Twilesque
by Pienuniek

Summary

Her grandmother taught her to believe in fairy tales. She was told that one day her Prince Charming would come to save her. But after years of abuse, Bella has nearly given up all hope, until the day the Cullens moved to Forks. Twilight AU, mating connection story.

Notes

A/N First things first. Everything Twilight belongs to Stephenie Meyer, I just play with her characters. No copyright infringement was intended.

I started writing this story because I felt a lot of things in the Twilight Saga were treated as normal, and I'm not talking about the supernatural things. I'm talking about clear neglect/abuse, and manipulation which is easily forgiven. I thought if I commented on it I should try and do it again but better. At least from the point of those pet peeves. I accentuated some things, to make them more visible. Other things I turned up side down because I couldn't stand them.

This story is completely pre-written, and will be posted one chapter a week. To give me time to write the sequel which is almost completely lined out, right now.

I'd like to thank Lorraine Bubblybear, for being my sounding board. Without her I would never gotten past chapter 10.

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Prelude

TWILESQUE

Prelude

BPOV

Dreams are nothing but fairy tales

If you are born for a dime, you'll never become a quarter.

You're a precious gem waiting to be discovered, never forget that.

If you look at the previous statements, you probably can't tell which of those I had to believe to survive. And even though I believed fairy tales to be fictitious, I still wrote them to escape my hellish surroundings. I created my own world where the lowly servant girl became the queen—all to temporarily drift off to happier places; of course, I was that servant girl, forced to work in the castle, sometimes even to tend to the pigs and looking the part—but the prince always noticed her and rescued her to a life so much more than her lowly beginnings.

This is a story of how the last statement became true; my prince entered my life and indeed rescued me from a dismal future.

This story tells how my future became a fairy tale.

EPOV

Against all odds, I kept my morals.

Against every previously written law, I prevailed.

I learned I didn't have to be alone.

I became the knight in shining armor.

I was humbled by the greatness of my shooting star.

I started out totally alone within a family.

I ended up more closely bound to an angel than I could ever have dreamed about.
BPOV

The godlike boy turned to me and what I saw in his eyes was astounding. They were the most beautiful color, a warm emerald green, but what they exuded took my breath away: all I could see was pure love.

How could that be? I only just met him. I felt a strange pull toward him, like he was my savior. Like I just found the person who would finally lift my loneliness. Strangely, I felt utterly safe.

With a loud crash, my bedroom door was thrown wide open and my father stumbled in, more than half drunk again, and luckily I was able to stuff my writing notebook under my biology textbook. It would look like I was studying.

"Why was my dinner not on the table when I got home? You lousy, good for nothing little bitch. I can't trust you to do a thing around here! Maybe I should go and exchange you for a whore; at least I would get some that way." He threw out his usual derogatory remarks; they still hurt like hell but were mostly expected.

His dinner had been on the table when he should have been home, but he obviously stopped at the bar after work. When I had my dinner, half an hour later, I had covered his and put it in the fridge. No, I didn't throw it out, which I probably should have done.

The man not worthy to be called my father still stood wobbling in my room; oh, he probably had enough attention span to wait for an answer. I looked at the clock—half past ten—sighed, looked at him for the first time, and asked nicely (sarcastically), "Would you still like me to warm your dinner? It's in the fridge waiting for you."

He looked at me dumbly; oh dear, he was further along than I thought. I stood up, grabbed my toiletries, and moved around him towards the bathroom. I’m glad he was so slow enough now that I could glide smoothly past without him grabbing my arm. I left him in my room reluctantly, but I had to shower before he would pass out on the bathroom floor. In the morning, I would probably have to forgo the bathroom, never happier that the previous owner of the house had put in a downstairs toilet.

Once in the bathroom with the door safely locked, I had time to muse again on my life. Born to teenage parents who had to marry because I was coming, the first five years of my life I was relatively happy, although my mother was never interested in doting on me, and the perpetual rain here in Forks also didn't help with her idea of a good life. She left when I was five, leaving my father...
while he was on a nightshift so he could not stop her. My father was a police deputy then; he had somewhat good prospects on becoming the next Chief of Police.

When his wife left him, my father turned into a bitter man. He blamed me for my mom’s disappearance and started drinking. Now, twelve years later, he blamed me for everything that went wrong in his life, including him never qualifying for Chief. From the ripe old age of eight, he forced me to do all the chores except groceries, and when I was big enough to stir a pot with the aid of a stepstool, I was forced to have his dinner and breakfast ready on time as well. I was resigned to be his personal slave for eternity, because who would want me? Without the resources to buy my own clothes, all I had were two threadbare jeans and six hoodies, also fraying on the edges. I had one pair of worn sneakers with holes in the soles, but that was an expensive buy, and I hadn't saved enough of the meager household money Charlie gave me. My hair was long because I simply couldn't afford going to the hairdressers’. This way I could trim it myself. So, I didn't think I would get away from him soon, but I could dream about it, and that is what I did.

The library computers had helped me to apply for every scholarship I remotely qualified for. I wanted to go to college, study literature, and become a writer. I scoffed at myself; yeah, as if any of those things would want me. Inside, I was fierce and fearless, but it never came out. I was a weak wallflower, bullied not only by my peers but the worst were my parents.

The three times a year my mom called were solely for her to put me down, telling me how I ruined her life and how I would never achieve anything good at all. I was alive to be forgotten, not loved. And then there was Dad: bitter, drunk, and if he wasn't neglectful he was callous and mean. I preferred the neglectful dad. Then I could do as I liked. The mean one was always too close to physical abuse. It happened only a few times; he hit me so hard it left more than bruises and he was too careful not to hit me in places anyone could see. My lower back and the back of my legs bore the brunt of the abuse. He valiantly tried to break me, but, due to my gran, he never had. I just endured while nurturing my inner strength, as hard as that sometimes was.

I escaped in my writing, my dream world; sometimes it seemed like some elements of my writings, or should I say dreams, came true. Maybe I was secretly a bit supernatural, because I sure as hell didn't fit into the normal world. Forced to mature, I could do nothing but despise my peers. They were just too childish to even try to form bonds with. Not able to buy the latest fashion, I didn't fit in anyhow, and was frequently the laughingstock of the entire student body of Forks High. Not that there were a lot of people. Forks was a very little community. My entire junior year had about 40 students, including the airheads held back a year.

Because I wanted to go to college, I had to work my ass off to keep my grades high, especially because of the extracurricular requirements placed on a lot of the scholarships. Due to my enslavement by Charlie, I couldn't work or do community service. I helped a lot in the school library and received extra credit for that. Mrs. Cope, the school administrator/librarian, had taken pity on me, the plain and unassuming daughter of a cop. She knew I had to be at home when my dad’s schedule said day shift or earlies. But on the evening and nightshift days I could go and help her out. Never at the checkout desk though. She had me cataloguing and putting books back. The library was my sanctuary. I was the only person allowed to eat lunch there. That way I had an hour long reprieve from my relentlessly cruel peers.

While I was thinking everything through, I had finished my ablutions and was ready to go to sleep. Charlie had earlies this week and his breakfast had to be ready at 5:30am. This meant I had to be up and running at 4:30am at the latest. When I had Charlie out of the house I would take another nap.

It looked like I would be lucky in the morning; Charlie had passed out in the upstairs hallway, waiting for me to come out of the bathroom. If he didn't wake up before me, hopefully I could wash
myself in a bathroom.

Before I snuggled in the ragged blanket on my bed I re-read the chapter I had been writing on, a chapter triggered by the massive gossip in town: the Forks Hospital had snagged a prize, a general surgeon with specialties in OBGYN and Orthopedic Surgery. How a young doctor could have that many fields was astounding. Even more astounding was the fact that he had a big family.

He and his wife fostered and/or adopted troubled children. They had five of them living with them now. Tomorrow would be their first day of school and, while I was helping Mrs. Cope, I had seen their ages. Two of them were my age, 17, and the other three were older, two were 18 and twins, and the eldest was 19, almost 20, but had suffered illness and was now a senior.

Rumors were running rampant as the five siblings were spotted grocery shopping and it looked like they had formed couples between themselves. Well, good for them, they would have safety in family, no sluts or playboys to deal with.

My thoughts went out to the only single of them all; it was a boy, and somehow that sparked my dream world into a new chapter of meeting the boy, running from the slut squad to the library. And, somehow, love at first sight for both of us. I could dream, couldn't I?

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The alarm jolted me from more dreams of the godlike boy who had fallen in love with the mousy librarian girl. Sheesh, I needed my priorities straightened out. That could never happen.

The voice of my grandma scolded me for giving up, and to keep believing in myself. I felt guilty for giving up. After all, my grandma had been the best thing in my life, until she sadly died when I was four.

I jumped out of bed and raced to the bathroom to brush my teeth, only to find Charlie had woken up during the night and was now crashed on the threshold of the bathroom trying to make it to his bed. I collected his insanely loud alarm clock and put it next to his ear. He had already several warnings for tardiness and I refused to be the subject of his anger when he had to blame it on another. Because nobody saw it, he was perfect. Yeah, right.

I went downstairs and started the espresso maker; he would need a mug of the stuff to wake him up enough to report for duty, then drive to the most remote road, and sleep his shift away. He bragged about being able to do that. He couldn't eat this early after his drunken stupor of last night, so I fixed him a box of sandwiches for later, then made my own cereal with the last of the milk I could afford this week. Charlie's paycheck would come in two days and I would receive the next meager installment of food money.

When his alarm started to blare its foghorn quality sound, I bolted fast into my room. I really didn't want to be confronted by a hung over bully. He didn't come into my room, thank god; he was more than loud enough though.

"You little bastard bitch better have my coffee ready down there. Why in the hell didn't you help me into bed anyway, you afraid I might think your scrawny ass gropeable? You wish, you take after your bitch of a mother that's an ugly pig too." After that, and some other derogatory remarks, he stumbled downstairs, and I realized he never changed out of his uniform yesterday and intended not to waste time changing today.

I set my alarm to the time I needed to get up for school and closed my eyes. Another hour of rest would do me good.
When I eventually arrived at school, parking my rusty bicycle behind the library, I spotted two strangely pale people arguing nearby. I could hear their voices but they spoke a language totally unknown to me; it had hard throaty sounds in it. One of them was a supermodel beautiful blonde girl and, my breath hitched, the other a bronze-haired godlike boy.

They didn't notice me and I marveled at the boy; he looked exactly like the boy in my stories. Could my gran have been right? The blonde patted the boy on the back and they walked in the opposite direction of where I was standing, too fast and too graceful for normal human beings. What were they?

My curiosity piqued, I followed behind them, stumbling a few times, and when I rounded the corner to the quad I found them standing with three more pale people, all of them looking around with guarded golden eyes. These had to be the new students. Staying away from the main student body, I observed them. They all looked in different directions, but somehow it looked like they were still communicating.

I saw the skank squad trying to find out if any of the males were available, Lauren and Jessica whispering furiously who they wanted to fuck first. I was three steps behind them and could hear them debating about all of them but they quickly discarded the biggest of the three males as too imposing, or let's say the blonde model-like girl was the imposing one and they looked attached at the hip. The blond guy was obviously attached to the pixie-like girl. They were staring in each other's eyes. The bronze-haired boy had a pained look in his eyes and gave the blond guy a punch to the shoulder.

The skanks were outraged that the gossip was true and they seemed to have formed relationships within their own family. That was obviously incestuous; I was greatly surprised they even knew the word and what it meant. Or not, as was the case, because only two of those five were biologically related and they were not a couple. The two blondes were twins.

I had just seen two of them move with inhuman grace and, quite frankly, speed. Looking at the five of them now, I noticed that they moved like everybody around them did but it looked staged, as if they were conforming to their surroundings to fit in. I couldn't believe that all of them were exempt from gym, albeit most of them had gotten it on psychological grounds due to old endured hardships.

I had been tortured in gym for four years, but last year Mrs. Cope had taken pity on me once again and declared that she needed me in the library more. My embarrassment made me clumsy, and vice versa, so going to gym in rags was the pinnacle of clumsy Bella. I had sustained and inflicted more injuries there than everywhere else. I smiled to myself, it wouldn't take me long to acquaint myself with the new doctor in town.

I didn't understand what I was feeling right that minute though. My body felt as if it wanted to cross the quad and join the new students; I held back, of course, not wanting Lauren and Jess to notice me. They were discussing what would go over the best to propose to the bronze god,—they called him that—a BJ or some French kissing. They were boasting about having to change their panties now, eewwww.

The bell rang and everybody started to disperse to their classes. I dared to take one more peek at the new bunch and saw the big guy move elegantly before getting punched in the shoulder by the blonde girl and from then on stomping on to his class. They were really acting! Again, my investigative brain was jolted into action and wondered what they were.

My first class was English today, so as quickly as I dared to move without stumbling, I made my way there and tucked myself away in the far back corner where I had two places for myself. Nobody wanted to sit next to the school freak. I didn't mind, because most of the time I was working on
senior classes, having completed my junior ones before winter break.

One big advantage of having no social life was that I could work ahead. I had conferred with all my teachers and they provided me with the curriculum and books I needed. I took extra tests in the study hall hours provided by not having to go to gym. None of the students knew; I had begged not to be transferred to a senior class.

The only subject I had to follow normal time was calculus. Mr. Varner couldn't explain math for his life. For him it was a piece of cake and he couldn't understand that students might have difficulty with one step so basic for him.

So, while the rest of the class was working on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, I settled in my corner with Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller. Next, I had to tackle Wuthering Heights, one of my favorites; I wouldn't even have to read it; I could go straight to the essay. I was deeply into my book, trying to understand the sad figure of Willy Loman, and in some twisted way the parallels with Charlie's life, when the chair next to me was pulled back with some noise. My head shot up and my startled gaze was met by friendly golden eyes.

"Hey, I'm Alice Cullen; I understand that you are the advanced student in the class. That would make you my study partner; at my old school, I was in an advanced study program and I think we could work together."

"Erm, hi, I'm Bella Swan, and are you sure you want to be associated with me? You won't make yourself popular studying with me. So, just keep to yourself and you will be fine. For the advanced program, the books are in the bookcase behind you and the red binder holds the curriculum and assignments. When you reach a test point, you fill out the form in the back of the folder and hand it to Mr. Mason. He will arrange the test in a study hall hour within three days." I ducked my head and started reading again, afraid of the disdain that would certainly be visible in her eyes. Those were the only looks I ever got, why would the new students be anything different?

"Bella Swan, don't be so ridiculous. Why in heaven's name wouldn't I work with you? Or become your friend, do you really think I don't know about being the freak? I look twelve years old, I'm smarter than everyone in this room, with the possible exception of you, and I'm involved with my so-called brother. Even if we are both adopted, that is frowned upon. So don't think that unfashionable clothes could hold me back from looking at the person and seeing a smart one worthy of my attention. I look for beauty on the inside not on the outside."

After her tirade, she whizzed around lightning fast and suddenly was studying the red binder holding the curriculum on her desk. I blinked and narrowed my eyes suspiciously. What were they?

"Okay." It was all I could say. I blushed red from being embarrassed, so to deflect all attention I started reading again, glad Mr. Mason started the others on class so further conversation would be impossible.

A note appeared in front of me; it seemed more conversation was possible.

*Please don't isolate yourself so much. You wrote me off before I even said anything bad to you. Look, I had a pretty bad childhood and know a lot about defense mechanisms because I used them all. My adoptive parents and siblings helped me to cope and open up. I will never bully anyone who doesn't try to bully me. I can see the beautiful person you're guarding inside, let her be my friend please.*

I was stunned; I hadn't thought about back stories when I read they were all adopted. But, of course, those stories could be bad. How stupid and inconsiderate of me. The fear of rejection had me lashing
out before any attachment could be formed, because I never fit in with anybody. Anybody normal
that is; I thought again about all the strange things I'd observed. Maybe I could fit in somewhere
unnatural. Somewhere strange. Magical even. And, deep down, I felt a bond with this former misfit.

*Okay,* I wrote back and her grin said it all. She was genuinely glad that I tried to let her in. I wrote
again: *My story isn't pretty either, and I hope I'll be able to tell you soon, but it's still ongoing and
the bullies here in school are the lesser of two evils. At home it's worse.*

While I finished writing the last words, she was already scribbling on a fresh piece of paper. Now
where did that come from? I held her notebook and mine in my hands and I didn't see her move
around to get it out of her bag. Gah, I was getting paranoid, seeking strange in everything.

From the corner of my eye, I saw at least three classmates look our way, watching as we obviously
communicated in a friendly way. They all had scathing looks upon their faces when the designer
dressed Alice didn't write me off at first glance. Mike Newton had an obvious scowl on his face.
What was his problem? Did he actually think he would have a chance at Alice? All he ever did for
me was offer me money to get in my pants, saying that I would certainly would become the whore
my mother was, so I might as well start.

Alice's answering note appeared before me while I wondered about my fellow students.

*I understand. I think that you are mostly terribly lonely in your quest to outgrow your home
situation. Well girl, start believing in aided growing. My siblings and I will become your fertilizer,
and we'll have you blossom in no time. Just watch and be a friend.*

Her hand came to rest upon mine and she looked meaningfully into my eyes. Her hand was cold as
ice. And again, my overactive imagination counted one more strange thing onto the ever growing
list.

She was writing again and just a few seconds later I got another note half a page long. How the hell
could she write that fast and still legible?

*Look, all of us were in lousy situations before the Cullens adopted us. I was locked away in a
mental hospital by my father, just because he was afraid of losing social status. My boyfriend,
Jasper, was forced to be a child soldier. Rosalie, his sister, was molested by family friends. Emmett
was severely beaten and almost died, and Edward almost died himself when he and his parents
contracted a deadly virus. His parents died of it. Carlisle, our dad, actually saved him. He couldn't
leave him alone with no relatives. Edward has been very reclusive ever since, but due to his looks he
is perpetually harassed by every skank around. He feels violated by them and tries to escape them as
much as possible. You see, we all were or are misfits; we tend to band together. But we will always
defend those in the same position as us.*

Impressive, a whole sob-story family. This was starting to get freaky, so I answered short and simply.

*Listen, Alice, trust is difficult for me, please just be patient. I'll work with you here, but give me
some time and just prove yourself right on all you just told me.*

We worked together on Death of a Salesman for the rest of the hour, searching out the themes.

I should have expected the fall out of being friendly with one of the new students. Blabbermouth
Mike didn't keep it to himself; he must have told Jessica between first and second period because
Lauren attacked me as soon as she saw me in that class.

I sat in my own corner, getting my books together for Social Studies. I was nearly finished with it,
almost ready to take finals for my senior year. This class had a lot of reading and recalling it at the tests. With my photographic memory, I just read it all and went over it to answer them verbatim with what the books said. I knew I had to form some opinions during my senior finals, though, so I was prepping those with old finals.

Lauren came marching over and tore into me with her nasally challenged voice. I cringed back. "Where did you get permission to become friends with one of the new students? Well, you're not allowed to socialize with them. We can't have them thinking that you're the standard we all live up to. Stupid bitch, you can't even say something about it. No wonder they have you working by yourself; you can't keep up with the rest of us. Keep away from the new kids. You have been warned!"

She stomped away and plopped in what she must have thought was an alluring way into her chair: legs crossed to one side and, when Mr. Cleary watched, she did a Sharon Stone in Basic Instinct showing of her panties, or lack thereof. Mr. Cleary's eyes widened and he repositioned himself out of her crotchline, so to speak. I didn't look at the class anymore after that and worked through two finals on the opinion questions, looking at how they wanted to have them.

Third hour was a joint attack from Jessica herself and Mike to back her up. They basically threw the same shit at me as Lauren had done and I played dumb. Mike wanted to get his own jibe in because I still wouldn't let him in my pants, even though he offered to pay, so he thought it was funny to call me a dyke.

I hated Calculus, it being the only topic I somehow lacked the brainpower for to work ahead much. I still had my own corner but was even or only one chapter ahead most of the time. Mr. Varner was a terrible teacher and tactile to boot. He would walk around helping mostly the female students by putting his hand on one side of the desk and then explain from the other side, trapping you into touching him. He talked much too close to your ear, making it a very uncomfortable experience.

I survived, as usual, and went to Spanish. There, I worked alone in the language lab and thought about everything I had noticed about the new students: unnaturally pale, too graceful when thinking they were not observed, too fast, possibly speaking several languages fluently, strange eye color, and, to be honest, Alice talked more like the books I read than like a modern teenager; she sounded like she was in her forties rather than seventeen. Ah well, I shoved all strangeness aside and worked on my Spanish assignments for the rest of the hour.

Lunch was next; with the status quo disrupted by the newcomers, I would not brave the cafeteria and went straight to the library, taking a table towards the back and taking out my writing notebook. With the almost argument from this morning in my head, I started to outline and write a new chapter, one where the hero of my fantasies suffered heartache because his love seemed unattainable.

It wasn't long before my emotions of the day started to overflow, the tears streamed from my eyes. My writing always brought my insecurities to the surface and I was safe here in my sanctuary. At least I thought so. Suddenly, the doors slammed open and somebody stomped through them.
Chapter 2 Edward

I hated new schools, I hated high school period. Every time I had to readjust to the endless vacuous thoughts of the teenage population assaulting my peace of mind. The vulgar ideas the girls had about me—the fantasies—were getting more and more invasive. Sometimes I felt raped; Rose and I talked about it and she agreed. Even though I never had looked at a girl that way, they did, and the thoughts were appalling, straight from the gutter.

This first day was as bad as all the others; I needed a pep talk early in the day. Rose and I stepped away from the others so she could boost my mental strength; we had an almost argument in Dutch so nobody would understand. Alice had added insult to injury by blocking me ever since the first bell rang: I saw her going into an extensive vision but she blocked me and kept at it. To have some reprieve, I fled the cafeteria at lunchtime when it became apparent that I was the odd man out in our quintet.

The library was thankfully on the other side of the building, and without the visual, the thoughts could be pushed back into a nice hum. I walked to the classics section, my favorites. I let my fingers run over the titles while the stories ran through my head. Finally, a moment with my own thoughts; well, the thoughts of the greats stored in my flawless memory. A hopeless romantic, I was addicted to love stories from the start of the 20th century, the time of my youth. Vampires mate for eternity, we only have one love; and with my morals bred into me by birth and rearing, I could not engage in physical relations without that love present. I had a pretty good idea how it would feel to find your mate. I was present when Carlisle found Esme and when Rosalie came home with Emmett. And I’d witnessed how their thought processes changed.

Suddenly, I heard sniffling, but only that and a heartbeat that was very appealing. There were no thoughts whatsoever, none at all. When somebody is sniffling, crying, there should be a thought process behind it. I crept silently around the bookcases and took a look. A brunette girl sat at the study table writing furiously in a notebook, all the while crying over what she wrote. She flipped her
long mahogany curls over her shoulder and I got a glimpse of her profile, and a nose full of her scent. I froze; her scent was the most intoxicating I had ever smelt. Strangely, no bloodlust was involved; I had absolutely no inclination to drain her. Even being a humanitarian vampire didn't mean I didn’t want to drain every human I encountered. I just had trained my resistance to human blood. But with this girl, I felt I had to be near her, not to drink her, just for the company. I felt a pull toward her.

Oh my god! Thinking back to Rose's mating, I remembered her having no bloodlust over Emmett and feeling a pull to save him from that bear. He was a bloody mess and Esme had to leave the house until the venom had changed him enough.

The five of us had never tasted human blood; Carlisle, our coven leader, had changed us by injecting us with venom, and from the moment we woke up to our second life, we were trained to withstand the lure of human blood to retain our humanity.

He encouraged us try to remember as much from our human lives as soon as we could. That was a hard one for both Esme and Rosalie because their lives had ended violently. For Emmett, his ending was a blur with an angel in it. For me, it was a feverish dream; I had been dying from the Spanish influenza.

Yeah, Carlisle was a humanitarian, compassionate to the core. He had woken up after his change with his control already there. He didn't want to become a monster and had withstood the newborn bloodlust all on his own. He discovered that animal blood could sustain him, and the rest is history.

But, coming out of my thoughts, I now knew that the beautiful girl with the silent thoughts was my mate. I had to approach her carefully, because I felt she used the library as her sanctuary too.

Vampire lore told me that mates found human usually were born to become vampires themselves, and that their human lives were troubled most of the time. We had proof of that: Esme had tried to commit suicide to flee her abusive husband after the death of her child; Emmett had been the oldest surviving child of 14 in a desperately poor family, and was mauled by a bear when he was found, hunting for meat for his family.

My mate wasn't close to death, though, and that could mean that Carlisle wouldn't want to change her. He only saved lives, he never took them. I would change her myself, but only if she wanted me to do that. I would court her, the way a gentleman would. It was remarkable; I could feel myself changing from the brooding loner to the loving mate. We hadn't even spoken yet but the change was instantaneous.

Maybe the best way to introduce myself was as a fellow fugitive. I made my way back to the entrance of the library and banged the door, closing it just as loudly behind me, and stomped towards the tables. My girl was hastily putting her things together and trying to stuff them into her book bag.

I threw myself noisily into a chair at another table with my back to her and sighed deeply, putting my head in my hands and shuddering violently. Recalling the thoughts those vile teenagers had about me, I could easily summon the sobs of being desperate to escape them.

I sat there feeling the pull strengthen; I heard her heartbeat stutter then speed up. She sighed, walked towards me, and said, "Hey, you all right, what's the matter?"

I sobbed into my hands to disguise the fact that tears were absent and stuttered, "Oh, nothing… I just feel so violated at every new school I come to. Every vapid girl dives onto me, because of my money and looks. And I just want to live my life in peace and learn what they want us to cram in our heads. I'm not interested in sleeping around. But what is it to you? I hope you're not another one of those."
"No, I'm not," she spoke adamantly, "but if you don't want a friend, someone to talk to, you can ignore me just like they all do here." Her voice trailed off towards the end and she mumbled to herself, "If you don't join them when they bully me."

So, I was right; her life was not easy. My beautiful mate was easily dejected and felt rejection even before it was dished out. I turned my head sharply and looked her straight into the eyes—the most gorgeous brown orbs—and I got lost in them immediately. We stared at each other and I whispered, "Sorry, I was just ranting. I shouldn't presume all girls to be the same. The fact I found you here in the library should have told me immediately you are different." I held out my hand for her to shake.

She wrapped her arms around her torso, looking at my hand suspiciously, and snapped, "You can't think I will be your friend that easily, not after what you said. You should watch out and not be tainted by my reputation. You are too beautiful to go around befriending the school freak. Just let me be, that would be better."

My eyebrows shot into my hairline with my astonishment. "Listen, beautiful girl, why should I want to associate myself with the mostly vapid and callous bitches and assholes running around here? Today is my first day and I have already been propositioned more than a dozen times by those tramp-like creatures they call girls here. I see you are totally different, so I can tell you that much. All of those gold-digging whores can go to hell if I can have one good conversation with anybody not that air-headed. And don't forget you just offered to be my friend."

A loud snort burst from the girl and she grabbed my still outstretched hand. "Well, if you think about it like that, welcome to Forks High. My name is Isabella Swan, or 'that plain one' for the vapid bitches. Friends call me Bella, or Bells, but those only reside inside my head."

"Well, Bella, my name is Edward Cullen and I'm the only single of the Cullen household. I am frequently lonely in my own family just because they all partner off. And, please, never call me Eddie; that is what every vapid bitch tries to get away with."

"Ok, Edward, is Teddy an acceptable short for your name or do you prefer to be called by your full name?"

"Teddy… wow, it's a long time ago that anybody called me that. My biological mother called me Teddy because my father was an Edward too. Nobody ever thought of it after her. Please, call me whatever you like, just not Eddie."

We stared in each other's eyes and couldn't break away; I felt the love pour out of mine, and got a little confusion and slow building elation in return.

"Bella, do you feel it too?" The words fell out of my mouth before I could do anything about it.

"I do, but I don't understand. This is my story… the chapter I wrote last night. Are you real?" She was still holding my hand and slowly looked at our entwined fingers. A slow but radiant smile broke out on her face. Without controlling my expression, I felt the same creep onto mine.

"Yes, I am real, but I think I just landed in my favorite fantasy. It's like I am complete for the first time ever. I feel whole, like you are the missing piece to my puzzle."

Her eyes dipped down, staring at the table, her shoulders hunched and her bottom lip caught between her teeth. A dark cloud of doom descended on her features and she started to cry. Sobbing, she fell into my arms and stuttered her explanation.

"Oh, Edward, you don't have to do all this to make me feel better. How do you know about my stories? You weren't even here. This can't be real; I want it to be real, but it just can't be. You are so
much like the lead character in my stories it is frightening. Please be real and just never leave me again."

"I am absolutely, positively real, Bella, and I can feel a mountain of grief behind your words. Please believe me that I know what just happened between us, and if you give it a chance, it will be wonderful for both of us. I understand that, after a life with a lot of misfortune, it is difficult to believe that suddenly all the bad luck is sponged away by good luck. But, my beautiful girl, I'm not lying; I'm incapable of lying to you. I've waited a long time for you and I will never leave you to fend for yourself until you send me away."

Her tear-filled eyes locked with mine once again, and slowly the sparkles I had seen earlier made their entrance again.

"Oh dear, my father will be so flabbergasted when I leave his house forever. He thought he had a slave for life. And I somehow don't see you giving him the chance to keep that up. It's so strange; I feel as if my future just arrived, and I don't want to sound like one of those gold-digging bitches, but you can help me go to college, can't you?"

"Of course, love, I will even go with you if you want me to. Or follow you when you don't. Sorry, but I can't leave you ever!"

"Teddy, what are you? If I go by my story, you can't be human. How can you be so sure you want me when we just met? You have to tell me. I watched your family arrive this morning and you are all otherworldly graceful and beautiful. The most stunning thing I noticed was your eye color. You all have the same eye color, even though you are all adopted. Now it is possible I am just stunted in this backwater town, but somehow I don't think so. You all are more than human, and I will find out what you are."

"Even though we are ‘otherworldly’, as you say, you don't feel the urge to scream and run?"

"No; maybe it is strange not to do that, but I feel completely safe around you." She shrugged her shoulders and said, "I've never felt as if I belong in this world; maybe I belong in yours. Can you tell me what you are or is that a secret not to be revealed to outsiders?"

"Well, I won't reveal it at our first meeting or in a public place, but, being my friend, I will tell you if I can meet you somewhere private. You have my word as a gentleman; you would be completely safe with me. I won't try to take advantage. I respect you for who you are and I will keep you safe."

"Edward, you just revealed more than you should have done. What if I go and blab this all around the school?"

"Dear Bella, somehow I don't believe you to be a blabbermouth, and if you somehow did blab this, I wouldn't come to your house tonight to explain everything. Please leave your window unlocked if you want to keep my visit secret. I will come to your room. I know this is really strange all of a sudden, but I need you to be in the loop as soon as possible. You and I, my dear, have a connection—a very powerful one—and I won't deny it. This connection gives me the right to tell you all about my world. And you are right, you belong in it too, but only if you choose it yourself. I will never force your choice."

"But I'm not worth the trouble…"

"That is where you are wrong, Bella. I have waited to find you for a century, and nobody else will do. Now the rest of the explanation will have to wait until tonight. We are going to have company in about two minutes; I can hear them coming. Do you want to be seen with me? Or do you deem it
more prudent to keep our association secret for now?"

I saw an adorable frown creep between her eyebrows, and while she thought hard, I listened to the minds coming our way. Damn, of course they would be coming my way. Alice and Jasper.

"Well, Bella, I'm sorry but these two who are coming our way will already know. It's part of my explanation tonight, but you might as well meet them now. They are two of my siblings, Alice and Jasper, joined at the hip and quite something to behold."

I could hear Jasper's chuckle and Alice's scoff at my remark. In my head, I made the decision to tell Alice to tone it down, that Bella wasn't fully informed yet, but knew something was not normal about us.

'Interesting, Edward, I have to say you're slow today. Maybe because most of the tracks of your mind are completely focused on your MATE! Congratulations. Bella is incredibly observant and inconspicuous. She saw your little pep talk this morning; she noticed every little slip I made in English. She's my study partner in the advanced program there, so she already knows me. By the way, you have to disappear for a little bit when we come to the library; just go to the back with Jazz, he will keep you calm. The bitch brigade is going to attack Bella and we don't want you exposing your bond too soon. I will take care of it.'

Bella looked at me expectantly and I saw she had seen something of the silent conversation I had had with Alice. Oh well, she would know soon enough. My ire was up, though, because those trollops would attack my Bella; I wanted to protect her. Sadly, I also knew that to protect her long term, I had to step back and let Alice play her part.

"Okay, here's the thing, about a minute behind Alice and Jazz, two of the school hussies are going to come in. Jazz and I will hide until they are gone. You and I will need a little more bonding time before we can face those airheads. Will you be okay? Alice will be with you, and on your side."

"Edward, they might think they get to me, but they don't. Whatever is said here at school, I can let go quite easily because I always tell myself that they are so stupid that they are jealous of me. They don't know it's much worse at home."

Alice bounded into the library and over to us. "Hi again, Bella, shall we go over our English assignment for Death of a Salesman?"

Jazz came over more slowly, his thoughts guarded, as was his stance. He told me in his thoughts that Bella's scent was mouthwatering; that earned him a glare and a growl. Bella watched me and shook her head. "Go on, Edward, the skanks are coming. You aren't the only ones hearing them now."

'She heard your growl and dismissed it without even blinking. I'm impressed' Jazz told me. We disappeared among the bookcases to the back of the library.

"Jazz, what kind of emotions did you get of me and Bella when you walked in?" I whispered to him.

He smiled and thought back, 'I think you already know what I felt, and yes, it's mutual. It almost bowled me over when I walked in; I have never felt this from you before. Congrats, bro, she's something to cherish. Her scent will become a problem for me though. It's only because of the mating bond that you don't act on it, but I sense she smells sweet to you too.'

Before I could answer, the library doors opened again and two girls stepped inside: the two most irritating whores of the day. I had classes with both of them separately and both had already suggested to hook up, in no uncertain terms.
The mousy brown-haired one was called Jessica; she had hitched her already too-short skirt up, pulled her barely decent top down so her breasts almost fell out, and panted to me that she would like to suck me, everywhere. I had asked if she was okay or if she needed the nurse for her asthma. That had shut her up. I never looked at her again.

The next class, I was unfortunate enough to be seated next to the bleached-blonde Lauren. She slipped me a note with several numbers on it. When I looked at her, she breathed huskily that those were her favorite positions of the Kama Sutra. I again recommended a trip to the nurse for asthma-related ailments and ignored her for the rest of the class.

Now, those two little whores in training thought they had the upper hand with Bella. Jazz clamped a restraining and calming hand on my shoulder.

"Ah, the ragged library girl, you must be able to help us. We're looking for one of the new guys. He promised to meet us here for some fun," Lauren screeched with a surprisingly nasty nasal voice. Images of me in every state of undress flitted through her mind. I was glad I looked nothing like what she imagined, otherwise I might have lost yesterday's kill right there.

Bella looked at her with disdain written all over her face, but the blonde, through whose eyes I watched that, didn't pick up on it. She thought Bella looked impressed by her vile statement. "Nope, sorry, haven't seen anyone but Alice here."

Alice, who had been perusing books nearby, skipped over and sat down next to Bella.

Jessica snorted and said, "Well, well, well, it looks like the ugly duckling has tried to gain a friend. Alice, is it? Don't you know that hanging with that trash could damage your reputation?"

Lauren added, "Yeah, like seriously harm you. The only thing she's good for is doing the cleanup after I had a fuck. Nobody would want to touch that."

Jazz clamped his hand more, restricting over my shoulder to keep me in place, because I wanted to rip them apart. I saw through their vile eyes that Bella's bravery started to waver and the beginning of tears were forming in her eyes.

"Hey, Frizzabella, you might want to replace those rags of yours sometime if you ever want to attract some attention. I think Alice's SINGLE brother would like something nice to look at," Lauren sneered, preening around.

Alice looked over the prostitute outfits those two were wearing and sniffed. "Look at you two, you might think those outfits are sexy, but the only thing you are portraying is: I'm easy, fuck me, it won't cost much. I know my brother and that is definitely not what he's after. So, please remove your overly processed hair and six inches of makeup from my presence. You both are ruining my view."

Lauren and Jessica both bristled at that comment, their surprisingly empty heads now completely blank. This had never happened to them. They always had the last word and everybody folded under their sneers.

"You bitch, you'll learn to choose your friends here carefully; there isn't much to choose from if you hang with the likes of her." Jessica finally found her bitch voice again.

Alice looked at the bookcases beside Bella. "Bella, did you say something? I thought I heard something. I must say I'm glad I found you. Finally somebody real to talk to."

Bella's mouth twitched and she grabbed Death of a Salesman. "No, I didn't say a thing but I was thinking about finishing up with our essay subjects. I thought of another one: unrealistic expectations.
Definitely a theme here. Oh, and desperation would be a good one too."

My mate was so smart; she put the bitches down with flare, while the vapid trollops didn't even notice.

Alice piped up, "Oh, and don't forget the pathological desire for recognition." They giggled together and the skank squad stood there slack jawed, before bristling, turning on their heels and marching out. Both their minds were on finding me again.

When the library doors thumped shut, I flew out from the books and knelt next to Bella, wrapping my arms around her waist. I nuzzled her belly and inhaled her scent. Her fingers found my hair and started moving through it, rubbing my scalp, and I started purring. Now it was clearer than ever: a vampire only purred for his or her mate.

The sound of the bell broke us apart and I was desperate to stay with her, but I knew I had to go to my class: advanced junior biology. It was a side self-study subject because not enough of the students here were advanced.

"What do you have now, Bella?"

"Advanced junior biology, one of the classes I designed together with the teachers to keep me busy. Why?"

My head whipped up and an enormous grin broke out on my face. "Oh, well, that's what I've got too. Please let me escort you to class."

"Edward, maybe we should go separately and use the class as the front for meeting each other. You see, the other students are too dense to know I'm working on senior classes right now. I mostly work by myself anyway. Alice already blew my cover in English, argh, I'm rambling. I'm not ready to become the center of attention. It would create a shit storm if you walked me to class. Please go, I'll be right behind you. You will be sitting next to me the whole hour." She looked at me apologetically and started to hastily jam her books into her bag.

I smiled at her and turned around, feeling a little dejected, but I understood her holding back. After all, she didn't have all the information yet. And she was right; if all of us locked on to her, in the public eye, she would suffer for it. Alice already stepped in and defended her, and if I'd read Jessica's mind correctly, that would be all over the school by now. I had to bide my time. While I was once again assaulted by the minds of three hundred teens, I made my way through the corridors to the science wing. The advanced class would be self-study within the normal junior biology class. I walked up to the teacher and handed him my note to sign. He looked up, surprised at the advanced prefix on it.

"Mr. Cullen, we don't have many advanced students; to be exact, without Ms. Swan, we would have none. You don't mind working with her?"

I looked at him, puzzled. "Why would I mind working with somebody somewhat on the same level as I am?"

He looked abashed. "Ah, erm, well, most students here don't like to work with her, and to be honest, she very much likes to work alone."

"Hmm, I understand. If that's the case, I will work by myself beside her. I'm not doing simple junior biology yet again if there is an advanced program. Where do I sit?" I had already spotted the little corner with a bookcase and a lab table a little apart from the rest of the class. Bella just slid into the
corner, busying herself by pulling out a microscope and slide box.

"Miss Swan is over there in the corner, the girl with the microscope. When you two need to talk, please do so quietly. I am giving a lecture for the rest of class today."

I nodded and made my way over. I smiled shyly and said, "Miss Swan? I believe we share the same class here." Behind me, I heard the assembled thoughts of our classmates. They were of pity for me that I had to work with the town reject. I had to work really hard to stay focused on Bella and not whip around and tell them off.

Bella looked up from her slide box, and with a wink she said gruffly, "And you are?"

Wow, in public she had her attitude down pat. Her voice didn't have any inflection towards being nice. Her eyes, on the other hand—after all, I was blocking her from the rest of the class—exuded love and adoration. The same, I was sure, came out of mine.

"Oh, sorry, my name is Edward Cullen, I'm new here today. Mr. Banner advised me that you could help me on my way, if you're amenable that is." I made a small bow, just like I was taught by my father. I heard snorts from behind me, and their thoughts went from pity into two distinct directions. The guys thought me preposterous and in the right place after all. The girls, on the other hand, all swooned and glared at Bella for being on the receiving end of my charm. I cringed inwardly; it wasn't my intention to heap unwanted attention on her. Hastily, I sat down and turned my back on the class. "I'm ready for your explanation."

We worked together, conversing in whispers for the rest of the hour, identifying one-cell organisms, and observing an amoeba splitting itself in two.

The last hour, I had to leave her again—I had advanced Spanish—working in her corner alone. I would have to hack the computer and line our classes up so we could work together. This was ridiculous; we had all the same subjects except for the math elective, and we had only one class together. I would remedy that as soon as possible.

She had told me during biology that she had to hurry home to do grocery shopping and cook dinner for her father Charlie, so he wouldn't take his bad mood out on her. I promised her I would come by that evening to explain everything.

Being apart was not a nice feeling. It felt as if my unbeating heart was altogether missing. Even though I was elated that I had found my mate, my mood was morose. I had given Jazz my car keys and waited at school until I could go into the surrounding forest without bringing attention to myself; I ran straight to the hospital.

I hadn't been there before, but I knew the layout and walked to Carlisle's office without announcing myself at the desk. I knocked; Carlisle had caught my scent and thought his welcome to me, while opening the door with a flourish.

His mind was curious, to say the least. Why would I come to him alone, did something happen, something bad that needed covering up? He gauged my mood and couldn't put a finger on it, because I looked pained, but underneath he sensed something had changed in me.

"I have found her," I blurted out.

"Her? What do you... oh! Oh, you mean your mate?"

I let the warm feeling of that word run through me; for the first time ever, I didn't feel disgruntled at the mention of my mate. "Yes, my Bella, my mate." The smile on my face couldn't be held back.
"But, Carlisle, we need a plan. She's still underage and in a very bad home situation. Her father is neglectful at the least, and also abusive for the most part. Not physical abuse, I don’t think, but the worst kind of mental abuse. Her self-esteem is buried deep, but I have seen it. She is very intelligent but downtrodden. She’s in my year, but I believe she’s ahead almost a year in most subjects, going all by herself, doing advanced material without officially skipping a year. Alice is in her advanced English and I'm in advanced biology with her. I think she intends to graduate early to get out of her father’s house as soon as she turns eighteen." I sounded, even to myself, as a proud parent, but it couldn't be helped I was proud of her.

Carlisle beamed at me and thought, 'My dear boy, finally it happened. And you're the first who finds his mate relatively healthy. Did you tell her already?'

"No, I did talk to her and made it clear that we have a connection, but I promised to go to her tonight and explain everything. I know that she'll have a lot to learn, so probably not everything will be discussed. I have the impression, though, that she somehow knows a lot already. I said she is smart, and I believe that she is very observant too. I think she picked up on our ‘otherness’.'"

Suddenly, I doubled over in pain. It was temporary and I could adjust, but pleasant was something entirely different.

Carlisle looked at me and smiled ruefully. "I expected this; you are mated, my dear boy, but your mate still can’t believe it is true. The moment she doubts your connection, you will feel it physically. When you're both mated, even only in words, she will experience it too. Simple distance will be incapacitating for both of you."

I couldn't be too far away from her ever again? That would be a problem on nights like this, when her deadbeat father was at home. I decided I would build a tree house near her house, a vampire tree house. I started designing it in my head: nobody would see it from the ground and the only entrance would be by jumping from a nearby tree. I smiled at the vibration on my leg: Alice. I took out my phone and showed Carlisle at the same time I was reading her text.

*Bella will never doubt again after tonight, and the tree house supplies will be here the day after tomorrow.*

Chapter End Notes

AN Next week we go back to Bella.
I'd like to take this place to recommend some stories I read, and enjoyed a lot.
Firstly one of the most original ideas I've found
Reboot by Diana Law - FFn 622264
And The complete Angel series by Drotuno - FFn 5134656, 5564546, 6203334, 8519121
This story is also available on Fictionpad, my pseudonym there is also Pienuniek.
Chapter 3 Explanations

Chapter Notes

A/N Twilight and all it's characters are the property of Stephenie Meyer, no copyright infringement is intended. This plot is mine.
I'm still on a high from all your fantastic reactions. I never thought that a newbie could such a great response. Thank you all so much.
This week we're going back to Bella, and Edwards explanations

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 3 Explanations

BPOV

My head and heart were still in a tailspin when I came home after grocery shopping. I had spent the last of the weekly budget on dinner. Luckily I had found a great discount on the steaks, so I could serve steak and potatoes tonight. That was why they were so cheap; they had already been frozen and were close to their expiration date—more like on it—and I got them for a quarter of the price. Normally the other three-quarters would go into my clothes fund. But with Charlie again cutting the budget, that wouldn't happen this time. I would never get those new shoes before the summer. But still, I could not go about my business like I always did; my thoughts skittered around and around, from my stories to the lunchtime meeting with Edward.

Edward, oh dear, my stomach flip-flopped and butterflies had taken all available living space in there. He was absolutely beautiful, with the most mesmerizing eyes I'd ever seen. Most importantly, he’d told me about the connection we had and I could feel his absence right now, a deep lonely feeling inside. He would come to my room tonight to explain everything. I was so glad Charlie was on a drunk streak again; he would notice nothing.

Charlie was home late again, but not as late as yesterday. I had been waiting to hear his cruiser in the driveway and put his dinner in the microwave on high when the telltale scrunch of tires on gravel came to my ears. He took his time stumbling inside and putting away his gear. The microwave dinged the moment he crashed into the kitchen, where I had his place set up with a can of “vitamin R,” as he called it. He slapped my ass, hard, for delivering his food; that was as much thank you as I ever got.

While rummaging in the storage closet this afternoon, I’d found a can of WD-40 and lubricated my bedroom window liberally; it was stuck in a bad way with rust and overall disuse. If Edward wanted to enter that way, it had to open soundlessly. The can of WD-40 was now in the trash; I used it all and the window opened when I blew at it.

Charlie grunted through his dinner and crashed in his hideous recliner in front of the television—his flat screen—bought from the child support meant for me: the money I already hadn't hoped to get my hands on for some new school clothes; the money which we could have used for a new washer and dryer. I should not dive in that bitter mindset; I had Edward coming over tonight and I would find out what the big secret was.
The whole family was an enigma, or close to it. The things I saw before, and heard in our talk, made that clear. They could not be human, not that I had ever felt close to any human except my grandma; she had told me on the day she died that I had to hold out and my fairy tale would happen. She had told me to write down the stories in my head, because they were more. I had loved her dearly and followed all her advice. So, now I had three dozen thick notebooks full of my stories, and it looked like she could be right. If they were all prophetic, Edward and I would become very powerful in his world—powerful but free—after some trials and tribulations.

I couldn't believe that I could be worth that much to anyone, and also knew that when he heard my story he would run for the hills. I hoped he would stay, that the human restraints on my being were nothing for him, but I could not let that hope take root in my system. I had to be prepared that he and his siblings had played an enormous practical joke on the school outcast; even if they were new, I knew that was easy to find out. I was generally known as the ugly duckling, due to my adolescent status and last name.

Because I didn't have money to style my hair, and my full first name is Isabella, the skank squad called me Frizzabella. None of the names at school hurt me though; they were less harsh than what I got at home: good for nothing whore, useless piece of shit, bastard slut, klutz extraordinaire, waste of space, etcetera, etcetera.

I had understood Gran when she told me I was special, but that I had to be a big girl for it to come out. The enormous layers of degradation piled over my head since her death held me in a choke hold, and it became more difficult to believe in myself as someone worthy every day. Most days I didn't even think about my worth, just my existence in emptiness and pain.

I was jolted out of my thoughts and found myself at the sink, mindlessly scrubbing a plate. Charlie snored for the second time and I realized that he'd crashed for the night in his recliner. I looked at the clock and jumped. How could I have lost more than an hour in desolate thoughts? It was time to finish my homework before Edward would come. I really hoped he would come, that my story world was real and I was to go on to bigger and better things. Taking the stairs two at a time, I ran upstairs, only falling once, to my room. I opened the door and froze; on my bed, against the headboard, sat my Edward.

"I didn't hear you come in, but I suppose that is a good thing, what with Charlie downstairs as my jailor. You're early!"

"Good evening, love, you look like you didn't expect me. I promised you I would come, and a mate can't lie or break promises to a mate. And I couldn't stay away anymore."

"Please, Edward, don't make everything more cryptic. Tell me the truth about you and your family. I know you are not human, and somehow you're convinced we are connected. I did feel something but I really don't understand what it was. I'm feeling it right now too, like I need to be near you. It's like you're a magnet pulling me, the humble paperclip, towards it."

"Bella, love, you're a magnet too, pulling me towards you. But let me start at the beginning. It's involved, so please just listen, and try not to interrupt. I promise you it is the truth and nothing but the truth. However strange it may seem to you, it eventually will make sense."

I nodded my promise to listen quietly.

"I was born June 20, 1901 in Chicago, as Edward Anthony Masen Junior. I was raised in a well to do family, with a doting mother and an absent father who loved his work more than his wife. My greatest love in the world was my piano—I played it for hours every day—to the despair of my father, who had set me up to become a lawyer. I had just turned 17 when the Spanish Influenza hit
the town; my father, being a lawyer, ran himself ragged to update wills at sickbeds all over the city. My studies were halted because my tutor fell ill; I was homeschooled because I learned too fast for the schools then. At 17, I had already graduated high school and was working on pre-law classes for college. I resented being told I had to become a lawyer. I had two things in my head: music and the war. So, when my tutor didn’t come anymore and my mother was loath to let me out of the house, I spent my days behind the piano.

"It was the beginning of September when my father came home, desperately ill. With my mother’s help, I drove him to the hospital. At the hospital, we met with the doctor, Carlisle Cullen. He told us that the outlook was not good; my father was exhausted from running around and the virus had taken a strong hold on his system already. Dr. Cullen told us that he had probably kept his symptoms from us for a day or three. We were told he would die. My mother went into practicality mode and started to give me all the necessary papers and keys, as well as the codes to the wall safe in my father’s office. Dutifully, she went to visit my father the next two days.

"I was struggling to adjust to being the man in the house and went to the funeral home to try to secure my father his burial plot and funeral. They were selling plots to the highest bidder at that point, and I had to fight for the plots of my family; they were already ours. Because I was in public so much, and my mother was at the hospital, we were both exposed. My father died on the morning of the third day, and by God’s grace, we had him buried the same day, on our plot. I was now considered an adult and responsible for my mother, but nothing much came of it, because both my mother and I became ill the next day. We hurried to the hospital to talk to Dr. Cullen. He admitted us together and somehow got us a private room together. He was convinced that the mass of beds and cots in the public wards only helped the sick to become the dying. Nobody but him came into the room. He had somehow taken a liking to us and was our only caretaker. He had to go and care for others but stayed his off hours in our room.

"My illness progressed aggressively, and soon I was unconscious more often than not. I found the doctor and my mother deep in a whispered discussion; these memories are hazy to me, fevered deliriums I thought them to be at the time. I heard my mother plead with the doctor to save me any way he could. She didn't mind if he wasn't human, or that I would become inhuman; I just had to live. She knew; she had seen the girl for me and she was certain it was in the far future, because the girl had worn cowboy trousers and really strange shoes, just like you're wearing now: jeans and sneakers. I had to find you. Dr. Cullen was very hesitant towards her, but all the stress and the worries about me weakened my mother. He told her he would try to find a way to make it happen.

"We were in the hospital for a week when my mother died, and I gave up. I thought I didn't want to live without her. Carlisle—he really had become a friend—took care of her funeral and told me she was in the family plot; he had buried her himself, evicting some others to the communal graves. He told me later he had made it look like both our plots were used. Until after the epidemic, they stayed without headstones.

"The next morning, he came into my room, which was actually his office, his way to keep us separated from the masses. He came in and told me I was dying fast. He could stop it but I had to become like him. He explained what he was: a vampire, but a humanitarian vampire. Yes, he needed blood to survive but because he valued human life, he only drank from animals. He also told me that he had been alone since his change in the mid sixteen-hundreds. Because he had trained his control, he could withstand the urge to drain a human, even if they had open wounds. He told me everything and then asked me if I wanted to join him.

"That was the most difficult decision I ever had to make. I knew it was my mother’s dying wish that I would do it, but I had given up and essentially decided to join my parents in death. Carlisle told me I would join them in death, just not in the afterlife. I still balked; I told him that I didn't want to be a
soulless monster. He looked at me with a raised eyebrow and asked if I really thought him (a) to be a monster, and (b) how he could be soulless if he could act with a conscience?

"I thought about point B. All the stories told us that vampires were soulless, but what if they weren't? I couldn't fathom Carlisle not having a soul. And a monster didn't have to be inhuman or undead; some humans fit the bill of monster more than Carlisle ever could. He was good, a good vampire. That I could want, and that I chose because my mom wanted me to. Of course, it was all much more involved than he could explain in just those few hours of me being lucid. I found that out in the decades following; in a way, I became a baby again and had to relearn everything.

"While I was a newborn—that's what we call young vampires—we stayed in remote places, cabins in the middle of the forest, with a lot of large wildlife around. When I was two years old, in my eternally 17-year-old body, Carlisle trusted me enough to start working again. I didn't dare venture near humans yet, but we did find out my gift. Carlisle thought he had gone insane and talked out loud while he thought it was inside his head. I answered his unspoken questions as readily as his spoken ones. Can you guess my gift yet?"

I looked at him and thought my answer, because I was pretty sure it was mind reading. He kept looking at me expectantly.

"Well, I guess I was wrong there, because you sure as hell didn't react to my answer."

"You didn't say anything, love." I liked that he called me love.

"Well, I thought my answer to you, because I thought it was mind reading. I expected some sort of reaction from you when you heard it in my mind. Or have you perfected the poker face needed to keep it a secret?" The moment I said mind reading, his face bloomed with the most alluring crooked smile. It was good that I was sitting cross legged on my bed because I felt my knees go weak.

"Oh, love, you are so very right. My gift is mind reading and, until today, I have never met or been in a three mile radius of anyone with a silent mind. Maybe that is too cocky, because if the mind was silent I wouldn't notice the person that far away. Okay, I never have been in smelling distance from anyone with a silent mind until I met you. I can't hear a thing from your mind, absolutely nothing. And even if I would very much like to hear your thoughts, it gives me peace to know you can be an enigma for me, that I can act normal around you and have to find out about your ideas the usual way."

"Does that make me a freak? Does my brain not work the right way?" I asked, a little worried.

"Of course not; it makes you gifted, extra special."

"So, you became a vampire, and you said that Carlisle had been alone until he met and changed you. What about your mother and siblings?"

"Okay, first, I need to explain vampire relationships to you, because they are a bit different than human relationships. You see, Bella, we are essentially frozen at the moment we change. We become like marble; our body is unchanging, our ideas and the way we were are unchanging. I chose to become a humanitarian vampire, had that set in my mind going into the change, and that is how I came out. Sure, it was difficult at first not to give into the instincts, but my idea of what I wanted to be helped me to abstain. I have never tasted human blood, ever. I also was a very eager learner all my life; that never stopped either. I kept learning new things, because that's my nature. But I also was the 17-year-old boy reared in the early nineteen-hundreds with very strict values about how to treat women. I was raised to be a gentleman. I hope I am one."
"Two things can alter the way a vampire works. Finding and losing love. I have witnessed, first hand, finding love twice now, and I can tell you that Carlisle's, as well as Rosalie's, thought patterns changed dramatically. It's like the magnet pull you described earlier. Suddenly, that person is their number one priority; Rose had a very traumatic change and was very bitter towards everyone near her. The moment she brought in Emmett, my jaw almost dropped to the floor because she suddenly became loving and let go of her bitterness.

"Bella, a vampire can only fall in love once, and only with his or her true soul mate. We are fiercely protective, and probably overly possessive. We’re also strictly monogamous once we find our love. I say that because not everyone has my morals; I mean to say that I saved myself for my one true love, even when my succubus cousin of sorts tried very hard to seduce me. I left, or declined her offers. My virtue is for my mate, not one of the ‘skank squad’ as you call them. Furthermore, a vampire can't fall out of love. They mate for eternity. If they fall in love and are rejected—it happens in political games some vampires play—they will love the person forever and will wither away from loneliness.

"If a vampire’s mate is destroyed, the other change will happen. It can go two ways: revenge or an empty shell. Neither way is pretty and the vampires who succumb to the second option actually try to commit suicide. The vampires who focus on revenge go on killing sprees to avenge their love, and more often than not, get destroyed in the attempt."

He took a deep breath, looked me straight in the eyes and professed, "Bella, today I found my mate. Today, in that library, I transformed; the world as I knew it doesn't exist anymore. My priorities were rearranged and I knew what happened; I had no bloodlust, even though your blood is the sweetest I have ever smelled. I only need to be near you, because you are it. You are my first priority now. I can and will never leave you. Whatever happens, we will weather it together."

I was speechless; I opened and closed my mouth several times before I even tried to form a sentence. "Why me? You could do so much better."

"Bella, it isn't voluntary. A vampire—I—can only fall in love with his one true soul mate: you. We are two halves of a whole."

"Okay, I think I need to listen to my gran; she told me to write my dreams before she died. Maybe that's why my thought processes are lagging right now. You have always been in my dreams; I even had your hair color right, but I gave you green eyes, not golden."

"Bella, I had green eyes when I was human. I think you were linked to me from birth and your gran knew it, just like my mom knew too. Those two women had, on their deathbeds, already become privy to the secrets of the universe; I strongly believe that that was why my mom knew. Your gran too, I think she told you to hang on and grow up, and probably told you to write too."

"Yeah," I said in a shaky voice. Somehow we had moved and I was now sitting on his stony lap; he was cross legged in the middle of the bed. I rested my head on his chest and felt completely at home and safe. "So, when are you going to change me into a vampire? And before you do, I think I have about a million questions, because I never made the inhumanly gorgeous boy in my stories a vampire, and you do not adhere to vampire fiction at all it seems."

"Shoot, I think we can handle a few tonight before you go to sleep."

"Well, dang! Now you added another one and I think that's the first one I will ask. Before I go to sleep? What do you do? Go fly like a bat? Don't you need to rest? If you are around during the day, does that mean your coffin awaits you at night? Just a few ideas planted in my head by reading vampire literature."
"Okay, Bella, we are dead already—the undead, remember?—so we don't need rest. I am also marble and unchanging, no flying around like a bat, or any kind of animal. Before I met you, I studied at night: obscure languages, music, I read everything I could get my hands on. We have a special room for me in the basement; it's basically a thoughtless tank. It's a small study immersed in water. Water is the only thing that blocks my three-mile radius mind, and now your mind shield. I can have the peace of only hearing my own thoughts in there, and believe me, with all the others mated for decades, they pursue quite different things at night. Or I go hunting to remote areas, but we drink only once in every two weeks after the newborn stage. The fact that we don't sleep gives us a lot of spare time."

I let that little explanation sink in. "Ok, no sleep ever again. Another very blatant difference between literature and real undeadness, you can come out during the day, and I don't see any special rings on any of you. So, what triggered the burning in the daylight myths?"

"Well, in most myths, it is burning in the sunlight. Why do you think we live in the most overcast areas in the world? But we don't burn in the sunlight; in the sun, it would immediately be very clear that we are different, and the effect may have given someone the idea that we burn. Our skin is like crystal or diamond in the sun. We light up, just not in a bad way. I will show you sometime, as soon as we can get away on a sunny day. Maybe when Charlie goes on one of his long weekend fishing trips he is planning."

"Ugh, don't remind me of those; until I was eleven, he forced me to come. Then, I started getting homework, or had to go to school before he wanted to go back. The only time I ever stood up to him was to get out of those horrible fishing trips; he made me bait his hooks. Once he caught something, I was the one gutting and descaling the bastards. I still can't stand fish; it’s not food, in my opinion, just smelly crap.

"After I stood up to him—stupidly timed, I might add—he locked me in my room for the summer. He didn't know, and never found out, I also have a key to my room. So, when his cruiser was gone, I would go out and use the bathroom and keep up with my chores, because if he would have come home to his own filth, he would have taken it out on me, locked away be damned. By keeping him appeased just enough, I have successfully dodged beatings."

"Oh, darling, I could kill him for damaging your self-image, and using you as his personal slave. I do understand, though, that killing a cop would attract attention, and thus force me to leave. I can't do that to you, and not to me either. So, what do you think about subterfuge, large amounts of it, working around your deadbeat sire, and the moment you turn eighteen, leave him in the dust."

"I like that idea a lot, actually, especially the leaving in the dust part. What you're saying is I would have a place to go when I turn eighteen?" He nodded. "Really! Oh god, you're my savior; I was dreading Charlie's schemes to keep me here. Now I can just walk out."

"To keep the distress for you as low as possible, would you be willing to tell your story to the whole family tomorrow night? Then you won't have to repeat yourself ever again. Another vampire trait is a multitrack photographic mind. We are unable to forget, and able to recall every second of our lives as a vampire with perfect clarity."

"Edward, how on earth can I leave here without Charlie knowing? He padlocks the doors at night with combination locks and I don't have the combinations."

"Dearest, how about me jumping out of this here window with you in my arms; we also won't need a vehicle. I can run faster and in a more straight line than a car can drive. It's a ten minute drive by car to my house, I run it in three."
"Okay, I think. Won't they find it strange that you're bringing a human girl home?"

"Not at all, love, most mates are either found human or known about before they are changed. Carlisle, Rosalie, and Jasper all found their mates while they were still human. Carlisle even left her human for eight years, keeping tabs on her. She was a minor when he found her and he knew she needed to be an adult before he could change her. That is why I was his first companion. Three years after my conversion, he was hard pressed to save her after she jumped off a cliff to kill herself after her husband, and I use that term lightly, beat her so badly she delivered her son three months early. In 1921, no baby could survive that. The loss of her baby distraught her so much that she didn't want to live anymore. Carlisle couldn't explain to her like he did to me, but she mouthed 'Help me' to him when lying in the morgue. He injected her and ran with her to the house in the woods we shared.

"Rosalie was saved by Carlisle also. I believe he still thought then that mates were made not found, and he wanted me to have a mate, but Rosalie was so bitter after her change and wouldn't even acknowledge me. Not that I minded; I had heard the instantaneous bond between Carlisle and Esme in their minds and nothing like that happened between Rosalie and myself.

"After that, Carlisle and I studied mating. He has a vast amount of friends and quite a lot of them are mated couples. We would talk to them about their mating and I could see their memories in their minds. That is how I instantly knew you were my mate. The most important indicators are, when the mate is still human, no bloodlust at all and that magnetic pull. Does it bother you that you have no choice in the matter?"

I looked at him, perplexed. "How so? My intuition says it's right. My mind might be a bit stunned, and my self-esteem issues might tell me this can't be—a person so beautiful inside and out being my forever, literally—but I think we're made for each other, and nothing or nobody will ever change that fact. I wish we could leave all this behind right away, but I understand the need to keep this low key. I just hope you will be with me as much as possible, because after we parted this afternoon, a deep loneliness came over me. I just don't want to be away from you."

"I don't want that either, but we will have to separate sometimes. I thought something up to make those times a little easier. I hope you will accept this phone," he produced a brand new iPhone from a bag I hadn't noticed beside the bed before, "it's on my family's plan, and it won't cost you a dime. You will have to keep it a secret from everyone but our family, but we can text and maybe even do some FaceTime."

He looked imploringly at me to take the phone; my independent streak balked at accepting anything which could unbalance our already very uneven relationship, but deep down I knew he didn't want to give it to me to unbalance us. He wanted me to have it so we could stay linked while apart. After feeling the dull ache this afternoon, I knew, that as our bond grew stronger, that would be more pronounced. I yawned and grabbed the box from his hands, putting it on my nightstand, and threw my arms around his neck.

"It is difficult for me to accept this, because I have always taken care of myself, but I know this is no charity on your part. So, thank you, but please don't go overboard and shower me with gifts. That would make me feel insignificant."

"Oh, my love, this is just me, your mate, trying to take care of what is mine. Sorry to put it that way, but vampires are very possessive. You are absolutely your own person, and I am as much yours as you are mine. Link that instinct to my Victorian upbringing and it's almost impossible for me not to try to take care of you."

I yawned again. "I think I need to go to sleep. Are you staying with me?"
He smiled and nodded, stood up off the bed, pulling back the comforter. I went to the bathroom and took care of my nightly ablutions and changed into my only nightshirt: a dark blue men's t-shirt I bought at a thrift store for only a dollar. When I returned, Edward had just finished remaking the bed. I looked at him, puzzled; my bed was perfectly made before.

He smiled and said, "Alice saw I wanted to stay and brought an essential part for your bed to make it possible for me to hold you in my arms: she brought us an electric blanket and mattress pad. I just remade the bed with them installed. All we have to do is plug them in and you won't freeze in my arms."

I just couldn't do more than nod and smile, walking towards the nightstand to fish out the extension cord with three outlets. I unplugged the nightlight and plugged it into the extension. The two new plugs went in as well and I finally plugged the extension in the outlet. Edward had shed his jeans and button up and was perched under my thin comforter and the new electric blanket in his boxers and t-shirt. I blushed at the sight of him in my bed and shyly crept next to him. He wrapped me in his arms and I snuggled close. I felt him kiss the top of my head. I kissed his pecs and closed my eyes.

I opened my eyes again and asked, "Alice saw? What did you mean by that?"

He chuckled. "You can't shut off your mind? Alice is gifted: she sees the future based on the decisions people make. Jasper is gifted too: he is an empath. He can feel your emotions and can even manipulate them. Alice had a vision about us right after she was changed. Jasper changed her to save her from a sadistic vampire. He worked at the mental hospital she was admitted in. Another human found mate, they said it was rare, but I'm not so sure anymore."

Alice could see decisions; I thought I would try something. "Mmmmm, Edward, can you still hear Alice's mind?"

"Well, now I can again, you must have found it necessary."

I decided to kiss Edward square on the lips and heard the sharp intake of his breath almost immediately. I turned my head and felt him do the same; our lips met in a soft lingering kiss which set me on fire. He pecked my lips a few more times and looked me in the eyes. I lost myself in his soul shining through his golden orbs.

My stories mixed with reality and I felt myself drifting off. With my last conscious thought, I realized that I was absolutely sure of three things. Firstly, Edward was my soul mate, my other half. Secondly, my dismal existence suddenly had color; I had endured and now I could live. And thirdly, in eight months I would leave dreary Forks and would begin my eternity as a vampire.

Chapter End Notes

A/N next week, Bella's story.
my recommendations for this week are another few vampwards
Firstly a reading the books fic, but one without the original text included
Will Things Change by 2browneyes FFn 6646963, or on Fictionpad under Browneyes Fanfictions account
Secondly the fabulous journey of sexual and relational discovery
The List by LauraACullen FFn 4934524
See you next week, please review
Pien
Chapter 4 Meeting the Family

EPOV

I held the love of my existence in my arms the entire night, thinking about our lives together. I thought about the edicts of the Volturi too; human found mates were given the choice to become a vampire, they were allowed to know the secret, but I didn't know if there was a timeframe in which they had to change. I really didn't want to upset our family so soon after we found a place so well suited for our kind to live among humans. That's probably why nothing was said in the rules. Non-humanitarian vampires simply didn't live among humans like we did. Disappearing would be a lot easier then.

"Edward, my eternal, my savior," Bella spoke in her sleep, totally jerking me out of my thoughts. A warm feeling spread through me, I had found my eternal love. After a century of loneliness, and ridicule from my siblings, I could finally bask in the love of the one for me.

Somehow I hoped that she would want to change very soon. I could feel my vampire instincts to claim my mate fully battle with my upbringing as a Victorian male to do the right thing, to wait to consummate our relationship until we were married the human way. My instincts told me that we were mated and no bond was stronger than that. But that was something in human terms we could never explain.

I basked also in the relative silence in my mind. Downstairs, Charlie was out in a drunken stupor, no real thoughts went through his mind. And the nearest neighbors were far enough away that I could push them effortlessly into a quiet hum in the back of my mind on a separate track ignored by my conscious mind. I had closed my eyes and while Bella was sleeping I rested next to her in my own form of sleep. I never thought it would feel so peaceful to do something like this.

"Stay, Edward, please don't leave me," Bella whimpered.
My love was afraid that I would leave her; she didn't know yet that that was an impossibility for me. I had told her, but it hadn't fully taken root in her brain as of now.

"Shhhh, Bella, rest, my darling girl, I will never leave you. I can't leave you, darling," I whispered directly into her ear. I felt her relax into my embrace.

My phone buzzed and I looked at Alice's text message. She told me Charlie would want to see Bella before he went to work and that it would be a sunny day. Great, no school torture for Bella and me. I would have to find some sample of Charlie's writing so I could write Bella a sick note to give to Mrs. Cope on Tuesday.

I liked Mrs. Cope; her thoughts were kind towards Bella, even protective. Her husband was the Chief of Police here in Forks, and what I had heard so far in her thoughts was that they had a pact to keep Charlie on the force as long as Bella lived at home, with the only condition that she didn't show any signs of physical abuse. They had discussed it and had decided that it would be worse to put her in the foster care system than to have her in her own home with a neglecting parent. Mrs. Cope had seen me talk to Bella and she was glad that our family seemed genuinely friendly towards her. I was very happy that Bella had a few silent protectors in Chief and Mrs. Cope.

Bella's alarm went off and she turned to put it out, coming to a full stop in her movement when I was between her and the alarm. She inhaled deeply and the most wonderful smile spread across her face. "Hmmm, Edward." I smiled down at her and switched the alarm off. Bella snuggled into my arms and almost drifted off again. I tightened my grip and kissed her forehead.

"Bella, honey, you need to wake up for a moment. Charlie will want his breakfast, and he wants to see you this morning, I don't know why. Furthermore, it's going to be sunny today so I can't go to school. Would you like to come with me to my home? I can show you what I look like in the sun."

Her eyes lit up and she nodded fervently. I bowed my head to kiss her but she clamped a hand over her mouth and muttered through the gag, "Morning-breath!"

