

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

ALYSSA (24) lays on the couch in jeans and a blue T shirt. She watches old reruns on the TV.

Alyssa's sister, RACHEL (26), runs past the living room tripping over her own feet and enters the kitchen. She wears a revealing white dress and stilettos.

ALYSSA

Whoa, what's with the rush?

RACHEL

I'm late! Chelsea's throwing a party, but it was a long day at work and you wouldn't believe what douchebag Jonathan tried to pull- never mind. Point is I passed out and missed half the party!

Rachel takes a long chug of the bottle of wine and Alyssa laughs.

ALYSSA

If you're that tired, why do you even want to go out on Halloween? It's the most exhausting of holidays.

Rachel runs back to her bedroom, a chaotic mess with clothes, shoes, and makeup littering every inch. She dives into a pile covering her bed.

RACHEL

(yelling)

Nope, that's Christmas!

After a little effort, Rachel finds two pairs of white bunny ears headbands. She runs back to the living and stands in front of the TV.

RACHEL

You know, I have an extra pair of ears. You should come! Get your ass off the couch for once, it'll be fun.

Rachel leans over and puts a the headband on an unamused Alyssa and smiles widely. Alyssa takes it off and sets it on the coffee table.

ALYSSA

Rachel, I don't like Halloween. It's a

night filled with entitled dickbrain
teens and horny drunks. That's my
version of hell.

Rachel rolls her eyes.

RACHEL

Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for
the company as I always say.

Rachel walks off.

ALYSSA

Mark Twain, actually.

Rachel rushes to the bathroom and frantically applies makeup.

RACHEL

I worry about you. You're in the prime
of your life, and you refuse to enjoy
it.

ALYSSA

I am enjoying it. I have my books, my
Netflix, my novel-

RACHEL

You haven't written a word in weeks.

ALYSSA

I'm happy. I am living a most
fulfilling life.

Rachel walks back into the living room.

RACHEL

Of course you think that. You have a
stick so far up your ass it's skewered
your brain.

ALYSSA

You know, I stay out of your life, so
get the fuck out of mine.

Rachel grimaces.

RACHEL

Sure thing, sis.

Rachel checks her phone.

RACHEL
Shit, I'm really late.

Rachel runs and grabs her jacket.

RACHEL
Enjoy your fulfillment!

The door slams and the only sound remaining is the faint noise of the TV and a TICKING CLOCK on the wall.

Alyssa looks across the room at her computer, next to which is a small stack of pages. She goes to the kitchen and starts to brew a pot of tea.

Alyssa sits in front of a blank page on her computer entitled Chapter 4.

As she stares at the blank page and the blinking curser, the sound of the TICKING CLOCK becomes unbearably loud in her head. The tea kettle begins to WHISTLE loudly and she's taken out of her trance.

Alyssa runs to the kitchen and frantically pulls the pot off the stove, leaving the apartment in silence again.

Alyssa sighs and leans back against the counter. From across the room, she glances at the bunny ears left on the table.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alyssa runs out the door wearing the bunny ears and typing furiously on her phone. She runs down the hallway and hits the elevator button, holding the phone up to her ear.

ALYSSA
(into phone)
Hey Rachel! I want to come to the party! Where are you?

RACHEL
(over phone)
Aly I can't hear you!

ALYSSA
I SAID I AM COMING TO THE PARTY!

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Alyssa walks in, pushing the button for the bottom floor.

RACHEL

Jonathan, cut that out!! I'm sorry
Aly, we're breaking up. I'll call you
back in a sec!

ALYSSA

No Rach, don't hang up!

The call cuts out and Alyssa sighs. As the elevator descends to the third floor, it comes to a sudden halt. The lights flicker off, and the dim emergency lights come on.

ALYSSA

Perfect! That's fucking wonderful.

Alyssa goes the emergency call button, but is shocked to find it disabled.

ALYSSA

(quietly)

Shit.

Alyssa quickly opens her phone to find she has no signal. Just then, the elevator begins to move again.

ALYSSA

Oh thank God.

As the elevator descends once more, it starts to speed up and the floors countdown from three, two, one, until it's speeding past the basement level and the buttons are blatantly stuck.

Alyssa frantically presses the emergency stop button to no avail. As the elevator achieves terminal velocity, Alyssa floats with weightlessness. The elevator stops suddenly and she slams to the ground and passes out.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

When Alyssa wakes up, she appears to be in a forest. Sitting across from her is CATERPILLAR (22), a frat boy type who blows rings of vapor from his E-Cig.

CATERPILLAR

Who are you?

Alyssa quickly stands up to leave.

ALYSSA

Um, no one. I'm no one. Sorry to

bother you.

As she walks away, Caterpillar mysteriously appears in front of her again, scaring her. Alyssa blinks and shakes her head in disbelief.

