

Backstage Lesbians

By Ryan Polk

Polkryan@me.com

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Joan	New Kid. A Romantic. Values Honesty.	16	F
Heather	Student Council Head. A Flirt. Keeps Secrets.	17	F

A dressing room backstage during act two of a high school production of a classic farce. Joan is sitting down in a servant's outfit, looking over her two lines. A dress is hung up or laying somewhere. We hear Heather from on-stage.

HEATHER

(off-stage, bad Cockney accent)

All this tuna for one quid? That's bloody mental innit?

Sound of a slamming door. Audience laughter. Joan takes this in. A moment. Heather enters in a beautiful costume dress and sees Joan.

HEATHER

Hey sexy.

Beat.

HEATHER

You're looking especially beautiful tonight in that costume.

Beat. Heather starts to change out of her dress.

HEATHER

Give me a hand?

Joan walks over to Heather and starts to help Heather from behind her. It's tense in every sense of the word. Joan clearly wants to say something, but doesn't. Eventually, the costume is off, leaving Heather in her street clothes underneath it. A beat. Joan walks over to Heather and starts to help Heather from behind her. It's tense in every sense of the word. Joan clearly wants to say something, but doesn't. Eventually, the costume is off, leaving Heather in her street clothes underneath it. A beat. Suddenly-

JOAN

(an eruption)

I can't do this anymore.

HEATHER

What are we not doing anymore?

JOAN

“Sexy,” “beautiful,” I can’t stand it anymore.

HEATHER

You can’t stand me complimenting you?

JOAN

I can’t stand you flirting with me.

HEATHER

Listen, Joan Jett, Dear Joan, Joan-a and the Whale.

JOAN

I hate all of those nicknames.

HEATHER

I’m just hyping you up. There’s nothing romantic about it.

Heather grabs a snack from somewhere onstage and opens it

JOAN

You really expect me to believe that?

HEATHER

Yep. I’m not into you in the slightest.

Heather takes a HUGE bite of food when-

JOAN

Then why did we kiss last night?

Heather nearly chokes on her food. She quickly chews and then-

HEATHER

I need to change.

JOAN

Yes, you do.

HEATHER

Into my next costume.

Heather moves to wherever the dress is onstage and stands by it

HEATHER

Are you not going to help me?

JOAN

Not until you answer my question.

HEATHER

That didn't happen. We didn't- no.

JOAN

Well it did and we did. And I'm sure your boyfriend would love to hear all about it.

HEATHER

You wouldn't dare.

JOAN

I absolutely would.

HEATHER

You can't tell him if I get to him first.

JOAN

I thought you had to get changed.

Heather moves back to the dress and struggles to put it on by herself during the following.

HEATHER

(desperate, while struggling with the dress)

Yeah, well, go ahead! UGH. Spill the beans! I mean, who are people going to believe? SHIT. The respected head of the student council and the popular lead of the Fall production, or the new girl with two lines?... Yeah, uh, and if people somehow do believe you, you'd be responsible for breaking up the biggest power couple this theatre department has ever seen. FUCK THIS ZIPPER! No one will want to be friends with you after that. Your future at this school will be ruined. I can totally make sure of that. Can you GET OVER HERE AND HELP ME?

JOAN

Why do you do that?

HEATHER

Do what?

JOAN

Act like you're the antagonist in a early 2000's high school movie.

HEATHER

Well why do you care about how I act, huh? Why do you care so much?

JOAN

You're the first girl I've ever been in love with.

Beat

JOAN

I mean, I've had crushes before, but nothing like this. I tried to push my feelings down but, from the moment I saw you, I just felt this pull towards you, and I didn't know what it was. And when you started flirting with me, I was so happy because, for the first time in my life, I thought that someone was into me. But you're dating John. And I tried to respect that and move on, but it's so hard when you're so sweet and flirty with me every. single. day. Last night was the happiest I've ever felt and you won't even admit that it happened. So just stop sending me mixed signals and be honest with me for once. Please.

HEATHER

Come over here.

JOAN

What?

HEATHER

I'll tell you about last night.

Heather and Joan gravitate towards each other. Suddenly, the women are transported back to the previous night.

HEATHER

It was at the cast party. You were in a hammock. I jumped in. And we just laid there together and looked at the stars. I'd never felt so relaxed in my life. I remember turning my head to look at you and I swear I could see the stars reflected in your eyes.

HEATHER (cont'd)

You looked so beautiful. For a moment, I didn't care about the rest of the world. All I knew was that I desperately wanted to kiss you.

JOAN

So kiss me.

HEATHER

I can't.

The illusion is shattered. Back to reality.

JOAN

Why not?

