**Never Go Hungry**

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**Summary**

WHAT IF... What if true love in the form of Rhett Butler left Scarlett O'Hara? What if Scarlett ate Rhett? Complete.
Chapter 1

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Disclaimer: Neither work in this crossover is mine.

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They called it the Massacre of '78.

How hungry she'd been, Scarlett reflected over the bloodless severed hand that rested on the fertile cotton fields of Tara. It still wore an enameled bracelet she recognised as Suellen's. Why, she'd sworn on these very fields that she would never go hungry again, as God was her witness. She'd lately drunk the last drop of all the sustenance within fifty miles around. But deep in her stomach she felt an aching, tingling craving that just couldn't be parted from her.

The stranger had come from behind her. His skin was white as a haunt, and strange enough his eyes were a scarlet, bloody red. Even stranger that she could behold him so in the dark. Recently, Scarlett thought, a time not too long ago, she'd run amiss another such stranger, but it never was Scarlett's nature to be introspective.

"Pardon me, miss," he said in a Yankee's nasal voice, raising his hat. " Couldn't help misnoticing your activities of late. Afraid I've been sent to kill you..."

Scarlett smiled her most fetching smile, and saw her charm catch a man in his tracks quite literally. Her newest beau told of kings and queens of this odd new world open to her. According to his word she'd broke some silly law, and would do best to chat to this Yankee's bosses in person. She decided a tour through Italy would cause her no harm. So long as she returned to restore her Tara to what it ought to be.

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"Empress Scarlett," the Cullen boy said, kneeling before her court of Tara. "I would rather die than live without my Bella. Please, kill me."

"Why, Ned. It pleases me to grant your wish."

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A/N: Unlike the Volturi, Scarlett O'Hara does not fuck around.
Chapter 2

A/N: Thanks to clicketykeys for inspiring this and GrrHero for reading it before it was posted.

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It was impossible to forget Scarlett O'Hara. Men always were caught by her charm.

Edward always remembered—with a horrible fascination—the time that Carlisle took him to meet the Empress. His father, the father who had changed him, meant him no ill. Some events were fated.

The Empress held her court in the South, in a former plantation called Tara. Edward had seen the glossy, extravagant magazine adverts offered to humans about a historic plantation experience, used to draw in food for the Empress' court. There she gathered servants she found useful, and also, according to unsavory rumors, a group of male vampires who pleased her. Of course Edward's powers had gained him an invitation—a requirement—to appear to her court.

Edward could not raze from his mind the moment he saw her, even knowing as he always did what lay inside. Empress Scarlett's mind was crude, filthy, redolent with lies and deceptions, ambitious, vain, vicious, grasping, hungry, and entirely shallow. He felt contempt for her; he should have felt contempt for her. But the glossy black curls of her hair that shivered against her impossibly pale skin—the long set of her red, red lips—He tried to look away. The thickness of her dark brows that cut an oblique slant in her face—her tiny, graceful frame that seemed fragile as a Cherokee rose—She forced herself on a man's attention like a volcano. The way her lissom slender waist and hips moved under a slinky crimson dress the shade of blood and desire, cut to the most modern and immodest of fashions possible...Edward saw her.

Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, and of horrendous character and repute, but a man could never realize this when caught by her gift.

"Carlisle." The Empress was flanked by a pair of huge male guards. One was tall, lithely muscled, and fair with delicate features; the other was dark and hulking with a rough, bristling, black mustache. Their minds were uninteresting and they were nothing but devoted drones. She extended a small, deceptively fragile hand to Edward's father to kiss. "Then this is your talented boy, young Master Edward. Why, Ned, it's fine as summer peaches to meet you."

Edward found himself walking below sunlight in the vampire sanctuary. There were many other vampires with powers, gathered like jewels in a collection. The summer rays turned all visible skin incandescent below the light. Scarlett smiled upon a female vampire whose plain face could not hold a candle to her own: "Chelsea, dear..." She negligently gave the other a pair of barbaric, antique golden earrings: incredibly valuable to a human, and yet hopelessly unattractive on her servant. Edward easily read the crude goal in her mind. Chelsea added to the Empress' charm, binding those who were less susceptible to Scarlett's power over every man. The Empress was no fool and collected those who could help her achieve her goals. None, though, had Edward's particular talent.

"I have one who reads and alters emotions," Scarlett chattered, "a fine Confederate man. You only
read, isn't that so? Poor Ned!" She gave a delicious smile to a tall, muscled, blond vampire. "Jasper here can both read and change...much more useful! Once upon a time, dear Aro was a friend of your father's, Ned. A member of the old faction. He was another reader and said he found my mind most fascinating at the time we met; but it would have been ruinous for me to keep him around."

