Bella is a single mom not only taking care of her own child but also her nephew.

Edward is a single dad that just moved back home with unreliable help.

Bella steps in changes his life for the better.

Notes

This was previously posted on ff.net and also got the request to post here. Minor editing and changes have been made just for a better story.

This was written before I had read any of the books so there may be OOC moments b/c I was just writing based on character descriptions I found online and from a friend.
Chapter 1

Bella ducked behind the large pillar. She tried to slow her breathing so she could hear. She heard soft movements to her left. She crouched and ducked right. She edged her way around the corner and saw the three shadows. She moved silently away before they saw her. She heard one of her group get taken down. The laughter filled the air as she jogged around in the shadows. She climbed on top a set of stairs and lay low. She saw them as they slowly progressed toward her. They were three strong and she was the last of her team. She stayed motionless. Right when they were only a few feet away she gave a battle cry and jumped from her spot. She pulled the trigger as she aimed accurately at each of them. She heard them moan in defeat. The lights flooded the entire area and her team cheered her on.

“Mooommm! So not fair!” her daughter said as she pulled off her gear.

“Yea Bells. It's our birthday party we were supposed to win at laser tag,” her nephew whined.

“Well then you shouldn’t have asked me to play,” she smiled as she walked them back to the party area.

“Mom that was so not cool.”

“Well Fiona I am sorry you feel that way but I had one heck of a good time today,” she pulled off the vest and helmet, “let’s eat lunch.”

“Fi your mom is the coolest mom ever,” Jeremy said as he pulled off his laser tag gear.

“Totally. My mom would never be so awesome and play with us,” Tiffany agreed.

“Do not encourage her,” Fiona said with a pout.

“Bella is the best aunt in the world,” Nigel said as he sat down.

“Thank you Nigel,” she smiled as she waved the guy with lunch over.

Bella made sure that each child had juice and their favorite sandwich. She would not allow any of her children’s friends have unhealthy snacks while they were in her care. There was no soda and no junk food unless of course it was movie night. Then there was always popcorn, chips and cookies. Bella was careful of what she fed them especially since Fiona had the habit of picking friends with allergies.

Bella watched as Nigel and Fiona tore into their presents after they had cake. She was happy that they had grown together and didn’t mind sharing birthday parties. They had been born on the same day and she thought it was perfect and it was a way she could save money. They finished with the large party and saw that every child went to the right parent. Bella had promised them they could each have a friend spend the night so she loaded the four children into the H3 and headed back to her house. Immediately the boys went to the basement for the game system and the girls settled in Fiona’s room to gossip. Bella unloaded the left over party materials into the garage and made sure the H3 was cleaned out. She only drove it when she needed the space. Their daily car was the civic hybrid. She felt like it made up for owning the hummer.

“I’m going to jump in the shower girls. If the boys ask let them know I’ll be out in a bit.”
“Ok mom.”

Bella smiled grateful to still have her baby girl and she hadn’t entered the pre-teen years yet. She took a quick shower. She knew that if she left the boys unsupervised it would cause trouble. She pulled on her favorite pair of blue lounge pants and baseball tee. She braided her hair back as she looked into the fridge. She knew that the kids would be hungry within the hour. She pulled the ground beef from the freezer to make spaghetti. She hummed as she readied everything for dinner. She went down the stairs and checked on the boys. They were engrossed in a racing game. She went to Fiona’s room and the girls had their attention grabbed by the latest pop music as they danced around.

Bella made dinner and called of the kids to wash up and set the table. After dinner she put in the latest Disney movie and popped popcorn. They finished the movie and she made sure they were all tucked in. She went to her computer and responded to a few emails before she called it a night.

The next morning Josh’s parents arrived early and took him home. Bella made breakfast for the three kids and made herself coffee. Fiona and Karly went to the pool as Nigel played with his foam sword. After a while he joined Bella on the couch. She put her book down and he curled up against her.

“Tell me about my mom and dad again.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Remind me of them,” his voice held a hint of sorrow.

“Nigel they loved you so dearly. I remember when your mom was pregnant with you. She was told you were a girl. Your entire room was pink. Lucky for us they said I was having a boy. Once you and Fiona were born we had to swap everything out. They made sure you had everything you wanted. When the pre-school wouldn’t accept you they moved so you could go to school with Fiona. They made sure you wanted for nothing. You’re named after your great grandfather. They wanted nothing but the best. They were taken from you and I know how hard it is. I wish we hadn’t had to go through that. Your mom, my sister, made sure you made it to shore then she went back for your dad. You were the most important thing to them. You are the perfect mix. You have your father’s hair and height and your mother’s smile, freckles and cheek bones.”

“Thank you so much. I’m eight now. Do you think that you can tell me what really happened?”

“I just don’t feel comfortable yet. I’m sorry. Just know that they loved you with all their heart and if they didn’t have to they wouldn’t have left you. It worked out though Fiona isn’t alone.”

“Why didn’t my dad’s family want me?”

“Hmm,” she tried to think of a nice response for the question he had never asked, “at the time you were four and his family was not apt to take care of a child so young.”

“But you were and you had Fiona and her dad isn’t around. You are raising us both without much help and you were so young.”

“I have a great support network. You know grandpa Charlie and grandma Renee helped a lot.”
“Yea but you took me not knowing what would happen. You finished college and everything. Why couldn’t they? Aren’t they all grown-ups?”

“Ya know Nigel you’re a little too smart for your own good. How about we go see what the girls are up to?” she hugged him and stood.

“Ok but we will revisit this later,” he said matter-of-factly.

“Ok sport,” she ruffled his hair and they went out back to see the girls in the pool.

Bella felt relieved that he had dropped it. She wasn’t sure how to say that his paternal grandparents were not willing to take their role up in his life because they didn’t care. She had contacted them after the accident and they refused to acknowledge they had a grandchild. By the stories her sister Monica had told about their relationship with Evan she wasn’t shocked. The Swans were happy to take care of the children while Bella finished school. She had gotten her real estate license and masters in computer securities. She brought in enough income to support her family and put away for both their college funds. She was happy to be a mother to Nigel and she never required him to call her mother since she hadn’t given birth to him. She enjoyed him and Fiona they were a pair to be reckoned with. Bella sighed and hoped he wouldn’t be damaged with such a traumatic childhood experience.
Bella changed out of her suit and pulled on a pair of jeans and a purple layered camisole. She pulled her white sweater over since the temperature had dropped. She let her hair down as she put together snacks for the football and soccer teams. Bella reached the field in time. She had been pleased that the fields were across from each other when they had moved their practice location. She had been late at the meeting to discuss the opening of her own firm she had thought she wouldn’t make it. Bella stopped off at the football field. Their practice ended first. She sat out the cooler and unfolded the tables and placed the fruit salad and bowls out. Bella arranged the Gatorade and graham crackers as the coach walked over.

“So sorry I’m late coach.”

“No problem Bella. I hear you’re getting closer to signing on the old Candid building,” Emmett said.

“Yeah. We had a meeting and it ran over.”

“Glad things are working out. Fiona is killing out here today. I don’t think the boys expected her to be so…fierce.”

“That’s a nice way of putting it,” Bella chuckled.

“Alright gang!” Emmett called as he moved back to the field, “go to Mrs. Waters and clean up. Ms. Swan has brought you some munchies while you cool down.”

“Mom! Did you see me? I totally rocked it out hard!” Fiona ran up to her.

“I did see. You are a hard core kid. You get that from me. I was the only girl on my team too. Eat up and I’ll be back. I gotta go take Nigel’s team their snacks.”

“Okay,” she raced back to her friends.

Bella made it over to soccer field as she pulled the cooler with her. She had the table tucked under her arm. Bella set up their snacks and walked over to the coach. She saw a new kid. She knew every child and all the parents. The child was new but no new parent.

“Hey Rosie who’s the new kid?”

