

INT. MINNIE'S BACHELORETTE PARTY - DAY

A sweet yet delirious atmosphere--like a tea party in a fever dream. A huge banner reads out 'MINNIE'S GETTING MARRIED' as the mirrors of a spinning disco ball scatters light across the room. Every inch of the space is decorated with hearts and bows and pink frills and photos of the soon-to-be bride and groom. Adorning the rest of the space is a covered table carrying a sloppy, melted white cake, a MYSTIC drawing tarot in the corner, miscellaneous flower petals, a disemboweled piñata spilling medication tablets from it's guts, and a deer skull with a party hat. The BRIDESMAIDS (colorfully dressed and adorned, fun and quirky girlfriends) gather toward the TELEVISION SCREEN to watch the woman of the hour. Bachelorette MINNIE (romantic and melancholic, exists in her own world) is giving the worst karaoke performance of a love song known to man. Her maid of honor, DOT, is picking up on her cry for help and leans over to another bridesmaid.

DOT

She thinks this party's shit,
doesn't she.

BRIDESMAID #1

What? Dot, this party is sick. This
is like, all of Minnie's favorite
stuff.

DOT

Look at her. How can someone look
so sad the night before her wedding
day?

Minnie's makeup runs as she sings dejectedly. The song ends and Honey falls onto the ground, limp. The other bridesmaids clap and cheer her on.

Dot and Minnie eat cake against the wall as another one of the bridesmaids sings karaoke. Minnie believes she's hiding her inner turmoil pretty well, but Dot can see right through it.

DOT (CONT'D)

Are you having fun?

MINNIE

What? Of course I am, you planned
the best Bachelorette party ever,
Dottie.

DOT

I was just worried I might have
overdone it.

MINNIE

Not at all.

DOT

You didn't mind the deer?

MINNIE

(genuine)

I love the deer.

DOT

Or the piñata filled with your
meds?

MINNIE

I thought that it was a nice touch.

DOT

Well if it's not the party, then
what's wrong?

MINNIE

You want me to be honest?

DOT

You've got to, honey. Look at you!
You've lost all your color, you're
so sad.

Dot nods. Minnie sighs as we watch her find the words.

MINNIE

I don't know if I should be getting
married.

DOT

What? Why? I thought you were
obsessed with this guy!

MINNIE

I know, I know, I just can't help
but wonder. The other night, we
were lying together in bed, me
looking up from his lap. I could
tell he was preoccupied thinking
about something else, but all I
could think about was meeting him
wherever he went off to. I'm
wearing his ring, you know? The
anchor of our moored hearts sitting
right on my finger, and still he
feels so far away.

(MORE)

MINNIE (CONT'D)

I figure by now I would be able to read his thoughts--or rather, we'd share the same thoughts.

(beat)

I just don't want to be searching for him our whole lives. I wanna feel what he's feeling, see what he's seeing. I wanna be wherever he is.

Dot's face is deeply sympathetic.

DOT

Do you love him?

Minnie nods earnestly.

DOT (CONT'D)

Then you've got time, Min, you've got nothing but time. And tomorrow, when you'll walk down the aisle and he raises your veil, and you'll be happy knowing that you've got forever.

Minnie's first instinct is to feel comfort for these words, but as the weight of 'forever' starts to sink in, we see her expression start to contort into one more lost and uncertain.

MINNIE

I hope so. I just wish he were here. It's so much easier to tune out my doubts when he's here, but he'd suggested that we sleep in separate rooms until the ceremony. Superstitious type.

DOT

We could pick a card out for you if that will make you feel better?

MINNIE

Yeah, I think it would, actually. Thanks.

DOT

Duh! Girls, it's time for Minnie to have her tarot picked out!

The bridesmaids shriek with glee and stop everything they're doing to rush over to Minnie.

CUT TO:

INT. MINNIE'S BACHELORETTE PARTY

The girls gather around in a circle around the roller psychic and her crystal ball.

MYSTIC

For the young bride-to-be,
desperately waiting the next
chapter of her life to begin,
seeking answers amidst the
forthcoming uncertainty...

Minnie watches the mystic woman, entranced by her movements. With her lithe, quick fingers, she watches her pull a card from the deck.

MYSTIC (CONT'D)

Ah.

MINNIE

Ah? What's ah?

