FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

The Elegant Gathering of White Snows
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Coming out, coming of age, and achieving a life's dream by triumphing (sort of) over adversity; these are the blended themes of this engaging tale.

An easy styleÃ'part reminiscence, part stream-of-consciousnessÃ'tells the story of Rose Salino in her own words. The reader meets Rose as she is about to attend her grandmother's funeral on Long Island. She's saying goodbye to more than her grandmother, since she has also just lost her lover Gail and her job as a chef in a trendy San Francisco restaurant ("their" restaurant, but Rose had no contract and when Gail dumped her, she fired her as well).

While trying to come to terms with her own issues (her mother offers her money and help; Rose sees this as intrusion, while conceding that if it came from anyone else she would welcome the offer), Rose learns that there is more to be dealt with than she had thought. She runs into Jessie, from whom she had been inseparable throughout childhood. Jessie was Rose's first love. Reliving the trauma the two survived growing up, she and Jessie both realize that they still love each other. Old issues die hard, however, and Jessie's past haunts them. Jessie has lived through years of sexual abuse by her father, as well as rounds of drug abuse and self-mutilation when the pain grew too great to bear. Rose remembers all this far too well, along with the years of therapy that followed as Jessie tried to deal with her past.

Still hurting from Gail's abandonment and remembering all too well the abandonment she felt when Jessie ran away on her odyssey of pain, drugs, and suicide attempts, Rose is unsure whether she can deal with the love she still feels for her childhood friend. Will the past explode in their faces, she wonders, if she surrenders to that love?

The author holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology. Her short stories have appeared in YM and Teen magazines. She has written, with warmth, compassion, and humanity, a story that wends its way to a place farther down the road for Rose and Jessie. Readers will find the characters very much alive and their struggles with life all too familiar.

Marlene Satter