Aurora Borealis

by ariesjinx

Summary

Life after the war didn't go as smoothly as Harry predicted it would. Three months of peace was all he had before everything went to hell. First was the sudden death of Andromeda Tonks – who everyone assumed succumbed to widows' depression. Then there was the even more unexpected inheritance of an ancient kind that put Harry in the leader position once more. And then came the slander.

Suddenly, Harry finds himself on the other side of the fence, his closest confidents two people he never knew he would be so close to. He assumed he could live this way, stay in Britain, and raise Teddy despite the negativity against them.

And then things got out of control. An attempt on Harry's own life made him come to the startling realization that he couldn't stay – especially when not even the Ministry would help to protect him. No, they actually wanted to lock him up on the vague account that he might turn into the next Dark Lord.

Harry couldn't take anymore.

And so he fled.

Notes
Hey everyone, I'm Marie Tomlinson (no this isn't my real name.) Now, this is my first ever yaoi fanfic, but I've always liked the whole Harry/Edward pairing. This story take place at the end of the Harry Potter books and before the beginning of Eclipse. There won't be any Bella bashing because I like her character, but there also won't be any love triangle type thing. I don't change anything that happens in previous book, so that whole Bella/Edward/Jacob thing still happens. And nothing in Harry Potter changes.

Disclaimer: Don't own Harry Potter or Twilight saga, they belong to J.K. Rowlings and Stephen Meyer respectfully. But I do, however, own this plot and all the crazy stuff that happens in it.
Prologue

To live in the future, one must first understand their history.

The Forgotten History of the Most Noble and Ancient Wolves

There was a time, long before the Wizarding World came to be called the Wizarding World, sometime after the reign of Merlin, that there were a group of outstanding Wizards. This Quartet was known as Wolfe by all those that came to know about them. They traveled across the land, going for town to town, administering small acts of kindness; and everywhere they went, rumors followed.

These four were so well known all across the lands and valleys of Scotland. They were revered for their talents and their power. Where they went flora flourished and fauna lived. It was said that the very land and sky moved for them.

Their names were Naira Peverell, Charity Alphorn, Lasik Serapha, and Raphael Zephyr.

They all had a way about them that left people stumped and confused, and often times people could only wonder. The four had an intellect that much suited their personalities as individuals. They were hardly ever seen separated although their personalities clashed violently. And they were like replicas of the great founders of Hogwarts, people often wondered if they themselves were the reincarnations of the founders.

But the most memorable thing about this Quartet was that they could do things that people could only dream of. Though inept in wizardry, the four was also elemental in their skills, reaching beyond that of simply wand magic.

Naira was able to control the Earth like no other. She could rock the Earth with a simple wave of her hand. She could make plants grow up for deserted wastelands. She was able to create armor that even the goblins envied.

Charity was able to control the airs. She could fly through it like a bird. She could manipulate it to her will. She could create storms you could never imagine in a second. She could weave a hurricane, spin a tornado, and dread up a wind storm that would last for days. And yet she could also create a nice breeze on a hot summer day, cushion the fall of a child, or rock a crib for a sleeping baby.

Lasik had control over the waters. He could make it rain for days on end. He could cause the oceans to swell, or the rivers to dry. He could collect all the water from the air, turning it into a weapon. Some believed that he could even control the blood in a person's body.

And Raphael had control of the fires. He could breathe it like a dragon and bend it to his will like man always dreamed of. He could snuff it out with his hand or start it with a snap of his fingers. He could pull it from the Earth's core or pull it down from the sun. It was said that the fire even ran through his veins.

But no matter how great they were, it did not stop Death from taking them, or so people believe. The last person was to have seen any of the four was a woman who lived alone out in the words. She swore she saw all four turn into wolves and then they disappeared into the trees. It was from then on that they were called the Wolfe.
My life has been a far cry from pleasant, but I can't really complain, because I am sure that there are some people out there that are worse off than me. But while I know that, I can still claim that I have had a very unfortunate life. I often wonder if maybe Fate is really sadistic and likes to play with my life. Now, you might wonder what could possibly possess me to say something like that, well I'll tell you, for I'm not raging mad or anything of that sort.

I find that I could say this because, since before I was born I was a marked man. Yes, I said before I was born. See, not only is my life a far cry from pleasant, but it is also a far cry from normal. I'm not normal, at least I've been told so on many occasions.

The Halloween after my first birthday, I lost my parents to a ravaging madman, and he marked me, unfortunately, as his equal. From then on I was destined to either kill him, or die at his hands.

Orphaned, I was given to my relatives, who despised me for what I was and didn't bother to hide it. Eleven years I lived in neglect, lost and hopeless, believing I was worth nothing in the world. Ha! If only I knew then!

In a way you could say I was saved from them, but sometimes I wished I never found out just what was so special and different about me. Maybe if I had remained oblivious none of them would have died. He wouldn't have come back, and the world would not have changed me so drastically. But I found out, and it did change me, for better or for worse I could not tell you.

But I can tell you that in the end I did win. Whether that should be a good thing or a bad thing, I'll let you be the judge of that. All I know is that with him gone I lost everything. My purpose, my drive, my friends, my family, my pride, everything. Gone, dead with him, and I don't know if I should even hate him any more for that.

But even though the battle was won, I still feel like I lost, and in the end, I know that I'm nothing but a tool, like toy soldiers.

_Step by step, heart to heart, left right left_

_We all fall down...

_Step by step, heart to heart, left right left_

_We all fall down like toy soldiers_

_Bit by bit, torn apart, we never win_

_But the battle wages on for toy soldiers_

_I'm supposed to be the soldier who never blows his composure_

_Even though I hold the weight of the whole world on my shoulders_

_I am never supposed to show it, my crew ain't supposed to know it_

_Even if it means goin' toe to toe with a Benzino it don't matter_

_I'd never drag them in battles that I can't handle unless_

_I absolutely have to_

_I'm supposed to set an example_
I need to be the leader; my crew looks for me to guide 'em
If some shit ever just pop off, I'm supposed to be beside 'em
And even though the battle was won, I feel like we lost it
I spent too much energy on it, honestly I'm exhausted
And I'm so caught in it I almost feel I'm the one who caused it

This ain't what I'm in this world for; it's not why I got in it
That was never my object for someone to get killed
Why would I wanna destroy something I helped build
It wasn't my intentions, my intentions was good

I went through my whole career without ever mentionin'...
Now it's just out of respect for not runnin' my mouth
And talkin' about something that I knew nothing about
Plus Dre told me stay to out, this just wasn’t my beef
So I did, I just fell back, watched and gritted my teeth

While he's all over TV, down talkin' a man who literally saved my life
Like fuck it I understand this is my business
And this shit just isn't none of my business
But still knowin' this shit could pop off at any minute cuz

Step by step, heart to heart, left right left
We all fall down like toy soldiers
Bit by bit, torn apart, we never win
But the battle wages on for toy soldiers
Isabella Swan hummed softly to herself as she pushed her ancient and bulky red truck down the winding path that lead to the Cullen’s house, and she used the word house very lightly. The gorgeous white structure could be viewed more as a mansion than a house. It had a towering glass wall that made up the back side and gave view to a sprawling river. A beautiful wrap-a-round porch hugged its structure like a nice fitted skirt on the first floor. Fresh white paint coated the outer layer of the rectangular house and it was shaded by tall cedar trees that gave off an air of mystery and fantasy, like anything could happen there.

The Cullen house would easily have been the envy of every homeowner in Forks, had anyone ever really seen the place. But, like always in a small town, people speculated and Bella was smug when she heard them gossip because she knew that they guessed wrong. The Cullen house was located well into the forest far away from the prying eyes of the resident town’s folk who’d want to do nothing more than poke their noses into other peoples’ business. A person would have to know what to look for and be very acquainted with the Cullens to be able to find and approach the house, after all, the Cullens like their privacy, and for good reason.

What no one knew was that every member of the Cullen family was – in fact – a vampire, but not the normal, run-of-the-mill vampire, if ever such words were used together.

Nope.

The Cullens were a family of vampires that acted on a strict animal blood only diet, which came as a kind of relief for the citizens of Forks, although they did not know that. To them, the Cullens were just a bunch of rich and beautiful people who called one another family. Bella was the only ‘normal’ person clued in on their secret.

Bella blinked her large, doe brown eyes as she came upon the Cullen home. Even though she had been there before, she couldn’t help but stare at it in awe. The first time she had seen the place she had thought it was timeless, and now, a little over a year later she still believed that. The front door swung open, breaking the spell Bella was in and Esme Cullen smiled out at her, looking extraordinarily like Snow White standing in the doorway of the beautiful house.

“Hi,” Bella called out in a small voice, knowing that despite the distance Esme, and all the other vampires in the house, would be able to hear her. Sighing inwardly, Bella turned the key in the ignition, effectively turning off her truck. The silence that followed was deafening now that the roar from the old engine was gone. Bella sighed a little before she stepped out into the damp air that
constantly hung over the town, despite the fact that the sun was actually out today.

“Hello Bella, how are you,” Esme asked as way of greeting once Bella had approached her. She moved to the side to allow the girl in and she shot her a smile full of dimples, which Bella always found to be a little odd. How could a person that felt like hard rock have dimples? They couldn’t possibly be as soft as they looked.

“I’m fine, thank you,” Bella said back politely as she shrugged out of her light sweater. A sweater she had been wearing as a precaution in case it rained again – which it hadn’t so it had been pointless and a minor annoyance having to lug the thing around. She hung it up by the door and looked around the open space that was the “living room” if it could be called that.

The area really just looked like a mass of empty space – kind of like a loft would look and Bella often suspected that the room had originally been three or four separate rooms. There was a large couch and two loveseats made of white suede, and the far back wall was made entirely of glass – giving view to the leafy green surround them. On a raise platform near the glass was a white grand piano. Everything in the room was white, the high-beamed ceiling, the walls, the thick carpet, even the wooden floors. A large winding staircase took up much of the west side of the room and an empty square near there lead into the kitchen. Another empty space on the other side of the room lead to the dining room which doubled as the family meeting room since vampires technically didn’t eat human food.

“That’s good to hear. Now, I’m sure you’re hungry.” Esme said, turning toward the kitchen. “I made you some food. Let me go and warm it up for you.” And then she disappeared through the walkway before Bella could even think about objecting. Bella smiled and shook her head fondly at the motherly vampire, before she walked over to the couch and sat down next to Alice, who was flipping through the channels quickly on the wide-screen TV. On Alice’s other side, Jasper leaned forward and gave Bella a tightlipped smile and she could see from the way his chest didn’t move that he had stopped breathing.

Bella sighed at the notion, feeling a little bit guilty that Jasper had to try so hard to maintain control over his bloodlust whenever she was near.

“Hey Bella, how was work,” Alice asked in a distracted voice. She didn’t seem particularly interested, but Bella answered anyways.

“It was alright,” she told her nonchalantly with a casual shrug of her shoulders. “I heard some interesting news.” Alice hummed absently, her bored gaze not leaving the TV. Bella wondered if she was actually watching it at all. “Yeah, you guys have some new neighbors.”

At this Alice’s hand froze; the channel landing on some random soap opera as she turned to face Bella.

“Neighbors,” the small dark-haired girl repeated, confusion coloring her bell-like voice. Bella nodded her head, her brown hair falling into her face with the movement. Pushing it behind her ear, she continued on.

“Yeah, the realtor who sold the house was talking about it in the store today. She said the house had been empty for about 90 years now and that it belonged to some old family from England. The Potters I think she said their name was,” Bella trailed off, poising a thoughtful expression. She was completely oblivious to the silent conversation Alice and Jasper seemed to be having beside her. “Well, anyway, just the other day some kid called her saying he inherited the house or whatever. And today they moved in.”
“Hmm, I’ve never seen a house anywhere around here,” Alice finally said and Bella looked at her in confusion, finally catching on to the vampire’s discomfort.

“That’s odd,” she mumbled and Alice hummed in agreement before turning to look at her husband inquiringly.

“Have you?” Jasper shook his head in the negative, looking thoughtful. Alice sighed sadly, and Bella could only guess that she was not pleased with not knowing something. It was silent as the three pondered over this new development. On the TV, some woman was begging her husband to not leave her, telling him that she’d try and be more faithful.

“Bella, do you know who the person that bought the house is,” Alice suddenly questioned, breaking through the still silence.

“No, but the house supposedly cost a fortune, so the guy that inherited it has to be loaded? But then again, it could probably be just some kid that got lucky or has nothing else left.” Bella shrugged at the end of her statement, showing how much she believed her own words. Alice shrugged also, her lips pursed thoughtfully.

“Is it just the kid? What about his parents? How old is the boy,” Esme fired off as soon as she was within hearing distant of Bella. She was whipping her hands off in a kitchen towel and Bella was a little bit struck at how normal the gesture seemed. She was just so caught up in the vampire-ness of them that she was often taken aback when they acted human.

“I don’t know, supposedly the guy didn’t want to talk about his family. At least, that’s what I got from the realtor’s complaining.” Esme continued to frown, but she sensed the hopelessness of her questions and returned to the kitchen to finish making Bella’s snack. If Bella strained really hard, she could hear the small clattering of the woman tinkering with kitchen appliances.

Alice suddenly sat straight up in her seat, her eyes filming over slightly. Just as quickly as it had happened, it was over and she was once more relaxing into Jasper’s strong arms.

“Edward’s back,” Alice announced at Bella’s questioning look, and right on cue Edward blew into the room in a swirl of wind and scattered blades of grass. The three turned to look at him questioningly and was taken aback by his appearance. The normally neat vampire was curiously missing several buttons from his shirt and his already messy hair was filled with grass.

“Edward? Is that you,” Esme called before walking into the room from the kitchen. “Oh! What happened? Are you okay,” she questioned when she took in Edward’s harried appearance. Edward nodded once, the move so quick Bella could not catch it with her slow human eyes.

“Edward,” Alice said in a warning tone when Esme’s worried expression didn’t go away. Edward hesitated for a fraction of a second, his dark eyes landing on Bella before moving away quickly. He looked embarrassed as he treaded his fingers through his bronze colored hair, scattering a few blades of grass.

“I . . . I don’t know.” His brows pulled together and he frowned deeply as he said, in a serious tone, “I think there’s something wrong with me.” Esme took a few steps toward Edward, concern written on her face.

“Did something happen, dear,” she asked. Edward sighed heavily in a very human fashion and turned to stare unseeingly out the large glass wall behind him.

“I didn’t mean to,” Edward finally said into the silence that had fallen. Jasper frowned when he sense
the waves of shame coming off of his ‘brother.’ “I don’t know what came over me,” Edward continued. “I just . . . I just jumped on him. I just wanted to . . .” he trailed off, lost in his thoughts and recollection of what had just happened.

Esme looked at him with concern and sadness, Jasper and Alice with shock, and Bella just didn’t look at him, instead looking somewhere else so that he wouldn’t see the sick expression on her face. After a moment Edward seemed to finally notice their expressions for he sighed.

“I didn’t want his blood,” he muttered quietly. He then looked down at the floor, looking about as embarrassed as a vampire could.

The man in the soap was now throwing his unfaithful wife’s stuff out of the house while she stood on the lawn crying hysterically.

It took a moment, but having normal teenage friends, some of them boys, allowed Bella to put together Edward’s words and appearance, and the knowledge had her slapping her hand over her mouth. Alice, Jasper, and Esme looked over at her in confusion at the clear amusement they saw on her face.

“Ah . . . sorry,” Bella choked out before she lost all control and collapsed into a fit of uncontrollable giggles. Her amusement caught the attention of the household’s prankster and the bulk of a vampire strolled into the room to investigate, his wife, Rosalie, tucked possessively under his arm.

“Hey, what’s so funny,” he asked in a booming voice, looking around the room as if he could somehow spot the source of Bella’s amusement.

“Edward . . . jah-jumped . . . boy . . . wah-woods,” Bella managed to gasp out, still overtaken by her laughter. Rosalie spared Bella a look full of disdain before she rolled her amber eyes and focused her attention on her nails. Emmett, however, was very interested and he turned to look at the bronze haired vampire, his dark eyebrows raised.

“Wow! Really?” Bella nodded her head vigorously, tears streaming down her cheeks as she tried to catch her breath. Emmett let out a booming laugh. “Wow little brother! Finally decided to bat for the other team, huh?” He wiggled his eyebrows teasingly at the mind reader. Alice and Jasper finally seemed to catch on to the situation and the blonde male looked at Edward in shock while his wife beamed brightly. Bella sneaked a look at her and could practically hear Alice’s plans for a shopping spree, as if Edward’s new sexual preference would make him more agreeable to go and ‘shop till he dropped.’

“I’m afraid I don’t follow,” Esme finally admitted in a slightly defeated tone, looking around at all the teens in confusion. Emmett sighed as if exasperated and he waved his hand vaguely at Edward as he said, “Well, it seems like Eddy-boy here tested his new found sexuality out on some poor boy in the woods.”

Edward groaned and was sure that had he been human he would have died from embarrassment by then.

“I always figured you were gay,” Rosalie said in a dismissive tone, still studying her nails as if they were the most interesting thing in the world. Her comment was the only one that seemed to get a rise out of the immortal teen.

“I’m not gay,” Edward snapped defensively. He glared at the blonde beauty before looking over at Bella, his eyes asking her to back him up, but she simply shrugged.
“Sorry Edward, but Rosalie is right,” she told him in an apologetic tone. Edward stared at her with wide eyes, as did Esme and Jasper – and even Rosalie spared Bella an astonished look for one short moment before she went back to looking disinterested. Bella sighed in exasperation and shook her head, as if she were disappointed in them. “Well, it’s true. Anyone with eyes could see it.”

“Bella,” Edward called in a whisper, his expression that of great confusion. The others in the room could feel the sudden change in the atmosphere and they discreetly left the two alone. Bella, noticing their departure, motioned for Edward to come and sit with her. Edward obliged, sitting down and grabbing one of Bella’s hands and clasping it between the both of his. Bella patted the back of his hand with her free one.

“Actually, Edward, this is sort of why I came here,” she said in a low voice. She looked down at their linked hands. “We need to talk.”

“About what,” Edward asked a forbearing feeling overcoming him. He was once again tortured by the fact that he couldn’t read her mind. If he could . . .

“Our relationship,” Bella answered and then she sighed. She really didn’t want to do this, was willing to completely ignore it and go on, but she also wanted him to be happy. “It’s not working anymore, Edward.”

“What are you —?”

“I can tell you don’t love me,” she told him, cutting him off. She drew swirling patterns into his hand as she waited for his response, and when it came she mentally sighed.

“Yes, I —” Bella looked up, locking eyes with him and Edward broke off at the look in her eyes, a look that said she knew he didn’t and she didn’t want him to have to lie to her.

“No, you don’t,” Bella told him softly but with conviction. She then sighed yet again – she seemed to be doing that a lot in this conversation – and let her eyes wander around the spacious room. “Yes, you love me,” she spoke again in a slightly distracted tone. She sounded wistful as if a declaration of love did not mean the same to her as it did to him. “Yes, you do,” she intoned again, still in that soft voice. She patted his hand again but still avoided looking at him. “Yes, you love me.”

Edward flinched slightly as if he had been hit, but he knew Bella’s words were true. He had known something was different as soon as they had come back from Italy. Yes, he did love her, and she most definitely was family, but she was more like . . . another sister than the love of his ‘life’. He wasn’t sure how or why it happened; it just . . . sort of did. So while their relationship had started out intimate, in a way at least, it wasn’t now.

“You see my point,” Bella said after she had given Edward a moment to think her words over. Edward turned to look at her again and they locked eyes, intense gold against warm brown. Bella thought he looked like an odd mixture of distressed and relieved – but still beautiful, always beautiful.

“I’m sorry,” he apologized, his sincerity pouring out of him. Bella shrugged and waved his apology away.

“Don’t be,” she told him. She then lifted her free hand and placed it on his cool cheek. “I love you Edward. I really do.” Edward’s face seemed to break at Bella’s declaration, twisting into an
expression Bella did not wish to ever see – ever. “But,” she continued, determined to get her message across, “I always knew we weren’t meant for each other. I’m too plain for you.”

“No, you’re not,” Edward protested immediately, lifting one of his hands to curl around the one Bella had on his cheek. Her skin was so warm under his icy touch that, had he been human he would have shivered. “You’re very beautiful.”

“That’s not the point,” Bella told him, although she couldn’t help the blush that flooded her cheeks – from both the compliment and the intensity of his gaze. She slipped her hand off of Edward’s cheek and took a deep breath to calm herself before she continued. “We . . . we don’t fit together. We’re not compatible. We’re like . . . like . . . like fire and ice.”

“Bella,” Edward whispered, using his free hand to trail down Bella’s cheek. Her sad smile could have broken his heart if it had still been beating and he was sure that she was crying on the inside. He couldn’t read her mind, but he could read her face and it was there, in her dark brown eyes, shimmering on the surface.

“It’s okay, Edward,” Bella said, almost cooed, trying to comfort him and if the situation wasn’t so sad, Edward would have rolled his eyes. It was just so like Bella to comfort someone else even when she was the one that was hurting. “I’ll be fine. I just want you to be happy.” Edward smiled bitterly as Bella patted the hand he was still using to hold hers. He could almost hear the unspoken words in her mind. *It’s okay that you’ve stop loving me*, they spoke to him.

“You’re probably the most selfless human I have ever met,” he told her and Bella laughed in response. The sound was light-hearted and helped to loosen the tension a little bit.

“I’m not so sure about that,” Bella responded, grinning from ear to ear. It hurt a little, but Edward seemed to relax at the sight of it. Bella looked away and racked her mind for a distraction. Finding one, she clutched onto it like a life preserver and kept it in mind as she turned back to face her, now ex-boyfriend.

“So, do you want to hear what I found out today?”

Harry Potter sank down into the ugly, orange plastic chair positioned in the drab office he was currently residing in. It was bland looking place, with dull off-white wall – that may have been pure white at some point in time – and an abundance of potted plants, as if there weren’t enough greenery outside. The room was also small and box-like; Harry couldn’t imagine anyone wanting to willingly work in the room. It was claustrophobic and the chairs were very uncomfortable and annoying.

Harry balanced a pad on his knee and reached over to grab a pen off of the nearby table, which had a potted flower on it. And then he sighed for what he figured had to have been the hundredth time in the past two minutes.

“Teddy Remus Lupin-Potter, would you please stop moving,” he pleaded with the adorable blue-eyed baby in his arms. Teddy tilted his head to the side cutely; his black hair flopping into his eyes, and, despite his annoyance, Harry couldn’t help but smile at the boy. He was putty in the child’s chubby little hands. With an amused smile and a shake of his head, Harry turned back to the form he had been trying to sign. He had managed to write down his name before Teddy started squirming in his arms again.

“Come on Teddy,” he began pleading again. “Aren’t you bored? Don’t you want to go home? I’m
sure you do, and if you would just sit still for a moment I could finish up here and we could go home.” The baby simply stared at Harry blankly, chewing absently on his little fingers. Harry sighed inwardly, feeling like an idiot for trying to reason with a baby. “I’m going completely mental,” he muttered softly to himself.

“Excuse me.” Harry looked up at the sound of the voice and came face to face with a cute brunette that had an amused expression on her pale face. “Do you need any help,” she asked him, gesturing vaguely at Teddy with her hand. Harry hesitated for a fraction of a second, his instincts screaming that he could not trust strangers, even if they did appear to be very good in nature. It was most definitely his paranoia talking because the girl didn’t even look like she could harm a mosquito.

But then Teddy decided that he had had enough of sitting still and he began to wiggle impatiently in Harry’s lap, causing the pad to fall onto the floor and the papers Harry had been trying to sign to scatter about. Harry glared accusingly at the boy before holding him out to the girl in a sign of clear abandonment, even if Teddy could not tell. The girl plucked Teddy up into her arms, beaming into his face as she turned so that she could sit down in the empty chair right next to Harry. Harry immediately approved of the girl, whoever she might be.

“Thanks,” Harry told her as he reached down to collect the documents. He pulled them into a neat stack, making sure they were straight, before clipping them back onto the clipboard. “I thought I’d be here forever thanks to that little monster.” He threw a mock glare at Teddy but the baby didn’t seem to notice, so busy with playing with the girl’s thin fingers.

“No problem,” the girl told him airily, waving her hand in the air to dismiss his thanks. She then braced Teddy against her right arm so that she could hold her left hand out to Harry. “I’m Bella Swan by the way.” Harry shook her hand and gave her a smile, which in turn caused Bella to blush. This was normally a cause of alarm for Harry – girls were always blushing and giggling and flirting to blush. But with Bella that didn’t seem to be the case. Chuckling lightly, Harry offered his name.

“Harry Potter.” Bella’s brows rose into her hair and she hummed thoughtfully, the tone of which had Harry cocking a brow in question. “What?”

“Oh, nothing,” she mumbled quietly, another blush coming up to coat her pale cheeks. “It’s just that . . .” she started and then finished in a rush of words that had Harry blinking in confusion for a moment, “… The whole town is already buzzing with gossip about you and your move here.” Harry groaned and shook his head sadly, while Bella nodded her head at him sympathetically. “Yeah, I know,” she told him, her voice low – which made Harry think that that just made it more pleasant on the ears. “I moved here last year and the only reason why they’re not still gossiping about me is because my father has lived here since forever.”

“Fantastic,” Harry complained on another groan, shaking his head. Bella smiled, amused by the teen’s reaction. She had always assumed that she was the only person who didn’t like attention, but it appeared that she wasn’t as much of a freak as Emmett liked to tease her about, which was a relief for her to realize. While she thought this over she bounced Teddy on her knees, enticing small giggles from the baby.

It was silent except for Teddy’s baby babbling and the ominously loud ticking of the overhead clock. Bella thought quietly to herself during this time. She wondered when it would be a good idea to stop by the Cullens again, or was that relationship gone now that she was no longer dating Edward? She wondered what she should make Charlie for dinner. She wondered when next she’d be able to visit Renee. She was just thinking about what someone like Harry would be doing moving to a remote town like this when Harry’s low tenor washed over her.

“So,” Harry finally drawled when he was done filling out the forms. “Aren’t you going to question
about my accent, or my family, or why I moved here?” Bella blushed once more for she had just been wondering about those things, and Harry wondered if the girl was an easy blusher. That would be interesting; he hadn’t met one of those before.

“Well . . . I wanted to,” Bella admitted a bit reluctantly. “But I know personally how annoying those questions can be.” The response was so bluntly honest that it had Harry blinking in surprise. Most girls Harry knew tended to only be able to blush, giggle, and jabber consistently and they often got on his nerves.

“You know Bella,” he said slowly, picking his words carefully so as not to be too forward. A smile crept onto his face as he said, “I think I’m going to like you.” Bella’s face immediately flushed dark red – a reaction Harry was coming to expect was normal – as she blinked her large doe eyes. Harry couldn’t help the smirk that pulled on his lips as he continued. “I don’t normally say this, but I have a feeling we’re going to be great friends.”

Bella let out a laugh in a short burst before she said, “You sound like someone I know. And she happened to be right.” Then she stood up, perching Teddy on her hip. The baby giggled before pulling some of her wavy hair into his mouth – a horrible habit of his – and Harry was amazed when it didn’t seem bother Bella. Most girls seemed to care a whole lot about their hair, another thing Harry couldn’t understand about them. It was turning out that Bella wasn’t like most girls.

“Well,” Harry drawled, his accent thickening on reflex with his good mood. “That’s good to know, what with helping my confidence and all.” He also stood and placed the signed documents into the turn-in bin – which was made of black wire and had large stickers of flowers on it. Harry was starting to get sick of seeing flowers.

“So, Harry, what’s this little guy’s name,” Bella asked as they made their way out of the warm building and into the chill outside. She jostled Teddy a little, smiling when the baby let out another peal of excited giggles.

“Teddy, and before you get the wrong idea, he’s my godson,” Harry said in a rush. He knew that in small towns people tended to have simplistic views on other peoples’ lives, and he wanted to quickly clear up anything that would be harmful to his small patched-together family.

“Godson,” Bella asked, surprise showing in her voice and on her face, but Harry heard nothing of the small town condemnation. “Where are his parents?” Harry stopped walking abruptly and looked down at the ground with a depressed expression. Though he had expected it – it was a reasonable question – he was still jarred. Bella bit her lip and immediately tried to make up for her blunder. “Oh, well um . . . it’s nice that you have him,” she said nervously. “I wish I had something of a younger sibling.”

“It’s not all its cooked up to be,” Harry told her lightly, internally glad that she had changed the subject and humbled that she had thought to do it at all. He immediately knew that Bella wasn’t like other people, those who didn’t know when not to press a subject, and he liked her all the more for it. “They can be quite annoying after a while.” Bella laughed at his attempt at a joke. And just like that the tense situation from before was quickly forgotten and the two walked on in an oddly familiar ease, like old friends or something of that sort.

“So, now that we’ve established that we’re friends, can I question about your accent, or your family, or why you moved here,” Bella asked in a teasing tone with an easy grin. She was falling into a comfortable pattern she had only ever accomplished with her best friend. The thought had her backtracking and she tried to shake it away, turning to focus on Harry. Harry’s nose wrinkled as he tapped his chin in thought, yet Bella could see the amusement sparkling in his emerald eyes.
“I supposed so,” he finally said in faked reluctance before letting out a deep and enriching chuckle. “Well, let’s see. I’m British – but you could already guess at that. I’m an emancipated orphan and as for why I moved here,” Harry seemed to really think about this one, and after a moment he shook his head and turned to look teasingly at Bella once more. “... well I don’t know you that well to trust you with that, now do I?” His tone was teasing so Bella laughed, but she couldn’t help but wonder about the whole emancipated orphan part.

“I guess you don’t,” she agreed then she said, “Wow.” They had reached what Bella assumed was Harry’s car; it certainly didn’t look like something a resident of Forks would own, or even be able to afford. In fact, it didn’t look American, and that was reason enough.

It was a midnight black with a single green stripe painted on its side, like a racing car. Bella couldn’t tell the model or make, but she knew it had to be both expensive and fast. Something she knew the Cullens would enjoy, and suddenly she couldn’t wait to introduce Harry to them. She was positive that even Rosalie might like him.

“Well, I guess I’ll be seeing you at school tomorrow,” she asked, handing Teddy over as Harry opened the back door. Harry took Teddy from her and buckled him into his car seat before answering Bella’s question.

“You most certainly will,” he said, laying his accent on thickly, and he was rewarded with another of Bella’s easy blushes. The female brunette then smiled before saying, “I’ll look forward to it.” Harry nodded, tipped an imaginary hat at her – making Bella giggle girlishly – and then hopped into his car. Bella stood where she was until the car had pulled out of the lot before she turned and walked back toward the building. All the while she wondered if Alice had seen any of that.

Harry pulled his car up the long drive to his new home. He took a few minutes to appreciate its beauty. The gorgeous house that he had somehow come into inheriting was nothing he had ever dreamed of possessing, and even now, three days after he had come to reside in it, he still couldn’t believe it was all his.

It was four floors of brick and wood, all painted in a soothing blue and white, and stretched out to nearly cover seven acres of land which was almost all of the twelve acres Harry had inherited. A porch wrapped around the second floor of the building, where seven of the bedrooms were located. There were eleven bedrooms in all, three libraries, two living rooms, four drawing rooms, three ridiculously large offices, twelve bathrooms and five half-baths, a large kitchen, and a basement Harry suspected was used for training and potion development.

And that didn’t even include the serving quarters that Harry knew was for house elves, or the garage, which had to have been a recent addition. The house was all done up in neutral tones of browns, creams, and tans – save for the occupied bedrooms that had their own personal touches. It was completely furnished when Harry had first got it – again except for the bedrooms – and the libraries were already stocked full. Three house elves named Tibs, Shell, and Misty had kept the house in tip top shape for the ninety years that it had been uninhabited, and that had been a pleasant surprise for Harry.

On Harry’s first exploration of the house, he had come upon his family’s entire heritage – the Potter’s side that is – stocked up in one of the drawing rooms, the East Den to be exact. Harry had spent the entire first day going through it and familiarizing himself with the Potter family history; which had been very interesting. For instance; he had found out that for a while the Potter family had a string of Slytherins – none of which were evil. Also, the Peverell brothers were direct descendents of both
Slytherin and Gryffindor. That had been a real head turner.

Harry sighed and pulled into the massive garage, parking his car next to a sleek green motorcycle. In the garage was a total of five vehicles and only two of which Harry owned. There was his Lightning GT, which he was coming to love dearly, and then Sirius’s old flying motorbike, which he had gotten remodeled and painted green, in dedication to his and Sirius’s Slytherin side – and the man did have a Slytherin side, despite his many protest. Next to Sirius’s bike was a silver motorcycle, made for speed, a Slytherin green GT3 40, and lastly a bright blue Vantage.

Harry rolled his eyes at the flashy vehicles before moving to take Teddy out of the car, and then the two headed into the house. Harry was immediately assaulted by the loud wailing of the fire alarm he had taken the courtesy of installing, when he crossed over the threshold into the house. In his arms, Teddy started wailing with the alarm, big fat tears streaming down his cheeks and small hands clamped over his ears. Harry winced, because he was sure the noise was killer on Teddy’s overly sensitive ears – which he had inherited from his father – and he quickly moved to the second floor, so that he could place Teddy down in his room.

Out of all of the rooms Harry had remodeled, Teddy’s was his most prized piece. The walls were a dark blue, so that it always looked like it was night and it was filled with millions of twinkling stars. On the ceiling right over Teddy’s crib was a large moon. It changed like a regular moon – which had been a bit of very tricky magic. The floor was covered in a thick black carpet and there were toys – both Muggle and Wizarding – strewn about. Teddy’s favorite, a shaggy grey wolf given to him by Tonks when he was first born, was rested against the crib bars.

The little boy, however, was not ready to relinquish hold of his godfather just yet, so Harry had to have a small battle with the baby before he finally managed to get him into his crib. He called on Misty to come and watch the boy. Harry then placed a one-way silencing charm over Teddy’s room before going to investigate what had caused the fire alarm to go off.

The kitchen was cloaked in a thick smoke and Harry could hear someone cursing violently from inside of it. With a sigh, Harry waved his arm, where his wand was tucked securely up his sleeve, and the smoke was sucked out of the room like some kind of vacuum. With it gone, Harry could easily spot the source of the problem.

The two blondes were bent over the stove, their blonde hair merging together so that Harry could see the distinct difference in the coloring – one more white than the other but both white-blonde to begin with.

“What is going on?” Draco Malfoy jumped up in shock and turned around looking distinctly guilty before he managed to school his featured into a mask of indifference. Luna Lovegood, never one to be scared or startled, simply looked over her shoulder at Harry briefly before turning back to the smoking stove.

“I didn’t do anything,” Malfoy immediately proclaimed calmly, doing the Slytherin thing and ratting someone out to save his own arse. He pointed one slim finger accusingly at Luna saying, “It was all Lovegood’s doing.” Harry crossed his arms over his chest loosely and leaned back on the counter behind him, arching a brow at the blonde aristocrat.

“I see,” he said in a patient tone, trying to hold in the laughter that was dying to bubble up inside of him. “And what, pray tell, did she do?” Malfoy gave an uncharacteristic shrug then looked pointedly at Luna, who was now humming softly to herself.

“I simply thought it would be a good idea to cook breakfast, seeing as you were out,” she finally said after a too long pause. “But I’m afraid the Chikaries thought it’d be rather humorous to play a cruel
prank on me, and something went rather bad.” Malfoy snorted at Luna’s explanation and rolled his silver eyes, then looked pointedly away when Harry glared at him.

“Well, Luna,” Harry said kindly, walking over to her. He peered into the pot that she had been cooking in but could only distinguish a black mass out of what was left. “How about we ask Tibs to do the cooking if I’m out,” he then suggested. Malfoy mumbled something under his breath, but before Harry could question him on it, he turned and stalked out of the kitchen. Harry sighed for the millionth time since he had awoken.

“Well’ll all get used to one another sooner rather than later,” Luna suddenly said, somehow managing to read the worry on Harry’s mind. Harry laughed once without humor.

“A Gryffindor, a Ravenclaw, a Slytherin, and the child of a Marauder; all living in one house,” he said then shook his head. “We’ll have to learn to get along. It’s either that or one of us kills the other. I opt for killing Malfoy, but that would probably hurt Teddy’s feelings. They are cousins after all.” Luna giggled like Harry knew she would, and the Savior smiled before patting her fondly on the head.

“Alright, let’s get this cleaned up.” Luna nodded, turned, and walked out of the room in a swish of her long skirt. Harry watched her leave with an amused expression that disappeared when he looked back down at the charred pot.

“Tibs,” he yelled.

Draco groaned and leaned back in the black leather armchair, looking up at the night blue ceiling – magically painted with twinkling stars in the shapes of his favorite constellations. He had gotten the idea after taking a look at what Potter had done to the baby room. Draco watched the stars, letting his mind drift about but not on anything in particular. He was content in his solitude, reveling in the peace that came with his very much unexpected move west.

Getting away from the Wizarding World was the best decision he had ever made, as surprising as that may be for a Pureblooded Wizard who once believed strongly in pureblood supremacy and sneered at the mere thought of anything Muggle.

Draco sighed then, and let his eyes trail around his room, one of biggest room in the house with a sitting area and a connecting bathroom. It had taken only the better part of a day to get the room to fit his liking, and Draco was smug to admit that Potter probably wouldn’t approve of it, what with all the magical items it displayed.

His broom – the same Nimbus 2001 his father had given him – was propped up on a display case above the fireplace in the sitting area. A portrait of his mother also rested high up on the wall opposite his bed. She was currently missing from her frame, probably off visiting her living counterpart at Malfoy Manor – it was amazing the kinds of things you could talk about with yourself. Among other things, Draco also had his many school pictures, the moving figures flickering lazily in their frames around the room – a room Draco had taken care of painting a dark moss green. A Slytherin banner hung above his king-sized bed, snakes slithering silently around the green words.

The sitting area – which was where he was currently seated – was set up in much the same way, a suede green couch, a white armchair, and a magical fireplace he had set up simply because he had wanted his own Floo. The floor here was wood, blonde oak to be precise. Another portrait, this one of his family – his father, his mother, his aunt, his uncles, his grandfather, and himself – sat above the
fireplace. Sure, he no longer approved of his family’s actions during the war; it didn’t mean he wasn’t proud of his heritage – which is why he had family books in the truck under his bed and some placed carefully in the small bookcase underneath the window by his bed.

There was a sudden knock on the door and for a minute Draco simply stared at it. The three – plus the baby – had been living in the house . . . manor for a little over three days, and in those three days Draco had spent all his time in complete solitude in his room. It wasn’t because he didn’t like his company – he could tolerate even Potter to some degree now – it was simply because he had wanted to be left alone.

After a moment’s debate, he flicked his wrist in a moment of wandless magic to open the door and let his guest in.

Potter peaked nervously around the door, spotting Draco at the far end of the room before entering. He shuffled nervously and looked around, letting his surprise at the room’s décor momentarily distract him. Draco couldn’t help the smug smile that graced his face at the other man’s surprise.

“Can I help you,” Draco drawled. He was staring, not at the Boy-Who-Lived, but at the wand he held in his hands, which Harry had returned to him shortly after the war ended. He twisted the object in a show of idleness as he waited for Potter to speak.

“Oh . . . right . . .” Potter mumbled. “Well . . . I just thought – you know . . . with us living together and all . . .” Draco rolled his eyes, mentally urging to other teen to quit his ramblings and get to the point already. “. . . I thought we should come to a . . . truce of sorts . . .” Draco finally looked up into the Savior’s eyes and he could see that this conversation was not one the wizard was comfortable having.

“Well, Potter, I agree.” Potter’s head shot up and he stared over at the aristocrat in blatant shock. “But,” Draco continued and the shock on Potter’s face changed to a wary expression. “You should already know that I can’t really do anything without your permission.” Draco then watched curiously as Potter winced at the reminder.

“Right, I forgot about that,” the dark-haired teen muttered, looking more uncomfortable than when he had first entered the room. Draco lifted and dropped his shoulders slightly in a shrug, apparently nonchalant as he said, “It’s not really that big of a deal.”

“So you say,” Potter mumbled looking down at the floor. “But I’ve never actually liked leading” – Potter winced again as if the word hurt coming out of his mouth – “people. I’m not exactly comfortable with —”

“Well it’s not like you can change anything,” Draco interrupted, feeling just the slightest bit annoyed. Who knew the Savior was such a whiner? “Look, I don’t care, your godson certainly doesn’t care, and I’m pretty sure Looney doesn’t care either.”

“I really wish you didn’t call her that,” Potter muttered absently, looking down at the thick carpet that mirrored the ceiling. Draco shrugged again and he could practically hear his father’s voice, scolding him. *Draco, Malfoys do not shrug like commoners. We are above such normalcy. I don’t want to see you exhibiting such behavior in my presence again.*

“Alright Malfoy,” Potter finally said after a long moment of strained silence. Draco put up a wall in his mind to block out his father’s drawling voice. “We’ll just . . . try not to kill each other . . . okay?”

“Agreed.” Draco complied airily, no longer really paying the other teen any more attention. He was staring at his wand again, frowning only just slightly so that you’d have to have be looking really
closely to see it. Potter nodded and then turned to leave, but stopped at the doorway – lingering in the threshold.

“By the way,” he added turning to look at Draco over his shoulder. There was a grin stretching his face, showing off the straight pearly whites. “We have to do something about your room. What would happen if a Muggle came in here?” Draco let out an uncharacteristic snort and shot Potter a grin of his own.

“As if I’d have a Muggle in my room,” he sneered, but only playfully. Potter threw his former rival a parting smirk before shutting the door gently behind him. Draco could hear his ringing laughter as he moved down the hallway.

Chapter End Notes

Man I just loved writing that bit about Edward. I was practically rolling as I wrote it. LOL. And that stuff about Luna making breakfast! Hilarious! Well anyway . . . R&R
The next day came with a buzz of anticipation for the students of Forks High School. Even though it was another gloomy and drizzly Monday, everyone was abuzz with excitement. The one thing on each of their minds was the newest residents to Forks, Washington. Everyone was speculating on the exciting idea of fresh meat, for no one ever really moved into the town – save for the Cullens.

People only ever wanted to move out.

Bella pulled up to the school with a passive expression and a roll of her eyes. Despite the wet weather – which was a constant in Forks – students were milling around the lot, hoping to catch a glimpse of the newbies before school started. Sighing and feeling a bit of sympathy for Harry, Bella grabbed her bag and exited her raggedy truck. She then walked over to the picnic table where she could see her friends, Angela Weber and Ben Cheney, waiting.

“Hey guys,” she called as she sat down in wait for the Cullen’s arrival.

“Hi Bella,” Angela greeted back in a quiet mousy voice. “You didn’t come with Edward today,” she then observed, pushing up her glasses as she gazed over Bella’s huge rusty-red truck.

“No.” Bella sighed and went on to divulge a piece of information she knew would travel around the school like wildfire. “Edward and I broke up Saturday, so I’ve been giving him some space.” Angela nodded in understanding although she was a bit surprised – the two had been practically inseparable and everyone remembered what had happened to Bella when the Cullens left. She wondered if Bella would have a similar reaction now that they had broken up.

Ben, however, wasn’t as tactful as his girlfriend and was gapping at Bella in open-mouthed shock. Bella self-consciously ducked her head, her cheeks burning red at the attention he was giving her. The purr of an engine had her looking up moments later, though, as Edward’s silver Volvo pulled into his normal spot across the lot. Alice and Edward got out, looking as supermodel-like as ever, and made their way over to the group.
“Hi Bella, Angela, Ben,” Alice chimed happily, jumping into the seat next to Bella and giving the girl a one-armed hug.

“Good morning,” Edward greeted the group in a more polite and subdued manner.

“Hey,” Bella greeted them both, letting go of Alice to wave nervously at Edward. She had wondered all of Saturday and Sunday how her relationship with Edward might change, but when the vampire smiled warmly at her she could tell that it wouldn’t be awkward. Angela smiled at the two shyly and Ben nodded his head in greeting.

Angela then opened her mouth, no doubt to say something, when she was cut off with the sudden appearance of Jessica Stanley. The brunette smiled cheekily at the group and they all stared back at her as if she had lost her mind. Bella being the exception, humans normally avoided vampires and therefore avoided the Cullens. It had taken Angela and Ben a year, and the removal of the very much intimidating Emmett, to get used to just Alice and Edward; so Jessica’s sudden company came as much of a surprise.

“Hey, so did you guys hear about the new kids,” she then asked immediately, almost as if she had been waiting for them to gather before she had approached them to pose the question – which she probably had. She looked from the Cullens to Bella to Angela and Ben expectantly, waiting for someone to ask the question so that she could dish out the gossip that she had heard.

“New kids,” Alice finally asked after a while, if only so that she could get rid of Jessica more quickly. Jessica beamed brightly and dropped the books in her hands onto the table before sliding onto the bench next to Angela. She then leaned forward and dropped her voice as if they were in danger of being overheard.

“Yes,” she practically hissed, her face bright with excitement. “So, I heard from Lauren, who heard from Ashley, who was at the store the other day, that the new guy that just moved into town was a to-die-for blonde. No, seriously,” she added even though no one had objected to her description. “Ashley described him as sex on legs!” Ben shifted in his seat – leaning back and away from the girl as if she were carrying some kind of disease and looking distinctively uncomfortable, which Bella could fully understand. Jessica’s explanation was quickly shifting into girl talk, and no guy wanted to deal with that. The only reason why Edward wasn’t reacting was probably because he had already heard it all in Jessica’s head.

“Wait, the new guy is blonde,” Bella asked, suddenly picking out that crucial piece of information.

“Oh yeah,” Jessica practically moaned, nodding eagerly, “Blonde hair, grey eyes, about six feet, and totally gorgeous.” Bella chose to ignore the little side notes as she thought over Jessica’s words. Harry was most definitely not blonde; in fact, he was on the other side of the spectrum. And he was not tall; Bella pegged him at five six at the most.

“That can’t be right,” she finally muttered, shaking her head. Jessica frowned at her and leaned back, no doubt wondering if maybe Bella had some information that she didn’t.

“Why? Did you meet them?”


“Yeah, there was some blonde girl, probably his sister, with him,” Jessica explained. Bella still looked confused, and a bit skeptical. Jessica frowned further, an embarrassed blush rushing to her face as she started to feel a little stupid.
“Ashley said they looked just alike, except the girl had really blue eyes, like contact blue.” Bella tilted her head to the side, suddenly envisioning Teddy. Harry had said that Teddy was his godson, yet they had the same coloring and now Bella was finding out that there was some blonde girl out there with the same color eyes. Something was clearly not right.

“Bella, what is she talking about,” Alice suddenly cut in, sounding impatient. “What’s this about a new kid?” Bella blinked, shaken from her thoughts and she turned to look at the petite vampire, who was looking very much annoyed. It was clear that Alice had not seen any new students joining Forks, just like she didn’t know that she had new neighbors. Yup, something definitely wasn’t right.

“I told you guys about it Saturday,” Bella informed her, frowning thoughtfully. “Remember, it was about your new neighbors.”

“You did say something about that,” Edward admitted in a low voice, his tone slightly distracted.

“So, our neighbors have kids,” Alice questioned curiously. Jessica looked between the three of them in unconcealed annoyance. She had come over to them to give some gossip but it was clear that Bella already had the dirt.

“Actually, your neighbors are an emancipated orphan, his godson, and two other people I have no clue about.” All of them looked at Bella in clear confusion, wondering where she had learned that, and she shrugged her shoulders. “Well, that’s what he told me.”

“He,” Alice asked, and Bella could see the vampire’s frustration mounting. Alice hated being surprised, especially since she always knew when things were coming. Bella opened her mouth to continue, only to be distracted when a familiar sleek black car pulled smoothly into the lot. Everyone gapped at it as it pulled into the empty parking spot right next to Bella’s table. The engine cut off and it was silent as everyone waited with baited breath to see who would appear. The passenger door opened after a moment and a tall blonde stepped out.

He held himself with a poise only an aristocrat could have, with his shoulders back, his head up, and his grey eyes indifferent. He was even dressed the part, with tailored slacks and a silk blue button up, and his shoes were casual but screamed expensive. His hair was a white blonde and brushed past his shoulders. Bella immediately tagged him as a spoiled rich kid, and she was wondering what he was doing with Harry, who seemed like the total opposite. And Jessica’s friend Ashley was right; he did look like sex on legs.

The teen reached back into the car, oblivious to the stares he was receiving, and pulled out a navy messenger bag and a baby bag with grey wolves painted on it. He slung both over his shoulder in an elegant fashion just as the back door on the driver’s side opened to reveal the other mystery blonde. This one didn’t hold the aristocratic air; in fact, she gave off a feeling of eccentricity. Her blue-eyed gaze was oddly hazy and out of focus, like she wasn’t fully in their world. She looked around for a bit then skipped to the other side of the car, her multi-colored skirt swishing around her ankles. Where the male was dressed stylishly, the girl was the complete opposite, like she had dressed in the dark. She wore a long sleeved yellow shirt and over that a vest the color of moss; and her long skirt was a mixture of brown, red, and purple. Her shoes were also strange, something clunky and dark blue. Yet despite the total clash of colors, her beauty seemed somehow enhanced. And her hair was a white-blonde waterfall that stopped at her waist, curving around her slim and perfectly proportionate figure.

She opened the back door on the passenger side and childish laughter rang out, reaching everyone’s ears. The girl leaned in and when she reappeared she had a messenger bag strapped diagonally across her chest and a baby perched on her hip. The baby, whom Bella recognized as Teddy, looked
around at all of them with wide and excited blue eyes. And Bella could see clearly now that the two
did have the same eye color. As Bella made this observation, the driver’s door opened and out
stepped Harry.

His black hair was a stylish mess around his head and he looked around, his green eyes holding
annoyance behind thin glasses. He pulled out a messenger bag and slung it over his shoulder. Out of
the three, he was the only one dressed casually, in a long sleeved grey and green striped sweater and
worn jeans with scoffed sneakers. He locked the car, then looked over and caught Bella’s eye,
smiled and then began to walk over to her. Bella smiled back as she got up, ignoring Jessica’s look
of open-mouthed wonder, and met Harry halfway, the two blondes trailing behind him.

“I knew I’d be seeing you today,” she called in way of a greeting.

“Well, I said I’d be here,” Harry responded back. Bella nodded then turned to look inquiringly at the
two blondes, who were staring back at her, the male with indifference, and the girl vaguely. Catching
Bella’s stare Harry shifted nervously.

“Oh, um . . . these are my . . .” he paused momentarily, looking around as if trying to find the right
word to use, which Bella found to be a little odd.

“Cousins,” the girl offered in an airy voice. Harry smiled at her but looked warily at the guy: Another
oddity. Harry Potter was proving to be another odd puzzle in the small town of Forks.

“Right, cousins,” he muttered. “Um . . . Luna and —”

“Draco Malfoy,” the male drawled, cutting Harry off. Bella smiled at both of them and Luna smiled
back slightly but Draco simply ignored her.

“Um . . . guys this is Bella. I met her yesterday.”

“Nice to meet you Bella,” Luna said in her vague voice. There was a sort of tense silence before
Bella sighed.

“Hey, Harry, I’d like for you to meet some of my friends,” she told the green-eyed boy and Harry
looked slightly relieved to be distracted. Bella then grabbed his sleeve and tugged him toward the
group that had been standing in shocked silence by the picnic table. “Okay, this is Jessica and that’s
Angela and her boyfriend Ben, and Alice and her brother Edward.”

Harry gave Jessica, Angela, Ben, and Alice hesitant smiles but froze when his eyes landed on
Edward. Edward stared back, looking both embarrassed and apologetic. He opened his mouth, as if
to say something but Harry tore his gaze away from the teen rather violently, as if he had been
physically caught in Edward’s gaze.

“I think I should go,” he stammered out, clutching the strap of his messenger bag tightly. His
knuckle looked bone white against his lightly tanned skin. “Y-you know, don’t want to get lost on
the first day and all that rot. See you later Bella?”

“Uh, sure, whatever you say Harry,” Bella said, confusion coloring her words. Harry gave her a tight
lipped smile, his expression one of apology before he hurried off without some much as a backward
glance. Draco and Luna immediately trailed after him looking only a little bit confused. “That was
weird,” Bella muttered once the three had disappeared around the bend. She looked quizzically at
Edward, but the vampire was still staring after the three’s retreat. Bella opened her mouth to question
about his strange behavior when the late bell rang. With a sigh, she turned and headed toward her
first class, English.
“Potter, what exactly was that back there,” Draco demanded as the trio continued their walk through the now crowded halls. Harry sighed and stopped walking but didn’t answer the boy’s question.

“Luna, here’s your first class,” he told the girl. “I’ll meet you here after class is over, okay.” He then held his arms out for Teddy. Luna handed the baby over and nodded once before drifting into the classroom like she was walking on a cloud.

“Potter,” Draco growled out, demanding the dark-haired teen’s attention.

“Look, just leave it alone. It’s nothing,” Harry snapped irritably, still not looking at the other teen. “I don’t even see why you care.” Draco’s jaw clenched tightly but he didn’t broach the subject again, and Harry was silently grateful for that. He adjusted Teddy on his hip then turned and led Draco to their first class, Trigonometry. When they entered the class grew silent and every eye turned to look at them. Harry sighed at the attention and took a seat in the very back of the room, yet people still somehow managed to look at them.

The class passed by in one of those slow dragging fashion. Harry pretty much knew most of the information, thanks to the fact that his cousin Dudley always threw away his school books when he no longer needed them, or thought he didn’t need them.

This free time gave Harry too much time to think, something he didn’t want to do, especially not now. He tried to distract himself with breathing exercises, for his magic had been a little out of control lately, but that didn’t distract him for long. Soon his thoughts kept drifting through memories he both enjoyed and hated. He was only too glad when the bell rang. However, Music, Latin, and English all seemed to pass in very much the same fashion, and by lunch Harry was feeling worn out and was thinking about ditching.

“You’re Harry Potter, right?” Harry started, the question creating an automatic scowl. How many times had he heard someone ask him that? It had to have been too much to count or harbor. But when he turned around and looked over to see the brunette from earlier that morning, Jessica or something like that, the scowl disappeared into a polite smile. Then he saw that she was practically leering at him and he groaned internally. She had a look on her face that Harry knew all too well. It was the same look he saw on the faces of the many girls that had once made up his fan club. It was sufficient to say that Harry did not like that look at all.

“Uh... Hi, Jessica, right?”

“You remember,” Jessica gushed happily and then she looped her arm through his – without his consent might one add. Harry couldn’t help but cringed when she pressed her chest against his arm. Talk about obvious.

“Would you like to sit with us today,” she was asking him. Harry wanted to object – was about to do it – but she was already steering him toward a table that was situated a little bit in the middle of the cafeteria, in everyone’s clear view. Half of the table was occupied by a rather rambunctious group of teens.

Harry managed to pull his hand free before Jessica could push him into the chair at the very middle of the group, he wouldn’t put it past her to try and force him into it. Jessica turned to look at him curiously and he let his gaze travel around the room, looking for an excuse that wouldn’t make him sound like a total prat.

“Hey Harry!” Bella appeared at Harry’s side with a smile on her face and a tray in her hand, almost like she had been conjured. Harry sighed in relief. He had never been more relieved to see a Muggle in his life, but at that moment he could have kissed Bella. He turned to face her fully and then looked
down to eye the food on her tray wearily. Seeing the clearly . . . questionable food, Harry made a mental note to pack his own lunch from then on.

“So, how’s your first day going so far?”

“Completely boring,” Harry deadpanned inching away from Jessica discreetly.

“Well, it could be worse,” Bella told him and Harry couldn’t help but agree, especially when he thought about what his school life had been like up until then.

“‘Suppose you’re right.”

Bella grinned and nudged him playfully in his ribs.

“Would you like to sit with me,” she asked. Jessica opened her mouth – no doubt to object and claim that Harry had agreed to sit with her, which he hadn’t by the way – but Harry quickly moved away from her and closer to Bella. The girl grinned and leaned closer to Harry so that she could whisper the last part in his ear. “Or would you rather sit alone and get mobbed by the hormonal girls of Forks High School?” Harry shuddered, shooting Jessica a fearful glance. Sure, he may have beaten the most evil wizard of all time, that didn’t mean hormonal teenage girls were not to be feared.

“I’ll sit with you,” he told Bella quickly.

“Thought you’d say that,” Bella said with a wink and then the two broke out into laughter. Harry felt his day immediately lighten as he followed his new friend to the other side of the table, the quieter side that was slightly in the shadow and out of the spotlight. He was only vaguely conscious of Jessica’s eyes boring a hole into the back of his head. Harry sighed at the girl’s obvious infatuation and took a seat next to Ben.

“Don’t you want to get lunch?” The question drew Harry from his thoughts of Hogwarts, crazy fan girls, and illegal love potions and he turned to look into Angela’s curious face.

“Hmm,” he asked and Angela ducked her head a little, red tainting her cheeks. Well that was sweet, she was a shy one.

“I was wondering why you weren’t eating,” she elaborated softly.

“Oh, I’m not hungry.” Angela looked like she wanted to say something more but the sudden appearance of Draco and Luna had her withdrawing into herself. Draco sighed and sat down heavily in the chair next to Harry, looking slightly put off, and Luna sat across from him, Teddy seated in her lap.

“How was your day,” Harry questioned the girl politely. Luna hummed in way of a response and began playing with Teddy’s feet.

“Potter, what have you gotten me into,” Draco demanded, a slight whine in his voice. Harry wanted to point it out but he had a feeling the aristocrat would never admit to it. “This place is absolutely horrid, their history is atrocious, the girls are ugly, the boys are crude, no one seems to have any sense or manners, and I don’t even want to know what that slop they call food actually is.” Here he casted a disgusted glance at Bella’s tray.

“Are you complaining Draco,” Harry asked, feeling just a little weird to be calling the teen by his first name. Draco looked over to glare at him but Harry could see that he also was a little weird out by the sound of his given name leaving Harry’s lips.
“Hilarious Potter,” he commented dryly. “Bloody hilarious.”

“Draco,” Harry scolded, tilting his head slightly toward Teddy – who was trying to bat Luna’s tickling fingers away and laughing happily. The blonde simply shrugged, looking down at his nails – Harry swears the teen gives himself manicures – in sudden boredom.

“Not my fault you’re carrying baggage.” Harry glared at the teen but chose not to comment. There was no need to start an argument so early on in their truce. There was no telling what that could lead to.

“The food s’not that bad,” Bella mumbled under her breath, picking at her ridiculously dry roll. Harry wanted to protest, but he felt that Draco had already said all that could be said on the subject of the school’s food.

“Don’t mind Draco,” Harry told her instead. “He always acts like a . . . um . . . well prat. You learn to get used to it.”

“I’d have to disagree with you there James. I doubt anyone could learn to get used to that,” Luna spoke up, earning herself a glare from Draco. Harry looked at her in amusement. It was an oddity to hear Luna tease anyone, but she seemed to do it a lot to Draco.

“It doesn’t matter to me either way,” Bella told them, tilting her head slightly. “I know someone just as . . . um . . . pigheaded.” A tinkling laughter sounded from behind Bella, drawing everyone’s attention to Alice and Edward as the two made their way over to the table.

“I hope you’re not talking about Rosalie, Bella,” Alice said in her bell-like voice. “She won’t like being compared to someone else, especially a guy prettier than her.” Draco scowled at the pretty comment, making Alice giggle girlishly again.

“As if I like being compared to some Muggle,” Draco muttered lowly and Luna rolled her eyes in an exasperated manner. Alice turned to look at Edward, about to say something about the comment that she heard Draco make, only to find him locked in an electric staring contest with Harry. She could practically see the sparks floating in the air. Both teens seemed completely oblivious of their surroundings and those around them. They didn’t even seem to notice that they had managed to acquire everyone’s attention.

“James,” Luna called softly, trying to get Harry’s attention. Harry blinked rapidly as if he was trying to get something from out of his eyes and he suddenly looked away, his eyes wide and his face as red as a tomato.

“Um . . . I should probably go,” he muttered lowly, blushing furiously as he could still feel Edward’s heated gaze on him. He reached over and plucked Teddy out of Luna’s arms. Then he muttered a quick goodbye to the girl before walking away swiftly, leaving behind a very confused group of people.

“What the bloody hell was that,” Draco demanded almost as soon as he had lost sight of Harry. He turned to glare accusingly at Edward, who was also staring after Harry’s retreat.

“Edward,” Bella called, snapping the vampire out of his daze – something completely out of the norm for the teen.

“Hmm?” He turned to look at her with a slightly unfocused look. Bella sighed inwardly at his inattention. Who knew Edward – or vampires in general – could be so absentminded?

“What was that,” Bella repeated, enunciating each syllable as if she were talking to someone
mentally challenged, and with the way Edward had been acting he might as well have been mentally challenged.

“What was what,” Edward questioned back, arching his brow curiously. As the words left his mouth the bell rang, dismissing them from lunch. “Oh! We’d better head to class. Wouldn’t want to be late.” He smiled his crooked smile and Bella sighed in annoyance. Who knew she could ever come to hate that smile – or find it annoying?

When Harry reached his next class, the bell had yet to ring. He talked very briefly with the teacher – forgetting his name as soon as he said it – before he took a seat at a table in the middle of the room. There were two other stools at the table, so he assumed this class was one in which they were taught in groups. He wondered vaguely who his group members would be, but it really didn’t matter to him seeing as he didn’t really know anyone in the school.

Once he was seated he set Teddy down on the tabletop and closed his eyes. In his mind he envisioned a bright white ball of light – which was actually his magical core. It was large and had bits of light flying off of it in odd directions. Harry had found his core one day when he was meditating after the War – thinking about giving Occulmency another try.

With immense concentration, Harry imagined the light from his core growing smaller and smaller – and when it was a reasonable size, he sighed and sank back into his chair, slightly tired. Trying to control his magic was always a tiring thing – even if it happened quickly – and normally he wouldn’t have to bother doing it. But since this morning when he had set eyes on one, Edward Cullen, his magic had been going insane, buzzing along his skin like a current, like it was looking for a way out. And it ONLY happened when he was near.

Edward Cullen.

Practically every girl’s – and gay guy’s – wet dream come to life. Such a beautiful male and just about the most alluring person Harry had the pleasure of ever meeting, and Harry could distinctly remember the Veelas he had come in contact with during his fourth year at Hogwarts. No, not even the Veelas could hold a glass to Edward Cullen, and that made Harry know for sure that the teen couldn’t be human.

Nu-huh, he was much too perfect, too compelling; with all that pale skin, disheveled copper-colored hair, and most of all, those smothering golden eyes.

It was all so . . .

Harry violently shook his head to rid himself of the thoughts. Thinking about Edward Cullen was not good for his health and so he opted to turn his attention to his godson, who was staring at him quizzically and sucking placidly on his fingers. Harry stared back, green against blue and for a long moment the two were content to just stare at each other. But then the moment of peace was broken as the school bell let out a loud shrill that had Harry jumping up and nearly falling out of his seat.

“Absolutely horrid device,” Harry mumbled as Teddy let out a peal of laughter and clapped his hands. Harry shook his head and smiled when the baby once again decided to pick up his unintelligent babble. “You are your mother’s child,” he said in a soft, fond voice. His thoughts then traveled back to days spent in a dank kitchen. He could see Nymphadora Tonks, her jubilant laughter ringing in the air and her spiky hair changing color in mirth. And then he could see Remus Lupin, his amber eyes soft and a smile on his face. Never too far behind them would be Sirius Black, eyes filled
with mischief and a cocky grin. There would also be Ro —

Harry shook his head to stop the memories there. There were some things he liked to remember and there were things he wished he could just forget, or erase. And he was bitter to know that most of his memories now were tainted with the tinge of betrayal. With a sigh Harry allowed himself to be pulled back to the present. It was then that he noticed that the room was a lot louder than before. As he looked around he realized that while he had been daydreaming the room had become filled with students. Then – with a jolt – he noticed that Teddy was talking, or trying to talk, to someone that was sitting next to him.

This would probably be Harry’s lab partner. With a resigned sigh, Harry turned to face them, a greeting on his lips. And his heart nearly jumped out of his throat at what he saw. There was Edward Cullen in all his forbidden glory.

Harry froze in shock, his body tensing up as his magic started to unwrap itself again from its tightly wound place, coiling out and running across his skin like an electric current. Harry sat ramrod straight in his seat, his hands curling into tight fist at his sides. He scowled down at the black desktop as he tried to concentrate on reeling in his magic. His vision seemed to tunnel, darkening around the edges as he slipped halfway into his mind.

Harry was only vaguely aware of the moment Bella walked in and sat down next to him, and he could no doubt feel her concerned gaze on him. But he could also feel Edward’s pointed gaze, practically drilling a hole into his skull. Harry spent the entire class period trying his hardest to not concentrate on Edward – trying to control the impulse to reach out and run his finger down that pale jaw. Such an overwhelming urge, like some other force was pushing him to do it.

Harry was just about to succumb to the act when the bell rang. Harry had never been more grateful for that damned Muggle contraption as Draco would call it. Quickly Harry scooped Teddy into his arms and ran out of the room so fast it was as if Voldemort’s ghost were chasing him. He sped into the closest bathroom and slid down to the floor.

“Dear Merlin, what am I going to do,” he moaned, drawing his knees up to his chest and burying his hands into his hair. He tugged on it slightly as if that could help him think of a solution to his glaringly obvious problem.

“Blah,” Teddy shouted. Harry smiled down at him, glad his godson at least was attempting to cheer him up, even though he couldn’t talk yet.

“Ted, what would I be like without you?”

“Sane seeing as right now you’re talking to a baby.”

Harry groaned and banged his head back against the tiled bathroom wall. He closed his eyes and hoped desperately that he had imaged Draco’s voice, but when he opened them again there the blonde was, standing over him. “What are you doing exactly, Potter,” Draco questioned, arching a thin eyebrow. Harry scowled up at him.

“What does it look like I’m doing, Draco? I’m talking to a baby inside the male’s loo. Now go away so I can continue with my insane ramblings.” Harry made a shooing motion with his hands and put on an irritated look. Draco scowled up at him.

“What does it look like I’m doing, Draco? I’m talking to a baby inside the male’s loo. Now go away so I can continue with my insane ramblings.” Harry made a shooing motion with his hands and put on an irritated look. Draco’s lip twitched, the only sign of his amusement.

“Alright, Harry, I’ll leave you be. But remember, we live together. I’m bound to find out what you’re hiding.” After giving Harry his famous Malfoy smirk, Draco turned around and walked – no struttted – out of the bathroom.
“Harry,” a chipper voice chirped in Harry’s ear. “Are you okay?”

Harry turned, a polite expression set firmly in place, to look straight into the golden eyes of Edward’s sister Alice. She smiled cluelessly at him, her head tilted a little to the side.

“I’m fine, thanks,” Harry told her before turning to look back at the English teacher.

“I don’t think so,” Alice continued to say, talking in a sing-song. Harry mentally rolled his eyes – what did this Muggle know about him – and turned his attention on his godson. Teddy was looking over at Alice curiously, his nose wrinkled as if he smelled something bad.

“You know,” Alice spoke again after a moment of pause. Harry tried to ignore her – really he did – by trying to concentrate on the words of the teacher. She was lecturing about something or another.

“You really shouldn’t do what you’re doing, you know. You’ll have to give in sooner or later anyways,” she finished in a slightly dazed tone. Harry fought the urge to look over at the girl, keeping his gaze focused on the teacher at the front of the room.

Alice was finally silent and Harry chose to ignore her cryptic comment. He didn’t know what Alice meant by her words but he had a distinctive feeling that it had something to do with Edward, and at the moment he wanted nothing to do with Edward. The guy could go and get himself hit with an Avada Kedavra for all he cared.

. . . Well actually Harry did care, a bit too much if he would admit, and that just made him even angrier toward Edward. Why did he care about a complete stranger? A stranger that – nope Harry would not think about it.

That never happened!

Harry let out a breath in a huff and crossed his arms.

Teddy copied his movement, but added a curious tilt of his head.

Alice giggled charmingly from beside them, a peel of wind chimes.

Harry sighed in annoyance.

It was turning out to be a bad day.

Chapter End Notes

Ah . . . poor Harry, he's swimming in the huge river well all know as De Nile! I wonder how Edward's going to handle this? -_^
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Pairings:

Harry/Edward (duh!), Alice/Jasper, Esme/Carlisle, Rosalie/Emmett, Draco/?, Luna/?, ?/? (I'm allowed to keep some pairing secret)

Disclaimer:

This story is based on characters and situations created and owned by JK Rowling and Stephenie Meyer, various publishers including but not limited to Bloomsbury Books, MT Books, Scholastic Books and Raincoast Books, Little, Brown and Company, and Warner Bros., Inc. No money is being made and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

Edward was feeling slightly irritated – okay, maybe it was more than slightly – and frustrated as he drove home from school. It didn’t help his mood that Alice was being unrelentlessly persistent in her questions – both vocal and not – and even Bella was being unnecessarily annoying. He looked in the rear view mirror and glared at the old red Chevy behind him. It took all of his years of self control not to growl, that would have been like giving in. But it was maddening, and he was sure Bella was supposed to be grounded.

“Edward,” Alice called, finally vocalizing her thoughts, her impatience thinning even more than usual. Edward sighed and ignored her, much to her ire. He was not ready to tell her – or anyone else as a matter of fact – what was ailing him. It was too personal and embarrassing. No, he was determined to solve this . . . problem on his own, and he would solve it.

Just as soon as the allusive Harry Potter would stop to hear him out, although he doubted the teen would. Even now he could feel the boy’s heated glare, and he wondered if that was how Bella had felt the day they first met. Not that it was the first time he had actually met Harry. And given the circumstance he was actually a bit relieved that Harry had acted the way he did. But it didn’t mean that he enjoyed being avoided. Granted, he’d give Harry his space, but it was only a matter of time before he took the boy. No matter what happened, Harry was his.

