

SOUTHBOUND

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

MADDY, 18, is sitting at a table with her LAPTOP open. Furiously typing and intensely focused, her friend ELI, 18, sits across from her talking, muffled. Eli looks up and is visibly annoyed as he realizes Maddy is not paying attention.

ELI  
Hey are you listening?

Maddy snaps up from her laptop.

MADDY  
If I lie and say yes can I get back  
to what I was doing?

Eli rolls his eyes.

ELI  
Would it kill you to at least  
pretend like you're interested in  
this? I know you're excited about  
Tulane but-

MADDY  
Dude, I'm not even working on that  
right now. And I was paying  
attention.

Eli gives Maddy a "you're kidding me" look and Maddy rolls her eyes.

MADDY (CONT'D)  
Okay fine, maybe I wasn't but you  
know I've always hated this type of  
math. We have calculators for a  
reason.

ELI  
You know for someone who wants to  
major in finance-

A PING from Maddy's laptop interrupts them and she stares blankly at the notification for a beat too long.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Everything okay?

MADDY  
(hesitantly)  
Yeah.

Maddy closes the laptop.

MADDY (CONT'D)  
Just got a weird text.

Another PING. Maddy checks her phone and places it back down almost immediately.

ELI  
And you're not going to share?

Maddy looks mildly annoyed before unlocking her phone and handing it to Eli. On the screen are two texts from someone named ALLISON.

ALLISON (TEXT)  
Hey! I know it's been a while but I  
heard you're going to Tulane in the  
fall and I wanted to see if you'd  
wanna catch up.

ALLISON (TEXT)  
I've missed you :)

Madison appears visibly stressed.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A younger Maddy, 15, sits in a classroom doodling as a TEACHER in their mid 30s drones on in the background about math. Maddy is wearing a colorful uniform until a hand slides a folded sheet of paper on Madison's desk.

She grabs it and quickly opens it and it reads "Hi :)."  
Maddy chuckles a little and scribbles something on the paper before passing it back to ALLISON, 14, in a similarly colorful uniform. Allison giggles at the note and interrupting the note passing back is the teacher clearing their throat.

TEACHER  
Ladies in the back would you like  
to share that with the class?

ALLISON  
No sorry, Maddy just had a question  
I was answering?

The teacher makes their way back and grabs the note from Allison's hand and reads it. They let out a sigh as they turn it for Allison and Maddy to see small hearts littered across the small slip of paper.

TEACHER

What does this have to do with  
class?

Allison starts trying to make excuses but the teacher holds  
up their hand.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

I don't want to hear it, office  
both of you.

MADDY

But I didn't even do anything.

TEACHER

I know your art Maddy and this  
isn't the first time you've done  
this. Go. Now.

They both grab their bags and leave but not before Allison  
turns around.

ALLISON

Can we at least have the note back?

Maddy grabs Allison's hand and starts dragging her out of  
the classroom.

ALLISON

Hey it was a valid question.

MADDY

No it wasn't. It's fine though,  
that class is so boring.

ALLISON

I know...wanna go somewhere else?

MADDY

We have to go to the office.

Allison gives Maddy a look.

ALLISON

I mean we don't *have* to do  
anything. Come on, let's go outside  
or hide in the library. You know  
you want to.

Maddy sighs as she looks Allison's pleading eyes. Her eyes  
are like a puppies...it's actually really cute. Maddy feels  
a flutter in her chest as she stares but looks away as she  
feels her face grow warmer.

MADDY

Fine, fine where do you wanna go?

Allison squeals and grabs Maddy's hand as she starts practically running.

ALLISON

Anywhere just not here.

Allison goes to open a door.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MADDY'S ROOM - SUNSET

Present day Maddy walks through the door and drops her bag on the ground.

The sun peaks through her window and there are small rainbows littering the poster covered walls. The room itself feels a bit cluttered with the amount of things on a variety of surfaces but there's an order within the chaos as everything is either stacked or piled or grouped.

Maddy sits on her bed with her bag beside her. Tension in her face, she stares at her phone as she keeps reading one text over and over and over again from an unknown number.

ALLISON (TEXT)

Hey, I know we left things in a weird place but I heard you're going to Tulane in the fall and I am too! We should definitely catch up soon, I wanna hear how you're doing.

