

**TYCHE:** I wouldn't read anything into it, she hardly ever comes to meetings. I'll let her know what we've talked about and the changes you'll be making. She's got some interesting ideas too, but she'll only go into these once you've signed. She's quite excited about the potential here.

**SOPHIA:** More changes?

**TYCHE:** Just a different way of looking at things. A bit of a shake up on approach as you... as we, I should say, scale up.

**SOPHIA:** Shouldn't we know what these changes are?

**ULLR:** Ms Rust will not share her *valuable* ideas before signing.

**OGHMA:** We can't take any investment on these terms Sophia. The Rust Fund will have 51% of the company and three seats on the board. She would have full control. For the amount they're offering, it's not worth it.

**ULLR:** How about we print out the latest version and talk to Ms Rust. You can then make your decision.

**OGHMA:** We won't be signing on these terms, but yes, go ahead.

**TYCHE:** I'll sort it. Can I use your printer?

**SOPHIA:** Yes, Violet's just out there, she'll help you get connected.

*As TYCHE exits we see a quick, hushed chat outside the door with ERIS. TYCHE nods and they shake hands. ERIS then pushes through the door. She is the same as she was in the coffee shop, except she's not wearing her barista apron.*

**ERIS:** Ah, this is where you've been hiding!

**OGHMA:** Ms Rust? Pleased to meet you.

*OGHMA and ERIS shake hands. OGHMA gives her a look that says 'what on Earth are you doing?'*

**ERIS:** It's Rusty! Now that we're going to spending lots of time together, spending my money, you can call me Rusty. Sorry I'm a bit late to the party, I've been getting to know the team. (To ULLR) Have you seen the lab? It's amazing. I have no idea what any it does, but it's very impressive. And the team are so enthusiastic. I've learned more in the last 30 minutes than in the rest of my life put together. If I'd had them as teachers, I might actually have finished high school!

**SOPHIA:** But you work in a coffee shop!

**ERIS:** Yes I do! Yes I do. In a coffee shop I own... along with a few thousand others around the world. What can I say, I like coffee. Do you know how the sums add up? (Quickly) If your average coffee drinker buys two cups a day at, say... let's make the sums easy... \$5 a cup 5 days a week, that's \$50 a week. Times that by 50, giving us easier sums and them two miserable coffee-free weeks, and you get \$2,500 a year spent on coffee. \$2,500! What else does your average human spend that much on year after year?! And the margins are crazy, particularly when you massively over-price almond milk and syrup shots.

**SOPHIA:** But you I thought you were just a barista.

**ERIS:** Just?

**SOPHIA:** I mean you didn't say...

ERIS: I know what you mean. I didn't look like someone who was work, work, working my way to the top?

SOPHIA: Well...I...erm...

ERIS: Do you know how much business happens coffee shops? It's how I heard about this company way before anyone else. And I like getting to see people as they are, not how they present themselves when they're in rooms like this.

SOPHIA: I'm sorry if I gave the wrong impress....

ERIS: Shhh, no problem, no need to say anything.

*TYCHE hurries back into the room with two print outs. TYCHE whispers to ERIS who smiles in the direction of the other side. ERIS takes them and quickly signs both before pushing them in front of OGHMA and SOPHIA and putting a pen on top. OGHMA pushes the document and pen back to ERIS.*

ERIS: Oh come now, you're not going to turn me down are you?

OGHMA: You're asking for too much of the company for too little.

ERIS: You know, I hardly ever come to these sorts of meetings. Particularly with small and struggling companies like this. But despite your superiority complex, I actually like you. I do. What you're doing is nothing short of miraculous. It's visionaries like you who change the world...

SOPHIA: Thank you?

ERIS: ...when they get support from the right people. Think about it. I'm not just money, have thousands of cafes and restaurants. Plus connections you could only dream of. I can deliver you a...a smorgasbord of A-listers and (does air quotes) 'influencers', all desperate to have a ride on the healthy junk food bandwagon.

OGHMA: We're not ready for that yet.

ERIS: No, but I will get you ready. *(Pause as she stares them down).*

Opportunities like this don't come around often. We're talking about a partnership that could actually redefine eating!

Money isn't an issue once you've signed.

OGHMA: No, we can't give away control of the company for so little.

ERIS: Ah, but you *would* give it away for the right amount? *(Intense)* Look, I want to work with you. Not just as an investor, but as a partner. Let's make this work for both of us.

*She finds the right place in the document and writes in a couple of places, crossing out the original numbers. She then pushes this to SOPHIA. SOPHIA reads and is surprised.*

SOPHIA: That can't be real.

OGHMA: Whatever it is, we won't be signing.

SOPHIA pushes the document to OGHMA who is taken aback by the new numbers.

OGHMA: Well...that's a lot. But, no we can't accept.

ERIS: I understand you have concerns, a voice in your head saying 'no, it's too good to be true'... but think about where we could be a year from now with this deal. It's leaps of faith like this that change the world.

OGHMA: We need some time to think.

ERIS: Time is one thing I don't have and can't give you. It's a ridiculously good offer and you know it. There are many other places I can spend it and I'm notorious for changing my mind. *(To TYCHE)* Right?

TYCHE: All the damned time.

ERIS: So take it now or never. Come on, let's make history together!

*She pushes the document back to SOPHIA who picks up the pen, hesitates for a moment, then signs. OGHMA also signs. ERIS hands the documents to ULLR who exits. ERIS heads to the door and calls out.*

ERIS: Violet my dear, could you pass me that champagne please? *(To the others)* I know it's a bit... *(looks at watch)* a lot early, but we should celebrate.

*The champagne is passed through the door to ERIS.*

OGHMA: I'm game! Sophia's teetotal though, aren't you?

SOPHIA: Yes, nothing for me thanks.

ERIS: Seriously? Not just one? It's a big day for you.

SOPHIA: No, no thanks.

*ERIS exits quickly, the others looking at each other awkwardly, then strolls back in with an orange juice carton and plonks it in front of Sophia.*

*They fill glasses. OGHMA stands to make a speech.*

OGHMA: *(Formally)* As chair of DNAlicious, I'd like to welcome The Rust Fund to our business. Ten years ago the founders started work on making their vision of an obesity-free world a reality...

ERIS: Yes, yes, and here we are now. Cheers! *(Downs drink and pours another).* I think we have a wonderful future, with DNAlicious *(struggles with the name)* fitting in perfectly into the Rust Group. AI, DNA and obesity – you couldn't be more on trend! We'll be as addictive as coffee and a LOT more expensive. Anyway, I would like to thank young Sophia here for bringing the business to my attention, even if she wasn't aware, and also for all of her hard work over many, many years to get the technology from idea – even if it's not her idea – to launch... or thereabouts. *(Raises glass)* Here's to changing the world.

ALL: Cheers.

ERIS: Now to business. As my all-round marketing-guru, Clementine here *(indicates TYCHE)* will be joining the team.

OGHMA: I think we'd need to discuss that first.

ERIS: We would, would we?

OGHMA: Any significant hires need to go to the board first.

ERIS: Ah, but you wouldn't be hiring her. I'd be loaning her. Are you going to turn down free help? No wonder you've been moving so slowly.