Edward sighed and pushed the thoughts of Harry to the back of his mind as he neared the house. He didn’t want to alert Jasper to his feeling just yet. Just for a little bit he was hoping he could keep this a secret and keep all those in the household oblivious to his new attraction.

Edward pulled the car – his precious Volvo – into the garage, still tuning out a pouting Alice, and exited the vehicle quickly. If he was lucky he knew he’d be able to retreat to his room and ignore the rest of his family there. Even though they were all unnaturally strong and could easily take out a measly piece of wood, the entire family all understood the importance of privacy and a locked door. If Carlisle taught them nothing he at least made sure that they all knew that. Luck, however, wasn’t on his side when he had to stop to greet Esme, giving Alice just the right amount of time to corner him.

“Edward,” Alice hissed, her displeasure quite evident in her tone. “You know I hate not being able
to see. What happened? What was that today,” she demanded.

Esme’s welcoming smile vanished, turning into a frown when she caught on to her children’s mood. She looked between the two in confusion.

“What’s going on? Did something happen? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” Edward said in answer to both of their questions. He then turned, wanting nothing more than to retreat to the comfort of his room so that he may think, only to be met with another obstacle in the form of Bella. She stormed loudly into the room and glared at him.

“What did you do to Harry,” she demanded. “And don’t you dare say ‘nothing.’” Edward didn’t answer, because he knew Bella would see through his lie. She always had a habit of picking up on things he didn’t want her to know. Edward used to find it endearing, but right now, it was just plain annoying.

“Who’s Harry,” Esme asked into the silence, confusion coloring her melodic voice.

“Harry’s the one I told you about. He moved into that house a mile or so out from here on Saturday,” Bella explained, looking quickly at Esme before turning back to glare accusingly at Edward. “When I met him he was perfectly polite, but all day today, whenever Edward showed up Harry would disappeared. And in Chemistry, Harry was practically glaring a hole into Edward’s head. So, I’ll ask again: ‘What did you do to Harry?’” Edward sighed and threaded his fingers through his hair in a clear sign of his frustration as he averted his eyes away from those in the room.

“Nothing . . . really,” he said cryptically and Alice growled lowly, the sound sounding foreign coming from her.

Sensing his wife’s spiking frustration, Jasper appeared at the small vampire’s side. Edward watched – a little bit envious – as the blonde ran his hand down Alice’s back in a soothing manner and the girl visible relaxed. With Alice calm, Jasper let his golden eyes drift around the room, tasting the emotions of those there. His brows knitted together in confusion as he turned to face Edward.

Who are you thinking about? He questioned in his mind. Edward chose to ignore him. He didn’t want to tell them about his green-eyed beauty. And then, for a moment, Edward’s thoughts were consumed with thoughts of Harry. That smooth pale skin, those petal red lips, all that thick black hair, and those eyes . . .

“Edward,” Jasper called, shifting slightly from the intense emotion rolling off of the mind-reader. “Why are you feeling so . . . lustful?” Edward tensed up as everyone turned to look at him with wide eyes. Then Alice’s face lit up like a Christmas tree and Edward inwardly groaned.

“Oh, this is so exciting! Edward, you’ve —”

“Ah, Carlisle is here,” Edward suddenly announced, cutting off whatever it was that Alice was about to say. He flitted over to the door to open it for his sire, feeling immensely grateful for the distraction. Carlisle entered the room with a smile of his beautiful face and confusion in his warm, golden eyes.

“Hello,” he greeted them all pleasantly. “Did I miss something?”

“Edward’s found his mate,” Alice blurted quickly before Edward could even think to stop her. Edward turned to gap at his little ‘sister’ with wide eyes – not able to believe her gall – but she simply grinned cheekily back at him.

“Is that true,” Carlisle asked, surprised, turning his always intense gaze onto his first son. It had only
been three days ago that Edward had realized that he was, at the very least, bisexual. Surely he
couldn’t have met his mate in such a short time period?

“Well, I’m not really certain if he’s my mate or not,” Edward answered a bit hesitant; making sure
Alice could see the accusing glare he was giving her. He then made a face at Carlisle’s hopeful
thoughts.

“Oh, well, what’s the boy like?” At that Edward had to shrug his shoulders.

“I don’t really know,” he admitted, and then added bitterly, “I haven’t really gotten a chance to get to
know him.” Behind him, Alice and Bella shared a knowing look. They had a very good idea who
Edward was ‘pinning’ for.

“Well, have you tried reading his mind,” Esme asked, getting confused again.

“Yes, but I can’t read him mind,” Edward answered much to everyone’s surprise.

“You mean like me,” Bella asked, feeling a little relived that she wasn’t completely abnormal.

“Not quite,” Edward told her and she frowned. “With you, I can’t hear anything. It’s like you’re not
really there. But with him, it’s like I’m constantly running into a wall. His mind is there, I just can’t
got to it,” he explained to them as best as he could. Thinking about it now was actually giving him a
headache.

“So, Harry has, like, a barrier in his mind or something,” Bella asked, and Edward shrugged, still lost
in his thoughts. “Oh, well what about Draco and Luna?”

“Same thing,” Edward answered absently.

“Oh, hmm . . . that’s weird.” Bella then turned and grinned at Alice and the pixie-like vampire
grinned back. “Well, at least we now know that Harry’s your mate,” she commented nonchalantly.
This seemed to snap Edward from his stupor and he looked over at the two grinning girls in shock.

“I never said that,” he remarked numbly, groaning inwardly.

“But you hinted at it,” Bella pointed out. Edward opened his mouth to object but Alice cut him off.

“It’s okay Edward, we completely approve,” she told him, and Bella nodded in agreement. They
seemed to be doing that a lot lately.

“Who’s Harry,” Carlisle asked in amused confusion. Alice whirled around to face him, her eyes
bright with excitement.

“Oh, you’ll just love him,” she said, bouncing on her toes. “Harry’s just about the most interesting
human ever. I just know we’ll be best friends.”

“Alice, you just met him today,” Bella reasoned with a teasing smile. Alice rolled her eyes and shook
her head at Bella, as if the girl was missing something obvious. “But Alice is right. Harry is
wonderful. A complete gentleman and he has the most adorable accent. Completely perfect for you
Edward.”

Edward sighed and shook his head. For the first time in his afterlife, he felt like hitting his head
against something really hard, if only so that he could be unconscious.
Harry stared blankly ahead, not sure what to make of the man standing across from him. He had been quite sure he was alone in these woods, but here he was – a being so beautiful that he could not be real. The man stared back, his eyes a smothering dark gold and Harry saw something stirring in them that he had witnessed in the eyes of a few of his more . . . promiscuous fans.

Lust.

Undulated lust.

Harry swallowed hard and the tense moment shattered as the man moved. Harry blinked and he was suddenly right next to him – this auburn haired angel. Harry wanted to know who he was, what he was doing there so far into the woods, but one look into the stranger’s eyes and all words escaped him.

As if drawn by some magnetic force, the man reached out and curved his hand around Harry’s cheek. A jolt of electricity shot down Harry’s spin and he gasped, and then suddenly he was on his back and the man was hovering over him. His eyes were completely black now and Harry thought he’d be swallowed up by them.

“Mine,” the man growled, but the sound was so beautiful that Harry shivered. “Mine,” he growled again, and he was leaning in. Harry lost all thought, his mind went blank and he reached up to meet the stranger’s lips. “Mine,” that beautiful voice murmured once more against his lips. Harry’s arms lifted upward and he wrapped them around the man’s neck. Harry’s arms splayed out and ran up and down Harry’s sides. A moan came unbidden to Harry’s lips.

Everything seemed to have exploded around him in a flash of white light. The feeling was too intense when the stranger bucked down. Harry felt disoriented; his head was dizzy and things seemed to swirl in his vision even though his eyes were closed.

Harry groaned and threw back his head as cool lips trailed down his neck. Fingers dug into his hips, pressing them more firmly together. Harry felt as if he were sinking into fire, his whole body was burning up.

And suddenly, he wanted more.

With surprising ease, Harry flipped the stranger over, straddling him and moving his hips in a slow circle. The man gasped and his dark eyes seemed to cloud over. The nails digging into his hips tightened and Harry smirked superiorly. He leaned down, running his lips over the square jaw, down the smooth neck . . . and was stopped by the man’s shirt.

Harry growled and, without even thinking about it, ripped the shirt open – ignoring the buttons completely. The man gasped and his dark eyes seemed to cloud over. The nails digging into his hips tightened and Harry smirked superiorly. He leaned down, running his lips over the square jaw, down the smooth neck . . . and was stopped by the man’s shirt.

Harry growled and, without even thinking about it, ripped the shirt open – ignoring the buttons completely. The man gasped and his dark eyes seemed to cloud over. The nails digging into his hips tightened and Harry smirked superiorly. He leaned down, running his lips over the square jaw, down the smooth neck . . . and was stopped by the man’s shirt.

Harry growled and, without even thinking about it, ripped the shirt open – ignoring the buttons completely. The man gasped and his dark eyes seemed to cloud over. The nails digging into his hips tightened and Harry smirked superiorly. He leaned down, running his lips over the square jaw, down the smooth neck . . . and was stopped by the man’s shirt.

They were rolling in the grass now, trying to outdo the other. Harry was gasping for breath when they finally broke apart.

“Bloody hell,” he whispered as heat pooled in his stomach. The stranger sucked in a breath sharply, and just as suddenly as he had come upon Harry, he was gone. Harry laid on his back, blinking dazedly up at the slate sky.
“Bloody hell,” he said again, but this time in horror.

Harry groaned and sank down into the comfy chair that reminded him strongly of the Gryffindor common room. He had finally gotten Teddy to sleep and all he wanted to do now was relax. Of course, that was easier said than done. Every time he closed his eyes, an image of Edward Cullen would drift into his mind, and that would remind him of what had happened only two days ago. No matter how hard he tried to shake away the thought, it would always come back to haunt him. That horribly embarrassing day, constantly drifting on the edges of his mind, waiting to ambush him. With a sigh of defeat, Harry opened his eyes and looked around the room.

He was sitting in the North Den, the sitting room located on the second floor. This room was done up in shades of red and browns. The chair he was sitting in was suede and it sat in front of a stone fireplace, and the carpet was dark red. The walls were a nice tan that looked warm in the afternoon sun, which was making another rare appearance by peeking through the feeble veil of clouds. There was a dark oak desk sitting across the room from the fireplace. The wall behind the desk was fitted with a bookcase, all of its shelves filled. The portrait of one of Harry’s ancestors – Adrian Potter – snoozed on one wall and Harry stared at him for a while before getting up.

He walked absently toward the kitchen, wondering what he was going to make for dinner, when he passed the Records Hall, which was the small library that held all important information pertaining to the Potter family. The door was cracked open and through the slit Harry saw two figures leaning over the main desk at the far end of the room.

“What are you doing,” Harry questioned, and the two blondes looked up, looking slightly like a child caught with their hand in the cookie jar. Neither said a word, they just stared at Harry before Luna smiled, turned, and stuck her head into the stone Pensive and disappeared from sight. Draco hesitated for a moment, looking apprehensive before he followed after the odd girl. Deeply confused, Harry walked over to the Pensive and peered down into it. He looked around for a moment, not sure what to do, before he dunked his head into the swirling white liquid. He felt as if he had been doused with a cold *Agumenta* as he was pulled through a dark spiraling tunnel before he crashed painfully on his back in the middle of a meadow.

The area was bathed in a warm buttery light, much like the odd sunshine that had graced Forks on Saturday. Harry stood up and looked around, and his stomach clenched painfully as a feeling of déjà-vu swept over him. The feeling increased as he approached Luna and Draco, who were standing, frozen, staring at something. He peered over their shoulder and felt his stomach drop at the sight of the two figures entangled on the grass before him. Harry had to quickly look away, his face burning.

“Oh, my,” Luna murmured on a gasp just as Draco mumbled, “Merlin’s beard.” Harry made the mistake of turning back around and he immediately turned a darker shade of red. He truly understood the saying curiosity killed the cat, and at the moment he felt like he could die from embarrassment.

The scene was one that he had failed to mention to Draco and Luna. He hadn’t cared to mention that he had actually met Edward, although he hadn’t known that that was the teen’s name at the time. The meeting had been very brief and consisted of few words, but the two had gotten to know each other very well.

Harry shook his head and looked away again, the image of himself straddling Edward Cullen burned into his retinas. Harry wished desperately that a hole would just open up and swallow him, anything for him to escape the horrifically embarrassing scene. As if Fate was on his side for the first time, the memory ended and the three were spat out, unceremonially, onto the library floor.
Harry pulled himself to his feet and preoccupied himself with dusting imaginary dust off his clothes before sitting down on the armchair situated a few feet away from the desk, making it a point not to look at the two blondes in the room. He looked at everything: The dark blue walls, the tall shifting bookcases, the wide fireplace, the moving portraits of his random ancestors, the floating books, everything but the two that were staring at him.

“Well,” Draco drawled after a bout of tense silence. Harry sighed and looked over at the former aristocrat.

“Well what,” he asked, his tone rather rude and his eyes narrowed. Draco’s back straightened at the defensive tone, and his silver eyes flashed in annoyance.

“Well Potter, I never figured you for a queer,” the former Slytherin sneered. “Who knew the Gryffindor Golden Boy was gayer than a fairy. So much for that polished hero image.” Harry bristled like an agitated cat, and his eyes narrowed even more until they were thin green slits.

“Stuff it Malfoy. You’re just bent because you never had a hero image.”

“Boys,” Luna snapped, stopping the fight she could feel was about to begin before either boy got too agitated. “Stop this right now.” The former rivals turned to look at the girl in shock. Never before had Luna snapped at them, and Harry was immediately feeling guilty.

“Sorry,” he mumbled in apology, looking at the floor guiltily. Draco huffed haughtily, crossing his arms over his chest. That was about as much of an apology Harry thought the Malfoy could give.

“Now, James would you like to talk about it,” she asked as she draped her arm around the taller boy’s shoulders – the rainbow colored bangles on her wrist clattering loudly.

“Not really,” Harry mumbled, pulling his knees up to his chest and leaning his forehead against them.

“Oh, quit being a baby Potter,” Draco cut across, his annoyance coming back. “So you were intimate with a stranger, there’s no need to act like a bloody virgin girl. If I were you I’d be celebrating the fact that some hot bloke took a liking to me. I don’t see what the problem is.”

“The problem,” Harry started, reeling in shock from Draco’s words of . . . support? . . . “Is that he practically attacked me, and he’s a stranger.” He looked at the Malfoy a little suspiciously and Luna giggled, as if the blonde calling someone a ‘hot bloke’ was a normal thing.

“Well,” Draco retorted on a snort. “If you’d stop avoiding him he wouldn’t be a stranger, now would he?”

“But . . . but . . .” Harry stammered, at a loss. Was Draco actually helping to set him up with someone? He looked searchingly at Luna, but she simply shrugged unhelpfully.

“Exactly, you have no argument.” Draco smirked triumphantly at Harry’s lost look. “Now, got your act together before I hex you.”

“Magic,” Harry suddenly exclaimed, making Draco jump back and into the desk from shock. He cursed lowly when his foot banged painfully against the leg of the desk and then glared at Harry as if it was the teen’s fault.

“What,” the blonde growled through gritted teeth.
“My magic,” Harry repeated, not seeming to notice Draco’s ire. “It goes bonkers every time Cullen comes around. That’s got to be a good enough reason to stay away from him.” Harry then looked smugly from Draco to Luna, but neither looked like they agreed with him. Draco stared at him with wide eyes, his mouth hanging slightly open, and Luna stared at him with slight amusement.

“Are you a bloody idiot,” Draco suddenly roared, waking Rosalina Potter. She hissed angrily at him before disappearing out of the edge of her frame with a flip of chestnut-colored hair. “Don’t you know anything? Are you really that ignorant?” Harry blinked in shock at Draco’s sudden aggressive questioning, like he didn’t understand and that was only confirmed by the unintelligent ‘Huh?’ that passed his lips.

“Honestly, didn’t you pay attention in school? Did you ever think to pick up a bloody book? In History of Magic they clearly tell you all about what happens when you meet your destined one. You know . . . your life mate.”

“Wizards have mates,” Harry asked dumbly. Luna sighed and patted him on the head like one would a confused child.

“Back off Dragon, you know James was brought up by Muggles,” she told Draco in a calm tone, angering the boy slightly with her choice of a nickname.

“Muggles have nothing to do with it. If he’d pick up a bloody book . . .” the blonde muttered lowly to himself, crossing his arms tightly across his chest.

“Wait, wait,” Harry spoke up after a moment of digesting this news. “Are you trying to say that I have a mate, and it’s Edward Cullen?” Harry’s voice was amused and he looked at both blondes as if he expected one of them to burst out laughing, claiming it was all to be a joke. When that didn’t happen his shoulders sagged. “No way. How?”

“Bloody hell if I know,” Draco said with a shrug. “But Cullen has to have at least a bit of magic in him, right?” He looked over at Luna and the girl nodded in the affirmative.

“So, what, he’s a wizard too?”

“He doesn’t have to be a wizard to be your mate,” Luna informed him. “And I don’t think he is. I don’t even think he’s human . . . anymore.” Harry sighed, not liking the situation at all. Why couldn’t he have a normal life for once?

“I guess I can agree with you there,” he mumbled rather reluctantly. “But, then, what is he?”

“Oh, I believe that would be quite simple to find out,” she informed him with a wink. She then stood up and glided over to the desk where there was a stack of books that had yet to be sorted into the right library.

“This should be helpful.”

She turned around and in her hand she had a book titled *Magical Beast and Where to Find Them Vol. 1.*

“Ugh,” Harry groaned, stretching his arms out above his head. He heard the satisfying pop of his bones readjusting and sighed. He then slid *Mythological Creatures of the Deep* off of his lap and yawned. They had been at the books for an hour and they had yet to come across what the enigma
that was Edward Cullen was. “This is pointless,” Harry complained. Draco glared at Harry from over *Creeper Creatures* and Harry rolled his eyes.

“Look, I’ll go and cook us up something and you two can keep looking if you want.”

“Whatever. It’s not like you were helping anyways, Potter,” Draco drawled before disappearing behind his book once more. Harry look questionably at Luna but she just let out a distracted “Hum,” and continued to read her book: *Beasties of the Forest*. Harry sighed and shook his head as he left the Records Hall.

He wandered once more down to the kitchen, nodding at the portraits that bade him hello on his way. Halfway there a house elf appeared before him. Her ears were droopy and she was dressing in an old doll’s dress. The elf Harry now recognized as Misty, bowed lowly before speaking.

“Master Harry, little Master Teddy has awoke and requests Master Harry, sir,” she said, speaking to the floor. Harry sighed and turned around to walk back up the spiraling staircase.

“Thanks Misty,” he called back to the still bowing elf.

“Tis nothing, Master Harry.” And then Misty disappeared with a loud crack.

Teddy was standing up in his crib, the bars fisted in his hands, when Harry walked into his room. He stared unblinking at Harry with large green eyes and a smile split his face when Harry approached.

“Ah,” he shouted, reaching out toward Harry. Harry grinned and pulled the 15-month-old boy into his arms.

“Hey there little man!” Teddy giggled, flashing another set of perfect pearly whites. “Come on, you’re gonna help your godfather make dinner.” Teddy laughed and clapped his hands before launching into a longwinded baby babble, which he continued all through the first half of Harry’s dinner making process. He only stopped when Luna came streaking through the kitchen, a book clutched firmly in her hands and Draco trailing after her, looking highly amused.

“What’s wrong? Did something happen? Is someone hurt?” Luna paused for a moment, a large grin spreading across her face as she dropped the heavy tomb onto the island.

“I —”

“We,” Draco cut in, still looking amused. Luna rolled her eyes in a very un-Luna-like fashion.

“We found it. We know what Cullen is!” Harry blinked and dropped the spoon he was holding into the pot of bubbling tomato sauce.

“Really,” he asked in disbelief. He glanced briefly at the title of the old tomb: *Magical Bites and Its Affect on Its Victims*, before looking back up at Luna. “Okay, so what is he?” Luna took a deep breath as if steeling herself to deliver some dramatic news, or at least that’s what it felt like to Harry.

“Edward Cullen . . . is a vampire.” As if the words were some sort of trigger, Draco began to laugh uncontrollably. Harry blinked, looking between both blondes with confusion.

“But . . . but how can he be around people? And why aren’t his eyes red?”
“It has to have something to do with his diet,” Luna told him, trying to ignore Draco’s obnoxious laughter. “A vampire’s eyes are normally red because human blood turns it that color. I’m going to have to assume that they drink something different. But what, I don’t know...” Luna trailed off, clearly lost in thought. It was only at times like these that Harry could really see the Ravenclaw in her.

“Okay, so he’s a vampire,” Harry said, breaking the girl out of her thoughts. “That doesn’t explain why Mr. Ego is dying of laughter right now.” Harry motioned toward the blonde aristocrat that was rolling around on the floor, clutching his stomach in a move he would normally call undignified. Luna threw the teen an annoyed look.

“Frankly, I don’t know,” she said, sounding as annoyed as she looked. “He said something about submissive, but you can’t expect me to understand half the things that come out of his mouth.”

Harry blinked and stared after the girl as she stalked off. Something was seriously wrong with this picture. Draco was the one that was normally annoyed. After a moment’s debate, Harry chalked it up to the two being around each other a little too much.

With a sigh and a shake of his head Harry turned back to the stove, trying to ignore Draco’s laughter and Teddy’s small giggles.

“I don’t wanna.”

The childish retort only served to further aggravate the blonde it was directed at. Draco scowled darkly and pulled out his wand, the threat of a hex in his eyes.


“Why can’t I just stay here and take care of Teddy? I don’t really need to go to school.”

“If I must be subjected to this Muggle madness then you, as our rightful leader, must suffer with me,” Draco grounded out. “What’s that Muggle saying?”

“The Captain always sinks with his ship,” Luna offered helpfully from her perch on the kitchen counter. Harry peered under Draco’s arm so that he could glare at her but she seemed oblivious, humming some song and swinging her legs.

“Exactly. So be a Captain and hop aboard.” Harry almost laughed at Draco, almost, but laughing would have probably earned him a very painful hex. “And don’t you dare say another word about Teddy. I have Tibs watching him today so you’re free to go to school... unattached.”

“Now wait just one damn minute —” Harry spluttered, now glaring up at the blonde towering over him.

“No, you wait one damn minute,” Draco immediately cut in. “Stop being a bloody coward and get your arse in that Muggle contraption before I’m forced to make you do so.” And he would do it, Harry could see that now.

With a small sigh, Harry gave in.
Harry was a bundle of nerves as he drove them to school. Draco had demanded at first that he drive, but Harry kind of wanted them to live so he had grudgingly got behind the wheel. The car was deadly silent accept from Draco’s constant muttering, which he had been doing since they first started to drive.

“Honestly, scared of a vampire, the nerve . . . our bloody Savior? Ha! As if . . . If I didn’t know any better . . . disgrace to all of Wizarding kind . . . bloody ponce . . .” Harry tried to ignore him, but then he would think about where he was heading and the nerves would come back full force. By the time they had reached the school, Harry felt like he had swallowed a box of Doxie eggs – which wasn’t a very pleasant feeling altogether.

“I really can’t do this,” Harry announced suddenly, pulling the car into a parking spot and then letting it stall. He bounced his leg nervously as he glance out the window at the students milling around outside of the school. “I think I’m gonna be sick.”

“. . . And where the bloody hell is all that Gryffindor courage now . . .” Draco’s voice rose suddenly as he voiced this part of him mutterings. Harry was still looking out the window and as a patch of girls walked by he spotted Bella and the two Cullens walking toward their car.

“Down the toilet with my breakfast,” Harry injected as his nausea increased, but Draco didn’t even acknowledge his presence. Harry took a deep breath and let it out slowly, but it didn’t seem to help at all.

“I really can’t do this.”

“It’s a bit too late to ditch now,” Luna piped up from the back seat, and Harry was struck once again by a Muggle saying leaving a Pureblood’s mouth. First Draco and now Luna – the world was going insane.

Harry watched the three figures and when they were in line with his car he briefly considered running them over, but then Bella would get hurt . . . unless he moved her carefully out of the way. Would the car even do any damage to Edward anyways?

Almost as if she could hear his thoughts, Luna tapped Harry on the head and said, “Don’t even think about it.” Harry heaved a heavy sigh and nearly jumped at the sound of a door opening, but it was just Draco.

As Slytherin got out of the car, he shot Harry a glare that clearly said: ‘Don’t make me bodily pull you from this car’. Harry grimaced and quickly scrambled out after him, even thought his stomach was twisted into painful knots. Draco was already known to be irritable and violent in the mornings, there was no need to add to it. As soon as he stepped out, he was immediately faced with a cheerful, spiky-haired brunette.

“Good morning.” Alice Cullen chirped happily, a blinding smile lighting her small, fairy-like face. Harry blinked at her before mumbling a quiet good morning back. He then gave her and Bella a smile and then practically dragged Draco and Luna toward the school building. Along the way Harry tried really hard to ignore the stare he could feel burning into the back of his head.

When they were safe from the rest of the student body, Draco pulled Harry roughly into an empty bathroom. Luna strolled in casually after them and sat down on a sink, humming – she always seemed to be humming something, but never anything Harry recognized.
“Alright, Potter, let me get this out now,” Draco started, staring Harry straight in the eye. “I don’t want to have to drag you back here after you try to make a run for it, because, leader or not, I will kill you.” Harry opened his mouth, a retort on his lips when Luna cut in.

“Just let whatever happens happen.” And then she added, “You’ll have to give in sooner or later anyways.” The words sparked a memory in Harry’s mind and then he remembered Alice saying the exact same thing to him yesterday. Harry turned to look at his friend to see that she was smiling and humming again.

“So suck it up and get your arse out there.” Draco then proceeded to push Harry out of the restroom, not giving him any chance to defend himself or argue. The halls were filled now and a great number of people turned to stare at them, especially when they noticed that Luna had just stepped out of the boys’ restroom with her ‘siblings’.

Whispers followed them as they made their way toward their first class. Draco guided Luna to her class, nodded her goodbye and then pulled Harry toward Calculus. Harry sighed, today was going to be a long day.

“Someone seems a little down in the dumps.” Harry looked up, a glare set firmly in place and a frown on his face. Bella arched a brow at him before sliding into the seat next to him. “So . . . what’s eating at you?”

“Nothing,” Harry muttered, crossing his arms across his chest tightly. Bella continued to stare at him but he ignored her. It’s not like he could tell her that he was mad because a vampire had to be his mate. That was sure to send the girl running for the hills. “It’s complicated,” he then rephrased when he saw that the girl was still waiting for an answer.

Bella shrugged at that and dropped the subject. Harry was once again thankful that Bella was not like most girls. Most girls he knew would have pushed the subject until he spilled his guts, as morbid as that sounded.

“Hullo James, Isabella,” Luna’s sweet voice washed over them as the girl appeared at the table, pulling out a seat next to Angela. Harry didn’t return her greeting, still annoyed at the girl for forcing him into going to school.

“Hi Luna,” Bella greeted and she gave the girl a smile. “Do you know what’s wrong with grumpy here?” Luna blinked slowly and peered at Harry before she shrugged.

“He’s being a prat that’s what’s wrong with him,” Draco sneered, coming up on the other side of the table. He pulled the chair beside Luna out roughly and slid elegantly into it. Then he proceeded to cross his arms and glare at Harry. Bella looked between the two glaring boys in confusion, not quite sure what was going on.

“Wow, I feel like I’m watching some kind of deadly battle,” Angela whispered, as if she were afraid to speak any louder unless either boy unleashed their anger on her. Bella nodded mutely in agreement.

“You can practically see the electricity in the air.”

Bella nearly jumped out of her seat when Alice’s amused voice reached her. She turned to see Alice and Edward sitting calmly in the seats beside her. She hadn’t even heard either of them approach, which could be expected but it didn’t mean she was used to it quite yet.
Alice flashed her a bright grin before calling down the table, “Hey guys! How was your day?” Luna appeared to be the only one who had heard her and was therefore the only one who answered.

“It was quite pleasant, thank you for asking.”

Bella blinked. She had never heard anyone answer a question like that. Luna sounded like one of the characters from out of Pride and Prejudice – or someone from Edward’s time. It was a bit unsettling, but the girl didn’t seem to notice Bella’s discomfort.

She turned back to her lunch and said, “James, don’t slouch,” in a distracted voice. Harry, who had slouched low in his seat when he saw Edward arrive, shot Luna a glare but sat up straighter none the least.

“So . . . um . . . how do you guys like Forks so far,” Angela asked hesitantly, and let out a small breath when she wasn’t glared down for asking the question.

“It’s alright,” Draco answered in a disinterested tone that immediately contradicted his words. Across from him Harry muttered something that sounded like, “It’s horrible, we should move.” But Bella couldn’t have been too sure.

“Come now James, cheer up.” As Luna said this Draco took out a green checkered thermos and slid it over the tabletop to the sulking boy. Harry eyed it suspiciously.

“What is that,” Bella found herself asking, but Harry simply shrugged so the girl turned to look inquiringly at Draco, who in turned looked at Luna.

“Just a simply herb remedy my mother used to make for me,” Luna explained and then went on to change the subject. “James, Alice has offered to take us shopping and show us around town.”

Bella grimaced, thinking it would be best if everyone stayed away from Alice when she shopped. Even though she thought that, she knew that the three new kids did not know Alice’s habits, so therefore, she was very much shocked by Harry’s reaction.

He sat up straight, his eyes widening and blurted out a loud, “No,” that caused the group at the end of their table to pause in their conversation and look over at them. Bella smiled shyly at Mike and mouthed “Nothing,” which made the blonde shrug but resume his previous conversation. Sighing, Bella turned back around to see Luna glaring – very mildly at that but glaring all the same – at Harry.

“And why not,” she asked in a strangely level tone. Now, Bella didn’t know Luna that well, seeing as she had just met the girl the other day, but she had a very good idea that Luna wasn’t one to talk in a level tone. Harry swallowed loudly and turned to look searchingly at Draco but the other boy simply shrugged unhelpfully.

“Well . . . um . . . I have stuff to do,” he finally said rather lamely.

“Like what,” Luna pressed. Harry looked around the cafeteria as if the answer would fly in from the ceiling.
“Well . . . uh . . . I still haven’t painted my room yet and . . . and I’ve barely spent any time with Teddy as of late, I wouldn’t want him to think I’ve neglected him, and there’s no food at the house, I have to go shopping for that too. So . . . yeah . . .” Now Draco had joined in at looking at Harry skeptically. Bella couldn’t understand, they sounded like reasonable enough excuses, even Alice looked like she was thinking of rescheduling her offer.

“Can’t Tibs do the shopping,” Draco questioned, sounding like he was talking to a small child. Harry shot him a glare.

“No, Tibs can’t. I’m the one cooking, so therefore I’m the one who knows what ingredients to buy. Besides, I can’t send Tibs to the Supermarket to do the groceries, imagine what would happen.” Draco grudgingly agreed.

“Okay, fine, but honestly you shouldn’t have to worry about all that. Misty or Shell could do that,” he said, sounding disgruntled.

“Well excuse me, but I actually enjoy cooking.”

“Well what else are they for; you might as well use them while they’re still around.” Bella didn’t know what Draco was trying to do but the blonde must seriously have a death wish. The look on Harry’s face was enough to kill.

“They aren’t slaves, Draco Malfoy,” Harry hissed, his words almost sounding animal like. Bella inched away from him in shock, but Draco didn’t look the least bit affected. He simply arched an eyebrow but continued to look uninterested.

“Okay, don’t get your knickers in a bunch. It’s not like I’m abusing them or anything.” Bella could have sworn she saw Harry’s eye twitch, but he looked relatively calm, although his eyes looked like a churning green storm.

“So, um . . . who’s Tibs,” Bella interjected, but only to stop Harry from acting violently toward Draco after she had seen that Luna wasn’t going to intervene.

“You could say he’s our butler,” Harry told her through clenched teeth. He appeared to be trying to calm himself, but it didn’t seem to be working. Finally, he stood up, gathering his bag and put the thermos in it. “Look, I’ll see you later in class Bella.” He then nodded at everyone then turned and left. Luna rounded on Draco once he was gone.

“Look at what you’ve done now Dragon.” Draco turned to look at her with an outraged expression.

“What I’ve done,” he asked indigenously. “He’s the one walking around biting everyone’s head off!” Luna sighed and then stood up also. The bell rang as she did so and the sound of a hundred voices was now mixed in with the screeching of chairs and the clatter of trays.

“Yes Dragon,” Luna said over the din. “And you know he’s having a stressful time, the least you could have done was gone a few minutes without arguing with him. I was under the impression that the two of you had come to a truce of sorts.” Then she turned away and disappeared between the twisting bodies. Draco stared after her with his mouth slightly open. Bella was a little surprised when he turned to look at her.

“Can you believe that!” Bella shook her head slowly, not really sure if he was actually asking for an answer.

“Don’t worry Draco, they’ll get over it,” Alice piped as she slid her arm through his. “Now come on, we wouldn’t want to be late.” Draco still looked flabbergasted and Bella was sure that that was the
only reason why he allowed Alice to pull him away. Right before she disappeared into the crowd, Alice turned and winked at Bella.

“Well, that was certainly an interesting lunch,” Edward commented in an amused voice from next to her.

“I’ll say,” Bella grumbled before she turned to look accusingly up at the vampire. “You didn’t try to talk to Harry at all.” Edward had the decency to look sheepish at that.

“I wanted to, but I had a feeling he would have just left if I did. But I did get Alice to ask about the shopping thing, I figured that might work,” he admitted.

“Oh, so that was your idea? Huh, guess it didn’t work like you thought did it.”

Edward sighed at that and Bella felt her heart got out to him when she saw his disappointed expression.

“Aw, don’t worry. Something else will come along.”

And with that said Bella pulled Edward out of the cafeteria and toward their Chemistry class, where she knew the sight of Harry would cheer him up slightly.

Harry wanted to be angry; really he did because Draco had no right to suggest that he treat his house elves like slaves. But he just couldn’t seem to summon up the energy to keep that anger that had flowed through him in the cafeteria. Harry suspected that maybe Luna had spiked the tea he drank with a Calming Draught. He wouldn’t put it pass her.

But that really wasn’t Harry’s top concern at that moment. The real reason he wanted to feel angry was so that he couldn’t have to worry about Chemistry. But seeing as he had unknowingly downed a Calming Draught, he couldn’t, and although he felt calm his mind was still left to wander about in circles about what might happen.

Harry walked into an empty classroom once again and moved straight toward the teacher.

“Professor,” he called out to the man, who jumped a little in shock before turning to him.

“Oh . . . ah, Harry, right?” Harry nodded and the stout man gave him a pleasant smile. “What can I do you for?”

“Um . . . I was wondering if I could change seats,” Harry said, the slight infliction he added at the end making it come out like a question.

“I see something wrong with the seat you have now,” the teacher asked – for the life of him Harry could not remember his name.

“Not really sir, but I have a slight problem with one of the people sitting in my group.” The teacher nodded his head in understanding.

“I see, well I supposed I can put you in group three,” he told Harry, pointing at the table near the back. Harry almost cried out in joy when he saw the distance between his old seat and his new one.

“Thank you sir, that seat’s just fine.” And with that, Harry strolled over to his new spot, sitting himself comfortably on the stool at the end of the counter. He watched as the students entered the
classroom this time and nodded in greeting at the ones that came to join him in the back.

“You moved your seat,” Bella asked when she saw him sitting in the back. Over her shoulder Harry saw Edward looking over at him with the expression of a kicked puppy. Harry focused back in on Bella to see that she was looking at him in disappointment.

“Um . . . yeah, Edward and I are at a misunderstanding at the moment and I didn’t want that affecting my grade in the class.” It was a complete lie, but what Bella didn’t know wouldn’t hurt her. Bella looked at him skeptically for a moment before sighing.

“Fine, but just so you know, I think you’re being unreasonable.” She then turned away from him at the sound of the bell and went to her seat.

“What was that about,” one the guys in his new group, a blonde that said his name was Mike, asked, staring after Bella also. Harry lifted and dropped his shoulders in a shrug.

“Whatever, she’s probably just jealous because you’re not sitting with them,” Jessica, the girl from yesterday said with a disdainful sniff. She then flipped her brown hair over her shoulder and shot Harry a flirty look. “So, Harry, how do you like Forks so far?”

Harry had a feeling that she was asking about something different, especially when she leaned and pushed her arms up so that she was showing a tremendous amount of cleavage. Harry internally rolled his eyes and tried to be as polite as possible.

“Forks is . . . alright so far.”

“Really? You don’t find all this rain dreary?” Harry leaned back as she leaned in even closer to him, batting her eyelashes. Mike, who had seemed so easy going at first, was now glaring at him. Harry now wished he hadn’t changed seats. Dealing with Edward was a whole lot better than dealing with Jessica.

“Yeah . . . well, England isn’t that different from Forks. I’m kind of used to the rain.” Jessica sighed and went to say something more when their teacher dropped a packet of papers in front of them.

“Get to work,” he ordered, and Harry let out a relieved sigh and scooted his stool away from Jessica. A quick glance over his shoulder revealed Edward staring at him intently. Harry blushed and turned back around, concentrating on his work more than he actually needed to.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY TO ALL MY AMERICA READERS!!!! Anywho. I feel like this was sort of a filler chapter. It's just a lot of little scene. If I were naming chapters I'd probably call this one And Time Passes. We'll just say this chapter is playing catch up until we hit the beginning of Eclipse.

Pairings:

Harry/Edward (duh!), Alice/Jasper, Esme/Carlisle, Rosalie/Emmett, Draco/?, Luna/?, ?? (I'm allowed to keep some pairing secret)

Disclaimer:

This story is based on characters and situations created and owned by JK Rowling and Stephenie Meyer, various publishers including but not limited to Bloomsbury Books, MT Books, Scholastic Books and Raincoast Books, Little, Brown and Company, and Warner Bros., Inc. No money is being made and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

“Green? No. Yellow? Ugh!” Harry wrinkled his nose and tapped the wall again, returning it to its plain tan color. He had been debating the color of his room for a while now. His first thought had been to make it red, for Gryffindor, but that had caused a very disastrous result. Who knew red could be so . . . loud?

“I think a dark brown should do nicely,” Luna’s pleasant voice spoke up from behind him. Harry titled his head to the side and tapped his wand against the wall. The entire room turned a rich dark brown that was very nice to look at. Harry grinned and turned to the side where he knew Luna was standing.

“Thanks, I couldn’t decide.”

Luna hummed a simple response as she fluttered over to Harry’s bed and plopped down on it. Harry followed her and took in the full effect of his room. With a few extra waves of his wand the room was complete.

His Gryffindor banner was tacked to the far wall, by far the only red and gold thing in the entire room. Under and around it were the few photos Harry had managed to freeze of his parents, Sirius, Remus, Tonks, and some of Luna and Neville. He had as of yet to catch Draco on film and he couldn’t put any that he had of Teddy up yet. That boy changed hair color like people changed clothes.

There wasn’t a whole lot of personal stuff Harry had left; he had lost most of them in the war. A craving of his old owl, Hedwig, was posted on top of the dark wooded dresser near the wide window. If Harry wasn’t hiding the magic the wooden owl would have flown off its perch and circle once around the room ever thirty minutes.
Harry changed his bed covers to match his room – they were now a calming dark brown and silvery blue. The carpet, originally a marble floor, was now a soft cream color. Harry had never been in a more calming atmosphere.

“Wonderful,” Luna commented after a long moment of silence.

“Uh-huh,” Harry agreed, a silly grin stretching his lips. “So, Luna, what can I do you for?” For a long time Luna did not speak. She just sat there humming and rocking her feet back and forward.

“Coffee,” she suddenly said. Then she got up and drifted out of the room, expecting Harry to follow her, which he did.

The sky was a dark slate grey and the rain was coming down like a thin sheet. Anyone who so much as took one step outside was instantly drenched. It was days like these that the streets of London found themselves completely void of all people. Shops were mostly closed down and everyone was basically secure in their homes. It was Sunday and it had been raining nonstop since Friday. There had been some kind of flash flood warning on the news earlier that morning, but even that wasn’t completely out of the norm.

Harry was curled up in his bed, covers pulled over his head and the sound of the rain beating against the roof over his head echoing loudly throughout the mostly empty home of Grimmauld Place. His only relief of the moment was the slight reprieve in the wave of reporters trying to get at him. Actually, it probably wouldn’t even really matter if the sun was out; it wasn’t like they could get into the house.

Suddenly there was a loud knocking sound coming from a few floors down and it was shortly followed by a loud ringing. Harry poked his head out of the blankets and looked anxiously over at the crib near his bed. His godson was knocked out, sleeping peacefully on his back. Harry sighed and then silently slipped out from beneath the warmth his blankets had provided for him.

The ringing started up again and it was then that Harry realized it was the sound of a doorbell. He hadn’t even been aware that this place had a doorbell. Harry traveled slowly down to the ground level. As he walked past the portrait of Mrs. Black, he tugged the curtain close over her screaming face and bulging eyes. It had been a relief when he found that permanent silencing charm, now all he needed to do was to find a way to get the blasted picture off the wall and all would be good.

The doorbell rang a few more times before Harry got to it, leaving Harry to wonder who could be at his house much less in this weather. It had to have been someone who knew about Grimmauld Place or else they wouldn’t have been able to see it.

Taking a deep breath, Harry unlocked the many locks and pulled the front door slowly open. There, standing out in the rain and looking incredibly like a drowned cat, was Luna Lovegood. She smiled pleasantly at Harry and let herself in.

“I was wondering when you’d answer,” she commented mildly as she strolled past him, looking around the place in apparent wonder. Harry was flabbergasted. Luna was not one of the people who knew about Grimmauld Place because Harry had never seen it fit to tell her, no matter how much he trusted her.

“Luna, what are you doing here,” he demanded. Luna turned around to face him, staring at him for a long time without blinking with her cloudy blue eyes. It was a long time before she even spoke
“Tell me Harry; has anything odd happen to you since the war?” Harry blinked, taken aback. The war had only been over for one month. One month in which lots of things had happened. Funerals, announcements, interviews, job offers, Andromeda’s sudden death, even an invitation to come back to Hogwarts to finish his schooling, all seemingly normal things for someone who had just saved the world. But that was not what Luna was asking about, and so Harry sighed and then directed her to the nearest drawing room.

There he settled down across from her on the couch. Luna curled up in the plush armchair, tucking her feet underneath her and folding her skirt so that it covered her pale legs.

“What do you know, Luna, about what’s happening to me,” Harry asked bluntly, because that was the only way to talk with Luna, bluntly and honestly.

“Let me see your arm,” Luna instructed instead of answering. Confused, Harry held out his right arm. “No, your left one.” Harry blinked and did as told. Luna took his arm and flipped it over and that was when Harry noticed the mark for the first time; it was right under the blue-ish veins on his wrist. It looked like a tattoo at first, penned into his arm with green ink. Luna traced the curving lines and intricate swirls and a word bubbled up in Harry’s mind.

“Earth,” he whispered and Luna hummed.

“This, Harry, is the ruin for Earth,” she told him in an equally low voice. Harry stared at it for a long time and the longer he stared the more there appeared to be.

“That’s not all.”

“That’s right,” Luna said and Harry could hear the smile in her voice. She placed a pale finger at a small waving line that flowed into a knot that came off of the Earth ruin. “This is the ruin for leadership.” Harry jolted as if someone had shocked him, but Luna did not let go of his arm. “You’re our leader, Harry James.”

Harry then looked up, confusion written all over his face. Luna was smiling and when she finally let go of his arm, she did it so that she could turn over hers. There, shining a deep blue on the inside of her wrist was another ruin Harry had seen once before – the ruin for water.

“You’re my leader, James,” Luna whispered into the still silence.

“I don’t understand,” Harry told her but Luna continued to smile.

“Don’t worry, you will.”

They drove to the only café in Forks in Luna’s car, which seemed to earn them a lot of attention. Harry could completely understand, how many people did you know to drive an electric blue Vantage with bright yellow flowers painted on it. They were bound to attract attention.

Harry liked Luna’s driving over Draco’s any day. Both wizards were horrible at it, but Luna’s only problem was that she took the turns too sharply. Draco tended to speed, and it wasn’t the comfortable kind of speeding either.

Luna pulled the Vantage smoothly into a parking space right near the door and pulled out the key
swiftly, like she was in some kind of race. Then she proceeded to get out of the car and headed toward the doors. Harry had to scramble to catch up with her.

The inside of the café smelled warmly of chocolate and coffee. Harry was getting a caffeine buzz just from stepping into the place. Soothing jazz played over the speakers and the climate was a calm one. There was hardly anyone around, a few college students who probably lived in the town, a nurse from the hospital, and a couple of teens horsing around toward the back.

Harry ordered an espresso for Luna, adding cream, chocolate, caramel, and strawberry syrup; and a chocolate latte for himself. Then he slid into the booth Luna had chosen – he had a perfect view of the door – and gave Luna her strange caffeinated drink.

“So, what’s this all about,” he questioned after a long bout of silence. Luna took a long drink of her espresso, watching Harry with her unblinking eyes.

“Are you happy,” she finally asked. Harry blinked, taken aback by Luna’s question.

“Um . . . yeah . . . I guess . . .” he answered awkwardly.

“Are you really?” Harry didn’t know how to answer that and so Luna continued on. “I think you should give this thing a chance. Don’t throw away your happiness James; you deserve it after everything that’s happened to you.” Harry swallowed thickly at Luna’s words. He knew what she was asking him, but he didn’t feel comfortable going about it.

“Luna, I . . . I don’t think I can.”

“James, you can do just about anything. So the question isn’t can you do this, it’s will you?”

Harry bit down on his lip and stared down at his latte.

“Think about it at least,” Luna whispered, reaching over and patting his hand.

Harry bit down on his bottom lip as he turned his car down yet another corner. That had to have been the fifteenth one. But he refused to admit it. It couldn’t be possible. They most definitely weren’t . . .

“Lost,” Harry finally said on a sigh.

In the back seat Teddy mimicked his godfather’s motion with childlike exaggeration. Harry pulled over to the side of the road, put the car in park, and leaned his head against the steering wheel with a groan. Once again Teddy mimicked him, but Harry didn’t notice.

This was all his fault.

If he’d been paying attention to where he was going – like he should have been – he would have been home by now, or at the very least on his way home. But no, like always these past few days, his thoughts had been on bloody Edward Cullen.

Who was he? What was he like? How could he stand to be surrounded by tons of people day in and day out? What did Bella have to do with his family? Why were they so close? Did she know he was a vampire? How many people were in his family? Why where his eyes so golden? What did he do in his spare time? And so on and so forth until his mind was swirling and he wanted nothing more than
the search the teen out and have at him. Which he most certainly could not do.

So far he’d managed to avoid the Cullen, even in Chemistry to some extent – and putting up with Jessica was a very tiring affair. But even with all his avoidance and preoccupation, he couldn’t get the immortal teen out of his head. He was – like Draco so kindly liked to point out at every chance he got – acting like a hormonal Muggle girl, and it didn’t help that Cullen was a vampire, another thing Draco liked to point out. In fact, the blonde aristocrat liked to point out a lot of things, like how vampire males tended to be very possessive and were the more dominate in a relationship. This fact only made Harry want to avoid the Cullen all the more. He didn’t need some overbearing vampire hovering over him.

“Da! Da!”

Teddy’s voice broke through Harry’s hazy thoughts and the teen turned around to give the child his attention, a warm smile on his face. Just the other day Teddy had learned his first word and Harry had been over the moon to learn that it was ‘Da’ – which happened to be the one thing he could lord over Draco, the blonde was proving to be very annoying as of late.

At the moment the baby was smiling widely – full teeth gleaming brightly – and pointing his chubby finger out the window. Harry turned to look out the tinted window, a confused smile on his face. He hadn’t noticed before, but at the moment he was parked right across the street from a house, which meant he was in some sort of neighborhood, if it could be called that. And lying out on a blanket in the grass sleeping was – to Harry’s pleasant surprise – Bella.

“Nice job, Teddy,” Harry praised, reaching back to ruffle the baby’s – now orange – hair affectionately. “Okay, now bud, I’m gonna need you to concentrate. Think you can do that for me?”

Teddy tilted his head to the side curiously but his eyes screwed up and in the next moment, his hair had turned black.

“Excellent,” Harry congratulated him and, after rummaging through Teddy’s baby bag for a moment, extracted a Sippy cup and handed it to the boy.

After making sure Teddy took a few sips of his juice – which was laced with the potion that kept his hair from changing color – Harry pressed his hand down on the car’s horn to get Bella’s attention. After three honks, Bella shot up, her eyes wide and her hair a wild tangle. Bella looked around for a while, deeply confused as to what had awakened her, before she finally spotted the car. Harry rolled down the window as the girl approached.

“Hey Bella, what were you doing?”

“I tend to read outside when the sun makes its rare appearances – which happen to be a lot recently,” she answered in a sort of wistful voice, leaning into the window and resting her arms against it so that she could see into the darkened vehicle. If she didn’t know any better she would have thought he was a vampire, hidden in the dark like he was. “What are you doing?”

“Um . . . well I’m kind of lost,” Harry admitted, rubbing the back of his head sheepishly. Bella chuckled lightly and shook her head.

“Men,” she said, earning a small glare and some protest from Harry.

“Hey, I’m asking from directions aren’t I?”

“So where were you trying to go,” Bella asked, ignoring Harry’s words. Harry leaned his head back and scratched his chin thoughtfully.
“Uh . . . I think it was called . . . Settle? . . . or something like that . . .”

“Seattle?”

“That sounds right.” Bella shook her head again, an amused smile on her face. “Anyways, Teddy needs some new clothes and I thought I might as well get a head start on Luna’s birthday.”

“How much of a head start,” Bella asked curiously, hoping that maybe she could get something for the eccentric teen also.

“A few weeks,” was Harry’s answer and Bella nodded.

“Well, how about if I come with you,” Bella suggested. “That way you won’t end up lost again, and I can join in on your little present buying.”

“That would be wonderful,” Harry said, laying his accent on thickly, and – like he predicted – Bella’s face flushed red. She turned away from him quickly when he started to laugh.

“That’s a dirty trick.”

“Well, I can’t help it if I’m hot.”

Bella turned and glared at him, but Harry simply smirked. With an annoyed look Bella turned away again, muttering something that sounded suspiciously like ‘arrogant jerk.’

“Well, come on, I have to change my clothes,” she told him, still sounding slightly annoyed. “Besides, Charlie, my dad, wants to meet you.” Harry cut the engine and stepped out of the vehicle, his brow arched.

“Don’t you think it’s a bit early to be meeting the parents,” he asked smoothly and then he faked a shocked look. “Oh no,” he gasped rather dramatically. “Don’t tell me he found out about our little fling! And here I was about to steal you away so that we could run off into the sunset and elope. Well there goes that plan.” Harry snapped his fingers at the end and put on a slightly disappointed expression. Bella laughed and swatted at his arm, her face tinged a soft pink.

“I don’t mean it that way. He’s Chief of Police so he likes to know a little about everyone in town. So, don’t be surprised when I ask you to bring Draco and Luna over.”

“Good luck with that,” Harry said with a snort, his voice muffled as he unstrapped Teddy from his car seat. “Luna would probably come, but it might take some convincing with Draco.” He then straightened up; Teddy perched on his hip and a baby bag hanging loosely in his hand. “But I might just drag him out for your sake.” Here he winked at Bella.

“Thanks you, Harry, that means so much to me,” Bella said formally, placing her hand over her heart in a dramatic gesture. The two then laughed and Bella relieved Harry of the baby bag. “So, how’d you end up over here anyway? My house is in the complete opposite direction of Seattle,” she asked as they made their way toward her house side-by-side.

“Are you serious? Merlin, I must have really been out of it,” Harry groaned with a shake of his head. Bella threw him a sympathetic smile as she pushed open the front door.

“Dad,” she called as they entered her house. “I brought a friend over.”

“Is it Alice,” a male voice called back from the living room where Harry could hear the TV playing – it sounded like something sports related. Bella smiled fondly then motioned for Harry to follow her
into the living room. Her father was sprawled out on the couch, and when they entered his chocolate colored eyes narrowed in suspicion. “Who’s this?”

“Dad, this is my friend, Harry. He moved into that old house a few days ago,” Bella informed him in a voice that clearly said ‘Be nice.’ The man rolled his eyes at his daughter’s attitude and stood up.

“Harry Potter, sir, it’s a pleasure to meet you,” Harry greeted politely, his ingrown politeness coming out as he held out his hand for the man to shake.

“Charlie Swan, Chief of Police. It’s nice to meet you, too,” Charlie greeted back, shaking Harry’s hand. “You’re very polite,” he then said, rather bluntly.

“That’s how I was raised, sir.” Charlie looked Bella in the eye meaningfully at that and the girl rolled her eyes at the man’s not so discreet message.

“Da,” Teddy yelled out suddenly, demanding attention as he squirmed in Harry’s arms. Harry chuckled at the small child.

“I’m sorry, how rude of me. This is my godson, Teddy Lupin-Potter.” Teddy laughed at the sound of his name and clapped his hands before he started pulling – rather painfully too – on Harry’s hair. The bespectled teen looked over at Bella for help and she rolled her eyes before taking the baby off his hands.

“I’ll be upstairs changing,” she said, then sent Charlie a warning look before disappearing upstairs with Teddy.

“Godson, huh,” Charlie asked when Bella was gone, rubbing the hairs on his chin. Harry nodded his head, already knowing what the next question would be. “Where are his parents?”

“They’re dead,” Harry answered bitterly, and then quickly added, “sir” so as to smooth over the sound of the response. Charlie blinked suddenly looking abashed.

“Oh . . . um . . . I’m sorry to hear that,” he mumbled awkwardly scratching at the back of his head uncomfortably.

“It’s alright, sir. You didn’t know,” Harry said, trying to reassure him with a smile. Charlie nodded then tried to search for a safer topic.

“So . . . what do your parents do?”

“They’re dead, too, sir.”

After that, Charlie didn’t dare ask any more questions, in fear of bringing up more awkward topics.

Three hours later Harry, Teddy, and Bella found themselves sitting down in La Bella Italia on the boardwalk in Seattle. Bella was sitting across from Harry, watching him as he tried to coax Teddy into eating his peas.

There was something very . . . unusual about Harry Potter, Bella had decided.

Not so much in the way that he looked but in the way that he acted. He was a lot like her in that he was more mature than he seemed, but then he wasn’t. Bella could see something else, also, locked deep away inside of his eyes.
And then there was his secret.

Bella knew there was a secret, she could sense it.

And it was painfully obvious. She had noticed the subtle hints. Like the fact that neither Luna nor Draco could operate any kind of electronics by themselves, besides a car that is; or the fact that they didn’t know some of the simplest of things. Like when Jessica mentioned going to the movies, they had both turned to look at Harry and he had to explain what it was to them.

She had also noticed some other things she was sure she should not have seen. Like at one point Harry didn’t give Teddy his juice at the right time, Bella was sure she had seen a part of the baby’s hair change to brown for a moment.

There was also this one time when Draco was complaining about his food being a little cold and then moments later she could see steam coming from it. And Harry had shot the blonde a glare, which only proved that she wasn’t seeing things.

And they used strange euphuisms – like ‘Merlin’ or ‘Muggle’, but Bella supposed that could simply be a British thing.

And then there was also the first day of school to take into count. It had been painfully obvious that Harry was not completely comfortable around Luna and he didn’t seem to like Draco at all. And yet they had all moved here together and they were sharing a house? What was that about?

Yes, odd things happened around Harry Potter and his crew.

“Um . . . Bella,” Harry suddenly called out to her timidly, not looking at her but instead down at his plate – a dinner of steak and potatoes.

“Hmm,” Bella hummed as she twisted her spaghetti around on her fork. Harry shifted and looked around the restaurant like he was hoping some word might fly out of the air. “Harry?” Harry started and then turned a deep red.

“Oh, um . . . I . . . I was curious . . .”

“About,” Bella urged when Harry didn’t immediately continue.

“Well, I noticed that Ed- I mean the . . . um . . . the Cullens weren’t particularly . . . um . . . social,” he started rather awkwardly. “So, I was wondering . . . how . . . how did you guys meet up?” Bella blinked and then she realized that Harry wasn’t really asking about the Cullens, he was asking about Edward.

That was a wake-up call. To hide her smirk, Bella lifted her cup to her lips and took a long drink of her coke. Then she put it down so that she could answer Harry’s awkwardly phrased question.

“Edward and I used to date,” she told him, watching as Harry’s eyes flashed with . . . annoyance? But it was gone as quickly as it came, and Harry was looking once more at his plate.

“Oh,” he said for the lack of saying something else.

“Yeah, but we sort of . . . drifted I guess you could say. I broke it off the day before I met you.” Harry’s face was unreadable when Bella gave away this news, but his eyes were like open doors. Bella noticed the way the green darkened and then seemed to grow light again.

“I see. I’m sorry to hear that,” Harry finally managed to say, and he actually sounded sincere. Bella
almost believed him, but then she saw that his hand was clenched so tight around his fork, she could have sworn there were words scarred into it.

“Are you really?” Harry blinked and looked a little startled. Bella grinned and pointed her fork at him and winked. “Gotcha.” At this Harry’s face flushed tomato red.

“I . . . I . . .” was all he mattered to splutter out before Bella took pity on him.

“You know, you could have just told me you liked Edward,” she said, going back to twirling spaghetti on her fork. “I could probably help you out a little.”

“I’m not interested in Edward,” Harry snapped out so harshly, Bella looked up in surprise. But the look on the boy’s face clearly contradicted his words. He seemed almost sad that he even had to say such a thing. “I’m not,” he repeated with less conviction, looking conflicted. He sounded like he was trying to convince himself of that more than Bella.

“Okay, you’re not,” Bella agreed just to placate him. Harry nodded, his expression a mixture of sadness and relief. As Bella pulled another forkful of spaghetti into her mouth, she couldn’t help but wonder at Harry’s reaction.

“Watch the crowds, of people walk by. Seeing them laugh as you’re waiting to die. Trapped in a cage, stuck behind the bars. Feeling left out as if you’re on bloody Mars.” Harry paused and removed the pencil that he had put behind his ear. Nodding just slightly, he wrote down some words onto the paper before he then played an experimental cord on his guitar.

“What are you doing?” The question jarred Harry out of his thoughts and he looked over at the doorway to his music room, finding Draco standing there, his arms crossed over his chest.

“What does it look like I’m doing?” Harry retorted, turning back to his work. He frowned as he tried to catch back the mood he had been in when he had first started writing. Draco rolled his eyes and pushed off from the doorway, making his way over to the messy haired teen. Harry was humming now and Draco had to admit, the tune sounded nice.

“So . . . what brought this on,” Draco asked rather awkwardly. He squinted his eyes as he took in the mass of hastily squalled notes and words on the page. “Don’t Try to be a King,” he asked when he caught the title. Harry hummed a sort of yes and wrote down another few bars on the paper. Draco leaned back and looked around the room. He had noticed Harry spending a great deal of time in here when they first got there, but this wasn’t what he had expected the Savior to turn it into.

Harry had turned one of the drawing rooms into a music room.

The walls were a pale green that matched well with the black marble floor. Draco was surprised at the color choice; he had assumed Harry would have painted things that gaudy red color all Gryffindors seemed to favor. But no, this room was done up like the Slytherin common room, except with a musical theme.

Dark green padding blocks were put up on the walls, so that the music played would be allowed to bounce around instead of being absorbed into the walls. There were a few music stands scattered around, and a shiny black upright piano pushed against one wall. By the wide windows were a set of drums and by an amplifier was another guitar – base if Draco remembered correctly. There was also an acoustic guitar propped up next to Harry’s chair, but he was using the electric one.
“I didn’t realize you could play so many instruments,” Draco comment lightly, turning back to look at Harry, who had stopped in his composing to watch Draco take in the room.

“I can’t,” Harry told him. Draco blinked once in confusion.

“Then why do you have all of these,” he had to ask when Harry just continued to stare at him. Harry arched a brow sort of challengingly.

“Sometimes Luna likes to play with me,” Harry finally said. “That’s hers.” He pointed at the bass which, now that Draco was really looking, bore Luna’s signature. There were splash on the body, like someone had thrown a bunch of paint balls at it. “And just about ever musician had a piano.”

“Okay, so the drums are . . .”

“For you,” Harry finished when Draco trailed off. Draco’s eyes widened and when he looked back at Harry you could actually see the shock reflected on his face.

“W-what,” he sputtered.

“Well, I saw you eyeing it the other day, before we left, and I thought you’d like it. Call it a welcoming gift if you will.” Harry commented casually before he flashed Draco a grin. Draco flushed and looked away, suddenly embarrassed. He didn’t even know Harry had been watching him that day, and it was just a passing glance – you could hardly say he was eyeing it.

Draco never even told anyone that he liked the drums. Playing something so loud and out of control was not something his parents approved of, so he kind of did it in secret. But to think Harry picked up on something his own mother never even guessed at was surprising to say the least. Then again, Harry always seemed to know things others didn’t.

“Go ahead and take a look,” Harry suddenly said and he held out a pair of drum sticks to Draco. Draco stared at them for a long moment. They were customized, a black snake on one stick and a green one on the other. And the drums were the same, the black and green snake coiling on the silver background of the bass drum.

“I . . . I . . .”

“A simple ‘thanks’ would suffice,” Harry told him, sounding annoyedly amused. Draco flushed a dark red and stammered out a thank you before walking over to the drums. Harry chuckled bemusedly and turned back to the song he had been composing.

“It appears that you have converted another one,” Luna commented mildly when she walked in to the music room an hour later to find Draco breaking in his new instrument. Harry was lying on his back on the floor, making airplane noises as he levitated Teddy in the air.

“So it would seem,” Harry shot back with a wide grin. Luna smiled and drifted over to him, plucking Teddy out of the air as she did so. The baby giggled madly, his hair flashing ever color under the sun in his glee. Luna tickled him in his stomach then settled into the chair where Harry laid in a square of grayish light coming in from the window.

“Have you thought about what I said,” Luna asked in the same pleasant tone. Harry stiffened a bit, his jaw clenching but made no comment. “You know, this could be good for you.”
“And how would you know,” Harry snapped out rather harshly. Luna hummed and began to bounce Teddy on her knee, focusing on him rather than Harry.

“Look, Luna, I just want to be normal and he isn’t exactly normal. You can’t just expect me to jump into something like that. I don’t even know anything about him besides the fact that his name is Edward and he’s a vampire.”

“Well, you’re not exactly trying to get to know him, now are you,” Luna shot back, peeking a glance at the teen beside her. Harry was not looking at her, his gaze trained on the window. Draco had paused in his drumming to listen in on their conversation.

Harry heaved a heavy sigh before saying, “I just can’t, okay?”

“And why not,” Draco suddenly cut in. “What exactly are you afraid of?”

A pained expression flashed across Harry’s face and he bit down on his lip. He looked, Luna thought, as if he might cry.

“Nothing.”

Draco huffed and took to studying his drumsticks.

“Look Potter,” Draco said in an unnaturally soft voice. Harry propped himself up on his arms to look quizzically at the blonde. “Okay, I know we aren’t exactly friends, but if we’re going to try this... truce we might as well learn to trust each other.”

Harry blinked, looking thoroughly shocked.

“Okay,” Harry consented carefully.

“Okay. So, I’ll ask again: What exactly are you afraid of?”

But Harry didn’t really have an answer for that.

Edward sighed and plucked harmlessly at the keys of his piano, his thoughts on a certain green-eyed boy.

Harry Potter had to be the most allusive teen Edward had ever met. He didn’t know that someone could actually succeed in avoiding him, especially in a school that small, but Harry did. It was a bit annoying, and it didn’t help that his so called siblings thought it would be funny to tease him about his predicament. Even Bella had joined in on teasing him unrelentlessly.

“Hey Edward, thinking about Harry again,” a chirpy voice asked. Edward turned to glare at the small dark-haired vampire. “Oo, that’s a scary look. I know what can help. Shopping!”

Edward groaned and turned back to his piano, choosing to ignore the girl. “Oh, come on, sulking is not going to do anything.”

“I’m not sulking,” Edward replied smoothly. Alice rolled her golden eyes at that.

“Yeah right,” she said sarcastically. Edward didn’t bother to make a comeback and after a while of waiting for one Alice sighed. “Fine, don’t come shopping with me. But we can at least go hunting.”
“Don’t feel like it. Why don’t you just go with Jasper?”

Alice frowned delicately before sliding onto the piano bench next to Edward.

“You wanna talk about it?”

Edward sighed and hit a low note on the piano as if that could describe his mood.

“He’s just . . .” he trailed off, not quite knowing what to say.

“I know. Bella told me how much he’s been avoiding you,” Alice said sympathetically. Edward sighed at that.

So, Harry was somehow still able to maintain his relationship with Bella even though Bella was always around him. It was quite frustrating to learn that, and Edward couldn’t help but wonder how the teen managed to do it.

“Have you tried talking to his friends,” Alice asked.

“Yes,” was Edward’s response, “but that Draco guy doesn’t like to socialize or something and Luna’s a bit . . . odd.” Alice laughed at Edward’s choice of words.

The fact was, in the few days that they had been there, Draco had been labeled as a stuck-up jerk and Luna was the weirdo. And since Harry was always kind and polite, people were often left to wonder how the trio got along so well – maybe it was because they were related. Their personalities, however, always seemed to clash, especially with Draco and Harry. But that was only how they acted during school. No one had a clue as to what they were like outside of the classrooms. The three tended to keep to themselves and didn’t like to give out information about themselves. It made them have an air of mystery.

“Oh, well . . . there’s always tomorrow,” Alice concluded with a shrug.

She then stood up and twirled away, leaving Edward more annoyed than before she had come to try and cheer him up.

“We have got to do something about this,” Bella declared rather suddenly as she was walking with Alice to her truck. Edward had decided to skip that day and Bella suspected it was because Harry was still ignoring him.

“I know, this is completely ridiculous,” Alice agreed wholeheartedly. The two walked on in silence for a while longer, until they were in Bella’s truck.

“And you wanna know what makes this all the more frustrating,” Bella all but yelled as she turned to look Alice in the eye. “Harry actually likes Edward!” Alice’s eyes widened ever so slightly and Bella caught a mischievous gleam in their amber depths.

“Oh really, well this won’t do,” she said in much the same way as she would about an outfit of Bella’s that she didn’t approve of. Bella frowned, now slightly confused.

“What won’t do,” she questioned hesitantly, squishing down the urge to look down at her clothes. Alice grinned sharply, stopping next to Bella’s truck.

“Well, we can’t let things continue to go in this direction. I have a feeling Harry would be a nice new
“Okay,” she said slowly as she climbed into the driver’s seat. She pushed her keys into the ignition and turned the truck on. It roared to life and as Bella back out of her parking spot she asked, “But what exactly are we going to do. Lock them in a broom closet?”

Alice rolled her eyes at that and sighed in exasperation.

“Bella, Bella, Bella. That is like . . . centuries old. No one does things like that anymore. No, no, I have a better idea.” Bella arched a brow but didn’t ask Alice to elaborate. She was likely not to anyways. But whatever it was, Bella hoped it would happen soon. It was kind of tiring to be friends with two people who wouldn’t even talk to each other.

“Something’s not right.”

Harry and Luna looked up from where they had both been trying, and failing, to feed Teddy some normal food — stuff for normal kids his age. So far it wasn’t working, the boy seemed determined to eat nothing but meat. Harry suspected it was because of Remus’s werewolf gene.

“What’s not right,” Luna asked at the same time Harry asked, “Are you reading a Muggle newspaper?”

Just a little bit annoyed, Draco lowered the paper to glare heatedly at Harry.

“Wasn’t it you who said we needed to keep up appearances,” he demanded. Harry shrugged, a smirk on his lips because he had in fact said that, many times in fact. It was his argument whenever Draco demanded that he drop out of high school. “Anyways, this is what’s not right.” Spreading the paper out on the table, Draco pointed at the headline.

**Death Toll on the Rise**

**Police Fear Gang Activity**

Curiosity peaked; Harry slid the paper closer and read a few lines from the article.

“It reminds me of when the Dark Lord came back,” Draco continued to explain. “You remember all those raids on Muggles. It looks like someone’s doing that here.”

“But who would be doing that here,” Luna voiced, her tone very much serious for once. It was only when she sounded like this that Harry remembered she had had a part in the war and it had changed her just as much as it had changed others. “Why would wizards want to cause trouble in America?”

Draco sighed and leaned back in his chair.

“I don’t know.”
“It can’t be wizards,” Harry finally concluded. “It’s way too messy. Yes, those people are being killed, but not with spells.” Then Harry sighed and looked at the clock. “We’ll finish the conversation later. Right now we need to get to school.”

“Hi guys,” Bella greeted in an oddly chipper voice as she appeared at Harry’s side. Beside her, Edward was looking highly amused.

“Hey,” Harry greeted back cautiously, his curiosity the only thing keeping him from bolting, like he normally did when Edward was present. “Um . . . you okay?”

“Couldn’t be better,” was Bella’s gleeful reply. On the other side of the table, Angela looked over at them frantically.

“Have you started your announcements?”

“No,” Bella answered. “There’s no point really. Renée knows when I’m graduating. Who else is there?” Angela nodded then turned her frantic gaze onto Harry, who had just finished explaining what an announcement was to Luna and Draco.

“Um . . . we don’t really have to,” he told her hesitantly.

“We’re emancipated orphans and we don’t really have any friends outside of our group,” Luna informed them bluntly, her attention seemingly focused on Teddy. All those around looked at the three sympathetically. Draco snorted and rolled his eyes, if that was the story they were stick with far be it for him to protest.

