

Scene Nine

RUPERT. A crisp morning, a black suit with a black tie bought the day before. Shoes polished like my grandfather's and an umbrella waiting by the door.

A black polo-neck with a black skirt, hair brushed straight unlike the usual messy bun, two pearl earrings and a necklace placed gently around her neck, that I secure with difficulty. Her tights have a hole in them, but it's too late by the time I've pulled them up I don't have the energy to take them off her. Shall I tie your hair up?

I can do a mean French plait
Which shoes?

The car will be here soon
I think in about ten minutes

It might be here already actually, I'll have a look.

I've got your coat, your fur one, well fake-fur one. Shall I put it on, c'mon sit up my love, there you go and give me your arm we'll pop it through.

Which shoes?

It's cold, it's surprisingly cold for this time of year I'll find your boots. You might need some woolly socks, have a rummage in my drawer, take mine.

ALEX. I'm not allowed

RUPERT. What?

ALEX. I'm not allowed, you don't like me taking your socks?

RUPERT. I don't mind

ALEX. You do, you get cross when I steal them.

RUPERT. Only because they never come back matching

ALEX. So why are you letting me take them now?

RUPERT. Because

Because

I don't want your feet to get cold

ALEX. Okay

RUPERT. I want you to wear my socks

ALEX. Okay

RUPERT. I'll get your shoes.

ALEX. Okay

He comes back with her boots.

RUPERT. Here we go, give me your first foot, there we go my love.

ALEX. Stop it

RUPERT. What?

ALEX. That

RUPERT. What?

ALEX. Talking to me like I'm her

Beat.

RUPERT. We have to give him a name

ALEX. Her

RUPERT. No him, a baby boy Alex, we had a baby boy.

ALEX. Rose

RUPERT. Alex it was a boy.

ALEX. It.

RUPERT. He

ALEX. HER. ROSE

RUPERT. It's the wrong name.

ALEX. She's not alive she doesn't know

RUPERT. We had a baby boy

ALEX. We didn't

RUPERT. We have to put a name on the, I need you to tell me what name you want to put on the gravestone. I need to tell them.

ALEX. Rose

RUPERT. We can't put Rose

ALEX. Why?

RUPERT. We can't

ALEX. You did, you put that name on the death certificate

RUPERT. I know but

ALEX. So why can't we put it on the gravestone?

RUPERT. Alex, please. Please.

Beat.

The car is here, it's been here for half an hour Alex. We have to go.

ALEX. I'm ready.

They go to leave.

RUPERT. They want to know if you want to hold the coffin on your lap, on the way.

ALEX. Is she in it?

RUPERT. He is.

ALEX. I can hold her?

RUPERT. In the coffin yes

ALEX. Yes.

RUPERT. Okay, you'll sit down and they'll place him on your lap.

ALEX. Will he know?

RUPERT. Sorry?

ALEX. Will he know I'm holding him?

RUPERT. Yes.

Of course he will.

ALEX. He'll know I'm there?

RUPERT. Yes.

ALEX. Really.

RUPERT. Yes.

*

ALEX. Edward
Edward

RUPERT. Edward

ALEX. Teddy

RUPERT. Like a bear

ALEX. Like a bear

RUPERT. Like Rupert

ALEX. Yes.

Scene Ten

ALEX. A crisp morning, a pink onesie covered in yellow stars, a purple cardigan that clashed horribly, but it's all they had and I didn't want you to be cold my love. Socks so small that when I took them out of the packet I thought, these won't fit. But they did. Perfectly. A blue beanie, knitted but in a charming way. A grey comforter folded under your head, a teddy bear tucked in beside you, and his red tie secretly hidden under the blanket. You have his nose. You have your daddy's nose.

I'm going to paint your room. I'm going to decorate your nursery. I'm going to fill it with stars.

Daddy won't like that, Daddy will hate that, I think Daddy may hate me.

People bring food to my door, literally. People I don't even know or like come to my door, present me with a hotpot, a Thermos of soup, endless fucking brownies and then they come back a day later and pick it up and ask what I'd like next, what takes your fancy? They don't ask me how I am, they don't even know your name. I just want them to say your name.

So I spice it up, I spend hours researching difficult meals, curries with obscure spices, or a passion fruit and papaya pie, a twelve-hour beef stew. They do it, they cook it all, these people who now feel they know me. That they know you.