I peeled her hand away and took a deep breath through my nose. "Sweet, sweet Bella, all natural floral… freesia, strawberries, and a hint of cranberries with no nasty things to subtract from it. Bella, darling of mine, we vampires are all about natural scents; perfume and things like toothpaste are really vile to us. I understand your need to clean your teeth but you don't have to do anything about your scent. I'd rather smell your sweat than those artificial deodorants. When a person dyes their hair, I can smell it in their hair for weeks. I know you use strawberry shampoo because those strawberries smell artificial. Your natural scent has pure strawberry in it and that is stronger because it's in your blood. So enough, please kiss me."

She smiled shyly and leaned towards me; our lips brushed together once, twice, then I put more pressure into it and tilted my head to make us fit better. Our lips danced together until she broke away gasping, a smile a mile wide on her face. I nuzzled her neck and pressed some kisses to her pulse point. I wanted her to feel desired, loved beyond reason, and safe. She sighed, looked at the clock and squeaked, trying to free herself from my arms.

"Edward, I really need to make Charlie's breakfast. If he comes in here, please hide in the closet, or behind the door. He never snoops around that I know of."

She went into her father’s room, grabbed the alarm clock and a clean uniform shirt and trousers, sighing to herself that he didn't change the day before so she had to remind him to dress properly. I could see her standing in front of his dresser, opening the top drawer and closing it again fast. Another sigh and a curse under her breath later, she took a pair of navy boxers from the drawer and added it to the pile of clothes.
"Bella, why do you remind him like a small child to change his clothes? It isn't as if he treats you better for it."

"Edward, he gets warnings at work for being tardy and when he doesn't look sharp. Because he is perfect in his eyes, he takes those warnings out on me. If I get him to work on time and make sure he's dressed right, he doesn't have extra ammunition to shoot me down."

After that, she disappeared downstairs and I sat down in the rocking chair listening.

I heard her going into the refrigerator, cursing softly under her breath. She had told me that Wednesdays were the worst days food wise, because on Wednesdays Charlie would get his paycheck. I texted Esme to ask her to get some treats and basic food items for Bella. I nearly jumped out of the chair when the foghorn alarm went off for Charlie downstairs.

His thoughts assaulted me. That goddamn cunt, she had to wake me up again at an unholy hour. Dammit, I almost forgot, I have to patrol La Push today or Billy won't be happy. I should look sharp today at roll call; looks like that piece of shit thought about everything. Now how to keep her in line... she mustn't think she rules me, but dammit, she always thinks of everything. The little whore tries to weasel her way out of punishments. Maybe I should beat her to thank her then. Ah hell, that won't work either. I can't keep her at home to hide the bruises, and as much as I don't think people would care, some would. I can't ruin my stellar reputation. I have to uphold my image. That's the only way Billy will let me share. Ah well, goddamnit, I need a fuck and to get dressed. Sadly, only the latter will happen.'

I was appalled at his inner musings, and what did he mean by Billy letting him share? It sounded in his head as if he never acknowledged Bella by name if he could help it. I was glad in a way, that way he couldn't defile it either. He went into the downstairs toilet and changed his uniform out. Stepping out of the bathroom, he went to the kitchen and confronted Bella on the meager sandwiches she'd made.

"Hey, you bitch, this isn't nearly enough for breakfast and lunch. Where's the rest of it? You better produce it now."

I heard Bella scurry to the other side of the kitchen, stumbling on the way.

"There is nothing more; the food money you gave me ran out two days ago. So, if you want lunch, you'll have to buy it yourself." Bella's tone was soft but defiant.

"You think I believe for one second that you haven't held back something for yourself? You're not here to eat my food; you're here to prepare my meals. Give it up, you ungrateful little cunt."

"This is everything that was left; you could take leftover dinner from Monday."

"Why in the hell is there leftover dinner, bitch, that wouldn't be because you didn't have it on the table on time did it? You're never on time with my dinner. Either running around in that stupid library, or buried in those damn books when you're here. Why should you even bother? You're just going to tend house and spread your legs on command when I ever find a stupid sod that'll take you."

Bella sniffed and her voice broke when she said, "You better hurry. Roll call starts in fifteen minutes." I heard her stumbling feet on the stairs, running towards her sanctuary—her room—and to me. She closed the door silently behind her, turned around, and realized I was still there.

She rushed into my arms and sobbed on my shoulder. "Every Wednesday is the same, no food for
me. I have to go hungry until he leaves money in the jar on the fridge. But that last comment today was more vicious than even I am used to. I think the only thing keeping Charlie from simply booting me out is that child support check every three months. He buys his luxuries from that money, because he drinks everything else away. He never saves up; he goes only for instant gratification."

Downstairs, we heard the front door slam shut. "Good, he's gone, that means he'll be on time. That'll make my life somewhat easier tonight. Let's forget about Charlie until then. What are we going to do today?"

"Well, after what you just told me, we're going to go to my home and get you breakfast. I will take care of you, especially on Wednesdays; you'll never want again."

"How are we going to your house? My bike is old and rusty. It won't hold both of us. And I'm no great hiker; furthermore, my shoes are only protecting the tops of my feet right now."

She grabbed one of her sneakers and turned it over; I did a double take when I saw the worn sole with a golf ball sized hole in it. Her cheeks flamed in embarrassment and chagrin when she saw my shocked face.

I found my voice again. "Luckily, you won't have to walk a step; you may sit back on my back, while I do the running. I'll give you a piggyback ride."

"I think that will answer a couple of my questions, won't it? I'll be introduced to your speed and strength." While talking, she had put on a pair of ripped jeans and a fraying hoody, almost the same as she had worn the day before, and was now tying her sneakers on her feet.

"Okay, let's go, Edward."

I scooped her up in my arms and jumped out of the window, not stopping until we were safely under cover of the trees. I helped her on my back; she locked her arms around my neck in a chokehold. Her legs went around my waist and I planted one of my hands squarely on her backside to hold her in place. She giggled into the crook of my neck; I felt her cheek heat up, then I started to run towards my house.

A surprised gasp came out of her mouth and her breathing started to pick up. Was she afraid or aroused? It wasn't long until I picked up an intensifying of her scent. Bloody hell, she was aroused! I was over the moon; she liked the speed. The run wasn't long, only about three minutes. The big white form of our house loomed up through the trees and I was greeted in mind by my family.

'Edward, I'm so happy for you, I can't wait to meet her.' Esme was her motherly self.

'My, my, the virginal boy is getting laid! I'll give you some pointers.' Damn Emmett, I couldn't get out of his mind fast enough before he descended into porn territory.

'Carlisle told us you found your mate. I hope she's feisty but I'll help her become that if she's not, yet.' Rose; yeah, she would help Bella find her hidden feistiness.

'I'm going to keep some distance, Edward. Her scent is very intense.' Jasper was making sure he wouldn't upset Bella too much.

'Welcome home, son, our family is finally complete. This is a joyous day.' Carlisle the father figure.

I didn't hear Alice, where was she?

I stopped and helped Bella to her feet. Her eyes were shining with excitement. "Oh, wow, that was
exhilarating! But short, we have to do that again. Will I be that fast when I change?" I turned her while I told her maybe, but that I was the fastest of the family. She gasped when she saw the house. Esme and Carlisle were situated on the porch.

Suddenly, I heard Alice's thoughts and I smiled. *Distract her for a moment, Edward, that way I can get the groceries inside and greet her with the rest.* Well, what better way to distract her than kissing her? I grabbed her face in my hands and slowly touched my lips to hers. The electricity between us ramped up. It was exquisite. I heard Carlisle in my mind, warning me that she needed to breathe, so I slowly let go.

Panting, Bella scolded me, "Edward, in front of your parents! What if they think I'm easy?" Carlisle and Esme were strong individuals, keeping their faces welcoming but impassive. They had seen Alice speed inside and knew I did it to distract Bella.

"Bella, they know we're mated. It would be strange for me not to kiss you." Her cheeks flamed and she hid in her hair. I urged her forward and toward Esme, who embraced her and welcomed her into the family. Bella teared up and stammered her thanks and greeting. Carlisle repeated the hug, noticing that Bella wasn't used to such friendly greetings.

I wrapped my arm around her and whispered to her that she only needed to meet two more people. I steered her inside, where Alice and Jasper were on the love seat furthest from the door; Rose and Emmett were standing just inside and they both looked excited to meet her. Emmett, the doofus, was almost vibrating.

"Watch it, Emmett, she's human; don't break her," Rose warned him under her breath; Bella wouldn't hear, but she did see their interaction, that cute little frown coming between her eyebrows.

She greeted them shyly and looked up to me, silently asking what to do next.

We all settled with our mates on the different sofas in the living room, the sun streaming in through the back windows, all of us glittering a bit from the reflected light. The couches were situated away from the windows on purpose.

"Well, Bella," Emmett began. I tried to interfere but the oaf was talking in sync with his thoughts. "Looking at you, do you really think you're good enough for our Edward?" The douchebag thought he was funny. I felt Bella starting to tremble in my arms and she subtly created a bit of distance between us. Her eyes glazed over and Emmett's added "Hmm" made the tears spill over. She started to sob and I pulled my love into my arms and glared at Emmett.

I kept my voice soft but it sounded deadly. "You insufferable idiot, now look what you have done! Knowing what you know about human found mates, why in the HELL DID YOU THINK THAT REMARK WAS ANYTHING CLOSE TO FUNNY!" Okay, I lost my temper big time, and the ability to modulate my voice. "Bella, dear, he was joking! Remember what I told you, we are mated and nothing will ever split us up, no matter what. I love you for all of eternity, darling. I'm yours as much as you're mine. Please, darling, calm down please."

I had pulled Bella into my lap and rocked her like a small child, while she was crying into my chest. I was completely focused on my girl, my peripheral senses picked up on Esme and Rose both hitting Emmett in the head for being so insensitive.

Rose scolded him. "God, Emmett, every time when I finally think you're trying to not be a bully you disappoint the crap out of me! Just because you were the last to be changed doesn't mean that you can forget about our stories. None of us were particularly happy before the change, what made you think that her self-esteem is any higher than Esme's or mine were, hmmm? You're going to try harder
to be nice to her, or it will have dire consequences!"

Esme added, "Emmett, I've had enough of you acting like the older brother towards Edward and Jasper. Jasper has about a hundred and fifty years on you, and Edward about thirty. Furthermore, your behavior places you in kindergarten and makes you sound younger than even Bella! It is time for you to finally learn some manners. Slip up again and I will help Rose discipline you."

Right about then, I felt something wonderful: Bella started giggling. I looked at her and she smiled back at me, her eyes red rimmed and a blush on her cheeks. "What is it, love," I asked.

"Oh, Edward, I just felt so loved all at once, not just by you but your whole family. It's hard to grasp because it's so foreign to me. Nobody outside this room loves me like that, unconditionally. Sure, some have taken pity with me, but most either ignore me or bully me because I'm different. Can I have a glass of water, then I can tell you my story? I think it's time you all really know me."

Within two seconds, Esme returned with a big glass of ice water and a platter with peanut butter chocolate chip cookies. Bella's eyes lit up and she grabbed two cookies and wolfed them down. Her cheeks lit up and she ducked her head. "Sorry, that is a rare treat, and those are my favorite. I couldn't help myself."

Esme smiled. "You don't need to apologize, Bella, they are yours. Remember, dear, we don't eat solid foods and drink only one kind of liquid." Bella's cheeks flamed even redder, but her expression was pleased. She nibbled on cookie number four and took a gulp of the icy water, crunching on one of the chips of ice.

"Okay, my story. I have to start with my gran, my father's mother. Even though it wasn't exactly usual anymore in the late nineteen-sixties, her marriage was arranged. Her father wanted a bigger part of the business he was in and the son of his boss was interested in my gran. She wasn't interested in him, but that didn't matter. She bore him one child; luckily for her, the first child was a boy and he let her be after that. He slept in the master bedroom and my gran had the spare room together with the baby. When Charlie turned five, my grandfather decided the boy would sleep in the garage from then on and made a corner there for him. From that day forward, my grandfather took over the raising of his son, not sparing the rod and instilling his values in him as well.

"He wasn't pleased when Charlie rebelled at seventeen and went to the police academy to become a cop. I'm sorry to say 'that to catch a criminal, you need to have one' is entirely true for Charlie. He just was never caught; he hot-wired cars for joyrides, he shoplifted almost everything, and he was very promiscuous, sleeping with every girl he could get his hands on.

"That resulted in a desperate phone call from a girl he had a wild night with from Phoenix, one Renee Higginbotham. She was pregnant and she believed that it was his. Both eighteen, they didn't know what to do, but Charlie had no intention to become a father that young. He was talking on the phone to her about an abortion when his father overheard and took over; he wired Renee enough money to fly to Forks and picked her up at the airfield. He had already arranged for a marriage license and he forced both of them into it at gunpoint."

Bella took a sip of water and continued. "Eight months later, I was born. My gran was my primary caregiver from birth; apparently I rejected breast milk from the beginning, probably sensing the bad things in it. My mom smoked weed a lot. When my physical needs had nothing to do with her, my mom went back to partying the night away and sleeping until she had to get out of bed to go to her crappy part-time job as a waitress at the diner. My so-called parents slept in the master bedroom in Gran's house. My grandfather died of an alcohol induced heart attack a month after they were married. My gran kept her room and took me in, like she had with Charlie when he was little."
"My life was good; my gran was a great person and she loved me very much. She taught me to be strong, always telling me stories and listening to mine. She taught me my letters when I was three and to read and write when I was four. She encouraged me to learn everything I could get my hands on. I can clearly recall those lessons; Gran told me a story and afterwards said I had to write it down any which way I could: in pictures or words. I learned fast that words were easy for me and I could see them in my head when I recalled Gran's stories. I wrote them down verbatim most of the time. Gran told me I had a photographic memory and to make good use of it." Bella's face fell and she heaved a deep sigh. She was still sitting on my lap and pressed herself closer to me. I wrapped my arms around her waist and nuzzled her hair.

"This is going to be the less than pleasant part to tell. Gran became ill when I was four. Pancreatic cancer, she died in three months. I was heartbroken. On her deathbed, my gran had confided some things to me; I lived in the hospital with her, and in the dead of night she told me I was very special, that I had to be strong and grow up before it would happen. She urged me to write down my stories and to believe in them. She told me those were her dying wishes, then she handed me a box of jewelry and a spiral bound notebook and a box of pencils. She told me about her hiding place in her, now my, room. And then she died. Gran had done everything to protect me, but she could only do so much. She had seen the same callous streak in her son as her husband had had, and she also had pegged my mother as a flight risk.

"About five months after her death, Renee left without leaving a forwarding address or contacting information. Oh, dear, I just realized that they are still married; oh wow, well, they deserve each other. Charlie never really liked Renee and they both blamed me for ruining their lives. Ever since Gran died, Renee has not lost an opportunity to tell me that: I was a goo spouting dirtbag, filth not good enough to pay attention to, a whore… Yeah, really she called me a slut and a whore at four. I really don't know where my brain came from because both of my parental figures are stupid morons. Well, anyway, Renee left. Charlie just left me locked in my bedroom with a box of cereal and a bottle of water. He made me do the chores when he was home. I learned to cook from cookbooks I got from the library when I was big enough to climb out of my window when he was out.

"Sadly, he found that way out and pruned the tree next to my window. He didn't know, and still doesn't, that on my trips to the library I had taken my bedroom key with me and had it duplicated. I paid for it with a simple ring from Granny’s jewelry. When I was eight, I was deemed old enough to do the groceries. From then on, I got a bit of money every week to buy his meals. I had to cook them and make sure I had them ready in time. I learned to budget that money real quick, because when I grew out of my clothes, he simply said that he gave me money so I should get everything I needed next to his meals from that money. I buy my fresh ingredients either in bulk or on the expiration date. The butcher at the Thriftway knows me and keeps almost bad meat apart for big bargain prices. He always puts both the old and the reduced price on the paper. I use the old price in my budget book and stash the rest of the money in my clothes money jar.

"Charlie is a cruel and indurate man. I try to avoid him as much as possible, which is easier now since I'm in high school and almost of age. Because I can't afford more clothes, or to style my hair, and am freakishly intelligent and forced to be mature to boot, my peers do not like me and have always tried to bring me down. Because they are less cruel than Charlie, I can take it most of the time. I hear my gran’s voice in my head when I am on the brink of giving up. She reminds me to be strong, but it is hard most days. After twelve years of derogatory remarks everywhere I go, I almost believe them most of the time. I only keep them at bay through my stories; there I was the princess found by her fairy prince." She smiled apologetically. "Sorry, Edward, but I just didn't see vampire in my head. You were so beautiful, and otherworldly, but you simply couldn't belong to what I knew about vampires, those from Bram Stoker and Anne Rice. And I was right, you are nothing like that. Almost the only thing you have in common is that you drink blood."
Everybody laughed at that.

Carlisle sobered first. "Bella, you do understand that not all vampires are like us, don’t you? I mean they might share the same traits and physical appearance, but besides us and our cousins, humanitarian vampires are few and far between; they also all drink human blood. Even the ones, like Jasper before, who don’t want to kill anymore. To make it clear, if you encounter another vampire, look at the eyes. If they are red, and I mean the irises, they are living on human blood. To protect yourself, you should immediately tell them you’re a mate to one of our kind. That should be enough; it’s against all rules to harm another vampire’s mate. Please, never go into the forest without one of us by your side. I saw your medical file, and you, little lady, are not the most coordinated human. Dr. Gerandy wanted me to look at it because he's suspecting abuse. After what you've told me, I think he's right but not in the way he's thinking. I think the mental abuse put on you has made you clumsy, unsure how to act. The fear of being noticed and bullied doesn't help either. Your fierce nature warring with the need to protect makes you stumble on your choices, literally."

Bella looked thoughtful, clearly taking everything Carlisle had said in and mulling it over.

Suddenly her eyes sparked. "Carlisle, please tell me about the change, what to expect afterwards too. I already know that my future is with you all, the choice never was a choice; it was an inevitability. From the moment I first saw Edward in my dreams, I have known he was my future. In my stories, I gradually changed into a fairy, but what I have gathered from Edward’s history is that is not how it works. Please enlighten me so I can prepare myself."

My awe for this amazing woman spiked; she really listened and understood, and wanted to have all information before making a choice.

"Okay, Bella, the traditional way to become a vampire is to be bitten by one. Our saliva is actually a multipurpose venom. It serves to incapacitate our kill, but when left to work, it will begin to change the genetic makeup of the one bitten. Small amounts of venom are beneficial to small to medium sized wounds; when applied on the skin only, it will seal cuts without a trace. The changing takes approximately three days and all that time you’ll feel as if you're burning alive. Sadly, I have never found a way to counteract the burn. I have searched for it, but nothing works. Because I don't want to tempt myself with the taste of human blood, I devised a way to change my companions through injecting them with my venom.

"When I changed Edward, my method sounded good in my head. I thought I had covered all eventualities in my mind. I had hunted excessively to be covered if the bites were necessary. I knew I didn't have a lot of time and I had to prepare him for the burn. If you're prepared, then it's easier to think through things. I also had to bring him to my house; I knew I was an exception waking up alone with my control in place. Edward’s blood was so sweet, I knew he had to be gifted. The ruling vampires, the Volturi, told me as much. The sweeter the blood, the greater the gift."

"Wait a minute," I interrupted, "Bella's blood is the sweetest I have ever smelt. If the mating bond hadn't eliminated the bloodlust, I would have been in big trouble."

"Oh I know her blood is sweet, but not excruciatingly so, to me at least. I think she is la tua cantante, your singer, and I only know of one pair of vampires in our history having such a bond before. Marcus of the Volturi had such a bond with his mate. The way Marcus explained it is that your souls were bonded before either of you were born, probably in a former life. Once two souls are bonded that way, they will search each other out again and again. That's why Marcus is still desperate to end his existence, to be with his soul mate again."

Bella looked a bit overwhelmed, but working through all the information at more than human speed, at least it looked like she did; I began to get a small idea just how very smart she really was.
"Then why, if he wants to be with his soul mate, does he still hang around? I mean, Edward told me the two ways vampires who lost their mate go. If his bond was stronger, then why didn't he just walk into a volcano and be with her? She will walk through her next life empty and lonely. Or can't people who have become vampires reincarnate again? If they can, he can find her again, you know."

Carlisle looked surprised and awed at the same time. He tried to formulate an answer but he had none. He never thought about it that way. His mind was curiously blank, as were those of the rest of my family. I basked in the awed silence for a moment.

"Well," I said, "you truly stumped the collective Cullen brain trust at the moment, dear. The only thing I can hear an answer to is Marcus's passive attitude. He is bonded to the Volturi by one of their gifted members, Chelsea. He can't leave against that bond, even to end his existence. Come to think of it, that's probably why he isn't searching the globe for her incarnation. Even if that's still possible after becoming a vampire. Your way of looking at it cured me of one thing though. I will never kill myself if something happened to you while you are still human. I will wait and then start searching for you. It would be agony, but I would know you would come again."

"Well, at least she fits right in with you brainiacs, even if she looks like a bum," Emmett blabbed again while thinking the words, and this time they were out of his mouth while they were still forming in his head. How did he do that? Bella started to tremble again, trying to hold back the tears. She wasn't used to teasing; every jibe towards her in the past had been to inflict injury. I growled menacingly and Rose was on her feet, hitting him in the head as soon as she saw Bella's reaction.

"Damn it, you big douchebag, this is the last time! You don't tease someone who has been demeaned his or her whole life. If you do it again, you will walk around a eunuch for at least a month! Don't think I couldn't do it; I would have Edward's and Esme's help to hold you down. And you would not only walk around like a Ken-doll, you would have to keep me satisfied as well."

Wow, dominatrix Rose to the rescue; Bella blinked away her tears and gaped at her in awe. Looking around, she realized that everyone was nodding their approval towards Rose. She sighed and said in a small voice, "Erm, thank you, Rosalie, but you don't have to do that on my account."

"Of course I have to, you're family now and I won't let anybody hurt family, not even other family. I will help you with your snowed under self-esteem, and in time you'll learn that teasing can be fun. At the moment, I just understand that it is too much like bullying for you."

Alice started vibrating, and I saw what she was going to do. Having no way to stop her, I sighed and whispered to Bella, "Brace yourself."

"Bella, your wardrobe does leave a lot to be desired. I know you don't have the resources to buy new things, but we do. Now that you are part of the family, I will make sure you get the clothes you need to fit in with us. I have seen that we will go to Seattle tomorrow; it'll be sunny here again, and I'll provide you with the wardrobe you desperately need."

Alice looked at Bella for confirmation of her words. She didn't expect a thoughtful look on her face, but that is what she got.

"Alice, your visions work on the decisions everyone makes, don't they?"

Alice looked puzzled but went along; hell, all of us looked puzzled.

"Yes, Bella."

"Tell me how that works, when it comes to things you want."
"Simple, I decide what I want and then I can see the overall outcome."

"Okay, if that outcome is less than satisfactory, you go over your decision until it is?"

"Yeah, that's pretty much it."

"Have you ever thought about factoring the free will of the person or persons involved into that equation?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you manipulate everyone on a daily basis to do your bidding. You dictate what happens based on your whims. You will not take my free will away from me. I've been in manipulative situations enough to know a manipulator when I see one."

Alice's face was an impassive mask, her mind reeling. Nobody had dissected her ways so thoroughly after only knowing her a few days. I had known how she worked for a long time, but I had always been too much of a gentleman to confront her on it. When nothing came from Alice for a minute, Bella continued, "Think about it, Alice, and ask people what they want. Don't use your knowledge of the future to bully everyone to do what you want. Learn humility and team-work. You will be surprised how much more it will give you. Of course, you can still look at the outcomes, but I assure you that you'll have a lot less grumbling housemates if you take their free will into your equations."

Bella crossed her arms over her chest and stated, "I will not change my appearance overnight. I will have to keep up the ruse that I am still under Charlie's control. We will use your ability to keep up appearances. I accepted the phone from Edward yesterday, because I knew it wasn't charity. I find it difficult to accept charity in any form; I have managed with absolutely no help from anybody for almost fourteen years now, and I won't give up total independence. I know I will have to learn that not every gift is charity, but for now, please tread slowly."

With her last words, her eyes bored into mine and I understood. I wanted to shower her with gifts, to show her my love for her, but love wasn't material for Bella. To her, those gifts would highlight her inability to take care of herself, even if she had done an incredible job of it all this time. I would think of small thoughtful gifts, like the phone, gifts that would take care of both of us in a way.

Bella's stomach protested its emptiness loudly at that point and Esme shot into the kitchen. While Bella's cheeks flamed with embarrassment, I frowned in chagrin. I had totally forgotten my mate's need for regular meals and the cookies she had as breakfast weren't nearly enough. I heard Esme scuttling at vampire speed, and before Bella's blush had disappeared, she reemerged with a plate of sandwiches and a glass of milk. None of us said anything—Emmett was probably afraid to—but the milk smelt especially atrocious.

The rest of the afternoon was easy going; I took Bella up to my room and showed her my music collection. "Edward, this room illustrates your nature so well. That big ass piano downstairs is yours, isn't it?"

"Yes, love. To my great joy, I retained my skills on the piano, and I must have had a talent for it before my change, because it's one of the things that kept developing in me. Only our human talents keep growing, all the rest will freeze in the change. Vampire talents are highly reminiscent of their human counterpart. Like my piano skills, I now compose too. As a human, I embellished the pieces I played; now I write my own."

"Oh, wow, so your state really freezes over and the only big change that can happen is falling in love?"
"Yes, mating is the only big one, it rearranges your entire being. I actually felt it happen when I first laid eyes on you, and realized I didn't feel any bloodlust towards you. That and the Pull: I changed from a brooding, lonely, sometimes morose vampire to the one in front of you now. Focused on your happiness. You are my everything, my first priority. I'm yours, and you're mine." I had to say the last part; I had to give in to the possessive part of my vampire nature.

Bella looked deep in thought while she answered almost automatically, "Yes, yours, always." Her deep in thought expression became more pronounced. "Edward, can I ask when you are intending to change me?"

"Well, as soon as possible, without us having to upset our so short stay here. That's either now—you would disappear without being linked to us too much—or as soon as you turn eighteen and are able to leave Charlie's house."

"Hmmm, and already being mated to you, no big changes for me after my change then. I'll stay the same forever?"

"I never thought about that, but it looks like it. Emmett mated directly after the change with Rosalie and never changed again so far. Esme, I think, was mated before Carlisle injected her, and she hasn't changed a bit either."

"Ok, then I would like to wait to change until I am a bit more free from my abuse. Rose already offered to talk to me to get it out. I don't want to stay locked up inside myself because I changed too soon. I want to be everything promised inside me. That means hard work to overcome those years of abuse. Inside and around you, it’s less pronounced; here, I'm free to speak my mind. I'm sorry to say I've learned to lie and pretend so well that it's become my mask to the outside world. That has to go before I change and freeze that way."

"Um, love, I'm bound to tell you that you'll need to lie and act quite well to keep our nature secret to the outside world. I do understand your need to get rid of the influence of abuse. I like your feisty mind, and I'm not glad you feel the need to defer everything at the moment, but don't lose it completely as a tool. I'm just saying that I'll comply to your timeframe."

My inner beast roared with dissatisfaction; he would be denied his mate in the carnal way until she was changed. That could become a problem, and it was something I needed to discuss with Carlisle. How could I stay the gentleman I want to be and not give into the beast inside until she was changed?

Bella and I were cuddled on the leather couch in my room. I decided to buy a very comfortable, big bed in here. That way, Bella could live here while just being at Charlie's for the shortest amount of time manageable with a future seeing pixie on our side.

Alice's mind voice came into my head. 'Edward, Bella needs to go to Charlie's in fifteen minutes. She can heat the leftover dinner for him. He didn't take it to work. I'll give you a container of lasagna for Bella. Keep it closed until Charlie crashes, which won't be long; he found some extra cash somewhere and bought himself some booze. I put your present inside the same bag. They look the same, almost, nobody will notice the difference.' I decided to thank her and got a no problem in return.

Everything went off as Alice saw, of course. After Charlie ate his dinner and I had curbed my wish to strangle him into a pulp again, he fell into his recliner and downed the bottle of booze in fifteen minutes. He crashed three minutes later and I crept down the stairs with Bella's dinner and her present. We warmed her dinner and she attacked it with gusto, almost moaning how good it was. We opened the kitchen window and washed everything thoroughly to keep Charlie from smelling her
meal. My sense of smell could still detect it but I was convinced Charlie couldn't. I had Bella sit at the kitchen table.

"Darling, as promised, I will not shower you in gifts, but this one I had to get you, to care for you properly. You need to have warm and dry feet. These are to ensure that." I handed over the sneakers I had Alice buy. I had to smile at her choice: the highest end sneakers available, which looked almost like Bella's old ones. Bella's eyes went wide and glassy; oh shit, did I overstep, was it too much? Or were these signs of the so-called happy tears?

I froze and just watched her hugging the sneakers to her chest, and then the tears were streaming over her cheeks silently. The next thing I knew, I was wearing Bella around me. She hung from my frame with arms and legs thrown around me. I quickly wrapped my arms around her to give her support, both emotional and physical.

"Oh, Edward, this is the sweetest thing anyone has ever done for me. They are perfect. Nobody will notice but I will float around now."

"Love, you're very welcome. Let's throw the old ones out right now, so your dad won't notice you've suddenly got two pairs. I have to ask you something too, because in order not to draw attention to us, we need to stay home tomorrow as well. Carlisle has called the school and hospital to explain we are all down with some contagious bug or virus. Nothing bad, but you need to decide if you caught it too; you'll need to call the school yourself then. Mrs. Cope saw us interact, so she won't be suspicious if you've caught it too."

"I'll stay home too, I've got work here enough to keep up my lead on everyone else. I'm going to bed now, you staying?"

"Of course."

We went upstairs and were cuddled up in her bed ten minutes later. Another ten minutes of kissing and caressing later, Bella's body relaxed, her breathing slowed down, and her heart rate went down as well. I closed my own eyes and retreated in my newly discovered form of rest.

Chapter End Notes

A/N with this chapter, the introduction of my view on Twilight, and the show of the differences from canon is complete. The next chapter my world will start to take over. The story will leave the paths of the original behind and follow its own way to our couple's HEA.

My recommendations for this week:
Firstly, a beautiful replacement for Breaking Dawn. It starts after Jacobs unwanted kiss, and diverts from there.
My Sweet Angel by kiseger, FFn 5457613

And secondly, a rewrite of Twilight with a blind Bella.
Seeing Bella by sherryola, FFn 6579398
Thank you for reading, please review.
See you next week.
Pien
Chapter 5 New Beginnings

Chapter Notes

A/N again I'd like to emphasize that all things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer. I just play with her characters.

Enormous thanks again for Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue85. They helped me make this idea into a story.

thanks also to all the readers who are following me or have put this story in their favorites. You guys are the cream in my coffee. I truly had not expected such a response to my first try at writing a multi-chapter fic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 5 New Beginnings.

BPOV

In the first few weeks after Edward and I found each other, my life changed dramatically. Alice learned to tone down her overbearing streak and asked before answering it herself, but because she now asked the questions she got the visions of the true answers, instead of her ideas made into other decisions through bullying. I believe the rest of the Cullens were very grateful for that subtle change. Emmett was scolded by Edward, Rosalie, and Esme. He tried very hard not to make me feel dejected again, and if a sad look came on my face after another wrongly phrased tease, he was hit in the head by all three. Twice by Edward, because I couldn't do it myself yet.

We quickly found a way to be together almost constantly. Alice and Jasper were our helpers all the way. Alice told us at what time Charlie would expect his dinner and I would be at Charlie's 10 minutes before he came home, Tupperware containers in hand with a meal I cooked at the Cullens' with Edward's and Esme's help. I didn't call Charlie's house home anymore, the Cullen mansion was. It was ridiculous how fast I became acclimated to living in luxury. Nine out of ten nights I slept in Edward's ridiculously large and comfortable bed—a brand new bed to boot. He had lain next to me the first night and resolved that he didn't want me sleeping in that dump anymore if he could help it.

At Edward's, I had a complete new wardrobe of Alice-approved clothes; I never wore them as she had forgotten to ask what my idea of nice clothes was. Thanks to Edward, I also had a few new jeans and sweatshirts. Again, just like my sneakers, they looked a lot like my old clothes; those I still kept and changed into when I went to Charlie's. I would acclimate him slowly to the new ones. All at once, he would notice; one at a time would slip by him.

I was becoming bitterness towards Charlie when I learned how easy it was for the Cullens to just love me. I actually thought that he had to have gone out of his way to treat me like he did. My resentment for Renee wasn't as strong as what I was holding towards Charlie. At least she left me alone, but she had called and insulted me again on the anniversary of the farce that was her marriage. She had demanded money from Charlie, which made him furious at me, of course. It was the most idiotic situation if you thought about it. Charlie and Renee had never divorced; Renee left so everybody
assumed they had, but if my dad was killed in the line of duty, or simply keeled over from alcohol poisoning, Renee would be his beneficiary. I didn't mind that, not now my future husband provided for me in every way.

Or should I say every way but one, the one being physical relations. When he held me at night I felt his desire, prominently I might add, against my hip or stomach. I felt it when I woke up against my butt. But he told me he wasn't ready, he felt stifled by his upbringing. His vampire instincts told him to pounce and totally claim me, but the ingrained gentleman bolted at the thought. My decision to remain human for as long as it took to shed my characteristics, or rather to turn my weaknesses into strengths, also made it harder for him because they didn't have any idea if a vampire claiming his mate while human would be able to hold off on the mating bite.

Carlisle and Esme had shown their mating bites when they explained being mated more fully; I also knew that, while we were bonded, Edward and I wouldn't be fully mated until we consummated our bond. This caused Edward a lot of instinctive anxiety; he was highly possessive and insanely jealous, so jealous that the Cullen males kept their distance from me. They never were closer than about twelve feet, and I talked to them but didn't look them straight in the eye. I talked to my toes or hands a lot these days.

School also became a strange place; while I was always bullied, nobody, and I mean absolutely nobody, had ever taken an interest in me. Since I now had five friends all of a sudden, and most noticeably a boyfriend in Edward, the boys in the two most senior classes suddenly looked at me differently. Mike 'the Pimp' Newton suddenly tried to walk me to class and stuttered his way through another vile proposal of hooking up behind the library. Tyler 'the Rat' Crowley blatantly asked, while Edward's arms were wrapped around my waist, if I would go out with him and do better. Rose, Alice, and I laughed in his face, and I asked him how he thought to accomplish that. I felt bold and looked at Jasper's smirk. He must have influenced Tyler, too, because he blurted out that he was undoubtedly a bigger man than what that freak of a Cullen could ever have. He started to whip his manhood out in the open when I looked down at his package and shut him up good.

"If that bulge is you soft it couldn't hold a candle to my man here, if that is you erect then you qualify for the new nickname 'Pinky'." All the while I felt an inaudible, at least for humans, growl rumble through Edward's chest. I had put one of my hands right on his package and stroked him to keep him in place. When Tyler ran off, he told me that that hand had saved the boy's life, that my claim on him soothed him into mild anxiety. My poor mate suffered because he had to conform to his human façade and it had never been more difficult for him.

The other way around was also difficult. Most of the skank squad still tried to lay claim on Edward as one of their conquests. Luckily for Jasper and Emmett, they had given up on them. But the fact that the school freak—their words not mine anymore—had won the undivided attention of the godlike single new guy didn't sit well within their minds. I found that my instincts resembled a vampire's. That, combined with my insecurities, was sometimes hard to handle, but the unwavering love I felt pouring out of Edward kept me sane.

Jessica was the worst of the skanks, not only assaulting Edward in her mind unwittingly, but trying to make her nasty little fantasies a reality. Once, while I was working in the library, Edward was pretending to study in the back. Jessica came to harass me with her dim witted questions, but when she spotted Edward in the back, her object of obsession changed. Edward's face grew disgusted the moment she saw him; the gentleman in him quickly wiped his face. I shook my head; he should just keep looking at her that way, voice his disgust about her. He shouldn't be so close to rival females. HE WAS MINE!

He recognized my expression and smiled at me, his own claim in his eyes. When he was distracted,
Jessica pounced; she hadn't said a word but suddenly she was in his lap. Before she could do anything more, she was sitting on the floor looking dazed and Edward was standing behind me, hissing. He had acted with vampire speed, simply standing up and unhitching her arms, dumping her on the ground, and fleeing behind his mate. He whispered in my ear that that was the way he handled succubi.

Jessica was seething. "What the hell, Cullen, you can't do that to me! You know I could be more accommodating than that freak show in front of you. I would gladly service you and you could take advantage of me as much as you like. I would only like you to shower me with gifts."

Edward looked disgusted again and this time the gentleman didn't erase the expression; he was as disgusted as the vampire was and spoke through clenched teeth. "Jessica, listen very carefully because my limit is reached, I will tell you this straight and only once. You are an ugly person inside; I don't look at anyone other than my Bella. I have been assaulted and violated all my life and you just continue that. You disgust me with your degrading propositions. So this is your only warning before I go to Chief Cope and the principal to file harassment charges. For every act you did, I have witnesses in my siblings and Bella, don't think you will escape justice. Love, I'll be in my car until you can join me." He turned around and let his hand linger a little on my butt before walking out of the library, leaving his books on the table. Jessica was now channeling her fury toward me.

"What in hell did you do to that poor boy; it's impossible that he would be devoted to you. You are worth absolutely nothing compared to me, and I can't understand that suddenly the most interesting people in school include you, and that suddenly all the boys fall over themselves to have you. You simply should be ignored and that is what I will do from now on. You don't deserve my attention."

She marched out of the library and I let out a big sigh of relief; if she kept her promise we would have some peace. Alas, that turned out to be false though. She ignored me all right but kept trying to seduce Edward on a daily basis. She didn't touch him again though, and that made it easier to ignore her than before.

The nastiest part to overcome in our relationship was the separation pain we both felt while being apart. Edward could function but that was all; his mind was reduced to a human's, the rest of the eight tracks were incapacitated with pain. I could only function on auto pilot; I had to set my tasks beforehand and write them down or memorize them before Edward left. Until he was approximately a mile away I was just sad, then the pain began. It felt as if my heart was missing and my lungs wouldn't function right. After a week of this, Edward stopped driving me over and stayed in the trees near Charlie's house when I needed to be there. We ran from his house to Charlie's.

I thought he just sat in the trees, waiting for Charlie to crash, so he could pick me up to go to sleep in his bed. After about two weeks of that he said he had a surprise for me. All his siblings had helped him to build an enormous tree-house between three big spruces, a good sixty feet up. It was luxurious and had three rooms on two levels, a bedroom, living room, and a bathroom. The siblings had dug the trenches for the water, electricity, and sewage lines. Access was only through climbing a fourth spruce and jumping a twenty-five foot gap to a platform which would only stay horizontal if you had the right remote with you. Other vampires would not be able to enter. I could only get there by vampire, and I was very glad Edward had to jump the river, a good fifty-foot jump, to bring me to or from Charlie's. I was used to big jumps already. Even so, the first time at that height I was terrified.

For Edward, the tree-house was his sanctuary away from me; it was situated at almost a mile from Charlie's house and that made the pain bearable for both of us. Furthermore, by carefully situating it, it was almost thought free for him. The closest house was Charlie's, all the other houses in the street were further away; his own house was about five miles away as the vampire ran. He was free from
their noises and thoughts in the tree-house. I slept there when I had to cook Charlie's breakfast in the early mornings. My horrendous alarm was replaced by soft kisses to my neck and face. All night, every night Edward held me in his arms and he said he happily held me and meditated; listening to my heartbeat, he could exclude everything and almost sleep. He called it his Bella bubble.

Edward was not the only one of us having problems with his instincts; I wanted to complete the mating bond as desperately as he did, but my natural shyness and my regard for his struggle held me back. I had to say, though, that my sexuality had blossomed. Never before had I been more aware of my body in such a way. Whenever Edward was near, my panties were a lost cause; even my jeans were soaked through most of the time. It was completely involuntary; my nipples turned into signals to him and he could smell me every time. Whenever he said something sweet and took his next breath, he was aware of my response to it without me saying anything. Luckily, human scent receptors were less sensitive or I would have been red all day every day. As it was, whenever I had a really strong reaction to him I flooded my pants and my face.

The human males in my vicinity had become degrading but no longer bullying. That had, as a result, made the female population around me try to bully me more; their jibes became more and more insulting. My thick hide, built up by years of Charlie's abusive remarks, withstood their feeble teenage attempts at putting me down. Had my confidence not been boosted by the Cullens, and especially Rosalie, I don't know how I would have withstood it. I wouldn't have so much attention either though.

Rosalie told me her story, how bitter she became after the change toward everyone because her final human moments had been awful, to say the least. Thinking about how she was gang-raped and beaten until her life hung by a thread made my stomach churn. I understood her bitterness completely and I was very happy for her swift mating, only two years into her vampire life. The mating erased the bitterness inside because her destiny took over. She was still very bitter towards her ex-fiancé and his friends, but now saw that their actions had ended her human life and the possibility of having children.

She understood that Carlisle had tried to save her life first before he used his ultimate way out to save her. He injected her with his venom; the transforming power of the venom took care of all injuries and enhanced a human's natural beauty—with special attention to the word natural. Artificial enhancements like silicone boobs or caps on teeth were expelled during transformation. Rose had become a supermodel on steroids, as it were, but she hated her beauty for a long time. She saw it as the cause for her unfortunate demise.

As soon as she could let the bitterness go, when she mated with Emmett, she started to learn to use her experience to help others. A few nights a week she volunteered at an abuse hotline, where her Cum Laude Masters degree in Psychology and Social Sciences with a published thesis about abusive teen relationships came in very handy. Rose was the ultimate mental coach, and since the day I told my story she helped me overcome the years of mental abuse and give the scars a place so I could grow. She was elated with my decision to stay human until I had reformed my mental structure into something I could be proud of to step into my second life.

Because that's how I started to see it, becoming a vampire would be the start of my second life. I worked hard on my insecurities and was happy to say that I was now able to accept gifts, reasonable ones, without immediately becoming defensive and feeling like a charity case. My natural shyness was something that was cut up until the point it made me cower away; because of the shyness I became too easily embarrassed which made me cower into myself and act defensively.

Due to the everlasting mental barrage at home, I had started to believe some of the unfair qualifications thrown at me. I was utterly convinced about my ordinariness; I saw nothing but a plain
mousy girl. Rose put me in front of a mirror and started to show me what she saw. I became completely mortified when she stripped me down to my slip and bra and outlined the strong points in my physique—a long list of strong points—to my embarrassment.

She started with my face, mentioning big, soulful, doe-shaped eyes; shiny-as-fuck, long, mahogany hair; full, pouty, kissable lips; heart-shaped face with high cheekbones. My body was slender but not a packet of bones, I had a flat toned stomach, medium perky breasts (which was what most guys preferred), endless strong legs, and to finish it all off I had a fantastic full ass. She finished the once over stating that every one of those things were as Edward preferred a woman to look like.

At my scoff, she told me she counseled him on and off too and had him describe his dream girl; he had obviously stated that he'd rather have her be ugly but sincere yet had given his preferences anyway. In a way he would never understand, because he didn't remember her clearly, he had described his mother. The picture Rose had sketched was seen by Carlisle and he was a vampire when he met them, so he had a perfect picture of her stowed away. Carlisle had been shocked to see a drawing of Edward's mother and asked if Edward's memory of her had become clearer.

I immediately despaired. How could I ever live up to the ghost of his mom? Rose was quick to eradicate that thought; I hadn't even said it out loud, she read it on my face. She told me in no uncertain terms that vampires in general, and Edward, the mind reader, in particular, were not interested in looks. Because beauty was part of being a vampire; it was a burden and one of their lures for humans. Personality was what counted in the vampire world. She was again quick to assure me that my personality was beautiful but a little snowed under due to the abuse.

Then she blurted out the biggest truth ever. "You, girl, are the other half of Edward's soul; that means no competition ever. He won't look at other women, and if you haven't noticed or heard this before, he never ever looked at another girl until you. He's changed dramatically since our first school day here. He was really lonely and subdued, holed himself up in that little study under water. To give us and himself a little privacy. He once tried to explain to me what the inside of his head was like on an average school day, how hard he worked to keep all those thoughts in the back of his head as a hum, but every time anybody thought one of our names, that person's thoughts would automatically be the focus of his attention.

"Quite unintentionally, but that's how he trained his brain to watch out for us. That also means that every fantasy about him is always attacking him front and center, and because most of them are so vile, he is unable to push them back into the hum. He may never react visibly anymore but we all see the disgust in his eyes. He feels violated by those thoughts, mentally raped, and I agree with him. He may never have had sex before, but he has been forced to watch himself over and over doing god knows what to those vapid bitches."

I interjected, "Rose, I understand you trying to make me understand Edward, but isn't that stuff private between you and him?"

"Oh, sorry, Bella, he gave me permission to tell you this to help you understand why he is so hesitant to consummate your mating bond."

I choked out a half-hearted laugh. "God forbid his Victorian upbringing isn't enough, he also has been traumatized away from sex. If I didn't already hate Jessica and Lauren just for their behavior, I now hate them even more for hurting my guy. Couldn't we get them removed from our classes? Edward already changed his whole schedule around to be with me every class. It won't take much to get them suspended; I think you all forget how observant I can be while sinking into the background… well, when I'm not attached to one of the most attention-attracting five in the school.

"Both Lauren and Jessica are stoners, big time. One or both are selling it too, behind the library and
in the girl's bathroom. So maybe we should get pictures or video on them; I know Chief Cope would like that. I'm utterly convinced that those drugs are coming from the Rez, and Charlie's best friend Billy is running that show. But never mind, that's to think about later. I understand the road blocks thrown in Edward's way about giving in to his internal instinct to claim his mate. I also understand that I probably need to lose my insecurities and push a little, but I still think I'm insignificant. I know we are fated to be together, but I'm wired human and looks are important to humans."

I lost my train of thought then because Edward walked in: in torn and dirty jeans, a tattered black oversized t-shirt, and dirty sneakers. I ran over to him and jumped him, only to have him catch me and hold me away from his body with an apologetic smile on his face.

"Sorry, love, I've just hunted and I have to shower." He looked up to Rose and nodded.

"Edward," I said, "why do you wear high end clothes all the time?" He looked puzzled, confused even.

"I just wear what Alice puts out for me. The only clothes I choose myself are my hunting clothes, and those are all old for obvious reasons."

"Hmmm, that's a shame, because I like the way you look now. No pretenses, fitting in with the small town crowd. I really wonder a lot about you saying you try to fit in, but your clothes, cars, and grace all make you stand out. Maybe dressing like this would minimize the brain attacks you suffer. Let me tell you, if you all had arrived in a second hand SUV with under the radar clothes—nice but not high end—I think you all sticking out like a sore thumb would have been a lot less annoying. I know you, Edward, are assaulted every first day because you can't shove back all the new voices yet. But wouldn't it be easier if you all didn't showcase that there's money in your family? We all know there is, but a family of seven living on a doctor's salary wouldn't have it in buckets." Rose and Edward looked at me as if I had two heads. Slowly, a big smirk crept onto their faces.

"Family meeting, tonight, all of us, and you're explaining this to Alice. It is too late for this round, but I want to try this next time. Because a family of eight living on a doctor's salary is even tighter." They laughed in unison.

"I'll go through my closet and tone it a bit down now too, Bella. I think it'll make you a bit more comfortable too. I can't go grunge all of a sudden, but more tees and less button-downs, and more jeans would work, I think." Edward pulled me into a hug, completely forgetting his shower requirement, and I was enveloped in the smell of trees, grasses, and his usual honey and lilac scent. He gave me a closed-mouthed kiss, and I tried to deepen it, but he pulled back, shaking his head.

"Love, I still haven't cleaned my mouth, too much venom and blood in there."

"Um, Edward?" I asked. "Would you clean your mouth if I were a vampire already?"

"No, sweet girl, I would share the taste of my kill with you; it would be a sensual experience. But right now the venom and blood residue could be harmful to you. I would like to kiss you properly. Truly, I would, it's just too dangerous."

"Then go take your shower, and return to kiss me properly." Rose smiled at our banter, Edward flitted out the door, and I heard the shower in his room being turned on.

Rose stepped real close to me and whispered real soft; I was convinced no one but Edward was aware of what she said. "Bella, I think that when you become a vampire you're going to be the smartest of us all. You already are smarter than most of us, with the possible exception of Edward and Carlisle, but wait until you can process on eight tracks, girl, it's going to be sensational. Now, can you please turn some of that brainpower to self-empowerment? I blocked Edward so he doesn't
know what I'm saying right now, but he will find out because I'm unable to stop thinking about ways of letting you see just how fantastic you are.

"Do me a favor. Every time somebody puts you down, empower yourself by repeating a few sentences in your head. One, I am worth everything I dream of. Two, I am loved by fantastic people so I must be fantastic too. And three, I stand above the jealousy oozing from them, I am the better person, I will go beyond their wildest dreams." She patted my shoulders and walked towards the living room, leaving me to my thoughts.

My photographic memory gave the three sentences a once over and I immediately felt stronger in myself. I yelled for Jasper to quit enhancing my feeling when Edward appeared in the doorway telling me that Alice and Jasper were not in his mind-shot, taking a private moment. That brought me up short; the only explanation was that mental self-empowerment was really powerful. I promised myself to use it diligently, and that I needed a private talk with Carlisle sometime soon. The whole venom idea was not sitting well with me. Edward and I French-kissed regularly; I had felt the venom inside my mouth. It healed little nicks and scuffs, Edward used it to heal them by applying with his fingers. I also knew that when pushed into a person through a bite or an injection that it would start the transformation; I wasn't ready for that yet. I just wanted a clear picture in my mind what would be too much, and, to be completely honest, if Edward's semen would trigger my transformation.

As a second line of thinking, my stories came into my head and just how damn prophetic they really were. In my stories, I never wrote about a three-day painful conversion, it was always gradual. How much of that could be true? Nobody but Edward had read my stories; they were now stashed in the tree-house safe.

Yeah, Edward had gone completely overboard on security; not even his siblings could come in uninvited. He would simply decide if they were welcome or not and Alice would know if he would raise the platform needed to enter the reinforced, vampire-proof house. She had tried to bully her way in to dress me, but it didn't work. He finally had someone more important to him than family. We loved them dearly, but we needed our privacy to get to know each other.

I was resolved, and I would be ready soon. If he couldn't muster up the courage to end this impasse, then I would be the strong one. I would go to Carlisle for information and I would make Edward give in somehow, preferably before my birthday in eight months.

Chapter End Notes

A/N next week, Edwards inner struggle up close.

my recommendations for this week:

First, an old one which portrays Edward as THE original vampire. Fans already know which fic this is.

Eternally Damned by twiXlite FFn 5023928, TWCS Sid=5844

Secondly one of the best New Moon AU's I've ever read. Probably because Bella doesn't accept Edwards lies, and leaves him in the woods.

Serenity's Prayer by ladylibre FFn 7630525, TWCS Sid=7993
Twilesque is now available at FFn, FP, and Ao3

see you next week

Pien
Chapter 6 Frustrations under the Microscope

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephenie Meyer, I just play in her pond, my splashes don't intend to cause copyright infringement.
Big thanks again to my mental support, beta, banner and pre-read team, the fantastic
Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue85.
Now what has Edward been doing when he was away from Bella?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 6

EPOV

I had never expected this: neither the euphoria nor the agony I was in were expected. I had expected the contentment and warm feeling inside, but the utter euphoria caused by the love my darling mate poured out over me was extraordinary. The agony could also fall in the extraordinary category, but the fight inside myself which caused it was devastating. My vampire self was chomping at the bit to claim its mate completely. My gentleman upbringing kept reining him in but was losing terrain fast. My most desperate argument to not claim her now was that I wanted to be married to her before we consummated our relationship. My vampire scoffed at that human way of thinking; he countered that consummating the bond was our kind of wedding and a lot more permanent than marriage was considered during this day and age.

This internal debate was a large part of the agony, but not all. Because we were not completely mated, somewhere inside myself something was insecure big time. It caused major jealousy and very possessive behavior—behavior I saw in my Bella too, by the way, only her mercilessly beat-down self-image kept her from acting on it.

Separation was another hard thing, but if I stayed within a mile it was bearable for both of us. Because of my vampire brain, I could compartmentalize the pain and stay functional, but because I knew it was at least ten times worse for Bella, I had to find a way to stay close and to be able to have her out of that hell hole she had to call home as soon as Charlie slept or left.

My siblings and I found a trio of Sitka spruces which stood in the middle of a clearing. All were about two-hundred and twenty-five feet tall; at sixty-five feet, the lower branches completely obscured whatever happened higher up in the trees. The clearing with the trees was a little less than a mile from Charlie's house, just within the safe zone for Bella's pain. Her separation pain started when I was more than a mile away; until that point, she was just sad and lonely. Not that I found that acceptable, but it was better than doubling over in pain.

Damn, I should just take her away, keep her with me the whole time. My girl wanted to graduate at the end of the year though, and her wish was my command. I had put in a little more effort to catch up to her, and so did Alice. Every Cullen kid would graduate at the end of the year.

I was starting to understand that Bella had a few silent protectors in the Cope family. They were too old to be qualified as foster parents so they kept watch and recorded everything. Chief Cope was in charge of Charlie's criminal record, his attendance, and his diligence on the job. Mrs. Cope kept
watch over Bella's health and safety; she was overjoyed to see her making friends for the first time. Alas, she also had a big crush on me, but that made working with her easier if not uncomfortable. She was the one who confided to Esme how she and her husband kept watch and record. Deputy Swan was in for a rude awakening the day after Bella's eighteenth birthday. He would receive a summons to report to the station for a personal review. When he arrived, he would be summarily dismissed and arrested if they could get the evidence he was involved in more than just slacking on the job.

So the whole Cullen Clan was now scouring Forks and La Push for evidence. We already found two ecstasy labs in secluded cabins in the woods; the foul smell had cleared away a lot of the usual wildlife. The heavily used quad trails running towards those cabins gave them another suspicious trait. We touched nothing; we only took copious amounts of pictures. Pictures which were date stamped and saved on several different media.

The original memory cards were delivered to the Chief by Carlisle; in his capacity as coroner, he could officially gather evidence without loss of integrity. Carlisle explained the pictures as taken during hiking trips. Those little cabins reeked of Quileutes; somehow their smell was repulsive to us. Perhaps there was some truth in their legends—descendants of werewolves—yeah, right. Charlie’s scent was nowhere near them, but the Quileute Chief was his best friend, and on certain days he would be adamant in taking the Rez to patrol. So, Chief Cope and us Cullens thought that he was allowing them to ship the drugs out. How to prove it though…

I was gone inside my head again while I was setting up the entrance to the tree-house. The only entrance was through jumping on a platform which could be put on a vertical to keep others of our kind from investigating. All the other sides were smooth as glass and covered in a transparent plastic, so even Emmett’s tries to get in were thwarted. He hung from the side before I installed the second story and the roof, trying to get his fingers between the window and the siding, using all of his considerable strength, and failed.

The windows themselves were missile proof, just about the only glass which could withstand several blows of a vampire. The whole tree-house looked like wood but was actually made out of four-inch steel. I angled the roof and made it very smooth and with a big overhang, so no gutters were needed. We had the most comical time trying to get into the house through the roof. Jasper made some excellent military strategies, but he only got hold of the tip of the pyramid-shaped roof once before sliding down when he tried to get through the plastic-coated steel.

The whole house was airtight with an air-conditioning system like those in hospital clean rooms. The vents of the air-conditioning were hidden underneath the roof’s overhang, making them impossible to reach when the extendable porch was retracted. That porch could only be operated from inside, except the front door entrance. Jasper and I had worked together on a remote with a rotating frequency, and not like the car ones that used only a few; this thing used over a thousand frequencies, more than enough to thwart unwelcome visitors. I had the only remote. And a spare one in my safe.

The linking up code was only known to me too, and could not be found from bouncing random signals at the base station. Only when the right code of a hundred and twenty-eight digits was sent to it would it check the infrared frequency and activate after sending it another access code. Jasper only knew about the infrared part. Yeah, I was paranoid but I wanted it to be a private haven for Bella and me, not a party place for the whole family.

The most difficult part was to keep everything from Alice. I had realized early on that having them help me build the house would mean them knowing everything about it. So, without making any decisions I thought of ways to keep them out. Some things I made decisions on because they knew I
was afraid other vampires might run into the house and try to infiltrate. But keeping the two codes of the entrance a secret was imperative, so I used a random code generator and stored the number in my memory but never thought about what it was for. Then, on a day that Alice was thoroughly occupied by trying to find a way to shop with Bella without her freaking out, I assembled the whole door opening system, inputting the codes as a part of the process. That little decision slipped through nicely. From the tree-house, I could hear Charlie's thoughts just fine, so I knew when he went to sleep and then I could run to pick up Bella. We would really enjoy our little bubble there.

One day I was tinkering on my piano, composing Bella's song. It had been a long while since I played; because of my abused mind, the joy had gone out of my music. Esme had drifted towards me, thinking happy thoughts, when I suddenly doubled over. I didn't understand until Esme told me that Carlisle had taken Bella out of my mind shot. She had wanted a private talk with him.

Being the smart girl that she was, she had written me a note claiming me vehemently, stating I was hers and only hers and she was most definitely mine. All that before telling me to calm down because she wanted a doctor's conversation with Carlisle and she wanted her girl stuff as private as possible, feeling embarrassed enough that she had to tell my father. Then she soothed me again that it was not something hurting her, but natural for women to have checkups with their OB GYN, that she couldn't go to another doctor because of the simple reason they couldn't answer all her concerns. I was a little hurt, because I, too, had two medical degrees, but she was right that those were only basic degrees without specialties. Esme told me that Carlisle was purely with her in his professional capacity, that he was already mated and had no designs on my mate. They had gone to the hospital to do some standard tests. She showed me Bella's written question to Carlisle to block his mind from me, and one for her to leave them in private for a moment. Later, she had handed Esme my letter and one to tell her where they went and why. The pain was overwhelming for me; I sincerely hoped that Bella had been thorough enough to write all her questions down or she wouldn't get everything answered. I was reduced in brain function to a mind-reading human. Two tracks still worked: one for the never ending thoughts, and one for my own.

It made me think once more about our half mated state, knowing it would ease up if the insecurity of that state would be lifted. The pain would go away; the intense loneliness would remain but would kick in at larger distances. My resolve to wait for our wedding night crumbled a bit more and I was glad that I had sought help with one of my cousins in Denali some days earlier—one of the sane, non-obsessed ones and an overall very good friend of mine. Because hell would have to freeze over before I would go with these questions to the one that invented vacuous women, Tanya. Her relentless sexual innuendos and blatant seduction attempts of not only myself but every mated male in our family was one of the reasons I never went to them anymore, much to the chagrin of my friend Kate. She and I could talk endlessly to perfect our languages, or talk music theory because Kate was very talented on the cello. Because of Tanya's obsessive behavior towards me, she just bombarded me with fantasies starring us both—frightfully accurate fantasies because she had once followed me to the hot springs and had seen me in my birthday suit—I texted Kate that I needed her discrete help on a sensitive subject and she texted back that she would go on a solo hunting trip, and told me to call her the next day when I was alone.

The tree-house was finished and I could now stay within Bella's pain boundaries, so when she was catching up on her chores and cooking dinner, I called Kate. She was overjoyed that I had found my mate, but frowned upon the fact that I had chosen to keep her human until she could move out of her father’s. When I gave her Bella’s reasoning for staying human she was awed. The fact that Bella had grasped all the details of what it entailed to change so well baffled her. Then I stuttered my way through my most embarrassing question ever: how to make love to my mate without harming her in any way. Kate was very realistic and understood that had I been able to blush, I would have been tomato red.
She answered me with one statement, "Edward, the first time you will hurt her even if you don't want to. You're taking, and giving her, I might add, her virtue. This will entail a certain amount of pain." I sighed and she continued, "One big advantage of being a vampire is, though, that you are the painkiller for that pain too. Our body temperature will soothe instantly. I advise you to have her on top, to give her control, so you can't thrust too hard or crush her by forgetting your weight over her. Give her a few simple commands that are signals to you to ease up or stop completely. For god's sake, don't fret over a simple bruise, because humans bruise all the time during sex; even in human couples it's not uncommon. If you are flipping out over something that simple you will harm her more emotionally than you did physically. And most importantly, because she is your mate, you will get the urge to bite. Bite the headboard or your own upper arm or something. It has to be something like that because a pillow won't feel like substance; the mating bite will have to wait until she's changed. I don't think I need to give you pointers how to do it, because after a century of human and vampire minds to peek into, I think that your porn stash is varied enough. The only advice there is, throw out the vampire things you've witnessed. Especially those of my sister, because her body can't handle that yet. Remember that vampires can go all night, humans really can't. One maybe two rounds is the maximum they can take. Okay?"

"Kate, thanks so much, do you really think I could do it without hurting her?"

"My dear friend, you are unable to hurt her; she's your mate. But please listen carefully to her, and don't spring it on her as a surprise because there are boundaries you'll have to work within. She must know what they are, and you must set your embarrassment aside and discuss it with her beforehand."

"Okay, this might be a bit out of your expertise, but do you think my semen injected into her body might be harmful? I ran some tests on the stuff and found it to be almost a hundred percent venom, some barely moving sperm, but those are in the tens and not viable so I'm not afraid of pregnancy. I'm afraid the venom will start the change."

"God, Edward, I never thought of that and hadn't even begun to think about a pregnancy. The only thing I can say is that every human male I bedded up to ten times, and after I became a humanitarian, has survived with no side effects other than a bit of bruising."

"Well, that topic is one for Carlisle then. I think I will go hunting with him. Or invite him to Bella's bubble, when she's at her father's."

"Bella's bubble?"

"Oh yeah, that's the fabulous tree-house I built for us, vampire proof and inaccessible without the remote key. It's within a mile from her father's place, to keep the separation pain away."

"That sounds wonderful, but why do you call it Bella's bubble?"

"Oh dear, the only way to describe it is that when I'm in a relative thought-free environment and concentrate on Bella's heartbeat, I can slip in a meditative state close to sleep. It's so soothing and calming."

"Whoa, wait a minute, I never heard of something like that. Wouldn't her dreams keep you out of it? I mean, her thoughts keep it from being thought-free, don't they?"

"Now we come into territory you can't divulge to anyone, not even Eleazar. Truly, Kate, you have to promise no trip to Italy until Bella is one of us for a few years, and absolutely no one outside of my family can know this." I was scanning the woods around me for unfamiliar thoughts: empty. And no family either.
"Of course I promise; I'm hunting alone and we don't have an Alice, thank god. When I get back, just text me about some music theory way beyond any of their knowledge. I already deleted the other texts. Really, Edward, nothing of this conversation will be divulged to anyone."

"Okay then, Bella will be some kind of shield when she changes. I can't hear her thoughts now. I think she will be powerful."

"Good grief, your power is one of the most powerful I know of, and she's shielding you completely while human! Wow! I completely understand why you want to keep this a secret… You know, I just thought about some of the things Eleazar and I studied. Do you know about mate-enhanced powers?"

"Excuse me? No, never heard of it."

"Eleazar had a theory that mates enhanced each other's powers if both in the couple were gifted. He thought that the right couples could work together with their powers. For instance, a fire starter together with a water gifted one. We could never prove it conclusively because of the one big disadvantage, one of the couple would have to be human found and the vampire not only had to be the mate but also the sire. The second part is that the human had to be the singer of the vampire, which wouldn't be a problem until the change. As soon as the blood touches the tongue of the sire, the frenzy would start. That taste would send him or her into total irreversible bloodlust."

"Wait a minute, if Bella was my singer I couldn't change her myself? I would kill her?"

"Yep, the mating bond overrides the sense of smell, but not the sense of taste."

"Glad you told me, because Bella is my singer. Damn, now I have to have Carlisle change her."

"Hold on, you doofus. Since when do you need to bite her? Carlisle will simply inject her with venom, just like the rest of you. What says it has to be HIS venom?"

"It could be mine, you're right. We're a long way from that, but please continue on the mate-enhanced powers."

"Without a shred of proof, he knew of one such couple: Marcus and Didyme. Sadly, Aro felt threatened by their powers. As you know, Marcus sees the bonds between people, but just as an observer. Didyme could enhance them or sever them, much like Chelsea. The big difference between the two is that Didyme was Aro's older sister and his polar opposite in character. She refused to use her power to gain control. Through Marcus she could see which bonds to strengthen. Together they were working on a peaceful vampire world, much the same as Carlisle; when he lived there, they were great friends. But to get to the mate enhancement, Eleazar felt or saw, or however his power works, that they worked together not only verbally, the way you work with Alice and Jasper, but also through each other in some way. Alas, Aro decided his sister was a threat and had her killed while Marcus and he were on a mission with the guard. That was the end of his research."

My thoughts flew through Bella's strangely accurate stories and found that her fairy and her heroine in the end became king and queen of the fairies because they were the closest team any couple could be. They had the most powerful magic available because they worked together. It could be true, but it seemed so unlikely.

"And he never found another couple that had those things in common?" I asked.

"Nope, until now that is. I found another one."

"Still, don't you dare tell him. I need to talk to Carlisle about this, and with Bella as well. Eleazar
goes to Aro still with most things; I know that he communicates quite regularly with him. He even
goes to Italy once a year; it's a wonder Aro hasn't found out about all of our powers. He would covet
us above all others, try to bring us to Volterra and enslave us. He doesn't want to understand
humanitarians, you know that. He calls our diet a waste, and our way of thinking abnormal. He
doesn't know it but I have been in Volterra once, deep undercover, and always at about three miles
from the throne room, red contacts in place. Did you know that Marcus drinks just enough human
blood to keep his eyes red, but hunts animals like us? I don't know how he keeps that a secret from
Aro—he wouldn't tell me—but I encountered him while hunting. We tackled the same deer. I asked
Marcus about his feeding because around Volterra it's almost blasphemy to eat anywhere else than in
the feeding room. He told me he went through the motions and sipped from his designated humans
and then dropped them into the feeding frenzy of the guard. Somehow nobody notices. He gave me
one trick to thwart Aro though, hide thoughts you don't want to share behind immense pain. So train
yourself to put this kind of conversation away behind your memories of your change. I think there's
more to it, because the blanks would give questions, but ever since then my memory structure has
changed, I conditioned my brain to place my power behind my change. Every mundane thought
entering my mind automatically files there. Be aware that Aro only sees long term memories, not
every thought through your mind like I do. I'm real time, he's video"

"So, when Aro reads a mind you get it all too?"

"If it goes through his mind at that moment, he's becoming sloppy though. He rifles through minds,
not storing everything or even reading everything. He's been doing it for such a long time that he
thinks he's infallible. He isn't interested in human memories and stops at the change every time he
comes to it. Marcus, in my belief, has soaked his brain in pain—the loss of his mate—and because
Chelsea binds him to his brother-in-law, he can't leave. I hope he'll find Didyme again in her next
incarnation, he would be perfect to take over from Aro."

"Okay, you lost me again on that last one."

"Oh, Kate, you'll like my Bella, she is so incredibly smart. Carlisle told her the story of Marcus as an
example of a vampire who had lost his mate and gave up. Bella absorbed it all and came to the
conclusion that killing yourself to be with your mate again was ludicrous because you just had to
wait for his or her next incarnation. Soul-mates are eternal... I have to add with a bond like ours,
moving into speculative territory again. Looking at our stories, we came to the conclusion that Bella
was born for me, born with a subconscious knowledge of our world. You know as well as I do that
not all human found mates are true soul-mates. True mates, certainly, look at Alice and Jasper. But
soul-mates is a bond even stronger. Her whole life, Bella has had dreams about her fairy Prince
Charming; her grandmother told her on her deathbed to write those dreams down. When she
describes her Prince Charming she describes me... The only difference is my eye color. Can you
guess what eye color she gave me in her stories?"

"Wait, if you ask me like that it should be either totally weird or weirdly accurate. So I'm going for...
let's see... Neither golden nor black... I'll go for your human color, green."

"Exactly, it's like she remembers me, my human self. I feel all the changes inside me. My whole
world has been turned upside down. No more loneliness, no more selfish behavior. She is my first
priority. Oh, Kate, I wish you could come to visit. You are my only friend outside of my family I
trust completely, and because you're female my anxieties won't go overboard. You would like her
very much; I think she could best you at literature."

"Really... But, Edward, I think I have to decline your offer for visiting before your mate is a vampire.
Sorry, but I have two reasons. First, if I go and visit you, my sisters will want to come. I won't
impose Tanya on your still human mate. That would lead to her being either shredded by you before
“Something happened to Bella, or after and you being alone again until her incarnation comes along. And second, I think you forget her anxieties a bit. Don’t you think that if I come along she would become a bit territorial?”

“Yeah, you may be right, although I find it difficult to precisely gauge her state of mind. When the vapid bitch squad of the school is drooling over me, I think I saw some of it in her expression. You know the look, MINE…”

“Yeah, that’s what I mean, and that would be with females you’re obviously not attracted to… need I say more?”

“Nah, you're right. Maybe we could do something over the phone, the three of us just talking. I already told her about Tanya, I had to. My idiot of a brother thought it funny to blab out, asking if she could handle competition. I mean, she's been put down all her life, mentally abused by both her parents, the outcast at school. Everything that was said to her was either to put her down or out of pity. She rejected friendship before it was offered. It took both me and Alice each about half an hour before her walls would come down a little bit. Only after my story she lost them completely with us, but as soon as we are on school property I feel her shell settle around her and she turns into the girl afraid of her own shadow I first met. Really, one more stupid comment from Emmett and I'm going to take Rose up on her offer to make him a eunuch for a month. I will even store his parts here in the tree-house.”

“Rose offered THAT, wow; your girl must be really something if she melted the ice queen.”

“Hey, you know that Rose isn't an ice queen. She only puts on that façade because of your vapid sister. We have to keep her at a distance somehow. Rose is counseling Bella, to overcome her abuse.”

During our conversation I had been monitoring Charlie’s mind, and now I heard what I wanted: his mind blanking out in a drunken stupor.

“Kate, I would really like to set up some teleconference with you and Bella some time. I want to thank you for your advice and I hope to talk to you soon, but Charlie just blacked out and I'm going to get my girl out of there. Tell your family hello, but nothing more; when we're ready we'll invite you. Bye.”

“Bye, Edward…”

Chapter End Notes

A/N Well, it looks like our gentlemanly vampire is going to throw out his Puritan ideas to make his mate more comfortable. What did you guys think of Kate? I'm dying to hear all your thoughts on the tree-house.

