I Want A Mommy

by TheStrong1

Summary

MOBWARD! DADWARD! 34 year old Edward Cullen is the head of the Cullen Family, he's deadly, he's charming, and he's a single father with a small boy who's greatest wish it to have a Mom. 21 year old Isabella is sweet, maternal, loving and good-natured. When the Cullen boys crash into her world, she finds her lonely, simple life is never going to be the same.
"He's a sullen, gloomy child, to be frank," Mrs. Smith said, with a grim frown upon her face as she stared down at Mr. Cullen. Unknown to her, he was one of the most dangerous men in the city.

"I see," Edward said smoothly, glancing back through the double-paned window at his son who wasn't interacting with the other children. "How can this be fixed?" he demanded sharply.

"He's lonely and depressed. To be rather honest, no child his age should be so well behaved," Mrs. Smith snapped. "There isn't much we can do for him. Normally, I'd suggest an active social circle—play dates, karate classes—but I've read he already has all of those things. My educated guess is the root of the problem lies at home."

"I see," Edward snapped, rubbing his chin for a moment. "We'll be leaving now. Antonio, warm the car," Edward ordered coolly, surprising the concerned teacher with his nonchalant attitude.

"Mr. Cullen, maybe he should be on some medication for his depression." The head child psychologist in Seattle suggested a bit more timidly. This coming from a man whom Edward hadn't been bothered enough to even learn his name.

"No! No one will be medicating my child. Mrs. Smith says the root lies at home. I shall uncover what concerns my child at home then," Edward snapped. His green eyes flashing coldly toward the cowering psychologist.

Mrs. Smith stepped forward, after watching all of her superiors and the states' two best child psychologists tremble and shudder around the pleasant-looking man. "You seem to be a very powerful and busy man, Mr. Cullen. EJ's file does state he's being raised by you alone. I noted three different nannies in the last five months I've been teaching him. I was just wondering, how much one-on-one time you personally allotted to him?"

Edward's face grew tense. "I assure you, Ma'am, that I spend adequate amounts of time with my child."

"I'm sure you do," she muttered, earning herself a sharp glare from her boss, as he closed the door to the room.

"Let's go EJ," Edward called stiffly.

"Dad," the surprised boy said, smiling for the first time since being placed in the school's observation room for the counselors. "What are you doing at my school?" he asked excitedly before his tiny face fell. Worry replaced his previous joy. "Is something bad happening?"

"No, I just thought we'd go for pizza," Edward said. His heart twisting, as the worry disappeared from his son's face, but the smile didn't return. Speculation and distrust were written all across the boy's face.
"Okay, I need to get my pack-pack," EJ said softly, leading Edward down the hallway towards his classroom.

"It's backpack," Edward corrected gently.

EJ didn't grace his father with a verbal response just a simple shrug of the shoulders. He collected his backpack, his lunch box and coat without instruction. He stood awkwardly next to his father. He wanted to reach out and grab his father's hand, but he was informed repeatedly by nannies that he wasn't a baby. Therefore, he didn't need to partake in such juvenile behavior. He might be five, but he knew his Daddy, Granddaddy and his Uncle did dangerous work.

"Mr. Cullen—Mr. Cullen ... here, these might give you some insight," Mrs. Smith said, hurriedly handing him EJ's diary and artwork he was required to do with the school therapist. "I'm not supposed to give you these, but I don't really understand why. If it were any other student, we'd show their parents. It's frustrating really how my coworkers are acting. Anyway, EJ, I'll see you tomorrow; have a nice time with your daddy, okay?" she rambled nervously.

Edward nodded slightly. He had made a good choice by picking Mrs. Smith. She led such a normal, mild life. She wasn't aware of who or what he was, just that he was EJ's father and a rich businessman. Things like the mafia, thugs, gangs, to her were something for the movies and hardly filtered into her everyday world.

"Thank you, Mrs. Smith," Edward said flashing her a charming smile. "Don't worry about your job. You still have it. I assure you."

She gave him a relieved, bewildered smile. In the end she shook her head, money talked and Mr. Cullen most definitely had that, so of course her job was safe.

Seconds after clicking himself into his child seat, EJ stuck his headphones on before starting up his iPad. Edward slid in next to him and opened the file, as Antonio drove them towards their favorite pizzeria. The file contained pictures drawn of a mysterious woman. A family picture of him and EJ, and again a woman. One page on the top asked: what do you want more than anything in the world … a single word filled the page—MOMMY. Another was: what would you like Santa Claus to bring you? I want a mommy, was the response.

"Son," Edward said once they were settled in the back corner of the pizzeria. Antonio, Marcus, and Jimmy stood around them remaining distant and professional.

"Yes, Dad," EJ said, while slowly slipping his headphones off. "I didn't do anything to Nanny Jane."

"I didn't say you did, now did I?" Edward asked amused, wondering what kind of trouble EJ had caused his newest Nanny making him blurt out such revealing words.

"No," EJ pouted, but not willing to reveal anything.

Edward set the pictures down on the table, "What are these about?"

"I want a Mommy," EJ said simply, a light blush staining his cheeks.

"I don't understand. You have me?" Edward said, only to receive a pointedly blank stare in return.

"Okay, better question, why do you want a mother?"

"I just want one. Jamie has one, and Aunt Alice is Tanner's Mommy. A Mommy loves you, no matter what. And they keep you safe, and they're pretty and smell nice. They hug and kiss your ouches. They tuck you in and check under the bed, even if it's silly," EJ said in a low voice.
"I tuck you in," Edward retorted.

"Sometimes," EJ said shortly.

"I love you; I keep you safe."

"You're a Daddy, it's your job, and I guess ..."

"I pay Marcus to keep you safe," Edward said, trying to reason with his stubborn son.

"You just don't understand," EJ said, slowly shaking his head, his face falling. All hope of making his father understand was gone.

Edward's resolve broke, as he looked over his boy. His long hours, his sudden business meetings, the stress and the worry of his life was showing in his son. As a child he had had his mother. Esme sheltered him from this life, until he was older, in his teens. Nannies weren't paid to love your child or to shelter them. No matter the price tag, they couldn't fill the void that he was leaving in his son's' life. Maybe his son was right. Maybe he did need a mother. The trick question was, did Edward need, or even want a wife?

The next few months Edward's mother partook in a wife search, which went by fruitlessly. Not one woman met his standards, background checks or his mother's approval. There had been: Madison, Zoey, Adrianna and Sophia, none panned out.

"Get back here," Edward called after his bolting child, as EJ darted to the swing set. Marcus moved quickly, keeping up easily with the child. He was used to shadowing and occasionally caring for EJ. "EJ, watch out," Edward hollered seconds before his son stumbled over a woman reading against a tree.

"Are you okay?" the woman asked, kneeling quickly before the child, inspecting the crying boy. "Shh, now, are you hurt?" she repeated her question gently.

"No. No, ma'am," EJ whispered with his chin quivering.


Bella winced at the harsh tone directed at the small boy with the soulful green eyes. "I'm sorry for running into you."

"It's okay, Edward," Bella said gently, brushing an auburn lock behind his ear. Edward stood back watching the woman critically, but all he could read was genuine concern for his child. There seemed to be no hidden agenda in her posture, just pure, honest concern.

"Call me EJ," he insisted, with a smile that was a carbon copy of his father's.

"EJ it is then," Bella said smiling, shaking hands with the small boy. "I'm ..." she was cut off rudely by Marcus, who began talking to Edward as he moved toward them.

"Mr. Edward, he was just a few milliseconds too fast for me to catch, sir," Marcus said, directing the conversation to Edward who had joined the scene. "EJ here tripped over ..."

"Bella," Bella said, smiling brightly up at Edward reassuringly. "EJ here has made a charming introduction."

"I can see that," Edward said lightly, his phone interrupting the moment. With a click of his fingers
signaling Marcus to watch EJ, he stepped away to answer his phone. "Emmett, what's the problem?"

Bella watched as EJ's face crumpled, as he observed his father pacing nearby at a picnic table. "EJ, do you want to know something funny?" Bella asked pulling EJ's attention away from his father. She continued when he nodded eagerly. "I've met some of my best friends in the whole wide world by crashing into them. So, this little meeting here was a sign. Do you want to be my friend?" Bella asked. Marcus's brow furrowed, but he made no motion to stop their interaction. He'd observe and if he felt anything was amiss, he'd put a stop to it. His lips twitched at EJ's eager agreement to Bella's proposal.

"Want to swing with me?" EJ asked her quietly, a dark blush staining his cheeks. "My dad was supposed to push me, but ya know, plans change."

"I'd like that a lot," Bella said, tucking her digital reader away in her bag. There was something about this small, seemly sweet, little boy that made her want to protect him, even if only for the little while his father was distracted by the phone.

The swings were just a couple feet away and they were under Marcus's watchful gaze, as Bella helped him adjust to the seat and began to lightly push him. After a long while EJ decided he'd rather hang upside down on the jungle gym. Bella quickly helped him down and said her goodbyes while gathering up her bag from the ground.

"Thanks for that," Edward said, thanking the strange woman who had been so kind to his son. "I'm Edward, Edward Cullen."

"Isabella Swan, but most people call me Bella," she said offering the good-looking father an endearing smile and her hand. Her breath caught in her throat as their hands connected with the other's.

"So, Isabella, why are you in the park on this surprisingly warm day? I don't see you fawning over any children of your own," Edward stated, scanning the area for a child that resembled the woman next to him.

"I was reading, studying," Bella said, pulling her tablet from her bag and flashing it at Edward. "Days like today are too rare to spend indoors."

"Agreed," Edward stated with a firm nod. They chatted easily with each other, for a little while. Edward allowed himself to relax and enjoy her company. She was gorgeous in a way that he wasn't used to. Bella was seemingly a down-to-earth, simple, yet still beautiful kind of woman. Her hair was in a messy ponytail, tight fitting, well-worn jeans, converse sneakers and a tight, long-sleeved navy shirt. She was beautiful yet casual.

"It was very nice meeting you, Edward Cullen. I'll see you around EJ," Bella called waving at the upside down boy, as she left the park.

"Damn... she was smokin'," Emmett said coming to stand next to his brother. "Are you going to hit that?" Edward turned his eyes from Bella's ass to Emmett with a scowl across his face. "Sorry Bro, but you really need to get l-a-i-d."

"My sexual conquests or lack thereof, is not your concern as much as you think it is," Edward said icily.

"What the fuck ever man," Emmett said with a booming laugh, not one to be intimidated by Edward. "Tell me you at least got her name?"
"Isabella Swan," Edward said giving his brother a knowing smirk.

"Do you want Jasper and Jenks to look into her?" Emmett said seriously all the warmth leaving him. He was known for being a goofball, but Emmett was a soldier and he took the wellbeing of his family seriously. He had never forgiven himself for his rookie mistake that had ended with Edward taking a bullet for him a few years back.

"Yes, I want the file on my desk by tomorrow night," Edward said shortly. "Now, why don't you go surprise your nephew. Are you sure you and Rose can handle him for the night?"

"We'll be fine. I can't believe I'm sitting out of your meeting with the Chinese," Emmett said shaking his head.

"Yes... well, Chia is going to be there. He's still angry with you for sleeping with his youngest daughter," Edward said with a frown, but his eyes were twinkling with mirth. His baby brother's antics have always brought him amusement.

"Ah... Addie, good memories," Emmett said with a cocky smile before his face hardened. "You'd think the old dick would get over it already; it's been almost five years."

"He's not going to just forget about it, Emmett, he walked in on you screwing his precious, his youngest, and to top it all off, his favorite daughter. He did put a bullet in your ass for it. So, I suggest you play Guess Who with EJ and enjoy your night off," Edward said stiffly.

"EJ, over here," Edward yelled motioning for his son to come to him.

"Uncle Em, you're here," EJ said high fiving his Uncle before being lifted in the air and tossed above Emmett's head.

"Hey, pal? You want to spend the night at my place? Rose is making your favorite– spaghetti pie," Emmett said placing the child easily on his hip.

"Sounds fun; Dad has to work, doesn't he?" EJ said, his face remaining neutral, but Edward could read the disappointment written across it.

"I do, but I'll pick you up first thing in the morning, so be ready by seven. Okay, bud?" Edward said hugging him tightly before turning him back over to Emmett.

"If you say so," EJ said with a tight smile. "I love you."

"You, too, son," Edward said ruffling EJ's hair before walking away. Yes ... yes, his son really did need a mother, and now he had an idea of someone who just might fit the bill.

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
"Emmett," Edward snapped from his office signaling his younger brother to join him.

"Yes, Boss," Emmett said seriously, so unlike the man he was at home.

"I thought I requested Isabella Swan's file to be on my desk last night?" Edward asked, his mood foul. He might have been more tolerant if he hadn't awakened today to what seemed like a shit-storm in motion. He briefly wondered why problems couldn't occur in single intervals, instead of what seemed like a massive one thing he was looking forward to today was nowhere to be found, and it was already well into the afternoon.

"I told Jasper myself," Emmett said shaking his head confused, blinking for a moment at Edward before nodding and muttering an "Oh," making his brother's lips twitch in amusement. "I'll go fetch Jasper."

Edward took a moment to breathe and relax as he overlooked his city–Seattle, from his well-appointed office.

"Jenks is headed here now," Jasper said, his childhood southern accent had been worn down from years of living in Seattle, yet it was still faintly present. "There wasn't much to go on, so I had him follow her for the past thirty hours." He finished taking Emmett's lead and sat in one of Edward's soft business chairs.

"Very good," Edward muttered sourly.

"Is that all?" Emmett asked.

"No. Grant from Seattle PD stopped by this morning," Edward said pausing, as he opened the file containing photos of four different beautiful women who'd been beaten. He shoved the evidence across his desk angrily towards Jasper. "Apparently, in the past two weeks, four patrons of Aqua have been followed home and left raped and violently beaten. This doesn't happen; not in my city, and goddamnit, not on my turf, especially not at my fucking night club. I want this stopped, finished, ended NOW."

Jasper nodded sharply shooting a worried glance at Emmett whose jaw was clenched; his eyes flashing coldly. "Understood," Emmett barked cracking his knuckles. Edward knew this would hit Emmett hard, this was too close and too personal to him. "Priority one," Emmett said, clearly stating that finding the sick, twisted fuck hurting these young women—who were just going out to have a good time at a club—was now his primary goal for the near future.

Edward eyed him critically before agreeing with a, "Very well." Edward turned his attention back to Jasper.

"Jasper, we're in need of a new manager for Aqua. Tristan is being demoted down to bar back for not bringing this issue to us from the get-go." There was a brief pause in the room while Edward poured himself a glass of scotch.

"Chia would like for us to be the go-between with their interactions with the Irish."
"What's in it for us?" Jasper drawled.

"Gold," Edward answered. "Mostly, it will better our relationship with the Chinese, but we'll have to spend a few days in London."

"Sounds fine," Jasper and Emmett said with a shrugs.

"Uley and I met last night. Apparently, there is a new crew of young thugs trying to push drugs into the west high schools and middle schools. I've ordered his boys to shut it down. I gave him two weeks to put it out or we are stepping in," Edward said coolly. "Also, Jasper, you can happily tell my sister that I'm keeping the Cullen Scholarship, but it's the girls' responsibility."

"Thank you," Jasper said, flashing Edward a relieved smile knowing his wife would be excited.

"O'Riley is behind a month; I want his payment by the end of the week. We also need to get Hatfield to be elected. I do not want the tight ass, bible basher anywhere close to being elected. Lastly, have you both decided if you are going to go in with me on the Emerald Palace?" Edward asked setting his empty glass down.

"What the hell... you've been right so far about propelling the family into more legit businesses. The bars, night clubs, real estate, porn have all been profitable so far," Emmett said wiggling his eyebrow at the last word.

"I've had your back since the moment you proposed the opening of 'Ryan's to Carlisle. I stood strong never losing faith through that shit-storm. I've been with you since you told me your dream of opening a casino when we were just teens," Jasper said mentioning the first bar Edward had opened on his twenty-first birthday.

"All right then," Edward said, pleased while opening his computer and silently dismissing them. "Send Jenks in," he ordered, not looking up as Jasper made his way toward the door.

"Mr. Cullen," Jason Jenks said, shifting nervously on his feet standing between the two comfortable chairs unwilling to take a chair until directed.


"Right here, sir," Jenks said, hastily handing over the ordinary yellow file filled with photos, bank documents, a copy of a tax return and birth certificate, a full background check on her family, a class roster, and cell phone records.

"You broke into her house?" Edward snarled, eyes flashing as he glanced through the pictures.

"No-no-no, sir, Jasper did." Jenks stuttered terrified. Edward was instantly pleased that Jasper had insisted on doing that himself as he tracked the girl around Seattle. He sat back relieved; there was something about this girl, this woman that pulled him in, consumed him, he needed to know more.

"I don't feel like reading this right now. Tell me your assessment," Edward commanded leaning back in his chair, his eyes drifting over a beautiful photo of her curled up on her sofa—a sofa that seemed to be from the 70s.

"Her father was the police chief in Forks, Washington for fifteen years until his death four years back. Her mother is married to a young baseball player. It appears they have been estranged for some time. She lives in an apartment," Jenks snorted as he said the last word before continuing.

"In reality, the apartment is nothing more than a small room that is little more than a hovel; her lease
states she's lived there for almost four years. It's in a shady part of town. She seems to be hard working; she has two jobs, one as a night stocker at a local corner market, and the other as a dishwasher at small diner called Rosie's. She appears to be intelligent, she's holding up a 3.9 grade point average, and her apartment has built-in bookshelves crammed full of second-hand books. She's had the same phone plan for years, travels by bus, and has no social life that I can dig up," he rambled flicking through his notepad.


"She shops regularly at Safeway spending no more than fifty bucks a week; her biggest splurges this year have been her tablet reader and online books," Jenks said.

"She eats at Al's Pizzeria regularly as well as Subway."

"Personality?" Edward snapped impatiently.

"She appears to be generally very kind and calm. There doesn't seem to be any negative motives at all, sir. Honestly, she seems like a very good girl," Jenks risked saying, obviously scared for the girl's life.

"Relax, Jenks," Edward spat, before picking up the file. "You can pick up your pay at the front desk. I'll call down and have it ready for you," Edward said, picking up his phone and speaking quickly into it before clicking it back down, immersing himself in the file in front of him. The pictures of her stirred emotions in him he didn't quite trust, emotions that made him want to make fast, irrational decisions, emotions that had him already drawing up a contract. She was going to be his—his wife, mother to his child. He mentally added in a rush, correcting his dark thoughts. He was going to pull her out of her fleapit of an apartment and into riches.

"Antonio, the car," Edward snapped into his cell phone, alerting his driver and head security guard of his plans as he swiftly moved to shut down his office for the night.

"Jasper, alert Alice to pick up EJ," Edward ordered sticking his face into his best friend's office. "Tell my mother that I'll be missing dinner."

"Sure thing, Boss," Jasper said surprised at Edward's early departure. He watched his best friend, his brother-in-law walk away talking into his cell phone.

Edward stepped out of the Dean's office. It was nice to be in so many pockets, pockets that if you call them and demand their attention, they give you the time, no matter how it fucks with their day or night.

"Mr. Cullen, I don't know what inspired your sudden interest in our little university, but on behalf of all of us here at SU, we're grateful and excited about your donation," the Dean said courteously shaking Edward's hand outside the university, while Edward scanned the crowd for Bella knowing she should be exiting the double doors across the street in building C.

"Excuse me, Mr. Devon, but I see a friend; I must go," Edward said motioning toward Bella, who had stopped walking and was gawking in the middle of the sidewalk, at the handsome man she had met at the park days before.

"Hello, Bella," Edward said strolling up to her, his most dazzling smile blazing. "You're looking stunning today," he flirted casually testing the waters.

"Edward, what are you doing here?" Bella asked barely refraining from stuttering as she spoke to him, while his gaze ran up and down her body taking in her mismatched converse, university
sweatshirt and so-tight-they-should-be-illegal jeans.

"I was finishing up my business meeting with the Dean," Edward said motioning to the older man across the street, who was watching the scene before him with a slightly puzzled expression. "You're my excuse, for getting away from the old windbag," he said grinning when she chuckled softly. "Quickly now, hug me before he gets suspicious," he encouraged, pleasantly surprised when she actually stepped forward and hugged him. He stilled, breathing in her scent, she smelled faintly like vanilla and fresh cut grass. He smirked softly, she had been lounging outside again today. The mental image left him aroused and alert. She pulled back pleased; he smelled…the only words she could come up with were expensive and manly.

"Would you mind walking with me?" he whispered.

"Sure," she agreed easily. She wanted to spend more time with the man she had spent the weekend thinking and dreaming about.

"So, were you born and raised in Seattle, or are you just here for University?" Edward asked, handing Bella one of the warm coffees he'd purchased for them.

"I'm originally from Forks, Washington, a small town a few hours from here," Bella said before turning the question around on Edward. "You?"

"Born and bred, two generations back or so. I did spend a few years in an uptight boarding school in Washington, D.C., when I was a teenager. I graduated quickly so my parents slapped my ass into university. I moved home when I was nineteen, closing in on twenty," Edward said opening up slightly to the brown-eyed beauty before him.

"Sounds a little lonely," Bella said warmly.

"It wasn't, I assure you. My parents paid for Jasper's tuition as well. I wouldn't have agreed to go without him," he said sternly, but a hint of fondness was behind his cool words.

"That's good," she murmured softly.

Bella couldn't breathe as Edward looked her over with such intensity, she waited quietly for him to speak again; she could tell something was brewing in his mind.

"I haven't been able to get you off my mind, Isabella Swan. I'm not a man that allows himself to be distracted. So, if you wouldn't mind accompanying me on a date this evening, I'd enjoy getting to know you."

Bella blushed scarlet, never one to believe that a man of Edward Cullen's status would be interested in her. Yet this time, this time she feared she was going to believe him and jump in, headfirst, eyes closed, and fingers crossed.

"Sure," she said trying not to second guess herself.

"Anything you don't eat?" Edward asked, used to women having some bizarre eating habits or preferences.

"Mushrooms," she said wrinkling her nose at the thought of the nasty fungus.

"Favorites?" he asked, raising an eyebrow amused at her distaste for mushrooms.

"Philly cheese steak with sweet potato fries," she answered causing Edward to stop walking and
look at her. "What?" she asked before shaking her head and muttering, "some women do like to eat, pretty boy," she teased playfully.

"Cheese steaks it is then," Edward said motioning for Antonio to open the car door.

"How's EJ doing?" Bella asked as they pulled into the hole-in-the-wall diner that Bella had insisted served the best sandwiches.

"He's doing well, trying to run off another nanny, but otherwise good," Edward said, not used to women asking after his child, and or so sincerely asking about him. He debated mentally with himself if he should pull out the documents with the agreements right then. With years of practice he ignored the insistent voice demanding him to do it.

"So what do you do, Mr. Cullen?" Bella asked sipping her water.

"I own and have inherited a variety of businesses with my brothers," Edward said. "A couple bars, a nightclub, things along that nature," he explained simply watering down the truth.

"Edward Cullen… Cullen…" Bella said her eyes widening slightly. "The Seattle Cullens? The library is named after your family," she squeaked. She blushed as she realized who truly sat across from her, smirking, his green eyes bright with enjoyment.

"The one and only," he stated simply.

"What do you want with me then?" she demanded softly. "I'm a nobody—a no one—I don't understand."

"Oh no, Isabella Swan, you're going to be someone," Edward said slowly, his voice slipping from pleasant to cross at her self-doubt. His emotions swirling, intense as he snapped open his briefcase. "I'm a powerful and wealthy man, you do agree with that statement?"

Bella nodded hesitantly, her heart pounding in her chest. It was like she could feel her entire world, her life was about to change.

"I will admit I get what I want and I'm not used to hearing no. What I am about to offer you is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I will not make this same offer twice or to anyone else ever. Do you understand?" Edward asked seriously, his green eyes watching Bella's carefully.

"Yes," Bella said strongly.

"These documents right here are offering you the chance to be my wife," Edward said placing them in front of her.

"Don't freak out, listen to me," he demanded softly a mixture between exasperation and gentleness. "Are you listening?" he asked, giving her a minute to wrap her mind around his previous words, when she nodded slightly, eyes wide, he continued. "It states your monthly allowance which is extravagantly fair, responsibilities, obligations and such," he said tapping the papers. "You can sign it or not on May 7th, a month from now. You have a month to decide, if you're willing to contemplate it."

"Responsibilities and obligations would be? Because I'm nobody's whore," Bella snapped gently, assuming the worst. It was the way she said whore, the way her eyes saddened, but angered that made Edward note this ran deeper than a sudden worst assumption.

"Caring for my son, bedtime stories, karate classes, and homework help. Only sign this if you believe
you can love EJ like your own. Occasionally, I might ask you attend an event with me. In no way
would you be a *whore,*" Edward explained as calmly as possible. "I would like a *yes* or *no* right
now, if you're willing to give this offer a chance." He added the last part as an afterthought.

Bella stared at him stunned. "I don't know," she whispered, as her mind conjured up images of the
little boy, who she had felt so protective of at the park. Hadn't she earlier that day decided to jump
head first without much thought, believing a guy like Edward would want her. "I'll do it, at least I'll
think about it," Bella said undoubtedly.

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Author Note...

Beta’ed by awaywithwords3

Review
Bella spent the next four days mulling over Edward's offer and the contract. It was unquestionably a
once in a lifetime opportunity--that was absolutely true. The money itself was enough to make a
greedy person pounce, but Bella wasn't a materialistic person. Reading through the contract once
again, she sighed and let it fall upon her table, next to her notepad full of questions and concerns.

*What would be my place in Edward's life? Would I be viewed as an object? A thing, an accessory?*

* If not for sex, but for appearances. How long am I to remain married?*

* What kind of man proposes marriage to a stranger?*

* Why didn't he just offer me a nanny job, If his main concern is for his son?*

* Could I have a future with him? Did he even want a future? What about children? My education?*

Her eyes wandered over to the business card Edward had handed her; on the back was his personal
e-mail, cell phone and extension number to his personal secretary. Deciding she didn't actually want
to talk to him on the phone, she texted him.

**We need to talk, preferably in person – Bella**

**Come to the office** was Edward's reply a few minutes later. Not ten seconds later came another
message.

**Antonio will be outside waiting for you in twenty minutes – Edward**

Bella took a minute, along with a glass of wine to collect her nerves before getting ready. She
straightened her hair, applied a bit of makeup, slipped on a casual three-quarter-length sleeved black
dress, and as she pulled on her heels, she spotted Edward's luxury car pull up to the curb.

"It's now or never," she muttered while she locked her front door.

"Hello, Ms. Swan," Antonio greeted kindly.

"Hi, Antonio, right?" she asked fairly sure. Antonio was the large serious man from the day at the
park, and when Edward had appeared in her life again, the day he offered the contract.

"Yes, Ma'am," Antonio said as he opened the car's door for Bella to step in.

"How do you know my name?" Bella questioned after a few minutes of silence, when Antonio
rolled to a stop at a red light.

"I'm Mr. Cullen's head of personal security. It's my job to know who you are, Ms. Swan," Antonio
said kindly, but his piercing stare made Bella shrink back surprised.

"I see," Bella mumbled awkwardly, uncomfortable with the information. No doubt he knew more about her than she even knew herself. "How long have you been working for Edward?"

"I've been with the Cullen family over fifteen years now," he stated proudly. "You must be something special, Ms. Swan. Edward has never sent me to protect or collect someone other than his son," Antonio said when he pulled her car door open for her.

"Thank you." She stared up at the largest building in Seattle; there had to be at least eighty floors. It was stylish and modern. She couldn't help but feel insignificant and small next to the large building.

"Follow me, Ma'am," Antonio requested, leading her into the building and over to a private elevator. With a swipe of his card, they were skyrocketing upward. "76th floor," Antonio told her as the elevator door opened. Bella stepped out keeping her head high as several pairs of eyes turned and stared at her; following her all the way until she stepped into privacy of Edward's office.

"Bella," Edward said placing his telephone back in its cradle, his eyes running down her body focusing on her long legs.

"Edward," Bella smiled tightly, both of them gazing at the other not speaking for a short while.

"Well, what is it?" Edward said leaning backwards.

