

IT WAS A NIGHT

PART THREE

'As Sweet as Cherry Pie'

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INT. CAR. EARLY EVENING.

A silver rental car, the back seat is packed with suitcases, backpacks, sleeping bags, pillows and assorted giftbags with very loud Christmas patterns splashed across the front. A classic Christmas song is playing softly on the radio.

Behind the wheel sits a girl with dyed, orangey-red hair, ANNA (25, Australian), and occupying the passenger seat next to her is her girlfriend NADIRA (24, Australian). Both girls are watching the nearby pie shop, it's windows emitting a warm golden light.

ANNA
So...are we going in?

Nadira looks unsure, wiping roughly at her window.

NADIRA
You sure it's safe?

ANNA
Well I'm sure a bunch of axe
wielding murderers wouldn't be
spending their Friday night in a
snowstorm in a pie shop.

NADIRA
Not funny.

ANNA
We can always just go all Home
Alone on their asses if that's any
reassurance.

Nadira turns to Anna, unable to not smile at her joking.

NADIRA
It isn't really, but I can always
just push you in front and then run
for it.

Anna turns off the radio and starts wrapping a long scarf around her neck.

ANNA
Well don't I feel loved.

Laughing, Nadira also starts buttoning up her jacket as Anna pats her coat down, producing her phone and wallet.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Hey, race you?

NADIRA
Loser pays?

There's a brief pause before both girls make a sudden mad dash to pull open their respective doors.

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. EARLY EVENING.

When the girls enter the pie shop, a little dishevelled from their race, the same Christmas song from the radio is playing over the speakers.

On their left is an old woman (DOROTHY, 74, a sweetened New York accent) knitting, to the right a young man (AUSTIN, 23, Australian), who is fast asleep with his head in a book and directly in front of them is a waiter (LUCIFER, 21, a Michigander) playing a very noisy game on his phone.

Anna approaches the counter with an unimpressed expression upon her face.

ANNA
Hello.

Lucifer keeps playing.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Um, hello?

Lucifer keeps playing.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Hey!

Lucifer finally looks up as his phone makes a sad, defeated sounding beep, equally unimpressed.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Hi there. Yeah, you, hi!

LUCIFER
Can I help you?

ANNA
We were wondering if you were open.

In response, Lucifer waves his hand limply towards the two solitary customers. Anna raises an eyebrow in displeasure before spinning around to face Nadira.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Whatcha thinking?

Nadira, arms crossed to better hold her coat closer to her body, looks around the room briefly.

NADIRA

I think I'm too tired and too cold
to care. You decide.

ANNA

Okay. Well, I need sustenance or
I'm going to drop dead.

Anna turns back around to face Lucifer while Nadira wanders over to admire the nearby display cabinet that is completely swamped in Christmas tinsel.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Two coffees please.

LUCIFER

And?

ANNA

No, that's all, thanks. We'll just
go sit down?

LUCIFER

Shure.

Anna retreats to a table, pointing out the booth to Nadira as she walks past her. Nadira hesitates to follow, eyes trained upon the cherry pie on display.

LUCIFER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

Nadira looks up to find Lucifer watching her from behind the register.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)

Best in the county. The state
too...I think.

Nadira falters for just a second before:

NADIRA

Well hell, I suppose. When in Rome,
hey.

LUCIFER

When in Rome.

As Lucifer returns to work, Nadira joins Anna at the booth.

NADIRA
I got us pie.

Nadira sits next to Anna, cuddling into her arms. Outside, the snow is falling thick and heavy.

NADIRA (CONT'D)
This really is bad, isn't it?

ANNA
It's just different. Nothing we can't take.

NADIRA
Definitely not something you'd find back home.

The two girls sit together a short while, watching the snow fall before Nadira brings out her phone and starts scrolling through a travel itinerary.

ANNA
We've done a lot already, haven't we.

NADIRA
(concentrating on phone)
Mmmmm, pretty much the entirety of the east coast, yeah.

Anna watches over Nadira's shoulder as she continues to scroll before they are briefly interrupted when Lucifer appears, handing over two coffees and the cherry pie. He has decorated the pie with cream and to the side he's placed some shiny, plastic holly.

LUCIFER
Enjoy.

ANNA
Cheers!

Lucifer retreats as Nadira takes first swipe at the pie.

