

ANNUAL FEE

"What's YOUR price?"

Written

by

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SUPER ON BLACK

"Begin by seizing something which your opponent holds dear. Then he will be amenable to your will." - Sun Tzu

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

A dive boat cuts across calm, glassy waters.

Stopped, the boat rocks gently. Pairs of divers plunge into the ocean.

A MAN and WOMAN, blonde and fit, casually descend through warm waters to the coral floor. Among the flowing kelp strands, they explore the vibrant sea life.

Abruptly, a small shark darts past; not attacking, but grazing the Woman's mask.

The regulator is knocked from her mouth.

She flounders, but does not panic. Divers practice for this.

She calmly sweeps her arm back, trying to hook her air hose, but she's not finding it.

She kicks backward. The first hint of panic.

A firm hand grabs her dive vest and she's jerked forward. The Man locks eyes with her.

Calmly, with his free hand he pulls his regulator from his mouth. Divers practice this too.

She calms as he begins to offer his air --

-- But at the last moment he pauses.

Confusion in her eyes.

Cold calculation in his.

Still gripping her dive vest, he pushes her away.

Eyes of terror. She scrambles wildly for his mouthpiece, but he's stronger, his arm longer.

She tries again for her regulator, but his grip keeps her from twisting.

She gulps, swallowing water --

INT. TURNER HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Water splashes. Eyes closed, SHEREE (30s, African-American) plunges her face in.

Stepping back from the sink, she pats her face dry with a towel.

INT. TURNER HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Stepping out of the bathroom, she playfully tosses her wadded towel at a figure lying in bed.

SHEREE

What's todaaaay?

She sings the question as she crosses to the patio doors.

The body groans into his pillow.

Fluttering drapes are whipped silently aside. The lush bed is bathed in a burst of early morning sunlight.

Shielding his eyes, MARCUS (30s, African-American; close cropped hair) rolls over.

SHEREE (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Couldn't hear that.

Marcus grumbles his practiced response into the pillow.

MARCUS

"The first day of the rest of our lives."

SHEREE

That's right, baby. A day filled with promise.

Sheree kisses his shoulder and strolls back into the bathroom.

A cell phone buzzes on the night stand beside a Rolex and keys to a BMW.

Marcus pushes himself up with a grunt, leaving behind tiny BLOOD STAINS.

He wipes his mouth and pulls off the pillow case.

INT. TURNER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Their daughter MARTINE (8) races past them wearing a karate gi.

SHEREE

Hey, there...

Martine pauses for Sheree to kiss her forehead and tug her yellow belt tight.

SHEREE (cont'd) (CONT'D)

What did I say? After the demonstra

--

MARTINE

Change after the demonstration.

Outside, a horn honks.

SHEREE

That's my girl. Now go kick some butt!

Marcus passes through with an armful of bedding as Martine races off. He calls after her.

MARCUS

Love you, baby girl.

SHEREE

That child will surpass us all.

MARCUS

Don't think I'd stand a chance against either one of you.

Sheree turns, seeing him at the washer.

SHEREE

Oh, thanks, baby.

She slides over to him.

SHEREE (cont'd) (CONT'D)

She has Brownies tonight. Can you...?

MARCUS

I'll pick her up.

SHEREE

Oh, thank you.

She starts correcting his tie.

SHEREE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Brandi has a thing, y'know, a
'thing', and I --

MARCUS
I know Brandi's 'things'. I've got
Martine. You have fun. You know,
I'm capable of tying that myself.

He touches his tie...

SHEREE
Where's the fun in that?

Grabbing his wrist, she twists his hand away and plants a
firm kiss on his lips.

His cell phone hums. And again. He glances at the screen.

SHEREE (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Brent?

INT. BMW - DAY

Marcus drives. His phone buzzes.

MARCUS
Marcus Turner.

BRENT (O.S.)
You don't return my texts now?

MARCUS
Morning, Brent.

BRENT (O.S.)
Why is there a right of first
refusal in this contract? They
hated this guy.

Marcus checks the clock on the dash. It's 8:10.

MARCUS
You're in the office?

BRENT (O.S.)
Do we need to have this
conversation again?

MARCUS

Didn't need to have it the first time.

BRENT (O.S.)

The hell did you just...? Listen, Turner --

Marcus's phone beeps with a second call.

MARCUS

Hang on.

BRENT (O.S.)

What? No, you --

MARCUS

Sorry, have to take this.

He clicks over.

MARCUS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Marcus Turner.

He listens, nodding. Dark clouds gather on his face. His responses are slow, metered.

MARCUS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Ah-huh. Yes. Mm-hmm. So...how long do I...? Mm-hmm. Of course. Of course, I.....

His eyes dampen.

MARCUS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He hangs up, sagging in his seat.

The on-hold call rings through. He answers out of reflex.

MARCUS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Marcus T--

BRENT (O.S.)

I know your name, idiot. Don't ever put me on h--

MARCUS

Check your e-mail. They had a deal memo guaranteeing first refusal on one more. It's a payout.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

They don't have to work with the
guy. They just cut him a check.

A keyboard clatters.

BRENT (O.S.)

In my e--? Oh. Okay, well.... Huh.
How the hell did you manage that
con?

MARCUS

That's a dirty word, Brent. Crazy
as it might sound, I told them the
truth. He'd give them a great first
draft, probably wouldn't vibe
enough for the second.

A harsh cough wracks Marcus. Brent launches into another
rant, but Marcus is not listening, distracted by drops of
blood on his chin and tie