

LOSS

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EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

MARLA (12), a tomboy with matted hair, sits on the kerbside picking through a heart-shaped box of pink chocolates.

MARLA
Euch. Turkish Delight.

LEWIS (17), approaches. She puts the chocolate in her mouth.

LEWIS
Thought they'd cheer you up.

No reply. He sighs and stares at the ground.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
My ma wants you home.

She spits out the chewed chocolate onto his chest. He grabs her by the hair and pulls her up, their faces inches apart.

MARLA
Perhaps after her date your ma'd
like to play your game?

Marla glares at him unflinching.

INT. CARE HOME. BEDROOM - DAY

Lewis forces Marla into the room. She cries and struggles as he holds her arms down.

MARLA
Please, don't do this.

The chocolates fall to the floor. He takes control of her.

MARLA (CONT'D)
I'll fucking kill myself. I will.

Lewis squeezes out the door. We hear him lock the door and walk away.

Marla faces her fear; her FATHER lies on a nursing bed in the homely yet functional room. He's had a stroke. He tries to wave to her.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Flustered, Marla pushes a metal hanger into the door lock. We hear the key turn through her efforts.

Her Father attempts to wave at her again. Picking up the chocolates she cautiously walks to his bedside.

MARLA

I got these.

She seems to expect a response but realises it's not coming.

MARLA (CONT'D)

This was ma's favourite - "Caramel Kiss". Would you like it?

She holds the chocolate out. She puts it into his hand. He holds his hand to his head in confusion. She looks deep into his eyes trying to read his thoughts.

MARLA (CONT'D)

I wish I knew.

She puts her eyelashes to his and flutters them. A corner of his mouth rises. She pulls her face down his and her cheek scrapes against the stubble.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Marla gently shaves her Father's lathered face. Carefully the razor turns on each curve. She leans forward and they touch foreheads.

MARLA

Dad, I'm not coming back. Sorry.

The door handle turns.

MARLA (CONT'D)

So don't...just don't expect me back. You don't need to wait...for me to come back.

He nods slightly, saddened and confused.

INT. CARE HOME. LANDING OUTSIDE BEDROOM DOOR - EVENING

Irritated, Lewis rattles the key. Finally, it unlocks.

INT. CARE HOME. BEDROOM - EVENING

Lewis enters and sees the window's open so rushes to it.

LEWIS

Oh, Jesus, Marla. Fuck.

Marla is hiding behind the door. Her Father holds up his hand to her, his palm covered in the melted pink chocolate.

She holds up her hand to him, then creeps out the door.

THE END.