

Scott

Smokes

Pot

Scott

Smokes

Pot

Kristen -
What an outstanding
book! I really
enjoyed the story
line! I couldn't
put it down 😊
Mrs. J.
7100

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Scott Wallace. Your normal, everyday, McDowell freshman. He liked to lift weights, dye his hair tips platinum blonde and shop for plaid shirts and blue vests at Gabriel Brothers. After all, he was born and raised in Erie, PA, which can only mean he's a bargain hunter.

One day, he was at home playing a game of "Lassie" with his collie, Rusty. This was one of his favorite things to do. In this game he would poke the dog in the butt with a feather duster until Rusty began to bark. Then he would "guess" what Rusty was trying to tell him.

"Old Mr. Fillibuster is trapped under the fallen log in Chippewa Creek? He wants us to find his daughter and give her the basket of tangerines he left for her in the rose bush by the burning shed? Rusty! I mean, Lassie! What should we do?"

At that moment, the doorbell rang. Tony Spumoni, his best friend, swaggered into the front door without waiting for someone to answer it.

"What up, bro?" he asked Scott, giving him their double backhanded high five secret handshake ending with the two of them whispering "asparagus".

"Nothing much, man, just playing a game of 'Lassie' with Rusty."

"Man! That's whacked!" Tony cried out, laughing. Scott didn't mind if Tony laughed at him. Tony was his very best friend in the whole wide world and had known him forever. The two boys told each other everything, from the girls they liked to the make believe games they still played in the 9th grade.

"You wanna play?" Scott asked him, hopefully.

"No way, man! I've got a better idea."

"What?" Scott asked, throwing the feather duster behind him and jumping to his feet. Despite his childish games, he wasn't really all babyish. He was at that age where an adolescent is teetering between childhood and adulthood. The age where he wants to hold on to the last shred of his old life, yet dying to leap forward into a new one.

"Well, I heard that Mike-you know, that really cool tenth grader in our Math class? Yeah, he said he was having a party

tonight and that I was invited and could bring whomever I wanted with me."

"Wait a minute. Is this like one of those wild, drunken high school parties that they always show in the movies?"

Tony laughed. "I doubt it. That kind of stuff, like you said, only happens in the movies. It'll probably just be a couple of guys hanging out at Mike's, you know? And besides, you've drank before. What are you scared of?"

"Yeah, once, with my 22 year old brother! That's hardly the same as the whole peer pressure-wild party-naked guys hanging from the chandelier-scene. Besides that, I don't want you to get hurt or anything. But hey, either way, I'm up for it."

"Thanks man!" Tony said, sarcastically, but he was excited, too. "Well, let's just hope that it's a safe party."

"Yeah, let's hope," Scott said, quietly. He knew as well as Tony did that they both secretly wished it would be a wild party. They wanted some fun, some excitement, in their otherwise boring lives. Plus, Mike was a pretty cool kid and hanging out, or better partying, with his friends could mean major points on the social scoreboard! "When is it?"

"Uh, let's see," Tony mumbled. "It's 6:00 now. . . um, I believe it starts at 7:00 tonight."

"Till when?"

"Till 'question mark'."

"I'd better ask my mom-hold on. MO-OM!"

"What?" Scott's mother yelled back from upstairs.

"Can I go to this kid, Mike's, house with Tony tonight at 7:00?"

Scott's mother walked down the stairs. "Mike who?"

"Um. . ." Scott began.

"Mike Omni!" Tony helped.

"Yeah, that's it! He's in our math class and he invited us over tonight."

"Hmmm," Scott's mother began. "Will his parents be home?"

"Yes, of course!" Scott lied, not really sure whether or not there would be any adult supervision at all.

"What time does it end?" She questioned.

"I'm not sure. He lives right down the street, so you don't have to pick my up or anything. I'll walk home."

"With Tony?"

"Yeah. Hey, could Tony spend the night? Er, well, Tony, if you want to. . ."

"Would I be allowed?" Tony asked Scott's mother.

"Sure, I suppose so. Just, Scott, make sure you stick with Tony when you two are walking home. You can never know what kind of people will be out at midnight."

