

Dancing in the Moonlight

written by

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INT. HALLWAY OF A SCHOOL - DAY

Don is putting away his books in a locker as the bell rings, signifying it is almost time for classes to start. Not too far away from him, Ellie is rushing toward her locker only to trip and fall right behind Don. Don turns, sees the situation, and helps Ellie out.

DON  
Here, let me get that for you.

ELLIE  
Thanks.

Don hands Ellie her last book and Ellie holds her pile closer to her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

Don smiles and nods as Ellie walks away. Don closes his locker door to reveal Reggie, his best friend.

REGGIE  
Who's that?

Startled, Don gives Reggie a menacing stare.

DON  
Don't scare me like that.

REGGIE  
(sarcastically)  
Did I scare you? I'm sorry.

Don punches Reggie as he laughs.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
Okay, but seriously, who is she?

DON  
What do you mean?

REGGIE  
I haven't seen her before. Is she a new kid?

Don looks back toward where Ellie went. She is gone now.

DON  
I'm not sure, to be completely honest with you, Reg.

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

Don walks out the front door and past all of the other kids. A couple of feet away are two girls--Ellie and Ilsa--talking to each other. Don walks by them.

ELLIE

There he is, Ilsa. The boy who helped me.

ILSA

Don James? He doesn't do much around here. He's kinda just... there.

ELLIE

But he was sweet.

ILSA

In the point-two second interaction? Sure.

ELLIE

Oh, what do you know? All of your relationships are with toxic assholes anyway.

Ellie jogs over to Don and falls slightly short behind him. Over by Ilsa, Reggie peers out.

REGGIE

Who is she?

Startled, Ilsa turns to face Reggie and hits him. Reggie laughs.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Okay, but seriously, who is she?

ILSA

You don't remember?

Reggie shakes his head.

ILSA (CONT'D)

That's Ellie. Ellie Valmont? From middle school? She suffered from brain cancer and now she's back. Ring any bells?

REGGIE

We had a cancer patient here?

ILSA  
 Good god, you're ignorant.

EXT. SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

As Ilsa and Reggie are debating on Ellie, Ellie finally gains up the courage to tap Don's shoulder. Don turns and stops in his tracks, allowing Ellie to walk right into him.

DON  
 Whoa!

ELLIE  
 Oh my god!  
 (Retracts, embarrassed)  
 I'm so sorry.

DON  
 (chuckles)  
 Don't be. It was my fault.

They both share a moment of silence with one another. Don finally chimes in after it gets too awkward.

DON (CONT'D)  
 So. I'm Don.

ELLIE  
 Ellie.

DON  
 Ellie. It's cute.

ELLIE  
 Thanks.

Another silence.

DON  
 So...

ELLIE  
 Do you maybe want to go out with me?

DON  
 Huh?

ELLIE  
 Nothing... it's... stupid.

DON  
 No.

ELLIE

Yes, it is... wait... no it's not stupid or no on the date?

DON

It's not stupid.

ELLIE

Are you sure? I'm a lot to handle.

DON

Pro tip. If you're asking someone out, don't lead with that.

ELLIE

I know.

DON

Okay. Dinner tomorrow, seven o'clock. At Birch Room. Don't be late.

Don walks away. Once he crosses the street, Ilsa and Reggie catch up with Ellie.

ILSA

What did you say to him?

ELLIE

Everything. Nothing. All the same.

INT. DON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Don is getting ready to go on the date he set up with Ellie when he hears a knock at his door. He opens the door to be greeted with Reggie.

REGGIE

Yo, Donnie, what's shaking?

DON

Not much, Reggie. Just a date with Ellie.

REGGIE

Ellie? Cancer patient Ellie?

DON

No, girl who dropped her books before classes yesterday, Ellie.

REGGIE

Right, cancer patient Ellie.

DON

What are you talking about?

REGGIE

Her friend, Ilsa, said something about Ellie being a classmate of ours in middle school. That is, until she developed brain cancer and now, she's back and supposedly cured from it.

DON

Okay, just a big ass bomb to drop on someone right before their first date with the person being mentioned. But I can deal with it.

REGGIE

Whatever, man. You do you. Me? I'm sticking with the safe girls.

DON

You know cancer isn't contagious, right?

REGGIE

(Stares blankly then scoffs)  
Of course, I do.

DON

Okay. I'll see you later, man.

Don leaves Reggie in the room.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Don enters the restaurant to see Ellie already seated at a table. He checks his watch, it's only six-thirty. He smirks and goes to sit in front of her.