The Mystic flips the card toward everybody else. The card looking back at them is THE TOWER.

MYSTIC

The Tower could mean many things.
It predicts entering time of great
change, which is natural for a
young bride such as yourself. It's
a sign of transformation, of
awakening.

MINNIE

So...that's good, right?

MYSTIC

Usually, in the long run. However,
this great change often comes with
the destruction of your old ways.
You must be at ease with entering a
time of unprecedented change.

The Mystic hands Honey her tarot card, as the other girls coalesce around it.

MYSTIC (CONT'D)

(gravely)

You mustn't ever lose that card.

Minnie takes it and ponders upon the card. Soon, she's been staring at it for ten minutes, and the other bridesmaids have gone back to watching karaoke and taking photos of each other on polaroid cameras when a knock rings out from the front door. Minnie and some of the other bridesmaids appear confused. Dot stands up and makes her way over to the door, swinging it open to TWO RUGGED FIREFIGHTERS.

FIREFIGHTER #1

We've got a distress call of a
SUPER HOT BABE that might need our
attention.

DOT

She's right over here, Mr.
Firefighter!

As they enter the room, the girls begin to shriek with glee again when it becomes evident the men are clearly just MALE STRIPPERS.

FIREFIGHTER #1

Which one of you is the woman of
the hour?

They point to Minnie eagerly and she's moved to a chair. One of the firefighters begins to give her a lap dance, much to her very thinly veiled chagrin. Minnie endures the lap dance, though it's obvious she is preoccupied with her foreboding tarot reading and her doubts.

CUT TO:

INT. MINNIE'S BEDROOM - DUSK

We hear a key turn and a door croak open to Minnie in the frame, stepping into the threshold of her room. She quickly places all of her things back where they belong, and she begins her nightly routine to bed: taking her meds, . When she returns back to her bed, she notices a letter and a rose tucked into the pillows. When she opens it, it reads: *See you in the morning, beloved.*

Minnie flushes and smiles giddily as she places the letter on her nightstand and admires the flower. She goes to place the flower on the nightstand where she finds the TOWER CARD. She gazes at the card--pondering what the future holds for her--and sets it down beside an OPEN WINDOWSILL, then heads to the bathroom to finish getting ready for bed.

When she returns from the bathroom, much to her surprise and horror, THE TOWER CARD is gone.

She looks around her room frantically, before she notices it out the window--flying out of view. She sighs, frustrated, and bundles up to retrieve the card.

EXT. MINNIE'S GARDEN - DUSK

Minnie rushes out from the house to retrieve the card from the snowy brush. She finds it tucked in a shrub, as a DEER grazes on the leaves and berries. She makes her way up to the shrub, gently, so as not to scare the creature, and she reaches out to grab the card when a hoof slaps her hand down. She is shocked as she turns to face the deer.

THE DEER

Wait your turn. I called dibs on the shrub.

The deer talks as if she smokes multiple packs a day. She goes back to eating. Minnie stands there, incredulous.

MINNIE

You called dibs--? Look, I live here, and that card belongs to me.

THE DEER

Well, I lived here before you lived here, and I called dibs on the shrub. You think it's easy finding food in winter? You think it's easy giving all of what little food you find to provide for your fucking ingrate husband and greedy kids? Well it's not. This is the first time I've eaten all day today, did you know that?

Minnie is simultaneously baffled and embarrassed by this exchange.

MINNIE

Sorry. I can wait.

The deer dismisses her and continues to go back to eating. When she thinks she's not looking, THE DEER STEALS the tarot card and SPRINTS OFF INTO THE FOREST.

THE DEER

(under her breath)
Using this as rolling paper, bitch.

MINNIE

Come back here with that!

The deer sprints deeper into the wood. Minnie looks back at her house, then back to the wood. She storms off into the wood, following the deer's track marks in the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - DUSK

Minnie treks alone through the wintery forest. She jolts when she hears the sound of a gunshot in the distance, followed by a shrill, animalic cry, much closer by. Minnie sees THE DEER collapse and she rushes over to it. Surely enough, she gets to THE DEER first, where she sees the TOWER CARD beside it's FRESH BODY GUSHING WARM BLOOD into the snowy white floor.

Minnie picks up the card and looks at THE DEER, deeply distraught despite their unpleasant encounter. She empathizes with the creature--she had a family, she had love.

