Episode Seventy-three-

When I woke up in the morning in the hotel, Alice was laying with her head on my shoulder with my arm numb underneath. Her mouth was hanging open a little bit, and she was drooling. I grimaced as I looked down at her.

"Ew," I mumbled. I heard Edward snort quietly beside me. When I looked over, he was lying beside me, his hand on my stomach as he watched both of us with a small smile. I smiled in return. "Good morning."

"Morning, beautiful," he whispered charmingly.

"You could yell, and she wouldn't wake up," I told him softly. He chuckled, leaning over to kiss my mouth gently. I brought my other hand up to his chin, holding him in place as we kissed slowly and tenderly. "What time is it?"

"A little before nine," he replied, brushing my hair away from my eyes.

"I need to take a shower, and then I'll call Jake," I informed him before looking over at my best friend. Lightly, I kissed her forehead then said in her ear, "you're drooling on me. Please get the fuck off."
She moaned loudly, pushing her face into my neck before grabbing at my waist. "No."

"I'm not a pillow."

"Yes, you are," she answered back. "You're a loud pillow. You were talking in your sleep."

"What was I saying?" I asked curiously.

"A whole host of interesting things," Edward answered. "I've heard you talk before but nothing like that. My goodness."

"She used to yell shit out in her sleep as a kid," Alice told him. "Remember when you screamed out my phone number, and you scared the shit out of me?" She laughed quietly.

"That's the only phone number I remember off the top of my head still," I said with a giggle. "You fell out of the bed. I'm just so glad that I don't sleepwalk anymore."

"One time we had a sleepover with our friend Brenda, and in the middle of the night she asked Bella to get her toilet paper. And she straight up brought her aluminum foil," she snickered.

"Foil paper and toilet paper are close, in my defense," I laughed as well. "Remember when I put the hanger on my head and walked into the wall?" I looked over at Edward. "I had a vivid dream where I was going to a party, and I went to the closet and put on my hat before trying to leave. I ran into the wall, turned on the light, fell down, and woke up freaking the fuck out. We had a puppy with us in the room at the time, and he freaked out too," I giggled at the memory.

"You were just crying on the floor," Al shook with laughter. "What were we? Eleven, maybe?"

"Maybe," I said before wiggling my shoulder. "Seriously, though. Get off. My arm is dead."

"Fine," she complained, moving beside me. I flopped my numb arm on top of her, thwacking her with it several times. Alice just giggled. "I'll get up in a minute."

"I don't believe you," I answered before rolling towards Edward. He pulled me into his arms, holding me tightly to his chest. "Let's go take a shower together."

"Oo, kinky," she mumbled sleepily.
“You’re not invited. The shower is too small,” I said into his chest.

"I mean, if you want to take a shower with her, I don't mind just watching," Edward joked. I pulled back, and he smiled at me innocently. "Or, not. I don't have to watch."

“You’re funny,” I said dryly, shaking my head and snuggling into a little closer. “Another day. Why would you want to play in that dinky shower anyway when there is ours in LA?”

“Mm, true,” he agreed with a smirk before it changed slightly. “You called it ours.”

“Well, it’s yours. I just share it with you.”

“No, it’s yours too,” he said softly before pulling me back to lightly kiss my lips. Edward was so gentle and sweet with me. I loved how tender he could be with me and how the little things made him so happy.

After a quick shower, we all headed back towards the reservation. This time we didn’t need an escort to know where we were going. The drive was beautiful and peaceful, everyone in the car still quiet because we were so sleepy. This time we listened to some music, though.

Jake was waiting for me on the porch when we arrived, gentle rain falling on the red metal roof of the beautiful log cabin. He smiled widely, pulling me into a hug right away.

“You smell like coffee,” he mumbled into my hair. I laughed quietly.

“That’s because I don’t have blood, I have coffee. If a vampire bit me, he’d be awake for days,” I joked. He chuckled at my lameness, pulling me back towards the door of his home.

Vanessa already had brunch waiting for us since she knew we were on the way. All of the leftovers from the day before we were on the table, fresh coffee wafting from a carafe.

“So, I thought after we eat, you and I could go see Ephraim. It'll probably be for the best though if it’s just us to start with. I don't know how he'll react, especially if a bunch of people show up at once."

I looked over at Edward, Rosalie, and Alice. They all smiled at me encouragingly. My boyfriend took my hand, giving it a quick squeeze.

“I’d like it if Edward could come with us, at least. He is my partner and the reason we’re here. I want him with me,” I told my brother honestly. I looked at Rosalie and Alice. “Is that okay?”

“Of course,” they both said quickly at the same time.
“I need to go to the store today,” Vanessa chimed in. “If you ladies want to join me, you can.”

“That would be great,” Rose agreed for both of them.

“We’ll have to leave by five to get Edward and Rosalie back to the airport in time for their flights home. Alice leaves tomorrow evening.”

“What time is your flight out on Tuesday?” Jacob asked a little sadly.

“Three.”

