

FADE IN:

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON.

Under the opening credits and theme music, we see five women arrive one by one at the house via their own cars. They are generally the same age – all in their late twenties or early thirties – and all are dressed casually. As each exits their car, they are greeted warmly by MARY and the others who have arrived before. Each is carrying a small suitcase. All the women remain outside the house until the last one arrives. Then they all go inside, led by Mary.

INT. VARIOUS - AFTERNOON.

Still with the theme music playing, we see a montage of events. The women excitedly get settled into bedrooms in the huge house. Mary is showing the women around the house and grounds. In one scene, Mary is wearing a bridal veil and holding up a wedding gown on a hanger while the others look on admiringly. Then they are in the kitchen, helping to prepare a dinner. Then in the dining room eating their meal. A large banner reading "Congratulations Mary!" hangs behind a table loaded with wedding presents.

The meal has been finished, and the women are chatting happily, when KAT rises and takes a wineglass in her hand. She motions for quiet.

KAT:

(raising her glass)

"Ladies! Your attention please."

The chattering subsides as others pick up their wineglasses as well.

KAT:

"As most of you know, I have known Mary for practically all my life. During that time, she has been a true and dear friend, and I love her like a sister."

At this comment, MADDY seems to be taken aback.

KAT:

(continues)

"So it's with mixed emotions that I anticipate her coming marriage to Bill. Naturally, I'm very happy for her. Bill is a wonderful man, and he has made Mary truly happy. Heck, I'd marry him myself."

Laughter from the others.

KAT:

(continues)

"But at the same time, it's almost like losing a sister."

Kat looks at Mary, whose eyes are beginning to tear. Maddy looks at her too, and is not happy.

KAT:

(continues - to Mary)

"So you just remember this, young lady – you are NOT allowed to just disappear from our lives like so many married women do, leaving their poor, unfortunate single friends behind in the wake of their marital bliss."

The others laugh and nod in agreement.

KAT:

(continues)

"I still expect to see you every single day, you hear?"

MARY:

(nods)

"So you'll be coming with us on the honeymoon then?"

Roars of laughter from the women. All except Maddy, who looks angry.

KAT:

"Absolutely! I'll go home and pack. Has Bill got a friend?"

More laughter.

KAT:

"Seriously, Mary. I love you both and wish you all the happiness and love in the world. You deserve it."

Murmurs of agreement are heard from the others as they all drink from their wineglasses. Maddy drinks her wine in a huge gulp. Kat sits, and Mary rises.

MARY:

"Thank you, Kat. You've been the best maid of honor a girl could ever have."

Maddy scowls at this.

MARY:

"And thanks to all of you, my trusted bridesmaids. How could I ever have gotten through all of this without you? You are my dear, dear friends."

Everyone smiles.

KAT:

(jokingly haughty)

"Of course, I'm her BEST friend. That's why she picked ME to be maid of honor!"

At this, Maddy pushes away from the table suddenly and leaves the room. The others are somewhat surprised.

TERESA:

"What's up with her?"

KAT:

"Did I say something wrong?"

MARY:

"No, it's fine. Maybe she's just not feeling well."

Mary gets up from the table and leaves the dining room. The other girls look after her questioningly. They then begin stacking the dishes.

MELODY:

"I hope Maddy's alright."

TERESA:

"Me too! I worry about her."

ANNE:

"I know! She seems so out of it."

MELODY:

"She used to be so much fun. Remember?"

TERESA:

"Give me a break! All she needs is a man to give her a good tumble."

ANNE:

(shocked and embarrassed)

"Teresa!"

TERESA:

"It always works for me."

KAT:

"Well, believe it or not Teresa, sex is not the answer to everything."

TERESA:

"Yeah, right!"

The girls laugh.

Maddy is in the upstairs bathroom crying softly. She looks at herself in the mirror, and for a moment it appears she is furious. Then there is a knock at the door.

MARY:

(through the door)

"Maddy? Is everything alright?"

Maddy stiffens and does not reply.

MARY:

(through the door)

"Maddy.....Let me in."

MADDY:

(tense)

"No! I'm fine! I'll be down in a minute."

MARY:

(through the door)

"Are you sure?"

MADDY:

(irritated)

"I said I'm alright!"

MARY:

(unsure)

"Okay. Just let me know if you need anything."

After a few moments, she composes herself and looks at herself in the mirror. Her hand moves slowly, gingerly to her flat stomach. She looks very sad.

Back in the dining room, the women are clearing the table, carrying the dishes into the kitchen. Mary enters the kitchen.

MARY:

"Don't worry about those. Just stack them up there on the counter. I'll do them later."