"Midnight?!" Scott asked, excitedly. "Is that when I have to be home by?"

"Well, at least before 1:00," Scott's mother said. Scott almost choked. *1:00?!*

"All right, Mom! No problem! Thanks!" Scott cried, giving his mom a hug. She smiled at her son and ascended the staircase, leaving the two boys with smiles that lit up their faces like a candlelit, grinning Jack-O-Lantern on Halloween, except not quite so evil.

"Hey, Tony, you think we should bring anything with us?"

"What? Like a present?" he scoffed.

"No, not a present, ding bat. Like, I don't know, something else?"

"Man, I don't know what you're getting at, but let's go," Tony said.

The two boys set out for Mike's house. In actuality, he lived a little farther than "right down the street". They just didn't want 'Mommy' to be the one to pick them up at this very cool kid's house.

A little over a half hour later the boys arrived at Mike's. "Hey Tony," Scott wondered, quizzically. "it doesn't seem like there are any parents here."

"Yeah, you're right, Scott-man, but it does look like there are kids here! Let's go!"

The two boldly marched to the front door of the house. They could feel the heavy bass of the music inside, vibrating under their feet. A loud, but muffled, murmur of excited voices filtered

through the mail slot in the door. The door opened and the noisy impact of the wild party inside stunned both boys.

"Hey guys!" Mike Omni greeted them, beer in his hand. "Come on in!"

Scott and Tony exchanged eager glances with one another and emerged into the house. There were a lot more people there than they had expected; forty or fifty, maybe. A guy with a moose hat on walked by and handed both boys a cup with pale, red liquid in it. Scott sniffed his. "Yup, that's alcohol all right."

"What kind?" Tony wondered.

"Um, I don't know? Something with strawberries, I think."

Tony shrugged and took a few gulps. "Interesting; in an awful, sweet kind of way." He paused after noticing the strange expression on Scott's face. "What?" he asked him, defensively, taking a few more sips of 'the substance'.

"It's just, well, never mind," Scott murmured, staring at his cup.

"Hey, I figure it like this," Tony said, setting his cup down on a nearby coffee table. "If I'm going to try alcohol, why not do it tonight when everyone else is doing it and I know I won't get caught? I mean, I'm only gonna have two or so, anyway, so what's the big deal? And you drink, too! So quit giving me that look!"

Scott's stony-faced expression broke into a smile as he set his cup down on the table. While Tony picked his back up and began to drink out of it again, Scott said, "Hey man, sorry! I guess I just need to loosen up, that's all. You know, you're right." Scott paused as he witnessed Tony polish off his cup. "If tonight's a night that I know I can get away with anything, why not relax and just, you know, experiment with things?"

"Right with ya, buddy," Tony said, dropping his arm on Scott's shoulder.

"So, what did you think of it?" Scott questioned Tony, referring to the empty cup in Tony's hand. "You drank it awfully fast, you must be feeling something."

"I'm not sure. . ." Tony said, slowly. "A little buzz, I guess, if that's what it is. Hey, are you going to drink yours?"

"Here." Scott thrust his cup in Tony's face. "Have it. I



think I'm going to go and mingle."

"All right, dude. Check ya later!"

Scott walked over to a boy he kind of knew from J.S. named Nick O'Toole. He was talking with Mike.

"Oh, hey Scott!" Mike said. "This is, uh, Nick is it?"

"Yeah, hi Scott! Yeah, we know each other," Nick said.

"Oh, great! Great! Well, I'm going to go get another beer— you guys want anything?"

"No, thanks!" Nick said.

"Scott?"

"None for me, Mike." He turned to Nick. "So, Nick, what do you think of this party? Pretty wild, huh?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Hey, I was just about to go meet some friends out back to smoke some pot. You wanna come?"

"Pot? As in marijuana?"

"Yeah, that's usually what it is," Nick laughed.

"Well, I don't know, man. . ."

"Oh, come on, Scott! Loosen up! Have some fun!"

Scott heard his own voice in his mind. <I guess I just need to loosen up, that's all> *But, I can't do drugs!* He thought to himself, *what if I get caught?* Scott nervously bit his lip and got very tense.

"Man, you just need to relax. Come on! It'll help you," Nick said in a laid back way.

