

ACES

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

PHOEBE McDUFF (16), likable and confident, yet sometimes comes off as intimidating thanks to her RBF, stands next to her dad, GREGG McDUFF (40s), dedicated to his work but cares about his daughter more than anything, moving boxes in hand.

The house is furnished with large pieces of furniture, but there's no personal touch anywhere -- not yet, at least.

GREGG

All the big pieces are in, now it's just...everything else.

Beat.

PHOEBE

I'll start with the kitchen if you do the bathroom.

GREGG

Deal.

And they're off, determined to get moved in as soon as possible.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Phoebe unloads dishes in the kitchen cabinets, trying to keep them from clinking too loudly.

She opens another box and GROANS when she sees more plates.

PHOEBE

Why do we have so many plates?

GREGG (O.S.)

Wanna purge some this time?

PHOEBE

Please.

Phoebe shoves the box of plates away and reaches for another unopened box.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Gregg unpacks bathroom supplies into the bathroom cabinets. Most of it is clearly for Phoebe, but there doesn't seem to be anything for Gregg.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

A desk stands in the middle of the floor.

PHOEBE

Are you sure this works?

GREGG

For the few nights I'm home, it'll be wonderful.

Gregg and Phoebe push the desk towards one of the walls. Gregg begins to set up an air mattress.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - PHOEBE'S ROOM - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Phoebe and Gregg move a mattress into place on the bed frame.

- Phoebe and Gregg make the bed.

- Phoebe hangs clothes in the closet while her dad hangs some in the wardrobe.

- Gregg helps Phoebe hang up the final touch -- a lesbian pride flag on the wall.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Phoebe and Gregg are passed out on the couch together, the TV still playing a forgotten movie in the background.

END MONTAGE.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Phoebe wakes up on the couch, now alone. She hears someone MESSING AROUND in the kitchen.

She turns to see her dad making coffee.

GREGG
I swear, I tried to be quiet.

PHOEBE
It was the sun, not you.

Phoebe squints against the sun coming in through the windows as she looks around.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
At least we found out the couch is comfy.

Phoebe notices her Dad's packed suitcases by the door.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
What's your next stop again?

GREGG
Arizona for some Grand Canyon pics, then I'm off to Bolivia for the salt flats.

PHOEBE
Please don't get too close to the railing.

Gregg LAUGHS.

GREGG
I'll keep my distance.

Gregg comes back to the couch and hands Phoebe a mug of coffee. He sits back down beside her.

GREGG (CONT'D)
We won't move again until after you graduate, I promise.

PHOEBE
I don't mind. I'd travel with you if you weren't such a bad homeschool teacher.

GREGG
It was one year!

PHOEBE
A very long year.

They LAUGH at the memory. Then Gregg turns more serious.

GREGG

Anything you need, you call me and
I'll be on the next flight home--

PHOEBE

I know, I know.

GREGG

I mean it. Anything, Phoebe. Even
if you think you shouldn't, call me
anyway.

PHOEBE

I will.

They stand and move to the door. They hug. When they pull
back, Gregg keeps ahold of her hands. He squeezes them three
times.

GREGG

(one squeeze with each
word)

I. Love. You.

Phoebe squeezes his hands back four times.

PHOEBE

(one squeeze with each
word)

I. Love. You. Too.

It's clear -- this is their thing.

Gregg grabs his bags and opens the door.

GREGG

Send me a first day of school
picture tomorrow, okay?

PHOEBE

So you can laugh at my ugly
uniform?

GREGG

...Maybe.

PHOEBE

Text me when you land?

GREGG

Yes ma'am. I love you.

PHOEBE

I love you too.

She closes the door behind him and looks around the house -- it's all hers.

EXT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - DAY

Phoebe snatches her bike helmet, then hops on her bike and rides down the road towards town.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Phoebe rides through the town on her bike, looking at all the shops.

EXT. TOWN - OUTSIDE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Phoebe rides past a coffee shop and stops to read the menu through the glass.

Inside, she sees a girl her age behind the counter. We don't know it yet, but this is SUMMER RAINE (16), popular, impossible to dislike, and beautiful inside and out.

Phoebe makes a mental note to stop by again, then continues on her ride.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - PHOEBE'S ROOM - DAY

Phoebe straightens out her school uniform -- she wasn't wrong, it isn't the nicest thing to look at, but she doesn't seem to care.

She scribbles something on a piece of paper, then holds it up in front of her as she takes a photo of herself. The paper has her name, 11th grade, then "Montgomery Prep - Atlanta, GA"

She texts it to her dad, adding the message, "Could be worse."