"I would like some clarification on a few things?" Bella asked, setting the contract upon his desk.

"Which would be?" Edward asked stiffly.

"Why not just offer me a nanny position?" Bella was frustrated not knowing how to start, so she just blurted out the first question that popped forward in her mind. "It would cost you financially so much less, and honestly I'd love to have the job. EJ is a bright boy with a brilliant future ahead of him, and yes I could see that after spending an hour at the park with him."

"Are you saying, no?" Edward asked dryly.

"No, I'm just confused," Bella said hotly, not knowing how to explain the connection she felt to him… the desires he awakened in her. "The contract is vague in areas and crystal clear in others. I want it straightened out, because I want to understand. I'm not changing the course of my life without knowing what I'm getting into."

"What isn't clear?" Edward asked, pinching his fingers together.

"Why marriage? If not for sex, then why?" Bella said folding her arms crossly. "The contract you laid out before me was nothing more than an extravagant nanny job with the entanglement of a marriage to you; it didn't even say how long the marriage is supposed to last."

"Sixteen years," Edward said answering her last question, trying to think of the best way to explain his actions. There was a silent inner voice warning him that she wouldn't tolerate anything less than the truth. "My son needs a mother, not a nanny. He wants a mother," Edward admitted reluctantly his words taking on a bitter tone. "Somehow he reined my parents into this idea and somewhere along the road, me, too. I searched for months; every time backing out when it came down to decision time. That was until my father strapped a stipulation onto my current position. I want you to know I could ignore his request. I'm a very wealthy man in my own right. Yet, I've spent too many years and taken too many risks to lose my rightful place."
"Then why me and not someone more accustomed to your lifestyle? I'm sure there are women that would kill to be with you," Bella asked, but her cheeks flushed with concern, her eyes wide and begging Edward to be truthful with her.

"I knew you were right the moment I saw you in the park, kneeling next to EJ," Edward said stiffly. "You were a breath of fresh air; I wanted you," he said softly against her ear as he passed her by to grab a drink from the mini bar.

Bella's breath got caught in her throat, arms goose-bumping at his near presence. Bella pushed down the fear, the bubble of negative emotions that her next question brought her.

"Would this marriage have a chance to be romantic, or am I supposed turn a blind eye?" she questioned bluntly, watching Edward's eyes carefully as they narrowed, angry at her softly put accusation.

"I wouldn't have asked you if I wanted another woman to warm my bed."

Bella eyes widened at Edward's possessive words. "I thought you said this marriage wasn't about sex?" Bella squeaked.

"I said that you would be in no way a whore." Edward set his glass down. "I want you as my wife, Isabell. You are not obligated to have sex with me, but at some point, I do foresee us in a marital bed." Bella blushed at his serious words.

"Then, why not date me instead of handing me marriage proposal? Seriously, what kind of man does that on a first date?" Bella huffed, but her eyes were lighter and her tone sounded teasing.

With a charming smile, Edward said, "I'm not letting you slip out of my grasp, Isabell Swan, I can offer you the world, and all you have to do is accept."

"As much as I want to say yes, Edward, I think we should get to know each other first. I suggest we wait six months, and date before we rush to the altar." Bella was firm; her pleading eyes met Edward's intense green ones.

"I'll think about it," Edward said shortly. He turned sharply, slipping his hand into his coat jacket as his office door opened unexpectedly. Edward's hand dropped to his side when his parents stepped into the room unannounced along with his son.

"Bella," EJ squealed, letting go of his grandmother's hand and bolting toward his friend.

"EJ, how've you been?" Bella said picking the boy up and twirling him around, causing the usually serious little boy to giggle

"Dad's taking me to the zoo," EJ said, happiness coloring his tone until he glanced over to his dad who winced.

"EJ," Edward shook his head, his heart clenching knowing he was once again going to let down his boy. "I still have some work to do," EJ nodded and it made Bella's stomach twist.

There were no temper tantrums and no tears; just a quiet brooding acceptance. "I'm not working at all on Sunday, I promise," Edward smiled in a feeble attempt to make up for his son's let down. EJ looked skeptical but he pushed a smile on his face when Edward continued.

"We'll go then, I swear and Bella can join us."
"Will you?" EJ asked excitedly. "Please."

Bella knew she should be worried at how her heart and emotions failed her when she looked into those pleading green eyes.

"I'd love to go as long as there's going to be ice cream involved," Bella bargained, enjoying how EJ's eyes widened in excitement.

"Can we get ice cream, too, Daddy?" EJ said turning to his father with a wide smile. Edward couldn't remember the last time his son smiled so brightly at him.

"If the lady insists," Edward agreed.

"Yes–yes. The lady does insist." Bella's playfulness was even more evident as she winked at the little boy who, in return squealed from excitement. She looked at her watch and realized that it was time to go. "EJ, I have to go to school, okay? I'll see you Sunday."

"How many days is that?" EJ demanded eagerly.

"Two…You go to bed tonight, then play all day tomorrow, go to bed again and the next day after that, I'll see you," Bella explained simply.

"Okay, bye, Bella," EJ said softly followed by his father's "I'll talk to you later," Edward grinned at her. Bella turned and gave his parents kind nods before exiting the room.

"Who was that?" his mother demanded stiffly. She knew she wasn't among the many women that were acceptable to date his son.

"Her name is Bella. She's a friend of EJ's and mine," Edward explained smoothly.

"She appears to be quite young," Esme said imprudently.

"It's none of your concern," Edward snapped. EJ bolted out of the office no doubt going to look for one of his uncles or to the back office that was used as a lounge area. Marcus would watch over him. "I decide with whom I spend my personal time," Edward stated coolly before turning to his father, "Dad what brings you here?"

"Garry McNay called me asking for an extension for his son-in-law's debt," Carlisle said not bothered by his son's sudden sour mood. "He's been a friend of the family, son for over thirty years."

"No," Edward barked coldly. "These old-as-fuck acquaintances of yours think they can borrow my money and because of their connection to you, then assume they can fuck around with me. I don't know why they can't borrow money from a regular bank, and frankly I don't care. Jarrod Donavan borrowed seventy thousand dollars to start up his own fix-it repair, second hand electronic shop. I gave him twenty months to get grounded; his business has been a success. He should have been able to pay me back twice by now, with the revenue he's bringing in."

"I apologize my son, Garry spun a pitiful tale, lying bastard," Carlisle ground out, proud of his son who was tough as nails. His son, who had defied him, had taken his childhood savings and opened a bar, which grew quickly into a franchise of seven bars. Then he took those profits and opened a nightclub, flipped the profits again, bought a hotel and invested in a porn company. Carlisle guessed that Edward brought in more legit money than they ever did illegally, though not all their current earnings were above board. Nor did Edward work completely inside of the law when it came to running this city; he was feared, respected, and he got the job done.
"You'll come to dinner tonight?" Esme asked. "Emmett and Alice will be there."

"We'll try," Edward said. "I'm sure EJ will want to play with Tanner." Esme and Carlisle dismissed themselves when Edward's phone rang. He spent his next hours bombarded with information on different clients, thinking about Bella's request, going over the financial numbers for his businesses for the month. All the while EJ played quietly in his father's office, entertaining himself with his iPad and the numerous puzzles and books his father's secretary kept around for him. Every once in awhile, Edward would glance up and make short conversations with his child in between various phone calls.

"Let's head out, EJ, Antonio is waiting for us," Edward said holding his hand out to his child, who took it happily; thrilled his father had offered him his hand.

Edward remained mostly silent, enjoying being surrounded by his family. He watched as Tanner brought EJ out of his shell with adventurous, imaginative games of pretending to be cowboys and pirates. He thought of Bella and contemplated her offer. She has balls, he admitted to himself and smiled lightly. The extension she demanded and her questions concerning the marriage proposal were solid. That meeting was another plus for him to know that his decision was the right one. Bella wasn't like the power hungry, pretentious whores that tried to worm their way into his life. He was pulled from his musing when his mother tapped his shoulder.

"It's nice to have you here, Edward," Esme said sweetly, drawing a smile out of her normally tense and troubled son. "Now about that girl at your office, Bella," she stated, watching his smile shifting into a tense frown. "I know she's beautiful, but she's young, Edward, hardly more than a child and she's still in school."

"Mother," Edward growled warningly, "she's a university student."

"Don't mother me boy," she snapped gently not bothered by his icily tone. "EJ is getting attached and quickly to this Bella, and children shouldn't be raised by children, Edward. You need to find a more suitable woman to raise him."

"Mother, you're not to interfere with my decision. I let you push me into multiple suitable women this past year and not one of them were," Edward said coolly leveling his mother with an annoyed stare. "EJ and I enjoy Bella's company, and if I want to see where this goes, then it's my decision."

"Edward," Esme gasped.

"Don't Mom," Edward said softly. "I'm done discussing this with you. EJ and I will head home now."

The ride home was spent in silence as EJ struggled to keep his eyes open and by the time the car turned into their driveway, he was asleep. After tucking his sleeping child into bed, Edward headed toward his office. The other rooms in the house had always felt too big, too empty to relax in after EJ was in bed. He took a moment to climb into his chair and gather his thoughts before he picked up the phone and dialed Isabella's number.


"I gave your stipulations some thought and I'd like to propose my own counteroffer," Edward said while his eyes drifted to the window and the vast backyard.

Bella lips twitched. Only Edward could make a wedding conversation sound like a business meeting, even if it was. "And?" she asked.
"I suggest we start dating; get to know each other for three months and during the three months' trial, we will decide whether and not to continue the relationship. If we decide to move forward, we'll be engaged for a three- to six-month period. If, at any time, during those months you decide this engagement doesn't work out, you can bow out gracefully," Edward said confidently, even though he was leaning forward in his chair and clicked his pen in and out anxiously.

The phone line remained silent for a long moment as Bella rolled his words around. His offer made her heart beat faster with excitement. "Okay... okay," Bella said. It was strange to begin a relationship and openly know where it was headed. "I can live with that. I do want the contract to remain open to changes, while we figure out all the kinks in it. I mean, I might discover something I'm not okay with and I won't be locked into something with which I'm not comfortable," Bella said firmly. She might be young and naïve enough to consider jumping into a marriage with a man she hardly knew, but she didn't want to be trapped in it either.

"That's fine," Edward said compassionately. Her cautious nature made him proud. That was another plus because it meant that she would take seriously the role of EJ's mother. He might be a killer and ruthless, but he'd die to protect his family.

Edward turned the marriage conversation into a small generic talk for a while until he heard Bella yawn. "I'll see you Sunday, Bella," Edward said looking forward to the outing.

"Goodnight."

Author Note...
Beta'ed by awaywithwords3
Review
Chapter Four

I want a Mommy!

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Stephenie Meyer. The plot, along with a few of the characters I add here and there belong to my ruthless muse.

Chapter Four

EJ was bouncing on his heels at the entrance of the Seattle Zoo, his excited green eyes scanning the crowd for Bella. His father had his hand clutched tightly into his as he talked on his cell phone.

"And what did she do yesterday?" Edward asked into his phone, glancing down to look at his boy as he waited for an answer. Edward had to smile at how joyful and carefree his son was behaving. It was out of character for his normally serious child.

"She left her apartment around ten p.m. on Friday evening and went to work at the Corner Market. She worked for eight hours. Boss, she was lifting and moving heavy boxes throughout the night. She left the market with two bags of groceries after her shift ended. She went home for about thirty minutes before rushing down the street. She ran at least five blocks until she arrived at a diner, where she washed dishes until three in the afternoon. She made her way home slowly, climbed the stairs, then reemerged a little later with a sack of laundry and headed over to the laundromat. Boss, she dozed off, she slept on and off while doing her laundry; it was fucking insane. Then she went home, bundled up and went to bed by nine," Andrew said, finished with his report. He had jumped at the chance to prove himself to the family. He'd protect Isabella Swan with his life.

"Thank you, Andrew," Edward said. "Take today off, she'll be with me."

"Sure thing, Boss," Andrew said.

Edward snapped his phone shut as Bella walked toward them. She was dressed in a simple, classy sundress and inexpensive flip-flops. Fuck... how Edward loved the view of her long legs and bare shoulders.

"Bella!" EJ squealed, letting loose of his father's hand the moment Bella offered him hers.

"So what's your favorite type of animal?" Bella asked, looking down at EJ returning his smile.

Edward winced, funny how a stranger thought to ask such a simple question, a question he was curious to hear the answer to.

"I love Dinosaurs. X-especially the giant-a-tosaurus, it's the biggest meat eater ever found. It's even bigger than a T-Rex." EJ gushed excitedly.

"I'm rather fond of the triceratops," Bella shot back, making EJ's eyes light up.

"Dad, what's yours?" EJ asked, causing Bella's eyes to shoot up to her future husband. Edward blinked, his eyes flashing towards Bella, who was giving him a look, a look telling him that he needed to answer and not redirect his son's question with another question.
"... The Pteranodon," Edward said, pausing to come up with the name of a dinosaur. "Are you ready to go in now?" Edward asked, motioning to the entrance gates.

"Yes," EJ said, tugging Bella forward.

Edward stared at Bella's other hand, that she was obviously offering for him to hold. He reached forward and grasped her hand with his. They looked like any other family at the zoo, minus the men shadowing them. It was a shock to Bella how they could forget about the men following them, guarding them. A few times she swore she saw a couple of people gasp or snap Edward's picture from afar. She grinned to herself, she didn't mind, she even enjoyed Edward's ever growing handsy nature. He'd wrap an arm around her as they walked, or pull her into him and point to an animal he wanted them to spot.

"Dad, can I feed the giraffe, please?" EJ begged, pulling Edward's attention away from Bella's who had been telling them that her favorite mammal was the giraffe.

"Come on, Edward, it will be fun," Bella encouraged, following EJ up the stairs to the feeding deck. Edward made sure to follow behind Bella a few steps, enjoying the view and the subtle sway of her hips. "I've always wanted to feed one," she admitted to EJ, who insisted she lift him up for a better view over the fence.

Neither EJ nor Bella noticed Edward slip the zookeeper a few hundred bucks and a promise of a future generous donation to clear out the feeding deck for thirty minutes.

"You may pet them if you wish," the zookeeper spoke softly.

"Thank you," EJ squeaked, eagerly turning his green eyes on Bella, who giggled lightly, thrilled when her hand brushed over the giraffe. Edward watched Bella help EJ pet the long necked species.

"Antonio," Edward said turning toward his long time security guard. "Take a few pictures," he requested, tossing his camera at Antonio.

"Sure thing, Boss," Antonio said, snapping a picture of Edward sneaking up on Bella, who was tickling a laughing EJ as an Giraffe reached between them for the leafs in EJ's hands.

Bella knew she should be worried at how at ease she was with EJ, at how much he had already wormed his way into her heart.

"Anyone ready for lunch?" Edward asked them once they finally left the feeding deck.

"I am! I'm starved!" EJ announced rubbing his belly. "I am so hungry that those leaves were starting to look really yummy up there."

"You're starving, huh," Bella gasped, playfully lifting him up and onto her back effortlessly. Edward couldn't help but feel a little smug at how right this felt, how right he had been about Bella. She was gorgeous; no she was fucking sex on legs, but something much more than that. It was the way EJ and her took to each other so naturally. Like she was meant for them, for him. And goddamn, he couldn't stay focused! She looked amazing in that sundress, he couldn't help but imagine taking it off of her.

Edward stopped mid bite when he noticed EJ's smile slip from his face as Antonio stepped up to the table, phone out and held towards him.

"Boss, it's important." It was the tone of his voice, that leaked cool ice and steel, that had Edward on alert as he reached for the phone and pressed it to his ear.
"I'll be right back," Edward said before stepping away from the table.

Bella watched the color drain from Edward's face, his voice increasing, his language harsh and despicable as he hissed into his cell phone. EJ pushed his plate away dejectedly.

"He's not coming back ya know." EJ whispered to Bella, his eyes watering making her heart clench painfully.

Bella nodded somberly, having had the same feeling that their good time together had come abruptly to an end.

"We can still have fun just you and me," Bella whispered back playfully. "We don't have to let these old boogies ruin our fun, now do we?"

"I've got to go," Edward said, stepping back to their table, while fishing out a hundred dollar bill and handing it over to Bella. "Take EJ to the gift shop, buy whatever EJ wants. Jimmy will watch over you until Marcus arrives with the Lexus. Bella, I'd like for you to spend the day with EJ, his nanny has the day off and while Marcus is capable of watching him, I'm sure EJ prefers your company. I should be back to the house by nightfall. If I can salvage the day, we'll go to Aqua as planned."

Bella blinked up at him, for a moment there was something swirling in his eyes. Before she could place it, he smirked at her and pulled her into him, kissing her soundly on the mouth before walking briskly away followed closely by an alert Antonio.

"Let's go ma'am," Jimmy said, motioning toward the nearest exit. It was like someone flipped a switch with the guards, that's how quickly the change happened. They went from shadowing them to full out bodyguard mode.

With the cautious, nervous vibes everyone was throwing off in the past few minutes, Bella scooped EJ up in her arms protectively for the relatively short walk to the gift shop, where they were to wait for Marcus to arrive with the car. Bella watched as EJ picked out two different toys, one was a plastic dinosaur to go with his collection and another was a soft plush giraffe.

"Giraffes are my favorite...umm, what'cha call it again?"

"Mammals… Mammals are normally four-legged land animals, but some mammals have adapted to live in the sea, like the whale," Bella explained.

"Giraffes are totally my favorite mammal, too!" EJ said proudly. "The gorillas are really cool, too. It's too bad we didn't get to see them." He ended with a whisper.

"We'll come back soon. The zoo not going anywhere. It's open year round, rain or shine," Bella explained as they checked out.

"Marcus is here with the car, he's waiting out front." Jimmy said interrupting them.

Bella wasn't sure what had happened to cause Edward to flee so suddenly earlier, she wasn't oblivious, the sudden change in Edward's guards' demeanor, she understood something was wrong, so she clutched EJ's hand and walked briskly to the waiting luxury car where Marcus was waiting with the backdoor open.

EJ's eyes drifted closed as they drove further away from the inner city of Seattle, out to the gated community where the mega rich built their multi million dollar homes. Bella sucked in a breath as the car turned into a drive and proceeded to the massive gate. It wasn't just a house; it was three stories, a goddamn mansion. It was modern, glass and stone. It was breathtaking. Manicured lawn, beautiful
brick drive. Bella felt out of place until EJ, who had woke up when the car pulled to a stop, beamed up at her. "Wanna see my room?" he asked excitedly.

"I'd love to," Bella said, pleased she could keep a smile on the boy's face. Marcus led them into the home where an older though kind looking woman was standing and waiting for them.

"Miss Swan, this is Mrs. Goff, she's the homemaker, she cooks and cleans up after the Cullen boys," Marcus said, making introductions.

"Elizabeth," Marcus said, turning towards Mrs. Goff, "Edward has been called away until this evening. You're still welcome to your day off, but would be paid time and half if you stuck around."

Bella noticed Mrs. Goff seemed unsure. Mrs. Goff was weary that Bella would be like the other women that have come and gone this past year.

"If I can get a tour, Mrs. Goff, EJ and I will be fine, I assure you."

Mrs. Goff raised a surprised eyebrow, never had any of Edward's women spoken so fondly of the young lad. Her nerves eased just by the smile across EJ's face.

"Marcus, my baby girl is in town with my first grandbaby; I'll show Miss Swan around and then be on my way out," Mrs. Goff said, dismissing the security guard who nodded and opened, what at first glance appeared to be a closet door near the front door, but after a quick glance, Bella realized was actually a room filled with monitors; it was shocking to say the least.

"That's the security office. Marcus, Jimmy, Andrew and Antonio will occasionally pop out of that door. Marcus and Antonio are permanent residents here along with Nanny Jesse, while Jimmy and Andrew, are currently part-time. In a few years, Mr. Edward will recommend them to another family in need of their assistance," she said, fondly pointing down the hall. "Now, down that way is my office, the kitchen, pantry and holiday storage. Right out that door is where I live above the garage. A mighty nice little apartment I have there," she explained, pointing down the hall where the door led outside. Bella could clearly see the large garage of which she was speaking.

Bella and EJ followed Mrs. Goff as she gave Bella a skim over the kitchen, dining room, family room, den, and the reading nook that should be considered a library. Mrs. Goff also made sure to show her where to find the bathrooms. "Upstairs are EJ's rooms; his bedroom and playroom; I'll let him show you those. Edward's room, a couple of guest rooms, and the upstairs bathrooms. The basement is mostly an entertainment area. Edward's cleared your access to the entire the house, though he has requested you stay out of his office."

"No problem," Bella smiled widely, a little overwhelmed at the abnormally large house in which she was standing.

"Also, Miss Swan, at the end of the hall upstairs, across from Edward's room is a room with the door open. It's yours." Mrs. Goff said giving Bella a knowing smile. "Mr. Edward has had a handful of people in and out this week working on it. Now, I know and I'm one of the very few people that do know that you will soon to be running this home, not even Edward's family is aware of his plans as of yet. So please dear, make yourself comfortable." Bella blinked, startled by this information, but she managed a shaky smile.

"Now Miss Swan, I have a grandbaby to be seeing, so I'll leave you two be for now. Oh, and please Miss Swan, call me Elizabeth," she said seriously.

"If you'll call me Bella," Bella offered, having the sinking feeling that this is one woman whom she'd
be growing close to if Edward and her go ahead with the contract.

"I will, ma'am," Elizabeth said, excusing herself as EJ tugged her toward the staircase.

"Do you want to see my room first or yours?" EJ asked his eyes twinkling.

"Yours, definitely yours," Bella said in a whispered breath, nowhere ready to see the room Edward had arranged for her just yet.

Bella was astonished, EJ's room, she was convinced, came straight from the Kid's Pottery Barn magazine, and it bothered her that everything was so tidy. The room had an almost untouched feeling. Almost like a child didn't live here, that he didn't find his sanctuary here. Bella's heart warmed when he placed his new stuffed Giraffe on top of his bed. His playroom would make any child care center jealous. Overboard, was the word that came to Bella's mind as she stared into the large room filled to the brim with toys, most of the educational variety: board games, puzzles, blocks, art supplies; a race track, train table, anything a child could ever want was stuffed inside this large room.

"So, what do you want to do?" Bella asked curiously, glancing down at the boy who would soon be her son. Her lonely heart fluttered at the word, at the realization.

"Wanna play candy land?" EJ asked pulling out the Cars edition of the game. "You can be Miss Sally," he offered.

Three rounds of candy land, a game of chutes and ladders and two rounds of don't break the ice later the sky was beginning to darken.

"Bella, I'm hungry," EJ announced. Bella had learned all sorts of interesting things throughout the afternoon; most were about EJ, but a few things included Edward. Like how the pair of boys never drank white milk, that it was always chocolate. EJ informed her very seriously, that white milk was cook milk and chocolate milk was drink milk.

"Oh—okay," Bella said happy to finally be off the floor of the playroom; the pair made their way into the kitchen.

When EJ looked at her cautiously before blurting out, "You do know how to cook, right?"

Bella chuckled, "I can cook, so rest assured, I've been told I'm a very good cook. Now what would you like?"

"Umm... I don't know. I don't really like anything," EJ said shrugging his shoulders, used to having to eat whatever Elizabeth or the Nanny placed in front of him.

"Okay, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and carrot sticks," Bella said rummaging around the refrigerator.

"A what?" EJ asked his eyebrow rising curiously, as Bella sat the ingredients on the counter. Bella's heart almost stopped, but she quickly set to work making her childhood favorite sandwich for the clueless little boy.

"That was delicious," EJ stated pushing his plate away after consuming two sandwiches. "Can you tell Elizabeth about those, please?" EJ begged turning her to mush with his hopeful green eyes.

Bella snorted quietly to herself. "Come on Green Eyes," she teased pulling him from his chair. "Let's get you ready for bed."
Tomfuckery! That's what Edward had to put up with all afternoon. No one had any clue of who took a shot at Jasper outside of the downtown office. Just some hooded, masked punk.

"You all right?" Edward asked weary, he tried hard, so fucking hard to sway them away from all the illegal shit. The shit that could get them killed or arrested. They'd never get away from it completely. No, the Cullens were in; too connected to ever just leave this world behind them.

"Fine man, stupid fucker, whoever did this," Jasper said, motioning to his injured knee, "I can guarantee he's a dead man walking. My only concern is for you, Boss. If you hadn't made quick arrangements to be gone today, this would have been you. My gut tells me whoever did this wasn't after my ass, because if he was, he wouldn't have stopped with just a graze to my knee," Jasper said with a frown.

"I have my back covered," Edward said, lifting his button up to reveal the bulletproof vest Antonio insisted he wear until this shit-storm clears over. "We'll find out whoever did this and fuck his world up," Edward said grimly. No one inside the small room missed the cruel meaning behind Edward's words. "I'm going to head out, Jasper." Edward said, shaking hands with his oldest friend and brother-in-law. "Stay with him, Emmett." Edward ordered.

"Boss, hold up," Jasper said, stopping Edward from leaving. "Baskov called, he wants us to move him and his little daughter out of Russia and set them up with a comfy bland life in Albany. The whole shebang."

"Sure." Baskov was a billionaire psychotic dickweed who had many enemies.

"He's only willing to deal with one of us three though; he doesn't want one of our men handling him," Jasper said grimly, hoping it didn't turn him off.

"How much is he offering to get him out of Russia," Edward asked.

"A million... he's in some pretty deep shit," Emmett said with a chuckle.

"I'll handle it," Edward said.

Edward walked into his house with Antonio. "We're headed to Aqua in an hour," Edward said briskly, letting Antonio know he wouldn't change his plans before they parted ways in the entryway.

Edward climbed the stairs. His breath caught in his fucking throat as he looked into EJ's room. It was a fucking sight to behold. Bella was asleep in the rocker, a book lying limply on her chest as EJ snored in his bed.

EJ opened his eyes as soon as Edward stepped into the room and made his way to wake Bella.

"Dad, we got to keep her, she checked under the bed and everything," EJ whispered before drifting back to sleep.

"Bella," Edward nudged her gently, smiling as her beautiful golden-brown eyes opened. "Hi."

"You're back," Bella said standing, hugging him. After the craziness of today, she had been worried about him, even if she didn't know why, she had been worried.

"Are we still going to Aqua?" she asked.
"We are. Have you seen your bedroom?" Edward asked, picking up her anxious gaze. "You haven't. I... never mind," Edward said with a chuckle. She proved to him once again she was different from all the other women he had ever brought here. He could have sworn she'd have a list of things to change or remodel.

Edward pulled her down the hall. The room was stunning, a girly, blue, white and grey theme decorating throughout. Empty bookshelves, a desk, a huge bed that looked so much more comfortable than her thin cot back at her apartment.

"The closet has clothes, pick something, love. I'll collect you at nine. The bathroom is completely stocked as well," Edward said leaving her alone in her bedroom.

Bella chose a navy and black, dazzling dress obviously meant for nights spent with Edward at Aqua. It fit her well, almost perfectly. Bella shuddered, knowing deep down that Antonio or someone must know her sizes, even the shoes fit perfectly. Someone Edward had hired to find out this information. Her mind whirled as she applied the make-up that was waiting for her in the bathroom. All the right shades, nothing was wrong, everything was as if she herself had bought them.

"Holy Fuck," Edward breathed from her doorway.

She turned and glared at him. "How did you do this?" she demanded, waving at her dress.

"What do you mean?" he asked, his eyes sparking with lust. Holy mother of God, she was his, she was absolutely going to be his, even if he had to move hell, heaven and earth.

"Everything, everything is too damn perfect, Edward, tell me how?" she snapped.

"Antonio and Jenks looked into you to make sure you were safe," Edward said. "Rosalie used a picture of you for the makeup, and I memorized your shoe size when I jokingly asked you on our first date."

"I see," she said, slowly growing less annoyed by the minute; she did faintly recall laughing and telling him her shoe size. His good looks were distracting her, his cocky smirk of a smile, black slacks, emerald cashmere sweater. Good Lord, he was good enough to eat.

The club was mind-bogglingly loud, glamorous and busy. It didn't take her long to realize why it was the most popular club in Seattle. Bella couldn't help but smile at Edward as he overlooked his business from the VIP section. His arms wrapped around her as they swayed to the music. He whispered in her ear how he built this place, remodeled from an old abandoned warehouse.

