

~ Those Three Days ~

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Disclaimer

Love/Sex: 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. There are scenes of explicit sexual encounters.

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.

Author's Personal Note: Ideas for stories can come from anywhere and everywhere. A favorite singer of mine, Lucinda Williams, sings the song that inspired this story. On many occasions through the journey of writing, I found myself floundering and unsure of what direction the story should take. Fortunately for me, a dear friend gave of her time unselfishly as she helped me over the roadblocks. It is because of her unwavering support and counsel that this story was completed. Thank you my friend.

Those Three Days

Part One

Winnie James leaned against the seawall and watched as the waves repeatedly slapped against concrete. This was the one place she would always come when life threw her curves and she needed to be grounded. Something about the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean could make her

realize just how insignificant her woes were. But, for some reason, she just couldn't get her head around what had happened for those three days and how they changed her life forever.

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For six months, Winnie worked as an apprentice at the upscale Boutique La Rene` that specialized in business apparel for women. Her recent degree in design helped her immensely in obtaining the much coveted job and finally her internship seemed to be over. The shop, located in the fashion district of New York City, had a long, impressive list of clients that included executives, politicians, stockbrokers and many well known business woman from around the country.

"Winnie, we have a new client coming in at one and I'd like you to see to her needs," the boutique's owner, Bess Matthews said. She liked Winnie's motivation and eye for detail which was why she decided to promote her from apprentice to full fledged fashion consultant.

"Thank you Bess. Wow what a way to start the week out! I promise you won't be sorry for trusting me."

Bess paused as she looked through a catalogue. "There is no doubt in my mind that you will do wonderfully. I must say you are the best intern we've ever had." She handed Winnie a folder with the woman's name, Eleanor Powers, on it. "Here is the information I obtained from Ms. Powers' phone interview. Are you clear on how to handle everything?"

"Yes. First, we will have an intimate conversation over coffee to get to know about her life, job and clothing preferences. Then I will make an additional appointment to show her what I would suggest she wear." Winnie thought for a moment. "Do you want to sit in?"

Bess smiled fondly towards the young woman and patted her shoulder. "No, my dear, I am sure you will do wonderfully."

Winnie took the folder and went to the room that she would be using for the interview. She wanted to familiarize herself with the information. Dropping the folder on the small round table she walked quickly out of the room in search of a cup of coffee. Walking back to the room with her caffeine fix in hand she sat down at the table and stared at the name – Eleanor Powers. Her fingers tapped on the manila folder deciding how to handle the information. "I think I will get to know her before I read this." She knew she had good instincts and wanted to rely on those rather than some preconceived notion.

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The bell over the door jingled as a tall, well dressed woman walked in. Winnie felt the surge of excitement one feels when starting off down a new road. The woman oozed power and something else; *danger* came quickly to Winnie's mind.

"Ms. Powers?" Winnie walked briskly towards the woman with her hand outstretched. "I'm Winifred James."

The woman's strong hand clasped Winnie's. "Pleased to meet you, I thought I spoke with Ms. Matthews. Isn't she here?"

Winnie took a deep breath and let go of the woman's hand. "Bess Matthews is the owner and she has assigned me to advise you." She saw what she thought was a look of concern on the woman's face. "If you object I can get her for you."

"I did expect to deal with Ms. Matthews. She came highly recommended and frankly I know nothing about you," the woman said bluntly. Her eyes gave Winnie the once over sizing her up much as she would a business proposal. *Not bad...cute and young..*

"I understand. Listen, I will make a deal with you," Winnie said with a confidence while her stomach seemed to be erupting in waves of nausea.

"I'm listening." The woman's tone was filled with doubt.

"We can go into the consultation room and have a conversation about my credentials and what your expectations are." Winnie searched the eyes that were a darker blue than hers and when she saw no objection she continued. "If at any time you feel that you would prefer that Ms. Matthews be your consultant I will happily get her for you."

Eleanor sighed deeply. *I don't need this shit.* As surveyed the young woman's body she squeezed her thighs tightly while a wave of pleasure surged through her body. *I could do with the diversion and then I will dismiss her for her boss.* "We can give that a try," she said in a practiced reluctant tone.

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"Please, take a seat Ms. Powers. Can I interest you in something to drink?" Earlier, Winnie had placed plates of delicate cookies, fruit, two Spode teacups and two carafes on a table that was between their chairs.

Eleanor sank down in the overstuffed chair and was surprised at how comfortable it was. She had spied the plate of crackers, brie and fruit and her stomach grumbled reminding her that she hadn't eaten yet. "Coffee, black would be good."

Filling one of the cups with coffee and placing it in front of Eleanor Winnie smiled brightly. "Please help yourself."

Once they were settled, Winnie began her interview of the Eleanor Powers. "May I call you Eleanor?"

"That will be fine."

"Thank you. I know you answered a lot of questions when you made the appointment, but if you don't mind I would like to ask them again."

"Why? Didn't you read what I told Ms. Matthews?" Eleanor fixed the young girl with a look of annoyance while all thoughts of a diversion vanished. *This girl doesn't know a damn thing. God, what have I gotten myself into? Incompetence is unacceptable.*

"Actually, Ms. Powers, I didn't read the document because I wanted to have an impression of you that is not tainted by previous knowledge." She saw the uncertainty in Eleanor's eyes. "I graduated the top of my class from the Gibbs School with a degree in fashion design. I have interned with Alan Steven and just finished another internship at this shop." The woman's eyes filled with doubt. "I know what I am doing."

Eleanor's lips curled into a tentative smile. *This might turn out to my advantage* she thought as she wantonly eyed Winnie again. "Fire away with your questions, but know that my patience is rapidly becoming exhausted."

"Thank you." Winnie breathed a sigh of relief. "I can see by your clothes that you have impeccable taste. Are you looking to maintain that style?"

The older woman nodded at the comment. "Well, if I wanted to do that why would I be here? I want something that screams success, power and money," she purred in an ominous tone.

Winnie trembled as she gave the woman a once over. *She doesn't need clothes to say that.* "I see. Do you want to incorporate the traditional reds and blacks or do you have something else in mind."

Eleanor picked up her coffee cup and took a sip covertly watching Winnie over the rim. *The girl certainly is attractive. I like the way her mouth moves.* “Well, I think that if I want to say power those are good colors...”

After an hour of a lively and revealing conversation, Winnie had a clearer idea about and what Eleanor’s needs for business clothes would be. Because she was an investment banker, it was important that the woman look conservative and very professional. But, Eleanor wanted to go beyond the traditional banker image – Powers was her name and that was the statement she wanted to make.

“I have a very good idea of what you want Eleanor. When will it be convenient for you to return and go over a selection of outfits?”

Eleanor flipped open her Blackberry and punched a few buttons. “What about Friday? I have meetings in the morning, but I could get away around three.”

“That will be good.” Winnie wrote a notation about the appointment. “Thank you.”

As Winnie watched Eleanor walk out of the shop Bess came up behind her. “How did it go?”

Startled, Winnie turned around blushing slightly. “It went really well. A bit shaky at the start because she was expecting you.” A smile crossed over her face. “Did you see her? Can you believe she is forty-eight and an investment banker? She certainly doesn’t conjure up my idea of what a stodgy banker should look like.”

Bess, seeing the look on Winnie’s face, shook her head. “Remember the number one rule dear...never mix business and pleasure.”

Winnie hadn’t disguised her sexual preferences and Bess didn’t seem to have a problem with that. Although Winnie had always known she was gay she had never really acted on those feelings in a relationship. She had her share of crushes and even dated a few women, but the extent of her physical experiences was limited to passionate kisses with girls she had met and danced with in gay bars. Her life had been all about excelling and she had little time for a social life. She figured that once she was established she could devote time to finding a stable, permanent relationship.

“Trust me Bess, I know the rules. She’s more than twenty-five years older than me. I can’t see me in a relationship with someone *that* old.” Winnie screwed up her face. “It would be like dating my mother... gross.” She saw

the look of humor on Bess's face and laughed. "Of course you are not in that category Bess you are still a young chickie."

Bess waved off the comment. "Okay if you say so. I can wait to tell Frank that someone thinks I am a chickie."

"I just want to thank you again for the chance," she replied shrugging modestly while exuberance washed over her.

"You'll do just fine." Bess patted the young girl's hand.

* *

Eleanor Powers left the store with a predatory smile. *Yes, Winnie James will do quite nicely*, she thought as she hailed a cab. Eleanor felt her body fill with tension. Her last conquest had ended several weeks earlier and she needed a replacement. *This naïve young woman will be the perfect distraction for me*. She had noticed the light in the girl's eyes when she had told her she lived an alternate lifestyle. *Yep, she definitely is batting for the right team and I am going to be the pitcher that throws her a fast curve ball*.

Relationships had never been Eleanor's strong point. She preferred to love them then leave them wanting more. She, of course, never gave more. She often hunted women in much the same way she sought out investments. She smiled as she remembered following a woman dressed in scrubs into a hospital. Investigation revealed that the woman was a resident - she made an appointment for a physical. Research, patience and charm had worked on every woman she went after and she was certain Winnie would succumb to her seduction. Reaching in her handbag, she took out her cell phone and pressed a speed dial number.

"Marcus, I need you to adjust my schedule for next week."

Her assistant replied, "Sure thing. What do you want me to change, Ms. Powers?"

"I need Friday at three open this week and one to three needs to be open next week on Thursday."

"Okay. You do know that Mr. Heath is scheduled at two on Thursday don't you?" He knew he was taking a big chance telling her that but Heath, with his eight figure account, was his boss' biggest customer.

Eleanor snorted. "I am well aware of that Marcus that is why I am calling you," she said sarcastically. "I will be back at the office in less than thirty

minutes and expect that you will have taken care of the schedule change by then.”

She raised a hand, a cab stopped she got in. “Fifty-fourth and Park. If you get me there in ten minutes there is a twenty in it for you.” She would get to her office much sooner than a half hour and rattle Marcus. Fredrick Heath would not be happy with the schedule change and make Marcus pay. Eleanor smiled. *How I love to play the game.*

“No problem lady.”

As the taxi weaved in and out of the heavy traffic Eleanor thought, *I bet he'd sell out his family for a fifty.* The vehicle screeched to such a sudden that Eleanor had to stretch out her arm and brace herself from lurching forward. Opening the door, she handed the driver the exact amount for the fare.

“Hey, where’s the twenty you promised?”

“I said ten minutes not eleven. You lose.” She slammed the door shut and walked briskly towards her building as the driver yelled obscenities.

* *

“Marcus did you change the appointment?” Eleanor smiled slyly knowing exactly what the young man’s response would be.

“Ms. Powers, I called his secretary and she said there was no way the appointment could be changed.” He followed the tall woman into her office.

Eleanor turned around and eyed the man. “Did you ask to speak with Mr. Heath directly?”

“Ah, no ma’am.”

Eleanor angrily flipped through her rolodex and picked up the phone. “Hi Janet, this is Eleanor Powers, I need to speak with Frank.” She waited a moment then spoke again. “Frank it is good to hear your voice too. Listen I need to change our appointment for next week.”

Listening to the response she answered. “Yes, I know you don’t like changes but what if I made it worth your while?” Her voice dripped with sexuality mixed with persuasion. “What if we met at Rao’s around eleven thirty. My treat. We can discuss your new acquisitions.” Eleanor laughed.

“Yes, I know it is your favorite. So do we have a date?” Her face glowed with victory. “I thought so.”

Hanging up the phone she turned to Marcus and pierced him with a cold stare. “You know when I hired you I really wanted someone older with more experience, but I took a chance on you. It looks like I might have to reconsider that decision.”

“But ma’am...”

Eleanor held up her hand. “I don’t want to hear excuses. Go see if you can do something right and find the Holcomb file for me.”

She watched as the dejected man left closing the door quietly behind him. *He’s been put in his place. The look on his face when I called myself was priceless. Precisely what I wanted to see, I will mold him into exactly what I need.* Sitting down at the desk, her mind turned to her new target, Winifred James and a wolfish smile crossed her face.

* *

For three days Winnie poured over catalogs and designs for the perfect look for her first real client, Eleanor Powers. The woman, who was tall and slender with olive tone skin, foreboding dark blue eyes and dark auburn hair, was stunning. Her figure was the kind that designers designed for so there was no problem in finding a large assortment of appropriate apparel. Winnie knew exactly what she was looking for and rapidly flipped through catalogues dog earring pages until she was satisfied.

She bounced around the shop with a big smile on her face causing everyone to smile as her enthusiasm increased as the week passed. “Winnie you bring back fond memories with all your preparations.” Irene Witherspoon, a co-worker, patted her on the shoulder. “I still remember my first customer...Camille Wolcheski.” she smiled with the memory.

“I can’t believe how nervous I am.” Winnie motioned to all the catalogs and pictures she had strewn across the table. “I feel like a kid in a candy store when I look at all the different choices I have, but then I get this feeling in the pit of my stomach...what if she hates everything?”

Irene, like most everyone else in the boutique, genuinely liked Winnie. “You will do fine. If you run into a problem just excuse yourself for a moment and find me and we will work it out.” She patted Winnie’s hand. “Remember you are the expert and the client is always right.” Both women laughed. “Sometimes, the hard part is convincing them that you just may know what is right for them.”

They both stopped what they were doing when they heard the bell announcing that someone had entered the shop. Winnie's eyes darted to the clock on the wall and saw it was quarter to three. "You don't think she's early do you?"

"Wouldn't be the first time a client got here before expected, you better go out and see."

"That's great...I should've been out there when she arrived." Winnie stood up and quickly headed for the door.

Irene reached out and held Winnie back. "Stop. Take a minute to gather your composure before you go out there."

Puzzled, Winnie looked at her. "What do you mean? If she's out there she's expecting to see me I need to go."

"You need to take a deep breath and relax. The client needs to see you calm and relaxed not all flustered."

Winnie took a deep breath and closed her eyes for a moment. "You're right." She could feel her heartbeat slowing. "I'm ready to go now."

Irene smiled fondly. "Good. Now go knock her socks off." She watched as Winnie walked away. "Winnie," she said and the girl glanced back. "Good luck."

"Thanks," drifted back into the room as Winnie left.

* *

Winnie walked with purpose to the front of the shop. She saw Eleanor Powers speaking casually with Bess and her stomach churned in nervous anticipation.

"Ms. Powers," Winnie said smilingly as she held out her hand.

The cool blue eyes sized her up before they turned warm, crinkling in reaction to the smile on the woman's face. "It's good to see you Ms. James." She took Winnie's offered hand and firmly shook it before letting go. "I am looking forward to seeing what you have selected for me."

