

Tear Drop

By
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FADE IN:

EXT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAWN

It is early morning. The sky is blue and some clouds float past an old bungalow with red roof tiles. Birds are chirping. The garden surrounding the house looks unkept. A gazebo stands on the left, dusty as if it has been left vacant for a while. Only a single window in the house is lit up. A bird flies back to her nest with a twig.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

MINNIE (34) sits alone in a lace gown in front of her dressing table beside the window. She is putting on a face cream, staring numbly at her reflection in the mirror. In the reflection, behind her she can see her beautiful bed in the centre, perfectly made up. Framed photos of Minnie and her husband on her wedding day hang on the wall beside her bed. She looks down to close the lid of the cream and instead runs her finger over the framed photo of her with a beautiful brunette wearing their college hoodies that rests on the table. She slowly picks up a crystal tear shaped pendant lying beside the photo, puts it on and closes her eyes. A teardrop rolls down her cheek.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSE - DUSK

The sun is about to set over the bungalow. The garden seems lush but slightly unkept. A kitchen garden blooms on the right, and the gazebo on the left is decorated with fairy lights. The husband, ABNER, (31) from Minnie's wedding photos walks from the back door to the gazebo, happily carrying one wine glass and a mug in his hand.

As he approaches the gazebo, he can hear soft classical music playing gently. Minnie (27) sits happily, surrounded by pillows. Her hair is tied in a bun and she is wearing a maternity body con dress that highlights her stomach. She is 5 months pregnant. The crystal tear shaped pendant glistens on her neck. She holds an open sketchbook full of thumbnail sketches. She sits admiring the sun rays that gently fall near her.

AYANA (26), the beautiful brunette from the college photo, is gently twirling to the rhythm of the music, her pastel yellow dress flowing around her. She stands in the darker corner of the gazebo, under the shade. She too wears a matching tear-shaped pendant, but this one is a dark shade of purple. She is

holding an empty wine glass and is a little unsteady on her feet.

In the pinkish glow of the sunset, the three of them look like they belong in a fairy tale.

ABNER

There you are, ladies!

Ayana turns to look at Abner, swiftly taking the wine glass from him. She nods politely but doesn't make eye contact with him. Abner seems unconcerned, and walks over to Minnie, kissing her on the cheek as she takes the mug from his hand. He sits down beside her and eases the sketchbook out of her hand.

ABNER

I think that is enough for now

MINNIE

But I think I just got the perfect idea!

ABNER

Yeah?

MINNIE

So, for Mr Old Man, he wants the painting of his granddaughter to look natural..

I was thinking we could use very earthy colours.

The composition could be a little like this -
What do you think, A?

Abner and Minnie look up towards Ayana expectantly, waiting for her input but she is taking the last gulp of wine. Minnie purses her lips for a second, instinctively turning towards Abner. She blinks and then smiles again, beginning to talk in the same excited tone.

MINNIE

So, when we went to visit Mr Old Man-

ABNER

Why do you both even call him that?

Ayana laughs mockingly.

AYANA

Well, he is old and rich and frankly looks crazy... I mean he wants us to paint his granddaughter. She is three!

Abner frowns. There is an awkward pause. Minnie places her hand on Abner's.

MINNIE

Well, I thought he was kind... and the granddaughter,
she's delightful!

Abner and Minnie look at each other lovingly.

AYANA

How about some more wine?

She stumbles as she walks down the gazebo steps, losing her balance and falling. The sun has almost set, and the darkness encroaches.

MINNIE

(reaching her hand out)
Ayana?

Abner rolls his eyes a little and gets up to help Ayana.

ABNER

Better now?

MINNIE

You're okay?

AYANA

Yeah, yeah all good,
ahaha these damn heels

MINNIE

Hey, maybe you should stay the night?

Abner looks up at her questioningly.

MINNIE

(rambling)

I don't think it's the best idea to
drive right now, A.

I mean, since its dark
and the roads around here
would be so empty...

I just

AYANA

(dusting herself)

So, more wine, anyone?

BACK TO PRESENT.