NADIRA
Oh man, I'm so ready to literally inhale this.

ANNA
Haha, well I'm glad you're starting to enjoy yourself. Oh, hey, we should let Cassie know where we are, just in case. Here.

Anna brings out her phone, selecting a message chain with a contact named AUNTY.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Pose it up girlfriend!

Nadira pauses mid bite, turning to face Anna. Anna grins and takes the shot with her phone. Nadira hastily swallows her pie.

NADIRA
Aww c'mon. I wasn't ready.

ANNA
Gorgeous people are always ready.

NADIRA
Ha. Ha.

Anna takes some of Nadira's pie as she attempts to send the photo.

ANNA
Oh. I don't think I have service.

NADIRA
Really? Here, let me see.

Nadira brings out her own phone to check, taking another bite of cherry pie.

NADIRA (CONT'D)
Oh, nope, you're totally right. I got zilch.

Anna looks up, surveying the other two customers.

ANNA
Do you think I should let them know?

NADIRA
Huh?

ANNA
The other customers.

Nadira joins in her surveying. There isn't much to see, it's still just the girls, Dorothy, the ever sleeping Austin and the excessive number of Christmas decorations.

NADIRA
Don't wake the boy, he's sleeping.
And he looks so peaceful too.

ANNA
 Okay, not the boy then.
 (calling out to Dorothy)
 Excuse me, ma'am.

Dorothy looks up from her knitting.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Seems the phones have gone down.
 Just thought you ought to know.

DOROTHY
 That's very kind of you dear.

Anna smiles in response before returning her attention to Nadira.

NADIRA
 Hey, don't worry about it. We can
 just amuse ourselves some other
 way.

ANNA
 Are you thinking...?

Nadira nods her head knowingly and Anna's face breaks into a large grin.

NADIRA
 Who should we start with?

ANNA
 Do him, do him!

Nadira, first sparing a glance towards the kitchen, makes herself comfortable, taking a deep breath.

NADIRA
 Okay, okay. Lucifer. Well, whether by coincidence or cruel trick of fate, Lucifer's life had never been easy. He just couldn't get anyone to invest in his indie game.

Anna has to muffle her laughter by pressing her coat sleeve into her mouth.

NADIRA (CONT'D)
 And so he turned to the only man who could help him. He made a deal with his very own namesake. But one must tread carefully when dealing with demons, for you see Lucifer was beginning to turn--

Ding-a-ling!

ANNA
Oh, look.

Looking up, the girls find their game interrupted by a new arrival. A tall, bearded man (CARMEN, 41, speaks with a noticeable baritone Alabaman accent) who approaches the counter just as Lucifer comes running out.

Together, Anna and Nadira watch with much curiosity as Lucifer and Carmen converse, eating the last of the pie as they do. Eventually, as it appears he's wrapping up his order, Anna notices the empty pie plate.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Want me to get you some more?

NADIRA
Huh? Oh, no, I'm fine.

Anna raises an unbelieving eyebrow.

ANNA
I know that tone. That's your 'I'm being polite' response.

NADIRA
Not true!

ANNA
You mean so true! Need I remind you that we're on holiday? Plus, we're now stuck in the middle of a snowstorm and all phone services are down. Honestly, a sugar coma would be the absolute least of our worries.

Nadira smiles.

NADIRA
Well, when you're right, you're right.

Anna grins, and raises her arm, signalling to Lucifer.

LATER

Nadira is sitting alone, looking at the photo Anna took of her.

CLOSE-UP <PHOTO OF NADIRA>

Nadira is caught mid-bite and partially turned to face the camera. Behind her the snow and warm lighting obscure any sort of view, throwing the reflection of the room up on the window. This includes Nadira's reflection, but the angle seems a little off. Like it's not directly copying her actions.

Nadira is just about to zoom in on the image when Anna suddenly returns and swings into the seat next to her.

ANNA
(nodding at Carmen)
Wanna move onto him next?

The phone is abandoned to the table.

NADIRA
Hmmm. Clark Kent. He's the Superman of lumberjacks, and this is his everyman disguise.

ANNA
Oooh, I like it

NADIRA
Every day he's busy rescuing squirrels from fallen trees and using his magical axe to heal the forest.

Both girls pause a moment to look over at Carmen, who looks so deep in thought he looks angry and nothing like Nadira's description. Nadira and Anna are forced to grab at one another to stifle their laughter.

