

DAVE. No, Paige, I can't make him do that, I *can't*.

PAIGE. Dave. There's a reason you hired me. You hated me the last time we worked together—

DAVE. I didn't *hate*—

PAIGE. You kinda did; but you know I know politics. You knew I could tell you what happens next, which is this: there's two political parties, right?; and the *other* guys—the guys who *don't* want Ned to be Governor? —they now have a video of him mumbling and trembling for five minutes straight. And they're gonna *use* that video to get him kicked out of office. They're gonna call for a Special Election—to replace the Governor in... six weeks? And I'm not telling you Ned won't *win* a Special Election; I'm telling you he won't even get to *run*. 'Cause not even his own party will want Governor Mumbles as their candidate. So if you want him to *keep* his job, you have to undo this. You have to get him on TV—today—talking. Not a *speech*, just... five minutes of him, on camera, speaking words. He can do that, right?

DAVE. (*Beat.*) Well...

PAIGE. (*She's done trying to make her case, and moves away.*) Yeah, this is why we didn't work well together last time.

DAVE. No, I know you're *right*, Paige—

PAIGE. Good, 'cause I *am* right; so: we've got a plan. Now for the good news. Do you know the name Arthur Vance?

DAVE. (*Beat.*) The guy who's on CNN every election night?

PAIGE. Exactly; I got a call from him this morning.

DAVE. How do you know Arthur Vance?

PAIGE. I don't; he called me out of the blue. Somebody I worked for saw the video I posted—Ned's swearing-in?—she shared it with Arthur Vance, and... suddenly the guy's calling me to say he'd like to help Ned out. Like, he basically wants to be a political advisor to Ned Newley.

DAVE. (*Beat. This is now a very odd story.*) Arthur Vance?

PAIGE. Yes.

DAVE. Hasn't he been like—

PAIGE. Yes!

DAVE. A campaign manager or personal advisor to—

PAIGE. Yup—

DAVE. To three of the last—

PAIGE.
Four of the last six
presidents.

DAVE.
(*Simultaneous with the word "presidents":*)
Presidents?!

PAIGE. And now he wants to work for Ned Newley. Like, *really* wants to work for him. I mean, you should have heard him on the phone. He said he was in Boston for some reason, sees this video, clicks on it, and the *moment* he saw Ned, he said it was like he, like he *had* to work with him. I mean, he checked out of his hotel, bought a plane ticket, and called me from the airport.

DAVE. He's coming here?

PAIGE. This is what I'm telling you; it's some kind of godsend. I don't know, maybe politics is so... *crazy* now, if you're someone like him, you're desperate for something different, something...

DAVE. Genuine?

PAIGE. (*As good a guess as any:*) Sure! All I know is Arthur Vance sees potential in this guy. He's already got me doing polling on him—questions about competency, likability. I think he's got plans for him—like *national* plans. I mean, the man's got connections; if he wanted to, he could turn Ned Newley into a political superstar.

DAVE. Okay, but... I'm not sure how Ned's gonna react to a political advisor who's worked in the White House; that is way out of his comfort zone.

PAIGE. Dave, here's the thing: you can either keep Ned in his comfort zone, or you can keep him in his job. Where is he, anyway—is he hiding?

DAVE. He's still in his old office, downstairs. He likes to work there; it's quiet. And small. Very little light.

PAIGE. You need to get him out of his cave, Dave.

DAVE. (*Making a move to the Reception door, uncertain of how this will play out:*) Right.

PAIGE. And tell him Arthur Vance is coming to save his career.

(*DAVE opens the Reception door to find, standing in the doorway, LOUISE PEAKES, the temp hired as Ned's Executive Assistant: an impressively personable, likable, confident woman. Though it's never occurred to her—and won't yet occur to us—LOUISE has the air of a politician about her. If she were running for office—greeting morning commuters at your train stop—the friendliness of her smile, and the confident way she looked everyone in the eye*)