



Chapter Four: In a Car

Alice picked me up a little before noon the following day. It was spring break for the school she was teaching at, and she was happy to get out and do normal things during daylight. We hadn't seen each other much since the shooting, though we had spoken a lot.

"Hey, gorgeous." She beamed at me as soon as I got into her little yellow sports car. I always felt way too big in it. She had it since she was a teenager and it was her baby. She had just gotten the paint job redone the year before so that it was the color of sunshine.

"Hi!" I replied, smiling in return. "Okay, I need so much help with this meeting. Please use your magical powers and assist me in finding clothes that make me look somewhat professional," I began right away.

"With pleasure," she remarked with a grin. "Lunch first?"

"Always."

"So, how's Jasper doing?" She asked as we set off towards the restaurant we had talked about going to when we planned our day.

"Well," I took a deep breath and just started letting it all out at once. It had been a stressful couple of months, and so much had been going on, not only to us but between Jasper

and myself. Texting wasn't the same as in person. It felt as if I spoke for the entire drive and could have kept going for the whole day.

Our meal was going to be sandwiches. We were eating at a deli where you order at the counter, nothing too fancy. There were a few people ahead of us, but I barely noticed as I continued to talk. It was lunchtime, so it wasn't surprising it was busy.

"And he's cool with you going to the party even with Edward being there?" My best friend questioned, pulling her wallet out of her purse to get ready to pay.

"Yeah. He trusts me. And we're friends now. He's not a terrible person, just-" I stopped, not knowing how to finish that. "It's whatever. He feels awkward around Edward now. They glare at each other when they're in the same room. It's not like we hang out or anything, but sometimes he'll be there when I spend time with Tanya."

"Jasper's just mad that boy wants some of what he got," she giggled, saying it in a funny voice.

I rolled my eyes. "Well, Jasper shouldn't worry because the only man I want is him."

"I think you should totally play-" She began as the person in front of us turned around to look at us.

"Bella?" Rosalie asked in surprise. I hadn't recognized her. She was in workout clothes with her hair thrown up. I hadn't seen her without makeup before. She was still stunning, though. If I were honest, she could have been a model, but so could her brother.

"Oh, my god! Rose! Hi!" I blurted out, looking at my friend with wide eyes. I was so glad she didn't finish her sentence. "Um, Alice, this is Jasper's twin sister, Rosalie."

Alice smiled at her welcomingly. "Of course! I've seen so many pictures of you. It's nice to meet you! Your brother loves you so much."

"Yeah, he's spoken about you," she replied almost shyly, nodding. "Sorry, I didn't mean to eavesdrop. You don't hear the name 'Jasper' too often, and it caught my attention."

"No! It's okay. So, what are you up to?" I inquired, trying to make small talk while the people in front of her took forever. It was an elderly couple with their young grandkids.

"Oh, it's my day off. I just went to do some yoga, and I decided to treat myself to a nice lunch since I have nothing else to do. What about you?"

I promptly nodded in understanding. "Well, we were about to have lunch and spend the day shopping."

This got her attention. "Oh? What for?"

"So. Much. Stuff," I sighed as I rubbed a hand over my forehead. "I need a new party dress for my roommates thirtieth, and I think I need more clothes that would be good for springtime in New York. Light sweaters and thin long-sleeves. Things like that." I was already in a sleeveless shirt and capri pants. Texas was exceptionally warm and humid today.

Alice leaned in with a sly smirk on her face. "And some slutty underwear for your brother." I swatted her, making my friend giggle.

"She doesn't need to hear that," I whined with a laugh.

"It's fine," she laughed, too. "It's kind of expected, even if it's something I try not to think about." She bowed her head as if she was telling a naughty secret. "I love shopping so much."

"I hate it," I responded dryly. "Do you want to join us?" I offered before looking over at Alice. She quickly nodded in agreement as a broad smile grew on her lush pink lips that was very similar to her brother's.

She seemed genuinely surprised. "I'd love to! If I wouldn't be imposing," Rosalie added sheepishly.

"Ma'am, I can take your order now," the cashier called to us, trying to get our attention. We had been too focused on our conversation and were holding up the line. There were several people behind us, waiting.

"Yeah, sorry," I said to her, ushering Rose to the counter. She was ahead of us. "We'd love for you to join us," I promised her in a whisper.

Nodding her head, she ducked it timidly. "Awesome," she answered before looking at the young cashier. "I'll take the number three, extra cheese, no onions, with the baked chips and unsweet tea. And whatever they'd like." She pointed to us. "My treat."

"Aw, you don't have to do that," I hastily stammered.

"No, I want to. I don't get to go out a lot with female friends. Besides, this is Emmett's credit card. He pays for this one."

"Well, in that case," I remarked almost blandly, making her snicker.

We had such a wonderfully pleasant lunch with her. She was timid and soft-spoken. Both she and Alice enjoyed fashion, and they struck up a quick conversation over it. They had thoughts about what I should wear to the party, both for the day and evening. I couldn't go in a church dress to brunch and then hit the clubs, and there was no way I was wearing something skimpy all day in front of Tanya's family.

We made plans about where to meet up as we walked to the parking lot.

Rosalie's sleek classic sixties Mustang sat beside ours, just a space apart. It was baby blue and perfect. She stopped to stare at Alice's car. She seemed impressed. "Is that a Porsche 944?"

"Yes, it is! Very good!" Alice answered.

"What year?"

"1985."

"Oooo..." she drew out as she ran her fingers over the back. "This is beautiful."

"You're both making me feel so inadequate," I spoke jokingly, even though I meant it. "Jasper keeps insisting I use his new car because he's afraid of my rust bucket."

