

~ Nirvana ~

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Disclaimer

Love/Relationships: This story features relationships between adult women. If this bothers you, is illegal in the State, Province or Country where you live or if you are under the age of 18, find something else to read. There are loads of general stories out there.

Sex: If the story dictates, scenes of a sexual relationship will occur. It is not my policy to just add an erroneous sexual scene for shock value or to increase my readership. This particular story has no sexual scenes.

Language: There is the use of a few expletives.

Violence: There is no violence in this story.

Hurt/Comfort: There are scenes of heartache to be dealt with by the characters.

Acknowledgement: This story is for my dear friend Vi whom I affectionately call Moi. Thank you Julie for your guidance in taking my writing to a new level.

Author's Personal Note: Nirvana literally means "The blowing out of a candle". The fire that goes out does not pass away, but merely becomes invisible by passing into a conscious experience of space (akasha); thus the term nirvana does not indicate annihilation but rather entry into another mode of existence and experience.

To listen to a live Lucinda Williams concert go [here](#).

"Winnie, Winnie over here. Turning before she went backstage, she smiled as the flash went off.

"Winnie," the reporter said following her. "One more question, what do you attribute your successful show to?"

Stopping, she sighed. "There were many events that lead to this night but the one defining moment was three days five years ago."

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Winnie basked in the glow of success as her first major show featuring the Winifred James line of clothes, came to a conclusion. The reception that followed included dignitaries, friends, models, fashion reporters and other well wisher.

Turning around when she felt a tap on her shoulder, she smiled brilliantly and embraced a woman. "Bess you made it."

"I wouldn't have missed this for anything Winnie. I am so proud of you." Stepping back she gave the young woman a once over. "You look so good - success agrees with you."

"I owe it all to you Bess. If you hadn't given me the senator's account..."

Interrupting, Bess patted her hand, "you were always destined for this." Extending her hand to the woman by Winnie's side, she said, "Its good to see you again Doctor."

Taking the offered hand, Rita smiled. "You too Bess." Raising her glass, she added, "If you two will excuse me I will get us refills."

Bess turned back to Winnie. "You will never guess who came into the shop about six months ago"

Questioning eyes spoke.

"Your very first client, what was her name?"

"Eleanor Powers." Straightening her back and gulping deeply, Winnie's eyes searched the crowd for Rita. "Really, did she buy anything?" Her eyes refused to connect with Bess'.

"No, she said she would only do business with you. She acted like you were her personal property demanding to know where you were." Bess' derisive laugh made Winnie look directly at her.

"What do you mean?" she asked relieved that Rita was making her way towards them.

"There was no way I was going to tell her anything about you. I never did like her and thought even less of her when she tried to intimidate me into revealing where you were. Now mind you, I wanted to tell her about your upcoming show but I wouldn't give her that satisfaction."

Coming up to them and putting a comforting arm around Winnie, Rita laughed. "You two look way too serious for such a wonderful day. What's going on?"

Easing back into the reassuring arm, Winnie sighed. "Nothing we were just talking about old times." Wistfully she looked around the room. "It's kinda hard to believe this all is real."

"Oh it is," Bess said patting her friend's arm. "And, you deserve every minute of it dear so relax and enjoy the ride."

"I will Bess, thank you." Smiling warmly she sighed. "No rest for the weary, I need to mingle. Please excuse me."

Watching Winnie walk away, Bess turned to Rita. "For a time I was really worried about her." She touched Rita's arm. "Thank you for coming into her life I think you are really good for her."

Blushing, Rita smiled. "It works both ways." Her eyes tracked to the blonde who was chatting amicably with a reporter. The mask of happiness that Winnie wore for her guests was not lost to her. *Something is obviously bothering her. I will get to the bottom of it and find out what or who upset her. If it is a person they will be sorry.* "She is very special and I'm the lucky one."

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Winnie finally allowed her shoulders to relax as satisfaction crept over her face while she shook the hand of the last guest to leave. Brenda Baxter, her assistant, scurried around the room picking up glasses and plates.

"Brenda leave those be, the caterers will take care of them tomorrow."

"Are you sure, I don't mind."

"Yep, why don't you go home and I will see you on Monday."

"Okay if you're sure."

"I am, now get going."

Approaching Winnie from behind, Rita wrapped her arms around her lover. Whispering in an ear she said, "Have I told you lately how much I love you and how proud I am of you."

"Hmm, I think I heard you say that about," lifting her arm and looking at her wristwatch, "five hours ago."

Nestling in closer, Rita kissed Winnie's neck. Pulling back she asked. "So what were you and Bess talking about that got you so upset?"

Reaching up, Winnie pulled Rita's hand apart then turned to face the woman. "She said Eleanor had been in six months ago looking for me."

Rita laughed sarcastically. "Well that would be a mood buster. What else did she say?"

"Not much really." Winnie's eyes saddened. "Will it ever go away?"

