

WIP

Written by

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INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MONA, 17, sits at the head of a conference table full of students and runs a hand through her black hair. She stares at a fixed point on the table, not paying attention to her surroundings, as the people around her seem frozen. No one moves a muscle and a heavy silence encompasses the room. Mona doesn't notice, her eyes still fixed on the table as she seems to be preoccupied by something. It's not until Mona feels a chill and she blinks that the room suddenly comes back to life. A voice cuts through the noise.

CORY

Mona?

Mona snaps up and looks at CORY, 18, and the two lock eyes before Mona composes herself.

MONA

Yes, yes sorry. Uh...thank you all for coming today and helping with planning for our cultural celebration. I'll send out an email later with more information but otherwise, meeting adjourned.

Everyone slowly trickles out until only Mona and Cory are left in the room. Mona sighs and lays her head on the table and Cory stands up from her chair.

CORY

Let me guess, you have no idea what anyone said during that whole meeting?

MONA

That's not true...Mark mentioned something about a Google form for sign ups right?

Cory chuckles as she puts her laptop in her backpack.

CORY

Good job, but that was the beginning of the meeting. What is going on with you?

Mona sits up and grabs a paper out of her bag and slides it to Cory. Cory catches it and sees it's a math test with a 84 in the corner.

CORY

Oh...fuck.

MONA

Yeah, I'm dead.

CORY

Well maybe your mom will understand, I mean math isn't exactly your strong suit and this grade isn't that bad.

Mona shakes her head and starts to fidget with the silver cross necklace she's wearing.

MONA

You know she won't. I-

A *buzzing* noise is heard and Mona groans as she checks her phone.

MONA

Speak of the devil herself.

A text can be seen on Mona's lavender phone from her mother ALICE:

ALICE (TEXT)

We need to talk when you get home tonight.

Mona's face falls.

CORY

Oh that can't be good.

(beat)

So, what're you gonna do-

A look of confusion flashes across Cory's face as she pulls her own phone out of her pocket and smiles a little.

MONA

Who is it?

Cory shakes her head and after typing out a quick response, puts her phone away.

CORY

No one, but I've gotta go. We still on for tonight?

Mona nods and Cory hurries out the door. Mona's face starts

to flush as she watches the door close and she turns back to the test on the table. She feels her throat begin to close as a tear drops down her face but she quickly wipes it away and composes herself.

MONA

(whispers softly) Nope, not in public.

Mona picks up the test and shoves it into her backpack before leaving herself.

INT. COMMON SPACE

Several hours have passed and Mona sits on a couch in the common area of the school to start typing out an email for the student council when a hand touches her back. She jumps and sees it is SHANE, (18), smiling down at her.

SHANE

One of these days I'm gonna see you  
not working for once in your life.

Mona rolls her eyes as Shane sits at a chair across from her.

MONA

What do you want? I'm busy.

SHANE

You always are, what're you doing this  
time? Classes? Student council? NHS?  
One of the other hundred things you  
do?

MONA

Just an email for student council and  
then some homework.

(beat)

You never usually ask this many  
questions about what I'm doing.

Shane shrugs and puts his feet up on the table.

SHANE

It was literally one question and what  
I can't care about what you're doing?  
I can't be curious?

Mona closes her laptop and squints her eyes as if to inspect Shane.

SHANE (CONT.)

What?

MONA

You want something don't you?

Shane scoffs and just before he can respond Cory comes by and sits beside Shane.

CORY

Hey you two what's going on?

Mona opens her laptop again in attempts to hide the look of mild disgust on her face and Shane puts his arm around Cory.

SHANE

Nothing, I just asked Mona what she was working on and she got all weird about it.

MONA

Like I said you usually care to even ask so you must want something because you don't even-

Shane rolls his eyes and Cory sighs.

CORY

Look it doesn't matter so let it go.

Mona peers over the top of her laptop and Shane grumbles.

