

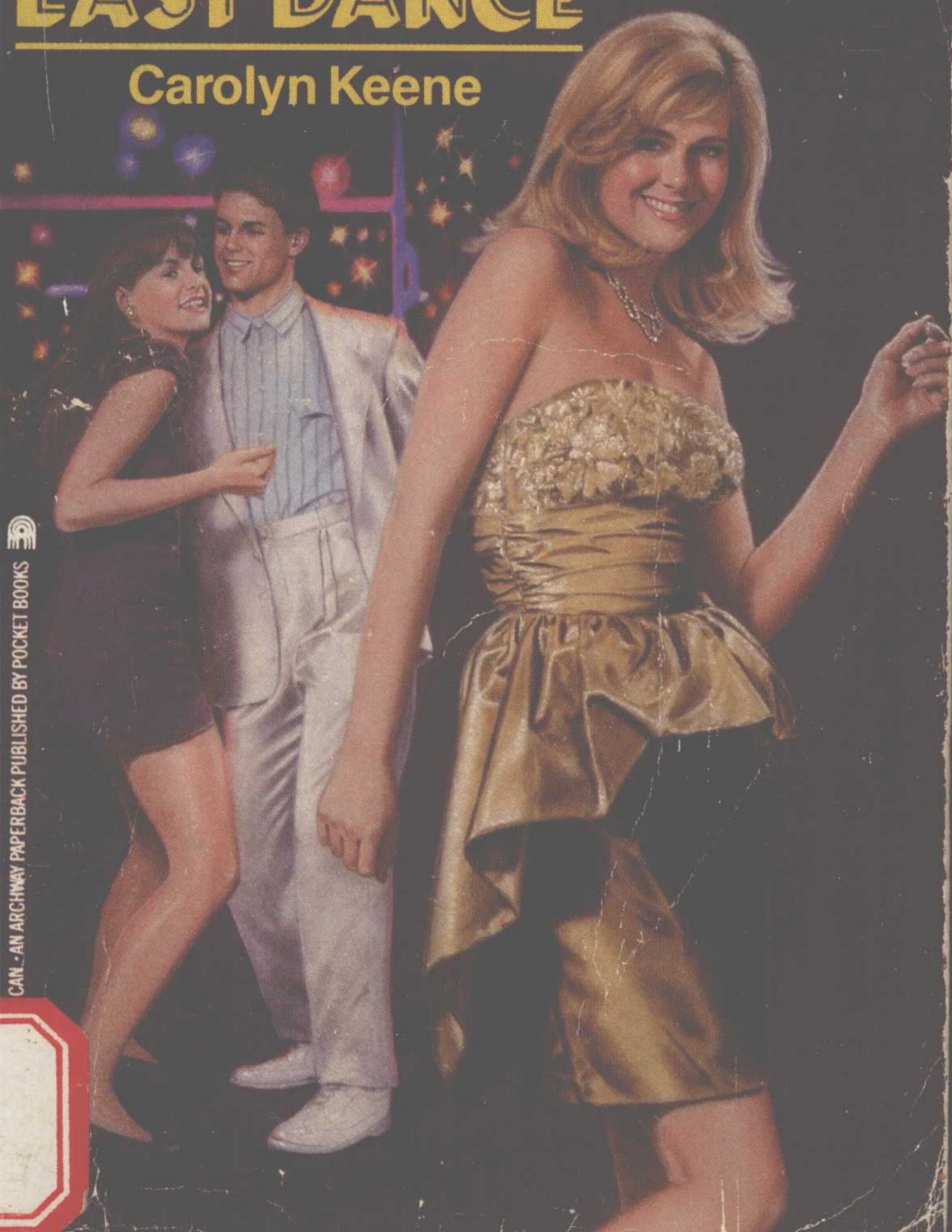
THE NANCY DREW

FILES™

C A S E ■ 3 7

LAST DANCE

Carolyn Keene



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THE **NANCY DREW** **FILES**™ CASE ■ 37

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AN ARCHWAY PAPERBACK
Published by POCKET BOOKS

New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo

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AN ARCHWAY PAPERBACK *Original*



An Archway Paperback published by
POCKET BOOKS, a division of Simon & Schuster Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

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For information address Pocket Books, 1230 Avenue
of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

ISBN: 0-671-67489-7

First Archway Paperback printing July 1989

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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FROM THE NANCY DREW FILES

THE CASE: To find out who's behind a series of nasty accidents, Nancy must dig up a handsome lady-killer's past.