Pulling Winnie closer so she rested on her shoulder, Rita whispered, "No, but we have our support group remember?"

Breathing in the scent of the woman she loved, Winnie's mind drifted back to five years earlier...

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Pacing the floor, she kept checking the time and looking out the window. Whispering into the soft fur of her cat she asked, "Do you think she will actually show up?" Looking at the clock again she sighed. "Well we should know in about five minutes unless of course, she's like Eleanor and will have an excuse."

Jumping slightly at the sound of the buzzer, Winnie rushed to push the button. 'Hmm, she is a few minutes early. Maybe she is different,' she thought as she opened the door. "Hi."

"Hi yourself. Are you ready, I've got a cab waiting."

Grabbing her keys off the table by the door, Winnie smiled. "Yep, let's go." Closing and locking the door, Winnie followed the doctor down the stairs and into the cab. "So where are we going?"

"A little Italian place in the east village - it's one of my favorites."

"Sounds great," Winnie said guardedly not allowing her emotions to overshadow the night.

Arriving at Frank's, Winnie and Rita were greeted by a gray haired man, "Ah, Doctor it is good to see you again," he said in a thick Italian accent. "I have a nice table just for you."

Looking over the menu, Winnie peered covertly at the woman across from her. "What do you recommend?"

"Just about anything on the menu is good Winnie. My personal favorite is the linguine with sausage but I've had the rosemary chicken which is quite good too."

After placing the order, a few minutes of awkward silence ensued. "Did your parent's name you after Rita Hayworth?"

Rita laughed heartily. "Well, with red hair and green eyes it was a choice between Rita and Scarlet. I think I lucked out. What about you... are you named after anyone."

"Would you believe a maiden aunt? I think my parents were trying to make up for the fact that she had no children."

Both women sighed before relaxing into comfortable conversation once the ice had been broken.

"That meal was absolutely wonderful." Placing her fork on the plate, Winnie sighed in satisfaction. "How did you ever find this place?"

"I used to live right down the street. The food here was delicious and best of all it was cheap which was great for a struggling resident." Rita said happily. "I'm glad you like it."

"What field of medicine do you specialize in?"

"I'm an internist. My practice is with a group in uptown Manhattan." For a long moment they sat silent each deep in thought. Finally, looking deeply into the blue eyes, Rita cocked her head and asked, "So how did Eleanor find you?"

Scrunching her face up in a frown, Winnie tried to find her voice. Finally she said, "Oh she didn't find me it was more of an accident - she really wanted Bess." Wiping a hand over her eyes, she continued, "I had never met anyone so charming and captivating," she said sadly.

Reaching across the table, Rita touched her hand. "Hey, remember we are in this together."

"Yeah, so how did you meet her? You said she came in for a physical, were you her doctor?"

"No, she found me. I was doing an internal medicine residency at Mount Sinai and she showed up in the clinic demanding to have a physical and insisting I was to be her physician." Rita laughed. "Her presence alone makes things happen for her so she got the appointment. I remember when I walked into the exam room and saw her it was..." With eyes rolling upwards, she tried to find the right words. "Damn, she took my breath away. I had never met or seen anyone so completely beguiling and I was instantly drawn to her." Shaking her head, Rita laughed softly. "She managed to make the

entire exam a sensual experience. When I listened to her heart she took the stethoscope away and opened her gown telling me I could hear the beat clearer that way. Of course when she did that it exposed her breast and I had to fight to keep my eyes from them. I remember thinking she must hear mine pounding." Sighing deeply, she smiled forlornly. "I was totally smitten and I am sure she knew it. She insisted on a gynecological exam. I didn't need much lubricant and when I did the internal exam I felt her contract around my fingers." She shrugged. "By the end of the exam I couldn't think straight so when she bent in and kissed me I lost all control. Damn, I could have thrown my whole career away for that but it didn't matter, all that I cared about was her. Then I had my three days and she broke my heart."

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That night started Winnie on the road to recovery from Eleanor Powers by taking her first tentative steps towards finding true love with Rita Pomeroy.

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Stretching, Winnie opened her eyes and smiled. The night before had been a wonderful success; all her dreams for becoming a fashion designer came true. Her eyes tracked to the empty pillow beside her. "Rita?"

"Good morning beautiful," Rita said with a smile as she came into the bedroom carrying a tray laden with breakfast. "Bet you're hungry this morning. I have all your favorites."

Sitting up with a pillow propped behind her back, her eyes grew wide as the tray was placed over her lap. "Who else is joining us?" she said laughingly.

"Not to worry my dear I know you can eat it all." Bending in, she gave Winnie a quick kiss before she moved around to the other side of the bed. "Mind if I join you?" Snuggling up close to Winnie, she snagged a piece of toast before picking up the paper. "Shall we see what's in the

paper?" She flipped through the various sections before dramatically opening the style section.

