

I.

You are sitting in your living room with your friend from theater. You sit on your couch in the basement. You flip through the channels, landing on Chicago. A musical. A tune. Cellophane.

Mister? Misses? Neither. Both. She jokes.

You don't know how to explain it. A feeling. A gender. A gender? A-gender.

What even is a gender? You say. You laugh.

A gender?

She asks, to clarify.

You say, Nevermind.

You sit through the song, silent.

II.

When you sit in your chair in class, you do not feel different. You feel exemplary as a student. The teacher puts your work on the screen. She talks about how strong your writing is.

Suddenly, a word. A pronoun. Not yours. Not yours. Not yours.

She.

It stings. It strikes. Unexpectedly, you're hit. Blindsided. The world lurches. But it doesn't. Only in your mind. You blink a few times. There's static in your ears. There's a knot in your stomach.

One second has passed.

I'm sorry -- they.

The knot tightens. She is right. She corrected herself. She did the right thing.

Why are you angry.

Why are you angry.

Why are you angry.

You go by they?

He turns in his seat to face you. You are stuck in a trance and take a moment.

Then, a response.

Excuse me?

I didn't know you went by they.

Oh, yes.

Cool.

Yeah.

The interaction, English class. It sits in your mind. You do not forget. It is hard to forget. Why are you upset?

The days passes. You sleep and things are better in the morning.

III.

You have decided on your name. It is pretty. It is handsome. Your theater friends tease you. The character, the name is from your favorite musical. You laugh along. Accepted.



*Ezra Miller for GQ Magazine*