



my lover and mary jane

by

Ella Johns

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama Editor EZRA NEIGHBORS writes...*

*All too often queer characters alike have been used as tragic underpins to a more compelling heterosexual story. In *My Lover and Mary Jane*, this tradition is broken and we are oh so thankful. A glimpse into the unraveling of a queer love triangle relies on nothing more than*

letting a story be told. No demons, alien invasions, tragic deaths, or over-the-top spectacle. Ella Johns gives us queer people exactly as queer people are; people. Captivating in everyday life and troubled with the same struggles we face. Johns dives into grief, how we cope in the face of struggle, and the knowledge that a life is one we choose.

my lover and mary jane

a play in 1 act

by ella johns

CHARACTERS

ZO: Queer. Recently went through a break up. Originally from georgia - that's where she met Liz, now goes to school in Boston. Recently cut her own bangs and it shows.

BECK: Nonbinary Bushwick lesbian and Liz's roommate. Is dating someone in NY. The kind of person you see on the streets of nyc and think about for weeks after.

SETTING

A cabin somewhere in the Tennessee Mountains.

TIME

Present day.

NOTE: Everytime the characters are high there should be some kind of shift in music / lighting. This should be amplified times 10 during the shrooms scene.

Text in parenthesis shouldn't be spoken, unless it should.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(The stage is set as a cabin home, living room and porch. The living room has a front door facing the audience as well as a couch and side table next to the door. There are two doors stage left that lead off to the rooms / bathrooms. Off of the cabin there is a porch with a table and three chairs. Music begins to play off of ZO's iphone as she exits one of the bedrooms and begins dancing around the apartment. She is wearing a flowy denim flannel and no pants and she is holding a small box. She exits the cabin and goes onto the porch. She is still dancing around as she removes the contents of the box: one small and very dirty (borderline disgusting) pipe, a small ziploc bag with weed inside, a tiny grinder with alien print all over it, and a rainbow colored lighter with no safety. She begins to grind and pack a bowl of weed. When she's done she sits on top of the table and smokes while looking out at the mountain view. She closes her eyes and begins to meditate and breathe in the mountain air - this is her peace. Suddenly she hears a car pull up and a door code starts to be put in. She jumps up and tries to stuff her contraband back into the box. The door opens and BECK enters with a suitcase. Zo quickly covers her flannel around herself and stares at Beck.)

ZO

Holy Shit, hey?

BECK

Hey. You're Zo, right?

ZO

Yeah?

BECK

I'm Beck.

ZO

Okay...

BECK

I'm gonna unpack.

(Beck exits into the other bedroom and closes the door. Zo looks after them confused. She runs into her room and puts dingy and well worn sweatpants on then re enters. She walks over to Beck's room to speak through the door.)

ZO

Sorry, I just thought everyone canceled coming on this trip.

BECK

(offstage)

Yeah, Liz and Micah have the flu and didn't wanna travel, but I was already planning on coming so decided screw it, you know?

ZO

Yeah, sorry did you text the group chat? Because I got in yesterday and thought I was the only one that was gonna be here.

BECK

(offstage)

I texted yesterday.

(Zo looks at her phone - no service.)

ZO

Oh must've missed it, no service up here.

(Zo sits on the couch and waits for Beck to reenter. Finally Beck enters with a book, wearing an outfit that wouldn't be cool on anyone else but them. They have a sort of confidence that could pull off any outfit, and Zo realizes this immediately, feeling self conscious in her sweatpants and flannel - Zo has never felt that effortless cool. Beck sits very close to Zo on the couch and begins reading.)

ZO

So, you're Liz's roommate?

BECK

Yup, she's great.

ZO

Yeah we've been friends forever.

BECK

That's cool. She told me a bit about that.

(Zo has no clue what to say to this. She decides to escape the awkwardness and goes out to the porch again and starts to light her bowl. She looks into the house at Beck.)

ZO

Do you want some?

(This peaks Beck's interest, they grab their book and walk outside to the porch.)

BECK

Oh totally.

(Zo lights the bowl and the two start passing it back and forth.)

ZO

So, what's your deal?

BECK

What do you mean?

ZO

I don't know, what makes you come on a trip with a person you don't know?

