CHAPTER FOUR

*Subtle Tension in the Air*

SEPTEMBER 7, 1995

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL – 2PM**

The big day had finally arrived. The entire gang including the awards committee was beyond excited to see the biggest musical event of the year come to life. David and Dennis picked up their freshly dry cleaned suits and ties and the Clark women spent the entire day getting pampered at the spa before having their hair and makeup done professionally. Knowing red was one of her idol’s favorite colors, Aurora wore it in a satin gown with a thin string of pearls across her waistline and single shoulder strap. Her mother wore a black dress with a sequined vest on top. The MTV Video Music Awards was just hours away from breaking records and making history.

Aurora hadn’t seen or talked to Michael since the incident at his rehearsal. She had no idea what to say to him and felt guilty for allowing herself to let her guard down with a married man who was also one of the most famous people in the world. The young Clark couldn’t deny her feelings and enjoyed her special moment with King of Pop but wasn’t sure if he actually felt the same way. Jill’s harsh words were still lingering in the back her daughter’s mind. Aurora knew her mother would have a heart attack if she found out what happened. Even though her life was not her mother’s business, Aurora knew she had no choice but to remain as calm as possible. She did not want Michael’s image or reputation any more damaged than it was.

The Clark women didn’t speak to each other after their argument at the mansion. Aurora wanted to teach her mother a lesson by proving to her that she didn’t need her approval to be with anyone she was romantically interested in. Jill, not liking her daughter’s attitude, decided to put her differences aside for one night and deal with Aurora’s tantrum once the award show was over and done with. She had plenty of things to say to her only child and agreed to keep her feelings buried for one night.

MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS PRE PARTY

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL**

**THE ROXY SUITE - 4PM**

“This is incredible!” David said as he and Dennis stepped out of their black stretch limousine and walked onto the famous red carpet. Dozens of celebrities including TLC, Madonna, Weezer, Eric Clapton and Alanis Morissette arrived for the pre party and smiled for the cameras posing in their lavish outfits and dramatic hairstyles. As the host of the yearly event, Dennis was pulled away from David within seconds as every tabloid and media reporter from all over the country wanted to take his picture and ask questions about his job.

Keeping a low profile, David also took a few photos and vaguely answered questions from reporters before entering the massive and lavishly decorated suite. There were no signs of the Clark women or committee members yet but David had a plan – talk to Aurora Clark and get to know her better. David wanted to tell Dennis that the intern was not as shallow and money minded as he thought. He also had faith that Aurora Clark was down to earth and ultimately the ideal match for his secret crush.

5PM

“You are never to speak to me in that way again, Aurora Clark!” Jill said as she and her daughter shared a limousine ride to the pre-show. “Do you understand me?”
“I’m not a child, mother. I don’t know when you will understand that.”
“I am well aware of it but until you prove me wrong, I am still your mother and you WILL OBEY ME!”

“I don’t want to argue with you about my life anymore.” Aurora scoffed not looking in her mother’s direction. “Whatever I do, whoever I date, wherever I go is MY business.”

“I am not going to let you ruin all the hard work I put into making this event possible.” Jill said giving her daughter the evil eye again. “We shall discuss this tomorrow. The subject is now closed.”
“And it will STAY closed!” Aurora spat back wanting her mother to shut up.

Once the Clark women arrived at the venue, the event escorts opened their door. Jill exited the luxury vehicle first then stepped aside and waited for her beautiful daughter to shine like the red rose she was on the same colored carpet. She noticed John Branca and a few other committee members and left her daughter to do her own thing as she made her way across the carpet to greet her associates.

Not wanting to draw attention to herself, Aurora discreetly skimmed the entire scene looking for the surprise man of the evening. She could tell by the crowd’s calmness he hadn’t arrived yet. She knew Michael was known to be late but feared he would not make it on time to present the award named in his honor to R.E.M. Not wanting to overthink the situation, she made her way into the venue and accidentally bumped into David.

“Excuse me. I’m sorry.”
“Miss Clark! That’s quite alright. I’m glad you’re here. How are you?”
“Very well. Yourself?”
“Great. Can I buy you a drink?”
“Sure.”

David’s plan was off to a great start. Fate brought his friend’s crush his way and he knew this would be the perfect time to get to know her interests, likes and dislikes so that he could ease Dennis’s mind about Aurora only being interested in certain types of people. Magical dust particles were invisibly being sprinkled upon everyone and not one person knew it. This was definitely going to be a memorable night for everyone.

5:30PM

The crowd cheered loudly outside the venue as several members of an entourage entered the building. A few guards walked towards the large podium that was set up at the center of the Roxy Suite hall. David and Aurora were enjoying themselves as they sipped martinis and had delightful conversations about work and hobbies. Aurora had no idea David was so down to earth. She enjoyed his company and complimented him on his wonderful personality. Not wanting her to get the wrong idea, David thanked her and politely excused himself making sure Dennis didn’t see the two of them together. He had to be subtle and not give himself away, especially in front of Dennis who would think he was trying to hit on the girl he admired for such a long time.

