

"DEAR GIRLS ABOVE ME"

By

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Loosely based off the book of the same name

by Charlie McDowell

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FADE IN:

INT. THE DINER – DAY

In an American diner like Wendy's, CHARLIE, our hero – cute but un-coordinated, sits opposite his lumberjack brother; BEN – who wolfs down a massive plate of chicken wings. Charlie sips his coffee. The two have the same eyes, but Ben is well-built whereas Charlie is scrawny.

BEN

(while eating)

...Yeah man but that's not it. Now she wants a new kitchen, a better washing room. Bunk beds for the kids. It's like..

He pauses to gulp 20oz of root beer.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's like she thinks that the be all and end all is going to IKEA every last Saturday of the month for me to spend every last Sunday of the month with splinters in my fingers and a headache!

The waitress comes over.

WAITRESS

(to Charlie)

Are you sure I can't get you anything to eat, Sir?

CHARLIE

I'm fine, thank you.

BEN

Dude, I'll pay for it. Charlie, have a burger. He'll have a burger. Anything with cheese. Make that two.

CHARLIE

You didn't have to-

Ben waves him off.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

How'd the diet going?

Ben fits an entire slice of garlic bread into his mouth in one bite.

BEN  
(grinning)  
How's the writing going?

Charlie rethinks.

CHARLIE  
You look like you've lost weight.

BEN  
Ha! If you don't write something soon  
you'll just be a guy with a degree and  
no job hanging out in Starbucks.

CHARLIE  
I love our bro-talks, Ben.

BEN  
How's the apartment?

Charlie grimaces.

CUT TO

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT – DAY

We move into a modern, hipster style apartment towards Charlie. He sits on the thrift-store couch, typing on his MacBook:

Pretending to write time

Female voices from upstairs can be heard. Charlie rolls his eyes and deletes what he just put.

CATHY (O.S.)  
...well if they wrote a book about me it  
would definitely be called *Dazed and  
Confused*. This assignment is going to be  
the death of me!

CLARE (O.S.)  
OMG if anyone ever writes a book about  
me it should be called *A Beautiful Mind*.

CUT BACK TO

INT. THE DINER – CONTINUOUS

Ben laughs. Then downs more root beer.

CHARLIE

It's not funny. It's not! How am I supposed to get any work done with that uneducated chit-chat in my ears? I heard Cathy scolding Clare for almost microwaving a can of baked beans -still in the can! I fear for my life, man.

BEN

That's fucking brilliant.

CHARLIE

No it isn't. And someone needs to tell Clare that *A Beautiful Mind* is already a book - and a movie! Do you have any idea what it's like listening to idiots being philosophical about shoes?

BEN

I'm married.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The girls continue to talk. Charlie stares at his blank screen. He closes the page, goes onto twitter.

Charlie has nine followers. He types:

SORRY CHAD DIDN'T TEXT BACK. DO YOU BLAME HIM?

Charlie's ROOM MATE walks in. He'd be one of the cool kids if they were still at school.

LUKE

They're at again. I don't think I can take another eleven months of this.

CHARLIE

How was your date?

LUKE

Fine, boring. You want something to write? 'To girls upstairs, shut up!' Put it in a nice card love from Charlie and Luke. Beer?

CHARLIE

Please.

Charlie amends his tweet.

DEAR GIRLS ABOVE ME, I'M SORRY CHAD DIDN'T TEXT  
BACK. BUT, DO YOU BLAME HIM?

Charlie listens to their conversation and starts to type  
out many tweets of quotes to the girls have said.

DEAR GIRLS ABOVE ME, WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT,  
FISH DON'T "DRINK WATER"

INT. DINER – CONTINUOUS

Charlie and Ben's food arrives.

CHARLIE  
Thank you.

BEN  
Ketchup? So have you ever met these  
creatures of wonder?

Charlie hands Ben the ketchup.

CHARLIE  
Broadly speaking, how long does it take  
for you to shower?

BEN  
Wet-up. Soap-up. Wash off. Out. Two  
minutes' tops.

CHARLIE  
How long does it take Em to shower?

BEN  
She doesn't shower. She takes baths and  
when I say baths it's more like she  
grows gills and hibernates in the water  
for two hours.

Ben tucks into his burger.

CHARLIE  
Exactly. Showering is one of the clear  
gender divides of our society. I even  
use 2-in-1 shampoo/conditioner combos  
just to-

BEN  
Which one? The one with the little-

CHARLIE

Yeah the little turtle and the naked girl.

BEN

I like the mint one. Makes my balls tingle.

CHARLIE

I use the boring one to spend less time in there. That's the point. My shower is the same average temperature as liquid nitrogen.

INT. CHARLIE'S BATHROOM – DAY

Charlie steps behind the novelty shower curtain of a naked girl's body and eases himself into the water.