Craning her neck so she could read, Winnie begged, "Come on, let me see too."

Positioning the paper away from Winnie's view, Rita smiled slyly. "All in good time darlin'."

"So what does it say?"

"Well, there is an interesting article on how to dress appropriately for a wedding." She continued to peruse the page. "Oh and there's one here about some new designer."

"Rita!"

Folding the paper back slightly Rita leaned over and kissed Winnie's cheek. "Since you asked so nicely I will read it to you."

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Has Winifred James arrived? Has she crossed the threshold from promising newcomer into a style establishment? Those uncertain of her fate when they turned up Saturday afternoon at her first big runway show had only to glance at the parade of models in stylish fashions to make up their minds. The new darling of the fashion world is sure to be a favorite of the not only the business world but of the ladies' lunch set too. Her designs are fresh, affordable classics with a bit more edge than Ralph Lauren. In the previous season, she focused on party dresses of the breezy romantic variety, but has for the spring, branched out into daywear. She has married light weight leg-lengthening trousers with tiny knit sweaters and added adorable drop-waist dresses in breezy cotton-silk that looked just right with flat sandals. When James came out the end of the show for her bow, she was greeted to a standing ovation as the models made one last lap down the runway. The accolades that will come to this talented young lady are all well deserved for the mass appeal of the line should have James' ever growing following coming back for more.

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"There you have it babe, you've arrived." Picking up the tray and placing it on the floor, she pulled Winnie in close. "I am so proud of you."

Whispering with a shaky voice, Winnie said, "I couldn't have done it without you."

"Sure you could you were always destined for great things."

Moving close so that there was no separation between them, overwhelming emotion caused tears to roll down her cheeks. "I may have been but that all would have been buried if you hadn't come into my life. I was so devastated after the experience I didn't want to go on. Then there you were standing at my door and everything changed after that."

"As you changed mine." Kissing the top of Winnie's head Rita sighed happily. "Remember that day when you first showed me your designs?"

"Yes." Winnie laughed.

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They had been talking to each other daily since their first dinner date. Several times a week they would meet and go out to the theater, dinner or visit the city's numerous museums. After they had known each other for two months, they shared a picnic lunch in a park across the street from Winnie's apartment.

Stretching out on the blanket, Rita asked, "What are you dreams?"

"I've always wanted to have my own line of clothing."

"So why haven't you done that? You certainly have the education and training for that."

"I'm afraid. What if I fail."

Sitting up and looking squarely in the blue eyes, Rita smiled. "Then you try again. Have you done any designs?"

"You make it sound so easy. There is so much more involved then just design."

"Of course there is Winnie, anything worth doing is involved but you never know until you try."

Shrugging, Winnie focused on a distant tree. "I have some designs," she said quietly.

"Want to show me?"

A brilliant seductive smile crossed Winnie's face. "Do you want to come back to my place and see my etchings?" She wiggled her eyebrows.

Scrambling to her feet, Rita held out her hand. "Let's go."

After months of getting to know each other and falling in love that night they sealed their love for each other.

Unlike Eleanor, Rita was focused on making love as a joint experience. She was passionate, loving and eager to fulfill all of Winnie's needs. Gradually Winnie realized what it was to be loved and not taken. Nothing in her experiences with Eleanor had prepared her for the deep loving feelings she had for Rita. Sex wasn't only about heart pounding orgasms but was more about deep feelings of tenderness and love.

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The rest of the morning after the show had been one of renewing their deep love and commitment to each other. Standing at the window, Winnie watched as a fall rain fell softly on the pavement below. A look of warmth and love crossed her face as she felt the strong loving arms of Rita encircle her waist.

"You ready to go?"

"Yes, I want to get all those flowers over to the hospital today." She leaned into her lover's body. "And, I need to write thank you notes." Turning to look into Rita's green eyes, she grimaced. "I hate doing that." Stealing a quick kiss she added, "you sure you want to come you don't have to you know."

Rita laughed deeply. "You know I think step number six says we have to help each other. Does that include thank you notes?"

"Absolutely. Come on let's go and get it over with then we can go to Frank's for dinner...my treat."

"Sure you don't want to go to some place fancy now that you are *the new darling of the fashion world.*"

Slapping Rita gently, she made a face. "I'm no one's darling but yours."

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Sitting at her desk with the pile of cards from the flowers in front of her, Winnie sighed. "Better get to it." Her eyes drifted to Rita who was taking armloads of flowers out to the van. *She has the easier job. Get your rear in gear Winnie these people thought enough to send congratulatory flowers the least you can do is thank them.* Picking up the stack, she flipped through them looking for the one from her parents. Holding a card in her hand, she shook her head, read it again then began to shake.

Winnie, congratulations on your success...my money was always on you for greatness. I will be in the audience cheering you on. Love, Eleanor.

