

The Choice

VICKY SAT AT HER DESK. She opened the blue folder and reviewed the information and numbers one more time. She reread her notes from phone calls with colleagues.

I've seen the data. Know the history. Heard plenty about the players. Am I crazy to say yes to this? she asked herself. She took a deep breath and enjoyed a long, slow exhale. *Am I kidding myself to think I can turn this around?*

She'd been thinking hard since the offer on Tuesday. *I'm always up for a challenge, and this certainly counts as one*, she thought. She surprised herself when she chuckled out loud.

Vicky stared at the phone on her desk. *He's never steered me wrong before.* She picked up the receiver and dialed. She expected voice-mail, but he answered.

"Peter?"

"Vicky? Hey, what's up?"

"They've offered me the opening in Dallas, working for Michael."

"And?"

"It feels like a sinkhole. The last two people failed. They say he's impossible to work for."

"It's an opportunity."

"For what? A train wreck?"

“For proving you’re even better than they think. Slaying a dragon is a great way to build a reputation.”

“If the dragon doesn’t get you first. This is a tough one, Peter.”

“Did you get this far by playing it safe?”

“No, but not by being stupid, either.”

“I’ve never taken a job that didn’t scare me. That means I had to learn fast and stay alert to survive.”

Vicky let his words sink in. Peter broke the silence.

“They think you can do it, Vicky. And if I were a betting man, I’d put my money on you. You’ll learn a lot. That I guarantee.”

“You’re willing to field plaintive cries for help?”

“Always. More fun than a lot of things I do. And when you do well, it makes me look good.”

“There’s another side to that coin, you know.”

“That’s why I’ll be here if you need me.”