



Chapter 1

Bobbi stood by and watched an airport security agent ramble through her Gucci handbag. The agent had questioned her about a six-ounce bottle of facial moisturizer, which she'd paid fifty dollars for, and then threw it away. When he cleared her to travel, she gathered her belongings — and her dignity — and headed for her boarding gate.

Bobbi checked the time and stopped at a café on the departure gate concourse for a vanilla latte. Moving forward in line, she ordered, tapped her card, and then stepped aside. At the condiments bar, she noticed a handsome stranger stirring his coffee before a deep male voice called out her order for pick up. She gave the stranger a small smile, taking a sip of the smooth steamy beverage to avoid further eye contact, and moved on.

At the boarding gate, Bobbi powered on her laptop to take one last look at the presentation she would be giving later this morning. She clicked through the charts reviewing her notes and rehearsed the pitch under her breath. If everything went according to plan, she would be signing her first professional athlete to the roster at My Way Communications.

Representing a major athlete would give her the exposure she wanted in the world of professional sports. This would diversify her client portfolio and set My Way up for long-term success. Bobbi smiled.

“United Airlines flight 1507 with service to Atlanta now boarding business class and premier members at gate five,” said the attendant, pulling Bobbi out of her dreamy state.

She put away her laptop, drank the last of the latte, and went to stand near the blue lane divider for boarding.

That’s when she saw the handsome man from the café just ahead of her in line with a tall model-type chick at his side. Bobbi couldn’t deny how well he wore those jeans and the way his muscles rippled underneath the clean white t-shirt. Hmm. They were an attractive couple, but none of her business. Bobbi moved forward, ready to scan her boarding pass. And just before the handsome stranger entered the jet bridge, he looked back at Bobbi, and she looked away.

When Bobbi boarded, she walked past the interesting couple to her seat and put her carry-on in the overhead bin. She said a prayer for the flight and for her pending meeting. She had a lot to be thankful for. After five years in business, Bobbi had managed to position her company as one of the leading independent public relations agencies

in Washington, DC. And signing a star athlete like Terry Barnes would take her business to the next level.

In Atlanta, Bobbi deplaned and followed the signs to ground transportation. The stranger and his companion were just ahead of her. Who was this guy anyway? Bobbi frowned. Why did she care?

Moving on, Bobbi stopped at the restroom to freshen up for her meeting, and the couple from the plane disappeared down an escalator.

Bobbi washed her hands and stepped over to the full-length mirror. The tailored white suit and black stilettos had been the perfect choice for today. She smoothed down blunt cut bangs and applied more pink gloss to her full lips. With a wink of approval, she grabbed her bag and left.

When Bobbi exited the terminal, the stifling Atlanta humidity assaulted her lungs, and she gasped. When she caught her breath, she stepped off the curb and reached in her purse for tissues to dab at the beads of sweat forming on her forehead. Just then, she noticed an older gentleman wearing a black suit and white hat holding a sign with her name on it.

“I’m Bobbi Fragua,” she said, waving toward him.

“Hello, Miss Farqua. I’m Eugene, your driver,” he said, tipping his hat.

“A pleasure to meet you, Eugene.”

He nodded and grabbed her bag, and she followed him to a black Cadillac with tinted windows and got in.

“Ahhh. That’s more like it,” said Bobbi, thankful for the rush of cold air.

“We should arrive at Fairview Tower in thirty minutes,” Eugene said.

“Thank you.”

Bobbi reached in her purse and pulled out a mirror. Thank goodness her make-up hadn't melted, and her hair hadn't shriveled up. The humidity in Atlanta could turn a silk press into afro-puffs in a snap. She dusted her face with a little loose powder and nestled into the soft leather seat for the short ride into downtown Atlanta.



Chapter 2

Bobbi sat on the edge of her seat as Eugene exited the interstate. She gazed at the familiar shops and the crowds hurrying along the sidewalks once they were in the heart of the city. Things sure had changed since she'd left for the military more than ten years ago. Even though she visited often, new real estate, retail stores, and restaurants were popping up everywhere all the time.

"We're here," said Eugene.

He pulled up to the curb and opened the door for Bobbi. Her eyes traveled up the ten-story building which resembled a huge mirror with its smoky glass design. Inside, she admired the novelty stores and chain restaurants as she pulled her rolling bag across the pristine marble floors to join the small group standing at the elevator.