ANNE:

"No way! You cooked the meal. Darn if you'll get stuck washing the dishes too. It's your party, for goodness sake!"

TERESA:

"Yeah, there's plenty of us here. It won't take long. You just relax."

The women set about the task of washing the dishes, while Mary sits on a nearby stool to keep them company.

TERESA:

"So what's up with Maddy?"

MARY:

"I don't know. She seems so out of it tonight."

MELODY:

"Tonight? She's been 'out of it' for ages!"

ANNE:

"I know! Ever since she broke up with Arnie. What's going on with her?"

KAT:

"Honestly, Mary, why did you even invite her?"

MARY:

"She's a bridesmaid. Besides, she's my sister! How could I not invite her?"

MELODY:

"She's your STEP-sister."

KAT:

"Geez, Mary -- if your dad hadn't taken that trip to Boston...."

MARY:

"Even so, she's been closer to me than any blood sister ever could be."

KAT:

"Yeah, but how long ago was that?"

MARY:

"OK, so she hasn't been herself lately."

ANNE:

"Lately? She's been in this funk for months."

MARY:

"I know...."

KAT:

"Well she's bumming us out. What's wrong with her anyway? She used to be a lot more fun."

MARY:

"I don't know. She's changed since the breakup. I don't know what's up with her."

TERESA:

"Well, let's hurry up and get some more wine into her. Maybe that will loosen her up."

Maddy is still in the bathroom. Taking a washcloth, she dabs cold water on her eyes, straightens her hair, gives one more look at herself in the mirror, and then goes back downstairs. She doesn't want to rejoin the other women, so she goes into the living room and stands looking out the window at the coming night. After a few moments, Mary comes into the room and walks over to her.

MARY:

"Hey, Maddy. Is everything alright?"

Maddy continues to stare out the window.

MARY:

(continues)

"Maddy, what's wrong? Why did you run out like that?"

After a long moment, Maddy answers.

MADDY:

"I just couldn't stand it anymore."

MARY:

"Stand what? What was it that bothered you?"

MADDY:

"Come on, Mary. You know what it was. It was her. Kat."

Mary looks down for a moment.

MARY:

(softly)

"I know."

MADDY:

"Why, Mary? Why is Kat your maid of honor and not me?"

Mary looks embarrassed, but does not answer.

MADDY:

(continues)

"We're sisters. Well, almost sisters. We've been through so much together. I should have been your maid of honor. Not her!"

MARY:

"I know, Maddy. I know."

MADDY:

"Then why, Mary? Why did you pick her?"

Mary struggles to find a way to explain without hurting her sister's feelings.

MARY:

"Maddy, I wanted you to be my maid of honor. You know that. You know I always wanted it to be you. We used to plan it, remember? We'd plan our weddings – I would be your maid of honor, and you would be mine."

MADDY:

"I remember, Mary. I remember it all. But then you picked her. And now she just loves rubbing my nose in it. (mocking) 'Oh! I'M Mary's best friend now! Why, she's like a SISTER to me!' How could you? How could you pick Kat?"

MARY:

"It's not like that, Maddy..."

MADDY:

"It IS like that! It's JUST like that! Didn't you hear her in there? She was digging her claws in."

They sit silently for a moment, Maddy looking out the window, Mary looking forlornly at Maddy. At length, Maddy calms down.

MADDY:

"Just tell me why. Why did you pick her instead of me?"

MARY:

"Maddy....I wanted you. It's just....it's just..... Lately, you've been.....so far away."

Maddy drops her head.

MARY:

(continues)

"I don't know, Maddy. I don't know what's happened. I don't know what's changed. But ever since you broke up with Arnie, you don't talk to me anymore. You don't come see me, you don't call. When I do see you, it's like you're on another planet. I don't know what to do, I don't know how to reach you."

Maddy turns away from Mary.

MARY:

(continues)

"Maddy, please – talk to me. Let me in. I'm your sister. You're my best friend."

MADDY:

(glumly)

"Not anymore. Kat's your best friend now."

Maddy turns and goes across the room, flopping into a chair. Mary moves to say something, but just then Kat and the others come into the living room from the kitchen, chattering happily. Mary gives a long, helpless look to her sister, then turns to greet the women.

Everyone is talking about how good the meal was, while Maddy sits glumly in a corner watching them. Kat has brought two bottles of wine with her from the kitchen, and is filling everyone's glass. After a few moments, Kat notices Maddy and calls across the room to her.

KAT:

"Hey Maddy. Why the sad face? Aren't you having a good time?"

Maddy just stares back at her silently.

KAT:

"What's the matter, Maddy? Cat got your tongue?"