She walks out the door to--

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

--the kitchen, where she grabs a granola bar from the pantry and makes her way to--

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE- FRONT DOOR - DAY

--the front door, where her phone CHIMES with a response.

It's her Dad replying with, "Yep. Could be stripes." A picture comes through of Gregg in a striped polo standing in front of the Grand Canyon.

Phoebe laughs to herself, puts her phone in her pocket, then grabs her backpack from the hook on the wall. A rainbow flag pin is pinned to one of the pockets.

Through the front door window, we see Phoebe lock the front door, put on her helmet, hop on her bike, and head to school.

EXT. MONTGOMERY PREP - DAY

Phoebe rides up to Montgomery Prep, a beautiful, old-looking private school.

Other STUDENTS walk into class, TALKING with each other.

Phoebe chains up her bike, then walks inside.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Phoebe walks into the front office. She walks up to the FRONT OFFICE ADMIN (30s).

FRONT OFFICE ADMIN
Yes ma'am, how can I help you?

PHOEBE
Hey, I'm here to pick up my
schedule. Phoebe McDuff.

A GIRL sitting behind the front desk shoots up at the name. She walks over as the Front Office Admin grabs Phoebe's schedule.

FRONT OFFICE ADMIN
Welcome, Phoebe! We're excited to
have you here with us. Where'd you
move from?

PHOEBE
Most recently Florida, but I've
been all over the past few years.

FRONT OFFICE ADMIN
Well we hope you'll stay with us
for a while.

PHOEBE
You and me both.

The Front Office Admin hands Phoebe her schedule just as the girl comes up.

FRONT OFFICE ADMIN
Here's your schedule. And this is
Quinn Raine, she'll be showing you
around.

The girl, who we now know as QUINN (Q) RAINÉ (14),
enthusiastic, lovable, and fiercely protective of those she
cares about, shakes Phoebe's hand.

QUINN
Most people call me Q. Nice to
finally meet you.

PHOEBE
Nice to meet you too.

FRONT OFFICE ADMIN
I'll leave you to it then.

Quinn leads Phoebe out of the office.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - HALLWAY - DAY

Quinn and Phoebe leave the office.

QUINN
Mind if I see that?

Phoebe hands over her schedule.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Sweet, you've got some classes with
my sister!

PHOEBE
Do we share any?

QUINN
Nah, I'm just a freshman. But we
all have the same lunch period, so
you can sit with my sister and I's
friends, if you want?

PHOEBE
Sure. Thanks for the invite.

Phoebe watches a GROUP OF KIDS chatting as they head towards the auditorium.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

How big is the student body here?

QUINN

The upper school has around 500 total, but the lower school has a lot more. You know, since they've got 8 grades and we have 4. There's about 900 over there.

PHOEBE

Excited to be in the upper school?

QUINN

You have no idea.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - OUTSIDE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Quinn stops them outside the auditorium.

QUINN

First day of school always starts with an assembly, followed by your homeroom, then all 6 of your classes. A Block days is homeroom and your even classes, B Block days are homeroom followed by your odd classes.

PHOEBE

Sounds simple enough.

Phoebe nods along. Just then, the BELL rings. Quinn grabs Phoebe's arm.

QUINN

Come on.

Quinn and Phoebe rush inside just before a TEACHER closes the door.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Montgomery Prep's PRINCIPAL (30s), an upbeat person who excels at their job because they really connect with the kids, stands on stage addressing the students.

PRINCIPAL

To returning students, welcome back, and to those just joining us, welcome, to Montgomery Prep. Or as we all so lovingly call it, Monty.

The STUDENTS CHUCKLE.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

As always, some announcements to start us all off on the right foot.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - HOMEROOM - DAY

Phoebe introduces herself to her TEACHER and the CLASS.

PRINCIPAL (V.O.)

Monday during homeroom, head down to the cafeteria for our club fair. Every student is required to sign up for a minimum of one club, run for a student government position, or participate in a sport.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - GYM - DAY

Phoebe sits with her CLASS, listening to the GYM TEACHER (30s), who holds up a Montgomery Prep P.E. uniform.

PRINCIPAL (V.O.)

While we always strive for excellence here at Monty, communication is also very important to us. If you're struggling, if you're confused, if you feel something is unfair, please don't hesitate to reach out. It sounds cheesy, but we are here for you.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

Phoebe looks over the syllabus she's given.

PRINCIPAL

Monty is a safe place for all students. We do not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, or hate towards another student or teacher. If you see something, say something.

INT. MONTGOMERY PREP - AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Principal finishes their speech.

PRINCIPAL

Alright, that's enough from me.
Work hard, be kind, and let's make
this a year to remember!

