

Chrysanthemum

by  
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**Synopsis** - After inheriting her mother's flower shop, Lily plans to flip it and sell. With strong community support, she realizes why her mom started her business. Once set on selling, she instead keeps it, recognizing the shop is a way to honour and keep her mother's memory alive.

**Lily (24)** - After graduating college out of state, Lily feels uncertain about her future. Her hesitant, untrusting nature stems from a childhood of independence and distance from her mother. Surprised by an unexpected inheritance, she finds herself navigating unfamiliar territory, questioning her past and contemplating what this discovery means for her future.

**Ralph (57)** - Wise and strong, Ralph's job as a mover helps him connect with the community. He often provides empathic advice and is something of a father figure to Lily. His rough skin and beer belly give off a false perception, and could not be further from the teddy bear he truly is.

**Candice (73)** - Candice, a notorious gossip, spreads news faster than ever. Her big mouth, however, stems from joy and excitement rather than ill-intent. As a friend of Lily's mother, she is hurting more than others, but often does wellness checks on the community, taking over the motherly role that is now vacant.

**Marcus (41)** - Contractor by day, Marcus excels at fixing anything. Known for his generosity, he often offers his skills for free and is always ready to lend a helping hand. His dependable nature and willingness to assist others make him a valued friend and a reliable presence in any situation.

SCENE 1

LILY's new flower shop is quaint and cozy. Lined with various flowers in planters, and other miscellaneous plants in the centre.

she stands at front desk, in front of the cash register and a tip jar, half empty. Stacks of boxes scatter the stage, with one stack propping the door open, which is on the opposite side.

A SILENCE.

RALPH enters carrying a box.

RALPH

Alright, dear. That about does it.

Ralph sets the box down.

RALPH

Need anything else before I take off?

LILY

No. I don't think so. Thanks, Ralph.

Lily hands Ralph some cash.

LILY

Count it, if you want.

RALPH

No, it's alright. I'm sure it's all there.

Ralph slips it in his pocket.

A BEAT.

RALPH

You sure you're okay, Lil?

LILY

What did you know about her?

RALPH

Your mother? Oh, she was a great woman. She clearly raised you right, taking on the family biz. She would be proud.

LILY

I don't know about that. I'm gonna sell.

RALPH

You're kidding. Why's that?

LILY

It's bleeding money. She clearly wasn't the best business owner.

RALPH

Maybe. But what if she just needs someone to take over? Someone who knew her. And knew flowers.

LILY

It's not like that. I took one botanist class.

A beat.

RALPH

Well, whatever you decide, you're making the right decision for you. Sell, don't sell. Sell, don't sell. Sell...Don't sell.

Ralph chuckles.

LILY

I don't know, Ralph. It's just too much for me now. It's too raw.

RALPH

I know. I know you're hurting. I am, too. She left some big shoes to fill. But I know if you do choose to keep it, you'll do great.

Lily sighs.

RALPH

Remember, Lily, it's not about getting rich. It's about connecting with your mom. She built this place because she loved her community. Do you?

LILY

I don't know any of 'em.

RALPH

I think you'll be surprised at what these people have to offer. Just give it a little while.

LILY

Fine. I'll give it a chance. But if I have any doubts, I'm selling.

RALPH

That's all I need to hear. I'll be back with the rest of the boxes. Take care, kid.

LILY

Yeah, you too.

Lily moves the stack of boxes holding the door open. The door shuts. She turns around to see the state of repair the store needs.

LILY

Better get to work.

## SCENE 2

There are slightly less boxes than before. The flowers and plants are rearranged. Lily stands on a ladder, hanging a bell on the door.

CANDICE enters. The bell rings.

CANDICE

Lily, hon? Are you here?

LILY

Up here.

Candice turns around.

CANDICE

Oh, hey, lil. I just wanted to come and check on you. How are you holding up?

Lily steps off the ladder.

LILY

We're getting through it. I'm almost done with lights and just finished with the new bell. How are you doing, Candice?

CANDICE

I meant how are you holding up with your mom.

LILY

Oh. I'm okay, I guess. This place is keeping me busy.

CANDICE

A little birdie told me you're planning to sell?

LILY

I was at first. But, I don't know. Gonna give this place a chance. It's still in the cards, I suppose.

CANDICE

Well, I'd love to be your first customer.

LILY

Oh, really? I'm not technically open yet but thank you, that's so sweet. Let me see if I can do this.

Lily walks behind the counter.

LILY

What can I get you?

CANDICE

I'll take a few of your 'mums'

LILY

I'm sorry?

CANDICE

'Mums. Chrysanthemums.

LILY

Oh! Okay. Sorry, I wasn't aware people called them that.

Lily walks over to the pot of chrysanthemums. She picks out six, and walks back to the counter.

