

## • BELDON PARK

*Luna and Marty, two high school teens, have been best buddies for years. Unfortunately, they've always been in the "out" crowd. Recently, Luna has been revamping her appearance to change this situation. She's becoming a little more stylish and, in the process, a little more revealing and sexy. She feels this might be a good way to attract Josh, one of the more popular boys in her class. Marty is aware of her crush on Josh and is particularly upset about it because, one, he has a thing for Luna and, two, he's overheard Josh dishonor Luna's reputation in the locker room. At the top of the scene, Luna is whooping it up with a group of Josh's friends about heading to the beach this Saturday night to party. Marty vehemently objects to this potential get-together with Josh and his pals.*

LUNA: *(Waving.)* Yeah! Yeah-hah! We can party like crazy. You bring the stuff. *(Winks.)* See you guys tonight. *(Coyly, waving.)* See ya, Josh. *(She smiles. Beat. Turns. Sees Marty looking disgusted.)* What? What?! What is your problem?

MARTY: Nothing! I didn't say anything. Though I probably should.

LUNA: You don't have to. You're looking all narrow-eyed and witchy at me.

MARTY: No, I'm not!

LUNA: Well, you looked like you were going to lose your lunch or something just now.

MARTY: I'm not feeling well for your information. My stomach is killing me.

LUNA: Maybe you ate too much. Or maybe God is punishing you for being such a pain to me.

MARTY: I didn't say anything. *(Beat.)* Do you want me to say something?

LUNA: No! God, not like you need to. You're sitting there all contorted and retarded or somethin'. I know you don't like them.

MARTY: No, I don't like them if that's what you're asking.

LUNA: I'm not asking you anything, Marty. You're obviously all moody over your physics final.

MARTY: It has nothing to do with that.

LUNA: Well, ring, ring. *(Marty looks annoyed. She continues.)*

Ring, ring. Rinnnng, Rinnnng!

MARTY: Hello?

LUNA: This is the get-a-clue phone. Calling you to remind you this is not your business.

MARTY: I thought we were friends. Is that not my business?

LUNA: Well, I'm not so sure . . .

MARTY: You're not so sure we're friends? Fine! *(Pushes back from the table. Grabs his side.)* Ow! *(Recovering.)* I can't believe what a total loser you've become Luna. Screw— *(He starts to grab his books.)*

LUNA: Hey! Wait. Don't start on me. I only meant that sometimes you act like we're more than friends.

MARTY: *(Looks down.)* No, I don't. I don't feel that way.

LUNA: You seem like it sometimes. And besides, just because we're friends doesn't mean you're the only one I want to hang around with. Ya know? I'd like to meet a few more people in high school. You and Lumpy and Anne are great, but you all could branch out a little more.

MARTY: You make us sound like the royal losers. If you don't like hanging out with us, don't. Fine. Meet some more friends. But those guys are not your friends. They're after something else.

LUNA: *(Flirtatiously in his face.)* Oh yeah, Marty, what are they after? *(She blinks her eyelids.)*

MARTY: You know exactly what I mean.

LUNA: *(Seriously.)* Oh, yeah, they'd have to be after that because why else would they hang with such an ugly girl, right? It wouldn't have anything to do with the music I play

or that I'm a good dancer. Well, I'm not ugly anymore, Marty. Not like that anyway. I've grown, I've changed a lot this year.

MARTY: Yeah, right, it's not like you got all cool and philosophical, expanding your mind. You got all bulimic first semester and now you wear a lot of tight clothes. If that's what you call growing, yeah, you've grown and changed.

LUNA: God! You are . . . I'm just one big ole slut to you. At least I'm not a lard-butt sitting around in my puddle of depression, watching scrambled porno on cable all day!

MARTY: Oh gee, thanks a lot. *(Beat.)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean you're a slut. I meant, some of your clothes look slutty, but not all your clothes. And believe me I know I'm a lard-butt, thank you very much.

LUNA: Look, I'm just going out with those guys and a couple of girls to hang out by the beach tonight. I thought it sounded fun. I'm glad they invited me. I'm going because I want to dance and party by the beach. Is that all right with you?

MARTY: Those guys will bring Ecstasy.

LUNA: So? So maybe I'll try it once. It's no big deal once.

MARTY: Do you know what that does to the neurons in your brain?!