The students CLAP and CHEER. Phoebe CLAPS with them -- she thinks she's gonna like this school.

EXT. MONTGOMERY PREP - COURTYARD - DAY

Quinn leads Phoebe to a table with three other students. MUHAMMAD (15), an easy-going and go-with-the-flow guy, SKY (15), the most quiet and reserved of the group, and SIDNEY (16), outspoken, sly, and unafraid of anyone and anything.

QUINN

I brought a new friend! Phoebe,
this is Muhammad, Sky, and Sidney.

Muhammad and Sky GREET Phoebe. Sidney looks her over once, then goes back to her lunch.

PHOEBE

You sure it's okay if I crash your
group?

MUHAMMAD

For sure. We don't bite.

SIDNEY

Most of the time.

Phoebe and Quinn sit down.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Summer skip today?

Quinn rolls her eyes.

QUINN

Like she always does.

SKY

I could never.

PHOEBE

Why skip the first day?

QUINN

She hates that we start on a Friday. Says it's pointless to just have one day and then the weekend.

SIDNEY

Been doing it since 7th grade.

PHOEBE

Well, I'm excited to meet her on Monday then.

MUHAMMAD

Just come to the party tonight, you can meet her there.

(to Quinn)

You did invite her, right?

QUINN

I totally forgot--

PHOEBE

I'm not really a party person, thanks though.

SKY

Finally, someone else!

QUINN

I know Summer would love you though! Maybe just for a little bit?

MUHAMMAD

We don't get crazy or anything. It's just our way of closing out summer.

SIDNEY

She can wait to see Summer until Monday. Not like she's gonna disappear.

QUINN

You can meet other people too though! Make a ton of friends in one night. Please?

Phoebe looks at Quinn's pleading eyes. She looks to Sky.

SKY

They're really not that crazy. I stay for the first half hour then head out.

This convinces Phoebe.

PHOEBE

Fine, I'll come for a little bit.

Quinn celebrates and pulls out her phone.

QUINN

What's your number? I'll text you
the details.

Phoebe motions for Quinn just to hand it over. Quinn hands it over and Phoebe shifts as she grabs it and puts in her number.

Sidney sees the rainbow pin on her bag. A strange look crosses her face -- a weird mix of alarm and jealousy.

INT. PHOEBE'S HOUSE - PHOEBE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Phoebe looks at her outfit in the mirror. For once she scrutinizes it, caring about it more than usual.

GREGG (V.O.)

(filtered)

I think it looks nice.

Phoebe picks her phone up off her bed -- on the phone with her Dad.

PHOEBE

Not like I'm trying too hard or
anything, right?

GREGG (V.O.)

(filtered)

Not at all. You look nice, but not
overdone.

PHOEBE

Thanks, Dad.

GREGG (V.O.)

(filtered)

Be careful, okay?

PHOEBE

I will.

GREGG (V.O.)

(filtered)

Love you.

PHOEBE

Love you too.

Phoebe hangs up, takes one last look at herself, then walks out of the room.

EXT. SIDNEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Phoebe walks up to the house. MUSIC can clearly be heard from outside. This definitely *looks* like a crazy party.

Phoebe takes a breath, then heads inside.

INT. SIDNEY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Phoebe squeezes inside and is immediately met with LOUD MUSIC, and lots of PEOPLE drinking. This is not the scene that was described to her.

She only looks around for a moment before Quinn is bounding up to her, looking a little caught off guard at the situation around her.

QUINN

You came!

PHOEBE

And I'm about to leave. You call this "not crazy?"

QUINN

I know, I know. It's not normally like this, I don't know why Sidney-- Just, come meet Summer first?

Phoebe hesitates, then nods. Quinn pulls her further into the house.

INT. SIDNEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sidney sits on the counter, slightly tipsy. In front of her stands Summer, clearly not happy. Muhammad stands off to the side, ready to intervene if needed.

SUMMER

Why? Why did you think this was a good idea?

SIDNEY

Would you just relax? It's just a few more people--

SUMMER

We went from a group of 25 to the entire upper school, Sidney. That's not a few more people.

SIDNEY

Don't be dramatic.

Summer snatches the cup from Sidney's hand.

SUMMER

And alcohol? Really? Since when do we drink at these things?

SIDNEY

Since it's my house and I can do whatever I want--

Quinn and Phoebe walk in, catching them mid-argument.

QUINN

Look who I found!

SUMMER

Q, thank God, listen we need to--

Summer turns to see Quinn dragging in Phoebe. She stops at the sight of Phoebe.