“Well, what about you, Alice,” Angela then asked, turning to the girl sitting beside her.

“All done,” Alice answered with a smile. Angela groaned at that.

“Ugh. Lucky you. My mother has a thousand cousins and she expects me to hand-address one to everybody. I’m going to get carpal tunnel. I can’t put it off any longer and I’m just dreading it.”

“I’ll help you,” Bella volunteered, “If you don’t mind my awful handwriting.” Angela looked at Bella in relief.

“That’s so nice of you. I’ll come over anytime you want.”

“Actually, I’d rather go to your house if that’s okay – I’m sick of mine. Charlie ungrounded me yesterday.” Bella grinned widely, finally announcing the meaning to her good mood.

“Really,” Angela asked, mild excitement lighting her weary eyes. “I thought you said you were in for life.”

“Yeah, well it’s all thanks to Harry.”

Harry looked up from his lunch, surprised, not having expected to be dragged into the conversation.

“Me,” he asked, wincing when Teddy reached over and pulled on his hair. Bella nodded, chuckling when Harry glared at the baby.

“Yeah, Charlie was so glad that I made a new friend that he figured he’d let me free so that I can spend more time with said friend.”
“Sounds like he’s trying to set you up,” Harry told her with a chuckle. “I told you it was too early in our relationship to be meeting parents. Looks like I can just go ahead with my plans.” Harry laughed as Bella narrowed her eyes and swatted at his arm in annoyance.

“This is great, Bella,” Angela exclaimed. “We’ll have to go out to celebrate.”

“You have no idea how good that sounds,” Bella said with a wistful sigh.

“What should we do,” Alice mused, jumping into the conversation. Bella looked nervous at the excitement on the smaller teen’s face.

“Whatever you’re thinking, Alice, I doubt I’m that free.”

“Free is free, right,” she insisted.

“I’m sure I still have boundaries – like the continental U.S., for example.” Everyone laughed but Alice grimaced in real disappointment.

“So, what are we doing tonight,” she continued to persist, her impatience showing.

“Nothing. Look, let’s give it a couple of days to make sure he wasn’t joking. It’s a school night, anyways.”

“We’ll celebrate this weekend, then.”

“Sure,” Bella answered offhandedly, with a roll of her eyes. Draco also rolled his eyes and leaned closer toward Harry and Luna.

“Merlin, I’m glad we don’t have parents to deal with.” Harry glared heatedly at him for the statement and the aristocrat arched a brow in question.

“Forget it.”

With a shrug, Draco changed the subject. “Are you going to celebrate with them?”

“If I do, you two will come, right?” This question received a shrug from Draco and a nod from Luna.

“Whatever you want James,” Luna hummed, and then nodded her head discreetly over at Alice. The two boys turned to look at the girl, who had a curiously blank look in her eyes.

“Alice,” Angela called, waving her hand in front of Alice’s face. “Alice!” Suddenly Edward laughed, the sound of it causing an electric shock to sprint down Harry’s spine. Harry ignored it, sharing a knowing look with Draco and Luna when Alice jumped up, like she’d been kicked under the table.

“Is it naptime already, Alice,” Edward asked in a teasing tone.

“Sorry, I was daydreaming, I guess.” And just like that everything was back to normal. Ben, who’d been sitting quietly reading a comic, shut his book with a sigh.

“Daydreaming is better than facing two more hours of school,” he said. While the others continued the conversation, Harry took the chance to notice how Bella seemed to be tense and the two Cullens strained to appear normal. Something was defiantly going on.
“They know something,” Draco announced as soon as the trio got home. Harry sighed, and shook his head as he placed a sleeping Teddy inside his playpen. “Something’s up, and I’d bet you my manor that it has something to do with the murders in that Cattle place.”

“Seattle,” Harry corrected. The young Malfoy glared at him. “Right, not important.” Shaking his head again, Harry walked into the kitchen to prepare some tea.

“Aren’t you going to do something,” Draco demanded, walking into the kitchen moments later. Harry thought he looked strangely like a flustered housewife, hands on his hips and a disapproving frown on his face.

“Like what,” Harry asked, watching as Luna drifted in, grabbed a cup of tea, and then drifted out again.

“I don’t know,” Draco shouted, throwing his hands up in frustration. “Go confront them or something.” Harry arched a brow, taking a sip of his tea.

“And how do you think that would go over,” he asked rather calmly, which only seemed to aggravate Draco more. “Should I just walk up to them and say, ‘Hey guys, I’m a wizard in hiding and I was wondering if you’ve been killing people off in Seattle.’?”

Draco scowled, his lip stuck out a little in a pout as he sat down heavily on a chair.

“No, I suppose not,” he finally muttered sullenly. “I just hate not knowing things. These could be Death Eaters trying to lure you out.”

“Aww, Draco. Are you worried about me,” Harry asked in a babyish voice. Draco looked up only to send him a hateful glare. Harry sighed and said, rather patiently, “I already told you it’s not wizards.”

Draco’s response was immediate, like he had already thought this argument through.

“Yeah, but it could be Greyback.”

“Or it could not be Greyback,” Harry returned just as quickly. Then he sighed at the worried look on Draco’s face. So the blonde was concerned about him – that was oddly touching. This whole truce thing was still making Harry uncomfortable and it’s only been two weeks since he made it. With a sigh, Harry made Draco a proposition.

“Look, if it makes you feel any better, we could patrol this weekend.” Draco’s face lit up at the idea.

“Really? It’s been a while since we were out and about.”

Harry arched a brow questioningly at him, surprised to see that he had caught on to yet another thing that Draco seemed to like very much. Harry could just about imagine him with a wagging tail.

“Excited,” he asked in an amused tone, his lips twitching into a smirk. Draco huffed and crossed his arms trying to look put-out, yet he could not completely get the look of excitement out of his eyes.

“Of course, I feel like a bloody animal trapped in a cage here.” Harry continued to look at him skeptically and he sighed. “You know what I mean, Potter.”

“Harry.”

“What,” Draco asked, sounding slightly distracted as he gazed out the kitchen window. Harry hid his smile by sipping at his tea.
“I keep telling you to call me Harry.” Draco scoffed and rolled his eyes.

“Old habits die hard, you know that.”

“But I call you Draco,” Harry pointed out, looking at the blonde over the rim of his cup.

“But you aren’t exactly normal, so the phrase rarely ever applies to you,” Draco argued teasingly. Harry rolled his eyes and took another sip of his tea. “So, you figure we could get someone to watch Teddy,” Draco asked, changing the topic back to more important matters. Harry shrugged, this time taking a long gulp of his tea before he answered.

“I have someone we could trust.”

The air was nice and cool that night as Harry, Draco, and Luna entered the forest behind their house. A cool mist hung over the forest, clinging possessively to the leaves and sticking to the three’s exposed skin.

They were dressed in the least amount of clothes as possible; Draco and Harry in pants and Luna in a simple white sundress, and none of them had on shoes.

“James, where did Bella go,” Luna asked in a musical tone, dancing over the spiky branches littering the ground like a ballet dancer. Harry lifted his shoulders and let the fall in a shrug as his eyes scanned the trees, the sky, the ground; it was a habit he had yet to break.

“Don’t know, though she did say something about her mom. Why?”

“Just curious,” Luna sang doing a complicated sort of jumping twirl over a fallen log.

“Are we doing this or what,” Draco demanded, sounding suspiciously like the Muggle American he was growing accustomed to. Harry smirked and rolled his eyes at the fallen aristocrat.

“Yeah, sure,” he agreed airily with a nod. The three then split off into three different directions and under the cover of the night and trees, they shed their clothes and shifted. In a matter of seconds, in their places were three relatively large wolves. The large black one with the white strip in his muzzle let out a low rumbling growl and the wolves ran out into the forest, their noses held high as they scented the air.

“I’m not getting anything here,” the silver white wolf barked out to his companions.

“Spread out and howl if you get anything,” the black wolf, the obvious leader, commanded. The two white wolves nodded an affirmative before they ran off in opposite directions. After a long moment one of them, the slimmer one, caught something and let out a low howl.

“I caught a scent,” she announced as the other two caught up with her.

“Alright, we’re going to follow it. Stay close and be quiet,” the black wolf ordered. He got affirmatives and the trio set out. It wasn’t long before the wolves came upon a gathering. They approached quietly, hidden in the bushes, as they watched.

One side of the clearing was made up of wolves larger that the trio, much larger, about as big as horses. They appeared to be on edge, a low strained growl emitting from their muzzles. But they were kept at bay by their leader, who was just as black as night itself. On the other side of the
clearing there were what appeared to be humans, except some of them were crouched forward, as if they were prepared to attack.

“Is that Alice,” the female white wolf asked, lowly.

“Must be the entire coven then,” the silvery white wolf commented, then continued on in a teasing tone. “Oh, but look, one’s missing. I wonder where he is.”

“Shut up,” the black wolf commanded, growing irritated. The other two immediately quieted down although the silvery white one was grinning widely. The black wolf was doing everything to keep himself from tackling his fellow wolf.

“We are obviously tracking the same person. It would be more efficient if we . . . compromised for the moment,” the leader of the Cullens was proposing to the wolves. The leader of the wolves seemed to debate that for a while before agreeing and then the two sides vanished swiftly into the trees.

“Let’s go, they can obviously handle this,” the black wolf commanded, before turning and running back home, the other two following closely behind. As they neared the house they shifted again, and shrugged into their clothes.

“Man, the first time is always so annoying,” Draco complained as the three walked into the house. He stopped at a mirror hanging in the hallway to fix his hair.

“What, you don’t like running in the nude,” Harry teased only to receive a glare from the blonde. Well there, that was for teasing him in the woods about Edward.

“But, that run was very educational,” Luna piped up. The two boys turned to look at her but she merely hummed and walked further into the house.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hmm . . . it took me some time to hash this one out and all that. I did a lot of considering for this one and ended up having the rewrite the whole thing because I didn’t like the way it played out and then this happened. All I have to say is that I was just as surprised with some of the stuff that happened as you will be!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Good morning,” Bella greeted Edward as she got into his silver Volvo. She gave him a smile although she was just a little suspicious over the reason as to why he would want to drive her to school. Then again, she was still suspicious over the reason on why he wanted her to visit Renee all of a sudden – not that she was complaining, but she had noticed how distracted and reclusive he had seemed during the entire trip to Florida. Even her mother had noticed.

In fact, she had taken Bella to the side and questioned her on what was going on. Bella had to admit, she was a little disgruntled to see the relief in her mother’s eyes when she had told her that she and Edward had broken up.

Shaking her head, Bella buckled herself in and looked around the empty car in confusion.

“Did I miss something,” she asked Edward as he swung expertly out of her driveway and began to accelerate down the street.

“Hmm,” Edward hummed, as if he’d been distracted from his thoughts. He turned his head to the side and fixed his gaze on her and that was when he noticed Bella’s pointed look. “Oh, nothing really. Alice just decided to skip today.”

Bella nodded her head slowly, her lips pursed in suspicion. She didn’t really have any reason to be, all of the Cullens skipped school at some point, but as of late Edward’s behavior had been just a little too strange. Bella had chalked it up to his situation with Harry at first, but now she wasn’t so sure.

The car ride was done in complete silence as she thought this over, the only sound coming from the radio – which was spilling out low classical music. As they neared the school, however, Edward suddenly tensed up, his hands gripping the steering wheel tightly that the plastic creaked in protest.

“If I told you to do something, would you trust me,” he suddenly asked of her. There was an edge to his voice and his jaw was clenched tightly. Bella narrowed her eyes slightly as she said, “That depends,” in a cautious tone. Edward sighed in exasperation and pulled the van into the parking lot.

“I was afraid you’d say that.”

“What do you want me to do Edward,” Bella asked him with a sigh, mentally rolling her eyes at him.

“I want you to stay in the car,” he spoke in a deliberately slow voice. He pulled into his usual parking spot and turned off the engine with a simply twist of his wrist. He glanced at her quickly – those amber orbs were guarded – before gazing straight ahead. Whatever he saw just served to make him tenser. “I want you to wait here until I come back for you.”
“But... why,” Bella asked, perplexed, her brows pinched together in confusion. She moved her gaze away from him and glanced out the window. Immediately she spotted the reason behind Edward’s tension.

It was hard to miss him, seeing as he towered over the students, even leaning against his black motorcycle – a motorcycle that was parked illegally on the sidewalk.

“Oh,” was Bella’s only response. She was surprised to see Jacob Black at her school, and then she was immediately suspicious as she took in the calm mask on his face.

“You jumped to the wrong conclusion last night,” Edward murmured, talking about the out-of-nowhere call Jacob had made the other day. “He asked about school because he figured that I would be where you were. He was looking for a safe place to talk to me. A place with witnesses.”

Now curiosity coated Bella suspicion. She was very much aware of Jacob’s animosity toward Edward, so why would the werewolf suddenly want to talk to the vampire he detested very much?

“I’m not staying in the car,” Bella declared in a matter-of-factly tone and was amused when she heard Edward groaned quietly.

“Of course not,” the teenaged vampire said as he opened the door. Bella was happy to know that he had completely given up arguing with her. “Well, let’s get this over with.”

Bella grinned and got out of the van. There were a whole lot of people milling about – just as they had done when Harry had arrived – and they were all gazing at Jacob with wary curiosity.

Jacob’s face hardened when Bella and Edward walked toward him, and then it turned slightly curious as he took in the very obvious amount of space in between them.

Bella was nervous as she took in the faces watching them. She felt oddly like a bystander walking right into the middle of a showdown. As she took in the faces of those she walked by she realized that the wary curiosity was not because Jacob was a stranger, but because Jacob actually looked dangerous to them.

Weird, was the thought that flashed through her mind. She just couldn’t place the Jacob that they saw with the Jacob of her mind. He was simply the same awkward teen that had a smile like the sun and was her best friend.

Edward stopped a few yards away from Jacob, twisting his body slightly in front of Bella and holding an arm out across her body like a shield. Bella ignored it, although it irritated her greatly, and slanted a glance at her best friend turned angst-y werewolf.

“You could have called us,” was the first thing said between them. Edward’s voice had taken on that steel-like quality that Bella knew he only used for those he could just barely tolerate.

“Sorry,” Jacob shot back, a sneer twisting his face into something Bella really didn’t like. “I don’t have any leeches on my speed dial.”

“You could have called at Bella’s house.”

Jacob’s jaw flexed and Bella wanted to hit Edward – which really wouldn’t have been a good idea given his stone-like body – for giving Jacob the wrong conclusion.

“This is hardly the place, Jacob,” Edward continued. “Could we discuss this later?”
"Sure, sure. I’ll stop by your crypt after school," Jacob snorted before demanding. "What’s wrong with now?" Edward glanced pointedly around the lot at the curious faces of the student population.

"I already know what you came to say," Edward reminded Jacob in a voice so low even Bella had a hard time hearing him. "Message delivered. Consider us warned."

"Warned," Bella repeated blankly. "What are you talking about," she then demanded, catching the worried look that had appeared on Edward’s face.

"You didn’t tell her?" Jacob asked incredulously, his eyes widening in disbelief. "What, were you afraid she’d take out side?"

"Please drop it, Jacob," Edward said evenly.

"Why?" Jacob challenged, his dark eyes flashing in clear amusement – bitter amusement.

"What don’t I know?" Bella asked, frowning in confusion and looking between the two. "Edward?" she then demanded but Edward didn’t answer, too busy glaring at Jacob. "Jake?" Jacob arched a brow at her and Bella knew he was more than willing to tell her any information she requested. That was one of the reasons why he was her best friend.

"He didn’t tell you that his big . . . brother crossed the line Saturday night?" He said, sarcasm coating his words. His eyes flicked from Bella to Edward as he said the next words. "Paul was totally justified in —"

"It was no-man’s land!" Edward hissed out, cutting him off.

"Was not," Jacob shot back almost childishly.

"Emmett and Paul?" Bella whispered lowly, her brows pulled together even more in her confusion so that a wrinkle creased her forehead. She then asked in a louder voice – not that she really needed to – “What happened? Were they fighting? Why? Did Paul get hurt?”

"No one fought," Edward said quietly for only her ears. "No one got hurt. Don’t be so anxious." Jacob stared at them with incredulous eyes.

"You really didn’t tell her anything at all, did you?" he asked. "Is that why you took her away? So she wouldn’t know that —"

"Leave now," Edward cut across evenly. Bella noticed that in that single moment he looked terrifyingly like a vampire. Jacob raised his eyebrows but made no other move that he even heard the threat in Edward’s tone.

"Why haven’t you told her?" It was silent for a long time. Bella could see more students gathering in her peripheral vision, and in the silence she heard the purr of a car’s engine as it pulled into the lot. She also saw Ben standing next to Mike Newton, Mike had his hand on Ben’s shoulder, like he was holding the boy back – from what Bella wasn’t really sure.

Then, with a flash of intuition, the pieces fell neatly into place and suddenly realization came over her.

It was all so clear now.

What Edward didn’t want her to know, but Jacob wouldn’t dare to keep from her. What would have two enemies out in the woods together and have Edward take her on a sudden trip out of the state –
despite his own issues with his mate.

It was something Bella always knew was coming, something she had been dreading.

As this sudden realization came over her, she could hear her breath coming out in short gasps. Was she hyperventilating? Over that she could also hear someone calling out her name.

“She came back for me,” Bella managed to choke out. For one moment Bella was gazing up at Edward’s torn expression and then she was suddenly staring into a pair of familiar emerald eyes protected by thin glasses.

“Bella, are you okay?” Harry asked her, cupping her face gently between his slightly large hands. “What’s wrong?” Bella shook her head as best as she could with Harry’s hands holding her face. She could never tell Harry her problems; they were too big for him, the consequences too great to handle.

Harry let out an animalistic growled – Bella wondered if all her male friends were able to growl as realistically as that – and pulled Bella roughly into a protective hug. His arms were strong around Bella’s body, holding her firmly against his chest. Then he turned and glared at Jacob, not seeming the least bit imitated by the younger teen’s massive height and bulging muscles.

“Who the bloody hell are you and what did you do to Bella?” he demanded, and in his anger his eyes looked like they glowed. Draco and Luna came to flank him on both sides – an uncharacteristically serious look on Luna’s face – and Jacob blinked in surprise, having not expected the new arrivals.

“Harry,” Bella mumbled into his shoulder, which was her face was pressed thanks to Harry’s hand. “It’s okay. Jake didn’t do anything.”

“Then who did,” Harry asked, pulling back to look down into Bella’s extra-pale face. Bella’s eyes drifted down to the right so that she was avoiding his gaze. She was torn between wanting to tell him and protecting him from the craziness she often found herself involved in.

“It’s nothing,” she whispered again instead. “Don’t worry about it.”

“Bloody hell it is,” Draco mumbled, crossing his arms over his chest. Harry chose to ignore him, focusing all his attention on Bella. He stared into her eyes for a long time with a heated intensity that made Bella squirm, before looking away, a slightly hurt expression filling his face.

“Fine,” he finally said on an exhaled breath as he let her go. He was determinedly not looking at her and the action made Bella bite he lip. She did not like the wounded look on Harry’s face at all and she silently cursed herself. Was she determined to only hurt her friends? It certainly seemed so.

“Okay, get to class,” a stern voice suddenly sounded from behind them, cutting off what Bella had been about to say to get that look off of Harry’s face. “Move along, Mr. Crowley.” Bella glance over at Jacob anxiously – he was still looking at Luna, Harry, and Draco with a deeply confused expression.

“Get to school, Jacob,” she whispered. Harry turned his head only slightly so that he could watch the interaction before he turned fully to watch as a pudgy man pushed his way through the crowd of students surrounding them.

“I mean it,” the man threatened. “Detention for anyone who’s still standing when I turn around again.” The audience quickly melted away before the man even finished making his threat, taking with them a nervous-looking Angela who was holding a fussy Teddy. When all the students had
cleared out, the man approached their group.

“Ah, Mr. Cullen,” the man started, his beady eyes landing on Edward first. “Do we have a problem here?”

“Not at all, Mr. Greene,” Edward said smoothly, giving way to an open smile. “We were just on our way to class.”

“Excellent. I don’t seem to recognize your friend.” Mr. Greene turned to glower at Jacob. Bella could practically see an imaginary figure stamping ‘Delinquent’ across Jacob’s forehead with a red stamp. “Are you a new student here?”

“Nope,” Jacob answered popping the ‘p’. He tore his gaze away from Harry, Draco, and Luna so that he could smirk at the man.

“Then I suggest you remove yourself from school property at once, young man, before I call the police.” Jacob’s smirk turned into a full blown grin – Bella wondered if he was envisioning Charlie coming to arrest him, that would be interesting to see – before he said, “Yes, sir.”

He snapped a military salute before he climbed on his bike, kicked it into start, and then raced out of sight. Draco watched the performance with his lips twitching in amusement. Bella thought he looked slightly impressed.

“Mr. Cullen, I expect you to ask your friend to refrain from trespassing again,” Mr. Greene said, his face a little red. He appeared angry over what had just transpired and Bella couldn’t fault him for that, Jacob was being annoyingly cocky.

“He’s no friend of mine, Mr. Greene, but I’ll pass along the warning.”

Mr. Greene pursed his lips, assessing the situation.

“I see. If you’re worried about any trouble, I’d be happy to —”

“There’s nothing to worry about, Mr. Greene. There won’t be any trouble,” Edward reassured, giving the man another charming smile.

“I hope that’s correct.” Mr. Greene responded, mollified for the moment. He then puffed up his chest and fixed them all with a stern stare. “Well, then. On to class. You four too.” The group nodded as one before hurrying off.

Harry spent the morning in an irritating depression, as Draco had so gracefully put it, and it was for no real reason at all. So what if Bella didn’t trust him enough to tell him a secret that she no doubt held dearly. She’s only known him for a few weeks now, so it really shouldn’t matter. Nope, Harry should not be mad that a person he was coming to think of as a best friend wouldn’t tell him when something was extremely wrong.

No he wasn’t.

Not a single bit.

Oh, damn it all, he was irritated!

“Alright class! Settle down, settle down!”
The words of his Music teacher, Ms. Abel, drifted into Harry thoughts and pulled him into attention. He gazed up at where she was standing at the front of the room behind her large desk, hands on her hips as she glared her students into submission. When everyone was silent a dimpled smile Harry had come to expect from the woman bloomed on her cherubic face.

“Alright, now that you’re are all nice and quiet, I have some wonderful news to share with you.” Everyone who hadn’t been paying attention now turned to look at Ms. Abel with avid curiosity. Ms. Abel clapped her hands together once, her smile stretching even more.

“We’re going to host Fork’s first ever talent show!”

Silence met her excited statement.

Harry blinked a few times before looking around the room to see how everyone else was taking this news. From their shocked expression, he had to guess that stuff like this didn’t happen very often. After a few more second of silence, the room exploded.

“Alright, alright, calm down,” Ms. Abel called over the raised voices. “Silence!”

The room fell into a strained silence, a few whispers breaking out here and there.

“Good, now the show is optional, I know some of you have finals to study for and such. The show will take place the Saturday before Graduation. That’s one month people! Sign-ups for auditions are Friday. The actual auditions will be held from the 4th to the 5th. That’s all.”

With that said and not permitting any question, Ms. Abel dismissed them to independent study.

Harry leaned back in his seat, a thoughtful look on his face. Maybe now he could finally put those instruments to use.

“A talent show,” Draco repeated in a skeptical tone when Harry had relayed the news. “What the bloody hell —”

“Draco,” Harry scolded quietly, giving the blonde a glare. “Teddy just learned how to talk; I’d rather not have him swearing so soon.”

Draco rolled his silver eyes and muttered, “We really need to get him a babysitter or leave him with the house elves,” lowly so that Harry wouldn’t hear him. Then he said in a louder voice, “I swear Po-Harry, you’re worse than a mother hen.” Harry glared at him but the blonde simply brushed it away.

“I think a talent show is a wonderful idea,” Luna spoke up in a pleasant tone, nodding her head to further her point. “Are we entering?”

“We,” Draco demanded at the same time as Harry said, “Yes.”

“Um, we, Potter? I’ll have you know that I have no intention to enter some —”

“Give it a rest Draco,” Harry cut across with a roll of his eyes that made Luna giggle. “Besides, this way you can show all us lowly commoners how wonderful your talents are.” Draco puffed up like a peacock at the praise and looked momentarily satisfied.

“Oh, are you guys entering the talent show too?” Bella’s voice drifted over to them as she joined the
group at the lunch table. She was greeted with a murmur of ‘heys’ and ‘hellos’.

“Too,” Harry then asked, clearly confused.

“Yeah, Alice is thinking of bullying Edward into it,” Bella informed him, grinning madly to herself. Harry nodded, suddenly looking just a little bit queasy and Bella suddenly let the grin come out. All she had to do was say the words as Alice had told her and everything else would fall into place.

“You know, I suddenly had a great idea,” Bella told him sounding nonchalant. When Harry looked at her quizzically, she said, “Why don’t you guys perform together.” Harry opened his mouth to object but Luna cut him off and Bella had to wonder if she was in on the plan.

“That sounds like a delightful idea.” Bella laughed at the girl’s word choice.

“You know Luna; I think you’re the only person I know who says thing like ‘delightful’.”

“Well, Luna has always been a little odd,” Draco muttered, and Luna reached over the table and slapped him on the arm before turning to look at the Cullen sitting next to her. When the two had appeared, Bella did not know.

“So, shall we meet this weekend?”

“How about next weekend,” Edward suggested instead in a smooth voice, although he was jumping in excitement on the inside – secretly very glad over the whole idea. Across the table Alice winked at Bella who grinned in return.

“We’re not going to be in town this weekend.”

Luna tilted her head to the side and stared unblinkingly at Edward for a long moment before nodding her head.

“That’s quite alright. We’ll be happy to meet at your house next weekend.” Then she stood, grabbing her rather full tray, and skipped away; but not before dumping a giggling Teddy into Draco’s lap. Harry stared after her in shock then turned to look at Draco, who shrugged.

“Like I’ve always said, she’s completely loony.” Harry rolled his eyes and the comment before turning to look at Bella.

“Bella, if you don’t mind, I’d like to have a word with you.” Bella blinked, looking a little shocked but she stood anyway.

“Sure, I guess.” Harry nodded and the two moved to leave. Harry however stopped and turned back to the group, his eyes landing on Edward who was just getting up.

“I’d like to have this conversation alone, thank you,” Harry told the teen. Bella was sure Edward would have protested, but he didn’t. He just sat back down and picked up a conversation with Ben.

Well that was weird, Bella thought as she followed Harry to Chemistry. The halls were mostly empty seeing as the bell had yet to ring yet, but there were the odd student here and there that turned to stare at them.

“Um . . . Harry, what exactly is this about,” Bella questioned after a bout of uncomfortable silence.

“You sounded serious back there.” Harry sighed and paused outside of their classroom door, moving the lean back against the wall with one foot propped up.
“Bella, about this morning —”

“It was really nothing Harry,” Bella immediately told him, hoping desperately that he would drop it. She hated lying to him, but this was necessary. Harry’s jaw clenched however, in a motion Bella was coming to find was stubbornness.

“Bella, really, I doubt what happened was nothing and I’m insulted that you would think I would buy that.” And there it was again, that hurt expression flashing across his face and lighting his eyes. Bella shifted the books in her arms, her gazing drifting down.

“It’s . . . complicated,” she said after a moment.

“I can handle complicated,” Harry said back in a soft voice. “Please Bella; tell me what’s going on. I’d like to help you if I can.” Bella sighed and casted her mind about for some kind of truth to tell him that would not be incriminating.

“Okay,” she finally said on a sigh. She peeked a glance at Harry from between her bangs to see a relieved expression plastered on his face now, and then she immediately felt guilty for the half truth she was about to tell him.

“But on one condition.” Harry tensed a little bit.

“What condition?”

“You move back to our table,” Bella told him. For a moment Harry looked like he would completely drop the subject, but after a moment’s thought he sighed and agreed.

“Alright, well it was all actually just some kind of misunderstand that one of Edward’s brother got into,” Bella explained slowly, taking the information Edward had given her in English and attempting to hash it down so it sounded completely normal.

“What kind of misunderstanding?”

“Well, you know that guy that came here?” Bella looked up to see Harry nodded and then went on with her explanation. “Well, he lives on this Reservation about a mile out or so from here and the Natives there have some kind of weird superstitions going on. To put it short they don’t really trust any of the Cullens.” Harry’s brow rose in skepticism. “I know, it’s completely ridiculous and I tried to tell Jacob that time and time again but he just —”

“Oh, Bella,” Harry cut in, a smile twitching at his lips. “The point.”

“Uh, Bella,” Harry cut in, a smile twitching at his lips. “The point.”

“Anyways, the Natives claim they have some kind of treaty with the Cullens. None of them are allowed to even step a foot into La Push. However, this weekend, Edward’s brothers were hiking in the woods and some kind of trouble came up. Supposedly Emmett, crossed over the treaty line or something and one of the Natives there started a fight or something. Jake came up to the school today to tell Edward to tell his family that they needed to stay over the line or whatever, that’s what this whole thing was about.”

Bella let out a deep breath and waited for Harry’s response.

“Alright,” Harry said slowly after he had thought over the story. It sounded pretty believable, but Harry was sure there was some kind of magical creatures thing going on somewhere in that.

“Alright, I can believe that,” Harry told her instead. “But that doesn’t explain your reaction to that.”
“Well I thought that Emmet had gotten hurt or something, but it turned out that I was wrong and he’s completely fine; at least Edward told me he was completely fine.”

“Oh, well . . . huh?”

“Yeah, I didn’t want to say anything because it’s pretty embarrassing and everyone’s spreading this rumor that Edward and Jacob were arguing over me.” Bella was able to conjure up a real blush at this when she remembered the bets Mike, Austin, Ben, and Eric placed in Calculus earlier.

“Where they,” Harry asked in an amused tone.

“No!” And much to Bella’s embarrassment, Harry began to laugh. Bella glared up at him before turning around and stalking into the classroom, her head held high. Harry’s laughter followed her in and she could still hear it when the bell rang. Bella continued to glare at him as he walked over and requested that he seat be moved back. He was lucky Mr. Bennett was such a laid back teacher, because he had no objection.

“Would you shut up,” Bella hissed when Harry came to sit by her, snickering now. Harry shot her a cheeky grin and ducked his head into his text book when she glared at him once more.

*Oh, Edward so owes me for this one*, Bella thought.
After long he came across the scent of salty, damp air. As curious as he was, he decided to head toward it. It was simply a blessing when he came upon a beach.

The sand was pale white, the sea was dark and frothy, and the breeze was cooling. There was a rock-like structure at the far end of the beach, but the area he ended up in was completely blank, except for a ring of drift wood he suspected was for bon-fires or the like.

The area was empty due to the still slightly cold weather, but that was just another blessing to Draco. He didn’t need, nor did he want anyone’s company.

Shifting back into his human form, Draco walked slowly toward the water, relishing in the feel of the air on his face, in his hair. As he neared the water, he shucked off his black shirt and stepped out of the pair of shorts he deemed old. He folded them carefully and placing them on the rocks, out of the way of the water so that they wouldn’t get wet.

Then he turned and walked into the ocean.

The water was curiously warm and Draco used that opportunity to get some much needed relaxation. First he ducked his entire body underneath the dark liquid and then he let all of his muscles relax so that he was resting peacefully on the waves. He floated over the water on his back, gazing up at the slate grey sky and allowing his thoughts to wander meaninglessly nowhere.

All too soon, however, the serene quiet was broken.

The disturbance arrived in the form of three rowdy teens, laughing loudly and fooling around. With an irritated glance at the sky, Draco sighed and then swam back to the shore. He pulled himself out of the water, grabbed his clothes, and then headed for the tree line to make his way back home. It was as he was just crossing the sand that one of the boys called out to him.

“Hey,” the teen called again when Draco did not immediately turn around the first time. Draco sighed irritably wondering what he had done to deserve being disturbed when he had finally been having such a nice day. Knowing now that the boys were not likely to leave him alone, he turned to face them with a bored expression plastered on his face.

“What?” he drawled impatiently, one brow arched for good measure. The three blinked at him, all seemed to be stunned into silence.

They were all tall, Draco noticed – a lot taller than he was and he was at least a good 6.3 feet tall. They were also really muscular – kind of like Beaters. It was easy to see since two of them weren’t wearing a shirt and the one that was wearing one had on a white-beater. They all were sporting similarly cropped dark hair – was that some kind of fashion statement here, Draco wondered – although the one in the middle had hair that was slightly longer.

Upon closer inspection, Draco realized the guy in the middle was the one from the Monday. An odd thrill filled him, that feeling he had been trying to identify all week crept up on him once more and he quickly tried squashed it down – mostly out of fear for the reason behind it showing up now of all times.

“You don’t look familiar,” the guy who had called out to him was saying. “You new?”

“What’s it to you,” Draco asked in a bored tone, allowing his gaze to shift off to the side to show his disinterest in the conversation.

“Hey, aren’t you Bella’s friend,” the guy in the middle suddenly asked, when his friend elbowed him in the gut. Draco slid his gaze over to him.
“Not really,” he answered before he could help himself. Then, to his further confusion, he found himself asking, “And aren’t you that Jake guy with that bike?”

“Jacob Black,” the teen introduced with a wide grin. Then he pointed at his two friends respectively. “They’re Quil and Embry.” Draco nodded absently, trying to figure out why he was still there. Then something Jacob had said caught his attention and had his eyes narrowing slightly.

“Black, huh? Do you happen to have any English relatives?”

Jacob lifted and dropped his shoulders in a shrug, the muscles in his arms rippling. Draco’s eye widened just the slightest bit when he found his thoughts turning in a direction he did not want it to.

“Not that I know of,” Jacob spoke breaking Draco from his horror. Draco nodded absently again, turning his mind to trying to figure out what had prompted him to start a conversation with the three. Finding nothing else to say he turned away from them, not offering any sort of farewell, only to be stopped again.

“Hold on,” Jacob called. Draco sighed and turned to face him again, abet warily. “You never told us your name,” he explained, a blush darkening his cheeks. Draco scrutinized the teen for a moment before saying, “I’m Draco Malfoy.” Jacob rocked back on his heels and whistled lowly, behind him Quil and Embry shared a confused look.

“Draco?” Jacob repeated, and the foreign feeling rose up inside Draco’s chest again for some odd reason. “Is that, like, Latin for dragon or something?”

“That’s exactly what it’s for,” Draco informed him coolly, although he was actually a little surprised to find that an American Muggle had actually known that.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me.”

For the third time Draco turned to leave and this time he wasn’t stopped, much to his relief. One he was far enough into the trees that he knew he wouldn’t be spotted, he transformed and ran straight for home.

The whole way there, his thoughts were conflicted.

Bella was nervous as she slowly approached her room. She had to remind herself that Edward wasn’t truly mad, just worried – really, really worried.

Taking a deep breath, she shut the door quietly behind her. When she turned around she wasn’t the least bit surprised to see Edward, standing in the shadow near the window, glaring at her. She did, however, cringe at the sight of the glare and lowered her head as she waited for the reprimanding. But it never came and she guessed that Edward was possibly too mad to speak.

“Hi,” Bella finally said; Edward, however, didn’t respond – didn’t even twitch a little. He could have been carved from stone for all Bella knew. She counted to one hundred in her head – adding Mississippi also but there was no change.

“Err . . . so, I’m still alive;” she began again. That got a reaction out of him.

A low growl sounded through the room, but Edward remained frozen where he was.
“No harm done,” Bella insisted with a shrug, trying to be casual.

Edward finally defrosted.

He closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose between the fingers of his right hand. It was a pose of immense patience, one Bella knew all too well and she tensed, waiting for his response.

“Bella,” he whispered. “Do you have any idea how close I came to crossing the line today? To breaking the treaty and coming after you? Do you know what that could have meant?” Bella gasped and Edward’s eyes opened so that he could stare at her – the dark orbs were cold and hard as night.

“You can’t,” Bella nearly shouted too loudly. She worked to lower her tone so that Charlie would not hear her, but she wanted oh so desperately to shout at him. “Edward, they’d use any excuse for a fight. They’d love that. You can’t ever break the rules!”

“Maybe they aren’t the only ones who would enjoy a fight,” Edward shot back evenly, his eyes narrowing.

“Don’t you start,” Bella snapped. “You made the treaty — you stick to it.”

“If he’d hurt you —”

“Enough!” Bella said, cutting him off. “There’s nothing to worry about. Jacob isn’t dangerous.”

“Bella,” Edward started, rolling his eyes. “You aren’t exactly the best judge of what is or isn’t dangerous.”

“I know I don’t have to worry about Jake. And neither do you,” Bella pointed out, sounded smug and very much sure of herself – which she was, it was just Edward that was being difficult.

Edward grounded his teeth together, his hands moving to ball up into fist at his side. Bella sighed and crossed the room. When she was close enough, she wrapped her arms around him hesitantly. He didn’t pull back so she supposed this wasn’t crossing any line or anything.

“I’m sorry I made you anxious,” she muttered lowly. “I know you don’t love me that way anymore, but I know you still care.” Edward sighed and relaxed a little, his arms curling to return the friendly hug for a moment before pulling away.

“Anxious might be a bit of an understatement,” he murmured in an equally low voice. “It’s been a really long day.”

“Well you were supposed to be hunting,” Bella scolded him in an accusing tone, leaning in to him so that she could look into his eyes. She frowned when she noticed that they were still coal-dark.

“When Alice saw you disappear, I came back,” he explained.

“Well great. Now you’re gonna have to go back,” Bella said in a disapproving tone. She mentally berated Alice in her mind, the fortune-teller was going to get hell for messing up their carefully placed plans. Edward looked at her questioningly and she shrugged. “What? Harry was supposed to come over to your house next weekend,” she explained. Edward poised a thoughtful look at that.

“I can wait,” he finally said and Bella found herself smiling at his response.

“That’s ridiculous. I mean why should you suffer because of me. I know Alice can’t see me with Jacob, but you should have known —”
“But I didn’t,” Edward protested. “And you can’t expect me to let you —”

“Oh, yes, I can,” Bella interrupted this time. “That’s exactly what I expect —”

“This won’t happen again,” Edward cut across evenly, his jaw set. Bella was reminded of Harry and thought that the two of them were perfect for each other. They were just too alike.

“That’s right!” Bella agreed instead, turning her mind back to her conversation, “Because you’re not going to overreact next time.”

“Because there isn’t going to be a next time.”

“Edward,” Bella said, her voice holding all the patience in the world. “This isn’t going to work. You can’t expect to protect me all the time, especially when you have to leave.”

“I’m not exactly risking my life when I leave,” Edward said rather tensely.

“Neither am I.”

“Werewolves constitute a risk.”

“I disagree.”

“I’m not negotiating this, Bella.”

“Neither am I.” Bella crossed her arms stubbornly across her chest and met Edward’s glare head on. After a few minutes she gave up, throwing her hands up in frustration.

“Ugh . . . what is it with you guys? Is it some weird vampires-and-werewolves-are-always-enemies nonsense? Is it just a testosterone-fueled —?”

“This is only about you,” Edward cut across, his eyes blazing. “You’re right when you said I don’t love you that way anymore, but I still care. I just want your safety.” Bella sighed at that and uncrossed her arms, letting them fall limply at her sides.

“Okay,” she said on another sigh. “Okay. I can believe that. But, I want you to know something: when it comes to all this ‘enemies’ non-sense, I’m out. I am a neutral country. I am Switzerland. I refuse to be affected by territorial disputes between mythical creatures. Jacob is family. You are family. I don’t care who’s a werewolf and who’s a vampire. If Harry turns out to be a wizard, he can join the party, too.”

Edward stared at her silently through narrowed eyes.

“Switzerland,” she repeated again from emphasis and Edward sighed in reluctant agreement.

The week that Luna had planned the meeting with Edward came too quickly for Harry’s taste. It didn’t help that Draco was in a piss-y mood, which in turn put him in a piss-y mood. And Luna’s constant reminders of the meeting was not helping his mood any either.

Harry had considered bailing a good number of times, but Luna had seen to that and had taken the liberty of signing them up, with Edward included — so he was literally stuck.

Then, to make matters worse it seemed like it was Bella’s turn to also be in a sour mood. This week
was slowly turning into a worse one than the week before when he had to put up with Draco’s constant taunts and fights.

Harry had taken to clinging to carrying Teddy to every class now – even in Music where everyone like to fawn and coo over the boy – just so that he could have some semblance of peace.

Thursday found Harry to be in an even worse mood when he arrived to find that Edward was missing, not like he cared a whole lot.

Mumbling irritably to himself, he turned toward the Arts building where he was supposed to be meeting up with Luna – he was allowing her to take Teddy for today, but just so he could get away from the headache that were the girls in his music class. He caught sight of Bella leaving the English building which was near the Arts one. She was talking with Mike from Chemistry.

Harry’s mood brightened a little when he saw her and he called out to the teen.

“Hey, Bella!”

Both of the teens turned around and for a second Mike looked like he wanted to bite Harry’s head off for interrupting them. Harry was thinking of just walking on – no need to move in while Mike was trying to make his move – but Harry noticed that Bella’s mournful expression had eased up a little and so he made his way over to them. Before anything could even be said, however, their voices were drowned out by a loud, growling roar.

Everyone within the vicinity turned to look as a black motorcycle pulled to a screeching stop at the sidewalk near Bella. The cyclist – the large, bulky teen that Harry remembered was called Jake or something like that – waved Bella over urgently.

“Run, Bella,” he yelled over the engine’s roar. Bella froze for only a quick second before moving into action. She whipped around to face both Mike and Harry, her eyes bright with excitement.

“I got really sick and went home, okay?” she said quickly, her word running together in her rush to get them out. Mike blinked, gapping at her openmouthed.

“Um . . . okay,” Harry agreed reluctantly when it looked like Mike wasn’t going to say anything.

“Thanks, Harry,” Bella said, relief washing through her. She leaned over a pecked him lightly on the cheek before spinning around. “I owe you one!” Then she was speeding out of the parking lot on the back of the bike and disappearing around the bend.

“What the hell was that,” Mike finally said in a whisper, amazement in his voice. Harry shrugged, his eyes landing on Alice, who was standing near the cafeteria and staring after Bella in frozen fury.

“I have no idea,” Harry murmured. “But I’m about to find out. Don’t forget to tell your teacher that Bella got sick.”

He then turned away from Mike and nearly crashed right into Luna. His mouth opened, about to question her on her sudden appearance but the girl just took Teddy out of his hands and winked before walking off. Harry let her go this time, smiling after her fondly before turning to head off. He caught up to Alice just as she was entering the art classroom.

“Hey, Alice!” he called out to her, waving his arm to get her attention. She paused and turned around to face him, still looking slightly angry.

“Oh, hi Harry,” she greeted uncharacteristically unenthusiastic.
“Um . . . do you know what all that was about with Bella?” Harry asked uncertainly, waving his hand in the air. Alice frowned delicately at the mention of what had just transpired. Then she huffed out a breath in annoyance.

“That was Bella being unnecessarily difficult and annoyingly reckless,” Alice grounded out. Then she adopted a sad look and sighed. “And I only just got the Porsche.” With that said, she turned away and drifted into her class, leaving Harry very much confused.

Bella knew immediately when they were over the treaty line. Jacob straightened up and let out a howl of laughter.

“We made it,” he shouted, lifting one hand off the handle so that he could pump it in the air. “Not bad for a prison break, eh?”

“Good thinking, Jake,” Bella said with a laugh of her own.

“I remembered what you said about the psychic leech not being about to predict what I’m going to do,” Jacob went on to explain, joyously. “I’m glad you didn’t think of this – she wouldn’t have let you go to school.”

“That’s why I didn’t consider it,” Bella agreed. Jake threw back his head and laughed triumphantly.

“What do you want to do today?”

“Anything,” Bella laughed back. Boy did it feel good to be free. They ended up at the beach wandering the sand and talking about meaningless things.

“So, what’s the latest pack scandal?” Bella asked lightly. Jacob skidded to a sudden stop and gapped down at her with shocked eyes. “What? That was a joke,” she said when she caught his expression.

“Oh.” He looked away, slightly embarrassed.

“Is there a scandal?” Bella then asked when nothing more had been said. Jacob chuckled once, dryly.

“I forgot what it’s like, not having everyone know everything all the time. Having a quiet, private place inside my head.” They were both silent for a while as they started back down the beach.

“So, what is it?” Bella finally asked. “That everyone in your head already knows?”

He hesitated for a moment before sighing.

“Quil imprinted. Everyone’s starting to get worried. Maybe it’s more common than the stories say . . .” he trailed off, looking like he wanted to say more. Bella waited patiently but he didn’t continue he just went back to walking. Eventually they came upon a familiar piece of driftwood. Bella sat down and Jacob sat beside side her.

“Oh, why is Quil’s imprinting such a scandal,” she finally asked when she knew he wasn’t going to go on without prompting. “It it because he’s the newest one?”

“That doesn’t have anything to do with it.”

“Then what’s the problem?”
“It’s another one of those legends things,” Jacob said on a sigh. “I wonder when we’re going to stop being surprised that they’re all true,” he then muttered to himself.

“Are you going to tell me?” Bella demanded when he stopped speaking again. “Or do I have to guess?”

“You’d never get it right,” Jacob said with another sigh. “See, Quil hasn’t been hanging out with us, you know, until just recently. So, he hadn’t been around Emily’s place much.”

“Quil imprinted on Emily, too,” Bella said with a gasp.

“No! I told you not to guess. Emily had her two nieces down for a visit . . . and Quil met Claire.” Jacob left it there and Bella poised a thoughtful look.

“Emily doesn’t want her niece with a werewolf? That’s a little hypocritical,” she finally said. But she guessed she could kind of understand where Emily was coming from. Bella could remember all too clearly the scars marring Emily’s face and arms. Sam, her imprinter had been standing too close when he had transformed one day and . . .

Jacob groaned and shook his head, breaking Bella from her thoughts.

“Would you please stop guessing? You’re way off. Emily doesn’t mind that part, it’s just, well, a little early.”

“What do you mean early?”

Jacob scrutinized Bella with narrowed eyes for a minute.

“Try not to be judgmental, okay?” Bella nodded cautiously.

“Claire is two,” Jacob said flatly.

The sky opened up all of a sudden, rain falling down in a sheet over them and Bella blinked furiously as the drops splashed against her face. Jacob waited patiently for her response in silence. He wasn’t wearing a jacket; the rain made dark spots in his black T-shirt and dripped through his shaggy hair. His face was expressionless as he watched Bella’s.

“Quil . . . imprinted . . . with a two-year-old,” Bella asked finally.

“It happens.” Jacob lifted and dropped his shoulders in a casual shrug. He reached down and picked up a rock, sending it flying into the ocean. “Or so the stories say.”

“But she’s a baby,” Bella protested. Jacob looked over at her in dark amusement.

“Quil’s not getting any older,” he reminded her, a bit of acid in his tone. “He’ll just have to be patient for a few decades.”

“I . . . don’t know what to say,” Bella admitted, her face twisting into an unreadable expression. She was trying her hardest not to be critical, but really, the thought was kind of horrifying. Up until then nothing about the werewolves every bothered her, but this one just about freaked her out.

“You’re making judgments,” Jacob accused. “I can see it on your face.”


“It’s not like that,” Jacob defended vehemently. “For Quil it’s nothing romantic. It’s more like . . .
like gravity is no longer holding him. Like she’s the only thing keeping him on Earth. Nothing else matters more than her.” Bella nodded but Jacob’s expression was one she didn’t quite understand. It was like he was no longer talking from Quil’s experience.

“You sound like this has happened to you,” Bella observed.

Jacob froze, looking pointedly out at the sea. He picked up another rock and tossed it.

“Has it?” Bella asked. Jacob didn’t say anything so Bella took that as a yes. “Jake! This is great! When did this happen?”

Jacob sighed, finally giving in.

“Last week. Saturday. Right here. On the beach,” he said in a clipped tone.”

“Oh, well, what’s her name? You did get her name, right?” Jacob looked away again, looking like he’d swallowed a lemon whole. “What? Jake, what did I say?”

“I never said it was a ‘her’,” Jacob whispered lowly. Bella’s mouth dropped open with an audible pop. She had not expected that! Was everyone secretly gay? Then again that probably didn’t matter much with mythical creatures . . .

“Oh,” she breathed, not letting her thoughts through. It took her a moment to recover – although this did explain why Jacob hadn’t been over the moon when she had told him about her break-up – and then she said, “So, what’s his name?” Jacob looked over at her in surprise at her casual response.

“What?” he demanded, having expected something like disgust. Bella shrugged, like his sexual preference didn’t matter to her one bit.

“I said, ‘What’s his name?’” Jacob gapped at her, his mouth opening and closing, giving his the impression of a fish out of water.

“You mean you don’t mind?” Bella shrugged again.

“Why should I care if you like guys or not? It doesn’t matter to me. Besides, Edward’s gay too, so it’d be a little hypocritical of me if I did care.” Jacob’s eyes suddenly looked like they’d pop right out of his head. “Are you going to tell me the guy’s name or not?” Bella asked after a minute of silence, just a little irritated.

“Oh, right,” Jacob said, shaking his head to clear his mind. “Um . . . he said his name was Draco Malfoy,” he told her in a quiet voice, savoring the name on his lips. He wasn’t sure how many times he’d said that name to himself since he’d met the boy.

Now it was Bella’s turn to do the fish-out-of-water impression, and then she burst into a round of laughter that had Jacob shifting nervously.

“What! What’s so funny,” Jacob demanded, shaking Bella’s shoulders lightly. Bella shook her head, still shaking with laughter.

“Sorry, sorry. It’s just . . . *Draco? You imprinted on *Draco Malfoy?”* And then Bella was rolling with laughter again.

“Is that bad,” Jacob asked, feeling uncertain.

“Not *bad* necessarily. It’s just that Draco’s . . . um . . . hard to get along with.”
“Bella, be honest with me,” Jacob pleaded, looking sort of like a desperate puppy.

Bella sighed.

“Well, he’s kind of . . . standoffish, and . . . um . . . stuck-up. But hey,” Bella said when Jacob started looking downcast, “Maybe you can change him for the better.”

Jacob looked up, suddenly hopeful and Bella sighed again.

She had no idea what she was going to do with these guys.

Chapter End Notes

I just gotta say, when I posted this on Fanfiction.net someone said they loved my Switzerland reference. -_- someone obviously has read the books.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Hmm . . . it took me some time to hash this one out and all that. I did a lot of considering for this one and ended up having the rewrite the whole thing because I didn’t like the way it played out and then this happened. All I have to say is that I was just as surprised with some of the stuff that happened as you will be!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was only the early afternoon but the city of Seattle was thrown into darkness, with long shadows and shady looking alleys. The sky was heavy with clouds and the rain came down like a thick waterfall, drenching anyone who dared to step outside in a matter of seconds. The street was completely empty, and not just because of the rain. Had it been nice and warm outside, people still would not have ventured out, not with the gang threat.

Police were baffled at the rising crime rate, and they were no closer to finding out the cause of the mass of missing or dead people than they were to finding the cure to cancer. It was mindboggling and a little bit irritating at that.

Two figures suddenly appeared at the end an empty street – having walked out from a dark alleyway. They were both dressed in unisex coats, the hoods pulled up protectively over their heads and one of them carried an umbrella. The other held a large box that had holes punched into the top of it and appeared to be moving.

“Why are we here again,” one of the strangers questioned in a distinctively foreign accent. From the deep tone of it one would be safe to guess that he was male, that and the fact that he was tall and bulky.

“I told you already,” the other stranger sneered, irritation clear in his voice. “He’s somewhere near here. I can feel it.”

“Alright, alright, no need to get snippy,” the first man stated and he shifted the box in his hand. “I was just wondering why we couldn’t do this in the morning. You know, when it’s light out and the rain had stopped.”

The second man suddenly stopped walking, causing his companion to walk from out under the cover of the umbrella.

“Do you want to find him or not?”

“I do,” the first man said and there was a grin in his voice. “I’d just rather do it dry.” His companion snorted and began walking again at a more clipped pace. With a light shrug, the first man scampered to catch up, falling into step with his companion once more. Together the pair disappeared off into the darkness.

There was the sound of a low growl.

Something snapped.
A person screamed in agony.

And then the city was silent once more.

The door to the Potter Estate main living room crashed open loudly, banging against the walk hard enough to leave a dent in it. Harry then stormed inside in an angry mess, his magic crackling in the air and making his hair stand up more than usual. The two blondes that had been lounging on the couch looked up curiously when he entered.

“James,” Luna asked, setting aside her Quibbler magazine. Worry spread over her face when she caught Harry’s murderous expression. “What’s wrong?”

Harry didn’t immediately respond, so consumed by his rage that all he could do was pace in front of the fireplace for a while.

“Luna,” he finally said, talking through his teeth. “You’ll have to take Teddy and go by the Cullen’s alone. Tell them we’ll be late if they ask,” he ordered, turning his back on them to stare into the fire burning in the fireplace. “Draco, you and me are going to do some tracking in town.”

Behind him, Luna and Draco shared a confused look.


Harry whirled around, baring his teeth at the blonde in his anger.

“Rogue vampires that’s what,” he snapped, his voice vibrating of the walls loudly. In the corner of the room the portrait copy of Rosalina glared at him and disappeared from her frame to go back to the Records Hall. “Now would you get a move on? We don’t have all day.”

Draco narrowed his eyes, leveling Harry with a steely look so reminiscent of the past when the two had been bitter rivals. Luna looked between the two vaguely, wondering if today was the day that the spells would start to fly.

“Listen Potter,” Draco spat out venomously. “You may be the leader of this merry little band but I’ll have you know that that doesn’t mean I won’t hex you into oblivion if you dare to treat me like I am some house elf to be ordered around.” Draco then took a calming breath and managed to school his expression into a blank mask of indifference. “Now, why don’t you calm down and tell us what happened.”

Harry dropped down heavily on the floor – crossing his legs Indian style so that he looked a little like a school child – and ran his hand over his face, feeling mightily guilty.

“You’re right Draco. Sorry.”

Draco waved the apology away and waited patiently for Harry’s explanation. The glasses-wearing boy took a deep breath and let it out in a huge sigh.

“Alright, I went over to Bella’s house like I said, you know to see if she was up to coming along with us, when I heard her and Cullen talking. I didn’t really stick around to hear the entire thing, but from what I did hear . . . well it turns out that some vampire that Cullen wasn’t familiar with had been in Bella’s room.”
Harry looked meaningfully at the two to convey what he wasn’t saying silently – that the vampire was likely to be dangerous.

“Why would they be there?” Luna asked, the dream-like quality completely gone from her voice in the face of the threat to their newly made friend. Harry lifted and dropped his shoulders in a shrug.

“Bella said something about them probably looking for her,” he told them, but from his tone they could tell that that didn’t clear thing up any.


“Dragon’s right,” Luna agreed. Harry heaved a heavy sigh before reluctantly agreeing also.

Draco then smirked at the teen as he said, “Honestly, Harry, you sure know how to choose them.” Harry glared at the aristocrat before sighing.

“How long will you be,” Luna asked as both boys stood up to prepare.

“No sure,” Harry admitted casually. “Just listen for a howl. We can’t be too long.”

Luna nodded slowly and turned away from them. She was just a little put out that Harry wasn’t allowing her to come along, but someone had to take care of Teddy. Sighing inwardly, she went to go and get the baby.

Luna was just the slightest bit awed – and more than a bit impressed – when she rounded the corner and came across the Cullen household. It had taken her at least ten minute of winding dirt road before she came upon it, and at first she had wondered if she had taken a wrong turn somewhere. Now however, here the house stood in all its magnificent glory.

The house itself would have been something her father called timeless. It wasn’t eccentric like most of the things she loved turned out to be, but it had a certain charm and uniqueness to it that she immediately liked. And it was big enough that someone like Draco would approve of it given that it was a Muggle house.

“Look, Ted, isn’t it absolutely lovely?” Luna asked the baby in the backseat. Teddy clapped his hands and laughed in response. Luna pulled up in front of the porch and slid smoothly out of her seat before whirling around to remove Teddy from where he was strapped into his car seat. Securing him comfortably on her hip, Luna then made her way up the porch and across it to the front door.

She knocked politely on the polished wood and moments later the door opened to reveal a very beautiful woman with wavy caramel hair and a nice heart-shaped face. She smiled warmly at Luna, dimples seemed to wink in her cheeks, and turned slightly to welcome her in.

“Hello, you must be Alice and Edward’s classmate,” she said in a very appealing voice. “I’m their mother, Esme.”

She didn’t offer her hand and Luna pretended not to notice.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m Luna,” Luna instead said, smiling before she turned to look around the room. She glanced over the many faces in the room, and ignored the slight tension hovering in the air, instead opting to take in the décor.
The room was beautiful and very open with the entire back wall made of clear glass. It looked out onto a wide, winding river that gleamed in the weak light and was surrounded by large trees. Everything, from the walls to the furniture to the floor, was decorated to follow a white color scheme. To the west side there was a long winding stair case and a small opening that Luna could barely see might lead to the kitchen. Directly opposite it was another opening that lead to another room – Luna guessed dining room from the edge of a chair and table she could see.

“I must say, you have a very lovely home,” Luna complemented when she was done taking in everything.

“Why, thank you,” Esme replied politely, a smile brightening her face even more. Luna hummed tunelessly, thinking. She was sure that had Esme not been a vampire she would have blushed with pleasure. It was nice to know that the change hadn’t stripped the woman of her humanity – as it did with many.

With a small smile, Luna turned and finally took in the faces she had only seen once before through the eyes of her wolf form. There was who she assumed was the leader of the coven, a man with blonde hair and an easy smile that eluded a calm atmosphere. Luna could tell he was the most compassionate of the group.

And then there was another blonde male, taller and slightly bulkier than Edward with a look on his face somewhere between confusion and anguish.

The last blonde was a very beautiful woman, poised in every way. She gave off a Malfoy-like aura that was slightly diminished by the awed expression she was looking at Teddy with.

Finally, beside her was a bulk of a man, built up like a Beater or a Muggle weightlifter. He had an easy, playful grin on his face that gave way to a prankster like mentality and he appeared to be the most relaxed of the group.

Then there was Alice and Edward. All of them were angled around the couch, where Bella sat, trying – and failing miserably – to look normal and casual.

“Hello, everyone. I’m Luna Lovegood and this,” she introduced, shifting Teddy in her arms so that they could all see him properly, “Is Ted Remus Lupin – known to most as Teddy.”

Teddy waved his chubby hands at him, his blue eyes bright as he said – or rather shouted with childish glee, “‘Lo! ‘Lo!”

“Oh! How cute,” the blonde woman finally gushed, giving up her stoic appearance to beam at the baby. She walked over to peer into Teddy’s round face. “How old is he,” she asked Luna vaguely, her eyes riveted on the baby in the witch’s arms.

“He just turned a year in April,” Luna answered as Teddy pulled her long and wavy hair in front of his face like a curtain and peeked out of it shyly at other blonde woman. She beamed at him then let her golden eyes travel up to look pleadingly at Luna.

“May I?” she asked rather hesitantly, which seemed to go against her nature. Luna tilted her head a little before nodding and handing Teddy over. The boy quickly got comfortable and went about chewing on the girl’s hair. As the blonde turned away, Alice twirled up at Luna’s side.

“Well, come on in,” she instructed, leading her away from the door. As they were walking toward the couch she asked, “Where are the guys?”

“They’ll be a little late. They got held up with something or another,” Luna answered vaguely. Alice
nodded before pushing the girl down onto the couch next to Bella – who still hadn’t gotten her expression completely under control. Luna pretended not to notice.

“Okay, well I believe some introductions are in order,” Alice announced to keep Luna’s attention away from Bella. She jumped up and latched onto the arm of the blonde with the pained expression. “This is my boyfriend Jasper.”

Jasper grimaced at Luna.

“And over there is Rosalie and Emmett,” she said pointing at the blonde cooing at Teddy and then the bulky man. “And finally our father, Carlisle.”

The head vampire smiled and said, “It’s nice to meet you.”

“Likewise,” Luna agreed, smiling at them all, or rather the two that were paying her attention.

“So, Luna,” Bella spoke up in an attempt to start a conversation. Alice’s distraction had given her time to compose herself and now she looked utterly relaxed. “Have any of you guys been down to La Push yet?”

Luna turned her head slowly to look at Bella, and blinked slowly. The action seemed to unnerved Bella just a little, but the girl was tactful enough not to mention it, unlike some people Luna had known in the past.

“I don’t believe so, but Dragon did go out last week and he returned quite wet. This La Push wouldn’t happen to have a beach would it?”

“Um . . . yeah it does,” Bella answered, sounding and looking a little confused. Luna nodded thoughtfully before saying, “Then yes, it is likely that Dragon went there.”

“Oh . . . did he mention . . . um . . . meeting anyone,” Bella continued to probe hesitantly. Luna tilted her head slightly, thinking over the question thoroughly.

“No, I don’t believe so. But he has been acting rather odd as of late.” Luna then turned to look blankly out the window. “It looks like it’ll rain soon. I should probably get the instruments out of the car,” she announced to no one in particular.

“Oh, Emmett could help you with that,” Esme suggested and the man looked over at them at the sound of his name.

“I suppose so, if it isn’t too much trouble,” Luna spoke softly.

“Nah, I can handle it,” Emmett boosted before following Luna to the front door. He stopped short in the doorway however, his eyes widening slightly as he looked over at the bright vehicle parked near the porch. “Is that a Vantage GT2,” he asked, sounding completely astonished.

Luna shrugged casually as she rounded the car and headed for the trunk.

“That’s what Dragon told me it was called. I just wanted it because I liked the look of it.” Luna answered as she popped open the trunk. Emmett gapped for a moment longer before moving to help pull the various instruments out of the car.

“But this isn’t supposed to come out for another five years.” He told her, still looking thoroughly shocked. “How the hell did you get it?”
“I was told it is a prototype. And James said something about connections,” the girl told him vaguely, before looking up at him pointedly. Emmett shook his head and focused on the task at hand. He’d have latter to grill these new guys on the how they had managed to acquire a car that was only at the sketching stage.

And then he was amazed when he saw the instruments crammed into the car’s small trunk. It was impossible but somehow they had managed to fit a complete drum set, two guitars, and two amps inside.

Luna instructed him to set up all the stuff in the open space near Edward’s grand piano.

“Wow, what do you play?” Bella asked curiously, peering into the shiny face of the silver cymbals – she hadn’t known that there were silver symbols.

“The base,” Luna said absently waving her hand at the guitar with the bright splashes of what looked like paint on it. A sudden roaring sound cut through the air and everyone turned to look curiously at the door. Luna was the only one to move and once outside she ran into the yard just as two motorcycles pulled up behind her car, one a silver and the other green. Luna breathed out a sigh of relief.

“James, Dragon,” she called out to the two riders, walking over to them. Harry pulled off his black helmet and shook his head to get rid of his helmet hair.

“Lu,” he said, relief clear in his voice. “You’re okay.”

“Why wouldn’t I be?” Luna asked. “You were the one out tracking some rogue.” Harry shrugged and shot her a sheepish smile to which she rolled her eyes and muttered, “Worrywart.”

“Well, well, let’s get on with it,” Draco cut across them, slipping off his bike and cradling the helmet in one hand. Harry rolled his eyes. “Well, we have some interrogating to do!”

“We’re not here to interrogate anyone, Draco,” Harry told him as he reached over and pulled out a clear box that held a dozen crystallize lilies and his messenger bag from the pouch clipped to the side of his bike. Draco snorted at him.

“Right,” he said, sarcasm clear in his voice. Harry shared an exasperated look with Luna before walking with the girl up to the house. Draco was looked around at it with an insultingly shocked look on his face.

“I’m impressed,” he said once he had crossed the threshold, much to Harry’s embarrassment, especially when he saw that the entire Cullen clan plus Bella was gathered in the living room. Esme and Carlisle moved to meet them at the door.

“Um . . . hi, sorry we were late,” Harry apologized awkwardly. “I . . . um . . . I got you this.” He then pushed the clear box into Esme’s hand.

“Oh my,” Esme gushed as she lifted the box to look at the crystallized flowers. She then lowered the box and gave Harry a bright smile that left his slightly unbalanced. “Thank you very much. You must be Harry.”

“Huh?” Harry blinked.

“Bella and my children talk very fondly of you,” Esme explained kindly. Draco snorted behind him as a dark blush coated Harry’s cheeks.
“I . . . thank you Mrs. Cullen.”

“Please, call me Esme,” Esme told him and she reached over and wound her arm around Carlisle’s waist. “And this is my husband Carlisle.”

Harry nodded his head in greeting to Carlisle’s welcoming smile. Esme then moved slightly to the side so that Harry could see more into the room.

“And those two back there are my sons Jasper and Emmett and that is my daughter Rosalie. You already know my Alice and Edward.”

“Uh yes . . . it’s nice to meet you all.” Harry got a pained smile from Jasper and a careless wave from Emmett. Rosalie seemed completely oblivious of his presence, her back turned to him. “Um . . . this is Draco and you already seem to know that I’m Harry.” Esme smiled at that and her gaze drifted to look at Edward.

“So, what are you guys going to play,” Alice demanded of them, pulling to two men further into the room and over toward the instruments. Edward got up to join them. “Is it something original? That would be so cool. Oh, can I design your outfits? I have the perfect idea in mind! It has this —”

“Alice,” Bella yelled on a laugh when Harry had started to look a little pale. “Give them some breathing room will ya?” Alice’s lower lip jutted out into a pout and she looked pleadingly up into Harry’s face.

“You don’t mind, do you?”

“I . . . ugh,” Harry stammered, looked over at Draco with panicked eyes. The blonde simply shrugged and leaned casually against Edward’s piano, looking bored.

“Maybe some other time Alice,” Edward suddenly spoke up, coming to Harry’s rescue.

The Savior turned to look at the bronze haired vampire thankfully, forgetting for a moment why he had been avoiding the teen for two weeks. Suddenly his eyes were caught inside Edward’s heated gaze. Everyone else seemed to disappear and Harry was strongly reminded of what had happened the first time they had met.

“Da!”

Teddy’s excited cry jolted Harry back to attention and he ripped his gaze away from Edward’s to look wide-eyed at the one-year-old. He was blushing madly and was painfully aware that everyone had been staring at him.

“Da,” Teddy called again from where he was peering at him from over Rosalie’s shoulder. The blonde woman turned to look at Harry, her gaze sweeping over him like he was something she was considering buying.

“Hey there bud,” Harry called, ignoring Rosalie’s gaze as he moved toward his godson. “Where have you been?”

Teddy giggled madly before reaching his arms out to Harry. Harry easily took the baby from Rosalie. Alice made a little awing sound behind Harry that had the teen grinning stupidly and rolling his eyes.

“So, the song, right?”
“Oo! Yes,” Alice exclaimed, clapping her hands together. “Is it an original piece or something known,” she then asked again as Harry reached into his bag and pulled out a few music sheets.

“Original,” Harry commented absently.

“Lemme see.”

And then Alice proceeded to pull the sheets from Harry’s hands, but Harry wasn’t complaining. He was too busy trying to disentangle Teddy’s fingers from his hair. Alice hummed appreciatively and leaned over so that Edward could look at the music from over her shoulder.

“Wow,” she breathed and then looked up at Harry with sparkling eyes. “Did you write this by yourself.”

Harry shrugged casually, an embarrassed blush coming up to coat his cheeks.

“I’ve had a lot of time on my hands,” he tried to explain.

“Play a few cords,” Alice demanded, not even seeming to hear Harry. She shoved the papers into his hands, plucked Teddy up, and then pushed Harry over to his guitar. Harry tried to protest, but the girl was surprisingly forceful. With a small sigh, Harry picked up his instrument and hooked it up to the amp. He played a few notes to make sure that it was tuned properly; then looked determinedly at the far wall, trying to ignore the eyes on him.

“It’s like a curse that binds me
Constantly holding me down,” he belted out in a strong tenor.

“I can never be free from this burden
That seems to always follow me around
I was put up on their pedestal
For they think I am their only savior
I’m here to only be their hero
Therefore I must be on my best behavior
They don’t seem to understand
That I just want to be left alone
I want to lead a normal life
Yet their tabloids keep following me home.”

The rest of his words trailed off to be swallowed up in the silence that followed. Thorough the song, Harry’s voice had remained unwavering and strong, filling the room with its somber sound; now however, he shifted uncomfortably and a blush stole across his pale cheeks.
“So . . . um . . .”

“That was brilliant,” Alice thrilled, applauding loudly. She wasn’t the only one, Teddy followed her quickly and then everyone else was giving him a standing ovation. “I can’t wait to hear the rest of it at the talent show!”

“Uh . . . right . . .” Harry mumbled for nothing better to say. Alice rolled her eyes at his bashful behavior.

“Well, I suppose you guys should get started with the practicing and all that,” she reminded them and Harry nodded and turned to do just that.

They were just stepping into the house when they heard the howling. It was low and somber and sounded incredibly sad. It lasted for a full minute before breaking off abruptly. Harry, Luna, and Draco shared a look before rushing over the threshold of the house.

“Misty,” Harry called and the house elf popped up beside him. She bowed lowly and addressed the floor.

“What can Misty be doing for Master Harry, sir?”

“I need you to look after Teddy for a bit,” Harry told the creature, setting the boy down beside her. Misty looked at him for a minute with large blue eyes before looking at Teddy.

“Of course, Master Harry, sir. Misty be doing just that.” And with that said, the house elf disappeared with a loud crack. Once she was gone Harry turned to look at Draco and Luna, his eyes showing his concern.

“That sounded like family,” Draco commented lowly, voicing what was one all of their minds. Harry nodded his agreement with the blonde’s assessment and started making his way out of the house once more.