Curiously, his sister looked at me. "What do you drive?"

"I have a 1953 Chevy that my dad bought for me when I moved in with him when I was a teenager. He had the engine completely redone for me, but that was nearly twenty years ago," I explained. "She's an old lady, but I adore my truck."

"SHUT THE FUCK UP!" She practically shouted at me. "You do not!" I nodded. "That is one of the coolest-looking vehicles. Does it have the round bonnet?" I nodded once more. "Ugh, I'd love to get under that hood."

"Really?" Alice asked in confusion.

"I'm a classic car mechanic. I restore vintage automobiles. Cars, trucks, motorcycles. A few tractors."

"I didn't know that. That's cool!" I felt like a jackass for not asking about her work sooner. She wasn't very talkative, and if we were together, we usually were with Caroline too. She dominated any conversation.

Blushing, she rubbed the back of her neck. "Yeah, I don't really talk about it a lot because I know it's not the most normal career for a woman—"

"Um, who cares about normal? That's dope," Alice reassured her. It made Rose's entire face light up.

"Thank you. Most women find it rather off-putting that I'm a grease monkey. Dad wanted me to sell cars, like him, but I don't have the personality for it."

"Obviously, we think it's cool," Alice pointed to her car as she spoke. "So, we'll meet you at the mall?"

"Yeah. See you there. Park by the Dillard's?" She double-checked just to make sure.

We shopped until six o'clock. The two of them were having so much fun together. I came away with a lot more clothing than I intended, but it would be good to get some new things.

Alice paused as we walked out of a store with another bag of purchases to look at her watch. "Okay, I hate to do this, but I have a date tonight, and I need to get ready. We were out longer than I expected us to be," she declared. "Bella usually rushes through this," she teased, smiling at her new friend.

"Aw, but I was having fun!" Rosalie whined playfully.

"Me too," I admitted.

"Well, how about this? I'll take you home. We can shop a little longer." She peeked at her smartwatch. "Oh! Emmett gets off at eight. Do you want to have dinner with us?"

I looked at my boyfriend's sister and then my best friend. Alice encouragingly gazed at me. I glanced back at Rose. "That sounds great. I'd love to."

After we hit a few more stores, we figured we would pick up some supper and bring it to her place. Emmett had a long day and was tired. So was I, and pizza and some beer sounded fantastic. Rosalie ordered it on an app as we sat in the parking garage of the Galleria. When she finished, she didn't start the car right away. She put the keys in the ignition where they just dangled there for a moment, clinking together loudly in the silence.

"Um, so... I was debating whether I wanted to talk to you about this or not, but I like you, and you seem like a wonderful person, so I don't want you to get blindsided or anything."

"Okay," I drawled, assuming I was about to get a warning about either her husband or mother. Both were a handful.

“Jasper isn’t the kind of man you think he is,” she began, looking nervously down at her lap. “He’s a good guy. Most of the time. I don’t know. Anyway,” she mumbled. “My brother is... violent.”

I narrowed my eyes at her as my cheeks heated. “What do you mean?”

She couldn’t look at me. “He likes to hit women,” she spoke in a hushed tone even though we were alone.

Rosalie barely got the sentence out before I laughed. It was a little nervous and hysterical. I immediately slapped my hand over my mouth. “I’m sorry. You’re serious. That’s rude. But, um, yeah. I know.”

“You do?” She questioned in surprise.

Biting my lip, I considered what to tell her. I didn’t want her to be concerned about me or what happened between us. “It’s- uh, actually how we met. We both like it.”

Her jaw dropped in confusion. “I thought you met through Alice.”

“We did. She likes it, too,” I whispered for some reason. I wasn’t telling a secret. Alice would cheerfully tell her all about it if asked. She wasn’t embarrassed.

“Really?!”

Laughing, I briefly looked out the window. “We’re all into different aspects of BDSM. I’m sorry if this is TMI,” I began, looking down at my hands. “Your concern is genuinely touching, though. Thank you.” I smiled as I glanced at her. “I’d probably want a warning if I weren’t into it.”

Opening and closing her mouth again for a moment, she finally shook her head. “But, you seem so innocent!” I laughed, making her do so. “You like it, too? I mean, you want him to hit you?” She scrunched up her nose.

“Mm, yes,” I giggled, my flush somehow getting brighter. “It’s not the only thing we enjoy. And he’s not beating me. He rarely leaves lasting marks. He’s actually pretty gentle for a-” I stopped, not wanting to call him my Dom in front of his sister. “And it goes both ways, so maybe you should warn him,” I quipped. “He enjoys pain.”

Rosalie snorted. “I know he does. We used to wrestle and fight all the time as kids. It’s probably part of the reason they sent him off to military school,” she hesitated, considering her thoughts. “But he thought he was playing and wasn’t realizing how rough he was. He apologized for it later, when we were adults. Jasper felt guilty for hurting me.”

“That sounds like him,” I breathed. “He’s not harming me. He treats me like a goddess...” I trailed off. “Who needs a good spanking every once in a while.” We both snickered. When we stopped, I looked over at her again. “Thank you, though. Really. Your anxiety over it means a lot. But he’s never hurt me, and I don’t think he could. He’s giving me something I require deep down in my soul. Things we both need.”

“That sounds... intense.”

“It can be, but it’s also a lot of fun.”

She smirked. “My brother isn’t usually known for being a fun guy.”

“Really?” I said in surprise. “I always have such a good time with him, even when I’m not tied to something.”

Cackling, Rosalie threw her head back. “It’s always the quiet ones,” she mused before finally starting up the car. She glanced in my direction with a sly smile. “Thank you for inviting me today. This is the most fun I’ve had in a while.”