

Everyone is Steve

By

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(At rise: The stage is set to resemble a bar. A man- STEVE- is sitting alone, slowly sipping a drink. Every so often he glances across the "bar" [the audience] and smiles.)

Enter HUNTER, CHARLOTTE and EMILY, not necessarily in that order. The three surround STEVE.)

CHARLOTTE.

Alright Steve, here's your chance.

STEVE.

My chance to do what?

CHARLOTTE.

To get with the girl, naturally.

STEVE.

Who are you and why are you telling me this?

CHARLOTTE.

That's not important right now. Focus, Steve!

EMILY.

You're making eye contact, trading smiles- if you play your cards right, things might end up going pretty well tonight.

STEVE.

I don't know, I've been wrong before-

EMILY.

Just watch and read the signs. You can do this.

CHARLOTTE.

You came to the bar to meet someone and you're not leaving alone. Not tonight.

STEVE.

Um... Who are you three?

EMILY.

(Unison)

Steve.

CHARLOTTE.

(Unison)

Steve.

HUNTER.

(Unison)

Steve.

(There's a confused pause.)

EVERYONE IS STEVE!

STEVE.

I'm sorry, but what?

CHARLOTTE.

Don't worry, you're the only person who can see or hear us.

STEVE.

Whoa. I'm really drunk.

HUNTER.

Not nearly drunk enough! Bottoms up, fellow Steve!

CHARLOTTE.

You've had a tequila sunrise and half a Cosmopolitan. You are not nearly drunk enough to be hallucinating three people.

STEVE.

Oh. Yeah. I guess I'm not that much of a lightweight. You're just messing with me-

HUNTER.

No, we really are a hallucination! We're just real at the same time! Wee!

STEVE.

Am I crazy?

EMILY.

No more than anyone else. You're just in tune with the voices in your head. It's not insanity until we start telling you to do dangerous things.

HUNTER.

Steve, you know what we should do? Drugs.

CHARLOTTE.

Ignore him.

STEVE.

Can you leave me alone? I'm trying to figure this out.

EMILY.

That's exactly why we're here. You're us. We're you. You want what we want because we actually want the same thing because we're all really just figments of your imagination that you created to talk to because you're so lonely.

CHARLOTTE.

You really need to get out more.

STEVE.

What do you think I'm trying to do?!

HUNTER.

You know, for someone who came to a bar to meet people you've done a lot of drinking alone.

EMILY.

Shut up, Steve.

STEVE.

Hey!

EMILY.

No, not you, that Steve.

CHARLOTTE.

I didn't say anything!

EMILY.

No, the other other one!

STEVE.

Okay, since you're figments of my imagination I'm imposing a one Steve limit! I'm the only Steve!

CHARLOTTE.

But we're you-

STEVE.

Just pick different names.

(The three voices huddle together and talk, then break.)

Well?

CHARLOTTE.

Charlotte.

EMILY.

Emily.

STEVE.

Then does that mean he's Anne?

EMILY.

No, you're not trying to defy social norms. You're enforcing them. So, she's staying up in your grey matter for now.

HUNTER.

And Hunter S. Thompson!

EMILY.

Just call him Hunter.

CHARLOTTE.

Well now that we've wasted time, back on the issue at hand. Our subject- the girl across the bar. Our mission-

HUNTER.

To explore strange new worlds of human intimacy, to seek out and possibly even create new life, even new civilization, and to boldly go where no Steve has ever gone before!

CHARLOTTE.

I wasn't going to use nearly so many words, but yes.

STEVE.

Now I want to go home and watch Star Trek...

EMILY.

NO! You do not want to go home and watch TV! You are going to get this girl.

CHARLOTTE.

For the rest of the night you don't like Star Trek. You don't even know what Star Trek is. Unless of course she's into it and is turned on by it. Then you can be nerdy, but only if you're nerdy together.

STEVE.

I don't think I can do this.

EMILY.

You can! Look at the signs!

STEVE.

I don't see any.

EMILY.

Because you're not looking. Look at her.

(He does. Beat.)

Eye contact is held. Smile!

(He does. It's a weird sort of grimace.)

No, real smile! Not constipation!

(He does.)

She laughed! Good, you're safe. Now break eye contact before it gets creepy.

(He does.)

See? Not too hard.

(STEVE turns away, nursing his drink and not paying attention. CHARLOTTE and EMILY talk to him. HUNTER is being the lookout.)

STEVE.

She's probably just being nice.

CHARLOTTE.

Face facts, Steve. Nobody would be nice to you if they weren't at least a tiny bit into you. You're... an acquired taste. Let's go with that.

STEVE.

Hey, that's not very nice!

CHARLOTTE.

There will be a time and a place for nice. The time is not now, and the place is not here. Right now you need to be bold and confident!

HUNTER.

DANGER DANGER ABORT ABORT!

EMILY.

What? What's the problem?

HUNTER.

She has a friend, repeat, she has a friend!

STEVE.

Shit. I knew she'd have a boyfriend, I just knew it.

HUNTER.

NO! NO! WORSE! WORSE!

STEVE.

(STEVE can't quite see who HUNTER is referring to.)

What could possibly be worse than-? Hunter, what the hell are you talking about?

HUNTER.

Man the harpoons! A whale's been spotted in her company! AVAST YE WHITE WHALE, CALL ME ISHMAEL FOR I WILL-

EMILY.

Goddammit Hunter S. Thompson, don't be so fucking insensitive!

CHARLOTTE.

Nothing wrong with a bit of a bigger girl who's cool.

STEVE.

