

IS THAT A TEAR?

Written by

Steven Clark

steamroller138@gmail.com

INT. TRENDY COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Overcast, rain falls as DOUGLAS (42), expensive leather tote draped on his shoulder, exits the shop with a coffee. He adjusts his collar.

MARK (O.S.)
Nice day, huh?

Doug turns to see MARK (39) striding towards him, steeled, but non-threatening glare.

DOUGLAS
Huh?

MARK
I said, nice day.

DOUGLAS
Sorry, do I know you?

Mark glances at Douglas' shoes. Shiny, nary a scuff mark.

MARK
(scoffs)
Sort of. You're the guy fucking my wife.

Douglas appears confused. He hesitates slightly before--

DOUGLAS
You got me mixed up. I don't know you or your wife.

MARK
Cut the shit, okay. I know exactly who you are.

DOUGLAS
I'm late for work. I don't have time for this--

Douglas turns to go when--

MARK
I have photos.

Douglas halts on a dime, slowly turns as Mark waves a manilla envelope. He pulls out a few eight-by-tens, hands one over.

Douglas studies it, rain pelting down.

Mark points.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's you. The woman under you is my wife.

DOUGLAS

This is ridiculous.

MARK

That's the understatement of the year.

A moment of silence. Finally, Douglas wilts.

DOUGLAS

Maybe we should go inside and talk about this.

MARK

I'm fine right here, pal.

DOUGLAS

(indignant)

So, what do you want? You gonna beat me up? That's not gonna happen.

MARK

You're right about that. I was never much a fighter. Probably get my ass kicked. But there are other ways to hurt you. Like, say, if your wife found out. How would you feel about that? Better yet, how would she feel about that?

No answer.

MARK (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe she's the forgiving type. You know? No big deal, but how would I know--?

DOUGLAS

(sneers)

I have children.

MARK

Me too. What are their ages?

Hands the photo back.

DOUGLAS

What do you want?

MARK

Cash. Twenty-five thousand and tis
all goes away. I drop it. Stacks of
bills like this...

Mark holds his thumb and forefinger apart.

DOUGLAS

Twenty-five thousand? You're crazy.

MARK

No, I'm not. You're saying you
don't have it?

DOUGLAS

Not laying around, no.

MARK

Well, get it.

Douglas shakes his head.

MARK (CONT'D)

No?

Mark slides the photo back in the folder and turns.

MARK (CONT'D)

Have a nice day then.

DOUGLAS

Okay, okay. I'll get it.

MARK

Twenty-five thousand?

DOUGLAS

Yes.

MARK

Good. Only now it's thirty-five.

DOUGLAS

What?!

MARK

First you tell me you can't get it,
now you can. If you can get twenty-
five, I'm sure you could rustle up
and extra ten.

Douglas stands in disbelief. His eye twitches.

DOUGLAS

Fuckin' fine. How do I know you're not gonna tell her anyway?

MARK

(smirks)

You won't. Not really. You're always gonna have that little cloud hanging over you like a gremlin sitting on your shoulder. Small price to pay, though, huh?

DOUGLAS

That's not very comforting.

MARK

Nor should it be.

DOUGLAS

When do you want it?

MARK

I'll give you two days. Meet me in the Harris Teeter parking lot. Give you some time to dip into a money market account or something. And no funny stuff, okay? I'm a big Second Amendment guy.

Mark abruptly spins when--

DOUGLAS

Does your wife know?

MARK

(thin smile)

She about to.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Mark scrolls through his phone at the table as AUDREY (36) comes in, dressed for work and primping her hair before she grabs a mug from a cabinet.

AUDREY

Hey, where were you before?

MARK

Kids got on the bus okay?

AUDREY

Yeah.
 (pours coffee)
 So, where were you?

MARK

I just met a friend of yours. Guy
 named Douglas Sacks. Ring a bell?

She stops pouring.

AUDREY

Who?

MARK

Yeah right.

Mark slides the photos over.

She slowly crosses to the table and her jaw goes slack as she
 looks them over.

AUDREY

Mark...

MARK

Save it.

AUDREY

Mark, we were having problems at
 the time. Remember? It just kind of
 happened. It was just the one time.
 Mark, I-- How'd you even get these?

MARK

Why do you keep saying my name?
 (he rises abruptly)
 Did you say his name, too? Huh?
 Doug? DOUG!

Audrey's hand trembles. She spills the coffee as she sets the
 mug down, and whimpers. She dares to look him in the eye.

AUDREY

I'm sorry, Mark.

MARK

You're sorry, huh? Were you sorry
 when he was shoving his cock in
 your ass?

AUDREY

Mark, please--

He slams both hands on the table.

MARK

Stop saying my goddamn name!

Silence as the mug rattles on the table.

Audrey's trembling lips curl into a cunning grin.

AUDREY

So, how much did you get?

MARK

Thirty-five.

AUDREY

Thousand?

MARK

Of course thousand.

AUDREY

What happened to twenty-five?

He returns her devious smile.

MARK

Late adjustment. Expensive leather bag, nice threads. I had a feeling there was more.

AUDREY

He does have a nice house.

He goes to her, kisses her passionately.

MARK

So do we. But, hey, there's bigger fish out there, Audrey.

AUDREY

Summer house on the beach kind of big?

MARK

I was thinking college for the kids kind of big.

AUDREY

Harvard or Penn State?

MARK

Mm... Both?

AUDREY
I'll get into it.

MARK
You know the script, right?

AUDREY
By fucking rote.

Mark tilts his head as he gazes at his wife.

MARK
Is that a tear?

She dabs her eye, holds out a wet fingertip.

AUDREY
Why, yes, I do believe it is.

MARK
Brilliant.

THE END