

A cold, sterile, and clinical cell. Poorly lit. There is a heavy door with no window, a well-worn wooden bench, and a cheap cot with an uncovered mattress. A second door leads to a small unseen room.

(SARAH sits on the cot, smoking.)

She wears a suit appropriate for a conservative office: blazer, skirt, heels. Her shoulder bag is casual and not appropriate for office clothing.

She ashes on the floor and smiles to herself.

The door opens and GUARD escorts CLAIRE into the cell. CLAIRE has a stylish and funky fashion sense.

GUARD is neither threatening, nor friendly. He wears a nondescript dark uniform.)

GUARD

Wait here.

(He leaves, shutting the door.)

CLAIRE

(She remains at the door, looking blankly downstage.)

SARAH gives a friendly wave. CLAIRE does not notice and turns to the door.)

Excuse me. Hello. There must be some kind of mistake. Hello.

SARAH

I don't think they can hear you once the door is shut. I think it's pretty much sound proof.

CLAIRE

(She turns and notices SARAH for the first time.)

Oh. I see. Of course.

(She looks at SARAH for a moment then sits on the bench. She is restless immediately and begins to move around in her half of the cell. She eventually stops in front of the bench, reaches into her purse, and pulls out a lighter.)

I'm sorry but could I get a cigarette off you. I seem to have misplaced my cigarettes.

(She considers the lighter.)

Why would I still have my lighter?

SARAH

Sure.

(She pulls a crumpled pack from her shoulder bag and gets up to offer it.

CLAIRE is distracted.)

You can have one.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

(She sees only one cigarette remains.)

It's your last one.

SARAH

It's alright. Go ahead.

CLAIRE

I can't take your last cigarette.

SARAH

Don't worry.

CLAIRE

You never take the last cigarette.

SARAH

It's the lucky one. I'm offering. I've got plenty left on this one.

CLAIRE

Are you sure?

SARAH

Positive. Take it.

CLAIRE

Thank you. I will. Then.

(She lights the cigarette.

SARAH returns to the cot.)

I'm surprised they let us smoke in here. It's rare to smoke indoors these days.

SARAH

That's true. It is a bit of a novelty. The real pleasure, I think, comes from being able to ash on the floor. Sacriliscious.

CLAIRE

Is there no ashtray?

SARAH

There is, if you think of the floor as a particularly large ashtray.

CLAIRE

If there is no ashtray, maybe we shouldn't be smoking. No ashtrays usually mean no smoking.

SARAH

I've been chaining my way through this pack for a half-hour and no one has said anything yet.

CLAIRE

No?

SARAH

No.

CLAIRE

I wonder why they don't care.

SARAH

I don't know.

(CLAIRE moves distractedly around the room, as she smokes.)

So. Do you like stuff?

CLAIRE

I'm sorry? What do you mean by stuff?

SARAH

(She is disappointed because CLAIRE does not understand the reference.)

Any kind of stuff.

CLAIRE

Do you mean drugs. Then, no. Not unequivocally, though. Just not now. Thank you.

SARAH

No. I'm not talking about drugs. It was kind of a rhetorical question. It's a Simpsons reference.

CLAIRE

It's a what?

SARAH

It's a reference to a Simpsons episode. Ralph is trying to make small talk with Lisa and that's what he asks her, "Do you like stuff?" He asks it as a way to try and make conversation.

CLAIRE

What do the Simpsons have to do with anything?

SARAH

Shock. The Simpsons have to do with everything. But I take your point. It's suppose to be a kind of ice breaker, I guess. I once had an entire conversation with a complete stranger using nothing but Simpsons references.

CLAIRE

Well, I never really watched the show much.

(They fall into an awkward
silence.)

SARAH

I'm Sarah. By the way.

CLAIRE

I'm Claire. Nice to meet you.

SARAH

I wish it was under better circumstances.

CLAIRE

Me, too.

SARAH

I like your outfit.

CLAIRE

Thanks. I wear a uniform all day, so, when I am off work, I try to make up for it. You know, funk it up a little.

