

It's Complicated

You're at a friend's birthday party, and it's late at night. You will make prank phone calls with your friend, until you scroll across a name—Zander. You find that it's the most intriguing name you have come across so far. Ask your friend who this guy is, and she'll say some guy from camp. Press the call button, and muster up your southernest accent. His voice will be deep, and out will come a confused hello. "Howdy", you'll say, "We are selling apples of all different colors." He will play along, and you'll be charmed by his sense of humour. Your friend and you will roll over on the bed laughing. The phone call will end, and the two of you will text him. She's suddenly interested in said guy from camp, but why now? It's because she sees the hunger in your eye for love. You have to be noticed, and might possibly die if he does not take an interest in you.

So what happens when two girls want a singular guy? War, war happens. You two go back and forth complimenting him on his poetry he decided to share about his ex. "This is so powerful, and I can see the hurt in your words." You text back rapidly. Your friend snatches the phone and writes a simple "That's good." You have the upper hand now. Text back, "I'm a writer too. I like writing poetry." He will be intrigued, and your friend will fade into the background. He sends a picture of himself. Nice, you find him attractive. He's white, straight, brown eyes, brown hair—everything you think you want. You have to send a picture of yourself now. Quick! Choose the photo you recently took on Snapchat. Send it before he loses interest in you. "You're cute." He types in response. Score! 100 points are given to you, while your friend is at a -0. You've got this in the bag. Your friend doesn't even want to send him a picture. Hurry! Send him your personal number. No reply, he's asleep you assume.

It's the morning time and you grab your phone immediately. Could this be the moment, the one time that a guy actually wants you to be his? "Hey, sorry I was asleep." The message said. "Oh that's fine! I was just giving you my number so me and my friend didn't have to keep sharing the phone lol." Make it lighthearted, it's all good. He will send you more of his stories, ones that he sends everyone else. You will put your heart into these pieces of writing. "Wow, that was truly fantastic. You have such a way with words." He will ask to see some of your writing. You will put something together quickly. It will be absolute elementary work, but you're just 13, and he's 16, so surely he will understand. It will just take some time to improve. He will reply to your poem with a generic response, and you will swoon at it. He's got you wrapped around his finger so tightly, that you can't even use your brain.

It's September of 2016, and you guys text every single day. Anything he says is magical. He will make the move, text you on Snapchat, and you will open it. "I like you." He will type. You will ask if this is a prank, and he will say no. You will reply, "I like you too, Zander." You two will bask in the thought of reciprocated feelings. It will be lovely, and you guys will text even more. He will say things like, "You have the heart of a Disney princess." You'll fall over dead, just kidding, you'll write back a cheesier response. "You are the light in my darkness. You are the light of my life." It will go on, and on, and on, until you want to make your Snapchat story viewers gag their hearts out.

It's November, and you are having the worst year of your life. Your mom is trying to get custody of you, and your dad is preventing it from happening. You will go to court countless times saying that you want to live with your mom. But you're 'just a kid'. So you will be forced to live with your abusive father, and will see no hope in life. Until, Zander texts you, and your

heart flutters. Him, he's your reason to stay alive. He will tell you that he loves you, and you will feel whole. At least he doesn't think you're useless, and will actually listen to what you say. Yet, you won't tell him that you love him. You feel like that saying is used too loosely. After all, your dad says it, and then hits you in the head. But he's not your dad, and that makes you think about your feelings. Do you actually love him? Give it a few weeks before you finally decide that you do. Then the saying will be thrown around like an endless game of tennis—and boy do you love the game.

December will roll around, and you will realize it's your birthday month. It won't matter though because you see no purpose in celebrating misery. You are still living with your dad, and you have fallen down a dark hole. You can't get out. You try to escape, but you always come back to the same destination. Zander will be concerned for you, and you will tell him what is going on. He will try to sound like a hero. He will say that he will save you from your dad. But is that all just a load of buttered up lies? Surely not, because Zander loves you, right? So you will believe that a 16 year old boy will take away all of your suffering. You will tell him every time something bad happens, and he will say how much he despises your father. Great, you guys have a common interest—hate. You hate your father, but do you know what you hate more? Yourself. And so you will carve patterns into the skin you hate, and Zander will not be there to save you from yourself.

But wait, there's more! Zander has many more problems than you do. So now you guys will turn into a projectile vomiting pit of toxic waste. You will throw some at him, and he will throw back twice more. Lovely, you two are past the lovey dovey stage, and now have reached the brink of negativity. There will no longer be room for jokes, instead that will be filled with each other's personal problems. Oh, and don't forget the empty "I love you's" that are supposed to hold together your now 'therapist' to 'therapist' relationship. Some days you will feel so worn out from hearing his issues that you will give out I'm Sorry's like Ellen Degeneres gives away money. Ah, isn't it so fantastic to be in love?

It has been months, and you two are still hanging in there. You are finally able to live with your mother, and it seems like everything will be peaches and cream. Yet, Zander and you still have a ton of problems. Both of your mental states are declining at a rapid pace. It feels like the only time you two are happy is when you are in each others arms. Any other time, you are feeling numb, and he is feeling all types of emotions. When you guys see each other he shows you his love by kissing you sloppily. You go along with it because this is what lovers should do, right? It feels like the most ridiculous thing in the world to you. You wonder why humans make such a big deal out of such a boring event. You try your hardest to get into it, but nothing works. Surely, you must be broken.