Dropping all the other cards, she brought the card to her face and kissed it gently. "She was here," she whispered, "she was here."

A tear coursed its way down her cheek as all the feelings for the woman flooded back to her. She remembered the last time she heard Eleanor's voice...

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"Winifred, I've been thinking about you."

Winnie couldn't speak or believe that it was actually Eleanor on the phone.

Eleanor's voice was low and sultry laced with familiar sexuality and desire. "Have you been thinking about me? I certainly think about you everyday."

Finally Winnie found her voice. She and Rita had discussed what to do when this moment came but all that went out the window as Winnie's body and mind went into overdrive with desire. "Why are you calling me?"

"Ah, you know why Winnie. I want you."

'God no, I can't fall into her trap'. "Eleanor I can't speak with you right now I have a client."

Just as Rita had predicted, Eleanor's voice changed from warmth to ice. "Just come to my apartment tonight."

It took all of Winnie's resolve to answer, "I can't do that."

"You can and you will," Eleanor ordered before she hung up.

She spent that night crying in Rita's arms.

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That had been five years earlier and so much had happened to her since then. She had found love and her true calling in fashion design. Eleanor was in the past along with all the old feelings that the woman invoked. *Or is she?* Rita had been her salvation, her lover and best friend - still, just seeing a card that Eleanor had written filled her with a passion she had never known with Rita. *I do love Rita don't I? Of course I do she is everything I could have ever hoped for. But, why*

do I feel so turned on by this stupid gesture of Eleanor's? I can't let her do this to me I can't...

Coming back inside and seeing the stricken look on her partner's face, Rita hurried across the room. "Hey, are you okay?"

Refusing to make eye contact, Winnie just handed Rita the card.

Rita took the card, read it and then, breathing deeply, gently placed it on the desk. "Wanna talk about it?"

Still declining to look up, Winnie said, "There's nothing to say. It just took me by surprise that's all." Finally she looked up into Rita's eyes and saw the concern there. "Did you get all the flowers loaded?"

I can't believe the nerve of her to send those flowers. Damn I know the feeling and it is like being punched in the gut. "Yep." The bitch has no heart.

"Good, let's go deliver them. I think we need to know that we can do something good for others."

Pointing at the cards Rita raised an eyebrow. "What about those?"

"We can both answer them when we get back."

"And, hers?" Rita bit out bitterly.

"She doesn't deserve a response." Watching as Rita turned to leave, she picked up Eleanor's card and slipped it in her pocket.

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Rita eyed Winnie as they ate dinner. She knew the far away look was a result of Eleanor entering their lives again. *Can we ever get passed allowing her to upset our lives?*

"Wanna talk about it?" she asked again sounding like a broken record. She was determined to find out why her lover was in such an emotional

turmoil. Of course she knew, but Winnie needed to bring it out into the open so they could discuss it together.

"About what?" Winnie's eyes concentrated on her plate of linguine.

Blowing out a frustrated breath, Rita shook her head. "You know what, Winnie. We have a deal. Remember? We talk about what is going on in our heads regarding *her*."

Instinctively Winnie's hand went to her pocket and fingered the card. "There's nothing to talk about." Focusing her blue eyes directly on the green ones across from her, she smiled thinly. "She's nothing to me Rita. Yes, the card upset me but not for the reason you're thinking."

"What am I thinking?"

"That she still has a hold on me - she doesn't - not anymore." Placing her fork on the plate she reached for Rita's hand. "You are the one that makes my heart smile and sing - no one else."

Pulling her hand away, Rita frowned. "I thought we weren't going to lie to each other about *her*."

Cocking her head and frowning, a tear trickled from her eye. "I love you and no one else."

"I'm sure you do," Rita said in a defeated tone as the thought of Eleanor played on the edges of her mind. "We need to discuss what you're feeling." Green bore into blue. "I love you. You can trust me."

"I do trust you! I feel like I want to run and hide." Then the corners of Winnie's mouth crinkled in a smile as she reached for Rita's hand again. "What do you say we go home? I need to feel your arms around me."

Knowing that the discussion of Winnie's feelings about Eleanor and the card were over, Rita fished in her pocket for money. She placed a ten and twenty on the table and said resignedly, "Let's go." *Tonight we will celebrate our love and push Eleanor out of our lives again.*

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Throwing the charcoal pencil on the pad in frustration, Winnie scrapped her chair back and got up. Concentration was impossible and she knew why. Eleanor had invaded her thoughts continually since she read the card and flowers from the woman. "Damn what am I going to do?" Reaching in her jacket pocket, she took out the card and held it close to her heart.

It had been five years and the number was still etched in her mind. As much as she hated herself for what she was about to do, her finger, seemingly with a mind of its own, quickly punched the buttons.

"Eleanor Powers' office my I help you?" a woman's voice asked.

"Yes, this is Winifred James, is there any chance of speaking with Ms. Powers?"