“That’s Adrian Masen. He’s new to the team. He was here the two last practices. He just sat on the side taking in everything the first time and he played last time. His father will come and pick him up or send the housekeeper at the end of the practice,” Rosalie glanced over to where she pointed.

“Cool. I just like to know everyone.”

“I’ll be sending out an email with the updated contact numbers. A few have changed then with two additions it’ll be good to get everyone up to date.”

“Awesome. I knew I could count on you as always. I’m going to go help them get everything loaded up. Send Nigel over when you guys are done.”

“Thanks for snacks as always.”
“No prob.”

Bella went back across the street and helped get football practice packed up. Fiona said goodbye to her friends and went across to join Nigel while Bella chatted with a few of the parents as they planned their Halloween parties. They made lists of what would be needed for the class parties in school. Bella said she would take a few of the kids out to trick or treat since Karly’s mom was having the party the weekend before. She had planned it out so she couldn’t wait. She said her goodbye’s and walked back to the soccer field. Nigel and the new kid Adrian were there as Fiona and Rosalie watched on. The others had gone.

“Was he this late last time?”

“Nope. He was on time last time and his house keeper was on time the first time. He may be stuck in traffic,” she looked impatiently down at her watch.

“You go on. I know you and Emmett have things to do. I’ll stay here with him.”

“Oh thank you so much,” she raced to her car.

Bella and Fiona loaded the left over snack materials into the car and waited with the boys. Another fifteen minutes passed and Bella waved them over.

“Hi Adrian I’m Bella. I know you're having fun here but I was wondering if you knew when someone would pick you up,” she knelt down in front of him.

“Oh. I’m the last kid here aren’t I? I’m sorry,” his big green eyes grew panicked.

“It isn’t a problem I just want to make sure that they haven’t forgotten you. Do you have a number I can get in touch with someone?” Bella smiled softly and ruffled his honey blonde hair.

“Yeah my dad.”

“Good,” she pulled out her phone and called the number as he gave it, “hm went straight to voicemail and it says his voicemail is full.”

“I’m so sorry Ms. Bella. I didn’t mean to keep you,” Adrian frowned even deeper.

“I’m going to try your dad again. It looks like rain you guys get in the car.”

“Okay,” they raced to the car.

Bella tried several more times and got the same result. She was less than happy. Bella was angered when a parent forgot their child. She called the recreation office located on the side of the fields and left a message in case someone showed up for him. Bella cursed as she made her way to her car. She had just shut the door when the rain started. She turned to Adrian.

“I’m going to take you with us. We’re going to go to my house. I left a message for your dad with my number at the office. So he will have a way to get in touch with me.”

“Okay. That makes sense.”

“Mom,” Fiona whispered, “we don’t know this kid.”

Bella laughed as she turned on the DVD player to grab their attention in the back seat. She looked over to Fiona after a glance in the back seat to make sure they were preoccupied.
“We can’t just leave him honey. He’s okay. I promise if he tries anything funny then we’ll pull over and leave him.”

“Okay.”

Bella smiled and focused on the road. She loved her daughter and her sense of security. She hoped when Fiona was a teenager she wouldn’t lose it. They made it back to the house. Nigel showed Adrian his room then took him down to the game room. Fiona busied herself going through Adrian’s duffel bag. Bella stopped her and sent her to shower.

Bella looked at the clock. It was an hour and a half since practice had ended. She was glad that the kids had busied themselves so he wouldn’t notice how late it was. Bella grew worried. She dialed the cell number that Adrian had given her. She sighed in relief as the voicemail picked up.

“This is Bella Swan. I am one of the mothers who has a child on the soccer team. It began to rain so I have Adrian here at my house. I don’t want you to freak out. He’s okay you can pick him up here,” she left her address and hung up.

“Was that my dad?” Adrian asked as he came in.

“No but I did get his voice mail this time. I’m going to start dinner you guys go wash up. You’re about Nigel’s size he’ll have something you can change into so you’re clean.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Bella smiled as the boys went to wash up and Fiona sat at the island and looked at her. Bella shrugged as she put everything together for tacos. She browned the meat and added the seasoning before Fiona spoke.

“Mom. I love you and Nigel is family. He’s like my brother and we were born together. Adrian isn’t family. We cannot take in another kid. You work so hard for us already.”

“Fiona! I’m not going to keep him,” Bella laughed.

“Okay. I just want to make sure you understand,” her hazel eyes were serious with a hint of laughter.

“Go get them so they can eat,” she said as she shook her head smiling.

Bella sat out the sides, tortillas and vegetables. She popped in a 90 second Spanish rice as they came down the stairs into the kitchen. She poured the rice onto each plate and threw away the packet. Just as they began assembling their tacos her door bell rang.

Bella went to the door. She looked out the window and didn’t recognize the car at the curb. She opened the door and she lost the ability to breathe.
Chapter 3

“Hi I am so sorry. I am Mr. Masen,” Edward held out his hand with a friendly smile but his face still showed tension from the situation, “my housekeeper was supposed to pick Adrian up. I came as soon as I got your message.”

“Mm…okay come on in,” she shook his hand and stepped aside.

Bella shut the door. She realized by habit he removed his shoes and hung his coat on the rack. Bella smiled. It looked too natural as if he belonged there. She shook her head and led him into the house. Edward looked around nervously as he made sure that his son was indeed in good hands.

“We’re about to eat. You might as well join us. Kids this is Mr. Masen Adrian’s dad.”

“Nice to meet you sir,” they said in unison.

“Dad. Jill forgot me again. Thanks to Ms. Bella I wasn’t stranded. She’s super nice,” Adrian said as he made his tacos.

“Here,” Bella handed him a towel, “dry your hair it’s dripping in your face,” and distracting me terribly.

“Thank you.”

“I might have a shirt you can change into. I’ll be right back.”

Bella went to her bedroom. She had a few items that had belonged to her daughter’s father and hand me downs from her own father. Bella found a t-shirt. She went back to the kitchen and handed it to him. She took his wet shirt and hung it to dry. Bella wouldn’t waste electricity putting it in the dryer since it would have time to hang dry.

“I don’t know how I can thank you. We just moved back to town and I haven’t met anyone yet. Thank you so much,” Edward said genuinely.

“Oh it isn’t a problem,” Bella watched the kids eat as she heated up a few more tortillas; “if it’s easier I can take him after practice if you just want to grab him from here.”

“Are you serious?” Edward looked at her as he stood at the counter about to make his plate.

“Sure.”

“You don’t know me from Adam and you’re willing to take my child a couple days a week.”

“It isn’t a problem at all. It just makes sense. I know what it’s like to be new and have no one to depend on. I moved back here to have my parents help. It’s hard when you’re so independent. I promise I won’t hurt him and Nigel and Fiona could use more friends.”

“Wow. I hope all strangers here are like you. That would work so much better since I live closer here,” Edward said smiling.

“MOM!” Fiona called from the table.
“I promised I wouldn’t keep him. I never said anything about watching him,” Bella laughed as they went to the table to join the kids.

“What?” Edward asked confused.

“Long story. Mr. Masen it isn’t a problem at all to have him a couple days a week. It will be one less thing you have to worry about,” and it’ll give me more time to stare at you.

“Thank you so much. You can call me Edward,” Edward said with a smile and less tension.

“Okay Edward. Now I’ll give you the number of the costume shop for his Halloween costume. I needed one more to fill out our group. You’ll call Alice and give her his measurements so she can have him all set.”

“Okay. How much do you usually charge for child care?”

“Nothing. She likes just helping out. It’s why god put his angels here on earth,” Nigel responded.

“An angel huh? That I can believe.”

They ate with little talking and Edward changed back into his shirt. Bella handed him the bag with Adrian’s practice clothes. She pulled out one of her business cards and jotted down Alice’s number on the back. Bella couldn’t believe how calm she appeared on the outside when she was giddy in the inside. She would freak out once everything else was taken care of.

