



The Kiss

A dance. At their old high school, no less. Of all the things she could be doing on this Saturday night, going to a dance at her old high school - with her best friend as her date. Wow. She had some changes to make in her life. Maybe this was what high school reunions were for - to shake some sense into you and make you realize how little you'd done with your life since graduation. And to see how old everyone now looked. Naturally.

Speaking of said best friend...she walked down the echoing corridor, cringing at the gunmetal lockers lining both sides of the hall. He had only come with her as a favour, he'd told her countless times that reunions weren't good for the soul, that nothing good ever came of it except hangovers and stories of glory days. But he'd come with her anyway. He had been her friend ever since those halcyon days, back when teenage problems loomed large but looked so pitiful now in hindsight. He had been with her through all the ups and downs, he had been her rock, her go-with guy. Her everything.

The fact that she was, and always had been, hopelessly in love with him... well...she thought, he had never made a move on her, had never even hinted that he thought of her that way, and so she'd stored away her feelings, like a gem in a velvet box, tucked away and cherished but rarely seeing the light of day. She wanted him, badly, but... as the Stones say...*you can't always get what you want.*

But sometimes you get what you need. And right now, she needed to go home. Back to adult life, back to the daily habits her life had settled into, the comfortable, if a bit lonely, routines that were still better than the tumult of high school. She needed to find him and let him know she was ready to go. She knew he had been ready to go before they'd even arrived.

She drew closer to the gym, the faint aroma of stale alcohol drifting on the air, the muted bass of a song from her graduating year thudding dully behind the double

doors. She pulled open one of the doors and the music all but rattled her bones. The gym was dark, shadows and silhouettes of couples embraced on the dance floor flitted through the smoky air. People still danced the way they did in high school, she noted with amusement. Draped over each other, his hands on her ass, her arms around his neck, swaying back and forth with their feet barely ever even moving.

And then she saw him.

He was dancing. *Dancing*. With that girl...what's her name, that girl from art class, all those years ago. That girl who had spent a semester in Paris, where he had always wanted to go. That gorgeous blonde girl with curves in all the right places.

Curves he had his arms around right this minute.

He was looking down at her and laughing, and she was looking up at him and even now, years later, she looked as flawless as she had in high school, her features almost breathtaking in their perfection. He was smiling, happy. He looked...he looked...god, he looked like he was enjoying himself.

She swallowed, unable to move. She didn't want him to look up and see her but she couldn't will herself to move and she couldn't look away. The two of them, two gorgeous people, two beautiful, happy people, dancing, enjoying each other. It would have been a happy scene - if it didn't make her feel like throwing up.

And then, like something out of a movie - a horror movie - the girl lifted up her chin and kissed him.

It was just a soft kiss, sort of tentative, nothing too hungry or demanding, but sensual all the same. The kind of kiss that would only deepen, only get hungrier, only lead to more and more and...

She turned abruptly, her knees almost giving out. Nausea swept over her and her first reaction was "get out. Just get out now." She walked briskly back out the gym doors and turned, blindly, not knowing where she was going. Tears burned in her eyes and she berated herself, willing them to stop.

Of course they were kissing. Of course. She was beautiful and charming and she had kissed him first. What man in his right mind wouldn't kiss her back? What man wouldn't take her out to the parking lot right then and there and explore that gorgeous body?

God she was idiot. She should never have let herself do this, she should never have let her feelings get so far out of hand.

She turned down the empty corridor and saw the exit beside the teacher's lounge. She headed for it, not caring that she didn't have her coat, or that she had no way of getting home. They had come here in his car, and she knew, she just **knew** that he would be using it to drive the girl back to his place; he'd come to her with a bashful smile and a plea for understanding and ask if she minded terribly finding her own way home tonight and...

Her name. Someone was calling her name.

She stopped and turned.

It was him. Striding down the corridor towards her.

She smiled weakly and kept walking. "Oh, hi. I'm just going out for some air." She heard him actually start to run. He caught up with her quickly.

"Wait. Please. Please stop. I know you saw that, and I'm sorry."

She turned to face him, eyes wide. "You don't have to apologize," she said, dumbfounded.

The outside doors opened and a group of smokers bustled in, loudly, complaining about the cold and stamping out the last of their cigarettes. Their faces were red from the cold and probably alcohol as well, and they took their time, loudly laughing and jostling in the doorway.

He looked at them with irritation, and then blew out an exasperated sigh. He pushed open the door to the darkened teachers' lounge and ushered her inside.

"Come on. Let's talk in here."

"There's nothing to talk about," she said as he closed the door behind them. It was so dark, the only light coming from the moonlight spilling in through a high clearstory window along the ceiling edge. He didn't advance into the room, but stood close to her so she was all but backed up against the door.

"I'm sorry," he repeated quietly, his face near hers. He was so close, she could feel him wanting to touch her, wanting to step closer. It was in every slight nuance of his stance, every small movement of his head, his arms. He wanted to get closer to her, she could feel it, and the realization, the shocking, sudden excitement of it, made her heart begin to pound.

