT: Is this some kind of joke?

E.M.: No. Aren't you the one who makes all the jokes?

STUDENT: Is this a snowman in a snowstorm or something?

S.N.: Hum, no. How can you even say that?

I.L.: (*still looking at her phone*) Seriously rude!

E.M.: Are you trying to be funny?

STUDENT: There is nothing on that page!

Z.H.: Are you serious?

E.M.: What's wrong with you?

STUDENT: What are you talking about? Clearly, there is nothing on that page. Come on, you all can see that!

S.N.: (*dramatically going to burst into tears*) You're right, you're right, there is nothing on this page.

STUDENT: You see!

S.N.: But my blood, sweat and tears.

E.M.: Look, I don't know what's wrong with you! But this isn't funny.

STUDENT: It's a blank page!

E.M.: As your best friend, I have to tell you that you're being a jerk. Clearly, S.N. has put a lot of work into this. You're just being rude!

STUDENT: So you're all saying that you don't see a blank page? (*they all nod*) Well, I guess, I just, don't, see it.

E.M.: Well if you are such an art critic, then show us your work.

Z.H.: Yeah – apparently you know art better than anyone.

STUDENT: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend anyone.

S.D.: Show us your work.

STUDENT: Look, I really don't want to show what I made.

E.M.: So you can dish it out, but you can't take it! Figures!

STUDENT: Okay, okay. *(slowly shows a picture of a stick figure)*

Z.H.: And that is what you call art?

STUDENT: No, I said, I didn't have time.

I.L.: Wow! That is, so, terrible. My followers would love it!

STUDENT: Please?

I.L.: What?

STUDENT: Do you have to share this?

I.L.: Do I have to share this? Of course not. But do I want to share this – of course I do! Do you know how many people are going to comment on this post! Do you know how many people will rate this post?

STUDENT: Not many I hope.

I.L.: Tens of thousands. You need to post things that matter to people.

STUDENT: But it's a stick figure!

E.M.: Yeah, and one made out of lines – am I right?

S.D.: Yeah.

E.M.: It's not even sticks!

STUDENT: Please don't post it.

I.L.: But I have to. If I don't post on a regular basis, what would people notice? What would people like? Could you imagine not being able to like something or post a comment when you're trying to fill thirty seconds to avoid boredom?

STUDENT: What's wrong with boredom?

I.L.: It's boring. What am I supposed to do with that wasted time? There's so much I could be seeing, commenting on, and, like, engaging in. What else am I supposed to do? Sit here, and not share it?

STUDENT: But, being on all the time, you know, public, isn't that hard? It just sounds so, onerous.

A.S.: No, I am not a Taurus, I was born in May.

STUDENT: No, I just meant being on all the time.

I.L.: Look, the only thing that matters is that people notice me.

STUDENT: But it's not you they are noting, just your posts.

I.L.: It's the same thing! I am my posts. That's what matters. You think any of this matters?

STUDENT: That just seems...

A.D.: Woo, woo, woo, flashing lights! Fire! Fire!

STUDENT: What?

A.D.: Woo, woo, woo, flashing lights! Fire! Fire!

Z.H.: Bet it is just a drill.

STUDENT: We're not even in the same space.

A.D.: Please lineup in alphabetical order and proceed to your fire route. (*pause, no one moves*)

STUDENT: This is ridiculous!

S.D.: I know, right? What a waste of class time!

S.N.: Fire drill! Wooh! So exciting!

STUDENT: What is happening?

E.M.: What is with all the questions all the time? It's starting to get annoying.

Z.H.: At least we get to go outside.

Z.H., S.D., S.N., A.D., I.L., E.M., and A.S. all pretend to be outside.

Z.H.: (*rubbing her shoulders*) It's so cold! Should have brought my jacket.

E.M.: It's nice in the sun.

Z.H.: (*shifts slightly in her chair*) Ah, yeah. Nice.

S.D.: (*realizing, starts looking up*) Oh no, I didn't look for coconuts.

