

ANOTHER ROSE ON THE VINE

Written by

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EXT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

The backyard garden of LILY WHITE, Dennis, MA.

A yellow rose.

A glove. A snip.

ANGLE on a large brimmed garden hat. The Camera pulls down to flannel shirt, jeans and a pair of CROCS.

Hands are covered with a pair of men's work gloves.

ROSE is humming the song "The Rose." She is clipping Yellow rose. SNIP SNIP. SNIP SNIP.

A basket gathers the long-stemmed beauties. Close up on a lady bug that lands on the gloved hands.

ROSE
Oh, make a wish.
Lady Bug, you're a sign of good
luck and positive energy!

She removes one glove - revealing not a gentle lady's hand, but a hand worn from years of labor.

Rough skin. Short, clean nails. The hand of someone who's worked - and served.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - LILY WHITE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Lily stands at the window, on the phone.

She watches Rose in the garden, smiling.

LILY
(laughs, dry)
No, Iris, I've never told her.
Besides, if she knew... she'd leave.
And then who would I have to play
with? She is the perfect servant.

**SMASH CUT
TO:**

EXT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Note: The camera has not yet seen Rose's face. Only her hands. Her posture. Her stillness.

She brings a rose to her nose. She sniffs

LILY (O.S.)
(screeching)
ROSE! ROSE!

A thorn draws blood. A single drop.

ROSE (42) sucks her finger

****FOCUS:**** A single ruby-red droplet of blood.

Rose looks at it.

LILY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(shrill, relentless)
ROSE! Are you deaf? Rose?

****SMASH CUT
TO:****

INT. KITCHEN - LILY WHITE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Lily watches Rose through the window. She sighs, still on the call.

LILY
(laughing)
Oh, Iris...
You'd never know you two are sisters.
You - full of life.
The other one - just so full.
It's going to be just like we planned. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf weekend.* Bring your claws.

****SMASH CUT
TO:****

EXT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Rose sighs. She sucks on her finger once more.

Then quietly puts her glove back on.

LILY (O.S.)
Rose, it's time. Right?

Rose stands.

She picks up her basket of yellow roses.

ROSE
(to no one)
Let's begin.

LILY
(shrill, offscreen)
Rose!

INT. LILY WHITE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LILY WHITE, 68, still styled like Lauren Bacall's final close-up. She snatches the bouquet from Rose's hands and begins trimming.

LILY
You always pick the best ones.

SNIP. A rose falls. SNIP. She slices off a bud she deems unworthy.

Rose turns on the radio and the song "The Rose" is played.

Rose smiles softly and hums.

Rose picks up the trimmed bud Lily discarded. She holds it.

Doesn't speak. Doesn't smile. Just... lets it be.

Lily sees this and snaps the radio off.

Rose drops the bud in the trash.

LILY (CONT'D)
Well-almost perfect.
(pause, smile)
And my favorite color, of course.

ROSE
(flat)
They're the only ones we have.

LILY AND ROSE
Yellow roses are my favorite!

They chuckle, performative.

LILY
(suddenly cool)
When did you stop calling me "Mom"?
I really wish you'd call me that
again. Or "Mumsy."

ROSE
You don't remember?

LILY
If I did, I wouldn't ask, would I?

ROSE
Of course. Wouldn't want to waste
words.

LILY
(arches an eyebrow)
Don't be jealous. Just because—

LILY AND ROSE
I have a Pulitzer prize for writing
Lily freezes. Rose doesn't flinch.

LILY
Are you mocking me.

ROSE
No, Lily. I'm quoting you. Big
difference.

Lily eyes her up and down.

LILY
Well then. Remind me—
When did you start calling me
"Lily"?

The camera finally reveals Rose's face. Plain. Weathered. And
unblinking.

ROSE
The day you stopped treating me
like your child.

LILY
(scoffs)
And when was that, dear?

ROSE
When I was eight.

She leaves. Calm. Controlled. Humming again.

