



Mellow Mushroom and a Movie

"So... Guess what?" Alice said excitedly as I met her for dinner one quiet Thursday night at our favorite pizza place in Deep Ellum. She had already ordered me a tall draft Abita strawberry lager, and it was waiting for me on a little white paper square napkin sprinkled with salt to keep it from sticking to the bottom of the glass. She knew me too well. She had ordered our food, too.

"What?" I asked almost in boredom, pushing my purse to one side of the booth as I slid in.

"I've been chatting with FBI guy a lot lately," she said with a big grin, taking a sip of her own beer. She wiggled her eyebrows at me meaningfully.

FBI guy had been one of Alice's favorite fantasies for a few years. She met him when she first came onto the BDSM scene and had played with him a few times. It never went anywhere, but she wanted it to. He was, in her words, super hot. I had never seen a picture, though. I wasn't that interested, to be honest, but it was fun to listen to her talk about him.

"Mm," I hummed, smiling. That's all she needed to go on.

"Yeah. He's been looking for someone new to play with when he's in town, and I mentioned your name."

This made me pay attention. "What?" I said again. This time slowly in surprise.

Alice and I had been friends since college. We realized we were both into the scene while we were sharing a dorm during a drunken night of confessions. We had played together several times before, but we were into incredibly different things, so it wasn't a regular occurrence. But it was fun to have someone to talk about it with openly. It helped me to become more secure with myself, my body, and my sexuality. I realized that there was nothing wrong with enjoying getting spanked if others did, too.

"I was chatting with him, and well, some of the stuff he's into are things that I know you really like. Like sensory stuff, and belts," she said discreetly, trying to pretend as if she wasn't talking about being blindfolded, gagged, and then beaten in the middle of the Mellow Mushroom.

"I don't think he'd be interested in me," I said right away, adjusting uncomfortably in my seat.

"Why?"

I looked down at my size sixteen self then back at her, a size four. Guys who were into her weren't usually into me. And I was okay with that. Everyone was different with distinct tastes. There was a flavor for everybody.

"He's seen a picture of you. Lots of them, actually. On Facebook. We're actually friends on my real one, too. He said that if you wanted to chat, send him a request. If you don't want to play, at least you'll have a new friend. He's a really nice guy," she encouraged with a smile. I shrugged, biting my lip as I considered it only briefly.

"Who likes to viciously spank tied up women," I joked a moment before the pizza arrived. We both smiled awkwardly at the waiter. "I don't know. It's been so long since I've done anything," I said when he left.

"I wanna play with him again. I kept hinting-"

"Why hint? Why not ask to play?" I questioned, interrupting her. Alice shrugged her delicate shoulders, her tiny nose in the air. She pouted a little, shaking her head.

"If he were interested, I would know. He's not." She wanted him to go after her, and it annoyed her that he didn't.

I shook my head a little. "Wouldn't it bother you if I played with him?" I mused jokingly. I took a long sip of my beer, playing with the napkin. "I know you have a little crush on him." I wiggled my eyebrows at her. She snorted, turning a little pink.

“Nah. I’d only be mad if you didn’t tell me about it after,” Alice said then giggled. She sprinkled some cheese onto the thin crispy pepperoni and ham pizza we were sharing. “He’s still one of the best experiences that I’ve ever had. You should at least think about it.”

I just shrugged again, letting the moment pass.

After dinner and an action movie, I went home to the apartment that I shared with my roommate Tanya. We had lived together for a few years, after she answered an ad I put online, and had become real friends. She was funny, bright, outgoing, and very pretty. She was a model, in fact. Her long strawberry blond hair and big blue baby doll eyes drew everyone in. She looked even better in pictures somehow.

As much as I liked my roommate, I was horribly jealous of her. Not because of her appearance, though. I might have been a chubby girl, but I knew I had a pretty face and nice breasts. I loved my look and my curves. The reason I was envious was Doctor Edward Cullen, the man that had his arm draped around her shoulder as she leaned into him on the couch.