HEATHER

Because then it'll make it real. And it can't be real. It's just been harmless flirting so far. You know, that's not cheating. But if I just dump John and immediately start seeing you. That'll start so much shit. I couldn't handle it. My reputation is all I have.

JOAN

Fine then, keep your pristine reputation. I'm done.

HEATHER

(sudden, sincere)

I love you, Joan.

JOAN

This is just so- GOD! This is just like you. Every time I try to move on you just have to go and say something really sweet and pull me right back to you. I'm just an object to you. Something to make you feel good. I can't do it. These feelings. This "relationship." This costume! My first ever role, and I'm playing your servant. I get it, I'm beneath you. I'm done.

Joan rips off her servant costume, leaving her in her street clothes, and starts to storm out.

HEATHER

Wait, you can't go.

JOAN

Why, because you're gonna sweet talk me again?

HEATHER

No, because we're in the middle of a performance.

JOAN

Oh, right.

Beat

HEATHER

I meant it before, you know, when I said that I loved you.

JOAN

Then make it official.

HEATHER

I can't. I'm still with John.

JOAN

Then break up with him, It's closing night. Maybe this can be a new beginning for us. But you have to choose. Either break up with John, or let me go.

HEATHER

I can't break up with him tonight.

JOAN

Why not?

HEATHER

Didn't you hear? John messed up one of his slapstick stunts and ended up getting a concussion. He's okay, he's fine. It's actually kind of funny because the only words he can say without stuttering are his lines for the rest of the show, so they sent him right back out onstage. I'm driving him to the hospital tonight.

JOAN

(enthusiastically)

That's perfect!

HEATHER

What?

JOAN

You can break up with him tonight and there won't be any argument because he won't be able to say anything.

HEATHER

What the fuck, Joan?

JOAN

What's wrong?

HEATHER

What's wrong? What's wrong with breaking off a long-term relationship while he's on a fucking hospital bed? You don't see anything wrong with that?

JOAN

...

HEATHER

You're unbelievable.

JOAN

I don't know how breakups work!

HEATHER

Well I do. That's why I don't want to put John through that. I don't want to hurt anyone.

JOAN

Someone has to get hurt here, Heather, that's the situation you've created. Something has to end. Otherwise you're just stringing both of us along.

HEATHER

Stop acting like there's a clear solution, okay? It's not that simple and clean. John has been there for me for a long time and he's safe.

JOAN

All this talk about John, and what John's feeling, and how this effects John. But I think this is actually about you, Heather. What is up with you, huh? What's your deal?

HEATHER

I'm scared, okay?

Beat. Joan recognizes this feeling.

HEATHER

My parents don't know I'm bi. I have no idea how they'll react. That's why I flirt at school. That's why I kissed you in private. So that nothing in my life has to change.

JOAN

Heather, I'm not asking you to change your entire life right now. I just want you to meet me halfway.

HEATHER

...

JOAN

Come on, let me help you get changed.

Joan helps Heather get into her dress.

HEATHER

Why do you love me?

JOAN

I don't know. I can't really explain it. I've never been in love before, so it's all pretty new to me. I guess it's because, when I'm with you, life feels like a movie. When we're close to each other, I can feel electricity between us to the point that it feels like I'll get shocked if I touch you. And that's exactly what happened when we kissed last night. I felt electric. No one's ever made me feel that way before, so I know that this has to be special. And anything that's special is worth fighting for.

Joan finishes with the dress and steps back. Heather doesn't move.

HEATHER

No one ever talks to me like you do.

JOAN

What do you mean?

HEATHER

I've always been in a position of power. No one calls me on my shit. And no one has ever talked about me like you just did.

JOAN

So, what happens now?

HEATHER

You helped me with my costume, let me help you with yours.

Heather helps Joan with her costume. Heather does most of the work here. Heather finishes.

HEATHER

Et voila. You're glowing.

Beat

HEATHER

I'll break up with John as soon as he's better, I promise.

JOAN

Are you sure?

HEATHER

Yeah. He's a straight man in theatre. I'm sure he'll find someone else.

JOAN

(bad Cockney accent)

That's for true innit luv.

HEATHER

(bad Cockney accent)

Right you are luv absolutely.

JOAN

We really have to work on our accents.

HEATHER

Yeah, they're terrible.

JOAN

But we can make it better. Together.

HEATHER

Yeah, for sure.

Three knocks on the door.

JOAN

I think that's the stage manager getting you for your next cue.

HEATHER

Your cue is coming up soon too, let's go together.

Heather and Joan start to walk to the exit together.
Suddenly, Heather pulls Joan in for a big hug that lasts
for as long as they need it to. Blackout.

END PLAY