



The Spring Dance

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I want to go with Rocky, not nerd boy

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Study hall...last class of the day before what is supposed to be a relaxing weekend restoring another car he had just bought. However, the relaxing weekend would only happen if Jim finished his history report before the bell rang, and now that just did not seem possible. Jim had been sitting at a workstation in the back of study hall. He had an open book in front of him. It was still turned to the same page that he had opened forty-five minutes ago when study hall first started. Jim just sat there, staring into space, chewing on the end of his pencil wondering how in the world he had gotten into the situation that was clouding his mind.

"Why in the world did I say yes," he wondered to himself as he assessed the problem in his mind. "Nerd boy...never goes to these dang dances, and suddenly I find myself roped into going to one all because I can never say no to my best friend....and with Marissa of all people."

As he stood up, stretching his arms over his head to relieve the kinks in his back, he spots the very girl he wants to avoid. Marissa, homecoming queen, head cheerleader was heading into study hall. Marissa had long blond hair, was curvaceous, with long sexy legs that never seemed to end. A girl, any guy in his right mind, would want to be seen with...except him. Marissa was entirely out of his league.

Her friend Molly, who was Jim's best friend and the one who had gotten him into this awkward situation, followed her. Both were chattering back and forth and did not see Jim, who very quickly sunk down in his seat, hoping the front of the tall workstation would keep him from being seen.

Both girls put their books on a table in front of Jim's workstation and sat down with their backs to him.

"I cannot believe that I let you talk me into asking the king nerd to take me to the Spring Dance Molly." Marissa moaned, "He will probably wear a pair of polyester slacks and a plaid sports coat."

"Hey, Jim is nice, and besides, it is only one dance, and the theme is The Fifties so if he does dress like that he will fit right in, right?" Molly answered back laughing softly as she came to Jim's rescue

"Nice or not he is not Rocky," Marissa replied ignoring Molly's question. "I know now that I need to think before I act when Rocky and I fight and I want to make him jealous. If I knew where I could find Jim, I would just cancel going to the dance with him and stay home."

“I have his cell phone number so you can call him,” Molly told her as she pulled her cell phone out of her backpack and opened it up, handing it to Marissa. “It is number 1 on speed dial.”

Jim quickly reached into his pocket and tugged his phone out, turning it off. He did not want it to ring and give his position away. Just as Marissa took the phone in her hand, Rocky walked into the library with a very sexy redhead hanging onto his arm, laughing softly at something he whispered in her ear.

Smacking him lightly on the arm, the redhead said, “Oh Rocky, you are so bad.”

They headed to the back of study hall, not even noticing Marissa staring at them, her mouth wide open in astonishment.

“Did you see that?” Marissa exclaimed, “We have not even officially broken up, and he is already hooking up with Sherry!”

“We are in study hall, and we don’t want Ms. Thompson coming over here so tone your voice down,” warned Molly softly.

After a few minutes of sitting there staring after Rocky and Sherry, Marissa handed the phone back to Molly.

“Guess I am stuck going to the dance with nerd boy after all,” Marissa complained. “I just hope I can make Rocky jealous enough to make him come back to me and forget all about Sherry.”

Seeing and hearing everything, Jim smiled to himself as he thought to himself, “Nerd boy, am I? Guess it is time to show Ms. Homecoming Queen another side of nerd boy even Molly has not seen.

Knowing that there was no way to sneak out of the study hall without being seen by Molly and Marissa, he sat there and tried to concentrate on his report but finally gave up when his mind kept wandering to the evening ahead.

“Wonder if I apologize to Rocky he will come back?” Marissa whispered to Molly

“Was it your fault?” Molly asked, “If it were not your fault I sure in the heck would not apologize.”

“It does not matter whose fault it was Rocky will not apologize so if we are going to get back together I have to apologize.”

Molly shook her head and said, “You deserve better Marissa.”

Suddenly the bell rang, breaking into his thoughts and interrupting their conversation. He shut his book and slipped it into his backpack, patiently waiting for the girls to leave.

“What time is Jim picking you up?” asked Molly changing the subject.

“He said around seven o’clock,” Marissa responded as she gathered her things. “See you at the dance?”

“Sure will. Smile and try to enjoy yourself tonight.” Molly said, “I’m sure you will have a good time if you just let yourself relax even though you are not going with Rocky.”

Marissa gave Molly a mean look forcing them to giggle softly as they walked out of study hall talking softly and giggling. Giving them a few minutes lead way, Jim finally got up and stretched the kinks out of his back. Slinging his book bag over his shoulder, he headed out for home planning in his mind how to show Ms. Homecoming Queen just how wrong she was about nerd boy and how a gentleman should treat a lady.

