

# The Turning Shadows

## Chapter Seven

On the fourth floor of the Swank, just outside the door to room 420, Obi Washington quietly sang “Peace in the Valley” to himself as he stood watch for his employer. Fortunately, the walls of this hotel were sturdy enough to block out any noise from within the room behind him, but he didn’t have to hear it to know what was going on inside the room.

His employer was a swine, on the inside at least. To casual onlookers, the man was handsome and respectable, even honorable, but on days like today that mask came off, and it was Obi’s unfortunate lot to make sure no one saw the putrid face it concealed.

Obi’s mother would not have been proud, but she herself had affirmed that beggars can’t be choosers, and work was hard to find. Doing his best to think of her and not his employer, with a pleasant voice much higher than one might expect to hear coming from a 260lb man, Obi quietly continued his song, one of her all-time favorites.

His revelry was interrupted when the elevator opened and a blonde in a red coat walked out. She smiled and confidently approached him.

Obi was still scanning his brain for the right question to ask, when she stopped in front of him and said, “So sorry I’m late.” With a nod at the door beside him, she asked, “Could you buzz me in, please?”

Obi’s face constricted in confusion, and he said, “But there’s already someone in there with the boss.”

The new girl just nodded enthusiastically and said, “We’re a team.” Making an hourglass motion with her hands, she said, “She’s the voluptuous, curvy one,” and then to Obi’s shock and embarrassment, the blonde pulled open the red coat revealing only a white lacy bra and panty set covering a pale, white frame. “I’m the athletic one.” Then she slowly raised her right leg until her foot came to rest high on the opposite wall, essentially doing a full split in the hallway in front of him, before returning to rest position.

Obi’s dark brown eyes scanned her form once before involuntarily elevating to study the ceiling above them. It was off-white and stained, obviously having seen better days. The same couldn’t be said for the blonde whose smile only widened at Obi’s discomfort.

Without another word, Obi removed a key card from an inside, jacket pocket and swiped it across the door.

The girl quietly opened the door and slipped inside, turning back to give him a wink as she quietly closed it, leaving him alone again in the silent hallway.

Scarcely a minute later, a ding sounded from the end of the hallway, and the elevator doors opened again. The sight within brought a spontaneous groan to Obi's lips. Six people exited the elevator. The four leading wore casual clothes. The two trailing wore uniforms. All six of them were cops.

Detectives Miles and Beck walked in the middle, uniforms behind them, with the vice detectives taking the lead. Beck watched the man at the door, the very large man at the door, turn slightly to square off with them as they approached.

Lutz flashed his badge and credentials before saying, "Sir, we are detectives and officers with the NYPD." He slipped his credential's case back in his pants pocket, pointed up at the door to room 420, and said, "We are going to have to ask you to step away from that...."

Before he could get the word "door" out, it flew open, forcing the big driver to sidestep to avoid being struck. Beck was impressed and perhaps a little intimidated by the big man's speed, but before he could ponder further, a much smaller and immeasurably faster shape shot from the room in a blonde-headed red blur. Grasping hands shot out behind her, seeking to envelope her, but the blonde/red figure ducked below them, in a roll that turned into a cartwheel, splitting the detectives and leaving the figure leaning up against the far wall beside one of the uniforms.

A voice full of rage and hate shouted from the room, "Stop that ...." The last word fell away as a naked man, the owner of the grasping hands, stepped into the hallway. Beck considered the man. He was late thirties to early forties, still sporting a head of black hair that was just showing the first signs of grey around his temples. The face would have been handsome if not for the scowl that currently resided there.

The man stuttered for a second before straightening to his full height just over six feet, and commanding, "Officers, I want that girl arrested," an accusing hand pointing at the attractive blonde in the red coat, while the other cupped his privates.

The blonde, Dailyn Beldam, smiled, held up small smart phone in her left hand and took several, rapid photos of the naked man in the hallway.

Too angry to be aware of his nudity or stupidity, the man tried to rush forward, but as he did so, Detective Lutz arm-barred him while his partner, Detective Galloway, proceeded to cuff him.

The driver simply raised his hands and took several steps back as a sting of nearly incoherent curses poured from his boss' mouth.

When his words returned to standard English, he said, "Do you have any idea who I am?"

Dailyn Beldam answered, "This is City Councilman Gordon Bishop, whose wife decided last week to stop ignoring his lecherous ways and hire a P.I.," at this she raised her right hand, "To secure proof of his infidelity." Smiling, she added, "They have a morals clause in their prenup which she intends to exercise."

The councilman turned beat red with barely contained fury. Unable to point with his hands cuffed behind his back, he nodded, "Those pictures were taken illegally. I want that camera."

Detective Lutz glanced once at the councilman before holding out a hand, palm up, fingers wagging. "That phone is now evidence, and we will need to confiscate it."

The councilman seemed momentarily mollified as the girl handed the phone to the detective, until the red-coated blonde said, "You are welcome to it. It's just a burner, and it's synced to Mrs. Bishop's cloud account, so she already has the photos."

A wave of expressions passed through the councilman's face, renewed anger was followed by panicked confusion, which quickly gave way to resignation. The councilman's head fell, and his shoulders rolled forward in submissive defeat.

The uniforms followed Detective Galloway into the hotel room, and one of the uniforms exited a minute later with a bath robe, which he and Detective Lutz draped over the congressman before the uniform walked him to the elevator.

Detective Lutz turned and addressed the driver. "You are not being charged, but we will need a statement."

Obi nodded, his dark skin not entirely hiding the flood of blood warming his face.

Motion from the doorway to the hotel room caught Detective Mile's attention, and as she watched, another uniform exited the room escorting a curvy brunette in a low-cut, black cocktail dress with a high low hem. Large, brown eyes with hints of an almond curve adorned a face that would have been beautiful if not for the endless streams of tears that flowed from them.

She appeared to be in her mid-twenties, far too young Miles thought to be entangled in this fiasco.

The uniform officer never paused, leading his suspect through the detectives towards the elevator.

A moment later, Detective Galloway appeared in the doorway. Though he wasn't trying rivers, Miles could tell he was not a happy camper himself. Galloway locked eyes with Lutz and shook his head with an expression somewhere between frustration and fury.

"Nothing," he said bitterly, throwing an underhand strike into the open door to his left.

Detective Miles traded glances with her own partner, Detective Beck. He nodded in understanding. These two vice detectives had been after something more than a simple prostitution ring.

Beside them, Dailyn Beldam purposefully cleared her throat. When she had their attention, she reached into the front pocket of the red coat she wore and held up a small, capped bottle of the sort a person having a prescription filled at a pharmacy might receive.

Smiling, she said, "I picked this up off the TV stand when I first entered the room."