Empress Scarlett, Carlisle had explained to Edward, charmed and subverted the previous vampire government from within. Once, the Empress was a Georgian plantation owner, turned by a nomad who surely immediately regretted his choice. They still called what she'd done the Massacre of '78. Scarlett was summoned to the vampire council to account for her crime. She drew those she could within her thrall, recruited a coven of ancient Romanian vampires, and mounted her coup. Then she turned on the old ones and massacred them as well. Her court had new faces rather than old.

Edward was introduced to physical and mental powers, vampires turned not so very long before him who all carried the same scarlet eyes as their Empress. The names and the tides of bloodthirsty thoughts swirled around them.

"Ned? You look a mite moonstruck," Scarlett teased, shimmering in the late afternoon light. In her mind, her vanity looked for an explanation flattering to her beauty. It took all of Edward's willpower to be silent. She was surely coarse and vulgar, unwomanly inside, ruthless and violent. But in the currents of the Empress' simple mind Edward saw energy and determination, a certain force and zeal that with her powers to charm gave her a fleeting allure...

"Why, we've walked all day in the hot sun!" Scarlett mocked. Her dainty cloche hat was tipped rakishly over her left eye. "You'll wish to dress for dinner, Ned. I must rely upon my escort. A lady always needs a strong man to protect her." She twined herself delicately about the torso of a hefty black-haired bodyguard, like frail ivy seeking support against a rugged oak tree. Edward tried not to think about how the guard made him feel weedy, puny, and very young in comparison. All about her was deceptive.

Empress Scarlett desired balls and dances, and more often than not she ordered a grand festivity at her court. The floors were waxed to a shining brilliance and reinforced for immortal, marble-hard feet; musicians and professional dancers were gathered by any means necessary; and all bloomed into a luxurious, overblown display that would put even human royal celebrations to shame.

Edward hated it, or at least felt that he ought. The music was sickeningly modern. Though he was turned only a few years ago, his taste was exclusively for the classics. The Empress was dressed in a manner that his mother would have scorned: she was loaded with finery and jewels like a harlot displaying all her charms at once. Of course her rings and necklaces and earrings were the wealthiest that the world had to offer. She glinted with bright cold diamonds and rubies the size of hen's eggs that complemented but could not equal the glory of her liquid scarlet eyes, fringed by long ebony lashes that sparkled in the firelight. Her barbaric lust for as many treasures as possible somehow suited her as it would not suit other women. As for her dress, Edward could not say of what material it was made or even the color, but the fashion in which it clung to her slim graceful ankles and slipped delicately from her pure shoulder he would not forget. He could not look at her shining skin at all.

"Since you're our newest visitor, Ned, the first dance is reserved for you," the Empress purred. Her voice was honey and wicked claws by turns, at one moment clear as a silver bell and the next seductive as murky burgundy. Edward was keenly aware of the entire room's jealous glances and bitter thoughts toward him; even without mind reading he would have known.

He smiled at the Empress like a gentleman and followed her to the dance floor, his head whirling hopelessly at her charm.
She was a vicious, grasping, childish creature who could not see anything without desiring it for her own, to carelessly break or use until it was done with. She'd a false and tawdry charm and some personal charisma below it. Her ambition and drive burned like flame. She had a vitality that adapted every moment, changing for each change around her. Unquenchable passions ruled her vivid mind, her hunger for blood and other things, her collection of money and treasures. She loved her own Tara that lay below their feet; Scarlett took pride in the fields of red earth she raised to new life after her own death. For a vampire, Scarlett O'Hara was stunningly and impossibly alive.

And if Empress Scarlett was flame, then this made all around her the...

Edward's feet stumbled in the dance, in spite of the fact that he was immortally perfect. His head was in a bewildered whirl. He told himself that he could not shut out the many mental voices that crowded around him, not merely that one. He was entrenched in this den of sin and horror. He knew well that he had met his end.

"Please," he begged, "please...let me be excused! I am unaccustomed to this finery; my head spins with it. Please pardon me, Empress, great Empress, my lady. I must go."

Edward fled the ballroom. Contempt was all around him, but all that he remembered was the Empress' face. She was confident, happy, and satisfied that she had thoroughly discomfited him. As Edward fled at top speed to run to the North Pole if he could, he was grateful to God and fate and all that he could possibly be grateful to—that she was satisfied at only his discomfiture and not more. The Empress' servants could have chased him to the end of the world and caught him, but she allowed her victory to stand where it was.

Edward Cullen would never forget Empress Scarlett O'Hara, queen of all the vampire world. He gravely wished that he could.

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