

# CHARLIE SIDE #1

10

Iris: According to Charlie he did. He didn't mention that he had a wife either. Not much of a talker apparently. And he loved flying more than anything in the world. I'm going to open that wine now. Sweet Jesus.

Natalie: I'll come with you.

Iris: No, you stay here and talk to Charlie. He's been wanting to meet you.

*(Iris exits.)*

Natalie: What did she mean by that?

Charlie: I have no idea.

Natalie: She's not herself right now.

Charlie: That must be it then.

Natalie: So, you live next door?

Charlie: Yes.

Natalie: And you knew Robert well?

Charlie: I did. He was a good fella. It was a shame, him dying like that.

**START**

→ Natalie: Do you work at the shipyards too?

Charlie: Well, I work there occasionally on a contract basis. I'm a carpenter. And an electrician. I work for a lot of folks in town whenever they need me.

Natalie: A handyman.

Charlie: Yes ma'am. I'm not the best but at least I'm handy. I thought of putting that on my business cards. But, I don't have any business cards. And what do you do? Do you live down in Maine too?

Natalie: I do. I own a framing shop in Brunswick. The Framing Idiot.

Charlie: The Framing Idiot. That's funny.

Natalie: Well, that's me. The Framing Idiot.

Charlie: What got you started in that line of work?

- Natalie: I wanted to be an artist but I wasn't very good, so I keep my hand in it by framing work done by people who are good.
- Charlie: I can never really tell when art is good.
- Natalie: Are you one of those 'I don't know what's good but I know what I like' people?
- Charlie: Maybe. You see, I like the early expressionist work of Max Beckman but does that make it better than the European modernism of Josef Albers, which I don't like? Probably not. So, yeah, I guess I am one of those people.
- Natalie: Oh.
- Charlie: I surprised you didn't I?
- Natalie: Yes you did.
- Charlie: Yeah, I like doing that.
- Natalie: How do you know so much about art? No, I'm sorry. That was condescending, wasn't it? Assuming that you wouldn't know anything about art based on your...on your..
- Charlie: On my slipshod, threadbare appearance?
- Natalie: Yes. I'm sorry. I'm trying to be more honest in my life. Say what I really feel.
- Charlie: I think you're succeeding.
- Natalie: Yes, I think it's going well.
- Charlie: Well, the fact is these are my wood chopping clothes.
- Natalie: Oh. Were you chopping wood?
- Charlie: No, but these are the only clothes that are clean right now. Laundry day's not til' tomorrow. And I expanded my knowledge on art by reading about it. Whenever something interests me I read about it.
- Natalie: Reading? How uncommon.
- Charlie: I probably don't look like a reader either.
- Natalie: Now, I didn't say that. Readers come in all shapes and sizes. That was condescending too, wasn't it?

- Charlie: Yes it was.
- Natalie: I'm digging myself a pretty deep hole, aren't I?
- Charlie: If you dig any deeper you're gonna go straight through to the Indian Ocean.
- Natalie: Don't you mean China?
- Charlie: No ma'am. Digging straight through the earth from here would land you in the Indian Ocean southwest of Australia.
- Natalie: How do you kn...never mind.
- Charlie: So, maybe you were a good artist and didn't know it.
- Natalie: No. I definitely was not a good artist. But, sometimes dreams don't work out, right?
- Charlie: That's very true.
- Natalie: What about you? What did you want to be?
- Charlie: A carpenter. Boom. Nailed it. Yeah, my Dad was a carpenter. In fact he and I built this house.
- Natalie: Really?
- Charlie: Twenty-five years ago. My dad also built our family home next door and now I live there.
- Natalie: You live with your parents?
- Charlie: No. They died a while back. Dad died first and then my mother died sitting in a chair waiting for me to drive her to Dad's funeral.
- Natalie: Get out.
- Charlie: I swear to God. Died right there in the living room. Dressed in black. Purse clutched to her lap. Her eyes closed and her head dropped and that was it. She left us. Everyone says my father took her with him and they're probably right.
- Natalie: Awww. That is so romantic.
- Charlie: Well, I don't know about that. She did die after all.

