

Valentines Day Short

Nate and Kennedy from Searching for Perfect

“Dude, it’s V day. You gotta get her something sexy.”

Nate looked at his older brother, Connor. His brother had accompanied him to one of the sexy lingerie stores, and was currently waving a scarlet barely-there lace corset and matching thong in the air. Nate had come a long way since meeting the love of his life, but his brother still managed to exasperate him with some of his antics.

“I don’t think this is a good idea,” he said in a low voice, trying not to glance at the salesperson who seemed way too interested in their exchange.

Connor grinned and lifted them higher. “Are you blushing, bro? Come on! Women love this stuff. Skip the chocolate because they just worry about getting fat. Besides, this is a present for you, too.”

Damned if his cheeks weren’t red. His sex life with Kennedy was adventurous, erotic, and consistent. She’d worn much sexier stuff, including the French maid costume that almost gave him a heart attack. But having his brother try to delve into their sex life was freaking him out.

Gritting his teeth, he grabbed at the lacy red stuff and stuck it back on the rack. Connor laughed, and winked at the approaching saleswoman. “Can I help you, gentlemen?” she asked in a professional voice.

Connor’s gaze ate her up. “Darlin, you can help me anytime and make me a happier man. But this time I’m trying to advise my little brother. Don’t women adore skimpy outfits to wear on V day?”

Shit. This was getting worse by the minute.

The pretty blonde gave him a smile. “Definitely. There’s nothing better than an outfit to make a woman feel good. It’s the most popular gift for Valentine’s Day.”

“See! Told ya.” Connor moved closer to the blonde and winked. “You model them here?”

Nate waited for his brother to get slapped. Kennedy had re-educated him on the right and wrong stuff to say to women, and by God, that was so wrong it bordered on offensive.

The blonde licked her lips and studied Connor. “Not usually. But sometimes I make an exception.”

Nate’s mouth fell open. Son of a bitch. What was it about his brother able to get away with crap no man else did? That’s it—he was outta here.

“Con, I’ll see you later, man. Thanks for the advice though.”

The blonde looked nervous about losing a sale. “Wait, I could show you something else you’d like!”

“No, thanks. But I’m sure Connor will buy something.”

Nate shot out the door before his brother stopped him. Since going back to college and working toward management at his construction company, Connor had grown in many ways. But the way he communicated with the female sex still remained medieval. Kennedy was always asking if she could sign him up for Kinnections, but Connor refused to change. Why should he? His approach still got any woman he eyed, and he was damn happy.

Unlike Nate, who had been a walking disaster before Kennedy gave him a make-over. He'd tumbled right into love with her but it had been a long road for them. Thank God he hadn't given up and now she was all his.

Every delectable inch.

Nate walked and thought. He wanted this Valentine's Day to be special, but celebrating her body wasn't the way. He worshipped her body every damn day. This time, he wanted to give her something else.

He just had to come up with something.

"Whatcha doing for V day?"

Kennedy groaned and stared at her friend Kate. "You know I despise that holiday, even though it's great for Kinnections Matchmaking. I mean, come on. The clichés are ridiculous. Candy. Flowers. See through lingerie. Gag me."

Kate laughed. "You're such a cynic. You're not even going to dinner?"

"Hell, no. I plan to go home, have a quiet night with Nate, and crack open a bottle of wine. And it won't be a bottle of red."

Kate disappeared, shaking her head. Kennedy got back to work until her phone buzzed. She picked it up. "Yeah?"

"You got a delivery."

“On my way.” Kennedy smiled. Nate wouldn’t let the day pass without something. That was just the type of man he was, and another reason she loved him. She strode out, expecting roses, and got a vanilla envelope with her name scrawled in calligraphy instead. Curious, she slit it open and pulled out a single sheet of paper.

Go outside.

Kennedy looked up and frowned. “It says to go outside.”

Kate squealed. Grabbing her coat, she pushed it into her arms and toward the door. “Go! OMG it’s a Valentine’s Day surprise!”

Kennedy allowed her friend to urge her out the door. A stretch limo was waiting at the curb. The driver stepped forward and opened the door. “Ms. Ashe? Mr. Dunkle is expecting you.”

What was going on? She slid into the back seat and the car pulled away. Oh, boy, she hoped Nate hadn’t spent a ton of money doing something fancy for her. Sure, she loved dressing up and hitting the town, but since she finally found love, she was thrilled to cuddle up with him on a winter’s night without the fuss and fanfare.

But it didn’t matter. Her man was trying to spoil her, and she would be open to anything.

Finally, the limo pulled up to the local college science building. Stopping in front of the frosted glass doors, the driver escorted her out, then handed her another sheet of paper. Kennedy opened it.

Go through the doors, make a right, and follow the hallway.

She followed the instructions, wondering why her heart was beating so fast. Another piece of paper was taped to the double doors.

Enter.

She did.

And froze.

It was the planetarium. The room was bathed in darkness, but the domed ceilings were full of stars. As a hidden science geek, she'd always adored astronomy, studying the night sky on her telescope she'd owned as a kid. She took a few steps in, and suddenly, Nate appeared.

He held a glass of champagne. Her gaze roved over his beloved face with his trimmed goatee and piercing blue eyes. That slamming, hard body was covered in black pants and a charcoal cashmere sweater. A tiny tear at the upper arm proved he would always be her slightly nerdy, disheveled rocket scientist. God, she loved him.

“What are you doing?” she whispered.

He smiled and handed her a glass of champagne. “I figured you'd hate all the usual stuff. So I thought it would be nice to spend the afternoon studying the stars. Alone.”

Fierce emotion rocketed through her, bringing an odd sting to her eyes. He knew her so well, knew her inner soul almost better than herself. She managed a nod, and he reached out and took her hand.

She sat next to him in the front row. Low music played, the stars shone bright, the comets exploded, and they looked at the night sky together. Finally, he reached down and handed her one rich, perfect, chocolate truffle.

“Just a taste,” he murmured.

Yes. He knew she’d hate a whole box, still struggling with some bodily issues from her past. But one truffle spoke volumes. He fed it to her slowly, licking the chocolate from her lips, kissing her in the dark.

“I love you, Nate Dunkle,” she said when his mouth broke from hers.

He grinned. “Then when are you going to marry me?”

She pressed her forehead to his, smiling, her fingers stroking his rough cheeks. “Soon,” she promised.

“I’m not going to give up until you’re completely mine, Ken,” he said. “You know I’ll win.”

A shiver raced down her spine. His possessive, sexy side always exploded in the bedroom, wringing pleasure for too many hours until she begged for mercy. Oh, yeah, he’d be making her beg tonight.

She couldn’t wait.

“You already won,” she whispered back. “I’m yours.”

His mouth took hers, and they didn’t speak again for a long time.

Maybe Valentine’s Day wasn’t so bad after all.