Minnie is startled again when she hears the sound of boots crunching in the brush. She turns to face the noise when she sees THE HUNTER (freewheeling, brazen and scruffy, like a bad dog. can be played by a masculine presenting person of any gender, moreso about embodying a certain audacity).

THE HUNTER

You okay? Are you lost? Hurt?

MINNIE

No, I'm alright. And I'm not lost,
I live just back there--

As Minnie turns back toward home, she's met with rows and rows of trees stretching out far into the distance. She hadn't realized how far she'd gone into the forest, how unfamiliar her surroundings have become. She turns to The Hunter again, much less certain.

THE HUNTER

Well, there's not much use looking for it now, it's getting too close to dark. I have a camp set up not far from here, if you need a place to rest for a while.

Minnie takes in what they have to say. She's not terribly fond of The Hunter based on their first impression--she's a bit unsettled by how casually they killed a living thing, and is otherwise skeptical of their character. Nonetheless, she swallows up her skepticism and acquiesces.

HONEY

Sure. Lead the way.

The Hunter smiles and gestures Honey to follow her, and the two trek deeper into the wood.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

A tent and a myriad of wilderness survival equipment sit beyond the eating area. The site is lit by a toasty campfire, and scattered lanterns around the site. The two sit on logs opposite each other. The hunter feeds on the grilled meat of their recent kill, washing it down with a flask, while Honey suffices with some fruit. Minnie seems to be focused on regaining her energy, but the Hunter eyes her shamelessly, as if she were something to eat.

THE HUNTER

You said your name was Minnie?

Minnie nods.

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)

'S a pretty name. Why are you out here by yourself, Minnie-Min? You don't look the outdoorsy type.

Minnie snorts.

MINNIE

I'm definitely not. It's a long story.

THE HUNTER

I've got all night.

MINNIE

...I got my tarot card pulled at my bachelorette party. It's supposed to give me insight on my future...married life and all that.

Minnie shows the ring on her finger. The Hunter whistles, low and long.

THE HUNTER

Pretty ring. Congrats.

MINNIE

Thank you. Anyway, I was told to hold onto it, so I took it home. As I was getting ready for bed, the card blew out the window.

(MORE)

MINNIE (CONT'D)

Then, there was this deer who took it, and I ran after it, and then you shot it. So. Here I am.

THE HUNTER

Wait, so you ran into the middle of the forest at night for a tarot card that you only got today?

MINNIE

Well, yeah.

The Hunter smiles and sips out of their flask.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

What? That's funny?

THE HUNTER

Relax. It's nothing. You looking forward to it?

MINNIE

To what?

The Hunter nearly fails to stifle a laugh.

THE HUNTER

The *wedding*?

MINNIE

Oh. Yeah. Of course I am. I just...

THE HUNTER

You just what?

MINNIE

I don't...I don't know if my husband-to-be feels the same excitement.

THE HUNTER

Don't know if I blame him, if I'm honest.

Minnie straightens up, taking offense.

MINNIE

Excuse me?

THE HUNTER

Don't get me wrong, it's got nothing to do with you.

(MORE)

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)

I'm sure anybody would kill to lock down a lady like you. I just don't believe in the marriage thing.

MINNIE

Like the ceremony...?

THE HUNTER

Just everything. I can't do the whole 'til death do us part' of it all. There's so much life to live out there, why would you deny yourself the chance to experience all of it?

MINNIE

You're not denying yourself anything. It's liberating to open your life to someone. Someone who can change you for the better, change your life for the better.

THE HUNTER

I don't wanna change my life. I love the way I'm doing things. I'm my own free agent, nothing holding me back. I can eat, sleep, shit, fuck wherever I want. I can be whoever I want, whenever I want.

MINNIE

How can you live a life with no one to love? No one to care for, no one to rely on? You just...wake up alone in the morning and feel nothing?

THE HUNTER

Who says I'll wake up alone? You're keeping me company, aren't you?

Minnie says nothing, her face only scrunches up further, The Hunter barks a laugh.

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)

Look, It's not that I feel *nothing*. I take a deep breath, enjoy the moment, enjoy being alive. Then, I do the same thing I do everyday-- whatever it is I feel like doing. Which, I would wager, is the exact thing your husband-to-be is doing right now.

