

Alison's Birthday

By

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**INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASS - DAY**

ALISON YOUNG - five years old - sits by herself in a small elementary school class.

Suddenly -- the classroom phone rings. The teacher answers it, mutters a couple of "Uh huhs", then turns to Alison with great interest, after she hangs up.

MRS. HARRIS  
Alison, to the office, please.

**INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASS - OFFICE - DAY**

Alison, walking by herself to the office.

She steps inside. A receptionist looks down at her, approaching.

Before she can greet Alison --

LISA YOUNG (O.S)  
Hey, Baby!

Alison turns -- A middle aged woman, seriously underdressed for a place like this, storms out of a room, and sweeps her into her arms.

It's her mother, LISA YOUNG. Close observers may take note of her smudged makeup and glassy eyes. It's obvious she's been crying.

ALISON  
Mommy?  
(realizing --)  
Mommy!!

LISA YOUNG  
Hey! It's my birthday, girl! How's my birthday girl?! Look at you!  
(to receptionist)  
Can I go now?

**INT. LISA'S CAR - DAY**

Lisa drives. Alison sits in the passengers seat.

ALISON  
My birthday was on Friday, Mommy.

(CONTINUED)

LISA YOUNG

I know that, honey. It's like,  
we're going to do it...over again.  
Do it right this time. It's like,  
we're going to pretend that Friday  
didn't happen.

ALISON

What happened to Grandma?

LISA YOUNG

Oh. Well. Grandma says Happy  
Birthday. She says sorry she  
couldn't come, but she wasn't  
feeling well.

Lisa suddenly gets serious. Alison watches, slightly  
confused by this strange behavior.

LISA YOUNG

You know, I just -- I got to  
Grandma's house, and I thought  
about you. About how I didn't get  
you anything on Friday, and...I  
felt...I just couldn't stay there.  
I had to be with you.

(beat)

I thought it would be nice if we  
did something special today.

(beat)

Just the two of us. How does that  
sound?

Alison smiles. Lisa strokes Alison's hand.

LISA YOUNG

(lights smoke)

Do you remember when I said that we  
couldn't get that camera you  
wanted?

Alison nods.

LISA YOUNG

It's all yours today, kiddo.  
Remember? The one with the big  
screen.

ALISON

(laughs)

Did you win the lottery?

(CONTINUED)

LISA YOUNG  
Uh huh. A *magical* lottery.

Beat.

LISA YOUNG  
Do you mind if we make a quick stop  
somewhere first?

Alison shakes her head, "no", and Lisa turns the car into a parking lot.

Now we see where Lisa is headed - a liquor store. Judging by Alison's casual reaction, this is a fairly routine process.

LISA YOUNG  
Be back in a jiff.

Lisa opens her wallet, and withdraws a credit card - one that Alison has clearly never seen before.

**INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY**

Alison and Lisa, seated at a fancy restaurant.

LISA YOUNG  
Isn't this so much fun, baby? Just  
the two of us?  
(quickly --)  
Now, I want you to order whatever  
you want, OK, kiddo? Look here --  
They have Spaghetti and Meatballs.  
You like Spaghetti and Meatballs,  
don't you? Look how fancy this one  
is.

Alison smiles and nods. The WAITER comes over.

WAITER  
Hello, Ladies.  
(beat)  
Can I get you something to start?

LISA YOUNG  
Yeah. I think we'll have the  
Oysters to start, please - AND -  
fuck it - scuse' my language -  
let's do the charcuterie board,  
too.  
(beat)  
I will have a Rum and Coke to  
drink, and -- No, wait. Wine.

(CONTINUED)

(winks)  
I'll have white wine, actually.

WAITER  
Sure. Any preferences?

LISA YOUNG  
The best kind you have.

The waiter nods, turns to Alison.

LISA YOUNG  
Go on, honey. Tell him what you want.

ALISON  
I'll have--

WAITER  
--Wait. Stop right there, young lady!  
(beat)  
You look like somebody!

The waiter turns to Lisa.

WAITER  
She looks like somebody, doesn't she?

The waiter feigns confusion. Alison, LEGITIMATELY confused, cocks an eyebrow.

WAITER  
You look like somebody...  
(beat)  
..like...a...  
(suddenly --)  
...A birthday girl!

LISA YOUNG  
Oh. That's right! She *is* a birthday girl! How'd you guess?!

Alison blushes. Suddenly scans the room in anticipation of what's coming next -- a parade of waiter/waitresses emerging from the back of the kitchen, with a birthday cake, flashing with candles.

They make a big scene, singing "Happy Birthday". The restaurant joins in. Alison giggles.

LATER

(CONTINUED)

Lisa and Alison, post-meal. An empty bottle of wine sits on the table.

LISA YOUNG  
How was that, kiddo? Better than  
mommy's sandwiches, huh?

Then, Lisa's cell phone rings. She looks at the caller ID, which reads "ELEANOR YOUNG CALLING..."

Lisa frowns, grabs the phone, and saunters away to answer it.

LISA YOUNG  
(to Alison)  
I'll be back in a jiff.  
(RE: Phone call)  
Grandma is just upset that I left.

ALISON --

Watching her mother speak to whoever called -- Lisa is noticeably upset with whomever is on the other line, though we can't hear what about, exactly.

