



Chapter Forty-one:

And somehow, my life became more normal than I ever expected it to be. As soon as I was settled into our home, it was like living in the trailer was the oddity. It was amazing, and I loved it. And so did Edward.

I was pretty sure we christened every single surface in the place, from the pool table to the library desk to the hood of some of the cars in the garage. In the middle of the day, mind you.

What amazed me about the whole thing was how quickly it all just felt right. It took less than a week for me to feel absolutely at home.

I wasn't exactly certain how my weekdays would go when I was no longer kept busy with lunches with my friends and family, but that was a different story. We would have to take everything one step at a time.

My first lunch was with Sue to discuss wedding details. They were planning a spring event, which I thought was fitting for them. It was a new start. She was extremely excited that I wished to be involved in the whole thing, and I knew it made my father happy too.

She even asked me to be one of her bridesmaids. The maid of honor would be her daughter. Well, if she got over herself, anyway. It was what Sue wanted, and I hope she got her way. Every bride deserves to have the wedding of her dreams and not have it ruined by cranky people, especially family.

The next day, I had a meal with Seth at the house. He was blown away when I offered him the trailer, and he took it happily. When he did, a weight lifted from my shoulders. I knew it wasn't a great place, but who was going to turn down a free home? He was so excited, we drove over right after lunch so he could look around. He hadn't seen more than the living room.

And he even liked the furniture.

Everything worked out really well since his lease ended at the end of the month. They were even raising his rent by about fifty dollars. He was thinking about finding a new place to live or maybe moving back in with his mother until he figured something out. He didn't want to do either, and I could not blame him.

I promised the following week that I would go to his apartment and assist him with packing and cleaning. I was certain Charlie would lend me his truck so we could move all of his stuff. Edward would help, and I figured if I pleaded with Jasper, he would too. Seth had a lot more to move than I did, that was for sure.

The day after that, I met with Alice, and she helped me look through the want ads and different websites so I could find a job. I didn't really want a full-time one, which was good because part-time seemed to be the norm in most places. It was a little frustrating, but by the time my boyfriend got home that evening, I had already put in several applications.

Edward put the word out at different companies that worked with Eagle that he was looking for someone who needed an IT person. I wasn't certain how hard he was trying, though. He wanted me to stay home so he could take care of me.

Honestly, I didn't mind that so much, but I didn't want to grow bored and fatter while sitting on my ass around the house. I didn't even clean that much. Maria did most of that. And there were only so many hours you could spend in the gym before your knees screamed out in pain, and your stomach ached.

That Friday, I took lunch to Edward at the office. It was the first time I had been up since I had agreed to work for him months before, and it was a little odd. But I went with my head held high, knowing exactly who I was and where I belonged.

Angela greeted me happily. I had to wait patiently for his meeting to end, but it didn't take long. He knew I was coming and was just as eager to see me as I was to see him. When everyone was gone, he told her to take a long lunch on him, and to even invite some other assistants if she wanted. She was more than delighted to agree, telling us to enjoy ourselves.

We enjoyed our lunch, but it had nothing to do with food.

When I walked into his office, I figured it would be uncomfortable, but it wasn't. I knew Edward better. I knew his words were true, and his touches were gentle and loving. And just for me. This started out as something almost obscene, but it wouldn't end that way.

He was pleased to have me sit on his lap at his desk as we took turns feeding each other food until it was all gone. And when we had nothing else to entertain our mouths, we snacked on each other.

I was glad he sent her out, and I was even happier the door had a lock. And that Edward's office was the only one on the floor. I prayed the walls were soundproof and thick enough to hide my loud moans as he took me on his desk. And the chair. And on the ground.

When I finally allowed Edward to get back to work, I went to go say hello to Jasper. He was extremely happy with himself, but for a very different reason.

He was busy packing, making sure everything was in order. My friend had been told that morning he would be moving into a bigger office on Monday, and he would be getting a raise to go along with his supervisor position. And it wasn't a little one either. It was nearly twenty-five percent. It would be enough to help pay off their house years earlier than they had planned, and his truck too.

He hadn't told Alice yet but was going to surprise her at dinner. I was sure I would hear about it the second he did. Well, maybe not the exact moment. I was certain they would want to celebrate in their own way.

When Edward got home that night, I asked him about it over our meal. I inquired if it had anything to do with me, if Jasper got a raise because he was my friend.

"I would be lying if I said it didn't have something to do with you, but no. I started watching him more closely when we first met. I watched his job performance and how he interacted with others. It didn't take me long to realize what a good job he was doing. And everyone seems to respect him. He's tough when he needs to be, and he's supportive to the individuals underneath him, but he doesn't get walked all over. He was doing a far better job than the person he's replacing. Honestly, he was already doing it... He's just getting paid for it now," he explained, and I knew he was telling the truth. When he was done with his little

monologue, he smiled. "I see him going places if he keeps this up. I'll give him six months in this position, and if he does as well as I imagine, I may have something better for him to do. He won't have to travel as much, and it's more money."