Neither noticed the pair of cold, angry eyes following their every move around the club. His target shifting from Edward to the beautiful auburn on his arms, who he stared so adoringly at. He laughed coldly, a plan rising. What better way to rock Edward fucking Cullen's world than take what was so precious from him.

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Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
Chapter Five

I want a Mommy!

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Stephenie Meyer. The plot, along with a few of the characters I add here and there belong to my ruthless muse.

Chapter Five

It had been a little over six exhausting weeks since he had held Bella in his arms at his nightclub Aqua. Since then, a dozen different things kept pulling him away never giving him enough time, he thought distractedly. Even now he was busy debriefing with Jasper and Emmett before he could retire for the night or morning as the case would be. It appeared that they were getting nowhere. The boys couldn't agree on how to issue a simple warning, it was late and everyone was on their last nerve, including him.

"Enough!" Edward hollered, intervening before Jasper and Emmett moved to swing at each other. "Fucking knock it off," he yelled shoving the two temperamental men away from each other. His voice taking on a cold edge that they both knew not question, "We're done here. Emmett, check in with Grant, compare notes; this isn't the sixth woman hurt at one of our establishments. Jasper, issue the Sixers a warning that if we hear so much as a funny whisper, I will stop their supply. Sam is sure they're the crew behind those young thugs that tried to push product into that fucking middle school."

"Sure thing, Boss," Jasper said.

"The Emerald Palace is on course; the old abandoned hotel that we're converting is in closing, it will be ours by the end of the week. Carlisle is hosting a High Stakes Night, twenty grand a pop for an entrance fee. Emmett, put some of your boys on it, I want it covered," Edward said pausing as he tiredly held back a yawn. He hadn't slept in over thirty hours and the jet lag was about to kick his ass. "My trip wasn't a failure, between the Chinese and the Irish, their history is nowhere near settled; so for the near future we will be playing middle man. Actually, I've arranged for the Natives to be their middle man in exchange for gold for which we'll be giving the Natives a small profit, but in turn, it will free our hands. It's five in the morning, all the other shit we'll figure out later. I don't want to see either of your ugly mugs until tomorrow," Edward said as they left his office and headed for their cars.

"Where to?" Antonio asked, pulling Edward's car door open.

"Bella's Corner Market," Edward said smoothly, pulling his black cashmere sweater over his head. He had been away for almost five days and he was ready to see her warm smile. He couldn't believe he had known her for six weeks; six weeks of courting her, but she didn't just immerse herself with him, she was fully committed to getting to know EJ as well. She'd stop by a few nights during the week and eat dinner with them, going as far as making him play at least one board game with them before EJ and her would disappear up the stairs. Many nights he would sit at his desk in his office across from EJ's bedroom and listen to her read to his child.

"Edward, what are you doing here?" Bella smiled brightly, surprised at the sight of her future husband waiting for her outside the store, her sore muscles quickly forgotten.
"I came to see if you'd like a ride home? I was in the neighborhood." He laughed, handing her a small arrangement of pink and yellow roses accompanied with daisies.

"The neighborhood, huh?" she asked, raising an amused eyebrow as she looked around the dark and silent street. "I'd love a ride, Edward, even if I think you're full of it."

"How was your trip?" Bella asked as soon as Edward slipped his arm over her shoulder.

"Profitable," Edward said with a dashing secretive smirk.

"That's good," Bella murmured softly, giving Edward a kind smile.

"Nanny Sarah told me that you two don't see eye to eye," Edward said with an amused grin, wanting to hear Bella's point of view on the matter.

"We don't." Bella's words were crisp and final. "Nanny Sarah made it nearly impossible for me to see EJ on Friday night, boiling down to when I had to call you even though Antonio and Elizabeth both told her it was fine. Then when I was tucking EJ in, she insisted I read Shakespeare to EJ even though we're midway through Hank the Cow Dog. Now there isn't anything wrong with Shakespeare, I love his works but EJ is five." Her words sparkled with passion. "So, if you think I'm going to be reading Macbeth instead of Harry Potter or the Magic School Bus, you've picked the wrong woman."

Edward tossed his head back and laughed. "I heard you went to the museum."

"We had a remarkable time at the Children's Museum." Edward grinned at the enthusiasm on Bella's face; he could only imagine EJ's. "We had a Happy Meal and played at the park as well. Are you coming up?" she asked getting out of his town car.

"Sure, I'm not supposed to pick up EJ until sometime after ten this morning," Edward grinned which turned into a frown as she led him into her building, up the creaking staircase. He gritted his teeth as he stared at the multiple door locks on the inside of her door.

Her place was clean, neat and tidy and she seemed to make the place work, it functioned nicely. Along one wall was her kitchen, the other her living room and on the wall opposite of the front door laid a neatly made cot, and a plastic three-drawer dresser.

"Would you care for some breakfast?" Bella asked moving over to her mini fridge. Everything was marked, labeled, organized.

"That would be delightful," Edward said sincerely, his eyes roaming over her monthly calendar, the days were marked with when bills were due and how much, her work schedule, and he smiled when he noted that EJ and he were penciled in. "You work too much," Edward said turning to look at Bella who was placing a few pieces of fried bacon on a plate.

"I have bills to pay," Bella laughed.

"Why doesn't that obese man help you lift those boxes?" Edward asked his jaw clenched, being concerned for another human being outside of EJ was unfamiliar territory.

"Todd is lazy; he does just enough to get by," Bella said with a shrug.

"Move in with me," it wasn't posed as a question more like a statement, a demand. He hated that she worked herself so hard, only to still live in such an unsafe neighborhood.
She laughed and turned to look at him as she placed a fried egg on his plate. "Wait. You're serious… You can't be serious," she said flabbergasted, placing the frying pan in the sink, shock overwhelming her.

"I am," Edward said. "You already have a room prepared for you. Give me a day and I'll have a car for you and make the arrangements for you to have your own debit and credit card issued to you. In the meantime cash should suffice."

"Edward, whoa, hold on," Bella said firmly. "I know moving in with you is inevitable, but Hon, what brought this on so soon, right now?" she said stepping into his body space, her warm brown eyes watching his guarded green ones.

Edward frowned, "You work too much, and this apartment isn't safe enough for you. It makes me uncomfortable, uneasy that you live here. I've come to care a great deal about you—your safety and health is a concern of mine."

"I don't know, Edward." Edward's jaw clenched in irritation at being denied something he was most unaccustomed to.

"I don't understand," Edward said slowly. "We're going to be married soon. I'm not offering you anything that isn't already on the table. Moving into my estate would settle this issue. I do not like where you work; did you know more than half of your coworkers have some sort of criminal background, and this building has numerous health and safety violations."

Bella sighed, she knew this was a battle she wasn't going to win. His honest concern for her was making her cave into his will. "Give me a couple weeks. My finals are around the corner and I'll turn in my two weeks' notices, notify the landlord, put in a change of address, and alert some of my family of the move."

"That sounds logical," Edward said rubbing his chin.

Bella chuckled a little relieved he didn't try to push the issue any harder. "Can we eat now?"

Edward chuckled at her before digging into his plate of cooling food, he noticed her eyes shooting to his, her lip biting and her fidgeting increasing, something was churning in her mind.

"Bella, you can ask me whatever it is that's brewing in that stubborn head of yours," Edward said, finally breaking the silence between them.

She blushed and laughed, "I'm that obvious, huh?" she asked.

"Very."

"I... umm... It's none of my business I understand, but I heard Nanny Sarah asking about EJ's mother and I realized that I am very uninformed. EJ very plainly told me, and I quote, 'I don't have a mom, never have,' when we overheard Elizabeth rebuffing Nanny Sarah's questioning."

"I was in my upper twenties and I was feeling the pressure to settle down and then there was Tanya Denali. She is the oldest daughter of my father's longtime friend and confidante. We were arranged and I will admit I had little to no time for her. She was beautiful but crazy. I proposed like expected after she became pregnant. One day, out of nowhere, she left claimed she had fallen in real love and I never thought..." he paused as if in pain, "I never thought to have someone check on her during her pregnancy with EJ. She went into labor two months early, brought on by an overdose. Thank the Lord that nothing caused EJ any kind of permanent damage. I had her maternal rights revoked and she moved to be with her family in Alaska," Edward said, the pain and guilt of his past mistakes
slipping into his voice. He didn't tell her how he forced Tanya into a treatment center. How her rights were terminated in exchange for her life, with the stipulation that she never return to his city. "Isabella, she is never going to be a part of EJ's life. When he's eighteen he can make his own choices, but while he's a minor and under my care, she will never have the power to hurt him."

Bella sucked in a long breath, releasing it slowly she had knew, or at least subconsciously known, that whatever had happened to EJ's mother wasn't something pleasant but her heart twisted at the cold reality. Fury, anger and heartbreak washed over her as the reality settled into her bones, at how incredibly luckily EJ was.

"Thank you for telling me," she whispered, wiping a tear out of the corner of her eye.

Edward reached forward and pulled her into him, wrapping his arms around her body, enjoying her soft fragrance.

"I am warning you now because eventually you'll meet my parents and family. I do not know how they will react to us. I want you to know that you are not replacing someone, you can't replace someone that has never been there, someone that will never be there. There are some things that can't be redeemed. Tanya lost her title of mother the moment she picked up that needle and harmed my child."

Bella nodded, she could see in his eyes that he meant every word he had spoken. Before she could respond, her phone rang breaking them out of the tension-filled moment.

"Hello," she said into her phone, her brow narrowing as someone breathed into the other end of the line. "Renee... Phil... I don't have any money to spare."

"Tick tock… goes the clock… your time's running out," someone whispered into the phone like a real creeper. Bella's eyes widened, frightened for a moment before she settled on a laugh.

"Stupid fraternity boys," she said placing her cell back on the counter. Word had spread fast on the small campus that she was dating the notorious Edward Cullen. A few had even been brave enough to ask her in person, but she heard the whispering and pointing and could feel their eyes following her.

"What was that about?" Edward asked curiously raising an eyebrow.

"Just a frat boy prank," Bella explained smiling down at their conjoined hands as he tugged her over to her couch, where he pulled her down next to him, wrapping her in his arms.

"I have a couple hours until I have to be anywhere. EJ is in the middle of a grandparent weekend and I can't pick him up until after ten, so would you mind laying here with me and enjoying the short-lived peace," Edward said using his green eyes to swoon her to his will.

"I'd enjoy that very much, Mr. Cullen," Bella said leaning into his embrace.

It surprised him how comfortable he was with her alone with no EJ as a buffer. How he didn't second guess himself with the things he shared, of the things he wanted to share with her. Being in her presence made him crave the intimacy her presence provided him. The laughter, the smiling, the flirtatious teasing, he wasn't sure when he had ever really enjoyed someone's company more.

Bella enjoyed the feeling of safety that Edward created inside of her. It scared her at how she felt at home with him and EJ, how they had turned her very lonely world and turned it on its axis. They remained there talking quietly until his phone rang sometime later.
"Hello?" Edward said answering his phone with a yawn. "I'll be there in a few."

"You've got to go. EJ, I assume," Bella said with a small yawn of her own.

"Yes," Edward said. "Can I give you a ride to campus?"

"You're spoiling me, Edward," Bella giggled and Edward chuckled as he watched her collect her books. He followed her out of her apartment, his eyes glued to her spectacular ass until they reached the curb where Antonio was waiting for them outside.

The ride was mostly quiet. Bella hummed to the radio as Edward's phone started to buzz and ding every few minutes.

"Would you like to come out after your classes end?" Edward asked after quickly silencing his phone, with the flip of a small switch so she'd have his full attention.

"I'd love to," Bella said smiling widely.

"Good… Andrew will pick you up from campus; just text me when you're ready and what building," Edward said stepping out of the car with her. It didn't escape his notice that he acquired a lot of attention—spectators. He didn't like how some of the men looked Bella up and down.

"Bella," he said stepping into her body space, eyes locked on her mouth. "Have a nice day," he said ghosting his lips over hers. He smirked as she stepped back grinning at him. "You'd better get or you're going to be late," he reminded her teasingly tapping his watch.

He waited until she was a good ways away before calling out very loudly, "I'll see you tonight, love." Edward turned and slipped into his car ignoring Antonio's knowing smirk. Antonio knew very well his boss was staking his claim.

Bella blushed deeply as Angela rushed towards her, her mouth gaping open. "It's true, the rumors; you're really dating Edward Cullen?"

Bella nodded not knowing how to tell her only friend in Seattle that she was technically engaged to the man.

Angela leaned in and looked around before whispering seriously, "Is he really a mob boss?"

Bella laughed, "Oh come off it, Angela that's just silly, it's the twenty-first century not the prohibition. He's just a businessman."

Angela laughed with her, "Okay, you're right… it's just what some of the boys have been saying."

"Then I'm glad I'm dating a man and not a silly boy," Bella said linking arms with her longtime friend and heading to class.

"A very hot man," Angela said giggling.

"Indeed," Bella giggled back taking her regular seat in the lecture hall.

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
Chapter Six

I want a Mommy!

Disclaimer: All characters belong to Stephenie Meyer. The plot, along with a few of the characters I add here and there belong to my ruthless muse.

Chapter Six

It had been a week since her pleasant morning with Edward and the strange phone call, which in the last week had been upgraded to weird texts and late night calls. She clicked her jaw at the sight of another obnoxious text message with an image of a bloody knife, and the words: 'Tick …tick … tick… can't you hear it?' She hated them; they scared her. Her eyes snapped up and away from her cellphone when she heard the sounds of Jacob Black's deep laughter, she flinched away when her eyes met his cold black ones.

Her temper snapped. She couldn't stand Jacob Black, her once childhood best friend and Forks, Washington's Golden Boy. She collected her books and stomped over to him, missing the surprise that flickered across his face.

"Jacob," she barked coldly. "I don't know what kind of sick games you're playing at now, but quit messing with me. Don't you think you've done enough damage already?" He winced at her harsh words–words that pulled him back to his high school years–years that he was so ashamed of. Then, after a moment he blinked in bewilderment and confusion as he watched her scurry away from him, as her accusation settled in his mind, his anger flared and he stormed after her.

"Hold the fuck up, Bells," Jacob ordered once they were both outside the campus library, Bella flinched as he jerked her around to face him. "I might have pointed you out to a few guys that were wondering about the girl that currently has Seattle's most eligible bachelor snagged, but honestly, I don't know what the hell you were going on about."

Her eyes widened, honest fear replacing the anger. "You and your frat buddies haven't been sending me these... or prank-calling me?" she said pushing her phone into his large hands.

"Jesus..." Jacob barked, his anger disappearing in a flash as he fumbled through her text messages. "You really thought I sent you these?" he asked lowly; it was a kick to the gut that he had been so cruel to her in high school that she would believe he was capable of this.

"I assumed maybe your frat friends," she whispered tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Listen, I know some of the guys like Mike and his basketball groupies have made cracks at you for dating Mr. Cullen, but I put a stop to that shit in my fraternity. Bella, this isn't a cruel prank, you need to report this, whoever is sending you this is dangerous," Jacob urged, concern coloring his words. "Listen, I know I've wronged you and hurt you, especially with the whole James incident, and I'll never forgive myself for that shit, but I've grown up, Bella; I'm not that guy anymore."

"Is everything all right here?" Bella's eyes widened at the sight of Andrew, one of Edward's guards, standing there before her. "Miss Swan, is this man hurting you?" he inquired seriously as Jacob took a large step backwards.

"What?" Bella asked shocked, wiping the tears off her cheek. "Umm, no, he's not." Bella sighed, he
didn't look convinced. "Andrew, is Edward here?" she couldn't help but look around hopefully wanting to wrap her arms around the man that made her feel safe just by his presence alone.

"No, ma'am," Andrew blushed knowing his cover was blown. "I was assigned to watch over you."

Bella couldn't bring herself to be mad or annoyed not with the current dread and fear she was experiencing. Maybe a little annoyed that she wasn't aware she had a bodyguard, but it was one of those things that she probably should have assumed, since both Edward and EJ always had one when away from the house; if she was going to be his wife, then it was part of the picture.

"Andrew, do you think Edward would mind if we dropped by his office for a minute, I need to see him," Bella asked a little unsurely, turning her watery brown eyes on the kind man. If Jacob wasn't messing with her, then who? Every emotion she was experiencing was pushing her, urging her, to tell Edward.

"I'll give him a call," Andrew said leading her toward his waiting vehicle, the same one that had been giving her a ride to and from school all week, so she wouldn't have to use the bus.

She let her body relax once she was in the safety of Edward's town car. She almost nodded off, but snapped awake to the sound of her cell phone ringing, she smiled when she saw EJ's picture knowing he probably had something exciting to tell her; she answered it happily.

"Hello, EJ," she said softly, but worry slipped into her core when she heard sniffling. "Champ, come on buddy talk to me," she encouraged.

"B… Bella," he cried into the phone making her heartbeat explode in her chest. "B..Bella,"

"EJ, where are you?" Bella asked gently.

"Ho..home," he whispered, but Bella could hear his muffled crying.

"Andrew, take me to the estate, now," she ordered so forcefully that Andrew didn't miss a beat, he spun the car around on the highway and hit the gas pedal.

"EJ, what's wrong?" she asked.

"I… I… Miss Sarah, she, she…Patches is gone," he stuttered, his young mind trying to filter his turmoil. Bella's heart clenched, she knew how he treasured his stuffed giraffe that he had recently started taking everywhere since their trip to the Zoo. The ten-minute drive seemed to take a lifetime; Bella could hear muffled yelling in the background as EJ whimpered in her ear, so she sang softly into the phone.

Bella paid no mind to Andrew who followed her into the house.

"Edward Anthony the Second, get out of there right now. I can't believe I got stuck watching such a messed up child." They could hear Sarah's frustrated screaming. Bella bolted up the stairs and she stopped stunned at the sight of EJ's room—it was trashed.

Nanny Sarah stood there surprised, but she knew she had been overheard by the cold look in Bella's eyes.

"EJ," Bella spoke into her phone, "where are you?"

"Dad… Daddy's closet." She rushed into Edward's room and flung the door open.
"Come here," she whispered wrapping her arms around him rocking him, her blood turning to ice when she noticed the light pink handprint on his arm, where someone had grabbed him. "Who did this?" she asked trying to keep her voice even.

"Sarah tried to make me go to piano lessons. Bella, I don't like them, and Patches—he's gone," he whispered into her neck, breathing in her scent as his little body shuddered and his tears slowed.

"Why don't you crawl into Daddy's bed and watch some cartoons. I'll be right back, okay." Bella instructed, flicking on the television to cartoons. Once his attention was absorbed by the television, Bella went back to the hallway where Marcus, Andrew and Elizabeth were lingering by the stairs, and Nanny Sarah was standing there awkwardly her path blocked by Edward's loyal staff.

"Where is Patches?" Bella growled lowly, her voice taking on a blistering edge.

"What?" Nanny Sarah asked with pseudo innocence.

"His giraffe, he takes it everywhere. It's lost, where or what did you do to it," Bella demanded.

"That…that disgusting toy is in the trash," Nanny Sarah said snottily. "He's much too old for such attachment objects."

Bella smiled when Elizabeth held it up having a second of relief.

"You put your hands on him," Bella accused, and Marcus took a step forward, his eyes narrowing.

"You left a mark on his wrist where you tried to yank him toward the car."

"I… he just went wild," Nanny Sarah wailed. "He started screaming, kicking, he trashed his room looking for that stupid giraffe, he was going to be late for his lesson. I just pulled him toward the car; he got loose and disappeared."

"You're fired," Bella announced shocking all of them. "I don't care what your reasons were, you could have seriously injured him." It took everything Bella had not to slap the woman who had made both Bella's and EJ's life hell since her arrival.

"You don't have that kind of power," Nanny Sarah snarled stepping into Bella's personal space.

"I do, believe me I do." Bella warned lowly, she didn't care if she had to fight tooth and nail with Edward, this woman was not going to step foot in EJ's presence again not on her watch. "Now, get out before I have you removed. Be warned, I have no idea of what Edward's reaction will be when he learns you laid a malicious hand on his son."

Bella couldn't help but smile when Sarah, the ex-nanny bolted out of the house.

Elizabeth grinned at her; Bella was unaware that she had just earned the entire staffs' respect and approval. "I found it this morning in the garbage bin. I washed it; I planned on giving it to EJ at dinner."

Bella surprised the homemaker by hugging her tightly. "Thank you, Elizabeth, Thank you."

"Not a problem, Bella, so happy I did the right thing." Elizabeth chattered giving the young woman a kind smile, "I'll bring you and EJ up some chocolate chip cookies and juice boxes; it look like both of you could use some," She said receiving a grateful nod before returning her kitchen downstairs.

Bella kicked off her shoes and crawled into the bed with EJ who snuggled into her side, and gave her a heartwarming smile when she handed him his treasured toy. They spent the rest of the
afternoon lounging in Edward's bed watching reruns of Jake and the Neverland Pirates.

"Antonio," Edward snapped after finally hanging up with Natives' club president, they were going to take over handling and moving product between the Chinese and Irish. He was relieved to finally have one issue put to rest.

"Yes, Boss," he asked handing Edward the cup of coffee he had requested earlier.

"Where is Bella?" Edward demanded, having expected her hours ago after Andrew had called and informed him that Bella wanted to come see him. Yet the hours had got away from his as call after call rang in, and the meeting with the remodeling agency who had questions about his plans for the casino had come and gone.

"Andrew called, said that Bella demanded he take her to the estate. EJ was upset." Edward cringed and glanced down at his personal cell phone, sure enough his son had tried calling him a few hours ago.

"Anything else I need to know?" Edward asked.

"Apparently Bella fired your nanny," Antonio said flicking through his texts from Andrew. "She's currently at your house with EJ."

"Jasper," Edward shouted getting his longtime friend's attention. "I'm heading out, heading home."

"Boss, what of Aro?" Jasper asked not wanting to take the call. The man who ran the Volturi family was cruel and devious. The Volturi family had recruited the Cullen family into this lifestyle generations ago. Aro hated Edward, the fact that Edward's pockets reached deeper financially, socially, and politically, ate at the cruel leader like a parasite making him even more dangerous to the Cullen Family. Jasper wasn't lazy, he just didn't want to make the wrong move where Aro was concerned.

"You can handle it, or let Emmett, better yet have my father take his call," Edward said handing the tedious task off. They could handle it. He just wanted to make it home before dark. He had promised EJ he'd be home before dinner and he didn't want tonight to be another broken promise on top of all the others.

"Edward," Emmett whined, but shrunk back when Edward glared at him.

"No. It's Friday. I want to go home. I want to spend time with my child. I want to do something besides handle all of this shit. I'm a taking off until Monday. I have been here every night this week, hours later than everyone else including both of you. I am going home," Edward ranted slipping his suit jacket on. "Emmett, Jasper both of you make an appearance tonight at Aqua. It thrills the locals," Edward ordered.

"Sure thing, boss," they both answered nodding with wide eyes, it wasn't often that Edward lost his temper or demanded private time.

"Home," Edward directed shortly after sliding into his luxury SUV.

Edward entered his house and stepped into the security room full of monitors. "Where are they?"
Edward asked as Antonio followed him inside.

"Your room," Andrew answered from his reading spot on the couch while Marcus kept his eyes glued to the monitors.
"The surveillance team is back," Marcus said pointing out the pool van parked behind the Davidson family's house.

"You'd think they would get tired of never getting anything," Edward mumbled with a stressed sigh.

"Right," Andrew laughed bitterly, everyone in the room was tired of the F.B.I's inconvenient presence in their lives.

"Night boys," Edward said dismissing himself.

"Night, boss," all three men said in sync.

Edward climbed the stairs two at a time in his rush to get to Bella and his son. He stopped in his tracks, his heart fluttering happily in his chest as he stared at the sleeping pair; a smile ghosting around his lips as he looked at his child snugly wrapped up in Bella's arms. It wasn't exactly how he pictured her first time in his bed would look, but it was a beautiful sight. No, he couldn't regret any of the impulsive decisions he had made concerning Bella.

He kneeled next to the bed and kissed EJ's forehead before moving back and tenderly kissing Bella's lips, smiling when her eyes fluttered open, stunned when her face broke out with a lazy happy smile at the sight of him.

"Hello," she whispered not wanting to wake EJ

"Hi," Edward quietly replied as Bella untangled herself from EJ and crawled out of Edward's bed to wrap her arms around him hugging him tightly.

She took a slow deep breath and whispered. "I need to talk to you."

She followed him to his office. Her stomach tightened when she thought of all the things she had to tell him. Edward could tell by Bella's open and unguarded facial expressions that he needed to prepare himself for a shit storm.

"I was on my way to see you this afternoon. I had something to tell you, but EJ called me crying, and all that got put on the back burner," she explained fumbling with her phone. Edward could practically feel the nervousness rolling off of her. "I fired Nanny Sarah," Bella declared carrying on with her explanation. "She tossed out EJ's giraffe. EJ had a meltdown looking for it when it came time for him to go to his piano lessons. When they got close to being late, she pulled him toward the car kicking and screaming; her hand print from grabbing him remained on his arm for quite some time. Of course he got loose and then hid from her and called me. I came home and heard her calling him 'messed up' before finding him in your closet and calming him down. Then I fired her. I'm sorry if I overstepped, but I wanted her gone, gone for good."

"Good," Edward bit out, but he couldn't help but be pleased with Bella's actions, once again proving how right his decision was. "EJ will be the last kid she ever nanny's for, I'll make sure of that, Bella," Edward said so coldly it shocked her a little. Seeing her startled look, Edward tried to calm her by reassuring her that she had done the right thing, "and Bella, it was an excellent call. Now what were you going to come tell me earlier, Andrew said you seemed very out of character and upset."

Edward blinked as she pushed her cell phone toward him. He clicked through the messages. His fury rising as each twisted picture and threatening message appeared.

"Why didn't you come to me sooner," he demanded his voice icily cold. "These go back five days."
"I thought they were a prank," Bella whispered her tears returning. "I mean for dating you. There are rumors of...about you being...well dangerous." She didn't want to come out and call him a mob boss which just seemed silly. "I just thought they were frat boys trying to scare me away from you."

"And they're not?" he asked turning his serious green eyes on hers.

"No. I confronted Jacob and this isn't connected to him," Bella said not aware she had given him a piece of her history.

"And why would a Jacob be a part of this?" Edward asked coldly.

"He's just a boy I grew up with. He made high school unpleasant," Bella said not wanting to dig into the history with Edward. "He urged, he begged me to report this, that this wasn't a prank, that whoever's doing this is dangerous."

"I'll handle this, Bella. I promise you," Edward said kissing her and pulling her into him, relieved that she had come to him instead of going straight to the police. "I want you here now. No more excuses–you're moving in. I can't keep you safe there. Not like I can here," Edward ordered his voice leaving no room for negotiation. Bella blinked at him but nodded, honestly a little too scared to argue; it wasn't like another ten days would change anything.

"Daddy," EJ called having woken and found them in his father's office.

"Hey Bud," Edward greeted, lifting his son in his arms and squeezing him tight. "Guess what, Champ. Bella's going to come and live with us. How about that?" Bella eyes widened at his sneaky manipulation even though she had already agreed, he had just made it where she couldn't back out.

"Really?" he asked turning his green eyes toward Bella in excitement.

"Yep," Bella said.

"Awesome," EJ said leaning out of his father arms as he snuggled into Bella. "Does that mean you can come to my class play?"

"I wouldn't miss it for anything in the world," Bella said reassuringly.

"Not even for Daddy?" EJ asked in awe.

"Not even for him," Bella said enjoying how EJ's eyes lit up and sparkled.

EJ tugged her down to his level indicating he had a secret. "I love you, Bella," he told her softly against her ear hugging her tight.

"I love you, too, green eyes," Bella quietly replies as EJ pulls back with a smile at the special nickname only Bella calls him.