“Okay, here’s what we’ll do. Luna, you stay here and hold down the fort while we go and check it out. Get a couple of potions ready too since we don’t know what we’re going to find,” he instructed and he pulled off his jacket and then shucked off his shoes. Draco was already heading into the woods at a brisk pace. Luna saw him change just as he crossed the tree line and he paced there waiting from Harry.

“No,” Luna protested, turning away from Draco’s sleek form winding in the trees. “I’m not a child, James. I’m coming with you.” She leveled Harry with a look, daring him to object. For the first time her eyes hardened, making them look like chips of ice. Harry hesitated for a fraction of a second before giving in.

“Okay, fine, but keep on guard.”

Luna resisted the urge to roll her eyes – like she wouldn’t be on guard – and nodded before the two began to make their way after Draco. The entered the woods a humans and changed form as easily as they breathed.

The three raced through the woods, sniffing the air for a foreign scent or even a scent that was slightly familiar but unknown. Although they didn’t know who was calling them, their fears mounted with the silence that seemed to press down on them when the howl did not come again.
It was a few miles out when they came upon a large wolf. He was pacing back and forth in a small clearing, his tail flickering anxiously. When he heard them coming he turned to look at them with shimmering brown eyes.

The wolf huffed and moved his head in a motion that was easily recognized as beckoning. Luna and Draco hesitated, waiting for Harry’s say so before they approached. Harry however, was already moving for he had smelled something that he knew all too well.

Blood.

Moving around the brown furred wolf, the three came upon a scene that thoroughly shocked them. Harry and Luna shifted back immediately and kneeled down at the side of their old friend.

Neville Longbottom lay curled up on the damp grass, his eyes and teeth clenched in what one could only assume was pain. Not only that, but he was also covered in blood. It was all over his chest and down his left side, darkest near his ribs. Some of the blood was even on the grass. Harry had to guess that he had been laying there for a while because some of the blood had turned brown and dried.

“Neville? Neville,” Harry called, reaching over to clasp the man on the shoulder. Neville’s entire body shook but he made no move that he heard them.

“This isn’t good,” Luna murmured, worry transforming her face into something peculiar with her naturally raised eyebrows. “He’s injured but it looks easy enough to treat with the right potion and all, but they need to be treated quickly. He’s lost too much blood as is and he can’t afford to lose anymore.” As she spoke Harry could already see more of the crimson liquid staining the grass.

“Alright then, Luna, help me lift him up,” Harry snapped out quickly, pulling out his wand and casting the levitation charm on his friend. Luna did the same to help strengthen the charm and together the two moved back to where Potter Estate laid – the brown wolf trailing after them with Draco behind him.

“Where are the potions,” Luna asked without preamble as they crossed the threshold of the front door. Harry shrugged, levitated Neville over to one of the couches in the living room, and then called for Shelly who appeared instantly. Harry snapped out some orders on which potion she should bring then turned to perform a diagnostic scan over Neville.

“Two broken ribs and his leg is broken in two places,” Harry reported in a monotone. Luna grimaced as Shelly returned and handing Harry four bottles of potions. One held something shiny and silver, another Harry was familiar with that was a Dreamless Sleep potion, another was a Blood Replenishing potion, and the last was dark and murky looking.

“You wouldn’t happen to know how to repair broken bones, would you,” Luna asked when Harry hesitated for a bit, looking unsure. Harry shook his head as he tipped the first potion down Neville’s throat.

“Only in theory,” he muttered, wincing when the phrase reminded him strongly of an old friend. “But now is about as good as any time to take a whack at it.”

The brown wolf whined lowly in protest and he glared over at Harry, no doubt disagreeing with Harry’s assessment. Behind them, Draco – who had yet to change back – let out a dry bark that sounded suspiciously like laughter. Luna turned to give the blonde wolf a stern look as Harry poised his wand once more over Neville’s shaking form. He muttered something in Latin and there was a
loud popping sound as the broken bones repaired themselves. All four of them – the unknown wolf also – winced reflectively but Neville made no move that he felt that at all.

Harry shared a concerned expression with Luna before turning to face the unknown wolf. Harry stood up slowly, clutching his wand tightly in his hand.

“Alright, who the bloody hell are you and what happened to Neville?”

The wolf looked uncertain for a split second before his form shifted into that of a tall dark-skinned male Harry knew only of in passing. Draco shifted after him, his gaze showing his absolute shock.

“Blaise Zabini,” Harry stated calmly, his gaze hardening at the ex-Slytherin whose loyalties he had never been sure of. “And just what exactly are you doing here and with Neville?”

Blaise rolled his eyes and his mouth twisted into a mocking smirk.

“Thought it’d be quite obvious, Potter. Don’t you have any brains in that big head of yours,” he sneered. Harry twisted his wand threateningly between his fingers and Blaise raised his hands as if he were surrendering. “Don’t get your knickers in a bunch, I’m not here to antagonize you, as fun as that may be.”

“Then I’ll ask again, why are you here?”

“Well, I turned eighteen sometime last year and came into my inheritance,” Blaise explained in a drawling voice, his accent thickening the longer she talked. “And I happen to be a part of a pack.”

There was a bout of silence before Blaise said, “Your pack.” Harry narrowed his eyes suspiciously.

“Prove it.”

Once again Blaise rolled his eyes before he lifted up his left sleeve and turned over his hand to display the rune for fire, located right in the middle of the inside of his wrist.

“Alright then,” Harry said, stowing his wand. “But, you even think about double-crossing me and you’ll end up like my good friend Tom.” Although the threat was very much real, that didn’t stop Blaise’s smirk from turning into a full blown grin, and the curly haired teen nodded.

“Yes sir,” he said sarcastically, rolling his eyes again. Harry narrowed his eyes even more but there were more pressing matters to deal with beside an annoying Slytherin.

“Alright, so, what happened to Neville?”

Now real worry crossed Blaise’s face and he bite down on his lip as he turned his gaze to the brunette curled up in a fetal position on the couch.

“We ran into a bit of trouble finding you,” Blaise started, speaking slowly in his aristocratic accent. His eyes narrowed and flashed dangerously as he thought his words over.

“What kind of trouble,” Draco questioned, sounding innocently curious. Blaise didn’t spare him a single glance as he answered.

“Vampires.”

Harry stiffened. Luna gasped dramatically. Draco made a kind of choking sound.

“Vampires,” Harry echoed after a moment of strained silence.
“Yeah. About two of them.”

“Where?”

“I don’t know,” Blaise replied with a shrug. “Some city not too far from here. I was following your pull when we came across them. I took care of one of them but the other got to Neville before I could stop him. Stuck his arm right through Neville’s chest and then took a chunk out of him.”

Blaise shook his head ruefully, a bitter smile coming to light his face.

“I had real fun taking the bastard out. But there wasn’t much I could do for Neville. I managed to get him out of there before others could show up, but I could only get as far as that clearing before I had to stop.”

“So . . . what. . . He’s changing?” Harry asked uncertainly. Blaise nodded and Harry casted a glance down at Neville’s face, it had lost most of its roundness now. “Why isn’t he screaming? I thought they all screamed.”

“He was at first,” Blaise told him softly. “But after a while, he just stopped. If his heart wasn’t still beating I’d have thought he was dead.”

Harry winced at the thought of Neville being dead, but he didn’t remove his eyes from his friends face. One of the only ones that remained true up until now – and he was turning into a vampire.

It was official. Life was a bitch.

With a shake of his head, Harry cleared his thoughts and turned to look at the three surrounding him.

“I’m going to take him upstairs,” he said quietly before reaching down and placing his hand on Neville’s shoulder. With a loud crack, he Disapparated, leaving the two Slytherins and one Ravenclaw all alone.

“Yeah, about two of them.”

“Where?”

“I don’t know,” Blaise replied with a shrug. “Some city not too far from here. I was following your pull when we came across them. I took care of one of them but the other got to Neville before I could stop him. Stuck his arm right through Neville’s chest and then took a chunk out of him.”

Blaise shook his head ruefully, a bitter smile coming to light his face.

“I had real fun taking the bastard out. But there wasn’t much I could do for Neville. I managed to get him out of there before others could show up, but I could only get as far as that clearing before I had to stop.”

“So . . . what. . . He’s changing?” Harry asked uncertainly. Blaise nodded and Harry casted a glance down at Neville’s face, it had lost most of its roundness now. “Why isn’t he screaming? I thought they all screamed.”

“He was at first,” Blaise told him softly. “But after a while, he just stopped. If his heart wasn’t still beating I’d have thought he was dead.”

Harry winced at the thought of Neville being dead, but he didn’t remove his eyes from his friends face. One of the only ones that remained true up until now – and he was turning into a vampire.

It was official. Life was a bitch.

With a shake of his head, Harry cleared his thoughts and turned to look at the three surrounding him.

“I’m going to take him upstairs,” he said quietly before reaching down and placing his hand on Neville’s shoulder. With a loud crack, he Disapparated, leaving the two Slytherins and one Ravenclaw all alone.

“Well, now that Potter’s gone,” Blaise spoke if only to break the uncomfortable silence that had fall over the trio. He reached into the inside pocket of his cloak and pulled out a rolled up newspaper, which he spread out on the coffee table.

He then sat down exactly where Neville had just been laying, ignoring the blood there, and said, “I think you guys should see this.”

The two blondes glanced down at the paper where the headline slid between:

**From Boy-Who-Lived to Next Dark Lord**

To:

**Old Savior Gathering Secret Forces**

Beneath the headline was a picture of Harry, glaring up at them as he rushed down a cobble stone pathway. He looked deranged, with his glasses askew and his clothes mussed. Draco quickly
snatched the paper up, his eyes trailing down the article and Luna leaned over his shoulder to read with him.

“The Ministry of Magic preps unrelentlessly to this day in fear that another Wizarding War hangs over the horizon. Could it be that the Boy-Who-Lived and the Savior of our world is actually just another Dark Wizard? Is he actually planning a secret uprising against the Ministry as we speak? I had the liberty of interviewing a few people and a Ministry worker had this to say about the claims:

“Well, it’s no secret that Potter hates the Ministry. Everyone knows he had a problem with both Fudge and Scrimgeour. And he’s already broken in here twice and done as he pleases, who’s to stop him now if he tried.”

And many others agree with dear old Mafalda Hopkirks. For the seven years that Harry Potter was in our world, he’s had constant trouble with the law. I myself have gotten the opportunity to speak with Potter and I must admit that he did come off as a bit deranged.

“Well o’ course he had problems wit the law!” Good friend of Harry Potter, Rebeus Hagrid, argued. “They’re always out to make ‘im a fool and he saved the lot o’ us!”

But former best friend and member of the celeb Golden Trio, Hermione Weasley nee Granger claimed, “I always knew he was a bad seed the moment I met him. Who else goes around looking for trouble?”

And when Mrs. Weasley nee Granger was further questioned on her involvement with Harry Potter, she had this to say. “Well of course I went along with him. Back then he was the only one who could save us. But I knew something dark was inside of him, especially after the whole Chamber of Secrets ordeal. Lockheart still doesn’t have his memory back. And he was the one who made up the plans to break into Gringotts and the Ministry. Oh, and don’t forget, he’s already used two of the Unforgivables. What’s to say he won’t use the last?”

Mrs. Weasley’s husband, Ronald Weasley, the other member of the Golden Trio, had this to add. “I reconded the man was always dark. He’d already cheated death twice. If that’s not dark magic then I don’t know what is. And he always said he was a bit like Voldemort, it’s only a matter of time before he starts trying to rule over us. ‘Course he’s also got all the instruments to be Master of Death.”

We questioned Mr. Weasley further on this and he had this to say.

“Well anyone who’s heard the Tale of the Three Brothers would know what they are. Now I didn’t believe it at first either until I saw it with my own eyes. Potter already had the rare invisibility cloak and Dumbledore simply gave him the stone. ‘Course the wand was harder to get, but he won that when he beat Voldemort. With that kind of power, who’s to say he won’t use it against use?”

And our readers quite agree with Mr. Weasley. Harry Potter is obviously a danger to the Wizarding World, and now that he’s gone underground everyone’s at their wits end on what to do. It’s a wonder the Ministry is all in a panic.”

When both were done, Draco tossed the paper aside, watching in disgust as is slid across the glossy surface of the coffee table.
“What a bunch of bollocks,” he muttered darkly and beside him Luna nodded in agreement.

“I don’t see why anyone bothers to read that woman’s work. Rita Skeeter is nothing but a pathological liar,” she muttered venomously – quite unlike herself. “Everyone knows Daddy’s paper was so much better.”

“It’s simply Fudge all over again,” Blaise explained, resisting the urge to point out that Xenophilius Lovegood’s paper was never actually ‘good.’ It was best not to speak of the dead around his own daughter who could no doubt hex him with some very curious spells. “If it’s not one thing, it’s got to be another. And it doesn’t help that he just up and disappeared.” He was carefully not to mention the fact that Rita had gotten most of her information for two-thirds of the Golden Trio – he wasn’t sure what had happened with that relationship and didn’t want to bring up bad feelings.

“No, it’s none of that. It just goes to show you that I can’t trust anyone anymore, can I?”

Harry’s voice startled the three. They hadn’t even heard him approach but suddenly he was standing there, just behind them.

“I wouldn’t worry about it. It’s just Rita Skeeter telling her lies again,” Luna told him in an off-handed manner. Harry chuckled darkly and shook his head, his hair coming to flop down over his glasses.

“More like the truth hidden under a small lie,” he muttered.

“What?” Draco asked, clearly confused.

“All of that,” Harry said, waving at the newspaper situated on the coffee table, the picture of Harry repeating itself over and over again, “is true. Well except for the part about me being the next Dark Lord, that one’s an outrageous lie.”

“So you really used the Unforgivables,” Luna asked, her tone surprised.

“You actually wiped Lockheart’s memory,” Draco questioned, awed.

“You’re really the Master of Death,” Blaise demanded, slightly envious.

Harry rolled his eyes at the three but didn’t say anything. One of these days he’d tell them he’s story, but this was neither the day nor the time.

“I’m going to go make some lunch, don’t forget we have that meeting with the Cullens later on. Draco, do something useful and inform Zabini about it.”

Then he turned and walked away, effectively ending the conversation.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, sooooo that’s done! You know, at first I wasn’t going to include Neville, but someone mentioned him so . . . well you know how stories go! They just have a habit of running away from the creator, and that’s definitely what happened here! Any who . . . why don’t you Review! LOL another one of those clever rhymes!
Harry left Blaise at the house to watch over Neville and make sure nothing went wrong with his transformation – that and he didn’t want to have to explain to the Cullens who their newest house guest was. Together with Luna, Draco, and Teddy – who Rosalie practically begged him to bring back – he left the house to go to the Cullens for dinner.

“Does no one else see the weirdness of this situation,” Draco commented lightly as he pulled his car out of the driveway. Harry, who had been wondering why he decided to let Draco of all people drive, turned to look quizzically at the blonde male.

“I mean, here were are, two wizards, a witch, and a baby half-breed heading to a house full of vampires for dinner.” Draco arched a brow and looked over at Harry, his lips twitching in amusement.

“Well, I guess I can see where that might be weird,” Harry agreed amiably.

“Not to mention that the baby is the son of the vampires’ greatest enemies and one of the wizards is mated to one of the vampires,” Luna piped up from the back seat. Harry turned around a little to glare at her, to which she returned with a cheerful grin.

“Oh, okay,” Harry conceded with a roll of his eyes. “Jeeze you two are annoying.”

“That’s my goal in life,” Draco drawled, “To drive the Great Savior completely mad.”

Harry rolled his eyes in a ‘whatever’ move and settled down in his seat as Draco swerved and spun dangerously down the deserted road.

They arrived at the Cullens house in one piece, for which Harry was very thankful for. Esme met them at the door with a cheerful smile.

“Nice to see you again.”

Harry’s returning smile was just as easy and he greeted her politely like he had been taught to do when he was only knee high. The Cullens were spread out all over the house, only Alice and Edward were in the main room when they walked in. Alice skipped over to them, chirped a happy ‘hello’ then grabbed Teddy and disappeared up the stairs. Harry stared after her in openmouthed wonder then turned to look imploringly at his companions. Draco just shrugged and Luna giggled.

“Oh, don’t worry about Alice, she’s just excited that there’s a baby in the house.” Carlisle voice floated down from the stairs Alice had just disappeared up. He smiled at them warmly. “Welcome back. I’m glad that you could make it. We don’t normally have many opportunities to entertain guest.”

“It’s no problem Si–Carlisle,” Harry told him, remember at just the last moment that he was not to call the Cullen sire ‘Sir’. Beside him Draco mumbled something that Harry couldn’t make out but knew was sure to be rude. Harry glared at him.

“Well, come on in. Dinner should be ready in just a few minutes.”
“Harry.”

Harry looked up from where he had been playing with Teddy and trying to coax the boy into not eating his teddy bear while also ignoring Draco’s imploring looks that was screaming at him to get a move on with their whole reason for them coming back to the house – and Harry had to admit that he was procrastinating on the enviable discussion.

Edward was standing a little bit behind him, keeping his distance enough for Harry to feel comfortable. Harry arched a brow questioningly at him.

“What can I talk to you in private for a moment?”

Harry wasn’t quite sure, but he could have sworn that everyone had stopped what they were doing and were listening to the pair. But that couldn’t be right because Emmett was still trash talking with Jasper as they played their video game and Alice was in the corner murmuring to Rosalie about something or another over the computer.

“Uh . . . sure . . . I guess.”

Edward visibly relaxed at Harry’s answer and a crooked grin stretched his lips. Harry tried really hard not to let this effect him, but it was . . . ugh! Harry sighed and got slowly to his feet, trying to ignore Draco’s pointed look.

Edward led him into a beautiful study with a tall wide window to the far right – facing west and a high ceiling. Harry could tell that the walls were a rich mahogany from what little of it he could see. Most of the space was taken up by towering book shelves filled to the bursting with all kinds of toms – more than Harry had ever expected to see outside of a library. A large mahogany desk sat to the back of the room, a leather chair placed carefully behind it. Harry thought the room would have suited a college professor and he could easily see Carlisle in that kind of environment.

Harry walked farther into the room, trying not to let panic settle in when Edward closed the door firmly behind them. He leaned against the desk and folded his arms across his chest in an attempt to look nonchalant as he turned to face the vampire teen. Discretely he cast a silencing charm over the room so that the other vampires in the house wouldn’t ‘accidently’ ease drop.

Harry noticed that the whole wall surround the door was full of carefully painted portraits from varying time periods. In one of the larger ones, Harry noticed that Carlisle was featured.

“So . . . what do you want to talk about,” Harry asked, turning his attention onto Edward but not really looking at him. Edward shifted uncomfortably, his eyes moving around the room and his jaw moving only slightly as if he were trying to work something out.

“About that day . . .” he started and immediately Harry’s back was up. His stance didn’t change any, in fact, he looked even more relaxed, but his eyes did flash warningly.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” Harry stated, his voice hard. “It was a mistake and it won’t happen again.” Harry finally moved his eyes to stare over at Edward for a moment before pushing himself off of the desk. “Now, if that was all . . .”

Edward grabbed at Harry’s arm before he could make it to the door. Harry’s first reaction was to immediately pull away, but before he reacted on it he made the mistake of looking up into Edward’s face.

Everything seemed to drop away; nothing else seemed to so much as even move. All Harry could see was Edward’s eyes, that captivating, blazing gold. Harry’s head spun and his heart beat a
painfully tattoo against his chest. He barely noticed that Edward was pulling him closer until he could feel the vampire’s hard chest pressed against his.

“Wait,” Harry gasped out, his voice just a little lower than normal. “I... I can’t do this.”

Edward lifted his hand, moving it down to Harry’s wrist as he trailed a cold finger down Harry’s flushed cheek.

“Why not,” he asked softly, sounding for all the world just merely curious.

“I... I...” Harry couldn’t think straight. He shook his head to clear his mind and then took a step back, placing both of his hands flat against Edward’s chest and pushing at it to put more space between them.

“I don’t know you,” he declared firmly when he could get his thoughts together. Edward let go of Harry’s wrist, freeing Harry – who immediately put more space between them. He walked over to Carlisle’s desk once more and leaned against it – placing his palms face down and bowing his head as he tried to pull himself back together.

“Well you haven’t exactly tried to get to know me,” Edward suddenly spoke defensively. Harry didn’t even bother to look at him, that would just wash all the thoughts from his mind again and he definitely needed to think if he were to talk with Edward.

His magic was crackling in the air, sizzling with an intensity that would normally be felt after an electrical storm. Harry could feel it buzzing around him. It was like Edward’s touch had released it all. Harry took small breaths to calm both his heart and his magic. It wasn’t working. Harry was consciously aware of Edward’s presence and he could feel the vampire moving closer to him again.

Harry whirled around, and just as he had suspect, Edward was right there – just a whole lot closer than he had originally thought. They were practically nose to nose. Harry drew in a sharp breath and tried to recoil away from the proximity, but the desk marred his movement.

“Harry, won’t you give me a chance,” Edward asked softly, his voice like muted velvet. Harry closed his eyes and bit down on his bottom lip. He could feel his walls crumbling, breaking off in large chunks and disintegrating into dust to be blown away by the wind. Edward was so close. The vampire’s winter breath blew across Harry face, his scent overwhelmed the teen – honey and lilac and some other smell that Harry couldn’t quite identify but was along the same wavelength as the sun.

And then it happened.

Harry wasn’t sure who moved first, maybe he pulled Edward down or Edward pulled him up or maybe they moved at the same time – but suddenly they were kissing. Edwards cold and hard lips melding against Harry soft and warm ones. It was like joining an inferno and a blizzard in one cosmic explosion of color and sound and overwhelming sensations.

Harry groaned and wrapped his arms more firmly around Edward’s neck, pulling himself all the more closer to the immortal teen. His head spun dizzily like he had just taken a shot of strong Firewhiskey and warmth spread everywhere throughout his body. He had never felt so alive. His magic was sparking and crackling in the air like fireworks but he really didn’t notice.

But then the need for air became necessary and the two had to pull apart.

Harry gasped and panted like he had just done a marathon – both running and swimming. He was sitting down on Carlisle’s desk, although he wasn’t sure how he got there, and Edward was
breathing deeply into his neck.

“Do you snog all the people you bring to your father’s study?” Harry asked breathlessly after a long moment of the two just standing – or in Harry’s case sitting – there. Edward chuckled deeply into Harry’s neck.

“No, just you.”

Harry let out a little sigh and allowed himself to bask in the moment. Now that he had finally given in, he had to admit that he had been overreacting. He couldn’t really remember what he had been so afraid of. Being here with Edward was so easy, like breathing, or phasing, or flying, or even doing magic.

“Harry, are we every going to talk about this,” Edward asked suddenly. Harry bit down on his lip, hesitating. He really didn’t want to talk about it, because if he did then he’d start thinking again and then he’d remember what he had been afraid of.

“There’s nothing to talk about,” Harry told Edward quietly. The vampire pulled away slightly to look searchingly into Harry’s face. Harry held his gaze, staring into the pools of liquid gold. They complemented Edward so well, but Harry couldn’t help but wonder what the vampire’s eyes had looked like before he was changed.

“Did you say something?” Harry blinked, broken from his thoughts by Edward’s question. Edward was still gazing down at him, but now with a confused frown on his face.

“No,” Harry replied slowly, wondering where the question had come from. Had he been talking out loud again? He’s been known to do that sometimes.

And then it hit him. His shields were down!

Harry quickly pulled up his Occulmency shields and watched as Edward’s face grew slightly alarmed and even more confused.

_Bullocks!_ Harry mentally swore and he slipped away from Edward, racing over to the door before the vampire could even realize he was moving. Edward followed him downstairs in a confused daze, looking deep in thought.

All heads turned when the two entered the living room – curiosity burning on all of their faces. Harry flushed a dark red and sought out Teddy for a means of distraction. The young toddler spotted him first.

“Da,” he shouted, making Harry’s head turn. When Harry saw the boy all suspicions about Edward being a mind reader fled from his head.

Teddy was standing wobbly on his two legs, a look of deep concentration on his face. The baby took a single careful step forward, and then another followed by another. By the fifth step he wasn’t as wobbly and he looked up at Harry with a wide smile.

“Teddy!” Harry shouted in clear joy. “You’re walking!”

Teddy’s smile grew even larger at his godfather’s praise. Harry grinned just as brightly and then moved to scoop the boy up into his arms. He made a move of throwing Teddy up and cheering loudly, Teddy giggling with delight.

And then Teddy did something that had Harry groaning – and wanting to bang his head against
something really hard – and the Cullens all gapping in shock.

Right before everyone’s eyes Teddy decided that he no longer wanted to have black hair and he changed it to a bright – and highly unnatural – turquoise.

“Teddy, no,” Harry moaned pitifully as the baby looked up at him for approval. Teddy blinked and his lips poked out and trembled a little when he realized his godfather was not proud of his little display as he had been before.

“Wait, wait, it’s okay Teddy,” Harry rushed to reassure the baby, remembering suddenly that the boy got more temperamental as the full moon approached and it was only a few days away. “It’s okay. You did great. See, Harry’s very proud of you. Da is very proud.” Teddy sniffled a little before a watery smile spread on his pouty lips and he pressed his face into Harry’s shirt.

“Well now that that’s happened,” Draco said, walking over to Harry and giving him a stern look. “I suppose you can’t keep putting this off now, hmm?”

Draco nodded his head over to where the Cullens and Bella were spread about look at them with shocked expressions. Harry glanced briefly at them before turning to glaring at Draco.

“Don’t tell me you encouraged Teddy to do that so I could get a move on?”

Draco shrugged, his lips twitching as he tried hard not to laugh at the half-mad, half-scared look on Harry’s face. Harry shook his head and muttered something that sounded a lot like “Manipulative Slytherin bastard.”

“Oo, this should be interesting,” Luna spoke up in her mystical. Harry didn’t look like he agreed but he muttered something that sounded like “Suck it up, Potter” before walking calmly over to the couch and seating himself there.

“Well, I suppose I owe you lot an explanation,” was what he said to the gapping group.

“I’ll say.” Emmett muttered lowly but he was mostly ignored.

Harry let out a little sigh and put his hand into his pocket to pull out a slim phone. He flipped it open, dialed a number, and then put the phone to his ear. It was a moment before anyone answered.

“Potter? It that you? Hello? Confounded! How does this blasted thing—?” the vampires could hear a deep cultured voice on the other line ask in a harried voice. Harry’s brow creased in a sigh of worry.

“Blaise. I can hear you. What’s wrong?”

“Thank Merlin! You need to get over here. The change is happening a whole lot faster than normal. I think it’s his magic.”

“Wait, he’s going to wake up soon?” At these words Luna and Draco straightened and gave Harry their immediate attention.

“Yeah. What do I do?” Harry heaved a heavy sigh and his green eyes moved to revolve around the room.

“You’ll have to bring him here,” he said after a moment’s thought.

“What? Are you bloody insane? I can’t —”

“Just do it. And don’t worry about the Statue of Secrecy. I don’t give a— I don’t care what the
Ministry thinks. Besides, magical creatures don’t fall into the clause so it’ll be fine.”

“And how, may I ask, are you going to explain this to your blood buddies?”

Harry scowled a little at the other male’s words and the Cullens all tensed.

“Just get over here. You remember the address?”

“Yeah, I’ll be there in three seconds.”

“You do that.” And then Harry hung up the phone.

“What was that? What’s going on,” Draco demanded at once.

“There’s been a little complication with Neville’s change. We’ll see in a few—” Before the words could fully leave Harry’s mouth there was a loud cracking sound and suddenly there were two extra people in the room.

Blaise had arrived with Neville curled up like a child in his arms. All of the Cullen’s jumped at this new appearance and Bella looked like she might faint from shock.

“What the —” Emmett shouted, but once more he was mostly ignored. Harry had approached Neville and was now waving his wand over the brunette’s form.

“I’ll put up a few shields and wards to keep him in control, but right now I have to focus on them,” Harry was explaining to Blaise. “Take a seat.” Blaise nodded and allowed Harry to levitate Neville over to an empty couch and lay him there.

“Can someone please explain what the hell is going on here,” Alice suddenly shouted when it appeared like Harry and the other’s had forgotten about them. Harry looked up at her mildly surprised.

“Oh, right. Well you all might as well take a seat.” Harry told them after a few minutes of strained silence. “I was planning on bringing this up soon anyways, considering the situation.”

Still looking mightily confused, the Cullens and Bella also settled down in seats around the room, although Edward immediately went to claim the seat beside Harry. Esme drifted out of the room only to come back in with a tray of cookies, which she placed on the table before going to sit with her husband.

“So,” Bella said slowly, splitting the word into two syllables as Harry reached out to take a cookie. Harry handed the treat to his godson – who was now sporting amber eyes to go with his turquoise hair – and looked at Bella quizzically. “What exactly are you guys – vampires, werewolves, some kind of weird shape shifters?”

The three froze, shock flitting across their faces, and then Draco suddenly shot up with a triumphant “Ha!”

“I knew it was Greyback in Seattle,” he exclaimed a smug smirk on his lips.

“Seattle,” Harry corrected automatically.

“Doesn’t matter,” Draco said in a dismissive manner. “The point is that now we know who it is. We can go and —”

“We don’t know anything,” Harry snapped, glaring up at the blonde. Beside him, Luna sighed as the
argument from a week ago was brought up yet again. Draco returned Harry’s heated glare with one of his own.

“Are you daft? The Muggle just said —”

“The Muggle,” Harry cut in with a roll of his eyes, “didn’t say anything. She asked what we were and listed so—”

“So what? It’s painfully obvious that it’s Greyback anyways. Who else —”

“It’s not a Death Eater,” Harry said in a dangerously low voice. Draco took a step back, looking affronted. “Its way too sloppy and I know for a fact that it’s not Greyback.” Draco opened his mouth to retort, but Harry didn’t give him a chance. “Look at the facts. These victims are not young enough.” At this Draco’s mouth snapped closed and his expression turned thoughtful.

“Um . . . excuse me,” Alice called, bringing the two’s attention to the others in the room once more. “Who’s Greyback?”

“A vicious werewolf who abandoned all human beliefs and likes to prey on children, not waiting for the full moon’s influence to attack,” Luna deadpanned in a monotone quite unlike her normal voice. The Cullens adopted a look of disgust, Bella shivered and drew back into the couch, and Harry reflectively pulled Teddy tighter against his chest.

“And you think this . . . Greyback is in Seattle?”

“Draco is the only one who harbors that ridiculous notion,” Harry scoffed and the Malfoy heir glared at him. Blaise took that moment to add his input into the argument.

“Malfoy, you don’t honestly believe that do you,” he questioned and when Draco simply sat back down with a huff, Blaise sneered at him. “Obviously hanging around Potter has affected your mind. Tell me, honestly, what Death Eater in their right mind would come to a backwash country like America?” Draco flinched and looked down, sulking.

“And what is a Death Eater?” Alice spoke up, once again voicing a question on everyone’s mind. The four shared a look, debating on whether they should give out that information. Neville whimpered a little but made no other kind of movement. When they still didn’t answer, Alice poised another question. “What are you guys?”

“Well, that’s rude,” Blaise muttered. “Are you suggesting that we’re not human,” he then questioned smoothly, arching a dark brow. The four could tell that had Alice been human, she would have been blushing from embarrassment.

“No . . . I . . . um . . .” Bella turned to stare at Alice in shock. She had never seen the vampire stutter, she wasn’t even sure vampires could stutter.

“Ignore him. He’s just being a prat,” Harry told Alice, not bothering to spare Blaise a glance and the black teen shrugged, not really caring. The Cullens turned to look at Harry expectantly and the savior sighed. He wasn’t sure how best to give out the information, but he didn’t have to worry about it much when Luna began to talk.

“We are magical beings. I am a witch and the boys are wizards,” Luna reported bluntly as she reached for a chocolate chip cookie off the tray. She bit into it and looked around the room blankly; not paying attention to the globsmacked looks on the Cullens’ and Bella’s faces.

Harry turned to look at the young witch with an amused expression.
“Well, that’s putting it simply,” he mused, and then turned to look at the Cullens. “I suppose we should be fair and let you know that we know you are all vampires, too.” This just proved to shock that Cullens and Bella even further. It was a while before anyone recovered and Bella was the first to speak.

“Well, I guess I should have figured there was something mythical about you guys,” she commented lightly before letting out a breath in a huff. “I don’t know why I expected to ever have normal friends here of all places.”

“Yes, Forks does seem to have a natural habit of attracting the attention of a number of our people,” Luna commented and Harry turned to look at her, a little startled.

“Luna, don’t say it like that. You’ll make me think that we could be traced.”

Luna shrugged and took another bite of her cookie.

“So, you guys don’t have any problems with vampires, do you,” Bella asked and here her eyes flickered over to Edward, who was staring back, no doubt thinking about the conversation they had a week ago. “Because if you do, I just wanna make it clear that I don’t believe in any of the prejudice crap.”

“Neither do I. I don’t care what you are,” Harry told her. “I can’t speak for anyone else though. Our society labels vampire as Dark creatures so . . .” Harry shrugged. “You know.”

“James, none of us cares either,” Luna muttered lowly. Again Harry shrugged but he could tell from the look on Blaise’s face that he cared.

“So, what, you guys use wands and fly on brooms and stuff,” Emmett asked, looking like he really wanted to laugh.

“Oh, yes,” Luna answered nodding her head as if she were agreeing with herself, “Although I don’t prefer brooms much. Thestrals are much better if I must say.”

“If you could see them,” Blaise muttered and Draco rolled his eyes.

“What,” Emmett asked dumbly.

“They’re magical creatures. A bit like large horses except they’re all skeletal and they’re invisible to most people. You’d have to have witnessed a death to see them,” Harry explained and then turned to smile slightly at Luna. “And I have to disagree with you Lu. Brooms are way better. Imagine playing Quidditch on a Thestral.”

“Ugh,” Draco grimaced. “That would be horrid. No one in their right mind would want to play, then.”

“Is this Quidditch another magic thing?” Alice questioned, leaning forward where she sat on the armrest of Jasper’s chair. Harry smiled fondly at her, clearly amused with her curiosity.

“It’s a popular Wizarding sport, sort of like American soccer but in the air. You have to play on brooms and there are three balls, seven players, and three goals.”

“Wow, could you show us how to play?” Emmett asked, practically bouncing with excitement, and he let out a loud cheer when Harry nodded.

“Do you use spells to perform your magic?” Jasper spoke up in a soft voice.
“How else would we perform magic,” Draco sneered.

“Ignore him. It’s in his blood to make people feel inferior,” Harry told them and Draco glared at him.
“As for your question, yes, we do use spells. But there are also other ways to use magic. Like potion making is a type of magic and so is Herbology.”

“Which is the best subject ever,” a voice suddenly chimed in. All of them turned to look over at where Neville was laying. He had been so quiet that they had forgotten that he was there. Now the teen was sitting up rubbing tiredly at the back of his neck. His eyes were still the same warm brown that Harry remembered them being, but now they had red flecks in it – the sign of a just changed Wizarding vampire.

“Oh, Neville, you’re up.” Luna beamed and she looked like she’d like nothing more than to run over and give him a hug, but she refrained from doing so.

“Yeah, I feel like crap though. My throat is killing me.” The soft-spoken brunette said with a wiry grin. At this Blaise pulled out his wand and waved it around a little, conjuring a beautifully crafted wine glass. He then proceeded to fill it with what the Cullens knew to be animal blood.

“Here mate, this should tide you over until you can hunt properly.” Neville smiled thankfully and drained the glass quickly. The red specks disappeared from his eyes at this.

“You’re a vampire,” Jasper was the first of the Cullen’s to speak. Neville looked at him a little surprised.

“Yes, I suppose I am now.”

“Huh?” Bella chimed, looking confused.

“Well a couple of hours ago I wasn’t a vampire – at least I think it was a couple of hours ago.” Neville turned to Blaise for conformation.

“It was this morning that you got bitten.”

“Only one day,” Carlisle asked in surprise.

“18 hours,” Blaise intoned. The Cullens all shared a surprised look among themselves.

“I thought the change took three days,” Bella asked the question that was on all of their minds.

“For normal humans, yeah. Not for us though. It usually takes 24 hours, but it mostly depends on a person’s magical core.”

“Fascinating,” Carlisle muttered, a calculating look appearing on his face.

“I suppose, but it’s all just part of the whole magic thing. When you think about it, we can do just about anything.”

“So, is there also a type of magic that protects your mind?” Edward asked suddenly, and Harry knew that this question had probably been burning on his tongue since Harry had accidently dropped his shields.

“Yes, there is,” Harry told him softly, not looking at him. “It’s called Occulmency and it protects against Legilimency, which is a spell that’s sort of like mind reading.”

As Harry spoke the words, he felt his mind drift back to the time he spent learning the art in his 5th
year. He could clearly hear his Professor’s smooth voice as if the man were standing right next to him.

‘The mind is not a book, to be opened at will and examined at leisure. Thoughts are not etched on the inside of skulls, to be perused by any invader. The mind is a complex and many-layered thing. Potter . . . I’

“James?”

Luna’s voice broke through Harry’s thoughts, bringing him back to the present. Harry blinked before giving the girl a reassuring smile.

“What’s that spell like?” Carlisle, who had been remaining mostly quiet so far, asked, his curiosity finally getting the best of him.

“It merely pulls memories and experiences from your mind, or something like that,” Draco tried to explain, with a nonchalant shrug of his shoulders. “I wouldn’t really know.”

“Can you demonstrate it,” Carlisle continued to ask. Draco arched an eyebrow at the man before turning to look inquiringly at Harry, who shrugged.

“Sure, but it’s not the most pleasant experience,” he warned. “In fact, having your memories extracted against your will is quite painful.” Now the wizards (And witch and just turned vampire) were looking at him inquiringly.

“Someone performed Legilimens on you,” Luna asked, shocked.

“Yeah, Snape,” Harry said in way of explanation. As he took in the three’s shocked expressions he frowned. “You didn’t actually think I was actually taking Remedial Potions, did you,” he asked slowly

“Well, yeah.” Draco answered for the quartet. “You weren’t exactly top notch, you know. Actually you were just a little bit above Longbottom here.” At this Harry rolled his eyes while Neville glared at the blonde.

“Come off it. Everyone knew Snape was just picking on me. And, I was the top of the class in 6th year.”

“I guess,” Draco mumbled, considering it.

“But . . . if you weren’t why did Snape . . . ?” Luna trailed off, leaving the question hanging. There was no missing the bitterness in her voice when she said Snape’s name, and Harry was momentarily shocked. He forgot that no one there knew the secret behind Snape’s actions. He supposed he’d have to tell them . . . someday.

“It was to teach me Occulmency,” Harry said in answer to Luna’s question. Then he shook his head. “Look, we can talk about this later, but right now . . .” He gestured at the Cullens (And Bella), who were watching them in silent curiosity. It was just so easy for them to forget that they were in the presence of others.

“Right, so, who will it be then,” Neville questioned the room at large, looking around at the from behind the shield Harry still hadn’t taken down.

“Bella,” Edward immediately answered and the girl in question jumped up a little at the sound of her name.
“W-what?” she asked, looking confused. Edward turned to look at her with a teasing smile on his lips.

“Well, maybe *they* can actually penetrate your mind,” he said mockingly and Bella blushed and glared at him.

“Fine,” she agreed with an annoyed huff. Harry shook his head fondly at the girl as he pushed Teddy onto the couch and moved to stand up, his wand at ready.

“No, I’ll do it,” Blaise drawled, waving Harry back.

He was staring at Bella intently, an appraising look on his face, like he was seeing something he approved of. Bella shifted under his gaze, a dark blush coating her cheeks at the attention. Harry looked at Blaise for a moment, debating on whether he could trust the teen, before deciding that maybe he could.

“Whatever,” he mumbled and leaned back into the couch, pulling Teddy back into his lap. Blaise stood and moved to stand in front of the brunette, his wand pointed at her. A slow smirk crept onto his face when he noticed the girl was twisting in nervousness.

“Alright love,” he drawled, purposely making his accent thicken. Bella’s blush deepened and she averted her gaze, letting it slide to her knees. “Now, now,” Blaise chided. “That won’t do. You have to keep direct eye contact, pet.” Harry, Draco, and Neville shared an exasperated look. Blaise was making Bella nervous on purpose.

Harry rolled his eyes and turned back to look at Bella. The girl took a deep breath and let it out slowly before locking eyes with Blaise. “Good, good. Ready?” Bella nodded and tried to ignore the annoying grin on the black teen’s face as he waved his wand and said, “*Legilimens!*

Bella shut her eyes at the last moment and Blaise was knocked off his feet and thrown back by some invisible force, causing him to land solidly on his back a few feet away. Blaise blinked, thoroughly dazed as he stared up at the dark ceiling. There was a beat of silence in which everyone looked form the wizard to Bella in shock, before he rolled over and jumped to his feet, not looking the slightest bit ruffled.

“Well, I must say, that is one strong barrier you have there, inside that pretty little head of yours.” He commented, his expression a mix between amused and interested. “Are you sure you’re a Muggle?”

“A-a what,” Bella asked her voice barely above a whisper in her shock.

“A Muggle, you silly girl,” Blaise said in a condescending tone, and then added, “Non-magical.”

“I . . . I . . .” Bella muttered, put out for being called a ‘silly girl’. “I don’t know.”

“Well, that certainly is strange,” Harry mused, thoughtful. “What do you think, Lu?” He asked the girl beside him.

“Natural Occlumence,” Luna speculated.

Draco let out annoyed huff on the other side of Harry.

“Where’s a human dictionary when you need one?”

Harry winced at the blonde’s words. He knew exactly where to find a ‘human dictionary’. Draco, noticing the wince, went over his words in his head before a look of horror crossed his face. “Oh!
Harry I’m sorry. I didn’t realize —”

Harry raised his hand to cut off the Malfoy’s apology.

“It’s fine.”

Even though he said that, everyone could tell that it most certainly wasn’t ‘fine.’ Harry sighed and stood up, setting Teddy down in his cousin’s lap.

“I’ll be back,” he mumbled, and then said, “Air,” as a way of explanation. Without another word, he rushed out of the front door. Everyone listened as he started Draco’s car and no one moved until they heard him speed away.

“Is he alright,” Esme asked worriedly, staring at the door as Edward moved as if to go after the black haired teen. Draco waved the vampire back.

“He’ll be back soon,” Luna told them, and there was such certainty in her voice that they found it hard to argue.

“Um . . . can someone remove this ward,” Neville asked when no one had spoken for a while. “I don’t think I can stay in this room any longer.”

Everyone turned to look at him and noticed for the first time that his eyes were turning completely red.

“Oh, I almost forgot,” Luna muttered as the other two wizards looked over at Bella. The Cullens seemed to catch on to what was going on for they also turned to look at Bella, and after a moment Bella also caught on. Luna moved to set Neville free and the newborn gave the girl a tense smile before disappearing with a loud crack.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Happy New Year to all!!!!

Bella stood up and stretched, sighing quietly when her bones popped pleasantly. She had been sitting way too long in the same spot, and it wasn’t only her body that felt worn. Her mind felt like it was being stretched beyond its limits. Her thoughts buzzed around her head in a jumbo mass as she tried to make sense of the information she had been given only fifteen minutes ago.

Everyone had spread out around the house once Harry had returned and he and Esme had retreated to the kitchen to feed Teddy. Luna and Draco had captured the attention of Edward, Emmett, and Jasper, as they strummed a few notes on their instruments. Blaise was conversing with Neville in low tones over near the glass wall. And Alice and Rosalie were cooing over Teddy as the boy happily changed his hair different colors.

Alice looked up questioningly when Bella moved.

“I’ve got a bonfire to go to. Don’t want to keep the wolves waiting,” she said in answer to Alice’s unspoken question and Alice’s nose wrinkled in disgust. Edward looked up from where he had been tinkering with Luna’s base, and nodded. He disappeared and when he returned seconds later, he had his keys in hand.

At that moment Harry walked into the room. He eyed the two for a moment before he spoke.

“Where are you going,” he asked as Teddy tottered over to his side and clung to his pants.

“Bonfire in La Push,” Bella told him. There was a sudden high-pitched keening kind of sound and everyone’s head snapped over toward Draco, who was staring at Bella, opened-mouthed. After a couple of seconds, he seemed to realize that everyone was staring at him and a light blushed coated his face.

“Sorry, hand slipped,” he muttered, gesturing faintly at Harry’s guitar, which he had been attempting to play. He then coughed delicately and asking, in a voice full of nonchalance, “Is that friend of yours going to be there?”

Harry shared a startled look with his fellow magic users and Bella bit down on her lip in an attempt to keep in her laughter.

“Jacob you mean? Yeah he’s the one who invited me.”

Draco nodded absentmindedly, like he really didn’t care about the answer and began to fiddle with the strings on Harry’s guitar.

Bella took pity on him and asked, “Would you guys like to come?”

“Can we,” Harry asked curiously.
“Yeah, I guess,” Bella said with a shrug. “You should probably tell them about all this magic stuff too. They don’t like being left out of the loop.”

“We’re not allowed to tell Muggles about the Wizarding World. We have laws and that goes against the Statue of Secrecy,” Blaise recited immediately as if on reflex.

“Screw the Statue,” Harry mumbled at the same time as Bella said, “Well they aren’t exactly Muggles.” The five wizards stared at her.

“They’re not,” Draco was the one to ask.

“Well no, they’re werewolves.”

The five simultaneously blinked before Blaise burst out, “Are you bloody crazy!”

“Wait, wait,” Draco called over the Italian’s voice. He waved his hand a Blaise, signaling that he calm down, before addressing Bella and the vampires. “Do you mean to tell us that they’re a pack of werewolves running around in close proximity to a town of Muggles?”

“I’m afraid I don’t see what the problem is,” Carlisle chimed in. “The wolves aren’t attacking anyone or anything like that. We’re the only ones they have any animosity toward.”

Now it was the wizards’ turn to look confused.

“They’re not attacking anyone,” Blaise repeated.

“They’re probably all taking the potion,” Harry suggested.

“Don’t be daft, Potter,” Draco sneered in old-fashion. “That potion is incredibly hard to create. Professor Snape was one of the few that were able to make it, and all the others charge tons of gallons for just one vial. I doubt a bunch of American werewolves have the gallons to buy enough for an entire pack.”

“Well we’re just going to have to tag along to figure this out,” Luna told them, walking over and scooping Teddy up into her arms.

“Alright then, who’s riding with Edward,” Harry asked as they all moved toward the Cullens’ garage. No one answered. “Right, me and Bella it is then,” he muttered and tried hard not to notice how his heart flipped when Edward grinned.

After squeezing Bella’s motorcycle into Edward’s trunk, and Harry making a lot of cracks about Bella even attempting to ride a motorcycle, the eight were finally on their way. Harry was just a little surprised to find that Edward drove just as fast as Draco – only condolence was that Edward drove with more expertise.

About halfway to La Push, Edward rounded the corner and Harry caught sight of Bella’s friend, Jacob or Jake or something like that, leaning against the side of a red Volkswagen that looked like a patchwork quilt. The large teen had a carefully neutral expression that dissolved into a confused smile when the two cars pulled up.

Edward parked the Volvo thirty yards away and Draco pulled up beside him.

“I can’t go farther than this,” Edward explained to Harry’s confused expression. “We have a longstanding treaty going.” Harry nodded – he vaguely remembered Bella saying something about that, although at the time he had thought Bella had been trying to distract him – and he and Bella got
out. Harry helped Bella release her bike from the confines of Edward’s trunk and she rolled it away as she headed over to her friend.

“See you later I suppose,” Harry said to Edward, leaning into the vampire’s window with a small smile.

“You won’t need a ride back,” Edward asked, just a little bit confused.

“Nah, we have other ways to travel.” Edward nodded before rolling up his window and driving away. Harry couldn’t help noticing that he looked just a little bit tense as he did so. Harry frowned a little at the thought but shrugged it off and headed over to where Bella and her friend were standing.

“Harry, I’m sure you remember Jake,” Bella said as way of introduction.

“I thought it was Jacob,” Harry asked confused and a little wary. Jake was huge, Harry couldn’t remember any of the werewolves he’d ever met being this big – then again he’d only met two.

“It is,” Jake answered, “Jacob Black.” Harry’s frown returned and he internally winced at the last name.

“Black? Any English relations?”

“No,” Jacob said slowly before asking, “Do you know someone with the last name Black, cuz your friend asked me the same question when we met.”

“My friend,” Harry asked, blinking. Jacob motion toward Draco’s GT3 40, where Harry could see Draco looking out at them with a bored expression. “Oh, well yeah. Draco’s mother’s maiden name is Black and I knew someone with the last name Black.”

Harry attempted to say all that in a nonchalant tone but some of his hurt must have come through because Jacob rubbed the back of his neck nervously and said, “Oh, I’m sorry.” Harry shrugged the apology off.

“Shouldn’t we be going now?”

“Right,” Jacob mumbled and they all loaded up into the car.

They had to hike through a forest to get to the meeting place, and they did it in a kind of awkward silence. Bella could tell that Jacob wanted to say something but that he wasn’t sure what the wizards all knew and so he didn’t say anything. Bella on the other hand was worrying if the werewolves would treat her like a traitor.

But none of any of it was necessary. First of all, Embry outted them all as soon as they crossed over onto the cliff side where the bonfire was already burning brighter than the cloud-covered sun.

The first words Embry spoke to Bella were, “Hey, vampire girl!” Jacob had shot him a murderous glare and everyone else had frozen when they caught sight of the wizards.

Teddy was the one that broke the tension. He clapped loudly and shouted for all to hear, “Wolf! Wolf!”

Harry beamed brightly and turned to Draco with a teasing smile.
“See Draco, I told you his next word wouldn’t be your name.” Draco scowled and him and huffed in annoyance. Bella couldn’t help it, she giggled and Luna joined her.

“Why are they all staring,” Blaise drawled after a moment and Bella noticed that the wolves were still looking tense.

“I think they’re wondering if they just revealed a big secret,” Neville chimed in helpfully.

“But were already know the Cullens are vampires,” Blaise said casually, which only served to make the wolves even tenser.

“You already know,” Jacob asked and he shot Bella a demanding look. Bella shrugged.

“Well you didn’t think I’d invite them if they didn’t know, did you?” There was another tense bout of silence before Quil and Embry broke it by waving at Draco and calling out to him.

“Hey Draco.”

“Wassup?”

Draco shifted and muttered something that might have been ‘Hi’ but Bella wasn’t completely sure.

“Oh, so this is Draco,” Sam asked and all of the wolves moved to crowd around them. Draco looked a little surprised.

“Jacob’s mentioned you some,” Jared supplied but that just served to make Draco even more surprised. He turned to look at the large teen questioningly to which Jacob just rubbed the back of his head sheepishly and shrugged.

“What are you so startled for, Malfoy,” Harry questioned with a sly grin. “I thought you just loved attention.” The blonde glared heatedly at him and muttered a sharp, “Bugger off Potter,” to which Harry beamed.

It was all smooth sailing from there. All of the pack and their family were introduced: Sam and Emily, Paul, Jared and Kim, Old Quil and Quil his grandson, Leah and Seth with their mother Sue, Jacob’s dad Billy, and Embry.

Harry quickly came to realize that everyone here was familiar with each other, even Bella who received several teasing comments – mostly from Paul – to keep the vampire stench downwind. It was all easy and simply, until someone asked the question Harry knew had been hanging in the air for a while.

“So . . . what’s you guys’ story,” Quil was the one to ask as he stuffed an entire hotdog into his mouth. Harry was forcibly reminded of his once good friend Ron, but he quickly shook the memory away in favor of giving Quil a questioning expression. The teen swallowed before speaking again – to which Harry was grateful.

“I mean, the Cullens don’t just go around telling everyone about their secret.”

“They didn’t have to,” Luna spoke up from across the fire from where she had been previously conversing with Paul and Seth – both of whom seemed to be completely captivated by what she was saying. Harry couldn’t blame them; Luna away spoke in a way that either captivated a person or made them think she was crazy – and sometimes both.

“What do you mean they didn’t have to tell you,” Sam demanded. Now the Wizarding quintet had
all of the La Push people’s attention – Bella was looking at them with smug amusement.

“Just that,” Luna replied vaguely.

“We looked them up, is what she means,” Draco drawled from his place to the right of Jacob on a low ridge of rock – a place he had immediately claimed for himself and had yet to leave. “If you read the signs right, which we were taught to do, you’d know what to find.” Everyone just continued to look confused.

“Don’t tell me you’re all Muggle werewolves?” Blaise broke the sudden silence with a slight groan. He missed the tension appearing in all of the wolves at this admission but when he saw their expression he groaned again.

“Just my luck that I end up finding Potter in some backwater town with Muggle vampires and Muggle werewolves,” the dark Italian sneered, crossing his arms. Harry sent the teen an icy glare.

“I’ll have you know that I didn’t even choose this place, Zabini!”

“Well this certainly does explain why the reading on this place came up dead,” Draco injected if only to keep the two from fighting. “I’m pretty sure if we searched for creatures they’d —”

“Oh, but Dragon, I did do a creatures search,” Luna interrupted him serenely. “I wanted to know if any Snaggerpouffs were around here. They tend to migrate to wet places where there’s plenty of rain and water.”

Blaise opened his mouth, no doubt to make some kind of scathing remark about the creatures Luna’s mind came up with, but Neville cut across him.

“Well then why didn’t they show up,” Neville asked curiously from across the fire where he was seated between Leah and Embry. Instead of answering, Harry settled for looking thoughtful.

“Can someone please explain what the hell you are all talking about,” Jacob’s warm voice suddenly cut across them, sounding slightly irritated. Draco cocked a brow at the teen then sent an inquiring look at Harry.

Harry knew what it was.

It was a silent plea to give out information.

Harry sighed then nodded his head slightly, sinking down even more from where he was leaning against a piece of rock sticking up out of the ground.

“I’m not sure what you all know – but you seem knowledgeable of vampires and are somewhat magical even for a bunch of Muggles – so there’s really no harm in tell you all this. At least, I don’t think there is,” here the blonde shot his Slytherin friend a questioning glance to which the black male shrugged.

“Sod the Ministry,” Harry murmured lowly under his breath. Maybe after the third time everyone will get it into their heads that Harry didn’t give one damn about the Ministry of the Statue of Secrecy.

“Well it doesn’t really matter seeing as out fearless leader has given me the say so already,” Draco continued in his drawling voice.

“Would you just tell them already Draco before I do,” Bella demanded after Draco took a pause for
what Harry would assume was dramatic effect.

“We’re wizards.”

There was a beat of silence as the Quileutes all stared at Draco as if he had grown an extra head. Harry could see the disbelief on their faces, but some, like Jacob and Leah had grudging acceptance.

And really, he couldn’t help it – honestly he tried to control it, he really did.

He laughed.

Draco glared at him and huffed in an offended manner.

“Are you serious,” Seth was the one to ask, looking wide-eyed.

“No, I’m Draco. Sirius was that fool’s godfather,” Draco joked and all the wizards laughed as Seth just looked more confused.

“What?”

“Never mind. Inside joke,” Harry explained to the teen, still clutching at his stomach. “The point is we aren’t taking the mickey.”

“He means they’re telling the truth,” Bella elaborated when the La Push gang continued to look confused with all the British sayings.

“You believe them,” Embry asked skeptically. Bella arched a brow at the question.

“And you don’t,” she challenged them. “Really I’m not even surprised about this anymore. If werewolves and vampires are real then why can’t wizards be real?”

Another silence followed Bella’s rhetorical question.

“So . . . you’re wizards,” Jared asked slowly looking like he was having a hard time wrapping his mind around it. “Like, with wands and flying brooms and potions and stuff?”

“Well yes,” Blaise drawled out. “I’m surprised Muggles have us portrayed so correctly,” he then added looking thoughtful and then irritated when Harry burst into more laughed. “What Potter?”

“I-I’m sorry,” the Savior wheezed shaking his head and holding onto his stomach. “But . . . but . . .” and then he collapsed into more laughter. Blaise shot him a disgusted look before focusing on Draco.

“Our so called leader is mad.” To that Draco simply shrugged.

“Wait, wait,” Billy called out over the group, everyone choosing to ignore the giggling teen rolling around on the rock near them. “I’m having a little trouble wrapping my head around this. All of you are wizards?”

“Technically the correct term for a female is a witch, but yes, we are.”

“Are all wizards British,” Seth asked curiously.

“Well no, although the largest concentration is in England,” Draco answered and Harry allowed him to. He was the most knowledgeable on all things Wizarding. “But there are wizards all over the world. I believe there’s a small settlement near here is that Settle place.”
“Seattle,” Harry automatically corrected, which didn’t really do much as Draco simply ignored him.

“How is it that this is the first we are hearing of this,” Old Quil asked in a thoughtful manner.

“It’s against Wizarding law to inform Muggles, none magical folk, about the Wizarding world.” Neville piped in. “And us wizards are sufficient enough in charms and wards to keep the Muggles oblivious.”

“Wow,” Seth breathed after there was another stretch of silence as they all took the information in.

“That’s pretty much what I thought when I first learned about it all,” Harry told him with a low chuckle. The young teen tilted his head to the side like a puppy dog.

“Wait, so you didn’t always know?”

“Nope,” Harry said, popping the ‘p’. “When a wizard turns eleven they get an invitation to the magical school closest to them. That was when I learned that I was magical.”

“Wow,” Seth repeated again.

“Well enough of that,” Blaise cut in with a wave of his hand. “What I would like to know is, since you are all werewolves, how can it be that you all aren’t going on a rampage throughout Forks every full moon? Since you’re obviously Muggle I would assume that none of you have the potion?”

“Dude, what are you talking about,” Quil asked for the group.

“The Muggles,” Blaise said airily. “They’re not talking about some monster roaming the forest killing their young every full moon. I would like to assume that you all are finding some other way to control the wolf?”

“Oh, all that full moon, silver bullet stuff isn’t true,” Embry told Blaise slowly, as if trying to explain something to a child.

“Oh, yes it is,” Harry told them back in the same tone.

“No it’s not,” Embry shot back, almost childishly.

“Yes it is. Look,” Harry then said when it looked like Embry would continue on this strain once more. “Teddy here,” he said, waving his hand at the boy who had been napping comfortably in Bella’s arms for the past hour, “has a werewolf father and I’ve seen him change on the full moon with my own eyes. I also know for a fact that he cringes away from anything that has a sliver of silver in it.”

All the natives stared at Harry in baffled confusion.

“Well that doesn’t apply to us,” Jacob finally said. “We can change whenever we want or if we get too angry.”

“Well then you’re not werewolves at all,” Luna exclaimed in a tone of one having an epiphany and then she laughed. “James, they’re shape-shifters! They just happen to have the form of a wolf.”

“Well that certainly explains a lot,” Blaise muttered lowly and Draco nodded his agreement.

“Well this is a letdown,” Quil pouted. “We’re not even werewolves.”

“Oh trust me, you don’t want to be a werewolf,” Harry told him gently. “Remus once told me that
the transformation is hell and then there’s always the wolf hanging around in your consciousness just waiting to gain control and go on a rampage. It’s not pretty.” And with that Quil conceded.

“Are you gonna eat that hot dog,” Paul asked Jacob his eyes locked on the last remnant of the huge meal the shape-shifters had managed to consume in the time span of three hours.

Jacob leaned back against Draco’s knees and toyed with the hot dog he had spitted on a straightened wire hanger; the flames at the edge of the bonfire licked along its blistered skin. He heaved a sigh and patted his stomach. It was somehow still flat, though Harry had lost count of how many hot dogs he’d eaten after his tenth – not to mention the super-sized bag of chips and the two-liter bottle of root beer.

“I guess,” Jacob said slowly. “I’m so full I’m about to puke. But I think I can force it down. I won’t enjoy it at all, though.” He sighed again with dramatic sadness. Somehow, despite the fact that Paul had eaten at least as much as Jacob, he still glowered at the younger teen, his hands going to ball up into fists at his sides.

“Sheesh.” Jacob laughed. “Kidding, Paul. Here.” He flipped the homemade skewer across the circle. Harry thought that it was going to land hot-dog-first in the sand, but Paul somehow managed to catch it neatly on the right end without difficulty.

Harry suddenly remembered that these were shifters – shifters that could keep up with the incredibly fast Muggle vampires if what Bella had been telling him could be trusted.

“Thanks, man,” Paul said, already over his brief fit of temper – Harry was figuring out that Paul had a lot of fits. Luna hummed and twisted her fingers into his hair and the big shifter relaxed even more. The fire crackled, settling lower toward the sand. Sparks blew up in a sudden puff of brilliant orange against the black sky.

“It’s getting late,” Bella murmured to Jacob.

“Don’t start that yet,” Jacob whispered back – though everyone else heard them anyways. “The best part is coming.” Bella shot her best friend a teasing grin.

“What’s the best part? You swallowing an entire cow whole?” Jacob chuckled his low, throaty laugh and Harry noticed Draco shudder at the sound.

“No. That’s the finale. We didn’t meet just to eat through a week’s worth of food. This is technically a council meeting. It’s Quil’s first time, and he hasn’t heard the stories yet. Well, he’s heard them, but this will be the first time he knows they’re true. That tends to make a guy pay closer attention. Kim and Seth and Leah are all first-timers, too. And then there are you and your friends.”

“Stories?” Draco asked curiously, although trying not to appear so.

Jacob scooted back so that he was sitting beside him. He put his arm over Draco’s shoulder, enticing another one of those shudders and spoke even lower into the blonde’s ear.

“The histories we always thought were legends,” he said. “The stories of how we came to be. The first is the story of the spirit warriors.”

It was almost as if Jacob’s soft whisper was the introduction. The atmosphere changed abruptly
around the low-burning fire, almost humming like it did when magic was performed. Paul and Embry sat up straighter. Jared nudged Kim – who had been nodding off against his shoulder – and then pulled her gently upright. Emily produced a spiral-bound notebook and a pen, looking exactly like a student set for an important lecture.

Sam twisted just slightly beside her – so that he was facing the same direction as Old Quil, who was on his other side. Leah closed her eyes – not like she was tired, but as if to help her concentration. Seth leaned in toward the four leaders – elders Bella had told Harry – eagerly like a child awaiting a fantastic tale.

The fire crackled, sending another explosion of sparks glittering up against the night.

Billy cleared his throat, and, with no more introduction than his son’s whisper, began telling the story in his rich, deep voice. The words poured out with precision, as if he knew them by heart, but also with feeling and a subtle rhythm. Like poetry performed by its author.

“The Quileutes have been a small people from the beginning,” Billy said. “And we are a small people still, but we have never disappeared. This is because there has always been magic in our blood. It wasn’t always the magic of shape-shifting – that came later. First, we were spirit warriors.”

Emily’s pen sprinted across the sheets of paper as she tried to keep up with him. Luna, taking pity on her, produced a Quick Quotes Quill and poised it over Emily’s paper. The woman watched in wide-mouthed wonders as the quill began moving by itself, taking down Billy’s words.

“In the beginning, the tribe settled in this harbor and became skilled ship builders and fishermen. But the tribe was small, and the harbor was rich in fish. There were others who coveted our land, and we were too small to hold it. A larger tribe moved against us, and we took to our ships to escape them.

“Kaheleha was not the first spirit warrior, but we do not remember the stories that came before his. We do not remember who was the first to discover this power, or how it had been used before this crisis. Kaheleha was the first great Spirit Chief in our history. In this emergency, Kaheleha used the magic to defend our land.

“He and all his warriors left the ship – not their bodies, but their spirits. Their women watched over the bodies and the waves, and the men took their spirits back to our harbor.

“They could not physically touch the enemy tribe, but they had other ways. The stories tell us that they could blow fierce winds into their enemy’s camps; they could make a great screaming in the wind that terrified their foes. The stories also tell us that the animals could see the spirit warriors and understand them; the animals would do their bidding.

“Kaheleha took his spirit army and wreaked havoc on the intruders. This invading tribe had packs of big, thick-furred dogs that they used to pull their sleds in the frozen north. The spirit warriors turned the dogs against their masters and then brought a mighty infestation of bats up from the cliff caverns. They used the screaming wind to aid the dogs in confusing the men. The dogs and bats won. The survivors scattered, calling our harbor a cursed place. The dogs ran wild when the spirit warriors released them. The Quileutes returned to their bodies and their wives, victorious.

“The other nearby tribes, the Hohs and the Makahs, made treaties with the Quileutes. They wanted nothing to do with our magic. We lived in peace with them. When an enemy came against us, the spirit warriors would drive them off.

“Generations passed. Then came the last Great Spirit Chief, Taha Aki. He was known for his wisdom, and for being a man of peace. The people lived well and content in his care.
“But there was one man, Utlapa, who was not content.”

A low hiss ran around the fire. Harry thought it starting from over near Leah and traveled around like a game of telephone until it reached Paul on the opposite side of the circle – the four elders did not participate. Billy ignored the sound and went on with the legend.

“Utlapa was one of Chief Taha Aki’s strongest spirit warriors – a powerful man, but a grasping man, too. He thought the people should use their magic to expand their lands, to enslave the Hohs and the Makahs and build an empire.

“Now, when the warriors were their spirit selves, they knew each other’s thoughts. Taha Aki saw what Utlapa dreamed, and was angry with Utlapa. Utlapa was commanded to leave the people, and never use his spirit self again. Utlapa was a strong man, but the chief’s warriors outnumbered him. He had no choice but to leave. The furious outcast hid in the forest nearby, waiting for a chance to get revenge against the chief.

“Even in times of peace, the Spirit Chief was vigilant in protecting his people. Often, he would go to a sacred, secret place in the mountains. He would leave his body behind and sweep down through the forests and along the coast, making sure no threat approached.

“One day when Taha Aki left to perform this duty, Utlapa followed. At first, Utlapa simply planned to kill the chief, but this plan had its drawbacks. Surely the spirit warriors would seek to destroy him, and they could follow faster than he could escape. As he hid in the rocks and watched the chief prepare to leave his body, another plan occurred to him.

“Taha Aki left his body in the secret place and flew with the winds to keep watch over his people. Utlapa waited until he was sure the chief had traveled some distance with his spirit self.

“Taha Aki knew it the instant that Utlapa had joined him in the spirit world, and he also knew Utlapa’s murderous plan. He raced back to his secret place, but even the winds weren’t fast enough to save him. When he returned, his body was already gone. Utlapa’s body lay abandoned, but Utlapa had not left Taha Aki with an escape – he had cut his own body’s throat with Taha Aki’s hands.

“Taha Aki followed his body down the mountain. He screamed at Utlapa, but Utlapa ignored him as if he were mere wind.

“Taha Aki watched with despair as Utlapa took his place as chief of the Quileutes. For a few weeks, Utlapa did nothing but make sure that everyone believed he was Taha Aki. Then the changes began – Utlapa’s first edict was to forbid any warrior to enter the spirit world. He claimed that he’d had a vision of danger, but really he was afraid. He knew that Taha Aki would be waiting for the chance to tell his story. Utlapa was also afraid to enter the spirit world himself, knowing Taha Aki would quickly claim his body. So his dreams of conquest with a spirit warrior army were impossible, and he sought to content himself with ruling over the tribe.

“He became a burden – seeking privileges that Taha Aki had never requested, refusing to work alongside his warriors, taking a young second wife and then a third, though Taha Aki’s wife lived on – something unheard of in the tribe. Taha Aki watched in helpless fury.

“Eventually, Taha Aki tried to kill his body to save the tribe from Utlapa’s excesses. He brought a fierce wolf down from the mountains, but Utlapa hid behind his warriors. When the wolf killed a young man who was protecting the false chief, Taha Aki felt horrible grief. He ordered the wolf away.

“All the stories tell us that it was no easy thing to be a spirit warrior. It was more frightening than
exhilarating to be freed from one’s body. This is why they only used their magic in times of need. The chief’s solitary journeys to keep watch were a burden and a sacrifice. Being bodiless was disorienting, uncomfortable, horrifying. Taha Aki had been away from his body for so long at this point that he was in agony. He felt he was doomed – never to cross over to the final land where his ancestors waited, stuck in this torturous nothingness forever.”

Harry felt for the long gone Taha Aki. How was it to know of a danger to your people and be helpless to stop it? He wouldn’t have known how to handle himself.

“The great wolf followed Taha Aki’s spirit as he twisted and writhed in agony through the woods. The wolf was very large for its kind, and beautiful. Taha Aki was suddenly jealous of the dumb animal. At least it had a body. At least it had a life. Even life as an animal would be better than this horrible empty consciousness.

“And then Taha Aki had the idea that changed us all. He asked the great wolf to make room for him, to share. The wolf complied. Taka Aki entered the wolf’s body with relief and gratitude. It was not his human body, but it was better than the void of the spirit world.

“As one, the man and the wolf returned to the village on the harbor. The people ran in fear, shouting for the warriors to come. The warriors ran to meet the wolf with their spears. Utlapa, of course, stayed safely hidden.

“Taha Aki did not attack his warriors. He retreated slowly from them, speaking with his eyes and trying to yelp the songs of his people. The warriors began to realize that the wolf was no ordinary animal, that there was a spirit influencing it. One older warrior, a man name Yut, decided to disobey the false chief’s order and try to communicate with the wolf.

“As soon as Yut crossed to the spirit world, Taha Aki left the wolf – the animal waited tamely for his return – to speak to him. Yut gathered the truth in an instant, and welcomed his true chief home.

“At this time, Utlapa came to see if the wolf had been defeated. When he saw Yut lying lifeless on the ground, surrounded by protective warriors, he realized what was happening. He drew his knife and raced forward to kill Yut before he could return to his body.

Harry heard Bella draw in a strangled gasp.

“‘Traitor,’ he screamed, and the warriors did not know what to do. The chief had forbidden spirit journeys, and it was the chief’s decision how to punish those who disobeyed.

“Yut jumped back into his body, but Utlapa had his knife at his throat and a hand covering his mouth. Taha Aki’s body was strong, and Yut was weak with age. Yut could not say even one word to warn the others before Utlapa silenced him forever.