There are a few stifled snickers from the others. Mary looks apologetically at Maddy, who turns away and looks out the distant window.

MELODY:

"Come on, Kat. Maybe Maddy's just not a party girl."

KAT:

(chuckles)

"Well then, it's a good thing she's not the Maid of Honor. 'Cause my job is to see to it that everyone has a GOOD TIME!"

Kat waves one of the wine bottles in the air as she says these last words, and everyone cheers and hoots. Kat walks over and fills Maddy's wineglass.

KAT:

"Now come on, Maddy. Loosen up. You wouldn't want to spoil the party, would you?"

Without waiting for an answer, she turns and walks back to where the other girls are sitting. Maddy stares daggers after her.

MARY:

(sympathetically)

"Maddy's just not feeling very well tonight."

MADDY:

(defiantly)

"That's not true. I feel fine. Here."

Maddy picks up the full wineglass and drinks it all down in one long gulp. She puts the wineglass back down forcefully and gives Mary a long stare. Kat and the others are whooping their approval, but Maddy does not notice.

ANNE:

"So Mary.....are you nervous about The Big Night?"

Laughter from the other girls, as Mary appears embarrassed.

MARY:

(with false bravado)

"Nervous? What's there to be nervous about?"

More laughter.

ANNE:

"Come on, Mary. Everybody knows you've been 'saving yourself' until you were married."

MELODY:

"That's right. We all feel really bad for Bill. How long has he been waiting now?"

KAT:

(in amazement)

"Two and a half YEARS! Can you believe it???"

Gasps from the others.

TERESA:

"My God! I didn't know a man could GO two years without it!"

KAT:

"Honey, YOU couldn't go two WEEKS."

Everyone explodes in laughter. Teresa hides her face for a moment, pretending to be embarrassed. Anne is also embarrassed.

MELODY:

"Poor Bill! Maybe we should've gotten together and 'helped him out'."

Ooo-ing sounds and laughter from the others.

MARY:

"Don't you girls get any ideas! Besides, he's only got a few days left to wait."

Cheers from the girls.

MARY:

(continues)

"Okay, okay – so I am a little bit nervous. I admit it. BUT – I got a little something to break the ice."

Mary runs out of the room and up the stairs as the other girls look at each other wonderingly. Then they go back to their wine and conversation.

ANNE:

"So what's up, Maddy? How have you been?"

There is a moment's pause, as if everyone is waiting to hear what Maddy has to say.

MADDY:

"I'm fine, Anne. Just fine."

She realizes how sarcastic that sounded, and softens for a moment.

MADDY:

"How have you been? Are you still seeing that guy... What was his name?... Steve?"

Everyone in the room tenses at the mention of Steve, and Anne's head drops. After a long moment, she replies.

ANNE:

"No... um..... He and I... We—"

KAT:

(angrily)

"Maddy!"

Maddy is startled and confused. She doesn't understand what's happening.

KAT:

(still angry)

"Steve was cheating on her, and then he dumped her, remember? Jeez, Maddy – how can you be so cold?"

Maddy looks shocked.

MADDY:

"No....uh.....uh.....I didn't—"

Anne's head is still down. Teresa goes over and puts an arm around her shoulder.

MADDY:  
(apologetically)  
"Anne, I'm so—"

KAT:  
"Leave her alone. Can't you ever think about anybody but yourself?"

Maddy shrinks back into her chair, upset. Anne takes a deep breath and nods that she is alright. Teresa takes her arm from Anne's shoulder, but remains sitting close to her. The other girls look uncomfortable, trying to decide where to look. Kat stalks across the room and plops onto the couch. Everyone is quiet for a moment. Then Mary comes down the stairs and into the room. She is wearing a very nice bathrobe. She takes a position in the room where everyone can see her. The others look up at her expectantly, relieved to have something new to focus their attention upon.

MARY:  
"Well ladies, as I told you, I have been feeling a little nervous about the impending wedding night 'duties'."

Some light laughs.

MARY:  
(continues)  
"However, Bill has been a perfect gentleman for a long, long, LONG time...."

More laughter, and stronger.

MARY:  
(continues)  
"He's respected my desire to remain celibate until our wedding night, and I love him for that."

MELODY:  
"You're SO lucky, Mary!"

ANNE:  
"I know! I wish I had waited..."

Murmurs of agreement from the others. Teresa gives Anne a shocked look. This is the first time she's ever heard her sister admit to having had sex.

MARY:

"Well, Bill is living proof that there really ARE good men out there. And you're right, Melody – I am VERY lucky! And that's why I decided to go do a little special shopping. So, seven days from now, BILL is going to get lucky too!"