Oh, you're talking about that girl? She looks nice, I guess. Don't really see the problem there.

HUNTER.

Steve Prime has visual on the whale! FROM HELL'S HEART I STAB AT THEE- Nevermind. False alarm.

STEVE.

What? Hunter she's walking away-

HUNTER.

Aye, lad. They weren't actually friends. Just two ships passing in the night, one ship on it's way to the shitter.

EMILY.

In other news, never listen to Hunter.

STEVE.

Is he really a part of me?

CHARLOTTE.

Unfortunately, yes.

STEVE.

Wow. I'm an asshole.

EMILY.

No you're not. Everyone has one. Poe called it the imp of the perverse. It's totally normal.

HUNTER.

I've got the perfect solution to the girl problem! ARSON!

STEVE.

There's nothing normal about that at all.

EMILY.

That's why you don't listen to him.

CHARLOTTE.

On the bright side, next time you get a crazy, stupid, or crazily stupid idea just shout GODDAMMIT HUNTER S. THOMPSON! It's cathartic.

EMILY.

Back on the girl. You've got your foot in the door. Now you just need to take another step.

I've got cold feet.

STEVE.

CHARLOTTE.  
With that attitude you'll die alone. Hope you like cats.

STEVE.  
Hey!

CHARLOTTE.  
No pussyfooting around. March right up to her and ask to buy her a drink!

STEVE.  
No, I don't really think I should. She's just being polite-

EMILY.  
All the signs are there.

STEVE.  
What "signs"? You keep saying signs but I don't see any signs!

EMILY.  
That's because you're not paying enough attention. They're subtle, but they're there.

STEVE.  
Why can't we have huge signs in lights that say "HEY I LIKE YOU"? Subtlety isn't my strong suit.

(HUNTER has a cardboard sign. He's about to hold it up.)

CHARLOTTE.  
Hunter, put that down.

HUNTER.  
Curses, foiled again.

(He puts the sign away.)

STEVE.  
This was a bad idea.

CHARLOTTE.  
Look, Steve, we're trying to help you here. You think she's pretty, right?

STEVE.  
She's gorgeous.

CHARLOTTE.

And that smile's great, right?

STEVE.

God, it's like her mouth is full of pearls and precious jewels instead of enamel covered bones.

CHARLOTTE.

Don't use metaphors yet. And never use that one again. And she's got a great body too, right?

STEVE.

Oh god yes, I just want to f-

CHARLOTTE.

NO! Don't objectify her, asshole! This is a living, breathing, beautiful creature you're dealing with, not some cheap blow up sex doll. Respect, motherfucker. That's what real men have.

STEVE.

This is really complicated, I just want a little bit of company-

EMILY.

Then go buy her a drink.

STEVE.

But that's really forward.

EMILY.

Then go talk to her.

STEVE.

What do I say?

CHARLOTTE.

How about "hi"?

STEVE.

But I don't know her.

CHARLOTTE.

And how are you going to fix that if you don't talk to her, genius?

HUNTER.

You should hit her with a loaf of french bread.

(Everyone is stunned.)

STEVE.

I'm sorry, what?

HUNTER.

Seriously. Hit her with a loaf of french bread. You know, violence baguettes violence. And sex and violence are pretty connected, so...

(He brandishes a loaf of french bread at STEVE.)

Godspeed you, black emperor. There's no way this plan can go wrong.

(Nobody can coherently respond.)

CHARLOTTE.

More like there's no way it can go right.

STEVE.

GODDAMMIT, HUNTER S. THOMPSON.

EMILY.

Do you feel better now?

STEVE.

A little bit, yeah.

HUNTER.

Sadly mankind has yet to recognize my genius. Oh well. I am one of God's prototypes, a mutant unfit for mass production. Too weird to live but much too rare to die.

STEVE.

I can't deal with this. I'm just going to go home.

EMILY.

No you're not. Stand up straight. This is how this is going to go down. You're going to walk over to the other side of the bar, buy the lady a drink, say "Hi, I'm Steve, what's your name?" and then whatever she says, even if it's Ethel or Olga or another name for a grandmother you're going to reply with "oh, what a pretty name, it suits you" because you think she's so goddamn pretty you can't wait to learn more about her and what she likes and dislikes hopes fears and dreams, her favorite songs and bands and her favorite ice cream flavor, anything! You're going to talk to her and you're going to flirt and play and listen and learn and not even think about anything else because you'll be making a friend, a real human connection. If you hook up, yay! Shallow carnal pleasure, a temporary patch over a deeper injury. If you don't, that's fine too because you'll have tried! That's all we want you to do. Try. The worst she can say is no. Or you can go home and watch the Notebook and cry

(MORE)

EMILY. (cont'd)

yourself to sleep and when your roommates come home you can lie and tell them your sister uses your Netflix account. The choice is yours, Steve.

STEVE.

You're right. You're totally right. I'm going to stand up, walk over there, and start something! Right here, right now! It's time for Steve to be a man!

CHARLOTTE.

There's the Steve I knew was in there somewhere. We just had to drag the badass out of you!

STEVE.

Here we go. Wish me luck!

EMILY.

Good luck, you magnificent bastard.

HUNTER.

I hate to ruin the excitement and the atmosphere but...

STEVE.

....She's gone, isn't she?

HUNTER.

Yup.

STEVE.

Did some guy just casually walk over and start talking to her?

HUNTER.

Like it wasn't even hard.

STEVE.

And she left with him?

HUNTER.

About a minutes ago.

STEVE.

(All his new found bravado is channeled into one word, a perfect expression of his pure unadulterated rage. The result is positively atomic.)

FUCK!