“Thank you so much again for everything. I appreciate it,” Edward said with a relaxed smile and a twinkle in his green eyes.

“Not a problem. Be careful getting home.”

Bella watched them down the walk then turned the porch lights off. She shut the door and turned around. Nigel and Fiona stood behind her with their arms crossed and heads tilted expectantly.

“What?”

“You’ve got a crush,” they said in unison.

“Stop with the creepy twin thing,” she walked passed them.

“Mom.”

“Bella.”

“We can tell,” they agreed.

“Whatever,” she loaded the dishes into the dishwasher.

“Mr. Masen is very attractive for an old man.”

“He isn’t old,” her head popped up, “I mean he probably isn’t much older than me.”

“You’re almost thirty,” Nigel said.

“AH!” Bella took off after Nigel as he ran, “you get back here.”
“Run Ni run!” Fiona yelled as she jumped up and down.

“Almost thirty,” she tackled him and tickled him, “how’s that for almost thirty?”

“O…o…okay…I take it…back,” Nigel laughed uncontrollably.

“You do have a crush. You don’t know his kid or him and you just agreed to take care of his kid. Mom I love you for sure but you are crushing hard and you just met him.”

“To bed with both of you,” Bella laughed at how intelligent her kids were.

Bella changed for bed as well. She grabbed the shirt he had worn and inhaled his scent. She giggled as she folded the shirt and laid it on her dresser. She had a crush and she knew it but she would never admit to it out loud. Bella pulled on her pajamas and went to bed.

*****

Bella went back to her office and looked at all the boxes. She had signed the final papers on her buying the Candid building. Her broker had assured her that they had gotten the best deal possible and she felt the same since she had done the research. She moved the boxes marked home to a trolley and went to the elevator. There would be a month’s time where they would transition. She hadn’t wanted to pay another month’s rent on her current building so she had redone her home office to keep everything up and running. She liked the idea of working from home for a while. Her assistant and partner had their desks set up there as well. She made it down to the u-haul and loaded the boxes in. She tugged her shorts down into place and wiped her face with the edge of her tee shirt. She waited for her assistant and they finished loading everything that they needed at home.

“Hey Kelley don’t you want to take a break?” she asked as she drove to her house.

“Oh that would be awesome. Lunch and then we can move on to unpack this beast,” Kelley said as she tied her sandy blonde hair back.

“Good.”

“What time you have to get the kids today?”

“They’re having a half day so Rosalie is going to pick them up and keep them a little later so that way we can get this crap done.”

“Why didn’t we just pay rent until we were done moving?”

“Because they would have charged us two month’s rent. Since our lease is up next week it just seemed financially appropriate to leave without having to worry about extra fees.”

“Okay that makes sense.”

“What do you want for lunch?” she asked as she stopped at a red light.

“Chinese.”

“Okay hit four on my phone and tell Bou that we want the usual,” Bella handed Kelley the phone, “brown rice instead of white.”

“Wow. You have them on speed dial.”
“I have so many more on speed dial.”

Kelley laughed as she dialed the number. She placed the order and they arrived back at the house the same time that the food did. Bella paid and they went in. They washed their hands and sat down for lunch.

“Don’t you have a bunch of guy friends who can unload? I mean what is Emmett doing?”

“They all work during the day. This is the last truck load. Once we have this done all we have to do is take the truck back and finish packing for the movers tomorrow.”

“What about the cute new guy in your life. Edward wasn’t it?”

“Yeah it is Edward. I just take his kid twice a week I have no idea what his normal schedule is like. Plus I’ve only known him a few weeks. I can’t obligate him into helping me move yet,” Bella said as sat her chopsticks down.

“You knew him less than five minutes and agreed to watch his kid,” Kelley laughed.

“That’s true. I just don’t know ya know. I don’t want to put him in a weird situation. He’s just a new guy who needs some help. Plus it would take our relationship to a level pass what we’ve come accustom to.”

“Whatever you say. I’m pretty sure the dirty thoughts you have about him would put him in an awkward relationship,” Kelley said as she sipped her water.

“Come on and let’s get this over with. It’s going to take us some time to unload all this.”

“Yeah.”

They went out and began to unload the truck. They took a break after an hour. They had reached the half way point of what had been loaded in. Bella and Kelley sat on the porch and drank slowly from their bottles of water. Bella looked to her driveway as she heard a car pull up. The midnight blue Acura MDX cut its engine. She cursed under her breath. She had forgotten to tell him the kids would be home late. She stood and dusted herself off and went to meet him.

“Hi Edward,” Bella prayed she didn’t look as tired as she felt.

“Hey are you guys moving?” Edward asked as he eyed the u-haul.

“No we’re moving my office temporarily so we can redesign the new building. I forgot to tell you that the kids aren’t going to be here until tonight. Rose is keeping them. They’ll be here in like another hour. I am so sorry.”

“No problem,” Edward began to remove his tie and blazer, “I can help you guys finish up here.”

“No not in your suit.”

“No worries that is why they made dry cleaners,” he sat his tie and blazer on the hood of his car, “nice to see you again Kelley.”

“The pleasure is all mine,” she smiled as she watched Edward roll up his sleeves.
Bella was glad to have the extra help because they finished the truck in half an hour. Edward followed them to u-haul to drop the truck then took them back to the office. Kelley bid them farewell and headed home.

“I’ve gotta grab my purse and I’ll meet you back at my house.”

“Sure see ya in a bit.”

Bella grabbed her keys and purse off her desk. She locked up their office and went to her car. She made a mental note to come in extra early to finish packing for the movers. Bella looked at herself in the mirror and shuddered. She had never wanted to see him as worn out as she looked at that moment. Bella headed home and arrived just as Rosalie did with the kids. She smiled at her kids and Adrian.

“Mom you're looking a little rough,” Fiona stated as she put her book bag down.

“Well thanks,” she said sarcastically.

“She worked hard today. She moved half her office here so she can work while they make her new office perfect,” Edward said.

“Hm okay. There is no way I’d let a boy who I have a crush on see me so grungy,” Fiona said matter-of-factly as she poured herself some juice.

Bella blushed as she heard Rosalie laugh and Edward chuckle. She turned and looked at her daughter. She couldn’t even say what she wanted. Bella excused herself and told Fiona to order pizza for the six of them. She took a quick shower and returned as the pizza guy left. She felt better and she didn’t want to kill her kid.

“So what is it that you do Edward?” Rosalie asked as she handed the kids paper plates.

“Well I run a music store downtown. I’m looking for new property to open up a restaurant. That’s what really keeps me busy. I spend most of my day on the phones with banks and property owners.”

“Wow small world. Mom’s got her license for real estate. She could help you find a place,” Fiona said as she took two slices of cheese.

“Oh really? Ms. Swan the multi-talented.”

“Yeah. It helped pay the bills when I went to grad school. We could sit down next week if you want and I can help you find something.”

“That sounds like a plan.”

They finished dinner and they all separated. Bella tucked her kids in the bed and went to her room. She had allowed her daughter to get her into a situation she hadn’t wanted to. She sighed sort of pleased for another excuse to see him more. She changed and got into bed.
Bella sat in front of her computer in her home office and finished the webcam conference she had with an interested investor in Japan. She finished up the call and turned off the webcam. Bella forwarded the memos to Kelley to write up and store. She turned to Alice and smiled. Bella and Alice had built their small company from the ground and it was ready to expand.

“So how’d it go?” Alice asked from her desk.

“Sounds like Miyomoto might take our services across the ocean. We might be about to go international,” she said and threw her arms around her petite friend.

“Awesome. We have worked so hard to get here. Well it has been a very successful day. I am off the clock and going to pick up the rest of the costumes. I put your kids’ and Adrian’s in your closet.”

“Cool. Only a few more days and we’ll be ready for the best Halloween ever,” she stretched.

