Immortal Tendencies

by TheSortingHatsSunglasses

Summary

Immortality. What does it even mean? For Aro: eternal power. For Marcus: eternal grief. And for Caius? Perhaps he never really knew, perhaps he just went on out of sheer anger?

But for Elizabeth immortality had always meant evil. Only the villains in stories desired eternal life, and usually it was their downfall.

And yet... was this love? Between an immortal and a human?
The stone was cool beneath her sandals. She wandered along the hallway. She wondered what this place was, what it had been. It seemed so old but also felt used, giving an almost lived in quality which was so different to the abandoned castles she had visited before. Yet the stonework was the same; not fake in anyway.

There was a door at the end of the hallway. It was a simple wooden door which she could tell was a modern fixture, like the lamp fixtures attached at intervals along the walls. She felt slightly nervous. She knew she shouldn’t be here: all the tour guides had told her that this was private property; that it belonged to an old family who’d lived here for generations. Yet something had drawn her to this place despite all that.

Her innate curiosity wouldn’t let her leave it alone. She was a student of History, a lover of stories and the castle tower in the town of Volterra seemed to be made of untold stories, of untold secrets. Yet even the look of the door at the end of the hallway spoke of privacy. It had been easy enough to sneak in through the first door into this long stone hallway. She had been shocked that it was unlocked but had quickly got over her shock in order to sneak in.

Breaking and entering, she thought to herself, that’s what you’re doing. But somehow even that – the fear of breaking the law – couldn’t seem to hold her back. Deep down she knew there was something here, something old and powerful, terrible and dark. There was nothing that would stop her, not even fear for her own safety.

That was a strange feeling, out of place. Logically the worst that could happen to her was that she would get caught, the police called and a night in an Italian prison cell. Yet the part of her which was driving her on – the side that sensed the dark secrets of this place, the terrible stories – also feared for her life.

But, for her, curiosity would always win out over fear. She reached for the door handle and turned it. Her heart was thudding in her mouth. She pushed gently against it and the wooden door swung slowly open.

It was a let-down. The room the door opened onto was a reception, nothing more and nothing less. There was a dark haired woman sitting behind a desk. There was nothing dark or sinister about her, bar perhaps the ridiculous amount of make-up that she wore.

“Who are you?” the woman asked when she looked up to see her, a hint of irritation in her voice, “What are you doing here? This is private property.”

“I...” she trailed off, “I’m sorry – I was curious. This is such an old building... I...”

“What’s your name,” the woman asked, her voice suddenly softer, more kindly.

“Lizzie,” she answered, “Elizabeth, that is.”

“Well, Lizzie,” the woman said coming around the desk and walking over to her, “I think perhaps you should leave.”

“Of course,” Elizabeth said, “It’s just there’s something about this place... Do you feel it?”
“It is an old building,” the woman said, reopening the door Elizabeth had come through, “But its better perhaps not to indulge in such superstitions. Come on...”

Elizabeth was about to walk back to the door when someone else entered the room. Two people, actually. They both looked like angels. They were pale faced and wore black robes with gold embroidery. There was no doubt in Elizabeth’s mind that these two were twins. One was male and one was female and both were breathtakingly beautiful, angelic. But both of them had crimson red eyes.

“Who is this Valentina?” The girl said. Even when she spoke Elizabeth felt strangely drawn to her. Yet there was something about her. Something inside Elizabeth told her that despite her outward appearance this girl was much older than any of the elderly Italians she had seen sitting in the cafe’s. There was also something dark behind her sweet voice.

“I’m sorry,” Elizabeth said which drew the attention of both the angels to her instead of to Valentina, “I was being nosey I’m afraid. This place is so old and I’m a huge History buff.”

“Oh thank you,” Elizabeth said, “For being so understanding. But do you ever get the feeling that there’s some sort of dark secret lurking here?”

“What.”

“I just get these feelings sometimes,” Elizabeth said, “I can’t explain it. Old places like this I feel a strange pull to and sometimes I feel like I know what happened in them. Crazy I know but...” She trailed off. The girl was advancing towards her, an expression of pure loathing on her face.

“Jane,” it was the boy. He took her arm gently, still looking at Elizabeth, “Aro will be interested.”

“Why,” Jane said, “There’s nothing special about her.”

“And if that’s the case, I’m sure he’ll let you have her.”

“Why not now?”

“Jane,” he said, his grip firmer on her arm, “You know why.”

She was still staring at Elizabeth with an intensity that sent shivers down her spine. Valentina had closed and locked the door and had now quietly moved back to her desk. Jane removed her brother’s grip from her arm and then nodded.

“We’ll take her to Aro then.”

“Come with us,” the boy said to Elizabeth. There was no question in his voice and after their exchange Elizabeth felt certain there was no other option. She was cursing her own stupid curiosity. Clearly there was something dark and terrible here, and she wished she hadn’t dragged herself into it.

She followed the angelic twins through a set of doors on the opposite side of the room and into another stone hallway. They walked along this till they reached a second set of double doors. For some reason Elizabeth felt a strong sense of relief. Somehow she seemed to know that she was going to find out what secrets this old place held. Even if it would be the last thing she discovered, which she felt was highly likely.

They pushed open the double doors and entered a completely different room. It was round and
had a high vaulted ceiling. There was a huge amount of white marble and pillars. What drew the attention though, were the three thrones opposite the door, and the three men who sat in them. They were pale skinned with red eyes like the twins and as Elizabeth was led further into the room she noticed several other people of the same sort standing around the room.

She stopped a few feet from the steps up to the thrones. Jane walked up the steps to the man sitting in the central throne, and her brother moved to stand at the side, leaving Elizabeth alone in the room.

She swallowed. Her heart was pounding very quickly now. What had she gotten herself into? She watched as Jane allowed the man to take her hand. There was a moment of stillness and silence. Then he let go of her hand and she moved to stand by her brother. Elizabeth looked more closely at the men sitting on the thrones.

The one of the left looked to be the oldest but despite this Elizabeth knew their looks to be deceiving. He also looked incredible lifeless, bored almost. He had dark hair and a long face. The man in the centre had black hair and was looking at Elizabeth in an almost hungry way. She didn’t like it at all. She looked at the third man. He looked the youngest and had white blonde hair and wore a brown patterned scarf, the only colour aside from black that any of them seemed to be wearing.

She turned her attention back to the man on the left. There seemed to be a deep sadness about him. Instantly Elizabeth seemed to realise that he had lost someone so important that he was now all but a shell without them.

“Elizabeth.” She turned at her name to see the man in the centre coming down the steps towards her.

“Who are you?”

“I am Aro,” he replied, “And these are my brothers Marcus and Caius.” Without taking his eyes from hers he took her hand in his own.

Elizabeth almost gasped, she felt as if he was flicking through her thoughts, as each rose to the surface of her mind in quick succession. She watched his expression. The hunger in his eyes increased. Suddenly he let go of her hand.

“So you have noticed Marcus’s sadness then.”

“I...” Elizabeth trailed off, “He’s lost someone who made him very happy.” She looked at the older man sitting on the left throne. He gave her the merest of glances as an indication that he was listening.

“Aro,” Caius said. There was an anger in his voice, “Is this how we deal with trespassers who enter our own home?”

“Calm yourself brother,” Aro said, “For she may wish to join us.”

“What is this,” Elizabeth said, completely confused, “A cult or something else?”

“We are a family,” Aro answered, “The Volturi.” Elizabeth looked from him to Caius and Marcus and then over to Jane standing with her brother. All of them were older than they looked – that much she could feel. They were immortal then. And all of them were deathly pale and had those terrible red eyes.

“Impossible,” she breathed, looking from one to another, “How can that be?”
“What?” Aro asked, watching her intently, “What have you found out?” She turned to look back at him, horror in her eyes.

“You’re vampires.”

At her words there was a movement throughout the room. As if everyone in there had felt uncomfortable at her working it out so quickly, so easily. But Aro’s face burst into a wide smile.

“Well realised,” he said, “What gifts could you have I wonder... Won’t you join us?”

“No,” Elizabeth said, automatically backing away, “I’d rather not. Vampires, immortality, drinking blood. Is this really happening?”

“Yes,” said Aro, the smile gone from his face, replaced by a grim look, “Yes it is.” He moved towards her quickly but then stopped as if thinking something through. He forced a smile.

“What?” Elizabeth asked.

“You will stay with us,” he said, “You are a fan of history – we have lived through a lot of it. We are people of learning; the Sciences, the Arts, History. You will stay with us.”

“Do I have much of a choice,” Elizabeth asked, glancing around her. She was surrounded by vampires.

“No,” Aro said firmly, “But you will like it here. You are a scholar, like us.”

“But you kill people, don’t you?”

“It is our nature,” Aro said, “We cannot survive without human blood to sustain us.”

She nodded. Perhaps she could attempt some understanding on that front: they couldn’t help it after all.

“Is this wise brother,” asked Caius, “What if she escapes, tells our secret?”

“She won’t,” Aro said, still staring at Elizabeth, “How could she with us being what we are?”

Elizabeth swallowed, not breaking eye contact with him. How had this happened? How did she let herself end up here? Her stupid curiosity had led her to this. Her stupid curiosity had put her in danger. Her stupid curiosity had made her a prisoner of vampires.

A vampire’s prisoner.

Aro smiled at her, that hungry look still in his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

So this is going to be an eventual Caius/ Elizabeth story. Basically I wanted to try to create a way in which Caius, the most sadistic of the Volturi, could somehow become 'good'.
For the purpose of this story, although Athenadora is alive, Caius and her have a basically non-existent relationship: they've grown apart.

I hope you enjoy it and feedback really is the bomb!! :D XD
Elizabeth woke up. She was in an ornate four-poster double bed. There were cushions all around her and the quilt was made of the softest material she had ever felt. She sat up and saw the room she was in. It was large and beautiful. There was a pair of huge bay windows looking out over the town of Volterra.

Then she remembered. Her grip on the quilt increased. Shakily she got out of the bed and walked over to the window. She tried to open it but it was shut fast. Besides, there was a huge drop down to the street below. She tried banging on the window in the hope of getting someone’s attention but nobody looked up to her window, as high as it was.

She took a step back, both physically and mentally. What the hell was she going to do? The lead vampire, Aro she recalled was his name, had wanted her to join them. But that meant becoming a vampire. She sat back down on the bed and put her hand to her forehead.

That meant becoming immortal, living forever. Sure that sounded good, but would it really be all that good. She had read lots of books and stories in which immortality wasn’t all that brilliant: it was always the villains who became immortal and lost their humanity in the process. She didn’t want to lose her humanity! And then there was that thirst for human blood. She didn’t want to be a killer – she was a good person, or at least tried to be. She couldn’t kill someone to satisfy her own thirst. It was so impossible to think about: becoming an immortal murderer.

A vampire.

She shuddered. How long would it take Aro to realise that she wasn’t going to change her mind on this, she wondered. And then what would he do? Kill her, said the realistic part of her mind, or turn her anyway. He might let her go... maybe... if he was feeling nice about it...? No, deep down she had got the feeling of what sort of person he was. He wouldn’t let her go, not in a million years (which he probably had) would he do that.

She was as good as dead... or immortal. Depending on what they decided in the end. So what should she do? Elizabeth looked about the room. Her clothes were nowhere to be seen. She was wearing a cotton night shift that they had given her to sleep in. There was no way she could go out wearing just that.

On the chair by the dressing table was a dark blue dress. Was this all there was? She sighed, they were the controlling sort as well, it would seem. She slipped into the dress and then discovered her trainers under the chair. She put them on and stood up. Well, she thought to herself as she looked in the floor length mirror, clothes really weren’t the biggest problem here.

Elizabeth walked over to the huge white door. It had a gold handle. She pushed the handle down and pulled open the door. It wasn’t locked and she was able to walk out into the hallway. She stood in the hallway for a moment, unsure what to do. Then she heard soft footsteps coming towards her, muffled slightly by the red carpet running down the centre of the hall.

She turned her head. It was the younger vampire, Caius. He was staring at her with little to no emotion on his beautiful face.

“Won’t you join us?” He asked, suddenly, his voice soft and low and wonderful, “We’re in the
library today. Aro thought you might like to see it. It has the largest collection of ancient texts in
the whole world. When the great library at Alexandria was destroyed during the Seige, my
brothers and I managed to salvage a lot of the more valuable manuscripts.”

“Really,” Elizabeth said, completely blown away; the destruction of such a wonderful library had
always irritated her and to think that the Volturi had some of the texts astounded her, “That’s...”
She trailed off. The Siege of Alexandria took place in 48 BC: “But then how old are you?” She
asked, staring at him in awe. She had felt they were old but that old. And Caius looked so young.

“Over three millennia,” he answered nonchalantly, “You lose count.”

Elizabeth stared at him: she had though hundreds of years, of course, maybe a thousand at a push.
But three thousand! That was a long time – and yet he looked so young.

“How old were you when you were turned?” She asked, he didn’t look older than thirty for sure.

“I was twenty-six,” he said, “I can hardly remember though. It was so long ago.” He looked at her
and then smiled. It was strange to see him smile: he had looked so angry before. All she could do
was stare at him, her head slightly to one side.

“It’s strange,” he continued, “No one’s ever asked me my age in a long time. But you have.” He
turned to look out of the window opposite, his smile slipping away, “Will you join us?”

“No,” Elizabeth said, “I couldn’t imagine living like that. Through so much and yet being so
distanced from it all.” He looked at her, a strange emotion on his face, it looked almost as if he
were in pain. But when he spoke, he was quite in control of his voice.

“Won’t you come with me to the library Elizabeth?” He asked, “Aro and Marcus are waiting.”
She nodded and cautiously took the arm he offered. Even below his sleeve, she could feel the
coldness of his skin.

“Is that a consequence of being immortal,” she asked quietly as they walked down the hallway,
“Cold skin?”

“Yes,” he replied and said no more.

“What’s it like being immortal?” She asked, curious as she always was, “I mean, can you even
make long lasting bonds with other people?”

“I have a wife,” he replied, a smirk on his lips, “If that’s what you’re asking.”

