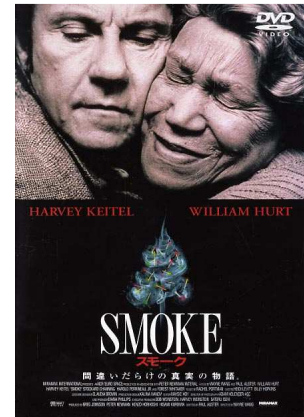


Smoke

Director: Wayne Wang
1995 (108')



The Brooklyn Cigar Co., at the corner of Third Street and Eighth Avenue sells tobacco. Here can be found Auggie Wren, owner of the store and one who enjoys a smoke and a talk. There is Paul Benjamin, a novelist with writer's block still consumed by tragedy. Then there is Rashid who miraculously enters into Paul's life and goes in search of a one-armed man. Ruby then reappears from the past with some news for Auggie. *Smoke* is a film of pieces of lives in Brooklyn, New York. These are simple stories crafted by the author Paul Auster and transformed into a wonderful film by Wayne Wang.

Vocabulary and expressions:

A crack: A joke

The cracks you make!

Suit yourself: Do as you want

To mess up: To make a mistake or do something incorrectly

Sorry I messed up

To give somebody the creeps: To frighten or unnerve somebody

To stare at somebody or something: To look at sb. or sth. for a long time

It gives a man the creeps to be stared at all day

To hock something: To pawn sth.; to get money by borrowing on a possession of some value

Did you hock it for a bottle of gin?

Crack: Rock cocaine: A heavily addictive form of cocaine

Strung out: Addicted to a drug or intoxicated from drug use

She's strung out on crack

To handle sth.: To successfully deal with a situation or problem

I thought I could handle it

Cut it out!: Stop it! Stop doing that!

In a nutshell: In a few words; concisely

That's it in a nutshell

To blubber: To cry sob noisily

I can't stand people who blubber

To mock sb.: To make fun of sb.; to ridicule sb.

Are you mocking me?

A feather in somebody's cap: An achievement or success that may bring future reward

That's a feather in your cap

I'm all ears: I am ready to listen to you with undivided attention

Measly: Very small or of little consequence (used derogatively)

He was a measly little punk

To hug sb.: To embrace sb

Reviews of the film:

The movie is a delicate creation, with no big punch line or payoff. Watching it, I was in the moment: It was about these people wandering lost through their lives. Afterward, I felt good about them - good because they were likable people, but good, too, because the writer and director took care to give them dialogue that suited their needs. Of all the handicaps in life, the worst must be the inability to express how you feel.

Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

The dialogue, written by Paul Auster, sparkles. Each conversation has at least one memorable line, and it's always delivered in such a casual manner that it blends right in. Auster's creations speak and act like real people, and that helps us identify with them. The script has not "dumbed up" what the characters say simply to appeal to a wider audience.

James Berardinelli, Reelviews

Lovely, subtle and carefully textured..... If you care about films that respect their characters, and have something interesting to say about the ways we communicate and find points of connection, then don't miss this one.

Edward Guthmann, San Francisco Chronicle

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