"Please come with me then I have everything prepared." Winnie motioned for Eleanor to sit in a chair. "May I get you a drink?"

“No, thank you. I am on a tight schedule so if you wouldn’t mind can you just show me what you’ve come up with.”

The smile on Eleanor’s face had disappeared. Winnie’s heart sank at the businesslike tone as she scrunched her face in concern. *She isn’t going to buy anything*, she thought before determination overtook her. “Certainly, I think you will be pleased. Let’s begin shall we?” Pulling out her first selection she held her breath as Eleanor’s eyes scanned the picture.

Eleanor’s long tapered fingers ran over the linen fabric of the last selection of Winnie’s presentation. “Hmm, you know I do believe you have come up with a very functional yet attractive wardrobe.” She repeatedly tapped her fingers on the pages. “You’ve captured success, power and money which is exactly what I wanted.”

Winnie beamed. “Are there any you would like me to order so you can try them on?” Eleanor had appeared to be very interested in all the selections, but Winnie knew better than to put much stock in that. *Customers are finicky and when it comes down to actual selections they tend to pick only one or two items.*

Eleanor flipped through the selections again before looking squarely at the young woman. “It is important in my business that I look professional at all times.” Her eyes glanced at the drawings and photos again and tapped one finger on the folder. “You have managed to capture exactly what I have been looking for...professional, but with a flair that says so much more. I think the words would be, very successful.”

Winnie held her breath wondering if she would turn blue before she got an answer.

“I’d like them all.”

Winnie’s eyes widened before she choked out, “All?”

“Yes.” Finally a warm smile appeared on Eleanor’s face. “At first, I had my doubts about you Winifred, but after this,” she touched the presentation, “I know you are just who I have been looking for.”

A swell of excitement and pride filled Winnie. “Would you mind undressing so I can get your measurements?”

Oh, I would undress for you anytime. “Certainly.” Eleanor stood up, took off her skirt then began to slowly unbutton her blouse while she observed the girl’s face intently looking for any signs of interest.

Winnie watched as the blouse came off and couldn't help the blush as she noticed the swell of Eleanor's nipples. "We have a dressing room if you like, it's probably warmer in there." The woman's fingers lazily ran across her chest as she lifted her blouse off. Grabbing on to the table Winnie managed to say, "You can leave your slip on."

Winnie regained her composure as she took Eleanor's measurements and recorded them. When she looked at the final calculations then she giggled.

"What is so amusing?" Eleanor asked. "Is my body that funny?"

"No, no. Let me finish up then I will show you."

Eleanor angrily looked at the young woman. "I don't like being made to feel foolish."

The tone of the woman's voice scared Winnie. *Damn.* "It isn't what you might think." She held out the page she had written the measurements on. "See here are the measurements I just took." She picked up a scrape of paper from the table and apprehensively handed it to the woman also. "And, here is what I had written down after you left on Monday." Nervously she added, "Its a little game I play."

Eleanor rapidly scanned both documents and was surprised that Winnie's previous estimations were exactly what she had written. "I'm impressed." *With such an eye for detail, I can imagine she will be an attentive lover.* The thought of Winnie James languishing over her body while making love caused Eleanor to close her eyes to cover up the delight she was feeling. *Yes, she is just who I have been looking for.* Clearing her throat she quickly dressed then looked at her watch. "I really must be going."

"Shall I place the order then?"

Blue eyes turned cold again. "That is what I said isn't it?"

"Yes, yes it is. When would you like to come back?"

Without even consulting her schedule she said, "Next Thursday at one."

"Great I will be looking forward to seeing you then." Winnie held out her hand and was embarrassed when Eleanor reached for the door handle instead. Retracting her hand she said, "Goodbye," to the woman who had already left.

Winnie's shoulders fell as her body finally relaxed once Eleanor had left. She took a deep breath, and although she tried hard to stop, she couldn't hide the relieved expression that crossed her face. Turning back to the smiling faces of her co-workers she beamed. "What a rush."

"I take it by your expression it went well." Irene couldn't help responding in kind to the happiness crossing Winnie's face.

Winnie's eyes widened. "My first real client and she liked everything."

"Everything? I have never had a customer that liked everything," Bess interjected.

"Yeah, she wants me to order all of my selections," Winnie said in wonder.

Bess remembered the large folder that Winnie had prepared for her client. "And, how many is that?"

"Well...there are eight business suits, five dresses and of course all the accessories."

Bess' eyes widened. "She wants you to order all that?"

"Yes," Winnie said bewildered by the question. "Is there a problem?"

"Oh, no it is just that doesn't happen...ever. You know...that the client wants everything." Bess paused then asked, "She even wants the shoes?"

"Yep, she said that it is her policy to buy everything together that way she doesn't have to search around for shoes or scarves to match." Winnie shrugged. "Well, I'd better get busy. She is coming back next Thursday afternoon for a fitting." She thought for a moment. "I better make sure Maria will be here then to do any alterations."

Bess didn't want to dampen Winnie's excitement. "Well, run along then and place your orders so they will be here in time."

Once Winnie had left Bess turned to Irene. "I think I need to make a few phone calls."

Irene shook her head knowingly. "I would call Horne's first."

"Yes, that's what I was thinking too."

* *

“Thank you Emily.” Bess hung up the phone and turned to Irene. “Well she pays her bills and always buys.”

“I sense a but.”

“Emily said one thing that disturbs me.”

Irene saw the concern on her boss’ face. “And that would be?”

“Barracuda.” Bess shook her head. “I don’t want Winnie in a situation with someone who might hurt her.”

“We’ve all had it happen, Bess. If it does happen to her at least she has our support. I remember the first time a customer devastated me...”

“Yeah, so do I. Not a pretty picture.”

“No it isn’t. Did Emily say anything else?”

“Apparently this Powers woman has been to all the shops, but only once.

“Well maybe this time she has found the right person. Winnie is destined for great things. I think we both know that.”

Bess nodded in agreement. “It’s just that she is such a sweet trusting kid that...”

“You want to protect her.” Irene laughed. “Guess it’s the mother in us that’s coming out.”

Just then the phone rang. “Hi Neil. Thanks for getting back with me. Listen, have you ever dealt with a woman named...”

* *

Eleanor felt like a penned up cat as she paced her office before finally stopping and looking out the window to the street thirty floors below. Winnie James was preying on her mind and her body was reacting to those thoughts. She recalled how good it felt when Winnie measured her breast. She had leaned in close to wrap the tape measure around her and then her fingers ever so gently brushed across her nipples. The thought of the young girl’s fingers lingering at the top of her thigh as she measured Eleanor’s inseam made her feel wet. *Oh yes, Winnie James will do very nicely.* She would fall into her web and never realize until she was ensnared what her fate would be.

She needed relief and knew just where to find it. Picking up the phone she dialed the familiar number of Rachel Brown a former conquest who was always a soft touch whenever Eleanor needed her special touch. "I'll expect you at my hotel room at nine." She listened to the response.

"I can't tonight I have plans." Rachel said timidly.

"Cancel it." Eleanor waited impatiently as she paced back and forth.

"No, I can't it's my parent's anniversary I have to be there."

"Unacceptable Rachel." She breathed in deeply in annoyance.

"Well, maybe I could leave early and meet you," she said in resignation. She knew she could never tell the formidable woman no and mean it. Eleanor Powers was in her blood and she would do anything to keep it that way.

"I thought you'd see it my way."

Rachel certainly didn't compare to the young woman she had her sights set on, but she would do. A vision of Winnie came to her mind. There was something about the girl that intrigued her. *Perhaps it is her wholesomeness.* She inwardly laughed. *It has been some time since I knew wholesome. I would guess her to be around twenty-five.* She chuckled. *She is so young, nice and firm. And, she smells really good...like soap and water...wholesome yes, I could get real used to that.*

For the weekend she would allow Rachel to satisfy her. Although Rachel was older and had let herself go in so many ways she did have the most talented tongue and knew exactly how to use it. *Perhaps while she is licking my clit I will do a bit of fantasizing.* It wouldn't be the first time she had pretended that the woman in her arms was someone else.

* *

The key clicked in the lock and Winnie nudged opened the door with her hip and entered her apartment. The day had gone remarkably well and she wanted to share her good fortune with her parents. Her feelings of elation over her first real client hadn't been dampened by the subway ride to her small apartment in Tribeca. Closing the door behind her she felt her small grey cat, Kati, rub up against her leg.

"Hey girl, mom had a great day today." She bent down and picked up the animal and kissed its head. "How was your day?" She held Kati close to her as she made her way towards the telephone and picked up the

receiver only to return it to its cradle. "If I call and tell them I might jinx everything. I'd better wait until it is a done deal." She nuzzled the cat again. "You are a good listener. What do you say we have some dinner?"

Winnie took a bag of lettuce out of the refrigerator along with some left over chicken. As she was preparing her salad her mind drifted to the day and one Eleanor Powers. She knew what the woman liked in the way of business clothes, but wondered what she wore outside of the office. *Hmm, maybe I can convince her to let me find her casual clothes. Hold on girl, you need to get her business order done first.* Putting the completed salad in the refrigerator she went into her bedroom and changed her clothes. She needed to get rid of the pent up energy she was feeling and a run would do the trick.

It was at times like this that she wished she had taken the time to find someone in her life to share wonderful news. In the past, her career and studies had always come first, but now she wanted to pursue a relationship. *Perhaps tonight after my run I will go to that lesbian club down the street and who knows...maybe Ms. Right is waiting for me there.* For a fleeting moment the image of her first client filled her mind before she started jogging down the street.

* *

Opening the door of the corner bar, Winnie's ears were assaulted with the sounds of music, laughter and the voices of women. Looking around, she noticed that the establishment hadn't changed much since she was last there seven months before. While she wove through the crowd to the bar she made eye contact with various women and smiled at each one.

"What'll it be," the overly tattooed barkeep asked.

"Rum and coke," Winnie then added, "can you make that diet coke?"

"Sure thing."

"Well hello beautiful I don't think I've seen you in here before."

Winnie glanced right and saw an attractive blonde woman standing next to her. "Excuse me?" She looked over her shoulder to see who the woman was speaking to. Realizing no one was there, she turned back and blushed. "You're talking to me?" she said placing her hand on her chest.

The woman smiled and in a low sultry voice said, "Yes I am beautiful. May I buy you a drink?"

A glass was placed heavily on the bar. "You want anything?" the bartender asked of the pretty blonde.

"Carona." Reaching in her back pocket for her wallet, the woman took a twenty out and placed it on the bar.

"Thank you."

"You're quite welcome."

Winnie smiled shyly. "You know you are wrong." She noticed the woman's questioning look. "I have been in here before it has just been a really long time."

"Ah, that explains it then. I know I would have remembered someone like you."

"What exactly does someone like me look like?"

The woman's seemed to be undressing Winnie as she gave her an appraising once over. "Beautiful."

Winnie touched her cheeks and felt the heat rising. Her eyes darted around the bar as she tried to think of something to say for that kind of flattery was so far out of her experience. Finally, she held out her hand. "I'm Winnie James."

Taking the proffered hand and holding it firmly the woman replied, "Chris Chambers."

"It's nice to meet you." Still Winnie was at a lost for what to say or do. "I...I guess from your comments you come here often."

Chris laughed heartily. "Not really...well I guess every Friday would be often." She took a long swig of her beer. "I usually stop by after work for a beer or two and then go home." It was her turn to blush. "I don't usually do this," she said as she motioned back and forth between them with the bottle.

Confused, Winnie asked, "Do what?"

"Buy a beautiful lady a drink." Taking another long pull from the bottle she added, "Truth be told, you are the first." She shrugged then looked away.

The feeling of being special floated into Winnie's heart and mind. She couldn't recall a time that anyone had made her feel that way. "I'm glad."

Chris cocked her head. "Hey do you hear that song?"

"Yes." Winnie recognized the soulful voice of Elvis Presley singing *Love Me Tender*.

"I know it is sappy, but that is my all time favorite." Chris took Winnie's hand. "Dance with me."

Winnie felt herself floating on air as she allowed Chris to lead her onto the dance floor and surround her with her arms. She closed her eyes delighting in the sensations surging through her body as their bodies moved as one to the music.

For the next two hours Winnie and Chris shared information about each other. For Winnie, it was exactly what she had hoped for when she left her apartment earlier that evening. Chris was wonderfully attentive and very interested in everything that Winnie had to say. When Winnie shared the news about her big sale Chris pulled her in for a big hug and then kissed her lips. The kiss was soft and gentle and Winnie hoped there would be more. She wasn't disappointed when, while dancing, their lips meet again in what deepened into a very passionate kiss. As the night wore on Chris moved her chair closer to Winnie and asked if it would be okay to kiss her again. Winnie did not refuse and several minutes later both women found themselves gasping for air.

Standing up, Chris held out her hand. "Come with me."

Winnie looked at the woman. "There isn't a song playing."

Chris laughed and leaned into whisper, "I don't want to dance." Her hot breath tickled Winnie's ear. "I want you to take me home."

"I don't have a car."

Again Chris laughed. "Take me to your home where we can get more comfortable and get to know each other much, much better." She ran her hand high up Winnie's thigh.

Suddenly, Winnie understood the woman's meaning. "You mean you want to take me to bed?" she said incredulously. "We just met."

Chris pulled back with a glare. "So, what do you think this was all about?" She gestured between them. "You don't come into a place like this looking for long term babe you come lookin' for a good time."

Winnie didn't know what to do or say. She had come to this bar hoping to meet someone that she could develop a relationship with and certainly not for a one night stand. "I...I...I think you misunderstood."

"Oh I don't think so. Your kisses said more and that is exactly what I want." She roughly grabbed Winnie's hand. "Now, let's go."

"No!" Winnie said loudly trying to wrench her arm away from the increasingly strong grip.

"Is there a problem?" A tall Amazon-like woman seemingly appeared out of nowhere. She looked pointedly at Winnie then at Chris who still held her arm tightly.

"Yeah, this bimbo led me on all night and now won't put out," Chris said angrily.

