

Friends Like These

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Garrett – The Geek, 17

Bryan – The Social Butterfly, 16

Diz – The Freak, 15

Nicole – The Cheerleader, 16

Jesse – The Jock, 17

Note: Bryan and Jesse also double as Shadows in Act II Scene IV.

It is recommended that the Reporters, Student and various Voices are done as pre-recorded sound cues. Recordings of these lines are available upon request and rights to their use are included with the performance rights under the same terms and conditions. Alternatively, productions are allowed to record their own versions or stage them live.

TIME & PLACE

Post-Columbine Suburbia, USA

SETTING

This play takes place in more than half a dozen different locations with several quick changes. This show can be done with a set as simple as a table and three folding chairs arranged in different configurations to represent each place. A projector can be integrated into the production to accent each location and provide a richer backdrop. Transitions between scenes should be fast, but it is suggested that clips of music are used to help bridge scenes together. The story is set a year or two after the Columbine Massacre. It is suggested that any music used should be from no later than 2001.

FRIENDS LIKE THESE

PROLOGUE

A projector screen hangs as the backdrop to a bare stage. The show begins in blackout. Speakers crackle to life as short series of pre-recorded news segments play in the darkness.

REPORTER #1: Another tragic school shooting rocked the nation today. The bodies of over a dozen students and faculty from Piedmont High School were removed after a brutal rampage that was over before many knew anything had happ-

REPORTER #2: -he shooting began in the hallways where the gunman opened fire on a crowd of students, then moved into one of the athletic roo-

REPORTER #3: -arrett Lang, 17, a Sophomore at Piedmont. Friends say he was the quiet type an -

REPORTER #4: - wearing a long, black trench coat, a signature for this kind of violence, and armed with multiple handguns. The thoughts and prayers of everyone here at Channel 7 go out to the members of the Piedmont High School community and especially the families of the vict-

STUDENT: -ll of a sudden, I heard something like firecrackers going off, then people were running and screaming.

REPORTER #2: -said they never saw it comi-

REPORTER #1: -nother tragic incident of teen violence leaving a community reeling and families asking, "why?" Will we ever know the answer? *(The news broadcast is consumed in a burst of static, then fades out. The words "3 Months Earlier" flash across the projection screen.)*

ACT I

Scene I

The Haven campgrounds. Garrett, Diz and Bryan enter, all decked out in a mish-mash of homemade medieval-style costumes and sports pads.

DIZ: Another job well done.

GARRETT: Indeed, Lady Mortania. Never again will the lands of Haven be threatened by the dark magic of the evil Lord Malkor. The forces of good have reigned supreme.

BRYAN: *(Interjecting.)* Dude.

GARRETT: What is this "dude" you speak of, good Sir Sway?

BRYAN: Garrett, game's over.

GARRETT: It's Ivan.

BRYAN: Garrett, the game ended an hour ago. So, save the in-character grandstanding for next month.

GARRETT: But I'm in the moment.

BRYAN: You're the only one.

GARRETT: Bryan, why do you always need to piss in my Frosted Flakes?

BRYAN: I'm not. I'm just ready to go back.

DIZ: Why?

BRYAN: Because after a weekend of running around the woods in hockey pads and rubber ears, beating people with foam swords all night long, I'm ready for a shower and a hot meal.

DIZ: Pussy.

BRYAN: Well, you are what you-

GARRETT: *(Interjecting.)* Please. Come up with something original.

DIZ: Seriously. Why would you ever want to leave?

BRYAN: Because this is a game. I already have a life.

GARRETT: That makes one of us.

BRYAN: Don't start.

GARRETT: I'm not. I'm just saying that if I could, I'd be here all the time.

BRYAN: Please. Next, you'll say you wish it was real.

GARRETT: I do.

DIZ: Me, too.

BRYAN: Remind me why I like to hang out with you guys again?

DIZ: Because you like everybody.

GARRETT: And you're almost as geeky as we are.

BRYAN: I wouldn't go that far.

GARRETT: So, you're both going to be at the event next month, right?

BRYAN: If I don't have a wrestling tournament.

GARRETT: Ah, off competing with the brute squad.

DIZ: He's on the Brute Squad.

GARRETT: He is the Brute Squad.

BRYAN: Geeks.

