

I DIDN'T SAY A WORD

By Shirlie Wright

NOTES

Aristotle once wrote, “True friendship is shown in times of trouble.” In her powerful poem about love, loss, friendship and forgiveness, Shirlie Wright introduces us to a young teenager, whose former best friend has just lost her mother. This beautiful narrative poem may be performed by a female (or male) and be entered in either Poetry Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. There are moments of reflective humor throughout this free-verse poem. Play those moments for their humor, and let those moments “show” the audience just how much the two friends once truly cared for each other. This is a truly powerful poem for a dynamic, but honest, performer.

She missed two weeks of school.
Everybody knew that she was gone.
I had a couple of classes with her,
And it didn't take long before everyone was talking—
Talking about how her mother had died.
My heart hurt when I heard the news.
We used to be best friends, but that was years ago.
That friendship faded away sometime during middle school.
Nobody seemed to remember, and I wasn't going to bring it up.
As I listened to the others talk about her,
I didn't say a word.



Throughout the day, I thought about how we *used to* be.
We practically lived in each other's homes.
If she wasn't at *my* house, I was at *hers*.
I remember the two of us spending hours in the kitchen with her mom.
Her mom made the *best* chocolate chip cookies.
It didn't take much persuading to get her to mix up a batch.
I'm not sure how many cookies we consumed
Before they ever even hit the oven.
We would dip our fingers into the mixing bowl
And lick off the dough, giggling the entire time.
We ate until we felt like our stomachs would explode.
One year for Christmas,
She gave me her mom's recipe for chocolate chip cookies
Along with a basket filled with the necessary ingredients.
That was the best Christmas present I ever got.
I absolutely loved it!
But...I didn't say a word.



Just last week, I made a batch of chocolate chip cookies

Using the old beat-up recipe card she had given me years ago.
As I licked the cookie dough from my fingers,
I thought about taking a picture of the already baked cookies
And then sending it to her.
I thought she would get a kick out of knowing
I still used her mom's recipe.
But...I didn't take a picture.
I didn't say a word.



When I got home from school, I began looking through old pictures.
There were tons of them with just the two of us.
I guess it's something that all childhood friends do—take pictures...
Dozens and dozens of pictures.
There were pictures of us making all sorts of faces—
Faces with puckered lips, with our tongues hanging out.
There were pictures of us at the summer carnival—
At her parents' lake house—lying on the beach trying to get a tan,
Skiing behind their boat, jumping off the dock...
There were pictures of the million sleepovers we had over the years—
We would transform each other with makeovers—
Always putting on too much makeup
And trying our best to recreate the latest hairstyles.
There were so many pictures of us just... laughing—
Just...laughing and looking at each other—
Looking at each other in that special way that best friends do.
She was my favorite person on earth.
I think she knew that.
I *hope* she knew.
I'm not sure...
I didn't say a word.



When she came back to school,
She was swarmed by masses of people.
Everyone wanted to be a part of the latest school drama.
Everyone wanted to appear to be her best friend—
The one who knew her *better* than anyone else.
I watched from the sidelines.
I knew that none of those people knew her like I did.

Since we drifted apart, she had basically become a loner.
I knew that she didn't like people invading her space.
She hated being hugged.
She hated a lot of the people