CONTACT: Nancy's friend Laurie Weaver has a big crush on a sexy dance-club deejay, which could trigger a backlash.

SUSPECTS: Jon Villiers—What does the hot new deejay have to hide?

Adam Boyd—Laurie's old boyfriend doesn't approve of her new dance partner.

Sheila Day—Jon's mysterious ex is carrying a torch that could burn both of them.

COMPLICATIONS: The teen sleuth is stepping on some toes to trip up an arsonist.

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Chapter

One

WELL, NANCY?" Bess Marvin demanded of her friend, "is Moves the hottest dance club within a hundred miles of River Heights, or what?"

"It's great!" Nancy Drew answered, raising her voice to be heard over the music. Nancy's shoulder-length reddish blond hair took on a metallic glow as she stepped into a pool of black light. She grinned. "This is wild!"

"There's a table," George Fayne shouted, pointing to the opposite side of the club. She ran a hand through her short dark hair to fluff it and

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strode confidently through the crowd to the table. Nancy and Bess followed.

Bess flashed a hundred-watt smile at the handsome young deejay inside the sound booth, but he didn't seem to notice her. She gave a long sigh, which made both Nancy and George grin.

"He's so gorgeous!" Bess moaned.

Nancy looked around at the club, with its black-and-white checkerboard dance floor and zebra-striped walls. Television screens hanging from the high, vaulted ceiling showed shots of the dancers, mixed with clips from music videos.

"Look, there's Julie Carlton," Bess said. "Hey, Julie!" She waved at a pretty, petite blond girl who was dancing with an enormous football-player type.

"Julie Carlton? Any relation to Brenda Carlton?" George asked, making a face.

"Fortunately for Julie, no." Bess laughed. "They have the same last name, but the similarity ends there. Julie's really great. How do you like this place?" she asked Julie as the girl walked up to their table.

"It's incredible," Julie answered breathlessly. "It reminds me of this club I went to in New York when I was visiting my older sister. I love all the black and white!" She grinned. "I just wish I was tall enough to see all the faces of the gorgeous guys."

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Nancy laughed. "Bess knows what you're talking about," she told Julie.

Bess nodded emphatically. "It's fun to be dainty—but I know I'm going to have a stiff neck by the end of the evening," she complained.

"Julie, you deserted me." Julie's huge dancing partner strolled over just then, looking mournful. "I thought you said you'd be right back."

"Sorry, Walt," Julie said apologetically. "See you all later." She tossed the girls a wave and boogied away with Walt.

Just then a slender, pretty girl appeared at the table. She had long, glossy brown curls and a heart-shaped face. Her green eyes sparkled as she slid into the seat next to Nancy.

"Hi, everybody," she said.

"Laurie Weaver!" Nancy cried. "I haven't seen you in ages. How are you?"

Laurie had graduated the same year as Nancy and her friends at River Heights High. Although they'd never been especially close, Nancy had always liked Laurie, with her ready smile and easy sense of humor.

"I'm just fine," Laurie said. "Great, in fact. I love the summer. Listen, I'm having an outdoor party tomorrow, at five. Will you all come?"

As Nancy, George, and Bess accepted, the deejay spoke up. "This next song is for Laurie," he said. "With all my love."

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Even in the dim light of the club, Nancy could see Laurie blush.

