

The Story to Tell

By

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INT 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA LOBBY-NIGHT

An elevator door opens and a GIRL about 20 years old rushes out, she is clutching an envelope and is visibly worried.

She runs straight into a tall heavy-set MAN, who appears to be as smart as he is skinny, he looks at the envelope in her hand first and then up at her face greedily.

He licks his lip in the process. She shudders.

GIRL

Excuse me, I didn't see you.

She moves to step around him, but he grasps her upper arm.

MAN

You're not going anywhere with that envelope, Missy.

She looks down at her envelope and then up at him.

GIRL

Are you Wesley Carr?

MAN

Yes I am, now give me the envelope.

GIRL

Oh! So you're the multi-millionaire thirty year old who created the biggest internet start up since Facebook.

MAN

Sure, now how much money will I have to give you to hand over that envelope.

GIRL

Yeah, that's not how this works.

She thrusts her knee up right where he does not want it to go. He howls in pain and she is released from his clutch.

She runs out the door into the busy New York City street.

INT STARBUCKS COFFEE SHOP-DAY

Two girls are sitting across from each other at a table. The girl is telling the story and a young, fiery woman, CHARLOTTE is sitting across from her, writing rapidly in a notebook.

GIRL

And that's how I outsmarted the mob. It wasn't hard really. He seemed to have enough smarts as my thirteen month old brother.

CHARLOTTE

That's a wild story. Are you sure you don't mind me using it as part of my series in the paper?

GIRL

Nah, it's my go to party story, most people know it by now.

As she stands to leave, SCOTT, 20, a tall awkwardly handsome man slides into her now vacant seat.

Charlotte turns and audibly groans. His smile widens.

SCOTT

Beautiful day, isn't it? Full of sunshine and lies.

Charlotte gathers up her stuff to leave, and pushes herself out the door. Scott follows.

EXT STARBUCKS COFFEE-DAY

CHARLOTTE

I have no idea what you are talking about.

SCOTT

So you're informing these completely innocent people that you intend to steal their stories for your own personal gain?

CHARLOTTE

In a sense.

SCOTT

Charlotte, you have to reconsider this arrangement, you-

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE

I will not. I'd rather die than
change my opinion in the matter.

SCOTT

Well, you're pretty close to
fulfilling that desire.

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me?

He stops her on the street and forces her to look at him.

SCOTT

You're really not this self
centered are you? You can't be. No
one is.

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Kane, self centered
extraordinaire. Nice to meet you.

She stick her hand out to shake his, but he brushes it away.
Charlotte begins to wobble and lose her balance. She starts
to walk away but her body betrays her.

She sways on the spot as Scott looks at her alarmingly
terrified. She loses consciousness and falls into him.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

Everyone dies. It's inevitable.
Something we are born knowing, and
born hating. After my mother died,
I got tested. Huntington's Disease.
Fifty-fifty chance of getting the
DNA code that would ultimately kill
me. A flip of a coin, you could
say. Yet, here I am, no control
over my motor skills, my brain
eating me from the inside out.
Diseases come fast and leave behind
nothing in their wake, besides a
grave and the body they devoured
residing six feet under.

The sounds morph and the scene is now shown from above.
People rush to Charlotte who is now laying on the ground her
head in Scott's lap. Sirens begin to fade in.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

There's a funny thing you realize
when you learn that you're dying.
You take a deep breath and look

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE (V.O) (cont'd)
around and realize that nothing
you've done has mattered, that the
difference you set out to make in
the world, will never be completed.
I always wanted to be great, and
nothing sells a story better than a
dying girl writing it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Charlotte lays in a hospital bed with wires sticking out of her, her heart monitor beeps steadily in the back ground.

A doctor, CLARA, 30, with a warm smile and soft, sad, kind eyes walks into the room and nods approvingly at Charlotte.

CLARA

You gave us quite a scare today,
Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Sooner or later it's not going to
be scary anymore, just expected.

CLARA

I really wish you'd talk to someone
about this. It's not good to bottle
up your emotions.

