



## The Desmond Hotel

It was so cold in New York when I arrived, but I loved it. The air stung my cheeks, my little-used scarf wrapped around my neck. Jasper had surprised me with a new coat overnighted the day before. He said that he wanted me to be adequately prepared. It was especially thick, the inside lined with soft faux fur. Black, it went past my knees and had a hood. They also came with a pair of luscious vegan leather gloves, also lined.

He was working when I arrived, so I got a taxi and went to the hotel that he rented for us in Albany. He said the one the FBI provided him was in the slums, and he wouldn't let me step foot inside. We were staying instead at The Desmond. I walked up to the front desk and smiled nervously at the clerk.

The blond woman looked up instantly, grinning. "Hi, may I help you?"

"Um... yeah. Hi, my... partner... has already checked in. I just need to pick up my key."

"Yes, ma'am. What's the name?"

"Dr. Hale. Jasper Hale."

Something lit up in her eyes as she recognized the name. "Oh, Mrs. Hale! Yes! He said you would be coming to pick it up this afternoon," she responded in a hurry. He came earlier in the day to make sure that everything was alright with the room. She pulled out a fancy thick envelope, the key card, and a dozen red roses in a vase from behind the counter.

'Darlin' was written beautifully on the front of the envelope. Inside was a card with a drawing that he had done. It was in black marker. The center was a thick, outlined rose, and it was surrounded entirely in abstract lines, swirls, and dots. I smiled to myself as I flipped it over. The note said, "I already miss you, my sweet little girl. Get ready for me, and I'll take you out to dinner when I get in tonight. I should be done by around seven. I love you.- Jasper."

When I walked into the suite, I knew precisely why he had chosen it. The large wooden four-poster bed took up the wall in the very center of the room. There was also a sofa, a large sturdy looking wooden table and a desk. In the bathroom, there was a separate shower and a Jacuzzi tub that could fit three people comfortably.

It was just four in the afternoon. I decided to quickly get showered and do my hair and makeup before running to a shopping center not far from the hotel. There were a couple of things that I could get to make our next few evenings better.

Sparkling wine, bubble bath, whipped cream, strawberries, rope, and scissors. I could only imagine what the old woman checking out thought. She was probably exactly correct on what we were going to do with them. I couldn't wait.

Within a second of walking into the hotel room again, I was in Jasper's arms. I squeaked in surprise but quickly melted against him. It was a struggle to not drop my loot. He kissed me several times as if he had not seen me in months.

"You're early!" I excitedly declared. It was just after six.

"I snuck out. What do we have here?" He asked playfully when he took my bags from me.

"Why don't you look and see?" I offered seductively.

He took them over to the table and began to remove my purchases. The rope was very last. It was softer nylon, a deep blue. Jasper glanced back at me, smirking a little. He lifted it up. "Thank you. I love how thoughtful you are about these things."

I giggled. "It's a perfect opportunity. I know that you've been wanting to play with some for a while."

Jasper nodded, his back still turned to me. "On our Mexican vacation, you're going to spend at least one night tied to something," he murmured as he took off his jacket and threw it over the chair. When he turned around, I noticed that he was wearing the blue tie that I had gotten him for Christmas.

“Mm, we could start practicing for that right now if you want to,” I flirtatiously urged, biting my lip. He warmly chuckled, his eyes going from my feet to my eyes. He was considering my offer very seriously.

“Tempting. Tomorrow, though. I have plans for you already tonight, Ms. Swan.”

“Oh?” I inquired as I walked towards him. I took my new coat off and threw it over the chair with his. He obviously liked my new dress, long, tight, and red. I was wearing super comfortable lined leggings as well. They were black, and the sides had white roses going up the sides of my calves.

He took my gloved hand and brought my wrist up to his lips. His mouth moved over my palm, gazing up at me as he kissed each of my fingertips. Then he removed my glove very carefully with his teeth. I let out a shuddering breath, my heart speeding up. I would have done anything he wanted right then. Delicately, he pulled the other off as well.

