

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - ANN ARBOR - MORNING

LAYLA SULLIVAN (18) a young, bright, high school student, is staring at herself in her bedroom mirror. She is BRUSHING her blonde hair and making sure she looks presentable.

Her expression is rather somber. She has the look of someone with a lot on her mind.

Layla sets her hairbrush down on her bed and suddenly receives a notification from her PHONE. She grabs her phone out of her pocket and reads the text.

'Hey, I'm outside.' - Daniel

Layla sighs as she gets the text but quickly regains her composure. She puts her phone back into her pocket and opens her bedroom door to head outside.

INT./EXT. DANIEL'S CAR - LAYLA'S HOUSE - MORNING

DANIEL MCMANUS (18) a shy, kind of nerdy high school student, is sitting alone in his car, outside of Layla's house in a quiet subdivision.

Daniel sits and waits in his car. Eventually, Layla emerges from her house and knocks on Daniel's car door. Daniel sees Layla and lets her inside.

LAYLA

Hey, sorry. Josh was hogging the shower this morning, I just got out.

DANIEL

(shrugs)

It's no problem. It's just...really good to see you.

LAYLA

(apprehensively)

Yeah...you too...

Daniel doesn't notice the change in Layla's tone, as he's busy SHIFTING his car into drive, and starting to move his car into the road.

INT./EXT. DANIEL'S CAR - ANN ARBOR - MORNING

Daniel DRIVES down the road in silence for a while, letting silence spill over the car.

DANIEL

Haven't seen you in a while. You know, not since...the other night.

LAYLA

Yeah, sorry. I wanted to talk to you, but, I thought it best to give you some space. Plus, I've been super busy trying to get ready for college. I know move-in is still a long time from now, but Swarthmore is a pretty big place. I want to make sure I'm prepared with EVERYTHING. I think I'm going to try and plan a trip down there with my dad in a couple of weeks just to get used to the structure of everything. And we'll hopefully start to figure out what it is that I'm bringing with me down there, and I want to make sure that I get everything I want with me right away.

As Layla explains herself, Daniel tenses up and continues to focus on the road as if he's not invested in the conversation.

Layla doesn't notice that Daniel has seemingly checked out.

LAYLA

(slightly giggling)

I'll be over in another state, so it's not like I can just jump back home for anything at any time.

Noticing the silence, Daniel returns to the conversation.

DANIEL

Yeah, that...that doesn't sound fun.

The silence returns momentarily.

DANIEL

(changing the subject)

Well, I've got a great day planned for us. I was thinking we could stop over at JoJo's Diner for a quick bite to eat, and then go for a nice walk in the park. Sound good?

Daniel looks over at Layla, who nods her head in approval.

LAYLA
(slightly confused)
Yeah...sounds fine.

Daniel smiles and looks back over to the road. Layla continues to ponder in silence.

LAYLA
Why are you doing this?

DANIEL
(curious)
What do you mean?

LAYLA
All of this? This day, the plans,
everything? Why are you doing this for
me?

Daniel hesitates for a moment.

DANIEL
(cautiously)
I just want today to feel...normal. I
want to spend time with you, and not
care about what's ahead. Ok?

LAYLA
Ok.

Layla nods her head in approval, but as Daniel turns his attention back to the road, Layla continues to look at him for a second longer.

She finally leaves Daniel alone, and turns her attention back to the window, all the while FIDDLING with a NECKLACE she's wearing, running the piece of jewelry through her fingers.

INT. JOJO'S DINER - ANN ARBOR - MORNING

Cutting over to a new location, Daniel and Layla have seated themselves at a local diner, JOJO'S DINER.

The restaurant has the appearance of a slightly more upscale restaurant, but still has some vague elements of a traditional diner. There are some pieces of vintage 50's memorabilia hanging on the walls, like license plates and newspaper articles, and even a jukebox playing in the corner currently playing "WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?" by Tom Jones. But the restaurant itself is large and able to house many more people than a regular diner would. The restaurant is

relatively busy, with a crop of people walking around the main floor.

