

A Blossom of Love

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A classic romance story set in modern times.

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1 - Leaves

Lily waited patiently in the long row of girls in black dresses. Her short brown hair hung loosely, free to blow in the light breeze. She fiddled with the ill-fitting garment. It was too tight everywhere, but she only had to wear it once more. Her nerves jittered around inside her. The corsage that one of the choir mothers had pinned on her chest was now upside down. She looked at it, annoyed. Her annoyance quickly left, however, because she found more than one reason to be joyful. It had finally come. The last choir concert of her middle school years. She was moving on to high school and would be amongst some of the best singers in the city. She smiled inwardly just thinking about it.

The young man that stood behind her snapped her out of her dream world suddenly when he tapped her on the head with his music folder. "Hey, space cadet! What the hell are you always smiling about?" he asked, looking at her with a crooked smile. Lily blushed. Dom was talking to her. "For your information, Dominic, I was thinking about how awesome choir is going to be next year. Of course, you would never value frivolous thoughts like that, now, would you?" she said more icily than she had intended, hands on her hips.

"Lily! Hsst!" whispered the girl next to her, Ana. "Quiet!" Lily narrowed her eyes at Ana, an underclassman. Ana was only an eighth grader, and therefore had no right to order Lily to stop her conversation with the handsome Dominic.

Suddenly, Dom leaned down and sniffed Lily's flower, his eyes closed and his face as that of an angel. Lily's heart fluttered. He opened his eyes and stared at Lily, his face close to hers. "Beautiful," he said. Closing his eyes again, he walked off after his row onto the outdoor stage.

Lily blushed so deeply that Ana looked at her, worried. "Lily, do you have a fever?" asked the short girl, standing on her tiptoes to feel Lily's forehead. Again snapping back to reality, Lily took Ana's outstretched hand in her own and shook her head.

"I'm perfectly fine," she said dreamily, following the tiny tenor that stood on her other side up the stage steps. She sung her heart out, making it the best concert of the year. Her eyes filled with tears and a wistful smile spread across her lips as she hugged the director. She bid her fellow choir members farewell and, with one final look at Dom, ran out of the building to meet her aunt.

Her parents had died in a plane crash in Lily's early youth and she had never really known them. She lived with her Aunt Barbara, Uncle Tony, and cousin Morissa. They treated her well enough, even though Morissa was a total enigma. Barbara, a rather large woman, greeted Lily with a huge hug. With black curls covering most of her face as usual, Morissa quietly congratulated Lily on a job well done. Tony put a rough arm around Lily's shoulders and told her he was more proud of his lovely daughter Lily than he could say. She glowed at the fact that he considered her his daughter. With a laugh, she thanked him and hugged him tightly as they walked back to the car.

When they reached their house just outside of city limits, Lily plopped down on the couch in her room and picked up one of the many books strewn upon her bedroom floor. Ace, her sleek, gray tiger-striped cat jumped up and lay on her stomach, purring contentedly. She petted him gently as she read, humming to herself. Without a knock, Morissa appeared in the doorway.

Lily looked over the book, eyebrows raised. "Yeah?" Morissa removed the hair from in front of her face, affording Lily a rare glimpse of her immaculate white skin and calculating violet eyes.

"Who is the boy?" she asked mysteriously.

"Boy?" Lily questioned.

"The one who sniffed that blossom," Morissa specified, pointing to the corsage that lay in a heap with

Lily's dress. Lily threw a pillow in Morissa's general direction.

"You nosy twit! It's none of your damn business!" she shouted.

"You're infatuated with him. Admit it. You love Dominic," Morissa taunted, a devilish smile on her crimson lips.

"GET OUT!!!!" Lily howled, tossing harder things than pillows at her cousin. Morissa retreated. "Sorry, Ace," Lily apologized to her cat, scratching his ears. He purred and batted at one of her slippers. With a sigh, she fell back onto the couch, picking up another one of her books from the floor. It was Robin McKinley's *Spindle's End*. "Good book," she said to Ace, showing it to him. He purred louder. She laughed and started to read it to him. "The magic in that country was so thick and tenacious that it settled over the land like chalk-dust and on floors and shelves like....." she read a few pages, yawning intermittently. Slowly she drifted into sleep, dreaming that she was a princess.

Her castle was deep in the woods, secluded and mysterious. Her parents, the king and queen, were holding a ball in order to choose a husband for her. Her nurse was pinning a beautiful rose to her dress just before she went out to make a grand appearance on the dance floor. The stringed quartet in the corner played a Bach minuet as she floated out amongst the guests. They stood, awed at her angelic beauty. She smiled at each, whispering politely to some of them as she passed. A certain young man stood out from the crowd, the light catching his handsome face just so. She couldn't take her eyes off him. He caught her gaze and flashed a charming smile as he began to make his way toward her. She blushed, embarrassed that he had seen her looking at him. He took her in his arms and they danced, spinning around the room as gracefully as two swans. As the music ended, he leaned down, eyes closed, and sniffed her flower. "Beautiful," he said, kissing her softly.

2 - A Bud

Lily awoke with a start to the playing of her radio. Morissa was sitting on the floor next to it, reading. "Oy, Monkeybait, what the hell are you doing in here?" Lily asked groggily, yawning.

"Reading. What does it look like?" Morissa replied, looking up from the book. "You know, Lily, you have the foulest mouth. Monkeybait. Honestly," she chided, getting up to leave.

"Public school," Lily said, her voice stifled by the pillow over her head. "I blame society."

