

AUDITION PIECES FOR SECOND HONEYMOON

GEORGE & CRISPIN 1

CRISPIN: Hello there?

GEORGE: Hello?

CRISPIN: Crispin.

GEORGE: No, George.

CRISPIN: No, I'm Crispin. I assumed you might be George. Good journey?

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: London?

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: North, East, South, West?

GEORGE: West.

CRISPIN: Ealing?

GEORGE: Gunnersbury.

CRISPIN: Ah, Gunnersbury. How is it these days?

GEORGE: Gunnersbury?

CRISPIN: I was thinking more London as a whole. Still being London? I suppose we couldn't ask it to be anything else really, could we.

GEORGE: I'm sorry, who are you?

CRISPIN: A question I ask myself every day, still haven't got a definitive answer as yet.

GEORGE: Who are you in relation to this place, I mean?

CRISPIN: Here to help out.

GEORGE: Help out with what?

CRISPIN: With whatever's required.

GEORGE: What were you doing in there?

CRISPIN: Checking the meters in the cellar.

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GEORGE: Mrs Nichols said they'd be nobody around for the two weeks.

CRISPIN: Don't worry, I'm not here. Not here here I mean. I'm just around... to help out here. You've been before, she says.

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: Honeymoon.

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: But this time it's just you. Well, it looks like you should have some lovely weather – if the forecast is to be believed. What was it like the last time you were here? But I suppose you may not have seen too much of it being your honeymoon – the outside world I mean. Sorry, I don't want to be reminding you of something you'd rather be forgetting... if I am. But I suppose you wouldn't have come here if you're wanting to forget it. Then again, we are hugely complicated creatures us human beings, aren't we?

GEORGE: Sunny.

CRISPIN: Sorry?

GEORGE: The weather, last time I was here.

CRISPIN: Ah. Good. You're a writer, she says.

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: Novels, she said.

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: Anything I may've come across?

GEORGE: No.

CRISPIN: Try me, I might have done.

GEORGE: No, you wouldn't, because I haven't had anything published... *yet*.

CRISPIN: Yes, that would make it rather tricky. The writer's art fascinates me. To have that skill to delve into that murky realm of the human psyche and drag to the surface the monsters that lurk there and expose them for our scrutiny on the clear white page... if that's how you see it. It must be extremely rewarding.

GEORGE: Sometimes.

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GEORGE & CRISPIN 2

CRISPIN: Good morning.

GEORGE: Oh God!

CRISPIN: Sorry, didn't mean to startle you. Just replenishing supplies in the bathroom. Meant to do it yesterday, but forgot. I did knock and call. Nice walk?

GEORGE: Yes, thanks.

CRISPIN: I noticed you up by the cliff and I must say I was a little concerned in the light of our conversation yesterday. I wasn't sure if you were about to... You were standing there precariously close to the edge for quite some time. Were you... about to...?

GEORGE: If you must know, it did cross my mind. Quite seriously in fact.

CRISPIN: What stopped you?

GEORGE: A crow... funnily enough.

CRISPIN: A crow? Don't tell me it spoke to you?

GEORGE: Yes, it did.

CRISPIN: It did?

GEORGE: But not in English, of course.

CRISPIN: In Spanish?

GEORGE: No, I mean it spoke to me by its very presence there.

CRISPIN: Go on.

GEORGE: The way it was just... perched on the rock there... looking at me.

CRISPIN: How was it looking at you?

GEORGE: In a severe, almost... challenging way.

CRISPIN: Maybe you were standing on its nest.

GEORGE: No. I felt it was telling me – daring me – to believe that it *was* in fact possible. That I *could* somehow bring her back to me through the power of my imagination. That I'm *not* deluding myself. In fact, the very thought that I *was* deluding myself was the very thing that was preventing me from achieving the thing that was perfectly...

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achievable.

CRISPIN: Wonderful! And you got all that from that bird?

GEORGE: Yes... more or less.

CRISPIN: And if that creature hadn't appeared to George in your book, you, George, may not have given it a second glance and you may be over that cliff edge now and on the rocks below.

GEORGE: We walked back together the whole way.

CRISPIN: You and the crow?

GEORGE: No, me and Tanya.

CRISPIN: Ah. And is she here with us in the room now?

