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CRWR 450
Draft of Story.

Closure.

“Why the fuck is he here?”

Charlie thought as she stared quietly at Jay Watson, a boy that means nothing to everyone else in Advanced Screenwriting, but once upon a time, he meant everything to her. It hadn’t even been 2 weeks since they broke up and the universe decided to put them in the same class in the spring semester. Jay’s eyes met Charlie’s for a brief second as he sat down. She couldn’t tell what he was thinking, she never could in their relationship, but one thing she could tell was that he looked more ok than her. The teacher, Mrs.Gazelle, started talking about the syllabus, but Charlie couldn’t listen. All the joy she had about writing a movie script for her final project vanished upon seeing Jay.

“Now, I’d recommend getting a number from someone in this class, in case you miss an assignment,” said Mrs.Gazelle.

Everyone got up and started asking for numbers. Charlie got a number from a girl named Elizabeth, although she knew that she would never contact her during the semester. And while returning to her desk, Charlie ran directly into Jay’s chest. She looked up at him. Even though he tore out her heart and stomped on it without breaking eye contact, Charlie couldn’t deny that he still looked handsome.

“...Hey, how have you been?” Jay asked shyly.

“You know how I’ve been, you piece of shit.” was what Charlie wanted to say.

“I’ve been fine. Still writing.” was what Charlie managed to say, although words were harder to form than ever.

Class was over and Charlie packed up her things and left without looking back. She had to see Jay on Wednesday again and that thought sent her nervous system into overdrive. Charlie arrived back in her dorm, made herself dinner, and called Jenna, her best friend, to vent about the situation.

“What are the actual odds of that, though?” said Jenna as Charlie put on her pajamas.

“I know, right? It feels like the universe is punishing me. I just want to never see him again.” said Charlie.

“Hey, this weekend, me and a couple of my friends are going to go and stay overnight in LA. Do you wanna come? There’s extra spots in the AirBnB.” said Jenna.

Charlie tensed. Staying overnight with a couple of strangers wasn’t exactly on her top ten lists to make herself feel better.

“I don’t know,” said Charlie.

“I know it's sudden, but some fresh air and good vibes would make you feel better. I’m not going to let you sulk alone in your room to get over him though.” commanded Jenna.

“You see right through me.” said Charlie.

Jenna laughed.

“That’s why we’re friends, Charlie. Goodnight and sweet dreams!” Jenna

“Good night.” said Charlie and she hung up.

She grabbed her stuffed animal, wrapped herself in her blanket, and fell asleep.

“I’m sorry. I can’t be with you anymore.”

Charlie was crying hysterically, her vision blurred by tears. Meanwhile, Jay, her love, wasn't hugging her or trying to comfort her. Instead he just stood there with a blank expression, as if her crying was an everyday occurrence.

"I know that we said we would talk after our break, but I've been hurting this whole time. I just want to help you, but I can't without hurting myself. So, we have to break up. I'm sorry." said Charlie.

Jay said nothing after her emotional appeal. There was silence for a few moments after her tears, and finally he said the words that broke her heart:

"Well, I don't want to describe what our ***former relationship*** *was like, but…"*

Charlie didn't hear what he said after that, because nothing else after "former relationship" mattered. One week ago, he promised that they would get back together after a break, and now after what he said, it was clear that wasn't the case. Jay had no hope for their relationship lasting. He had stopped caring about it their entire break. He pushed her away as easily as a piece of paper while Charlie couldn't push him no matter how hard she tried. But with all of these thoughts in her head, Charlie had to ask one more question:

"Before I go, can you please just tell me what's going on? You said that you were hurting so can I at least help you as a friend? Please tell me what's going on." Charlie begged.

Jay's expression didn't change as he responded.

"*That…is something that I have to discover on my own."Jay said calmly.*

Charlie left Jay's dorm and ordered fast food. She devoured it, hoping that the salt of the fries would overpower the salt of her own tears. But it was useless. Right now, Charlie was alone in this world.

Right now, Charlie is unloved.

Charlie awoke from her nightmare with tears streaming down her face. That memory replayed through her mind like an old record, a constant reminder of her pain and agony. She reached for her phone and texted Jenna, her mind now clear of what she must do.

“Let’s go. Tell me what I need to pack.” Charlie texted.

She emailed all her teachers requesting a mental health day and fell back asleep, foolishly hoping that she could escape the torture she brought upon herself.