“I have reservations for us to one of the nicest restaurants in the city.” Jasper kissed my bare palm. I swallowed, wondering how he could be so calm. “It’s Italian. And then, I bought tickets to see a special concert at The Egg,” he explained casually as he kissed the tips of my fingers. His lips were soft and warm. “It’s a popular entertainment venue here. We’ll be seeing a New Year’s themed symphony.”

“That sounds wonderful,” I whimpered.

He brought my hand to his cheek, pushing my palm against it. “And tomorrow, I’ll get off before eight, hopefully. I want you to be ready for me when I get here because I’m going to take you out for a drink and show you off to my colleagues. But I plan to have you back here before midnight.”

I let my thumb rub over his lip. He kissed it lightly. “I do have one request for tomorrow. If you don’t mind.”

“Anything.”

“Kiss me at midnight.”

Jasper smiled. “Don’t worry, I was planning on it. You just might be tied to the bed when I do.”

“Perfect!” I beamed, making him laugh. “I’m so excited for whatever you have arranged for us. What do you want to do New Year’s Day since you’re off?”

“Lazy morning and a scene in the evening?” He supplied easily as his fingers ran down my sides.

“Mm, yes... Sounds good. You in charge or...” I trailed off, looking up at him innocently as I did.

His eyes got wider for a second, looking away from me as he began to blush. He bit his lip, chewing it for a moment. “How about we switch?” Jasper asked when he looked back at me.

I nodded, tracing the lines of buttons of his vest. “Out or in?”

“Let’s stay in. We can eat here and go to the bar. I am tired, and it’s stupid fucking cold,” he admitted with a wrinkled nose. I giggled. “Is that okay? I know that you want to play in public.”

“Sweetheart, I’m not cruel. I wouldn’t do anything outside in this weather,” I smirked playfully. “Sounds good, though. It’s probably better to do your first time in private anyway.”

He chuckled softly. “That makes me sound like a virgin.”

I laughed as well. “Oh, I think that we both know that’s not true. But I want you to be as comfortable as possible. And I can’t use your handcuffs on you in public.”

He turned redder. “Mm, that is true.”

Biting my lip again, I looked over at the clock. “What time is our reservations for tonight, doctor?” I questioned as my hands slid down his chest.

He looked at his watch. It was six-fifteen. I leaned into him, starting to kiss his neck. “They’re at seven-fifteen. It’s only about ten minutes away from the hotel, though.”

“Oh, good,” I smirked a little as I dropped onto my knees in front of him instantly. He realized what I was doing and helped me undo his belt so that I could do the button and zipper. Jasper was already hard and ready for me. He enjoyed the conversation as much as I did. We had only been apart for about thirty-six hours, but I needed him again.

We were only about five minutes late for our reservation. It was worth it.

At seven in the morning, Jasper woke me up with several kisses. It was actually hard to open my eyes. “I got you some hot cocoa mix and some croissants for when you want breakfast. And a cup of fruit salad.”

“Thank you,” I grumbled through my sleepiness, rubbing my eyes. I had been dead to the world. We had made love well into the night. He seemed so awake, and I wasn’t sure how. “You’re so thoughtful.”

“You came up here just for me. It’s the least that I could do.”

“I’m spoiled,” I smiled, reaching up for his woolen coat. He was already wearing his gloves, and he stroked my cheek gently with them. I pulled him down by his lapels for a deep and lingering kiss.

“Be ready by eight, Isabella. When we go out, you may speak normally, but you will be as polite as possible. And you will keep your naughty jokes to yourself, or you’ll regret it. You will be well-behaved in front of my co-workers,” he threatened playfully.

Like he even had to say that. He was smirking a little. “Yes, sir.”

“We’ll leave the bar by eleven. You’re going to serve me those strawberries and champagne that you so thoughtfully picked up for us when we return. And then we’re going to bring in the New Year in our own special way.”

“Yes, sir,” I repeated as I lifted up and kissed him thoroughly on the lips again. “I love you. Have a good day.”

“I always sincerely try. I love you, too. Have a good day, too.”

I couldn’t go back to sleep once he left. So, I straightened up the room and got things ready for the evening. After breakfast, I sliced the strawberries from the day before and went out to buy some flutes for the champagne. I arranged all the toys on the dresser that I brought with me. It didn’t take much time.

