My story starts with an average job, and that job starts with me late at night, waiting outside a beautiful mansion, sitting back on a lovely little stone wall, with a backpack. Just sitting there. For hours. I pull out my fob watch impatiently. 8:50. So close…. Suddenly a fancy Auburn Speedster, the newest model, pulled up. I smiled. She came early. A ditzy broad honked her horn again and again and again. A skinny man in a tuxedo bolted outside. One of his servants opened the gate and escorted him to the car. As he drove off, the servant saw me sitting.

“Go away, you nasty beggar! Off!”

He kicked me in the gut. I doubled over in pain. I looked up at him in hate. I couldn’t give him what he deserved, despite my ability to do so. I had a job to do first. As I walked off, I smiled. That would make my job MUCH sweeter...

“Stay away, you vagrant trash!”

I walked off out of his sight. Now that the owner was gone, I could expect the guards to make their normal rounds. I could expect them to slack off a bit as their employer was gone. I could also expect some servants cleaning. But they shouldn’t cause too much trouble. I slid to the to the wall. My breath deepened. My fingers twitched anxiously. Time to start.

 I climbed the stone wall and the gate quietly. I could feel it, the adrenaline pumping. I slid to the wall and crept to the door with absolute silence. Not the front door, of course, but the back one, leading to the basement. I put my ear to the door and listen intently. I hear nothing. I pick the advanced circular-deadlock door easily with 2 bobby pins, and pull the door open as slowly as possible. I peek my head out. Nobody. I sneak inside. I turn on the flashlight, covering it with my hand as I moved and letting it shine just enough to look around. Laundry room. I look at the clothes. I might be able to sell this coat… I could wear this… I put the items of interest in my bag and peeked through the next door. Storage. Shelves covered in all sorts of stuff. I shined my light a little. Cans. Toys, made for a little girl, not even used once. An expensive doll in a box package. Silverware made of real silver, which I claimed as mine as soon as I saw them. Some kind of fancy chalice thingies. Mason jars full of… what is that.. apple butter! Peaches! I licked my lips as I shoved some of them into the bag too. I continued to scan the room for goodies, all the while watching for security. I go through a regal hallway to what looks like a wine cellar. Aisles of assorted fancy spirits systematized like a library. Liquor. Lots of liquor. Fancy champagne. *I know people who’ll pay fortunes for that…* I noticed something in between the bottles. *What is this?* A small box, hidden where most eyes would never see it, concealed. I picked it up and opened the lid. A golden ring, with a huge diamond. A marriage ring… Oh well. He can buy another. I grabbed it off the shelf with kleptomaniacal pleasure. I continued to check around. *This painting seems oddly placed.* I moved the painting (which was too big and ugly to even sell off) and there was a beautiful, lock-combination safe. It was made of impermeable steel, had a brand new, high quality lock on it, to which I didn’t know the combination, and I could hear footsteps above. *Good. It’s no fun without a challenge.* I started cracking it. I put my ear to the safe. I twisted the little knob slowly to the left… slowly… I felt the smallest sensation, the tiniest little *click* on the number 42. I started to turn to the right… The footsteps grew louder, someone was getting closer. Sweat ran down my face, even though it was freezing. I tried to focus on the TINY tick over the stomping footsteps… 2 pairs of footsteps now… I focused as hard as he could. They were now right above me. My fingers felt incredibly heavy as they delicately turned each tick. *Click.* I started to turn right again. A door

opened behind me. I spun it as fast as I could, trying to resist looking back. *Click. I* raked everything in the safe into my bag , shut the safe, and hung the picture. I ran out to the Laundry room and hid behind the wall.

I peeked over. Two bodyguards turn on the light.

“Butt me John.”

A big gruff guy named John handed him a cigarette.

“We don’t get paid enough, Bill. We’re getting swindled. I aint even got enough money to feed my kids.”

“Well that’s probl’y becuz you chose to have 7 kids, John!” Bill said, laughing.

I looked at the door to the outside nervously. I couldn’t move without the risk of being caught. I kept listening.

“Well… how’d you like to be paid… a little more…?” John insinuated.

“What's that mean?”

“Look at that picture there.”

“Okay. It’s pretty ugly.”

I smiled. *Glad someone agreed with me*.

“Not the painting itself! There’s a safe behind the painting. Why would someone put a painting in a basement? You ever wanted to, you know, just take a look inside a fancy safe?”

*Good Luck.* I smirked. But then I remembered I didn’t completely shut the safe! It was still unlocked… I buried my face in my palms and continued listening.

“So you’re saying… you want to steal from the boss?”

“No,no, no. I’d say he’s stealing from us! We’re barely living paycheck to paycheck while he dines like a king! Besides, We’ll just take a little off the top. Nobody’ll ever notice.”

There was a long period of silence.

“Alright.” Bill said weakly. “I’ll do it”.

“Great! Now go stand guard while I try to pick this.” I peeked over again. One of them was standing, back turned to me, facing the stairs! *Yes!* And the other one was going to find out that the safe was already taken from and try to catch me…

I slipped to the back door as fast as I could. I opened it as quietly and didn’t bother to close it. I rushed to the gate and got over just before I heard John shout

*“WE HAVE AN INTRUDER! FIND HIM!!”*

I sprinted downtown as fast as I could with my bag of loot. I ran all the way back to the city. There’s a magical feeling when you get away from robbery like I did. It’s unlike any other. I ran down the city, laughing maniacally. That was close.