

SOUTHBOUNDERS SYNOPSIS

OLIVIA has lost her confidence. She decides to confront her fears by hiking the Appalachian Trail alone. She begins her hike in the remote Maine woods where she is confronted by the many challenges of the trail. It's harder than she thought it would be. She arrives at a shelter filled with male hikers. She tries to stay to herself, but the gregarious SLACKPACK won't give her any peace. Slackpack talks incessantly, and initially irritates Olivia. But as they travel together, Olivia finds him endearing.

Olivia begins reading register entries left at each shelter by a poetic hiker, ROLLIN. She soon catches up to him; a wounded leg has slowed him down. Olivia tends to his leg, and there is an instant attraction between them. He's mysterious - friendly and conversational, but revealing little about himself. Rollin writes in his journal every chance he gets. Olivia, Slackpack, and Rollin travel to the remote town of Monson, Maine, where they meet up with a large group of hikers staying at a local hostel. Olivia remains an outsider in the hiker's world. The hikers continue their hike. Olivia and Rollin form a tight bond, but neither will open up completely. Rollin continues to hide his emotions in his journal. Olivia tells him he should try to get published, but Rollin doesn't seem to have the desire.

Months pass. The trees are bare of leaves. The hiker's hair has grown long and the men have grown beards. The hikers take a day off in a small mountain town. Slackpack is visited by his beautiful girlfriend JOLIETTE, who takes him for a conjugal respite away from the Trail. Olivia and Rollin continue on. Olivia is increasingly tormented by her sense of duty to her family and her obligation to return to school - an obligation that would require her to leave the trail before finishing. Finally alone, Olivia and Rollin make love while on the Trail. The following day, she curiously picks up Rollin's journal, which he steals from her hands.

Tensions grow between the two hikers as they continue south. Rollin doesn't understand Olivia's desire to rush to the end, while Olivia grows weary of Rollin's aimlessness. While trying to warm up in a shelter, Olivia decides she must return to school. Rollin objects, telling her he loves her. But Olivia is too committed to her future plans; she escapes into the wilderness. Rollin continues his hike as winter descends, while Olivia returns to her life at school. Month's later, Olivia returns to her dorm after class and discovers a package from Rollin. It's his journal. The entire book is written about, and dedicated to, her. The last pages are missing. Rollin has left the pages in shelter registers along the trail. Olivia returns to the Trail. She goes to the shelter register and removes one of the missing pages from Rollin's journal. She continues her hike south.