SHANE

Sorry, I'll leave it alone.

Cory stands up and reaches out her hand to Shane. He grabs it and stands as well but reaches over and brushes her hair out of her face. The two share a brief glance before Cory turns back to Mona.

CORY

We're going to go hang out for a little while, I'll see you later okay?

MONA

Yeah for sure, have fun.

Shane and Cory walk away.

SHANE

(whispers) Why doesn't she like me?

Cory shrugs and grabs Shane's hand.

CORY

I don't know. Look I love Mona but she's not dating you. I am. So her opinion doesn't really matter you know?

Shane sighs and pulls his hand away and puts both in his pockets.

SHANE

Yeah I know but she obviously means a lot to you and I just-

Cory stops and turns to Shane.

CORY

Stop worrying, nothing is going to happen okay? Mona is her own puzzle but like I said she's not your girlfriend. I am. And I love you.

Shane gives a small smile and kisses Cory.

SHANE

I love you too.

CORY

Now come on, I'm sure your parents are waiting for us.

EXT. MONA'S HOUSE - DAY

Mona's driving to her house listening to *Broken Clocks* by SZA. As she's driving she sings along until she pulls into the driveway of a suburban house.

She gets out of her car and finds Alice standing outside of their door. Her dress and curled hair whip in the wind but Mona can still see Alice's face and her heart drops as she sees the look of anger on her face.

ALICE

(yelling) An 84?!

MONA

(whispers to herself) Here we go.

Alice comes over to the car and Mona instinctively back pedals, hitting the door.

ALICE

You can't afford 84's Mona you know this. What the hell happened?!

MONA

I'm sorry I just...math has always been hard.

ALICE

I don't care and neither will Duke. God do you even care about college?

MONA

Mom you know I do I just-

ALICE

I don't want to hear it. Go upstairs and figure out how to fix this. I'm emailing your teacher too because you're clearly distracted.

MONA

Mom I'm not-

Alice starts to walk away and Mona starts breathing fast. Tears stream down her face as she starts to choke up. Alice quickly whips around and grabs Mona's wrist.

ALICE

Stop crying, someone might see us. Now get inside.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Alice comes inside as Mona can be heard going upstairs. Alice sighs as she grabs a wine glass and pulls out her own phone and starts calling her mother, RUTH.

ALICE

Hey mama.

RUTH

Hey honey, what's going on?

Alice sighs as she pours herself a large glass of wine.

ALICE

Just had to talk to Mona, she got an

84 on a math test.

RUTH  
And that required a talk?

ALICE  
Well colleges aren't going to like that. I just know she can do better.

RUTH  
I just know how y'all's "talks" go.

ALICE  
It wasn't that bad, she didn't take it well though. She started crying and I can't handle that. I can't...I can't let her throw herself away mama.

Alice takes her first sip of her wine.

RUTH  
Are you drinking right now?!

ALICE  
It's just one glass- that's not the point. I called because I was hoping you could maybe talk to her? She won't listen to me.

RUTH  
Alice you yell at her constantly-

ALICE  
(yelling)  
Because I care! I...I care about her so much I want her to succeed.

Ruth lets out a soft sigh and Alice takes another drink.

RUTH  
Alright, I'll talk to her. Control yourself tonight. Don't drink too much okay?

Alice rolls her eyes and takes another drink.

ALICE  
I never do.



INT. MONA'S ROOM - LATE EVENING

Mona's room is pink, the walls covered in small posters of different TV shows and books. There's a dresser covered in a variety of plaques, medals, and certificates. In the center is a vase of dead red roses and a picture of Mona and Alice from what appears to be well over a year ago, Mona's wearing a medal and a pale pink leotard. Alice holds her close, a bouquet of red roses in her hand. Mona sits on her bed, mascara now running down her face as she types on her laptop. The mirror from the vanity across from her bed is covered with photos and various sticky notes with to do tasks and reminders like "LOVE YOURSELF" and "YOU ARE ENOUGH!!!" Mona closes her laptop and stares at her reflection and breaks down more.

