

## Marla/Ashlyn - "Loft"

ASHLYN

Every town I go to, I try to build a new life. But then something happens, I say the wrong thing. And I remember what I learned all those years ago. I can hurt someone so bad that they stop loving me. And every time I leave, that's another story to tell. You see, Marla? I will never run out of stories. But they're the kind no one wants to hear.

MARLA

I want to hear them. And so should anyone who truly cares about you.

### START HERE

ASHLYN

You say that. I think you even mean it. But you built a family here and you brought me in and I should've warned you...I ruin families. That's what I do.

MARLA takes a beat.

MARLA

I've failed you. And everyone here. We have fun and tell stories and laugh, but there's deeper work we could be doing. Should be doing. I'm sorry I didn't see that until now. But it's important you know this: even if you did something wrong, and I don't think you did, there's a difference between doing something wrong...and being wrong. You're not a monster. You're someone with a lot of pain that hasn't quite figured out how to deal with it yet. You're just like the rest of us. Doing the best with what you have.

ASHLYN

I don't think my best is worth very much.

MARLA

And that's the kind of thinking you have to overcome. I know it's hard, but you must try.

ASHLYN

I don't want this. I never did. Why can't I just be normal?

MARLA

What's normal? Everyone carries burdens. And pain. And everyone has gifts. Most don't resemble parlor tricks, but that doesn't make them any less real. And that means we all struggle with the same question: what to do with the gifts we've been given?

ASHLYN

Every day, all I see is heartbreak ready to happen, all around me.

MARLA

And joy. You see that, too.

ASHLYN

Sometimes.

MARLA

You treat your gift like it's something to run away from. But what if you ran toward it? And through it. You may not be ready now. But when you are, I think you could do some good, Ash. You just have to believe you can.

ASHLYN takes this in. Looks around the loft.

END

ASHLYN

I was really happy here for a time.

MARLA

I know.

ASHLYN

You should keep doing it. It's too important.

MARLA

We'll see.

A beat.

ASHLYN

Do you really think there's someone who knows everything?

MARLA

If there is, do you think she wants the gift? Or would she trade a thousand voices telling her everything there is to know, for just some silence?

The lights fade out.