

## ICETIDE

### **Third-person POV RPG cinematic**

Written by

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#### CONTEXT:

The player character is FINNEY (18), a new recruit of the Watchers - guardians of the frozen outpost town of Arborrun and its most precious resource, silvershale. Watchers spend long, lonely days high up on the decks that loom above the Icetide plains. They watch for strange, hostile folk known as HAGS - and shoot them on sight. She shot one in the leg the first time she held a rifle when she was 15, though it got away.

#### PRECEDING GAMEPLAY: EARLY-GAME QUEST ('HIT THE DECKS')

Finney explores a portion of her town, gathering items she'll need for a week up on the decks. She bickers with her mother and a few disapproving neighbours - one of whom makes a snide remark about her father - as she fetches her things. She heads out of town to the Icetide and climbs up to her deck, where she meets with her dad CARRICK (45), also a Watcher. They settle in for a long night watching over the plains...

EXT. ICETIDE DECKS - NIGHT

FINNEY and her father CARRICK sit high up on one of the decks that loom above the Icetide plains. They sip grain spirit from a shared HIPFLASK with RIFLES tucked under their arms, bracing against the searing cold. Other Watchers are stationed in the distance, scattered across decks that puncture the spartan horizon. The frozen plains glimmer strangely in the moonlight.

FINNEY  
Shades, it's quiet up here. Why does it have to be so quiet?

CARRICK  
Quiet? With you up here, lass?

FINNEY  
...Sorry, Dad.

Carrick takes the hipflask back and downs a glug.

CARRICK  
Don't be daft, Finn. Just got to mind orders. Him on Deck 6 was spitting last time. Came by the house, even.

FINNEY  
What? Why?

CARRICK  
Threat'ning reports and such-

FINNEY  
Jaque? I bet he did. Fuck him.

CARRICK  
Finn.

FINNEY  
What?

CARRICK  
Just... Nothing, lass.

Finney sighs, watching her breath cloud and evaporate into the night.

FINNEY  
Dad?

CARRICK  
Mm?

FINNEY

I know what you're gonna say, ok, but... Like, just this once, can you tell me ab-

CARRICK

Not again, Finn. Just leave it alone, alright? Let it be.

FINNEY

Come on. I just wanna know what it was like before. I can't picture it, the Tide being real instead of just... all that, going on forever. All dead and frozen. I know you were there, when it went off.

CARRICK

It was over half my life ago, Finn. And it's done, it's not gonna change back. Just let it be.

FINNEY

But Arel said-

CARRICK

What did she say?

FINNEY

She said I shouldn't be a Watcher.

CARRICK

Why?

FINNEY

'Cause I'm trouble. Can't be sniping trouble if I'm causing it.

Carrick seems to relax a little.

CARRICK

Ha. That so? Well, Shades spare you, lass, but she's not far off.

FINNEY

She said you were, too.

CARRICK

She-? What?

FINNEY  
 Yeah, and then she said she supposed it was only right we'd spend our lives up here, rotting; freezing. Atoning.

Carrick stares at the hipflask. He takes a swig, pauses, then takes another.

FINNEY (CONT'D)  
 Dad?

CARRICK  
 She said that? "Atoning"?

FINNEY  
 Yeah. What did she mean? ...Dad?

CARRICK  
 (muttered)  
 I didn't know Varne'd told her.  
 'Fore he died.

FINNEY  
 Told her what? I don't get it.

Carrick is tense, silent. His eyes grow watery and he swallows as he stares hard at the frozen plains.

FINNEY (CONT'D)  
 Dad! I'll get it out of Mum if you don't tell me.

CARRICK  
 She doesn't know, she wasn't there.

FINNEY  
 But, so... what? Were you there? When that... thing went off? They always said it was just them out in the Haglands that did it. Hags screwing with shit they shouldn't.

Carrick screws the hipflask shut and stuffs it away in his pack.

CARRICK  
 It was. Now, drop it, Finn.

FINNEY  
 So what did Arel-?

CARRICK  
 Finney. I won't say it again.

FINNEY

Dad, come on! You can't just shut off like that-

Silhouettes of other Watchers in the distance begin to stand and gesture at them, swiping their hands across their mouths. Carrick eyes them warily.

CARRICK

I can, and you need to, too. Now, cut it out.

FINNEY

No! You're being just like them now - like Mum and Arel and everyone else. Always boxing me in, telling me to stitch my mouth. Why can't I know? Why can't you just tell me?

CARRICK

Not. Now. Finney. I mean it.

FINNEY

I'm a Watcher, I got that Hag, didn't I? I can handle it! Just-

CARRICK

You're a kid. You're just a kid. Now, be quiet!

FINNEY

Dad-!

A bang, or it could be a tear, rips the air. Carrick's face changes and his eyes empty. Time seems to slow as he collapses to the deck. Crimson leaks from his coats through the gaps in the planks, spilling in streams into the darkness below.

A MALE WATCHER (MID-THIRTIES) and FEMALE WATCHER (LATE-TWENTIES) on the nearest deck snap into action.

MALE WATCHER

Decks 7,8 - drop!

FEMALE WATCHER

They have guns?!

Finney doesn't move or think. She stares at the silhouette of the Hag sprinting across the ice, back towards the Haglands. It has a limp; she recognises it as the one she shot three years ago.

MALE WATCHER  
Deck 8, drop it!

Finney ignores the order. She half-kneels; her eyes won't look at the heap fully.

FINNEY  
Dad? Dad, come on.

Carrick is still. His eyes are already glazed.

FINNEY (CONT'D)  
Dad? Come on. Please, Dad. Don't.

The MALE HAG (TWENTIES) slows for a moment.

MALE HAG  
Let blood melt the ice!

The MALE HAG continues running as best he can, away into the night.

FINNEY  
Dad. You can't... You can't...

FEMALE WATCHER  
Watcher, drop it! Now!

FINNEY  
I don't- Dad, please?

The other Watchers fire shots into the dark, and miss. The Hag is getting away. They curse to each other.

MALE WATCHER  
Watcher, back to home post. Now.

Finney shakes her head and sniffs, ragged and hard.

MALE WATCHER  
WATCHER! NOW!

FINNEY  
No. No.

Finney wipes her nose with the back of her hand and grabs her dad's things from his body, eyes lingering only on each item. She stows his silvershale compass, sight-glass, hipflask, and rations in her pack. She slings his old, beaten rifle - adorned with Hags' teeth trophies - over her shoulder. She ties his wool-wrap around her neck.

Finney takes off, down the long ladder, and onto the Icetide.

She tries to fire a few shots at the Hag but he's too far away. She ignores the yells of the other Watchers from the decks high above.

Finney pursues the Hag, who disappears into the edges of the Haglands - a strange region of frozen bogs forbidden for her people to enter. The home of the enemy.

She takes a breath at its limits, swallows, and heads into the unknown.

FADE OUT.

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