"It's none of my business," she said, swallowing.

"It is." His eyes pinned her. "I think you know it is."

"Look, you can do whatever you want," she said, trying to sound airy, and not pulling it off.

"I was just dancing with her so we could talk about Paris," he explained, his eyes dropping down to her lips. He saw something in her face, something in her skeptical expression, because his brow furrowed and he stepped even closer. "What? You don't believe me?"

She scoffed, and swallowed, looking away. "You weren't *talking*."

"*She* kissed *me*," he said in a low voice, angling his head closer to hers.

And you kissed her back."

He smiled. "No I didn't."

She let out a breath. "Come on. Yes, you did. And I don't blame you, but -"

"No, I didn't," he said more emphatically. "She just surprised me with it."

She smiled. "Fine. Good."

God, she felt like an idiot. An incredibly turned on idiot, standing so close to him, feeling a little small and feminine next to him in that pleasant, sexually exciting way. He always smelled so good, and from all the times he'd hugged her she knew how good he felt, how strong and solid and masculine. And right now, in the darkened room, her back against the door and him leaning in towards her, one hand pressed against the door over her shoulder, all but trapping her there, she felt like he must be able to hear her heart pounding, her pulse racing, her breath growing shallower and less steady.

"Trust me," he said, his voice dipping into a lower, deeper register and taking on a decidedly more intimate tone. "What you saw was not me kissing her back. There's a difference."

"If you say so."

"I do," he said, his voice almost a whisper, and stepped even closer. "You want to know what the difference is?"

She tipped her chin up as if to encourage him, her lips beginning to tremble just a little.

He brought his lips down to within inches of hers, and whispered. "Kiss me and I'll show you."

She inhaled sharply, awareness flaring throughout her body, a fluttering, breath-stealing sensation rippling through her. Kiss him... God, he wanted her to kiss him... he was so close, his lips so close to hers, his warm breath whispering across her mouth...

"Kiss me," he said again, his voice low and almost hoarse. He was hovering near her, so tantalizingly close, but decidedly not kissing her. He was waiting for her to press her lips to his, but coming as close to her as he could. Tempting her, encouraging her, pulling her in.

She felt drawn forward as if by a magnet. Lightly, delicately, she pressed her lips to his, feeling how much she trembled, how insubstantial and frail her kiss felt but unable to do anything more. She lingered for just a moment, and then pulled back, uncertainly.

He remained still, not moving, so close, his chest now against hers, backing her solidly up against the door. He didn't kiss her, he didn't smile, or say anything, and she felt an unfamiliar tremor of panic rise in her.

"I thought you said you'd show me," she said ruefully, her cheeks beginning to burn. Had she done it wrong? Could a kiss be wrong? She could barely remember her name right now, let alone how to kiss someone. Especially this someone.

"Oh I will," he whispered. "I'm just waiting for you to really kiss me."

Something in the timbre of his voice, something in the drowsy desire of his words emboldened her. She leaned forward and kissed him more sensuously, taking his lips with hers, opening her mouth and savouring the fullness of his. And with only the slightest of pauses, he took over.

He leaned against her heavily, almost surging into her, his mouth roaming over hers with a heady, sensual slowness that ignited her. His lips moved over hers possessively, with a slow, languid rhythm as his tongue dipped into her mouth to taste her. When his tongue met hers she let out a little cry of pleasure, feeling an arrow of desire shoot right down to her core.

He groaned at the sound and dipped his tongue into her mouth and out again rhythmically, as if making love to her. One hand slipped around her back and held her while the other slid up to her breast and felt her, owned her, roamed over her like she was a longed-for prize. He groaned against her, and his kiss deepened into a hot, sensual exploration.

She felt weightless, boneless, all but liquefied by the heat of his mouth on hers and the strength of his hands caressing every part of her. His sounds of pleasure, his soft groans and heavy breathing, every male expression of pleasure made her even more desperate for him. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him down into her, kissing him with abandon.

There was no time for words, no breath to be stolen for the little flirtations of new lovers, there was simply this kiss. They fell into each other, seeking, needing, as if making up for all the years they had denied themselves this pleasure. It was never enough, there was never a moment when it seemed right to part, never the need to break and bring lips to skin, or breasts, or to fumble with clothing. It was all consuming, and erotic enough, this deep, soulful kiss, this meeting of mouths and breath and sounds.

They weren't friends...not now, and not ever, she suddenly knew. They had always been this to each other, always one breath away from this, always one kiss away...one breathless, soulful, beautiful kiss.

Finally....finally....when the need for air had peaked, when the thundering of their hearts needed calming, he reluctantly pulled away, his chest rising and falling with each laboured breath. He smiled at her, a soft laugh escaping through his breathing.

"Now that," he said, bumping his nose against hers as his breath finally began to slow. "Is kissing back."

"I think....." she said, biting her lip and smiling up at him. "I may need to try that again..."

The End