"Thought I heard the word *no*," the tall woman said. "In this place it means *NO*." The woman then reached over and wrapped her large hand around Chris' wrist squeezing hard until the grip on Winnie's arm was released. "Go on," she said looking at Winnie. The woman glared at Chris as she attempted to speak. "Don't"

Winnie didn't need to be told twice she quickly got up and headed for the door. Her insides were quivering as the cool night air assaulted her, but all she could think about was getting home before she threw up. Once she was out on the street she ran the short distance to her apartment building. Looking back towards the bar, she thought she caught a glimpse of Chris, but couldn't be sure. She took the stairs two at a time until she reached the door and unlocked it quickly. Safely inside, she climbed the old wooden staircase to the second floor and her apartment and opened the door. Finding herself in the safety of her own surroundings she bolted the door and refrained from turning on the lights. *If Chris followed me she will be looking for the lights to show where I live.*

Kati's body seemed to wrap itself around Winnie's ankle trying to get her attention. Bending down Winnie picked up her baby and nuzzled her nose into the soft grey fur. "Hey girl, mom had a close call tonight," Winnie said ruefully. "Guess a bar isn't the best place to find true love." With that thought her stomach began to churn violently and she headed for the bathroom.

* *

Eleanor arrived at her office earlier than usual on Monday morning. A wicked smile crossed her face as she imagined the look on her PA's face

when he realized he was not there to greet her. Marcus prided himself on being there early with everything at the ready for her. *It will certainly start his week off on the wrong foot*, she thought with a laugh. *Bet after today he will start coming in at six.* Satisfied with how the morning would evolve once her PA arrived, she sat down at her desk and twirled her chair so she could look out the window. The street below had a smattering of pedestrians while cabs and buses hurried down the street to their appointed destinations.

The weekend had been exactly what Eleanor needed. Rachel at first was hesitant to commit to spending the entire weekend, but as always, she saw the situation the way Eleanor wanted. Rachel certainly had satisfied all of her sexual needs and none more so when Eleanor fantasized that it was Winnie touching her. A wicked smile crossed her face as she closed her eyes in the remembered bliss of her imaginings.

Rachel rose up from between Eleanor's legs and quirked her head. "I don't think I have ever elicited such a response from you before."

"You didn't," Eleanor said from her sexually satisfied haze.

Rachel moved up the body then sat up straddling the woman. "Oh really," she said grinding her center against Eleanor's stomach. "Who else is here?"

Eleanor rolled over on her left hip to topple Rachel. "I need a shower."

"I'll join you." What Rachel hadn't expected was the searing look of disdain. "What? Do you want me to leave?"

"What part of you are to spend the weekend didn't you understand?" Eleanor's eyes bore into the woman.

"I thought..."

"You're not here to think," Eleanor said angrily.

"I'm sorry." Tears began to cascade down Rachel's cheeks.

Eleanor pulled the woman in close. "You know how much I love you being here with me. No one makes me feel the way you do."

"Really?"

“Believe me baby, there’s no one like you.” Eleanor kissed her lips hard. “I really need a shower why don’t you order us something from room service.”

“Okay,” Rachel said in a small child-like voice.

“I think a rare steak would be nice.” Then Eleanor slid off the bed and headed for the bathroom.

“If she can excite me like that in a fantasy I can only imagine what it will be like in person,” Eleanor said to the room. Turning back to her desk she flipped through her day planner before developing a strategy to seduce the young woman.

* *

Winnie arrived at the shop earlier than usual. She had an appointment at nine with a new client and wanted to make sure everything was prepared. The experience with Eleanor Powers had buoyed her confidence and she was certain this client would respond in the same way. She had a satisfied smile on her face as she unlocked the door and went inside.

“Well you’re early,” Bess said with a smile. “Good morning. How was your weekend?”

“Good morning Bess.” Winnie trembled for a moment when she recalled her weekend. *No way do I want her to know how stupid I was.* “It was a quiet weekend and how was yours?”

Bess had noticed the look on the young woman’s face and knew something had happened. “What happened? Do you want to talk about it?”

Winnie didn’t know what to say. She felt like a teenager who had just been caught sneaking back into the house. Bess had always been kind to her and in a way was her mother away from home. *But, dare I tell her about what happened?* “I...I had a lapse in judgment that’s all.”

The older woman eyed the younger girl for a long moment. “And?”

Winnie couldn’t help the tears that began to fill her eyes. “It was so awful.” With her hand she wiped away the threatening tears.

Bess quickly moved closer to Winnie and took her arm. “Let’s go to my office. I think you could use a nice cup of tea first and then we can talk.”

The office was warm and cozy reminding Winnie of a room in her grandmother's home. She didn't know if it was the tea or the ambiance that made her feel safe but she knew she was safe. "Thank you Bess."

Bess patted her hand and sat in a chair next to the young woman. "Why don't you tell me what happened."

"Well..." Winnie cast her eyes to the floor refusing to look into Bess'. As she related the events of Friday night she realized how foolish she had been and didn't want to see that sentiment reflected in the woman's eyes.

For her part, Bess listened in silence although her concern for Winnie grew as the story unfolded. The girl was so naïve with a heart of gold who could easily become an innocent victim out of sheer ignorance. Clearing her throat she began then stopped for she really didn't know what to say. Seeing the mixture of shame and sorrow on Winnie's face she leaned in and gave her a hug. "Are you okay?"

"I feel so foolish. I should have known better."

"We all make mistakes Winnie. The important thing is the lesson you learn from those mistakes."

"Oh, I learned the lesson alright. Never go into a bar and let someone sweet talk me."

Bess could only shake her head for she knew that Winnie still did not understand how the world of predators operated. "Winnie, I have never seen anyone who can see a person and know exactly what size they are as accurately as you do." She smiled fondly. "You need to know how to do that with people...how to judge their intentions and words."

"I do that," Winnie said defensively. She then saw the arch of Bess' eyebrow and felt idiotic. "I just expect everyone to treat me like I treat them," she said softly. "Why are people so cruel?"

Sighing deeply, Bess lifted Winnie's chin so they would be eye to eye. "They do because they can sweetie. Learn from this and the next time you are in such a situation remember and act accordingly."

"Oh don't worry about that I will never put myself in that position again."

Bess could only smile at the innocent remark. *Unfortunately dear Winnie, you will.* She patted Winnie's hand again. "Do you feel better?"

“Yes, thank you. I needed to share that with someone. Thanks for being here for me.”

“Anytime.” Bess got up. “We have a busy day ahead of us. You have Mrs. Blanchard and I would imagine some of the Powers order will begin arriving today.” A chill ran up her spine as she remembered the word *barracuda* used to describe Eleanor Powers. *Predators abound* she thought before they both began their workday.

* *

Long tapered finger casually dialed 555-8274 as a slight smile crossed the lips of Eleanor Powers.

“Good morning, Boutique La Rene`, this is Irene Witherspoon may I help you?”

“Good morning. This is Eleanor Powers is it possible for me to speak with Ms. James?”

“Why yes, Ms. Powers just give me a minute to find her.”

“Thank you.” Eleanor drew large concentric circles on a piece of paper as she waited.

“Good morning Eleanor, this is Winnie how may I help you?”

Eleanor scrawled *DELICIOUS* across the paper when she heard the young woman’s voice. “Ah yes, Winnie. Thank you for taking my call I’m sure you are busy.”

“Never too busy for you,” Winnie said happily.

LUSCIOUS “Is it possible to make our appointment for eleven on Thursday?” Eleanor paused, “That is of course if it doesn’t inconvenience you too much.”

Winnie looked over her schedule and saw she had promised a co-worker, Cybil Duncan that she would sit in on her consultation with a difficult client at that time. The Powers account was a big one for the shop and in no way did she want to jeopardize that. She would work something out. “Of course we can change the time.”

FIRM “Thank you so much.” Eleanor smiled smugly. “You’re sure I haven’t caused any problems with this change?”

“No, none at all,” Winnie lied.

MINE “Great you are a life saver. See you at eleven tomorrow then.”

“Yes, see you then. Bye.”

* *

Sheepishly Winnie approached Cybil Duncan. “Cybil.” She waited until the woman looked at her.

“Yes.”

“Hmm...” She had spent the better part of the morning with Cybil mapping out strategies for Mary Owens’ ensemble. The woman was head of an advertising firm and had been an important client for years. Since she had last visited the shop she had put on significant weight which constituted the need for a whole new wardrobe. The problem was that the woman thought her style should stay the same. “Is there anyway we can change the Owens appointment?”

Cybil eyed the young woman. “Why?”

“Hmm...well...you see...Ms. Powers needs to change her time to eleven.”

The look of irritation on Cybil’s face was unmistakable. “Let me see if I understand this, we have set a time and plan for my client but yours wants to change times so mine must accommodate her?”

“The Powers account has the potential to be very lucrative for the business,” Winnie countered.

“Owens already is.”

Winnie closed her eyes in resignation that she had made a terrible mistake. “Look I’m sorry. I didn’t think. I just thought we could work everything out, but I can see now that I have made a complete mess of everything.” She shook her head. “I will call Ms. Powers back and tell her that eleven will not work out.”

Cybil scowled. “Didn’t you already tell her the time was alright without consulting me?”

“Yes,” Winnie said dejectedly.

“You need to understand how things work around here young lady.” The matronly woman said testily. “You think you can just come in here and take over and be the big shot that Bess dotes over.”

Cybil’s voice raised loud enough for Bess to approach the women. “Cybil you will have to keep your voice down. Is there a problem?”

“I’d say so,” Cybil said angrily. “Little miss goody two shoes here thinks that she can just change times without consulting anyone.” She took a deep breath. “We have worked all morning and a good part of yesterday on the Owens’ account and now because *her* client wants to change times mine gets cast aside.”

Bess looked at Winnie. “Is this true?”

“I really didn’t think it would be a problem,” Winnie said stiffening her back. “Ms. Powers called and needed to change her time tomorrow. Since she is a new client and potentially a very big one, I thought it best to accommodate her,” Winnie said trying to put a positive spin to her decision. In truth she chastised herself for being so thoughtless of Cybil’s needs. “I’m really sorry.”

Bess’ heart went out to Winnie. She was such and innocent and had never fully comprehended in the time she had been there that Cybil was not someone to cross. The woman was extremely adept, but had a habit of using the other consultants for her purposes. Unfortunately, Winnie had made the decision that her client was more important and for Cybil that was the kiss of death. *She seems to attract all the predators.*

“Cybil, how many years have you been working with Ms. Owens?”

“Seven. But...”

The owner held up her hand. “I should think in seven years you know your client well enough to deal with her alone.”

“You don’t understand the woman has gained an enormous amount of weight and...”

“And you will deal with it.” Bess eyed the woman. “From my observations you and Winnie have come up with a workable plan for the woman. I think you can present that yourself and if you need help, I will gladly sit in with you.” She then turned to Winnie. “Will you please go to my office and wait for me?”

Winnie looked startled at the dismissal and wondered what was going to happen as she walked out of the office with her head bent. *I've really screwed up big time* she thought as she walked slowly to the office. *God I feel like I've been sent to the principal's office.*

Five minutes later Bess entered her office, closed the door and plopped down in the chair next to Winnie sighing. "Just so you know, I have made some discrete inquiries about Eleanor Powers."

Winnie's eyes widened at the revelation. "Why."

"Because we've never had anyone that wants to buy everything and I wanted to find out if she could pay."

"Can she?"

"Yes, but there is something else you should be aware of." Bess' voice was kind but firm. "She never returns."

Shaking her head as if to better understand what was said, Winnie asked, "What do you mean?"

Bess let out a laugh. "This is the only order she will make with you. There is no potential for a big account for the shop."

Incredulously Winnie spoke again, "How do you know that will be the case with me? Did it ever occur to you that she may have never found the right consultant until now?"

I guess she will have to find out herself. "You may just be." She smiled before continuing. "Nevertheless, you should have consulted with Cybil before changing the time. It is common courtesy."

"I know," Winnie said embarrassedly.

Bess wanted to warn Winnie about Cybil, but in her position she couldn't do that. "Okay, I suggest you order a bouquet of flowers for Cybil. It will go a long way in saying you're sorry." She paused. "Winnie you need to be careful dealing with people. Try not to be so open and accommodating."

"I will try, but I'm not sure I know any other way to act." She smiled thinly. "Thank you Bess...for everything."

"You're welcome." As she watched the young lady leave her office Bess fought the feeling to protect her from the big bad world.

* *

With the ringing of the small bell over the door, Winnie looked up to see Eleanor Powers enter the shop. When the woman's face lit up in a brilliant smile, Winnie felt almost giddy. She moved towards the woman with an outstretched hand. "Ms. Powers, it is so good to see you. All your selections are here...you will be pleased with how they will look on you." She knew she was babbling and instantly felt her face heat up.

Eleanor fought the urge to feel warm towards the small woman.
"Eleanor...remember?"

Winnie's face reddened even more. "Yes, sorry."

Once again Eleanor was taken by Winnie's firm supple body. She appraised the shapely body letting her eyes linger on the perfectly formed breasts. The wavy dark blonde hair was cut attractively short and, in some curious way, set off her azure blue eyes and full ruby red lips. Eleanor resisted licking her lips for want of the girl. Getting control she spoke, "Shall we start?"

"Yes, please come with me." Once Eleanor was settled in the fitting room she excused herself to have Maria join them.

An hour and a half later all the outfits had been tried on and marked for alteration. Once Maria had left the room, Winnie turned to Eleanor. "All the alterations should be done and your clothes ready by next week. Do you want to set up a time for a final fitting?"

"I will get back to you on that. Right now I need to get going." Checking her wrist watch she said, "I didn't realize it was that late. I will have to eat on the run if I am to make my one thirty meeting."

"Would you like to share my sandwich?" Winnie blurted out.

Cocking her head Eleanor grinned. "I wouldn't want to inconvenience you."

"Oh, no you wouldn't be. I usually pack two sandwiches." She shrugged and felt her face redden again. "I'm a big eater. You can take one with you."

Eleanor felt a surge of excitement spread throughout her body. "I would love to share lunch with you. I think I have enough time to eat here since I won't have to fight the crowds to order something."

At first the two women sat in silence each appraising the other with sideways glances. Winnie was the first to speak. "I could see from your expressions that you were pleased with the results."

"Hmm, yes I am. You have a good eye for fashion Winnie which has proven fortunate for me."

Winnie's face again reddened. "You seem to have made me blush more than once today."

Eleanor laughed. "That is a first for me. I can't recall anyone ever blushing on my account." Seemingly she looked embarrassed. "In case you wondered, it looks good on you."

Winnie's hands covered her face. "Oh no that means you noticed it before." Parting her fingers slightly she spied Eleanor's face which looked thoroughly amused. "You must think I am a real goof."

"No, not at all. I remember one time when I was younger, probably about your age, and I was making my first really big purchase and I was so nervous that I actually snorted. Talk about being embarrassed I think my face must have turned scarlet."

Winnie laughed. "Did you still make the buy?" The thought of the stoic woman blushing was completely out of her realm of thinking.

