

CHAPTER 21: DATE NIGHT

Having my mother cancel my flight to Connecticut for me was heartbreaking. I am so ready to leave this place, especially after the assault, but I still have unfinished business that I need to take care of before I leave. Besides, there is no way I will be able to do much if I go now while having broken ribs, so I might as well stay here until I can at least move around and do things on my own a bit more.

I've yet to tell Jace anything about me leaving. Depending on what my decision is going to be, I may not tell him at all. That is one of the reasons why I agreed to go out to the movies with him tonight. It's been almost a week since I got home from the hospital, and he's been coming over after school to help me around the house when nobody is around. He still comes even if I don't need the help, and it's actually been nice. I've seen a lot of the old Jace, but I'm not sure if it's because my family is around or if he really is trying to go slow for me.

When he asked me this morning if I would go to a movie with him tonight, I didn't say yes just because it's a date, but because I need out of this house and my parents won't let me go anywhere alone, neither will Jace. I do want to try and get to know him all over again as well, it will help in my decision, but I'm just nervous that the bully will come out the moment I am alone with him. A tingle runs through my core at the thought of that happening, and I frown at myself. How can I keep telling Jace to not be that way, and then my body reacts to the possibility of him doing exactly that?

A heavy sigh leaves me as my phone vibrates. When I glance down at it, I see that it's a text from Jace telling me that he will be over in five minutes. Taking one more look at myself in the full-length mirror, I slowly head downstairs to wait for him. I've just stepped down on the last step when the doorbell rings. Mom is quicker than I am, and she lets Jace in after greeting him with a warm smile. Our mothers are on cloud nine knowing that we are going on a date together. Jace told me that his mother's eyes teared up when he told her.

He shows me his pearly whites when he sees me at the bottom of the stairs. I didn't dress up or anything, but I did add some lip gloss and mascara just so it looks like I'm making an effort. It's not like he hasn't seen me at my worst. I smile back and walk over to him as he holds my coat up for me to slip my arms in. I'm pretty sure he's only doing it because he knows that I can't quite do it yet on my own, and not because he's a gentleman.

"Bye, kids, have fun!" My mom calls out as we walk out the door.

"What's so funny?" Jace asks when I chuckle at my mom's words.

"We will forever be 'kids' in our parent's eyes," I give him a side glance, "You're almost nineteen and still, they call you a kid."

He shrugs before opening the door to his mom's car for me, "I really don't care either way. There is only one person that needs to know, and understand, that I'm no longer a kid." He winks at me while he helps me lower myself into the seat.

There is the Jace that I knew would come out at some point tonight, but I won't hold it against him because he wasn't trying to be an ass. I mean, after all, he did think about my comfort by using his mom's car over his jeep. I would have a harder time getting into his than I did a moment ago, and I think

it was sweet of him to do so. Even when he pulls the seatbelt across my front, and clicks it in place, he's only looking out for my safety. A shiver runs through me when his hand briefly touches my thigh as he brings his it back to shut the door. I think he might have seen my reaction, because when I glance up to thank him, he's has a smirk in place.

On the car ride over, we talked about what was happening with my case. I was told that they had all posted bond after being arrested and had plead 'not guilty' to everything. Now we are all waiting for a court date, and I will have to go in and testify, along with Jace because he's the one that came to get me. It's all a mess and I wish it would all go away, but of course, because that would make my life easier, that's not going to happen.

The movie theater wasn't very busy, so it didn't take long to get our drinks and popcorn, and then find a good seat. We are both quiet while we eat the popcorn and watch the previews to upcoming movies. The first time I hear Jace laugh at a scene once the movie starts, I stare over at him. It's been years since I heard his real laugh, and I missed it.

He glances over at me, "What?" He smiles.

"Nothing," I smile back, "It's just nice to hear that laugh again, that's all."

He studies me for a few seconds and then focus's back on the movie, but he also lifts his arm and drapes it over the back of my seat. Eventually, his arm comes down over my shoulders and he pulls me closer to him. I don't fight him on it, because in all

#### Date Night

honesty, it feels good and almost natural to have him touching me like this. I bite my lip, and snuggle in a little closer, resting my head against him. I feel his lips press against the top of my head briefly before going back to the movie.

His intoxicating scent makes me want to bury my face into his neck and never come back up for air, but I keep myself in check and focus on the movie. We stay like this for the rest of the movie, and when the credits start to roll, neither one of us are too eager to get up. We remain in our seats until the rest of the patrons exit. Being so relaxed during the movie, and not moving around too much, causes my still healing body to be little bit sorer than normal. Jace gives me his hand and helps me to stand, but doesn't release it until we get outside to the car, where he has no choice but to let go, so I can get in.