CATERPILLAR

I don't believe I'm talking to myself.

ALYSSA

I'm looking for my sister, Rachel. She's wearing white and has these bunny ears, you can't miss her.

CATERPILLAR

(laughing)

Yes, the white rabbit. And for what reason should I tell you her whereabouts?

ALYSSA

You're right. Have a nice night.

Alyssa tries to make her escape, but Caterpillar keeps talking as she speed walks away.

CATERPILLAR

I was expecting more of a fight than that. Oh come on, I'll tell you!

ALYSSA

Not interested!

Alyssa looked behind her to yell, but when she faces forward, Caterpillar is leaning against a tree.

CATERPILLAR

Don't you trust me?

ALYSSA

The only person I trust is myself.

CATERPILLAR

The last person you should ever trust is yourself.

Caterpillar inhales from the E-Cig and blows a ring of vapor in Alyssa's face, making her cough.

CATERPILLAR (CONT.)

How will you ever know when you're

lying?

ALYSSA

The hell is that supposed to mean?

CATERPILLAR

Be my date for the tea party?

ALYSSA

Tea party?

CATERPILLAR

Hurry up, we're late enough as it is!

Caterpillar starts to walk away, expecting Alyssa to follow.

ALYSSA

What you said about lying, what did you mean?

He turns around.

CATERPILLAR

Surround yourself with the right people and you can take them at their word. Far more difficult is to be honest with yourself.

He keeps walking in the direction of some lights in the distance, and Alyssa decides to follow.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

They arrive at a cabin with a lively tea party and a few peculiar guests. Caterpillar swings open the door wearing a Santa hat.

CATERPILLAR

Happy Unbirthday everyone! And a Merry Christmas to all!

At a large table sits four characters:

CHESHIRE CAT (23) is a young woman with fuchsia hair and an infectious smile.

MAD HATTER (26) wears an extremely high top hat belonging to an exaggerated Abraham Lincoln costume.

TWEEDLE DEE and TWEEDLE DUM wear identical clothes.

TWEEDLE DEE AND TWEEDLE DUM
You're late!

CHESHIRE CAT
Our guests left a little while ago. Is
it Christmas already?

Mad Hatter laughs.

MAD HATTER
It's Halloween, jackass.

CATERPILLAR
Then why have they been selling
Christmas decorations for the past 3
months?

MAD HATTER
The woes of capitalism, brother.

CHESHIRE CAT
Won't you introduce us?

Cheshire Cat watches Alyssa with a smile.

CATERPILLAR
Of course! This is... I didn't get
your name.

ALYSSA
Alyssa.

CATERPILLAR
Yes, Alyssa! Right well, I found her
passed out in the woods. She's lost
her sister.

CHESHIRE CAT
You poor thing! I'll pour you a cup of
tea.

ALYSSA
That's not necessary, I don't want to
trouble you.

CHESHIRE CAT
Nonsense!

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cheshire Cat grabs Alyssa's arm and herds her to the kitchen,

where she begins pouring her tea.

ALYSSA

I'd really like to go home.

CESHIRE CAT

And where's home?

Cheshire Cat hands Alyssa a cup of tea, and Alyssa stares into it for a moment, transfixed by the vapors.

ALYSSA

It's- well it's- I can't remember...
who in the world am I? Why can't I
remember...

Alyssa sits down at the table, beside herself. Cheshire Cat sits across from her and grabs hold of her hand.

CESHIRE CAT

Don't worry, doll. Around here, you forget the person you were in order to become the person you were meant to be. Amnesia is excessive, but it does the trick. Do you take sugar?

ALYSSA

But... who am I? How did I get here?

CESHIRE CAT

It doesn't matter where you come from, all that matters is where you want to get to?

ALYSSA

It's hard to say, but I should feel I'd like to go somewhere. Anywhere, I guess.

CESHIRE CAT

That's a low expectation. You're sure to get somewhere so long as you walk long enough.

ALYSSA

I feel like I have to run so fast just to keep in the same place.

CESHIRE CAT

Then take a new direction.

Cheshire Cat takes the teacup from her hand and replaces it with a flask that says "Drink Me" on the front. Cheshire Cat smiles widely.

ALYSSA
(sarcastic)
Alcoholism?

CHESHIRE CAT
You're funny! See? You're learning
about yourself already.

Alyssa smiles and rolls her eyes. Mad Hatter opens the door a crack and awkwardly pokes his head in.

MAD HATTER
Did I interrupt?

CHESHIRE CAT
We were both just getting to know her
better.

MAD HATTER
Wonderful! Just thought you should
know, Red is playing croquet in the
garden...

CHESHIRE CAT
Oh, not again.

Cheshire Cat and Mad Hatter run out the kitchen, momentarily forgetting Alyssa. She stares at the flask a moment longer before putting it in her jacket pocket.