"He won't disappoint you," I said with no doubt in my mind. He nodded with a slight smile, agreeing with me.

Everything in my life was going so well, and I was so incredibly happy.

But, I had to say I was grateful the Twelfth Night party was the last one we would be going to for at least a couple of months. In the Krewe, this was the big one- the one where they named their royal court and all that jazz. If you were a member, you were required to come, and from what Edward was told, this one shoots all others out of the water- party-wise.

I couldn't really imagine one being any crazier than New Year's Eve. We would have to see.

It was certainly starting out far more quietly.

My boyfriend was carefully shaving his face, the sink filled with hot water, and his lower half covered in nothing but a towel. The image was a little distracting. I was having a hard time applying my eyeliner because I kept looking at him. At one point, he chuckled, smiling slightly to himself.

"What?" I asked with a smirk.

"I don't understand how you can do that to yourself," he commented, running the sharp blade over his neck slowly. "Seems dangerous."

"Ah, it takes years of practice," I teased. "But I was always good with my crayons in kindergarten."

He scoffed and rolled his eyes as he splashed fresh water over his cheeks. I passed him his lotion wordlessly, knowing how he applied it right after he shaved. It made his skin so soft, and the smell was lovely. He took it from my grip, staring at me for a long while. I cocked my head to the side questioningly, smiling.

"You are so gorgeous," he finally declared.

It was my turn to roll my eyes. "Thanks. If I could wear this towel to the party, I would. I'm sick of dresses and corsets and pantyhose."

“Ah, that’s a shame,” he declared with a smirk on his handsome face. “I quite enjoy all those things. You are always so breathtaking that it’s hard not to just take you back upstairs and have my way with you.”

“Why don’t we skip the dress, corset, and hose and just go to having your way?” I asked, letting my towel slip a little to expose more of my breasts. Edward only groaned as he walked out of the bathroom. I had a feeling this was to keep himself from doing something that would make us late.

“Tonight,” he stated in a deep voice, the tone rich with desire. It made me literally shiver all over.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I batted my freshly made eyelashes. “Yay,” I mumbled. I picked up my lipstick, a thick, nearly purple shade that made my skin look even paler, and my eyes darker. “Let’s hurry and go so we can get back.”

“Sounds good to me,” he replied as he threw his wet towel into the bathroom. I stuck my head out to see his magnificent bare ass walking away. I pursed my lips in appreciation at the unbelievably sexy sight.

The party was fine. There were drunk people, loud music, fur coats, and folks dripping in jewelry. There was dancing, and yes, they announced their royalty. It was a good thing we did go because they declared him one of the dukes. He said it was only because of the amount of money he put into it, and if he stuck around a few years, he had no doubt that they would make him king.

I teased him about it the entire ride home. We decided to split right after the crowning, sneaking out before anyone could stop to congratulate him. It was like he was actually knighted or something. The whole thing was rather funny.

We were surprisingly and uncharacteristically silent as we rode back to the house. Neither one of us had more than a single drink. I think New Year’s had slowed our desire to booze it up, at least for a while. Neither one of us were at our best for a couple of days after that.

Edward took my hand and led me upstairs, still quiet with a stoic expression. I gripped it gladly, the other holding my dress so I wouldn’t trip over my own feet. When we got to the door, he stopped and turned to me, his finger brushing my simple braid off of my shoulder. He stared into my eyes, deep and imploring. He could be so intense when he wanted to be, his expression nearly brooding. There was something on his mind, but he didn’t want to talk about it. Or didn’t know how to do so.

He took my face in his hands and pressed his lips to mine, his mouth firm and his kisses sensual. There was so much desire in them. It was much more than just the simple need for sex, though. There was something else behind them, but I couldn't put my finger on it. I relaxed into his touch, my fingers winding into his hair. I let them fall from his scalp, tugging at the ends.

"Bella, can I make love to you tonight?" He asked against my cheek.

Biting my bottom lip, I ran my hand over his jaw as I kept his gaze. "You know you don't have to ask something like that."

"I just..." he drew out in a soft sigh as my fingertips grazed his lips. "We've been going at it so fast and furious lately. I want to take tonight slow. I want to savor it. I want to savor you."

"You can have me any way you want me." My fingernails dragged their way down his chest. "Fast, slow. Hard, soft. I'm yours."

"Any way?" He inquired in that same dark voice he used earlier in the night as he pressed me against the wall. "Do you mean that?"

"Yes," I gasped as his teeth found my neck.

"Good," His warm breath slid over the nape and down my collarbone. I clutched his shoulders, the toes of my high heels digging into the carpet, so I could stay upright. My head fell back as my back arched slightly.

