

From The Firecracker Incident by Don Zolidis

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JOE, 14, awkward

JULIE, 17, very pretty

JULIE has just been dumped and met JOE, a stranger at a party. She's driven him to one of her favorite spots.

(JOE speaks to the audience as JULIE enters.)

JOE

The sand and gravel pit by the dump wasn't really a pit. It was more like a dumping ground for unused construction material. There were huge concrete cylinders everywhere for some project that never happened.

JULIE

I think these were supposed to be used for the sewers.

JOE *(to the audience)*

And twisted old trees that were growing between them. There were piles of concrete blocks – it looked like a giant had forgotten to pick up his toys.

(The CHORUS adjusts things to create a strange, weird landscape.)

JULIE

I come out here sometimes to look at the stars. There's no light pollution. It's pretty cool.

JOE

Isn't this like trespassing?

JULIE

Yeah probably.

JOE

So that doesn't bother you that you're like breaking the law?

JULIE

It shouldn't be against the law to just be places. No one else is using this.

(JULIE is about to climb up on something, then stops, sick.)

JOE

You okay?

JULIE

...yeah. My stomach is killing me, that's all.

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JOE

You know I should probably go home.

JULIE

We just got here what are you talking about?

JOE

If my parents find out that I'm gone they're going to annihilate me.

JULIE

Is there any difference between coming home at one or coming home at three?

JOE

Probably just different shades of death.

JULIE

So don't worry about it. You're gonna die either way.

(JULIE fights through the pain and climbs up on something.)

JOE

Great. That's nice to think about.

JULIE

Come on.

(JOE climbs up and sits next to her. JULIE exhales woozily. She grows increasingly sick throughout the scene.)

JOE

Your parents don't care that you're out late?

JULIE

I don't really have a curfew.

JOE

Wow. Must be nice.

JULIE

They don't really notice me, so... so it is what it is.

JOE

Right.

JULIE

How old are you, Joe?

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Fourteen. JOE

Oh man. That's terrible. JULIE

I know. JOE

That's like the worst period of your life. JULIE

Yeah I'm figuring that out. How old are you? JOE

Seventeen. JULIE

Is that better? JOE

Not really. I mean – I guess it's better. Or it was better. Have you ever had your heart broken?
(JOE laughs.) JULIE

I've never even kissed anybody. JOE

You could still have your heart broken even if you haven't kissed anybody.
(JULIE clutches her stomach.) JULIE

You sure you're okay? You don't look okay. JOE

Having your heart broken is worse than being fourteen. JULIE

I guess I've got a lot to look forward to. JOE

...yeah.
(pause.) JULIE

Do you like your life?

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JOE

What do you mean?

JULIE

I mean do you like your life?

JOE

Like, could I be somebody else if I wanted to be?

JULIE

No I mean like – all of it – do you like who you are?

(Pause.)

JOE

Do you?

JULIE *(woozy)*

...I asked you first.

JOE

No. I don't.

(This is probably the first time he's realized this.)

I don't like my life.

JULIE

Why not?

JOE

Well... my parents are really hard on me, and I know – you know it's because they love me and all and that's good but... I guess I get the impression that they don't think I'm worth very much. Like I'm just some obstacle or nuisance that bothers them on occasion. And the worst thing – is that's kinda how I feel about myself too. You know? Like I'm in the way. And that – why would anybody like me? In the best circumstances I just blend in and when people do notice me they basically spit at me, so... of course they do. Of course they do.

JULIE

No hey hey you're a good guy –

(She puts her arm around him.)

JOE

You just met me –

JULIE

I'm a really good judge of character.

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JOE

You fell in love with Blake's brother. You're a terrible judge of character.

JULIE

In this case I'm a good judge. You're really decent.

JOE

...thanks.

JULIE

And your parents shouldn't think that about you. You should like who you are... And if you don't... then change.

JOE

...yeah.

JULIE

Be the guy you want to be.

JOE

Yeah. Do you like who you are?

(Pause. JULIE is really feeling woozy.)

JULIE

Not at all... My parents are too wrapped up in their own stuff to care about me – I just got my heart stomped on, and my best friend would rather spend time with her boyfriend than care about me. And I lost my driver's license.

JOE

You don't even have a license? How do you even drive then?

JULIE

You can still drive without a license... you just have to not get caught...

(JULIE takes a moment.)

I feel like... I swallowed a bag of cement. The birds are coming.

JOE

What?

JULIE

...you seen the birds?

JOE

What birds?

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JULIE

...the... it's like you get your insides carved out of you... all your little dreams about yourself... somebody throws on the light... and they die.

JOE

You're not making any sense. We should probably go.

JULIE

I'm tired. I'm gonna sleep here.

JOE

You can't sleep here. We should go. Are you sure you're feeling okay?

JULIE

Might've done something.

JOE

What do you mean?

JULIE

Took a couple pills that's all.

JOE

What do you mean you took a couple pills?

JULIE

Good night Joe.

(She lies down.)

JOE

Julie? Julie?

(He tries shaking her awake. She mumbles something but doesn't stir.)

How many pills did you take?

(He tries shaking her again. She doesn't move.)

Julie. Oh crap. Uh-oh. Do you have a phone?

(No response.)

Do you have a phone? Where's your phone?

(No response.)

Wake up. Wake up!

(He starts searching for her phone. Finds it.)

Crap. What's your pin? What's your pin Julie? Julie what's your pin? Your phone's locked what's your pin?

(He starts punching in numbers. 1111. 2222. Etc...)

Oh man. Come on. You have to wake up!

(He shakes her roughly.)

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Mmm? JULIE

What's your pin Julie? JOE

...what? JULIE

What's your pin? Tell me your pin. We have to call somebody. JOE

...I don't know. JULIE

You know what it is what's your pin? Come on. JOE

...3456 JULIE
(she sinks back asleep. JOE dials 911.)

Yeah hello. Um... I've got an emergency. JOE

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