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
Chapter Seven

Later that week Bella glanced around the auditorium in hope; hope that was quickly diminishing. She knew he probably wouldn't be able to make it; he had said as much this morning, and she hated the self-loathing expression he wore as he left the kitchen, his shoulders slightly bent in defeat and a heaviness in his steps. Instead of dwelling on the disappointment she quickly came up with a backup plan; she knew how much he hated missing moments like these. So she had called up Angela and borrowed her video camera. She grinned as she pressed play, capturing the moment for both father and son. She watched in pride as EJ rocked his well-earned solo, she giggled softly at his little swagger that they had practiced in front of the bathroom mirror. She clapped excitedly as the production came to an end and watched from afar as EJ's grandparents gave him some well-earned praise.

"You did an excellent job, honey," Esme said as she gushed over her grandchild.

"Very well done, boy," Carlisle said tapping his grandchild's chin fondly.

Rosalie hugged him. "Good job. I bet you worked really hard on that solo?"

EJ frowned, "He didn't come," he said looking around expectantly for his father.

"Your father is a busy man. A very important man, honey, it's really hard for him to get off work in the afternoon," Esme tried to explain just like she had for Edward all those years ago, missing the rejection passing across his face until he spotted Bella. He bolted away from his grandparents and aunt, and ran straight into Bella's arms.

Esme and Carlisle were close enough to hear their exchange. "You came, you really, really came," he said smiling up at her as she lifted him in her arms.

"I told you I wouldn't miss it for anything." Bella said tapping his nose gently.

"Dad didn't come," he stated. Bella didn't miss the sadness in his voice.

"I know," she said gently, "but guess what?" she ignored the three people eavesdropping on them. "He sent me with a message; he told me to tell you that he is super-duper sorry he couldn't be here, but we have a surprise for him," she said.

"We do?" he asked, his wide eyes melting her heart and she chuckled at his curiosity.

"I recorded the entire performance. We can go home and make a DVD for your dad so he can watch your performance," Bella said proudly tapping the video camera she had borrowed from Angela. "He's going to be excited to find out he didn't miss it."

"Really, really we can watch me on the TV?" he asked in wonder, swinging Bella's hand with his.

"Yep, and we will watch it later with your dad," Bella promised, she smiled at a frowning Esme.

"Good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Cullen," Bella said politely.

"Abigail Pond wasn't it?" Mrs. Cullen asked.

"Isabella Swan," Bella said stretching her smile a little wider trying not to show that she felt about an inch tall next to the two women that oozed confidence.
Mr. Cullen frowned at his wife, before politely taking the young girl's hand. "It's a delight to see you here. I apologize for my wife, we are just surprised that you are here. Rosalie, this is Isabella, she is Edward's close friend."

"Well, it was very nice seeing you again, Mr. and Mrs. Cullen, you as well, Rosalie," I said before turning my attention back to EJ," and you, green eyes, I will see you in an hour."  

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"Detective Grant," Edward said stiffly shaking the older man's hand tightly.

"Mr. Cullen … Emmett," Grant said motioning for both boys to sit. "I want to thank you for your assistance in trying to locate this sick fuck. Emmett and his boys have managed to put the brakes on any new victims so far, but your ears have discovered more women hurt by this man."

"What do we know so far?" Edward asked sipping the warm coffee the barista set in front of him.

"He's over six feet, tan and so far, all the woman swear they don't have a clue who he is. Grey eyes, a tattoo of a cross on his chest. We can't find any transactions or receipts at any of these places, no security footage either. He's a goddamn ghost. The woman so far have all gone to and left the bars and or nightclubs alone." Grant huffed.

"He's going to be hard to find, he's not an amateur, fuck, Edward, it's like the man is trained to be invisible," Emmett said running a tired hand over his face. "The sick twisted part is it somehow ties to you."

"What?" Edward said confused.

"Everywhere these women have been in the twelve hours before they're attacked, was owned by you or somehow attached to your name," Emmett explained grimly.

"I'm a fucking Cullen, my name is all over this goddamn city," Edward rebuffed.

"No, not dad's names, not mine, not mom's charity events. Your childhood cancer fundraiser, your bars, your nightclubs, your fucking park," Emmett said stringing out the photos of all the places these women had been or attended before being violated. "And you know how Jamie died of an overdose a few nights ago?"

"Yeah," Edward said frowning.

"I pushed them to look further, off the books," Detective Grant said. "She's a porn actress, it wasn't the coke that killed her, it was a struggle with an attacker, she cracked her head against the floor and it busted a pre-existing Aneurysm. Someone set it up to look like she overdosed. I'm not even going to ask if you have any enemy who would try to hurt you or your business," Detective Grant muttered bitterly giving Edward a twisted smile.

"Motherfucker," Edward hissed slamming his phone down on the table. "So, what we are getting out of all this, is that this man is either deranged and wants to play with the big boys or someone is paying this twisted fuck to screw with my life."

"Exactly," Emmett said squeezing his older brother's shoulder. Edward's face went ashen as he placed Bella's phone on the table.

"Someone's been stalking Bella," Edward said sliding Bella's phone towards Emmett and Grant. "She thought it was a cruel prank at first by an old ex-friend, she confronted him, a Jacob Black who
told her he wasn't connected to this. She came to me; she's terrified. It's connected, it has to be. I
want this Jacob Black looked into, because whoever this is, isn't getting near Bella. Find this
psychopath."

Edward stormed out of the café, he needed his family, and he needed to blow off some stress.
"Antonio, take me home."

"Boss?" he asked concerned.

"There nothing I can do the rest of today that can't wait until tomorrow." Edward said slipping into
the car. "Just take me home."

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"Daddy!" EJ shouted jumping from the swing that Bella had been pushing him on. "Your home and
the sun is still up, up, up."

"There's my boy," Edward said relishing in the tight hug his son was giving him. Bella had definitely
brought out the affectionate side of his son. "How was your play?"

"Grandma and pops said I did a superb job. Bella and I made you a surprise." The little boy gushed,
pulling Edward toward Bella.

"A surprise, huh?" Edward said letting himself be pulled toward the woman that was gently
entwining herself into his heart. He didn't stop himself; he leaned forward and captured Bella's lips in
a warm kiss. "Honey, I'm home," he whispered receiving a warm laugh, he wrapped an arm around
her needing her in his arms, reminding himself that she was safe. That they both were safe.

"EJ, go request some popcorn from Elizabeth … and Mister you better ask politely," she called after
him as Edward smiled into her hair.

"Sit down, he's very excited," Bella ordered softly. "Turn off your phone for twenty minutes."

"So bossy," he teased switching off his phone. The world wouldn't implode if he didn't answer.
Hopefully. "So, what's this?"

"You'll see," Bella said as EJ returned with the popcorn. Edward sucked in a deep breath as the
video began to play and the images of what he was seeing hit him.

"You did this?" he asked stunned, his voice cracking with emotion as the tape finished and shut off.

"Yeah, I knew you felt awful about missing it and EJ and I wanted you to see it." Bella explained
her actions and she sighed in relief when he gave her the widest and open smile she had ever
received from him.

"Thank you. This is the most thoughtful thing anyone has done for me in a long time," he said
capturing her mouth greedily, kissing her hard; they pulled apart at the sound of EJ's giggles.

"I love it; thank you, both of you," Edward said grunting as EJ pounced on his father. Together they
enjoyed the afternoon on the couch.

"We've got to get ready," Bella announced helping both of her green-eyed boys stand. "I'm not
going to be late to your mother's charity event, Edward. She doesn't care for me as it is, let's not give
her anymore reason not to, okay?" Bella laughed at Edward's groan.
"What's the cause again?" Edward grunted following Bella into her room, watching with heated eyes as she slid out of her clothes and slipped on the long, sleek, pale-pink formal dress.

"Autism," Bella said glancing over her shoulder. "Would … would you mind zipping me?" she asked shyly. Edward ran his hands softly over the silky material, his eyes on her exposed back. It took a great deal of willpower to zip up the dress instead of slowly peeling it off of her like his body urged him to.

"Where did you get this scar?" he asked softly kissing the old, faded, jagged scar lightly.

"In a car crash," she whispered painfully. Edward's brow narrowed, something in her tone and the way her eyes held so much pain as they danced around his face in the mirror, never settling on his eyes had his instincts on edge. She had lied to him, to his face, straight up lied. "It was a long time ago. I don't want to talk about it." This time her eyes met his and he sighed touching her cheek.

"Right. Well, I better go get ready," Edward said kissing her neck one last time.

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"Thank you, Elizabeth," Bella said smiling graciously at the housekeeper who had helped her finish her curls. Bella waited in the entryway and she smiled when EJ came around the corner and stood before her in a handsome little tux, matching his father.

"You both look handsome," Bella said taking Edward's offered arm and clutching EJ's hand.

"You look pretty, Bella, just like a princess," EJ complimented grinning at her.

"And that would make you my handsome prince, right?" Bella asked sweetly.

"No way... I'm a knight," EJ replied as he rejected the idea with a shake of his head.

The Autism Awareness Ball was very extravagant and put on by none other than Esme Cullen. Bella applied her best smile for his family. It was very clear they didn't know what to make of her or her presence in their son's life. Esme made her opinion clear that Bella was much too young and green to handle their lifestyle. Carlisle was perfectly almost creepily polite and Emmett seemed to like her while his wife's cold disdain wasn't hidden. The only ones that welcomed her with open arms were Jasper and his wife Alice. Bella had somehow made it through the small chit-chat session with Edward's family.

"I'll be right back; ladies room and I want to check in with EJ," Bella whispered to Edward excusing herself from the table.

"I'll meet you back here in twenty then. The boys and I are going to hit the cigar room," Edward said, shocking everyone when he gently kissed her mouth.

Esme and Carlisle moved to make social rounds along with Alice and Rosalie.

"Did you look into Jacob Black?" Edward asked his brother and Jasper once they moved to the private cigar room.

"Emmett and I cornered him. He was sort of expecting us, Sam has asked him to prospect for his MC," Jasper said lighting up a smoke.

Edward downed a shot. "Well?"
"He said he hasn't spoken to Bella in years other than when she confronted him a few days ago. That he has no plans, intentions or ill will toward her. He only holds regrets of his juvenile behavior in high school." Jasper carried on.

Emmett added, "He said that they were childhood best friends when they were little. They had a falling out at the start of their sophomore year of high school. His regrets to this day siding with the popular kids and abandoning her to years of high school rumors and pranks. He's not connected to this. He's a football jock, a tutor, a well-to-do-kinda kid."

"Did he say what the falling out was about?" Edward asked.

"That their friendship was ruined the moment he betrayed her trust, he said that she had confided in him and he went and revealed her secret," Jasper explained. "He wouldn't tell us the secret, blew it off, said it ruined her relationship with the football captain." The boys put out their smokes and headed back out to the ball.

"What the hell is going on over there?" Edward growled, frowning as one of his bottom boys and longtime hopefuls to become one of his men, James, he believed, was chatting up Bella who was clearly uncomfortable.

"Bella Swan, my sweet, sweet Isabella," James said smoothly letting the cocky grin take over his face as he cornered the woman who had grown even more beautiful since high school.

"James," Bella said, but her voice shook, her mind trying to come up with an escape route.

"You're looking mighty fine." James leered not daring to touch the woman that belonged to his boss. A snarl took over his face when she didn't respond, he growled lowly so only she would hear his next words. "Does he think you're a virgin? My sweet Bella, you're not playing the virgin are you? Because I know how sweet you moan." She flinched back. "Boss, he'll be so disappointed." He touted loving fucking with her mind. "Does he know why you're so good with his little boy, hmm?" he said gently caressing her stomach, but his smile was cold and taunting.

"Don't touch … me," Bella cried a little above a whisper, heart racing, memories freezing her.

"Good man, Mr. Cullen, he helped me out of a few tight spots in the past," James said winking at her; she shivered.


"Boss, I was just telling an old friend, hello. I didn't realize she was your date; you're a lucky man. Well, I better get back to the wife." James excused himself at the sight of Edward.

"I would like to go now," Bella said, eyes on the floor unable to maintain eye contact with Edward. She never thought, never dreamed she'd ever see the likes of James Newton again. Edward watched her, his concern growing, she wasn't being her normally strong willed, sweet self; this was a woman shaken, scared and maybe even a little broken.

"James... he works for you?" Bella asked shakily once they were alone in his car, since EJ had arranged to stay over with Jasper's son Tanner for the night.

"My father helped him out of some trouble in high school in trade for labor; he's practically family," Edward said. Bella nodded her heart sinking to her gut. "How do you know him?" he inquired, dread filling his stomach like a heavy weight.
"We went to high school together," Bella said tightly looking out the window trying not to let her mind drift back to that dark place. "He wasn't a nice boy." Edward wrapped her in his arms, waiting patiently for her to relax. He knew, his instincts urged him not to push her more; he'd learn the truth someday, but right now it was his turn to comfort her. There was no doubt in his mind that James was behind some of the pranks and social ridicule she had experienced in her past; so Jame's sudden appearance must have came as a shock.

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
By the time they reached the estate, Bella had relaxed into Edward's arms, internally embracing the safety and security he brought forth in her. They curled together on the sofa, an unknown western movie played on mute before them.

"What are we going to do with ourselves?" Edward teased huskily into Bella's ear after sliding his phone onto the coffee table. "Tanner, EJ and Alice have roped Jasper into going out to the cabin for the rest of the weekend."

Edward smiles as Bella frowns cutely. "Does EJ need an overnight bag?"

"No, Tanner and EJ are close enough in size; he's just borrowing some of his cousin's clothes. If he needs anything else, Alice will purchase it."

Bella refrained from rolling her eyes. It was hard for her to wrap her mind around Edward's thinking. Any of her few luxury items had come with struggle and small sacrifices like skipping her school days' dollar menu McCoffee and Biscuit, and turning down the heater to save for her craptop – laptop.

"Does he have his giraffe?" Bella asked worriedly knowing how the young boy refused to sleep without it. Just recently they had spent over an hour looking for the missing stuffed animal.

Edward nodded, his eyes light and full of emotion as he answered her quietly, "Yes." He leaned forward and kissed her lips tenderly, he groaned deeply as her lips molded against his softly. He tugged her upwards, forcing them to stand while the kiss was still going on. He was driving her half-crazy with his mouth, his tongue, even his teeth as he chewed gently on her lower lip.

They clumsily made their way up to his bedroom, kisses, groping and soft caresses made for short detours. He swore in relief as his bedroom door slammed shut behind them. His eyes narrowing in on the zipper of the pretty pink formal he had imagined removing most of the night. They both let out a sigh as his skilled long fingers tugged the offending zipper down, he watched in glee as the expensive garment fell to the floor.

"Are you sure about this?" Edward asked her as he leaned forward to press his lips against her naked collarbone.

"I am... but um …" Bella paused. "I'm not a virgin," she admitted, James words from earlier came back to haunt her.

"I didn't think you were." Edward chuckled.

"I haven't done this in years and don't really have much experience," she rambled, blushing.

"Okay, anything else I need to know?" He asked teasingly sucking gently on her earlobe.

Bella moaned it was so hard to focus with him nibbling on her neck, ears, but there was something she knew she had to mention, men could be touchy about these things. It was kind of embarrassing, but it was something her very likely, soon-to-be husband needed to know.

"Okay, so, I... um, sometimes I have …"

Edward paused his movements. He turned her around to meet her apprehensive eyes. There was no
light-heartedness in his eyes now, for his green eyes were full of concern as he used one of his free hands to cup her face gently, forcing her to keep eye contact. "I want this to be special; tell me, Isabella." It was a softly put command.

Bella bit her lower lip and released a shaky breath. "It's trivial; I wasn't going to mention it. I just don't want you to be upset if—" 'Sweet Jesus, this is mortifying' she thought gravely. "It takes a lot of stimulation for me to cum," she finally blurted out; a deep blush staining her cheeks. She flinched back a little when he didn't react. "Occasionally, I just …can't," she admitted in a whisper pushing past the embarrassment letting the words pour out of her. "So don't feel like you need to wait for me or anything …I've been told I'm just not sensitive enough or something," she confessed faintly.

He pulled her into his strong arms. "Bella," he said roughly, his eyes flashing, "what fucking moron told you that?" he asked fiercely, anger flickering in his pupils. "Whoever he was – he's a goddamn fool. I'm going to prove to you just how sensitive you are, how easily you can cum," Edward declared softly his mouth claiming Bella's.

Edward moaned as her hand slid through his hair, massaging his scalp sending a shiver down his spine. He would hold back tonight, he would show her just how sensitive she was; erase all the doubts she had about her body.

He kissed her as he ran his fingers along the edges of the lacy white fabric, brushing the bare skin of her stomach, enjoying how she squirmed against him. He smiled as she lifted off the bed to feel his callused hands against her soft creamy skin. He ran his hand back to her covered breast, he squeezed carefully – playfully. "Is this okay?" he asked.

"Yes," Bella hissed softly raising slightly and kissing his mouth.

"Unhook it," Edward demanded. His husky commanding tone excited her.

Bella sucked in a deep breath, it took her a second to process his order.

"Isabella," his voice was firm, demanding, and undeniably arousing. He'd lost the unfocused look, those beautiful green eyes of his boring into hers with scorching heat.

She reached behind her and unfastened the two little hooks. Her arousal clenched as his hands removed the lacy material. She could feel the rush of warmth, moisture build up as he fastened his mouth around her nipple. His green eyes light with mirth as he popped off her breast, watching in delight as her chest rose and fell in want. "You're beautiful, love."

"Tell me what you want, Isabella," he commanded, rolling the matching lacy thong off her hips.

"I don't know," she admitted, slightly embarrassed shying away from him, moving to hide her body with the sheet.

He'd moved one hand to gently open her. "Don't hide from me, lover; you're gorgeous." She relaxed into his touches; she forced herself to remain relaxed as his face hovered over her.

She jolted in surprise as his tongue flicked across her clit, she sighed in pleasure with the second brush of his tongue. She had never felt anything quite like it as his tongue slid deeply inside of her. "Has anyone ever?" he asked stopping briefly.

"No," she gasped wanting him to continue. "Please..." Even his facial stubble felt amazing against her sensitive thighs.

He chuckled lowly. He explored her thoroughly. Memorizing her reactions – every shudder, moan,
buck and soft swear were noted as he repeated the actions that were making her come undone over and over with a passionate hunger that left her breathless.

Edward drank in the sight of her as she writhed in pleasure before him. Bella could feel the tight coiling of a looming orgasm building rapidly. Hardly aware that she was begging him not to stop, never to stop, followed by soft pants of *yes* murmured over and over again. He grunted in pleasure as he felt her orgasm around his finger and tongue.

"That was incredible," Bella whispered her brown eyes bright.

"Yes, you're practically frigid." Edward mocked playfully, "the way you moaned, begged so prettily and came undone around my fingers." He laughed as she swatted his chest lightly. Bella chuckled with him having never experienced an orgasm so intense. "Rest love," Edward said pulling her into his side, ignoring his hard-on as her eyes drifted closed.

Edward clicked the Tiffany & Co box open and gazed down at the Tiffany's Lucida diamond engagement ring. It was stunning and everything a would-be Cullen should expect. Edward observed Bella as she slept peacefully curled contently into his side. When he finally does make love to her, she'd be wearing his ring.

…

Bella peaked in at Edward whose eyes were focused on the computer screen before him. She had awoken next to him this morning; before she could slip out of his bed and back into hers, his hand had shot out and snatched her back to his side. In the shower they had fooled around and come to their mutual release, but he had yet to make love to her.

"We're going out tonight," Edward said, admiring how his large Marnier's tee shirt covered her slim body. She raised her eyebrow expectantly waiting on him to be more specific. "Just us; wear something formal, be ready by seven."

"Okay," Bella murmured as Edward captured her lips in a chaste kiss.

"I'm going to finish up in here and meet you downstairs for brunch," Edward said softly dismissing her so he could finish his arrangements for tonight.

"See you in twenty?" she asked hopefully.

"Yes, love," Edward smiled eyes raking over her long legs. "Why don't you call and check on EJ for me?" he asked knowing she had been worried about him.

He watched as she walked down the staircase dialing the number to one of his favorite and privately-funded restaurants.

"Mr. Cullen, how can I help you today?" The owner asked.

"Devin, I need your signature room tonight, say seven thirty," Edward demanded his voice leaving no room for negotiation.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cullen, but the signature room is booked tonight – an engagement."

Edward swore internally, he wasn't as cruel as his father, but he wasn't a pushover. "Then move it," he ordered. "Devin, after everything I've done for you, you're going to deny me one little request."

"No, Sir." Devin answered back.
"Push the engagement party back a few hours, call them, apologize, comp their meal and offer them a five hundred dollar gift card for their wedding for the inconvenience," Edward snapped. "Andrew will drop the gift card off in a few hours."

"What's the occasion, Mr. Cullen?" Devin asked politely.

"My engagement," Edward said shortly, "and, Devin no press, not so much as a whisper of this conversation gets out, understood. I want to be able to come and go without so much as a picture in the papers."

"Of course, Mr. Cullen." Devin agreed. "Now how would you like to propose, we have a variety of creative and fun ways to 'pop' the question so to speak."

"No – I will be presenting her with the ring," Edward said stiffly. "Champagne, roses with white daisies and raspberry chocolate truffles."

"We'll see you tonight, Mr. Cullen and congratulations.

..." You look stunning," Edward complimented, taking in Bella's navy, sleeveless dress with matching jacket with an open front, long sleeves with a few well-placed sequins. The dress clung to her in all the right places.

"You're not so shabby yourself, Mr. Cullen," Bella teased, eyeing his handsome navy, pinstriped suit, tie, and as always well-polished shoes.

"Your chariot awaits ma'am," he teased back, linking a possessive arm around her waist. She smiled, loving how his face softens with his charming smile.

The restaurant was nestled at the top of hill that had a wonderful view of downtown Seattle, similar to his office. Antonio made sure to park in the small underground parking garage reserved for special clientele. They watched the city lights glimmer in the night sky from their private seating. "It's beautiful," Bella commented softly, smoothing out her dress.

"I love this city, my city, but you, Isabella are the real beauty," Edward said, his focus on the flickering lights for a moment before returning his attention back to her.

Neither spoke while their waiter filled their glasses full of champagne.

They ate, talked, laughed and sipped champagne as the meal came to an end, and their waiter presented them with Edward's prearranged dessert truffles. Edward waited until the waiter made his exit before slipping their marriage contract onto the table.

"These documents are offering you the chance to be my wife," Edward said, coming to stand before Bella, pulling her to her feet as he repeated the words he had said to her some months ago. "These documents have all the fine lines we've smoothed out, but Isabella Swan, I want you for my wife – just as I wanted you to mother my child; we need you," Edward said dropping to one knee. "I will offer you anything, everything, even the world, but first you must say yes, Bella." He clicked open the box.

"As much as I'm dying to say yes, Edward, I want to know why me? There are millions of women who would marry you in a heartbeat; so why me?" Bella asked curiously.

Edward's green eyes met hers, he knew this is the one time he shouldn't dodge her question as he had
in the past, "I feel comfortable with you. I will admit by having control over us and our contracts, make me calm and assured about this decision. No one left the impression in my life like you have. You are the woman I want to spend the next several years growing old with, raising a son with."

Bella's jaw went slack as she processed his words, the almighty Edward Cullen was directing at her. "I want you to be my wife. I was looking for a mother for EJ, but I never expected to want a wife and, Isabella, you make me want you, want us, to be a family. So, will you marry me?"

"Yes," Bella whispered too choked up to speak as Edward slipped the ring upon her finger. He kissed her forehead as she leaned forward and signed the prenuptial agreement. The contract that stated she would be legally bound to him for a minimum of sixteen years or else she'd lose the seven-million-dollar trust, caring for his child, caring for him, everything laid out, every possible angle covered.

They left together, headed back to his estate, entangled in each other. It should worry him how spontaneous and impatient Isabella made him. How he had to have her, how possessive she made him feel, the normalcy she brought them.

As Antonio pulled onto his street his cell phone rang.

"Edward," Emmett coughed his breathing heavy and raspy. "Someone just torched Ryan's. – No! I don't want to ride in any damn ambulance, back the fuck off man," Emmett ranted at an EMT.

"Emmett, are you okay?" Edward demanded, his voice taking on a panicked edge.

"I'm fine, Eddie Boy," Emmett laughed. "Covered in soot, thank god I made Rosalie stay home tonight. It took four of us to bust the door open, this was definitely an act of sabotage and attempted murder."

"I'll be right there," Edward said clicking his phone shut, his jaw tight; a grim frown set across his face as he turned to a worried Bella. "I have to go."

"What happened?" Bella asked concerned touching his cheek lightly as they pulled to a stop.

"Ryan's a bar, the first business I ever owned, was maliciously set on fire; people were locked inside, my brother included. Luckily, the men didn't panic and they busted the windows and doors in, and so far, it's believed everyone got out safely," Edward explained roughly, his voice tight and his emotions cold. Tonight was a firm reminder of just who he was and how many enemies he has, that he can't protect everyone. His heart twisted as he realized he was pulling her into his world, entangling her into his dangerous life.

"Why would someone do that?" she whispered sadly.

"Isabella, there are people, many people who want to hurt me, even a few who'd love to see me dead. I'm hated for the family name I carry, for the name I've made for myself, for my success and wealth." Edward reached down and brought her engagement ring to his lips. "I need you to think, really think if you want to be part of my life," he said giving her an out. "I probably won't return to the estate until tomorrow afternoon."

"Okay," Bella said kissing his lips softly. "Tomorrow, I'll probably head to my apartment with Andrew; wait, do you think Andrew would mind helping me finish packing?"

"I'm sure he won't mind. I'll make sure he's well-compensated for his help," Edward said kissing her once more. "Please love, think about what I told you. I will not be hurt or disappointed if you decide you can't be a part of our lives."
"I'll see you tomorrow, be safe," she said slipping out of the car. Her heart clenched in pain as he pulled out of the drive, bodyguards in tow. The worry taking root in her heart, but she smiled at Edward's silly words; she didn't need to think about it, she was all in.

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
Edward brushed past an emergency responder trying to stop him from entering the crime scene. He stumbled over debris, rubble, ash, broken glass, nudged soot-covered tables out of his way. He whirled around slowly wrinkling his nose, swallowing hard as he took in the disrepair, the ruined remnants of Ryan's, his first business, his first real success.

"Stay out," Edward ordered his men. Antonio stepped forward, "Boss, you need to get out of here. This area isn't secure."

"I said stay out," Edward hollered, he waited for a moment, when Antonio refused to retreat as requested, he snapped pulling his gun on his longtime friend. "Get the fuck out of here."

"Whoa, Boss," Antonio breathed holding his hands out as he backed out of the front door.

Edward's fist slammed forth into a wooden pillar. His stomach burned like acid as he stared his failure in the face, his failure to protect his family, his property.

He scowled as his phone blared through the silence, "What?" he snapped into the microphone.

"Tick–tock, tick-tock," a man taunted over the phone line.

"Who is this?" Edward snarled into the phone; for the first time he could feel the bloodthirsty ache, the want, the need to kill, quick easy old school justice he was against.

"Lovely evening for a barbeque? Eh, Mr. Cullen." The man mocked nonchalantly.

"I'm warning you, once, stop fucking with me." Edward cautioned his tone harsh and threatening.

The man laughed. "How's the fiancée?"

Edward felt his blood turn to ice. The how, whys, filling his mind as the line went dead. No one should be aware of his engagement. Bella's sweet smile flashing behind his eyelids. He hit the seven on his cellphone and pressed send.

"Andrew," he spoke sharply into the phone. "Lock down the house, get Isabella in the safe room now."

"Boss, Isabella is in the shower," Andrew said hesitant.

"I don't care if she's in Timbuktu, get her in the fucking safe room NOW. I'm issuing a code black. IS that understood?"

"Understood, Boss, code black, safe room, now," Andrew spoke, his voice shifting from casual to deathly serious. He knew he could trust him; trust him to give everything to protect his Bella. Edward stepped out of the building, breathing in the cold air as he hit the end call button.

"Are you okay?" Edward enquired, clasping his younger brother's shoulder fondly, his face and clothes were filthy; soiled with soot and dirt. Edward's smile was strained, but he was happy to hear Emmett's shaky laughter.

"I'm just relieved I was here to help break down the doors. Fuck Eddie – that fire burned fast, crazy fast."
"It's a good thing you're all right, kid." Edward paused, pushing the thought of what could've happened to Emmett out of his mind. "I want you to inform Jasper, they're to make their way back from the lake before sunrise." He turned to Antonio, whom he owed an apology. "Antonio, what I did back there wasn't right."

