

[Lights up on MINNIE, wandering around her room, maybe dancing a bit, but doing nothing in particular, to the tune of some weird lo-fi music channel playing from her computer or phone. Something should indicate from her environment that we are in the fandom-specific, maximalist world of an older teenage girl's bedroom.]

Just as she's relaxing and really vibing, CHARLOTTE bursts into her room unannounced. Charlotte is an extremely put-together-looking lady, tight bun, pristine designer clothes, the opposite of Minnie and her room.]

MINNIE:

Gawd, Charlotte! You scared me. Don't you knock?

CHARLOTTE:

I stopped knocking a long time ago. *[off Minnie's face]* You know why. I'm not getting into it right now. I need that dream book from your bookshelf.

MINNIE:

Why are you so sure I have a book on dreams?

[Charlotte looks pointedly around the room.]

MINNIE:

I just like the smell of incense.

CHARLOTTE:

And that little tattoo I never told Mom and Dad about. You're welcome.

MINNIE:

Wait, which one? Oh, right, the constellation.

CHARLOTTE:

The *second* constellation.

[Charlotte has returned to looking for the book.]

MINNIE:

I can bring it to you next time.

CHARLOTTE:

I'm in a rush. I have to get to work. But I keep having this one same thing pop up in my dreams.

[Charlotte ignores her, already looking in a book she found. Minnie probably tries to get up and look over her shoulder, but is pushed away.]

MINNIE:

What did you dream about?

CHARLOTTE:

Bla bla... specific symbols... bla bla... weather... here we go. Ah. "As a symbol of protection"... "We view it as one of the most basic items of protection, one of the first ones we learn about as a child."

MINNIE:

Well, that makes sense for you.

CHARLOTTE:

What's that supposed to mean?

MINNIE:

Remember that time Jesse Miller pushed me on the playground and you came over and pushed him back?

CHARLOTTE:

Sounds fair to me.

MINNIE:

I barely fell. I got like this little scrape on my hand. He went to the hospital and got three stitches in his head. I think he got a concussion.

CHARLOTTE:

Please. He joined varsity football later on. He was fine.

MINNIE:

Still. Protective A.F.

CHARLOTTE:

I don't need protecting. It has to be something else.

MINNIE:

Wait, I wanna know more about your dream. Like, what are you even looking for?

CHARLOTTE:

Min, I'm in a rush. I have to finish getting ready for work. "Instead of protection, it could mean—"... Defensiveness?? What the hell. "Could signify that you are seeking cover from something that you're not ready to confront."

MINNIE [*laughing*]:

They're roasting you.

CHARLOTTE:

It's just a book, Minnie. A book written for mass consumption. [*flipping around it, eventually to the cover:*] It's impossible for a book that went on clearance at the E Street Barnes and Noble this soon after it's publishing date to be roasting me.

MINNIE:

See? Exactly. I was kidding and you start whipping out publishing industry know-how.

CHARLOTTE:

I was hardly dispensing "know-how."

MINNIE:

Dude, this is what they mean. Like I can't even joke with you anymore these days.

CHARLOTTE:

I don't find a lot of what you say funny anymore these days.

MINNIE:

These days. How many times have you heard me try to joke with you these days? How many times have you listened to me at all?

CHARLOTTE:

I haven't heard you say anything for—I don't have time for this.

MINNIE:

Let me see the book.

CHARLOTTE:

I don't have time!

[A small, very sisterly fight ensues, tugging on the book, including maybe little slaps and gasps of disbelief, etc. Eventually Minnie takes the book and reads as Charlotte fixes her outfit and hair, then resumes a light search around the room.]

MINNIE:

Could signify emotional difficulties.

CHARLOTTE:

That's stupid. How could something like...

MINNIE:

It says you could be seeking a tool for upcoming emotional difficulties, or using this item as a tool to get through emotionally trying times from the past--

CHARLOTTE:

I don't need to seek tools. I did my time in therapy. Twice a week for three months, once a week for five, once every other week ever since. Group therapy on top of it. Even tried hypnosis, which was a waste of time.

MINNIE:

You're too much of a Scorpio to be hypnotized. Let me guess - you also journal? In a little designer notebook?

CHARLOTTE:

As a matter of fact, I already had Poppin office supplies in matching colors already. The notebook was the natural next addition.