SARAH

It is very funky. Where'd you get the top?

CLAIRE

I can't remember. I go to a lot of rummage sales and second hand shops. You can dress fairly cool without spending too much, if your willing to work for it. Although, my boyfriend may have bought this for me. The only piece of clothing he's ever got me that wasn't designed specifically to make him horny.

SARAH

At least, your boyfriend buys you stuff. My ex-boyfriend doesn't believe in the idea of gifts.

CLAIRE

Sounds like a fancy way to justify being cheap.

SARAH

Maybe. He was consistent at least. I wasn't allowed to buy him stuff either. He'd get upset if I so much as bought him a bon-bon.

CLAIRE

There's a time and a place for gifts. Anytime and anyplace if they're for me.

(She laughs. SARAH does not.)

SARAH

Are you a police officer or something?

CLAIRE

Why do you ask that?

SARAH

You wear a uniform all day.

CLAIRE

Oh yeah. No. Not a chance. I drive a bus. For the city. Public transport.

SARAH

You don't really look like a bus driver.

CLAIRE

Why do you say that? What does a bus driver look like?

SARAH

Bigger, I guess. More like. A man.

CLAIRE

I suppose. Most of the drivers are still men. They've made a bit of an effort to recruit women. Not many go for it though.

SARAH

Hasn't it always been kind of thought of as men's work.

CLAIRE

Pretty much. I don't know why though. A driver meets lots of people. Lots of time for chatting.

SARAH

There's all that driving. I hate driving in the city. I can't imagine driving one of those big huge buses. And all the passengers. It seems there would be a lot of -- I don't know -- confrontation.

CLAIRE

There can be. You take the good with the bad. I love driving. Even though I'm stuck to a set route and schedule, I'm totally free when I'm on the road. On the road, no one messes with a bus.

SARAH

Yeah, I guess. Not an '81 Celica though. Old women on mobility scooters aren't afraid to mess with a Celica. What does your boyfriend do?

CLAIRE

He's a writer and stay-home dad. He looks after the house and our baby.

SARAH

You have a baby?

CLAIRE

Yep. My beautiful little girl, Jessica. She's eighteen months old.

SARAH

But? You smoke.

CLAIRE

Not while we were trying to get pregnant or during the pregnancy. A few months after the birth, things got pretty stressful. New baby. Trying to figure out who was going to look after her, on top of all the housework and writing and stuff. There was a lot of fighting. Don't worry, I never smoke around her or in the house.

SARAH

I'm sorry. I guess, I'm being intrusive.

CLAIRE

Not at all. No, I'm being rude. I haven't asked a thing about you. Any kids?

SARAH

I have a cat. Her breath smells like cat food.

(She waits for recognition.
Sees none and carries on.)

Her name is Oscar. As far as babies go, I can't imagine having a baby until, I'm forty or something.

CLAIRE

Why so late?

SARAH

So much to figure out, I guess. I'm not so sure I'd be able to figure it out with a husband and/or children making demands on me all the time. You're pretty lucky to have found a man who is willing to stay at home.

CLAIRE

It's good for what he wants to do and I'm not prepared to stay at home. I've always known I wouldn't end up with someone who wasn't willing to compromise on that point. Once you know what you want, it isn't so hard to get it.

SARAH

Yeah. Knowing what you want is the hard part.

CLAIRE

You don't, I take it.

SARAH

Sometimes, I think I do. Then, I change my mind.

CLAIRE

In the unholy words of Bobby Brown, it's your prerogative.

SARAH

A woman's prerogative?

CLAIRE

Of course. I suppose it's everyone's prerogative these days. Oscar is a cute name for a cat.

SARAH

That's because she's a cute cat. She's all white, with a little black on the tip of her tail and the tip of her nose.

CLAIRE

Did you pick the name Oscar for any particular reason?

SARAH

She's kind of named after Oscar Wilde. And Oscar the Grouch. Depends who I am talking to.

CLAIRE

That's cute, too. I never much liked Wilde. Too flowery, even with all his sharp little one-liners. Sesame Street was great but I preferred The Muppets. Much more subversive.

