

FRED

(gestures at the copy) Just so we're clear on the semantics – was anything going on between you and Richter?

VALERIE

No.

FRED

He would have been – number four, right? If there'd been anything.

VALERIE

Number four what?

FRED

Ethan. Martin. Durrell.

VALERIE

What about them?

FRED

Richter would have been number four.

VALERIE

I'm limited to four friends per decade? God, Ethan? We haven't seen him in – more than ten years. When he just kind of vanished. Someone said he moved to Seattle. Thought I'd be worth at least a postcard, but well, I guess when some people start new lives there's no room for the old.

FRED

I paid him off, you know.

VALERIE

Paid him off.

FRED

Paid him to leave. Seattle. Martin took the money, too. He was a little more expensive. Durrell skipped before I could make an offer.

VALERIE

You thought I cheated on you? Three times? Four? Jesus, Fred, really?

FRED

The total's eleven, actually. Ethan, Martin, and Durrell were the ones who lasted longer than a week. And it's not that I thought. It's that I knew.

Beat.

VALERIE

Really.

FRED

I have photos.

Beat.

FRED

You were going to monkey with the ledgers – our ledgers – to hide the money for the new, extra copy, weren't you?

VALERIE

Would you have just given me the money?

FRED

You know the home books are off limits.

VALERIE

Should I have found the extra money in the company's books?

FRED

The system is in place for a reason and it's worked very well. You should know better than to mess with it, since you're the one who set it up.

VALERIE

How long have we been doing this, Fred? How long?

FRED

It cuts both ways, Valerie.

VALERIE

No leeway. No loosening.

FRED

We have an arrangement. There are terms. You came to me.

VALERIE

Yeah, because your clumsy attempts at embezzlement were going to bring down your whole company, and take my job with it.

FRED

So you made a deal with devil. I go down, you go down. You must admit, we've been a pretty

good team, all these years. Are you having second thoughts, is that what this is all about? You're not happy any more?

VALERIE

Would you have given me the money for a new copy? If I asked for it?

FRED

Is Richter worth it?

VALERIE

Every penny.

FRED

Of course, if you'd ever bothered to tell me about your string of men in the first place, I probably could have saved a lot of money over the years.

VALERIE

You wouldn't have minded?

FRED

Actually, no. It's actually a rather old fashioned arrangement, when you come down to it. You do your thing, I do mine, we keep up the pretenses together and are just careful not to talk in front of the help. Or fuck with the ledgers.

Beat.

FRED

The checkbook is closed. Oh, and I was talking with Ted, and he still thinks insuring the painting under your name wasn't the best thing to do.

VALERIE

But we agreed.

FRED

Ted's right. I'm heading to his office tomorrow to switch the insurance to my name.

VALERIE

It's mine. It's the only thing, in my whole life, I've ever really wanted.

Beat.

FRED

Earn it back, then.