

THE BUSKER

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1 EXT. CITY CENTRE - MORNING

A busker stands by a clock tower playing his guitar. As he plays CHARLOTTE passes by him - causing the camera to track her as she walks briskly down the street. She proceeds to walk down the street, but turns to walk along the main road as she approaches it.

2 EXT. STREET - MORNING

CHARLOTTE walks down the street - with her clothes changing with each day. As she approaches the end of the street, she looks up at the college building looming over her.

3 INT. COLLEGE - MORNING

TUTOR:

Charlotte Porter?

CHARLOTTE (monotonal):

Here.

CHARLOTTE rests her head in her hand as she looks down bleakly at her notebook - struggling to write. The words "STORY IDEAS" are circled in the middle of the page.

TUTOR:

So today we will be working on our short story ideas. You should have the basic concept by now. You just need to work on fleshing out the basic plot, okay?

A few students break away from their conversation to half-heartedly mutter in agreement with their tutor.

TUTOR:

Good. Now if you need anything, let me know.

As their tutor finishes talking. The class erupt into conversations between groups of friends. CHARLOTTE continues to look blankly at her work.

4 EXT. STREET - SUNSET

(MATCH CUT)

The sun sets behind the towering college building as the day comes to a close. CHARLOTTE walks out of doors - staring down at her book as she highlights certain words and phrases. As she continues to walk, she trips over a guitar. While she catches herself on a nearby wall, the stranger sat next to guitar rushes to pick her book up off of the floor.

JASON:

I'm so sorry. Are you alright?

CHARLOTTE (flustered):

Oh no it's fine. I'm fine.

They look at each other awkwardly for a second.

CHARLOTTE (quietly):

I like your guitar. It's... cool.

JASON:

Yeah? I mean it's all I have now to be honest.

He laughs uncomfortably.

JASON (CONT'D):

So uh, what were you so distracted by?

CHARLOTTE:

Oh yeah, my notes. Basically, we need to write a short story, but I'm still stuck on the 'ideas' part of the process.

JASON:

Well when I was in school, I was always told to talk about my ideas with a friend. You got anyone you could do that with?

CHARLOTTE:

Not really...

JASON:

Right. That's fine, neither did I. Why don't you tell me about your idea then?

He gestures towards the ground next to him

JASON (CONT'D):

I won't do anything if that's what you're worried about.

CHARLOTTE meekly slides onto the pavement next to JASON as he hands her book to her.

CHARLOTTE:

So basically, I have these two big ideas...

CHARLOTTE and JASON talk about her story - getting into more detail as more days go by. After a while, they start talking to each other more casually and laughing - forgetting to mention the book.

5 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

STEPHEN is sitting on the sofa watching TV when CHARLOTTE comes in through the door.

CHARLOTTE (shouting):

I'm ho-ome!

STEPHEN:

Y'alright, love? How was it?

CHARLOTTE:

Not bad.

She enters the living room and sits on the arm of the sofa.

STEPHEN:

You're a bit late. Where've you been?

CHARLOTTE:

Just with a friend.

STEPHEN:

A friend? What's her name?

CHARLOTTE:

His name is JASON.

STEPHEN:

Oh, so is he like a boyfriend?

CHARLOTTE:

He's just a friend dad.

STEPHEN:

Alright, alright.

CHARLOTTE heads to her room; leaving STEPHEN to watch TV alone.

6 EXT. STREET - EVENING.

CHARLOTTE:

And he thought it was his *girlfriend* that you liked?

JASON (laughing):

Yeah! I don't know why. It's not like it wasn't obvi-
CHARLOTTE's phone beeps. She checks it.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my god, it's so late! I've gotta go.

JASON:

Alright. See you tomorrow?

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah. Bye!

She rushes down the street as JASON waves to her.

7 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CHARLOTTE creeps through the door - closing it quietly behind her.
STEPHEN enters the hallway.

STEPHEN:

You're late again.

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, sorry. I was with-

STEPHEN:

With Jason again? That's his name, right?

CHARLOTTE (docile):

Yeah...