"Well, all right, I guess. Why not? I mean, what's it gonna hurt?"

"That's what I like to hear, buddy. C'mon!" Nick said, happily guiding Scott into the back yard.

The back yard was filled with about eight kids, lounging around on porch chairs, or just sitting on the ground. Scott knew a few of the boys, but not very well. He nervously sat down beside Nick. One of the boys pulled a few joints out of his pocket and tossed them to a couple of the kids. They each took out a lighter and lit them.

Scott looked around and noticed the other boy next to him looked as nervous as he felt.

"You ever done this before?" Scott asked him. The boy

jumped as though Scott had awoken him from a deep sleep.

"Oh! Um, me? No, never." The boy said, shaking his head. "Hey, my name is Tom Killingsworth."

"I'm Scott Wallace," Scott replied. The two boys stopped talking and watched the kids inhale the marijuana. Their eyes seemed to get glossy and glazed over. Now Scott was scared. There was no way he could get himself out of this one. Nick passed him the joint and someone passed a joint to Tom, as well.

"Uh. . ." Tom wondered, "um, how-?"

"How do you work this thing?" Scott asked, waving it around in the air. The other guys laughed.

"Just suck in open mouthed gulps, man," one of the kids suggested. "And try and hold it in your mouth for as long as you can."

Scott exchanged uneasy glances with Tom as both boys raised the joints up to their lips.

Scott looked around at the faces in the crowd. Those who had not yet smoked were staring curiously at Scott and Tom. Those who had were gazing at them with far away, yet still partially there, looks.

Scott sucked the tainted air into his mouth. *Oh my God! I'm gonna die!* He thought. The smoke seemed to spread throughout his body and fill his lungs and mind. His chest felt like it was about to explode. He looked over at Tom whose eyes were bulging. At the same time, both boys began to cough and choke. The other kids laughed.

"Whoa. . ." Scott said slowly. "This stuff is like. . .whoa. . ." He coughed a few more times, took a few more puffs, and passed the joint over to another boy.

"Yeah," Tom agreed. "It's so relaxing."

"See guys?" Nick said taking a long drag of the pot. "I knew you'd like it."

Scott suddenly felt so happy and free, like he could just fly away- high, high into the sky-and never come back down. Suddenly he became aware of the smoothness of the chair he was sitting upon, the prickly grass underneath his feet. He took off his shoes and socks and began to laugh. "Dude, I can hear the grass



moving under my feet.”

“Wow, that’s deep man,” one of the boys said, rubbing his feet over the grass, too.

Something suddenly occurred to Scott. “Hey, Tom, you know Jessie Killingsworth?”

“Yeah, man, she’s my sister.”

“Dude. Your sister’s hot.”

“That’s not cool,” Tom shook his head. “She’s actually here.”

“Cool. Maybe I’ll talk to her.” Scott’s mind went back to the prickly, smooth blades of grass under his feet and, again, he desperately tried to understand and give meaning to silent sounds of the long blades rubbing against each other and against his feet. “I still can’t get over the grass,” he commented, bewildered by his astounding discovery.

Nick laughed. “Which kind of grass?” he joked, handing Scott the marijuana. Scott took a long drag, then laughed and shook his head in disbelief.

“Oh my gosh,” he mumbled to himself, laughing. “This is just too much! I gotta go find Tony.” He shook his head and stood up. “Thanks for the stuff, Nick.”

“Sure thing, Scott. See ya.” The stoned teen took the joint back from Scott. Scott walked back inside, in search of Tony.

Inside, the party scene was very wild. Semi-drunk to drunk kids everywhere, music blaring, the entire house a haze of smoke and steamy with sweat.

Scott walked, in a confused daze, through the hazy crowd of kids. Suddenly he bumped into a girl. She, a little unsteady on her feet due to her beer buzz, tumbled onto the ground. Scott, with his slow reactions, stared blankly at her for a moment, looking stunned and helpless. “Sorry,” he finally said, extending a hand toward her. “Let me help you up.”

The girl stood up and smiled gaily at him. “Thanks! Hi, I’m Jessie!” she yelled over the music.