BECK

You seem cool from what Liz says.

ZO

Oh thanks.

BECK

What makes *you* come on this trip?

ZO

(deflecting)

I don't know, it was already paid for, plus this seemed like a nice escape.

BECK

Yeah real.

(Zo empties out the bowl and starts grinding more weed.)

ZO

What are you reading?

(Beat. Beck picks up their book, embarrassed)

BECK

Okay you can't judge me.

ZO

I won't.

BECK

It's called "Behind" and okay, it's a fanfiction that was published and made into a movie series, which I understand is lame, but once you see Hudson you will totally understand.

ZO

Hudson?

BECK

Yeah, something about him.

ZO

(laughing)

So you're not-

BECK

What?

ZO

Gay?

BECK

(laughing)

Oh fuck, what gave it away?

ZO

I don't know, your vibe? Pretty much your whole deal screams gay.

BECK

Damn you got me there.

(They laugh a bit together. The tension starts to break between them.)

BECK (cont'd)

What about you?

ZO

Oh you can't tell?

BECK

I don't wanna make assumptions?

ZO

I don't really love labels so I mostly just say queer, but Liz swears I've never actually liked real life men in the ten years she's known me so who knows?

BECK

Have you read the lesbian master document?

ZO

The what?

BECK

It's this twenty page document one of my friends in New York made that tells you if you're just experiencing compulsive heterosexuality. I have it if you wanna read it.

ZO

Why not, it's not like we have a ton to do here.

(Zo lights the bowl, takes a hit, and passes it to Beck)

SHIFT

(Beck and Zo are officially stoned. Zo sits on the floor in front of the couch with the phone in her hand and Beck is laying on the couch laughing at Zo.)

ZO

Holy shit.

BECK

Dude.

ZO

Holy fucking shit.

BECK

Wait, read that again.

ZO

“You have an attraction to male fictional characters that you use to justify liking men, but these men are unattainable and therefore do not prove a legitimate attraction.”

BECK

Like Hudson.

ZO

Okay sure I'll give you that. Except when I see Hudson it just confirms to me that I like women.

BECK

Looking through Liz's dating apps confirmed to me that I like women.

ZO

Honestly this whole document confirms to me that I like women.

BECK

When did you come out?

ZO

I came out to Liz when we were thirteen. My parents caught me hooking up with my “study date” when I was sixteen.

BECK

Oh rough. I told my parents when I was fifteen. They were pretty cool actually.

ZO

That's cool. My parents were not great, but they're kinda fine now so I guess, happy ending?

BECK

Happy ending.

Beat

ZO

I think my Hudson is Jesus Christ.

BECK

What.

ZO

My parents had this really sexy portrait of Jesus in our living room and it made me question my sexuality for years.

BECK

That's so fucking funny.

ZO

Yeah I know.

BECK

Jesus made me question my sexuality too but more from a place of a "will I go to hell" kinda thing.

ZO

You don't get it, that portrait was like, unholy levels of hot.

BECK

Agree to disagree on the Jesus thing.

ZO

Same for me with the Hudson thing!

BECK

You haven't seen the movie. He's so kind and broken and like, vulnerable.

ZO

So just written by a woman for the appeal of women?

BECK

Yeah pretty much.

(They grab the remote.)

BECK (Cont'd)

Here lemme put the movie on, you'll see.

ZO

Yeah, sure.

BECK

No dude I swear.

Beat

ZO

Am I a lesbian?

(Beck starts to play the movie.)

SHIFT 2

(Beck now sits on the couch hugging Zo. Zo is sobbing. Beck turns off the movie.)

ZO

Good God.

BECK

Dude I told you.

ZO

They're so / in love.

BECK

/ So in love.

ZO

I can't believe we binged all three.

BECK

They're addicting, once you start, you can't stop.

ZO

That's so real... and *Hudson*. Dude you were totally right I get it now.

BECK

Thank you!

ZO

Yeah so sorry for the doubt I put in the space.

(Beck turns the tv off.)

BECK

Damn, I'm exhausted.

ZO

Wanna smoke?

BECK

Oh yeah.