SARAH

Oh, I'm a huge fan of the Muppets too. I have every episode. But, as a kitten, Oscar wasn't really into subverting social mores so much as eating Tender Vittles and playing with string.

CLAIRE

Yes. Of course. So, what do you do?

SARAH

Kind of in between jobs right now. I was a waitress for a while. Now I'm temping. Trying to figure out what I want to do with my life, I guess. I have a degree in English, so I think I'd like to get into publishing but I'm not so sure.

CLAIRE

Why publishing?

SARAH

I don't know. I've always liked books. I always thought I'd be an English professor -- that's what my Mom is -- but I couldn't really handle grad school.

CLAIRE

Why not?

SARAH

I enjoyed the classes and reading but the essay-writing was too hard for me. I'd get this massive writer's block -- to the point where I couldn't write more than a few words an hour. Then, with only a few hours left, it would burst out of me. Come rushing out. After I'd been up all night. It was too much stress. Not worth the effort.

CLAIRE

Writing essays was my favorite part. I liked having something to say and saying it completely.

SARAH

Don't get me wrong, I always had something to say. That's no problem. I don't know, putting it down in words made it too permanent, I guess. It was too exposed. Too vulnerable, maybe. If I could make sense of it -- you know, a book, a poem, or something -- and articulate it fully in words, it was like I had ruined it, made it less precious somehow. I don't know. All of it I guess. What was your degree in?

CLAIRE

English, like you. Well, Comp-Lit to be more precise.

SARAH

How did you end up as a bus driver?

CLAIRE

Because my Dad was a driver. I was like you for awhile. Didn't really know what to do, took some time off school, traveled around, screwed a lot of mysterious and troubled men, did my own thing. Once I was done with all that crazy stuff, I thought I'd better finish my degree -- seeing as I would be the first one in the family to get one -- and when I was done I was ready for something different. I loved

driving around with Dad when I was a kid, they were recruiting women, and it was different. Dad is management now and he got me a job driving.

SARAH

Cool. Do you think you'll do it for the rest of your life?

CLAIRE

Now that I can't say. So long as it fits my purposes, I will. When it doesn't, I'll move on, find something else to do.

SARAH

I wish I had your confidence.

CLAIRE

Confidence does make the world a bit easier to navigate.

(They fall into another awkward
silence.)

SARAH

So. Read any good books lately?

CLAIRE

I've been reading a lot of Henry Miller. *Plexus* was the last one. He's amazing. And you?

SARAH

Milan Kundera.

CLAIRE

I've read *The Joke*. It was pretty good.

SARAH

Oh, You've got to read *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. It's wonderful.

CLAIRE

How so?

SARAH

I can't say, really. It just is.

(Another awkward silence.)

CLAIRE

So. Why are you in here?

SARAH

They say I killed a man. But they're wrong. I've killed many many men.

CLAIRE

Really?

SARAH

No. Of course not. The only thing I kill is time. I haven't a clue why I'm here.

CLAIRE

Really?

SARAH

No. Not a clue. Hey, you don't know why you're here, either.

CLAIRE

No. No, I don't.

SARAH

Thank God.

(In her excitement, SARAH makes a move to touch CLAIRE. Without speaking, CLAIRE makes it clear that she is not to be touched.)

I didn't ask you anything because I didn't want to admit that I didn't know why I was here.

CLAIRE

If you didn't know why you were here, why would it be any different for me?

SARAH

I never know what's going on. I get so lost inside my own head that all life's a stage and I am not so much a player as an usher who's locked himself inside the toilet during intermission.

CLAIRE

I don't know why I'm here either.

SARAH

Did they abduct you too? I was having a coffee and a smoke during my break at work and these big guys came up and abducted me.

CLAIRE

Me too. Two big guys showed up at my door and politely asked me to come with them. They had darkish quasi-faux-uniforms. Terribly cliché. So cliché I thought it was some kind of practical joke. A lame reality TV show or something.

SARAH

Me too!

