

Material Things

by

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INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - FRONT ENTRYWAY - DAY

A waist-high mound of containers, shiny black garbage bags, and loose piles of clothing fill the area, blocking the lower half of the front door.

CHARLOTTE, 20s, waifish, kneels on top of the mound of clutter and looks out the front door peephole. She turns and, with a huge smile, she crawls off the mound.

EXT. MINA'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Three tables make up a yard sale. MINA, 20s, muscular, sits in a lawn chair nearby, reading. Charlotte spots a box of clothes marked with "Free to a good home."

CHARLOTTE

Why would you just give away your stuff?

MINA

Uncluttered house, uncluttered mind.

Charlotte rummages through the box.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah totally. Can I maybe, take the whole box? Since, it's free? I'm a collector.

MINA

You collect ratty old clothes?

Charlotte pulls out a T-shirt for the band The Cure.

CHARLOTTE

Uh-huh. Dude, you like The Cure? What's your favorite song? Mine's "Never Enough."

MINA

"Charlotte Sometimes."

CHARLOTTE

Whoa, my name's Charlotte. But, like, all the time.

MINA

I'm Mina. Pleased to meet you.

CHARLOTTE

So, Miss Mina, what do you like to do for fun? Besides give stuff away for free.

MINA

Well, I'm volunteering at a food bank later today.

Charlotte lets out a nervous chuckle.

CHARLOTTE

Do you at least get to keep some of the food for yourself?

MINA

I feel that would defeat the purpose of volunteering.

CHARLOTTE

True. True. Hey, do you think I--we can go? Together? To the food bank thing?

Mina give Charlotte a warm smile.

MINA

Are you asking me out on a date?

Demure, Charlotte blushes and grins.

A car, blaring punk music, honks as it drives past.

Charlotte stiffens. She watches the car pull into her driveway across the street. Charlotte balls up her fists.

EMILY, 20s, androgynous, storms up to Charlotte and Mina, carrying a box of pizza and a plastic grocery bag with a bunch of cassette tapes in it.

EMILY

What the shit is going on here, Charlie?

Charlotte steps away from Emily.

CHARLOTTE

Mina, this is Emily. My abusive Ex.

Charlotte makes an "X" with two fingers. Mina suppresses a laugh. Charlotte grins, enjoying Mina's reaction.

EMILY

Subtle. Brought you a pizza. I know you need to eat before taking your meds.

Charlotte barks out a nervous laugh. Emily holds out the bag of cassette tapes to Charlotte.

EMILY

I also brought you more tapes.

Emily locks eyes with Charlotte.

EMILY

For your hoar--sorry, collection.

Charlotte glares at Emily. Charlotte snatches the bag and puts it in the box of "Free to a good home" clothes.

MINA

You collect cassettes, too?

Charlotte winces and tries to hide it from Mina.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. They remind me of my dad.

MINA

Is his favorite band The Cure?

CHARLOTTE

Was, yeah. And my mom's. That's how they--

EMILY

Hey, Charlie, that gonorrhoea I gave you ever clear up? I'm asking for a friend.

Emily winks at Mina. Mina clicks her tongue.

Charlotte goes to speak but stops.

EMILY

What's the matter, pussy got your tongue?

CHARLOTTE

Oh, for God's sake, Em.

Charlotte storms off.

EMILY

(feigning surprise)
Was it something I said?

MINA

You are a very toxic person.

Emily grabs the bag of cassettes and scowls at Mina.

EMILY

Charlotte's mine. Stay away from her or I'll make you fucking ugly. Got it?

Mina bursts out laughing. Emily gives Mina the bird and struts away.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - FRONT ENTRYWAY - DAY

The doorbell rings. Charlotte kneels on top of the clutter blocking the door and peers into the peephole.

CHARLOTTE

(edgy)

What do you want?

Through the peephole, a distorted Emily holds up the bag of cassettes and shakes it. Behind Emily, across the street, Mina tends her yard sale.

CHARLOTTE

(defeated)

Go around back.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A mountain of clothes and garbage bags looms tall in one corner. Piles of clothes and garbage bags fill the rest of the area, with only the couch free from clutter.

Emily strolls in and kicks over a stack of clothes.