“Killingsworth?” Scott asked, grinning.

“Yeah, how did you know?”

“I just met Tom. He said you were here. <pause> You’re



really hot.”

“Um. . .thanks. You wanna dance?”

“Yeah! O.K.!” The two began to fast dance in the crowded room. Scott couldn’t believe he was dancing with one of the coolest girls in the 10th grade!

Jessie grabbed her glass and swallowed the rest of its contents in one gulp. “Hey! I have to go to the bathroom!” she yelled. “I’ll be right back!” She staggered off and left Scott alone. Scott looked around. His eyes fell to the left hand corner of the room. There, pretending to surf on a rocking chair, was his very own best friend in the whole wide world: Tony Spamonie.

Scott billowed over to the chair. “Tony! What are you doing?! Get down from there!”

Tony leaped off the chair and onto Scott, knocking both of them and a bowl of popcorn over.

“Oh my gosh!” Scott cried. “Food!” He shoved handfuls of popcorn in his mouth, while trying to ask Tony, who was sitting on his lap, about what he had been up to.

“Tony, are you drunk?” he asked him.

“I don’t know. If I am drunk, then I think I like it! I like it a lot!”

“Well, how much have you had to drink?” Scott asked, continuing to satisfy his munchies with the popcorn.

“Um, I had like three of those things. That’s not that much, is it?”

“Well, it all depends on a lot of things. My own personal opinion is that you are a little more than tipsy, but a little less than sloshed.”

Tony paused for a moment. “Um, whatever, man-but what have you been up to?”

“Actually, I-”

Tony interrupted him. “Hey, did you see the losers smoking up in the back yard? I mean, there’s experimenting, and then there’s being just plain stupid. Anyway, what were you saying?”

“Uh. . .nothing. Never mind,” Scott said, guiltily shoving the bowl of popcorn away from him. “Well, actually, I was

dancing with Jessie Killingsworth.”

“*The* Jessie Killingsworth? Aw man! You lucky bum!”

“Yeah, she is so fine, dude. Every inch of her body is like perfection radiating all around the room.”

Tony smiled at him, a little weirdly. “You know, you’re acting kind of strange, Scott. Like you’re not completely there.”

Scott looked down and shrugged.

“And you didn’t drink or anything?”

Scott shook his head slowly. “Define ‘or anything’.”

“What’s *that* supposed to mean?” Tony asked him, looking at Scott as though he were an unknown specimen on the floor of the bathroom.

“Never mind, man. Forget it.”

“You know me better than that. I’m not going to just ‘forget it’; but I’ll let it go for now. Just be aware that whatever it is, I’m going to find out.”

Scott nodded guiltily, like a puppy who was caught doing his business on the carpet when he knew he was supposed to go outside.

The guy with the moose hat on walked by again and handed them each another cup.

“Hey!” Tony called out to the guy with the moose hat. “What time is it?”

The moose hat man looked at him for a few seconds before screeching out, “EEEEEE!”

“All right, thanks man,” Tony cried, lifting his cup in the air and pouring it all in his mouth.

“Cheez-its, Tony! Do you want to throw up?”

Tony laughed and tossed his empty, plastic cup at Scott’s face.

“Come on, dude! I’m fine! I could drink, like, 10 of theshe,” he slurred.

“Yeah, we’ll see about that,” Scott said, doubtfully.

Suddenly the song Give It To Me, Baby came on. “Hey Tony! Tony, let’s see if I can break dance!”

“Yeah man, me too!” Tony climbed off of Scott’s lap and the two trashed boys began to roll around on the floor in sporadic

bursts of intoxicated energy.

"Look, Tony! I can do The Worm!" Scott flopped around on his arms, then ran around his hands, compass style.

A group of kids had crowded around them. The boys mistakenly took their jeering laughter as approval, and continued their idiotic dance moves.

"Wow!" Scott heard a womanly voice slur. "That'sh amazing."

Scott looked up in time to catch Jessie Killingsworth as she fell onto him.

"You're a little unsteady on your feet there, Miss," Scott commented, smiling dumbly at Jessie.

