



## In Hysterics

One hour passed, and Jasper didn't call or text. I couldn't hold a conversation with Alice, so I just let her go. I wanted to make sure that my phone was charged when he finally did.

"Please, just tell me that you're alright," I messaged him when I couldn't take it anymore. It was left unread.

The news reported that one officer was killed and several more were injured in the raid. The mother of the young hostage was taken to the hospital in critical condition. But, at least, the child appeared to be unharmed. Royce Mathew King was arrested with only minor injuries, including but not limited to, a broken nose and jaw which he was taken to the hospital to treat.

Two hours.

My nerves caused me to vomit. I was pacing a hole in the floor when my mouth began to water, and my dizziness suddenly overwhelmed me. My whole body twisted until my stomach was empty of our long-forgotten pleasant lunch. Holding onto the cold white porcelain bowl, I willed the night to just be over. I wanted it to all be a terrible nightmare. I wanted my boyfriend to wake me up with kisses and sweet words.

When the knock at the door came, I gagged automatically. But my stomach had nothing left to give. I swallowed the bile back and stood before slowly walking to it. My trembling hand could barely twist the golden knob.

On the other side was Sam. He looked sad and battle-worn.

“No!” I shouted at him in instant agony. My stomach heaved again.

His eyes got huge. “It’s okay, honey. He’s alive, but he’s in the hospital. He wanted me to come to get you,” he rushed to say, grabbing my arms to keep me from crumbling to the floor.

I looked at him slowly. “Jasper’s okay?”

“Yes, ma’am,” he replied quickly, nodding his head vigorously. “He will be, anyway. Soon. Very soon. He was shot under the arm, but it went straight through and didn’t hit anything critical.”

My eyes got huge in surprise. “What do you mean, critical?”

The man swallowed, a little taken aback by my intensity. He had a long day, I imagined, and my hysteria didn’t help. “It just nicked his collarbone on the way out. It was a small caliber, came out clean. He’s awake, just hurting a little.”

Putting both of my hands on my face, I began to cry in relief. “Oh, thank fucking God.” My shoulders shook with the violence of it. I had never been so scared in my life. It felt as if I was already beginning to mourn him.

Sam cleared his throat after a moment. “Alright, honey. You go get your stuff together, and I’ll take you to him. Jasper wants to see you. And he asked if you could bring him some clothes and your book. He said that you’d know the one.”

I nodded and wordlessly went to go do what I was told like a zombie.

The entire car ride was silent as the grave. I wasn’t sure what I could ask, and I wasn’t positive that it was a good idea to open my mouth. It still felt as if I was going to throw up again. My heart hurt in my chest, and my ribs felt too tight.

There were police cars literally everywhere around the hospital. He parked up front and led me through the hallways of the emergency room. Jasper had been moved to a private room, though. I got a lot of looks as I walked beside Sam. There were a ton of cops there for those who were injured, and they recognized me from the night before.

There was a uniformed officer standing guard in front of Jasper's door. His partner didn't knock. Nothing was going to stop me from going inside, anyway.

Jasper beamed when he saw me, lifting his hand a little. "There's my brilliant woman!"

He was lying shirtless, his chest covered in thick white bandages that were soaked in his blood. His left arm was in a sling, and an IV was in his other. There was more speckled haphazardly around his forehead and in his hair. I noticed that the knuckles on his right hand were black and purple, swollen and angry looking. If he didn't break his hand, he came close.

Gasping, I wanted to just dissolve into the floor. My tears came explosively. It was a mixture of every emotion that I had over the past twenty-four hours. He had literally taken me to my greatest height before the threat of losing him made me drop to my very lowest point. I could taste my relief in the salt.

"Aw, darlin, I'm fine. Come here," he cooed, beckoning me with his right hand limply. His voice was uncharacteristically light and high. Almost airy. "Come here," he encouraged again as he patted his thigh.

I rushed to the bed and without a single thought, crawled on top of Jasper to hug him desperately. Before I could hurt him, he grabbed me with his good arm and pulled me to the right side of his body. Instantly we were kissing. His hand gripped me tightly. His sweet mouth obliging my need to taste and feel him as much as I was allowed.

"I was so scared!"

"I'm fine," he repeated the lie, smiling at me. "I am so proud of you right now."

"What? Why?" I asked in confusion.

"Uh," my boyfriend laughed, "I've been up here for fucking months, looking at the evidence right in front of me with every tool at my disposal and you. You, my smart little girl, figured it out in a day. Because you got a vibe."

I shook my head. "I was just-"

"No, no, no, no," he argued as he shook his head as well. "You don't disagree right now, Isabella."

"I just told you what I was reading," I interjected.