DON

You're early.

ELLIE

Better than being late.

DON

Touche.

ELLIE

So, I hear you're a writer?

DON  
Who told you that?

ELLIE  
(shrugs)  
A bird.

DON  
Well, that bird knows too much, if  
you ask me.

ELLIE  
Why is that?

DON  
I'm no good. I try writing novels  
and storylines, but nothing comes  
out as groundbreaking as I'd like  
it to. In my mind, anyway. Haven't  
really given any manuscripts to  
publishers because I don't have  
much faith in my lousily written  
work.

ELLIE  
Well, practice makes perfect, I  
guess. You can't pin greatness on  
just a couple of stories.

DON  
I've written over fifty stories.

ELLIE  
Holy shit, and you're still in  
school?

DON  
(shrugs)  
No faith in any of them.

ELLIE  
Can I read one?

DON  
No.

The waiter comes by with a notepad and pen in hand.

WAITER  
Hello hello, welcome to the Birch  
Room, our special today is the  
peanut butter burger-and before you  
gag, trust us, it's delicious. Can  
I get you two started on drinks?

ELLIE  
I'll have a water.

DON  
Root beer.

WAITER  
Perfect. Would you like any  
appetizers or...?

DON  
Mac and cheese curds. To share.

WAITER  
Perfect. I'll be right back for  
your main course orders.

The waiter walks off.

DON  
Now speaking of birds, one told me  
you had brain cancer.

ELLIE  
I thought everyone knew that  
already.

DON  
To be perfectly honest, I didn't  
recognize you until this bird said  
something, let alone knew you came  
back.

ELLIE  
Yeah. It has been a while, I guess.

DON  
It's okay. I'm glad you're  
remeeting old friends. I don't  
think I would be able to do that if  
I was in your situation.

ELLIE  
What makes you say that?

DON  
I am severely awkward.

The waiter returns with drinks and the appetizer.

WAITER  
Alright, are you two ready to  
order?

ELLIE

Yes, I will try the peanut butter  
burger.

DON

And so, shall I.

WAITER

Perfect. Are the chips okay with  
that?

DON & ELLIE

Yes.

WAITER

Sweet. It'll be ready in just a  
few.

The waiter walks away. Ellie looks back at Don and smiles.  
Don smiles back. Their hands on the table extend until they  
touch each other, then they hold each other's hands.

EXT. A HOME - LATER

Ellie and Don walk together, hand in hand, as they stop at  
Ellie's home.

ELLIE

Alrighty. This is my stop.

DON

Alrighty.

They giggle.

ELLIE

I had fun tonight.

DON

Me too.

ELLIE

I'll see you tomorrow?

DON

Tomorrow's the weekend.

ELLIE

(shrugs)

We can still see each other, can't  
we?

Don smirks as he watches Ellie walk back to her home. She waves back at him, and Don waves too.

INT. ELLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ellie walks in and falls on her bed with grace. She sighs in happiness as Ilsa walks in.

ILSA  
Must've been good, then?

ELLIE  
The best.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Ellie and Don attend a horror movie. Ellie gets scared and cowers close to Don, who feels comforted by her action.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

Ellie and Don mess around on the playground. Slides, swings, seesaws, sand fights. All having fun.

INT. GYM - AFTERNOON

Ellie and Don attend a sports game and cheer on their team. Ellie gets so excited she punches Don's arm. Don says "ow," then smiles at her. They look at each other and kiss.

EXT. A HILL - NIGHT

Ellie and Don stare up at the night sky. The moon in view as they stare at the many stars, wondering how in all of the universe they ended up together.

DON  
The moon is bright. I think you're right. I am wonderful, you are beautiful, as we dance beneath the moon's light.

ELLIE  
Did you come up with that on the spot?

DON  
Sure did.

ELLIE  
Not bad.

DON  
(shrugs)  
Needs work.

ELLIE  
Made me smile.

Don looks over and smiles.

DON  
You are amazing in every way, Ellie  
Valmont.

ELLIE  
Now, don't be getting cheesy on me.

DON  
(In a weird voice)  
But I am the King of Cheese!

Ellie laughs.

ELLIE  
I love you, Don James.

DON  
What?

ELLIE  
(Looks at Don)  
I love you.

DON  
(smiles)  
I love you too.

They kiss beneath the moonlight.

INT. HALLWAY OF A SCHOOL - DAY

Don stops at his locker and looks for Ellie. She is nowhere in sight. He checks his phone for any messages, nothing. Reggie walks up to him and Don places his hand on Reggie's shoulder.

