

EDWARD

(Changing the subject.)

I suppose you're wondering why I made this appointment.

JOSEPH

I think I have some idea.

EDWARD

Oh.

JOSEPH

A rich, Hollywood actor, or better yet, star - you're a TV star, aren't you - wants to start an art collection, so he comes to see an old friend's somewhat respected partner to buy a painting.

EDWARD

You're partially right.

JOSEPH

Which part?

EDWARD

The first part.

JOSEPH

So you don't want to buy a painting.

EDWARD

No. Commission one.

JOSEPH

A commission. How interesting. So you want to be a modern-day de Medici from Hollywood?

EDWARD

You sound just like Nelson.

JOSEPH

Couples often begin rubbing off on one another after a while, and we've been together for quite a while.

EDWARD

That's great. I'm almost jealous.

JOSEPH

Don't be. It sounds like you've had a pretty good ride in life so far.

EDWARD

I can't complain.

JOSEPH

So, a commission.

EDWARD

Money isn't a problem.

JOSEPH

No. Of course not.

EDWARD

Whatever you may think of Hollywood, and if Nelson's been rubbing off on you, then I certainly know what you think about it, but I have to say it's been rather kind to me and allowed me to have quite a life.

JOSEPH

I can only imagine. And don't worry, I don't disdain Hollywood because I never think about it. It really doesn't exist in my world. So, why a commission from me? There are many younger, hipper, more popular artists than I am.

EDWARD

I've been mesmerized by your work ever since I saw an exhibit in LA.

JOSEPH

Oh dear God. All of that light out there was terrible for my paintings.

EDWARD

I don't know, I thought the California light brought out your colors to the fullest.

JOSEPH

To each his own, I suppose.

(Pause.)

So, you saw the MOCA show?

EDWARD

I read an article about it, and was intrigued, and decided to go.

JOSEPH

Which article?

EDWARD

In the LA Times, I think.

JOSEPH

Oh, yes. I do remember that dreadful article. A bit too personal for my taste. So, you liked my work in California?

EDWARD

At first I wasn't sure I would. I thought how cliché to paint nudes, but after seeing them. Wow.

JOSEPH

They turned you on, so to speak.

EDWARD

They caught me off-guard.

JOSEPH

Excellent.

EDWARD

I'm curious. What led you to paint nudes?

JOSEPH

I'm a bit of a sadist.

EDWARD

I see. Well, anyway, I became a fan immediately and began learning more about you. I was thrilled when I found out our mutual friend Andrew knew you. So, when I saw this painting hanging in here a few months ago, I instantly knew I wanted you to paint one for me.

JOSEPH

So, you like the nude?

EDWARD

Very much.

JOSEPH

What is it about this painting that makes you want me to paint one for you?

EDWARD

I'm not quite sure. I know on an intellectual level I have absolutely no idea what's going on in this painting, however, I'm strangely... aroused by it. Not in a sexual sense, but... I don't know... you seem to have some type of insight into this person.

JOSEPH

And you're hoping this commissioned painting will give you insight into someone?

EDWARD

Perhaps. I'm curious, what do you see when you're painting someone? Obviously you don't see the things I see.

JOSEPH

Unhappiness.