MINNIE
 (scoffing)
 Oh is *that* so?

The Hunter shrugs and stands up, sauntering over and crouching beside Minnie with a tickled grin.

THE HUNTER
 (erring on sadistic)
 Oh, I'm sure of it. He's out there telling all the same jokes he told you to make some drunk girl laugh at a bar as if he doesn't have a lovely little wife at home waiting for him faithfully. And you know something else?

MINNIE
 (quietly seething)
 I guess you're gonna tell me anyway.

THE HUNTER
 You wanna know where that pretty little matching ring of his is? It's tucked away in his back pocket. Out of sight, out of mind. Because a ring won't stop him from getting what he wants.

The Hunter leans in to sweetly whisper:

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)
 Just like you shouldn't let a ring stop you from what you want. What exactly *is* it that you want, hm?

Strike three for Minnie. She shoots up, outraged.

MINNIE
 You're such a fucking coward, you know that?!

The hunter gapes. This is the first time we've seen a break from their cool demeanor.

THE HUNTER
 C'mon, Min, don't--

MINNIE

Don't you fucking 'Min' me, fucker!
 You think you're above love or
 something, but the truth is you
 don't have the fucking balls to
 love somebody! It takes *strength* to
 love, it takes *strength* to care.
 You're not doing what you're doing
 because you've cracked some secret
 cheat code in life, you're doing it
 because it's easy! It's so easy to
 spend all day getting shitfaced and
 playing nomad in the woods and
 never having to worry about being
 counted upon. It's the easiest
 fucking thing in the world to not
 give a shit about anybody but
 yourself!

The Hunter is stunned into silence. Minnie is truly seething.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

And for the record, that deer you
 shot and killed in cold blood had a
 fucking family. Ones who counted on
 her. Not that you would give a
 shit, anyway.

The Hunter starts laughing again. Minnie's responding glare
 is withering.

THE HUNTER

(incredulously)

You can't be serious. What does
 that have to do with--

Minnie grabs a FLASHLIGHT and what little belongings she had
 and bundles herself up in her coat again. She stands up to
 leave, much to the Hunter's apparent shock, and begins
 storming off into the vast, dark wood.

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)

Minnie! Minnie, c'mon, I'm sorry. I
 didn't mean to set you off.

Minnie keeps proudly marching away.

THE HUNTER (CONT'D)

You don't know what's out there,
 Minnie!

Minnie stops in her tracks. They're right. For a split second, she ponders going back, but her pride keeps her pacing onward into the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

Minnie plunges deeper into the woods. It's freezing, the winding is howling around her and she can hardly make out what's beyond her flashlight. The further she treks, the more we see her start to doubt herself. The forest around her feels hostile--as if wherever her back is turned, wherever her light misses, there is something lurking, watching her. What's worse, she hears the sound of rolling thunder in the distance.

Finally, she comes across a misty clearing in the brush, leading up to a OLD STONE TOWER, nearly identical to the one matching the tarot card. At the foot of the tower, the door is swung wide open. Minnie hardly hesitates before taking shelter in the tower.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Minnie wanders up the spiral steps of the tower until she reaches the top floor. There, she enters into a lived in, eclectic space. The walls are covered in tapestries, the floors coated with ornate rugs. Tomes, crystals, tarot decks, and wax candles adorn the space. Minnie looks around the space, taking it all in when a voice creeps up from behind her.

MYSTIC

You're right on time! I've made cake!

Minnie nearly jumps out of her skin. She whips around, though deflates with relief when she realizes that it's the MYSTIC from the party, holding a MESSY, LOPSIDED CAKE.

MINNIE

Oh! It's you! Thank god, I just need a place to sleep for the night.

MYSTIC

Sleep? Sleep? Oh, there won't be any sleep tonight, dearie.

MINNIE

What do you mean?

MYSTIC

The crystal ball told of a storm so powerful that it would swallow the forest tonight. We don't have much time before we're caught in it's wrath, you know.

Minnie is horrified.

MINNIE

So, we're gonna die? How are you so calm about this?

MYSTIC

I've lived a life, kid. I've laughed, I've loved, I've watched the ones I love slip through my fingers. Now, my most precious dream is reuniting with them on the other side. You, on the other hand, shall live through the storm. You're young, you have so much more love left to give.