Daniel and Layla are seated at a booth by the window, both are fiddling through menus, trying to decide what to eat.

Layla sets her menu down and takes a quick look around the diner.

LAYLA

They seem a bit busy today.

Daniel looks up from his own menu.

DANIEL

Yeah, they usually are on the weekend.
No school and everything.

Just as Layla's about to glance back over at her menu, a WAITRESS (late 20s-early 30s) comes over to her and Daniel's table. She is wearing a white apron and holding a notebook and pencil in her hand.

WAITRESS

(smiling)

Hello there, are you ready to order?

Layla hands her menu over to Daniel, who goes to hand both of them to the waitress.

DANIEL

Um, yes. I will have the two eggs,
scrambled, with a side of hash browns.

WAITRESS

(nodding)

Excellent. And for the miss?

Layla ponders her decision for a moment.

LAYLA

Um, I think I'll go for the vegan
scramble with no onions.

Daniel nods at this but gives Layla a PUZZLED look.

WAITRESS

Okay, food should be ready in a few.

DANIEL/LAYLA
(simultaneously)
Thank you.

Just as the waitress is about to leave, she circles back to glance over at Daniel and Layla again.

WAITRESS
(slightly giggling)
I must say before I go, you two make
an adorable couple.

Layla's eyes light up when the waitress makes her comment.

LAYLA
(correcting)
Oh, actually, we-

DANIEL
(interrupting)
Thank you. Yeah, we've, we've been
together all throughout high school.
We met freshman year, started dating,
four years, and haven't looked back.

As Daniel explains his and Layla's history together, Layla puts on a slightly fake smile for the waitress.

The waitress COOS at Daniel's story.

WAITRESS
Oh, that's wonderful! You two going
off to college together?

Daniel's tone slightly changes, but he maintains a slight smile.

DANIEL
Um, no. Unfortunately. I'm staying in
Michigan, but Layla's going over to
Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

Daniel MOTIONS over to Layla, who RAISES her hand in confirmation.

LAYLA
I'm studying liberal arts.

WAITRESS
Ooh, that's exciting. Well, I wish you
both best of luck with the future, and

I'll be back in a jiff with your food.

LAYLA
Alright, thank you.

The waitress leaves with their order in hand. As Layla and Daniel get re-situated in their booth, Daniel starts to LAUGH a little.

DANIEL
(slightly curious)
Since when do you order that?

LAYLA
(looking up, confused)
Hm?

DANIEL
VEGAN scramble? I once saw you eat a bucket and a half of chicken wings on a dare! Since when did you go vegan?

LAYLA
(shrugging)
Oh, I don't know. College is coming up, I wanted to try new things. Is that a problem?

DANIEL
(nonchalantly)
Oh, no. Not at all. Just curious. Not what I expected you to order, that's it.

Layla nods her head, satisfied with Daniel's response.

LAYLA
I've been wanting to try a lot of new things lately, and I really feel like this is the time to be doing that.

DANIEL
Yeah, I agree. It's your life. You owe it to yourself to shake it up a little.

Layla nods but gets a look of concern. Once again, Layla absentmindedly starts to fiddle with the necklace she's wearing.

EXT. BANDEMER PARK - ANN ARBOR - MORNING

Layla and Daniel are taking a nice walk in BANDEMER PARK.

Daniel casually takes Layla's hand into his own. Layla notices this and grows a look of surprise, and slight annoyance, but chooses not to say anything.

The two walk in silence for a little bit.

LAYLA
(curiously)
I've been meaning to ask, how's the
planning for college going?

DANIEL
(sounding a little nervous)
Um, It's going. Still trying to settle
on what classes I'm going to be
taking. I know you've got all that
figured out, but I'm still trying to
decide on a major.

Layla can sense Daniel's nerves, and gives him a friendly smile to try and calm him down.

LAYLA
Don't worry, it'll come to you.

DANIEL
(sighing)
I hope so. I gotta be honest,
everything about this is freaking me
out.

LAYLA
How so?

DANIEL
I mean, everything's changing. I'm so
used to the same routine every day,
seeing the same people, doing the same
things, and in a few months, all that
will be different.