My recommendations for this week:
Firstly one of the earliest fics I read, I lost it and recently found it again. Bella is changed by James before she came to Forks. Luckily her shield and her control are he same. She finds the animal diet just like Carlisle did.
Scheme of Fate by thebugroom FFn 5639554
And secondly a pre Twilight fic about Carlisle meeting The Detective extraordinaire Sherlock Holmes. This author has written several fics which play out before Twilight but could very well fit into canon. These little known gems are truly a joy to read.
Dr Cullen, I presume? By persephonesfolly FFn 5598412
Enjoy reading,
Please review,
See you all next week.
Pien
Chapter 7 Transcribing Embarrassment

Chapter Notes

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A big appreciative nod to my fabulous team: Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue85.

Now, let's see what Bella was up to, in the hospital with Carlisle.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 7

BPOV

I was so immensely glad that I had written down all my questions and that Carlisle understood that I couldn't retain the answers. The separation pain seared through me. Damn Edward’s mind reading working farther than our boundary. This talk to Carlisle was very important; I had to know what to expect from a vampire when sex was involved. I understood that it was a powerful thing for humans, especially when true love was involved, but consummating the mating bond sounded even more powerful. Vampire emotions would crush a human, and the most powerful of emotions was binding yourself to your mate. I focused on the vampire doctor in front of me.

"Carlisle, I have a list of questions and some assumptions which I would like to discuss with you." I spat out the words through gritted teeth, my empty heart aching for my love. "I won't be able to recall this conversation, as you well know, so please write down your answers beneath each question." I gave him the notebook I prepared for him, with one question on top of each page.

"Sweet Bella, we can do this in another way. I hate seeing you in so much pain, especially knowing that my son must go through the same."

"No, please; I might be able to understand enough to ask a follow up if it comes up. If you just write the answers we would have to resort to subterfuge once again when I want to ask more. If I focus enough I might be able to think around the pain."

"All right then, let's set a brisk pace then to shorten the time needed and to force you to focus. Question one?"

"Do you think Edward will be able to overcome his assaulted mind?"

"Rose and I have spoken about this, and while his human side might have some scarring the vampire side of him was never affected. This might make it difficult to gauge. One thing is absolutely clear though: he wants to make you happy, with both his human as well as his vampire side. If he was pure vampire he would have claimed you the moment he laid eyes on you." He wrote down every word he said while I listened. "He has retained his humanity the most out of all of us; I lost a big part because I was alone in the beginning and didn't know how to save it. But being alone for so long had me harness what I could about it."
"Okay, back to his violated mind, that strong humanity inside Edward is bruised, battered, and beaten again and again. He doesn't want the vampire to take over because he would kill those vapid girls for assaulting him. With you, my girl, his vampire is salivating and forcing him almost to do the deed. That's where the separation pain comes from. You two are bonded for eternity, but you already understand the anxiety without truly mating. Can he overcome the mental assaults? I think he can. He has a crystalline brain that works like a computer; he will have to password protect the part where he stores those experiences—lock it away. I know that in a human, some things may trigger memories. With a vampire it works differently, lock it away and it will only come back if you consciously recall it. So the simple answer to your question is, yes, easily."

"Good, next page second question. How strong are his Victorian beliefs in comparison to his vampire nature?"

"My dear, you have put some thought into this, haven't you? Let us see, his ingrained nature, which was solidified when he changed, is that of a young gentleman of the early nineteen hundreds: to court, spoil, and pamper his lady friend. In his mind, he can't think of you as his future wife yet, because he hasn't proposed. In that world he would ask your father for permission to marry you. This won't be as easy to put away as those vile assaulting thoughts, because it's part of him. A vampire, on the other hand, would never do that; marriage, to a vampire, is ludicrous because they don't follow human traditions. As I said before, his vampire side is screaming at him, throwing tantrums and attacking his control every minute of the day. His claim is incomplete, he could still be thwarted, lose everything. You have to understand that politics rule the vampire world. To give into a more powerful alliance can overrule the wish to mate. Power is what motivates a pure vampire the most. We are different because we mate out of love, not for power. Our ruling coven, the Volturi, live for power. So much so that the one couple of the three of them that mated out of love was scorned and ultimately Aro, the leader, destroyed his own sister because she was mated out of love.

"I told you about Marcus. His mate was Didyme; she was Aro's biological sister, as Caius is Marcus' brother. The whole family, including the in-laws, was changed some six thousand years ago, give or take a century, to rule over our world. It is believed they once answered to the original vampire, but this history lesson can wait until your man is at your side. Mulling over this question, I think that you should ask Edward to marry you. I even will go with you to the jewelers to pick out a ring for him. He, of course, will say no, because that is simply not done in his gentleman's brain, but he will then know that you will accept his proposal. That will follow soon after yours, if not in counterpoint to it. I know he already carries around his mother's ring, because that has never left his person since his change. But to finish my thought, I think that even if you wait to marry until you're eighteen, that the promise will soothe his gentleman enough to free his vampire."

"God, you're devious, Carlisle. Do you have his ring size? Because I need a beautiful ring for my man. But could I do the shopping online with Esme? I think that's a mother's task. Take him hunting tonight; I will convince him to go, to keep the pain limited to the same day. And somehow I think he needs to talk to you alone too. All right, question three. How can I help him to regulate his strength during intercourse?" Of course I turned bright red while reading that question out loud.

"Please don't be embarrassed, dear. I am so proud you have put so much thought into all of this. I'm going to be blunt; that's the only way this will work. Okay, first of all, I think you must be the one in control as much as possible. That means you on top, he pretty much has to lay there and take it. When he grips too hard, you'll need to have a simple word or phrase that will cut through his frenzy to calm him down. That you absolutely need to agree upon before you get into it. You both will need to put your shyness aside and talk it through, decide on your safe-words and have him ingrain them into his vampire side, because it will be the vampire mating who has to understand that his mate is fragile. The frenzy is instinctual and will occur, no matter what. Second is the mating bite, he will need to bite something, something hard, preferably his mate's neck, but that's out of the question until
you are changed. So, when he is near his climax you'll have to guide his mouth away from your neck and towards something hard, his own upper arm or a bite ring for instance. Again, this is something you both need to decide upon in your talk."

"Okay, a bite ring for my baby. Question four, I think condoms won't work due to the venom, but will I need protection, either from pregnancy or the venom?"

"Condoms will dissolve the moment they come into contact with venom, so they won't work at all and I know that Edward has done some research into the viability of vampire sperm; apparently it isn't viable at all. The spermatozoa are killed by the venom, or at least incapacitated; their count is very low also with all four males he tested. Yes, my dear, we all helped him with his research. So, to my belief, pregnancy is out, won't happen, impossible. But will his venom inside your womb be dangerous? I don't think it will trigger the change if that's what you're asking. Will it have another effect on your system? I don't know; the only stories I know of about male vampires with human found mates, the women are always changed first, with mating taking place afterward. I do know incubi, male succubae who seduce human women, exist, but those encounters always end with a dinner party for the vampire. The seducing is just to release certain chemicals into the blood, making it sweeter to drink, so no survivors there; I simply don't know. I'm wracking my brain to find a way to test it."

"Carlisle, couldn't you use some kind of animal to test this on? I mean keep a pig in a pen for some time and inseminate it daily with vampire semen? And I chose the pig because that's what they use in forensics to mimic humans. Afterwards the pig could be dinner for one of you."

"Pig, yuck; sorry, Bella, any sort of domesticated animal is almost as bad as eating human food. But we could corral some does... You know we do that every time we change someone. That way we don't endanger stray humans with a savage newborn. I'll talk it over with Edward tonight."

"Okay, I know that the venom will only start the change as it is introduced into the bloodstream in large enough quantities. Edward has healed some of my scrapes with it. It's amazing what it can do. But how much venom does it take to start the change? I mean, I bite my cheek almost every other day, and Edward kisses me every day; sometimes I feel a little tingle in my mouth where I had bitten it. Does it accumulate in my system or does it break down? I will stop all pushing boundaries if this will start my three days of burning suddenly."

"Again, slightly unknown territory, but our cousins in Alaska were succubae and still love to play with human males. Now that they are humanitarians, their conquests live to tell the tale, and most of them come back for more. None of them accidentally changed all of a sudden, so that might be a good thing."

"That leaves only the last two things; one is my period. That's always been really bad. It's coming up and I know Edward will freak out at me in that much pain. Could you please prescribe me something? And second, will I need to abstain during my period due to the fact that I'm actively bleeding in my womb? I mean, venom and open blood vessels; wouldn't more venom be absorbed then?"

"You say your period is coming up, that means I can give you the shot after it. It will regulate your period and stop the heavy cramping. For this period I can give you some painkillers. As to the second part of your question, abstain is a big word. But you're right that you might want to avoid penetration on those days. I won't go into details what you can do, but remember our preferred food source and you might have a very excited boyfriend—sorry, fiancé—during the days of your menstrual cycle."

I turned deep red and felt my blush cover my whole body. "God, Carlisle, I never even thought of
that one. You've got a dirty mind, Dad. Do you need blood work done for the shot? Do you want to give me a physical, because I think this is your only chance to touch me without Edward freaking. Don't think I didn't notice him being anxious even with you three mated males."

Carlisle was still transcribing this whole meeting while talking to me when he suddenly stopped and looked me deep in the eyes. He studied me for some time, taking deep breaths through his nose. His concentration unnerved me a bit. His eyes stayed the same color, so I knew it had nothing to do with him wanting my blood. His concentration broke and he smiled.

"You, young lady, are perfectly healthy; you're right to expect your period in a day or two. The only thing I can detect is a little anemia, but that we are already treating by feeding you regularly. I think that you were a little undernourished before."

I sat there staring at him with my mouth hanging open. I tried to say something but I only succeeded in imitating a fish. Nothing came out of my mouth. Finally I was able to form a coherent sentence. "I… I see… Vampire doctors should be everywhere; it would save so much time and money on tests."

Carlisle burst into laughter and said, "I do believe that it would also reduce the numbers of patients significantly because I'm the only vampire immune to human blood. Believe me that my sense of smell and my enhanced vision are a big help in diagnosing. I have to play the human doctor though, and order all the tests accordingly. With you I can rely on my senses which will appease my son. My scent will only be on acceptable and agreed upon places on your body: your hands and maybe your shoulders, because if the pain had become too much I would have held those to comfort you, while calling him here to erase the pain. Believe me when I say that you are closely monitored by my son, and not only if you're happy but also your health. He is able, for the first time, to use his senses to diagnose somebody, because his bond with you erases his bloodlust. Now let us return home. Oh, just one more thing; he will want to see my memory of this conversation. Do I have your permission to show it to him?"

"Of course, Carlisle, at least everything which isn't about my proposing to him. Please lock that bit away."

We rose and walked out of the hospital; I wasn't pain free but I found a way to focus through it. I was very glad that the separation didn't manifest itself as a headache, because those were impossible to focus through. This heartache I could now shove aside if necessary; it took some pretty hard focusing but it worked. Carlisle was a gentleman too; he opened doors and gave me his hand to help me into the car, but he touched only my hands, as he had said. I noticed he would like to hug me like a father but refrained. I should put that on my list of things I needed to talk to Edward about, because he was asking for accidents if his brothers were not getting used to my scent. I noticed several times already that he almost glared them out of the room when I was there. Emmett I could understand, the blundering giant was not used to be around humans and didn't have the inclination to try to be careful enough not to hurt me. Edward was more worried about Jasper; somehow he lacked control. According to Edward it was because he was the last one to completely stop drinking from humans.

He was a humanitarian for a long time; he drank human blood but didn't kill or change anybody since he left his sire, a particularly vicious female who was one of the ringleaders in the southern wars. She had been terribly upset that Jasper, her second in command, had had enough after fifty years of carnage. He just couldn't stand the emotions of his victims any longer. He left Maria and learned to control his bloodlust to a point. When he knew he could mingle with humans without draining them he started to work in a mental hospital, or asylum as they were called then. He was in charge of bloodletting, carefully storing the blood away for later consumption.
That was where he found Alice and knew he had found his mate. He cared for her in the asylum for a few months, all the while researching where she came from and why she was there, because no charts were being kept on her and she was known only by her first name. He overheard a phone call one day from one of the doctors to a Mister Brandon. The doctor confirmed to Mr. Brandon that his daughter was erased from the system and would die in shock treatment later in the week. Mr. Brandon shouldn't be afraid of his witch daughter any longer and nobody would miss a little girl from the asylum if no records were ever there in the first place. The last sentence confirmed for Jasper they were talking about his mate. Little Alice would not survive the shock treatment; her body was too small to cope with that amount of current. Jasper was infuriated; the so-called doctor would, without blinking, electrocute a little girl because her father was afraid of her little gift.

He decided then and there to change her that night. When the doctor left the building, Jasper went and drank all of the blood he had stored. He needed to be fully sated to be able to change her. He took her far into the woods for privacy. Alice was sixteen and a powerful clairvoyant. She knew what was happening and was glad to be free of her human bonds. When she woke up from the change, she had a vision of the Cullen way of life. That became their goal; she never hunted humans or drank human blood. The only regret she had was the fact that the only humanity she remembered was through Jasper's memories. Her mind was a blank slate when she woke up, only Jasper was there and she understood their bond immediately, instinctually. Because he had survived on human blood for so long, Jasper had difficulties adjusting to animals. Or that was what the Cullens believed.

I didn't; I had listened carefully to Edward and Jasper talking about their gifts. Edward had explained to me that he could hear the thirst of others in his mind, and that he needed to lock that away to keep his own thirst under control. Luckily, human thirst was something completely different. Edward called it part of his control. Jasper never thought about the thirst of the others, he simply reacted to his own. He told me how his gift worked; it was based in his brain and he was able to physically influence humans and vampires. He felt everything around him and had said he often didn't separate his feelings from those around him. That was his weakness, I believed; I hadn't spoken about it yet but intended to do so soon.

While this went through my brain, Carlisle had driven us home and the pain subsided halfway down their driveway. A second part of my brain had worked through everything we had talked about and most of that was what I had deduced from earlier conversations. Edward stood on the porch and flashed to the car, running at my side until Carlisle parked the car, his hand pressed to the window next to me. He had missed me as much as I had missed him. He threw the car door open and lifted me carefully out of the car. I cried a 'thank you' to Carlisle and a 'talk to you later' to Esme and we were gone. Edward shifted me onto his back and seconds later we jumped the river. He was taking me to our bubble, the tree house. He scaled the entrance tree and jumped to the platform. He finally slowed down when we were inside.

"Frantic, Edward?"

"Love, is everything all right? Nothing's wrong, is there? You aren't feeling sick?"

"Edward, slow down, babe. There is absolutely nothing wrong with me. I needed some questions answered by a professional, someone without ulterior motives, and someone who won't tease you about your forward girlfriend. So I couldn't go to either of your sisters, because they would blab to their mates and your brothers would tease you to death. My second motive was that I wanted to test if I could focus through our separation pain, and I'm proud to say that I did. I was able to compartmentalize it and push it aside."

"Oh, baby, I'm so proud of you. Esme almost threw me out because I couldn't concentrate. They are not used to me thinking like a human, on one track only. Well, two technically, one for outside
thoughts and one for my own. But I'm babbling. I have thought long and hard, literally…" he said, smirking, "and called a very dear friend for advice. We should talk about the upcoming consummation of our mating bond." He whooshed out and by the look on his face he was completely mortified. Well, lookie here, no need for my proposal. I would get a beautiful wedding band for him anyway, but the pressure was off. He came to me, when I was planning to go to him. Perfect.

A lot of things went through my head: how to start and how to do this properly. I hoped he had the same concerns I had; that way we could compare notes. The notes were a perfect way of talking this through with a minimum of mortification. I hadn't wanted to record the meeting because he could have overheard while I listened to it. Carlisle had obliged and transcribed what we said word for word. So that's what I did, I gave him my notebook.

Chapter End Notes

A/N Oh, I know, they're going to compare notes, THE lemon is coming closer.

My recommendations this week:

First a AU Edward vs Jacob fic. The primary focus of the story is on the mating bond, but it's very different from how we know it to be. Throw away all your previous knowledge of twilight but the basic things. Then start reading.

A Choice by Bexie25, FFn 7684971, FP under Bexie25

Second, an alternate BD fic, where Edward and Bella go to college after isle Esme, happily exploring their sexual relationship.

Getting Warmer by eiluned price, FFn 5499346, TWCS Sid=3634.

Last, an O/S where Bella finally puts Charlie in his place.

Charlie Pushed to Far by bobbismomma, FFn 8351645

see you next week

Pien
Chapter 8 Comparing Notes

Chapter Notes

A/N all things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I just play with it without intending any copyright infringement.

Another big thank you to my back up team, Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue85

Well, we might as well dive right into the embarrassing conversation.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 8 Comparing Notes.

EPOV

When I spilled my mortified sentence about our upcoming consummation, I saw a lot of emotions flicker on her face, finishing with a satisfied grin.

"We should both rid ourselves of our mortification, Edward, because if we keep that in place, then we will both die of it before we get anything done."

She was right, of course. And apparently taking control because she fished her notebook out the little backpack she had with her.

"First, Edward, are we family thought free?"

"Yes, nobody’s thoughts in here but my own," I said, tapping my temple.

"Good, now I asked Carlisle's advice on several things related to this topic. Do you want to start and let me fill you in, or do you want to go over this together and you fill in what you got?"

Looking at the notebook, I saw a few lines in Bella's script and the rest of the page in Carlisle’s neat hand.

"God, Bella, he transcribed your discussion while you were there?"

"Yes, I wasn't sure I would be able to think through the pain. This was my safeguard. Oh, give it here." She ripped the book out of my hand, turned to the next page and took a black permanent marker out of her bag. She blacked out several lines in the transcript, carefully reading it all. Blacking out some more a bit lower, she then turned to the last page and blacked out a few more lines. "Sorry, honey, some things have to stay a surprise. Now you can read it all. Please don't try to read the indentations, even though Carlisle hardly leaves any. Must be a very good pen he uses."

I read her first question regarding if I would be able to overcome my assaulted mind. My breath left me in an audible whoosh.
"Love," my voice cracked, "you really thought about it all, didn't you? Oh, darling, I hope so. I don't want it to stand in our way."

"Read on, vampire of mine, Carlisle knows how to do it."

I read the rest of the page and indeed he did; it worked a bit like the trick I learned from Marcus, only this time the thoughts would be sealed away and inaccessible in any way, only through a conscious effort by me would they resurface. I immediately went to the space where the thoughts of others were stored behind the wall of pain from my transformation, and created an extra vault there, one with the same one hundred and twenty eight digit code as the remote of the tree house. Rifling through the immense mountain of everyday thoughts, I found every vapid bitch of the last century and threw them all into the vault. I created a one way funnel on top for the ones still active or in the future.

While this was happening in my head, I had read Bella's second question and I was again flabbergasted. She had taken my struggle apart and identified the separate parts. Quickly reading the transcript, I was left without Carlisle's advice to her because it was blacked out. I didn't need it though, because I had already pushed the gentleman aside. Firstly because I would never ask the man-unfit-to-be-called-a-father for her hand, and secondly because my vampire side had simply won the battle. Kate had me convinced it could be safe.

"My darling girl, I am pleased to say that my advisor told me to boot the gentleman to the curb and focus on the safety side of the act. To put it crudely, I need to shackle the wild side of the vampire."

"Ooh really, do I get to shackle you?" she teased with an excited expression but a severe dose of sarcasm in her voice.

"You, my dear, are my jailor; you own me, I am yours completely. But, knowing you, I think I know the next question you asked Carlisle because it flows from this one. Your question three was my question one. Kate was kind enough to…"

She interrupted viciously. "KATE! You talked to another woman alone—an unmated woman—to compile your whatever!" Her anger sizzled out and she started to shake. I wrapped my arms around her and held her to me.

"Honey, I talked to her on the phone. I know my sisters told you about the Denali sisters after Emmett's stupid remark. They told you about Tanya's obsession with her track record, and Irina's vicious streak. They are right that those two belong to, if not invented, the vapid bitch squad. Then there is their biological sister Kate, who is intelligent, funny, and loyal. Besides my siblings, who have teased me to death about guarding my virtue, I needed a true friend, someone I could talk about anything with, knowing for sure that whatever was said was said in confidence so I texted her that I needed a discrete conversation.

"She went hunting alone and I sat here while you were at Charlie's. I wanted her to come over, to meet you, but she properly predicted your reaction and told me to ask her again when we were ready, as in properly mated, maybe even waiting until after your change, because when she comes this way we need to expect their whole coven. I want to be able to hide behind you when Tanya comes anywhere near me.

"We found that you and I have some very interesting characteristics in our bond. Carlisle already talked about the soul bond. Kate told me about a theory she tried to research for Eleazar: mate-enhanced powers. From that I learned one important and life saving point. Because you are my singer and my mate I don't feel bloodlust at all, but if I tried to change you the traditional way, which I intended to do, I would be overcome by it. The sense of taste is not blocked from the bloodlust,
only the sense of smell. I cannot bite you until you are immortal. I will change you by injection, but with my venom. To make it clear, Carlisle already has several syringes of my venom in his office. Every member of the family knows how to get to them. If anything happens to you, and the choice is change or die, they will change you…” I shook my head to get that picture out of my head.

"Dearest, I would never be alone with an unmated female vampire right now, not because I couldn't resist, but because of the impropriety. Kate has saved me from Tanya at least a dozen times; the first time was when I really needed alone time. We were all living in Denali before Rose became one of us. After five days of endless sexual assaults on my mind, I had finally had enough and ran from the house. I was, and still am, the fastest and I lost them pretty quickly. I thought I was safe, but I didn't cover my tracks well enough. I was sitting buck naked in a hot spring, clearing my mind, when I suddenly got scattered thoughts from Kate like she was fighting on the edge of my range. She wanted me to know something and somebody else tried to keep her out of my range. I had been stupid, because when I looked her way, I saw her fighting with Tanya. The bitch had been watching me, hoping my mind would switch off, or I would become distracted. When that happened she was ready to pounce.

"Sadly, since that day her assaults only became more painful because she had seen me disrobe; luckily, she only saw my backside. But to see a fantasy as if it is a memory—that clear and precise—is really painful; it truly is rape. The good thing was that Kate used her power on Tanya; she shocked the hell out of her. Tanya was completely out of it for three days, three blissful thought-free days. Kate dragged her to some dirty cave and left her there, and she left me in my hot spring alone. She made sure the cave was within my range so when Tanya woke up I could hear that and get out of there."

"Edward, if Tanya is such a pest, and everybody knows it, why does she still walk around? Sorry to say it so crude, but I would rip her legs off and ram them up her cooch and ass, then I would set fire to her." She shocked me with her vicious defense of me.

"Bella!"

"No, really, Edward, she can rape your mind, she almost got into Emmett's pants with her succubus ways. Hot damn, she even tried to seduce Carlisle! They haven't told me but I think she must have tried to get to Jasper, too. What is wrong with her? And when is enough, enough? If I understand mating the right way, then once you're mated that's it for flings and things on the side. She must know that, so why try to come between mated pairs? Damn, they all have human found mates; that indicates true mates then and there. How dumb is she really? I can understand the bitch squad here in school, you all are hot things, but she's a vampire. She should know better, and to bombard your mind with those so-called fantasies, if it didn't work the first time, why in hell would she believe it would work after eighty years? I understand you don't want to file charges with the Volturi—that would bring to much attention to your power—but can't you destroy her yourself?"

I thought about it and could only think of one reason why I didn't do it.

"Bella, while this is way off topic, I'll try to answer you. I have played with the idea of simply ripping her to little shreds, but one thing stopped me. If I did that I would lower myself to her level. I took the high ground and ignored her. I worked out a way to communicate with Kate without going to Denali. And to bring us back to topic, I made that vault in my brain. It has a one way funnel on top; any and all thoughts which constitute an assault will now automatically disappear into it. They won't bother me anymore."

"Oh, that's great! And yeah, let's get back on topic. Kate is a good one, and she advised you to do what?"
"Well, I asked her if we could have... sex... without me hurting you... and she told me some really
down to earth things. One, that I couldn't have sex... with you the first time without hurting you
because that's part of a girl’s first time. She also told me that me being a vampire is the cure for it too.
Uhhhh... The uhhh... cold pack to the sore spot?"

Oh my god, could I become any more pathetic? My words wouldn't flow and I felt completely
mortified. I stared at my twisting fingers and raked them through my hair a few times. Finally I
became still while I pinched the bridge of my nose.

A soft warm hand landed on my cheek and I leaned into it, my eyes still closed. "Sweetie, that wasn't
too bad, was it? I know it's going to hurt the first time. Can you tell me what else she told you? Or
would you rather read what Carlisle said to me?"

I couldn't move, I just couldn't shed the mortification. Her thumb caressed my cheek slowly,
lovingly. I knew I had to acknowledge her, so I leaned into her a bit more, shifting on the bed to be
closer, but I still couldn't speak. I think she understood; she understood that even though I wanted to
kick the gentleman to the curb, he was a part of me.

"All right, Edward," she said, "Carlisle told me to be in control, to be on top, for you to lay there and
take it. So I have to deflower you, not the other way around." She snorted and continued,
"Furthermore, we need some safe-words, words that would trigger you, so that I can slow you down
or stop you. You have to help me here, because these need to be words that trigger your instincts to
listen to me and not the frenzy." That shook me out of my frozen state.

"Frenzy? Whatever are you talking about? I'm not going to taste your blood, Bella."

"No, silly, the frenzy a vampire can lose himself in when he mates for the first time." She laughed
really loudly. "Carlisle even advised me to get you a bite ring, something I can put in your mouth
when you want to bite me."

"Actually, my dear girl, that’s all pretty much the same as what Kate told me. She lectured me
furthermore on not sweating a few bruises because even human couples bruise when they have sex.
That is, to me, the hardest part to reconcile in my mind. That I could hurt you, that you would have
my handprints on your flawless skin."

"Love, that would be you marking me as yours. Look at it that way. You can't bite me, but you can
possibly mark me."

I looked at her in amazement; even Kate hadn't thought of that, probably because Kate only had had
sex, not mated. All problems with bruises were suddenly flying out of the window; now I wanted
to leave a bruise or two.

"You're absolutely right—oh wow—now you certainly will have some bruises. Oh, love, this way of
looking at it lifts all my worries about them. Bruises don't hurt too much, do they?"

"Oh, you silly vampire, you should see your face right now, going from troubled to Christmas come
early." She ruffled my hair and left her hand there, softly scratching my head. I picked up a lock of
her hair and twirled it around my fingers. We got lost in each other’s eyes, our foreheads resting
together. I angled my head and slowly brought our lips together. It was the sweetest of kisses to
begin with, but Bella's fingers found their way into the hair in the nape of my neck.

If she only knew what that did to me; I let my tongue sweep over her bottom lip, asking for
admittance. She opened her mouth instantly and my tongue began a dance with hers so enticing I felt
something shift inside me. The gentleman stepped back and the vampire took over; he immediately
tangled one of his hands in her hair, cupping the back of her head. The other hand slid over her curves and came to rest at the small of her back, pushing her even closer to me. Her heated center was pressed on my thigh. I was sure she felt my arousal pressed to hers as well. When she ran out of air my lips travelled over her delectable neck, over her pulse point to her collarbone. Bella was gasping for air while moaning at the same time. I captured her lips again in another mind blowing kiss, then I slowly created a little distance because my gentleman was now screaming about safety in my head, that our talk wasn't finished. I chastely kissed her lips a few more times.

Finally I whispered, "Safe-words? I don't know the frenzy Carlisle is talking about so I don't know what would cut through to stop me."

"Something simple then; remember, you're on your back and only guiding me lovingly. I think that position alone will help you a lot. So, what about 'easy, Edward' to slow you down, and 'no, stop now' to stop you cold. I would use those now if you ever forgot your strength."

I tried to put those commands somewhere in my brain to make them have the required effect, but because I absolutely had no idea where I would need them I struggled. Finally, I put up two large traffic signs right in front of my vampiric instincts; that should work. "Okay, done"

"Good, now I heard that the male members of your family helped you with some research." Oh god, Carlisle told her about my experiments. Could this get any worse? "He actually picked up an additional idea from me. Because I don't know what your venom will do in my womb, I thought about forensics, and the way they use pigs as a stand in for humans. To take a sow and inseminate her multiple times over a period, to see if it works accumulatively to eventually trigger the change. He said that pigs are vile to drink but he would think about corralling some does."

For the love of all that's holy; Carlisle the mad scientist with his equally mad sidekick Bella. "Sorry, Bella, but no, simply no. I had to know if I had to worry about pregnancy, and yes, my mad father and brothers found out and gave samples, all while laughing their asses off. I know enough about the workings of venom to say this, when you're not actively bleeding it will become a sticky residue without harmful properties. The venom loses its viability when exposed to air. We have my venom in vacuum sealed glass and stainless steel containers, which can be loaded into a special syringe. It reacts with red blood cells to activate the change, starting by healing all imperfections, and expelling foreign bodies, as you already know. Kate has knowledge by experience about humans reacting to venom when exposed repeatedly in a non-invasive way, and she swears that she never had somebody start the change suddenly."

Bella cringed at the scientific language I used to describe Kate's involvement with human males. "Sorry, love, but not all non-mated vampires are as virtuous as me. Rather the opposite; I'm the freak here."

"Don't. Put. Yourself. Down. If I'm not allowed to wallow in self-pity or condescend myself, then you aren't either." She picked up a pillow and swatted me with it. I was amazed at how fast she was growing into a really self-assured woman, assertive towards me, taking control in this truly mortifying conversation. It was like she glowed from happiness; I was happy that I was the cause of that happiness.

"All carefully worded crap aside, I got your meaning. Last topic on my list. It was on there because I needed advice from a doctor about my period." I had to switch to the medical part of my brain to stave off any more mortification.

"Your period. What of it?"

"I always have had severe cramping the first two days, so I wanted Carlisle's advice on how to minimize that to keep you from freaking. He has given me painkillers for this time, and afterwards he
will give me the shot. That should help until you cure me of it altogether. He gave me a warning and advice about it. No penetration during, and other ways of play could get interesting."

"Holy F…” I stopped myself just in time; I never thought my father to be so forward and open about oral. No penetration was logical with an active bleeding point during those days. But could I, should I, go down on my girl during those days? The thought was intri… NO. "Uhh… Bella, do you remember what I told you about me changing you? About not being able to stop myself from draining you due to the taste, which is not exempt from the bloodlust? I think it would be dangerous to try that."

"Oh my god, that slipped through, and Carlisle doesn't know that bit of info yet, does he?"

"That would be a no; I've been with you ever since my call yesterday until you spirited away with Carlisle this morning. Oh… Charlie is home… Well, that's the best kind of news we’ve received in a long while from him…"

Charlie's mental voice, as vile as the man himself, cursed up a storm because he thought Bella was working at the library again and he wanted her to make a mountain of sandwiches to take with him to the Rez, where he planned to be for the coming week. He had been ordered to go undercover and was gloating they gave him the job. He could help his friends out big time that way, all while getting paid to go fishing. He changed out of his uniform and loaded his gear in his ancient truck. And then he was gone… no note, nothing to Bella informing her where he would be.

"He's gone for the whole coming week. He has gone fishing, while pretending to be undercover to smoke out the drug ring."

"What do you think, is Chief Cope keeping him out of the way?" Bella asked with a shrewd look on her face. "You all took those pictures and gave them to him, didn't you?"

"Oh, I think you got it spot on. Carlisle also let it slip that you overheard Charlie on the phone talking about keeping the highway clear for them. Of course he couldn't say that I heard it in his mind."

"Hey, it might be an idea to bug the house. That way, whenever he blabs we have it recorded."

"The only shame is that for those recordings to be admissible in court a sure suspicion must exist. Otherwise, no judge would give a court order to randomly bug a house. We might, however, use a nanny cam ruse; we gave you a nanny cam to record his abuse, to give us legal grounds to have you emancipated. That would be a big one if we put a tap on the phone, too, to record Renee's abuse."

"It's all a bit iffy in my book, and I won't subject any of you to listening to hours of vile language to filter out the criminal acts. When I turn eighteen I'm gone, and will leave Charlie reeling."

A look of sheer determination shone in her eyes and my heart warmed a bit more towards her. How in the world was it possible to love her even more? It might not be too long before my heart burst out of my rib cage from holding on to that love.

"Edward?" Bella said in a sing-song voice. "To go totally off topic but a rather strange fact keeps bugging me. How can it be that you vampires talk about the smell of food items, as a part of somebody’s scent, and call them delicious—like the strawberries in my scent—but when we are talking about the things themselves you find the smell atrocious.” Well, I'll be damned, how did she find all the little strange things in our existence?

"Uhh, I don't know, Bella, never even realized it." I took a deep breath through my nose and smelled the almost agonizing sweet scent of strawberries and freesia in the background, and all around her
was my scent of honey, lilac, and linen. Yeah, also a food item there: honey. Thinking about it didn't clear it up; I actually shuddered while thinking about the raw scent of honey. "I can't find an explanation, it is just so. Your scent of strawberry, freesia, and cranberry delights me. But when I think of a strawberry, I almost gag. The same for the honey component in my own scent. It is a mystery we will put on the list of mysteries still to be solved by the Cullen brain trust. You're part of that brain trust already, sweet girl, did you know that?"

"Mmmm, you know, maybe the scent of a person reminds you of how you originally stored the scent?"

At the same moment she said that I heard Alice's thoughts from across the entry tree. 'Edward, you have to come to the house; we have to plan the next week.' All the while she was stamping her feet on the platform.

Bella looked up and said, "Well, only one vampire can be this noisy. Why don't you let Alice in; I know she has to be bombarding you mentally." She heard that? Now I had more to think about while I pressed the button to lower the entry platform and open the door for Alice. I decided that I underestimated Bella again, and Alice was probably louder than I thought she was. After all, since I met Bella I was more distracted, or should I say more singularly focused than ever before.

Chapter End Notes

A/N I'd like to thank you all for the great reactions to my story, we've passed 200 reviews this week. So I'd like to recommend some more great fics to share them with you.

first this week an older New Moon AU, the divergence in this one takes place at the moment of their reunion in Volterra. This is as close to what I'd like Eclipse to have been.

The Courtyard by latessitrice. FFn 5542641, Ao3 under the pen name LaTessitrice.

secondly another fic of browneyes fanfiction, this one is an alternative backstory Twilight. Bella and Emmett are biological siblings, but when Rose carried off Emmett to become a vampire, his mute, baby sister is changed by James. She escapes him and has to keep running from him for almost eighty years.

Brother Bear by 2browneyes. FFn 6932219, FP under browneyes fanfiction

Thank you all for reading

Please review

Pien
Chapter 9 Revelations and Discoveries

Chapter Notes

A/N The Twilight universe belongs to Stephanie Meyer, I just play around in her pond.

Without my backup team this story wouldn't have seen the light. So a shout out to Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta (2x) and LunaDiSangue85.

Now what did Alice want disturbing our couples time together?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 9 Revelations and Discoveries

BPOV

After our candid yet terribly embarrassing conversation, Alice dragged us to the main house. It was strange that I had heard her stamping her foot on the entry platform; the whole treehouse was almost soundproof to me, until recently. I put it out of my mind; Edward had probably left the door open to air the house a bit. A more urgent thing to think about was what Alice was up to. Why should we want to plan a Charlie-free week? We didn't have to keep up appearances and I wouldn't have to go to the Dump, as I called Charlie's place in my head.

Upon arrival, Alice shepherded us into the dining room, where the rest of the family was waiting.

"Okay, Alice, why are we here? Bella and I were perfectly happy to stay in our treehouse until tomorrow. You've been blocking me since you came into my range there, and those little known musicals are little known for a reason. Absolutely not worth listening to for so long." Everybody chuckled at his disgruntled face and tone of voice.

"Everybody is here so we can start planning; the thing is that I saw a vision of Charlie and Billy Black discussing their nefarious plans while out fishing in a day or two… I think bugging 'the Dump', as Bella affectionately calls Charlie's place, would be in order. I think it might also be advantageous to search every inch of it, especially the parts where Bella is not allowed to go. We will have to wait until Bella's eighteenth birthday for it to be legal, won't we, Jazzy?"

"Actually, in the state of Washington, minors over the age of sixteen are allowed by law to give consent to a search of their primary living arrangements. That means that if we work as CSI as possible, recording only, rearrange everything we disturb, we could get away with it in court. Assuming we find something, of course."

I heard Rose murmur something I didn't quite catch, but I believed it had something to do with some degrees coming in useful. I saw Edward smile and angle his head towards her, as if indicating he got her idea loud and clear.

"Okay, Rose," I said, huffing, "please tell all of the hearing impaired humans in this room what you just said. I know all of you heard her and I got something about 'useful degrees', but I think being part of this family gives me the right to know everything, too." All of the vampires were now looking
at me as if I just sprouted a second head or two. "What?"

"Okay…” Carlisle tried to get his act together. "Bella, did Esme make you inordinate amounts of dinner containing spinach or broccoli, potatoes and red meats or liver? Because not even all of us got that statement completely. How did you hear that? I know I gave you vitamin supplements to strengthen your constitution but this is a new side effect."

I looked at Edward and saw a proud smile slowly brightening his face; it was easy to see that he was awed by the thoughts of his family—our… our family. I might not be a member officially but I felt at home here.

"No, Esme, I'm not uncomfortable," I said, reading her facial expression and in some other way as well; I just knew that was what she was going to ask. "Now, could you all just put the she's-grown-an-extra-head look away? That makes me uncomfortable."

Because, damn, they all had their eyeballs on their cheekbones again. Edward's were almost on the table when I looked at him again.

"Bella love, you're scaring the vampires a bit," he said. "You just answered Esme's exact question that was in her head. To the rest of them it looked like you were channeling my gift."

I dove into my thoughts after that statement. I simply couldn't keep my attention on the conversation. The whole week I had had several instances of strange things, and I had noticed that even in mind-war, Rosalie's term, moments my grace had greatly improved. So my hearing was slowly catching up to theirs.

I thought back to my grocery trip… God, was that only yesterday? When I entered the store, I was almost knocked to my ass by the potent scents around me. I could determine from the entrance that the fish advertised as fresh from the ocean, had actually been frozen for some time. Its scent was almost the same as one of the pieces from one of Charlie's catches I pulled out of the outdoor freezer in emergencies. Charlie loved his fish, but I had to almost put a clothespin on my nose to stand the stench. That's why it was a last resort; it was another night for me without food. But returning to my visit to the Thriftway, my sense of smell must have increased as well.

Maybe my already very active brain found a few areas to use for senses, just to make me a little more equal to my vampire relatives. Oh I didn't know; the most useful of the vampire traits, not needing sleep, was still eluding me. I still needed eight to nine hours every night. I had always slept more than the average person. Was I storing all those hours for the future when I wouldn't sleep anymore? Most of my stories happened to be born in those hours and hours of sleep, maybe it wasn't as useless as I thought. But putting everything in order, the only thing I could say for sure was that something strange was happening to me.

"Everyone, I also noticed my sense of smell is getting better. Thinking it over, the only conclusion I can come to is that something strange is happening to me, but I can't declare it a bad thing."

Emmett burst out in guffaws of laughter, as usual finding me extremely funny. Just to pay him back, I put my bottom lip between my teeth and looked down, thinking about being in school before the Cullens joined me in purgatory. Jasper gasped, doubling over from the strength of my emotions. Alice had seen that it was a joke and calmly drew circles on his back to soothe him. Still looking down, I apologized to Jasper, but added a small glare towards Emmett who was still rolling on the ground. Edward sat glaring daggers at him; he knew I wanted to get back at him through Alice so he did nothing but try to soothe me. Esme and Rose flew off the handle, Emmett was dragged upright, one of them attached to each of his ears, both verbally and physically. The strong language was coming from Rose—she cussed him out something fierce—but Esme never spoke one curse or derogatory term. She simply reduced him to a four-year-old and treated him that way.
What nobody, not even Edward, knew was that Esme and I had used my neighbor's wireless Internet while Edward was at the treehouse. Esme had brought her laptop the day after my talk to Carlisle. Together we had searched and found Edward a beautiful wedding band. I couldn't, in good conscience, call it an engagement ring. It was white gold, with thirty-six black and yellow diamonds embedded alternately all around. A big emerald was the center stone. I had them put the words 'Eternity is too Short' inside it. The stones told the history of Edward's eyes, green like the emerald for seventeen years, and alternating from yellow to black ever since.

Esme was also the keeper of my very own Cullen credit card; Carlisle had it made and for now it showed on his statements. That way I could do my very own gift giving, totally in the family spirit. It had taken him a lot of persuading, because I felt as if I didn't earn the money. He told me that solely by making Edward happy for the first time in a century, I earned my share of the family fortune. He also asked if I thought Jasper and Emmett, and even Esme, who had come to the family with nothing to their name didn't qualify for the money? I had answered that that was different. That had earned me a disbelieving look and a lecture on how time was irrelevant when family was concerned. It didn't matter that I was the new member of the family. Due to Alice's gift and Edward's considerable talent on the stock market, money was totally irrelevant, too, not something to be earned or somehow qualify for. So, putting my insecurities aside, together with my poor person attitude, I accepted the card.

My first purchase with it was a new winter coat I needed desperately. It was definitely not Alice approved but it was stylish and brand new. My next intended splurge was put on hold. I wanted to learn how to drive a car. Get my license. I just couldn't do that until we lived somewhere else; we didn't want Charlie to get suspicious about my newfound freedom. Until the Cullens, the only cars I had been in were Charlie's decrepit truck and ambulances.

But to cut my mind's ramblings short, I dished out an impressive twenty-five thousand dollars on the ring. It was made to my specifications when all others online disappointed me. Esme luckily knew Edward's ring size; they all had a Cullen crest piece of jewelry—the ladies a necklace and the gentlemen a signet ring—and because they never changed in size, that signet ring gave us his ring size. My male engagement ring was due to arrive at the Cullen mansion in about two weeks. I had it send to Esme, so she could take good care of it until I needed it. Only, after today's discussion, I doubted that it would be needed.

I was vaguely aware that the family was making plans to scientifically dissect the Dump. Emmett was sitting on the stairs, officially in timeout. He was forbidden to interact with anybody. After his timeout was served, he still had to write an essay of at least four pages on the benefits of thinking before talking or reacting to stimuli. Especially with vampire reflexes it should be easy to just take that split second to evaluate your way of reacting. Getting lost in my head again was no option and I tried to follow the scientific discussion around me.

Jasper suddenly reappeared—when did he leave…?—with a few rather big metallic cases. When he opened them up I suddenly understood their talk. These were just like those cases they used in the television show CSI: cotton swabs, latex gloves, digital fingerprinting, powders brushes, and all kind of chemicals to ensure the just and flawless lifting of evidence. The last case was opened and my jaw hit the ground; it was full of photographic equipment, and it looked like top of the range digital with special lenses and filters.

Alice saw my bewilderment and commented, "Edward and Rosalie are both licensed forensic researchers, mostly to use on ourselves to ensure we leave no clues behind when we need to disappear. Well, that's what they got the degrees for, but now we can use them against real criminals. Jazzy is a forensic photographer in his own right; he needs to use every technique he knows to keep our papers looking genuine. You understand that we need to switch identities every time we move."
We manufacture our own papers, but to keep them up to scrutiny he has to up his game accordingly. And, of course, he's a pretty decent art photographer as well."

My jaw had resumed its normal appearance, and it looked like Edward and Rose had checked their cases for deficiencies. They picked up their cases and headed out towards the forest. Behind them, Alice and Esme came with buckets and special cleaning supplies. Jazzy had his photographic equipment, which left Carlisle to carry me. I hesitated to accept his lift, calling to ask Edward if it was ok first. It didn't happen often, but he was so focused on bringing down my lousy excuse for a father that he had forgotten that our mating bond wasn't complete and the scent of another male on me, on places other than my hands and shoulders could set him off. He quickly returned to my side and handed the two cases he carried to Carlisle.

"Thank you, love, for remembering. It doesn't happen often that my focus is that off." He kissed me ardently before shifting me to his back.

At the Dump, I was put on the couch and told to stay put until they needed me. Esme ran to the store and got me a sandwich after she deemed the crap in the fridge not edible. Sorry, I couldn't afford to buy better stuff and not tip off Charlie.

Pretty soon Carlisle came over with Charlie's bank statements; he found them scattered, all still in the envelope, all over the house. We put the kettle on and steamed them open. To my surprise, none of Charlie's big spends were to be found. He did buy that enormous flat screen with the last child support check, didn't he? But no, that money was sent to a bank in Florida. Soon a pattern showed: every child support check was deposited to an out-of-state bank, mostly southern states, too. An idea was forming in my head, but more urgently I wanted to know how Charlie was paying for his big indulgences because they simply were not to be found on his bank statements.

Edward and Rose went over the house with fine-toothed combs and came up with absolutely nothing. The out of bounds cabinets in Charlie's bedroom held his porn stash, which was of a disturbing quality. Lots of violence towards women in that. I started to think I was lucky he didn't hit me more often. They had me in latex gloves to handle anything, to make sure I didn't leave anything on the things I handled. After my sandwich, I was still a little hungry and went into the kitchen to see what was left there. A bowl of fresh fruit had appeared on the counter. We shouldn't forget to take that with us when we left.

I took an apple, rummaged through the utensil drawer and chose a peeler. When I started to peel, Jasper came into the kitchen to document its state before they started. He startled me and the apple slipped in the latex gloves I was wearing, nearly slipping from my hand. Then, as I was just putting pressure on the knife, it slipped off the apple into the fleshy part of my palm near my thumb.

The cut wasn't severe, but I knew immediately this was not a good thing to bleed in front of a vampire who wasn't immune to my blood.

"Edward!" I yelled.

Jasper crouched on the other side of the kitchen. He was growling, but visibly restraining himself. All the Cullens appeared in the doorway, looking for what brought on my panicked reaction. Suddenly Jasper began to stalk me. Edward was in front of me in a flash. I knew Jasper was still holding back, otherwise he would have drained me by now. With the protecting wall of Edward before me, I started to reason with Jasper.

"First of all, everybody who even feels a tiny bit of thirst because I cut myself, make yourself scarce now," I ordered. I somehow made sense to them and all but Carlisle and Edward disappeared. "Edward, please send Jasper love; you're proud of him for holding back. I know he threatens your
mate, but if he didn't hold back I would have been drained before you got here.

"Secondly, Jasper, pull yourself out of the haze; I'm your brother's mate. You know that, and you were perfectly capable of withstanding me on your own. I saw what happened when the others came into the room. I'm actually really surprised none of you ever figured this out. You, Jasper, feel the thirst of every vampire around you, and it doubles your thirst with every additional vampire. Come on, think through it, push the thirst aside. I know you can do it; you're so immensely strong to withstand the thirst of six vampires regularly. I love you, Jasper, you're my brother."

Slowly, Jasper came out of his crouch, an awed look in his eyes, "You are speaking the truth; I can feel nothing but support and sisterly love from you, not a shred of fear. How is that possible?"

"I'm not afraid of you, Jasper. I heard little snippets of your vampire life. I simply know you aren't capable anymore of killing a human. You never wanted to because of your power. Every time you took a human for sustenance you felt their despair and fear. Those became part of you and turned you from taking lives. You were a humanitarian vampire long before you gave up hunting humans."

Carlisle was looking like a kid on Christmas morning, new information for him to process. "Bella, how did you come to the conclusion Jasper feels the thirst of the others?"

"That's simple; I looked for it ever since I heard Edward groan when some of you were too thirsty. He always sent you hunting if he sensed that. I simply applied that to the other power that impacts the same way on its owner. If a mind reader can be bothered by the thirst of others, I deduced it would be ten times worse for the empath. Simply because thinking about it is more front of the brain than feeling it. Edward knew it was the thoughts of others, because they came to his power center rather than his personal thought center."

"Wait a minute," Jasper gasped, "are you saying that Edward separates the thoughts coming in through his power?"

"Yes, she does, and she's right." Edward smiled. He had tended to my hand, and after it stopped bleeding he applied a bit of venom with his fingers.

"I have a very structured brain; I made it that way. It was the only way to handle my power. I think I would have gone crazy if I hadn't regulated it."

"Well, I think it's time I tell Bella my whole story; maybe she can find out even more from that," Jasper said. We moved into the sitting room and I sat down on Edward's lap, his arms snug around me. Carlisle went outside to call the others back. They went to finish the search of the Dump.

"Okay, I was bitten by Maria because she knew I would have a power, something about the sweet scent of my blood. She, like Aro, wanted vampires with powers to rule her army, an army of newborns. She rewarded us for so-called good behavior by giving us extra humans to feed on, only it was never really a reward for me. I was a maelstrom of emotions; I existed in chaos inside myself: the typical newborn chaos. You lot had it easy because you all chose to become vampires. Through the change of human-found mates making the choice, we know they don't have that chaos. Anyhow, after a few years I began to master my power and calm down inside. I started to think that there must be a more peaceful way of living, so I left. Maria wasn't happy with me leaving but couldn't hold me; I was stronger and could use my power to incapacitate her. She was afraid of me.

"I wandered around, starving myself as long as possible, because I didn't want to feel depressed about killing humans. Eventually I found employment in an asylum for the insane near Jackson. I was the night watchman and only nurse. Bloodletting was a regular practice on some of the inmates there. Suddenly I knew how to survive without killing. The inmates weren't afraid of the bloodletting
because they thought it calmed their brain. I collected the blood at night, saving the day nurses the task and being able to drink before the blood went old. This worked for decades. I lived in the basement of the facility; nobody saw me regularly, except the inmates, but as they were considered insane their stories weren't believed.

"After about forty years they told me a suspected witch would be held in total isolation and needed to receive electro-shocks and bloodletting. Because one of my old suppliers had died, I was glad another was coming. It didn't work that way. When I met her I hadn't the slightest bit of bloodlust; I wanted to be near her. Her face broke into a huge smile when she saw me. I had found my mate, and she expected me.

"We stayed in the asylum for about ten years. I moved her to my quarters pretty soon, but I wanted her to be of age before she chose to join me or not. In those years she saw the family a lot, a lot of visions of vampires hunting animals. I had never thought about living that way, but started to change my diet immediately. After I changed Alice, we stayed in remote areas until her newborn time had passed. We then started to follow her visions, and eventually found the family, both of us already fully on an animal diet."

Edward looked pensive; he, of course, knew this story already. He had also told me that Jasper was the only one of them ever to taste human blood, but that he found his peace when he discovered the animal hunting way of life.

"Jasper, I think we should work together with Carlisle on training your brain in a similar way as his and mine are structured. I think you have too much chaos up there still to overcome every craving."

Jasper nodded, right at the moment Rose barged into the room yelling, "Found his stash! The little sneak has a secret basement."

We all went running behind her, and in the mud room she had found a door covered with the coat rack. Behind the door was a staircase leading down, down into a musty cellar with several cabinets. Three of the four cabinets were absolute jam packed with piles of money; the last one held audio tapes and several Forks PD marked recording devices and wire-taps.

The top drawer held tapes with extensive libraries of dates and places attached. Every entry also had a number referring to one of the tapes in the other drawers. Rose put one of the tapes in the sound system and pressed play. Charlie's voice filled the room.

"All right, so you're saying I can get part of your profits for turning a blind eye when your transports leave the Rez."

Billy's voice answered, "That's exactly what I mean; you'll get rich. You just have to make sure to space your big spends out until we can take care of that little bitch of yours. We might want to find a husband to breed her."

"Bloody hell, this tape is dated a few months after your gran died!" Rose exclaimed in disgust. "You would have been just five years old then."

Edward was growling; I placed a hand on his chest to calm him. "Guys, you have a week to copy all of these tapes, connect the stereo to a hard drive or something and start digitizing. Plant the bugs and tell me where they are afterwards; leave this place as you found it. Don't clean up the blood in the kitchen, leave it on the floor. Just make sure that Charlie's blackmail stash becomes evidence in his downfall."

"Come on, Edward, we need to get out of here. Take me to our treehouse."
A/N Bella's brainpower cutting through vampire instinct once again, don't you all think that a lot of this could have been solved long ago?

I know that Charlie just became an even bigger slimeball with bits, he really is abhorrent. They'll get him taken down a peg (or a tree).

My recommendations for this week:

This week I'd like to go back in time, Bella goes back to 1918 to meet human Edward.

Beyond Time by TKegl, FFn 5755522 TWCS Sid=1020 Ao3 723118

Only Human and Anatomy of a Human by Amethyst Jackson, FFn 4293411 and 5879490.

See you all next week

Please review,

Pien
Chapter 10 Mated!

Chapter Notes

A/N Twilight belongs to Stephenie Meyer, I own this plot from which I don't intend to earn a cent.

You guys are all so good to me, the number of favs and follows as well as the reviews keep steadily climbing. I'm humbled by all your great reactions. This is the chapter where a fair number of you have been routing for. It's essentially one big Lemon.

thanks beeps to Lorraine, Chandra and Brenda. You girls kept me going when the ratings couldn't yet.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

TWILESQUE

Chapter 10 Mated!

EPOV

My fantastic mate had rescued me from a meltdown once again. I ran us to the treehouse, her body radiating warmth through me, stirring the seventeen-year-old vampire who wanted to claim his mate. He replaced the hundred-year-old blissfully ignorant virgin. This would be the day we would claim our mate; I forced my legs to go even faster.

Flying up the entrance tree, he had pushed the remote already, the porch extended and the door sprang open. His feet barely touched the platform before we were airborne, one foot touching the porch and barreling into the treehouse, his other foot kicking the door closed. He had to calm down or Bella would be one gigantic bruise; that was unacceptable.

Bella loosened her grip and slid down to come stand before me.

"Edward, sweetheart, please calm down. I'm yours completely but, more importantly, today you're mine. You are going to listen to me; you will keep that vampire I see so close to the surface in check. Do you understand me?"

She was glorious; the vampire was in awe, a puny human taking him on and he wanted to listen. He knew she was right to be so forceful; he didn't step back—he wouldn't give me a chance to rob him from claiming his mate—but he would give his mate the lead. He started to purr. Bella caressed his cheek… my cheek… our cheek. This was the strangest feeling, as if I was a spectator to my own existence.

"Edward, honey, we need to check we have everything to keep us safe. I see you're too far gone to answer me, so show me, or nod. If I want you to slow down, I will say 'easy, Edward'. If you need to stop and release me, I will say 'Edward, stop'. You, Mr. Vampire, are going to listen to me, Ms. Human."
She walked to her set of drawers and rummaged through the bottom one; he was watching her, frozen to his spot. He was going to follow her lead. He was going to follow her everywhere. He couldn't exist without her. We couldn't exist without her; she was our heart and soul. We were in total agreement about that, but this was his terrain and I would take a back seat and observe. We knew we couldn't take total control with his mate still human. He wanted to change her, right there on the spot, but knew that would be against her wishes. Being her perfect match, he would never violate her like that, so he needed to listen to her; he nodded our head.

Bella turned around triumphantly, holding a solid steel ring, about an inch thick and about four inches in diameter. "Now we are ready. Edward honey, if you are inside of that vampire, you need to divert the need to bite to this thing. You can't mark me yet. Make that body move and get onto the bed."

But the gentleman part of the vampire—huh, never knew that was even there—balked. He had access to all the perverted, and less perverted, thoughts of lovemaking in my head and he knew it would hurt her less if she was prepared lovingly. He turned to me, because he was too emotionally charged to use our vocal chords. He was shaking our head frantically.

"Bella," I said, "please understand that we will follow your lead, but we know that this can hurt you and want to make sure it is as enjoyable for you as it will be for us. Please honey, lay down on the bed and let us pleasure you, just to prepare you to take our virginity later."

"Uh, Edward? You're confusing me a little, so tell me if I'm wrong. If I watch you, your posture and your eyes, then I would say one hundred percent the vampire is in charge. But just now human Edward spoke to me." She was so incredibly smart that she recognized the human part in only the voice. The vampire was almost a puddle of goo; he was so enamored with her.

"You're right, dear, he's given me the speech because at this moment he's unable to; the growls and purrs are his, ours—oh damn, I confuse myself—us. Don't think about it; we are both me, parts of me. I will be his safeguard if his instincts take over claiming his mate. He will follow your lead; he knows he needs to be careful."

"Oh, all right, I'm a mess of nervousness. It's such a pity we need to talk about everything, no spontaneity allowed. It just makes it more awkward. Okay, you two want me prepared. What about us climbing on that bed to cuddle, fondle, make out like the teenagers we're supposed to be? I know that we can't make your vampire wait any longer, so come on."

With that said she took our hand and led us to the bed. Crawling up and to the middle of it, she turned around and gently patted the mattress beside her. My vampire growled and crawled onto the bed, like a cat stalking its prey. Bella's breathing hitched and a second later we smelled what it did to her. Her glorious arousal wafted around us. We were rock hard instantaneously.

He grabbed her shirt and shredded it off her, nuzzling his nose in between her breasts. She stroked our hair, scratching our skull; the feelings were incredible. This we both already knew, only this was the first time he was in control. He gently wrapped our arms around her, one around her waist, one cradling her head, and laid her down, finding her glorious lips and finally kissing her. She immediately angled her head to deepen the kiss and we happily obliged, sliding our tongue deep into her mouth and tangling it with hers, sliding them against each other for that fantastic tingling sensation.

Bella's hands were everywhere she could reach and it was not long until they disappeared underneath our shirt, slowly raising it further and further, until the vampire got impatient and just removed it altogether. Bella's eyes riveted onto our pecs and abs and her hands followed them. After
she had her fill looking, her mouth started to follow her hands, peppering our whole chest with licking butterfly kisses.

I nudged the vampire, who sat there nearly in a stupor, to take her bra off and return the favor. But no biting her nipples. And nibbling only with our lips. Bella went limp under our ministrations, until she slowly started to buck her hips. We had heard in many women's thoughts that the nipples seemed to be connected to the clitoris. And looking at the evidence, they were right.

I commandeered the eyes for a moment and made him start to unbutton her jeans while I looked in her eyes, searching for permission. She smiled and nodded, moaning. Back in my seat, I watched as he very slowly opened her zipper, to loud moans and the bucking of Bella. His plan was deliciously diabolical; he wanted her to become impatient with him, and then he would shred her jeans.

"Edward, come on," she moaned, "don't make me cool down. Please…"

There it was, she was ready for more. A fraction of a second later, her jeans were on the floor in tatters. Another second later, so were ours. He dove for her lips and started to kiss her senseless, only moving to her neck to allow her to breathe upon my kick to his backside—ow, damn, his backside is mine too. His hands roamed her body—massaging her breasts, her round cheeks, caressing her arms, legs, and stomach—but still avoiding her most sensitive area.

Bella lay half underneath us, dressed only in her panties. We were in a pair of boxer briefs. Her hand, which was trapped underneath us, was trying to get purchase on the waistband of our briefs. Persistent as she was, she managed to wriggle it around to our back and sunk her hand into our boxers, grabbing our right cheek, trying to sink her nails into it. The sharp sting of her nails on our very sensitive skin fueled the vampire to rip her panties from her body.

When the source of her arousal was set free, I had to hold on to him with all my might, his feral reaction almost too much to hold back. Bella looked him in the eye and calmly said, "Easy, Edward."

He reacted immediately, loosening his hold and touching gently once more. My doubting nature started to think that we had to wait, that this was too much. How she saw it, behind the vampire caressing her and absolutely not stopping, I don't know. She did, though. She brought her free hand up to our cheek and rubbed her thumb over our cheekbone.

"Shhhh, Edward, it's okay. We stopped your instincts from escalating. Your signs work. Please believe me. We all need this. Shhhhhhh, it's okay, I'm okay. Don't doubt this; this is what we all need."

Her soothing words acted as a balm on my doubts, wiping them away; the vampire purred louder and our hand slipped between her legs at the knee, slowly rubbing circles higher and higher. He was halfway up her thigh when she suddenly lost patience and grabbed our hand, dragging it up to where she wanted it.

The feeling of moist heat surrounding our digits was phenomenal and nothing we ever felt could compare. She was sopping wet for us. The vampire slowly started stroking her wet lips, distributing the abundant moisture all around and up towards where we knew she would be the most sensitive. Flashes of males searching for that spot fluttered from our memory banks, showing us the way to her nirvana. Rubbing her there would help to relax her; the next obvious imperative was to help stretch her entrance a bit. We knew we were rather large. And we would be that much more rigid—we already were—than any human male.

Slowly and very carefully we inserted a finger into her. Moving it in and out, her moans became louder and her hips started to move contra to our movement, making the resulting finger thrusts more
powerful. We added another finger, earning even louder moans. Her walls were slowly stretching around our fingers. When we added a third finger, she screamed out incoherently.

Her face looked so beautiful, eyes screwed closed, mouth wide open, labored breaths panting in and out. Her thighs started shaking, a tremor out of her control. We pressed our thumb hard onto her little bundle of nerves and curled our fingers upwards, searching for that spongy bit that should trigger her climax.

"Oh, OH, EDWAAAARD, oh YES, YES, ungh… Ungh… OOOoohh."

Every muscle in her body contracted, stiffened, and held with incredible force for a human. Trembling, she lay in our arms, slowly coming down from her first climax ever. We had given that to her!
We slowly brought her down, caressing and kissing her, ignoring the throbbing between our own legs for now. Our mate needed us as she came out of her euphoria.

"You wanted me to relax; I must say you've succeeded," she said with a lazy smile on her face. We stroked the sweaty strands of hair out of her face and kissed her once more languidly.

Slowly her breath and heart rate evened out. Her endless deep brown eyes looked into our black ones. Her tiny hand rubbed our abs.

"Edward, will you please get on your back, love."

She phrased it as a question, but it was a demand. Determination had settled in her eyes. Now we were nervous; knowing that her signals worked did nothing to abate those nerves. Nonetheless, we did what she wanted, positioning our body in the middle of the bed, making sure our precious mate could not fall off accidentally.

Bella rose and kneeled beside us, shamelessly admiring our body. When she came to the black boxer briefs, her brow furrowed; she pointed at it and uttered only one word: "Off!" It was an order, a command. The vampire needed less than a second to comply. The remnants fluttering to the ground added to the scattered tatters of the rest of our destroyed clothes. Bella rose and kneeled next to us.

We moaned when her hands rubbed our abs. She flicked our nipples with her thumbnails; that made us growl. We were utterly incapable of coherent speech, only the animalistic sounds could come out. A low but constant purr made our chest vibrate under her hand. A feral growl left us when she suddenly grabbed our erection. The heat on it was heaven and hell in the same instant; it was so sudden that we almost couldn't hold back.

Bella moved to straddle our legs, and our hands started caressing her thighs. Slowly she lay down on our chest, licking our nipples and moving up, essentially slowly lining us up. She pushed the bite ring in our right hand, looking pointedly in our eyes.

Still, she lay on our chest, caressing and moving around, kissing everything she could reach. Suddenly she sat up fully, and our erection was hard enough to penetrate her completely at once. She hissed through her teeth and a single tear escaped her left eye. We stayed absolutely still, not breathing. The sensations were incredible; her walls were contracting around us, getting used to the intrusion. We felt a surge in heat around us and a sudden increase of moisture. The vampire gritted his teeth at the scent of blood when he realized he didn't have to worry about her scent.

Our brave Bella slowly opened her eyes, looked us over, and sighed. Her hips started to move against us. Our hands, which had been balled next to us on the bed, relaxed and restarted their quest in caressing every part of her we could reach. The pain vanished from Bella's eyes; her breathing
was picking up again and her movements became more enthusiastic. Seeing as she was human, we understood the effort it took her to make these, until now unknown, movements. We hooked our arms under her backside and guided her movements: up, almost losing contact, down, buried to the hilt. Our instincts were trying to get us to thrust up into her with force, the vampire almost giving in until I tapped him, shaking my head. He relented immediately, instead holding our hips frozen at a slight angle, making sure to hit her most sensitive spot inside.

Both Bella and we were grunting and moaning and generally making it known we enjoyed ourselves. Our movements started to become more erratic; we could feel Bella's walls beginning to flutter around us. We felt like a tightly wound clock waiting for the spring to snap. The vampire started to feel the urge to mark his mate; he clamped his jaws together and I felt his determination to not bite.

Bella came down onto us again, but this time she swiveled her hips a different way and we both fell over the edge. A feral growl came from our mouth and the vampire lost his fight with his instincts; he opened our mouth to bite and I jammed the bite ring between our teeth. Fireworks exploded in our head; he clamped down while Bella's walls were milking our erection dry, spurt after spurt of venom leaving our body, coating her inner walls, marking her as ours alone.

The vampire relinquished control to me, chanting a chorus of 'mine, mine, mine' in our head. After the mind blowing climax, my only concern was my mate. She lay utterly spent on my chest, a very big grin on her beautiful face. Softly, she sighed, "Mine." I answered with the same sentiment and a matching smile.

We lay there for a long time, basking in each other, stealing kisses and touches. Bella took a nap on my chest while I stroked her hair and back. It felt as if I could almost touch her mind, as if our true mating lessened the thickness of the barrier to her innermost thoughts.

All phenomenal things come to an end, and so was our alone time now. We had, again, a very impatient pixie on our entrance platform vibrating that she was going to take Bella shopping, that I wasn't invited, and that she wouldn't take no for an answer. Bella had just woken up and saw the irritated expression on my face. She grabbed a notebook and wrote: Do we have company?

I nodded; her face became thoughtful while she allowed me to kiss her neck, with a lot of noise, I might add. It's Alice, isn't it? I can only guess what she wants. No more separation pain for us, so she thinks I will go shopping with her. Fat chance! I want to stay here. Do we have food?

I laughed really loud as I saw Alice's visions crumble in her head; somehow Bella knew exactly how to thwart the pixie. She couldn't be guilted into anything by her. On things Alice wanted to do, I would bet on Bella every time. Bigger issues were another story; Alice didn't steer those to be to her advantage. Alice had this strange idea that because she saw the future, she could determine what everybody should do.

"No, Alice, we will stay here for an indeterminable amount of time. That is our free will at work. No visions can change that, dear sister," Bella spoke out loud.

"BELLA, BE REASONABLE! YOU'RE HOGGING EDWARD AS IT IS. AND YOU, EDWARD, ARE HOGGING HER. WE NEVER SEE YOU TWO AT THE HOUSE ANYMORE. DON'T YOU LOVE US?" Alice screamed from the entrance platform. Bella's left eyebrow rose slowly into a bitch brow.

"Oh no you don't, Alice!" she spoke menacingly. "I've listened very well to all the details of mating. You all have been very lucky we can't travel yet, because we would have been gone on our newly mated tour for a decade. You're lucky to have any time with us at all. Now scram, this is our mating
day!"

'Edward, please,' Alice invaded my mind, 'you're my brother and I miss you. Pleaaase at least come to the house.'

Bella took one look at my face and sighed. "Now she's in your head, isn't she, guilt tripping you to make you do her idea of nice. Damn, it's almost as if she doesn't know what it is to be mated. I don't want an audience; I know we wouldn't be able to keep our hands to ourselves. By the way, baby, I want you again," she almost purred at me and all thoughts about my sister left my head. "Edward, baby, could we, now that the vampire is happily mated, try and make love, just like we are now?"

"I would like that very much, my beautiful girl. I'll be in control of myself, you just keep me in check when needed."

Bella raised her arms around my neck and pulled me to her. She was lying on her back, and I was next to her on my side. We kissed long and deep, only breaking apart when she needed to breathe. My breaths were just as labored as hers, and my erection had risen again and was rubbing her thigh. Softly I bucked into her to feel the friction. My top leg slid between her thighs and she immediately started rubbing the juncture of her thighs against my leg.

We were a big mess of limbs writhing with each other. Her nails made tracks on my scalp, making jolts of electricity spike at the base of my spine. My whole body felt as if she warmed it from the inside out; wherever her hands touched an inferno started. It wasn't long before I was a burning torch, a torch burning for just her. My life, my soul, my mate.

Listening to her cues, I found her most sensitive places, like when I suckled the inside of her elbow, and she went wild. Or stroking ever so lightly just above her womanly curls, which earned me loud moans and a buck. I gave her a hickey or two by sucking on her breasts, had to keep it even.

And it wasn't that she was just laying there, doing nothing, she was trailing her hands all over me, also searching my body for the places eliciting the biggest response. Her nimble little fingers set my groin on fire when she trailed over, ever so softly, what she called my happy trail. My answering growl made her buck her hips onto my leg. It seemed as if my most animalistic utterings turned her on the most. I was very partial to her whimpering her need for me, and the mewls coming out of her when I played with her nipples.

Our interactions became slowly more heated and more driven to connecting. We couldn't get close enough, we needed to be complete. I untangled our legs and nestled myself between her legs, holding most of my weight off her by propping myself up on my elbows. My erection fell right where it belonged when she wrapped her legs around my waist.

I rubbed my erection up and down between her folds, feeling that she was very ready for me. The slick heat felt like heaven on earth, and my movements became more insistent hitting her most sensitive spot, the little bundle of nerves which stood out proudly, with every upward stroke with the throbbing head of my erection.

Suddenly I was kicked in the ass by the vampire, scolding my archaic language. I should call it what it was: cock, clit, pussy. I told him to shut up, that I would work on it and that I didn't interrupt his mating, he shouldn't interrupt my first time making love. He disappeared into his cage again. Luckily this internal argument stayed on a hidden track and didn't interrupt my lovemaking to Bella.

We were moving in total synchronization, ramping up the heat between us. I slightly changed the angle of my hips and slid into her moist heat completely in one movement. We both screamed at the feeling, and only a few thrusts later we found our completion together.
I kept moving in and out of her slowly, bringing her down. I turned us over, never losing the connection. Bella lay on my chest again, looking blissfully happy. Her eyes drooping and her breathing slowing down, I knew she would soon be out like a light. I murmured, "I love you."

Sleepily she garbled back, "lo-ve you t" and she was fast asleep.

Chapter End Notes

A/N Well, what do you all think? Edward made me write it this way, I was halfway down the chapter when I saw how it was written. Then I edited it to be more consistent.

My recommendations for this week.

Firstly a fic in which Bella is changed by our unlovable nomads. Without any help she starts immediately on the veggie diet. Alice sees her change and that she's Edwards mate. The hunt is on.

Once Bitten by TwiLoverSue, FFn 2086771

Secondly, a Bella with a most awesome gift. And Jacob is booted to the curb. Also a most interesting soundproofed and thought proof hideout for Edward.

