

I'M FINE, REALLY

JULIE: Age 16, a sweet lively girl who is concerned for her friend's welfare.

TRACI: Age 16, in love with Alan and blind to his faults and mistreatment of her.

JULIE: Traci, where were you last night? I thought you and Alan were going to come over after the game.

TRACI: Poor Alan. He felt so bad after losing the game that he just wanted to go home and be alone.

JULIE: Well, it's not like he lost it all by himself. There are quite a few other guys on the football team.

TRACI: Not all of them dropped the ball in the last few seconds of the game on the two yard line when the team is behind by only three points.

JULIE: I see what you mean. So what did you do?

TRACI: We just went to his house. His parents are away for the weekend, so we just stayed over there.

JULIE: Oh. Well, too bad. You missed a great party.

TRACI: Julie, you know how Alan gets when he's depressed. The last thing he wants is to be around a bunch of people having a good time.

JULIE: Yeah, I guess so. Kind of a drag for you, though, isn't it?

TRACI: What does that mean?

JULIE: Nothing. Except he seems depressed a lot lately.

TRACI: He's not. He just has some things going on in his life right now that trouble him.

JULIE: So he becomes a hermit?

TRACI: He's not a hermit. He's just sensitive. He says that I am the only one who understands how he feels. He needs me, Julie.

JULIE: I guess so. Well, c'mon, we're going to be late for class if we don't hurry.

TRACI: Yeah, I'm coming. Let me get my books, OK?

JULIE: Traci, you are always late for everything. Hurry up. I'll just drag you there and you won't be late.
(She laughingly grabs her arm and drags her a few steps.)

TRACI: Ow! Hey! *(She pulls away.)*

JULIE: God, I barely touched you. What a crybaby.
(TRACI is trying to cover up real pain.) Traci . . . what's wrong?

TRACI: Nothing, I just whacked my arm on the car door this weekend and it still hurts.

JULIE: Let me see.

TRACI: Julie, it's fine. C'mon, we're going to be late.

JULIE: Let me see your arm, Traci.

TRACI: I'm fine. Let's go.

JULIE: *(Pulling up TRACI's sleeve, seeing a large bruise.)*
What the heck is this?

TRACI: I told you.

JULIE: This is not from hitting your arm on the car door. This looks like it was slammed in a car door.

TRACI: Are you calling me a liar?

JULIE: I'm asking you a question. How did this happen?

TRACI: I told you.

JULIE: Look at me, Traci. I've been your best friend since seventh grade, and I know when you are not telling the truth, so talk to me. What happened?

TRACI: If I tell you, you won't act stupid about it?

JULIE: Did your dad hit you?

TRACI: Oh, c'mon, Julie. You know my dad. No.

JULIE: *(Extremely relieved)* Oh, thank God. Well, what then?

TRACI: It's just so stupid. Alan and I were wrestling around and my arm hit the table next to the couch.

JULIE: *(Quietly, disbelieving)* What?

TRACI: You know how Alan likes to play with me. Well, he was so down after Friday's game that I wanted

to get him in a good mood, so I started teasing with him.

JULIE: And . . .

TRACI: Well, he started to laugh and play back and then I whacked my arm on the table and that was the end of play time.

JULIE: And that was all?

TRACI: Yes, that was all.

JULIE: Isn't that what happened when you chipped your front tooth?

TRACI: What?

JULIE: You said the exact same thing about your front tooth getting chipped. You said that you and Alan were wrestling on the floor and you accidentally got whacked in the mouth.

TRACI: You know he likes to play.

JULIE: Playing a little rough, aren't we?

TRACI: I really don't think it's any of your business.

JULIE: What about last month when you said that you ran into the door and got a black eye. *(TRACI looks away.)* It's Alan, isn't it? He hits you.

TRACI: He doesn't hit me.

JULIE: Talk to me, Traci.

TRACI: *(Very quietly)* Alan gets upset, and he needs me. I have to be there for him.

JULIE: You mean he needs a punching bag, so you're it?

TRACI: *(Gathers her things.)* I knew you wouldn't understand.

JULIE: *(Stopping her)* Traci, I'm trying to. Tell me. Don't shut me out.

TRACI: Like Friday after the game. I wanted to go to the party and he didn't want to. He knew that Brian and Pat and the rest of the guys would make fun of him for dropping the ball and losing the game. I kept bugging him about going. It was my own fault.

JULIE: What? Omigod. I can't believe you just said that.

TRACI: But he told me to shut up. I wouldn't let up.

JULIE: So he hits you? Just because you speak?

TRACI: He didn't hit me. He just held me.

JULIE: Traci, you are 5'2" and he is 6'1". I can see it. He picked you up and shook you like a cat.

TRACI: He didn't mean to. He never does.

JULIE: What do you mean, "He never does"? He does this a lot?

TRACI: Not every day. You make it sound worse than it is.

JULIE: Has he ever full out hit you?

TRACI: No, he would never do that. I'd have to get him very, very angry for him to do that. No, I know when not to push him.

JULIE: I cannot believe I am hearing this out of an intelligent human being. He has no right.

TRACI: He doesn't mean to.

JULIE: If he is grabbing you now, the next step is going to be hitting.

TRACI: He won't. He loves me.

JULIE: Oh, fine. I'd hate to see it if he hated you. That's just sick, Traci —

TRACI: *(Cutting her off)* And I love him.

JULIE: And that is sicker.

TRACI: Julie, don't say another word. Not another word.

JULIE: Word, heck, I've got paragraphs to say...I could speak volumes.

TRACI: If you value our friendship, you will forget this conversation ever took place.

JULIE: I do value our friendship. And I value you. Obviously more than you do.

TRACI: You don't understand. Alan needs me. He needs my love.

JULIE: He needs someone to punish for his own stupid life.

TRACI: Goodbye Julie. *(She begins to go.)*

JULIE: He needs help, Traci.

TRACI: *(Stopping, but without looking back)* He needs me. *(She is gone.)*

JULIE: *(Sadly, quietly)* Traci . . . *(She looks after her friend.)*

MIDNIGHT RUN

MARCI: At 16, she is excited and adventuresome as well as in lust with Jason. Willing to risk reputation to see him.

NICOLE: Also 16, but reluctantly joining Marci on her little quest to see Jason.

SETTING: The scene takes place on a boy's front yard. The bushes are indicated by using chairs.

MARCI: *(Enters crawling on all fours, skulking close to the ground. She makes it to about Down-stage Left of Center, her head pops up, then she quickly drops down again. She whispers.)* This is great. I can see his bedroom light from here. *(MARCI looks behind her and sees she is alone.)* Nicole, will you get over here?

NICOLE: *(NICOLE enters crawling in the same way MARCI was.)* Marci, this is the stupidest, most ridiculous thing you have ever gotten me into. And you have gotten me into quite a few ridiculous and stupid things.

MARCI: Stay down and be quiet.

NICOLE: Bugs. Everywhere there are bugs. And I'm covered with dirt. This is just great.

MARCI: *(Looking upward)* I can't see anything, can you?

NICOLE: Just the leaves in my eyes. What kind of bush is this, anyway?

MARCI: He's gotta be home. I see a light.

NICOLE: I bet this is some kind of ragweed. I know it. I'm going to blow up like a balloon tomorrow. A big, red, rash covered balloon.

MARCI: *(Completely ignoring NICOLE's complaints.)* Look, look, there he is. It's Jason.

NICOLE: How do you know that's him?

MARCI: Look at those shoulders. Who do you think those belong to, his mother? Hand me my binoculars.