He was beautiful, tall with coppery red hair and ivory white skin. He was muscular, every angle sharp to a fine point. There was nothing about Edward that was soft. He was the son of a wealthy plastic surgeon and was well on his way to becoming one himself. They had been dating for a couple of years, and my instant crush on him had only grown since the first time that I met him in my kitchen at two in the morning in his underwear as he was getting a glass of water.

Their eyes flicked towards me, away from the movie they were watching on Netflix. Edward’s went back to the screen after a quarter of a second.

“Hi, Bella,” Tanya beamed at me from her spot beside her boyfriend. “How’s Alice?”

“Good. She sends her love. And leftovers. Pizza, if you want it?” I offered her the box. She shook her head.

“Edward?”

“Hm?” He hummed, taking a sip of his beer. He still wasn’t looking away from the movie.

“Would you like some pizza?” Tanya asked, pointing to the box that I was holding.

He gazed at me and the small brown cardboard container for a second before taking it from my hands. His fingers brushed against mine accidentally. “Um... Yeah. Sure. Thanks, Bella.”

“You’re welcome,” I said lightly, annoyed at how giddy it made me. I didn’t want to be a grown woman with a crush. I was nearly thirty. I was getting too old for that shit. “Enjoy!”

I hurried back to my room, anxious to get away from the couple. Plus, I wanted to get into my pajamas. While I changed, I turned on my laptop. The very first thing that I saw on the screen was a funny BDSM meme Alice had posted to her private Facebook account. We both had them. No one wanted to deal with their parents or employers knowing about their perverted hobbies.

I sighed heavily. It had been ages since I had played with someone, longer since I had dated. It would be nice to have the kind of sex that I enjoyed again. There had been too many things going on in my life to focus on that part, and time just sort of slipped away from me. Between work and family, I wasn’t sure how to even start looking anymore.

“Okay, what’s his name?” I sent Alice the text before I could change my mind.

“Whit Locke on Facebook,” she messaged back right away. She sent me a link to his page. There were no pictures of his face, not that I expected there to be. He was in the FBI and probably wanted to keep his job. There were photos of his body though, muscular and firm. His profile picture was of a cropped image of him shirtless and holding a brown leather belt in his strong hands. Alice assured me that was actually him.

Before I could overthink it, I sent him a friend request. There was no harm in that, I figured. I always needed more friends.

“Anything I should know about him?” I asked my best friend.

“Hmm... Well, he travels for work, so he’s not in town a lot. In fact, he lives out of a suitcase. He doesn’t even have an apartment,” she answered quickly.

“That’s got to suck,” I replied.

“He loves it. He says he loves to travel.”

Though we had spoken about him a lot, the details were mostly sexual in nature. I realized that I didn’t really know that much about him. “What does he do for the FBI?”

“He’s a psychologist of some sort. A profiler. He can’t really talk about it, though,” she explained.

I sat on the bed with my phone after getting changed, my Facebook wall still on my computer screen. Whit Locke had accepted my friend request and sent the message, “hi there.”

My heart actually skipped a little beat in surprise. "Hi. I'm Bella, Alice's friend," I typed to him quickly, just in case he thought I was some random stranger. My Facebook name was Marie Bell.

"Yes, I know. Hello! How are you?" He responded back promptly.

"Good. Yourself?"

The three little dots showed up instantly to indicate that he was typing. "Tired. I've just gotten off of work, and I'm about to fly home... hopefully. My flight was supposed to leave an hour ago."

"Oh, no! Is it a weather problem or...?" I asked curiously.

"Weather. It's storming in D.C. right now. But it seems to be a nice night there in Dallas," he said very casually. I was chatting with a Dom about the weather, and it felt bizarre.

"It is nice. I was just out with Alice. It was lovely tonight. I love the summer weather, but I'm ready for fall."

"As am I," Whit replied. "So, tell me about yourself. What do you do for a living?"

I decided to be sarcastic for the hell of it. I wanted to see how he would answer. "I'm a drug dealer. Is that a problem?"

"You're joking, right?" He asked instantly, typing very quickly.

"Yeah," I sent back with an eye roll emoji. "Of course I am."