(Beck stands and extends their hand to Zo, Zo takes their hand and Beck leads them both to the porch. Beck takes their phone out and starts playing oldies. Zo packs the bowl while Beck dances around the porch. Zo gets distracted staring at Beck dancing and Beck catches her gaze.)

BECK

Is it ready?

ZO

Oh yeah almost.

(Beck sits down and Zo lights the bowl. They speak very genuinely to each other now.)

BECK

This is fun.

ZO

Yeah it is. I was a little worried when you showed up that we wouldn't have anything to talk about or something.

BECK

(lifting the pipe in a "cheers" motion)

Nature's truth serum: works every time.

ZO

Oh absolutely. Plus, smoking weed in the mountains is an absolutely peak experience, especially with you.

(Awkward... was that flirty? Did she care?)

BECK

I'm gonna head to bed. I'll see you in the morning?

ZO

Yeah, see you.

(Beck goes inside.)

ZO (cont'd)

Oh my god.

(Zo smokes a few hits in quick succession and goes inside. She leaves her baggie of weed on the porch. We linger on it for a few seconds.)

SCENE 2

(Zo dreamily stalks out of her room, she is wearing her sleep t shirt which is probably merch from some band from the 80s that she stole from her dad, She finally gains awareness and jumps a bit when she notices Beck sitting on the couch, book in hand, wrapped in a towel. Zo notices and pretends she doesn't. It's around 2 PM.)

ZO

Woah! Hey.

BECK

Good morning sleepy girl.

ZO

How long have you been up?

BECK

Few hours.

ZO

A few hours doing what? Your book cannot be interesting enough to wake up before 10 AM on a vacation.

BECK

Just went for a run, gave me time to think. This neighborhood is gorgeous.

ZO

I think Liz picked this place for the “mountain view.”

BECK

We should check it out more. I found this sick little trail a few miles from here on the brochure the owners left for us, it looks great.

ZO

Oh totally, which one is it?

BECK

It’s called Cades Cove.

ZO

(deflecting)

Oh, um that’s the place Liz and I always go to together on these trips.

BECK

Is it cool?

ZO

It’s fine, you know.

BECK

I don’t actually.

ZO

Yeah it’s cool, wanna talk about it more tomorrow? Heard it’s gonna rain later today anyway.

BECK

Oh yeah, sure.

(Zo looks a bit anxious. Beck goes back to reading. Zo walks offstage to their kitchen area.)

ZO

Gonna see what we have in the realm of breakfast.

BECK

Not much honestly.

ZO

(offstage)

AH cold pizza. Jackpot.

BECK

Ew.

(Zo re enters with the pizza and begins waving it in Beck's face in a very playful way and Beck giggles a bit.)

ZO

Oh sorry, what was that?? You don't like this?

(She takes a very dramatic bite. Beck chuckles.)

ZO (cont'd)

Yum yum yum yum yum.

(Awkward silence. Zo's not sure if she should sit on the couch. She finally decides "screw it" and sits down. She finishes her pizza and looks at Beck reading.)

ZO

So...

BECK

So.

ZO

Tell me about yourself.

BECK

What do you mean?

ZO

I don't know, I know you're originally from Texas, like what's that like?

BECK

Boring.

ZO

Cool.

BECK

Yeah.

(Wow, they are not a conversationalist.)

BECK (cont'd)

Wanna smoke?

ZO

Oh, yeah I guess.

BECK

Cool.

(Beck exits to the porch, when they get there they start looking around for something. Zo looks dejected. She needs a connection right now. Beck re-enters.)

BECK (cont'd)

Hey, did you put the baggie in your room last night?

ZO

Um I didn't think so? I can check.

(Zo goes into her room.)

ZO (cont'd offstage)

It's not out there?

BECK

Nope.

(Zo enters the living room.)

ZO

Not in my room. Are you sure you checked everywhere outside?

BECK

Uh yeah?

(Zo exits to the porch and looks around while Beck stands at the doorway and watches. Finally Zo gives up and reenters the cabin.)

ZO

I just have no idea where it could've gone.

BECK

Do you think it blew off the porch?

ZO

Fuck dude. Do you have any?

BECK

Nah, I flew here.

ZO

Right.

BECK

Here, you go check outside, and I'll see if there's anywhere that sells around here. Is weed even legal in Tennessee?