With this, Mary throws open the bathrobe to reveal some very sexy lingerie. The girls gasp in surprise, then applaud and cheer.

KAT:

"Wow! I hope Bill has a strong heart!"

Howls of laughter from the girls. Mary struts a little, showing off.

MARY:

"Well, I figured Bill deserved a nice 'package' to unwrap!"

She struts a moment more, then closes and ties the robe with a look of embarrassment. The girls applaud.

KAT:

"Okay, now everybody into their jammies! We've got a couple gallons of wine to kill off, and some VERY interesting videos to watch!"

With squeals of glee, the girls run out of the room and up the stairs, except for Maddy who remains sitting in the chair. Kat is the last to leave the room. As she passes, she grabs Maddy's arms and drags her to her feet.

KAT:

"Come on, spoil sport! We're going to make you have some fun if it KILLS you!"

She pushes the reluctant Maddy towards the door. As Kat passes, Mary stops her.

MARY:

(questioningly)

"Videos???"

Kat gives her a sly look.

KAT:

"That's right. You can just consider them 'training tapes'."

She smiles mischievously and leaves the room, pushing Maddy ahead of her, leaving Mary with a questioning look on her face.

CUT TO:

The girls are in their sleepwear, jammed together on the couch, laughing hysterically as a porno movie plays on the TV in front of them. We cannot see the TV screen, but we can hear the sounds of mock passion and cheap music. The girls laugh as if it is the silliest thing they have ever seen. Mary is half-hiding her face in embarrassment. Even Maddy cannot suppress the occasional giggle. After a few moments of this, Mary grabs the remote and turns the TV off.

MARY:

"That's enough of THAT! Where on earth did you get that, Kat?!"

Kat springs to her feet in mock defense.

KAT:

(theatrically)

"I will never reveal my sources! You can jail me! You can torture me! You can—"

She is hit with sofa pillows thrown by several of the laughing girls.

MARY:

"Well, I'd have to have a LOT more wine in me to watch any more of that!"

Taking this as a cue, Kat grabs the nearest wine bottle.

KAT:

"Your wish is my command!"

The alcohol is beginning to have its effect on Maddy. She is beginning to get into the spirit of things a little more. She is smiling more and participating more in the fun, although still considerably more subdued than the others. As Kat refills Mary's wineglass, she fills Maddy's too, as well as her own glass.

ANNE:

(sarcastically)

"So what's next on the entertainment agenda, Kat? Bobbing for apples? Pin the tail on the donkey?"

MELODY:

"Or maybe a rousing game of Old Maid?"

Boos and hisses from the other girls. Maddy joins in.

KAT:

"No ladies. Now it's time for some REAL fun!"

Oooh's of anticipation from the girls, including Maddy.

KAT:

(continues theatrically, with humor)

"Now we're going to play the game that delves into the deep, dark, stinky, slimy recesses of your very souls, where your most basic desires are laid bare for all to see!"

ANNE:

"Oh no! Don't tell me."

KAT:

"That's right. We're going to play 'Three Wishes'!"

Groans come from the other girls.

KAT:

"Aw c'mon! This'll be fun."

MARY:

"Yes, come on. I like this game!"

The others reluctantly agree.

KAT:

(gleefully)

"OK, OK! Let's start with.....Mary!"

Cheers from the others.

KAT:

"Alright Mary... you're wandering on a desert island and you stumble upon Aladdin's magic lamp. The genie inside grants you three wishes. What would you wish for?"

Mary ponders this thoughtfully as the other girls look on with anticipation.

MARY:

"Hmmm..... Three wishes, eh? Let me see. Well.....first, I would wish for a million dollars for each and every one of my friends."

Cheers from the girls.

MARY:

(continues)

"And for my second wish, I would wish for.....a nice house at the beach."

Murmurs of approval.

MARY:

(continues)

"And for my third wish.....I would wish that Bill and I would have a whole bunch of healthy, happy children."

Applause from the other girls, but Maddy looks as if she's been punched in the stomach. She collapses back onto the couch, suddenly withdrawn again.

FADE TO:

MELODY:

"I would wish for a diamond as big as an orange, a brand new Mercedes, and....."

She pauses for effect.

MELODY:

(continues)

"....for Roger to be better 'endowed'!"

Squeals of laughter from the others.

FADE TO:

ANNE:

"I wish for a new house, a trip around the world, and a boyfriend who won't cheat on me."

Murmurs of agreement from the others.

FADE TO:

TERESA:

"...a houseboat, a big ranch, and a starring role on a major soap opera."