“Looks like he’s here!” David said as he made his way over to Dennis.

“He’s walking in now.” Dennis added anxiously waiting for the Pop star to show his face.

Aurora stood at the back of the room not wanting Michael to notice her. She still felt awkward and uneasy about what happened between them and didn’t know how to face him. When Michael entered the room, dozens of photographers took his picture from every angle as he gracefully walked towards the podium. To Aurora’s surprise, her dress was the same color as his beautiful red wine colored blazer. He wore dark sunglasses and black dress pants making Aurora’s heart thump in her chest.

**He is so handsome**. Aurora said to herself smiling and shaking her head. Noticing the change in her face, Dennis sighed and turned his head towards the front of the room listening to Michael talk about his History tour on HBO and the winner of the Vanguard award named after him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AoOhMbFaWk>

**“The Michael Jackson Video Vanguard award goes to R.E.M.”** He said as he smiled brightly. Aurora noticed Michael visually scanning the hall before stepping down from the podium as if he were trying to locate someone. She kept her distance in the background hoping he wouldn’t catch her gaze. Once he left the room with his security, Aurora made her presence known in the room again and began mingling with other familiar faces. She was happy to know Michael arrived safely and like all the others couldn’t wait to see him perform the opening act.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

**MAIN ENTRANCE - 7:30PM**

**“MICHAEL JACKSON ARRVES AT THE 1995 MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS WITH CHAOS OF HIS OWN!”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POPCyAX9tTU&index=32&list=PLoypgHo3Fcli4nnJr00fIFsOcOe0Z___b>

It was almost show time. Every celebrity, reporter and paparazzi known to man attended the event. Everyone anxiously took their seats including the committee members. Meanwhile, Dennis was putting the final touches of his act together going over last minute jokes and speech techniques while David made sure all of the program details were perfected. The show was about to begin and the audience couldn’t have been happier.

Lisa Marie Presley arrived just in time and sat alone near the front of the stage looking like her usual ‘sour’ self. She was dressed very simply in a white shirt and black pants with her dirty blonde hair straightened across her shoulders. Aurora admired the Pop star’s wife and remembered her husband’s words about her. She wanted to approach the legendary singer’s daughter but didn’t know quite what to say. She did kiss her husband after all.

“Miss Clark?” A young dark haired gentleman said approaching the young woman dressed in red. “You are requested backstage.”
“By whom?”
“Mr. Jackson.”

Aurora gasped. She had completely forgotten about her promise to see him before the show. Knowing it was too late and mean to say no, she followed the man as he led her towards a large green room area filled with Michael’s entourage members, bodyguards and several other unfamiliar faces. Aurora knew it was time to face the King of Pop again but hesitated. She still wasn’t sure of her feelings and didn’t know if acting upon them again would be such a good idea. He was a married man. She was an intern. Could there really be a future for them?

“What were you doing talking to her?” Dennis asked his friend as he saw him working on a few things backstage. “You better not have told her about me!” He said grabbing David’s sleeve.
“Relax, D!” David said easing himself away from his now paranoid looking friend. “I was just being friendly with a coworker. Nothing wrong with that.”
“Why are you so interested in getting to know her all of a sudden?”
“Because I want to prove to you that she’s not the stuffed shirt you think she is! She has class, D. And by the way she’s not interested in rich, famous, media targeted people.”
“How do you know?”
“Because I talked to her. She’s cool. I suggest you get to know her.”
“Whatever. You better not be cozying up to her just because you want to hook us up. I DON’T want her knowing about me.”
“I wouldn’t screw you over like that, D. Trust me. I care about you.”
“Thanks, bro.” Dennis said as he walked away.

David’s heart broke to pieces all over again. He couldn’t believe Dennis hadn’t caught onto his words. But then again, he couldn’t expect someone like him to understand. After all, Dennis was a straight man with only one person on his mind – Aurora Chastity Clark. Knowing this, David decided to shelve his feelings for the host and try his best to be there for Dennis the only way he could – as his friend.

Aurora followed the dark haired man towards the very back of the green room. A large door appeared in front of her and she assumed Michael was behind it. She thanked the man as he kindly let her in and told her Michael would be arriving any second to see her. He then closed the door leaving Aurora in the dressing room by herself. She sat on a nearby chair and tapped her foot nervously waiting for the iconic entertainer to see her. Did he want to apologize for what happened? Did he change his mind about performing? Several different questions floated around Aurora’s mind as she sat and waited for the man she accidentally kissed to enter the room.

**MTV VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS COMMITTEE MEMEBERS AT THEIR SEATS**:

“Where is he?”
“I have no idea.”
“We are running behind schedule.”

“He’s backstage, we know that much.”

