

1.

Bradley LeJeune pulled into the parking garage of American General Insurance Corporation, exited his car and walked the tunnel to the AGI building. He approached the elevators, got in the and selected the correct floor.

He pulled his access badge from his pocket and prepared to badge in. He stepped from the elevator, walked the corridor and was about to enter when he was cut off by Watson.

“Morning, Watson, “ said Bradley looking up at AGI’s head of security who was peering down at him in a rather serious manner.

“Got my orders,” replied Watson.

“Orders?”

“Yep. Got to take you to the big man’s office.”

“Big man?”

“Mr. Robbins. “ shot back Watson. “Seems you got your ass in a whole mess of trouble .” He stuck out his hand and said, “Let’s have your badge.”

Bradley shrugged and handed it over.

“Follow me.” Commanded Watson.

Bradley followed. Watson unlocked a door and they walked through it together. They went down a hallway and emerged in a corner of Edward Robbins office, Chief Operations Officer of the Omaha branch.

Watson motioned towards a conference table. “Mr. Robbins requests that you wait here.” Bradley sat down. Watson moved towards the exit door, turned around and said, “Don’t try any shit on me, Brad. My cameras see everything.”

“No shit.” Replied Bradley.

Watson left. Bradley looked around the office. It had the typical décor one would expect- a stack of management methodology books, diplomas, certificates and photos of exotic vacations.

Bradley LeJeune waited.

2.

An hour later, he was joined by Brenda Jackson, the HR manager, who accompanied Sarah Earle into the room. Bradley knew Brenda by reputation and until yesterday, had only vaguely known Sarah.

They joined him at the table and waited. Bradley raised his eyebrows at Sarah. Sarah smiled back. Brenda, scribbled in her planner and checked her phone for messages.

Finally at about 10:00 am, Edward Robbins himself, graced them with his paunchy presence.

He sat down at his desk chair, sipped a Starbucks elixir and said, “Did you watch the news last night Mr. LeJeune?”

Bradley stated flatly “I don’t own a T.V.”

Robbins grunted. “That stunt you two pulled yesterday was all over the evening news. Corporate isn’t happy. It’s caused all kinds of shit to hit the fan.”

He looked at Sarah, “Sarah, honestly, I’m surprised. I’d expect a stunt like this from LeJeune. He’s borderline at best. Doesn’t dress to code, needs a haircut, is habitually late and has nothing but attitude. But you were one of our top college prospects on the quick path to becoming Team Leader. And now you’ve just flushed that down the crapper.”

A smile of disbelief crept across her face, framed in long locks of brown hair. “We were just flying a kite on our lunch break, Mr. Robbins.”

“Yes. Flying a kite atop of our thirty story building. It’s caused a PR nightmare. Do you know how irresponsible and unsafe that was? We’re an insurance company not an amusement park. Perception is everything. It’s already caused our stock to plummet.” He took another sip and looked at Bradley, “I know he probably put you up to it, but now you both have to live with the ramifications.

Bradley and Sarah looked at one another in dismay.

“Brenda will handle the details,” he said. “Good luck with future endeavors.” Edward Robbins left his office.

Branda Jackson had two packets. She pushed one each to them. “At this time, you have the option of resigning. In the event that you wish to resign, please sign these forms. You will be allowed to gather your possessions and discretely leave. We will confirm to any future employer that you left on good terms.”

Bradley said, “What if I don’t want to resign?”

“You will be immediately terminated and escorted from the building. AGI will not guarantee any neutral reference.” Said Brenda looking over her reading glasses at him.

Bradley took the packet, ripped it apart and said “Show me the door, Brenda.”

Brenda looked at Sarah and said, “And you, Ms. Earle?”

Sarah gently pushed the paperwork across the table and said, “I’ll take the front door option as well.”

3.

Watson escorted them to the elevator and down to the lobby. The elevator opened and he said, “This is where my jurisdiction ends. Don’t let me catch you back up there. Cameras are watching.”

Sarah and Bradley stepped onto the musty smelling marble floors of the lobby.

Bradley turned to Sarah and said, “I’m sorry I got you into this. We barely knew one another before yesterday.”

Sarah shrugged, “No worries, Brad. I didn’t feel like spending another year writing insurance claims much less the rest of my life, anyway.”

“I just thought it was a great day to fly a kite and wouldn’t have forgiven myself had I not taken the opportunity.”

Sarah patted him on the shoulder, “It was a great idea. I don’t regret it.”

They walked through the revolving door together. Sarah stopped and looked around her while Bradley shuffled to the garage elevator. “Bradley, hold on!” she exclaimed.

He turned.

“Look...” she said as she circled around pointing towards the sky.

Bradley looked up and said, “Well I’ll be damned.”

From the tops of many other buildings in Omaha, people were standing with invisible strings attached to their hands that led to an array of colorful kites dangling and dodging to and fro in the cool spring air of a Nebraska morning.

Sarah smiled and said “What are you doing the rest of the day?”

“Nothing,” he replied.

“And what are you doing tomorrow?”

“Still, nothing.” He said.

“Well, how about we do nothing together until it becomes something?” She replied as her forest green eyes beamed brightly at him.

Bradley laughed and said, “Then let’s get the hell out of here, Sarah.”

They left American General Insurance Corporation and never looked back.