

JACK. Calm down, Vincent. Jack's not planning on dying any-time soon.

VINCENT. Of course not. Why. I bet you outlive us all, Jack.

ANNIE. Oh, I wouldn't bet on it.

VINCENT. All right, Jack, please let's discuss your urgent matter, then as soon as we're done, I am heading back home.

ANNIE. But dinner? We invited you for dinner.

VINCENT. Oh, I'm not in the least hungry.

ANNIE. When you walked in, you said you were famished.

VINCENT. I did?

JACK. Yes.

VINCENT. Well these hors d'oeuvres are just so filling —

JACK. Who gives a damn if you stay for dinner or not! Let's get down to the guts of the evening!

ANNIE. Yes, Jack called you up here to discuss *Study in Red*.

JACK. Annie, how many times have I told you — it's *Study in Red, No. 4!*

ANNIE. Sorry.

VINCENT. Yes, your latest, yes. Well, let's talk and then I'll be running right along.

JACK. How's it selling?

VINCENT. Well bites, bites, no offers.

JACK. What will we get for it?

VINCENT. Jack, it's an unusual painting for you —

JACK. Just answer the question, Vincent. What will we get for it?

VINCENT. Too soon to say.

JACK. I want a million.

VINCENT. I'm sorry, Jack, that's just not realistic.

JACK. I've never sold for a million, this work deserves it.

VINCENT. Jack, you've never sold for a million, and you won't this time either.

JACK. It's the best work I've ever done!

VINCENT. Jack, the market has not responded well to this piece.

JACK. Liar!

VINCENT. Let's start with the name, Jack. First, though called *Study in Red, No. 4*, there is no *Study in Red, No. 1, 2 or 3*. Though I'm sure you think that's an artistic statement, most people just think you can't count. And second, though called *Study in Red*, the entire canvas is painted yellow. People read the title then look at the painting and think they've gone colorblind.

JACK. I'm an artist, never judge me!

VINCENT. Even the greatest artists make an occasional misstep.

JACK. This painting is important to me!

VINCENT. I'm sorry, Jack, but frankly, it's a minor piece.

JACK. You don't know what you're talking about!

VINCENT. I know exactly what I'm talking about and ...

JACK. No, you don't!

VINCENT. Now, Jack — *(Jack begins to toss a couple of things around the room.)*

JACK. You don't! You don't! You don't!

VINCENT. Stop it, Jack! Jack!

ANNIE. You could just kill him, couldn't you, Vincent?

VINCENT. Shut up! Jack, look, you're my most valued client —

JACK. It's not my work, Vincent, it's your work!

VINCENT. What?

JACK. You no longer have the talent to make me the money I deserve!

VINCENT. Oh, no, no, no. I will go to great lengths to make you happy, but I will not go unappreciated.

JACK. You can't sell *Study in Red, No. 4!* You're a failure! Admit it!

VINCENT. Well, that's it for me, folks. Annie, thank you for an evening I won't soon forget, no matter how hard I try. And Jack, you've been as charmingly psychotic as always so ... — *(Suddenly, Jack retrieves the revolver and aims it at Vincent.)* No! *(Jack pulls the trigger. But he has moved the revolver right before the shot, aiming at the collage.)*

JACK. It's my favorite collage. I thought a bullet hole would make it more marketable.

VINCENT. My God, I thought you were trying to kill me!

JACK. Don't be ridiculous, Vincent. If I was going to kill you, I'd do it slowly, creatively, causing you great humiliation. I'm an artist.

VINCENT. My God —

JACK. I will go to any length imaginable to sell this painting, Vincent.

ANNIE. *(To Jack.)* Darling, you look a bit tense —

VINCENT. The man fired a gun at me. To you, that's "a bit tense"?

ANNIE. Darling, why don't you go into your tank and relax for a few minutes. I have to talk to Vincent, in private.

JACK. About what?

ANNIE. A sure-fire way he can sell *Study in Red* for a million.

JACK. *Study in Red, No. 4!*

ANNIE. Forgive me. Now let me talk to Vincent.