“Yup. I’ll see you Friday.”

“Later.”

Bella pulled on her sweater and scarf. The kids were almost ready for pick up. It was the one day that she didn’t have to worry about snacks. She let Kelley know that she was gone and got into the car and went to the fields. Bella waited for her kids and Adrian. They piled in the car and she took them home. They all sat at the table and finished their homework as she prepared dinner.

Bella smiled as Adrian leaned over and helped Nigel with his math homework. He was a grade ahead of her two and was able to assist in the areas they struggled in. Nigel helped them both with their Spanish. Fiona was in advanced history and English so she aided Adrian in those areas. It worked out. She was proud of the bond they had formed in the last month. Bella put the finishing touches on the roast and had them clear the table. It had become a quick tradition of the family dinner twice a week. She enjoyed it and it was good for the children to have a male figure in their life outside of school.

Edward looked over a few pictures of places his current realtor had emailed him. The locations were spectacular but the buildings themselves needed more work than he had in his budget. He knew that he could get the money if need be but he wanted to do it on his own. He shoved it all back into the envelope he had pulled everything in.

Edward glanced at the clock and realized if he didn’t leave in a few he would be late for dinner. He chuckled. It was his family dinner he enjoyed every week. He knew that Bella felt some way for him but hadn’t openly admitted it. Her daughter on the other hand had made no secret of it. He laughed again. Fiona was spunky and he liked her. Edward could see a lot of her mother in her. Nigel was more quiet and reserved and he figured that he had gotten that from their father. He was attracted to Bella but made no moves because he wasn’t sure about where the children’s
Edward was not one to get in the middle of a family situation that he knew nothing about. As he cleaned his desk he thought about how little he did know about their family life. He knew that Bella was a great provider for the children and her parents were there but that was it. Edward hadn’t seen any evidence that a man lived with her but he hadn’t seen anything more than the common living areas. With that thought he smiled as he thought of seeing her bedroom one day. He hoped that their time together looking at properties would open up her willingness to get pass pleasantries. He had his own crush but was not willing to put her in an uncomfortable relationship.

“Mr. Masen, don’t forget the fire marshal will be here tomorrow,” his assistant said as he peeked into his office.

“Thanks Gary. I almost forgot. One of the perks of being the owner is that you have to be here for the secondary inspection. Make sure that Tabitha knows she has to be here too.”

“Will do. Now you better get going or Ms. Swan will not be happy that you’re late for dinner again,” Gary winked at him as he left.

Edward smiled at the thought of Bella. He grabbed his coat, the file, and his keys. He got in his vehicle and headed to her house. He decided to grab dessert. Edward stopped and picked up ice cream and headed to the house. He got there with his mind preoccupied with how to breech the little bubble they had put their relationship in. Edward went straight in as she always advised. He hung his coat and went to the kitchen. He ruffled the kids’ hair and kissed Bella on the cheek and put the ice cream in the freezer.

“Brought dessert. So what’s for dinner?” he asked as he turned.

Edward looked at all the faces that stared at him with their mouths agape. He looked at Bella who had her hand on her cheek. His actions floated back to his memory and he felt himself blush.

“Oh crap I’m so sorry. I wasn’t thinking.”

Silence and no one moved. Bella felt her face get hot and she cleared her throat. She blinked several times and turned back to the food.

“The kids have set the table and got the drinks there. Um, if you can carry the sides to the table I’m almost done with carving the roast into slices.”

“Yes ma’am,” his face felt like it was on fire.

Edward grabbed the green beans and potatoes and sat them on the table. The children still looked at him in awe of what had happened. Fiona leaned in very close and tugged him to her. She looked passed him to her mom and when she realized she wasn’t paying attention she put her hand up to his ear so no one else would hear.

“Are you going to be my new dad?” Fiona held her hand to her ear so he could whisper back to her.

“Uh…well…see Fiona,” Edward stuttered as he tried to think of a response.

“No whispering at the table. That isn’t polite young man,” Bella smiled knowing that she had just rescued him from something.
“Sorry,” he took his seat on the other side of the table beside Adrian.

“Dad, are you going to marry Bella?” Adrian asked once everyone was seated.

“W-what?” Edward stopped mid scoop of the mashed potatoes.

“You kissed her. Is she going to be my new mom?”

“Uh…”

“Adrian,” to the rescue again, “friends kiss sometimes. Just a brief touch on the cheek is a friendship thing. I’m not going to be your mom because of the kiss.”

“Oh,” Adrian looked a bit disappointed, “mom and son brunch is in a couple of weeks, and I’ll be the only one without a mom. I was hoping you’d be my mom by then so you could go.”

“Oh Adrian,” Bella felt her heart tear, “how about I go as a friend?”

“That would so rock. If my dad asked you would you kiss him on the lips and be my mom?” his green eyes lit up.

“Adrian silly that isn’t how they marry,” Fiona said as she scooped green beans on her plate, “they have to have sex.”

“What?!?” Bella spit her water in the middle of a drink.

“We learned it in health class. That is what married people do.”

“Okay this conversation is confusing me Bella. Is the kissing or the sex that will make you and Edward married?” Nigel asked.

“Whoa. No. Okay this conversation is over. I don’t want to hear anything about sex or marriage until you’re both 16,” she wiped up the mess she had made.

“The same goes for you,” Edward managed to squeak out.

“They haven’t even been on a date anyway. They have to date first,” Fiona said.

“Again I said enough,” Bella looked up at Edward and smiled at his flustered expression.

“Yes ma’am.”

The rest of the meal was uneventful as well as dessert. Bella walked Edward to his car. Adrian got in and he secured the door before he walked back to Bella. He sighed and shook his head.

“I’m so sorry for that. Fiona is a little beyond her years. I promise you that she’s only that bad when she likes someone,” Bella laughed nervously.

“Okay. She’s at that age. So how about dinner after we look at buildings next week?”

“Excuse me? I mean…okay. That sounds good.”

“Alright Bella I’ll see you for trick or treat Friday.”
“Drive safely Edward.”

Bella waved as they left. She went back into the house. She saw the curtains fall into place as she locked the door.

“Front and center,” Bella called from the hallway by the stairs.

“Yes ma’am,” they mock saluted her.

“I love you both. This night cannot happen again. I know how tough it is to not have a dad for you guys. I wish it wasn’t this way, but you cannot just make any man who comes around my husband.”

“He’s not any man. He’s Adrian’s dad. We like him,” Nigel said.

“I know that. He is a really great guy but you cannot just make us a couple. We’re still getting to know each other and I am not looking to get married okay.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Good now go get in bed and I’ll be up there to tuck you in soon.”

The children went upstairs to their rooms. Bella called and relayed the story to Alice. Bella thought for a moment that Alice had died on the other end she was gasping so hard from laughter. She told her about the date they had planned. Alice was excited for her. It had been years since Bella had anyone and she was excited.

Edward tucked Adrian in bed and kissed him on the top of his head. He turned off the light and made sure that his closet door was closed. Even at nine the closet was an issue that was never talked about but understood even without its monsters. Edward walked to the door.

“Dad,” Adrian called in a small voice.

“Yes son?” he went back by his bed.

“In all seriousness,” Adrian’s voice held a mature tone, “will I ever have a mommy?”

“Yes. I cannot tell you when but I promise one day you’ll have a mom again.”

“I don’t want my old mom back. She is just a weekend mom. Ya know birthday cards and Christmas through the mail. She left to be single and I don’t like that. I want a new mom. Ya know if you like Bella for real I’d really like her to be my new mom. Just keep that in mind.”

“Sometimes you scare me Adrian with the way your mind works. I’ll see what we can do about getting you a mom. I’ll make sure she’s someone you like,” Edward hugged him and tucked him back in.

“Don’t forget Bella should be at the top of the list.”

“Okay,” he chuckled.

