

oranges

A 10-min play

By Rachel Lynett

CAST OF CHARACTERS (2 humans)

JACKS, 30s, any race, any gender, high school teacher

MICKEY, 30s, any race, any gender, chef

*JACKS and MICKEY must be the same gender

SETTINGS

Time and place aren't set. It's not the end of the world but it's the end of an era. The literal place is the rooftop of high school gym building. And I guess the time could best be described as "the future." This could be six months from now, or maybe a 1000 years.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Moment v Shift

I have a hard time with the word "beat." For me, moment is a break in the dialogue, a chance for the characters to reassess. Shift is a sharp turn. It's not a pause. It's a sudden shift. Moment is passive whereas shift is active.

Missing periods

The missing periods are on purpose. If -- shows up, a different actor is cutting the speaking person off but if there's a missing period, the actor cuts themselves off. A shift mid-dialogue, a trailed off thought.

SCENE 1

It's sunset, sort of. It's not clear if the sun is exploding or just falling but the pink and red lights are vibrant, everywhere.

There's a sound of distant explosions. Maybe the city is on fire. Maybe the city is celebrating. An end is coming but what end we don't know.

JACKS sits on the rooftop, scribbling notes into a journal with a pencil. A beat before MICKEY enters holding a bottle of red wine and a bottle of champagne.

(JACKS and MICKEY's pronouns are written as she/her but they can be played by any gender. Please change the pronouns as necessary.)

MICKEY

Malbec or Perrier?

JACKS

You brought sparkling water to the apocalypse?

MICKEY

It's not the apocalypse. Don't be so dramatic.

And no it's Perrier-Jout. I think it's fancy. Everyone else went straight for the Dom and this was all that was left.

JACKS

Malbec sounds great.

MICKEY starts to open the bottle of wine with a screwdriver.

MICKEY

All the wine openers were taken and I didn't feel like stopping by the
How are you doing?

JACKS

I've been worse I think.

MICKEY

Yeah. When?

JACKS

Remember that one time your mom told me that I smelled like a crack den?

MICKEY

Like she would know.

JACKS

That felt worse.

MICKEY gets the wine bottle open and drinks directly from it.

MICKEY

I think some cork got in there.

MICKEY hands the bottle to JACKS who also drinks directly from it. They continue to pass it back and forth.

JACKS

I feel like this is the time we talk about everything major you know? But like what's major right now?

MICKEY

Um, not having a president seems pretty major.

JACKS

But is it? Half the population is boarding ships to Mars right now. With a new elected leader.

Like is not having a president that big of a deal when everyone is leaving anyway?

MICKEY

An elected council.

JACKS

What?

MICKEY

You said new leader. It's new leadership.

JACKS

All billionaires.

MICKEY

Still more than one.

Moment.

JACKS

Did your mom buy a ticket?

MICKEY

Yeah.

JACKS

Did she offer you one?

Shift.

MICKEY

I think ultimately all the things we think are major aren't really all that major. Like global politics, not knowing what's coming next...

In moments like these, I'd rather talk about the every day things, the minor things.

JACKS

Well, what's minor then?

MICKEY

I killed your guinea pig.

JACKS

What?!

MICKEY

It was an accident.

JACKS

I had more than
Did you kill both of them?

MICKEY

No I just killed Bumblebee. I think Hornet died of loneliness.

JACKS

So when you told me that they both just got out and I looked for them for months

MICKEY

Total bullshit.

JACKS

Mickey!

MICKEY

Well, not total bullshit. I vacuumed Bumblebee. Like I didn't realize he was still out and I

JACKS

She.

MICKEY

What?

JACKS

I kept telling you that they were both girls.

MICKEY

Did they tell you that?

JACKS

I cannot do this with you again.

MICKEY

Gender just can't be assumed, Jacks.

JACKS

You killed my guinea pigs!

MICKEY

Only one of them!
And um

Yeah, I'm sorry. I should've told you. I thought it'd be one of those things I'd take to my grave but
 Just based on, you know everything, it felt right to tell you.

Moment.

JACKS

I cheated on you.

MICKEY

Oh?

JACKS

Just once. It was when I went on that trip with the kids. I guess around the same time you murdered my guinea pigs.

MICKEY

Only one. And it wasn't with a student right?

JACKS

I truly do not understand how grown adults sleep with teenagers. Like yes, Tiffany has an amazing understanding of iambic pentameter and is an excellent writer but she also cried for half an hour because she *thought* Taylor Swift had come out.

MICKEY

Taylor Swift is gay?