“Taha Aki watched as Yut’s spirit slipped away to the final lands that were barred to Taha Aki for all eternity. He felt a great rage, more powerful than anything he’d felt before. He entered the big wolf again, meaning to rip Utlapa’s throat out. But, as he joined the wolf, the greatest magic happened.

“Taha Aki’s anger was the anger of a man. The love he had for his people and the hatred he had for their oppressor were too vast for the wolf’s body, too human. The wolf shuddered, and – before the eyes of the shocked warriors and Utlapa – transformed into a man.

“The new man did not look like Taha Aki’s body. He was far more glorious. He was the flesh interpretation of Taha Aki’s spirit. The warriors recognized him at once, though, for they had flown with Taha Aki’s spirit.
"Utlapa tried to run, but Taha Aki had the strength of the wolf in his new body. He caught the thief and crushed the spirit from him before he could jump out of the stolen body.

"The people rejoiced when they understood what had happened. Taha Aki quickly set everything right, working again with his people and giving the young wives back to their families. The only change he kept in place was the end of the spirit travels. He knew that it was too dangerous now that the idea of stealing a life was there. The spirit warriors were no more.

"From that point on, Taha Aki was more than either wolf or man. They called him Taha Aki the Great Wolf, or Taha Aki the Spirit Man. He led the tribe for many, many years, for he did not age. When danger threatened, he would resume his wolf-self to fight or frighten the enemy. The people dwelt in peace. Taha Aki fathered many sons, and some of these found that, after they had reached the age of manhood, they, too, could transform into wolves. The wolves were all different, because they were spirit wolves and reflected the man they were inside."

"So that's why Sam is all black," Quil muttered under his breath, grinning. "Black heart, black fur."

The fire threw a volley of sparks into the sky, and they shivered and danced, making shapes that were almost decipherable.

"And your chocolate fur reflects what?" Sam whispered back to Quil. "How sweet you are?"

Billy ignored their jibes.

"Some of the sons became warriors with Taha Aki, and they no longer aged. Others, who did not like the transformation, refused to join the pack of wolf-men. These began to age again, and the tribe discovered that the wolf-men could grow old like anyone else if they gave up their spirit wolves. Taha Aki had lived the span of three old men's lives. He had married a third wife after the deaths of the first two, and found in her his true spirit wife. Though he had loved the others, this was something else. He decided to give up his spirit wolf so that he would die when she did."

Harry thought there was something a little strange about that, especially when he saw Jacob and even Leah shift nervously in their seats.

"That is how the magic came to us, but it is not the end of the story..."

He looked at Old Quil, who shifted in his chair, straightening his frail shoulders. Billy took a drink from a bottle of water and wiped his forehead.

"That was the story of the spirit warriors," Old Quil began in a thin tenor voice. "This is the story of the third wife's sacrifice."

"Many years after Taha Aki gave up his spirit wolf, when he was an old man, trouble began in the north, with the Makahs. Several young women of their tribe had disappeared, and they blamed it on the neighboring wolves, who they feared and mistrusted. The wolf-men could still read each other's thoughts while in their wolf forms, just like their ancestors had while in their spirit forms. They knew that none of their number was to blame. Taha Aki tried to pacify the Makah chief, but there was too much fear. Taha Aki did not want to have a war on his hands. He was no longer a warrior to lead his people. He charged his oldest wolf-son, Taha Wi, with finding the true culprit before hostilities began.

"Taha Wi led the five other wolves in his pack on a search through the mountains, looking for any evidence of the missing Makahs. They came across something they had never encountered before – a strange, sweet scent in the forest that burned their noses to the point of pain."
Harry felt a coldness settle in his bones. He could guess at who – or rather what – they found.

“They did not know what creature would leave such a scent, but they followed it,” Old Quil continued. His quavering voice did not have the majesty of Billy’s, but it had a strange, fierce edge of urgency about it.

“They found faint traces of human scent, and human blood, along the trail. They were sure this was the enemy they were searching for.

“The journey took them so far north that Taha Wi sent half the pack, the younger ones, back to the harbor to report to Taha Aki.

“Taha Wi and his two brothers did not return.

“The younger brothers searched for their elders, but found only silence. Taha Aki mourned for his sons. He wished to avenge his sons’ death, but he was old. He went to the Makah chief in his mourning clothes and told him everything that had happened. The Makah chief believed his grief, and tensions ended between the tribes.

“A year later, two Makah maidens disappeared from their homes on the same night. The Makahs called on the Quileute wolves at once, who found the same sweet stink all through the Makah village. The wolves went on the hunt again.

“Only one came back. He was Yaha Uta, the oldest son of Taka Aki’s third wife, and the youngest in the pack. He brought something with him that had never been seen in all the days of the Quileutes – a strange, cold, stony corpse that he carried in pieces. All who were of Taha Aki’s blood, even those who had never been wolves, could smell the piercing smell of the dead creature. This was the enemy of the Makahs.

“Yaha Uta described what had happened: he and his brothers had found the creature, who looked like a man but was hard as a granite rock, with the two Makah daughters. One girl was already dead, white and bloodless on the ground. The other was in the creature’s arms, his mouth at her throat. She may have been alive when they came upon the hideous scene, but the creature quickly snapped her neck and tossed her lifeless body to the ground when they approached. His white lips were covered in her blood, and his eyes glow red.

“Yaha Uta described the fierce strength and speed of the creature. One of his brothers quickly became a victim when he underestimated that strength. The creature ripped him apart like a doll. Yaha Uta and his other brother were more wary. They worked together, coming at the creature from the sides, outmaneuvering it. They had to reach the very limits of their wolf strength and speed, something that had never been tested before. The creature was hard as stone and cold as ice. They found that only their teeth could damage it. They began to rip small pieces of the creature apart while it fought them.

“But the creature learned quickly, and soon was matching their maneuvers. It got its hands on Yaha Uta’s brother. Yaha Uta found an opening on the creature’s throat, and he lunged. His teeth tore the head off the creature, but the hands continued to mangle his brother.

“Yaha Uta ripped the creature into unrecognizable chunks, tearing pieces apart in a desperate attempt to save his brother. He was too late, but, in the end, the creature was destroyed.

“Or so they thought. Yaha Uta laid the reeking remains out to be examined by the elders. One severed hand lay beside a piece of the creature’s granite arm. The two pieces touched when the elders poked them with sticks, and the hand reached out towards the arm piece, trying to reassemble
“Horrified, the elders set fire to the remains. A great cloud of choking, vile smoke polluted the air. When there was nothing but ashes, they separated the ashes into many small bags and spread them far and wide – some in the ocean, some in the forest, some in the cliff caverns. Taha Aki wore one bag around his neck, so he would be warned if the creature ever tried to put himself together again.”

Old Quil paused and looked at Billy. Billy pulled out a leather thong from around his neck. Hanging from the end was a small bag, blackened with age. A few people gasped.

“They called it The Cold One, the Blood Drinker, and lived in fear that it was not alone. They only had one wolf protector left, young Yaha Uta.

“They did not have long to wait. The creature had a mate, another blood drinker, who came to the Quileutes seeking revenge.

“The stories say that the Cold Woman was the most beautiful thing human eyes had ever seen. She looked like the goddess of the dawn when she entered the village that morning; the sun was shining for once, and it glittered off her white skin and lit the golden hair that flowed down to her knees. Her face was magical in its beauty, her eyes black in her white face. Some fell to their knees to worship her.

“She asked something in a high, piercing voice, in a language no one had ever heard. The people were dumbfounded, not knowing how to answer her. There was none of Taha Aki’s blood among the witnesses but one small boy. He clung to his mother and screamed that the smell was hurting his nose. One of the elders, on his way to council, heard the boy and realized what had come among them. He yelled for the people to run. She killed him first.

“There were twenty witnesses to the Cold Woman’s approach. Two survived, only because she grew distracted by the blood, and paused to sate her thirst. They ran to Taha Aki, who sat in counsel with the other elders, his sons, and his third wife.

“Yaha Uta transformed into his spirit wolf as soon as he heard the news. He went to destroy the blood drinker alone. Taha Aki, his third wife, his sons, and his elders followed behind him.

“At first they could not find the creature, only the evidence of her attack. Bodies lay broken, a few drained of blood, strewn across the road where she’d appeared. Then they heard the screams and hurried to the harbor.

“A handful of the Quileutes had run to the ships for refuge. She swam after them like a shark, and broke the bow of their boat with her incredible strength. When the ship sank, she caught those trying to swim away and broke them, too.

“She saw the great wolf on the shore, and she forgot the fleeing swimmers. She swam so fast she was a blur and came, dripping and glorious, to stand before Yaha Uta. She pointed at him with one white finger and asked another incomprehensible question. Yaha Uta waited.

“It was a close fight. She was not the warrior her mate had been. But Yaha Uta was alone – there was no one to distract her fury from him.

“When Yaha Uta lost, Taha Aki screamed in defiance. He limped forward and shifted into an ancient, white-muzzled wolf. The wolf was old, but this was Taha Aki the Spirit Man, and his rage made him strong. The fight began again.

“Taha Aki’s third wife had just seen her son die before her. Now her husband fought, and she had
no hope that he could win. She’d heard every word the witnesses to the slaughter had told the council. She’d heard the story of Yaha Uta’s first victory, and knew that his brother’s diversion had saved him.

“The third wife grabbed a knife from the belt of one of the sons who stood beside her. They were all young sons, not yet men, and she knew they would die when their father failed.

“The third wife ran toward the Cold Woman with the dagger raised high. The Cold Woman smiled, barely distracted from her fight with the old wolf. She had no fear of the weak human woman or the knife that would not even scratch her skin, and she was about to deliver the death blow to Taha Aki.

“And then the third wife did something the Cold Woman did not expect. She fell to her knees at the blood drinker’s feet and plunged the knife into her own heart.”

Harry could see the scene in his mind’s eye – a woman with dark hair and eyes, a knife protruding from her chest like Dobby and blood pouring down her front, and a vampire standing near her, exceedingly beautiful and fighting an old giant wolf. The vampire would abandon the fight for the fresh blood, Harry didn’t need to hear Old Quil’s words to know that.

And Harry had to admit that he admired the unnamed woman who sacrificed herself for her family and people.

“Blood spurted through the third wife’s fingers and splashed against the Cold Woman. The blood drinker could not resist the lure of the fresh blood leaving the third wife’s body. Instinctively, she turned to the dying woman, for one second entirely consumed by thirst.

“Taha Aki’s teeth closed around her neck.

“That was not the end of the fight, but Taha Aki was not alone now. Watching their mother die, two young sons felt such rage that they sprang forth as their spirit wolves, though they were not yet men. With their father, they finished the creature.

“Taha Aki never rejoined the tribe. He never changed back to a man again. He lay for one day beside the body of the third wife, growling whenever anyone tried to touch her, and then he went into the forest and never returned.

“Trouble with the cold ones was rare from that time on. Taha Aki’s sons guarded the tribe until their sons were old enough to take their places. There were never more than three wolves at a time. It was enough. Occasionally a blood drinker would come through these lands, but they were taken by surprise, not expecting the wolves. Sometimes a wolf would die, but never were they decimated again like that first time. They’d learned how to fight the cold ones, and they passed the knowledge on, wolf mind to wolf mind, spirit to spirit, father to son.

“Time passed, and the descendants of Taha Aki no longer became wolves when they reached manhood. Only in a great while, if a cold one was near, would the wolves return. The cold ones always came in ones and twos, and the pack stayed small.

“A bigger coven came, and your own great-grandfathers prepared to fight them off. But the leader spoke to Ephraim Black as if he were a man, and promised not to harm the Quileutes. His strange yellow eyes gave some proof to his claim that they were not the same as other blood drinkers. The wolves were outnumbered; there was no need for the cold ones to offer a treaty when they could have won the fight. Ephraim accepted. They’ve stayed true to their side, though their presence does tend to draw in others.”
Harry was just a little bit surprised to hear mention of the Cullens, but he subconsciously knew that they would come up. There was no way a group of vampire could live nearby and the Quileutes not know about them.

“And their numbers have forced a larger pack than the tribe has ever seen,” Old Quil said, and for one moment his black eyes, all but buried in the wrinkles of skin folded around them, seemed to rest on Bella. “Except, of course, in Taha Aki’s time,” he said, and then he sighed. “And so the sons of our tribe again carry the burden and share the sacrifice their fathers endured before them.”

All was silent for a long moment. The living descendants of magic and legend stared at one another across the fire with sadness in their eyes. All but one.

“Burden,” he scoffed in a low voice. “I think it’s cool.”

Quil’s full lower lip pouted out a little bit. Across the dying fire, Seth – his eyes wide with adulation for the fraternity of tribal protectors – nodded his agreement.

Billy chuckled, low and long, and the magic seemed to fade into the glowing embers.

Suddenly, it was just a circle of friends again. Jared flicked a small stone at Quil, and everyone laughed when it made him jump. Low conversations murmured around them, teasing and casual.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for all the book copy. I’ll put the next chapter up soon to make up for it.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Sorry for the long wait. You guys get two chapters today!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The sharp click of heels hitting marble flooring echoed down the deserted hallway as a young woman with sharp features made her way through the building. She had a business like feel to her from her dark hair pulled into a bun and her thin glasses to her sensible heels and dress-suit. Pressed to her side she held a simple manila folder on which the words ‘URGENT’ were stamped across it.

The woman reached the end of the hall and came to a stop outside of a large oak door. She knocked solidly on it before opening it into a massive room.

The room was oval-shaped, and the entire back was made out of glass. If asked, one would say that the room was a replica of the Oval Office in Washington – and it was.

“President Stevens,” the woman spoke to the man sitting behind the desk in the center of the room. “I have some important news to share with you.” The President of Magical America looked up from the documents he had been pursuing at the young woman.

“Ah, Ms. Helen, do come in.”

Draco Malfoy has always believed firmly in maintaining a certain image for himself and his family name.

Malfoys didn’t slouch. Malfoys don’t commence in acts of idiocy. Malfoys don’t associate with those beneath them.

These rules had been ingrained into him since he could first understand the words. And never before had Draco thought for one second to go against what he was taught.

Until the war happened.

Draco could finally admit to himself that he had done a lot of things he wasn’t proud of. That he had followed his father blindly and it had led to the downfall of the Malfoy name.

However.

At the end of it all Draco could admit that he did have some Malfoy pride left.

Yeah, he wasn’t giving to believe blindly in anyone anymore, or do things he didn’t feel comfortable doing. But he could at least be proud of his ancestry, of the great Malfoy name. He couldn’t let one generation of bad leadership tarnish that.
Right?

It was hard to think about that now, however.

Right here, in this very moment, it was hard to think about anything really.

Nothing but the hands that ran down his side, up under his shirt and pressed into his back.

Nothing but the scorching heat pressing into him. The hot mouth on his face. The huge body against his, pressing him into the hard bark of the tree.

How could he think about any of his Malfoy pride when he was being groped by Jacob Black of the Quileute Tribe in the middle of the bloody forest?

Draco let out a low groan and his head fell back, allowing Jacob full access of the pale expanse of Draco’s neck. Jacob attacked it like it was the fountain of youth.

Draco knew he was gasping and meaning like some virginal girl, but he honestly didn’t care. Not when Jacob was doing whatever it was that he was doing.

And then Jacob’s hand traveled way south, down into Draco’s pants and the blonde had to bite down on the Native’s shoulder to stop from crying out loud. Jacob made a low growling sound that caused a shiver to race up Draco’s spine – and then he squeezed his hand. Draco felt like he might pass out from the pleasure of it all.

Suddenly Draco was doused awake by a chill when Jacob suddenly pulled away. Draco was completely dazed for a moment, and he automatically reached out to pull Jacob back.

But then he heard it.

“Draco!”

“Someone was calling his name and with a jolt Draco was shocked aware. The aristocrat immediately started straightening his clothes, tucking his shirt his pants and fixing his hair.

Jacob was still standing there, looking a bit like a deer caught in headlights. Draco rolled his eyes at the teen.

“Hide,” he demanded, jolting Jacob into action. The shape shifter, stepped forward, placed a searing kiss on Draco’s lips, and then disappeared into the trees.

Just in time too, for Blaise showed up through some bushes, his wand lit with a Lumos.

“What are you doing?” the black wizard questioned, looking at Draco with an arched brow. Draco scowled at him and moved away from the tree, dusting his clothes off.

“That, I believe, is none your business,” the blonde said in his most superior tone. Blaise blinked in confusion for a normal before shrugging it off.

“Well we’re getting ready to leave. You coming?”

“Yeah,” Draco said offhandedly and followed Blaise back to the group, all the while trying to ignore the eyes he could feel following him.
It’s been less than a decade since the city of Seattle was the hunting ground for the most prolific serial killer in U.S. history. Gary Ridgway, the Green River Killer, was convicted of the murders of 48 women.

And now a beleaguered Seattle must face the possibility that it could be harboring an even more horrifying monster at this very moment.

The police are not calling the recent rash of homicides and disappearances the work of a serial killer. Not yet, at least. They are reluctant to believe so much carnage could be the work of one individual. This killer – if, in fact, it is one person – would then be responsible for 39 linked homicides and disappearances within the last three months alone. In comparison, Ridgway’s 48-count murder spree was scattered over a 21-year period. If these deaths can be linked to one man, then this is the most violent rampage of serial murder in American history.

The police are leaning instead toward the theory that gang activity is involved. This theory is supported by the sheer number of victims, and by the fact that there seems to be no pattern in the choice of victims.

From Jack the Ripper to Ted Bundy, the targets of serial killings are usually connected by similarities in age, gender, race, or a combination of the three. The victims of this crime wave range in age from 15-year-old honor student Amanda Reed, to 67-year-old retired postman Omar Jenks. The linked deaths include a nearly even 18 women and 21 men. The victims are racially diverse: Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and Asians.

The selection appears random. The motive seems to be killing for no other reason than to kill.

So why even consider the idea of a serial killer?

There are enough similarities in the modus operandi to rule out unrelated crimes. Every victim discovered has been burned to the extent that dental records were necessary for identification. The use of some kind of accelerant, like gasoline or alcohol, seems to be indicated in the conflagrations; however, no traces of any accelerant have yet been found. All of the bodies have been carelessly dumped with no attempt at concealment.

More gruesome yet, most of the remains show evidence of brutal violence – bones crushed and snapped by some kind of tremendous pressure – which medical examiners believe occurred before the time of death, though these conclusions are difficult to be sure of, considering the state of the evidence.

Another similarity that points to the possibility of a serial: every crime is perfectly clean of evidence, aside from the remains themselves. Not a fingerprint, not a tire tread mark nor a foreign hair is left behind. There have been no sightings of any suspect in the disappearances.

Then there are the disappearances themselves - hardly low profile by any means. None of the victims are what could be viewed as easy targets. None are runaways or the homeless, who vanish so easily and are seldom reported missing. Victims have vanished from their homes, from a fourth-story apartment, from a health club, from a wedding reception. Perhaps the most astounding: 30-year-old amateur boxer Robert Walsh entered a movie theater with a date; a few minutes into the movie, the woman realized that he was not in his seat. His body was found only three hours later when fire fighters were called to the scene of a burning trash Dumpster, twenty miles away.
Another pattern is present in the slayings: all of the victims disappeared at night.

And the most alarming pattern? Acceleration. Six of the homicides were committed in the first month, 11 in the second. Twenty-two have occurred in the last 10 days alone. And the police are no closer to finding the responsible party than they were after the first charred body was discovered.

The evidence is conflicting, the pieces horrifying. A vicious new gang or a wildly active serial killer? Or something else the police haven’t yet conceived of?

Only one conclusion is indisputable: something hideous is stalking Seattle.

Harry sipped at his tea as he came to the end of the article. Honestly, he didn’t think it was a gang doing this to Seattle. No evidence, no fingerprints, not even a trace of accelerant? No, there was something more going on here, but what Harry couldn’t put his finger on. It was like he knew but every time his mind seemed to latch on to it, the thought fled away. It was highly irritating. What was it? . . .

“Is that a Muggle paper?”

Harry looked up to see Blaise leaning casually against the archway that led into the kitchen. He looked for all the world like he had just walked out of a bloody magazine and not at all like someone who might be starting their first day at school. In fact, Harry was considering letting him stay here with Neville. The year was almost out anyways.

“Yes, it is.”

“And why are you reading the Muggle news,” Blaise asked as he walked further into the room. Even his walk was smooth and catlike.

“Because,” Harry answered, his irritation bubbling on the surface now. Blaise arched a brow at him and Harry threw the paper in his face.

“Well that was nice,” the black male muttered, looking the paper over. As the title caught his attention he found himself reading and the more he read the higher his eyebrows rose. When he was done he let out a low whistle.

“I see why you look like that now,” the aristocrat muttered. “What the bloody hell is going on around here?”

“Hell if I know,” Harry muttered sullenly, sipping at his tea.

“Well what are you going to do about it?” At this question Harry sent the other teen a heated glare. Blaise held up his hands in surrender.

“Have you been talking to Draco? We’re not going to do anything about it. It’s not our business.” With that Harry shoved away from the table. As he was leaving the kitchen his cell phone rang. The dark-haired man stopped, took a deep breath and then pulled the phone out of his pocket.

“Yes Bella,” he answer, for only one person actually called him on his phone. Blaise watched silently at the Savior’s face changed along with the conversation, going from irritated to confused and then determine.

“Yeah. Okay. We’ll be there.” With that Harry flipped the little device shut. “Change of plans,” he
told Blaise. “We’re going to the Cullens.”

“Why,” Blaise asked the obvious question.

“That’s what we’re going to find out.

The ride to the Cullen household was mostly silent. Harry glared stubbornly at the road and was glad that Draco had decided to take his motorcycle because he was sure he wouldn’t have been able to handle the blonde aristocrat right not. Neville kept sending concerned looks at Harry ever ten seconds, which wasn’t doing any good for Harry’s anger.

It was with a relief that he pulled up to the Cullen’s front door – and at the same time Edward and Bella arrived.

“Harry,” Bella called and walked over to him. Her face was pinched with worry. Even Edward looked a little stressed.

“What’s going on,” Harry asked, looking between the two. Bella shrugged but Edward offered no kind of answer. Instead he led the way into the house.

The group walked in to find Carlisle, Esme, and Jasper watching the news intently, though the sound was so low that it was pretty much unintelligible. Alice was perched on the bottom step of the grand stair case, her face in her hands and her expression discouraged. As they walked in further into the house, Emmett ambled through the kitchen door, seeming perfectly at ease. Nothing ever bothered Emmett.

“Hey, guys. Ditching, Bella,” he asked with a grin and a wink.

“We all are,” Edward reminded him.

Emmett laughed. “Yes, but it’s her first time through high school. She might miss something.” He then looked at the wizards and shrugged, not seeming to find anything to joke about with them.

Edward rolled his eyes, but otherwise ignored his jokester of a brother. He tossed the paper to Carlisle.

“Did you see that they’re considering a serial killer now,” he asked.

Carlisle let out a low sigh and said, “They’ve had two specialists debating that possibility on CNN all morning.”

“We can’t let this go on.”

“Let’s go now,” Emmett said with sudden enthusiasm. “I’m dead bored.” A hiss echoed down the stairway from upstairs and Emmett muttered to himself, “She’s such a pessimist.”

“We’ll have to go sometime,” Edward said in agreement with Emmett.

Rosalie appeared at the top of the stairs and descended slowly. Her face was smooth, expressionless, until she saw Teddy and then she was quick to claim him. Harry let her, he had a filling things were about to get a little tense. He shot a look at Draco who nodded and leaped against one of the walks, content to listen for now.
Carlisle was shaking his head at Edward.

“I’m concerned. We’ve never involved ourselves in this kind of thing before. It’s not our business. We aren’t the Volturi.”

“I don’t want the Volturi to have to come here,” Edward said quickly, and he lifted his hand toward Bella before letting it drop. “It gives us so much less reaction time.”

“And all those innocent humans in Seattle,” Esme murmured quietly. “It’s not right to let them die this way.”

“I know,” Carlisle said on sigh. Harry thought he looked suddenly older.

“Oh,” Edward said sharply, turning his head slightly to look at Jasper. “I didn’t think of that. I see. You’re right, that has to be it. Well, that changes everything.”

Harry shared a look with his group all who shrugged, feeling as left out as he was. They weren’t the only ones. Everyone was looking confused, if not a little bit annoyed also.

“I think you’d better explain to the others,” Edward said to Jasper. “What could be the purpose of this?”

Edward suddenly started to pace, staring at the floor, lost in thought.

Alice got up and flitted over to Bella in a move so fast it reminded Harry that they were all vampires.

“What is he rambling about?” the small vampire asked of her mate. “What are you thinking?”

Jasper didn’t look like he enjoyed the attention he was getting. He hesitated, reading every face around him and then over at the wizards. He seemed to be the only one to have noticed them standing there.

“You’re confused,” he said, staring straight into Harry’s face. His deep voice was very quiet. Harry arched a brow at him and crossed his arms. It was safe to assume that everyone was confused.

“We’re all confused,” Emmett grumbled.

“You can afford the time to be patient,” Jasper told him. “Everyone should understand this.” Jasper turned away from Harry then and focused in on Bella.

“How much do you know about me, Bella?” Bella blinked, looking a little taken aback. Emmett sighed theatrically, and plopped down on the couch to wait with exaggerated impatience.

“Not much,” Bella admitted.

Jasper stared at Edward, who looked up to meet his gaze.

“No,” Edward answered his thought. “I’m sure you can understand why I haven’t told her that story. But I suppose she needs to hear it now.”

Jasper nodded thoughtfully, and then started to roll up the arm of his ivory sweater.

Harry leaned in to get a better look, his curiosity taken a hold of him. Jasper then held his wrist under the edge of the lampshade beside him, close to the light of the naked bulb, and traced his finger across a raised crescent mark on the pale skin. Harry supposed it was only his heightened senses that allowed him to see the marks crisscrossing the vampire’s skin. Teeth marks.
“Oh,” Bella breathed out, her eyes slightly wide. “Jasper, you have a scar exactly like mine.” And then she held out her hand. The silvery crescent looked more prominent against her cream skin than against his alabaster. Harry narrowed his eyes, wondering who had bitten Bella and when?

“I have a lot of scars like yours, Bella,” Jasper was saying to the girl now. His face was smooth as he pushed the sleeve of his thin sweater higher up his arm.

Bella let out another gasp, and started horrified at the blonde vampire.

“Jasper, what happened to you,” she asked in a whisper. Harry had to admit that he was curious to. What had happened in Jasper’s past that allowed him to get bitten so many times?

“The same thing that happened to your hand,” Jasper answered in a quiet voice. “Repeated a thousand times.” He laughed a little ruefully and brushed at his arm. “Our venom is the only thing that leaves a scar.”

“Why?” Bella breathed in horror, staring at the scars she could not see on Jasper’s arms.

“I didn’t have quite the same . . . upbringing as my adopted siblings here. My beginning was something else entirely.”


“Before I tell you my story,” Jasper said, addressing them all now, “you must understand that there are places in our world, where the life span of the never-aging is measured in weeks, and not centuries.”

The others seemed to have already heard this story, for they all moved to do various things. Edward started pacing again but every once in a while he would look up at Harry.

“To really understand why, you have to look at the world from a different perspective. You have to imagine the way it looks to the powerful, the greedy . . . the perpetually thirsty.

“You see, there are places in this world that are more desirable to us than others. Places where we can be less restrained, and still avoid detection.

“Picture, for instance, a map of the western hemisphere. Picture on it every human life as a small red dot. The thicker the red, the more easily we – well, those who exist this way – can feed without attracting notice.

Bella let out a low shudder but Harry didn’t even blink. He could see it, the world through the eyes of a vampire is kind of like the world through the eyes of Fenir Greyback. Blood-tinged and bloated with ‘food’.

“Not that the covens in the South care much for what the humans notice or do not. It’s the Volturi that keep them in check. They are the only ones the southern covens fear. If not for the Volturi, the rest of us would be quickly exposed.”

There was that name again.

Volturi.

It sparked a memory in Harry’s mind but nothing concrete.

“The North is, by comparison, very civilized. Mostly we are nomads here who enjoy the day as well
as the night, who allow humans to interact with us unsuspectingly – anonymity is important to us all.

“It’s a different world in the South. The immortals there come out only at night. They spend the day plotting their next move, or anticipating their enemy’s. Because it has been war in the South, constant war for centuries, with never one moment of truce. The covens there barely note the existence of humans, except as soldiers notice a herd of cows by the wayside – food for the taking. They only hide from the notice of the herd because of the Volturi.”

“But what are they fighting for?” Bella asked. Draco snorted again and shared an amused smirk with Blaise – probably about the obliviousness of Muggles. Harry tried to ignore them, he was very interested in this story.

“Remember the map with the red dots?” Jasper asked, almost like a teacher would ask a question to help a student find their answer. Bella nodded. “They fight for control of the thickest red. You see, it occurred to someone once that, if he were the only vampire in, let’s say Mexico City, well then, he could feed every night, twice, three times, and no one would ever notice. He plotted ways to get rid of the competition.

“Others had the same idea. Some came up with more effective tactics than others.

“But the most effective tactic was invented by a fairly young vampire named Benito. The first anyone ever heard of him, he came down from somewhere north of Dallas and massacred the two small covens that shared the area near Houston. Two nights later, he took on the much stronger clan of allies that claimed Monterrey in northern Mexico. Again, he won.”

“How did he win?” Bella asked with wary curiosity.

“Benito had created an army of newborn vampires. He was the first one to think of it, and, in the beginning, he was unstoppable. Very young vampires are volatile, wild, and almost impossible to control. One newborn can be reasoned with, taught to restrain himself, but ten, fifteen together are a nightmare. They’ll turn on each other as easily as on the enemy you point them at. Benito had to keep making more as they fought amongst themselves, and as the covens he decimated took more than half his force down before they lost.

“You see, though newborns are dangerous, they are still possible to defeat if you know what you’re doing. They’re incredibly powerful physically, for the first year or so, and if they’re allowed to bring strength to bear they can crush an older vampire with ease. But they are slaves to their instincts, and thus predictable. Usually, they have no skill in fighting, only muscle and ferocity. And in this case, overwhelming numbers.

“The vampires in southern Mexico realized what was coming for them, and they did the only thing they could think of to counteract Benito. They made armies of their own. . . .

“All hell broke loose – and I mean that more literally than you can possibly imagine. We immortals have our histories, too, and this particular war will never be forgotten. Of course, it was not a good time to be human in Mexico, either.

Even Draco shuddered this time – they were probably thinking about the same thing. Last year and the reign of Voldemort. It certainly wasn’t a good time to be on the opposing side.

“When the body count reached epidemic proportions – in fact, your histories blame a disease for the population slump – the Volturi finally stepped in. The entire guard came together and sought out every newborn in the bottom half of North America. Benito was entrenched in Puebla, building his army as quickly as he could in order to take on the prize – Mexico City. The Volturi started with
him, and then moved on to the rest.

“Anyone who was found with the newborns was executed immediately, and, since everyone was trying to protect themselves from Benito, Mexico was emptied of vampires for a time.

“The Volturi were cleaning house for almost a year. This was another chapter of our history that will always be remembered, though there were very few witnesses left to speak of what it was like. I spoke to someone once who had, from a distance, watched what happened when they visited Culiacan.”

Jasper shuddered at the memory.

“It was enough that the fever for conquest did not spread from the South. The rest of the world stayed sane. We owe the Volturi for our present way of life.

“But when the Volturi went back to Italy, the survivors were quick to stake their claims in the South.

“It didn’t take long before covens began to dispute again. There was a lot of bad blood, if you’ll forgive the expression. Vendettas abounded. The idea of newborns was already there, and some were not able to resist. However, the Volturi had not been forgotten, and the southern covens were more careful this time. The newborns were selected from the human pool with more care, and given more training. They were used circumspectly, and the humans remained, for the most part, oblivious. Their creators gave the Volturi no reason to return.

“The wars resumed, but on a smaller scale. Every now and then, someone would go too far, speculation would begin in the human newspapers, and the Volturi would return and clean out the city. But they let the others, the careful ones, continue. . . .

A low gasp came from someone near him, but Harry was staring too intently at Jasper to notice who.

“That little thought was nudging at him again and it was so close . . .

Jasper was staring off into space.

“That’s how you were changed,” Bella muttered lowly as the realization came to her.

“Yes,” Jasper agreed. “When I was human, I lived in Houston, Texas. I was almost seventeen years old when I joined the Confederate Army in 1861. I lied to the recruiters and told them I was twenty. I was tall enough to get away with it.

“My military career was short-lived, but very promising. People always . . . liked me, listened to what I had to say. My father said it was charisma. Of course, now I know it was probably something more. But, whatever the reason, I was promoted quickly through the ranks, over older, more experienced men. The Confederate Army was new and scrambling to organize itself, so that provided opportunities, as well. By the first battle of Galveston – well, it was more of a skirmish, really – I was the youngest major in Texas, not even acknowledging my real age.

“I was placed in charge of evacuating the women and children from the city when the Union’s mortar boats reached the harbor. It took a day to prepare them, and then I left with the first column of civilians to convey them to Houston.

“I remember that one night very clearly.

“We reached the city after dark. I stayed only long enough to make sure the entire party was safely situated. As soon as that was done, I got myself a fresh horse, and I headed back to Galveston. There wasn’t time to rest.
“Just a mile outside the city, I found three women on foot. I assumed they were stragglers and
dismounted at once to offer them my aid. But, when I could see their faces in the dim light of the
moon, I was stunned into silence. They were, without question, the three most beautiful women I had
ever seen.

“They had such pale skin, I remember marveling at it. Even the little black-haired girl, whose
features were clearly Mexican, was porcelain in the moonlight. They seemed young, all of them, still
young enough to be called girls. I knew they were not lost members of our party. I would have
remembered seeing these three.

“‘He’s speechless,’ the tallest girl said in a lovely, delicate voice – it was like wind chimes. She had
fair hair, and her skin was snow white.

“The other was blonder still, her skin just as chalky. Her face was like an angel’s. She leaned toward
me with half-closed eyes and inhaled deeply.

“‘Mmm,’ she sighed. ‘Lovely.’

“The small one, the tiny brunette, put her hand on the girl’s arm and spoke quickly. Her voice was
too soft and musical to be sharp, but that seemed to be the way she intended it.

“‘Concentrate, Nettie,’ she said.

“I’d always had a good sense of how people related to each other, and it was immediately clear that
the brunette was somehow in charge of the others. If they’d been military, I would have said that she
outranked them.

“‘He looks right – young, strong, an officer. . . .’ The brunette paused, and I tried unsuccessfully to
speak. ‘And there’s something more . . . do you sense it?’ she asked the other two. ‘He’s . . .
compelling.’

“‘Oh, yes,’ Nettie quickly agreed, leaning toward me again.

“‘Patience,’ the brunette cautioned her. ‘I want to keep this one.’

“Nettie frowned; she seemed annoyed.

“‘You’d better do it, Maria,’ the taller blonde spoke again. ‘If he’s important to you. I kill them twice
as often as I keep them.’

“‘Yes, I’ll do it,’ Maria agreed. ‘I really do like this one. Take Nettie away, will you? I don’t want to
have to protect my back while I’m trying to focus.’

“My hair was standing up on the back of my neck, though I didn’t understand the meaning of
anything the beautiful creatures were saying. My instincts told me that there was danger, that the
angel had meant it when she spoke of killing, but my judgment overruled my instincts. I had not been
taught to fear women, but to protect them.

“‘Let’s hunt,’ Nettie agreed enthusiastically, reaching for the tall girl’s hand. They wheeled – they
were so graceful! – and sprinted toward the city. They seemed to almost take flight, they were so fast
– their white dresses blew out behind them like wings. I blinked in amazement, and they were gone.

“I turned to stare at Maria, who was watching me curiously.

“I’d never been superstitious in my life. Until that second, I’d never believed in ghosts or any other
such nonsense. Suddenly, I was unsure.

"‘What is your name, soldier?’ Maria asked me.

"‘Major Jasper Whitlock, ma’am,’ I stammered, unable to be impolite to a female, even if she was a ghost.

"‘I truly hope you survive, Jasper,’ she said in her gentle voice. ‘I have a good feeling about you.’

“She took a step closer, and inclined her head as if she were going to kiss me. I stood frozen in place, though my instincts were screaming at me to run.”

Jasper paused suddenly, his face thoughtful. Harry felt as if he had been douse with and Agumenta. He shook his head to get rid of the feeling.

“A few days later I was introduced to my new life.

“Their names were Maria, Nettie, and Lucy. They hadn’t been together long – Maria had rounded up the other two – all three were survivors of recently lost battles. Theirs was a partnership of convenience. Maria wanted revenge, and she wanted her territories back. The others were eager to increase their . . . herd lands, I suppose you could say. They were putting together an army, and going about it more carefully than was usual. It was Maria’s idea. She wanted a superior army, so she sought out specific humans who had potential. Then she gave us much more attention, more training than anyone else had bothered with. She taught us to fight, and she taught us to be invisible to the humans. When we did well, we were rewarded. . . .”

Jasper paused again and Harry realized that he was editing his story so as not to frighten them. That was almost laughable. Harry had seen enough of war to no longer be frightened by it.

“She was in a hurry, though. Maria knew that the massive strength of the newborn began to wane around the year mark, and she wanted to act while we were strong.

“There were six of us when I joined Maria’s band. She added four more within a fortnight. We were all male – Maria wanted soldiers – and that made it slightly more difficult to keep from fighting amongst ourselves. I fought my first battles against my new comrades in arms. I was quicker than the others, better at combat. Maria was pleased with me, though put out that she had to keep replacing the ones I destroyed. I was rewarded often, and that made me stronger.

“Maria was a good judge of character. She decided to put me in charge of the others – as if I were being promoted. It suited my nature exactly. The casualties went down dramatically, and our numbers swelled to hover around twenty.

“This was considerable for the cautious times we lived in. My ability, as yet undefined, to control the emotional atmosphere around me was vitally effective.”

Harry leaned forward so that he could see Luna. She smiled at him and mouthed “Empath.” Harry nodded and leaned back to listen in once more.

“We soon began to work together in a way that newborn vampires had never cooperated before. Even Maria, Nettie, and Lucy were able to work together more easily.

“Maria grew quite fond of me – she began to depend upon me. And, in some ways, I worshipped the ground she walked on. I had no idea that any other life was possible. Maria told us this was the way things were, and we believed.
“She asked me to tell her when my brothers and I were ready to fight, and I was eager to prove myself. I pulled together an army of twenty-three in the end – twenty-three unbelievably strong new vampires, organized and skilled as no others before. Maria was ecstatic.

“We crept down toward Monterrey, her former home, and she unleashed us on her enemies. They had only nine newborns at the time, and a pair of older vampires controlling them. We took them down more easily than Maria could believe, losing only four in the process. It was an unheard-of margin of victory.

“And we were well trained. We did it without attracting notice. The city changed hands without any human being aware.

“Success made Maria greedy. It wasn’t long before she began to eye other cities. That first year, she extended her control to cover most of Texas and northern Mexico. Then the others came from the South to dislodge her.”

He brushed two fingers along the faint pattern of scars on his arm.

“The fighting was intense. Many began to worry that the Volturi would return. Of the original twenty-three, I was the only one to survive the first eighteen months. We both won and lost. Nettie and Lucy turned on Maria eventually – but that one we won.

“Maria and I were able to hold on to Monterrey. It quieted a little, though the wars continued. The idea of conquest was dying out; it was mostly vengeance and feuding now. So many had lost their partners, and that is something our kind does not forgive. . . .

“Maria and I always kept a dozen or so newborns ready. They meant little to us – they were pawns, they were disposable. When they outgrew their usefulness, we did dispose of them. My life continued in the same violent pattern and the years passed. I was sick of it all for very long time before anything changed . . .

“Decades later, I developed a friendship with a newborn who’d remained useful and survived his first three years, against the odds. His name was Peter. I liked Peter; he was . . . civilized – I suppose that’s the right word. He didn’t enjoy the fight, though he was good at it.

“He was assigned to deal with the newborns – babysit them, you could say. It was a full-time job.

“And then it was time to purge again. The newborns were outgrowing their strength; they were due to be replaced. Peter was supposed to help me dispose of them. We took them aside individually, you see, one by one . . . It was always a very long night. This time, he tried to convince me that a few had potential, but Maria had instructed that we get rid of them all. I told him no.

“We were about halfway through, and I could feel that it was taking a great toll on Peter. I was trying to decide whether or not I should send him away and finish up myself as I called out the next victim. To my surprise, he was suddenly angry, furious. I braced for whatever his mood might foreshadow – he was a good fighter, but he was never a match for me.

“The newborn I’d summoned was a female, just past her year mark. Her name was Charlotte. His feelings changed when she came into view; they gave him away. He yelled for her to run, and he bolted after her. I could have pursued them, but I didn’t. I felt . . . averse to destroying him.

“Maria was irritated with me for that . . .

“Five years later, Peter snuck back for me. He picked a good day to arrive.
“Maria was mystified by my ever-deteriorating frame of mind. She’d never felt a moment’s depression, and I wondered why I was different. I began to notice a change in her emotions when she was near me – sometimes there was fear . . . and malice – the same feelings that had given me advance warning when Nettie and Lucy struck. I was preparing myself to destroy my only ally, the core of my existence, when Peter returned.

“Peter told me about his new life with Charlotte, told me about options I’d never dreamed I had. In five years, they’d never had a fight, though they’d met many others in the north. Others who could co-exist without the constant mayhem.

“In one conversation, he had me convinced. I was ready to go, and somewhat relieved I wouldn’t have to kill Maria. I’d been her companion for as many years as Carlisle and Edward have been together, yet the bond between us was nowhere near as strong. When you live for the fight, for the blood, the relationships you form are tenuous and easily broken. I walked away without a backward glance.

“I traveled with Peter and Charlotte for a few years, getting the feel of this new, more peaceful world. But the depression didn’t fade. I didn’t understand what was wrong with me, until Peter noticed that it was always worse after I’d hunted.

“I contemplated that. In so many years of slaughter and carnage, I’d lost nearly all of my humanity. I was undeniably a nightmare, a monster of the grisliest kind. Yet each time I found another human victim, I would feel a faint prick of remembrance for that other life. Watching their eyes widen in wonder at my beauty, I could see Maria and the others in my head, what they had looked like to me the last night that I was Jasper Whitlock. It was stronger for me – this borrowed memory – than it was for anyone else, because I could feel everything my prey was feeling. And I lived their emotions as I killed them.

“You’ve experienced the way I can manipulate the emotions around myself, Bella, but I wonder if you realize how the feelings in a room affect me. I live every day in a climate of emotion. For the first century of my life, I lived in a world of bloodthirsty vengeance. Hate was my constant companion. It eased some when I left Maria, but I still had to feel the horror and fear of my prey.

“It began to be too much.

“The depression got worse, and I wandered away from Peter and Charlotte. Civilized as they were, they didn’t feel the same aversion I was beginning to feel. They only wanted peace from the fight. I was so wearied by killing – killing anyone, even mere humans.

“Yet I had to keep killing. What choice did I have? I tried to kill less often, but I would get too thirsty and I would give in. After a century of instant gratification, I found self-discipline . . . challenging. I still haven’t perfected that.”

Jasper was lost in the story, as was Harry. It surprised him greatly when Jasper’s desolate expression smoothed into a peaceful smile. And from Bella’s jolt, Harry had to guess that it had shocked her also.

“I was in Philadelphia. There was a storm, and I was out during the day – something I was not completely comfortable with yet. I knew standing in the rain would attract attention, so I ducked into a little half-empty diner. My eyes were dark enough that no one would notice them, though this meant I was thirsty, and that worried me a little.

“She was there – expecting me, naturally.” Jasper chuckled once. “She hopped down from the high stool at the counter as soon as I walked in and came directly toward me.
“It shocked me. I was not sure if she meant to attack. That’s the only interpretation of her behavior my past had to offer. But she was smiling. And the emotions that were emanating from her were like nothing I’d ever felt before.

‘You’ve kept me waiting a long time,’ she said.”

Alice had gone to stand behind Bella again and the girl nearly jumped out of her skin when Alice started to talk.

“And you ducked your head, like a good Southern gentleman, and said, ‘I’m sorry, ma’am.’” Alice laughed at the memory.

Jasper smiled down at her. “You held out your hand, and I took it without stopping to make sense of what I was doing. For the first time in almost a century, I felt hope.”

Jasper took Alice’s hand as he spoke. Alice grinned at him, her face alight with cheer. “I was just relieved. I thought you were never going to show up.” They smiled at each other for a long moment, and then Jasper looked back at Bella, the soft expression lingering.

“Alice told me what she’d seen of Carlisle and his family. I could hardly believe that such an existence was possible. But Alice made me optimistic. So we went to find them.”

“Scared the hell out of them, too,” Edward said, rolling his eyes at Jasper before turning to Bella to explain. “Emmett and I were away hunting. Jasper shows up, covered in battle scars, towing this little freak” – he nudged Alice playfully – “who greets them all by name, knows everything about them, and wants to know which room she can move into.”

Alice and Jasper laughed in harmony, an odd symphony of soprano and bass.

“When I got home, all my things were in the garage,” Edward continued.

Alice shrugged at this. “Your room had the best view.”

They all laughed together now.

“That’s a nice story,” Bella said with a small smile and Harry had to agree – at least the last part was nice.

“I mean the last part,” Bella said defensively when the others turned to stare at her as if she were crazy. “The happy ending with Alice.”

“Alice has made all the difference,” Jasper agreed. “This is a climate I enjoy.”

There was a pause.

“An army,” Alice whispered, breaking it. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

Everyone was intent again, their eyes locked on Jasper’s face. Harry’s hand was clenched into a tight fist. That little idea had taken bloom during Jasper’s story. It was a newborn army in Seattle.

Blaise and Draco both turned to look at Harry as if questioning if it was their problem now. Harry wanted to say no, but could he really leave the Muggle population of Seattle to fend for themselves against rogue vampires? It wasn’t in his nature to do so.

“I thought I must be interpreting the signs incorrectly,” Jasper was saying to his family. “Because where is the motive? Why would someone create an army in Seattle? There is no history there, no
vendetta. It makes no sense from a conquest standpoint, either; no one claims it. Nomads pass through, but there’s no one to fight for it. No one to defend it from.”

Everyone looked tense. Harry wondered if they were on the same page as him.

“But I’ve seen this before,” Jasper continued. “And there’s no other explanation. There is an army of newborn vampires in Seattle. Fewer than twenty, I’d guess. The difficult part is that they are totally untrained. Whoever made them just set them loose. It will only get worse, and it won’t be much longer till the Volturi step in. Actually, I’m surprised they’ve let this go on so long.”

“What can we do,” Carlisle asked.

“If we want to avoid the Volturi’s involvement, we will have to destroy the newborns, and we will have to do it very soon.” Jasper’s face was hard. Knowing his story now, it wasn’t hard to guess why. Even Harry was having a hard time coming to this decision. No one who had to fight through one war wanted to go through another.

“I can teach you how. It won’t be easy in the city. The young ones aren’t concerned about secrecy, but we will have to be. It will limit us in ways that they are not. Maybe we can lure them out.” Good idea, but Harry would rather they didn’t do that.

“Maybe we won’t have to,” Edward said and his voice was bleak. “Does it occur to anyone else that the only possible threat in the area that would call for the creation of an army is . . . us?”

Jasper’s eyes narrowed; Carlisle’s widened, shocked. Harry thought over Edward’s words and stiffened, sharing a look with Draco. The blonde looked very much like he had the day he had thought the killings in Seattle were being done by Death Eaters.

“Tanya’s family is also near,” Esme said slowly.

“The newborns aren’t ravaging Anchorage, Esme. I think we have to consider the idea that we are the targets.”

“They’re not coming after us,” Alice insisted with a conviction Harry did not understand, and then she paused, her eyes filming over much as it had that one day at lunch. “Or . . . they don’t know that they are. Not yet.”

“What is that?” Edward asked, curious and tense. “What are you remembering?”

“Flickers,” Alice said vaguely. “I can’t see a clear picture when I try to see what’s going on, nothing concrete. But I’ve been getting these strange flashes. Not enough to make sense of. It’s as if someone’s changing their mind, moving from one course of action to another so quickly that I can’t get a good view. . . .”

“Indecision,” Jasper asked in disbelief.

“I don’t know. . . .”

“Not indecision,” Edward growled. “Knowledge. Someone who knows you can’t see anything until the decision is made. Someone who is hiding from us. Playing with the holes in your vision.”

“She has visions,” Neville asked in disbelief. Draco and Harry both shrugged.

“Of course she does. Don’t know that some Muggle vampires get special gifts,” Luna said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. Well, to Luna it may be, she was a Ravenclaw after all.
“Who would know that,” Alice whispered, looking suddenly horrified.

Edward’s eyes were hard as ice as he said, “Aro knows you as well as you know yourself.” Harry wondered who Aro was. And the Volturi. And the Tanya.

So many new questions and so few answers.

The Cullens were now debating over whether or not these Volturi people were creating the army and why.

Harry honestly couldn’t follow it all because he didn’t know who the Volturi were.


“We’ll need you to teach us, Jasper,” Carlisle finally said. “How to destroy them.” Harry let out a small sigh and turned to Draco with a slight smile, silently saying that all was good and the Cullens would handle this.

“We’re going to need help,” Jasper said and that brought Harry up a put that smug smile back on Draco’s face. “Do you think Tanya’s family would be willing . . . ? Another five mature vampires would make an enormous difference. And then Kate and Eleazar would be especially advantageous on our side. It would be almost easy, with their aid.”

“We’ll ask,” Carlisle answered.

Jasper held out a cell phone. “We need to hurry.”

Carlisle took the phone, and paced toward the windows. He dialed a number, held the phone to his ear, and laid the other hand against the glass. He stared out into the foggy morning with a pained and ambivalent expression.

Harry thought this was the perfect time to get some questions answered.

“So . . . does anyone want to inform us on what exactly is going on?”

Bella jumped a little and turned to stare at them with wide eyes, as if she had forgotten they were there. Edward turned also, his jaw clenched tightly. He didn’t seem like he was going to talk any time soon. Harry narrowed his eyes at that.

“Look. We,” Harry began, waving his hand at his group, “aren’t exactly helpless. And if you need help we’ll be happy to provide it.” At this Emmett let out a snort. Draco stepped forward with a low growl.

“Don’t test me vampire,” the blonde hissed. “I could take you out with a simple wave of my wand. You wouldn’t know what hit you.” Emmett huffed and shrugged as if Draco’s words meant nothing to him.

“If you don’t want out help then we don’t care,” Harry spoke then, holding his arm out to keep Draco from doing something rash. “I’m sick of fighting anyways. I just wanted to make sure you all knew that we could be of some help.”

Edward opened his mouth now, an angry retort ready on his lips, but he was distracted when there was a sudden change in Carlisle’s tone.
“Oh,” the doctor said, his voice sharper in surprise. “We didn’t realize . . . that Irina felt that way.”

Edward groaned and closed his eyes.

“Damn it. Damn Laurent to the deepest pit of hell where he belongs.”

“Laurent?” Bella whispered, the blood emptying from her face.

Carlisle was still talking, his voice not quite pleading. Persuasive, but with an edge. Then the edge abruptly won out over the persuasion.

“There’s no question of that,” Carlisle said in a stern voice. “We have a truce. They haven’t broken it, and neither will we. I’m sorry to hear that. . . . Of course. We’ll just have to do our best alone.”

Carlisle shut the phone without waiting for an answer. He continued to stare out into the fog.

“What’s the problem,” Emmett murmured to Edward.

“Irina was more involved with our friend Laurent than we knew. She’s holding a grudge against the wolves for destroying him to save Bella. She wants —” He paused, looking over at Bella.

“Go on,” she said evenly.

“She wants revenge. To take down the pack. They would trade their help for our permission.”

“No,” Bella and Draco gasped at the same time. Harry looked curiously at the Malfoy, but he was staring at the wall, his face tense.

“Don’t worry,” Edward said in a flat voice. “Carlisle would never agree to it.” Edward hesitated a moment, then sighed. “Nor would I. Laurent had it coming and I still owe the wolves for that.”

“This isn’t good,” Jasper said suddenly. “It’s too even a fight. We’d have the upper hand in skill, but not numbers. We’d win, but at what price?” His tense eyes flashed to Alice’s face and then away.

Harry gritted his teeth. He may have known the Cullens for a little bit but he didn’t like the idea of them being take out. Especially Edward . . .

“Then let us help,” Luna spoke up for him and they all turned to stare at them.

“No,” Carlisle immediately protested, “I don’t want to involve any of you. You have no——”

“Don’t tell me that there’s no reason I should help you all,” Harry growled suddenly, cutting Carlisle off. Everyone was staring at Harry with surprise now.

He was so angry his magic was seeping out of his skin and saturating the air. Luna and the guys were backing away from him cautiously.

“You know damn well that I’m invested in this. I’m sure you all know what Edward is to me, so don’t you dare keep me out of this. I’m bloody well helping you, whether you want me to or not. I will not stand by idly while someone else I love dies!” And with that said, Harry swept from the room, taking with him the dense feeling that had been in the air.

Everyone watched him go in stunned silence.

“Did he just admit that I was a loved one,” Edward asked after a moment.
Yeah so . . . I love Jasper. So I HAD to put his story in. I couldn't help myself. Sorry again for the book copy. Next one won't have any. I promise!
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

This is kind of a question-answer chapter - meaning it answers some questions I'm sure some of you had. Also, the long awaited auditions are finally here! So original lyrics in this chapter. They are solely mine so no stealies.

“I don’t understand,” President Stevens muttered, scratching at the back of his head with a ballpoint pen. His Head of the Auror Department, Kyle Daniels, leaned back in his chair and let out a wide yawn.

“I don’t understand either,” the black man agreed, nodding his head sagely. “Normally their governing body would have handled a situation like this. All of this,” – and here Kyle waved his hand over the desk where several reports were strewn about – “isn’t supposed to be happening.”

“Do you think this is the work of someone else,” Helen Bridges questioned from where she stood on President Stevens’ right – a clipboard pressed against her chest.

“No . . .” Kyle let out a long sigh and scratched absently at his ear.

“Look,” Stevens said after a minute’s pause. “This is obviously not going to go away as fast as we need it to. Maybe we should consider sending in a team —”

“I would love to send in a team,” Kyle interrupted, sounding bored as he gazed at his nails with disinterest. “However, all of my best men are out at the moment and for this assignment we need the best.”

“Well, how long are they going to be gone?” Stevens demanded.

“About one month.”

Silence followed his statement. President Stevens shared a tense look with his advisor, Helen. Then the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement spoke up for the first time since the meeting had been announced.

“What about Harry Potter?”

Harry awoke to something heavy pressing down on his chest.

He groaned and pushed at it.

Whatever it was giggled.

Harry blinked slowly and looked down at his chest – only to look straight into the amber eyes of his godson.
How Teddy had gotten into his room – and on his bed at that – Harry didn’t have the slightest idea. But here he was in his turquoise-haired glory, a thumb stuck passively in his mouth.

“Teddy, where on earth did you come from?”

Teddy giggled again and tilted his head to the side. Harry sighed and wrapped his arms around the toddler, shifting the boy from off of him.

It was then that he saw it.

A red husky, blinking at him with large red eyes and panting heavily as if it had just come from a run.

Harry stared at the strange animal, looking for all the world at a loss. That was how Neville found him ten minutes later when he strolled into the room.

“Hey, Harry, have you seen . . .” the blonde stopped short at the sight of the red husky cub seated upon Harry’s bed. “Oh there it is!”

Harry blinked and looked up at his fellow Gryffindor.

“Wait, you know what this is,” the Savior asked of the newborn. Neville nodded and grinned sheepishly, rubbing at the back of his neck.

“It’s a gift. From Hagrid.”

That was all Neville needed to say for Harry to understand. The Boy-Who-Lived sighed and shook his head, muttering about crazy half-giants and supposedly harmless pets.

“Alright then, can you tell me exactly what this is? Last I checked dogs weren’t red.”

To this Neville simply shrugged.

“I was actually hoping you could tell me,” his admitted apologetically. Harry sighed and stared back at the odd colored dog – which was still staring up at him.

“Well we’ll have to figure it out later. I’m gonna go down and make some breakfast, would you like to help?”

“Sure,” Neville agreed.

And that was when the husky let out a bark and ended up spewing fire – which set fire to Harry’s comforter and required a well placed *Aguamenti* and *Reparo* to fix things.

“You can’t be serious. You’ve completely lost your mind!”

Harry arched a brow questioningly at Draco when he joined their group at lunch. The blonde shrugged, although his bored look said he didn’t really care what it was Bella and Alice were arguing about now. In fact, it seemed the two had been arguing for a bit for everyone seemed to have resigned looks on their face – save for Edward who was looking a cross between annoyed and concerned.

But Harry wasn’t about to ask Edward what was going on.
He was still nursing hurt feelings at the way the vampire seemed to dismiss him yesterday when Harry had been offering to help.

But that didn’t mean the brunette could stop from listening in.

It seems like the argument had moved to more serious grounds – the newborns in Seattle that is. Edward was now telling Bella that they would be going into Seattle within a week – a thought that made Harry’s heart constrict painfully in his chest.

“You’re looking for help,” Bella said rather slowly, a thoughtful look on her face.

“Yes,” Alice said in an equally slow voice.

“Well,” and Bella’s voice was almost casual now. “I could help.” This declaration had Edward’s entire body tensing up. It was Alice, however, who said anything.

“That really wouldn’t be helpful.”

“Why not,” Bella was arguing and a slow sense of horrible realization was sweeping over Harry now, especially at Bella’s next words. “Eight in better than seven. There’s more than enough time.”

Bella wasn’t possibly thinking . . .

She had more sense than that.

Right?

Obviously not seeing as Alice’s next words were words to dissuade Bella from her ridiculous idea. Harry was clearly going to have to have another talk with Bella if the girl thought becoming a vampire could fix anything.

Now seemed like as good a time as any really.

“Hey, Bella,” Harry called, gathering the girl’s attention. “Can I have a word with you?” And he forced his expression into a friendly one so that Bella wouldn’t get the seriousness of the conversation they would be having.

Bella arched a brow at him but stood none the least.

“Actually,” she admitted as the two walked away from the table. “There’s something I’ve been meaning to ask you.” This brought Harry up for a moment and he sent the girl an inquiring look.

“It’s about Edward.”

“What about Edward,” Harry asked stiffly, his stance defensive. This drew another questioning look from Bella.

“Well,” she said slowly. “It’s really just something you said yesterday. . . .” Harry made a motion with his hand that urged her on. “Something like not standing idly by while someone else you loved died.”

Harry’s entire body froze.

Surely he didn’t say love . . . right. He had said ‘care for.’ He was sure of it. He was positive.

Because he didn’t love Edward.

He couldn’t love Edward.
Not yet at least.

And this thought frightened him.

Surely he wasn’t thinking about loving the vampire. This was just a little fling. So what if they were mates?

“Harry?”

Bella was waving a hand in front of Harry’s face, her expression one of concerned. And Harry suddenly remembered the reason why he had pulled Bella away from lunch.

“Look, it was nothing. I was just saying whatever in the heat of the moment,” Harry said quickly in a dismissive voice. Bella didn’t look the least bit fooled, but Harry rushed on before she could argue. “Anyways, that’s not what I wanted to talk with you about. I was actually wondering about that conversation you were just having with Alice.”

Now it was Bella’s turn to tense up and she eyed Harry shiftily.

“Yea,” she said slowly.

“Something about you helping the Cullens,” Harry went on, hoping he couldn’t have to say it out loud. But Bella didn’t seem to want to say it either, or anything for that matter and so Harry reiterated. “It seemed like you were suggesting that they turn you.”

And there it was – out there in the open for all to see.

“I already know all this,” Bella cut across rather suddenly, startling Harry from the neat little picture that was forming in his head. “I’ve already thought all this through. I know what I’m giving up, but at this point it doesn’t matter.”

“What are you talking about,” Harry demanded, suddenly confused.

He had thought, no, assumed that this had all been a rash decision that had sprung up from Bella’s need to help everyone. But from the sounds of it, Bella had actually thought about this for a while. How long, Harry wasn’t sure.

“I have to be turned Harry,” Bella told him, looking suddenly grave. “If the Cullens don’t turn me, I will be killed.”

Blaise sighed in frustration and threw down the quill he had been holding. He rubbed tiredly at his eyes before glaring at the documents spread out before him.

Suddenly he wished he was going to school with Potter and everyone else, because surely they didn’t have to deal with all this political, legal shit. Blaise swore if he had to sign another paper with,
‘Yes, we do want to move our vaults to the American branch of Gringotts’ he just might claw his eyes out.

“Hey, we have another one,” Neville’s voice called out and the just-turned vampire dropped another stack of parchment on the desk. Blaise stared blankly at the documents for a moment and the let out a loud roar that had Neville jumping back in surprise.

“What,” the former Gryffindor demanded in alarm.

“I can’t do this,” Blaise shouted, slamming his hand down on the desk. Rosalina Potter hissed at them, flipping her hair over her shoulder as she went to find yet another portrait that she could reside in and hopefully have some peace and quiet.

“Maybe you should take a break,” Neville suggested, gazing warily at the volatile teen.

“I don’t need a break,” Blaise growled, snatching up the quill again and practically stabbing at the top parchment. “Not when our leader – stab – has declared that I will handle this shit.” – stab – “No, I’m perfectly fine.” Another stab. There were now four holes in the parchment and Blaise rolled his eyes before growling out a repairing charm.

Neville gave Blaise a dubious look but didn’t decide to argue with him.

“I’ve actually been wondering about this whole leader stuff,” the blonde muttered, wondering if a distraction was what Blaise really needed. It seemed to work because the black Italian looked up, a look of relief on his face.

“You never did explain to me why you wanted to join Harry,” Neville reminded him and that was all the incentive Blaise needed to leave the work for the moment.

“It has to do with our inheritance. It binds us to him,” Blaise informed, leaning back in his chair, lacing his fingers behind his head, and crossing his feet at the ankles. Neville arched a brow curiously waiting for Blaise to continue.

“Have you heard about the Wolfe clan?”

At this question Neville nodded vigorously, his eyes going a little wide. He could clearly remember the tales of the legendary Wolfe clan. His grandmother used to tell him of how that powerful quartet had done things most wizards could only dream of. And then one day they just vanished without a trace.

“Well, that’s what we are.”

“Wait,” Neville said slowly, his brows furrowed. “You’re telling me. That you and Harry are . . . are . . . No way.” Blaise simply nodded, a cocky smirk making its way onto his lips.

“It’s true. I’m the last descendent of Raphael Zephyr, the one who could control fire. Draco is the descendent of Charity Alphorn of the Airs. Lovegood is the descendent of Lasik Serapha of the Waters. And Potter, our glorious leader, is the last descendent of Naira Peverell of the Earth. We make up the Wolfe clan, a name given to us when a witch saw our second animagus for, the wolf.”

Neville was now gazing at Blaise in open mouthed awe.

He couldn’t imagine that . . .

Then again, whenever Harry was involved one could expect the unexpected. That teen just seemed
to unearth things that people believed was lost to the world forever – for example: the Chamber of Secrets.

“If the rest of the Wizarding World knew this about you guys,” Neville said, his voice just as awed as his expression. Blaise snorted.

“They would be worshiping the very ground we walk on instead of trying to slander our leader with blatant lies.”

The two fell into silence, pondering over these words. A loud crack broke them from their thoughts moments later.

Neville turned to look inquiringly at the elf – Misty – who was bowing lowly at them, her nose almost touching the floor.

“Little Master Teddy is awake sirs,” she told them in her high-pitched elf voice.

“Err, thanks Misty,” Neville said awkwardly. Misty bowed again before disappearing with another crack. “I guess I’ll leave you to your work now.”

Blaise let out a low sigh, glaring at the documents.

“Yes, go look after the little monster,” he said and made a shooing motion with his hand.

Neville chuckled and left Blaise to the tiresome work of documentation.

Luna hummed softly as she navigated around the people leaving the school. They swirled around her like a swarm of doxies, all rushing to leave the campus ground so that they could be free until the next time they were trapped behind the walls of the school.

Luna weaved throughout them, making a game of it and trying to see if she could spot any wandering Yaksperns trying to sink into peoples’ skins. When they got there they cause people to break out with unexplainable rashes.

She was distracted from her search when she spotted Alice and Bella up ahead near one of the picnic benches, leaning into each other and talking in hushed whispers.

Luna cocked her head to the side and casted her gaze around in search for Edward – sure that he would be close by – but he was nowhere to be seen. And so she walked over to the two girls, knowing that now was her chance.

“Ladies.”

Bella jumped a little before turning around to look at Luna with wide eyes.

“Luna!”

“I’ve startled you,” Luna observed, looking up at the taller girl with luminous eyes. Bella blinked before letting out a little chuckle.

“Well yes you did.”

Luna nodded at that, tucking her long hair behind once ear – where one of her radish earrings
glimmered. The three then fell into an awkward kind of silence in which Luna stood there and swayed gentle to a song she was making up in her head.

“Um, can we help you with something,” Alice asked politely after the silence became something she could no longer bear.

“James isn’t falling in like you thought he would,” Luna said rather suddenly. Alice blinked and shared a startled look with Bella.

“What are you —?”

“Your plan,” Luna told them, sounding just shy of impatient. She swatted at the air a little, dislodging a Chikari that was trying to tie a knot into Bella’s hair. “It’s not working like you thought it will. It’s because James is really hard headed. The Wrackspurts have taken hold and they’re clouding his judgment.”

“Oh-kay,” Bella drawled, her confusion evident. She had no idea what Luna was going on about. And what was a Wrackspurt?

“So what do you suggest we do,” Alice asked and Bella turned to look at her like she was crazy. Surely she wasn’t asking Luna what to do. Bella wasn’t sure if the girl was capable of any kind of normal solutions.

“It’s quite simple,” the blonde said, nodding her head as if she were agreeing with something. “Let the tension build.”

Bella blinked.

Alice blinked.

Luna hummed.

“That’s surprisingly very simple,” Alice finally said, her tone clearly one of surprise.

“Just because I act the way I do doesn’t mean I’m incapable of simple logic. I was sorted into Ravenclaw, where *wit beyond measure is man’s greatest treasure,*” Luna told them serenely, and Bella cursed the fact that she was still clearly human and could therefore still blush.

“Well Luna,” Alice said to divert away from Bella’s clear embarrassment. She hooked her arm through Luna’s and pulled the girl in close. “This looks like the start of a beautiful relationship.”

“Oh, this is exciting,” Luna drawled. “I’ve only had James and Dragon as friends. I’ve never had any girl friends.” This startling confession made Bella feel even guiltier. Really, who was she to judge someone just because they were a little odd? Look at Alice.

“Well now you have us,” Bella said, coming up on Luna’s other side and hooking herself to the small girl as Alice had. “We should have a girl’s day.”

“Let’s go to an amusement park,” Luna said in agreement. “Let’s go to Disney World! I heard they have a dragon. I miss seeing dragons.” Bella blinked at that.

“Uh, Luna, Disney World is in California. We couldn’t possible make it there in time to get on any rides,” she told the girl gently, deciding to dismiss the whole dragon comment. If there were wizards in the world, who says there can’t be such things as dragons. “And even if we could, I don’t have the money —”
“Oh posh,” Luna cut across her. “I can get us there in two minutes.”

And with that said the three girls disappear with a loud crack that had several of Forks’ remaining students looking around in confusion.

“Welcome all to the auditions for Forks High’s Music Competition,” Ms. Abel said as way of greeting. A low murmur spread throughout the group in the auditorium. Harry shared a look with Draco.

Competition?

“Yes, yes, I know,” Ms. Abel continued, her voice rising over the murmurs. “As I explained to yesterday’s audition group I’ve managed to hash out all the details of this spur of the moment contest with our sponsor.” As she said this, she gestured toward the stage and out walked Alice in all her pixie-like glory.

“Hi everyone,” she chirped happily. “First I would like to say that yes this is a competition and yes there will be a prize for the winner. Second I would like to ask that anyone who is here on a dare please leave because some of the people here are actually serious about this.”

Here Alice paused and watched as a group of boys in the very back exited the auditorium, jeering loudly and making a big show of things.

“Moving on. The auditions today can be considered a first round. Our judges today will be the teachers of the music department. Those who make it past this round will move on to the actually competition where the students will vote on who’s best. That group will win a two thousand dollar scholarship and the opportunity to play at the graduation party that I’m having.”

Alice concluded with a little bow and gave the attention back to Ms. Abel, who was now calling the first group onto stage. While the group of girls started setting up, Harry leaned over to Draco.

“Is it me or does this seem just a little bit suspicious,” Harry questioned.

“Suspicious how,” the blonde inquired curiously.

Harry simply shrugged and settled for looking thoughtful.

It was just a little odd that the Cullens had been living in Fork for a while and never before did they decide to sponsor an event until now. Harry wanted to dwell on it, but really, what was so bad about a two thousand dollar scholarship and giving people an opportunity to show off their musical talents?

It was a while before Harry’s group was called up. The three walked up to the stage and began setting up their instruments.

Harry felt a lump form in his throat as a case of stage fright swept over him.

“Easy, peasy,” Luna whispered to him as she walked by to stand to the left of Draco’s drums. “Just like at home.”

Harry sent her a thankful look and turned to face the microphone and audience.

“Hey everyone. We’re the Hogwarts’ Wolves! And this is a little song I wrote called, ‘Standing Tall.’!”
With that said Harry took a step back and Draco set up the base line with Edward weaving in a little melody on his keyboard. Luna jumped in then with a little cord and Harry laid down a complicated riffed. Already they could see that they had the audience’s attention.

Harry and Luna both opened up, their voices mixing together to create a unique taste – low and melodic Harry with warbling bird-like Luna.