By six-thirty Marissa was sitting on her window seat staring out the window, watching for Jim's old red beat-up truck she always saw him drive to school every day to drive down her street. She could only imagine what the inside looked like. He probably had a floorboard full of pop bottles and twinkle wrappers. As she sat there smoothing down her baby blue poodle-skirt, she saw a cherry red Mustang moving slowly down the street, as if looking for a particular house.

Sighing, Marissa thought to herself, “Man, sure wish I was going with Rocky tonight. At least he has a cool car.”

When she looked out the window again, she saw the Mustang stop, then pull into her drive. Figuring the car was just using her drive as a turnaround, she continued to sit there. Much to her surprise, Marissa heard the car engine stop, and the driver side door slowly opened. A few minutes later she saw Jim climb out of the car carrying a corsage box.

Jim rolled his shoulders and shut the door. He was dressed in form-fitting black jeans with a white t-shirt that molded to his chest showing off muscles Marissa did not know Jim had. His hair was slicked back in a ducktail so popular in the fifties. As he made his way to her front door, Marissa jumped up and did a quick look in the mirror to make sure hair was fluffed out and her lipstick was on straight. She quickly spritzed herself with her perfume.

In spite of the fact she was just using Jim to make Rocky jealous, Marissa found her heart fluttering

with excitement. She was not going to be the laughing stock of the school Monday because she arrived at the dance in a beat-up pickup truck. Instead, she would be the envy of every girl in school because she was arriving in a cherry red 1963 vintage Mustang.

Hearing the doorbell ring, she took a deep breath and made her way downstairs. She wished now that she had told her parents to stick around instead of insisting that they go on to their weekly dinner date. If they had been there, her dad could have opened the door allowing her to make a grand entrance. Her dad would have been impressed with Jim's manners. Marissa was impressed to although she hated to admit. If she were going with Rocky, he would just blow his horn and expect her to come on out.

Opening the door, Marissa said, "Hi Jim. Please come in while I get my purse."

Jim stepped into the foyer, looking around for her parents so he could introduce himself and find out what time he needed to make sure she was home.

He held out the corsage box, "This is for you. I wasn't sure what color your blouse was so I got you a white orchid wrist corsage."

"Would you put it on my wrist?" she asked as she held out her left arm.

After fumbling and almost dropping the box, he got it open. He laid the box on the entry table and slipped the corsage on her wrist.

"Are your parents' home?" he asked, figuring they were somewhere in the house, probably hiding out in the kitchen.

"No, they have gone to dinner. Why do ask?"

"I wanted to introduce myself and find out what time I need to have you home," Jim explained

Marissa just looked at him for a moment, not use to such politeness. "I need to be home by midnight, but if I call home, they will let me stay out longer."

"I will make sure you are home by midnight because I do not want to get on the wrong side of your parents when they do not even know me."

Without thinking, Marissa said, "Do not worry. They think I am with Rocky."

Although her careless remark hurt, he did not say a word. Jim turned and opened the front door for her. After making sure the door was locked, Jim offered her his arm. "Allow me to escort you to the car, Marissa."

"Is this your car?" She asked in awe as they walked to the car. "I thought you only had that red pickup truck you drive every day."

"Yes, it is." Jim told her "I just finished restoring it about a month ago so this is the first time I have had her out. However, do not worry; she is safe to ride in. I did take her for a small test drive after I restored her. In regards to the pickup truck, you do not take a beautiful girl to a dance in a pickup truck."

When they got to the car, Marissa reached for the door handle, but Jim beat her to it. "You do not let a lady open her door."

He opened the door and helped her inside, then shut the door behind her. Jim came around to the other side and got in. When he started the car, music from the '50's came out of the speakers.

"Thought since we were going to a sock hop we might as well listen to that kind of music to get us in the mood to dance." He told Marissa giving her a big smile. "I just love this type of music. It is what my band and I play at the senior club on Saturday night."

"You play in a band?" Marissa asked in astonishment as she watched him out of the corner of her eye.

"Actually I am the lead singer. Since we play that type of music, they are playing tonight at the dance." Jim said proudly. "But do not worry; they have a backup lead singer so you and I can enjoy the dance."

She found herself wondering if he could dance or if he had two left feet. Thankfully, she had opted to wear sneakers instead of heels so if he did have two left feet he would not cause her to trip if he stepped on her feet.

Without taking his eyes off the road, Jim said, "You look very pretty tonight Marissa. Blue is a very good color for you. It brings out the blue in your eyes."

"Thank you," she answered back, not use to getting sincere compliments from a guy before.