STEPHEN:

Will I ever get to meet this elusive Jason? I mean, who even is he?

CHARLOTTE:

Just some guy from my college. Seriously dad it's fine.
She makes her way up the stairs.

STEPHEN:

Charlotte, wait. You have to tell me a bit more than-
CHARLOTTE slams her door

8 EXT. STREET - EVENING

CHARLOTTE and JASON are sat on the pavement - leaning against a wall.

CHARLOTTE:

I don't think my dad's too fond of you.

JASON:

What? He hardly knows me.

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah but he talks about you like you're dangerous or something. Honestly, it's fine. I'll talk to him.

She checks her phone.

CHARLOTTE:

I should probably get going. I'll see you tomorrow.

JASON:

Oh okay. See you!

As CHARLOTTE walks away from him, JASON heads towards a nearby alleyway. As he enters the alleyway - placing his guitar and sleeping bag on the ground below - a shadowy figure appears in the opening.

As twilight slowly floods the city. The sound of a shattering guitar echoes throughout the back streets.

9 EXT. STREET - MORNING

CHARLOTTE walks down the street with a bounce in her step. She notices JASON sat on the floor against the wall - looking defeated - and slows down; stopping in front of him.

CHARLOTTE:

Everything alright? You're usually playing in town at this time. He doesn't reply. She notices that his guitar is missing.

CHARLOTTE:

Wait. What happened to your guitar?

Still nothing.

CHARLOTTE (stern):

Jason. What happened?

JASON (quietly):

We shouldn't talk to each other.

CHARLOTTE's face drops.

CHARLOTTE (voice raised):

Oh my god. He did it, didn't he?

Before he has time to respond, CHARLOTTE storms off in the opposite direction.

10 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

CHARLOTTE storms into the house, slamming the door behind her. STEPHEN enters from the living room.

STEPHEN:

Shouldn't you be in college?

CHARLOTTE:

You smashed his guitar!? What's wrong with you?

STEPHEN:

I had to warn him somehow. I don't want you going out with some dodgy homeless man.

CHARLOTTE:

What don't you understand about "just a friend"?

STEPHEN:

And how do I know he doesn't have other intentions?

CHARLOTTE:

You don't need to! I can figure out these things for myself.

STEPHEN:

If your mother was here, she'd want you to be safe.

CHARLOTTE (shouting):

But she's not here, is she? And even if she was, she wouldn't do something so... stupid!

She storms upstairs and disappears into her room. She then emerges carrying a guitar case.

STEPHEN:

What are you doing?

CHARLOTTE:

Fixing your mistake.

CHARLOTTE storms past him and out the door; slamming it behind her. STEPHEN slides down the wall; putting his head in his hands.

11 EXT. DAY - STREET

CHARLOTTE walks over the JASON - who is still slouching against the wall in defeat. She takes a seat next to him as she rests the guitar case on her lap. She hands it over to JASON.

CHARLOTTE (slowly):

This is for you.

He looks at her.

JASON:

Why?

CHARLOTTE:

Because you'll use it more than I will. Also because my dad's been an utter prat and it's kind of my fault.

JASON:

You think you dad's bad...

CHARLOTTE:

Oh yeah?

JASON:

Yeah. When I told mine I was leaving, he just laughed. Told me my boyfriend wouldn't have me forever. As it turns out, he was right. So I go home, ready to admit defeat. But when I get to the door, the bloody thing won't open. And he's just stood there in the living room, waving at me through the window with this stupid grin on his face - acting like it was all part of his evil scheme to get rid of me.

CHARLOTTE:

Yikes...

JASON:

Tell me about it.

He looks down at the guitar case for a few seconds. CHARLOTTE stares blankly at the passing traffic.

JASON:

I should probably give this thing a go, shouldn't I?

CHARLOTTE looks at him eagerly as he unzips the case and rests the acoustic guitar on his lap - fiddling with the tuning pegs before plucking a warm, melancholic melody. As CHARLOTTE gazes at her friend, mesmerised by the intricate patterns formed by his fingers, a smile starts to form on her face.

END.