Sacrificial Lamb by Nolebucgrl, FFn 5390243, FP under Nolebucgrl, TWCS Sid=3389.

Please review, see you all next week

Pien
Chapter 11 What the Fuck!

Chapter Notes

A/N Twilight is Stephenie Meyer's brainchild, I don't own anything about this story but the plot. No copyright infringement is intended.

once again, your reactions are fantastic, I'm sorry if some of you didn't like the two aspects of Edward working together to keep their mate safe. It's how he told it to me.

A big thanks to my team, Lorraine, Chandra and Brenda, without you girls I truly wouldn't have gotten this far.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 11 What the Fuck!

BPOV

The world was changing for me; I was now, and had been for several months, a happily mated person. The only thing missing from our bond was marriage. Edward and I discussed if it was necessary to even get married, but we both wanted to hold on to that human concept of binding ourselves together. Wasn't it the essence of the family's way of life, to hold on to everything human? We just were hesitant to show our bond too much to outsiders.

We were very busy, too; my original plan to graduate silently a year early was now in motion for both Alice and Edward as well. The rest of the Cullen 'kids' would graduate normally. In the early weeks of their Forks' High attendance, Edward had streamlined the advanced classes. We now worked together on most of them independently, and without teachers hushing us. As long as we made progress and showed up every day, we were given permission to work in the library under the watchful eye of Mrs. Cope.

Edward had finished his senior assignments first; he helped me to complete mine. Except for math, he didn't need to help me there. The entire school had breathed a sigh of relief when Mr. Varner was marched out of his classroom in handcuffs about a month and a half ago. That whole affair started only a week after our mating with the skank squad plotting one of their childish pranks on me.

When Alice was hit by the vision of them jeering at me, my bike hanging in a tree, in front of the whole student body, Edward almost lost control over his vampiric nature. We knew at once that I wouldn't ride my bike the whole way to school anymore. To keep up appearances, Edward bought an abandoned garage situated between the Dump and school. I rode my bike there, and he was waiting with his car. My bike was safe, but most of all they couldn't touch my still fragile self-esteem. The added benefit was what arriving in Edward Cullen's car did to my reputation, not that I thought a lot about reputation anymore; I knew I would be out of this hellhole of a town as soon as I turned eighteen.

The skank squad didn't let up. I overheard them talking, in itself a strange happening as I was alone in the library; Alice and Edward were in the dean's office taking a final. The skanks were walking
outside on the other side of the quad. I could hear them clear as day. If I didn't use my bike anymore, and furthermore had the nerve to show up in their Edwards car, I should be dragged through the mud, literally. Their plan was to get me alone, as in away from the freaky Cullens—funny how they wanted to be associated with a freak—then they would make sure my books were ruined and my new and improved exterior was thoroughly defiled.

When I told my family about what I heard, we knew they simply wouldn't stop plotting against me. Jasper told us he had seen them dealing drugs behind the gym. He couldn't tell anybody, because it was on a sunny day and he was high up in a tree. Our plans were born out of the desire to have them caught, if not for bullying, than for the more serious crime of dealing.

We arranged to follow them covertly, through the school’s security cameras. Jasper, our resident computer hacker extraordinaire, with the help of Rose, hacked his way into the school’s system and made sure every tidbit of information about their whereabouts was somehow collected on a separate hard drive—something about them applying facial recognition software on the raw footage. The school’s security cam system was top notch. Carlisle had made sure that the school had the funds to upgrade the antiquated system after another classroom shooting somewhere in Ohio. This also meant that there were few places where you could be alone in the school. Every room was covered, except for the gym locker rooms and toilets. No visuals from there, but they were wired for sound. The exterior of the school was also covered fairly extensively.

Once a week we evaluated the tapes—well, the vampires did at super fast-forward, reducing five days of school to a mere two hours. What we found the final week of our surveillance boggled our minds. On the one hand, how stupid could a teacher be, and on the other, where did those girls learn their morals?

To our disgust and ever growing outrage, Jess and Lauren slipped into Mr. Varner's classroom dressed to kill his nonexistent virtue. They whined about their failing marks and requested, almost demanded, a way to ensure a passing grade. Mr. Varner at first dismissed them completely, until they threatened to go to the principal to complain of his wandering hands. His expression changed from outraged to afraid. Lauren walked forward and rubbed her hand on his chest, suggesting much more fun things to do with those hands. Jess, in the meanwhile, was unbuttoning her too small blouse. The fear on his face transformed into a lecherous one. He grabbed Lauren's ass and Jess's boob and the game was on. I was glad that they used the super fast-forward, which was still too fast for me to register properly. When we started the videos they were a complete blur, but I must have gotten used to them because I could follow a lot more now.

After they were finished sucking and fucking, he promised them a point rise in their grade for each time they let him fuck them. I cringed as they happily agreed and said they would be back. We then knew that we would not only rid ourselves of two skanks terrorizing the school, but also of a lousy teacher with wandering hands. Alice and Rose were elated; because of their nature, they couldn't allow humans to freely touch them. Both of them had to discourage Mr. Varner from his usual practices of almost hanging on your shoulder to look down your blouse. Their solution was ingenious, but not completely effective: they buttoned up completely and wore elaborate shawls to his classes.

I thought that with such evidence my family would go to the Chief and have them all arrested. I think that Rose had other ideas; she knew those two skanks had humiliated me often. My big sister had taught me to be indifferent to the bullying and to shrug it off. This helped my grace immensely. To use her words: "Damn girl, we're gonna make a ballerina out of you yet." I had snorted, but she was right about my stumbling ways disappearing; flat surfaces were no longer death traps for me.

The Monday after our watching those videos we had assembly. The senior film class would be
presenting their short movies. After watching a goldfish's life, from pet store to toilet burial, and a static interview with an even more static, and frankly boring, grandfather, we got a documentary about the fishing spots in and around Forks. Edward, Jasper—oh hell, all the Cullen kids—hissed when Charlie and Billy where seen fishing on the Bogachiel. Edward whispered in my ear that they could hear what they were talking about and it wasn't nice; it had nothing to do with fishing either.

The principal came on the stage and announced a last minute candidate for the film final. An anonymous entry about school life.

I noticed the evil grins on the faces of my siblings and raised a questioning eyebrow towards them. "Just watch," whispered Jasper.

A digitized voice started to tell the assembly that high school was the playground of the depraved. Several shots of students pleasuring each other behind the gym, or in the back of the parking lot, were cut at a fast pace. Nobody could be recognized, and it was maybe against school policy, but it wasn't illegal in the eyes of the law. Next the voice declared that boredom was the devil’s pillow. The shots behind those words were of smoking students gossiping away. The camera zoomed in on Lauren and Jess sneering at a sophomore and taking away her lunch money.

A fast sequence of little clips showed them making transactions and counting their spoils. At this point the gasps around the auditorium were increasing in volume. The money shot in this one was a shot from them at the edge of the woods, near the back of the parking lot, talking to an enormous Quileute boy; he looked like he was on steroids and he probably was. He gave them a package; the girls were looking around to see if they were alone. They opened the package and held up a baggy with pills. They gave him two envelopes, one from each of them. The Quileute disappeared into the woods and they went to the science building.

Complete astonished silence had descended on the audience; everybody was riveted to their seats, except for a small corner where a group of students were now keeping Lauren and Jess in their seats. The next on screen was a sound clip from the locker rooms played over a photograph of the locker room door. The voices were easily recognizable as again Jess and Lauren discussing how to save their grades. As their discussion went on, the door dissolved into the footage we had discovered over the weekend.

The principal had to have watched all entries before showing them, because he stood conveniently behind Mr. Varner, his cell phone at his ear. I heard him over the cries of outrage running through the crowd. "Chief Cope, we have a situation concerning the video I sent you this morning. All parties concerned are being contained and we hope you can come with some deputies to clear this school from their unwanted presence… Thank you, see you shortly."

That was the last we had seen of the skanks and Mr. Varner. He was in jail, and the girls were under house arrest until the trial, complete with ankle bracelet monitoring devices. Their cell phones and computers were confiscated and their houses were under surveillance, to make sure they didn't have any unauthorized company.

The film was scrutinized but nobody could find the girls’ nemesis. The only prints on the tape were from the principal, and no other forensic evidence was found. Locker searches of all students were conducted on a weekend; due to the serious nature of the crimes, all parents had signed permission slips to do it behind their children's backs. Carlisle signed six slips with a big grin on his face; yeah, he signed mine too, right in front of all of us. Three more students were arrested for possession with intent.

The biggest perk, which came from this nightmare, came into fruition a week later when Esme sat besides Edward in his car when he picked me up at the garage. She had called the principal and
offered to teach the math classes for the remainder of the year; that way he could search for a suitable replacement with no rush. The whole school suddenly understood math; Esme had a way of explaining things about fifty different ways if needed. Whichever explanation clicked with you was irrelevant to her. She would search new ways to tell it until every student found his or her click.

One night, while all this was happening, I overheard Charlie on the phone, not that that was difficult; he was extremely loud. He accused the person on the other end of the line of not keeping to their agreement. They had all deputies working around the clock to scour through the evidence and he couldn't keep his son out of trouble forever. If Paul was compromised, and he was, he had to disappear now. Going to another reservation or feeding the sharks, those were the same to Charlie. I noted the time on my phone, to give the Cullens an easy job safeguarding the entire phone call from the logs. Carlisle immediately had me drop off my 'nannycam' tape with Chief Cope. I didn't know who was on the other end of the phone, but I thought it was Billy.

To take a look, we, the kids, went to First Beach. We wandered around the reservation, looking at the displayed Native American art objects. The whole reservation had an artificial feel, a shining shell over a nasty core. Edward was listening to the internal voices of all the people around. Everybody else listened to the actual conversations. When we came to a very well-kept red house, we heard what we were listening for. Billy was yelling at Jake, that he was no longer allowed to run his own sideshow because he jeopardized the main operation. Jake grumbled back that he took care of it, and that nobody would find Paul ever again.

"Well, we will be the judge of that," mumbled Edward, tapping his head, "I know where he stranded Paul. He incapacitated him just enough that his death would be attributed to the animals who will find him."

"Edward, we need to save him. He will be very cooperative when he wakes up," Alice proclaimed in an ardent whisper.

Paul was found not too much later by the 'hiking' Cullen kids. He was rushed to the hospital and Carlisle's care. He was unconscious when they found him, with a laceration on his head that was nearly fatal. Carlisle had to put him into a chemically-induced coma to help bring the swelling of his brain down. Both of his legs were broken, too. According to our resident doctor, he had bruises on both legs showing boot-prints. Forensic photographs were taken, ultraviolet lights highlighting the treads. Now it was a waiting game to know if he would recover. After Carlisle weaned him off the chemicals keeping him in a coma, he sadly remained comatose, and fear was that he would remain vegetative forever.

Well, that whole mess started because the skanks were jealous of my new and improved exterior. After Edward and I mated, we could finally be apart over more than a mile, and Alice and Rose thought it was time to boost my morale by a make-over. It took them two weeks but I relented and went with them to Seattle.

Alice convinced Edward to go hunting with his brothers, because she didn't want to tempt Jasper too much. All the Cullens hunted more frequently to give him a bit of time to come to grips with his new and improved brain. He really did give it a complete make-over. After long discussions with both Edward and Carlisle, he designed a structure for his brain, put it in place, and changed overnight into a self-assured person. He admitted that the filing system was there but filing needed to be trained a bit. He loved the fact that his gift now was completely separate from his other brain functions. He could feel his own emotions more clearly. He, too, had built a vault with an elaborate combination lock and a one-way funnel. His funnel caught the emotion of thirst from his family. This worked like a treat.
Alice's concern was partly feigned to get Edward to go hunt. That way she could kidnap me. We arrived at an elaborate and luxurious day spa and salon: Bowie's Salon and Spa. The staff worked hard at making us feel at home there. The spa part of my visit was first. I felt totally embarrassed when the lady who did my facial declared I had the most flawless skin she had ever seen; if she had to comment, she said, she would say I was too pale, and that my skin seemed to resist the products.

Then Alice and Rose talked me into a Brazilian wax job, as well as a wax for my eyebrows. Rose whispered in my ear that if I became a vampire soon I would thank them. So I added the armpits, too; I hated shaving, and until I mated I never bothered. Edward would never ask for grooming, because he was from a time things like that weren't discussed; in that time, ladies were completely covered, so if they looked like cave women it didn't matter. Even in the marital bed it was common to have ankle length nightgowns.

The waxing was far less painful than I had imagined. My legs, bikini line, eyebrows, and underarms were done in a flurry of activity, the strips being yanked off very efficiently. The aftercare massage, however, was heavenly. When I was ready to go to the salon, Alice had another surprise for me: my hair would be styled by none other than Stacy Bowie herself. It didn't say much more to me than that she was the owner, but apparently she was a prize-winning stylist. Her first question was, looking at my hair, when I had been to the stylist last. Embarrassment for my poverty came creeping up, and I whispered that I always cut it myself before.

Alice pulled her away and whispered to her for a while; I caught most of it though. She told her that I was recently adopted into her family after an abusive childhood and for her to please steer clear of the topic, because it was very touchy still. Stacy came back smiling, and to her credit she didn't have a look of pity in her eyes; the only thing I saw was determination. She declared that I had done a marvelous job in styling my hair myself, and asked what I wanted out of the haircut.

I told her that I wanted to lose a bit of length, still long, but more to the bottom of my shoulder blades than ass-length, which was what it was now. I also said, thinking about the soon being a vampire part, that I'd like to enhance the natural reddish highlights in my hair. I wasn't opposed to changing the color to a more mahogany brown, as I was tired of the flat plain brown. She went to work, treated my hair with something to bring out its shine, put in dozens of foils in different shades of red, and some mahogany ones as well. When all of that was done, the scissors, clips, and combs came out, and she cut my hair in a very flattering almost waist length, then she blow-dried my hair, straightening it while she did it. When I looked into the three-way mirror to assess it from all sides, I was so proud at how it looked. I felt my confidence grow; I no longer looked like an abuse victim. I thanked her profusely.

While I was treated at the spa and salon, Alice had slipped out and bought me a few new outfits. Luckily for her, she asked before she went. I told her okay, but not to go overboard, no designer stuff for me yet. She found me a beautiful royal blue form-fitted sweater, a pair of skinny jeans that were not too low on my hips, and lastly a pair of ballet flats in exactly the color of the sweater. Rose ran out and returned with a wide black belt with an oversized buckle, putting it over the sweater to finish the look.

Arriving home that day was fun; all the Cullen men were watching an action movie when we walked in and Esme was making me dinner. The girls walked in front of me, keeping my new look secret as long as possible. Jasper must have felt our anticipation; he paused the movie and turned in our direction. Edward picked up his thoughts and turned a fraction of a second later. The girls split and revealed me.

"Holy f…" Jasper just caught himself.
Emmett flashed from the couch, wrapped Rosie in his arms, and said, "Where did you two find this blinding beauty?"

Edward’s eyes had left his sockets and his tongue hung on his toes. He rose from the couch in slow motion, never taking his bulging eyes off me. He sauntered through the room, almost prowled, towards me. He looked like a cat stalking his prey. I heard a low purring growl emanating from his chest. Jasper looked at him and whistled. "Damn, Edward, tone it down a little."

Edward never looked away, but snapped viciously at him. When he stood before me he uttered one word, and I knew it would be an interesting night.

"Mine."

He threw me on his back and ran; a few minutes later he climbed the entrance tree of our treehouse. After our evening together, both thoroughly sated, he smiled down at me and told me that he always had found me beautiful, but that I had thoroughly surprised him and his vampire had taken over, claiming his mate all over again. He was glad I had kept my hair long and was a bit shy about the wax job. He liked it but couldn’t get it out of his mouth until I asked.

My make-over had another unwanted effect too. At school, the male population suddenly thought me attention worthy. The skanks were green with envy and started all those troubles.

A few weeks after the film finals, I was walking towards the library after my Spanish final. Alice and Edward were waiting for me; I rounded the last corner near the library when I was grabbed from behind and pushed against the wall. Vile Mike was trying to molest me; he groped my boobs and sneered in my face.

"You gave it up for Cullen, now you will give it up for me finally."

I twisted in his hold; to my surprise I felt I could take him. I kneed him hard in his balls at the same time I punched his face. I felt a satisfying crunch as his nose broke. He doubled over, one hand on his junk, the other on his face.

Alice came out of the library, cell phone at her ear. "Chief Cope? Yes, Alice Cullen here, Mike Newton just assaulted Bella Swan in the corridor near the library. Could you please come and arrest him? We will hold him for you. No, that won’t be a problem; Bella incapacitated him, and my brother Edward is here too. Okay, see you soon."

Edward had come out of the library and had taken hold of Mike none too gently. I was sure his handprints would be on his arms; Mike hung in Edward’s hold, whimpering. Chief Cope came up to the school, siren blaring, lights flashing. He slapped the handcuffs on Mike’s wrists with a satisfied grin after taking my statement. The grin had appeared when I told him about my actions to defend myself.

Mike was the next student on house arrest; when it became known he was arrested, more girls had come forward about his molesting ways. One of the girls told the police he was also the first peddling drugs during lunch hour. He had been clean out of stash when the lockers were searched, which was the only reason he wasn’t caught then.

Edward parked the car, turned to me and asked, "Love, where were you during our drive?"

I turned to him, smiling. "I was thinking about the last few months, all the things that happened."

We were on assignment to keep up appearances: grocery shopping. It was our turn, and I had volunteered. I wanted to buy the things for Charlie too. I still bought his food from his own money.
He would not eat better because the Cullens had money, so I put a hand-basket in the child seat of the shopping cart. When we entered the store, both of us crinkled our noses. Edward sighed. "Damn, I wish food in general wouldn't smell so vile."

I laughed. "For me it's only that damn fish in the back. It's really not fresh."

Edward looked at me and smiled. "Somehow it's really astonishing, the way your sense of smell has become so much better."

"It's not only my sense of smell, Edward; my hearing and eyesight are better too. Before I knew you, I needed glasses, nothing much but I was nearsighted. I just couldn't afford glasses; those are more expensive than shoes."

We loaded the cart with my favorites, enough for eight people. The rest of the food would be donated to a shelter in Seattle. I threw a few essentials in the basket—bread, meat, vegetables, a box of the cheapest cereal. As we stood with the butcher, he showed me the pieces he had put aside for me—some ground beef from the day before and a frozen steak with a lot of fat. That would make lasagna and two plates of steak, potatoes, and veggies.

Edward stepped forward and looked questioningly towards me. "Love, please choose what you like; everybody who eats at our house likes your cooking."

I looked at the best the butcher had. The nice and bloody prime rib looked yummy; I only had to sear it. I looked at some beef and asked the butcher to ground two pounds of it, then I ordered the prime rib, also two pounds. The butcher looked at me questioningly; I told him it was for the Cullens and there were seven of them. He ground the beef, and packed the prime rib, giving it all to Edward. We walked along; I got tomatoes, leak, garlic, and basil from the veggie aisle, as well as discounted cauliflower and carrots for in the basket. Looking at the cart, I knew the only thing we needed now was dairy, and I didn't look forward to that. A few weeks ago I lost all appetite to ever eat dairy again; it was the most disgusting smelling thing ever. I needed it to make both lasagnas—Charlie's and the one for the shelter—I would not touch it myself.

While I had busied myself with the fresh ingredients, Edward had gotten the other things: lasagna leaves, soda, water. He was on the other side of the dairy aisle from where I was, his hands full of canned goods. I pushed the cart along the cooler section with the damn milk. Looking for what I needed, I didn't look in front of me. I had just put a gallon of discounted low-fat milk in the basket, and walked forward to get two gallons of whole milk, when I started to slip. I looked up and saw the panic in Edward's eyes; he wanted to run and catch me but he knew people were watching him. A second later I stood on the other side of the aisle, looking at the puddle of water I almost slipped on. But how in the hell did I get there? Edward stood next to the puddle, cans all around him, arms outstretched to catch me. He was doing the funniest double-takes: looking at the puddle, his hands, up to me, then back again over and over.

"What. The. Fuck?" Edward shocked us both by swearing out loud. It was just too much; I lost it and dissolved into a giggle fit.

"Bella, do you know you just impersonated a ballerina and twirled out of that slip? Moving above human speed, I might add. Damn, it isn't just your health improving. I think you were right in your stories, love. You are changing gradually."

I sobered instantly; I had dismissed my stories. I truly thought they couldn't be true, because they all told me about their three-day change, burning to a crisp until you turned to stone. But everything else in the stories so far had been true. I was slowly turning into a vampire. No pain at all. I turned to
Edward and said, "Well, I think you can lose the injections. You won't need them. But we need to pay, head home, and call a family meeting."

"We need more than a family meeting, Bella. Kate and Eleazar are the experts when it comes to our connection. They know more than Carlisle. We need to tell the family tonight, but right now I'm going to invite Kate, Carmen, and Eleazar to discuss it all."

Chapter End Notes

A/N Please let me know what you all thought about the skanks downfall and Bella's ballet stunt?

My recommendation this week is a writer who, I think, should have a broader public, her stories are very well thought out and well written too.

thepinkcupcake

On FFn she has published four stories, of which three are still WIPs, I know a lot of you don't like that but all three are worth reading.

First her finished story: Spellbound Heart, a Twilight/Harry Potter crossover with a Veela Bella, who convinces Edward he belongs in the magical world. He won't have to hide anymore.

the sequel Enough for Forever is nine chapters in and promising to become equally as good as the first story.

then there's Raising Bella Whitlock, a story where Jasper is thrown out of the Cullen family after they left Bella. He goes back to protect her. He has to change her to keep her safe. They regard each other as siblings and start the Whitlock coven.

and finally one of the best NM AU's I've ever read. The way that Bella shows how she understands vampire nature is fantastic and I reread the chapter of 'the fart speech' regularly because it's so damn true what she blurts out there.

My Sentimental Vampire

Please review, see you next week.
Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephenie Meyer, I don't intend any copyright infringement but this plot is mine.

I'd like to thank you all for the fantastic guesses toward Bella's change, I still haven't heard the truth according to my characters. They'll show you their ideas today.

Again, I'd like to thank my team, Lorraine, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 12 Being a Mutant

EPOV

"Yes, that would be acceptable."

"We can't make it any sooner as a week from now. Eleazar needs to check in with Volterra in four days; I won't say a thing to him until afterwards. I want to take him hunting alone to inform him. Too many unwanted listeners close by."

"Kate, I understand, just text me when you leave. See you then, and give my regards to Carmen and Eleazar."

"Bye, Edward, see you then, and my regards to the whole family, including Bella."

I hung up the phone and turned to Bella. She smiled a little apprehensively. "You all right, love? Can you call the family to gather them for an in-depth planning session?"

"Okay, mmmm... I'll just call Alice then."
Her phone started to ring with the minute waltz and she picked it up.

"Hello, Alice."

"Tell my brother it's all taken care of, and you go, girl!"

And the click sounded through the car; Alice had hung up the phone.

After the revelation we just had in the Thriftway, my mind was still reeling. My Bella was slowly changing into a vampire. I was absolutely sure of that. What kind of implications would that have? When did it start, because everything about her already started changing before our mating. We all just thought it was her health improving after the years of neglect and malnourishment.

"Okay, Edward, get out of your head now! I see you sinking into all kinds of scenarios and you're not to make conclusions alone. Let's be clear about that. When we get to the house, then we will discuss it with the whole family. Just store your questions and conclusions until then," Bella admonished me.

"You're right, dear; I was drifting off into the land of possibilities. We're almost there, I can already hear Emmett's annoyed thoughts. Alice just told them to show up, not what the meeting was about. You know how he hates to be out of the loop."

I parked the car in front of the house, Esme came flitting out to help with the groceries, and a smack sounded from inside the house. Rose scolded Emmett that he needed to make himself useful and help Esme, Bella, and me with the groceries. I was surprised to hear she thought about vampire Bella to be, the strange connection she felt to Forks before we came here, and how seamless the two merged. She hadn't figured out yet that Bella already was part vampire.

Carlisle's thoughts, as usual, were running over a multitude of possibilities. Jasper was hoping that the urgency in Alice didn't forebode something bad in our future. Esme was full on task, herding Emmett into the kitchen while hauling two trays of drinks in herself. I followed with the crate of meat and vegetables. Bella only had the stuff she bought for Charlie. She wouldn't need them here, but it needed to be kept cool because those things were close to going bad. After the meeting, there was going to be a cooking marathon.

The whole family gathered in the dining room; for the first time the family meeting was going to be
complete. For the first time I wasn't the spare wheel, the helpful bystander only there to scout the surroundings.

"Edward, can you please hold off on remembering the past, I thought we were here for the future," Jasper exclaimed.

Oops, that was me; I had the tendency to get lost in my own thoughts, just because that was a safe place to go when there were thoughts pouring in from outside. But not anymore, I had to help keep my mate safe, and right then it encompassed her changing place in the world.

Carlisle opened the meeting by asking why we were there; he erroneously looked to Alice, as it usually was her who called them. Bella giggled and said, "It would be about the fact that Edward and I found out that I'm slowly changing into a vampire."

The complete and utter silence that fell was deafening. Jasper, Carlisle, and Emmett had their jaws hanging in their laps, no thoughts at all. Rose and Esme were beaming but silent in word and thought as well. Alice knew what was coming—she kept her thoughts silent—but she was as close to vibrating off her chair as I had ever seen her. I took over.

"Okay, everybody, can you all please come out of this brain freeze? Bella herself knew that her change would be gradual. In her stories she writes about slowly gaining the abilities of her fairy prince."

Emmett looked like he wanted to burst. 'Oh man, a fairy prince, could it be any more childish? It makes Eddie look like a big pansy.'

"Emmett, you should only think that. And insult my mate once more and I will take revenge with Rose's blessing," Bella told him.

"What, another round of baffled people today, nice. No, I didn't read his mind. He looked ready to explode, and Edward flinched. You guys should get used to me having vampire reflexes or close to it."

Carlisle's eyes started to gleam. "Uh, Bella, can I please have a blood sample from you? If it's still possible. I have a beginning of a theory running around my head, something Marcus told me a long time ago, but I want to look at your blood before I tell everyone."

"O-okay," Bella stuttered, "please do it quick. I really hate that empty feeling in my arm when blood
is drawn."

Carlisle flew to his office and back, carrying his bag. He drew Bella's blood with some difficulty, but fast and clean. In that moment, we all knew that our theory was substantiated. Bella's blood was transparent and its scent was no longer exactly human. For me it never stirred my bloodlust, but I heard Jasper's evaluation of his thirst and he didn't feel much either. The draw to him was weaker than for a deer.

"Bella, please tell us what changes you have noticed, and are you really pain free?" Carlisle asked her.

"Yes, I'm pain free; I think that initially some of the separation pain could have been the beginning of the process working. I don't know, but I started to notice things just before we went to scour the Dump. I told you all as much. I heard things I shouldn't be able to, smelt things distinctly instead of one big scent comprising of everything. Those have only intensified; most of the time I noticed but thought the same as you all, that my health was improving. Oh, I don't need glasses anymore; I couldn't afford them but needed them all the same. And the last few weeks my taste has changed. I loved yogurt and custard; now I loathe them. They stink something awful and I just don't want it anymore. I also like my meat more rare than before. Sweets and bread are still the same, but with vegetables, I only like the sweetly flavored ones now, like carrots and corn.

"Furthermore, my clumsiness has vanished to be replaced with a grace that I've only ever witnessed in you guys. Today I started to slip in a puddle of water on a stone floor. Somehow, and you're going to have to ask Edward about that, I managed to twirl my way out of falling over, and moved to a safe piece of floor. The speed was too fast for my eyes to follow. I was just suddenly on the other side of the aisle." She looked thoughtful for a moment and added, "I think that's it for now."

Rose spoke up. "Wow, that's really great news, and also a problem. Bella, we need to step up your therapy. We can no longer choose when you'll be done. I have an idea, though… maybe we will be done soon. I'm thinking out loud here; Bella is already a lot surer of herself; my thought is that she's finally coming into her own. Her true self is emerging. When her bond with Edward grew, her self-esteem and feeling of self-worth grew at the same rate. This is just another piece of the interesting puzzle these two are."

"Okay." Carlisle reentered the room with an elaborate microscope. "All points Rose made are valid, but not helping us solve this little conundrum. Edward, you told me Eleazar and Kate had researched special connections between mates. Now I want to say that you two are definitely made for each other, scientifically proven, mind you. Emmett, fetch the flat screen and an extension cord."
He situated the microscope on the table and hooked a state of the art camera to the ocular. Emmett put the flat screen on the side board and connected the camera to it. Carlisle flitted to his office again and came almost flying back with a rack full of vials. He prepared his work surface, spreading a few Petri-dishes.

"All right, let me explain." He pointed to the different vials. "I have here a sample of Bella's blood I preserved when she was here the first time, the second holds the content of one of the ampoules with Edward's venom, the last holds Bella's blood, which I collected this evening. When I put that under the microscope, I saw something extraordinary. Watch."

He prepared, with lightning fast movements, an object slide with some of the blood from the last vial—the transparent red-colored liquid I should say; it didn't resemble blood anymore. The slide was put on the microscope and he deftly brought the picture into focus. I really hoped that Bella's eyesight had improved enough that she could see the details we could see.

"This is a magnification of a thousand," Carlisle's lecture continued, "Bella, I hope you can see this, too. Please, everybody, try to see what excited me at once."

Six and a half vampires stared at the flat screen. In the liquid were now visible cells. I recognized red blood cells, blood platelets, and white blood cells, but another two kinds of cells were visible: bright blue cells I couldn't place, the size of large white blood cells, and the familiar pale yellow venom cells.

"This looks exactly like the blood of somebody infected by a virus," Rose exclaimed.

"Exactly; watch closely and tell me more."

Bella started to bounce in her seat. "Carlisle, as the person with the weakest eyesight, can I try to explain? If I miss something, please show me, because I saw what kind of camera you used and you can go from a thousand to four thousand if you like." She walked to the screen; Alice gave her a laser pointer.

"Okay, these I recognize," she said, pointing to the three recognizable blood cells. "That's my blood. I must say, looking at this sample, I would say that it's very low on white blood cells. If a viral infection without antidote was present, that would be normal, thus linking to Rose's statement."

I was beaming with pride; my mate stood before a group of multiple Masters in every scientific
degree and could hold her own.

Bella pointed out a venom cell. "That would make this the virus; I presume this is a venom cell?"

"Correct, my genius girl," I replied.

"Then this is an infected white blood cell; the venom has given off its DNA and the cell is transforming into new venom cells. Look here, here's one releasing venom cells. I'm right!" She was dancing on the balls of her feet.

"Bella, I have here a vial of the blood of one of my patients," Carlisle interrupted. "Look at the normal reaction of venom with blood. To make it totally unrelated with you two, the first one I will use my venom." He placed a perfectly normal blood sample with signs of sickle cell disease on the microscope.

"As you can see, this person has sickle cell disease, but that would be his last problem when this happened." Just then he added a little drop of venom from a glass pipette.

The image immediately went blurry; after two seconds, Carlisle refocused the microscope, and where we saw white blood cells before, there were now multiple venom cells.

"Okay, after this happened, a person can't live human anymore. The venom travels through all organs, attacking every cell and transforming the DNA, adding two chromosomes to the original," Carlisle explained the rest of the process.

A new slide, this time with Bella's old blood, was placed on the microscope. Carlisle added his venom to show that it was not only her blood that was different. And that showed an equally violent reaction. The only difference was that the venom that was made in the white blood cells was more plentiful.

"Now, for the last step, that is what is actually happening inside you." Carlisle looked pointedly at Bella. "We should have a better view of what happens, and with some extra magnification, maybe even find how."

He placed another slide with Bella's old blood in focus and opened the vial with my venom. A drop was added to the blood and we were all riveted to the screen. It was a totally different effect. The
venom cells travelled through the blood, adhering to white blood cells, but nothing violent happened. The white blood cell wrapped itself around the venom. Then, about a minute later, the cell turned blue. We had already seen that when a blue cell divided, it turned into two pale yellow venom cells. Carlisle turned up the magnification and centered the view on a white blood cell. From the side, we witnessed a venom cell approaching. Suddenly, Bella gasped.

"Look at that! The venom cell has little tentacles with a distinct blob on the end. Now look at the white blood cell. It has indentations of exactly that form, like a key in a lock. Carlisle, show us the video of the first reaction. If I'm right, that venom won't match the lock; that's why it has to overpower the cell."

The video changed, and of course Bella was right. Carlisle's venom not only didn't fit the lock, it didn't have the tentacles at all. We looked at each other, somewhat baffled. It looked like my venom was mutated; it developed tentacles.

"Uh, we need to see if my venom is the only mutant here," I said. In high tempo, we made slides with the venom of all my siblings and Esme. Equally fast, we looked at them in high magnification. My venom was the only one with tentacles. Everybody stared at the eight pictures next to each other. Even the new venom, formed within Bella, her own venom, didn't have the tentacles.

"Can I pose a theory?" Bella asked.

"Of course you can, dear girl, you've been right every time so far," Esme told her.

"Well, I'm thinking about all your changes. Edward was the only one of you deathly ill with a disease, a virus no less. Couldn't his flu have mutated his venom while it formed? His white blood cells were already heavily infected with foreign DNA and his venom acts like a virus on my blood."

A new slide was put on the microscope by Rose; she put some of the sickle cell blood on it. Then she added my venom. The reaction was as explosive as with Carlisle's venom. She proved the unique circumstances of Bella's change. Her white blood cells had the lock to the keys of my venom.

"Thinking virus, I think it's a fair deduction to say that Bella started changing from the moment she came in contact with my venom. Thus after our first kiss. The last few months after our mating was completing the process; it's been fast tracked but still going at a rate that doesn't invoke pain."

"Now that we know how, we need to decide what to tell Eleazar and Kate. Somehow I think this is
real confidential information. Aro must never learn of it. I think I need to tell you about Didyme's change." Carlisle was back to his lecturing/leader tone. "Didyme's change was thought to be very long. It took her eight days to transform. What Marcus never told anybody but me is that she hardly felt any pain. He was puzzled; she was coherent and could function through it. To her, it was as if she had a high fever, nothing more. My thoughts about it were not useful until now. Her change wasn't as peaceful as Bella's because her system was flooded with Marcus' venom. The infection was massive. I didn't know yet exactly how the change worked; I couldn't tell him this. I promised him if I ever found out to tell him."

"I want to tell him—I think he can tell us more about our bond—but not before my change is complete and we have left this hellhole of a town. And absolutely nobody," Bella said, looking sternly at Emmett, "Will spill about any of the powers and abilities in this family. Edward will teach you to hide the evidence of them; Marcus taught him to do it. We need to shield the fact that we're a gifted bunch. When my brain reaches real vampire potential, I will build a wall of all the pain from my youth to stand in for the burning."

"Let's just see what Eleazar and Kate already know. We only discovered that Bella is changing, nothing more. He can probably also see her power. Because she keeps Edward out, it has to be something." Esme was the voice of reason.

'Son, Eleazar is not stupid. He'll suspect we know more. You will have to keep an eye on his thoughts; Kate's, too,' Carlisle thought to me. Bella turned sharply towards me and glared.

"No secrets, Edward," she said. "Now, I'm hungry. I'm going to make the lasagna for the shelter and my own prime rib. Later, I will have to go to the Dump, to cook for that inbred who lives there."

With that, she went to the kitchen and started to stink up the house. I loved her for it, but those dairy sauces going in the lasagna were really bad. When I couldn't be away from Bella anymore, I walked into the kitchen to the most unusual sight ever: my, until this morning and still looking human, mate drinking the blood from the tray the meat had been put in.

"Bella love, if you crave blood that badly, I can bring you things much more appetizing than a drink of cold, dead blood."

She whirled around, a faint blush coloring her cheeks. Hmm… her blood was no longer able to make her cheeks burn. Alice came running in with a thermos.

"Here you go—it's deer blood—for now as a food supplement but one with a growing role. If my
visions are correct," she said, snickering, "you will be on an all blood diet around your birthday."

Bella grabbed a glass and continued to drink her dinner, moaning at the taste of the nearly fresh blood. My seventeen-year-old teenager woke with a vengeance. I grabbed her gently and proceeded to kiss the hell out of her. She growled, we looked at each other, and she called to Esme to get the lasagna out of the oven in half an hour.

I slung her on my back and we were out of the door in a flash. We went to the treehouse; upon arrival I saw that Bella's eyes had darkened considerably. I had put her down and she was stalking towards me, her movements lithe like a cat. Oh my, she was letting her instincts take over. She couldn't know that was what was happening; it was all too new for her.

"Bella, you're scaring the human inside me; the vampire is getting frisky. God, you are magnificent, all instincts taking charge. Come and get me, goddess!"

"I don't know what's happening with me, Edward, but drinking the blood woke something inside me. You're mine, and I want you right now!"

I had been walking backwards into the main room, slowly retreating from her prowl. I bumped with my calves against the couch, my attention momentarily divided. She noticed and, with a catlike grace, she pounced, knocking us onto the couch, tearing at my clothes. She stopped when she held one of my sleeves in her hand, completely torn off my arm.

"Seems like we have to add strength to the list, too, dear," I said, laughing. She growled, and it was the sexiest thing I ever heard. I undressed her, while she undressed me. He recognized his mate was more durable, and together we rejoiced in that fact. I told him he still needed to listen for her signals; he agreed. I then took a step back and gave him free reign. It was clear that Bella's vampire was in charge, too; she had taken over after feeding. It was fast, rough, and utterly satisfying, for all four of us. I noticed when Bella came down from her feeding high, her eyes went back to her chocolate brown and her movements slowed down. Slowly kissing me all over my chest and abdomen, I stroked her hair until she suddenly shot up.

"Damn, I really need to cook now, Edward. We need to keep him in the dark."

"You're right, my love, I'll run you back to the house to get the supplies, then back to the Dump. I'll come back here to wait for you."
We found Alice busy at the foot of the treehouse trees, busy turning the area around the trees into a mud moat. 'Just extra security; I see visitors in the region.'

An hour later, I sat on the bed in the treehouse, frozen in place, taking advantage of one of the rare times when only my own thoughts are in my head, dreaming about my eternity with Bella. If we have to believe her stories, we will suffer a separation to become stronger than ever. The prince and princess of the fairies. The best thing was that she already had so many vampire traits, because damn, she growled at me to defend her prey.

I focused completely on my memories of the last few months, looking for signs of her change. They were plentiful now that I was looking for them. My mind compared her body when I saw her for the first time with the picture I had in my head from earlier that night. Her legs were toned now; she was slowly being perfected, the beautiful creature she was. From the treehouse, I could hear her heart beating. I recognized her effortlessly within a crowd several miles away, I was that attuned to that sound. Timing the beats, and again making the comparison, I found out that her heart rate in relative rest had gone down about five beats per minute.

I slipped into the heartbeat-induced meditative state and evaluated my entire existence. For so long I was afraid I would walk alone for eternity, afraid of eternity as my destiny. I always stayed with the family—staying to protect them—three happily mated pairs to drive me slowly insane, especially Emmett, who just couldn't understand my choice to remain virtuous, to spare myself for my mate. He would secretly inundate me with the vilest porn to break my resolve.

Now I had my Bella, not only immeasurably beautiful, wicked smart and fiercely loyal, but most of all, totally mine. She owned me as much as I owned her. Mmmmmmm... Bella, the single most important thing to me ever. I wondered when she would try running, to test her vampire speed. I would enjoy running behind her and seeing her get used to the speed. Oh, how...

A loud thud on the roof jarred me violently out of my Bella bubble. Something slid, scrambling for a hold on the roof; there was a half a second of silence and then a reverberating splash resounded underneath the treehouse. At first I thought that one of the family was here to test the house's defenses. But as soon as my Bella bubble completely dissipated, I heard who it was.

I would probably have heard it anyhow, because she was cursing up a storm. I heard the family of squirrels living with us in the Sitka spruces scramble for safety. But hearing this person curse out our complete family was very entertaining. This was also the very first real test of the treehouse, by someone not privy to its construction. The special coating sprayed over metal roof plates worked a charm.

I remained frozen on the bed. I would not give away my presence. This piece of trash needed to take herself out. I didn't hear her coming, another test of the fairly new brain addition I made to escape the
mind rape every day. The one way funnel worked a treat. Stored away in that vault, her thoughts would be accessible only when needed for scrutiny. Oh hell, that scrutiny would be needed. Why was she here? Kate and I had been so careful. She really couldn't have overheard. If she did, we would all be in danger from her notorious blabber mouth.

I opened the vault, and very carefully I took out the thoughts of the last fifteen minutes from the 'to be sorted' basket. Scanning for owner identification, I saw that they all belonged to her. Every other thought I threw back in the basket, deemed too nasty to deal with. Piece by piece I found what I was looking for; slowly, what happened before the crash and burn came together. I was mortified; this was not good.

When I was certain absolutely no thoughts were near, no strong scents close, I exited the treehouse and went to explore the crash site. Alice did good, real good. This was the most hilarious thing I’d ever seen. I pieced it all together with the thoughts I intercepted and it just couldn't be any better. Bella would enjoy this.

Chapter End Notes

A/N That will become a problem, will the inventor of the skank squad be a match for Bella, or will our half-vampire prevail.

This weeks recommendations:

First one of the darkward stories I love by one of the great fanfic writers,

Bloody Kisses by Carano. This story can be found on Cara’s blog on Wordpress: caranofiction(dot)wordpress(dot)com

On the same blog a one shot can be found, Eternity, another Darkward story.

and my last Darkward:

Shhhhhhhhhhhh by robshandmonkey to be found at robshandmonkey(dot)blogspot(dot)co(dot)uk and at TWCS Sid=4241

Please review

See you next week

Pien
Chapter 13 Unwanted Visitor

Chapter Notes

A/N all things Twilight sadly belong to Stephanie Meyer, the only thing I own is the story plot. I don't intend to earn money from this story, or want to infringe on her copyright.

Merry Christmas to all my readers, and especially to my team: Lorraine, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 13 Unwanted Visitor.

BPOV

After the pig was finished grunting his way through the lasagna I made him, he disappeared into the living room after another too hard slap to my lower back as thanks. At least it once was too hard; I liked my new vampiry self. I reveled in the thought that his food was infinitely worse compared to the food served at the shelter. I washed the dishes and overall cleaned up a bit before he crashed in his recliner.

Normally I would now call Edward to collect me, but after the revelations of this afternoon I wanted to try something. The Dump was locked up, but my window wasn't. I looked down; would I be sturdy enough to jump? Oh well, only one way to find out. I climbed on the window sill and sat there; it was dark out but that didn't bother me. Something inside me kicked into gear and I could suddenly calculate how to land without making a noise, which I did, landing in a crouch and immediately running for the cover of the trees. Oh wow, I was fast; this was going to be fun.

In about three minutes I was at the clearing, witnessing the most idiotic thing ever. Edward was near the entrance tree, rolling on the ground laughing. Roaring with laughter, really; he didn't even notice me. Slowly I walked up to him; he suddenly seemed to feel he wasn't alone, shooting up into a crouch and then lowering himself onto his knees when he finally recognized me.

"Damn, Edward, what happened to get you into this state?"

Still chuckling, he answered, "Oh, my darling, we had an unwelcome visitor, but Alice's moat made her run off again… after she fell in it."

"She? Damn, Edward, tell me the story!"

He sighed. "Tanya came to have a try at me again. I was immersed in my Bella bubble, didn't even notice her advance until she crashed onto the roof of the treehouse. You'll be pleased to know it held up to its purpose; she slid off, scrambling for a hold the whole way. And then she came down in a glorious splash, right in the middle of Alice's new safety feature: the mud moat. Cursing up a storm and scampering off when she discovered she was missing some essentials to her so-called beauty and that she came without any luggage, so she couldn't change her clothes."
"Okay, but how did she find you?"

"She started at the house, but was told to bugger off by Rose, who told her that no one was interested in her whatsoever. She didn't believe her and the delusional bitch started following my scent. What she totally missed was your scent though. And because I was frozen in my Bella bubble, not breathing, she never knew I was inside. I kept still until I couldn't hear her anymore. That's when I started to retrieve her thoughts and piece it all together."

"Wait a minute, Edward. Retrieve her thoughts? That means you couldn't hear them right away! Your vault is working on vampires, too! Congratulations, sweetheart."

"You're right, dear; I collected the 'to be sorted' thoughts out of the basket beneath the funnel, and I could go through them as if they were a book. The nasty ones I discarded and pieced together her way here, and her motivations, after retrieving one of the discarded thoughts. She had noticed that I had texted Kate the first time for the sex-talk. That made her think about her tarnished record of getting every man she wanted. She started wanting me so much that she started to think of me as her mate."

I started growling at that last sentiment; he was mine, and only mine! Edward caressed my cheekbones with both hands, whispering he was mine.

"Bella, she came to try and claim me. There was one thing I was very grateful for; I never once picked up a thought in her head of you. She didn't follow Kate that first day, and Kate kept her word. She told no one about us."

Calming down, my brain started working again and I was suddenly very curious why he was rolling on the ground when I came here.

"Uh, Edward? I understand you have some pretty funny pictures in your head, but why were you rolling on the ground when I got here?"

"Oh god, I saw her planning to jump on the roof, break into the treehouse, and wait for me naked when I came back." He shuddered. "Then she jumped, slid off, and landed face first into the mud. Now that was funny enough to get me laughing. But when I found these, I lost it." He held up a handful of... hair?

"What the…"

"Okay, nobody knows but me, but she was attacked once by a jealous girlfriend. That girlfriend chopped off half her hair. Tanya is so vain and secretive that she has been wearing wigs, and when they were invented switched to extensions. These," he said, waving the hair around, "I fished out of the mud. Tanya took a look at herself in the reflection of the window and saw she lost them. She immediately panicked, and while whining out loud about her ruined Chanel clothes and Louboutin shoes, she inwardly wailed about her lost extensions and that she couldn't let anybody see her before it was fixed. She went back to Denali."

We both dissolved into laughter. "Oh, Edward, we need to keep those; we can use it to get her to leave us alone. Her harpy vibes won't work on me, just as her seductive vibes don't work on you. But I know that she'll be back one day, probably soon."

Edward received the text half an hour ago; the Denalis were on their way and would arrive in about ten minutes. They were driving to keep unwanted members of their family from following. I was
nervous; old insecurities were making themselves known. What if they didn't approve? What if I were the cause of a conflict between them and the Cullens? What if, what if, what if… Rose walked towards me with a pissed look on her face.

"Damn it, Isabella," —oops, she used my full name— "Get out of your head, right now! If ‘what ifs’ determined the course of history, humanity would never have risen out of the Stone Age. Just be yourself, you know you are Edward’s destiny, as you know nothing can change the fact that he is yours. Will you please act like you belong at his side? Damn, you’re almost a vampire, and don’t say how strange that is to say; now set your already impressive human brain at work to find the vampy upgrades and show them who Edward belongs to!"

Her words did wonders; it was the original pep talk. I would be faced with three new vampires and I would show them exactly what Rose told me to: I would be confident and graceful at Edward’s side. I would endure the scrutiny, and I would not reject friendship before it was offered.

We all heard a car turn into the driveway and gathered on the porch, mates holding on to each other, four couples facing friends who came visiting. As soon as the car stopped, the back door flew open and a tall blonde female shot out and straight at me, pulling me into a hug.

"Oh, Bella, you made me so happy for Edward. I could hear it over the phone; he is so much more at peace. He's happy, and all because of you. Girl, even before I knew you, you were my friend. Now that I see you," she grabbed my shoulders and took an assessing look at me, "I must declare you to be a magnificent addition to an already way too beautiful family." She winked at me and made a move to hug Edward, but her eyes stayed on mine, asking permission.

I nodded; she hugged Edward shortly and went to the other Cullens. My attention was drawn to the other two vampires, clearly mates as they seemed attached to each other. The male was studying me intently, making me look at Edward to see if he was all right with it. I could see he was listening intently to the man's thoughts. He shook his head minutely.

"Oh no, Edward, I know she is gifted, can't make heads or tails from it because she's blocking me. Part of her power is a very strong personal shield. But it's not all. I feel potential flowing from her; it's just not possible to see through her protection."

"Dear, it is a pleasure to meet you; shall we leave the men to their discussion? I'm Carmen, by the way," the woman with raven black hair and a Mediterranean glow on her pale skin introduced herself.

"That insufferable scientific mind over there is my husband and mate Eleazar. Now tell me about yourself, and the stunning fact that you look like a vampire but I can hear your heartbeat. To keep the secrecy, they told me absolutely nothing. But as neither Kate nor Eleazar seem surprised, I have to surmise they knew already, and it also might be the reason we're here."

"You're right on target with everything," I started to explain when I was rudely interrupted by the second curse I ever heard from Edward out loud. He ushered everyone inside, shut the door, and started to explain in whispers so low I could barely follow, his eyes on mine to see if I could.

"We have an unwanted visitor in the woods; she just entered my hearing range. Bella, honey, brace yourself, because Tanya is indeed back. I would like for us to keep silent on any gifts or strange things surrounding Bella please. You three came down to meet my human found mate. Okay?"

We all hurried to sit down and I launched into my story, leaving out my writings and any supernatural things. Edward sat plastered to my side; when I felt him stiffen and then relax, I looked at him, mouthing 'vault?' He nodded. Just when I told them of my Gran’s passing, a rather sharp
knock sounded through the house.

Carlisle went and opened the door, showing a large bit of surprise at her arrival but welcoming her in. He told her fervently that we had gathered to introduce me to their family but that he hadn't expected her to come.

"Carlisle, cut the crap. You all just didn't invite me to debunk this charade. If Edward had mated with her, she wouldn't be human anymore! He can't mate with her because I'm his mate."

I wanted to growl and attack her for defiling my mate; he was mine! I felt my anger rise inside of me.

To my utter astonishment, I suddenly heard a voice in my head: Rose's voice. 'Let her act human, she must stay acting human. Please let her keep her instincts at bay, she can't lose her temper now. Oh, please let her act human.'

I cuddled a little more into Edward, solidifying our bond, took a deep breath, and wished that what just happened would keep happening. The inconsequential conversation went on, and I summarized what I had already told the other Denalis for Tanya. When I came to our meeting, I noticed a concentrated look on Tanya's face, her eyes trying to bore a hole in his head. Edward was completely focused on me, smiling and playing with my hair. I knew why her assault didn't work but I still wished I could hear her. As soon as that thought went through my head, I did.

'...the damn little tart can't hold your attention, EDWARD. Listen to me! Why do you ignore me? The puny little human could never satisfy you the way I can, because you're not telling me the bond is complete. Maybe this would do it for you.'

I hastily let go of her thoughts when a picture of her riding a skewed picture of Edward came into my head. I heard enough to keep clear for a while; now I knew what Edward had to endure until he built his vault.

One of my vampire growth spurts was happening because I was conscious of the fact that I never wavered in my story when all of this happened. I simply processed it on a different track.

Tanya's eyes became speculative, still boring into Edward. I wished again to hear her thoughts. '...know he's ignoring me. If I do this, he would need to see me. Yeah, gonna kiss the living daylights out of him.'

My rage peaked again. She wanted to assault my mate; I needed to protect him. I remembered the story Edward told about how Kate could zap people and how she had zapped Tanya unconscious before. Oh how I wished I could do that; that would teach her. It would also protect my mate.

From my periphery, I saw Kate and the wish flooded my senses. Just at that moment, the skank bolted from the couch straight for my Edward. I knew he wouldn't hear her thoughts, so I needed to act. I wanted to throw myself in front of him when she crumbled to the floor shuddering, cursing Kate, but Kate laughed. "Come on, bitch, I'm nowhere near you."

"No, you stupid skank, your so-called sister is nowhere near you. But you tried to assault MY MATE! I won't stand for it. I'm not some puny little human. I defend what's MINE. You were trying to fill his head with vile images, RAPIING HIS MIND. Just as you have always done. But now you're breaking the mating laws and I'm completely in my right to rip you apart. Mating law 1 sub-paragraph #5: nobody will try to come between a vampire and his mate, this is doubly true for a vampire with a human found mate."

"You witch; you can't be his mate. Edward would never leave me," the bitch gritted through her
teeth, still shuddering.

"Oh dear, not only a skank but delusional as well! I had to deal with the likes of you my whole life, watching them degrade themselves to be noticed, becoming raving bitches the moment they don't get what they want, jealous even of their best friends or siblings. So sad to see them throw their lives away. Do you even know how mating works, tart? Or are you just an abusive reject with minimal intelligence? Did you ever even try to understand mated pairs, or would your promiscuous cooch not allow your brain to think? They say males follow their cocks around; you certainly have the same affliction. You follow your clit around, probably with your tits as cheerleaders. Now, I'm going to release you so you can leave. If you never come back, it will be too soon. If I ever see you after my change, you'll be in pieces faster than you can follow."

I released Kate, still not entirely sure how it worked. Tanya slowly stood up, growling under her breath.

"You're still human but use my own sister's power against me. How dare you! You will pay for this, count on it, you little witch."

Edward started to rise. "Now you are crossing the second line. You're threatening my mate," he growled.

At that moment I sensed Tanya's intent: she wanted Edward away from me to attack me. I had to defend myself; I knew I wasn't a match for her in strength yet. I needed to have more, like Emmett. I localized him in my peripheral vision. He's on his feet, ready to defend his little sister.

Tanya pounced on me; to all around gasps and growls, she was literally airborne. Edward flew to his feet, but he was too late. She met my outstretched hands and was stopped in her tracks. I had her by the neck and walked her to the door. Alice flitted past and opened it for me.

On the porch, I once again wished for Emmett-like strength and threw her to the tree line. "AND STAY OUT!" I shouted at her over her inarticulate screeching. Every member of my family joined me on the porch, as did the remaining Denalis. Without another word, Tanya disappeared into the woods, humiliated and outcast.

Eleazar sighed. "That was sadly a blowup we were waiting for. The obsession Tanya showed has been her problem her whole immortal life. She was a reject during her human life, always poking in happy relationships. She travelled the country seducing every man she fancied. Her moral compass is off. We know venom heals a lot, but it solidifies character and morals. It also gives a multi-track brain, but can't make you use it for more than involuntary actions. To make optimal use of our brains we have to train them, just like we have to learn to use our new senses. Nobody taught Tanya to use her brain properly; she essentially never stepped away from her human brain, and that brain wasn't very intelligent to start with.

I don't want to excuse her behavior, because to me she stepped over a lot of boundaries. And I'm very glad that Edward has found such an intelligent and extraordinary mate, one that could take her."

"You mean that it really was Bella who got her? Damn, little sis, are you really a witch?" Smack! Rose hit Emmett over the head to remind him to think about what he said.

Edward started to speak, but was cut off by Eleazar. He started rubbing his hands together and said, "Now, Bella, I think we need to talk about your powers."

Chapter End Notes
A/N What do all of you think about Bella's awakening power? Let me know.

On this Christmas Eve my recommendations are in style. Three different Twilight inspired renditions of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

1) A Twilight Carol by 2brown-eyes, FFn 7598331, FP under Browneyesfanfiction.
2) A Cullen Carol by content1, FFn 5477621.
3) A Vampire Christmas Carol by AChristmastoRemember, FFn 7581488.
Have yourselves a very Merry Christmas, see you next week.

Please review, Pien
Chapter 14 The Original Takedown

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephenie Meyer, but this little plot is mine. I don't intend any copyright infringement.

Hello everyone, I'm sorry I'm posting this at the other end of Tuesday. My only excuse is that my irregular shifts had me muddled which day it was. Plus early shifts ask early bedtimes and I normally post just after midnight on Monday to Tuesday nights. Ah well, half the world has already entered 2014 when I write this. So to all of you a very Happy New-year, may all your dreams and wishes come to fruition.

A special thank you again to my team, especially Chandrakanta who through all the Christmas business still found time to beta this chapter. Of course Lorraine and LunaDiSangue have my thanks also for all the ideas and encouragement they've given me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

TWILESQUE

Chapter 14 The Original Take Down.

EPOV

I saw it all happening; most of the family was frozen in shock as Bella gave it to Tanya decisively. The original skank was put down and kicked out by my very powerful mate. Looking through Eleazar’s mind, I saw her power at work. Fascinating, really, he could see powers and enhanced abilities at work. Looking at me, he saw words and pictures float into my head. With Jasper, the vibes could go in or out, looking like colored squiggly lines.

Carlisle emitted a veil of sureness, his confidence in action. To look at Emmett through his eyes was comical; he looked like a kind of Popeye. But then I looked at Bella; it was immediately visible that she was a shield. A slightly opaque veil enclosed her completely.

The fireworks really started when she began to use the second part of her shield. Yes, she had a secondary shield, one that she could wrap around a person. In itself, it did nothing to a person, but it looked like she used it like a conduit to use any person’s power on a person.

"We all witnessed Bella borrow the powers and abilities from the people in the room," Eleazar started to explain. "I would call her a mimic, to give it a name. She doesn't emulate those powers though. Her power is a passive one; it works as a conduit, determining only who to borrow from and who to use it on. At this time, I can't determine if she can find a power or ability in a person, or if she needs to be aware of them before she can use them."

"Uh, Eleazar, I think she can find them. We never told her my power," said Kate.

"Uhm, sorry, but Edward told me about Tanya when I blew up thinking he had been alone with an unmated female," Bella said, looking embarrassed. "He told me that you zapped her unconscious?"
Kate threw her head back, laughing at the memory of that little tidbit from our long history.

"Eleazar, could you please explain how your power works? I mean, your explanation of mine is so detailed." Bella still looked a bit off kilter. I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her in my lap; she noticeably relaxed when our electricity ran through her.

"It's really a visual representation of what actually happens; I see words and pictures float to Edward’s head from everybody in the room, except you. Because you are shrouded in an impenetrable veil, nothing in nothing out. That, by the way, is your personal shield. When Kate uses her gift, I see lightning bolts between her and the person she's shocking.

"Abilities show as characters superimposed over the holder. Emmett looks like Popeye to me. Esme has a Lady Justice coming out. To come back to you, I now only see your veil, but when you used your power, tentacles grew from inside your veil and wrapped around other people. Green tentacles around Edward, Kate, and Emmett—although the tentacle around Edward was more of a bluish-green—a big fat red tentacle around Tanya. I could then see their powers running along the tentacles. Then again, with Emmett's ability, you held Tanya in the red tentacle but the power stopped with you. When you held Edward, I saw the words and pictures duplicate and go to both of you. I assume you read her mind?"

"I have no idea how it actually happened, but yes, I read her mind. To me it seemed as if my wishes were granted," Bella said, intrigued. "When I read in her mind that she wanted to assault Edward, kissing the living daylights out of him, I wished I could defend him like Kate. The moment the wish was formed, it happened. After that it was going with the flow. My question is now, was Tanya the only one I used it on?"

Eleazar and I started to grin. "No!" we said simultaneously. Eleazar went on, "Although that first instance worked because that was the moment your power kicked in. You heard Rose in that moment. Somehow you used Edward to read her. Then you knew what you could do—your senses are very sharp—you picked up that Tanya tormented your mate. That soaked your anger, which fueled the rest of your actions."

"Anger, that's an understatement, it was pure, unadulterated, possessive rage," Jasper spoke up. "Nothing wrong with her vampire instincts."

Alice sighed and slouched a bit on the couch she was sitting on with Jasper. Bella looked at her speculatively, then redirected her attention to Eleazar. "So how can I get control, because right now I'm wishing my ass—sorry, Esme—off and nothing happens at all?"

"Well, my dear, we might want to enlist the aid of Jasper here to make you angry. Shall we start with something simple? Use Edward to read someone, anyone other than Edward. He can verify your input."

I heard in Jasper's head that he slowly pushed possessive rage towards Bella. I locked in on Eleazar's brain and watch as Bella's power kicked in. The bluish-green tendril wrapped around me, then it wrapped around Emmett. His thoughts came into focus.

'...so boring. Why can't this reject just have a more awesome power like shooting bolts of lightning like Kate.'

I watched as Bella's artificial rage was replaced by her own indignation. A bright green tendril wrapped around Kate, and within the same tenth of a second, Emmett was writhing on the floor, hit by the full force of Kate's power. Almost just as fast, all tendrils disappeared and Bella hid her face in her hands.
But after a short moment she looked up, squared her shoulders, and said, "I didn't intend to use full power, but I think that that can only be done after a lot of practice. Just learn from this, you big baby, never again will you hurt Edward with your dumb, insulting thoughts. I'm not a reject and I just showed you I can throw lightning bolts around. Still bored, Emmett?" Turning to me, her eyes questioning, she asked, "How did you stand that all these years? I really can't understand how you didn't leave, to protect yourself. I'm so sorry you had to take that for so long."

"I just held in mind he is the mate of my sister, sweet girl, he was here to stay. But nobody can make me leave my family; I wouldn't do that to Carlisle and Esme, or Rose, for that matter. Alice and Jasper came later, but they deserve me as a brother, too. I must admit, and Rose agrees with me, that the big oaf is one of the immortals in a short list who have mentally raped me for years. The sad thing now is, I can't put him in the ignore vault because I want to protect you, therefore I need to monitor him to stop him from blabbing his mouth and making us have to leave."

Emmett still sat on the ground, pouting for being put on display; Eleazar sat bouncing on the armrest of Carmen's chair. He was trying to block his thoughts, but bits and pieces came through.

"Spit it out, Eleazar. You can hardly wait."

"Okay, I saw something extraordinary; we need to do an experiment. Bella, use Jasper next, make somebody cry. And Jasper, please be the counter agent; as soon as somebody starts crying, you make it better."

Bella used her still abundantly flowing anger to wrap up Jasper; a red tendril then wrapped around Rose. She started sobbing. No waves of joy came off Jasper. It was as if his power didn't exist. This was different. Or was I? My power still worked when wrapped up in her tendril.

Eleazar stepped towards Jasper. "Do you feel any emotions in the room besides your own? That's enough, Bella." Bella released both Jasper and Rose, flying over to Rose and apologizing profusely. Meanwhile, Jasper sat there shaking his head.

"I just noticed the first instance of the MEP connection. Edward, and only ever Edward, will keep the use of his power while Bella uses him. Every other person whose ability is used is temporarily powerless."

"Eleazar, I'm sorry, but what is the MEP connection?" Esme asked, baffled.

"Oh, I'm shooting too far ahead; MEP is short for Mate Enhanced Powers. A mated pair of a vampire with his singer—his human-found mate—in which the vampire is also the sire of his mate and they are both gifted with powers, will enhance each other's powers. Until now, I only had the privilege to study one such pair: Marcus and Didyme. They were the basis of my theory. Kate and I scoured the globe for more pairs; they are very rare. So rare that Edward and Bella here are only the second pair we found. One other pair had the potential, but he didn't dare change his mate himself because of the singer connection; he knew that the moment he would taste her blood he would go feral and drain her."

Carlisle's thoughts exploded with the virus information we found out a week ago. 'Marcus told me he nearly drained Didyme, but she calmly stopped him, bringing him back to his rational mind. He thought it was the reason for her long change. Very little blood left. Now we know differently. Edward, do we keep the virus info in the family?'

I nodded.

I scanned the room; Emmett listened quietly for a change, a little perturbed that he was bested by a near human girl. Jasper and Rose were going over all the info we had found a week earlier, drawing
the same conclusions, and both knew to say nothing. Esme was just beaming with pride; to her, this was right. I was finally coming into my own. Kate was asking herself what more we did know, and held off on, because Eleazar had too much contact with Aro. And Alice, Alice was off in visions of Paris Fashion Week, completely focused outside of the room.

I nudged Bella and whispered into her ear as if I was nuzzling her. "Try using Alice's power now, without warning, and try to keep your anger down to a minimum."

I felt her relax then stiffen beside me, her eyes glazed over as she went into a vision. Alice shrieked, her visions of runways going blank and she couldn't get them back. Jasper immediately knew what was happening and also knew that I wouldn't be able to see the vision. He knelt before Bella and started to lead her through the vision as he usually did for Alice.

"Okay, Bella, tell us what you see," he urged her to speak.

Bella's eyes went wide with the experience before she hissed.

"Tanya running through the woods, fuming, covered in mud. She meets another of our kind, a male," Bella started speaking. "Long blond hair, unremarkable features, tattered clothes, leather jacket, about five foot six, he says his name is James. He asks her what her problem is. I don't like the look in his eyes; he's got eyes like that serial killer Charles Manson. He's calculating. Damn, she just blurted out everything that happened with her today, calling me human and a witch. You should see his eyes light up. Thank God she just said she tried to get your attention, Edward, but not how."

Bella shrank back into the couch. "Ewww, nasty, he offers to calm her down, to fuck her to forget about her missed opportunity. Oh, I so don't want to look at this, because she just took him up on his offer. Mighty interesting trees. Lots of noise, but I won't look at them. Scanning the trees, what's that up there to the left? Another female, wild red hair, also tattered clothes, also covered in mud. She's seen them and she's livid, screeching at the top of her lungs at Tanya to get off her mate. Oh dear, the talons come out. Tanya is now fighting with that female. Oh my, there goes her arm... and the other one.

"To the right, James is now building a fire. Calling to the female—Victoria—to quit playing with her kill. They need to leave before those Volturi Guards catch up. They leave. Time speeds up two days and three cloaked figures are investigating the fire remnants. The ingrates didn't even make sure she was completely burned. The littlest cloaked figure pokes at a foot, and the bulky one holds a piece of the skull. Relighting the fire with some new wood and an elaborate torch thing, they clean up the mess James and Victoria left behind."

Bella sagged into the couch, coming out of the vision and looking totally exhausted. Alice was in her face immediately.

"You will never use your power on me again, those visions are MINE!"

Eleazar grabbed Alice's shoulder and turned her around. "You listen up, Alice; this vision was Bella's and hers alone. You know why? Because this very important piece of information wouldn't have come to you. You were off in lala-land, the only thing drifting through your head was fashion. You forced your visions towards some big runway."

Alice started fuming; she stomped her foot and ranted, "Everything in this family is going to hell; you're all so serious. I'm not allowed to take you shopping," she poked Bella in the chest, "I have to be on the lookout for nasty stuff all the damn time. We can never have a party, or go to the beach. Suddenly mister broody is all we are busy with! And his precious human!"
"THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, MARY ALICE!" Jasper shouted over her. Her eyes went wide with shock, she clamped her jaws shut, glared at him, and ran out of the back door. I caught her thoughts but couldn't make sense of them.

'A damn shield, why didn't I think of that?'

Jasper rolled his eyes and sat down next to Bella.

"That was very nicely done, lil' sister. You put in a lot of detail, saving us from the nasty bits. Nobody needs to see that. I apologize for Alice; it's hard on her not to be the center of attention." He sighed. "Maybe we all indulged her too much. You pointed out how she uses her visions to make us all do what she wants. Ah well, she has to learn."

He squared his shoulders and stood up, arms clasped behind his back. Suddenly, Major Whitlock was in the house. "Listen up, this James and Victoria will now be a risk factor. They are already pursued by at least three Volturi Guards; we all know that Demitri will be one of them. They will be caught eventually, which means Aro will know about Bella soon. Are we making sure she's registered as a mate before or after her change is complete?"

Carlisle cleared his throat. "I don't trust Aro. What he did to Marcus is reprehensible, and I think he has something on Caius, too. He's a dictator, but at the moment we can't do anything about that. I certainly don't want to rule the vampire world. I will contact Marcus in such a way he will know to keep it hidden. I want to tell him about Bella's reincarnation theory; it might give him some hope. I'll also tell him about your slow change."

Jasper's hand shot up. "Sorry, Carlisle, I need to stop you there. Please establish communications with Marcus on the reincarnation theory, but don't bring up Bella at all until you're absolutely sure that your lines of communication are safe. Only Marcus can know about this; he can hide his mind from Aro. No other in Volterra is to be trusted. I'm sorry, but this is so big we need to take all precautions we can."

"How is this so big?" Emmett said in an indignant tone. "I mean, it's great Bella isn't in pain while changing, and her power is awesome, to some extent. But why is it so big?"

Eleazar snorted. "Can't you see, Emmett? Oh, maybe you can't. Edward and Bella are not only true mates, they were literally made for each other. Edward's mother and Bella's grandmother knew that. Even if Elizabeth Masen didn't know what would happen to her son, she knew he had to live until a time where young girls would wear cowboy trousers and strange shoes. Bella's grandmother told her she would be special, that she just had to persevere through all adversity. Bella dreamed of Edward long before she ever saw him in real life. If any or all of this came to Aro, he would instantaneously send a very large contingent from the guard to take care of you all. Wiping you off the earth, turning you into ashes. He doesn't care, in his paranoid brain, that you wouldn't ever go against him unless he makes you.

"The last few decades I've slowly diminished my visits to Volterra, waited a week longer every time I reported to him. The last time I spoke to him was just before I came here. That gives us five months until my next visit in person."

"We could go after James ourselves and kill him before he betrays you to Aro, but he's a minor threat. Bella can't switch off her personal shield; that means as soon as Aro touches her he will know that she's powerful. It is sadly required that both spouses shake hands with Aro. It's been tried to do it with coated hands. You must find a way to hide your powers from him. Don't tell me—I have my own method—but whatever you do, leave enough there to placate him, so he can see you're all perfectly normal humanitarian vampires.
"Kate and I will help you as much as possible in your training, Bella; you absolutely must have total control over your power when you meet Aro. We can't have accidental uses of anybody's power. I will tell you what powers are in Aro's guard, with a sketch of the guard involved."

Bella looked baffled; I had already told her about the need to register our mating. What we hadn't explained yet was that it had to be done in person, within a year of the mating. The Mate Registry was ancient and predated the Volturi by several millennia. What was collected of each mated pair were the names of each partner, their human parentage, and their grandparents, if all remembered; if one of the couple was human found; of course, the sires of both also needed to be recorded. Nobody knew why all that information was important, but also loath to change it.

"Okay," Jasper spoke up, "looking at Bella, I think we need to talk about her powers and bring her up to speed on all the vampire legal things later." He turned towards Bella with a big grin on his face. "You need to correct me if I'm wrong, but that last bit of using your power, you did it without anger, am I right?"

A proud smile bloomed on Bella's face. "You're right, Jazz, when I zapped Emmett I found something in my head, the exact place where my power resides. You could almost say that I found the control room. I don't know yet what all the knobs and buttons do, but I found the start button for both tentacles. I called them 'acquire' and 'dispense'. Another interesting knob is a kind of power setting, could maybe also be an amplifier. I'm not sure. The room right now looks like it's still being constructed. I think we won't find all my possibilities today.