"No blood, no foul," Antonio gruffed. Edward nodded, grateful for his understanding.

"Come on let's get to mom's," Emmett said tossing an arm over his elder brother's shoulder. "Rosalie is in a panic, and I bet mom already has a batch of muffins or cookies in the oven."

…

"Isabella!" Andrew knocked roughly on the bathroom door causing Bella to jump in the shower. "Get out, we're under lockdown. There has been a direct threat to your life – Edward's ordered us to the safe room."

Safe room? What the hell is a safe room? Bella thought frantically as she dried off and slipped into the fancy yoga pants that felt like heaven with a label she couldn't pronounce, and her favorite old snug-fitting Mariner's tee. Years of sharing a bathroom with her Dad had taught her to always take her clothes with her, to avoid any awkward moments.

"Isabella, you have ten seconds to open the door before I bust it open and toss your naked ass over my shoulder," Andrew threatened. Edward would have his life, everything he valued if anything happened to her. He practically sighed in relief when the bathroom door popped open, revealing a fully dressed Bella.

"What's going on?" Bella demanded, her voice shaking as her stomach twisted, her mind conjured up horrible terrifying scenarios of what was happening.

"Edward has received a direct threat from your stalker," came Andrew's crisp reply, he watched while she darted to her jewelry safe and quickly unlocked it. "Ma'am we don't have time for this, we need to get to the safe room now." His eyes widened when she turned a small pistol held in right hand.

"Let's go, Andrew," Bella said motioning for the man to get a move on.

"Wait, Isabella, do you know how to use a gun?" Andrew asked surprised, watching her handle the weapon with an ease most women didn't have.

She snorted softly at Andrew's question as she followed him to the basement. "I was raised by my single father who was the police chief in our tiny town. I can spiral a football, cast a rod and my aim is straight," she answered stopping when Andrew came to a halt in the basement. Bella watched, mouth gaping slightly when Andrew unlocked a drawer.

"I need your hand," he spoke sharply when he pulled open the drawer, attached to the entertainment center. Bella blinked, but placed her hand on a panel that quickly scanned her fingertips, then asked for a five-digit passcode that Andrew punched in.

Oh mother of mercy! She thought as a piece of the wall opened up revealing Edward's safe room.

"We're safe in here," Andrew said after the wall – the door closed behind them. Bella followed him as he turned on the lights. He pointed down the hallway, "the bedrooms and bathrooms." She nodded numbly, her mind racing as she took in the living room that they were standing in, a small kitchen set to the back of the room. When Bella didn't speak Andrew spoke, "There are two bathrooms, three small bedrooms, and a security room. It wasn't a damn safe room; it was a fucking
safe house. Who the hell needs a safe house this vast? It was a …a fallout shelter. She blinked back
tears. "And, Isabella, no one, knows this place exists."

"Is EJ okay? Is Edward? His family?" Bella asked quietly, her mind still spinning like an endless top.

"EJ is fine, he'll be down here before sunrise," Andrew answered barely looking up from his phone
as he communicated via text message with Edward and the rest of the family. Out of the corner of his
eye he watched as Bella paced the room, he could tell the young woman was deep in thought by the
way her eyes darted back in forth when she forced herself to be still for a moment before the pacing
resumed.

"This isn't James, is it?" she muttered softly to herself, but in the complete silence she might as well
have yelled it, as Andrew's brow furrowed. She shook her head negatively. He hadn't contacted her,
not since he left Forks. The charity event had been a fluke, a chance to mess with her to hurt her, but
he wouldn't do this, he wasn't that crazy.

... 

"Edward, you must handle this swiftly; this man, is making you look weak – incompetent." Carlisle
commanded harshly, slamming his Scotch glass on the fireplace. "I raised you to be a man, not this
deskbound CEO you've become. Do NOT forget whose name you carry. You're a Cullen and it's
about damn time you start behaving as one."

His jaw locked, nostrils flared as he bit back at his father, his voice low, hard, hostile, "I haven't." No
one spoke or moved as father and son squared off with one another. "I have more enemies than I can
shake a fist at." Edward paused for effect, sucking in a sharp breath and releasing it. "We're in a new
world, a different era, justice can't be halfcocked, it has to be meticulous, flawless," Edward said
lowly, his entire body tense frustration for his father and his old-way thinking.

"Emmett, stay here with Mom and Dad," he ordered downing the last bit of whiskey in his glass and
slipping back into his suit jacket.

"Where the hell are you going?" Emmett barked.

"Home," Edward answered roughly. "I have a fiancée I need to return to. We won't learn anything
new until morning. I want Aro in my office by the end of the day tomorrow. This feels like his
tomfuckery."

"Aro is family, boy, blood family." Carlisle hissed.

"We might be cousins, but Aro has made his distaste, distrust of me clear, ever since I have taken my
place at the head of the family," Edward retorted. "Open your eyes, Carlisle, Aro is a vile man
whose jealousy eats at him like a parasite. He cannot live up to his father's name, where I have
surpassed mine. His envy makes him even more dangerous to our family—the Cullen Family,"
Edward informed the room before making his way to the exit.

"Whoa, whoa …Hold the fuck up, Eddie boy, pump your breaks already," Emmett boomed his
voice lighter, more carefree than the rest of his family. "You said Fiancée, you're getting married?"

Edward rolled his eyes his lips twitching at his brother's excitement. "I proposed tonight."

"You're shitting me?" Emmett asked raising an eyebrow, ignoring the head slap his wife gave him
for his language.

"I am not 'shitting you,' bended knee, ring, and candlelight, the whole enchilada," he stated, mouth
twitching upward.

"And she said, Yes?" Emmett teased good-naturedly.

"Yes," he blinked surprised when his brother engulfed him in a tight hug.

"Congratulations, Eddie." He nodded thankful for his brother's enthusiasm and his ability to ignore the frowns of his mother, father and his wife.

"Edward," Esme objected softly, "She's a child."

"She isn't." Edward rebuffed his mother words, his voice growing stern. "Isabella Swan is going to be my wife, the mother to your grandchildren. You need to get over whatever reservations you have against her and fast."

"The car is warmed, the garage is clear," Antonio spoke giving his boss and friend an out. He could tell by the very way Edward stood he was exhausted on every level.

"Thank you, Antonio," Edward offered following his longtime companion guard out of the house. He sank into the comfortable cushions of the suburban and lifted the phone to his ear, checking in with Jasper. Thankfully, nothing shifty had gone down and they were safely in route home.

"She's fine." Andrew informed them quietly so as not disturb Bella who had curled up on the sofa instead of in the bedroom. "She didn't overreact; she followed me down here without a fuss. Then she paced for a few hours before I forced her to sit down, watch TV, and have a cup of tea. She didn't get a quarter of the cup drunk before she passed out. She did mutter something, but I don't think she meant to say it aloud. She was shaking her head, pacing, very deep in thought."

"What did she say; cut to the chase, Andy?" Edward demanded cutting Andrew off.

"She pondered aloud if this was James," he said baffled, unsure what her words really meant, but Edward's eyebrow jumped up in surprise; his entire body went on alert. James Newton, his father's go-to-boy, the man his father was vouching for to become an inner part of the family. James, who had been one of Bella's bullies. If Bella was wondering, accusing James internally, meant he had presumed wrong. James had done something more than tease his sweet love.

"I want James Newton and Jacob Black strung up in the warehouse tomorrow night for an interrogation," Edward instructed coldly, his eyes flashing toward Bella, who was curled up peacefully on his sofa. "Retire for the night, boys," Edward orders. Once the gentle click of the guards' bedroom door closed, he moves toward Bella scooping her into his arms.

He watched in fascination as her eyes fluttered open, a warm smile spreading across her face before it flickered away and worry crinkled across her face.

"Is EJ okay?" she panicked, eyes watering.

"He's fine," Edward reassured, "I just spoke to Jasper, and they'll be here soon."

"Good, good, I've been so worried," Bella muttered sagging against Edward, her smile slowly returning finding comfort in Edward's words. "I thought you said you wouldn't be back until tomorrow afternoon?" She questioned fumbling with the button on his dress shirt, smiling shyly at him, even with all the worry, fear she had experienced the last few hours, the safest she had ever felt was right here and now in Edward's arms.

"There's nothing I can do until morning, and there is nowhere else I'd rather be," he whispered in her
ear, enjoying the way her soft body affected him.

"What happened, Edward?" Bella asked, her eyes losing the last bit of hazy sleepiness.

"Your stalker and my tormentor who's been attacking me by causing chaos on my businesses. Turns out he's the same bloke. He burnt down Ryan's. He called me as I stood inside of the ruined building. I was clued in because his message was the same, that fucking tickity-tock shit. Then he asked how my fiancée was, the second those words slipped past that fuckers lips, I put you and EJ in a code black."

*Code Black, what the heck?* Her confusion must have shown because Edward sighed bitterly. "A code black is what level of caution your security team will be treating you with. A code black is simple, Isabella. It means that one of your guards: Andrew, Matthew or Jimmy will always be with you at all times – same goes for EJ. They'll be doing more than just shadowing from a distance, like in the past, for a while until it's safe to drop the security level, they will be escorting you everywhere—bathrooms, your classes, your volunteer work."

Her eyes widened. "Okay," she croaked understanding he was trying to protect her and EJ.

"I will go ballistic if you try and ditch them," Edward warned darkly, his eyes flashing intensely.

*Ballistic?* Bella thought nodding tightly, her heart fluttering wildly in her chest. Every so often she'd catch a glimpse of a darker Edward, yet even when he says something crazy or possessive, she still felt safe, protected, loved.

"Say you'll be a good girl, Isabella?" Edward requested huskily, she didn't miss the innuendo.

"I'll be a good girl," Bella murmured softly, eyes bright and teasing as a soft groan tore from his lips.

It was an exciting, lust-filled power trip to make a man of Edward's status moan. She felt his hand curl around the nape of her neck, his fingers entangling themselves into her hair as he pulled her into him, closer, his mouth captured her swiftly full of possession and pride, his tongue demanding entrance, she gasped as he tugged on her hair roughly giving him the entryway he wanted, the kiss became deeper, needier. Edward's free hand anchored itself to her waist, pulling her on top of him.

They knew they couldn't finish the act they had initiated; they broke apart at the sound of Edward's ever present cock-blocking phone.

"They're here," Edward muttered as Isabella peeled herself away from him. She straightened his collar and he smoothed down her messy hair, giving her a look that didn't scream 'just fucked' or fooled around as the case may be.

The door opened and EJ burst into the living room, "Bella," he shouted rushing into her arms.

"Did you have a good time?" Bella asked forcing a small smile across her face masking her underlying worry.

"Uncle Jasper and Auntie Alice took me and Tanner fishing at the lake, and when we were hiking I slipped and look..." He paused yanking up his pant leg and showing Bella his scabbed-up knee. "Cool, right?" he asked turning her heart to mush at his adorable eager expression.

'All boy,' she thought fondly. "Very cool; does it hurt?" Bella asked gently. EJ shrugged softly.

Edward's breath got caught in the back of his throat as Bella brought EJ's bruised knee to her lips. "One extra special kiss to make it heal up super fast," she told the small boy who had stolen her heart.
EJ grinned cheekily up at his father, his eyes wide with wonder, "Bella's kisses have superpowers."

Author Note...

Beta'ed by awaywithwords3

Review
"Where do you think you're going?" Edward asked, straightening his tie in the mirror and turning as he buttoned up his black suit jacket. They had spent yesterday in the panic room – house. After twenty-four hours of no additional threats, they decided to move out of lockdown.

"To class," Bella muttered, lacing up her Irish-green converse.

"Oh no, you're not. You're going to stay here," Edward demanded, his jaw tightening, his frustration building as Bella ignored him and continued fixing her hair into a sloppy bun as if he hadn't spoken.

"Edward, I have to go," Bella stated, jamming her text books back into her Kate Spade messenger bag.

"Can't you take a week off?" Edward asked, raking a hand through his hair roughly, she was going to turn him grey. Bella, for the most part didn't mind his I-don't-give-a-fuck- I'm Edward Cullen, and you'll bend to my way's attitude. She had watched politicians, her school dean, and other power people cave to his commands, but he had another think coming if he thought she was going to jeopardize her education. She had worked too hard, sacrificed too much to ruin it now.

Bella whirled around and pinned Edward with a hard glare. "No, I can't just take the week off. Do you know what next week is? Finals, Edward, Finals. So no, I'm not going to take a week or even a day off," she screeched tossing her hands up; she took a deep breath knowing Edward was trying to protect her, but she wasn't going to let fear rule her. "Andrew is going to be by my side the entire day. I'll be fine. I trust Antonio to keep you safe while you're at work, and EJ isn't staying home from school. I'm not naïve, I know the danger I'm in, but I won't risk my GPA, and I most certainly won't risk repeating a semester. I've worked too hard."

"Isabella," Edward hissed roughly, eyes narrowing.

"Don't, Isabella me, Edward. I'm not going to twiddle my thumbs while being locked up in Fort Cullens. I have a life and I'm going to live it. Andrew come here," she hollered down the hall.

Andrew entered the hostile room, standing awkwardly as his gaze bounced between his boss and his charge, but neither Edward nor Bella looked at him, too wrapped up in their own stare down, as they tried to get the other to back down.

"Andrew, what is your primary responsibility?" Bella snapped.

"To protect you, ma'am," he stated firmly.

"Exactly, we're not going to be gallivanting around the city are we? What did I tell you about the plan for today?" Bella asked softer, a smug grin tugging at her lips as Edward continued to scowl at her.

"No, ma'am. You're going to attend your classes, and then we're to come back to the estate. I'm also to remind you to cancel your lunch plans with Angela and Ben," Andrew listed his duties for the day.

"Andrew, take Jimmy with you, you're both on guard. She's not to even to use the restroom alone. Is that understood?" Edward issued coldly, straightening his coat jacket releasing a cross sigh.

Bella's smile was beautiful as she whispered thank you before lightly pecking his lips. Edward
couldn't help but feel a little proud of her bravery to carry on.

Edward didn't get a chance to respond as EJ sprinted into the room. "Bella, helps me," he squealed giving her a wide toothy grin, motioning at the school uniform that he had attempted to button on his own which ended up crooked.

"EJ," Bella paused briefly as she snapped on his clip-on school tie. "I want you to have a super good day," she said with fake pep as she lifted him up and into her arms. "I want you to promise me that you'll stay with Marcus at all times, like we've talked about." He was heavy, but not overwhelming so, as she carried him down to the entrance foyer.

"Why? Is something bad going on?" EJ asked, his young, green eyes becoming clouded and watery with worry. Bella's heart clenched and tears sprang forth in her eyes.

"No," she started to say, but was quickly cut off by EJ's raised eyebrow silently calling her out on her lie. "Okay, yes, but you're safe. You like Marcus, right?"

"Yes, he's really silly and super strong." EJ giggled twirling a strand of Bella's hair.

"Yes, well, Marcus has a secret. He's a superhero with only one job in the whole wide world."

"What's that?" EJ asked peeking over Bella's shoulder at Marcus in wonder.

"To protect you," Bella stated seriously. "You're such a special boy that you have your very own superhero to protect you, especially when your Daddy or I can't be with you. Now, promise me you won't go anywhere without him, no wandering off alone." Marcus nodded discreetly at Bella that he'd do anything to keep the young Cullen safe.

"Okay, Bella." EJ agreed kissing her cheek gently before she passed him over to his father. She watched them as EJ hugged his father tightly. Thank you! Edward mouthed to his fiancée, his eyes lighter.

"You be safe, too, Daddy?" EJ asked fiddling with a button on his father's suit jacket.

"Of course, I have Antonio," Edward said reassuringly.

EJ leaned forward and whispered quietly, causing his father's lips to twitch and his heart to swell with love for Bella as he asked, "Is he a superhero, too?"

... 

"So, what's up with the men in the black escorts?" Angela asked quietly linking her arm through Bella's, frowning at Jimmy and Andrew.

"They're my new BFFs, we go everywhere together, right guys?" Bella chirped sarcastically making light of her situation, not wanting to worry her longtime friend.

"We need to talk – alone, like yesterday," Angela whispered seriously, her eyes flashing between Bella's and her bodyguards'.

Bella glanced Angela over, and she could see something was seriously troubling her. Angela's hair was a tousled mess, thrown in a quick ponytail, her clothes were wrinkled, not Angela's typical polished style.

"All right boys, quickly check the classroom and then scoot," Bella ordered quietly, opening an
empty classroom door.

"Ma'am?" Andrew questioned.

"You'll be able to see me through the door window. I won't be out of view," Bella improvised, it was twisting the rules, not actually breaking them.

Angela waited for the men to close the door before releasing a heavy-hearted sigh.

"Well?" Bella prompted nervously tapping her right foot.

Angela wrung her hands nervously, "Girly, I need you to listen to me. I know you think Edward is just a businessman and I thought that, too, until my sister's FBI boyfriend Tyler had a file on you and your romance with Edward. His father Carlisle Cullen, is a, *vile man*. He's been accused and tried for bribery, prostitution, money laundering, racketeering, illegal high stakes gambling, and murder, are just a few of the things the court tried to nab him on, he got off on a technicality, almost all of his associates are serving prison time, like, *life* prison time," Angela whispered lowly.

Bella's skin tingled as her stomach grew cold and heavy. "Wait, what?" Bella asked, collapsing into an empty chair and staring blankly at the empty chalkboard.

"Do I need to draw you a picture--Google them," Angela urged quietly, eyes darting back to Bella's bodyguards who were watching them from the door window. "You'll see what I'm saying isn't just campus rumors."

"This is crazy," Bella declared abruptly, not wanting to believe Angela. "I've got to go Angie," she muttered not looking back as she quickly left the room.

"Just think on it, please, Bella, I don't want to see you hurt. They're dangerous people." Angela screamed after her, pleading with her.

...It can't be true... Bella thought as her Political Thought professors rambled Edward's words from the night of their engagement came back to haunt her. "Isabella, there's people, many people who want to hurt me, even a few who'd love to see me dead. I'm hated for the family name I carry, for the name I've made for myself, for my success and wealth."

...Edward relaxed into his chair after receiving word from Andrew and Jimmy that Bella had returned to the estate safely with no sign of the threat.

"Aro, welcome," Edward greeted his cousin with a false cheerfulness.

"Eddie boy, what prompted this meeting, I've been trying to get in to see you for the last week, but you've been a busy, busy, boy?" Edward glowered at his childhood nickname rolling off his twisted cousin's lips. Aro was dressed sharply, but the materials that covered him weren't the same quality as Edward's. It was unnoticeable to the untrained eye, but Edward could see the financial struggle and the stress of being the head of the Volturi family had aged Aro.

"I found the time; what brings you to my city, Aro?" Edward asked flatly leaning back into his large office chair.

"I needed a break, Eddie boy, Chicago is all hustle – hustle to make a buck. I've always been overly fond of Seattle." There was a pause as Edward straightened in his chair leveling his cousin with a glare, not ignoring the underlying threat in Aro's voice, but Aro carried on unaffected by Edward's
menacing stare. "Father knows of my affections, and he thought I should come and see how the Natives have been handling my business, being as my own cousin is too good to dirty his hands with the family business."

"I have no interest in the trade or the time," Edward said lowly, his lips curling upwards. "I'm a busy man." The first thing he had gotten his organization out of, was the drug and gun trade as fast and smoothly as possible. The Natives were a strong, well-manned, motorcycle club that Edward puppeteered from a safe distance. The Natives now handled Aro's trade. Spread the prosperity, was Edward's motto. The more he cleared his hands of his father's driveul activities, the more his personal wealth grew, and with his personal wealth so did his family's.

"How is Uncle Caius?"

"Not adjusting to retirement." Aro offered truthfully, leaning back as Edward poured them a drink. "I spend half my time convincing him out of his old way thinking, and the other half covering his seasoned ass. I don't have a fuckin' clue how you've handled Uncle Carlisle so well. He was the scariest sonofabitch growing up; I've spoken with him a few times this week, he seems happy – happier than my father."

"He's retired and he's not rotting in the State Pen," Edward bit out. "He can't afford to make the calls anymore. When I took over the family seat, it became mine, not ours to share." Edward smirked at Aro who returned Edward's taunting smiles with a snarl. "Mom keeps him busy helping with her fundraisers, and every so often he plans a high stakes night."

"I heard about your bar; have you found the culprit – arsonist?" Aro asked a little too casually. Edward didn't miss the flicker of a smirk that fluttered across Aro's face as he asked, "Ryan's, wasn't that your first bar?"

"Yes, thirteen years of success and loyal customers. There is no doubt they'll return once I'm able to reopen the bar," Edward said with a sly smirk, letting Aro know that the attack hadn't affected him.

"Oh, but I hear that people are starting to doubt the polish you've added to the Cullen name," Aro snarked. "Maybe people are starting to consider that the apple fell a lot closer to the tree than they believed."

... Bella curled up on the sofa not really watching the Seattle late-night talk show as her mind whirled. Now that EJ was fast asleep and unable to distract her, her thoughts returned to Angela's words of warning. Bella shot up straight and fumbled with the remote turning up the volume as a picture of her and Edward looking cozy together flashed across the large television screen. "We have lots of questions tonight about the notorious Cullen family. Is Edward Cullen, Seattle's most charitable man as many claim? Or is it a cover for a more sinister mask maybe; Wolf, the apple didn't fall far from the tree after all? We all remember the fall of Carlisle Cullen's criminal organization five years ago."

"I don't know, Dixon," Wolf laughed. "Edward Cullen has been an upstanding citizen for years; the sins of the father are not the sins of the son. Edward Cullen has not had so much as a parking ticket."

"Ryan's favorite local bar, owned by Mr. Cullen, was struck by an arsonist late Saturday night when packed to capacity. Wolf, this makes a suspicious man out of me, maybe not all felonious ties have been broken? It appears someone might be after Seattle's infamous crime family." Bella felt dazed, as she clasped a hand over her mouth.

"And it could be a coincidence," Wolf chuckled. "Edward Cullen owns multiple businesses ranging
from bars, a porn industry, hotels and casinos," Wolf barked back rolling his eyes at his over eager
co-host. "He's been Washington's most eligible bachelor for four years running now? Or are the
rumors true, is Seattle's favorite multi-millionaire settling down?" Another picture of her and Edward
as they strolled the pier after their engagement, and then another of Edward kissing her engagement
ring.

"We have many questions Seattle, and are prime inquiry tonight is, "Just who is Edward Cullen?"
…

"Antonio, keep the car warm," Edward ordered coolly keeping his facial features blank. "If you see
anything of importance, call me."

"Of course, Boss." Antonio confirmed.

Edward strolled into the warehouse, his shoulders back, chest out, but his eyes gave him a sinister
edge for they were cold and calculated.

"James is a noisy fucker, and the other man is calm as a cucumber," Emmett muttered.

"Emmett, this is personal; you might want to go home," Edward offered his younger brother an out.
Emmett clasped his brother's shoulder; it had been a long time since he had seen his brother this low,
this menacing. He knew in his gut Edward needed someone to watch his back to pull him back from
the brink.

"Emmett and I aren't going anywhere," Jasper said. "How do you want to do this?" Jasper asked
with a lazy smirk. Edward inwardly grimaced. Jasper had a knack for retrieving information from
unwilling sources.

"Black, we're going to leave him alone, he's only here to confirm or deny James' story." Edward
stated. "James – he's done something to Bella. It's past history, but it's bad enough that she thought
he could be behind these attacks against my name."

"So, instead of asking your fiancée, we're going to torture a man that is supposed to make the family
in a few months' time?" Emmett asked in disbelief; James was practically another son to their father.
Not that Emmett, Jasper or Edward cared much for Carlisle's errand boy.

"I want the truth, the full truth," Edward snapped; he had never cared for James. "Not the watered-
down version that Isabella would give me." He moved down the hall.

"What the fuck is going on man? The Cullens, they'll have your head for this shit." Edward's lips
curled upwards as he took in James' screams.

"Pipe the fuck down – I'm reading," Sam grunted absentmindedly, turning a page of his book as
Edward stepped into the dimly lit room. The walls were concrete, the air smelt stale and musty.

"Hello, James," Edward greeted as Sam stood up and quietly left the room.

"What the hell, Boss?" James grunted, wide eyed, pulling at his chains.

"James, I want answers and I'm neither patient nor kind." Edward warned lowly, his voice dark and
ominous.

"Answers to what?" he squeaked suddenly terrified, this wasn't a sick prank.
"I want to know why my fiancée accused you of these attacks against my name and businesses?"

"I'm not… No. I'm loyal, Boss… what fiancée?" James began shaking his head in confusion, then his nostrils flared as he realized who Edward's fiancée was. "Fucking Bella," he swore spitting on the ground. "Listen, Bella and I, we have some bad blood that's all. I'd never go against a Cullen."

"What kind of bad blood?" Edward hissed through clenched teeth.

"The kind that will prevent you from marrying the little whore. Carlisle will never let you tie the knot with her." Edward slammed his fist into James' nose. Edward smirked coldly at the scream that ripped from James' throat as blood gushed out of his nose as he fell from his chair in pain.

"Get Black in here," Edward ordered forcing James back into his chair roughly.

"Sam I …man," Black grunted. "This is just a misunderstanding."

"Whatever this is you better fix it or you can forget about patching in." Sam, the president of the Natives MC grunted shoving Jacob into the room.

"Hello, Black."

"Mr. Cullen," Black took him in with a level dull stare. "Newton, it's been awhile," Black laughed hollowly, almost like he had been expecting this confrontation.

"What do you want, Mr. Cullen?" Jacob asked tonelessly, acceptant of his dire situation.

"I want to know why Isabelle would accuse James of burning down my bar?" Edward snarled emotionlessly, his grip tight around the metal handle of his handgun.

"James forced her into an abortion in our sophomore year, then taunted her for the rest of the semester, making her social life hell," Jacob informed Edward softly as James laughed maniacally.

"Jakey, Ol' Jakey, is that what you really think happened," James spat, spitting blood in his direction as Jasper took an intimidating step forward from the shadows.

"I know I stopped her from committing suicide on my damn cliff. I know that our taunting, our group dismissal and whatever you did, fucked her up enough she thought about ending her life. I know you turned one of the most beautiful and strongest girls I've ever known into a mousy pariah."

Edward stepped backwards as Jacob lunged forward picking James up from the chair. No one stopped him as Jacob shook James forcibly before knocking him into the cement wall behind him. "I don't know anything. All I do know is she disappeared for three and half fucking weeks after I told you she was pregnant, and she came back this skittish, mousy girl who jumped at her own shadow and never talked to anyone but the geek squad."

James cackled as a tear streamed down his face. "I kept telling her, pressuring her emotionally, physically. I played every card I could think of. I paid her thousands to abort the kid. My father panicked when she didn't; he even offered to pay for her college, any school Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, MIT. She kept telling me it was too late," James shouted half crazily. "I didn't know jack about pregnancy or abortion and Carlisle gave my father this drug to inject her with. My Dad told me it was either my life or the kid's, because no son of his was going to rot in the penitentiary for child molestation. I was eighteen and she wasn't even sixteen yet."

"So, what did you do?" Emmett glowered coldly surprising everyone.
"I did what Carlisle and my dad told me. I drove her up to Tacoma where Carlisle could handle the doctors who would keep her as a Jane Doe," James said bitterly. "Of course she didn't come easily. She's a spitfire, so much spunk, fought me the entire time; she begged, pleaded, kicked, scratched, but in the end she just tried to shield her stomach. I have scars from that night, injected her with fuck if I know, and she passed out and Dad rigged the car to crash." Edward felt his blood run cold as the lie Bella had told him about her scar. His father, his family had been involved in her torment, the loss of her child.

"It wasn't until later, afterward, when I learned she had been four months along," James sobbed. "I had been seventeen when she got pregnant," he spit bitterly. "I wouldn't have gone to jail. I killed my child for nothing, and it was easier to hate her so I tormented her, I bullied her, made her life hell along with mine."

No one spoke after his confession. Jacob lunged forward again, his fist raising and falling as he beat the holy hell out of the man that had once been his mentor.

"That's enough, Black." Jasper grunted pulling Jacob off of a bleeding James.