Bess's eyes widened, and she leaned forward in her chair. After casting a look at the deejay, who was gazing in their direction, she asked, "Are you the Laurie he's talking about?"

Laurie nodded. "I guess I am," she admitted with a smile.

Nancy knew that Laurie had broken up with her boyfriend, Adam Boyd, and started going with someone else a couple of weeks earlier. But it was a surprise to find out that Laurie's new guy was the deejay at Moves.

"Wow," Bess gasped. "So tell us all about him."

"His name is Jon Villiers," Laurie said. "He moved to River Heights a few months ago from Chicago to open Moves."

"Hey, Bess, come and dance with me!" A good-looking, dark-haired guy emerged from the crowd and grabbed Bess's hand. She stood up. "Don't leave—I want to hear all the details!" she yelled to Laurie as she was being towed away.

Nancy glanced at the booth and saw that someone had replaced Jon, who was moving through the crowd toward Laurie.

He seemed to be unaware of all the girls watching him and saw only Laurie. He held out his hand, and after a moment's hesitation, Laurie took it and followed him onto the dance floor.

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Seconds later an angry-looking Adam Boyd charged up to Nancy's table.

"Want to dance?" he asked Nancy.

Nancy felt sorry for Adam. She knew he'd cared a lot about Laurie. The break-up had probably been hard on him. "Sure," she answered, and they moved onto the dance floor.

Adam wasn't a very attentive partner. He kept craning his neck, trying to find Laurie and Jon in the crowd. "What a couple—both losers," he said with a sneer. "You know, I lost all respect for Laurie when she fell for that Villiers creep."

Nancy sighed. "Adam—"

"He's been chasing her for weeks," Adam interrupted. "He sends her flowers, takes her to fancy restaurants for dinner, buys her expensive presents. But he's not fooling me. He's a lowlife. One of these days Laurie's going to find it out—the hard way."

Nancy was beginning to wish she hadn't accepted Adam's invitation to dance. She glanced around at Jon Villiers. He was older than she had thought at first—probably about twenty-four, and great looking, with a lean, muscular build and short, sun-bleached blond hair. His high cheekbones and perfect nose made him look like a star. Clearly, Adam was incredibly jealous of Laurie's new boyfriend, and Nancy tried to change the subject.

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"Are you working in your dad's hardware store again this summer?" she asked.

Adam scowled at her and nodded. "I guess that makes me pretty dull, compared to Mr. Music there," he said, indicating Jon with his eyes. "I could tell Laurie a thing or two about him, but she won't listen. He's just after her family's money—"

Nancy looked at Adam curiously. "That's a pretty strong accusation, don't you think?" she asked.

Adam avoided Nancy's eyes for a moment. She could feel his pain and anger. "I've got to make her understand," he said in a voice so low that Nancy could barely hear him. "I've got to make Laurie see what a mistake this is."

Nancy was relieved when the dance ended and she could go back to her table. George and Bess were dancing with two of their old classmates.

Adam lingered for a moment. Nancy assumed he was waiting for Laurie to come back, but when she did start toward the table, he disappeared into the crowd.

"I saw you dancing with Adam," Laurie said to Nancy. "He's still angry with me, isn't he?"

"He'll get over it," Nancy answered, feeling a little awkward. "He needs some time, that's all."

Laurie nodded, but she didn't look convinced.

A waitress appeared. She was small, with red hair and flashing green eyes. The tag on her

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uniform said Pam. "Mr. Villiers said to give you this," she told Laurie in a sulky voice, handing her a note. Before Laurie could thank her, the girl was gone.

Laurie read the note, then carefully folded it and tucked it into the pocket of her jean jacket. Her smile seemed a little forced when she met Nancy's eyes. "He says there'll never be another girl for him," she said.

Something in Laurie's manner filled Nancy with concern. She leaned forward in her chair. "Laurie, what's wrong?"

Laurie swallowed. "This is all happening too fast, that's all," she confided.

Nancy waited for Laurie to go on. Instead, she changed the subject.

