

Smoke 1

He

All right, sugar, what's on your mind?

She

Don't look at me like that, Auggie. It gives me the creeps.

He

Like what?

She

Like what you're doing. I'm not going to eat you up. (Pause) I need your help, and if you keep staring at me like that, I might start screaming.

He

Help, huh? And I don't suppose this help has anything to do with money, does it?

She

Don't rush me, okay? You're jumping to conclusions before I've even said anything. (Pause) And besides, it's not for me. It's for our daughter.

He

Our daughter? Is that what you said? Our daughter? I mean, you might have a daughter, but I sure as hell don't. And even if I did – which I don't – she wouldn't be our daughter.

She

Her name is Felicity, and she just turned eighteen. (Pause) She ran away from Pittsburgh last year, and now she's living in some shit-hole here in Brooklyn with a guy named Chico. Strung out on crack, four months pregnant. (Pause) I can't bear to think about that baby. Our grandchild, Auggie. Just think of it. Our grandchild.

He

Stop it, already. Just stop all this crap right now. Was that your idea to call her Felicity?

She

It means "happiness".

He

I know what it means. That still don't make it a good name.

She

I don't know who else to turn to, Auggie.

He

You've suckered me before, darling, remember? Why should I believe you now?

She

Why would I lie to you Auggie? You think it was easy to come here and walk into this place? Why would I do it if I didn't have to?

He

That's what you told me when I shoplifted that necklace for you. You remember, baby, don't you? The judge gave me choice: either go to the can or enlist. So, instead of going to college, I wind up in the navy for four years, I watch men lose their arms and legs, I nearly get my head blown off, and you, sweet Ruby McNutt, you run off and marry that asshole, Bill.

She

You didn't write to me for more than a year. What was I supposed to think?

He

Yeah, well, I lost my pen. By the time I got a new one, I was clean out of paper.

She

It was over with Bill before you ever came home. Maybe you don't remember it now, but you were pretty hot to see me back then.

He

You weren't so lukewarm yourself. At least at first.

She

It fizzled, baby. That's the way it goes. But we had our times, didn't we? It wasn't all bad.

He

A couple of moments, I'll grant you that. A second or two snatched from the jaws of eternity.

She

And that's how Felicity came into the picture. During one of those two seconds.

He

You're conning me sweetheart. I ain't responsible for no baby.

She

Then why do you think I married Frank? I was already pregnant, and I didn't have much time. Say what you like, but at least he gave my kid a name.

He

Good old Frank. And how is fat Mr. Grease Monkey these days?

She

Who the hell knows? He dropped out of site fifteen years ago.

He

Fifteen years ago? It won't wash, pumpkin. No mother waits fifteen years to tell a man he's a father. I wasn't born yesterday, you know.

She

I thought I could handle it. I didn't want to bug you. I thought I could handle it on my own, but I couldn't. She's in real bad, Auggie.

He

Nice try, old girl. I'd like to help you out. You know, for old time's sake. But all my spare cash is tied up in a business venture, and I haven't collected my profits yet. Too bad. You caught me at the wrong time.

She

You're a cold-hearted bastard, aren't you? How'd you ever get so mean, Auggie?

He

I know you think I'm lying to you, but I'm not. Every word I told you is the God's honest truth.