"You know... If you had that kind of attitude with me while you were here, I would have already had you over my knee."

Something in my spine actually tingled. I licked the corner of my mouth as I thought about how I wanted to react to him.

"I was actually going to tell you what I did, but I think I'd rather be taken over your knee," I replied back brassily.

"I actually already know very well what you do, Isabella. I was just trying to get to know you better. See how you answered."

"Oh, and what do I do?" I asked with a smile.

"Besides being bratty, you mean?" He taunted. *Bratty* was a good term, and I knew it right away. I was already enjoying this conversation. "You're a writer." There was a pause before he added, "Alice speaks of you often."

"She talks about you a lot as well," I admitted.

"I enjoy chatting with her. She's funny and very smart. She always speaks highly of you."

He was being very formal, but I didn't hate it. "Same, actually. She says you're a great guy, but I am kind of a brat, though," I flirted a little. "I should warn you."

"I know. I like that." A shiver actually tickled at the base of my neck, running down my back. It had been so long since I had flirted with anyone, and it was amazing that I still knew how. "So, though your original reply spoke volumes... Tell me more about yourself. How old are you?"

"29. I'll turn 30 in about a month. You?"

"33. What do you do for fun? Besides the obvious."

For some reason, I wasn't actually expecting him to ask me that kind of question. I had to think about it for a second. "Well, I may pretend that it's torture, but writing is actually a lot of fun for me. The research, the planning, the organization... which is the boring stuff. I also like to cook and paint. What are your 'normal' hobbies?"

"I love to draw and read. I actually have a confession to make. I've read some of your writing before. I enjoyed it thoroughly. Alice recommended it to me."

I had dozens of books and short stories online. Everything from children's books and teen novels to hardcore smut. They were all published under different names. Though I had written a lot, I wasn't making much money. I was just starting to pull in thirty thousand a year. It was barely enough, but I knew it was still more than the average author.

"Oh, which?" I could only assume.

"Everything under the Marie Bell name," he answered. I wasn't surprised. It was my perverted titles. It was actually where I made most of my money. They were easy to write, though, and I pumped out sometimes hundreds and thousands of words of it a month. "And all of your Isabella Swan, too."

That one shocked me. That was the name I used for my efforts into more serious dramas. There was a murder mystery and a period piece under that moniker as well. They barely sold a thousand copies each.

“All of them?”

The dots popped back up. “I spend a lot of my life waiting. In airports, on planes, trains, and just in general. I have a lot of time to read. And once I find an author that I like, I have to read everything by them. It’s a habit.”

I wasn’t sure what to say. “So, I’m an author you like?”

“One of my favorites now, if I’m honest.”

He was very effectively flirting with me. But I wasn’t sure how seriously to take him, so I decided to test him. “What’s your favorite story of mine?”

“The Rabbit in the Snow. The murder mystery under IS. Your attention to detail on the crime scenes was stellar, and I appreciate the realism you used when dealing with the criminal aspect. Also, the twist was beautiful. I didn’t catch it until the very end that the doctor was the killer the first time, and when I went back again, it was like reading a whole new story. I read it three times in a row, just to make sure I didn’t miss anything.”

I was stunned. I wasn’t expecting an answer, let alone a lovely and detailed review of his feelings towards the novel that was actually the favorite of my stories. It took two years to write altogether, the longest I have ever worked on a single project. I finished it while I sat by my father’s deathbed.

“Thank you. I’m glad you enjoyed it! Coming from someone who works with the FBI, I’ll take that as a compliment.”

“Very much so. Though, enough of it isn’t quite right to convince me that you’re not a serial killer yourself. Which is good.”

I giggled to myself. “What did I get wrong? Please, I’m always trying to improve. Maybe you can correct all of my mistakes...”

“Oh, and how would you like me to correct them?” He replied.

“However you would like. You’re the one with all the experience. With the FBI, I mean.”

“Hm, that is true. Perhaps I’ll read your wonderful story for the 4th time and take some notes to give you.”

I bit my lip. “I’d love that.”

We chatted playfully for two hours until his flight was finally called.