Minnie opens her eyes and notices her phone light up with a reminder "Abner's day with Bina". The screensaver shows BINA, a toddler (3) with Abner and Minnie. They are sitting on a picnic cloth, smiling cheerily. Minnie quickly wipes her eyes, gets up and walks out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - DAWN

The hallway is mostly dark. Minnie walks towards the adjacent room. We can hear a child laugh. Minnie pauses, smiles, and then gently opens the door.

INT. BINA'S ROOM - DAWN

Faint sunlight falls into the room through the mostly closed grey drapes. There is a dollhouse near the window. A large bed sits in the centre of the room. It is partially covered with a mosquito net. BINA (6) is lying in bed, holding a teddy bear. She is speaking to herself.

BINA

And then...

And then, the teddy goes into the cave

But suddenly

And it is raining and...

Minnie walks towards the window and opens the drapes.

MINNIE

Did you sleep well, baby?

BINA

(giggling)

We had the teddy go on a mission!

MINNIE

Oh, wow! What was the mission?

BINA

No, that is secret.

MINNIE

Okay, how about some breakfast, hmm?

BINA

But teddy is at the cave!

Minnie comes to sit beside Bina. She takes the teddy and brings it close to her ear.

MINNIE

Oh, but teddy says he is hungry.

BINA

No no no

Minnie tickles Bina.

BINA

(giggles)

He is a little hungry..

But he wants to have lunch with Baba.

Minnie gets up and walks towards the door with the teddy.

MINNIE

(teasingly) He says he likes mum more..

And wait, what is that?

(brings teddy closer to her ears)

Teddy wants to eat with mum!

Bina laughs and jumps out of bed to follow Minnie. We can hear them giggling and running.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Some sunlight filters into the room through the enormous French windows. A large maroon sofa sits in one corner, and a chestnut wooden drawer set sits near the entrance. One side of the room remains dark in shadows.

Through the windows, we see Minnie sitting on the patio floor on a picnic blanket. She is flipping through glossy prints of renaissance artwork, admiring the details by running a finger across the art. A stack of self-help books is piled next to her. She looks up occasionally to feel the sunlight as a breeze rustles through the leaves of the adjacent trees. Brené Brown's TEDx talk, "The Power of Vulnerability" plays on her phone.

BROWN(voice over, slightly muffled)
And shame is really easily understood as the fear of disconnection: Is there something about me that, if other people know it or see it, that I won't be worthy of connection? We all know that feeling: "I'm not blank enough. I'm not thin enough, rich enough, beautiful enough, smart enough, promoted enough." The thing that underpinned this was excruciating vulnerability. This idea of, in order for connection to happen, we have to allow ourselves to be seen, really seen.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSE: GAZEBO - AFTERNOON

Little dandelions and daffodils are blooming everywhere and fairy lights twinkle around the gazebo. Minnie (27) and Ayana (26) sit close together. Ayana holds a bottle of wine in one hand, while the other is placed on Minnie's lap. Minnie is carefully painting Ayana's nails. Her engagement ring glistens as she dips the brush into the nail paint.

MINNIE (giggling)
I can't believe I didn't realise he was flirting.

AYANA (laughing)
And the way you turned to look back...
I mean, what were you thinking?!

Minnie blushes. She closes the nail paint, then begins to fiddle with her ring.

MINNIE
But it is so lovely with him, you know?
It is just (pause) so easy talking to him...
Like he will always stand by and-

AYANA (suddenly serious)
I wish you had asked me before you said yes.

She pulls her hand away from Minnie.

MINNIE
Hey, come on! Nothing is going to change.
Come here.

Minnie pulls Ayana close, kissing her forehead. Ayana breaks into a smile.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Bina walks into the living room from the hallway. Running her hand over the drawer set, she doodles in the dust collected on the surface. She is humming "ring-a ring-of roses" to herself.

She twirls around, and suddenly notices ANNA (30), a beautiful brunette, sitting in the darkness. She is wearing a faded pastel pink silk dress and looks thin and frail. There are bags under her eyes, and her brown hair is straight and falls gently down her shoulders, slightly dishevelled. She slowly tilts her head and smiles. Bina runs up to her and sits on the table opposite the sofa.

