

TAKE CHARGE

written by

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INT. OFFICE LOBBY -- MORNING

WREN enters the lobby of a tall office building. The room has marble floors and elaborate sconces. Even though dozens of people are flowing in and out of the revolving doors, the room is quiet. Reverent. Clean.

Wren (23) wears professional attire -- with sneakers -- eagerly approaches the front desk with a big smile. A guard, RYAN -- broad shouldered, massive hands, scowl -- sits at the desk.

RYAN
Can I help you?

WREN
Hi. It's my first day.

RYAN
Where?

WREN
Uh, here, I think? Am I in the right building?

RYAN
What company?

WREN
Oh -- ha -- right. The Global Times magazine.

RYAN
ID?

She hands the guard her ID, and he begins looking up her information.

WREN
(beat)
I just graduated from J school.

The guard continues to type tacitly at the computer.

WREN (CONT'D)
University of Texas ... at Austin.

More silent working.

WREN (CONT'D)
Hook 'em horns!

She laughs. He doesn't.

The printer at the front desk pops out a temporary pass. The guard hands Wren's ID back to her. He swipes her temporary pass and the gate opens. He hands her the pass.

RYAN

Fourteenth floor. Elevator on your right.

She grabs it from him, affixes the temporary pass to her lapel, and heads off.

WREN

Thanks!

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

The elevator matches the lobby's style -- clean, professional, with a touch of luxury.

As the elevator goes up, Wren removes her sneakers and puts on some dress flats. She shoves the sneakers in her bag just as she arrives at the 14th floor.

The doors open to a hallway with big glass doors that say "The Global Times".

INT. GLOBAL TIMES OFFICES -- CONTINUOUS

Wren opens the doors and finds -- a mostly empty floor. Old, gray computers sit atop old, gray cubicles. The tinge of luxury decor up to this point has been replaced with a tired, cliché newsroom.

She wanders through the cubicle aisles looking for -- anyone. She finally sees an office with "HR" labeled on the door. She knocks and slowly opens the door.

INT. HR OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Jean sits behind a desk.

JEAN

Good morning! How can I help you?

WREN

Yeah, uh, today is my first day here. I'm supposed to be starting today.

JEAN

Wonderful! And your name?

WREN
Wren, uh, Wren Higgins.

JEAN
Oh yes, Wren. I've got your
paperwork right here.

Jean picks up a stack of folders and thumbs through them.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Here we are!

She opens Wren's folder and reads through it. Jean looks up.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Yes. You're fired.

WREN
I'm sorry?

Jean reads from a piece of paper from the file.

JEAN
We have very much appreciated your
dedication while employed here at
T.G.T. -- but a business decision
has been made to let you go.

WREN
Appreciated my dedication? I just
got here.

JEAN
(reading)
You will be compensated for any
previously submitted timesheets --
as well as from when you punched in
this morning until now.

Jean puts the paper down.

WREN
What, the past 3 minutes? I don't
have a punch card or anything. I
don't currently work here.

JEAN
That's the spirit. The sooner you
can embrace that, the better.

WREN
What happened? Where are the
reporters? The editors? The
designers?

JEAN

Well, it won't be announced publicly until this afternoon, but The Global Times was bought out -- over the weekend.

WREN

Wait, is this conversation on the record?

Wren reaches into her backpack and pulls out a notepad and pencil.

WREN (CONT'D)

Who bought it out? What did they buy? When did they buy it? Where ... uh ... did they buy it? Why did they buy it?

She writes "Who, What, When, Where, Why" on her notepad, leaving several lines in between each to fill in the answers.

JEAN

Are you -- trying to use me as a source? For a publication that not only do you not work for, but that may not exist 10 hours from now?

WREN

Oh right. So what do I do?

JEAN

I could care less. I'm just here to get any stragglers who didn't see last night's email.

Jean pulls out a bottle of bourbon and two glasses.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Drink?

Wren stands up.

WREN

No. I'm a journalist, damn it.

JEAN

You DO know journalists drink, right?

WREN

I'm going to get to the bottom of this.

(MORE)

WREN (CONT'D)

I'm going to find out WHO bought The Global Times, and I'm going get a job from them. I didn't spend six weeks on the arts and entertainment beat at UT for nothing! I didn't make phone call after phone call, walk from campus building to other campus building, just to come all this way and give up! No. I'm a reporter. And I'm going to report the news.

Wren gathers her things and storms out of the room. Jean pours herself a drink.

Wren pops her head back in.

WREN (CONT'D)

You COULDN'T care less.

JEAN

What?

WREN

Earlier -- when you said you "could care less" -- you really should have said you "couldn't care less."

Jean stares back, blankly.

WREN (CONT'D)

... just FYI -- for next time.

Wren leaves. Jean downs her drink.

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Wren pulls out her sneakers, takes off her dress flats, and switches shoes again.

WREN

(to herself)

Okay. Okay. Okay. How am I going to ... they couldn't just fire everyo ... are they just going to stop publishing?

She continues to mutter to herself.

WREN (CONT'D)

Twitter!!!