FADE TO:

KAT:

(looking around the room)

"OK, Maddy. It's your turn. You're on a desert island and you find Aladdin's –"

MADDY:

(sullen)

"I don't want to play."

MELODY:

"Come on, Maddy. Be a sport."

TERESA AND ANNE:

(in unison, encouraging)

"Yeah."

MADDY:

(irritated)

"I said I don't want to play. Leave me alone!"

KAT:

(irritated)

"What's the matter, Maddy? Already got everything and nothing to wish for?"

Maddy says nothing. Mary reaches out and takes Maddy's hand.

MARY:

(encouraging)

"Come on Maddy. It's just a game. Everybody else told their wishes. Now you tell us what you would wish for."

Maddy snatches her hand away and stands up unsteadily, the effect of the wine. She is upset now.

MADDY:

(angry)

"Leave me alone, dammit! I said I don't wanna play!"

Near tears, Maddy storms out of the room and up the stairs. The other girls look at each other, stunned. Mary gets up and goes after Maddy, the others close behind her. They find Maddy in a room off the upstairs study. The room has two large windows, and Maddy has opened one and is standing close to it, looking downward. Mary approaches her slowly.

MARY:

(cautiously)

"Maddy?... What's going on?"

MADDY:

(still looking out the window)

"I don't wanna play. I don't wanna tell you what I wish for! Just leave me alone!"

MARY:

(suddenly afraid that Maddy may leap out of the window)

"Maddy, please. It's freezing in here. Please -- come away from the window."

Maddy doesn't move. Everyone is riveted in their positions. Finally, Mary moves to stand beside Maddy.

MARY:

"Please, Maddy. Tell me what's wrong. Why are you doing this?"

MADDY:

(approaching hysterics)

"What do you care? What do any of you care?"

Maddy moves even closer to the open window. The others lean slightly towards her, as if they are preparing to grab her.

MADDY:

(continues)

"I just want it to stop. I want everything to stop."

Mary moves slightly closer to Maddy.

MARY:

"Is this about being Maid of Honor?"

At this, Kat throws her hands up.

KAT:

(suddenly angry)

"GEEZ, Maddy! Is that what this tantrum is all about?! You're whining because you didn't get to be Mary's Maid of Honor?! Well get over it!"

Maddy whirls around to face Kat.

MADDY:

(venomously)

"Shut up, you little bitch!"

Mary and the others are shocked by this outburst, and stand in stunned silence. But Kat responds immediately.

KAT:

(angrily)

"OK, OK! You don't want to tell us? Fine! Who cares what your wishes are anyway? You've already got everything you ever wanted, don't you? So why not just ruin the party for everyone! What do you care?"

Maddy turns back to the window and buries her face in her hands, trembling as if she's on the verge of a breakdown. Suddenly, she drops her hands and whirls back around to face Kat.

MADDY:

(angry)

"You want to know what I wish for, Kat? You REALLY want to know? Then I'll tell you! I don't have three wishes -- I only have ONE wish. I wish I could go back in time and change one horrible thing I've done. Just one! I'd give all three wishes for that!"

Everyone stands in stunned silence.

MADDY:

(continues)

"There! Are you HAPPY now?!"

Maddy storms out of the room and back down the stairs. After a moment, the others follow. In the living room they find Maddy collapsed in a chair, near tears. They come into the room, but do not approach Maddy.

TERESA:

"Oh, come on Maddy. You're so perfect -- what could you possibly want to change about your life?"

Maddy slowly looks up at Teresa, tears running down her face, and a strange look of horror in her eyes. A long moment passes, then she speaks.

MADDY:

(strangely calm)

"I killed someone once, Teresa."

Gasps of shock from the others. Silence for a short moment.

MELODY:

"Yeah, sure! You're kidding, right?"

But the girls slowly realize that Maddy is serious. Mary moves close to her.

MARY:

"Maddy, what do you mean you killed someone? Was there -- some sort of accident or something?"

MADDY:

(still strangely calm)

"It was no accident."

MELODY:

"Then what? Self defense?"

MADDY:

(agitated)

"It wasn't an accident. And it wasn't self defense."

She looks at the questioning faces, a growing look of despair on her face.

MADDY:

"It was murder."

The girls are stunned.

ANNE:

"Murder??? How could it be murder?"

MARY:  
(to Anne)  
"It can't be."

MARY:  
(to Maddy)  
"Maddy, what are you talking about? You never murdered anyone."

MADDY:  
(anguished)  
"I did! I did! I planned it! I thought it all out. I knew what I was doing!"

The others look at her in disbelief.

MADDY:  
(continues)  
"You don't understand. I committed a murder. A calculated, cold-blooded murder. I deserve to die."