Scene II

A house party. Same night. Nicole enters and moves to the center of the party to address a large crowd of her peers.

NICOLE: Attention everyone. I have an announcement to make. Thank you. My boyfriend, Jesse, Mr. Captain of the Varsity Wrestling Team, Mr. "God's Gift to Women," self-proclaimed, of course, is now single. That's right, folks, he's back on the market! *(Jesse enters. Nicole doesn't notice him.)* I know this may come as a shock to some, but, believe me, it's for the best. Ladies, he's available immediately for your dating pleasure. He's not much for conversation, unless you like endless prattling on about football and "that time he pinned that kid from O'Connell in the State Finals," but he tries hard. Yes, he may be lacking in intelligence and sensitivity, as well as other "significant" areas, but he's not that bad, really. Anyone want his number? It'll be up on the bathroom wall later under the heading "For a good time, call Meathead."

JESSE: Nikki, what's going on?

NICOLE: It's Nicole now, douche bag, and I could have asked you the same thing but it was pretty obvious. Let me spell it out for you - we're over.

JESSE: What? Why?

NICOLE: Thank you for your attention, everyone! Party on. Party on. *(Nicole turns to leave but Jesse grabs her and spins her around.)*

JESSE: Now you just wait a min- *(Nicole slaps Jesse across the face. All conversation and party noise stops.)*

NICOLE: Don't you ever touch me again. *(Nicole turns back around and leaves Jesse, stunned in the middle of the party. He comes to his senses.)*

JESSE: What are you lookin' at? *(Jesse turns and exits.)*

Scene III

The wrestling room. Bryan and Jesse are practicing their wrestling techniques. Jesse is recapping his version of the party.

JESSE: Yeah, that bitch was getting stale. I kicked her to the curb Saturday night.

BRYAN: So, she dumped you.

JESSE: I just said I dumped her.

BRYAN: No need to save face, dude. It's all over the school. I wasn't even at the party Saturday night and I heard about it.

JESSE: Yeah, where were you? It was a great party.

BRYAN: ...Camping.

JESSE: Really.

BRYAN: Yeah, with my old man. It's a tradition.

JESSE: Sounds gay.

BRYAN: Whatever.

JESSE: You guys got back late. You missed practice on Sunday. *(Garrett and Diz knock on the door to the wrestling room. They're both in black heavy metal t-shirts, baggy black pants and black combat boots. Garrett wears a long black trench coat over his clothes and Diz sports a spiked collar. Garrett carries a black notebook tucked under his arm.)* What do you want, faggot?

GARRETT: Hey Bryan, we've got your part of the treas- stuff... from this weekend. It's in my locker.

BRYAN: Not now, Garrett.

GARRETT: It's ok, just find me after practice.

BRYAN: Whatever, I gotta get back before Coach flips.

GARRETT: No worries. *(Garrett and Diz exit.)*

JESSE: Camping, huh?

Scene IV

Inside the cafeteria. Garrett's sitting alone at a cafeteria table. He's absentmindedly shuffling a deck of game cards while reading from his notebook. Nicole enters, wearing her cheerleading outfit, and approaches his table. Garrett doesn't notice.

NICOLE: Hi.

GARRETT: What?

NICOLE: Hi. *(Garrett looks around. She must be talking to him.)*

GARRETT: The pep rally's in the gym.

NICOLE: Huh?

GARRETT: You're a cheerleader.

NICOLE: Yeah.

GARRETT: I'm a freak.

NICOLE: Ok.

GARRETT: I'm sure this is a violation of the Natural Order of the Universe.

NICOLE: I don't understand.

GARRETT: Never mind. Forgive me if this is obvious, but... why are you talking to me?

NICOLE: What?

GARRETT: Seriously, if this is some prank or something, you're wasting your time.

NICOLE: Why would you think that?

GARRETT: Because you're talking to me. Cheerleaders don't talk to people like me.

NICOLE: Have you thought about looking beyond the uniform?

GARRETT: Why should I? You guys don't.

NICOLE: We don't?

GARRETT: No.

NICOLE: If that's true, why am I still here talking to you, then?

GARRETT: I think I asked you that.

NICOLE: You did.

GARRETT: Well, if I did, that means I've got no idea.

NICOLE: I'm curious about your cards.

GARRETT: Oh.

NICOLE: What are they?

