

# Prologue

## Dark Shadows

Bryce Goodman

My phone vibrates with a call. I can't answer. I can only stare at the images displayed on the monitor. There's no doubt about what I'm looking at—it's my dick, stuffed in the mouth of my ex-fiancé. Behind her kneels my ex-girlfriend, whose tongue furiously dips in and out the crack of my ex-fiancé's fat ass.

My phone vibrates again.

Confident that whoever is calling is the person responsible for sending the flash drive of the video I'm looking at, I don't answer. Instead, I keep watching. If it were just a sex tape, I wouldn't care. However the footage that follows makes me out to be a sexual predator.

This part of the video shows a man with a predilection for watching women—me—slipping, presumably unnoticed, inside the ladies room of several of Philly's most respected and affluent restaurants. It's never been my desire to approach anyone; in fact it doesn't even get my dick hard. I only wish to observe women at their most vulnerable moments because it provides me with the ability to understand what's really beneath the surface of their public façade. But little did I know someone was watching me.

I uncap a bottle of Macallan M single malt and, foregoing the glass, I turn the bottle up to my lips. As I take a swallow of the warm, smooth liquor, the outside door to my office buzzes.

Tiffany Johnson-Skinner

Did he know I'd come? Maybe that's why his door is unlocked. Now that I'm inside, there's nothing much to see except the basic essentials: a black leather couch, matching recliner and a flat-screen TV mounted on the wall. On the coffee table there are three neatly stacked piles of the *Financial Times*, *The Rake* and *Forbes*. In the kitchen, there are no dirty dishes or signs that he even cooks. I open the refrigerator and see bottles of Poland Spring water and a bag of rotten green apples. His freezer is empty, save for two empty ice trays.

His apartment matches his public persona—nondescript—but I know there's more to Bryce Goodman. Tonight I intend to find out exactly what that is.

With nothing to do but wait, I scramble through my purse for a perfectly rolled Kush. Using his stove to light it, I inhale deeply, filling my lungs and finally my head.

Bryce

Sliding open my bottom desk drawer, I remove my trusted Smith & Wesson pistol and shove it into the waistband of my pants. Standing now, I take another swallow of Macallan then make my way out of my office, through the reception area and to the front door.

I peer over the frosted glass of my storefront window. The black Maybach idling against the curb shines under the streetlight. The driver swings the back door open and a woman dressed in a black pantsuit climbs out, making me realize that a gun isn't what I need.

## Raquel Turner-Cosby

Bryce Goodman has never been on my radar and he certainly does not run in my social circle. Clearly, he hides his net worth and a disgusting penchant for voyeurism behind his pristine reputation and no-frills office. That ends tonight.

Swallowing any doubt about confronting him, I step through the doorway of his cramped office. After my eyes adjust to the dark, I maneuver my way around boxes and bins that are haphazardly stacked around the room. Finally, I make out the contour of his body posted against the back counter.

“Did you receive my package?” I ask the shadow lurking in the dark.

I wait for a response. There is none, except him turning a bottle up to his lips. I continue.

“Mr. Goodman, I believe you already know who I am so I will tell you why I'm here. It has come to my attention that my daughter has retained your firm to manage a portion of her investments. I understand that she wants to be independent but I will not allow her, or my wealth, to be mishandled.”

## Bryce

She is right about one thing—I do know who she is. The woman standing in my office threatening me is Raquel Turner-Cosby who spent four years in federal prison for murdering a man allegedly in self-defense. I also recall meeting with her mixed-race daughter for the first time a few weeks earlier. Apparently the white woman standing before me has a few secrets of her own.

To keep from pulling my gun on her, I turn the bottle up to my lips and take another swallow. She continues to talk but I'm only half listening. Right now Ms. Turner-Cosby is nothing more than a rambling mannequin shrouded in the red light from the glowing Staples sign across the street.

I can't figure out what's more comical, me watching women or this woman hiring someone to watch me watch them. She continues to talk.

## Tiffany Johnson-Skinner

Standing in the middle of his neatly organized bedroom, my eyes are drawn to his king-sized bed with its padded gray headboard and nail head trim. I resist the urge to immediately undress and slip between the sheets. Instead, I grab his pillow and breathe in the woody fresh scent of Creed Green Irish Tweed.

Across the room, on his otherwise clean dresser, sits an iPod dock, an envelope stuffed with rolls of 20- and 50-dollar bills wrapped tight in rubber bands and two unique watch boxes. Nestled inside one of them, is an average alligator-strap Rolex etched with his initials. Alongside that lies a not-so-average, blue-faced Piaget. My eyes fixate on a beautiful gold and sapphire-embedded Hublot that looks like it's never even been worn. I turn the key to unlock the box, remove the Hublot and see "10X" etched on the back. I slip it on my wrist. Now I see how he likes to spend his money.

The second box is encased in leather and bares an inscription, "The Good Box." Its contents are more titillating than the watches...a loosely knotted, red silk Hermès men's necktie; I slip that around my neck. Next to it is a packet of Skyn condoms, and Lelo massage candles whose wicks have previously been burned. There's also a fresh tube of L'Occitane almond cream and a velvet sachet that holds a silver pinwheel. All of this affirms my decision to choose Mr. Goodman as the man to handle my finances and hopefully me as well.

### Raquel Turner-Cosby

His lack of response is unsettling and so is his constant drinking from that bottle. Maybe I misjudged this man. Is he more of a physical threat than I had assumed? I mean, what person wouldn't be after viewing the images I'd sent him?

"Mr. Goodman, I'm warning you, if you take advantage of my daughter or threaten to expose our personal arrangement in anyway, I will destroy you. I've done it before. And I have no problem accepting the consequences, especially when it comes to my daughter. Are we clear?"

### Bryce

Am I drunk, or did this bitch just threaten to kill me? Fuck that.

Reaching behind me, I pull the gun from my waistband then hold it down at my side as I unlatch the safety. When I step back to get my footing, I stumble. Without considering the consequences I say, "Bitch, get the fuck outta my office."