“No,” Elizabeth said, “I didn’t mean it like that... I don’t care if... I’m just curious!”

“I know,” Caius said, “But you’re right, in what you’re really asking. It’s hard after living for so
long to find things to say to one another. Athenodora and I have never really been intimate like
that for almost three thousand years. We’ve made love but there’s nothing between us, not
anymore.”

“That’s sad,” Elizabeth said, “That’s really sad. Why do you go on living if...” She trailed off. His
face had hardened.

“I would never choose such a cowardly escape,” his voice was like ice, “Just because my wife
and I aren’t intimate doesn’t mean I don’t have relationships with others. Aro and Marcus are my
brothers and I would never abandon them in such a way.”
“Of course” Elizabeth said, “I shouldn’t have said that. I suppose I don’t really understand.” He turned to look at her, a frown on his forehead.

“You understand better than most mortals,” he said, looking at her intently, “How is that?”

“I don’t think I do,” Elizabeth said. She paused then went on, “I’ve always been able to see things from other people’s point of view I suppose.” Caius gave her a half glance.

“You realise that that is why we’d want you to join,” he said, “Once we’ve turned you, you have the potential to have some sort of gift – like Aro.”

“He read my mind, didn’t he?” She said, glumly. Caius looked over to her.

“There’s no reason to be so upset by it,” he told her, “If he hadn’t then you’d be dead.”

“Perhaps that would’ve been simpler,” Elizabeth said, “For everyone.”

“Perhaps,” Caius said, but he didn’t seem convinced by it. He led her down a flight of stairs and then they stopped their walk by a set of double doors. Caius tapped on the door and it was opened from the inside.

Elizabeth let out a gasp. It was huge. Books lined every single wall and shelves split the room into individual areas with tables and chairs for reading. There were no windows and the light was a red glow from the lamps dotted around the room. There were shelves full of scrolls, no doubt from the ancient library of Alexandria, and books whose bindings were wider than a piece of paper.

“Good morning, Elizabeth,” said Aro. He and Marcus were sitting at a table, with several open scrolls in front of them, “Won’t you join us?” He asked.

Elizabeth hesitated. More than anything, she wanted to see the scrolls but would it be as if she were giving in? No, she thought to herself, they won’t turn me into a vampire just because I want to look at these ancient texts. So she went over to them. The scroll in front of Aro was actually papyrus and had hieroglyphic symbols on it.

“What does it say?” She asked. Elizabeth could read some ancient languages like Latin and ancient Greek, but not the hieroglyphic writing of the Egyptians.

“It talks of the Persian conquest of Egypt,” Aro said, “Though it embellishes some of the details.”

“How do you...” Elizabeth trailed off. She had been about to ask how he knew this, but then remembered the whole age thing. The three immortals she was in the library with were ancient. She swallowed and tried to suppress a shiver.

“We were in Greece at the time,” Caius told her as he came to sit down at the table, Elizabeth now the only one standing, “But when we heard of the fall of the Egyptian pharaohs we visited.”

“Was it very different,” Elizabeth asked, curious beyond control, “So far back?”

“On the surface perhaps,” said Aro, “But humans haven’t changed much. Basic instincts are the same.” He exchanged a knowing look with Caius whose lip curled into a wry smile. Elizabeth noticed this and felt very much an outsider. These three shared three thousand years worth of inside jokes and shared experiences.

Remembering that there were in fact three of them, Elizabeth turned to Marcus, who was staring at a scroll with that same passive expression on his face.
“What was her name?” She asked, her hand resting on the back of the opposite chair to him.

Aro and Caius looked up at her. Aro was frowning whilst Caius looked intrigued, his lips slightly parted and his eyebrows raised. There was none of that usual anger on his face. Marcus slowly tore his eyes away from the scroll he was looking at, an Ancient Greek text.

“Didyme,” he seemed to breathe her name and a look of such bittersweet longing appeared on his face that Elizabeth was almost reduced to tears.

“I...” But she had nothing to say.

“She was my sister,” Aro said, cutting through the emotion with a cold statement, “She had the power to make those in her presence immensely happy.”

“She could have had anyone,” Marcus said, his voice soft and gentle, “So many loved her, but she chose me.” Even after all the pain he had gone through his last few words contained a hint of astonishment. He was smiling but it slowly disappeared of his face to be replaced by an intense pain.

“How long has it been?” Elizabeth asked, trying to keep her voice steady, but failing.

“Almost three millennia,” Marcus said, any emotion now completely gone from his voice. He turned back to looking at his scroll.

Elizabeth wiped the tears from her face. She knew what it was like to lose someone you loved: she herself was an orphan. But she had never really known her parents, not like Marcus who must’ve known Didyme as well as he knew himself. And Elizabeth had only lived with missing her parents for twenty years whilst for Marcus... three thousand years was a length of time impossible to imagine, even without such terrible grief.

She turned to see Caius looking at her. The emotion on his face made her pause for breath. She couldn’t quite work out what the emotion was but it was intense, very intense.

She realised she was shaking and turned to leave. This was all too much. They killed people to survive. They were murderers. They were vampires and yet only Aro seemed to lack true emotion. How could that be? They had all lived so long and yet they still had the capacity of such strong emotions.

As soon as she had closed the door behind her, she let out a shaky sigh and leant against the wall, raising a hand to her face.

Her cheeks were wet from tears.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed it :D XD

If you have the time, I'd love some feedback :D XD
Elizabeth walked back up the steps and came out into a stone hallway. She walked along it until she came out at the reception room. Valentina, the receptionist who she had spoken with the other day was sitting at the desk. She looked up when Elizabeth came in and smiled. It was a rather forced smile though.

“Have you had anything to eat?” she asked.

“No,” Elizabeth said, realising her hunger, “I don’t suppose you have anything.”

“Yes,” Valentina said unlocking a door just behind her desk, “Let me see what I can get you. Vampires forget that mortals like us need to eat.” She went through the door, calling back: “Take a seat; I’ll be a few minutes.”

Elizabeth sat down on one of the sofas and closed her eyes. She tried to get her thoughts in order but failed. They were monsters, she reminded herself. Then why did she feel such pity for them, such emotion. Not for Aro - he was too far gone, obsessed with power like so many mortals were.

But Marcus was a different matter. He lived off human blood and was a monster as much as Aro was but his life was a living hell. He had loved and lost that love. And then lived on for three millennia without her. How could anyone carry on like that?! It was beyond understanding.

Elizabeth sighed and felt her breath quicken as she thought of the third vampire. Caius. Surely he was the worst? He was angry, though, she thought to herself, that was all. Three thousand years he had lived and what joy had he had; barely any. His relationship with his wife had fizzled to nothing through the ages whilst his quest for power had left him as only second best. Aro wielded the real power. She frowned: this still didn’t explain why she was drawn to Caius. Perhaps she sensed that there was something more to him, something else.

She opened her eyes and almost jumped out of her skin. Caius was standing in front of her, looking at her.

“How long have you been there?” She asked, sitting up.

“No – just thinking.”

“About what?” He asked then said, “Whether you want to join us?”

“No,” she replied, “There was never a choice there.”

“You should know,” he said, “We don’t do this often.”

“What?”

“Offer random humans the chance to be immortal,” he replied, “Even the ones who work for us – it’s rare if they’re even considered.” At that moment Valentina came back into the room carrying a plate of bread and Italian ham. From her pale face, Elizabeth knew she had heard his last words, but she made no comment on it.
“There you go,” she said and placed the tray down on the table near Elizabeth. She was about to turn to go when Elizabeth asked:

“Valentina, do you really want to be immortal?” Valentina stopped, her back towards them. Then she slowly turned around.

“Ever since I found out about vampires,” she said, “It’s all I’ve wanted.” She gave a half glance to Caius who showed no reaction then hurried back to her desk. Elizabeth dug into the food she had brought her. Caius watched, looking half amused half disgusted.

“What,” Elizabeth asked, between mouthfuls.

“I haven’t eaten food in three millennia,” he said, “And you eat it so quickly it’s...” he trailed off.

“Well unlike you,” Elizabeth said, “I need food to survive.” She swallowed then put the piece of bread she had been about to eat back on the plate.

“What?” Caius asked, “Carry on. I don’t find it offensive or anything.”

“As if I care if I offend you,” Elizabeth said, sharply, “You’re a murderer. It’s a choice you make: surely there’s a way for you to survive without killing others?” She watched his face, it darkened.

“There are vampires who live off animals,” he said, hardly hiding his disgust, “They debase themselves by it.”

“So there is another way,” Elizabeth said, “But you’d rather be a murderer.” Caius’s eyes flashed in anger.

“You know nothing about this,” he said, his voice dark, “And you’re ignorance will lead to us killing you. You don’t even realise the opportunity you have.” Without another word he disappeared, leaving the room so quickly that it was hard even to see which door he had exited through.

“Why do you anger them?” Valentina asked, “When you have such an opportunity to become like them?” Elizabeth turned to her.

“I don’t want to lose who I am in the pursuit of immortality, of power,” she paused, “I value other things above life.” Valentina didn’t look convinced or even understanding. She shook her head and turned back to her work.

Elizabeth stood up and walked out of the room, going down a passage she hadn’t been down before. She walked along it for awhile before she came to a door leading out into a courtyard. She went into the courtyard and took a deep breath. It smelt wonderful, bursting full of flowers and growth and life. She wandered amongst the tall bushes for awhile, reeling from Caius’s angry outburst. He had seemed more like the angry vampire she had first seen and less like... Well she wasn’t sure what he had been like when they were in the library. Just different, she supposed.

She stopped by a rose bush. The red roses were in full bloom and smelt euphoric. Suddenly she noticed at the bottom of the bush, partially hidden behind the stems, a rose flower which had fallen off. It wasn’t as red as the ones still on the bush and seemed smaller, shrunken somehow. She picked it up and cupped it in her hands.

It was still beautiful with curling petals of red. But some of the outer petals were dead; they were a browner colour and crumpled. It didn’t take away from the beauty of the inner petals though. She tore off the dead petals and admired the rose. Now it was smaller but all of it was red and perfect.
Yet somehow she thought it had been prettier with the dead petals, prettier even than the whole flowers still on the bush.

She felt a pang in her stomach: were the roses somehow a metaphor? She shook her head and allowed the fallen rose to drop back onto the ground. They were only flowers.

“The bushes need pruning,” Elizabeth turned around to see Aro walking towards her. “Valentina is supposed to do it but she seems to have forgotten.” He walked up to her and took her hand.

“Must you...” Elizabeth trailed off as she felt all her thoughts and feelings dragged one by one to the front of her mind in quick succession. She watched Aro’s face. His mouth went into a wide grin before he dropped her hand.

“What is it?” She asked, “I haven’t changed my mind – if anything it’s all the more clearer.”

“We’ll see,” he replied and bent down to pick up the rose she had dropped, “It’s such a pretty thing, wouldn’t you agree my dear?”

“It’s just a flower,” Elizabeth said, knowing full well that he knew it represented more.

“If you say so,” Aro said, and scrunched it up in his hand, allowing the broken petals to fall to the ground.

Elizabeth watched them fall, feeling weirdly satisfied: it was just a flower after all. She looked to see Aro smiling at her triumphantly. She leant forward and took his hand, pushing her thoughts of the insignificance of the flower to the front of her mind. But Aro’s smile didn’t falter.

“You will become one of us,” he said.

“So you can see the future now?” Elizabeth asked, sarcastically, “You’re monsters. You most of all, and I will never join you – even if you transform me into a vampire. I won’t join your power mad vampire cult. You can’t make me.”

“You’re right of course my dear,” Aro said softly, “I can’t.” And with that he turned and left. Elizabeth felt uncomfortable. She knew exactly what he meant by the phrase ‘I can’t’. He might not be able to get her to join the Volturi but there was someone else who could, someone who was figuring in her thoughts too much. Caius.

Elizabeth snapped a rose off the rose bush. Caius who was all anger and bitterness. Yet she had thought she had seen something more in him, she wasn’t sure what, just something better. Aro clearly didn’t think so and he had known Caius for over three millennia, so she must be wrong.

But she had such a strong feeling about this, so strong that she had begun to feel things for Caius which logically she shouldn’t, because logically he was a murderous, sadistic vampire. And these feelings could mean that Caius could get her to join the Volturi. Caius could get her to join when Aro could not.

At this uncomfortable realisation, Elizabeth dropped the second rose to the ground and turned to leave the courtyard.

“Elizabeth.” She turned at her name.

It was Caius, standing by the rose bush she had so hastily walked away from. There wasn’t any of that usual anger on his face anymore, instead he looked like he had earlier that day, on their walk down to the library and in the library.
“Caius,” she said, and gave him a nod before turning to go back inside.

“Wait,” he said, and was beside her, “I want to talk to you.”

“Why,” Elizabeth asked and raised an eyebrow; “Because we agree on so many important things? Like the value of human life?” She turned to face him, staring him straight in the eye.

“I’ve lived like this for over three thousand years,” Caius said, “You’ve got to realise these are deeply set opinions – and they can’t be changed overnight.” He hesitated for a moment, “As much as I might want them to.”

Elizabeth hesitated. He wanted to change, then, this angry sadistic vampire. She swallowed. And surely there was truth to what he was saying: it’s known that older people find it harder to adapt to change, are more set in their views. A three thousand vampire would of course have difficulty in getting over the fact that he had lived for three thousand years in a bad way. But it was more than just a bad way.

“How many people have you killed?” Elizabeth asked. Caius looked down, a frown creasing his forehead.

“I don’t know,” he said, quietly, “I’ve never bothered to count.” She nodded, of course.

“What’s changed your mind,” Elizabeth asked, “Why do you want to change?” He raised his head, an incredulous look on his face.

“You,” he breathed, the word barely audible, “You came yesterday, trespassing may I add,” he smiled a little, “But when you realised, all by yourself, what we were, you didn’t try to run.”

“Because you would’ve caught me so easily,” she replied, her words a whisper as she stared intently at him, her heart beginning to pound more quickly.

“No,” he said softly, and took her hands in his own, “Because you’re brave. And so... so good.”