"Shut up and kissh me, you fool!" she cried out, leaning in towards Scott's mouth. Before he could say a word, she began to passionately and sloppily make out with him. Scott took his arms and held onto the coffee table's legs behind him in order to keep upright. He opened his eyes and looked over at Tony for potential help. Tony was staring at him in openmouthed, utter disbelief. Scott felt a little uneasy kissing this girl he hardly knew. He grunted and made a weak attempt to free himself, but she must have taken that as passion, because she continued making out with him.

Suddenly, Tom burst into the room, out of breath and stumbling into the CD player, shutting it off.

"Something's wrong with Nick!" he gasped. Jessie's attention was averted from Scott just long enough for Scott to jump up and run after Tom. Tony followed him. Tom led the boys into the back yard where Scott had been earlier.

Nick was lying on the ground; the group of stoners crowded in a circle around him.

"Get out of my way!" Scott yelled, barraging through the crowd. He stooped down next to the unconscious boy and checked his pulse.

"No pulse. . ." he mumbled. "No pulse! Someone call 9-11!"

"No way, man," one of the boys said. "I'm getting the heck out of here."



"Yeah, me too," said another. "I'm not sticking around to get caught."

"Tony-please?" Scott begged his friend. Tony pulled out a cell phone and dialed the number.

"Something is wrong with my friend! He isn't breathing!" Tony yelled out into the phone.

"Why? I don't know why! Hold on!" He paused for a few seconds. He pulled the phone away from his ear. "Scott, why isn't he breathing?"

"Cuz. . .he, um, he was smoking pot, I guess-I don't know!" Scott said slowly, while attempting CPR on Nick.

"How do you know that?" Tony hissed.

"Well, because, I did it with him."

"WHAT?!" Tony shrieked. He went back to the phone. "I guess he was smoking marijuana. Maybe he overdosed or something. Can you even overdose on that?!" Tony panicked, shouting into the phone. "Was it laced with something? How should I know? I mean, maybe! Oh man! Oh man!"

"WHAT'S GOING ON?" a voice bellowed. Scott turned and saw Mike Omni march into his backyard. "Everyone is leaving - they said something happened back here and they didn't want to get caught. So, I'll ask you again: What's going on?"

At that moment, police sirens and the blaring of an ambulance could be heard coming down the street.

"It's the fuzz!" someone yelled.

"It's the po-po!" shouted another.

"It's the cherry tops! Run!"

Kids were scattering left and right. In a matter of seconds the entire house had cleared out. They flew off in their cars or sprinted through the woods by Mike's house to make their big escape.

"What do we do? What do we do?" Tony panicked, throwing his arms up in the air.

"I don't know!" Scott cried. His heart was racing like a horse and he was breathing so quickly that he was almost hyperventilating.

"Man, you guys have got to calm down! I mean, look what happened to Nick!" said Mike. He was pacing back and forth. All

three boys wanted to run away like the others, but they knew that they couldn't abandon their friend.

At that moment, an ambulance rolled into the back yard from the street, followed by two cop cars.

"Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh!" Scott repeated over and over again, his eyes as wide as saucers.

A team of E.M.T.s jumped out of the back of the ambulance and rushed over to Nick. They hovered around him for a few seconds, then strapped him to a stretcher and lifted him into the ambulance.

Tony staggered up to one of them. "Pleashe-ish our friend going to be ok?" he slurred.

The man frowned at him. "I don't know yet, but you've got your own problems to worry about." He pointed to the police behind Tony and slammed the ambulance doors shut. The ambulance flew out of the backyard, its siren blaring.

A trio of cops stormed up to them. "Place your hands behind your head and get up against the car. You have the right to remain silent."

Scott felt the aggressive cop jerkily lock his hands into handcuffs. All of the emotions of the evening came rushing back to him. The excitement. The guilt. The fear. He couldn't stand it anymore and began to cry. As the boys were being dragged into the cop car, the other two began to cry, as well.

Tony shook his head. "I can't believe you, Scott," he whispered. "I mean drugs? What were you thinking?"

"I don't know, Tony!" he sobbed. "I just don't know."

"We are in such a mess," Mike sighed. "My parents are going to *kill* me."

"Are we going to go to jail?" Scott asked the cops in a small voice.