When the doors opened, Bobbi entered and asked for the tenth floor. She rode alone for the last two floors then

got off at the Penthouse — suite 1000. Glass double doors revealed a contemporary reception area in shades of gray and black. Bobbi took a deep breath and went inside.

“Good morning. May I help you?” said the woman behind the desk rocking a cute pixie haircut.

“Good morning, I’m here to see Mister Kendall.” Bobbi looked at her watch. “I’m a bit early, but I have a ten-thirty appointment. I’m Bobbi Farqua.”

The receptionist checked the schedule and made a call. “Mister Kendall, your ten-thirty is here,” she said.

“Miss Farqua is here?” he said. “Uh . . . give me ten minutes. Thanks, Tish.”

The receptionist looked at Bobbi. “Please have a seat. Mister Kendall will be with you shortly.”

“Thank you.”

Bobbi sat on the plush gray velvet oversized chair and pulled out her phone to look at the presentation charts one last time. Competing with big public relations firms required Bobbi to bring her A-game to every business deal. Stellar customer service and personal attention to detail had been key to her fast-track success. So today, she would use that same approach to win over Atlanta Condors’ star running-back and add her first professional athlete as a client.

“Hi Bobbi. Jim Kendall,” he said as he extended his hand with a smile.

Bobbi stood to greet him. “Yes, Jim. How are you? Finally, we meet in person.”

Jim chuckled. “I know. It took many conversations to get to this point, but we’re here now. If you’re ready, let’s go back to my office.”

Bobbi grabbed her things and followed Jim out of the reception area through another set of glass doors and down a long hallway. They chatted about her flight on the way to his office.

“By the way, thanks again for sending a driver,” said Bobbi.

“Of course. I’m glad it worked out for you. I’ll call Eugene after the meeting so he can take you wherever you want to go.”

As they entered Jim’s office, his phone rang. He asked Bobbi to have a seat as he reached over his desk to answer it.

“Yes, Tish?”

“Terry called and said he’ll be up after he finds parking.”

“Okay. Send him back when he gets here.”

Bobbi admired the mahogany furniture in Jim’s office while she waited. When Jim got off the phone, he went to sit on the corner of his desk near Bobbi and they continued conversing about her visit.

A knock came on the door and then Terry entered.

“What’s up, man?” said Terry, walking toward Jim.

“You, man. Glad you could make it,” said Jim, greeting Terry with a handshake and man-hug. “This is Bobbi Farqua, the publicist I’ve been raving about.” Then Jim said, “Bobbi, meet Terry ‘Sweet Feet’ Barnes, star running-back for the Atlanta Condors.”

Terry extended his hand. “A pleasure to meet you, Miss Farqua.”

Bobbi stood up and reached for Terry’s hand. She smiled. “Please call me Bobbi. The pleasure is all mine,

Sweet Feet.” She chuckled. “Thanks for taking the time to meet with me.”

Terry brought Bobbi’s hand to his lips and kissed it. She almost gagged when his wet lips pressed against her skin. She hadn’t expected such a greeting, but whatever. Jim cleared his throat.

“Hey, why don’t we move to the conference room and get started.”

Once they were settled at the conference table, Jim and Terry talked football while Bobbi set up for her presentation. She plugged the laptop into the portable projector she’d brought to display her charts on the white board, then walked to the front of the table opposite Jim and Sweet Feet and began her pitch.

For the next twenty minutes, Bobbi talked about her agency’s capabilities. She talked about new endorsement deals and ideas for expanding the Sweet Feet brand. When Bobbi mentioned getting Terry an exclusive deal with a popular sports-drink company, Terry and Jim both nodded their approval, eagerly awaiting her next word.

Bobbi walked toward the gentlemen as she delivered closing remarks. “So, you see, Terry, at My Way Communications, we take charge of every situation. We tell the story — the story doesn’t tell us.” With her final words, Bobbi sat next to Sweet Feet. “You have any questions for me?”

“I’m impressed,” said Terry. “Do you represent any other professional athletes?”

“Besides you?” She chuckled. “Just kidding. You would be my first. However,” she said, reaching in her bag and

pulling out a folder, “here’s a list of my clients. They’ve agreed to talk with you about their experience at My Way.”

Terry reached for the file. “Thanks.” He looked at Jim.

Jim looked at Bobbi, and Bobbi glared at both men, wondering why they made things so awkward.