- Natalie: Of course. That was a stupid thing to say.
- Charlie: No, that's fine. I guess it would be kind of romantic if you put it in a poem. But, the fact is...
- Natalie: She died.
- Charlie: Right.
- Natalie: So, you're from here?
- Charlie: Born and raised.
- Natalie: Well, it certainly is a lovely spot.
- Charlie: No place like it on earth I'd say.
- Natalie: Is that the Atlantic Ocean out there? *(She points to her left.)*
- Charlie: Yes ma'am. Lunenburg Harbour here. Atlantic Ocean out there.
- Natalie: Is that where Robert's plane went down?
- Charlie: No, his plane went into the water further north. Just off the coast of Newfoundland. The experts figured the engine died and down they went.
- Natalie: That's just terrible.
- Charlie: It was.
- Natalie: Poor Iris. She was devastated when she got the news. And then finding out about this house made matters very confusing for her.
- Charlie: So, Bobby...Robert, was home with Iris in Maine for a couple of weeks each month, is that right?
- Natalie: Right. And he spent the other two weeks here. I think it had something to do with him being Canadian and only being able to work in the U.S. for a certain amount of time each year. That's why he had to keep coming back here.
- Charlie: Uh-huh. What about you? Are you married?
- Natalie: Divorced. You?
- Charlie: Oh, I'm a confirmed bachelor.

- Natalie: You've never been married?
- Charlie: No, I've been married. That's what confirmed it for me.
- Natalie: Do you have children?
- Charlie: A son. He's twenty-three. Lives in Saskatoon. You?
- Natalie: A daughter. Twenty-four. She's a nurse in Boston.
- Charlie: A nurse. Now there's a noble profession.
- Natalie: What does your son do in, Saskatoon is it?
- Charlie: Saskatoon right. He's a bartender. Another noble profession.
- Natalie: And why Saskatoon?
- Charlie: His mother is from there. She took him there after we split twenty years ago.
- Natalie: Do you see him often?
- Charlie: No, I'm afraid not. He's got a stepfather who kind of became his dad when he was eight. I couldn't compete for his affection from three thousand miles away.
- Natalie: That must be tough.
- Charlie: I don't think about it. It's packed away in a lead box somewhere in the back of my mind.
- Natalie: Men can compartmentalize like that. I don't think women can. I know I couldn't.
- Charlie: What about your daughter? Do you see her?
- Natalie: Oh all the time. Chelsea and I are best friends. She and Iris are the best friends I've got.
- Charlie: That's nice.
- Natalie: Yeah. It's great. A mother and daughter bond is something special, that's for sure.
- Charlie: It is.

- Natalie: So special.
- Charlie: And you're here for moral support for your friend Iris?
- Natalie: That's right. This is a very sad time for her and I think she needs that support.
- Charlie: You're a good friend.
- Natalie: One does what one can. I wonder why Robert never told Iris about this house. He owned it for ten years and never told her about it.
- Charlie: Yeah, that's strange all right.
- Natalie: Do you have any idea why?
- Charlie: Me?
- Natalie: Well, you were his neighbour.
- Charlie: Yes, I was.
- Natalie: So, I thought you might know why.
- Charlie: Uh-huh. Well...
- Natalie: Well what?
- Charlie: ...Well, why do you think he didn't tell her?
- Natalie: I don't know. That's why I'm asking.
- Charlie: Okay. You know, I was just hoping for some pleasant conversation by coming over here, because I don't like drama. I've had enough drama in my life. No, I thought I'd come over here, meet you, maybe charm the ass off of you because that's what I do. And who knows, even though you're only going to be here for a few days, maybe some sparks would fly between us and we could, you know, have a really good time during those few days. A really good time.
- Natalie: You thought about all of this before coming over here?
- Charlie: When you build a house you've gotta have a blueprint. But I guess your friend is going to find out the truth soon enough and it might as well come from you. So here it is.

END