



Dropping off Mamaw

Jasper's point of view.

Honestly, I'm not sure that I had ever felt so exhausted after a day when I didn't have to work. I loved them, but my family was insane and emotionally draining. I forgot how wildly extroverted everyone was compared to me, except for Rosalie. She would just quietly tease me whenever Bella wasn't in the room.

"Aw, you're so in love," she whispered in my ear as she brought me a mug of the spiked hot apple cider that she had kept slipping her husband all day. He was starting to smell strongly of Crown Royal Apple and was obviously smashed. "It's so cute. You're all mushy and shit. It's weird."

"Shut up," I hissed at her, but she just smirked.

Rose leaned on her elbows over the couch. "She's adorable, though. Really. But I think that we know what you're into now."

"What is that supposed to mean?" I demanded quietly, turning to look at her sharply.

"You like a girl with a big butt. You can't keep your eyes off it. Every time she gets up, they follow it around," Mamaw said with a mean smirk, pointing at her own eyes with her two

fingers. She focused one of them on me. "You keep coping a feel, but you're not as sneaky as you think you are. I see what you're doing. Leave that poor girl's rear alone."

I flushed bright red. Both Emmett and Rosalie snickered to themselves, obviously amused. Usually, she gave them a hard time. They were enjoying the change.

Bella and Mom came out of the kitchen, giggling as they spoke to one another. She went in after dinner to help her clean up, which was a big plus in my mother's book. She was already in love with my girlfriend, too.

It helped that they had shared half a bottle of the cheap-ass wine that Bella had gotten her.

Rose laughed a little louder as I tried to keep my eyes straight ahead, pushing herself off the couch to go back to where her husband was sitting on the floor. He had gotten a new video game system, along with several games, and was playing a sports one on it. She sat beside him, leaning her head against his shoulder to watch.

My girlfriend came to sit beside me again on the sofa. She smiled at me prettily, my family doing their best to make her ever so slightly drunk. They had been giving her at least a drink or two every hour since we had arrived. It was just enough to make her relaxed around them. They knew what they were doing. It was often a trick that they tried with me, but I rarely allowed it. It was also my mother's favorite way of getting information.

"I am so full," Bella whispered to me, laying her head on my shoulder as my arm wrapped around her. "And sleepy."

"We can go soon," I promised, kissing the top of her head slightly.

"Mm," she hummed, shaking her head. "No rush, honey. I'm having fun," she replied before leaning up to kiss my jaw lightly. I could have melted at her touch. Her fingertips grazed my cheek, trailing down my neck.

We were very much in a world of our own. Dad was asleep in his recliner, so Mom took the remote from him to turn on some sort of cheesy Christmas romance movie.

"So," my sister began with a little smirk, looking over at Bella. "How did you two meet?" She wasn't very good at small talk, but she was going to attempt it.

"We have a mutual friend. Hmmm... Actually, does she count as an ex?" She teased as she looked up at me a bit wickedly. I rolled my eyes a little.

I shook my head quickly. We were not going to start those kinds of jokes in front of everyone. "Certainly not. We have only ever been friends. I adore her, I do, but..." I trailed off with a tiny laugh of my own. "My sanity is not strong enough to withstand dating Alice."

"Much to her disappointment," she continued. "I've listened to her sigh over you for years," Bella smirked, her cheek pressed into my arm as she playfully fluttered her eyelashes. "I was a little surprised when she said that you were looking for new friends to hang out with while you were in town. I figured she would be jealous. Instead, she's been the biggest cheerleader for this relationship."

I nodded in agreement. "She has. Trust me, I sent her a huge gift to thank her."

"What did you get her?" My mom questioned.

It was hard to hide my smirk. It wasn't dirty, but I knew what she would use it on. "I got her a rather handsome Amazon gift card. She liked it."

"Question," Emmett said absently with his eyes still on his screen. "Why was she sighing over him exactly? How boring he is?"

I would have flipped him off, but my mother wouldn't have liked that, and he wasn't looking up anyway.

Bella laughed hard. "Um, boring? Hardly. Okay, so... He's a cop," she counted on her little finger, "a veteran and has a Ph.D. He's the most well-read person that I know, and he is a perfect gentleman. And looks like all of this." She motioned her hand over my stomach casually. "Yeah, I don't need to be a woman who writes romance to see why she kept sighing over him."

My face turned neon red. I had never been complimented in such a manner, especially in front of my entire family. Those were all things that I was, sure, but I couldn't see how any of them were at all desirable or even attractive.

Laughing a little quietly to herself, Mom reached over to touch Bella's arm. "He does come with a nice resume, doesn't he?" She winked at me.

"He does!" She agreed, slyly going along with her to tease me further. "You raised an incredible man, and you should be very proud."

"D'aw," Emmett laughed, leaning into his wife. He made his eyes innocent and wide as he finally looked away from his game. "Do you feel like that about me?"

"Ha, no," Mamaw answered for her. Rose just shrugged and nodded in agreement. He frowned at both of them. "You knew when you asked, boy. Don't play dumb."

Giggling, Bella shoved her face into my chest to hide it. It was so cute. I wrapped my other arm around her, chuckling as I kissed the top of her head once more.

Not long after, I fell asleep on the couch like an old man. My mouth was hanging open, and my head was back while everyone, but Dad, watched a movie. She didn't seem to mind, though, using me for a pillow with her legs drawn over my lap.

Sometime later in the evening, Mamaw threw a balled-up wad of wrapping paper at me. It smacked me right in the nose, jarring me awake. "Hey!" She called to get my attention. I frowned a little as I picked it up, examining the crinkled blue angel-themed paper. "I'm ready to hit the road. Willing to give me a ride before you start drooling?"