EMILY

Holy shit. You've been busy these past three months.

Charlotte enters and sets the pizza and bag on the couch.

CHARLOTTE

It's not that bad.

Charlotte attends to the clothes Emily toppled.

EMILY

Charlie, seriously, you need me. Because this hoarding bullshit is getting way out of hand. I can help you get better, you just have to let me.

Charlotte presses her lips into a thin line. She can't meet Emily's eye. Emily smirks, relishing her control.

The door bell rings. Charlotte squeaks.

Charlotte looks at Emily. Emily plops onto the couch and flips open the pizza box.

EMILY

Why don't you invite 'em in?

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - FRONT ENTRYWAY - DAY

Charlotte scurries over the clutter.

She peers into the peephole.

Through the peephole, a distorted Mina, turns to listen.

MINA
(muffled by the door)
Hello?

Charlotte scans her cluttered surroundings.

CHARLOTTE
Now's not a good time.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emily, enjoying the tension, bites into a slice of pizza.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - FRONT ENTRYWAY - DAY

Charlotte wobbles on the clutter, waiting for a response.

MINA (O.S.)
(muffled)
Okay. Well, come by later, if you still
want those clothes.

CHARLOTTE
Will do. Thank you.

Charlotte looks through the peephole. Her body deflates.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlotte sits on the couch and pouts. Emily hands her a slice of pizza. Charlotte shakes her head.

EMILY
Look, there's no way she'd ever
understand you. Not like I do.

Emily puts a hand on Charlotte. Charlotte pulls away.

CHARLOTTE
You need to leave.

Emily gives her a dismissive wave.

EMILY

Just stop. You're acting beyond immature,
even for you. It's not a good look.

CHARLOTTE

Get out. Now.

Emily scowls at Charlotte. She stands.

EMILY

Unless we get back together, I'm gonna go
tell that bitch everything.

Charlotte jumps up. Emily turns to leave. Charlotte grabs
Emily's arm.

CHARLOTTE

Don't you dare.

Emily spins and slaps Charlotte hard across the face.

EMILY

You're mine. I own you. The sooner--

Charlotte puts her face in Emily's.

CHARLOTTE

Get out of my life!

Emily scoffs. She sucker punches Charlotte.

Charlotte doubles over, gasping.

Emily grabs Charlotte by the hair with both hands.
Charlotte cries out in pain.

Emily leans down and forces Charlotte to look at her.

EMILY

What was it you said to me when we broke
up? "You're suffocating me."

Emily tries to laughs but emotion clogs it up and she
looks away from Charlotte. Emily yanks Charlotte by her
hair. Charlotte lets out a full-throated scream.

EXT. MINA'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mina leans forward in her lawn chair and scrutinizes
Charlotte's trailer.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emily spins Charlotte around by her hair and tosses her into the mountain of clothes and black garbage bags in the corner of the room.

The top of the pile lurches. Garbage bags shift and slip.

Charlotte pushes herself to her knees and stretches a hand toward Emily. A heavy garbage bag lands on Charlotte's back and she buckles.

The massive pile topples and swallows Charlotte whole.

Emily heaps an armful of clutter onto the pile.

EMILY

Die, you selfish bitch!

Emily curb-stomps the pile. She grabs the box of pizza off the couch and leaves.

EXT. MINA'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

From her lawn chair, Mina watches Emily hurry to her car.

Emily opens her car door, leans in with the pizza box, and comes out wielding a machete. Emily crosses the street, heading right for Mina.

Mina's eyes go wide, then narrow. Mina stands.

INT. A PILE OF MATERIAL THINGS - DAY

Total darkness.

A slow-motion doorbell rings in the distance.

In the darkness, Charlotte breathes, sharp and quick. She grunts. Plastic garbage bags crinkle and squeak.

Light from a keychain flashlight shines bright. Charlotte's head and arm appear in the light while heavy black garbage bags surround her, squeezing her.

Her breaths are short and wheezy.

The doorbell rings, clearer but still distant.

Charlotte wiggles and grunts. Her second arm emerges.

Charlotte clenches the flashlight in her teeth. She pushes both arms ahead. Her arm muscles tighten and she lets out a yell as she pulls herself forward.

