

Dance of Love

by Posse Gal Angie

Written in response to a Posse "challenge" to write Jackson's next marriage proposal to Erica.

Erica tried to sit back and relax in the limo Jackson had sent for her. She was not feeling very relaxed. She was not even sure if her dress was right. Okay it was definitely right, she just was not sure if it was appropriate for what Jack had planned. Erica smiled, knowing it would not matter, she could wear an evening gown to a barbecue and Jack would simply give her an amused smile, and never take his eyes off her. When she had asked him how to dress, he had been infuriatingly vague, telling her to "dress for a special moment." Of course Erica had gone through dozens of outfits before deciding that this was the one that would really make Jack look at her in the way that always made her heart do flip-flops. The way that said how happy he was that she was all his. She had nearly flung THAT dress off in a fit of temper and refused to go as she stood there muttering about how Jack was the most infuriating man she had ever known, and so not worth this. But he was worth this. He was worth anything. And he may be the most infuriating man on the planet, but he was her infuriating man.

Erica was slapped with the cold air as she stepped from the limo. She knew she should have worn her coat, but she wanted Jackson to get the full effect of her dress.

She turned to thank the limo driver when he raised his cap, so she could make out his face. "Reggie?" she gasped, receiving only his smile in return. "Do you even have a driver's license?" she queried, already acting the role of his mother.

"You worry too much, Erica," Reggie finally spoke, "Just doing my part." As Erica walked away from Reggie, he gave a low whistle. Flustered, Erica whirled back around, but she could not help the smile creeping across her face.

"Reggie!" she tried to sound stern, and tried just as unsuccessfully to stop the blush from filling her cheeks.

"J's gonna love the dress," Reggie grinned.

~*~

Erica stood staring for a moment, her eyes widening in surprised, and then settling lovingly on the dashing figure sprawled on the steps of the boathouse. There were even more twinkle lights than the last time they had been here and she could see roses strewn about the dock. And a single rose in Jack's hand. He did not see her yet. He was gazing forward expectantly, yet his mind seemed to be somewhere else, somewhere very pleasant from the faint smile on his lips. He looked impossibly handsome, perched on the top step, wearing a white tuxedo, and a long black coat.

"Hi handsome," Erica smiled as she walked toward him. Jack held out the rose to her, his mind battling over where to look first. He was enchanted by her dark, sparkling eyes and the beguiling smile that painted her lips, but his eyes were drawn to the dress that clung to her body in all the right places. As Erica held the rose in one hand, and reached for his hand with the other, Jack instead circled her waist with his hands and gently lifted her until she was staring down into his eyes. After carrying her up the steps, Jack allowed her to slide down his body until she was standing in front of him on the dock. Before her feet were even solidly on the ground, her arms found their way around Jack's neck and her lips melted into his. When their lips parted, the pair stared into each other's eyes for a long moment, their bodies untangled from one another, yet their hearts and souls so completely connected. As Jack ran his hands up and down Erica's arms, he became aware she was shivering, and it was not merely from their close proximity. Shrugging out of his long coat, he wrapped it around her shoulders. Not ready to move so far from her yet, he took her hand and led her across the dock to where the CD player set. But he did not touch it. He released Erica's hand and stepped back, his eyes gliding over her small frame surrounded by his coat. Erica could not deny that she loved watching him look at her this way. Finally, she arched her brow in a silent question. If he was going to look at her like that, he certainly should not be so far away.

Jack smiled and admitted, "I love when you wear my clothes. Only you could make a coat look so sexy."

Erica smiled seductively at him in return, "Oh darling, " she cooed, "You do a wonderful job of that yourself."

Reflecting, Jack responded, "You were wearing my jacket the day I came home."

"I did not think you noticed," Erica teased him.

"Lady, I notice everything about you," Jack said, holding her gaze.

"I missed you so much," Erica admitted quietly.

"We will never have to miss each other again," Jack promised, holding out his hand to Erica, as music swelled through the air with a touch of his other hand. Taking the rose from her hand, he brushed it along her cheek, before pressing his lips to the very same spot, and tossing the rose away into the sea of roses that littered the dock.

~~*~ The music plays so soft and sweet
My hands they shake when our lips meet
All that I ask is that tonight
We have this dance of love ~*~*~*

Looking into Erica's eyes with so much love that she thought her heart would surely burst, unable to contain the over-abundance of love she felt in return, Jack spoke to her heart. His voice held his own emotions, telling her, "Erica, we have spent years dancing in and out of each other's lives. Dance with me now, share this dance with me forever." Before she could even answer, Jack pulled her into his arms, needing to hold her close. Erica leaned against him, feeling the warmth of his body against her cheek, even with the bitter wind filling the air. His familiar scent already surrounded her, as his coat draped around her body, and the nearness of him overwhelmed her senses. Her mind was reeling as he closed his arms around her, bringing her closer, inhaling her own scent as he buried his lips in her hair. His earlier words leapt to mind. A special moment. She knew at that moment that she was standing at the edge of a cliff. And Jack was going to ask her to jump. She was terrified. She was terrified, because she knew she was going to take that leap. As Jack's body began to sway with hers, Erica paused, glancing down at the bed of roses at their feet.

