



Chapter forty-eight-

I was released the following afternoon from the hospital. In the evening before I was discharged, we were visited by the rest of Edward's sisters. Also by both of his grandparents who each brought us candy, snacks, and balloons and flowers. Seth and Tyler came as well and brought us a box of Lamington cakes from a local bakery. Jasper came by after work to check on me as well. He ate dinner with us, the food they brought from the cafeteria for us to share. I could have eaten anything they put in front of me. I was felt like I needed to catch up on my meals.

Jasper helped us bring all of the flowers and gifts home when I was released. I gave the balloons to Edward's nieces who were the most interested in them. I didn't need them anyway. The whole kitchen table was filled with flower vases, and I had several new stuffed animals to cuddle. We also had plenty of junk food for our snacking pleasure.

It was just after six when we got back to the sweet little bungalow that we were not getting to enjoy. I had some new medication for anxiety, and we had purchased enough condoms to, at the very least, get us most of the way through the trip. I had a feeling Edward was going to be ambitious and make up for lost time. We got Thai takeout and ate it on the back deck beside the golden sand. We watched the sunset together, Jasper, Edward, and myself.

I was definitely having the worst period I have had in years. I was cramping so much. The flow was so heavy too. There was *just* so much blood. Edward had his sisters go out and pick up any supplies they thought I might need for my discomfort. They had gotten me super strong painkillers that I couldn't get over the counter in the states, large mentholated pain patches, pads, tampons, and even more junk food. They might have gone overboard.

His family was all about comfort food, it seemed. I was down for it. There were Tim Tams literally everywhere.

"Tomorrow we could do a video where I try all the good Australian snacks for the first time," I mused to Edward as I picked through the bag to see what I had to choose from after Jasper had left for the evening.

He grinned at my words. "We can buy all that stuff and take it back with us. We can do it when we get back to the states. You should rest now."

"I'll be fine. But, whenever you want to." I rubbed my fingers over his unshaven jaw. The reddish hair had grown very thick and very soft. He was keeping it well groomed though. I liked it so much more than I expected. "What do you want to do tomorrow?"

"Nothing. Not a thing," he chuckled, stressed and obviously tired. "I think I'm going to take the rest of our time here off. Completely off. No videos. No work. No editing. I'm burnt out. And I'm the one doing it to myself."

"You really do need to hire some more people." I frowned at his words. He had so much planned that he had been so looking forward to doing with all of his friends. And now he wasn't going to do any of them because of me. It made me feel so guilty. If my head had been in a better place and I had been thinking clearly, I would have just gone to the doctor to start. My anti-anxiety medication had convinced me I was just fine. It was stupid.

"I wish Jasper would come to America. It would make it so much easier. You know, he works at the news station here. He's actually experienced in a professional setting," Edward explained to me. "We learned the video shit together, and he just ran in a different direction than me. He's so much better at the graphics than me."

"Have you told him all of this?" I asked curiously.

"Many times. I'm going to make him another offer again though. He's not taken it before, so I don't know what will have to change so that he'll change his mind," he said with a little sigh.

"Does he have a lot of family here?" I asked.

"His mum moved to New Zealand with her new husband. He's not close to his father. He's kind of a deadbeat. Jasper is an only child. But he does have a lot of friends here though," he said thoughtfully. "I get it. It's hard to move. I just miss him."

"I can understand that." I petted his hair at the base of his neck soothingly. "I like Jasper. I wouldn't mind if he were around more."

"He likes you, too," he answered me thoughtfully. "And not just in his normally *perverted* way."

"I don't think he's perverted. Well, not any more than the average person. I think he uses it as a cover-up," I replied.

He turned his head to look towards me a little. "What do you mean?"

"Mm," I considered my words carefully as we lounged on the couch, my feet on his lap. "I think he has some self-confidence issues."

"Well, you're not wrong. Though I think that could be said about you and me, too," he replied as he massaged my ankle with his thumb.

"True," I mused. "And he has anxiety, to some degree."

"LA would be good for him. Even if he doesn't stay with me forever, there are so many job opportunities for his kind of work," he said. This was an argument and reasons he had made before with his friend. I could tell.

"He's worried about using you for your money. He's like me in that way."

"He'd deserve every cent I'd give him. Just like you," Edward said in mild annoyance.

"I don't doubt that." I laid back with my arms behind my head. I still felt tired. Slowly I moved the ball of my foot over his thigh as he rubbed the other. "I like watching you together," I told him honestly.

"Ah, yes, I remember." He wiggled his eyebrows at me playfully. I clicked my tongue and rolled my eyes. "You still need to share those dirty thoughts with me."

"Do you think that's a good idea if you want him to come to Los Angeles?" I asked curiously. "What if you get jealous?"

"I'm not. You're going to have them whether you tell me about them or not," he reasoned with a slight smirk. It was our conversation from Thanksgiving in reverse. He slid his hand up my shin and to my knee. Edward let his fingers dip into the bend of my leg before dragging them lightly over my calf. "I don't mind. It's interesting to know what turns you on."

"I don't think it's too hard to figure out that a girl might enjoy two healthy young men aggressively rolling on top of one another. I mean, I don't usually seek out gay porn but when it happens in front of you..." He laughed at my answer. "But, yeah. Okay, I think he's cute. I'm sorry. He's got a nice smile and an even nicer body. I'm sure you wouldn't turn down watching me with Alice."

"No, I wouldn't," he agreed with a smirk. Edward considered his words for a moment before he decided something. "Have you... Have you actually slept with her?"

"Do you want to reword the question because oh, *baby*, we have slept together so much," I joked with him. He swatted my thigh, making me giggle. "Be brave and ask direct questions."

Edward swallowed hard, his green eyes darting over to me. He smiled despite himself,

knowing I was going to be stubborn and make him actually say the words. "Have you fucked her?"

"Yes." I watched his reaction with quiet curiosity. He nodded his head slowly, tracing his finger over the top of my right foot. I wasn't going to make it too easy on him. "Are there more questions you want to ask?"

"Can I ask questions about that?" He asked almost nervously.

I laughed, shaking my head. "You can ask me anything you want, and I'll be as honest as I can be. But, you might not always like the answers."

"I don't know, I kind of liked the answer to the first question," Edward joked softly. He seemed almost shy. His head rolled to one side as he considered his every word carefully. "Recently?"

"Mm, it's been about six years or so since the last time."

He seemed a little surprised. "When you were with Aiden?"

"Yes. He was there, too. They had very similar *interests*," I explained to him with a little smirk on my face. "We played together sometimes. We played with others, too. Sometimes together, sometimes not."

"What were his interests?" Edward was curious and quiet, glancing over at me as he took in what I was telling him slowly. "Or, I guess their interests."

"Hm," I thought how I should word my reply. "Broadly BDSM. Though the answer is really complicated and long-winded. They liked wildly different things. He was into more control and she is into punishment and pain."

"Would she be bothered with you telling me this?" He let his finger trace over my knee. Edward was obviously trying very hard to control his voice. I could see it in the way he held his mouth and jaw. His throat was visibly tight.

I laughed at the idea of Alice being shy. "Absolutely not. She will very gladly tell you all about her fetishes and stories that she writes about them. She's not reserved at all. They're excellent, by the way. Her stories. I always proofread them for her."

"Does it bother you to tell me?" He seemed slightly worried, his eyes finally flicked over to mine again.

"No." I reached for his hand. "I just don't like talking about myself, and I still worry that I'll say something you'll *nope* out of because it's too much for you... but, I trust you. My sexual history is kind of sketchy compared to yours, though. I was a wildling in school. Even after I got married, obviously. But I like it when you ask me questions. I won't give anything away freely, I'm not sure I know how, but I want you to ask me everything."

He licked his bottom lip lightly.

"What do you mean by *wildling*?"

"I was a cheerleader with daddy issues. What do you think it means?" I smirked at him. "You're a writer. Use your imagination, and you're probably not wrong. I did everything I could do. Drugs, drinking, and tons of casual sex. You know, the standard wild child stuff."

Edward brought my hand up to his mouth and lightly kissed my fingers. "When you say you were a cheerleader my imagination automatically goes to a rather dirty place."

"Remind me to show you my school uniform. I can still wear it," I commented with a smile. He chuckled and grinned, looking away. I could see a flush creep up his neck. "Catholic school girl does something for you?"

"I wanna lie and say no," he joked. "Though imagining you in anything does something for me. Why do you like encouraging such naughty thoughts in me?"

"Because I constantly have them about you and it seems only fair. So, are you sure these are the questions you want to be asking?" I teased him lightly. "I'm sure you have more interesting ones in mind."

Edward nodded his head as he thought of the things he really did want to ask. "Have you been with other women?" He asked next curiously. His cheeks were flushed slightly. "Besides Alice."

"Yes, but Alice was the last time," I admitted.

"You've joked about not enjoying it. I don't imagine that is the case?"

"No," I smirked a little. "We have fun when we're together. Though I worry that's not the case for her. We're really different."

"I can't imagine that being true," he told me thoughtfully before biting his lip. "Why haven't you been with her since?"

"I guess because I was depressed for so long. She's dated someone off and on for a while, but it didn't work out with him, so she's been single for a bit. I guess the timing just hasn't been right. You're honestly the first person I've thought about seriously having sex with since Aiden died. I was getting a little worried, to be honest," I laughed a little as I considered it sadly. "Alice doesn't enjoy sex as much as me either. She wants it like once every six months and then to be left alone to write about it. She doesn't get off like me."

His smile was a little naughty. "If every woman came like you the world would be a happier place."

"Amen," I agreed as his hand slid up the center of my thigh and around the leg of my shorts.

"What did you do with her?" He asked in a timid voice. "Them, I guess. The last time you were together. If I can ask."

"Well," I drew out, "Aiden had been playing video games in our room, and he was sitting on the end of the bed, basically ignoring us while we watched a movie on the computer. We got bored and started kissing. Well, she got bored and started rubbing on my thighs first because she knows it does things to me. There had been a lot of weed and wine before. It took him ages to realize what was going on. And when Aiden did he didn't turn around," I laughed at the memory. I could see the dark bedroom at my old townhouse with the glow of the TV behind us as we kept stealing confused glances at the back of my husband's stupid head.

"Why?" He questioned, confused.

"He said he was scared to interrupt. Like, man... we know you're there. We know what we're doing. For the love of god, put fucking Skyrim down. At least turn and watch," I continued to laugh, still frustrated to that day by it. We made fun of him viciously for it afterward.

"At the minimum turn off the video game," he agreed with a chuckle and a smile.

"We eventually had to flat out tell him to come to join us. The idiot got a really good blow job he definitely did not deserve," I snorted. "From both of us. We fooled around for hours, actually. It was after sunrise when we finally went to bed. I had tried Adderall for the first time around that night, so we were all extra focused," I joked. "Aiden had ADD so they were trying him on different medications to figure out the right one for him and we ended up bottles and bottles of the stuff. Alice has it, too. They decided to see what it does to me. Like a terrible experiment. One just makes me stay awake for days, by the way. Alice takes five a day and sleeps for nine hours."

"I've not taken any Adderall," Edward admitted to me. I was glad he didn't indulge the same casual drug taking I did when I was younger. I was almost jealous of some of his innocence.

"I'm surprised they weren't passing them out like candy at your school. It wasn't big when I was in college yet."

"They were, but I was a nervous prude. You've met my mother."

"Indeed. She'd make me want to take more drugs personally, but I can understand the opposite too."

Edward laughed at my answer. He took a little sip from his beer that he had resting on the end table. He sighed then looked over at me. "I want to ask you questions about your sex life with him, but I don't want to upset you."

"Why would it upset me? You're not going to ask me to compare. I hope. Though there is no comparison, you're so completely different," I replied thoughtfully as I draped my arm over my eyes lazily. "You're both good lovers, but..."

“Can we be that different? We've both loved the same woman. ”

I laughed at his oozing charm. "Worlds apart." I reached for his beer, and he passed it to me. I propped up on the arm of the couch a little and took a sip. "I feel bad because there is a part of me that does want to trash him for our sex lives and the other part realizes that his low libido had less to do with me and probably more to do with his heart and medication. You expect the amount of sex you have to go down after a while but damn."

He tilted his head to the side slightly. "What do you mean?"

"We were having sex once a month, maybe, the last couple of years. If the stars were right. And he never..." I trailed off, shaking my head. "Let me tell you how that affects your confidence. We were fighting so much about it, and I always felt guilty because he wouldn't start the fights. I was the greedy one that wanted more. I wonder if we'd even be still married at this point."

"I thought your marriage was good," he said softly. He seemed so sad for me.

"It was besides that. But I was... so... *bored*," I laughed bitterly. "I feel like such a bitch for it now. I was starting to resent him so much though. I talked to my therapist about it a lot. All of my self-worth was wrapped up in him, and I felt worthless." I took another drink of his beer. "We had been fighting about it the night before he died. Whenever I'd try to talk about what was bothering me, he'd do this *poor pitiful me I'm the most terrible worst husband* dramatic bullshit so I'd end up comforting him and I'd be just as furious as before, but I had to pretend I was over it. I hated to see him cry."

Edward took back the beer that I handed to him, his fingers brushing against mine. He took a long sip as he considered what to ask next. "What did you fight about exactly?"

