

Spaces

by

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Address
Phone number

The lights reveal a studio with many paintings. An old woman sits behind an easel. She appears to be preparing the space for her next painting. Finally she sits down and wets her brush.

The old woman begins painting using the color black as CHARLIE enters.

He enters nonchalantly and begins his journey around the space.

It's a long journey as he looks at the paintings.

CHARLOTTE

If you have any questions feel free to ask.

CHARLIE quickly turns to face her.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry?

CHARLOTTE

The paintings dear. If you have any questions about the feel free to ask.

CHARLIE

Did you um... Paint all these yourself?

CHARLOTTE

Oh yes. Of course.

CHARLIE

They're very well done.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

CHARLIE

Do you only paint portraits of people?

CHARLOTTE

Not always but I find that people are fascinating to paint.

CHARLIE

Why's that?

CHARLOTTE

It's hard to explain to someone who has never painted one.

CHARLIE

How do you know I haven't?

CHARLOTTE

Then you wouldn't need to ask.

CHARLIE

I see.

CHARLOTTE

(Pause)

You want me to explain anyway don't you?

CHARLIE

If you don't mind. I'm interested in listening.

CHARLOTTE

Why don't I just show you? Grab that chair over there and take a seat. I'll paint a picture for you.

He takes a nearby chair and sits down in front of her. She looks at him and then begins painting again.

CHARLIE

Haven't you already started that one?

CHARLOTTE

Oh yes but it's never too late to change. In fact sometimes an early ending of one thing is an unexpected beginning of another.

(silence)

What's your name dear?

CHARLIE

Charlie.

CHARLOTTE

Ah and English name.

CHARLIE

I suppose.

CHARLOTTE

Well, Charlie, as I said before some endings are others beginning. This is why I always start with black in my paintings.

CHARLIE

Black?

CHARLOTTE

It's a color associated with sadness, remorse, unhappiness, death... But also, mystery. Which is why I start with black. I don't know what or who I'm going to paint. I also don't know much, if anything, about

them. It's all a mystery.

(Pause)

So, now that we are done with the color black, why don't you help me fill in the spaces Charlie.

CHARLIE

The spaces?

CHARLOTTE

For the painting dear. The painting needs more colors.

CHARLIE

You want me to paint?

CHARLOTTE

No, no, no. I want you to tell me about yourself. Your hopes, interests, problems, family, friends... Your life.

CHARLIE

I'm not sure what this has to do with the painting.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, everything my dear. This painting lacks color. I know nothing about you so I've only been able to use black to draw out the lines of mystery. From those lines will branch your colors.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry but I'm not exactly here for a therapy session.

CHARLOTTE

Neither am I Charlie. I'm just a translator for your words.

(Noticing his confusion)

You tell me about yourself using words and I will translate those words into colors to create your portrait. It's really not that hard.

CHARLIE

Okay... I'm not really sure where to start.

CHARLOTTE

Let's start with red. What excites you? Gives you power, the energy to keep going? What's your passion Charlie?

CHARLIE

I suppose um... Sorry I just need a minute to think.

CHARLOTTE

Take your time.

CHARLIE
I'm not really sure.

CHARLOTTE
Well what brought you here to my workshop today?

CHARLIE
I just kind of-

CHARLOTTE
I apologize. I don't mean to be rude. I've never seen you before so I just thought I would ask.

CHARLIE
No, it's alright... I guess I just needed a quiet place to think.

CHARLOTTE
About what?

CHARLIE
Just things.

CHARLOTTE
I see. Did my paintings help?

CHARLIE
Maybe.

CHARLOTTE
Do you like painting Charlie?

CHARLIE
I've only tried it a handful of times.

CHARLOTTE
What do you do for fun then?

CHARLIE
Honestly... I don't have much time for things like that... At least I didn't.

CHARLOTTE
Why's that?

CHARLIE
Well... I... I'm uh...

CHARLOTTE
Too busy.

CHARLIE
Yes. Busy.

CHARLOTTE
Work taking up too much of your time?

CHARLIE
You could say that. I'm a salesman. Although I always wanted to be a writer.

Charlotte begins painting.

CHARLOTTE
Married?

CHARLIE
No.

CHARLOTTE
Why not?

CHARLIE
No real good connections I suppose. That spark just...
Is never there.

CHARLOTTE
But you've had it before?

CHARLIE
Yes. But she's gone now...

CHARLOTTE
No longer with us?

CHARLIE
No. Just no longer together.

CHARLOTTE
I suppose that probably makes you sad?

CHARLIE
No so much anymore. It was a while ago.

CHARLOTTE
You still talk with her?

CHARLIE
No. Although I still hope shes doing well.

CHARLOTTE
That's a good wish to have for someone else. Very kind
of you.