Edward left Adrian’s room and went to the kitchen. He opened the cabinet over the fridge and pulled out an aged bottle of scotch. He poured himself a short glass and settled in his recliner. He looked around the condo and realized that it was kind of lonely even with his son. Edward wanted nothing more than to share it with someone. He sipped his scotch and thought
about where he’d take Bella for dinner.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks so much for reading. I hope you're enjoying it. I'm reading over each chapter and doing small edits so I'm trying to be fast to get them all out. Again this was written back in like 2010 so somethings may not be so current. Love you guys!
Chapter 5

Bella sat all the kids down and checked over their costumes. She nodded with a happy smile. Bella had carried the idea for so long that she was ecstatic to have it finally happen. They had spent a lot of time, money, and thought into that Halloween. She lined them up and pulled on her mask.

“You guys look so amazing. I can’t wait,” Alice said with a smile as she watched them head out the door.

“Don’t forget don’t get too close but close enough that you get everything filmed,” Bella said slightly muffled by her mask.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith sat in their house humming as they carved their last jack-o-lantern. They had handed out a lot of candy earlier in the night and expected another rush in a few when the older kids would be out in full costume. They heard a slight commotion on their front yard. Mr. Smith went to the front door and opened it. Mrs. Smith followed behind him. There was a burst of smoke that covered the grass and then he saw the black hummer before the smoke lifted too high to see out to the curb. They heard the sound of multiple feet in unison on the ground. It was almost a march. The smoke cleared and in full formation was a miniature swat team. They eased their way forward in their all black uniforms. Their chest armor was formed perfectly to their small frames, masks with guards down, upper arms were covered with armor, elbows and knees padded, and each had their neon coloured weapon trained on the porch. The leader had a light on their rifle as they advanced to the porch. Mrs. Smith dropped the jack-o-lantern in shock. It took her a moment to notice the neon coloured weapons and they meant no harm. In a solid synchronization they had the porch surrounded and a couple of them were on the stairs. In the same creepy synchronization they holstered their guns, lifted their masks, and pulled a candy sack from their sides.

“Trick or treat!” they shouted together.

“Awesome,” Mr. Smith replied with a hearty laugh as his wife tried to catch herself, “get the candy.”

“Oh yes,” she went and retrieved the candy and made sure they all had their candies.

All of a sudden another smoke bottle was tossed and the yard was covered again. Synchronized they pulled their helmets down again.

“Move, move, move!” the leader yelled and they marched back to the hummer.

“Shh it’s coming on,” Bella said as they crowed around the television.

All the children and the few adults there grew quiet. They clapped at the image of the hummer showed on television and the kids trooped forward.

“This was the image from earlier this evening in two neighborhoods. A very thought out and perfectly executed Halloween event/prank. The master minds are no other than two mothers of our local families, Alice Brandon-Whitlock and Isabella Swan. The use of Swan’s hummer and Brandon’s costume designs the duo managed to pull off this wondrous prank. All
families were in hopes that they would show up at their homes to be part of the event but they limited their activities to their local neighborhoods where they are well known,” more images of their team flooded the screen, “from homemade non-toxic smoke grenades, body armor, neon coloured safety weapons and the hummer pulled everything together. It was a spectacular sight to behold.”

“Oh we were the first ones they hit,” Mr. Smith bounced on his feet happily, “it was awesome. My wife and I are thrilled to be part of this great prank. They should be making movies.”

“My son Josh is one of them. It was a wonderful idea. We all stood behind it. The kids loved it. Bella is a great mom and loved throughout the school and neighborhood. She always has these fantastic ideas. She was the one responsible for planning our superhero Christmas story event last year. She is just wonderful.”

“For more on the mini swat team creativity you can checkout our website…”

The room burst into cheers and laughter. Everyone hugged and clapped hands. They all settled down and turned off the TV.

“That was so great. We made the news mom,” Fiona jumped in her lap.

“Bells you are the best,” Nigel hugged her as well.

“Bella you have to always plan our stuff,” Adrian hugged her too which led to a dog pile on her from all the children.

“No problem guys. It was terrific for me too. Now don’t throw away the body armor. We are going to paint it green for Peter Pan 2032.”

“Okay it’s time for the candy check before you guys hit the sack,” Alice ushered the kids down stairs to the game room where they had stored their candy.

The other parents followed her to the basement with garbage pales in hand for the candy that needed to be tossed. Edward stayed behind and sat down by Bella on the couch. She smiled over at him. He reached over and tucked a stray hair behind her ear.

“If I had known that you were going to pull something like that I probably would have come over earlier to play too,” he said with a smile.

“I like to be creative and the kids simply love it.”

“Thanks for including Adrian from the very beginning. He is very pleased.”

“Cool not a problem,” Bella looked up at him from behind her dark lashes and leaned forward at the same time he did.

“Dad?” Adrian called as he came into the room.

“Yes,” Edward pulled back and looked at him.

“Some of the other kids are spending the night can I stay too?”

“Well…”

“Please,” he looked at him with the puppy dog face.
“Okay. You have to promise to behave. I don’t want to hear anything negative when I come to get you.”

“I swear I’ll be an angel.”

“Okay then.”

“Thanks dad,” Adrian raced back to the basement.

“He can wear some of Nigel’s night clothes and I have a spare toothbrush,” Bella said.

“When do you have time for yourself? If you don’t have my kid you have other people’s kids.”

“About an hour or two before I pick them up from practice twice a week. It’s part of being a parent. It doesn’t bother me at all.”

“My parents take him at least once a week just to give me time to take a breath. Now I feel like I’m not a good parent,” Edward said seriously.

“You are an excellent parent. Some of us deal differently. There are days I want to have away from them but I know I can’t because as soon as they’re gone I’m going to just wonder what they’re doing.”

“I guess. Well I am making plans for us for next Wednesday evening, not this coming but the next. You can dress comfortable nothing too dressed up.”

“Okay.”

“Well I should get home. I’ve got a property to design and revamp in the morning.”

“Drive carefully,” she walked him to the door.

“Don’t let him have too much candy tonight.”

“I’ll try not to,” Bella smiled.

“Goodnight Bella,” Edward kissed her lightly.

“Goodnight,” she said with her eyes still closed from the kiss.

Bella eyes fluttered open when she felt him step back. Edward smiled at her and she blushed. He gave a little wave and left. She shut the door and smiled.

“O-M-G! You guys are too cute,” Rosalie said as she tied the bag with the bad candy closed.

“Whatever.”

“You are. It’s about time you started dating. He’s one hunk of man too.”

“Right,” Bella followed her to the kitchen.

“The candy is all separated and they have all changed into their pajamas. Emmett is going to sleep down there with the boys and Alice said she’ll stay in the guest room with the girls.”
“Awesome. With that then I’m going to shower and hit the hay.”

“Sweet dreams lover girl,” Rosalie teased.

“I hate you,” Bella mumbled as she went upstairs.
Chapter 6

Bella looked at her closet. She wanted something that screamed attractive but also business since she had to show him buildings first. She had hoped that Rosalie would assist but she had to be at work all day. Bella sorted through a few more things then decided. It was her ‘sell today sign tomorrow’ outfit.

Bella slipped into the stockings with the diamond pattern and slid the gray wool knee length shirt up and zipped it. She buttoned the steel gravy with navy stripes three-quarter shirt. Bella had braided her hair back in a French braid and left a few tendrils out to frame her face. She had applied light makeup and a delicate mist of cologne. Bella zipped her calf high boots and grabbed her shoulder bag. She smiled at her reflection. She was sexy, sophisticated, but comfortable. Bella grabbed her sweater duster and got in the car. She felt confident with her decision in wardrobe.

Edward finished up at the record store. He placed the pay stubs in each of his employees’ boxes and grabbed his sports jacket. He made sure he had his watch and bag. Edward wanted to take notes on the places that Bella had lined up for him. They agreed that she would meet him at the record store. He had stopped to straighten a display and when he turned back she was at the entrance. His mouth dropped.

