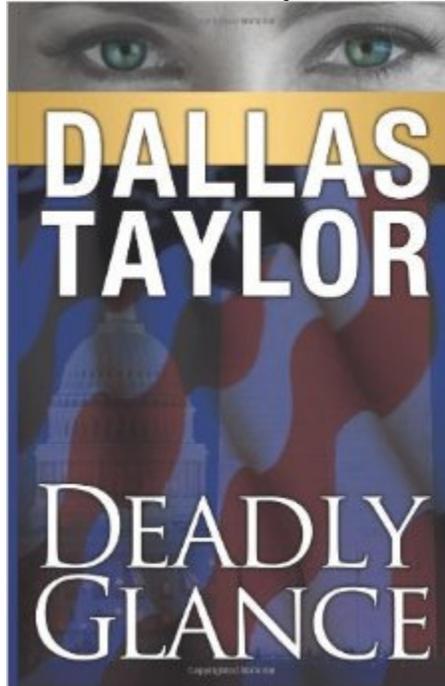


Deadly Glance

Dallas Taylor



## Praise for Deadly Glance

I read this book in two sittings, as it was very difficult to put down - a real page-turner. The story pulls you in immediately with the main character, Jeff, and his two law partners, Bob and Lil, who have an up and coming law practice specializing in trade matters and government affairs. The plot moves quickly and keeps you on the edge of your seat. Anyone who loves a good mystery will not be disappointed in this book. I am must hoping there will be a sequel. Move over John Grisham!!!

Margaret B.

Dallas Taylor's Book Deadly Glance is an excellent read. Smart character development, rich plot and enough twists and turns that make it hard to put down. Move over Connelly and Turow, Taylor is taking her rightful spot in the Legal thriller world!

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## Deadly Glance

Dallas Taylor

To

My friends and family who have supported me and inspired me to keep writing so I could realize a dream. To my editor who guided me through the process so expertly and patiently, thank you. My muses and coaches and angels along the way who have reminded me to keep pushing, dreaming and achieving.

## Prologue

Jeff sat quietly on his cold leather couch, staring out the window. He could see cars driving slowly by, taking their passengers leisurely through their lives. The lights from the cars danced through the trees, casting shadows through his living room and making it come alive with the ghosts that haunted his thoughts. He stared blankly ahead, his thoughts turning involuntarily to her.

He realized now, of course, that he might never know. Everything he knew of her had vanished into the night, as suddenly as the day she had appeared. On that day, he'd known immediately that he had to help her. His insight could read deeper than the surface of her smile. Perhaps it was in the tilt of her smile, or the blankness of her eyes. She was in trouble. It was subtle, but it was there.

It had all started with a simple game of cards ... Hearts, he remembered. He had decided on a Tuesday to wander into another world as a distraction from his normal routine of working late at the office. And there she was, catching his glance from across the room. *Who is she?* he'd wondered to himself. The thought caught at his breath, and his eyes had devoured her as she flirtatiously batted her eyes around the room in sheer defiance of the kind of attention it garnered. She absolutely lit the room up. Yet there it was ... something in her look ... something that looked like fear.

Jeff had watched intently as a smartly dressed man in a gray double-breasted suit, elegantly wearing his wealth, whispered something to her. She had looked up at him as the other man finished, and their eyes had locked. Jeff had tried quickly to regain his composure at that point, and began to look

at a waiter behind her. He'd known, though, that he had been caught staring. His trained eye told him that something was out of place. It was subtle, but it was there. Perhaps it was that the men that surrounded her appeared displaced in this casual bar.

The man in gray, still leaning closely over her, had looked at Jeff as well, smiling slyly and sliding his fingers slowly through his slicked-back black locks. The lights in the club had glistened on each shiny strand as he shifted his hair away from his face, Jeff remembered. His ring glistened in the light – diamonds visible from across the smoky room. His chiseled features would have probably intimidated most men, but Jeff found the challenge rather passé. Jeff had experienced his own success with women, mostly because of his pure love and sense of enjoyment. He met the eyes of the man leaning close to the beautiful woman, and took his measure in an instant. Yes, he was part of it, Jeff thought. This man was part of the something that was not quite right.

He took his eyes off the man and glanced back at the woman, catching her eyes again and grinning. She smiled back, but it was a distant smile ... and it left as soon as it came.

Jeff suddenly realized he's half a hand into his card game and turned his attention back to the cards. Jeff grabbed for his glass and glanced at his cards to see if he should fold. By the time he looked back in her direction, she was gone, and so was his card game. *Damn it*, Jeff thought.

He had returned to the club several times over the next several weeks, hoping to see her again. He enjoyed the distraction from his everyday life, and the crowd watching was second to none.

He wondered each time if he'd catch sight of the gorgeous blonde again. Something about her was a piece to a

puzzle that had intrigued him and the slight but nagging feeling that she was in danger stuck with him. His past trained him to always calculate and measure. He knew how to measure a man by his body language, his smile, the way he held himself. And the men that surrounded the blonde in this club made him instinctively nervous. This beautiful woman was keeping company with the wrong crowd, and he wanted to know why.

Jeff didn't know why he was so interested and he knew it was none of his business, really. He wasn't ready for a relationship at this point in his life.

Jeff didn't like to think of himself as shallow, but he knew he could have any woman that he wanted. His looks were engaging, his charm stemming from his confidence and deep, dark eyes. Yet he had given his heart away a long time ago, and he wasn't sure if he would ever be ready to give it again. He poured himself into his work instead, seeking escape from the pain he'd found in love.

He held his 6'2" stature in a cool and casual style, and had an athletic build built on years of sports – he had never lifted a weight in all of his thirty-nine years, but he had played baseball since childhood. One of his few memories with his dad was playing catch in the back yard. He continued playing as he grew older, going on to be a star pitcher with the University of Texas during his undergraduate years. He continued playing minor league ball with the Durham Bulls, but decided to get his law degree at University of North Carolina at the same time. His life had taken a sharp turn, then, when he was recruited into the clandestine operations for first the NSA then for the CIA. He worked with those operations for a total of eight years; a fact well concealed from his current clientele. When he returned to civilian life, he played one year in the majors at the Texas

Rangers before hanging up his jersey for his law practice, and for Sidney.

These days, he kept his body well-toned with frequent basketball games against the boys from neighboring law firms. He'd also started a baseball league for the lawyers in town, and played every weekend. He was a ringer, and the women appreciated it.

He worked hard to treat the women he met well, and won them over with both his body and his mind. He looked at each and every woman with his deep, mesmerizing brown eyes, and extended a pure appreciation to each. Yet the blonde held his attention more than any other had. A single glance held a moment in time, captured. He hadn't noticed a woman in this way since Sidney had captured his heart in college. That relationship hadn't ended well and he lost a piece of himself in the aftermath. He shared his heart with very few, having locked it away safely since that fateful day. Now, it beat a bit harder, perhaps it was asking to be let out of the box, at last. Perhaps, a glimmer of hope.

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