



HOPE runs through the—

HOPE waits at the—

HOPE sits on the—

‘The train to Hounslow is now leaving from platform seven.’

Fluffy empty dumb bimbo bimbo—

‘This train is calling at Vauxhall, Queenstown Road, Clapham Junction, Wandsworth Town, Putney, Barnes—’

You know why Hope is the way she is you know—

‘Barnes Bridge, Chiswick, Kew Bridge, Brentford, Syon Lane, Isleworth—’

*She doesn’t even remember—*

‘Terminating at Hounslow.’



HOPE is on the wrong train.

Blinking, I stand up.

HOPE jumps off the—

HOPE drops her—

HOPE picks up the—

‘The train to Windsor and Eton Riverside is now leaving from platform eighteen.’

HOPE breaks into a run.

Platform eight, platform nine, platform ten . . .  
*Fluffy*— Platform eleven, platform twelve, platform  
thirteen, platform fourteen . . . *doesn't even pass the*  
*Bechamel test*— Platform fifteen, platform sixteen,  
platform seventeen—

HOPE can't find her ticket—

‘The train now leaving platform eighteen calls at



Vauxhall, Clapham Junction, Putney, Barnes,  
Richmond—'

Shut up shut up shut up—

I slam Mercy's debit card down and push through  
the barrier. All the lights in my head have smashed,  
there's glass everywhere, the cameras have broken,  
the set is falling apart—

HOPE jumps on the—

The script is ripped—

Stop it stop it stop it I'm not listening I'm not  
listening I'm not—

*BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP*

The train doors shut on HOPE.

OW!

I don't have to hear it I don't have to—

*BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP*

The train doors shut on HOPE again.



OW!

Block it block it block it block it—

*BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP*

*Happy happy happy happy happy happy happy  
happy—*

Hands get slammed on the doors.

‘Whoa,’ a warm voice says as I’m pulled gently forward on to the train. ‘You OK?’

Shaking my head, I focus until everything’s silent again. Until the words ringing in my ears stop smashing my world up. Then I stare through wet eyes at the most beautiful boy I’ve ever seen.



‘Is it midnight yet?’

‘Eleven forty-three.’

‘Just in time.’

Blinking, I gaze at the boy standing over me, glowing in the train carriage lights.

‘Not you,’ I clarify quickly. ‘I meant me. This is the last train home.’

The boy laughs; there’s a tiny gap between his front teeth.

‘Close, though. You definitely OK? That looked pretty painful.’

He’s very tall, with golden skin and bronze freckles scattered across his nose and cheeks. His hair is platinum white – flicked across his forehead – and his face is heart-shaped, with a little dip in his upper lip and a slightly pointed chin and ears, a bit like



a pixie. His eyes are electric blue: the colour of a winter sky, bright and cloudless.

Obviously, I knew the stars were sending me Someone, but even in my wildest fantasies I didn't know it would be Someone as Special as *this*. Every other Potential is disappearing like bubbles: Waiter, *pop*. Photographer's Assistant, *pop*. Receptionist, TV Wolf Actor, Welcome Drinks Boy: *pop pop pop*.

Did I *really* fancy Ice Cream Boy?

'N-no,' I manage, still staring at him. 'I didn't feel it. Not at all, really. I was . . . thinking about . . . something . . . else.'

'Here. You must be in shock.' I'm led gently to a seat. The train is rocking from side to side, beetling out of Waterloo. 'Sit down. And just let me—'

Before I can breathe, the boy sits next to me and puts a golden hand gently under my chin, thumb and finger lifting my face towards him. Then he uses the right sleeve of his jumper to gently rub at my cheeks, studying my face carefully as he does so.

'Oil,' he explains, smiling. 'From the doors.'

I can feel warm breath on my nose, and we're so close I can see intricate splashes of turquoise and

sky blue in his eyes, ringed by cobalt like round the edge of a swimming pool.

‘There,’ he says, pulling away but still looking at me. ‘Much better.’

It’s suddenly as if the camera has flipped and I can see *me* through his eyes: dark brown eyes, brown skin, button nose, full bottom lip, the little heart birthmark on my cheek and the tiny curls collecting on my forehead.

Then the camera pulls back and I can see both of us.

I can hear the *click click click* of the smashed spotlights in my head trying to switch back on.

‘You’re American, right?’

He laughs brightly. ‘I am indeed. Although I’m native Californian, which is basically a different nationality in and of itself.’

‘My dad’s American too!’ I beam, even though I totally thought California was in the States. ‘From New Orleans originally, but he got together with my mum in London many years ago so I’m half British too. He’s in Los Angeles at the moment for . . .’ *some blonde with a perky nose and tiny feet* – ‘work. He’s in the film industry,’ I add proudly.



‘Yeah?’ The beautiful boy grins. ‘Cool. I’m not really into movies, if I’m being honest. I’d rather be outside, in the fresh air and sunshine. A typical Cali boy, I guess.’

I stare at him, trying to understand.

What does he mean, *outside*? Doing what, exactly? Surely you mostly go outside to collect the stories you can then go back inside and make films about?

‘So much other stuff going on,’ I agree, nodding. ‘Soooooo much stuff. Like, ah . . .’ *What other stuff?* ‘Well, there’s breakfast for starters. Lunch. Dinner. The bit in between dinner and lunch.’ *Umm.* ‘And parties where everybody is happy and lovely and everything goes perfectly.’

