

“A PERFECT MURDER”

STEVEN

Well I can certainly see what Emily was drawn to.

DAVID

Yah? 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. Color of despair. I wonder where that comes from.

DAVID

I don't know. Inside I guess.

STEVEN

Inside...indeed. (sitting on his bed) No where to sit but the God damn bed. 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. It sneaks up on you like cancer and 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 (interrupting)

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. She is in love with you buddy. You're in business.

DAVID

What the hell are you saying?

STEVEN

I'm saying you didn't meet my wife by chance. I'm saying you didn't study at Berkley. 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. Awarded to the courts at the age of ten. Went from pick pocket, to car thief, to con man. Until you found out you had a way with the softer sex, no doubt looking for that mother you could barely remember. Your life made up completely of depressing little scams, until now.

DAVID

Where'd you get all that?

STEVEN

All that's for sale Winston, the hell of it is you're not half bad with a brush.

DAVID

Thank you. It's called rehabilitation.

STEVEN

It's called a con and my wife is the grand prize, but you set your sites just a little too high this time.

DAVID

She loves me.

STEVEN

She loves David Shaw, your invention, not that it matters because you made a fundamental miscalculation. Now you play it out, love conquers all, Emily divorces me, she marries you. Given your history, her advisors are going to insist on a prenup. So 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 petty swindler doesn't care about a trust fund that can buy fucking Barstow? Why don't you cut the shit. You care or we would not be having this conversation. The only thing keeping you from bolting right 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 five hundred grand for?

STEVEN
Killing my wife.

DAVID
Emily?

STEVEN
Imagine my embarrassment if they're not one in 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
Oh. Well I guess I'll just go straight to Emily and tell her all this.

STEVEN
Well that would be my word against yours, Winston.

DAVID
And would if I call the cops.

STEVEN

Have you ever been to Boca Raton, Florida? There was a lady down there last year who was carrying on with this younger man, he was a hell of a tennis player. Anyway, when the affair ended, he disappeared, along with the ladies treasury bonds. You sure you've never been there?

DAVID

Not that I recall.

STEVEN

Well an acquaintance of mine has a photograph of the suspect. All they need is a name, as in strike three. Fifteen years. No parole. You think you have a box big enough to hold a hundred thousand dollars in cash? Why don't you come by the apartment around twelve O'clock tomorrow. Unless of course you have a previous luncheon engagement. I assume you know where I live.

END SCENE