Bella was gorgeous. She showed just enough leg and the outfit hugged her curves delicately. Edward had seen her in strict business attire as well as extremely casual but he had never seen her in what border-lined sexy librarian. He closed his mouth as she took off her shades and greeted his employees.

“Nice to meet you. I love vinyl. I am so glad that there is an actual record store that sells records among their CDs,” Bella said to the young guy behind the register.

“The only place in the state to still sell vinyl,” Edward said as he joined them at the counter.

“Hm someone did some good marketing and to get a location by the university was an excellent idea.”

“That’s why they pay me the big bucks,” Edward smiled down at her.

“I’m sure the man who signs the checks would beg to differ,” she joked.

“He is the guy who signs the checks.”

“Oh,” Bella cocked her head and looked at him, “I was under the impression that you managed the store.”

“As per my job description of being owner I do manage it and do all the books as well,” he took her arm and led her out the store as he waved goodbye.

“Wow. I guess I have to set my expectations a little differently. I might have to rethink my choices of buildings for you since you did so well with this one.”

“It was a lucky shot really. I wasn’t expecting to get it,” Edward admitted as he followed her.
“Okay. So, the first one,” Bella pulled her legal pad from her bag, “is in walking distance.”

“You're going to walk in those?”

“Honey I can run in six inch heels these little two inchers are nothing.”

“If you say so.”

They arrived in front of a two story brick stand alone building. Bella pulled the keys from her bag and unlocked the door. She told him some of the history of the building as they entered.

“Vaulted ceilings and exposed brick are in so this is one that would be very trendy. I thought with the second floor it would be easier to have a smoking section without too many worries. There’s already an industrial kitchen and the view is spectacular from all points. Now in the warmer seasons you can even do roof top dinning. Just a few ideas,” she said as she led him around.

“It feels good too. I like the vibe it gives.”

“We have a couple more to see but we’ll put a smiley by this one,” she led him up the stairs.

“Is there an elevator or is stairs the only way?”

“Yup it’s in what can be the lobby. There’s a service one in the kitchen as well.”

They walked through the building and she pointed out all the extras and unique items. Bella took him to the roof and it was too windy to walk around but it did appeal to him. She led him back through the building and locked it up behind them.

“The next one is across town. The last one is going to be closer to home.”

“Your home or my home?”

“Since I’ve never been to your house we’ll say my home.”

“You haven’t been to my place. I had never thought about that. Well you and the kids have to come by next weekend.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

They went through the last location and Edward immediately hated it. Even though it was closer to home he didn’t like the architecture and it was not near any activity it was too secluded for his taste. He knew that he liked the first one the most. Even out of the ten others she had shown him it was his favorite and it wasn’t too far from the record store. Edward slowed his pace as they walked back to her car. He liked the powerful strides that she took toward her car. Edward knew that he was attracted to her and he had planned the evening accordingly. They drove back to the record store to take his car. They swapped out vehicles and he drove them to dinner. He smiled at her when her stomach gave a little growl.

“Hm so all that hard work makes you a hungry girl?”
“Something like that,” Bella blushed.

“Don’t worry we’ll eat soon.”

Edward made his way across the river and she glanced over to him. She hadn’t expected to have dinner in another city. Edward smiled. It was one of his favorite restaurants. They pulled in front and the valet took his car and parked as he escorted her in. Bella was glad that she had chosen her outfit as she handed her duster to the coat check girl. He had made reservations so they were seated immediately.

“How’d you know what time we’d be here?” she asked as she opened the menu.

“I didn’t I just made reservations for every hour figuring one of them would be accurate.

“Wow. Ooh everything looks so good.”

“So you know French?” Edward smirked.

“Oui.”

“Good.”

As the waiter arrived he placed their drink order and ordered appetizers. Bella stared at him.

“Okay I know food French. I missed half of what you said to him,” she chuckled.

“It was nothing just small talk. Have you been here before?”

“No. It isn’t kid friendly. I don’t usually ask my parents to watch them during the week.”

“Hm okay,” he peeked over his menu at her.

The waiter returned with their drinks and took their order. Then he returned with the appetizers.

“So why do you allow your son to call you by your first name? I’ve been thinking about it but there was no way I’d ask in front of Fiona. I didn’t want to catch some smart remark,” Edward sipped his wine.

“I don’t blame you. Nigel isn’t my son.”

“Oh,” he leaned forward.

“He’s my nephew. My sister and his father were killed and his father’s family didn’t really want to take care of him. My parents offered but I knew they were passed that age, ya know, so since he and Fiona are so close I figured it was good for both of them.”

“Oh. I’m sorry for your lost. That is a very brave thing to do.”

“I would have never handled it differently. I reached out to his father’s parents because I didn’t want to assume but when they made no actions to wanting to be part of his life then I took over as his guardian. I signed the adoption papers last year so they have no rights to him at all.”

“That is so amazing. Adrian’s mother’s family keeps in touch but not like I would like,” Edward said as he sipped his wine.
“Oh my you know I didn’t even think of your wife. I probably should have thought about that before I accepted the date. I’m an adulterer.”

“No,” he laughed, “I’ve never been married. His mother left three months after he was born. She wasn’t ready to be a mother. We expected her to come back but she isn’t ready to come home. She still communicates monthly. Adrian knows who she is and sees her once or twice a year.”

“Oh okay. Sounds like Fiona’s father. He was a good dad for about a year and then he didn’t want to do it anymore. He pays his child support and that’s all I can ask for. His parents are wonderful. They’re a big part of her life. They even accepted Nigel as theirs. They spend part of summer vacations with them and every holiday we have a big family gathering. They always wish that their son had been a better father.”

“No wonder you're so strong. That’s good.”

“Thank you. We so just broke the number one rule of first dates.”

“What’s that?”

“We’re not supposed to talk about our exes.”

“Oh I didn’t know that was a rule.”

“Yup. What is this?” she said as she took another bite of the fried food.

“Zucchini fritters and baked brie. I didn’t figure you for a caviar or escargot type,” he smiled.

“You got that right. This is delicious though.”

They finished with the appetizers and talked more about their work and hobbies as they waited for their food. Bella thoroughly enjoyed their meal and was very happy with the rich chocolate of their dessert. They had another glass of wine before they parted. He pulled in behind her car and cut the engine.

“So…” Edward said as he realized how nervous he was.

“I haven’t dated in years and never thought I would again. I was content with being single. You’ve shown me that I do indeed like to date. I have had a wonderful time. We have to do it again,” she leaned in and kissed him.

Edward was shocked at how soft her lips were. She moaned against his lips. He deepened the kiss for several moments and then pulled back. Bella smiled at him as she licked her lips. She nodded and got out of the car. They exchanged goodbyes and she shut the door. He watched her pull off and he sighed.

Edward started his car and headed home. He had dated when Adrian had gotten old enough to sleep through the night and it wouldn’t be a bother to his parents but hadn’t been on a real date since. Edward had thought that his long time girlfriend would come home eventually. He hadn’t wanted to get serious with anyone and his first true love came back around. Edward had given up after that and thought that if he was supposed to have someone they would come on their own. He smiled at the thought that Bella was that someone. His heart bounced at the mere thought of a relationship.
Edward headed to his parents house. He was glad that he was a good father. Edward couldn’t even begin to think of not having his son in his life. He pulled into the driveway of his parent’s house. He looked at the house and was reminded of where he came from. It was just his parents and his younger sister but the house had room for ten others. The three floors could hold a small army and he knew if he wanted to he could come home and not have to worry. Edward had to prove to himself that he could do it alone and he had been for the last seven years. When his girlfriend had left he had moved home but after two years had moved back on his own and survived. He took a deep breath and went in.

“Hey mom,” he said as he entered the living room.

“Hey honey,” Elizabeth closed her book, “have a seat. Adrian’s sleeping.”