‘Sure,’ he laughs. ‘You’re cute. Hey, are you cold? Why don’t you have this for a second? I don’t need it right now.’

I hadn’t realised I was trembling, but thank you once again, universe. Obviously, I was *supposed* to forget to collect Mercy’s coat from the bouncer because now this beautiful boy is taking his jacket off and wrapping it round my shoulders.

I glow at him. This is *exactly* like a film. I couldn’t



have written it better myself, and I know because I've tried to repeatedly.

The stars must have *foreseen* that I would read my horoscope late this evening, must have known Max would lend me his hat and let me into the party, then accurately predicted that I'd get caught in those train doors. Destiny had my back right from the start, just like I *knew* it would.

So auditions are over, my romantic lead is found, everyone else can go home – the most important part has been won.

Thank you, Venus, and in your face, *Max*.

'I'm Hope,' I smile, holding a hand out. A puff of cotton wool has started poking curiously out of my bra so I subtly prod it back in with my finger. 'Great to meet you.'

'Jamie,' he smiles and shakes my hand. 'Jamie Day.'

'Hi, Jamie,' I say, feeling shyer than I've ever been before. The entire right side of my body has gone tingling and warm and kind of numb. 'And thank you. For . . . you know . . . saving my life and stuff.'

I honestly don't think that's an exaggeration. I mean, who knows how many times I was going to



get shut in the train doors before I snapped back to consciousness? It could have been *hours*.

‘You’re welcome,’ Jamie grins. ‘I guess you could say I’m an accidental hero.’

We both laugh and the train crunches to a slow stop. ‘Train now approaching Vauxhall,’ the tannoy says loudly.

Jamie Day stands up. ‘Well, it’s been a pleasure running into you, half-American Hope. And an absolute honour to pry you out of the evil demonic train doors of South London.’

I stare at him.

Why is he standing up?

‘This is my stop,’ he explains as the doors beep and swing open. ‘Catch you later, Hope. Who knows? Maybe we’ll run into each other again one day in the future.’

Then The One grins, waves, steps off the train and disappears into the darkness.

I stare numbly at my reflection in the window.

Umm, that’s not how this scene goes. I have seen a *lot* of romantic movies, and at no stage do the male leads go around saving girls from almost certain death, touching their faces, breathing on

them, cleaning them up with jumper sleeves and calling them cute if they're just going to get off at the next station.

I mean, if that was supposed to happen, my horoscope would have said *Romance Is Calling But Don't Get Too Excited Because It's A Wrong Number LOL!*

Vauxhall is less than three minutes from Waterloo. This isn't an epic romance; it's barely even a *trailer*.

Maybe Jamie Day doesn't realise he's *my* The One?

Maybe he saw the cotton-wool puff poking out of my bra and it sent fate spiralling in a different direction.

Maybe he didn't read his horoscope this morning, or he met *another* Cancerian while I was in class, or we were actually *supposed* to meet on the way to Waterloo and then we'd have had more time together to really bond and—

'Hope?'

I spin round in my seat.

'So I was thinking, you know that day? The one in the future I was talking about? Maybe we could make it a particular day?'



I blink. ‘What?’

‘We could run into each other again.’ Jamie grins and scratches his head. ‘Like, on purpose, at a designated time, in a specified place. Maybe tomorrow? Same place?’

*What . . . ? Is he—*

‘Wait.’ I stare at Jamie, then at the open train doors behind him. There must be some kind of delay because they’re not closing yet. ‘Did you just leave the train, walk to the next carriage and come back in through the doors behind me to ask me on a *date*?’

Jamie laughs. ‘Sure. I realised there’s a chance I wouldn’t stop thinking about you if I didn’t. But, if I need to wait till the next stop for an answer, then I totally will.’

My eyes open wide.

Heart hammering, I reach speechlessly into my handbag and pull out one of my pre-signed photos with my number on it.

‘Sweet.’ Jamie smiles easily as he takes it, putting it in his jeans pocket. ‘And can I have my jacket too?’ I blink at the coat, then nod silently and hand that over too.



'I'll text you, 'kay?'

*Beep beep beep beep -*

'There go those demon doors again.'

He bounces down the train and leaps through them.

I suddenly snap back to life.

'Wait!' I shout in a panic, jumping up and running after him. 'I forgot to ask! What's your star sign?'

'Gemini,' Jamie grins as the doors slam between us and the train starts pulling away.

And, just like that, I hear it.

A tiny click.

As the train rocks away from the platform and into the darkness – tracks beneath me thudding like drums – there's a faint tinkle of piano music. Slowly, it swells until there's flutes, violins, trumpets. Cameras whir, hot white lights blink on. A spotlight, glowing and warm, is aimed straight at me.

And we are *Back. In. Action.*

With a rush, the camera pans over all of London – how big it is! How unlikely the odds! How mysteriously the universe works and yet how accurately predicted! – before slowly focusing in on the train hurtling through the night.



Then it zooms in for a tight shot of my glowing,  
happy face.

And in that moment HOPE knew that  
nothing would be the same again.

Finally, the BOY had a name.

**END SCENE.**