

Dear Darling,

I'm gonna be blunt with you: I saw someone the other day with the most amazing ass that I've seen, maybe ever, and I can't stop thinking about it. It's not like me to be so fixated on someone's anatomy as a source of attraction. Normally I'm downright demisexual and it takes me months to develop a crush! But here's the thing: they were in full black bloc from head to toe, masked up and covered. Was it the aura of mystery and intrigue about them that attracted me, or perhaps effortless grace in their every movement? Or was it that thick, perfectly outlined pair of gorgeous buttocks in the military style pants, whispering to my heart that we could be soul mates?

Darling, I really need your advice! In a protest culture that depends on anonymity for safety, how do I tell the hottie in black bloc that I want to get to know them better?! Should I trust that if it is meant to be we'll find each other out in the normal world? Should I pretend to be offering to write the jail support number on their arm, and substitute it with my own? Or....are we destined to remain strangers, confined to the endless, ethereal sets of realities that would have but couldn't have been?

Sincerely,

Blunt about Butts in Love

Sweet BBL,

Ahhh a black bloc crush, feels like the 90s again, or maybe July of 2020. I can feel the tear gas remnants burning in my eyes. What a hot, thrilling and politically based way to start crushing. An anarchist storybook romance if it works out, and an exciting story from the streets if it does not. Plus, unlike matching with someone on tinder who has "ACAB" in their profile, you definitely know you have a lot in common when it comes to strategy and tactics if you've seen them in full bloc on the streets of your town.

Anyways, it would be great if you could simply lock eyes across the burning barricades and fall into a passionate kiss (note: you would have to look up from their ass for this to be possible), but let's get practical here— this is the real world, not a crimethinc story... you need an actual plan here comrade. As far as I can tell, you have a few options:

1. You could just walk up and talk to them. We all know street protests often involve a lot of standing around. You could keep it casual and strike up a conversation about their military pants, how the demo is going, what the police are doing etc. Unfortunately, the black bloc is no place for asking about personal information, or playing the 'who do we both know' game, so it's going to take charisma and creativity to keep the conversation going and build a connection. Maybe you could ask their name in a security-culture-aware way like "hey, I know we're both in bloc, but I like talking to you and I'm curious what your name is, or what you want to be called on the streets?" From there you could let a connection develop naturally, or perhaps at some point admit that you are crushing and find out if they'd want to take a break from the protest, de-bloc and walk to the river or perhaps exchange signal usernames. (note: you probably want to memorize yours before you try this move, and have a pen and paper in your bag, because no one should be bringing their phone to protests!)
2. You could start asking your friends on the streets if anyone knows them, and try to get introduced in a regular way. Note that this will involve you asking a lot of people questions about one person in bloc, which might make people think you are sketchy.
3. You could pass them a note. It could say something full-black-flag-romance like "I saw you across the sea of black bloc and something about you made my heart explode like kerosene on a pile of tires blocking the entrance to the

federal building. Don't worry, your block is solid, and I promise I'm not a cop. But the truth is, I'm crushing and I had to take direct action. Here's a burner number where you can find me, lets walk down a dark street sometime without all these riot cops around? Loot my heart like the 2020 Jimmy Johns, break my heart like a Starbucks window, I don't care, there is a riot in my heart for you." It could also say something a lot chillier than that. You could mention your fixation with their ass, but I dunno comrade, not everyone is into that from someone they don't know. Then you wait and see if they respond.

4. I really like the jail support number idea for its general innovation. If you go that route, you should use a burner number to protect yourself. You're also gonna have to crush confess right away, so they know what the number is and what it's for. If you chicken out, prepare yourself to answer their calls and facilitate their jail support if they DO get arrested cause they're going to be calling you. Maybe you can crush confess outside the jail upon their release? Don't do it on a jail phone, cause remember the cops are listening. Honestly, as I think about it, a lot could go wrong with option 4.

Anyways there's your options as I see them. For what it's worth, I had some friends who fell in love in the black bloc in summer 2020, and they used option 1. Though this crush is strategically challenging, I encourage you to pursue it! What is street protest but passion spilling out of our bodies, and navigating our fears of consequences... sounds like crushing to me. If they don't take you up on it, well, that just means they aren't your soulmate after all, cause who wouldn't respond to a crush note passed to them in a black bloc?? (on a burner safely messaging another burner of course). Good luck!

Darling Tonia's Assistant