Lonnie Shakespeare, a sophomore Philosophy major taking a Psychology class, needs to write a term paper. Remembering that he had helped out a Psychology major friend of his, Shirley Bacon, by writing a paper for her for a Philosophy course she had taken the previous semester, Lonnie asked Shirley to return the favor by writing the paper due in his Psychology class (a class she had taken during her freshmen year). Without hesitation, Shirley agrees to help out Lonnie. Lonnie provides Shirley with a list of acceptable topics for the paper. The night before the paper is due, Shirley provides Lonnie with a paper that directly addresses one of the listed topics.

Two weeks after handing in the paper, Lonnie looks up his final grades for the semester and sees that he has failed his Psychology course. He meets with his Psychology instructor and is told that the paper he submitted was previously submitted (word for word) by a former student for the same course. Not knowing with complete certainty that the student who originally handed in the paper was involved in Lonnie’s act of cheating, the instructor does not reveal that student’s name to Lonnie. Although Lonnie knows that Shirley was a willing participant, the instructor has no intention of pursuing any action against her.

Lonnie is quite upset. He wrote the paper Shirley handed in for her Philosophy course for the sole purpose of helping her out; he never used it for any course he had taken. Instead of writing a new paper for him, Shirley recycled a paper she knew that she previously submitted to the same instructor for the same course. In Lonnie’s mind she must have known there was a good chance that he would get caught.

Was it fair for Lonnie to receive an F for the Psychology course? Did the instructor act appropriately (was there something else the instructor should have done)? What about Shirley—should Lonnie or the instructor involve her in this case of plagiarism? Prepare your responses for the class.