CHARLOTTE

I've been bottling up my emotions
since my mom died, it's not exactly
something to call CNN about.
(beat)
Am I free to go?

CLARA

You don't have to talk to a
therapist, or to me, but you should
talk to a friend.

CHARLOTTE

Don't worry about me, I'm talking
to loads of people.

INT PROFESSOR MEYERS OFFICE- AFTERNOON

A middle aged professor sits at his cluttered desk, it is lined with multiple picture frames. A large diploma from Columbia hangs on the wall, showing a masters of English.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

Professor Meyers was the type of Professor that brought in pizza at the end of the semester because he wanted a good teacher evaluation, but he also had friends in high places. He was the first stop on my madness story.

Charlotte comes into the door frame and knocks on the door.

CHARLOTTE

Professor?

PROFESSOR MEYERS

Yes, yes Charlotte. Please come in.

CHARLOTTE

How are you today?

PROFESSOR MEYERS

I believe I should be the one asking you those questions.

CHARLOTTE

(ignoring him)

I have a couple of questions regarding my autobiography.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

I felt as if I had a story to tell, since the one I wished to live was to never be written, maybe I had to take a step back.

Meyers stand up and pours himself a cup of coffee from the pot on his desk. He offers one to her wordlessly.

PROFESSOR MEYERS

Ah! Yes! My friend over at Simon and Schuester says he can show it to the publisher if you can get it to him by Friday.

CHARLOTTE

This Friday? I thought I had until the end of the month?

(CONTINUED)

PROFESSOR MEYERS

One can not change the things they have no control over.

CHARLOTTE

If I wanted a fortune cookie, I would've gone downtown.

PROFESSOR MEYERS

I know how much this book means to you. I know of your desire to be remembered in such a way. I am happy to grant a dying girls wish, but only if you can meet me halfway.

Charlotte leans back in her chair and groans.

CHARLOTTE

Meyers, you're killing me here.

PROFESSOR MEYERS

(ignoring her)

Five p.m. on Friday? I have a plane to catch.

EXT: STARBUCKS COFFEE- DAY

SCOTT

Do you have friends?

Charlotte is walking down the street, clearly avoiding him. Her notebook is in her hand and two pens are pushed through her ponytail.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

The next person comes in the form of Scott Connors, a kid I should have never let out of my sight. He was smart, he was cool, he was a pain in my ass.

SCOTT

The reason I'm asking, is that you're dying, like actually dying. Don't feed me that bullshit 'everyone dies' nonsense this isn't Game Of Thrones. You're dying and you have no one to

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE

No one to what, Scott? Console me?
Be there for me? I don't need
anyone.

SCOTT

Honey, you really do, this whole
Ice Queen thing doesn't really fit
your style.

She stops him.

CHARLOTTE

This whole act and appearance is
for me. I don't have any *friends*
because I don't want any friends.
Got it? I'm not on some suicide
death wish, I just want to finish
something before...before...

SCOTT

Say it. Come on Char, it's your
fate say it.

CHARLOTTE

Why do you even care?

SCOTT

Because, four years ago, I was a
scared kid moving into my college
dorm. I was so nervous, I was never
alone. Middle child, raised by
parents who loved me dearly, and
there I was, out on my own. Then as
cliche as it sounds, I saw you.

INT: COLLEGE DORMITORY HALLWAY- DAY

A younger, shakier version of Scott is standing on a chair
hanging posters. He wipes his hands on his thighs and take a
deep breath, he is clearly in over his head.

SCOTT (V.O)

I wasn't ready. I wanted to get
back in my mom's van and go home.
I'm obviously a great catch, then
you walked into my room.

A younger Charlotte knocks on the open door and smiles. The
conversation is muffled and Scott stumbles on the chair. He
gathers himself and laughs. They share a smile.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT (V.O)

You terrified me, because here I was eighteen years old and afraid of college and there you were, calm cool and collected. The world as I knew it was spinning out of control...

