



## **Episode Eighty-two-**

I had my first therapy session in Los Angeles the morning before I went to pick up Demetri at the airport. It was as awkward as meeting anyone could be for the first time. I wasn't sure how I felt about them. For whatever reason, I just didn't feel comfortable. I wasn't sure if I wanted to go back or find someone else, but I didn't really have a lot of time to think about it either way. It was going to be a busy weekend.

Edward decided to show off and get a driver for the whole long weekend for Demetri and me to use instead of just letting us go in taxis or a rental car like ordinary people. I didn't mind. It was just precisely what he needed to do to impress my loud friend, and he knew it.

My bougie currently strawberry blond buddy squealed happily when he saw me by the luggage. We hugged for a long minute. He easily lifted me off the ground for a second.

"Damn, you look so good!" He gushed when he pushed me back to look at me once he put me back down on the ground. "How are you feeling? I haven't seen you since you went into the hospital."

I flushed, embarrassed that people kept bringing it up. But I understood why. "Great! Really good. Happy! Siked you're here! You're going to love it." I shoved at him playfully, smiling. "You were made for LA."

"No. Girl, you know I have New York in my veins."

I glanced over him. "Bitch, that's pizza grease."

"Um, same thing?" He said seriously.

I laughed loudly, shaking my head. "So how are you? I've missed you so much!"

He pouted, his perfect pink lips pursed. "Missed you too, baby. I am so hungry!" He touched his stomach and slouched a little bit. It didn't match his clean appearance in a beautiful soft pink business suit and cream-colored silk blouse.

"I think I can fix that," I promised as I took one of his rolling bags. He carried the other, walking with his big purse beside me. His thin heels clicked against the granite floor.

"So, what are you thinking?"

I took his free hand, holding it as we walked. "Well, it's just me and you tonight. Eddie is doing movie stuff today and tomorrow. So, why don't we stop for a bite to eat before we go home? Anywhere you want. We have time. What are you in the mood for?"

"Mm. What's good in LA?" He asked as he stepped outside, just crossing onto the sidewalk of the LAX pick-up lane. There were several people with cameras standing around waiting for celebrities, and a couple of them took pictures of me. I tried to ignore it, but Demetri noticed. "Um, hello? What are they doing?" He whispered to me quietly.

"Are you Eddie's girlfriend?" One of them called to me as our driver took the bags and put them in the trunk. "Are you Bella?"

I let go of Demetri's hand to wave. "Yup," I said in a friendly tone. "Hi."

"Who's your friend?" He asked conversationally.

"This is Demetri Voronin. He's one of my very best and dearest friends. He's my big brother," I smiled back at him, and he winked. "He's also the owner of the wonderful little Blue Light Theater in Brooklyn. And he is an extraordinary makeup artist and is going to be my stylist for the Children's Choice Awards this Sunday," I explained, trying my best to act like Eddie would. Not Edward, but my wonderful actor who was comfortable talking to anyone about anything at any time. I was nervous, but I wanted my friend to get all of the attention he deserved. This was free advertising.

“Are you excited?” The stringy young man asked from behind his big camera. He was recording me speak, I realized.

I nodded, smiling a little nervously. “Totally! It’s my first major red carpet event with Eddie. I can’t wait to see him win.”

He nodded, looking down at the screen as I spoke. “How are you going to celebrate when he does?”

We hadn’t spoken about it at all. I think he was too nervous. Maybe it would jinx it. I wasn’t sure. “Mm... He starts filming the next day, so we’re probably going to celebrate with a nice late fast-food feast and an earlyish bedtime. Which is probably exactly how he would want to celebrate either way,” I laughed.

“Sounds good!”

Everything was in the car. Thankfully, it was time to escape. “Alright, have a good evening!” I waved again, smiling too big.

“You too, Bella!” He took my picture again before I slipped inside the car. I took a deep, shaky breath to calm myself down.

“WHAT WAS THAT?!” Demetri shouted excitedly as we got moving. I laughed loudly, blushing furiously. I covered my face with both of my hands. “OH, MY GOD! You are so cool.” He shoved me hard, laughing with me. “Ah! That was so much fun. How does it feel to be a celebrity?”

I shook my head quickly. “I’m not!” I snorted. “It’s just because I’m with one.”

He made a face. “He knew your name, too!”

