

“It’s just, like... who am I, Georgie? If I take this role, how does it define me? Does it present the right image?”

Georgie rolled her eyes as she strode across London Bridge, the Thames sparkling beneath her. This was a necessary expression of frustration which Leila couldn’t see over the phone.

“You said the issue was autonomy in the role. They’ve answered that concern.”

“Yes, I saw their email, but it just wasn’t... convincing, you know?” said Leila, in her forthright yet somehow also whiny voice. “Like, I need to know that I’ll have free rein to run the department how I see fit. And that I’ll be seen as the professional--as the thought leader--and style icon--that I am.”

“I’m sure you’ll be the most stylish accountant that Quinlan’s Concrete & Ballast Ltd has ever seen.”

Georgie clamped her jaw shut in order to restrain herself from making any audible sounds of frustration. Leila was one of the best accountants she’d ever had as a candidate. She was pragmatic and unflappable when it came to balance sheets, but annoyingly high-maintenance and jittery with matters relating to her career and personal life. She was on the brink of accepting an offer--a very good offer--from QC&B, but this dither was the latest in a week-long series of dithers. Georgie’s client was keen, but even the most staid and steadfast of hirers would run out of patience eventually. Georgie’s own patience had been exhausted roughly six days ago, but she was good at hiding her feelings.

“Well, maybe, but it’s going to be a real challenge to strike the right balance between my personal style and appropriately representing the company. What kind of outfit says... ambitious career woman... and also... blast furnace slag?”

“Pardon?”

“I’ve been doing my research, Georgie. I’ve read up on all the aggregates.”