STUDENT: You haven't left your room!

S.N.: I wonder if it's a real fire, drills don't usually take this long.

A.S.: No, I don't think you'd look good in a sarong.

A.D.: Ring, ring ring. And that concludes your daily fire drill. Please resume your classroom activities.

Z.H.: Do we have to?

The next set of lines are delivered clearly but as quickly as possible.

S.D.: Seven, twenty-two.

E.M.: Blue and Orange.

S.N.: Tulips.

A.S.: Back-flip.

I.L.: I'm trending!

S.N.: Stomach acid is strong enough to dissolve stainless steel.

S.D.: Sloths can hold their breath longer than dolphins can.

Z.H.: Stop asking me questions!

I.L.: I'm an influencer!

S.N.: The measure is in a four-count.

I.L.: Number one!

S.D.: They lived in the Prairies.

A.S.: No, I am not an Aries, I was born in April.

Z.H.: Don't you know what the answer is? Isn't that why you're the teacher?

E.M.: "A."

S.D.: Five.

S.N.: E.

STUDENT: What's happening!

A.D.: Breaking news. Due to a teacher shortage, students will take turns teaching the class. The schedule has been sent to you.

S.N.: Wooh! Can't wait for my turn.

S.D.: I know, I wish mine was sooner!

E.M.: Okay bestie, you are up!

STUDENT: What? Who me?

E.M.: Yeah, you are up first, teach.

STUDENT: You gotta be kidding me.

Z.H.: You're not going to ask us questions are you?

STUDENT: I, hum, I don't know. I mean, isn't that what teachers do?

Z.H.: (*sarcastic*) Great, so you're one of those teachers.

STUDENT: I'm not a teacher.

A.D.: Well today you are!

E.M.: I've never been best friends with a teacher before.

STUDENT: What am I supposed to do?

E.M.: You're so silly. Teach all of us of course.

STUDENT: But I'm not qualified.

S.D.: But this is an emergency, everyone has to pitch in.

STUDENT: But I don't know what I'm doing.

S.D.: It was emailed to you.

S.N.: Come on! We get to teach! Step up, wooh!

Z.H.: Just don't ask me to answer anything.

A.S.: No, no, no, I'm not a Libra. I was born in October, and that was a blessing.

STUDENT: So what am I supposed to do?

E.M.: Check your email.

S.D.: It's all there, perfectly laid out.

STUDENT tries to check email.

STUDENT: I didn't get anything.

Z.H.: (*sarcastic*) Wow! Great, glad we got such a great teacher.

STUDENT: This isn't my fault.

S.D.: But we're all waiting – what do you want us to do?

STUDENT: I, huh, I don't, hum...

S.N.: Come on! I want to learn, Bring it on, Teach!

S.D.: Yeah.

Z.H.: Just no questions.

STUDENT: But how do I know what to do? I'm not prepared.

E.M.: You're so funny.

STUDENT: No I'm not.

S.D.: That's a good start. Teachers are not funny.

Z.H.: Not funny at all.

STUDENT: I, hum.

E.M.: You've got to do something.

STUDENT: Okay, hum. Read chapter, hum, twelve.

S.N.: So you want us to read chapter twelve?

STUDENT: Yeah, I just said that.

S.N.: So, we're reading chapter twelve?

STUDENT: Yeah, you will be reading chapter twelve.

S.D.: We will be reading chapter twelve?

STUDENT: Yup, that is what I just said.

Z.H.: Just reading right?

STUDENT: No, you should be doing something other than reading?

Z.H.: No questions!

STUDENT: Fine, no questions. Um, how about an essay?

S.N.: Yeah, wooh! An essay!

S.D.: That's all we've done this year!

STUDENT: We have? Okay, then how about, a hum, a diorama?

S.N.: A diorama! Sweet! Wooh!

Z.H.: Is there a question attached?

S.D.: We don't have to go out and buy supplies right? We can use what we have from home? Right?



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