Say You Won't

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

You have these memories – of being sixteen, of the music that was playing, of the magic of the music – and at forty-two that sixteen-year-old is still inside, looking out at you in the mirror with increasing dismay, whispering, "You were much, much cooler when you were me."

So you try to find doors to let the sixteen-year-old out again; you try to recapture the wonder of those days. Little things – losing weight, tightening up the muscles, digging out old books and old music and finding out that some of them weren't too bad and that others demonstrate only that you had pretty low standards before you got so damned picky.

Some things have held up so well. Tolkein – you were pretty smart for making the annual trek through **The Lord of the Rings**. Aerosmith. Mmm. **Definitely** Aerosmith. Weird guys, smart music. And Fleetwood Mac. Damn. They were so good for so long. **Rumors** was magic and that magic hasn't dimmed. **Tusk** – amazing.

So, standing in the aisle, you are twiddling between the **Best Of** and an honest-to-God new Fleetwood Mac album, **Say You Will**, and the sixteen-year-old says "Get the Best Of; we know those" and the forty-two-year-old says, "Arrowsmith has grown and sharpened and repeatedly blown you away, maybe Fleetwood Mac has done the same."

And the forty-two-year-old owns the checking account. So you go home with **Say You Will**.

And dreams die, and the sixteen-year-old shudders and hides and whimpers, "Promise me this isn't what it means to get old."

Tired, tired, tired. **Say You Will** is endless Stevie Nicks whinges done with her stunning* half-octave range, with tedious, arrhythmic non-rhyming lyrics and the same tune for every single song. There is a difference between introspection and navel lint-picking, and there isn't a single Nicks-penned track that rises above the latter. She sounds like she's doing a bad parody of herself. Interspersed between this lo-o-o-o-ong stretch of autobiographical hell is a bit of Lindesy Buckingham seventies politicking, with the serial numbers rubbed of to make it seem contemporary – but it doesn't. And a couple of Buckingham songs that struggle to break free of the tedium, and almost get there. **Steal Your Heart Away** and **Bleed to Love Her** weren't bad, but this is Fleetwood Mac, goddammit, and the inner sixteen-year-old and I, we're looking for something better here than "not bad." We wanted the next "Landslide," "Tusk," every track on the "Rumors" album. Hell, **any** track on the "Rumors" album. We wanted, and we did not get. And where the hell is Christine McVie? Fleetwood Mac clearly is not the same without her.

So … when you're standing in the music aisles looking at old Mac and new Mac with a hunger for a taste of what was, this stands as testament to disappointment and a sad little warning from one (or two) who wanted to love. When you get to **Say You Will**, say you won't.

*(**stunning** (STUN-ing) – Sensation of being repeatedly whacked between the eyes with a meat mallet.)

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