

THE PARTING GLASS AUDITION SIDES

CAROLINE – FEMALE, SEVENTEEN. NOSTALGIC. WITHDRAWN.

CAROLINE Addie liked to put on a show. She hoarded the truth of herself from others, rationed it, like she was preparing for a winter which never came. But finally, that summer, I saw the glimpses of beauty in her. She liked to make origami birds out of anything she could get her hands on: newspapers, receipts, wrappers even. She wished on every eyelash and every dandelion. She could never walk past a tree without climbing it or carving something into the bark. She kept a little box of old keys under her bed, which she had collected over the years, and every so often she would take them out one by one and fantasise about what they might unlock. There were annotations scrawled into the margins of all her books, as if she were in conversation with them. And she held them so tenderly, like old friends. The sentiment in her was so quiet, and so innate, and so beautiful. She filled my heart, and I let her.

EDISON – MALE, MID-TWENTIES. WRY. EMOTIONALLY BOTTLED-UP.

OCTAVIA You can't leave.

EDISON Why, are you going to stop me?

OCTAVIA If I have to. *(Edison looks her up and down, and chuckles dryly.)*

EDISON I'd like to see you try.

OCTAVIA Edison, please /

EDISON Are you proud, Octavia? Of this thing you've become.

OCTAVIA Just wait a minute /

EDISON It won't make him love you, you know.

Beat. Satisfied, Edison starts to leave.

OCTAVIA You can't just /

EDISON Yes, I fucking can. Don't you think I've earned that right? Don't you think it's time I get something back? Every day of my life, cowering in the dark, watering myself down into a version that might be palatable for a man who doesn't care whether I'm miserable as long as I can pretend I'm not. You know every time I set foot into this fucking house, I feel like I'm holding my breath. And you're not special, Octavia, he doesn't care about you either. Think about it, really think. If he wanted you to be happy, don't you think you'd be with Francisco now?

ADDIE – FEMALE, SIXTEEN. PERCEPTIVE. KIND. ENIGMATIC.

ADDIE *(jokingly)* You're such an older sister.

CAROLINE Why?

ADDIE You know exactly what to say to calm people down.

CAROLINE *(dryly)* Perks of the job.

ADDIE It's not a bad thing. The opposite, actually. *(Pause. Softly)* You know, I was wrong. It's just not just Eddie; it's you, too.

CAROLINE Me?

ADDIE I think you've kept me sane, all these years.

CAROLINE Addie, I really don't think /

ADDIE And Flo and Vivi. But you most of all. *(Pause. From the heart)* I don't know what I'd be without you. *(Pause. Caroline is too stunned to reply. Addie takes this as a rejection and pulls away, reassuming a light tone.)* You're lucky you came late, you know. It was absolute carnage earlier. We only had half a string quartet and Octavia had to call in a favour from her friend in the village who's about a hundred years old and deaf in one ear – *(She catches sight of Caroline's face and stops in her tracks.)* Stop looking at me like that.

CAROLINE Like what.

ADDIE Like you'd do anything for me.

OCTAVIA – FEMALE, MID-TWENTIES. COLD. ELEGANT. STOIC.

ADDIE I don't understand.

OCTAVIA No, you don't. You won't until you're older, and by then... It'll be Jacob, for you, and Louise Clifford for Edison. He's had them all lined up for us for years. You're friends now. But it's only a matter of time. He'll start coming here more often and you'll start going to his. You'll bump into him at parties. He'll invite you out to dinner and a show. You'll introduce him to your friends. Before you know it, you're at the parties with him. You'll go for drinks afterwards and talk about all the people you find insufferable. Eventually, you'll become so used to having him around that his company will feel like an extension of your own. Being together will become a reflex; you won't even spare it a second thought. After that, marriage doesn't seem like such a big leap after all.

JACOB – MALE, SEVENTEEN. COCKY. CHARISMATIC. PERSISTENT.

Jacob enters, two drinks in hand, somewhat tipsy. He is fazed momentarily by the sight of Caroline – he was expecting someone else – but tries to hide it.

JACOB Didn't think I'd find you here.

CAROLINE Ditto.

JACOB Though that doesn't mean it's not a pleasure. How long's it been? A year?

CAROLINE Year and a half.

JACOB Semantics. *(He offers a glass.)* Champagne? It's a fresh bottle. Delicious, as a matter of fact.

CAROLINE No thanks.

Jacob is perplexed that she does not succumb to his charm. He searches for another way in and gestures to the piano.

JACOB Do you play?

CAROLINE Not really.

JACOB Always more of a violin man, myself. Got my diploma last year. *(Pause.)* Addie and I always used to play duets for our parents. Pretend we were in the Royal Albert Hall. *(He chuckles at the memory.)* You're in my year, aren't you? *(She nods.)* How did GCSEs go for you, then?

CAROLINE Well, thank you. You?

JACOB Mixed bag, mixed bag. Still, made it through in one piece. *(He stares at her for a moment.)* You've done something different with your hair.

CAROLINE Not particularly.

JACOB It's nice. Pretty. *(Caroline raises her eyebrows.)* What? I'm not allowed to compliment you? *(She says nothing. He gestures to the piano.)* Well, go on then. Let's hear it.