She pulled away slightly, still thinking about what Aro had said to her, what he had implied. It was just attraction, she thought to herself. She was just attracted to him because he was a vampire, and apparently vampire somehow now meant beautiful and sexy.

“I...” she trailed off. He gently touched the side of her face, tenderly tucking a stray curl behind her ear.

“Say you feel it to,” he said, “It’s mad, I know: we barely know one another. But say you feel it too.”

She moved away from him, removing his hand from her face and reaching for the door.

“I need to go,” Elizabeth said, “I just need to go.”

And with that, she left, leaving Caius standing alone in the courtyard looking after her.

Chapter End Notes

So there’s the next chapter. I really hope your enjoying it. Any feedback is most welcome. :D :D
Elizabeth strode down the hallways, her mind wheeling and turning. *Say you feel it too.* It was madness, it wasn't possible. It had been one day and yet overnight Caius had seemed to change. Before he had been anger and hate, but when they had spoken this morning he had been civil and nice even. She couldn't understand it. Had she changed? Surely not – she would realise if she had, wouldn't she?

*Say you feel it too.*

Feel it? Of course she felt it! It was terrifying her: these growing feelings she had for the vampire. A vampire! How was this even happening? It had only been yesterday morning when she hadn't even known of their existence. She had just been curious about this old castle. And now: was she falling in love with a murderous vampire, one who didn't even know the number of people he had killed? But he was changing. *Say you feel it too.* He had been as confused as she was, that at least had been clear.

*It's mad, I know: we barely know one another. But say you feel it too*

*Say you feel it too.*

His words kept repeating in her mind and she kept seeing his face when he said it. He had looked so vulnerable and she kept remembering the feel of his fingers on her face, tucking her hair behind her ear. They were so cold but so gentle. Without thinking she raised her hand to her face, to feel where his fingers had been. It felt the same as any part of her skin. What had she thought – that there would be a mark where his fingertips had been? Like the mark he was making on her...

Suddenly she stopped and looked about her. She hadn't been looking where she was going and now she had come to a dead end. The stone hallway suddenly came to an end and she didn't have a clue where she was.

There was a door in the wall but when she went to open it, it was locked. She would have to go back the way she had come. She turned around and stopped dead.

Jane was standing in the middle of the hallway, her face impassive.

"Good afternoon Elizabeth," she said, her voice as angelic as it was before.

"Is it afternoon already," Elizabeth said, glancing down at her watch: it was almost two o'clock, "I completely lost track of time." She tried to keep her voice calm but there was something about the look on Jane's face which unnerved her

"You've been wandering alone for hours," she told her and then smirked, "I'd know: I've been following you."

"I'm not trying to escape," Elizabeth said, "I'm just exploring."

"I don't care," Jane said, "We rarely come down here. It's just you and me right now." She took a step towards Elizabeth. There was a moment, a fraction of a second, in which Elizabeth realised what Jane was going to do before she did it.
Then she dropped to the floor in agony as Jane stood above her, looking down on her with an angelic smile on her face.

The pain seemed to go on forever. It was excruciating. Every single atom of her body seemed to be on fire, burning with a terrible pain. She was screaming, her body flailing around on the cold stone floor. Then it stopped.

Elizabeth pushed herself onto her knees. Her body felt tender and weak, as if she had suffered a terrible fever. She looked up at Jane, glaring at her in anger.

"You've been waiting for this ever since you realised I might have some sort of power," she almost spat the words out, "Scared that your master might find a better pet, is that it?" Her last few words were cut off as the pain started again and she was screaming.

"Aro is intrigued with you," Jane said, her voice full of bitterness and envy, "Otherwise you'd be dead." Even though she was screaming and in agony, Elizabeth could still make out every word she was saying; "But you don't belong here. You are nothing like us. You are weak and scared and by killing you I'll be doing us all a favour."

The pain stopped but this time Elizabeth didn't bother to sit up. Instead she lay where she was, panting for breath, feeling weaker than a newborn baby and more vulnerable than a deer in the headlights. So Jane was going to kill her. Probably for the best, she thought, I've never wanted immortality and mortality means you have to die at some point. Better now than never.

She closed her eyes and waited for Jane to kill her, hoping that it might not be overly painful. But this was Jane. She screamed again as the pain surged through her, more intense than the other times. Then it stopped but Jane didn't kill her.

Elizabeth looked up to see Jane staring at something just beyond where Elizabeth lay, where the door was. She turned her head.

It was Caius.

He stood in the open doorway, a look of cold anger on his face. Jane didn't flinch, however, meeting his gaze with her own.

"Go," he said to her, his voice low and dangerous.

"She's going to die anyway," Jane said, her voice emotionless once more, "Better sooner rather than later."

"That will be up to Aro, Marcus and I," Caius said his voice almost silent due to how low it was, "It's not for you to make such decisions Jane." Jane looked from Caius to Elizabeth and then back.

"Perhaps," she replied, "But in the end you won't be able to save her. She's made up her mind."

"Go," he said again, "Show Aro what you've tried to do here, see what he says."

"I will," Jane answered, before glancing to the door he had appeared in, "So that's where you were: trying to explain to your wife." Caius took an angry step towards her.

"You go too far Jane," he said, "You will show me the respect that is due."

"You lost my respect," Jane replied, "When you fell for a weak mortal. When you debased yourself and the three millennia worth of principle you abandoned. When you made that decision." She didn't stop to hear any reply, instead turning and disappearing quickly behind a
Caius stood frozen for a long time, staring out into space. Elizabeth slowly got to her feet, feeling very unsure of herself and of what had just happened. It was like watching a teacher's pet spit in the face of a teacher who had used to be their favourite until that teacher had forgotten to give out homework or given them a bad grade.

Caius turned to her and began to reach out an arm to her but then stopped himself, moving his arm back to his side.

"Thank you," she said, quietly. He looked away from her. She looked at the open doorway: for some reason she got an overwhelming sense of sadness, of depression, of lack of emotion, coming from that direction.

"Do you want to meet them?" Caius asked, seeing where she was looking.

"Who?" Elizabeth asked, and then slowly realised, "Is that where your wife is?"

"Yes," Caius replied, "And Aro's wife, Sulpicia. They have four guards who are always with them."

"But Jane said no one comes here often?"

"Here - this corridor - they don't," Caius replied, "Neither me or Aro see them that often and no one else but their constant guard are ever in that tower."

"It's a tower."

"Come," he said, offering her his hand, "You can meet them if you want." Elizabeth nodded, though she still didn't feel too sure. She reached out and took his hand.

They went through the door and up a set of spiral stairs, so narrow that they had to go in single file. Caius let her go first, and she could feel him, just behind her. At the top was a circular landing with the stairs in the centre. There were several doors leading off it but Caius knocked on a set of double doors which then opened from the inside.

They went in. Two hooded vampires had opened the doors for them whilst two more stood at the opposite corners of the room. These must be the guard, Elizabeth realised.

The room itself was large and well furnished with two fireplaces, both lit, and a harp in one corner. There were sofas and armchairs round the fireplaces and several tapestries hanging on the walls. There were two largish windows looking out over the town but both were closed and looked to be bolted.

The two wives were sitting in the centre of the room, one sitting at a loom, the other just sitting. One had dark hair whilst the other had hair only slightly darker than Caius's own white-blond hair. It was the one with dark hair who was sitting at the loom, her fingers moving so quickly that Elizabeth felt dizzy just watching her. She looked up when Caius entered the room with Elizabeth.

"Back so soon," she said, her voice even and quiet, "And is this the human you mentioned before; the girl who you have fallen for."

"Yes," Caius said, before turning to Elizabeth, "This is Sulpicia, Aro's wife. She made all the tapestries in our castle."

"And many more," she added, no humour in her voice, "It comes off having so much time on
your hands and an absent husband so no one to share it with." She sounded slightly bitter, "At least I keep busy." She glanced to her blonde companion who had made no reaction to show that she acknowledged their presence.

"Athenodora," Caius said, in a quieter, more gentle voice, "This is Elizabeth." The woman didn't seem to have heard him. The way she was reminded Elizabeth of Marcus a little, though Athenodora wasn't sad so much as depressed. She could sense discontentment which had turned to emotionless coming off Athenodora whilst Marcus was grief to emotionless.

Elizabeth turned to look at Caius. Had he really neglected her so in the past three millennia? Another of his cruelties, yet he seemed more concerned now. He walked over to her and knelt down beside her, taking her hand in his. She looked at him, nothing in her eyes. Perhaps it had been neglect on both sides, Elizabeth wondered.

"Please," Athenodora said to him, "Mercy, I beg." There was no emotion in her voice, just a plea.

"What does she want?" Elizabeth asked, hesitantly. Sulpicia looked up at her sharply.

"She wants to die," she said, "She's weak and has had enough. But Caius has never given her what she wants: he thinks it is a weakness, wanting death."

"Of course he does," Elizabeth said quietly to herself, forgetting that the vampires could still hear her. Sulpicia smirked at her words whilst Caius turned to look at her, hurt. How could he look hurt? Had he really changed so much? Elizabeth looked at him for a second before turning away.

Caius stood up, looking down at Athenodora sadly. He looked over to Elizabeth.

"Shall we go?" He asked. She nodded in reply, finding her voice hard to find. They left the room, the guard closing the door behind them. As they walked down the stairs, Elizabeth found her voice.

"She wants to die," she said, "How long has she wanted to end it?"

"I'm not sure," Caius replied, "But she began being vocal about it about fifteen hundred years ago. I was very short with her on it, and forbade anyone else from destroying her."

"How do you kill a vampire anyway?" Elizabeth asked, inquisitively.

"You tear their head and limbs off, then burn them."

"Nice," Elizabeth said, "So you couldn't do it then? Because it was so... so brutal?" She was being hopeful – that he wasn't a total monster, or at least, hadn't been...

"No," Caius said, giving a dry chuckle, "That's not the reason."

"So what's the reason?"

"Wanting death like that," he said as they reached the bottom of the stairs, "It disgusts me..." He trailed off and then turned to her, "Or at least, it did."

Elizabeth swallowed. She knew what he meant by that. They were standing quite close to one another, she was only slightly shorter than him, and for some reason she couldn't stop looking at him. They were staring straight into one another's eyes.

"I'm sorry about Jane," he said.
"Don't be," Elizabeth replied, "She's right: you're going to have to kill me at some point. I don't want immortality and I'd rather die young than not at all." She saw his jaw tighten at this, his gaze becoming more intense.

Then he leant in and kissed her fiercely on the lips. She hesitated for just a moment before kissing him back with just as much passion. His lips were as cold as the rest of him but somehow they seemed to warm her up from the inside; a burning heat rising inside her as they kissed.

His hands were wrapped around her waist, pulling her into him, whilst hers were on his chest then in his pale blond hair. It was fervent and passionate to begin with but slowly tempered down, becoming slower and gentle, more tender and true.

Elizabeth pulled away to breathe. She took deep breaths and stared at him. He was staring at her with such intensity but slowly his features flickered to something else, to something like despair.

Then she took a step back and turned and ran.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Elizabeth hasn't got a surname yet. She can't just be 'Elizabeth' so does anyone have any ideas for a surname? Elizabeth is a bit of a stock name (but I really like it cos Elizabeth I was a boss-ass-Queen) so perhaps something more exotic or weird. Do feel free to leave suggestions. :D

Anyway, they finally kissed! ...And then she ran away... Is he really that bad a kisser? ;) Bit awks really - two people finally kiss then one of them runs away! Tch, that's gonna be an awkward conversation... Actually it's quite an entertaining one... at least to write! ;)

Thank you for following and favouriting and reading. You're all really good sports and all that eh what! Ok... time to finish the A/N part...

:D :D :D :D
Caius stood where Elizabeth had left him, at the base of the stairs. He stood frozen, completely still, as his mind heaved and reeled over what had happened.

One day. That's all it had been and yet here he was. Caius felt so confused, so very confused. Elizabeth. That name, that woman. What had she done to him? How had he ended up like this? So vulnerable so... so weak... Yet he felt stronger than he had ever been before, in his three millennia, so how could this be weakness?

He remembered yesterday. Jane and Alec had come in with her behind them. He had just thought her a silly human, a nosey mortal who didn't know what was good for her. But then Aro had taken her hand and had seen her thoughts. She had a gift of sorts, Aro had thought, so they should give her the option to join them, but that wasn't what had stalled Caius. That wasn't what had changed him so much, what had led him to a night alone in the mountains nearby.

He had spent the night thinking. Thinking about her. She wasn't pretty but there was something about her, something more. She had thick unruly brown hair. It had looked tangled and knotted and frizzy, but that didn't stop him from wanting to touch it, to feel it, to smell it up close. Her features individually had nothing ugly about them, in fact her dark sea-green eyes enchanted him, but altogether they weren't quite symmetrical, they weren't beautiful. She wasn't ugly at all, but she wasn't pretty. She just... was...

And yet when she spoke, when she showed who she was, Caius had felt something. Then he hadn't liked it, it had made him feel weak. But afterwards, when she had been shown to a bedchamber and he had run off to the mountains, away from his vulnerable feelings, he had had time to think. Time to be.

What was it all for anyway? Immortality. What does it even mean? For Aro: eternal power. For Marcus: eternal grief. And for Caius? Perhaps he had never really known, perhaps he had just gone on out of sheer anger?

But now, now he had something. Surely? He no longer needed to be angry in order to keep going. But she would die, said a voice in his head. Whether now in Volterra or later from old age, she will die. And she wants to die, to be mortal. She doesn't want to live forever, to be a vampire.

Then he'd die too. As soon as he thought it, he knew it was what he wanted. He would live for as long as she lived but then, when she was dead, he'd end it as well.

He felt a dry smile flicker onto his face: so he no longer thought death was weakness then? Or abhorrent. When did that change? Probably at the same time he realised he was in love with Elizabeth.

"So quickly," he muttered to himself. It had all happened so quickly. He smiled again; this time a genuine smile, "How ironic."

He had lived for over three thousand years but it had taken less than forty-eight hours for his whole perspective of life to change.

Far above him he heard the opening of a door. The wives would be going to their separate chambers now, as they did in the evening.
Athenodora.