MARY:  
"No you don't. You don't deserve to die. Nobody deserves to die."

MADDY:  
(calmer now)  
"He didn't deserve to die. But I killed him."

TERESA:  
"Maddy, get a grip. You didn't kill anybody."

MADDY:  
"Oh, I didn't kill him myself. I paid somebody to do the killing. But I committed murder just as sure as if I had--..."

Maddy dissolves into tears. The girls are shocked, frozen in place. Mary puts her arms around the crying Maddy.

MARY:  
"Maddy, stop it! You don't know what you're saying."

Maddy tries to pull away from her.

MADDY:

(sobbing)

"I DO! I DO know what I'm saying! I was there! I killed him! He's dead because of me."

Mary doesn't know what to say. For a moment she just sits there, her arms around the sobbing Maddy.

MARY:

(soothing)

"Alright Maddy. Shhh. Calm down now. Tell us what happened, Maddy. When did this happen?"

MADDY:

(still crying)

"Six months ago. It happened six months ago. Oh God! I killed him six months ago!"

Kat has moved close, and now puts a hand on the sobbing girl's shoulder.

KAT:

"God, Maddy. Was it someone who hurt you?"

Maddy shakes her head vigorously.

MADDY:

(the sobs subsiding)

"He never hurt me. He never hurt anyone. He was completely defenseless."

MELODY:

"Well I'm sure you didn't mean to hurt him."

MADDY:

(insistent)

"YES I DID! YES I DID! I did it on purpose! I was supposed to take care of him. And I murdered him!"

TERESA:

(impatient)

"Well then who was it, Maddy? Who did you kill?"

MADDY:

(as if she didn't hear Teresa's question)

"He had so much potential. He could have been anything, gone anywhere. But he never got the chance."

She begins sobbing softly.

MADDY:

(continues through tears)

"He was so small... so tiny and defenseless. He never hurt anybody. He never did anything. But I didn't want him around. So I made the plan. I paid the money. I had him killed. Now he's gone, and I can't ever, ever take it back!"

Slowly the girls realize what Maddy means.

MARY:

(with great sorrow and sympathy)

"Oh Maddy... You had... an abortion?"

At the sound of the word, Maddy lets out a scream of anguish and dissolves into tears once again, burying her face in Mary's shoulder. Mary puts her arms around the sobbing girl.

KAT:

"Oh God... Maddy..."

Everyone is silent, in shock. No one knows what to say. A long moment passes as Maddy's sobs slowly subside.

MARY:

"Maddy... What happened?"

Maddy sits up. Kat grabs a nearby box of Kleenex and offers it to her. She takes one and dries her eyes.

MADDY:

(her head down)

"It was when Arnie and I were dating. I really, really thought he loved me, you know? And I wanted to make him happy."

She looks at the others. Some have tears in their eyes.

MADDY:

(continues)

"I should have waited. I wasn't ready. We'd only been going out a couple of months."

Several of the girls nod understandingly. Kat puts a hand on Maddy's shoulder.

MADDY:

(becoming more agitated)

"I didn't know what to do. As soon as Arnie found out, he dumped me. I had nowhere to turn. I couldn't take care of a baby. What could I do?"

TERESA:

(lighter)

"Jeez, it was just an abortion! No big deal."

The others turn and stare at her sternly.

ANNE:

"Hush, Teresa!"

TERESA:

"What? What's the problem? It's just an abortion. People have 'em everyday."

Anne takes her arm and turns Teresa to face her.

ANNE:

(sternly)

"Be quiet, sis!"

TERESA:

(defensively)

"Well it's true! It's not like it's murder or anything. It's just, like, a piece of tissue, and you have it removed. Like an appendix."

At this, Maddy wails loudly.

MADDY:

(anguished)

"He was NOT just a piece of tissue! He had fingers and toes! I could hear his heart beat! He had brain waves! He slept, he woke up, he kicked -- they tell me he could even cry! He was a person!"

Maddy lapses into heavy sobs. Mary tries to comfort her, as Kat steps over and gets close in front of Teresa.

KAT:

(speaking low, directly at Teresa)

"Look Teresa, I know you're young, and all you know about the world is what you see on TV. But to her, this was her child, her baby – and she killed it. That's what it is to HER. So if you can help, then help. Otherwise, just shut up!"

She turns back to Maddy, leaving Teresa with a shocked look on her face. Anne is nodding that Kat is right.

MARY:

(sympathetically - to Maddy)

"Why didn't you come to us? To me? We would have helped you."

MELODY:

(sympathetically)

"Yeah, Maddy. Why didn't you tell us?"