ZO

Don't think so. Maybe it's outside, let's think positively!

(Zo leaves out the front door and Beck goes into their room. They reenter wearing a sports bra and sweatpants, hard at work googling solutions on their phone. After a second Zo reenters.)

ZO (cont'd)

Nevermind. Actually no trace of it.

BECK

Yeah the closest dispensary is across state lines.

ZO

I mean is it actually that bad?

BECK

What do you mean?

ZO

Like, what if we just get to know each other? Watch a movie and hang out?

BECK

Tinder.

ZO

What?

BECK

How I used to get weed in Texas. Set up a tinder account and see if anyone is a dealer.

ZO

Okay that's sketchy as fuck.

BECK

Yeah but it works.

ZO

I mean if you want to? Do you even have the service to do that?

BECK

Oh yeah!

(Flashes their phone with the tinder app up.)

BECK

Two bars gets the job done!

ZO

Okay, you have fun with that. I'm gonna shower.

(Zo stalks off into their bathroom. We hear a shower start running. Beck keeps swiping / texting on their phone. All of a sudden they get a phone call. They groan and pick up the phone.)

BECK

Hey -

Why'd you call? -

Yeah Jaz I know -

Can we please stop talking about this? -

Okay I'm sorry -

Yeah I'll tell Micah you said hi -

Okay -

Yeah ... I love you -

Bye -

(Beck hangs up and puts the phone down. They sigh and put their head in their hands. They suddenly get a notification. They look down at their phone. They stand up and begin knocking on the bathroom door.)

BECK (Cont'd)

Dude!

ZO

(offstage)

What?

BECK

I think I got someone! I'm gonna drive into town! I'll be back soon.

ZO

(offstage)

Okay! Please don't get kidnapped!!

BECK

You got it!

(They run into their room and reenter holding their car keys wearing a flannel over their sports bra. They race out the door.)

SCENE 3

(Zo steps out of her room wearing her same outfit from yesterday. She looks around the empty cabin. She sees Beck's book on the living room table. She walks over and picks the book up. She flips through and notices something.)

ZO

Annotations?

(She laughs to herself a little. Beck walks through the front door with a chocolate bar and a small baggie. They see Zo.)

BECK

Who's the best?

ZO

I cannot believe you actually did it.

BECK

You're welcome.

ZO

Was the guy super creepy?

BECK

It was actually a lady. A lady dealer. God I love women in weed.

ZO

What's the chocolate?

BECK

Ever done shrooms?

(Zo walks over and inspects the chocolate. She sits on the couch.)

ZO

Oh my god you didn't. Dude I've always wanted to try shrooms here.

BECK

Happy to help.

(Beck joins her.)

BECK (cont'd)

Ever done them?

ZO

No. You?

BECK

Once. Back in New York. Honestly didn't feel much, but if both of us split this bar it should hit pretty hard.

ZO

Why am I like nervous?

BECK

You'll be fine.

ZO

What does it feel like?

BECK

You're like high just with more energy. And you feel like really happy and connected to the world and stuff.

ZO

Sick.

BECK

Yeah. We could just listen to music and like... talk, you know?

ZO

Oh, yeah. That sounds really nice.

BECK

Cool.

(Zo passes the bar to Beck. Beck opens the bar and splits it in half, passing one half to Zo.)

BECK (Cont'd)

Cheers.

ZO

Cheers.

(They clink the chocolate halves and eat them.)

SHIFT

(During the shift Beck starts playing music from YouTube on their tv, something with the vibe of the band Cigarettes After Sex. Zo is laying on the floor and Beck is dancing around Zo on the floor. As the scene progresses Zo gets gradually more high. Beck does too but they cover it well.)

ZO

Favorite dino?

BECK

One of those little ones that ran around a lot and are like the ancestors of chickens.

ZO

I like the herbivore ones. Like the tall ones with the longggg necks.

BECK

Oh yeah those rock.

ZO

Glad neither of us said T-Rex. I hate their lil arms.

BECK

Yeah and T-Rex's were kinda dicks.

ZO

They just stomped around, crushing the little guys.

BECK

Anarchy...

ZO

Fuck.

BECK

Dude we've been talking forever. What time is it?

ZO

I don't know like 7?

