

THE DRUG PROBLEM

By Monica Bauer

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ISBN 1-60003-032-7

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CHARACTERS

LINDA 30s or 40s, plain but slender and stylishly dressed

DIANE 20s, very pretty, slender but dressed in a plain pair of pants and a shirt

TIME & PLACE

The near-future, a late afternoon in the Spring. A deserted area of Central Park in Manhattan

AT RISE: Enter LINDA, who sits on a park bench, waiting for her dealer to appear. SHE glances around nervously. DIANE enters casually from the other side of the stage, sits next to LINDA, and gives her a meaningful look.

LINDA: "The pigeons eat lunch on your forehead".

DIANE: "And have your Haagen Daz for desert". **(pause)** What happened to Number Seven? I was expecting Number Seven! Who are you?

LINDA: I'm Number Nine. Seven is in the hospital.

DIANE: The hospital!

LINDA: The drugs finally caught up with her.

DIANE: Poor Seven. She was a great courier. I hope she has a spectacular funeral.

LINDA: Yes, I'm sure she will.

DIANE: One of the perks. I almost look forward to them. All you can eat buffet, sirloin, bacon burgers, six kinds of cakes, seven kinds of pies. And then, there's the floor show. Last year, a supplier in Jersey City got Wayne Newton flown in just for her! Now THAT was a funeral.

LINDA: I hear the Big Momma shows up at every funeral. I sure would be honored to meet her. She's such a...

DIANE: Legend. She's a legend, all right.

LINDA: Have you ever met her?

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DIANE: I thought so, once, but I wasn't sure. Rumor was she had changed her gender. Several times. Back and forth. All this just to keep the cops off our tail. Bastards!

LINDA: Yeah, the bastards!

DIANE: Whose business is it what we put into our bodies!

LINDA: Nobody's business!

DIANE: They're getting sneakier every day. They found an undercover cop in Brooklyn, she penetrated almost up to the top of the organization.

LINDA: What happened to the lousy snitch?

DIANE: Took her to a warehouse somewhere in the Bronx, and started stuffing her. Cheesecake, chocolates, you know, the usual treatment.

LINDA: Why not just knock her off and be done with it?

DIANE: Because death isn't good enough for them. They need to be stuffed. You sure ask a lot of questions...

LINDA: Well, I'm new to this.

DIANE: How long have you been using? Looks like quite a while, from the looks of you. Yet you say you're new to this...

LINDA: I said I'm new to THIS part, the distribution end. Seven's been supplyin' me steady for the last three years now. I always thought about becoming a Dealer, but I didn't do anything about it until, all of a sudden, she calls me from the hospital.

DIANE: Yeah, they tell me that's the way it happens. Not much warning. One day, you're out on the beach, showing off your new bikini wax, and then, BAM, right into intensive care. So, you've got the stuff, right?

LINDA: Sure. Here it is. **(hands over a baggie full of pills)**

DIANE: Since you're a new supplier, you don't mind if I check out the merchandise, do you?

LINDA: Absolutely, check it out. It's the same stuff Seven was supplyin'. Nothin's changed.

DIANE: **(looks at a capsule carefully, breaks one open, sniffs it, tastes it with her little finger)** You sure nothing has changed?

LINDA: Absolutely.

DIANE: And Seven told you to meet me here.

LINDA: That's right.

DIANE: **(grabs her by the throat)** These aren't my custom order; these are normal. Seven knew I needed my special dose, double strength. I have to be a size six by June to fit into a bridesmaid's dress. So you have just a few minutes to explain yourself, before I use my cell phone to call the Enforcers.

LINDA: **(choking, blurring out)** No! Please don't kill me!!

DIANE: Killing's too good, remember? I think you need to be...stuffed! Are you wearing a wire? **(pats LINDA down with her free hand)**

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Good. It's just you and me, then. *(flips open her phone)* Thought you could fool me just because you know the password? Hope you enjoy being fat, because when the Enforcers take you...

LINDA: Wait! Stop! I couldn't take it! I couldn't take being stuffed! Please, you can't turn me in!

DIANE: Now why should I give you special treatment? When you came out here to bust me? And I bet you busted Seven, too. Where is she?

LINDA: She's at a re-education camp on Long Island.

DIANE: Poor Seven's probably going through withdrawal right now. Dreaming of Haagen Daz double chip mocha, breaking rocks in the hot sun...All because of YOU!

LINDA: It's not so bad. She can lose a lot of weight breaking rocks like that. All we really want to do is help! We only bust you to protect you!

DIANE: You really believe that, don't you? Bet you've been thin all your life. Miss All-You-Can-Eat-Buffer-Natural-Size-Six. You people are freaks of nature! You have no idea what life is like for us without these pills. That's why, whatever your name is, you need to be stuffed. Good and stuffed. So you know just how it feels.

LINDA: NO! My name is Linda. Look, I'm a woman, just like you; I'm not just a cop! And I already know how it feels to be fat!

DIANE: How can you possibly know what it feels like to be fat?

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