"I must say that I like the multiple tracks my brain is gaining; earlier, I could talk to you all simultaneously while going through my brain and trying things out with my power. While I told you my story, I surveyed Tanya and listened to her thoughts because I knew Edward had put her in the vault.

"But I have been thinking about possibilities; Eleazar, you talked about powers and abilities. Then there is MEP: that talks about powers. As I understand it, every vampire is gifted: some with enhanced abilities like Emmett's strength, others with powers like Edward and Jasper. Now, my question is: Are there also vampires with abilities as well as powers?"

"I'm sorry to say, sweet girl, that I don't know. It could be possible."

"I'm posing a theory now. Could I be able to combine powers from two different vampires? Like reading their thoughts and at the same time feel their emotions, or adjust them?"

I thought we were done with all the theory. "Love, maybe you should simply try that, but don't use me this time. Our tendril is different and we can test that another time. I just think that that one is still under construction, in your own imagery. Maybe you can try to feel Carlisle's emotions while you look for his power or ability. I think that we must refrain from Kate's power until you find the power settings."

While I was talking, I tapped into Eleazar to look at Bella in action. The first green tendril wrapped around Jasper. A small wrinkle came between Bella's eyebrows. She looked completely adorable and I wanted to kiss her; I knew to hold back though. Slowly, the second green tendril formed and snuck around Eleazar, whose face broke out in a big grin. He thought to me, 'Damn, Edward, your mate is formidable. Her first try and she's got it!'

The red tendril shot out at vampire speed, wrapping around Carlisle like a whip. As soon as it was in place, Bella started giggling like a little girl. I looked at Jasper and he was grinning too. 'I think I know why she's giggling. Ever felt like a kid on Christmas morning? That's what I felt from him until she wrapped me up. It's the strangest feeling to have only my feelings inside.'
Bella cleared her throat to get us out of our mental banter. "Gentlemen, if I may? Eleazar, with your power I can see that Carlisle's ability is determination, and it's the funniest picture; he looks like Wile E. Coyote." She started giggling again. Eleazar and I looked at each other in surprise; that was not the picture he had. He saw Carlisle like a man pushing an enormous bolder up a hill. "Jasper's power gave another special effect for me. I suddenly felt like I did with Gran on my birthday. She always somehow made me a cake, and I got a present. I was so happy then."

Esme's distraught thoughts came to the front of my mind. 'Oh, Edward, she hasn't celebrated any holidays or birthdays since she was four.'

Suddenly, Bella's eyes drooped; just a moment later she yawned. She crept on my lap and curled up like a kitten. It looked like all the attention and new abilities had drained her. I smiled down at her, kissed her forehead, and sat back on the couch to let her take a much deserved nap.

Chapter End Notes

A/N We got a little more acquainted with Bella's budding power. I'm interested in knowing your ideas of where this could go.

Only one recommendation this week. One very apt to the night of posting. It's the sequel to A Twilight Carol.

Resolutions by 2browneyes. FFn 7700313, and on FP under Browneyes Fanfiction.

See you all next week, please review

Pien
Chapter 15 Her Lion Finding His Kitten

TWILESQUE

Chapter 15 Her Lion Finding His Kitten

BPOV

The week following the big powwow was busy to the extreme. Kate, Carmen, and Eleazar stayed at the Cullen house to help with my training. On top of that, Alice, Edward, and I had the rest of our finals, together with the senior class of the year. That meant that Rose, Jasper, and Emmett were sitting them, too. My concentration wasn't as high as it should have been; all the changes had me reeling. I much preferred to focus on that then inconsequential social studies. After our last finals, they gave us a form to indicate if we would like to attend the graduation ceremony or have our diplomas sent to us in the mail. All six of us opted for the latter.

I went to the Dump that evening with a foreboding feeling; when I entered my room through the window I immediately knew why. Charlie had a guest: the vile drug-dealing scumbag Billy Black. I cracked my door to listen to their conversation. It was all fishing right now; I was really loath to go downstairs.

"So, another summer arrived, only one more year you need to put up with that little bitch of yours. After she graduates, you can easily make her disappear. Then you can finally start using some of your share." Billy’s voice drifted upstairs.

"I'd much rather sell her to the highest bidder, get some of what she cost me back. She's trained well: can cook, cleans with the best of them. And the biggest perk: she's untouched," Charlie countered.

"Let me think on that; I might have a good deal for you. After the high school shut Jake down, I've been training him to take over as Chief of the tribe. He can't, however, take over without a wife and a bun in the oven. Tribal laws want proof of fertility to show worth of the position. I have to go. Got
a shipment coming in tonight; no need to keep your buddies away, though, this one comes over the
sea."

I had my phone out, texting Carlisle to inform Chief Cope about the shipment. I hoped they had the
manpower to catch them on such short notice. It would be futile to think Billy would be implicated. I
was glad Billy left; I could handle Charlie alone. Ten minutes after the door shut on Billy, I had his
dinner on the table and was vacuuming the sitting room, because human food was becoming nastier
and nastier to smell.

As soon as I could, I retired to my room and was out of the window in a flash. On my run to the
treehouse, I remembered the strange state it was in the night of my first show of my powers. Edward
and I came up to it—I was running full speed, he was jogging—and the roof looked dirty, the
entrance platform was muddy, and a couple of strange smells were in the air. Edward sniffed the air
delicately and proclaimed that three female vampires had been here recently, as in the last few hours:
Tanya, Alice, and an unknown scent to him.

He followed Alice's trail first that led us to a crushed remote control. Edward, sighing in relief,
confessed to me that he wanted to keep the family out as well as strangers. He had put extra
safeguards on the remote access, safeguards nobody knew about. Alice, in her petulant storm, had
tried to break in. It hadn't worked.

Tanya's attempts were a lot more pitiful; when we jumped to the front door, we noticed a perfect
imprint on it of somebody who jumped, covered in mud, against it. Extending the porch, we took
inventory around the house. Together, we counted about seven different tries from all directions by
Tanya. And we needed to wash the windows, because she had become muddier every try.

The strange vampire's tries were less in number and desperation. Three different sides of the roof she
tried. We had put it all behind us and snuggled peacefully in our own private bubble. Even after my
nap, I was still worn out that day.

The woods opened up, showing me the clearing. Already? I once again had bested my time to the
treehouse, this time by a massive fifteen seconds. Some vampire traits felt foreign in my head, like
the ability to calculate anything, or keep time without needing a clock. I scaled the entrance tree with
a little difficulty, calling out to Edward to open the door. He appeared in the open door immediately
and caught me when my jump was a fraction too short. Okay, so I could calculate anything, but my
execution of the calculations wasn't top notch yet.

As soon as the electricity of our bond rejuvenated my dwindling power supplies, I became ravenous.
Just as I wanted to ask him for a snack, a cup appeared before me with what smelled like deer blood,
my favorite at this point. They had me try other herbivores but those really couldn't do much for me.
I absolutely loathed all domesticated animals; somehow the wild had gone out of their blood, too,
and made it very bland. Almost like drinking a coke with the fizz gone off.

At Eleazar's advice, I had now adopted an all meat diet, no more dairy, vegetables, or bread. My
breakfast was half a liter of deer blood with a top off mid-morning of another one. My lunch
consisted of an almost rare steak with a blood sauce. During the afternoon when I craved something,
it was either a blood and steak smoothie, or just another half liter of blood. And for dinner, they
surprised me with a deer, still alive. They made a small cut in its carotid artery to get me used to
drinking from the source. That actually had been the best dinner ever.

I was tasting the blood again and my nose had been off, or this was a mixture, the deer blood
overpowering the smell of the other creature. I looked at Edward’s crooked grin, his proud eyes.
"Sorry, but whatever you mixed in with the deer makes this drink unpalatable. Do you have any
clean deer blood left?"
He wrapped me up in a bear hug. "You are amazing, honey, of course I have clean deer blood for you. Carlisle wanted me to test you. To that cup, he added three drops of human blood. He suspected that the slow change would eradicate your thirst for human blood. You never will have to fight the urge to kill a human. To celebrate, I have a cup of something special. When you were at the Dump I went for a quick hunt and bounded into this. Before I fed, I saved you a cup."

He handed the cup over and I sniffed it. A mesmerizing smell wafted into my nose; this was appealing. I took a sip, the rich taste filling my mouth, building a picture of feral, unrestricted power. I gulped it down and demanded, "What is this?! Oh, this is good, never tasted anything so immensely good. Fanfuckingtastic…"

His grin grew, his eyes sparkling with pure lust. "Bella, darling, that was a cup of mountain lion. When I caught it, I simply had to save you a cup, just to see you taste your first predator. Please remember that predators are treats, we only go after them when they are too close to humans, or start to overpopulate an area."

The blood inside my system did something with my instincts; I had never felt this when I fed on deer blood. But the predator unleashed something inside. My purr started up, and I began to stalk Edward. Slowly, with catlike moves, I strutted towards him. His eyes lighting up, he began to softly growl and back away.

"You're mine, Edward, mine alone, and I want you."

His purr became louder, and his face almost split in two with the smile he was sporting. I noticed his jeans were straining to hold his cock captured, and at a glance it looked like they were losing.

He hit the couch and froze; I crouched, licking my lips. A tearing nose alerted me to his jeans losing the battle with his arousal. He huffed and ripped the rest of the ruined pants off himself.

"Commando, Edward? You must have been in a hurry; you never go commando," I teased, because Edward only wore underwear if he hadn't had pants on. His growling smile only grew. I still stood crouched about ten feet away from him. I didn't like that his t-shirt covered his recently freed dick. My purr became something resembling a bit more like a growl. Not at all impressive for a full vampire, but I was kind of proud. My growling attempt made the lower front of Edward’s shirt twitch. I couldn't hold back any longer. I pounced.

My attack being precise this time, I knocked Edward over and landed on top of him on the couch. A look of surprised joy on his face, he surrendered to me immediately, trying to soothe me. I was having none of it. With a sharp snap, and another half-baked growl, I showed him I was feral.

My side track suddenly came to a conclusion; I understood it all. The fact I had seen two beings inside my Edward our first time mating, and almost every time after that. The strange feeling of having another you inside. My vampire had become an entity. She was controlling my body at the moment. The predator blood had shaken her instincts to a vibrant level and she had taken over.

Another feral growl burst from her chest; she never stopped purring. Edward’s eyes had turned pitch black and he answered with a growl of his own, two of the ultimate predators calling out to their mates. Some kind of realization dawned in his eyes and I almost saw him giving over the reins to his own vampire. His eyes found mine and, through those, the humans stayed connected, giving the
bodies over to the vampires.

"Mine, you're mine, only mine forever!" she growled out between clenched teeth, teeth tingling from the force they were smashed together.

"Yours, only yours forever, and you're mine, too," he grunted. On the ‘mine’, his subservient behavior vanished and he took control, ripping my clothes and his shirt off. Smirking when he saw that I was commando, too, he pressed me up against the wall with vampire speed and strength, grinding his diamond hard cock into my stomach. Hoisting me up, he urged my legs around his waist and slammed into me with incredible force.

He stilled and examined my eyes, the human checking if I was vampire enough to withstand that. This was the first time his vampire didn't let his human ask permission in advance, but relented just after to check on me. I arched and rounded my back, making my hips dance on his cock.

Understanding that I was not only okay, but eager to follow through, he set a punishing pace if we had been human. Hard and fast was definitely the definition here.

Snarls and growling whimpers filled the air, his left hand grabbing my hair and forcing my head to the side so he could suck on my neck freely. Even in the feverish action he kept his teeth to himself, only biting down with them covered by his lips. She grabbed two full fists of his hair and pulled his head towards her, crushing her mouth into his, forcing her tongue into his mouth for the very first time, almost fucking his mouth with her tongue in the same fast pace our hips were setting to follow. Using the muscles in her pussy, she started to bring his release closer and closer. The hand still holding her hair came away and snaked between us, rubbing my clit while never wavering in his movements.

Lightning was shooting through my entire body; every part of me felt little shocks, shocks that grew in length and intensity. My entire body started to feel like a livewire. It felt as if I were lighting up the room with that electricity building inside me. When he growled out that I was his, everything about the electricity short-circuited and I exploded with his lip clad teeth latching on to my shoulder, biting down hard. The explosion doubled in force at that moment. His ferocious and possessive growl punctuated his own release, thick streams of venom coating my inner walls, being absorbed, changing me into his equal mate. Because he was mine, and he far from satisfied the feral beast unleashed inside me.

I jumped down from his hold, throwing him towards the couch. Kneeling around his head and swallowing his still rock hard cock down whole, I relaxed my throat and allowed his engorged head entrance, purring against his flesh, sending those vibrations through his body. His hands grabbed my hips and smashed my pussy into his face. He started French kissing my lower lips, probing his tongue deep into me, licking the entire length from back to front. From rimming my ass to circling my clit, he attacked as if it I were an oasis in the dessert and he the lost traveler.

Synchronizing our attacks, we ate each other whole. The new build of electricity in our bodies, this time much faster, was eclipsing the feeble lightning storm of our last release. I'd never felt everything so intense and detailed. My body again became a livewire, only this time with a high voltage charge. He took my clit into his mouth and ever so carefully scraped his teeth over it. The livewire hit a puddle of water and exploded. I swallowed harshly around his dick and brought him over the edge with me.

We brought each other down slowly, our breaths equally choppy. He turned, as quick as ever, and took me in his arms.

"Mmm, love, I think someone has woken up inside you. Do you like wild animalistic sex, kitten?"
My answer was the only one my vampire would allow—she's still in control of my body—a playful snarl.

"Oh my, kitten; you're still here, aren't you? Shall we bring you out some more? Hmmm, do you want another cup of mountain lion?"

A joyful snarl and my head nodding furiously made him smile his crooked smile. He flitted to the kitchen and back, turning over the highly tasteful beverage. Within seconds my whole body exploded from the power surge running through me. Oh my god, that stuff was heavenly. Kitten, as Edward called her, was purring like a fat cat being scratched behind the ears while lazing in the sun.

When the drink settled in my stomach and the power started to run through me, the feral side of my vampirette showed itself again, grabbing the cup from Edward's hands and licking all the residual blood clinging to the walls up. He tried to get the cup from me in a playful way but was met with a snarling hiss of protective possessiveness. That cup was mine, mine alone.

Edward’s mouthwatering scent washed over me, and I used the instincts, which were unlocked, to smirk at him and run my claws over his chest. A deep rumbling purr was my answer, while I saw at his stance that he, too, only listened to instincts. Two primal beings who sized each other up: I believed they really liked what they saw, because satisfied purrs and mewls filled the air. My body had never felt so alive; it sang the hallelujah chorus. Even my teeth seemed to join in the singing, tingling away in the soprano section. Running my tongue over them, they felt very sensitive in a good way, as if they had acquired a sense of touch.

We pounced at the same time, falling entangled onto the couch and over the backrest to the floor behind. Rolling over and over playfully, we battled for dominance without the urge to win, egging each other on to explore and to find that the limits we’re taking a back step every time we came near them. It was obvious I was now more vampire than human. My heightened hearing picked up tentative movement on the entrance platform. I sniffed the air and growled possessively; damn that pixie spying on us. Edward’s growl joined mine and I wrapped him up in my green tendril, shooting the red one towards the platform.

'Why can't I find the damn frequency? With them sealed inside, I can't try and jump on that little ledge. I need to get inside; they did that all by themselves, not fair. I'm the resident decorator—shopper—and they need to accept that.'

"Alice, try and find some form of manners inside yourself and give us our privacy," I called towards the door. "Or do I need to tell Jasper about your little excursions here while we are going at it. You know, Alice, when you two mated, I believe you had alone time. Damn, you two had almost two decades before you found the Cullens. The same goes for Rose and Emmett; they left to be alone for about a decade. When Carlisle and Esme mated, Edward left to travel the world. What I'm trying to tell you in this convoluted way is: GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, YOU'RE NOT WELCOME IN THE TREEHOUSE! THIS IS OUR PLACE!" For good measure, I threw another almost ferocious growl behind it. We heard a curse, and someone scurrying to get down and scrambling to get away.

"Kitten, are you all right?" Edward asked gently, caressing my cheekbone.

"No, Edward, I'm not. I'm pissed off. Why would she constantly try to get between us? How can she even think it’s acceptable to sit on our doorstep while we're here? Don't get me wrong, I'm glad we have a future seer in the family, but her future, the one she thinks up, is not my future. If she keeps pushing, she should know that my instincts are quite volatile."

"Hey, you there, don't let her win, don't give her the satisfaction of having ruined our day. She
interfered for only five minutes. Where's my kitten gone? She was delectable, and I was completely hers. I'm yours to do with as you please… As soon as you catch me."

He darted up the stairs to the bedroom, and my human mind did a step back to let my vampirette take over. We shot up the stairs and dove onto Edward, who had draped himself on the bed, straddling him. I clawed his chest and attacked his mouth while he grabbed my hips wildly and ground me into his steel erection. His eyes were coal black, radiating lust. A purring growl emanated from his chest, making us vibrate on the bed.

"My Lion," my alter ego snarled. "All mine, you're all mine. Nobody can have you because you're MINE!" Teeth gritted, eyes hooded with possessive energy and lust, my vampirette claimed her mate.

"OH YESSSS, KITTEN! All yours, completely and utterly yours."

With every thrust of his hips, the head of his dick slid over my clit, ramping up the electricity between us. If our last two thunderstorms weren't enough, this time the air almost crackled with it. Our connection was growing stronger and stronger.

With a decisive swivel of his hips, Edward entered me completely in one forceful thrust. His hands had locked onto my tits and were massaging them while his fingers started pulling on my nipples. Light bolts of electricity shot from my tits straight to my pussy, the three way lightning ramping up the livewire inside of me. Every bit of my body was lit up, alive for the very first time.

I rode him with abandon, his nimble fingers pulling on my nipples on every upstroke. I put my hands on his thighs to get better leverage. We both looked at the very erotic picture of his dick sliding in and out of me. We were one; we became one with every stroke, every thrust. We would always be one, never alone again.

I threw my arms around his neck and buried my nose in the crook of it. Nothing but instinct, I gave in and did it.

We both exploded into a euphoric high.

Chapter End Notes

A/N I have to confess that I really hadn't planned this chapter the way it went, but that cup of mountain lion, Edward surprised me with, changed the direction to new heights in enjoyment for our beloved couple.

Please tell me what you think Bella did at the end of the chapter.

My recommendations for this week:

Distractions by windchymes, FFn 5759303.

Sacrificial Lamb by Nolebucgrl, FFn 5390243, TWCS Sid=3389, and on FP under Nolebucgrl.

See you all next week,

Please review, Pien
Chapter 16 Full Stride Institute

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I just borrow her characters to mold them the way I like it. No infringement on her intellectual property is intended.

Last Friday Twilesque has been reported as being not compliant with the FFn TOS. When it is lifted I'll repost it on this site but replace the non-compliant chapters with summaries. The full story can be found on FP and Ao3 too.

Thanks once again to my fantastic team of encouragers, helpers, they keep me going on writing. Lorraine Bubbleybear, Chandrakanta, and LunaDiSangue85.

Now let's go and see what Bella did.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 16 Full Stride Institute.

EPOV

She bit me.

My mate bit me.

My mate marked me!

"I'm yours, sweetheart, entirely yours. For all of eternity."

Bella had retreated in shock, her hands over her eyes, our bodies still intimately connected. She mumbled into her hands, "Oh, Edward, I'm so sorry; I didn't know I could do that. I didn't know I could harm you. So, so sorry, Edward."

I looked at her as if she had grown a second head. What was she talking about? She did the most glorious thing, and she was apologizing?

"Honey, what's the matter? You marked me, you already marked me! Oh, love, don't cry. This is so wonderful. What you just did was perfectly natural."

Her hands slowly fell away from her face; she looked at me with doubtful eyes.

"You know I'm incapable of lying to you. Did Carlisle not tell you everything about mating? Oh, of course. He just handled the human/vampire part of our relationship, and with everything that has been going on, nobody thought about explaining it to you."

"What do you mean? How can it be right when you have to keep your teeth away from me? If you can't bite me, I shouldn't feel good about biting you."

"Love, do you remember what Carlisle called the biting instinct?"
"Yeah, he told me you would get in some kind of frenzy and needed to bite something. Preferably me, but I needed to divert it to prevent you changing me. Edward, he never said I would get into that frenzy, too! Why would I want to bite you?"

"Love, your vampirrette woke up today. I saw her inside of you, and she took over. Every vampire, male or female, has the instinct to show to the world who its mate is. Our way of showing is to mark our mate, to bite in the shoulder or over the heart. That second bite is more intimate, something solely done for themselves. Your vampirrette just acted on her instinct and marked me. To me, it was the most incredible experience. It heightened our climax a lot; you have to have noticed that."

"Yeah, that electricity between us was never as high. I'm still a bit rattled, though. The fact that I broke your skin, and wanted to drink your venom... At the time it felt as if my teeth had grown a sense of touch. Our electricity made them tingle. What do you think; are my teeth vampirized now?"

I had to think about that; only vampire teeth could penetrate our skin. She broke the skin on my shoulder. I ran my fingers over her mark, feeling myself settled, at home even more than after our initial mating.

"Bella love, I think we need to talk to Carlisle and Eleazar about this. It's just another step in your change and they have to be in the loop."

"You're right; do we still have any spare clothes left in here? We once again destroyed them all I think."

A few days later I had to hunt again, and just like Carlisle suggested, I was going to take Bella for her first hunt. She was waiting for me in the treehouse, waiting for me to bring her cup of blood. This time she would have to catch her blood herself.

She was waiting for me, sitting against the entrance tree, knees to her chest, arms around her legs and her chin resting on her knees. When she sensed me, her eyes located me and a big smile showed on her face, just like on mine. I grabbed hold of her and threw her on my back; when she had locked her arms and legs around me securely, I ran off in the direction of Canada.

"Edward, where are we going? What's going on, I can run for myself."

"Yes, you can run for yourself, but our hunting grounds are far away. You still get tired, love. I want you fresh for the hunt; that's why you're on my back. Love, you're going to catch your own prey today." One, two, three, and she didn't disappoint.

"EDWARD! I can't yet. I don't know how. I'm not that far yet! Oh, Edward, please don't make me do this."

"Bella, don't act like a three year old, and don't fall back in your insecure little human role. Hunting is instinctive; that means Kitten knows what to do. All you have to do is keep her under control, know what you're doing at all times. Don't let your vampirrette run wild. Because you still feed on a human schedule, please don't choose too big a prey. I'll bring you close, then you'll have to do the rest yourself."

"Okay?" Her answer came out as a question.

"Still not entirely sure, are you?"

She nodded her assent to not being sure. I picked up the scent of a rather large herd of whitetail deer. That should be sufficient for both of us; also, a large herd would congregate again soon after an
attack, unlike a small grouping, a family unit which would scram and find a larger herd to get safe within. I carried her until we were only about fifty feet away. I put my finger to my lips to indicate she needed to be silent. I whispered far below the deer’s hearing level and was very glad Bella picked it up.

"Honey, you need to grab one around the neck and bring it down as fast as possible. Your instincts will tell you what to do next, just follow them."

I set her on her feet and inhaled deeply through my nose; she mirrored my action. I saw a minute change in her stance. Then I pointed to my ears, listening out to the heartbeats of our prey, keeping a very tight leash on my vampire. If I didn’t, he would ruin her first hunt by doing it for her.

Bella shifted into a hunting crouch and stalked noiselessly through the grass between the last trees. I followed just as stealthily. I pointed over her shoulder to a good sized kill for her. She hunched further into a hunting crouch and, after another deep breath, her leg muscles let go. With a graceful leap she broke the perimeter, two more catlike moves and Bella had one of the deer in a grip around the neck. The deer started bucking to get loose; Bella held on with a totally confused look on her face. She looked back to me, clearly asking silently what to do. I was confused, too; I had told her to bring down the deer. That had been enough for me, Esme, Rose, and Emmett to make our first kills. Bella only held on to the now frantic doe.

"Bella, turn the head towards the back, it'll help you bring it down."

Bella tried to change her hold to do what I told her, but the manic bucking of the doe caught her off guard. The doe escaped, thrashing out of her hold, tearing her jeans with its sharp hoof. The expression of confused pride on Bella's face instantly changed into deep disappointment. Her eyes shone with tears, tears which slowly, very slowly, brimmed over and crawled down her face. Glittering tears rolling down her face at a snail’s pace. They intrigued me; I shot to her side and cupped her face between my hands, using my thumbs to clear the moisture from her face lovingly.

"I'm just not good enough, Edward; I'm a failure at hunting. You'll have to feed me for the rest of eternity."

My Bella, always jumping to the worst case scenario; I hated her parents for ruining her self image. 

"Bella," I sighed, "this was your first try. Have you ever heard of practice makes perfect? Now you know how to bring it down, and I might advise you to let Kitten go a bit more. The person I saw holding the deer was the same person I always see in the supermarket, tightly controlled features and firmly showing nothing but the mask."

Her nose scrunched up in thought, analyzing, I had no doubt, her first effort at hunting. She looked adorable, but I knew her mind was sharp as a freshly sharpened knife. Her eyes closed and I took the opportunity to quickly taste her tears from my thumbs. They were still slightly salty, but my tongue broke them down into elements and told me I had three quarters venom and a quarter salty liquid in my mouth. To me, her taste was heavenly; I mentally froze for a second, because I had tasted her. A quick scan throughout my body told me no frenzy was building. Just as fast, I rejected the whole frenzy idea; that wasn't possible anymore. My girl was more vampire than human now.

While I was contemplating my own things, I saw Bella's face slowly change from despair to determination. She started inhaling deeply and caught the scent of the herd, which had relocated from the grassy clearing to a nearby watering hole. All by herself, Bella started to stalk the animals, stealthily creeping through the woods like a cat. I took to the trees to follow her without being a threat.
I didn't need to give her renewed instructions to the parts she already mastered. I should have known; my pride in her soared. She halted at the tree-line, assessing the animals, her crouch deepened and she sprung, grabbing a fairly large doe. With a swift turn of her hands, she twisted the head of the deer towards its hindquarters, dropping it to the ground. My silent heart gave a lurch of pride; she did it.

Elation blooming on her face, she turned to me, she never even zoned me out; her eyes found mine immediately and unwaveringly. Her attention wavered from the doe, and it freed itself from her grip. In her eyes I saw a sudden change: Bella stepped back and Kitten took total control. The doe was barely on her feet but Kitten had her down again in an instant. This time her focus was complete, sinking her teeth with no hesitation into the carotid artery.

Jumping down, I slowly approached her. When she sensed me coming near, she growled to keep me away, defending her prey. My pride in this remarkable creature grew once again. All her instincts were busy now, feeding and protecting her kill, and even I—her mate—would not be allowed near it. Bella had let go too much; Kitten was in complete control. I had to carefully coax her to let go.

I suddenly remembered why we had waited to go out hunting until today: I needed to hunt also. I left Kitten to it and concentrated on the rest of the herd. The stupid animals had simply scattered but stayed near; the deed was done, the danger passed. I targeted a large buck and freed just enough of my vampire to hunt, bringing down the buck with a giant leap. Within seconds, I broke its neck and was drinking to sate my thirst.

I kept my attention on Kitten, who had finished with her kill. Her eyes were glued to me, following my every move, eyes black with desire after my demonstration of being a very proficient hunter. I clamped the artery I was drinking from and looked her straight in the eye, showing her the neck of my kill, inviting her to join me. Kitten pounced, but not on the buck. Apparently she had sated her thirst.

I growled menacingly in warning; I would not stand being distracted from the hunt. She might be sated, but I was not. I returned to drinking my prey, still holding its neck in offer to her. Kitten mewed and attacked the opposite side of the animal. Together we drained the buck. I kept growling and purring at her; I had to get her compliant to give Bella a chance to take control once again.

The constant flow of reassuring sounds started to have an effect. I stifled a grin, instead throwing her my lopsided smile, which always melted her before. Now we could test if it worked on her vampirrette, too. Her whole body still kept a catlike appearance, showing me that Kitten was still in control. Her eyes gave me another picture, though. Looking deep into the dark chocolate pools, I saw the war being waged inside. I stayed with the nonverbal communication. I only uttered feral, but soothing, noises. Slowly the mewls changed into more human sounding whimpers. Her eyes changed from dark into milk chocolate and she spoke.

"Edward, that was… I have no words. Wow. You're such a sexy beast when you hunt."

I dropped the carcass in shock. Okay, so Kitten hadn't completely vacated the premises. I caressed her cheek, not breaking our eye contact, not even blinking. Bella also held our gaze; after a few minutes she started to blink. Then I knew the human inside had completely taken control again.

"Welcome back, Bella, did you enjoy your hunt?"

"I feel more full than ever before, but I have to say that this was The. Best. Meal. Ever. Human food never gave me this much satisfaction. The hunt is almost orgasmic in its intensity. I wanted to fuck you into oblivion, but my Lion wouldn't give me control. You were completely and utterly magnificent in your male dominant reactions, honey. Kitten just melted into a puddle of sated goo by only looking at you. But that might have been your plan to help me get back my control, wasn't it?"
"It was, and it worked. Thank god, because Kitten is still a lot more newborn in her reactions. I have
to apologize to you, though; I never thought about your control as a human for the last twelve years.
You held on to too much of it when we started the hunt; I think you need to practice letting Kitten
out without her taking over. But enough chit chat, let's get you back to the house. Esme made
Charlie's dinner, and Alice had it on the table for him. She stayed in your old room a bit, making little
noises before going home. He never suspected you weren't there."

"Oh great, because we need to talk to Carlisle and Eleazar. I think we're ready for another diet
change."

We started running towards the house in unison. It was really remarkable how much we were in tune
with each other. I felt our bond grow stronger every day. I had run us a long way out, just to make
sure that I wouldn't be surprised by a stray human in hunting mode. After our little test earlier this
week, I was confident it wouldn't bother Bella even the slightest. My fantastic, brave girl started to
get exhausted half way to the house, her speed drastically dropped. I scooped her up and ran with her
the rest of the way, her head against my chest, giggling away in euphoric bliss.

I lowered her to her feet after I jumped over the river, and together we walked at a human pace to the
house. As soon as our scents came close, Carlisle started thinking towards me.

'Edward, Alice notified me that Bella wants to talk to Eleazar and I. Sorry, son, but Eleazar had an
emergency with Irina in Denali. He had to leave for the day. But come to my office now, we can
handle this within the family.'

I sprinted up the stairs, with Bella in my arms again, and halted at his door. He thought his assent to
me and we entered.

"Carlisle, so glad to see you. I hunted today," Bella almost shouted at him. "But I realized something
in the aftermath; I'm done with human schedules for food. I might be more able to let go without
losing control when I stop to sate myself at human mealtimes. I just wanted to run it by you and
Eleazar. Where is he?"

"Sorry, Bella, Carlisle told me he's gone to Denali to deal with Irina," I told her.

"Oh, okay. Well, what do you think then, Carlisle? Can I stop acting like a human in the food
department?"

Carlisle looked thoroughly impressed again with my mate. His thoughts were completely silent for at
least thirty seconds—okay, thirty-four seconds, to be precise—then they started up again in triple
time, leaving me unable to read them. I heard a soft giggle beside me.

"I just eavesdropped on Carlisle's thoughts; I think I impressed him a bit, didn't I?"

Carlisle barked out a laugh and said, "That you did. I must deduce from your words that you had
trouble letting go at first? But you said you hunted, that means you did let go later? Did your inner
vampirette take over?"

"Right on all counts, Carlisle," I told him. "She was a bit hesitant until her second catch tried to
escape; her inner vampirette took over and drained it in under a minute. After that, I had to pull out
all the stops to bring her back under control."

"Bella, I think your deductions about your diet are right, but you have to tell Edward when you're
thirsty. Or, in human terminology, when you get a sore throat. I'm not even sure if you will get a sore
throat, but if you get any signs, like simply feeling hungry, tell Edward and he will take you
"Thank you, Carlisle. They got what they deserved," I answered, because Bella was almost out of it. "I'm going to let her sleep on the couch."

My whole family was home. Alice was reorganizing her closet while Jasper was in his own study. Emmett and Rose were in their room, talking. Carlisle was in his office; Esme was in hers, with the door between them open. Bella and I were in the family room. I lay on the couch with her on my chest. I treasured these calm moments; she wouldn't need sleep soon. I would miss the special intimacy of her sleeping form using me for a pillow.

She wasn't asleep long when she sighed my name, making Emmett mock me in his thoughts. I tried really hard not to put him on ignore in my brain, but it was just too much. Luckily, I could center my thoughts on a very proud Rose; she had heard our talk to Carlisle. Her sisterly pride was enormous for her new sister succeeding in her first hunt.

I was mindlessly fingering the tear in Bella's jeans, the one the deer had put there, when I suddenly saw a vague discoloration of her skin underneath. Looking closely, I could discern a bruise on my Bella's leg. I started to panic; if she was still bruising, she could obviously still get hurt. The only thing keeping that bruise from being deep black-blue right now was the fact that her blood was now three quarters venom. I had to find her some…

"Welcome to Bullstrode Institute, you will leave your name at the door. You there will be 1578, and you will be 1654," a strange voice shouted through the house. I looked down in shock; my gentle Bella sounded like a foghorn.

I heard Emmett stifle his laughter, his thoughts assaulting me. 'Damn, that's rich; it's a really good movie, Mathilda. But how did she imagine that?'

I was awed; Bella's sleep addled brain had linked a book she read years ago with the name of the Institute she heard only once.

"You there, 1578, you thought you were better than others? Where did you get those illusions, you little slut. A whore before you were of age. Throwing yourself at every male to get attention. Get it through your shallow little mind now; that is the wrong kind of attention. They told me of you two bullying other girls at the high school. How do you like it now, with the shoe on the other foot? You're nothing, less than the soles of my shoes."

It seemed a very vivid dream, but something caught my attention in the thoughts assaulting me in merriment. Alice's thoughts were subdued but they showed me a vision of what Bella was barking out. The edges were blurred, some scenes were very vague. Both those indicators told me it was a vision. What I didn't understand was the way Alice tried to keep her thoughts silent from me.

It all suddenly clicked in my head, and I knew Eleazar had been wrong. Bella had, in her sleep, tapped into Alice's visions. She did, however, not stop Alice from seeing the vision, too.

When I heard the Battle Hymn of the Republic being translated into Swahili, I knew another strange force was happening. Alice was hard at work keeping me out of her head. But somehow I could
listen around her block. I quickly made several different decisions which cancelled each other out. I didn't want Alice to know that Bella had strengthened my power. My hunch was that the extra power was part of our growing bond.

"Now show me how you would greet a male visitor," the foghorn inside my mate barked. "Right, demure is the word; 1654, you are not properly dressed. That skirt is about fifteen centimeters too short. That will be another round of kitchen duty for both of you. Unworthy little brats, not worthy to walk on two legs. Drop and crawl to the kitchen. I have onions that need to be peeled; after that you can clean out the fridge I had you shut off a week ago."

The visuals from Alice accompanied it all nicely. The hulking matron of the institute didn't look like Ms. Bullstrode in the film. But I realized she could easily be like the mental picture Bella had built from the book. The girls were used as pieces of furniture, had to show true submission, give up their personalities, and then they started to build them up again from the blank slates they had become. The Bullstrode character was the equivalent of the drill sergeant in boot camp, just a lot nastier.

Carlisle and Esme drifted into the room, followed closely by Jasper. They conveyed in their thoughts how interesting Bella's dream was to them. I ignored their presence, keeping my eyes on my girl, my woman, my mate. I honed my power in on the extensive vision Alice was still lost in; I felt her irritation at not being able to force it away. Behind all of what I picked up, she was still blocking me by reciting all misses starting with years, and years of Miss Universe, Miss World, through to every town Miss she ever knew.

Rose and Emmett also came downstairs, after she warned him to keep it down. All I did was nod to them, quickly immersing myself again in my Bella bubble with a side of Alice.

"Don't you scowl at me; being my footstool is a promotion from the doormat you were before!"

Emmett's eyes almost burst out of his skull with his stifled mirth. His mind conjured up strangely enhanced pictures, dressing the girls in minimal leather clothing, leashes in place. The whole scene was placed in a BDSM dungeon.

"You better make sure that chocolate cake is iced thickly with chocolate buttercream, and don't you dare taste it! I know one of you has been into my chocolates. I'm still thinking about your payment for those."

Another flurry of images invaded my mind, surprisingly from Carlisle: a stark white kitchen with the girls in paper jumpsuits and surgical gloves, working on a giant five-tiered cake. All my family downstairs was now in stitches; they almost couldn't hold in their laughter. Rose had both her hands over her mouth to keep her sounds in. Emmett had buried his face into the couch by now.

I once again tried to get into Alice's head and I saw that the girls were ready to graduate the institute. Dressed in white dresses, the girls stood demurely to the side in a big ballroom.

"Well, aren't you a couple of nicely dressed debutantes. If they believe you tonight, if you show them who you’ve become then you will go home. If not, you earned yourself another six months in the institute. Now go out and don't embarrass me."

Everybody had the correct image in their head; Bullstrode just looked different in Esme and Carlisle’s heads. The rest had seen the movie and pictured her. All their imaginations went wild and the restraints on their laughter weakened even more. If I read Alice correctly, both the girls would fail their first test.
"1578, get your ass down here now! What did I tell you time and again, what did I tell you about flirting with anyone?"

"You dare to talk back to me! That's it, welcome to the second half of your training. You're going back with us!"

Emmett actually started to convulse on the couch, only barely hanging on.

"There is number 1654, another fail that's even more obvious than your footstool buddy. What is it, didn't you want to go home alone? Did we not do enough to teach you to behave as a proper lady? How is it that I find you under a table with a piece of male genitalia in your mouth…"

The room exploded, Emmett the loudest of us all rolling on the ground. Jasper almost exploded himself with all the mirth streaming into him. Bella shot up, vampire speed, looking around at us all dissolving into puddles of blubbering jello, with a giant smirk on her face.

"It seems that even being three-quarters vampire didn't stop my sleep talking. I so hope this dream will turn reality. I felt as if I was Bullstrode. It was so good to finally turn the tables!"

All of us decided that we would watch a movie; our first choice… Mathilda, of course.

Chapter End Notes

A/N I really like to know what you think about Bella's first hunt, as well as her growing power.

My recommendations for this week:

A couple of companion fics, one in BPOV the other EPOV
The Dark Dance of Temptation and Becoming Whole by stupid shiny volvo driver ffn 3490192 and 3429718.

Next week we're going to start to rid Bella of her human mindset and she and Edward will start to openly defy Alice's control.

See you next week,
Please review, Pien
Chapter 17 I'm a Vampire!

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephenie Meyer, I just play with her universe. I don't intend any copyright infringement.

A big thank you, once again, goes to Chandrakanta for cleaning up my mistakes, to Lorraine Bubbleybear for listening to my ramblings and helping to form them into a story, and LunaDiSangue85 for reading and dealing with continuity. Without these three I wouldn't have ever come this far.

now without further ado, the next chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 17 I'm a Vampire!

BPOV

The day after my first hunt and that amazing revenge dream, Edward took me to the treehouse. He made it clear he wanted to talk to me in private. We ran side by side, but it was obvious my speed still wasn't nearly as great as his. Even so, it was totally exhilarating to run beside him. We entered the treehouse; my jump still was a bit off but I almost made it.

"Bella, please sit down, honey. Yesterday, during your dream, I noticed a few things. Firstly, Alice tried to keep me out of her head with her usual shenanigans. Only it didn't work; somehow I could get behind that first layer and see the vision she had. Secondly, your dream was in sync with Alice's vision. Thirdly, Alice experienced her vision along with you. And lastly, Alice was unable to stop the vision until you woke up.

"I'm a bit awed by your power, love; when you slept, you somehow tapped into Alice's power and had a vision. You didn't block her vision this time, and she absolutely didn't notice something was going on until the vision ended. She was off in her own mind, working hard to keep me out. Normally it would have been enough; I would have heard nothing but her deranged ramblings."

I was looking at him baffled, trying to wrap my mind around it. I had to recap to him to see if I had understood it right.

"Okay, so you're saying that I didn't have a dream, but a vision, all while I power boosted your mind reading, made sure Alice didn't notice I was using her power, but made it impossible for her to force it away. And what I dreamed was not a dream, at least not all of it, but it will really happen." I looked up at him with a growing smirk on my face.

"Yes, probably, but I don't know if your dream images were altered by your imagination, because every spoken comment conjured up images from the book or movie Mathilda. But I would like to discuss the consequences of what happened with your power and/or our bond. The power boost was fantastic; to be able to easily circumvent a block was awe inspiring. I want to keep everything to do
with our bond private though, just between us, nobody else. Because the things I picked up from behind Alice's block, not related to the vision, were vague and disturbing. I can't put my finger on it, but something is wrong with her."

"Of course there is; even though I told her straight to her face that I would not tolerate to be bullied, she still tries to manipulate me into all sorts of stupid girly stuff. My hunch is those are probes to see if she can manipulate me. I don't know; I think she's so incredibly spoiled that she just can't take no for an answer. I agree with you that if we discover new things about my power or our bond we need to decide together if we keep it between ourselves, or share it. But looking at what happened yesterday, everyone is convinced that I had a dream? Even Alice?"

"As far as I can tell, yes; Alice thinks she had a vision of your dream. She is a bit rattled the vision was so strong she couldn't snap out of it, but she has absolutely no thoughts about you doing any of it."

"Then I think the power boost and me borrowing a power without blocking will stay between us. Let them think it was a dream."

Damn her! Alice is here again, spying on us. She's internally outraged she missed our talk. She's thinking, and I quote: "Damn Jasper and his needy ways. He made me miss their talk. Now I still don't know. I don't understand; I can't see Bella much, but now I can't see Eddiekins anymore either. And he was always my truest follower."

**Damn her! Alice is here again, spying on us. She's internally outraged she missed our talk. She's thinking, and I quote: "Damn Jasper and his needy ways. He made me miss their talk. Now I still don't know. I don't understand; I can't see Bella much, but now I can't see Eddiekins anymore either. And he was always my truest follower."**

You're right, love; she's totally spoiled rotten and will do anything to get her clutches into you. Oh, I just thought of something. I'll have to leave you with Rose tomorrow; I want to go shopping, alone. I'm finally going to buy the clothes I like. If she can't see me, she can't stop me. I'll bring them here, so they're safe from her destructive hands.

All I said was "Okay," and then we lost ourselves again in each other's caresses.

The next day Rose found out from Edward he wanted to go to Olympia alone. When his car was out of sight, after a lengthy and totally satisfying kiss to tide me over, she immediately told me that his birthday was coming up: June twentieth, his human birthday. His vampire birthday was ironically the same as my human one. She wanted to go with me to Seattle to buy his presents and maybe look around for my future wedding outfit. I started to feel uncomfortable inside, my mind going a mile a minute. I wanted to go badly; I had the most perfect idea for a present, but no money at all. I would have to sell some of Gran's jewelry, but over the years that supply had sorely dwindled. Even so, I told Rose I would go change and get my things.

Sitting next to her in her fire-engine red convertible, I rummaged through my little box, internally calculating what it was worth. My slow panic became more urgent inside every minute, because I was suddenly faced with selling the only two pieces I really wanted to keep: Gran's hair combs—a beautiful pair—made from solid silver encrusted with gemstones. I didn't know what kind of stone the blue ones were, but as a child I had frequently used them to restrain my hair for just a few minutes, to look in the mirror and admire them. I dreamed at those moments that I would wear them on my wedding day. My soul constricted inside at the feeling of losing them. My breathing became choppy and unhelpful, even if I needed the air less and less. I started to hyperventilate.

Rose turned her head sharply towards me, stopped the car and flew around, opening my door and kneeling in the opening.
"Hold your breath now!" she ordered. "Listen to my voice and follow my breathing; come on, you can do it, you're almost a vampire. Control your body; we'll talk about the rest."

I did as I was told, and through the control of my body my senses returned to almost normal, although my almost absent tears crept along my cheeks.

"Now, please tell me what could bother you so much that an almost vampire would start to hyperventilate?"

"Oh, Rose, I was looking at my gran's jewelry to decide what to sell today." Her eyebrows shot up but she stayed silent. "I browsed the Internet last week and found the most perfect present for Edward, but I can only buy it with my gran's jewelry. Just now I looked and what is left doesn't have a lot of value. The only two pieces that have value are her gem-encrusted hair combs, but my dream was to wear those at my wedding day. It breaks my heart to have to sell them."

The incredulous look on Rose's face had only grown, tinged with some concern. And when I paused to take a slow breath to stay in control, she burst. She threw something in my lap and started to rant.

"Oh, Bella, where do you get the idea that you need to sell those? Have you forgotten about you being family? Have you completely blocked out you have money as water now?"

I shook my head violently. "No, Rose, I have to use my own. I can't use Edward's money to buy him his own present!"

"Put that card in your purse, together with your gran's jewelry. We have some talking to do before we go shopping."

Reluctantly, I put the black AMEX card into my little backpack acting as my purse, as well as the box with the combs and essentially worthless trinkets. When I was done, Rose had already pulled the car around and was speeding towards our newly installed therapy room. Only Edward and Rose knew about it. The rest of the family thought that Edward only bought the garage for me to put my bike in. A few weeks after he bought it, I came inside to put my bike away and the whole garage looked like construction was going on. The whole garage except for the first five feet. Those were pristine and held a bike rack.

It had taken longer to install the chamber inside the dilapidated garage than it had to build the entire treehouse. Why? Because Rose and Edward could only work on it for about half an hour each day, and because they used several layers of soundproofing so strong that the room was truly soundproof. The inside was an extremely comfortable sitting room. The only drawback was that it held only enough air for three hours at a time. I wasn't allowed in alone because I couldn't open the door by myself, but inside we had true privacy, even more than in the treehouse.

I walked up the two steps leading into the low room. The soundproofing was all around and about one and a half foot thick. Luckily, the garage had been on the high side, and with three feet less still had standing room for Rose and me. Edward needed to watch his head, as the dents in the ceiling showed.

Rose conjured a water bottle from her bag and told me to sit. I complied and opened my mouth to start protesting. She raised her hand, telling me to shut it.

"Now, young lady, you're going to answer my questions first, and think about them before you answer. First, who told you that the money on the account connected to that card was Edward's?"

I immediately thought that I caught her in a slip, because just as I thought, she just proved to me it
was his money. So I answered her truthfully.

"You did, just now."

"Then I must disappoint you. I did no such thing; I asked you to tell me who planted the idea in your head that the money on the account was Edward's."

I was confused; in my head it was clearly Edward's money at all times. He made it; he did all the financial stuff for the family. Even if Alice sometimes showed trends in the stock market, he played it, in about five dozen ever changing names. He made billions of dollars without it really being known. But nobody had said the words to me that it was Edward's money. Carlisle had said it was the family money; I just still didn't feel like an official part of the family.

"Nobody; I was told it's the family money, but Edward and Carlisle are the only real contributors. I just made it Edward's in my head."

"Exactly, and if it is family money, why won't you use it?"

"Because it is not mine to use. I'm not officially part of the family yet."

"Do you really think that?"

"Yeah, I'm only Edward's girlfriend."

Rose looked at me with concerned eyes. She sighed, "Bella, do you hear yourself? Girl, throw your human connotations away. You're changing into a vampire! We told you mating history: the moment the bond is acknowledged by both partners and nobody disturbs the bond before it is consummated, a pair is mated, a bond a thousand times stronger than any human marriage. Your bond to Edward is even stronger because you're his singer. Now how could you even try to think you're only his girlfriend?! I'm not mad at you, just really sad that you feel that way."

"See, that's why. I'm not good enough; I can't live up to all your images. You all paint splendid, brilliant pictures about me. Well, even with my power I feel inadequate. No control of anything, everything is happening to me. It just feels it's happening on the outside. Inside, I'm sitting there with my sad excuse of a life. Never good enough, a freak. Even my change is freakish. I never have anybody to be with me just for me. Not even now. Right now I'm a science project for Carlisle, an object for ridicule for Emmett. Esme takes away my independence by smothering me. Alice, overall, tries to bully me into her own schemes. Jasper keeps me in line by messing with my emotions. And sorry, but to you I'm a case, a special project because I'm not human anymore. To Edward, I don't know, he's sweet enough but I'm his toy."

Tears were creeping down my cheeks while I threw everything out. How she did it, I don't know, but everything just came flying out, everything I kept hidden deep down. Some of it I knew wasn't true, but you can't always throw out the feeling that it is.

Rose's phone signaled a text message. She looked at it and turned it around for me to see. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BELLA, I JUST ALMOST COLLAPSED FROM THE SEPARATION PAIN. E

I grabbed Rose's phone and typed quickly. JUST SOME INSECURITIES FLARING, ABOUT HERSELF NOT YOU. R

Before I gave it back, I pushed send.

Not five seconds later his ringtone filled the room. I dug my phone from my purse and answered; I
could use a dose of his voice. My chest was hurting, and I was sure that the dig I took at everyone around was the cause.

"Hi, honey."

"Bella, love, what happened?"

"My insecurities exploded because I wanted to pay for your birthday present myself, and the only pieces left from my gran that are valuable are the ones I really, really want to keep."

"Bella, I am shocked. Carlisle gave you a card to your own account; I have deposited your allowance in it every month. I knew you wanted your own money. I thought Carlisle had explained it to you."

"What? No, he didn't. He said I could use that card and draw from the family money. I got a whole speech on poor person attitude, and while he might have been right, it left me with the feeling that I wasn't good enough. I bought my coat and never used it again. I just let you pay, except for his food."

"Goddamnit, I told him that that would backfire! I know my mate very well. Oh, love, I wish I had given you that card, I would have explained to you that I would give you your own money, your account to do with as you please. You will simply get an allowance every month, like every kid should have. Honey, please don't sell something with such big sentimental value to you. Keep it safe to remember your gran by. Please use your money in your account, because even if it came from the family money, that part is yours and yours alone. Nobody but you can use that money; only if you give that card to someone, someone could. I love you, honey, please work with Rose on those insecurities. Don't doubt yourself, because by doubting yourself you hurt us both."

"I understand that now; I'll work on it with Rose, but brace yourself, honey, to get it out I need to go into it. I love you with everything inside. Please continue with your shopping; I think I'm going to like you in jeans and tees."

"I know now what to expect, but we're going to need alone time when we're home tonight. Be strong, I love you. I'll see you tonight."

"Love you, see you later."

I disconnected the call; the ache in my chest had diminished slightly. I felt a bit better about myself, too. I got the card out of my purse and went to the Amex website to check my balance; I had to know how much I had to work with today. I already knew it would be excessive; my bank balance had probably gone from nonexistent to thousands of dollars. Giving the card number and PIN number—I luckily had retained that through my memory—I got access to the account information. Holy Fucking Hell! I speedily retreated from the site, logging off completely. I had become a fucking millionaire several times over in the course of six months. I would have thought he would have gotten me a thousand dollars a month for my allowance, and that was excessive. But that deranged vampire had given me a half a million dollars allowance a month. Ah, well, he loves me, and now I'm a rich girl.

I turned towards Rose and gave her a little bit of a bitch brow. "So you knew I was a millionaire?"

"Yeah, of course. We all are, silly. But now we're going to dig a bit deeper into what you ranted earlier. The trigger has been solved, but the underlying source is still there. Please hear me out, then you can mull it over and respond. First of all, you're holding on to some very human concepts. The ones you hold on to are very destructive to your ego. You base your self-image on what others tell
you are. Even if you try to stay away from them, it still has taken root deep inside. I totally understand that that was almost unavoidable in the life that you had. Your gran told you you were special; I tell you now, she was absolutely right. Look at you, changing into a vampire and talking to me. I became a vampire in the fires of hell for three days. You're being changed by the forces in heaven. You. Are. Special. Just be who you want to be, not what you're told to be.

"What you still miss is a sense of family; to you, we're Edward's family, you don't see yourself as part of it. Also not strange, you never had a good example of a family, and we're a pretty strange family as well. You have to understand that it's okay to have your grievances with anybody. You started very well on your first day by telling Alice off. You opened all our eyes; she almost ran the day to day business of the family with her forced visions. But after that, you listened to everybody, analyzing everything from the sideline. You communicated with Edward, building a strong relationship. You brought him out of his head. You taught him to listen to his heart when he uses his head. Let go of your lousy example of family and become one of us.

"And then for the most important bit—also the most difficult to let go: the feeling of unworthiness. I can talk until I'm blue in the face, which will never happen, I will never convince you of your worth. That's something you have to do yourself. I can only give you what I've seen, and hope you will be very honest in your assessment of those things and where they land you and your feeling of worth. You have to be open to that first, so come to me if you need help with that. And please stop listening to Emmett; he's my mate, my true mate, and that's why I'll always be with him. But he's a juvenile prick, too. Sadly, changing a mated vampire is almost impossible. And you need to work all this through before your change is complete.

"Well I think that's enough of a speech. Think it over in the car to Seattle before Alice finds our trail and takes over. Did you say you had a present in mind for Edward?"

I was stunned and walked behind her to the car, dazed, my mind going a mile a minute over all that she had said, churning it over and over. Had my slavery at the hands of him who shall not be named torn my inner peace to shreds? Did I really have such a horrible image of myself? Did I place myself automatically on the sidelines? I thought back to my mental ramblings I had just before I met the Cullens. I essentially talked myself down; I didn't believe I could get out. I didn't blame myself for it, but I sentenced myself to being worthless, because I was never shown my worth. When people started to show me my worth, I didn't believe them anymore, convinced by the old mental and physical beatings of my worthlessness.

I had some big decisions to make, and make sure to live up to my new goals. Edward had already helped me by giving me my own money. He gave me a materialistic feeling of worth; he truly loved me, and showed it by giving me the means to make my own decisions, giving me my independence. How could I work with the other subjects? I never really thought about who I wanted to be, I essentially lived by my surroundings. My gran had told me to always believe in myself, but her daily affirmations had been snowed under completely. I had to believe in myself again, whoever I turned out to be.

That decision had two paths. The first was easy to follow: simply don't bother with what others thought of me except those who mattered to me. The second would take time, and a lot of affirmation by myself. I had to find every destructive thought inside and stop on it, affirm the opposite before moving on.

Rose's second point I still had to think more about: the fact that I thought about the Cullens as Edward's family and not my own. I had trouble truly thinking of myself as part of such an idyllic family. Maybe I should throw out my own ideas of family, which were very twisted, get them off their pedestal and just decide to be part of them. No excuses, no way out, Edward and I were mated
for all of eternity. I would be part of that group of vampires as long as they stayed a family. Sorted.

"Okay, Rose, I thought it over. I went through my memories and had to conclude you are right on all things you stated. Edward already gave me a materialistic sense of worth for the first time ever. That's half of the worth issue, the other half will take time. I deduced that I have a lot of negative self thoughts. I will need to make positive affirmations for all of them. Then I need to stop myself when a negative thought goes through my head and beat it down with the affirmations. I don't know who I want to be yet, but I will look more positively towards my future. Whoever I might become, only the ideas of the people that matter to me will sway me. And lastly I'm part of our family from now on; I just need you all to teach me to be a functioning part."

"As usual, you made an excellent image of what goes on, deduced your goals and thought about actions to reach those goals. Genius sister of mine, we're almost in Seattle, please tell me where to go."

"I need a professional person who makes things with leather. An artist, or a bookbinder, something like that. I want to buy him a composition book for his music. He told me he would like to write it down, but doesn't like the loose papers. I want him to have a lot of personalized music paper, but a beautiful binder to keep them in."

"I know just the place; it's an artisan bookbinder and also a restorer of old books. She has a lot of paper, including music paper, which she will personalize to your wishes. But the most important part, her own line to store things might hold something truly Edward, because you and I know he's not as 1918 as our sister Alice wants him to look. He only has jeans to wear to school to make him look a teenager. In between, you have noticed she only provides him with slacks and button downs."

"Oh I know, but in true mated style, he's rectifying it today. He's gone to Olympia to buy clothes he likes: t-shirts and jeans, and not designer ones like Alice buys him for school. I think he might go a bit hard rock, or even steam punkish. That's what I have in mind for this binder. The steam punk angle is rather interesting, because its elements would fit his roots, even though the use is modern. Oh, is there an IT store nearby? I want to get him a tablet inside the binder, too. I was looking through apps and found some for automatic music conversion. You play and it makes it into notes."

Rose made a sharp left and parked the car; we were straight in front of a big IT store. We jumped out and almost ran inside, quickly locating the tablet aisle. Looking at all the available models, I chose the sleekest looking, a tablet that matches the sleek computers they—correction, we—had at the house. I bought the one with the biggest memory, but no cellular connection option. He would probably never want to use it out of our home. We even had Wi-Fi in the treehouse.

Ten minutes later, we were again in the car, after declining the salesperson our phone numbers. Rose gave him a glare and told him he didn't need it on the receipt. We arrived at a big warehouse where, according to Rose, a whole lot of artists had their ateliers. She steered me to one of the biggest units; half of it was furnished like a shop overlooking the other half with racks and big tables. The racks were filled with all kinds of leather and, by the smell of it, chemicals. The lady came our way; when she saw Rose, a big smile appeared on her face.

"Miss Rosalie, what a pleasant surprise, with what can I be of service today?"

"Miss Shondra, my new sister-in-law would like to see your crafts. Why don't you explain what you are searching for, Bella?"

For the first time ever, I straightened my back, squared my shoulders, and confidently approached Miss Shondra. "My partner composes music; he absolutely hates all the loose paper that generates. He never thought about a binder type holder for the pieces he deems good enough. He sometimes
loses good pieces in the wastepaper basket. So, I'm thinking about a leather folder with room on one side for this tablet," I said, putting the box on the table between us. "And on the other side, room for personalized music paper, which you also can provide, I believe."

"I must say, you have excellent ideas, Miss Bella. Do you have a furniture or fashion trend as a basis for the design of the binder?"

"Rose and I spoke about Edward's style on the way here, and I do believe that we came to an understanding about that. Even though he dresses mostly like a stock market broker, I do believe his true nature to be more in the direction of steam punk."

"Ah, now I understand completely why Rose brought you here. Just a moment, I'll be right back with some examples and pieces of leather to choose from." She walked swiftly, for a human, to one of the racks, picking up a large bundle of pieces of leather. Then she opened a cabinet and took out three items before hurrying back to us.

"Okay, first let's choose an outside for your binder."

She spread out three different binders before me with different steam-punkish locks and decorative patches. One had a big buckle with a watch inside of it; that one was out immediately. The other two were both with old school turn locks. They also showed the colors of locks we could choose. One had two in a silver color, the other had one in a bronze color. The binder with the one lock look was more creative, while the one with two looked more businesslike. I grabbed the leather swatches and started to hold them next to the bronze lock. I soon found a nice tan distressed leather I liked a lot.

"I think I made my choice. I want a binder with one turn lock in bronze, made of this distressed leather. Please make the lock plate and the decorative patches in a dark brown color, the riveting, of course, matching the lock."

"Very good," Miss Shondra said, scribbling away on an order form, turning the piece of leather upside down to write down the number.

"Now for the inside, is Edward left or right-handed?"

"He's ambidextrous but writes mostly with his right hand," I answered her giggling.

"That's fine; we will put the paper section of the binder in it for the right hand. Now, do you want a complete flap holding the papers, a partial flap, or a metal holding system? The flaps usually keep the paper a lot cleaner."

"Gee, I don't know, I think… a partial flap, three quarters up with a corner off on the loose side. Can you put text on that flap?"

"Yes, of course. Now you said also that it needed to contain a tablet. Because of all the sizes I'll need to know which one. Do you want padding behind it? And around?"

"Yes to all the padding; he's prone to throwing things if he's disgruntled. And it's an iPad."

"Then all that's needed now for the binder is the texts you want on and in it."

"Okay, this the Masen coat of arms. I want that on the front, please, about ten centimeters across. Underneath I want his full name, just like I have it here. This is his own writing; I teased him about his ridiculously long name and how it would look written out. Is that possible?"

"Oh yes, his writing will look beautiful in a bronze ink against the leather. Maybe with gold highlights? And inside?"
"Inside on the flap, this poem." I handed her a folded piece of paper with my own four lines of text. "Please choose a fitting font for it. Oh, will there be space for a pen in there?"

"...choose font. Of course there will be if you want it. I have a small collection of fountain pens with a steam punk feel to them," she said while opening a drawer and sliding a tray with six fountain pens my way. "I have to warn you, this one is a real Mont Blanc skeleton pen and is sold for $90,000.00. On the other end is the cheapest, still $6,000.00. They are all high quality writing utensils and handcrafted casings, made from first class materials including precious metals. I also have a more traditional fountain pen, in stainless steel, possible to engrave for $600.00"

"I will take the stainless steel option; the binder should be the star of this performance," I said without blinking once. Hey, I really accepted the money! "The last bit is music paper: a couple quires, approximately 10 ounces, of paper. I need to see your selection to choose the color, with his coat of arms and his name on top of each page, but lined front and back with those music bars."

While I spoke, she got paper samples from yet another drawer. I immediately saw the yellowed kind of paper I was looking for.

"That one, a whole box, I don't know how many pages are in there. If the box is filled with copy paper I believe it's twenty-five hundred. But this paper is heavier."

"Let me make you a total price for all of it. Twenty-five hundred dollars. Everything will be ready in about two hours. Do you want to wait, or are you coming back later?"

I gave her my black Amex and ID card, signed the receipt, and told her we would be back in two hours. I towed Rose out of the shop to a little cafe; we both got ourselves a cup of coffee to warm our hands and I told Rose what I wanted to do next.

"Rose, I know Edward wants me to marry him soon. I fully intend on saying yes when he asks. I think he will as soon as all the hoopla around me moving out, and the Rez, has been resolved. Now I'm not a traditional kind of girl and I have a wedding dress in mind. I need your help."

After Rose had stopped squealing and had me tell my ideas, she towed me to four different clothing stores and we were set. I had what I wanted; even more, I had a choice of two pairs of shoes, both nice to hot looking. I had my wedding lingerie, and every piece of clothing I had in mind. I happily swiped my card every time. Since we left Miss Shondra, two and a half hours had passed. It was time to pick up the present. Safe to say, it was swoon worthy, so nice. When I walked into the store, I also saw a couple of ring binders in the same leather and with the steam punk patches; they were fifty dollars each. I asked Miss Shondra if she could put the coat of arms and his name on the back, and she could. It would take half an hour because she had to shrink her template down.

We pulled out the iPad and made an iTunes account on it in Edward's name, with my card number as payment option. I bought Notion, the app I researched on my phone. It was awesome. You could play any instrument and the app translated what you played into notes to read. When it was ready, I paid Miss Shondra and we were on our way.

While in the clothing stores, I had also bought some other clothes I really liked to have. I didn't need them, I liked them. And two more pairs of chucks because those were simply awesome. I gave Rose all my presents and my wedding ensemble to hide in her closet, and took only the clothes I bought for everyday use with me on my run to the treehouse. I texted Edward that I was on the way. I knew he was back, because his car was parked in its spot in the garage. By listening to the huffing and stomping inside, I knew I would find him in our sanctuary.

"What did you do to Alice, love?" I asked him when I entered after he buzzed the door open. The
moment I saw him, I burst out laughing, sputtering out, "Never mind I already know."

He was laying on our couch, looking like a rock star. He wore a dark gray long-sleeve t-shirt, layered with a black short-sleeved one; the black shirt had the print of a dragon on it. He also had on very sexy low-slung black stonewashed jeans and a pair of black vintage Doc Martens. He also wore the most content, yet smug, grin I had ever seen on his face.

Chapter End Notes

A/N Oh dear, those pesky insecurities, I'm glad Bella is so damn smart.

I've submitted an entry in the FictionPad Olderward, Olderella contest this week I recommend all of you to go to FP and look up all five stories on the olderwardolderellacontest profile. At the end of each story is a link to the vote page of the contest. The contest is anonymous so I can't give you any hints which is mine. Just vote and make this contest a success. Thank you.

Enjoy reading

Please review.

Pien
Chapter 18 Birthday Ball?

Chapter Notes

A/N All of the original Twilight universe belongs to Stephenie Meyer, I just play with her characters without intending copyright infringement.

I'd like to remind everyone that voting for the olderward, olderella contest on FP is open until the 15th of February. I've got a piece entered in it and urge you all to read and vote. Just go to the stories on the olderwardolderellacontest profile.

once again my thanks to my team, Lorraine bubbleybear, Chandrakanta and LunaDiSangue85. Without you guys I wouldn't have gotten this far.

Let's see what Edwards reaction was to Bella's exploding insecurities.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 18 Birthday Ball?

EPOV

I hung up the phone and sagged against the bench I was sitting on. I was more than angry with Carlisle, the man said to be a doctor with a specialty in psychology. Damnit, he lied to me, too; he lied to me about my mate. I desperately tried to calm down, but my anger only flared hotter. I had to get it out of my system. I dialed his cell phone and steeled myself.

"Dr. Cullen."

"You didn't even check who was calling, Carlisle? I hope very much you're alone and sitting down because you overstepped your bounds big time. You messed with my mate!"

"Edward? What do you mean? I have nothing but the utmost respect for your mate; she's very interesting."

"And there's the crux of the matter; to you she's nothing more than a science experiment. You effectively halted her healing by deeming her not good enough for the family. You told her to her face she couldn't be part of it without losing her poor person attitude. Well thank you, my poor mate just had a breakdown with all of her insecurities flaring. I told you when you insisted you needed to give her the card that you needed to tell her it was for a special account with her allowance on it. I told you, dammit, you sanctimonious prick; you didn't even try. NOOOO, you gave her the standard poor person attitude speech. The one you gave to every one of them.

"When are you going to learn to use your degree in psychology? Huh, huh? I know: never, because you can't process it. It doesn't work with empirical data; it doesn't leave you detached enough. Well, it's the last thing you'll ever handle, in the interest of the family, pertaining my mate. You might be the oldest vampire of this coven you like to call a family, but I'm the money train and the day to day leader as well. Remember that."
"Edward, I'm speechless, what got into you?"

"You dare to ask, after my extensive explanation, what got into me? You know what; I believe that's the only thing you can. Sit and act like a goldfish. You never act on yourself; pacifist my ass, you're just passive. You never act when you're not asked. I've been mentally raped for almost a century, but when Bella asked you for a solution you gave her one without blinking. You knew that all along, but you never told me. You never helped Jasper with his bloodlust either. It's the same solution for both of us. But you, my so called father, watched and recorded my slowly diminishing state of mind. I bet you were disappointed you no longer had things to record about it. Well let me tell you, you're going to step up your parenting.

"Your first lesson is for me: you're going to find a solution for Emmett's rape of my mind. He's the only one who still can. Because I can't stay out of his mind, he acts on his thoughts before we know it. I guarantee you now, we're a coven. It's on you to change yourself and really become a parent. Just don't try out your skills on me or my mate, we stand above you. I'll keep running the coven. You try to make us a family again. Good day, Carlisle."

"Edward, wait... Please, I understand, I'll do as you want..."

"Of course you will, you have no choice. I'd like to keep our coven in one piece, but I won't hesitate to leave and take everyone who wants to come, and who I want to take. Now I have a lot to do today. Good day."

I pressed the end call button and took another deep breath. Damn, where did that come from? But it felt good to do it, real good. Now it was time for my primary goal of the day. Get myself an engagement and wedding band set for my girl. Rose told me her ring size; she expertly gauged it from one of her own rings she'd lent to Bella.

I didn't see anything fitting in the first three jewelry stores I went to. The fourth was a little Mom and Pop store, everything made in house. In the window I saw a zirconia ring with a design I really liked. I went in and asked if they had that kind of ring with real gems and in platinum. The jeweler brought out a few sets that were comparable: a big center stone with a freestanding border around it and stones inlaid in the band. One of those bands stood out. It was exquisite; the center stone was a golden yellow diamond cut into a heart shape. The freestanding border had small brilliant-cut clear diamonds, and the stones on the band were clear diamonds as well, a little bigger than those on the border, and all also cut into heart shapes.

I had found it; this was the ring fit for my Fairy Queen. The wedding band belonging with that ring was an eternity ring in platinum with alternating pale yellow and clear brilliant cut diamonds.

I asked the jeweler if he engraved rings. He lifted his eyebrow in a “duh” gesture. I apologized and asked him to engrave the engagement ring with My Fairy Queen and the wedding band with Forever Is Not Long Enough. After I paid, I had to kill an hour for them to size and engrave the rings. On the other side of the street, I saw a store I really, really liked. It was called Everything Leather and had an ankle length black leather coat showing in the window. I had to smile; it was a coat people would call a vampire coat. I knew that I would ransack that store; I loved the smell of leather. I knew I looked good in leather, too; I had had a whole biker’s outfit once, one I wore on my Harley.

Alice detested how I looked in leather; she wouldn't even think about buying me a leather dress coat. While I mused, I entered the store and immediately saw a rack with his and hers biker jackets, the ones with the asymmetrical zippers. Fitting one in my size, I discovered they fitted small; I picked a size bigger and it fit perfectly. Taking it and one that would fit Bella, I gave them to the shopkeeper to start me a tab. I walked over to the leather trousers; they had all colors of the rainbow. My choice went to the darker ones: very deep blue and black. I got one leg hugging pair in black and a deep
blue one with wider legs, and pleats at the waist.

Then I spotted a dress in exactly the same color blue as the trousers I chose. It's sexy, because it’s formfitting, but not overly revealing. They had only one piece hanging there; I scooted over and took a peek at the size and I asked the shop assistant if she thought the dress fit small? I hope it does because it’s a size over Bella's dress size. It was absolutely beautiful, definitely not Alice approved but stunning. I decided I was going to buy it for her.

Then I spotted another coat—this one was more like a long dinner jacket—it would look perfect on the dark blue trousers. Shrugging it on, it looked beyond perfect on me. In the corner, they had a whole wall full of vintage Doc Martens. I soon found my size in worn black. I gave everything to the shop assistant and walked around one last time. I picked up a black leather T-shirt and a tan leather button-down.

All right, I went a bit crazy; I had such fun buying clothes I really liked. I went through town buying all kinds of clothes; I went to the stores Alice would avoid and found many treasures. I was careful with the printed T-shirts; they shouldn't be too exotic, however sad that sometimes was. I went to Walmart and bought a lot of long sleeved T-shirts I could use as undershirts in grays, blacks, and dark blues. I was flabbergasted that I had about twenty shirts for the price of one of the button-downs Alice bought for me.