"I'm not my old man," Edward breathed feeling nauseous as he raised the 45 to James' head and pressed it against his temple. "I don't kill needlessly, but you—you make me want to put a bullet between your pretty blue eyes." He stared James down until the younger man averted his blue eyes to the cold concrete. Never had he felt the overwhelming urge to kill so ruthlessly. "Jasper, I want you to arrange Victoria's memorial flowers and have Jenks find and transfer James' international funds into trust for his young children. Emmett, please escort Mr. Black to the campus, and Jacob, tonight never happened." Emmett waited for Jacob's shaky nod before leading him out of the room. Jasper ignored James' pleading as he followed Emmett and Jacob out the door.

Edward entered his house quietly and Bella's voice drifted over him momentarily relaxing him until her words registered with his mind. "I'm not your hostage, you let me out of here right now," Bella screamed into Jimmy's face. Andrew folded his arms, a deep frown set on his face.

"Listen here, honey, you ain't going anywhere without a guard," Jimmy tried to soothe.

"Don't you honey me, buster or I'll kick your ass," Bella threatened harshly, her voice hitching.

Edward stepped into the security room, as he was met with Bella's hostile glare, he knew he needed to prepare himself for a fast approaching shit storm.

"What in the world is going on in here?" Edward asked casually. Bella scowled but her heart lightened at the sight of him.

Marcus piped up when Bella refused to speak. "Isabella tried to sneak out."

"You did what?" Edward snapped, his tone incredulous, the stress of the last few days eating at him.

"Oh! Don't you try to Jimmy Hoffa me!" She yelled trying to storm out of the locked room.

Edward let out an amused yet baffled laugh, "What the hell does Jimmy Hoffa have to do with anything?" He asked.

"I just... I just needed some air and to think. Everything – all of this is so, so far out of my belief system, and I couldn't wrap my mind around it. You're a... a mobster!" She shrieked, tears springing to her eyes as she stared at the man she thought she knew. Edward shot his guards a look and they all
discreetly as possible fled the room.

"Isabella," Edward shushed, stepping cautiously forward.

"No – I've never so much as jay-walked, and you expected me to be okay with this?" She flung her arms around the room filled with monitors. "Sweet Jesus, Edward, my Daddy was the Police Chief. Angela told me what your dad was tried for, and it's all there on Wikipedia," she said, twirling her laptop around and showing him her computer screen. "Erica's FBI boyfriend is investigating your family; they have a file on me," Bella confessed, her eyes giving away her distress as she kept touching the old locket her father had given her for her tenth birthday.

"I'm not the monster you believe me to be," Edward whispered, stepping into her body space forcing his honest green eyes on hers as he pleaded his case. "How can I be a monster when my only thought is protecting and loving you and my son?"

"You can't say things like that," she cried, heart softening, her anger melting as she stared into his intense green eyes.

"I'm not my father, Bella," Edward declared. "I'm not responsible for his crimes; I'm only responsible for my own sins."

"And what sins do you carry?" she inquired trying to appear aloof, but her heart betrayed her as she searched his face, eyes for signs of the man she believed she knew.

"That I let a man live tonight when he should have died," Edward confessed quietly, his words ringing in her ears.

"You what?" Bella blinked, feeling as if the expensive carpet had been ripped out beneath her; he wasn't denying his family nor was he attempting to lie to her, he was confiding in her, trusting her. She paused as his body pressed against her as he reached around her and unlocked the door with a simple twist of the latch. She breathed him in; his expensive manly smell relaxed her, reached into her psyche and made her feel safe. She was sure his manly scent could only be found on him and not in the luxury exclusive cologne bottle that sat on his bathroom counter upstairs.

"Are you leaving?" Edward asked softly into her ear whirling her around to look at him. She knew in that moment as she stared into his haunted eyes that she wasn't, that she didn't want to leave him, but that didn't mean she wasn't still angry at being duped. He reached forward and gently cupped her cheek. "This is the last out I'm giving you. If you stay tonight, you're never getting away from me. You're mine forever, love," he warned darkly. "After tonight I won't tolerate it if you decide to walk away."

She walked off and up the stairs fully aware that he was stalking her, following her every move as he trailed behind her. Before she could open her bedroom door, Edward caught her arm and pulled her roughly against his chest, holding her against him as if it would be the last time.

His gaze was heavy and dull when Bella looked him directly in his eyes, the green eyes she loved so much. "What are you doing, where are you going?" he asked, his voice breaking, he couldn't phantom her staying.

"To bed – alone. I've told you before—I'm in," Bella whispered as he sucked in his breath before kissing her soundly on the lips, she pushed away from him softly. "I am angry and I need some time to think, to wrap my mind around everything, especially you being Jimmy Hoffa personified."

His eyes brightened making her heart jump. He let out a soft snicker before he told her, "Isabella,
Jimmy Hoffa was a union boss not a mob boss."

Bella glared at him, but a smirk was twitching at her lips as she slammed her bedroom door in his face as he cackled in the hallway. She knew without a whisper of a doubt that she was crazily, madly, irreversibly in love with him; there was no out, there never had been.

Author Note...

Beta’ed by awaywithwords3

Please Review!!!
Chapter 11

After entering her code at the keypad, Bella drove through the gates of the estate and let out a small huff. There had been no point in attending her morning classes; she hadn't been able to concentrate on the material or the lectures. How could she concentrate on anything–she was going to be Mrs. Edward Cullen, mob wife–it sounded like a damn reality show, not her life. She hung her school bag in the hall closet, placed her e-reader on the entryway table and slipped out of her converse sneakers. She was surprised that EJ wasn't waiting for her, like he usually is, especially now that he's on summer break.

"They're in the backyard, Sweetie." Elizabeth informed her fondly, holding out a glass of her favorite soda. "Edward's teaching EJ–well not actually teaching EJ anything–they're playing soccer, come watch."

Bella observed EJ and Edward from the kitchen window, watching as they kicked the soccer ball around the backyard. Her mind hadn't stopped; she spent the night before tossing and turning over every single moment she had spent with Edward. How had she missed it? The monster hiding behind the expensive suit and charming smiles. Her mind recoiled at the thought. He wasn't a monster. He was EJ's father, her soon to be husband. The same man that made her laugh, made her feel safe and protected. He was respected for his intellect and business-savvy mind, not just feared for the wrath he could bring. She knew, suspected that he let her see the man behind the mobster–a side no one sees–the domesticated, loving side.

Bella grinned as she heard the hallway entrance door slam open and then shut, and the sound of tiny feet pounded down the hallway.

"Uh, uh, wash your hands," Bella chided gently at the dirty boy who groaned and placed hand-picked flowers on the tabletop.

Elizabeth rolled her eyes heavenward, the poor flower bed. She smirked to herself as she spread the peanut butter over the apple slices, listening to the sound of the kitchen chair as it scraped across the tile floor. Bella had brought this house exactly what it needed–a matriarch; she had already done wonders for her boys.

EJ grinned up at Bella as she turned on the faucet. "Bella, I'm an..." he scrunched up his nose as he thought for a second, "...upper-tunist man."

"You mean you're an opportunist?" Bella asked, wondering briefly what her green-eyed boy was up to now, watching as he pumped too much soap into his tiny little palm. Neither of them glanced at Elizabeth who put their snack on the table and quietly left the room.

"Yeah, that," he charmed, his eyes twinkling with mischief. "Daddy had to go, he's thinking of a way to say sorry – he is sorry ya know?" He chirped happily lathering his hands with the soap. "And that means you and me have got the rest of the day to just us."

Bella's lips twitched upwards. "Oh yeah?"

"Yep." EJ nodded eagerly.
"What are you cooking up in that great big mind of yours?" Bella asked knowingly as she shut off the faucet and watched as he scrambled out of the chair, and gathered the flowers he picked for her in the garden bed.

"Miss Bella, it would be my honor if you'd go on a date with me," EJ announced seriously, holding out the colorful flowers he had picked for her. She took the flowers with a touched heart and breathed in their lovely scent. With a curl of his fingers, he motioned her down to his level and whispered, "Don't tell Miss Elizabeth, she gets all grouchy when I pluck flowers out of the garden, but Daddy helped me pick them just for you."

"And just where are we going on our date, Green Eyes?" Bella asked curiously.

EJ's eyes twinkled. "Our park," he stated as if it was obvious. "Ya' know the park, the one with the carousel."

Bella bit her lip and thought it over. Edward had... he had been the one to suggest that EJ and her do something fun together, just them. It was sneaky and underhanded of him to use her love for EJ against her. It didn't take a genius to figure out that he was still worried she'd pull a runner and bolt from him, away from him and the lifestyle he lived. She knew how much EJ treasured going to the quaint little park they had discovered down the road with the half-century-old carousel.

"Okay, go get ready and I'll tell Andrew." Bella agreed, her heart swelling at the pure joyful smile that blossomed across EJ's face before he turned and bolted. She could hear his feet pounding up the staircase as she made her way to the surveillance room.

"Andrew, inform Edward that we're going to Exploration Park," Bella instructed, watching as Andrew pulled out his cell phone and shot off a text message to his boss.

"The Suburban will be ready in five," Andrew responded. Bella gave her guard a glance over, these men, they knew actually who they were working for, did their bidding for. Bella didn't have a doubt in her mind that if she ever really wanted to leave Edward, these men wouldn't blink twice if orders were to bring her back.

"Okay," Bella murmured absentmindedly as she tugged on her sneakers, gathered her e-reader and slipped it inside of her poppy-colored Coach purse.

"I'm ready," EJ informed them as he rounded the corner with his stuffed giraffe and book in hand.

No one spoke as Marcus held open the Suburban door for them. "Two cars, really?" Bella asked, eyeing the other Suburban that Jimmy was climbing into parked behind them.

"Safety procedures, ma'am," Marcus informed her as she buckled up after checking EJ's straps and buckles.

"Bella, could you read to me?" he asked eagerly, thrusting his book forward into her waiting hand. They had started reading "The Adventures of Bailey School Kids – Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots."

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"She's going to put up a fuss," Edward sighed, running a hand through his wild locks.

"Most likely," Jasper agreed. "I said to do something grand, you did it. You took grand to a whole new fucking ballpark," he muttered looking over at Edward's personal jet. "Don't start fucking stressing now, it's five days. I can handle the business end; Emmett can handle any family matters
that arise. Together, Emmett and I should be able to handle anything that comes up."

Edward's lip quirked upward.

"Besides, this will throw the target off. With you and her gone, out of the city, maybe he'll fuck up, take a risk or some shit," Jasper said lighting up a cigarette. "We need him to slip up."

"If you catch the sonofabitch, toss his ass in the pit with James until I get back," Edward ordered sourly.

"Yeah, about James, Ed?" Jasper asked releasing a puff of smoke.

"He remains missing until I decide if he lives or dies. For now, he can waste away in the hole," Edward grunted, his jaw clicking as his mind thinks of James' transgressions, of his father's sins. How the hell was he going to handle that complicated mess? "I want you to put Benny on watching Aro; I don't know why he's loitering around my city. I don't care what Carlisle says, Aro is a threat."

"Aye Aye, Boss," Jasper nodded, there it was—trust and brotherhood, Edward quirks a smile at Jasper.

"Here they are," Edward said, his features smoothing as the Suburban came to a halt near the runway.

"Are you ready for it?" Jasper drawled aloofly, he couldn't hide the amused smirk that spread across his face. He realized Edward didn't know it yet, but he had fallen. Never had he dreamed he'd see Edward tangled and torn up over a woman?

"Ready for what?" Edward inquired, raising an eyebrow at his longtime friend.

"For five days of being just Edward Cullen, father, and husband, without the bullshit and distractions," Jasper clarified, kicking away from the car he had been leaning against.

"What's going on?" Bella's voice rang out as she slipped out of the Suburban, EJ's hand wrapped firmly around hers. Jasper slipped away, toward the Suburban. "Edward?" Bella asked uncertainly, her eyes taking in the small luxury plane, glancing around watching as the people around them bustled with activity. Bella followed as EJ pulled her forward toward his father. "Edward, what's going on?"

"We're going on a trip." Edward motioned toward his plane, a secretive but happy smile spreading across his face. This was part of the Edward she knew, he didn't make requests, he gave commands, and he most certainly didn't understand or accept the word No as an option or an answer, when he wanted something. She knew it should bother her more; however, she found that particular trait extremely attractive.

"I can't just go on a trip," Bella sputtered, breathing in noisily trying to keep her temper in check. She could feel her resolve slipping as EJ's eyes watered. "Have you taken a knock to your skull lately?" she questioned, digging her heels in. "Finals start Monday."

"It's taken care of." Edward shrugged casually, ignoring her death glare.

Bella huffed. Here he was Jimmy Hoffa'ing her; damn her for wandering eyes. Sinful jeans, collared polo, sneakers, he was looking very casual forgoing his normal forbidding suits.

"What actually does that mean— 'it's taken care of'?" she asked tartly.
"I've spoken to your professors, made arrangements for the rest of this week's absence. Each professor assured me that you're more than ready to pass your exams, but even still they will be emailing you notes and material you need. Each morning from eight to noon is carved out for your schoolwork. You'll be home by Sunday evening, with plenty time for one last cram session with Angela," Edward explained.

Bella's eyes widened, "That isn't fair, Edward. Other students can't just take off."

He cut her off sharply, "Life isn't fair, Isabella, it's corrupt; it's about whom you know and the connections you make. I know you haven't wrapped your mind around it yet, love, but I am very well connected." He breathed in and then out and added much softer, "We need this. I need this. Five days of just us, together. I find myself needing to prove to you that I am still the same man, just a little more. I want... I need you to stay."

"Edward," Bella's tone is sharp, but Edward can see the contradiction in her face, while her mouth is in a firm frown and her tone is sharp alluding to her frustration, her warm brown eyes were softening. Edward tugged on his ear, signaling EJ to help crumble her defenses.

"Are you guys breaking up like Todd's parents?" EJ asked, turning his watery green eyes on Bella. "Are you not going to marry Daddy anymore?" Edward bit his lip to keep from grinning as Bella gasped, spinning around and kneeling before EJ, opening her arms as he tossed his tiny body into hers squeezing her tightly.

"No, no, honey," Bella soothed, lifting EJ into her arms, rocking him.

EJ cried into her shoulder. "But, you don't want to go with us."

"I do, I do," Bella reassured. "I have some conditions for your father, but we're going to have so much fun. Why don't you go get your iPad out of the Suburban and play ABC Mouse on the plane," Bella instructed, placing EJ back on his feet. She watched him bolt off, climb in and out of the Suburban. She waited until Marcus and EJ boarded the plane to round on Edward, who was waiting patiently for her outburst.

"Your conditions?" He asked, his green eyes twinkling and his eyebrow shot up in surprise, as she held her hand out.

"Hand over your phone," she demanded sweetly. "If we're going on a trip then we... no, I want your full attention. I won't have you creeping off to take phone calls every ten minutes."

"Isabella," Edward sighed.

"Don't Isabella me, you say this trip is for us--then prove it. Hand over your phone," Bella bravados. "I'm not saying you can't take or make phone calls at all. I'm not stupid. I understand you just can't stop being you, but let's say during the hours of ten a.m. until nine p.m., we get your full uninterrupted attention; you only accept true, honest to God emergency calls during those hours."

"Okay, deal," Edward agreed and slipped his phone into her hand. He grinned widely, as she gaped at him and eyed him suspiciously. "No phone calls between ten a.m. and nine p.m., anything else, mistress?" he asked huskily, leaning into her.

"And wherever we're going, it better be warm and full of sunshine," she teased and pecked his lips before she darted around him and onto the plane. EJ grinned up at her and scooted up next to her when she took a seat near him on the sofa.

"That went better than expected," Edward murmured to himself ignoring Antonio's chuckling, as
they boarded the small luxury plane. Edward slid next to Bella on the small sofa, while she was quietly helping EJ with his game.

He waited until Bella glanced up at him and smiled for him to wrap an arm around her, pulling her into his chest. He felt himself, his body, relax for the first time in days as he listened to the quiet chatter of his son and his fiancée. The sweet smell of Isabella soothed his frazzled nerves and the comfort of her warm body pressed against him brought a peace of mind, he had never really felt before meeting her.

"So where are we going, Daddy?" EJ asked turning his eyes away from the plane window, for a moment to look at his Dad.

"It's a surprise," Edward explained, not opening his eyes as Bella snuggled into him, her even rhythm lulling him back to sleep.

... Edward woke shortly before they landed.

He smiled as he stepped off the plane. The hot, humid air making him smile as he took in the palm trees.

"Orlando! Orlando," Bella gushed as she carried a tired EJ down the steps of the plane to the waiting limousine.

"What's Orlando?" EJ murmured not raising his sleepy head off of Bella's shoulder.

"Tomorrow, EJ, tomorrow's going to be magical," Bella breathed keeping the surprise as she helped EJ buckle into his booster seat.

Edward watched the wanderlust that flitted across Bella's face as they made their way through Orlando to their hotel. He was reminded by Bella's blue-collar raising, she seemed mesmerized and a little startled by the bellhops who rushed to open the limousine door. Two bellhops, a butler, and manager were awaiting them. "Ritz Carlton?" she breathed and her eyes were wide. He knew that a Hilton would've sufficed, even impressed her. This trip was not only to prove he was the same man, but yet a good opportunity for her to take the plunge off of poor man's pike, and into the luxurious life, he was offering. It was time to open her eyes to the extent of his wealth and power.

"Mr. Cullen, we're so happy to have you back with us once again," the concierge stated politely. "The Royal Suite awaits you; unfortunately I will need a few signatures before we can escort you up."

"Of course," Edward murmured and turned to Bella. "Why don't you take EJ and Marcus and peek around the resort while I finish up the paperwork."

"Okay, Daddy," EJ interjected tugging on Bella's hand, now wide awake. It amazed Edward how his child could go from on the brink of sleep to full alert and excitable. "Can we go see if they have a pool? Can we, Mom, can we?"

Edward smiled widely, neither Bella nor EJ seemed aware of his slip of the tongue. Bella's attention went to EJ, it warmed something deep inside of him to see her smile so sweetly at his child, their child. He mentally scuffed at himself as EJ and Bella walked away from him, he didn't miss the mile-wide smile spread across EJ's face as he rambled away at Bella. Who was he kidding? EJ was much more her child than his.
"Are the rooms set up as requested?" Edward inquired, following the manager and concierge. Shaking off the jealousy that had sprung upon him so suddenly, this was their week. A week to help him mend and expand the narrow, crumbling bridge he seemed to be walking down with both Bella and his son.

"Of course, sir, the master bedroom is set up with the romantic package, the third bedroom is set up for in-room camping and the television in the room has been programmed only to show Disney Jr. and Nick Jr." The concierge assured as the manager pushed the paperwork across the desk. With a few mind-numbing swipes of his pen, he applied his signature. "The fridges are stocked; your personal shopper spoke and worked with one of Nordstrom's personal shoppers. Everything is put away as expected and, Mr. Evans will be your personal butler. Is there anything we here at Grand Lakes can do for you, Mr. Cullen?" The concierge asked politely.

"Yes–yes there is," Edward smirked lazily. "In an hour or two, two Federal agents going by the name Simmons and Reagan will be checking in. Why don't you upgrade their room to a two-bedroom suite and give them the getaway package. Apply all charges to my credit card, and please inform them that I'll be leaving for the Disney World Park at noon."

"Is that all?"

"No, I plan to re-propose to my fiancée on Saturday night. The first time was a little too business-like. I want to woo her this week, seek her forgiveness and then give her a proposal that she ultimately deserves. A memory she will treasure for the rest of her life. I want simple, elegant with a wow factor, Julian."

"We'd be delighted to help you accomplish that. I'll talk to the staff; we do these things regularly. We will come up with some plans and we can discuss them tomorrow evening," the concierge offered. Edward nodded his acceptance before stepping away from the helpful staff, ready to go find his family.

Edward slipped up behind Bella, who was watching EJ, who was squealing as he ran from Marcus. "Run, EJ, run. He's going to get you," she called after EJ, so engrossed watching him dash around the playground equipment, that she wasn't aware of Edward's close proximity, and she just about jumped out of her skin when his arms wrapped around her.

"Gotcha," Edward teased kissing the side of her neck.

"Edward!" Bella shrieked, whirling around and smacking his shoulder for startling her. "You scared the bejesus out of me."

He chuckled softly and pulled her into him. "So?" he whispered.

"It's beautiful," she answered and twirled in his arms so she could face him. "It's Orlando and Disney World," she snickered. "A little crazy; I can't believe I'm here, but this place is picturesque. Do you know my mother lives only a few hours from here?"

"Jacksonville, right?" Edward asked, wondering where her mind was going. "If you want to go see her, we can, tomorrow even."

"No, but thank you," Bella smiled tightly, trying to mask the sadness she felt. "I just meant all the summers I was forced to visit her as a child, I only ever saw the crummy neighborhoods she lived in with her husband. No matter how many times I wanted to come here, we never did, she always..."
promised but it never happened." Edward caressed her cheek. "I haven't seen her since I was fifteen. I only hear from her when she needs something anymore."

"What about when your father passed?" he asked.

"I spent the last few months of high school with Angela's family, and then I moved to Seattle for school. I knew if I didn't leave, I would've probably ended up with a house and a baby, with a waitressing job or working my way up at the grocery store for the rest of my life. Without my dad there, I didn't want to get tied down in Forks; I just wanted to start over," she confessed. "It was good for me. I enrolled, found my apartment, got a few jobs, and was a part of a couple of groups that helped me a lot." Neither spoke as they watched EJ, content to be in each other's arms.

"EJ, C'mon, time to head inside," Edward called. He was pleased to see the smile that lit up his son's face as he sprinted toward them. He squeezed Bella a little tighter, grateful for her presence in their lives. She was changing them, linking them all together as a family. He had always loved his son, more than life itself, but she pulled, pushed and prodded the parental side out of him, helped him connect with his child in a way he didn't know he was missing. He let go of her and swept his son off his feet and onto his hip, he reached out with his free right hand and grasped Bella's hand into his.

"Do you want to eat down here or in our room?" Edward asked as EJ eyed a very pregnant woman suspiciously.

"Room service; I feel all grungy," Bella admitted looking around at the very well dressed people that were waiting to get into the restaurant.

"Psst, Bella?" EJ whispered, not taking his eyes off the pregnant woman.

"What's wrong with that lady?"

Bella's lip twitched upward. "She's pregnant," she answered; with EJ's crumpled brow she realized that he was still confused. "That means she has a baby growing inside her belly."

Edward snickered at the horror that crossed his child's face. "She ate her baby?" he asked dismayed as they walked toward the elevator.

"No–no, that's just how babies grow until they're big enough to be born," Bella explained, shooting Edward a look for his whole body was shaking with silent laughter as they entered the elevator.

EJ pursed his lips, clearly frustrated and thinking. "Well, how did the baby get in there?" With that question, Edward's body froze, and his eyes shot to Bella's.

"Very special love magic," Bella explained simply as they exited the elevator and entered their suite.

Together they ate pasta and bread in their pajamas, followed by reading two chapters of *The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids*, inside of EJ's tent residing in the second bedroom of the suite. "Sweet dreams," Bella whispered as Edward handed EJ his stuffed giraffe.

"Finally, you're all mine," Edward teased as he tossed her over his shoulder, ignoring her soft protesting as he strutted into the master bedroom. He gently placed her on the bed, his eyes lit up with lust and desire. She rolled over and her eyes caught sight of their private balcony, and striking view of the night sky and Orlando, off in the distance. He followed her outside, loving the emotions that flashed behind her eyes.
"Look at that!" she exclaimed softly, twirling around and giggling. "Amazing, Edward," is all she said being momentarily at a loss for words. After a few peaceful minutes soaking in the view, she sobered. "Next time I get mad, you can't just sweep us off to some magical land. This won't always work," she said softly.

"I'm still the same man. I never meant to fool you, or hide who I am from you, Isabella. You have to understand that it's uncommon for me to meet someone that doesn't know, exactly who they think I am," Edward reasoned as he stepped into her personal space. "I do run a criminal organization, but please don't ask me to change that because I can't. That part of me isn't something from which I can just walk away," Edward said, stiffening. He knew this was something they really need to discuss and move on from. "I was born into this life, Isabella," he explained. "There is no out for me; the only way outcomes from the receiving end of a bullet and death."

"I know," she breathed, she had figured as much. "Edward you're a criminal; not just a criminal, you're a mobster, a Mob Boss," Bella whispered and her deep, brown eyes meet his. "I can't bring myself to care about that," she admitted blushing deeply. "Do you know what scares me the most?" she asked, "that you'll get caught or we'll lose you."

"I can't promise you that I'll always be safe. There is no way I can tell you I'll always be on the right side of the law," Edward said wrapping his arms around her. "I can promise that you and EJ will always be protected, taken care of and that I will gladly die before my life brings either of you any pain."

"What about EJ, does he have to live this life, too?" Bella's voice cracked, she couldn't imagine her sweet boy or any children they might have being a part of his father's organization.

Edward's heart cracked at the deep sadness he found in Bella's eyes, he shook his head negatively. "No."

"What if we decide to have more children?" she questioned.

"No," Edward restated firmly. "I will do everything I can to keep them out of this lifestyle. I am doing everything I can to pull my family away from this dangerous world. I've been working at this a long time, Bella. I never wanted this and I am doing everything I can," he admitted to her, his green eyes filled with pain.

"Okay," she said nodding and wrapping herself around him. "Can you promise that you'll always try to come home to us?"

"Yes, I swear to you. I will always do whatever it takes to make it back home to you guys. I won't go down easily or get caught stupidly," Edward promised. "I love hearing you saying that," he confessed quietly, his body relaxing the weight of everything crumbling around him. "I love knowing you think of me and EJ as home," he moaned loudly as Bella's lips reached up and caught his in a sweet kiss. "I need you to stay, Isabella; I know it sounds crazy but I need you to stay. Please see past that part of me, and be able to forgive me and..." he faltered, could he really ask her to love him.

"I love you," Bella breathed against his lips. The simple words taking root into his soul, as her chocolate-brown eyes locked on Edward's emerald-green ones. He watched as she pulled back and bit her lip nervously; he groaned as her pink little tongue darted out of her mouth to soothe her abused bottom lip. "You don't have to say..." she started to say, her voice shaky and raw. "I mean, it's okay if you don't," she rambled, her confidence melting and embarrassment struggling to take hold, but before she could feel rejected or humiliated Edward cut her off.
"I love you, too, Isabella, never doubt that," he grinned widely. He hadn't been aware of how badly he had needed to say it. How much he had wanted to hear those words spill from her lips, until after they had fallen.

She smiled boldly. "Prove it," she commanded into his ear before nibbling his earlobe teasingly.

He knew she needed his physical reassurance, love.

His love.

He groaned as her soft kisses made a slow trail down his five o'clock shadow. It hit him, this wasn't like the meaningless sex he was used to having. This wasn't dirty, emotionless or manipulative. This was raw, engaging, equally about her pleasure and his.

"I'm going to make love to you—right here, right now on this balcony, underneath these glorious stars, with the soft moonlight glowing against your skin," he whispered naughtily, making her shiver as he gently tugged her sundress over her head. He made quick work of removing her white, lacy bra, before gently laying her back on the double chaise lounge chair. With a quick twist of a lever, it positioned itself down into a bed where she slipped her matching thong off. He grinned down at her.

"So beautiful," he murmured, drinking her in–his eyes darkening with lust. "I'm going to make you mine, Isabella. All fucking mine, no man will ever see you like this again but me, your eyes bright and wide so filled with want and love. If other men knew what I had, they'd be jealous bastards. There have been wars over women like you, and men would kill to have a woman like you, Isabella." He leaned down and pressed a searing kiss to her lips, giving her a glimpse of the possessiveness and darker side of him. He swiped his tongue over her lip; he groaned as her lips parted and her tongue darted out and clashed against his.

"Edward," she moaned gently, pushing him back lightly. "You're overdressed," she murmured raising a perfectly shaped eyebrow at his polo and jeans.

"I can remedy that," he chuckled, and pulled his polo over his head, not caring where it landed. He loved how her eyes drank him in as they ran up and down his bare chest, over every scar, running over his well-formed abs, and how her gaze lingered on his family crest tattoo that sat near his heart. He kicked his shoes, socks, jeans, and briefs away from him before settling between her thighs once again. He growled lowly in the back of his throat as her small soft hands traced over his tattoo.

