

# The Meeting

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## Chapter One

### The Sleeper

Looking out across the night sky he waited. Waiting for her to arrive. Sitting on his back porch smoking a cigar. Taking a deep breath in he smiled. It was good to be back where he belonged. Prison had been hell. No one knew hell like the ones who had been there. Smiling, he was glad. He beat the system. Found not guilty. It had only taken four years of his life for that to happen. Now as a time for optimism. He no longer had to listen to the screams or the beatings that prison had given him. The nightmares were bad enough. Always waiting for him. Waiting to invade his peaceful dreams. With nights like those, there wasn't anyway he could find a solution to his problems. He was innocent. He was innocent, wasn't he?

Thunder rolled in the distance causing Adam to jump out from his train of thought. Looking to the East he saw a storm coming. Oh storm, Adam thought. Go away. Just go away. There's no need for your presence here tonight. Go along your way. Standing up, Adam walked into the house to wait out the storm inside.

Resting on a couch he looked at a chess board. Thinking of the different moves his opponent could take, Adam planned out his moves accordingly. No matter which way he moved the game would end quickly. He would be the victor. Adam enjoyed that thought. Being able to win was something that he enjoyed. It wasn't the fact that he beat someone but the fact that he accomplished something. A personal best added to his list of accomplishments. A personal score card was kept in his mind. If he didn't win, Adam wouldn't sleep until he figured out why he didn't win. Meticulously thinking it all through making sure it all made sense. That's how Adam's mind worked. Some would say it was due to over thinking, but Adam felt otherwise. He felt it was his way of covering all of his bases.

Adam wasn't one to enjoy surprises or being sneaked up on. Maybe he was a tad paranoid. Over the course of his life of 20 years, he always wanted to know what was going on at any given moment. Sometimes this worked to his advantage, other times it didn't. It used to bother him and fill his mind with worry, doubt, confusion and sometimes depression. Adam got through all that. Drugs wasn't the answer. Just clearing his mind from everything else would be the key. The doctors had been right all along. His psychiatrist figured it best for Adam to live alone in the country somewhere. Which is what brought him to where he resides.

Waiting on her. He was always waiting on her it seemed. Adam grew tired of the waiting. Tired of the constant reminding himself to be patient. He wanted things his way. If people took too long like his companion, he would have to continue the game without her.

Adam reached for a chess piece and began to move it. Stopping midway he slapped his wrist. Don't do that. You move that piece and you'll lose for sure. Looking to the knight he pondered for another moment. He moved the piece. As the wooden chess piece made

contact with the marble board thunder shook the house. Lightning lit up the interior as it flashed. Outside small creatures went running for cover. Adam looked at the clock. Twenty-Five minutes late now. She isn't coming. He thought. If she was she would have called by now. There's no saying where she went or what she's up to.

Picking up the sides of the chessboard, Adam closed it in on itself. The pieces dropped into the table it was sitting on and the board laid flat against itself easing into the table as well. With the table now clear, Adam walked over and made himself a Martini with two olives. Walking back over to the couch, he sat back down. Resting his Martini on the table where the chessboard had rested.

Adam took a sip of his drink. As the alcohol burned his throat on the way down, Adam could only think of one thing. He had made it stronger than usual. Shaking his head, he continued to drink his drink. It would only take a few minutes. He wouldn't remember or feel the gag reflex. The alcohol would cure that until he woke up sober and hungover in the morning. Drinking was the way he cured whatever pain he was in. Currently the anxiety over the thunder was giving him quite a blow.

Looking to the cigar in his hand Adam wondered how he had forgotten about it. He took another long drag from it. Blowing smoke rings he laughed. The rings of smoke had always been a favorite of his. Now his evening, however so ruined, was complete. Relaxing back into the sofa, he drank and smoked until he passed out.

## Chapter Two The Alcoholic

Sharon walked through the front door of the house and into the living room. Sighing at Adam passed out on the couch she picked up his unfinished Martini and his cigar. Sharon put out the cigar and left it in the ashtray. Taking a look at the Martini, she smelled it and then took a sip. Spitting it out she sighed. Amateur she thought. Walking into the kitchen, she poured the drink down the drain and placed the glass in the sink.

Looking over to the fridge she smiled. Beer sounded like a good plan. She wasn't in the mood for something fancy, just a quick buzz. Opening the fridge, she pulled out a six pack of Corona and popped a top off one of the bottles. The cap flew across the kitchen into the garbage can.