“After the baby comes, you two will have to come to stay with us in LA for a couple of weeks. This summer we were already talking about having all of my family come from Australia and renting out a hotel for all of them to stay. I would like it very much if all of you could join us as well. We can go swimming in some nice warm water,” Edward said charmingly. It made my heart swell up, and tears come to my eyes. "Of course, that includes all of her family." He looked up to Rose and Alice.

“Wow, this is going to be some party,” I tried to say lightly. He winked at me.

Once we were done eating a slow meal together, Edward, Jacob, and I made our way to the office where my grandfather apparently worked every single day. Being the chief was a fulltime job, and he took it very seriously from what my family said. He was an earnest and stern man, I had been warned. And cold. I was told not to expect very much from him. He knew I existed, but nothing else besides that I was the reason that his son ended up in a wheelchair. I was assured that, of course, that wasn’t my fault. And they were right. It was my grandfather’s.

The space was an old temporary building that had long since become permanent. It was clear that it was probably from the seventies, maybe earlier, and had been patched up a thousand times. An old wooden wheelchair ramp went to the door. A beat-up old blue pickup took up a single spot in front of a sign that said 'Reserved for the Chief.'

Jacob didn’t knock but instead just opened the door, popping his head inside. I was on the ramp behind him, suddenly scared to go inside. Edward was behind me, his hands on my forearms comfortably.

“Hey, Grandpa,” Jacob started cheerfully, not going inside or allowing us in further. I peeked around his shoulder to see a tall man with long stark white hair braided in a single rope down his back. He was wearing a blue flannel shirt and a pair of blue jeans, along with some cowboy boots. His back was turned to the door, pulling something out of a filing cabinet.
“Hello, Jacob,” he said calmly, not looking up from what he was doing.

“Do you have a minute?” He asked.

“Hm. Since you’re my grandson, I might have two,” he said dryly, still not looking up from whatever he was looking for. “What is it that you need?”

“I don’t need anything,” he replied. “There is someone that I want you to meet.”

Jacob finally took a couple of steps forward while taking my hand and pulling me in with him. Eventually, the older man turned to look at us. Edward stayed just outside the door, watching quietly.

His expression was indescribable. A million emotions filtered through his eyes as he looked me over. Slowly he took a step forward, looking between Jacob and myself. He didn't say anything, and I think my brother was too scared to because I felt his hand shaking in mine. The older gentleman wiped his mouth, sucking in a deep breath through his nose. He looked as if he had just seen a ghost.

Suddenly he closed the distance between us, pulling me into his long arms. He didn't say anything as he hugged me. I began to cry a little, shaking as he held my head to his chest.

“You're Billy's girl, aren’t you?” He finally asked. I nodded against his chest. "What's your name?"

“Bella. Isabella Swan,” I breathed, my voice shaky.

He pulled me back to look at my face, placing both of his big warm, soft wrinkled hands on my cheeks so that he could look into my eyes. He pressed a kiss to my forehead. "Welcome to the family, Isabella."

“Thank you," I cried, tears flowing heavily down my cheeks. It was beyond my control.

“My son loved you,” he stated simply. I nodded my head, swallowing back heavily all my emotions. I couldn’t speak. I didn't have the words or the ability. He brushed his big thumbs under my eyes. “Look at you. Billy couldn’t deny you, not that he wanted to. You look just like your grandmother. Just like her," he repeated.

“So I’ve been told," I said with a watery little laugh before looking down. I glanced over at Edward, and he gave me a soft and hopeful smile.

“Who are you?” My grandfather said shortly, looking over when I did. My love stood straighter and walked into the building as well.
“This is my partner, Edward,” I introduced him with a small smile that he returned.

“He’s the reason we were able to find each other,” Jake added in quickly.

“Hello, it’s nice to meet you, sir,” he said politely. I could tell he was nervous because his voice was so controlled. He offered him his hand. My grandfather looked at it for a minute before shaking it back firmly.

“Well, come in, then. Tell me about yourself, girl. Where have you been hiding all these years?” He asked afterward, finally letting me go. He waved his hand towards a couch, wanting us to sit while we talked.

“Texas for the first seventeen years, New York City for almost fifteen now, but I’m sort of in the process of moving into Los Angeles right now,” I explained, sitting on the well worn blue couch. “Which is going to be even better than I expected because now I get to be even closer to my family.”

Edward smiled as he sat beside me, putting his arm around me as I leaned into him comfortably.

“Are you her husband?” He asked directly.

“Not yet. Hopefully soon though,” he grinned happily at me. I nodded my head. “She’s forcing me to be patient, but it’s rather hard since your granddaughter happens to be one of the most amazing women on the face of this earth.”

“Do you have any children?” He asked me next. I shook my head slowly. “How old are you?”

“Thirty-three. My birthday is October fifth,” I answered.

“What do you do for money?” He asked, looking at Edward again. “Are you taking care of my girl?”

I laughed and sighed before I decided to answer for him, "Eddie is a very talented man. He's a multi-award winning entertainer and writer, not that he would tell you that." I smiled over at my boyfriend again. "He doesn't have to take care of me, but he does it very well anyway. Actually, we're going to be working together now. He has his own growing media empire," I teased, making him blush. He had made the joke before, but he knew that I meant it. I knew what he was capable of.