Jill, not seeing one sign of her daughter couldn’t help but wonder if she was somehow responsible for Michael’s delay in getting the show started. She excused herself from the board members and went to find her praying that wherever she was, it was far away from Michael.

“Why have you been avoiding me?” Michael asked as he entered the room and locking the door behind him. “I’ve been trying to get a hold of you for five days.”

Aurora stood up to greet the man in front of her and apologized for being distant. She certainly didn’t mean to upset him but also knew she couldn’t get any closer to him than she already did.

“I needed time to think.”
“About?”
“What happened between us. It’s been on my mind since that night.”
“Mine too.”

“We cannot be anything other than friends and business associates, Mr. Jackson.”
“Aurora, please stop that.”
“I can’t. This relationship needs to be maintained on a strictly professional level. What happened between us was…”

Aurora paused. She wanted to say it was a mistake but she didn’t believe it was. She was too honest to lie to the man that touched her heart in a way no one else did and really wanted to know if there could ever be a chance for them. Michael’s marriage to Lisa Marie was the only bridge between the two of them forcing Aurora to realize nothing could but friendship could ever happen develop them.

“Was what?” Michael asked walking towards the pretty lady dressed in red.

“It…it…”

Aurora stuttered as Michael walked closer towards her. His stunning features including his dreamy eyes weakened her physically making her thoughts and judgments clouded. No man ever had this type of effect on her and she hoped no one else ever would.

Jill searched the entire backstage area wondering where her daughter was. She asked as many people as she could and all they told her the same thing – they hadn’t seen or heard from her. Frightened and now worried, she stormed through every door and hallway she came across hoping and praying that Aurora was alright and just occupied with work related tasks. Little did she know she was actually locked in a dressing room with the one man she ordered her to stay away from.

Michael walked towards his beautiful new ‘friend’ and gestured her to sit on the chair behind her. When she did, he sat on his knees in front of her and placed his hands on top of her lap. Feeling bad for him sitting on the floor, Aurora asked him to sit instead but he refused saying he just wanted to be near her.

“You have no idea how much I’ve missed you.” Michael said looking into the intern’s smoke grey eyes. “You look absolutely beautiful in red.”

“Thank you. I noticed you also wore the same color earlier today.”

Michael smiled and laughed quietly to himself.

“I saw you standing at the back of the room trying to avoid me. Do you really want me to stay away from you?”
“Of course not. I’d never want to lose—“

Aurora stopped herself again from speaking. Her eyes began to fill and all she could do in that moment was close her eyes and sigh. Why did love have to be so difficult? Why did he have to be married? Would it be worth it to go through all of this just for a famous person?

“Why do you keep stalling?” Michael asked placing her right hand in his.

“We can’t do this. I must leave.”

“Aurora, I can tell you don’t want to be just friends.”
“You’re a married man. I can’t—“
“Lisa Marie left me three days ago.” Michael interrupted shocking the hell out of Aurora. “She filed for separation and moved out of Neverland.”

Aurora was appalled. How could Lisa Marie do such a thing?

“I’m so sorry. Had I known, I would have been there for you.”
“I tried to get in touch with you but you ignored me. I really needed you, Aurora.”

Michael’s eyes were filling. The beautiful Clark junior could see and feel the hurt in Michael’s demeanor and couldn’t believe how selfish she was. She thought Michael contacted her to justify his actions when in reality, all he wanted was someone to talk to. Someone to comfort him. Someone to tell him he would be alright.

“I can’t even begin to imagine the pain you must be feeling.” Aurora said placing his head on her lap. “I hate myself for not being there when you needed someone. But I am now if it helps.”
“It does.” The troubled Pop star said gently rubbing the soft material on his new friend’s dress. “Thank you for coming to see me.”

“You’re welcome, Mr. Concur.”

Michael laughed as he lifted his head from her lap and tickled her. He complimented her again saying she looked like a princess and Aurora blushed as her face became redder than her dress. She stood up to leave giving Michael time to prepare for his act and he kindly walked her to the door. As soon as her hand touched the doorknob, Michael gently kissed Aurora’s bare shoulder sending chills of pleasure down her entire spine.

“I hope you enjoy the show.” He whispered in her ear before making his way towards her cheek kissing it lightly.

Aurora took a deep breath and turned around. She needed to tell him exactly what was on her mind before his enchanting aura made her lose what little senses she had left.

“Mr. Jackson, I have to—“
“Michael, Aurora.”

She ignored his request and continued.

“You must know that I am sorry for what you are going through in your personal life. However, I really don’t think that anything other than friendship could ever happen between us.”
“And why is that, Miss Clark?”

“We come from different backgrounds - yours consists of fame, wealth, media controversy and exemplary humanitarian efforts. My background consists of an internship, an overbearing mother and nothing but hope for the future. We come from different worlds, Mr. Jackson – mine is black and yours is white.”
“That may be but like the song says – ‘it don’t matter if you’re black or white’ Miss Clark.”