Sharon took a sip of the golden liquid. Cold and refreshing, she smiled. Looking down at her clothes she laughed. Dressed up and nowhere to go. She would have to fix that. Putting the bottle of beer down on the counter she walked through the living room and into the master bedroom to fetch some more appropriate clothes.

Walking into the bedroom, Sharon turned left into a walk in closet. Racks and racks of clothes hung on the walls. Dress shirts, slacks, ties, tuxedos. She shook her head. None of it would do. What kind of person lived here, she thought. Where are the normal clothes? Looking above her, she saw a baseball cap. Perfect!

Sharon stood on her tiptoes as she reached for it. Grabbing the ball cap from the top shelf, she looked at it. Giants huh? He's a Giants fan? She laughed. Watever. Well, if there's a ball cap, there's for sure to be... she continued to look around. A sweatshirt and jeans. Exactly what she needed.

Slipping off her shoes, she unzipped her dress and tossed it to the side. A full length mirror was on the door. She looked into it and smiled. Beautiful as ever, she thought. Her blond hair shined in the light and her green eyes sparkled. Pulling on the sweatshirt she frowned. There went any hope for showing off her figure. Oh well, not expecting company. It shouldn't be a problem. She slipped on the jeans as well.

Turning out the closet light, Sharon left the room and headed back to the kitchen where her beer was waiting.

Passing by the couch, she looked at Adam. I should probably put him somewhere. She thought. Nah. He'll figure things out later. Shouldn't have drank that much to begin with. Can't hold his liquor worth a damn.

Walking back into the kitchen, Sharon grabbed her beer and sat on the counter. Hearing the front door, Sharon dropped down to the floor and slithered across the kitchen down to the basement. She could hide there so whoever just walked in wouldn't mess with her. Unless he decided to explore the house. That could be a problem.

Better hide good. She thought. Better hide your ass so good they won't find you. Taking one last look at the beer on the counter she swore under her breath. Dammit, now what are you gonna drink?

### Chapter Three

#### The Gambler

Violet walked through the front door carrying a bag that made clicking noises as she walked. The sound of loose change and poker chips could be heard echoing throughout the house. Holding the bag with both hands she bumped against the door to close it. The door slammed shut.

Adam roused a little on the couch but fell back asleep snoring loudly.

Violet tiptoed across the entryway to the living room. Her sparkling dress lit up the room almost as bright as the lights did. Looking down on the couch she saw Adam. Poor kid wasted and passed out again. Someday he'll learn.

Looking to her winnings, she smiled. Three hours of hard work had finally paid off. The folks had always told her she couldn't get through life by playing card games alone. She had proved them wrong. Only took one hard lesson in jail to figure out how not to be caught card counting of course, but she was learning from her mistakes.

Violet headed towards the stairs. Slipping her shoes off, she set foot on the first step. It squeaked. She looked down at the step. You didn't use to squeak, Violet thought. Better take them two at a time. Skipping a step she ran up the flight of stairs trying to keep the squeaking down to a minimum.

Upon reaching the top floor she looked back down. Adam was still asleep. Lucky bastard being able to sleep through almost anything. Violet felt the carpet on the bottom of her feet as she walked down the hallway. It tickled a little. At the end of the hall was her goal, a private office. Stepping inside the office, she sat down at the desk and started to count her winnings by hundreds. Two thousand dollars later she smiled even more.

It was time for a celebratory smoke. Flipping open a cigar box she pulled out a cuban. He won't mind if I have one cigar. She thought. Cutting off the end, she lit the cigar and put it in her mouth. "Mama's a winner" Violet said as she started smoking it.

## Chapter Four

### The Reader

Tim sat in the corner of the room. No one had noticed him. It was typical for him. He was an introvert, never volunteering anything. People could walk on by and not give him a second look, or a first one for that matter, and he was good.

Looking around he thought about going into the kitchen. No, that's where Sharon had gone. Don't want to confront her in case she's still there. No reason to. Sighing, he shifted in his chair and pulled out his book. Turning to chapter thirteen, Tim continued reading from where he had left off the day before. The book was finally providing some interesting substance. Something useful to take home. It wasn't like television. Books were a way for the mind to open up. To explore and advance in ways that were difficult to do with video like television and movies. The imagination was of little use in those environments. But when reading a book the possibilities were endless.

Smelling cigar smoke, Tim stood from his chair and walked outside. The fresh cold air hitting him as he opened the door. The smell of rain falling. The thunder had stopped as well as the lightning. It was just a gentle rain now.

Sitting down on a porch swing, Tim got comfortable. Pushing off on the swing, he let it rock back and forth. Tim put his legs up on one end of the swing and relaxed; his head on top of a pillow at the other end. The swing rocking back and forth to a gentle rhythm.