"Edward," I murmured quietly as he teased my exposed flesh, though there wasn't as much of it as it had been in the last dress I wore. This one was more conservative, and I felt much more comfortable. But with his teasing, I wished there was more he could get to. I didn't want him to stop or slow down for any reason, and taking off my gown seemed to take forever. I wanted our clothes to disappear. Just melt away so we could be skin against skin. I needed to feel his hardness against my thigh and my nipples against his chest.

"Isabella, do you know how happy you make me?" He asked, his voice in my ear. I could hardly answer, far too distracted by his open palm that was sliding up my leg as he pushed my dress upwards.

I tried to think of a response, but the words got caught awkwardly in my throat. My head lolled to the side as he gripped my panties with his strong fingers. My eyes sunk closed as my breathing increased slightly.

"Do you know how astonishingly beautiful you are?" He whispered against my jaw, his lips dragging against my flushed cheeks to my wanting mouth. But he didn't kiss me, and I moaned in frustration. "Do you know how much I think about you, Isabella?"

“Edward,” I complained lightly, the whine coming out more breathlessly than I expected as his fingers worked the strap of my dress down my shoulder just enough to let his lips explore.

“I think about you every second of every day. There isn’t a moment that you aren’t on my mind in some way. I think about your lips, your hands, your beautiful eyes, your sweet face, and your sexy body... And I think about our conversations, innocent and dirty. I think about you being at home, waiting for me, and I’ve never been more excited to get back to the house because of it. Because I can’t wait to see you again. Every second we’re apart is too much.”

One moment I was in the hallway, and the next, I was in our bedroom with Edward’s smooth fingers working the zipper of my dress down to my hip. I fumbled with his tie, but my hands were shaking, and I knew I couldn’t do anything but enjoy his attention.

The gown dropped to the floor, and the cool air hit me with a powerful whoosh that made me gasp, and my nipples harden. But Edward’s hands were quickly on my waist, sending fire licking up my spine and swirling in my stomach.

“Promise that you’ll always be here with me,” he pressed in a way that made my knees wobble. It was all I could do to just nod, leaning against him for support as his fingers danced over my back. “Say it. Say it out loud.”

“I promise,” I said so quietly I was almost sure he didn’t hear me. He worked the clasp of my bra and took the straps in both of his hands. “I promise,” I spoke louder this time.

“I promise something, too,” he smiled slightly as he looked at me underneath his thick eyelashes. “I swear I will always love and cherish you. I promise there will never be another woman in my life that I will love in the way I love you.”

My lips sought his, finally finding the will to stop my trembling fingers as I worked the buttons of his shirt. He tugged his tie away, letting it drop to the floor next to my outfit. My hands were eager to explore his chest, raking my nails over his hard abs. Edward hissed as he let his head slip back. He enjoyed the feeling of the sharp, delicious pain against his all too ready flesh.

His jacket fell away, as did his shirt. I tried to work off his belt, but he stopped me with gentle hands. Instead, he walked me over to the bed but didn’t allow me to sit or lay down. Rather, he dropped to his knees in front of me and pulled my panties down my thighs. He nuzzled my skin, kissing each one as his palms slid to my ass. Blushing, I felt awkward and unattractive as I gazed down at his beauty.

And that’s what he was, beautiful. And he wanted me. I couldn’t understand it.

“Isabella,” he began as he kissed my belly button lightly. “One day, very soon, I will drop to my knees to beg you to be my wife.”

Gasping, my knees gave way as I dropped in front of him, my rear sliding down against the edge of the bed. He didn’t even slow down a beat as he curled his hand around the back of my neck to pull me closer to his mouth. He stopped a breath away from kissing me, his eyes peering deeply into my own. “And I will beg if I have to. Every day until you say you will be mine. Always mine. I will until you wear my ring. And when you say yes, I will make every one of your dreams come true. I will take you around the world and shout from every rooftop that I have the most exquisite wife, and I am the luckiest son of a bitch to have her.”

“Edward,” I breathed, my hands resting on his chest. “You are my dream. You’re more than I ever imagined.”

“Well,” he grinned, pleased with himself. “You better start coming up with other things because I’m going to spoil you.”

“You already do,” I assured him as my nose brushed his.

“Oh, my love... This- this is nothing.” He dragged his finger along one of my earlobes that contained the diamond earrings he had gotten me right before Christmas. “Trust me when I say you have seen nothing yet.”

“All I want is you.” I pushed my way onto his lap to straddle his waist. I placed my fingers on either side of his face. “You have to know that. I would love you if you were broke and homeless. I would adore you if you were the garbage man and came home smelling every day. As long as I have you, I have all I need.”

“I know,” he said, his eyes glistening. “That’s why I want to give you everything.”

