

MIKE: Did you ever think that maybe what you miss isn't Shelly, but is something that she gave you?

CHUCK: Man, it isn't the sex. Sex I can get from anybody.

MIKE: Heck, I don't know then. Because I sure don't see it. All I see is my best friend starting all over with a girl who did nothing but make him miserable.

CHUCK: Man, I don't know.

MIKE: Me either. *(The phone rings, they both look at it.)*
Chuck, you do what you have to do. See her or don't, but no matter what, I'm your friend.

CHUCK: *(Picking up jacket)* **Let's go.** *(They start to exit, MIKE leaves first, CHUCK looks back at ringing phone, walks out.)*

THE JERK

CHRIS: Sixteen years old, has finally reached the point of no return with his best friend's manner of life style.

STEVE: A sixteen year old insensitive clod, caught up in his own needs, completely disregarding the feelings of his family and friends.

SETTING: The scene takes place in Chris's bedroom. It is empty when Steve enters, all full of angry emotions.

STEVE: *(Enters in an angry rush, calls out.)* **Chris, are you in here? *(Throws himself in a chair.)* I can't stand it anymore.**

CHRIS: *(Enters, sarcastically.)* **Hey, make yourself at home.**

STEVE: **Are you ready for this? They took away my car. Can you believe it? My car!**

CHRIS: **Your parents took away your car?**

STEVE: **No, the tooth fairy took away my car. Yes, my parents.**

CHRIS: **Why?**

STEVE: **They say it's because of my grades.**

CHRIS: **What do you mean "They say?"**

STEVE: **It's not my grades. It's just another one of their power trips. Another way to show me that I'm the kid and they are the adults.**

CHRIS: **What were your grades, anyway?**

STEVE: **Chris, my grades are not the point. You are missing the point entirely.**

CHRIS: **So, what is the point.**

STEVE: **I told you. It's power. My parents are into this major power struggle with me. That can't stand to see that I'm becoming a man, that I'm not their little boy anymore.**

CHRIS: **Oh . . . So, what were your grades, just out of**

curiosity.

STEVE: Two "C's" three "D's" and "F" and one "A".

CHRIS: The "A" was in P.E., right?

STEVE: Yeah, so?

CHRIS: Nothing.

STEVE: So, what? You think I'm wrong.

CHRIS: I didn't say anything, Steve. I'm just sitting here, listening as usual.

STEVE: What does that mean?

CHRIS: It means that I'm listening. That's what you want me to do, right? Listen?

STEVE: You're acting like it's some big chore or something.

CHRIS: No, I'm just listening. You want someone to talk at, so here I am.

STEVE: And what does that mean? Talk "at"?

CHRIS: You know, you always do this. You get mad at someone or something, you come over here and spill your guts and then you leave. I'm supposed to just sit here and let you vent your anger? OK, so vent.

STEVE: I don't get it. I came over here to talk to someone I thought was my best friend. Why, all of a sudden, are you acting like this?

CHRIS: Don't ask questions you don't want honest answers to.

STEVE: What? Are you saying that you can't be honest with me?

CHRIS: Yeah, I guess that is what I am saying.

STEVE: Well, maybe you better come right out and say what you are thinking.

CHRIS: Yeah, I think I will. Steve, we have been friends for a long time, right?

STEVE: Since seventh grade, almost five years now. I thought that...

CHRIS: Hey, I'm the one who is supposed to be talking,

remember.

STEVE: (*Irritated*) Fine, talk.

CHRIS: For the last few years I have seen you change from the really nice guy I used to know into this... I don't know.

STEVE: (*Proudly*) Rebel?

CHRIS: Rebel. What does that mean to you?

STEVE: Someone who won't put up with crap from people just because they are older and think they are smarter. Someone who can think for himself.

CHRIS: Yeah, rebel. A rebel without a clue is more like it.

STEVE: Hey...!

CHRIS: You have been acting like a jerk, Steve, a real jerk. You cut classes all the time, you get lousy grades, you are rude to everybody, you drink too much. You're a jerk. And I'm getting sick of it.

STEVE: Thanks a lot. You're a great friend. Fine, you feel that way, I can hang with someone else.

CHRIS: Who?

STEVE: Mark, Brian, Rick, lots of people.

CHRIS: Yeah? Were you out with them last night?

STEVE: They all had to work.

CHRIS: You think so?

STEVE: Are you telling me they didn't? (*CHRIS nods.*) You're a liar. You don't know anything.

CHRIS: I know they didn't work last night, because we all went to Julie's party.

STEVE: Julie had a party? I didn't hear about it.

CHRIS: It was private. Only people she wanted to be there were invited.

STEVE: So, I wasn't invited. Why?

CHRIS: Because you're a jerk. You didn't used to be, but you sure are now. I'm your best friend, I don't even like you much.

STEVE: *(The reality of the situation hitting him.)* Julie had a party, huh?

CHRIS: It was fun, too.

STEVE: Didn't anybody ask where I was?

CHRIS: We all knew you weren't going to be there. Most people have gotten really tired of your attitude, your mouth and just plain you. It was pretty much a group decision.

STEVE: So why hasn't anybody said anything before this?

CHRIS: They did, you just never listen to anybody but yourself. That's another thing everybody is tired of, you talking about yourself all the time.

STEVE: So, what do I do now?

CHRIS: I don't know. Everybody is pretty tired of you . . . including your parents.

STEVE: My parents?

CHRIS: Yeah, they called me last week and were telling me how they can't seem to get through to you and could I help. I guess that's what finally made me decide to talk to you like I am. I mean, if your own parents are starting to dislike you, you're in big trouble.

STEVE: I guess so. So, what do I do?

CHRIS: I don't know. Stop being a jerk, I guess.

STEVE: How? I don't even know what I'm doing that is jerky.

CHRIS: Maybe that's the problem. You are so caught up in thinking how cool you are, you don't give much thought to what anybody else is feeling.

STEVE: So, what do I do?

CHRIS: Stop it.

STEVE: How?

CHRIS: I don't know.

STEVE: *(Gathering his jacket up.)* Let's go.

CHRIS: What?

STEVE: I'll buy you dinner and you can tell me how I am being a jerk. You've got nothing else to do, right?

CHRIS: See, that's what I mean. You automatically assume that I have nothing else to do. Well, I do. Rick and I are going to a club in about an hour.

STEVE: Well, I'll go with you guys. *(CHRIS turns his head away.)* Rick doesn't want me to go.

CHRIS: Yeah.

STEVE: *(A low whistle.)* Wow. Well, are you busy tomorrow?

CHRIS: Not as far as I know. I'll call you.

STEVE: Yeah, call me. Maybe I'll go home and talk to my parents.

CHRIS: Maybe you should. You need a ride?

STEVE: No, I've got my car.

CHRIS: I thought you said your parents took it away.

STEVE: I drove it anyway. They are at work.

CHRIS: What a jerk.

STEVE: *(Finishing the sentence with him)* . . . jerk. Yeah I know. See you later.

CHRIS: OK. *(STEVE leaves.)* What an ass. *(Shakes his head.)*