Maddy starts typing "hey" and then immediately deletes it. She tries several different phrases and again deletes them all immediately. This process repeats a couple times before Maddy throws her phone aside in frustration.

She turns to her vanity where she sees a small slip of paper with hearts all over it but this one has an "A" on it in a heart. Her gaze stays there until she's snapped out of it by Eli, who's presumably been there the whole time.

MADDY

Should I even go?

ELI

Well what's stopping you?

MADDY

So much, I mean I haven't seen her  
in so long.

ELI

Yeah but...you were close right?

Maddy sighs and looks back at her phone.

MADDY

We were really close but...okay  
what if she ghosts me?

ELI

She reached out to you Maddy.

Maddy gets up and starts pacing.

MADDY

Okay and what if it doesn't go  
well? Like okay let's say she shows  
up, and what if she hates me? What  
if we get there and things are just  
completely different or I make a  
fool of myself or-

ELI

(yells)

Maddy!

Eli is standing and grabs her arms to stop her.

ELI (CONT'D)

You're spiralling.

MADDY

(sighs)

I know...I'm just nervous.

ELI

Clearly. But look I think you  
should go. You seem to care a lot  
about her, so why not see her? Get  
to know her again.

Eli grabs Maddy's phone from the bed and hands it to Maddy.  
She takes it from him.

MADDY

What do I say?

ELI

Yeah I'd love to see you. Simple.

Maddy types exactly that and sends it. Almost instantly a notification: it's a response.

ALLISON (TEXT)  
Yay I'm so excited!

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Present day Maddy looks agitated as she sits in a restaurant at an empty table. The restaurant, like the cafeteria, is loud and crowded. The WAITER approaches Maddy at her table as she's fiddling with the bracelet that we just saw.

WAITER  
Are you sure your friend is  
coming? We're pretty busy tonight  
and I don't wanna kick you out but  
we could really use the space.

MADDY  
(sighs)  
She's coming, she's just always  
late. Some things never change.

The waiter nods and steps away. Almost immediately PRESENT DAY ALLISON comes rushing in.

ALLISON  
(quickly and out of  
breath)  
I am so so so sorry. I got off of  
work late because this kid's  
parents would just not show up and  
you know that happens so much more  
than you'd think but then there was  
traffic cause there was this huge  
accident and-

MADDY  
(interrupting)  
It's fine. I'm just glad you made  
it.

Maddy gives a small smile while Allison is smiling ear to ear. They both hold eye contact for a bit too long, Allison's eyes still look the same, dark but Maddy always felt like she was stargazing as she looked for the flecks of light in her eyes. And they were there. And they were wonderful.

Her hair is longer but is tied back in a messy bun, stray hairs strewn across her face. There's a perfection in the mess, a beauty that Maddy can't help but blush at as she feels all those feelings come swirling back up.

The same feelings that brought them to this point.

Maddy clears her throat and grabs the menu.

MADDY (CONT'D)

We should start looking at the menu. I think the waiter is going to throw us out herself if we don't order soon.

Allison laughs as she grabs the menu. God, Maddy missed that laugh.

ALLISON

Well, are you excited for Tulane?

MADDY

Uh...y-yeah. It'll be nice to go somewhere warmer I guess.

ALLISON

What are you thinking of majoring in?

MADDY

Finance.

Allison looks up from her menu finally and the two make eye contact. Maddy quickly looks away and buries herself in her menu.

ALLISON

Finance? But you literally lived in the studio.

MADDY

It's not exactly practical to major in. I'll never get a job and I can't afford that especially with the amount of debt I'll be in postgrad.

ALLISON

But you were so good. And don't you hate math anyways?

It's Maddy's turn to look up from the menu but she remains silent.



ALLISON (CONT'D)  
You're staring...again.

MADDY  
Sorry, I just...it really has been  
a while. I don't think I've done  
any art in years.

Allison almost looks dejected.

ALLISON  
Why?

MADDY  
(shrugging)  
I just didn't enjoy it as much.

A painfully awkward silence falls over the table and the  
sounds of the aimless chatter of others and kitchen become  
loud until Maddy's voice breaks through the noise.

MADDY (CONT'D)  
What about you? I mean what've you  
been up to?

ALLISON  
Oh I mean, you know I've been good.  
After you switched I joined the  
lacrosse team and I think I'm gonna  
play at Tulane so that's exciting.  
But things weren't the same without  
you, I definitely missed you.