DON  
Hey, do you know where Ellie is?

REGGIE  
Can't say.

DON  
You don't know, or are you not  
telling me?

REGGIE  
I don't know, sorry, man.

Reggie walks away. Don spots Ilsa from afar. He rushes over  
and taps her shoulder. She turns around, startled.

ILSA  
What is it with boys and scaring  
the ever-living shit out of me?

DON  
Do you know where Ellie is?

ILSA  
Why? Did she not show up in class?

DON  
No. And she's not returning my  
texts.

ILSA  
That's weird. She's crazy about  
you. What did you do?

DON  
Nothing. I don't think.

ILSA  
Check in on her at her place. Maybe  
she can't find her charger or  
something.

Ilsa walks off and Don nods.

DON  
(To himself)  
Yeah, just go visit her. Okay.

EXT. A HOME - LATER

Don walks up to Ellie's door and knocks on it. Ellie answers  
it, then quickly shuts it.

DON  
Ellie? Sweetie? Is everything  
alright?

ELLIE  
Yes. No. I don't know.

DON  
Can I come in?

ELLIE  
Yes. No. I don't know.

Don enters anyway.

INT. ELLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Don closes the door behind him. Ellie is lying on the couch, her hands over her eyes. Don, not knowing exactly what to do, sits in a chair close to her.

DON  
Are you okay?

Ellie removes her hands from her eyes. She's been crying. She shakes her head.

DON (CONT'D)  
What's wrong, babe?

ELLIE  
I had a doctor's appointment today.

She looks over to Don's worried face. She shakes her head.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
I shouldn't have gotten you involved. I feel so stupid for putting you into my life. I don't want to be the reason for anyone's pain, I--

DON  
Hey, hey, it's okay, it'll be okay.

ELLIE  
No, it won't, Don.

They reside in silence. They both start crying. Ellie falls into Don's arms as he attempts to comfort her. They stay this way for a very long time.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Ellie and Don attend a movie, they are holding hands and staying close as much as possible.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

Ellie and Don mess around on the playground. Slides, swings, seesaws, sand fights. All having fun.

INT. GYM - AFTERNOON

Ellie and Don attend a sports game and cheer on their team. Ellie lays her head on Don's shoulder and Don puts his arm around her.

EXT. A HILL - NIGHT

Ellie and Don stare up at the night sky. The moon in view as they stare at the many stars, wondering how in all of the universe they ended up together. And why of all the futures, did Ellie's cancer have to return.

Don gets up and holds his hand out toward Ellie. Confused, Ellie takes the hand stands up as well.

ELLIE

What are we doing now?

DON

Dancing in the Moonlight. This way  
I can say I danced with the most  
beautiful girl in the world  
underneath the most beautiful sight  
in the world.

Ellie puts her arms around Don, and Don does the same to her. Together, they dance beneath the stars and the full moon for a long while.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Don stands above Ellie's grave, a rose in hand. As he does so, he recites his newest poem. As the poem goes, a montage of Don and Ellie's relationship plays out in memory of their shared love for each other.

DON (V.O.)

A hand. Dark, cold, and thrilling.  
It grasps my heart and pulls it  
from my chest, removing the organ.

(MORE)

DON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A demon thought once destroyed, a demon thought to never come back has returned and summoned a fate to pull apart what was once perfect and beautiful. A face so pure and innocent. With eyes that gleam like the moon's rays kissing the rapid oceans below. An angel thought once at peace, thought to stay forever has fallen. Now the angel suffers with the dreaded fate that bestowed upon my heart. Our love, once large and flourished. With every night I think of you, you think of me just the same like rose petals falling at the exact same pace. A bond so strong that it was thought to never break broke when the dreaded demon brought upon the equally dreaded fate. And all I can hope for is your safety. Disease. Fuck the damn disease. We may not have the bond we once had, but I still hoped for a world with you in it because I never had a friend quite like you. Your friendship meant the world to me. Your laugh, your smile, your very person is a joy to be around. Being with you were the best days of my life. And because our journey has ended doesn't mean I don't love you. You are the greatest person I will ever meet. You are the greatest friend I will ever have. Because of our time together, I will never forget you. You are the angel, you have your demon. I prayed for the demon to be ridden from you and you'll never have to encounter it again. That way you could've lived on.

(drops the rose)

Like everyone should have the chance to.

Don walks away from the grave, leaving the rose in its place.

THE END.