

Not the use of
marijuana was a



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

not was not really the point; Derek was a private person and did not like to feel that his comings, goings, and doings were known to just anyone. Oddly enough, Derek could justify the volume of his music because it served to mask his personal actions. He looked at Arthur who was eyeing him, fists on hips, with a sardonic grin. Derek ignored it. "You want some?" he said. It was more of a statement than a question; Arthur was an avid smoker of "the Herb". "Sure, if you haven't already smoked it all.

"Arthur was trying to joke, but Derek suddenly did not feel like responding. He was vaguely aware that he was not being very friendly, but Arthur's exuberance was suddenly bothering him. Only a couple of minutes ago Derek felt excited about Arthur.

But now Arthur's energy, as much of it as there was, seemed stale. Derek disappeared into his darkened bedroom and pretended to root around, trying to clear his head. I'm just being moody, he thought.

I can't relate to him 'cause he's not stoned...yet! Derek soon emerged carrying a bag of green powder and a packet of rolling papers. He did not look at Arthur, but went into the living room and turned on the lamp in the corner. He left the candle burning and turned down the music a touch. Then he set about rolling a joint.

Arthur surveyed Derek's living room with his permanently curious eye. It was rather bare: there were only a few prints hanging up to take away the starkness of the white walls, and the furniture was limited to a coffee table, a few chairs and a beanbag scattered over the cheap indoor/outdoor carpeting on the floor. Hasn't changed since the last time I was here, he thought.

Arthur liked to spend a lot of time making his place as homey as possible. When he saw the lighted candle, Arthur raised an eyebrow, and he began to wonder. To Arthur, the use of marijuana was a social thing, an experience to be shared with others. He did not understand how Derek could sit all by himself in the dark, alone with his swirling and scattered thoughts. That was because, though he would never have admitted it, Arthur was afraid of his thoughts. Despite his boisterous, energetic and positive front, deep down Arthur did not trust himself, and his thoughts and desires often haunted him. He tried to drown them out with constant movement and action, and the idea that Derek was doing what he dared not do made him worried. He did not realize that Derek was even more uncomfortable among his peers, when stoned, than when he was alone.

Arthur crossed the room and turned down the music so he could talk to his friend. He was trying to think of what to say to get Derek to leave with him, to get out of these oppressive surroundings." So what's new, Bud?" he asked. Derek did not look up from the floor where he was carefully rolling the joint." Not much," he said in an uncommunicative tone. Derek held the joint up to the light and eyed his handiwork critically.

Satisfied, he set about rolling another. He was preparing to be in a better mood, but he wanted a few moments to think about something else entirely. Arthur, knowing his friend well, recognized this and kept silent. Scanning the room he noticed a pencil and notepad on the coffee table in front of him.

Curious as always, Arthur reached for it and saw that it was covered with wandering doodles and almost illegible scrawls. Derek was aware of

Arthur's movements. He said nothing, but wondered what Arthur would say, and waited in anticipation. Often when high Derek would try to write down some of the random thoughts which occurred to him, thoughts which at the time seemed like indisputable Truth. He took his time rolling the joint and cleaned up thoroughly afterwards. Then he carefully re-rolled his bag of pot and sat back watching Arthur's expressions as he read. Unfortunately for Derek, Arthur's face remained impassive and he finally threw the notepad down without a comment.

Derek was disappointed and stared at his friend, feeling lost. He had thought that the few lines he had scrawled were quite good, and he wondered that Arthur could remain unmoved by them. Not that this was anything new. Derek often felt frustrated by what he saw as the insensitivity of others to what he considered Truth.

Statements like "The Oneness of All", were too easily seen as being corny,