



Episode Fifty-six

It pissed me off so goddamn much when they had to delay shooting for a little while. I could have stayed with Bella longer. Instead, I used that time to sleep and get some more work done on videos I had been putting off. Though I was productive, it was because I didn't speak to anyone but my sweet girlfriend. After the first day, she put on a facade of handling it much better than I was. She was determined to be professional and work. And I respected her for it. She was stronger willed and more independent than I was. If our roles were reversed, I wasn't sure what I would have done.

I should have been over the moon to be surrounded by my idols. Actors and actresses who were award-winning superstars. People I wanted to be like. But every smile that crossed my face during that time was fake. I interacted with them and was polite, and I wasn't purposefully cold or distant. They were all lovely and kept praising me for my professionalism. My goal was to get through everything as quickly as possible, getting done on the first take. Especially the fight scenes. My attitude wasn't diligence but depression. But it made it easier to be a sarcastic, dark asshole in front of the camera. Every punch I threw made me feel a little better. I needed to get it out violently.

The only thing that really kept me in any sort of good mood was shopping on her website and sending it to all the people I worked with regularly, or wanted to, for Christmas. I also

bought my family a ton of things. She was so talented that I wished to share her art with everyone.

Bella tried to act like she was just fine when we spoke every night. Her foot was doing okay, she assured me, but I didn't believe her. I had spoken to Alice through text, and she said that she was in pain, whimpering in her sleep. But she refused to take her pills until it was almost unbearable. In an attempt to show her my support, I sent her little gifts and meals. I wanted to cheer her up.

It was close to midnight in New York when she called me after a day of photographing some Broadway star I had never heard of. She was following her just as she had done me but could go home at the end of the night since it was in the same city. She had been doing it for a few days, and she was miserable. Not because of her injury, though.

"Oh, my god. This bitch," she began as a greeting. It was so salty and mad. There was so much venom in her voice, and it made her accent adorably thicker. "How- How- how does someone this- this," she stuttered comically, making me laugh. "She's so awful. Why is she talented?" She whined. I could almost see her bottom lip sticking out.

"The universe is cruel like that," I chuckled. "Bitches can climb their way to the top, using the people they step on as ladders. It's just the way it is. Nice guys finish last in business."

"Please tell me they're not all like that. I know some of them are, but- ugh," she groaned. She was so tired of this woman. Bella had been endlessly patient with me, but I couldn't imagine how this lady was behaving. None of my co-stars were in any way unpleasant.

"They're not."

My girlfriend huffed. "Yeah, I guess you're not like that," she drew out. "You set an incredibly high bar," she flirted before sighing. "I miss you."

I breathed the words in. "I miss you, too."

"Oh, by the way, thank you for the coffee this morning. It was the only thing that kept me from killing someone. So you saved lives today. Good job."

She made me laugh again. "My pleasure."

"So, tell me about your day. Having fun?"

"It's exciting. The stunts are cool. I'm so goddamn sore, though," I complained. "It's so intense all the time. Hopefully, one day soon, you'll be able to hang out on set with me and watch."

Bella sighed softly. "That sounds like so much fun."

We spoke until it was far too late for both of us, but when I fell asleep right afterward, I dreamed of her. It was a sweet one, and when I woke up, I could still smell her perfume and taste her kisses with just a hint of coffee in the background.

I smiled at the countdown on my phone that stated it was less than a week to her visit. It was my last day of shooting, but I wasn't getting much of a break. I had to do some recording the following day, but it was much easier work, where I could sit down if I needed.

My poor girl wasn't having a fun time, the witch sleeping through her busy schedule without a care in the world. She felt it was very disrespectful to everyone involved, and I had to agree with her. I was far too anal to do that.

The final day was the hardest, stunt-wise. If someone got hurt, it wouldn't hold up shooting for anyone else. It was wrapping for the entire movie the next day, and they invited me to the wrap party, but I declined my invitation because I didn't feel like partying. Smiling was exhausting enough.

When it was close to ten her time, she hadn't called for the night, but I was still on set myself. She might not have wanted to bother me. So, I decided to chance it and call her, but it went straight to voicemail. I didn't know how long the late shows on Sundays went, or if she had something after. But I knew Bella would be overjoyed to be finished with her.

