

**Jr.**

“You will never be like your father.” She whispered, as she rocked her baby to sleep. The newly single mother glanced out the window to the retreating headlights from her driveway and sighed.

The man she thought she knew had vanished with a single kiss and a scrawled, crumpled note thrown on the kitchen counter. But the longer he was gone and she was alone with her newborn man-of-the-house, she knew she’d never raise him as a coward.

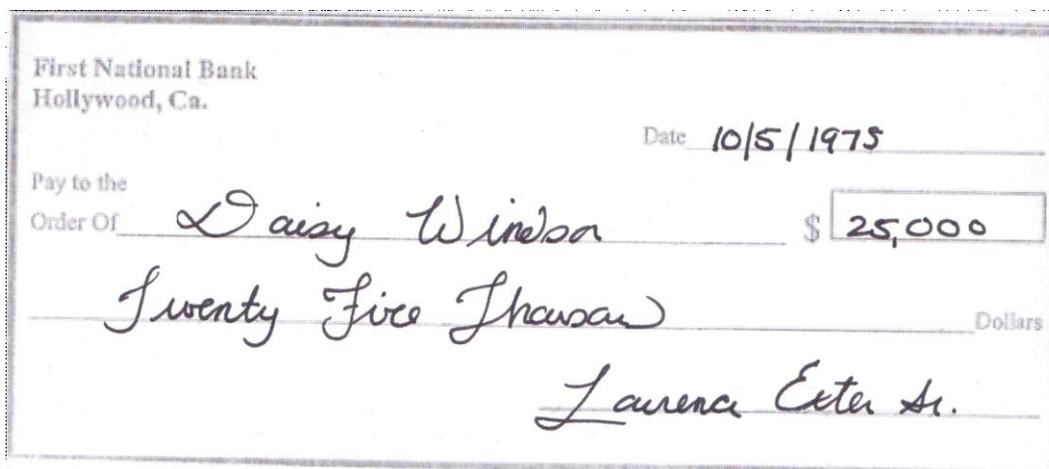
**Sr.**

His thick fingers clung to the steering wheel as he sped away 40 miles over the speed limit. The creases around his hazel eyes caught many of the tears but somehow, a few slipped through and fell, staining his jeans. He didn’t want his son to know the horrible person he was, so he left. He couldn’t bear the thought of another person like him, and he couldn’t limit his wife to the kind of future he’d provide.

A son wasn’t in his plans, and his finances weren’t exactly prepared for this unexpected addition. He knew if he didn’t leave now, it would only get harder as the child grew and became more attached to a father he’d never be able to idolize.

As the man stopped outside an old motel, he pulled out his cell phone and stifled his sobs for a few moments so he could converse with the person on the other end of the line. After a few simple responses, he hung up and unlocked his room door. He hadn’t planned on it being so simple.

Within the next few days, he had flown over 200 miles and ended up in Las Vegas, Nevada in a room that smelled like whiskey and the “Do Not Disturb” sign permanently attached to the door. He felt as though he had given up on the only people that had ever had any faith in him. Money was an object, not a necessity now. He threw it away like it wasn’t a big deal and he didn’t mind spending it on nothing and saving none for anything.



Miss Daisy Windsor certainly wasn't the first woman he spent his money on for her services, but she was the most money he had spent on one woman. He wasn't one to be frugal but he wasn't worried about spending his money on such a catch either. The woman was a knock-out and honestly, he didn't mind paying a bit to keep her around. Though the longer he kept her around, the lonelier he became.

He wasn't sure if it were his previous actions rising back up to haunt him, or if he just felt as though it wasn't right. He had left the woman he loved for fear of her realization that he wasn't who she thought he was. It was he who had made the decision to leave, and she was not to blame. Betraying a woman he was still legally married to, though had no idea he was still alive wasn't in his best interest.

