



## Chapter Two: Hit a Threshold

After a meal I could barely eat, we went to the airport. We got there way too early, so we had a few drinks at the bar to help relax. Jasper had already spoken to his boss, taking an indefinite leave of absence. Something in him snapped. He was angry beyond words and scared something would happen to me. We had been on the edge of this stressful cliff I thought we were stepping away from. Now I felt as if we were hurtling over it.

I had done nothing like this before. Admittedly, it was fun to go into the first-class section. The chairs were undoubtedly nicer. I saw four people reading my book in the waiting area, but they were selling it at every newsstand and gift shop. It looked as if it would be number one for the tenth week in a row.

Only one person asked for an autograph. It was happening more and more when I went out. It made my man anxious, though. His eyes kept darting around, but in my heart, I knew whoever it was couldn't follow us here. We would be safe. It was probably easy to get our address in Dallas. They couldn't guess we were suddenly flying out of state. We had told no one but Sam. Even Tanya only knew we were going out of town, but we didn't say where.

On the flight, I dozed on his shoulder while he planned our wedding on the iPad he had gotten me for my birthday. We would get married in the Red Canyon's Red Springs, and he reserved the license so we could just pick it up. When he finished that, he started making a list of things we would need when we went shopping.

"We'll have to get me a wedding band," he whispered. Smiling, I peeked at him. "I already have yours. Would you choose mine, Goddess?"

My cheeks warmed up. "I'd love to, sir," I replied, giving him a light kiss. My lips lingered on his rough skin. He hadn't shaved that morning. "I need to get my hair and makeup done. I want to be perfect for you."

He brought up the website for the hotel to search the spa services. He quickly arranged it for me, getting everything I could need to look gorgeous for the day. Jasper ordered a massage for himself, too. Most of his morning would probably be spent alone, though.

I couldn't enjoy the view when we got to our beautiful suite. He looked out the window after putting our things in the closet. Falling back on the mattress, I let my arms go above my head as I closed my eyes.

"Well, this wasn't how I was expecting the day to end," my fiancé mumbled to himself as he shut the curtains. "I figured we would have been asleep already after a long day of moving."

"Me too," I breathed. My face lolled to the side so I could gaze at him. "But I don't hate this."

His eyes met mine in the darkness as he walked to the edge of the bed. He removed my shoes before pulling off my blue jeans. It reminded me of when we went to Six Flags the year before. I lifted to discard my sweater. He crawled over me, so we were at eye level.

"I am so sorry about your car. I feel responsible." He shook his head. "I haven't gotten my shit together and bought all the security stuff you require now as a star in the limelight. I know we have the basics-

Lightly, I covered his mouth with my hand. "Stop it. It's not your fault. Someone is trying to rattle us."

"And I'd say they were successful, too."

Frowning, I nodded as I pushed his hair out of his eyes. "We just need a quick vacation to get our minds right. We'll get married, have a little honeymoon, and then we'll go back and deal with this stupidity."

He leaned down to kiss my lips softly. "I'm glad we're here. You're right. I didn't want to wait, anyway. I'm so damn ready for this."

"I think you have been way longer than me. I'm sorry that-

"No," he interrupted before kissing me again. "No. If you weren't ready, then neither was I. It's like... I can only be a Dom because you allow me to be. I can only be your husband if you permit me the honor."

It was hard not to smirk at his words. "I hope you don't think they're similar jobs."

"Some duties do overlap," he joked with a grin. He got more serious. "I have been since we got the house. I was such a shit when we got back, and you still wanted to deal with me... I knew then I had to stop screwing around, pull my head out of my ass, and act as if I deserve you. You've blossomed so much this year, and I feel as if I'm just basking in your light."

Laughing, I kissed him again. "I already said yes. Stop sucking up and get naked."

He snorted, lifting so he could yank off his shirt. He threw it to the floor. "Are you really in the mood? You look exhausted."

"No, but I want you to make me forget."

"Yes, Goddess," he purred before he spent a glorious amount of time making my legs shake.

We slept until one in the afternoon. It was the latest we had in months. Ordering breakfast, we shopped online for our basic hygiene items and would just have it delivered so we wouldn't have to search for it. It was so easy to do it in our underwear. I stole his glasses, laying my head on his lap. We somehow spent four hundred dollars, but I got him some nice cologne and perfume for me. The mimosa I was sipping helped. They would bring it in the evening. The stuff the hotel provided was more than good enough for the day.

When we finished that, I started looking at rings. "I think I want it to go with mine. Gold. Is that okay?"

"Whatever you want, darlin." He kissed my neck. I was wearing his t-shirt, and it was stretched tight over my breasts. He loved it. Jasper especially liked how he could see my nipples through it. His big palm smoothed down my thigh.

It didn't take me long to find a simple band with the diamonds embedded inside, lining the ring like mine. I showed him, and he grinned slightly but said nothing. "What do you think?"

“I think it’s perfect, but I don’t know what size I am.”

I rolled over to peer at him. When I did, he pulled his glasses off gently and put them back on. “There is a store close to here. We’ll go look.”

After we showered and got dressed, we headed down to the Strip. We were alone in the elevator. We definitely looked like tourists in our jeans and sweatshirts. It wasn’t too cold, especially after being in Albany for so long.

“We should play one night while we’re here in public. You can be in control while we’re in the casino,” I blurted out suddenly, just spewing my thoughts.

