

## Chapter 5

Watching the video, hearing what was being discussed, sickened me. And at the risk of repeating myself today, "Son of a b\*\*\*h!" These two vipers had balls, I'll give them that. But they are so sure of themselves, so utterly brainless, they actually discussed their plans in a public setting, where anyone could overhear.

Thankfully, someone did. Not only was that someone Bradley Gray, he had the presence of mind to record the conversation. And he was here, in my penthouse apartment, allowing me to see and hear their plotting.

The second video was the one taken from the security cameras, and it proved to be about fifteen minutes longer than the one Bradley had recorded. It proved to be even more informative than the one I first watched. This one picked up their end of a phone call that Fiona had made to her father. And since Alan always spoke in a voice loud enough to wake the dead, a good part of his end of the conversation could be heard.

There was one section of this video I was particularly interested in. I paused it, and backed it up about thirty seconds. Before I hit play again, I moved over to sit beside Bradley. I wanted to see if he heard the same thing I did. He automatically placed his arm around me and pulled me in close to his side. Wow!

"Listen closely. I want to see if you pick up the same thing I just did." I requested. Then I hit play.

I could clearly hear Alan's voice, though not all the words."Iris... the car accident....hit and run.....Wade Blackwood....call him."

Fiona's response was very clear. "So do you still have the number for this Wade Blackwood? Do you think he can arrange another car accident for Anna? Maybe pinholes in her brake lines? The street she always takes to the ocean is really steep. A transport truck at the bottom would stop her right up. The impact would probably kill her. I mean, it worked on Iris."

I paused the video, trying to absorb what I had just heard. That is exactly what happened to my mother. Or at least that is what Uncle Caleb told me before he disappeared. I was spending the summer in Toronto visiting with my grandparents when the accident happened. My grandparents had received a phone call from Uncle Caleb, which was very hush, hush. Two days later he showed up at my grandparents house with an urn of ashes, and that's when he told me about the accident.

I was absolutely devastated. I didn't get to say goodbye. All I had was her ashes, sealed in a fancy porcelain glazed steel urn. That urn sat on the replace mantle in the ocean of my grandparents home until they passed away. Now, that urn sits in a glass-doored cabinet in the ocean here in my penthouse.

Five days later I was back in Halifax, with my grandfather's assistant as my only source of emotional support. I knew why they couldn't come. Not only was their health failing, but they didn't want my father, his wife, or their daughter to know their, and my, true identity and nancial status. Smart move on their part.

Grandpa had been a shrewd judge of character and obviously he had judged my father wanting, That was why he insisted my mother keep her true identity a secret and had her sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement. She started Fredericks Design Co. with money she received from a Business Development Grant. My grandparents did not like or trust Alan Fredericks, and made sure not a penny of their money went into his coffers.

By the time my parents divorced Fredericks Design Co. was well established and thriving, so Mom never asked for any nancial help from her parents. I think it was a source of great pride for her, that she could not only survive, but thrive, without family money. The day after the divorce was nal, Mom packed me up and moved me to live with my grandparents in the Lawrence Park North neighborhood of Toronto. She visited me a week out of every month, but continued to live and work in Halifax.

Considering what I just learned from the videos, I question if that was a wise decision on her part. But maybe she did so in order to keep me safe, and out of my father's greedy clutches. After all, he might have used me as leverage against my mother. And who he can't nd, he can't harm.

Bradley gently touched my arm, bringing me out of my daze. "Anna, are you okay?"

"I'm not really sure," I responded. "I just heard, for sure, out of my father's own mouth, that he arranged an accident that killed my mother."

I continued to sit in silence, just absorbing the impact of the recorded conversation. After a few minutes, I looked at the time. Realizing it was not yet four in the afternoon, I picked up my own phone and placed a call.

"Sean," I spoke to the head of the investigative team in my security company. "I need you to do something for me asap. First off, the accident my mother was killed in four years ago, I want every bit of information you can nd on it. Second, nd out everything you can on a man named Wade Blackwood. I know he has some connection with Alan Fredericks. Yes, my father. Also, nd out anything you can regarding dealings between Wade Blackwood and my father. I don't care how you get the information, use every means possible. Gloves off, if necessary. Send the info to my encrypted email address. Thank you!"

I ended the call and turned to look at Bradley. "I think it's time for a rather large shot of that Crown Royal, don't you think?"

The words had barely left my mouth when Bradley was placing a half-full glass of the liquor in my hand. He picked up his own glass, and tipped it in my direction. "Here's to revenge and retribution." We lifted our glasses to our mouths and threw back the contents.

I took a deep breath, feeling the burn of the ery liquid as it coursed it's way down my throat, then held my glass out for a rell. I don't usually drink this much, but today, I needed it.

"Bradley, can you please send me those videos to this email address?" Since I still had his phone, I opened his contacts and added the address for my encrypted email, as well as my secure phone number. "Any future communication should go through either this eamil or phone number. You never know who may be monitoring unsecured lines."

A slow grin spread across his face. "You denitely learned your grandfather's lessons well, didn't you Red?"

That was the second, or was it the third, time that he called me Red, instead of Anna. "Wait a minute. Did you know my grandfather? My grandparents?"

"I surely did. My father worked for him for years as his head of security. Your grandfather gave me my start in business. He actually funded my university years through scholarships." Bradley was watching me carefully as he said this.

"I had no idea," I gushed. "I don't remember ever seeing you when I lived with them. Or at least, not that I can remember. Does your dad still work in the security sector of Grandpa's companies?"

"He does indeed. He is currently on a special assignment, and has been for a few years now. He is protecting someone very important to the future of the conglomerate." His words were slightly hesitatant, as though not wanting to reveal secret information. I knew enough not to push for answers I might not want to, or be ready to hear.

"I'm glad to hear he still works for our companies. Loyalty means a lot in the business world. At least to me, it does. But I still don't remember ever meeting you. I mean, I lived with my grandparents for most of my life, even went back there during breaks from university. I still don't remember meeting you. And trust me, I would remember you." I winked at him, then continued to wrack my brain trying to remember him, but to no avail.

"That's because shortly after you went to live with your grandparents, my family moved to Halifax. My dad was head of security for your mother's protection." He paused and took another drink of his liquor. "I've changed a lot since you rst met me. I was a nerdy fourteen year old boy, who lived fairly close to your grandparents. Your grandma used to bake the most delicious snickerdoodle cookies. And her cute red-headed granddaughter liked to share them with me."

I couldn't help but smile at that happy memory. Grandma used to bake every Friday, even though she had a cook on staff, Friday's was Grandma's day in the kitchen. She taught me to bake, and I still occasionally made snickerdoodles. "Yeah, Grandma loved to bake. And she loved to feed everyone. Especially the next door neighbors boy."

"I think his name was Lee."