He closed his eyes. How had he been so cruel? He didn't hesitate, reaching the top of the stairs in less than a second. He walked over to Athenodora's door and knocked. One of the guard opened it. She sat on a chair as she always did, staring, unseeingly into the fire in the grate.

"Leave us," Caius told the two guard, "And make sure no one disturbs us." That was in case Sulpicia came nosing about. She was a selfish woman, Sulpicia: Caius had always felt comfortable leaving Athenodora with her because he knew she would never attempt to destroy her. Sulpicia liked the company, even if Athenodora hated her existence. But Caius had changed now, even if Sulpicia never would.

Caius walked over to his wife. He remembered the high point of their relationship: when they had actually spoken to one another. They had never talked about important things, just the insignificant politics of the time, but it had been better than nothing. Now, however, their relationship was as dead as Athenodora wanted to be.

"Athenodora," he said, gently. She turned to look at him but said nothing. "It's been a long time hasn't it," he went on, "Will tonight be alright?"

She looked at him, her face as impassive as ever, "For what, Caius?"

"Oblivion," he whispered the word as he looked at her, "I've come to set you free from all this." Her eyes flickered, slightly: the most emotion he had seen on her face in fifteen hundred years.

"Yes," she breathed, "But why now?" She spoke the words as slowly as always but this time, for once, she looked directly at him.

"I've changed," he answered, "I'm not sure how much, yet, but I know I've been cruel in forcing you to carry on. I'm sorry." He took her hand, "Could you ever forgive me?" She smiled, the first time in almost two thousand years.

"You're going to free me tonight, Caius," she said, softly, "Of course I forgive you." She looked at him a moment then said, "I'm ready, I've been ready a very long time."

Caius nodded then placed a hand either side of her head. She had closed her eyes, a look of pure contentment on her face. He ripped her head off and threw it into the fire. Then he pulled of her limbs and one by one threw them into the fire.

He watched as her body smouldered to ash and then turned and left. The two guards waiting outside looked at him.

"Athenodora no longer needs your protection," he told them, "But Sulpicia might." The two guards nodded impassively and then went into Sulpicia's chamber. When she burst out of her chamber in selfish anger at the loss of her only companion, Caius was long gone.

He strode along the corridor, feeling lighter. Athenodora was free. He could no longer cause her anymore pain or suffering. He had freed her from the hell she had been living in for so long. It had been too long. He smiled but his smile faltered when he saw Jane coming towards him.

"What do you want?" He asked, his voice hostile.

"Aro sent me to look for you," she said, "Heidi's due back soon."
Caius nodded. Heidi brought them humans from outside Volterra for them to feed off. It was a system which worked well due in large part to Heidi's charm and cunning when rounding up mortals. They went to the circular hall where he had first seen Elizabeth and he nodded to Aro and Marcus. Marcus made no response but Aro stood up and offered his hand.

Caius hesitated a moment before laying his hand against Aro's.

"Oh that must have been hard for you Caius," Aro said, "And poor Sulpicia will miss the company, but perhaps it was because you have your eye on a new possible mate."

Aro was finding out about Athenodora, a thing still at the forefront of his mind but then Aro's grip tightened and his face darkened.

"You'd die if she died," Aro said, hesitantly, "You don't even think she will join us?"

"I love her," Caius said, fully aware of everyone listening in, "You've noticed how much she's changed me."

"I have," Aro answered, "But have you realised your effect on her? She will join us rather than make you suffer watching her die. Of that, I'm sure, brother."

Caius took back his hand quickly as soon as Aro released it. He had never much minded Aro reading his mind, he was loyal to him of course, but it now unnerved him how Aro seemed to know more about his feelings than he did. The day before, Aro had realised before Caius had even thought about it that he was falling in love with Elizabeth. And now he saw it all, so much clearer than Caius did.

At that moment Heidi entered the room, followed as always by her retinue of mortal humans to be feasted on.

Caius hadn't thought much about this part, not really. But as he watched the others kill them all, he felt disgusted. Not at them; not at the way they ignored, so easily, the cries and pleas for mercy, or they way the blood trickled down their chins before they wiped it away; but at himself. He was disgusted because that was what he had done, so easily, for over three millennia.

He stayed sat on his throne, watching, and when the bodies were piled in a corner, he looked at each individual face and felt sickened.

Aro took his leave soon after and everyone left, leaving just Caius and Marcus alone in the room.

"So, Athenodora's struggle is finally over," Marcus said, sensing that Caius wanted to talk about it.

"Yes," Caius said and paused a moment, "But we never really had what you and Didyme had."
"No, you never did." Marcus said and chuckled for what must have been the first time in centuries, "It was raw attraction to begin with but soon even that disappeared."

"Yes," Caius said, smiling. He didn't think he had ever got Marcus to smile before, let alone laugh. "What do you think of Elizabeth?" He asked, for some reason craving his good opinion of her more than he thought possible.

"I like her," Marcus said simply. Caius felt a strange sense of relief, "She's very insightful," he added.

"She is," Caius agreed.

"There's something strong growing between you two," Marcus carried on, "It reminds me of Didyme and me right at the start. I loved her of course, who couldn't, but initially we disagreed on the silliest of things."

"The value of mortality isn't really a silly thing," Caius countered, seeing the parallel Marcus was attempting to draw.

"No," Marcus said, "I suppose not" There was a long moment of silence before Caius broached a subject which had long been on his mind.

"You want to end it," he stated, "Just like Athenodora."

"Yes but I have to carry on," Marcus said, sadly, "Aro has done so much for me. I owe him my loyalty."

"Don't we all?"

"You don't."

"I don't?" Caius asked, confused, Marcus turned to him and there was so much meaning in his look alone that it brought Caius up short.

"Go," he said calmly and certainly, "Go with Elizabeth, go and be happy - like Didyme and I wanted to."

"Before she died" Caius said almost in a whisper. She was killed by Aro, her own brother, he thought to himself, in order for Aro to keep hold of Marcus.

"Yes," Marcus said, his face darkening.

"I..." Caius trailed off. Marcus looked at him. There was nothing more to say, Marcus had told him what to do. Why should he have happiness though, when Marcus had lost his? But there was nothing to do about Marcus's happiness but his own could still be salvaged.

"Aro and I are going to Rome this evening along with all the inner guard," Marcus said, "You're welcome to join us... unless you have more important things to do." Caius looked at him, knowing exactly what he meant by what he said. Then he shook his head.

"No," he said, "I won't be going to Rome with you and Aro." He looked Marcus in the eye, then took his hand, "Goodbye Marcus."

And with that, he left the room.
That was Caius's point of view. I thought the best way to describe Elizabeth was through someone else's eyes because she wouldn't do it herself; she's not exactly vain. But I also wanted Caius’s own perspective on what was happening so... I hoped you enjoyed it... :D :D X
"Elizabeth my dear, whatever's the matter?"

Elizabeth looked up to see Aro walking over to her. She had taken refuge in the library, surrounding herself with books to escape what was happening. The kiss had been good, better than good. It had been wonderful and now she had realised that she was in love with Caius. It wasn't just raw attraction; it was love, on both sides.

After the kiss she had run, as she always did when faced with emotions, away from it all, away from him. It had been a silly thing to do, a cowardly thing. Yet she hadn't been able to face it – the fact that she loved him. Its consequences were too much. He would be able to get her to join the Volturi and live forever: just to keep him happy. For now she knew that she cared about his happiness. Caius; she loved him.

"Let's see shall we?" Aro said and took her hand in his own. So now he would know. Elizabeth looked away from him: it would be unbearable to see the triumph in his eyes. He had known this would happen all along, hadn't he; that she would become one of them, that he would get her, because of what was happening between her and Caius.

It didn't even make sense. She had always thought love was something which came with time, time to get to know one another; not something like this. It had happened so quickly, in the time of a night and a day.

"My dear," Aro said gently, "This is not a bad thing. You have found a love so strong that it will last eternity."

"Well it will need to wont it," she said, bitterly, "I don't understand how this happened."

"It's curious," Aro said, "That it has happened so quickly, but this is just the beginning for you. Perhaps this gift you have has worked in some way, allowing you to see that there is more to him."

She looked up at him, "What do you mean?"

"He would die for you, my dear," Aro said, "Or at least if you died, he would die too. He doesn't want to live without you. But now, now you both can live together forever." He smiled at her, a broad creepy grin, "A happy ending I'd say," he finished, finally letting go of her hand.

"But I don't have a gift," she cried, "I don't have any special powers or anything so why on earth are you putting me through this."

"You don't have a gift yet," Aro conceded, "But your potential is more than promising. You knew there was something here. You realised we were vampires. You knew Marcus had lost a loved one."

"That's not magic," Elizabeth said, coldly, "That's not a power; that's just intuition and compassion."

"We'll see," Aro said, his eyes darting about, searching her face, "We'll see when we turn you."
"And when will that be?"

"Soon," he replied, "We're going to Rome tonight for a few days but when we return... Magnifico." He stared at her a moment longer, the desire and hunger clear in his eyes, before turning and disappearing from the library.

Elizabeth glared after him a moment, feeling helpless and out of control. She picked up an old book with a broken cover and threw it across the room, letting out a yell of anger. She then pushed over one of the many chairs.

"What are you doing?" She turned around. It was him; it was Caius.

"You," she screamed and completely lost her head, running straight at him and proceeded to hit him over and over, not even caring that it hurt her hands like hitting a brick wall.

"Stop it," Caius breathed and grabbed her wrists to stop her.

"Get off me," she yelled, "Get off!" She struggled against him but his grip didn't slacken.

"Elizabeth what is it?" Caius asked, urgently, "Why are you so upset. I don't understand – you ran off..."

"Are you serious?!" She yelled, pulling away from him. He let go of her wrists and she took a couple of steps back.

"Yes, Elizabeth," he said, looking directly at her, "I am: you ran off earlier and now you try to attack me. You know that's impossible. Obviously something's wrong."

Elizabeth stared back at him and felt a tear running down her cheek. She hastily wiped it away.

"I don't want to live forever." She said, "I don't want to have a craving for human blood. I don't want to be a vampire."

"I know," Caius said gently, "I know and I'd never make you become a vampire. Clearly you don't want to, and I understand why."

"You... You do?"

"Yes," he said and came over to her, "In living forever I've lost – or started to lose – who I am. Days have become like seconds, months like weeks and years like months. The changing of the seasons happens as quickly as the changing of the moon. Or so it seems." He took a deep breath, though he didn't need to, "And I have killed more people than years I've lived. But I don't remember any of them, not individually."

"Caius..." Elizabeth trailed off, "I have to become like you, like... all that."

"What do you mean?"

"Aro told me: you'd die if I died," she told him, "And I... I love you – mad as it is." She came over to him, and took his hands in her own, "I'm sorry I ran off earlier but I was scared and being a coward."

"Of what?" He asked, "Of me?"

"No, not of you," she said, "But of what I'd do for you; of what I'd become."

"You don't have to become a vampire for me," Caius said, smiling a little despite himself, "I'd
"You don't have to become a vampire for me," Caius said, smiling a little despite himself, "I'd never want you to."

"But I do, don't you see!" She exclaimed and pulled away, "If I don't then Aro will kill me, leaving you..." She trailed off and Caius grabbed her hands back in his and kissed them fervently.

"Which is why we leave," he said, "We leave tonight when they've all gone to Rome."

"But they'll come after us."

"Not immediately and not for sure," Caius countered.

"But where will we go?" Elizabeth asked, confused, "I can't go home, I..."

"You know I mentioned other vampires, ones who fed off animal blood."

"Yes," she said slowly.

"We go to them, I know where they are – or where they were at least." He stroked her face gently and she looked straight into his eyes. That was when she noticed. They weren't red anymore; they were more of a honey colour.

"You eyes," she said surprised, "What happened?" He smiled a little.

"How did you only just notice?" He quickly kissed her cheek, "I'm trying to live off animal blood from now on."

"Oh Caius," Elizabeth cried out, and flung her arms about his neck, "I knew there must be a reason I loved you. I knew there was something more to you. Oh thank god I'm not just going mad!"

"You thought you were going mad?" He asked, incredulous, "Elizabeth you are the sanest person I've ever met."

"How could I love a killer without being mad," she said, her voice muffled by his shoulder. Caius closed his eyes.

"By that logic, you're still mad," he said, "What I'm doing now doesn't change all that I've done, all those I've killed." She pulled away from him, to look him in the eye.

"But all that's in the past," she whispered, kissing his nose, "You're someone better now. But I'm still mad for sure."

"Why?" Caius asked, confused. She laughed.

"I've been mad all my life," she told him, "Like everybody. Nobody's sane. And if they think they are, well, that's when bad stuff happens!"

"You are just..." Caius trailed off and began to kiss her.

Elizabeth kissed back, pulling him into her. They fell against a bookshelf, still kissing. One of her hands tangled in his hair whilst the other slipped around his waist. Both his hands were roaming over her back, pulling her into him. Finally she had to pull back for air.

She looked at him to see his eyes still closed and a look of pure contentment on his face. He looked like an angel, an angel not of death or destruction but an angel at peace. Her eyes widened and she couldn't help but smile so when he did finally open his eyes he saw her beaming up at
"Oh god," he said and kissed her again, this time more tenderly, more softly. Then he stopped and pulled away.

"They've left," he said, "Aro, Marcus and all the inner guard."

"Should we go now?"

"Yes," he nodded, "Definitely: we'll want to be at the Cullens' by the time they discover we've gone and it'll take us a couple of days to get there. Come on."

"Who are the Cullens?" Elizabeth asked.

"They're the vegetarians: vampires who live off animals only, the ones I was talking about before." She nodded then remembered something important.

"My clothes: the ones I came in. Where are they?"

"Wait here a moment," Caius said, "I'll get them." And without another word he was gone.

Elizabeth was left alone in the library. She looked about it and then picked up the book and the chair she had thrown in her anger earlier. She had just put the book back on the shelf when the door opened. She turned around: it was Valentina.

"Hello," Elizabeth said, "Are you alright?" The Italian woman looked pale and seemed a bit off. Then she pulled out a handgun.

"What are you doing?" Elizabeth asked, confused.

