

It had been three months since Marlee last spoke to her best friend Max. She didn't understand what happened to the two of them. They had been friends forever and all of the sudden he left without anything as much as a goodbye. Infact, her parents were the ones who told her that he was gone. Nobody knew where he went, not even his parents, everyone assumed he had run away, but Marlee knew that he would never do that. It killed her to know that he had left and she didn't know why or how or when. He was just gone. Marlee stopped caring about a lot of things after Max left. Her grades plummeted and she hasn't hung out with any of her friends. She had become a different, unrecognizable version of herself, and nobody cared enough to help her.

It was Wednesday and Marlee had just come back from school. She drifted into her room and browsed her bookshelf. She came across a book that she hadn't seen before. It was titled "The journey home". Marlee opened the book and out fell a little piece of paper, with nothing but an address on it. She was so overwhelmed that she couldn't read it from all the tears filling her eyes. She immediately got into her car and started driving to the mystery destination. It was over 4 hours away, and the long ride was a silent and focused one.

Marlee arrived at a little house, dusty, old and completely deserted. She was disappointed that she drove all the way just to find an old house that clearly wasn't occupied. She decided that since she came all the way out, she might as well go inside. She slowly walked in the home and scavenged around. The walls were musty, the paint was peeling off it and multiple spiders had built their webs around it. The creaky floor looked like termites had gotten to it and cracked every step. She walked over to a door and slowly turned the rusted handle. Inside the room was nothing but an old television and strapped to it was a CD. She walked over and untaped the disc. It read in big capital letters "To the only one who cares". Marlee broke down. She knew exactly what was going on and couldn't contain herself. "Why has Max left this CD here for me?" She thought, "Why hasn't he just come to me?". There was nothing left to do but play the video, so she opened the disc reader and sat down, preparing herself for the video she was about to watch.

The movie opened with Max sitting alone in his room. He looked like he had not slept for days and he had red, tear stained cheeks. His hair was messy and his clothes didnt match. He was a wreck. He stared at the camera for a little while before he began to speak. "Hello marlee. I'm so sorry that this is the way that things have to be done, but I couldn't bring myself to tell you, or anyone in fact. I'm making this video to tell you that I am gone. I'm gone and I am not coming back. I'm sure right now you are thinking, 'Why max? You seemed so fine, you can't be gone?' and I agree, you deserve an explanation. Before I explain , I just want to let you know what you mean to me. You have been my best friend for as long as I remember, and you do not deserve this. This is my fault, and nothing more than that. I know that if I had just told you, or if I had explained what was going on, that you would be the first in line to help me, because you always were. You were always the one I could count on when I needed help, or my shoulder to cry on when I was just having a really bad day. And I'm sure you figured something was up, right? I mean I couldn't get anything by you, even if it was a small sigh, you would ask me what was wrong. I know your first thoughts are probably going to be that this is your fault, but it's not. Please don't ever think that because you don't deserve that. You were the one thing that I had been holding on to for this last year, and I just couldn't hold on anymore. It's like everyday I would wake up, and I wouldn't even know why I was getting up, because no one wanted to see me, and I didn't want to see anyone. It was pointless going on, so I decided I wouldn't. I wouldn't spend another day being unloved, or being stuck in a life that I didn't want. I hope you understand. Don't worry, i'll see you again. Bye."

Marlee couldn't breathe from crying so hard. She felt like a piece of her had been taken and even though it wasn't, she felt like it was her fault. How could she not have seen anything different? Why didn't she help? Her whole world, her best friend, was gone. Marlee sat alone and cried for a long time.

A year passed since she had seen the video, and life started to get better. She started an awareness club for people going through similar situations as Max, and spent her whole summer researching and helping those in need. She goes to therapy every week and has learned how to cope in healthy ways. She held a funeral for him and his parents were so thankful for her. They were even sadder than she was and she wanted to help in the best way she could. Not a day goes by when she doesn't think about her best friend, but she has a clear conscience knowing that it wasn't her fault. She learned that sometimes, the best way to forgive yourself is to help others. You ever know what someone else is going through sometimes until it's too late. She helped a lot of people and helped people know that they aren't alone. Because no one should ever feel that way, even for a minute.