"After we're married, your name goes here," he said thumping the space in between the crest and EJ's name.

He slides his tongue up from her belly button over the swells of her breasts, his mouth stopping when it finds its destination. He brings her nipple into his mouth with a gentle suck. A soft whimper encourages him, so he gives an experimental tug and is welcomed with a louder groan. He sucks harder, finding a rhythm that leaves her panting and wanting, needing more.

Everything about this image was right, she was right, she belonged here with him, in his bed, by his side, mothering his children, loving him. He had to say it again, hear it again. He releases her nipple with a soft pop, and presses himself to her center as he hovers over her, "I love you."

"I love you," she cries out, it happens so suddenly, a single, well-positioned thrust and she could only moan as he slides fully inside of her.

He remains still, looking down on her with an oddly tender gaze nothing like his intense stare she was used to; she could feel every twitch, the rapid wildly beating of his heart underneath her fingertips. They were locked together so tightly, she was amazed when he began rocking his hips, sending waves of pleasure up her spine. Her release was building low and deep, coiling waiting for
her to fall over the edge of bliss.

"I'm yours, baby," Bella whispered as he clung to her. There wasn't anything less she could give him that he didn't already have. She was his as much as he was hers.

"Ah, love," Edward growled, seeming to come undone by her words. His control was gone. He pulled her fingers to his mouth and licked them and placed them over her clit. "I need you to get yourself there, love, I'm not going to last much longer, so fucking sweet," he commanded switching positions, giving her easier access.

The world seemed to still around them; nothing else matters but the feel of him inside of her, he felt amazing on top of her, so solid, a part of her never wanted this moment to end. Never had she felt so connected with another soul, and she gasped suddenly, crying out his name as her sweet release washed over her.

He was consumed by her, if he thought for a second before he could let her a walk away, he was damn wrong. The slickness of her heat, the softness of her body, and her swollen lips upon his skin that seemed to tingle wherever her kisses landed. She was completely his, made for him. He let himself go when her soft cry rang in his ears and the tugging of her inner walls clenching and releasing around him.

They lay there tangled together, catching their breaths, observing the stars above them, and glancing off over Orlando twinkling in the distance.

"Now, I might be wrong, but I'm pretty positive that mob bosses don't go to Disney World," she teased heartedly, kissing his tattoo.

Edward chuckled. "That sounds like one of EJ's mystery kid books."
"And..." Edward prompted, sipping his chilled coffee, looking out over the quiet resort's grounds. He turned and glanced through the sliding glass door. He wasn't surprised to find Isabella curled up on the sofa, laptop, and textbooks surrounding her, or EJ, on the other end of the sofa mimicking her by playing ABC Mouse on his iPad.

"We had to send them back, insurance speaking, the machines had been recalled, a malfunction in the software, I've spoken with the company and they're sending replacement machines, an upgraded version." Jasper reassured, "we're still on schedule for the opening."

"Isabella's stalker?" He probed. He forced his lips upward, returning Bella's grin when she glanced up from her textbook long enough to catch his eye, smile, and motion for a few more minutes.

"Emmett's tracked down the man, well, I should say, boy, who broke into Bella's apartment. The night after ya'll left for Florida. Apparently, he had been paid cash to trash it and place the envelope on the counter. You read the note; whoever is doing this, wants Isabella to run from you." Edward paused, his jaw clenched, eyes darkened as he mulled over the theory that had silently been eating at him, since James's confession; could his own father be behind Isabella's harassment. Carlisle had the motive, the means, maybe her harassment didn't correlate to his own issues, but there was still the chlorinating threats.

"We're not any closer to discovering the man behind his puppets, but the kid gave a good description, he's been more than willing to rat after our little chat," Jasper said, I nodded tossing my empty coffee cup into the trash.

"Very good," he stated. "Make it clear that I want to have a talk with this kid," he ordered. "But in the meantime, cut him loose."

"Is that a wise call, boss?" Jasper asked slowly.

Edward chuckled, "just make it clear, if we have to come looking for him, it won't end well. Is he smart enough to understand that?"

Jasper turned and stared down at the runt of a boy, who was sniffling into his threadbare jacket. "Yeah, boss."

"And when you say, boy?" Edward questioned as an afterthought.

Jasper shot the kid a look, and he shakily held up his fingers, one hand, a single finger was raised and the other had held four, "Thirteen maybe fourteen tops," Jasper explained. "I was going to make him hand over the money he earned for destroying Isabella's apartment, but the young lad
used the money to pay his mother's rent. That story was confirmed by the boy's, landlord, "
Edward frowned, "and he's smart?"

"Yeah, he's intelligent, especially for a gutter rat," Jasper answered.

Edward spoke, knowing he was on speakerphone, "Clean him up and take him home; let his
homeboys know that he now belongs to the Cullens. Make it clear we're watching him, that if he so
much as steps a Nike out of line, we'll know."

"Y..y..yes, yes, s..sir," the boy stammered and nodded eagerly as Jasper dragged him to his feet.

"Anything else?" Jasper asked, after taking a moment to switch his speakerphone off.

"No," I shook my head just as Bella stepped out onto the balcony.

"Time's up, M. Cullen," Bella sassed, giving Edward a firm look, "Tell Jasper you'll speak to him
once we arrive back in Seattle; until then you're mine."

"Yes ma'am," he smirked, losing the frown that had developed from talking business with Jasper.
"You heard the lady," he stated firmly and he hung up just as Jasper called him, "pussy whipped."

He placed his cell in her waiting palm. "Your call ran over," she teased biting her lips, "I wonder
how you're going to make it up to me, Mr. Cullen."

"I could think of a few ways," he said. Bella moaned softly as one arm wrapped around her waist as
his other his hand ran possessively up her arm, to her shoulder, she shivered as his fingers ghosted
over her neck, finally coming to up to cradle her face. He kissed her as though it was the last thing
he'd ever do. It wasn't a show, it wasn't a ploy nor a manipulation, he was simply showing her just
how much he wanted her, needed her.

"Eww," EJ said, wrinkling his nose in disgust and smacking his hands over his eyes.

Bella and Edward broke apart, flushing. Edward cleared his throat a bit awkwardly. "EJ."

"That's sooo gross," EJ declared giggling, his face showing his utter disgust, as he spread his fingers
to peek through them.

Edward snickered, "One day you won't think so, Sonny-boy."

EJ folded his arms over his chest and gave his father an aspirated look of annoyance, "Tanner says
that you can get sick from kissing girls." He paused and thought for a moment. "You should
probably go brush your teeth or somethin'," he stated very seriously.

Bella's lips twitched as Edward sputtered for a second, "You know what? I think I am getting sick, I
need to stay in bed all day," he claimed faking a sniff, "Bella, too."

EJ narrowed his green eyes and frowned, "You're not funny, Daddy," he scoffed.

"Okay then, boss, where to today?" Edward asked, lifting the small boy up into his arms.

"Tanner says, I can't miss the Spiderman ride," EJ stated. "Can we go to that park? Please, can we
Daddy, Bella, please," he begged, holding his hands together and shaking them with a small pout.

"Of course," Bella agreed, ignoring Edward's horrified expression. It was clear to her that Edward
was borderline exhausted. "Why don't you finish getting ready," Bella instructed, holding the
balcony door open for the little boy, as Edward placed EJ back on his feet.

"I'll be ready in a flash," EJ told them, before bolting off to change his clothes.

As soon as the door clicked behind him, Edward groaned. "Another amusement park?" Bella snickered at the slight whine in his tone.

She smiled excitedly at him, "Oh stop it," she scolded him softly. "We rested all day yesterday," she reminded him with a secretive smile. They had spent the day entangled in the Egyptian cotton sheets, while Marcus and Jimmy had run EJ around the Magical Kingdom and other Disney parks, collecting the last of the autographs, the young boy had declared he must have. "And, I'm really excited about this one. It'll be different than Disney, more roller coasters - fewer lines and express passes."

"Oh, you're really excited are you?" he smirked, tugging her into his arms.

She chuckled and smacked his arm, "shut it, you. Yes, I'm really excited. It's going to be amazing, well it better be amazing, I really, really, really want it to be amazing," she confessed excitedly, giving him a bright grin.

He laughed at her exuberance as they stepped back inside the hotel suite. "Are you ready?" he asked, eyeing her simple sundress and converse with admiration. It didn't matter the more he introduced her to his wealth, her simple stylish taste didn't change.

"I am, are you?" she asked, raising an eyebrow at his choice of attire.

His brow furrowed, "What's wrong with what I'm wearing?" he asked, looking down at his clothes.

"You've been sweltering all week in those clothes; no one going to view you any less if you dress comfortably." She frowned, trying to reason with the stubborn man. "Why don't you try, something less forbidding; you can leave that up to your posse of henchmen. Come on, try it, jeans and a tee, I know you packed some."

He gave her a long piercing look before turning and entering their bedroom quarters; not long later he reemerged in jeans and a plain grey tee-shirt.

"Well?" he asked, giving her a sarcastic little twirl that made her snort with amusement. He hooked his arm around her waist.

"You look nice; ready EJ?" Bella called out as the young boy bounced into the room.

"I've been ready for ages," EJ announced, taking Bella's other hand as they head out of the hotel suite.

"Are we eating here?" Edward asked as they entered the lobby.

"No. Daddy. No. The park – they'll have lots of rest-a-rants," EJ stated, dragging his father passed the restaurant in the lobby. "Let's go, please. Plus, Bella and I already ate breakfast."

"I saved you two chocolate eclairs," Bella said, holding up a small box.

He leaned over and pecked her lips. "And this is why you're great," he whispered, taking the box from her as they slipped into the luxury rental.

The ride was filled with EJ's excited chatter, as he told them the plan for the day. "Then, we've got
to ride Spiderman like three times, please? Tanner only rode it twice; we got to ride it more, please, please, Bella," he begged, green eyes pleading over at her.

"We'll try, but we don't want to spend all day on one ride though," she said, taking his hand as they climbed out of the car. It's only a matter of minutes before they're walking toward their destination. Bella's not sure what Antonio said to the security officer, but their bodyguards pass through the inspections without pause.

"Always so many people," Edward grumbled, causing EJ to laugh pulling them through the crowds, tugging at both his father and Bella's hands.

EJ doesn't seem to notice that they bypassed the check-in lines entirely.

Bella leaned her head against Edward's shoulder, "You 'Al Caponed' them," she whispered in his ear.

He snorted and shook his head at her, amusement etched across his face as he spoke quietly into her ear. "I'm not Al Capone, babe, I can prove it to you. One – I'm not Italian. Two – I'm not a hundred and fifteen years old. Three – I have never bootlegged alcohol." Bella rolled her eyes smiling at his antics, as he pressed a kiss to her temple, and kept one arm across her back keeping her close to his side.

"All right, Boss, where to first?" Edward asked EJ, lifting the boy into his arms for a moment.

EJ pointed to his right, "Dr. Seussland first." He paused and scrunched up his nose in thought. "Daddy, did you know, The Green Eggs and Ham only has fifty whole words in the entire book?"

"It does?" he questioned, as he placed EJ back onto his feet.

"Yep. Bella told me," he stated confidently, pausing, then posing with his father and Bella in front of the gate for a picture, which one of their guards quietly captured.

"Can we ride that, that and that, and then go into the bookshop, please?" EJ asked, pointing out various Dr. Seuss-themed rides, then the bookstore 'All the Books You Can Read.' "The carousel, first?" he asked Bella, who nodded her agreement over their shared enjoyment of the merry-go-round.

The morning passed with many more rides; meeting and dancing with the Cat in the Hat and Thing 1 and 2. She couldn't pass up purchasing a Thing 1 shirt for EJ; on a whim she purchased a Thing 2 baby bodysuit, for down the road, even knowing she might never have the use for it.

"What this for?" Edward asked, pulling it from the souvenir bag.

Her face flamed in embarrassment at her impulsive purchase. "I... I... it's nothing," she stammered. "I don't know, it was stupid, okay?" She stated, looking anywhere but back at him.

Edward nodded, a puzzled expression settling over his face, "I was purchasing EJ one and it caught my eye and I don't know, I thought, someday..." she trailed off. "It was just a whim; I'm sorry if it freaked you out," she ended with a forced chuckle.

He pulled in a deep breath as a satisfied smirk spread across his face, "You didn't," he stated calmly, a serious but playful gleam shining in his eyes, "maybe...someday, with you." He grinned, folding the little bodysuit and placing it back into the bag.

EJ's face fell as Antonio stepped out of the shadows with a cellphone to his ear. "Boss, you're really
going to need to take this call," he informed Edward with a frown.

Bella squeezed Edward's hand and let it go as he stood up from the bench, where they had been resting. EJ snuggled into her side as they watched Edward step away from them.

"Emmett, what's going on?" he snapped, eyes skimming over the small lake around which the theme park circled.

"You're not going to like this, Edward," Emmett warned, running a hand through his hair. "There are photos of you everywhere, on every local news station, talk shows, in the tabloids – not just you, but of Bella and EJ."

Edward froze, his shoulders tightened, "What?"

"Paparazzi, man, someone has been following you all week capturing pictures of your vacation," Emmett stated seriously.

Edward's eyes went cold as he swept a glance around the parks, he barked a disgusted laugh. People with cameras were everywhere, in every direction around him. "I'm calling MacCormack and his team. I want those pictures pulled — off air. Understood?"

"Yes, of course, Edward," Emmett agreed, signaling Jasper for a meeting.

"When I find whoever did this..." he threatened coldly.

"I hear you," Emmett stated before Edward disconnected the call.

He let out a rough breath, as he turned and took in his fiancée and child's smiling faces. He moved forward swiftly. "Antonio, get MacCormack on the phone," he ordered, tossing his cell phone at his long-time bodyguard and friend.

"Edward, what's going on?" Bella questioned, not liking the shadows that seemed to haunt him as he stepped forward.

"Nothing I can't handle but requires my immediate attention. EJ and you, go back to our plans and we'll meet up at the Dinosaur restaurant for dinner tonight. I promise."

"You pinky swear?" EJ asked, holding out his small pinky finger.

Edward's lips twitched upwards as Bella placed on a smile for EJ. "I not only pinky swear, but I cross my heart," Edward stated, sealing the promise he had made, as he wrapped his pinky around his son's and shook on it.

Bella hugged him and Edward pressed a chaste kiss to her lips. "We'll see you in a little while," Bella said, stepping back and taking EJ's hand. "But first, we have to ride the Hippogriff and Spiderman," Bella told EJ who nodded eagerly.

"Bye, Dad," EJ called over his shoulder, tugging Bella forward, yammering excitedly up at her.

Edward stopped Jimmy and Marcus as Andrew trailed after Bella and EJ, "Stay with them at all times," he ordered, eyes darkening.

"Of course, Boss," Marcus said, moving past Edward to follow his clients.

Edward fell into step with Antonio as they made their way out of the park and back to the hotel. "I want to know who's selling pictures of my family to the press. I wanted to know five minutes ago,"
he barked into his phone.

"MacCormack has half his team calling for the removal of the photos, and the other half trying to figure out who sold the pictures," Jasper replied coolly.

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"Again, Bella, please..." EJ begged as they exited the ride.

"One more time..." She agreed with a chuckle, letting him yank her forward and back around to get back onto the ride.

Marcus looked around frantically as he stepped off the ride, "Jimmy, you've got eyes... Andrew?" he asked into his radio.

"No sir," Andrew grunted. "I lost contact with them coming off the last ride."

"I might... headed toward the restroom," Jimmy stated, causing the three men to rush in that direction.

"That was so awesome!" EJ beamed. "Let's get another Butter-Beer, please?" he requested, knowing he had her.

"Okay, come on." The second time through the line went much faster than the first. They wandered in and out of shops, playing with gizmos and gadgets, and purchasing candy and trinkets.

"Andrew? Would you mind..." She trailed off, paling as she realized they had become separated from their guards and that Jimmy had never handed back her phone earlier after she had gotten off the rollercoaster with Edward and EJ.

She quickly moved them to a less crowded area and sat down making sure they could easily be seen.

"What's going on?" EJ asked, bottom lip sticking out pouting.

"We need to stay right here until Marcus or Andrew find us," Bella instructed calmly.

"But why?" he whined, fiddling with the toy wand Bella had purchased for him.

"Because it's not safe, and your father asked us all to stay together," she explained, brushing the hair out of his green eyes.

He folded his arms and protested, "It's not our fault they couldn't keep up."

"I know, but we shouldn't have left them behind," she whispered worriedly, pulling him into her lap.

"But it's not our job to watch them," he grumbled, returning Bella's hug, before pulling her into a simple game of eye spy.

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"What do you mean you lost them?" Edward roared, his pulse quickening in his veins.

"We became separated as we exited the rollercoaster," Marcus explained into the phone. His eyes scanning the area around him as Jimmy and Andrew searched for the missing pair. "And we have
no way of communicating with her as Jimmy was holding her purse."

"Find them and bring them back to the hotel. If you haven't located them in thirty minutes, call in reinforcements," he growled into the phone, ending the call. "Incompetent fools," he snarled angrily.

He pinched his lips together and every muscle in his body rigid with tension as he focused on not destroying his phone. His stomach turning as cold dread filled his body as the seconds turned into minutes, while his mind tortured him with a horrible scenario and endless what if's. Never had he felt so out of control... helpless.

"Boss, we've got something," Antonio said, clicking on a web address then twirling around the laptop so his boss could see, a series of pictures chronicling the entire week appeared. The pictures started from the moment they had arrived at their morning at the theme park. "Whoever is behind the site is uploading more pictures," he stated as new series of pictures of Bella and EJ's afternoon started loading.

"They're sitting just outside a gift shop in Jurassic Park," Antonio relayed to Marcus.

Edward slumped back into his chair as, 'found safe and sound,' rang out through his mind.

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Bella frowned deeply as Marcus lifted EJ out of her arms and began carrying him through the crowd, she stayed silent as Andrew gently but firmly led her toward the exit. Her heart clenched the very moment that EJ figured out they were being forced to leave.

"I don't want to go!" He cried, face contorting into an angry mask.

"EJ." Bella tried unsuccessfully to calm him.

"No," he screamed, starting to struggle in Marcus's grip. "No," he yelled, his tiny fist beating into Marcus's chest as he tried and failed at wiggling out of his grasp.

"I'm sorry, EJ, but these are your father's orders," Marcus stated, continuing walking with purposeful strides, ignoring the screaming child.

"But I didn't get to ride Spiderman!" He wailed at the top of his lungs, continuing to hit and kick at Marcus.

She forced herself to take a few calming breaths, as equally upset at him and for him. "I know, Green Eyes," she murmured, taking him into her arms as soon as they were both locked safely inside the luxury rental car.

A heaviness settled into her stomach and chest as Andrew pulled out of the parking garage and headed toward the hotel.

Edward's body twisted around as the hotel room door sprang open, revealing his sulking child and ashen-faced fiancée. The relief drained from his body as he took in their perfectly healthy presences. "Do you mind telling me what the fuck happened today?" he snapped coldly at Bella.

"I..." She started to explain as he yanked his hand up silencing her.

He pulled his eyes from hers and stared coldly at Marcus, Jimmy, and Andrew. "Thank you, you may go now. Antonio can handle everything from here." He let out a hostile breath, "I'll be in touch
with each of you other later."

The blood drained from her face as the three men stepped out into the hall to no doubt take their post out there, that was...if they still had a job...a life.

He stayed silent for a long pause, "I'm willing to give you everything, anything you can ever want, dream or wish for," he stated carefully, his tone laced with hostility. "All I've ever asked for in return is one thing, for you to watch over him, to keep him safe." He released a deep breath, "and how do you keep him safe? By staying with your fucking guards and allowing them to protect you," he snarled, stepping into her personal space.

She couldn't breathe, surprised to note the tears streaming down her face. "I... I'm sorry," she whispered unable to meet his eyes.

He laughed bitterly, "You're sorry?" He mocked. "Do you have any idea what could have fucking happened to you today? You guys could have been tortured, drugged, killed, molested — Jesus-fucking-Christ."

She flushed and averted her eyes, for the first time intimidated by his presence, wondering if she had lost everything. "I—" She cut herself off unable defend herself.

"Stop it," EJ yelled, appearing out of nowhere and suddenly between them. "Stop it," he bellowed up at his father. "It's not Bella's fault," he screamed. "It's not our fault those stupid old farts couldn't keep up," he explained protectively, "you're making her cry. Stop it. You had them ruin our day; you ruin everything, you're ruining my life. I—I hate you," he screamed dramatically.

"EJ," Bella said firmly, finding her voice, "that's enough. Go reset in your room," she ordered quietly, letting him know he needed to go cool off in privacy.

He stomped away from them, "I didn't even get to ride Spider-Man once," he snarled slamming his bedroom door shut.

"He doesn't mean any of that," she whispered after the quiet moment passed.

She blinked in surprise as his hands wrapped around her arms as he yanked her against his chest. She stared at him, finally seeing the emotions that were fueling his anger. She reached up and cupped his cheek as she took in the fear that still lingered there.

Her chin quivered, "I really am sorry and I understand if..." she stated quietly, gently pulling her engagement ring from her fingers.

He sucked in a deep startled breath, pain blossoming in his chest. He rubbed his hands over his face for a second realizing the need to pull himself together before he lost her. "Isabella, no," he stated shaking his head. "I am in the wrong here, I apologize," he said quietly, slipping the ring back upon her finger. It had made him crazy, for almost the span of almost an hour, they had been out of his protection, his control. He could have lost them; the thought traumatized him. "EJ's right, this wasn't your fault."

She nodded slowly, "It was an accident, Edward. I promise, it'll never happen again," she swore as he pulled her against him in a tight hug.

"I know," he murmured into her hair. "I apologize for my loss of sanity and temper."

She blinked, staying in his arms. "We're okay?" she asked, pulling back just enough to see his face, happy to note he appeared much calmer and relaxed.
He nodded, "We're okay," he assured her pressing a desperate kiss to her lips. "The thought of losing or any harm befalling onto EJ or you terrifies me." He pressed a kiss to her forehead, "and I do know; I have realized you would never let any harm come to my child."


He smiled, "I know," he stated, "go wash your face, I'll try to salvage the rest of our day."
"The jet is ready for our departure," Antonio stated, slipping his cell back into his inner jacket pocket.

Edward shook his head. "I'm overreacting! Cancel our plans, tell the pilot we'll leave tonight." His gut twisted—his instincts told him to take his family and lock them in a safe house until the threat had been eliminated. His eyes scanned the photos on the computer screen and blew out a deep breath.

"We're going to lunch; have the car ready in forty," he ordered as he moved toward his son’s room. "EJ, I’m coming in,” Edward announced before opening the door and stepping inside. The room was cluttered with toys and clothes that had been thrown around the room in a fit of rage.

“I hate you,” EJ sniffled. “You ruin everything,” he added, burying his face into his pillow.

Edward forced back a smile as he sat on the edge of his bed, “Well, then I guess you don’t want to ride Spider-Man,” he commented.

EJ sat up, wiping his tears away, “I do, I do, I really, really want to ride it. Tanner rode it twice!” He held up his fingers to show the injustice.

He chuckled as he lifted EJ up onto his lap, “I apologize EJ, I’m sorry I ruined your afternoon at the park. When Marcus couldn’t find you, it frightened me.” He admitted to his child, moving EJ’s brown hair out of his eyes.

“Really?” EJ asked, amazed that anything could frighten his father.

“Yes, really, EJ,” Edward chuckled, tapping the end of his nose. “And because I was scared, I overreacted and had your guards bring you home to me where I knew you’d be safe,” he explained firmly.

EJ chewed on his lip thoughtfully, “But you yelled at my Bella?”

“I did,” he sighed, not denying his despicable behavior. “I wasn’t very nice at all,” he corrected. “What happened wasn’t her fault; but sometimes when I get scared, I get angry, too, and that was wrong the way I spoke to her,” EJ nodded slowly, as he focused on his father’s apologetic eyes, “and I apologize for that. Sometimes your father make mistakes, but I never want one of those to cause me to lose you or Isabella.”

EJ hugged him tightly around the neck and pulled back to place a kiss to his cheek. “Now, why don’t you watch cartoons and rest, and we’ll all go out in little while.” He promised, turning on the television and placing EJ back against his pillows.

“Okay,” EJ agreed, his attention quickly turned to the talking dogs attempting to rescue a boy. Edward handed him his stuffed giraffe and placed a reverent kiss to his forehead, before leaving him alone to rest.
Edward moved across the living room and entered the master suite he shared with Bella. He found her standing at the large window; he moved up behind her and ran his hands gently down her sides before pulling her back against his chest.

“Edward,” she murmured, a touch of sadness in her voice.

“Hush,” he ordered, turning her in his arms. “You did nothing wrong, Isabella. I overreacted and behaved as a neanderthal.”

Her lips quirked upwards in a smile. “Well, yes,” she agreed with him, eyes shining with tenderness and amusement. Moments like these—private moments between them—it was easy for her to forget who he was when he stepped out of their bedroom.

“It made me crazy. I’ve never felt fear like that before.” He admitted stiffly, “not only for EJ but you as well.” He stroked her shoulders soothingly. “I have very few precious things in my life,” he whispered, caressing her cheek, “and I don’t want to lose them.” If anyone could make his family, a real one, it was Isabella Swan. It was terrifying and it was exhilarating, and Edward found himself impatient. “May I?” He asked, softly tilting her head up to meet his heated eyes.

Her breath hitched in her throat as her gaze locked on his green eyes, “You don’t have to ask,” she whispered, warmth pooling in her stomach.

“Thought I should,” he replied, his lips quirked upward as the air of forgiveness washed over them as his mouth pressed down against hers.

He caught the bottom of her dress in his hands, and he tugged it up over her body. He watched as it fell to the floor. His pupils flared, “I wonder if you have any idea just how much I want you,” he said lowly as one of his hands trailed up her exposed stomach. He cupped her right breast in his hand, his thumb brushing against the soft material of her bra, need roaring through his veins as her nipple hardened against his thumb.

“I want you, too,” she returned his words softly as her lips found his, her fingernails scraping against his scalp. “Door locked?” She asked breathlessly as she stepped back as he removed his shirt, throwing it to the side as he pulled her back into his arms.

“Door’s locked,” he confirmed; he nudged her toward the bed, smiling as she fell backward onto it. His eyes were bright as he laced his index fingers into the waistband of her yellow, cotton panties, and pulled them slowly down her legs. She leaned up and kissed him; he growled hungrily against her lips. He slid his hands between them and into the moist, velvety flesh of her pussy. He stroked over her clit until she moaned, opening her mouth to him.

“Feel good, love?”

“Yes,” she breathed out. “So good.”

There was no thinking. Only the slick, hot feel of her, safe and sound beneath him.

…

"You guys ready yet?" EJ hollered, knocking on their bedroom door. "It can't take that long to say sorry." Bella laughed quietly into Edward's shoulder.

"Just a minute, Bud," Edward called, tugging on his briefs before gently yanking Bella out of bed. He kissed her soundly before handing her, her dress. Together, they scrambled to get dressed, handing each other socks, underwear and trading shoes as they found their missing garments.
“Are you guys kissin’ in there or something?” EJ asked through the door, ignoring Marcus’ quiet snicker as he led him back to the living room.

Bella blushed as they made their way back out to the living room, “Antonio is waiting in the car,” Marcus informed them, as she took EJ’s hand and looked him over to make sure he was ready.

“Let’s head out then,” Edward instructed. He wrapped an arm around Isabella’s waist as he led her down through the hotel and out to the awaiting car.

After he shut the car door on Isabella and EJ, he turned to Antonio and Marcus, “I want the man that was fucking stupid enough to tail me and my family. The man that had the audacity to turn around sell their photos to the media,” he said lowly. “I want him located—” He cut himself off in case they were being listened to.

“We’re on it,” Marcus nodded unflinchingly.

He raked a hand through his hair, before circling around the car and climbing in the back with Isabella and EJ. He reached out and curled an arm around Bella’s shoulder, tucking her into his side. EJ smiled at him as he pressed a tender kiss to her temple as Antonio merged onto the highway.