MADDY:

"I wanted to. I wanted to so much. But the day I found out I was pregnant, I came home and heard you were engaged. You were so happy! Everyone was so happy and excited! And I just couldn't tell you. I just couldn't ruin that for you."

MARY:

(tearfully, hugging Maddy)

"Oh Maddy! I'm so sorry. I should have known. I should have seen something was wrong."

MADDY:

(tearfully)

"But you were so happy. And I wanted that for you. I told myself, 'I'll tell her tomorrow.' But with every day that passed, it was harder and harder to say the words. So I made the decision, and I had it done. I killed my baby."

Maddy is staring sullenly now, almost as if she is in shock.

KAT:

(sympathetically)

"It must have been awful."

Maddy looks at Kat as if slowly realizing she is in the room.

ANNE:

"Maddy – how far along were you?"

Maddy looks at Anne.

MADDY:

"About ten-and-a-half weeks."

A realization strikes Kat.

KAT:

"Oh no... Oh Maddy..."

Kat begins to cry softly. The others drop their heads in sorrow, all except for Teresa, who looks at the others questioningly.

TERESA:

"What? I don't get it."

MARY:

"Oh God. Maddy, your due date. It would have been..."

Maddy nods sadly.

MADDY:

"Any day now."

She heaves a heavy sigh, no more tears left in her.

MADDY:

(continues)

"Any day now Mary – you would have been an aunt."

Mary turns her head away for a moment so that Maddy won't see her tears. Then she turns back and takes Maddy in her arms again.

MARY:

(crying softly)

"Maddy – I'm so, so sorry."

They sit together for a long moment. The other girls are wiping their eyes. After awhile, Maddy sits up and composes herself.

MADDY:

(to Mary)

"I'm sorry I ruined your party."

MARY:

"You didn't ruin my party. I'm the one who should be sorry -- sorry I didn't see what you were going through. Sorry I wasn't there for you."

Maddy smiles weakly at her sister. Kat kneels in front of Maddy and takes her by the hand.

KAT:

(sympathetically)

"Yeah, Maddy. I'm sorry too. We all are. We're your friends. We should have been there for you."

Nods and murmurs of agreement from the others. Teresa comes and puts a hand on Maddy's shoulder.

TERESA:

"Listen, I'm sorry about what I said earlier. I -- I didn't know it could affect someone like this. I'm really sorry."

Maddy smiles at her.

MADDY:

"Thanks, Teresa. I appreciate it."

ANNE:

(to Maddy)

"Can I get you anything?"

MELODY:

(to Maddy)

"Yeah, Maddy. You want some more wine or something?"

Maddy chuckles softly.

MADDY:

"No, I think I've had enough wine! But thanks."

The girls remain close to Maddy.

TERESA:

"I just realized, this could have been me."

ANNE:

"What do you mean, sis?"

TERESA:

(somewhat reluctantly)

"Well... Just that I don't always practice safe sex."

Anne looks at her with some shock, and starts to say something, but Teresa cuts her off.

TERESA:

"I know, I know -- It's stupid and dangerous. I don't know why I did it."

She looks at Maddy.

TERESA:

"But I know I won't ever do it again."

A faint smile crosses Maddy's lips and she reaches out to touch Teresa reassuringly.

KAT:

"Yeah, well -- safe sex is all well and good, but I'm beginning to think Mary has the right idea with the celibacy thing."

Some nods and murmurs of agreement.

MELODY:

"Yeah, but then where are we gonna find guys as patient and understanding as Bill?"

KAT:

"Hey, if Mary can find one, then so can I. (To Mary) Are you SURE Bill doesn't have a brother?"

The others chuckle, even Maddy.

ANNE:

"You know, this is our fault. If we hadn't been so wrapped up in ourselves, we could have seen that something was wrong and done something about it."

MELODY:

"That's true. We could've saved her a lot of pain and suffering if we'd just been paying attention -- like friends are supposed to do."

Murmurs of agreement.

KAT:

"So what happened to us? We used to be that way. We used to talk all the time, all about our problems and stuff. We were all like sisters. Whenever anybody had a problem, we all shared it. What happened to that?"

TERESA:

"I don't know. Seems like we lost it somewhere."

MARY:

"It's like we've all become superficial -- like we're almost afraid to face bad things. So we just pretend that everything's alright. It's a defense mechanism."

TERESA:

"Well it sucks!"

Light laughter from the girls.

KAT:

"Yes it does suck! So what are we going to do about it?"

TERESA:

"Well what CAN we do?"

ANNE:

"I don't know, but we have to make sure that none of us ever has to go through what Maddy has had to suffer."

