

INT. ELIZE'S HOUSE - DAY

The door swings open and FRANKIE, a young, disheveled woman, hurries in.

Her grandmother, ELIZE, lies on the couch. A HOSPICE NURSE looks up from her patient with a gentle smile.

HOSPICE NURSE
I'm glad you could make it so quickly. I'll give you two your privacy.

Frankie watches her go before turning to her grandmother, who looks up at her with a strangely determined expression.

She clutches a framed photo to her chest.

FRANKIE
(searching for the words)
The nurse called, she said it was time. Are you... are you okay?

Elize smiles tightly at her granddaughter.

ELIZE
I will be, but first I need to tell you something. Sit down.

Frankie sits at the edge of the couch. Elize's bony hand grasps hers.

FRANKIE
Save your strength, Grandma-

ELIZE
Do you ever wonder why you're the only one taking care of me?

Frankie stares at Elize, dumbfounded.

FRANKIE
I know you and Mom fought a lot. So do we, I know how she is.

ELIZE
That's different, your mother doesn't hate you.

FRANKIE
Mom doesn't hate you either.

Elize scowls, shutting her eyes.

ELIZE

No need to sugarcoat it. She hates me, and it's important you understand why.

FRANKIE

Grandma-

Elize grips Frankie's hand tighter.

ELIZE

Just listen. You need to hear this from me.

Frankie nods, biting her tongue. Elize picks up the photo with her free hand.

ELIZE (CONT'D)

You don't remember Owen, your grandfather.

FRANKIE

I don't, but Mom always talked about him like he hung the moon.

ELIZE

In her eyes, he did. He was a wonderful man to her. Treated her like his own.

FRANKIE

"His own?"

ELIZE

I made a mistake when I was young and your mother was the result. Owen was kind enough not to take it out on her.

Frankie gapes at the old woman, unable to believe what she's hearing.

FRANKIE

Is that why Mom won't talk to you? Because you let her think Grandpa was her real dad?

ELIZE

I thought it was for the best, and for a while it was. We were best friends, but now she can't look at me the same.

FRANKIE
(struggling to understand)
Why did you tell her at all?

ELIZE
When Owen died, the guilt became
too much. If I could only go back-

A coughing fit cuts her off.

FRANKIE
Grandma, I don't know what to say.

ELIZE
(weakly)
Just tell your mother I'm sorry,
okay? She may not know me anymore,
but she should know I love her. No
matter what.

Elize closes her eyes and releases a shaky breath. She goes still, the photo and Frankie's hand still tight in her grip.

Frankie stares with bloodshot eyes down at the woman she spent months caring for.

One she never truly knew at all.