

The Broken Window: A Lincoln Rhyme Novel

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Bestselling master of suspense Jeffery Deaver is back with a brand-new Lincoln Rhyme thriller.

Lincoln Rhyme and partner/paramour Amelia Sachs return to face a criminal whose ingenious staging of crimes is enabled by a terrifying access to information...

When Lincoln's estranged cousin Arthur Rhyme is arrested on murder charges, the case is perfect -- too perfect. Forensic evidence from Arthur's home is found all over the scene of the crime, and it looks like the fate of Lincoln's relative is sealed.

At the behest of Arthur's wife, Judy, Lincoln grudgingly agrees to investigate the case. Soon Lincoln and Amelia uncover a string of similar murders and rapes with perpetrators claiming innocence and ignorance -- despite ironclad evidence at the scenes of the crime. Rhyme's team realizes this "perfect" evidence may actually be the result of masterful identity theft and manipulation.

An information service company -- the huge data miner Strategic Systems Datacorp -- seems to have all the answers but is reluctant to help the police. Still, Rhyme and Sachs and their assembled team begin uncovering a chilling pattern of vicious crimes and coverups, and their investigation points to one master criminal, whom they dub "522."

When "522" learns the identities of the crime-fighting team, the hunters become the hunted. Full of Deaver's trademark plot twists, *The Broken Window* will put the partnership of Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs to the ultimate test.

Jeffery Deaver is the #1 international bestselling author of more than forty novels, three collections of short stories, and a nonfiction law book. His books are sold in 150 countries and translated into 25 languages. His first novel featuring Lincoln Rhyme, *The Bone Collector*, was made into a major motion picture starring Denzel Washington and Angelina Jolie, which is currently being adapted for television by NBC.

He's received or been shortlisted for a number of awards around the world, including Novel of the Year by the International Thriller Writers and the Steel Dagger from the Crime Writers' Association in the United Kingdom. In 2014, he was the recipient of three lifetime achievement awards. A former journalist, folksinger, and attorney, he was born outside of Chicago and has a bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a law degree from Fordham University. *The Broken Window*
Chapter One

Something nagged, yet she couldn't quite figure out what.

Like a faint recurring ache somewhere in your body.

Or a man on the street behind you as you near your apartment . . . Was he the same one who'd been glancing at you on the subway?

Or a dark dot moving toward your bed but now vanished. A black widow spider?

But then her visitor, sitting on her living room couch, glanced at her and smiled and Alice Sanderson forgot the concern-if concern it was. Arthur had a good mind and a solid body, sure. But he had a great smile, which counted for a lot more.

"How 'bout some wine?" she asked, walking into her small kitchen.

"Sure. Whatever you've got."

"So, this's pretty fun-playing hooky on a weekday. Two grown adults. I like it."

"Born to be wild," he joked.

Outside the window, across the street, were rows of painted and natural brownstones. They could also see part of the Manhattan skyline, hazy on this pleasant spring weekday. Air-fresh enough for the city-wafted in, carrying the scents of garlic and oregano from an Italian restaurant up the street. It was their favorite type of cuisine-one of the many common interests they'd discovered since they'd met several weeks ago at a wine tasting in SoHo. In late April, Alice had found herself in the crowd of about forty, listening to a sommelier lecture about the wines of Europe, when she'd heard a man's voice ask about a particular type of Spanish red wine.

She had barked a quiet laugh. She happened to own a case of that very wine (well, part of a case now). It was made by a little-known vineyard. Perhaps not the best Rioja ever produced but the wine offered another bouquet: that of fond memory. She and a French lover had consumed plenty of it during a week in Spain-a perfect liaison, just the thing for a woman in her late twenties who'd recently broken up with her boyfriend. The vacation fling was passionate, intense and, of course, doomed, which made it all the better.

Alice had leaned forward to see who'd mentioned the wine: a nondescript man in a business suit. After a few glasses of the featured selections she'd grown braver and, juggling a plate of finger food, had made her way across the room and asked him about his interest in the wine.

He'd explained about a trip he'd taken to Spain a few years ago with an ex-girlfriend. How he'd come to enjoy the wine. They'd sat at a table and talked for some time. Arthur, it seemed, liked the same food she did, the same sports. They both jogged and spent an hour each morning in overpriced health clubs. "But," he said, "I wear the cheapest JCPenney shorts and T-shirts I can find. No designer garbage for me . . ." Then he'd blushed, realizing he'd possibly insulted her.

But she'd laughed. She took the same approach to workout clothes (in her case, bought at Target when visiting her family in Jersey). She'd quashed the urge to tell him this, though, worried about coming on too strong. They'd played that popular urban dating game: what we have in common. They'd rated restaurants, compared *Curb Your Enthusiasm* episodes

and complained about their shrinks.

A date ensued, then another. Art was funny and courteous. A little stiff, shy at times, reclusive, which she put down to what he described as the breakup from hell—a long-term girlfriend in the fashion business. And his grueling work schedule—he was a Manhattan businessman. He had little free time.

Would anything come of it?

He wasn't a boyfriend yet. But there were far worse people to spend time with. And when they'd kissed on their most recent date, she'd felt the low ping that meant, oh, yeah: chemistry. Tonight might or might not reveal exactly how much. She'd noticed that Arthur had furtively—he thought—been checking out the tight pink little number she'd bought at Bergdorf's especially for their date. And Alice had made some preparations in the bedroom in case kissing turned into something else.