**Jr.**

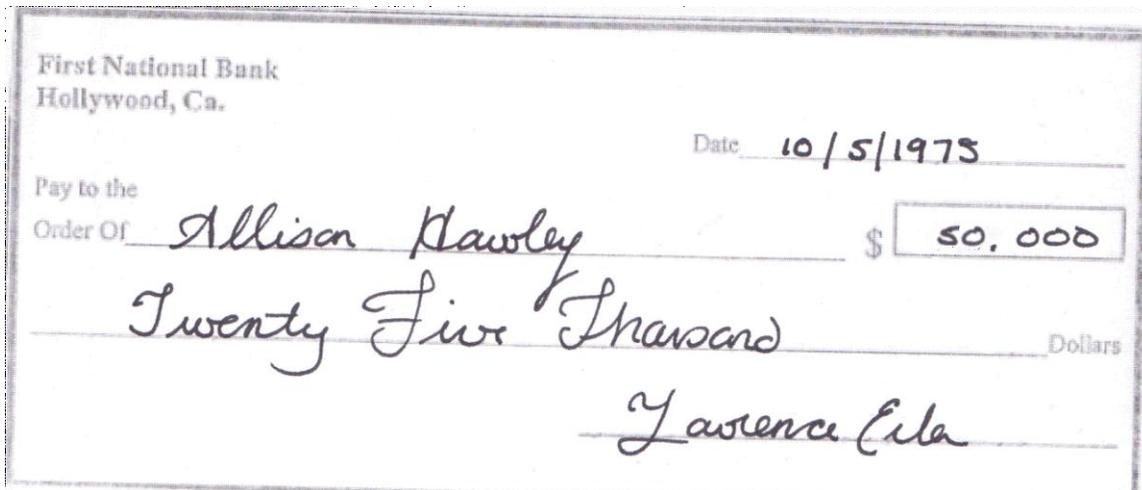
At the tender age of twenty-three, he was as attractive as any man could be. A man of many talents and charm, he was one who understood how to entice a woman. His mother had taught him everything she claimed his long-lost father didn't possess and he was going to make sure he impressed her.

His mother had taught the boy that his father was a rotten man who didn't want anything to do with him. It wasn't any fault of his own, just that of a man who was too immature to take responsibility for his own actions.

As the boy grew, his relationship with women grew as well. More and more girls appeared at his house as he worked through high school, and though their numbers dwindled through law school, his mother would occasionally come home to strange car in the driveway and a strange woman putting the vehicle into reverse.

Allie was the one that stuck out vividly in his mothers mind. She'd never seen her son's hazel eyes light up the way they did when she walked into a room. The girl was a doll; coke bottle figure and a tiny black bob. She was exactly who she wanted her son to be with; not only was she attractive, but her reputation was superb. She was smart and had a knack for rejecting the boys she didn't think were good enough for her. The fact that Allie had stuck around for her son was more than enough reason for him to marry her.

As a man knows, an engagement ring is the most important piece of jewelry a woman can own. It will be shown dozens of times to people you barely know for the sake of bragging about how much money your soon-to-be spouse has already spent on you. Allie was no exception. Not wanting to let her down, the boy wrote her a check for fifty-thousand dollars. His law firm was well known and the money wasn't the issue; it was getting the perfect band of metal for her to wear 'round her finger.



She could buy any ring she could dream of with the money, and she had convinced him it should be a surprise. As she pulled out of the driveway and smiled at him, she waved as she flew down the road.

Months passed before he realized the money and Allie weren't coming back. He learned later that she had used the money to sail to Europe, and met some handsome Italian salesman. She was pregnant with triplets and that was when he had cut the storyteller off. He didn't want to hear anymore about the betrayal. Not only was the woman the one he had loved more than he ever thought he could, but she was the one who left him without any explanation.

**Sr.**

When Daisy wasn't a part of his life he decided it would be a good time to get away from the place he had known for so many years. He boarded a plane and refused to take a window seat, for he couldn't look down at a city that had not only made him feel worse about his situation, but made him feel as though he couldn't have made a more inaccurate decision.



He stepped out of the airport into the misty New York City streets, and inhaled the car exhaust and an autumn, New England rain storm. If there was any place to start over, it was New York; the city that never sleeps and the place where you can continually start your life over and over again.

He checked into the Ambassador Hotel and planned to stay as long as physically possible to get his mind off the past. New York coffee shops and parks were within walking distance and he could meet new people and get away from the memories. As he strolled past monotone buildings and the repetition of the structures began to stick in his mind, he realized that he wasn't the only one in the city looking to start over.

As he looked around at the passing faces, he noticed everyone had the same, bustling expression. No one looked happy, or looked sad. They all just looked busy. He wondered if he possessed the same facial expression as everyone else, or if he should find something to keep him that busy because honestly, he didn't have anything or anywhere to go. Picking up his pace, he marched along the side streets of New York City. Fighting the role of a tourist, he kept his head low and walked forward with a mission.

Feeling as though his life didn't have much meaning and as he walked down Wall Street, he felt more useless than the brokers inside. Not only was he losing the game, but he was losing everything, including his sanity.

He stopped outside the NASDAQ building and stared at the numbers changing rapidly on the neon sign. Not knowing how long he stood, watching them rise and fall, it was in one moment that he turned on his heel and walked towards his future. He wasn't losing anymore.

Jr.

