

Episode One-hundred-fifty-six:

Jasper made sure I was in the middle that night once we went to bed. Though he wasn't boiling with anger, he was still pissed off, and he had a right to be. Jewelry is one thing, but a vehicle you're going to drive for years is another. But he didn't want to talk about it anymore. I hated that he was repressing his emotions about it, but what else was there to do? I didn't know how to help him either, other than saying his concerns were valid. Edward was guilty and apologetic, but he was disconnected as to why he was upset in the first place. He had solid points on why to get it, but when emotions are involved, it doesn't matter. Our boyfriend felt tricked into telling him what he preferred, and I think that's what stung the most. I couldn't imagine him doing that. Our sweet man just wanted to make him happy and didn't think it through.

When I slept, I dreamed about my family. All of them together, and we were at a wedding. It wasn't until I got to the end of the aisle to both Jasper and Edward I realized it was ours. They each held a hand out to me, bringing me in the middle. I was in my grandmother's leather and fur clothing, my hair heavy with ornaments. When I moved my head, I could feel the feathers and beads brush against my cheek. The makeup on my skin was thick and sticky, but I didn't know what it looked like. It just seemed caked on. We were in a big Catholic church with high stained-glass windows. The three of us went to our knees in front of a priest, still gripping each other's hands. When I peeked back at the crowd who was watching, my parents were together in the front row. They were younger than me, beautiful and happy, like the day they got engaged. I missed something happening in front of me. The words were jumbled, but then each of my men kissed me with a smile. The paint my sisters did the day before marked their faces. I wanted to see what my parents thought about what was happening, but when I glanced back, less than a foot away was an emotionless Aiden.

I woke up sweaty and a little crampy. Both guys were holding onto me tightly from either side. There was just a tangle of arms, but it wasn't exactly comfortable. It was before sunrise, but I couldn't relax to go back to sleep. Pushing myself up, I peeled them off of me one limb at a time. Rolling my neck, I popped my spine before padding to the bathroom.

Not bothering to put on any clothes, I was only in panties and the tank top I slept in. I did yoga outside and listened to music. It wasn't too chilly. The weather reminded me somewhat of Texas in May. When I finished, I laid flat on my mat and watched the sunrise.

Making some coffee, I straightened up the kitchen as the kettle bubbled. Edward left it a bit of a mess, and the maid service hadn't come by in a day or two. They came twice a week, usually on Tuesdays and Fridays. The recycling had been empty when we left, and it was now filled with beer and wine bottles, only one I had any of. Drunken online shopping sounded like a dangerous pastime for anyone who didn't have unlimited funds.

Showering in the guest bedroom, I changed into a comfortable dress from the closet in there. We needed more storage space. It was probably a good thing I didn't have much to get from my old apartment. As it was, I was going to have to figure out how to store my instruments.

My boyfriend and I were taking the day off to recover from traveling. We had a stupidly busy week ahead, so we were going to need it. The premiere of Edward's movie, the tech drama he filmed when we first started dating, was happening Thursday, and we had to get Jasper ready for that by the following day. Then Friday, we were flying to New York.

I had so many things on my mind.

Taking my second mug into the living room, I sat at the new piano. It would be perfect for making music for the channel with all its fancy features. It was an impressive toy I would never ask the price on. It was too much. I already knew that. But I had been a little sad and over-emotional the day before, and it sparked something selfish in me. I needed a treat big enough to get my mind off of everything. And it was an object I had always wanted but never dreamed about ever owning. It was a tool for a proper artist, and I would make sure Eddie got his money's worth out of it.

Lightly, I pressed the keys. The soft tinging of the notes hummed and floated through the air. At first, I just tapped one or two before finally, I played a melody from memory. Something simple and slow.

A warm pair of muscular hands massaged my shoulders from behind about a minute in. Leaning down, Edward pressed his lips to my shoulder. "So beautiful."

"It's the most impressive instrument I've ever touched."

He smiled. "Actually, I was talking about the gorgeous musician." Tenderly, he kissed the nape of my neck. "I am so glad you at least like yours. I thought you were going to be the one to get mad, to be honest. His is more logical. Yours even cost more."

I didn't stop playing. "Yet, you still did it."

He sat beside me and sighed. "Yeah, I yoloed that one too hard, I reckon."

“I reckon,” I began in his accent, “not being sober probably didn’t help.”

Edward hummed. “Yeah. It didn’t. In my defense, I missed you both, and I had nothing else to do. And do you know how easy it is to convince yourself to have one more drink when you’ve already had five?”

“Not an excuse, but I can’t say anything. I wasn’t sober for most of our trip.”

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you.”

I played a different song, equally simple but melodramatic. “It’s okay. Jasper was there.” We were silent for a long time, just letting the music fill the space. “He was great. Perfect, actually.”