GARRETT: They're for a game. *(Garrett closes his black notebook and puts his decks away. Nicole sits down across from him.)*

NICOLE: What kind of game?

GARRETT: It's called *Magic*.

NICOLE: I think my little brother plays.

GARRETT: How old is your brother?

NICOLE: Seven.

GARRETT: He plays "Pokemon."

NICOLE: That's the one.

GARRETT: This is not "Pokemon."

NICOLE: Ok. So, how do you play this game?

GARRETT: Do you really want to know?

NICOLE: Yeah.

GARRETT: It's geek stuff.

NICOLE: Don't judge. I'm interested. I see you guys playing here all the time. *(Beat. Garrett withdraws two playing decks from his bag.)*

GARRETT: Ok. Well, here, take one of my decks and shuffle it up.

NICOLE: What do the different colors mean?

GARRETT: I'll get to that in a second. First- *(Jesse enters. He sees Nicole and heads over to her.)*

JESSE: Hey. What's going on?

NICOLE: Nothing.

JESSE: Nothing? What the fuck is this? Don't tell me you're getting into this shit.

GARRETT: Dude, it's just a game.

JESSE: Nobody asked you, faggot. You'll shut the fuck up and stay away from my girl if you know what's good for you.

GARRETT: Hey dude, she ca-

NICOLE: Your girl? I dumped you last week. If you forgot, you can ask anyone at Sarah's party. I'm sure they'll remind you. They all saw it happen...

GARRETT: Y'know, if you guys need to talk in private, I can go.

JESSE: *(to Garrett)* Shut up. *(to Nicole)* Whatever. You'll be back.

NICOLE: Right. Just keep telling yourself that.

JESSE: You'll see. *(Jesse exits.)*

GARRETT: What a dick.

NICOLE: Yeah, no kidding.

GARRETT: Wonder what his problem is.

NICOLE: I dumped him.

GARRETT: Oh, yeah. Well, that would be a problem.

NICOLE: Mmm hmm.

GARRETT: Why?

NICOLE: Walked in on him having sex with my best friend.
Ex-best friend.

GARRETT: And that would be grounds for dumping. *(Beat. Garrett starts shuffling his decks.)*

NICOLE: I'm Nicole.

GARRETT: I know. We had History together last year.

NICOLE: We did?

GARRETT: Yeah. I let you copy my homework.

NICOLE: Oh, I don't remember.

GARRETT: You copied it every day for the semester.

NICOLE: Wow, um, thanks again.

GARRETT: Think nothing of it. Again.

NICOLE: Yeah. So...

GARRETT: What?

NICOLE: What's your name?

GARRETT: Garrett.

NICOLE: Yeah. So, Garrett, you want to go catch a movie?

GARRETT: What?

NICOLE: *(slowly)* Do you want to go see a movie with me?

GARRETT: Uh... sure.

NICOLE: Ok, don't get so excited.

GARRETT: No, I'm not, I mean, I am. Excited, that is. I'm just surprised, too.

NICOLE: Surprised? Why?

GARRETT: Cheerleader. Freak. Violation of Natural Order.

NICOLE: Whatever! We can go see a movie. I mean, it's not like it's going to be a date or anything.

GARRETT: It's not? *(Beat.)* Oh, ok.

NICOLE: I just want to hang out and do something tonight. It's Friday after all.

GARRETT: Ok.

NICOLE: So... meet me at 8?

GARRETT: Sounds good.

NICOLE: Oh, and bring your cards. I still want you to teach me.

GARRETT: Seriously?

NICOLE: Seriously.

GARRETT: Ok. *(Beat. Nicole starts to leave. Garrett thinks she's out of earshot.)* Holy shit.

NICOLE: What?

GARRETT: Nothing. Nothing. I'm just... wow. Yeah. Uh, I'll see you tonight! 8 o'clock, right?

NICOLE: Yeah.

GARRETT: Cool. Ok. Wow. *(Beat.)* See you then.

NICOLE: Bye.

GARRETT: Bye. *(Nicole exits. Beat)* Holy shit. *(Garrett gets up to leave. A voice offstage calls out to him.)*

VOICE: Hey Faggot! *(Garrett looks to where the voice came from and is greeted with laughter.)* See? Told ya he knew he was queer. *(Garrett storms off frustrated.)*