A couple of hours later, I filmed my last scene before taking a car home. I still hadn't heard from her. It was well after midnight there. I sent a text instead of calling again. "Oh, I do hope the old bat isn't keeping you up too late. Ugh, you better not have kicked her and broken your other foot. I know she deserves it, but..."

When it dinged as I walked in the front door, I got excited, but it was Jasper. "HOW WAS YOUR LAST DAY?!"

"Exhausting but fun," I replied vaguely. When I thought back on it, or even the previous weeks, I couldn't exactly tell you what happened. It all blurred together. Depression wasn't good for my memory.

He called. "That's it? That's all I get?" He began in an annoyed tone. "Tony! You got to punch Jason Bourne!"

"I didn't actually punch Matt," I explained quietly, going into my room to get changed into some pajamas and find my joints. I was too tired to order dinner. "I smacked around his stunt double, though. A lot. My hands hurt. That padding shit is rough."

“Oh, Matt. I see. How very casual,” he teased, then chuckled. “You sound so exhausted. Was it thrilling? I’d be a wreck around someone like him.”

I shook my head. “He’s a real nice guy.”

There was a long moment of silence. “Are you okay, Tony?”

“Yeah,” I lied, just like I had every time he asked. I wasn’t a very good actor when it came to him, though. “It’s just been the longest day, and I stayed up too late last night talking to Bella,” I explained as I made my way outside. I lit my joint as I plopped down on the cushioned loveseat that overlooked the city. “She’s not having a great time right now, that’s for sure. She hates the woman she’s shooting. Apparently, she’s a heinous bitch.”

“Aw,” Jasper drew out softly. “That’s a shame. I liked her in the things I’ve seen. How much longer does she have to do it?”

“Today’s the last day. I’ve called and texted her, but she’s not responded yet. It’s super late, and I’m a tad worried.”

“Hm, maybe she’s gone to bed. I’m sure she’s fine.”

I took a long drag. “Oh, yeah. I’m certain she is,” I lied once more. Every day I thought about the horrible man at the café with his gun. I had never encountered a human like him before, and it made me wonder how many people out there were like that. I had several nightmares where Bella suffered some painful fate because she wasn’t afraid to stand up for herself. But I didn’t want to think about it. I was overprotective, and she wasn’t a child.

He sighed softly. “What are you doing now?”

“Just about to head to bed. I can barely keep my eyes open. I’ll talk to you later, yeah?”

“Yeah,” he mumbled. “Get some rest. Call me when you feel like talking. Good luck with your recording tomorrow.”

I finished my smoke before heading into the house. Gulping down two aspirin, I drank an entire bottle of water in one go to help my aching body. When I got to my room, I turned the ringer up as loud as it would go so I wouldn’t miss it and put it on the wireless charging stand beside my bed. I flopped back into the covers with a yawn.

Just as I drifted off, her song played. It jolted me, making me sit up to grab it hurriedly. I almost fumbled it to the floor. “Ello?”

“Hi, darlin’. How are you doing?” Bella questioned in the sweetest southern drawl. It made my worries melt away.

I smiled, stretching as I got more comfortable for our conversation. “Tired. I finished filming my final scene this evening.”

“How did it go?” She asked just as eagerly as Jasper. I could give her more energy than I did him.

“Good. Everything went smoothly. Such a long fucking day, though. I have a few new bruises, too,” I pouted playfully. “What are you up to now? Are you in bed?” I inquired as I closed my eyes. I liked to imagine her as she laid there in her comfortable nightgown, the sheet wrapped around her calf as her toes peeked out. In reality, it was probably too cold in her apartment for that, but LA was just right.

“I’m in a taxi heading home right now.”

This shocked me. “It’s so late there, love. You must be tired, too. What time is it? Midnight? One?”

“I’m a little wired, to be honest,” she replied, not answering my question. She seemed perky despite the hour. Bella really must have been pleased to be done with the crone.

“Mm,” I hummed as I tried to stifle a yawn. “Do you have a lot more editing to do?”

“Not really. I’ve kept up with it pretty well.” She disliked the woman so much she was already rushing through her edits so she wouldn’t have to look at her for any longer than she had to. I couldn’t imagine her hating anyone that much, so she must have been a piece of work. “What are you up to?”