"Just a moment."

Unbelievable! I didn't get the run around. Fear gripped her heart as she realized that she might just speak with Eleanor.

"Winnie, is it really you?" the voice said happily.

"Um...a...a...yes."

"I am so glad you called. How have you been?"

There was an edge of happiness to Eleanor's tone that Winnie had never heard before. She couldn't believe that she was actually hearing the one voice she longed to hear for so many years. "I...I just wanted to thank you for the flowers they were lovely."

"I'm pleased you like them. Your show was spectacular Winnie. I always knew you were destined for greatness."

The voice sounded so sincere and kind. *Who is this person? Has she changed?* "Thank you I wish I had known you were in the audience. You should have come back stage for the party."

"I didn't think I would be welcomed." Hurt seemingly laced Eleanor's voice.

Momentarily taken aback, Winnie didn't know what to say. *Would I have welcomed her?* The resounding answer to her question was *yes*. "It would have been great to see you again Eleanor."

"Have dinner with me."

"I can't."

"Please I want to see you...I've missed you terribly over the last five years."

Can it be that she really missed me? She knows how long it has been...maybe she has changed maybe... "No, I can't. I really can't. I'm involved with someone."

"Please," Eleanor whispered. "Please meet me for dinner. I need to see you."

"When?"

"Friday."

"Where?"

"The Olica. Remember it is at the Beverly...you said it was one of the best meals you ever had."

"What time?"

"Seven."

"I'll be there."

"Thank you Winnie. See you then." Eleanor paused, "I love you," she said with a sincerity she never felt before - the line had already been disconnected.

Hanging up the phone, Winnie brought her hands to her face and splayed her fingers as tears began to fall unabated. "What have I done? Oh Rita I am so sorry. What a loser I am" The guilt over the betrayal to her lover was pushed aside as the vision of Eleanor's face drifted into her mind. Tears were replaced with warm feelings as she recalled the sound of Eleanor's voice. *I wonder if she has changed much. Will she still be as beautiful? Have the last five years been kind to her?* Rising to the surface of her consciousness was Rita's face as the tears that had been held in check, rolled down her cheeks.

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For the next three days guilt and shame filled Winnie. At the same time, the anticipation of seeing Eleanor again turned her on like nothing had since she had last been with the woman. Nights would find her in Rita's arms making love with a ferocity that they had never experienced. During the evenings they wouldn't speak much each seemingly lost in their own thoughts. Often Rita would stare at her with a questioning look on her face.

Their relationship had changed and Rita knew why - Eleanor Powers. *How can I fault her when I have felt the overwhelming influence of her on more occasions than I care to remember? How would I react if she called me?* Her mind drifted back two years when her cell phone rang and how overwhelmed she felt when she heard Eleanor's voice.

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*"Rita, I need to see you tomorrow night," the authoritative voice said.
"You know where to meet me."*

She blew out a breath. "A hello would have been nice."

"Just be there."

"No can do El."

"Unacceptable."

"Maybe so, but I won't be there. I've moved on and it doesn't include you," Rita said unconvincingly.

"I haven't time to play this game Rita. I will expect you at seven."

The phone went dead and Rita just stared at it. "The nerve of her. Wait until I tell Winnie." Her mind fought with her body as the old familiar feelings of the lust that Eleanor caused tried to take hold. "Maybe I won't tell her." The next night, Rita said she had to work late and went to the special meeting place and clandestinely watched as Eleanor waited for her. Watching the woman sitting there, Rita felt for the first time that she had the power. She could choose to go to Eleanor or leave - she left.

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Now, a patient kept her at the hospital when all she really wanted to do was go home and tell Winnie about that remembered incident. Winnie was having a hard time and she knew if she shared her experience she could help her. Hearing her lover's voice she smiled. "Hey, I've got a critical patient so I don't wait dinner. I'm not sure when I'll be home."

"Do what you need to babe I will be here when you get home."

"Thanks. Hey, when I get home I have something important to tell you," she said before adding, "Winnie?"

"Yes."

"I love you so much. Thank you for being there for me."

"Anytime, hurry home."

Hanging up the phone, Winnie sat down at the table and ate a lonely meal. Looking around the home that she and Rita shared she wondered what it would be like not to have the woman in her life. *Do I really love her or is she just a substitute for Eleanor because she knew her too?* A shiver shot through her body as she recalled the unbridled passion she felt for Eleanor. Putting the food away and the dishes in the

dishwasher, she headed for the shower and bed. All the while thoughts of Eleanor danced through her mind.

Rita crawled in next to her and kissed her cheek.

"You're home," a sleepy Winnie said.

"Yeah, it's late, go back to sleep."

"How's your patient?"

"He's going to make it."

"I'm glad. What did you want to tell me?" Winnie asked as she drifted off back to sleep.

Rita gazed at the face that she deeply loved. "It'll wait until morning."