LUCIFER (O.S.)
Okay, I've got Pecan, Apple, Pumpkin and Key Lime here.

LATER

Nadira and Anna are mid-way finishing off a slice of pie.

ANNA
But where does the 'Key' bit come in?

NADIRA
I think it's the lime?

ANNA

But it tastes like, well, just like
a normal lime.

Moving onto the next pie, Nadira takes a large mouthful topped with Pecans, chewing thoughtfully. Anna quickly follows suit.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Nutty.

NADIRA

Cinnamon!

ANNA

A shit tonne of butter.

Nadira has taken another bite, but now she's looking a little confused.

NADIRA

Burning?

ANNA

(inspecting the bottom of
the pie)

No, I don't think it's burnt.

NADIRA

No, I mean do you smell something
burning?

Anna stops, half a slice in her mouth.

ANNA

(around the pie)

I guess?

Nadira looks concerned despite Anna's casual response and partially raises her hand in the air.

NADIRA

Excuse me.

Over by Carmen's booth, both Carmen and Lucifer stop mid-conversation and turn to face the girls.

NADIRA (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, but do you
smell something burning?

Even from across the room the fear in Lucifer's face is visible and he bolts out the back without a word.

ANNA

He's a bit like a very tall and
lanky rabbit, isn't he?

NADIRA

(distracted)

I suppose. Do you think he'll be
okay?

ANNA

(in her own world)

I'm late! I'm late! For a very
important date!

Nadira shoves Anna's shoulder.

NADIRA

Have you gone loopy or something?

Anna puts down her fork, turning to Nadira.

ANNA

Yes. As a matter of fact, I have
gone completely around the bend, so
much so that I think it is time for
round two.

NADIRA

Oh jeez.

LATER

Nadira and Anna are sprawled across their booth, eyes half-closed.

ANNA

Ooookay...

NADIRA

Okay?

ANNA

I can't think straight. Or fast. Or
at all.

On the table before them sit four plates covered in the remnants of four new types of pie. A single peach slice sits on one, another is smeared in what looks like caramel sauce and another still holds a couple of crumbs from some kind of bright orange pie.

NADIRA

Those were....a little weird.

ANNA
I concur.

NADIRA
You concur?

ANNA
We all concur.

Nadira and Anna fall into a heavy silence. Before them Dorothy is still happily knitting away while Austin is continuing to sleep away the entirety of the evening. The only active customer is Carmen, pulling himself up from his table and approaching Lucifer, who is once again playing on his phone by the register.

NADIRA
Do you think they'll let us sleep
here?

ANNA
Huh?

Nadira turns as slow as humanly possible to face Anna. Over by the front door, Carmen makes his exit.

NADIRA
Sleep here. You know, in case we
are actually properly stuck.

ANNA
(distracted)
We are properly stuck.

Anna is watching Lucifer at the coffee machine.

NADIRA
Well thanks, now I really feel
better.

ANNA
I need to use the bathroom.

NADIRA
What, again? Well just go then,
what are you telling me for?

ANNA
I said, I need to use the bathroom.

NADIRA
A, I'm too tired and full of pie to
play word games with you.

Anna lapses back into a contemplative silence, watching Lucifer as he puts Carmen's coffee on his table and converses quietly with Dorothy before disappearing out the back. As soon as Lucifer is out of sight Anna leans over to whisper something into Nadira's ear.

NADIRA (CONT'D)

Oooooh...but how do you even have
the energy!?

Anna stands up, offering a hand to Nadira.

ANNA

Because I'm bored and have eaten my
weight in pie. Which means my
weight in sugar.

NADIRA

Ah, the infamous sugar high.

Nadira slowly rises with much audible complaint.

NADIRA (CONT'D)

Well don't blame me for being
unromantic if I throw-up in your
mouth.

Anna takes Nadira's hand.

ANNA

Only if you do the same for me.

NADIRA

Always.

INT. BATHROOM STALL. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. NIGHT.

Crammed a little awkwardly into a single cubicle, Nadira and Anna are successfully entangled in one another's arms as they kiss. Just above their heads, the bathroom light is steadily flickering, illuminating their breath as it turns visible in the air and revealing Nadira's cheeks slowly turning pink. Anna's fingers follow suit as she cups Nadira's face in her hands.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. CONTINUOUS.

