



Anywhere You Like

He loved me.

We stared at each other in silence for a second before my timer went off loudly in my robe pocket, scaring me. I laughed nervously, putting my hand on my heart before turning it off. I closed my eyes for a minute, trying to focus.

"Should I just leave?" He worriedly asked. I shook my head slowly, taking a step towards him. I took the roses finally, bringing them up to smell.

"Thank you," I whispered, blushing bright red. "Um... I need to take a shower to wash this stuff off."

Jasper nodded his head quickly. "Okay. I'll wait," he promised.

I put them down on the coffee table so that I could step closer to him. He brought his hands up to touch me but stopped, dropping them to the sides. He wasn't going to until I

allowed him to do so. I smiled to myself, straightening his tie. When I brought my hand up to his cheek, his eyes sank closed in pleasure as he leaned into my fingers. When I ran my thumb over his lips, he pecked it.

"Last time, you didn't kiss me, and it broke my heart," I stated in a hushed tone. "I need you to know that."

"I'm sorry. I couldn't. If I did, I couldn't keep control. I should have. I'm sorry," he breathed regretfully, his eyes still closed. "I did everything wrong that night."

Hopeful, I looked up at him as my fingers wrapping around the lapels of his coat. He peered down at me adoringly even though I looked like a cartoon character. "Are you going to make up for it now?"

Jasper scooped me up in his arms, bringing me into a savage kiss. I could see in his eyes as he realized that there was something amiss.

"What's on your lips?" He asked, pulling back swiftly. "Is that sugar?"

"It's a scrub. Don't worry, you're supposed to eat it," I answered.

"Oh." He nodded his head. "Okay. Good." He kissed me again. I giggled against his mouth. He kissed me until there was none left, slowly putting me back down to my feet.

"Okay. I'm going to wash off now. I'll be right back," I said breathlessly, finally stumbling away from him.

He smiled happily. There were little green smears on his cheeks. "Don't rush. Take your time. I'd wait forever."

Grabbing his tie, I pulled him to me for another kiss. I pouted for a second because I didn't want to let go, but then I sighed and reached for the remote. Handing it to him, I tugged on his jacket gently again. "This might actually take a while. I wasn't expecting guests."

Jasper chuckled softly. "Clearly. It's okay. You're worth the wait. Can I take you to a late dinner, so we can talk some more? Or just have drinks. Whatever you want."

"Dinner sounds good. I'm actually pretty hungry."

I turned the water on in my shower as hot as I could, quickly washing my face first. The hair mask took a long time to get out, though. I used shampoo after, adding conditioner while I scrubbed my body and shaved. I hadn't in a month, and I was turning into a werewolf. My hands were trembling for the first ten minutes until the water helped to calm me down.

When I finished, I didn't want to walk out looking like a drowned rat. My appearance was crazy enough when he arrived. So I blow-dried my hair. When the mirror defogged, I realized how sickly I appeared. I quickly tried to put on natural-looking makeup. Once again, I wrapped back up in my robe.

"I'll be out in just a second," I promised before rushing to my room. I still couldn't look at him, and I didn't even give him time to answer.

There was a pile of clean clothes on my bed from earlier in the day. I shoved it in the corner of my closet. I decided on one of the new outfits, spraying it down with perfume in the hopes that it was clean enough. It was a knee-length dress with three-quarter sleeves. It was a simple black with a white peter pan collar. It was very mod. I decided on my red heels. They felt powerful for some reason that I couldn't explain, and I wanted the confidence.

I slowly came out of my room. I couldn't bring myself to lift my eyes from the floor, too nervous. Jasper stood swiftly, turning off the television. He had removed his coat and gloves, still in his suit jacket. He was actually wearing his gun holster as well. I could see it under his blazer as he moved. He must have come directly from work.

Just looking at him made me feel warm. Rushing over to the table, I reached for the roses. "I really should put these in water. They're so beautiful. I haven't gotten flowers in years," I began to ramble. When I straightened up, he reached for my hand to stop me.

"Are you okay?" He worriedly asked.

I didn't meet his eyes, just looking at the roses. "Yeah. Why?"

His hand moved over my side, shaking his head. "You look lovely."

"Thank you," I whispered. I hid my face in the flowers for a moment.

"Bella, look at me, please," he begged quietly, his hand squeezing my waist. I finally met his eyes. "I'm sorry for hurting you."

Swallowing heavy, I replied. "I'm sorry that I slapped you."

Jasper shook his head quickly once more, his hand squeezing me again. "I deserved it for going through with that when I knew it was wrong. I hated myself, but I missed you too much. I should have just talked to you. I kept expecting you to safeword before, but you didn't. I wanted you to. I wanted you to call me out. I feel like a monster." He looked down at the flowers to avoid my eyes. "I am so ashamed of myself."

"I was there because I chose to be. Because I wanted to be there. I could have stopped you, but it was my punishment. I accepted it."

