

## Chapter 6

"Hmmm, I do believe you are correct. Your grandmother called him by his nickname, Lee. But his real name is Bradley." He continued to watch me closely.

Lee. Bradley. That makes sense. Hey, wait a minute. Lee moved away shortly after I went to live with my grandparents. Lee loved Grandma's snickerdoodles. Lee. As in Bradley. Bradley Gray!

"Oh my God! Lee! You're Lee." I squealed. My voice was so high-pitched with excitement that it could probably shatter glass. "You're Lee. I can hardly believe it!" Without pausing to think, I threw my arms around his neck and hugged him to me tightly. He reciprocated, his arms pulling me close to him.

"Easy Red. I can't breathe," he gasped.

I immediately loosened my grip, but noticed he didn't let me go. Not that I minded. I mean, have you seen this guy? s\*x appeal galore, as well as being a truly nice man. "I can't even begin to tell you how often you crossed my mind over the years." I blurted out. "You were so nice to me, a little kid. I've never forgotten that."

"Believe it or not, I always wondered what became of you, too. It was a bit of a shock to me when you introduced yourself the other day. You are far more beautiful than I imagined." He sounded almost shy when saying this. "I've always been a bit partial to red heads. Now I know why."

"Well, thank you. You've had a bit of a glow up yourself. I'm very impressed." I chuckled at the look on his face when I said that. "Now I'm very, very glad I called you."

He nally let me go, and I went to move back to my original seat, but he grabbed my hand and held me beside him. "You're good right here beside me." His arm once more pulled me in closer to his side. The length of our thighs was touching, sending tingles throughout my body. "Now tell me how you want me to help you."

I gave him my best 'evil villian' smile and began to lay out my plan. "At rst, I thought I would simply break up with Adam and then re him and Fiona. Then, after watching certain segments of security video, I thought, why not give them what they want? Which is Fredericks Design Co."

Bradley gave me a very puzzled look. "Why would you want to give them a very prosperous company? That doesn't make sense."

"Oh, I'm not giving them the prosperous company. The company they will receive is going to be a shell of what it is now. For a while now, I have wanted to change the business model of the company. There are six very competent interior designers in the company, and they deserve a chance to showcase their talents to a wider audience. However, that is not possible with the current limitations imposed upon them by their employment contracts. The same goes for the renovation crews. Give me a second, and I want to show you something."

I swiftly got up and went to my oce, got the printed business plan, returned to the living room, and brazenly sat down again, right beside Bradley. "Take a look at this, and tell me what you think."

He took the document from me and began to read. Every so often, he would make a humming sound, indicating he found a section of the plan extremely interesting. When he leaned forward and reached for his glass, I noticed it was empty, so I poured a couple of ngers of the amber liquid for him. Half an hour later, he raised his head and just stared at me.

"This is brilliant! It's absolutely brilliant. What made you think of this?" His enthusiastic approval of the business plan was the incentive I needed to explain how I came up with the concept.

"Of the ten interior designers on staff, six of them have been talking about wanting to start their own business, but they don't have the nancial backing to do that. So, I thought, what if I set up a new company, called Graystone Design and Construction, and asked those six designers to be the design team. They will be able to seek out their own clients, as well as work with clients my marketing team brings in. The same goes with the reno teams. They will be able to select the teams they need for each project since each team specializes in different aspects of design and construction. They will all receive a base salary similar to what they now receive and be able to share in the prots of their jobs. Very much like a co-operative."

"The idea is inovative in the design eld. I think it will prove highly successful. But how are you going to do this without tipping off Adam, Fiona, and your father?" Bradley's concern was palpable.

"Well, I do believe that is where your help comes in. I don't want anyone to know the new company is mine. I am hoping I can talk you into being the 'front man'. Everyone would think the name Graystone was a play on your last name. I would nance the company, giving you part ownership, with me being the silent partner. Once the company is registered, then I need to get Adam, Fiona, Alan, and Lydia away for at least a month. That will allow me time to nish outstanding projects, head-hunt the employees I want to take with me from Fredericks to Graystone, withdraw my personal funding from the company, and arrange the transfer of ownership."

"If I'm not being too nosy, how much of Fredericks Design Co. funding is your personal wealth, as opposed to the company's earnings?"

"Of the twenty million available, twelve million is my personal wealth. It is in a separate account that is accessible only if absolutely needed, and only on my say so. My accountants have been begging me to move it in order to protect my assets in the event of a lawsuit, pending bankruptcy, etc. I do believe that now is the time to do that." For some reason, I had no issues with revealing this information to Bradley.

"That will leave Fredericks with eight million as an operating cash ow, correct? They can still remain competitive with that." He mused.

"Yes, they could. If they had someone who knew how to manage the business. However, I do believe those people will be moving to Graystone. And I have no doubt that between the four new owners, they will run the company into the ground within the year." I really couldn't help but gloat a bit at the prospect of seeing them fail.

"Aren't you concerned that will affect your reputation within the interior design eld?"

Bradley asked.

"Not at all. From what I understand from listening to security footage, Adam and Fiona have been claiming that Fiona is the owner of Fredericks Design Co., and has been doing so since she started working there. I have always kept a low prole with our clients, often being introduced as a designer and senior marketing manager. This move will simply be looked upon as me seeking greener pastures, so to speak."

Bradley grinned at me. "You've thought of everything, haven't you? Does your father not know that you own Graystone International?"

"He has no clue. My grandparents made mom sign an NDA, and she kept her identity a secret. My father thinks that mom came from a middle-class background. He's not the sharpest knife in the drawer. Nor is he inquisitive by nature. But he is greedy. And that is going to be his downfall."

"How are you planning on changing the company ownership? You need to give them an explanation, don't you?" His question begged an answer.

"No explanation needed. By the time they get back, the company lawyer's will meet with them. They will have instructions to return the engagement ring to Adam, with a letter from me stating the engagement is off. As compensation, he will receive a twenty-ve percent ownership of the company. In a separate letter to Alan, Fiona and Lydia, will be my formal overnering of family ties. In, along with each of them receiving a twenty-ve percent ownership of the company. In order to receive their shares, they will have to sit and watch a video. They receive nothing if they don't watch the complete video."

"And what's in the video?" he asked. Unconsciously, at least I think it was his hand had migrated to my leg, and his ngers were moving in a swirling pattern on my exposed skin. I could hardly think for the feeling coursing through me. Faack!

"Information that will make it impossible for the four of them to work together in a way that will keep the company successful."

Evidence of their cheating, lying, schemeing, and betrayal of each other." Again, my evil villian grin covered my face. "And I disappear from their radar. My house will be sold during the month they're away. At least, that's the plan for now. But the plans are uid. I will adjust as needed or required by any unexpected changes."

"How are you getting them away for a month? That's not going to be easy."

"Lydia has wanted to go on a cruise. So I am arranging she 'win' a 30-day luxury cruise for two. Fiona will 'win' a separate cruise for two on a different ship. I have no doubt that Adam will conveniently have a business trip he has to take during that time."

"It's a win/win for me." I laughed.