“Here,” said Bobbi, handing Terry a business card. “Take your time and check out my company and credentials. When you’re ready, give me a call.”

Bobbi shut down her equipment while Terry read over her client list and Jim made small talk with her about the meeting.

A few minutes later, Terry stood to excuse himself. But before he left the room, he thanked Bobbi for coming to Atlanta.

“I’ll definitely be in touch,” said Terry, kissing Bobbi’s hand again. “Safe travels.” He winked at her and walked out.

Bobbi held back a frown. Rumor had it that Terry might be engaged, so she didn’t appreciate his flirty eyes or his wet lips. She wanted his business not him.

As Bobbi finished packing up, Jim watched her every move.

“So, Bobbi,” he said, “I may have some other business to throw your way, if you’re interested. I like your style. From what I just saw here, Terry should be ready to sign on the dotted line today. You convinced me . . . and if I need to convince him, I will.”

“Thanks for the vote of confidence,” said Bobbi, zipping her bag. “I’m sure Terry will make the right decision for him. But as for your other clients, give me a call and we can go from there.”

“Sounds good to me.” Jim used the telephone in the conference room to call for the car and then escorted Bobbi back to the reception area.

“Thanks for setting up the meeting . . . and for the car,” said Bobbi. “I look forward to working with you again real soon.” She shook Jim’s hand and left.



Chapter 3

Riding in the car, Bobbi pondered the meeting with Terry. Closing this deal had been her primary focus for weeks. She had expected him to sign with My Way before she left Jim's office.

When she'd talked to Jim in the weeks leading up to the meeting, she learned that Terry had been through several publicists over the years. And this time around he wanted to be the top priority and not just another client on a list, so they were considering smaller firms.

Nevertheless, Bobbi had to trust that all the time she'd spent on Terry's pitch would pay off, and she'd find that out soon enough. For now, she needed to shift her energy to a happier vibe because she had plans to spend the day with her mother, Grace.

When Eugene got off on the exit for Buckhead, Bobbi called her mother.

“Hello,” said Grace.

“Hey, Ma. I’m almost there.”

“Hey there, baby girl. I’m in my office working. Just come on in when you get here.”

“See you in fifteen minutes,” said Bobbi.

“Be safe,” said Grace.

When Bobbi arrived at her mother’s house, she put her key in the door and before she could step across the threshold, Grace met her in the foyer. They embraced and then doted on each other’s hair, nails, and make-up like fangirls.

Bobbi followed Grace to the kitchen where she poured her a glass of iced tea. When Grace asked about the meeting, Bobbi shrugged it off saying she felt good about the pitch but hadn’t closed the deal just yet. They chitchatted about family matters and Grace’s plans for the summer before a rumble in Bobbi’s stomach reminded her that she hadn’t eaten all day. And she knew exactly where she wanted to go — Leonard’s Grille on Peachtree Road. Bobbi grabbed Grace’s purse and car keys, telling her they could finish catching up in the car, and the mother and daughter duo headed out to lunch.

At the restaurant they were seated and then placed their orders. Once the server left the table Grace asked Bobbi if she’d contacted Lance. Bobbi rolled her eyes. She knew her mom wouldn’t let this day go by without asking about him.

“Who has time to show some random guy around town. I’m busy.”

“He’s not random. His mother is my friend. Lance is going to think I lied about my wonderful, kind-hearted daughter if you don’t call him.” Grace continued, “Lance is a very nice, successful young man. Just call him.”

“I will.” Bobbi shrugged her shoulders. “When I have time.”

“Don’t lie to your mother. You know I don’t play.”

Grace’s cell phone rang. *Thank God.* Bobbi breathed a sigh of relief. She didn’t want to go back and forth with her mom over a guy she didn’t even know. She would get around to meeting him soon. Things were busy at work and Bobbi didn’t need any new male friends, especially not a friend of her mother’s.

Besides, Grace had mentioned that Lance had a kid, and him being a single parent made Bobbi uncomfortable. What if he or his child got attached to her? The thought of it made her cringe.

Bobbi glared at Grace, still on the phone, cackling and talking louder than she should be in this public place. But Bobbi had been grateful for the timing of the call because it put a stop to all the questions about Lance. Bobbi shook her head and continued enjoying her meal while checking work emails on her cell phone.