Lily watches her go.

LILY
(scoffing to herself)
Eight years old. What nonsense.

Lily trims the final rose.

SNIP.

She pricks her thumb – deliberately. RUBY-RED blood beads up.

She holds the vase aloft, checks the room – Rose is gone.
Then, with Broadway-level flair–

LILY
Ohhh!

CRASH.

She throws the vase. It shatters. SLOW MOTION – glass, water, yellow petals suspended in air. Lily basks in the performance.

ROSE (ENTERING)
Lily, are you okay?

LILY
(panting)
The VAAAASE–it slipped.
All your beautiful flowers. Ruined!

Rose, skeptical, grabs the broom.

LILY (CONT'D)
And look–I cut myself!
This is your fault. You shouldn't
have left me with that heavy
VAAAASE. It was my mother's.

ROSE
Lily, it was from the Dollar Store.

LILY
That's where you came from, isn't
it?
(beat)
Bargain bin daughter. Bargain bin
life.

Rose freezes.

Lily steps—crunch—on two roses. Deliberate.

ROSE
Lily, you—

LILY
Oh, dear. Didn't see them.
Well. We'll just pick more.

Rose exhales. Deep.

LILY (CONT'D)
I heard that. Are you taking your
asthma meds?

No response.

Rose sweeps.

LILY (CONT'D)
Darling? You okay?

ROSE
Wouldn't want to waste words, Lily.
I'm perfect. I'll get more yellow
roses—your favorite.

Lily dons her pretty sunhat and dainty gloves.

LILY
Wonderful. I'll come with you.
We want the perfect ones.

Rose doesn't flinch.

ROSE
Of course we do.

Lily hums, sings:

LILY
♪ "I beg your pardon... I never
promised you a rose garden..."

They walk into the light.

EXT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Sun low. Shadows long. Lily struts in heels. Rose follows,
basket in hand.

LILY
Not that one, sweetie.
This one's perfect.

Lily leans in delicately to snip a rose—her pristine floral gloves untouched by effort. She's here for the performance. Rose does the labor.

LILY (CONT'D)
We want the perfect ones, don't we?

ROSE
(sighs)
Yes, Lily. The perfect ones.

LILY
We haven't heard from your sister.

ROSE
(pauses)
Iris?

LILY
(beat)
Yes, Iris. Rose and Lily and Iris.
(she smiles wistfully)
A floral bouquet. Independent
flowers, each of us.

ROSE
(flat)
You never liked that word,
"Independent."

LILY
(snickering)
Oh but Iris adored it. Always the
free spirit.
(chuckles)
"Don't pick me, I'll wilt," she
said. So poetic. So dramatic.

ROSE
She always called us the greenhouse
girls.

LILY
She always thought herself wild.
Like a weed, if you ask me.

(Rose cuts a particularly bright rose. Her hand trembles slightly.)

ROSE
Maybe she'll call.

LILY
Oh, she'll call when she needs something. Said she was bringing a friend— some sort of "life coach" she met.

ROSE
(chuckles, dry)
Well, we know what that means.
So... you have spoken to her.

(Lily ignores the comment, as always. She turns, holding a yellow bloom to the light.)

LILY
Not like you, darling.
You're the dependable one.

ROSE
Because I stayed.

LILY
Because you belong. I hope Iris calls.

ROSE
I reminded her what day this is.

LILY
(feigned surprise)
What day is it?

ROSE
Lily today is your birthday.

LILY
(feigned shock)
Oh it is? I completely forgot.
Will there be a party?

ROSE
(beat, with a soft smile)
Oh yes, Lily. There will be... a surprise.

She snips a rose. The stem falls to the dirt. Clean. Quiet.
Final.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

6pm. Rose turns on the lights.

ROSE
Lily are you going to change?

LILY
What should I wear? Who will be here?

ROSE
Well as you always said about parties,

LILY AND ROSE
"Invite the world and half will come."