Tim smiled as he drew the book closer fully immersing himself into it and letting go of the reality that was around him.

## Chapter Five

### The Prostitute

The front door opened again. Helen walked in through the living room and into the kitchen. Seeing the half drunken beer bottle she turned her nose up a little at it. Damn you Frank. She thought. Drinking and sports never mix. Pausing she looked at the bottle, there was lipstick around the edge. Sharon. Of course. Now it made sense. Probably hiding again.

Helen looked around. No one was around that she could see. Pulling cash out of her bra, she started counting it. It had been a rather successful night for her. Two blow jobs, a handy, and a full on sex encounter. Not bad for a school night. She snickered. Helen placed the cash back in her bra and walked to the basement entrance. Upon opening it she looked down at Sharon.

“Oh, there you are.” She said.

Sharon looked up. “Hi Helen.”

“Hiding from people again?”

Sharon nodded.

“I figured as much. Helen said. “Scoot over, let’s have a talk.”

Sharon turned around on a step and made room for Helen who sat down. Sharon looked up to Helen. Helen had always carried such confidence about her. Something that Sharon lacked but badly wanted in her life.

“Did you bring my beer?” Sharon asked.

Helen looked back on the counter. “Nope, sorry kiddo.” She said. “You really should stop all of that. Your liver will hate you someday for it all.”

Sharon nodded. “Yeah I know. That’s what the doc keeps telling me. I can’t help it though. My liver needs company. It’s how I tell it it’s loved.”

Helen laughed. “Right. Just how I tell my privates they’re loved by letting strangers have their way with me? Uh no. I just need the money.”



Sharon looked to Helen and smiled. “Hel? How do you do it?”

“Do what?”

“How do you have so much confidence about you?” Sharon asked.

Helen stopped and thought about it for a bit. She had never thought that one through before. It was just something she had. Helen figured as long as she didn’t think about what the people were paying her for. What they were doing with her. She wouldn’t have to worry. She could just take their money and go about her day. Once she got to thinking about it, it turned her stomach. Something she never wanted to do. So she didn’t think.

Helen just shrugged in response.

Sharon nodded. “Oh.”

Helen looked at her watch. “Well I best be getting to bed. Gotta get my beauty sleep.” She stood up and walked back through the kitchen to an empty room upstairs.

## Chapter Six

### The Sports Fan

Frank walked out of the den screaming. “Wow! What a game!” he shouted through the house. “What a game indeed! Behind seven zip and they came though with a minute to spare. Haven’t seen that in ages!”

Walking to the kitchen he saw the open beer bottle on the counter. “What do we have here?” He asked the bottle. “You look lonely. I’ll keep you company.” Frank picked up the bottle and took a look around.

He took a sip.

The taste of beer mixed with lipstick made him smile. He always enjoyed drinking Sharon’s leftovers. Had she not left the bottle out, he wouldn’t have helped himself to it.

Her loss. He smirked.

Running back to the den, he stumbled. Damn trick knee. Frank thought. Standing up he limped back into the den. Ever since he had been a Quarterback and had been hit from behind in the middle of his prime. Frank rubbed his knee back and forth. He’d ice it later. There was more important things going on at the moment.

He screamed again. “Now it’s time for the basketball game!”

The door slammed shut.

Sharon hit her head against the floor. “Damn” she said. “He took my drink.” Sneaking out into the kitchen, she opened the fridge up and looked around. The last Corona too. Searching around the fridge, she found a Bud Light. Meh, this will have to do.

Sharon headed back downstairs, this time with beer in hand.

## Chapter Seven

### The Dancer

Entering through the back door, Monique stepped into the house. Six foot two, black, and full of curves, Monique smiled. “Honey, I’m home!” She yelled throughout the house. There was no response. Adam was even quiet except for the snoring.

Monique looked around. Huh quiet night. People aren’t up. Strange. She thought. What kind of place is this anyway? She had just come from the club and was still in the mood for dancing. Looking to the couch she saw Adam. Damn kid. Monique rested her hands on her hips. Eh, he never was good for dancing anyways. Didn’t have the right rhythm for it.

“Yoohoo!” Monique said in a high pitched noise. “Honey you home?”

“Buttercup?”

Monique walked upstairs to her bedroom. It was time to change and get ready to go out again. Monique never grew tired of dancing. She didn’t care what kind of dancing it was. As long as she was moving her hips to the sound of music, she was good.

