

I shuffled over to aisle seven where some large boxes were waiting to be emptied. I slowly began to make my way through the tedious task of stacking the hundreds of cans. Stacking shelves in a dingy supermarket for a repulsive man, constantly breathing down my neck all day, was not the life I had in mind for myself. As far back as I can remember I have wanted to be a doctor. But my dreams were crushed a long time ago when I realised there is no hope for a young girl from a working class family to ever become something as great as a doctor when my parents couldn't even afford to give me a full education. So I am stuck here with little hope of ever leaving and making something of myself.

"You knock off in 10 minutes Darlin'. I want those shelves stacked before you leave, there's a good girl." My manager smirked at me; he has a wife, along with two sons, and there are rumours that he abuses them, which honestly wouldn't surprise me, as I am subjected to his sexist remarks every day. I quickly finished my work and left as soon as I could.

The afternoon train rides home are my favourite part of the day. The rhythmic clicking of the train on the tracks always puts my mind at ease after a hard day of work. It's a time where I don't have to be bothered by anyone and I can just close my eyes and forget about everyone else in the world for just an hour; however on this particular afternoon a stranger caught my attention.

When we stopped at the second station an unusual guy got on the train, and I couldn't help but stare in awe. He was covered in piercings, from head to toe, and his hair was a faded green, shaved at the sides and the rest incredibly spiked up. As he stood beside me, the chains hanging from his worn jeans jangled slightly. His face was stern, unphased by the looks of disapproval he was receiving from the passengers around him. A few moments passed, and he must have noticed me still staring. He turned his face towards me and snarled. I giggled at this strange noise, and to that he smiled at me.

"What, never seen a punk before?"

"I've certainly never talked to one."

"Well now you have. You don't seem to dislike me as much people usually do."

"No, I think you look awesome."

He laughed at my compliment, and continued, "This is my stop, so I'll be going now." He gave me a small nod farewell, and stomped off the train. I was slightly disappointed that our meeting had been cut short, but I smiled at him as he left and settled back into my seat.

The day after meeting the punk I hurriedly finished work, avoiding my manager as best I possibly could. I got back on the train to head home as usual and when it arrived at the second station the green headed stranger got on for a second time. He scanned the passengers and when he saw my face he trudged over.

"I was hoping I would see you again". He grinned, "because I have something for you." He handed me a small piece of paper and added, "You seemed really cool yesterday. Anyway, I had an extra ticket lying around for this Sex Pistols gig on Sunday. You should come along."

"That sounds great, thanks."

Our train ride continued in comfortable silence, as I studied the ticket for the rest of the ride home.

When Sunday arrived I found myself feeling nervous about the gig. There were going to be lots of people going and I would only know one of them, and not very well. I had never seen a live band before and I didn't know how to act or what to expect. I thought about not going at all but I

remembered that the ticket was a gift so I couldn't reject it. I left in a hurry so I had no choice to change my mind again.

As soon as I entered the bar the smell of beer, sweat and cigarette smoke filled my nostrils. The walls were barely visible as they were covered in old peeling posters and graffiti. I wasn't really sure what to do and I felt like an outsider amongst all these people; so for a while I just stood by myself and observed. Everyone standing around looked a lot like the guy on the train, however, at the same time every single person in the room was beautifully unique. I noticed that the women also had shaved heads or spikey hair. I got the vibe that there were no sex specific roles in the culture that I had immersed myself in. There were a few guys on the small make-shift stage setting up a drum kit and amps. Some people were standing near the stage watching, waiting for the band to start so they could see from the front of the crowd. Everyone else had congregated around the bar and all seem immersed in their own conversations.

"Hey you made it!" I turned to stare straight into the face of the punk from the train.

"Yes, of course!" I smiled

"So, what do you think?"

"It's really cool but, um I just don't entirely understand. Why is everyone like this?"

He smiled and answered "Well, it's kind of hard to explain I guess. Have you ever felt like you don't really fit in anywhere and, I don't know, like the rest of society treats you like they are better than you and like you're not good enough?"

I thought about men like my boss, who think its okay to treat women like I we're just a sexual object and aren't as good as them. I thought about how I can't live my dream because society does nothing to help people like me who don't have the privilege of a well-stocked bank account. I knew exactly what this guy was talking about. "Yep, all the time."

"This is what we all feel like. I guess we all just got fed up with how we were being treated and punk was our way to rebel. We go against what the system dictates to us as being the 'correct way to live'. We do what we want because we want to do it. We don't live to impress others. We're too fast to live, too young to die." He laughed.

It was then that the band walked onto the stage. Without introduction the red-headed guy, who I knew was front-man Johnny Rotten, picked up the microphone and started to shout some lyrics as the rest of the band played along, "I am an anti-christ and I am an anarchist. Don't know what I want but I know how to get it. I wanna destroy!" Everyone had now put down their drinks and butted out their cigarettes and a crowd had formed around the stage. People were jumping up and down chaotically, barging into the people around them. Fists were being thrown in all directions as the crowd sung along to the lyrics. I soon realised that the train guy was right; I had no need to be nervous because I could be myself and I knew that the people here wouldn't mind. The whole atmosphere of the room, the band and the people liberated me. For once in my life, I belonged.

This night made me realise something; a bigger world lies out there and I want to explore it and live it. I don't have to be stuck in my everyday life and I don't have to stay frustrated and confined by the walls society has put in place to say how I have to live. I am going to break those walls down and punk is going to be my weapon of escape.



## Too fast to live, Too young to die

Mya Nipperess

**T**HERE IS ALWAYS THAT ONE POINT in a person's life that changes everything. Mine was the night of the 29th of August 1977. The night I saw the Sex Pistols play in a small grimy pub in West London. This was the night where I finally felt like I belonged.

"There are some shelves that need to be stacked on aisle seven! Get to it, love." My manager called at me across the supermarket.



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