He chuckled softly. “We didn’t bring any toys. We should have.”

“That’s a problem easily solved,” I spoke in an impish voice. “Add it to your list. I’m sure there is a sex shop around here somewhere.”

Jasper leaned down so he could speak in my ear. “All we really need is some lube for a good night, but I think picking out some new things sounds like a lot of fun. I assume you don’t mean tomorrow, though. I don’t think it’s a brilliant idea for either of us to be in control of our first evening together.”

Thoughtfully, I nodded. “Mm, maybe the day after. We could each take a turn and have a night.”

“How long are we staying?” I shrugged in answer. “We can’t run away forever, even if I want to. And we should plan a proper honeymoon, too. Somewhere relaxing. As distracting as this is, it’s not.”

Again, I nodded as I leaned against the wall. “Let’s stay here a week before we go back, at least. I agree about the honeymoon. We’ll deal with the fallout from the car and... this, and then we’ll plan a long getaway. We’ll need it after that. But what about your job?”

“I don’t know,” he admitted slowly after moistening his lips. “I think I hit a threshold yesterday I didn’t realize existed. My work is affecting my personal life too much. Even when things were supposed to be going back to normal, they’re not. I feel so out of control there.” He sucked in a deep breath through his nose. “I thought I had such a handle on it when I put in for my new position and made all these plans with you. But I can’t put you in harm’s way-”

“No.” I stopped him from reaching too far. “This is just probably a crazy groupie. We may have overreacted yesterday.”

“That was a frightening message, Bella. They were willing to do that all night. I think you’re right that it was someone at the trial. Something in my gut tells me this is dangerous.”

Turning towards him, I took both of his hands. “We’re both safe. We can relax for the next few days. Before we head out, let’s go to the front desk and extend our stay, okay?” He nodded in agreement.

The elevator doors opened. We walked out into the afternoon crowd together. “I can’t feel this out of control. I should have power at my job and in my own home, but someone is threatening my wife because I got her involved with my work. I’ve never experienced this before, and I’m not sure I can handle it, to be honest. It’s gotten me to the core.”

“Are you going to quit?”

He shrugged. “I have more than six months of paid time before I have to decide, but I feel like kind of a prick for leaving them hanging. My new boss was pleasant enough, and she was trying so hard. She keeps getting screwed in this. She deserves someone more excited, who can be dedicated to the job.”

I waited until we finished at the front desk before I spoke about it again. We stepped out into the bright street together. “Well, you won’t take six months, but you can at least take two weeks after everything you’ve gone through. They’ve gotten by without you before, they can do it again.”

“Yes, you are exactly right, which may be a check in the ‘reasons to quit’ column.”

We stopped and stared at each other for a long minute. “I’ll support you no matter what.”

Sighing, he pulled his sunglasses down as he tugged me along. “I know. But you seriously need a bodyguard now. If it’s not me, it’s got to be someone else. I think I can do the job, but I’m sure there are those who are more capable.”

“I’d rather have you,” I smirked. “And I think you may be over-qualified, Doctor.”

He squeezed my hand. “Let’s see how I feel after a couple of weeks, but it’s a serious consideration. At least until we can hire someone.”

I had never gone to a jewelry store with Jasper before. It wasn’t the kind of place I went to often. Most of mine was the cheapest you could get. A salesman descended on us right away to assist. We must have had a flashing light above our heads. ‘Happy couple!’

“How can I help you today?”

“We’re looking for a wedding band for him,” I explained as I held onto my fiancé’s arm.

“Congratulations!” He beamed, delighted he would make a quick and easy sale. He must have heard it thirty times a day, at least. Everyone was coming to Vegas to do the same things. Getting married, going to the casino, and now smoking the legal weed while doing it.

There weren’t a lot of men’s options to choose from compared to women’s. I spotted the one I was looking at online, and we found the right size with a sizer the man pulled out in a second. He searched for one we needed before handing it to me. “If you’d like to practice and see what you think.”

I laughed a little awkwardly. Jasper held out his hand and put the other on his heart as he fluttered his eyelashes at me playfully. “Oh, my stars,” he said in a thick southern accent in a feminine voice. Snorting loudly, I swatted at him. “Sorry, sorry. I’m an idiot. Go ahead.”

Giggling at his silliness, I slipped it onto his finger. He lifted it up to his face to look at it. “What do you think?”

“I think that’s something I would be proud to wear for the rest of my life.”

“Good answer,” the salesman responded with a chuckle.

Jasper took it off and passed it to him. “We’ll take it.” He reached for his wallet, but I retrieved my debit card first. While holding his gaze, I gave it to the gentleman. “Really?”

“You bought my ring!”

“I purchased the diamond and had it redesigned-”

“Shut up,” I scoffed. I looked at the guy. “I’ll buy it. Thank you.”

My future husband shook his head, rolling his eyes. “You heard the lady.” The salesman rushed off before we could get in a fight in front of him.

Beaming, I quickly tilted in for a kiss. “Thank you. I want to do this as equals.”

“Me too,” he agreed, kissing my forehead. “Well, that was easy. Should we take this back to the hotel?”

“Probably a good idea. I’ll look up where the sex shop is next,” I replied just as the man returned with my card. I smiled at him, hastily snatching it back. “Thank you.”

He passed me the bag with the black velvet box. "I'd tell you to enjoy your night, but I think you've got that covered."