Then, the waiter brings over the check, smiles at Alison, as he lays it down upside down.

A short beat later, Lisa returns to the table, noticeably more tense after her phone call.

Lisa grabs the bill, which we catch a glimpse of --

SUBTOTAL: 231.87\$

Lisa fishes out the same credit card we saw her use at the Liquor Store, and waves it at the waiter.

**EXT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY**

Alison and Lisa, emerging from a high-end children's clothing store, with two full bags of clothes on either arm.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Alison and Lisa, driving.

Alison holds up an expensive designer shirt from the bag.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Mommy, I don't remember the name of the camera I wanted.

LISA YOUNG

That's OK, honey. We can ask them at the store. And hey - let's get two of them.

(fighting tears)

TWO cameras. How does that sound?

Lisa let's out a soft sob.

ALISON

Mommy, why are you crying?

LISA YOUNG

(sudden outburst)

I'm not crying, honey! Mommy isn't crying! Mommy is very happy. These are tears of happiness, honey, see?

Alison -- unconvinced.

Suddenly, Lisa's phone rings. "ELEANOR YOUNG CALLING..." appears on the screen.

Alison reaches for the phone.

LISA YOUNG

(exploding)

DON'T TOUCH IT!

Alison reels back in shock. A shameful silence.

Lisa immediately regrets it.

LISA YOUNG

I'm sorry, baby. Mommy is sorry for yelling. Please. I'm just...

(beat)

I'm not crying, and these are tears of happiness, OK? And this is your birthday, and we're going to have a great day, and you're going to take lots of new pictures with your new camera! How's that?

Alison nods. Swallows nervously.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

The car speeds down the road.

**EXT. CAR - DAY**

Alison and Lisa, driving.

LISA YOUNG

You know what my mom got me for my birthday? Your grandmother? You want to know?

Lisa makes a 0 with her hands. She takes a discreet sip of a bottle of booze.

LISA YOUNG

Not to put down your grandmother. I just think your birthday is an important day, that should be spent with...your mother, that's all.

Alison looks on, concerned.

LISA YOUNG

Ah, well. What am I gunna' do, kill myself?

Beat.

LISA YOUNG

That's what your father always used to say, any time anything went bad. Even little things. He'd always say, "Ah, what are you gunna' do, kill yourself?"

(beat)

"Dan, I lost my job", "Well, what are you gunna' do, kill yourself?"

(beat)

"Dan, I lost my winning lottery ticket", "Ah, what are you gunna' do, kill yourself?"

Beat.

LISA YOUNG

Just once, you know, I wanted him to come home, find me dangling from a noose, with a note that said "Broke a nail", or something.

Lisa chuckles to herself. Notices Alison isn't.

(CONTINUED)

LISA YOUNG  
I guess you're too young to  
remember that stuff.

**INT. CAMERA SHOP - NIGHT**

A CASHIER --

CASHIER  
Your total is...  
(beat)  
Two thousand one hundred and fifty  
one dollars, and fifty two cents.  
How would you like to pay?

Lisa holds up the now familiar credit card.

LISA YOUNG  
Credit Card.

**EXT. CAMERA SHOP - NIGHT**

Moments later.

Lisa and Alison emerge from the shop.

LISA YOUNG  
Hey! Hey! Let's take one right now.

Lisa unboxes the camera, takes it out, turns it on. They  
both pose for a selfie. Click.

As they approach the car, Lisa goes noticeably pale. There,  
leaning against her vehicle, are two uniformed officers.

ALISON  
Who are those men, mommy?

LISA YOUNG  
Wait here.

Lisa approaches them. We can't hear the subsequent  
interaction. One of the men flashes his badge, then roughly  
spins Lisa around, and slaps a pair of handcuffs on her.

Alison immediately races for her, but is intercepted by one  
of the cops.

ALISON  
Mommy?!  
(realizing --)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (cont'd)  
MOMMY!

COP #1  
Easy there, sweetie. Easy there. We  
just need to talk to your Mommy,  
OK?

The owner of the camera shop - having seen the commotion -  
comes spilling out of the shop.

SHOP OWNER  
What's going on?

COP #1  
You're the owner of this place?

The owner nods.

COP #1  
She bought those camera's from  
here?

SHOP OWNER  
That's right. What's going on?

The cop sighs, removes his glasses.

COP #1  
This woman has been using a stolen  
credit card. I'd check your  
records.

SHOP OWNER  
Stolen...?

COP #1  
Yeah. Her mothers', apparently.

The shop owner snatches the camera's from Alison's hands,  
and returns back to the shop.

COP #1  
Can you come with me for a minute,  
sweetie?

ALISON  
Where is my mommy going?

COP #1  
Your Mom will be fine, sweetie.  
Alison, is it? Can you come with  
me?

The cop slowly ushers Alison away from the shop, and she turns to her mother, offering an apologetic look, with her hands cuffed behind her.

**INT. CAMERA SHOP - NIGHT**

The shop owner powers up one of the camera's that Lisa and Alison just used.

She clicks a button and a photo pops up on the screen --

The selfie Alison and Lisa just took.

The owner studies it for a long moment -- Alison and Lisa, wrapped in a loving embrace - Lisa with tears in her eyes, and Alison with an oblivious, unsuspecting innocence in hers.

Then, she shuts off the camera, turning the screen black.

And we...

FADE OUT.