

THE BRIDGE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

A bridge over a wide river. Under a street light, a tony car, hood up, sits by the curb, disabled.

Next to car, phone to her ear, stands VICTORIA, 40s, tony, refined, finished to a tee. She is the epitome of money.

She pulls down the phone and frowns.

VICTORIA  
Stupid phone.

She hurls the phone over the railing and into the water.

VICTORIA  
(to car)  
Do you have a phone?

Under the hood, lighter in hand, TAQUAN, black teen, checks out the engine and wiring. Jeans low, baseball cap turned to the side, gold chains around his neck, high school jacket, and designer sneakers, he's directly from the hood.

TAQUAN  
Phone don't work here.

VICTORIA  
What?

TAQUAN  
Damn, cheap-ass, government shit  
ain't worth dick outside the turf.

VICTORIA  
Let me try.

TAQUAN  
(handing over phone)  
I don't see nothin' loose.

She takes the phone and tries to dial. Nope, it doesn't work.

TAQUAN  
You got gas?

VICTORIA  
You're right. It doesn't work. I  
think so.  
(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It's supposed to have some kind of  
reserve tank or something.

She hands back the phone as he kills the lighter.

TAQUAN

Why didn't you fill up when you  
drive through?

VICTORIA

Please.

TAQUAN

Ain't nothin' gonna happen.

VICTORIA

My neighbor got carjacked there  
last year. The incident landed her  
in therapy, and she still won't  
drive.

TAQUAN

She got to get over that. Lots of  
shit happen, and you got to get  
over.

He backs from under the hood.

VICTORIA

Easier said than done.

TAQUAN

Ain't no loose wires or shit. Try  
it again.

VICTORIA

Why? It's dead.

TAQUAN

I wanna hear what it do when you  
crank it.

She clearly doesn't want to try.

TAQUAN

You ain't gonna get past the gate  
if you don't try.

VICTORIA

What makes you think I live in a  
gated community?

TAQUAN

All you live past the gate.

VICTORIA

I don't.

He stares a moment.

TAQUAN

That cause you got yo own gate.  
That right?

She frowns before she walks past him and climbs behind the wheel. He twirls his finger and leans over the engine.

She tries to start the engine which does nothing but CLICK. Taquan shakes his head.

She climbs out of the car.

VICTORIA

Anything?

TAQUAN

Nothin'. Battery dead.

VICTORIA

Great.

TAQUAN

If we had a car and jumpers, we  
could get it going.

VICTORIA

If wishes were horses, beggars  
would ride.

TAQUAN

What? You got something against  
who don't have?

She rolls her eyes.

TAQUAN

You got to respect. We just as  
good as them on the other side of  
the gate.

VICTORIA

Respect is earned.

TAQUAN

That bullshit. Everyone deserve  
respect.

VICTORIA

Look, I don't want to argue. I simply want to start my car and go home.

TAQUAN

That the problem. You don't want any folk who don't have to come over the bridge.

VICTORIA

I am not a bigot, and I won't apologize for living well. I work. I work hard every day. I'm not ashamed of how I spend my money.

A Mercedes flashes past, not even attempting to slow down.

TAQUAN

There be more gate people.

VICTORIA

You don't know what you're talking about.

TAQUAN

They too scared to even stop.

VICTORIA

Last month, someone stopped to help a stranded motorist and was robbed.

TAQUAN

No one gonna think you rob them.

VICTORIA

Looks can be deceiving.

TAQUAN

What?

VICTORIA

People sometimes look different from what they are.

TAQUAN

You got that right.

In the distance, a lowrider, car body hugging the ground, rolls slowly toward them.

TAQUAN

Shit.

VICTORIA  
What?

TAQUAN  
Ain't family.

VICTORIA  
Bad?

TAQUAN  
Death.

They look at each other.

VICTORIA  
Hide.

TAQUAN  
Where?

VICTORIA  
Under the car.

He stares at her.

VICTORIA  
It's not going anywhere. You'll be  
safe. Give me your phone.

He hesitates and then hands over his phone.

He slides under the car. She leans against the car, phone to her ear as the lowrider stops and a teenage BANGER, tattoos and attitude leans out the window.

BANGER  
Yo, need help?

VICTORIA  
(killing connection)  
No, I got it. Thanks.

BANGER  
I mean it, chica. We help.

VICTORIA  
I'm sure you mean it, but I just  
called 911. They'll be here in a  
couple of minutes.

The Banger stares, trying to tell if she's lying.

BANGER  
Why you do that? We happy to help.

VICTORIA  
Maybe next time.

BANGER  
Come back manana. Over the bridge.  
We give you a good time.

With a leer and a wave, the lowrider rolls away.

From under the car comes Taquan. He holds out his hand, and she hands him the phone.

TAQUAN  
That cool. Thanks.

VICTORIA  
It doesn't get my car fixed.

TAQUAN  
Yeah, well, that not my problem.

VICTORIA  
You have a job?

TAQUAN  
What that got to do with dick?

VICTORIA  
I didn't think so. Want to make  
some money?

TAQUAN  
What I look like, step-fuck-  
fetchit?

She goes to the car, pulls out a notebook, and writes.

VICTORIA  
Run to the end of the bridge and  
call this number. Tell them  
Victoria needs help.

TAQUAN  
Why I do that?

VICTORIA  
For money, why else? I've got  
fifty dollars in my purse. It's  
yours when you get back.

TAQUAN  
Give me now.

VICTORIA

That's not how it works on my side of the bridge. You get paid after you do the work.

TAQUAN

You on wrong side. If I want yo money, I take your money.

VICTORIA

You owe me.

He laughs.

VICTORIA

I protected you.

TAQUAN

Don't bull me. You protect youself.

It's a stare-off, and neither one blinks. She breaks first and looks toward her side of the bridge.

VICTORIA

Too late. If I'm not mistaken, there's a police car coming.

Taquan looks and pulls a knife from his jeans.

TAQUAN

Gimmee your purse.

VICTORIA

What?

TAQUAN

That the way it be.

VICTORIA

If I were you--

He steps forward and holds the knife to her face.

VICTORIA

OK, OK.

She reaches into the car and pulls out her purse. He snatches it, tucks it under his arm, and runs.

As she watches, a police cruiser stops. The window rolls down.



COP  
You all right?

VICTORIA  
Just fine.

COP  
Want me to run him down?

VICTORIA  
Don't bother. The purse is fake.

COP  
Fake?

VICTORIA  
In case I get robbed. A few  
dollars and phony plastic. The  
real one is in the trunk.

COP  
Need a ride?

VICTORIA  
And a tow truck.

She goes to the trunk, opens it, and removes her purse. She  
climbs into the cruiser which makes a U-turn and rolls away.

FADE OUT.