LUNA: I don't know. Maybe it'll make me even more slutty than you already think I am. A total slut monster. Whoo-hoo! Won't that be fuuuunnnnn?!

MARTY: No offense, Luna, but Josh is not interested in you romantically if that's what you're thinking.

LUNA: Where did that come from? Who said I was interested in Josh?

MARTY: I just don't want you to get the wrong idea.

LUNA: You have nerve, you know that? I think this friendship is on its way out. You are way out of line. And Anne is too. First of all, because I told Anne explicitly that I didn't want anyone else to know. I told her that, and she promised. See how much that means.

MARTY: But I—

LUNA: Don't! I know she told you, so just shut up. And secondly, because it's none of your business if I want to hang out with some cool people. Some maybe, popular people. It's so totally surprising to you that some popular people might find me half-interesting? That's what's insulting! Your assumptions are insulting.

MARTY: It's not that.

LUNA: If you're jealous, then you're jealous. That's not my fault! You don't know what I think or feel. You really don't know what Josh Michaels thinks and feels. You don't know him. You don't even know what you feel because you pack it in and push it down to the bottom of that huge stomach of yours! *(Pause.)* Anyway, I'm gonna go. And don't wait for me after school. I won't be carpooling with you guys tonight. I'd rather walk. *(She gets up to leave.)*

MARTY: You're right, Luna. I do pack it in so I don't feel.

LUNA: I'm really angry at you at the moment. I didn't mean to make that crack about your stomach. I have a big stomach too. I'm sorry. I just think . . . we shouldn't talk for a couple of days. *(Starting to leave.)*

MARTY: *(Beat.)* Wait. I know Anne shouldn't have told me anything. Though I figured it out already. You drool when he walks in the room. A puddle gathers around your feet.

LUNA: Whatever.

MARTY: And this is absolutely none of my business. You're right.

LUNA: At least you got that right.

MARTY: But it was hard for me to ignore what he told me.

LUNA: What? I'm not talking to you. Okay? Do you understand?

MARTY: And he didn't just tell me. He told every guy in the locker room.

LUNA: What are you talking about, Marty?

MARTY: The park. Beldon Park?

LUNA: *(Pause.)* What about Beldon Park?

MARTY: Him and his buddy Matt. They're jerks. We always said that. And this afternoon made me sure of it. What happened to you? You didn't like them at all last semester. It's like you lost your mind.

LUNA: I didn't lose my mind. So what exactly did Matt say? He probably was just bragging.

MARTY: It wasn't Matt who said stuff. It was Josh. And he definitely wasn't bragging. Those guys are not cool. They're total jerks, Luna.

LUNA: Lump them into a whole sum, why don't you?

MARTY: They are a lump sum. Or maybe just a lump of crap.

LUNA: How would you know?

MARTY: They don't think individually for one. And for two, I've been going to school with them for eleven years. They're like mob mind-set. And no offense, because I'm not trying to hurt your feelings, but they're using you.

LUNA: Okay, then. What did Josh say that was such a big deal to you?

MARTY: Well, he . . . he kinda said . . .

LUNA: I know. He told you that I showed him something at Beldon Park. That I showed him and his friend Matt my boobs. So what?! It's not that big of a deal. Get over it. He was just bragging like guys do.

MARTY: He said you were a whore.

LUNA: *(Beat.)* No, he didn't. He didn't. You're lying.

MARTY: Yes, he did. And he said you did things, Luna.

LUNA: What things?

MARTY: He said you let him do things to you . . . some things—I don't want to say, but they were kinda, ya know? And it was in front of other guys.

LUNA: What do you mean? What are you talking about? What did he say?

MARTY: Ya know, stuff that . . . touching and groping kinda thing. Things girls don't generally let guys do in parks.

LUNA: Well, he's a liar if he told you that!

MARTY: Exactly! That's what I'm saying.

LUNA: Or maybe *you* are.

MARTY: What?

LUNA: You could be a liar. I mean, you hate Josh so much. Maybe you're just trying to turn me against him.

MARTY: What?!! Are you serious?!

LUNA: I don't know. I just can't believe he told you those things.

MARTY: Not just me! Everybody! What the hell?! You are— Yeah, yeah, I'm just trying to turn you against them. That's all, Luna. *(He starts to go.)*

LUNA: Wait!