"Yes, I made the sale. Fortunately, my faux pas happened after we had signed on the dotted line." Eleanor looked at her wrist watch again. "Look at the time. I really need to go."

"Oh, dear I'm sorry I kept you so long."

Eleanor reached over and touched Winnie's hand and instantly felt a charge of electricity surge through her body. "I completely enjoyed every minute."

Winnie was taken aback by the unexpected touch. She couldn't recall a time in her life that she felt the sensations the touch had elicited in her body. She was so enthralled in her thoughts that she didn't realize that Eleanor had risen and was about to leave the room.

"I will call you and set up a time for a follow up appointment," Eleanor said softly.

Jerking her head up, Winnie momentarily wondered how Eleanor had gotten to the door. Finally, the woman's words made it through her

muddled brain. “Oh, okay, I will look forward to your call.” She stood up and went to the door.

Once again Eleanor reached out and touched Winnie. “Thank you for sharing your lunch with me. Now I must really go.”

Winnie just stood there with her mouth opened wondering what had just happened. Turning back to the room, she looked around trying to recall every minute of the last several hours. On the table she saw her folder and the check that was attached to the outer cover. *Yes, she really was here.* She looked down at her hand half expecting to see red marking the spot where Eleanor touched her. *It certainly was searing enough to leave a mark* she thought. *What is happening?* She couldn't get the vision of Eleanor Powers out of her mind.

* *

Approaching Bess, Winnie held out the check. “Here, this should alleviate your fears. She has paid fifty percent.”

“I never thought she wouldn't pay Winnie. I was just concerned this would be a one time deal.”

Winnie felt her hackles rise. “Isn't that why you made the calls?”

Bess looked at Winnie curiously. “At first it was. You have to agree that her order was unusual.”

“Not to me.”

“It was your first order dear. Trust me, in all my years of experience I have only had one full order and it was only because two outfits were all that were ordered.”

Winnie felt foolish for her outburst. “I'm sorry Bess.”

For a long while Bess looked at Winnie trying to decide how to proceed. The young woman was clearly rattled and she needed to find a tactful way of finding out why. She had seen Eleanor leave the shop with a very pleased look on her face which was different from that of a client who was happy with her purchases. No, this was a predatory look of satisfaction and Bess remembered thinking at the time that it was odd. Coupled with Winnie's current agitated state, she could only surmise something had happened between the women.

“There is nothing to be sorry for Winnie.” She smiled slightly. “How did the fitting go?”

“Fantastic. The size was almost perfect and the alterations are minimal.” Winnie smiled inwardly remembering the look on Eleanor’s face as she tried on each outfit. “I think she was pleased.”

“Good. Why don’t you take your lunch now?”

“Oh, I already ate. I think I will check in with Cybil and see how her meeting went and if she needs any help.” She looked questioningly at Bess. “Will that be okay?”

Bess desperately wanted to ask when Winnie ate lunch, but decided against it. “Yes, I think Cybil will appreciate your concern. The meeting went well, but Ms. Owens was a bit subdued with the realization of what her weight gain meant to her wardrobe.”

As Winnie turned to find Cybil, she turned back to Bess and said, “She really is a very nice and funny person.”

Bess just shook her head as the word *barracuda* swam in her mind.

* *

Arriving with only a few minutes to spare, Eleanor entered the meeting room and greeted the investors gathered there. Fortunately, Marcus had set up everything and all she needed to do was the presentation. She had spent way too much time with Winnie James, but was satisfied that the results were worth it. *The look on her face as I left was exactly what I had hoped for. She will not resist me.* Her attention was then turned towards the meeting.

While the others on the team presented their findings Eleanor’s mind drifted back to the small blonde and the feelings that were stirred in her. She hadn’t expected her body’s extreme reaction that her touching the woman caused. Sitting among the men in the testosterone filled room, she smiled knowing that they would never know the soft sweetness of Winnie in their arms. *She will be mine and want no other.* She could feel the tightening of her center as Winnie continued to dominate her thoughts. The young woman was so tantalizing that she was tempted her to scrap her plans and take her earlier than scheduled.

* *

Friday proved to be slow for Winnie as she waited nervously for the call from Eleanor to set up their next meeting. Butterflies fluttered in her stomach in anticipation of hearing the woman's voice once more. As hard as she tried, she just couldn't keep her mind on the tasks at hand as enlightenment about Eleanor kept teasing the edges of her conscious thought. There was something there that she couldn't quite grasp the meaning of and that alone distracted her the most.

"Winnie," Bess said for the second time. "Hey where is your head?"

As if she were languishing in some dreamscape, Winnie could hear her name but felt helpless to respond. It wasn't until she felt a firm hand touch her arm that she finally responded and looked dazedly at the boss. "Oh, Bess, I'm sorry did you say something?"

"Are you okay?"

"Of course, why do you ask?"

Bess laughed at the quizzical look on the young woman's face. "Well I've been trying to get your attention for about five minutes."

"Nooo, you haven't, have you?" Winnie asked the question, but she knew the truth. She had been caught daydreaming. Thinking quickly she said, "Sorry I was trying to visualize the right colors for Karen Blanchard. She is proving difficult because she doesn't fall completely into any one category."

"Don't you hate when that happens? Would you like an ear to bounce ideas off? I can't guarantee I will have the answer, but I have had my share of quirky clients."

Winnie smiled at the woman, glad that she was able to give a palatable reason for her lack of attention. Truth be told, Winnie didn't really know what was going on in her head. She only knew that there was something lurking there that she couldn't understand fully.

Just then, the bell over the door jingled and both woman looked to see who it was. A man with a small vase of flowers entered the store. "Is there a W. James here?" he asked.

Winnie was shocked that someone would be sending her flowers. "That's me," she said as she approached the man and took the bouquet in her hands. Fumbling in her pocket, she found two dollars and handed them to the man. "Thank you."

“Well, well Winnie is looks like you have an admirer. Have you found that special someone?” Irene asked.

“No,” was her simple reply. She sat the vase on the counter snatched up the attached card and slid the card partially out of its envelope. What she read brought a broad, delighted smile to her face. *Thanks for sharing. You can make me lunch anytime. E.*

“Well,” said Bess. “Don’t keep us in suspense. Who are they from?”

Winnie looked up at the two women and quickly shoved the card back in the envelope and put it in her pocket. “My parents. They wanted to congratulate me on the Powers sale.” She didn’t know why she lied, but something told her that clients sending flowers was a no-no. *Bess is already suspicious enough of Eleanor and this will surely add to that.*

“Well they are beautiful and absolutely perfect.” Irene said as she bent in to smell the fragrance.

“Yes they are.” Winnie smiled broadly. “My problem is, how will I get them home. The subway on Friday afternoon is not really suited for transporting a vase of flowers.”

Bess only smiled and shook her head. “Only you would think of that Winnie. Why not treat yourself today and take a cab.”

“Good idea. Well, I should get back to figuring out Ms. Blanchard.” She picked up the vase and took it with her to her workroom. Once she closed the door, she breathed in all the wonderful smells emanating from the beautiful flowers. Irene is right, they are perfect. She took the small envelope out of her pocket, pulled out the card and ran her fingers over the writing. *That can’t be her handwriting.* She opened Eleanor’s folder and looked at the copy of the check. Eleanor’s writing was bold and precise while the writing on the card was small and indistinguishable from countless other scripts. It was then that she noticed that the address and phone number on the check was that of Eleanor’s business. *That’s curious* she thought as she picked up the phone and dialed the phone number.

A man answered the phone. “This is Eleanor Powers’ office. May I help you?”

“Yes, this is Winifred James and I would like to speak with Ms. Powers please.”

“She can’t be disturbed at this time. If you would like to give me a message I will pass it on.”

“Oh.” Winnie hadn’t expected this response. *I should never have called her. This guy must think I’m some sort of weirdo.* “I see. If you could just tell her thank you for me I would appreciate it.”

“Will do,” was all the man said before the line went silent.

Winnie smiled. *Maybe she’ll call me back.*

* *

Marcus Saunders lifted his head when he heard his boss approach.

“Any messages,” Eleanor asked absently.

“Yes, one,” the young PA said.

Eleanor took the message, read it and chuckled softly. *It is working. Excellent.* “Marcus, this woman will call again next week...probably on Thursday, I do not want to speak with her. Is that understood?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Even if I am standing right *here* in front of you I do not want to speak with her.” Eleanor then looked the young man squarely in the eyes. “Don’t mess up on this or it will cost you your job.”

“I understand.”

Marcus watched as his boss, without further comment, turned and left for her office. He had seen the look of victory on her face before when she closed a big deal. He had also sat by and watched as she played mind games with various women, but never before had she put his job on the line. There was something different this time in her voice. *It’s almost like she is afraid to speak with the woman. Get a grip man, she isn’t afraid of anything or anyone. On the other hand others are terrified of her.* He recalled the voice of Winnie James and how rattled she was when he said she couldn’t speak with his boss. From the sound of voice, the woman was young and obviously not in tune with the ways of the business world. *She actually thought she could just call and speak immediately.* Eleanor had given him his orders and he would not fail.

* *

When Winnie arrived at work on Monday she immediately went in search of Maria to find out how the alterations on Eleanor’s clothes were proceeding. “Maria, there you are.”

“Good morning to you to. Where else would I be?” the woman said stiffly.

Winnie laughed self-consciously. “You are so right. Good morning how was your weekend?”

A smile crossed Maria’s face. She had been taken aback with Winnie’s brusque manner for the young woman had always been polite and kind. Winnie was one of the few people in the shop that actually took time to speak to her about things other than alterations. “My weekend was good. The children and grandchildren came by as usual for Sunday dinner after Mass.”

“How are they all doing? The last time we spoke your youngest granddaughter Felicia was having her tonsils out.”

Maria’s face brightened. Winnie always remembered each of her children’s names as well as the grandchildren. “Thank you for asking. She is doing well.”

“That is wonderful to hear,” Winnie said flopping down in a chair next to the woman seated at her sewing machine. “I need to know how the Powers alterations are coming along so I can give her a date to come back for the final fitting.”

“I was in on Saturday and did much of the work. I think that I should have it all done by Wednesday...Thursday at the latest.”

“Great. Thank you so much.” Winnie sighed. “You know this is my first really big sale so I am anxious that it go just right.”

Maria could see the anxiety written all over Winnie’s face. “Don’t worry dear it will all work out. That woman seemed very nice and I could tell she really liked you.”

This had been the first person that spoke kindly about Eleanor so Winnie warmed immediately to the remark. “Really? You don’t think she is someone I should be cautious of?”

Maria turned in her chair and moved it closer to Winnie. “I spend time with every customer that comes in and buys so I have seen my share of good and bad people.” She smiled affectionately. “I judge people by how they treat me. Often they are mean spirited and disrespectful because they think I am nothing but a lowly seamstress. But, this lady seemed sincerely respectful of my position. And, when you left she had only praise for your abilities. I don’t think you have anything to fear from her.”

Winnie couldn't help the vibrant smile that emanated from her face. Eleanor was not someone to fear like Bess lead her to believe, but a warm kind person. "Thanks, Maria I needed to hear that."

* *

For the next two days Winnie kept her ears perked for the ringing of the phone and her being summoned to answer a call from Eleanor. Maria had told her late in the afternoon on Wednesday that the clothes were ready and Winnie worried that Eleanor hadn't called to set up a time for the final fitting.

"Bess, do you have a minute?"

"Certainly." Looking up into Winnie's face, she saw concern and something else. Disappointment she was definitely disappointed about something. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, all of Eleanor Powers' clothes are ready but she hasn't called to set up a time for the final fitting. What should I do? Is it okay to call her? Or, should I just wait?"

A nagging apprehension gnawed at Bess. *I will be glad when this woman is finished with us and out of Winnie's life.* "What were the arrangements you made with her?"

"She said she would call me. That was last Thursday. You don't think something has happened to her do you?"

"I doubt it. She is probably just busy." She had never had a customer make partial payment and never return, but she wouldn't put it past this woman. There was something just not right about her. *Maybe it is the way she looked at Winnie when she first came in to the shop? Maybe I am just acting like a foolish mother hen.* "Why don't you give her until tomorrow afternoon and if you haven't heard from her by you can give her a call."

"Alright," Winnie said nervously. "I just don't want to..."

Bess cut her off. "Don't worry it will all work out."

"But I need to make sure Maria is available."

Bess' heart went out to the young woman. She remembered her first big sale and how anxious she had been. "You know dear, we have all been there and we all survived."

“What do you mean?”

“We all have successful conclusions to our first big sale and you will be no different. Trust me it will all be fine.” She drew Winnie in for a light hug. “Stop worrying.”

“I’ll try.” Winnie said reluctantly. She could shake the feeling that she must have done or said something wrong to make Eleanor not call. Again thoughts and feelings for the woman played on the edge of her consciousness, but would not let her in on the game.

By two o’clock on Thursday, Winnie was a nervous wreck. Eleanor hadn’t called for an appointment and it was now up to Winnie to make the first move. Secreting herself in her workroom she placed a call that had her insides all a flutter.

“This is Eleanor Powers’ office. May I help you?” the male voice announced.

“Yes, this is Winifred James. I would like to speak with Ms. Powers about an appointment.”

She heard the man’s sharp intake of breath.

“I don’t see your name anywhere when is the appointment exactly?”

“No, I don’t have one I need to make one.”

“I see,” the man said in a matter of fact tone. “Is this relating to a financial concern?”

“No, it’s personal.” Winnie didn’t think that she should be discussing Eleanor’s clothing purchase with the man.

“I see,” he said again. “Ms. Powers is booked solid through next week the earliest appointment I can give you is two weeks from today.”

Winnie didn’t know what to say or do. The man obviously was doing his job and she, at the same time, didn’t want to violate Eleanor’s confidentiality.

“Do you want me to set up the appointment for you?” the man said impatiently.

“No,” Winnie said shakily. She took a deep breath to gather her composure. All the stress of waiting for the call had caught up with her and

she felt the tears threatening to fall. "Will you please ask her to call me at 555-8274."

"Certainly. Will there be anything else?"

"No."

"Thank you for calling."

The line then went silent and the tears that brimmed around the edges of her eyes began to fall.

* *

"Excellent Marcus. There is hope for you yet." Eleanor scooped up the message with the number and went to her office.

Everything is going just as planned. She looked at the clock on her desk and noted the time. *I'll call her back just before five.* A feral smile crossed her face. *Hmm, Winnie James you are about to have the ride of your life.*

Several hours later she dialed 555-8274 and was pleased to hear Winnie's voice. "This is Eleanor Powers may I please speak with Winifred James?"

