



The Distance Between Us

Christmas eve could not come fast enough.

I kept myself busy with gift shopping, writing, and looking through old stories about murders in New York State. It was oddly soothing, the research. I was good at it, I felt, but I was sure that I wasn't learning anything that the FBI didn't already know. I just enjoyed knowing more about it so that I could talk to Jasper about the case.

Every day he called at least once, and our text conversations were constant. He would be coming in the evening of the twenty-third and leave the morning of the twenty-eighth, giving us four days together. I was looking forward to it with every fiber of my being.

Edward was lounging on the couch, watching television, as he waited for Tanya to finish packing that night. They were going on a trip with his family over the holidays and wouldn't be coming back until a few days after New Year's Day. It was somewhere tropical and beautiful. Understandably, she was thrilled. She was rushing around the house, waiting until the last minute to get ready. Her boyfriend knew better than to get in the way. The woman did it literally every time, and if he tried to help, they always fought.

My room, the bathroom, living room, and kitchen were all cleaned to perfection. I had spent the afternoon getting ready for him. I just wore a sweater and blue jeans, trying to be

casual, even though I was attempting to look as pretty as possible. It was a weird balance. We were just going to stay in and order dinner since he was going to be so tired from work and traveling. He didn't want me to cook because he wanted us to both relax together. We were going to spend the following day out, having another real date. He was planning it and being rather cagey about its details.

We hadn't discussed what we were going to do for Christmas again. I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I could be alone for a few hours, go with Alice, or to Jasper's. As long as I got to spend at least a few hours with my boyfriend at some point in the day, I would be happy.

When I heard the knock, I rushed out of my room and towards the door before Edward could fully sit up. When he realized that I was going to get it, he settled back into his spot with a slight smirk as he put his arm behind his head. He was watching a superhero movie on television, the remote on his thigh.

After the door swung open, I practically leaped into his arms. Jasper lifted me off the ground so that only my tiptoes were on the floor. His lips were on mine in an instant, his fingers gripping me tightly. I smiled against his mouth as he tilted me back just a little.

Jasper had come directly from the airport, still in his suit. I could feel his gun underneath his long wool coat and blazer. His leather-clad hands rubbed just under my shirt at my waist. The sensation was fantastic.

"I missed you," he whispered after burying his face in my neck. His five o'clock shadow was rough against my skin. "God, you always smell so good."

"Thank you," I giggled, stroking his hair at the back of his head gently. Slowly Jasper pulled back to look at me while smiling. He brought his lips to mine again with his fingers on my cheeks as he kissed me deeply. With his other arm around my waist, he lifted me a couple of inches off the ground. I cheerfully laughed against his mouth. "I missed you, too."

Eventually, he put me back down to my feet. When he pulled back again to look at me, he took both of my hands into his and lifted them up to examine me. Jasper grinned at whatever he saw, bringing each to his lips to kiss my knuckles.

"Mm-mm-mm... You look lovely, darlin," he complimented me, bringing my arms back around his neck. Jasper put his hands on my hips, his fingers tracing over the skin he found there as my sweater rode up a little. "But I think that I'm overdressed."

"We can get you out of some of these clothes," I replied cheekily, making him smirk.

"Oh, good," he smiled playfully, making me giggle again. "You can take off whatever you like."

“Maybe not in the hall,” I teased as I brought him inside and shutting the door behind him. He stopped, looking at the man on the couch.

“Should I move?” Edward offered, looking at me. “Hey,” he said politely to Jasper.

I shook my head, not slowing down as I tugged my boyfriend towards my room. I wanted to be alone with him, and Tanya was already in a mood. “Nope. You’re fine.”

“Uh, hi,” Jasper replied quietly when he realized what I was doing, happily following behind me while holding both of my hands. He didn’t mind me dragging him along, especially to my bedroom. “Bye.”

When inside, I locked the door behind us. He chuckled when I pushed him against the door to kiss him again. He took over, turning to press me against it in return. Jasper lifted me by the thighs, wrapping my legs around his waist. We made out there like that for several minutes.

“We probably shouldn’t do this with a gun on you,” I laughed breathlessly as he began to suckle at my throat, my head falling against the door. His hand was going up and down my thigh as he did, sending electrical shocks that went to my sock-covered toes.