She pulls out her phone as the elevator gets to the bottom floor.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

She frantically searches through Twitter as she strides through the lobby, dodging other heads-down worker bees, and passing Ryan. She gets to the lobby doors and begins to push them open, but pauses.

WREN
(shouting)
TMI!

The room screeches to a halt.

WREN (CONT'D)
Uh, Telecom Marketing
International. That's who bought ..
uh ... nevermind ...

She pushes through the doors to outside.

INT. OUTSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The street is hustling and bustling. She stops in the middle of the sidewalk.

WREN
(to self)
Now I've just got to find out where
these TMI offices are.

She searches on her phone and discovers -- they're in the same building. On the 15th floor.

WREN (CONT'D)
You've got to be kidding me!

She clumsily switches back into her high heels. She turns and re-enters the building.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

She enters and walks right past Ryan again, trying to get through the gate. She pushes and nothing happens.

RYAN
Your pass?

WREN

Ha! Right, of course.

She swipes her pass. Nothing happens.

She tries again -- nothing.

RYAN

Ma'am, come here please.

WREN

Don't you remember me? You just --
you JUST saw me. I just showed you
my ID and everything.

RYAN

Badge please.

The guard checks his computer.

RYAN (CONT'D)

It's not valid.

WREN

What?!

RYAN

Says you were fired. On your first
day?

WREN

I wasn't fired. I was laid off.

RYAN

Still.

WREN

I need to go back up there. Could
you please just -- you know what?

Wren takes off. She hops over the gates, losing one shoe in
the process. She frantically mashes the elevator button.

Ryan leaves his desk and comes after her.

The elevator door isn't opening. Wren darts for the
stairwell. She throws open the heavy metal door, takes off
her other shoe, and lumbers up the stairs -- taking them two
at a time, shoe still in hand.

A moment later she hears the heavy metal door open and close
again.

Realizing she's being followed by the security guard, she keeps booking it up the stairs -- all 15 floors.

She gets to the top, hunched over, breathing heavily, exhausted, and pushes open the stairwell door to the main floor.

Ryan is standing there, outside the elevator, and walks toward her.

WREN (CONT'D)
How did you ... I thought ... I
heard ... hold on ...

She continues to pant. Ryan puts his hand around her arm.

WREN (CONT'D)
Just give me a ... I really think
I'm going to throw up ... you want
that to happen? All over your
standard issue shoes here? Give me
some space.

He takes his hand from around her arm and places it on her back -- and she takes off again through the TMI office doors.

WREN (CONT'D)
(shouting)
I'm here! I'm here! Please! I want
my job back!

Ryan follows shortly after and begins to drag Wren away. She grabs onto the front desk, refusing to budge. Slamming her shoe onto the surface.

WREN (CONT'D)
Let me go! I work here now!
Sanctuary! I claim sanctuary!

A older gentleman, bolo tie, boots, suit, walks by. This is JACK, the owner and chairman of TMI. He sports a white goatee, a thick southern drawl, and the delicate sensibilities of someone raised on a proper estate in rural Texas -- because he was. Richard Branson meets Yosemite Sam.

JACK
Just a minute sir. Ma'am, what is
going on here? Do you work here?

| | | |
|-----|------|------|
| | RYAN | WREN |
| No. | | Yes! |

WREN (CONT'D)

(beat)

No. Kind of. I was supposed to start at The Global Times today.

JACK

I don't know what that is.

WREN

(beat)

You don't know what The Global Times is? You own it!

JACK

Oh THAT! Yes, I think I do recall buyin' that magazine. Still don' know what to do w'it. Always wanted to own one, you know? Today is your first day, you said?

WREN

Yes sir.

JACK

And what were you hired t'do?

WREN

A writer, sir. Reporter.

Jack turns to his ASSISTANT.

JACK

When do all the magazine people start again?

ASSISTANT

Sir, they don't. You laid everyone off.

JACK

I did? Everyone?

ASSISTANT

Everyone, sir.

Jack thinks for moment, then points to Wren.

JACK

Put her in charge. She's clearly a fighter.

Ryan finally lets go of Wren.

WREN
 (shocked)
 In charge?!
 (professional, confident)
 Of course! Not a problem. I'll take
 care of it. Thank you sir.

Jack smiles, nods, and begins to walk away.

WREN (CONT'D)
 (calling out to Jack)
 Sir, I am going to need some help.

JACK
 Hire whomever you need.

Wren's shoulders sag. She sighs. She looks around. Sees Ryan
 who is about to get back on the elevator.

WREN
 You like your job downstairs?

RYAN
 I'm sorry?

WREN
 You like what you do? When you were
 a little boy, did you dream of
 becoming a security guard?

EYAN
 Yes, actually. Bull Shannon was my
 hero.

WREN
 Who?
 (dismissively)
 Doesn't matter. Do you have any
 hobbies?

Ryan narrows his eyes.

RYAN
 (curtly)
 I draw.

WREN
 Good. We'll need an art director.

Wren puts out her hand. Ryan pauses for a moment, then shakes
 it.

WREN (CONT'D)
 Welcome aboard.