He couldn't stand to stay in the same city he had fallen so deeply in love with someone who had so carelessly torn him to bits. He threw what he could into a duffle bag and gave his law firm to his partner. Though his partner promised he could always come back, he knew he'd never be able to. He drove to the bank and withdrew a small sum from his massive amount of money. Money wasn't a necessity, but merely an object to him, and really he didn't care what he spent it on, if on anything. He called the airport from his taxi cab and arranged his flight to Paris.

First National Bank Hollywood, Ca.	Date <u>2/4/1999</u>
Pay to the Order Of <u>Banque de France</u>	\$ <u>10,000</u>
<u>Ten Thousand</u>	Dollars
<u>Laurence Ester Jr.</u>	

Once he had arrived, he placed his money into the *Bank of France* knowing full well he'd only spend the bare minimum. He threw his few belongings on the floor of the dingy, old motel at the edge of the city. He decided he'd pay the minimum and simply live life the way he wanted to live it; without boundaries.

He spent countless nights flirting with women in night clubs until they were too intoxicated to say no. He had two hotel rooms, as he had made friends with the owner and bribed her into a deal as well. He'd slip out of the room once the stranger he had brought home had passed out and would sneak a few rooms over until she left the next morning. It worked every time, and he was never forced to say goodbye.

He had lost his love once. He wasn't about to lose again.

**Sr.**

As he packed his belongings he stopped thinking and started doing what he knew he should: taking responsibility of the life he had led so far. He had made mistakes and each time, he ran from them instead of staying around to fix them. It was his turn to change.

He boarded the plane and closed his eyes the entire flight. He didn't sleep however. He was envisioning how time may have drawn stress lines and age marks across her face, and left her older with the burden of raising a son he had never given himself an opportunity to know.

He hailed a taxi, and unless he was giving directions, he remained silent the entire drive up to the house he had sped away from all the years before. As he pulled up to the same white siding, he pulled out the key he never believed he was capable of throwing away.

He entered and saw a collection of objects strewn across the floor and it was obvious she hadn't the time or money to take care of it. He heard something rustle in the next room and he saw her moving papers across a desk, sorting through the stacks and holding her pencil between her lips.

She glanced up and the pencil fell. All she could do was stare at the man who felt he could simply exit her life one day and return twenty-seven years later. He didn't say anything but slid across the table a check, and a rolled piece of parchment.

First National Bank  
Hollywood, Ca.

Date 5/14/2003

Pay to the  
Order Of Mia Adams \$ 150,000

One hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars

Lawrence Ceter Jr.

He didn't know how to express his apologies except with the money he hadn't been able to provide in years past, and the education he didn't have to make the money he knew they both so desperately needed.

She unrolled the parchment and began to weep, smudging the ink on his NYU diploma. She glanced up at him and held up a single finger, telling him to wait and not say a word. She walked over and ran her fingers across his face, tracing the lines that hadn't changed in the years he'd been gone, but had deepened intensely.

She grasped his hand and walked into the kitchen. She had him sit in front of her as she raised the phone to her ear and began to dial.

**Jr.**

He sat with his head in his hands, not knowing what words to speak, with only himself to be angry at. He stood because it wasn't just the anticipation but the anxiety getting to him in a way he had never felt before, and he began to pace the small lobby.

He charged into the attached room, once he was given the okay, and stared in awe at the tiny figure in her arms. He no longer knew whether or not to be disappointed in himself, or proud.

The baby stared at the two people who he'd one day call mom and dad, and he stretched his arms toward his father. He didn't reach back. His mother stared at the man who had caused the bundle of joy to lay in her arms at the very moment as all he did was extend one arm with a piece of paper clenched in his fist.

First National Bank  
Hollywood, Ca.

Date 5/14/2003

Pay to the  
Order Of Charlotte Idus \$ 300.000

Three Hundred Thousand Dollars

Lawrence Ester Jr.

She looked at him with a confused expression but nodded once his eyes pleaded for her to just take it. He looked at the child, whose moment of creation he could hardly differentiate from every other moment of lust, and at the woman whose name he hardly remembered. Nothing came but an overwhelming feeling of shame for himself. He'd never be able to provide the kind of life they both deserved, and money was all he had to offer.

He looked at his son and left the room, leaving the mother alone with her newborn man-of-the-house.

*"You'll never be like your father."* She whispered to the tiny bundle that clung to her for warmth. And she closed her eyes and lay there with the only thing stable she had in her life.

As he ran down the hospital steps, he glanced back only once but couldn't bring himself to do it again. He walked away from the life he had accidentally created and the mistakes he had made. As he walked towards the awaiting taxi cabs, he felt his phone buzz. *Home*. Not even home deserved him, and he didn't want to influence anyone to ever be like him.

He hit ignore.