"Remember when we bought the same dress for that dance?" she asked.

Nancy laughed. "How could I forget?" She'd shown up at a country club dance, sure that no one else would be wearing a dress like hers because she'd ordered it from a fancy department store in New York. Five minutes later Laurie had walked in with Adam, her dress a carbon copy of Nancy's.

"I remember, all right," she said. "You and I have always had similar tastes. We liked the same guy in sixth grade—"

"We both got blue bicycles for Christmas that year, too," Laurie put in, her eyes twinkling.

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"Now I've got a blue Mustang," Nancy said.

Laurie grinned. "Hey—I have a red one," she replied. "Guess you've still got good taste, Nan."

The music ended, and George and Bess returned. Bess sat down and tossed her long blonde hair over her shoulder, fanning her flushed cheeks. "I'm thirsty," she announced, signaling the waitress who had brought Jon's note to Laurie.

Pam returned, an unpleasant expression on her otherwise pretty face. She tapped the notepad in her hand. "What'll it be?" she asked, and though the words were directed at Bess, she was glaring at Laurie.

Bess, George, and Nancy ordered sodas. Laurie shook her head when Pam asked her. The waitress scowled.

Poor Laurie looked really uncomfortable. Trying to help her out, Nancy started chattering. "Hey, you guys, guess what? Laurie's got a Mustang, too."

George chuckled. "That's amazing, you two are still choosing the same things."

A few minutes later Pam returned with a tray of cold drinks. She set a soda down in front of each girl with a thud—until she got to Laurie. Then, with an odd little smile, she said, "Mr. Villiers said, 'With my compliments.'" She picked up a stemmed crystal goblet of soda.

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"All right, Laurie! What a great guy," Nancy said, applauding. Bess and George joined in.

Just then Pam bumped the goblet with the edge of her hand. It tipped—right into Laurie's lap!

Laurie gave a stunned cry as the soda splattered over her jeans, T-shirt, and jean jacket.

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry!" Pam insisted, as she surveyed the damage she'd done. Nancy didn't miss the glint of pleasure shining in her eyes, though. She was sure the move had been deliberate.

"It's okay," Laurie said lamely, dabbing at her clothes with the paper napkins George had handed her. "I was going to leave soon anyway. I promised my parents I'd get home early."

Without giving anyone else a chance to speak, Pam hurried off. Nancy followed, on impulse, and saw Pam and Adam Boyd meet in front of the doors leading into the kitchen. As she watched, Adam handed Pam some money. Then they went their separate ways.

"I see you're still sticking your nose into everybody else's business," commented a familiar voice.

Nancy turned to see Brenda Carlton standing practically at her elbow. Brenda wrote articles for the River Heights newspaper and considered herself a star reporter. As far as Nancy was concerned, Brenda was more of a star nuisance.

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"Nice to see you, too, Brenda," she said cheerfully, before returning to her table.

Laurie was about to leave, and Bess looked as if she'd had enough of Moves, too. "I'm exhausted from all that dancing! Let's go rent a movie or something," she said.

George and Nancy exchanged a look; they were ready to leave, too. "Sounds great to me," George said.

The four girls were moving toward the door when a male voice called out, "Laurie, wait!"

Jon had left the sound booth and was working his way through the crowd. Laurie hesitated. She looked from Nancy to George to Bess. "You haven't forgotten about my party tomorrow, have you?" she asked. "I'm really going all out."

"We'll be there," Nancy promised.

Bess and George nodded their agreement.

The three friends went outside, leaving Laurie behind to talk with Jon.

"He's so romantic. Too good to be true," Bess said with a sigh.

Nancy laughed. "You mustn't have been talking to Adam," she remarked. "The whole time we were dancing, he told me how rotten Jon is and how sorry Laurie's going to be if she gets too involved with him."

"Yeah, he tried that one on me, too," George put in.

A soft summer breeze ruffled Nancy's hair as