They drove the rest of the way to the dance in silence, letting the music and Jim's singing break the

silence. Marissa was impressed with his singing and was sorry when he quit. When they drove into the school lot, Marissa saw Rocky and Sherry heading into the gym. After Jim parked the car and turned off the motor, she reached over to open the door.

Putting his hand on her arm, Jim quietly said, "Ladies do not open their doors remember."

He quickly got out and came around to open her door, helping her out of the car.

"Hey, guys!" Molly yelled from the next row. "About time you got here."

She hurried over to them, dragging her date with her. Taking a good look at Jim, she smiled wide and gave him a thumbs-up.

"Hey Molly, Sam," Jim said as he offered his arm to Marissa.

Without hesitating, Marissa took his arm, placing her hand on his forearm. They walked into the gym, which was decorated with balloons of all colors, red, blue, yellow, green, and many more colors. There were posters on the walls of cars and movie stars of the '50s. The attire of evening were poodle-skirts, button-down blouses, white socks and either tennis shoes or saddle shoes for the ladies, and jeans and tight white tee shirts and tennis shoes or loafers for the guys.

The band was just starting to play " You Are My Special Angel " a song Jim had requested they play when they saw him enter the gym.

Turning to Marissa, he held out his hand and asked, "Dance?"

She opened her mouth to say no, but then she saw Rocky and Sherry moving onto the dance floor. When she saw Sherry snuggle against Rocky, Marissa took Jim's hand and followed him to the dance floor. She fully expected Jim to crush her in his arms and step on her feet, but it was a small price to pay to make Rocky jealous if Jim did.

Stopping at the edge of the dance floor, Jim slipped his arm around her waist and took her left hand in his, holding their hands close to his chest being careful not to crush her courage. At first, Marissa kept her body taut, her right arm loosely around his waist trying not to get too close. By the beginning of the next slow song, Marissa felt her body relaxing as she put her head on his chest. Jim took a deep breath, inhaling the sultry scent of Marissa's perfume.

"They look like they are having fun," said Sam as he grabbed Molly's hand and dragged her to the dance floor.

Marissa intended to smile at Rocky as they whirled passed them. By the time they got near them, she had her head on Jim's chest and her eyes closed. Marissa did not know Jim had planned for her to be leaning against his chest when they danced near Rocky. Something devious inside him made him want to provoke Rocky by letting him see how close Marissa was to him.

"What the heck..." Rocky muttered when he saw Jim whirl by, making sure that Rocky saw Marissa in his arms. "Marissa sure looks cozy with nerd boy."

As the song ended a band member, who knew Jim liked to do the twist, shouted, "Okay everyone, hit the dance floor, and let's TWIST!"

Reluctantly, Marissa left Jim's arms and headed toward the punch table when Jim caught her by the arm and pulled her back onto the floor.

"No need to let good music go to waste," he told her.

Ashamed to admit it, Marissa said softly, "I am not really up on those dances."

"It's easy. Just watch me." Jim told her.

"And us," Molly told her as she and Sam joined them. "Just stand still, and twist your body. You can even move your feet. It is a fun way to exercise."

Watching them for a minute, Marissa decided to try it. Not hesitating a minute, Jim put his hands on her waist and showed her how she should move her hips. Marissa soon got the hang of it and was able to mimic some of Molly's moves. When the music ended, all four were breathing heavy and laughing at the memory of Sam trying to twist down to the floor, losing his balance and flopping to the floor on his butt.

"Punch time," Molly said as she took Sam's hand.

"After this dance," Jim told the group as the band began to play "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling."

Marissa turned into Jim's arms and put her arms around his neck as Jim slipped his arms around her waist as naturally as if they had done this before. He leaned down and gently touched his lips to hers.

"Well....I'll be," Molly stammered as her eyes followed Jim and Marissa around the dance floor, surprised Jim actually kissed her.

Unbeknownst to the group, Rocky was also watching Marissa and Jim as they made a spectacle of themselves doing the Twist. When he saw how easily Marissa went into Jim's arms when the slow song started and how familiar Jim seemed with Marissa, Rocky saw red – especially the kiss.

"I have to teach nerd boy a lesson," Rocky muttered as he headed out on the dance floor, leaving Sherry standing on the sideline with one of his friends

Suddenly Marissa found herself yanked out of Jim's arms and an angry voice saying, "Okay, enough is enough Marissa. I don't know what you are trying to prove, but you are my girl, not nerd boy, so let's get the heck out of here...NOW!"

Looking at him, she asked, "Where is Sherry, your date?"

"I dumped her and left her with one of my friends so let's go...NOW!" Rocky told her again as he gripped her arm tighter, trying to drag her to the gym door, not caring that he was acting like a spoilt child and everyone was watching.

"Let go, Rocky," Marissa said. "You are hurting me."

