

**David:** Building's over 100 years old you know. Watch your step.

**Steven:** Well, I can certainly see what Emily was drawn to.

**David:** Yeah? What's that?

**Steven:** Your work. It's...very trashy... but potent.

**David:** Trashy? Is that what she said?

**Steven:** Your anger...it's very controlled.

**David:** You think I'm angry?

**Steven:** The anger in your work. The color of despair. Wonder where that comes from.

**David:** I don't know. Inside, I guess.

**Steven:** Inside, indeed. Nowhere to sit but the goddamned bed. (Pause) You know, I envy you.

**David:** You envy me?

**Steven:** You should be flattered. I'm not prone to envy. It's a pathetic emotion. Sneaks up on you like cancer.

Now I've got it and you know why.

**David:** No.

**Steven:** Oh, of course you do. One of life's legitimately sublime experiences it's so utterly complete.

**David:** What?

**Steven:** Fucking my wife.

**David:** Mr. Taylor, I don't know--

**Steven:** --I think it's about time you called me Steven.

**David:** We're in love, sir.

**Steven:** That's it? That's it? You steal the crown jewel of a man's soul, and your only excuse is some candy-ass Hallmark card sentiment? Even if it was true, that's not good enough!

**David:** If what were true?

**Steven:** She is in love. You, buddy...you're in business.

**David:** What the hell are you saying?

**Steven:** I'm saying you did not meet my wife by chance. I'm saying you didn't study at Berkeley. I'm saying you learned to paint while doing 3 to 6 in Soledad State Prison for relieving a widow in San Francisco of her life savings. Your second conviction, if I'm not mistaken. Your real name is Winston Lagrange, which I rather like. Born to pure trailer trash in Barstow, California. Ward of the courts since the age of ten. You went from pickpocket to car thief to con man till you found out...that you had a way with the softer sex. No doubt looking for that mother you can barely remember. A life made up completely of depressing little scams...until now.

**David:** Where'd you get all that?

**Steven:** All that is for sale, Winston. The hell of it is you're not half-bad with a brush.

**David:** Thank you. They call it rehabilitation.

**Steven:** It's called a con and my wife is the grand prize. But you set your sights just a little too high this time.

**David:** She loves me.

**Steven:** She loves David Shaw, your invention. Not that it matters, because you've made a fundamental miscalculation. Play it out. Love conquers all. Emily divorces me. She marries you. Given your history, her advisors are going to insist upon a prenup. You might storm the castle, but you ain't getting the keys to the treasure room, ever.

**David:** I don't care about that.

**Steven:** The swindler doesn't care about a trust fund that can buy fuckin' Barstow? Why don't you cut the shit! You care, or we would not be having this conversation! The only thing that stops you from bolting now is bad genes and greed.

**David:** Now what?

**Steven:** Choices. I can tell Emily exactly who you are, and life will imitate art. You become a starving painter, game over.

**David:** Or?

**Steven:** Or you can cash out.

**David:** Cash out?

**Steven:** Half a million dollars. Tax-free.

**David:** Just for walking away from her?

**Steven:** I said tax-free. I didn't say free.

**David:** What's the five hundred grand for?

**Steven:** Killing my wife.

**David:** Emily?

**Steven:** Imagine my embarrassment if they're not one and the same. One hundred thousand now, four hundred thousand after, cash-and-carry.

**David:** You're out of your mind.

**Steven:** Not really.

**David:** Why?

**Steven:** Well I appreciate your curiosity, but my agenda doesn't really concern you.

**David:** I guess I'll just go straight to Emily and tell her all of this.

**Steven:** Well, that would be my word against yours... Winston.

**David:** And what if I call the cops?

**Steven:** Have you ever been to Boca Raton, Florida? There was a lady there who was carrying on with a younger man....he was a hell of a tennis player. Anyway, when the affair ended...he disappeared...along with the lady's bearer bonds. You sure you've never been there?

**David:** Not that I recall.

**Steven:** An acquaintance of mine has a photograph of the suspect. All they need is a name...as in, strike three. 15 years. No parole. You think you got a box big enough to hold \$100,000 in cash? Why don't you come by the apartment around 12 o'clock tomorrow...unless you have a previous luncheon engagement. I assume you know where I live.