

MERELLUS

Short Drama

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Version 3

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EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

EVELYNN (70) is outside in her garden, picking bell peppers and placing them into a basket. She wipes the sweat from her forehead with the back of her hand, brushing it onto her shirt.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Evelynn prepares coffee and slices a freshly baked cake, arranging the pieces on a plate. She glances out the window and sees a car pulling into her driveway.

JOSEY (42) steps out, giving Evelynnn a wave. Evelynnn waves back, walks over, and opens the door.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Josey approaches the doorstep, tucking her car keys into her pocket and adjusting the strap of her bag.

JOSEY  
(kisses Evelynnn's cheek, a  
bit stiffly)  
Hi, Mum.

EVELYNN  
(kisses her back, tone  
flat)  
You're late.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Josey sits at the table as Evelynnn starts the coffee machine.

JOSEY  
(glancing at Evelynnn)  
The kids overslept, so I had to  
drive them to school.

Evelynn pours coffee into two mugs, brings them to the table, retrieves the milk from the fridge, and hands it to Josey.

JOSEY  
(a bit annoyed)  
Sit down, you're pacing.

Evelynn sits, sipping her coffee.

EVELYNN

(proudly)

I was up at 7, out in the garden, doing some harvesting. Want some bell peppers? And take a few cucumbers for the kids—they love them.

JOSEY

I will. Mind if I pick some tomatoes as well, when I leave?

Evelynn stands, gets an empty basket, and hands it to Josey.

EVELYNN

(smiling as she sits)

Of course. How are they?

JOSEY

Good. The new school's tough on Hunter, but Emery's handling it well.

EVELYNN

(dry)

Good. How are they eating?

JOSEY

(slightly annoyed)

They're eating just fine. You should worry about your own eating habits.

Josey gestures toward the cake. Evelynn takes a slice, picks up a small piece with her fork and bites into it.

EVELYNN

They should visit me more often. Who knows for how much longer I'll be around?

JOSEY

(amused)

Oh, believe me, you'll outlast us.

Josey remembers something, reaching into her bag.

JOSEY

Your St. John's wort drops.

She slides them across the table. Evelynn stands and rummages through her purse.

EVELYNN

Thank you. Did you get some for yourself too?

JOSEY

Yes, tried them out yesterday.

EVELYNN

(nodding)

Here.

(hands Josey money)

This is for the drops.

(takes out more money)

And this is for the kids.

JOSEY

(shakes her head)

Don't you want to give it to them, yourself? Spoiling them so much, they'll forget to appreciate it.

(murmuring to herself)

Like you didn't do that all their lives.

EVELYNN

No, no—give it to them. They need the money.

Josey takes the money, tucking it into her purse. Her gaze drifts to the wall, where old family photos are hanging. Evelynn follows her eyes, gripping her mug.

EVELYNN

You've lost weight. It suits you—you look healthier!

Josey's eyes snap back, staring at Evelynn in silence. Evelynn stares back.

EVELYNN

(annoyed)

What?

JOSEY

No. We're not doing this right now.

EVELYNN

Why are you overreacting? I was complimenting you.

JOSEY

Compliment?

EVELYNN

Yes, a compliment. Can't I compliment my own daughter?

JOSEY

(growing infuriated)

You don't get it. You never did.

EVELYNN

(irritated)

I took care of you! I've made you someone to be proud of. I give you everything! You should be more thankful!

JOSEY

Thankful? Thankful that you tore down my self-worth since I was a kid? Do you even know how hard it is to grow up feeling like you're never enough? Always needing to measure up to your standards?

Evelynn stands, retrieves the cake, and places it on the counter. She moves to the sink, removing her ring, and starts washing the knife, fork and plate.

EVELYNN

You're so ungrateful. Do you know how hard I worked to give you a good life? I—

JOSEY

A good life? You were never there for us, Mum. Your work was your family, and you ruined everything. You don't get to do this to me again. You—

Evelynn pauses, clenching the sponge in her hand, then turns to face Josey.

EVELYNN

Do you know how hard it was for me to raise you? I had to work to take care of you, your father, the house — everything. This argument is pointless.

She turns back to the sink, and Josey stands, moving closer to her mother.

EVELYNN

(sardonic and dramatic)

I don't even know why you bother coming if I'm so terrible.

JOSEY

You're doing this to yourself. I was never smart enough, pretty enough, thin enough, helpful enough, or a good enough daughter. I was never enough for you.

Evelynn stares at Josey, then turns back to drying the dishes, taking a deep breath to hold herself steady.

EVELYNN  
(frustrated)  
I did everything to take care of us  
as a family. Do you have any idea  
what I went through? You can't even  
begin to imagine.

