

## CH 13

Harmony

She was up bright and early for work on Friday morning, had slept like the dead despite what she'd learned yesterday, had felt exhausted and crashed out. She was up and dressed by 7am and making herself coffee when her phone rang. She glanced at the caller ID and frowned, didn't recognise the number.

Then she realised that she had yet to put any of the work numbers onto her mobile phone, it could be someone calling her in, or Garrett Owens himself needing something, so she answered it, "Hello."

"Miss Preston, my name is Clayton, I'm head of the PR department for Owens Construction. I need you to come into the office early today please. There's a meeting to be had."

"Oh, is something wrong?" she asked right away.

"Not on your end, as far as I am aware. Garrett has asked me to call you in early, though...have you by chance seen the paper this morning?" he asked her.

"No..." she bit her lip "Is there a problem?"

"No, I just saw something odd was all. Never mind if anything arises from it, I assure you the PR department will be all over it. As for today, this meeting, don't be too concerned. It's a standard this time of year. Could you come in early, like now?"

"I can." She nodded, though was still curious about that 'have you seen the paper this morning' comment. "Where is your office?" she asked, staying on topic.

"No need for that, just come to the conference room on the 12th floor, it's being set up, as we speak, a big day here at Owens Construction."

"Alright, I'll leave now." Harmony told him and the line clicked closed.

She arrived at the office and headed for the conference room, and found Garrett Owens and his three CEOs in there along with all their secretaries, his mother and his father, plus the three previous CEOs as well. She knew who they all were; had done her research before coming to the interview.

"Ah, there she is." Garrett smiled right at her. "Come Harmony, we're announcing Christmas bonuses for the most excellent employees to the press, and handing out Christmas gifts to the employees." He told her as she walked across the room. "It's a big deal this year, got some cruises to be given out, we'll also be taking a full management photo to go with the article."

"Oh," she felt relief flood through her. She had not found anything about herself in the papers online, but she had seen Damien's had been in there, and there was a picture of an engagement ring next to him. The title had read 'Damien Blackwell seen to be buying an engagement ring.' She'd glared at the article but hadn't bothered to read it.

He was going to propose to Chloe, and marry her, she'd thought angrily, but the date and time stamp on the photo of him in the jewellery store, it was weeks old. From when she and he had still been together.

That ring was likely to be the very ring his own father, Gregory, had mentioned to her, that he'd approved Damien buying, to give to her. She'd had to swallow the pain of it. She needed to move on and get over it.

She was, she thought, rapidly being able to do so with that photo and those thoughts in her mind, as the pain of seeing it; that ring that was likely to be meant for her, had been replaced by anger in only a few minutes.

She stepped over to where Garrett motioned for her to sit, in a chair right in front of where he stood. She felt his hand land on her shoulder seconds after she sat down, while he was talking with Clayton and the others, his touch was light, and she shivered a moment later when his fingers seemed to caress her shoulder.

Harmony turned to look up at him, he didn't even bat an eyelid, and she didn't think he knew that he was doing it. She had to shake it off. His eyes moved to hers a moment later, and he smiled at her, then leaned down and murmured "Sorry you had to see the paper this morning."

"W... What?" she stammered.

"Your ex getting engaged, I saw. And what all of two weeks after breaking up with you?" he sighed "It's not right... Now, I want you to smile and look happy, like it doesn't bother you at all." he smiled at her once more and patted her shoulder "Can you do that for me?"

"Um...yes I think so." she nodded.

He grinned right at her now, from just mere inches away, and she felt her heart stutter inside her chest. He was so handsome, when looking all cheeky like that. She turned her eyes away from him. What on earth was she thinking? She couldn't look at her new boss like that.

She was given a Santa hat with a bell on the end of it to wear, and couldn't help but smile when Garrett tinkled it at her. She shook her head, he was in a good mood this morning, as were everyone in this room. They were all wearing Santa hats she saw and all the secretaries had bells on the end of them.

She looked up at her boss, and he winked at her, and she actually laughed at him. He was actually enjoying this, she could tell by how happy he was, laughing and chatting with his family and his CEOs, they all got along so well.