"Yes, ma'am," I mumbled, scrubbing my hand over my face. Thankfully, I hadn't yet. Bella giggled again softly beside. "What?"

She shook her head, standing up from the couch so that she could stretch out. "Nothing. You're just precious."

"If you say so."

Bella sat in the backseat on the drive to my grandmother's apartment. They said their goodbyes by the car. Mamaw gave her a quick hug, thanking her for the chocolates. I carried all of her many gifts inside. It took a couple of trips. I set them on her kitchen table for her to organize. She disappeared for a moment into her room before I was done.

When she came back out, I smiled at her. "That's everything, Mamaw. And I will call and text you more. I'm sorry. I've been busy," I said as I shook my head at myself. "We'll have more visits soon, I promise."

"I know, baby," she answered as she came to give me a hug. Her thin hand patted my back. "So, I've got something for you before you go."

"Oh?"

"Now. You don't have to use it, because it's old and ugly, but if you wanted to melt it down and have it made into a new one," she began as she pulled out an ancient green felted box. She opened it up and immediately recognized it as her engagement ring and wedding band.

"Oh, Mamaw, I couldn't take this," I began right away.

She shook her head. "I haven't worn it once since your grandfather died. You know that I'm not the sentimental type. But if you wanted to, you could use that to propose to that girl."

Pausing, my heart skipping a beat as she said the word 'propose.' I bit my lip, gazing at it for a long minute. "It's only been two weeks."

"Are you going to marry her?" She questioned. We both already knew the answer to that. I just reached for the box. "That's what I thought. It's hideous, though, so get something done to it. I always hated it. Your Pa had the worst taste."

I laughed, closing it and putting it in my pocket. "Yeah, it's pretty terrible," I agreed. "Okay. I will look into it. Thank you so much. It means a lot to me."

"I'm just happy that you are. And you're finally settling your ass down! I never thought that I'd see the day. You're getting too old for all that running around," she fussed.

Blowing out a long breath, I nodded my head in agreement. "Yes, I am."

"Well, I'm glad she's got her claws into you. I like her."

She walked me to the door. I gave her one last hug and kiss on the forehead. "Good. She's going to be around for a good long while, I hope."

"Yeah. She will be," she whispered. Patting my cheek, she gave me one last kiss goodbye. "Goodnight. Merry Christmas."

"You too, Mamaw."

The ring box burned a hole in my pocket the entire drive back to the hotel.

I carried all of our gifts back to our room, Bella helping. It was a lot of stuff. After I put everything on the dining room table, I pulled off my jacket. I felt the weight of the ring box as I did. It made my heart speed up to even think about it. Pushing a nervous breath from my lips, I tried to swallow back some of my nerves. My neck hurt from sleeping on the couch, and I wanted to stretch it away.

"My, what a day," I finally managed to get out when I turned around. She was standing about ten feet away, watching me.

Bella nodded her head quickly. "It was fun," she offered. I wasn't sure if I would call it that. She removed her coat, so I hurriedly took it from her so that I could put it away. She grinned as I did. "Your family loves you. They're funny, too."

“They’re insane,” I complained as I went into the closet to put them away. I did hers first, then mine. I looked into the pocket to make sure the ring was still there despite being able to see the outline.

“Oh, for sure,” she giggled lightly. “But, I like them.”

Grinning, I nodded my head just once in agreement. “I think that they like you, too.”

Finally, I turned back around. When I looked at her, I didn’t know what to say. She was so beautiful, her dress hugging her body in a pleasing manner. Honestly, I didn’t know how I was going to continue to behave like a gentleman. Especially since she was now allowing me to swat her ass playfully.

She took a few steps towards me, leaning upon the tips of her toes to bring her lips to mine.

“Thank you for inviting me.”

“Thank you for coming, darlin. I’m sorry that they’re so intense,” I began to apologize, but I knew it was only the tip of the iceberg. I really hoped that she could take them. Swiftly I shook away my fear, just trying to breathe. “They mean well,” I promised.

Bella didn’t seem bothered at all. She carefully unbuttoned my shirt, just the top couple. “They do. I promise that it’s fine,” she assured me as she dragged her palms down my torso, stopping at my hips as she peered up at me. “So, tomorrow, do you want to just spend the day relaxing? We could go to my place, and I can cook for you.”

I loved how well she knew me and my desires. The last thing that I wanted was to be around anyone. All that I required was her. “I’d love that,” I told Bella as I brought my hands to her waist so that I could pull her just a little closer. “Sounds like exactly what I need.”

“Perfect,” she replied before she kissed me again lightly. “I’m going to get changed for bed. Would you mind unzipping me?”

Sometimes, it felt like she was torturing me just a tiny bit, but it was in a way that I enjoyed. She turned around, lifting her long beautiful brown hair away from her neck. Leaning down, I kissed the spot just above the chain. She obviously loved her necklace and kept toying with it. Goosebumps formed as I pushed the zipper down. All I wanted to do was shove the dress to the floor and drag her to the bed. Somehow, I restrained myself.

Confidently, she took her overnight bag from the dresser and strode towards the bathroom. Her hips swayed the entire way. My Mamaw was right. I couldn’t keep my eyes off of her ass.

But it was perfect, so who could blame me?

When the door closed behind her, I went to the closet to pick out some sleep clothes for the evening from my suitcase that sat on the floor inside. Even if it was going to kill me, I wasn't going to force myself onto her. She was in charge of our sex lives now, and I was more than okay with that. If Bella wasn't ready, neither of us were.

Before I changed, I pulled the ring box out once more to look at it. I smiled a bit to myself. Mamaw was right about something else too. It really was an ugly little thing. But I knew that once I got back into Dallas, permanently, I could look into getting it redone into something Bella would be proud to wear on her finger. When we were both ready.