



## **In the middle of the night**

For the next week, I tried to avoid both Tanya and Edward as much as possible. When I saw my roommate, it wasn't awkward at least. She was her usual cheerful self. I just needed some space. Honestly, I didn't even want to think about the next time that I saw Edward. My face turned red every time that I imagined it.

One Monday night less than two weeks later, I went to the kitchen in just my tank top and panties. It was late, and I wasn't even sure anyone else was home with me. I had been listening to music, and I couldn't really hear when they came and went. If they were around, I figured they would be asleep anyway. I had spent all day writing, and I was too tired to really care.

"Well, hello there," Edward said softly so as not to scare me. I glanced up from the fridge where I was pulling out the bottle of fruit punch.

"Hi," I replied quietly as I got a glass from the cabinet. I tried not to meet his eyes.

"I'd like to apologize if I made you uncomfortable the other day. It wasn't my intention," he stated very softly, leaning against the doorway. He took up most of it so that I couldn't walk past him even if I wanted to.

I shook my head and swallowed, pouring myself a drink to buy myself time. "You didn't. It's nothing against you. I just respect Tanya too much to hurt our relationship."

"I can understand that, but as you can see, it doesn't bother her in the least."

"No. Surprisingly," I mumbled as I took a sip of ruby red juice. Then I put the carton back in the refrigerator, just trying not to look at his handsome face. I felt like my heart was beating a million miles an hour while his eyes burned my skin.

He cleared his throat awkwardly. "You know, I got to look at your checklist before I knew it was you. And I have to say, you and I could have some real fun if you were willing," he offered in a charming and casual tone. Edward took a step towards me, and I took one back. "I had no idea. I wish I had known."

"What? Why? I'm not sure-"

"Sure of what, Bella?" He cut me off, taking another step forward.

I looked up at him, swallowing slowly. "That I'm exactly what you're looking for."

"Sometimes the things we actually need aren't the things we were looking for in the first place." His fingers skimmed my cheek, bringing my chin up to look at him. "The things I could do to your body. I would make you feel like you never have before."

I pulled back slowly, pressing my ass against the counter. It felt as if he towered over me. "Edward," I whimpered his name. It was really hard to find my voice. I felt so exposed to him. Nothing else came out.

"What's the matter? What's stopping you, hm? It's not Tanya. Do you not like me, Bella? Are you not attracted to me?" He was smirking, forcing me to look into his eyes.

"It's not that," I responded, trembling. I couldn't look into them. They were too green and too focused on me. My eyes concentrated instead on his perfect lips as they curved into a crooked smile.

He brought them to my ear, turning my head to the side slightly. "Then what's stopping you?"

My mouth opened and closed several times. "I would have to talk to Jasper first."

Edward pursed his lips then nodded his head. "That's understandable. Talk to your boyfriend and-"

"He's not my boyfriend."

"Your Master, then."

I laughed nervously. "He's not that either. He's just my friend."

"If he's just that, why do you need to speak to him first?" Edward asked curiously as he moved his thumb under my chin. It felt as if he was going to pull me into a kiss at any moment. My heartbeat tripled. Faster, faster, faster. Blood rushed through my ears.

"Because I respect him and the time we have together," I said as confidently as I could. It was the only thing I knew for sure at that moment.

He licked his bottom lip. Smiling, he looked me over again, almost hungrily. Edward finally let go of my chin. "I understand, I suppose. You've always been a sweet girl. Honestly, you should hear the way he talks about you, though."

"What does he say?" I asked quietly.

He brought his lips up to my ear again and whispered, "that he's never seen a slut so ready for it." Then he kissed my cheek, letting them linger. "Talk to him and let me know."

There he left me, dazed. Since I already had the juice, I got the vodka from the freezer and added a massive shot.

The next day for the first time in ages, I went to dinner with Alice. We decided on Mexican, going to a nicer place for margaritas. She loved them. My friend arrived first, getting an appetizer to share and a beer for me.

"Edward is... really?" She questioned in shock as soon as I sat down. "Really?"

I shrugged, taking a big drink. "Yeah. Apparently really extreme, too," I mumbled before taking another sip of my beer. Just thinking about it again made me need a shot.

"That's so hot," she uttered, biting her bottom lip. "You totally have to play with him."