Then the faint uneasiness, the concern about the spider, returned.

What was bothering her?

Alice supposed it was nothing more than a residue of unpleasantness she'd experienced when a deliveryman had dropped off a package earlier. Shaved head and bushy eyebrows, smelling of cigarette smoke and speaking in a thick Eastern European accent. As she'd signed the papers, he'd looked her over—clearly flirting—and then asked for a glass of water. She brought it to him reluctantly and found him in the middle of her living room, staring at her sound system.

She'd told him she was expecting company and he'd left, frowning, as if angry over a snub. Alice had watched out the window and noted that nearly ten minutes had passed before he got into the double-parked van and left.

What had he been doing in the apartment building all that time? Checking out—

"Hey, Earth to Alice . . ."

"Sorry." She laughed, continued to the couch, then sat next to Arthur, their knees brushing. Thoughts of the deliveryman vanished. They touched glasses, these two people who were compatible in all-important areas—politics (they contributed virtually the same amount to the Dems and gave money during NPR pledge drives), movies, food, traveling. They were both lapsed Protestants.

When their knees touched again, his rubbed seductively. Then Arthur smiled and asked, "Oh, that painting you bought, the Prescott? Did you get it?"

Her eyes shone as she nodded. "Yep. I now own a Harvey Prescott."

Alice Sanderson was not a wealthy woman by Manhattan standards but she'd invested well and indulged her true passion. She'd followed the career of Prescott, a painter from Oregon who specialized in photorealistic works of families-not existing people but ones he himself made up. Some traditional, some not so-single parent, mixed race or gay. Virtually none of his paintings were on the market in her price range but she was on the mailing lists of the galleries that occasionally sold his work. Last month she'd learned from one out west that a small early canvas might be coming available for \$150,000. Sure enough, the owner decided to sell and she'd dipped into her investment account to come up with the cash.

That was the delivery she'd received today. But the pleasure of owning the piece now diminished again with a flare-up of concern about the driver. She recalled his smell, his lascivious eyes. Alice rose, on the pretense of opening the curtains wider, and looked outside. No delivery trucks, no skinheads standing on the street corner and staring up at her apartment. She thought about closing and locking the window, but that seemed too paranoid and would require an explanation.

She returned to Arthur, glanced at her walls and told him she wasn't sure where to hang the painting in her small apartment. A brief fantasy played out: Arthur's staying over one Saturday night and on Sunday, after brunch, helping her find the perfect place for the canvas.

Her voice was filled with pleasure and pride as she said, "You want to see it?"

"You bet."

They rose and she walked toward the bedroom, believing that she heard footsteps in the corridor outside. All the other tenants should have been at work, this time of day.

Could it be the deliveryman?

Well, at least she wasn't alone.

They got to the bedroom door.

Which was when the black widow struck.

With a jolt Alice now understood what had been bothering her, and it had nothing to do with the deliveryman. No, it was about Arthur. When they'd spoken yesterday he'd asked when the Prescott would be arriving.

She'd told him she was getting a painting but had never mentioned the artist's name. Slowing now, at the bedroom door. Her hands were sweating. If he'd learned of the painting without her telling him, then maybe he'd found other facts about her life. What if all of the many things they had in common were lies? What if he'd known about her love of the Spanish wine ahead of time? What if he'd been at the tasting just to get close to her?

All the restaurants they knew, the travel, the TV shows . . .

My God, here she was leading a man she'd known for only a few weeks into her bedroom. All her defenses down . . .

Breathing hard now . . . Shivering.

"Oh, the painting," he whispered, looking past her. "It's beautiful."

And, hearing his calm, pleasant voice, Alice laughed to herself. Are you crazy? She must have mentioned Prescott's name to Arthur. She tucked the uneasiness away. Calm down. You've been living alone too long. Remember his smiles, his joking. He thinks the way you think.

Relax.

A faint laugh. Alice stared at the two-by-two-foot canvas, the muted colors, a half dozen people at a dinner table looking out, some amused, some pensive, some troubled.

"Incredible," he said.

"The composition is wonderful but it's their expressions that he captures so perfectly. Don't you think?" Alice turned to him.

Her smile vanished. "What's that, Arthur? What are you doing?" He'd put on beige cloth gloves and was reaching into his pocket. And then she looked into his eyes, which had hardened into dark pinpricks beneath furrowed brows, in a face she hardly recognized at all.

Other Books

The Deliveryman, Forensic detective Lincoln Rhyme and his partner Amelia Sachs return in this short story from New York Times bestselling author Jeffery Deaver. The Deliveryman A Lincoln Rhyme Short Story A man is murdered in a back alley. Renowned forensic detective Lincoln Rhyme and his partner Amelia Sachs are left with a veritable mountain of evidence collected from the trash-filled alley, and their only lead is a young eyewitness: the man's eight-year-old son, who was riding along on his father's delivery route. But the murder victim may have been more than just a simple deliveryman. Rhyme and Sachs uncover clues that he might have been delivering a highly illegal, contraband shipment-- which is now missing. And someone wants it back...

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