

Sexual Healing

By DirtyMartini

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Third in a series of stories told from the perspective of my older friend Gary, aka 67Goat.

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I recall the evening like it was yesterday, even though it's been over ten years. I stared down at the table and mindlessly picked at my food while my wife sat silently across from me. Nancy and I had been married almost 25 years at the time. We had been through so much together in those years, good times and bad. Of all that we had been through together, nothing was as tough as this. I just stared down at my plate. I really didn't want Nancy to see the tears that were forming in my eyes. "What did the doctors say today anyway?" I managed to ask. "They said I have less than a year to live, Gary." Nancy answered, her eyes diverted. "You know those doctors never know what they're talking about." I said indignantly. There was clearly anger in my voice. Anger that Nancy might actually be taken from me. Anger that there seemed to be nothing I could do about it. Anger mixed with my sadness as I sat there staring down at my plate. After a while Nancy got up from the table to clear the plates. I had barely eaten a thing. "You done with that?" Nancy asked as she reached for my plate. "Yeah, just not hungry." I answered back mindlessly. I watched my wife as she cleared the table. She seemed to move so slowly these days, never really smiling. Her eyes seemed so blank, without a trace of joy. The cancer had taken a lot out of her. She bore little resemblance to the woman I fell in love with just over 25 years ago. In fact, I barely recognized her these days. I sat at the table silently for a few more minutes before getting up. I had to get ready for my night job. I had taken a night job as a security guard several years ago when the kids started college. Our youngest had graduated just over a year ago, but I kept the night job. I figured we could always use the extra money. As I walked out the door that evening, I took another look at my wife. She was still in the kitchen cleaning the dishes from dinner. She seemed to move so slowly. I walked out the door without even saying goodbye. Basically just going through the motions as if in a trance, I got into my car. As I drove off, my emotions ran the whole spectrum from anger to hurt. I didn't know whether to cry or scream as I drove away. I believe I did both. I felt like cursing God. I cried out loud, "God, why her? Why not take me?" I was like a raving lunatic with tears in his eyes. Nancy meant more to me than you'll ever know. I thought about all that Nancy and I had been through since we had met. When I first met Nancy, I had already been through one failed marriage. I went through a rather debilitating

depression following my "failure" and my "solution" was to drown my sorrows in alcohol. In spite of it all, somehow Nancy saw something in me that nobody else saw. A real human being that was hurting and didn't know how to handle it. She showed me love and helped me out of my downhill alcoholic spiral. Nancy did more for me than anyone else in my life ever had. I vowed to myself that I would do anything I could for her. Since our marriage, I always made it a point to be a good provider. To keep Nancy comfortable in any way I could. Alas, all too often that has meant providing her with material things. I wanted so much to help her right now, but I felt so powerless. That feeling was eating me alive from the inside out. Heading towards the job, all sorts of thoughts started racing through my head. There was a bar on the corner of the block where I worked. I thought about having a drink again. It had been nearly twenty years since I had a drink. I actually walked to the bar and stood in front of the door, literally shaking. Thoughts and emotions were running through me that no human should have to endure. As I stood there momentarily, looking up at the still light sky, a girl walked by selling flowers. "Flowers, sir?" She asked as she passed. I just shook my head 'no.' As I stood there for a few short moments, something suddenly hit me. It was as if all the tension was suddenly released from my body. I ran down the block and caught up with the flower girl. "Flowers." I panted. "Yes sir?" She responded. "Um, flowers. I'll take a bouquet." I said. I paid the girl and stood there for a moment savoring the delicate scent of the colorful bouquet. A few minutes later I started down the block to the nearest pay phone. I called the night job. "Um, hello Bill. Yeah, this is Gary. I won't be able to make it in tonight," I started into the phone, "In fact, I am going to have to quit the job. Personal reasons. I'm sorry." I walked back to the car and got in. In a little while, I was back in my driveway. I parked the car and walked up to the door. Opening it, I concealed the flowers behind my back. "Gary. You startled me," Nancy exclaimed, "You're home. Don't tell me you lost your job. What happened, Gary?" "What happened is I quit," I answered as I handed her the flowers, "It's more important that I'm home with my wife." "Oh, Gary. Flowers! I can't remember the last time you bought me flowers. How sweet." The truth was, I couldn't remember the last time I bought my wife flowers either. The other thing I couldn't remember was the last time I saw Nancy's eyes light up like they did when I handed her the bouquet. It warmed my heart to actually see a happy look on the face of my own wife for a change. "I think we need some music." I said calmly. I walked over to the radio and put on a cool jazz station. I then took my wife by the hand. "May I have this dance, my dear?" She smiled up at me in a way I had not seen in quite some time. I looked in her eyes as we began to sway gently to the music. Emotions started to build up inside of me. I pressed Nancy against me. She was still clutching the bouquet between us. I rested my head on Nancy's shoulder. I didn't want her to see the tears that were welling up in my eyes. As I held my wife close, I wished there was some way her disease could pass into my body. I truly wanted to heal this woman. I truly wanted to take away all her pain. Even after my wife and I stopped dancing in the middle of the living room, we just held each other close for some time. After a while, I suggested we take a bath together. The last time we did that, I could not tell you. Gently I led the woman I loved into the bathroom by the hand. I began to run the bath water as I went into another room to find some scented candles I knew we had stashed somewhere. In short order, I came back with the candles, lit them and placed them around the room. I