"I heard Aro and Jane talking before they left," she said, her voice calm and cold, "Talking about you. Jane really doesn't like you now does she?"

"No," Elizabeth replied, her eyes on the gun, "But I don't think she really likes anyone besides her brother and Aro."

"They talked about you for ages," Valentina continued, ignoring Elizabeth's comment, "You and Caius and how because you two were in love you'd join."

"Where did you hear this?"

"Oh I was pruning the roses in the courtyard and they passed by," she replied, "They act like I'm nothing so it's easy to overhear things."

"Valentina, I'm not going to be a vampire," Elizabeth said. Was this why she was here? Jealousy?

"I don't care about you," Valentina said coldly, "But the way Aro goes on about you. He can't wait for you to join them," her voice was bitter.

"Don't worry," Elizabeth said, trying to reassure her, "I'm not going to."

"Shut up and listen," Valentina said, raising the gun, "You see Aro and Jane were talking about you and then right at the end of their conversation, like an afterthought, or some household chore that needed doing, Aro asked Jane whether they kill me now or when they return from Rome."

Elizabeth swallowed: so that's what it was all about. "Valentina, I..."
"Don't." She snarled, "Just. Don't." She paused before carrying on, "In the end, guess what? Aro decided I would live a few more days because of the effort in getting a new person in at such short notice."

"I'm sorry," Elizabeth said, "But there's nothing I can do about that!"

"I'VE ALWAYS WANTED THIS!" Valentina screeched, "Always. And yet you just waltz on in and they immediately want you to join. You don't even want to," she sobbed, "But I do! And they're going to kill me!"

"Valentina please," Elizabeth said, still watching the gun. Valentina's hand was shaking so much Elizabeth thought there was a good chance it might go off by accident.

"Goodbye Elizabeth," Valentina said, and steadied her hand.

The gunshot was loud and clear. But Elizabeth had dived behind a table the second Valentina had said goodbye. She lay on the ground, her shoulder aching from where she had landed. Surely Caius would have heard that? But the castle was large...

"Quick move," Valentina said and sniffed. Elizabeth heard her heels clipping across the stones and looked up to see her aiming the gun carefully at her forehead.

"NO!" It was Caius. He had knocked the gun, clear out of Valentina's trembling hands, "What are you doing?"

But Valentina didn't hear him; she just shrugged to the floor in a sobbing heap. Caius didn't stop to say anymore, instead he picked Elizabeth up, and sped out of the room. In less than a minute they were out of Volterra and heading west.

Then he started to run, properly run that is: faster than a bullet or a plane, as fast as a vampire. Elizabeth clung to his back as they sped through the night.

They were going to find these Cullens, these good vampires.

Chapter End Notes

Well thank you for reading and thank you Kay328 for the more than inspiring comment. I hope you liked this chapter. :D X

P.S. Just so you know - maybe I should have said this earlier? - but this is set post breaking dawn, about ten years after the Volturi visited... So... yeah... ;}
Renesmee

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The rabbit squeaked a little as she placed him back in the hutch. He was only a baby really and had fur as dark as shadows. His sister was black as well, but she had patches of white; on her front paws, her nose and her left ear.

Renesmee still hadn't decided what to call them both. They had been an early birthday present from Jake. Technically she would be ten years old next month but physically she was twenty-five. Jake had got the rabbits from a friend of his down on the reservation. They're younger sister's pet rabbit had given birth to them earlier that summer and Jake had asked if he could buy them.

Renesmee smiled, Jacob Black was so thoughtful. He was a wolf and she was half-vampire but that hadn't stopped them from dating these past couple of years. He had always been there for her, someone she could talk to when she couldn't talk to her parents, or needed a shoulder to cry on. Her mother had explained it all to her years ago; it was a wolf thing - he had imprinted on her.

She closed the hutch and went back into the house. They had been living in Forks for five years now, having moved back here from Alaska and only a handful of people knew that she was the same Renesmee who had lived here before. It was all a bit confusing but now she posed as her mom's sister to the people not in the know.

"Ness, have you decided on names for the rabbits yet?" It was Jake. He came up to her from behind and kissed her neck. She leant into him and smiled.

"No I haven't," she admitted.

"What about Salt and Pepper?" he suggested, "I mean – the boy's as black as pepper whilst the girl has speckles like salt?"

"Those are the most cliché names ever!" Renesmee said, "No way am I calling them after seasoning, Jake."

"How about Binky?"

"Binky?"

"Yeah like Binky the bunny," Jake said, enthusiastically, "Cute right?" Renesmee turned round and kissed him on the nose, before pulling back and looking him directly in the eye.

"Not in a million years." She raised an eyebrow, "I don't want silly names: these are rabbits who want to be taken seriously."

"Renesmee," said her mom from the sofa, "You know they're just rabbits right – I don't think they're going to mind too much what their names are."

"Hey mom," Renesmee said, "You don't know that!"

"Bella, how can you be so harsh?" said her dad appearing in the room, "Ness can name them whatever she wants."

"Thanks dad," Renesmee said and went over to him. He gave her a hug before joining her mom.
on the sofa. At that moment Granny Esme came in with Auntie Alice. The rest of the Cullen family were out hunting but Alice and Esme had been sorting through old pictures.

"Look," Alice said, handing Renesmee's mom a picture, "It's a picture of us after graduation."

"Oh my god Alice," she said, "I look terrible!"

"Was that when you were still human?" Renesmee asked, hurrying over to her mother.

"Yeah," said Jake, sniggering at the photo, "And when she was the clumsiest person alive." They all chuckled at this.

Renesmee turned to Alice to ask whether her mother had really been that clumsy and that was when she noticed something was wrong. Alice had dropped the few other pictures she was holding and they were fluttering gently down to the floor. Her eyes were wide, staring unseeingly out of the window.

"What?" Renesmee's dad said, staring at Alice intently; obviously he could hear what she was thinking.

"Edward what is it?" Mom asked, urgently, turning to him.

"Alice?" Esme took her hand tentatively and moved her over to sit on the sofa. Renesmee exchanged a look with Jake. Alice was having a vision.

"It's Caius," Alice said suddenly, turning to Dad, "He's coming here."

"I didn't see, was it all of them or just him?"

"Just him," Alice said, frowning, "But he was carrying a human girl on his back. She had dark curly hair, green eyes. I've never seen her before."

"When are Carlisle and the others due back?" Dad asked Esme. She looked down at her watch.

"They should be back soon."

"What does it mean?" Renesmee asked, she didn't like the feeling of tension now in the air. Her mom had got up and taken her hand, looking worried.

"I don't know," Alice answered, "He's not hostile. He looks... he looks different."

"He wanted Renesmee dead," Mom said, "He wanted any excuse to kill us all, why's he coming here now?"

"How long will he be Alice," Dad asked, exchanging a look with Mom, "Do you know when they'll get here?"

"Soon," she said, "Very soon."

"Well that's exact," said Jake sarcastically, "Great."

"Jake," said Dad, a warning in his tone, "That doesn't help."

"Why's Caius coming here on his own," Renesmee asked confused, "Without Aro or Marcus or any of the guard?"

"I..." Alice said quietly, "I think it's to do with the girl but I don't even know who she is..." She
trailed off, looking as confused and worried as Renesmee felt.

At that moment Grandpa Carlisle came through the door followed by Renesmee's Uncles, Emmett and Jasper, and Auntie Rose. Carlisle took one moment to look at their anxious worried faces before turning to her dad.

"What's happened?" He asked as he walked over to Esme and placed a hand on her shoulder.

"Caius is coming here," said Mom, "Alice saw him, but he's not with any of the guard." Jasper was at Alice's side in a second, an arm around her shoulder.

"What?" Carlisle asked, confused.

"Alice what exactly did you see?" Jasper looked to her, concerned. Alice took his hand.

"He was in a forest very near here," Alice began, "He was running and on his back was a girl."

"A girl?"

"Well a young woman," she amended, "She looked to be in her early twenties with dark curly hair and bluey-green eyes. Do you know her Carlisle?"

They all turned to him but he just shook his head. "No, I don't think so. Was she human then?" Alice nodded.

"How long till they'll be here?" Rose asked quietly, "Soon?"

"Yes," Alice answered, "I think this evening perhaps, but it's hard to be sure..." She trailed off and everyone was quiet for awhile. Renesmee looked around at them all. Everyone seemed confused and worried. She wasn't sure what to think.

"Well he can't be coming for a fight," said Emmett, "So what does he want?"

"That is the question," Mom said, dryly.

"Perhaps he wants help?" Renesmee suggested, thoughtfully. He was on his own, she reasoned, without any of the guard.

"Yeah," Jake said, "Maybe he's left the Volturi or something?"

"Caius - leave the Volturi!" Carlisle didn't seem convinced, but then he paused, "I suppose it's possible..."

"Did you see his eyes," Rose asked, "Were they red or..." She trailed off.

"His face wasn't clear enough," Alice said, "Hang on," And she closed her eyes, frowning slightly. Jasper tightened his grip on her hand slightly. Everyone watched her intently. Renesmee bit her lip, her heart thrumming. Then Alice gasped and opened her eyes.

"They're golden," she said and turned to them all in surprise. Emmett whistled.

"Well..." Dad trailed off: he looked genuinely shocked, as did everyone else.

"Could it be something to do with the girl?" Esme asked, turning to Carlisle.

"Perhaps," he replied, "I don't know what to think though. Of the three of them, Caius was always the least likely to... to change... I always thought... He thought it disgusting, feeding off animals..."
Carlisle looked genuinely confused and surprised.

Renesmee felt relieved: if his eyes were golden it meant that, for whatever reason, he had changed. He was trying not to feed of human, trying not to feed of people. And if he was coming here, it seemed clear that he wanted help not to harm them. Her mother didn't look convinced by this, neither did Auntie Rose or Uncle Emmett.

Then the doorbell rang.

"That'll be him," said Alice, looking to Carlisle. He nodded in response and went over to the door. He opened to reveal Caius standing with a dark haired woman at his side.

Caius looked exactly as Renesmee remembered him: a handsome pale face fringed by white-blond hair which fell about his face, but his eyes were no longer that crimson red. They were golden, the same shade as the rest of the Cullen family and he no longer looked angry or bitter. His face looked ever so slightly different without that anger; it looked kinder and more wholesome. At the moment however, he looked desperate, a pleading look in his eyes as he faced Carlisle.

The woman at his side looked decidedly plain, almost ugly, next to him. He was an immortal vampire, a creature of beauty whilst she... clearly she was a human. That said, Renesmee was drawn to her eyes. They were a dark green colour, a sea-green, and were wide and beautiful. They were the only thing about her which looked unique or special at all. Her hair was a dull brown and looked a mess. Although she wasn't fat, neither was she particularly slim, still somehow seeing to lack any sort of figure, least of all an attractive one. Her nose wasn't particularly large or odd shaped but was enough off centre to be unattractive, her eyebrows were heavy and her lips nothing more than average looking.

Yet Renesmee was still drawn to her. She had always been surrounded by beautiful people: her parents and the rest of the Cullens were vampires and so therefore attractive, she herself was half-vampire so wasn't ugly, and Jake was... well, she smiled a little, Jake was just perfect. Perhaps it was this stark contrast between what Renesmee was so used to, perhaps that was why she was so intrigued by this young woman.

"Carlisle," Caius began then trailed off, clearly unsure what to say.

"Alice saw you coming," Carlisle said patiently, "Why don't you both come in and we can talk." Caius nodded and the two of them came into the house. Renesmee felt her mother tense beside her before slowly moving to stand in front of her.

"Do you want anything to eat?" Esme asked the woman, as kind and sweet as always, "Have you come far?" The woman looked a little spaced out, as if she hadn't really taken it in, but then she seemed to pull herself together.

"I'd love something to eat," she replied, "We've come a long way."

"From Volterra?"

"Yes," she said and it seemed to Renesmee that she attempted to suppress a shudder, "So you're the Cullens?"

"Yes, we're the Cullens," Carlisle said and smiled at her, "Won't you sit down?" He gestured to the comfy chair by the fire and the woman sat down, albeit slightly timidly. Caius followed her, standing next to the chair.

"This is Elizabeth," he said, "Elizabeth Hervey. She... she arrived at Volterra a few days ago and..." He trailed off.
"And they decided they didn't want to eat me because I might have 'a gift'" The young woman, Elizabeth, finished off for him. Renesmee watched as Caius's jaw stiffened: clearly he didn't like it; that fact that she was only alive because Aro thought she might have a gift.

"Can we stay here?" He asked, turning to Carlisle, "I mean... I need help, controlling my thirst, and Elizabeth needs to be away from the Volturi and..."

"You mean you want us to shelter you," said Rosalie, angrily, "You want us to endanger ourselves for you."

"Rose," said Carlisle giving her a warning glance before turning back to Caius, "We'll do what we can," he said, "But if Aro comes here looking for her... after what happened with Renesmee ten years ago..." He trailed off but Caius seemed to understand, he nodded.

"Thank you Carlisle," he said, "It's more than I deserve but Elizabeth; she is innocent in all this."

"What happened ten years ago?" Elizabeth asked, looking from Caius to Carlisle.

"You didn't tell her," Rose said disdainfully, "But of course you didn't."

"Rose," Esme said quietly but firmly, "Stop it."

"What," she replied, angrily, "Don't you remember what Caius did. He murdered Irina and even when Aro decided against slaughtering us all, he was still up for it. If it had been down to him alone, we'd all be dead!" With that she stormed out of the room.

"I'll go after her," Emmett said, and hurried out of the room. Renesmee looked over to Elizabeth. She was sitting up in her chair, a frozen expression on her face. Then she spoke, quietly but powerfully, ice in her voice.

"You thought it would be a good idea to seek the help of people you've tried to murder," she stood up and faced Caius, "What is wrong with you?!" She turned to Carlisle, "I'm sorry... We shouldn't have come... I can leave... There's always one sure way of avoiding the Volturi." Renesmee knew what she meant by that – suicide – and so it seemed did everyone else in the room.

"No Elizabeth," Esme said firmly, "We'll protect you, for as long as we can."

