

6.55pm.

Five minutes to go.

I'm holding my phone like it's an unexploded bomb, ready to detonate at any second. Not that people tend to find unexploded bombs in busy London pubs, but you get the idea.

Dan the barman smiles as he passes me a glass of wine. I take a sip, making myself relax as my mind meanders back to the email I'd gotten three months ago...

Dearest Jeanie, if you are reading this, I'm already dead (I have always wanted to write that line.). In fact, if I've got my timing right, I've been dead for about six months. Sucks to be me. But hurray for living in a time of scheduled emails!

I'd been a total blubbering mess - getting an email from your dead best friend will do that to a person. Missing Sasha is like toothache. Constant and throbbing and sometimes angry. I'd felt so alone, until her email.

And she was right. By then, Sasha *had* been dead for almost six months. Now it's close to nine.

I won't waste time dwelling on how awful the whole thing was. I'd much rather have a bit of fun. Every month for the next three months, I'm going to email you something that I'd like you to do for me. Three wishes, if you will. And you're going to do them. Like in Aladdin, because your name is Jeanie, get it?

6.56pm.

I look around the Victorian pub that was our regular the entire time we lived together. It's one of those ones which hasn't bothered to modernise. I'm propped up at the long wooden bar on a ripped barstool, drinking wine which came in its own little bottle. Rustic, you'd call it if you were being kind. A bit of a dump you'd say if you weren't.

Sasha and I came here every Friday night for years.

The man slumped over a pint of Guinness further along the bar is wearing a coat that looks like it would walk itself to the nearest washing machine, given half the chance. It makes the tight velvet dress that I have on even more ridiculous.

But that had been wish one.

Sasha had ordered that I go to Harrods where she'd booked me a personal shopping experience. Two women who looked like they'd fallen off a catwalk had manhandled me into an array of ever more revealing dresses. I'd eventually picked the velvet one, thinking that I'd have to barter a kidney to pay for it. But Sasha had already paid on the proviso that I dress up and wear it to our pub tonight.

I glance at my phone.

6.57pm.

Month two had been much harder.

Sasha had wished for me to call my Mum. Really, she'd been like a Mum to Sasha too, considering how much time we spent together growing up. I'd heard Mum agreeing with Sasha one day near the end, telling her that it was okay not to have any more treatment. And then Sasha went and died, and it all got muddled in my head. I guess I blamed Mum. But not having her made me even more alone.

That second email had spouted off about the importance of forgiveness which I thought was a bit rich. Afterall, Sasha had been in a lifelong blood feud with Patch, our neighbours one eyed cat.

'Are you okay, I didn't miss it did I?' Mum asks, coming back from the toilets and slipping onto the stool next to me.

'No, don't worry, I'm just thinking about last month,' I tell her.

She gives my hand a squeeze. 'I'm glad she made you call me. You're my favourite child. I still wonder why she wanted me to tag along tonight though?'

I swallow, my mouth dry. This is the last time I'll ever hear from Sasha. 'Maybe she thought I'd need the support.'

6.58pm

Dan catches my eye again and I smile a nervy smile.

'Sasha always said he likes you,' Mum says, having a drink.

'He does not,' I protest. My cheeks a bit pink.

6.59pm

Seconds to go. I open my emails ready.

7pm

My phone buzzes and I fling it into the air, grappling to catch it like it's made of butter. Finally, I have it and I'm looking down at the new email. The title is the same as the other ones.

Three wishes.

'Open it then,' Mum presses her shoulder close to mine. I swallow and tap my finger to my phone, my eyes already filling with tears.

Dearest Jeanie,

As you know, this will be my last email. I hope by now, you're a bit less miserable about the whole me dying thing. In the words of Trooper, I was here for a good time. Not a long time. Now, back to you. My final wish, my little Jeanie (insert dramatic drum roll) is...

Please kiss Dan. (Barman Dan, in case you know any others).

One little kiss, that's all I'm asking for.

If you've managed to get yourself a boyfriend lately, then you're officially absolved of any responsibility to fulfil this wish. Tell you Mum to ignore her message too.

You are amazing, time to let someone else see it.

On that note, I'll say goodbye. Don't you dare forget me. Sash.

My heart is pounding in my ears. The back of my neck damp with sweat. I can't believe she'd ask me to do this. I look over at Mum, now rummaging around in her bag for her own phone.

'What does it say?' I ask as she pulls it out and starts tapping away.

Instead of telling me, she holds out the phone. It's just two words.

Nudge her.

Mum sniffs. Then turns to face me.

'You heard the woman,' she says, looking at Dan. He's busy texting behind the bar.

I laugh and lower my voice. 'And say what? Hi, my dead best mate told me to come and snog you?' He'd run a mile. Plus,' I say, mildly hysterical, 'he probably has a partner. They're likely messaging right this second.'

'Well, I have my instructions.' Mum moves to stand behind me.

'What are you doing?' I ask as she puts her hands on my shoulders and nudges me from the stool. 'I don't think she meant literally!' I protest.

Dan turns to face us, his eyes wide at the small scene we're making.

I'm pretty sure you could power half of London with the thermal heat my face must be giving off.

Mum's hands are on my shoulders again, set for another nudge, 'Okay, I'm going, I'm going,' I tell her.

I'll just walk up to Dan and ask to peck his cheek. Job done.

Shakey legs propel me towards the end of the bar. Dan is walking that way too, looking at me in a curious sort of way. I blame Sasha for the fact that I'm really paying attention to how nice his forearms are. I'd never be ogling forearms if she hadn't emailed telling me to kiss him.

Dan arrives at the end of the bar a second before me and stops to wait.

I'm breathing like I've run a marathon by the time I get there. I smooth my palms down my dress, remembering I'm in this daft velvet thing again.

'Hi,' I say, looking up at Dan. You have to hand it to the man; he has good eyes. Not that anyone really has bad eyes. But his are extra nice. Brown with little flecks of green.

And now I've been staring at him for way too long.

This is weird.

I make it even weirder by saying, 'this will sound strange, but Sasha emailed me from beyond the grave and told me to kiss you. And I know it's ridiculous, but I feel kind of like I have to do whatever she wants, on account of the fact that she's dead. So, if we could just peck then my Mum over there,' we both look at Mum who waves, 'will leave me alone.'

'Huh,' Dan says, 'makes sense now.'

I hardly hear him. 'Like I said, you must think it's ridiculous, and we totally don't have to...hang on, what makes sense?'

'I got an email from an unknown address just now. It just said, "say yes."' He smiles and I relax, just a touch.

'It did?' I ask.

He nods, rubs a hand over the back of his neck. 'I've wanted to...before.' He goes red too.

It feels like we're standing on a precipice then. I think of how brave Sasha was, always so brave. And of how lonely I've been without her.

'So, do you...' I trail off, tilting my head up to him.

'I do.'

In this moment now, I feel less alone.