(Beck walks to the kitchen and grabs their phone.)

BECK

Dude it's 9.

ZO

(giggling)

You're kidding. I could kinda talk to you forever.

BECK

Yeah I agree.

(Beck sits on the couch. Zo stands and joins them.)

ZO

What was your first kiss like?

BECK

A classic Texan game of spin the bottle. I kissed Julien Fulmore on the mouth when I was thirteen. She tasted like doritos.

ZO

Lucy Andrews was the Hermia to my Helena. She kissed me backstage right before bows on closing night.

BECK

That's so fucking gay.

ZO

What?

BECK

Shakespeare?

ZO

I don't know, call me a dork, but I kinda love him.

BECK

That's not dorky. What you told me about binge watching Star Wars every year on Thanksgiving is dorky, but this is pretty cool.

ZO

You a secret Shakespearean nerd?

BECK

I don't know, kinda. I did a photo series for our sex and self love magazine based on Midsummer Night's dream. There's something so mystical and sexy about fairies running around the forest and the lovers running away together and the fairy king and queen and stuff. You know?

(Zo is super attracted to every word they just said. Maybe she's high, maybe that's what she keeps telling herself.)

ZO

That's ... awesome.

BECK

Oh thanks.

(Beat. Zo stands up and looks out the window. Beck follows her.)

ZO

What did you wanna be when you were a kid?

BECK

Straight.

ZO

(giggling)

Like what job?

BECK

(looking out the window)

Nerdy, but like an astronomer or something.

ZO

Dude same.

BECK

Really?

ZO

Yeah I used to listen to these constellation history tapes when I was falling asleep. And I had those shitty glow in the dark stars on my ceiling.

BECK

Oh my god, same.

ZO

Dude!

(they giggle and settle into some silence.)

ZO (cont'd)

Do you believe in fate?

BECK

Yeah I think.

ZO

(moving back to the couch)

I know I do.

BECK

(following her)

How?

ZO

Just a feeling I've had.

BECK

What do you feel?

ZO

I don't know.

Suddenly, here you are. Here you are in my orbit when I never expected it.

You make me feel the weight of gravity.

Or it's probably just the drugs.

(They are now super close to each other. Neither of them move back during this sequence. Beck is mesmerized by Zo.)

ZO (cont'd)

Do you feel anything?

BECK

Zo... I'm -

ZO

From the chocolate.

BECK

Oh I think so.

ZO

I feel pretty high.

BECK

Yeah?

ZO

Your face is so....

BECK

(chuckling)

My face is?

ZO

I think you look like a painting. A Van Gogh.

BECK
(leaning in)

Oh really?

ZO
Yeah. I think you're the most beautiful person I've ever seen.

BECK
Zo.

ZO
Can I touch your face?

BECK
Yeah.

(Zo cautiously puts both hands on the sides of Beck's face. She slowly draws her hands down their face and stops.)

ZO
Do you wanna know why I really came on this trip?

BECK
Tell me.

ZO
Because I just broke up with my girlfriend.

BECK
Why?

ZO
I don't know. I just stopped feeling. It was two years and I just stopped feeling.

BECK
I understand.

ZO
You understand.

BECK

We're the same.

(They are inching closer and closer together with Zo's hands still on Beck's face. Beck lifts their hands.)

BECK (cont'd)

Can I?

(Zo nods and Beck places their hands on Zo's face. Neither of them move. They just look at each other for almost an uncomfortable amount of time.)

ZO

(almost whispered)

What do you want?

BECK

I've never been called beautiful before.

ZO

Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.

BECK

Would it be alright if I held you?

(Zo takes her hands off of their face and repositions so she is facing away from Beck in their arms. This lasts for a few seconds. They both look out into space and away from each other.)

BECK (cont'd)

I have to say something.

ZO

Yeah?

BECK

I have a girlfriend in New York.

ZO

Oh.

It's complicated.

BECK

(No response from Zo)

Can I keep holding you?

BECK (cont'd)

(No response)

I don't wanna let go.

BECK (cont'd)

(Zo and Beck stare out into space for an uncomfortable amount of time. The lights and atmosphere changes around them. They both fall into their high very suddenly.)

Do you love her?

