

PSYCHO THERAPY by TG Wolff

EXCERPT

Irish found me a hot therapist. To show my appreciation, I wouldn't kill him.

Just maim him a little.

"Odd doesn't begin to describe it." I put my hands out to him. "So, what do you say?"

"Why don't we leave those as is for now." He leaned against the bathroom doorframe and gestured with a hand toward the couch. "You're early."

"I shouldn't be here at all." I went to the couch because I couldn't stay bent over his moving boxes. "Call me Diamond, all the cool kids do. I don't need to be here."

"We should be able to wrap this up quickly then. No point in kicking a dead horse, now is there?"

"Exactly, I'm glad we—wait, are you insinuating that I'm a lost cause?"

"No, no, of course not. It's a metaphor. It's one of those parts of speech you Americans endlessly bastardize without understanding its linguistic origins. You, for example, have closed your mind to therapy. Ergo, your mind is a dead horse. Any attempt on my part to alter, change, or inform your perceptions is a waste of energy much in the same way of kicking a dead horse to get it to move. In short, no matter how hard I kick you, you are not going anywhere."

I stood, flashing my charming smile. "There is a difference between being dead and playing dead. The first is confining, the latter liberating. As for kicking me, well, I wouldn't want you to strain yourself. I understand your limitations. After all, those who can, do. Those who can't, hang diplomas on the wall."

He pulled his long body from its reclined position. "Are you suggesting I'm a fraud?"

"Not at all. I'm suggesting you're a failure. Being a failure is not the same as being a fraud. It's not your fault. Being ordinary is a handicap that can be overcome with delusions of grandeur and copious amounts of whiskey."

"And you're extraordinary? Please. I've met pigeons more unique than you. Look at yourself. Where do you shop? NYPD Blue wardrobe surplus?"

I rolled my eyes. "Elton John called and asked you return the shirt you stole."

He crossed his arms over his chest. "Smart. Vicious. Enjoys a good fight. Thinks she's unique when she is of the buy one, get two free variety. Poor baby. Life didn't live up to your expectations?"

I mimicked his position. Well, I tried to, zip ties cramped my style. I settled for resting my hands on my hip. "That's a mirror you're looking in. Don't be too hard on yourself. You're not the only one who ekes out a living getting people to pay you for your attention. At least you get to keep your pants on."

"Silk pants on. Only the best. When did the nightmares start?"

"I..."

“Don’t bother denying it. The circles under your eyes and lack of witty repartee are classic signs of sleep deprivation. How long has it been since you slept through the night? A month? Six months? Tell me about the nightmares.”

“I don’t have nightmares,” I snapped. “I don’t dream at all.” Immediately, I knew I had lost. I’d revealed too much. “And if I did, I could handle it.”

He sat down at his desk, pulling a few sheets of paper in front of him. He slashed across the top with a green pen. “Goodbye, Lucy Nutcase. Hello, Diamond.” He scribbled my name, then looked up. “Last name.”

“Tiara,” I said sarcastically, and the bastard wrote it.

He began reading. “Dead husband. Hmm. Hmm. Car chase. Pyrotechnics. Hmm. Baseball?”

“You had to be there.” I left the couch to creep up on his desk. The page was filled with printed text and comments in the same green ink.

Reckless.

Rash. (Doesn’t that mean the same thing?)

No regard for life.

Suicidal tendencies.

He looked up, pinning me with his gaze. “Care to talk about it?”

“No.”

“Fine. I don’t have time anyway.” He bent to a box behind the desk and began unpacking. “If you don’t have the stomach to deal with your issues, then you might as well kill yourself. Do it quickly and leave the air for the rest of us.”

I...He...Did he really? “You can’t tell people to kill themselves. That’s malpractice.”

He stacked books on the glass desktop. “Sue me. Oh wait, you’re gonna be dead. Haunt me. I’ve always wanted a pet ghost.”

“Maybe I have a good reason to want to die.”

“You’re taking up air.”

“Maybe I—”

“Bloody hell,” he said sharply. He turned, crossed the room in three long strides, and spun me toward the door. “I don’t have time for this. Out with you.”

I sidestepped right. “I thought I had an hour.”

“Had. Past tense.” He grasped my shoulders and steered me left again. “Your time is up.”

I planted a boot on the wall. “Oh no, it isn’t.”

“Yes, it is.” He put his shoulder into it, sweeping my leg, and sending me tumbling into the hallway. “Take two aspirin and don’t call me in the morning.”

Door slam.

“What the f**k?” I sprang to my feet and tried the door. It was locked from the inside. I pounded on the f**king beige panels. “Open. Up.” It’s not that I wanted back in, ’cause I did not want to talk to Dr. Robin Ransom, but nobody turns Diamond out like a cat at night. “I’m not through talking to you!”

“Yes, you are,” Ransom said, his voice muffled by an inch and a half of engineered wood. “Bloody nutter.”

“Bloody nutter? I’ll show him who’s nutters.” I would just circle around to the reception room and kick his ass with my hands tied together. Now, to get back. The hallway was a one-way trip to a staircase, which opened onto the parking lot. Irish was sitting in his SUV with the motor running, windows up. I kicked his door, startling the self-proclaimed super spy.

He shoved the door open and got in my face. “What the hell are you doing here? You still have forty-five minutes.”

“Your therapist is psycho. What did you expect from someone named Robin? Cut me loose. Now. I’m going to kick his ass using number eighteen.”

Irish pulled a knife from his pocket. “Hold still. You cut yourself. How hard were you pulling? And what do you mean ‘he’? Ransom is a she.”

“I shouldn’t have had to pull at all. And Ransom is definitely a he. A hot he, as if you didn’t know.”

“She’s a she.” He cut through the zip tie. “I know a woman when I see one.”

An unnatural noise drew our attention to the second floor. A woman was awkwardly climbing over one of the balconies. Her hands were bound behind her back and tape covered her mouth.

“We can’t get to her in time,” Irish said. Both of us saw the resolve in the woman’s face. She was gonna jump.