Outside the cubicle the bathroom is completely still, bar the gentle dripping of a solitary tap. Even the Christmas music next door can't penetrate the heavy silence

Plink. Plink. Plink...Plink, plink...Pliiiink...

As the dripping water comes to a steady stop, freezing seconds before dropping from the tap, a thick layer of ice begins to spread up and over the sink towards the mirror. As it covers the glass an undefinable letter begins to loop itself into existent against the ice.

INT. AUNTY RUTH'S PIE SHOP. NIGHT.

Hand in hand, Nadira and Anna return to their booth and are greeted by four new slices of pie. Lemon Meringue, Sugar Cream, New York Cheesecake and Rhubarb.

ANNA

Wow, I didn't think he'd take me literally when I said to keep 'em coming.

NADIRA

I think it's sweet of him.

ANNA

But how on earth are we supposed to eat all of this?

NADIRA

Well, I don't know about you but I reckon I just worked off at least one or two slices.

Nadira grabs a fork and advances on the nearest pie with a can do attitude.

ANNA

You've got guts, Di. And I mean that literally.

NADIRA

Cheers.

Anna joins Nadira with visibly less enthusiasm, eyeing off the pie arrangement with unease. But before she can try anything, Austin suddenly emerges from the bathroom, catching both the girls' attention. Together, Nadira and Anna watch as he comes closer, passing them by to reach his booth.

AUSTIN

Evening.

NADIRA

Hi there.

ANNA

Hello.

Without another word Austin returns to his table, picking up the book he had been previously sleeping on and beginning to scribble something in it. Back at the girls' booth, Anna elbows Nadira while nodding her head in Austin's direction.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Him next.

NADIRA
(whispered)
He's just there!

ANNA
So what?

NADIRA
(whispered)
Shush, he'll hear you.

ANNA
But I've got a really good one!

Nadira pauses briefly, before giving in to Anna's pleading expression.

NADIRA
Oh fine.

ANNA
Okay! Picture this. A young man,
coming up in the world of
academia...

LATER

A recognisable scene, Anna and Nadira are spread out with equal expressions of exhaustion and satisfaction across their faces. On the table before them, the pies haven't even been completely finished this time round.

NADIRA
I wish I was Elastigirl.

ANNA
Or Jake the Dog.

NADIRA
Then I could just streeeeetch.

Nadira holds her hands out wide to indicate how far she'd like to stretch, wiggling her fingers towards the roof above where someone has cut out paper snowflakes and hung them from the air ducts. Then, slowly, she lowers them in defeat.

NADIRA (CONT'D)
I think I am a little disappointed.

ANNA
Oh no!

NADIRA
It's true. How can I ever go home now. Unable to finish all the pies in America, what a copout.

ANNA
Now, now. One, these have definitely not been all the pies, and two, have you forgotten the brilliance that is takeaway?

Nadira turns to Anna, a hopeful smile spreading across her face.

NADIRA
Oh you are an absolute genius.

ANNA
As I have been made aware many times before.

NADIRA
You deserve a medal.

The girls, still riding the sugar high, are really getting into their conversation now and putting on silly voices.

ANNA
A great big gold one.

NADIRA
And it will read: The Greatest in All the Land

ANNA
Ha ha, yes! And--

Brrriiinnngg!

A sudden, and violently loud, noise cuts through the previously soporific atmosphere and gentle Christmas music.

At the girls' booth, Nadira latches onto Anna's arm, Anna responding with a strangled sort of squawk that may or may not sound like a highly descriptive curse. On the other side of the room Dorothy drops her knitting and hidden in his corner, Austin is woken so suddenly it sends him leaping backwards from his table.

Brrriiinnngg!

All heads turn to Austin, who is staring blankly at his phone as it vibrates aggressively on the table before him.

Brrriiinnngg!

Calming down, Nadira sneaks a glance at her own phone, still showing no service whatsoever. Discreetly she presents the screen to Anna, who notes the lack of bars before returning her attention to Austin.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hey.

Austin slowly looks up towards the girls and Dorothy, clearly still a little dazed at having been woken so suddenly.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I think you better answer that.

Nadira turns towards Anna in concern, but Anna finds her hand and holds it tight as reassurance.

Over in the corner, Austin picks up the phone.

THE END OF PART THREE...