“Oops,” he mumbled as he quickly put me back down to the ground. “Shit. Forgot about that. Sorry.”

“It’s okay. I’m pretty sure that it’s a risk of dating a lawman,” I joked, making him smirk a little.

He turned around to take off his coat, and I began to help him. Carefully, I moved my fingers over his shoulders, letting them drag down as I removed it. I took his suit jacket as well, hanging them both up in my closet. He was wearing a black vest and a tight pair of matching slacks that made his ass look amazing. Openly staring, I watched as he pulled off his gloves, sticking them in his pocket, before removing his gun harness.

“If you want, you can put it in my desk so that you don’t have to run out to the car,” I offered. I knew that he usually kept it in his briefcase, but he hadn’t brought it in with him.

“Perfect,” he replied, following me to the unused desk in the corner. There were three drawers. The top was filled with pens and notebooks, the second housed his Christmas gifts. Opening the one that was barely filled at the bottom, I allowed him to put it down because I wasn’t comfortable handling his gun. “Thank you.”

“Mhmm,” I mumbled as I moved my hands down his ribs as I stood beside him.

Jasper turned to face me. Slowly, I traced the bottom of the vest until I got to the buttons. I did each one carefully, pushing it off his shoulders before going to hang it up as well. He was careful with his clothes, and I would be too. When I came back, I began to work on his red tie.

“I don’t suppose there is anything that I can take off for you?” He impishly asked.

I giggled, shaking my head. “No. I’m just going to help you get more comfortable.”

“Okay,” he smiled a little, tugging me towards him for another gentle kiss. The knot gave way, and I pulled the silk from around his neck as we continued. When I drew away, I hung it around mine so that my hands were free to begin to work on his shirt. He undid his cuffs for me quickly. Jasper was left in nothing but his white undershirt and slacks.

“There,” I said as I went to the closet to put the rest of the items away. “Honestly, you should just bring your suitcase in so that I can go ahead and wash your clothes.”

“You don’t need to do that,” he promptly replied.

I shook my head. “I want to.”

“You’re my girlfriend, not my slave,” he stated earnestly. Like it was even a concern.

I laughed at his seriousness. “Hm, I know. I wanted to do it for you before, and I want to do it now. Because I want to take care of you. Because, you know, I love you.”

He actually blushed a little, surprised for some reason. “It’s going to take a little while to get used to that,” Jasper admitted in a small voice. “I don’t want you to think that I’m just using you ever again. For sex or anything else.”

“I mean, eventually I’d like you to use me for sex at least a little bit,” I teased. “I like being used. It’s fun.”

Without thinking, he jokingly popped my ass just once. It wasn’t hard, just playful and funny. Jasper realized what he had done just a second after, his eyes getting wider. It actually made me laugh in surprise, but I immediately reigned it in. I narrowed my eyes at him.

“Did you just spank me?” I pretended to be offended. He realized right away, his lips pushed together as he turned a little pinker. “Dr. Hale, you didn’t have permission to do that.”

“Oops,” he repeated, trying to look bashful and failing. “Sorry. Forgot myself. You were just being so sassy and asking for a smacking and-”

“Asking for a smacking?” I interrupted, laughing at his adorably thick accent. “I wasn’t asking for nothing,” I continued to taunt.

He grabbed my hips, pulling me towards him roughly. “I was being sincere.”

“So was I.”

Jasper groaned, leaning down to kiss my throat gently. “I know you were, my naughty little girl.”

His bare hands started to sneak under the hem of my sweater again along my stomach as he began to lightly nip. I tilted my head back and to the side, closing my eyes as he expertly gave me attention.

There was a knock on the door. He moaned in protest, bringing his hands to his face to cover it. I pulled away from him, giggling at his attitude. “It’s probably for the best.”

“If you say so,” he complained, pouting.

“Hey!” Tanya said brightly when I opened my bedroom door. She peeked over me and made a little face at my boyfriend. Quickly, she smiled at me again. “So, we’re heading out. See you next year. Have a Merry Christmas, okay?”

“I will. You too.”