"That was a pretty good movie, I'm glad you picked that one instead of some romantic shit." He lightens his harsh words by winking at me. Yes, Jace Palmer just winked at me.. and smiled while he did it!

After the shock from Jace's demeanor wears off, I realize that I should probably say something back, "Well, I remember when I made you watch the movie 'After', and you ruined it for me by making commentaries throughout the whole movie because you were bored."

"Oh, the movie wasn't that bad, I just wanted to annoy you." He chuckles.

"Really?" I give him a fake glare.

He nods his head, and grins, "Yup."

"Huh, well then, I guess you won't have an issue with watching the two movies that came after that one." I grin and wait for it.

"You mean to tell me that they went ahead and made two more movies after that one? It wasn't that good." He mumbles, realizing after his little outburst, that I tricked him into admitting that he didn't like it.

"Yes, they did. We should have a movie marathon at my house. You know, to catch you up. I have all three on Blu-ray."

"Of course, you do," he rolls his eyes, "What do I get if I suffer through this marathon with you?" he quirks a brow at me.

I put my finger to my mouth and pretend to think, "Hm, let's see..."

"Actually," he cuts me off, "I should get to choose, since I'm the one doing all the suffering."

"And what is it that you want in return?"

"Oh no, it's going to be a surprise, and I'm going to want it as soon as the credits start rolling on the last movie." He keeps his

eyes on the road, but I see the evil smirk on his face, warning me that I'm either not going to like it or I'm going to like it too much.

I figure it's best to drop the topic, so I ask where we are going instead, because we are not heading in the direction of home. When he tells me that he's taking me for ice cream, my stomach begins to churn. I don't know if I'm ready to face anybody yet. At least at the theater, it's dark and nobody can really see your face, unlike the brightly lit ice cream shop. Bringing it to his attention, does no good, though. He refuses to let me hide behind closed doors.

"Ella, you need to show everybody that they didn't break you." He states.

"It's not so much that; I look horrid with all these fading bruises!" My voice raises just a bit, but just enough to earn me a stern look from him.

Watch your tone, Ella. I am taking you for ice cream, and that's the end of it. I'm not going to let those assholes ruin my good time with my girl, and you're not going to either," he reaches over and grabs my hand, "This is our very first date, so let's just enjoy it, and fuck anybody that has the nerve to stare at the beautiful woman at my side."

I scoff, "Don't you mean Bride of Frankenstein?"

He swerves into a parking spot really quick and throws the car in park before turning in his seat to face me, "Don't ever talk down about yourself, Ella!"

"Oh, I forget, you're the only one that is allowed to call me names, my bad!"

I might have taken it a bit far because he reaches over and grabs my jaw in a tight grip, "You are one hundred percent right on that account!" he glares for only a moment before his features soften, and he sighs, "Listen, I know I called you a few names in the past out of spite, but that was all before what I know now, and I'm trying to make up for it," he glances around before his eyes land on mine once more,

“But in the future I will call it like it is, when you finally give me that body of yours. You will be my little slut, not because I think you are, because you are far from being one, but I will say it because I know that once that sweet cherry of yours goes bye-bye, you’re going to let me fuck you whenever I want, and you’re going to love it. I promise you that. I will

29,83%

Date Night

humiliate you and talk down to you while I fuck you, because I know you will get off on it, but only in the bedroom. You’re going to be a little slut for my cock, and my cock only, do you understand what I’m saying, Ella?”

Um yeah, can someone be a slut before they even lose their virginity? His words just went straight to my core, sending it into a throbbing frenzy. I never knew that you can almost come simply by listening to someone say dirty things to you. His words combined with his deep voice..oh Lord! All I can do is nod at him.

“Words, Ella.”

“Y-Yes, Jace, I understand.”

His grip loosens and he caresses the area that he was holding, “That’s my good girl. I knew you would understand.”

I’m almost ready to say screw it and let him make me a woman right here, right now, but the other part of me, the good part, is yelling at me to step away and get a hold of myself. I want to do both, but I know it can only be one or the other, so instead, I grab the door handle, “How about we get that ice cream?”

The ice cream shop is pretty busy for it being mid-January. I drop my head just before we walk in, so nobody notices my hideous face. I should have used some concealer to cover up the green and yellow areas where the bruises are fading. Jace stops us right before he opens the door and moves to stand in front of me.