They both laugh easily.

LILY
So, Iris is coming?

ROSE
I've not hear back yet.

LILY
The Dupont's, surely will be here.

ROSE
No, sadly they went in to Boston for the weekend. Some event with the Smith's.

LILY
(swooning)
Oh the Smith's have a

LILY AND ROSE
Marvelous yacht

LILY
And when I won the Pulitzer

ROSE
Yes they took you out to celebrate. You brought Iris and left me home.

LILY
Well you were so

ROSE
Plain looking. Average. You always
said "average"

LILY
Well I never.

ROSE
I let go of that little bee sting
years ago.

LILY
Iris always did light up a room.

Rose hands Lily a Manhattan straight up.

ROSE
Here mother, it's time for our
beverage.

LILY
Oh you always take such good care
of me, Rose.

ROSE
Dependable, I belong here, right,
Lily?

Lily raises her glass.

LILY
To Rose!

ROSE
Ah, Lily, now this is your day, we
focus on you. Look at how grand
you look. Wait one moment.

Rose goes out to another room.

LILY
Oh Rose, what are you doing, no
surprises needed! No, no. Dear come
back. Let's have our cocktail and
talk of old times.

Rose returns with a showy white, feather boa. She puts it on
Lily. Behind on the mantle is a massive portrait of Lily
with Iris in the garden and Lily is wearing the same boa.
She puts the boa on Lily and then stand back. She makes one
adjustment.

ROSE
There, darling just perfect.
Perfect. Let me take a picture.

Add a beat. She steps back. Looks Lily up and down. One second too long. The smile is pleasant. But the eyes? Empty

LILY
Oh no need. Well maybe just one.
We can send it to Iris.

Rose takes a picture with her phone. She shows to Lily.

ROSE
Beautiful as ever.

Lily looks and smiles.

LILY
I always did have good lines. You

LILY AND ROSE
Take after your father.

ROSE
Iris always had your looks. You
favored her. More.

LILY
No. I loved—
(pauses)
—I love you both. Equally.

ROSE
Mother, your Pulitzer winning
novel, "Through Iris' Eyes"

LILY
(scoff)
Oh, you, always so sensitive. It's
all fiction.

Rose goes to the bookshelf and picks up the novel. Opens it.

ROSE
(she reads with no
fanfare)
"Her eyes saw so much. She knew
she was different. Destined for
greatness.

LILY
(thoughtful and emotional)
I long to see the world through
Iris' eyes."

ROSE
Oh dear. No need for maudlin
emotions.

Rose dabs a tissue to Lily's cheek to wipe away the tears.
Lily tenderly touches her hand and kisses it.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Let's get this party started, shall
we?

LILY
(excited)
Yes let's! Did you make
appetizers?

ROSE
Now my mother brought me up proper,
of course, we have appetizers. Now
dear you just snuggle up to your
Manhattan. Let me put on some
music and get the first course.

LILY
Oh wonderful!

Rose turns on Patsy Cline, "Crazy" She goes to the kitchen.
Lily swoons in her chair. The feeling is light.

INT. LIVING ROOM - 6:45PM

The golden hour light hits just right.

Lily stands in front of the mirror: white feather boa, red
lipstick, a silk wrap that gleams like old Hollywood. She
twirls. She purrs.

Rose enters carrying a tray. Still in the same flannel shirt,
jeans, and Crocs. A dish towel tucked into her waistband.

The contrast is devastating.

LILY
Darling, I feel positively radiant.
You don't think it's... too much?

ROSE
You always said, "Too much is just
enough when you're Lily White."

LILY
(giggling)
Did I say that?

ROSE
You wrote it in the dedication of
your second novel. Under Iris'
name.

A beat. Rose sets the tray down. Deviled eggs. Radish roses.
All perfect.

LILY
But look at you, Rose. You haven't
changed. Still my little garden
gnome.

ROSE
Practical. Comfortable.