While pampering myself, I continued to do research on the Tracker case. There were stories on the front pages of some of the papers at the store that I went to. I bought them to read while I wore a face mask and did my nails. Another body was found in Rochester in the days before, about two hours away. Most of them seemed to be around I-90.

On my computer, I had neatly organized my research. Bodies found in New York state with similar MOs with suspects, ones with convictions, and those with no leads. Then the surrounding states as well. There were so many. I wasn’t sure how so many women could go missing, and no one was screaming about it. Someone, somewhere, had to say something. Was it really that easy to make a young black girl in America disappear? The idea made me want to scream. I wondered how many there actually were.

I laid in my underwear for most of the afternoon, changing my tactics on my research methods. Instead of looking for a news story about bodies and murders, I started looking for missing person's cases. New York City itself had a shocking number. I decided to save that for another day. Albany had less, but still too many. I decided to look at only a certain age range: teens and very young women. There were only a few. I wrote down their names and saved all of their information for a more in-depth inquiry later.

Then I started on Rochester. One girl's name kept coming up over and over again. Bree. Bree Tanner. Her mother wanted everyone to know her name. Bree Tanner was an African American girl who was a junior in college who went on a blind date with a charming rich white man. They had a good time, by her own admission, but when it was time to take her home, he didn't. Instead, he took her to his apartment, bound, raped, and tortured her for over a day. He said that eventually, he was going to kill her when he finished using her. He was going to make her his slave. Somehow, the poor girl escaped, and an arrest was made. But the family of the accused was apparently old money in the area, and the charges were quickly dropped. The police actually apologized to the asshole.

Two months to the day after the charges were thrown out, Bree Tanner disappeared and was never heard from again. It was now five years later, the anniversary just days before. Her mother was still seeking justice but had been getting nothing but opposition from every direction. She said that because he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, that he was getting away with murder. And it certainly seemed like she was right. She even had a court order to not even say the guy's name because of defamation suits. It was almost always 'the accused' in articles. When I read his name, it made me cringe. If I were to make up a fake rich bad guy name for a story, it's not what I would have chosen because it was way too on the nose.

Bree never wavered in her belief that it was him that brutally raped and tortured her for hours. She knew it without a single doubt. She was conscious and sober for the entire horrible event. In her statements, she claimed his face would be forever burned into her memory.

The family of the rapist obviously worked very hard to have his name scrubbed clean from any court documents. I couldn't find any online. I was sure that there had to be some sort of file or record of the arrest or something. It seemed like kind of a big deal to not leave a single trace. It was only briefly mentioned in some of the stories in old papers, and I had to dig for those. I might have signed up for free trials to do so.

Unsurprisingly, I got lost in my work.

I had to rush to get dressed, but I was waiting with my coat and gloves in my hands. I was ready and made up prettily for the evening when Jasper arrived. My dress was long-sleeved, crushed green velvet with a low V front. It was short, so I wore thick opaque thigh highs. You could see up the sides through mesh windows. I went for chunky high-heeled boots

because I didn't want to die on the ice if I could help it. I wore the necklace that he gave me for Christmas along with a thick, black velvet choker.

"Good evening, Isabella," he said with a smile as he shut the door. "You are stunning, darlin." He walked behind me to examine me from behind. "I can't wait to show off my gorgeous little slut," he praised, his hand sliding over the curve of my ass. "I've been bragging about how you've come to spend the holiday with me for two days," Jasper admitted, pecking just below my ear. I couldn't help but smile. "So, are you going to be a good girl for me tonight?"

I nodded as his hand slid around my front. I leaned back into him, and Jasper squeezed me to his chest. His fingers spread wide over my stomach, pushing up over my breast.

He smiled against my neck, kissing it lightly again. "I know that you will be. I'm going to go change my shirt and freshen up, and we'll leave. Is there anything that you need to do before we go?" I shook my head. "Good." He took his laptop out of his briefcase and set it up on the dresser beside the assortment of toys. Then he took something out of his jacket that was in a brown bag and laid it with them. He ran his finger over the riding crop that I had brought with me in my suitcase. "I hope that you're ready because it's going to be an extremely long night for you."