Charlie screams and jumps back from the water. He grabs the shower gel, douses himself in it. Then picks up the shampoo but drops it. He grabs it and splashes some in his hair - and beard.

INT. APARTMENT – LATER

Charlie leaves the bathroom shivering.

LUKE

Oh there's no hot water, dude.

Charlie rolls his eyes at Luke.

INT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING'S CELLAR – DAY

Charlie ventures into the dusty office below his building.

LATER

PAT

Well you see here the building's actually built with two different-

BEN (O.S.)

I hate that!

INT. THE DINER – CONTINUOUS

CHARLIE

I know right. I'm not asking for a college-grade lecture on plumbing. I'm asking you to fix the damn thing.

INT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING CELLAR – CONTINUOUS

Pat is still explaining to Charlie the boring and complex nature of the building's water regulation system.

PAT

...So installing a reserve monitor would effectively stop the temperature from dropping below a set average. Understand?

Charlie's face is blank.

CHARLIE

Yes, thank you. Thanks.

PAT

Ah you're very welcome. Always nice to see a friendly face. You often get times where you're just alone for hours and hours and you feel like time moves slowly and slowly...

The vein on Charlie's temple throbs.

INT. THE DINER – CONTINUOUS

Ben finishes his burger.

CHARLIE

Basically, my tank was connected to someone else in the building's and they were using all the hot water. Take three guesses who?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING – DAY

Charlie goes into his apartment.

CATHY (O.S.)

How can you say that? RDJ is a sex god!

CHARLIE

I know RDJ means Robert Downey Jr. What is happening to me?

Luke laughs.

Charlie takes a deep breath, puffs up his chest and then walks back out of his apartment.

EXT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT – CONTINUOUS

Charlie walks out of his apartment, up the stairs and outside the girls' apartment. He raises his hand to knock but doesn't. He eavesdrops.

CATHY (O.S.)

Well I'm not drinking beer because I don't want to get fat but I want to be drunk so...

Charlie knocks the door.

CLARE (O.S.)

Is that the pizza man?

CATHY (O.S.)

I didn't order pizza. Did you?

CLARE (O.S.)

No.

The door opens revealing two GIRLS in their early twenties. The blonde one is CLARE. The prettier brunette is CATHY.

CATHY

Oh hi. Can we help?

CHARLIE

Hi. I'm Charlie, I live downstairs.

INT. THE DINER – CONTINUOUS

Ben and Charlie have finished their burgers.

BEN

Please tell me you didn't-

CHARLIE

Tell them I can hear every word they say? Tell them I've taken to tweeting responses to their rhetorical questions and quoting their insane FMK's to my ever increasing twitter fan base?

Charlie takes a swig of soda.

BEN

FMK?

CHARLIE

Fuck, marry, kill. Like your wife, Katy Perry, that waitress. Fuck one, marry one, kill one.

Ben glances over at the waitress.

BEN

Well I'd fuck Katy Perry-

CHARLIE

Only natural.

BEN

Yeah, naturally so. I'd probably marry the waitress.

CHARLIE

'Cause she calls you Sir and brings you food-

BEN

Yeah! Fucking sold!

CHARLIE

You misogynistic- Anyway, no I didn't tell. I didn't exactly get a chance.

INT. THE GIRLS' APARTMENT - DAY

The girls welcome Charlie into an apartment that looks much like his own but much girlier.

CLARE

Would you like some Pinot Grisio?

CHARLIE

I'm a beer kind of guy.

CATHY  
So have you just moved in?

CHARLIE  
No. Erm-

CLARE  
We only moved in a month ago but we love it!

Clare hands him a beer.

CHARLIE  
Listen hey I actually need to talk to you about something.

The girls look at him.

INT. THE BOILER ROOM – LATER

Charlie struggles to attach the water regulator.

CATHY  
I had no idea. Guess we owe you more than just a beer.

CHARLIE  
I'd settle for the ten minutes of my life I lost talking to the maintenance guy.

CATHY  
Oh he's so boring. Sorry, I know that's rude but he is. I asked to help fit an air purifier in the bedroom to drown out the guy next door's snoring. It's unbearable.

CHARLIE  
I can imagine. Ow! Fuck!

CATHY  
Are you- What did you do?

Charlie moves out of the way. He has bashed his finger with the screw driver.

CATHY  
I'll do it.

CHARLIE  
You sure?

Cathy gives a 'come on' look.

LATER

Charlie applies a *Captain America* plaster to his hurt fingers. Cathy effortlessly fixes the last piece of the filter.

CATHY  
Do you fancy coming to our party tonight? Be nice to get to know our neighbors. Bring your room-mate.

CLARE  
Cathy! FMK; Ryan Gosling, your crush, that guy?

Cathy winks at Charlie.

BEN (O.S.)  
How many...