Jasper smiled too big. It was so proud. "I told you that we just needed some little scrap of paper," he mused as he played with my hair before sliding his hand down my back. He was

incredibly high on painkillers. “We just needed that little link, and you gave it to us. So, you saved their lives. My pretty little girl.” He patted my ass, not caring that his partner was in the room with him.

“He had someone?” I pulled away in horror. I turned to look at Sam and then back at Jasper.

“He only had them for a little while. Maybe a few hours. A couple of girls,” he stated matter-of-factly. “They’re in the hospital too, but they should be just fine. We caught him red fucking handed, and that son of a bitch is going to get what’s coming to him.”

Sam chuckled tiredly before sighing. “Your man here punched King in the face after he was shot and knocked him out cold. He even handcuffed him!”

Jasper laughed, leaning his head back against his stark white pillow. “I didn’t realize that I had been hit, to be honest. I didn’t feel a goddamn thing until afterward. Someone pointed out that I was bleeding.”

I looked between them in shock. Suddenly, I was so tired. My brain was uselessly rattling around in my head. They didn’t seem fazed. Overwhelmed, I just began to cry again. I needed dinner, drinks, and a nap. Nothing could be funny at that moment.

“Baby, what’s wrong?” Jasper purred into my hair, holding my head to his chest with his arm tightly. He rocked us back and forth gently. Nothing could have bothered him right then, I realized. “You smell nice. Did you take a bath? I got that big tub for you because I thought that you’d like it.”

“I took a shower after I got sick.”

“Aw,” he pouted. “You’re not hungover, are you? From yesterday? Did I give you too much?”

“No, you idiot,” I laughed, pressing my face into his neck. “I was so scared. I knew that something was wrong, but I couldn’t talk to you.”

He nodded absently. “Oh! Yeah, my phone broke. Goddammit. I mean, it’s all backed up, but still, it’s annoying.” He continued to pat my butt, obviously enjoying it. “Sorry about that. But it’s okay, darlin. It’s not the first time that I’ve been shot, and it probably won’t be the last.”

“It better be!” I shouted at his face.

Sam laughed at our scene. “Stop talking, man. You’re not helping.”

“Listen to him!” I squeaked against his skin. He smelled strongly of antiseptic.

Jasper lightly kissed my forehead and smiled. “Okay. Okay. Sorry. It’s all over now. They’ll let me leave tomorrow, and we’ll get to fly home soon. We’ll probably have to talk to some people, but we’ll get to start that vacation early.”

“Yeah, you’re going to be on leave for the next few weeks, whether you like it or not,” Sam chuckled.

“Oh, no,” Jasper laughed with his friend. “How horrible! I’m taking until fucking March off,” he declared with an earnest nod. “We’re going to go to Mexico. And we’re going to stay drunk the entire time.” He patted me again, harder this time.

I nodded weakly against his neck.

A nurse came in to check his stats. I wasn’t going to move. Jasper wasn’t going to let me, anyway.

Sometime early in the morning, I fell asleep while still being held by his good arm against his bare chest.

I woke up to a thunderously loud sob and the door swinging open.

“Oh, good god,” Jasper mumbled groggily. I looked up slowly in confusion at him then the door. His parents and sister were standing at the entrance. I looked around for a clock. It was just after eleven in the morning.

Caroline rushed to the bed and hugged him from his uninjured side, pressing me into his chest. “Thank goodness you’re okay!” She wept.

“Mom! Stop! You’re probably suffocating Bella,” he complained. He wasn’t high anymore, and I could tell that he was in pain.

“Sorry! Sorry, honey,” she said as pulled back. She started petting his hair. “How are you feeling?”

“Like I got shot on my day off,” he stated sarcastically.

Rosalie giggled softly, and he smiled at her. He waved weakly. I tried to sit up, but he rewrapped his arm around my waist and pulled me close to him again.

“Hey, bro.”

“Where’s the idiot?” He asked with a smirk. “Stopped at the vending machine?”

“Oh, Emmett sends his love. He’s got the man-flu,” she informed him, coming to sit on the other side of the bed in one of the free chairs. “So, you caught the bad guy?”

“Sure did. Punched the bastard right in the face, too.” He lifted his fist and showed it to her.

She hissed through her teeth, flinching. “Does it hurt?”

He actually smirked at her. “No. It feels great.” He meant it.

“Are you in pain?” His mother asked worriedly. She was hovering over the bed, her hands gripping the railing.

Her son shook his head. “Nah. I’m alright. I am hungry, though. And I’d bet that Bella is, too. I don’t think that either one of us has eaten since yesterday afternoon.”

“Justin! Go get them something real quick!” She ordered her husband. He instantly stood from the chair that he had just sat down in without further instructions, but there was a knock at the door. Everyone turned to look at it.

