

GARBIELA. There was this girl—this quite needy girl who toured me around, and I told her I'd be her—

(The DING of the elevator.)

FANTINE. Best friend!!!

GARBIELA. *(To the audience:)* Day one.

FANTINE. So, first thing: How are people going to know we're friends?

GARBIELA. I think it'll be obvious.

FANTINE. I'm going to say something that I shouldn't say. But I'm going to, but I shouldn't. Do you have plans for tomorrow night?

GARBIELA. I do. I'm going out to dinner with my dad.

FANTINE. Are you tricking me?

GARBIELA. No.

FANTINE. In case you're really not tricking me, and your plans fall through: There's a surprise party for me tomorrow night, if you want to come.

GARBIELA. If it's a surprise party, how do you know about it?

FANTINE. Did anyone ever throw you a surprise party?

GARBIELA. Yeah.

FANTINE. Did you know?

GARBIELA. Yeah, like a hundred different ways.

FANTINE. Mine's at seven tomorrow. So you should come, unless you already are. My sister will be there, which is too bad. I wish she didn't exist.

(KELVIN sprints on for no apparent reason. KELVIN is fast. He doesn't make it far when—)

STAUNCHER. *(Offstage:)* Kelvin, get back here!

(KELVIN turns, sprints back the way he came.)

FANTINE. Hey Kelvin! *(To GARBIELA:)* Kelvin's fast. I need a favor.

GARBIELA. What's that?

FANTINE. The school play is already rehearsing but there's a part still open that's perfect for me. Can I do my audition speech for you?

GARBIELA. Sure.

FANTINE. Thank you!

(The BELL rings.)

FANTINE. Where are you supposed to be first period?

GARBIELA. Spanish.

FANTINE. With who?

GARBIELA. Ms. Collister.

FANTINE. You're late!

GARBIELA. The passing period just started.

FANTINE. Go! I'm serious. I'd take you, but I'm staying on this floor and you're heading up to twenty-eight . . . Down that hall, up the stairs, and three doors left.

GARBIELA. *(This represents GARBIELA walking:)* Down the hall, up the stairs, three doors left and—

COLLISTER. Where have you been?

(MS. COLLISTER is imposing, at least in spirit. Next to her is someone more imposing than she is. This is TAM TAM.)

GARBIELA. I'm new.

COLLISTER. The only proper response when I ask a question is to answer the question. The rule in this class is that you get here four minutes early to turn in your homework. Where were you?

GARBIELA. I got lost.

COLLISTER. The worst response is to lie. The school's not that big, the rooms are numbered, and there's no one who wouldn't have given you directions because everybody here is nice.

GARBIELA. Maybe not everybody.

COLLISTER. Explain that. Explain what you just said.

GARBIELA. It's three hundred students. There have to be some mean ones.

COLLISTER. This is my bodyguard, Tam Tam. Ignore him. I have a disorder that sometimes makes me attack students. He's here for your protection. You're Garbiela Nettles.

GARBIELA. Yes.

COLLISTER. Did you take Spanish at your old school?

GARBIELA. Yes.

COLLISTER. The class motto is on the board. Can you translate it?

GARBIELA. No.

(We hear a CHIME.)

COLLISTER. What was that?

GARBIELA. I think I got a text.

COLLISTER. That's impossible. We don't get reception here. Give me your phone.

(GARBIELA does. COLLISTER reads it. It puzzles her. A SOUND tells us she's erased it.)

GARBIELA. Did you just erase my text?

COLLISTER. I did.

GARBIELA. What did it say?

COLLISTER. It was private.

GARBIELA. You can't do that.

COLLISTER. Apparently I can.

GARBIELA. Give me my phone.

COLLISTER. Sit down.

GARBIELA. No, I'm out of here.

COLLISTER. If you leave this classroom, then you're leaving the school, permanently.

GARBIELA. That's right. I am. Give me my phone.

(COLLISTER gives GARBIELA her phone.)

COLLISTER. On your way out make sure to check in at the office so they don't think you've been abducted.

GARBIELA. I will.

(But then GARBIELA hears a voice: strange, of indeterminate gender. It seems to come from above.)

VOICE (SFX). You're burning up.

GARBIELA. Who said that?

COLLISTER. Who said what?

VOICE (SFX). You're burning up.

GARBIELA. A voice that said "You're burning up." *(To a STUDENT next to her:)* You heard that, didn't you? What's directly above us?

CARA. The theatre.

GARBIELA. I thought the theatre was in the gym.

CARA. The old theatre. The one that burned.

COLLISTER. You were on your way out.

GARBIELA. I changed my mind.

COLLISTER. It's too late for that.

GARBIELA. Here's my phone.

COLLISTER. Doves Forge is a privilege, and you've lost the privilege.

GARBIELA. Please. It's my first day.

COLLISTER. Goodbye.

VOICE (SFX). You're burning up!

GARBIELA. How can I be the only person hearing that? You don't hear a voice from up there? "You're burning up."

COLLISTER. You're holding up the class.

GARBIELA. I'll fix my attitude. I'll try so hard that— *(She looks at the board.)* The class motto: "No eres tan inteligente como crees." You're not as smart as you think.

COLLISTER. Sit down. Don't speak again this period. Do you understand?

GARBIELA. Yes. *(To the audience:)* I don't remember anything else from that morning.

VOICE (SFX). You're burning up.

GARBIELA. Just that voice, over and over again. From upstairs.

(BELL RINGS!)

VOICE (SFX). You're burning up.

(Boom. She's alone, in the hall.)

(From off, SNARLING, FEROCIOUS BARKING.)

CLOVIS, 16, enters with his giant, invisible-to-us dog Scattergood on a leash. He's barely able to hold the dog back. CLOVIS has lost a tooth, and is self-conscious about it.)

CLOVIS. Slow down SLOW down!

(CLOVIS stops, but Scattergood seems desperate to reach GARBIELA and devour her.)

CLOVIS. Are you lost?

GARBIELA. No, I have this period free.

(Another Scattergood lunge, accompanied by ferocious BARKING.)

CLOVIS. This is Scattergood.