“He must have been if you blurted your feelings out like that,” he replied almost emotionlessly. It reminded me of Aiden’s expression in the dream.

Stopping, I looked at him. “Is that okay?”

My boyfriend genuinely laughed. “What? Bursting in like the Kool-Aid man didn’t give you a hint? I’m such a dumbass.”

Giggling, I started a different melody. Clair de Lune. I kept my eyes on the keys, shaking my head. “I hadn’t even said the words to myself, but it was so intense I couldn’t keep it inside. I feel bad he didn’t tell me about his feelings sooner, though. He must have been so scared.”

“He was. Jasper was worried about ruining our relationship and friendship. And he thought you weren’t ready, but I think the problem was him. No, I know it was. I figure if he said it, you would have in return. He doesn’t want to overstep his bounds, but I wish he’d realize we are equals in this.”

“It’s okay if he needed to hear it first. I just hope he wasn’t too anxious about it.”

His hand rubbed down my spine. “He knew what your feelings were, though. I knew.” He kissed my temple. Edward pushed my hair off my shoulder and leaned in so he could whisper in my ear. “I love you.”

Leaning into his kiss, I closed my eyes. Our foreheads touched. “I love you, too. So much.” I paused, letting out a shaky laugh. “Holy shit, I’m in love with two men, and it’s not going to cause drama-” I stopped myself, beginning to giggle for real. “Nope, can’t even finish that.”

He chuckled. “Oh, it’ll be extra dramatic, but it’s worth it, right?”

I took his face in my hands and kissed him firmly on the lips. Nodding, I rested my forehead against his once more. "Of course."

"Are you okay?" He pulled me closer.

"Yeah. I just got up early and exercised. Jet lag is messing with me," I kind of lied. Maybe it was the truth, and I was lying to myself. "There's some coffee in the kitchen. Would you like me to make you some breakfast?" He shook his head. "Are you sure? I have more than enough time to fix something nice."

Smiling, he brushed his fingers along my jaw. "I'll pick up take away on the way. You look so tired. Why don't you go back to bed?"

"I couldn't if I tried."

He put his arm around my shoulders, resting his head on one. "I need to take a shower and get ready. Do you need anything before I do?" Shaking my head, I began to play another song with my eyes focused on the keys. He sighed softly and kissed my cheek before getting up.

I played for several more minutes before I felt another pair of hands move across my back. These were different, firmer. Smiling, I didn't stop. One of them wrapped around my hair and forced my head back for a surprising kiss. Moaning against his mouth, I brought my fingers up to hold his chin.

Jasper's grin was so sly. "I've changed my mind. I want to film you playing for me instead," he announced when he pulled away. "You are so talented. It's such a turn on. Maybe have you play while sitting in my lap."

Softly, I laughed. "It won't sound like music if you distract me."

"Yes, it will. It's always musical when you moan." He kissed me again, just as forcefully as before. "I wonder if you could keep playing while I fingered you."

"No," I replied right away with a smirk.

He wiggled his eyebrows. "We'll see about that later. Would you like some more coffee, dove?" He pointed at my mug when he straightened up.

"Sure."

"Coming right up. You keep playing for me, hm?"

Jasper took my cup and went into the kitchen. What I made was cold, so he started a new pot. He moved around the cabinets as the kettle simmered. I couldn't hear what he was doing over the music, though. He had a sweet smile on his face as he looked down at whatever he was working on.

When it was done, he put it on the table with the creamer and sugar. Then he brought three plates with two pieces of thick toast each. One was covered in mashed avocado, sliced tomatoes, red pepper, and salt sprinkled on the top. The other was Nutella with bananas and strawberries.

"Breakfast is ready," he called.

"Oh, darling, you didn't have to do that," Edward commented as he came down the hall. I hadn't even realized he was there. He was still in his undershirt and boxer shorts, his hair slicked back. "Oo, that looks delicious," he mumbled. I stood to follow, and he wordlessly took my hand.

Without being asked, Jasper brought two different hot sauces he knew I liked. I grinned when I saw it. "Thank you."

"My pleasure," he cooed before kissing my temple. "Thank you for playing for me. Will you do it again later?" His smirk was suggestive as his palm moved down to the curve of my ass. He rubbed his fingers over my bottom to double-check he was correct in thinking I wasn't wearing any panties, but he said nothing.

I nodded as I sat. "Of course... though, probably not the way you want today. I might be too jet-lagged to do anything, and I wanted to work on editing my family pictures." I also didn't want to tell them about my cramps. Either I was about to have a period despite the stupid birth control, or it was when I would have had one, and it was letting me know. Both options sucked.

Jasper picked up my hand and brought it to his mouth. "Whenever you wish. I need to edit too," he admitted. "Always," he chuckled. "I'll make dinner tonight, and we can just relax today around the house."

