

From The Firecracker Incident by Don Zolidis

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JOE, 14, awkward

JULIE, 17, very pretty

(At a party, JOE has just encountered JULIE, who has been recently dumped)

(JULIE is crying and sniffing terribly. JOE is watching her.)

JOE

Soooo...

(Pause. JULIE sniffles and cries.)

So your name is Julie.

JULIE

...yeah.

JOE

Cool. That's cool. Do you like – do you like having that name?

JULIE

What?

JOE

I'm sorry that's um – that was a stupid thing to say. I'll leave you to your crying and grief.

JULIE

...okay.

(JOE gets a step or two away and stops. JULIE is still miserable.)

JOE

You know I don't really know Sam, but um... he always kind of seemed like the Devil to me.

JULIE

Oh.

JOE

So can I ask you a question?

JULIE

Sure.

JOE

How come a guy like that gets a pretty girlfriend like you... and someone who's like – nice – um... doesn't?

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JULIE

I don't know.

JOE

I guess you probably can't speak for all other girls. It's just something I've noticed.

JULIE

Oh.

JOE

You know what? You're better off without him.

JULIE

You don't even know. He was my whole life.

JOE

I'm pretty sure he wasn't your whole life. I mean that's kind of a stupid thing to say.

(JULIE cries.)

JULIE

You're right. That was stupid.

JOE

No I mean... you're not stupid. You're not. Like – okay – Sam... huge jerk, right? I mean he probably eats bunnies for breakfast. Seriously? That's what he does. He goes outside and hunts down small furry animals and strangles them – because he's cruel. I know he's cruel. He enjoys making things suffer. I know he enjoys making his brother suffer. And I know plenty of guys like Sam who are my age, and all they want to do is make me suffer. So – he dumped you. Fine. But that means that you're that much quicker to being with the person you were actually meant to be with. Someone who doesn't make you feel miserable and alone and stupid all the time. So it's a good thing that you broke up. It is. You're not wasting your time any more.

(JULIE stops crying.)

JULIE

Thanks. You're right.

JOE

I know I'm right.

JULIE

What's your name again?

JOE

Joe.

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JULIE
People are mean to you?

JOE
Well yeah I guess.

JULIE
Why are they mean to you?

JOE
I think you should probably ask them that.

JULIE
Why do you think they're mean to you?

JOE
Um... probably because I'm different. And I'm... you know if I had my choice I'd probably be sitting in a basement playing video games instead of talking to people so... so I'm weird.

JULIE
That's not weird.

JOE
It's a little bit weird.

JULIE
All the other guys play video games.

JOE
Yeah, but they play sports too, and I don't – and I don't – I don't know how to talk to people.

JULIE
That's not true.

JOE
You just met me. You don't know. My parents say I have an overactive imagination.

JULIE
That's a good thing.

JOE
Not if you want to be normal it's not.

JULIE
Do you want to be normal?

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JOE

Well no. I mean – I don't think I can really help it.

JULIE

Do you want to do something stupid?

JOE

I'm not sure how to answer that.

JULIE

Do you want to get out of here?

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