MONA  
(to herself)  
Stop crying, stop crying, stop  
crying...

Mona frantically wipes away her tears as her phone *buzzes*.

CORY (TEXT)  
i'll be over in 5  
window?

MONA (TEXT)  
Yeah.

Mona turns on *t r a n s p a r e n t s o u l* by WILLOW and collects herself tosses her phone behind her and quickly grabs a makeup wipe and starts wiping away more tears. She dances around a little bit and looks at herself again in the mirror again, forcing a smile. A *knock* is heard at her window and we see Cory on the roof top. Mona pauses the music and opens the window.

CORY  
Sup bitch?

MONA  
Nothing much what've you been up to?

CORY  
Just hanging out with Shane, we went  
to a park. It was very cute.

Mona bites her tongue and looks down as she nods.

CORY (CONT.)

So can I come in? Or am I going to sit  
out here forever?

Mona forces a laugh and moves to grab her phone off the bed.  
Cory climbs into the room and sees the makeup wipe on the  
dresser.

CORY

Up to nothing?

Mona turns and quickly takes the wipe.

MONA

What I can't take off my makeup?

CORY

You never take off your makeup this  
early. What happened?

MONA

Nothing, I just didn't feel like  
wearing makeup right now. I have no  
one to impress. But did you see all  
the homework Ms. Clark gave us for  
tonight? I mean we have to read 2  
chapters and-

Cory grabs Mona's shoulder and turns her around so the two  
are facing each other. Their faces are close and Mona tries  
not to blush as she looks down, unable to look Cory in the  
eyes.

CORY

I know what you're doing.

MONA

What? It's just a lot of work. I think  
she forgets we have other classes  
sometimes.

Cory rolls her eyes and lets go of Mona.

CORY

You're deflecting. Something happened.  
Why won't you tell me?

Mona sighs and turns away.

MONA

My mom yelled at me again that's all.

CORY  
What because of the test?

Mona nods.

MONA  
It's nothing though I knew it was  
going to happen.

CORY  
Yeah but...she can't keep making you  
feel like this.

MONA  
She's my mom what am I going to do?

Cory sits on the bed.

MONA (CONT.)  
Like I said it's fine really. I...I'll  
be fine.

Mona sits beside Cory.

CORY  
Yeah, I don't believe you but if you  
want to try to convince yourself then  
go ahead. Look I just-

Mona jumps and her eyes widen.

MONA  
Hide.

Cory looks a tad confused but rolls under the bed and Alice  
stumbles into the room.

ALICE  
(slurred)  
Hey sweetie...I thought I heard  
voices.

MONA  
Nope, just me mom. Have you-

ALICE  
(still slurred)  
No I'm fine...I've just had a long day  
so I'm gonna call it a night. Make  
sure you lock up the house okay?

MONA

Got it. Have a good night mom.

An aggressive amount of *buzzing* can be heard from underneath Mona's bed but it suddenly stops as Mona makes a motion with her hand.

ALICE

You too and stop that noise it's annoying.

Alice stumbles out and Cory rolls out from under the bed, texting someone. Mona closes the door and sighs.

MONA

Why does your phone buzz so fucking loud?!

Cory finishes typing and looks up.

CORY

Well sorry I didn't exactly expect to be under your bed hiding from your drunk mom.

MONA

Me either but I'm not surprised. This is a nightly thing at this point. You know that.

CORY

I do and I'm sorry that she's like that. But if your mom is going to bed we should get out of here. I think you could use a change of scenery.

MONA

No! I'm not sneaking out! What if I get caught?!

CORY

I think you'll be fine, come on let's go do something fun for once.

Cory extends her hand and Mona stares at it for a moment. Cory has on several rings and bracelets, each perfectly placed. Mona smiles and grabs her hand.