“Did he go to bed without a fuss?”

“Yeah no problems out of him at all.”

“Good. He has been trying the ‘let’s stay up late with daddy’ move the last couple of nights.”

“Reminds me of you at that age,” Elizabeth picked up her mug and sipped her tea, “so how was your date?”

“It was interesting to say the least.”

“Are you going to tell me more about this amazing young woman that Adrian can’t seem to stop talking about?”

“Oh mom you’ll love her. She’s smart, self sufficient and funny. You know her son is on the soccer squad with Adrian. Her daughter is on the football team. Bella’s has her own computer security firm and real estate office.”

“You like her a lot. The way your face lights up you like her a lot. I am so happy to see that you have found someone who catches your interest.”

“Mom,” Edward ran his hand over his face, “you have no idea. The first time I met her she had my heart. I stepped foot into her home and it felt like I belonged there. I had been keeping my distance but her children are so endearing and joyful and she is such a strong person that I couldn’t just walk away anymore. I just found out her son isn’t really her son but her nephew. Her sister was killed and she took over custody. She has a heart of gold.”

“Sounds like a catch. When will you be bringing her by?”

“This was just our first date. There have to be a couple more dates before she meets the parents. I do feel like this is going somewhere. She might not be the woman I marry but she is definitely someone who is in for a long run.”

“I am so happy for you. Just be careful there are children involved. You don’t want to get too close because they are sensitive and they will grow to love you as Adrian will to her.”

“I know mother. You have taught me well. I want to be able to keep her a friend if things don’t work out.”

“Good.”

“Well I better get Adrian and head home,” he said as he stood.
“Why don’t you stay the night? There is no need to wake him.”

“I love you mom,” he kissed her and headed up to his bedroom that he kept there.

Bella got in her car and began to giggle. Edward didn’t pull off immediately once she was in her car so she couldn’t have her girly freak out moment. Bella started her car and headed home. Once she was a safe distance away she pulled over and let out a loud squeal, threw her hands in the air and bounced in her seat as she clapped. Bella cleared her throat, took a deep breath then headed home. She had to get the giddiness out before she got home where she knew her children or at least Fiona would be waiting.

“Girl pop,” she said and her car responded and pulled up her folder with her girl pop music.

Bella sang along with her favorite poppy girl songs. She reached her home and took a deep breath. Bella calmed herself down and grabbed her bag. She went in and paid the sitter and watched her go. She hung up her sweater and waited for one or both of the children to show up.

“So,” Fiona whispered as she entered her room in her transformers pajamas, “how was it?”

“Hm aren’t you supposed to be in bed?” she said as she slipped off her shoes.

“I am but I had to know. You and Mr. Masen make a cute couple. Kind of like Taylor and Taylor.”

“Who?” she asked as she changed into her pajamas.

“Taylor Swift and Taylor Lautner. They were in that movie Valentine’s Day and it’s where they hooked up. Ya know that movie from a couple years ago.”

“Okay I trust you I guess,” she giggled because she had no idea what she was talking about.

“How’d it go?”

“It was nice,” she turned down the covers and climbed into bed.

“Nice like you don’t want to see him again or nice you hope he asks you out again?” Fiona crawled into the other side of the bed.

“Hm I hope he asks me out again.”

“Did he take you some where nice?”

“Yeah. You remember that French restaurant that grandma and grandpa went for their anniversary that’s where he took me.”

“Wow that is a lot of money mom. I think he really likes you,” she pulled the covers up.

“Yeah me too.”

“I think he is going to fall for you. Like a Disney movie.”
“Go to sleep kiddo. You need all the rest you can get. You’ve got play practice and football practice.

“Yes mom,” she said as she closed her eyes with a smile.
Chapter 7

Edward rushed around his condo as he got everything in place. He checked the bathrooms to make sure they were clean one last time. Edward approved of the way the condo looked. He smiled down at his tuxedo kitten Lucky and picked her up.

“I am trying to not be nervous,” Edward said as he rubbed her behind her ears, “she is kind of the coolest lady that I know and I don’t want to mess it up.”

Lucky looked at him and purred without a care in the world. Edward chuckled and put her down. Adrian came down from his room, sniffed the air, and looked around. He gave his dad a look that spoke to his suspicious nature.

“Dad…what’s going on? Did Jill come in? Why is it so clean?”

“You know we’re expecting guests over today and I don’t want to give a bad first impression.”

“Dad it’s just Bella, Fiona, and Nigel. We see them almost every day.”

“They haven’t been here before though.”

“Whatver you say,” Adrian said with a knowing smile and left the room.

Edward knew that everything was perfect but he was so nervous that he checked everything again. He finally calmed down and sat at the bar side of the counter and sipped a bottle of water. Edward looked at the clock. He tapped his foot nervously. When the door bell rang he jumped. He smoothed his hands over his shirt and answered the door.

“Hey guys I hope it was easy to find,” he said as he let them inside.

“Yeah totally easy,” Bella said as she looked around as they walked in.

“Wow this is a really nice place Mr. Edward,” Fiona said as she mentally priced everything, “the furniture in here alone could get me through my first semester at college.”

“Fiona!” Bella put her hand over her daughter’s mouth.

“Out of the mouths of babes.”

“So sorry about that. She’s definitely hit that age where her filter switch is broken,” Bella let Fiona go.

“No worries. I’m so glad that you guys could make it. I’ve got all the games laid out over here,” Edward walked to the dining room, “I figured we’d play a few board games then we could hit up one of the consoles.”

“Sounds awesome,” Bella pulled off her coat and handed it to him.

“Great. You guys can make yourself at home. I’ve got beverages of all sorts in the fridge. I placed the cups right on the counter,” Edward took their coats to hang in the closet.

“Hey guys. Before we play I wanna show you my room,” Adrian said as he came down stairs.
“Cool,” Nigel followed excitedly as Fiona trailed behind.

“This is a very lovely home you have,” Bella said once the children were gone.

“Thank you. It’s only temporary until I get a house. I wanted to be able to settle in as quickly as possible since I had up rooted Adrian. I figured I would spend a year here and find something once my lease is up,” he poured her a glass of wine.

“That makes sense. So why did you move back here?” Bella sipped the wine he gave her.

“It was time to give up on my exe. We had stayed out in Chicago trying to be close to her and her family but in the end I wanted to come home and reclaim my roots.”

“Hm I can get that. How does it feel being back?”

“It was scary at first but now everything has come together. It almost feels like home again.”

“Mom!” Fiona said as she bounded down the stairs.

“What is it?” she turned quickly to see her daughter’s face aglow.

“Can I get a dirt bike?”

“What?”

“Adrian’s got a dirt bike.”

“Oh. My parents got him a dirt bike last year and he’s got a few pictures up in his room,” Edward explained.

“No. Right now you have gotten all the freedom you’re going to get. We’ll see what your grades look like in January then we can discuss it. With the way your grades were at the interim you know not to ask for something like that.”

“Oh come on mom,” Fiona pouted.

“You know that isn’t going to get you anywhere.”

“Fine,” she stormed from the room.

“Wow and she isn’t even a teenager yet.”

“I’m hoping she’ll get it out of her system now so I don’t have to worry. If not I’m hoping the ABC store is close,” she giggled as she sipped her wine.

“Wait until she starts dating,” he chuckled.

“I’ll pack her bags and she’ll stay with you since you’re trying to jinx me.”

“Oh no,” Edward shook his head as they sat down at the table.

“Dad,” Adrian called as he came down the stairs, “can Nigel and Fi come with me camping to grandpa Carlisle’s?”

“Well first we have to see if they have the space out there and then you have to ask Ms.
Bella as well,” he answered as they moved to the dining room.

“Ms. Bella you think that it would be ok?”

“When is this camping supposed to take place?”