CLAIRE

I told them to screw off but they were pretty persistent. The guns were quite convincing.

SARAH

They had guns? Do you think we've committed a crime or something?

CLAIRE

I haven't done anything.

SARAH

Me neither. Wow. It's all a little too Kafka-esque for me.

CLAIRE

God, I hate when people say that. Anytime a situation gets a little ambiguous and involves an authority figure, everyone starts saying it's Kafka-esque. Well, it isn't. To think the man's brilliance could be condensed into a throw-away catch-phrase like that. It's a total insult to his work. Kafka-esque. This isn't even existentialist. Except, maybe, derivatively so.

SARAH

I. Am. Sorry?

CLAIRE

Fine. It's fine. Don't even get me started on irony. God, people don't know how to use that word. Fucking Alannis Morrisette.

SARAH

However you want to describe it, it's still kind of creepy. There doesn't seem to be enough -- I don't know -- detail.

CLAIRE

Honestly, I like the lack of detail. If there was more detail, I think I'd be more scared. Given the situation, greater detail is probably only nasty-I-don't-want-to-know-about-it detail. Soylent Green-type detail.

SARAH

There's such a temptation to fill in the blanks. You know, connect the dots. I know I haven't done anything but I feel guilty anyway.

CLAIRE

I'm always innocent until proven guilty. Even when I know I'm guilty. Besides, I doubt you've ever done anything wrong enough to warrant anything like this.

SARAH

Why do you say that?

CLAIRE

I figure people out. You make mistakes but you don't ever do anything wrong.

(The lights increase significantly, the door opens, and GUARD enters.)

GUARD

So. How are you ladies doing?

CLAIRE

I would say we're a little anxious to get out of here. Seeing as we have been forcibly confined against our will.

SARAH

I have to get back to work. Really.

GUARD

In due course.

CLAIRE

How long do you plan on holding us here.

GUARD

As a matter of fact, that's exactly what I've been sent to talk to you about.

CLAIRE

How convenient.

SARAH

Good.

GUARD

How long you stay here will ultimately depend on you.

CLAIRE

I think I can speak for Sarah, when I say we would both like to leave now.

GUARD

That might very well be the case for one of you. Not both of you.

SARAH

You said it was up to us and she told you we both want to leave now.

GUARD

It isn't going to be quite so simple.

CLAIRE

No, of course not.

GUARD

No. Of course not.

CLAIRE

It never is, is it?

GUARD

There wouldn't be much of a story otherwise. What would you tell your friends?

SARAH

My friends watch TV. They enjoy situations -- not stories.

CLAIRE

Abduction is pretty exciting in itself. I don't need anything more than that to impress my friends, family, and lawyer.

GUARD

Not much of a narrative is there? Let's see if we can spice it up a little.

SARAH

No. No narrative spice. Couldn't we add water. A little warm milk, maybe.

GUARD

You'll both be asked to confess to a crime.

SARAH

Oh no, paprika!

CLAIRE

Neither of us have done anything.

GUARD

That's right. As far as anyone here is concerned, neither one of you have done anything to warrant any particular sort of punishment.

SARAH

What are we suppose to confess to then?

GUARD

The crime you confess to isn't as important as the decision to confess itself.

SARAH

I choose jay-walking.

GUARD

Cute. What you confess to will have no effect on your sentence. In fact, you won't be asked to confess to any particular crime at all. You will simply be asked to confess or not to confess.

SARAH

Anyone quotes Hamlet, I hit them.

CLAIRE

Sentence? Hold on a second. We're being sentenced. As in, being put into prison. As in, doing time.

GUARD

Yes. Although, technically-speaking, since our organization has no legitimate political authority, it won't really be a prison.

CLAIRE

What if we refuse to confess?

GUARD

That depends.

CLAIRE

Depends on what?

GUARD

Depends on whether or not you both refuse to confess.

SARAH

What happens if we both refuse?

GUARD

I'll have the pleasure of your company for no less than six months.

SARAH

Doh!

CLAIRE

If we play along and confess? What happens then?