## Chapter Eight

### The Joker

Matt walked up the stairs that led to the kitchen. Upon seeing Sharon he was about to say hello, but saw that she had passed out. Man for an alcoholic, she sure can't hold her liquor. He thought.

Oh well, we'll just put this right here for when she wakes up. Placing a hand buzzer under Sharon's hand he chuckled to himself. When she wakes up, she'll have a nice little jolt to ensure she's awake.

In his eyes he was helping. Sure it was at the expense of another person, but hey at least he was helping.

Walking into the living room, Matt picked up a seat cushion and put a whoopie cushion underneath it.

He smiled, the stage was set for the next sucker to walk in and sit down. Crossing the room he sat in a chair in the entryway. He would wait for the fun to begin.

## Chapter Nine

### The Fighter

The garage door opened. A few moments later, Wil walked through the door. Closing the garage he walked in the house. Wil put the keys to his motorcycle on a hook in the kitchen and opened the fridge.

Grabbing a big plate of cold pasta, Wil heated it in the microwave and then walked into the living room. Sitting down the whoopie cushion went off. Wil jumped. Then the laughing started.

He looked across the room to the front door where Matt was seated. "Very funny Matt." He said.

Matt shrugged. "Hey, what can I say? It's what I do."

Wil nodded. "Uh huh." He said. "Oh well, I'll fight ya later. Just cleared some guy's clock out on 12th street. He'll have a nice nap until morning. For now, I'm just starvin'." Wil took a big bite of pasta.

## Chapter Ten

### Finding Each Other

Monique exited her room and stood on the stairway overlooking the living room. Wil looked up to her and waved. Monique waved back.

Matt looked up from his spot near the front door and smiled. He always enjoyed seeing Monique. She was always full of energy.

Monique started clapping. "Wake up everyone! Come on out here for a second. Meeting! Meeting!" She yelled. "Let's all get down here. Come on!"

One by one the inhabitants of the house came from their different hiding places. Sharon yelled as she hit the hand buzzard. "Son of a-!" She stumbled out from the basement stairs and stumbled into the living room.

Monique counted as every one of them walked into the room.

"Oh good, we're all here." Monique said. The big black woman's hands waved about excitedly. "Wait where's Rachelle?"

"She didn't make it" Wil said, "You knew she couldn't be here. We told you this was a close friends only party. She's not a close friend!" He yelled at Monique.

Monique looked at Wil and frowned. "But I want Harry to meet her! Besides, she's a close friend of mine!" Resting her hands on her hips, she shifted her weight back and forth quickly daring Wil to make a move.

Wil stood his ground. "She might be a friend of yours, but she ain't a friend of ours!" He folded his arms.

"For the love of mud!" Adam screamed. "Can't you all just shut up! I am trying to sleep here! You're making it very difficult!" He said trying to find a more comfortable place on the couch. His head buried in a pillow, Adam was trying to drown out sound and keep light out. Pulling the pillow over his head, his face buried in the couch cushion now, he tried anything to keep the noise and light from interfering with his sleep.

Monique frowned. "Humpf." She said. "Fine. Harry will be here any moment. Everyone hide. We'll surprise him when he gets here!"

Frank started walking back towards the den. He had a game to watch.

“Stop it right there mister!” Monique said. “Don’t you dare go back in there. No game for you!”

Frank turned around. “Oh come on Monique. I was going to hide in there. I promise I’ll come back out when he gets here.”

Monique shook her head. “Oh hell no. You ain’t gonna be pulling that on us mister. We’re all here for a reason. Don’t you be hiding.”

Frank nodded and walked towards the couch. As he crouched behind it, Frank looked outside. “Hey, should we let the kid know he can come in now?” He tapped on the window. “Dude get in here!”

Tim ignored them all. He would come in when he had the time.

## Chapter Eleven

### The Owner

Headlights shined in the window. People scattered to different hiding places throughout the house. The sound of a door opening and closing. The car door locking. Footsteps up to the front door. Another key unlocking and opening the door. A man stepped in and turned on the lights.

“Surprise!” The voices came out from their hiding places surrounding Harry. He was startled and shocked. Not frightened, just shocked they were there all at once. Harry crossed the room and stood against the fireplace trying to wrap his head around it all.

Harry looked at them. Unsure of how to act or respond. He simply stood there leaning against the fireplace. You can’t be here, he thought. You just can’t be here. It’s not possible. His mind raced. I don’t want you here. Just go away. You aren’t invited. This is my house. I don’t want you here.

