

## **JIGSAW**

### **Prologue**

I lie back on the damp grass and stare at the sky through the circling smoke. A memory comes of me and Sean on the rec in Bradford, pointing at the cumulonimbus and making collages from them. We used to spend hours gazing upwards. That was when the universe was our playground, when nothing was irreversible. That was when things were simple.

I offer the spliff to Lou and she lies down next to me. Dan stretches out at my other side. Wordlessly, they take my hands and some of the sadness ebbs away.

“Do you ever wonder what might have happened if you’d done things different?” Dan asks.

Nobody answers him because we know the question means a thousand things. Where would I be now if I had never made that train and met Sean? What would have happened to the others if we hadn’t moved to Harrogate? If Carrie hadn’t started working at Gio’s? Most of all, if James hadn’t... Questions. Nothing but questions. Perhaps sometimes there aren't any answers, only questions that spiral on and on. Perhaps there is no jigsaw.

And then from behind the hydrangea bush there is a noise. A terrible noise that makes us scramble up from the ground. A searing noise that makes Carrie, who is still sitting on the rock, slap her hands over her ears, a terrifying noise that tightens itself around my head and clamps my eyes shut.

***From the novel, 'Jigsaw, by Becky Cherriman***