"We're taking you down to the station and calling your parents. We'll deal with the legalities later," one of the cops stated, firmly.

"Oh, man!" Tony moaned.

The officer strapped the boys into their safety belts. The back door was slammed shut and the three intoxicated boys sat

scared stiff behind the iron bars in the car.

Scott was beginning to come down off his high. Either the drugs were wearing off, or the evening's events had depressed him. Maybe a little bit of both. He sat with his head in his hands, wiping away his tears and trying not to cry again. He was only 15! How could this be happening to him? Why did he put himself in this situation? *I shouldn't be going to jail!* Scott thought. *Nick shouldn't be unconscious in an ambulance! Maybe none of this is really happening? Maybe I'm just hallucinating, or something! Yeah, that's gotta be it!*

Scott sat there, trying desperately to convince himself that this wasn't really happening to him. It was too unreal. But deep down he knew exactly what was going on. He should have expected it. What a fool he had been!

"Hey guys?" Mike said quietly, breaking the silence. "I know this probably isn't gonna sound like much to you now, but I do appreciate that you didn't abandon me at the party, like everyone else. I don't know what I would have done if I had seen Nick lying there, and everyone had left me. Probably something stupid. So thanks. It's too bad that it takes an awful situation like this to find out who your real friends are."

Scott and Tony kind of half smiled at Mike. "Hey man," said Tony. "We wouldn't leave someone hanging like that. Not you, not Nick, not anybody. That just ain't right."

"Yeah," Scott agreed. "And any punishment we get, we'll probably deserve it. It's better than just leaving Nick to die there."

The two cops looked at each other and raised their eyebrows, obviously touched by this unusual display of emotions demonstrated by the young, juvenile delinquents in the back seat.

The cop car rolled up to the police station. The two cops got out of their car, and the third cop out of the other car. They walked up to the boys and each grabbed one by his shoulders, guiding him into the police station.

Scott felt like he was on one of those TV shows where they arrest real people. He was walking with his head hanging down and shuffling his feet. He noticed that Mike and Tony were doing the same thing. He felt such indescribable shame and

embarrassment. He wanted no one to find out who he was or what he had done.

The cops walked the boys through the front door and up to the front desk.

"Name?" asked a man, shattering Scott's wishful thinking.

"Scott Wallace, sir," he mumbled.

"Tony Spamonie."

"Mike Omni."

After giving the man all of their personal information, like where they lived, who their parents were, and everything else, the boys were led over to a telephone where each boy had to call his parents for a ride home.

"Who wants to go first?" asked a cop, dangling the phone in the criminals' faces. They continued to stare at the floor. "How about Mr. Wallace?"

Scott stepped up toward the cop. The cop took off his handcuffs and handed him the phone.

He stared down at the black and white digits, wanting nothing more than to bolt out of the police station and run far, far away. Scott slowly pushed down each digit of his phone number.

His breath caught in his throat as he heard the first ring of the telephone. Then the second. Then the third. Then the fourth.

"Hello?" asked a sleepy and agitated sounding voice.

"Mom?" Scott asked, quietly.

"Scott, honey, where are you? Are you all right?" Her voice took on a sudden tone of fear. Scott felt like a worthless jerk. He didn't deserve such a wonderful, caring mother. How could he do this to her? How could he disappoint her the way that he was about to?

"I'm-I'm," Scott began, his voice breaking at the end. He began to sob. "At the police station." He cried so hard that his shoulders shook and his breaths were uncontrollable gasps for air.

"What?! Why? Scott, what's going on?"

"Can you just come p-p-pick me up?" Scott managed to say.

"Honey, I'll be right over," his mother said, sternly, but in a confused and concerned way.



Scott shamefully handed the phone to the policeman and collapsed in a nearby chair, trying to control his breathing.

After Tony and Mike had made their calls, Scott looked up at the cop. "How will I find out if my friend is okay? I don't even know what is wrong with him!"

"They took your friend to Saint Vincent's Hospital. I don't know what kind of condition he is in, but I doubt you'll be able to see him any time soon. Would you like me to make a phone call to the hospital and see if I can find out anything about your friend?"

"Could you?" Tony asked, hopefully.