"Speaking." Winnie let out a breath she had been holding for a week when she heard the woman's voice.

"Winnie darling I am so sorry that I haven't been able to get back to you before this. The stock market was doing strange things this week requiring my full attention." She heard Winnie sigh. "Will you forgive me for my tardiness?"

"Yes." Eleanor smiled when she heard the coolness in the one syllable answer.

"Please don't be angry with me," she said in her most conciliatory voice.

"I'm not. I was just worried I had done or said something wrong."

A broad smile crossed Eleanor's face. *Perfect.* "No way. I really am sorry. Can we make an appointment for tomorrow?"

"The man I spoke to on the phone said you were booked solid." Winnie countered.

“I was, but I’ve rearranged my schedule and I can be there by five tomorrow afternoon. Will that be a good time?” Eleanor knew that the shop closed at five which fit perfectly into her plans.

She heard Winnie heave a sigh before speaking again. “I am not sure Maria can be here at that time. If there are any changes that need to be made...maybe we should schedule for next week.” Eleanor heard the dejection in the girl’s voice and smiled.

“Not to worry about that. If need be I will come back next week. Listen I am really anxious to have the clothes so if it won’t be too inconvenient for you could I come tomorrow?”

Winnie sighed again. “Tomorrow at five will be fine.”

“Great. Thank you so much for understanding.” She paused then added, “Winnie you’re the greatest.”

“I’ll see you at five tomorrow then.”

Eleanor heard the softening of the voice and knew she had achieved her goal. “I’m looking forward to seeing you again.”

[Continued](#)

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~ Those Three Days~

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Disclaimer

Love/Sex: 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. There are scenes of explicit sexual encounters.

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.

Author's Personal Note: Ideas for stories can come from anywhere and everywhere. A favorite singer of mine, Lucinda Williams, sings the song that inspired this story. On many occasions through the journey of writing, I found myself floundering and unsure of what direction the story should take. Fortunately for me, a dear friend gave of her time unselfishly as she helped me over the roadblocks. It is because of her unwavering support and counsel that this story was completed. Thank you my friend.

Those Three Days Conclusion

“Excuse me Miss,” a man said as he knocked into Winnie.

“Sure its okay,” she said several moments later as she looked around wondering who she was talking to. Ever since Eleanor left the store a week earlier, she had found herself daydreaming more and more about the woman during the ride home each evening. With glazed eyes, she watched as the landscape whizzed by taking very little note of where she was until she realized the train was about to pull away from her stop. “Please let me by, this is my stop,” she said frantically. Once her foot touched the platform she shook her head and sighed deeply. *What is going on with me?* Her dazed-like condition continued as she walked to her apartment. It wasn't until she unlocked the door to her apartment and Kati rubbed up against her leg, that she realized she couldn't remember walking to the building or climbing the stairs.

The last seven days had her fixed on one thing only - Eleanor Powers. She hadn't slept soundly or eaten much since her last encounter with the woman. When Eleanor called her earlier that day she felt anger and jealousy that Eleanor's job interfered with her calling sooner. She couldn't deny the warm feelings she had when she heard the woman's voice and the pang of sadness she felt when Eleanor hadn't recognized her voice. A vision of the attractive woman invaded her mind as she stood stroking Kati while she watched children play in the street below. "She certainly is quite charming Kati. Did I tell you how funny I think she is?" She lifted the cat to her face and kissed its fur gently before placing her on the floor. "Well she is." Winnie shook her head as she tried to summon up a thought that still refused to surface. Eleanor was a beautiful, talented charming woman but there was something else just beneath the surface that intrigued Winnie. The draw that she felt was increasingly difficult to deny - Eleanor Powers captivated her.

There was something about how the cool eyes seemed to be picking her apart with delight that made her want to know more. The woman exuded danger and that had a draw all of its own. "She's old enough to be my mother!" Her eyes trailed to two women walking hand in hand down the street. "I want that," she whispered. *Is this what is like to be in love?* She walked sadly over to the couch, sat down and flicked on the television. Silently she sat there and welcomed Kati who jumped up and nestled next to her. She mindlessly stroked the cat and blankly looked at the screen. Again Eleanor played on the edges of her mind taunting her to realize a truth that she was not aware of. *If only I could figure out what it is. Maybe when I see her tomorrow I will understand.*

Later that evening she woke with a start. It was midnight and she hadn't eaten or showered. *I've got to get a grip.* Getting up off the couch, she went into the bathroom showered then went to bed. *Tomorrow is a big day* she thought before drifting off into a fitful sleep.

* *

Bess' concerned eyes focused on a haggard looking Winnie. "Do you want me to stay with you while she is here?"

"No, no I will be fine. You are having the kids over for dinner tonight and don't need to be here babysitting me." Winnie smiled. "I'm just really nervous...you know first big sale and all."

Bess looked skeptically at the girl. "Is that all?"

Winnie took a deep breath and closed her eyes wishing Bess would just disappear. "I have to admit that your constant warnings about Eleanor have me rattled."

Shocked at the comment the older woman's eyes widened. "Oh no, please don't feel that way."

Wearily the girl closed her eyes again. "I really don't know how else to feel Bess. Frankly, I haven't seen any indication at all that Eleanor is anything other than sincere." Opening her eyes she fixed them on her boss. "Yet you keep telling me to be careful."

"It's only because I have seen far too many people in my life that prey on others." Her eyes searched Winnie's. "It's my mother hen coming out." She smiled fondly. "I care about you and want to protect you."

Winnie couldn't help feeling a bit angry although she understood where Bess was coming from. "I don't need to be protected! I am twenty-six years old. I pay rent and have a job and even can go to the bathroom alone. I know I haven't been out in the world as long as you have but I think I have a pretty good handle on life and people." She patted Bess' hand. "I know you worry about me but please trust me. I will be okay."

Bess realized she had crossed a line when she heard Winnie's somewhat angry retort. "I do trust you." She didn't but at that point she had no other choice." You have my cell number if you run into any problems or need help. It won't be a problem to come back if you need me." Her eyes searched Winnie's. "I need to go now. Please don't hesitate to call me."

"I won't. Have a great weekend," Winnie said anxiously.

"Same to you." Reluctantly Bess left. *Be safe Winnie.*

Winnie was finally alone in the shop as she waited for Eleanor's arrival. As five o'clock came and went Winnie had a sinking feeling that the woman's work might have interfered once again with her keeping the appointment. *What do I have that someone like that would want to put first?* Looking at her watch and noting that it was five fifteen she headed for the back room to retrieve her belongings and go home. *She obviously isn't coming.*

Just as she was about to leave she saw Eleanor get out of a cab. Winnie's heart felt like it would explode when the woman entered the shop.

"I am so sorry I am late."

"I thought you weren't coming," Winnie said quietly as her eyes found the floor.

Without warning Eleanor engulfed her in a hug. "Oh I am so sorry to have caused you concern." Stepping back a bit she saw tears welling in Winnie's eyes. Lifting her chin, she gently wiped the tears away. "Did I cause that?" she said tenderly.

Shakily Winnie stepped further away. "No. I didn't sleep very well last night and it has been a really long week."

Eleanor had worked this scenario enough to know exactly why Winnie was crying and inwardly patted herself on the back. “Would you rather do this next week?”

Panicked that the woman would leave, Winnie blurted out, “NO! Please I have everything ready and you did say you were anxious to have the clothes.”

“Okay but only if you’re sure.”

An hour later Eleanor had tried on all the clothes. “Absolutely wonderful,” she said excitedly. “Everything is perfect.” She took out her checkbook and wrote a check for the balance and handed it to Winnie.

“Thank you. I will make out a receipt for you.” Winnie sat down at the table and filled in all the necessary information then handed the woman her copy. “We can send them out to your residence if you’d like.”

“Not necessary. I have a service standing by to come and get them. Can I take up just a little more of your time?”

Winnie’s mind was whirling with muddled thoughts and the realization that she didn’t want to see Eleanor leave. “You can have all the time you need,” she said shyly.

Just what I wanted to hear. “Good,” she said as she picked up the phone. While placing a call to the delivery service, Eleanor smiled while her eyes seductively scanned the firm taut body. The erotic memories of her reaction when she fantasized that Rachel was Winnie came back to her. “Okay they will be her in five minutes,” she said smiling enticingly. A shiver ran through her body as she remembered how it felt when she held the young girl in her arms earlier. “I was thinking that you might let me take you out to dinner.” She cocked her head. “It’s my way of saying thank you for all you’ve done for me.”

Winnie was not prepared for the feelings that coursed through her body when she heard the invitation. “You really want to have dinner with me?”

“Of course why wouldn’t I?”

“Well for starters I am sure you could come up with someone who is more mature and sophisticated.”

For a long moment Eleanor gazed at Winnie. The girl was different from anyone else – unassuming, completely open and so naïve. *Until she’s been with me.* “You have no idea how very special you are. Do you?”

Winnie shook her head negatively.

Eleanor gathered Winnie in her arms and held her close. "There is no one else I'd rather be with." Looking down into the small woman's gaze she saw what she hoped for. Slowly and purposely she lowered her lips to gently touch Winnie's. Pulling back slightly she whispered, "will you please have dinner with me?"

"Yes." For a second Winnie's mind flitted to Kati and whether she had enough food then she found Eleanor's lips and all else was forgotten.

* *

Dinner, at the elegant Olica restaurant inside the Kimberly hotel, with Eleanor was like a dream come true for Winnie. The French cuisine along with red wine was everything she had ever dreamt about romance. The older woman was charming and solicitous and made Winnie feel completely at ease. When they spoke, Eleanor's eyes were focused only on her making her feel as if she were the only person in the room.

"Oh, the meal was marvelous," Winnie said happily. "Thank you so much for everything."

Eleanor smiled enticingly at the younger woman. "No thank you." She reached across the table and took Winnie's hand. "Until you came along I had no idea how lonely and boring my life had become."

Winnie could feel her face turn scarlet. "You have a way of making me blush," she said self-consciously.

"I like how it looks on you."

Winnie was way out of her element and for a fleeting second a sense of foreboding filled her mind. Eleanor was like no one else she had ever met and she desperately wanted to have a relationship with her. *Slow down girl don't do something you will regret.* With that thought she knew she needed to distance herself. "Will you excuse me for a minute?"

Eleanor let go of her hand. "Certainly. Don't be too long, they will be bringing the dessert tray soon."

Winnie got up and walked towards the ladies room frantically trying not to turn around and run back to the table. *What the hell am I doing?* She was on a collision course with her destiny in the form of Eleanor Powers. The woman was no longer playing on the edges of her consciousness but she was fully enveloped in it.

As she returned from the ladies room, she felt the dark blue eyes appraising and wanting her body. She was totally smitten with the woman and wanted to know her in every way.

"I missed you," Eleanor purred.

At that moment Winnie knew she was helpless to deny the woman anything. Tentatively she reached across the table and touched Eleanor's hand. "I missed you too," she whispered softly.

When the waiter arrived with the dessert tray and mechanically described all the delicious fare Eleanor's eyes searched Winnie's. "Do you care for anything?"

Winnie held Eleanor's gaze. "No, nothing there appeals to me."

Eleanor looked at the waiter. "Nothing just the bill." Her gaze returned to Winnie. "If none of those desserts appeal to you what does?" The sudden scarlet face gave her the answer before words were spoken.

Winnie cleared her throat. *What do I say now?* Instead of speaking she gave the woman a slight smile and lowered her eyes. Her face was hot, but not as scorching as the feelings that Eleanor was creating throughout her body.

"Spend the night with me," Eleanor said softly.

"My cat will be wondering what has happened to me," she offered lifting her head to look at the woman. "I never stay out this late." Her gaze again fell to the table. When she heard no response Winnie raised her head and saw the dark blue eyes beseeching her to stay. Her heart was pounding and every nerve in her body screamed out to be touched. Again she lowered her eyes. "I've never..."she said very softly.

"Please spend the night with me. We won't do anything you don't want to." For Eleanor, those words were strange for every woman she had been with always did exactly what was expected. But, Winnie was different and she would require special extra tender treatment.

"My cat..." She looked directly into Eleanor's eyes.

"Will be fine."

Winnie was ensnared in a smoldering gaze and wanted nothing more than to be lost in it forever. "Yes, she will."

* *

Winnie expected they would go to Eleanor's home and was surprised when she was steered into the hotel's elevator. Her questioning look when she looked at Eleanor was answered quickly.

“I have a home in the Hamptons, but I have a suite here to live in during the week. The commute from the east end is terrible and with my job being so stressful I figured I didn’t need the extra hassle.”

When they exited the elevator and stood in front of Eleanor’s door Winnie felt both panic and excitement. There was no doubt in her mind that being with Eleanor was the right thing to do. The woman excited her as no other ever had and she wanted, at long last, to make love. She had waited until the right person came along and she knew, without doubt, that Eleanor Powers was the right person.

After closing the door and attaching the security lock, Eleanor took Winnie into her arms and lightly kissed her lips. Leaning back she smiled mysteriously. “Hmm, it would be so easy to get addicted to your kisses.”

Winnie wanting, no needing to kiss the woman again and again bent forward. Eleanor avoided her advances and took her hand leading her into the bedroom before once again taking her in her arms and hungrily kissing the wanting lips. Winnie offered no objection to the deep and passionate kisses enthusiastically taking Eleanor’s tongue into her mouth. Pulling out of the kiss, Eleanor began to slowly undress the young woman. With each button that was undone, she kissed the skin underneath that was released from captivity. As she let the blouse fall to the floor she stepped back and looked appraisingly at Winnie’s body. Even with a slip on she could tell that the body was all she had hoped it would be and more. Her fingers slid under the straps of the silk undergarment and lifted them so they would fall over Winnie’s shoulders before landing on the floor. Again her gaze drifted to the body and the perfect breast with taunt nipples that even the lacy bra couldn’t contain.

“You are so beautiful,” she whispered as she reached behind and unfastened the bra. She felt Winnie flinch when the bra was gently removed. “Do you want me to stop?”

“No,” Winnie strangled out. Her arms snaked around Eleanor’s shoulder to unzip her dress which joined the other garments on the floor. She leaned in and tentatively kissed a creamy shoulder. Her imaginations of what the moment would be like paled in comparison to the actual event. The feel of the skin under her lips sent shock waves throughout her body and she wanted to feel more. “Please make love to me.”

A feral smile crossed Eleanor’s face as she picked the young girl up and laid her on the bed. “I’ve wanted to make love to you ever since I first saw you.” Then she lowered her body over Winnie’s.