BINA

Anna! Hi!

Today, Baba will take me to the movies!

Anna leans forward to listen, and her purple tear-shaped pendant catches the light and shines. Bina notices it and reaches out to touch it. Anna gently caresses Bina's cheek. Her fingertips are pale and bluish. Two thin but deep scars run down her wrists. Bina runs her fingers over them.

BINA

What is this?

ANNA (whispers)

Well...

A car-horn blares loudly. Bina turns to look towards the window and Minnie hurries into the room.

MINNIE

Bina, he is here...

I am going to the stud- to the garden.

Bina continues looking outside. Minnie glances around the empty room.

MINNIE

Who were you talking to?

ABNER (offscreen)

Bina?

Minnie looks worried and walks out of the living room. Bina looks over and sees Anna frown.

CUT TO:

INT. NEAR THE FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Abner (38) is wiping his shoes on the doormat repeatedly. Minnie walks over and smiles a little. She is fiddling with her pendant.

ABNER
So how // are you?

MINNIE
She'll // be here in a moment

ABNER
Oh, yeah. No problem

MINNIE
Well I got (pause) the garden- so uh

Minnie points towards the door and walks out. Bina comes running and Abner bends down with open arms to hug her.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LARGE SUBURBAN HOUSE - MORNING

Minnie walks rather fast. Loose strands of her hair fly in the wind. She is holding back tears.

ABNER (voice over)
(angrily)
She was supposed to // babysit

MINNIE (voice over)
(crying)
I know// I know!

ABNER (voice over)
(firmly)
She was drunk, Minnie.
With our three-year-old daughter!

She pauses as she reaches the back of the house. Taking a deep breath, she reluctantly opens the door that leads to her studio.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MINNIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Abner (35) stands by the door. He is wearing a suit. Minnie (31) is sitting on the floor in her pyjamas. Her hair is completely dishevelled, and it looks like she has been crying. There is paint spilt all over the floor and her legs, and her art supplies are in complete disarray.

ABNER

You need to stop doing this to yourself, Minnie!

MINNIE (whispers)

How will I work without her?

Abner moves to enter the room, but Minnie looks up angrily, stopping him on his tracks.

MINNIE

Don't.

ABNER

(calmly)

You have to let it go, love

Minnie wipes her cheek, pushing back loose strands of hair with the back of her hand. Some paint gets smeared on her nose. She is sobbing but seems a little calmer.

ABNER

I know it is sad, Minnie

I know, but -

MINNIE

SAD? (sob)

I should have picked up her call

I should have - (sob)

I shouldn't have -

Minnie pushes the jar of brushes away from her, and the brushes scatter across the floor.

MINNIE (whispering, shaking her head)

I don't-

I don't deserve anythi-

A baby cries in the background through the baby monitor. Both Minnie and Abner look outside the door, concerned. Abner sighs and leaves the room, walking back towards the house. Some brown leaves fly into the room with a cold wind. Minnie stays seated on the ground, heaving.

BACK TO PRESENT.

INT. MINNIE'S STUDIO - MORNING

Minnie wipes a tear as she enters the studio. A large desk sits in the centre, covered with art supplies. She hesitates, then grabs an empty jar from the table and fills it with water. Crystal wind chime hangs by the window, and as sunlight falls through it, little coloured specks of light dance around the room. Taking the jar, she walks over and sits on the stool next to the easel. Dipping a brush into the water, she examines the blank canvas. She closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Minnie (28) sits on a bed, propped up on pillows. She is wearing a wraparound gown and is looking lovingly towards Abner (32) who stands beside the bed, gently swaying baby Bina in his arms. A nurse enters the room, ushering in Ayana (27) who wears a pastel blue dress. Ayana seems to be ignoring her.

AYANA

Oh, Minnie! Ah, I am so happy
for youuu!

Minnie looks up and smiles. Abner smiles politely. The nurse leaves, closing the door behind her. Ayana stands by the door, reluctant to come forward. Minnie reaches for the baby and Abner hands Bina over. Minnie looks up.