"No!" I retorted in shock.

"Why not?"

I flushed as I thought about it. "Because it's Edward."

"That's why you should!" She made a face like I was being stupid. "You've wanted him for fucking ages," Alice continued. I whined quietly at her words but didn't say anything. "Don't deny it!"

I cover my forehead with my palm, roughly pushing my hair out of my eyes. "I'm not. Fuck. But I can't."

"But Tanya is-"

"But what if she isn't and I lose a friend and a roommate?" I asked in a quick whisper.

She sighed, considering it for a moment before shrugging. "We'll get a place together," Alice offered. "I don't think it will be a problem. Huh, I wonder if Edward would want to play with me."

"You don't even like him."

"And it makes me even more curious. It would probably be phenomenal," she countered thoughtfully, biting her bottom lip again as her mind began to wander. "I really think you should do it. You're into him."

"No. I'm not even going to talk to Jasper about it," I mumbled. "I'm his."

"Oh," she laughed, then nodded her head. "Okay. Got it. I see. Why not just say you're dating Jasper? I think that's a good enough excuse, especially since it's a newer relationship."

I shook my head, taking another sip before I reached for a chip. "Because I'm not dating him. He's here twice a month, maybe. He's made it pretty clear that we're just friends, and he's fantastic when we're together, but that it's. It's not going to go anywhere else."

"Why not?"

"He's not here enough! I may not have the highest self-esteem, but I know what I deserve. And it's more than two evenings a month. And we've not even gone out anywhere together. If we've eaten out, it's at the hotel or drive-thru. It's not like he wants to be seen in public with me," I hissed the last three words.

"Aw, don't say that!" She pouted. "I'm sure that's not true."

I ate another chip, avoiding her eyes. "Yeah, okay. I'm not stupid. It's fine. I get more than I ever expected from him." I shook my head. "You better not say anything to him." She clicked her tongue, annoyed with me. "Just don't. I'm happy with how things are."

"Jasper is crazy about you!"

I laughed and repeated, "okay."

"No, no, no." She shook her head, frowning at me. "He is. He talks about you all the time."

"And he tells Edward that I'm just an eager slut," I whispered.

"That's kind of hot," she breathed, taking a big gulp of lime margaritas on the rocks. "I'm sure that's not the only thing he told Edward. And context is everything. Man, the things he's said to me is steamy enough, and he's barely revealed anything at all. You've told me way more than him."

"What has he mentioned to you?" I asked in curiosity.

Alice cocked her head to the side as she considered what she wanted to tell me. "He always going on about when you bring him food. He really, really, really liked it when you served him dinner. He said it was the best scene that he's ever done. And it was even better because it was impromptu."

I took another long drink as I remembered it, dipping another chip in salsa after. "That's going to be a hard night to top," I sighed, smiling at her. "Next time that I have a little warning, I'm going to make another meal. Something good for sharing. I need him to give me a list of his favorite foods. He loved my meatloaf."

"He'd love whatever you brought him because it's you," she remarked with a smirk.

"I don't know about that," I answered. "I want everything to be perfect, even if it's for a few minutes. I just want him to forget while he's here. About death and murder, blood. Everything that's hard in his life. I just want to make him feel good."

Alice cocked her head to the side again as she looked me over, crossing her arms over her chest. "Have you told him how you feel about him?"

I ate another chip. "What do you mean?"

"You... I mean, girl. You obviously- Come on now."

I laughed at her stuttering. "What do you want me to say? I like him. A lot. He's fantastic. He's the best. You've been with him! You understand!"

Alice snorted. "Okay, so I want to bang him. But Bella," she laughed, reaching for my hand. "You've got it so bad for him."

"Do you blame me?"

"Not at all, but you should tell him."

I scoffed. "I think he knows."

"If he did, I think you'd be his girlfriend and not just his friend," Alice said with a little smirk. I just shook my head. "I don't think you know what you're talking about."

"Whatever," I mumbled when the nacho tray finally got the table. "I'm ready to order."

Just as I was getting home that evening, Jasper sent me a text. I sat in my old beat-up red truck in the parking lot to quickly read it. "Are you busy?"

"No," I responded straight away.