"Thank you," Elizabeth replied, "But when they come for me, I won't endanger you all I promise. I'll leave."

"And then what will you do?" Caius said, his voice weak and sad, "They'll find you and then they'll change you."

"I won't give them the chance," Elizabeth replied. She stared at Caius without blinking and then turned and left the room. Esme went after her.

"It might not come to that," Carlisle said to Caius, "Who knows what goes on in Aro's head?" Someone coughed loudly. Renesmee turned to see her dad giving Carlisle and Caius a wry smile. Caius gave a weak smile back but then frowned.

"Aro isn't letting us go that easily, Carlisle," he said quietly, "He hasn't just lost Elizabeth, he lost me. I've been by his side for three millennia; he's not going to let me go that easily."

Renesmee cocked her head to one side; that was true enough, but how on earth would Aro be able
to bring Caius back? Clearly there was no way Caius would return to the Volturi willingly, especially if Elizabeth died to avoid them. What would Aro do? That was the real question. What Aro would do, Renesmee realised, wasn't going to be anything rash - especially not if losing Elizabeth, and more importantly Caius, was at stake.

By that logic Renesmee thought, and with a bit of luck, they had time - perhaps even enough time for Elizabeth to live out her life.

Then again... Perhaps not...

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Ok so I'm not sure about this chapter. I decided to take a completely new pov and so tried to write from Renesmee's pov. The problem was, I wasn't a hundred per cent sure how to refer to Edward and Bella. Does it seem a bit awkward, a bit clunky? Or is it ok? The whole mom and dad thing... :/

Well asides from that, I hope you enjoyed that chapter. If it's terrible please say because I can rewrite it... er... yeah? But any ideas for improvement would help. :D

Thanks for reading
Caius smiled as Elizabeth turned in her sleep. She was safe here, for now anyway. He was finding this new way of life hard, but it was worth it. He stayed at the Cullen's house rather than attempting to mingle with any humans. When Bella's dad had come to visit he had had to leave the house. It was just too hard.

He had lived for three millennia giving into his cravings for human blood, justifying it, and so trying to now control his thirst was almost impossible. But he was managing, and it was undoubtedly worth it. When he was around Elizabeth he didn't even notice his thirst for her blood, not even a little bit. He reached out and stroked her hair; he loved her too much, how could he even consider killing her. It was impossible.

"Caius." He turned. Carlisle was standing in the doorway, "You ready?" Caius took one last look at Elizabeth then nodded.

"Yes."

He and Carlisle left via the window, leaping down to the ground. They zoomed through the trees of the forest, heading uphill; two immortals racing to the mountains. They both smelt it at the same time; a large brown bear, lumbering along the forest paths. Caius looked over to Carlisle.

"You have it," Carlisle said, still running at extraordinary speed, "You need it." Caius acknowledged this truth and followed the scent, veering away from Carlisle.

"You have it," Carlisle said, still running at extraordinary speed, "You need it." Caius acknowledged this truth and followed the scent, veering away from Carlisle.

The bear heard him coming and turned to see him standing in between two tall trees. It roared, clearly it was hungry, and lumbered towards him, picking up speed as it neared him. Caius smiled; this was something he enjoyed. It gave him a rush that killing innocent people he hadn't had to hunt never had.

The bear was on him in a second but he had jumped high in the air over the creature's head. He landed just behind it then leapt up again, this time grabbing the huge head and yanking. The bear fell to the ground, almost dead. Caius bit into the soft flesh of its neck. The feeding frenzy began and he was lost to the feel of the blood streaming into his mouth and down his throat. He drank it dry and then sat back, content.

He had come very far from thinking feeding off animals was some sort of debasement, very far indeed. He smirked a little: what would Aro say if he could see him now. Thinking of Aro made him worried again. They didn't have a clue what he was planning: according to Alice he seemed to keep changing his mind, nothing was set or decided. There was no way of knowing what he would do. It was terrible.

Caius stood back up and leapt up into one of the taller trees. He scrambled up until he was right at the top, looking out over the whole forest. A cloud drifted aside and the moon shone through as white and as pure as it had always been. Caius looked up at it and as he did, despite all the worry about Elizabeth, he felt more alive than he had ever felt before. That was down to her. It was completely down to her: she had saved him, had given him a reason to be.

He leapt down to the ground when he heard Carlisle coming over.

"Feeling better?" Carlisle asked, smiling a little. Caius realised that he must look happier; the hunt
"Feeling better?" Carlisle asked, smiling a little. Caius realised that he must look happier; the hunt gave him such a rush.

"Yes," he replied, "Did you find anything?"

"Yes, there was a deer," Carlisle replied, "Apparently deer populations are on the rise."

"Or else you wouldn't eat it?" Caius asked, incredulous.

"Only if it was a threatened species," Carlisle replied, "I don't want anything hunted by us to extinction."

"Carlisle," Caius said, staring at the other vampire with respect, "You are something aren't you. I... I guess I overlooked it before."

"You mean when you said I was debasing myself by feeding off animals instead of humans?" Carlisle replied, a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh come off it Carlisle," Caius said sportingly, "That was what? Three hundred years ago? Is that how long it was - when you left the Volturi?"

"I don't think I ever technically joined," Carlisle said, "And it was only ten years ago when..." He trailed off. The mood wasn't as joking as it had been. Caius bit his lip and found it hard to look Carlisle directly in the eye. But he knew he had to, so he forced himself to do so.

"I wish I could take it all back," he started but then hesitated, unsure how to go on.

"Caius," Carlisle said, placing a hand on his shoulder, "You're different now; any fool can see that."

"It doesn't change what I did, what I said, what I was..."

"No," Carlisle said nodding, "But it can change the present, and the future. That's more important really."

"I'm sorry," Carlisle said, making his eyes look directly into Carlisle's own, "For it all." Carlisle took his hand off Caius's shoulder and smiled.

"There's nothing to forgive." He said calmly. Caius looked at him, incredulous.

"You really are..." he trailed off, "You really are just... a good guy."

"As eloquent as always," Carlisle said, a huge grin spreading across his face, "Never one for the long monologues were you Caius?"

"No," he replied, laughing, "That's Aro's job: the talking."

"He does love the sound of his own voice doesn't he?" Carlisle said, shaking his head, "Perhaps that's what saved us last time."

"What?"

"Perhaps the only reason Aro hesitated was for his vanity's sake: so he could hear the sound of his own voice." Caius laughed at this.

"Oh god Carlisle," he said, after his laughter had ebbed away. He turned to his friend, a more serious look on his face, "Will he come after us this time? Elizabeth and me, that is. Or will he wait?"
"Who knows;" Carlisle said, "Aro is unpredictable to say the least. And Alice's visions are uncertain."

"Does that mean we have time?"

"There's always time: we're immortal Caius." Carlisle said turning to him.

"Not all of us," Caius replied quietly. Elizabeth was mortal, and wanted to stay that way.

"You want her to live her life," Carlisle said, understanding, "And probably she'll be able to."

"When she dies," Caius said, finding such an idea hard even to think of, "Carlisle will you end it for me?"

"Me?" Carlisle said, "Why not..."

"As if the Volturi would ever be so merciful," Caius said sadly, "I never was."

"You ended it for Athenodora," Carlisle said, "You were merciful to her."

"Yes but after how long," Caius replied, "Millennia!" There was a long silence. Carlisle broke it.

"If I killed you as you want," he began, "It would give Aro every excuse to come here, to kill my family. Therefore I can't, even if I wanted to."

Of course, Caius thought, there was never any chance of Carlisle killing him. But there were other ways, and other vampires. And there were those wolves. He shuddered slightly at the thought of letting a wolf kill him, but he was getting along with Jacob Black at least.

"Let's go back," Carlisle said, "It's beginning to get light and I'm sure you wouldn't want Elizabeth to wake without you there." He raised an eyebrow in jest, but his voice sounded understanding. Caius smiled and nodded. The two of them set off, reaching the house before dawn had properly begun.

Caius went up to Elizabeth's room at once. She was still asleep and he stayed by her side until she woke a few hours later.

"Good morning," he said, smiling at her. She gave him a bleary smile back and then stretched, sitting up.

"Did you go hunting last night then?" She asked, "With Carlisle?"

"Yes," Caius answered, "He's a good person, well, the best really."

"I like him," Elizabeth agreed, "How old is he?"

"Well he was turned in the seventeenth century so almost four hundred years I guess."

"And he stayed with the Volturi, when?"

"Seventeen-twenties I think," Caius answered, "Or at least some time in the eighteenth century."

"So precise," Elizabeth said, smirking then sighed, "What must it be like? To give a whole century as a time when one specific thing happened." Caius knew what she was getting at: for him time had compressed because he had lived for so long.
"I don't remember," he said, "Not like I'll remember these times with you."

At that moment there was a knock on the door. It was Edward. He opened the door and smiled at them both, behind him bobbed Alice.

"Elizabeth," she said, from behind her brother, "You've been putting this off but you really can't go around in those summer clothes much longer."

"Oh no," Elizabeth groaned, "But it's only been a few days."

"You need new clothes," Alice said, decidedly, "And that's what we're doing today!" Elizabeth buried her face in Caius's shoulder. He laughed and kissed her on the top of her head; he knew she hated shopping.

"The Volturi are one thing," Edward said, smiling, "But there's no running from Alice when she wants to go shopping."

"It's not what I want," Alice said indignantly, "It's what she needs."

"I know," Elizabeth said getting out of bed, "But I literally have no money – unless you count the twenty five cents in my short pockets."

"It's on me," Alice said, "Now come on Elizabeth, Bella's attempted to cook breakfast for you. Don't worry," she added, seeing Edward's terrified face, "Ness was with her. It'll be edible."

"That's kind of her," Elizabeth said. Caius nodded in agreement, his eyes on her as she pulled her hair into a ponytail.

"Wait till you've eaten it before you say that," Edward said, smirking.

"Like you've ever tried her food," Elizabeth said, an eyebrow raised.

"No I haven't," Edward conceded, "But Ness has and as her father, from reading her true opinions, it's not looking good."

"But Ness was helping Bella," Alice said, "And anyway we haven't time for this! Come on Elizabeth!" And she dragged her out of the room. Caius smiled; how had he ever overlooked the wonders of the Cullen family.

"Even Rose?" Edward questioned, smiling despite himself. Caius realised he was listening to his thoughts.

"Even Rosalie." He said. Edward clapped him on the back and the two followed Alice and Elizabeth downstairs.

It was Renesmee who was actually doing the cooking. Bella, it appeared, had given up. She sat at the counter table, next to Jake, when they got downstairs. Alice was already sitting Elizabeth down by the time Edward and Caius came into the room.

"Voila," said Renesmee as she served up the three plates full of fried bacon, eggs, beans, sausage, toast, mushrooms and tomato, "A full English breakfast for our English lady."

Elizabeth smiled, "This looks amazing," She turned to Caius and Edward, "You guys don't know what you're missing. I mean – bacon!" And she dug in. Caius smiled at her. Boy could she eat, but not as fast as Jacob.
"Hey Nessie is there anymore?" He asked, his plate already mostly empty.

"No this is mine," she replied, tucking into her own plate. "There's more bacon in the fridge though."

"Ok Elizabeth," Alice said, on her way out of the room, "I want you ready in ten minutes."

"Sure thing," Elizabeth said and turned to Caius, "You're coming with us." It was a statement; there was no question in it. Caius didn't protest; he wanted to go with her. There was no way he was leaving her alone, not even with Alice Cullen.

"I've seen a lot of styles go in and out of fashion," he said, smiling wryly, "I'm sure I can help."
She looked at him and smiled, but it didn't quite seem to reach her eyes. What was she thinking he wondered. "Elizabeth?"

"What," she said, seeming to snap out of her reverie and gave him a proper smile, "Jake," she said turning to the wolf-boy, "You can have the rest of mine if you want?"

"Sure thing," Jake said, pulling her plate towards him, "Thanks Elizabeth."

She smiled then turned to Caius. "Give me a minute," she said, "I still need to get dressed."

And with that she hopped off her stool and hurried upstairs, leaving Caius feeling slightly wrong-footed. She didn't seem one hundred percent alright. He looked over to Edward. He was deep in conversation with Bella so must've missed what Elizabeth had been thinking.

It had been when he'd mentioned all the styles he'd seen. It was the age thing, Caius realised suddenly, that was what she was thinking about. He was too old for her, Caius realised with a sinking feeling; he might look twenty-six, but really he was much older. That must be what she doesn't like. Caius felt his heart drop; she couldn't love him because he was just too old. He felt lost.

"Caius," he looked up. It was Alice; "Where is she?"

"She's getting dressed," Caius said, forcing a smile, "She'll be down in a minute."

"Good," Alice said, smiling, clearly not noticing Caius's dreary thoughts, "I know the perfect place we can go."

At that moment Elizabeth came back down stairs. She didn't even look at Caius, instead going straight over to Alice.

"I'm ready," she said, still determinedly not looking at him; "Let's go shopping."

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I hope you enjoyed that chapter but I just want to give a heads up: at the end of this week I'm going on holiday! That means that I won't be updating for a little over a week. Don't worry, I'll update one more chapter after this one before I go but then it's a week till I next update. Just so you know :D

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this chapter and the next one will be up in a few days time. :D X
Also, it may seem like there's a bit of a lull in the plot but stick with it because big stuff will be happening soon! A key part of these chapters is to consolidate Elizabeth and Caius with the Cullen family so it may seem like not much is happening but it's important to the plot and more interesting and exciting stuff will be happening. Thanks for sticking with it, it'll be worth it! XD
Friendship

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Esme came into the kitchen and smiled. Edward was happy, surrounded by Bella and their daughter. Jake was searching for the extra bacon in the fridge. She had always wanted Edward to be happy and now he was, and had been for a good ten years. Seeing her loved ones so happy and content made Esme feel elated. Even the initial worry about Caius hadn’t been strong enough to dampen her joy.

Edward looked up at her and smiled. He was glad she was happy. Esme laughed, Edward had always wanted her happy, but had never fully realised that it was his happiness which made her happy. Well, nowadays he did.