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She entered the house and went up a staircase before she noticed that the walls, ceilings and floors were all gone and the steps were only one thin board wide. Reaching the landing she saw the rafters that supported the non-existent floor. Across the way was a door with a familiar figure standing in it.

Terrified yet comforted by the sight she asked, "Who are you?"

The figure began hovering just above the rafters with a long white finger beckoning her. "Come to me," a haunting voice called.

She tried desperately to see who it was but there was a white fog clouding the face. But, she felt unconditional love from the entity and knew it could only be Rita. A sense of warmth filled her heart. Looking at the spindly rafters, she shook her head. "I can't it won't support me."

The figure, floating back towards the door, drifted inside.

"Don't go please wait for me. I'll find a way."

"It's too late for that. You betrayed me."

A great sense of loss filled her subconscious as her body trembled. Turning, she saw a menacing figure encased in flames moving up the stairway towards her. Fear filled her heart as the apparition began to engulf her in a fiery embrace while seductively touching her skin. She felt her body being pierced as if her flesh was being devoured down to the bone.

Desperate to get away, her arms raise and clenched fists began beating back the flames as her eyes tried to see the face. "Noooooo," she screamed as she recognized who was trying to greedily consume her. Eleanor was upon her and wouldn't let her go!

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Wrapping her arms around the flailing Winnie, Rita pulled her into a loving embrace. "It's okay it's only a dream."

Winnie's eyes flew open. "Oh Rita I am so sorry."

"Hey, nothing to be sorry for I wasn't asleep."

"No," Winnie said shakily. "Not for that." Lifting her head, her teary eyes searched out the green ones she did love. "I called her...I told her I would meet her for dinner tomorrow night - why did I do that? Why?"

Kissing the top of the dark blonde head, Rita held her lover closer. She wasn't surprised by Winnie's confession. When she had seen the card she knew exactly what Winnie's reaction would be. After all, she had the same one two years earlier. Also, there was a tinge of jealousy but not for Eleanor - Winnie had contact and she did not. "What do you say we put an end to this for once and all?"

Terrified by the words, Winnie pulled back. "You're leaving me?"

Surprised by the comment, Rita frowned. "Never. I meant let's put an end to Eleanor in our lives. We can't move forward if she is lurking in every corner."

"How do we do that? We've tried for five years and all she had to do was send some flowers with a stupid card and I am slinking around trying to see her again!"

A sly smile crossed Rita's face. "I have a plan..."

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Walking into the restaurant Winnie rubbed the nap of her neck feeling the pull of Eleanor long before she saw her. Dark blue eyes found her lighter ones searing her with desire and passion. Feet moving of their own accord, found their way to the table where she immediately clung to the chair back for support - her knees threatening to give out. Eleanor was at her side wrapping an arm around her for support.

"Are you okay," she asked gently.

The closeness of the woman made Winnie feel lightheaded as she allowed herself to be guided into the chair. "Thank you." She looked curiously at Eleanor. *Something is different about her. She actually is gentle and kind. Is it possible that she has changed?*

"Certainly," Eleanor replied as she took her own seat. Smoldering blue eyes appraised Winnie. "You are looking well."

Briefly closing her eyes, Winnie smiled back at the woman. "Thank you."

"Your show was outstanding. When you came out and took your bow I thought that success looked good on you."

"I wish I had known you were there Eleanor...you should have come backstage."

"Believe me I was tempted but..." she smiled seductively, "you and I have this...um, connection and...well let's just say it wouldn't have done for the star to disappear."

Gulping down the urge to let her stomach have its way, she smiled thinly. "Yes, it wouldn't have been a good idea."

A young, attractive woman approached the table. Her face was flushed and her eyes betrayed the desire she felt. "Ms. Powers, would you care for something from the bar?" she asked with a familiar tone.

Dark blue eyes that never left the young woman's ample breast, appraised them lustfully. "Yes." Eleanor's hand reached out and touched the girl's arm. "We will have the house Merlot." Her eyes moved up to capture the anticipatory brown ones as her hand moved back to the table. "Thank you, Kait."

Turning back to Winnie, she smiled. "I remember how fond you were of the Merlot the last time we ate here."

She hasn't changed at all. I can't believe I even entertained the idea. As she watched Eleanor seducing the young waitress, Winnie's stomach churned. Back off bitch, tonight she's mine.

Returning to the table with the drinks, Kait asked, "Would you like to order now?"

Again Eleanor eyes captured the young waitress'. "Hmm, Winnie is there anything you'd like to eat?"

The meaning of the question was not lost on Winnie or the waitress who grinned seductively. Unabashed lust seemed to fill Winnie's voice. "I'll let you select what and where we eat."

Eleanor nodded and stood up. "Charge the drinks to my room and be sure to give yourself a generous tip." Then she leaned into the waitress, whispered something that made the young woman smile and gently kissed her cheek. Taking a few steps, she stood by Winnie. "Shall we go? I'm very hungry."