All I could do was shake my head again. I was nothing, and they only cared because of Eddie. “It’s so wild. Earlier this week, I signed a legit autograph. It was crazy.” She knew my name because she liked me too, at least. I shook my head once more to make the thoughts go away, blushing heavily still. “Anyway... French?” I just wanted to change the subject to anything else.

Demetri grinned wildly. “Girl, yes. Mm, bread, and cheese. We always need more bread and cheese.”

“And wine,” I giggled. “Can’t forget that.” I needed a big glass.

We shared a bottle and had a true slow French dinner. He had an omelet, and I had a Croque Madame. Everything was delicious, and it was so relaxing. We also shared a fancy little tart and sipped coffee while we caught up. I really did miss him.

It was late when we got back to the house, unsurprisingly. The sun was already down, but the front porch light was on, so I knew Edward was home as well.

"This place is so cute," he gushed. "I love the front yard. Are those giant aloe vera?"

"They are! I love all the cactuses so much. Why would anyone want grass when you could have beautiful plants you have to do literally nothing to maintain? Plus, if I burn myself, I will never run out of aloe," I joked, opening the door with the keycode. I turned around to see him looking around in wonder. "Isn't it beautiful?"

Demetri's eyes were huge as he peered in. "He has such good tastes," he said in a breath, touching his chest as he looked up at the high ceilings.

Edward poked his head around the corner. He had his wireless headphones around his neck. He pulled me into his tight grip and kissed me as if he had not seen me in days. I loved it. I giggled against his mouth, my arms going loosely around his neck.

"Hello, my darling. How was dinner?" He asked sweetly when he pulled away.

"Mm, delicious." I put my chin on his chest and looked up at him with a little smile. "I miss you, though."

"I missed you too," he cooed, kissing me again. He finally turned his attention to my companion, like it was hard to take his eyes off of me. "Demetri, it's so good to see you again! Welcome to our home," he said charmingly. He reached over to shake his hand while holding me in his other arm. Demetri took it slowly and gently shook back while still looking around in wonder.

"I love it so much." He blinked, leaning over some to get a glimpse of the big glass wall that opened up to the back.

Edward beamed enthusiastically. "Thank you! I'm quite proud of it myself. Anyway, why don't I take your bags to your room for the weekend? I just need to finish up something real quick, and then I'll be done for the evening."

"I'll give him the tour," I said before pecking a kiss on his chin. My boyfriend turned his attention back to me, rubbing his nose against mine before pressing a soft kiss to my forehead. I wanted to melt into his side.

"I'll just be a minute," he promised.

I smiled. "Okay." He took both suitcases from us, easily handling them both. "Thank you."

"Yes! Thank you!" Demetri hummed as we watched him go down the hall. "Mm..." We softly giggled and tilted our heads to the side. I sighed happily, looking at my friend. "What a man."

"Don't I know it," I replied with a smirk.

Demetri laughed, finally taking a few steps into the living room. "Okay, I want to live here. Can I move in?"

I hissed, pretending to think about it. But then I shook my head. "Get a house down the street. You won't want to live with us. I don't think I could not be loud," I teased, taking his hand. He scoffed. "So..." I walked him through the living room to the pool area. "The backyard. Check out this view."

It was a perfect night, not a cloud in the crisp sky. The mountains were a black shadow in the background, the lights of LA glowing faintly off into the distance.

"Holy fuck!" He said in a gasp. "Bella! You live here!"

"Yes, I do!" I laughed at his reaction. "It's a dream come true."

He pulled out his phone and started taking selfies. He quickly tugged me to him so I could be in the photos as well. Demetri sent them to his husband before posting it on his Instagram. I sent some to Jasper as well, putting them on my social media stuff. It instantly got a lot of likes from our mutual friends.

"Okay, now show me the rest of the house!"

First, I just opened the door to the gym before I ushered him into his bedroom. It was where he was going to spend most of his time anyway. Finally, I took him into our bedroom and to the big lit-up vanity where he would help me get ready for the awards show.

"This bathroom turns me on," Demetri said in a funnily deep voice. "Oh, my god." I actually cackled, making him laugh as well. "I feel like I need to put on one of those sheer pink robes with the feathers at the end and some cold cream then monologue about my washed-up Hollywood career in front of this mirror. Then maybe threaten someone with a wire hanger."

“*Right!*” I snorted. “It’s going to be so much fun getting ready in here. I am so happy that you came. Thank you.” I bounced up and down excitedly. He gave me a big hug, pressing my face to his chest for a second.