Phoebe is struck by Summer. A beat passes as they meet for the first time -- while neither of them know why, it feels monumental.

PHOEBE

Hey, I'm Phoebe.

Phoebe holds out her hand. Summer shakes it.

SUMMER

Summer.

PHOEBE

I know. I've heard a lot about you.

SUMMER

Only good things, I hope.

SIDNEY

Like anyone could talk bad about Monty's queen.

Sidney's comment snaps Summer and Phoebe out of their moment.

SUMMER

I'm sorry we're not meeting under some more....relaxing circumstances. That's what these back to school parties usually are.

Summer shoots a look at Sidney.

SIDNEY

There's nothing saying we can't still get to know her here.

PHOEBE

I think I'm just gonna head back home--

SIDNEY

A speed round then? To be continued on Monday?

Phoebe notices Summer's annoyed look at Sidney, and quickly realizes the type of game Sidney's trying to play -- she wants Phoebe to turn her down.

PHOEBE

Sure. Ask away.

Sidney goes into rapid-fire question mode and Phoebe doesn't back down -- it's a war to see who will break first.

SIDNEY

Where'd you come from?

PHOEBE

Moved from Florida, born in South Carolina.

SIDNEY

What's your family like?

PHOEBE

My parents are divorced. Mom lives in South Carolina still, my Dad travels for work a lot.

SIDNEY

Most embarrassing memory?

MUHAMMAD

Sidney, really?

Phoebe doesn't miss a beat.

PHOEBE
Probably this conversation.

SIDNEY
Too much for you?

PHOEBE
Oh, I'm not the one who's gonna
wake up embarrassed.

Quinn hides a laugh by curling into Muhammad's arm. Muhammad
doesn't hide his smirk.

Seeing this, Sidney goes in for the kill.

SIDNEY
You queer?

Phoebe opens her mouth to answer, but Summer steps in front
of Phoebe before she can.

SUMMER
That's it, you're done.

SIDNEY
It was just a question. Who you
love isn't anything to be ashamed
of.

SUMMER
We all know that, but not everyone
feels safe to be out.

SIDNEY
She literally has a pin on her
backpack.

Ignoring Sidney, Summer turns to Phoebe.

SUMMER
(quietly)
I'm so sorry. I don't know what's
gotten into her.

Quietly seething, Sidney changes tactics.

SIDNEY
You know what? You're all bringing
me down, and I planned on having a
good time tonight. So if you want
to join the rest of us, we'll be
playing beer pong in the living
room.

Sidney hops off the counter and not so subtly splashes her drink all over Phoebe.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Whoops.

Sidney saunters off. Phoebe looks down at her shirt.

PHOEBE

Damn, I liked this one.

SUMMER

I am so, so sorry, oh my god.

She turns to Muhammad and Quinn.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Muhammad, can you get Q back to our place? I don't like where this night is going.

MUHAMMAD

Absolutely.

QUINN

Will you meet us there?

SUMMER

Yeah, right after I find Phoebe another shirt.

PHOEBE

It's fine, really--

SUMMER

(to Muhammad)

Go. I'll meet you there.

Muhammad nods and leads Quinn out the back door.

Summer turns back to Phoebe.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Come with me.

Summer leads Phoebe upstairs.

INT. SIDNEY'S HOUSE - SIDNEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Summer closes the door behind them.

She starts rifling around for a piece of clothing.

PHOEBE

Not to be picky, but I don't really
wanna wear something of hers.

SUMMER

I wouldn't either. You're gonna
wear something of mine that I left
here accidentally.

Summer finally finds what she's looking for -- a Montgomery
Prep sweatshirt. She hands it over to Phoebe, then turns
around so Phoebe has privacy.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry again. I've never,
ever seen Sidney like this. And
these parties...we usually just
invite a handful of mutual friends
over, play some music and stupid
games, and talk about the upcoming
school year. The craziest we've
ever really gotten is when we all
jumped off of Muhammad's dock into
the lake two years ago.

PHOEBE

It's fine, really.
(beat; with humor)
You can turn around now, I'm
decent.

Summer turns around and has to quickly accept what Phoebe in
her clothes does to her.

SUMMER

It's not okay, so don't say that it
is. You know it, I know it, and she
does too. I'm gonna talk to her
about it on Monday.

PHOEBE

I have a feeling she'll be calling
you tomorrow.

SUMMER

And I won't answer.

Beat.

PHOEBE

Or you could just tell her you want
to wait until Monday? Ignoring her
could make...whatever this is
worse.

SUMMER

Yeah, maybe.

Beat.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Listen, about that last question she asked you--

PHOEBE

I was gonna answer anyway.