MONA

Fine but not for too long okay? Where were you thinking we go?

Mona stares at Cory's face as she thinks, taking in her soft eyeshadow and small earrings. Cory starts to say something but Mona isn't paying attention until suddenly she's locking eyes with Cory. Cory has a small smile on her face and Mona starts to blush.

CORY

Hi.

MONA

Hi?

CORY

You're staring.

MONA

Oh sorry sorry, I zoned out that's all. What did you say?

CORY

I said let's just walk around and see what we find.

MONA

I like the sound of that.

EXT. SIDEWALK BY MONA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cory and Mona have already taken their walk and Mona turns to Cory.

MONA

Thanks for forcing me to get out.

CORY

Yeah, of course. Now you should go inside and get some sleep okay?

Mona nods and hugs Cory. Cory stiffens but slowly lets herself hug Mona back. Mona smiles wide as she hugs tighter.

CORY

Okay okay you can let go now

Cory laughs a little as Mona lets go.

MONA

I'll see you tomorrow?

Cory nods and Mona goes to her door. Before walking in she waves to Cory who waves back as she puts in her earbuds. She

starts to play 1,2 by mxmtoon as she walks and texts Shane.

CORY (TEXT)  
hey you still up?

Cory watches and soon the little ellipses bubble shows up.

SHANE (TEXT)  
Yeah, what's up?

CORY (TEXT)  
just leaving Mona...wanted to see what  
you were up to rn

SHANE (TEXT)  
Nothing much, are you okay?

CORY (TEXT)  
yeah ofc, just walking home and wanted  
some company

SHANE (TEXT)  
You should've said that I was worried  
you were upset about something.

Cory smiles a little as she keeps walking and texting Shane until she gets home.

CORY (TEXT)  
okay im home now, im gonna go to bed,  
have a gn, ily

SHANE (TEXT)  
Love you too

Cory goes into her room, it strongly contrasts Mona's as there is a wall covered entirely in paint chips that fade through various shades of purple, on another wall is posters from a variety of bands and musicians. Cory's desk is a mess with papers and makeup strewn everywhere on it. The bed is similar as its unmade and theres clothes on top of it. Cory quickly changes into pajamas and shifts things around on her bed before getting in. As she's about to fall asleep she scrolls through Instagram and pauses on a beach photo of some girls and smiles a little but quickly closes her phone.

INT. MONA'S ROOM - MORNING

Mona springs up in her bed, breathing heavy and sweating in her shirt.

MONA  
(softly)  
Shit...not again.

Mona falls back on the bed and closes her eyes.

MONA  
When am I going to stop having these  
dreams?

Mona reaches over to her nightstand and grabs a pen and a small pink notebook labelled "DREAM JOURNAL" from the drawer. She starts to write in it until she hears a voice from downstairs.

ALICE  
(yelling)  
Mona! Let's go you're gonna be late!

Mona groans softly and quickly finishes writing and grabs a plaid skirt and button down shirt.

MONA  
(yelling back)  
I know I know, I'll be down in 5!

ALICE  
Make it 3, you need breakfast!

Mona quickly puts on eyeliner, mascara, and a natural pink lipstick before putting on her shoes and grabbing her bag and keys. She runs downstairs where Alice is putting together a plate of food.

MONA  
Morning, sorry, had another bad dream.

Alice pauses briefly.

ALICE  
Another one? That's the sixth night in a row.

MONA  
Yeah I know but it's fine.

Mona flashes a smile and Alice hands her a plate with eggs.

ALICE  
Well you should eat.

Mona grabs the plate and pauses.

MONA

Are we gonna talk about last-

ALICE

Just eat.

Mona nods and grabs a fork to eat. Alice and Mona move around each other almost in sync as they carry about getting the last of their things and eating. They quickly finish and Mona picks up her bag and keys.

MONA

Alright, I'm heading out. I'll see you later.