END FLASHBACK

EXT: STARBUCKS COFFEE- DAY

SCOTT

...and you made it stop spinning. The least I can do, is help yours stop too.

CHARLOTTE

You're sweet, but I'm really fine. Really, I promise.

SCOTT

Then why are you stealing stories from people in a coffee shop?

CHARLOTTE

Not this again.

SCOTT

You want your legacy to be tainted because of your extreme desire to be remembered?

CHARLOTTE

It won't be tainted if they never find out.

SCOTT

I'll tell them, Char, I swear I will. This isn't right. Please let me in, let me help you.

CHARLOTTE

I have to go, Scott.

SCOTT

You're not thinking straight, Char. I googled it, your brain is essentially eating itself.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE
I'm fine, Scott. My world isn't
spinning, I'm fully... my feet...
I'm... fully planted on the ground.

She brushes past him, and into the coffee shop.

Scott is left standing on the street. He pushes his hands
through his hair and sits down on the bench.

INT STARBUCKS COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Charlotte sits down in the chair opposite OLIVIA, a girl
with red-rimmed eyes and wearing an oversized sweatshirt.

CHARLOTTE
Hi, you must be Olivia, it's so
nice to meet you.

Charlotte looks down and begins scribbling in her notebook.

OLIVIA
A friend told me you're listening
to peoples stories.

CHARLOTTE
(not looking up)
Yes, that's what I'm here for.

OLIVIA
I need help.

CHARLOTTE
You can just start talking
whenever, I'm listening. I'm just
not a-

She stops. Charlotte finally looks up and makes eye contact
with Olivia, who is fighting back tears.

Charlotte grabs a napkin and holds it out, clearly at a loss
for words. Olivia neglects it and leans closer.

OLIVIA
Can you tell my story?

Charlotte's eyes gleam in excitement and she also leans
closer.

EXT: SCOTT'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

CHARLOTTE

SCOTT!

She is banging on the doors, she is openly crying and has been for a while.

CHARLOTTE

SCOTT, COME ON! I'm spinning,
Scott. I need help.

She pounds one final time and slides down against the door. She curls her legs up into herself and lowers her head.

SCOTT (O.S)

Honey, I'm home.

He appears at the top of the steps.

SCOTT

What's going on?

He slouches down next to her, mimicking her position.

CHARLOTTE

What am I even doing, Scott?

SCOTT

I wish I knew the answer to that.

CHARLOTTE

I wanted to make a difference,
Scott. I wanted to be someone who
did something in their life. I
didn't want to fade in obscurity. I
wanted to be remembered. So I wrote
my story.

SCOTT

Except, your story is boring.

She glares at him.

SCOTT

No it's boring, dad left young, mom
died when you were in college. But
other than that your story is the
same as every girl on campus. You
were completely-

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE
-ordinary. I was nothing so I had
to become something.

SCOTT
So you stole people's stories.
Faking an article in a paper,
having people tell you stories to
tell yourself.

CHARLOTTE
You're not surprised.

SCOTT
You're like a book. You can't get
anything past me. I only have one
question.

CHARLOTTE
What?

SCOTT
What changed? You're distraught.
You've changed your mind. Why?

CHARLOTTE
A girl was raped, Scott.

START FLASHBACK

INT STARBUCKS COFFEE SHOP- DAY

OLIVIA
Can you tell my story?

Charlotte's eyes gleam in excitement and she also leans
closer.

CHARLOTTE
Of course.

OLIVIA
On October fourth, I was at a
party. It was my friends birthday,
she was gone, but I-I had nothing.

Her eyes begin tearing.

OLIVIA
I want that to be clear. I had
nothing, I was there to help her. I
was sober. I thought he got me

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA (cont'd)
water. I told him I wasn't
drinking.

Charlotte pauses and looks up.

OLIVIA
The last thing I remember is the
bottom of the glass.

OLIVIA
I woke up that morning with bruises
on my arms completely naked in a
strangers bed.
(beat)
On the night of October Fourth I
was raped, and I never told anyone.
Not until now.

