



Friends:

A ONE-ACT PLAY BY JULES FEIFFER

FRIENDS:
A ONE-ACT PLAY

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riends was part of an evening of dialogue,

96 scenes and narrative entitled *Jules' Blues*, presented at the Vineyard Playhouse in Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts on August 10 and 11, 1998. The roles of Fran and Ted were performed by Polly Draper and Robert Brustein.

TED
(MIDDLE-AGED MAN)

Fran and I have so many friends—

FRAN
(MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN)

—whom we love

TED
Whom we love, and who represent a significant part of our lives.

FRAN
Truly significant.

FRIENDS

TED

And it's a joy.

FRAN

We are joyful.

TED

And thankful for these friendships.

FRAN

And grateful.

(pause)

That we are blessed with so many friends.

TED

Who expect a lot—

FRAN

Over the years—

TED

Over the years, they've come to expect—

FRAN

A lot.

TED

A lot of giving—

FRAN

Which we want to do.

TED

Very much need to do.

FRAN

Not for them, not just for them. For ourselves.

JULES FEIFFER

TED
We get as much as we give.

FRAN
Oh?

TED
(proving his point)
They love us.

FRAN
They depend on us.

TED
Isn't that what friendship's all about?

FRAN
In a way that they don't depend on their other friends.

TED
They don't have other friends.

FRAN
Why is that?

TED
Oh, they have some friends.

FRAN
Of course. What kind of friends would they be if they didn't have other friends? Not the kind of friends I'd want.

TED
But no one is as close—

FRAN
No one gives, who think it's their duty to give—

TED
As much as Fran and I—

FRAN
And when we give to one friend, when we spend time, or go out for an evening, or go away on a trip—

TED
God help us if one of our other friends find out.

FRAN
I don't know why—

TED
I will never know why—

FRAN
They get jealous.

TED
They want us for themselves.

FRAN
They expect us to be there, even when we're on holiday.

TED
“Where were you?” they demand.

FRAN
“You weren't there when I had plans, tickets to Forest Hills.”

TED
“Where were you?”

FRAN
It can get tense.

TED
Why should we feel guilty?

FRAN

Because we are there most of the time.

TED

We can't be there every second of the day and night. We have jobs, for Christ's sake!

FRAN

We can't fit in everyone all the time—

TED

They wouldn't appreciate it anyway.

FRAN

The problem is—if they only liked each other. They gossip about each other.

TED

We discourage it.

FRAN

But, let's face it, dishing is an element of friendship, don't you think?

TED

What do they say about us behind our backs?

FRAN

Oh, I don't think—I'd rather not know.

TED

It's not fair, it's really not.

FRAN

(miffed)

They're as needy as children.

TED

Our children weren't that needy.

FRAN

I don't mean our children.

TED

Of course not. They were independent from day one.

FRAN

They wouldn't listen.

TED

They didn't care.

FRAN

You couldn't say anything to them without having it thrown back in your face.

TED

“You didn't!”

FRAN

“You weren't!”

TED

“You're never there!”

FRAN

When we were there.

TED

“You didn't try!”

FRAN

“You're never there and you don't try!”

TED

After a while, you stop trying.

FRAN
The sheer ingratitude.

TED
Who can live with it?

FRAN
“You always have time for your friends—”

TED
A lie. A bald-faced lie!

FRAN
We had time for them. We made time for them.

TED
So much time.

FRAN
But it was never enough.

TED
They wanted to devour us.

FRAN
Till there was nothing left.

TED
Their anger...
(shudders)
our guilt.

FRAN
I have nothing to feel guilty about.

TED
Yes, you did.

FRAN
(fast response)
You did too.

TED
No, I didn't.

FRAN
No, I didn't either.

TED
No...neither of us, really.

FRAN
The stress...the god-awful, relentless, never-ending stress...

TED
It's better with them gone.

FRAN
I thought I'd miss them.

TED
What a pleasant surprise not to.

FRAN
It's worked out fine.

(pause)

Really.

(long pause)

We have more time for our friends.

TED
Fran and I have so many friends.