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## **GENEROUS JACKIE**

I've known Jacquelyn since I was maybe three or four years old, we've had our ups and downs but have always remained very close friends. This tale takes place when Jacquelyn was a young 22-year-old woman just starting law school.

If there's anything I could say about her, Jacquelyn has a heart, a big one at that. Has always had one. Whenever I need help, she's there.

When we graduated high school, she decided to go to Boston to study law and become a civil rights lawyer. Always wanting to protect and help people, especially women. If you were to see Jacquelyn walking her dog down the street you'd see her soft, welcoming face, blue eyes that hook onto you and pull you in, and a constant smile gracing her face. She not only cares for humans but animals as well. She knew someone at a local shelter that would give her cats and dogs to nurse back to health and Jacquelyn never turned them down, even if it was a ferret with three legs.

I live in New York and would frequently visit Jacquelyn in Boston, We'd go out and get dinner and I would insist I'd pay but she would always steal the check from me when it got to our table. Throughout our friendship I had noticed that about her. If her and a bunch of friends would go out for drinks or anything that involved money she'd end up paying for it. No one asked her to but she still would. As we got older I noticed her friends asking her to pay multiple times. And of course, she would say yes. I started to feel uncomfortable with this. I didn't know how I felt about these people she called her friends. I knew they were using her.

Jacquelyn is a very close friend of mine, like I've said. I remember one time when my artwork wasn't selling very well and I knew I wasn't going to be able to pay my rent. Being my best friend, Jacquelyn knew I was struggling. She ended up offering to help me pay the rent. Of course, I turned her down. I'm an adult; I should be able to take care of my responsibilities. I worked my ass off to be able to make it in time. It didn't go over

too well. So, yes, Jacquelyn ended up helping me pay for my rent. Although I did pay her back. Yet no one else repaid her the way I have. And it never seems to bother her.

A couple of months ago, Jacquelyn's father passed away from a heart attack. It was very unexpected. No one saw it coming. When Jacquelyn heard the news she was devastated. She had called some of her close friends in Boston for support. Yet, none of them reached out, or offered to help in any way. She called me sobbing, saying, "No one is my true friend and they are all selfish and self-centered."

I didn't know what to say. I apologized for her loss, but when she started spilling all these other feelings I was speechless. We talked for hours on the phone yet nothing I could say would change the fact that she was so lonely and didn't have as many people that cared about her as she thought she did.

For as long as I'd known her friends, I knew they were self-centered and only used her for her material things. But I didn't have the heart to tell her, at least not in that moment.

I called her everyday for the next two weeks after that. She would rarely answer or get back to me. I knew something was wrong. So I bought a train ticket to Boston to visit her. I told her I was coming but she never responded. I decided to go anyways. When I arrived at her house it was a mess. It looked like a college boy's dorm room. Pizza boxes everywhere. Dirty clothes strewn across the floor. I could tell she hadn't left her house in days. I found Jacquelyn in her room, all of the lights were off and she was watching reruns of Breaking Bad. She looked so depressed and broken down. I went to go hug her and she immediately started crying. She said none of her friends had called her since she'd told them what happened with her father. I told her what I thought of her friends and as if I saw it coming, she started crying even more. Jacquelyn said she had no idea the whole time that her friends were using her. I still don't understand how she didn't realize it. How could she not? I stayed with her for a week, cleaned her apartment and did her laundry. I took her out to dinner a couple times and drinks. I told Jacquelyn she needed to find new friends. But she said she didn't know how she could do that; she had lost all of her confidence.

Maybe Jacquelyn's immediate downfall into this depression wasn't solely based on the lack of the friends. Maybe this was the first time, the first real time; Jacquelyn

didn't get what she wanted in a time of need. Since I can remember if Jacquelyn was going through a rough time everyone surrounding her made sure life would become easier for her. She's a hard worker, don't get me wrong, but it was her way or the highway. I realize this trait but never let it faze me.

In situations of blaming others I can't help but think about both parties. Pondering or comparing one's mistake to the others. So was Jacquelyn the selfless or selfish one? She may have shown compassion for her friends with material items but is that really how compassion is shown?

I was never around when Jacquelyn's friends were dealing with painful experiences. If Jacquelyn's idea of a caring friend is going out to dinner at a fancy restaurant and getting wasted to forget about the real issues so she wouldn't have to deal with the tears or hear about the sad things. Then she put herself in that situation of longing for a caring friend. Treat others how you want to be treated; take a depressed friend out to the bars is exactly what you're going to get in return.

With her growing up in a family that always hid their emotions I wouldn't expect her to deal well with others emotional times. Then I started to wonder. When was the last time Jacquelyn came to see me in New York when I was going through something traumatic? Of course, she knew when I was stressed or feeling down. But she'd only make the effort to answer the phone.

Was it the right thing to do by going down to Boston and staying at her bedside while she, in fact, was the one who put herself in that bed?

With the state of the country's economies how many relationships are based off of money? How many women go out looking for a man that makes a salary with more than a couple zeros at the end? Jacquelyn would always say that if she were to get married her husband should and want to be able to support her. I know she can't live with out her luxurious life style of designer clothes, long vacations and fancy cars. We grew up on an area that was extremely affluent. At age sixteen most kids were driving BMW's and Jacquelyn had two cars to herself. Recalling such an event, as in death, makes you think about the friendships you've been part of, how you treat yourself and others. Maybe

Jacquelyn is to blame for her misfortune. Maybe she isn't truly happy but just has more money.