"Oh... Just the worst thing. I was done trying to get pregnant. Not for the first time, though. It was all he was focused on by then. When I was ovulating and how we should do this and do that. He wanted me to go to the doctor to look into it, but I wasn't ready to admit it was probably me. He went right before he died and his sperm count was fine." I shook my head. "Anyway, I wanted to fool around, and he told me no because it wasn't time yet. And though I'm not going to force someone to do anything they don't want to do... I-" I shook my head. "At first, I didn't mind, and I tried to keep up with it, but then I started doing shit purposefully to avoid it. I'd get upset, so we'd take a break for a while, but he'd talk me back into it again. Beg me. And it pisses me off that I don't remember the last time I had sex with him, but I know what it was probably like and I wasn't happy about it. I just loved him so much and I wanted to make him happy, but I didn't understand why he didn't want to touch me anymore. Why did he have to be so controlling about that part of our lives?"

"I don't know but... You're right. We are very different. I find it impossible to keep my hands off of you." He brushed his hand slowly up my shin. "I'm sure it wasn't about you, though."

"I think about that night so much. It replays in my head in bed. I felt so *ugly*. He had a lecture in the evening so when he was away, I got really dressed up for him. I knew the things

he liked most. When he got home, he didn't even act interested." I wiped the inside of my eye, wrapping my other arm around my stomach self consciously.

Edward's face was so morose. "You are in no way ugly, not then. Not ever."

I slid back down completely on the couch. "I shouldn't tell you these things. This is not what you wanted to know."

"I want to know everything about you. This explains some things though," he played with the hem of my shirt that rested just above my belly button distractedly as he spoke.

"What do you mean?"

"I didn't understand some of your guilt that you obviously feel still. I don't think you should feel it, for the record. None of this is your fault. It wasn't the fight. And, it's not your fault you didn't have a baby with him."

"We never found that out for sure. It might have been. So, that's a thing we might have to deal with. I am glad that I didn't get pregnant though," I told him a tired sigh.

His thumb brushed along my belly button. "I'm surprised to hear you say that."

"I would have become my mother," I said quietly.

"No." He shook his head quickly.

"I would have had an abortion if I found out right after he died. Or, given it up for adoption. I was in no place to be a mother. I had a breakdown that lasted months. Imagine doing that to a child? I couldn't put it in that kind of danger. It wasn't right anyway. It was an obligation, not something I wanted. But, it didn't happen, so it doesn't matter."

"Do you not want to have babies, Bella?" He seemed so sad for me and worried. Gingerly he slid his hand under my shirt, his palm flat against my skin. It was the lightest of touches.

"What would happen if I said no?" I asked him curiously. "You've been pretty clear on what you want."

"I want a life with you. That's all that matters to me," he said confidently.

"Right now. That could change. I do want your children someday though, honestly," I promised him. "I wasn't just saying that before to make you feel better. It scares me, but I want it."

"What's different?" Edward questioned.

"Me," I offered up. "Not ready yet but I think about how it would be with you more than I have ever thought about it before. When I see you with your nieces, it makes me realize how

good of a father you'd be. You're so amazing with them. I'm not sure I ever had that moment with Aiden where that happened... that *'oh, I want this so bad'* moment. And I've had that with you so many times." I closed my eyes and swallowed before I laughed awkwardly. "Wait. Weren't we supposed to be talking about threesomes?"

He laughed a little as he took a swig of his drink. "We can talk about those later," he promised me in return. "We probably needed to have this conversation at some point."

"But, did it have to be here and now?" I complained. "I feel like I just trot out my trauma for you. One by one. It all feels so ridiculous."

"Well, my trauma has a first name, and it goes by *Mummy dearest*. So, you might have your issues but so do I."

"I hate her so much," I said with a frown. "Like, she's a bitch. Real talk, I'm sorry. I'd clawed her face if I had felt better the other day. It wouldn't have been on purpose either. I'd just seen red and started slapping."

"I just had the most beautiful image of you slamming my mother's face into a wall, slow-motion movie style. Please, if you get the chance..." he drew out teasingly, smirking at me. "She is a real bitch," he said in a catty tone. "Well, her loss. You're *awesome*."

I giggled, "you make me feel special."

"You are special." His thumb smoothed over my skin, making me suck in a little. "I swear to you I will always make sure to let you know exactly how much I love you and how beautiful I think you are every single day for the rest of our lives. I promise I'll never want to take my hands off of you."

"You make such grand promises. I really want you to keep them. I want to believe you." I pressed his hand against my stomach with both of mine. It felt so good against my cramping uterus, not that I would have told him that. I closed my eyes to savor it.

"I'm sorry that I'm rushing you," he said in a whisper.

"It's not rushing to talk about it. I just don't want to do it in front of your friends. Or grandparents."

"But you obviously hate talking about these things," he pointed out.

