

## Chapter 21

It's been several years since the death of Dee's Uncle Harold. Their 'Specialize Cleaning' business has busy periods and quiet or slow periods. The quiet times are usually the 3 or 4 months before an election for mayor, district attorney or other prominent political figures.

During those periods before the elections, the Mayor, District Attorney and other political figures what to show the public they're tough on crime. In response, the six crime organizations known as the commission, tone down their attention getting activities. Mainly murders and other violent activities that will bring attention to them.

During those somewhat 'quieter periods', Dee and Edward fly to Hawaii for vacation. Because they are always treated equally (lack of racism), they love the islands. During their forth vacation, they made their retirement plans.

Buy a boat and go into business of ferrying passengers on daily sightseeing tours of the islands.

Because today's cleaning only involves one body, only Dee and Edward have removed the victim. Now they're on their way to the funeral parlor.

She has called Uncle Herbert at home and at the parlor earlier and did not receive an answer at either place, so she called Cousin James to meet her at the funeral parlor.

Because Dee has keys, she let herself and Edward inside; "I wonder what's going on. Uncle Herb left all the lights on. He must be sleeping in the office."

Edward being suspicious; "I'll check the backdoor and make sure everything is secure. You check the office."

After a couple of minutes, Edward enters the business area of the funeral parlor. Speaking loudly; "The backdoor is locked and everything seems normal. Find anything?"

From the office; "Eddy, come to the office please."

He enters to see Dee's uncle leaning back in his chair. He looks like he's sleeping. Edward goes to desk and touches Herbert's neck, there's no pulse. The body is also cool to the touch."

Dee is sitting in what must be a visitors chair; "Was he murdered?"

Edward gives a quick examination; "No. I think he fell asleep and had a heart attack during the night. There's not a mark on him that I can see."

"I'll call for an ambulance."

Cousin James arrives and the succession process starts again. Herbert left his house, the funeral parlor business and graveyard in his will to Dee.

Because Herbert has passed, Cousin James is going to need help in a hurry. A funeral home and graveyard cannot operate with only one person.

Bringing this issue to the others who work for Specialize Cleaning, the crew comes up with some rather interesting ideas.

“Anna, do you know of any of your coworkers who may be interested in working for a funeral home?”

“None I would trust. We have to remember, whoever goes to work there could blackmail all of us.”

After several ideas from the crew, Cousin James comes up with an idea.

“There's not too many people in the funeral parlor and graveyard businesses. You can say it's kind of a closed society. The general public avoids us until we're needed.

That being said, I heard of a couple of people who were fired from their jobs. Sandra Hill is from the Smithfield funeral parlor and her husband from the Peaceful Rest cemetery.”

“Do you know why and are either of them qualified to work here?”

“Sandra is a licensed funeral director and mortician. Her husband Ryan was in charge of the grounds at Peaceful Rest. He dug the graves.”

“Do you know what they were they fired for?”

“Just before a coffin was to be moved to a grave site, Sandra was caught by the owner opening the coffin, removing rings, jewelry and other valuables.

Her husband was caught raising a coffin after everyone had left. Then opening it and doing the same.”

Edward smiles; “They seem like our kind of people.”

Dee adds; “Considering their future employment looks dismal, contact them. See if Sandra would like a good paying job working with you and if Ryan might be suitable working for Specialize Cleaning. If you think they'll be good for us, Eddy and I will talk to them.”

James surprises them with; “I won't go into details for obvious reasons. ... While we're here, I would like to ask for something.”

“Ask away. What would you like?”

“If these two work out and you want to hire them, I'd like to get Bruno to leave your company and work here with me. He already wants to leave your employment.”

“Really? Bruno hasn't said anything to us.”

“You know him. He wouldn't complain if he was on fire. He told me he wants to stop picking up bodies from crime scenes. I told him I would ask both of you.”

Dee smiles; “If we think these two people will work for us, we'll cut Bruno loose and the new guy Ryan can take Bruno's place.”

“Oh thank you so much. Can I call Bruno and tell him?”

“Sure. Now remember, it all depends on the new people being okay. Make sure Bruno understands that.”

The same day, Dee receives a call from Cousin James. Sandra Hill and her husband Ryan want to meet Dee and Edward today if possible. She tells James to bring the couple meet her and Edward at Fortune Park after lunch.

That afternoon, Dee and Edward are sitting in a local park at a rather secluded picnic table. James arrives and sits down.

“I talked with them and they're really interested. Because like you said, jobs in the undertaker business are few. Once the word about them went out, no funeral home will even talk to them. They're desperate.”

Looking around, he waves to them; “Here they are. I'll leave so you can talk alone.”

“Thanks James.”

He arises, walks a few steps to greet the unemployed couple. He points to Dee and Edward. When they arrive, the husband speaks first; “Thank you for seeing us. This is the first time we ever interviewed for a job in a park.”

The Sandra the wife continues; “Because we're here, I take it this job interview is going to be different.”

“Yes it is. I'm Edward Gibson. She is Dee Mullins. I know your name is Sandra Hill and you're married to him. What's your name?”

“Ryan Hill. Pleasure to meet both of you.”