Aurora smiled at the icon’s joke. He wasn’t trying to make fun of her. He was just trying to get Aurora to see that it didn’t matter where people came from or how they were raised. The only thing that did matter was the two of them and how they felt about each other.

“I don’t want to get trapped in some dramatic love triangle with a famous celebrity, Michael.” Aurora said honestly seeing a spark of intensity in the Gloved One’s eyes. “I’ve been single for five years now and the last thing I need is someone leading me into a world I know I cannot handle.”

“Do you really think I’d do that?” Michael asked running his hand gently down her cheek. “You obviously don’t know me, Aurora. If I didn’t want anything to do with you, I wouldn’t waste your time or mine. I don’t believe in playing games. I either keep you in my life or I don’t. It’s really that simple with me.”

“You’re in the middle of a marriage breakdown.” Aurora explained trying to get Michael to see her point of view. “You are vulnerable and emotionally flustered. I feel like you are just looking for a time pass and a reason to keep yourself busy while you heal from the wounds your wife has given you. Forgive me for sounding rude but I will never allow myself to be anyone’s second choice.”

“What the heck is going on?” Dennis asked wondering why the show hadn’t started yet.

“I have NO idea. We are almost an hour behind schedule.”

“Excuse me gentlemen?” Jill asked as she approached the two handsome looking men. “Have either of you seen Aurora anywhere?”
“No, Miss Clark.” Dennis said shrugging his shoulders at the head committee member.

“I spoke with her earlier at the pre party.” David said. “But I haven’t seen her since then.”

Jill thanked them both as she frantically continued to search for her only child.

“Aurora, you would NEVER be my second choice.” Michael said as she backed herself into a corner. “I know the media makes me look like a monster but believe me I’m not. I’m just me. I’m Michael.”
“I understand that.” Aurora said smelling his alluring cologne. “I just don’t want to be the one who helps you get through this difficult time then be forced to leave. I’d never recover from that.”
“What makes you think you’d have to leave?”

“Isn’t that what you told me? That everyone you’ve ever been close to has left you? What if the same thing happened to me? What if I couldn’t handle being with you? What if I needed to break free?”

“I’m not asking for you to leave your entire world for me.” Michael explained. “You came into my life for a reason and I believe it was for way more than just friendship. I love what happened between us the other day and wouldn’t take it back for anything. I know you feel the same way too.”

Michael was right - Aurora DID feel the same way but the one thing constantly alarming her was the fact that he was married. Separated or not, she didn’t want to be the one name linked to his in the media.

“I love that we quickly became friends. I love being around you and adore your music. You are unbelievably cute, charming and incredibly funny. But, Michael the reality is that you are—“
“SEPARATED!” He yelled trying to stop her from saying that he was married again.

“My days as her husband are numbered, Aurora. She left and I’ve accepted that. It’s just a matter of time before the rest of the world learns and accepts it too.”

“That makes me look like the other woman, Michael.”
“No, Aurora.” He said bringing his face closer to hers. “That makes you look like the ONLY woman.”

At that moment, Aurora no longer felt the need to fight her feelings. There was nothing holding her back now that Michael was technically unattached. The beautiful lady in red decided to throw caution to the wind, listen to her heart and give love another chance. She pressed her lips against his making him moan and smile against her mouth. He wrapped his arms around her waist and Aurora put hers around his neck as they both stood against wall kissing each other deeply and affectionately.

“AURORA? WHERE ARE YOU?” Jill yelled terrifying everyone who heard her backstage.

She unknowingly walked past the dressing room her daughter and Michael were in and startled them both forcing them to break their kiss and hide hoping she would not catch them in their act. Michael giggled adorably as he wiped Aurora’s lipstick from his lips and kissed her gently on her forehead. He was so happy. He felt victorious by giving his heart to a wonderful young lady who, in his eyes, deserved it more than Lisa Marie. Michael trusted Aurora. He believed her. He admired her. He was falling in love with her.

Michael asked the beautiful Clark woman what her favorite dance move of his was and she lovingly said it was none other than the moonwalk. He smiled and thanked her for telling him as she wished the great entertainer the best of luck. He let go of his new friend, kissed her forehead again and ran towards the far end of the room disappearing through the large set of doors. Knowing her mother was searching for her like a mad woman, Aurora quickly straightened herself out and opened the main door coming directly in contact with her mother’s grief stricken face.

“THANK GOD!” Jill said hugging her daughter tightly. “You scared me to death! Where have you been? And why do you look so red in the face? What happened to your lips?”

“I am perfectly fine, mother.” Aurora said rolling her eyes at the overbearing woman. “I was in the middle of something work related. I’m going to the bathroom to freshen up. I’ll meet you at our seats.”

