

EXCERPT 5. Honor Scene 13

GEORGE. I'm sorry –

HONOR. Friday you were at the book launch with her. There she was. Madeleine told me. Of course she did. Sweet *schadenfreude*. She said you tried not to look as if you belonged together, but you left minutes apart and with the kind of overdone tact that is totally novel-esque behaviour for new lovers attempting to be discreet. (*Beat.*) Tuesday to Friday.

GEORGE. That's not –

HONOR. I *had* been invited to the launch. As your wife of thirty-two years, I've been invited to close to three hundred launches. *It was in my diary*. But of course, I wasn't going to turn up – I was doing what humiliated women do. And there you were.

GEORGE. I had to go –

HONOR. With her, you had to go with her.

GEORGE. We can keep delaying and delaying these things, but what's the point? You're talking about *decorum*, Honor –

HONOR. *Yes, I'm talking about decorum!* Yes I fucking *am* talking about decorum! Courtesy is not nothing, George. It means something. It's kindness. It's decency –

GEORGE. We have to get on with our lives!

HONOR. Listen! Listen to him! One week! One week!

GEORGE. You're hysterical!

HONOR. Book launches are an excellent way to get on with our lives. You're right! You're right! Some brought brief-cases, umbrellas, wives. You brought a new life. Slipped it in there, effortlessly. Effortlessly. Tuesday to Friday. One woman for another. One short history for one long one. One cunt for another too. And a glance here, a glance there. The whispers. The sibilant wave that must have followed you around the room. And it's done. A book launch. A life launch. And next time – next time – (*Breaking.*) they'll expect *her*. They'll say: I suppose George will be bringing: (*Beat.*) Claudia. Claudia. And that plain expectation is really the triumph, the successful passing of the baton. Done.

*Beat.*