GUARD

Again. That depends.

CLAIRE

Quelle surprise.

SARAH

On what?

GUARD

On whether or not you both confess.

SARAH

Will we get out sooner? If so, I confess. Mea culpa. The candlestick was in my hand, I was in the Conservatory -- I don't even know what a Conservatory is -- and that bastard Mustard was nowhere near the place.

GUARD

If you both confess, you both spend ten years in here.

SARAH

Ten years.

CLAIRE

We're doing what you want if we both confess, aren't we? Shouldn't the sentence go down?

SARAH

I can't stay here for ten years. Oh, Aquaman you can't marry her, she has no gills.

GUARD

It really makes no difference to us if you confess or don't confess. Our interest is in how you choose given the situation. The sentencing-rules have been designed and set with this purpose in mind. Choose however you think best.

CLAIRE

So far there is no best. Getting out now is best.

SARAH

Isn't there a way for us to get out right away.

GUARD

Yes. But that --

CLAIRE

But that depends. Yes, we got it already. On what does it depend?

GUARD

It depends on who confesses and who doesn't. If one of you confesses and the other doesn't, the one who does goes free immediately.

SARAH

Woo hoo!

CLAIRE

The one who doesn't confess, what happens to her?

GUARD

I'd like to say I'll be enjoying her company for the next fifty years but I don't expect to be working here that long.

CLAIRE

Fifty years! This is insanity. If either one of us remains here for fifty years, our lives will be over. My little girl will be fifty-one. She won't even know me.

SARAH

My God, Claire, fifty years. I've got so much left to do.

CLAIRE

I'm not staying here that long. Neither one of us is.

SARAH

What are we going to do?

CLAIRE

The answer is obvious. Neither of us will confess. There's nothing we can do but wait out the six months and hope that they're true to their word.

GUARD

No need to fear. We are quite true to our word.

SARAH

Six months. I'll lose my job.

CLAIRE

It's either that or ten, or fifty. Unless we both refuse to confess, that's what going to happen to us. Or one of us, anyway.

SARAH

While the other goes free.

CLAIRE

Yes. While the other goes free.

SARAH

Ok. We both refuse to confess, stay six months, make the best of it. I mean, this could be alright. Can't be much worse than temping, right.

CLAIRE

Alright, there you go, neither of us is confessing.

GUARD

You're welcome to come to any arrangement you like. I must inform you, we'll make no effort to coordinate the decision.

SARAH

Is there anything we can do to get out of here more quickly. Like, time off for good behavior. Maybe if we did crafts or something. A little light housekeeping.

GUARD

One of you will be free to leave at any time. So long as you are here, the option for confessing will always remain open. For one of you, anyway.

CLAIRE

What?

GUARD

Each day, for the six months you are here, you will both be given the chance to confess.

CLAIRE

Will we be in the same cell, will we be allowed to communicate with each other?

GUARD

Our research suggests it doesn't make any difference.

CLAIRE

You bastard.

SARAH

What? What's wrong?

CLAIRE

We're screwed. We're totally screwed.

SARAH

What? How?

CLAIRE

We're not going to be here six months. They've rigged it so we'll be here for ten years. It's guaranteed.

SARAH

What are you talking about? We both agreed not to confess. We'll both be out of here in six months.

CLAIRE

No. No, we won't. The fact that we can't make sure the other person doesn't confess, it changes everything.

SARAH

Why? Why should that change anything?

CLAIRE

Because we can screw the other person, that's why.

SARAH

Que?

CLAIRE

If we both know the other person is not going to confess, that means one of us can get out of here immediately by confessing. Which means if we're thinking at all, we know the other person will confess. Which means we both have to confess.

SARAH

But. We've already agreed. We promise that's all. That's it. It's finished.

CLAIRE

Making it, all the easier to screw the other person. You bastard. You screwed us.

SARAH

How are we screwed? We only need to promise.

GUARD

Yes. It is a bit more complicated than it first appears. Now, I'll give you ladies a few minutes to discuss the situation and clarify your thoughts before we perform the ceremony.

