

EXCERPT:

The visitor commons of a correctional facility. Ruby and Bixby sit across from one another. There is a sack on the table between them, cigarettes spilling out of its mouth.

RUBY: I should have known.

BIXBY: Ruby–

RUBY: I should have known something like this would happen. Something like this was *bound* to happen.

BIXBY: Baby–

RUBY: I should have known the second you said ‘everything’s taken care of’ that *nothing*, in fact, was actually taken care of.

BIXBY: It’s not *nothing*. It’s just not the right *something*.

RUBY: Let the record show that I wanted nothing to do with this. Let the record show that I wanted nothing to do with *you*. But you’re relentless, and annoying, and...and relentless. And very, *very* annoying.

BIXBY: And I’m your father.

RUBY: Don’t remind me.

BIXBY: Be nice.

RUBY: So I cave. I concede to your request – bizarre as it seems to me – I give in...in no small part due to your repeated assurances that *everything* was taken care of.

BIXBY: I thought everything *was* taken care of.

RUBY: Cigarettes, dad? *Cigarettes?* You want me to pay your hired goons with *cigarettes?*

BIXBY: In here cigarettes are as good as money. In here cigarettes *are* money.

RUBY: *In here. Out there.* Pretty important distinction, don’t you think?

BIXBY: Ruby, I know I fucked– I *screwed* up, baby-doll. I’m sorry!

RUBY: Don’t call me baby-doll. I’m not some late-night, trucker-stop booty call.

BIXBY: I mean it as an expression of affection.

RUBY: It makes my skin crawl.
Beat.
I've already talked to these people...*hired* these people. Do you know how much they cost? Do you know how much they're charging me?

BIXBY: Did you use the coupon?

RUBY: Yes. I used your stupid coupon.

BIXBY: So it's all set up?

RUBY: No, it's... It's *not* all set up!

BIXBY: Keep your voice down.

RUBY: Now *I'm* supposed to pay them, right? With my *own* money. *Right?*

BIXBY: Keep your voice down.

RUBY: *(Pause)* Every time I let you back into my life, I get screwed. That is our relationship in a nutshell. You tell me trust you, I trust you, I get screwed.

BIXBY: I'll make it up to you. Once it's done, once I'm sorted, I'll make it up to you.

RUBY: Well that's comforting. I can't wait to see how you make it up to me. A sack of cigarettes ought to do the trick, don't you think? Maybe two?

BIXBY: Done!

RUBY: I was being sarcastic!

BIXBY: You quit?

RUBY: *I've never smoked.* Jesus...

BIXBY: I've gotta get out of here. I'm not taking well to...
Lowers his voice.
I'm not like these people.

RUBY: I think you're *exactly* like these people.

BIXBY: You can say that because you don't know... You don't know what they do to people like me in places like this. One minute someone's trying to lead

me to Christ, the next minute I'm passed around like bad cabbage. I'm being violated physically and spiritually on an almost daily basis!

RUBY: Could we not discuss this in such graphic detail?

BIXBY: I'm just trying to open your eyes to the harsh realities of prison life.

RUBY: I don't want my eyes opened to the harsh realities of prison life. I've taken steps to *avoid* having my eyes opened to the harsh realities of prison life. In fact, I took only *one* step to avoid having my eyes opened to the harsh realities of prison life – *I didn't break the law*.

BIXBY: You tell me I did a bad thing. We live in a world with laws, and if you break those laws, you pay the fine. Quid pro quo. Under normal circumstances, I'd be perfectly willing to accept the consequences of my actions. But I say to you this: I have *not* done a bad thing.

RUBY: You were running a grow-op.

BIXBY: Exactly!

RUBY: Of marijuana.

BIXBY: And where's the harm in that?

RUBY: It's illegal.

BIXBY: Technically.

RUBY: But this being *you*, you didn't just start up and operate a grow-op, you started a grow-op in a house built by a narcotics detective.

BIXBY: *Ex-narcotics* detective.

RUBY: For his mother.

BIXBY: This is what I'm saying! What business does an ex-narcotics detective have building a house in the first place?

RUBY: He was retired.

BIXBY: And if the house was for his mother, why wasn't she living there?

RUBY: He moved her to a nursing home.

BIXBY: And if she's in a home, why was this so-called ex-detective poking around another man's private property?