JACKS

No. That's why she was crying.
 It wasn't with a
 It was Ean.

MICKEY

The math teacher?

JACKS

We were drunk. I immediately regretted it and kicked him out. And I just I kept it to myself because it didn't feel like something to blow up my life over.

MICKEY

That makes sense.

JACKS

You're not mad?

MICKEY

Not really. Ean is not nearly as hot as I am.

They both laugh.

JACKS

Is this the part where you tell me you're leaving me anyway so it doesn't matter than I cheated on you?

MICKEY

This is the part where I tell you that you definitely could've told me that a while ago. Things happen. I get that.

JACKS

How very evolved of you.

MICKEY

Maybe in different circumstances I'd be upset but

MICKEY gestures at...well, everything.

JACKS

Fair enough.

Any other confessions?

MICKEY pulls out two tickets from her pocket and hands one to JACKS.

JACKS

Oh.

MICKEY

They're for tomorrow morning.

JACKS

I didn't think

I just don't know that I

MICKEY

Yeah I know.

A moment. They look out. The explosions get loud. The bright colors fade.

JACKS

I can't believe I'm even about to say this but
Jesus, this is insane
Is this the end of the world?

MICKEY

My dad visited the new place, the new planet last week. Is it a new planet? It's always been there but we weren't supposed to
Anyway, he said it was different.
Like, breathing is different obviously. He joked that we're already wearing masks so wearing a helmet is essentially the same and they figured out how to make it so you don't need one at home. Just out and about. Which isn't
Food's different too, obviously. It's
It's an adjustment you know? We could get used to it.

JACKS

Are we 100% sure we can't stay? Like what if everything ends up okay?

MICKEY

What if we stay and it doesn't?

Moment. It's uncomfortable and heavy. They both sit in silence for a while. It's best if this moment isn't rushed. Giving them a moment to take in...well, what it means to drink on a rooftop at the end of the world.

JACKS

I thought we weren't talking about anything major?

MICKEY

I've never cheated on you and I'll got is that one time I accidentally vacuumed your guinea pig.

JACKS

That's pretty major, by the way.

MICKEY

More major than cheating?

JACKS

Murder is more major than--

MICKEY

It wasn't

Alright.

Better that he didn't live to see this, honestly.

JACKS

She!

And yeah I guess you're right.

Shift.

JACKS

I actually think it's kind of beautiful.

MICKEY

Yeah.

JACKS

Like I've never seen this many colors in a sunset before.

MICKEY

Is it a sunset or the death of the sun?

JACKS

Living on Mars won't work if the sun doesn't exist.

MICKEY

Fair enough.

Moment.

JACKS

I don't want to be the reason you don't go. I get why it makes sense to go. Why it's the safe choice. I've read all the op-eds and all the essays. It's the smart, solid choice.

We've wrecked this planet and there's not much more we can do. Things change. People adapt. I get all of that. And I get that this is about our survival. The earth might be dying and we've all got to make hard choices. I get that. I do. But
 What if the planet is just evolving? What if we're witnessing a once in a millennia combustion and everyone's fleeing a hair too soon? What if those of us who stayed could figure out a new way to live? To be better to one another? To start over without the billionaires and the corporate greed.
 What if we finally learned how to fix things?
 What if we're all about to leave just when it's gorgeous?

MICKEY

All those op-eds say you're an idiot for believing that.

JACKS

Is that what you think?

MICKEY reaches into her pocket and pulls out an orange.

MICKEY

They had stopped buying fresh fruit because of
 Well, everything, you know. Shortages on farms and the price sky-rocketing.
 Like I think this orange was legitimately \$15.

MICKEY starts to peel the orange.

MICKEY

I've always loved the smell.

JACKS

Smells like morning.

MICKEY

Want some?

JACKS nods. MICKEY hands her a half of the orange.

JACKS

It's been forever since I had fresh fruit. Bet they don't have that on Mars.

MICKEY

They don't. But soon we won't have it here either.
You really think we could find a way to turn things around?

JACKS

I do.
But please, please don't stay for me. I could never forgive myself if I

MICKEY rips the tickets.

MICKEY

I was never really going.

JACKS

Mickey.

MICKEY

We should save the seeds. Maybe we could try planting an orange tree.

JACKS

Really?

MICKEY

Yeah. You're right.
What if it's gorgeous?

MICKEY and JACKS turn to look at the audience, taking in the sound of the explosions, realizing the weight of staying instead of going. They're at peace with the choice they've made.

It could be gorgeous.

END OF PLAY