SUMMER

No one really cares around here, whether you're straight or if you play for the other team.

PHOEBE

Yeah, no, I play...I play gay. All the way.

Summer lights up.

SUMMER

Really? I'm pan! Finally, I'm not the only one.

Phoebe thinks back to Sidney's reaction.

PHOEBE

I don't think you were ever the only one.

SUMMER

What do you mean?

PHOEBE

I think Sidney's in love with you.

Summer LAUGHS.

SUMMER

She's flirty with everyone, but no. She's got a new boyfriend every two months.

Summer takes Phoebe's hands.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

It's so nice to have someone else.

Phoebe tries not to get too flustered, but can't speak. She nods.

This is clearly another moment between them. Summer takes another step towards Phoebe, bringing them closer together.

The moment is shattered by YELLING and CHAOS from downstairs.

Summer runs to the window. Police lights reflect off her face.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Shit. I told her this would get bad.

PHOEBE

I should have just stayed home.

Summer yanks open a window away from the front of the house. She looks back to Phoebe, who looks mildly terrified.

SUMMER

Do you trust me?

Phoebe hesitates, then follows Summer out the window.

EXT. SIDNEY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Summer and Phoebe flee the scene, much faster than the DRUNK KIDS around them.

EXT. SUMMER'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Summer and Phoebe run through Summer's front yard up to the front door. They rush into the house.

INT. SUMMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Summer pulls Phoebe in, both of them out of breath.

Quinn and Muhammad sit on the couch with Summer and Quinn's parents, KIM (30s) and MATTIE (30s), both outstanding moms who find pure joy in raising their adopted daughters to become thoughtful, kind adults.

QUINN

What happened to you two?

KIM

Q, let them catch their breath first.

MUHAMMAD

Did it happen?

Phoebe nods.

SUMMER
Thank you for getting Q out.

MUHAMMAD
Always.

MATTIE
Hold on, did what happen?

SUMMER
Did they tell you about Sidney?

KIM
A little bit.

SUMMER
We told her she went overboard, she didn't believe us, and now I wouldn't be surprised if she and half our upper school is in a jail cell for the night.

MATTIE
No.

SUMMER
Yep.

Summer finally realizes Phoebe hasn't been introduced.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
Oh! Mom, Mattie, this is Phoebe. She just moved here.

PHOEBE
Nice to meet you both.

KIM
Want some water?

SUMMER
Please.

PHOEBE
Yes, please.

Kim goes to leave the room, when Summer stops her.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
And would you mind throwing Phoebe's shirt in the wash? Sidney spilled her drink all over it.

KIM
Of course.

SUMMER

Thanks, Mom.

Summer hands over the shirt. Kim leaves the room, and Summer and Phoebe collapse onto the other couch.

MATTIE

Did either of you drink?

SUMMER

You know I don't drink.

PHOEBE

Oh no, I don't drink.

They share a look, then laugh.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

I've known you for half an hour and we're already saying the same thing at the same time.

Kim comes back in the room. She checks her watch.

KIM

Well, it's only 10.

QUINN

Ooh, can we make brownies?

SUMMER

Oh my god, brownies sound amazing right now.

Summer looks to Phoebe.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

What do you think?

PHOEBE

I mean, I should probably get out of your hair. I can get my shirt from you on Monday and give this one back.

Just then, THUNDER RUMBLES outside.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

On second thought, brownies sound great.

INT. SUMMER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Phoebe cracks an egg in the bowl with one hand. Summer tries to replicate it, and they have to fish pieces of shell out of the bowl.
- Quinn mixes together the brownie mix. Muhammad dips his finger in and steals some, eating it. She slaps him playfully on the shoulder.
- Phoebe, Summer, Quinn, and Muhammad play a board game while the brownies are in the oven, having a good time.
- Summer pulls the brownies out of the oven and Quinn tries to cut one right away. When it falls apart, they realize they have to wait. That is, until Phoebe gets an idea and grabs four spoons.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. SUMMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Summer, Phoebe, Quinn, and Muhammad eat the brownie with spoons while they watch a movie on TV.

TIME CUT:

INT. SUMMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Not long later, Quinn and Muhammad are asleep on one couch. Summer and Phoebe lay on the other.

Phoebe stares at Summer, realizing quickly that she is somehow falling head over heels in love with this girl far too fast.

Phoebe realizes too late that Summer has opened her eyes, and is looking right at her.

Summer grabs her hand.

SUMMER

So much better than the party.

Phoebe LAUGHS quietly, agreeing.

Summer closes her eyes, attempting to actually fall asleep.

Phoebe lets out a breath -- oh her heart's in trouble.