EXT. MINA'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Emily breaks into a run with a maniacal chuckle. She raises the machete over her head and charges Mina.

INT. A TUNNEL OF GARBAGE BAGS - DAY

Shiny black garbage bags form a tunnel-like crawlspace that dead ends into Charlotte's front door. A ball-pit of clutter fills the lower half of the crawlspace.

Tracing the edges of the door, a bright line of illumination fills the area with dim, ambient light.

Charlotte's hands breach the pile's wall. Then, her arms. Then, her head, flashlight clenched in her teeth.

The doorbell rings, loud and clear.

Charlotte claws her way out of the pile. She scurries across the clutter and peers into the peephole.

Through the peephole, Mina walks in sunlight through a field of spring flowers. Mina beckons to Charlotte.

Charlotte scans her cramped, dimly lit surroundings. She looks at the front door, then looks away. She nods.

Charlotte shovels the clutter blocking the door into the tunnel behind her.

EXT. MINA'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Emily thrusts the machete at Mina. Mina grabs the lawn chair, swings it, and slams it into Emily's arm.

The machete careens away. Emily's eyes go wide. Mina smashes the chair into Emily's face.

Emily falls to her knees, holding her nose. Mina tosses the chair aside and grapples Emily into a choke hold.

MINA

Listen up, you fucking plaything. We're going to go have a talk with Charlotte. And you're going to promise her you'll never bother her again.

Mina squeezes Emily's throat. Emily sputters and gasps. Mina leans close to Emily's ear.

MINA

And if you ever break that promise, I'm gonna show you what your stuffing looks like. Do you understand me, little doll?

Emily, face flushed, eyes bulging, veins popping, nods.

INT. A TUNNEL OF GARBAGE BAGS - DAY

Charlotte draws short, wheezy breaths. She grabs the doorknob, plants a foot on the doorframe, and heaves.

The clutter around the door shifts. The door opens wide enough for an arm to fit through. Bright beams of light spill in through the slim gap.

Charlotte puts her arm into the bright gap, trying to squeeze the rest of herself through. Her desperate movements slow. Her words taper off.

CHARLOTTE

(drifting off to sleep)

Help! Mina. Anyone. I need help. I--

The bright light through the gap dims. Charlotte's head thumps against the doorframe. Her wheezy, shallow breaths slow to a stop. Charlotte closes her eyes.

The last of the bright light fades. The garbage bag tunnel falls dark.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A black garbage bag lifts off of the pile, exposing a limp arm. Two sets of hands grab the arm.

Mina and Emily pull Charlotte's limp body out of the pile. Mina lays Charlotte on her back.

MINA

Charlotte! Wake up, come on.

(to Emily)

She's not breathing.

Emily steps back from Charlotte's body.

Mina kneels over Charlotte. She laces her fingers together on top of Charlotte's breastbone.

Emily runs away. Mina counts out compressions.

MINA

One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

Charlotte moans and pushes Mina's hands away. Charlotte, dazed and glassy-eyed, speaks like she's drunk.

CHARLOTTE

Stop touching my boobs, Mina.

Overcome by relief, Mina laughs. Tears in her eyes, Mina takes Charlotte's hand and presses it to her cheek.

CHARLOTTE

(still "drunk")

If I'd known you were coming by, I would've cleaned up a little.

Mina chuckles as she brushes Charlotte's sweaty hair off of her face. Charlotte gives Mina a loopy smile.

CHARLOTTE

So, hey, you think I can get a raincheck on our date?

Mina's huge smile sets loose fresh tears. She laughs and kisses Charlotte's hand.

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S FRONT LAWN - DAY (ONE WEEK LATER)

A sign reads: "HUGE Yard Sale Today!"

Three tables, with clothes stacked on them, along with dozens of large containers, fill the yard. Charlotte's front door stands wide open.

Charlotte pulls a shirt out of a garbage bag and folds it. Mina exits the front door, carrying a container packed with cassette tapes.

MINA

What price should I put on these?

Charlotte stops folding the shirt and glances at the container of cassettes. She turns back to her folding.

CHARLOTTE

Just put: "Free to a good home."

Charlotte grins and sets the folded shirt onto a stack.