

A Shower of Bright Red Sparks

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Clinquant, effulgent light flashed cardinal red and pomelo orange entwined with violaceous lilac, fuchsia pink and lime green blurred my vision as Bulbul's fled from trees singing their harmonious melody. A blanket of cimmerian, swarthy purple draped over the sky glowed bright with flaxen auricomous stars speckled over the night sky. People bustled down the streets, their shopping bags swishing as they filed down the streets. I looked up and in the distance saw the lambent, incandescent letters that spelled out 'HOLLYWOOD'. Lush prolific greenery surrounded the gargantuan letters and I drew in a sharp breath as elaborate golden pillars came into view. Spark Theatre.

A twisting line stretched down until it curved around a bend. I gulped as I felt the beady stares of people as they eyed my 'over the top' makeup and billowing velvet dress. Pearl necklaces were draped over my neck and my bangles clicked together as I took my spot behind a skinny woman with an auburn plait.

"Here for the auditions too?" She turned on her heel and stood face towards me. I nodded. Her lips pressed together into a tight line as her incandescent hoops in her ears swished back and forth.

"Claudia Everqueen, I'm going to be the lead singer and if you're lucky might be secondary. Or, a 'just in case' if I get sick. Well of course that isn't going to happen, you might as well go home." She swivelled back on her formidable heels and grinned as the line moved forward. I twiddled with my thumbs as more people gathered behind me. She was right, I didn't stand a chance against the hundreds of competitors gathered today.

I felt as if the minutes had turned into hours and the hours had turned into days or even centuries before Claudia moved forward to take her place on stage. The last thing I saw of her was her gleaming smile, the clack of her rhinestone studded shoes and then the swagger of her hips as she sashayed into the spotlight.

"Name," I peeked behind the navy curtains and saw a woman sitting straight in her seat, eyeing Claudia. Her silky wisps of ivory hair were pulled back into a messy updo and behind her leopard print glasses were the intimidating ice cobalt eyes that pierced into anyone's soul.

"Claudia Rosella Everqueen age 16, position auditioning for: lead," She stated proudly, straightening up to her full height as the woman raised an eyebrow and jotted the name down.

"Song you are to be performing today,"

"Some of These Days by Sophie Tucker,"

"Perfect, you may begin." I watched tremulously as Claudia opened her mouth to sing and expected the slurred notes of a perfect harmonious melody. I pulled back from the curtains as crackled, staccato beats echoed around the cavernous room. Many girls behind me stuck their fingers in their ears and even the woman who I soon realised to be Mariana Evans flinched a little as Claudia's high pitched wail emitted from her throat.

"I feel so lonely, just for you on-ly! For you know honey, you've had your way!" It was a relief once the song ended but Claudia didn't even seem to notice the frowns as she strutted from the stage.

"Your turn girlie," She whispered to me as the doors engulfed her. I was ushered forward by some girls behind me as I realised I had not appeared when Mariana had called my name. She seemed just as stony like she hoped I didn't have equally as bad of a voice as Claudia.

"Name,"

"Alice Mcmillian,"

"Age,"

"15,"

"What part auditioning for and song,"

"Lead or anything really I just have a dream of becoming a jazz singer, sorry," I blushed as she gritted her teeth and shot me a glare, I had said too much already. "I'll be performing It Had To Be You by Frank Sinatra." Her expression softened but it instantly became impassive again. I took a deep breath and looked straight ahead at the empty chairs lining the room. It was just her watching.

"Why do I do just as you say, why must I just give you your way. Why do I sigh?" My mind replayed the lyrics I had practised the night before and once I reached the last word I held the long high note at the top of my voice. Once I had counted a solid eight beats I closed my mouth making the slightest of sound. I bowed to Miss Evans and exited the stage. I was directed to a chair as the rest of the girls had their auditions. I gritted my teeth, no one had said anything to me, had I really performed that badly? Hours passed until finally everyone was gathered onto the stage. It was time to announce who would play the lead part.

"Now, everyone will know why we are here, I have decided who will be playing lead. There are so many talented singers in this room but I am afraid I can only choose three people from the 69 girls that have come here today. Announcing the girl that will be covering up for the lead if sick or unable to attend, Hazel Mcknight!" A girl with braids bounded up on to the stage, a look of disappointment but also glee plastered onto her face. "Secondary to lead singer Georgiana Remlin and lead singer..." I drew in a breath, crossing my toes and fingers for extra luck. "ALICE MCMILLIAN!" The crowd burst into applause and I looked around flustered, my face searching for- I jumped forward in horror as rubicund sparks sprayed out from behind me. I surveyed the room looking for the source when I saw the curly auburn locks that disappeared from sight. Claudia.

Girls clambered for the exits as the flames danced in pure mockery, lashing out their bellicose, pugnacious mutilated hands in search for innocent people to feed off. Twinkling light came crashing down in a cacophony of clangs and tendrils of ashen grey smoke spiralled upwards setting off the clangorous wails and screeches of the fire alarms. Vermilion fire lept and clawed, forcing its way through locked doors and mobs of people. Boys and girls screeched in agonising protest as calesent burns and sears marked their bodies. Peroxide yellow and valencia orange oppressive flames flanked the exits on all sides, roaring, growing larger by the minute. Someone grabbed a fire extinguisher and started spraying furiously at the flames that tore for her, screaming hopelessly as it batted it away like a harmless fly. Claudia, I never knew she was such a savage. I groped through the thick smoke, feeling my way out when a body crashed forwards on me. I thrashed as someone pinned me to the ground.

"Don't make a sound Alice!" A voice hissed, though, it wasn't Claudia's voice. I was dragged backwards, the scene that played out with me made me swallow as half the building capsized. I was

thrown backwards, my head clonked onto a metal wall and I looked around. I scrambled to my feet as the girl hurried to close the door.

"NO STOP!" I shouted but before I could reach the handle someone pinned me down again. This time I knew exactly who she was.

"Alice, congratulations on getting the lead. Even if you sang half as good as me," She added under her breath. "I'll be happy to know that Hazel will be covering up for you, she was the one who took you here. She's a little savage. Anyway, I think you should kiss your life goodbye. I don't think you'll make it out of here alive." She chuckled before slapping me hard on the face.

"That's for stealing my dream!" She breathed indignantly before swinging open the door and locking it firmly behind her. I could see the flames that crawled for the room I was in, glistening sweat trickled down my forehead. It was over. There was no escape.