She brought me into a hug, squeezing me tightly. “Thanks again for my gifts. They’re so perfect for the beach.”

“You’re welcome,” I replied. We had done our exchange the day before. I had found a bunch of summer-themed stuff on sale at a Target for ninety percent off in some forgotten corner. It was exactly what she needed. A fun beach towel, a bag, and a couple of other matching accessories. They were all bright pink. “Have a good time. Be safe.”

“You too,” she said, holding my shoulders. Tanya looked at Jasper again. “If you do anything-”

“T, it’s fine,” I laughed awkwardly, pushing her out of my room. “Please stop. He’s being great.”

“For now,” she whispered then hugged me again. “Okay. We’re going. Happy Holidays.”

I followed her to the door so that I could lock it when she left. Edward had already taken her stuff to the car and was waiting for her there. They were already running late.

“Sorry about that,” I said quietly when I turned around. Jasper was standing just outside my room, watching.

He shook his head, looking away. “She has a reason not to like me.”

I shrugged in response. “It’s not her place to be angry with you over that. It’s mine, and since I’ve decided to forgive you, she’ll have to eventually get over it.”

“Have you forgiven me?” He questioned. I nodded. Jasper swallowed, taking a deep breath through his nose. “So easily?”

“Well,” I began, “you’re obviously sincerely remorseful. And though I’ve found your contriteness charming, I don’t wish for it to last forever. Eventually, I want you to not be afraid to play with me again. To spank me. Maybe not tonight, but very soon.”

Jasper nodded his head. “I know. I want that, too. And I am sorry. I didn’t mean to do that earlier.”

“I don’t want you to apologize,” I promised. “It was just unexpected.”

“Obviously, I’ve missed your ass,” he ruefully stated, looking down at his feet as he stuck his hands into his pockets.

I giggled, nodding my head. “So, how many spankings do you owe me?”

“I’m pretty sure I wiped that particular slate clean a few moments ago.”

“Just the one?” I pouted. “Really? Man, I need to up my game,” I deadpanned, making him laugh. “Okay. So, anyway...” I shook my head, laughing a bit myself. “Would you like to order dinner?” I offered just so we could maybe try to relax.

He brought his hand out of his pocket real quick as if to stop me. “Um, actually, I was hoping that we could talk about something first. If that’s okay. I just want to get it out of the way.”

“Of course,” I responded, instantly worried. I didn’t like the words or the distance between us. It made me nervous.

Taking a deep breath, he swallowed deeply as if he was nervous too. “Um, so I was hoping that you would like to join me at my family’s home for Christmas day. I know that I’ve asked before and you haven’t said anything. If not, it’s okay. I understand that it’s too soon, and it’s probably overwhelming. And if you don’t want to, I’ll come over as soon as I can. I just-”

“I’d like to go,” I answered, making him instantly smile. He looked so relieved. “I mean, your mom has probably already picked out the napkins for our wedding. Don’t want to disappoint her.”

Jasper laughed. “Um... You have no idea how much she’s been talking about you, actually. She’s asked whether you were joining me or not every day for a week now. I just told her that I couldn’t promise anything and that we hadn’t discussed our plans yet. She’s not real pleased with my lack of willingness to provide information.”

“What have you told her about us?” I asked curiously. I was going to need to know that.

He looked away for a moment. “The truth, mostly. That we just became... exclusive... a couple of weeks ago and that we haven’t been able to see each other much. And that she needs to calm the hell down.” I giggled softly at his words. He took a few steps towards me. “You really want to come? You don’t have to do it just for me.”

I shook my head, taking a couple of steps towards him. “I want to. It’s a little... scary, but I do. I want to meet the rest of your family.”

“Well, you’ve met most of them. It’s just Mom, Dad, Rose, and her husband, Emmett. And my Mamaw,” he said in a happy rush. “We’re a small bunch.”

“Aw,” I giggled, smiling at his choice of words. He chuckled, finally closing the distance between us. “So, um, what do we have going on tomorrow if we’ve settled Christmas day?”

Jasper put his arms around my waist. “First, a nice breakfast, and then I’ve got something planned for the whole day... if you’re willing to indulge me.”