LILY
Plain.

A silence. Patsy Cline still hums faintly in the background.
Lily sips her Manhattan like it's her Oscar. Rose takes a
dish back to the kitchen.

LILY (CONT'D)
(cheerfully)
Maybe tomorrow we'll go shopping!
I'll buy you something with shape.
Something... pink!

ROSE
(over her shoulder)
I have shape, mother.
You just stopped looking.

Lily tries to recover.

LILY
(over zealous)
You were, well are such a smart
girl, 1st in your class in High
School. I don't know why you didn't
go into nursing.

ROSE
Lily, please you know why. The
sight of blood.

LILY
(demonstrative)
Oh blood is just blood, it cleans
up.

ROSE
It stains, lingers. It has smell.
You remember, right.

Lily is looking off. Ignoring.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Lily you do remember? There I was
with father coming out of the
movies, "Beauty and the Beast."

LILY
You so loved that movie. Just like
Belle, you love to read.

ROSE
And then out of nowhere a man comes
up and shouts, "Harry White you're
a dead man." Then he shoots and
father jumps in front. We fell
backwards. He fell on top of me.
The bullets came down like rain.
Then silence.

LILY
Must you dig this up.

ROSE
Then the blood was all over me. I
was soaked in Father's blood. Then
at the hospital for hours. The
police, the doctors, all at me.
And where were you. Where?

LILY
These deviled eggs are delicious.
You followed my recipe perfectly.
I do like a little paprika on for
color. That way they are just
perfect.

Rose goes to the kitchen and comes back with paprika and adds
just a touch to the deviled egg in Lily's hand.

LILY (CONT'D)
See? Perfection.

ROSE

So, no mother I did not want to be
a nurse.

LILY

Yes, well, you've had options, you
hesitate and they just all wither
away like a rose on the vine.

Lily raises her empty glass.

ROSE

Yes, Lily let's freshen up your
beverage. It is your birthday.

LILY

Oh I forgot!

Rose goes to the side and makes another drink. Lily gets up
with her boa on and mirrors the image. She hums along with
Patsy Cline.

DOORBELL RINGS.

LILY (CONT'D)

Oh, surprise guests. You sly fox,
Rose. It must be the DuPonts. We
may have to cancel our plans
tonight, I am sure they've come to
take me out.

Rose looks, deadpan, She's done this routine a hundred times
with the same ending.

ROSE

(over excitement)

Well. let's see! Of course. I can
change my plans. No worries.

Rose goes to the door. Lily displays an over-the-top
greeting. The door opens. Lily gasps.

No one there. Just a parcel on the doormat.

ROSE (CONT'D)

No, DuPont's, just a package.

Lily winces slightly at her disappointment. Rose brings the
package over to Lily and hands it to her.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Happy birthday Lily!

LILY
From you? No, no need, no need.
What is it?

ROSE
Sweetheart, let's open it and find
out.

Lily is giddy with excitement. She opens the package and there is a smaller box, wrapped like the size of a ring or earrings.

LILY
Oh well, now as we know

LILY AND ROSE
Jewelry is never the wrong size.

Lily opens the box, displaying exaggerated excitement. Camera on Lily's eyes then back to Rose. The package is opened. Back to Lily's eyes as they go from joy to emptiness.

Beat. Silence. Hold on Lily's face.

LILY
You got me wrinkle cream.
How..thoughtful of you.

ROSE
I know, Lily, you don't really need
it, yet, but always good to have on
hand.

Rose smiles. Lily gets up and hugs Rose. You can feel the disdain and lack of love in the air. The cold war drifts in.

LILY
Always dependable.

ROSE
Always.

Patsy Cline music swells as the feeling of bleak nostalgia settles in. The ladies toast the moment. The box of wrinkle cream is set aside.

Lily sips her drink. The Patsy Cline track softens in the background.

LILY
You know, I do love a good
celebration. Even a surprise.
(beat)
(MORE)