Allison gives a small smile and reaches a hand out to Maddy,  
who removes her hand after a brief moment.

MADDY  
Even after everything?

ALLISON  
What do you mean?

MADDY  
You know what I mean.

Allison sighs and sits back in her chair.

ALLISON  
I had a feeling you'd want to talk  
about it.

MADDY  
I mean...yeah...it was kind of a  
big deal.

ALLISON  
I know and I'm sorry.

Maddy becomes quiet.

MADDY  
Do you know?

CUT TO:

INT. MADDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maddy's room is distinctly less cluttered than before and the rainbows are completely gone. A slightly younger looking Maddy enters with a similarly aged Allison in tow, both laughing.

MADDY  
Did you see the look on my mom's face?

ALLISON  
Yeah she looked like she was going to kill us! Oh my god that was a good prank.

The two fall back on to the bed beside each other. Allison is still laughing and Maddy has now fully turned her attention to Allison. Allison notices after a beat and turns to face Maddy.

ALLISON (CONT'D)  
What are you smiling at?

MADDY  
Nothing, you're just cute when you're like this.

Allison blushes.

ALLISON  
Thanks.

Maddy smiles and suddenly they feel incredibly close. Were they always this close? Maddy reaches out and moves Allison's hair out of her face and goes in for a kiss but Allison quickly pulls away and sits up.

ALLISON  
(whispers)  
No...I-I can't.

MADDY  
Why not?

ALLISON  
We're friends.

MADDY  
What?

ALLISON  
I...I just don't feel the same way.

MADDY  
Are you serious?

ALLISON  
N-no I...look I'm sorry.

Maddy sits up and is holding back tears. She forcefully wipes them away.

MADDY  
(coldly, through gritted  
teeth)  
I think you should go.

Allison nods and silently leaves as Maddy sits there in silent sobs.

INT. SCHOOL ART STUDIO - DAY

Maddy is standing in the midst of a school studio, she looks a little messy with some paint on her hands as she paints. Her earbuds are in and she's very in the zone on what she is painting. A tap on her shoulder breaks this focus and the music immediately fades as Maddy takes out her earbuds and turns to see Allison.

ALLISON  
Hey.

Maddy looks annoyed and turns back to her painting.

MADDY  
What?

Allison sits on a stool nearby. The tension between them is a bit intense.

ALLISON  
Sorry, I just saw you in here so I  
thought I'd come say hi.

MADDY  
Hi.

Maddy doesn't break focus.

ALLISON  
That's pretty? What're you  
painting?

MADDY  
Why?

ALLISON  
I'm curious, come on you know I've  
always enjoyed your art.

Maddy puts down the paintbrush and steps away.

ALLISON (CONT'D)  
I mean I also wanted to see if you  
wanted to join me and-

MADDY  
No.

ALLISON  
You didn't even let me finish.

MADDY  
I don't need to. The answer is no  
Allison.

Allison nods.

ALLISON  
Sorry. I didn't think...are you  
still mad at me? I mean it's been  
weeks.

MADDY  
I know.

Allison remains silent.

MADDY (CONT'D)  
If you didn't like me like that you  
could've just said that.

ALLISON  
I never did.

MADDY  
And you didn't have to. I've got to  
go.

Maddy grabs her bag and swiftly exits.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

WAITER

So I've got a cheeseburger and  
fries on the side and a Greek salad  
with chicken. That sound right?

ALLISON

Can I get that salad without  
tomatoes? Other than that I think  
we're good.

The waiter nods and makes the change on the notepad and  
walks away. Maddy looks conflicted.

MADDY

So what changed?

ALLISON

What do you think changed? You  
left. And it sucked.

Allison reaches her hand across the table and Maddy looks at  
it. She moves her hand but doesn't grab Allison's. It's not  
a ton of space between them, but it feels like miles.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I don't expect you to forgive me.  
But I want you to know I am sorry  
and that I do love you. I want to  
try again.

Maddy looks at Allison and looks away.

MADDY

No. It's been two years. I don't  
know you anymore and you don't know  
me.

Allison pulls her hand away, dejected.

ALLISON

So what now?

As the two sit in silence the atmospheric sounds of the  
restaurant grow. The girls start talking again but it can't  
be heard and they soon become smaller and soon blend in with  
the rest of the restaurant.

END.