“Don’t try to tell me
That your life is over
For it’s just beginning
So take my hand
And we’ll keep on living
So don’t you dare give in
Just keep on
Walking far!”

Luna took the next verse all on her own, letting the bird-like sound of her voice spread out over the room.

“I’ll keep on leading
So you’ll keep believing
And we’ll never give up
We’ll take a stand
And stand tall!”

Harry grinned, feeling like he was in his element. It was the same feeling he got when he was playing Quidditch. He took over the next verse, letting the music wash over him and take him away.

“As I go through these dark
Dark days
I wanna stop and drift away
You came into my life
And took away the pain
How did you do it?
Are you the one for me?
You just say . . .”

Luna jumped in again for the chorus.
“I’ll keep on leading
So you’ll keep believing
And we’ll never give up
We’ll take a stand
And stand tall!”

Draco jumped in all of a sudden, taking over the next verse. His deep aristocratic drawl adding a new kind of sound to the group.

“Here I stood
Ready to give up
Then I stop and looked up
And there you are
Smiling at me
Begging me
Please, oh please
You take my hand and pull me away
And then I know everything’s okay
And then your words come to me
They say . . .”

Edward took the next verse, adding his own musical voice to the mix. While the others’ voices we’re just shy of unique, Edward’s sounded like the voice of an angel.

“I’ll keep on leading
So you’ll keep believing
And we’ll never give up
We’ll take a stand
And stand tall!”

All four of them took up the chorus this time, and their voice were both a weird mash-up of sound and something extraordinary all at the same time.

So don’t try to tell me
That you’re life is over
For it’s just beginning
They ended with another nifty little rift from Harry.

The applause was thunderous, but it was the judges that made the final call.

Harry waited patiently, breathing a little bit heavily. One by one the judges held up a card. If they got three checks they were through. Taking a deep breath, Harry scanned the cards one by one, counting in his head.

One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five!

Harry felt Luna knock into him as she hugged him tightly. And then Draco was there thumping him on the back. Harry felt like his heart just might burst. He turned to look behind him, into the face of Edward and beamed brightly.

Sure, it was only just the audition but it was the first thing besides Quidditch in which Harry had gotten such positive feedback.

Draco was actually grinning as he maneuvered his bike through the streets of La Push.

He didn’t want to think too deeply on why he was grinning or why he was heading to La Push of all places – but he was. For the first time in what seemed like forever, Draco was honest to God happy and he was letting himself feel that way.

He wasn’t questioning it.

Because if he started questioning it he was sure his Malfoy upbringing would rear its ugly head and he wouldn’t be feeling so happy anymore.

For once in his life Draco was just going with the flow.

It was terribly frightening, but he felt like he owed himself this.

And it was also exhilarating.

Draco basked in it, soaking it up and letting it spread through his body. He wasn’t even paying all that much attention to the road.

It was pure reflex – although he would claim that he saw it coming later – that kept Draco from knocking into the figure standing in the road.

Draco’s bike skidded around the figure and hit a patch of stones by the edge of the road. Both Draco
and the bike flipped into the trees.

Draco groaned and pushed the bike off of him. Anger speared through him and he turned to glare hatefully at the fool who had been standing in the middle of the bloody street. Said fool, however, was already at Draco’s side, fussing over him and apologizing furiously.

Draco blinked up into the face of Jacob Black and all anger just seemed to wash itself out of his body. He sighed and swatted at Jacob’s hands.

“I’m fine,” he told the shape shifter. “No blood, no foul.” Jacob still looked like someone had just killed his dog. “Look, just make it up to me, okay?”

“Ohkay,” Jacob agreed quickly. He then moved to help Draco up, brushing dirt off of the blonde’s clothes. “I’m really sorry though. I smelt you coming and I just wanted to catch your attention. It was incredibly stupid, I know but —”

“I get it,” Draco cut him off with a slight smirk.

An awkward silence descended between them. Draco could feel a blush trying to work its way onto his face as he suddenly remembered what they had done a couple of night ago.

“Hey, do you wanna come to my house and clean up,” Jacob asked in an effort to break the awkwardness. Draco looked a little startled at the idea. “It’s just up there. And we can talk or something.”

“Talk,” Draco repeated faintly, staring in the direction that Jacob had pointed. It took all of two seconds for Draco to decide. “Yeah, sure.”

The walk to Jacob’s house was just as awkward. Draco was searching his mind constantly for things to talk about, but it was as if his thoughts had suddenly decided to take a break. And then they were at the shifter’s house.

It was a small thing. It looked like it only held two rooms at the most. But it had a sort of charm to it that Malfoy manor never seemed to have. It was definitely lived in, Draco thought. All the furniture was worn and the living room was cramped.

“So,” Jacob asked nervously from where he was standing in the tiny kitchen.

“I like it,” Draco admitted, his voice thick with surprised honesty. “It has a lot of character.”

“Thanks,” the large teen mumbled and shuffled toward the couch where he all but sprawled out on it. Draco shifted awkwardly on his feet for a moment before moving to sit in the small space next to Jacob.

“So . . . what kind of house did you grow up in?”

“A manor,” Draco admitted a little sheepishly. “But it’s not as cool as it sounds. There’s just too much space and I don’t know how many times I got lost when I was little and trying to go to breakfast.”

Jacob didn’t seem to know what to say about that and so he picked another subject.

“What are your parents like?”

Jacob was confused when Draco tensed up all of a sudden, and he was about to retract the question
and ask something else, but Draco moved to answer it anyways.

“My father is not someone I like to talk about,” the older teen started slowly. “He wasn’t a particularly good father. Never offered words of pride or anything like that. He was . . . a cold man. And he tried to make me a copy of him.”

Draco looked down at his hands, flexing his fingers. Jacob saw a little smile make its way onto the blonde’s lips.

“Now my mother, she is probably the kindest and most amazing person I know. If I didn’t have her . . . I don’t know where I’d be in life. It was an arranged marriage,” Draco explained further for Jacob. “I think the only reason my mother stayed with my father was because of me. She wanted to make sure that I didn’t turn out to be as rotten on the inside as he was.”

“Will I ever get to meet her,” Jacob asked, pulling Draco from his thoughts. The blonde arched a brow at the shifter.

“Why would you want to meet her,” he questioned. Jacob shrugged looking suddenly uncomfortable.

“Well . . . because she’s your mom. And we’re —”

“We’re what,” Draco demanded sharply. He moved away from the wolf-shifter to peer up at him with hard eyes.

“I . . . I,” Jacob stammered, looking unsurely around the room. Draco reached forward in a rash show of boldness and grabbed at Jacob’s face, forcing the younger teen to look him in the eyes. Dark chocolate gazed into hard silver.

“Jacob.”

Draco said his name in a warning tone.

“I imprinted on you,” Jacob blurted out, unable to break away from Draco’s gaze.

Draco dropped his hands, letting them fall to the couch as he stared up at Jacob in shock. He wasn’t one hundred percent sure what imprinting meant, but he was sure that it had something to do with them being mates.

“What exactly is imprinting,” Draco drawled after a moment of silence.

Harry didn’t think he had ever been in a more uncomfortable situation as the one he was in now. He had come to the Cullens house to pick up Teddy – who he had left with Rosalie seeing as the vampire was so taken with him – and somehow he had been coerced into have tea and biscuits with Esme. Or rather, she was feeding him tea and biscuits and watching him eat it.

As much as Harry liked Esme – for her kindheartedness and her big heart and motherly ways – it was still uncomfortable sitting here eating while she just watched and quizzed him about anything and everything.

“And how are your parents handling your move,” Esme questioned kindly as Harry took a bite out of another biscuit. For a person who could no longer eat, she sure knew how to bake.
Harry swallowed the sweet before answering.

“They’re dead Ma’am.”

“Please dear, it’s Esme,” the motherly vampire said, a sad smile taking over her face. “And I’m very sorry to hear that.”

“It’s okay, Esme. They died a long time ago.”

Esme looked like she wanted to say more, but a cough from the doorway had her stopping. Harry looked over to see Edward standing there giving Esme as significant look.

“Oh, um . . . I have some things I need to speak with Carlisle about,” Esme suddenly said, getting up from where she had been seated next to Harry. She sent the dark-haired teen a smile and said, “You can take those cookies with you if you don’t finish it, okay.”

“Okay,” Harry agreed, bemused and watched as Esme flitted out of the room. Edward took up her spot.

“Are you done,” he asked, motioning to the biscuits that Harry hadn’t touched since Esme had left. Harry pushed the plate away to show that he was. “Okay then. Can we finally talk?”

Harry sighed and grabbed at the cup of tea, letting it warm his fingers.

“I thought we already had our talk.”

“We got . . . distracted,” Edward informed him. Harry blushed a bright red at that and looked down into his tea. “Why are you avoiding this so much?”

Harry peered up at Edward from under his bangs, not sure how to answer the question.

How could he explain the overwhelming fear that gripped his heart whenever he thought about giving in? How could he explain that he didn’t think he was capable of love? How could he explain that he felt like he was endangering Edward’s life just by being here? That being the soul mate of Harry Potter was possibly the worst thing that could possible happen to him?

He couldn’t, because saying it out loud made everything real and horribly terrifying. And if he ever voiced his thoughts he was sure they wouldn’t be as sound as they were in his head.

“Harry?”

“I just don’t want to talk about this,” Harry murmured lowly. He felt Edward’s hand under his chin and he didn’t fight the pull as he was turned to face the bronze-haired vampire.

“Okay, we don’t have to talk about it,” Edward said just as lowly. His eyes were a dark amber now, and Harry felt like he was drowning in them. He could feel Edward’s breath ghosting over his lips . . .

“Harry will you let me plan Luna’s surprise party?”

Alice looked innocent enough as she gazed over at Harry. She looked for all the world like she hadn’t just interrupted something important, but Harry wasn’t all that fooled. Not with that mischievous gleam in the small vampire’s eyes.

“What,” Harry questioned, trying to will his blush way.
“Luna’s surprise party,” Alice repeated.

“We weren’t,” Harry started to say then shook his head and thought better of it. This was Alice they were talking about. “Sure Alice. You can plan the party.”

“Oo, goodie,” the vampire cheered with a clap of her hands. “We can have it here. It’ll be like a prequel to the graduation party. We need to get started on the cake. And gifts!” Alice let out a sudden gasp, a look of horror flashing across her face. “I haven’t even gotten her a present yet.” And then the girl was gone from the room, leaving Harry staring at the place where she had been standing in amazement.

“What have I done,” the brunette whispered in mock shock. Edward let out a low chuckle that sent a thrill through Harry’s body.

“Alice is a force to be reckoned with.” Harry laughed his agreement, turning toward Edward with a smile. A peculiar look made its way onto Edwards face, but Harry hardly noticed.

“I never thought I would meet someone just as odd as Luna, but here she is.”

Edward’s hand was under Harry’s chin again. But this time he traced his finger up Harry’s jaw and curled his finger’s around his cheek.

“I love it when you smile,” the vampire muttered lowly. Harry’s smile slid right off his face and the intense feeling from before Alice had interrupted them returned in full vengeance. Edward’s hand had now slid back to cup the back of Harry’s neck.

Edward pulled Harry close, their bodies aligned. Harry could feel the coldness of Edward’s skin seeping through his shirt and he shivered reflexively. His cool lips pressed once against Harry’s cheek, his nose, the corner of his mouth . . .

“What kind of things does Luna like?”

Harry blinked furiously to get the clouds from his mind. It took him a moment to understand what Alice had asked of him. He was vaguely aware of the heated glare Edward was sending his little sister, but he chose to ignore it – that and the blush that was covering his entire body now.

“She likes to paint,” Harry told Alice faintly.

The girl was grinning up at him and he wondered if there was anything else she wanted.

“Is that all Alice,” Edward demanded in an even voice. The girl nodded and then skipped slowly from the room. “Honestly that girl.”

“Hmm,” Harry hummed vaguely, his head still not completely clear, especially since Edward was rubbing soothing circles into his back with one hand and the other was still cupping the back of his neck. Harry tried to move back to his chair – he wasn’t sure when he had climbed into Edward’s lap – but Edward’s hold on him wasn’t easily broken.

Not that Harry was trying too hard.

“You’re always fighting me,” Edward observed.

“You’re always crowding me,” Harry shot back, but he relaxed against Edward anyways, allowing the vampire to hold him close. Edward pressed a kiss to Harry’s forehead and the teen’s eyes fluttered shut. He leaned in closer, allowing his instinct to take over and thinking that now, finally
Harry jumped away from Edward in a move that even surprised the vampire. 

He was breathing heavy, his eyes wild as he looked over to the lean form of Rosalie standing in the doorway – Teddy perched comfortably on her hip. 

The toddler was reaching his arms out to his godfather, his face bright with a smile. 

“Da,” he called again, and balled his hands into fist as is beckoning Harry. The teen Savior smiled shakily at his godson before going over to relieve Rosalie of the babe and handing him one of Esme’s biscuits. 

“Hey Teddy bear, how was your day?” 

In response Teddy began to babble about, only ever other word an actual word although they didn’t make sense with any legit kind of story. The-Boy-Who-Lived and the metamorphagus both disappeared into the living room. 

When they were gone Rosalie arched a brow questioningly at Edward, who groaned and said, “I never thought the day would come where I would hate a child.” 

To that Rosalie snorted and shook out her blonde hair.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

So more flashback in this chapter and what i think in a really funny ending. Enjoy!

Harry awoke to a crying baby, loud yells, and the strong smell of smoke filling his nose. He shot up quickly, a little disoriented to find himself in the sitting room and not his bed. Stumbling forward, Harry scooped up Teddy who was wailing loudly from his playpen and then opened the door leading out into the hallway.

The smoke was even worse here, curling almost sentient-like around the ceiling. Further down the hallway Harry could make out the flickering shadows of flames.

Panic and fear speared through Harry’s body and he immediately shook of the last remnants of sleep. It was almost funny how easily it was for him to slip into battle mode, with his wand drawn and Teddy tucked expertly against his shoulder.

The fire came from the front of the house and it had already eaten the front door away. Harry felt a sense of sadness sweep over him as he watched the familiar umbrella stand melt away in the heat.

“Finally,” a voice huffed next to his ear and Harry turned his head to catch the irritated silver eyes of his roommate. “Where the bloody hell have you been Potter? This fire has been going on for about five minutes.”

Malfoy looked ruffled and there was a smudge of soot on his face. It was only the panic in Malfoy’s eyes, however, that kept Harry from commented on the blonde’s appearance.

“Where’s Luna,” Harry asked as he casted an Agumenta at the fire. His eyes narrowed when the water simply evaporated mid air. Well that wasn’t good, but this didn’t look like Fiendfire.

“She disappeared upstairs raving on about something or another,” Malfoy said with a snort, while he subtly guided Harry back down the hallway and away from the fire. “So what’s the plan, Leader?”

“The plan,” Harry said with a roll of his eyes, “Is to get everything you can and Apparate out. I’m bringing the wards down; they’re kind of pointless at this point.”

“Alright, but where are we Apparating to,” Malfoy demanded with his own eye roll. Harry sighed.

“The park down the street,” he said shortly. “Actually I want you to go now; I’ll get your things.” And then he shoved Teddy into Malfoy’s arms. Malfoy’s mouth opened up and Harry could see the argument about to start. So he cut Malfoy his sternest look and the blonde clamed up. In the next moment he was going with the familiar crack of Apparation.

Harry’s entire body sagged with relief now that Teddy was safely out of harm’s way. Shaking his head, Harry eyes narrowed a little as he took in the flames inching their way down the hallway. Using his Seeker skills and years of running from Dudley, Harry darted across the hallway and up the stairs just in time for them to erupt into flames also.
“I suppose we won’t we getting out that way,” a calm voice said with a small sigh. Harry turned to see Luna standing at the top of the staircase. She was swaying a bit as she peered at him. “Are we Apparating out,” she asked curiously.

“That’s the plan,” Harry told her. “We just have to collect our—”

“Already done,” Luna sang, patting her pocket. Harry blinked before a smile broke across his face.

“Brilliant,” he told her and Luna smiled back in pleasure. “So we’re going to the park down the street. Malfoy’s already there with Teddy.”

“Yes sir,” Luna said seriously. She then pulled out her wand, which she had been using as a hair ornament, and disappeared with a loud crack. Harry was quick to follow her.

“That was fast. Did you get all my stuff,” Malfoy asked, rushing toward them as soon as they had appeared in the park. It was just coming on dawn so they were safe from Muggle eyes, something Harry hadn’t considered until just them.

“Luna said she got everything,” Harry said, looking at Malfoy with bemusement when he shoved a sniffling Teddy into Harry’s arms.

“Are you sure you got everything,” Malfoy demanded, whirling on Luna. “My mother’s portrait, the box under my desk—”

“Do stop fretting,” Luna said in a vague tone. “I got everything.” Malfoy huffed but decided to let the matter die for them moment. As a unit the three turned to watch the once magnificent House of Black go up in flames.

“I still don’t know what the bloody hell happened,” Malfoy said after a long moment of silence. “Did that senile house elf leave the stove on?”

“This was no accident,” Harry told the aristocrat, his eyes narrowing at the thought. He could remember the hate filled words that someone had thrown at him just the other day. ‘Down with Bloody Potter,’ some had yelled over the din in the Leaky Cauldon. Harry had never figured out who it was, but it was no coincidence that his home burned a couple of days after the sentiment had been uttered.

“I was afraid you would say that,” Malfoy muttered lowly with a little sigh. “So I suppose we’ll have to take up residence with my mother until we find new accommodations.”

“Oh,” Luna sighed dreamily. “I’ve always wanted to see more of Malfoy Manor besides the dungeon.”

Both Malfoy and Harry flinched at the girl’s blunt words. Harry really didn’t want to go to Malfoy Manor, but they really had nowhere else to live.

“Alright Malfoy,” Harry said, turning to him and placing his hand on his bony shoulder. “Lead the way.” And the trio disappeared again with a loud crack.

“Tell me again why I have to come with you and not someone else,” Blaise demanded as he calmly picked his way through the forest. Luna hummed and twirled a few feet in front of him, somehow making it pass the poking branches and fallen logs easily.
“We were lucky enough that the shape shifters didn’t notice that Neville was a vampire last time, but we can’t take that chance again. James and Dragon are composing. That leaves you.”

Blaise had to admit, her argument was sound, although really, Luna was powerful and creative enough to protect herself.

“All right,” Blaise said, letting that argument drop for now. “But why are we going back to La Push?”

“To give the shifters these,” Luna told him and she twirled to his side and waved a couple of tickets in his face.

Blaise reached out automatically to grab at the waving hand, his hand coming to curl around Luna’s thin wrist and he stared at the tickets she had been practically shoving into his face.

“Luna,” Blaise began in a patient tone although he couldn’t help rolling his eyes. “You only have three tickets here. Last I checked there were at least eight shifters.”

Blaise thought he had made a very good point and was therefore surprised when Luna rolled her eyes at him in return.

“I know that, Blaze,” Luna said in an uncharacteristically normal voice, although the name she came up for Blaise was a little more toward her loopy side. “Contrary to popular belief I do have a brain and therefore I know how to count.”

Okay, so maybe he had forgotten for a moment that Luna had been sorted into the house for brains – it was easy mistake after listening to half the nonsense that came out of her mouth. But that still didn’t explain why she only had three tickets when she clearly needed more.

“I believe I will only need three for today,” Luna told him after an unnervingly long stretch of silence.

Ah! There was the Loony Lovegood they all knew and loved.

Deciding to drop the matter for now, Blaise allowed Luna to go back to her twirling as the duo continued their mostly silent trek through the forest toward La Push. After a while Blaise started to wonder why they hadn’t taken Luna’s car, but then realized this was Luna so she probably had some wacked out idea that they’d have a better chance of running into some odd creature if they walked.

Blaise wondered not for the first time how he had ended up in this weird group with this strange girl. Sure, Draco was tolerable when he wasn’t acting like a drama queen and whining about some injustice done to him. And Potter was damned powerful so it wasn’t that much of a hassle to be one of his followers. But Luna Lovegood . . . ?

Then again, it could be reasoned that his relationship with Neville was odd.

Really though, old House rivalries aside, Neville was probably the coolest person Blaise had ever met. And if anyone ever caught wind of that thought Blaise would cheerfully roast them to death and danced around the fire while laughing hysterically.

But, really, Neville was cool . . . once he grew into his confidence. Actually, although no one really knew, Blaise and Neville had struck up and tentative kind of friendship in sixth year that kind of managed to survive the death of Dumbledore and the Carrows takeover of Hogwarts and only grew stronger after the war. It was astonishingly easy to like the former Gryffindor. He was just so . . . calm and wise, when people took the time to actually talk to him. And all the clumsy bad stuff that happened to him had only proved to make him have a kind of ironic humor.
Blaise was sure that if he had grown up like Neville had he would have been just the slightest bit jaded – or rather in a different way than he was now.

The sound of snarls and growls and snapping jaws drew Blaise’s attention and he felt himself shifting before he had even consciously thought about it.

Darting forward, Blaise immediately spotted the source of the sound, two abnormally large wolves fighting in the middle of a clearing. Blaise assumed the wolves were shape-shifters because there was Seth Clearwater, shouting at them to stop and calm down.

Shaking his head at the childishness of it all, Blaise ran into the fray, startling the small grey wolf. Blaise used the shock to knock the larger wolf down and he snapped threateningly at the male’s throat.

In the next moment the two were shifting back, revealing a very naked Leah and Paul. Leah darted immediately for the trees, her face a bright red. Paul only shrugged sheepishly into his pants, trying not to notice the way Luna had been casually staring at his naked form.

“What are you guys doing here,” he asked with a scowl, folding his muscular arms over his bare chest and trying to look menacing.

“We came to give you invites,” Luna sang, twirling around the large male’s form. She even trailed her fingers lightly over his bicep, which was about the highest part of him she could reach. Paul’s entire body shook and Blaise thought he was going to shift again, but he seemed to control himself.

“Invites,” Seth echoed, confusion clear on his face.

“Lovegood, Potter, and Malfoy are in some kind of band and they’re doing a performance at the school,” Blaise elaborated when it looked like Luna wouldn’t. She was now winding her way in between Leah and Paul’s body in a figure eight.

“You’re injured,” Luna suddenly trilled, cutting off whatever Leah had been about to ask. They all turned to look at the small girl who was poking at Paul’s elbow. The hulking shape-shifter winced and pulled away and it was then that Blaise noticed that his arm was twisted weirdly and bleeding.

“It’s nothing. It'll heal in a little bit,” Paul was saying, cradling his arm to his chest. Luna frowned up at him.

“I can guess as much,” she said sounding shockingly superior. “However, it still needs to be set properly.” She then snapped her fingers impatiently at him until he relented his arm.

Blaise winced at the sound of bones rubbing against each other when Luna re-broke Paul’s healing bones and set them properly. Paul just let out an aloud hiss as the only sign of pain. Luna then tore off a good chunk of her skirt and created a makeshift sling, sliding Paul’s arm carefully into it.

“Are you okay,” Seth asked nervously, fluttering around the pair with a concerned expression. Paul waved him off with his good hand.

“I’ll be fine. You know that,” he told the younger boy with a scowl.

“Yes, you will be now,” Luna agreed, her voice picking up its dreamy quality once more. “Although I’m highly fascinated at your healing rate. I wonder why that is? Is it something with the chromosomes, or maybe in the biological make up? I suppose some animals can heal quickly, is that incorporated into your being . . . ?”
Luna trailed off into a mass of medical mumbo-jumbo that Blaise couldn’t make heads-nor-tails off, and looking around at the others they didn’t have a clue either.

“So . . . about this band,” Seth said as a way of changing the subject.

“Right,” Blaise said, jumping on the thought. He moved over to the distracted Luna and snagged the tickets from where they were sticking out of her sleeve.

“Here you guys go. It’s on Saturday and the winners are probably going to be playing at the Cullen’s party so you might as well come to that to.”

“I don’t think we’re invited to the Cullen’s,” Leah sneered and rolled her eyes at him as if her were some kind of child.

“Whatever,” Blaise said, not the least bit affected. “I’m just extending the invite. Come if you want.”

With that said, he turned around and began walking away. Luna could follow him if she wanted, he wasn’t her nanny.

Neville frowned thoughtfully, his eyes trained intensely on the cup of blood sitting tantalizingly in front of him. Jasper had a hand on his arm, but it wasn’t restraining at all, just resting there as a reminder. This trust in him was what had Neville sitting stock still, but his eyes wouldn’t move away from that bloody cup.

He was at the Cullen’s house, learning about control from Jasper. Carlisle had thought it was a good idea seeing as Jasper was the only one who knew how to deal with newborns, although Neville was a slightly different kind of newborn seeing as he had magic.

“It’s all about blocking,” Jasper said softly, his voice nice and calming. “You know how everything seems to have increase; you have to focus on the part of your mind that thinks about blood and just . . . block it out. It’s kind of like thinking about your favorite food but telling yourself that you don’t need it.”

“I can do that,” Neville murmured, his brows furrowed in concentration.

It was kind of hard to do what Jasper was saying, however, because his mind could think about everything all at once now. And the smell of Bella was all over the house – Neville wouldn’t be surprised if he started licking the floors trying to get a taste.

And that cup of blood was just sitting right there. All he had to do was reach out a grab it . . .

“Concentrate Neville,” Jasper commanded, no doubt feeling Neville’s blood lust rise.

Neville felt his face trying to flush, but since he was no longer living it didn’t. It was weird. His mind wanted to do so many things that his body had given up.

“Try replacing the blood with thoughts of a hobby. You like plants right? Try thinking about that,” Jasper suggested.

Neville nodded and a small smile found its way onto his lips. He envisioned the cup as a pot of waving Snargaluff. He wondered if Harry had any in his family’s greenhouse.

“Very good Neville,” Jasper said suddenly, breaking through Neville’s thoughts about the plants that
Neville nodded, lifted his wand, and vanished the cup before he could give into temptation and drain it. He’d only been a vampire for a week and Jasper swore his control was really good for a newborn, but he still felt on edge. He figured it was a small miracle that Harry, Malfoy, Blaise, and Luna were all magical and therefore didn’t smell all that much like Muggles did.

“Thanks for this Jasper,” Neville whispered softly to the blonde vampire and he received a crooked smile. Neville just stared at it for a moment. It still surprised him a little whenever he saw Jasper show happiness. When he took in all those scars and given Jasper’s past, well . . . he mostly came off a scary. But now Neville knew better. Jasper was really just a very nice person.

He was a bit like Harry actually. They were the same kind of war-worn hero with an insane amount of calm serenity about them. Although being an Empath requires Jasper to have a tight control on his emotions.

“So what do you think about,” Neville asked curiously when the silence stretched too long for him. “Or do you just block it out?”

Jasper gave him an amused look and for a moment Neville thought he wasn’t going to answer. “I like the world’s history, so I think about that.”

Neville’s brows furrowed at that. He didn’t think history was all that interesting, Binns’ class had sufficiently steered him away from it. But if he thought about it history could be kind of interesting, like reading a good book.

“Okay,” Neville said after a while. “What kind of history?”

“Mostly wars,” Jasper admitted a bit sheepishly. “You’d think after living through one I would hate it but how a country reacts during a war . . . well it’s always kind of interested me. I think it’s mostly the resilience of the country.”

“I suppose,” Neville said slowly, his mind turning toward the Wizarding War and Hogwarts under siege. Trying to look at it from an outsider’s perspective, it really was kind of amazing how they had defeated Voldemort. “Yeah, I can see what you mean. The second war was pretty amazing if you think about it – especially the Battle of Hogwarts.”

“The Battle of what,” Jasper asked, confusion clear in his voice. Neville jolted a little and turned to look at Jasper with wide eyes. He was panicking a little bit now, wondering if he had let something slip that Harry didn’t want known. It wouldn’t be the first time he accidently gave away secrets.

“Don’t worry about it,” Neville told Jasper hastily, jumping to his feet. “Anyways, I should probably go. I left Teddy with Blaise.”

Jasper stared blankly after the blonde as he disappeared out the door.

Harry sighed a little in boredom, looking blankly out the window near him as the sound of scribbling pencils filled the air. Finals had arrived and although Harry had been a little nervous at first, after all his Muggle education wasn’t all that, it turned out it had been for naught. It was a half a day and he only had three classes, Trigonometry, Music, and Latin – which really it could only count as two classes seeing as Ms. Abel didn’t believe music required testing.
Harry sighed again and his thoughts drifted, away from the classroom where everyone else was still working hard on their test – which Harry had finished in record breaking time. He could see Draco in his peripheral, fingers flying away on his cell phone. Harry had been surprised at first when Draco had requested one, and then even more surprised when Draco had demanded that Harry teach him how to use it. But nothing was more shocking the watching the pureblood text like no tomorrow, and he had been doing it for days. Harry really wanted to know who the ex-Slytherin was texting, but he didn’t ask because he knew the Malfoy would snap at him.

Snorting internally, Harry allowed his thoughts to drift away from Draco and his mystery friend. Then landed now on his adorable godson and he wondered how the baby was dealing with being shuffled off onto Blaise and Neville.

It wasn’t like Harry wanted to give responsibility to someone else; it was just that he wasn’t really supposed to have Teddy in school with him. And the charms he had cast on the school’s staff could only hold so long.

It was a little hard though. Teddy was all that Harry had left of both the Black family and the Marauders. And he was still so young; Harry just wanted to be there for every little milestone in his life. Was that too much to ask?

But it wasn’t right to cart the boy around with him everywhere. Babies did not belong in school. And really, Harry should get over it because he wasn’t Teddy’s mother and acting like one was a little embarrassing – as Draco liked to point out.

God, Draco! The blonde had been so insufferable when he had first come to Harry. Harry had to admit that if Luna hadn’t been there, he probably would have shut the door in Draco’s face as soon as he saw him.

The ringing of the bell sounded loudly through the house and Harry looked away from the stove, where he had been scrambling some eggs for dinner.

“Are you expecting someone,” Harry asked curiously, looking over his shoulder at Luna, who was reading the Quibbler. Harry was suddenly struck with a sense of déjà vu, because Luna looked exactly like she had when Harry had first met her on the Hogwarts Express in fifth year – right down to her wand tucked behind her ear and her dangling radish earrings.

“No,” she hummed, tilted her head to the side and squinting at someone in the magazine. Harry sighed a little and scrapped the eggs onto a plate. The ringing was getting impatient now, coming out in short burst that suggested the person was pressing it over and over again.

“I’m coming. I’m coming,” Harry grumbled as he stalked toward the front door. He pulled out his wand and waved it vaguely at Mrs. Black’s portrait before tugging open the heavy door.

And there stood Malfoy, looking sullen and glaring at Harry with hard silver eyes. Without conscious thought Harry started to close the door again, but a pale arm stopped him. Harry looked down to see Luna standing beside him and he gave the girl an irritated look.

“What do you want Malfoy,” Harry demanded, crossing his arms over his chest as he turned to look at Malfoy again.

“And you are wearing an apron,” Malfoy blurted out, amusement crossing his pointy face. Harry gave him a bland looked and waited patiently. Malfoy sighed after a moment. “Look, I’m not completely
sure what’s going on,” and he sounded so disgruntled to be saying those words, “but something told me to come here. So here I am.”

“You’re the third,” Luna said with a wizened nod, much to the two wizards’ confusion. Harry looked questioningly at her but she simply smiled and hummed. Harry growled lowly under his breath and then stood to the side.

“Won’t you come in,” he asked in a tone that clearly said ‘Go away.’ Malfoy lifted one brow smoothly before grinning at them in a show of gleaming white teeth.

“Don’t mind if I do,” he said almost cheerfully and then he pushed his way in, making sure to bump against Harry as he did so. Harry glared angrily at his back.

“There better be a very good explanation for this,” Harry muttered lowly to Luna, watching Malfoy as he looked around the hallways with mild interest.

“Oh, it is,’ Luna said in a voice coated with amusement. She then skipped forward and tugged Malfoy into the nearest drawing room. It was the same room Harry had pulled her into when she had showed up on his doorstep two weeks before.

Malfoy was sitting tensely on a winged back chair when Harry finally joined them. His hands were clenched into fist on his lap and Harry could practically see his hand twitching for his wand.

“Alright Luna, explain,” Harry said, walking over and dropping onto the couch beside the girl. Luna titled her head to the side a little bit before holding her hand out toward Malfoy. The aristocrat stared at it with disgust.

“Hand please,” Luna told him when he continued to stare at her small hand like it was going to bite him. “Left one.” Malfoy jolted a little at this request and his fists tightened until it looked like his knuckles were trying to break free of the skin.

“Why,” he hissed with venom and he was glaring daggers dipped in poison at Luna.

“I need to see your wrist,” Luna told him in a soothing voice. Malfoy blinked before slowly extending his arm. Luna grabbed a hold and flipped his arms over. Just at the cuff of his sleeve, Harry could make out the graying ink of the Dark Mark. But that wasn’t what made him jolt forward in his seat.

No, what did was the tattooed rune that was inked in silver into Malfoy’s skin on the inside of his wrist.

“Wind,” Harry muttered and Malfoy stared down at his wrist with clear surprise.

“Where the bloody hell did that come from,” he asked, staring at his wrist as if it were someone else’s.

“It’s probably been there for some time,” Luna told him, letting his arm go and sitting back.

“Alright,” the Slytherin drawled slowly looked between the two of them. “And what’s it got to do with anything?”

“We have something similar,” Harry told him reluctantly. Internally he was groaned because he just knew that this stupid thing was now forcing him into Malfoy’s company. Could he never get a break?
“We’re three fourth of the Wolfe clan,” Luna said serenely, twisting her blonde hair around her finger. Malfoy’s mouth dropped open with a pop and Harry looked at him with confusion.

“We are not,” he said with a sort of reverence. “Great Salazar’s polka dotted pants!”

“What’s the Wolfe clan,” Harry asked, which earned him a familiar Malfoy glare.

“Don’t you know anything,” Malfoy sneered but he did not explain. Instead he turned his attention back to Luna and asked, “So who’s the lead?”

“That would be James,” Luna told him vaguely, nodding her head at Harry who was glaring at Malfoy. Malfoy’s eyes flicker to Harry and he let out a low groan.

“Great. Just bloody great.”

And then Draco had moved in with them, although he had claimed it was only because he thought it was degrading to still be living with his mother at his age. Harry had let him but the weeks that followed had been awkward and strained. Harry supposed the fire had been a bit of a saving grace – well except for the part where the last thing that connected him to Sirius burned to the ground.

The sound of the bell jolted Harry from his thoughts and he scrambled to exit the room with the rest of the students. Draco immediately disappeared off to his next class without so much as a ‘see ya’ to Harry. Harry stared at the blonde’s back before shaking his head and turning to head to the music room.

“Harry?”

An electric shock sprinted down Harry’s spine at the voice and he struggled to keep his face neutral as he turned to face Edward. The vampire was walking up to him in all his gorgeous glory and was it so wrong if Harry drooled a little bit?

Shaking his head to get rid of the naughty little imagines creeping across his eyes; Harry pasted on a polite smile and tilted his head questioningly.

“Do you mind if we talk for a moment.” Edward asked with a small frown. Harry blinked, his smile disappeared as he thought about what kind of things Edward would want to talk to him about. None of them really appealed to him at the moment, to be honest.

“Do we have to do this now,” Harry asked with a small hint of panic. He looked around cautiously but they were being mostly ignored as everyone made a mad dash for their next class. Harry supposed it was only finals anxiety that kept people from looking at him curiously, like they had been doing since he had arrived in April.

“It won’t take long,” Edward insisted.

“We’ll talk after school,” Harry told him with a tight smile and then turned to leave. Edward wasn’t too keen on letting him go though. The vampire grabbed a hold of Harry’s arms and pulled him back before pushing his up against the wall.

Harry’s body automatically arched upward into Edward’s, but then his mind caught up with him and he started sliding away from the older teen. Edward rolled his eyes in exasperation before lifting his arms and settling them on either side of Harry, effectively caging him in.
“Are we really going to do this here of all places,” Harry demanded with a hiss when he realized that escape wasn’t really an option. Edward smiled down at him for a moment before chuckling and shaking his head.

“I’m not trying to do anything Harry,” he practically purred. At least it sounded that way to Harry, and his mind fogged up for a moment. “I just want to talk to you. You’re being unnecessarily stubborn.”

“I’m not,” Harry snapped irritably before he it occurred to him that maybe he was being a little bit stubborn. Sighing, Harry leaned back against the wall and stared determinedly at Edward’s jaw – because really, if he stared into Edward’s eyes he was likely to do something that would have the whole school buzzing for days.

“Alright, I’m listening.”

“Thank you,” Edward said softly. Harry’s eyes flickered upward to his for a second before dropping back to Edward’s jaw. The vampire smiled a little before leaning back to give Harry more space.

“So what’s this thing you want to talk to me about,” Harry asked when Edward just stood there for a moment just staring at him. Edward blinked before turning his head away and Harry imagined that he was blushing. It was adorable.

“I was actually wondering,” Edward started haltingly, and he lifted his hand to run his fingers through his hair. Harry’s eyes followed the movement and he wished it was his fingers running through Edward’s hair.

“Will you go out with me?”

Harry blinked in confusion at Edward’s blurted question. It took a moment to register in his head and for a moment he simply gapped at the vampire. Edward was giving him a nervous smile and he looked so hopeful.

“What do you mean go out,” Harry asked numbly, still trying to restart his brain.

“Well, on a date,” Edward told him slowly, his eyes practically glowing with that hope now that Harry didn’t immediately turn him down. “You said you don’t really know me so I thought a date would be appropriate.”

“I . . .” Harry frowned a little in thought, his mind churning slowly now. It wasn’t a bad idea when he thought about it. And he’d never really been on a date before . . . okay there was that thing with Cho Chang, but he liked to not think about that really.

“Okay,” Harry finally said with a small smile.

“Really,” Edward breathed and was it wrong for Harry to think that he looked like a kid in a candy store? Harry nodded and Edward beamed brightly. “Alright. Tomorrow.”

“Sure. I’ll meet you at your house,” Harry agreed with a smile tugging at his lips.

“No this has to be a proper date. And since I asked you, you have to let me pick you up at your house.” Harry was outright smiling now, but this time it was because of humor.

“That’s kind of a tall order and a little bit impossible,” Harry told Edward, that amusement slipping into his voice. “You’re likely to get lost for days.”
“What are you talking about?”

“I have wards up around my property, Edward,” Harry said slowly and tried not to notice the shiver that went through him when he said the vampire’s name. “They keep out everyone but those who live there.”

“Oh,” Edward said blankly and he looked a little disappointed.

“How about you pick me up at the property line,” Harry suggested, but only because he kind of owed Edward some leeway.

Right, keep lying to yourself Potter.

“Okay. Tomorrow at eight,” Edward said and Harry was pretty sure the sun was cringing away from the brilliance of Edward’s smile. Shaking his head to clear the daze, Harry turned and walked away. And if he had a little bounce in his step, it was only because he loved music.

Draco drove his car toward La Push with a recklessness that would have scared Harry, but to him it was exhilarating. Sometimes he wondered if he had a thing for speed, but he never really put too much thought into it.

There was music blasting from the radio, not anything Draco was familiar with but the beat was nice and pulsing. He was grinning a little too brightly as he navigated the winding roads of the Indian Reservation. And then he pulled to a tire-squealing stop in Jacob’s driveway.

Jacob was standing in the doorway by the time Draco had exited his beautiful car. Draco lifted his hand in a wave as he approached slowly. The grin that stretched his lips shrunk a little when he caught sight of Jacob’s face however.

Jacob looked very much like an Inferi. His face was drawn and there were huge bags under his eyes. Even his smile seemed a little too . . . wrong.

“Hey Draco,” Jacob called cheerfully, but his voice dragged slowly.

“You look like hell,” Draco observed with a frown. Jacob shrugged and shuffled out of the way so that Draco could entire the small house.

“I’m just tired.” Draco eyed him, taking in his shaggy hair and bedraggled appearance. Jacob yawned widely and his shoulders sagged a little, but he still managed to ask, “What do you wanna do?”

“I’m fine here,” Draco told him, and he guided Jacob over to the couch when it looked like he might kill over. “You look like you could use a kip anyways.”

“Sure, sure,” Jacob said dismissively and he collapsed onto the couch, leaving only that tiny space for Draco. Draco snuggled down into it anyways and turned to watch as Jacob flicked on that little Muggle device that showed pictures or whatever.

“You haven’t been sleeping much, have you,” Draco said in a scolding tone.

“Not really,” Jacob admitted with a sheepish smile and then he let out another one of his face splitting yawn.
“Why not?”

“Well Sam’s being a little stupid,” the shape-shifted muttered, making a face at the words. “He doesn’t trust the bloodsuckers. I’ve been running double shifted for two weeks and nobody’s touched me yet, but he still doesn’t buy it.” Jacob snorted at the end and rolled his eyes.

“That’s not a good quality in a leader,” Draco said dryly, although he might be slightly biased seeing as Harry was a pretty one of a kind leader. “But you can stop worrying so much. Harry has probably put up a multitude of wards around Swan’s house and that was probably before he knew Swan was in danger.”

“Wards,” Jacob asked curiously, tilting his head down a little bit.

“Yeah,” Draco said with a nod. “Think of it like a huge shield. Anything unknown vampire that comes within a two mile radius of Swan’s house will trigger a silent alarm and Harry will know about it.”

“Huh. That sounded cool.” Draco shrugged and settled down more comfortably in the chair. The little picture box was playing some weird animation with a talking sponge. Draco’s nose wrinkled at the nonsense Muggles could come up with.

“So, any special plans next week,” Jacob asked after a moment of silence. “You’re graduating, right? How’s that feel?”

“It’s nothing specially,” Draco said with a roll of his eyes. “Technically I’ve already graduated, but Harry wanted us to do this Muggle school business.”

“What,” Jacob said with an incredulous look. “You’ve already finished school only to come here and . . . do more school?” Draco frowned thoughtfully.

“When you put it that way it sounds absolutely horrid.” Jacob snorted. “Speaking of school, however, there’s something I want to give you.” Jacob sat forward now, his face alight with excitement and curiosity. Draco thought he looked suitably like a puppy.

“What is it,” Jacob asked. Draco smiled bemusedly at his excitement before pulling out a single ticket. It was wrinkled a little from where it had been jammed into his pocket. “What is this,” Jacob asked again looking at the ticket with confusion. “Fork High Talent Competition?”

“Yes,” Draco was with a sigh of faked suffering. “Harry had me in some band and we’re supposed to be playing.”

“You’re in a band,” Jacob asked in shock, his eyes moving up to Draco’s face. The blonde was blushing a little now although he hoped Jacob wouldn’t notice. “That’s so cool. So you guys are performing? And you want me to come?”

Draco nodded dumbly, his mind trying to process Jacob’s words. Was the shape-shifter actually happy that he was in a band? Well that was certainly new for him.

“Of course I’ll come,” Jacob said genially. “I wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

An unknown feeling swept through Draco then, leaving his body buzzing pleasantly and his eyes softening uncharacteristically. It took him a moment to place a name of the emotion sweeping through him, and when he did he wondered what the bloody hell was wrong with Harry. If this was what being with one’s destined felt like, Draco couldn’t understand why Harry was constantly trying to avoid Cullen.
“Come on,” Jacob suddenly said, jumping up in a move that startled Draco. The blonde blinked before allowing the shape shifter to pull him to his feet. Even then Jacob didn’t let go of his hand and he pulled the aristocrat from the small house.

“Where are you dragging me off to,” Draco demanded after a moment of being pulled through the La Push woods at a rapid pace.

“I promised to bring you to Emily’s the next time you came around, remember?” Draco vaguely recalled a text about that. “And the pack want to officially meet you or whatever.”

“What’s that supposed to mean,” Draco mumbled as Jacob slowed to a casual walk. “I’ve already been introduced to them.” Jacob looked suddenly sheepish and he rubbed at the back of his head.

“Well not really,” he said lowly. “Our pack’s bigger now than ever before and we’ve been trying to keep it from the Cullens so not everyone was at the bonfire.” Draco arched a brow at that but said nothing on the matter.

The two had broken through the trees now and came up in front of a small wooden house, about the same size as the Black household. Draco was starting to think all the homes in La Push were built this small. But the size of the house was about as far as the resemblance went. This house looked more cared for than Jacob’s and Draco could tell that a woman lived here – or at least someone who liked to garden. The only window at the front of the house had a flowerbox that was filled with orange and yellow marigolds. They waved cheerfully at Draco as if beckoning him closer.

Draco followed Jacob up the one step and through the door, looking around curiously. Just inside the doorway, however, he just barely managed to keep from plowing right into Jacob when the younger teen suddenly jerked to a stop. The blonde peered curiously at the shocked horror plastered on Jacob’s russet face before following the teen’s gaze to the kitchen area.

It took him only a second to really register what he was seeing and he almost burst into laughter. Jacob’s entire body jerked suddenly and the Quileute lifted his hand and slapped it over his eyes. He then pivoted around to make a quick escape but instead ran right into the corner of the way that separated the kitchen from the living room.

Draco honestly thought the entire house shook at the force of the collision and he watched with clear amusement as the two in the kitchen sprang apart as if suddenly realizing that they were there.

Jacob was cursing lowly under his breath and banging his head repeatedly against the wall. Seth blushed furiously and started patting himself down and rearranging his clothes so that he didn’t look so ruffled. Paul simply shrugged and leaned back against the cabinet, not looking the least bit concerned that he had just been caught snogging the bloody hell out of Seth.

“What the fuck,” Jacob suddenly shouted and he whirled around to fact the two members of his pack. His own face was still flushed with embarrassment at having caught the two in the act. “When the hell did this happen?”

“I . . . we . . . it was . . . I,” Seth stammered, his gaze planted firmly on his feet as he shifted uncomfortably.

“We’re imprints,” Paul grumbled with a wide grin.

Jacob blinked, staring in between the two and not knowing what to say.
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

It's Showcase time

Harry’s shaky fingers reached upward toward his hair only to be slapped away immediately.

“Stop touching it.” Draco growled, glaring at Harry’s reflection in the mirror. “You’re going to ruin everything I’ve done already.”

Harry sighed and clutched at the edge of his shirt to keep his hands away from the hair the blonde aristocrat had painstakingly styled for him. Draco huffed and strolled out of the bathroom with a shake of his head. Harry’s eyes skittered upward to his reflection and he bit down on his lip, trying to keep the panic from his face. He practiced his smiles and neutral expressions, but it didn’t do much. He still thought he looked rather goofy and pathetic.

Honestly, he shouldn’t be this nervous. He’d been on a date before. Granted it had turned into a total fiasco and his date had run away in tears. But this was different. Firstly, Edward literally couldn’t cry. And seeing as the vampire had been the one to ask him out Harry didn’t think Edward had the right to be crying at the end of this anyways.

Secondly they were mates. This was supposed to be fated to work or something like that. So really, there was no reason to be nervous.

Harry looked at his reflection again. The relaxed smile he was going for looked rather shaky and he was way too pale to be healthy.

“Okay, breathe,” he told himself. And saying it out loud helped to calm himself somewhat. And really, he was behaving like he was about to walk to his death.

Harry winced at that thought.

Okay, not the best thing to think seeing as he had actually done that before. Shaking his head, Harry lifted his hand toward his hair in an unconscious gesture.

“Don’t even think about it Potter,” Draco’s voice called suddenly and the blonde was back in the bathroom, glaring at Harry in an oh-so-familiar way. Harry dropped his hand and grinned at the aristocrat.

“No decorum whatsoever,” Draco muttered as he pulled Harry up from his seat. Those silver eyes ran up and down his body with a speculative look. Harry almost started shifting but a single glare had him freezing in place. Finally, Draco said, “You’ll do for now,” and pushed Harry out of the bathroom.

Harry rolled his eyes at the behavior but felt suitably calmer. As annoying as Draco could be sometimes, the pureblood was perfect for dressing people up for special occasions. Not that this was a special occasion. And that was proven by the fact that Draco allowed Harry to wear a pair of jeans. Granted they were fairly new and didn’t have that comfortable worn feel to them that Harry liked, they were still jeans.
The two walked down to the living room where everyone else was gathered doing their own thing. Neville was the only one to look up when Harry entered and the former Gryffindor gave Harry a reassuring grin. Harry grinned back and then dropped to the floor beside Teddy, which earned him an annoyed hiss from Draco that he suitably ignored.

Harry allowed the action of playing with his godson calm him further so that by the time he felt a small tingle run up his arm, announcing that someone was just on the outside of his wards, he was ready to tackle this date. Taking a deep breath, he gave Teddy a bright smile and then Apparated out of the room.

Harry appeared right outside of the gates that protected the manor, almost landing right on top of Edward. The vampire started at the loud cracking sound and blinked a couple of times before he managed to collect himself.

“Oh, sorry about that,” Harry apologized, his face turning red. “I didn’t mean to startle you. It’s just a whole lot faster to Apparate than to walk. It would have taken me a whole ten—”

“It’s okay, Harry,” Edward told the rambling wizard. Harry blinked dazedly when the vampire smiled at him and he barely registered that they were moving until Edward was helping him into his Volvo.

“So . . . um . . . where are we going,” Harry asked when they had driven out onto the road and away from Forks.

“Port Angeles. I thought I could show you around,” Edward said, peeking over at Harry’s face and posing the sentence as a question.

“That sound’s fun,” Harry told him with a chuckle and Edward visibly relaxed. “Are we going somewhere specific to eat?”

“Nope. Since it’s you’re first time, and I don’t actually eat, I figured you could pick the place.”

That made Harry brighten a bit. It was nice to know that although Edward had done the asking he was letting Harry choose a couple of places.

The next couple of minutes were spent in silence. Harry had a lot of questions he wanted to ask, questions he’d been gathering ever since Edward had suggested this date, but he wasn’t sure when was a right time to start asking them. And he didn’t want to pry. He wasn’t sure exactly how far his relationship with Edward went anyways.

After all, this . . . thing between them wasn’t exactly following any normal timeline. There was that rather . . . intense first meeting, and then the weeks of ignoring the vampire, and then the kiss in Carlisle’s office . . .

“What are you thinking about,” Edward asked suddenly and Harry turned to him to see that the vampire was staring at him with probing eyes. A slight sliver of panic raced up Harry spine when he noticed that Edward was still driving and yet wasn’t watching the road!

“Hey, watch the road would you! I don’t fancy dying today.” Edward chuckled a little at that but complied. “Anyways,” Harry said on a sigh, “I was wondering . . . can I ask you a few things?”

“Sure, you can ask me anything, Harry. I have nothing to hide from you.” Harry blushed at the words and the way Edward practically purred his name.

“Well . . . um . . . what’s it like? Being a vampire?”
This seemed to be a hard question for Edward, Harry reasoned. His entire face seemed to close off and his hands tightened on the steering wheel.

“I . . . can we come back to this later?”

“Sure,” Harry agreed immediately, not wanting to sour the mood so soon into the date. “When where you turned?”

“1918. I was seventeen.”

“Oh, so you’re not that old for a vampire,” Harry commented and so it went.

Everything was going exceptionally well, Harry reasoned later on as Edward guided him into a little diner. Both the car ride to Port Angels and the walk around the small city was spent in a relaxed atmosphere. Harry quizzed Edward on light topics, like what his favorite color was and what kind of things he liked. Edward answered them all patiently, even getting into some of the questions when the broached subjects he felt intensely about.

Harry was finding it hard to not like Edward. The more he learned about the vampire the more Harry wanted to know more. It was like an insatiable curiosity. But Harry was enjoying unraveling the mystery that was Edward Cullen.

And Edward wasn’t really all the complicated to begin with, which was really surprising when Harry thought about the previous people he dated. Not that it was really fair to compare Edward to them because they had both been girls. And Edward most certainly was not.

Cho had been rather unattainable. Thinking on it now Harry wasn’t completely sure what he had seen in her. She was rather emotional, although brilliant especially given that she was a Ravenclaw. But she had clung a little bit too much to the past and Cedric and Harry just hadn’t been able to handle that. Other than that, Harry hadn’t even really known the older girl. Sure, he knew she was smart, and she was on the Quidditch team, and she was pretty. But besides that . . . nothing.

And then there was Ginny.

Ginny was a whole other can of worms. Harry had known her. He had seen her grow up. He had saved her. And she had been Ron’s little sister. Harry had liked her well enough, but Harry supposed his attraction had been how safe she was. He was already a part of the Weasley family so it had been easy. But Ginny had been too much of a . . . girl for Harry. She had always complained about her hair and how it clashed with just about everything. When she wasn’t playing Quidditch she had always been in some volume of Witch Weekly.

And she had bragged.

She had bragged all the time about how she was with Harry Potter. It’s hadn’t been to the point where many people noticed, but it had been a subtly kind of bragging. She was ever so often slid into conversation that Harry was her boyfriend.

So really, when Harry had broken up with her it had been kind of a relief, although it took till after the war to realize how much of a relief.

But Edward wasn’t anything like that.
For one thing he didn’t know that Harry was famous, and if Harry had his way it would stay like that. For another thing Edward was very . . . careful. He complied to Harry’s wished but only after he gave it some thought. Harry knew that if he ever said or did something Edward didn’t like Edward would let him know.

And Edward wasn’t all the concerned with material things, although Harry believed that had a little to do with the fact that Edward had been alive of a little over a century.

But besides all that Edward was simple. He didn’t dwell too much in a person’s actions but instead in the thoughts behind the actions. Harry supposed that was a just a perk of being a mind reader. And Edward was inherently good although he didn’t believe it much himself. But Harry knew good people didn’t often realize they were good . . . like Neville.

“So it’s occurred to me that I’m doing a lot of the talking on this date,” Harry observed after they had been seated in one of the booths by the window. Harry had picked one that had a wall to his back and a window looking out at the front of the building with the door in his sight. It was a habit he had never learned to break.

“Aren’t you going to ask me anything?”

Edward looked a little surprised at the question.

“Well this is supposed to be for you to get to know me,” he commented in a mute voice, folding his hands on top of the table. Harry tilted his head to the side to study him.

“Hmm . . . that it is,” he finally agreed. “But seeing as this is a date, I thought you might want to get to know me also.” Harry dropped his head a little a peeked shyly up at Edward. “That is if you want to.”

“Of course I go,” Edward told him, leaning forward over the table. “You captivate me in ways you will never understand. I will always want to know about you.” Harry blushed darkly at the admission and was more than a little grateful when a waitress arrived to take their order.

“Hello, I’m Sara and I’ll be your waitress for the evening. Can I start you off with something to drink,” the teenage girl questioned, looking between the two of them with a bit of an awed expression. Edward waved for Harry to go first and the wizard pulled the menu close so that he can peruse his options.

“Um . . . can I have a . . . uh . . . lemonade?”

The girl nodded and scribbled that down on a pad before turning to look at Edward. Harry could see that she was straining herself to look professional, but a blush was already coming up to stain her pale cheeks.

“I’ll have a water,” Edward told her politely, flashing her a small smile before going back to his Harry staring. The girl blinked for a moment before scrambling away to put in their drinks.

“No need to give the girl a heart attack,” Harry muttered with some amusement, watching Sara race around the corner. He chuckled a little when he saw that she was fanning her face with her notebook.

“It’s involuntary,” Edward said distractedly. Harry rolled his eyes before looking over his menu. He could feel Edward’s gaze burning into his skull and he was trying really hard not to let that affect him too much.
“What’s a cheeseburger? Is it any good?”

Harry looked up at the sound of laughter and scowled at his date.

“I’m sorry,” Edward apologized. It’s just that . . . well I never met a person who didn’t know what a cheeseburger was.”

“Well I’m glad I can be a source of amusement for you,” Harry pouted, pulling the menu up so that he didn’t have to see Edward’s face. That vampire was grinning a little bit too much of his enjoyment.

“So, tell me what it’s like to grow up in a magical school,” Edward asked as a way to soothe Harry feelings. It worked. Harry dropped the menu and then launched into a long winded tale of the great castle that was Hogwarts and the people that resided in it. By the time he was finished Sara had come and gone again with his order – of course Edward didn’t order anything.

“Hogwarts sounds like an amazing place,” Edward commented when Sara had run off. “I wish I could have seen it.”

“Maybe you can one day,” Harry told him. “You’re a magical being now so you should be able to see it.”

“And you would take me,” Edward asked probingly. Harry hesitated for a moment, thoughts about why he hadn’t been back to Hogwarts and why he was in America in the first place running though his head.

“I would,” he finally said slowly. “But not anytime soon.” Edward looked like he wanted to ask more about that but seemed to decide not to. Harry was glad. While he wouldn’t outright lie to Edward about anything he didn’t want to be put in a position where he would have to tread carefully. And he certainly didn’t want this date to be ruined by guilty non answers.

It seemed that Edward was taking this new freedom to question Harry a little over the top, not that Harry mind very much. But Edward’s questions were more probing and insistent than Harry’s had been. Harry spent the rest of the evening and the car ride back home describing Surrey, London, Diagonal Alley, and Scotland whenever Edward asked. And when he wasn’t giving details he was telling Edward little snippets of his adventures at Hogwarts and the people he called friend. Harry only just managed to get away with not talking about Ron and Hermione, but he was sure Edward had noticed the little catch in his voice whenever he had to omit them from a story.

By the time Edward pulled up in front of the Manor gates, Harry was feeling just a little bit weary.

“So,” Edward asked expectantly after a bout of silence. He turned to look searchingly at Harry and his brows arched with the unasked question.

“I have to admit that this was a good idea. I had fun tonight,” Harry answered truthfully with a soft smile. And he had had fun, despite the questions toward the end that had hurt just a little bit.

“Enough fun that you’ll invite me inside,” Edward asked a little teasingly.

“And here I thought you weren’t a traditional vampire,” Harry said back, managing to keep the blush that wanted to rise to his face back. Edward blinked once before letting out a low chuckle and Harry felt embarrassment curl in his stomach when it occurred to him that Edward’s question hadn’t been
as innocent as he had assumed.

Harry managed to stumble out of the Volvo before Edward could open the door for him. He glared at the vampire for trying anyways, because he most certainly wasn’t a bloody girl. Even still, the embarrassment clung and started shifting into nerves. The walk to the gate seemed to stretch, giving Harry too much time to think on exactly how good dates usually ended.

Again he chastised himself on feeling nervous. It wasn’t like he had never kissed Edward before. Hell, they had done a little more than kiss before.

And maybe it was the memory of the first meeting that was causing the nerves.

It was to be expected. Every time Harry so much as touched Edward he lost all control over his body. And if that wasn’t a terrifying, nerve-wrecking idea then Harry didn’t know what was.

The cool press of fingers against his cheek shocked Harry from his thoughts, and he realized with a jolt that he was at the gate and Edward was alarmingly close. The vampire was gazing at him with such a long look – a look Harry had once saw Remus give Tonks although he hadn’t noticed it for what it was at that time.

Harry swallowed thickly and he moved closer as Edward’s entire hand came to curl around his cheek. The wizard wasn’t completely conscious of his actions but he supposed that it didn’t really matter when in the next moment his lips were pressed against Edwards.

And the kiss was just as mind-numbing and electrifying as the very first time. Heat speared low in Harry’s stomach and an ache seemed to spread across his chest. He swayed closer and Edward’s arm came to rest lightly on his lower back. Harry’s hands went upward, first gripping the vampire’s shoulders and then sliding into all that thick bronze hair.

Harry wasn’t sure how long they stood there, wrapped around each other and kissing deeply, but Harry knew that he had never felt so alive. And when Edward had finally let him go and Harry had Apparated straight into his house – appearing in Teddy’s nursery – Harry could still feel Edward’s lips against his.

The Savior smiled quietly to himself as he gazed down at his godson’s peaceful face, and felt like Fate was finally smiling down on him for once.

“Hello everybody,” Ms. Abel said into the microphone. “Are you ready for Fork’s 1st Annual Music Competition?” The audience let out a loud cheer and Ms. Abel grinned at them all. She then went on to explain the rules and as during the auditions, Alice twirled on stage when she was called out.

Harry watched all of this from backstage, grinning as the audience sucked up both Ms. Abel’s and Alice’s combined enthusiasm.

“This may be a bit of a shock to you, but I am completely jazzed,” Draco’s voice suddenly floated over to Harry. The brunette turned to look at his former enemy, noting the shock on the man’s pale face. It was amusing to see, but not more amusing than what Draco had shyly told him before they had entered to school. To think the aristocrat was the mate of a shape shifter!

“This is more exciting than my expeditions with Daddy searching for the Crumple-Horned Snorkacks,” Luna practically squealed, bouncing up and down as she clutched her guitar to her chest. She looked very much like a normal girl right then, but that could have something to do with
the fact that Alice had dressed them all up for this event.

“What’s a Crumpled-Horned Snorkack,” Edward inquired, looking at Harry for some explanation. Harry shrugged and wasn’t surprised when Luna then went into an in-depth explanation on everything that was the mythical creature she sometimes searched for. Edward listened to her with muted shock and Harry could practically hear the vampire’s mind whirling away.

Harry laughed at the two of them before peeking around the curtains once more, this time to look out over the audience.

He immediately caught sight of Bella seated in the front row. She was sat in-between an empty seat for Alice on one side and Blaise on the other. Neville was also there with the girl shape-shifter, Leah Harry remembered her name being, taking the seat beside him and looking around with an irritated expression. There was also Seth, Paul, Jacob, and Billy Black. All of the shape-shifters looked only the slightest bit tense given their proximity to their natural enemies. Jacob and Seth were probably the most relaxed out of the bunch. All of the Cullen’s were there, not that Harry expected anything else. Not only were they the sponsors but Edward was performing. Teddy was sitting calmly in Rosalie’s lap, looking around with muted glee and sucking on his fingers.

It was a bit of a wait before they were able to go on stage. There were thirteen acts total and they were number seven. The first act was a solo one that was decent enough but Harry thought the girl was overstretching herself just a little bit by trying to hit notes that weren’t in her range. The two after that were both bands that played some pop songs that Draco complained hurt his ears. The three after that kind of messed together in Harry’s mind so that he honestly had no idea what had been played. And Harry completely zoned out on the sixth performer as the nerves finally caught up to him.

“Breath,” Edward told him as he rubbed his hands up and down Harry’s arms in a calming move. “This will be easy. You’re a natural and the song will be great. They’re going to love us.”

“Okay,” Harry agreed, taking deep calming breaths. “I’m okay. Just a little bit of nerves.” But Edward continued to rub his arms until they were called on stage, and Harry was grateful for that. When he walked out onto the stage he was significantly calmer and as soon as he touched the MIC all his nerves fled away.

“Hello everyone! We’re the Hogwarts’ Wolves and this is our song Watch Me Go,” Harry shouted into the MIC as the cheers died down. He nodded at Draco to start the count and on the count of three all four of them jumped in with one blasting note. Luna and Harry then jumped into a intricate rift that had practically the whole audience jumping to their feet with a loud cheer.

Harry grinned at Edward before leaning into the MIC and belting out the first verse.

“It’s like a curse that binds me
Constantly holding me down
I can never be free from this burden
That seems to always follow me around

I was put up on their pedestal
For they think I am their only savior
I’m here to be their hero  
Therefore I must be on my best behavior  

They don’t seem to understand  
That I just want to be left alone  
I want to lead a normal life  
Yet their tabloids keep following me home.”

Harry broke off and allowed Edward and Luna to pick up the chorus just like they had practiced. He played a couple of rifts and moved around stage like he had seen some bands do on the internet.

“Why can’t they see  
The child who hides inside of me  
Just crying out loud  
Just wanted to be free  
But they don’t want to see  
What’s inside of me  
All they want to know  
Is the Savior that they rode  
Well they can stop riding me  
Cause I’m gonna be free  
From all of them and my enemies.”

Harry jumped back in again, taking up the verses. They did this for the majority of the song, Harry back off whenever the chorus came up.

“Trapped in this hate filled world  
They locked the door and took away the key  
They don’t think of what could happen  
They didn’t try to understand what would become of me
Making me watch as the world went on
And one by one they slowly faded away
Never will I be able to see what’s beyond these bars
Never will I be let out of this cage
Never to see the sun shine another day
Wallowing in self-pity
Something I thought I would never feel
Stuck in this sick illusion
Not even knowing what is real

And they can’t see
The child who hides inside of me
Just crying out loud
Just wanted to be free
Cause they don’t want to see
What’s inside of me
For all they want to known
Is the Savior that they rode
Well they can stop riding me
Cause I’m gonna be free
From all of them and my enemies

And I watch as they turn their faces away
Because they don’t want to see what they’ve done
But it doesn’t matter anymore
For in the end their selfishness has won

And they don’t want to know
They don’t want to see
That slowly they destroy
The small child inside of me
They stripped me of my innocence
They took all of who I am
And you what hurts the most
It’s that they don’t even give a damn
But I’m sure that they understood
That I was only just a kid
A kid they still threw into a war
Yes, I’m sure they knew damn well what they did

And I bet they can feel it now
That ugly, dirty thing called guilt
I’m sure they can see clearly now
Just exactly what they helped be built

They turned me into a soldier
A weapon so that they could win
They used me in their war
Right up until the very end
And now they don’t want to know
The monster that I’ve become
I can see now in their eyes
That their war was not completely won

I know now that they can see
The child that hides in me
Just crying out loud
Just wanting to be free
I know that they can see
The thing inside of me
But still they want to know
Just the savior that they rode

And when it was all finally over
When that horrid war was won
They turned their backs on me
Ashamed to see what they had done
Yet still they did it again
They put me above them
Forcing me to watch as they turned on me
Even those I had once called friend
They turned me into something ugly
Once I had won their fight
And now I just want to scream
For I know they know of my plight

For I know that they can see
The child who hides in me
Just crying out loud
Just wanting to be free
And I know that they don’t want to see
What is still inside of me
For all they want to know
Is the savior that they rode
But they’re gonna stop riding
For I’m gonna be free
From all of them and my enemies
Just watch me go

Cause I'm gonna be free

From all of them and my enemies

Just watch me go

At this point Draco was the only one playing and Harry pulled the MIC stand real close, letting his voice drop and flow out over the crowd.

“Because I know

They don’t want to see

The child they forced to grow up

Way to fast inside of me

For don’t you know

I was only seventeen

Luna started up again, laying down the line with Edward jumping in and then Harry topping it off with another rift. He grinned out at the crowd, pumping them back up again before he shouted out the last line, “Now watch me go!”

The four ended the song just like they started it with one last ringing note. The response they received was thunderous. Harry stared out at the audience with pleased shock as he tried to regain his breath. His head was spinning a little bit and he could feel his magic buzzing pleasantly around him.

“Alright everyone,” Ms. Abel shouted as she came onto the stage. “That was the Hogwarts’ Wolves. Let give it up for them one more time!” The audience did just that. Harry saw Bella jumping up and down with Alice in the front row and he winked at them as Ms. Abel herded them off stage for the next act.

“I do believe we just owned that,” Draco drawled with a wicked grin. Harry knocked shoulders with the blonde.

“Better than Quidditch?”

“Bloody straight,” the blonde immediately agreed. The group settled down backstage as before, only this time Harry walked around giving out encouragement. It was while he was doing this that he ran into a girl who looked to be a freshman. She was curled up in a chair and hyperventilating something fierce. The way she was acting kind of reminded Harry of Neville before a Potion’s class.

“Hey, are you okay,” Harry questioned softly, crouching down in front of the girl and placing a hand on her shoulder. The girl let out a small gasp and her head jerked up to reveal panicked blue eyes.
“Whoa! Um . . . breathe okay?”

The girl gave a jerky nod before closing her eyes and trying to do as told. Harry waited her out patiently, not removing his hand. Two minutes later the girl was looking a little bit calmer.

“There, that’s the ticket,” Harry said cheerfully.

“Thank you,” the girl whispered with a light blush. “I . . . um . . . sorry about that.”

“Don’t think about. Everyone’s entitled to their own spot of nerves. When do you go on?”

“Last,” the girl told him with a breathy laugh. “And everyone’s so amazing. I don’t know how I’ll be able to close out.”

“It’s all in good fun,” Harry told her comfortingly. “You made it past the Professors didn’t you, so you’ll do fine.” At that he received a grateful smile. “I’m Harry by the way.”

“Jack,” the girl said back, reaching out to shake the hand Harry held out.

“You’re parents named you Jack,” Harry asked with great confusion. “Not to be rude but isn’t that a boy’s name?” Jack laughed loudly at that, her face bright with amusement.

“My full name’s Jacquelyn,” she explained, grinning widely. “Everyone just took to calling my Jack for short.”

Harry let out a low ‘oh’, feeling mildly embarrassed. But he supposed it was a bit of a success seeing as he had gotten Jack to calm down. And just in time Harry supposed, as he watched one of the stage managers come over to inform them that Jack would be going on in two minutes. Harry walked with Jack to left stage and gave her an encouraging smile when she went out to a round of polite applause.

“Hey everyone, my name’s Jack and I’ll be performing the cover *Use Somebody* by Kings of Leon,” she spoke into the mike. She glanced over at Harry once before she began to strum the strings of her acoustic guitar.

Harry thought the entire performance was wonderful. Jack had an amazing voice and she knew exactly how to use it. She also had this air about her that just captivated the audience. Harry could see everyone staring at her with wide eyes. The entire auditorium was silent as Jack played and it stayed silent for a couple of minutes when she was done.

And then everyone burst into loud cheers and applause and catcalls. Jack looked suitably surprised but she managed to bow and she dashed off stage. Her cheeks were flushed and her blue eyes gleamed brightly.

“Did you see that,” she gushed, grabbing onto Harry’s arm. “That did not just happen. Right? Right?”

“That most certainly did just happen,” Harry assured with amusement. “And you were worried.”

“Thank you so much,” Jack then said. “You’re awesome.”

“I wouldn’t go that far,” Harry tried to say but Jack shook her head fiercely, almost smacking Harry in the face with her ponytail.