Not falling for Aurora’s story, Jill noticed Michael’s fedora on a glass coffee table in the dressing room her daughter had just come out of. She knew she was with him and worse – they were alone together.

“Aurora Clark! How dare you defy me!”
“What?!” Her daughter asked looking confused.
“You were in that room alone with that man! Where is he?”
“MOTHER!”

Jill pushed past her daughter and stormed into the room looking for Michael wanting to speak to him about luring her only daughter into a dressing room alone. Michael’s security noticed Jill’s rough demeanor with her daughter and asked her to leave otherwise she would be arrested for trespassing without permission. Jill rolled her eyes in disgust and walked past the army of guards forcefully taking her daughter with her and they both left the room. Aurora had never been so humiliated. She was so thankful that Michael didn’t witness her mother’s atrocious behavior and prayed in that moment that he never would.

“You are NOT to see him again! How many times must I tell you?”
“STOP IT, MOTHER.” Aurora yelled as they both took their floor seats in the committee section. “You just embarrassed me in front of his entourage. I will NEVER forgive you!”
“HA! You don’t need to forgive me, child!” Jill said mocking her daughter’s youth. “I know more about life than you. That man is known to snag young children into his web of sin. Once he got caught, he decided to try his luck with broken women. Judging from the one he’s now with he certainly doesn’t have a problem catching the ones that do nothing for him.”

Jill pointed directly in Lisa Marie’s direction implying to her daughter that she would be no one without her husband’s name or success.

“The good thing is I don’t really have to worry about him being with you since he only enjoys being with married women.”

“You are so off, mother.” Aurora said turning her back towards her. “You really need to look at yourself before talking badly about others.”

Ignoring her daughter’s remark, Jill patted the real animal fur scarf she wore with her dress and put her perfectly straight, silver colored hair behind her ears. In her mind, she had style, flair and class – things Lisa Marie and according to her, Aurora would never have. She smiled and quickly put on her ‘fan of Michael’ mask as soon as the stage curtain began to raise starting Michael’s historic performance.

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL**

**THE GREAT STAGE – 9:30PM**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSb9SBiehL8>

Aurora giggled as she saw Michael walking on stage as a silhouette to the beat of “Don’t Stop ‘Till You Get Enough.” Her heart was pounding rapidly and she cheered for the iconic entertainer as he quickly spun around and turned off the beat to his own song at the command of his own arms.

The crowd immediately rose to their feet and hollered uncontrollably as the entire world watched the greatest entertainer in the world light up the stage and city of New York.

As the performance continued, Aurora smiled brightly and turned the color of her dress again. The Pop icon slowly removed his black overcoat and threw it to the side of the stage. Aurora shook her head in amazement and could not believe that Michael incorporated all of the songs she listed as her favorites into his entire performance.

* Don’t Stop Til You Get Enough
* The Way You Make Me Feel
* Scream
* Beat It
* Thriller
* Black or White

Aurora glanced at Lisa Marie who was seated just a few rows away from her. She looked extremely serious and her aura dripped of not wanting to be at the show to support her husband, his opening performance or his 11 award nominations. Three of them being for “Scream” Michael’s duet with his sister, Janet.

Slash, Michael’s guitarist and personal friend also appeared on stage as his guest and performed a thrilling solo. Michael ran across the entire stage singing, lighting fireworks and illuminating several multi colored lights. Jill looked at her daughter and shook her heading implying Michael was indeed, ‘not normal’.

Not fazed by her mother’s ridiculously shallow thoughts, Aurora continued watching and enjoying Michael’s performance and loved every second of it. As Slash continued his amazing solo, one of the event coordinators approached Aurora and said she was to watch the next segment of the performance from backstage – a request made by none other than the King of Pop himself. Jill, not liking the idea, knew she couldn’t say no and didn’t want to cause a scene by showing her true feelings about Michael in public.

Aurora followed the coordinator and stood near the corner of the stage completely unseen by the audience. She wondered why Michael would want her to watch him there instead of at her seat directly in front of him. Seconds later and to her surprise, the beat to the beautiful intern’s all-time favorite song began to play. Aurora lost her senses and gasped loudly covering her mouth with widened eyes. The entire audience cheered and waved their arms as Michael started his dynamic routine to ‘Billie Jean’ beginning with him dancing behind an overhead projector and wowing the crowd wearing his iconic sequined jacket and glove.

**I cannot believe him**. Aurora thought smiling and crying tears of happiness. He knew her favorite song without her having to tell him. Michael briefly caught Aurora’s eye and smiled as he winked at her before sliding his microphone across the stage floor and picking up his fedora. Aurora was blown away by his remarkable craft and was even more amazed at the fact that he put the entire act together in just five days. As she watched him perform in a daze, she remembered their phone conversation and why he asked her for a list of her favorite songs. Out of love for his new friend, the Pop star marked her words and performed every song she named, did every dance move she adored and wore every accessory she loved. Aurora felt special and knew that Michael was definitely special too.