In less than two hours I had a completely new wardrobe. I picked up the rings; I felt warm inside to have them on me. I went into the leather shop one more time to buy another pair of Doc Martens in simple black. I had taken some of my new clothes with me and asked the shopkeeper if it was all right if I changed in her dressing room. She had no problem with it, seeing as I had made her day by buying two pairs of pants, two pairs of shoes, a shirt, a button-down, a dress, and three jackets. I heard in her head that she had enjoyed my enthusiasm, and thought my girlfriend was a lucky lady. But thank god that was all, no lusting over me.

Arriving home was a circus; Rose and Bella were still out. Alice was in a huff; she had had a vision of my phone call to Carlisle and subsequent shopping spree. She barricaded the door, telling me that I couldn't come into the house dressed like that. I threw the bag with my former clothes at her head, telling her that she could think it was her house, but that I was the one whose name was on the deed. Taking all the bags out of the trunk, she started to screech when she saw the bags from Walmart. Not in the mood for spoiled girl tantrums, I turned around and ran to the tree house. Once there, I put all the clothes away, hung the jackets on the coat rack, and lay down to wait for my Bella.

After about an hour of daydreaming about my love and our future, I got a text from her telling me she was on her way to the treehouse. When I heard her on the entrance platform I buzzed the door open and quickly took my relaxed pose on the couch again.

"What did you do to Alice, love?" she asked, coming in; at the same moment, her eyes landed on my smirk, and my appearance.

"Never mind, I already know," she sputtered out, laughing. Very appreciative eyes roamed my body; she looked around the room, probably searching for more clothes I bought. As soon as her eyes landed on the leather jackets, she squealed, running over to them.

"You bought yourself three leather jackets?"

"No, love, I bought myself a leather jacket and a leather coat, and I bought you one of the jackets, too."

Her eyes bulged out of her head; slowly she started to bob up and down on the balls of her feet. I walked over, grabbed her jacket and helped her in it, zipping it up for good measure. She looked
adorable in a very sexy way. I was blown away how her innocence kept shining through the confident vampire exterior she started to exude.

"So your shopping trip was a success?" she asked in a husky voice. "You look so hot, dressed like that. I think your character comes out more now. It simply looks like you're more comfortable in your own skin like this. How long ago was it that you bought your own clothes?"

"Let me think, last time I chose my own clothes, with help of Esme, then acting as my older sister, was the twenty-third of May nineteen fifty-one to be exact. Alice and Jasper showed up two months later, and she took over all things shopping in the family. Even more so when she discovered she had unlimited funds. You should have seen the tantrum she threw when I came home today."

"I imagined it; she was huffing up in her room, stamping around. I never even went inside, and I like to stay here alone with you. I've had a straining, emotional morning. And a very busy afternoon, shopping for my own clothes. I had a ball, spending my allowance.

Thank you so much for explaining how you designed it. I would have been so much more accepting from the start if Carlisle had explained it that way, but I must say that you know how to do some things over the top. You didn't need to give me such a big allowance; I know though that you did it out of love, and what you give me is a fraction of your total fortune."

"I was seething mad this morning, mad at Carlisle, I tell you. If he had been in the room with me I would have shredded him. The schmuck just told you his standard story, the one he told them all, including Esme. The one I told him when I could finally control my urges. Yes, love, I see it in your eyes, you don't believe me. I absolutely did give him the poor person attitude speech. The difference between you and him is that you, unlike him, never had a thing you could call your own. He thought he couldn't use my money, even though he called himself my father.

"My human father was very successful, and came from money, too. Carlisle secured my inheritance, but I started to use it the only way I could without the humans becoming suspicious. I found out I was good at playing the stock market. My power helped a lot, too; I knew when somebody tried to con me. I made millions; I got all my funds out of the market before the crash. I transferred everything into gold and gems. When everything stabilized, I started playing again carefully, creating aliases who were my clients. To make a very long story short, right now I'm richer than Bill Gates times two. Nobody knows, of course, because it's divided between my aliases, which I all keep just below the radar. I don't want any of them in the top fifty richest people. Right now I have about one hundred and fifty aliases, all with their own history; some are in the fifth generation as clients of my father's firm.

"Bella, you need to know that, by vampire law, you are already completely my mate. What's mine is yours. Baby, we are the money train of the coven. Yeah, I know Carlisle likes it to be a family, but I told him if he wants to be the father figure he needs to step up his fathering skills. Until he does, he's a member of my coven."

My phone chirped with a text message; a quick look told me that Carlisle was trying. He had spoken with Emmett during a father son hunting trip.

We stayed at the treehouse for the next two days undisturbed. At the beginning of the third day we received a letter, a thick parchment envelope with our names written in calligraphy on it. It was taped to the entrance platform. We were requested (read ordered) to attend the Cullen Ball in Honor of the Birthday of Edward Anthony Masen Cullen. Bella was reading over my shoulder and groaned at exactly the same time as I did. Tonight was going to be Alice wonderland induced torture. Both of us hated to be the center of attention, but we also knew we couldn't escape this time.

We went for a hunt, and I was so proud to see Bella bringing down and draining the first doe she
chose. She had successfully found the balance between control and instinct. Bella hadn't mentioned my birthday yet because she believed, like Esme had taught us, that your birthday didn't start until the hour of your actual birth. I had my original birth certificate; it told me I was born at 8:03 at night in Chicago, that meant 6:03 pm here in Forks.

At exactly 6:03, she jumped me and kissed me senseless. "Happy seventeenth, Edward." She giggled. "I have a present for you, but Rose is holding it for me at the house. Let's keep that for when we're back here tonight."

"Oh, Bella, you're making me curious on purpose, aren't you? I love you. What do you say we defy a bit of Alice induced grooming?"

"How, Edward? I would do anything to keep from being pushed into some kind of poofy dress."

I walked into our closet and brought out the clothing bag from the leather store, unzipped it, and whipped the dress out. Bella scrunched up her nose at seeing the fact it was a dress, but she slowly started to smile when the smell of the leather reached her nose. She grabbed the dress and flitted to the mirror in the closet, holding it against her and swaying back and forth.

"Oh, Edward, it's beautiful, so sleek and non-Alice approved. I love it. I love you. Do you have an equally non-Alice approved sexy outfit, honey?"

I had pulled out the blue trousers and button-down in a light blue with stark black Celtic designs on the right front and back sides, and I put the second pair of Doc Martens on the ground before it. Her responding delighted giggle was music to my heart.

She draped the dress on the other side of the bed and ran into the bathroom; I heard her clothes hit the floor and the shower being turned on. That turned me on as well. I tried to contain it; I knew how long girls needed to get ready and we had a little over two hours, not nearly enough. I needed only fifteen minutes and started to walk to the bookcase to get a mystery novel when the bathroom door opened and an angel in the nude walked out. She floated over to me and started to undress me.

We showered together until the water ran cold. We now had only an hour before the party. For me no problem, but I was afraid to make a late entrance this time. Bella used her vampire strength to squeeze as much moisture out of her long hair as possible then blow-dried it. In a few minutes she draped it artfully on her head, holding it with two beautiful combs. The way she looked would frame my mother’s heart charm necklace beautifully, but when I looked at the dress I knew I would not run to the house to get it. The neck closed high with a cutout framing her cleavage. To my surprise, Bella walked to the dress already, opening it up and stepping in.

I stood there mesmerized, still only in a towel, when Bella's giggled request broke the spell. "Zip me up, honey."

I closed her hidden zipper and flashed into my own clothes, closing the Doc Martens over the trouser legs of my leather pants. I threw a look into the mirror and looked at our reflection, and had to confess we looked spectacular.

"Bella, you're a breath of fresh air in the dressing department. Alice would have driven you mad with a four-hour primping session, but you're done in ten minutes and looking spectacular."

"Let's go, for the first time ever I want to dance. You'll help me learn, won't you?" Bella asked with an adorable shy grin on her face.

While we walked to the door I told her that it would be my great pleasure to teach her to dance.
When we stood on the porch, she looked out at the entrance tree, then down to her dress. A thinking crinkle crept up between her eyebrows. I watched silently how her brain worked out a problem. Her skirt was wide enough to jump for a full vampire, but it would change her trajectory. Suddenly she bunched up her skirt all the way. Holding it in one hand, she easily jumped to the platform, turning around for me to follow.

"You'll need to give me a piggyback ride down the tree; I can't climb and hold my dress without either falling and ruining my dress, or just simply ruining my dress."

I jumped over to her and caressed her cheek before turning around and crouching in front of her. She climbed on and secured her arms and legs around me. I climbed down and just ran with her on my back to the house, our combined elated laughs breaking the silence of the early evening. After I jumped the river I put her down and we started to walk to the house, arm in arm.

Alice burst from the back door, shouting. "Finally, you just have half an hour to dress correctly for this ball."

Bella blustered and looked incredulously down at her dress. "Alice, I don't know where you come from but I'm wearing an evening dress; I even did my hair. Edward has on new and festive clothes in which he feels comfortable. As it is his birthday, you could try to act a little less like a dictator and as if it all revolves around you."

"You vindictive shrew, you're turning all of them against me. I will warn you, I've been here longer, my rights will trump yours."

"Oh, Alice, give it a rest. If you think that about me it is clearly your problem. I'm not doing anything at all; that means everyone turns away from you of their own free will. But maybe it isn't at all what happens, but your perception of things," Bella calmly spoke.

It did nothing to calm Alice. "You've got to STOP TAKING THEM AWAY FROM ME!" And away Alice ran into the forest, dressed in a full poofy, as Bella would say, dress and jewelry.

Rose came to the door. "Come inside, guys, let's get this party started. I'd like to dance." When she got a good look at us, she looked stunned. "Wow, guys, you look really spectacular. Better than you would look in what's on your bed upstairs."

We all walked in together and everybody wished me a happy birthday. Esme started the pre-programmed music and a classic waltz came from the speakers. Carlisle bowed elegantly to Esme, she curtsied. Rose yanked Emmett to the cleared dance floor. Bella was looking around in an incredulous silence. I was used to these dress-up things from Alice. She perpetually tried to get us to host them for the humans around us at the time. Eventually she would cave on the humans, but we were expected to attend, the men in full tuxedo and the women dolled up out of this world. The whole house would be decorated, no expense spared.

At one thing standing on the presents’ table, I looked as incredulous as Bella. Standing there, emanating the most horrific smells, was a three-tiered birthday cake with two candles on top, number candles saying seventeen. Around it and on the other two tiers were standard birthday candles: eighty-six birthday candles. Alice had clearly gone off her rocker.

I gently steered Bella to the dance floor, took her in my arms, and started dancing. Apparently, becoming a vampire ignites some form of dancing ability, because Bella had absolutely no problem following my lead. I told her that she didn't need any lessons, and what could possibly be one of her last visible blushes colored her cheeks the lightest shade of pink.
After half an hour of waltzing with my beautiful mate, she asked me why Kate and Jasper weren't dancing with each other. They each stood at opposite sides of the room looking around. I told her that Alice didn't approve of non-mated dance couples. She huffed and walked towards Jasper, asking him to dance. I nodded in his direction, giving him permission to touch my mate. I walked over to Kate and bowed, asked her to dance, and swept her away for one waltz. Jasper told me in my head he would switch partners with me at the ending of the song.

We swirled towards each other at the end of the song and twirled our partners out to end up facing their new partners. Bella and Kate happily accepted our invitations. The dancing went on and we all started switching partners. It made this experience a lot more fun.

Two hours into the party, the door opened and Alice walked in as if nothing had happened. Thankfully, Jasper and Kate were softly talking to each other in a corner, no touching involved, and the rest were dancing with their own mates. Alice danced towards the presents' table and announced it was present time. In a flash, she lighted all the candles on the cake.

I followed the described action of blowing all the candles when my brain was suddenly invaded with highly inappropriate pictures of an inaccurate naked Bella and me. The pictures were accompanied by very vindictive thoughts from Emmett. He broadcasted loud and clear for me that he resented me for making Carlisle talk to him. Because I lived so long with invasive thoughts, I was able to shrug it off and proceeded with the birthday actions.

I did wince when he suddenly changed tactics and now showed me Tanya in a dominatrix outfit, with me in vampire proof shackles. Tanya was holding a container with a yellowish liquid and poured it out over me. The vicious mental voice of Emmett told me to enjoy my golden shower. I closed my eyes hard and grabbed Bella's hand. I violently threw the images into my vault; not a second later Emmett fell to the ground shaking, Bella towering over him.

"You will stop assaulting my mate! What you showed him was disgusting and vile. How can you, as a partner of a rape victim—sorry, Rose—act like a rapist yourself?! Shame on you. You stop now or you will lose a body part, goddammit, on his birthday of all things. Thanks, Kate."

She stepped back into my embrace, still shaking with anger. Alice reached towards the presents when another image of Tanya riding me while massaging a brown substance on my chest invaded my mind. Immediately Emmett again dropped to the ground, shaking much more violently than the first time. Bella ripped of his left shoe and sock, and then ripped off his big toe. She grabbed a bag from the table, put the toe in, then took my hand and walked to the door, turning around one last time.

"Well, thank you so much, Emmett, for ruining your brother’s birthday. That was a very nice birthday present, you childish overgrown asshole. And, Carlisle, I guess that what you did had a very real effect. You may all be glad Edward is such a nice individual. If this kind of treatment of us continues, we will start our own coven. We don't have need for a bunch of leeches. The non-bloodsucking kind. Goodnight."

I followed her gladly and picked her up near the river, bridal style. I jumped the river and ran to the treehouse. We entered and changed clothes; I put on a pair of lounge pants and Bella returned from the bathroom with her hair down and wearing sweats and a T-shirt. She walked to me slowly, holding the bag she grabbed from the presents table.

"Edward, I took your presents with me. I already took the toe out and put it in the bathroom drawer. Rose has wrapped them for me."

She took out a big box, three beautifully wrapped presents of almost equal size, and one a little
smaller. She placed them all on the coffee table, then looked up at me and smiled.

"Okay, honey, these are all part of one plan I had for a present. It just grew and grew when I was perfecting it. The first one I give you is the heart of the present, the rest are accessories."

She took one of the presents, put it in my hands, and kissed me with so much love. "Happy birthday, my love, my mate, my life."

I looked at the confident vampire woman offering me a human birthday present. She had come such a long way already. Just now at the house, for the first time she stood up against all of them and asserted her place at my side. I took the present and carefully removed the paper. When the content was revealed I was stunned. A beautiful leather binder lay in my lap.

I was looking at an embossed coat of arms, my coat of arms, not Carlisle's Cullen crest. The one he so desperately wanted on all of us, to show that we were part of the family. I stared down at the Masen Coat of Arms, and the fact that she used that to give me my own binder touched me enormously. Underneath was my complete name, in my own handwriting.

Slowly I opened the beautifully crafted lock and opened the binder. It's filled; on the left side was an iPad, explaining one of the side presents. In the middle, a pouch for a pen was filled with a beautiful fountain pen in stainless steel. But the right side did me in. On the flap is a poem, a highly personal poem.

\begin{quote}
After the last beat of my heart
Our love will still grow stronger
You'll write the music of our hearts
And I'll provide the lyrics
\end{quote}

I looked up at Bella with venom-filled eyes; her absolutely beautiful poem had me choked up. Not only did she firmly put herself beside me, she highlighted each of our fondest undertakings and made them part of our whole.

I sat staring at this incredible creature with the strongest feeling of love I had ever felt. Putting the binder on the coffee table, I grabbed her in a fierce hug. I hoped to make her feel everything that coursed through me.

She hugged me back, just as fierce, and whispered, "That poem is only known to you, me, and the person who made it for me. I gave her the text on a folded paper; Rose never looked at it opened. I asked her not to."

She prodded me to look again. The poem choked me up again, but I looked further. I saw that paper sat behind the flap; I took out a sheet and again saw the Masen coat of arms and my full name, in my hand. The sheet was heavy music paper, perfect for composing. Bella pushed the start button on the iPad; it started up on a page with a single app: Notion.

"This app will turn any form of music played to it, through the inbuilt instruments or MIDI input, into sheet music," Bella told me. "Honey, I got you a stash of that paper." She tapped the big box. "Everything coming with the iPad is here," she added, pointing to the little box. "The binder is to write your music and these are to store it," she concluded, putting the last two presents in my lap. Unwrapping them, it revealed two matching ring binders in the same kind of leather, with the coat of arms and my name on the spine and front.

"Bella, I've never before gotten such an incredibly personal and fitting gift ever. Nobody ever got me
as you do. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N Thanks again for reading, please review.

My recommendations for this week:

Hunted in Seattle by TwiLoverSue, FFn 8342904, FP under ElisedeSallier.

and an angsty one

Unloved Unwanted by content1, FFn 6009387.

See you next week

Pien.
Chapter 19 Dialing In

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I just play in her pond without earning a penny.

this week I finally worked out how to post from my iPad on TWCS. So this story can now be found there too. Welcome to the new readers, and the old, of course, on all platforms.

A Special thank you again, to my team, Chandrakanta, Lorraine Bubbleybear and LunaDiSangue85. You guys keep me going.

Now let's see if Emmett really is a douche bag, shall we?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 19 Dialing In

BPOV

Aaaaarg, I needed to think of what I had to do in the two weeks left until my birthday. Somehow, though, everything that happened since Edward’s birthday kept invading my mind. Like how we stayed at the treehouse, blissfully happy, until Rose called to say something more was going on with Emmett, and he was overcome with remorse.

Edward and I went to the main house, where only Rose and Emmett were present. Edward still had not completely been able to wipe the nasty images from his mind, his own anger holding him back. We knocked because we didn’t know how welcome we were. We heard someone stumbling inside. I saw a wicked grin grow on Edward’s face. It looked like I did him a great service by ripping off Emmett’s big toe.

"Well, Emmett, aren't you glad that clumsy vampires actually exist. Funny, really, that you now have to show what you thought very hilarious for Bella to become." He spoke through the closed door.

Elbowing him in the ribs, I gave him a glare, he shouldn't sink to Emmett's level. On the other hand, Edward just gave back for the first time. At least it was the first time I’d witnessed it; it seemed as if his shopping spree had set something free in Edward. He was suddenly much more assertive. As was I. I wondered what could have brought that on. We were much more in sync, too, and should be considering we had been with each other twenty-four seven for almost two weeks, no interruptions from anyone.

Rose swept the door open, looking at us as if we were crazy. A quick check using Edward’s power showed me that she was asking him why in the hell we stayed on the porch of our own house. He answered simply, "Just being sure."

Emmett sat on one of the couches, looking thoroughly dejected. As soon as we sat, he burst out, "Edward, it's so strange. I've been playing back everything that happened on your birthday, time and
again, and I can't explain any of it. I truly didn't want to do that to you. Carlisle and Rose both had laid into me before your birthday that all my sexual imagery to you was as if I actually raped you. I made myself a promise that I wouldn't do that to you anymore. But somehow, something overwrote that promise that evening. And even I was nauseated at what was thrown at you from my mind; the words I thought weren't mine. Damn it, you're my brother, I don't want to alienate you."

"Emmett, whatever happened on my birthday scarred me. Those images are persistent and they were the most horrifying nightmare come true. Whoever used you to get to me succeeded, but now I want to go further back. I want you to analyze every sexual tease you laid on me, from when you started until now. Ask yourself if it's you wanting to tease me like that or if it's forced on you. I expect we'll get a mix of want and force, but if you find a forced one, I want you to look at who's present, and with present I mean within hearing distance. When you're influenced, we need to find out who did it."

Damn, I had drifted off again. How would I ever master my powers if I couldn't even keep my mind on the topic that needed to be addressed? Charlie. What would I do about my father, how far would I go against him legally? He clearly had some ideas in his head about what he was going to do with me when I came of age. What I had overheard through our nanny-cam and other listening devises, as well as with my now super sensitive hearing, was very clear. He would never let me go. He's stupid, though; he still, after almost six months, hadn't noticed I no longer lived in his house. He argued about some kind of deal almost every time he was on the phone. He and slime ball Billy never said a thing, though, on what they argued about. We couldn't find out what the deal actually was.

I still needed to make my own plan, even if the pressure on my shoulders grew exponentially the more of me vampirized. All the training got to me. Too much hit and miss, too many knobs in that control room in my head. When my confidence grew, suddenly a whole wall of knobs had appeared in my head during one of the many training sessions. Sadly, none of the knobs had labels. I quickly found that the knobs had three colors, which corresponded to the three colors of the tentacles I could throw out. The red and green buttons were clustered together on the left side of the control board. There were two buttons of each shape I could see, every time a red and a green one of each shape together. The third set of buttons were blue. Put inside a golden border, these were more like switches each with several settings. Only one set of buttons was labeled—separation pain—and it was set on minimum.

When the training sessions started shortly after Edward’s birthday, I was seriously grateful for some of our family members and friends. Kate allowed me to use her power, as well as be a guinea pig. Jasper was always present, as much as Alice totally ignored us completely. Rose and Emmett were also willing victims.

To my delight, the knobs were less difficult to figure out. When I encased someone in one of my tendrils, the knob I needed to use lit up. If I only used my red tendril, all red knobs would light until I chose which power or ability to use with a green tendril. I could dial the green buttons up and down, just like the red ones. Edward and I had just thought it was better I kept that to myself.

Mayhem ensued, and I learned to dial down the red knobs with more and more precision. I used Kate's power to train with the most, and a very willing Emmett as a test subject. I made him jump with little pinpricks of electricity until it looked like he was dancing a jig, dialing up the power in increments to make him jump higher, or switching up and down to make it look erratic. Rose was in hysterics, rolling on the ground.

I wrapped another red tendril around her, and the red button on the other side of the green one of Kate's power lit up. I could toggle the power to the tendrils separately. Now I made them dance together jerkingly. Rose squealed.
"Bella! What... Oooh... are you doing... Damn iiiep, girl, this feels aaah... strange."

Kate stood next to me, grinning triumphantly, bobbing up and down on the balls of her feet. She confided in me that she only had this kind of control of her power in the palm of her hands. If she projected it over her whole body it was always full force. She was really enjoying the remote control I became. I glared in her direction. She looked contrite and amended her statement to remote control with a mind of its own.

Shit, I did it again; I had to focus now on how to do everything they wanted. Edward told me to please start rebuilding my mind just as I wanted it. To choose the corner where the control booth was as the corner where the wall of pain would have to go, to hide my power, I had already erected the vault next to the control room. Into that vault, all the memories about any of our gifts would go to hide them from Aro.

We had a whale of a time constructing alternative memories, which could replace any of the images that would be suspect. We made the whole jitterbug training into a dance match: which of the couples could dance the craziest? Edward and I did an elaborate mismatched flailing tap dance to Singing in the Rain. Carmen and Eleazar showed us a stumbling rendition of a Spanish Flamenco.

Another time we did a more silent training session and we kept it that way; we just changed the cheering when I wrote all thoughts they had at once correctly, even Edward’s somehow.

The reason for all those training sessions was obvious. One of the earlier sessions Carlisle tried to get me to use Jasper, to make Esme deliriously happy. I noticed Alice off to the side and going into a vision. She tried to fight it off; Edward noticed it, too, and nudged me to piggy back on her vision. I wrapped a second green tendril around Alice on a very low setting, just strong enough that she couldn't ignore this information.

I too went into the vision; Edward turned me into his chest, softly telling Carlisle I needed a break. I told everyone, mumbling into Edward’s chest, that my control was failing. Right after that statement, Alice allowed her vision to run free, no longer afraid I would hijack it. Edward told me near silently that her block was up; I immediately wrapped him up, too, dialing it up to maximum strength. He tapped my hip, telling me he was in, too.

Together we watched her vision. James and Victoria were running in one of the southern states, avoiding other vampires completely. The image jumped. Jane, Alec, Felix, and Demitri stood looking at discarded clothes: a leather biker’s jacket and a female one with a fox collar; next to that, two bottles of hair dye, one bottle for pitch black and one for platinum blonde.

Jane started to cackle. "Looks like they try to escape using human ploys. Even in that they are careless and sloppy. Look, the woman now has black hair; that means those bleach patches on the male coat make him platinum now."

Demitri concentrated, while Felix and Alec cleared the rest of the horrendous scene. Six humans, clearly tortured, had been left lying around, drained and with injuries that were not inflicted by other humans. One of the victims had a hand-shaped hole through her chest.

"We will have to come at them from all sides at once. The woman is his way of escape, her ability is escape. It's not as strong as a power though. Oh, Jane, I think you should herd them. Your mind is the most focused on harming them. We will fan out and around. Alec, you're the least obvious of us. You'll be in front.

“Okay, people, when we're done here they are going to go to Mexico City, trying to merge into what's left of the southern wars. Alec, go wait about thirty kilometers north of Mexico City. There's a
little canyon there they will cross. Don’t think about them, just about waiting for us; that'll throw the
woman off."

Alec blurred from the room and Demitri turned toward Felix. "Can you please keep your urge to
maim them inside, block it out completely? That way they won't know when we pass them."

Felix nodded seriously, squaring his enormous frame. All three of them left.

Alec showed up sitting against a rock in a little canyon, facing towards Mexico City, which lit up the
night sky in the distance. A woman's voice echoed through the canyon. "James, this way is safe, no
one is focused on us this way. Only one thing is focused my way and that's behind us, and very
strong. Let's hurry; I feel that we'll be safe if we reach the city."

She was answered with a grunt. When they had entered the canyon completely, Alec's phone buzzed
in his pocket twice. He stood up and turned around, focusing his thoughts on the nomads before him,
cloying their senses, paralyzing their limbs. At the same time, Demitri and Felix appeared from left
and right, while Jane closed the circle from the back. Demitri spoke after Alec dialed down his
power. They wouldn't be able to run, but they could understand and, most importantly, feel.

"James and Victoria, you are both accused of acting in a way that could expose our kind. Your ways
are crude, but more imperative is the fact that you are sloppy. We from the Volturi are appointed to
disperse you two. We will dismember and burn you before the night ends. We’d like to know,
though, if you have anything to say in your defense."

Both trapped vampires looked dejected; their whole demeanor showed defeat. Jane cackled again
and gave them both a sharp reminder of her power. James screamed within his immobilized body; he
started to plead almost at once. He blurted out he knew of an unregistered mating in the Cullen
family, a human-found mate that was still human but had powers. A witch. Demitri walked out of
earshot and called Aro; he relayed the story.

Aro sat in the throne room waiting on his guard to bring him the two lowlifes who had wreaked
havoc in the Americas. James and Victoria were brought to him, bound with werewolf rope: rope
spun from werewolf hair and guts embedded with fragmented pieces of their teeth. Without a word,
Aro grabbed James' neck and brought his head down. At top-speed he rifled through the asshole’s
memories. His eyes flickered dangerously a few times; he looked like he was holding back from
destroying him. Then he spoke for the first time.

"So, you think a secondhand story from a disgruntled succubus who thinks she's mated is good
enough to save your existence? Didn't you understand the inconsistencies in her story? She said she
was mated with this Edward Cullen; he was strong and rejected her. That makes it a political mating,
not a true one. She proved that by almost at once sating her sexual urges with you."

Victoria started to shriek, cursing up a storm, damning James for letting her believe their mating was
true, that even true mates needed a little extra on the side.

With a flick of Aro's wrist, Victoria lay on the ground writhing and screaming in pain, then she was
headless and shredded. Felix gathered the pieces and disposed of them in the incinerator in the
corner. Aro never took his eyes off James; from his memories, he knew that he had sired Victoria
and fed her a load of crap in regards to the rules.

James had understood his goose was cooked; he had intended to make his story a lot bigger, so big
that it would save his life, but he didn't even get a chance to spin his tale. In a fraction of a second he
got the truth thrown back into his face. He was completely thrown from his cocky attitude. He fell to
his knees pleading for his life. Another flick of Aro's wrist ended James' existence.
Aro turned to his brothers, a contemplative expression on his face. "Brothers, I believe it is time to summon the Cullen coven for an audience. They are the biggest coven in the world next to us. Now it seems that one of the males has a human pet, possibly a human-found mate. We haven't gotten any messages about this mating, did we? Yes, we will summon them to appear; it will be a good way to assess them all. Maybe they will have some interesting powers to complement the guard. Demitri, please give me a location for the Cullen coven. Then search the Internet for their address. Carlisle likes to play doctor; he will have a house for his family."

The vision faded and I quickly dropped both tendrils. I looked at Edward with trepidation in my eyes. He smiled and a second later my phone vibrated in my pocket. I took it out and looked.

Keep it quiet, all of it. Let's see when she will tell all of us. E

My man had texted me from his pocket.

It took a few weeks and Alice never said a word. I didn't understand the way her visions worked completely, but I couldn't get a grip on the uneasy feeling that she kept it from everyone because of me. Before my confidence grew, that would have send me in a tailspin of dejection. Now I understood that it was her problem. What her problem was I really didn't know; she had acted against me verbally a few times. To me it all seemed so childish; I just didn't like her methods. She bullied the entire family to do as she pleased. I wouldn't bow to those actions; I had kept a much worse bully off my back from the age of four.

Getting away from my original bully when I became an adult was the big thing to think about. I was completely sure he was so convinced he had me isolated and subdued that he couldn't fathom my own brain working to my advantage, or that I had my own support system. I went to my chest of drawers and opened the lingerie drawer, the one drawer Edward would never go into; he wanted me to surprise him. Reaching into the far left corner of the drawer, I retrieved the box I stashed there after Esme gave it to me. Opening the little black velvet box, I stared at the most beautiful piece of jewelry I had ever seen: the platinum ring with the little golden-yellow and black stones all around was beautiful. The oval green stone placed along the ring scattered the light. Right then I decided to propose to Edward as soon as it was necessary.

I closed my eyes and imagined an elaborate wedding, me walking down the aisle in a Cinderella wedding gown, a veil over my face, and a small train following behind me. Looking towards the elaborately decorated arch, with hundreds of white lilies interspersed with lavender and orange blossoms. My fantastic mate, my eternal friend, stood next to the arch, dressed in a tailored morning suit. The moment our eyes locked, his face went from nervous to ecstatic. The biggest smile graced his features, as I could feel an equally big smile on mine.

Shaking the beautiful dream away, I stroked the ring one last time, then put it back into its hiding space. I sighed, wishing that Edward would come home already. He had left when I had fallen asleep, because his brothers wanted an all male hunting party. Sadly, I only needed about two hours of sleep at that time. It felt like an endless night.

About three weeks after the original vision, Alice came running into the house, with Jasper on her tail, screaming bloody murder. She was blaring about a vision she just had which would cause the Volturi to make a decision about summoning us. She gave Edward and me the blame for not registering our mating. Now we all had to go to Volterra. The vision she told had nothing to do with James; what she told was only the last part, heavily edited. Sure enough, three days later a messenger came to the house with a piece of registered mail: a large ornate parchment envelope addressed to Carlisle Cullen and Family.

Carlisle called a family meeting and started with reading the letter out loud.
Carlisle and Family:

During the interrogation of a rogue member of our kind, some questions were raised to the conduct of your family.

To ascertain the value of these accusations, we have decided that you all need to present yourselves before our court as promptly as possible.

As these accusations have to do with a matter in our records still missing, possibly volatile situations could have arisen by now in your household. All eight of you will present yourselves as soon as the volatile situations with one of you will be under control. Within your lifestyle, I should think you can report before the end of the year at the latest.

Most Sincerely,

Aro of the Volturi
And brothers

It took exactly one sixty-fourth of a second before the room exploded. Edward shrunk into himself, cowering, hiding his head in his arms, groaning they were too loud. I had to do something to protect my mate. I concentrated hard; mentally I ran into my control room. Damn, I'd had trouble concentrating on what I needed to do; Edward would be incapacitated. I was trying every knob on the blue control panel. One of those had to extend my power over him, protect his mind from the onslaught.

I tapped into his power on the absolute minimum, sifting through the thoughts streaming into his brain at vampire speed. I stored the useful ones in my brain. He and I would analyze those later. One thought didn't fit the pattern. It urged Edward to surrender to the sounds, to give in and be overwhelmed. What. The. Fuck. I erased it completely, threw it away into the discard completely garbage shute. It went directly into the garbage thought incinerator.

Edward felt better almost at once. He took control of the room and restored order. I would have liked to probe into the other minds to see if they had thoughts inside that made them explode into a panic verbally as well as mentally, because I was now sure that someone wanted to undermine Edward’s position in the coven.

When the normal conditions were restored, we could finally start to discuss things rationally. Carlisle and Edward almost ordered that every single one of us had to rearrange their brain, to install a vault behind the wall of pain of their transformation. In that vault would go the memories they wanted to keep but that were not for Aro's mind. All minds needed to become clear as glass for Edward. He started to scan everyone to assess their state of mind. He told me that he was also seeking for the person who tried to sabotage us. He sat one of the family in a chair and had me ask probing, thought-provoking questions.

The decision was made that we would go to Italy as soon I was completely changed and had enough control over my gift to hopefully be able to drop it. If we wanted Aro to believe I was an inferior shield, with no other powers than a sporadic protection of my own mind, I needed to let it down when he tried to read my mind. That was also why I made all preparations to make it look as if nobody really had powers. We searched abilities we could give to the non-powered alter egos of ourselves. We talked about Jasper's power as persuasion, Alice got shopping. Edward chose musicality and I didn't know yet. I had a few suggestions but didn't know which one to take. Selflessness, protectiveness, loyalty, and imagination were suggested. I hedged between protectiveness and imagination; it would take a while before I knew what to choose.
One thing necessary but excruciating was the implantation of the pain I needed for the fake transformation. It would never do without me really knowing that pain. One day Carlisle, Eleazar, and Edward took me to a remote clearing and sat me down. They told me to use Edward’s power to probe the minds of both Carlisle and Eleazar at the same time. They would both recall in detail their whole transformation at the highest possible speed. To make a long story short, I now had a wall of pain erected in front of my control room and vault.

For the first time in forever I was really looking forward to my birthday. I would give Charlie the surprise of his life; he would never know what happened. I would rid myself of him, ban him out of my life. He could try to keep going, if all the evidence against him wouldn't land him in prison.

Chapter End Notes

A/N Well doesn't all that thicken the plot.

Sadly, I'm almost out of worthy vampward stories to recommend. Some of the best ones are pulled and disappeared into the vaults of pdf's we all are growing at home. Unlike the AH's that can be rewritten to be published, the vampwards simply can't be made profitable, I see them as true works of fanfiction.

this week two stories

An all time favorite of mine,

A Creature of Habit by EZRocksAngel, FFn 4769414.

and Changing the Future: Canon Rewrite by Chandrakanta. FFn 6559762, FP under the profile Chandrakanta, Ao3 423278, TWCS Sid=5760.

See you all next week,

Please review

Pien
Chapter 20 Negotiations

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer. I'm just trying to write an alternative with her characters. No copyright infringement is intended.

I'd like to thank all readers, the reactions to my first fanfic have surpassed all my expectations. We've passed 500 reviews on FFn this week. I'm over the moon!

A big thank you, too, to my fantastic team. Chandrakanta, Lorraine Bubbleybear, and LunaDiSangue85.

This chapter comes with a bucket warning! While writing it I was nauseated. it was necessary to show the true depravity humans can sink to.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 20 Negotiations

EPOV

A few days after my all male hunting trip, Bella and I sat in our treehouse and cuddled silently. We were content. Suddenly, I heard a car arrive at Charlie's house. I listened for the thoughts accompanying the car and growled. Bella looked up with a question in her eyes. She didn't need to speak—I didn't need to hear her thoughts—I knew she wanted to know what had me growling.

"Billy and Jacob are here to visit Charlie. He still doesn't know you graduated early and thinks you are at school. He invited them to finalize their plans. Billy thinks he can buy himself a caregiver by marrying his son off to you."

Bella's eyes grew wide. "Say again? Charlie sold off his personal slave to his best friend at the price of his son. That lowlife, drug using, ingrate of a dog! I get nauseated looking at him on a good day. They actually think I would agree to marry him! But we finally find out what those arguments were about."

She was outraged. "Edward, I know I live at your place mostly, and this treehouse is wonderful for privacy, but in a few weeks I turn eighteen. Did my father really think I would stay with him one day after that?! I have to think about this, but we need to know what their plans are. It's also a good idea to listen in so we know better how they see me."

"You're right, sweetheart; let's go to your room. You need to be absolutely silent so we can have the door open and you can hear the conversation for yourself. I will tell you what they thought later. Please don't use your power to listen in; I don't know if you can contain Kitten if you hear them yourself."

"Okay." With that, Bella jumped to the entrance tree and climbed down nimbly. She would become a fantastic vampire. Even mostly human, she was magnificent already; I still couldn't hide my joy in her changing slowly and without pain. I followed her quickly and she jumped on my back; I was still
much faster when running. I ran us to the Dump and jumped up to her window, holding on to the ledge and helping her climb inside; another advantage of her changing was her growing grace. She could never have entered so silently before. We opened her door just an inch, and retreated to sit on her bed with our backs against the headboard.

Gruff voices came from downstairs.

"Billy, Jacob, sit down make yourselves comfortable. Vitamin R?" There were two agreeing grunts.

"Jacob, make yourself useful and get us our beers," Billy said.

The recliner groaned as Charlie fell into it, his thoughts gleeful. 'When that cunt is Jacob's he won't mind making her clean here as a chore. This really is win-win for me. The free maid service is the only good thing that ever came of fucking Renee. That ugly bitch produced me a maid, an equally as ugly bitch but...'

I tuned him out before I could lose my temper. I switched to Billy's thoughts. 'Now, if we can only get Jacob to agree to take that little cunt, I think I can keep him in his place for Elder. It worked for me, too; Sarah produced me my heir and that was enough. 'Pictures of a wrecked car flitted through his mind. 'I did arrange that nicely, and with Charlie as an 'eyewitness' to the 'accident', nobody looked closer at the brake lines. God, how long ago was that again? Five years, I believe.'

Dear God, Billy murdered his wife, and he and Charlie conspired to cover it up. Charlie wasn't only a lousy cop, he was corrupt, too.

Jacob's thoughts were hazy; he was obviously coming down from a recent high. Vague curiosity as to why he was here could be found behind the psychedelic swirls in his brain. He picked up one of Bella's school pictures, and that started to replace the swirls. He undressed her in his mind and pictured her, to my horror, bound naked against a stone wall, spread eagle. I cringed when he then produced a picture of him caning her for disobeying him. That picture aroused him physically, and I was very glad that Bella picked up on my distress and started to rub soothing circles on my back. I was even more relieved that she had promised not to use her power.

"Well," Billy said, "how are we going to proceed? I mean, I know Jacob will not object to having her for himself. He needs a cunt to produce an heir. That way we can hold on to the hereditary Head of the Council spot. That is the way I did it. This should be even easier because he won't have to go through the trouble of being nice to the breeder to catch her. Charlie, what are your demands for giving up your little whore?"

Charlie bristled. "Hey now, I don't like the little cunt enough to stick my dick in it. She's handy to keep up the house and cook me dinner, but that ugly bitch will never be stellar in the sack. Hmmm, my demands... it has to happen as soon as Jake turns eighteen. I paid for her long enough and the child support checks will stop as she turns eighteen. It just isn't worth my money to keep her up after that. That's one; two, she still has to clean here twice a week, and maybe you can have her cook meals for me, too. I mean Tupperware meals, I won't disturb your fuckfest too much, Jake. Three, I want a bigger cut in your drug profits. I've always turned a blind eye when you guys haul them in on tribal land. I kept my so-called colleagues away by keeping the La Push roads to myself. So, I think that if I give up my free housekeeping service, I am entitled to a little piece. Fourth, keep any spawn coming from that cunt away from me; I'm not a doting grandfather, EVER. That's it."

Jacob's head started to clear when he understood what was happening. "Wait a minute; you two are deciding that I'm going to marry that cunt. Who said that I wanted that bitch?"

Billy chuckled. "Your rock hard cock says you want her. You haven't taken your eyes of her picture
since you grabbed it. Look, we need to keep our seat at the Council to continue our smuggling operation. It's the only way to keep the upper hand. For that to happen, we need you initiated as Chief. The only way that can happen is when you have a male heir. Until then you have a free fuckhole to do with as you please as long as you dump it here twice a week to clean and cook. She won't do anything against you; she doesn't have friends and she has always been a meek little thing. Doing as she was told. Use her and dump her when she has done enough."

Bella had her hand clamped over her mouth to keep her from vocalizing. The agonized fury spat out of her eyes. My fury was not far behind hers. How could they be so callous? I was actually wondering which of us was more inhuman. Me, the vampire, or those monsters down there. A very big vindictive smile started to grow on Bella's face. She took something out of her pocket and showed it to me. It was a small digital recorder and it was taping. I looked at the little screen and saw that it had the remote mike connected. Carlisle had obviously warned her that she had to activate the bugs in the house. This was just another time when our in-depth search and bug planting operation paid off.

"Now," sounded Charlie's voice downstairs, "we will need a marriage license. I will go with you, Jake, to get it. We need to do that soon, before the little bitch turns eighteen. You'll have to lie and tell them you got her preggo and want to do the right thing. With my consent, you will get it. Then I will sedate her the night before with Ketamine; when you come out of that haze, you'll do anything somebody tells you to do. Read a case about it once. We'll all go to Seattle and get you two married. Agreed?"

"Sure, sure," Jacob and Billy both said.

Suddenly, Jacob's leering mental voice burst into my brain. 'I would like to test drive this cunt before I'm bound to her. I could hogtie her and use all her holes to fill them up.'

I froze; the rest of his ideas were images he had seen on some perverted site about rape he was a paying member on. I had never seen such depravity, and the worst part was, he was substituting my love's lovely face on all those girls. A violent growl was starting to build in my chest. Bella felt the vibrations and understood I needed soothing; she stroked my cheek while I desperately held back my fury. We could not give ourselves away.

The vile monster downstairs decided to voice his urges.

"Hey, Charlie, what about a little test drive before the big event? I mean, if she's mine anyway, why not break her in?"

"NO!" Charlie was furious. Bella and I looked at each other. Was he actually defending her virtue? "You stupid moron, you 'test drive' her and give it all away. Remember that she's a week older than you, Jake. If you scare her before your birthday, she could disappear. Or report you to the straight cops. You will not bring us down by thinking with your cock. I have kept my hands to myself for almost eighteen years; you can do it for a few weeks."

Bella grabbed a notepad and a pen and scribbled a note, thrusting it to me.

Take me out of here, NOW. Before I go down and kill them all.

I took the recorder and put it under her books on her desk, then I scooped her in my arms and jumped from the window, landing in a full sprint toward our treehouse. I was still monitoring their thoughts and I was glad I left the recorder within range of the microphone. They were now discussing the percentage of the profits Charlie would receive and the dates of the next shipments. The Blacks had quite an operation going: cocaine and ecstasy, marketed under their own brand no
less, Werewolf X. The stupid morons talked about everything, like where their labs were, those
cabins in the La Push woods that were monitored by several video cameras in the trees ever since we
found them. But more importantly, we had the whole exchange recorded. Ironclad evidence against
the three of them of not only trafficking drugs, but also agreeing to take part in selling a human
being: human trafficking.

We had arrived at the treehouse about ten minutes ago; Bella understood that my mind was still at
Charlie's place and sat next to me, keeping me calm by running her fingers through my hair.
Involuntary I started to purr, which made her purr as well. That brought me out of the thoughts of the
real monsters of this world and back to her.

"Bella love, you're purring."

"Of course I am. You're purring; I need to answer you. Right now I'm here for you because you
were still at Charlie's in your mind. Are they finished?"

"No, not completely, but the recorder will get the rest of it and we can listen to it later with the rest of
the family. We will have to make a plan to undo everything they are planning. We need to get to the
Port Angeles impound lot. We should be able to track down the Black's former car. Billy slit the
brake lines and sent Sarah on an errand. Charlie witnessed the accident that killed her, and stated that
she swerved to miss a deer and that's why she missed the bend and plowed headlong into the trees.
This will not be on the tape, so we need to find solid evidence. I have a degree in criminology; I
could write a thesis on murder by car and examine a series of formerly accidental deaths on the
hypothesis that some could be murder. Charlie and the Blacks never thought about the fact that even
cars from accidental deaths are kept for ten years before they are scrapped. Do you remember when
Sarah Black had her accident?"

An adorable frown came between her eyebrows, she was thinking hard. "Five, maybe six, years ago.
So that would give you four years to prove that one. But my main concern is pretty selfish if you
don't mind. I refuse to even be in one room with Charlie anymore; if he is capable of slipping me a
Mickey, I just won't do face-time with him anymore. The only time you will find me in the same
room is when he is safely passed out. I'm so glad I don't eat human food anymore. I won't have to
inconvenience all you full vamps with human food at the house. And, Edward, can I ask you
something?"

"Of course, honey, shoot."

She scrambled off the couch we were sitting on, ran to her drawer of unmentionables, and rummaged
around. She found what she was looking for, ran to me and dropped to one knee before me. "Will
you marry me?"

I sat there stunned; she had completely blindsided me. My phone vibrated in my pocket. If Alice saw
it real time, Bella had comfortably blindsided the whole Cullen information system. I did the only
thing I could do. I dropped to my knees next to her, grabbed her face between my hands and kissed
her with all the passion in my heart. "Yes, of course I will marry you, my darling girl," I said when I
had to let her go to breathe. She slipped a gorgeous male engagement ring onto my left ring finger. It
was the most precious gift I'd ever received, platinum with an emerald and pale yellow and black
diamonds.

"It signifies your eyes through the ages, the windows to your soul."

Her statement choked me up; I hated the fact that my eyes couldn't produce tears anymore. They
filmed over with venom, though.
"Can I ask why you want to get married, though?"

"Edward, I will be eighteen in two weeks; I want to change my address officially that day. If there wasn't a twenty-four hour waiting period on a wedding license, I would want to get married that day. It will have to be the day after now, though. You have to understand that, even though you and I know we are bonded a thousand times stronger than any marriage, it's the only legal way to thwart Charlie's plans. But I will marry you out of love, only the haste is out of necessity. I know Charlie will get a wedding license in my name in the next two weeks; maybe we could hinder that also, because I don't know if we can get one if another one is issued in my name already."

My phone buzzed again, I took it out and read the text:

**Legally no problem with two licenses in one name. Best to let them get it without stirring up suspicion. J**

I let Bella read it and she grinned. While she had my phone, it buzzed again and she read the text.

**Bella has second recorder, collect nr1 and leave nr2 plugged into outlet, mic is voice operated, so will pick up all conversation. Come to the house with nr1 we will have a fam. meeting when you get there. ~ C**

We did what Carlisle told us and soon we were seated in the dining room for our family meeting. The Denalis had gone for a hunt; they wanted nothing to do with our human meddling. We explained what had happened that afternoon and let them listen to the tape. I have never seen six vampires slack jawed at once, but that tape did it. When I told them what I heard in their thoughts, the astonishment changed to anger and Jasper had to work hard to keep us calm enough to think rationally. Even passive Carlisle was vibrating in his seat, and I was touched by the fact that he wanted to end all three of them, not counting them as humans anymore.

"Edward, I must compliment you on your restraint, and the fact that you kept your goal firmly in your mind: total humiliation after your mate is safely yours. We will make sure that all three of them will get what they deserve, and I think that death is too merciful for them. Before they will suffer in hell, we will make sure they will suffer on earth even more." We all nodded in agreement with Carlisle's statement. "So, what plans do we have already?" Carlisle asked.

Alice was vibrating in her seat, but I started with my plan to act like a Master's student in criminology to unearth wrecked cars and to see how many car accidents were actually disguised murders.

Rose said, "I understand that you would like to do that, but maybe I would be better suited for that job, to pose as the student, I mean. I know far more about cars, have the same level degree in criminology as you have, and, for the casual observer, have nothing to do with the potentially accused in the wreck we will be unearthing. You are the boyfriend of the daughter of one of them and that could lead to suspicion. My criminology degree is in the name of McCarty and that's a name nobody here knows. Elody McCarty will be the over enthusiastic Master's student with the outlandish hypothesis to be proven. You can help me, of course, but I really think you should only be with me on secret locations or night work. You'll have to describe the car you saw in Billy's head."

"You're right, Rose; it was just an idea I had because of my criminology degree. I didn't think it through. Furthermore, you would have always been involved, but I'm okay with you as the driving force. I still can't be too far from Bella without it being debilitating for her, and she's the absolute last person to be involved in this. That would raise all kinds of alarms. I believe Alice wants to tell the next revelation of the day, because it does not happen often that the text informing me of something is after the fact."
Alice took over. "Yeah, so not true, I don't believe it. But can I plan it please, please, pretty please?"

"Plan what, Alice?" Emmett exclaimed, highly irritated over all the nonsensical babble in a planning mission.

"Well," Bella said, "to thwart Charlie, and because he's my soul mate, I asked Edward to marry me today. The date is set for the 14th of September. The day after my birthday."

"Why the hurry? That's barely two weeks," Esme exclaimed.

"You heard the tape; I need to be away from Charlie and legally untouchable before Jacob turns eighteen. He is only five days younger than I am. Charlie and Billy became friends on the maternity ward where I was just born and Billy's wife was admitted with a complication which resulted in her delivering him prematurely. Something must have been pretty wrong, because the way Jacob has grown up is not stable. He is a head case if I have ever seen one. When we were little and Charlie still took me with him to tend to his needs while fishing, Jacob was there often, too. He had heard their tribal legends about them being descendants of wolves. He believed those legends and ran around on all fours and growled at everyone. I mean, that's funny when you are four, but at twelve? I wouldn't be surprised that the name of those drugs came from those legends. Hahaha, he even used to howl at the full moon, for crying out loud. He probably still does."

I had taken something from the treehouse and put it in a pouch around my neck. My early nineteen-hundred morals made me want to do it right. I took it from the pouch, the pouch which also held my mother's engagement ring. Carlisle's eyes went wide; he knew what was in that pouch. He just didn't know I had bought an addition to that pouch.

"Bella, may I ask you something?" I said, while getting down on one knee next to her. I heard Esme gasp. Bella turned to me with a big smile on her face.

"Yes, Edward, what is it?" she said calmly. I took her left hand in mine.

"Bella, my darling, even though you have already asked me, and I have acquiesced, I still wanted to do this the way I was taught. My angel, with all my heart I love thee. My soul is yours; the bond between us can only grow stronger. In a little while, you will not only be my better in the intelligence department, but also physically. You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen; you are perfect for me. Will you please do me the exquisite honor of becoming my wife?"

I showed her the heart-shaped engagement ring, lifted it to her left ring finger, and waited. Bella's mouth was hanging open and her eyes were glassy. She shook her head and the big smile returned.

"Yes, I will," she stated confidently. I slipped the ring on her finger; it was a perfect fit. We fell in each other's arms and I twirled her around and around. Life would be perfect.

For the first time in ages, it looked like Alice was completely on board. She couldn't wait to splash out on this last first wedding in our family. I didn't have the heart to tell her yet that it would be a simple courtroom wedding. Bella had, though, because with one look at vibrating Alice, her hackles rose.

"Alice, please be advised that my wedding will be a very simple affair. If at all possible on my birthday, I already have my wedding outfit, so no conspicuous wedding dress shopping. I will plan the ceremony with Rose. You can do the reception, at a venue. The only humans I'd like to invite are Chief and Mrs. Cope; they are the only people who helped me without an ulterior motive. Edward, I hope you agree that we need to postpone our honeymoon until after we go to Italy."
Alice's thoughts were mildly argumentative, but she agreed to do the party happily, even though she couldn't invite the whole town to spite them. I didn't really understand Alice lately; at the moment, she seemed to be Bella's friend, but I caught her thoughts sometimes being downright hostile toward my mate. I tallied this day as a good one for once.

It took us about three hours to research and implement the plan to bring down Charlie and his cohorts. A very comprehensive package of evidence was compiled. We had video evidence of the cabins mentioned by Billy on our latest tapes, transcripts of all the tapes from Charlie's secret basement, Paul's testimony—that was a bonus, the kid had been in a coma for five months; for everybody outside his direct caregivers, including his parents, he still was. He was transferred to a long time care facility a few states away, to keep him safe. Carlisle worked together with Chief Cope, and when he grasped that Paul was waking up, he kept him sedated until his parents consented to the long term coma unit. One of four in the country, Carlisle made it look as if their insurance covered it, but ultimately it was done on Cullen—read Masen—dime.

Paul's testimony was very interesting. He knew a lot about the inner workings of the Quileute drug ring. Because Jacob betrayed him so badly, he sang like a canary; he told us that if Jacob had shown a sliver of respect, he would have kept his mouth shut.

On the other event what would unfold on the same day, we knew now it could all be done on Bella's birthday. Carlisle would go to Chief Cope to bring Charlie down right after Bella had confronted him. Because my feisty mate was determined to tell him exactly what he was worth to her. I just said that in the nicest words possible; her words were actually that she would fucking tell that lowlife ingrate where he could stick his dick. To add to that, she was looking for an industrial rat trap.

Jasper searched the Internet for the Washington marriage laws; he found that we could get a license as soon as a week before Bella's birthday, as long as the actual wedding would not take place until her birthday. That was fine by us. September thirteenth would be our wedding day.

Chapter End Notes

A/N The total humiliation of the human waste products has begun. I truly hope your buckets remained empty during the reading of the first part of this chapter. To soften the pain of such nasty thoughts I gave you a double proposal. Please tell me what you thought about it all. Review or comment, I really am interested in your thoughts and ideas.

my recommendations this week are:

A Fork in the Road by jane-with-a-y, FFn 6493971, TWCS Sid=3831, FP under janewithay.

Romance is Dead by Kat097, FFn 5589439.

see you next week

Pien
Chapter 21 The Beginning of the End

Chapter Notes

A/N We all know that Stephanie Meyer owns all things Twilight. I just like to play with her universe and make it my own, without intending any form of copyright infringement.

Okay, another big thank you to my team of conspirators.

Yes, everybody, we're there Charlie is going to get his ass handed to him. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

TWILESQUE

Chapter 21 The Beginning of the End

BPOV

When I woke up from an hour long nap—all that was left of a night's sleep—Edward and I ran over to the Cullen house. The whole family stood there waiting on me. I still felt shy with all that attention, but it was nice to bask in their love.

On the dining room table, a small pile of gifts lay next to my morning drink. Even though I could hunt for myself, my newborn thirst could do with a top off. I hoped really hard that the family had listened and bought gifts I would use. It turned out that they had in fact listened; all the siblings together gave me my own laptop, loaded with programs I would indeed use. Esme and Carlisle presented me with a Cullen Crest on a choker necklace. I was touched by this. For the first time ever, I felt a true part of a family. Edward had two gifts for me, one he added to the necklace, it was the Masen Coat of Arms. He didn't explain, but I knew he wanted to make sure I was marked as the queen of his coven.

His second gift came with an explanation. He dropped to his knees before me and declared again how much he loved, admired, and adored me. He said that his heart belonged to me, pulling out the second necklace of the day; he showed me a diamond heart charm. It had belonged to his mother, and it was huge, I mean enormous. The necklace with it was clearly platinum, braided beautifully and long. My eyes misted over with venom, but the tears couldn't fall anymore. Edward put the necklace around my neck and the heart charm lay between my breasts, next to my slow beating heart.

Alice came running into the room with the designer clothes I had decided to wear to the confrontation with my, so called, father. We had it all worked out. I would act like I had been at the Dump the whole morning. Alice and Esme had done the honors of serving him a sub standard breakfast of burnt toast and dry, scrambled, old eggs.

While I dressed, I thought over what happened with the licenses. Just over a week earlier, Jasper's hacking told us that Charlie and the Black duo had gone to the courthouse and obtained a wedding license. Two days later, Edward and I went and got ours; some eyebrows were lifted at two licenses in my name, until I explained I didn't even know about the first one. They were kind enough to flag
Charlie's license as a fraud. The trio would have a real big problem the moment they would show up with me.

Looking at myself in the three-way mirror in Alice's room, I appreciated my nearly completed vampire form. I looked smoking hot in the tan ladies' slacks and form-fitting silk blouse in royal blue. A pair of killer stiletto heels in the same blue completed the outfit. We left the house in two cars; the trunk of Carlisle's Mercedes was big enough to hold my meager possessions and most of Charlie's cash. Esme, Carlisle, Alice, and Jasper took that car. Rose, Emmett, Edward, and I were in Edward's Volvo. They dropped me off around the corner, where they would wait within hearing distance for my signal all was as it should be.

When I snuck up to the Dump, I was baffled to see Jacob just leaving. Charlie began to shout out obscenities that I wouldn't come down when I had a visitor—oops, a little kink in our plan. I flew through my bedroom window, landing silently. I kept my mouth shut. It was pretty early; I could make it out as if I had gone back to sleep after I made his breakfast. I softly told the family they could arrive. Charlie had already reached boiling point, and apparently decided to drag me downstairs, because he started to climb the stairs. When he was on his third step, there was a loud knock on the door. Cursing whoever it was to high heaven, he stomped to open it. I could hear his breath hitch when he took in the seven vampires on his doorstep. Edward was in front with a large bouquet of white lilies, lavender, and orange blossoms; I could smell them.

"Good morning, deputy Swan, we came to congratulate Bella on her birthday. Can we come in?" his velvety voice asked the ingrate at the door.

Charlie stood there spluttering, and his thoughts must have been funny because Edward cleared his throat while saying in vampire speech, "He's baffled—very angry, too—that you actually have the nerve to have friends he didn't know about."

Carlisle took over. "Well, sir, we'd like to see Bella sometime this morning; we won't go away. What's it going to be?"

"I would like to see my future daughter-in-law now please," Esme added in a sharp tone.

"Excuse me, lady, no one in this house is going to be a part of your family any time soon. What kind of prank is this?" Charlie blustered. He stomped back into the house, conveniently leaving the door open. My family took that as an invitation and followed him in.

"GIRL, YOU NEED TO BE DOWN HERE WITHIN TEN SECONDS, OR YOU'LL BE MADE TO REMEMBER YOUR PLACE," Charlie hollered up to me. I squared my shoulders, made sure all my recently acquired jewelry was showing, smoothed the wrinkles in my clothes over, and opened my bedroom door.

I strutted to the stairs, making sure that my heels made their distinct clacking sound on the naked floorboards of the upstairs landing. When I appeared on the top of the stairs, I looked down on a very funny sight: Charlie, white with anger and fear, red blotches on his neck. I opened my mouth to demurely ask what the problem was; I never got the chance to say a thing. Charlie started in on me; he was using his mock nice voice. This told me he was at his most dangerous; he probably felt cornered. Good.

"Young lady, how could you disrespect my home like this? You invited people I don't know into this abode. Care to explain why you chose to disrespect me like that?" And with that, the numbskull actually gave me the time to tell him exactly what I thought of him.

"You want to know why I disrespect you. To start with, you're an empty headed numbskull; you
think that right now I would keep my mouth shut? Let me tell you exactly why my respect for you is nonexistent."

While I spoke, I came down the stairs. He stepped towards me and his hand was beginning to rise; he opened his mouth to interrupt me.

"NO, you don't interrupt me today, the day I became an adult, the day you no longer have any say over me! You empty headed asshole of a sack of meat, you ingrate who dares to call himself a father. You are nothing to me but a pain in my ass. You are so stupid that you didn't even notice I've had these friends for almost nine months. You haven't noticed that my health has soared with their great treatment. You didn't find out that all those arrests at the high school were our work."

Jasper walked confidently towards the entrance of his secret hideout, while Rose walked around removing all the bugs we planted. Emmett joined Jasper in the basement, just to keep up human appearances. Three big bags of money would be too heavy for a human.

"You little bitch, what do think you're doing? I even have a birthday present from your boyfriend here."

He held out a brown paper satchel. I grabbed it, looked inside, and laughed my head off. I took the string between my thumb and forefinger and pulled a piece of wood on a string out of the satchel. Edward and I looked at it together. I looked at him.

"Asshole, who in heaven's name do you think is my boyfriend? Because my fiancé would never give me a chunk of wood on a string. What in the hell should this look like? Edward, what do you think? It has four legs, a head, and a tail—a big head at that—damn, it almost covers half of the lump."

"Eh, Bella, it looks a bit doglike to me," Edward said, winking to me.

"So, that so-called boyfriend of mine, I don't know, thinks I'm a dog? That's complimentary of him. Well, asshole, this is what I do to anything thrust into my life by you."

I threw the lump of wood on the ground and crushed it into dust right before Charlie.

"Why you ungrateful..." Charlie finally cracked, lifting up his arm to slap me across the face. He never got that far, though. I caught his wrist and tightened my grip carefully until I could feel his bones grinding on each other. He cried out in pain, while his other hand balled up to punch me in the gut. I held onto his wrist and caught the other hand on the fist. Because both my hands were busy, I couldn't concentrate completely on the strength of that grip. I heard two faint snaps. Oops, I broke two of his fingers.

"Now, Charlie, this is the last time you'll see me. I told you we are responsible for the arrests at the high school. What I didn't tell you yet is that..."

A knock on the door interrupted my statement. Jasper was next to the door; he opened it and two state troopers were on the doorstep. I decided to go on with my statement. Jasper told the deputies to just wait for five minutes, then it was their turn.

"As I was saying, we also gathered evidence against you, sneaky little dirty cop. For fourteen years you had me get you ready for work, acting like your wet nurse, your maid, and your cook. You used me for your own good. You abused me, slapped me around and degraded me. Not anymore; I've made a long deposition at the station about everything you've done to me. That statement will go nicely with the taped evidence I handed over telling the authorities about your scheme to sell me into slavery for breeding purposes. You backhanded son of a bitch, now you can reap what you've sown.
Good riddance."

I turned on my heels and walked out the door, picking up one of the bags near the door. One of the troopers asked me what I was taking. I told him I was moving out and only took my things out of the Dump he called his house. He nodded and let me walk out.

"Charles Swan, we're here to bring you in on charges of corruption, child abuse, drug trafficking, and attempted human trafficking. You're under arrest. You have the right to remain silent, everything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you. Do you understand these rights?"

We heard one of the troopers Mirandize him. With big smiles on our faces, we loaded into our cars and drove off. When we arrived at the house, we went into wedding mode. Edward went off to the treehouse to dress and prepare for our wedding later this day. The rest of us went into the house, to get ready for the wedding. Not five minutes later, Alice left with a car full of decorations to prepare the hotel banquet room she rented in Port Angeles.

Jasper sat in the dining room with the content of the three bags he filled in Charlie's basement. The whole table looked like a bank vault, half of it all messed up, the other in neat stacks by worth of the bills. It was a lot—a certifiable fortune—to me, at least. After all the money was sorted, Jasper counted it with the speed of light.

"Bella," he said, "I need you to decide what to do with this money. You have a few options, but for starters I think we should have Edward deposit the equivalent of this money in your account, then we can use this as spare change lying around. It would be suspicious if we went to the bank to drop it off. Is that okay, Bella?"

"That's fine by me, Jasper, but you haven't told me how much you took; it looks like an absolute fortune to me."

"Well, darlin', to you it is a fortune; I took about two-thirds of Charlie's money, the money he withheld from you. I needed to leave enough to get all charges to fully stick on him. So, two-thirds of Charlie's illegal earnings comes to almost eight million dollars, honey."

If it hadn't become impossible due to my changed nature, I would have fainted. Damn, eight million, I had very dual feelings about this. All that money was gathered illegally by the man not to be called my father; I shouldn't feel entitled to it, but I did. I thought about it, spaced out completely; I knew I had to do some good with it. Donate a hefty sum to shelters for abused children would be one of the first things I would do. But the rest would be mine; Edward could invest it for me, to make it possible to keep doing good.

"Jazz, please organize it like you said, but please make it seven million into my account and what goes over that make it an anonymous donation to a cause for abused children. I want to feel that all that drug money does some good."

"That's wonderful, darlin'. I'll make it work through our foundation."

Jasper grabbed his phone and called someone. "Edward man, I have a total and your girl's plans for the money. Could you please deposit seven million in her personal account? We're going to use the cash as back up money. Furthermore, I need your okay for a nine hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollar donation to a reputable charity for abused children."

I could hear Edward's answer through the phone; for the first time my hearing was the same as theirs. "Just a moment, seven mil you said? That's not bad; we should have Chief Cope donate the rest of
the money when it's released after the trial. Okay, it's in her account. Now you're going through the trust. I presume?"

"Yeah, it would be impossible to make it anonymous without going through there."

"Okay, my okay will be in your mail in the next five minutes. Now let me talk to my soon to be wife."

"Nope, sorry, but these few hours are your pre-wedding separation. Relax, get dressed, and wait for our text telling you we've left. Then you can get your car and come to the courthouse."

"Oh damn, okay. You're all cruel; you're all together and I'm here alone. I'm glad I'm at the treehouse, though; at least I'm surrounded by her scent. I'll be waiting for your okay text. See you in court."

He disconnected the call and a faint ache settled in my chest. We were truly separated until our wedding; even with the distance not being that big, the separation pain made an appearance. He had my scent, I could have his. In his room, I called Rose to bring my wedding outfit to Edward's room. My heart rate went up a bit and stayed at that level. Rose came into the room and gave me a searching look.

"If I have to bet, Bella, you're going to be a full vampire very soon. I can't put a timeframe on your change, but your heart beating faster tells me you're almost done."

"Rose, don't talk to me like I'm a Sunday roast. Just help me get beautified and dressed."

"Okay, get into the shower; I'm going to iron your clothes. Wash your hair but don't dry it yet. I'll do your hair and makeup. Oh, girl, you're going to give Alice a heart attack with your choice of clothes, but they're so incredibly you that she'll have to bite the bullet and shut up."

I showered, towel-dried my hair, brushed it, and put on my robe. Rose dried my hair and put it in an elaborate half up do. The flowers we'd chosen braided into my hair. My makeup was chosen to make me look as human as possible, to show my no longer existent blush one last time. I put on the barely there white lingerie we bought the same day we bought the rest of my unconventional wedding outfit. I loved the skinny white jeans, the white tank top, and the royal blue tunic. A tunic which was completely sheer. I had the tank top printed with the Masen Coat of Arms in silver. Now I had one last choice to make: would I wear the blue trainers or the royal blue killer heels. I asked Rose, and she told me to show my new confidence by wearing the heels. She flitted from the room and came back with my bouquet: white lilies, lavender, and orange blossoms.

Everybody waited for me in the living room. Carlisle and Esme were dressed to the nines in a lavender dress and a tuxedo. Rose and Emmett were almost dressed down for a wedding. He wore a three piece suit in dark gray, with a crisp white shirt and lavender tie. Rose wore a lavender pants suit. Jasper had his tuxedo on with a lavender vest and bow tie. I walked down the stairs to startled gasps from everyone but Rose. They all told me they loved my wedding attire, even if it was unconventional. We all boarded the cars, leaving Edward his precious Volvo.

The ride to the courthouse was short. I felt thoroughly excited; this would be the final link we needed to complete our human bond. The vampire bond had been complete since our mating. Both sides of our nature would be bonded forever. I couldn't wait, and had the greatest difficulty sitting still, not vibrating in my seat.

When we had parked in the visitor's parking lot at the courthouse and walked inside, Alice was perched on a bench in the entrance hall. She flew to her feet too fast.
"Bella, I'm glad you're here and your hair and makeup came out nicely, I'll strengthen your eye shadow in a minute. Now come along, then we can get you changed into your wedding dress shortly. I already decorated the registrar's office, now come on!"

She grabbed my arm and started to tow me along towards the bride's chamber, an unused office she commandeered. I allowed her to take me there, just to get out of that public place. Rose and Esme followed us inside. A few minutes into our argument, Kate sidled into the room, too. At that moment, Alice was showcasing the dreadful dress she had bought for me. It was a full out Cinderella dress with wide petticoats and miles of billowing lace. It was frilly, over the top, and ghastly. Rose and Esme had taken up positions in front of me, to protect my wedding clothes I had chosen with my heart.

"Alice, shut up and listen to me closely," I sharply told her. "I have no intention of changing into that affront of a dress you bought. I see that not being able to bully me into letting you buy clothes for me has wounded your ego, but I'm not sorry that I withstood your bullying, I told you the first night at the house that I wouldn't be bullied. I understood that night we would have this fight again. You have bullied them all for years without a peep, but now that I exposed you, they all started to stand up to your egotistical ways. Now get out of this room and don't you dare disturb this day. I gave you your niche and you overstepped again. Get out!"

If looks could kill, I would have been ashes right there and then. She showered us with curses and stomped her foot. Once again she tried to get to me, trying to ruin my clothes, so that I wouldn't have a choice but wear that dress. Rose and Kate held her back, when Esme did the most incredible thing. Esme dove towards the wedding dress monstrosity and shredded it in seconds. We all stood with open mouths in a flurry of little pieces of lace and silk.

"You controlled this family long enough, young lady. This beautiful new daughter of mine wants to marry her soul mate in clothes of her own choice. For once you're up against a strong person, a person who won't be intimidated, and you're going to stomach it and comply. Now get out like you were told."

Alice left steaming, but resigned she couldn't do much to change the course of things. Five minutes later, we heard another fight going on in the groom's room, the office opposite the one where we were. Edward's exasperated voice told her to leave him alone, and that he wouldn't wear her travesty of a tuxedo, and if she wanted to be present at the wedding she should stop manipulating everything her way. Her screeching voice was heard once again before we could hear Emmett growl, and then the shredding of more fabric was heard. Edward thanked Emmett, and we heard Alice stomping towards the registrar's office.

Kate and Esme slipped out, promising to make the decorations acceptable. They asked Edward if he was ready and asked him to help to straighten the decorations. Rose looked me over and showed genuine joy that Alice didn't damage a thing on my clothes. She flew around the office and put all scraps of fabric into the clothing bag hanging from the bookcase. Within two minutes, the office was spotless.

I heard Jasper call out to us after a short knock that it was time. We gave him a minute to take his place, then opened the door. Rose walked ten feet in front of me to the left side of the registrar's desk.

I walked into the room; a quick look around showed me flowers, a lot of flowers. But my eyes were drawn to the front of the room; an old lady stood behind a desk with a stack of papers before her. To the right of her my eyes locked on Edward's. He had hunted; his eyes were golden yellow, the exact same color of the diamond in my ring. I was completely captured in his gaze; my heart went into
Edward's eyes sparked with joy. I had to hold back my speed—I needed to control my movements—somehow my vampire nature wanted to take over. I wanted to fly to my man, but I kept a tight control on everything. I walked slowly through the aisle to the front, where Rose and Jasper waited with my only focus, Edward.

