

AGATHA. Master Branwell is dead.

EMILIE. That is not possible.

AGATHA. Of course it is *possible*, child.

All things here are *possible*.

EMILIE. But I – From his very hand, I received –

AGATHA. Master Branwell suffered greatly from the typhus.

And then he passed.

EMILIE. But – the letter. All the letters.

AGATHA. Did you like them?

EMILIE. Did I...?

AGATHA. Did you enjoy them. Did you feel...generously toward their author.

EMILIE. They were very...affectionate letters.

AGATHA. They coaxed from you a warmth. Did they not. You responded in kind. Your affection grew.

EMILIE. When did Master Branwell pass?

AGATHA. Three months ago, give or take.

EMILIE. But...that cannot be possible, you see, for the letters –
AGATHA. They were by my hand.

(A beat.)

EMILIE. I don't believe you.

AGATHA. You think I cannot write...affectionately, when I choose?

EMILIE. That was not a woman's hand. A woman would not be capable of such letters.

AGATHA. I think, Miss Vandergaard, you know very little about women and what they are capable of. That is not your fault. You have been handed limitations, which you accepted. Perhaps accepting them *was* your fault. Either way, in your time here on the moors, perhaps you will become more knowledgeable.

(A beat.)

EMILIE. What am I doing here?

AGATHA. Pardon?

EMILIE. I came at the request of Master Branwell – yet I find he is dead. I'm here to look after a child – that I have not met, and that you seem in no hurry to have me meet. If I am not here for Master Branwell, or for the child, then what precisely is it for?

AGATHA. Do you wish to leave?

EMILIE. It was a question.

AGATHA. No one is a prisoner here, Emilie. If you are eager to return to London and seek yet another poorly paid position in yet another syphilitic household, you have only to repack your trunk.

EMILIE. It was only a question.

AGATHA. I didn't quite hear you.

EMILIE. I am not...eager.

AGATHA. Well then. More tea?

EMILIE. *Excuse* me?

AGATHA. Would you enjoy more tea?

Mallory!

(**MARJORY** enters. *Parlor hat. Curtseys. Tea.*)

AGATHA. My brother was a rageful man. So. There is that.
He broke the teacups. As you have heard.
Other things, too, were broken.
Dolls. When we were younger.
Eventually a neck or two.
He had his way with the maid, on multiple occasions.

EMILIE. With Marjory??

AGATHA. With Mallory.

EMILIE. But in actuality -?

AGATHA. Master Branwell was not a prudent man.

(*A beat.*)

EMILIE. Were *any* of the letters from Branwell?

AGATHA. Perhaps the first. What did the first say?

EMILIE. It notified me that my advertisement had come to his attention, and that his household was seeking a governess.

AGATHA. Oh. Yes. No. That was still myself.

EMILIE. And the...poetry? The...descriptions?

AGATHA. (*Can't help a little pride.*) You did like them, didn't you.

EMILIE. How can you sit there before me and admit to writing things of such a nature!

AGATHA. If they were badly written, that would be a different matter. None of what you received was badly written, don't you agree?

EMILIE. Badly written or not, it was shameless!

AGATHA. "Shameless."

EMILIE. A woman ought never -

AGATHA. A *woman*, Miss Vandergaard, desires results. A little girl desires approval, maybe. But a *woman* desires efficient results. I desired a governess. I wrote to one. She quit her immediate position and she came to me. Like a bee to a flower. Is that not... efficient? Is that not what you would call: a result?

(*Beat.*)

EMILIE. And now that I am here?

AGATHA. Now that you are here, you should rest. It's been quite a journey.

EMILIE. And your intentions? And the reason -?

AGATHA. You were right.

EMILIE. ...Excuse me?

AGATHA. Your song was more than passable.

(*A beat between them.*)

Mallory. Please show Miss Vandergaard to her bedroom.