As soon as he put his fedora on, Aurora’s heart fluttered with excitement. She watched him glide flawlessly across the stage stunned at how swiftly he moved. She was completely swept off her feet when Michael slid his fedora down his face and blew a kiss in her direction while moonwalking across the middle of the stage astounding the entire audience. Aurora’s face was flushed and redder than a tomato. She was so mesmerized by the King of Pop that she couldn’t put her emotions into words. Anything and everything he did made Aurora feel like she was dreaming. A dream with her and her idol. A dream she never wanted to wake up from.

After finishing his routine to “Billie Jean”, the same event coordinator who asked Aurora to watch from backstage quickly went over to her again and asked her to sit down for the next part of Michael’s performance. She quickly went back to her seat and noticed her mother’s angry face and ignored it. Michael subtly noticed Aurora was in her seat again and thanked his overly hyped audience and said a few words to them as his backup dancers quickly prepared the next segment of his act.

**“Some of us like to play it safe and take each day as it comes.**

**Some of us like to take that crazy walk on the wild side…”**

Aurora gasped again. Those were the same words he once said to her!

**“So, for those of us who like living dangerously, this one’s for you!”**

Aurora was the happiest woman in the world. She loved how Michael cleverly orchestrated remarks from their own conversations into his performance. As she watched his routine to “Dangerous” she couldn’t help but giggle as he skillfully looked in her direction without being obvious. Aurora looked down and covered her face with her hands trying to control the little girl inside of her. Dennis watched his secret crush from afar noticing her every reaction and slowly broke into pieces as he watched Aurora’s face light up while watching another man.

Michael continued dancing the night away in the spotlight that shined upon him. As he sang certain verses from his iconic song, Aurora shook her head happily as she studied all of Michael’s gestures towards her. His eyes, hand movements and timing towards the audience were so perfectly put together that the intern could not fathom how much of a genius Michael really was. She admired him. She respected him. In that moment – she too was starting to fall in love with him.

Dangerous was not one of the songs on Aurora’s list. She quickly came to the realization that Michael added that song to his routine as a friendly hint towards his new intern friend being ‘no damn good for him.’ Ironically, every time Michael sang a specific verse, he would look at Aurora and wink his eye at her. Unfortunately, her mother caught onto Michael’s clues and was fuming at his idea of flirting with her only child and quickly made a mental note to talk to the Gloved One about his ‘improper’ behavior as soon as possible.

After Michael concluded his Dangerous routine, Aurora could not help but stand on her feet and applaud the man in front of her. Everyone in the venue followed in her footsteps including Michael’s wife and sister who were also amazed by his extraordinary talent. Michael was humbled and smiled beautifully as he blushed and spoke a few more words before ending his entire performance with a rendition of his newest song filmed alongside his wife.

**“And to all of those of you who made this record number one, I dedicate this to you…”**

**He took my advice**. Aurora thought smiling and looking down at her feet. She encouraged Michael to be strong and put up a front so that the media would not have another reason to write negative jargon about him or his wife. Aurora was happy knowing he did just that and noticed Michael constantly looking at his wife making her feel loved. Aurora’s heart was slowly breaking for her friend. She was the only one who knew Michael was wearing a mask that night and behaved as if his marriage was perfect. Not one person in that entire venue knew about his separation except for the grey eyed beauty dressed in red.

Aurora was glad to be the one Michael confided in and swore to herself that she would never breathe a word about his personal life to anyone whether they ended up together or not. The audience swayed their hands back and forth as Michael continued singing the romantic ballad and brought children on stage with him to remind the world to always be kind and generous to each other. Michael vocally sang the last few verses of the song as he stood center stage facing the entire audience.

As a final act of public affection, Michael pointed to his wife seated directly in front of him and smiled brightly making it seem like she was still the center of his universe. Aurora looked at her mother and shot her an evil look indicating with her eyes that Michael WAS in fact a good person and her thoughts about him were completely untrue and unrealistic. Once “You Are Not Alone” ended, the entire audience stood up again honoring the King of Pop for the last time with a final standing ovation. A few children Michael had on stage ran to his side and kissed him as the icon thanked the audience and told them he loved them all very much.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSb9SBiehL8>

As the night went on, Dennis hosted the show wonderfully making everyone in the audience laugh and entertained. A few committee members left early due to other work related commitments. Aurora hoped her mother would also be one who left early but to her disappointment, she stayed glued next to her daughter making sure she was behaving and not being led into the ‘wrong hands’.