CHARLIE
Thank you.

(pause)

CHARLOTTE

Would you like to see your portrait?

CHARLIE

You're done already?

She turns the portrait around for him to see. It's him but there's barely any color. It's not nearly as beautiful as the others.

It's um... It's not quite like the others.

CHARLOTTE

You don't like it?

CHARLIE

It's just not as... Colorful. Why is that?

CHARLOTTE

You just seem to have a lot of spaces in your life Charlie. Lots of things you've either let go or dreams you never chased. Life you've never lived.

CHARLIE

I still don't see what that has to do with my portrait.

CHARLOTTE

It's more of a reflection.

CHARLIE

No... No this... It's... I want you to make it like the others please.

CHARLOTTE

I can only paint what you tell me Charlie. I'm a translator for you-

CHARLIE

I don't care what you are!

(Pause)

This is... This is not me.

CHARLOTTE

There's a yellow fade to you. A sunshine and joy lost and fading to time. Never revitalized to it's once bright and beautiful color. You have small bits and pieces of red but that passion is seemingly locked away inside you. You're covered with Blue depression and a loyalty to a life you seemingly don't want. You lack the color orange, Your warmth and energy. And most of all... A gray surrounds you. A depression. You lack color Charlie.

(Pause)

But I think you are already very aware of this.

CHARLIE

I did everything right... You know? I listened in school. Got good grades. I was a great friend. I'd give up anything for them but eventually things just... They change. People forget about you. They move on and I just let it happen. Over and over again. Until it was just better to be alone. I even tried to change things up. Find a hobby. But the daily cycle of going to work and loneliness made it just... Not even worth trying. And then things happened and now I'm...

(Pause)

In all honesty. This... This doesn't really surprise me. It's just shocking because I had hoped it would have looked... different

CHARLOTTE

My painting is only a translation Charlie. A translation of your words. How you see yourself. Right now it seems you don't think your life was very colorful.

She turns the painting around again and begins painting once more.

I want you to look again at the paintings Charlie. Specifically those ones over there.

Charlie goes to look at the paintings and something seems different about his reaction.

CHARLIE

These are... That's James and this one, this one is Olivia. Grace, Ellie, William, Ben, Oliver...

CHARLOTTE

Those paintings are unfortunately not finished.

CHARLIE

Impossible. They're perfect. It looks just like them.

CHARLOTTE

They're missing a color

She stands up and walks over to him. She takes his hand and begins painting his hand with green paint. She then takes his hand and presses it to one of the paintings, Leaving a green hand print.

CHARLIE

What are you doing?!

CHARLOTTE

They are missing they're green

CHARLIE

It's ruined!

CHARLOTTE

No, Charlie. It's seven more beautiful and accurate now.

She sits back down to continue painting his portrait

Not many of my portraits have the color green. Green can often symbolize misfortune and jealousy but in this case, for you, it's a symbol of good health, generosity, renewal. The way you see yourself is not at all how others saw you. You were a color they were missing. A helping hand in their grayest days. Your life touched theirs. Even now... after you're gone.

CHARLIE

You knew?

CHARLOTTE

About your death? Yes. It's a gift of mine. Being able to see things others cannot.

CHARLIE

I don't want leave them.

She walks over to him and takes his hand again pressing it to the many paintings to leave the green handprint.

CHARLOTTE

You never will Charlie. Life is incredibly fragile. Once it's gone, it's gone. Many believe they'll never accomplish something or be someone important.

She walks over to his painting again as he stares at his hand prints across the many paintings.

But in reality, as you can see Charlie, it's not really that hard. You lived a life not for yourself but for others. In return they helped paint you. You accomplished tso much in your wonderful and beautiful life.

She shows him the portrait of himself which is now filled with colorful handprints of all shapes, sizes, and colors across his face.

He stumbles to the painting and gently takes it

from her. He then turns back to the

paintings of the people from his life and tightly hugs his own portrait

CHARLIE

I have to go don't I?

CHARLOTTE

We all do... Eventually.

He walks to her and hugs her tightly. He repeatedly thanks her as he cries on her shoulder.

CHARLIE

I suppose. It's time to head off then.

CHARLOTTE

If you're ready.

CHARLIE

I'll miss them.

CHARLOTTE

And they'll miss you.

He makes for the door.

CHARLIE

I never caught your name.

CHARLOTTE

It's quite similar to yours actually. The name Charlie became popular with the French and from it my name was created. Charlotte. In fact, both have a similar if not same meaning even though they come from different places.

CHARLIE

What is that?

CHARLOTTE

Free.

Charlie smiles and turns to the door. He takes a deep breath, and moves on.

Charlotte takes his portrait and places it with the others before sitting back down to begin another masterpiece