This time, it was three people in suits and FBI badges. Jasper smiled a little when he saw them.

“Mama, why don’t you go get us something good to eat? Lots of junk. I want some fries,” Jasper requested, but he was really telling her that it was time for her to leave.

I finally stood from the bed, my body sorer than it was the day before by a thousand. Jasper’s hand stayed on my back the entire time.

“Why don’t you come with us, honey?” Caroline called to me. I nodded, but then when I began to walk towards the door, almost absently, Jasper grabbed my hand.

“Actually, stay.” The FBI agents looked at each other in confusion and then back to us. “You’re going to want to speak to her as well. She’s the one that gave me the tip.”

“And what’s your name?” One of them inquired.

For the first time all morning, I spoke. “Isabella Swan. I’m Dr. Hale’s girlfriend, and I have some research that I’ve been doing that you may want to look at as well.”

We talked to his colleagues for a couple of hours, and they recorded all of it, writing notes as they went. I sent them links to all my research with my phone. By the time his family was allowed back in the room, the hospital was giving him his discharge papers.

The bullet didn't even break his collarbone, just grazing it. The wound was clean or, so I was told. He would have to keep it packed until it healed, but I would help him with that. As much as it surprised me that they were letting him go home early, it was for the best.

Jasper ate cold french fries from a McDonald's bag in the backseat of his parent's rental SUV while sitting in between his sister and me. His partner returned his early in the morning, taking his stuff to the hotel room. I flushed when I thought about him seeing some of our toys out. I had cleaned and straightened up nervously, but I kept everything out in the vain hope that he would come back to me after only a couple of hours.

Quickly, I typed the word 'toys' on my phone and showed it to him. He pursed his lips to hide a smile and nodded his head in understanding.

"Would y'all mind giving Bella and me some time to rest and get cleaned up? I think that I'd like to have dinner in the restaurant downstairs in a couple of hours," he asserted to his parents. They had gotten rooms at the Desmond to be close to Jasper.

"Of course," Justin replied quickly.

Caroline opened her mouth to argue, but Jasper cut her off. "Mama, would you mind picking up my medicine for me? I'm also going to need some gauze and tape."

"Yes, baby! I'll get everything that you need," she promised sweetly.

Rosalie looked over at her brother and smirked a little. They had a silent conversation, and Jasper snorted in amusement, wrapping his uninjured arm around my shoulder.

They left us at the door.

When we were inside, Jasper pushed me against it. My arms wrapped tightly around his waist, starting to get more emotional as we became more passionate. It was the first time that we had been totally alone since the day before. I felt so desperate as we kissed.

"He could have killed you. It was so close to your heart," I whispered, unable to look at him.

Quickly, Jasper shook his head. "Miles. He missed by miles, darlin," he purred against my lips. I shook my head in return. It was such a blatant lie. It wasn't miles, it was barely inches.

“I can’t lose you now.”

He kissed me again forcefully, his hand on my cheek to hold me in place.

“If they want to kill me, they’re going to have to try a lot harder than that,” Jasper declared with a slight smirk. “Now, why don’t we put away all these fun things before my mother burst in here. The trip to the pharmacy will only keep her busy for so long.”

“I’ll do that. Go sit down. Here, let me help you with your coat,” I mumbled before I began to tug it very gently from his arms. It just hung on his shoulders. He was wearing a button-down on one side, and it was draped over the sling.

Jasper nodded, unbuttoning his shirt and throwing it on the bed. “Yeah. Probably a good idea.” He sat against the headboard, propping up on pillows.

“Do you need anything?”

“Would you mind handing me the story and my glasses?” He asked softly. “I’ve already finished it once, and I’m ready to get started again.”

I got it from my purse. His glasses were on the table with the other things his partner brought by. He leaned over and picked up one of his red pens from the bedside table.

“What do you think?” I wondered curiously, offering it to him.

He pulled the thick black binder onto his lap before reaching for my hand. “I loved it,” he smiled, bringing my knuckles up to his lips to kiss. Jasper’s deep azure eyes peered into mine with a shocking amount of intensity. The hair on the back of my neck actually stood up despite him being hurt. “But I do have a few mistakes for you to fix, Isabella,” he sternly clarified, holding my gaze.

I bit my lip, smiling to myself. He purposefully made me blush even though neither of us was up to that. Nor would he be for a very long time. But it didn’t stop me from wanting him. Maybe it made my desire even stronger. I moved the binder from his thighs before crawling onto the bed to straddle them. He pulled me tight to him, his hand slipping down the back of my pants. I could feel him smile against my cheek, taking a deep breath.

“I look forward to your corrections, sir. I’m always looking to improve.”