

SPUD
Doubtful. But I rarely say never.

ANNIE
Well, I stay out of it. Wherever she ends up, I'm sure she'll be happy.

SPUD
Good for you! A lot of parents go nuts, living through their kids.

ANNIE
Frankly, I'm more "live and let live."

SPUD
Yes, I remember.

ANNIE
It's really good to see you, Spud.

SPUD
People call me William now.

ANNIE
You'll always be Spud to me. Those were amazing parties you had. You were always such an upbeat guy.

SPUD
Well, sure, I was drunk all the time. It got to be a problem after college when I was working construction. We were supposed to gut this house but I got the address wrong. Should have been a clue that all the furniture was still there. Anyway, that was my wake-up call.

ANNIE
What did you do, go into a program?

SPUD
No, I just dug deep and got it under control. It saved my life.

ANNIE
Good for you.

SPUD
I go one week totally dry, then the next week I drink whatever the hell I want, don't even try to stop me. This is my drinking week.

ANNIE
You were the one guy I could always talk to.

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SPUD

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"



SPUD

And you were always so good to me. Which meant a lot. There was that whole faction that didn't much like me.

ANNIE

Remember when the parties went all night and we'd go to that diner--

SPUD

Jimmy's. I'm glad you remember. I think about that stuff a lot.

ANNIE

You do?

SPUD

Pretty embarrassing, right?

ANNIE

Pretty sweet, to tell you the truth.

SPUD

Hey, Annie? How come you and I never...you know.

ANNIE

Just one of those things.

SPUD

It's strange, isn't it? Considering all the guys...

ANNIE

What do you mean?

SPUD

All those lucky bastards.

ANNIE

It's not like there were that many--

SPUD

The ones I knew were just the tip of the iceberg--

ANNIE

Oh, please, there was no iceberg. And I was far from the worst, I mean what about Virginia Slocumb or that Tammy Warren who was just, excuse me, a mindless whore. Remember?
(ANNIE laughs, SPUD doesn't)

Oh, you married her, didn't you. I'm sorry, Spud.

SPUD

Tammy has changed a lot. She hates sex. She's an architect.

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SPUD

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"



ANNIE

And a darn good one, I bet!

SPUD

Not really. Deadlines aren't her thing. Plus, she has that "personality," if you remember.

ANNIE

Well, whore, architect, people throw those terms around. As long as the two of you are happy.

SPUD

I don't like that word. Please don't use it in my presence.

ANNIE

Why not? What have you got against happiness?

SPUD

It's a conspiracy. The pursuit of happiness. I often think of leaving the country so I can pursue the right to be unhappy. And another thing, if we're all supposed to pursue happiness, doesn't that mean we don't already have it? Are you happy?

ANNIE

Well...at times...

SPUD

It's just self-love. If you love yourself then you can be happy. Otherwise, just pull the blankets up over your head and wait till it's over.

ANNIE

Don't you love yourself?

SPUD

Are you insane? Would you love yourself if you were me?

ANNIE

Well, I like you very much...

SPUD

But if you were me you'd wake up every morning and stare at the ceiling for twenty minutes trying to get the energy to fake your way through another pointless day. And you'd fall asleep at night hoarse from all the lies you told. Do you want to dance?

ANNIE

Sure. Old times sake.

STOP

LIGHTS FADE as they dance.

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SPUD

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"



Tucker 26.
4 pages

SPUD

I have feelings for you. The kind of feelings that can eat away at a decent life until you wake up some wintry morning half-frozen in a dumpster because you loved someone too much. I will fight to the death to get Jodi into Bowen.

ANNIE

Do you mean that?

SPUD

But you have to promise me something. If I am putting my job on the line and breaking many many rules to get her in, I need to know she'll go.

ANNIE

If you get Jodi in, I promise she'll go. And I'll be indebted to you for the rest of my days.

LIGHTS FADE on SPUD and ANNIE next to ANNIE'S half-packed suitcase.

LIGHTS UP on an OFFICE. TUCKER NUGENT is getting ready to leave. NEIL enters.

START :

NEIL

Hey, Tucker.

TUCKER

Oh, hey, Neil.

NEIL

Got a minute?

TUCKER

What is it?

NEIL

Nothing much. What are you doing?

TUCKER

Trying to get the hell out of here. Go home.

NEIL

Right. This is a great place to leave.

TUCKER

The best. Can this wait till tomorrow?

NEIL

Oh, sure. No sweat.

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TUCKER

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

