

"Sometimes I go about in pity for myself, and all the while, a great wind carries me across the sky." – Ojibwe Saying

CHAPTER 1

The Meeting Friday, April 1

Uncle Randy, Randall H. Firth, isn't really Addie's uncle. He and Addie's father, Franklin L. Young, remained friends after they finished college and eventually became business partners. Uncle Randy, as Addie has known him since before all other things in her life, was also more like a father than an uncle, and her father more like a landlord than a father. Franklin Young was well-meaning, but it was his way. He took care of Addie's fundamental needs and tried, however indifferently, to provide guidance. Now he's gone and there won't be changing any of that.

"Uncle Randy, is that a new suit?"

"I've only worn it once."

"Looks nice."

He adjusted his tie knot and picked up a pair of black-framed glasses from a leather case on the desk with his right hand; he held an unfolded sheet of executive bond letterhead in the other.

"Addie, your father loved you very much, but as you know, he was a bit unconventional, which I expect you will understand is fundamental to how these final affairs are presented. Some of this is new to me, but of course, I've been involved in matters that relate to the business. Recently, your father and I have reviewed a few of these things. These are entirely his wishes. I didn't try to suggest anything, nor did he ask me to. He only kept me informed of what he felt was necessary for me in my capacity of executor, and to those things that regard Enterprise, Inc. – I respected your father. He was a brilliant man. How most came to know him, including you, was really a conditioned, or manufactured I could say, character that I believe was separate from what drove him internally. He was two people, one that nearly everyone knew, but another who few knew, such as your mother and me. For reasons which only he could explain, I think he kept you from knowing both of those men. I feel bad about that. I'm not sure I've covered that the way I meant, but anyway, there was more to your father than you might fully understand."

"I think I know what you're trying to tell me, Uncle Randy. I've accepted those things for a long time. He was my father. It's okay."

Randall continued, "At any rate, he gave all this a lot of thought and I think, in the end, he did come through for you. Just to summarize things, he plans on liquidating all his assets outside of the business and leaving it all to you, just not in the form of a large check. You will have access to it all, over time, through what is technically referred to as a Spendthrift Trust. The name is misleading, but it basically means the disbursement of

the assets within the trust is done according to a particular design detailed by the trust—actually, by your father. We'll go over all that later."

"Okay."

He took a sip from a cup on the desk and said, "You'll receive a payment, sort of an allowance, each year based on a small percentage of the company profits, and I think you'll find that for certain expenses you'll be able to use money from the Spendthrift Trust. You will be well off but not wealthy, or at least not according to how I would define wealth."

Uncle Randy, "I'm not concerned about the money."

"That's good. When we get to the reading of the will later today, you'll become a little better informed about all this. You should know that he left personal items in the different residences for you to take, items of your choosing, so you might want to think about that. I'll help you store some of that if you like in one of the company buildings. Anything you don't want will be sold."

"Thank you."

"He left this letter for me to read to you."

Randall held up the sheet of paper he had been holding, then momentarily lowered it back and put the glasses on. He read from the sheet: