



Chapter Forty-five

After dinner, everyone was fairly quiet, but there were a few attempts at friendly conversation. It was awkward, though, so Tanya and I went back to my room and watched another movie together. It was just about halfway over when she fell asleep with her head on my shoulder and a slight smile on her face. Her shiny little personality was exactly what I needed to feel better. Edward took her to her bedroom, laying her down for the night. He looked so perfect with her in his arms, his manly dad beard giving it a nice extra touch. It hit right in the... ovary. I observed from the hallway as he put her in bed. Irina was already comatose, mouth hanging open and drooling with her arms out like a scarecrow. And Kate wasn't too far from it. She smiled when she saw us and rolled over.

Seth left because he had to go to work early in the morning for another account, and my mother went back to her hotel for the night. Charlie and Sue were the next to go, then Alice and Jasper. Each came in and told me a quiet goodnight, making me feel slightly guilty that I hadn't spent more time with them. But, I had to admit, all I wanted was to lie around with Edward and Tanya. It was like medicine.

My next visitor was not someone I expected, though. Carlisle knocked on the open door, his face was grim as he did. I sat up a little more, grimacing at the pain as I did so. "May I come in?"

“Yes, of course,” I said, not sure what else to say. He wasn’t hateful towards me anymore, but he wasn’t exactly bright and sunny either. I didn’t know if it was his personality or the emotions he had towards me.

He perched at the very edge of the bed uncomfortably. “I wanted to apologize.”

“What for?”

Sighing, he shook his head in disgust. “For my actions before. Again. Obviously, you’re not Edward’s mother, though I see it more now than ever. And I see myself in Edward, but he’s handling it far worse...” he trailed off. It hung in the air for a moment. He moistened his lips before he continued. “I shouldn’t have been so cruel to you. It was wholly unfair. And I am so sorry that this happened to you and that you’re in pain. You deserved none of it, and I am such an ass.”

I was flabbergasted.

“This is rather unexpected,” was all I could say.

“I said horrible things, and now I regret them.” He clicked his tongue in disappointment at himself and looked away. “I don’t know you as a person, but I can see how much he loves you.” Carlisle swallowed his emotions back, letting out a pained breath. “I’ve never heard him the way he was on the phone that night. It was heartbreaking. My poor boy.” He stared at his hands. “I know I should respect my children and the decisions they make, but sometimes it’s hard. You’ll understand one day.”

“Thank you,” I breathed quietly.

He shook his head. “I’m sorry that I didn’t tell you sooner.”

“You should talk to Edward. It may help him feel a bit better.”

He sighed softly. “You may be right. He looks so scared.” He rubbed the back of his neck with his hand as if it ached. “Thank you for forcing him to eat. I couldn’t when his...” He didn’t finish the sentence, but he didn’t need to. I knew what he meant.

I shrugged. “I won’t let him hurt himself if I can help it.”

The conversation was slightly awkward, and neither one of us knew where to go from there. Finally, he just patted my hand and stood. “I should let you get some more rest. I know you must be tired. You’ve had a trying day.”

“Thank you,” I repeated.

“Bella,” he said as he went to the door, his back turned to me. “I really am glad you’re in my son’s life.” With that, he was gone.

“Huh,” I mumbled to myself when I was alone.

Sleep comes easy when you’re drugged. Even if I was annoyed that Edward wouldn’t lay down in the bed with me. He was too afraid to hurt me still. It would have to be something that changed.

I didn’t allow him to leave the following night so easily.

“It’s been a long day-” he began as he tried to make his way off the mattress. We were all alone in my room, and I was feeling much better after all the rest.

“Yes, it has been,” I agreed. Some of the craziness would die down after my mother left the next afternoon. I was ready for that. “I wouldn’t mind going to bed.”

“Of course,” he nodded, standing. I had already planned this part out in my mind.

“Where are you going?” I asked with my head cocked to the side, my expression innocent.

He seemed confused. “I’m going to let you get some rest.”

“I never said I wanted to go to sleep.” I patted the mattress beside me. “I said I wanted to go to bed. That’s different.”

“Bella,” he sighed. “You know there isn’t a thing we can do.”

“Do you think that’s all I want you for?” I raised an eyebrow in his direction, my tone challenging. “Your body?”

“Of course not,” he frowned and flushed as he looked away from me. He hadn’t expected that response.

I bit my bottom lip and fluttered my eyelashes. “Would you do something for me?”

“You know I’d do anything for you, my love,” he declared, turning his deep green eyes back towards me again. Thankfully, after his shower earlier in the afternoon, he had shaved, and his skin was still silky smooth.

I ran my fingers over his jaw to draw him in closer as he leaned over me. "I need to be kissed. Please, kiss me," I pleaded in a breath.

Edward's face turned white with worry. "What if I hurt you?"

Laughing, I blinked slowly. "By giving me a kiss? You'll hurt me more by not. I'm fine," I pouted at his reaction. "I want to kiss you because I love you. And I miss you. I wish to fall asleep in your arms. This separation is far worse than any of the pain. It hurts so much more. I need you. Please?"

His cheeks flamed at my passionate words. "We're not separated, though," he tried to say, but I shook my head. Sighing, he gave in and crawled back onto the bed. "I've just been trying to protect you."

"Well, I don't need protection from you." I reached for his hand, and he instantly took mine, bringing it to his lips and kissing it firmly. When he was done, I moved my fingers from his grip and dragged them over his smooth chin, directing him towards my waiting mouth. I pressed my lips to his repeatedly.