ZO

Beat

I think so.

BECK

Tell me about it.

ZO

BECK

I feel like I don't know how to breathe.
Like she sucks all of the air out of the room.
I don't know if that's a good thing.
Maybe that's love.
Not being able to breathe.

Beat

Tell me about your ex.

BECK (cont'd)

I can't.

ZO

BECK

Why?

ZO

I feel more than I should.
(are you in love or just pretending?)

BECK

That's not a bad thing.
(I feel more than I should)
I'm sorry.

(Zo breaks from the hold Beck has on her and looks at them in their eyes.)

ZO

Are you apologizing to me?

BECK

No, I don't think so.

(Their faces are very close together.)

ZO

What do you want?

BECK

I don't know.

(Zo stares at Beck)

ZO *(cont'd)*

How are we in the same moment?
And I know.
But you don't.

*(Beck looks at Zo. They kiss her. Zo squeezes her eyes shut. They fall into each other's arms.
Beck remains frozen as Zo speaks.)*

ZO *(cont'd)*

(still near Beck's face)
And there it is.
The decision.

And my heart stops.
My mind is blank.
And before the rapture
There is calm.

(Zo goes back to holding Beck as they sit in the calm. Everything is still. Suddenly Beck lightly pushes Zo off.)

BECK

I don't know why I did that.

ZO
And there it is.

BECK

I think I need to go for a run.

ZO

Is that a good idea?

(Beck stands up and starts finding their shoes and jacket.)

BECK

Yeah. Yeah. It is.

(Beck makes it to the door and pauses.)

BECK (cont'd)

Will you still be here when I get back?

ZO

Yes.

(Beck walks out the door and stands on the porch while Zo stays staring out at the audience from the couch. The world swirls around them.)

BECK
I feel.

ZO

Regret.

But maybe I don't.
Maybe I just want to.
I feel.

BECK

What makes me human?
But not in a way that hurts.
In a way that makes me too alive.
To the point of detonation.
I feel.

ZO

Joy at someone else's expense.
In a way that scares me.

BECK

Maybe that makes me the villain.
If I think about it too long it hurts.
I don't want to hurt.

(There is silence as they sink deeper into the high.)

ZO

I wonder if they're in love or just pretending?
The way I was
I wonder if I love too hard
And my heart breaks too soon
When I don't even notice
I think of telling them to close their eyes before I ask if I can kiss them
Because seeing their eyes would surely stop my heart
I wonder
While we watch the stars and discover that we both wanted to be astronomers when we were
kids
I wish we could watch the stars forever
I wish I could kiss them with my eyes open
So I know it's real
Maybe it's just the drugs.

BECK

Sometimes I run just to feel something
Sometimes my emotions make me sweat
I wipe them off my brow and keep moving forward
I can't stop moving forward
When I stop I think
And I do something I'll regret

ZO

I'm so connected.

BECK

Zo.

ZO

I can see the earth breathing.

BECK

I feel more than I should.

ZO

Then why does my heart feel so heavy.

BECK

And I'm standing perfectly still.

(Beck runs off leaving Zo alone looking at the audience.)

SHIFT

(The lights are out in the cabin. Beck walks inside and notices Zo asleep on the couch. They grab a blanket from the floor and cover her. They pause for a second, watching her sleep, before kissing her on the forehead. They go into their room.)

SCENE 4

(Beck walks into the now bright living room. They notice Zo still asleep on the couch. They look at her for a second before exiting into the kitchen. They loudly bang their plate on the counter top from offstage and very loudly make a sandwich. They re-enter and eat their sandwich while looking at Zo. They walk around for a second, still trying to make noise before finally tapping Zo on the shoulder. She jolts awake, groggy.)

ZO

Oh my god what time is it?

BECK

9 AM.

ZO

9 AM?? Dude. When did you get back?

BECK

(ignoring her)

Let's go to Cades Cove.

ZO

You woke me up at 9 AM to go to Cades Cove?

BECK

Yeah. Come on, it's our last day, it should be special. We could smoke, hike, make some dinner, have a chill night in?

ZO

Uh yeah sounds good?

(Beck starts grabbing their things from their room to go to the Cove. Zo follows them and stands at their door)

ZO (cont'd)

So at what point do we talk about yesterday?

