

EXCERPT FROM
Jumping the Wind
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EXCERPT

AT RISE: Two pieces of pollen, POLLEN K-10, and POLLEN V-6, on a wilting flower petal.

POLLEN K-10

Quick—it’s coming!

(There is WIND which is slow and soft at first, but gains momentum and volume as it progress through the pollens’ dialogue.)

POLLEN V-6

It’s too weak.

POLLEN K-10

It’s not! It’s a perfect breeze!

POLLEN V-6

No, no. It’s too—We won’t get anywhere.

POLLEN K-10

We will! We’ll—hurry, now! With this gust!

(The WIND picks up speed)

POLLEN V-6

Don’t pull me!

POLLEN K-10

Well, you’re just standing there, rooting in to the petal even more!

POLLEN V-6

I’m storing my energy.

POLLEN K-10

Don't store it—use it! Come on! Now!

POLLEN V-6

Quit rushing me! You'll mess it up. We'll never make it to another flower and we'll just end up, we'll end up stuck in the wind and...fall somewhere useless, like in that box of sand or...I just—you need to think a little more before you act!

POLLEN K-10

Oh! I need to think more? You're telling me that I don't think about things? That I haven't planned ahead? Well, I'll tell you—I've been planning this moment since we got to the flower! Who started the jump-off training on this petal?

POLLEN V-6

It's not about the training...

POLLEN K-10

You don't think the training was important?

POLLEN V-6

Well...

POLLEN K-10

I've had 5000 successful pollen jumps since I started! You know what the rate was before I instituted the class?

POLLEN V-6

Ten percent success. I know. You quote that every time you start a new session!

POLLEN K-10

And you know what it is now?

(The WIND slows down)

POLLEN V-6

You say eighty percent success.

POLLEN K-10

You don't believe me?

POLLEN V-6

Maybe it's true. It might be. I'm just saying...you've never mentioned how you get these statistics...

POLLEN K-10

You never questioned that before.

POLLEN V-6

Everyone was wondering.

POLLEN K-10

Why didn't you tell me that?

POLLEN V-6

I was being polite.

POLLEN K-10

You should have told me.

(The WIND is gone.)

It's gone now. The breeze. You distracted me and we missed another one.

POLLEN V-6

Well, it's good we didn't ride it. It was short-lived. See? If we'd jumped it, we would have ended up half-way there and fallen in some pile of cow dung, or that circle of water the baby Talls splash around in. Then we would have drowned.

POLLEN K-10

Pollens have made it with less wind.

POLLEN V-6

And pollens have failed with more wind.

(pause)

I'm sorry, Pollen K-10. Please don't be discouraged with me. We'll take the next one.

POLLEN K-10

That's what you've been saying all day.

(pause)

POLLEN V-6

The party was nice last night. You organized it well.

(pause)

You're quite good at organizing. Classes and parties and jumps and...All the pollens look up to you. It was a good party.

POLLEN K-10

You were sitting in a corner.

POLLEN V-6

I was?

POLLEN K-10

It didn't look like you were having a good time.

POLLEN V-6

Oh, well...I was dancing too. At some point. Didn't you see me dancing? With Pollen D-9?

POLLEN K-10

He's a bad dancer.

POLLEN V-6

I know. I told him that too. But he only laughed and then danced worse. He was imitating the bees—flailing about wildly and making that terrible sound they make when they want to kidnap us. You should give him a training in dancing.

POLLEN K-10

I'm not a great dancer either.

POLLEN V-6

He's nice though. I wonder what flower he landed on.

(pause)

POLLEN K-10

Well, I'm glad you had a nice time last night. I'm glad I could organize a going-away party where everyone was talking about me behind my back!

POLLEN V-6

That wasn't happening.

POLLEN K-10

You said it was.

POLLEN V-6

Not like that.

POLLEN K-10

You said everyone questioned my statistics. And a party is a perfect place to talk about me behind my back.

POLLEN V-6

Pollen K-10...

POLLEN K-10

Well, isn't it though? Everyone is gathered together for easy access to one another. That way you can spread the rumors more quickly, right? The peepers and crickets offer loud music—which wasn't easy to arrange, by the way—so their songs could easily provide audio cover-up for everyone's gossip about me.

POLLEN V-6

They weren't gossiping about you. They like you. A few of us were just wondering how you got the statistics. That's all. I shouldn't have even told you. I'm sorry.

(pause)

POLLEN K-10

It's okay. I shouldn't care. I don't know why I let it bother me. What difference does it make what they believe or question? They're all gone now anyway. It's just you and me.

POLLEN V-6

Me and you.

(pause)

POLLEN K-10

Why were you sitting in the corner last night? After you were dancing.

POLLEN V-6

I don't know.

POLLEN K-10

Was someone mean to you? Did Pollen H-30 tease you about your color again?

POLLEN V-6

No. No, not at all.

POLLEN K-10

Good. Because your color is beautiful.

POLLEN V-6

He was fine. He didn't say anything. Everyone was so nice. Everyone has always been nice. I was sitting because, I guess...I guess I was just watching. Just looking at everyone. At our home. Do you know, Pollen K-10, I don't remember being anywhere else but here?

POLLEN K-10

Well, you haven’t been anywhere else but here.

POLLEN V-6

Haven’t I gone off, for a little bit at a time?

POLLEN K-10

I don’t think so. Not that I’ve noticed. But maybe. Maybe you’ve wandered off and wandered back.

POLLEN V-6

I feel like I have. But I don’t remember. I only remember being here, and knowing everyone, and taking your training, and having the parties when classes graduate, and then being here now. With you. The last two.

POLLEN K-10

That’s about all I remember also. That’s about all we’ve done, Pollen V-6.

POLLEN V-6

It’s been good though, hasn’t it?

POLLEN K-10

I suppose. But it’ll be good out there. Just as good. Maybe even better. A fresher flower, new pollens, more space, more opportunity.

POLLEN V-6

Yes, I know that. I mean, I assume that. But sometimes I wonder if we could just stay here. And have more parties and trainings and, just, talk and live. That might be nice.

POLLEN K-10

It wouldn’t be the same.

POLLEN V-6

Well, not exactly, of course. We don’t need the training now. We’ve already learned it all.

POLLEN K-10

I mean, there would be no one else here. No one else to have parties with. Everyone else would have moved on, and we’d be sitting here by ourselves on a rotting flower.

POLLEN V-6

I wonder how big the other flower will be. The one I land on. The one you land on. Do you think we’ll land on the same flower?

POLLEN K-10

I doubt it. Pollens usually get separated in the wind.

POLLEN V-6

Hm.

(pause)

I’ll miss this flower.

(pause)

POLLEN K-10

Pollen V-6?

POLLEN V-6

Yes?

POLLEN K-10

We really do need to ride the next wind.

POLLEN V-6

I know.

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