

When the Lights Go Down....

by Christie

Erica sat there staring out at the rain falling down washing away the sins of this California town. All the glitz and glamour didn't make up for all of the broken dreams young girls had to suffer coming here with such hopes. Hollywood shouldn't be allowed to take your childhood away and neither should the little men who find themselves so powerful here.

Damn that man...Damn him for dying before she could tell him the things she needed to say to him, damn him for not believing in her when she came to him about Richard Fields, and mostly damn him for walking out on her so long ago and never looking back! He was her father yet he never gave a damn about her. Why should she believe that any other man was really different from him? Her thoughts wandered back to that man, that man that had proven time and time again that he was different. That man that time and time again has been there to pick up the pieces of her shattered life and help her find her way right back to the top. He never knocked her for it; hell, he loved watching her at the top of her game. Yet one more time she pushed him away and this time...oh this time she pushed so hard that he would never forgive her. This time he was gone for good, and that thought was more than she could ever bear.

She had gotten the call while she was at the hospital trying to pick up the pieces of her own baby girl's shattered world but how could she do that when she couldn't even feel anything inside? It was like hearing of Miranda's death killed a large part of what was inside of her too. She had no will to fight anymore, and she couldn't seem to even find anything to fight for. Eric was dying, Miranda was dead, Bianca hated her, and Jackson finally gave up. She heard about Eric and without saying a word to anyone she left for California. She had written Jack a letter and left it at the penthouse and before anyone could notice her gone she was in the air on Palmer Courtland's jet heading once again in her lifetime for the horrible hills of California.

When the lights go down
He'll be filling a pan
With a broom in his hand
In some dive across town
He'll be wiping the bar
And mopping the floor
Counting his tips
And locking the doors
Wrestling the devil that tells him to pour
Another round
When the lights go down

Erica turned towards the small radio she had turned on and laughed. Well, that about sums up the life of the legendary Hollywood producer and director Eric Kane...he was dead and there was no-one to call god did anyone even care? She wondered that. How can you spend your entire life living and when you die leave no-one to care about you behind. She laughed to herself and poured another drink. She walked out into the rain on her balcony and looked up at the skies... "Oh mother is that how I am going to end up one day? When I die, will anyone even notice I am gone?" she cried. Longing for her mother's arms to hold her again and to hear the words of love and comfort she always offered her daughter.

She'll be calling her friends
From a Mercedes-Benz
But it's too late now
They were there for the fame, the flash and the thrill
The drop of the name, the parties, the pills
As another star falls from the Hollywood Hills
Without a sound

Well I don't want to end up alone like him ...I just can't. She crossed the room and took the phone from its charger. Dialing the numbers she knew so well after all these years she waited for him to answer. She frowned as the answering machine sounded with Reggie's own brand of speech. She had to smile at his message; she did love that boy so very much.

"Hi guys, it's me Erica. I just wanted to let you know I would be home in a few weeks. Jack don't worry, ok? I know what I am doing. I just needed to get away from there. Please try to understand that. Some things have happened that I needed to finally put to rest" she paused chuckling at the irony of her own words. "Take care of yourselves, my guys. II love you" she said hanging up the phone never hearing the door open across the room.

She walked to the balcony again stopping along the way to turn up the radio playing that sad song, walking out into the rain she stood there listening to the words of this song, cursing her father for banishing her trust in men so thoroughly at such a young age. "Damn you Eric Kane, damn you straight to hell" she screamed at the storm as she collapsed on to the cold hard tile of the balcony floor, crying for all of the years she missed her father and for all of the rage she felt at his leaving, for the years of doubt and disbelief he made her feel and for the little girl that never had a father's love.

When the lights go down
And there's nothing left to be
When the lights go down
And the truth is all you see
When you feel that hole inside your soul
And wonder what you're made of
Well, we all find out
When the lights go down

She sat there with her face buried in her hands, sobbing almost out of control. Then she felt the sweetest safest touch - of the man that

owned her very soul. She looked up into those clear honest, trustworthy, incredible desirable blue eyes that were like home to her... "Jack" was all she said before he swept her into his arms and carried her inside.

He carried her into the bathroom and sat her on the counter while he made quick work of filling the Jacuzzi tub with hot soapy water before turning back to her. She sat there on the side of the counter looking so sad and helpless and for the very first time ever Jack was so deathly afraid that his Erica had lost her will to fight.

When the lights go down
At the end of the day
With this game that I play
Has gone another round
As I lay there alone in this big empty bed
Nothing but thoughts of you in my head
I think of the things I wish I had said
When you were still around

He was here again...every single time her world came crashing down around her he was there to pick up the pieces and help her right her world... and once again proving Eric wrong he was there for her. He walked to her, studying her. Trying to find out what was going on in her mind. He knew the instant he heard about Eric where she went to and he knew with everything in him that he needed to be there for her now more than ever. The question that echoed through his mind over and over again...would she let him?

He knew she was drinking and he hated the thought of all the years she spent in recovery being thrown away but more than anything he hated seeing her spirit broken by that god damn man who never deserved to be any part of her world to begin with. When he met the man all those years before...Barney the damn clown he was for sure. God, he could play with Erica's head in such a way that it truly frightened Jack. Eric had such a power over his daughter and in the

end it always ended up costing Erica the most.

When the lights go down
And there's nothing left to be
When the lights go down
And the truth is all you see
And I wonder if all my life's about
The sum of all my fears and all my doubts
When the lights go down

He went to her then and lifted her from the counter placing her on her feet beside the tub as he began removing her rain soaked clothes. She was standing there before him with her arms at her side and her eyes centered on his chest, just kind of in a haze it seemed. He ran his hands up her bare arms to her shoulders "look at me Erica" he said softly to her but she didn't even register that he said anything to her at all. He cupped her chin in his strong hand and tilted her face up to his... "Tell me what I can do for you tonight Erica, tell me how to make this better for you." He said to her. "Just be here with me Jackson, you always make things better; just begin here." She said honestly before stepping into the tub of hot water.

Jackson set about lighting the candles that were all over the large bathroom, talking to her about nothing really as he did so. He was so unsure of how to handle this one. He didn't want to push her to tell him about Eric until she was ready to do so. "Jack" he heard her whisper his name but when he felt her touch his back he was startled to find her so close. Turning around to face her he found her clad in only a white bath towel. Desire swept through him almost without control; she made him feel things that no other woman alive ever could.

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And the truth is all you see
When you feel that hole inside your soul
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"Erica sweetheart" he said as he watched the tears fall from her eyes again. He wrapped her in his arms holding her as close as he could, trying to erase some of the pain that man had always caused her. "I am here baby, for whatever you need" he said stroking her hair as he spoke to her. "Oh Jackson I need the same thing I have needed forever now...I need you" she said looking into his eyes. "I need you too Erica, I will forever" he said as he lifted her in his arms and carried her to their bed.