

THE FRIENDS *of Julia Dark*

By Art C. Lennox

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The Friends of Julia Dark

-2-

Dedicated

*To all the young men and women
who have had the courage
to say "No."*

—Art Lennox

STORY OF PLAY

Seven teens are brought to police headquarters to tell what they know of their friend's devastating encounter with drugs and alcohol at a party the night before. Through police questioning and the attorney's defense, we find that while no one gave Julia Dark the drugs, no one stopped her from using them either. The teens know all about the dangers of drug abuse, but they don't understand the responsibilities of friendship. The story is based on a true incident.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11 flexible parts, approx. 6 m, 5 w)

Sergeant Quenton: Police officer, m or f.

Officer Cooper: Assistant, m or f.

Roth: Lawyer for the students, m or f.

Julia's Mother: Grief-stricken, accusatory.

Jill Bonner: Cheerleader.

Gilbert Clarke: Burned out.

Tiffany Hart: Flippant young lady.

Wally Ives: Smart aleck.

Mick Larson: Football player.

Ken Sommers: President of the student council.

Anne Sinclair: Honor student.

In the script Quenton and Cooper are men and Roth a woman; however, the parts are flexible.

TIME: The present.

SETTING: Interrogation room at Midland Police Headquarters, Saturday morning. Desk at the far SR. Two long tables in "L" shape face it. Eight chairs placed at tables sides. A door is behind tables.

PROPS: Briefcase/papers for Roth; purse with comb and mirror for Tiffany; envelope, folder, and small drug packet for Quenton; gum in wrapper for Wally.

THE FRIENDS OF JULIA DARK

(AT RISE: The door to the room is thrust open by COOPER. Seven STUDENTS are ushered inside followed by ROTH.)

COOPER: OK, you kids. Take a seat by the table. *(To ROTH.)* Counselor, you can sit by the desk if you like.

ROTH: *(Indicates chair at the end R of table.)* This will be fine, Officer.

COOPER: *(Nods then looks at the group sitting.)* Detective Sergeant Quenton will be here in a minute. If you need anything, I'll be outside the door. *(Moves toward door.)*

WALLY: *(Smirk on face.)* Officer?

COOPER: Yeah?

WALLY: What time are orders being taken for our breakfast?

(The STUDENTS break into snickers. A slight smile comes to ROTH'S face.)

COOPER: *(Frowns at WALLY.)* You know, kid, you were really yucking it up in the hallway. Everything's funny, isn't it? Well, let me set the picture straight. You and your buddies are here for one thing and one thing only. A girl is lying in a hospital bed suffering from a drug overdose. For your sake, I hope she walks out of that hospital OK.

ROTH: *(Sets briefcase on table and eyes COOPER coolly.)* I hope the police department is not getting presumptuous again. The community is quite aware of what happened last time the department overstepped its jurisdiction.

(COOPER is about to say something but holds back. He exits left of the table, opens outer door, and disappears through it, closing the door behind him.)

MICK: *(Slaps hands together and grins.)* Boy, Ms. Roth, you put that cop in his place.

The Friends of Julia Dark

-5-

(GILBERT, WALLY and TIFFANY laugh; JILL smiles weakly; KEN and ANNE look at one another, their faces impassive.)

ROTH: *(Looks sternly at MICK.)* Young man, I am not here to put anybody in their place. Your families have retained me to make sure that the police do not coerce any information by infringing upon your legal rights.

GILBERT: *(Angrily.)* Legal rights! What have we done? Just because we went to a party last night and had ourselves a good time, the lousy cops gotta haul us in and make with the threats. Cripe!

KEN: That's right. We didn't do anything except --

WALLY: *(Interrupting.)* -- except do what everybody should do at a party, have fun. *(Smiles.)*

ROTH: *(Calmer.)* Accordingly, Julia's mother did have some legitimate concerns with regard to Julia. The police were obligated to follow up on her complaint.

TIFFANY: *(Rummages through HER purse, locates a mirror and fixes at her hair.)* Instead of questioning us, maybe the police ought to ask Julia what drug she took, that is, after they wrench out her guts.

ANNE: *(Makes a squeamish face.)* Geez, Tiffany, can't you be a little more subtle?

TIFFANY: *(Still looking in mirror.)* Subtle! My darling, you weren't very subtle last night with Ken. *(Rolls HER eyes at HER.)*

(Snicker from WALLY. KEN drops his eyes to the table.)

ANNE: *(Aghast.)* You really are crass sometimes, Tiffany.

(The door to the room swings open and QUENTON enters. He looks at the assembled group for a few seconds then swings right by the table to the desk. In his hand is a manila envelope and folder.)

QUENTON: Good morning. I am Detective Sergeant Quenton.

The Friends of Julia Dark

-6-

(The GROUP looks casually at QUENTON. WALLY raises his hand slightly and waves.)

ROTH: Good morning, Sergeant.

QUENTON: *(Slight nod in recognition.)* Ms. Roth.

ROTH: I am here as counselor for this group of young adults. I hope we can expedite this trivial and unpleasant matter, then come to a satisfactory conclusion.

QUENTON: *(Places envelope on the desk then sits on table edge.)* You consider this a trivial matter?

ROTH: Well, Sergeant, it is to my understanding that these youngsters did attend a house party last evening. Allegedly some smoking of marijuana took place as well as the consumption of alcohol. If the police report is correct, Julia was found in a bedroom by her mother in an unconscious state. Julia's mother filed a complaint later that evening accusing Julia's friends of ... of what was the word she used? *(Looks at some papers in front of HER.)* Ah, yes, "victimizing" her daughter. The only victim here appears to be Julia herself. The first police officer on the scene reported an unusual amount of alcohol -- I believe it was gin -- spilled on Julia's clothes. By all indications, she got drunk on her own volition. None of these people were at the house when the police arrived. However, of course, if one of these youngsters did indeed provide the alcohol, a misdemeanor charge could be leveled. But discovering who, if anyone, supplied the alcohol would prove, I am afraid, a most unpleasant task for the police. *(A very slight smile comes to ROTH'S face.)*

QUENTON: *(Standing.)* And I am sorry to report that the facts surrounding this inquiry are more serious than the information you initially received, Counselor. Julia did indeed have gin in her system. But there was an additional substance found in her body.

ROTH: *(Now somewhat peeved.)* Yes, yes. There was some mention of marijuana but still, Sergeant, that constitutes only a misdemeanor and --

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