

Day Three

*Opal tosses in her sleep. Edith shifts, staring out at Opal. They meet eyes. Whispering;*

OPAL: Morning.

EDITH: How are you?

OPAL: Okay. You?

EDITH: Cold.

*Opal moves close to Edith and covers her with her blanket. Edith rests her head on Opal.*

OPAL: How did you sleep?

EDITH: Terribly.

OPAL: I'm sorry.

EDITH: You?

OPAL: Okay. I'm okay. Do you remember that time your mom took us camping?

EDITH: Oh yeah. How long ago was that?

OPAL: Feels like decades.

EDITH: Mom didn't realize a cold front was coming through that night so we just sat by the fire, shivering and complaining. We should have just slept in the tent like she said.

OPAL: We were young and dumb.

EDITH: She bought us a dozen donuts on the way home to make up for it.

OPAL: Which she didn't need to do. That was the best vacation I've ever had.

EDITH: Really?

OPAL: Mom never took us anywhere after Dad died. At first, I got it. A broke, single mom trying to corral three little kids had to be incredibly stressful. But as time passed and the grief waned, it was like she had a permanent ban on fun. Her way of keeping him alive was to barely live herself. I don't know, maybe I'm just projecting.

EDITH: Do you still miss him?

OPAL: Constantly.

EDITH: Does it ever get better?

OPAL: You learn to live with the hole. You can't fill it, and you can't avoid it. But you can acknowledge it and with time, you don't fall into yourself as often.

EDITH: What made you think of that trip?

OPAL: I don't remember.

*Joan shifts and wakes.*

JOAN: How did it get colder?

*Opal reaches out an arm and Joan joins them on the floor, shivering together.*

JOAN: Just one more day.

*Time moves on. The girls hold each other. They rise, pulling, and pushing until they are all standing.*

EDITH: Water.

OPAL: I think my legs fell asleep.

JOAN: We'll eat and feel better.

*Opal leans against Edith as Joan shuffles into the kitchen. They pull on each other, holding each other, giggling quietly. Joan enters with a water pitcher.*

JOAN: How do I smell?

OPAL: Uh.

JOAN: What?

OPAL: Do you want my honest opinion?

JOAN: I wouldn't ask if I didn't.

OPAL: Jeez, okay. You still... smell.

JOAN: What?

*Joan smells herself.*

JOAN: I'm disgusting.

*Edith and Opal laugh, a little too hard.*

JOAN: Stop it! It's only been a day! I don't sweat that much. I feel like the floor of a middle school locker room.

EDITH: You smell like one too.

*Joan grabs a can of febreze and tries to spray the girls, but the aerosol is too cold to work.*

OPAL: It's okay, I'm sure we all stink.

*They sniff themselves, determining Joan is right.*

EDITH: I'm putrid.

OPAL: How am I?

*Edith smells Opal.*

EDITH: Ew, somehow much worse.

*They laugh. Joan sulks.*

JOAN: I'm glad you think this is funny.

EDITH: I thought you couldn't smell anything?

JOAN: Well suddenly I can.

*Joan grabs a fresh top layer from the pile and exits in a huff.*

OPAL: Do you think we are bad people?

EDITH: It's too early for this.

OPAL: Edie.

EDITH: No. Maybe. Why do you ask?

OPAL: We are kind of mean.

EDITH: Lots of people are mean. Doesn't mean they aren't good people.

OPAL: We do good things. We volunteer.

EDITH: I haven't gone to the animal shelter in months.

OPAL: Really?

EDITH: Jeanine still works there.

OPAL: Oh.

EDITH: I only started volunteering to get closer to her.

OPAL: Hm. There's got to be something else.

EDITH: I say thank you when people hold the door open.

OPAL: That's good.

*Edith laughs.*

OPAL: What?

*Edith's laughter grows and infects Opal.*

OPAL: What! Tell me!

EDITH: I can't!

OPAL: Tell me!

EDITH: We're just so boring!

OPAL: What!

EDITH: Our good deeds are just basic human decency! We are inconsiderate!

OPAL: That's not funny!

EDITH: I know!

*They laugh even harder.*

EDITH: I only help others when I need it!

OPAL: I really don't like this.

EDITH: None of this matters!

OPAL: Edith stop my tummy hurts.

EDITH: We're not good enough to get out of here alive.

OPAL: I can't breathe.

*Joan enters, amused and confused.*

JOAN: What is it?

*Opal and Edith look to each other, cackling. Joan chuckles, reluctantly joining.*

JOAN: Are you guys making fun of me?

OPAL: No no no

JOAN: Then can you let me in on the secret?

EDITH: Our lives are meaningless.

*The women are cackling, rolling in fits of laughter.*

JOAN: No really! What's so funny!

OPAL: Joan we're not hiding anything from you!

JOAN: Then why does it always feel that way!

EDITH: Wait wait wait, Joan. Are you a good person?