Though from all she'd learned about him when doing research on the company for prep for her interview, he was reported to be friendly, and his CEOs were actually all his childhood friends. He was seen as nice, even when professional, that he had a bit of a cheeky nature as well.

It was a fun photo shoot, and it went for several hours as the gifts were given out. There were four family cruises and two trips to Europe, three trips to Disney World and Universal Studios, all expenses paid for his top performing employees in the nine departments of the company that none of his direct family ran. He'd accounted for them having families or being just a couple even.

There were many gifts laid out in this very room, along the walls and on the tables, and the company departments were brought in one at a time for them to be given their Christmas gifts. She'd never laughed so much at work before, and she stood with Garrett the entire time. Had to hand him each gift to be handed out, tell him who it was for so he could call their name and give it to them.

At one point, she tugged on his Santa hat to gain his attention, while he'd been talking to Ryan Mills, one of his CEOs and that hat nearly came off his head, was all crooked and sideways.

It looked cute and funny, and she stopped him from trying to snap a picture of it. He smiled right at her and chuckled "Now that's pure cheek, Harm." Shortening her name.

"Yes and your mother will love it." she laughed at him "I'll give it to her, for your dating prole." She teased him and dodged out of the way when he tried to snag her phone from her.

"You'll pay, you know." He managed to latch on to her wrist and took the phone from her to look at the picture, "Ah, I am a handsome devil, huh." He chuckled himself, and his mother was suddenly right there looking at it herself.

"Oh, I love it." Deidre smiled. "Send that to me, right now."

Harmony snatched her phone back from him and waved it at him. "See, she loves it." she reached up and xed his hat for him and sent his mother that photo, and the day continued on.

Her day was turning out perfectly and as they walked from the conference room when it was all over, she was still smiling, also still wearing her Santa hat, she was going to wear it all day, she thought to herself merrily.

"Feel better?" Garrett asked her as he leaned on her desk.

"Hmm?" She stared at him a little, not really understanding what he meant.

"Job done," he smiled at her, and she still didn't understand him, "Now, this afternoon is going to be big, and you'll have to stay late as well."

She frowned at him. There had been nothing in his schedule about that. It was actually blocked out from 4pm, she'd double checked his schedule before leaving yesterday to know what was going on with him today.

"Why?" she asked now.

"Company tree trimming, every year on the 20th, which is today. It's also when we hold our company Christmas party. Sorry you would have missed that memo, it came out on the 10th. Do you mind staying back, even though I had you brought in early?"

"No, I've not got anything on tonight." She told him honestly.

"Excellent, it'll be bustling, everyone gets off work at three to allow for them to change. Everyone will be wearing something Christmassy." He looked her over and huffed. "Now that's my bad, I forgot to tell you that; to bring a change of clothes."

"It's alright, I don't mind wearing my work clothes." She smiled at him and she didn't.

He nodded, and she turned to answer the telephone as it rang "I'll leave you to your work." Garrett pushed off her desk and then icked the bell on her Santa hat, and chuckled to himself, as he walked into his office.

The day moved on, and she was still smiling at 3pm when a large white box was placed in front of her on her desk. She looked up to see Garrett smiling down at her. "You didn't get a gift this morning, I realised." He tapped the box. "There's one in there and something for you to wear tonight."

He'd been out of the office since 1pm. She'd had to clear his schedule at the last minute at his request, and he and Wyatt had left the building.

"That's alright, I'm new here. I wasn't expecting anything, and you certainly didn't have to." She stated as she turned her eyes to the box "but thank you for including me in the festivities. This morning was really fun for me."

"It's always fun this time of year," he smiled, "now make sure you put that on for the tree trimming, it'll begin at four." He stated and walked away into his office.

She opened the box and found a Christmas-inspired dress in there, smiled at it, but it was a small box that sat on the top of the dress with a note card attached to it that read "Merry Christmas Harmony, from Garrett your fun, cheeky boss." That made her chuckle.

She opened the box and there was a pretty, small and petite snowflake necklace in there, with pale blue stones on each tip and one in the center. She touched it and smiled to herself; so very pretty and Christmassy at the same time.