“You are.” Harry shrugged at that, deciding the let the matter drop. Especially seeing as in that very moment he heard his band’s name being called out quickly followed by Jack’s name.
“Huh.”

“Move it Potter,” Draco said from behind him. “We’re in the top three.” And then he swept past Harry without so much as a glance at Jack.

“Does that mean me also,” Jack questioned in shock.

“It does,” Luna hummed, grabbing the girl’s arm gently and guiding her back onto the stage. A low chuckle alerted Harry to the fact that Edward was right beside him.

“Shall we,” the vampire questioned, holding his hand out to Harry. Harry blushed brightly as he laced his fingers with Edward and the two walked out onto the stage.

“Everyone put your hands together for our top three competitors,” Ms. Abel encouraged with excitement. The audience complied although there was some confusion because there were four acts standing on stage, but no one commented.

“I can’t believe this,” Jack was murmuring over and over again under her breath. Harry patted her arm comfortingly, but she didn’t seem to really notice. The third place winner was one of the bands that had performed before Harry’s.

The group shuffled off stage with wide grins and a small trophy.

“Alright,” Ms. Abel said to get the audience to quiet down once more. “The winner of Forks High’s 1st Annual Music Competition is . . .” There was a dramatic drum roll as Ms. Abel struggled a little with the folded envelope. She pulled it out, glanced at it then looked back at the audience. “It’s a tie! The winners are the Hogwarts’ Wolves and Jack!”

The audience went wild and Harry saw Jack freeze up before teetering a little bit like she was going to faint.

“Whoa, easy there,” Harry said, grabbing her around the shoulder’s to steady her.

“I won,” she whispered. “I won?”

“That you did,” Harry told her. “And since it would be incredibly unfair if the sponsor of this event won the scholarship, we’re going to give it to you.”

“What,” Jack said with wide eyes as Edward passed the large check to her. “But . . . but . . . I’m not even graduating. I’m just a freshman!”

“Well now you have something to work toward,” Harry told her rather cheerfully with a wink. Jack looked like she was going to faint again so Edward started herding them off stage.

“Congratulations guys,” Ms. Abel told them with wide grins. “Which one of you wants to take the trophy?”

“Jack can have it,” Edward told the woman, which made Jack’s eyes go impossibly wider.

“Oh no,” she refused. “I can’t possibly. You’re already giving me the scholarship, the least I could do was let you guys have the trophy.”

“I wouldn’t worry about it,” Edward told her. “Alice made duplicates in case something went wrong, so really, we’ll all have a trophy.” That seemed to calm the girl a little bit and she nodded before telling them she needed to find her family.
“Of course,” Harry agreed. “We’ll see you tomorrow at the party.”

“Oh right,” Jack said. “I can’t believe I get to go to a senior party! And a Cullen party at that. I have to be the luckiest freshman in the world!” And then she ran off through the crowds. Harry watched her go with a wide grin on his face.

“What a sweet girl,” Luna said as if reading his mind.

“Isn’t she,” Harry agreed before moving off to go find his friends and family.

 Teddie no!”

Draco let out a loud laugh as the sound of something breaking and then childish giggling reached his ear. This had been going on for two days now and the blonde was soaking up every sound of distress Harry made.

At that very moment the little troublemaker ran into the room, his hands stretched out toward Draco and his face sporting a wide grin. Draco scooped him up and turned to the door way just in time to see Harry run in, struggling with Teddys partner in crime.

The red husky that no one seemed to know what the hell it actually was, was wriggling around in Harry’s arms and panting heavily. Both dog – or whatever it was – and wizard were covered in dust and china pieces.

“THEodore Remus Lupin,” Harry grounded out. “How many times do I have to tell you that you can’t run around in the hallways?” Draco almost laughed at Harry attempt at a stern face.

“Moony,” Teddy shouted instead of acknowledging his godfather. Moony let out a loud bark before disappearing into smoke. In the next second Teddy disappeared also.

“Damn it,” Harry shouted, throwing his hands up in frustration. “Not again.”

“Good parenting Potter,” Draco chortled. Harry threw him an ugly looked before storming off to go hunt up his godson and the boy’s magical pup.
Chapter 13

Harry and his housemates arrived at Fork High a little late thanks to Teddy and his monster dog. It had taken a lot of convincing but Harry managed to convince Teddy that Moony would be perfectly fine at home with the house elves. Even now Teddy was still sulking a little and he refused to tell Harry ‘bye’ when Neville and Blaise walked off to join the group of parents and siblings taking seats in the gym.

“He’ll get over it so stop looking so heartbroken,” Draco said with a roll of his eyes as Luna patted Harry comfortably on the arm. Harry just managed to control the urge to stick his tongue out at Draco, but only just. As it turned out, Draco seemed to sense Harry’s intention anyways because the blonde threw him a dirty look before strutting toward the back of the Gym – where the seniors were told to gather. However, as Draco left Harry gave into his urge and made a face at the older teen’s back.

The cramped area behind the Gym was a bit chaotic when Harry and Luna finally rounded the corner. Ms. Cope from the front office and one of the math teachers were trying to get everyone into an alphabetical line – but most people were milling about, chatting with their friends instead of cooperating. It seemed like after a while the math teacher lost all patience and began yelling at people to get into place.

Harry ended up standing right in front of Jessica Stanley of all people. If that wasn’t a testament of how small Forks was, then nothing was. As it stood, the girl talked everyone’s ear off for a whole thirty minutes before the actual graduation began. She kept lamenting on how awesome the year had been and how good friend everyone had been and how they should all keep in touch when the all went off the university. Harry just kept giving Bella long suffering looks of empathy. And then the graduation was on its way.

Neville looked around the gym with wide eyed wonder, taking in all the Muggles and Muggle products. The stuff was so strange and foreign and amazing.

“That’s not a look someone normally sees on a teen’s face.” The dry comment came from right next to him and so Neville turned to look at the person. It was Leah, he remembered her from the bonfire and yesterday’s talent competition. Despite that he still couldn’t help but marvel at her amazing russet skin or her spiky dark hair. She just looked so bloody cool.

“Cat got your tongue?”

“Pardon,” Neville asked, blinking when he realized he was staring.

“You look like you’ve dropped into wonderland,” Leah told him with some amusement.

“What’s wonderland,” Neville asked, his brows furrowing at the unfamiliar term.

“You’ve never read Alice in Wonderland?” Neville shook his head and Leah sighed. “You’re childhood was seriously robbed.”

“I suppose it’s a Muggle think then,” Neville wondered. “I’ve always wanted to read Muggle stories, but my grandmum wouldn’t let me. She was afraid it would confuse me too much.”
“Well I’ll lend you the book and you can figure out whether or not it will confuse you,” Leah told him with a small smile and a shake of her head.

Neville smiled back before turning to face the front as the graduation started.

Harry had finally come to the decision that Alice Cullen was a force to be reckoned with. Not only had she managed to single handedly plan the best party in the existence of Forks, but she had also managed to set it all up in only two short hours. Harry supposed she had a little help from a thing called vampire speed, but it was still rather disconcerting.

“I like it,” Draco declared imperiously as he critically took in the flashing strobe lights and the gleaming stage that had replaced the platform that had previously housed Edward’s piano. Bella let out a low groan from beside Harry and he could guess that she now wished she had stayed for dinner with her dad for just a little bit longer.

“This is so stupid,” she muttered lowly.

“Alice will be Alice,” Edward said in a rather tense voice. Harry peeked sideways at his kinda-sorta boyfriend, but besides the clear tension Edward wasn’t revealing anything. And didn’t that just suck. Sometime after the actually graduation, most of which passed in a blur for Harry, Bella had told Edward something that had turned him into a bloody statue of tension. And despite the amount of times Harry had probed and pried, Edward still hadn’t told him with that conversation had been about.

“Hey Bella, wanna help me get some things from the car,” Harry asked casually, keeping his face as open as possible. Bella didn’t even have to think hard about her answer. She seemed to want to get away from the horror house as soon as possible.

“I can’t believe Alice would do all this,” Bella was ranting as she walked with Harry outside. “With everything else going on . . . ugh, she’s being so unreasonable.”

“Well it’s not like we know anything concrete. We’re just playing the waiting game now,” Harry cut in smoothly. He popped the trunk open and started pulling out his amp when he caught the guilty expression on Bella’s face.

“Something you want to tell me,” he asked blandly.

“Well . . . uh,” Bella stammered, shifting uncomfortably. She shuffled forward and a made a move as if she was going to pick something up but then stuck her hands into her pockets. “I . . . kinda figured some things out.”

“And they are?”

“Well . . . everything is connected. The vampire who stole my clothes is the same one that’s changing newborns in Seattle. I kind of put everything together this morning.” Bella’s voice turned sheepish toward the end but Harry didn’t really notice. He was thinking hard about Bella’s epiphany.

Really, looking at it objectively it made absolute sense. And Harry was sure he would have put the pieces together a long time ago, but since these events weren’t happening to him he hadn’t had all the facts.

“So they’re coming for you. This newborn army?”
“That’s what we think,” Bella admitted.

“So everyone knows this except for me,” Harry demanded, stung. Bella shrugged her shoulders although she looked a little bit guilty.

“Well I imagine Edward’s telling everyone else now.”

“And he didn’t feel the need to tell me?” Harry’s hands started clenching into fist at his side and he threw a glare at the house.

This whole, overprotective kinda-boyfriend thing was becoming a real pain real fast.

“Hey, don’t take it too hard,” Bella told him soothingly. “He’s just trying to protect you.”

“Bloody hell he is,” Harry growled, but left it at that. He and Bella began pulling the instruments from the car in a rather tense silence. Bella kept throwing Harry worried looks, which Harry was choosing to ignore only because he felt like he was likely to blow up on the next person that so much as said ‘hi’ to him.

They had just finished setting up when Jack arrived, looking around with wide eyes and an awed expression. Harry could understand the way Alice did things just had people feeling like that all the time.

“Jack, over here,” Harry called out gently and pulled her over to the stage. She nearly stumbled over the one step seeing as she was still staring up at the ceiling.

“This place is amazing,” she finally said in a hushed tone.

“Alice likes to go all out,” Harry told her candidly. Jack blinked rapidly before seeming to realize that her mouth was hanging open. She snapped it shut and even under the pulsing multi-colored lighting, Harry could tell that she was blushing.

“So . . . what’s the set list,” Jack asked after a moment of embarrassed silence. She was fiddling with the straps of her guitar and determinedly not looking at Harry. Harry smiled sympathetically, but otherwise pretended like he didn’t notice.

“Well since this is first and foremost a party, we’re planning to start out with generic music. Alice wants to give us time to mingle before we actually have to work so we won’t actually go on until around ten.”

“Oh.” And Jack grimaced at his words.

“What?”

“Well . . . I don’t want to sound ungrateful or anything . . .” she trailed off but Harry waited patiently for her to continue. “Well I’m a freshman remember. I don’t exactly have any friend here to hang with.”

Harry’s lip parted with a surprised ‘Oh.’ Honestly he should have thought of that before.

“Don’t be silly, Jack,” Alice’s tinkling voice suddenly cut in, the girl appearing at Harry’s elbow. “I took the time to invite some of your friends too.”

Now it was Jack’s turn to look shocked.

“Really?” Alice nodded patiently and then she suddenly had an armful of Jack. “Thank you so
much. Jeez I always knew you guys were freakin’ awesome! Everyone had their doubts, you know – cause you guys don’t really talk to anyone else. But not me, I knew you guys were cool. And I kept tellin’ everyone that—”

Jack was babbling excitedly now and so Harry helpfully pulled Alice free and suggested that she continue setting up. Jack didn’t even seem to notice that the other girl had left really, not until Harry had slipped his hand over her mouth to shut her up.

“Silence at last,” he said cheekily and received a glare.

---

Bella was sulking in a corner near the kitchen when she was approached. She swallowed nervously as the black man came to a stop in front of her, an easy smile on his face.

“Good evening,” he said smoothly, holding out a hand.

“Hi,” Bella said back and allowed the handsome Italian to kiss the back of her hand only out of pure shock that someone would think to do such a thing.

“Isabella, isn’t it? I do believe that is Italian,” Blaise commented smoothly.

“It is,” Bella answered, carefully taking her hand back and wondering at the probing look Blaise was giving her. “From my mother. Her name was Renee Moretti. It’s rather generic, or so I’ve been told.”

Bella shut her mouth with a click when she realized she was on the verge of rambling and a familiar blush found its way across her cheeks.

“It is,” the black male reaffirmed. “But that will not deter me.”

“From what,” Bella questioned.

“From courting you, of course,” was the answer. And Bella’s face turned an even darker red, as it should have. Now Bella could be called a lot of things, but oblivious she was not. But she was still thrown for a loop at Blaise’s words. Sure the teen had been hitting on her at every chance he got, but Bella had rightfully assumed he was just playing with her. There was no way that someone like him could actually be interested in plain, boring her.

And Bella was anything but a prude, so she fully acknowledged the fact that Blaise practically oozed sex appeal. And she had even indulged in a dream every now and then. And wasn’t that pretty damn exciting. But that also screamed Blaise.

Sure, she had dated Edward Cullen of all people, but despite the whole vampire bit, Edward had been tame. He was the perfect dapper gentleman that a mother would want their daughter to have and a father wouldn’t feel the need to pull a gun on. Even Jacob had been fairly tame, although Bella hadn’t given that relationship much thought.

But Blaise Zabini . . .

Well he was the type of bad boy that a girl had an affair with and hid from her parents. He was danger and sex and thrilling excitement. And he certainly reminded Bella of her little danger stint with the motorcycles and cliff diving.

“You can’t be serious,” Bella finally managed to say when her thoughts caught up with her.
“I’m always serious,” Blaise told her with a small frown.

“But why,” Bella demanded, just managing to keep herself from announcing her insecurities out loud.

“Why not,” Blaise shot back smoothly. “What did you think I was doing this entire time? I don’t do things half way Isabella and my madre would have my hide if I ever strung a woman along.” Bella’s mouth was gapping open now as she gazed up at the older teen. So when the doorbell rang not a moment later, she practically ran to it if only to give herself some space to get her head together.

And then the party was underway and Bella was too busy playing host to even give Blaise Zabini much thought. Not that he made it easy. Every time she turned around he seemed to be a couple of feet away from her, staring at her even as he talked to someone else.

Bella was so flustered at the attention that she stuck close to Harry hoping that if Blaise did approach her again before she had given his words enough thought that Harry would act as a buffer. This plan was ruined for a moment, however, when Harry had to go on stage.

“Hey everyone, give it up for Jack one more time,” Harry yelled into the MIC, throwing his arm around the girl’s shoulder. She was beaming brightly out at them all, and she had every right to. Bella had never heard a more talented singer.

“But she’s not leaving just yet,” Harry continued to say and Jack’s head swiveled around so she could stare at him with wide eyes. “Nope. Let’s say Jack sings one more song for my band?” Everyone cheered and Bella heard a few catcalls ring around the room.

“That is so like Potter,” a voice said into Bella’s ear, making her jump literally a couple of inches off the ground. She turned her head to see Blaise right beside her, his face alarmingly close and that familiar grin oozing confidence.

“Oh, hey,” Bella said awkwardly, moving over a little to put some space in between them, but Blaise just moved in closer. “Err, they’re really good together.” Bella gestured up at the stage where Harry and Jack were taking turns sing the lyrics to “Everything I Own” the Bandslam version.

“Mmhmm,” Blaise agreed although he didn’t look away from her like she had been hoping he would do. Bella felt her face heat up for what had to have been the millionth time that night. “You blush a lot,” Blaise murmured, and he lifted his hand, his warm fingers grazing Bella’s cheek. Bella felt a shiver run down her spin and she jerked back.

“I-I . . . Alice,” she stammered and then practically ran to the other side of the house, hiding away in the kitchen. Esme was in there, humming away to herself, but she seemed to notice Bella’s mood and so left her alone.

And so Bella spent the next twenty minutes hiding out in the kitchen and scolding herself for acting like a fool in front of a guy that was actually showing an interest in her.

“Stay here,” Edward murmured close to Harry’s ear so that he could be heard over the music. And then he was slipping away through the crowd, off to an alcove where he seemed to disappear into darkness. Harry narrowed his eyes at his boyfriend not even giving whoever it was his attention anymore.

“What’s he doing,” Bella whispered, standing on her toes so that she could see over the crowd. It
seemed like Harry wasn’t the only one suspicious about Edward’s sudden disappearance. “Oh shit.”

“What,” Harry asked, alarmed at Bella’s curse. But he already knew what because he had seen the look of dread on Alice’s face when the alcove was lit up for the quickest of seconds.

“Excuse me, Jess,” Bella suddenly blurted out and then she was twisting her way through the crowd toward Edward and Alice. Harry glance over at Jessica to see her face fall before he was following after Bella.

“What’s going on?”

Draco had appeared at Harry’s side, his eyes tense as he took in Harry’s face.

“I don’t know yet,” Harry told him tersely. He finally caught up with Bella to see that Edward had disappeared off somewhere. Bella was standing in front of Alice, her hands gripped almost pleadingly in front of her.

“Please, Alice, what? What did you see,” she was demanding, her face showing all the tension Harry’s wasn’t.

Alice wasn’t even paying Bella any attention. Her eyes were fixed on something over Harry’s shoulder, and so he looked also. Edward was all the way across the room, staring back. His face was so set . . . it looked to be carved from marble. And then he was disappearing into the shadows once more.

“Alice,” Harry demanded, turning back to the small vampire.

The doorbell rang, somehow being heard over the blasting music. It sounded almost out, seeing as it had been hours since the last guest had arrived and the band had already played. Alice’s face tilted up with a puzzled expression that quickly turned into one of disgust.

“Who invited the werewolves,” she bit out, looking put out. Draco shifted guiltily before saying, “Luna.” Alice blinked at that before shrugging it off.

“Well you guy take care of it then. I have to go talk to Carlisle.”

“No, Alice, wait,” Bella exclaimed, her hand shooting out to grab onto her arm, but the vampire was suddenly gone. “Damn it!” Harry sighed in disappointment and turned to look at Draco who wasn’t even paying them any attention anymore.

It was a curious thing to see – the look that came onto Draco’s face when he saw Jacob Black. Harry had never seen the Malfoy look so open before. And wasn’t it just the oddest thing to see how Jacob walked straight towards Draco, not even noticing the people he was practically plowing over.

“Oh goodie, they’re finally here.”

Harry was really getting sick of people just popping up on him, even though he still threw an arm around Luna’s shoulder as his eyes took in the other two shifters that had showed up with Jacob.

“Paul, Seth, Jacob,” Luna greeted them, leaning forward and taking one of Seth’s hand and one of Paul’s.

“Hey Luna,” Seth chirped back, his young face showing innocent excitement. He then leaned down and gave her a soft kiss on her cheek. Luna accepted it with a hum before turning to Paul expectantly. The larger shifter looked uncomfortable for a moment before he pulled Luna close,
landing a quick peck on her lips.

“Whoa,” Jacob just about shouted and he was staring at the three with wide eyes, as was Bella – who had previously been searching the area for some sight of Alice. “What . . . I . . . huh . . . but . . . what?”

“Nargles like to fly into open mouths,” Luna commented serenely. “They also create great distractions. Is that what you’re so interested in Isabella? You know you have to squint if you really want to see them.”

Luna’s comment seemed distraction enough because Jacob was now focused on Bella’s tense face.

“Why’re you so distracted,” Jacob asked.

“It’s nothing,” Bella said immediately, almost as if she wasn’t even aware she was saying it.

“Bella?” Everyone was looking at Bella now. Harry felt a little bit bad because she was clearly uncomfortably with the attention she was getting.

“Jake, I . . . no, there’s nothing.”

“It doesn’t do one good to lie,” Luna chimed.

“And you suck at lying anyways,” Jake added. Bella was looking very caged now, her eyes darting here and there.

“It won’t hurt to tell them,” Harry advised.

“It’s not . . . I just need to find Alice.”

“The psychic saw something,” Paul butted in and understanding lit up Jacob’s face.

“I – yes, I think so.”

“Is this about the bloodsucker in your room,” Jacob asked, ducking his head down and pitching his voice below the thrum of the music. Bella didn’t look like she was going to answer; her eyes were still darting around the room in search of Alice.

“Yes, it’s related,” Harry answered for her.

“So you know what this is all about,” Jacob demanded and now Harry had all the attention.

“I know some of it but whatever Alice just saw was a complete mystery.”

“Well you can start by telling us what you do know,” Draco commented in his sarcastic manner, taking the words from his boyfriend’s mouth. Jacob nodded behind him before crossing his arms over his chest. Paul and Seth mimicked him.

“Alice,” Bella suddenly squeaked, relief clear in her voice. Harry looked over his shoulder just in time to see Alice skip over to Bella’s side, her eyes narrowed. The little vampire moved close to Bella, her lips against her ear as she whispered something.

“Ah, er . . . I’ll see you guys later,” Bella mumbled, giving Harry a meaningful look before she started edging away from the group. Before she and Alice could move very far, Jacob threw his arm out, bracing it against the wall and blocking their path.
“Hey, not so fast.”

Alice blinked once, staring up at him with wide, incredulous eyes. “Excuse me?”

“Tell us what’s going on,” Paul demanded.

“Temper,” Luna sang.

And suddenly Jasper was standing on the other side of Jacob’s arm, Neville teetering nervously behind him. And Harry could understand why his friend was nervous – Jasper’s expression was understandably hostile.

Jacob slowly pulled his arm back. It seemed like the best move, going with the assumption that he wanted to keep that arm.

“We have a right to know,” Jacob muttered, a pout on his lips. Jasper growled lowly and the three shifters back up respectfully. Seth and Paul moved to flank Luna who was now rocking on her heels and staring up at the ceiling.

“It’s okay Jasper. He actually has a point.” Jasper didn’t relax. He moved closer to Alice, wrapping his arm around her tiny waist.

“So . . . um? What’s going on guys,” Neville asked, his voice vibrating his tension.

“Alice what did you see,” Bella asked at the same time. Alice looked at the shifters for a moment before turning to Bella.

“The decision’s been made.”

“You’re going to Seattle,” Bella demanded and Harry echoed.

“No,” Alice said slowly, her eyes darting between Bella and Harry as if she wasn’t sure who to focus on more.

“They’re coming here,” Bella choked out after a moment.

“Yes.”

“To Forks,” she whispered.

“Yes.”

“For?”

Alice hesitated. “One carried your red shirt.”

Bella looked remarkably pale and Harry gripped her arm to keep her steady.

“We can’t let them come that far,” Jasper said through his teeth. “There aren’t enough of us to protect the town.”

“I know,” Alice said, her face suddenly desolate. “But it doesn’t matter where we stop them. There still won’t be enough of us, and some of them will come here to search.”

“No,” Bella said as if she had a choice in the matter. “Alice. I have to go; I have to get away from here.”
“I highly doubt they have tracker,” Harry said calmly. “Our only choice in the matter is to protect you.”

“But I could —”

“Bella,” Harry cut across, already knowing what she was going to say. “We’re going to protect you.”

“Hold it,” Jacob finally broke in. “What is coming?”

“Vampires. The new kind,” Harry answered before either Jasper or Alice could because he just knew that they’d be as vague as possible. “They’re tracking Bella’s scent so it’s safe to say that they’re after her.”

“And there are too many for them to handle?”

“For *them* yes,” Harry agreed stressing the ‘them’ part.

“We have a few advantages,” Jasper imputed in defense. “It’ll be an even fight.”

“No,” Jacob disagreed, a fierce half-smile stretching across his face. “It won’t be even.”

“Excellent,” Alice hissed.

Bella’s mouth dropped open and she stared from Alice and Jacob as if she wasn’t sure who was being more of an idiot. Harry could practically see the thoughts rushing through her head. It didn’t seem to help that Alice and Jacob were now the best of friends.

“Everything just disappeared, of course. That’s inconvenient, but, all things considered, I’ll take it.” Alice leaned up toward Jacob in her excitement.

“We’ll have to coordinate,” Jacob said, leaning down and matching Alice’s excitement. “It won’t be easy for us. Still, this is our job more than yours.”

“I wouldn’t go that far, but we need —”

“Wait,” Bella interrupted, finally finding her voice. “Wait, wait, wait! Coordinate?”

“Well yeah. You didn’t think you were going to keep us out of this,” Jacob said flippantly.

“You *are* staying out of this!”

Harry sighed and turning his attention to the not arguing portion of the group. Draco and Luna were both looking at him with expectant expressions.

“Yes, we’re helping.”

“What about Edward,” Luna asked.

“Edward doesn’t make my decisions,” Harry told her.

“So we’re definitely helping. You’re not going to change your mind or anything,” Draco demanded, his eyes intent.

“Yes, Draco, I’m not going to change my mind.” Draco eyed Harry for a moment more before nodding his head sharply. Harry rolled his eyes before turning back to the argument, and just in time
to catch the last of Jasper’s sentence.

“. . . strategic meeting. If you’re going to fight with us, you’ll need some instruction.”

The wolves all gave him disgruntled looks and Bella moaned a low, “No.”

“This will be odd,” Jasper continued, ignoring Bella’s protest completely. “I’ve never considered working together. This has to be a first.”

“No doubt about that,” Jacob readily agreed. He was bouncing on his toes now, looking very much like an excited puppy. Harry almost laughed, especially when Draco glared at him as if he could hear Harry’s thoughts.

“We’ve got to get back to Sam. What time?”

“What’s too late for you?”

“What time,” Jacob asked again after giving his pack brothers exasperated looks.

“Three o’clock?”

“Where?”

“About ten miles due north of the Hoh Forest ranger station. Come at it from the west and you’ll be able to follow our scent in.”

“We’ll be there.” Jacob turned and then planted a large smacking kiss on Draco’s lips, much to the Slytherin’s embarrassment.

“Jake, please don’t do this,” Bella was trying to plead with him, but Jacob simply patted her on the head and started heading out. Paul and Seth followed him out of the house after giving Luna their own kind of weird goodbye that involved Eskimo kisses.

And then the wolves were gone.

“I can’t believe this,” Bella was ranting now. “Can you believe this?”

“You’re worrying too much,” Harry told her. “I’m sure they understand the seriousness of the situation.”

“But they don’t,” Bella yelled, throwing her arms up in frustration. “They don’t at all. To them this is just some stupid play fight.”

“Oh, stop complaining. You can’t control them,” Draco snapped at her before turning and storming off.
“You’re not going.”

Edward’s expression was as firm as his tone and Harry had never felt more like a child.

“You can’t stop me,” he hissed angrily, feeling overly embarrassed that his pack mates were witnessing this. It didn’t help that Blaise was snickering in the background.

“Yes I can.” And didn’t Edward sound just so sure of himself. And that was the problem. Edward was underestimating Harry. He had some ridiculous notion that because Harry could bleed he was incapable of fighting.

“Edward,” Harry said warningly.

“This discussion is over,” Edward spoke over him. “You’re not going and that’s final.”

“You can’t just tell me what to do and expect me to fall in line like some submissive fool. I’m an adult and I can do whatever the bloody hell I want.”

“Harry please,” Edward said, changing tactics now. “I just found you. Don’t put me in the position where I have to watch as you are taken away from me.”

“That’s not fair and you know it,” Harry said lowly. “I could use the same argument. And don’t you dare bring in the age card because I feel as if I have lived just as long.” A strained silence fell down upon them like cold water. The Cullens were trying to be very discrete about listening in as was Malfoy – but Bella and Blaise was staring rather rudely and Harry could feel their gaze.

“I can’t let you go,” Edward finally said and then rushed away before Harry could argue more. Not that Harry was about to. He was so angry he wasn’t sure if he could talk anymore. It honestly wasn’t fair of Edward to treat him this way and Harry was upset that he thought he had that right.

“I’ll see you guys later,” Harry muttered then motion for his group to move on out. They did so silently, Luna giving him woeful concerned eyes.

“Harry, wait!”

Bella caught up with Harry just as he reached his car and he turned to give her his full attention.

“Do you think . . . can you take me with you?”

“To my house,” Harry asked with some surprise. “Why do you —”

“No! Not to your house. I’m talking about when you go to the meeting. You are going . . . aren’t you,” and her voice turned a little hesitant toward the end.

“Of course I am,” Harry said confidently.

“Great.” Bella smiled brightly. “So can you take me?”

“Sure, be ready at exactly three.” Bella nodded enthusiastically, hugged Harry and then ran off. Harry shook his head at her, feeling a little bit better now.
Bella was waiting impatiently crouched on the front porch when Harry pulled up in front of her house. A quick look showed that he was gonna have to use a little bit of magic to fit her into the car. He suddenly wished he had thought to send Luna on ahead instead of having them all squashed together in his car.

“Should have left the baby,” Draco gripped, also looking into the back seat. Teddy was seated silently in Luna’s lap, looking around with large violet eyes. Harry sighed. He muttered lowly under his breath before reaching into his pocket and pulling out a miniature bike. He debated for a minute, looking between Luna and Draco.

“Alright, Draco, I’m gonna bring Bella in on my bike. You’ll be following me. Okay?”

Draco rolled his eyes at the pleading look Harry was giving him but nodded all the same. Bella jumped up when Harry got out and she rushed over to him. Her eyes trailed over the inhabitants of the car before focusing in on Harry.

“You’re riding with me,” he told her before she could say anything. He then placed the figurine on the ground. With a wave of his hand the object grew until it was its original size.

“Thank God Charlie is asleep,” Bella murmured. “He would have a conniption if he saw me getting on this.

“‘What he doesn’t know won’t hurt him’ is the saying I believe?” Harry patted the smooth leather seat and watched Bella carefully as she swung her leg over. She looked entirely too comfortable straddling the bike and Harry had to remind himself that she used to ride a motorcycle not too long ago.

“Do you know where we’re going,” he asked, holding out his helmet toward her. Bella nodded, lifting the helmet from Harry’s hand and sliding it over her head. Harry mounted the bike, kicked it into start, and waited until Bella had wrapped her arms around his waist before peeling away from the house.

Bella directed him to a very rocky dirt road cutting into the forest a little bit farther out from where Potter Manor sat. In fact, they were so close to the manor that Harry could feel the wards buzzing not five feet to the left of where he stood.

“The meeting place is deep in. I’m not sure how deep. We took this road most of the way and then Edward piggy backed me the rest,” Bella said when Harry had cut the engine.

“Okay. We’ll go on foot from here.”

Bella made a face, staring at the trees and rocks uncertainly. “We’ll probably miss the whole meeting even if we move fast,” she told him slowly, still staring at the terrain.

“That’s why we’re running,” Harry said with a sharp grin. Draco snorted at his words and started stretching out his arms. Luna passed Teddy over to Neville before she started jumping lightly on her toes. Even Blaise was leaning down as he stretched out his legs.

“Running,” Bella repeated dubiously. “I can barely walk across a flat surface without falling on my face and you want me to go running through a forest in the dark?”

Harry rolled his eyes at her, before leaning forward. The shift was so gracefully done that Bella felt like she missed it. One minute Harry was standing next to her and the next a wolf was sitting in his
place. Bella now understood why Harry had called his friends pack mates. Everyone, save Neville and Teddy, had turned into a bunch of wolves. They were larger than normal wolves but smaller than the La Push wolves.

Harry, who was as black as Sam, nudged Bella with his nose and motioned towards his back. Bella hesitated.

She knew what Harry wanted but she hadn’t even ridden a horse before much less a wolf that was actually one of her best friends. Bella slowly inched forward, throwing her leg over Harry’s back like she had done his bike.

Harry started walking forward and Bella let out a squeal as she rocked forward. By reflex she wrapped her arms around his thick neck and buried her face into the fur there. She heard a low grumbling beneath her and imagined that Harry was laughing at her.

“Oh shut up,” she muttered. There was another grumbling sound and then there was wind in Bella’s hair. Bella kept her eyes closed and her face pressed into Harry’s neck. She could feel them moving, a great difference from when she had ran with Edward or when she road on a bike. She could feel all of Harry’s muscles moving powerfully underneath her and it gave her a rocking motion that wasn’t all too pleasant.

And then they were coming to a stop. Bella peeked up and saw the rest of the guys waiting patiently for them at the forest edge. Blaise, Draco, and Luna had changed back already and Luna was twirling in circles with Teddy.

Bella sat up as Harry walked over and when he stopped she slid off his back. In the next second he was standing next to her, an amused smile on his face.

“So . . . you guys keep your clothes,” Bella asked.

“Of course, why wouldn’t we.” Bella just shook her head and then lead the way. They entered at the edge of an enormous field that was as large as a professional Quidditch pitch. The Cullen’s were already there, talking casually. Everyone could hear Emmett’s booming laugh echoing around them.

“Bloody Salazar,” Blaise exclaimed. “Imagine the matches we could play here.” Blaise’s voice drew the Cullen’s attention and in the next second Edward was standing right in front of Harry, his expression furious.

“What are you doing here,” he demanded lowly, his eyes almost black.

“What does it look like,” Harry said, matching Edward’s glare. “I’m here for the information session. We do need to know how to kill these newborns when we help you guys.”

“You’re not helping,” Edward grounded out. Harry rolled his eyes and brushed past Edward, but Edward wouldn’t allow it and he moved in front of the small wizard. Harry glared and moved to move around Edward again, and so it went. After the fifth time, Harry growled lowly, threw out his hands, and pushed Edward so hard that he landed on his back a few feet away.

“I’m staying and that’s final,” Harry said lowly. Edward glared at him before getting up and walking over to his family. Everyone else was staring at Harry with wide eyes.

“So . . . does this mean we get to practice with magic?” Emmet was the first to break the silence and he looked like a kid in the candy store at the prospect of seeing magic. Edward gave him a dark look but said nothing, his jaw clenched so tight it looked like it might just crack.
“When will our other guest arrive,” Carlisle asked Edward.  

Edward shifted, turning his attention towards the surrounding forest.  

“A minute and a half,” he said after a few seconds. “But I’m going to have to translate. They don’t trust us enough to use their human forms.”  

“This is hard for them,” Carlisle said empathetically with a nod. “I’m grateful they are coming at all.”  

“Wait,” Bella interrupted and Harry felt her tense at his side. “They’re coming as wolves?” Edward turned finally to look in Harry direction, but his gaze was fixed on Bella. Harry also looked at Bella; she was biting down on her lip and looking around a little uneasily.  

“Want me to take you back home?”  

“No,” she quickly declined. She straightened her back, a resolved look coming onto her face. “I want to be here.”  

“Prepare yourselves,” Edward suddenly called out, an amazed look dawning on his face. “They’ve been holding out on us.”  

“What do you mean,” Alice demanded, sounding put out, but Edward simply shushed her. The Cullens suddenly moved out to form a loose line with Edward and Jasper taking spear point. Harry looked over his group before motioning for them to do the same. Bella was moved to stand in between Blaise and Harry, with Harry taking the very end and Neville moving to stand near Jasper.  

“Damn,” Emmett muttered under his breath. “Have you ever seen anything like it?” Blaise whistled appreciatively and Draco allowed a shit-eating grin to cross his face.  

“Of course,” Luna said plainly. Esme and Rosalie exchanged a wide-eyed glance while Alice groaned. Harry arched a brow, looking over at Neville who simply shrugged.  

“What is it,” Bella whispered – the only person who hadn’t seen them yet. “I can’t see.”  

“The pack is huge,” Harry told her with a roll of his eyes. “Bigger than you guys know.”  

“Wait, you knew,” Edward demanded.  

“Of course. Draco told me.”  

The conversation was cut short as the wolves finally breached the tree line. Harry felt them first as the brushed against a layer of his wards. He was honestly surprised, he hadn’t thought his land stretched this far.  

There were ten of them, crouched in a more formal line in an arrow like formation. The huge black wolf was at spear point, a wolf just as large right behind him. It was this wolf Draco waved his fingers at, so Harry assumed it was Jacob.  

“Welcome,” Carlisle called out, stepping forward with his arms stretched in a clear show of reassurance.  

“Thank you,” Edward responded in a weird flat tone. Harry realized almost immediately that he was ‘translating.’ “We will watch and listen, but no more. That is the most we can ask of our self-control.”  

Harry snorted at the ridiculousness of the situation.
“That is more than enough,” Carlisle, ever the diplomat, said. “My son Jasper” – he gestured toward Jasper who was standing tense and ready – “has experience in this area. He will teach us how they fight, how they are to be defeated. I’m sure you can apply this to your own hunting style.”

“They are different from you,” Edward asked for the leader, Sam if Harry remembered correctly.

“They are all very new,” Carlisle told him with a nod, “only months old to this life. Children, in a way.”

“I take offense to that,” Neville said easily with a careless eye roll. Carlisle inclined his head toward him before continuing.

“They will have no skill or strategy, only brute strength. Tonight their numbers stand at twenty. Ten for us, ten for you – it shouldn’t be difficult. The numbers may go down. The new ones fight amongst themselves.”

A rumble passed down the shadowy line of wolves, a low growling mutter that somehow managed to sound enthusiastic to Harry ears.

“We are willing to take more than our share, if necessary,” Edward translated. Harry rolled his eyes at the wolves’ eagerness. He could kind of understand Bella’s worry now. They were kind of like big children.

“We’ll see how it plays out,” Carlisle said with a smile.

“And we’ll be helping out wherever needed,” Harry felt the need to add, for which he got a glare from Edward, but he ignored it.

“Do you know when and how they’ll arrive?”

“They’ll come across the mountains in four days, in the late morning. As they approach, Alice will help us intercept their path.”

“Thank you for the information. We will watch.”

With an almost sighing sound, the wolves sat down on their hunches.

It was silent for a moment before Jasper moved forward to stand in the space between the two groups. He shot a look Edward’s way before turning his back on the wolves. Harry could easily imagine how uncomfortable Jasper was; turning his back on what his instincts were telling him was his enemy.

“Carlisle is right,” Jasper spoke and he seemed to be trying to ignore the wolves’ watching eyes. “They’ll fight like children. The two most important things you’ll need to remember are, first, don’t let them get their arms around you and, second, don’t go for the obvious kill. That’s all they’ll be prepared for. As long as you come at them from the side and keep moving, they’ll be too confused to respond effectively. Neville?”

Neville looked confused for a moment but he stepped forward anyways.

“Since you actually are a newborn, I think you’ll help best in the demonstrations.”

“Oh, I can do that,” Neville agreed. “One sec.” He then flitted over to Harry and pulled out his wand. “Hold this for me, please. I wouldn’t want to accidently use magic.”
“Course mate,” Harry agreed, taking the wand. Neville smiled then moved to the other side of the field so that he was standing opposite Jasper.

“Okay Neville, just go with your instincts and try for an easy kill.” Neville nodded, his eyes narrowed in concentration. Jasper smiled and then in the next second he was off. He wasn’t all that fast but he did blur out of view a couple of times. Neville was just as fast, but since he was going for the obvious kill Jasper always had the upper hand.

It was over in three minutes.

Jasper had Neville form behind, his teeth an inch from his throat.

There was a muttered rumble of appreciation from the watching wolves.

“I’m next,” Emmett called, moving forward from the line.

“It’s my turn,” Edward protested.

“In a minute,” Jasper grinned, stepping back from Neville. “I want to show Bella something first.” Bella tensed at the sound of her name and then frowned deeply when Jasper waved Alice forward. “I know you worry about her,” Jasper explained as Alice danced into the field. “I want to show you why that’s not necessary.”

Jasper was the one to attack this time. He sank into a crouch opposite of where Alice stood motionlessly. Jasper shifted, slinking toward Alice’s left.

Alice closed her eyes.

Bella reached out and grabbed Harry’s hand, holding onto it tightly. Harry allowed it as he watched Jasper attack Alice. At the last second Alice side stepped the attack. The demonstration started slow, for Bella’s benefit, and then picked up pace. It was easier to see that Jasper had been holding back his speed when dealing with Neville, because he was moving around Alice so fast, there were times when they both completely disappeared from Harry’s radar. And they moved so fluidly together, it was like a dance.

After six minutes, Alice laughed. She was perched on Jasper’s back, her lips pressed into his neck.

“Gotcha,” she tinkled. Jasper chuckled, shaking his head.

“You truly are one frightening little monster.”

The wolves murmured again, this time with wariness.

“My turn,” Edward suddenly called, and he rushed forward before Emmett, who settled back by Rosalie with a pout.

Harry straightened and paid close attention to this match. He had always been a little curious to see how Edward fought, especially with his advantage of being a mind reader.

Edward moved with the ease and grace of a jungle cat. It was a little curious and kind of funny, really, given Harry’s animagus form – not that anyone had ever seen it outside of Draco and Luna.

Jasper spun around Edward with an ease that spoke of experience. But his body was always tense, his eyes always narrowed as he tried not to think about his next move. The strain of it was slowing him down, Harry could tell. Jasper was trying to rely mostly on instinct but also trying not to be too
obvious in his movements.

Harry could imagine that it was exhausting having to fight against a mind reader. It didn’t help that Edward was faster. Jasper’s only saving grace was that his movements were unfamiliar to Edward. Their advantages and disadvantages helped to make the two a very even match.

Eventually Carlisle cleared his throat when the match hit the fifteen minute mark. Jasper laughed and took a step back. Edward straightened and grinned at him. Harry could tell that Edward enjoyed the sparing match – and he could understand that a little bit. It was kind of like his matches with Draco – fun and exhilarating and challenging.

“Back to work,” Jasper consented. “We’ll call it a draw.”

Harry stopped paying close attention after that. Every Cullen had a chance and the information session turning into a training session. Harry sighed quietly and sat down on the ground as he watched Jasper take special care in teaching Esme. She was the weak link of the group.

Draco was getting antsy at his side. Harry could tell that his pack wanted a shot at the training session, but Harry knew the Cullens wouldn’t allow it. Harry figured they’d just have to train on their own using Neville; it might even be more of a challenge since Neville had magic.

Bella was starting to fall asleep on her feet, leaned up against Blaise.

“They’re almost done,” Harry told her, patting her foot.

Jasper confirmed that, turning toward the wolves for the first time, his expression uncomfortable once more. “We’ll be doing this tomorrow. Please feel welcome to observe again.”

“Yes,” Edward answered in the detached tone that suggested he was translating. “We’ll be here.” He then sighed and turned to address his family. “The pack thinks it would be helpful to be familiar with each of our scents – so they don’t make mistakes later. If we could hold very still, it will make it easier for them.”

“Certainly,” Carlisle said to Sam. “Whatever you need.”

“Does that include me,” Neville piped in, shifting nervously. Edward tilted his head as he stared at Neville.

“No,” he finally said. “They say that you don’t smell the same. It probably has to do with your magic.” Neville nodded and stepped back.

As the Cullen’s lined up again, Bella bent down towards Harry.

“You didn’t participate,” she said but it came out as more of a question. Harry could hear the unspoken ‘why not?’ “Aren’t you going to train?” Edward’s head snapped over at her question. He had stopped sending Harry burning glares a while back when Harry hadn’t tried to step in on the training session.

“No,” Harry lied, not looking at Edward. “We just came for the information.” Bella looked disbeliefing but didn’t question Harry further on it. She seemed to understand Edward’s overprotective-ness well. They did date.

The wolves were leaving now as dawn broke over the trees. Jacob stayed however, lopping over to Draco and grinning in the way that Draco did when he was in his wolf form. Two others – Seth and Paul – settled in around Luna who ran her fingers through their fur and began humming.
Harry sighed and settled in to let them have their ‘couple moment’. Bella sat down also, leaning onto him and away from Blaise. Blaise stayed where he was, staring down at Bella but not making any moves toward her. Harry had to admire his determination – and his ability to make Bella squirm. Harry shared an amused look with Neville, who understood Blaise the best of out all of them and still seemed surprised at the black Italian’s resolve to marry Bella.

“You guys should probably head home now,” Edward said as he walked over toward them. “You need to sleep.”

“We’ll go home when they’re done,” Harry said motioning to the two groups. Jacob looked up suddenly and he locked eyes with Edward. Edward sighed and frowned down at Bella.

“I’ve not quite figured out all the details yet,” he said. Jacob grumbled and moved closer. Draco followed after him curiously.

“It’s more complicated than that,” Edward was arguing now. “Don’t concern yourself; I’ll make sure she’s safe.”

“What are you talking about,” Bella demanded, rising to her feet so that she was on better standing to the two. Harry stood also, looking curiously between Edward and Jacob.

“Just discussing strategy,” Edward said simply. Harry narrowed his eyes. Jacob snorted then turned to run into the woods.

“Where’s he going,” Draco demanded, moving to follow.

“He’s coming back,” Edward told him. “He just wants to be able to talk for himself.”

“About what exactly,” Harry asked, his arms crossed and his green eyes fixed on Edward. Edward didn’t answer, but Jacob was returning now, making a beeline for them.

“Okay bloodsucker,” he said as he threw an arm around Draco’s shoulder. “What’s so complicated about it?”

“I have to consider every possibility,” Edward said, continuing the conversation from where he had left off. “What if someone gets by you?”

Jacob snorted. “Okay, so leave her on the reservation. We’re making Collin and Brady stay behind anyway. She’ll be safe there.”

“Are you talking about me,” Bella demanded sounding thunderous. Harry could understand – in fact, he was pretty sure Edward was trying to think of where to put him when the fight broke out.

“I just want to know what he plans to do with you during the fight,” Jacob explained.

“Do with me,” Bella repeated with all off the outrage that women seem to have in reserves.

“You can’t stay in Forks, Bella,” Edward told her in a pacifying tone. “They know where to look for you there. What if someone slipped by us?”

“Charlie,” Bella gasped.

“Then we’ll keep them both at Potter Manor,” Blaise inputted.

“Where,” Jacob, Bella, and Edward all echoed.
“Potter Manor,” Neville repeated. “It’s where we live.”

“I’ve never heard of it,” Jacob said at the same time that Edward said, “It won’t work.”

“Why not,” Draco demanded, ignoring Jacob’s comment.

“They’re not trackers so they’ll be coming here anyways. And they’re following her scent so they’ll find her anyways,” he explained.

“Right and I’d like to see them get past Potter’s wards,” Blaise said with a snort. “They wouldn’t even know where to start to look.”

“I don’t think so guys,” Harry finally spoke up and Blaise and Draco immediately backed down.

“You don’t,” Jacob said, sounding surprised. “But Dray told me a little about wards. If you have them up the bloodsuckers shouldn’t be able to find her, right?”

“Well yeah,” Harry agreed. “But then they’ll just come after her some other time, and let’s face it, Bella can’t live at my house forever. Hiding her won’t solve anything. What we need to do is get her to a safe open space and protect her. Whoever is after her is sure to find her – they’ve already gone through all this to get after her. Then we can eliminate the threat altogether and Bella can move on with her life.”

Jacob and Edward were silent for a moment, thinking over Harry’s words. Finally Edward said, “You’re right. But we should still make it hard for them to find her. And it can’t be La Push,” Edward interrupted when Jacob opened his mouth. “She’s been back and forth enough that her scent is everywhere.”

“What about out here,” Blaise asked, waving his hands toward the forest.

“She’ll be far from the battle but close enough that if something happens we can get to her,” Neville added when it didn’t look that Blaise would explain his reasoning.

“That’ll work,” Harry said before Edward could. “But it’ll have to be that way. Potter Manor covers all the land behind us. The wards are already too close to where we are and if, Merlin forbid, they can get past them I will not have Teddy in danger.”

“Your house is back there,” Bella asked quietly. “But we’re miles into the forest.”

“Potter Manor covers a lot of land,” Harry explained nonchalantly.

“We can’t hide her out here,” Edward spoke up. “Her scent is too strong and when combine with ours its more potent. And our scent is all over this place. It’s sure to catch their attention. We’re not exactly sure which path they’ll take because they don’t know yet. If they crossed her scent before they found us . . .”

Everyone grimaced at the implication.

“Well our scent isn’t,” Harry said. “And if we Apparate it won’t leave a trail at all.”

“That might just work,” Edward said slowly, although he didn’t seem to like the idea all that much. “Jasper,” he then called. Jasper looked up curiously before walking over with Alice on his heels. “Okay, let’s try it.”

“I’ll take her,” Blaise quickly volunteer. He then grabbed Bella by the waist. “Hold on tight,” he told
her before the two disappeared with a loud crack. Jasper looked a little startled before turning to them for an explanation.

“We’re trying to hide Bella but her scent is too familiar to me,” Edward explained. Jasper nodded once before turning in a wide circle. He frowned then moved out into a wider circle.

“I can’t get a sense of her anywhere,” Jasper said as he moved back toward them. Harry nodded before lightly tapping his wrist. In the next second Blaise and Bella were back with another loud crack.

“So,” Bella asked, moving out of Blaise’s grasp, her face as red as a tomato.

“No trace at all,” Jasper told her. “So long as you don’t touch anything I can’t see them finding you.”

“A definite success,” Alice agreed.

“And it gave me an idea,” Jasper added.

“Which will work,” Alice added confidently.

“Clever,” Edward agreed.

“How can you guys stand that,” Jacob murmured.

“I don’t,” Draco deadpanned with a roll of his eyes and Harry simply shrugged.

Edward ignored Jacob and turned to look at Bella. “We’re – well you’re – going to leave a false trail to the clearing, Bella. The newborns are hunting, your scent will excite them, and they’ll come exactly the way we want them to without being careful about it. Alice can already see that this will work. When they catch our scent, they’ll split up and try to come at us from two sides. Half will go through the forest, where her vision suddenly disappears. . . .”

“Yes,” Jacob hissed.

Edward smiled at him naturally. The idea of a fight seemed to be bringing them together.

“Not a chance,” Edward suddenly snapped, his voice disgusted. Bella jumped a little, looking a bit guilty but Edward wasn’t looking at her. His eyes were fixed on Jasper.

“I know, I know,” Jasper said quickly. “I didn’t even consider it, not really.” Alice stepped on his foot. Neville who had been watching silently snickered. “If Bella was actually there in the clearing,” Jasper explained to Alice, “it would drive them insane. They wouldn’t be able to concentrate on anything but her. It would make picking them off truly easy. . . .”

Edward and Harry’s combined glare had Jasper backtracking.

“Of course it’s too dangerous for her. It was just an errant thought,” he said quickly.

“No,” Edward said. His voice rang with finality. Harry had to admit that it was nice to hear it being used on someone else.

“You’re right,” Jasper said. He took Alice’s hand and inclined his head toward Neville. “You up for trying this time?” Neville nodded and the three walked off. Jacob stared after Jasper with disgust written all over his face.

“Jasper looks at things from a military perspective,” Edward defended.
“Which if this was a war and Bella was a trained soldier, there wouldn’t have been a problem,”
Draco said, helping in the defense – which surprised Harry. Draco hadn’t made his distain of the
Cullen’s secret, but it was nice to see the Malfoy was growing up a little bit.

“Alright then, we’ll meet up here on Friday to lay the false trail,” Edward said, getting back to
business. “You should probably come too,” he told Jacob, “so that everyone has an idea on where
Bella will be hidden.”

“And then what,” Jacob asked critically. “Leave her with a cell phone?”

“You have a better idea?”

“Actually I do,” Jacob said smugly.

“Oh . . . again, dog, not bad at all.”

“You’re just full of them today, aren’t you,” Draco teased.

Jacob leaned down to kiss Draco’s forehead before turning to Bella. “We tried to talk Seth into
staying behind with the younger two,” he whispered and all eyes darted over to where Seth, Paul,
and Luna were. The two wolves appeared to be sleeping, but it was hard to tell with the distance.
“He’s still too young, but he’s stubborn and he’s resisting – especially now that he has an imprint or
whatever they are. So I thought of a new assignment for him – cell phone.”

Bella nodded her head but Harry could tell that she didn’t completely understand.

“As long as Seth is in his wolf form, he’ll be connected to the pack,” Edward said. “Distance isn’t a
problem,” he added, turning to Jacob.

“Nope.”

“And I can throw in a messaging mirror,” Harry added. “I have a pair at home that I don’t use
anymore. One mirror can connect to the other no matter where you are, all you have to do is say the
name of the person you wish to talk to that has the other mirror.”

“Really, anywhere,” Jacob asked skeptically.

“Yes anywhere. Just in case you guys move out of Seth’s range.”

“We can hit three thousand miles,” Jacob boasted.

“Well then the mirror is just a precaution,” Harry said with a roll of his eyes. He then turned toward
Bella who was swaying on her feet. “Come on I’ll take you home.” Blaise opened his mouth to
protest but one look from Harry had him backing down.

“We’ll see you all tomorrow for the next session.” Edward didn’t look too pleased but he nodded all
the same. Neville paused in his fight with Jasper and started to walk over.

“Go ahead and stay Neville. It’s not like you actually need sleep,” Harry told him. “Draco, you and
Luna can stay also if you want to. I don’t have control over your lives.” Draco nodded and he and
Jacob walked off together.

With a tight smile towards Edward, Harry and Blaise Apparated away with Bella.

Bella was out like a light by the time she crawled into bed.
Harry got a call from Bella at six in the afternoon the next day. He was right in the middle of training with Neville when his phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Hey Harry. So don’t be mad but I have some bad news for you.” Harry frowned and moved away from the others who were still training. They had agreed to have Neville come at all of them to see how they would probably fair against one newborn. So far, it was too easy.

“What kind of bad news?”

“Well . . . you know how I worry a little, right?”

“A little,” Harry echoed.

“Okay, a lot,” Bella reiterated and Harry could practically hear her eyes rolling. He stayed silent hoping she would get to the point faster. “Well,” she finally said, sounding too nervous and a shade guilty. “I got Edward to back out of the fight, but you have to back out with him.”

It all came out in a rush so it took Harry a minute to understand what Bella just said.

“Why,” Harry demanded when it finally clicked.

“I’m sorry,” Bella apologized. “But I don’t think I can stand not knowing what was going on. And Edward was so sure that you’d end up fighting that he said if he was going to back out you would have to stick with him.”

“Stick with him where,” Harry asked with a sigh.

“Well . . . um . . . with me and Seth.”

Harry was silent for a minute as he thought the idea over. Given what little he knew about vampires and the one after Bella, he could still guess that the one after her would find her. So maybe it was a good idea to stick with her.

“Okay. I don’t mind.”

“Really,” Bella asked and the relief was clear in her tone. “Thanks Harry. You know, I would have tried to find some way to ask you to sit this out also. I hate to think of what could happen to you in a fight.”

“Well I suppose you’re getting what you want anyways,” Harry told her. “But don’t worry Bella. We’ll protect you.”

“I know you will,” Bella whispered softly. The line was silent for a moment. “So are you coming to get me for the meeting tonight?”

“I’m going to send Blaise for you,” Harry teased.

“Harry! This is so not funny. Blaise is intimidating . . . and hot.”

“Okay, too much information. I really didn’t need to know you thought that.”

“You’re a weird gay best friend,” Bella said with a laugh.
“Who said I was even gay? Edward is the first guy I’ve ever been attracted to,” Harry admitted, settling in for a long phone conversation.

The gang was at the Cullen household when the missive came. Harry’s fingers froze on the keys of the piano, where Edward was teaching him how to play, and he looked over toward the window. A barn owl was tapping calmly at the glass to gain their attention.

“Is that an owl,” Emmett asked, looking over at the window and subsequently losing his racing game against Jasper. “Damn it! No fair. Redo, I was distracted,” the large vampire complained when Jasper smiled at him smugly.

“It’s not my fault you have a short attention span,” Jasper quipped and Harry laughed as he let the owl into the room. The vampires gathered – Jasper, Emmett, Edward, and Alice – all watching him curiously as Harry took the letter from the owl.

“I’m sorry I don’t have any treats on me,” Harry spoke to the bird, but as always Luna came to his rescue. She shifted the bird onto her shoulder and then walked over to sit by the window and feel the bird treats from out of her pocket.

Harry smiled fondly at the girl before turning to the letter.

Dear Mr. Potter,

My name is Richard Stevens and I’m the current leader of America’s magical community. I would love to meet you some day but I am reluctant to admit that this isn’t a casual summons. I’m not sure if you are aware but there has been an outbreak of newborn Muggle vampires in Seattle, Washington. Given the information that has come in from Gringotts, I had reason to believe that you are within that area. Normally I wouldn’t ask this of a civilian, especially of one that is so new to the area, but I feel I must. I’ve heard great things about you and I only wish to ask for your help. I completely understand if you do not wish to, I will certainly not force you. But we are in a bit of a bind and it will take some considerable time for me to send out a good enough team to handle the situation. Please owl me your reply as soon as possible.

Much Appreciated,

Richard Stevens
President of Magical America

“Well, what does it say,” Draco demanded when Harry continued to just stare at the letter. Everyone was watching Harry with some concern now, wondering about the globsmacked look he was sporting.

“The President has requested my help,” Harry admitted numbly.

“What,” Draco demanded and he made a move as if to race across the room and snatch the letter from Harry’s hands, but Edward beat him to it. The vampire then proceeded to read the penned note out loud. When he was done all the others in the house had gathered and they all stared at Harry with
surprise.

“You’re going to tell him that you’ll do it, aren’t you,” Neville questioned quietly when the silence grew too long.

“Oh course he’s not,” Edward said before Harry could. “It’s too dangerous.” Harry blinked slowly at his boyfriend and then an amused expression crossed his face. It was backed up by all the Magical people bursting into loud rounds of laughter.

“Did we miss something,” Bella asked irritably, not liking the way there were all laughing at the thought of danger.

“Too dangerous,” Draco snorted with a shake of his head. “As if Wonder Boy cares that something’s too dangerous.”

“If anything that’s more of a reason for Potter to go,” Blaise added with a snort of his own.

“Hey,” Harry protested with a small frown. “I have some self preservation.”

“No you don’t,” Luna chimed in her usual overly blunt manner.

“I still don’t get it,” Bella admitted.

“They’re just making fun of me,” Harry muttered as he summoned a pen and began to write back his response.

“What are you writing,” Edward demanded as he caught a couple of the words on the paper.

“Well really it was nice of the President to ask, but I would have gone to handle those vampires anyways,” Harry told him nonchalantly. “Especially since you all are involved. As if I’m going to let you risk your lives and stand idly by.”

“You can’t,” Edward protested and he tried to take the paper from Harry but the Savior was done and handed it to the owl. They all watched as it flew out of the window. “Harry!”

“Edward,” Harry said back with a roll of his eyes.

“I can’t let you do this,” the vampire told him tensely. “This isn’t a game.”

“I know that,” Harry told him. “I’m not going to do it anyways because Bella already asked me to sit out. You know that.” Harry leveled Edward with a look and the vampire looked away a little guiltily.

“So we’re going to handle it,” Draco inserted with a smirk. “All the better, because now we don’t have to worry about you trying to sacrifice yourself for everyone.”

“One time and no one lets me live it down,” Harry muttered lowly.

“One time was enough,” Luna told him softly. She placed a hand on his arm and he turned to look down at her. “We don’t need a repeat. We’re nothing without you James.”

“Thanks Luna. But don’t worry, I’m going to be here for so long, you guys are all going to get tired of me.”
The room was cloaked in darkness, the only light coming from the crescent moon that hung low in the sky. It lit up the small circle located in the ceiling, giving light to the round stone table at the center of the room. There were three wizards and three witches seated around the table, although their faces were hidden in the shadows.

“It has been decided that we will enact our plan in two weeks,” one witch spoke in a no nonsense tone.

“Are you sure about that? Do we have everything ready,” a wizard asked anxiously.

“We’re as ready as we can be. This is Potter we’re talking about,” the first witch said.

“And who knows who he has with him right now,” another witch inputted.

“Alright Granger, you’re the boss here,” another wizard said with a careless tone.

“So we’re all in agreement,” Granger asked, leaning over the table so that her face was momentarily lit up.

“I suppose,” the second wizard said lazily. “You know him best. So long as he gets what’s coming to him, I don’t care how or when we do it.”

“He will,” Granger promised. “We’ll make sure of that.”
Chapter 15

The day of the attack, Harry met up with Bella and Edward at the Cullen household, where Bella had spent the night before. She was all dressed up in a thick winter jacket and hiking gear when Harry caught sight of her. He almost laughing at how uncomfortable she looked.

“All ready to go?”

“Shut up,” Bella snapped when Harry failed to keep the humor out of his voice. “Alice said that it would snow in the mountains.”

Harry simply held up his hands, his lips twitching in amusement. Bella glared at him so he turned to look at Edward instead.

“Would you like to travel with us? I figured Apparating into the clearing would help speed things up.”

“Really,” Edward inquired, his expression holding excited curiosity. “Can you take more than one person?”

“Well normally side-apparating more than one adult body is difficult, but I doubt I’d be able to splinch you,” Harry told him with some amusement.

“Splinch,” Bella echoed, her expression worried. “What’s that?”

“It’s what happens when a person Apparates wrong. They sometimes leave a part of themselves behind. I remember this one girl in my year left behind her leg when we were practicing back in school.”

Bella’s face paled, all the blood seeming to drain out of her already white face.

“But don’t worry,” Harry rushed to reassure. “I’ve been Apparating adults since I was sixteen. It’s all about intent and I’ve never splinched anyone.”

Bella got a little bit of the color back into her face, but she still looked somewhat unsure. Harry held out his hands towards them. Edward grabbed hold immediately, threading in thin fingers through Harry’s.

“Trust me,” Harry asked Bella when she simply stared at his hand. The brunette took a deep breath before nodding and grabbing hold.

“Okay. On three. One. Two. Three!”

And the trio disappeared with a loud crack.

They appeared on the edge of the clearing and Bella immediately dropped to her knees, looking rather green in the face. Even Edward looked a little unsteady.

“Yeah,” Harry said one a sigh. “The first couple of time aren’t all that pleasant.”

“You think,” Bella moaned, rubbing at her stomach. “I don’t know how you guys can get used to
“Well its one of the fast forms of travel we have,” Harry pointed out. “But I supposed it’s an acquired feeling.”

Bella muttered something else, but Harry chose to ignore it for the time being. He looked around the large clearing with a critical eye before turning to look expectantly at Edward. Bella did the same, arching her brow questioningly.

“Right,” Edward said with a nod, turning to the task at hand. “Just walk north for a ways, touching as much as you can,” he instructed Bella. “Alice gave me a clear picture of their path, and it won’t take long for us to intersect it.”

“North,” Bella asked, innocently puzzled. Harry almost snorted, before he realized that normal people didn’t have an internal compass in their heads.

Edward smiled charmingly before pointing out the direction Bella was supposed to take. Bella followed his finger before nodding her head, a determined look coming onto her face.

She took her steps slowly at first, as if she still wasn’t sure where she was supposed to go. But after a couple of minutes, she seemed to gain her confidence and set out at a more normal pace – well normal for her anyways.

Harry and Edward walked parallel to Bella, almost twenty yards away so that they wouldn’t affect that trail. Harry had been curious to know that wizards gave off a kind of electrical sent that was off-putting to most vampires.

The sky was baby blue over their heads, only a few clouds lingering here and there from what Harry could see through the trees. If Harry hadn’t scented the snow in the air, he wouldn’t have believe in Alice’s foretelling of it. But it was there and coming in strong. This was just further supported by the fierce wind whipping through the woods.

It was cold enough that Harry could feel it. And if he could feel it then Bella most certainly could. Harry could spot her rubbing at her arms every now and then.

“Am I doing this right,” Bella called out suddenly, her tongue tucked between her lips as she tried to keep in a steady line. It made Harry think that she was trying to cross a tightrope.

“Perfectly,” Edward called back.

“Will this help,” Bella then asked, running her fingers through her hair and trailing the strands over the bushes she passed.

Edward gave an inaudible sigh before calling back with, “Yes, that does make the trail stronger. But you don’t need to pull your hair out, Bella. It will be fine.”

“I’ve got a few extras I can spare.”

“We’ll see how much extra when you’re bald,” Harry joked when Bella’s next finger run ended up getting tangled in her hair. The girl yanked her fingers free before shooting Harry a mild glare.

The rest of the walk was done in silence. Harry was pretty much enjoying it. He could almost pretend like he was just having an innocent walk through the woods with the guy he liked. It helped that he and Edward were standing so close together that their hands brushed ever so often. Harry was tempted to take it . . .
“Ouch! Oh fabulous,” Bella’s voice suddenly cut through Harry’s daydream. His head whipped around to see the girl had almost stumbled into a rather large tree. A strong breeze brought with it the metallic scent of blood.

“Are you okay,” Harry called out with some panic. He was too far away to tell how injured Bella was. She looked alright for now.

“I’m fine. Stay where you are,” Bella told them, her voice just a little high pitched. “I’m bleeding. It will stop in a minute.”

Edward apparently didn’t care because he was suddenly at Bella’s side. Harry started forward also, but the thought of completely messing up the plan had him hesitating.

Edward didn’t look all that concerned, so Bella couldn’t be that hurt. And it didn’t really hinder the plan if Edward’s scent got mixed in. These newborns were expecting that.

Harry shifted uncomfortably as Edward tried to clean Bella’s cut.

“Wait a second,” Bella stopped him. “I just got another idea.”

And then Bella reached out and pressed her injured hand against the ground beside her.

“What are you doing,” Edward demanded, and there was that alarm.

“Jasper will love this,” Bella murmured as an answer. She pulled herself up and started heading out again, making sure to trail her injured hand against whatever came into her path. Harry bit down on his lip to keep himself from commenting on how idiotic this ‘idea’ was.

She was sure to get some kind of infection, rubbing an open wound in the dirt like that.

The broke through the trees, coming out in the clearing that the fight would take place in. It was different looking at this place in the day. It certainly looked large enough to hold a battle.

“The newborns will be frantic, and Jasper will be very impressed with your dedication,” Edward was telling Bella in a level tone. Harry had apparently missed out on part of the conversation.

“Good,” Bella said with a nod, finally allowing Edward to take up her hand.

“Yes. Good.” There was clear sarcasm in Edward’s tone, but Bella seemed to be ignoring it.

“Oh, would you let Harry do it, please,” Bella asked, tugging her hand back slightly as Edward began to rummage through the bag he was holding.

“This doesn’t bother me anymore, if that’s what you’re worried about,” Edward told her absently. He finally pulled out a first-aid kit and started cleaning Bella’s cut with the precision of a trained doctor.

“Really,” Bella asked skeptically. “Why not?”

Edward shrugged and smoothed a bandage over Bella’s palm before saying, “I got over it.”

“You . . . got over it? When? How?”

Harry also wanted to know and he stared at Edward’s face. Edward pursed his lips as he searched for the words to explain.
“I,” he began, shooting Harry a look before dropping his gaze to the first-aid kit. He started fiddling with it, a clear sign of nervousness. “I lived an entire twenty-four hours thinking you were dead. It . . . changed the way I look at things.”

There was silence through the clearing. Bella’s eyes were now fixed on Harry, the brown orbs glowing with concern.

It took Harry a moment to realize that this conversation was treading into territories he didn’t understand. Clearly, Edward’s enlightenment had happened when he was still involved with Bella, and it was this fact that was causing his nervousness.

Harry shifted uncomfortably, not sure how to handle this type of situation. He was saved from having to think of anything by the timely arrival of Blaise.

The black Italian Apparated right beside Bella, the loud crack of his appearance causing the girl to actually jump and nearly fall to the ground. Blaise reached out in time to grab hold of her arm to keep her steady.

Harry wondered if it had all been planned when the other wizard pull Bella into an almost embrace.

“Hello,” he greeted casually. “You ready to go camping?” He was speaking more to Bella than anyone else, which had the girl blushing a dark red. She gave a nervous chuckle and then squeaked when Blaise pulled her even closer to him.

“How are we supposed to follow them,” Edward asked after a minute had passed.

“I’ll have to track his magical signature,” Harry gritted out. Because the plan had been for them to all Apparate together, but Blaise didn’t seem to like following plans when Bella was concerned.

“Come on before he does something he shouldn’t.”

Edward nodded stiffly, scooping up Harry’s hand before he could offer it. Harry closed his eyes, concentrating on the residual magic in the area. After catching hold of it, he turned on his heal, pulling him and Edward into the tight fold that was Apparation.

Harry tapped his fingers against his thigh irritably, barely listening to the play by play of the battle happened hundreds of feet away. His whole body was coiled like a spring, adrenaline pumping furiously through his veins. He hadn’t felt this . . . useless since the battle of Hogwarts, and then he had been on a mission to kill Nagini.

Now he was stuck up here, crouched down on a slab of rock, listening to Edward’s voice as he recounted the battle. Bella was curled into a ball in the far corner of the small tent, rocking back and forth as the very picture of worry.

It took Harry a moment to acknowledge the sudden silence. It was deafening, pressing down on Harry’s ears in a highly ominous way.
“What—” Harry broke off as light suddenly flooded his eyes. He blinked rapidly against it and found his vision obscured by sandy brown fur. Seth was crouched there, staring deeply at Edward as if the two were talking. The sun shattered off Edward’s skin and sent sparkles dancing across Seth’s fur.

And then Edward whispered urgently, “Go Seth!”

Seth swirled around then disappeared into the shadowed forest. Harry stared after him in confusion. It had all happened so fast.

Harry opened his mouth to demand to know what was going on, but with a simple displacement of air, he suddenly found himself pressed into the wall of the cliff face. A small ‘oomph’ right beside him, suggested Bella had received the same treatment.

“What the bloody hell,” Harry muttered, narrowing his eyes at Edward’s crouched position in front of him. It was a defensive position and so Harry’s eyes trailed anxiously over the trees.

“Who,” Bella whispered beside her and her voice sounded strained and tinged with fear.

“Victoria,” was Edward’s answer, and his voice came out in a snarl, echoing loudly around them. Harry tensed and he flicked his wrist, releasing his wand from its holster. His eyes continued to trace the tree line, Mad-Eye Moody’s voice in his mind yelling ‘Constant Vigilance’.

“She’s not alone,” Edward was still saying. “She crossed y scent, following the newborns in to watch – she never meant to fight with them. She made a spur-of-the-moment decision to find me, guessing that you would be wherever I was. She was right. You were right. It was always Victoria.”