"I've got a ton of frozen stuff. We can do a lasagna or something. That way, no one has to work."

"Yes, please," Edward moaned through a bite of his toast. He wiped away some avocado with his napkin. "I'll fetch some garlic bread on the way home. I know we don't have any."

"I'll pick it up," Jasper offered. "Might as well use the damn thing. No need for you to stop at the store after a long day," he muttered grumpily.

Pursing his lips, he decided to ignore his mood. "Keys are by the door in the bowl. You and Bella are already on the insurance, by the way. On mine as well. The boys, too. Just in case."

"Smart," he stated in a sour tone. Our boyfriend pouted, taking another bite of the green and red toast. "Oh, I nearly lost my mind over the bloody Rolex. Don't be so stupid to not know I wouldn't be pissed at something this literally huge. Just because we're in a relationship now doesn't mean you can force your money onto me if I don't want it. It's controlling and annoying, and I don't like it, Tony. I love you, with all my dumb heart, but I'm already feeling emasculated enough with Bella bailing me out."

My stomach twisted. "No, I didn't bail you out. You were paying your bills! I only helped you leave a job that wasn't good for you and a place you weren't happy. Everyone needs help every once in a while. Please don't feel that way," I pleaded.

Huffing, he rubbed his hands over his face. "You're right, I just feel as if I should have--"

"But I needed you here. If I hadn't done that, you wouldn't have been there this weekend. I need you. Don't feel--" I swallowed the sudden rush of emotion in my throat, but my lips were quivering. "I wanted my boyfriend here. And I would've paid anything to have both of the men I love in the same home all the time."

And then I began to weep.

Both of them got up instantly and came to my side, wrapping their arms around me while I sobbed for reasons I couldn't explain. A sharp tug pulled on my ribs. Gripping their shirts, I pressed my face into Jasper's stomach.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry. I was only--" Jasper cursed under his breath. "My dove, it's okay. I'm so glad I came. I'm just- shit, shit, shit," he whimpered, kissing my temple. "You did everything right. I'm the idiot here."

Shaking my head, I was unable to get any words out. "N-no. I'm j-just so--" I sniffled loudly, rubbing my arm over my nose. "Exhausted. And I had a weird dream that bothered me. And you're obviously anxious and upset, and I can't do anything about it. I don't want you to be mad at him."

He shook his head. "I'm annoyed, not angry."

"Still."

“Okay, look. Look at me, love,” Edward said in a soft, cloying voice as he knelt beside me. He took my chin. “We’ll be fine. We already are. And damn, if it’s that much of an issue, I’ll return it. Jeez, it’s no big deal.”

Jasper sighed. “No. Don’t do that. I only wish that-”

Our boyfriend reached for him and took his hand on my shoulder. “If I make a decision this large again, I promise I’ll talk to you about it first. I swear. We’re in this together. I only wanted to spoil you because I love you so much. I wasn’t trying to take something away from you or deceive you or anything like that.”

“I know,” he replied.

Rubbing my cheek with my palm, I took a deep breath. “Ugh, I think I will lie down after breakfast.”

“That sounds like a good idea,” the sweet blond agreed before kissing my temple again.

Even after three cups of coffee, I felt myself dragging to the bedroom. Edward hurried to finish getting ready around me while I plopped down in the middle of the mattress. He moved the covers over me and pecked my lips before he went into the bathroom. After a few minutes, Jasper slipped in behind me. He washed the dishes, putting everything away. He was better at being tidy than our man.

“I feel like such an ungrateful prat right now,” he spoke in my ear. “I am so appreciative you talked me into coming and paid for everything you did. I’m already close to having enough to pay it all back. I might feel better-”

“I don’t want it,” I breathed, pulling the blanket in closer to my face.

“Bella-”

“No! I don’t want it,” I repeated firmly. “Use it to take me out on dates. It’s what I’d use it on, anyway. I don’t loan money to people I love. I give it to them, with no conditions or expectations.”

Sighing heavily, he pushed his face in my shoulder. “Fine. Stubborn assholes. Both of you. You better be prepared for some crazy big dates then.”

“Just let us love you!” Edward complained once he came out with styled hair, kissing both of us with a frown. The smell of his fresh cologne was so strong. He stared for a long minute with a grimace as he hovered over us. It pulled his cheeks all the way down. “Now all I want to do is climb back into bed.”

Jasper put his hand in the center of his face and pushed him away. "Yeah, go away. I love you but fuck off. I want to nap."

He swatted his ass. "Cheeky," he snorted before leaning down to kiss us again. "Love you both. Call me if you need anything, pretty girl. Okay?"

"I can take care of her," our boyfriend promised as his arms tightened around me. "Don't worry. I won't let anything bad happen."