LAYLA
(trying to sound positive)
Yeah, but it'll be a good different. I
mean, my sister was pretty freaked out
at first too, but she got into it
eventually.

Daniel listens to what Layla is saying, but still maintains a look of uncertainty.

LAYLA
You'll be fine. I promise.

DANIEL
(sighing)
I hope so.

Layla can tell that Daniel doesn't want to talk about his college dreams, so she decides to talk about her own.

LAYLA
I'm looking forward to it, I know that much.

DANIEL
That's a relief. I can't wait to hear all about it when you get there.

Layla's face reads a look of guilt.

LAYLA
(guilty)
Yeah...

As Daniel looks forward to where the park trail will lead them, Layla quietly starts to look away from Daniel.

DANIEL
It will be weird not seeing you every day though.

Layla continues to look away.

EXT. BANDEMER PARK BENCH - ANN ARBOR - MORNING

After walking for a while, Daniel and Layla have finally settled down on a park bench, and once again, silence has fallen over them.

Layla looks to be still lost in thought of everything she and Daniel had been talking about throughout the day and isn't trying to push forward any conversations.

LAYLA
(gazing out)
The flowers look beautiful.

Daniel SMILES and looks over at Layla with love in his eyes.

DANIEL
Not as beautiful as you.

Layla was paying little attention until Daniel said that. She WHIPS her head around to face him, eyes slightly widened.

Daniel takes Layla's head in his hands.

DANIEL
(softly)
I love you so much.

Before Layla can say anything, she and Daniel's lips meet together in a KISS. Despite Layla starting to enjoy the kiss, she still breaks it.

LAYLA
(slightly panting)
I can't.

DANIEL
(confused)
Hm?

Layla takes a moment to catch her breath.

LAYLA
I said I can't. I can't do this anymore, Daniel.

This was clearly not what Daniel wanted to hear. His confusion grows, and he looks to Layla with sadness in his eyes.

DANIEL
(sad/confused)
But...I don't understand...

Layla starts to get frustrated, as Daniel isn't understanding her point, and starts to rise from the bench to look down at Daniel.

LAYLA
(slightly angry)
Really? You don't remember what we talked about a few days ago? The last time we saw each other?

DANIEL
(slightly nervous)
I...I didn't think that was set in

stone. I thought we just had a fight.

Daniel also gets up from the bench to try and talk to Layla. He REACHES his arm out to calm her, but Layla refuses to accept it.

LAYLA

(still angry)

Yes, we DID have a fight, and at the end of the fight, I told you, that I thought it was best if we broke up.

DANIEL

(explaining himself)

Well, yeah. You said you THOUGHT we should break up, you never said we actually did.

LAYLA

(softly yelling)

Really? Because I thought I made it perfectly clear! And then you're trying to treat today as if nothing had happened between us like everything was back to normal!

DANIEL

I just wanted to have a nice day with you!

LAYLA

You were trying to get me to change my mind about us! I'm sorry, Daniel. I really am, but I meant what I said the other night. Do you want confirmation? I'll give it to you right now! It's over!

Daniel looks on at Layla and is starting to get frustrated with her.

DANIEL

(angry)

Y-you're not even going to give this a chance? What about long-distance? What about texts? Or e-mails?

LAYLA

(looking away)

You know those relationships never work out.

DANIEL

Not always, but some of them do. Don't you think we owe it to ourselves to at least try?

Layla turns back to face Daniel.

LAYLA

(frustrated)

Stop making this harder than it already is!

DANIEL

I'm trying to come up with a solution, here!

LAYLA

(yelling)

I don't WANT a solution!

As Layla says this, the pain in Daniel's face is shown more clearly. He's SHOCKED to hear Layla say something like this.

Layla starts to calm down and catch her breath.

LAYLA

I don't want a boyfriend that lives hundreds of miles away. I need a real connection, Daniel. Someone I can depend on and see every day.

DANIEL

(confused/angry)

So you just want to throw everything we've been through away just like THAT?! Four years together, and you want to just let that go? I'm still not understanding this, Layla. What is it about me that makes you want to run away from this so badly?

