

SHEDDING VELVET

For MA Filmmaking

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EXT. OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY - AFTERNOON

CHARLIE is someone who never fits in. Not for lack of trying, though. He looks...normal?

Trainers.

Jeans.

Jumper.

Rucksack.

And...

ANTLERS?!

Two. Identical. Antlers.

They stick up at awkward angles from Charlies head.

The people that mill around him seem not to pay him too much attention, but don't ignore him either.

Charlie stays still, stands with hunched shoulders, trying to make himself disappear.

WORDS appear around him.

ONCE A YEAR, IN THE DEPTHS OF WINTER, A MALE DEER WILL TRY TO SHED HIS ANTLERS.

INT. LECTURE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A note passes between students, heading towards where Charlie is sat alone on the front row.

It is written in thick black ink on a yellow post-it note.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT (NOTE)
Can you move a bit? I can't see the
slideshow.

Charlie unfurls the note.

Instincts make him move his head, antlers along with it, out of the eye-line of the person who has passes him the note.

He looks up at the screen, his antlers prominently block the projection.

He looks like he could crawl into a hole and disappear.

INT. EXAM HALL - A DIFFERENT DAY

A clock ticks aggressively in the background.

Tick.

Tock.

Charlie's head is bent over an exam paper. The antlers keep catching on the sheets, pushes them onto the floor.

swoosh.

Tick.

Tock.

swoosh.

Charlie gets progressively more cross with each sheet that he catches with the antlers. There are hand-drawn sparkles emitting from his antlers now, they burn with intensity.

A girl sits on the desk beside Charlie.

She looks towards Charlie and stifles a giggle as she watches the papers hit the ground.

She doesn't look at him again.

The sparkles fIzZ and PoP until they disappear.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM - LATER

Charlie stands in front of his mirror.

In his hands is a parcel. Still wrapped in the delivery packaging. He unwraps it and we see that it is a book.

"Chasing the Deer"

He turns to a page that explicitly describes the reason that male deer must shed their antlers.

In big, BOLD letters it reads...

MALE DEER SHED THEIR ANTLERS AFTER BREEDING SEASON

He fills his cheeks with air and puffs them out, in frustration.

Charlie gently tugs on one of his antlers.

It doesn't move an inch.

INT. UNIVERSITY CORRIDOR - DAY

Charlie walks, head down, antlers pointed down. He carries books piled haphazardly in one arm. Rucksack slung over the other. Typical fresher.

Preoccupied.

He doesn't see FAWN coming towards him. A pretty girl. Understated. Charlie has noticed her before, and his antlers let out a sparkle of unknown recognition.

BANG!!!

He has hit Fawn square in the head with his antlers.

Sparkles FLY out of both of Charlie's antlers.

She rubs the point of impact, just under her beanie.

Pain evident on her face. Two hand-drawn butterflies escape from under a beanie pulled tight over her head. She looks up as if to say something to Charlie...

He's gone.

A single sheet of paper floats down in his wake.

The sparkles die out in his wake.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Charlie nurses a pint.

A friend of his is in deep conversation with a girl at the bar.

Another friend plays pool with a girl who doesn't seem to care too much about the game - *if you know what I mean.*

Charlie remains alone.

He begins to fiddle with his antlers, pulls a little harder than necessary.

An onion ring flies past Charlies head, seemingly out of nowhere. Misses his antlers by an inch.

Charlie's friends shout noises of disappointment in the background.

The girl with auburn hair sits with her friends in the corner of the same bar. Her friends laugh at the missed onion ring bullet.

She does not.

A single butterfly escapes out of her hat again, she pulls down the sides of it, in defence.

INT. CHARLIES ROOM - DAY

Charlie stands, eyes himself up in the mirror.

A book is open, balances on the sink precariously in front of him.

"Chasing The Deer"

Open on a page that addresses when male red deer shed their antlers.

Charlie tears this page out of the book and pins it to the mirror.

Tilts his head one way, and then the other. Eyeing his antlers up for size. He looks ready for something.

BEGIN MONTAGE - CHARLIE TRYING TO REMOVE HIS ANTLERS

BATHROOM...Charlie tries to trap his antlers in the door.
KITCHEN...a rolling pin hammers down...OUTSIDE...a match is lit and held up close to antlers...KITCHEN...an off-screen person's hands try to pry antlers off Charlie.
BATHROOM...Charlie desperately tries to pull the antlers off himself.

CHARLIE
For fuck's sake.

INT. CHARLIES ROOM - DAY

There are bandages wrapped around his antlers.

And his finger.

And his wrist.

He rubs his head with frustration.

Charlie rips the page from the book off of the mirror, scrunches it up in a defeated ball and throws it in the bin.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Fairy lights hang twinkling from the ceiling, as if a thousand stars are there to distract.

Charlie has three onion rings on one antler.

He laughs along, but the expression isn't 100% cheery. Anyone who looks close enough could see there is uncertainty. His antlers release sparkles only occasionally.

The girl is there again, a single butterfly rests on her shoulder.

This time she sits with a boy.

He is deep into a story. Hands waving animatedly. She has a glass of wine in-front of her, only half drunk.

This time, it is Charlie who hasn't noticed her at all.

She always notices him, the butterfly on her shoulder flaps their wings harder. She excuses herself from her date.

Pulls a pink post-it note from her bag.

She considers it, as though it is the most important sentiment she may ever have written...

YEAH!!!

Another celebration. Another onion ring caught on Charlie's antlers. He is glad that is antlers can make someone happy, after all.

Worst thing is, Charlie hates onion rings. He'd rather they throw anything else. He picks one off, analyses it, then throws it off screen.

She walks past their table. A butterfly follows, sheepishly.

Charlie doesn't look up. That is when a pink post-it note sticks itself to the edge of their table.

EXT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie bursts out of the bar door.

The noise shatters the quiet peacefulness of the night.

She's there.

Her hair blows lightly in the breeze, rosy cheeks, beanie hat. She looks like a Christmas-wrapped dream to Charlie.

Speaking of Christmas wrapping...she holds a beautifully wrapped gift box. Fitted with a little glittery bow on top. She hands it confidently to Charlie.

Charlie reaches out with both hands and tentatively takes the box, opens the lid. A single butterfly lands on his finger.

We don't see what is inside...

...until she takes out gaudy, 80s style fairy lights. And a singular sparkly pink bauble.

Charlie looks confused.

She gently unravels the fairy lights and begins to wrap them around Charlie's antlers. She takes great care, as though she feels like he is made of glass.

She finishes decorating with the single bauble. Once it hangs from Charlie's antlers she flicks it and giggles.

Sparkles fly from his antlers with a ferocity that we haven't seen before. A butterfly works its way between them.

She takes his hand in hers.

Charlie has never been happier to have antlers.