Limits 233

Chapter 233

Jack had always considered himself sharp, but when it came to Phoebe, he constantly felt like he was chasing shadows. She was unreadable, distant, and impossible to pin down. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't seem to grasp what went on in her mind.

Compared to that, Bella's warmth, playfulness, and complete inability to hide her emotions seemed much easier and closer to him.

Every time he thought of her, memories flooded in. He thought of her beauty, her tenderness, and the way she had cared for him so openly. The emotions he had once been so certain of for Phoebe were starting to shift.

Suddenly, he realized something about himself. He had always been the type to fall too easily and chase after fleeting affections.

He had pursued Feena, only to be left behind. He had once been infatuated with Amelia, only to be dumped without hesitation. Now, after everything with Bella, he found himself estranged from her as well.

And Phoebe? She was more unattainable than ever.

The frustration and regret were worse than anything he had felt before. He had always believed that heartbreak had hardened him, that he had grown immune to the sting of rejection.

But right now, he knew he had been wrong. It was only now, standing in the aftermath of his choices, that he truly understood-Bella had left a mark on him. No matter what had happened, she had already carved a space in his heart, one he couldn't seem to erase.

...

When Jack returned to his dorm, the door was slightly ajar.

That was odd. He knew Isaac and Joshua were out playing basketball. Ronnie had been practically living with his girlfriend, already half moved out of the dorm. Samuel worked late every night to support his mother and sister.

And Luca had rented his own place to focus on his music career and barely showed up for classes, let alone the dorm.

So, who was inside? Jack gently pushed the door open. A familiar scent filled the air. He looked up-and there she was.

She was sitting at his desk, completely at ease, a book in her hands. Her long, silky hair cascaded down her shoulders, effortlessly elegant. The soft glow of the evening sun traced her delicate features, making her look almost unreal.

When she heard the door open, Bella turned to face him, her bright eyes locking onto his.

"You're back," she said, her voice light and natural. "Do you want to grab dinner? And then maybe go for a run?"

Jack froze. Everything about this moment felt wrong.

After what had happened last night, after what he had heard this morning, how could she be sitting here, acting like nothing had changed? He studied her face carefully, trying to find some hint of hesitation, some sign that she was pretending.

"Why are you here?" he asked, still processing. "Didn't you... get back together with Andres?"

If that was true, then why was she here? And why did she sound so casual, like they hadn't just walked away from each other?

Bella blinked, clearly catching the flicker of surprise on his face. She tilted her head slightly and asked softly, "What? Are you saying you didn't want to see me again?"

Jack hesitated.

"No, that's not—" He stopped himself, shaking his head.

The truth was, her sudden appearance made him happier than he was willing to admit.

Even if he had chosen to walk away, even if he had convinced himself it was for the best, a part of him had already made space for her. She had become a constant presence in his life, whether he wanted to acknowledge it or not. But he couldn't ignore the rumors. He had to ask.

"This morning," he said carefully, "Joshua told me that you and Andres... got back together. So, I just assumed you wouldn't show up again."

Bella watched him closely, reading every shift in his expression.

At his words, she pouted slightly.

"What? Are you disappointed I didn't get back together with Andres?"

Jack paused, then exhaled. "No."

His voice was quiet, barely audible. But Bella heard it. A flicker of something unreadable passed through her eyes before she smiled, pretending not to have caught it.

"Hmm? What was that? You're mumbling. I didn't hear you."

Jack changed the subject instead. "Why are you here, Bella? What do you want?"

Bella walked up to Jack and carefully studied him before speaking softly, "Who else could I turn to if not you? I came to tell you something. This morning, Andres found me downstairs by the dorm, and he wanted to get back together. But I thought about it for a long time before I gave him my answer..."

Hearing this, Jack immediately tensed up.