GEORGE: She's outside in the garden enjoying the sunshine.

CRISPIN: Lovely. So, are you going to concentrate your focus solely on conjuring *your* Tanya back into *your* life again and forget about George in your book for the time being?

GEORGE: Why would I do that? I can do both, can't I?

CRISPIN: Yes, two birds with one stone... so to speak.

GEORGE: One will assist the other. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to...

CRISPIN: Get busy in the workshop of your imagination?

GEORGE: Yes.

CRISPIN: My cue to leave again. Happy conjuring. Cheerio for now.

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TANYA & GEORGE 1

GEORGE: Oh God! Tanya?

TANYA: Hello, George.

GEORGE: What...?

TANYA: How are you, George?

GEORGE: It's...

TANYA: Yes, George?

GEORGE: You? Really... you?

TANYA: It was the last time I checked. A strange question.

GEORGE: What are you...?

TANYA: Doing here? I'm here to see you, George.

GEORGE: Are you with... *him*?

TANYA: No, I came alone.

GEORGE: But you're... still... *with* him?

TANYA: Bradley and I have gone our separate ways. I've uncreated him.

GEORGE: What?

TANYA: He no longer exists for me. There is no Bradley, George. There never *was* any Bradley, George. I made him up.

GEORGE: You... Why?

TANYA: It was necessary.

GEORGE: To... to torture me.

TANYA: I needed to do something, George.

GEORGE: But... that? There hasn't been a day – or night – when I haven't imagined you with him... kissing him... making love to him.

TANYA: My imaginary lover.

GEORGE: He wasn't imaginary to me. We could've talked more.

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TANYA: Argued more?

GEORGE: Talked.

TANYA: Do you want me to leave, George?

GEORGE: No. I... Where have you been living?

TANYA: With a friend. You don't know her.

GEORGE: How... how did you know?

TANYA: Know what?

GEORGE: I was here?

TANYA: A little bird told me.

GEORGE: A bird? A crow?

TANYA: Your mother.

GEORGE: Oh.

TANYA: I've taken time off. Two weeks. If you want me to... stay?

GEORGE: Do you have a case?

TANYA: It's outside. I didn't want to presume you'd be happy to see me. Are you?

GEORGE: Yes, I... I... I'm just having trouble believing you're really...

TANYA: Me?

GEORGE: It's just... what I'm writing, it's very... true to life – for a work of psychological magical realism thriller.

TANYA: It's going well?

GEORGE: Better... now. Oh... Tanya, I'll never give you cause again to create any more monsters to torture me with.

TANYA: Good. Although Bradley wasn't really a monster... not to *me* anyway. He was actually quite charming, witty, romantic and hugely exciting in the bed –

GEORGE: I'll fetch your case.

GEORGE exits through the front door. He enters through the

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front door with Tanya's case.

Is this all you have?

TANYA: I didn't want to be lugging a heavy case around if I wasn't going to be staying. Honeymoon essentials.

GEORGE: Honeymoon?

TANYA: Perhaps we can call this our second honeymoon, George. On one condition.

GEORGE: What's that?

TANYA: No writing. Can you manage that... at least for the next two weeks?

GEORGE: This laptop will remain well and truly closed.

GEORGE closes his laptop.

TANYA: We still need to talk, George. Negotiate going forward together.

GEORGE: Yes, but not now. Come on.

GEORGE takes TANYA by the hand. They cross to the stairs.

TANYA: Don't I even get a cup of tea?

GEORGE: Tea later, honeymoon fun first.

