

## CH 9

Harmony

She woke up at 6am. The new oce was a 40-minute drive across town from her apartment building, so she had an hour and twenty minutes to get ready, though it never took her that long. She always prepped the night before.

She showered and ate breakfast, put on some natural-looking make-up, and straightened her hair before pulling on the dark blue suit she had hanging on the back of her bedroom door, ready to go for the day. She liked this suit, had yet to wear it, had ordered it only a few days before quitting her old job. It was a neat tting skirt suit, with a short-sleeved jacket, with an off-centre inbuilt belt that had a simple silver clasp. She put it on and smiled to herself.

She slipped on her watch and a simple pair of sapphire studs, that matched not only the outt, but her dark blue eyes as well, and clipped on a Tahitian Pearl necklace, and settled it squarely in the small hollow between her collarbones. It was a single pearl set in a rose gold circle with half a carat of diamonds. It had been her mother's, and she wore it for special occasions, mostly.

Today she put it on for good luck, for the rst day of her new job. Harmony looked herself over, had left her hair out today, but it was styled to fall back behind her ears, and she always carried a hairband and small brush inside her handbag, if it annoyed her or needed pulling back. She'd gotten a hair cut a week ago and her usually long hair was now only to the bottom of her shoulder blades and much more manageable, she thought.

She smoothed out her suit and smiled at herself, really did like it. Her stomach had settled down during the night, and she was feeling good this morning. She made her coffee to take on the drive to work and poured it into her tumbler, which made her smile. She liked it, and it was something she took with her everywhere.

It had her name on it so no one could pinch it. It came from a 64Hyro, and was a black tumbler called Wisdom from an Owl. It had an angry looking owl sitting in a crescent moon among pretty pink, purple and blue roses, with tiny coloured stars in the background and then words of wisdom on the other side.

'Keep your eyes on the prize, embrace your uniqueness, seek council from the wise, stay loyal to your friends, steady as you go, ride towards greatness'

It was kind of her motto. Both her parents had been inspirational people. Her mother had been a university professor that taught Law and her father had been an English Professor. They both loved reading and giving out good advice, would sit and listen to their friends, actively listened without judgement.

Tried to understand what the problem or issue at hand was, then impart their own words of wisdom to those that requested it. Tried to be impartial and think logically as to the best outcome for all parties, not just the one they were listening to, they could play devil's advocate with each other, and see different perspectives to be explored.

They'd been happy, positive, helpful people, and she wanted to be like them herself, tried to be like them, and mostly she was, she thought, but of late her break-up, was seeing her down in the dumps a bit. It had hurt to be treated like that by someone she trusted, and had thought she was going to marry.

She shook that thought off, was trying not to think about that man anymore. Harmony took a breath in and made her way to her new job. It was a grand looking 12-story building likely showcasing their own construction and designing talents, she thought. The outside had been renovated and upgraded, just ve years ago. It was all glass, but had this beautiful eye-catching aesthetic.

The top seven tiers had outdoor balconies on either side of them. She presumed for the people working there to go and sit to eat their lunches, or take breaks out in the fresh air. At the front of the left of the building was a large formal garden with large garden beds and more seating for people to sit down and enjoy the place. The building was situated quite a distance off the road.

The front right of the building was a designated pick-up, drop-off zone, for she thought the CEO's and higher-up management, or where other businessmen and women could be met and greeted, a single lane one-way road with three dedicated parking spaces right by the front entrance, and a long narrow but pretty garden bed to be driven around.

The staff car park, she knew already, was at the back of the building, and it backed right onto a forested area leading away from town. She thought that they had picked their location perfectly, they had the best of both worlds, a view of the city and the forest. She also understood that the Owens' Construction owned the land behind the building, it was private property and only a certain few ever got to go in there. It was gated off.

She smiled at the man on the reception desk and looked at his name on his ID. Henry, it read "Morning Henry." She greeted him with a friendly smile, believed in using peoples names, it showed them she took the effort to see who she was talking to, and she thought it was not only polite but professional of her.

It also helped her to learn their names, seeing as she was going to be working here and, hopefully, for a long time. She had been in her last job for just over four years, and was hoping this one would be like that; a steady income with full job security.