He was tender- soft as a butterfly's wing. It made me smile. I placed both of my hands on either side of his face and drew him closer to me, kissing him harder. He moaned against it in surprise, hovering over me as carefully as he could. All I wanted was to feel the pressure of him on top of me, but that would have to wait. That didn't stop me from lifting my leg up and slowly dragging my foot against his calf.

Edward groaned as he pulled away. "Don't do that."

"Why?" I asked innocently with a grin.

"Because it turns me on, and I don't want that right now," he mumbled, almost embarrassed to say it.

Laughing again, I sat up as he flopped down beside me. "You know, we can't have sex, but that doesn't mean you can't get off. I have a very willing mouth, and I would adore helping you out," I purred. I saw his jeans twitch. Gripping himself, he quickly readjusted.

"Isabella, you almost died last week."

"So, what? Do I stop living now?" I asked with another raised eyebrow.

"I'm not ready for it," he finally stated, his frown growing. I sighed and snuggled up against him, placing my hand on his stomach, where his shirt had lifted away from his jeans. "Not yet."

“Let me know when you are,” I informed him as I brushed my nose along his jaw, just the tip lightly. He only nodded his head, silent for a long time. So long that I assumed he had fallen asleep. But then I felt his chest shake, and I looked up to see tears falling down his cheeks. The fat salty drops rolled down his face and to his neck until it soaked his shirt. Reaching up, I wiped them away quickly.

“I was so scared. Bella, I have never been so frightened in my life. I thought you were going to die. Oh god,” he sobbed.

“But I’m right here. I’m okay,” I tried to soothe him.

“I can’t- I can’t live without you. You are my heart and my soul. Without you, I’d only be an empty husk. I love you so much,” he whimpered quietly, his knuckles brushing away his tears.

I sat up beside him, resting my palm on his fast-beating heart. “You’ll never have to live without me. I swear,” I breathed. “I will always be with you.”

“You can’t promise that.” He shook his head and looked away.

Frowning, I sighed. “You know what? Yes, I can. You are my heart and soul too. But you know that, don’t you? You own me completely. And even if I leave this place... you still have me. And I wouldn’t want you to stop living because of it. In fact, it would really piss me off if you just stopped. You have to swear to me that if something ever happens to me, you’ll keep going.”

“Love-” he sighed, but I shook my head quickly.

“You said you’d do anything for me. Do this. Guarantee me this,” I insisted.

He brushed his fingers along my cheek. “Promise me nothing will ever happen to you.”

“I promise,” I smiled, leaning down to kiss his mouth gently. My lips lingered there for a long moment.

“I promise too,” he sighed as I pulled away, “as long as you keep yours, anyway.”

All I could do was roll my eyes. I had done a lot of that the past couple of days. He seemed a little brighter, but I could see the darkness still swirling in his gaze- the blackness of anxiety. I wanted it to go away completely, and I could think of only one way it would.

I bit my bottom lip as the thought fully soaked in. Sitting up more, I pushed the curtain of hair behind my ear as I tried to seem more relaxed about the whole notion than I was. "So, I was thinking of June."

"Huh? For what?" Edward asked, confused by the sudden change in the direction of our conversation.

"For the wedding. Early June. I don't want an outdoor one or anything, so I'm not worried about the temperature." I shrugged, glancing back at him. He adjusted, so he was resting on his elbows, his expression baffled. "What? Would you prefer winter? That would be nice too. I'm not too picky. It's up to you."

"Are you saying what I think you are?" He pushed up completely and moved onto his knees so he was sitting right in front of me. "You'll marry me?"

"If you still want to, yes." I blushed, looking down at my hands in my lap.

"Yes! Yes, of course, I do. We can get married tomorrow if you want!" He spoke excitedly, laughing as he grabbed my face and kissed me hard. It was the roughest he had been with me in days, and I loved it. I moaned into his mouth. "Oh, no! Are you okay? I didn't hurt you, did I?" He was nearly frantic with concern.

"No," I laughed as I attacked him once more. "Do that again."

And he did, repeatedly. Edward covered me with kisses. "You're serious? Please say you are." He held my cheeks in his hands as he gazed into my eyes. "You want to get married? Are you sure?"

I nodded and smiled, making him glow. If I thought the expression he made when I said yes to moving in was glorious, then I was mistaken. Edward's features were practically angelic, morphing to one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen. He was an Adonis on earth, a tangible God I could touch and kiss whenever I wished.

I laughed gleefully as he kissed my forehead, jaw, cheeks, and nose again and again. "Can we wait until I can walk normally? It'll take time to plan this thing, anyway."

"Whatever you want, my love," he beamed, his mouth going to mine once more. "Thank you. Thank you so much."

"Why?" I giggled. "Ugh, you shouldn't be thanking me." I shook my head as I looked deep into his gleaming green eyes. "I should. Thank you for loving me and for making me so happy. For taking care of me and for saving my life... in more than one way."

As we laid there on the bed, I was grateful and more than just content. I knew what happened to me was neither a beginning nor the end of our story, but the love that bound Edward and I was eternal. It may have been a test of our will or the power of our devotion, but we both passed. It was painful, but we had come out together on the other side and were better for it. We may have been shaken, but we were strong, and nothing would tear us apart.

So, once again, I prepared myself for another change. This time towards my happily ever after, even if we had to go over a few bumps in the road to get there. But it didn't matter, because I knew it was a journey worth taking with him.

The End.