"Punishment. For what?" He whispered, his voice pained.

I laughed hollowly, bringing the bouquet back up to my nose. "For allowing myself to open up."

"No," he said swiftly. "I led you on. Especially that night. That was a date. I knew what it was, and I even planned it that way and tried to pretend it wasn't. Because that's what I wanted it to be. But if I wasn't really your boyfriend, I wouldn't have to feel guilty for not being here ninety-nine percent of the time. For ignoring you."

Slowly, I shook my head. "Your job is so important."

"It is, but I don't have to travel as I do. I chose to do that because I didn't want to settle down and I've never been good at sitting still. I've never had a reason to want to come home to the same place every night. But you know, I can still do my job right here." Jasper nodded his head firmly when he was done speaking. Like doing so would make his decision final.

"So, I'm a reason to come home?" I asked with a slight smirk. Honestly, I just wanted to see what he would say.

He kissed my temple gently, putting his forehead on mine. "The best one."

Smiling to myself, I slowly pulled away before going towards the kitchen with the flowers. We had several vases to pick from. Jasper followed behind to watch. He leaned against the doorway with his hands in his pockets.

"What would you like for dinner?"

"Anything you want. I'll take you wherever you like," he instantly promised.

Smirking a little wickedly I decided to tease him. "I'm half tempted to be mean and say the most expensive place in the city, then."

"Do it," Jasper said right away. "In fact, let me look up a list of the most expensive places in Dallas for you." He pulled out his phone, making me laugh. Quickly, Jasper typed into Google, lifting his finger. "Let's see. The most costly place is called Frank. Not Frank's, just Frank," he began, his voice trying to be serious, but I could see his playfulness. He was trying to keep everything as light as possible.

"Is it fancy hot dogs?" I inquired coyly as I got the water. He chuckled.

“And apparently there is a lottery to eat there,” he mumbled as his eyes got wider. “So, not tonight. Fearing’s is next. We’re skipping that simply because of the name.” I laughed a little louder as I reached for the scissors to trim off the ends to make the stems fit. “Ah, Nobu.”

“And what’s that?”

“Sushi.”

“Hm,” I hummed, arranging the flowers carefully.

He was eager to please me, so he continued. “Next up is Nick and Sam’s. Steakhouse and sushi. And then there is The French Room. Oh, which just happens to be at the hotel that I’m staying at.”

“Which is?”

“The Adolphus.”

Finishing, I threw the trash away before washing my hands. I finally walked to him again and pulled on his tie a little. “I bet that’s obnoxiously expensive and stuffy.”

He put his arm around my waist, smiling down at me. “I’m sure, but if that’s what you want.”

Scrunching up my nose, I shook my head. “French might be good, though. Maybe you should look that up instead.”

He nodded his head quickly. “Yeah, okay. I can do that.” He put his hand on my hip, gently patting it as he typed into his phone. “Let’s see. Toulouse’s?”

“I’ve never heard of it.” I turned slightly so that my back was against his chest, reading his phone. Jasper pulled me tightly to him and began to kiss my neck. I nervously laughed and slipped away from him.

“Sorry.” He ducked his head and blushed.

“We should just talk first.”

He hesitantly reached for my hand, and I took it. “Right. You’re absolutely right. Toulouse’s?”

"Sure. Why don't I order us a car, so neither one of us has to drive?" I offered. "I think we'll both need drinks."

"That's a great idea! I'll-"

I put my other hand on his chest. "No. I'll get it."

"Okay," he smiled stiffly. Jasper didn't like it, but he was going to accept it. "But I'm getting dinner."

Moving my hand up to his jaw, I ran my fingers over it slowly as I smirked to myself. "Okay. Thank you."

He walked behind me as I went to get the rest of my things. I ordered the car before I retrieved my purse. Jasper helped slip on my jacket, gently pulling my hair out from underneath the collar. Almost as if he couldn't help himself, he hugged me from behind and kissed my temple again.

"Is that a gun or are you just happy to see me?" I teased.

"Both?"

I giggled. "You might want to put that away, Major."

He cleared his throat. "Probably. I came pretty much straight from the airport, and I forgot all about it. I have a special permit to wear it on the plane," he explained in a rush. Jasper went to his rental car, and it put it in a locked briefcase in his trunk.

As soon as we got in the taxi, there was an alert on my phone. There was another body. I looked at him as he read it over my shoulder. He sighed heavily, pressing a kiss to my temple again and letting it linger.

"Do you have to leave?" I whispered.

He licked his bottom lip. "Not tonight. In a couple of days. The position that I've put in for opens up next month. I'm sorry. I should have told you that already. There is so much I have to tell you."

"Why are you in town?"

Jasper shrugged his shoulders. "I took some personal days. I haven't been back since, and I've been working eighteen-hour days," he breathed, the exhaustion clearly written in violet under his light azure eyes.