Michael and Janet won three awards that night: Best Dance Video, Best Choreography in a Video and Best Art Direction in a Video. Aurora cheered every time she saw the man she idolized appear on stage and accept his well-deserved award with his sister. Michael kept looking in her direction and smiled every time Aurora would scream or try to get his attention. Knowing this, he subtly told his fans that he loved them but in reality he was actually saying it indirectly to the beautiful new brunette in his life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsI_zIIHHjA>

 Michael and Aurora exchanged smiles and longed to speak to one another throughout the entire evening but couldn’t due to Lisa Marie and Jill Clark’s interference. Once the show came to an end, Dennis thanked everyone for attending and headed backstage to say goodbye and shake hands with his fellow MTV coworkers. Several celebrity agents and attorneys shook hands and made small talk with Jill while Aurora and David talked amongst themselves and shared a few laughs together. As the venue slowly began to clear out, Dennis signaled David to his side. The Program Designer excused himself from the lovely lady in red and headed straight towards him. Wondering where the man of the evening was, Aurora slipped away from the crowd and headed backstage. Several people were crowding the dressing rooms and Aurora was having a difficult time getting through. Once she finally reached the room she and Michael were in earlier that night, several guards informed her that the room was empty and Michael and Lisa Marie had already left.

Not wanting to attend the after party (because she knew Michael wouldn’t be there) Aurora decided to head home. She knew Michael wasn’t the type of celebrity to attend after hour events and was sad for not being able to see and congratulate the King of Pop on winning three awards and for a splendid opening performance. She approached her mother in told privately that she would be heading straight home making her mother happy. Jill knew if her daughter went straight home she would be far away from Michael allowing Jill to attend and enjoy the after party without having to worry about her daughter’s whereabouts.

Aurora said goodbye to David on her way out and he briefly introduced the lady in red to Dennis who was standing right next to him. She shook the host’s hand making his heart skip a beat and his forehead sweaty.

“It’s nice to see you again, Miss Clark.” Dennis said looking into her beautiful eyes. “You look lovely.”

Aurora thanked Dennis and excused herself as she made her way out the venue and into the parking lot to look for her limousine chauffeur.

“Why did you do that?” Dennis asked David as he took sips from his dry martini. “I must’ve sounded like a complete idiot in front of her!”
“Relax, man!” David said offering the host a drink. “You are way too tense around her. She’s just a girl.”
“Not to me!”
Well, unless you grow some balls and tell her that she’s never going to know. And I suggest you hurry and do it soon otherwise the next best thing is going to come along and snatch her from you.”
“Not if I can help it.” Dennis said slamming down his martini in one gulp. “I’m going to find her and tell her NOW!”

“That’s my boy!” David said patting his friend on the back trying to comfort his aching heart at the same time.

Dennis scurried out of the main entrance doors hoping to catch the grey eyed beauty before she left. David watched him leave the facility and couldn’t help but cry tears of sadness. He felt like a hypocrite telling his friend to go after the love of his life but couldn’t take his own advice and tell Dennis about his feelings. David realized in that moment that Dennis could never found out the truth about him since Dennis was not interested in men. David’s biggest fear was his friend discovering he was secretly gay and would scare him away resulting in David losing Dennis’s friendship for good. He knew he’d rather lose his life than lose Dennis and decided to continue hiding his true feelings for him. David wasn’t one to live in deceit but knew he had to make the sacrifice if he wanted to keep the one thing he had going well for him – his friendship with his secret crush.

Aurora searched for her chauffeur but saw no sign of him. After running across the venue parking lot, she finally located a limousine that looked similar to the one she arrived in and ran towards it. She noticed her chauffeur standing by his driver seat and opened the back door quickly sitting inside. As she closed the door, she screamed at the sight of Michael sitting next to her smiling as if he had just received the best news of his life.

“OH MY GOD!” Aurora screamed covering her mouth. “What are you doing here?”
“Did you really think I was going to leave without seeing you again?”
“Why aren’t you with Lisa? Oh my god if anyone sees us—“
“SHH!” Michael said putting his index finger on Aurora’s mouth. “You’re coming with me.”
“To go where?”

“You’ll find out.” He said winking at me.

“I can’t believe you’re here. I can’t believe I’M here!”
“That was the plan.”

“How did you talk my driver into this?”
“I have my ways, Miss Clark.”

Aurora was excited to be with Michael again but was afraid someone would see them together making her the next target of controversy. The last thing she needed was the paparazzi taking photos of her making up ridiculous stories saying she was his secret lover. Although she didn’t care what her mother thought, she also didn’t want her finding out about her being with him. The last thing Jill Clark’s only daughter needed was another useless earful about being around the ‘wrong person’.

The divider between the two of them and the driver was drawn allowing for the ‘couple’ to have complete privacy. Michael sensed Aurora’s nervousness and tried to make her feel comfortable. He brushed her hand with his fingers making her flinch against his touch. Michael felt bad and apologized to her for but Aurora said it was perfectly fine and just wasn’t used to someone touching her in that way. Not wanting to kill the mood between them, she felt the need to ask him something she knew was important.

“Where is your wife?”
“Oh god.” Michael said rolling his eyes. “Why did you bring her up?”