"Are you sure about this?" she asked, gesturing at the flowers, even

though her eyes held the truth, jokingly lifting up her typical six inch heel.

Nodding with a steadfast certainty, Jack led her back into his arms, whispering, "If we hold onto each other, we will never fall."

~~*~ Your eyes, they shine like stars above
This is the night that I've been dreaming of
It's your favorite song
Girl, can we hold on in this dance of love ~*~*~*

Relinquishing their embrace, "You are still wearing my ring," Jack said softly, his eyes gazing at her hand for a long time before finally raising to look into her eyes.

Erica nodded, almost afraid he was going to ask her to take it off. "When I put this ring on, I promised to love you completely, for the rest of my life. That has not changed," she told him, love shining in her eyes.

"For me either," Jack assured her, knowing the fear that lay in her heart. "I would ask you to take it off, so I can put it back on again, but I am not taking any chances this time, lady. It stays right where it is."

~~*~ Something comes over me when you are near
So close and yet so far
I could die here in your arms
As we hold on in this dance of love ~*~*~*

Jack led her across the dock until they were standing in front of the bench where she had found him not so long ago. "You said we had to figure out what we can live with and what we cannot live without," Jack began, sitting on the bench and pulling a surprised Erica onto his lap, along with him. "The on-bended-knee thing has not served us well so far," he explained.

"I can live with your makeup in my bathroom - all of it," Jack began, waiting until Erica's lips tugged into a smile. "I can live with the stretch of time it takes you to get ready," not even giving her a chance to debate. "I can live with the way you are always convinced you are right, even when you have surpassed the earth's wrongness threshold. I can live with your impulsiveness and your creative problem solving. I can live with your temper," Jack continued pulling

Erica back into his lap, not missing a beat as she angrily and fruitlessly attempted to escape from his grasp. "See?" he grinned.

"That is why you wanted me in your lap!" Erica accused him, her eyes flashing.

"I am a smart man," Jack smiled.

"Oh, you think you are so smart?" Erica exploded, infuriated that her struggle was getting her nowhere.

"Yeah," Jack replied, "Smart enough to get you in my arms." He had her. He loved it. But she fought dirty.

"Well what are you going to do with me?" she inquired, curling ever closer to him. She had him, and she loved it.

"Hmm hold that thought sweetheart," Jack managed, very aware of how close Erica had moved toward him.

~~*~ The music plays, you're all I see
I feel you breathing so close to me
Take my hand, tonight I'll be your man
In this dance of love ~*~*~*

"I cannot live without the fire in your eyes when you know you are right," he began again, looking into her eyes, and never once looking away. "Or watching you wake up in the morning, or feeling your body curled against mine at night. Watching you walk into my arms. I cannot live without the way you look right before we kiss. When I hold you close, the way you smell, the way you feel. I cannot live without you making me crazy. I cannot live without your heart. I cannot live without you at all."

"Oh Jack!" Erica uttered emotionally, her voice barely a husky whisper, his words silencing her last lingering fears, searing her soul. It had finally happened. Jack filled up all the empty spaces inside. He gave her so much love that she did not know if her heart could hold it all. "I cannot live without you either! Not even for a moment," she pledged to him.

"We know all the steps, Erica. We know them by heart," Jack said, taking her hand in his, gazing at the ring on her finger, the symbol of their unending love. "This time the dance is forever," he promised.

“Be my partner, dance with me, let us spend the rest of our lives loving each other. Finally, once and for all, marry me Erica.”

“I would marry you right now!” Erica cried, flinging her arms around him, raining kisses down his face, before lowering her lips to his in a slow, lingering kiss.

~~*~ Something comes over me I can't explain
Girl, when I'm holding you
The world just slips away
As we hold on in this dance of love ~*~*~*

Pulling away to look at her, Jack was flooded with joy. Her smile lit up her face and her eyes sparkled with happiness. Looking out into the darkness, lit up by the myriad of twinkling lights, Jack could not help but smile at the thought. “Do you think you could possibly wait until tomorrow?” he asked.

Erica nodded vigorously, “But only,” she conceded, “If you take me home now and find a way to pass the time.”

“You got it,” Jack responded, as he rose, holding Erica in his arms. They both laughed, jubilant, as Jack spun them around in a circle, unable to contain his excitement any longer. He nearly stumbled on the steps when he felt Erica’s lips buried in his neck. “Honey, we need to get to the car in one piece,” he warned her.

“Hurry,” Erica urged him. And he did.

~~*~ And all I ask is that we have this dance
The music plays, we close our eyes
So soft, it flows into the night
You're like a prayer
Nothing else compares in this dance of love
You know I want you, take my hand
And I will be your man in this dance of love ~*~*~*

****SONG CREDIT: Dance of Love by Dan Hill****