

smoke **intro**: at the cigar store

PAUL Hey, Auggie. How's it going? **Long time no see.**

AUGGIE Hey, man. **Good to see you.** What will it be today?

PAUL Two tins of Schimmelpennincks. And **throw in** a lighter **while you're at it.**

AUGGIE The boys **and I were just having** a philosophical discussion about women and cigars. There are some interesting connections there, don't you think?

PAUL **Definitely. I suppose** it all **goes back to** Queen Elizabeth. **Have you ever heard of** Sir Walter Raleigh?

AUGGIE Sure. He's the guy who threw his coat down over the puddle **so this lady's feet didn't get wet.** And I **used to** smoke Raleigh cigarettes, too. They **came with** a free gift coupon in every pack.

PAUL That's the man. Well, Raleigh was the **person** who introduced tobacco in England, and **since** he was a **favorite of the Queen's** – Queen Bess, he used to **call** her – smoking **caught on** as a fashion. I'm sure Old Bess **must have shared** a cigarette **or two** with Sir Walter.

PAUL Once, Sir Walter **made a bet** with the Queen that he could actually **measure** the weight of smoke.

AUGGIE You mean, **weigh** smoke? **You can't do that. It's like weighing** air.

PAUL I **admit** it's strange. Almost like weighing **someone's** soul. But Sir Walter was a clever guy. **What he did was first** he took an unsmoked cigar and **put** it on a balance and weighed it. Then he **lit up** and smoked the cigar, carefully tapping the ashes into the balance pan. When he **was finished**, he **put** the butt into the pan **along with** the ashes and weighed what was there. The difference was the weight of the smoke.

AUGGIE Not bad. That's **the kind of guy** we **need to take over** the Mets.

PAUL Oh, he was smart, **all right**. But **not smart enough, it turned out**. He **ended up having his head chopped off** twenty years **later**. But that's a different story.

AUGGIE **You're gonna have to** tell us that one some day, ok? **Take care of yourself** now, and don't do anything I wouldn't do.

PAUL **I wouldn't think of it. See you around, fellas.**

TOMMY What is he, **some kind of wise guy**?

AUGGIE Nah. He's a good kid. **He and I go back a long time.**

TOMMY **I've seen him around**. He comes in here **a lot**, doesn't he?

AUGGIE **Couple of times a week**, maybe. He's a writer. Lives in the neighborhood. **He's published** three or four books. But nothing now **for the past few years**.

TOMMY **What's the matter?** Did he **run out of** ideas?

AUGGIE He ran out of luck. Remember that **robbery** out here on Seventh Avenue a few years **back**?

TOMMY You talking about the bank? **The time** those two guys started firing bullets **all over** the street?

AUGGIE That's it. Four people **got killed**. One of them was Paul's wife. The poor guy, he **hasn't been** the same **since**. **The funny thing was**, she stopped **in here just before** it happened. To **stock up on** cigars for him. She was a nice lady, Ellen. **Four or five months pregnant** at the time, which means that when she **was killed**, the baby was killed, too. I sometimes **think** that if she **hadn't given** me exact **change** that day, or if the store **had been** a little more **crowded**, it **would have taken** her a few **more** seconds to get out of here, and then maybe she **wouldn't have been hit by** that bullet. She'd still be **alive**, the baby **would have been born**, and Paul **would be sitting** at home writing another book **instead of wandering** the streets with a **hangover**...