He's started to notice that you don't like that type of physical contact. He wonders what is wrong with him, and you can only say that you are the problem. You have tried everything to enjoy the intimate moments you two share, yet that isn't enough. You start to hate yourself again. You want to feel what he feels. Maybe you are a lesbian? He will dismiss your idea, and you will agree. Anytime that he kisses you, you will pull away shortly, then make a stupid joke. It will be an occurring thing for you to make light of the situation every time. He will stop making that type of contact with you, and you will be upset. Why can't you just be normal? Why are you so difficult?

Now, he will come to your house, and you guys will watch Netflix. You will prop your legs on his lap, and enjoy the show, but he won't. He doesn't want to just sit there watching

stupid shows. He wants to wrap you up in his arms. You just want to watch your favorite show with him. That's not enough for him. Maybe, you're not good enough for him. Maybe, your relationship could be better if you would just enjoy those intimate moments.

It has been two years, and six months. You just want to have free time without him texting you, "Hey? Are you there?" Yes, you are there, and no you don't want to talk to him right now. You tell him that you have to have time to yourself, or you will get irritable. He says he understands, but he still sends texts like that. So you guys work out a plan. You will say that you need alone time, and he will say okay. You tend to say you need alone time too much, though. He doesn't like that.

He feels like you don't love him, even though you guys text everyday. You continuously reassure him, yet he still feels insecure. He will constantly ask, "How do you love me?" You will rehash the experiences you two have been through together. You will say that you care about him, yet that's not enough. "Am I just your emotional support animal?" He will ask. You will be hurt. Does he really think that low of you? Is it that he doesn't trust you enough? You will never find these things out. Instead, you will say that you are sorry. Sorry that you cannot fulfill his expectations, sorry that you cannot control your body, and sorry that you are who you are.

He tries to dissect you. He wants to understand why you are the way you are. You don't even know who you are. He will ask questions, and you will have no answers. You will be honest, but it's still not enough. You will wonder why he can't just leave it alone. He will keep pressing. He will ask why you don't kiss him anymore. He will ask why you don't run out to his car, and hug him again before he leaves. He will ask why you use jokes to get out of sensual situations. You've grown tired of these questions.

It's a Saturday night in January, and he texts, "We need to talk." This response makes you anxious, but you will text him back. He feels like you two have become more like friends. You feel a sense of numbness wash over you. Your brain locks a barrier around your heart. It's telling you to get ready for a harsh landing. He will say that he doesn't know how you two will fix things. He will say that all you guys do is watch Netflix. He will say that you never feel intimate when you guys kiss. Forget about the emotions you feel, because if you don't have *those* kind of feelings towards him, you're just a good friend. You feel like it's all on you. You're the reason why your relationship is about to be forgotten.

He thinks that you guys should take a break. You don't do 'breaks'. You feel like a break is just short of a breakup. You can't be enough for him, so why should you beat a dead horse? He will agree, and you guys will have mutually broken up. The numbness will fade away by the time the conversation ends. Your face will turn into a sea of liquid. It will feel like you are being attacked. Knives will stab holes into your heart.

When you rehash memories of him, the knives will dig deeper into your heart. You will be sitting in class, think of him, and cry. You will cry because you still love him. You will cry because you still care about him. You will cry because even though you tried to show how much you loved him, he never felt the power of it. So you will stay quiet, and delve into poetry. It will be about love, break-ups, and you will stop reading. You will close yourself off to love, and hate the idea of it.

A week later he will drop by your house to give you your stuff back. You guys will exchange each other's promise rings. You will give him back his Marie Lu books. You will give him back his jacket. He will give you the two parts of the yin yang necklace. He will look you in your eyes and say that he would rather you keep them. You two will sit in his car reminiscing

about the times you had together. How you guys would make the stupidest jokes at sonic. When you danced together in the yard during Christmas time. Then he will put his head on the steering wheel. You will try to cheer him up, but he will say that he never should've mentioned it. He will say that he will go to therapy, that he will do better. You will wipe away his tears, and say that the breakup was needed for the better. After a couple hours, you will step out of the car, hold each other tightly, then he will drive away. You will walk into your house with a hole in your chest. Your mom will be there, and she will hold you while you sob into her shoulder.

He will get a new girlfriend a couple weeks later. She will have the same features as you—brown hair, bangs, slim thick. You and him will still be talking, and he will say how much he likes this girl. You will be pissed off at him, but will say that you want him to do whatever makes him happy. Then you will realize that you still have those feelings for him, and so you will block him on all social media. You will make a pact to find out who you are as a person. You will say to yourself that you will find love for who you are.

Months will go by until April comes around. You will still check his social media to see if he's okay, but you have begun discovering who you are. One night you will be searching up the way you feel in relationships, and asexuality will pull up. You will browse for hours on the word. It will make sense to you, and you will identify with it. You will not feel broken anymore, but empowered. This word will give you a piece of why you are the way that you are.

In May you will meet the people who will encourage you to come out of your shell. They will accept who you are. Then you will look in the mirror one day and smile. You will smile because you are an independent, panromantic asexual women. You will smile because you have come so far. You will smile because you will realize that the past breakup has encouraged you to find a part of yourself that you had been missing for a long time.

In August you will start wearing clothes for yourself. You will wear what makes you feel good inside. You will cut your hair, and answer to no one why you did it. You will find beauty in everyday life. You will be open to the thought of loving someone again. You will not be thinking about your ex anymore. You will look back and see a girl struggling with a great deal. You will see her triumphs. You will see her self-discovery. Then you will realize that she is you. All of these past experiences have molded you into who you are today. You are strong, you are a work in progress, but most of all you are an overcomer. For that, I am proud of you.