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TANYA & GEORGE 2

- TANYA: I was wrong, George. I see that now.
- GEORGE: Wrong?
- TANYA: To stand in the way of your writing with my demands. Who am I, George, to get in the way of your genius, your need to express the magnificent stories that are there inside you waiting to be given out to the world? The wonder, the magic, the brilliance of George T. Slinger.
- GEORGE: Tanya?
- TANYA: No, my bedroom visitor at the Plough and Harrow made me see everything in a completely new light.
- GEORGE: Bedroom visitor?
- TANYA: The bird who was perched on the tree branch outside my bedroom window early this morning.
- GEORGE: What bird?
- TANYA: A crow.
- GEORGE: Crow?
- TANYA: Yes. Our exchange together was magical as we stared into each other's eyes. It felt as if he was looking into my very soul. And in that beautiful moment it felt as if another window within me burst open and through it I could see us together, George – you and me, our future life together – you writing and me... painting.
- GEORGE: Painting?
- TANYA: Yes, George, I've hidden it away since I was a child – my secret passion to paint – but now I feel it like an unstoppable force bubbling up within me. I want to paint the sea, the sky, the cliffs, the birds... everything. I need to find an art shop to buy canvasses and an easel. Perhaps there's one in the village. We'll enjoy the rest of our second honeymoon together, George – two creative artists, side by side – you writing and me painting. How does that sound?
- GEORGE: It sounds... perfect.
- TANYA: I need to get changed. Let's make today, George, the first day of the rest of our life together.
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AUDITION PIECES FOR SECOND HONEYMOON

BRADLEY & GEORGE 1

BRADLEY: Well, well, well... look who's still with us.

GEORGE: Who are *you*?

BRADLEY: You *know* who I am?

GEORGE: No, I've no idea.

BRADLEY: What... you don't remember me?

GEORGE: Should I?

BRADLEY: I would... if I were you. How the hell did you survive it?

GEORGE: Survive what?

BRADLEY: It's a miracle.

GEORGE: What is?

BRADLEY: You being here.

GEORGE: Who are you and what do you want?

BRADLEY: You really don't remember?

GEORGE: What?

BRADLEY: Me. Your fall.

GEORGE: What fall?

BRADLEY: You must've landed on a ledge or something and hit your head. Did you?

GEORGE: I've no idea what you're talking about. You've obviously got the wrong cottage, the wrong person.

BRADLEY: No, I haven't... *George*.

GEORGE: Are you going to tell me who you are?

BRADLEY: It begins with a B and ends with a Y.

GEORGE: You're not...?

BRADLEY: Not?

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GEORGE: *Him... are you... Bradley?*

BRADLEY: Ah, it's all coming back.

GEORGE: So... so you *are* real.

BRADLEY: Real?

GEORGE: Yes, she didn't just make you up.

BRADLEY: Make me up?

GEORGE: You *do* exist.

BRADLEY: Who told you I didn't?

GEORGE: Where did you meet her? In London? Do you know her from work – hers... or yours – whatever it is you do?

BRADLEY: We met here.

GEORGE: Here? No, that's impossible. She's only been here once before and that was on our honeymoon... and I know you didn't meet her then.

BRADLEY: Really.

GEORGE: What... you're telling me you met her on our honeymoon?

BRADLEY: She wasn't happy with you, spending all your precious honeymoon moments working on your book. She needed someone who was going to give her some undivided quality attention. I arrived just in the nick of time.

GEORGE: I hardly worked on my book at all.

BRADLEY: That's not her story.

GEORGE: If she was seeing someone – *you* – on our honeymoon I would've certainly known about it.

BRADLEY: You did know about it... before you hit your head.

GEORGE: I did not hit my head.

BRADLEY sits.

I wouldn't get too comfortable if I were you, I've got nothing to say to you.

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BRADLEY: Good, because I've got nothing to say to you either.

GEORGE: If you've come to see her, you're out of luck. She's probably on a train back to London by now

BRADLEY: Why would she be doing that?

GEORGE: Because we had an argument.

BRADLEY: About what?

GEORGE: None of your business.

BRADLEY: Well... we *didn't* have an argument, so I say she'll be back here soon. We've just been enjoying a nice refreshing glass of Chablis in the pub together. Perfect after a hard day relaxing at the beach.

GEORGE: You've just been in the pub with her?

BRADLEY: Yes.

GEORGE: It must've been a quick drink, she only left here ten minutes ago.

BRADLEY: What are you talking about? She's been with me the entire day.

GEORGE: No, she hasn't.