“Hey Nessie,” Esme said, “Have you thought of names for the rabbits yet?”

“Yes,” Renesmee said, and looked down at her feet, a little embarrassed.

“You have!” Jake said, pulling his head out of the fridge, “Not Binky then?”


“After our new guests?”

“Is that all they are then?” Renesmee asked, indignant, “Guests? Guests until we kick them out?!”

“No,” Esme said, “They’ve only been with us a few days but they’re more than that. Caius is an old friend of Carlisle’s and Elizabeth seems such a sweet person.”

“Not as sweet as you Gran,” Renesmee said calming down, and she came over to Esme, giving her a hug. Esme pulled her granddaughter closer into her and kissed her forehead.

“Oh Renesmee,” she said, smiling, “You are such a darling.”

“How are you spelling – what is it? K- then an ‘i’ sound.”


“I think they’re perfect names,” Esme said and smiled.

Suddenly the front door slammed open and Elizabeth walked in, tears streaming down her face. She glanced over at everyone then turned and ran upstairs, hardly holding back her sobs. Alice followed, looking confused and upset. Caius didn’t appear.


“He ran off,” Alice said, “Into the woods. They were arguing in the car and then Caius just got out and left. Elizabeth was in tears; she asked me to come back. I... I didn’t know what to say.”

“What were they arguing about?”

“Age,” Alice replied, “It was the stupidest thing really. Caius thought he was too old then Elizabeth said she was too young and... well, you know how these things can spin out of control.”
“I’ll talk to her,” Esme said, “You did the right thing bringing her back here Alice.” She stroked her daughter’s cheek tenderly and gave her a smile. Alice gave her a weak smile back then Esme hurried upstairs after Elizabeth.

She gently knocked on the door of Elizabeth’s bedroom and entered. Elizabeth was standing by the window, looking outside. She wasn’t sobbing as she had been, just quietly crying. Her grip on the windowsill was tight and she turned to see Esme before turning back to looking outside.

“Hello Esme,” she said, “I need to apologise to Alice don’t I? It’s just I was upset...”

“Alice told me what happened,” Esme said, coming to stand next to Elizabeth. From here they could see Rose and Emmett sitting high up in one of the trees talking, “Why are you upset about being too young?”

“I just...” Elizabeth began, “I just don’t have that knowledge he has. He knows all this stuff about the past and he’s lived so long he has all that wisdom, you know?”

“He doesn’t see it like that,” Esme told Elizabeth gently, “To him he’s the fool who’s lived for so long without any reason and Elizabeth, you’re probably the most intelligent person I’ve met. For your age you know so much – about history and life.”

“Thank you Esme,” Elizabeth said, turning to her, “You’re the kindest person I’ve ever met. Perhaps you’re right – I mean we have had plenty to talk about but now he’s got it into his head that he’s too old!”

“It is a silly thing to worry about,” Esme said, “Considering the fact that you two won’t have forever. For you time is precious.”

“Yes,” Elizabeth agreed, “But I suppose he’s used to being able to waste time on silly things like this.”

“He thinks you’re too good for him,” Esme said, “That you deserve better.”

“Stupid vampire,” Elizabeth said, smiling slightly, “He knows I love him. I can’t just change that! Not that I’d want to. Once all that anger had burnt away, Caius is good and kind and loving.”

“It was so well hidden before,” Esme said, “Even Carlisle was surprised but now, never have two people been closer friends!”

“Yes,” Elizabeth said, a genuine smile on her face. She turned to face Esme, “Did you ever feel like... like this.” She made an awkward gesture to herself.

“Of course I did,” Esme said, “And I felt unworthy to begin with as well.”

“Unworthy?” Elizabeth asked, confused, “How could you be unworthy of... of anything?!”

“Carlisle is so perfect,” Esme said, closing her eyes to think about him, “So perfect, and he saved me, from myself I suppose. I just felt like nothing next to him.”

“You could never be nothing,” Elizabeth said, taking her hand, “You’re all heart, all love and kindness and compassion. You’re everything everyone ought to be.”

“You’re sweet, Elizabeth,” Esme said, “I don’t feel like nothing anymore of course. I have so much, so many loved ones.” Elizabeth nodded but she seemed sad again.
“You do,” she said, “You’re so lucky. Though I suppose it’s not luck, it’s because you’re so good.”

“What is it?” Esme asked. She didn’t understand why Elizabeth seemed sad again.

“It’s nothing,” Elizabeth said, “It’s just I’ve never really had anyone... I’ve never been good at socialising, you know – the small talk. I have no family and no friends – just acquaintances.”

“Well that’s changed,” Esme said and tightened her grip on Elizabeth’s hand, “You have us, all of us. We’re here for you.”

“But you hardly know me,” Elizabeth said, “I mean...”

“I know you well enough to know that I want you to stay,” Esme said, “Not just temporarily but permanently.”

“But Esme,” Elizabeth said, “Aro and the Volturi... They won’t have forgotten about us.”

“We’ll look after you Elizabeth, “Esme said softly, “Don’t you worry.” Elizabeth turned and hugged her tightly.

“Thank you,” she said, her voice full of emotion, “Thank you so much.”

Esme held her tightly to her, feeling both happy and sad. Sad that Elizabeth had never had the closeness of another person before, but happy that now she would. The poor girl had been through so much, not just in the last week but throughout her whole life. Her parents had died when she was very young and she had grown up a lonely orphan. No wonder she sought refuge so much in stories and in history.

Perhaps being caught by the Volturi had been the best thing to happen to Elizabeth, Esme thought sadly; it had brought her here, to their family. They would look after her from now on, Esme decided, her and Caius.

“Esme.” It was Carlisle; he was standing in the doorway, a sad smile on his face. He spoke her name so quietly that Elizabeth, with her human hearing, wouldn’t hear him. “I spoke with Caius,” he went on, “He loves Elizabeth more than life itself – quite literally. Does she love him?”

Esme nodded and Elizabeth looked up at the movement. She turned to see Carlisle in the doorway and gave a watery smile.

“Have you seen Caius,” she asked softly, “I need to talk to him.”

“He’s outside,” Carlisle replied, “Just under this window.”

“I’ll go down,” Elizabeth said, and drew away from Esme, “Thank you,” she said again and then left the room. Carlisle came over to Esme. He slid his arm around her waist and kissed the top of her head.

“So?”

“She loves him Carlisle,” Esme told him, “And I love her. We have to look after them, we just have to.”

“I agree,” Carlisle said, “Completely. Caius has found happiness after so long, and we have to look after them.”
Esme looked out of the window. Elizabeth had come outside and was walking over to Caius. She reached up to him and kissed him on the lips, her hands entwining around his body to draw him in. He seemed to hesitate before kissing her back. Esme smiled and turned to see Carlisle watching the two of them, a smile on his face as well. He turned to Esme and placed a kiss on her forehead.

“I love you,” he said.

“And I love you, my dear,” she said and kissed him gently on the lips. She pulled back and smiled, “You know Carlisle I think I’ve found a dear friend in Elizabeth.” She paused, “And Caius too of course, but Elizabeth...” She trailed off and smiled.

“What?”

“She’s so understanding, so full of love.”

“A bit like you then,” Carlisle said, and kissed her again, “We will look after them Esme, if we can.”

“No ifs,” Esme said, pulling away, “They’re our friends and they need us so we will protect them.”

Carlisle smiled, “I don’t think we’ll need to.”

“What?”

“Just now, Alice had a vision,” he told her, “Of the Volturi: Aro and Marcus sat on their thrones and guess what?”

“What?” Esme asked, intrigued.

“Jane sat on Caius’s throne and Alice said they all looked content, as if they were happy to stay there forever.” Esme frowned.

“I hope you’re right,” she said, “I really do. I don’t want to fight, or have anything like ten years ago, over Renesmee.”

“We won’t,” Carlisle said, and gave her shoulders a squeeze, “They know they’re weaker against us what with Bella’s power. We’ll be safe.” Esme sighed and leant her head against his shoulder. Below them, Caius and Elizabeth were talking softly to one another as they walked out into the forest.

Esme smiled. She had a friend and she knew Elizabeth would be a close one. They were safe, and she was surrounded by Carlisle and all their family.

Life had never been better.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: I’m back and will be updating as regularly as I can. :D Thanks for reading and keeping up with this story. This is the second chapter which is not from the point of view of either Caius or Elizabeth. I wanted to get the Cullen’s point of view, almost as an objective view on Caius and Elizabeth. I’m planning on writing another chapter from a Cullens point of view. But I don’t know which one of the Cullen family to
write the point of view from.

So - I need your opinions: if you want to have a particular Cullen's point of view please leave the suggestions in the comments. I think more reader involvement would be good for the story - to make it into something you want to read. Don't worry though - I haven't abandoned Volterra and the Volturi - they will be back! But for now if anyone has a favourite Cullen or one who they want to see more of, please say.

Anyway, thanks for reading. X
They wandered amongst the trees, the back of the Cullen's house still in sight. Elizabeth had come down after speaking to Esme and had kissed Caius for all she was worth. When they had pulled apart they had both apologised and decided to talk about it all calmly and sensibly; they both knew that they loved one another too much to argue.

"Elizabeth you're not inferior to me in anyway," Caius said, continuing their talk, "In fact it's quite the reverse. Look how I've spent the past three thousand years or so." Elizabeth slipped her arm in his.

"I know alright," she said, "I was being silly – just like you were. There's no way you're too old for me. You're only twenty-six and I turn twenty-six in January."

"If you're going by physical age," Caius said, turning to her, "Then soon enough you'll be too old for me!"

"Fine," Elizabeth said, "Age isn't important in any way at all." She squeezed his arm and leant into him.

"I'm sorry," he said suddenly, "For running off like that. I'm not brilliant at dealing with emotions, bar the simple ones – like anger."

"Well that's changing isn't it?" Elizabeth said, "And anyway, neither am I. You remember how I ran off after our first kiss." Caius smiled and then stopped.

"Is this mad?" He asked. She turned to face him and smiled.

"Sanity is an illusion," she said, "Nobody's sane unless they take their own definition of sanity which, let's face it, is always completely made up." Caius laughed and tucked a stray hair behind her ear.

"You should be a philosopher."

"Oh yeah right," Elizabeth said, "Because they solve so many problems." They both burst out laughing and Caius pulled her in to kiss. It lasted several minutes, or at least seemed to, and then they pulled gently apart.

"I think I saw a lake near here," Caius said once they'd stopped kissing.

"What?" Elizabeth asked, completely confused, "Caius? I..." She broke off as he lifted her effortlessly onto his back and took off running.

"It was beautiful," he told her as he ran, sprinting up the mountain with ease, "You'll see."

"Caius!" Elizabeth cried and then started giggling.

"Are you alright," he asked, worried.

"Yes," she replied, choking down her giggles, "It's just this is... just..." She trailed off; words couldn't explain what she was feeling: the adrenaline, the rush, the wonder of it all.
"Well hold on," Caius said, he still sounded a bit worried: perhaps fearing for her sanity, whether real or an illusion.

Soon they had crested the peak and were zooming down the other side. Elizabeth let out a shriek at this point: it was like the most wonderful and bizarre rollercoaster ride ever. After running a little further and putting a few more mountains behind them they came to the lake Caius had been talking about.

He stopped at the shore and Elizabeth slipped of his back, feeling ever so slightly unsteady on her feet.

"Are you alright?" He asked her, his arm supporting her around her waist. She nodded in response then gave him a coy smile.

"It is rather a warm day, wouldn't you say Caius?" She said and gave him a long kiss before pulling back and stripping down to her underwear. Then she turned and ran down into the lake, shrieking as she plunged into the water. Caius stood there slightly shocked for a moment before pulling off his own clothes and running after her.

The water was cold, but such things never bothered a vampire, though Caius wondered how Elizabeth could just splash straight into the water without a second thought. He swam over to her and she splashed him straight in the face. He raised an eyebrow; so that was how she wanted to play then?

He dived down deep below the surface, and stayed there for a long time, lying on his back at the base of the lake. He could see her kicking above him and hear her calling his name and laughing. Then he pushed off from the base of the lake and zoomed up beneath her. She let out a scream which turned into a laugh when she realized who it was.

The momentum of his rise to the surface managed to carry them both a couple of metres above the surface of the lake before they fell back into the cool water. Caius resurfaced first and felt a moment of panic when he couldn't see Elizabeth. Then he felt a warm hand on his ankle and she bobbed to the surface laughing.

"There's no chance in hell that I could pull you under is there?" She said, paddling closer to him.

"No," he replied, smirking, "Of course not." And he pulled her closer to him, that feeling of panic still fresh in his mind. He leant his forehead against hers, their lips only inches apart. He closed his eyes, his arms wrapped around her waist, and revelled in the feeling of her so close to him.

"Caius," she said. He opened his eyes.

"What?"

"Look..." She trailed off and he turned around. She was looking at the forest on the slopes of the mountain and the sky beyond.

It was cloudy; the sky caked in the condensed water. Despite this, by some beautiful chance, the sun had found a small gap in this wall and the golden light of dusk was bathing the forest leaves in a holy glow, turning them from a dull green to a wonderful golden yellow. This enlightened colour was at odds with the grey of the grim sky behind it. It made for an eerie scene; the pious colouring of the land at the mercy of the menace of the darkening sky.

"We should get back," he said, worried, "It looks like there'll be a storm."

"It's beautiful," she said, her eyes wide and her lips slightly parted, "Don't you think?"
"It is," he agreed and turned so he could fully see it. The floated in the water of the lake like this for some time; side by side, arms around each other, staring at the ominous beauty of the light, sky and trees. Then they heard a low growl which built like an orgasm and suddenly it started to rain.

"That'll be the storm you promised," Elizabeth said, smiling slightly. He nodded.

"We should get back."

They hurried back to the bank and pulled on their clothes, not having the time or the means to dry themselves off first. Then Elizabeth got onto his back and he ran off, back to the Cullens...

"You're soaking wet!" Esme said, appalled, "What were you two doing?"

"We went to a lake," Elizabeth replied, "Near here. It was beautiful." Esme sighed and shook her head.