ALICE

Okay, have a good day.

Mona rushes out and gets in her car. She puts her playlist on shuffle and as *Good Days* by SZA plays.

Mona gets to school and parks, switching her music to her earbuds and as she walks in VIVIAN CLARK (36) smiles at her.

MONA

Morning Ms. Clark.

VIVIAN

Hello Mona, how're you doing?

Mona shrugs.

MONA

As well as I can be, how about you?

VIVIAN

I'm doing pretty good, I'll see you in class later.

INT. COMMON SPACE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Hours have gone by and Shane is sitting in a chair in the common space in the hallway. He's typing away at his laptop when a hand touches his back.

SHANE

Cory that'd better be you.

Cory laughs and sits across from him.



CORY

Who else would it be? What're you working on?

SHANE

That essay I told you about for Clark's class, I hate her fucking class.

CORY

Oh it can't be that bad, what's the essay on?

SHANE

Freud and the Oedipus Complex in the modern day. AP Psych was a fucking mistake.

Shane closes his laptop in frustration.

CORY

I believe in you, besides you like psychology and you're good at it. I'm sure you'll be fine.

Cory reaches for Shane's hand and he smiles as they start to hold hands but his smile vanishes when he sees Mona walk past them.

SHANE

Why doesn't she like me? I didn't even do anything to her?

CORY

I swear you ask me that every goddamn day and I don't have an answer.

Shane sighs and pulls away from Cory who looks visibly upset now.

SHANE

It doesn't matter, I need to finish this essay.

CORY

Okay...I guess I'll leave you to it. I'll text you later.

Cory gets up and catches up to Mona who looks very preoccupied until she feels Cory beside her and jumps.

MONA  
Holy shit hi you scared me.

CORY  
(laughing)  
Yeah that's kinda the whole point.  
What've you been up to today?

MONA  
Has a bad dream again last night, my  
mom was oddly nice to me, went to my  
classes this morning, going to a  
meeting in a few minutes for our GSA,  
and then more class and then we've got  
field hockey practice. How about you?

Cory grabs Mona's arm and stops her from walking.

CORY  
Another nightmare? What the hell? How  
many is that now?

Mona rolls her eyes and pulls away her arm.

MONA  
You sound like my mom, but its six  
thank you for asking. And it's the  
same every time I come home and it's  
empty and abandoned and my mom is  
gone. At this point it feels like a  
sign.

CORY  
Maybe it is, but I doubt it. Look  
after practice we should do work at  
your house. I have an art project I  
need to do and I'm not gonna get  
anything done at my place.

MONA  
Yeah for sure...I gotta run. See you  
later.

Mona runs off and Cory heads in the opposite direction.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

Cory and Mona are now in their field hockey uniforms and are  
sweaty as they load their equipment into the back of Mona's  
car.

MONA

Have I mentioned how much I hate this sport?

CORY

Yeah almost every time we play it.

They get in the car and Mona starts driving. The two keep talking as Mona drives to her house. When they get there Mona tenses up a bit at the sight of a car in the driveway.

CORY

Is that-

MONA

My mom? Yeah...she's not supposed to be here this early.

CORY

I'm sure everything is fine.

Mona shakes her head and parks the car beside her mom's. The two walk into the house and immediately hear yelling.

ALICE

I'm not listening to you, you have no idea what you're talking about!

Mona turns on her heel but Cory grabs her arm.

CORY

(whispers)

No offense but where are you going to go?

MONA

(whispers)

Harsh. I just know this isn't going to end well.

ALICE

(in the distance, still yelling)

No no you're being ridiculous!

Mona and Cory start to quietly move through the house but Cory steps on a creaky floor board and Alice turns.

MONA

(softly)

Fuck.

ALICE

I have to go, we'll finish this later.

Alice hangs up.

ALICE (CONT.)

Did you tell your grandmother about  
our entire conversation yesterday?