LAYLA

(sounding sympathetic)

Nothing. It's nothing you did Daniel or anything I did. It's more so what I HAVEN'T done.

Daniel's anger starts to die down as well, as he's now concerned for Layla and what she's referring to.

DANIEL
What's THAT supposed to mean?

Layla sighs.

LAYLA
Daniel, college is supposed to be that time in your life when you get to discover who you REALLY are. And honestly, I don't know very much about myself right now.

Daniel and Layla sit back down on the bench, with Daniel still listening to Layla closely.

LAYLA
(explaining)
I coasted through my classes, I didn't take very many chances, and more importantly, I'm not really sure what exactly it is I want for my life. What I DO know is that I owe it to myself to discover who I truly am before I commit to anything else. I know that I don't want to spend my entire life in Michigan, I don't want to be stuck behind a desk every day.

Daniel NODS along with Layla's points with a look of understanding.

LAYLA
I want to travel, I want to meet new people, I want to actually experience what the world has to offer, and learn more about myself along the way, and the only way for me to truly do that...is if I do it by myself.

Daniel looks away from Layla, saddened by her response, but understanding her point.

DANIEL
Why?

LAYLA
(calmly)
Because...there are certain things I need to find out about myself alone. Things I haven't even told you about...

Daniel turns back to face Layla with newfound confusion.

DANIEL

Layla, you're still not making any se-

LAYLA

(interrupting)

I like girls.

Layla's response STUNS Daniel, and he REELS back on the bench to support himself.

DANIEL

(shocked)

I-what?

LAYLA

(correcting herself)

Well, I mean. I like guys AND girls. I like both.

Daniel is at a loss for words.

DANIEL

Um...

LAYLA

(cutting Daniel off again)

"I know, I know, it's...it's a lot. Trust me, I didn't really connect the dots until a while ago. I mean, I was always curious about being with another girl, but it wasn't until a few months ago, that I realized I wanted to try it for myself."

Daniel looks away again, still trying to process Layla's confession.

DANIEL

(amazed)

Wow...

LAYLA

(still explaining)

This may seem like a new side of me, but it's just as new to me as it is to you. And I owe it to myself to see this through. I need to know if this is what I really want, and it's better to do it now than to have all these

'What Ifs" hanging around my head when
I'm forty or something.

Daniel is looking down at the ground. Tears are starting to
form in his eyes.

Daniel SIGHS, seemingly as a way to admit to himself that
Layla is right.

Layla beckons Daniel to face her again and takes his hands in
her own.

LAYLA
(affectionately)
I love you. I really, REALLY mean it,
Daniel. I've loved every minute we've
been together. And maybe we ARE meant
to go the distance, I never said that
we weren't.

Daniel sadly nods.

DANIEL
There's a 'but' coming, isn't there?

Layla nods in confirmation.

LAYLA
But before I can truly say that I want
to be half of this heart...I need to
know what exactly my half is.

Daniel breaks away from Layla's hold and hangs his head in
despair on the bench.

Layla quietly PATS him on the shoulder.

LAYLA
And you need to know YOUR half too,
and you will...I promise.

Daniel SIGHS and gets up from the bench to face Layla. Layla
rises right after him.

Daniel looks directly at Layla, still with LONGING in his
eyes. But he nods his head, conceding defeat.

The two hug passionately for a moment, wanting to savor the
last true moments of a relationship, that very well may never
come to be again.

INT./EXT. DANIEL'S CAR - ANN ARBOR - AFTERNOON

Daniel and Layla have both returned to Daniel's car. Daniel is driving again in silence, and Layla is sadly looking out the window.

Daniel has a sad expression on his face, and can't even bear to glance over at Layla. His eyes appear to be a little misty as if he was on the verge of crying.

Layla looks over at Daniel for a moment, and she too is starting to get emotional. She fiddles with her necklace again and finally decides to pull it off.

Layla sets her necklace on the arm-rest in between her and Daniel. It's then that we get to see what is engraved on the necklace.

"D+L Forever"

END