

THE MAN

by Christopher Stewart

All Rights Reserved (c) This work may not be produced, distributed or duplicated without the author's expressed written consent.

stewieville@me.com

**INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

EVELYN (45) is seated on a couch, dressed business casual, visibly tired after a long day at work.

ADAM (O.S.)  
Hey, babe.

Evelyn looks up as ADAM (43) joins her on the couch.

EVELYN  
Hey. How's Aurora?

ADAM  
Just peeked in on her. Sleeping like a baby. Which she is.

Adam grins, proud of his dad joke. Evelyn smiles politely as she props her feet up on his lap.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Long day?

EVELYN  
Very. Nothing but plea deals and pre-trial bullshit. Sometimes I wonder why I even became a judge.  
(beat)  
That said, the last case did end things on a high note.

ADAM  
Do tell.

EVELYN  
Typical felony assault. Punk kid got hammered at a campus bar, then took an actual hammer to the bouncer's head. Fifth arrest in four years.

ADAM  
Lovely. So what'd you give him?

EVELYN  
Probation with time served.

Adam raises an eyebrow.

ADAM  
Well that's...generous. He win you over with some tearful apology?

EVELYN

Hell no. Little shit couldn't have cared less.

ADAM

Then why'd you go lenient?

EVELYN

His lawyer consulted me before the hearing. Turns out, little shit's dad is one of the school's biggest donors and is very generous towards those who don't impede his son's future. Six figures to teachers who grade on a curve, one-night flings who agree to abortion and judges --

ADAM

(interjects, excited)  
-- who keep him out of prison!

Evelyn nods, grinning like a Cheshire Cat.

ADAM

When do we get paid?

EVELYN

Tonight. Hand delivered by courier.

The doorbell RINGS. Adam and Evelyn exchange smiles.

ADAM

Speak of the devil.

**INT. HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Evelyn is next to Adam as he opens the door, revealing --

THE MAN. Middle-aged. Short, stocky build. Warm smile. Black suit and fedora. An aura of calm, seasoned professionalism.

THE MAN

Good evening, Mister and Misses Steen. It's a pleasure to meet you both. I must say, this is quite the home you have here.

Evelyn looks at The Man's hands. He's not holding anything.

EVELYN

Well? Where is it?

THE MAN

The gentlemen bringing your illegal and immoral bribery will arrive here in twenty-two minutes and eighteen seconds.

Adam and Evelyn exchange confused glances.

ADAM

So who are you?

THE MAN

I've gone by many names in many cultures over the centuries. Too many to count. Regardless, who I am bears no weight compared to the reason for my being here tonight.

EVELYN

Which is?

THE MAN

You're both dead.

Adam and Evelyn flinch, caught off-guard by the comment.

ADAM

What'd you say?

EVELYN

Was that some kind of threat?

The Man maintains his cordial demeanor.

THE MAN

No. Merely a statement of fact. Only the dead can see and hear me. The two of you passed away a few minutes ago, thus prompting my journey here.

The Man gestures towards the living room.

THE MAN

See for yourself.

Adam and Evelyn turn around. Their eyes widen, horrified.

ADAM & EVELYN'S POV: They see their bodies slumped over on the living room couch. Neither are breathing. Clearly dead.

THE MAN

As I said, it's quite the home. Every amenity that money can buy...

Adam and Evelyn turn back towards The Man, stunned.

THE MAN  
...except a carbon monoxide alarm.

Evelyn is suddenly gripped by panic, realizing:

EVELYN  
Oh God! Aurora! She's --

THE MAN  
(calmly interjects)  
Gone, I'm afraid. An hour ago as  
she slept in her crib.

Evelyn crumples to her knees. Adam quickly kneels next to her. Both devastated beyond measure.

THE MAN  
I assure you that she did not  
suffer. Your daughter greeted me  
with a radiant smile and kept it  
the entire way to Paradise.

Evelyn looks up at The Man. Hope in her tear-filled eyes.

EVELYN  
"Paradise"? As in...Heaven?

The Man nods. Adam and Evelyn solemnly embrace each other. A bittersweet moment in their grief.

ADAM  
It's gonna be okay, babe. We're  
about to see her. You, me and  
Aurora. The three of us in Heaven.  
Together forever.

THE MAN  
About that.

WHOOSH!!! Adam and Evelyn suddenly burst into flames! They both writhe on the floor, screaming in agony as raging blue fire consumes every inch of their bodies.

A pitch-black portal appears behind The Man. BLOOD-CURDLING CRIES OF PAIN and DEMONIC ROARS emanate from within it. The portal is a gateway to Hell.

The Man casually whistles as he grabs the Adam and Evelyn by their feet, unfazed by the fire. He drags the burning couple towards the portal. Towards eternal damnation.

THE END