“Isn’t she supposed to be with you?”
“She was for the show. I have no idea where she is now.”
“Don’t you think you should find out?”
“Don’t you think I would if I cared?”

Aurora laughed and slowly moved closer towards him. She liked this side of her new friend – the slightly devious, care free side that no one ever saw or talked about.

“Don’t worry about her.” He said putting his hand on top of hers. “She’s in the past and you are in the future.”

“I concur.” Aurora said smiling as she curled her fingers around the icon’s hand.

Jill attended the MTV after party thinking she’d have an enjoyable evening but it didn’t turn out that way. Something was deeply affecting her thoughts. She couldn’t figure out what it was and decided to call Aurora making sure she was alright. When she didn’t answer her call, her suspicious were confirmed – she wasn’t going home. She was with Michael. As she heard whispers and unnecessary chatter about the issues in his love life and his trial from three years ago, Jill’s anger towards the King of Pop rose to a whole new level. She had to stop him for pursuing her daughter and would go to any lengths to make sure he stayed away from her.

“Where are you taking me?” Aurora asked as she took her cell phone out of her red jeweled clutch purse.

“It’s a surprise. Do you need to make a phone call?”
“No. It’s not important.”
“Are you sure?”
“Yes.”

Michael then offered the young lady a bottle of water. She graciously accepted it and took a few sips easing her troubled throat. She felt very nervous being alone with Michael in the backseat of a limousine – especially since she had no idea where he about to take her.

“Feel better?” He asked reaching for her hand again.
“Getting there. Thank you.”

“I hope I don’t make you uncomfortable.”
“Not at all.”
“Prove it.” He said winking at her.

“And do you propose I do that?”
“Kiss me.”
“WHAT?”

“Like you did before.”
“Mr. Jackson, I do believe you are gravely mistaken.” Aurora said coming even closer towards the Pop star “YOU kissed me.”

“I did not.”
“Yes, you did.”
“Did not.”
“Did too!”
“Did not!”
“Did too!”

Suddenly, the two of them realized how immature they were and started tickling each other. Michael, now dressed in casual clothing was resisting his friend’s touch like an expert. Aurora however was having a hard time as her dress was so delicate and long, she couldn’t easily run away from him.

“This isn’t fair!” She yelled between laughs. “You’re a dancer and can move faster than me.”
“I’m sorry.” Michael said trying to sympathize with the new lady in his life. “You look so beautiful. I don’t want to do anything to ruin such a gorgeous dress.”
“Thank you.” She said sitting up straight again. “It’s funny how we both wore the same color today.”
“I planned that.”
“And how did you know I was going to wear red?”
“Like I said – I have my ways, Miss Clark.”

Aurora was even more fascinated with the Pop star. How could he have known what she was going to wear? Did he call and ask her mother’s maid? Did he follow her home from the store she bought it from? Aurora was starting to feel stalked and didn’t know what else Michael knew about her.

“Don’t worry.” He said taking her hand again. “I didn’t do anything stupid. I had one of my reps ask one of your coworkers and they said you had planned to wear a red dress.”

Aurora sighed in relief. At least she could remove the stalker thoughts from her head.

“I’m not as crazy as the world thinks, Aurora.”
“I know. I’m sorry I didn’t mean—“

Michael leaned over and softly kissed her lips. Being in the same room as her for hours and not being able to talk or touch her drove him absolutely insane. He waited patiently to be alone with her again wanted to make good use of his limited time with the beautiful brunette.

“I’ve been wanting to do that all night.” He whispered against her lips. “I hope I’m not going too fast.”

“I do believe you are getting personal again, Mr. Jackson.”
“Does that bother you Miss Clark?”

Without answering him, Aurora pulled him on top of her as she lay back against the oversized black plush leather seat beneath her. His heartbeat was rapid and Aurora could feel Michael relaxing against her as they kissed passionately without a care in the world. In that moment, he wasn’t famous and she wasn’t an intern – they were two souls physically sharing their intensely growing feelings for one another. Aurora squeezed Michael’s hand and felt his body shiver against her satin dress. She asked if he was alright and he shook his head not wanting their special moment to stop.

The two of them were about to go further when the driver tapped on the window saying they had arrived at their destination. Michael, feeling slightly frustrated for being interrupted, sat up and thanked his driver as he helped Aurora sit up as well.

“Close your eyes.” He said as he waited for the chauffeur to open the door.

Aurora did as she was told and held Michael’s hand as he stepped out of the vehicle and helped his lady friend out. He walked a few steps with her before stopping somewhere outdoors. Aurora heard the chirping of crickets and the bustling of leaves as a small breeze circled around the two of them. Michael stood behind Aurora and gently kissed her cheek before asking her to open her eyes. When she did, she gasped and immediately turned around without thinking hugging the Pop star tightly and not wanting to let him go.