RUBY: He built the house, dad. He *built* it. People get attached to the things they build: homes, relationships, dreams. He swung by to make sure it was being well looked-after, and he finds the windows covered in plastic sheeting.

BIXBY: We could have been painting.

RUBY: For six months? Not to mention the rotting floorboards, the ruined appliances...

BIXBY: All circumstantial.

RUBY: Circumstantial to there being a *grow-op!* You're a drug kingpin!

BIXBY: I'm a blue-collar criminal with one offence.

RUBY: You're a career criminal who's only been *convicted* of one offence.

BIXBY: What does it all boil down to? Dumb fucking luck.

RUBY: What you don't get is that I don't care. I don't care about the crime, I don't care about the punishment, and I don't care about the luck. I don't care about *you*. You inserted yourself into my life the same way you inserted yourself into mom's.

BIXBY: Good woman.

RUBY: Mom was an exceptional woman. But mom was also blind.

BIXBY: Blinded by love.

RUBY: No, physically *blind!* Her retinas detached. But you aren't familiar with the details of her life, such as her ability to *see*, because the only time you ever spoke to her was to get her to send you money.

BIXBY: Compassionate, generous woman.

RUBY: She was in love with you, dad, she...
Takes a deep breath.
This has been an awfully screwed-up time in my life. I haven't been sleeping well or eating right...I can't shake this feeling that there might be more to my life...

BIXBY: Me too!

RUBY: This isn't a heart-to-heart! Just – shut up and listen. I'm trying to... I've taken stock. I've taken stock of my life and I'm not happy with the ledger. So I'm making changes. There are things I want to do with...to do in my life. There are places I want to see. I've never *been* anywhere.

BIXBY: Where would you want to go?

RUBY: Anywhere. England...India...Mexico...

BIXBY: Mexico's a shit-hole.

RUBY: You...jerk.

BIXBY: I'm not trying to piss on your dreams, babe, but of all the godforsaken outhouses–

RUBY: Stop!

BIXBY: If the world was a person, Mexico would be the assho–

RUBY: *Stop!*
Beat.
I'll do this thing for you. I'll pay these people – with my own money – I'll pay them to shoot you in the shoulder–

BIXBY: The shoulder?

RUBY: That was what you wanted, right?

BIXBY: *(Rubs his shoulder)* When?

RUBY: Tonight. Nine o'clock. Sharp.

BIXBY: So soon?

RUBY: Yes. I want this done with. I want you out of my life, for good, tonight.
Stands.

BIXBY: We still have five minutes. You have more important things to do?

RUBY: In point of fact I do. Today, as they say, is the first day of the rest of my life, and I'm not wasting any more of it on you.

BIXBY: Who're you wasting it on?

RUBY: *(Pause)* What's the plan?

BIXBY: The plan?

RUBY: Not that I care – but I don't get it. What's the plan?

BIXBY: *(Softly)* First I get shot.

RUBY: That part I understand. That part I endorse.

BIXBY: Then I'm sent to the infirmary.

RUBY: So...you're in the infirmary...

BIXBY: *(Whispering)* Then I break out of the infirmary.

RUBY: *(Pause)* How?

BIXBY: However people break out of the infirmary.

RUBY: Who breaks out of the infirmary?

BIXBY: There're guys breaking out of the infirmary all the time!

RUBY: That's the plan?

BIXBY: Yep.

RUBY: Every time I think you've scraped the bottom of the stupid barrel, you say something that reminds me your barrel has no bottom.
Pause.
Let me be perfectly clear – this is it. This is the end. I'm moving into a new phase of my life that does not include you. You don't exist in this phase. I need solid things to hold onto and you...you're too slippery. This, right now, *this* is closure. Are we clear?

BIXBY: But...

RUBY: But what?

BIXBY: But... I'm your daddy.

RUBY: You're the man who impregnated my mother. I don't know what kind of doormat syndrome mom suffered from, but from here on out you'll have

to find another dupe to wipe your feet on. If you want me to do you this favour, then promise me: We don't know each other.

BIXBY: *(Pause)* If that's what you want.

RUBY: Say it.

BIXBY: *(Pause)* You're my little girl, and I love you, but you're right: We don't know each other.

Beat.

And I loved her too. Your mom. Despite what you think. I did.

RUBY: *(Pause)* Goodbye.

Beat.

Good luck.

Ruby exits. Bixby rubs his shoulder.