Winnie held her breath as they stood hip to hip in the elevator that they shared with two other couples. Eleanor's hand, finding its way to her back, gently rubbed her waistline. Getting out, Winnie could feel

her heart racing while she grew wetter as her steps took her closer to Eleanor's suite.

The older woman swiped her keycard and opened the door. "Here we are. I hope you're as hungry as I am."

"Mm-hmm," was all Winnie said as she entered the room. "All my dreams are about to come true." Turning, she smiled seductively as Eleanor began to close the door only to have it pushed back open.

"What are you doing here?" Eleanor demanded.

Shoving her way into the room, Rita said, "Oh I came to watch."

"No one invited you! Get out!"

Walking over to Winnie and pulling her close, Rita kissed her soundly before answering. "Oh I was invited wasn't I darling?"

"Yes," Winnie murmured before kissing her lover again.

With eyes wide and mouth opened, Eleanor was speechless; something that was foreign to her. Here in her domain was the epitome of what she craved - a close relationship with the woman she now found she loved. Finally regaining her composure, she wasn't going to allow the two women make her look a fool and remarked in a sultry tone, "Hmm, it has been a long time since I had two beautiful women in my bed at the same time." Moving closer, she gave them a lustful look. "Oh yes, the two of you pleasuring me at the same time will be spectacular."

Rita was the first to speak. "I don't think you understand El, you aren't part of this equation."

Her face filled with rage. "Excuse me? You have no say in this! Winnie is here to be with me."

"No I'm not. I'm here to get you out of my life."

Veins popped out on the long neck as fury gained a foothold. "I'll never be out of your life." She pointed towards Rita. "You want her over me? Get real she isn't even a good fuck."

"Now, that is where you are wrong. Rita is everything I ever want."

A cruel laugh emanated from Eleanor. "Did she ever tell you how she drugged you then laid down on your bedroom floor and screamed out my name for more? Or how we did it for hours on your couch while you were under the influence of the sedative she gave you? She couldn't get enough." Seeing the wounded look in Winnie's eyes she knew she had hit the mark.

Rita put a protective arm around Winnie's shoulder in an attempt to soften the blows.

"I was her first Rita and you will never measure up. Does she still taste wonderful or did she just produce that special elixir for me?" Maliciously she added, "Do her fingers do that special move inside you? I had her first and taught her everything. No wonder you want her it's like having me all the time." Grasping Winnie's arm she pulled her close. "Let's go. I've wasted too much time on this charade."

Winnie wrestled her arm away. "You are so egotistical! Don't you get it? I don't want anything to do with you! I'm nothing more than another conquest to you. Go fuck that waitress. No, on second thought don't, she deserves so much better." Winnie took Rita's hand. "Come on let's go, we're finished here."

"No one leaves me!" Eleanor shrieked as they opened the door.

"Get used to it Eleanor. You're not getting any younger. Sooner, rather than later, no one will want you unless you pay them," Winnie spat out angrily. "Maybe you should get yourself a cat if you want a pussy."

Realizing that Winnie was actually leaving, Eleanor's eyes captured hers. "Please don't leave," Eleanor whispered, "I need you." Tears brimmed in the dark blue eyes.

Refusing to let the pull of the dark blue eyes ensnare her, Winnie shook her head. "Well I don't need you anymore," she said softly as she walked through the door and closed it gently.

Rushing to the door, Eleanor grabbed hold of the knob. Freely flowing tears were wiped quickly away as she turned the handle. Stopping, she straightened her back and let go. "I've never chased after anyone in my life why start now." Emptiness invaded her heart. *I need her that's why. All these years I have denied the hold she has on me. Everyone I fucked I compared to her and no one was ever as good. God, why did I have to go after Kait like that? Oh yeah, to prove to Winnie I didn't need her...but I do. Why is she with Rita of all people?* She remembered the night she called the doctor to take care of Winnie. *I brought them together.* Tears of her loss saturated her red silk blouse soaking through to her skin. She did not care for nothing seemed to matter anymore.

Going over to the desk, she opened the drawer, took out a jeweler's box and opened it. She had never bought jewelry for any of her lovers, but this time she had. Lovingly she touched the heart shaped necklace before turning it over to read the inscription. *ILY Winnie, E.* Sighing deeply, she closed the box. *So much for that. What a fool I was to think that I could settle down with anyone,* she sadly thought. *But, oh how I wanted just that. Winnie could have been the one. She was the one I know that now.*

Angry for being so foolish, Eleanor threw the box into the drawer and slammed it shut. Her mind turned to the young waitress. "She's young and firm and hot...just what I need. She's not Winnie but close."

+ + +

Riding the elevator, Winnie and Rita stood close together holding hands and smiling broadly.

"We did it!"

