

Lavender Breeze

It was Laurie's third week in France, and despite her initial resolve not to enjoy herself, she was more relaxed and happy than she had been for the past eighteen months. This was her favourite time of day, three o'clock, when she took her walk through the fields surrounding her aunt's farm. Walking through the upper meadow she became aware of the breeze rustling through the long grass. Closing her eyes she took a deep breath, filling her lungs with clear air. And yes, there it was, the distinct and beautifully haunting smell of lavender. She stood still, allowing herself to be bathed in the breeze, letting the sweet fragrance permeate every part of her body, mind and spirit. Her aunt, Louise, had said there were no lavender fields nearby, they were mainly far to the south in Provence. Laurie didn't care; she knew the lavender blew to her on the wind.

Her mind drifted back. She laughed at the thought of her mother and her aunt in collusion to get her out here. But she had most definitely not been laughing when she'd first arrived and realised they'd got her here under false pretences. She had been incensed at the thought her mother was meddling in her life. And bringing in an aunt that Laurie hardly knew! She'd been so angry with both of them she'd stormed off out of the house. She would show them she could not be manipulated, and that her love life, or lack of it, was her concern. She could be depressed if she wanted to be. That had been the first of her three o'clock walks.

The surrounding area was made up of fields as far as the eye could see. Rows of poplars delineated the roads and separated the farms. Most of the fields were in their natural state of long wild grasses stitched through with beautiful wild flowers in colours, ranging from red and yellow through pink and purple to pale blue. The land being fairly flat, the movement of the wind through the vegetation gave the feeling of flowing water. This in turn gave a wonderfully relaxing, almost hypnotic sensation to the vista. Laurie could appreciate why Louise had decided to stay here after her husband had died. She now understood what the older woman found in this place of tranquil beauty and healing grace.

Walking on through the fields, her mind on her musings, Laurie became aware of a slight drag in her right hip. She carried on strolling and thinking, with a part of her mind observing this dragged-back feeling. As she moved along trance-like she became aware of a small voice whispering, 'neediness'.

With a start she realised that this small voice was coming from the area of her right hip. She stopped walking, but stayed looking inwards, holding on to this revelation. She held her breath. There it was again. 'Neediness'. This time she felt the corresponding emotion within herself. She inhaled, bringing the lavender to this place of need and sadness. She stood perfectly still. She felt the breath dislodge the drag of neediness in her. She was not sure how long she remained there. When she returned to her full awareness, she found that she was lying sprawled on the grass, her face wet with tears. Stumbling home she stepped in through the door, crossed the kitchen and threw herself sobbing into her aunt's arms.

A little while later Laurie and Louise sat together at the kitchen table with steaming hot coffees liberally laced with French brandy. Laurie explained to her aunt this underlying feeling of neediness at the core of her being. She could see it now; see it with a detachment that allowed her to stand back from her life, and see how this need had warped all her relationships. Louise listened as the younger woman spoke about her need for her father, how this need had been thwarted when her father had left her mother. Laurie had only been five at the time. Since then she could see that she had been pining for him. This, in turn, had caused her to be very demanding in relationships, looking to have that need within her filled. Of course no one could fill it, it was impossible. As she talked she could feel her chest lighten, her shoulders relax and her breathing becoming easier. Laurie acknowledged to her aunt that this visit to France had probably saved her emotional life.

The next day Laurie woke late and went about the day with a slow heaviness. Her body felt as if it had been in a fight. Louise explained that she had had an emotional purge and it was understandable that her body was sore. Her muscles had been in a tight holding pattern of need for many years and now the catharsis had allowed them to let go. She assured her the aches would be gone in a few days and that keeping up her daily walks would allow her whole being to heal. A week later Laurie was meandering through the meadows, feeling relaxed and happy. She could feel a smile on her face. This smile had been appearing spontaneously over the last couple of days. Laurie felt her mind clear, and thinking ahead she felt a real sense of possibility in all aspects of her future. She took a deep breath, breathing in the clear air. It was only when returning back home that she realised there had been no lavender scent on the wind. Mentioning this to her aunt, Louise had replied that possibly the wind had changed direction. But Laurie wondered if the scent had never really been there. She never found out. But from then on Louise accompanied Laurie on her three o'clock walk.