LILY

Half-dozen okay?

CANDICE

Please.

Lily wraps the flowers. She types at the register. It pops open with a ding.

LILY

Fifteen fifty.

Candice hands her a twenty dollar bill.

LILY

And you change is...Four fifty.

Lily hands her the change.

LILY

Here you are. Have a nice day.

CANDICE

Thanks, dear.

Candice puts her change in the tip jar. She opens the door. The bell rings. She stops at the door.

CANDICE

I don't know if this is what you want to here, but you remind me of your mom on her first day.

Lily chuckles.

LILY

Is that good?

CANDICE

It's certainly not bad.

A beat.

LILY

Thanks, Candice.

CANDICE

We're here for you.

Candice exits.

LILY

Mums? Hmm. That's cute.

SCENE 3

There are slightly less boxes than before. Lily paints the walls with a bright purple.

MARCUS enters. The bell rings.

MARCUS

Lil! Hey, so nice to see you again.

LILY

Oh hey, um... Marcus, right?

MARCUS

Yes! Last time I saw you, you were...Eight?

LILY

Ten, I think. What can I do for you?

MARCUS

Well, word got out your taking over, I just wanted to see if you needed help with anything. Heating? Lights? Plumbing?

LILY

Oh, thank you. I mean, I don't want to put you out, but I could use some help with... Everything.

MARCUS

No, no don't be crazy, happy to do it. Let me just get the tools from my truck, be right back.

Marcus exits. The bell rings. Lily continues rolling new paint on.

A beat.

Marcus enters with his tool box. The bell rings.

MARCUS

I'll get started on the lighting, here.

LILY

Great. Thanks.

MARCUS

You got it, kiddo.

Marcus climbs up the ladder with his tool box.

A beat.

Candice enters with a tray of coffees. The bell rings.

CANDICE

Hey, hon. I got you a coffee...Is that...Marcus!

Marcus chuckles.

MARCUS

Hey, you!

Marcus climbs down the ladder. He gives Candice a hug.

CANDICE

What are you doing here?

MARCUS

Just fixing up a few things for Lily.

CANDICE

I only got two coffees but I'll be right back, I'm going to get you one.

MARCUS

Nah, nah. Don't do that. Appreciate it, though.

LILY

He can have mine. I only drink tea.

CANDICE

Oh, well let me get you a tea, then. Marcus, take this one.

Marcus takes the coffee.

CANDICE

And I'll be right back with your tea, dear.

Candice exits. The bell rings.

MARCUS

She's great.

Marcus climbs back up the ladder.

LILY

Marcus?

MARCUS

Yup?

LILY

What was my mom like? You know, before it happened?

MARCUS

Oh, well, she was very kind, super sweet. She'd always talk about you, that's for sure.

LILY

I always thought she resented me for going away for school.

MARCUS

She didn't love it at first. But then, she saw how happy you were. That's all she ever wanted.

LILY

Wish she told me that. Wish I told her things, too. I hadn't spoken to her since before I left. I wish she called me.

MARCUS

Anything she needs to know will make its way to her. Trust me. Especially with Candice taking over the roll of town mom. You even think of something, she'll read your mind.

Lily chuckles.

LILY

That's true. I told her I *might* sell and now the whole town knows. I know it's all love though, she just gets so excited.

MARCUS

I saw you sold her some 'Mums?

LILY

Yeah, she was my first customer.

MARCUS

She won't be the last, that's for sure. You've got some great flowers, here. I may need a few for when I see my mother.

LILY

Yeah, sure.

Candice enters with a tea. The bell rings.

A SILENCE.

CANDICE

Were you just talking about me? What's going on?

MARCUS

(whispers to Lily)

Told you.

LILY

Just talking about how you were my first customer.

CANDICE

Oh, yes, I was! I love my flowers, they're so pretty.

Candice hands the tea to Lily

LILY

Thank you. And thank you.

CANDICE

You know, my niece is getting married in the spring, and she still needs her bouquet. You interested?

LILY

Um, yeah. Let me check something.

Lily walks behind the counter.

She pulls out a large binder and plops it on the counter.

LILY

I know my mom has a protocol for this kind of stuff. Had a protocol.

Lily flips through the many pages. She pulls out a slip of paper. She hands it to Candice.

LILY

Here. Give her that, and she can give me a call.

CANDICE

Thanks, dear.

#### SCENE 4

The walls are a bright purple. Lily and Candice are working on the last of the boxes. Marcus is working on the AC.

Ralph enters with a dolly of boxes. The bell rings.

RALPH

Delivery! Got more in the truck, too.

Lily groans. Ralph drops off the boxes.

LILY

Oh, please. No more boxes. Why do I have so much stuff? I should become a minimalist.