MINNIE:

Mom and Dad used to say therapy was useless. Didn't want people talking.

CHARLOTTE:

I do my own thing now.

MINNIE:

I wish I could. What are you looking for?

CHARLOTTE:

I don't have time for this right now.

MINNIE:

There's a fourth meaning to your dream. Don't you want to hear it?

CHARLOTTE:

Not now, I'm going to be late. Maybe after work, okay?

MINNIE:

Emotional support. Not just difficulties, but the support to get through it.

CHARLOTTE:

Are we still talking about the dream? Let's sit down and talk about this for real later, okay?

MINNIE:

I'm here now.

CHARLOTTE:

Minnie, I tried to give you-

MINNIE:

You moved away as soon as you got this job. *Hours* away.

CHARLOTTE:

I can't force our parents to do anything for you.

MINNIE:

You didn't try.

CHARLOTTE:

And you didn't have to deal with it by turning to substance abuse.

MINNIE:

"Substance abuse!" Is that the term your therapist has you use? Or, wait, let me guess - you haven't talked to her about it? Is that why you keep dreaming about it?

CHARLOTTE:

It doesn't start with me dreaming about it! It just APPEARS. I could be dreaming about anything else. Car crashes, visiting the zoo, being naked at work, sex. Anything. It appears somehow, like someone's carrying it, or it just pops up in the corner of the room, or on my desk -

[Minnie produces, seemingly from out of nowhere, an umbrella.]

MINNIE:

Always this one, right? This size? This color?

CHARLOTTE:

How did you get that?

MINNIE:

You gave it to me.

CHARLOTTE:

And you never lost it?

MINNIE:

I know, crazy, right? The one thing I never misplaced. Never sold it, either.

CHARLOTTE:

But it's just an umbrella.

MINNIE:

But it was the last thing you ever gave me.

[The lights have shifted into something more menacing, colder than the soft amber lights of a girl's bedroom. The lofi music stopped becoming relaxing, and has started entering some sort of eerie loop of the same section of one song.]

MINNIE:

It was the last possession I ever had.

CHARLOTTE:

I have to go to work.

[But the door is locked, or stuck, or broken. Minnie reads from the book.]

MINNIE:

"The dreamer may use the umbrella as their own emotional support system, keeping *themselves* dry."

CHARLOTTE:

They said that if I gave you money, that was enabling! You would only spend it on drugs!

MINNIE:

I didn't ask for money that night.

CHARLOTTE:

If I let you in to our parents' house, I know what you'd do!

MINNIE:

You'll never know.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, so you can tell me honestly you wouldn't have stolen from us? Right?

MINNIE:

I didn't steal this.

CHARLOTTE:

Shut UP- I already KNOW- I have to GO TO WORK-

MINNIE:

You turned me away from your doorstep, in the pouring, freezing rain, in the middle of the night in November-

CHARLOTTE:

YOU WERE HIGH!

MINNIE:

But hey, you said -- At least I could take this.

[She opens the umbrella. The lofi music morphs to the sound of rain.]

And they found me in Fort Dupont Park the next day, clutching this umbrella.

CHARLOTTE:

Is this another dream?

MINNIE:

If it was real life, you wouldn't have stopped to look up the meaning of this dream.

[Charlotte grabs the book, then drops it, revealing that all the pages are blank.]

CHARLOTTE:

I can't wake up.

MINNIE:

All that therapy, all those years, and you've never told them what what you dream about, or how I keep appearing, and what I'm holding every time.

[Charlotte can't open the door.]

CHARLOTTE:

Let me out!

MINNIE:

You don't tell them about me.

CHARLOTTE:

I will! I promise! Just let me out, please.

MINNIE:

You sure you want to leave? It's pretty nasty out there.

CHARLOTTE:

Yes. I'm sorry.

MINNIE:

I don't need you to be sorry. I just needed you to see me.

*[She looks at Minnie. Really looks at her.
She reaches out for the umbrella.]*

*Minnie gives it to her. The door now opens
with ease. Charlotte goes out into the
pouring rain with the umbrella.*

*The rain morphs back to include the soothing
lofi music. Minnie dances around to it,
maybe looks out the window, maybe just
listens to the rain.*

Lights fade out. End of play.]