"Now, I'm not making any promises, but-" The cop picked up the phone and dialed the hospital. He walked away from the boys so that they couldn't hear what he was saying. They looked at each other with nervous glances, jiggling their feet or biting their lips. Finally, the cop hung up the phone.

"Well boys, as it turns out the marijuana that your friend, Nick, had smoked was laced with a small, nearly lethal, amount of rat poisoning. Your friend is lucky he isn't dead. Now, I'm not saying he is fine; in fact, he is in the ICU as of now, but chances are, your friend will be all right. Do you understand now how dangerous it is to smoke these drugs that come from who knows where?"

The boys nodded. Tony looked at Scott. "That could have been you, Scott-man. That could have been you."

Tony was right. If someone had handed him that joint instead of the one he had gotten, it *would* have been him. He could've died. He could have *died*.

Suddenly, his mother burst in the door. "Scott? Where's my Scott?" she asked frantically, storming up to the man behind the desk.

"Evelyn Wallace," she stated. "Now, where is my son and what is going...Scott! There you are!" She ran up to him and embraced him.

"Are you all right, son?"

"Yeah, I guess so," he said, looking downward.

"Can anyone tell me what is going on?" She looked directly at Scott.

"Well, you see. . ." Scott told his mother the whole story. Including the part where he had smoked marijuana and made out with Jessie Killingsworth. He felt so guilty about what had happened that he didn't want to tell his mother any more lies. He wanted to come clean.

"Oh, I don't believe this. I just don't believe this," his mother said, shaking her head and sitting down in a chair, looking stunned. "How-? What...what were you thinking Scott?"

"Mom, listen. I don't know what I was thinking. I wasn't, I guess. I was a total idiot tonight and I put myself in high risk situations, thinking only of the acceptance of the other kids, and not really *thinking* about anything sensible. Now I can see what horrible mistakes I've made tonight and I'm so sorry that I disappointed you. I love you and I'd never want to hurt you. I'm so sorry!"

"Scott-I , I love you, too, sweetie. I just want the best for you and I don't want you getting involved with-with drugs and alcohol and gangs-"

"I'm not in a gang, Mom."

"Not yet. Honey, I think that the best thing for you is to go to a counselor. I can't think of anything else. Now, I know-at least, I *hope*-that this is the first time you've ever done this-"

"It is!" Scott insisted.

"But, just in case, I don't want to risk it happening again. Next time, you might not be this lucky. You could be the one in the hospital."

"I know, Mom."

At that point, the officer sternly reminded the boys and their parents that there would be legal consequences as a result of their actions that evening. All of the fear of the night came rushing back to them.

Scott's mother touched him on the shoulder and looked into his eyes for a second, then shook her head and glided up to the desk to fill out some paperwork.

Tony's mother had arrived and was also filling out papers. Mike's parents were out of town, so he was waiting for his aunt from North East to come and pick him up.

"Hey guys, my Mom is right," Scott told them. "I'm never going to put myself in a situation like that again. It's just not worth it."

"Yeah," Tony agreed.

After a pause, Mike stood up. "You know what? You're right. From now on I'm waiting 'till I'm 21 to drink. Life is too short to risk ending up in the hospital, like Nick."

"I don't have to be messed up to have a good time," Scott said.

"Hey, guys," said Tony. "Let's make an oath to each other."

"Yeah!" said Mike. Scott nodded, excitedly.

"Ok, from now on, we have to promise to never, ever do drugs," Mike stated.

"Or drink, until we're 21!" Tony supplied.

"Amen!" cried Scott. He and Tony did their double back handed high five secret handshake ending with the two of them whispering "asparagus". They taught it to Mike and the three promised to abide by their statement.

From that time on, none of the boys ever drank or did drugs. When they went to parties, which wasn't for a *very* long time afterward, instead of partaking in illegal activities to look cool, they'd entertain the other kids by telling them the awful and fateful tale of Mike's 9th grade party: The biggest bash of the season destroyed by a troubled boy who inhaled a nearly fatal puff of a marijuana joint. After all, to him it was no big deal; it was just to relax. Who'd have thought that Nick's bad choice would change the lives of three boys forever?

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