RALPH

Sorry, kiddo. You'll feel better once everything's unpacked. I'll even help you for a little while.

LILY

Please and thank you.

RALPH

Yeah, you got it!

Ralph leaves. The bell rings.

Lily unpacks the first of the boxes.

LILY

How did you hear?

CANDICE

About your mom? I was watching my grandbabies. I got a call from the hospital. I guess I was her emergency contact after the divorce. Of course, it took me by surprise. But to be honest, the first thing I thought of was how you were feeling.

LILY

Yeah. It caught me off guard too. I got the call about the shop before I found out about my mom. I didn't know which one to react to first.

A beat.

LILY

I knew she was sick. I just thought I'd have more time. You know, and I'd be able to apologize when I got back.

CANDICE

You know your mom never meant to put you in an awkward position to take this place.

LILY

Really? Cuz I feel it's exactly the kind of thing she'd do. Get upset about me leaving her for college and then handing me her *local* flower shop? I love her and all, but that's classic mom.

CANDICE

She's not that vindictive. I mean, she could be a little passive-aggressive sometimes, but who hasn't been once or twice? It's just human.

LILY

Then why do you think she left the store to me? If she knew she was dying, why didn't she sell it before?

CANDICE

Well, it's like you said hon. She knew she was dying. I guess it wasn't her first priority.

LILY

Yeah, right. I'm sorry.

Ralph enters with more boxes. The bell rings.

RALPH

Am I interrupting?

LILY

No, it's fine. Thanks for your help, Ralph.

Lily gives Ralph a hug.

RALPH

Oh. Sure thing, kiddo. We don't want you to be alone.

MARCUS

A/C's on!

Candice shivers.

CANDICE

Is it full blast?

MARCUS

Well, yeah. We don't want the flowers to wilt, right?

RALPH

Not sure if that's how it works.

MARCUS

Surely the cool temp will keep the flowers alive for longer?

RALPH

Sure, but what about the windows? The green house effect? Won't the glass just trap heat?

MARCUS

Just because there are windows, doesn't make this place a greenhouse.

CANDICE

No, no. You guys know nothing. The A/C isn't going to turn this place into a fridge and the six windows in this place won't trap enough heat. Unless I'm wrong. I don't know. Lily?

Everyone turns to Lily.

LILY

I think we've gone off track, here.

MARCUS

You're right, she's right. Let's focus.

LILY

But Candice is right.

Marcus and Ralph exclaim.

CANDICE

I knew it! This old brain is still young enough to kick your butts!

Candice hugs Lily

CANDICE

Thank you, dear.

The four unpack boxes and fix up the store.

A LONG PAUSE.

MARCUS

I still think I'm right.

Everyone shouts at the same time.

CANDICE

Oh, come on!

RALPH

Seriously?

LILY

Marcus!

## SCENE 5

Everyone is unpacking the last of the boxes. There store almost looks ready to go...Almost.

RALPH

You sure you're going to be okay keeping this place running?

LILY

I'll be fine. I'll learn as I go.

RALPH

I just can't help but think I made you do this.

LILY

You were definitely an influence, but I think it's the right call.

RALPH

Okay, glad to hear it. You know I'm only a couple doors down, right. You need *anything* you come to me.

LILY

Thank's Ralph.

Lily turns to everyone.

LILY

Thanks for all your help. I really appreciate it. You guys have inspired me so much. You're good people, with big hearts.

CANDICE

And I think I speak for all of us when I say thank you too, hon. We really admire what you're doing. Your mom would be proud.

LILY

Yeah, I suppose I still need to reflect on a few things before I'm officially open for business. But I know I can do it.

MARCUS

You can do anything you put your mind to. I know you'll thrive.

LILY

Before you guys take off, I wanted to show you something.

Lily pulls out a SIGN covered by a sheet.

LILY

It wouldn't feel right to name the store anything else...

Lily pulls off the sheet revealing the store's name: *Mum's Flower Shop*

A PAUSE.

They gasp.

CANDICE

Lily, honey. I'm speechless.

MARCUS

When did you this? We were together the whole day.

LILY

While we taking our last break. I snuck off to the sign store.

RALPH

It's the best of you and your mom.

LILY

I could use some help putting it up.

MARCUS

Say no more.

Marcus positions the ladder and Ralph grabs the sign. They attach the sign to the hooks.

CANDICE

It's perfect.

Marcus and Ralph join Lily and Candice in admiring the sign.

A beat.

Lily chuckles.

LILY

I think that's it! You guys can take off.

Every one leaves the store after hugging Lily one-by-one. The bell rings each time.

A SILENCE.

LILY

Well, I guess I'm open for business.

Lily walks over to the chrysanthemums.  
Puts one on her heart.

A SILENCE.

LILY

I love you, 'mum.

FADE TO BLACK.