“Hey, Char! We’re over here!”

Jenna yelled happily as Charlie walked over with her overnight bag. Three of Jenna’s friends were sitting in Jenna’s van, two boys with blonde and black hair respectively and a girl with short green hair that looked familiar.

“Elizabeth?” Charlie questioned

The girl looked at her and her eyes lit up.

“You’re Charlie, right? You asked for my number back in class. Didn’t know you were friends with Jenna.” said Elizabeth.

“Same here,” said Charlie.

Jenna burst from behind Charlie before the atmosphere got too awkward.

“Oh, so you’ve met Liz already, that's great! Blonde boy is Jackson and black haired boy is Leo. They’re good people. Get in the van and let’s go already.” said Jenna.

Charlie put her bag in the trunk and took a seat next to Elizabeth. Jenna took the driver's seat while the two boys occupied the front. After Jackson triple checked for his bags, the van was off down the highway to LA.

“Nice to meet you, Charlie. Jenna told us a lot about you.” said Jackson.

“What did she say?” asked Charlie.

“She told us that you’re a screenwriting major and that you've been one of her best friends since freshman year.” replied Jackson.

“Jenna also said that you were sad and that’s why you wanted to come.” added Leo while looking up from his game.

“Leo! Don’t say that out loud.” said Elizabeth

“Why not, Liz? Hiding it isn’t exactly going to help.” said Leo

“He’s right, Liz. This trip is not only for some R and R but to help Charlie feel better about…” started Jenna.

“About not getting the job I wanted.” Charlie blurted out.

The van was filled with a resounding silence. Jenna sighed to herself.

“Right, Charlie was really looking forward to it.” said Jenna.

“There’s always going to be more opportunities. Don’t let it bother you.” said Elizabeth.

Charlie nodded but as she looked at Elizabeth’s emerald bracelets, she noticed a red marking on wrists. Charlie’s suspicions grew, but she dare not ask. The van kept driving and an hour later, they arrived at the AirBNB, an apartment with all of the luxuries a college student could ask for. Charlie threw her bag on one of the beds while Jackson and Leo were arguing over who would get the couch, which was quickly relegated to Leo after fighting valiantly in rock paper scissors.

“So, what are we going to do first?” asked Elizabeth who was stretching out her back.

“Food, I hope. I’m starving.” said Charlie

“I know a good barbeque place around here. Wanna go?” suggested Jenna.

“Hell yeah! That sounds awesome.” said Leo

“Let us girls freshen up a bit first, then we’ll head off.” said Elizabteh.

Elizabeth, Jenna, and Charlie scrambled to the bathroom. Charlie reapplied her lipstick, the same lipstick Jay gave to her as a birthday gift.

"Jay, OMG! This is my favorite color. I love it" Charlie exclaimed while unwrapping the bright pink lipstick.

Jay smiled. Charlie swore his smile could replace electricity easily.

"Its my pleasure to make you happy, baby. I always will." said Jay in his smooth sonorous voice. Charlie wanted to hear him say baby in that voice again.

"Hey, Earth to Charlie? Everyone's waiting on you." said Elizabeth.

Charlie snapped back to reality and quickly finished her lipstick.

"Sorry, I zoned out there. Let's go." said Charlie.

Charlie left the bathroom and joined the others and soon they were off on a beautiful sunny LA day. Couples scattered about everywhere, chatting happily, kissing each other, and pointing at the stores that were their favorites. Charlie avoided their eyes as the universe was once again testing her, mocking her, saying how she was unloved and she had just lost the love of her life and how she would never find someone like Jay again and and and….

Just then, Charlie felt a tight squeeze on her hand.

"Charlie…" said Jackson.

"DON'T TOUCH ME." Charlie yelled back.

Everyone else stopped in shock. Charlie covered her hand over her mouth in shock.

"I…I'm sorry. I was just surprised and…" Charlie sputtered out.

"It's ok. It's my fault for surprising you." said Jackson.

Charlie returned to her silence. Jay would do the same thing, whenever she was scared or anxious, he would squeeze her hand and say in his softest, sweetest voice:

“*It’s ok, my sweet angel. I’m right here”*

Charlie bit back her tears and as they entered the door of the barbeque restaurant, Leo held open the door for everyone.

“Thank you,” said Charlie.