He smiled up at her "Morning ma'am, how may I help you?" he asked and smiled at her.

"It's my rst day today, I'm here to see Deidre from Human Resources." She told him.

"Ah, you must be Miss Preston, Mr Owens' new secretary." He nodded, and she watched him mark her off a list.

"I am." She smiled and nodded, liked that the people already knew who she was. The company must have already announced it or being that she had to come here and be shown where to go, at least reception knew who she was.

"Welcome to Owens Construction, if you'll take the elevator over there, up to the second oor." He pointed out two elevators to her right, "the receptionist there will take you right to Mrs Owens. She's expecting you already, I'll call up and let them know you're here." he got up and opened a small access gate for her to walk through, by-passing the six rows of clock-in gates, with security on either side.

"Thank you," she nodded to him "Have a nice day today, Henry." She stated and headed off for the elevator as instructed. She liked that he'd called her Miss Preston, but soon he would know to call her Harmony. It was her preferred name to be addressed by, even in the oce environment.

She was met by Deidre as she stepped out of the elevator, smiled and shook the woman's hand. She was Garrett Owens' mother, though she didn't look that old to Harmony. She must have some really good genes, she thought absently. She'd done her research on this company, on Garrett himself. He was 38, and considered one of the wealthiest and most eligible bachelors in the city, even more wealthy than the Blackwell's.

Deidre smiled, "Now, just because I'm Garrett's mother, don't hold that against me." she chuckled, "It's a family owned and run business. My husband is retired now. He gave up the reins to our boy ten years ago, he was ready to take over. Though my husband and I still work in the building, we have just taken a full step back," she was told.

Harmony liked that they were still here, that must be good for Garrett to have his father still in the building, for the answering of questions if need be. She'd likely get to meet the former CEO at some point as well.

She had to go over her ocial contract and sign the standard condentiality agreement, and then her picture was taken, and an ID card printed out and placed on a lanyard. She was instructed to wear it at all times while in the building. It was a simple design with her name and picture on it, and the lanyard was black.

She was informed that every department had a different colour lanyard, and it was designed that way on purpose, made it easier for those in the building to recognise who came from where, seeing as their company was so large. She slipped it on and smiled down at it. It had Harmony in large lettering and Preston directly below it in lower case. Then Secretary to Garrett Owens was directly below that and the number 1201, which she was told was her telephone extension line. That was handy, she wouldn't have to remember it, could just look at her work ID, though 1201, she didn't think she would have issues recalling it.

She had to sit and watch three videos. The standard work place policies around s\*\*\*\* harassment, bullying and OH&S, then she had morning tea with Deidre before being shown around the building and nally up to the 12th oor and her desk.

This company was amazing. Every oor had its own cafeteria for meals, it had buffets set-up and display cases full of prepared foods from sandwiches to salads, fruit salads, yogurt and muesli, to cakes and tarts. That with a single swipe of her meal card which she'd been given and preloaded with \$50, she could, at just the cost of \$5, have whatever she wanted at break times and lunches.

There was an amazing Jura GIGA X8c with so many coffees to be made and tried, and there were plenty of different avoured syrups on bottles all lined up next to it, it was an impressive machine. She might just get to work early and make her coffee here every morning.

She sat and ate with Deidre, and she was introduced to a few other secretaries and employees that worked on the 12th oor, got nodded to by Mr Garrett Owens himself, as he sat with his CEO's for lunch, in that very room, and she got to watch him interact with his employees. Laugh, smile and have a joke with them.

He seemed friendly enough. He walked right over to her before he left the room. "Harmony, I'd like to see you in my oce to lay down some very important rules, before you go home for the day."

She smiled up at him. "Yes, Mr Owens." She nodded "Do you have a time in mind?"

"10 or 15 minutes before you knock off will do." He nodded, "Mother."

"Son, did you get those valuations done last night?"

"Yes, and they are on your desk. I was not happy with any of them." He stated and walked away.

"Stubborn boy." She heard Deidre mutter, and looked to her questioningly. She just waved it off.