Lightning flashes from just beyond the window, frighteningly close to the tower. The clap of thunder follows it shortly, startling Minnie.

MINNIE

Did you see that?! Did that hit us?!

MYSTIC

Just as foretold. You still have the card, yes?

Minnie retrieves the card from her pocket. She truly takes the image in--a tower, being struck by lightning, fires breaking out throughout the structure. Minnie hurdles into panic mode.

MINNIE

Oh no. No, no, no, no!

MYSTIC

Have you decided whether or not you are going to marry him?

MINNIE

I fail to see how this is relevant to right now!!

MYSTIC

If you are to accept love, you must
open your heart to the possibility
of being destroyed by it.

Minnie runs toward the door leading down the staircase, yet when she does, she is met with a billowing cloud of fire smoke. Minnie closes the door again, coughing and running over to the window. She lifts the windowsill and looks at the damage below. Surely enough, a gash in the earth where the lightning struck, and fire trailing up the sides of the tower. Minnie considers jumping, though the air is so thick with smoke and fog that she can't see the bottom.

Suddenly, A VOICE beckons her from the mist...

HUSBAND

Minnie? Minnie are you up there?

Minnie's eyes widen. She recognizes that voice anywhere.

MINNIE

Honey?! Baby is that you?

HUSBAND

We don't have much time, Min. You have to jump. I promise that I'll catch you and I'll never leave your side from this moment on.

MINNIE

I can't see you, I don't know where you are. I'm freaking out, okay?!

HUSBAND

I know you are, honey, but you're going to have to trust me. You're gonna have to take that leap, okay? Do you trust me?

Minnie looks down below her. She looks back at the room, and is horrified to see that the room around her has started to catch flame, the MYSTIC WOMAN HOLDING HER MELTING CAKE, ALLOWING HERSELF TO BE ENVELOPED IN FLAME. Minnie looks back out one more time before hoisting herself to the windowsill and slips out of the top window, disappearing into the smoky haze...

CUT TO:

INT. MINNIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Minnie jolts awake, her heart drumming out of her chest and breathing frantic. She looks around the space and is soothed entirely when realization washes over her--it was all in her head, she'd never left her bedroom. The TOWER CARD sits beside the closed window. She gets up and picks up the card, and looks out her window to see if she can spot any deer. The garden is completely bare.

CUT TO:

INT. MINNIE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Minnie splashes some water in her face and lifts her head from the running faucet, toweling her face off. She looks at herself in the mirror, eyes alight with a silent, lingering uncertainty.

She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, gives her best soft smile, the mark of a blushing bride.

MINNIE
(practicing in the mirror)
I do. I do. I do.

A memory flashes into her mind--she's gazing out at the smoky haze again, letting herself fall into the unknown, placing all of her faith in a love that will save her.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
(profoundly earnest)
I do.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CHURCH - DAY

An intimate wedding ceremony--friends, a priest, and an organist. A wedding procession plays throughout the space as Dot and the Bridesmaids fail to contain their excitement as Minnie walks down the aisle, dressed in a beautiful silky white dress and an ornate lace veil shrouding her features. She makes her way to the wedding arch, though it's apparent that something is amiss as she remains the only one up there. If Minnie is at all worried, she makes no show of it, only waiting under the wedding arch, silent and adorned for her wedding day.

BRIDESMAID #1
Where the hell is the husband?

DOT

When I get my hands on that man I'm going to fucking skin him.

BRIDESMAID #2

What's happening? Is he a no show?

DOT

I called him several times this morning, couldn't reach him at all. I haven't seen him at all today. Have you?

The bridesmaids shake their heads solemnly.

BRIDESMAID #2

Well, someone has to tell her.

No one volunteers. They simply all watch her somberly.

DOT

Just give him a few more minutes. For her sake.

The women watch and wait quietly as the whole church has gone silent, the wedding procession has completely stopped. Minnie stands dutifully at the altar, facing down the aisle as she awaits her husband. She's ready--ready to be loved, ready to be changed. Minnie is beautiful in her readiness; she's beaming with a newfound peace. We linger on her for a long moment as she waits, glowing under the stained glass, waiting for forever to begin.

The crowd has fallen silent. The organ's rung it's last note ages ago. Minnie lifts her own veil and turns to face us... and she smiles, miserably.

THE END.