MINNIE

Come here! Do you want to hold her?
Isn't she beautiful?

AYANA

Well, (smiles awkwardly)
I know this isn't the right time but-

Abner sighs audibly.

AYANA

Well - uh, the pay-check?

MINNIE

Oh, I haven't got it yet.

AYANA

(looks relieved) Of course!

(walks towards Minnie and looks at Bina)

Awe, she is a perfect doll!

Remember when we used to take care of our dolls like this?

Ahaha I can't believe-

BACK TO PRESENT.

Minnie opens her eyes. She puts a little green paint on her palette. Soft classical music begins to play in the background, muffled, then stops. Through the window we see clouds floating past. Minnie gets up and organizes her art supplies and eats some grapes while the sun makes its way over to the west.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MINNIE'S STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Minnie (28) is sitting in front of the easel and painting. She has bags under her eyes and looks tired. Ayana (27) sits on the windowsill, eating an apple. She is humming to herself. Minnie seems agitated and accidentally drops her brush. Ayana looks towards Minnie, silently observing her.

Minnie picks up another brush and makes a few paint strokes. As she reaches towards the cup of water, the brush slips out of her fingers and splatters to the ground. Minnie lets out a frustrated sigh.

AYANA

Okay, that's it.

What's the matter with you?

MINNIE

Nothing.

AYANA

What did he do?

MINNIE

(beat) Well...

Minnie sighs. AYANA gets up, pulls a chair next to Minnie and sits down.

AYANA (taking Minnie's hand)
Talk to me.

MINNIE
Well, the baby... she is always crying
And I am so tired... and
(beat)
His work keeps him so busy.
(tears welling in her eyes)
I barely get to see him lately.

Ayana throws her hands up in frustration.

AYANA
That's it. Who does he even think he is?!

MINNIE
A, it's not-

AYANA
I mean, with Bina in the picture,
and our work? You already
do more than enough!

Minnie wipes her cheek. Ayana stands up and starts pacing around the room.

AYANA
He is useless.

MINNIE
What?

AYANA
Yeah, I mean... I know you don't
want to hear this but (beat)
you know you made the wrong decision marrying-

She suddenly turns around and walks towards Minnie. Sitting down next to her, she grabs Minnie's shoulders.

AYANA
Hey, I have an idea!
We can still fix this.

MINNIE (confused)
Fix what?

AYANA
You know... (waving her arm around) all this!

MINNIE
A-

AYANA
Minnie, just listen to me! For once.
(beat) Let's go away together.

Minnie eyes widen with shock. She pulls back a little.

AYANA (in a sing-song voice)
Forget about him. You and me
against the world!
Like it always was, you know?
(beat)
We can paint and live so happily.

MINNIE (sternly)
I have a child now, Ayana!

AYANA (confused)
Well, what's with that? (awkward laugh)
We'll just take her with us!
(dismissively) She'll be happy anywhere.

Minnie pulls away and gets up.

MINNIE
What's wrong with you?

AYANA
So what? Now you're on his side?

MINNIE
There are no sides! He is my husband!

AYANA
So, he treats you like shit...
But you won't decide to come away with me?
When did things change this much, huh?

MINNIE
Are you hearing yourself right now?
You sound insane.

Ayana gasps. She takes her bag and walks out, slamming the door behind her. Ayana shakes her head and looks outside, watching her walk away.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Four hours have passed. Minnie sits looking outside. We hear the sound of a car pulling up on the driveway. She notices the pink and purple sky. A single star shines brightly. She closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MINNIE'S STUDIO - EVENING

Through the window, Minnie (33) sees a car pulling up on the driveway. She has bags under her eyes, and two empty coffee cups sit on the desk. Abner (37) gets out of the car. He is wearing a suit. He leans in and takes out a file. He walks towards the studio.

Minnie looks over at the unfinished canvases. She stands up as Abner enters.

ABNER
Hi... (pause)

MINNIE
Hi.

Abner walks over to the table. He looks sad. He moves aside some markers to put the file on the table.