His guests stood there staring back at him. Some looked to the floor unsure of how to act. Others sat down on the sofa, in a chair, on the floor. A set of twins played in the corner with an oversized ball oblivious to it all.

Adam woke from his sleep on the couch. Drool was dripping down his mouth. Sitting up he looked around. There were more people here than when he fell asleep he noticed. Using the sleeve of his shirt he wiped his mouth off. “Y’all are noisy.” He said. “Can’t a guy get a decent nights sleep around here?”

The others glared at him not amused with his inability to stay awake. It was of course what he did best. Find a comfortable place to crash and then crash.

Harry walked over to a chair and sat down. Adam looked over to Harry. He had a smirk on his face. “Martini?” Harry nodded as Adam rushed to the other side of the room to fix him a drink.

“Not too much of that.” Sharon said. “You need to be polite and share with your guests.” Walking over to Adam, she took the drink from him. Taking a sip she walked it over to Harry. “Here you are sugar, not the best in the world. But it tastes okay.”

Adam smiled, his work done he laid on the floor and fell back asleep.

Harry accepted the drink and took a gulp. This wasn’t happening, he thought, it wasn’t happening. All these people here at once. Too many people. Too many voices. Just way too many. His hands started to shake. Harry took a small sip of his drink trying to calm down. He wasn’t a fan of parties, especially ones with that many people in them. Harry was more of a conservative fellow when it came to friendships. Not too many and it was perfect. Have more than a handful and you’d have to entertain them all. He was not in



the mood to entertain these people, whoever they were.

Violet walked over to him. Putting her arm around his neck she leaned in. "I bet you'll leave here before midnight." She said. "Something tells me I'm right." Violet sat on the chair's armrest for a moment and started to nibble on Harry's ear. He relaxed his head back a little letting her explore his ear with her tongue.

"Tramp." Helen came walking up to Violet. "Let a professional show you how it's done." Pushing Violet to the side, she straddled Harry and started kissing his neck. The others watched in amusement. Violet fell to the floor with a loud thud. Looking up from her new position, she looked at Helen with disgust.

Tim walked into the room from the porch and looked at Helen. "You're doing it wrong." He said.

Helen stopped kissing Harry's neck and looked over. "How would you know?" She asked. "I've been doing this a lot longer than you have and you still haven't hit puberty yet."

Tim, holding up the book gestured to its title: Sensual Kissing. "I read remember?" Shaking his head he plopped down in a nearby chair and opened the book to his last place of reading. No one noticed him anyway that's how he liked it.

Harry looked to Tim and then back to Helen. "What the hell is going on here?" He asked pushing Helen to the side. Helen stood up before falling to the floor and took a step back.

Monique walked up to Harry, "I was going to invite my friend but I was told she wasn't allowed to come." She said. "Wil said that this was only a party for close friends."

Harry leaned forward and placed his head between his knees. "Party?" He asked. "Who are you people? Why are you here?!"

Frank looked over to Harry. "Hey man, you missed a great game!"

Sharon looked around for a beer bottle. She needed something to drink. There were none in sight. Dammit. Taking the Martini from Harry she smiled. "Thanks sugar." She gulped it down quickly. Walking over to the drink cart, she made herself a second and then a third.

Violet looked at Harry. "You know us baby." She said. "We've been with you a long time." Lifting his head up, Violet looked into his eyes. "Don't you remember?"

Harry's thoughts were turned back to his late teens. It was then he had made friends with these people. Once he met them they stuck around and wouldn't ever leave. No one else could see them though, that was the weird part about it. They acknowledged him

and he acknowledged them right back. People had looked at him strange when they saw him talking to his friends in the grocery store or at the mall. In the drive thru at McDonalds. Harry thought they had no business interfering in his life so he ignored them.

Looking around the house and to the people, Harry continued shaking. "Where am I?" He asked. "I don't recognize this place."

Tim looked up from his book. "You're home Harry. Where you belong."

Another voice spoke. A distant voice. Not coming from the room but from someplace else. The lights in the house brightened. Too bright for Harry to keep his eyes open.

A doctor stood over Harry's lifeless body with a flashlight. Running it back and forth over his open eyes, the man hummed to himself. Looking to an orderly he shrugged. "I think we've lost him this time Joe. His hallucinations finally grabbed hold of him. He's too far gone. You can remove the restraints, he's in a coma. He won't be getting up anytime soon."

As the orderly did as he was instructed, the doctor shook his head. Putting the flashlight back in his pocket he walked down the hallway making notes on a piece of paper. Poor kid, he thought, maybe someday you'll be freed from your demons. For now I hope they play nice.

The End