"Alice went shopping without you in the end," she told her, "She's left the new clothes upstairs on your bed. And not a minute too soon."

"Thank you," Elizabeth said and hurried upstairs leaving Caius and Esme alone.

"Well you managed to dry off alright," Esme said, "How's that?"

"I was running," he said, "And it wasn't raining too hard, then at least." He turned to look out of the window. The rain was hammering it down, the drops on the window racing down to the ground in seconds.

"Well it is now," Esme said, then in a more serious voice, "Are you two ok?" Caius looked at her, and the smiled.

"Yes," he said then paused. "You spoke to her didn't you?" Esme nodded.

"And Carlisle spoke to you didn't he?"

"Yes," Caius said then gave a wry smile, "Have you two considered setting up a couples counselling business? You'd be good at it."

"What," Esme said, laughing, "And then specialise for immortal and human couples."

"What are you two talking about?" Carlisle came into the room, holding an open book. He looked about, "Where's Elizabeth?"

"She's gone upstairs to change," Esme said, slipping her arm around his waist, "Apparently these two went swimming and got a bit wet." Carlisle raised an eyebrow and looked over to Caius.

"We got caught in the beginning of this rain," he explained.

"So I'm guessing the two of you are alright now?" Carlisle asked.

"Yes," Caius nodded, "Thank you, both of you." He was very grateful to them both for talking rationally, being the voices of reason, but he wanted to see Elizabeth now, "If you'll excuse me," he said and hurried up the stairs.

He smiled when he heard Carlisle say to Esme; "Swimming; I suppose it is the perfect weather for ducks," and her laughing.
Elizabeth came out onto the landing as Caius reached the top of the stairs. She was wearing warmer clothes: a pair of jeans and a thick jumper. As soon as he came up the stairs she came over to him and wrapped her arms around his waist.

"I've dried off now," she said looking up at him. He put his arms around her and pulled her close. They stood like that for awhile, entwined in one another's embrace, then the sounds of movement coming up the stairs moved them back into her bedroom.

"I was thinking," Elizabeth said, "Back home, I don't have many people I'd consider friends and no family, but there's one person – a university friend."

"You want to go back to England?" Caius asked, tucking one of her stray curls behind her ear.

"Yes," Elizabeth said, "I mean – the Cullens seem to think that Aro isn't looking for me and I know Francis will be wondering where I am, why I haven't called..."

"Is Francis your university friend?"

"Yes," Elizabeth said, "I'd just like to visit, with you: I'd like you two to meet."

"Of course," Caius said, "I'd love to meet Francis, the university friend."

Elizabeth smiled, and snuggled in closer to him. "When can we go?"

"We could go tomorrow, if you want," Caius said. Elizabeth looked up at him, eyes wide.

"Really," she said, "Because that would be amazing." Caius nodded and kissed the top of her head.

"I'll book the flights tonight."

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Sorry I haven't updated in a while but I had a huge plot crisis. I changed something I thought quite small in the plot and then had to change a lot so I've been doing a lot of plot rehashing. Therefore I didn't have the time to actually write chapters but now I've sorted out the plot and am back to writing though the updates will be slower than they have been. Thanks for bearing with! :D

Anyway, I hope you liked that chapter and I am really excited about this new character, Francis, because it'll open up a bit more on Elizabeth's past and all that. Just a heads up for the next chapter: there will be explicit mention of adult themes. I have changed the rating of the whole story to M but I know people will have started reading it when it was a T so just so you know. Hopefully I'm just overreacting over the ratings but just in case.

Thanks for reading :D :D X
The breeze was real. It ruffled the hair on his head as he looked out over the cold and desolate moors. In the distance a telephone wire trekked across the heather bringing much needed communication links to this most isolated part of Yorkshire. The road they had driven down was uneven and long, leading all the way from the more frequented road to the south to this one house they had arrived at.

Caius turned to look at the sprawling building behind him. It was ugly when it could so easily have been beautiful and enchanting. Clearly it had been an old Elizabethan manor house but the garishly modern extensions overwhelmed the discretion of the Tudor design. Huge glass windows which went across many rooms and floors were at odds with the quaint red brickwork of the original house. The extension walls varied in colour from dirt-stained white to vivid pink and dusky green. It was ugly. Caius turned to Elizabeth who was getting their cases out of the boot of the car.

"And this is the place where the only person you want to keep in contact with lives?" He looked at her and she laughed.

"Oh Francis is an odd ball for sure, an eccentric," she said, "But I wouldn't have insisted on us coming all the way to England if he was anything less than what he is."

"What did you say he did again?" Caius asked uncertainly, as he took the cases from her.

"Well, he was trying to write a book on Celtic language when I last saw him, but I think he probably gave up on it." She gave a wry smile, "He isn't one for persevering and with the huge inheritance he got from his great-aunt he doesn't really need a job at all."

"You met at university?"

"Yes," Elizabeth said, "He was doing his PHD when I was an undergraduate and we became good friends." She walked over to the door and Caius followed. Amidst all the smells of heather, nature and brickwork, Caius could faintly smell a very particular scent. It was a mix of sweat and salt and human flesh flushed with heat. It was the smell of sex.

"Elizabeth," he said, as she reached to knock on the door, "I don't think this is such a good time." She looked at him.

"What do you mean?"

"I think he's somewhat occupied, or at least was..." He gave her a look. Her eyes widened and then she laughed.

"Just like Francis," she said and knocked on the door. Caius listened to the distant squeaking of bed springs and then the footsteps coming to the door. The door swung open and there stood a man, several years older than Elizabeth perhaps, wearing nothing but a rather short dressing gown and a neatly trimmed beard. He took one look at Elizabeth and then pulled her into a hug.

"My darling Eliza," he said, proceeding to kiss her on both cheeks, "I expected you sooner, was your trip to Italy really that long?" Caius didn't like the familiarity with which he was touching Elizabeth.
"Francis," Elizabeth said, pulling away from him, "I've been a bit preoccupied." At this moment Francis turned to see Caius. His eyes looked him up and down and then he broke into a wild laugh.

"I can see how busy you've been Eliza," he said and reached out a hand for Caius to shake. Caius glared at him but reluctantly offered his hand, "Good to meet you."

"This is Caius," Elizabeth said, "And Caius, this is Mr Francis Thompson himself."

"The one and only!" Francis said and laughed, "Come in, come in." He gestured for them to come in and then led them down a long narrow corridor and into a large open space. They sat down on some odd looking chairs whilst Francis went to make some tea.

"He's very friendly," Caius said, trying to keep his voice casual.

"Yes," Elizabeth said, picking up a book left open on the side table, "Well that's how he's always been."

"Very different from you," Caius said, "More open and loud."

"So I'm closed and quiet am I?" Elizabeth asked, an eyebrow raised.

"You know what I mean," Caius said, listening to the distant sounds of a kettle beginning to boil.

"He might seem that way," Elizabeth said, "But he's really a bit of a recluse – couldn't you tell from where he lives? He doesn't like getting close to people so puts up a show. But he trusts me."

"I bet he does," Caius said, bitterly, "Though I don't think his intentions towards you are all that honourable."

"Intentions?" Elizabeth said, staring at Caius incredulously, "You don't mean as in..." Caius nodded, grimly. Elizabeth looked at him a moment then seeing that he was serious, burst out laughing. Caius was stung by how ridiculous she thought his opinion was.

"What," he said fiercely, "I've seen men like him so many times in all my life. I can see what he wants."

"Caius," Elizabeth said, "Trust me on this: there is no way Francis sees me like that. No way at all."

"Just be careful," Caius said, feeling the green eyed monster of jealousy rise up inside him.

"Caius," Elizabeth began, "I know Francis doesn't like me like that because - " But she was cut off as Francis re-entered the room carrying a tray with a teapot and mugs on it.

"Tea up," he said and put on the table. He then paused and swung round to look at Caius, "Or do you prefer coffee? I can only make instant though thingy upstairs makes the best cappuccino ever."

"Thingy does have a name Francis," Elizabeth said, smirking a little, "Come now – you must remember it." Caius frowned. Why was Elizabeth so alright with Francis not knowing the name of the woman he had slept with?

"Don't you even bother to ask the name of the poor girl you picked up?" Caius asked, his mouth curling into a look of disgust. Francis looked from Elizabeth to Caius and laughed.
"So you didn't bother telling him anything about me then?"

"I was about to," Elizabeth said, "But then you came bursting in like you do." She turned to Caius and placed a hand on his knee, "Caius, Francis isn't a womanizer."

"I should think not!" Francis cried, aghast.

"I don't understand," Caius said, "Then who's the woman he's got upstairs?"

At that moment a door on the other side of the room opened and a young handsome man came in wearing nothing but a pair of silk boxers.

"Francis," he said, ignoring the presence of Elizabeth and Caius, "The shower in the en-suite isn't working."

"Did you give the pump a wiggle," Francis asked and got up from the sofa. He walked over to the young man and kissed him on the neck. "Come on then," he said heading back upstairs, "Let's fix this shower for you... Mickey?"

"It's Nicolas," the man said, indignantly. They disappeared upstairs. Caius blinked in confusion then turned to Elizabeth. She was taking a long sip from her mug, the rim not fully hiding her smirk. There was an awkward silence. Caius sat on his chair in shock for a few minutes.

"He's a homosexual," he said slowly. Elizabeth nodded.

"Yeah," she said, "So he's not interested in me."

"You could have told me!" Caius said, "I look a complete simpleton now!"

"Can't argue with that," Elizabeth said, then she burst out laughing, "I've seen men like him so many times in all my life," she put on a low stupid voice as an obvious impression of Caius, "I can see he wants you."

"I didn't say it like that," Caius said, annoyed, "I was just worried."

"That I'd be seduced by a gay man?" Elizabeth asked, her grin wide. Caius glared at her, feeling an irrational level of anger, then he stood up and quickly left the room.

He was out and on the moors in seconds. They had arrived at Francis's house in the late afternoon and it was now dusk, the sun setting gently beyond the western horizon. Caius didn't stop to admire it or the wild beauty of the heather-land. He ran and in running he could think. He could try to figure out what had happened to him in the past fortnight. If he had been human he would have fallen over many times, stumbling on the uneven ground. If he had been human he would have felt the cold nip of the wind as he ran, but if he'd been human he would never have ran fast enough for the wind to nip at him as it did.

He ran faster than he'd ever run before, even in his new born years millennia ago. He crossed over streams and mud-filled brooks, never changing in his pace. He scared sheep who only just realised he was nearby when he was passing them by, and scattered the greying pebbles of dirt roads high up into the air as he flew over them.

Elizabeth Hervey. Elizabeth. Elizabeth. Elizabeth. As if her name, whirling around his head, could ever explain what had happened that quiet afternoon in Italy. When Jane and Alec had brought her in, when Aro had decided to try to persuade her to join them, when she had said no, when he had spent that night tormented; everything had changed.
Not everything though, not really. He was still full of anger; all she did was soothe it – like a balm to a wound. But when she was the one to bring him to anger? Caius growled and leapt over a boulder protruding dangerously from the heather.

It was irrational. He was being irrational. He had been jealous of her caring for anyone but him. It was stupid. It was irrational. How was he supposed to know that Francis was gay, that there had never truly been a reason to be jealous? It didn't change it. Caius stopped dead as the sun finally disappeared behind the curve of the earth. He was being irrational.

He stood frozen, like a statue or another rock sticking out of the heather, tall and thin. He had left her alone. And yes, there was no real explanation, but for whatever reason, Elizabeth Hervey meant the world to Caius.

And he'd left her alone. Realising his mistake, Caius turned around and ran.

"What is it Alice," Carlisle asked. Renesmee sat holding her aunts hand. She had had a vision, a long one.

"I saw Elizabeth," Alice said her voice shaking slightly, "Her eyes were red and she wore all black. The chain of the Volturi was laced around her neck."

"Where was she?" Carlisle's voice was calm but Renesmee could see the worry on his face.

"In Volterra," she said, "She stood next to Aro. There was blood on her lips."

"Did you see Caius?" Esme asked, her voice straining with worry unlike her husband's.

Alice shook her head, "No." She barely breathed the word but then she turned and took Jasper's hand, "But..."

"What is it Alice?" Renesmee asked, thinking that there was no way this could get any worse.

"But I was there as well." Alice's grip on Jasper's hand tightened as she turned to look Carlisle in the eye, "And my eyes were red too."

Renesmee felt her whole world fall apart. She turned to look at her parents. They looked as horrified and shocked as she felt.

Caius could almost feel the wind this time. He almost stumbled on the heather this time. He knew he wasn't running fast enough this time. This time, going the other way, going back. He had left her alone when he had always known that Aro would never desist, would always want her back. He had left her alone because of something as insignificant as jealously, as anger, as pride. For things he thought he'd ceased to be.

But of course, he'd never really changed. He was immortal whilst she was a human. He was the oak, unwavering and unbent. To him she was just a blade of grass, easily blown in the wind.

"No," he muttered, trying to run faster, "Please no."

He could almost see Aro's smirking face as Caius realised too late what he had always known. What Aro had calculated so precisely. He would have known even this: that Elizabeth would return to England, a place so much closer to Volterra than Forks, in order to see her old friend. Aro could read minds and Caius had always known that he was one never to be underestimated.
And yet, that was exactly what he had done.

Aro had been the puppet master all along. Caius realised now that he and Elizabeth could never run against one another. That the nature of one of them must be changed. He thought he had changed but that anger had shown itself. Caius felt so angry – how ironic – at himself for not being able to change something as simple as his nature.

And so it would be Elizabeth whose nature would change, not his.

Aro would be able to bend her to his will. Her nature would change so readily once she was a vampire, once her will was weakened.

Because of Caius. Because she loved him. And because even the most principled people have immortal tendencies.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Well, stuff is happening. Also - are those break lines I used in the middle alright? Do they look a bit odd? Would dots have been better? I wasn't sure.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed that chapter and the next one is in progress and I am very excited about it all because the Volturi are coming back! Woo! Bit spoilery but I did mention Aro in this one so... Yay: I'm so excited about the plot which I've finally managed to nail down properly.

Thanks, as always, for being wonderful readers. :D Xx

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!