

SUSPENSE THRILLER, *TARGETED*, PREVIEW

CHAPTER 1

A hand pushed aside the blossoms of a red ginger shrub and aimed high-powered binoculars at La Ceiba beach. It was the perfect spot. Close enough to watch and listen, yet far enough away to avoid being detected.

Tourists spilled from the sweltering airport buses. Excited voices carried snippets of conversations about their impending arrival at one of the most exclusive holiday destinations in Honduras — the Barefoot Bay resort on Roatán Island.

A young woman with dark hair bunched into a ponytail and long, bare legs jumped from the top step of the bus. She dropped her tote and waited for her companion to descend.

The second woman was petite and curvaceous, with hair the colour of fire. Her ivory skin appeared luminous under the bright sun. They wound their way through a knot of fellow travellers to stand under the spotty shade of a palm tree. The binoculars tracked their movement.

Shouts from the bus driver dragged the women's attention from the magnificent view of the Caribbean Sea. They watched with amusement as the driver hollered and signalled until he captured the attention of two Honduran teens sitting on an idling ATV hitched to a cart. The boys drove over and dismounted at the open luggage bay. With a noticeable lack of enthusiasm, they began tossing suitcases. Some hit the cart, others landed with a thud on the hot, white sand.

The brunette turned to her friend, "Look on the bright side, Ellie. At least your luggage won't be dented."

"Very funny, Jordan. I can't believe the airline lost my frigging luggage." Ellie dropped her bag to unfasten the lower buttons on her filmy yellow blouse. Grabbing the bottom ends, she savagely twisted the material into a knot.

Jordan patted her arm, "I'm sure it will turn up before the day is over. Meanwhile, my clothes are yours."

"Thanks. Good job I have my bikini, a couple of pairs of thongs, and my toothbrush in my carry on."

"That's all you'll need, my friend."

The binoculars lingered on the swell of fabric above the red head's bare midriff.

The driver slammed the luggage bin and shouted to the anxious tourists, “*Señoras y señores*, you must wait there for the ferry boat to Roatán.” He pointed a stubby, nicotine-stained finger towards the dock. “It should be here in *quince minutos*.”

“What did he say?” Ellie asked as she picked up her tote.

A fellow traveller, standing nearby, overheard the question. He strolled over to Ellie.

The binoculars swivelled to the male intruder.

“The chap said the ferry would be here in fifteen minutes.” The man’s lop-sided smile magically transformed Ellie’s funk over her lost luggage to awareness of an attractive male.

“I’m Darcy Piermont.” There was muscle under the man’s expensive clothes. Tattoos snaked along his forearms and calves. He had rugged, clean shaven features and his blond hair was short on the back and sides, while the top was two inches longer and gelled into a short, spikey Mohawk.

Ellie smiled widely and moved closer to the man, while Jordan simply nodded a greeting.

Fingers tightened on the binoculars. A flash of sunlight reflected off the lenses as they slowly withdrew. The scarlet blossoms shuddered, then fell back into place.

© 2017 by Donna Warner & Gloria Ferris