He chuckled. “Thank your hot ass boyfriend for paying me. I would have done it for free but-” he turned to look at me. “Thank you for getting me the hell out New York. I needed a change of scenery.”

“My pleasure, darling.” I used Jasper’s favorite pet name, making him grin widely. “You can’t get much different than this.”

Demetri shook his head quickly. “No, you can’t.” He turned to look at the vanity again, going to look at my makeup collection. “So, what’s the plan for tomorrow?”

“Shopping, lunch, spa, and Eddie is taking us to Spago for dinner tomorrow night,” I explained evenly. Demetri turned to look at me with large happy eyes, his mouth going wide. “We’re going shopping on *Rodeo Drive* tomorrow. Then to a spa in Beverly fucking Hills, and after we’re eating at Wolfgang Puck’s restaurant. And on Sunday, I’m going to be on a red carpet. What even is my life right now?” I asked, putting both of my hands on my cheeks before I pushed my fingers into my hair. The stress hit me like a bus.

“This, baby girl, is exactly what you were made for!” He laughed cheerfully. “You are glowing right now!”

“Yes! Listen to him!” Edward chuckled as he came into the room, sans headphones. He leaned against the doorway to watch us. “All done.”

I turned to my friend eagerly. “His office is my favorite room in the whole place,” I said as I took both of his hands to drag him along. “We’re almost done with the tour,” I promised Edward.

“Oh, wow,” Demetri breathed as he followed me inside. “It’s like your personality exploded in here,” he said to my boyfriend with a warm smile.

“Exactly! It’s why I liked it so much,” I giggled. “I mean, I wouldn’t want the whole house to look like this. But this is the perfect creative space.”

Edward grinned. “Aw, thanks, honey. It’s the one spot that I actually decorated.”

I smirked. “I know. I can tell.”

Demetri walked around slowly, looking at my boyfriend’s beloved shelves. He stopped for a minute, bending down to look at the Plexie statue. “Oh! Is this is the thing you got him for

his birthday that you showed me?" Edward nodded, grinning instantly. "How sweet! Isn't this your character or something?"

I actually began to turn a little red. It was the first time since Australia that I had even thought about him and what I knew was inside. My boyfriend was beaming, his hands in his pockets.

"Yes, it is. He is one of my most prized possessions, actually," he explained pleasantly as he glanced over at me. I just flushed brighter, my bottom lip between my teeth. I could only look at my feet.

"Didn't he open up?" Demetri unhelpfully remembered.

"Yes, he does," he said brightly. I started to turn instantly to leave out of the room. My feet just automatically went in the opposite direction. Edward began to laugh very loudly. "Oh, love! Come on!"

My friend was just confused. "What?"

I put both of my hands up. "Don't open it! I mean, you can. Just let me go first."

"Why?"

Edward chuckled, pinching the bridge of his nose for a moment. He was turning a little pink, too. "Because she knows what he's keeping safe. You don't want to even see it? What if you hate it and want me to get something else?"

Quickly, I shook my head. "I won't hate it! And if I see it... I just shouldn't. Not yet. I'm not ready. And I'll want it, and I don't. Just let me go," I stuttered out.

"What is inside this thing?" Demetri asked enthusiastically. Nothing usually made me react like that much of an idiot.

"I'm going to the bathroom to take off my makeup," I stated firmly. I slipped out of the room before either of them could say anything else. I heard Edward laugh loudly.

"Okay... So, it's the arm that opens it," I listened to him explain before I went into our bedroom and shut the door. I still heard my friend's squeal. I laughed a little bit to myself as I put both of my hands over my eyes. My fingers dug into my scalp for a moment.

When I finally came out in my pajamas, I went to Demetri's guest room. He smiled broadly when he saw me. I laughed, looking down at my hands. "I know. Don't tell me, though. I want it to be a surprise. I'm sure it's a gorgeous ring."

“You’re going to be so happy. He has *such* good tastes,” he said in a satisfied whisper. “Like, seriously.”

“I know,” I giggled, leaning my head against the wall as I watched him. “I’m just not ready for that yet. There is too much already going on. And if I put it on, I won’t take it off ever again.”

“Eh, no rush,” he breathed softly. I guess he was worried Edward might hear him. “It’s not even been six months yet. It’s just so sweet.”

I quickly nodded my head in agreement. “It is.”