Lifting my face upward, I see the furrow in his brow, “Don’t ever walk with your head lowered, Ella, especially when you’re with me. Be the confident woman that I know you can be and show everyone that nothing will keep you down.” The wind blows some of my hair into my face, so he pushes it back, behind my ear, “I am proud to have you walk beside me, now show them why that is.” Cupping the side of my head, he leans in and kisses my forehead before turning back to open the door.

I don’t know what to make of Jace anymore. I’m so used to him being my bully that I don’t know how to see him as anything other than that anymore. I used to hope and pray that the old Jace would come back to me, but instead, I got an updated model. He still has some of the old Jace in him that I see every once in a while, but then he’s also got the bully in him.-or Dom as he calls it, same thing to me. I haven’t decided on whether I like this one or not. I’m leaning more toward yes, especially after tonight, but I still need time.

Walking into the shop, half the patrons look up and stare wide-eyed, but those are all kids that attend our school and I think the shock on their faces has more to do with Jace being there with me, of all

people, and holding my hand as well. As we stand in line to order, I'm shocked when both Amy and Bree, my two ex-best friends, come up to us and say hi. I automatically turn and look at Jace, because I know he is the reason that they stopped hanging around me. I'm not sure why I look at him, but he gives me a nod, and I sigh in relief before turning back to my old friends.

"Look, Ella," Bree starts, "I'm sorry about the last two years," She glances briefly at the guy behind me, "there is no excuse for our actions, and I don't expect you to forgive us, but we wanted to apologize all the same."

"Yeah," Amy cuts in, "I'm sorry, Ella. I hope that someday we can rebuild what Bree and I broke, because we miss you."

I give them a polite smile, "Thank you, guys. I miss you too and maybe someday we can get it back, but there are a lot of things that I'm trying to work on right now. I'm not trying to push you away," I say quickly so they don't get the wrong idea, "but I have a lot going on right now, that deserves my full attention." I peek back at Jace again, and he seems to be happy with what I'm saying to the girls, mainly because he knows I'm partially talking about him and I.

"We understand," Bree embraces me in a hug, whispering, "We heard what happened and I am so sorry that they hurt you like that. I can't believe they would do something that evil to anyone!" She steps back.

"Yeah, well, they will get what they deserve." I state.

"I, for one, think the beating they all took wasn't near to what they deserved!" Amy scoffs.

"So, it's true then? All four got beat up?" It was never confirmed to me, aside from Kaylee, that the other three were the ones that got beat up too.

"Wait, you haven't seen the pictures going around?" Amy asks, surprised.

"What pictures? I don't get on social media much anymore." I glance back at Jace to see how he's handling me talking to the girls. He seems to be doing okay, but I can tell he's got something on his mind.

Amy holds up her phone to show me some photos that an anonymous person posted. It's a picture from when Toby, Mason, and Brandon were arrested, they must have been together when the cops came because they are all walking together, all three in

Date Night

handcuffs. The part that has my full attention, though, are their faces, or at least what you can make out of their faces. I gasp, because I know exactly what it felt like to get beat up like that, and just looking at their picture takes me back to that night.

"Okay, I don't think Ella needs to be looking at that," Jace says as he shoves Amy's phone away with a scowl, "If you girls don't mind, I'd like to finish my date with Ella now."

Both Amy and Bree apologize to him and then say goodbye to me before walking out of the ice cream shop, "You didn't have to be so mean, Jace."

He lifts a brow, "We are on a date, Ella. This is my time with you, and I don't want to stand here, listening to a couple of high school girls' gossip, when I can be having a nice conversation with you."

I smile, "I understand, but I'm just saying that you could have been a bit nicer."

He leans in, "Are you trying to tell me what to do again, Ella?" He asks in that sexy Dom voice of his.

Closing my eyes for a brief moment, trying to contain the heat that just rose between my thighs, I open them again and gaze up at him, "I'm sorry, Jace. It's not what I meant to do."

He caresses my cheek, "I know, but you need to learn to think before you speak to me like that, because that kind of attitude will get you a red ass. I can't wait until you're completely healed, I'm going to love inflicting the pain that will be needed to see that lovely shade of red that I love so much, on your ass."

A shiver runs through me.

"You're wet for me, aren't you?" He whispers in my ear just before stepping up to the counter to order.

Damn him for knowing how to get me going like this! As much as I have enjoyed our date, I can't wait to get home, and away from him. My libido can't take anymore of Jace Palmer tonight, but I don't think he's going to let me get away that easily. He's always loved torturing me, and even though the way he delivers it is different, it's still all the same, except this kind has me hurting for a release that will only come if he allows it.

Training