MARTY: *(Stops.)* Why should I? Why would I want to talk to someone who thinks I'm a liar? We're obviously not even close to good friends if you'd think I'd lie about something like that.

LUNA: I didn't say for sure you were.

MARTY: If you think it's going to be all fun tonight, Luna, you're wrong. There aren't any girls invited tonight. Do you get it? You're the only girl invited. One girl and eight guys. Got it now?!

LUNA: *(Beat.)* How do you know?

MARTY: I know what I'm talking about. *(He lifts up his shirt, revealing a huge bruise.)* Is this proof enough?

LUNA: *(Seeing the bruise. Pause.)* Oh my God! What did they do to you?

MARTY: *(He puts down his shirt.)* I don't know why I even bothered. You aren't worth it.

LUNA: What happened to you? What did they do to you?

MARTY: I just stuffed my face with too much food and my stomach got all purple from expanding too much. From being such a lard-butt.

LUNA: Oh God, Marty. You defended me, didn't you?

MARTY: It's really interesting to see the inside of a toilet bowl up close and personal. Of course, I would have had a clearer view had the toilet been flushed.

LUNA: Oh my God!

MARTY: I didn't even want to defend you. But I couldn't stand what they were saying. I know you're not like that! I know you're—

LUNA: Yes I am!

MARTY: No, you're not! I know you're—

LUNA: Yes!! I am. I was like that. I just . . . I let him. (*Fighting tears.*) I don't know why.

MARTY: (*Pause.*) Well . . . I called him the "A" word, Luna. I slammed his head into a locker hard too. He was all stunned. It was so great. I wish you could have seen it.

LUNA: I'm sorry, Marty. I'm sorry for what I said to you. About everything. Does it hurt bad?

MARTY: They didn't hurt me. It'll heal. We're friends. What I did was no big deal.

LUNA: But it is a big deal. It's a big deal to me. It means a lot. (*Pause.*) I'm so embarrassed. It was so stupid. He said he wouldn't tell anyone. He said he really liked me a lot, wanted to take me out this weekend. He only wanted to see what it felt like. His friends watched. He told me they wouldn't tell anyone. It was a secret. Forever.

MARTY: It's okay. I understand.

LUNA: No! It's not okay! I knew he was using me. But I just . . . I'm an idiot. And a big slutty—

MARTY: You're not a slut!

LUNA: I just . . . I just . . .

MARTY: Wanted him to like you. (*Nods.*) It's okay. (*He bugs her.*) We all feel like that sometimes. Do stupid things so people will like us. It just means, it just means you're human.

LUNA: And what if you didn't talk me out of going tonight? What would have happened to me then?

MARTY: Nothing. We would have been there. Lumpy, Anne, and I would have killed them. We would have killed them. Plain and simple.

(*She looks up to him, not sure what to say. She suddenly bugs him.*)

## CRESCENDO

*Alexander, 21, returns home to care for Helena, 63, his grandmother, who is sick with cancer. Helena is a flamboyant, energetic older lady who has always exaggerated Alexander's talent. In this scene, Alexander confronts his grandmother about her overstated view of the world and, in particular, her distorted view of his talent for the piano.*

HELENA: Oh my goodness, let me look at you! Let me look at you, Alex!

ALEXANDER: Grandma, I—

HELENA: Bite your tongue, sir. (*Hits his arm.*) And shame on you for not writing or calling for six months. You can forget the inheritance now.

ALEXANDER: Helena, can't we just skip the whole look-me-over routine? It seems kinda too grandma for you anyway.

HELENA: I'll be the judge of that. (*Beat.*) What did they do to you in Las Vegas?

ALEXANDER: What are you talking about?

HELENA: Your eyes are all bloodshot. Shoulders are saggy. And you've a down inflection in your voice that I *do not* recognize. What did they do to you there?

ALEXANDER: Nothing. It was just a long car trip.

HELENA: The car? You should have taken a train. Trains are so much more romantic. Your grandfather loved trains, remember?

ALEXANDER: Yeah, sure.

HELENA: He took me on a lovely, long train trip through Siberia. The food and service was primo—absolutely artistic . . . roasted duck, little tea sandwiches, bittersweet chocolate puff things. All served by total gentlemen in crisp white coats. And the view, well—simply breathtaking, Alexander.