BECK

(offstage)

We can talk later!

ZO

You sure?

BECK

(meeting Zo at their door)

Yes, I promise.

ZO

Okay cool.

BECK

I'm gonna change.

(They close the door in Zo's face. Zo walks to her room and closes the door. After a few seconds Beck reenters in a sports bra and shorts. They go to the porch and start packing a bowl. They take a hit as Zo re enters in a t-shirt and baggy pants. Zo goes to the porch as they pass the bowl back and forth.)

ZO

How are you feeling?

BECK

I'm good. Really feeling this hike.

ZO

Yeah okay.

(Beck lights it again and Zo exits to the bathroom. Beck looks off the porch, thinking and smoking. Zo comes out and walks around while brushing her teeth. Zo finishes brushing her teeth and grabs her shoes. She meets Beck on the porch. Beck passes her the bowl.)

ZO (cont'd)

Thanks.

BECK

Yeah.

ZO

So you're okay?

BECK

Pretty chill right now.

ZO

Pretty chill?

BECK

Yeah. You?

ZO

Just a bit confused.

BECK

I told you we can talk!

ZO

Yeah okay. Are you ready to go?

BECK

Born ready.

(Beck stands while Zo takes another hit. Beck grabs their keys and exits the apartment. Zo walks into the living room, obviously very confused about what is going on. She follows Beck.)

SCENE 5

(Zo enters the cabin. She throws her stuff on the couch and goes into her room. Beck follows in behind her.)

BECK

Zo.

ZO
(offstage)

What.

BECK

Can we please keep talking about this? It feels weird now.

ZO
(offstage)

Yeah I wonder why.

BECK

Zo, come to the living room. Let's smoke.

(Zo reenters)

ZO

No. I don't want to smoke. If you wanna talk then let's talk. But if you're just gonna list the reasons why you made a huge mistake and kiss me again then I think I'll stay in my room.

BECK

That's not fair.

ZO

No, it's actually really fair given the circumstances.

BECK

It's just a kiss.

ZO

A kiss that you regret so much that you did it again in the fucking woods.

BECK

Zo It's not like that.

ZO

You need to figure your shit out. You need to talk to your girlfriend.

BECK

I will! We've been fighting so much recently, what happened between us is seriously not a big deal.

ZO

But you're still dating her. You are in a committed monogamous relationship, Beck.

BECK

What do you want me to say??? We just had a moment and I know you felt it.

ZO

Yes, last night we had a moment. And I like you, but you have a girlfriend. And you care about her enough to feel guilty. I don't want a part of that.

BECK

Zo. This is my problem to deal with, not yours.

ZO

Do you understand how shitty this makes me feel? I don't want to be this person.

BECK

I'm sorry I just didn't expect this.

ZO

Why didn't you say something about her sooner?

BECK

I like you! I didn't want you to change how you act around me.

ZO

So you liked the attention, basically.

BECK

No! Zo, I really like you.

ZO

But you love your girlfriend.

BECK

I'm just having a hard time processing this right now.

ZO

And how the fuck do you think I feel?

BECK

I know I know I'm sorry. Why don't we smoke and try to hang out as friends? It's our last day together and we should have fun.

ZO

No. You can't just get high to avoid your problems.

BECK

Okay fine. What do you wanna do?

ZO

I wanna process it together. I want you to talk to me about your feelings, sober.

BECK

Fine. What do you wanna talk about?

ZO

Tell me about your girlfriend.

BECK

Zo...

ZO

I want you to tell me about her.

BECK

Jaz is an artist. She's our neighbor in Bushwick and we met through mutual friends. I don't know what you want to know. I've been thinking about breaking up with her for a while.

ZO

Why haven't you told her?

BECK

I'm waiting for the right time.

ZO

Is that really it?

BECK

(beat)

It's because I'm still in love with her.

ZO

I know.

BECK

I'm sorry.

ZO

I know.

BECK

With Jaz I'm comfortable, but you're so exciting and you make me feel so much. More than I've felt in a long time.

(Beck walks over to Zo)

BECK (cont'd)

And right now, I want to be with you.

(Beck takes Zo's hand.)

BECK (cont'd)

Forget about her. We have one night together.

