

BANG BANG BAR

AFTER COMPLETING A LONG DAY AT WORK, CHARLOTTE JOINED THE BIRTHDAY PARTY OF HER FRIEND ANNA AT THE BANG BANG BAR ACROSS TOWN, AROUND 8PM. SHE WALKED TO THE BAR TO ORDER AN APEROL SPRITZ, AFTERWARDS SAYING HER HELLOS AT THE TABLE. ON THE MATTER OF FINDING SOMEWHERE TO SIT, CHRISTIAN, A FRIEND OF A FRIEND FROM A WHILE AGO, ASKS HER TO SIT WITH HIM AS HE CURRENTLY DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO TALK TO. SHE POLITELY AGREED, PUTTING HER BELONGINGS UNDER THE CHAIR AND ASKING HIM ABOUT HIS DAY, TO WHICH HIS REPLY LASTED 30 MINUTES.

HE CONTINUED TALKING VIVIDLY ABOUT HIS DECISION FOR LUNCH, HIS NEW GERMAN LESSONS HE WAS TEACHING, AND A SEMINAR HE WAS TAKING ON MAN SHE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE NAME OF, OR HAD LITTLE TO NO INTEREST IN. SHOCKED THAT SHE HADN'T READ ANY OF HIS WORK, THIS ALLOWED CHRISTIAN TO EDUCATE HER WITH AN UNESSECERY AND UNDESIRED PRESENTATION ON THIS SUBJECT.

CHARLOTTE TRIED TO DISCUSS THE SEMINAR SHE HAD HAD THAT DAY, 'I ALSO FOUND THIS OTHER PERSON I LEARN'T ABOUT...' SHE WAS IMMEDIATELY CUT OF 'I THINK YOU'LL FIND ITS PRONOUNCED 'OTHER.'

CHRISTIAN CONTINUED WITH HIS STORY.

AT SOME POINT HIS TOPICS HAD SWITCHED TO YOUTH CULTURE, AND CHARLOTTE LIGHTLY TOUCHED UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE YOUNG MOVING INTO POORER AREAS, BEFORE CHRISTIAN JUMPED TO CORRECT HER, 'I THINK I NEED TO TEACH YOU THE MEANING OF GENTRIFICATION!' HE LAUGHED, AND CONTINUED TO DESCRIBE THIS WELL KNOWN WORD TO CHARLOTTE IN GREAT DETAIL.

AFTER NOT ASKING HER AT LEAST ONE QUESTION, SHE TRIED TO TURN THE CONVERSATION AROUND, BY ATTEMPTING SOME SMALL INTERJECTIONS. HOWEVER IT WAS HOPELESS, AS ANY COMMENT WAS EITHER SIMPLY IGNORED OR TALKED OVER.

PANICKED, SHE LOOKED AROUND THE ROOM FOR OTHER PEOPLE SHE COULD POTENTIALLY SWAP SEATS WITH, AND HAVE A CONVERSATION, AS THIS ABSURD DISPLAY WAS CERTAINLY NOT THAT.

BUT ALAS! EVERYONE WAS ALREADY DEEP IN CHATTER WITH THEIR PARTNERS, OR FORMER PARTNERS, HAVING ARGUMENTS OR FLIRTATIONS, TO WHICH SHE DIDN'T WANT TO INTRUDE. THERE WAS NO WAY OUT EXCEPT THE DOOR. SHE SIPPED HER BEER, PLANNING A QUICK ESCAPE. SHE WOULD CLAIM SHE WAS FAR TOO TIRED FOR COMPANY, AND HAD TO RUSH HOME STRAIGHT AWAY.

TEN MINUTES LATER, SHE ACTIVATED HER PLAN, AND WITH A LOUD YAWN, EXCLAIMED SHE MUST GO HOME. 'AH!' SAID CHRISTIAN, 'WE ARE LIVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION, ILL WALK YOU THERE!'

HORROR STUCK CHARLOTTE'S FACE. SHE COULDN'T BEAR BEING IN HERE WITH HIM, BUT THE THOUGHT OF WALKING JUST THE TWO OF THEM FOR ALMOST AN HOUR WAS TOO MUCH TO TAKE.

ORDERING RELUCTLY ANOTHER DRINK AND MAYBE MAKING A DASH FROM THE TOILET WAS THE ONLY OPTION. SHE SUGGESTED HE JUST GO ON BEFORE HER IF HE WANTED TO LEAVE, BUT OF COURSE HE WANTED TO WAIT, AS THERE WAS APPARENTLY SO MUCH MORE TO CATCH HER UP ON.

SHE CONTINUED TO LISTEN TO HIM FOR ANOTHER TWO HOURS, IN WHICH TIME HE HAD EXPLAINED TO HER HOW NOTHING COMPARES TO PAINTING, AND WHAT THE BIG IDEA REALLY WAS BEHIND FEMINISM. SHE HAD AT THIS POINT THANKFULLY FOUND A MECHANISM TO SHUT OUT HIS VOICE ALMOST COMPLETELY.

FOR WHATEVER REASON SHE STAYED SHE'S NOT SURE. SHE WASN'T ENJOYING HERSELF, THAT'S CERTAIN, AND HADN'T SPOKEN NOW FOR AT LEAST 40 MINUETS, COMPLETELY GIVING UP ON POLITE 'AHH'S; AND 'OHH REALLY.'

SHE LOOKED AROUND THE ROOM. SHE THEN NOTICED ODDLY THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE OTHER WOMEN IN THE BAR HAD THE SAME GLAZED LOOK OVER THEIR FACES, BORED, FIDDLING, AND SILENT, ALL SEEMED TO BE PASSIVELY LISTENING TO THE GUY THAT WAS TALKING AT THEM, NOT WITH THEM, FROM ACROSS THE TABLE. SOME SEEMED TO FAKE INTEREST, BUT STILL THEIR MOUTHS WERE CLOSED.

'CHRIST!' SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF, 'WHY ON EARTH DON'T WE HAVE THE BALLS TO GET UP AND LEAVE!' BUT SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR COMPLETE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING, THEIR NARCISSISM, OBSCENE SELF INTEREST AND PSEUDO INTELLECTUAL COMMENTARY WAS SO HIDEOUSLY UNBEARABLE SHE COULDN'T PULL AWAY. SHE WAS SO FASCINATED BY HIS COMPLETE UNAWARENESS OF THE PERSON ACROSS THE TABLE FROM THEM. SHOCKING! SHE THOUGHT, HOW OBLVIOUS ONE CAN BE. ZONING OUT AND DAZED, SHE CONCENTRATED ON THE OTHER COUPLES ACROSS THE BAR, HER ATTENTION STOPPING AT ONE OF THE GIRLS ON A TWO PERSON TABLE. THE GIRL HAD STOOD UP MID CONVERSATION, AND WALKED TOWARDS THE KAREOKE STAGE. WITH A GREAT SIGH OF RELIEF, CHARLOTTE ALLOWED HERSELF TO BE TOUCHED BY THE SONG, AS THE SONG STARTED PLAYING, DREAMING OF A TIME THAT SHE WASN'T DROWNED IN THIS DREADFUL ABYSS.....

(IM ON FIRE BY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN STARTS TO PLAY)