JOAN: I don't know. I'd think so.

*They all roar.*

JOAN: Yes! Yes I am!

OPAL: No no no you said you didn't know you're no better than the rest of us.

JOAN: Opal you're too far up James's butt you wouldn't know a single thing about me!

OPAL: I know that if someone slapped you in the face you'd say, "thank you" and hand them a twenty!

EDITH: Wait wait do me!

OPAL: Sometimes you're really mean to me and it hurts my feelings!

*At this point, the laughter is a cacophony, and the women are curled up in pain. The laughter dies down and they just breathe.*

OPAL: Oh Joan. You changed.

JOAN: Oh look at that.

EDITH: Guys. I can't move.

JOAN: Why not?

EDITH: I can't feel my legs.

OPAL: What did you do to them?

EDITH: Can you check to see if they are still there?

OPAL: No.

EDITH: No?

OPAL: I can't move either.

EDITH: And why can't you move?

OPAL: My neck won't turn.

EDITH: At least you still have a neck.

OPAL: I hope I do.

JOAN: I think I can move my arm.

*Joan reaches out stiffly, grabbing onto Edith's legs.*

JOAN: Your legs are still there.

EDITH: Thank goodness.

*Joan tries to pull away but is frozen now too.*

JOAN: I'm stuck too.

OPAL: How did you get stuck?

JOAN: I don't know. But my arm is stuck to Edith's leg.

EDITH: Only one? What about the other leg?

JOAN: I couldn't reach it.

EDITH: Joan.

OPAL: So what now?

*They all lay peacefully.*

EDITH: Would it be so bad if we stayed this way forever?

OPAL: Once the snow melts, we will find spring again.

EDITH: The sun will warm our crumbling bodies.

JOAN: The bees will tickle our earthy noses.

OPAL: And flowers will sprout all over us.

EDITH: A mossy Opal.

OPAL: A planted Edith.

JOAN: And a headstone in Joan, forever protecting the spot on which we finally returned home.

*The women breathe together. Then.*

OPAL: I'm really hungry.

EDITH: Shh you're ruining it.

OPAL: I don't want to rot on an empty stomach.

EDITH: How will you get up?

OPAL: You'll have to remind me.

JOAN: We should get you onto your stomach.

OPAL: I'm too heavy.

JOAN: Where do you feel the weight, Opal?

OPAL: All over.

JOAN: Is it pretty even?

OPAL: Yeah.

JOAN: Okay, I want you to move all of your weight to one side.

OPAL: Okay?

*Opal slightly rocks to one side.*

JOAN: Oh my god you're doing it.

OPAL: It's so hard.

JOAN: You've got to do it again Bug.

OPAL: I don't think I can.

JOAN: Again!

*Opal rocks again, flipping herself over. She thunks down.*

OPAL: I did it! Now what, Joan?

EDITH: Can you do a push up?

*Joan and Edith laugh.*

OPAL: Guys.

EDITH: Sorry, sorry.

OPAL: Let me try.

*Opal does a push up on her knees, moving into a table top position.*

OPAL: I'm up! I'm up!

EDITH: Now lift your head up.

*Opal does so, landing in a kneeling position.*

OPAL: It worked!

*She pulls herself off the ground. Edith and Joan cheer motionlessly from the ground.*

EDITH: Great now help us up.

*Opal sits up the others, shaking their joints until they are alive again.*

OPAL: Whew. That was weird.

JOAN: Really weird.

EDITH: What were we trying to do again?

*They think. Opal remembers.*

OPAL: Oh! Food!

*Opal exits to the kitchen. Edith calls out;*

EDITH: Is there anything?

OPAL: We have peanut butter. Two cans of chicken soup, and a dented thing of black beans.

EDITH: I thought you went shopping?

JOAN: I only got a few things. The store had been stripped empty.

EDITH: Texans don't know how to deal with a snow storm.

JOAN: Clearly.

EDITH: Opal, can you bring us the soup? And peanut butter I guess.

*Opal enters with their provisions and three spoons. The women gather around the peanut butter and Edith opens the soups.*

EDITH: This is the most intense roommate bonding.

JOAN: Do you guys want kids?

EDITH: No.

OPAL: I will not comment on the matter.

JOAN: They are all I've thought about.

OPAL: Since when?

JOAN: I don't know. There's always been this desire, always rattling around at the back of my mind. But I can't ignore it, it's too loud.

EDITH: Joan, you're young, You have so much life ahead of you, you don't want to be tied down with two little sticky gremlins. You're only 24, you've got time.

JOAN: Maybe my biological clock runs fast.

*Joan finishes off a can of soup and reaches for the peanut butter.*

OPAL: Whoa.

JOAN: What?

OPAL: Maybe we should take it easy on the food.

JOAN: I'm sorry?

OPAL: You just downed that whole can of soup and want more?

JOAN: You couldn't even have the soup.