ABNER
Minnie, I know you are // sad

MINNIE
I'm okay // Are those
the papers?

ABNER
Look, I know you were angry the other night,
but must we do this?

MINNIE
You'll be much better off without me, Abner.

ABNER
You know it isn't your fault,
right?

MINNIE

Do you know anyone who might want these art supplies?

Abner sighs.

ABNER

It doesn't have to be like this, Minnie.
You don't have to sign them now.

MINNIE

Hey, I have thought about this, okay?
(tearing up)
I can't-

Abner reaches out to touch her hand, but she pulls away to wipe her tears.

MINNIE

(pointing to the unfinished painting on the easel)
Mr (pause) Old Man asked for another commission..
But I just can't-

She walks over to the easel, facing away from him.

ABNER

Can't we put it on hold? Think again?
(whispering) Wouldn't she want you to continue?

MINNIE

(holding back tears)
I don't deserve to.

Abner looks at her, concerned but Minnie stands motionless.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Minnie opens her eyes to see Bina running across the garden towards the studio. She opens the door and runs up to hug Minnie. Bina is giggling.

MINNIE (cheerily)

Hi, baby!
Where is Dad?

BINA

He said he will meet me on Tuesday.

MINNIE

Oh (beat) of course.
(cheerily) So, how was your day?

They talk softly as Minnie leads Bina out of the studio towards the house. The sun is setting, and in minutes, the studio turns dark and ominous. A single lamp flickers on and off, then goes out completely. We hear the wind chime.

BINA (voice over)
Ring-a-Ring o' Roses
A pocket full of Posies
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down.

Ring-a-Ring o' Roses
A pocket full of Posies
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Minnie sits on her bed beside her bedside table. A single lamp is switched on next to Minnie. She is wearing her pyjamas. She sits fiddling with the pendant on her neck, teary-eyed.

The door opens, creaking. Minnie looks up. Bina is standing there with a teddy. Anna stands behind her.

Minnie blinks. Bina enters the room. The doorway is empty.

BINA
Mum, I can't sleep.

MINNIE
(patting the bed)
Come here.

BINA
Will you tell me more about Anna?

MINNIE
Who?

BINA
(lifts teddy)
Teddy wants to hear.

MINNIE
How about I show you and teddy some art?

BINA
Art?

MINNIE
Hmm. These ones are really famous!

Minnie reaches into the drawer of her nightstand and brings out the glossy prints. Bringing Bina into the bed, she tucks her in.

BINA
Ohhhhh!

MINNIE
Beautiful, isn't it?

Soft classical music plays in the background as Minnie and Bina point at the artwork. Minnie hums a lullaby as Bina slowly falls asleep. Minnie reaches to switch off the lamp.

FADE TO BLACK

DREAM SEQUENCE

MONTAGE- VARIOUS

- A. INT. MINNIE' STUDIO - DAY
sound of a baby crying, paintbrush falls to the floor
- B. INT. MINNIE'S KITCHEN - DAY
Pouring milk in a milk bottle for the baby, phone rings
- C. EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING
Grass hasn't been mowed in forever, it is raining heavily, Minnie is running
- D. EXT. IN FRONT OF AN APARTMENT - EVENING
Minnie is aggressively knocking on the door
- E. INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE - EVENING
An old lady opens the door and looks confused, she hands Minnie a key, Minnie walks up the stairs.
- F. INT. AYANA'S APARTMENT: DOOR- EVENING
Minnie puts a key in a lock
- G. INT. AYANA'S APARTMENT - EVENING
Everything is entirely dark, As Minnie steps inside, she notices the floor is wet, she is fumbling with light switches to turn them on, suddenly the lights are on, there is water flowing everywhere in the apartment, some papers and things float about in the water.
- H. INT. AYANA'S APARTMENT: LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Minnie is pulling up her skirt and walking inside shouting, "Ayana?" repeatedly, there is faint light coming from inside the bathroom.