MONA

No? I haven't spoken to her in days,  
why would you-

ALICE

She just spent the last hour telling  
me that I don't know how to parent.

Mona rolls her eyes and Alice arches an eyebrow.

ALICE

Did you just roll your eyes at me? I  
know you did not-

MONA

I really can't-

ALICE

And now you're-

Cory stands by watching and starts to back away herself until  
Mona holds up her hand and after a brief flash of purple,  
Alice freezes.

MONA

I said I really can't do this today.

Mona drops her hand and leans against the wall. Alice stays  
frozen, an angry expression on her face. Cory stares at Mona,  
eyes wide, as Mona sits on the ground.

CORY

What...how? I-did you-?

MONA

Cory I can't handle you short  
circuiting right now.

CORY

But...this...how long?

MONA  
Like a year or so.

CORY  
A year?!

MONA  
I accidentally did this while with my grandmother, she had to fix it and explain to me.

CORY  
So all this time you've been able to do this?

MONA  
I mean there's a lot more to it than just this but yeah, basically.

Cory sits beside Mona.

CORY  
Why didn't you tell me?

MONA  
What do you mean why didn't I tell you? How was I even supposed to start that conversation?

CORY  
Fair enough but...why don't you do this more often?

MONA  
Cause I've tried, she finds out every time and I get in trouble but I'm not going to get yelled at for something I didn't do, I don't have the energy for that today.

Cory nods and looks at Alice, still stopped in place.

CORY  
Wait why didn't you do the same to me?

MONA  
Figured it was time you knew, and also I kinda forgot you were here...

Cory jabs Mona with her elbow and Mona laughs.

MONA (CONT.)  
(laughing)  
I'm sorry, it happens to the best of  
us.

CORY  
So when are you gonna undo this?

MONA  
In a second, I just wanna appreciate  
the silence for a moment.

Mona slowly stands up, taking a deep breath as she puts her  
hand back out.

MONA  
Time back in I guess.

Alice starts yelling again but notices Mona's oddly calm  
demeanor.

ALICE  
You're too calm, what did you do?

MONA  
Nothing, just took a time out.

ALICE  
I can't believe you, go to your room  
we'll continue this later.

Mona starts going upstairs and as Cory goes to follow Alice  
puts her arm out in front of her.

ALICE (CONT.)  
Not you, you can go home now Cory.

Cory and Mona exchange looks and Cory turns to leave.

INT. MONA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Mona gets into her room and closes the door, locking it with  
a flick of her wrist and quickly afterward *pounding* can be  
heard at the door.

ALICE  
Mona let me into that room! We need to  
talk about what you just did.

MONA  
Like I said I really don't want to

talk and especially not to you right now.

The *pounding* stops as Mona lays down on her bed.

ALICE

Well unfortunately this conversation isn't going to wait for you to feel like it. We talked about you doing that type of thing and especially in front of people who aren't in this family.

MONA

Cory didn't see anything calm down I froze her too.

ALICE

That's fine but this is getting out of control.

MONA

I'm just tired of being yelled at for things I simply didn't do and I've had a long day.

ALICE

We've all had a long day you think I enjoyed being yelled at by your grandmother?

MONA

I guess you enjoyed it as much as I'm enjoying this.

ALICE

No don't turn this around on me. Why did you even feel the need to involve your grandmother?

MONA

I didn't tell her anything, have you thought you might've when you had that full bottle of wine that night? Or she just knew cause of these stupid powers or whatever.

Alice pauses, now visibly confused and then her eyes widen.

ALICE

I did tell her, I owe her a phone

call.

Alice promptly walks out and Mona is left sitting there.

MONA

You could also apologize to me, you  
know I did just get yelled at over  
nothing...

Mona lays down on her bed and feels a buzz on her bed and  
sees a text from Cory.

CORY (TEXT)

so? how's it going?

MONA (TEXT)

she realized she was wrong, didn't  
apologize tho.