OPAL: Exactly. I'm not going to eat that meat so that just leaves me with the peanut butter.

EDITH: Opal.

OPAL: What? What am I doing now, Edith?

EDITH: Lay off. We're gonna be fine. It's just a little while longer.

OPAL: I'm sorry that i'm a vegetarian and can't eat everything you two can but it just seems inconsiderate-

EDITH: Opal please shut up.

*Opal stands and exits.*

EDITH: Have as much as you want, Joan.

JOAN: Thanks.

*Opal enters with a handful of socks. She throws one at each of them and starts setting up a puppet show.*

EDITH: Opal, what are you-

OPAL (*in a deep, puppet voice*): Good evening. I'm John Rodgers and this is the ATVC 6 o'clock news.

*Joan gasps and joins in, slipping a sock over her hand.*

JOAN (*in a thick southern accent*): Hi y'all. I'm Karen something-

OPAL: Thompson.

JOAN: Really? (*In her puppet voice*) I'm Karen Thompson and I'm just as pleased as a pickle you could be here with us!

EDITH: I'm not doing this.

OPAL: Come on.

EDITH: No. I don't want to.

OPAL: What else are you going to do?

EDITH: I could read.

OPAL: Be serious.

EDITH: I read! I read all the time, actually.

JOAN: C'mon Edie. You get to be Samatha.

*Edith groans but puts on the sock. They gather behind the couch, performing their show with the utmost seriousness.*

OPAL: Good evening. I'm John Rodgers.

JOAN: And I'm Karen Thompson.

OPAL: Welcome to the 6'oclock news.

JOAN: Thank you for joining us on this Wednesday evening.

OPAL: Thursday.

JOAN: Thursday evening! We've had a terribly busy week.

OPAL: Besides the monster freak storm and the impending freeze infiltrating our bones, we also have a birthday coming up in the studio!

JOAN: But first, let's go to Samantha Storm for more on this terrible storm.

EDITH (*in a sultry voice*): Well hi y'all! I'm Samantha Storm, and we've got a real wild one brewing right now! As you can see, there's a lot of tension build up in this one centralized location due a combination of external factors. We've got our fiercely cold winds from the North causing some issues. And you can see they are coming in from Aspen- Austin! Oopsie!

JOAN: Samantha...

EDITH: I'm sorry, Karen. It's just so easy to get those two confused! Especially when you're a half wit cheater who thinks he can find something better than his depressed, but quirky girlfriend!

OPAL (*in the puppet voice*): I think we're all a little confused here in the studio. Ed- Samantha, did someone cheat on you? Because, as our adoring audience knows, Samantha is a lesbian so why would a guy cheat-

EDITH: It wasn't Samantha. It was you.

OPAL: John Rodgers was cheated on?

*Edith pops up from behind the couch.*

EDITH: No. Not John. You.

*Opal pops up too.*

OPAL: What?

EDITH: I'm so sorry Bug.

*Joan pops up between them.*

JOAN: I thought we weren't going to tell her.

EDITH: I'm sorry.

OPAL: You both knew?

EDITH: I don't know what came over me.

OPAL: How long have you known?

JOAN: A few weeks, maybe?

OPAL: Why didn't you tell me?

JOAN: I didn't want to hurt you.

OPAL: He was with another girl?

JOAN: I took a photo.

*Joan checks her phone, but it's dead.*

JOAN: It's dead.

JOAN: I'm so sorry Opal. I didn't know how to tell you.

OPAL: Who was she?

JOAN: I don't know.

EDITH: Does it matter?

OPAL: I bet it was that woman from his work, she always throws those dirty looks at me.

JOAN: It's not her fault.

OPAL: He told me he wasn't happy but I promised I'd do better.

JOAN: Bug.

OPAL: I did everything I could. I never complained. I put up with his temper tantrums and forgave him when he forgot our anniversary. What else could I have done?

EDITH: You did everything you could.

OPAL: It's not my fault I'm like this! He knew I was like this, I never hid that from him.

EDITH: I'm really sorry.

OPAL: Was I too sad for him?

JOAN: No, he was just terrible.

OPAL: I can tell I'm getting worse.

EDITH: It's okay. It's okay. Just make it to the end of today.

OPAL: I can't.

EDITH: You have to.

OPAL: Can you do the thing?

EDITH: Of course.

*Edith holds Opal's ears.*

OPAL: He would never get mad at me when I would slip like this.

JOAN: That's basic decency Opal.

OPAL: He would just hold me. Never saying anything. I think I scared him. He never knew what to do with me.

*A pause.*

OPAL: Do you think we're going to die?

EDITH: Opal-

OPAL: I'm not being dramatic. Do you think we're going to die?

*Edith says nothing.*

OPAL: I used to think that if I died young, it would be okay. Because the world would still have you. And you would always remember me.

EDITH: Come here.

*Opal moves rights next to Edith, and they hold each other as much as their bundles will allow.*

*Blackout.*