His eyes roamed over my body; I could feel them like a caress. I looked him over, too. He was dressed in a traditional morning suit: black coat with tails, dark grey striped slacks, and a light grey vest over a crisp white shirt and a dark tie. Next to him, on the registrar's desk, was a shiny top hat.

When I came to him, I offered him my right hand. He took it and kissed it reverently. We stared in each other's eyes, until the registrar cleared her throat. We reluctantly turned to her gently smiling face. She started to talk about marriage, about the commitment it was. She even told us that it was nice to see two people so in love and in tune with each other. She hinted that most weddings organized on the fly like ours were not thought through properly, but she wasn't afraid we were in that category. That earned her a repressed giggle from our audience. She then asked everyone present to voice any objections or forever hold their tongue. I heard Alice take air, but someone slapped a hand over her mouth. Edward's eyes flew to her in a flash of rage, only to refocus on me without the old lady noticing a thing.

The registrar then asked me if there was anything impeding this wedding, because she had another license in my name. I acted completely surprised by that piece of information, and told her that to my knowledge I had no other suitors, or other plans to marry anybody. I told her that license must have been obtained without my knowledge. Edward also looked completely surprised; he confirmed that he also had nothing impeding our wedding.

The registrar told us, with a happy glint in her eyes, that we would go to the marriage vows. She told our family we had chosen to speak our own vows. She turned to Edward and told him to go ahead. He took a deep breath, turned, and took both my hands.

"Isabella, you are a star from the heavens to love, honor, and cherish, for all the days of my life. You are my pearl of choice, my strength at my side."

Listening to him, I was overcome with emotions. My heart started beating like a hummingbird's; when he finished the second sentence, it stopped completely, giving one more shattering beat in the silence of his pause. Then I stood there, the silence around us deafening. Edward gulped, his eyes filling with venom. I felt like my world changed completely. I was now Edward's completely; I almost drowned in his love, and my love for him.

"My... My lo...ve for you will never fade."

Edward stuttered over his vows, but then his poise returned and he went on.

"You are my love, my life, my wife. May God bless our marriage in peace and happiness for all time."

Chapter End Notes

A/N

Now don't kill me for stopping here; I know breaking up in the middle of the vows is cruel. That's why you'll get a second chapter today. The rest of the vows just had to be
in Edwards's point of view. I'll post it ASAP, just bear with me for now.
Chapter 22 Linked Forever

Chapter Notes

A/N Twilight belongs to Stephanie Meyer, as usual I don't intend any copyright infringement by using her ideas to write my own story. I won't earn anything but some praise from the readers who enjoy my crazy ramblings.

Oh all right, here's Edwards point of view and the rest of the wedding!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 22 Linked Forever

EPOV

I stood next to Mrs. Forrester, our registrar, Jasper at my side in his tuxedo. His thoughts were full of pride for my girl, the one who finally understood why he struggled so much. The one who freed him of his excruciating bloodlust. The only one who stood up to his controlling mate.

My mind was flooded with the argument I'd witnessed when I arrived at the courthouse: Alice once again trying to bully Bella, failing miserably, but almost resorting to violence to get her way. Esme gained her freedom from our family bully by ripping the Cinderella dress Bella would hate to shreds. Esme kept her thoughts far away from what Bella was wearing. I was grateful for that.

Emmett was still rejoicing about his own act of destruction; one look at my face, when I saw what Alice thought appropriate attire, was enough to stir him into action. He shredded the tuxedo with shorts and, of all things, a train!

I heard Bella's heartbeat coming towards me. Rose had already warned me that she had entered the last phase of her change. I turned to the doorway and there she was, my goddess. I was stunned by her wedding clothes. We had both chosen to show ourselves in our clothes. I was in awe of her sheer blue tunic; it made her mysterious. She was so beautiful; all my attention was on her until Mrs. Forrester asked if anybody had grounds to object to this union. Alice's thoughts and actions were to interject and give grounds to object. Carlisle was fast for a change and put his hand over her mouth, much to her chagrin. I threw her a glance filled with rage. Bella's surprise at the registrar's question about the second license in her name was perfect.

Now we were finally at the vows. I was asked to begin. I turned to Bella completely and took both her hands in mine. To get over my excited nerves, I took a deep breath, listening closely to Bella's heart beating out a staccato rhythm.

During my second line, the staccato became a frenzied humming. I forced myself to keep speaking my vows. Before I could begin on my third line, her heart gave one loud final beat. Everybody froze in the deafening silence, a silence that was suddenly shattered in my head and heart. I heard Bella's voice inside my head, but it felt as if it came through my heart.

'Oh god, it's like I'm drowning in his love. I'm complete, finished, a full vampire. Oh my, I didn't
know my love could grow so much more all encompassing as it did just now. I'm his forever. And. He. Is. Mine.'

My composure shattered, I stuttered over the next line something awful. I made the mistake of looking her straight in her eyes, and saw their color change from the deep brown they still had been, to a beautiful golden yellow. No newborn eyes for my special girl. The absolute awe in her eyes kept me going, and helped me regain my composure when I finished with my vows.

The registrar was blissfully ignorant of all the extra special things happening during my vows. She smiled happily and turned to Bella, giving her a simple nod to get her to say her vows. Bella's eyes fixed themselves on our linked hands; she brought them together and encompassed both my hands with hers.

"Edward, since we have been together, you have provided me with strength, security, confidence, honesty, love, and plenty of much needed guidance."

'You've been my rock, you helped me grow.'

"Where there has been cold, you have brought warmth."

'Even though you're cold as ice.'

"Where my life was dark, you have brought light. In my darkest trouble, in my coldest silence, I looked for you and you were there."

The internal extra vows in her breathtaking inner voice were so heartfelt that I slowly started to melt inside. Bella's eyes snapped up to mine, big and full of wonder. Her inner voice came through.

'You can hear me? Because I can sure as hell hear your velvety voice inside me now. Damn it, Bella, focus and finish your vows.'

"My prince on your white steed, you are truly my knight in shining armor. You may not realize it, but you helped and saved me in so many ways, and I love you for that."

'Yes, I hear you, Bella. Keep going, darling, you're doing great. My vampire mate.'

'My fairy prince, my savior. I love you soooooo much.'

"I'm honored that you will have me as your wife, and I'm proud to have you as my husband. I believe that we were made for each other. I will love you with all my heart, forever."

'Truly and certainly now. Forever!'

'Forever and ever.'

Mrs. Forrester helped us to exchange the rings with the traditional "I Thee Wed" statements. Bella's wedding band was a simple platinum band dotted all around with black and golden yellow diamonds. My wedding band was the same, only the black diamonds were white ones, linking our wedding bands with our engagement rings.

I was then allowed to kiss my bride. My inner vampire was chomping at the bit to get to his mate; I told him to be patient. After the reception, the wedding night would be his; until then, appearances had to be upheld. Bella's inner voice startled me, in bursting out in a fit of giggles. I looked into her eyes and understood. I didn't close the door before telling my vampire off. She caught that and found it terribly funny. While all this was happening inside, we kissed the living daylights out of each other.
Keeping up appearances. Not only for the single human in the room, but I didn't want our family to know about our secret communication.

Emmett started to clear his throat and I caught a vicious thought in his head. He stopped that thought, though; he had cleaned out his brain and organized it like Jasper and I did. It helped him immensely to stop his mind's intruder from doing more harm through him. We hadn't been able to pinpoint yet who was responsible. It obviously happened remotely somehow.

The registrar announced us as Mrs. and Mr. Masen-Cullen; we turned and walked through our whooping and clapping family to the door.

Married and truly together forever; life couldn't get better.

Alice came stomping out of the courthouse and started to dole out orders. She made Bella and me ride with Carlisle and Esme. My Volvo would be driven by her and Jasper, while Rose and Emmett would take the jeep. She never told us where we had to go, which meant we had to follow her to the venue.

Bella and I sat in the back, perfectly happy to be lost in our bubble, silently talking to each other, trying to find out how it worked exactly. We had already found out that we didn't need to touch for it to work. Bella was wrapped in Rose's arms after the ceremony, while I was pounded on my back by my brothers.

'Oh, dear God, could they please stop hitting the snot out of you. I would like my husband in one piece... Okay, Bella, wait for an answer, hopefully we can do this without touching.'

'Let them, love, we only get married once for the first time. I can take it... How much fun is this? We'll be able to discuss things we want to keep from everyone, really private.'

But we were talking sweet mostly in the car, nuzzling each other and exchanging soft touches. Carlisle and Esme were beaming in the front of the car. For once, Carlisle held back on the deluge of questions roaming his mind. Rose had laid into him after Bella's mini meltdown; she told him that if he wanted Bella to be his daughter, he should start acting like a father and not a mad scientist. He should stop only looking in from the outside and start using his feelings. All of them, not only his morbid curiosity. It looked like he was finally persuaded to do just that.

Alice stopped at the Red Lion Hotel—a three star accommodation, the best Port Angeles had to offer—but, I fished out of her mind, absolutely sub-par for Alice. She had rented out the ballroom and brought in everything from Seattle. Alice ordered us to take a walk on the nearby pier, sending Jasper with his camera with us for our wedding pictures.

She took everybody else inside to finish the ballroom. A few waitresses were frantic that the she-monster from hell was back. She had them running around from the moment she arrived until she left for the wedding.

We took our time, finding a few idyllic spots to take pictures. We were gone about ten minutes when Rose found us. She advised us to completely set our own plan for the reception. Apparently Alice had gone overboard badly. I caught a glimpse in her mind and cringed. Inadvertently, I broadcasted the image to Bella; she gasped before she caught herself. She covered brilliantly,

"Rose, please tell me that image you're showing isn't true! Edward, don't look, it's ghastly. Sorry, Rose, I piggybacked on Edward's power."
'That would do it, won't it, Edward?'

"Let's get it over with, love. Rose, why don't we just go inside, act as if we're grateful, but follow our plan of a festive evening."

The four of us walked at a slow human pace to the gossamer nightmare, which was previously a ballroom. On the opposite side from the entrance stood a long table with a grand buffet: thousands of canapés, amuses and other finger foods, draped artfully over logs, interspersed with white lilies, lavender, and orange blossoms. In the middle of the table was a white monster of five tiers, buried in sugar flowers. Yes, it was a wedding cake, for a party where only two humans would attend. All the walls were covered in huge gossamer bows with garlands of flowers.

Alice was happily bouncing inside the room. She became even happier when Bella plastered a fairly convincing smile on her face, and told her that she did as well as she thought she would.

'I always knew she's all about her own ideas; at least this way I don't lie.'

Before Alice could start dominating the evening, our human guests arrived. Chief and Mrs. Cope congratulated us on our nuptials, gave us a blender for our new kitchen, in our new house near a campus of our choice. Then Chief Cope told us he had some information on the case against Charlie.

"You both know that he was arrested this morning after you left?"

We both nodded.

"Well, he was booked into our jail, processed, frisked, and put into a holding cell to wait for his first interrogation. We took our time setting up the interview room. We wanted to make him stew for a bit. The state troopers were impressed by your evidence and deposition, Bella. They also agreed that Charlie wasn't the smartest crook; he never suspected I kept him in his job for your sake. He was a classic narcissist, only concerned with himself. Oh, we've found out where your child support money went all this time. Renee got that money, through money orders."

'Edward, it just dawned on me that he talks about Charlie in the past tense. I think he's dead. Thank God.'

"Okay, we were ready for Charlie, and a deputy went to collect him and bring him into the interview room. Then all hell broke loose in holding. Everybody ran there when the alarm sounded, it just wasn't necessary. Charlie had committed suicide by using his shirt and jeans as a noose. He tied them to the bars in the high window somehow. We took everything but the clothes from his back; this was something we never expected."

He looked a bit perturbed, and Bella grabbed his hand carefully. She was so very well adjusted already.

"Chief Cope, I'm going to be very blunt. Thank God that atrocious person is dead. I'm glad that he has abused the funds of the Forks PD for the last time. I would like to thank you and your wife for being the only people in this town who genuinely cared for me. You both have been the only ones who gave me some freedom from his abuse. Please enjoy the buffet; one of the waitresses will bring you your champagne."

'I'm proud of you, love, and everything you said was true. You took the Chief's guilt for his death away.'

'I like this way of talking to you, it's so very private. This is just for us, right? We won't tell the others,
okay? Oh, this day is so perfect; I can't wait for us to leave. Let's get through this charade as fast as possible. Then we can get our alone time.'

I nodded to her and we started to mingle with our guests. The Denalis hugged us close. Eleazar lifted his eyebrow, looking at Bella. He thought to me that he sensed that our bond now was at full force. He was in total awe that Bella came out of the change a completely adult vampire. I caught the conversation between Bella and Mrs. Cope; the librarian asked what Bella thought about children. My wife was absolutely perfect in her answer, telling her that she wanted to wait until after college to think about that.

I was joking with Kate and Rose about something inconsequential when my girl began to show signs of impatience, and Alice got images running in her mind of cutting the cake. I quickly apologized to the ladies and turned to the DJ to give him our choice for the first dance. I gave him the CD I made with the song I wrote for Bella. It started out as a bit of a lullaby, but soon after the whole song shifted into an affirmation of life and joy. I took Bella in my arms and twirled her onto the dance floor. She came happily, following me effortlessly. Her beautiful inner voice spoke to me, while she stared into my eyes.

'Edward, you wrote this?' I nodded 'It's beautiful, I love you. Actually, after schmoozing with everyone for an hour, I'm ready to go. How about we say goodbye right after this dance? Can I get your decision on that, honey? Let's see if Alice picks up on our link decisions.'

'All right, angel, I totally agree. We are going to go after this dance. I think I'll make a short speech,' I thought to her. I had to get used to consciously thinking to her. I was used to receiving thoughts, not broadcasting them. But the feeling of her words getting to me through my heart was so very intimate. It also gave the words feeling. I heard the thoughts of all people around me, but it was devoid of feeling. Bella's words touched me like a caress.

The song ended and I grabbed the microphone from the DJ.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, you're looking at the happiest man in the world. My beautiful bride and I would like to thank you all for coming and celebrating with us. I would like to encourage you all to keep the party going, but the time for my bride and I to go enjoy our wedding night has come. Once again, thank you for your support and love. Goodnight!"

I returned the microphone, took Bella's hand, and together we ran from the room at a brisk human pace. Bella told me to set the pace because she didn't trust her strength yet. When I came to the Volvo, I was so glad that we went very early. On the backseat was a box with designer shoes, ribbons, and several boxes of condoms. We dove into the car when Alice's frozen state broke; she was completely baffled until then. Her thoughts were frantic, because she had gotten nothing before that. My decisions were vague when I was around Bella. But this time it was a complete blank, not a glimpse. When we drove away, a frustrated screeching scream left her throat. We successfully circumvented her controlling ways.

On the drive to the house, and the subsequent run to the treehouse, we decided that we would go for a celebratory hunt. We quickly changed clothes to our favorites: jeans and tees.

"I'm going to take you out into Canada tonight; Jasper conveniently shoved a little note into my hand just before the ceremony. They have a mountain lion problem near Vancouver. I think we need to let our animal selves celebrate our union, and your completion as a vampire. Is it a big change? Apart from losing your heartbeat."

"Mmmmm, mountain lion, I'm salivating at the thought. And to answer your question, yes, it's the biggest jump in becoming a vampire to me. Suddenly the brakes are off, I feel as if I had some
human restrictions to all of my senses, abilities, and power. For the first time I feel my strength humming in my body. And I think, no, I know my control room just sprouted a whole lot of new options."

We were running hand in hand at a leisurely pace toward the rogue mountain lions, enjoying being together, not having to censor every move.

"Oh, love, Emmett stopped the saboteur today. I caught the vicious thought in his head but he smothered it, drove it to his garbage bin. We still don't know who it is, but meanwhile he's cleaning up the clutter in his mind. He'll probably find it sometime; he told me that it's like an urge planted inside him. He doesn't want to act on it, but somehow it still happened until recently."

"Why are we talking about Emmett on our wedding night, lover?"

"I was so proud of him; that was the first time I witnessed him using restraint."

Bella froze in her tracks, yanking me to a halt also. Her nostrils flared and a soft growl rumbled in her chest. She inhaled deeply and her eyes went from golden to onyx in a second. Her stance changed as she released my Kitten. The breathtaking woman changed before my eyes into an awe inspiring predator. Inhaling the air myself now, I realized I'd stopped breathing when she yanked me to a stop. I picked up the faintest smell of mountain lion; damn, my girl's senses were sharp.

In answer to my Kitten, I opened the cage of her Lion. He behaved himself, only rattling his cage occasionally. Now I took a step back and gave the reins over to him.

'Hey, Lion, did you pay attention? You can talk to me silently now. That should come in handy during hunting and fucking.'

'Yeah, you little vixen, I really paid attention today. I hear, or rather not hear, you're done, cooked, ready to be served up for my pleasure. Finally completely without restraint.'

They kept bantering silently while steadily following the appetizing scent. It didn't take them long to locate the beast. It was a mountain lion all right, but it was a monster. I'd never seen one that big before.

'Together, but the kill is MINE.'

Kitten pounced and I felt my already hard cock twitch in my jeans. Her feline grace was incredibly erotic. Her tiny form was dwarfed by the cat easily three times her size, but it never phased her. And she certainly didn't want to play with her food. Taking a flying dive, she flew over the mountain lion, breaking its neck in the process, and nailing the landing. I growled my appreciation; her responding hiss radiated with pride and possessiveness. She crouched over her prey, growling at me. My instincts pushed me to show my domination over her.

I drew myself up to my full height, building a possessive growl. I locked our eyes in on each other and stared her down. The cocky, newborn, little vampire opposite me looked back, challenging, but her attention was drawn away from me by a stupid little deer intruding on our bubble. Her head snapped its way, and while her attention was elsewhere, I took advantage to approach and make my claim on her prey.

She completely surprised me by dropping to her knees and offering me the prey. After I sunk my teeth into its neck and took a heavenly pull from it, she latched on to the other side of the neck. We drank it together, the best of the best. The biggest male I'd ever seen, the heavenly liquid sliding down our throats. When it ran dry, I grabbed Kitten's hair and pulled her to me. She smashed our
mouths together and kissed the hell out of me. I lifted her off of her feet, and dropped her on the limp body of our prey. The last remnants of blood were catapulted from it into the air. I had the angle right and I ripped off her shirt just before the blood splashed down on her.

With a feral growl, Kitten was on her feet. She ripped my clothes off me and pressed her naked upper body to my chest. One flick of my wrist later we were both completely bare. We kissed and groped frantically. I latched on to one of her nipples, savoring her unique taste mixed with that of the prey. Arching her back, she pushed her whole breast into my mouth. I cleaned her up with my tongue, all the while kneading her butt and breasts. She had one hand in my hair; the other was roaming my back and butt.

Each of us wrapped one leg around the other; it opened her up and I rammed my cock home. Our hooked legs gave us leverage to fuck each other as true equals. Her nails raked over my scalp and back, sending erotic jolts straight to my cock. Her breasts were pressed tightly against my chest; I made my muscles stimulate her nipples. The clearing was alive with our growls, snarls, moans, and mewls. The electricity surrounding us was almost lighting the place up, the electric jolts ramping up in force with every thrust of our hips.

The walls of Kitten's pussy started to pulse, her growls growing in volume. My teeth started to tingle; I almost pushed that feeling aside, but elation went through my body. She was a full vampire now; my bite couldn't affect her change anymore. She had marked me, she would mark me again. Oh, God, we could mark each other. The realization drove me over the edge; Kitten must have felt the same urge, because I felt her teeth rake at my neck. The moment we exploded, we both sank our teeth in the other's neck; immediately the high went higher. We drank from each other while the world started spinning with our ecstasy.

We let go, locking eyes, kissing softly, but the world didn't stop spinning slowly. Bella and I looked around; through the link, I heard she also thought that the world was spinning. Then she looked down and gasped. Through the link I saw it a fraction earlier than my own eyes snapped down.

Bella and I were two foot five up in the air, revolving slowly. As soon as we realized this, we fell to the ground in a heap.

Chapter End Notes

A/N I hope everyone liked the wedding, please let me know in your comments/reviews.

No recommendations this week, I hope to find some new ones to push on you all next week.

Please review

Pien
Chapter 23 Blacks Friday

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I'm not doing this to earn money.

A big thank you once again for my fantastic team, Chandrakanta, Lorraine Bubbleybear, and LunaDiSangue85.

The human element in Bella's life is slowly dwindling down. This chapter I need to thank LunaDiSangue85 extra for her gracious consent of Jacobs nickname.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 23 Blacks Friday

BPOV

"Bella, I'm so glad that you backed me up this time; I've wanted to do this for so long," Esme told me while stuffing the fifth turkey. We got the biggest beasts we could find, ten in total. I was cleaning the cranberries for the sauce. There would be two sauces: one from a can, and one homemade. Some people just like the canned stuff better. Even homeless people should have a thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings. We already had the sweet potatoes, yams, and green bean casseroles finished. We also had all the stuffing ready. To be done were the cranberry sauce and the pumpkin and sweet potato pies. Esme plopped the massive turkey into the oven and started to peel the potatoes for the mash. I dropped four and a half pounds of cranberries into the simmering orange juice and sugar, and started to stir. My mind drifted away while I lightly whisked the wooden spoon through the mixture.

My mind took me to our animalistic first mating on our wedding night. We both were absolutely feral that night, and the days following we went through every state between human and feral multiple times. We stayed in the Canadian wilderness for a week, frolicking in our birthday suits, playing around with our connection. The best thing was that even being twenty miles apart, our connection still worked flawlessly. I was now a mind reader as well, only I could choose to use it. Because of our link, I could borrow Edward's power at will.

At the end of our wedding week, I couldn't call it a night. We swam back to the peninsula. I walked over the bottom for about a half hour; all those perks in being a vampire were great to discover. We got back to the treehouse. I never even thought about the remote, but Edward took it from the pouch he had always around his neck. We entered and got dressed; to my dismay, I only had one set of clothing left. We destroyed a lot of clothes and we needed to shop. Then and there we decided to go to the mall in Port Angeles, the shops there would have what we wanted.

Although I would rather run, we decided to take the car. Edward snuck up to the house and listened in on who was home before making a dash for it and silently pushed the Volvo a bit toward the driveway. He picked me up at the end of the driveway; no one in the house had noticed a thing. Half an hour later we were perusing the shops at the mall. Edward tugged me, with a mischievous grin on his face, into Victoria's Secret. He was right, of course, I had to go commando because all my undies were destroyed. I went for some basic cotton slips and bras, while Edward feasted on all things sexy
lingerie. We left with three big bags full. After speed shopping in a jeans boutique, we both had at least fifteen new pairs of jeans, and several button-downs in stonewash.

While Edward took all the bags and brought them to the car, I saw an artisan soap shop through the windows of the mall on the other side of the parking lot. Through the link, I told Edward where I would go, showing him the storefront. I had to take the back entrance of the mall to get to the little shop. The moment I took a step outside, I was yanked to the side. A burly russet-skinned boy grabbed me by the neck and tried to push me against the wall. If I had been human, he would have overpowered me, as he had me in a chokehold. Seeing the cameras in the parking lot, I played with him a bit, acting the frightened little human girl.

"Iiiiiisa…Belllllaaaaa, just because your coward of a father killed himself doesn't mean you're off the hook. You're still mine; without the cop guarding your virtue to keep his nose clean, I'm going to test drive you right now."

I wrapped one of my red tendrils around the bastard; through the link I heard the angry growls of Edward, but I told him to hold back. I would be the one to teach him a lesson. Suddenly, Edward's power kicked in, while he was nowhere near me!

'...be easy, she's tiny. I won't even have to bind her, though it would be nice to see it. I wonder if she's pure; to ram through her to violate her that way would be great."

'Love, get out of his head now, before you lose control. I've been there before, remember? He's addicted to violent rape. GET OUT NOW!' Edward growled in my head; the anger coming through the link was staggering. I closed off my mind reading, just as he ordered. I knew I had to incapacitate him using human strength, or a little bit more.

Jerkob only had a chokehold on me, which didn't impair me at all; I didn't need air, after all. His second hand went to my clothes, roughly trying to palm my breast; I decided to act.

"You know, Jerkob, you're completely twisted and entirely mistaken. I'm my own person; I'm not anybody's property. Now, I'll give you one chance to let me go before you'll regret ever touching me."

Edward's snort echoed in my head. He shot me a picture of a roundhouse kick to Jerkob's head. The aforementioned asshole tightened his hold, thinking it would stop all resistance.

'Love, go ahead, I'm just around the corner. I'll come out when you have him down. I'll call 911 in a moment.'

With that, he reminded me that we wanted all of the douchebags publicly humiliated. I would start that humiliation now, on camera, because I had subtly pushed him into the limelight of the security camera. He never noticed; he was helpless against my strength. I just struggled a bit and I had him where I wanted him. It had to look humanly credible. I grabbed the hand on my neck and bent it back all the way. He let go with a cry; I spun around while turning his arm around toward his back. He resisted, dropping to his knees, and his massive frame gave him some leverage against my human strength. I couldn't use vampire strength to subdue him; it would show on the tape. Keeping a snarling Kitten under tight control, I used one of her more colorful scenarios running through my mind.

I would permanently disable his ability to sire children. I had to ask Edward how I could do that without external injuries. I hadn't noticed yet but the big oaf already had his pants unbuttoned. Edward told me how, and that venom would heal any incisions without a trace.
'You better have an industrial strength sanitizer ready then, and keep your composure when I have to touch that part of him.'

'I promise, my angel.'

Jerkob chose that moment to try to attack me again. Because his trousers weren't done up, he dropped them; he went commando, so my little operation was made a lot easier. He stopped the attack, trying to hold on to me with one hand, while trying to catch his pants with the other. I gave him a light kick on his chin and he dropped to his knees.

'Pffg glass jaw.'

His back was to the camera, but he still held my wrist. I wanted him to, because if he stopped his assault, I had to stop defending myself. I let him yank me to my knees in front. All my actions were shielded from the camera, I moved at my new natural speed and gave the dog a vasectomy and cut the main nerve to his meager manhood. He would never have an erection again. Spitting on my fingers, I closed his wounds without trace. To cover up my fast movements, I junk punched him with a little more force than necessary. Jerkob crumbled into a fetal position, his hands clamped over his junk. I bent over and said, "I told you, you would regret it. Welcome to incarceration for the rest of your life."

In my peripheral vision, I saw Edward jogging toward us, two deputies on his heels. I flew into his arms, still at human speed—how irritating—and started sobbing.

Long story short, that tape, all evidence from before, and his drug-riddled confessions took care of him. Needless to say, I cleaned my hands with pure bleach, and Edward and I finally went to the little soap store the next day.

The week Edward and I were in Canada, Rose did her Elody McCarty routine at the Port Angeles impound lot. She solidly concluded that the car had hand cut brake lines. Her report stated that the car had sped straight ahead into a tree without swerving, like the official statement said. Her conclusion was straightforward, Sarah Black was murdered. Charlie's transcribed tapes told us who did it: Billy Black himself. We had already known, of course, we just didn't have evidence.

Billy Black, totally oblivious, walked indignantly into the police station to inquire why his son was arrested. He was led toward an interview room. Edward and I were ensconced in a nearby tree. Edward had asked me to please stay out of the cesspool of his mind, and after my brief dive into Jerkob's mind, I readily complied. Edward gave me the censored version of Billy's mind; the verbal part I could hear myself.

"He's furious that the cops dared to arrest his son; at the same time, he's furious at Jacob, too."

We heard the cops come into the interview room with a TV and DVD installation on a rack. They played him the security tape that was the grounds for Jacob's arrest. What they hadn't told him was that they had put Rose's video evidence about her work on the car behind it.

"Mr. Black, we were very happy that you decided to visit this police station today. Because of your son's attack on Mrs. Masen, we were able to take a DNA sample from him. In a few weeks, we will know if he can be implicated in any of the peninsula's unsolved crimes."

"What do you mean, unsolved crimes? Are you mad? My son is the heir to the tribe. When he sires his first son, he'll reign supreme! He can't be discredited, he stands above you all."

Edward choked back a loud, barking laugh. "He is as mad as his son; he thinks he's above everyone,
too. He actually thinks he has diplomatic immunity because he's a tribe chief. That is going to be a rude awakening; they are going to arrest him next."

Our attention was drawn back to the interview.

"Mr. Black, who do you think would give your son his heir?"

Oh, they were good; they would trap him into confessing to human trafficking.

"Are you daft? The Swan girl was promised to him; her father sold her to me. That mouse of a woman will be right for him, obedient and submissive. He just propositioned the wrong type of woman at the mall; anybody should be honored to bed him."

I realized I must have changed a lot more than I thought when that sad excuse of a human didn't recognize me. Edward and I high fived each other.

"Mr. Black, I need to tell you that the woman assaulted by your son, who bested your son, was Mrs. Masen born Swan. It was the person you just mentioned as his future partner. The fact that you admitted that her father sold her to you implicates you in at least one count of human trafficking. Now, let's watch the rest of this DVD, because your latest exploits are overshadowed by your past ones."

They started up the second part of the DVD. Rose's voice, carefully pitched to not be familiar, explained her thesis and then specified which cars she selected to prove her hypothesis. We knew she had selected three. One was one hundred percent an accident, the second could be either accident or sabotage, and the last one was the Black car. The whole thing was explained without Rose ever being in front of the camera; she simply showed everything in minute detail. In the end, the accident site analysis and the tool marks on the brake lines proved in all three cases the origin of the crashes. Case one was ruled an accident, case two also became an accident; the Black vehicle, however, was, without a doubt, murder.

The detectives stopped the playback and started a tape. Charlie's voice was heard stating date and time; after that was some background noises but no more talking for a few minutes. Then Charlie jovially greeted Billy by name; after a nice ten minutes of fishing talk, Billy told Charlie that he needed to be near the bend in the road where Sarah died the following afternoon. Charlie asked why. The answer was shocking; Billy simply stated that Sarah was going to crash her car there. He followed up with stating that his breeder had done enough to raise his son, and now she was becoming a hindrance. He would rectify that the next day. He told Charlie to witness the crash and declare it an accident.

"Mr. Black, at this point I have to arrest you for one count of premeditated murder and one case of attempted human trafficking."

They Mirandized him and stuck him in a holding cell next to his son, never giving him a chance to finish any of his indignant mutterings. The epic shouting match through the doors was a delight to listen to. They accused each other of everything; the detectives were fast to record everything being said. It was sad that they were so messed up in their heads, they exposed their entire operation.

Both Blacks were arraigned and put in jail to wait for their trials; bail was denied in both cases because of the sheer amount of indictments against them. The calm returned to Forks and La Push. Each and every rotten individual was now off the street.

I looked at my cranberry sauce and considered it done; I poured it into a big container, but left the lid off it to let it cool. My next project was making the pie filling for the apple pies. Peeling the apples
gave my mind the extra room again to reminisce. Carlisle had called a family meeting about a month after our wedding. He had received an answer to the letter he had written to Marcus of the Volturi, a covert letter to his secret mailing address, with small hints to a possibility that reincarnation could maybe be possible for vampires. Marcus had answered that he was interested in the theory and wanted to speak to all of us before we met with Aro. He also told us to conceal any powers from detection.

That had Edward up in a nervous tizzy; I didn't have full control of my power, and the shield part was a constant. I never even thought of lowering that. Everyone decided for me that I needed to train—train a lot—to gain full control. I promised them that the training could start the next day, but that I needed to hunt first. Through our link, I told Edward we needed some privacy to discuss our extra abilities, and to have total privacy we needed to go somewhere they wouldn't be able to be close. That's why I wanted to hunt. Somewhere deep in the Forks wilderness we found a beautiful meadow. We both had fed on some deer and plopped down in the middle, sitting Indian style, knees touching. Edward took both of my hands in his and looked me long in the eyes.

"Bella, we could have done this in the treehouse if we kept the real discussion silent. Why did you want to be out of earshot?"

"Because I heard your wish, Edward. You want to make contact with Marcus yourself. Can you tell me why?"

"My super observant little one, our bond is rare. So rare that nobody, not even Eleazar, knows how it works and what the possibilities are. The only one I know who knows absolutely everything about it is Marcus, simply because he lived it. He told me, and he still wonders why he told me, a lot about Didyme. Eleazar told us about Mate Enhanced Powers, but it has become very clear to me that what we have is so much more than just enhanced powers. I was already thinking about contacting Marcus; actually, I knew that I would do it the moment the link kicked in. Marcus told me he had a completely private connection with Didyme. Let me text him; we're going to have to stay here until he answers."

"When you have his secret phone number, then why weren't you the one to contact him in the first place?"

"Because I only contact him on very personal business. When I visited him in my time away, he explained mating in all its aspects to me. He explained the three kinds of mating: political, true, and human found mating. From those three, the human found couples have the strongest bond. He also told me that some of the human found couples were bonded more tightly. He didn't know why, but he told me he had had one of those extra strong bonds with Didyme."

"You know, Bella, Marcus is my true mentor, but because he's almost trapped in Volterra, he can't fulfill that role. Carlisle may be my sire, but from the moment I left my newborn stage behind, I never went to him for guidance. It was more the other way around. Around the time Esme joined us and he started treating us as a family, I was the one running the coven. He had lived on the bare minimum for more than two hundred years, then I came in and brought a fortune and the knowledge to make it grow. We never actually said it, but he was glad I ran the coven while he played house. Because we are a coven, whether he likes it or not. Right now, we're a coven of four strongly bonded couples, four couples with human found mates."

"Edward, isn't hierarchy very important with vampires? If so, how does this family business work? I mean, Carlisle made this family, but what you tell me is that you let him play house with your coven. His personality isn't built to lead a coven, but he brought a fierce need for a family over from his human life. But two hundred plus years alone as a vampire, and a broken home in his human life,
have left him lacking in his fatherly skills. It's sad, really; from all of you he has lost his humanity the most. He never solidified his memories as he made you all do. He was stranded for a very long time only looking in, and now he does the same: looking at his family, not really interacting."

At that moment, Edward's phone rang; his eyes lit up and he pushed the speakerphone button.

"Marcus, thank you for your swift reaction."

"Edward, after Carlisle's letter I was expecting you to call. Congratulations on your mating. I understand she's fiercely intelligent."

"That she is, she's also the most interesting creature ever."

I hit him hard on his shoulder before I addressed Marcus.

"Marcus, nice to meet you, my husband and mate needs to watch his tongue. I don't like it when he talks about me as if I'm not here."

"My apologies, Miss, but I think he is trying to tell me something. You can do it, too, if you want."

I gave Edward a nod to talk; at that moment I didn't exactly know what he wanted to expose from our bond.

"Well, I'll be blunt, Bella and I have the link you had with Didyme. We can communicate completely under the radar. Not even Alice picks up on it."

"That is very interesting. How about powers? Your power is extraordinarily strong; that means your charming mate has to be strong, too."

"I'm a mimic and a shield, Marcus. I can borrow the abilities and powers of anybody. Because of the link, I am now a mind reader, too, only I can switch it off. We're training hard and I'm learning to not always use full power, in both ends of the connection. I essentially have tentacles to harvest and ones to sow. Inside my head, I have a control room where I can dial both the harvest and the sowing up or down. Only my shield is my own; it protects my mind from any intrusion by powers."

"Oh my, that means your mind is silent to Edward. Tell me, please, can you enhance his power?"

"If you mean make him read deeper into the minds, then yes."

"And your change, was it very long, too?"

I looked at Edward; did we want to give that up?

"Marcus, that's one of the things I wanted to talk about. Bella's change essentially took eight months."

"Say what? How is that possible?"

"I never bit her; Bella's childhood has been very abusive. She asked me to wait with changing her because she didn't want to take her insecurities from that abuse with her into her immortality. Our sister Rosalie helped her to deal with her past. We suffered badly from our separations. That became less after we completed the mating, and yes, she was still human then. Or mostly anyway. To make a long story shorter, we noticed Bella having vampire traits. After some research, we discovered that her red blood cells have a deformity which corresponds exactly with a deformity in my venom. Her whole body had been absorbing every little bit of my venom that came in contact with her. Her red
blood cells simply bonded with my venom cells, and after that bond divided like normal cells. The two cells which resulted were venom cells."

"So the change was long, but pain free. Now I understand why Didyme only felt as if she had a fever. I flooded her system with venom; you didn't do that. Now I hope even harder we can find out if the reincarnation theory is true. Thank you for telling me this. I need to think about this. I want to see your whole coven, too. We now can communicate silently between the three of us. Teach Bella our sign language, Son. When are you going to Aro?"

"As soon as Bella has sufficient control over her power and I'm satisfied that everybody has rearranged their brain to hide our powers from Aro. We will come; can we meet before the audience?"

"Of course, just text me to keep me up to date. I'll send you the coordinates of the rendezvous place. Until we know if your whole family is trustworthy, keep all the extras of your bond secret."

"Absolutely, thanks for thinking this all over. And we'll be in touch. See you soon, Marcus, God bless."

"God bless, Bella, Edward."

We talked long about what kind of training I would still need. I also needed to learn to scout out powers and abilities. But our most important training would be lowering my shield, to make myself vulnerable. My big fear there was losing our link at the same time.

The following weeks were almost twenty-four seven training. For mostly me, but also everyone who had to rearrange their mind. All the training time needed decoy memories. After another phone call with Marcus, we decided to make all training decoys look like they tried to get my skimpy personal shield to expand, to cover more than me. We would show no successes.

Edward had a hard time, too, making everyone go through their memories of a day, assessing them at vampire speed, to help them adjust when a sign of power or deception showed. We had to do my assessment through the link; that became another strain because we still kept it silent to the family.

The loud alarm of my oven went off. The pies could be added to our stash of food, everything in disposable containers. I dropped each pie into a pie box, safeguarding their cornucopia design on top. Esme loaded her SUV with the food, Edward running to help us. He didn't want to be away from me for extended periods of time. The car full of human food was absolutely horrible to smell. Edward and I followed Carlisle and Esme in Edward's car, with me driving. I got my driving license, but not through official channels. Edward taught me to drive in a day. Vampire reflexes helped a lot, as did total recall. I never took a test; Jasper made me a fake one.

We drove to Seattle to distribute the food over four shelters. When we entered the last one, Carlisle started to act strange. I quickly looped his mind into our link. It looked like he wanted to join the homeless people in having dinner. His mind was curiously blank, with no personal thoughts at all. In the middle of his mind stood a big fat sign, screaming to him: I NEED TO HAVE MY THANKSGIVING DINNER!

There we went again, someone in the family was doling out revenge, trying to control the family. Edward and I were trying to find who. Oh, we had our suspicions, but finding proof would be the biggest obstacle.
A/N Well that’s the end of the Blacks, their trial will come by but they’re no longer bugging Bella.

my recommendations this week.

for the first time I’m recommending two unfinished fics. One just started updating again after a long hiatus. The other could be thought of as complete with a rough stop.

Firstly: The Day the Earth Stood Still by Sare Liz, FFn 4922956. A completely different view on the whole series which still follows most plot points to a new resolution.

and secondly: Resurrection by TwilightMomofTwo, FFn 5443190, TWCS Sid=135, Ao3 712670. Twilighted Sid=12240

Please review,

See you next week

Pien
Chapter 24 In Conclusion: C + S = 12

Chapter Notes

A/N Everything Twilight belongs to Stephanie Meyer, the plot of this story is mine. No copyright infringement is intended.

I'd like to thank all the readers here and on every other medium I use to put my story out there for their unwavering support for this story. Right now I'm working hard on the sequel, but that isn't going as fast as I would like. So prepare yourselves for a waiting period between the end of Twilesque and the start of Parallax. I simply refuse to post a story which isn't finished before I start posting.

A very big thank you once again for my team for even correcting my mistakes while not feeling well. Thanks Chandra! Lorraine my co-conspirator and story bouncer, and LunaDiSangue85 who gives an objective view, because she isn't in the planning sessions. Ladies you're golden in my opinion!

Now let's see what Marcus has to say.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 24 In Conclusion, C + S = 12

EPOV

Finally some rest; I had been at it for weeks, assessing my family's minds over and over. They were all ready and had well organized minds with a suitable decoy in place. Everybody had rearranged everything, even Alice, even though she did so very reluctantly. She fought to keep her power visible, until Rosalie pointed out she could be enslaved by Aro if she showed such a strong power. If Alice was anything, she was very attached to her freedom.

Carlisle and I split the travel arrangements. He ran the decoy, I ran the true ones. His plans consisted of us arriving in our personal jet in two weeks' time. Normally, Rosalie, and either Jasper or I, would fly that jet. This time, we hired a vampire pilot and co-pilot to fly the jet to Pisa. They would also guard the jet until we would eventually fly it back to the U.S. For Aro's sake, Rosalie and I made a flight to Italy, carefully staging our intended date and time of the actual flight. We went back as soon as the jet was refueled.

Emmett and Bella had a whale of a time, playing cards as if they were six different people. It was rowdy, it was hard ball, and it was for high stakes. Our stakes were chores around the house: dusting, building works, laundry. Yes, we actually had laundry now; our times of wasting money on throw away clothes was over. Or it was for three couples in our coven. Alice still held out that she wouldn't wear 'old' clothes. Jasper liked well worn jeans, and snuck his jeans into our laundry. He threw brand new ones into the hamper/waste basket in his own room, otherwise they would pile up and Alice would notice. Alice didn't recycle her clothes; they were not donated, oh no, they were burned.
My travel plans were far more mundane, even though we would travel under four of my aliases. Every couple was booked on separate occasions; I started with Bella and I. We flew under the name Thompson-Clark, yuppie silver-spooners, with big trust funds. Carlisle and Esme became the Grants, young retired, self made millionaires who sold their Internet business for a small fortune. Next in our line-up were the Huffmans, ex-football player with his cheerleader high school sweetheart who happened to hit it lucky on the stock market. The last couple had become affluent through striking oil; they were the Lisenbys. They were all booked into the first class of the same flight. I'd made a very detailed biography of every couple; we were flying intercontinental and would be questioned in length, we had to be completely believable. When we could pull that off, the Volturi would never know we were already in Italy.

Bella was struggling to shut her power down; Marcus advised her to try to dial it down as much as she could. But the only thing I heard from her mind was coming through the link. Her personal shield, which could encompass me at will, was, even on the lowest setting, incredibly strong. She now sat in a quandary; to make Aro believe everything in our false memories, she had to at least be able to show glimpses of her mind. But the control of her power, even though it was incredible after only a few months, was still limited. We just prayed hard for a breakthrough before our audience in the Volterra castle.

The day we had to fly dawned completely overcast. We all were scattered over four different cars. Alice insisted on the limousine, Bella and I took a chauffeured town car. Bella never had any troubles with her bloodlust. She still had to consciously decide to hunt; never once had her instincts overwhelmed her rational mind. Her control was probably linked to her shield, too. Nobody was troubled that she would drain a human; their blood was actually abhorrent to her. Bella was a miracle, a new breed of vampire.

We decided not to hang out in the first class lounge too long; I took her around the tax free shops. We avoided the perfume alley; the artificial scents burned our noses from afar. My girl attacked the bookshop, buying every book she took a fancy to. She also dragged me to the electronics outlet; she wanted me to choose a camera for her. She wanted to try to document the Italy trip without portraits, just impressions of the surroundings. I found a nice Canon SLR camera with one objective, a compact 18-135mm lens. We took a few extra memory cards for it, and an extra battery.

Bella, in the meantime, was lured to the other electronics in the store. Video cameras as small as the palm of your hand, sound recorders the size of buttons; they could take two hours of audio, you just needed a device as big as a book to play it back. It looked like a book, too.

'Edward, I'm going to get some of this stuff. We know we have a mole in the family, someone working under the radar. These things actually look the part to my vampire vision. They can fool the rest; we only need two bugs. Car and Essie are linked at the hip when he's not at the hospital. And Jasper doesn't need a bug; his fight against his bloodlust is proof of that. So, are you okay if I do this?'

'Of course, darling, get whatever you want. Do you know you're rattling Lion's cave when you get all strategic?'

She really did; my vampire was pacing within his cage. We were in a crowded airport. I needed to have him cool down fast, before my instincts took over. Right at the moment my vampire was about to crush his cage, a cool hand wrapped around my left bicep. Immense amounts of love flooded the link, along with soothing contentment. Bella had so much more control over her vampire that she could calm mine. I just fell in love all over again.

We left the electronics store with four big bags, apart from the modest camera bag. I bought another
suitcase and loaded it with everything; I would check it in at the first class lounge. I put most of Bella's books into the suitcase as well; additionally, she kept an advanced Italian speech course on CD, and three books all in Italian. I hadn't noticed with all the noises flooding my brain, but Bella wore a sound bud in one of her ears. I tapped it and she smiled, showing me a box she had loaded into her Discman. My girl still used antiquated personal stereo systems sometimes. But she used it well; she showed me a box of CDs of beginner and intermediate Italian. She was apparently determined to learn Italian before we were there.

'Don't tell me you never used Jasper's way of learning a language, this is his Discman, enhanced and now working at vampire speed. Since I bought it at the bookshop, I have already completed the beginner course and started the intermediate. I just want to understand the people around me.'

'I'm not stopping you, I just didn't know about vampire Discmans.'

We went to the first class lounge and boarded the flight, ignoring the rest of the family, even if they checked in with me/us mentally. Unbeknownst to everyone, Bella and I did everything together now, assessing family included; our link was never closed. We could each choose to shut parts of our minds off from the link, to give us a place to keep surprises from each other. A large part of the thirteen hour flight, we feigned to be asleep, something that was altogether impossible for, and infuriating Alice. She sat huffing and puffing, reading her fashion magazines. Carlisle was engrossed in a medical text, Esme found a book about interior decorating; from her mind, it was about Feng Shui and Minimalism. Rose and Emmett also 'slept' after a heated game of Travel Battleship. Bella and I, as I said, feigned sleeping, but went over her training through the link. She even tried to lower her shield again and again, closing the link for a moment and telling me something in her mind. Sadly, nothing came through.

After our flight landed, we all separated again. I had arranged separate accommodations for each of the couples. The only five star hotel went to Alice and Jasper, just because she was the only one in our family who actually thought the number of stars important. Once Bella and I were settled in our comfortable room, I shot Marcus a short text telling him we had arrived. Only ten minutes later, I got an answer: a set of GPS coordinates, a time, and a date. The day after tomorrow, at one in the morning, we would meet Marcus there. Shortly thereafter, another text came; this one was for Bella and me alone.

*Same place, tomorrow, at three in the afternoon, just you and your mate!*

'Bella, honey, Marcus wants to meet us alone before he meets everyone. You game?'

'Of course, why wouldn't I be? He's your mentor, after all. I respect him for that alone.'

We decided not to tell the others about the group meeting yet, our rendezvous was a given that it was secret. Bella had me in her shield permanently now. We absolutely needed to keep Alice out; after antagonizing her as much as we had lately, she was sure to want to block us. After a good look on a map, we determined that the coordinates lay in the middle of good hunting grounds. Using that as our excuse, Bella and I made our escape from the family.

We drove a rental with heavily tinted windows to a deserted road, far from human habitation, leaving it there to run the rest of the way. Bella had opened her navigational app, putting in the coordinates. When we came close to the spot, we entered a densely wooded area; we kept a line as straight as possible to the coordinates. Suddenly, we stepped into a large clearing with an ancient olive tree in the middle. At the foot of the tree stood a shrine, a shrine dedicated to St. Marcus. Before a miniature Volterra stood a statue of him, brandishing a cross and a string of garlic. Cliché vampires, half his size, were cowering away from him. Next to the shrine stood the real article. He greeted us warmly
and invited us to join him in his sanctuary. He pulled the arm with the cross down, and the whole contraption slid to the side, clearing a hole in the ground with a thirty foot drop to the bottom. Marcus indicated that we should go first; to keep my mate safe, I immediately jumped into the hole. I trusted Marcus, the hole not so much. My landing echoed through the cave; I stepped aside and Bella landed next to me, almost immediately followed by Marcus. He touched a tree root and the shrine slid back in place.

The three of us stood in a small antechamber; at least I hoped that was what it was. Marcus flitted through the only opening in the walls, we followed, Bella first, big mistake. I was still assessing my new environment, so I didn’t notice the link stopped broadcasting. Looking behind me, I followed Bella blindly, until I ran into her. She had stopped dead two steps into the next room. Bringing my attention around to what was before me, I felt my jaw drop. We stood in an enormous artificial cavern, dug out of sandstone and granite by hand.

The enormous space was divided into several functional rooms; to the left was a wall with floor to ceiling—20 feet high—bookcases. They were filled with all kind of ancient texts: large leather-bound tomes and parchment scrolls. By the smell coming off them, some of those scrolls were made with human hides. In front of the bookcases stood a large cloister table, also filled with books. Some of the books on the table looked modern, and distinctly new age. To the right was a large fireplace surrounded by comfortable looking sofas and chairs. Straight ahead was a wall adorned with curtains; they were bound back from a large landscape in minute detail. It was obvious that a vampire painted this; one person wandered toward the onlooker: a beautiful female, radiating power, looked at you with love. When I picked up Marcus' thoughts, it became clear to me. He was greeting her reverently, and introducing us to his mate, Didyme. Bella's eyes widened as she, too, picked up his thoughts.

"Bella, più belle ragaza, did you find the key to shutting down your power?"

Marcus didn't want to waste time. We were here solely for business related to things we didn't tell the family about.

"No, Marcus. I can dial it down, but Edward can't break through, even on the lowest setting. It doesn't help that I need to keep the shield partly around Edward as much as possible around the family; we don't want our decisions twisted around by Alice. Sadly, her motivations aren't in the family's best interest. She has a tendency to twist everything around to suit her wishes. With the deep readings Edward was able to do, we found her completely narcissistic with a very superficial view on the world."

"With what Edward explained to me, I understand that you have hidden your power behind a wall of pain, yes?"

"Correct; my power control room is situated behind my wall of pain."

"And in that room, the knobs, do you place them? Or do they appear out of nothing?"

"It's a fairly dynamic process; at first they just appeared, but I deduced that that was not entirely the case. I think my subconscious mind placed the knobs, slides, and lights."

"Ah, and there it is, the wit of a genius mind. You, my girl, have stumbled upon something not many vampires know: the fact that we have two layers to our minds. A conscious layer, with about eight tracks, and a subconscious layer with another four."

Marcus turned to me and continued.
"Edward, with the help of Bella's boost in power, you should eventually be able to breach into the subconscious layers of the mind. There you can find all sorts of things, and with some vampires, those hidden layers are a truly terrifying place. Because I worked with my power for millennia, I found those sub levels. That's where the true loyalties of a vampire are settled. Faked loyalty will reside in the conscious mind, but the true feelings will always be there, just hidden from view.

"Aro has never worked with his power; he uses it but never thought of expanding his possibilities. Thank the powers that be, nowadays he riffles through a mind as if it were a glossy magazine, never reading or absorbing everything. His sub layers show me that his loyalty is only to himself. He tolerates Caius and me only because it gives a semblance of fairness, but he actually demands opposing council from us; that way he has the final, and essentially only, say in the matter. But I digress, what I wanted to say is never stop developing your power. Edward, you recently found a way to cope with thoughts that abused you. If you hadn't stopped working on your power, you would have found that earlier. I'm convinced that you can also reach the sub layers of the mind, albeit with Bella's help."

His warm gaze was once again turned to my mate.

"And you, Bella, your power is yours to wield, not the other way around. If you want to shut it off, if you want to make it stutter, just do it. Why not put an off switch on your control panel? A stutter knob for my part. Determination is the key; don't be afraid to show yourself for who you really are. I can see that that fear is what's holding you back. You are magnificent, show it to the world."

While Marcus was talking to her, Bella's mind was racing into her control room. She grabbed a mental piece of paper and wrote, in big capitals: OFF. On the left control panel there had always been a bigger dial, slap bang on top and in the middle. She plastered the note above the dial, and it miraculously lit up immediately. She apologized to me and threw me out of her mind completely, closing the link. Only seconds later her voice rang in my head.

'Edward? Can you hear me?'

Her mental voice was devoid of emotion, and I suddenly understood. I was hearing her mind through my power, not through the link.

"Yes I do, angel. I hear you! You, my brilliant girl, are truly a wonder. But I must say that I'd rather hear you through the link. Your thoughts lack emotion now."

Marcus' face lit up; he was almost bouncing in place.

"Wonderful, you already fixed it. Oh, what wouldn't I give to train you personally, but I think your continued stay in Italy would make Aro suspicious. We'll have to do it long distance. Now some practicalities... tomorrow your coven will meet us up top. I have absolutely no intention to show them this cave. This is my personal sanctuary. The books I didn't want brought to Aro's attention are here for my research. You both now know how to get in, and when we leave here you'll know the way out. Please keep it a secret you already spoke to me. Edward, I'll be addressing you as the coven leader. I'll do it for two purposes; firstly, because acting as a family will be ridiculed in the vampire community at large; it's only a valid notion as a cover in the human world. Secondly, because I want to have a good look at the coven as a whole. I want to see how the loyalties lie. And overall, it's clear that if we think about a Cullen Coven, and not a family, that you are the leader. You'll have to truly step up."

"I already did, Marcus," I told him. "I pulled rank over Carlisle when it became clear he dismissed my assessment of a situation and simply did what he'd always done, with devastating effects on Bella." I winked at her. "I also pulled rank on Alice, who dared to tell me my choices were not good
enough. I must say that she has become somewhat hostile toward Bella and me. Until Bella joined us, we gave her free rein in her exploits. We each existed in our own little bubble, and let her dictate a lot. Bella believes vehemently in free will, and thus was able to dissect her motivations and essentially stopped her from running the family."

"Okay, that's clear; for now we'll keep calling it the Cullen Coven. But you'll be spoken to as the leader by everyone. Tomorrow we will solely discuss your audience before Aro, and Bella's reincarnation theory. Please share my thoughts, and perhaps Bella can use her power to show you mine with the emotions attached through your link. Don't try to understand, just record everything. Later this week I'll teach you to look at it. That's it for today, follow me."

He strode toward the fireplace and turned a brass embellishment on the surround. Next to the fireplace, a craftily hidden door slid open. He gestured us through the door and we climbed the stairs behind it. We surfaced inside one of the ancient oak trees on the outer edge of the copse of trees around the clearing.

"I'll see you two tomorrow; I need to get back to the castle. Aro expects me to discuss possibilities. Possibilities when he finds strong powers in your coven. He covets powers, he enslaves them. I'll explain tomorrow. Until then."

Bella hugged and thanked him for his guidance. I shook his hand and he pulled me in a man hug. Then he was gone. We went back to the car and made our way back to an overcast Pisa, strolling around, taking in the sights. This week would be as much a holiday as waiting around for Aro to find out we were in the country.

Bella wandered over to the leaning tower, until I showed her the big weights they needed to place inside to keep it upright but leaning. Because who would come to the formerly leaning tower? The biggest problem they had was the fact it was still subsiding. We got a book on the extensive operation which had taken place and had reduced the lean of the tower by a total of forty eight centimeters.

At the end of the afternoon, we barely escaped the sun by ducking into a bookstore with mostly old books. Bella immediately started to peruse the shelves. What I hadn't expected was her absolutely flawless Italian when she asked the shop owner to show her the supernatural books. My baffled expression made gales of giggles come over the link; that made me smile. When the sun set, Bella joined me again with a bag containing three very old looking books.

'Honey, these are gifts for Marcus. There is one on vampire royalty, one on reincarnation, and one on vampires in general. They are all from the thirteenth century and the shop owner told me they wouldn't sell due to the disinterest in supernatural phenomena nowadays. He let them go for a steal; I paid only five hundred euros for the three.'

Right then, I got another text from Marcus, immediately followed by one from Carlisle. Marcus' text simply told me he called Carlisle and set up the meeting. Carlisle's was short, too: the coordinates and time, followed by get there on your own. I almost bristled at his clipped tone when I saw that it was a group text. He suddenly tried to act the coven leader.

After a pleasantly spent night in our hotel, acting the humans we needed to portray, we hung out in the bar, acting like newlyweds staring in each other's eyes. Meanwhile, we discussed Bella's newfound on/off switch. She experimented a bit with a slight stutter setting, making her thoughts come through, but about one third of it was shielded. Bella went over her early memories of me, and I had to ask her three times to run over my story again, just to confirm the changes she put in to hide my power.
When the bar closed, we went to our room, laying down and going over everything we would share with the family and Marcus at the meeting. Eventually it was time to go; I wanted to be early, and maybe establish a link up with Marcus before the family arrived. We entered the clearing and we were the first to arrive. Looking around, I listened hard for the thoughts of my family, but they weren't in range yet. I pulled the cross arm of the statue and Bella and I quickly jumped into the anti-chamber. Marcus came our way and Bella gave him the books. He looked so pleased.

"Bella, my dear, these are awesome. I must congratulate you on finding three texts I never saw before. I'm especially pleased with the one on vampire royalty. It's a rare find; did you notice it was written on human skin? I think this book was written by a vampire. Sadly, this'll have to wait; we need to go to our meeting. Please, you two, keep tabs on my thoughts; I will show you all the bonds in the coven, conscious and subconscious."

He sent us out first, telling us to take charge if needed. But it wasn't needed. We arrived last and were greeted by a nervous group of vampires. Why they were all nervous was a riddle to us, and it didn't show in their thoughts either. They all jumped when Marcus strode into the clearing wearing an intimidating looking suit, which Bella called his mafia suit through the link, and she was right, too. She wrapped him up in one of her tendrils and started looking around while using his power, not interrupting his own usage of said power. She was also fully open to his thoughts, boosting my power to its limit.

Marcus walked straight to me and greeted me, businesslike but friendly.

"Edward, so good to see you again, please introduce me to your coven."

Esme immediately jumped in. "His coven? This is Carlisle's family. We are not a coven!"

"Really, miss?" Marcus whipped around to her. "Do you know how utterly unbelievable you are, uttering your human front as a fact in the vampire world? It's quite all right to establish a front to make it possible to live in the human world, but don't insult me with it when you enter vampire only territory. Edward here has been your coven leader from before you were turned. He is the one making it possible for you all to act out your strange family longings. Carlisle might have turned him, but Edward kept you together."

While he talked, he made his eyes sweep our entire group. Looking with him, he pointed out that the blue cables were ties of loyalty. Bella and I watched with him. Rosalie, Esme, Emmett, and Jasper showed inch-thick blue cables connecting them to me or Bella. Carlisle's cable was inexplicably purple; Marcus named it human loyalty. Esme also had a green inch-thick cable tying her to Carlisle, as had Rose to Emmett. Accenting those cables, Marcus simply said mates. Looking at Bella and me, he said, special mates. Both Bella and I bit back our gasps; we were connected to each of the members of our coven with blue cables, but between us a luminescent rainbow cable, at least two inches thick, pulsed away.

Then he zeroed in on Alice; she had no blue cables at all, and a red cable tying her to Jasper. Marcus told us that this was her subconscious tracks showing, her true colors, as it were. Bella reached out mentally and touched the red cable, clearly asking what that was. Deception, was the answer ringing in our heads. Marcus told us he would switch tracks to her conscious levels and for us to notice the difference. That was an understatement, Alice's conscious tracks showed blue ropes to all of us, even if it was only string thick toward Bella, and a green rope tying her to Jasper. If Marcus hadn't learned to see the true colors of a person in the sub-conscious tracks, we would have never known her to be a faker.

"Bella was with us the first day to tell her story and to learn about vampires." Carlisle had taken up the story we were here to relay. "She listened very carefully to everything we told her about us, and
then declared that if a vampire's mate was destroyed, he or she should simply go and search for the next incarnation of said mate."

"Yes," Bella declared, "I'm completely convinced that souls are bound together, and they will meet time and again. I truly believe, for instance, that I retained some of my memories from former lives. That made it possible for me to write about Edward before I met him this time. He became ill and would have died a century ago, before we met. Because he was changed, he had to wait until my next incarnation to meet me again. In 1918 or thereabouts, he was still too volatile to have a human found mate. His power had to mature, as did he himself."

"Do you say, Bella, that my mate has had multiple incarnations over the almost millennium and a half since she was killed?" Marcus asked her in awe. "Are you truly saying that I might be able to find her again?"

"Yes, Marcus, that is what I believe. If it's true, I don't know. But I'm truly convinced about it for myself. Soul mates will always find each other again. Finding her and turning her is one option. The other one is to reunite as humans; that means walking into a volcano and releasing your soul. You all say killing yourself is almost impossible for a vampire. I say, excuse me, but bullshit. Vampires are flammable, use that. To kill yourself, build your own pyre or, as I said, walk into a volcano."

Marcus drew my attention to purple threads swirling around us all. Most were coming from Alice, but everyone had some, except for Bella and I. He told me it was curiosity, adding that those threads could weave into the loyalty cables. He mentally smiled at me, once again making Bella and I almost gasp out loud, by telling us that we would never have any outward thread toward each other because it all went through our mating cable, that's why it was rainbow colored. No outside power would ever be able to turn us against each other, because the mating bond was unbreakable.

'Edward, please read Jasper's sub-conscious tracks now that you have a feel for it. I picked something up from Alice. Even though she almost bursts with curiosity, she still doesn't believe a word I say. But using Jasper's power, I also felt fear from her when I picked it up. I quote, 'need to reinforce, he must not find out, can't believe that cunt ruining almost everything'. I think that was about me; oh well, I already knew she didn't like me.'

'All right, I'll read him now. Turbo boost me, baby.'

Jasper's mind flew by, the now familiar pace of his conscious thoughts. I touched one of the walls and sank through into another chamber with muted light. Three big signs, flashing red, drew my immediate attention. The first read: I am mated to Alice. The second was more into my face, almost as if it was fresh; it was handwritten in a hurry: I won't go against Alice. The last was very old and pushed forgotten into a corner. I don't feel bloodlust toward patient fourteen eleven. Those signs were significant, but pulsing in the corner bathed in blue light stood a picture of Bella and me. I slipped back into his conscious mind, completely rattled by the metaphoric way the sub-conscious worked.

"...that's why we all redesigned our minds. We won't show Aro any power at all, except for Bella because she still hasn't been able to shut down her shield," Carlisle told Marcus.

I had apparently zoned out of the conversation, but it wasn't important, this had all been discussed to death already.

"That's not true anymore, Carlisle, I was overthinking everything and searching for intricate solutions. It just suddenly came to me and I installed an off button. It's a dial so I can now shut my power off completely, or partially, making it stutter."
"Finally, you damn well took your time, and did you shut off your access to my power as well? I told you I don't want you hijacking it again," Alice fumed; she had to go shopping according to her thoughts. Marcus told everyone to dress to impress when we visited Aro.

"Of course I did, did it happen again? No, the only time it happened was because I didn't have control yet. Please don't be afraid to lose control of your precious, useless power. The only things you predict are your own delusions."

Wow, Bella was vicious all at once. Alice looked as if she wanted to rip her apart. I stepped in front of Bella.

"No you won't, Alice; it's true. You haven't really given us a lot to go on since Bella joined us. The one important vision was that hijacked one," I told her in a clipped tone, telling her not to start with me. Of course she had given us a lot more, but she didn't know that. As long as Bella and I kept that a secret, we had to act our parts.

I had recorded everything that went down, all thoughts from every family member, neatly stacked into labeled boxes. Marcus was making the rounds, saying goodbye to my coven, warning them he would be absent and aloof when we saw him again in the throne room. In the meantime, he thought to me that Bella and I could come to train some more in the sanctuary below; he would be there as much as he could. He bid us all a final farewell and disappeared from the clearing. He might actually be as fast as Bella and I.

I told everyone to play tourist for the rest of the week and meet us at the airport an hour before our plane would arrive. They were all advised to please keep their distance from each other, and us. We had to keep our cover undetected. They all promised, and with that we went to the four directions of the wind to our respective cars.

The week following, Bella and I visited as many cities and sights in and around Pisa. If anyone from the family was trying to keep an eye on us, the many cliché souvenirs would convince them what we were doing. They would never suspect that most souvenirs were hastily bought in a whirlwind visit, from which we would then go back to Marcus’ sanctuary. He taught both of us a lot, and made sure we both were ready to act as the most important couple in our coven. He taught us to finally be true vampires, to hide our humanitarian facade. We became vampires with an alternative diet, not animal blood drinking pseudo humans. It felt freeing, as if we were coming into our potential. He merged our animal with our human. No longer was a cage needed; they worked side by side to ensure our well being on both sides of our existence.

Finally, the day dawned that our jet would arrive; the subterfuge had worked like a charm. Aro had told Marcus of the flight plan that was filed for the Cullen jet, listing two pilots and six passengers, all with the Cullen name somewhere in their listing. Marcus told us to expect Volturi guards to be present, with cars to bring us to Volterra. It was all as he told us.

Two SUV's with tinted windows pulled up in the hanger where we had just then boarded the plane. Alice had spent her week shopping to dress us all to impress. I had blatantly disregarded her choice for me; instead I dressed myself in a newly acquired suit. Yes, I bought myself an original mafia suit. Bella was equally stunning in a female version of that suit. We were both wearing matching his and hers aviators with mirror glasses. I held a briefcase with the mating documentation necessary to register us in the mating registry, and Bella had a purse in the same style. Together we radiated power couple, in human as well as vampire eyes.

We exited the plane in view of the Volturi guardsmen, fairly insignificant members with inconsequential powers. They directed us all to the two vehicles and had us board them. Emmett and Rose shared our SUV, together with a guard/driver named Julio. According to Bella, he could make
flowers bloom, even in the middle of winter. As I said, inconsequential powers. After a two hour drive, we arrived in the underground parking garage. We were led through a maze of corridors and steps to the enormous double doors of the throne room. Just as those doors started to open, I heard Bella say through the link.

'Well, here goes nothing!'

Chapter End Notes

A/N what did you think of this Marcus, I love him to bits.

As recommendation I am going to indulge in shameless self plugging. On FictionPad was an anonymous contest: the Olderward/Olderella Contest I entered and last Saturday the winners were announced.

To my utter astonishment I won all six categories. So please everybody go over to my profile and read Daddy's Precious. It AH/AU. But this big of a success I couldn't let pass uncelebrated.

Please review,

Pien
Chapter 25 Murder He Wrote

BPOV

Well, there we went, into the lion’s den. We should feel right at home; after all, Edward’s animal-self answered to Lion and mine to Kitten. I needed to focus and pay attention; Edward’s and my power suits helped us to play the part of coven leaders. The big double doors opened simultaneously, as if by magic, but one glance from my peripheral vision showed me that two livery dressed vampires had pulled them open.

Carlisle made a move to walk in first, but my man stuck out his hand to stop him. He looked at him with a raised eyebrow, scolding his sire and taking his true place in the coven. We entered the throne room, a cavernous circular space with a dais on the far side. On the dais sat three thrones, ostentatious gilded affairs. Marcus sat in the chair to the left, looking utterly bored and slumped over. To my surprise, I saw that the outer thrones were actually bigger and more elaborately carved than the middle one. High on the walls were large windows, letting in the light without letting direct sunlight come to ground level. Underneath the windows, at regular intervals, vampires in medieval get ups were standing absolutely still. Five of them had blue crests on their livery, five had green ones, and ten showed red colors.

Through Edward's power I assessed the three vampire leaders. Caius actually looked shocked by the size of our coven. He sneered in his mind about the fact that we called ourselves a family for the humans. He was pleased to see that even though the initial talks had gone through Carlisle, an absolute numbskull of a vampire in his eyes, Edward and I had now taken control. He thought that it was possible that we had been busy training my control.
'Edward, Bella, listen to me carefully. Aro will start using his power after the initial welcoming and acknowledgement of your bond. He will ask me to confirm. I fabricated a very strong normal bond in my conscious mind. He will be intrigued. He is an avid collector of useful powers; he might want to test your shield, Bella. And sadly, you'll have to let him. If he calls Jane forward and she smiles at you, shut off your power and endure please. Keep your eyes on the red guardsmen; those are Aro’s personal guard. The green ones are Caius' and the blue are mine. Those you can trust; they are completely loyal to me alone, even if they have to show loyalty to Aro in their conscious minds. When things escalate, Aro will have to die today, but I would very much like to know his secrets before that happens.'

"Ah welcome, welcome, my friends. It's always nice to see fellow vampires with class. Now, who do we have here? Such a pleasure to us all, newly mated, I understand. Edward, I see you brought your beautiful mate, and she's won control over her newborn urges I see. I must say I was a little perturbed when I heard James' story. He intended to bargain for his life with claims of strange powers possessed by your then still human mate. Sadly, his entire story was hearsay from a despicable succubus named Tanya. Could you please enlighten me about what happened with her?"

"Aro, Marcus, Caius, let me firstly thank you for the gracious welcome of my coven. The incident you're referring to has some backstory, and that's where I would like to begin. Tanya set her eyes on me the moment she saw me for the first time; I was barely through my newborn years. I was, however, raised with certain morals, morals that solidified in me with my transformation. Those morals told me to wait for the right girl. Tanya has, for ninety years, tried to seduce me. When our covens came together, she would try to talk sweet to me. When I ignored her, she would up the ante and start talking porn, even drawing sketches of pornographic images more vile than any I had ever seen. She showed up naked in my room, tried to catch me with my guard down after hunting. The list is endless. We called Eleazar to assess Bella just after her change. We wanted to know if she had a power, or, if not, what her ability could be. Eleazar and his mate Carmen came to our house with one of Tanya's sisters, Kate. Somehow Tanya got wind of this and barged into our house uninvited, claiming that I couldn't be mated to Bella because I was mated to her. Tanya didn't know Bella is my human found mate; she tried to attack me and Bella caught her and threw her out with her newborn strength. That's what happened; I don't know a thing about witchcraft, and neither does Bella."

"Oh, that's so great. Did Eleazar assess your whole coven or just your Bella? Are there any significant powers within your clan, Edward?"

"Well, Bella has a very limited personal shield, but her ability for reasoning things out is much stronger. We tried to enhance her shield, but with limited success. We were very excited; she is the first in our coven to possess any kind of power. But before we drown ourselves in the fascinating world of powers, I would like to formally request that Bella and my mating be registered with the court."