“How is the case going? I obviously still follow all the alerts. It’s so scary to think that there are people like this out there. How many are there now? Possibly over thirty?”

He nodded before leaning his head back against the seat as he closed his eyes tightly. “Nothing feels close enough. I feel like there is some tiny missing piece that we just don’t see. We just need that little something. Some scrap of paper or a name. Or Something,” he repeated in frustration. “But we can barely finish processing a crime scene before there is another. And another.”

“How are you handling it?” I took his hand and wrapped my fingers around it. He squeezed tightly.

Smiling a little, he said, “not well, I have to admit. I keep having nightmares. I see these dead little girls in my dreams every night. Or you. It’s worse when it’s you though because you always start off alive and I’m always too late. And I watch you-” He stopped, closing his eyes again. “I obviously need a vacation.”

“You should try to take one once you get settled in your new position,” I commented hopefully, clasping his palm tighter. I brought my other hand to our joined ones and began to trace his knuckles.

“Take a couple of weeks off and go absolutely nowhere?”

“If that’s what you want.”

“That would be perfect if I could spend it with you. Alone. I don’t care where.” He laid his head against mine. “I’m so tired, Bella. And all I can think about is you. How much I miss you and need you. And I couldn’t even message you because I knew after what I did, I needed to be a man and-”

“Shh,” I hushed him quietly. He didn’t need to get too emotional in the back of the car. Quickly, I kissed his lips for just a moment. I felt him melt against me.

It was just before eight, and it wasn’t that busy. We were taken right away to a small table. He sat as close to me as he could, holding my hand on the tabletop.

“So, obviously, you need to order the most expensive bottle of wine on the menu,” he teased, making me giggle.

“I’ll just start with the glass,” I smirked, making him chuckle.

When the waiter came to the table to take our drink orders, Jasper ordered his regular dirty martini with extra olives. I ordered a glass of rose.

“Go ahead and bring her the bottle,” he told the waiter.

“Going to drink some pink wine with me?” I joked when he left.

He shrugged his shoulders. “I’ll try a glass. So, tell me how you are. What have you been doing?”

I shook my head, looking down at our linked hands. His thumbs kept rubbing circles over the top. “Nothing.” I laughed a little sarcastically. “I left the house for the first time on Thursday, actually. I had my annual checkup. Good news. I’m definitely not pregnant and STD free. Go me.”

Jasper sighed as he rubbed his other hand over his mouth. “Have you been sick?” I shook my head. “You’ve lost a considerable amount of weight in a very short amount of time.” I shrugged, taking a sip of my water. “Have you been eating?”

“Yes, sir,” I laughed again, this time extremely condescendingly. “Everything has tasted like ash, so I’ve been living off these cheap premade salads and fruit. I figured that if nothing was good, I might as well eat healthily. Apparently, this is what happens when I stop eating cake and drinking sodas.” I waved my hand down at my stomach. “And Edward has been trying his best to keep me hydrated for some reason. He keeps bringing me glasses of water and telling me to drink them in front of him.”

“He told me off in a rather colorful email,” he whispered. “That night.”

“Really?” I asked in surprise. He nodded, smirking a little. “He’s been really nice to me lately. It makes me feel a little bad for being mean to him. Just a little though, because I know he enjoyed it.”

Snorting, he looked away as the waiter brought our drinks. He poured me a glass before leaving. Jasper took a long sip of his martini before he popped an olive into his mouth.

“He’s not a terrible guy, just a prick.”

I giggled, taking a sip. “I guess there was a reason that I was attracted to him in the first place.”

Jasper finished his martini quickly. “I hate that so much.”

“What? That I liked him?” He nodded his head. He poured me some more wine and put some into his own glass.

“I’m not worried about you. It’s him. He could literally give you everything that you want, whenever you want. And he works five days a week, maybe eight hours a day. Nose jobs rarely go into the night. He could give you everything that you deserve. And though I’m making good money, he’s going to be a-”

I bristled at his words. “Do you think I care about that? About his money?”

“No,” he replied. “You have to admit that he makes sense for you.”

“Uh, why would I let him do whatever he wants with me, probably doing the actual bare minimum for me, then listen to him bang his model girlfriend? That doesn’t sound appealing.”

He took a little sip of his wine. “Mm, I don’t think it would be like that. Honestly, you could own his ass now. I don’t think he’s ever been turned down before, and he sees you as a worthy challenge. He’d do whatever you wanted if it meant he got closer to his own goal.”

“Oh.” I bit my lip. “Switching with him. That’s a thought. He’d never do that.” I laughed evilly. “I’d destroy him.”

“Will you destroy me when it’s my turn?” He asked in a low voice. I shook my head slowly, smirking just a little. “Will I get a turn?”

“Do you want one?” I questioned quietly. He squeezed my hand before nodding. “We’ll see.”

“Whatever you want to do. You’re in charge now. I will do whatever you desire. On whatever timetable you wish. Until I earn back your trust,” Jasper promised.