END FLASHBACK

EXT: SCOTT'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

CHARLOTTE
I can't do that to her, Scott. I
can't, she came to me, she trusted
me to tell her story, and I was
going to make it my own. I got so
excited when she starting talking.
I knew what it was going to be, and
I was excited. What the hell is
wrong with me.

SCOTT
A lot of things. No but really,
you're dying, you're opinions and
ethics and morals are all skewed.
But I think you found your way
back.

The final piece of her armor falls and she cracks.

CHARLOTTE
What do I do, Scott?

Scott wraps her arm around her shoulder, pulls her closer to
him and brushes her hair off her face.

SCOTT
You tell the truth.

EXT: COLLEGE QUAD-DAY

They run across the campus, pushing through people.

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me!

SCOTT

You sure you should be running?

CHARLOTTE

I need to get there before he leaves. I only have one shot.

SCOTT

Thirteen minutes to five. You really wanted to cut it close didn't you?

CHARLOTTE

The printer wasn't working.

SCOTT

More like you don't know how to use technology.

(beat)

Here give me the envelope I'll go!

CHARLOTTE

I'm good!

They run the stairs to the English building. Scott throws open the door, and follows her in.

INT: ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HALLWAY- DAY

Professor Meyers is walking out of office and locking the door. Charlotte and Scott come running down to him.

CHARLOTTE

MEYERS! PROFESSOR MEYERS!

She comes to a stop in front of him.

CHARLOTTE

I have my book. It's not an autobiography anymore, it's a-

SCOTT

-collection of stories.

She smiles up to him and hands over the envelope to Meyers.

(CONTINUED)

MEYERS

Just in time, I'll try to swing the
different angle to my friend. I'll
let you know what I hear.

He turns to leave and starts walking down the hallway.

CHARLOTTE

Professor?

He stops and looks back to her.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you for everything.

PROFESSOR MEYERS

Take care, my dear. I expect to see
you in class on Monday.

He gives one last smile and walks out of the hallway down
the stairs.

Charlotte releases a breath she didn't know she was holding.
Scott smiles and lets out a loud yell in celebration. He
puts his arms around her waist and lifts her up.

CHARLOTTE

Put me down!

SCOTT

We did it!

CHARLOTTE

Scott! I handed in a book, I didn't
cure cancer.

SCOTT

I'm allowed to be happy. Let me be
happy. You should be happy!

CHARLOTTE

I'll be happier if you put me down.

He finally puts her down and smiles.

Charlotte finally cracks a smile and starts crying.

CHARLOTTE

Their happy tears, I promise, all
happy tears, nothing to worry
about. I'm done. I have nothing
else to do here.

He pulls her to him in a hug. She falls over the edge.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE
I don't want to die, Scott.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT: GRAVEYARD-DAY

Scott is sitting against a tree reading a book. The title displays:

THE STORY TO TELL

A Collection of Short Stories

By: Charlotte Kane

He flips to the front of the book and reads the introduction.

He picks up reading.

SCOTT (V.O)
I was scared I didn't know what to do, so I panicked. I thought about myself and not the people who I was stealing from.

The voices mesh into Charlotte's.

CHARLOTTE (V.O)
I never wanted to hurt anyone, I just wanted to be remembered. I wanted to tell a story. They tell you a lot of things when you're dying. But not a lot of them are what you want to hear. I wanted to know who would remember me, not why they would. The only thing I can hope for, is that you the reader, remember me as a person who gave a voice to the voiceless.

The camera pans around and lands on the gravestone closest to Scott. It reads

Charlotte Kane

1992-2014

"The universe isn't made up of atoms, it's made of tiny stories"

(CONTINUED)

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

Life isn't made up of stories, it's
made up of moments. Cherish those,
you'll never know how much a
conversation can change your life
or the people around you. Just
remember, little conversations in
doorways, can change your life.

Scott leans his head back and laughs.

FADE TO BLACK