As Alyssa makes her way to the back door alone, she's finally able to take in her surroundings. The cabin is cozy and colorful, filled with vines and roses spreading in from the woods.

EXT. CABIN GARDEN - NIGHT

She arrives at the door and hears incomprehensible chatter before a loud scream:

RED QUEEN
FORE!!!

Alyssa drops to the ground just in time for a croquet ball to come flying above her head. It bounces off a table and lands in a teacup.

CHESHIRE CAT

Goddammit Red! That's not how you play!

Cheshire Cat appears genuinely angry, but Mad Hatter rolls on the ground laughing. The Red Queen wears a red dress similar to Rachel's, and is played by the same actress. Alyssa seems unaware.

RED QUEEN

Oh Chessie, you must learn to have some fun once in a while. For a girl who smiles so much, you've yet to learn to laugh. And who is this?

MAD HATTER

Fresh meat.

Cheshire Cat hits the Hatter in the head, scolding him.

CHESHIRE CAT

Be nice. She's lost her way.

MAD HATTER

And her mind.

RED QUEEN

You should talk. Say, whatever happened to that ugly cap you used to wear so much?

The Mad Hatter loses his carefree smile. He excuses himself and leaves quickly. Caterpillar blows out from his E-Cig, unconcerned.

CATERPILLAR

That was a bit cruel.

RED QUEEN

But necessary.

The Red Queen turns her attention back to Alyssa, who curiously watches the Hatter leave.

RED QUEEN

And why are you here?

ALYSSA

I'm trying to remember. Why did he leave like that?

RED QUEEN

You two are on a similar path, he's just been walking it a lot longer. Why don't you go see? Upstairs and to the right.

INT. CABIN HAT ROOM - NIGHT

Alyssa opens a door to find a room filled with dozens of eccentric hats. She looks incredulously at the scene as Mad Hatter desperately tears apart the room in his search, throwing hats and clothes left and right.

MAD HATTER

Are you just going to stand there and watch or are you going to help me look?

Alyssa jumps into action, albeit confused.

ALYSSA

It might help if I knew what I was looking for.

MAD HATTER

You're telling me.

Alyssa looks at the Mad Hatter expecting him to say more, but he just gets back to his work. There's an awkward pause.

ALYSSA

You know, pretty much everyone here just offers me useless, cryptic advice.

MAD HATTER

Yep, it's bloody annoying.

ALYSSA

Can answer me something? No riddles.

Alyssa takes his silence as a confirmation.

ALYSSA

What the hell am I doing here? How do I get to where I'm meant to be?

MAD HATTER

"Meant to be" was a concept founded by optimists and exploited by opportunists. It doesn't exist.

ALYSSA
But Chessie said-

Alyssa sighs.

ALYSSA
Then what's the point of all this?

Mad Hatter begins to laugh hysterically.

MAD HATTER
There is no point! We're all just
wandering aimlessly in a house of
mirrors trying everything to avoid our
own reflections. Now where is my
fucking hat?!

ALYSSA
It's funny. I can't tell if you're
wise or entirely out of your mind.

MAD HATTER
Life is full of contradictions,
whoever said we can't be both?

ALYSSA
Well I'm not mad-

MAD HATTER
We're all mad here, princess. There's
no shame in it.

ALYSSA
You're wrong.

MAD HATTER
What kind of rational person forgets
their own name? Their own sister?

ALYSSA
It wasn't my fault, I didn't mean to
come here-

MAD HATTER
We all ended up here for a reason.
Tell me, whose fault is it? AHA!

Mad Hatter finally finds what he's looking for: a dark green newsboy cap, beaten and dirty. His initial expression of glee sours and becomes a frown. He sits down on the ground and leans his head against the wall in defeat.

MAD HATTER

I thought if I found it, I might-
nevermind. I'm an ass.

Alyssa sits next to Mad Hatter.

ALYSSA

I didn't take you for a newsie.
Doesn't seem like your style.

MAD HATTER

It's not, anymore. Might've been a
long time ago. Not that I can
remember.

Pause.

MAD HATTER

We were all like you once. Wonderland
is supposed to be a pit stop, a quick
detour. But some of us never get to
move on, we just get... stuck.

ALYSSA

Well why don't you leave?

MAD HATTER

Where would I go?

Beat.

Alyssa grabs the hat from his lap and playfully throws it on
her head. Mad Hatter smiles.

ALYSSA

What do you think?

MAD HATTER

It suits you.

The two have a brief moment before a ball comes flying
through the open window and shatters the mirror only feet
from Alyssa. Mad Hatter quickly grabs her and pulls her away
from the broken glass. He stands up with his arms open in
frustration, yelling out the window.

MAD HATTER

Seriously?!

RED QUEEN (O.S.)

Expect the unexpected!