

## **The giveaway**

Alice Dargan had been waiting for this moment all her life. She marched into the sleek building with portfolio in hand and took the lift that hissed quietly up to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor. She barely had the time to check her reflection in the chrome. It's fine, she whispered to herself. She'd watched a make-up tutorial and had perfected the 'Preparing for interview' look.

Alice's tattoos were hidden under a streamlined navy pantsuit, the most expensive of her preparations. The lift doors sighed open and she was faced with the secretary - gleaming glasses, shiny face. 'Can I help you?'

'Yes, I have a meeting with Grey Jukia.'

'Please be seated,' said the woman, looking Alice up and down. 'He's expecting you.'

Alice sat on a row of 4 gold velvet seats. They looked slightly odd as if they'd been re-covered and Alice smiled because there was always some little thing that let fake companies down, some silly shortcuts that wobbled the believability of it all. These chairs for one, and the secretary who looked more like a girlfriend.

'You can go in now.'

Alice stood and Grey opened the door to her. His look was appreciative and as a result he couldn't help but peek furtively at the secretary. Alice knew she'd got the job. She also knew that by the end of the year she'd make senior investigating officer.

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