CLAIRE

Why are you doing this to us?

SARAH

How are we screwed?

GUARD

It's better than watching TV.

(GUARD exits through the heavy door, closing it behind him. Cell becomes poorly lit again. CLAIRE storms around the cell in fury, making unintelligible noises of anger and frustration.)

SARAH stands still waiting for CLAIRE to calm down.)

SARAH

Tell me what's wrong. What do you mean, we're screwed?

CLAIRE

We're screwed because we're here. We're screwed because there doesn't appear to be any reason why we're here. In the here and now, we're doubly screwed because they have arranged things to guarantee we'll both be here for ten years.

SARAH

Explain. He said if neither one of us confesses we will be here for six months. Six months is much more than I want to be here but it's also much less than ten. I want to spend as little time here as possible -- just like you.

CLAIRE

And because of that, we'll both be here for ten years.

SARAH

Why? Why, when there is a way for us to be here for only six months?

CLAIRE

Because anyone with a brain is going to confess.

SARAH

I have a brain and I'm not going to confess.

CLAIRE

Only because you're not using it. Or at least not properly. Think about it. We both want to spend the least amount of time in here, right.

SARAH

Ya. Das ist richtig.

CLAIRE

The least amount of time is zero and that option is available. The only way to access that option is by confessing.

SARAH

Only one of us will go free. The other person will have to stay here for fifty years.

CLAIRE

And neither one of us wants to stay that long. Both of us want to spend the least amount of time here possible.

SARAH

So. We both won't confess.

CLAIRE

No. Both of us will confess.

SARAH

Why? You're the one who isn't thinking.

CLAIRE

Listen. We both want out of here. As soon as possible. Neither one of us wants to be here for fifty years -- which is the risk we take if we don't confess. So, we'll both

confess, hoping the other chooses not to. It's the only sane option.

SARAH

The only sane option is to confess hoping the other won't in the full knowledge that they will. How does that make any sense? If we both agree not to confess, we both get out in less time.

CLAIRE

Look, if we had some way to coordinate the decision, to guarantee that both of us weren't going to confess, it would be the right option. But we don't. And, because we can't, we have to assume the other person is going to confess. It's not even a question of one of us trying to screw the other person. It's not the right way to put it. The other person has nothing to do with it. I simply have to assume you are going to do what it takes to get out of here the quickest because that is exactly what I am going to do. And that means confessing. So, I have to confess as well. Otherwise, I'm stuck here for fifty years.

SARAH

If we trust each other --

CLAIRE

This isn't a question of trust! It doesn't even matter that we're strangers. If you were my best friend in the whole world, I'd still have to confess. It's not like if we hugged more the problem would solve itself. In point of fact, I do trust you. I trust you to do the smart thing. The smart thing is to confess.

SARAH

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my whole life.

CLAIRE

It doesn't matter. You have no choice. I'm telling you. I'm going to confess.

SARAH

I'm telling you, I'm not.

CLAIRE

Why? Why would you do that?

SARAH

Because, it's the right thing to do.

CLAIRE

The right thing to do. In what possible world is it the right thing to do?

SARAH

In this world.

CLAIRE

Wrong. In this world, your only option is to confess.

SARAH

Last time I looked, the option of not confessing hadn't magically disappeared.

CLAIRE

No, not magically. They have set the rules up so that there's only one option. Only one sane option.

SARAH

No. No, there's not.

CLAIRE

Don't be stupid. We aren't arguing about the rules of hopscotch or which dolly we are going play with. Saying no isn't going to get you anywhere. This is your life, your whole life we're talking about.

SARAH

You said it yourself. They designed it this way. Why would you want to play into that. Why are you trying to think the way they want you to think?

CLAIRE

Because they can do this to us. Because it's their game. All we can do is play by their rules and make the best of it.

SARAH

Or we can tell them the game sucks and not play.

CLAIRE

If you were a little older, had experienced a little more, you'd see things differently.

SARAH

No, I wouldn't. There's an obvious way out of this, which is not great, but it's the best under the circumstances, the best for both of us, and it's the way I'm going to take.