INT. DINER – CONTINUOUS

BEN (CONT'D)  
...followers did you have by that point?

CHARLIE  
A couple thousand. Apparently America is pretty fond of the thorns in my thigh.

BEN  
Shit! And there was me saying you were unfocussed I'm-

CHARLIE  
-Well I wouldn't say I'm exactly focused. I wasn't even going to go but Luke dragged me.

BEN  
Where's the waitress? Do you want dessert?

INT. THE PARTY – NIGHT

Charlie walks into the open apartment.

The party is in full swing. Cheesy house music, beer everywhere, mood lighting etc.

Charlie may be young but he is clearly the most mature person at this party. He is the only one wearing shoes rather than flip-flops.

Charlie spots Luke and heads over to him.

CHARLIE

Hey. Is it just me or did you always picture this room to be pink?

He looks around. It is very similar to his living room and it's not pink.

LUKE

Get a drink. That'll make it look pink.

Clare dances over to him.

CLARE

Hey downstairs guy! Welcome! Is this like a mirror image of your apartment?

CHARLIE

Er not quite. Nice...outfit.

He refers to her choice of neon shorts with a denim shirt and stilettos.

CLARE

Well you can't be out of place at your own party, can you Charles?

CATHY

It's Charlie.

Cathy winks at him. Clare leaves.

CATHY

You made it.

CHARLIE

And I'm the cleanest I've been in a month. Here.

He passes her a bottle of wine.

CHARLIE

In my day, when going to a party you would bring a bottle.

CATHY  
Your day? How old are you exactly?

CHARLIE  
Twenty-five.

CATHY  
Birthday?

CHARLIE  
July 10<sup>th</sup>.

CATHY  
That makes me older than you, sport.  
June 20<sup>th</sup>. So what do you do for a  
living?

INT. THE DINER – DAY

Ben browses a dessert menu.

WAITRESS  
And for you Sir?

CHARLIE  
I'm good, thank you. I'm gonna have to  
go in a minute, dude.

BEN  
What no- tell me what happened at the  
party man?

CHARLIE  
It's not that exciting. The first half I  
just spent tweeting about stupid  
products the girls owned. Jersey Shore  
talking pen and a life-size cardboard  
cut out of RDJ. That world had to know.

INT. THE PARTY – NIGHT

At the end of the party, Charlie helps Cathy clean up.  
Luke is passed out with Clare on the sofa.

CATHY  
You don't have to do that-

Charlie shrugs.

CHARLIE  
I've got nowhere to be.

CATHY  
Imagine if your famous one day. Then I  
can be like 'Hey I know that guy'. Do  
you have twitter?

CHARLIE  
Um. No. Sorry.

Charlie goes over to the book shelf.

CHARLIE  
Jaws. Nice.

CATHY  
I'm a film geek, really. To the point  
where I read the last page and said out  
loud to a room I was the sole occupant  
of 'the movie was better'.

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE  
You're different to how I imagined you.

CATHY  
Same.

CHARLIE  
You imagined me?

CATHY  
Yeah, well we can hear everything you  
guys talk about.

CHARLIE  
Oh. Sorry.

CATHY  
To be honest, at first we thought you  
were a gay couple.

They look over at Luke passed out with Clare's feather  
boa round his neck and a beer in hand.

CHARLIE  
That's not the first time we've had  
that. For the record, I'm straight.  
Single permanently, but straight.

CATHY  
Do you hear us?

CHARLIE  
No.

Cathy laughs and jokingly punches his arm.

CATHY  
You're such a liar @CoolGuyCharlie.

INT. THE DINER – CONTINUOUS

Ben drops his fork mid-way through taking a bite from a huge slice of chocolate cake.

BEN  
What, they- She...

CHARLIE  
Luke told them.

INT. THE PARTY – CONTINUOUS

Cathy cracks a grin.

CATHY  
It's fine Charlie.

Charlie wears the same 'oh shit' look Ben just wore.

CHARLIE  
Look I'm-

CATHY  
It's fine. I think it's funny.

Cathy pulls out a book from the shelf of film theory texts and journals.

CATHY (CONT'D)  
You're a writer but the most famous you've ever got is from us. That's cool. And I didn't know *A Beautiful Mind* was originally a book. I thought it was just a movie. But I've since bought it and been pleasantly surprised, so thank you.

INT. DINER – CONTINUOUS

BEN  
You lucky son of a- Do you want this?  
I'm full.

Ben passes Charlie his dessert. Charlie tucks in.

BEN (CONT'D)  
So what happened next dude?

Charlie's grins knowingly.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Charlie gets ready for bed. The girls talking upstairs can still be heard. Charlie flicks on two air-purifiers which effectively drown out the noise, and gets into bed. He closes his eyes and is about to fall asleep when:

PING! His phone goes.

CATHY: Dear boy below me, dinner? ;)

THE END.