As she walked in, a nosy elderly woman saw Charlie and Leo together.

“Wow, you picked a keeper, young lady.” said the elderly lady.

Charlie opened her mouth, but Leo beat her to it.

“We’re just friends, ma’am.” said Leo politely.

The elderly lady walked away. Leo yawned slightly.

“Jeez, a guy and girl can’t be friends in this world. I swear, that happens to me with Jenna at least twice a week.” said Leo

“Yeah, it's annoying.” said Charlie.

The barbeque restaurant was lively in the afternoon and it took the five of them 20 minutes to be seated.

“Guys, order what you want, it’s on me today.” said Jenna.

“Really, Jenna? Are you sure you want to do that with the boy here?” said Elizabeth.

“I do, only if one of the boys pays for dinner,” said Jenna.

“Rock, paper, scissors, shoot!” exclaimed Jackson.

Once again, Leo was defeated.

“Thanks for dinner, Leo!” said Elizabeth happily.

Leo sighed and smiled.

“I guess so, for new friends and old, it’s an honor.” said Leo.

Charlie ordered some brisket with a side of truffle fries and listened to Jackson ramble about an anime that they just had to see. Jenna and Elizabeth added remarks now and then while Leo multiplied Jackson's points about the anime. Charlie felt no pressure to speak, she just enjoyed listening to the flow and vibes of the conversation. For the first time in a while, she didn't feel lonely. The food arrived at the table and smelled incredible. Even with the tantalizing smell of meat, Jackson's passionate conversation never ceased.

"So, Charlie, what do you think about the show? Interested?" asked Jackson

"I am. I didn't know you liked mecha, Jackson. My favorite anime is Demon Slayer." said Charlie.

Jackson's eyes opened so wide Charlie could have fit one of her chicken wings inside.

"You like Demon Slayer? That's one of my favorite shows!Who's your favorite character?" asked Jackson.

"Rengoku and Inoske! I hated it when Rengoku d–"

Charlie paused.

"Why'd you stop? Go on." said Elizabeth.

"Well, I didn't want to spoil the show," lied Charlie.

"It's ok. I have a backlog of shows to watch. I won't get to it anytime soon." said Leo.

"If you say so. When Rengoku died, I cried for like an hour." admitted Charlie.

"That's rookie numbers. When Iron Man died in Endgame, Leo cried for the rest of the night." said Jenna with a chuckle.

"Hey! You said you wouldn't talk about that again." said Leo.

"I don't blame you. Iron Man's death was well written." said Charlie.

"See, at least someone in this friend group agrees with me." said Leo.

Friend. It warmed Charlie's heart to be called that. Jenna was right, this trip was a good idea after all.

Jenna paid for everyone's meals and soon they were out walking again on the LA streets. They walked into the plaza square and saw a magician performing street tricks. He locked eyes with Charlie and smiled.

"Hello, young lady. Want to participate in a trick? You can get something nice for your boyfriend there" said the magician, looking between Charlie and Leo.

"He's not my boyfriend." said Charlie

The magician ignored Charlies's words.

"Don't be shy, young sir. You have such a handsome man with you. How could you be single?" said the magician.

"How could you be single?" Charlie repeated in her head. With Jay, everyone surrounded her with compliments. You have such a sweet boyfriend, they'd say. You're lucky to have him, they'd say. Those words are meaningless now. Why am I alone? Because you're nothing without him. Jay gave you purpose, joy beyond anything else. And he took it from you because you weren't good enough for him. You don't deserve anyone, you lonely bitch. It's all your fault that no one loves you.

Charlie's head was so filled with thoughts that she didn't notice the magician grabbing on to her arm or feel Elizabeth and Jenna collectively rip her arm away from him.

"Are you ok, Charlie?" asked Jenna.

Charlie ran. She ran away from her new friends, away from the creepy magician, away from her mind, away from the world. She just wanted to go away. Her feet took her to a coffee shop and she ordered a black tea and chocolate cake alone. Once the waiter left, Charlie's watery eyes

finally burst. She cried freely, not caring about the awkward looks the other guests had. Whenever she was like this, Jay would hug her, his warm body and delicate perfume blocking all other noise.

"What's wrong, my love? I'm here for you. We can solve this together." he would say.

"Are you ok?" two voices said.

She looked up and saw Elizabeth and Jenna taking the other two seats across from her.

