

BLOSSOMS AND DUST

FADE IN:

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - CORRIDOR - DAY

With sunglasses and business attire, MARISSA HARLING, 47, plods along in her stilettos.

She passes the pane of a caregiver station where two female NURSES gaze after her from the open doorway.

NURSE#1

Must be her. Can't believe this
bitch eventually dare to come here.

Marissa reaches a door where a JANITOR is about to exchange the nameplate - Mr. Bell for Mrs. Harling.

She passes him, enters the

ONE ROOM APARTMENT

A tidy place, dominated by books and porcelain figures.

Marissa approaches the empty care bed in the corner. Below the hanging triangle handle, on the bed sheets, the vague imprint of a body remains.

Marissa touches the pillow. Her sunglasses drop on the mattress, revealing her red, swollen eyes.

MARISSA

Mom.

She swallows, tears run down her cheeks.

MARISSA (V.O.)

Oh, God, how could I ever forgive
myself?

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - APARTMENT - RESTROOM - DAY

At the wash basin, Marissa cools the dark bags under her eyes with water she picks up in her closed fingers.

MOTHER HARLING (V.O.)

My dear, there's no guilt between
us. Never.

MARISSA (V.O.)

No. That's only what I make up now.
To feel comfortable. I get it,
there is no second chance. Now that
it's too late, I finally get it.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marissa rummages through shelves. She lays things of importance into a cardboard box, mostly photos and letters.

MOTHER HARLING, 82, in a nightgown, watches her from the hospital bed where she perches on the edge.

MOTHER HARLING (V.O.)

That's my girl. Just get it done
and get out of this lifeless place,
honey.

Marissa picks up a picture.

INSERT PHOTO - MARISSA, as a kid of seven years, stands on the seat of a swing, the ropes in her small hands. She smiles directly into the camera.

RETURN TO SCENE

Marissa carefully puts the photo into the box.

She walks toward the curtains, opens them.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, she views a girl - it's herself, same age of the photo - hopping over the line of a jump rope that she twirls over her head.

Beside, on a park bench, MOTHER HARLING, 42 here, reads a magazine. From time to time, she casts a glance at her daughter.

Staring out, Marissa's eyes shiver. Her inner cinema is gone now -- behind the window, there's just a deserted lawn.

MARISSA (V.O.)

You always took care of me. Why
couldn't I watch for you when you
needed me? Why am I such a bad
person?

Mother Harling, the older one, stands behind Marissa.

MOTHER HARLING (V.O.)

There is no guilt between us. Only
love.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Marissa remains in front of a hole where an urn sits down in the darkness. Beside the grave are two bowls, one with colorful blossoms in it, the other one filled with soil and a small shovel sticking out.

Marissa gathers a handful of blossoms, bends over the grave and scatters them onto the urn.

She grips a shovel of soil. Her trembling legs almost collapse as she turns the spade and releases the dust.

INT. DR. HOUSER'S THERAPY ROOM - DAY

DR. AMY HOUSER, 50s, sits opposite to Marissa.

MARISSA

She was the best mother one could imagine. And I just left her alone in that shabby place for years. Without any visit. Just for that damn career and all those other excuses. I fear her voice that I hear now, that all is just what I made up to feel better. But in the end Dr., I know, all there is, is the big "never again" hanging above me for the rest of my life. I haven't even said a Good Bye.

DR. HOUSER

I'm sure you loved her. And she knew that well. The conversation you both have now is your shared history, which remains and lives on in your personality. I'd even call it a healthy reflection to listen to that voice. And when she says you shouldn't feel guilty, then perhaps you're just going to fulfill her wish.

Marissa gets up.

MARISSA

When it's too late, we'd do everything to turn back the time. All I had to say Good Bye is a handful of blossoms and a shovel of dust. How can I ever forgive myself?

DR. HOUSER

We'll help you with that. Humans helping each other can solve most problems.

FADE OUT.