"That is no way to treat a lady," Jim said so only they could hear him as he tried to get between them. "And besides, she asked you to let her go."

"Lady? I don't see a lady." Rocky said loudly with a smirk on his face. "All I see is Marissa who likes to be handled rough."

Snatching one of her hands loose, Marissa slapped Rocky across the face. "I told you were hurting me."

Reaching up, he rubbed his cheek and said, "That was a big mistake baby."

Not wanting to be expelled from the dance, or from school, Jim told Rocky, "Let's take this outside, and settle it man to man."

"Oh my, nerd boy wants to fight me," Rocky said laughing. "Over Marissa's honor, which she doesn't have considering...."

However, he did not get to finish his sentence before he found himself on the floor, knocked there by one punch from Jim. Jumping to his feet, ready to fight, he looked around for Jim and saw him

heading for the door. Jim could only hope he was not in trouble with the school dance monitors.

“That was a lucky shot...and a big mistake.” Rocky said angrily as he followed Jim outside.

Marissa, Molly, and Sam quickly followed them out. Marissa just knew that Jim was going to get hurt because Rocky outweighed Jim by at least fifty pounds and was on the wrestling team. Molly and Sam were more worried about Rocky because they knew a secret about Jim no one else did, especially Marissa.

The two guys moved away from the gym to a grassy patch at the end of the gym. Rocky quickly rushed Jim, only to find himself swinging at air as Jim danced out of the way. As he moved toward Jim again, Rocky felt a kick to the back of his knee, causing him to hit the ground. That kick was followed quickly by a kick to the side of the head, laying Rocky flat out on his back and staring up at the night sky.

“Are you ready to apologize to Marissa,” Jim asked, “or do I need to kick your butt some more?”

Rocky struggled to his feet and glared at Jim. “I am not going to apologize to no....”

Once again, Rocky did not get to finish his sentence before Jim grabbed his arm, pulled it behind his back, and slammed him to the ground, making him eat grass and dirt.

“I suggest you apologize and go home before I seriously hurt you,” Jim warned.

“I would do what he says Rocky,” Sam said as he revealed Jim’s secret. “He is a black belt in Karate and he can and will hurt you.”

Realizing no matter what he did Rocky was not going to apologize, so Jim let him up. Rocky opened his mouth to say something else derogatory but instead looked at Marissa and said, “Your choice. Going or staying with nerd boy?”

In response to his question, Marissa took his class ring from around her neck and handed it to Rocky.

“When you come to your senses, do not come looking for me because we are through. Hope he can take care of you like I did.” Rocky told her, knowing only they knew exactly what he meant.

And with that, he headed for his car wiping the dirt off his mouth and stuffing the ring in his pocket. When Jim saw the smirk on Rocky’s face before he turned around, he started to go after him when he

felt a soft hand on his arm.

“Let him go,” Marissa spoke softly. “I know what kind of guy he is now. I just want to forget it, go inside, and dance. Okay?”

“He had no right talking to you like that and making the accusations about your reputation Marissa,” Jim said.

Looking over at Jim, Marissa leaned in close and kissed Jim on the cheek. “Thank you for standing up for me. No one has ever done that before.”

Jim and Molly just stood there and stared at Marissa, both shocked to see a side of her that neither one had before.

Going over to Molly, Marissa whispered in her ear, “Thanks. You are right. Jim is nice.”

Molly smiled and whispered back, “not really a nerd is he?”

“Maybe just a little,” Marissa said as she looked at Jim with a smile on her face. “But I like the nerdy side.”

“What are you two whispering about?” Jim asked, as he looked first at Molly, then at Marissa.

“Never mind,” Marissa said as she took his hand. “I want to dance some more.”

Suddenly it hit him what they had been talking about. The same thing they were talking about earlier in study hall when they did not know he was there and listening...him being a nerd. A half smile came on his face, making Marissa wonder what he was going to do.

Deciding that he might as well go all the way to prove that he was not a total nerd, he pulled Marissa into his arms and kissed her deeply, right in front of everyone who had come out to watch the fight.

When he released her, he expected to be slapped for being so bold, but all Marissa did was lean in and kiss him again.

“I think four is a crowd,” Molly told Sam as she pulled him back toward the gym.

“So...want to get out of here and go somewhere for a bite to eat and get to really know each other better?” Jim asked, “Or would you rather go back inside and dance like you suggested, then go out

for something to eat.”

“I like the idea of having your arms around me as the band plays some slow songs” Marissa admitted, “but going somewhere to talk sounds like a better idea.”

Marissa smiled at him, thinking how wrong she had been about Jim and how much time she had wasted with Rocky when there were nicer fish in the sea.

Marissa hooked her arm around his arm and followed him to the car.