

WHY GET INVOLVED?

Characters: Bruce
Jerry
A woman

Scene: a city street. It is filled with litter, and the buildings are run-down and dirty. Most of them are warehouses and factories. One building, however, is an old apartment house. It is early on a Sunday morning, and the street is very quiet. Suddenly, Bruce and Jerry enter on bicycles. Bruce stops his bike and gets off.

BRUCE: Hey Jerry, wait a second.

JERRY: Why?

BRUCE: I'm thirsty. We've been riding over two hours. Let's have some cokes and a little snack.

JERRY: Are you kidding? I don't want to stop *here*.

BRUCE: What's the difference? We could sit against one of these buildings.

JERRY: Oh, come on! This place gives me the creeps. It was your big idea to explore this part of town. Well, now you can see it's crummy. So why don't you just get on your bike and . . .

BRUCE: Will you shut up for a minute? Look, I'll say it again—I'm thirsty. Hungry too. You want to keep riding, go right ahead. I'm stopping here.

(Jerry glares at Bruce who is busy unpacking the knapsack he has been wearing. Bruce then walks over to the apartment house and sits down against the building.)



JERRY: (*after watching silently, he speaks angrily*) All right—we'll do it your way. Again.

(He gets off his bike, finds some cookies and a coke in the knapsack, and sits next to Bruce.)

BRUCE: (*his mouth full*) See, we can't get hurt. Nobody's here.

JERRY: They don't show themselves, you know, until they're ready to mug you. And I heard this section is full of muggers, just waiting for idiots like us to show up and hang around—like we're doing. Boy, I'll bet there's one right now who—

BRUCE: Shut up and eat, Jerry.

(Jerry is quiet for a few moments.)

JERRY: Besides, this place smells. I'm probably going to get a stomachache.

BRUCE: Yeah, well, you're giving me one.

JERRY: Look I'm not trying to be funny! The garbage lying around, and the smoke—

BRUCE: Ahh, the smoke's from the factory smokestacks.

JERRY: I don't care where it's from. (*Bruce suddenly stands up and sniffs the air noisily.*) Hey, what's the matter?

BRUCE: (*quietly*) Did you notice that since we first stopped here, the air has been getting warmer?

JERRY: Warmer? (*getting nervous*) Why—why would that be?

BRUCE: (*walking a few steps away*) Hey! There's smoke coming from the other side of this building.

JERRY: Come on, let's get out of here!

BRUCE: No! We've got to get the fire department. (*looking around quickly*) There's a firebox across the street.

(He runs over to pull the alarm. Jerry tries to keep up with his friend.)

JERRY: Are you kidding? It would be a blessing if that place—

WOMAN'S VOICE: (*offstage*) Help! Help me!

BRUCE: (*returning to the building*) There's a woman up there! Come on, Jerry, we've got to go save her!

(He heads for the entrance, but Jerry stops dead in his tracks.)

JERRY: (*frozen with fear*) I can't! I could get killed!

(*Offstage, a woman's voice is heard, screaming loudly.*)

BRUCE: And what about her? What about that woman up there?

JERRY: The fire department—they'll be here soon—they can—

BRUCE: (*angrily*) You know what they'll do? They'll know it's this lousy part of town and they'll take their time getting here!

WOMAN'S VOICE: Help! Up here! Save me!

BRUCE: Jerry, I need you! Come on.

JERRY: _____