My phone rang in my hand as I unlocked the door. I answered before I opened it, trying not to smile to myself but failing. I wasn't expecting a call, but I was still excited about it. "Hi. Are you okay?"

"Yeah. I just didn't feel like texting," Jasper replied, his voice soft. I smiled again to myself, instantly relieved, as I walked into the apartment. "How are you?"

"I'm good. I just went out with Alice for dinner," I explained. Edward and Tanya were sitting on the couch, watching television. They both looked over at me. I didn't even stop to talk to them. I just put the leftovers on the coffee table if they wanted them. "You wouldn't believe how productive I've been today. I've written a chapter and a half." I kind of half-heartedly waved.

"Of the cop one?" He inquired excitedly.

"Mhmm," I murmured, going into my room and shutting the door behind me.

"Little girl, stop teasing and give it to me already."

"It's not ready yet!" I laughed, sitting on the edge of my bed so I could kick off my slip-on shoes. "I can't give it to you until I'm done. It has to be perfect."

He whined playfully. "No, it doesn't! I just want to see what you have. It doesn't have to be flawless. I know it's a work in progress. Maybe I can help."

I clicked my tongue. "Oh, my god. Are you that desperate for new reading material?"

"Uh, yeah. I am actually."

Another laugh fell from my lips, my cheeks filling with blood. I closed my eyes for a second. "My smut is one thing, but this has to be better," I maintained, flopping back onto my mattress.

"Your smut is amazing and gets me off every time," he deliciously purred. I giggled softly as I felt my skin flush hotter. "I've read it all a disgusting number of times. But now I think about you when I do. You getting bent over the bed and getting spanked like that. Me fucking you like that."

"Any particular one?"

He hummed for just a second. "All of them."

I giggled again. "I think we both might be in the right headspace again."

"I know that I am."

Biting my lip, I closed my eyes as I tried to imagine him being in the room with me. "What would you like to do next time we play?"

Jasper hummed again. "I've been thinking about using a riding crop on you. I want to tie your arms and legs to a bed. Maybe face down. That would be a perfect time to play with your ass since I haven't yet. I need to correct that."

"Oh, god," I sighed. "Yes, you do."

"I have so many things that I want to do to you. So many scenes I want to try. I've been thinking about forced orgasms, too. What it would be like to gag you and spend an evening trying to give you as many as possible. I'd have to tie you down good for that, and you'd have to bring all your toys," he explained in a thick voice. "You're so responsive, and I love to make you cum."

"Wow," I breathed, my stomach tightening with his words.

"What would you like to do?"

I giggled softly. "I don't even know where to start. You have no idea how many fantasies I have about you."

"Mm, why don't you write me a story, Isabella?"

"What kind of story?"

Jasper chuckled softly. "I think you know what kind I want, darlin. I want you to write about your ideal evening with me. I think I'll give you a little homework to keep you busy until the next time that I visit."

"When will you be in town again?" I asked eagerly.

"I'm not sure. So you should hurry. It could be a week or a month."

"Yes, sir," I simpered as my mind whirled with possibilities.

"Good girl. Maybe I'll have you sit on my lap and read it to me. And I-" He grumbled at something that I couldn't hear before clearing his throat. "Just a second!" He shouted before saying more softly, "my partner is knocking on the door. I need to go. I'll talk to you later."

"Okay. Have a good day," I said sincerely. "Be careful."

He chuckled again. "I always sincerely try, darlin. Sleep well."

I didn't. I stayed up all night writing the scene that he wanted. But then I didn't stop at one. I wrote two with him in charge, one in public and one in private, and then I also wrote a scene where I was the Domme, and he was my submissive for the evening. I knew it would never happen, but it gave me chills to even consider it. He didn't say that I had to write only one. I knew if they weren't perfect, they were at least written, and I knew I could fine-tune them until he arrived.

The next morning, I got an alert that another body was found. This one had been dead for at least a year, somewhere outside of Schenectady, New York. She was identified as a missing girl from New York City who was only fourteen. They thought the victim count was now somewhere around twenty in the last three years in New York State alone. There was a quote from Special Agent Dr. Jasper Hale in the local newspaper notification from Albany that was sent to my phone. It was, "I'm not sure what drives this savage monster to do what he does, but we won't stop until we get justice for these poor little girls."