Bella let out a tiny breath, one that sounded suspiciously like relief. Harry’s mind churned. It wasn’t like Bella to believe so fully in a person’s strength – not when it came to a fight. So why was she relieved?

Edward shifted just the tiniest bit, edging closer to Bella. Harry’s eyes snapped over to that direction and then he saw them.

They came from the forest like they were taking a simple walk, streaks of rainbow’s shattering against the skin in the sunlight. The two of them edged around the clearing, one going for Edward’s left and the other from the right.

Victoria took up the side closest to Bella, her dark eyes focused solely on the girl with an intense focus of a person performing Legilimency. She had Weasley hair, as bright as a flame and almost blinding to look at in the sunlight. Her body was coiled tight like she was ready to pounce at a moment’s notice, but she linger in the background as her friend continued to stalk forward.

He was big and blonde and couldn’t have been any older than that eighteen when he was turned. His eyes, a vibrant red deeper than blood, were focused on Edward.

Their plan was simple. Blondie would detract Edward and Victoria would go for Bella. Too bad Victoria didn’t factor Harry into the plan.

A long, low howl rented the air. The boy looked at Victoria, a fool awaiting his command. Victoria jerked her chin forward.

And then Edward spoke.

“Riley,” he called, his voice soft, pleading, musical. The boy froze, his eyes widening in alarm. “She’s lying to you, Riley. Listen to me. She’s lying to you just like she lied to the others who are
dying now in the clearing. You know that she’s lied to them, that she had you lie to them, that neither of you were going to help them. Is it so hard to believe that she’s lied to you, too?”

Harry’s brows shot upward. Was that Edward’s tactic? Talk the newborn down and then attack Victoria.

Emotions flashed across Riley’s face and Harry could see him starting to doubt as Edward’s hypnotic voice washed over them.

Harry found his eyes drifting towards Victoria now, confident that Edward had the newborn under control. The red-haired woman was still staring at Bella with an obsessed focus. For the first time Harry found himself wondering what Bella did to incur this woman – hunter’s wrath. It had to have been big, nothing really bothered a vampire this point of vengeance.

Or maybe this vampire was just really vindictive.

It was only because Harry was staring at her that he heard her speak – and it really wasn’t like him to have his thoughts wander when he was in danger. . . . Actually, maybe it was just a little bit.

“He’s the liar, Riley,” Victoria said, and he vice was almost babyish in tone. She kind of sounded like a child, a whining child – only her voice also that the alluring musical quality Muggle vampires seemed to possess.

“I told you about their mind tricks. You know I love only you.”

Harry’s eyes snapped over to Riley and just like that, it was over. Every shred of doubt Riley had disappeared at Victoria’s words – as if that was all he had needed to hear. The poor, poor fool of a boy.

Harry’s shoulders tensed as Riley braced himself to attack. He clutched his wand tight in his hand, feeling the reassuring thrum of magic spike through him.

There was a moment’s pause – just enough time for Bella to draw in a sharp breath – and then chaos issued.

Harry’s wand was pointed, the bright streak of light leaving its tip before he even consciously acknowledge the action.

In the same moment Riley took a minute step forward, before jerking backward as Harry’s spell hit him.

And a snarl ripped through the air before Seth flew from out of the tree, crashing into Riley’s stone body and the two flew to the other side of the clearing.

“No,” Victoria cried, her voice impossibly shrill.

Harry started forward to try and help, but the two were tumbling over each other so quickly that it would have been impossible for him to get a shot in. Edward twitch a little at Harry’s move and Harry scowled but decided that just this once he would sit back and protect Bella. The wizard shifted back again, moving over until his arm brushed against Bella’s.

She reached out immediately at took his hand and it was only then that Harry could feel her shaking – just tiny little trembles as if she were merely cold.

The was as sharp crack and then sound of stone hitting stone as something smacked into the rocks at
their feet.

“No,” Victoria sad again, through her teeth, as Edward started to move towards her, blocking her path to Harry and Bella. She looked so upset, Harry wouldn’t have been surprised if she threw a Myrtle-sized tantrum.

It was pretty much as stalemate now. Edward wasn’t going to let Victoria past, and from the look in the vampire’s eyes she wasn’t going to give up so easily.

Harry found his eyes drifting from his mate to Seth, who was fighting viciously a couple of feet away. He seemed to be holding his own for a young shifter and then Harry winced as he heard bone snap.

Seth let out a low pitched wine, backing off to circle around although he was limping from where Riley had kicked him in the shoulder. That hit seemed to improve the newborn’s confidence, because he was grinning now.

Harry squeezed Bella’s hand before dropping it and turning slight towards Seth. He narrowed his eyes, focusing as if he were searching for the snitch, and the let lose an easy jinx.

Riley fell flat on his face with a startled snarl and Seth leapt at him. There was the keening tearing sound and a bright white object flew into the forest. Riley jumped back up looking furious and took a swipe at Seth but the young wolf was lighter on his feet than one would assume.

Edward was talking again, although Harry was concentrating too hard on Seth and Riley’s fight to understand what he was saying. He could only feel the low tenor of Edward’s voice brush against his subconscious in a way of familiarity allowed.

Riley and Seth were almost playing tag now, darting in and out as they tried to get in another good hit. Harry focused in again, looking for an opening. And then Riley caught Seth on the flank, a solid hit that Harry swore he almost felt.

Seth backed up immediately, making the whining sound dogs produced when they were injured. Harry’s body jerked forward, sparking catching at the end of his wand before another flash of light jetted out – another unconscious spell. It was pure magic that just seemed to force Riley back and have him stumbling.

But he was quickly back up, snarling and closing in on Seth. He was driving the wolf back, closer and closer to where Harry and Bella stood. It was only a slight shake of Edward’s head in Harry’s peripheral that kept Harry from lighting the vampire on fire right there.

He wasn’t sure what Edward had planned, but Harry trusted him. And if anything got too dicey, well Incendio was the second year spell.

Now that Riley was winning, Victoria seemed to gain back her original swagger. She crouched down low, all intentions of fleeing gone as she snarled at Edward.

Was this what Edward had wanted? For Victoria to feel like she was wining?

She was darting fast, in and out, trying to get around Edward. But Edward was just as fast, and he was a mind reader. He managed to counter ever move Victoria took, but to the red-heads ire. Finally they closed in on each other, sharp crunches and cracking reverberating off the cliff face.

And Harry found his attention split.
Realistically he knew Edward could hold his own, but his instincts kept screaming at him to do something. That his mate was in danger and that he should be helping.

But at the same time Seth wasn’t looking so hot against Riley. He managed to chew off another piece of the newborn, but Riley bellowed and backhanded Seth in the chest. Seth fell backwards, crashing into the rocky wall above Harry and then dropping to the ground like a discarded toy.

Bella let out a low whimper and slid down until she was kneeling, staring around with eyes so wide, they looked like they might swallow her face.

Harry shifted, squishing down in baseline instincts as Riley settled his unnerving red eyes on him. Harry felt a glare settle over his face and he twitched his wand with a well-aimed Bombarda.

It hit Riley solidly, but had less effect than the wild magic. The newborn shook it before suddenly lunging forward. Harry gritted his teeth, barely registering the sound of something snapping from the other side of him, before mouthing “Bombarda Maxima.”

There was as sharp gasping sound from Bella and then an almost exasperated sigh from Edward. Harry’s eyes flickered down in the same second, catching sight of Bella with the ragged rock pressed to her arm, and he knew what Edward was going to do.

“No, keep fighting,” Harry whispered lowly before the vampire could attempt to deviate away from Victoria.

The spell had hit Riley now, smacking into him like a truck and knocking him right into Seth, who had leapt suddenly to his feet. Riley was disoriented enough that all Seth had to do was attack.

Everyone saw it coming.

Seth’s large teeth sunk into Riley’s shoulder, tearing past the marble skin and ripping the entire limb off.

“Victoria,” Riley called out with a tortured plea.

Victoria not only didn’t care, but she was still occupied with Edward.

Seth barreled into Riley, the force knocking them both into the trees where they disappeared from view. But one could not mistake the sound of Riley being pulled apart, or the fact that the newborn’s screams had suddenly cut off.

Riley’s absence seemed to hit Victoria after a second and she hesitated, her eyes flickered towards Bella with longing before she started to retreat.

“No,” Edward crooned, her voice so seductive it sent a shiver down Harry’s spine. “Stay just a little longer.

Victoria didn’t bother to acknowledge him, aiming for the safety of the trees. But Edward was impossibly faster, streaking forward faster than a Snitch.

Harry blinked and pretty much missed it. One minute Edward was right at Victoria’s back and the next a Victoria’s head was rolling towards the forest, separated from her body.

Harry let a smile grace his lips before rolling his eyes to look disapprovingly down at Bella.

She still had the terrified, wide-eyed look on her face and that jagged rock was clutched tightly in her
“Bella,” Harry called to her softly, and she jerked violently before her eyes snapped up to his luminous green ones. Harry crouched down and held out his hand. “Mind giving that to me?”

Bella stared at his hand like there was something wrong with it before she seemed to regain her sense. A dark blush stole across her cheeks before she opened her fists and let the rock drop to the ground.

And then she burst into tears.

Harry started, rocking away from her in alarm before reaching out tentatively for her. Bella collapsed against him, holding on to him tight as she sobbed into his chest. Behind him Harry could hear Edward instructing Seth to gather all the pieces of vampire.

Harry glanced over her shoulder at them before twisting his hand to light the pile of vampire parts. Seth jumped back as the flame flashed to life and then turned to glare at Harry. Harry gave him a sheepish shrug before turning back to Bella who had managed to pull herself back together.

“I’m fine,” she gasped. She shook her head, wiping at her tears before saying, “I’m okay. Just freaking out a little bit.”

“We’re all entitled to a little freak out every now and again,” Harry murmured sympathetically with a small smile.

Bella let out a watery chuckle before making a move that suggested she wanted to get up. Harry stood smoothly before pulling her up also, letting her lean against him when she was little wobbly on her feet.

“Here,” he said, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a tiny square of chocolate. He pressed it into Bella’s hand. “Eat that. It should make you feel a little better.”

Bella arched a brow skeptically before shrugging and popping the piece into her mouth.

“What the hell were you thinking,” Edward demanded, his eyes blazing as he stared at Bella. Bella blinked slowly, once, twice, her confusion clear. Edward groaned and rolled his eyes. “The rock Bella. The rock.”

“Oh,” Bella intoned, looking suddenly sheepish. “I . . . I just wanted to help. Seth was hurt.”

“Seth was only feigning that he was hurt, Bella. It was a trick,” Edward said evenly.

“And if Seth was hurt,” Harry added with an equally stern look. “I could have handled Riley. No one was in any serious danger.”

Bella pouted but she looked suitably admonished. Seth let out an annoyed huff that made Edward smirk, and that was the end of the matter.

“Wait a second,” Bella suddenly spoke up. “Didn’t you say something earlier, about a complication? And Alice needing to nail down the schedule for Sam. You said it was going to be close. What was going to be close?”

Edward’s eyes flickered back to Seth and they exchanged a loaded glance. Harry arched his brow and crossed his arm, waiting patiently for an explanation. He could vaguely remember Edward’s words before all hell had broken loose and he wasn’t about to let the vampire avoid answering.
“It’s nothing, really,” Edward said quickly, avoiding Harry’s eyes completely. “But we do need to be on our way . . .”

“Define nothing,” Harry demanded and found himself echoed by Bella.

Edward looked between the two stubborn faces tilted towards him before letting out a low sigh. “We only have a minute, so don’t panic. Okay?” He was looking mostly at Bella when he said this.

Bella swallowed thickly before nodding.

“No panicking. Got it.”

Edward hesitated a moment more as if he were trying to decided what exactly to say. This careful though made Harry uneasy, and his hands clenched tightly at his side.

Suddenly Edward’s head snapped over to Seth.

“What is she doing?”

Seth whined, a tiny anxious sound. And before anything else could happen, Harry disappeared with a sharp crack.

Harry Apparated on the edge of the clearing, already in motion and moving towards where a vampire was nearly choking one of the wolves. They were a few yards out from the clearing where the battle had happened and Harry could hear heavy footfalls coming their way.

But he had gotten there first.

In a burst of uncontrolled magic, Harry blasted the vampire away from the wolf. The vampire snarled viciously, moving rapidly toward Harry with speeds he hadn’t expected from a newborn.

Harry raised his arm, his hand already moving in the motion for an Incendio when the vampire was suddenly on him. It was a jarring impact as her hand smashed into Harry’s chest. The force of the blow was enough to break past Harry’s rips and he blinked rapidly as he gazed down at the limp sticking out of his chest cavity.

Harry could feel his body protesting the act of violence, wanting to shut down so that it could repair itself. Harry forced the clawing darkness back, pulling his body away before finally managing to set the vampire on fire.

She screamed a high pitched sound, running around as if trying to put the flames out.

Harry dropped to his knees. Something was burning up his throat and he coughed, not surprised to see blood splatter onto the grass before.

The darkness was coming faster, closing over him in a wave.

And Harry allowed it while an enraged roar filled his ears.
Chapter 16

When Rosalie had called him in February to tell him that Bella was dead – had jumped off of a cliff of all things – Edward had thought his entire existence had gone up in flames. He had thought that he would never, never know pain like that ever again.

He had been so very wrong.

Harry hit the ground like a puppet whose strings had been cut.

Edward was by his side in a second, his arms sliding behind Harry’s head and pulling his body close. Blood was going everywhere, oozing out from the gaping hole in the wizard’s chest.

Harry wasn’t dead. But Edward could hear the slow thrum of his heart, the loud stuttering in what was supposed to be a steady rhythm.

His mate was dying.

“What’s going on,” Bella demanded as soon as Blaise let her go. She stumbled a little once she was released from his hold, just managing to catch herself as she took in the grim expressions all around her. “What happened?”

Dread filled her when she got no answer. Her gaze swept over the area, but she saw no sight of Edward, Luna, or Harry. Nor did she see any of the wolves.

She couldn’t figure out what was wrong. Everything had happened so fast.

Harry had just up and disappeared and right as he had done so Luna and Blaise had teleported onto the cliff side. Bella remembered Blaise grabbing her, and Seth running off into the trees, and then she had been teleported here.

There was a bonfire in the middle of the clearing, a thick wall of purple-black smoke hovering like a disease against the bright grass. Jasper stood closest to it, his shoulders tense and his arms slightly extended.

Bella squinted against the dark smoke and a small gasp escaped her when she caught sight of what was there.

A girl, curled into a small ball beside the burning remains of her companions. She was the youngest person in the clearing, barely over fifteen – and dark haired. Her eyes were focused on Bella, the irises a brilliant shade of red.

And surprisingly, she was extremely calm, for a newborn in the presence of a human.

“What’s going on,” Bella asked again, staring at the girl.

“She surrendered,” Carlisle was the one to say. Bella blinked again before turning her attention fully on him.

“Okay, but that doesn’t explain anything. Something happened. What was it?” Carlisle looked uncomfortable for a good moment. Bella narrowed her eyes at him. “Carlisle? Where’s Harry? And
Edward?”

“They’re coming.” Neville said into the silence. Bella turned to looking in the direction he was faced just in time to see Edward and Luna walk from the forest. Harry was Edward’s arms, his face extraordinarily pale. There was blood all down the front of Edward’s shirt and Bella had never seen him look so much like he was being burned alive.

Bella couldn’t understand what she was seeing for a moment and then she made the connection. She felt the ground shift beneath her as she dropped to her knees. All the sound seemed to leave the area.

“No,” she whispered.

“That idiot,” Draco growled and he marched over to Edward, his wand out. Edward growled at him, but Draco rolled his eyes before saying, “I’m trying to heal him.”

There were a couple of wand waves and then Draco cursed.

“I already tried all that,” Luna murmured softly and there were tears in her eyes. “Nothing worked.”

“Bloody fool and his damn saving people thing,” Draco growled again.

“This isn’t happening,” Neville protested. “He’s probably faking.” Draco gave him a rather droll look.

“I don’t understand,” Bella whispered. “How did this happen?”

“Potter a bloody idiot that’s how,” Draco hissed irritably.

“Leah managed to catch a stray newborn,” Lune spoke over him calmly. “But the newborn got the jump on her and she was going to lose. Harry Apparated in to save her and then the newborn stuck her arm through his chest.”

Bella’s mouth dropped open in horror.

“But . . . but you guys have magic. Can’t you . . . fix him?”” Luna was shaking her head before Bella could ever finish the question.

“Guys,” Alice interrupted. “They’ll be here in three minutes.”

“What? Who will be here,” Bella asked, grabbing onto Alice’s words like a life line. Anything to distract her from the thought that Harry was dying.

“The Volturi,” Carlisle answered.

“What?”

“It’s okay,” he said, his voice ridiculously calm giving the situation. “They aren’t here for us. It’s just the normal contingent of the guard that usually cleans up situations like these. Simple routine.”

“This is the absolute worst time for this,” Rosalie hissed. “Who knows what they’re going to do to us with you here.”

For once Bella knew Rosalie’s ire was aimed at her, but at the wizards. And Bella was wondering the same thing. What would the Volturi do when they found out some more humans were in the Vampire know.
“Can’t you guys do your disappearing thing,” Bella asked, directing the question at Blaise who was hovering above her.

“We could but why should we,” Blaise asked smoothly. “These Volturi don’t scare us.”

“They should.”

“They’re here. The north end of the clearing,” Carlisle warned.

Blaise held out his arm and pulled her too her feet. Bella then turned her head to look towards the north end of the clearing. Everyone was crowding in now, around her and the wizards and Edward who appeared to be completely out of it. Bella couldn’t blame him.

Everyone was staring in one direction now, but Bella couldn’t see anything beyond the billowing smoke before her – dense, oily smoke twisting low to the ground, rising lazily, undulating against the grass. It billowed forward, darker in the middle.

“Hmm,” a dead voice murmured from the mist. Bella recognized the apathy at once and her fingers clenched into the sleeve of Blaise’s arm.

“Welcome, Jane,” Carlisle greeted, his tone as polite as if he were talking to a friend.

The dark shapes came closer now, separating themselves from the haze, solidifying.

Jane was in the front – the darkest cloak, almost black, and the smallest figure by more than two feet. Bella could just barely make out Jane’s angelic features in the shade of the cowl.

The four grey-shrouded figures hulking behind her were somewhat familiar to Bella. She was sure who the biggest one was. It became obvious when he tilted his head to let his hood fall back. Felix winked at her and smiled.

Jane’s gaze was sweeping the field, shock reflected in her eyes as she took in the wizards but she dropped her gaze onto the newborn first.

“I don’t understand.” Her voice was toneless, but not quite as uninterested as before.

“She has surrendered,” Carlisle explained.

Jane’s dark eyes flashed to his face. “Surrendered?” Felix and another shadow exchanged a quick glance.

“I gave her the option.”

“There are no options for those who break the rules,” Jane said flatly.

“That’s in your hands,” Carlisle said after a short pause. His tone was mild now, the careful lightness to it gone. “As long as she was willing to halt her attack on us, I saw no need to destroy her. She was never taught.”

“That is irrelevant,” Jane insisted.

“As you wish.”

Jane sated at Carlisle in consternation. She then shook her head infinitesimally, and then composed her features. “Aro hoped that we would get far enough west to see you, Carlisle. He sends his regards.”
Carlisle nodded. “I would appreciated it if you would convey mine to him.”

“Of course.” Jane smiled before turning to look back at the smoke. “It appears that you’ve done our work for us today... for the most part.” Here her eyes flickered over to the newborn. “Just out of professional curiosity, how many were there? They left quite a wake of destruction in Seattle.”

“Eighteen, including this one,” Carlisle answered.

Jane’s eyes widened and she looked at the fire again, seeming to reassess the size of it. Felix and the other shadow exchanged a longer glance.

“Eighteen,” she repeated, her voice sounding unsure for the first time.

“All brand new,” Carlisle said dismissively. “They were unskilled.”

“All?” Her voice turned sharp. “Then who was their creator?”

“Her name was Victoria,” Jasper informed them, no emotion in his voice.

“Was,” Jane intoned.

Jasper inclined his head towards the eastern forest.

Jane’s eyes snapped up and focused on something in the far distance. She looked between that area and the closer bonfire before asking, “This Victoria – she was in addition to the eighteen here?”

“Yes. She had one other with her.”

“Twenty,” Jane breathed. “Who dealt with the creator?”

“Edward,” was the answer. Jane’s eyes traced over Edward and Bella almost wanted to protect him from her sight.

She stared for a long moment before her eyes narrowed and moved to the girl seated by the bonfire.

“You there,” she said, her dead voice harsher than before. “Your name.”

The newborn answering scream was ear-splitting. Her body arched stiffly into a distorted, unnatural position. Bella had to turn her gaze away and fight the urge to cover her ears. She found her eyes trailed over the group surrounding her, everyone’s expression were cold, unemotional – except Edward who still looked like he was being burned alive.

Finally, after an eternity, it was quiet.

“Your name,” Jane said again, a demand not a question.

“Bree,” the girl gasped.

Jane smiled at her and the girl shrieked again. Bella held her breath until the sound of her agony stopped.

“That’s quite unnecessary,” Carlisle said into the silence. “I’m sure she’ll tell you what you wish to know.”
Jane looked up, sudden humor in her usually dead eyes. “Oh, I know,” she said, grinning before turning back to the young vampire, Bree.

“Bree,” Jane said, he voice cold once more. “Is his story true? Were there twenty of you?”

The girl lay panting, the side of her face pressed against the earth. She spoke quickly, mostly out of fear, “Nineteen or twenty, maybe more, I don’t know!” And then she cringed, terrified that her ignorance might bring on another round of torture. “Sara and the one whose name I don’t know got in a fight on the way. . . .”

“And this Victoria – did she create you?”

“I don’t know,” she said, flinching again with her hands over her head. “Riley never said her name. I didn’t see that night . . . it was so dark, and it hurt. . . .” Bree shuddered. “He didn’t want us to be able to think of her. He said that our thoughts weren’t safe. . . .”

Jane’s eyes flickered over to Edward and then back to the girl.

Bella was coming to realize how carefully Victoria had planned this all. If she hadn’t followed Edward, there would have been no way to know for certain that she was involved.

“Tell me about Riley,” Jane said. “Why did he bring you here?”

“Riley told us that we had to destroy the strange yellow-eyes here,” Bree babbled quickly and willingly. “He said it would be easy. He said that the city was theirs, and they were coming to get us. He said once they were gone, all the blood would be ours. He gave us her scent.” Bree lifted one hand and stabbed a finger in Bella’s direction. “He said we would know that we had the right coven, because she would be with them. He said whoever got to her first could have her.”

Blaise curled an arm protectively around Bella’s shoulder, drawing her into his side.

“It looks like Riley was wrong about the easy part,” Jane noted.

Bree nodded, seeming relieved that the conversation had taken this non-painful course. She sat up carefully.

“I don’t know what happened. We split up, but the others never came. And Riley left us, and he didn’t come to help like he promised. And then it was so confusing, and everybody was in pieces.” She shuddered again. “I was afraid. I wanted to run away. That one” – she looked at Carlisle – “said they wouldn’t hurt me if I stopped fighting.”

“Ah, but that wasn’t his gift to offer, young one,” Jane murmured, her voice oddly gentle now. “Broken rules demand a consequence.”

Bree stared at her, not comprehending.

Jane looked at Carlisle. “Are you sure you got all of them? The other half that split off?”

Carlisle’s face was very smooth as he nodded. “We split up, too.”

Jane half-smiled. “I can’t deny that I’m impressed.” The big shadows behind her murmured in agreement. “I’ve never seen a coven escape this magnitude of offensive intact. Do you know what was behind it? It seems like extreme behavior, considering the way you live here. And why was the girl the key?”
Her eyes rested unwilling on Bella for one short second. Bella shivered at the attention, relaxing when those eyes left her.

“Victoria held a grudge against Bella,” Carlisle told her, his voice impassive.

Jane laughed – the sound was golden, the bubbling laugh of a happy child.

“This one seems to bring out bizarrely strong reactions in our kind,” she observed, smiling directly at Bella, her face beatific.

“Would you please not do that?” Edward suddenly asked in a tight voice. Bella glanced over her shoulder to see that he was still looking down at Harry, but his eyes flickered over to Jane for a moment.

Jane laughed again lightly. “Just checking. No harm done, apparently.”

Bella shivered, suddenly understanding what had happened. She was deeply grateful that the strange glitch in her system – which had protected her from Jane the last time they’d met – was still in effect.

“Well, it appears that there’s not much left for us to do. Odd,” Jane said, apathy creeping back into her voice. “We’re not used to being rendered unnecessary. It’s too bad we missed the fight. It sounds like it would have been entertaining to watch.”

“Yes,” Alice answered her quickly, her voice sharp. “And you were so close. It’s a shame you didn’t arrive just a half hour earlier. Perhaps then you could have fulfilled your purpose here.”

Jane met Alice’s glare with unwavering eyes. “Yes. Quite a pity how things turned out, isn’t it?” Jane turned to look at the newborn Bree again, her face completely bored. “Felix,” she drawled.

“Wait,” Esme interjected.

Jane raised one eyebrow, but Esme was staring at Carlisle while she spoke in an urgent voice. “We could explain the rules to the young one. She doesn’t seem unwilling to learn. She didn’t know what she was doing.”

“Of course,” Carlisle answered with a soft smile for his mate. “We would certainly be prepared to take responsibility for Bree.”

Jane’s expression was torn between amusement and disbelief.

“We don’t make exceptions,” she said. “And we don’t give second chances. It’s bad for our reputation. Which reminds me . . .” Suddenly, her eyes were on Bella again, and her cherubic face dimpled. “Caius will be so interested to hear that you’re still human, Bella. Perhaps he’ll decide to visit.”

There was silence at this statement. Bella could remember Harry telling her that they would find another way. But he was dead and she didn’t know what to do anymore.

Jane’s expression was rather triumphant as she turned to face Carlisle. “It was nice to meet you, Carlisle – I’d thought Aro was exaggerating. Well, until we meet again . . .”

Carlisle nodded, his expression pained.

“Take care of that, Felix,” Jane said, nodding toward Bree, her voice dripping boredom. “I want to go home.”
Felix lunged suddenly and then he was flying backwards. Jane turned to look at him, shock written all over her face. Bree was gazing about in opened mouth awe.

Bella looked around to see what had happened. Had someone knocked Felix aside?

“I don’t think so,” a voice groaned and Bella’s head whipped around.

Harry was struggling in Edward’s arms, a glare on his face as he batted his mate’s hands away.

“If she’s surrendered then you have no right to take her life. You are not God,” Harry was saying amidst the looks of shock he was receiving. He finally managed to get to his feet although Edward kept an arm around his waist.

Jane turned to look at him, anger clear in her dark eyes. Harry made her poisonous glare head on, his eyes practically glowing.

“Who are you to question the Volturi?”

“Harry Potter.”

There was a long pause. Bella looked over to see fear suddenly reflected in Jane’s eyes. She actually backed up a step.

“I see you know the name,” Harry said calmly. “This girl is under my protection now. So is Bella. In fact, this entire area is under my protection. I don’t wish to see you here again. Tell that to your boss.”

“I . . . We’re leaving,” Jane suddenly snapped. The shadows around her hesitated for a moment before following her out. Once they hit the tree, the group vanished.

Bella stared after them in shock, confused about what had just transpired.

“What just . . . did that just happen,” Emmett was the one to voice the confusion.

“They ran away from big, bad Harry Potter,” Draco said with a snort. “Typical.”

“Don’t be so jealous Dragon. James can’t help the power he has,” Luna admonished before turning to Harry. She pulled out her way and the teen sighed.

“Can’t we do this later,” he asked warily.

“You just came back from the dead mate,” Neville told him. “And it wasn’t like before either.”

Harry scrunched up his nose before rolling his eyes.

“Fine. But let’s take care of her first.” He tried to move towards Bree, but Edward was still holding tight to him. “Edward?”

“I’m not letting you go,” Edward said, steeling in his voice. Harry titled his head up to look at the vampire, his eyes searching the smooth face, before he sighed.

“Fine. But I want to at least talk to my new charge.”

Stiffly, Edward guided Harry over to Bree who titled her face up to him.

“You save me,” she said, her voice filled with the awe reflected on her pale face. Harry nodded and
then girl bit down on her lip before asking, “Why?”

“Everyone deserves a second chance,” Harry told her gently. “But it’s going to be a little hard. Neville will help you. He’s also recently turned.”

Bree’s eyes drifted over to Neville and her eyes widened a little.

“You’re the one that got away,” she said slowly. At the questioningly look she receive she went on to explain. “I was with a group. I didn’t want to go feeding but I had to. And Sara, she found you. You took out our entire group except for me and Sara.”

“The day we got here,” Blaise said and Bree shrugged.

“Well never mind that,” Harry interrupted. “I need to go check on Teddy.”

“But wait a second,” Carlisle called out. “How did you heal yourself? Luna and Draco said they tried everything. It’s not possible that you’re still alive.”

Harry looked suddenly uncomfortable at all the eyes focused on him.

“Does this have to do with the Hallows,” Luna asked curiously.

“I can explain, but I’d really like to see my godson. And maybe get something to eat and sit down.”

“Of course,” Esme jumped in. “You must be exhausted. We’ll worry about all this tomorrow.”

Harry smiled at her thankfully.

And then there was a loud crack and a figure stumbled into appearance in the clearing. The wizards had their wands drawn in a second, Edward coming to crouch in front of Harry.

Bella tilted her head so that she could see around Blaise’s bulk.

A red haired teen had appeared, swaying on his feet and clutching at his chest. His blue eyes rested on Harry and he took a staggering step forward.

“Harry, mate I—”

“Oh no you don’t Weasley,” Draco growled. “Don’t you dare come any closer.”

An annoyed look came onto the red heads face and he glared over at Draco.

“I’m not talking to you Malfoy so bugger off,” he shouted before turning to Harry again. “Harry. They’re coming for you. They want to turn you in for . . . err . . . I can’t remember but they’re coming here. They know where you are.”

“What the bloody hell are you yammering on about,” Draco demanded, waving his wand at this Weasley person. He opened his mouth again but before he could say much more he tilted forward, his face clenched in pain.

“Ron,” Harry shouted, skirting around Edward and running toward the other wizard. He reached Ron just as another crack rented through the air.

This time Bella’s jaw dropped open in shock, her eyes wide as she took in the figure of her father, standing there blinking at them . . . with a wand clutched in his fist.
“Charlie,” Bella demanded loudly, her eyes wide. “What the—? How did you—? You’re supposed to be with Billy.”

Charlie Swan blinked several times before slowly sliding the wand he had into his pocket. He didn’t say anything as he continued to look around.

“He just Apparated in,” Harry finally broke the silence. “He just Apparated in . . . right,” he then asked, throwing the question at his pack.

“Yes, he most certainly did,” Draco drawled slowly, eyeing Charlie through narrowed eyes.

“But . . . but that’s magic right,” Bella demanded, whirling on the blonde. “But . . . but that not right! My dad can’t do magic.”

Draco arched a brow at Bella’s tone before saying, drolly, “He just did.”

“I can explain,” Charlie finally said, holding his hands up.

“This should be good,” Harry murmured. Charlie glanced down at where he was crouched, the slight glare on his face.

But whatever explanation he was going to give was pushed to the back of Harry’s mind when Ron let out a low pitiful groan. He was still clutching at his chest and his face was really pale and twisted up in pain. He looked very much like he had the day he had gotten badly splinched.

“Never mind that now,” Harry said, getting unsteadily to his feet while trying to support Ron’s weight. Edward moved forward to help him, actually pulling Ron up like he was a rag doll.

“We’re not actually going to help him, are we,” Draco demanded, a slight whine in his tone.

Harry gave his a rather steely look and the blonde subsided for the moment.

“I can do a full diagnostic back at the Manor,” Luna offered candidly, twirling her wand around her fingers.

“Oh come on,” Draco exploded again. “I can see you wanting to help but we can’t let him past the wards. We put them up because of him!”

“I’m with Malfoy on this one,” Blaise added in.

“We’re not having a discussion about this,” Harry said evenly. He then turned to look Charlie over before saying, “You’re coming to.”

“Of course. I have some information for you anyways,” Charlie agreed easily.
“Wait,” Bella interrupted. “I’m going too then.”

“This isn’t a soiree,” Draco grumbled lowly, his expression dully sullen. Harry eyed him for a moment before rolling his eyes.

“Go call up Jacob then if it’ll make you feel better.”

This appeared to be the right call because the sharp angles of Draco’s face lessened and he calmly pulled out his cell phone. This was the equivalent of the Malfoy smiling outright.

Harry rolled his eyes again before shaking his head and turning to face the motley group of vampires who were still looking for some kind of explanation as to what was going on.

“Can I borrow someone’s shirt or something of that sort,” Harry asked without preamble. They blinked at him cluelessly. Harry wondered if he had started speaking parsal tongue, but no because in the next moment Bella was shaking off her heavy coat and handing it to him.

Harry took it with a muttered thank you before pulling out his wand and muttering a soft “Portgas.” The jacket gave off a soft blue light for a moment and seemed to shake before settling back into place.

“I’m going to pretend I didn’t see that,” Charlie muttered softly and Harry gave him a curious glance before saying, “Agreed. I’m sure the President will understand anyways.” To which Charlie inclined his head.

“Alright everyone,” Harry called over the clearing. “We’ve got a large bunch so we’ll go by portkey. This one will let us bypass the wards but anyone else will have to be fetched.” Here he sent Draco a look that the blonde pretty much ignored. “Alright all, grab hold.”

It took a minute for anyone to even comply but finally everyone seemed to be holding onto a part of the jacket. Harry murmured another Portgas and then they were spinning in the air.

Once upon a time, Bella had believed that the Cullen house was the most beautiful home to ever be built on the West Coast.

That was before she saw Potter Manor.

When they had first arrived on the edge of the sprawling compound, Bella had just assumed the household was hidden a little bit into the woods – like the Cullens.

She had been so very wrong.

Of course, it had taken them forever before they even started walking toward the house. Draco had insisted that since they were guest, it would be a wonderful idea to walk down the winding pathway. Harry had rightfully argued that it was pointless and that they had injured people to deal with.

The following argument had lasted a full fifteen minutes before Luna had simply started walking on. Even so, the two were still arguing even as they followed.

Bella was honestly surprised that Harry and Draco could argue for so long. Esme had been afraid that they would come to blows, and Bella was thinking the same. Luna had simply waved off their concerns off and Blaise had commented nonchalantly that Draco and Harry couldn’t help but argue.
It was second nature for them.

“But I thought they were good friends,” Esme expressed, her brows furrowed. “Aren’t you all living together?”

“Ha. It’s complicated,” Blaise shrugged. Neville had rolled his eyes before calmly explaining that Harry and Draco were natural rivals and had been since they were eleven

“Arguing is just what they do.”

Bella had wondered about that for a while until she was suitably distracted by the sight of the gardens coming into view. They had turned the corner at the end of a long row of trees and the gardens had just bloomed into focus like the opening of a massive flower. Vibrant colors seemed to pop everywhere and there was no rhyme or rhythm to what was placed where. It was like someone had gotten a bag of mixed seeds and scattered them into the wind, allowing the plants to grow where they landed.

Trees of all sizes grew up over the lush lawn, creating little niches of shade. Rows of poppies and pansies and roses of all colors shot up from everywhere – around artfully placed benches, surrounding fountain, and tickling the bottoms of statues. There were even waving plants Bella couldn’t put a name to – some of which Bella swore she could actually see growing.

And all of this seemed to stretch out of acres and acres of land. In the far off distance Bella could see the peaks of the house, laid snug behind a cluster of trees.

Bella jumped suddenly as something slithered across her feet, and she looked down in alarm only to see an innocent root instead of a snake.

“Did . . . did that just move,” she asked lowly as if it could hear her. She stepped to the side away from it, inadvertently pressing against Blaise.

“Devil’s snare,” the Italian murmured, his warm breath ghosting over Bella’s ear. “Best stay in the middle of the path.” And he smoothly curled his arm around her shoulder, positioning her to the other side of him.

Charlie made a show of clearing his throat and Blaise’s arm slipped easily away, sliding into his pockets as if that had been his intention all along.

The rest of the walk was mostly silent as everyone took in the scenery around them. Draco and Harry had finally stopped arguing, but were now exchanging hard glares as if they were still in elementary school.

The manor appeared literally out of nowhere. First there was nothing but trees and flowers and then suddenly Bella found herself gazing up at a large sprawling Victorian-style house – complete with pillars and the customary twin staircase.

Emmett let out a low whistle from the back of the group to sum up the surprise Bella was feeling at the moment.

“Oh it’s so beautiful,” Esme murmured.

“Thank you,” Harry accepted bashfully, he even ducked his head down to hide the blush covering his cheeks.

“You actually live here,” Bella said once she could find her voice again.
“Of course, where else would we live,” Draco said with such distain, Bella could really see him living in such a place.

Luna was already twirling her way through the massive front doors, Harry right behind her with the redhead, Ron, floating behind him.

Bella found her gaze sweeping the large manor once more, trying to take in the grand beauty of it all, even as Blaise started tugging her forward toward the door.

And then she was inside and she was sure her jaw could not drop any lower.

There were high vaulting ceiling that seemed to stretch higher than what seemed possible. Another set of stairs on opposite sides of the foyer stretched upward giving way to other floors. The rooms seemed to expand into oblivion and honestly, Bella was starting to question the actual dimensions of the manor.

She numbly followed the group into a living room that could serve as a house of a family of three it was so large. And there was the biggest couch Bella had ever seen in her entire life, and before it was the largest fireplace, it looked like it could house an NBA basketball team.

“Wholly cow,” she murmured under her breath, her head titling all the way up to take in the large windows.

“Wonderland doesn’t have squat on this,” Bree the newborn breathed, the first words she had said since they had left the baseball field. It seemed like her surprise had won out over her fear of her saviors.

“You haven’t seen nothing yet,” Neville told them charmingly and then he brushed past them to help Harry do whatever it was he was doing.

Harry had already deposited Ron on a large ottoman and Luna was smoothly twirling her wand and murmuring a string of words in what appeared to be Latin. Neville was doing the same but he was waving his wand outward and soon bottles were flying through the air towards them.

Bella watched transfixed, wondering if this was what it always was like living with magic users when Harry suddenly barked, “Incoming!”

Bella jumped at the loud sound, her head swiveling around, but she didn’t see anything coming.

“It’s just someone at the edge of the wards,” Draco murmured tersely before he turned on his heel and disappeared out the front door.

“Come on,” Blaise said from her other side. “Let’s move out of the way so they can work.”

Bella couldn’t see how they were in the way seeing as the area was so large, but she allowed Blaise to lead her into the kitchen.

This room was just as remarkable, with its massive island and gleaming countertops. There wasn’t a fridge as far as Bella could see, or a microwave or really much of any kind of kitchen appliance. The stove itself looked ancient even thought it was gleming as if it were newly bought.

“Dude, where’s the fridge?”

Bella looked up as the wolves – Seth, Paul, Leah, and Jacob – strolled into the kitchen on Draco’s heels. The blonde’s head was tilted up towards Jacob as he asked, “The what?”
“The fridge,” Jacob repeated slowly. “You know. The device people use to keep food cold.”

“Oh! The refrigerator,” Draco asked confidently with a small nod. “It runs on that electricity stuff.”

“Uh, yeah.” Jacob threw a questioning look at his fellow wolves all of whom shrugged, looking equally confused.

“Magic and electricity don’t work well together. So in magically made houses there’s no need for a fridge,” Charlie supplied calmly. “We just place a cooling charm on a cabinet instead.”

Jacob still looked confused but he nodded anyways.

“And how do you know that Dad,” Bella demanded, whirling on her father. “Why do you have a wand? What aren’t you telling me?”

“I’ll explain later,” Charlie told her, not looking the least bit fazed. “Right now I’m on the clock so —”

“Right, why don’t you tell us what you’re here for.” Harry was standing in the doorway, his expression blank and his jaw set. He was leaning a little heavily on the doorframe, but his shook his head when Edward moved toward him.

Charlie sighed before stepping forwards so that he was staring only at Harry.

“First, on behalf of the President, I would like to thank you for taking care of the vampire problem. We’re sorry that the situation had to be dealt with by a civilian, especially one that came to our country looking for a safe haven.”

“Well tell the President that it wasn’t that big of a deal. Trouble seems to follow me everywhere,” Harry said with a small quirk to his lips.

Charlie nodded before going on. “On more serious matters, we’ve received word that a small group has been deployed by the Ministry and is headed here.”

That wiped all amusement off of Harry’s face. Draco moved away from Jacob and came to stand by his fellow wizard.

“Why are they coming,” he demanded when Harry didn’t.

“The official word is that they are coming to subdue an escaped terrorist. They wouldn’t specify who, but we have reason to believe that the target is the Chosen One.”

Draco let out a low hiss and all the blood seemed to drain from Harry’s face.

“That’s not his name anymore,” Luna spoke up calmly, coming up from behind Harry. Her blue eyes were fixed on Charlie’s face, and that was the most direct Bella has ever seen her. “But thank you for the warning. We’ll be ready for them.”

Charlie nodded, his eyes sweeping over the three. “Okay. My auror’s are at your call if you need them,” he then said before sweeping out of the room. No one tried to stop him, they were all watching Harry for some kind of reaction.

The dark haired teen took in a deep breath, let it out slowly, before turning and walking slowly away. Edward hesitated for only a second before following after him.

“Where’s he going,” Bree asked after a long moment.
“To be with his godson,” Luna said before asking, “Anyone want a snack?”

By the time the wolves were suitably fed, Ron had awoken. Draco and Neville were quick to crowd him, demanding answers. And slowly but surely, the scene came together.

Apparently, Harry and the gang had all been involved in a war back in Britain. Harry had managed to defeat the Dark Wizard but soon after that, his best friends had tried to turn him over to the Ministry. All this they had heard from Draco, but Ron was quick to defend himself.

“I did not turn Harry over! He’s my best mate, I wouldn’t do that,” he protested hotly.

“Oh really,” Draco sneered. “So someone Polyjuiced as you made that press conference that claimed Harry was another Dark Lord rising?”

“I’m not saying that!”

“Then what are you saying Ron,” Neville demanded. “Because the circumstances are pretty damn telling.”

Ron let out a frustrated growl before going in on a long tale about how his girlfriend had apparently been drugging him for the last couple of months. He had apparently been living in a cloud forced to watch as his family turned their backs on him and listen as his girlfriend came up with this elaborate plan to imprison Harry and steal his magic.

“I always knew Granger was a power hungry bint,” Blaise said with disgust.

“But what do we do now,” Bella asked. “According to my dad you guys have been found out and they’re heading here right now.”

“Well they can try but they sure as hell won’t be getting to Harry easily,” Neville said with some much confidence, it was kind of shocking. “They’ll have to go through us.”

“No they won’t.” Harry’s voice came from the far stairwell. He looked a little bit better than before, there was more color in his cheek and his stance was sturdier as he clutched Teddy to his chest.

“What do you mean,” Draco demanded, he jaw set stubbornly. “If you’re about to tell us that you’re going to hand yourself over or something equally moronic I’ll —”

“Shut up Malfoy,” Harry told him with a roll of his eyes. “That’s not what I was going to say. I meant that they won’t have to go through you guy because I’ll be meeting them head on.”

“But you’ll get hurt,” Bella protested and Harry gave her a droll look that she was more likely to see on Draco’s face.

“There’s always a chance I’ll get hurt,” he told her. “Today was proof of that. But I’m tired of running and hiding and looking over my shoulder. I’ve been doing that for nineteen years. I want to live, I bloody well deserve that by now.”

“Well in that case, we’ll fight with you,” Edward said from beside him. Harry opened his mouth to protest, but Edward plowed on with, “As if I’m going to let you risk your life and stand idly by.”

Harry’s lower lips stuck out in a pout and he murmured, “I hate it when my words come back to bite me in the arse.”
Edward grinned smugly as he hugged him tight.

Later that day Bella found herself sitting at the large, emasculate island, Edward on one side, Jacob on the other, while she watched Harry flit about the stove. It had been decided earlier on that for everyone’s safety – namely just the vampires and wolves – that they would all stay at the manor tonight.

Bella didn’t really mind, not if she got to hang out with all her boys like this, everyone acting cordial. Especially in this magical kitchen where the vegetables were chopped with invisible hands and the dishes clean themselves in the sink. There was bread baking in the oven, filling the room with a warm heady scent, combined with a large roast.

Jacob was practically panting in anticipation next to Bella, and she wasn’t even judging because she was salivating a little bit too. It was made all the worse because Bella was watching the whole process, so she knew exactly what Harry was preparing.

“Aren’t you making a lot,” Edward asked amused, finally breaking the comfortable silence. Harry gave a little jerk of his shoulders but did not turn from where he was stirring a thick gravy in the pot.

“Shifters have a higher metabolism and require more food to sustain them,” a voice replied from behind them, making Bella squeak and almost topple from her stool. Luna just stared at her mildly before saying, “James is also a stress cooker.”

“I am not.” Harry protested, shooting a mild glare over his shoulder as he walked over to the cooling cabinet and pulled out a block of cheese.

“But you’re baking a cake and pudding.”

Harry flushed a dark red, ducking his head down as Bella caught a glimpse of the large bowl of chocolate pudding with marshmallows sprinkled on top.

“Is it bad that I’m glad you’re so stressed,” Jacob said bemused.

“No, I’m glad also,” Luna hummed and she twirled her way around the island. Harry managed to beat her to the cooling cabinet, and he slapped her hand away before she could dip her fingers in the pudding. Luna just smiled gracefully before floating away.

Harry scowled after her before turning back to the gravy pot.

Finally, thirty minutes later, everyone was ushered into the dining room. There was a long table with a heavy chandelier dangling over it. The table was set immaculately, something Bella was sure Draco could be blamed for. Everyone settled down, vampires intermixed so that it won’t be incredibly awkward that they weren’t eating.

Harry waved his wand once everyone was seated and the food floated into the room and settled on the table. There was two large roasts, a huge bowl of mash, an overly large steak and kidney pie, a couple of platters of carrots and peas and beans, and three loafs of bread with cheese and butter.

Harry then pursed his lips and waved his wand again and a bucket of big lollypops floated in. Edward arched a brow at him in question.
“Blood pops. Having you guys just sitting here and staring at us is kind of awkward,” Harry told him with a shrug.

“Shouldn’t you be used to that already,” Bree asked curiously. She was seated on the other side of Harry, across from Edward and next to Neville so that she could be carefully monitored. Bella even noticed that Harry had even made sure that she was seated at the end of the table on the opposite side with Draco on one side and, Jacob across from her, and Blaise on her other side.

“I can eat food so long as I have blood in my system,” Neville told her softly. “It comes with being a Wizarding vampire.”

“That’s convenient,” Rosalie sighed wistfully.

“And unfair,” Emmett complained with a pout even as he reached for a blood pop. Seth snickered at him.

“Alright, dig in,” Harry said, which apparently was the cue everyone was waiting for, because Draco, Blaise, and Luna all moved as one and began to dish out food for everyone else. It was quite interesting to watch, like one of the movie Thanksgiving scenes.

Harry cut up all the meat and one by one Luna and Blaise passed him the plates around them. No one else even had to move as they were served. Harry served himself last and then everyone began to dig in.

Bella already had a clue as to how the wolves would eat, but surprisingly the person with the least table etiquette was Ron and not Paul. The redhead started shoving food into his mouth as if he were a starving man. It was really quite disgusting to watch.

However, the food was so good, Bella found herself kind of rushing to eat it all. This was so restaurant quality stuff.

As things dwindled down conversations arose. It was pretty innocent at first. What future plans were and stuff like that. Carlisle was having deep conversations with the wolves, trying to understand the genetics of their linage. Not that any of them had a clue how to answer them.

Rosalie has complete abstained from conversation and was focused on watching over Teddy and making sure he got most of his food in his mouth instead of on the floor.

It was a nice atmosphere Bella was basking in. Like one big family.

“Isabella?”

Bella blinked a couple of times before turning to the dark skinned man beside her.

“Hmm?”

Blaise’s lip quirked in one corner, his dark eyes swimming with amusement. Bella felt a blush unwillingly creep up her face.

“When this is all over, you’ll come to Italy with me, right?”

“I’m doing what now,” Bella asked, caught off guard. “Why?”

“To meet my madre. She’ll be pleased that I’m finally courting someone.”

“You’re courting her, Blaise,” Draco suddenly cut in and Bella was pretty sure he was giving her a
look of distain.

“I don’t believe it’s your business, Draco,” Blaise responded coolly.

Draco scoffed and looked like he was going to say more, but a loud conversation interrupted him from the other end of the table.

“I don’t care what you think I should do. Harry’s my best friend, not yours. I’m going out there with him.”

Ron’s loud voice had everyone looking over at him as he leaned over Luna. The blonde witch was calmly eating her food, not even looking at the redhead.

“What wrong,” Harry asked with a deep frown.

“Ronald is upset that I told him he should stay here.”

“I don’t see why I have to,” Ron protested. He looked over at Harry with desperate eyes as he said, “I can help you guys fight. I’m always there helping you fight.”

“You weren’t there when Grimmauld Place went up in flames,” Draco cut in drolly. Ron’s head snapped over and his glare was full of anger as he said, “I couldn’t help that I was being drugged.”

“Yes, with love potions,” Draco told him in a voice that suggested he was speaking to a young child. “And any first year Hufflepuff would know that love potions take a toll on a person’s mind the longer they are ingested. Seeing as you have been submitted to them for several months and we aren’t sure about your mental status — when you see Granger you will either fold like a puppy in heat or make that ridiculously stupid face that you always make. So therefore, you are completely useless to us.”

Ron let out a low growl and then lunged over the table. Before he could make it to Draco, however, Jacob knocked him back. The redhead hit the far wall and then slid to the ground limply.

Harry let out a low sigh.

“Shelly.”

There was a loud popping sound and a tiny green creature that reminded Bella of gremlins, bowed lowly to Harry.

“Yes, Master Harry sir.”

“Can you take Ron to one of the spare rooms? Thank you.”

The creature nodded, bowed again, before popping out existence with and somehow taking Ron with it.

“What was that,” Bree was the first to ask after a moment of awkward silence.

“That was a she and her name is Shelly. She’s a house elf.”

“What’s a house elf,” was the obvious follow up question.

“House elves are creatures who are bound to a master for whom they serve for all eternity,” Luna told them in her dreamy voice.
“So . . . like slaves,” Seth asked timidly.

“Yes,” Luna said at the same time Harry said, “No.”

Harry stared at Luna for a moment before sighing and saying, “Essentially they are but it really depends on their master.” Harry trailed off awkwardly. There was another weird pause and then Teddy let out a loud giggle.

There was suddenly a poof of smoke in front of the highchair. Bella’s eyes widened as she caught sight of the red husky.

“Ah! Teddy no,” Harry shouted, jumping up and rushing around the table towards him. Before he could reach the toddler, Teddy and the husky disappeared into a puff of smoke.

“Oh bloody hell!”
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

So this is a cop out of a chapter and an ending. I feel like I could have done so much better, but I'm just ten kinds of tapped out. This went on a lot longer that I had expected and by the time this fight came up I was just dried up with ideas. It's no excuse for a weak ending, but there you have it. It's finally over.

"Harry?"

"Hmm."

Harry floated gently into semi-consciousness. There as something pleasantly cool running up and down his arm and it was serving to lull him right back to sleep. The sound of a child's giggle followed by a small hand smacking at his cheek however pulled him fully from sleep.

Harry groaned as he cracked his eyes open one by one. Teddy was leaned over him, a toothy grin on his chubby face and his fingers stuck in his mouth.

"Good morning Ted," Harry greeted wryly.

"Da! Mor'ng," the toddler squealed.

Harry sighed and rolled onto his back. It was only then that he noticed Edward seated comfortably next to him and smiling down at him fondly.

Harry's face went red as he tried to remember what he had done last night that had lead him to have a vampire in his bed. After a moment he figured it couldn't have been much of anything seeing as he was still dressed and the only pain he felt was that same bone deep pain he's been feeling since he was "resurrected" so to speak.

Harry sucked in a deep breath which surprisingly eased some of the ache in his bones, before tilting his head up to offer Edward a soft smile.

"How long have you been here?"

"I never left," Edward told him lowly with a shrug. Harry's brow furrowed thoughtfully. He closed his eyes and reached out tentatively to get a feel of the house. Bright white spots told him where all his pack members were but a bunch of pulsating blue and green spots hinted at others.

"Did everyone stay," Harry asked whirlly, opening his eyes slowly.

"Pretty much," Edward murmured as he absentely dragged a finger down Harry's jaw. It left an icy after touch and Harry blinked up at him slowly.

"Da!"

Teddy chose that very moment to bash Harry in the face with one of his drool soaked fists. Edward snickered when Harry turned to look at his godson with a startled expression.
Alright then. Food it is.

Reluctantly, Harry left the warm comfort of his bed and trailed out of the room with Teddy hitched on his hip.

He found Draco and Jacob in the kitchen, rustling around most likely looking for food.

"There you are," Draco exclaimed, shutting the cabinet door with more force than was really necessary. "What took you so long? What's for breakfast?"

The scowl was instant on Harry's face. Sure by now he had pretty much gotten used to Draco's overly pompous personality, but damn it! He had just died! He was entitled to having a lie in instead of cooking up breakfast as if he were a house elf.

"I'm so sorry to keep you waiting Malfoy," Harry drawled sarcastically, adjusting Teddy on his hip as he moved around the island to take a look in the cupboards. "How could I be so insensitive?"

Draco was smart enough not to make a snarky comment this time. But it didn't stop him from turning his nose up at Harry before strutting from the room.

"Bloody hell," Harry murmured lowly, letting out a huff of air. He turned to look into Teddy's golden eyes as he said, "Your cousin is a right git."

Teddy's peel of laughter was enough to raise his mood for the moment.

"So now what?"

Ron's innocent enough questioned earned him several sharp glares.

"What," he asked, looking around the room cluelessly. "We're not just gonna just sit here and wait for them to come to us are we? Shouldn't we go out and look for them."

"No," Harry said on a sigh.

"Why not?" And there was a distinct whine in Ron's voice now. "This is boring," he then murmured and had the room not been full of beings that had accelerated hearing, it probably would have gone unnoticed.

"You know Weasley, you really are thick," Blaise commented blandly, not even dignifying to look in Ron's direction. The red-head predictably bristled and he shared a look with Harry but got no help from his former best friend.

"You'd think that someone in his position would have caught on to how unwanted he is here," Blaise was still saying, now directing his words towards Bella who was looking suitably nervous.

"Err . . . I guess," the human murmured with a shaky shrug.

"No need to be modest, Isabelle. He really is as idiotic as he sounds. Really makes me wonder what our fearless leader saw in him."
"Lay off Blaise," Harry finally said, but his words lacked the kind of heat one would assume when they defended a close friend.

Ron sank into his chair, his face red and looking like he had just gotten knocked over the head.

"But are we really going to wait for them to come to us," Emmett asked with a frown.

"There are ancient wards so archaic, the reversal spells have been lost in time surrounding the manor. This is the safest play we can be," Harry told him matter-of-factly.

"And with Ms. Sacrificial over there always trying to be helpful, its better that we don't go looking for trouble," Draco added with a roll of his eyes. Bella glared at him.

"We'll feel them coming anyways," Luna said with a shrug.

"So we sit here," Emmett concluded looking put out.

"Well you wanted to stay and help."

It wasn't until dinner time that anything happened.

Everyone was strewn about the house, mostly in the living room or kitchen. Harry was slaving away at the stove (okay, not really slaving), when he felt something hit the wards.

The force of the attack vibrated in his mind and the intent of it left a thick oily taste in his mouth. His entire body tense up, the spoon he was using to taste some of his gravy falling from his fingers to clatter against the floor.

"What happened," Edward demanded, already at his side. "What's wrong?"

"They're here," Harry murmured numbly. The after effects of the attack were finally leaving his mind and he shook his head to better clear it.

"Here where," Edward asked, his eyes darting around the kitchen.

"Not in here," Harry told him, shutting down the stove. He felt momentarily annoyed that the cooking was being delayed, but hopefully the fighting would end before the duck got too dry. With that absent thought in his head, the Savior left the kitchen and heading into the living room.

Luna was already up and coming to his side, her expression rather grim.

"They're outside the wards," she said without preamble. All talk in the room ceased.

"They won't be able to get in will they," Esme asked as Rosalie clutched Teddy close to her chest. The young boy hardly noticed.

"No they won't," Harry reassured, "but they're trying their damnedest."

"Well what are we waiting for," Emmett asked, jumping to his feet.

"This isn't a game," Rosalie hissed at him.

"She's right, this is a little more dangerous than your regular tussle with a vampire or shifter," Neville
told him blandly.

"To be honest, it would probably be better if you guys stayed here," Harry added.

"No way," Edward told him firmly.

Harry sighed although really he had expected that response.

"Fine. But not all of you have to come."

"Well you're not leaving us out," Jacob protested, gesturing with his hand at his pack. Draco looked as exasperated as Harry felt. "Come on. The more the merrier. You guys don't even know how many of them are out there."

"He has a point," Luna told him as if they couldn't see that. "And we can't stop them even if we wanted to."

"Thank you Lovegood," Blaise muttered lowly.

"Alright, fine! Whatever! Come if you want, stay if you don't," Harry exploded. "Just . . . Bella watch over Teddy for me, will you?"

"Yeah, no problem," Bella answered, finally knowing when to not argue.

There were six wizards waiting for them on the outskirts of the ward. Harry immediately recognized Hermione at the head of the pack, the rest of her group surrounding her. They were all people Harry knew from Hogwarts and it hurt him a little bit when he spotted the red of Ginny's hair and the childlike face of one Dennis Creevey.

"Well this is a surprise," Draco drawled in his most sarcastic tone.

"The Ministry will be pleased to note that I was right in how far you have fallen," Hermione said mildly, completely ignoring Draco as she focused in on Harry. "We had high hopes for you, Harry. It's disheartening to see that Voldemort had managed to influence you after all."

"It's funny how easy it is for you to twist truths," Harry said back in an equally mild tone. "I really should have seen this betrayal coming."

Hermione's face immediately soured.

"The ones who have been betrayed is the light of the Wizarding World."

"This coming from the person who's only doing this to accumulate power," Draco cut in, stepping in front of Harry so that Hermione would have to pay attention to him. "What? Being the best friend to the Savior wasn't enough attention for you?"

"We don't need to hear that coming from a filthy Death Eater," Ginny snarled, her face twisting in an ugly way that Harry had never seen before.

"News flash you ginger bint, the war is over and I was acquitted."

"That doesn't forgive you of your crimes," Hermione told him coolly. "Under the express order of the Ministry, we are to bring you and Harry Potter in for questioning."
"And what exactly is their crime," Neville asked, stepping forward.

"Oh Neville, have they corrupted you too," Hermione asked in an overly sympathetic voice.

"No they haven't," Neville told her tersely.

"Enough of this," Dennis suddenly cut in, stepping forward so that he was practically nose to nose with the wards. "Come out so that you may pay for your crimes."

Harry looked at the young boy sadly.

"For you I will."

"Harry," Edward hissed, reaching out for his mate, but Harry was already crossing the ward line. Edward muttered a lowly curse as Hermione raise her wand, and without thinking he jumped in front of Harry.

A bright red light splintered against his chest and for a moment he wondered if he was going to die. But after a few tense seconds, when nothing happened, he straightened up and glared at Harry.

"We'll talk about this latter," he warned before turning to face the group. Everyone had their wands trained on Harry, varying degrees of anger and confusion reflected on their faces.

"I don't need you to protect me." Harry pushed himself from behind Edward and stood beside the vampire, his wand at the ready.

From behind him a brilliant beam of light flashed over his shoulder and struck one of the wizards, Theo Nott if Harry remembered right, in the chest. Thick ropes sprung from thin air and wrapped around his entire body, binding him.

And just like that the battle started.

It took a little doing but Harry and his group had the upper hand. Even with just Emmett, Edward, Paul and Jacob helping them in numbers, Hermione's team was severely outmatched. When it came down to it only the best duelers were left, Hermione, Ginny, and Dennis.

Harry did not miss the irony that the people he taught put up the greatest fight. But it wasn't good enough.

Dennis was still young enough that his magic hadn't developed to its greatest potential. Luna took him out with a carefully aimed hex before disarming him.

Ginny put up and even greater fight, but Draco was just as fierce with his curses. Harry was pretty sure that the hex Draco used wasn't actually legal, but he couldn't really find it in him to care anymore.

Hermione was different. While Harry had the raw power, she had the vast knowledge and speed. Harry honestly couldn't name most of the spells she threw at him, and he was sure that if it wasn't for Edward, he would have lost to her.

It was hard, fighting Hermione this way despite knowing all the poison she had been spreading in the last year. Harry had trusted her, thought she would always be his friend no matter what.

Finally Harry managed to shoot off an Expelliarmus underneath a stunner that caught Hermione in the arm. Her wand flipped into the air, settling calmly in Harry's hand like a familiar stranger.
Hermione dropped to her knees, looking as distraught as if she had gotten a failing grade on a homework assignment.

Harry stared down at her, feeling like his heart was breaking all over again.

"You didn't think you could really win?" Draco looked way too smug as he stood over Hermione. It left a sour taste in Harry's mouth to know that the pureblood had always been right. Draco was a better friend to Harry than either Ron or Hermione.

"Well go on then. Kill me," Hermione spat, glaring heatedly up at them. "Isn't that what dark wizards do."

"You know better than anyone that Harry couldn't possibly be a dark wizard," Luna said smoothly from the other side of Harry.

"What you know about Potter suggests that," Hermione told her in a steely tone. "What I know about him suggests otherwise."

"I'm not an evil person," Harry told her sadly.

"Logic suggests otherwise."

Harry didn't know how to counteract that and he couldn't find the energy to try. He turned away from his once friend, dropping his head onto Luna's shoulder and hiding his face into her neck. He was bone tired and still achy all over from his 'resurrection'. He just wanted to sleep, preferably for the next couple of days.

"So what are we going to do with them," Neville asked softly, throwing a glance over his should at the group. They were all tied up in a circle a little bit away from the wards, Emmett and Paul standing guard over them. Harry had each of their wands and he was staring sadly down at Hermione's.

"We take them back to the Ministry to be dealt with," Harry said after a long moment of silence.

"Can you do that, though," Edwards asked, running his hand comfortingly down Harry's back. "Aren't you currently wanted by them?"

Harry made a face at his words.

"If the Ministry was smart they wouldn't make an enemy of Harry," Draco said with a snort.

"But they aren't smart," Blaise added in.

"So they probably do have a warrant out for Harry's arrest," Neville finished with a sigh.

"Some people never learn from their predecessors' mistakes," Luna chimed in.

"But Kingsley was part of the Order," Harry told them with a shake of his head. "I would have thought he had more sense than that."

"He chose to follow Dumbledore, not you," Draco told him. "That right there shows his intelligence."
"So what are we gonna do with them," Jacob asked to bring the topic back around.

"I've called my brothers." Ron's voice floated over them as if to answer the question. "They're on their way."

"Can we really trust the Weasleys," Draco asked of his group. "I mean from what I've seen they aren't that strong against mind washing."

"Ron and Ginny aren't the poster children for the Weasley family," Harry said blandly and didn't feel an ounce of guilt when Ron's face fell.

Before anymore could be said on the subject two cracks sounded to their left.

Bill and Charlie Weasley stepped out of the trees, their expressions stony when their gazes fell on their sister.

"Harry," the oldest called out as he walked over to him. A smile stretched his face, pulling against the scars over his eye and mouth.

"Bill," Harry greeted back, accepting the hug and returning the smile. "It's good to see you."

"Yeah? Wish it was under better circumstances." Here he grimaced as he looked over at his sister before turning back to Harry with an easy grin. "It's been a while. Mum's been missing you. She wants me to tell you that you should come visit more."

"I will when I get the chance," Harry said but they both knew that that would probably never happen. "How are the dragons then Charlie," Harry asked of the other brother to redirect the attention.

"As good as they'll ever be. Got another Horntail in. Don't think you'd be up to seeing it?"

Harry laughed at the good natured ribbing.

"I'd rather not. I've had my fill of dragons to last me."

"If you're sure," Charlie said with a shrug. "But the reserves always opened to you and your lot." He nodded his head at the group surrounding Harry. "Even Malfoy there although one of the hatchlings might run off with him."

"Very funny," Draco drawled with a roll of his eyes.

"But anyways, we'd best be going," Bill cut in. "Got to get back to the wife. She's due to drop any day now."

"Fleur's pregnant," Harry asked with wide eyes.

"Yeah. It's an absolute terror it is."

"I'll said," Charlie agreed with a grimace. "Mum's been bugging me about when I'm going to settle and give her some grandkids."

"Tough luck mate." Charlie shrugged before he and Bill turned to do what they had come for. They created a not completely legal portkey before grabbing hold of a person. Harry noticed that no one wanted to be in contact with Ginny or Hermione.

With a somber fair well, the Weasleys left and Harry's was sad to note that he wasn't upset to see
Ron leave with them.

Harry flopped face down on his bed, pressing his face into the mattress and hoping that he wouldn't have to move for the next twenty four hours. It was well after midnight and everyone had pretty much gone home – well everyone that wasn't mated to one of the house's residents. Edward himself was currently hovering around Harry, trying to find the best way to make the wizard feel better.

Harry could honestly say that he wasn't even sure if he ever would feel better. The last couple of days had served to age him in ways that the war simply hadn't.

"You should just go to sleep," Edward murmured lowly as he trailed his icy fingers down Harry's arm. "You'll feel a little better when you wake up."

"I doubt that," came Harry's muffled reply. He drew in a deep breath, letting it out slowly before wiggling his way up to his headboard. "I don't even think I can sleep now."

"Tell me what I can do," Edward practically begged, concern oozing out of his amber eyes.

Harry stared at him for a long moment, taking in his face, his hair, his eyes. Just taking him in.

He wasn't even aware of what he was doing until he suddenly found himself straddling Edward's lap, with his fingers in the thick bronze hair and his lips pressing into the vampire's.

Edward accepted the kiss although there was a confused tone coming from him. Harry sighed into his mate, breaking the kiss to press his face into Edward's neck. Edward's hand rubbed soothingly up and down his back.

"You are something else, you know that," Harry murmured.
Epilogue

There were hands everywhere. Trailing down his back, over his hip, stroking against his chest. Everywhere they roamed the left icy fire burning against his skin. His entire body was on fire, stretching, reaching for some kind of release.

His heart was rushing rapidly in his chest. His fingers scrambling against something for some kind of purchase.

Harry woke up painfully aroused and practically rutting against Edward. The vampire looked just as overly overwhelmed, his eyes black with lust even as he was straining away from Harry.

Harry's entire face flushed but he couldn't bring himself to pull away. He was aching painfully, his body thrumming for release.

"Bloody hell," the wizard muttered, dropping his face into Edward's chest. His finger's curled into the fabric of Edward's shirt.

There was a long moment of tense, awkward and embarrassed silence.

Harry wasn't sure what had come over him, and he was trying to think of a way to derail the situation, when he decided to just throw caution to the wind.

Edward was his fucking mate.

"Oh bugger it," he huffed out, sitting up so that he could straddle Edward properly. He then reached forward and tugged at Edward's shirt, almost ripping off the buttons as he pulled at it.

"What are you doing," Edward asked with alarm, although his voice was low with lust.

"What does it look like," Harry asked rhetorically. Edward didn't really seem to have a complaint as he let Harry rip apart his shirt. In fact, the vampire reached forward and pulled Harry down on top of him and into a bruising kiss.

Harry had no idea what he was doing. He'd only got so far as making out with someone up until now and he was completely out of his depth. But somehow he couldn't find any sort of nervousness. All he knew was that he needed Edward and he needed the vampire now!

Maybe it was a spillover from his dream.

Harry pressed himself closer to Edward as if he wanted to merge with him. Edward's fingers fluttered up his spine before settling at his shoulders and pushing his back slightly.

Harry groaned at the loss of contact.

"We shouldn't—"

"Yes we should," Harry cut in and he rocked his hips against Edward's stopping all protest. Edward's head dropped forward, his eyes clenched tight.

Harry grinned triumphantly.

And then he was on his back, Edward on top of him, his icy tongue twisting in Harry's mouth.
It was the best snogging Harry had ever participated in.

"God, I could never get enough of you," Edward murmured as he pressed his lips against Harry's collarbone. Harry hummed in agreement. "I wish I could spend eternity with you."

"Well you can."

Edward immediately froze, his eyes turning to Harry with burning confusion, but Harry hardly noticed. He was absorbed in his ministrations, pressing his fingers into the unmoving flesh of Edward's stomach, chest, hip . . .

Edward grabbed Harry's hand, drawing the Savior's attention.

"What do you mean by that?"

"By what," Harry asked back with equal confusion.

"What do you mean I can? Are you suggesting I turn you? Because I think we should—"

"Wait, no, stop," Harry cut in, raising his hands to Edward's mouth. Edward looked a little alarmed at his quick denial.

"Look, it's not that I wouldn't consider you turning me," Harry began slowly. "I just would rather not. The idea of being that kind of immortal with those kind of limitations is kind of not . . . appealing to me."

"So what do you mean," Edward asked just as slowly.

Harry shrugged.

"Well you saw what happened when that vampire killed me." Edward winced at the memory and Harry rubbed at his arm soothingly. "I just mean that I can't exactly die. So I image that I'll be sticking around for that forever with you."

"Oh," Edward intoned. "Well that's rather convenient."

"Things tend to work out that way for me," Harry told him with another shrug.

"Well I certainly won't complain."

And Edward pulled Harry back into him, allowing the wizard to curl up in his arms.

Harry had to admit, he was really looked forward to forever with Edward.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!