BOOK TITLE GOES HERE

This is the Title

By The Author’s Name

Place  
Year

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Our grateful thanks go to Person’s Name for all his/her help and patience.

# **Chapter 1**

UK, Corbridge, Triplet Hall

Richard was in a hurry as usual. He dressed for work, and crammed a slice of toast in his mouth as he passed through to the lounge. He reached to shut-down his laptop, and noticed his instant messenger flashing. He clicked on open. It was from Donna. She’d sent it to him around three that morning.

‘Hi Richard, I know it’s late, and you probably just forgot to log-off, but I thought I’d chance that you might still be there. Look at this - any ideas? Tell Gary, I guess tomorrow will be my last day at D’Netics. I’ve taken all of the new CEO I can tolerate. I’ve tried my best to cooperate with him, but he won’t give an inch. Mr. Wilson, my supervisor, has become the boss’s new ‘yes man’, so I can’t reason with him anymore either. Tomorrow I’m handing them my resignation. Talk to you later, Donna.’

Richard clicked on his browser and followed the link. He nearly choked on his toast when he read the headline. “How in the hell?” He started reading the article. About halfway through, he glanced at his watch. “Shit!” He grabbed his keys, jumped behind the wheel of his shiny black Mercedes S-class and spun out the drive. If he didn’t hurry, he would be late for work. He left in such haste; he didn’t even notice that Gary’s car was still in the drive.

USA, Shreveport, Louisiana, D’Netics

Donna switched her cell phone to silent mode. She took a deep breath and opened the door. She knew this was a waste of time from the moment she stepped into the room. A thick, hazy cloud of cigar smoke hovered over her head. Sitting across the table from her was the judge and jury. Immediately Forrest took control. “Miss Rigden, I’ll get straight to the point, since that’s how you prefer things. It has come to my attention that you are upset with your assignment and wish to leave D’Netics.”

Donna narrowed her eyes. How could he know that? The only person she’d told was Richard. “Yes Sir, I am. Why have you terminated my research on heart disease and reassigned more than half my team to finding a cure for CML?” She waited for a response.

Forrest put his cigar in the corner of his mouth and examined his fingernails. Donna persevered, “Surely, you can see the need for me to continue my research. It could benefit tens of thousands of patients and besides, there are fewer than 5,000 cases of CML documented per annum.” Donna was getting impatient.

Forrest narrowed his eyes, attempting to stare her down. Donna held his gaze. “Miss Rigden company policy is none of your concern. You will do as you’re told regardless of how you may feel about your assignments.”

Donna tightened her jaw and clenched her fist. “Sir, I’m not questioning your authority. All I’m asking is why. After all the time I’ve devoted to this company, don’t you think you at least owe me some kind of explanation?”

“Miss Rigden, I don’t owe you anything! I own this company. You are an employee. Are we clear?”

Wilson rolled his eyes. If Forrest didn’t change his attitude quickly, it would all be over. He smiled.

Donna sighed in exasperation. “I don’t need this. Money is not the reason I became a doctor. I can easily secure a higher paying job in New York or London. So, Mr. Forrest, unless you can provide me with a logical reason for the abrupt change in my research... I have no choice but to hand you my letter of resignation!”

Forrest rose from his chair and leaned across the table. He narrowed his eyes to a tiny slit. “Rigden, I will destroy you if you attempt to leave this company!”

Donna raised both eyebrows in disbelief. “And just how do you hope to achieve that Mr. Forrest?”

“Easy Rigden. For the duration of your contract, you and your research belong to me!”

Donna laughed. She’d heard enough. “I guess you didn’t know about my contract then. You see, it expired last month, and I don’t plan on signing a new one. Pity you didn’t notice this. You might have had me over a barrel. You’ve had the administrative staff, so busy jumping through hoops over the takeover that no one thought about renewing my contract. Oh well. I’m sure you’ll find somebody out there that’s willing to kiss your ass, but it won’t be me.”

Donna handed Forrest an envelope. He jerked it from her hand and sent it through the paper shredder. “Money is not the only resource at my disposal Rigden. If you leave this company now, you leave with nothing, and I will see you in court for breach of contract.”

Donna laughed. “You arrogant SOB! I’m leaving, and I’m leaving now. For your information, I expected you to do something like this. Yesterday, before I left for home, I mailed your secretary and the head of personnel copies of the letter you just shredded. You think you can take me to court? Fine – bring it on.”

Wilson smiled. Perhaps he had atoned for some of his mistakes. When she learned the truth, maybe one day, she would be able to forgive him.

“Rigden!” Forrest sneered. “You say you’re not afraid of me? Maybe you should reconsider. Accidents happen all the time. It would be tragic if any of those ‘accidents’ should befall someone else close to you.”

“What in the hell do you mean by that?

“I’m sure you can figure it out if you try hard enough.”

Donna leaned across the table and stared daggers at Forrest. “I’m not scared of your money. I’m not scared of your resources, and most of all… I’m not scared of you. You’re just a wrinkly old bag of hot air Forrest.” She jerked the cigar from Forrest’s mouth, and stubbed it out in his ashtray. “Furthermore, I asked you not to smoke around me. Now, I’m leaving before I say something I might regret.” Donna turned to leave.

“Rigden! You’ve already said something you’re going to regret!” Forrest shouted.

She paused briefly. The only answer Forrest got from Donna was a turned-up middle finger behind her back, and a slammed door.

Forrest had Wilson double check. Donna’s contract had expired. There was no legal way he could prevent her resigning. Plans were made. Orders were given.

USA, Hornbeck, Louisiana

Donna wasn’t thinking clearly. She was so upset; she got in her car and headed it south. After staring out the windshield of her car for at least thirty minutes, she came to her senses and looked around in disbelief. Her car was parked at the front entrance to Prewitt Chapel Cemetery. She visited the graves of her parents and grandparents. She said goodbye to them. She wasn’t sure where she would go next, but it wasn’t anywhere in Louisiana. Maybe she should consider London or New York.

After leaving the cemetery, she drove out to White City and checked on her grandmother’s old house. It was remarkable how