Dee continues; “We already know all we need about both of you.”

The Hill couple look nervous.

“It's because of your illegal actions, we decided to give both of you an interview and the opportunity to make lots of money. Are both of you interested?”

The couple is enthusiastic.

Edward continues; “Similar to what you two were doing, what we are going to ask both of you to do is also considered illegal.

Now, are either of you going to run to the police and try to be goody two shoes? Or would you like to make lots of cash for little work while working for us.”

“Our lips are sealed; we're in.”

“Good. I'm sure both of you should have heard about the commission?”

“No not really.”

“Are you aware there are six crime organizations in Kansas City?”

“Yes. We've heard about them from the radio and newspapers.”

“Those six organizations make up the commission. We provide a service for members of the commission. Are you getting my message here?”

Ryan looks confused. Sandra looks as though she understands; “Because we were employed by an undertaker and a graveyard; you must dispose of bodies that need not to be found.”

Edward continues; “Before we go any further, if either of you were to run to law enforcement and cause us any kind of grief, I'm positive the people who we provide a needed service for would be incredibly unhappy.”

Sandra replies; “I'm sure they would be.”

“Oh by the way, we may have also provided our services for local law enforcement. I'm sure there isn't a hiding place on earth where you won't be found. Am I clear on this so far?”

Ryan answers; “We understand. We also know you're offering us our last chance. If we don't get these jobs, I'll be shoveling shit and she'll be a short order cook in some diner.”

Dee continues; “Good. Now that we understand each other, Sandra; you will work under James at the funeral parlor. You can work out what your pay will be. Then there will be occasions where you will assist in body disposals. That's all I can say at this point. I will pay you fifty dollars cash to help with each disposal. Are we understanding each other?”

“Yeah, that's good for me; but what about Ryan?”

“He will find a real day shift job somewhere. I don't really care doing what. Both of you will take your paychecks and deposit them into the bank. You will not spend any of that money.”

“How will we live?”

“Ryan, you will work directly for us. We will pay you seventy five dollars per body in cash. You two will pay your rent and everything in cash. That way you avoid the IRS.”

“So I would be picking up murder victims?”

“You won't be alone. There will be others. Are you in?”

“How much does the removal pay again?”

“Seventy five dollars a body.”

“Why is my pay going to be more that my wife's?”

“There's more involved. Evidence search and removal, crime scene clean up and so on. Are both of you

in or we all walk away now.”

The couple looks at each other. A few whispers between them before; “We're all in.”

“Good. I need your home phone number and numbers where you hang out. When I or Eddy call, you stop whatever you're doing and come to our office. If you're eating a meal, on your knees pleasuring each other, or in bed screwing each others brains out, you stop and come to our office immediately. For obvious reasons, we can't have murder victims lying around.”

Ryan is smiling much, Sandra has to ask; “How may bodies are we talking about?”

“Occasionally, some weeks none. Usually one or two a week. Some weeks we have a bakers dozen. There isn't what you could call a 'normal week'.”

Edward adds; “One time we had seven bodies from a garage. What a mess that was. Four hit men wanted to be sure the targets were dead. They used two machine guns and two shotguns.”

“We remember that was in the news paper. What a mess, but no bodies were found. How did you know what they used?”

“When we arrive, we get paid or we leave. While the contact was handing the payment to Dee, I noticed the guns on the floor. Dee told the contact to take the guns with him because we don't do guns.”

Ryan is all excited; “Did you see your contact's face?”

“No. We count the bodies and count the money. We never look at who's paying us. It's healthier for us that way.”

Sandra looks to her husband; “Are you going to ask them or should I ask them?”

Dee responds; “Ask us what?”

“We've been out of work for a few weeks now so we're broke. Can you help us out? Maybe just a little advance on our future pay?”

Dee turns to Edward; “Should we?”

“Yeah.”

He reaches into his pocket, counts out \$50 and gives it to Sandra. Then counts out \$75 and gives it to Ryan.

“As a show of good faith, your first job has now been paid for in advance.”

“Oh thank you so much.”

“Edward looks at the couple with cold eyes; “You two are entering a business where betrayal is returned with swift and often fatal punishment. I'm letting both of you know; if either of you betray us, it will be fatal for the both of you.”

Dee adds; "As a couple, you have the opportunity to make a lot of money. Betray us, dead or alive, both of you will end up in an unmarked grave or cremated. Are we completely understood?"

The smiling faces left their guests; "Dead or alive?"

Edward looks at them with a cold stare; "Dead or alive, doesn't matter to me. The cost of betrayal is extremely high."

The couple acknowledge their understanding.

Edward has a slight smile on his face; "So far, this has cost both of you a little time and us a hundred and twenty five bucks. We will be in touch."

"Where's your office? How will we know where to go?"

"When we call, we will give you the address."

Ryan asks; "This isn't the type of job where one of us has to kill someone is it?"

"Not at all. As a matter of fact, when we call, do not bring any weapons. Not so much as a pocket knife."

"Why?"

"If for any reason we're stopped by the police, we cannot have any weapons on us. Weapons will cause problems we don't need."