

Lady, Arthur

TRACY LETTS

tears streaming down her face. I told her I'd see her soon. She saw right through me. I said, "I'll prove it to you." That was the last time I saw my daughter. She was thirteen years old.

*(Lights shift. Arthur dials the phone.)*

Hi, it's me, it's Arthur. Sorry for all the messages but I'm . . . I'm just getting a little worried here. You didn't come in today and I guess that means you're not coming in today. Which is . . . I mean I don't care at this point, but I wish you'd at least call me and tell me you're not coming in. Because then we could . . . I don't know, I guess I'm feeling like . . . like we had that argument and maybe, I don't know, hello? I just heard a click. Is the click indicative of something? Okay, well. The number at the shop is . . . you know the number.

*(He hangs up. Thinks. Takes Randy's card from behind the phone, studies it. Takes a deep breath, dials.)*

Hi. Randy. It's Arthur. Mm, Arthur, from the donut shop. Superior Donuts. I, I think you said this is your cell phone. And hey, I was just thinking that . . .

*(Lady enters.)*

That's Lady. Lady just walked in. Man, it feels cold out there. Um. Where was I? I thought if you were up for it, you, we could . . .

LADY: Can I have a donut?

ARTHUR: What? Yeah, uh. Randy, sorry, I just, it's getting kind of busy here, so I guess I'll talk to you next time you come in. To the shop. Thank you. *(Hangs up)*

Hi, Lady.

SUPERIOR DONUTS

LADY: Can I have a donut?

ARTHUR: Yeah, sure.

*(She sits as he gets her a donut and coffee.)*

Looks pretty nasty out there.

LADY: Yeah. And the weather ain't so great.

*(Arthur looks out the window, scans the street.)*

ARTHUR: You've got kids, right, Lady?

LADY: What's that?

ARTHUR: You have kids, don't you?

LADY: Oh, sure. Two boys, two girls. One of 'em's still alive.

ARTHUR: You've outlived three of your kids?

LADY: Yeah.

ARTHUR: That's awful.

LADY: One of 'em got shot by the coppers in a gasoline station stickup. One of 'em had a grabber, mowin' the yard. And one of 'em died in the crib with that disease. Where the spinal cord gets a mind of its own and decides it don't want to live trapped inside those little bones no more. You know what I'm talkin' about?

ARTHUR: I don't think so.

LADY: Your spinal cord gets it in its head to go free and slitherin' out into the world. That's what killed my little Venus. Her spinal cord got its own notions.

ARTHUR: Wow.

LADY: It happens. Happens to all of us, just not so extreme.

ARTHUR: It does?

LADY: The body don't work together. You know how they say the heart wants one thing but the brain wants something else?

ARTHUR: Yeah, sure.

LADY: The spine. It don't speak up for itself much. But when it does? Look out. Trumps the heart and brain every time.

*(Arthur thinks about this.)*

ARTHUR: You've still got one kid.

LADY: Walter.

ARTHUR: What's he do?

LADY: He's a bum.

*(Beat.)*

No, he's okay.

ARTHUR: You and Walter . . . you on good terms? I mean you talk?

LADY: Not so much.

ARTHUR: Mm.

LADY: He's got a lot goin' on.

ARTHUR: Right.

LADY: You got kids?

ARTHUR: A daughter. One daughter.

LADY: Aw. That's nice. Girls are better.

ARTHUR: Better than boys?

LADY: Yeah, they're just better people. What's your girl's name?

ARTHUR: Joni.

LADY: Aw.

ARTHUR: Yeah, Joni.

LADY: And she's still alive?

ARTHUR: Yeah.

LADY: Good for you. You still got time.

*(James enters, out of uniform.)*

End .

JAMES: Arthur, I have to talk to you.

ARTHUR: Okay.

JAMES: Come over here.

ARTHUR: You want some coffee?

JAMES: No, that's okay. Just some water.

*(Arthur pours water while James removes his coat, revealing a Captain Kirk costume.)*

LADY: Holy shit.

ARTHUR: Wow.

LADY: The spacemen have landed.

JAMES: I know, I know. Arthur, listen—

ARTHUR: You look great.

JAMES: Right, thanks. Sit down.

ARTHUR: Where are your ears?

JAMES: What?

ARTHUR: Randy said you wear ears.

JAMES: She doesn't know what she's talking about. I don't wear any damn ears.

ARTHUR: Yeah, 'cause that might look odd.

JAMES: Me and Crystal were at the convention when I got a call on my cell phone. Franco's mother called me.

ARTHUR: His mother.

JAMES: Franco's in the hospital.

ARTHUR: What's the matter?

JAMES: They've got him over at Masonic. I just came from there.

ARTHUR: What's the matter?

JAMES: He's been assaulted. It's pretty bad, Arthur.

ARTHUR: How bad.

JAMES: Someone cut off three of his fingers. *(Indicates the last three fingers of his right hand)* These three fingers.

*(Beat.)*

ARTHUR: What?

JAMES: Yeah.

ARTHUR: Well, is he . . . what, is he going to be okay? I mean—

JAMES: He lost a lot of blood but he'll survive. They've got him on some serious painkillers, you know, and he's still in the