Eleanor gently stroked every inch of Winnie’s body as their naked bodies lay close together. She had never spent as much time with anyone achieving an orgasm and although that caused her concern, she proceeded at a slow tempo.

“Do you like how this makes you feel,” Eleanor asked as her fingers made their way down a sweat soaked belly.

“Yes.”

“And this,” she purred as her splayed, long tapered fingers leisurely touched Winnie’s wet center.

“Oh yes.” Winnie closed her eyes reveling in the sensation the fingers were creating.

While her fingers tantalized, Eleanor’s mouth kissed the hollow in Winnie’s neck before her lips moved down to captured an extended nipple. She sucked softly at first then took as much breast as she could and began kneading it with her mouth.

Winnie moaned arching her back encouraging Eleanor to suck harder. At the same time she raised her hips urgently wanting to feel the long fingers inside.

Her orgasm was long, hard and sustained. Eleanor’s touch had her senses on overload and never in her life had she felt so completely loved. Just when she thought she had achieved the ultimate release the woman’s touch would electrify her to heights she never imagined where possible.

When the spasms finally subsided, Eleanor held the girl close kissing her softly then stopping to whisper, “Winnie you are so beautiful. I have never felt this way before.” Soon Eleanor’s lips found hers and they became embroiled in a deep meaningful kiss.

Pulling away, Winnie held Eleanor’s face in her hands. “Will you teach me how to make love to you?”

Eleanor smiled rakishly having held off her own orgasm longer then she ever had before. She needed immediate relief and took one of Winnie’s hands and led it down past the curly hair to her saturated center. She then placed her fingers on top of Winnie’s and guided them inside. Slowly she moved their fingers in short strokes then pressed the middle fingers against her ‘g’ spot.

Raggedly Eleanor spoke, “Always remember that spot.” She then bore down hard on Winnie’s middle finger. Her orgasm didn’t take long to materialize - she had been ready for it for weeks. “Again,” she commanded and held Winnie’s fingers inside her. Eleanor’s body stiffened as her hips moved rapidly to keep pace with the questing fingers. Finally one powerful orgasm after another wracked her body unmercifully consuming every fiber of her being.

As she lay there wrapped in Winnie’s arms Eleanor wondered what had just happened to her. She couldn’t recall holding anyone the way she was tenderly holding the young woman. Her fantasies with Rachel paled in comparison to reality and there was nothing in her recent memories to compare with the effect that Winnie just had. Looking at the young girl who was sleeping soundly in her arms, she wondered if this liaison was like any of the others.

* *

When Winnie opened her eyes she saw a sleeping Eleanor lying close to her. Closing her eyes again she vividly recalled the night before as her body reacted to the memories. Now, with clarity, she knew what her mind was trying to tell her for the past week – she and Eleanor were meant to be. Snuggling closer to the woman she nuzzled her neck. “Good morning.”

Eleanor felt the movement in the bed and took a moment before opening her eyes remembering who was there. *Ah, yes, sweet young Winnie.* “Good morning.” She then turned over and pulled Winnie close. “I love waking up with you in my arms,” she cooed. “Can you feel the connection between us?”

“Mm-hmm. Can we please make love again?” Winnie asked sheepishly.

“We can make love all day if you want.” Eleanor ran her fingers over bulging nipples. “I can start here and then when you want more I can go,” her fingers trailed down between her legs, “here.” She slid a finger inside then two. “How does this feel?”

Winnie could only moan as she spread her legs wider and lifted her hips.

“I’ll take that as a yes.” Eleanor then slid her fingers out.

Opening her eyes wide Winnie cried out, “don’t stop.”

“Oh, I’m not stopping I’ve just begun.” Eleanor gently rolled Winnie on to her back. “I want you to feel everything.” Her eyes searched Winnie’s. When she didn’t see any objection her lips began their exploration.

* *

Eleanor woke up but didn’t open her eyes. It had been a long time since she had felt so rested. *Young Winnie is a wonderful elixir* she thought as she stretched and opened her eyes. What she saw woke her completely. *No one leaves until I tell them to.* “Where do you think you’re going,” she said angrily to the naked girl. What she hadn’t counted on was the disarming smile on the girl’s face or the predatory way she crawled up the bed.

Winnie leaned in and kissed Eleanor soundly then said, “I need to go home and take care of my cat.” She kissed the woman again and pulled back and smiled. “I need to change my clothes. Day old panties are yucky.”

Eleanor turned her head away. “I was hoping you would stay the weekend.”

“I’ll be back. My parents always call on Saturday if I’m not there they will panic.” When Eleanor refused to look in her direction Winnie touched the older woman’s face.

Eleanor slapped the hand away. “Stop!”

“Please don’t be angry with me,” Winnie pleaded. “I need to feed my cat and get clean clothes.”

“Isn’t there someone you could call to feed the cat?” Eleanor had been in this scenario more times than not and knew exactly how to achieve the results she wanted. Some women needed the direct approach – you’re not leaving – while others required a guilt trip – that was this girl. What she wanted was Winnie there, with her, for the weekend and that was how it would be.

“Well, there’s Mrs. Wilkerson across the hall but she is old and doesn’t get around very good.”

“You never know until you ask.”

“But, Eleanor that doesn’t solve the problem of my clothes,” Winnie pleaded.

A seemingly teary eyed Eleanor looked at Winnie. “I was hoping that when I took your clothes off last night they would stay off.”

Winnie leaned in and held Eleanor close. “I’m sorry I didn’t mean to upset you but I have responsibilities.” She felt the body she was holding stiffen.

“Then just go.” Eleanor pushed Winnie away. “Just get out of here.”

Winnie reeled at the rejection. “No...I don’t want to go.”

Eleanor got up out of the bed and walked quickly to the bathroom and closed the door with a bang.

What do I do now? Panic filled Winnie’s mind as she realized that she had possibly ruined everything. All I wanted to do was feed Kati and get a change of clothes. Shit what can I do to make things right. I can’t lose her...not now.

When Eleanor came out of the bathroom she was pleased to see Winnie still standing by the bed looking grief stricken. “I thought I told you to leave,” she said coldly while moving forebodingly towards the girl. Eleanor stood so close to Winnie that she could feel the heat radiating from the young woman’s body. “You don’t really want to go do you?” Bending in, she repeatedly kissed Winnie’s lips lightly before her tongue parted them and entered. Pulling back she looked into glazed eyes. “Are you wet for me?”

Winnie swallowed. “Yes.”

“Show me what you’re feeling,” Eleanor whispered. She saw Winnie’s look of confusion and took the girl’s hand and led it down her body. “Touch yourself and come for me.”

Winnie hesitated for she really needed Eleanor's finger touching her. She looked at the woman whose eyes looked at her poised hand and nodded. "Show me," she demanded.

Winnie was helpless to do anything but comply as she slid her fingers through her slick wet middle before sliding them inside. She kept her gaze fixed on the dark blue eyes feeling a heightened sexual rush knowing that Eleanor was watching. Her body finally erupted strongly in pleasure.

Eleanor stood and watched as Winnie removed her fingers. "Did that feel good?"

"Yes," Winnie said breathlessly.

"Take your wet fingers and run them across your lips." Eleanor saw the objection in the girl's eyes. "Do it."

Slowly Winnie began to run her fingers over her lips.

"Now lick them." It was not a request.

Winnie gulped but complied.

Eleanor watched in fascination as the girl lick every part of her hand. *It's like taking candy from a baby.* Smiling seductively, she moved closer and let her tongue run lightly across Winnie's lips. "Hmm, I like how you taste. Do you want to feel my tongue lick your pussy before I suck you?" she said crudely.

"Yes." Winnie was trembling in anticipation of feeling the woman's lips sucking her.

Eleanor sat Winnie down on the bed and spread her legs before she knelt on the floor and lowered her head between the girl's thighs and the soaked center.

Several hours later both women were satisfied and laid wrapped in each other's arms. Winnie breathed in the heady smells and sighed in deep satisfaction. "I want to stay here with you."

"What about your cat, your parents and your damn underwear?" Eleanor said sarcastically.

"I will call Mrs. Wilkerson and my parents," Winnie countered. "I just have a thing about wearing day old panties." She shrugged and looked pleadingly at the woman.

"Don't wear any."

Winnie blushed. "I couldn't do that it wouldn't feel right."

"Get up and put on your blouse then go sit in the chair by the desk," Eleanor ordered.

Dutifully Winnie obeyed. "This feels funny."

"Close your eyes and pretend you are at work on Monday, the phone rings and you are told it is for you."

"Okay."

"When you answer you hear my voice and I ask...*are you alone?* What do you tell me?"

"Yes."

"Are you thinking about me?"

"Yes."

"Mmm, are you wearing any panties?"

"No."

"Touch yourself for me."

"I can't not here."

"Sure you can just slide your hand down between your legs." Eleanor smiled when she saw the young girl comply.

"Are you wet?"

"Yes."

"How wet?"

"Very."

"Slide your finger inside." Eleanor felt her arousal begin as she watched Winnie's reactions.

"Does that feel good?"

Winnie was captivated by the woman's voice. "Oh yes."

"Slowly slide you finger up higher until you find the spot." Eleanor got out of bed and stood next to Winnie watching and wanting.

"Make yourself come."

Winnie's finger slowly began to slide in and out of the slick opening until the need overwhelmed her and she pumped harder. When she felt Eleanor's finger join hers she stopped.

"Don't stop," Eleanor demanded. She straddled Winnie's legs and grabbed the girl's free hand and guided it to her own need.

* *

Winnie woke with a start not knowing where she was until she looked over and saw Eleanor sleeping soundly next to her. *Is this real?* Stretching slightly and closing her eyes she remembered the night before and Eleanor's seemingly insatiable need to make love even in the showers they shared. *Yep it's real.* Pulling aside the sheets she carefully got up.

"Where are you going?" a sleep filled voice asked.

"To the bathroom."

"Don't be long."

When she laid back down Eleanor pulled her in close for a kiss. "Hmm this is perfect," she whispered before adding, "It's my turn," and got up to use the bathroom.

Sliding back under the sheets Eleanor moved close to Winnie. "Did you miss me," she purred breathing in deeply.

"I never want to lose sight of you," Winnie said sincerely.

"All you have to do when I am not there is close your eyes and dream. There is always going to be this connection between us."

Winnie's heart soared with the words. Never had she felt so loved or wanted. The word floated in her head as she captured Eleanor's lips. Her hand ran over the woman's full inviting breasts as her lips moved to a tempting ear lobe. Her tongue darted in and out of Eleanor's ear then stopped. "I'm in love with you," she whispered. "I'm in love with you."

Eleanor had heard those words countless times before and would always silently congratulate herself for the victory. But, this was different - Winnie is not like all the others. Her hands captured the young woman's face as her dark blue eyes searched the lighter ones. "Let me show you how I feel about you," she said as she began a tender assault on Winnie's willing body.

* *

The two women stood close together as Eleanor's arm rose to hail a cab.

"Come with me," Winnie pleaded. "Spend the night with me."

Eleanor's arm snaked around the girl's shoulders. "I wish I could but I can't."

"Why?"

"We've been through this already," she said irritably. "We both have to go to work tomorrow and if we spend the night together neither of us will be in any shape to do our jobs." Again Eleanor laughed. "You've worn me out."

"You didn't seem so worn out thirty minutes ago in the shower," Winnie said leaning in closer. "Will you ride with me?"

"If I do that you know I won't let you go."

Winnie smiled happily. "And that would be a problem how?"

"Not tonight," Eleanor said as a cab pulled up to the curb. She opened the door. "Get in."

For a moment Winnie was taken aback by the cool no nonsense tone of Eleanor's voice. "Is something the matter?"

"Are you getting in or not," the cabbie growled.

Eleanor said as she guided Winnie into the cab and said, "No," then leaned in and handed the man a fifty. "Make sure she gets there safely." She kissed Winnie's cheek. "I'll call you," she said then whispered "remember no panties. I love you." Pulling back out of the cab she closed the door and smiled at Winnie.

Winnie smiled back then craned her neck to catch the last glimpses of Eleanor as the cab wound its way through traffic. Leaning her head back she closed her eyes and tried to relive each exquisite moment since Friday. *This is the greatest feeling on earth* she thought as the cab pulled up in front of her building. Getting out, she walked up the stairs to her building and went inside.

* *

It was strange coming into her apartment with the lights out. Normally she left a light on if she was going to be out after dark. Kati greeted her by wrapping her body around Winnie's legs.

"Hey girl, did you miss me?" she said as she picked the cat up and carried her into the kitchen. "Good you still have food and water." She went to the cabinet and took out a

can of cat food. "Would you like a special treat for being such a good girl while I was away?" Kati purred loudly. "I thought so."

Once she had undressed and taken a shower Winnie curled up in her bed. *Maybe I will call her and tell her goodnight.* She picked up her phone the stopped. *I have no idea what her number is.* Opening the phonebook that was by the bed, she looked up the number of the hotel and dialed.

When she heard the greeting and *may I help you* she said, "Eleanor Powers' please."

"I'm sorry Miss, there is a do not disturb for Ms. Powers. Would you like to be connected to voice mail?"

Winnie felt a pang of sadness in her heart. "Yes thank you." When she heard the beep she said, "I just wanted to tell you good night and that I love you."

Sinking underneath the covers, Winnie closed her eyes and a vision of Eleanor came to mind immediately. The weekend had been glorious and she knew that her life now would never be the same. Her body had been alive with the wants and desires she had thought she would never experience. As she relived their first moment together she felt aroused and let her hand slide past her belly and began to moan.

* *

"Good morning Bess," Winnie said brightly as she entered the store.

Bess was used to Winnie's smiling face in the mornings but this morning she seemed exceptionally happy. "Well you certainly are in a good mood for a Monday morning."

"It is a beautiful sunny day, why not be happy?" Winnie countered.

"Yes, indeed why not." Bess eyed Winnie. *There's definitely something different about her. I'm sure there is more to the story but I'll wait until she's ready to share.* "I see the Powers woman paid in full. Were there any problems?"

Winnie focused on her calendar avoiding Bess' eyes, fearing her face would give her away. "None at all everything was perfect." She squeezed her thighs tightly trying to stifle the sensuous feelings that coursed through her center at the mention of Eleanor's name.

"Do you think she will be back?"

"Most definitely," Winnie said confidently before adding, "She was very pleased with our whole operation. She said I...we were just what she had been looking for." She raised her head and focused her eyes directly on Bess. "See you were wrong about her," she said bitterly.

The daggers Winnie's eyes were shooting in Bess' direction were unmistakable. Not wanting a confrontation, she decided to change the subject. "I see that Mrs. Blanchard will be in today. Were you able to figure out the right colors for her?"