After lunch, Bobbi spent the rest of the day tagging along with her mom while she ran errands. Grace had even dragged Bobbi into a hobby store looking for jewelry beads to make her a bracelet before they headed downtown to meet Eugene for Bobbi’s ride back to the airport.

While sitting in Grace’s car in front of Fairview Tower, Bobbi watched Grace finish the Tiger-eye beaded bracelet with a single silver heart-shaped bead at the closure. Then Grace handed it to her.

“Put it on,” said Grace. “And when you meet Lance, tell him I made it.”

“OMG,” said Bobbi. “What is it with you and this Lance guy?”

“Just tell him,” Grace said.

Thank goodness Eugene had just pulled up. Bobbi couldn’t get out of Grace’s car fast enough. She gave Grace a quick hug and kiss, and then jumped out. She waved goodbye before sliding into the black Cadillac.

The bumper-to-bumper traffic on Interstate 85 South made Bobbi grateful once again that Jim had provided a car. She should be at the airport in thirty minutes — an hour and a half before her flight.

Bobbi kicked off her heels and wiggled her toes, wondering what her man might be doing. She chuckled. Tony could never be her man — he loved women too much. But she had to give him props for how well he played the role of convenient lover. Whenever her libido needed a playmate, he always came through with no questions asked. And after all she’d been through today, she could use some playtime.

Bobbi’s phone rang.

“Hey, sis,” said Nikki, Bobbi’s best friend. “How’d the meeting go with Sweet Feet?”

“I thought I killed it, but my contract is still unsigned.” Bobbi waved off the thought. “We’ll see what happens.”

“That sucks,” said Nikki. “But is he fine though? He is on TV.”

“No, he’s weird.”

Nikki laughed. “Let me guess. He hit on you, right?”

“He did everything but sign my contract.” Bobbi chuckled.

“Jerk.”

“It’s whatever though.” Bobbi’s phone beeped. “Hey, I need to take this call. I’ll hit you back later.”

Bobbi hung up with Nikki and accepted the incoming call from Jim Kendall.

“Hello. This is Bobbi.”

“Bobbi. It’s Jim. Are you at the airport?”

“Hey, Jim. Not yet, but we’re getting there.”

“Great. I talked with Terry after you left, and he has a few questions for you.”

“Sure. Is he with you now?” said Bobbi.

“No, but we can schedule a call,” said Jim.

“Sounds good. I’ll have my assistant call your office first thing tomorrow.”

“I look forward to it. You have a safe flight,” said Jim.

“Thank you,” said Bobbi. She ended the call. “Yes! Whoop, whoop!” Bobbi pumped her fist in the air. Another step closer to a signed contract. How surreal.

Bobbi’s excitement soon faded into a warm cozy feeling that caused her to shift on the soft leather seat. She squeezed her thighs together. Something about closing big business deals toyed with her hormones. Maybe the sense of fulfillment in her work triggered it. Or perhaps it had to do with an adrenaline rush. Whatever the case, the familiar twitch down below made itself none.

After Bobbi checked in for her flight and escaped airport security, she pulled out her phone and called Tony.

“Hey, love,” he answered.

“Hey, you. Can you come over tonight?” she said.

“Uhh . . . yeah,” said Tony.

“Cool.” Bobbi checked the time. “Midnight is good. And oh —” she giggled. “Don’t wear any underwear. I don’t want anything in my way.”

“You just be ready when I get there,” Tony said.



On the plane, Bobbi fastened her seatbelt and closed her eyes. She would dream about Tony and their freaky playtime. Her lips turned up in a smile.

“Excuse me. Is that seat taken? Miss . . . excuse me,” said the man standing in the aisle. “Is anyone sitting there?”

Bobbi’s eyes popped open. In the aisle next to her, pointing at the window seat, stood the mystery man from her morning flight. She had to be dreaming.

Bobbi poked her chest. “You talking to me?”

“Yes. Is that seat taken . . . the window seat?”

Bobbi looked around at the other empty seats on the red eye, wondering what seat number he had on his boarding pass. “Uh . . . I don’t know.”

He proceeded to secure his belongings and side stepped past her to the window seat.

Bobbi forced a smile and nodded in his direction. Then she closed her eyes again and pressed her head against the seat — thoughts of Tony now slowly fading into the shadow of curiosity with her new travel mate.

Once he settled in, the mystery man pulled out his phone and made a call. Bobbi didn’t want to eavesdrop, but she did. Based on the tone of his voice, he had to be talking

to a woman. And the unmistakable way he said, “I love you” before ending the call, told Bobbi all she needed to know.