Evelynn pushes her ring back onto her finger.

JOSEY  
(sighs)  
You're being so unfair. God, you're  
impossible.

Josey grabs her bag and heads toward the door.

EVELYNN  
Fine, leave. Go ahead. It's no  
wonder your kids struggle — they  
never had anyone to show them how  
to keep their shit together.

Josey stops, looking back at Evelynn. Their eyes meet, a tense silence hanging between them. Josey's eyes burn as she storms out, slamming the door behind her. Evelynn picks up the knife and throws it into the sink.

EVELYNN  
(to herself)  
Shit.

Evelynn tosses the sponge into the sink and grips the edge tightly.

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - AFTERNOON

Evelynn sits on a bench in front of the retirement home, fidgeting with her ring. LILLIAN (78) approaches. Evelynn stands, brushing off her coat before they share a light hug.

LILLIAN  
(smiling)  
Long time, no see.

EVELYNN  
It's been a while, Lilly.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - AFTERNOON

Evelynn and Lillian settle into seats in the common room. Lillian grabs a game box, sits opposite Evelynn, and opens it to start dividing the black and white stones for a game of mill.

LILLIAN  
(amused)  
It's been a while since I had a  
visitor.

Lillian hands Evelynn the black pieces and keeps the white ones for herself.

EVELYNN  
(sighs, apologetic)  
I'm sorry. I should've come by  
sooner. Got caught up with the  
grandkids and the garden.

Lillian chuckles, placing her first piece.

LILLIAN  
(smiling)  
Oh, please! You're here now, aren't  
you? That's what counts.

They place a few pieces in comfortable silence. Evelynn sets her last piece, gazing thoughtfully at the board.

LILLIAN  
(playfully)  
Cornering me already? Sometimes a  
little room goes a long way, Eve.

Evelynn gives a faint smile, her eyes lingering on the board as she thinks over her next move.

EVELYNN  
(jokingly)  
You know how I can be.

Lillian nods, focused on the game, sliding a white piece to the nearest corner.

LILLIAN  
Indeed.

Evelynn lines up three black pieces in a row, smiling confidently as she removes one of Lillian's white pieces.

EVELYNN  
Heard from your son lately?

Lillian, still focused on the board, slides a white piece to the right.

LILLIAN  
 Here and there. He and his wife  
 sent a birthday card. He calls  
 regularly, though.

Lillian takes one of Evelynn's black pieces.

EVELYNN  
 He's such a nice young man.

Evelynn moves another black piece.

LILLIAN  
 (smiling)  
 He is.

Evelynn removes another white piece. Lillian frowns slightly,  
 about to say something, but Evelynn interrupts.

EVELYNN  
 Oh! I nearly forgot.

Evelynn reaches into her bag and pulls out a few slices of  
 cake, placing them on the table and sliding one over to  
 Lillian.

LILLIAN  
 (amazed)  
 You brought my favorite?

Evelynn smiles, gesturing toward the game to nudge Lillian  
 back. Lillian resumes, sliding a white piece to the left.

LILLIAN  
 (mischievous)  
 You've always had a knack for a  
 good gamble.

Evelynn lines up another row, removing one of Lillian's  
 pieces.

EVELYNN  
 Guess I am, aren't I?

She laughs as Lillian makes her own row, snatching a black  
 piece from the board.

EVELYNN  
 (sarcastic)  
 Are you even trying? Don't make  
 this too easy—I might take it  
 personally. Show me your own moves.

Lillian chuckles as Evelynn moves a black piece, opening an  
 opportunity for Lillian.



LILLIAN  
 (competitive but amused)  
 Oh, don't worry, I've got my own  
 ways. I prefer stepping back here  
 and there... (winks) gives me time to  
 study the opponent.

Evelynn watches the board, hesitating a few times before  
 sliding an untouched black piece to the side, unknowingly  
 setting up a new opportunity for Lillian.

LILLIAN

..GIVES ME TIME TO WATCH AND LEARN A LITTLE MORE.

Evelynn nods slowly, lost in thought as she considers her  
 next move. Evelynn smiles, leaning forward as she studies the  
 board.

EVELYNN  
 (smiling winningly)  
 Don't reveal your secret strategies  
 to me. I'll just steal them.

Lillian laughs, forming another row and taking another black  
 piece.

LILLIAN  
 (confident)  
 Oh, I'm not worried. You wouldn't  
 understand even if I explained.  
 I've played countless games here—my  
 tactics aren't easily shared.