Edward laid me back onto the carpet. I worked off his belt and pants as he kicked off his shoes and socks with his toes, something he had a talent for. Before long, we were both almost completely naked except for my thigh highs and jewelry. I wrapped my leg around him as he hovered over me while between my thighs.

He hesitated, and I felt like I would explode. My fingers snaked their way into his hair, pulling his mouth to mine for a deep kiss. “Please,” I begged in a whimper. “Please, I want you.”

He pushed inside, and sweet relief flooded my entire being. It was magical, and I lost myself completely in the movements. My hands tried to find purchase as I moaned loudly. I was so glad we didn’t have close neighbors. It went on for so long that stars popped in front of my eyes.

“I love you,” he said against my neck as he buried his face against it. He was having trouble holding back, but I didn’t want him to. It was the last thing I wanted. I needed it all.

“I love-” I moaned as he hit just the right spot, brushing against all the best places. “I love you, too. Please... Edward. Harder.”

He groaned as he picked up speed, slamming into me as I adjusted my hips upwards so he could go as deeply as possible. I felt his mouth open against my shoulder as he twitched within me. “I can’t...”

“Shh...” I arched my back, my hands finally finding their way to his fine ass. Pushing him, he got the message and growled as he moved faster. With every second, he became jerkier, his actions more wild and uncontrolled. I loved it when he lost himself. He was so contained about everything else. “Oh, god... please!”

Only a few seconds later, we both fell over together. My heart was thrumming wildly against my chest, and my breath was coming out in pants. He flopped down beside me, his hand resting above his head.

“So much for going slow,” he declared teasingly.

“If you went any slower, it would have killed me,” I responded with a breathless laugh.

We laid there together for a few minutes, letting our bodies calm down a little. I rested against his shoulder, staring up at the ceiling.

“We’re on the floor,” he finally remarked, his hand brushing over my hip.

“Oh, really? I didn’t notice,” I retorted sarcastically. Laughing, he swatted my ass. “Did you want to do something about that?”

“There is a comfortable bed, just over there.”

I nodded. “Yes, there is.”

Edward hauled himself off the ground and helped me up. Feeling slightly chilly, I pulled the white sheet from the mattress and wrapped it around myself as I crawled into the center. He hummed in appreciation, sitting on his knees at the end by my feet.

“So...” he drew out, rubbing one of them gently.

“So,” I mimicked, raising my eyebrow as I rested against the pillows.

“Any thoughts about what I said earlier?” He inquired as a blush covered his pale cheeks.

I thought back and wondered what he was talking about. My brain was so foggy from the orgasm that it took me a few seconds before it dawned on me. Wife. Marriage. Begging. I gnawed my bottom lip as I looked down at my bare fingers. “I think... well, I hope we can live together for a bit longer first. I know you don’t want to wait, and I understand part of the reason why, but... I love you. And a piece of paper won’t change that. So, can we give it just a little while?”

“So, I’m guessing if I asked right now, you’d say no.” He frowned.

I sighed. “No. I’d say not yet. Like I did with moving in.”

“Can I have a deadline?” He cocked his head to the side slightly. I laughed and huffed, shaking my head. “Please?”

Hissing through my teeth, I considered it for a moment. “At least six months.”

“That’s forever!” He complained, pouting out his bottom lip. This only made me laugh harder as I played with the corner of the silky sheet to avoid his pleading eyes. “I’m not very good at being patient.”

“I know.” I grinned.

“You love toying with me, don’t you?” He rolled his eyes, tickling the bottom of one of my feet. I jerked away with a squeaky giggle.

“You know it.”

Suddenly all my laughter died in my throat as a massive and very painful headache invaded my temples. Groaning, I grabbed my head to keep it from splitting open. It was, by far, the worst pain I had ever felt... until something ripped deep inside of me.

I realized a little too late that the shrieking noises I heard were coming from my mouth as my hands dug at my stomach. They were searching for the knife that was ripping me apart from the inside, my legs kicking without my permission.

“Bella?” Edward shouted, and I tried to focus on his voice as all the colors drained from my vision. Sparks of pain danced in front of my eyes, but I couldn’t see him. “Bella,” I heard him roar again. “What’s wrong? Tell me what’s wrong!”

“My stomach!” I shrieked just as I felt the darkness wrap around me. “PLEASE MAKE IT STOP! GOD! PLEASE!”

His voice was faint in my ears, the agony pulling me under its dark blanket. “Don’t worry. It’ll be okay. The ambulance will be here soon. Please... Bella. Bella, please be okay. I need you... I love you... Don’t-.” And even if he didn’t finish, I knew what he was going to say. Don’t die.

The words struck me in some weird way. It was almost oddly soothing in a way to understand what was going on. I was far too calm.

Oh, this is what it felt like to die...

And then I was completely gone.