While the flight attendant prepared the cabin for take-off, Bobbi cut her eye at Mr. What’s-his-name sitting to her left. Game recognized game. He’d indirectly made a full disclosure about his status, just in case the two of them became acquainted on the flight.

Bobbi went to the restroom after the pilot announced the altitude and turned off the fasten seatbelt light. When she returned to her seat, the handsome stranger at the window took the opportunity to introduce himself.

“By the way, I’m Savon — Savon Turner.” He extended his hand. “You were on the flight this morning, right?”

Checkmate. Bobbi reached across the center seat to shake his hand. “Hi, Savon, nice to meet you. I’m Bobbi. I do remember you from this morning.” Savon’s hand, held on to hers longer than she’d expected given the phone call she’d just overheard.

After introductions, an awkward silence filled the space between them. Bobbi might be curious but never desperate. If he didn’t say another word the entire flight, neither would she.

“So . . . Bobbi. Are you from DC?” said Savon, interrupting her thought.

“No. I was raised in Atlanta — in Buckhead. But I live in the DC area now,” she said.

“Small world. What part of Buckhead?” said Savon.

“Peachtree Park.”

“Me too — on the north side. My family moved there from New York when I was in high school,” he said.

“No way,” said Bobbi, her eyes inspecting him. “You don’t look familiar though.”

“You either,” said Savon.

They talked about their neighborhoods and growing up in the A. When they started name-dropping, they discovered they knew some of the same people.

“Talk about coincidences,” said Bobbi.

“Yeah . . .” Savon gazed at her. “Do you follow pro sports?”

“A little. I go to a few games — football and basketball,” she said.

“Okay,” he said.

Then Bobbi added, “But I like basketball more, cause the Washington Warriors football team suck.”

Savon frowned. “I play for the Warriors. I was actually in town for a radio interview and stopped by my old high school.”

A brunette flight attendant with red lipstick on her front tooth interrupted their banter. “Would you like something to drink?” she said, looking between them.

Both Bobbi and Savon asked for water and the attendant scribbled on a pad before moving on.

“Don’t get me wrong,” Bobbi said. “I definitely consider myself a Warriors fan but come on — you guys could do much better.” She giggled. “My best friend and I say the team should try exorcism to cast out that losing demon. Ha!” Bobbi held her chest to quiet the laughter.

Savon frowned.

When she realized her humor had offended him, she changed the subject to smooth things over. To answer one

of his earlier questions, she told him that she worked as a publicist. They talked about her line of work and about making money in general. When the flight attendant rolled by with their water and snacks, Bobbi took the opportunity to shift topics again.

She asked about his social life and where he hung out. The exchange between them flowed with little to no effort and before long, the pilot's voice filled the cabin with an announcement to prepare for landing.

In the time it took to fly from Atlanta to DC, the chemistry between them had spread like fire. But Savon had already told Bobbi that he had a fiancée. So, she knew their meeting today would be both the beginning and the end of her curiosity. Although Bobbi didn't want a serious relationship, she never wanted to be the one to help a cheater cheat.

As the plane landed, neither of them said a word. In their silence, thoughts flooded Bobbi's mind about meeting the perfect stranger.

The two exited the aircraft, walking down the concourse and out to the parking garage together. Then things became awkward again. If Savon had been a free man, Bobbi would know what to say in this moment to keep him on the hook. But that's not the case.

She flipped her hair over her shoulder and reached in her purse. "Here's my business card. If you're ever in the market for a publicist, give me a call."

Savon examined the card and then looked at her. "You didn't say you owned the PR agency." He tapped the card against his finger. "Hmmm. Beauty and brains."

Bobbi looked up at Savon. When their eyes met, she knew she had to leave. “Welp, it’s been a long day. My bed is calling. It was truly a pleasure meeting you, Savon. Reminiscing about home and —”

“Check it out,” he cut her off. “A few of my homeboys are coming to town to hang out this weekend. We’ll be at Club Dream, Friday night. You should come.”

Bobbi tried not to read into his invite. She turned to press the elevator button and then looked back at him. “If I can, me and my girl will stop by for drinks.” Bobbi lied. Thank goodness for the ding of the elevator. She needed to get far away from this man. “Take care, Savon,” said Bobbi as the doors closed.