I. INT. AYANA'S APARTMENT: BEDROOM LEADING TO BATHROOM - EVENING

Minnie opens the bathroom door, she collapses to the floor as if from shock.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

Minnie wakes up with a start. She is sweating and breathing very heavily. She reaches out her hands towards where Bina was sleeping. The spot is empty. She anxiously looks around the bed and the room and realises the room is empty.

MINNIE

Bina?

She hurriedly gets off the bed, almost tripping on the covers.

MINNIE

(mutters) Shit.

Minnie walks out of the room, going down the steps.

MINNIE (shouting)

Bina?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Minnie glances around the living room, but it is empty. We can hear Bina giggling.

MINNIE

(softly) Bina?

A faint light is visible from the living room. As Minnie comes closer, she notices only the lamp hanging from the ceiling is lit. It swings a little even though there is no wind. Minnie walks inside, breathing heavily.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Minnie's sketchbook rests on the table. We see the thumbnail sketches from before. Bina is lying on the floor; red smeared across her arms. Minnie screams. She hurriedly dials Abner's number. The phone rings.

We hear the same sound of heavy rain from the dream sequence. Minnie drops to the floor, heaving. The phone has dropped from her hands.

ABNER (off screen)
Hello?
(beat)
(anxiously)Minnie?
(beat)
(louder)Minnie? Are you there?

We hear the phone cut. Minnie sits a little numb, then slowly reaches out towards Bina.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. AYANA'S APARTMENT: BATHROOM - EVENING

Minnie sits on the floor, tears streaming down her face. A hand lies limp from inside the bathtub. She reaches out to touch it. A deep scar runs down the wrist. The lower arm is bloody. Below the hand, the purple tear-shaped pendant lies broken on the floor. We hear the sirens of an ambulance.

BACK TO PRESENT.

Minnie sits numbly, crying. Bina suddenly opens her eyes and giggles.

BINA
Mum!

Minnie places a hand on her chest, instinctively clutching her pendant, and lets out a scream.

She reaches towards Bina, bringing her closer. She notices the red marker in her hands. Minnie tosses the red marker aside. It rolls across the floor and hits Anna's bare feet.

MINNIE
(whispering)
What are you doing, Bina?

BINA
(confused)
I was drawing like Anna!

Minnie helps Bina up and pulls her towards the sink. Picking her up, she sits her down next to the sink.

MINNIE (angrily)
What were you doing?
I thought you were-
You can't just do
this Bina! I-

Minnie switches on the tap, aggressively washing Bina's arms. We hear the sirens of an ambulance and heavy rain. Ayana's bloody hand flashes in front of Minnie's eyes. Bina sits shocked, watching her hands as the red slowly washes away.

MINNIE
(sobs then begins mumbling)
Oh, I'm sorry,
sorry
I am so sorry.
I'm sorry.

Bina looks up to see Anna standing beside Minnie. Her hands are outstretched next to Bina's on the sink, and the red on her hands slowly washes away too. The sun outside the window starts to rise.

CUT TO:

INT. BINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Bina is lying in her bed. Minnie sits next to her, gently running her fingers through Bina's hair. The doorbell rings but Minnie doesn't seem to notice. We hear a lock click.

ABNER (off screen)
(shouting)
Minnie?

We hear hurried footsteps, Abner walks in. Outside, birds are chirping.

ABNER
Minnie?
(pause)

Minnie and Bina look up to see Abner standing in the doorway.

BINA
(smiling)
Baba!

Abner comes closer, placing a hand on Minnie's shoulder. She wipes away a tear. Abner looks towards Bina.

ABNER
Did you get hurt?

BINA
No, red marker- and-

He gently takes Minnie's hand and sits down next to her. She rests her head on his shoulder.

MINNIE
(whispers)
You came.
For us?

ABNER
(whispers gently)
Everything is going to be okay.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINNIE'S STUDIO - MORNING

Little coloured specks of light dance around the room. Minnie walks over to the easel and picks up a brush. Her neck is bare. Through the window we see clouds floating past. On the windowsill rests her crystal pendant in a beautiful purple box. It casts rainbow coloured reflections around it.

Taking the palette with the green paint, Minnie begins to paint a leaf. Soft classical music begins to play in the background, muffled.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END