MELODY:

"Right! We need to start being best friends again and looking out for each other."

MARY:

"Yes! We need to get together more often -- all of us. And to talk -- really talk -- about what's going on in our lives."

Murmurs of agreement from the others.

KAT:

"Okay then. Let's make a pact! Everybody raise your right hand."

Everyone raises their right hand.

KAT:

(theatrically)

"We solemnly swear that from this day forward we will be the friends we should have been all along. We will call each other at least three times a week. And once a week we'll get together -- all of us -- and share what's going on in our lives. We promise never to hold back. We will always lean on each other, help each other, and support each other -- forever and ever. Amen."

EVERYONE:

(in unison)

"Amen."

Laughter from everyone. Even Maddy is now smiling.

MARY:

"Maddy, I wish you'd reconsider moving back in here with me. I really miss having you here."

MADDY:

"Thanks sis. I really appreciate it. But I've got my own place, and I love it there. I'll be alright. Honest."

MARY:

"I know you'll be alright. It's me I was thinking of."

MADDY:

"Well, I'll just have to come visit a lot more often. So you'd better give Bill fair warning."

This makes Mary happy. Kat is almost overcome by this, and wipes away a joyful tear.

TERESA:

"Oh! Hey! We forgot something!"

Everyone looks at Teresa questioningly.

TERESA:

"In all the chaos we forgot to ask Kat what her three wishes were."

ANNE:

"Uh -- sis, I don't think..."

MARY:

"Yeah, it might not be a good..."

KAT:

"No, no! She's right. Everybody else went, so I should too."

She looks at Mary and Maddy, still sitting together.

KAT:

(continues)

"But I only have one wish."

The others look at her expectantly as she pauses for a moment.

KAT:

(continues - to Mary)

"My wish is that Mary will make Maddy your maid of honor."

Maddy gasps with surprise at this. The others make sounds of appreciation.

MADDY:

(near tears)

"Oh Kat..."

MARY:

(to Kat)

"Are you sure?"

Teary-eyed, Kat nods. Mary smiles.

MARY:

(looking at Maddy)

"Maddy, will you please be my Maid of Honor?"

A huge smile crosses Maddy's face as she hugs first her sister, then Kat. As she's hugging Kat, she whispers into her ear.

MADDY:

(whispering)

"Thank you, Kat!"

They hug for another moment, then separate.

KAT:

(to Maddy)

"And I want you to come to my house for dinner Monday night."

MADDY:

"Well... I don't..."

KAT:

"Don't even try it! I will NOT take no for an answer, young lady."

Maddy smiles, fakes a salute.

MADDY:

(with humor)

"Yes SIR! I'll be there SIR!"

Everyone laughs.

KAT:

(with humor)

"She's a raw recruit, but she's got potential."

MELODY:

"And Maddy, I'd like you to come shopping with me this week. I have to buy a whole new wardrobe for my trip in April."

EVERYONE:

(in unison)

"PARIS!!!"

More laughter.

MELODY:

"Yep! And I'd really appreciate your advice."

Smiling, Maddy nods appreciatively. Mary takes Maddy's hand.

MARY:

"And first thing Monday morning I'm calling Reverend Petersen, and you and I are going for grief counseling."

Maddy lowers her head and nods. Mary puts a hand under Maddy's chin and raises her head up.

MARY:

"We're going to get through this together."

Maddy smiles and nods.

MADDY:

"Thanks sis."

KAT:

(wiping a tear from her eye)

"Um... Would it be alright if I come too? Just for moral support."

MARY:

(smiling)

"Sure, Kat. After all, you're like a sister to us."

Maddy and Mary share a chuckle. Teresa whispers something in Anne's ear. Anne nods enthusiastically.

ANNE:

"Hey! After the wedding next Saturday, everybody comes to my house for a barbecue!"

TERESA:

(pointing to Mary)

"Everybody except YOU, that is!"

Loud laughter.

MARY:

(laughs – then gives an exaggerated sigh)

"I never get to have ANY fun!"

Howls of laughter from the girls. Everyone breaks and moves back to couches and chairs in the room, some picking up their wineglasses and drinking from them. Mary is still sitting with Maddy, holding her hand. Kat is standing nearby. All are smiling now.

FADE TO:

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - MORNING. As the closing theme music begins, we see the girls are putting their things into their cars. They give each other long hugs, wave their goodbyes as they drive down the driveway one by one, until only Mary and Maddy are left, standing beside Maddy's car. Both are smiling now. They give each other a long hug and a kiss on the cheek, then Maddy gets into her car, waves goodbye, and drives slowly down the driveway.

FADE OUT:

Theme continues under closing credits.

THE END