CLAIRE

Why are you being such a girl? You know what's going to happen. You'll be stuck here the rest of your life. Alone.

SARAH

I know what might happen but I also know what I want to happen. I can't be sure I'll get what I want but I can at least try.

CLAIRE

You're crazy. Or worse. You want to be some kind of martyr.

SARAH

I don't want to be a martyr. I want to live my life based on choices I make because I want to make them -- not because I am suppose to make them. I'll deal with the consequences, as they come.

(Lights go up again and GUARD enters, holding a clipboard.)

GUARD

Excellent. I see you ladies have had time to discuss things.

SARAH

Yes. Yes, we have. I think it's pretty clear what we're both going to do.

CLAIRE

Or you're trying to trick me. This is some kind of elaborate con.

SARAH

I'm not trying to con you. You know what I'm going to do. Do what you think is best.

CLAIRE

You know exactly what I am going to do.

SARAH

I scream you scream we all scream for ice cream.

GUARD

Alright then. Well, now that's settled. If I could get Claire to take this form and pen and enter the room through that door on the left there, she will be able to register her decision in private.

(He holds out the form and pen
to be taken but neither woman
moves. He points at SARAH.)

You're Claire, right? Take the form and go in the other room please.

CLAIRE

No, she's Sarah. I'm Claire.

GUARD.

Oh. My mistake. Take the form, please. I'll stay here with Sarah to register her decision. I'll knock when we're ready.

CLAIRE

Don't be stupid, Sarah. Do the right thing.

SARAH

I will.

(Claire enters room and closes
door.)

GUARD

It's quite sound proof.

SARAH

Of course.

GUARD

So, what's your decision?

SARAH

I'm not filling out your form.

GUARD

Now now. Refusing to fill out the form will be interpreted as an unwillingness to confess.

SARAH

That's fine.

GUARD

Really? Have you properly considered the consequences of your decision. Frequently, people don't understand the implications of the sentencing rules. Would you like me to explain it again?

SARAH

I understand perfectly. No explanations required.

GUARD

Very well. Would you please fill out the form and record your unwillingness to confess. Space for an explanation has been provided.

SARAH

No.

GUARD

You've put a lot of faith and trust in a person you don't know. I can't say I'd do the same.

SARAH

No faith or trust here. She won't make the right decision.

(GUARD knocks on door and, after a pause, the door opens. CLAIRE hands her paper to GUARD and stands in front of the cell's main door. As he reads, CLAIRE reaches into her purse and pulls out a pack of cigarettes.)

GUARD

Of course.

CLAIRE

I didn't lose them.

(Removes a cigarette from
pack.)

I lied. I only had a few left. That's why I bummed one off
of you. I wanted to make sure I'd have some for later.
Sorry.

SARAH

Overflowing with confessions, I see.

CLAIRE

(Hesitates, then lights
cigarette.)

Yes.

SARAH

Are you apologizing for the cigarette or your more recent
decision?

CLAIRE

Both.

SARAH

Apology accepted.

CLAIRE

I take it, I'm leaving now.

SARAH

Of course.

CLAIRE

Fuck you. I warned you. I told you what I was going to do.
Don't try to make this out like it's my fault.

SARAH

I'm not.

CLAIRE

I made the only sensible choice. The only sensible
decision. The decision you should have made. I wasn't going
to wait for you to come to your senses.

SARAH

Fair enough. You win some. You lose some. Good-bye. Good luck.

CLAIRE

Cunt.

(CLAIRE throws the cigarette pack on the floor and exits without looking back. GUARD follows, smiling.

SARAH watches the cigarettes for a moment, sighs, shrugs, and picks them up.)

Ugh. Menthols.

(She goes to the bed, opens her shoulder bag, and pulls out a smaller designer leather handbag. She opens it and pulls out an unopened pack of cigarettes. She puts the handbag away again.)

SARAH

(She reads the package's warning.)

Cigarette smoke harms others. I hope someone feeds Oscar.

BLACKOUT