"I hate talking about my emotions period, Edward. I hate talking about myself. I hate talking in general, actually. I loathe the sound of my own voice. I sound like a fucking idiot with this dumbass hick accent."

"Seriously one of the sexiest voices I've ever heard. I don't know what the hell you're talking about." He took a long drink of his beer, finishing it and putting it back down on the coffee table with an annoyed clink.

"I haven't watched a single one of the videos with me in it because of it," I admitted guiltily.

He sat up a little bit. "Wait, seriously? Not a one?"

"I can't bring myself to do it. I hate looking and listening to myself so much now. Especially next to you when you're so very beautiful and talented. I feel like a troll."

"No, don't say that," Edward said to me quickly. "You're so lovely to watch, and you're such a natural. I wish you had the confidence I have in you."

"Me too. I'm trying to work on it in therapy." I opened my eyes again finally. "I watch the ones with just you. Sometimes when we're not together, I put them on just to listen to your voice before I go to bed. Though I like your real voice more than your performance voice, it gets me through."

"I like watching the videos with you in them before I go to bed. Not just the ones from the channel but some of the ones I've filmed for me. Do you remember when I filmed us that first night at dinner?" He asked with a happy, charming smile.

"Mm," I drew out softly, smiling to myself. "During the storm. It feels like a dream now."

"You looked so beautiful in the candlelight. Every time I see it I still wonder how I got lucky enough for you to pick me," his voice was like velvet, his hand still resting on my bare skin. He made my stomach tremble with desire when he looked at me like that and said such romantic things.

"Such a try hard," I teased him lightly. "I should give you a better video to watch before bed." I rubbed my foot over his thigh delicately. I just wanted to talk about nicer things.

Edward had a little smile on his face. "What would you film for me?"

"What would you like?" I brushed my sock covered foot seductively against just the right spot to get the point across that I was making.

He flushed in hot embarrassment, looking away but smiling as he did.

"I want one of you playing with yourself. I think about it a lot when I'm alone, hoping you're playing with yourself on that little bed or on your couch with your toys, hoping you're thinking about me too," he said in an almost low whisper, his voice deep and rich. Edward was surprisingly confident as he said the words.

"Christ, you turn me on so much," I laughed almost in annoyance. "I swear your voice makes me need a cigarette."

"Well, I can't offer you that, but I have a different sort of smoke if you're interested," he told me charmingly.

“Oh,” I sighed in pure pleasure as a thought popped into mind. “Can we go outside and smoke a couple of joints in the warm sand under the stars together?”

“Yes, absolutely...” he trailed off, not moving. “Do you really like my voice that much?”

“You are *literally* a voice actor for a reason. You know what your voice is. It's amazing. It's just even better when it's in my ear whispering dirty things. I always have to play with myself after we talk on the phone. Sometimes it's hard to wait.” I temptingly ran my hand between my legs, rubbing myself through my blue jean shorts flirtatiously. He bit my lip as he watched, taking me in hungrily.

He slid his hand down my stomach and between my legs over the fabric of my shorts. He pressed against my clit, making me gasp a little bit in surprise and bring up my hips some to meet his hand. Slowly he began rubbing tight little circles in the same spot, my hips rolling in time with his hand. Edward brought his other hand under my shirt and pressed it up towards my breast. He brushed his thumb against my already perky nipple.

“I love watching you like this. It's amazing to me what I can do to you through your clothes. Could I make you cum like this?” He asked me as my eyes slid closed, my back arching up a little.

“Yes,” I breathed out as my head tilted back. “Harder.”

He pressed as hard as he dared against the spot, pressing my panties against my clit as he worked me faster and faster. Edward palmed my breast roughly, massaging my hard nipple against the center as he did.

“Oh!” I cried out in surprise at the power of the orgasm. My body tensed tightly before relaxing into a puddle on the couch. My period cramps just melted away. “Oh, my god... I feel so much better,” I laughed breathlessly, placing my hand on my forehead.

Edward looked very pleased with himself. He shifted himself so that he laid on top of me with his hips between my legs. I kissed his mouth lightly, savoring the feeling of his body pressed on top of me perfectly.

“Did you enjoy that?” He grinned at me, brushing his nose against mine.

“I enjoy everything you do to me,” I told in an honest whisper. “I never want you to stop fucking me,” I said against his mouth, my tongue reaching up to lightly brush along his bottom lip. He captured it quickly.

“Never,” he gasped against my lips, grinding his erection between my legs. I moaned and smiled, guiding his hungry mouth to my neck. Slowly he brought it to my ear. “Now, let's go outside and lay on the beach. We'll go smoke in one another's arms. And, I'll whisper whatever dirty things you would like.”

