Green Beer and Grievances

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It's more than quiet outside. Especially for our apartment complex of 20-somethings. Especially for the first 70 degree day in almost six months. Especially for 8 p.m. on St. Patrick's Day, the beer drinker's official holiday.

I swirl my own green beer in its foam cup, which is inappropriately decorated with teal palm trees and a fuchsia coastline. Nothing but silence. I'm beginning to worry about my friends. It's early. Why are they wasting a holiday with weather like this? I go back to the party to refill my radio-active looking drink and recruit my friends to come back with me.

The inside of the apartment is quieter than its steps. Only one man is talking, and I don't remember him being invited to the party. He's the only one in the room not wearing green, not holding one of the palm tree cups, and legally old enough to drink. He speaks without interruption; everyone's eyes are glued to his mouth.

Well, not everyone's. My roommate Tiffany shifts restlessly from her spot on the keg and rolls her eyes at me, saying without words, "Can you believe this guy?" I can't figure out why she's annoyed. I'll never be able to understand what bothers her. She's the type of girl who, without warning, goes off on waitresses, her boss, people waiting in line behind us at the post office. Her opening is always the same: "That is bullshit!" The explanation that follows is what surprises me. Once she cornered a boy who dicked over our other roommate at a party and screamed at him for ten straight minutes. Not for using Meagan and never looking back, but for wearing a mountain biker's spandex shirt when he wasn't, in fact, a mountain biker. Even though it's always something new with her, it's comforting in its familiarity when she always thinks she's right. I think I'll begin to worry when Tiffany doesn't have the most random reaction, the one farthest removed from the situation.

The man at the party has concluded. The message was clear: "If Saddam Hussein does not leave Iraq in 48 hours, we will begin air strikes. Good night, and God bless America." My generation is stunned. Again, the silence begins to worry me. This is the beginning of our war, and none of us know how to take it.
That is bullshit!” Apparently Tiffany does. “You do NOT declare war on St. Patrick's Day. It's a national holiday. I can't believe George Bush.” She stops and sputters for a quick minute, thinking it over. “And if you do declare war on St. Patrick's Day, you put on some goddamn green, and say, “Happy flipping St. Patrick's Day, America, let’s go to war!”

Several of the young Republicans in the room look at her like she's being flippant and disrespectful of their president. But she's shaking her head and glaring at the spot on CNN where George Bush used to be, knowing that she was the one who deserves to be offended.