ZO

Do you love me?

BECK

No, but that shouldn't be a part of this. We've only known each other for three days.

ZO

I don't expect you to love me. But in three days I have so many feelings that I never expected, or wanted. And we'll do this so you can ignore your problems with your girlfriend, then tomorrow we go back to our lives and never speak again. You go back to Jaz and I'm alone.

BECK

We can still talk. I really love talking to you. Please.

ZO

You don't understand. I came on this trip to get away from emotions and my fucking overthinking, but right now my brain feels like it's going to explode.

BECK

Why? Tell me about it Zo.

ZO

I don't want to.

BECK

You said we're processing, let's process.

ZO

Tomorrow I have to deal with it by myself. I think I need to start now.

(Zo grabs Beck's hand.)

BECK

(Dropping her hand)

I never wanted it to get this complicated. Let's just forget the whole thing.

ZO

I don't think that's right either.

BECK

Jesus, Zo what do you want from me?

ZO

I don't want anything.

beat

BECK

I don't want it to end like this.

(Beck looks at Zo)

BECK (cont'd)

Can I kiss you? One more time?

ZO

I'm gonna go to my room. I'll see you tomorrow morning.

(Zo exits to her room and closes the door. Beck goes into their room and grabs their travel bag. They start throwing their items into the bag. This packing process only takes a few moments. They look at Zo's closed door and grab their book from the coffee table. They get a pen from the kitchen and write something in the book. They put the book back on the coffee table and grab their bag.)

BECK

I'm sorry.

(They walk out the front door.)

SHIFT

(Zo opens her door and looks around. She knows what happened. She walks to the coffee table and picks up the book. She reads what was written by Beck before they left. She starts crying and throws the book across the cabin. She sits on the floor of the cabin. The lights change to how they were in the shroom scene.)

ZO

And next week I'll move on.
And forget the fact that you left without a word.
And forget the fact that I'm alone
Finally alone here.
This is what I wanted.
Then why do I feel so fucking empty?
I am drained.
Hold me and fill me back up.
I need to be held.
But not by them.
By someone I haven't met yet.
That I won't meet for what seems like a lifetime.
Most of a lifetime.
But that's now.
And the urge will end.
And until then I'll find peace.
Even alone.
Even if it first hurts like hell.
It hurts like hell.
But I understand.
That one day it'll all be okay.

(She exits to the porch and packs a bowl. She sits on the table how she did the first day at the cabin, before Beck showed up. She smoked and looks at the view. The beautiful view.)

THE END

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:

As an avid play reader and LGBT+ activist, I have always been bothered by the lack of authentic queer and nonbinary representation in modern plays. My goal with “my lover and mary jane” was to write a play that showed the full span of a lesbian relationship in just three days, in an accurate way. I wrote this play to showcase a queer relationship dynamic that teens and young adults can resonate with. These characters are real people. If you’re a lesbian, you’ve probably dated one of them.

This play also explores drug abuse as a tactic to avoid honest feelings and conversation. Beck’s tricky and privileged connection with drugs creates conflict in their blossoming relationship with Zo. Stylistic changes in the text are associated with drug use; the poetry segments in this play provide a deeper look into the inner lives of these characters, helping them to vocalize what they are truly feeling in each individual moment.

With a need for meaningful representation, I aim to introduce a straight audience to a real and modern lesbian relationship, while offering a relatable and comforting story to LGBT+ people, written for and by this subsection of their community.

AUTHOR BIO: Ella Johns is a lesbian playwright originally from the Bible Belt of Alabama. Her most notable production was for the Junior League of Alabama, where she wrote and produced a play about the sex trafficking super highway that leads from Birmingham, AL to Atlanta, GA. This play was performed and was instrumental in convincing 31 municipalities to join the fight against human trafficking. After high school she went on to join the BFA Acting program at Syracuse University, and there she really found her voice under the guidance of her playwrighting mentor, Zizi Majid. Her plays have been read and performed at both the Alabama School of Fine Arts and Syracuse University. Many of her plays deal with the lesbian experience, specifically in the south and can best be described as modern poetic realism. This is her first publication of my lover and mary jane and she hopes to produce a staged reading in the Spring of 2024.