Winnie sighed in relief as the subject of Eleanor was closed. It would be difficult to keep hiding her feelings for the woman if she continued to speak her name. *Bess was wrong about Eleanor and one day I will tell her exactly how wonderful she is.* "Yes, I did."

"Good," was all Bess said as she answered a ringing phone.

Winnie squeezed her legs tightly again and closed her eyes hoping that the next words Bess would say "*Winnie it's for you*". She had felt undressed and vulnerable knowing she wasn't wearing panties riding the subway in that morning. She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't hear Bess call her name right away.

"Winnie, did you hear me?"

Standing in anticipation, she felt moisture spread onto her inner thighs. "No, I'm sorry I was thinking about an outfit for Ms. Blanchard."

"Well, that was her and she has to change her appointment until tomorrow." For the first time that morning Bess took a good look at Winnie. The girl's face was flushed. "Are you okay? You look like you might have a fever," Bess said with concern.

Winnie touched her face and felt her hot cheeks. *Do I tell her I am fantasizing about my lover?* "No, I'm fine...too much sun I think." She shrugged as the feelings of arousal subsided.

For the rest of the day Winnie felt wetness rise then fall with each ring of the phone that wasn't for her. As five o'clock neared she wondered if she should call Eleanor. *I really do want to hear her voice but she did say she would call me.* While the thought of pleasuring herself at work as the woman directed her was appealing in a naughty sort of way, Winnie longed to just connect with Eleanor. Waiting for another hour, she finally closed the door for privacy and dialed the now familiar number.

"Eleanor Powers' office, may I help you?"

"Yes, this is Winifred James is there any chance I might speak with Ms. Powers?"

"She has left for the day. Would you like to leave a message?"

Winnie was devastated. "Would you please let her know I called," she said softly.

Rifling through the drawers Winnie searched for a phone book. Not finding one, she went to Bess' office but found the door locked. *Everyone has left* she thought. Closing her eyes, she tried desperately to recall the number of the hotel but came up blank.

When I get home I'll call her. Turning, she went back to her work area to gather her belongings before leaving for home and the phone call she knew would brighten her day.

* *

Winnie hurriedly put the key in the lock and opened the door to her apartment.

"I thought that was you I heard," Mrs. Wilkerson, coming out of her door said. "Was your cat okay when you got home last night?"

Turning, Winnie looked at the older woman and remembered she hadn't thanked her properly. "Yes, thank you so much you were a lifesaver." She smiled brightly edging further into her apartment.

"That must have been one important meeting since you got in so late last night." The woman looked at Winnie speculatively.

"It was." She wanted to get away but she didn't want to be rude to the woman who had helped her out. "Listen, I would like to send you some flowers as a way of thank you."

Mrs. Wilkerson just waved a hand. "Don't waste your money." She then turned and went into her apartment and closed the door.

"Okay, I won't." Closing her own door, Winnie flew into the kitchen and took a phone book out of the drawer and ripped through the pages until she found the number. Dialing the number, she could feel the rise of desire building.

"The Kimberly Hotel. This is Randolph may I help you?"

"Eleanor Powers please."

"Just a moment," the man said politely. "Ma'am, Ms. Powers isn't picking up would you like to leave her a message?"

Crestfallen Winnie answered, "Yes, thank you." When she heard the beep she said, "Hi, its Winnie. Please call me my number is 555-8049."

She longed for Eleanor so much that all else didn't matter. She mechanically put food in Kati's bowl and opened the refrigerator door for her own meal. "I'm not hungry," she said before going into her bedroom. She undressed and let her clothes fall to the floor then crawled into bed and pulled the covers up around her neck. She clicked on the television, found the financial network and scanned the crawl bar to see if anything unusual had happened with the market - it hadn't. *Eleanor is a very important and busy woman who just may not had the chance to call me today.* Closing her eyes she recalled speaking with her parents on Saturday while Eleanor nipped at a nipple and her

fingers stimulated the other. *I couldn't get off the phone fast enough so we could make love.* She smiled at the thought. "Eleanor where are you?" she whispered as her fingers ran down her belly before resting in wet, silky smoothness.

* *

Eleanor's phone rang just as the woman she picked up at a bar had, for the third time, failed to bring her to an orgasm. When she saw the message light flicker she reached over, lifted the phone and pressed the message button. She heard Winnie's message and a satisfied smile crossed her face.

"Want me to try again?" the nameless woman asked.

"No. Get your clothes on and get out," Eleanor demanded.

"Hey it's not my fault you can't unwind."

"Get out."

"Fuck you," the woman screamed as she put her clothes on.

Eleanor's eyes bore into the woman. "You just tried to and failed every time, now get out."

Once she heard the door slam, Eleanor's thoughts returned to the message she just heard. *Ah, young sweet Winnie you were so unexpected...so eager to please...so open to everything...so luscious...so inventive...* Closing her eyes, she felt her body react to the thought of Winnie. *I don't think I ever had a virgin before. Oh sweet young Winnie it is such a pity.* She then reached down and slid her fingers through the slick wetness and entered.

* *

Winnie walked quickly into the shop. "Sorry I'm late," she said to Bess. "I didn't sleep too well last night and then I overslept."

Bess laughed. "I hate when that happens it messes up the entire day." Looking at the opening door she whispered, "You've gotten here before your client and that's good. Go put your things away and I will bring her back to you." Bess then approached Karen Blanchard. "Good morning Mrs. Blanchard. Winnie will be with you in a moment. May I offer you a cup of coffee?"

From that point forward, the week went from bad to worse for Winnie as she seemed to have a problem with everything she did. Fortunately, the other women in the shop were there to rescue her. She was the last to leave each day as she waited in hopes that Eleanor would return her calls. Not wearing underwear and feeling wetness each time

the phone rang became a normal occurrence. Each day she called both the woman's office and hotel leaving the same message – *call me*. Nothing had been the same since Eleanor had entered her life and showed her what true love was all about.

"Winnie I'm leaving," Bess said to the girl whose head was bent over an order sheet. "You've stayed late every day this week, its Friday why not go home on time today."

Lifting her head, Winnie smiled thinly at her boss. "I'm just finishing up the Blanchard order so I can fax it to the fashion houses. I won't be long."

"Will you look at that rain coming down? I didn't hear any weather report about rain." Bess said frowning. "Want me to do that?"

"No, I'm almost finished," she said as she fed the papers into the fax machine and pushed send. "Have a great weekend Bess." Winnie returned to the task at hand.

"You too, try and get some rest you've looked really tired all week. Lock the door after me and take one of our umbrellas with you."

"I will." Winnie watched as the woman left then dutifully locked the door and pulled the shade. Going back to the desk, Winnie picked up the phone and dialed the number that was now etched into her brain.

"Eleanor Powers office may I help you?" the familiar male's voice asked.

"This is Winnie James. Is there any chance I might speak with Eleanor today?"

"She is unavailable."

"I see. Will you tell her I called?"

"Yes." Marcus waited a moment then added, "Listen, no matter when you call here next, she will be unavailable to you." He heard a sharp intake of breath. "Do you understand what I am telling you?"

It was several moments before Winnie could speak. "Yes," she finally said tearfully before hanging up.

* *

Marcus Saunders sighed; he hated doing his boss' dirty work. Winnie James seemed so genuine and nice, but he had his orders and he would follow them – his job depended on that. He tapped softly on the door and waited until he heard *enter*. "I'm leaving for the day is there anything else you need me to do before I go?"

Eleanor looked up at the young man then to her watch. "You're leaving rather early aren't you?"

The man looked uneasy. "Don't you remember I requested to leave early today...you said it would be okay."

The scowl on Eleanor's face was unmistakable – she wasn't happy. "I don't recall that conversation at all. Are there any messages?"

"Just one," he answered dejectedly.

"Did you set her straight?"

"Yes," he said before foolishly adding, "She seems like a really nice..."

"If you want to keep your job you won't say another word." Eleanor glared at the man.

"Is there anything else?"

"No." Marcus turned to leave and heard her add, "You don't leave until I do."

He desperately wanted to challenge her but he knew if he did he would be out of a job. *I guess I will have to cancel my doctor's appointment and make it for a time that doesn't interfere with her schedule.*

Eleanor got up and locked the door. As she sat down, a predatory smile crossed her face. She picked up the phone and dialed 555-8274. When she heard Winnie's voice she purred, "Are you alone?"

"Eleanor," Winnie said trembling as tears filled her eyes.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes," Winnie whispered.

"Do you have panties on sweet Winnie?"

"No."

"Hmm, I like to think of you sitting there all wet and needy. Are you wet for me?"

"Yes," Winnie choked out.

"Mmm, touch yourself."

Winnie shifted her weight and pulled up her skirt before sliding her fingers between her thighs.

“How wet are you?”

“Very.”

“Oh, I bet you are dripping. Am I right?”

“Yes.”

“Taste yourself for me. I remember how good you tasted on my tongue.”

Winnie dipped her fingers in her mouth and sucked then groaned as her body trembled remembering the feel of Eleanor’s tongue.

Eleanor smiled. “Now, slide three fingers inside and squeeze them hard.”

Almost immediately Winnie erupted. “Oooohhhh god,” she whimpered.

“Squeeze hard and move your fingers slowly. I want you to come again for me Winnie but only when I say.” Eleanor could hear the slapping sounds of the wet fingers moving in and out. “That’s my girl. Can you feel me inside?”

“Y...yes. Now, I need to come now!” Winnie cried out.

“Not yet baby.” She heard Winnie’s moans and felt her own need grow to a fever pitch. When she felt herself unable to wait she commanded, “Now. Come for me now”

“Oh ahhhhhhh, oh god,” Winnie screamed as tears began tracking down her cheeks. She felt the tremble start deep inside and lost all sight of space and time concentrating only on the storm about to erupt in her body. “Oooh, Eleanor,” she screamed as her body was shattered with one tremendous orgasm.” With eyes closed tears began to flow. “I love you so much. I need to see you and be with you,” she whimpered.

“Impossible.”

“Why?” she sobbed.

“Because it’s over.”

Winnie opened her eyes wide. “No it can’t be.”

“It is,” Eleanor said coldly.

“You told me you loved and needed me. You said we have a connection.”

“That was last weekend.”

“No, I don’t believe you.”

“Believe it,” was all Eleanor said before she hung up.

Pulling her fingers out, Eleanor lifted her hand and looked at her still saturated fingers. She could still feel the fringes of her orgasm as she closed her eyes. “Ah, sweet young Winnie you were such a good fuck.” She looked out her window at the rain and thought *I hate the rain*. She sighed heavily. *Unfortunately for you dear Winnie, I’m not the forever type.*

* *

Winnie just held the phone as she heard the dial tone. *It can’t be true. I know she loves me.* Making a decision, she grabbed her purse, unlocked the door and walked out into the rain and hailed a taxi. “Fifty-fourth and Park,” she told the cabbie.

Getting out of the cab, she looked up at the clock on the building with the rain pounding in her eyes. It was five thirty and somewhere inside was Eleanor Powers. She would wait right there until the woman either came out or went in. *I need to look into her eyes to know the truth.*

Eleanor exited the building at six thirty and raised her umbrella. She was in a foul mood and the rain wasn’t helping. She felt the eyes upon her before she saw the young woman standing there in the rain. Even through the rain she could see the tears glistening on the smooth, young and seemingly very pale skin. Instinct took over and she began to walk away until, for some unknown reason, she turned and looked back. Winnie was bent over with her hand to her mouth spastically coughing while catching herself from falling by grabbing onto a lamp post. *Shit.* Being a banker meant leaving no loose ends and Winnie was unraveling her neatly tied rope. *Next time I’ll be more careful and not let them know where I work.* Quickly walking over to Winnie, she held the umbrella over the small body. *Marcus obviously failed in getting the message across to her. He will be unemployed come Monday.*

“What are you doing standing in the rain without a coat?” she asked Winnie angrily.

Winnie just leaned into the tall woman and sobbed uncontrollably.

This is getting tiresome. I’ve got better things to do. Eleanor raised her hand to hail a cab while pulling Winnie closer under the umbrella. The girl was soaking wet and shivering, but fortunately the sobs subsided when she put her arm around her. *It won’t do to have her causing a scene here. I’ll get her home and be done with her.*

A cab stopped. “Come on Winnie get in the cab. I’ll take you home.”

Winnie did as she was told and slid into the seat grateful to feel Eleanor sitting next to her. She put her head on the strong shoulder and felt herself melt into sleep.

“Where to lady?”

“Winnie, what’s your address?” When the girl didn’t respond Eleanor fumbled in her briefcase until she came up with Winnie’s business card with her address scribbled on the back. She handed it to the cabbie. “Here’s the address.”

“The village at this time of day...this is gonna to cost you.”

“I don’t care just get us there,” Eleanor said irritably. The scenario wasn’t in her plans and pity for others to her was such a waste of time. She looked at Winnie and felt a shiver go up her spine. “Do you have any idea just how much trouble you’re causing me?” she whispered to the groggy girl.

When the cab pulled up in front of Winnie’s building Eleanor shook her. “Come on Winnie we need to get you inside.”

Again Winnie complied with Eleanor’s orders and got out of the cab. She leaned on the taller woman as they climbed the stairs and went inside. When they were outside of her door Winnie put the key in the lock.

“What are you doing to her?” a woman’s voice demanded.

Turning around Eleanor saw an older woman standing with her hands on her hips and suspicion in her eyes. “Mrs. Wilkerson? I am Eleanor, Winnie’s friend. She’s sick and I am helping her.” Eleanor said in her most convincing voice. *How dare she question me?*

The older woman gave the stranger a once over. “Humph. You better get her inside she doesn’t look so good.”

Eleanor smiled insincerely then pushed the door open. Once inside she said, “Get those wet clothes off so you can get in a hot shower.”

“You take them off,” Winnie said weakly. “I know how you like to do that.”

Shaking her head angrily Eleanor began undressing Winnie before leading her into the bathroom and the shower. After what seemed to Eleanor an intolerable length of time, Winnie finally climbed into her bed.

Eleanor watched as Winnie’s thrashing in the bed became more and more violent. She pressed her hands on the girl’s shoulder in an attempt to stop her from hurting herself but was unsuccessful. Winnie was sweating profusely and her body seemed to Eleanor to be burning up. *Damn, she’s really sick. SHIT!* Finally managing to get the girl to settle down some, Eleanor took her blackberry out, located a phone number and dialed.

“Hey, it’s me.”

“El, I can’t come over tonight,” the woman said.