I rolled over to my side to peer out the back towards the mountains. “Laying in bed, thinking about you. Your soft skin. Your delicious smell. Your beautiful lips.” Swallowing, I licked my bottom lip as I thought about her taste. “All I want right now is for you to be in my arms so we can fall asleep together,” I flirted then took a deep breath. “I want to wake up beside you again.”

“Soon, I promise,” she swore adamantly. Bella was just as excited to be back together as I was. She paused for a moment. “Um, I’m here. Let me let you go for a second so I can get inside.”

“Alright, love. Don’t take too long, or I might fall asleep. I’m right knackered.”

“It’s okay if you do. We’ll see each other soon enough,” she stated in the smoothest tone.

I rolled over onto my back, shaking my head. “No, I want to talk to you tonight.”

“Okay then,” her voice was bubbly. I wasn’t sure how she had the vigor. My eyes were already starting to sink closed without my permission. “Give me five minutes.”

Though I didn’t mean to, I knocked out. It wasn’t on purpose. Bella’s voice was still in my head. It was so clear, like she was in the room with me. “Eddie,” it sang. My dumb ass thought it was the phone ringing, and I jolted from my spot, sitting up. I scrambled to bring it to my head, not even looking at the screen. My girlfriend laughed. “Edward!”

I blinked several times, trying to decide if I was asleep or not. But, in my dreams, Bella with a broken foot rarely meant something good. But she was smiling and very happy. And real and really there.

Turning on the light, I stared in surprise. “No!” I barked as I launched myself out of bed and towards her. In a second, she was in my arms and kissing me back just as hard as I was her. I spun around her happily, so over the moon that I danced in place. It made her grin against my mouth.

I had no idea how long we made out for, but I couldn’t stop. I had missed her too much. My brain was actually having trouble processing it. Bella held her foot up behind her, only a toe on the floor because my grip was so tight.

My girl had found a way to surprise me because she couldn’t wait to be with me either.

Finally, I leaned back to look at her beautiful face. Her eyes were glowing with excitement and joy, her wet lips curved in a gorgeous smile. “What? But. But- that mean old twat? What happened?” I could barely get the words out.

She quickly shook her head. “I got what I needed, and she didn’t want me there. My thing on Wednesday canceled, and I called in sick already tomorrow with a broken foot. Because you know.” She glanced over her shoulder at it, then back at me with a proud smirk. “And, it just seemed fair to return the favor.” She bit her lip as her hands smoothed over my chest. “I hated every moment I was without you.”

“You’re so dramatic,” I joked stupidly, but my smile was so big it hurt my cheeks. I couldn’t help myself and kissed her again, dotting her face with them. She melted against me, laughing as her eyelashes fluttered. “I’m so happy you’re here. I’m recording all day tomorrow and Tuesday, though.” I had never called in sick to something like it and didn’t want to disappoint my director. Bella shook her head vigorously, stopping me from going too deep into my thoughts.

“I know. I don’t care. I just... I just want to be close to you again. Ever since you left, I’ve felt like I’ve been in a daze. Like something was missing.” She pressed her hand to her heart as she gazed into my eyes. “I can’t even really tell you what I did during that time. I know I worked and did stuff with Demetri and Alice. Jessica. But it’s just a blur. And it’s not because of the stupid painkillers. It’s... just that after being that happy with you around, even when things were terrible, being back to normal sucked so fucking much.”

She put what I had been feeling into words. All I could do was nod, my own thoughts too jumbled. So I just kissed her again. It was hard to stop myself, but she was holding on so tightly.

I carried her to my bed, laying her down in the center where she looked so perfect. She was already in comfortable clothes and barefoot. Hurriedly, I moved in behind her so we could spoon. Her body was meant to be against mine in this way. It was the most relaxed I had been in days, her warmth instantly soothing me. I breathed her in deeply, my face shoved against her shoulder blade. She wiggled her perfect ass against me.

It took a long time to get my thoughts together enough to express them to her. “That’s exactly how I felt, my darling. My heart can’t seem to beat without you now. Though you could blame your blur on painkillers if you wanted to. I would not blame you. I have no excuse,” I joked lamely.

She giggled as she pressed her luscious lips against my jaw, keeping me in place with her palm. It felt so nice. But she didn’t stop at one kiss. Slowly, she spread them all over my face. With each one, she lulled me into slumber. I fell asleep holding her as close to me as I could.