Morissa shook her head and closed the door behind her.

An hour or so later, Lily awoke to the ringing of the telephone. She picked it up. "llo?" she croaked, yawning and rubbing her eyes.

"Hey Lily!" It was Asta, Lily's best friend.

"Pfft. Hey," Lily said, slightly more awake.

"I saw you at the concert! You were awesome!" Asta shouted into the phone, a bit overexcited.

Lily groaned. "I didn't need that ear..."

"Sorry," Asta said more quietly, giggling. "So, what's up with you and Dominic, anyway?!" Her hyperactivity was showing in her tone again.

"WHAT THE HELL!? I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT ARROGANT BASTARD!!!!!" Lily screeched. "WHY DOES EVERYONE THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM!?!!!!!!!!"

Asta let out a low whistle. "And you get pissed at me for yelling....." she said with a breathy laugh.

There was a slight rapping from the floor above. "Lily!" shouted Aunt Barbara. "No yelling into the phone!!!"

"Yes ma'am," mumbled Lily, as if Barbara could hear.

Asta snickered. "I knew it."

"Knew what?" Lily questioned, sure that she didn't want to hear what her comrade was about to tell her.

"You do like him....no, you looove him! You want to daaaaate him.....you wa-"

"Asta! Shut up! Gah!" Lily pressed the 'talk' button on the phone, cutting off Asta's little chant. "Grr! I can't believe the nerve of some people...." she complained to Ace, who had now perched on her shoulder. Tears suddenly appeared at the corners of her eyes. "The worst part about it," she thought aloud, choking back a tearful sob, "is that they're right....." Tears rolled down her cheeks, her eyes squished shut and her mouth slightly open in a silent sob.

The door knob clicked as it turned, indicating a pending entry. Quickly Lily wiped away her tears, knowing well that her eyes would be telltale signs of crying. Aunt Barbara came in silently and sat down on the couch, putting an arm around Lily. The sturdy sofa creaked slightly under their combined weight.

"What is it, Lovely?" she asked Lily softly.

"Nothing," Lily replied, sniffing.

"If I can't tell when my girl has been crying, then no one can," Barbara said with a smile.

Lily remained stoic.

"Is it that handsome boy that Morissa has been going on about? Did he break your heart?"

Lily's face reddened and she started up off the couch. "D@mn that little pest! I'm gonna kill her!"

Aunt Barbara reached up and put both her arms around Lily's waist, easily pulling her back down.

"Relax....tell me about it first..." she said with an easy-going smile.

Lily relented and told her aunt about the flower and how hard she had tried not to think about Dominic, but how he always came to her mind. She knew that he could never like her in that way, but she remained deeply in love with every fiber of his being.

After she finished her story, Aunt Barbara hugged her tightly. "You won't like what I'm about to say, but I'm going to say it anyway. You have to tell this Dom boy how you feel. Otherwise, how will he know? You can't just love him in misery all your life, can you?" she asked, raising an eyebrow in a characteristically Barbara way.

Lily shook her head, hintings of a smile brightening her tear-stained face. "Good," Barbara said, patting Lily gently on the head. "Now, no killing Morissa. I think I have a better idea." She smiled mischievously and left the room.

A few minutes later, Morissa's shouts of protest could be heard from the upper floor. "But Moth-ER! You know I don't like the outdoors. Especially not outdoors that involve cleaning.....and especially outdoor cleaning that involves animals! Aaaaaaaagh!!!!" The sound of a door slamming made a satisfied smile cross Lily's face.

"Thanks," she said to the ceiling, a little laugh escaping her lips.

3 - Opening

Sun streamed in through Lily's basement window. She had fallen asleep in her cloths on the couch. "Feeeeh...." she yawned, stretching. Then she looked at the clock. 8:30. "shoot!" she cried, flying off the couch and grabbing a pair of pants. Then she remembered that it was Saturday. With a sigh, she laid back down on the couch and fell back asleep.

An hour later, the phone rang. Again Lily was awakened. "Merf...who the hell...?" she mumbled, grabbing the raucous machine and pressing the 'talk' button. "Mmm...hello?"

"Hey! Morning sunshine!" cooed the gentle voice of Lily's other best friend, Elita.

"Oh...hi!" Lily said, brightening.

Elita laughed. "Why aren't you up yet? I'm coming over this afternoon and we're going to a movie, okay? Curt, Silas, and Dominic are going to be there too."

"Beh! Why don't you tell me about these things, Lita?" Lily asked as she hurried aroud her room, gathering clothes.

"Sorry. It was a spur of the moment sort of thing. See you in two hours, okay?" Click.

Lily turned off the phone, tossing it onto the couch and waking Ace. With a scornful glare he turned over and curled up again. "Sorry, Ace..." Lily grumbled, leaving the room.

For the next two hours she rushed around to get ready. She showered, straightened her hair, applied a tad bit of makeup and assembled what even Asta would consider the perfect outfit. She was definately ready for anything....

"So, where are you going?" asked a low, mysterious voice from the bathroom door.

"Gah! MORISSA, you FREAK! How many times have I told you to stay out of the bathroom while I'm in here!?" Lily fumed.

"Too many to count. I just want to know where you're going. Tell me and I'll leave."

"NO!" Lily shoved the door shut and locked it. Sighing, she leaned against its smooth wooden surface and slid down into a sitting position. "Ooooi....."

The doorbell rang. It was Elita. "COMING!" called Lily, grabbing her woven purse and scooting toward the door.