Winnie sighed in deep satisfaction. "We did indeed. I feel so free." She thought for a moment. "Did you see the tears? I actually felt sorry for her."

"I didn't," Rita growled. "Don't waste your time feeling sorry for her it was just another of her ploys to get you to stay."

"I know but there was something different about her this time. She almost begged me to stay," Winnie said mystified.

"Yeah, she isn't getting any younger so conquests aren't so available." The elevator door opened. "Wait for me outside and I'll bring the car around."

She hadn't noticed the young waitress standing outside the hotel entrance until the girl spoke. "Wow I can't believe she is done with you so soon," an amused voice said.

Turning, Winnie tilted her head. "What do you mean?"

"She usually keeps them overnight."

"You should be careful around her she's a user."

Kait laughed. "Dah, well yeah. I've seen her here with so many women that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that one out."

"You're on to her?"

"Hey she is a great tipper, available whenever I need a bed partner and...well you know...she's really a stud."

Winnie frowned then laughed. "You're using her?"

"Why the else would I waste my time on an old broad like her? Besides, there are always hundreds of other fish in the sea and some of them end up in this hotel."

Startled, all Winnie could think was, *another Eleanor in the making.* She let out a small laugh. *Exactly what she deserves.*

+ + +

Sitting close on their couch at home, the two lovers held each other tight. The events earlier had, they hoped, eradicated Eleanor Powers from their lives for good.

"You should have seen her in the restaurant chatting up the waitress while I was sitting there. I think she wanted to make me jealous or something. Shame she didn't hear what the waitress told me later." Giggling she squeezed Rita's hand. "All I could think while I watched her work the girl was *watch out you will only get three days.*" She laughed loudly. "Now it would seem it is Eleanor's turn to be played."

Rita laughed. "Sounds like she's finally getting a taste of her own medicine. She's met her match and I can't think of anyone who deserves it more." The laughter stopped and indignation laced Rita's voice. "Can you imagine she actually thought she was going to have a threesome?"

"Arrogance - she has that about her. I guess that is why she can con so many into her bed."

"Perhaps."

Questioning blue eyes looked deep into green. "For a moment there tonight I actually thought she had changed and she really did care."

"What if she had, what would you do then?" Rita asked quietly, afraid of what Winnie might say.

"She hasn't changed and even if she did you are the one that I love not her. Besides, when she went after the waitress and I knew it was all an act. She comes across as sincere and charming but she's not. Why? What makes her do this to people?"

Rita hugged Winnie closer. "Because she can," she said shrugging. "For her it is about power, control and intimidation. She has nothing to lose really. She doesn't let her heart rule her physical desires therefore she offers nothing but a good fuck. "

"Hmm, she was that." Winnie said wistfully. "But, love is so much more than just mind blowing sex. Why did we allow ourselves to think there was a chance?"

"She played on our insecurities. There she was bigger than life - a gorgeous woman who oozed sensuality, power and confidence and she wanted you. What a trip it was to think that someone like her wanted you." Shaking her head, Rita let out a small laugh. "Every time she'd call I would think this is the time, this is the moment when she will stay with me forever. I think it eventually became a challenge for me to see if I could be good enough for her."

"You are better than her. You know how to love."

Kissing Winnie's cheek, Rita embraced her then let go. "Just a minute I want to show you something." Getting up, she went to the closet and pulled out a shoebox and came back to the couch.

"Whatcha got there?"

Lifting off the lid, Rita dumped out all the contents. "This is my Eleanor collection. It represents all the times we spent together." She picked up a book of matches. "This is our first date." Moving the items around, she grabbed a napkin. "And this is from a bar where she met me six months after she dumped me."

Laughing, Winnie held up a hand and said, "Just a minute," before she got up and went into the bedroom. Coming back out, she too had an old shoebox. "Here is my collection."

Rita's eyes widened as Winnie's *treasures* joined hers. "Oh my god we are such goofs. I can't believe we did this!"

"Do you think all her conquests have a box too?" Winnie giggled. "We really are pathetic." Picking up a matchbook, Winnie's eyes twinkled. "What do you say we end this once and for all?"

"Sounds good to me."

They gathered up everything except two matchbooks and tossed it all into the fireplace. Each woman tore off a match and struck it.

"On the count of three. One, two three."

With a great trepidation that was laced with a sense of release, they set fire to all that was Eleanor Powers. Finally, they had eradicated her hold on their lives allowing their love to flourish unabated. At first their kisses were tentative, but soon lips feverishly began exploring with purpose. Soon they were naked, pledging their undying love for each other as their memories of Eleanor burned - gone forever.

The Flight

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,
Lift me up in your love as a light wind lifts a swallow,
Let our flight be far in sun or blowing rain -
"But what if I heard my first love calling me again?"
Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door -
"But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?"

Sara Teasdale
(1884-1933)

The End

To listen to a live Lucinda Williams concert go [here](#).

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