"Leo and Jackson are on their way." said Jenna.

"That guy was a creeper. I'm sorry that happened to you, Charlie. Are you ok?" said Elizabeth.

"...No." Charlie admitted.

"...It's not just about that guy, isn't it? You and Jenna have been off all day." said Elizabeth.

Jenna shifted in her seat.

"I would have told you guys, but I wanted Charlie to be comfortable enough to talk about it." admitted Jenna.

"I guess that makes sense," said Elizabeth.

"Well, Charlie?" asked Jenna.

"There's no point in hiding it." said Charlie.

Charlie then told them about Jay, the last conversation they had, the fact that Jay was in her class, and all of her pain. In the middle of the conversation, Jackson and Leo arrived and sat at the table, briefed on the rest of the conversation by Elizabeth. When Charlie finished, there was a resounding silence. Charlie wondered if she shared too much with people that she had just met.

"Jay sounds like an asshole," said Elizabeth.

Charlie gazed at her mouth open in shock, wondering if she had misheard what she said, but Jackson opened his mouth first.

“I agree. I admit that I’m not honest with my emotions all of the time either, but eventually I do tell someone what’s wrong.” said Jackson.

“So, you’re not sorry for me?” asked Charlie.

Jenna shook her head vigorously.

“No, girl, we’re sorry for him for losing out on a wonderful girl like you.” said Jenna.

“What she said. Even though we just met today, I can tell you’re a good person.” added Leo.

“You guys…” choked out Charlie through tears.

“Charlie, you might not believe it, but in freshman year I fell in love with a boy named Kendrick. He was handsome and I was young and we dated for about 6 months before I caught him cheating with another girl. I was depressed for a while and well, you already saw the scars in the car, didn’t you?” said Elizabeth.

Charlie remembered the red marks on her wrists and almost started crying again.

“Oh, Elizabeth, I’m so sorry.” said Charlie.

Elizabeth smiled.

“It’s in the past, don’t worry. Anyway, this group of idiots saved me and helped me get through that time. It took some time, but I’m ok now.” said Elizabeth.

“Don’t call us idiots,” said Leo embarrassed.

“It’s a term of endearment.” said Elizabeth with a smirk.

“How did you become ok?” asked Charlie quickly.

“I just remembered one simple thing: Closure is never found in the other person. It’s only found within yourself. Charlie, it all depends on whether you want to heal or move on.” said Elizabeth.

“I want to.” said Charlie determined.

Elizabeth’s smile grew wider.

“Then you will.” said Elizabeth.

“And we’ll be with you every step of the way.” added Jenna with a grin.

At that timing, the waiter placed down Charlie’s tea and cake.

“Damn, that looks good. I’m going to get something here.” said Leo while grabbing a menu.

“Didn’t you just eat?” said Jenna.

“There’s a separate stomach for desserts, Jen.” said Jackson brightly.

“Dessert’s on me, guys.” said Charlie.

“Oh no, you don’t have to do that.” said Elizabeth.

“Ok, I guess you can pay for your own food then.” teased Charlie.

Jenna laughed while Elizabeth smirked.

“Never mind then. Thank you, Charlie.” said Elizabeth.

“It’s my pleasure to treat my friends,” said Charlie.

As drinks, cake, and talk grew merry, Charlie’s heart started to pick up the pieces.

“Closure isn’t found in the other person, huh?” she repeated softly.

Charlie looked up at the sky, glowing beautifully in the sunset. At this moment, she remembered the mantra that she had once told herself, something that she forgot through a mixture of tears and self-hatred.

“Everything will be ok, eventually.”

Jay Watson walked into the advanced screenwriting class and sat down. His eyes instinctively wandered over to Charlie Madison, who was talking to the professor about her new script. She looked so passionate, something that he had once, no, still loved about her. Class ended and

Charlie got up from her seat with Elizabeth and made her way out the door. Jay followed them and reached for Charlie's hand.

"Charlie." said Jay

Charlie and Elizabeth kept walking.

"Charlie!" yelled Jay.

Charlie turned around and looked at him. She waved to Jay as if he was a lost child.

"Goodbye." said Charlie and the doors of the building closed behind her.

Jay leaned against the wall of the building and wiped his eyes. He couldn't be too sad, as this was exactly what he deserved. A taste of his own bittersweet medicine.

A door closing behind him, never to be opened again.