



THE WRONG CANDIDATE by S. Bee.

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]

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The Wrong Candidate by S. Bee.

'We met at my interview. It's Lauren, isn't it?' Clare asked, as she peeled off her bright tangerine jacket.

Lauren smiled. 'Yes, it is. Hello.'

So, she thought, the boss had chosen Clare for the new admin assistant's job. As she and Clare were around the same age, she hoped they'd get on.

James, the boss, came out of his office. 'Morning! We've got a busy day ahead, Clare, but here's your first task. Make us all a cuppa!'

Clare's face fell as she jotted down the orders.

Oh well, at least she can follow instructions, Lauren thought brightly.

Now that his father had retired, James Morgan had taken over the family business. He was keen to bring in change. This was something Lauren heartily agreed with – the company had been stuck in the past for too long – yet at the same time, she wondered how Morgan's clients would take to Clare's scarlet lipstick, false eyelashes, high heels, tight jeggings and chunky jewellery? As for that tangerine jacket...

This gaudy outfit was a complete contrast to her respectable interview outfit. Lauren recalled a cream blouse, dark jacket and a knee-length skirt. There was far less make-up, too.

Appearance was important in this job. Lauren thought that James would have stressed this at the interview - so had Clare ignored that instruction?

For three months, it had been Lauren and James running the business. Yet demand had increased and their workloads had become heavier. Now they needed an assistant - a mature, focused individual who cared about high standards and - Lauren frowned. What was that music?

It was Clare's phone. Without any flash of guilt, Clare fished it out of her pocket and answered it. 'Oh, hi Sam! Yeah, I'm at work. It's my first day. Did you watch 'Love Island' last night?'

Lauren stifled a sigh and wondered if James had recruited the right person for the job.

The rest of the day with Clare hadn't got any better.

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After lunch, she'd made a mess of the database system, and the constant smacking sound from her chewing gum was really irritating.

Lauren was preparing invoices when Clare broke in: 'It's so quiet. Can I put the radio on?'

'We don't have one. Clients can call in at any minute, you see.'

Clare shrugged. 'So?'

'Think about it, Clare. It wouldn't look good, would it?'

Lauren couldn't discuss the matter with James as he was out visiting clients.

Yet, the next day, curiously, Clare was nowhere to be seen. James was in, though.

'Where's Clare?' she asked.

'She's walked out,' he said. 'I tackled her about her appearance. Apparently, I don't have the right to tell her what to wear.'

Lauren sighed with relief. 'I know most offices now are relaxed about dress, but it really does matter here.'

Lauren's tone was professional. You had to be in this line of business.

After all, it took a special kind of person to hold down a senior admin role at a funeral director's.