Edward opened his briefcase and took out the papers for the registry. Aro ordered Marcus to take care of that. When Marcus came forward, moving like a zombie, Aro grabbed his hand and flinched, but then zeroed in on the connections in our coven, especially the mating bonds visible. His thoughts showed his growing paranoia.
'Incredible, a whole coven with human found mates. It has to be less formidable than the legends say. No gifts to mention, but that could be bravado, to cover it up. Almost every second vampire has a power. I will need to touch them all. I'm so glad my power isn't known to most vampires. These simpletons with their strange eyes will shake my hand only to be near the most powerful vampire around.'

Aro walked forward toward Carlisle and pulled him into a man hug. When they came out of that, he grabbed his hand for a few seconds. It was hard to follow because he rifled through Carlisle’s vampire life with big steps. He found nothing power related until he saw our training sessions with my power. He sighed deeply when he saw failure after failure. He released Carlisle and took Esme's hand in a chivalrous manner. With her he just looked at the part where I joined the Cullens and saw again all the failures from a slightly different angle. Once again he didn't pick up on any other power. Thank god he didn't pick up on my heartbeat during those exercises either, because I suddenly heard it in every memory. We had forgotten to wipe it out. Next were Rose and Emmett; their altered memories didn't alert him either. He really was smug, and overly confident he would see it all. He took a little longer with Jasper. We had, of course, trained a lot together; using his power was a break for Edward and a nice change of pace. The false memories we had made into control training. Vials and bags of animal blood were used as pretend human blood. To make it realistic, I had drained multiple bags of blood, attacking them like a madwoman, and slowly dwindling into total control.

I was honestly very surprised that Aro could be fooled so easily. Just before Alice was the one to be read I made a decision that could be Aro's, to enslave every member of our family with a strong well established power. Just to give her incentive to stay on the right path and not open her real mind to Aro. It worked like a charm. Aro merely scoffed at her ability to shop. He did pick up on her controlling and narcissistic ways, but didn't think much about it. He was just the same after all. Next was Edward; it took a bit longer with him. Aro researched the way our coven worked in his head. He verified Edward’s place in the coven, even though two older vampires were part of it, but, of course, he couldn't find a thing out of place. Edward really had run the coven from his humble place as son in the family. Thank god that he stayed away from the box with Edward’s intimate moments; I really didn't like the idea of him seeing all our personal time. He verified our mating bond through our first meeting, frowning when he heard my story.

I disconnected my power from Edward’s then; I told him through the link that I was about ready to shut down the shield and to refrain from making decisions until I could shield him again. Aro let his hand go and turned to me with a greedy smile on his face. Edward channeled his thoughts through the link. He was very interested in my shielding, thinking that it could become stronger over time. He saw in our thoughts that training didn't enhance it; he concluded that the training only helped with my control. He decided, even before he touched me, that he would let me age a bit and then harvest me any way he could. Edward gripped my hand, almost painfully, to keep himself from reacting to those thoughts.

He greeted me and I shut down my power to a light stutter. He would hear almost everything, with small hiccups blocking him. As soon as his hands touched mine, I had to fight to keep my shield down. I stood in my control room, holding the button that kept my power under control. The button tried to fight me and do what it was designed for, protect my mind. Aro's penetrating stare turned disappointed; he had thought my power to be more useful.

'Damn! Bella, you'll have to act convincingly; he wants to use Jane on you. Feel her power for
a second, then shield yourself please, and act for your existence. I'll warn you when you can stop.'

While Edward told me this, I saw Aro's eyes turn from disappointed to ferally gleeful. His eyes went over my shoulder and he gave a short nod. He hastily dropped my hands, and a fraction of a second later, I was hit with the most intense pain imaginable times ten. I fell to the ground screaming, giving my shielding knob a whirl to maximum. I stayed down on the ground writhing around and screaming, while assuring Edward it was an act. He put up his own act, screaming at Aro to stop and about what kind of hellish power he had. He fell to his knees beside me, sobbing, trying to get a hold on my thrashing body. The rest of the coven stood by dumbstruck; Esme was the only one reacting besides Edward. She, too, kneeled besides me and tried to soothe me. I got the stop signal from my wonderful mate. Edward stood and stalked toward Aro, seething.

"Is this how you welcome all vampires with powers? If so, I'm immensely glad that I'm powerless. But you just insulted our good faith. It seems that showing good faith and presenting ourselves as soon as possible after my mate got her control established was a mistake. Now if there is nothing else you have to say or do, we'll be leaving."

He turned his back and helped me off the ground, cradling me in his arms.

'Get ready; use Aro's power on him. Get out his secrets. To keep us here, he'll go off on a rant. Use that time to read him.'

And true to form, as soon as Edward and I started to walk to the door, Aro held us back in a panicked tone.

"Now, now, don't act childish. You can't leave yet, I haven't given you permission."

"Excuse me!" Edward drew himself up to his full height and towered over Aro. "My coven doesn't need permission from you to exist peacefully on the fringes of society. After the atrocious way you just treated my mate, you can't hold us against our will. You are here to determine if we have acted outside the laws. I believe that we explained the incident that made you aware of Bella's and my mating. You summoned us to come here, but we would have come anyhow to register our mating."

"Young Edward, I am not finished with your coven. I still want an explanation for your peculiar eye color. All of you, even a relative newborn, who has an inordinate amount of control for being only a few months old, have yellow eyes."

"It's quite simple; we are humanitarian vampires, we elect to retain our humanity. We fight for our human memories and cherish them. The side effect is that we won't drink humans; we feed ourselves on animals. But now I'm intrigued; Carlisle has never ever drank a human. After his newborn phase, his eyes have always been yellow. He lived here for several decades, how come you're not informed of this side effect of his diet?"
Edward was walking a fine line; he tried to get Aro to get on his soapbox. I tuned the discussion out when Aro almost exploded into his rant. I wrapped him up in both my tendrils and was immediately assaulted by almost two millennia of memories—not only Aro’s, but every mind he read through his power. He certainly didn't practice a clear mind strategy. I waded through the memories, setting aside any box labeled with the stolen memories of other vampires. I came to some kind of filing system: endless rows of steel mobile shelving units. These were Aro's personal memories, I just knew they were. It seemed Aro once started to file everything neatly, but had neglected to do so for a long time. The units stood open on the letter R and I zeroed in on the box with the caption Royalty. I went through it, copying its content to review later. Reading it all, even at vampire speed, was much slower that taking mental pictures for later review.

Another box that stood out to me was very old; the date on it was 100 - 500 AD. The caption was disturbing: Rebellion (my). Leafing through the memories, I soon came to a halt. Marcus' mate's name was at the top of the page and featured often in the body of text. I couldn't not read this.

I see no other options; I need Marcus and Caius to stay in power because if I took over solely, it would be only a matter of time until every vampire in the world would doom my rule. I need to bring them to their knees to follow me when I take their power for myself. I just don't know a thing on Marcus; he's frighteningly straight laced and sickly in love. Sadly, his one true love is my biological sister and pseudo mother, Didyme. Didyme, whose power is the very essence of my thirst for power. To give peace even to the greatest of enemies. It makes me sick that the sister I once held dear now is my biggest obstacle...

I skipped some of the initial rambling, scanning to where he got definitive plans brewing.

I'm so very proud of my two new toys. I found them about to be burned on the stake as witches. They both smelled almost sickly sweet; they were bound to become powerful. At first I intended to keep them away from the castle and keep them human until they matured, but even human and only thirteen they already were quite contrary. They would have run away from their minders, using their powers, however weak they still were. The only solution was to change them and tell them to behave, because they couldn't harm their sire without harming themselves. It was tedious to say the same phrase for three days, to condition their minds, but it worked like a charm. After I fed them their executioners as their first meal, they never strayed from their reverence to me. Because Marcus wouldn't condone thirteen year old vampires, I kept them away from the castle and trained them.

Today, Alec and Jane went on their first solo assignment. They didn't know, of course, that they would be the start of my rise to power. Alec stunned their victim, freezing her in place, and Jane dismembered her. Lastly, they burned her to ash. When Marcus went to his mansion in the country after a long court day, all he found was the ashes of his mate. He never suspected I was behind this most regrettable demise. I rid the world of eternal peace, and had Marcus sign over his ruling power to me, to give him time to grieve his loss. I became the non royal regent of the vampire realm.

Ha, I took Caius’ power away. Through my power, I found his Achilles heel; the stupid degenerate
has made two major mistakes. He covered them up, rectifying his mistakes, but mistakenly adding mystery to everyday deaths. The dumbass squashed one and created another religion by draining the one destined to become truly immortal, and failing to drain the everyday prophet, giving him powers beyond belief. It was beyond simple to blackmail him into following my lead from now on...

Not for the first time, I'm very grateful for finding Chelsea; she binds Marcus to the castle, or as the world at large calls us, the Volturi. He once again tried to escape, to investigate the death of Didyme and to claim his just revenge. It bothers me that I can no longer read his mind; every fiber of it is drowning in pain. He has become completely unresponsive, save direct orders to rule. In the rulings, he will only ever choose as his mate would have done, so I had to manipulate Caius into the role of constant antagonist, to cancel them out to rule myself.

With the latest ruling I made, it’s almost sure that now all ancient vampires have been destroyed. My illegal rule of the vampire world is now hidden from all. I no longer have to call myself the regent.

This was damning for Aro, and devastating for Marcus. The person he gave his trust, because he was as bereaved as he was, actually was the one causing everything. It also established vampire royalty was real, even though the true knowledge was lost. Hopefully, the book I found would clear up the blanks in the collective vampire memory. I quickly rifled through everything I could get my hands on, recording not reading. I knew that my time was limited. Grabbing random boxes and recording on several tracks, I now had two green tendrils running on Aro's mind simultaneously, doubling the recording power.

I knew I could use a maximum of four green tendrils from one red one. I used the third tendril on Alice, recording everything in her mind, a task much simpler than Aro's mind was. Not only were her memories less intricate, but also far fewer in number. But because I wasn't afraid of pain, I could venture behind her wall and collect everything there as well. What I didn't expect to find was an enormous file cabinet with human memories of visions. Not really looking, I filed absolutely everything away for later study.

Edward nudged me mentally that Aro's ego tripping rant was coming to its end.

"...how I can be sure that animal drinking deviants even are vampires." He sighed dramatically. "But as the official definition of vampire still is 'blood drinker', I can't say anything against it. To torture you, I should order a bus load of humans in here and let the guard feed. Don't be afraid; we don't have any humans stored and we fed just yesterday. And, as you have pointed out, your powerless coven lives peacefully on the fringes of society without giving away the secret.

"I don't understand your choices, and I really don't want to understand them either. You faithfully presented your coven when summoned, but I'm not completely sure you would have registered without the summons. Again, looking at the other couples in the coven, all registries are in order. I
must conclude that the summons merely hastened your trip here."

Suddenly, Caius stood and addressed Aro. "Brother, you are going around in circles and can't find a thing to fault this coven. Even if their prey of choice is abhorrent, it gives them a solid cover in the ridiculous way they choose to live their life. But though we might not agree with their life's choices, free will gives them the right to do as they please as long as the secret is safe. You personally saw to it that the newborn's power was tested and it proved to be insignificant. Let them go, I'm getting tired of this."

Aro turned to Marcus and asked him his council. He spoke with a voice seeped in pain; still, it was completely flat. "Caius is right, let them go." He waved a lethargic hand in a dismissive way. Knowing his true persona, I was extremely impressed by his act. He portrayed the opposite of what he was. The suicide threat versus the revenge seeker. Aro looked around, thwarted by his fellow rulers; his thoughts revealed that he was pissed beyond belief that they ruled the same way. He whipped around to Edward.

"All right, you, your mate, and your coven can go. But be advised that the size of your coven is dangerously large. Now that you all are mated, I must impress upon you to no longer pick up any more members. Because you all have no significant powers, the size of the coven is on the very outer edge of acceptable. I must, however, applaud your profile in the human world; you go to school, but no pictures are to be found in yearbooks. The father figure works in hospitals, but even there no pictures are to be found. You truly stay under the radar. Somehow you even are able to keep your pictures from the modern social media. Keep that up and we might never meet again."

Edward inclined his head toward each of the brothers and wrapped his arm around my waist. He threw a piercing glance to each of the other couples before leading all of us from the throne room. The two guardsmen who brought us there were waiting for us in the underground garage. Esme wanted to start talking, but Edward shut her up with a raised eyebrow. He was, however, bombarded mentally with an enormous amount of questions. I told him through the link to put everything into the 'ignore until later' basket and give his mind some rest. He had, after all, directed an impressive bit of subterfuge; Aro never suspected a thing.

I took out my camera to take some more landscape pictures; to my surprise, the memory card indicated that it was full. I checked if I had forgotten to switch cards, but my vampire memory told me that I changed the card that morning. I flipped the switch to allow me to review the pictures on the card. Document after document was recorded in minute detail. I couldn't read them, even with vampire vision. The little screen on the camera was simply too small. I marked the card and put in a new one. The analysis could wait until we were alone.

The guardsmen dropped us inside our hanger, where the jet was waiting. We hadn't decided if we would leave Italy right away, but we boarded the jet as if we would. The two SUV's sped from the hanger as soon as Edward’s feet left the boarding stairs. We were sitting in the lounge area of the
plane to discuss our options when my cell phone started to ring. The caller ID said it was Chief Cope; I answered it, completely puzzled because we had given him all evidence and every testimony we could think of. After I greeted him, he dove right in.

"Bella, we need you in Forks as soon as possible. I know that you're on vacation, but we have a situation here that requires you to be present. Please, Bella, come as soon as you can. Renee is here."

Chapter End Notes

A/N Bella's power keeps throwing strange curve balls, doesn't it? I think this is A good place to tell you all there are two chapters left in Twilesque. This part of the series was about the mating bond and resolving human attachments as far as they existed. The sequel, which is being written at the moment, will be dealing with all things vampire. My recommendations for this week.
One complete fic.
Breakdown by FelicityDeadwood, FFn 7694688, she's on TWCS but there's only one chapter there, and on FP under FelicityDeadwood.
and one promising AU mating bond WIP
The Mating Bond by LailaB, FFn 7234508, TWCS Sid=4970
See you all next week, please review
Pien
Chapter 26 Daddy?

Chapter Notes

A/N All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I just play with her characters without intending copyright infringement.

Of course, a big shout out to my tireless team, Chandrakanta, Lorraine Bubbleybear, and LunaDiSangue85

Let's see what Renee has to say...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 26 Daddy?

EPOV

"....Renee is here."

The face of my beautiful girl scrunched up, a heavy sigh leaving her in a defeated way. Her shoulders hunched and she looked completely dejected for a second. She then gathered her strength and she grew into a confident, beautiful woman with a task to do.

"Chief Cope, I'll have to put you on hold and quickly confer with my family; give us a minute."

She decisively put the man on hold, looked around expectantly, and told me through the link that, even if the family voted to stay in Italy, we had to go back to deal with the last bit of trash.

"Okay, you all heard the newest trouble in the town of Forks, Washington. Please show your hands for an immediate return home."

It was unanimous; everyone wanted to deal with the last of Bella's human shit. Chief Cope sounded absolutely terrified of Renee, and he was a good friend. We would have to let Renee set herself up to fall.

"Okay, Chief, I'm back. We should be in Forks early tomorrow morning. I'm going to meet with Renee, and probably need your services not too long after. Same protocols as before... Yes, I understand... See you then, Chief."

Jasper wanted to know what had happened behind the scenes in the throne room. We all decided that we would discuss that during the flight. We once more stepped into our alter egos and made a quick run to check out of our hotels and pack our suitcases. Because Bella and I had bought so many souvenirs, we were glad we had thought to double up our suitcases when we came. Now all four of them were full to the brim. Even so, we were still the first to return to the jet. Bella paid the pilots a hefty sum to fly back commercial, to keep everything said in the plane on the flight back private.
While we waited on the rest, Bella took out our laptop and transferred all the pictures from one of the memory cards onto it.

"Edward, my power has expanded with a wish I made while we were probing Aro. I know you didn't get all of it because I was working three tracks at once, and you needed your wits about you to counter him. I could show you everything, but when I saw this I wished there was a way to show Marcus. It now looks like my power did just that. From what I can see, every memory document I recorded in my mind for later scrutiny, and the ones I already read, are on here. Look."

I scanned the handwritten documents Bella had uploaded to the laptop. Low and behold, a good portion of Aro's personal memories were now immortalized digitally. We heard the rental cars arrive in the hangar and switched to silent communication immediately.

'Bella, we must keep those photos a secret, too. If we show them, they'll know that you can use any power without incapacitating the owner of said power. Alice would work it out that you can use her without permission, too.'

'Shoot, I never thought of that. Quickly, send these three to Marcus and tell him I lifted that from Aro's mind. I'll show you later.'

At that moment, Rose entered the plane and was pleasantly surprised that the pilots had gone. She immediately started the checklists and the filing of our flight plan, straight home from Pisa to Seattle. Esme called the rental companies to tell them where to collect our cars, and to deduct the rent from the provided credit cards. Alice and Jasper were the last to arrive; Jasper went to assist Rose as the co-pilot for today, to give me the space to explain everything I heard. From our private corner in the back of the plane, we could see every couple settle in. Rose got us a nice time slot; we only needed to wait for about twenty minutes. And in forty-five we were airborne.

We had removed the door from the cockpit, to make it easier for the pilots to be part of the conversations in the plane, not that it was needed with our hearing. I told them everything I picked up from the guards in attendance first, secondly what Caius and Aro thought of our ragtagity bunch. That, by the way, was a direct quote from Aro's mind. I showcased his deep desire to own gifted vampires. The only one he didn't really own was Chelsea, because she kept the rest in line. I heard her assessment of our coven, and she even tried to break some of our bonds. She was genuinely shocked that newborn Bella was so deeply rooted in all of us. She never tried the mated bonds; she knew those bonds were not to be touched. Marcus once caught her trying to break a political mating; oh dear, that info came from Marcus himself. The rest I had lifted from Chelsea's mind.

Jane and Alec's minds were nasty places to be, corrupted to the core: twin teen psychopaths on a power high. The only thing that kept them in line was their deep fear of Aro; I added a bit of Bella's knowledge I picked up. They are convinced their powers are ineffective on him. I told them how happy Jane was to torture Bella, just because she could use her power on something else than her human victims. Alec, for the most part, followed his sister, but his glee at seeing her victims scream was disconcerting, to say the least. Both those little monsters were robbed of their conscience while human, but the joy in torture had replaced the fear of capture.

I also listened to Marcus' guards: Demitri, Felix, Santiago, and, surprisingly, Renata. That last one should hurt Aro. His personal shield is under Marcus' control, or rather guidance. Marcus had told me all the guards’ names; he showed me their faces, their loyalties, both conscious and sub-conscious. Some sub-conscious loyalties were interesting; all guards were bound with a strong orange cable to the name of the Volturi. Those were emanating from Chelsea. I told the family only of the conscious bonds. They knew of Marcus' power, so I had to give them something.
Carlisle was quiet, as usual, with non scientific stuff, but I picked something from his thoughts that surprised me. It looked as if we would have to hash it out once again.

"Okay, Carlisle, let me have it."

"Let you have it? What do you mean?"

"Don't play ignorant now, or have you forgotten I'm a mind reader."

"Do we have to do this now? Can't we do this in private?"

"Why, are you afraid to lose face? But, because you won't acknowledge it, I'll have to tell them. Everybody, Carlisle feels disgruntled that his father status only holds value in the human world. He is deeply disappointed that Aro, whom he counted as a friend, hardly acknowledged him. He feels replaced, discarded, and wants to displace me as coven leader."

Bella's inner voice told me to wait a little, I had to listen deeper to Carlisle's thoughts. She linked me in on the track she had on him. We dove into his sub-conscious mind. I once again didn't really understand how it worked. Logic was obviously not a part of the sub-conscious mind. But Bella hauled me over to a corner where a shiny new sign stood, blaring to Carlisle to make sure he got control, that the old family should prevail, even in the vampire world. That I could be the administrator, but absolutely not the coven leader. Bella conjured, from thin air, a whiteboard wiper and cleaned the board. Then she proceeded to write on the board with a permanent marker. Her text was good: *I'll start working on being a good father, my family is my life. My coven is my existence; I'll be a good member of my coven. Edward and Bella are my coven leaders. My family will be Cullen, my coven Masen.*

We flew into the presence of our family; they didn't look as if they noticed I stopped talking, so I continued on the new course.

"I know this all sounds very disturbing. Please understand that I pieced this together from random thoughts. So, Carlisle, you now get the chance to voice the conclusion you want to draw from those thoughts. Take your time. We will discuss the Renee situation in the meanwhile."

Carlisle nodded and removed himself from our circle and went to sit alone in the back. His thoughts were warring with each other. He needed time to adjust to the new sub-conscious stimuli. Bella took over and grabbed the plane’s phone; she dialed Renee's number. It rang three times until a hesitant voice answered.

"Hello, who is this?"

"This is Bella; I heard you are in Forks. Maybe we can make an appointment, because you wouldn't have come to awful Forks to take a vacation."

"You little bitch, where are you?"

"My location is of no importance to you, and at the moment I'm not exactly sure. Somewhere over the Atlantic, I believe. I want to make an appointment, and that occasion will be the last time I ever want to see you."

"Well, listen to you, miss high and mighty, and how you think to avoid me. You should be with your owner right now, and I want my money!"

"All right, Renee, if you want your money you'll be at the Forks diner tomorrow at noon. We'll see you then."
Bella disconnected the call with a thoroughly disgusted look on her face. Emmett whistled, "That woman is a piece of work."

We all were in total agreement on that one. Everyone also agreed to be in hearing range when Bella and I would confront Renee.

Silently, Bella told me she would rather not go inside the diner; the grease scent is too much. Essentially we agreed to wing it upon seeing Renee. We agreed to wear Alice approved clothes, probably not matched the way she would like it, but that was inconsequential. Our inner dialogue started to shift subtly towards more personal wants. Bella stated she wanted desperately to go on a honeymoon. She was roaming my mind, and I hastily closed our, agreed upon, surprise door. I was just in time; she ran headlong into the door. The most interesting thing happened: our minds began a tickle war, totally awesome and, to be honest, quite erotic, too. Because no hands were used to tickle physically, the results were surprising and, honestly, arousing as hell. We became a moaning, giggling mess, no longer able to keep it silent and private.

Bella gasped, hearing a very soft thought ordering Emmett to humiliate us. I attacked Bella's lower abdomen with mental tickles and her gasp became another moaning giggle. Emmett couldn't keep his mouth shut anymore.

"Will you two," he stopped himself, feeling this wasn't his own doing and seamlessly went on, "keep it PG13, please, there's a pixie present." Alice huffed but didn't go off the deep end, yet.

The rest of the flight was uneventful and we were all glad to be back home. Bella towed me up to my room—sorry, our room—to choose our outfits for the next day from the Alice approved wardrobe.

It was a quarter to twelve; Bella and I parked the Vanquish, slap bang in front of the diner. Looking around, I spotted someone who could only be Renee. She mostly resembled a badly aged Lauren, or, even more prudent, a loose woman. I shuddered; scanning her thoughts I found out that she was scoping out our car, already thinking that she would bag any male inside. I specifically chose my special occasion car; I wanted a fast measure of the female. Even woman was too civilized to call that creature. Her mind was a chaotic mix of three subjects, and only those three: sex, drugs, and money. In no particular order.

I got out of the car, and as soon as she saw me the sex part of her thoughts exploded into beyond the gutter. I never read a more depraved female mind. I walked around the car and opened Bella's door, offered her my hand, and helped her out of the car. A gasp went through the assembled humans; ironically, no one recognized Bella. The thoughts about her were very diverse: from her being another sister, all the way to her being an escort, or, from a very few, my fiancée. No one pegged her for my wife.

Bella looked incredible; she wore a black Gucci dress, hitting her mid thigh. The top part of the dress, above her cleavage and the top part of the three quarter sleeves, was made of lace. To conform to the human world, she wore thick, dark grey pantyhose and a long Chanel coat. On her feet were the couture equivalent of biker boots: ankle high, four inch, Louboutins. My outfit was just as high street as hers, completely Armani, low blue jeans, a textured dark grey T-shirt and a dark blue, form fitting, leather jacket.

I decided we would hash everything out, out here in the parking lot; we would have the biggest witness pool. I silently told Bella and started the offensive.
"Hey, Bella," there were gasps from some of the bystanders, my volume just enough that Renee would hear me, "since when does Forks have a working corner?"

"Since the missing whore rolled back into town," Bella gave back, her derisive tone taunting.

"Do you mean this corner had any traffic then?" I said with a scrunched up nose.

"Probably, it was when the wheel was just invented though."

"Hey, baby, you said she came back, do you remember if she was always this strange color? I don't want to presume, but she looks like she's infected by an Oompa Loompa."

"That is new," Bella snorted loudly, "it could be something filtering up from the desert floor."

"Do you know her, other than having seen her before?" I went on, bowing toward Bella to whisper in her ear very loudly. "Because, if so, we could maybe tell her she's lopsided."

"You know, darling, she does look slightly familiar... But if I have seen her before it must have been when I was a kid." Then she stood on her toes, even more than the kick ass heels already forced her to, and whispered in my ear just as loudly as I just had. "But I'm positive she didn't look wonky, or wear kids’ clothes before."

And what a sight Renee was; she was sporting a denim micro mini skirt and a red pleather corset top, which was at least a size too small. Her artificial cleavage all but hung out over the zipper that was straining to hold the thing together. Then she sported stiletto, thigh high black boots with red laces all the way up. And to finish off her look were a pair of fishnet pantyhose.

"Look, she's headed this way." I whispered again loudly, "Damn, she's clumsy, she can't walk on those heels to save her live, unlike you, beautiful."

Renee's thoughts were outraged; she was deeply humiliated by our comments. She decided to cut us down, but she didn't think for a second that we were her appointment.

"Well, if she weren't wearing those stripper boots, she might be able to walk." Bella kept up our whispered banter, then Renee was close enough to address politely. Bella looked away from me and spoke to Renee; she sounded a bit like an indulgent parent addressing a wayward child. "Hello, how can I help you today?"

Renee went into bitch mode. "What the hell, can't you respect your elders? You stuck up little bitch."

"That's real respect worthy, Mother... They obviously forgot to wash out your mouth with soap when you were young. And for your information, respect is earned, not given."

"What do you mean, ‘Mother’? Who the fucking hell are you but a little girl brought up with a silver spoon in your bitchy mouth?"

Bella snorted loudly inside; her mirth at cutting Renee down was like a tsunami rolling in over the link. She was thoroughly enjoying herself. 'Can you believe it? She still doesn't recognize me, even after I called her mother.'

"Don't you recognize me, Renee? You know, the daughter you ran out on, leaving her with an abusive asshole who tried to sell her to a rapist for a wife. Or were you too busy whoring around, getting baked orange and fixed lopsided to remember you had one?"

"Isabella? Well now, didn't you do well for yourself? And who's this fine piece of man?" Renee
purred.

It was actually painful to have to keep Renee's foul mind under surveillance. She was under the impression I had bought Bella from her ingrate husband. That also meant to her that I was fair game, no way that I would be faithful to my enslaved spouse.

"I'm Edward, Bella's husband."

Then she did us a very big favor. "You're the one Charlie sold her to. He should have gotten a hefty sum then." She thought that Charlie had betrayed her, that he had stiffed her out of her rightful share.

'Bella, this is the jackpot. You are taping everything, aren't you? We need to try and get more out of her.'

'Silly vampire, of course I'm taping. I also got the digital data on our phone call on the plane.'

"So, Renee, how much were you going to get?" Bella tried to get Renee to give out more damning evidence.

But Renee was crafty. "What do you mean? Right now I'd like to know how much you're going to give me."

I had to goat. "Oh, you think I'm the rapist husband that she was going to be sold to?"

"You might, or you could have overbid that buyer. Nobody would take the piece of crap I left with Charlie voluntarily. Neither would he have allowed it to run out on him."

"Okay, let me get this clear," Bella cut in. "Charlie was going to auction me off to the highest bidder? Please tell, who were the other candidates?"

'I'm so glad I'm getting this recorded. This is hard time for Renee too.'

'Yep, definitely. Keep egging her on, I'm going to add a bit of vampire in my scare tactics.' I snorted through the link, Bella's feistiness made me mischievous.

"Lady, and I use that term extremely lightly, how dare you insult my wife?" I stepped into Renee's personal space while I allowed some of my human façade to dissipate. "Where do you think you get the authority to do that? You better watch your mouth, you absolutely don't know who you're dealing with."

I had to give Renee credit; she flinched but didn't back up.

"I have that right because I gave birth to the little shit. I wanted to get rid of it, but Charlie convinced me we could sell it when it became of age and make a boatload of money."

Bella snorted audibly. "Is that how you and Charlie deluded yourselves? You are mistaken; Grandma Swan told me that Grandpa Swan forced you two to marry and keep the baby. To live with it, you concocted the plan you just outlined, but only after you knew I was a girl. I'm right, aren't I? Charlie would never have been able to restrain a boy that way. And boys are not really sellable either."

Renee's eyes grew large, then she burst out, "A boy would have given him someone to train and take over, just like his father had done."

"True, but please tell me why you fled to California after fucking Charlie? Or rather, why did you
choose him to be the father? Because suddenly, I doubt he's my sperm donor at all. We all know what a whore you were, and probably are; you screwed everything male you could get your hands on," Bella went on, slowly increasing the pressure in her questions. She was after the truth, looking on her womb provider for the first time in fourteen years. Assessing Renee's intelligence and all her and Charlie's characteristics as well, Bella couldn't believe she came from two of those evil creatures.

Renee scoffed, "Of course he was your father. Why else would I have married him, or left you there with him? I could have used a maid myself."

"So, if I take a DNA test, you're a hundred percent sure he'll come out as your impregnator?"

"Um... yep, totally positive."

"Great, Edward, can you take us to Carlisle right now? I'm sure he can have the results in a few weeks."

"NO!" Renee shouted, then she went on in a whisper, "Okay, fine, I don't know who your father is."

The only thing that came to my mind to say spilled from my mouth before I could hold it back. It was dripping in sarcasm. "Needed money back then?"

"No, honey, she was whoring her way across the country; she got stranded in Cali," Bella gave up, just as sarcastic.

Renee decided to go on the offensive. "You little earth worm, I'm still your mother; I should get something out of it. And it looks like you've got enough right now."

"As if I'd give you anything; it's not as if you didn't get enough out of Charlie when he was still alive. The monthly payments: what were they, blackmail? It's the reason you're here, isn't it? Your money boat got stranded."

"Bella, sweetheart, I think she was his mule."

Renee exploded into faked rage; she felt she was losing and scrambled to hold on to some kind of control. "Charlie was a respectable police officer, and you know it!"

We would have kept it together, but we made the mistake of looking at each other. Both Bella and I exploded into laughter. When we got over our outburst, Bella addressed a flustered Renee snorting. "That giant asshole was arrested for drug and human trafficking, then hung himself in his cell like a coward."

Grasping at the last straws she had, Renee again tried the offensive. "I've been to his house, it's almost empty. Where did you take it? You and your boy toy couldn't possibly afford those threads otherwise. By the way, where did you get those fake Louboutins?"

Bella grabbed my shoulder and removed one of her ankle boots, and showed me the inside. "Does that look like a fake Louboutin?"

"You don't have to prove it to me, honey, I bought them for you, remember?"

Bella purred, "That's right. Did I thank you for them yet?"

I caressed her cheek and told her, my voice sounding low and husky. "Since when do you need to thank me for a simple pair of shoes? But yes you did, profusely."
"It's just good manners. Something I learned from Grandma Swan, she was the only parental figure I ever had." Bella's face transformed with an evil smirk. "Besides, I thought you liked the way I thanked you." She sent me a mental picture; at the same time, our heightened sexual vibes made Renee think of me discovering that her fishnets were crotchless. Bella's image was infinitely more alluring; she showed me what she was wearing underneath her dress: a midnight blue Agent Provocateur panty set with garters to the pantyhose, which were thigh highs instead.

It took all my control to keep my physical reaction from showing. To channel it away from my groin, I grabbed Bella and planted a good one on her. The crowd wolf whistled, but Renee lost her limited amount of patience and screeched, "Excuse me, but where is my money? You were sold to him, right?"

I exploded, "SOLD TO ME, HOW DARE YOU INSINUATE ANYTHING OF THE SORT! BELLA IS NOT ANYBODY'S PROPERTY!"

'Alice did something for us, for a change; she called the police. Chief Cope is on his way.'

'Are they going to join us, too?'

'Yep, the whole family.'

'This will be interesting.' Bella noticed Carlisle and Esme getting close and ran into Esme's arms. "Mama, that evil person who gave birth to me is saying that I was sold to Edward and she wants her money," she told them, fake sobbing, then she added at vampire pitch, "Play along, we are trying to get her to crack."

Esme wrapped her up in a tight embrace and patted her back. "There, there, baby girl, it's okay. You know that you weren't sold, that Edward loves you more than his own life." She focused a deadly 'mom' glare on Renee. "How dare you insinuate that we would allow our son to buy a human being, and especially that this perfect girl was nothing but a trade for you to get more money!"

Renee was completely flustered; she suddenly understood that she was up against people smarter than she could ever try to be. She hunched over, wrapping her arms around her torso. She was literally shrinking under Esme's glare. "Uh... Because Charlie... You know..."

"Oh yes, we know all about Charlie," Esme spat, "and if you were in on what he did to this poor, darling girl, then you will get what you deserve."

Carlisle actually tried to be a father; I heard it in his mind. "Who is this appalling creature?"

Bella sniffed her answer. "She thinks she's my mother."

Carlisle gave a derisive laugh. "To be a mother, you need to do something more than give birth. It's a title to be earned not given."

"Well, how about you show me how to earn it?" Renee tried to purr seductively while she sauntered over to Carlisle.

"Something like loving your child is a good place to start," Carlisle answered.

With every step Renee took he looked more uncomfortable, but he didn't move away, he did nothing. This made Esme's every instinct flare, but not at Renee. Esme became enraged that Carlisle did nothing to stop Renee, who now had a hand on his arm. Rose's thoughts asked me if that bitch was for real. Emmett bookmarked her as a real class act. She needed to be trashed as a makeover according to Alice, and Jasper informed me that her that her emotions were all over the place, but
that the prominent two were disappointment and anger.

Renee slowly stroked Carlisle's arm. "Well, you look like quite the daddy. Why don't you teach me?"

Carlisle stood frozen; he simply couldn't process what was happening. His thoughts were in a panic. Esme had had enough and asked him, fuming, if he was going to stand there and let it happen. Carlisle turned his head toward her, making another huge mistake. He gave her a placating look. I had to give him a sneer and a warning from his coven leader that he was venturing on thin ice.

"Nicely done, 'Daddy'."

Rose arched her bitch brow to full strength and sneered to Renee. "Yo, bitch, why don't you unhand my father. I really don't want something so pathetic touching him."

"Yes, unhand MY husband, although at this rate he'll be sleeping on the couch," Esme concurred.

Bella had had enough; she grabbed Renee's hand, which was still located on Carlisle's arm, and yanked her away. "RENEE, I know you're nothing but a whore, but you're not getting paid by any of us, so you might want to keep the goods locked up. You shouldn't give freebies."

"Yeah, why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" Emmett added, snorting.

Rose was laughing out loud while putting in her two cents. "Don't get it mixed up, Em, she's the one trying to do the milking."

We all burst out laughing at that, even if Carlisle and Esme were trying to hold it in. Renee dissolved into incomprehensible screeching; at the same moment, Chief Cope pulled up right next to us. He unfolded himself from the car, putting his baton in its place and drawing himself up to his full height. His thoughts were cursing Renee for humiliating him in middle school, then he smirked while he thought that she was the humiliated one now. "What seems to be the problem here, do we have a citizen’s arrest comprising indecent exposure?"

I had to give him credit, he showed nothing but professionalism. "Yes, Chief, we do, and we have proof that she was in on the scam to have Bella sold to Jacob Black."

The Chief looked around for security cameras he knew weren't there. "Proof? How? You there, right over here. Spread them, not too wide, lady." He cuffed Renee and put her in the back of his cruiser. Bella pulled out the digital recorder with the conversation, along with the thumb drive containing the phone call.

"Right here, Chief Cope; these are recordings of the phone call we had to set up this meeting, and the whole conversation we had today. Please take this slore out of our lives forever."

Snickering, Emmett bellowed, "At least the jumpsuit won't clash with her skin tone."

We all dissolved into laughter; I had to embellish my earlier comparison. "All she needs is a green wig."

Holding her stomach, Alice added, "Make it a bad die job; it'll last longer."

"Well, that was easy, I didn't have to do a thing today." Jasper sighed when the emotional storm called Renee was removed. "She did it all by herself."

"You see, it is not so difficult to bring down a person reaching beyond their might." Bella laughed,
and I had to finish that one with, "Especially one that's as money hungry as that one."

With Renee out of the way, Esme's indignation towards Carlisle rose to the surface again. I felt a tug on my hand and heard Bella's internal voice say we had to go to Carlisle's sub-conscious again. She had to add something to the sign. I agreed and felt her wrapping us up, and we jumped in straight away. She ran to the sign and added 'and husband' after the word father. We were in and out in a flash. She told me internally that the signs were like permanent subliminal messages; she didn't know where they came from yet, but she would use them for good until we did.

Esme slapped the back of Carlisle's head and told him to expect no wifely duties from her until he understood what a good husband was and he acted accordingly. She turned around and walked toward their car, climbing in along with Rose and Emmett. Alice and Jasper walked away casually and disappeared into the forest. Jasper let me know he needed to hunt after being between that many humans. Carlisle walked off dejectedly; he was thrown off his balance. Never before had anybody challenged him to change.

Later that afternoon, we all assembled in the living room. It was time to help Carlisle understand. Esme sat alone on a chair, looking out over her garden. I put Carlisle in the middle of the circle, and began to tell him off.

"Carlisle, you really need to do something about your excessive passiveness. It's starting to become detrimental to this coven."

Esme huffed and turned her back completely on Carlisle, thinking he could suffer until hell froze over. She couldn't leave him—they were mates—but she certainly could get her own room.

"Not to mention to your relationship with Esme. How she's handled your non action towards those slut nurses all these years, I'll never understand," Bella told him sternly. She internally added to me that it could be necessary to jump start the subliminal message. After a short analysis, I decided to use Jasper's power.

"Jasper, can you energize him into action in some way? He's been passive for so long, and that is some kind of emotion, isn't it? He has slowly slid off from pacifistic to passive. Make him pacifistic, because that's a core of his being, but add some passion to it."

Jasper answered, "I can do it, but the true change needs to come from him, my power is temporary. He needs to want to change."

"See it as an aid for him to grab on to and start this change; we all need to be patient with him. Rose, you might want to start taking him to the garage for talks. He'll need all of our help that he can get," Bella told us all.

Jasper nodded and sent the needed emotions to Carlisle. Unbeknownst to the family, Bella doubled them up with her power, adding a much needed kick to his mental butt. Carlisle shot up and ran out of the house, his thoughts focused on getting anything he could get his hands on to appease his mate.

Chapter End Notes

A/N next week will be the last chapter of part one. I'm writing part two, but it'll take a while before I'm ready to post it. My last recommendations with this story:
Both aren't marked as complete, but they are both finished non the less.

first

EAC: The Journal of Edward Cullen by katmom, FFn 7384319, FP under profile KathieSpitz.

and second

For Whom the Bell Tolls by CyraBear, FFn 6460691.

see you next week

Please review

Pien
Chapter 27 That's a Wrap

Chapter Notes

A/N

All things Twilight belong to Stephanie Meyer, I only play with her characters without intending any copyright infringement.

This is the last chapter of Twilesque, I won't talk much here, there's a long A/N at the bottom.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TWILESQUE

Chapter 27 That's a Wrap

epilogue.

BPOV

Relaxing on the intercontinental flight, on way to our honeymoon, I had ample time to think about the last six weeks. At first we had to be incredibly brave to enter the ice filled Cullen house; Esme's love had evaporated. The atmosphere in the house had suffered dearly. The homey, cozy environment melted away when Esme stopped using her ability. Now it felt stark, sterile, a show house: one where photographs for minimalist home magazines were taken.

Esme stayed on the chair she sat in, looking out over her slowly deteriorating garden, for almost a week. Carlisle was despondent; he tried everything to get her to respond, but his efforts were in vain. Edward had refused to give Carlisle insight into Esme's thoughts, and I refused to stand between them. My place was next to my man; I told Carlisle that if Edward gave me permission to use his power, I would read her mind. Not before. The family didn't know I could read their minds just as easily as Edward could now. Even if Edward wasn't beside me, our link was there, always. Esme was hurting; all the materialistic offerings around her did nothing to soften her resolve to punish Carlisle. He was trying, but somehow thought that gift giving would be enough. The stupid male still hadn't worked out that his actions should talk, and that he needed to verbalize his excuses beyond I'm sorry. He was running around gathering inconsequential things and offering them to her.

Esme didn't acknowledge any of them and they were building up around her chair: magazines about interior decorating from all around the world, a limited edition art book about Frank Lloyd Wright—one of Esme's favorites—several light blue jewelry cases with extravagant necklace and bracelet sets. Increasingly more exclusive flower arrangements made the living room look like a funeral home. The oaf even brought a box of Godiva chocolates. But with every offering, he never voiced why he was sorry; he just gave her the gift, stating he was.

Rose and I had had enough; she dragged Carlisle to the garage therapy room. I spoke with Edward; I realized that Esme was getting too solidified in her catatonic state. We were all suffering now; the bond Esme created between the four couples of our coven was slowly dissolving. Alice hauled Jasper away every chance she got, Rose and Emmett went on a hunt every day, and we sequestered
ourselves in our treehouse. A quick trip into Esme's sub-conscious mind told us that, once again, a subliminal sign was erected and keeping her from any and all action. We changed it into rightful indignation, but not forgetting that her coven needed her.

Thankfully it worked; Esme still rebuffed Carlisle's perfunctory excuses, but started to tend to the house and garden again. So much that she seemed to go into overdrive, decorating the house for the holidays. Alice jumped on the bandwagon, and together they transformed the house into a winter wonderland. Garlands and mistletoe were everywhere. They made the males put up miles of lights outside. Emmett was over the moon; he went shopping alone one day when Rose was counseling Carlisle, and came back with an enormous inflatable snowman, and an equally large Santa Claus. They were displayed proudly on the meadow that was the Cullen front lawn. A giant sled and reindeer in lights were parked on the roof.

Before we got Esme out of her funk, Edward and I were summoned to the police station. Chief Cope gave us an update of all the cases waiting for trial we were involved with. It turned out that I needed to testify in the case against Jerkob. They wanted enough evidence to put him away in a supermax facility. Rosalie had to testify in the case against Billy, because her investigation had unearthed his involvement in the death of his wife.

The case against Renee had grown considerably. Billy, knowing he was done for anyway through Charlie's tapes, confessed that Renee was his business partner even more than Charlie. Most of the drugs smuggled out of La Push went directly to her; she distributed them in California. The California authorities were over the moon that one of their most wanted was caught, because she had outstanding warrants for her arrest: two counts of drug trafficking and multiple on alleged identity theft and fraud. But the biggest surprise was one warrant for murder; apparently she was the prime suspect in the murder of Phil Dwyer, her boy toy lover. The Washington District Attorney had already decided to prosecute her here for accessory to drug trafficking, and conspiracy to commit human trafficking. After her sentence here was decided she would be extradited to California to stand trial there.

Chief Cope then went on through the list of students who were arrested after the video at school. Mike Newton was sentenced to three years in Clallum County, medium security, which meant that he would be seen by all his peers working in the prison cleanup crews, a modern day equivalent of the chain gang. Jessica and Lauren were now at their half year mark in their program. Both failed their probation test and had to stay the rest of the year. The Black trials, as well as Renee's one, would start in the new year.

Edward went to Seattle a lot during all of this. He said he needed to work on the coven's finances and wanted privacy to buy his Christmas presents. I let him do his thing; we could discuss anything coming up over the link. The link also gave me access to his power; I made good use of that. Because the family was unaware a mind reader was among them, I could freely explore their thoughts. Most of what I captured, I simply stored to go over later with Edward. I was surprised at some of the thoughts reaching me though. It seemed that a few coven members were very good at protecting their thoughts around Edward. When I advised him of that fact, he wasn't surprised. He had already pieced it together, because he was a devious one himself. Jasper never closed his mind off from Edward. Maybe only when he was intimate with Alice, but that was being polite. Hiding thoughts apparently had its own feeling. When they were in the house eventually, Jasper's thoughts of insecurity and unhappiness was a surprise to me. His ideas didn't focus on anything in particular, he just felt uneasy, as if he knew some things were not as they should be, but he couldn't put it all together yet.

I had a long talk with Rose in the garage, just to make sure it was private. I advised her to try to take Carlisle back to his human years. I somehow had a feeling that growing up with a single, fanatically
religious, hard ass father had somehow warped his idea of fatherhood. He desperately wanted a family, but he didn't know how to be a father, or a husband for that matter. When Rose started to dig deep and asked Carlisle to tell her about his human life, beyond the facts already known, some very twisted things were unearthed. From what we could surmise, from the bits and pieces Carlisle could remember, his father had derailed when his wife died in childbirth. The midwife had saved the child, Carlisle, but his mother bled out. His father had blamed her death on him, and had parked him with a wet nurse until he was three. From that moment, he was treated as if he was an adult, and required to act as one, too. Mistakes were punished severely; in an age where corporeal punishment was normal, a lashing was child's play. Carlisle's reaction to the harsh treatment was to withdraw and observe. There was the root of all his troubles; this ingrained behavior had now become extreme.

The lovelessness of his upbringing had left him unable to give love freely. Most of his human behavior was learned mannerisms, not instinctual reaction. When he was left to his own devices to solve family matters, he froze and observed. All went the way one of the coven wanted. Until the fifties, it was Edward and Esme leading the way, Edward acting as Esme's younger brother until Rose joined the coven. When they built the family basis, all knew that Edward was the one leading the coven, but they painted the picture of parents with two, and later three, kids. After Jasper and Alice joined the coven they made one big mistake: they had allowed her power to rule their actions. That was even more detrimental to Carlisle's mental state. He acted as the father superficially, calling into the schools to get the 'kids' out of attending on sunny days, but he wasn't required to do anything outside of that. He safely hid himself in his scientific fortress and acted only in his vocation as doctor. As decisive as he was as the emergency room doctor, he was standing back in family matters.

Rose had to literally spell everything out to Carlisle, but the subliminal message made it so that he retained the information. It took another week before he started to act on his teachings, but he finally hit the deck running. He groveled for Esme and apologized abundantly for his inactions; he also grounded Alice for wasting money, confiscating all her credit cards for a month. This resulted in a major temper tantrum, which earned her another two weeks without money. After a parental meeting between Carlisle and Esme, it was decided that Alice would get a fifty dollar spending limit per coven member for Christmas. This money was handed to her in cash, together with an extensive lecture about what was considered wasting money. She had to give Esme all receipts and any leftover money. I made sure I was close by during that lecture, listening more to Alice's thoughts than anything.

Esme softened the blow to Alice's addiction a little bit by taking her with her to shop for Christmas decorations. The house was transformed and Edward sat every evening at his piano playing Christmas Carols. He still went to Seattle almost every day, stating that the accounts of the family needed to be closed for the year. I gave him a list of Christmas presents I wanted to buy for the others. I had my own special trip to make; armed with my fake driver's license, I hijacked the most sensible car in the garage, a Mercedes SUV. I believe it was Esme's car, but since I didn't have my own transport, other than my bicycle, yet, I had to make do because I had to go to Olympia, to close the deal on Edward's private Christmas present. Online and over the phone, I had ordered a customized Aprilia RSV4-R. I had ordered a mat-black paint job, making it look like the Superbike model. Sadly, my haggling skills weren't so good that I could buy the Superbike itself. The matte black paint job on the bike was enhanced with some patterns inspired on the Bell RS-1 Steampunk helmet I bought online. To complete the package, I got the Joe Rocket Survivor one piece suit, Alpine Starr WP boots and REV’IT! Zoom H2O gloves. To ensure total coverage in the sun, I found him a neck dickie. I hadn't decided yet if I would give one of the riding gear packages during the family celebrations.

Walking around Olympia after I had closed the deal on the bike, and arranged delivery of it to the garage, I found Edward the most gorgeous steampunk watch: a skeleton watch, showing its inner workings of intricately tooled little plates of metal; one of the plates was enameled in blue. The
beautiful piece fit exactly with all of my gifts to Edward, the theme of them befitting my view of his
image. The new man inside an ancient package. With me by his side, Edward was redefining
himself; he grew from a lonely, brooding, miserable follower into a self-assured, happy leader.

I went home, happy with all the progress I made. On New Year's, another bike and a set of motor
gear would arrive; that set was solely for me. My fake driver's license stated that I could also ride a
bike, and after a few lessons I took that day, I knew that it was true. The bike I ordered for myself
was a Honda Goldwing in royal blue with the same steampunk designs on the tank and side coffers.
I wanted a bike for touring, for traveling around the world the most free way we could. Because of
that, I had opted for a trailer to go with it, adding it behind my bike. Of course the trailer was color
and design coordinated with my bike as well. With all the storage on and behind the bike, we would
be able to live on them, never needing a home except for the luxury we both enjoyed, and our
treehouse we absolutely loved.

After my day in indulging my wishes for the future, making sure everything was in place, I was glad
I had given my list of gift ideas for the others to Edward. Even if I didn't exactly know what I would
give them, I had put thought into the ideas, and through the link, Edward showed me possibilities
sometimes for me to choose.

Sooner than I thought, it was Christmas Eve, and a summons came to the treehouse that we were
needed in the main house. Edward and I were cuddled into each other, basking in the lights on our
very own tree, a tree adorned with a few very special ornaments. Two were the specials we each
bought, but the eight very special ones were those Edward had found completely intact when he
went through his Chicago home in the sixties. The house had been boarded up, but maintained since
he had left it in 1918. Luckily it was never burglarized or vandalized. He told me that it was like
stepping back in time when you entered. While sorting through his former life, he had found the
eight ornaments that now held the most prominent positions in the tree. The most precious was his
parents' first Christmas ornament, a bridal couple with a heart hanging underneath and a little banner
on top telling it was for their first Christmas.

We sighed and got our bag of presents before running over to the main house and stepping into the
over-the-top winter wonderland. Emmett immediately got our bag and added our packages
underneath the tree. He was amped up, babbling in his thoughts that he finally figured it out, never
divulging what he figured out. I couldn't ask because I couldn't let them know I was equally as adept
at mind reading as Edward. The atmosphere in the house looked cheerful, but a black cloud seemed
to be looming somewhere near the stairs. Alice, with a thunderous expression on her face, was
brooding next to it. Even though Esme had allowed her to help in the decorations, she had held a
firm hand on the purse strings. Most of the decorations were actually homemade, not the elaborate
crystal, sterling silver, or even bejeweled ones she had swirling in her head… the ones she had
planned to buy since May.

'Bella, I have to tell you that this is the first Christmas, since the fifties, that the house feels like
a home, not a showroom. I believe Esme's touch shows the love of her family. Alice dictated
everything until now, and she was just after status and expensive to show off.'

'I can only tell you that I'm so incredibly happy; this is the first Christmas I remember where the
whole house is decorated and traditions are in place. I only ever had a little tree in my room my first
four years with my gran. When we're done here, I need to take you somewhere, honey. For your
private present.'

His eyes lit up and a mischievous smile slowly crept up his face. Jasper walked past us, hitting him
over the head, telling him to keep it clean today. Rosalie was perched on the couch, wearing a very
Christmasy sweater. It pictured the elves at work in Santa's workshop. Esme came bustling into the
room, putting a bowl of potpourri on the coffee table. She wore a forest green dress with an apron, exuding motherly vibes.

She led us into a night of old-fashioned parlor games. It was hilarious; Emmett was horrible at similes, but to compensate he tried to give the most creative answers. His best one was on the question: loose as... He didn't even blink and answered, "Loose as Renee's morals." He was out of that round again at the first try, even though he was absolutely right.

My mind went to my false parentage; my gran had taken care of a child that wasn't even her grandchild. Still, she knew things; she made sure I believed in my stories, prepared me for my second life. She was special, too, in touch with the supernatural world.

Edward started to play the piano, the happy notes of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer swirling around the room. We gathered around the piano and I plopped down next to Edward on the piano bench. The whole family joined in with Edward's flawless performance; they sang polyphonic. I sat there watching it all with my mouth hanging open.

I didn't know any of the words and had only heard the melodies sometimes when I was in the Thriftway in the holiday season. Santa had been forced to scratch my name off his list, even though I was a very nice girl, never stepping out of line. I understood that he didn't give presents when those presents would be destroyed by the naughty parent in the home. The Dump was always the only dark house in Forks, no Jehovah's Witnesses in this tiny town.

When it was almost midnight, Edward started to play Silent Night. I found myself humming along with their beautiful singing. When it was finished, we stayed still for some time, all of us lost in our own thoughts.

A loud beeping sound shattered the reverent silence and Emmett started to bounce around the room. He chanted, "It's midnight, Merry Christmas, come on, it's present time," incessantly. I dove into his mind and found that his entire mind was focused on the fun of opening presents. Alice once again separated herself from the group; her thoughts were in sharp contrast to everybody else's. Through the link, I discovered that Edward and Jasper had built somewhat of a system to keep them both in constant contact with Alice's thoughts and feelings. And while she kept a constant block, or so she thought, on her thoughts, she never tried to hide her feelings. Right then rage, petulance, and being disgruntled fought for dominance. While Emmett was happily building eight piles of gifts, Edward pulled absolutely murderous thoughts from behind her block.

"Come on, you guys, it's time to open up these puppies," Emmett shouted from his perch before the tree. "Bella and Edward, you two take the recliner, Mom and Dad the love seat. Rosie, we take the left side of the couch. My left, honey. And that leaves the right side of the couch for Alicia and Jaspero. Come on, come on, I want to get to the private gift giving before we go to the shelter."

His enthusiasm was infectious and I felt myself getting exited for the very first time about getting gifts. These were presents from people who loved me, and there's nothing wrong with expressing love through giving gifts. It helped to know that we also donated to numerous charities—shelters for battered women and abused children's organizations taking a prominent place in the very long list. Edward had shown it to me; this Christmas alone the family had donated over three quarters of a million to about a hundred and fifty smaller charities and nonprofit organizations. Each year he added a name to the list; this year it was 'Not for Sale', an organization against human trafficking and slavery.

We were finally all seated with a pile of gifts in front of us. Out of nowhere, a high hat had appeared and Emmett shook it before he reached inside and read the scrap of paper he retrieved.
"Alice. Okay, sister, you may start off the ripping and tearing."

Alice huffed and grabbed the first package; she ripped off the paper and glared at the Louis Futton wallet and purse inside. Not only was the name deliberately spelled wrong, the stitch work looked absolutely shoddy.

"Now why would I want a bad knock off?" Alice growled toward Rose.

"I couldn't think of anything else you would maybe appreciate within our set spending limit," Rose answered. "But you're welcome."

Alice ripped through the next three presents, which were actually not bad at all, given her cold reaction to them. Esme gifted her with a designer's pad and a set of colored pencils, Carlisle had found a hand painted scarf in cheery colors, and the third was my present, a journal and nice pen. All three of these gifts got a small nod and eye roll. Edward's present was interesting; he gave her a book titled 'The Betrayal of Lancelot'. Alice's eyes snapped to his face, and if looks could kill, Edward would be in ashes right then and there. My instincts kicked in and I immediately solidified my shield around us, but it wasn't necessary. Alice smacked the book on the coffee table, face down, and angrily grabbed the next gift. That one turned out to be from Emmett, whose inner voice suddenly flooded our link.

'Edward, this little gift is because I figured out Alice must have been the one influencing my teases into mental rapes. And nobody toys with my family, not even family itself. I'm more than pissed that she somehow made me torture my big brother and coven leader. From now on, Edward, tell me if you spot me out of line; I will keep the teasing friendly.'

From the longish package a leather paddle emerged, studded with the text 'SPANK ME'. Alice dropped it like she was burned by it, and another family member was placed in the shithole she had opened in her mind. Her thoughts were so poisonous that I had to actively restrain my features to prevent myself from flinching. I felt Edward's fingers dig into my thigh and knew he had the same problem. She started to vibrate, got to her feet, and shook her head, trying to find her voice.

"I've lived with you all for almost sixty years," she said with a menacing voice. "All that time we were a respectable family; we held status and acted our parts." Her piercing glare now rested on me. "That is until you came in and rendered my power virtually useless in guiding our actions. Suddenly, the unit I was molding into perfection was crumbling. Everybody suddenly started doing their own things besides the acceptable things. Somehow you made them all turn against me; you never tried to listen and fit in." Edward started to get to his feet but I held him back, cautioning him through the link to let her incriminate herself. "This farce of a Christmas party is the final straw; half of the gifts I get are insulting, unfitting our status, rubbish. The other half holds strange kinds of warnings. I won't stand for this treatment; I tried to follow along tonight, but I've had enough. Enjoy yourself, I won't stay around here." She grabbed her last present, the one from Jasper, and disappeared through the back door.

We sat for a few seconds in stunned silence, then Jasper sighed and said, "Well, I think I speak for y'all if I say good riddance!"

Esme's eyes went wide when she heard him say that. "She's your mate, Jasper, you shouldn't say that."

"Mom, she has been souring my mood for days now; her totally appropriate punishment went over like a house on fire. She can't take her parade being rained on. She pushed us all for years, and now she's trying to lay a guilt trip on all of us for letting Bella into our family. It's like she can't truly understand the mating bond. I'm glad she's gone for now. Let's celebrate our Christmas with real
'The pull is gone, Edward. I don't understand yet but I don't feel the mating pull anymore.' Jasper's mental voice came to Edward.

I saw in my peripheral vision Edward nod once, acknowledging his comment. He told me through the link that we would have to go through everything we knew about Alice, but not until we were sure we were alone and could contact Marcus. We had discovered the one who betrayed the family he had warned us about.

Emmett, eager to put the tense atmosphere behind us, grabbed another name from hat. Edward was next. He was thrilled with the steampunk inspired watch he opened right before a butt ugly tie from Alice. The steel male bracelet with Cullen Crest he got from Carlisle was greeted with a wry smile. I knew he wanted to go back to Masen, but wasn't ready to announce that yet. Esme had gotten him a beautiful sweater in emerald green. Jasper and Emmett's gifts were similar; they both gave him baseball themed things. Rose gave him a gag gift: Leadership for Dummies.

As it turned out, several people had bought similar presents for each gender. Alice had gotten all males a horrid tie; the ugliest one was for Jasper. For the ladies, she had the most uninspiring gift possible: a gift card for Bath and Bodyworks. Carlisle had gotten all us females scarves and all the males that steel bracelet. It almost looked as if he wanted to mark his sons. Rose had gotten everyone funny but well thought out gifts. Jasper had gotten all the boys, even Carlisle, something baseball related. His gifts for the ladies were extraordinary; he must have taken so much time to get everything together. He gave us all a charm bracelet with eight charms representing each member of the family. Going mentally over my bracelet, I had an apron for Esme, a doctors bag for Carlisle, Rose and Emmett were a bear and a rose that formed a cross. Jasper and Alice were represented with a confederate officer's hat and a crystal ball; finally, Edward was a royal lion and I was a bejeweled swan. The thing that stood out the most was the fact that every couple was represented by charms next to each other, except for Alice and Jasper. His charm sat between Edward's and Emmett's; Alice's charm was set apart some distance between hers and all the other charms. It was clear he wanted to tell us something, something Edward and I would take into account when we went over everything.

My last present came from Edward; I felt it was a book. I thought briefly he had a hidden message for me, too, but when I lifted the layer of tissue paper from it, the title didn't help me at all. The book was called 'Extraordinary'; I had never heard of that one. Then my eye fell on the author's name and my still heart lurched in my chest. These were my stories bound into a book, with a leather cover. When I opened it reverently I saw that he had personally calligraphied every page in his flawless handwriting. Every chapter began with a small picture around the first capital. I was utterly speechless with awe. I flooded the link with gratitude and love.

At that time, I noticed we were alone in the room; it appeared that everyone had decided to get on with the personal gifts. I took Edward's hand and tugged him out of the back door.

"Run with me, Edward."

We ran to the garage; before we went inside, Edward stopped me.

"Bella, I would like to give you your gift first. I compiled this for us, but it's my gift to you."

He reached inside his jacket pocket and came back out with a thick manila envelope; he handed it to me. I opened the envelope and looked at the binder inside. I took it out and it was full of official looking papers. The first page appeared to be the owner certificate of a motor yacht; behind that was a page with four photographs. They showed the interior and exterior of the boat... the ship. The
damn thing was almost one hundred-forty-eight feet long. Turning the page, I expected more pictures of our speedship, but was baffled by a map of Malaysia with an arrow pointing to a bit of ocean to the east of it. The next page was another map; it showed the littlest bit of land on the west and it had another arrow. This time it pointed to an island; attached to the island was a name tag. La Bella Isla it said. I looked at Edward again with a question burning in my eyes. He smiled.

"That, my darling, is your island, our home for just us; we can be completely free there. Right now they are in the final stages of building the thermal energy plant for electricity. The whole island is ecofriendly. We are going there at the end of January, on our delayed honeymoon."

It took a moment to settle in my brain; here I thought I had gone overboard with his present. And here he went and blew all the stops. It was ridiculously over the top, but so immensely sweet that the only thing I could do was what I did next. I jumped him and kissed every bit of his face I could find.

"You gave us our own little paradise; I love you, I love you, I love you. Now, I really thought I had gone overboard, but you just set me in my place. But I think I still got you something you'll like. The first and most important part you will find next to my bicycle."

He went inside, freezing in the entrance when his eyes caught the bike. In a flash he sat on it, looking it over, like a little boy with his first train track. His eyes were lit up like a Christmas tree.

"Edward, what do you think, do you like it?"

"Oh, Bella, it's fantastic; the paint job is out of this world. Where did you get the inspiration?"

I went into the soundproof room and grabbed the box that held the helmet, gloves, boots, and neck dickie and brought it out to him.

"Well, my inspiration came from you. You are a living piece of steampunk, an old piece of hardware transformed into something with modern function. You must have noticed that I started that image for you with your birthday present and the watch tonight. It just suits you. Still, my first idea for the bike was simply matte black. Then I found this and the rest was born."

He ripped open the box and grabbed the helmet out of it, holding it up next to the bike, and the lights in his eyes glowed again.

"Bella, you realize that this bike has no buddy seat, don't you? I like this thing very much but the only drawback is that you can't come with me."

"Oh I know, but I have a delivery on the second of January; it is my bike and gear. It took a bit longer for them to finish that one. We had the same basic idea though: to travel together in total freedom."

I grabbed the final package while Edward was busy with the boots and gloves, holding up the dickie with question marks in his eyes.

"Well, if you put this on first, and then the helmet with it, you'll see that your neck won't be completely covered in the sun. To be free to travel everywhere, at any time, we need to make sure every bit of skin is covered. Here."

I thrust the last box in his arms; when he opened it and took out the rugged looking riding suit, he understood. It didn't have neck protection in the way we needed it.

"Thank you, I love it all. But I'm surprised that the suit is textile and not leather, to be honest."
"This suit looked more manly. Come on, suit up and try the damn thing."

The delivery at New Year's was hilarious; Edward certainly didn't expect my choice of bike. His eyes bulged out of his sockets when he saw the magnificent Goldwing come off the covered truck. He walked all around and just noticed the trailer coupling when they rolled the trailer from the truck. They hooked it on and opened it up, showing my riding gear.

When the delivery guys from the motorshop had gone with a nice tip in their pocket, he urged me to suit up and hurried to do the same. He unhooked the trailer, putting it safely into the garage. We both mounted our bikes and went for a spin around the peninsula, enjoying the dry day in Washington. To his delight, he found that my bike might not accelerate as fast as his, but it could still reach pretty good speeds. When we finally rode up to the house, everybody came to check out the strange sounds. Jasper and Emmett were all over Edward's sport bike while Rose and Esme were more into the comfort of mine.

The first court appearance was Rose's, or should I say Elody McCarty. It was astonishing how she changed her appearance enough to completely become somebody else. A lot was in posture and clothes, but her make-up, glasses, and wig had a big effect, too. When she was called I only recognized her because I, of course, knew her and her scent. Her self-assured persona had vanished; instead she had become a shy but determined geek, spouting just enough science babble to confuse the jury then, with a sigh, dumbing it down to a more than clear picture. Billy Black's verdict was guilty on all accounts; several days later, the judge held the sentencing hearing and came out with the death penalty for the murder of his wife. And on top of that, he received life without the possibility of parole for his drug involvement, and fifteen years for attempted human trafficking.

I was up next to testify about Jerkob's attempted rape. They had me on the witness stand for three hours; his defense team wanted to go over every detail of his alleged rape attempt. Edward sat in the gallery with a permanent smirk on his face because I counteracted any strategy they had. It was easy, because I could head them off before they made their point; I simply worded my answers just so I broke their train of thoughts. I tearfully told the court that I already knew Jacob from the nannycam at my house, that he had terrified me then with his vile ways.

Then Paul was called to the stand, and I had never seen a more baffled defendant. Jacob was under the impression he had died after a long coma. But Paul nailed his coffin shut by divulging everything they had ever done: from childhood pranks to beatings for money. Finally, he told the court what Jacob had done to him, because he was implicated as the middleman. It took the jury only half an hour to come back with a guilty verdict. The judge took a short recess and came back with a sentence of life without parole, with the recommendation that he be placed in solitary confinement to avoid possible riots.

The final court case we attended was, of course, Renee. The DA wasn't yet sure if my testimony was needed; she wanted to wait until Billy was done with his story. The Californian DA was second chair on this trial, to make sure that all evidence presented in this case was admissible in his own cases back home. Billy, after his own devastating conviction, sang his heart out. He told it all, how he had helped Renee with moving to California, how he supplied her with drugs to distribute. The shipments were actually done quite ingeniously. The Quileute tradesmen wove baskets with a secret compartment in it. Vases were made with cocaine mixed into the clay, and ecstasy was coated in chocolate tablets. He also divulged that the deal to sell me to him for Jacob was made when I was four. Not long after my gran died, Renee and Billy had bullied Charlie into the deal. He had wanted to simply pimp me out; he was disappointed that he had to keep me pure.
All the things out in the open, Billy suddenly threw in a bombshell and told that Renee had poisoned Charlie's father to get away from him. He gave a detailed account of what she did, but had to admit that he only had her word for it. The court went to recess until the next day. That morning the DA called and told me that my testimony wasn't necessary. Billy would be crossed by Renee's lawyer that day and the only witness on the list of the defense was Renee herself. Billy's cross-examination lasted all of ten minutes, the state rested and the defense put Renee on the stand.

It became clear very fast that she would dig her own grave. She was still dressed as a cheap hooker, only marginally more decent than how she had greeted us when she was arrested. She told a sob story that almost made us laugh out loud. Her appearance was directly opposite to her so called decency, as was the fact that she was actively flirting with the judge, as well as her own lawyer. She tried to look innocent while batting her eyelashes at the jury. The state did not cross her testimony and the defense rested. After a short recess, the closing statements were held. After that the jury was sent out to deliberate and the court recessed until the jury would return.

Again, the jury didn't take long. They probably took the time to eat the state provided lunch before they voted. That made their time sequestered an hour and a half. The verdict on all charges was an unsurprising guilty. Renee burst out in a bout of crocodile tears but didn't move the judge. He had clearly anticipated the guilty verdicts and went straight into sentencing. She got fifteen years consecutively for the drug charges and the attempted human trafficking charges. Furthermore, he ordered her sentences to be served in a Californian prison. And so the last of my human ties was dissolved on the anniversary of Edward and I meeting.

And here I was, boarding the magnificent motor yacht anchored just outside the One° 15 Marina Club in Singapore. Edward tipped the harbor master, who gave us a lift to the ship. After that he quickly lifted anchor and set course toward open sea. The night sky was completely clear, dotted with innumerable stars. It was a new moon, making the stars glow even clearer. Edward was up on the bridge, piloting the boat to our personal paradise. I walked up to the bow and looked over the sea toward our destination. My thoughts went over everything that happened the last year. From being the town's collective dog to kick, I became a vampire, the mate of a coven leader, with a power to be envied.

I analyzed where I stood now and realized that I had crossed the line between the human and supernatural worlds. I conquered the insecurities from my human life and arose as a confident person, sure of herself, and in her relationship. I looked forward to forever beside my mate. No longer bound by human convention, I was free.

Chapter End Notes

A/N

I'd like to thank everyone for the overwhelming response this story has gotten. You have all motivated me to stop Twilesque here and work harder on its sequel. The sequel will be called 'Parallax' and will handle all vampire issues raised in Twilesque. Yes, we're going on a quest to find Didyme's reincarnation and bring down Aro, but before we do, the coven needs to be united and clear of subversive influences. This means they need to take care of the problem Alice has become, because she's the one influencing them.
How is Alice influencing them?

We have to go back to the chapter where Eleazar explains powers to the, then still, family. Edward asked if a vampire could have a power as well as an ability; Eleazar couldn't answer that question, but didn't rule it out. I will reveal now—to soften the long wait for the sequel—that Alice indeed has an ability next to her future-seeing power; she’s able to manipulate people unaware. That means that as long as a person is unaware of her ability to manipulate, it works.

You can now see why Bella is immune from the start; she might not have known it was an ability, but she was aware of the manipulation. So, the ability never had a chance to establish itself. The rest slowly started to become free of it, which is understandable as they were manipulated for half a century at least.

The manipulation manifested itself as subliminal signs in the subconscious mind. Alice herself is unaware how the ability works, simply because she never really worked on her power or her ability.

Now I won't explain more, I don't want to risk outing the plot of Parallax. I'm working hard on it and so far seven chapters have been written, but it's slow work and I won't post until I'm done with it. It will mean you'll have a long wait until I start posting. I will, however, post pic teasers and excerpts about once a month on my wordpress blog. Just put my penname in front of Wordpress. (Charlie Oscar Mike) and you'll be there. You can also put me on author alert to know when I'll start posting.

I'd like to place one last enormous bit of thanks on my team of helpers.

**Lorraine Bubbleybear Juillerat** for stepping into the shoes of my idea bouncer; without her this story would have stranded at chapter nine.

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And lastly, **LunaDiSangue85** for looking for discontinuity and acting like the average reader to point out things I can't see anymore because I have all the information.

THANK YOU!

Until Parallax…

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