Evelynn shakes her head, moving another black piece. Lillian  
 slides her white piece, creating another row and taking  
 another black piece, leaving Evelynn with only four pieces.  
 Evelynn frowns, looking carefully at the board.

EVELYNN  
 (nervous laugh)  
 You're putting me in quite the  
 bind.

Lillian glances up, smiling mischievously.

LILLIAN  
 One more, and I'll have you  
 jumping.

Evelynn shifts a piece to the left, waiting for Lillian's  
 next move. Lillian slides her white piece, then looks up and  
 meets Evelynn's gaze.

EVELYNN  
 (grinning)  
 Oh, you're a ruthless player.

Lillian watches Evelynn as she places her next piece. Evelynn places hers with a slight frown, glancing at Lillian, who remains expressionless. Evelynn's movements slow down, and she picks up one of the black pieces she's removed, rolling it between her thumb and finger.

LILLIAN  
 (quietly, glancing at the  
 board)  
 Hmm. Interesting move.

Lillian slides a white piece forward, creating a new pattern and smiling to herself as the game tips further in her favor. Evelynn hovers over her pieces, her expression determined but with a flicker of frustration. She finally moves a black piece forward, blocking Lillian's path.

LILLIAN  
 (smiling gently)  
 Tightening up, aren't we?

Evelynn doesn't respond, eyes locked on the board. Lillian places another white piece, capturing one of Evelynn's, and removes it with a hint of hesitation. Evelynn, left with only three pieces, drags one across the board, attempting to corner Lillian but unable to form a row.

EVELYNN  
 (sighing, raising her  
 hands)  
 I give up. There's no way I could  
 win.

Evelynn gives Lillian a resigned look. Lillian raises her eyebrows.

LILLIAN  
 (disappointed)  
 You're not one to give up, Evelynn.  
 Come on.

Evelynn doesn't move, staring at the piece in her hand and gently tapping it on the board. Lillian moves a piece to the right, waiting. Evelynn slowly lifts her free hand, picks up a black piece, and sets it in a corner, forming a row of three. She removes one of Lillian's pieces.

LILLIAN  
 (challenging)  
 That's the spirit.

They continue sliding pieces across the board until each has only three left.

Just as Lillian is about to form her final row, Evelynn's piece falls from her hand.

EVELYNN  
(sighing)  
Oh, God.

She bends down to retrieve it, her hand pausing as she touches the piece, her expression softening. Lillian smiles, making her final move and taking Evelynn's last piece.

LILLIAN  
(satisfied)  
Well, that was quite the game! Did you have fun?

EVELYNN  
(thoughtful)  
I did.

Lillian begins gathering the pieces, sorting them back into black and white.

LILLIAN  
How about a rematch?

Evelynn shakes her head.

EVELYNN  
I think I'll sit this one out. Got a few things to take care of at home.

LILLIAN  
No problem. Just make sure you come back soon for that rematch.

EVELYNN  
I will, I promise.

Lillian finishes packing away the pieces and places the box on a nearby shelf. Evelynn stands up, about to say goodbye, when Lillian pulls her into a close hug. Evelynn hesitates, then relaxes, accepting the hug.

LILLIAN  
(nostalgic)  
Visit me more often?

EVELYNN  
I'll try.

Evelynn smiles softly, a trace of sentimentality in her eyes as she looks at Lillian.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Evelynn is in the garden, carefully picking tomatoes. Sweat drips down her face, but she doesn't bother to wipe it away as she fills her basket. She inspects the fallen tomatoes and wipes the dirt from them carefully.

A car pulls up in the driveway, causing Evelynn to pause. She watches as two teenagers, HUNTER (17) and EMERY (13), hop out and race toward her.

EVELYNN  
(surprised)  
Well, look who's here! How is  
school?

She pulls them into a tight hug, kissing the tops of their heads.

HUNTER  
Ugh, school's been awful.

EMERY  
(teasing)  
Maybe if you paid attention once in  
a while, it wouldn't be so bad.

HUNTER  
Oh, give it a rest.  
(rolls his eyes)

EMERY  
You're just distracted by your  
boyfriend.

HUNTER  
(scoffing)  
That's not true!

Evelynn chuckles, gently trying to calm them down by shushing.

EVELYNN  
Alright, alright. Let's head inside  
first, okay?

Hunter and Emery start walking toward the house still bickering. Evelynn picks up her basket of tomatoes, but as she looks up, her gaze locks with Josey's. They both pause, a quiet moment stretching between them. Evelynn's eyes begin to well up, a small smile forming on her lips. Josey's eyes mirror her mother's, glistening with emotion.

JOSEY  
I... forgot the vegetables.

They share a bittersweet smile.