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BRADLEY & GEORGE 2

- GEORGE: I see a very satisfying ending where you are standing on a cliff edge staring down at the harsh and jagged rocks below. Should you ‘accidentally’ fall it would be a most unpleasant occurrence for you. You’re not sure why or how you got there. It’s almost as if some invisible force beyond your control has brought you to where you are. And now I see Tanya – in the half-light of the evening – standing silently behind you. Her interest in you now is gone, completely... expired. You’re yesterday’s dream. She’s realised now George is her one, true love. And the fact that he’s soon to be a bestselling author isn’t hurting anything either. She puts her lips together and blows. That’s all it takes to dispatch the now insubstantial Bradley. Over the edge you go and down to the rocks below. But perhaps before you even touch the bottom you fizzle out into... unremembered oblivion. *(To himself.)* Nice, George. Thank you, George.
- BRADLEY: Okay, let’s cut the pleasantries, shall we. I’ll just say this: if you’re thinking about spending another night here, George, you might find it a little tricky waking up in the morning.
- GEORGE: That sounds like a threat on my life, Bradley. Is it?
- BRADLEY: Whatever gave you that idea, George?
- GEORGE: Well, I suppose you’ve attempted it before, so there’s nothing to stop you from attempting it again.
- BRADLEY: You can shack up tonight with Dolores – in her cottage with the spectacular views. If she doesn’t want you, I suggest finding a park bench somewhere – preferably near the station, so you don’t miss the first train back to London. Just tell me: how the hell did you survive it... your fall?
- GEORGE: I landed on the branch of hope or despair.
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DOLORES 1 (played by Crispin or another actor TBD)

TANYA: George says you have a cottage here.

DOLORES: I do. A wonderful spot to withdraw to when I want to escape city life – which is more and more frequently nowadays. It has absolutely gorgeous views of the sea. There’s nothing I like better than looking out at a setting sun, watching the birds perform their aeronautical acrobatics, while cradling a glass of chilled Dom Perignon in my contented fingers.

TANYA: He says you work for HarperCollins.

DOLORES: My dear, I practically *am* HarperCollins... I’ve been there for so long now. I come from a long line of literary agents so I was destined for little else in life. Although I did have a brief spell as a catwalk model in my twenties. I had a career-ending fall in Barcelona when I tumbled off a pair of nine-inch heels into a group of Japanese businessmen in the front row. I was mortified, naturally. The businessmen however were quite delighted and consoled me by supplying me with the finest champagne for the rest of the evening.

There is the pop of a champagne cork, off.

Ah, music to my ears. No, since then, it’s been HarperCollins all the way. It’s a rewarding profession and made all the more rewarding when a rare jewel such as a George T. Slinger finds its way into one’s inbox.

GEORGE enters from the kitchen carrying a tray with a bottle of opened champagne and four glasses.

GEORGE: Champagne.

DOLORES: Yes, this man is quite the writer. From the moment I started reading the first half of his novel – I am eagerly awaiting the rest – I was instantly drawn into the intriguing world of psychological magical realism thriller. A genre I had not come across before. But I think once this book is published – and I have no doubt it will be – we will see a slew of imitators eager to replicate this exciting new category of literary fiction. I can’t wait for Marion to read it. She’ll be green with envy that I discovered you first, George. Simon will also be incredibly miffed. And Geoffrey... well Geoffrey might actually read something for a change. He’s long overdue for the pasture poor man.

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DOLORES 2 (played by Crispin or another actor TBD)

DOLORES: Quite. There's nothing more exciting for a writer than to be able to present one's friends and family with a newly printed copy of one's latest novel. To see their excited faces as they peruse the eye-catching cover with title and author's name writ large on the front and glowing endorsements from fellow novelists eager to be associated with one's up and coming notoriety on the back. I can only *imagine* the thrill of it as we publishers are merely the facilitators of greatness not the producers of it... like George here. And if the remainder of his novel is as magnificent as what I've read so far: so artful in pacing, gripping in suspense, evocative in metaphor and allegory, intimate in its first person narrative voice... and the rest, then we will have a guaranteed bestseller on our hands. I don't often use the word genius – as it's a word all too often used and all too often misapplied nowadays – but in George's case it is indeed the mot juste.

GEORGE: Dolores, you're too kind.

DOLORES: Not kind, George. I can't afford 'kind', not in my profession. I didn't get to where I am today by being 'kind' to people. Au contraire, talk to anyone in the publishing world and they'll tell you that Dolores Foster-Creighton has the reputation for merciless savagery when it comes to critiquing novels. To receive praise from her – *me* – I assure you is well and truly earned. (*Raising glass.*) So, here's to George T. Slinger and his story so far. Is Bradley all right?