also threw some bath beads in the tub. We both helped each other with getting our clothes off and I held my wife's hand as she stepped into the tub. We took turns washing each other's hair. Afterwards, I started to lather my wife's body up in delicate fashion, applying messaging pressure where I thought she would enjoy it. I paid special attention to her feet, working the balls of her feet with my thumbs. "Oh Gary. That feels so good," She sighed, "I can't remember the last time you did that." Again, I couldn't either. As a man, I felt the thing was unfair. But then, life is a lot of things but fair is not one of them. If life was fair this cancer would show it's ugly face. I would get it in a ring and deliver it a knockout punch that would make Ali proud. But, I couldn't. All I could do was make my wife's last year on earth the best it could be. All I could do was be there for her. It was the least I could do for the woman I loved, the woman who bore my children. If God chose to take her from me in a year, that was his decision. But making her last days on the planet as enjoyable for her as possible was my decision. After we got out of the tub, we took turns toweling each other off. The areas I dried off, I followed with soft kisses. Then, taking her by the hand, I led Nancy into the bedroom. I softly kissed her on the lips. I delicately nibbled on her earlobes. I ran my lips and fingertips gently down her soft neck. I explored my wife's gorgeous breasts. I took the time to explore and caress every inch of the woman I loved, the woman I married nearly 25 years ago. I continued my explorations down to her womanhood. I savored her delicate scent, I explored every fold as if it was the first time. I made her juices really start to flow again and when we started to really make love, I took my time to ensure that she received all the pleasure this woman I loved deserved. We eventually came together and lied side by side for some time just holding hands. As I lay there next to Nancy I realized how much I had been neglecting my own wife. Certainly not in any material or financial sense, but in what she really needed. Me. After that night, we continued to make love on a regular basis. Our lovemaking sessions were always slow and unhurried. We made it a point to satisfy each other. I never felt more satisfied in my life. We also spent far more quiet times together, just taking walks and holding hands. Then one day something amazing happened. Nancy had what was considered a fairly routine oncologist appointment for some testing. A few days later she got a call from the doctor with her results. The cancer seemed to be in complete remission. There was no detectible trace of the evil cells that were attacking my wife's beautiful body. This was almost seven months to the day since the same doctor told my wife she would have less than a year to live. The doctor said he has never seen anything like it. They say that love conquers all. Perhaps that is true, we'll never really know. All I know is that my wife is still cancer free to this day. Why the cancer disappeared is something no one on this planet will ever know for sure. There is something I learned a long time ago. The opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is indifference. I had been neglecting my own wife's needs. The needs of the woman I truly loved. The fact that it took a major illness and threat of death to get me to realize that was a major wake-up call. A call that I answered, fortunately. That was just over ten years ago. As I sit here holding Nancy's hand on the eve of our 35th anniversary, I reflect back on how truly lucky I really am. Lucky to have someone to truly love and who is always in my corner for me. Sometimes I feel like I am the luckiest man in the world. Perhaps I am. It's just a shame it took so much to get me to realize it. 02-27-10.