

Percy Janes First Novel

Sabrina Pinksen, Wild Cove, White Bay

Those Who Stayed (an excerpt)

At home, the water is more violent. That's what I thought when I first saw the Caribbean. How the softness of it must make for a softer people—not soft in constitution, just a gentleness in approach, like the pearly froth of a turquoise wave. I've never felt gentle. There is nothing about me that is mild. I attribute this to the sea.

I was standing on the pool deck of a three-star resort in Barbados. The water was pale and still. I remember feeling like I'd arrived on a different planet. My friend Sarah was fighting with the woman at reception, who was trying to put us in a room on the ground floor.

Look at these pictures, Sarah said. The room I booked has a view. I could only hear the pitch and rise of her voice. When we arrived, a hotel porter had shown us to our room. It was small and cool with a window shaded by the balconies on the floors above. Sarah tossed a bag on the grass outside the door. Absolutely not, she said, then she marched back to reception. Or, she said: Like fuck. That was something she would do. She'd blame the porter for our shitty room.