EJ’s laugh was adrenaline-packed as Edward jerked back as the large fireball hurled at them making their faces warm as the ride twisted and turned through the track. “One more time,” EJ demanded as they climbed off.

“We’ve already ridden it three times,” Edward laughed, ruffling EJ’s hair.

“Please, last time. I promise,” he bargained and held out his pinky finger to swear on his promise. Bella grinned as Edward scooped EJ up and piggyback carried him back around to go once more through the fastpass line.

“Did you see Marcus’s face?” EJ giggled gleefully, looking up at his father as they made their way back to the car. “He was green, like the Hulk green. He so almost puked up his guts on that lady.”

Bella let out a surprised laugh as Marcus lifted EJ up from behind and flipped him upside down, “What was that Little Mate?”

“Nothing,” EJ squealed, “put me down,” he demanded, and with a careful twist of Marcus’s arms, he spun him around and placed him in the vehicle, buckling him in as Edward held the door open for Bella.

Edward turned to Marcus and Antonio. “No one outside of the pilot and us three is to know of the change in our flight plans,” he ordered, leveling both men with a calculated look.

“Understood, Boss,” Antonio nodded seriously, opening the car door in turn for him. Edward slid past him into the backseat.

EJ shrieked with fright and hid his face in Bella’s legs as the group stepped into the large dinosaur-themed restaurant. Bella smiled and knelt down to his level. “Shh… it’s okay,” she said gently, “it’s just a robot,” she assured him, “Look,” she said, stepping back so they could get a better view of the huge robotic T-Rex that greeted customers with a roar.

“It’s just a robot,” EJ repeated, as he watched from the safety of Bella’s arms. She picked him up, “Come on, let’s go pick out a stuffed dinosaur while we wait for our table,” she said, carrying him back to the Build-A-Dino store. Edward’s hand rested possessively on her lower back as he guided her through the crowd of people.
They circled the store a few times, before EJ settled on a striped-green brachiosaurus. Bella took pictures as Edward helped EJ through the stuffing process. Their meal was spent pointing out different dinosaurs and creatures, as they enjoyed barbeque ribs and juicy burgers. Afterward, EJ entered the Paleo Zone, where he played in the sand, digging for bones and searching for precious rocks. Edward tugged Bella into his lap; they traded a few kisses as they watched EJ play happily with another boy his age.

"EJ, we’ve got to go or we'll miss our flight," Edward said, standing up and holding out his hand to his young son, who waved goodbye to his new friend before taking his father's offered hand. "Remember?" Edward asked quietly, as he pulled out a few index cards out of his jacket pocket and handed them over to him.

“Yeah.”

"Good," he nodded proudly, as they meet up with Isabella.

Edward wrapped his arm around Bella’s waist as they walked out onto the boardwalk.

“C’mon Dad, Bella,” EJ said suddenly as he tugged them toward a photobooth.

Bella quirked an eyebrow at Edward, who leaned over and kissed her, “You heard the Boss,” he chuckled deeply, holding the curtain open for her.

“Look at me, Lovely,” Edward whispered as he turned Bella’s chin, so they were looking at each other instead of the camera. EJ beamed into the camera and held up the first index card that read: ‘Will,’ as the first picture was taken. Edward and EJ both pointed playfully at Bella as EJ held the next card: ‘You,’ as the second picture was captured. Edward reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a ring box as EJ held up another card: ‘Marry Me?’

EJ quickly handed her two cards. Bella laughed as she held up ‘Yes.’ In the following picture EJ’s face was scrunched up in disgust as his father and Bella traded a kiss. Edward held up the final card; the camera caught Bella’s surprise, “Tonight?”

“Edward,” Bella frowned incredulously. “You can’t be serious.”

“I am,” he said as he looked her in the eye as he cupped her cheek; she made him reckless, impulsive, and he refused to wait any longer to make her his. “Marry me, tonight?” He repeated.

She floundered for a minute. “How… where?” She asked, trying to wrap her mind around his impulsivity.

He gave her his most charming grin. “It’s been arranged,” he promised.

Bella’s eyes darted back and forth between EJ’s and Edward’s faces, both wearing matching pleading expressions, "Will you?" EJ asked excitedly. "Please."

“But the wedding,” she said, her nose curling up at the monstrosity of a wedding his mother was planning for them.

He threw his head back and laughed.

“Edward,” she stressed his name with a soft frown, “I’m serious – your mother.”

“I know,” he sobered, “we’ll let her host an extravagant reception party.”
They were quiet as they headed back to the car. Bella knew she should be worried, that her heart was tangling her into a dangerous mess; for all her logical sense, she kept barreling forward.

“Well,” he asked, his voice taking on that stiff tone he used to have with her.

“Yes.” She whispered, lacing their fingers as they headed for the airport

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Edward carried EJ up onto the small, luxury plane; it took him a minute to get him settled into a captain's chair with his iPad. “Try get some rest, sonny boy—we’ve got a long night ahead of us,” he instructed, checking his buckles.

“I will,” EJ promised, briefly glancing up from his tablet.

Bella curled into his side as he joined her on the sofa for take off. He relaxed with a glass of scotch as she rested her eyes for the first few hours of the flight. He gently nugged her awake, “What?” she blinked awake, rubbing at her face and whipping at her chin.

“We land in an hour,” he whispered huskily against the shell of her ear.

She smiled softly and stretched. “I’ll go get ready,” she said, kissing the corner of his mouth before getting up. He watched her with heated eyes as she slipped back into the bedroom with her luggage. She stopped, startled as she spotted her gown laid out on the bed. She picked up the ivory-colored dress with shaky fingers—it was a strapless, sweetheart gown with lace appliqués and a hand-beaded, crystal belt.

She stripped down and pulled on the lacy undergarments that coordinated with the dress; she applied her makeup with care. She stared at herself in the mirror as she ran a brush through her hair. She added a little more product to make the waves in her hair a bit more pronounced.

She forced herself to calm her racing heart as she opened the Tiffany & Co. jewelry box. Inside was a stunning pearl necklace with matching bracelet; at the clasp of both was a golden heart that resembled venetian, cast-iron, window gates. She tried not to think of the price as she put the jewelry on with a romantic sigh. She stepped into the dress, “Andrew,” she called.

Edward stepped into the room a minute later with a thunderous expression, “You called for Andrew?” He asked heatedly, his eyes roaming over her.

Bella whirled around and sucked in a breath; he was dressed entrancingly in a designer tux, she couldn’t name but knew for a fact the tux hadn’t came from Men's Wearhouse. She blinked at Edward; of course he wouldn’t follow tradition. “Zip me?” she requested, lifting her hair out of the way.

He stepped forward and ran a finger down the exposed flesh before slowly zipping up the dress. He pressed his lips to the sensitive flesh behind her ear, “I can’t wait to get you out of this dress once you’re Mrs. Cullen.”

She shivered at his bluntness. “Come, the limousine is waiting,” he said, lacing their fingers and leading her off the plane and to the awaiting vehicle.

Bella couldn’t conceal her look of wonderment as they drove down the Strip. She kept turning her head as she tried to take in all the vibrant lights and attractions.

Edward squeezed her shoulder softly, watching her tenderly. “We’ll come back soon,” he promised,
as they pulled into a private entrance to a resort that Bella was certain had to embody Vegas luxury at its finest.

“Welcome back, Mr. Cullen.” An older gentleman greeted him with a wide charming grin, as he offered him his hand, "Everything has been arranged as you've requested, and your brother and Mr. Whitlock are waiting in the private garden."

"Thank you, Benjamin." Edward said, shaking his hand firmly. "My son EJ, and my stunning bride, Isabella.” He introduced them.

Bella smiled politely as Benjamin took her hand and kissed her knuckles, "Stunning is correct," Benjamin complimented cheerfully.

Bella retook EJ's hand and followed them into the hotel. She watched as Edward spoke to Benjamin, with a casual friendly air. She adjusted EJ’s bowtie as they paused outside of Aqua.

“We increased security for the nightclub,” Bella overheard Benjamin tell Edward. She swallowed her shock as she realized the owner of the casino had made a point in greeting them himself.

“Have there been any problems?” Edward asked, his tone all business and none of the gentleness he displayed with them.

Benjamin shook his head, “No,” he assured Edward as he walked them through the casino floor and out to the private garden. "I wish you the both the very best.”

This was it, Bella thought, closing her eyes as she listened to the music start, she could feel her entire world change as she stepped through the door. She smiled as she walked slowly out to the beautiful gazebo in the middle of the private garden, where EJ and Edward stood patiently. Warmth traveled through her, sending pleasure into her heart at the sight of them.

Edward stiffened with pride as he watched her walk toward him; her chin held up confidently as he took her hand in his.

EJ smiled up at both of them as the minister spoke of love and commitment, and the hard work everlasting marriage took. Bella turned to Edward and vowed, “I believe in you and the person you’ve grown to be, and the family we’ve become; with my whole heart, I take you as my husband. I acknowledge and accept your faults and strengths as I hope you do mine.” She took the platinum ring from EJ and slid it onto Edward’s finger.

Edward cleared his throat and pledged firmly as he placed Bella’s wedding band onto her finger, “I promise to be faithful, I swear to always make our family’s safety and happiness a priority. I will be yours always as you’ll be mine, in failure and triumph.” He crashed his lips down upon her as the minister announced them man, wife and family.

They broke apart as Emmett’s whistle rang out through the garden.

“M’gonna bloody murder him,” Edward grumbled against her ear. Bella smiled widely as EJ hugged her enthusiastically, for a few minutes they indulged the photographer, taking a series of pictures.

Edward lifted EJ up, “You're going to fly home with Uncle Em and Jasper tonight,” he explained as he carried him over to his brother and brother-in-law.

“What about Bella and you?” EJ asked scrunching up his nose as his smile started to slip.

“We’ll see you for brunch tomorrow at your Aunt Alice’s house,” Bella promised, “you need to get
home and tell Tanner all about your trip.”

“Are you my mom, now?” EJ whispered, glancing between his father and Bella expectantly.

“Yes, she’s your mother now,” Edward assured him. “I know for a fact she loves you, no matter what. She’ll keep you safe and tuck you in at night,” he said.

Bella picked up where Edward trailed off, “and I’ll always check under the bed,” she promised, kissing EJ’s cheek lovingly. “But tonight, you’re going to head back with Jasper and Emmett, your father and I will meet up with you tomorrow.”

“Promise,” he held his finger out to Bella.

She wrapped her pinky around his, “I promise! Now go have fun with Tanner,” she said, handing him over to Emmett.

“Congratulations, you brave fool,” Jasper laughed.

“Fool is correct,” Emmett teased, covering EJ’s ears, “Mother’s going to have your balls.”

“Language,” Bella scolded, narrowing her eyes at him.

“Sorry, Madam,” Emmett apologized, uncovering EJ’s ears with a sheepish grin. “Say bye E,” he instructed, “before your mom decides to roast me.”

“Bye Dad…” EJ said and added hesitantly with a large grin, “by Mom.”

“Be good,” Bella smiled, her heart melting as she kissed his forehead. She briefly wondered if she ever had a choice. Jasper squeezed Edward’s shoulder before following Emmett out.

“So,” Bella whispered once they were alone—her voice low and seductive.

Edward realized she was flirting with him, in a suddenly shy and adorable way as if she was uncertain of how to do so now. He felt an intense rush of excitement, triumph. She was his: name, ring and all. He walked her to the nearest elevator that went up to their floor and swiped his card.

“What do you want, Isabella?” He asked, his gaze became all the more intense as his free hand played with a curl of her hair.

Her eyes lit up as she undid his tie, “You,” she whispered, “my husband.” Satisfaction gleamed in his eyes.

To be continued...

Thanks.

To my Pre-Reader

and Beta - Bobbi
Chapter 14

I Want A Mommy
Chapter Fourteen

... 
Bella followed Edward up to their room at the estate. She smiled as she took in all the changes the room had gone undergone in the past few weeks. Her perfumes were mixed with Edward’s colognes. Earrings, hair clips, and ties were scattered absentmindedly across his dresser. A photo from the zoo of the three of them together, now set on her nightstand next to her copy of Drums of Autumn. She grinned as Edward placed their luggage on the bed. Gone was the navy duvet cover, replaced with a softer floral blanket. “How long do we have?”

He rubbed at the stubble that shadowed his jaw. “Long enough to shower and change,” he replied, glancing down at his watch.

“Oh,” she murmured, unpinning her hair. “Together?”

He chuckled deeply, sending goosebumps down her spine. “C’mon, Minx,” he held the door open to their bathroom for her.

... 
He watched her out of his peripheral vision. His wife. His smile twisted into a smug grin as he thought the words.

“Isabella.”

She turned to look at him, pulling her gaze away from the view of the city from the car's window. “Hmm?” She asked.

He held out his hand to her, she laced their fingers as his thumb brushed over her wedding band. His lips quirked up and he raised her hand to his mouth, kissing her ring finger. “Are you okay?” He asked softly, as Antonio turned into the gated community.

Bella’s smiled widened. “Perfect,” she promised him. She turned her eyes back to the window and took in the large, white brick colonial-style mansion. It looked as if it belonged on the cover of a magazine, or on a movie set.

He wrapped his arm around her waist as he led her into his sister's house, where his family was gathered and awaiting them.

"Bella, Daddy!" EJ broke away from Tanner and rushed them. "You’re back," he beamed as Bella scooped him up and hugged him.

"We are, just as we promised," Edward said as he ran his fingers through his son's messy hair.

"Tanner and me, we're going upstairs to play. Auntie Alice says we must," he informed them as Bella placed him back on his feet. "She says that our little ears don't need to listen to your grown-up talk."

Edward chuckled, "they do not, now run upstairs and behave, Sonny Boy. I'll come and get you
once we've finished." He turned to Marcus and ordered quietly, "Make sure they stay up there."

Marcus nodded and followed the boys up the staircase to Tanner's playroom.


He tugged her close. "Don't worry, I'll handle my family," he kissed her softly. His voice dropped to a murmur, "You are my wife, and they'll learn to respect that," he swore to her.

"Edward Anthony, what is this nonsense I hear of you eloping?" His mother scolded him as soon as they stepped foot into his sister's kitchen. Alice's lips twitched as she continued cooking with Jasper. Emmett snickered, but he stopped immediately as Esme turned her glower on him.

"What, no congratulations, Mother?" He chuckled, curling his arm around Bella's waist.

Her frown deepened. "This is not the time for jokes, Edward," she said crossly, placing her mimosa back on the table. "I am deeply displeased by your actions."

The smile slid off his face. "And I'm a grown man, Mother. We didn't want to get married in some grand ceremony, surrounded by hundreds of people we don't know. I wanted it to be small, intimate and private," he explained, pulling out a chair for Bella.

"Esme, lay off the boy," Carlisle chuckled coolly, as he placed his hand on her lower back. "They're young and in love."

"But, Carlisle—" He shook his head, stopping her from continuing.

"Now, Mom, I know you're disappointed you missed the ceremony," Edward stated, "But Isabella and I, we'd like for you to plan a wedding reception. All the friends, all the people you would've invited, but without the fuss and stress of a wedding."

"Very well," she sniffed. "I'll need six to eight weeks." She agreed as the frown softened on her face. "Early July would be lovely." She mused.

He gave his mother a full smile. "Excellent, now what's for brunch?" He asked as Rosalie offered Bella a mimosa.

Bella shook her and declined softly. "No thank you, I don't drink. A glass of water would be great, though," she said.

Esme paled, her mouth drew up in a tight line. Carlisle patted her hand gently.

"I'll go get the boys," Jasper said, handing Alice a platter of pancakes to place on the table as he left the room.

A minute later, the sound of the boys' feet thundering down the staircase could be heard in the kitchen causing Edward to smirk, "they've been unleashed." He teased, squeezing Bella's hand as she laughed and told him to hush.

"Yeah well, I was big enough to ride Transformers," Tanner bragged.

"So, I rode Spider-Man five times, and Marcus almost puked all over an old lady," EJ boasted.

"Anyways, Spider-Man is way cooler than Transformers."

"That's enough you two," Alice chuckled, stopping the boys before their conversation turned into a
full-blown argument of which was cooler. "Take your seats, it's time to eat," she instructed them, as she made their plates.

"Are your hands clean?" Bella asked EJ who groaned and darted from the room to wash them. When he returned, he displayed his clean fingers for Bella to see before taking his seat.

"Marcus will take you and EJ back to the house," Edward said as he picked up Bella's plate to carry to the sink. "Jasper and I have some business to take care of today."

EJ's face fell. "But, Daddy, can't it wait until Monday?"

"I'm sorry, Sonny Boy, it cannot, but I will be home for dinner." He promised and his eyes cut to Antonio's, he nodded and made a reminder in his phone.

"Fine," he huffed. "Then, Mo—" he noticed his grandmother's frown and corrected himself, "Bella and I, we'll just have fun without you," he said a bit spitefully, giving him a reluctant hug.

Edward smiled sadly, "I'm sure you will." He kissed his forehead reverently before turning to Bella, as he brushed his thumb across her cheek before kissing her softly. "Tonight," he promised her.

EJ waved goodbye as Bella gathered his things and directed him out to the car where Marcus was waiting.

He watched them go from the living room window, his face twisting into a cold mask as they disappeared down the street. "Let's go," he ordered Jasper and Emmett, "I promised them I'd be home in time for dinner."

"All right," Jasper agreed, kissing Alice twice on the lips and once on her forehead.

She clutched his hands. "Be careful," she murmured, before letting him go. He gave her a tight nod.

"Bye, Dad," Tanner waved from the upstairs banister.

"Be good for your Mama," Jasper called up to him. He gave Alice a playful wink, she, in turn, provided him with a small fretful grin.

Emmett pulled back from Rosalie. "I'll talk with them," he promised her.

She pressed her lips against his. "Stay safe, my love," she whispered.

He caressed her collar, leaned in and murmured against her ear, "Always." She shivered under the intensity of his stare. "Be waiting," he ordered quietly.

He pulled back and beamed, his brother and family thought he was laid-back, playful, and maybe even a pushover. They were wrong. He knew, out of any of them, he was the most intense. He just hid it well.

"Later," he kissed his mother's cheek and followed Jasper and Edward out of the house. He slipped Antonio the two, hundred dollar bills he owed him from a wager he had lost the night before as they watched the game before sliding in next to his brother.

Jasper was the first to speak, as he checked his pistol. "I still believe you should have someone else handle this. You're risking a lot by doing this yourself, Edward."

Edward's lips tightened, he took a deep breath before speaking. "I want to send a clear message, and the best way to do that is to deliver it myself. I want this asshole scared. I want him to know I have
Emmett’s smile was amiable. "I have to agree. If some fucker messed with Rose the way they've screwed with Bella, I'd beat the holy hell out of him myself, and not rely on anyone else to do my dirty work. She's mine. Mine to protect."

"Then you understand me, brother." Edward gave him a grateful nod.

Jasper let out a low sigh, "I get you too, I don't like it, but I get it. I'd murder a million souls if it meant saving Alice. It's fucked up, but I get it. I'm just worried. We have the F.B.I. on our asses regularly. I don't want this shit sticking to us. We have families, man."

Emmett's whole body language shifted, and his eyes brightened. "Speaking of family, I need to take some personal time, a few weeks actually."

"Personal time?"

"I know it's short notice, especially with everything going on, but a spot opened up for Rosalie at this reproductive center in Colorado. We're going to try and have a baby, one more time."

"I thought you guys decided to adopt?" Jasper asked, slipping his gun back into its holster.

"We did, we're on a list, but this spot opened up, and we're going to try it. If it works, it works, but we still plan on adopting as well." He shrugged.

Edward smiled at his younger brother's optimism. "It's fine, Emmett, take all the time you need," Edward assured him as he slipped his favorite knife back into its leather sheath.

"Are we clear?" Edward inquired over the intercom, as Antonio pulled to a stop.

"Location is secure," Antonio confirmed. Jasper and Emmett averted their eyes to the window as Edward shrugged off his Armani jacket; he changed clothes with a calculated calm.

He hummed as he walked into the basement, Jasper and Emmett traded cautious looks. "You're sure this is the man?" he asked.

Detective Grant nodded. "Yes," he handed Edward a yellow envelope containing his proof.

He slid the contents out on the table and looked it over with a deep frown. "I appreciate your help locating this twisted fuck." He shook the detective's hand and then gave Emmett a look.

Emmett grumbled under his breath and reluctantly held out a folder to Grant. "This is what we have so far on the rapist, and the finder fee, of course."

"Always a pleasure," Grant stated, placing the folder into his briefcase. "Now if one of you'd kindly show me out," he requested, after shaking Edward's hand.

"This way," Jasper motioned and walked him out of the building.

Edward stared at the pictures of the man's apartment. There was an entire wall of photos of Bella. He read over his bank account statements, and the photos Grant had taken of the average looking man waiting at the airport with his camera yesterday evening when they were originally supposed to land.

"Well, well, well, who the fuck do we have here?" He chuckled coldly. "My wife and my family's, personal paparazzi. What's your name?" He barked at the cowering man. "Answer me now, motherfucker."
"Darren … Darren Hawk," he whimpered, fear and panic blazing in his beady brown eyes.

Edward's lips curled up. He pulled his knife, his lips twisted in a cruel smirk as Darren yelped and jerked back against the wall away from him. He was a pathetic, ball-less, coward of a man.

"It was just a job, man," he cried. "I never meant anyone any real harm, all right?"

Edward lunged forward as he reached out and he jerked him to his feet by the front of his shirt. He recognized his voice from the phone call he had received the night Ryan's had been set ablaze. "Did you burn down my fucking bar?"

"No, man, no," he shook his head frantically. "I just did what I was told. I was paid to follow her, to take the pictures, to scare her a little. To make those calls, I was told what to say. It was easy money. I paid that boy to trash her apartment, I wanted no part in that, dude."

"Who. Was. Your. Employer?" He snarled, his nostril flaring.

"I don't know," he sniffed. "I meet with one guy once, called himself Jim. I never saw or spoke to him again. He gave me the phone, with the instructions that as long as I did what the man on the other line wanted, I'd be rewarded. I was an amateur photographer, making crap pay as a pizza boy. Okay?"

Edward's fingers curled around his knife, Jasper moved to step forward, but Emmett clapped his hand down on his shoulder and shook his head as Edward expression darkened. "Yeah, okay," he watched the man crumple to the floor in a lifeless heap.

"Well, that went south," Emmett snorted, amusement flickering in his eyes.

"Go to the office, I'll handle this," Edward ordered sourly, as the deafening roar in his ears started to dull. "This is my mess—"

Emmett cut him off gruffly. "Listen, I don't want to hear any more woe-is-me bullshit spill from your mouth. I was born into this mess too, with the same twisted impulses and I've been here, I've done this before, you covered my ass when I went all Jack the Ripper on Rosalie's father. So just shut the fuck up and let me help."

"Right," Edward let out a slow breath, and neither spoke as they spent the afternoon riding the earth of Darren Hawk. He washed the blood from his body, watching it swirl down the drain as he clutched his favorite bottle of Johnnie Walker. "Antonio!" He shatters the silence of the locker room.

"Yes, Boss," he called, and Edward could hear the scraping of his chair as he moved to stand up.

He took another swallow of the rich, smoky liquid that felt velvety smooth against his tongue; his words came out mildly slurred. "I want guards on my family at all times discreetly as possible."

"Of course, Sir."

Edward turned the water off and swayed slightly as he stepped out of the shower. "Whoa there, Boss," Antonio caught him. He gripped his chin and checked his eyes. "You are completely plastered," he observed, his lips curving upwards.

"Am not," he huffed indignantly.

Antonio shook his head, gently prying the bottle of scotch from his hand. "I haven't seen you this gone in years," he snorted, "C'mon lets sober you up a little," he glanced at his watch and swore.
"You've got to be home for dinner in an hour."

"I promised," Edward agreed aloofly, giving him a clumsy nod as he tried to button his oxford shirt.

Antonio rubbed the back of his neck. "Stop," he grunted and moved Edward's hands out of the way, as he dressed him with a frown. "Jesus fuck, what did Jasper give you?"

"Dunno," he laughed. "But it was pharmaceutical grade."

"Right, let's get a burger and some fries in you, mate," Antonio said, pushing a bottle of SmartWater into his hands. "Drink up," he ordered.

"But I have to eat my wife's—" He let out a laugh that sounded suspiciously like a giggle to Antonio, and Edward's burst of lustful, boyish humor had him rolling his eyes heavenward. "My wife is fucking gorgeous," he gloated as Antonio led him to the car.

"Put your seatbelt on," Antonio ordered before pulling out of the parking garage and driving them to a nearby fast food joint. He passed the food back to Edward. "Eat up, Boss, you need to be a touch more clearheaded before I drive you home."

Edward wrinkled his nose as he looked in the greasy bag. "But, the calories."

"Just eat the fucking food," Antonio grumped.

The drive was quiet as the news report filled the silence; Antonio helped Edward out of the vehicle. He checked his eyes. "You're just going to have to fake it, don't talk too much."

"I'll be fine," Edward assured him. "Thank you, Tony."

"Goodnight," he nodded, stepping into the security office as Edward headed into the house.

"Daddy, you're home!" EJ beamed as he stepped into the dining room where Bella and EJ had been waiting for him. The food sat untouched in the middle of the table.

"Am I late?" Edward asked, eyeing his watch with a look of confusion.

"No, we just finished setting the table." Bella grinned at him as he tried to hang up his coat, her eyebrows rose as it hit the floor. "Join us, Elizabeth and I made a delicious roast."

"I helped, I put the plates and glasses on the table," EJ announced. "Mo—, Bella says chores do a young man good, whatever that means."

"EJ," Edward said a touch sharply, "Sonny Boy," he corrected, his tone gentler. "If you want to call Isabella, Mom, Mama, whatever, you're welcome too. No one is going to stop you."

"But Grandma …" EJ sighed, chewing on his bottom lip, his green eyes clouded with worry.

"Don't worry about Grandma, she'll get used to it," Edward promised him firmly, dropping into his seat at the head of the table.

Bella smiled. "You don't have to; if calling me, Bella is what feels most comfortable that's fine too."

"Okay," he murmured. He ran his small hand through his messy hair, and Bella's heart swelled with love.

Dinner passed smoothly, and Edward spent most of the time moving his food around his plate. He
listened as Bella and EJ’s chatter filled the air. "I so can't wait for summer," EJ beamed. "I get Mom all to myself every day. No school."

"It'll be good bonding time for the both of you," Edward agreed. He raised his water glass to EJ's who grinned as their glasses clinked together.

EJ kissed Edward’s cheek after the plates were cleared away. “Goodnight, Dad,” he said taking Bella’s hand. “Will I see you in the morning?” he asked.

“You may,” Edward winked at him. “Sleep tight.”

“Come on, Green Eyes, bath and bed. You have school tomorrow,” Bella instructed, handing him Patches, his favorite stuffed animal. “We’ll be upstairs.”

"I'll be in my office," Edward replied as he ruffled EJ’s hair.

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Bella opened the door to Edward's office slowly. "He's out," she whispered, as Edward turned his eyes away from the window and the backyard. "Are you coming to bed?"

He stood and stretched offering her his hand. She laced their fingers and laughed quietly as he tugged her off to their bedroom.

He wrapped his arms around her and breathed in her soft vanilla scent.

"What's the matter?" She murmured, running her fingers over his stubble.

He let out a long sigh as he nuzzled the soft flesh of her neck. "Nothing's wrong, Bella. At the end of every day, this is all I want." He pulled the sheet away from her and placed several kisses across her bare shoulder, his arms tightening around her possessively. "Now rest, love, you have a long week ahead of you."

The final weeks of the school year passed quickly for EJ and Bella. Edward sat next to his parents and son as they watched Isabella walk across the stage to collect her degree. He grinned proudly as she waved up at them. They celebrated her accomplishment with cheesesteaks and fries, and a weekend away before Rosalie and Emmett left for Colorado.

June passed by lazily. EJ and Bella days were spent forgetting what day it was while they lounged by the pool, attending play dates, music, art, karate lessons and late nights camped out in front of the television.

Edward worked long hours to compensate for Emmett's absence, many times well into the night, or weekend trips across the country. The rapist was lying low, and with Bella's stalker out of the picture, things were quiet as they settled into becoming a family.

Author Note...

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