“I need medical help.”

“Are you ill?”

“No, it’s someone else and I need you to look at her right now.”

“What are the symptoms?”

“She is flailing around and has a high fever.”

“Just give her some aspirin and lots of fluids she should be fine in the morning.”

“I don’t think you heard me Rita...I said I want you to look at her now.”

The woman blew out a breath. “I’ll be over to your place shortly.”

“I thought you’d see it my way. I’m in Tribeca...”

“Tribeca! Are you slumming? I’ve never known you to be anywhere but in your hotel suite.”

Eleanor wasn’t amused by the comment. “Just get here and bring your medical bag. The address is 1255 Barrelage, apartment B3.”

Thirty minutes later, Eleanor heard the buzz indicating a visitor and pressed the button to unlock the apartment building door.

“It’s about time you got here,” Eleanor barked as Rita Pomeroy entered Winnie’s apartment. “She’s in here,” Eleanor said as she walked briskly into the bedroom.

“Another one of your conquests,” Rita asked as she entered the room. Once she saw Winnie she gasped. “My god El how young is she?”

“Young, sweet, firm and so delicious,” Eleanor replied salaciously before her blue eyes darkened and bored into the doctor. “You know, I’m really not interested in what you think. You’re here to make her better, so get busy.”

Rita shrugged, sat down on the bed next to Winnie and felt the girl’s forehead before opening her medical bag.

“Well,” Eleanor said irritably. “Can you fix her? I’ve got things to do and can’t spend my time playing nursemaid.”

“Why are you here?” Rita asked as she continued to examine the girl.

Why am I here? “She was standing in the rain and I thought she might die if I didn’t get her warm and dry.”

The doctor laughed sarcastically. “And that matters to you?” She put her stethoscope back in her bag. “Well, the good news for you is she will live.”

“Can you get her to settle down so I can get out of here?”

“Ever the compassionate heart,” Rita said frowning, wondering for the umpteenth time why she continued to let the woman into her life. “Like I said on the phone, Eleanor...aspirin and fluids.”

“Can you fix her?” Eleanor’s face was dark and angry.

Sighing, Rita focused her eyes on the woman lying in the bed. “Her lungs are clear and her temp is only slightly higher than normal. I suspect she is suffering from exhaustion and heartache,” she said knowingly. Fixing her eyes directly on Eleanor she added, “You know one of these days your games are going to come back and bite you in the ass.” Pulling the covers up around Winnie’s shoulders, Rita looked at Eleanor again. “I gave her a mild sedative so she should sleep through the night. I’ll come back Sunday and check on her.” Rita gathered up her bag, stood up and started out of the room but felt Eleanor’s hand around her wrist.

“Not yet.” Eleanor’s voice was low and laced with want.

Rita looked over at the sleeping girl. “What about her?”

“I’m not interested in her.” Eleanor pulled Rita close and kissed her hard as her hands caressed a firm backside.

Rita, helpless to resist, dissolved into Eleanor’s kiss and felt herself being lowered to the floor.

Later, as she left the apartment, Eleanor took one last look and sighed before closing the door. *Very dangerous indeed and someone I need to get out of my life sooner than later.*

* *

Winnie didn’t know if it was Kati or a persistent tickle in the back of her throat that woke her. Looking at the clock on the table she saw it was twelve thirty and judging by the light outside she knew it was the afternoon. *I can’t remember the last time I slept this late.* She closed her eyes trying to remember how she had gotten there. A brilliant

smiled crossed her face as she remembered that Eleanor brought her home. She looked around the room for the woman. "Eleanor?" she called out, "where are you?"

Getting up on wobbly legs, she went in search of the woman that she was certain had saved her the night before. She found her clothes piled in a heap on the bathroom floor. When she saw Kati's bowl empty she felt a pang of guilt for neglecting the cat. Taking a can of cat food from the cupboard she opened it and scraped the contents into Kati's bowl. "There you go sweetheart I'm sorry," she said to her furry friend as she brushed her hand across Kati's head. She continued her search only to have her heart sink when she realized that the woman she sought was no longer there. *But, she was* and that thought alone gave her hope that Eleanor's words "*its over*" were meaningless.

Holding on tightly to the kitchen counter, Winnie felt faint. She realized just how much her actions of the last week were affecting her health. For almost a week she hadn't eaten or slept and that had her feeling weak. *I just haven't been hungry.* Going into the bathroom she took a double dose Tylenol before going back to bed. *All I need is to sleep some more and then I can think clearly. Eleanor loves me I know that.* She crawled under the covers, curled up in a fetal position and covered her head with the blankets. *Eleanor where are you* she thought just before closing her eyes in sleep.

The insistent ringing of the phone woke her several hours later. "Hello," she said groggily. "Mom? Why are you calling now?" She looked at the bedside clock - it was three.

"Winnie, darling are you okay? You sound terrible," her mother her asked worriedly.

Fearing that Eleanor may try to call her she was anxious to end the call. "Listen, Mom, I really don't feel very well do you mind if we talk later in the week."

"I thought you sounded like you were coming down with something. Is there anything I can do for you...do you want me to come down there?"

"No, Mom, its nothing that a day or two in bed won't cure."

Once she hung up she picked up the receiver once again to make sure there was a dial tone. She moved around the rooms trying to find any evidence of Eleanor's presence – she found none. Standing at the window she watched the street in hopes of seeing the woman walking towards her building or maybe getting out of a cab – she never came. As darkness filled the sky she finally left her station by the window and checked the phone for the tenth time to make sure it was still working. *Where are you Eleanor? An overwhelming sense of loneliness filled her heart as she swiped her fingers across her face in an effort to eradicate the tears trickling down her cheeks. Were you only a specter that built a nest inside my heart only to leave it empty?* Her eyes began to burn from the onslaught of tears. Then somewhere between the truth of Eleanor's words – *its over* – and the pain invading her heart she realized that Eleanor was gone and she was alone. As tears fell unabated she knew that nothing would ever be the same again and

that she was destroyed. Going into her bedroom she fell on the bed and began sobbing uncontrollably.

* *

Morning came and Winnie pulled the covers up over her head as she heard the soft mewling of her cat. "Kati go away," she screamed and instantly felt bad. Peeking out from under the covers, Kati's eyes gazed at her in what Winnie thought was compassion. "I'm sorry I was angry with you...it's not your fault." She reached for the cat and gently petted the soft fur. "Come on let's get you something to eat."

Getting out of bed, she went to the kitchen poured some food in the cat's bowl then measured out coffee and started it dripping. Her eyes stung from the night long crying session. Getting out a cup, she waited, tapping her fingers on the counter, for the coffee to finish. As she heard the final gurgling of the machine a buzz sounded indicating someone wanted to enter the building. Smiling for the first time in hours, she thought, *Eleanor*, as she hurried to the intercom. "Yes," she said into the horizontal lines on the wall.

"It's Rita may I come up and see you?"

Rita? "I think you must have pressed the wrong apartment's button I don't know any Rita."

"I know Eleanor."

Winnie immediately pressed the button to allow entry. The simple mention of the woman's name sent feelings of pleasure throughout her body. When she opened the door she was amazed to see a casually dressed woman standing there with a medical bag in her hand.

Focusing her eyes on the bag, Winnie felt fear grip her heart. "Is Eleanor alright?"

Rita's eyes followed Winnie's stare to her bag. "She's fine, I came to see you. Do you remember me from the other night?"

Winnie was confused. "Where are my manners? Please come inside." Once she had closed the door she turned to the woman. "You say you were here Friday night?"

The young woman's swollen eyes were rimmed in red and she looked like she hadn't slept in days. Rita's heart went out to the girl for she knew exactly what she was feeling. Looking beyond the outward appearance she saw something else – Winnie was a sweet innocent. *You sure know how to pick them Eleanor.* "Yes, Eleanor called me to come here and take a look at you. She was worried that you might be seriously ill."

A blush crossed Winnie's face as she smiled brightly. "She was worried about me?" she said hopefully.

"Yes," Rita said quietly. *I've been there and there is no forever Winnie.*

"I just made some coffee would you like a cup?"

"Yes, thank you. Black is good."

Returning with the coffee Winnie smiled shakily. "Here you go." She sipped her coffee eyeing the woman across from her. "Have you been her friend for a long time?" Winnie asked afraid that the woman was Eleanor's lover or partner.

Rita scowled. "Her friend...Eleanor doesn't have friends...only conquests."

"I don't understand," Winnie said in confusion. "If you're not her friend why did you come when she asked you?"

Rita just shook her head and patted the couch. "Why don't you sit over here next to me and let me examine you." Winnie sat down next to the woman.

"If you're not her friend then what are you?" Winnie finally asked when Rita took the stethoscope out of her ears. "Her doctor?"

"No," Rita chose her words carefully. "I was involved with her just like you."

"Like me? I don't understand. Are you her partner?"

Ignoring the question Rita continued. "Your chest sounds fine. How have you been sleeping?"

Winnie rubbed the nape of her neck. "Except for Friday night I've been having some difficulty getting more than a few hours a night lately."

"What about your appetite? Are you eating regularly?"

"Not lately," Winnie answered. "Please answer my question...are you her partner?"

Rita again ignored the question. "Hmm, no appetite and sleepless nights that sounds familiar. I remember that happening to me seven years ago," she mused.

"I don't understand."

Rita laughed sarcastically. "Seven years ago I was her favorite for three days." She laughed derisively. "She breezed into my office for a physical. I had never met anyone like her. So charming...so sexy. That sensuous gaze of hers crawls under your skin and

demands recognition. Somehow she bores a hole in your brain and fills it with thoughts of only her.” Rita gazed at Winnie. “You know how that is, don’t you? When out of nowhere this vision comes along and from that moment on it occupies your every waking moment.”

Winnie’s hand went over her ears as she began to comprehend what the doctor was trying to tell her. “I don’t want to hear this...it is different for me.”

Rita smiled compassionately. “I thought so too. I thought I would be the one to sweep *her* off her feet. It doesn’t work that way for Eleanor.”

“No, you’re lying. She loves me! Why else would she have brought me home the other night or called you to take care of me?”

“You don’t get it do you?”

“Get what?”

“She didn’t do all that for you, it was for her. It’s always for and about her.”

“No,” Winnie sobbed.

Rita lifted Winnie’s chin. “Yes, unfortunately it’s true. She’ll use you until she’s done with you then she’s gone.”

“If all that is true then why did you help her out?” Winnie sniffled. “Surely if she is as bad as you say you would have walked away from her.” Her voice rose with righteous anger.

“I wish it were that easy. I’ve been trying all these years to do just that, but still when she calls I run to her.”

“Why?”

Rita shook her head and laughed. “Why indeed.” For a moment Rita’s eyes searched the room as she tried to find the right words. The girl deserved to know the truth no matter how much it might hurt her. “Winnie, is your heart breaking more than you ever thought possible?”

“Yes.”

“Has anyone ever hurt you like this before?”

“No,” Winnie said tearfully.

“If she walked through your door right now what would you do? Pummel her and throw her out?”

“I couldn’t do that to her.”

“If she called you on the phone and said *I want to meet you* what would you do?”

“I’d go to her.”

“Why?”

It was then that Winnie finally began to understand what Rita had been trying to tell her. Eleanor was in her blood and there was no way to eradicate her. “She was my first. I thought it would be forever.”

Empathy for Winnie welled in Rita’s heart as she put her arm around the young woman. “Forever for Eleanor is three days. Some don’t even get that. Oh, she will call you every once in awhile and you will go to her because you can’t help yourself. You tell yourself that this time will be different this time she will stay. She never does.”

“No I won’t,” Winnie said defiantly. “I will never let her in again.”

“Yes, you will,” Rita said softly.

Winnie began to sob again uncontrollably for she knew the truth in those words. To Eleanor she was nothing but a diversion, but to her, Eleanor was everything and she would do whatever was necessary to keep the woman in her life.

Rita fished in her bag, took out a business card scribbled a number on the back and handed it to Winnie. “If you ever want to talk or just have a shoulder to cry on call me. If you call the office they won’t let you talk to me so I put my cell number on the back. I check those messages every hour.”

Winnie took the card and turned it over. “I called her everyday and she never was available.”

“I will call you back I promise,” Rita said sincerely. “Everyone isn’t like Eleanor.”

“Thank you,” Winnie held up the card, “for everything.” Tears stained her cheeks as they continued to run.

Rita gently wiped the tears away. She cocked her head and smiled. “I have an idea if you’re open to it,” she said compassionately.

“What is it?” Winnie asked tearfully leery of what would be said.

“Would you like to have dinner with me?”

Winnie pulled away. "I'm not ready for another relationship this one has done all the damage I ever want to feel."

"No, you misunderstand it's not a date. We can talk about what we feel and maybe come up with a plan for not letting it happen again," Rita said hopefully. "Let's just say it will be our way of eradicating Eleanor from our lives." Rita laughed. "Our own twelve step program."

Winnie straightened and wiped the last of her tears away. "Hmm, that could have some merits," she said wearily.

"Yep, we can be each others support system if we are ever tempted by Eleanor again." Rita smiled fondly. "What do you say...want to give it a try?"

"I'd like that. It will be good to have someone to talk to about this that understands."

"You know we could be at this for a very long time...even forever. Look at me I've been under her spell for seven years."

Winnie, for the first time, really looked at Rita. She was a very attractive woman that she guessed was maybe ten years older than her. "I've got the time. Do you?"

A warm feeling filled Rita's mind. "Yes." She held out her hand. "Partners."

Winnie took the offered hand. "Partners."

"Good." Rita drank the last of her coffee. "Let me get going. I have a few patients to visit at the hospital then I'll go home and change." She looked at her watch. "What do you say I pick you up around five?" Her eyes searched Winnie's. "Do you think you can be ready by then?"

Fear gripped Winnie. "Will you really come back?"

Rita patted her hand. "I'm not Eleanor, I will be back."

"I'll be ready then."

Kati picked that moment to jump on Winnie's lap. Finally she smiled, "Rita this is Kati."

Placing a gentle hand on Kati's head Rita smiled. "Hi there beautiful." Her eyes found Winnie's. "I have a cat too, Maxine, maybe they can have a play date sometime."

Winnie smiled at the passing comment Rita. "Maybe they can."

Leaning against the seawall, Winnie's eyes tracked the waves as they slapped repeatedly against the concrete. Eleanor Powers had changed her life forever by teaching her what it feels like to love. For now, she would take solace in knowing that she wasn't alone, that Rita would be there to help her understand what she was feeling. Although she knew nothing would ever be the same again, there was a ray of sunshine after those three days.

The End

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