“What sort of entertainer?” He asked, unimpressed with it.
“Mainly I’m a voice actor,” he finally chimed in. “I’m currently on contract with Disney.”

“They’re making the movie he wrote, and he’s going to be the lead actor in it,” I told my grandfather proudly. “He’s even won a Grammy.”

“Hm,” he grumbled and nodded his head. “Are you an entertainer as well, then?”

“I’m a photographer.”

“And a very talented musician,” Edward added in, bragging about me. “And she’s quite the entertainer herself, not that she would tell you that,” he used my words against me, winking at me. I rolled my eyes but smiled to myself.

“Have you told the girls yet?” He asked Jacob, his hard eyes glaring. My brother nodded slowly.

“She got to meet everyone yesterday. I wanted to make sure it went well before I brought her to you,” he explained to him quickly. Wordlessly he swatted him hard on the back of the head. “Yeah, I know. I realize. I just didn’t want to overwhelm her. You’re a big deal, Gramps.”

The older man narrowed his dark brown, almost black eyes at his grandson. “Boy, you don’t keep things like that to yourself.”

“Quil knew too. So did the girls. Take it out on them, too,” Jake mumbled. “Everything has been going so fast. I’ve been busy.”

“They’re not here right now, and you are,” he told him sourly before turning his attention to me again. "Are you hungry?"

"Not particularly, but I'd love to go talk to you over coffee or something, if you are," I offered. "Vanessa made us a lovely breakfast not that long ago."

“That girl is a good cook.” He nodded his head. “Coffee sounds good. Come on, I'll buy you a cup.”

We talked about my father and my grandmother for a couple of hours at a little restaurant that was settled at the opening of a river that poured into the ocean. The views were stunning. Ephraim was a quiet man and serious to a fault. He didn't laugh the entire time, but he wasn't unkind. Though he kept sending dirty looks over to his grandson and I had a strong feeling he would be hearing about it once I left for the evening. Honestly, I couldn't blame him for it, and I think neither could Jake.
Every person who came to the table to speak to him he would introduce me to them, which was a lot. “This is Bella, Billy’s girl,” he would say with a little nod. Almost everyone seemed to instantly understand, saying how happy they were that I had finally come home and back to the tribe. Back to my family, where I belonged. All I could say was that so was I.

We spoke about my upbringing and my grandparents. We talked about how I didn’t know and always wanted to know my father. I cried more than once. Edward was quiet and supportive the entire time.

When he finally had to get back to work, we stood in front of the restaurant, my cheeks in his hands as he looked me over again.

“Welcome home,” he breathed out softly before kissing my forehead. “We will see each other again soon.”

“Yes, sir,” I said softly.

“I like your manners,” he said before walking to his truck. "Teach your brother some."

Jacob and I stood beside each other as we watched him drive away. Finally, he turned to look at me. “Holy shit. That went so much better than expected. What the fuck?”

“What did you expect?”

“Him telling you to wait outside while he beat me with his walking stick,” he mumbled, finally climbing into the driver side door of his nice restored red truck. “Then telling you to go away.”

I sat in the middle in between Edward and my brother the ride back to the house. Rosalie and Alice were obviously having a good time with Vanessa, especially Rose. They seemed to be gossiping like old friends when we came back.

It was hard to leave at five. I didn't want to leave my brother, but I hated more that Edward and Rosalie were leaving. It was the first time in almost two months that I was going to be without him, and even though it was going to be for just two nights, I hated it.

Alice drove us to the airport in Port Angeles, where they would be taking their separate flights. Rosalie's first. We hugged, and I promised to come to see her again when I came back to New York to get my things. I also made her promise to figure out when she and Emmett could come for a visit.

“You’d love California,” I promised.
“Just because you’re there,” she whispered before pressing a kiss to my cheek and hugging her sister goodbye.

Alice gave Edward and I some privacy before his flight. This wasn’t a tearful goodbye. He smiled sweetly at me, my face in his hands as he kissed my lips.

“Text me when you get home,” I said softly when he pulled away. “When I get back, let's go do something fun.”

“Absolutely,” he agreed softly. “It's a date. I love you.”

“I love you, too. So much. Thank you for this.”

"Stop that," he laughed lightly. "Seriously. This has been one of the best experiences of my life. It has been so wonderful to see you like this. I know you're emotional and have a lot of feelings that you'll deal with because of all of this, but…” He shook his head and swallowed. "It's like you found a whole new part of yourself, and I get to share it with you, and it's so wonderful."

“You are such a good pre-fiance,” I teased, pecking his lips lightly with a smile. “I adore every bit of you, Eddie. You know that?”

"Yeah, I do. But, tell me again," he grinned. I giggled and kissed him deeply with my fingers in his hair. When I pulled away, he had a dopey smile on his face. "Oh, that'll do nicely. Yes. Do that again."

We kissed again and again in the airport lobby until finally, he had to go.

"Hey, kiddo," Alice said playfully when I finally joined her by the rental car. "What do you say you and I get a little dinner and go to the movies since we're here? It's been a long time since it's been just you and me."

“Sounds perfect,” I agreed quietly.