“Right after Christmas. We always go out there before school starts. It's a nice cabin in the woods. Grandpa Eddie and James always take me with them. They get into grown up talk so much I sometimes feel left out.”

“I don’t see where that’d be a problem. I think that would be very nice. Get away from it all for a few days.”

“Yes,” Nigel said with a huge smile.

“Am I going to be the only girl there?”

“You can invite a friend that way you won’t be the only girl.”

“Okay.”

They gathered around the table and played a few board games. They started with Life and Sorry then closed with a very frustrated game of Monopoly. Nigel eventually won the game and Edward got up and went to the kitchen. He pulled out the tray of sandwiches he had prepared that morning and pasta salad that he had made the previous night. They washed up and sat at the bar and ate lunch.

“I hope you guys have had some fun today. It’s good to have you here.”

“It has been awesome!” Fiona said with a smile.

“Yeah. It’s been a while since we’ve had…this kind of gathering with another family,” Nigel said.

“Glad to hear it. So what game do you want to play? We’ve got a wii and Xbox 360.”

“Ooh Mario kart!” Fiona said as she placed her empty plate in the sink.

“Sounds like a plan.”

Edward hooked up the wii and got everyone situated. Fiona and Adrian went first then Nigel and Bella then Bella and Fiona faced off. Since Bella won she had to play Edward. Edward beat Fiona and danced a little dance of victory.

“You're such a dork,” Fiona laughed.

“You're just mad that you lost.”

“Oh whatever. Well we better head out. I’ve got to meet with Alice and Kelley to go see the progress of our building. Come on guys.”

“But mooom…we’re having fun. Please,” Fiona begged.

“No. You can come over another time.”

“Please Bella,” Adrian and Nigel said at the same time.
“How ‘bout this, you can stay and have dinner with us then I’ll take you home?” Edward suggested.

“See mom he doesn’t mind,” Fiona batted her lashes hopeful.

“Okay. You have my cell call if you need anything,” Bella said as she grabbed her bag.

“Yes!” they giggled excitedly and sat back in front the game and began again.

“Thanks,” she said as she took her jacket from him.

“Not a problem. It’ll be one less thing you have to worry about. It’ll give a chance to talk with your team and not have to keep an eye out for them. I’ll take care of them no worries,” Edward walked her to her car.

“I know. I should be home in a couple hours. They both have keys if you beat me there.”

“Okay,” he kissed her quickly on the lips.

Bella smiled and got in her car. She was half way to the new building when she got a text. She had forgotten she had given Fiona the emergency cell phone. She laughed.

“We saw the kiss.” The text read.

“Behave.” She texted back once she was she had stopped at a red light.

Bella was excited about her relationship with Edward. He still made her giggle like a school girl with just a thought about him. She was glad that the children were comfortable with him and she didn’t have to explain to them what went on. They were also old enough to know she wasn’t trying to find a dad for them. Bella couldn’t help but momentarily imagine what the next few months could lead to. She giggled again and went to meet her friends.
Bella dropped the children off at her parent’s house and took a deep breath as she pulled up in front of Edward’s condo. She sat in the car a few minutes as she gathered herself mentally. She checked to make sure her makeup was perfect and looked down at her skirt and boots. Bella felt attractive but this time dinner with him made her nervous. It wasn’t the first time he had cooked for her but somehow to her it felt odd. She got out of the car and walked up to his door and rang the bell. Edward opened the door and smiled down at her as he let her in.

“Wow you look amazing,” he said as he took her coat.

“Thank you,” Bella felt herself blush.

“I am almost done. Let me get you some wine,” Edward pulled down the crystal flutes and poured her some red wine.

“I thought only champagne is supposed to be served from these?”

“Well Adrian had a friend over and they decided to pour grape juice into the wine glasses and pretend to be adults. She’s a little clumsy and broke one and I haven’t replaced them. She gets that from her mom,” he said with a wink.

“Damn I totally forgot to replace those for you.”

“No worries,” he said as he sipped his own.

“I actually have a set you can have at home. I’ll try to remember them next time.”

“If it makes you feel better,” he said as he slowly stirred a pot on the stove.

“Mm smells so good.”

“Steak, rice, and vegetables,” he pulled the steak from the oven.

“Baked steak?”

“Yes. It’s healthier than frying and the marinade taste better. I also made rolls,” Edward replied as he pulled the pan of bread from the other oven.

“I trust the man who looks like he runs marathons on his lunch break.”

“Good. You can go on to the table I will bring your plate over. Take my glass please.”

Bella stood and took both glasses over to the table and grabbed the bottle. She felt the butterflies in her stomach start up again. Bella took a gulp of the wine while his attention was on preparing the plates. She closed her eyes and gave herself a pep talk to calm down. They had dated for two months and she knew that she was ready to further their relationship but he had been
adamant about waiting. Bella had intentions of changing his mind. She swallowed a giggle as she thought about the underwear she had allowed Alice and Kelley to pressure her into wearing. The garter belt had been irritating at first. She had gone to the salon for a waxing as well and was prepared. Bella hoped Edward would be too.

“You okay?” he asked as he sat her plate down in front of her.

“Oh yeah sorry lost in thought.”

“Some intense thoughts then to make you blush like that,” he said as he sat across from her.

“So how was your day?”

“It was delightful. I got to see the first floor remodel today. We are ahead of schedule so we should be opening by Easter.”

“Excellent. How do you like your new building so far?”

“Eh it’s kind of amazing. I’ve got my own business off the ground and in our own place. It couldn’t be more satisfying. With the holidays behind us and the building complete there is a lot less stress in my life,” she said as she looked down at her plate, “really am I five?”

“What?” he was confused.

“You had to cut up my food?”

“Oh crap. Sorry I was on auto piolet and didn’t think about it. I’m so used to making a plate for Adrian.”

“It’s cute and will make sure I don’t choke,” she chuckled as she picked up her fork.

They ate dinner as they shared their successes of the last couple of weeks. They made the decision that they children would play field hockey for the spring. It would make it easier since they all had chosen three different sports and the pickup times wouldn’t work.

After dinner Edward rinsed the plates and put them in the dishwasher. He scooped some ice cream into small bowls and added sprinkles. They sat down on the couch in from the television where he turned on Chocolat with Johnny Depp.

“You really are treating me like a child. Rainbow sprinkles and only one scoop.”

“There’s always more if you want more. I figured we’d start off light since we had such a big meal.”

“Okay.”

Bella smiled as they watched the movie and finished their ice cream. She let them get half in the movie before she got up and went to get more ice cream. She smiled as she went back to the couch. She tried to not laugh as she lifted the spoon to her mouth. Bella gasped and quickly put the spoon in her bowl. Edward turned to her. His eyes immediately went to her chest where ice cream melted against her fair skin.

“Oh, I can be so clumsy,” she said as she used two fingers to scoop the ice cream and she licked those fingers.
Edward’s eyes followed her fingers. His brain went blank and he felt his pants pull against him. He reminded himself to breath and he tried to meet her eyes. Edward gulped as she stared back at him with darkened eyes. He had seen that darkness before and he knew what it meant.

“Look,” his voice sounded shaky even to him, “Bella--”

Edward was cut off as Bella pounced on him. He fell back onto the couch as his protest died in his throat. Edward lifted his legs on each side of her hips.

Bella was confident as she moved her hands to his shirt and began to unbutton it. She pressed her hips forward. He moaned against her soft lips. His hands settled on her waist and kissed her back.

Edward had been waiting for another two months before they took the relationship to the next level. He had it set in his mind. He didn’t want to get physical until they were sure where the relationship would go. Edward knew now that she had other plans.

Bella began to grind her hips into his and felt himself get harder. He knew that if she kept it up that he would want to go to the next level. Edward tried to pull away but she just kissed him harder and scratched down his chest. His hips bucked up automatically. She moved to his neck and kissed him there and nibbled on the soft flesh.

“Bella,” he said breathless, “please Bella. We can’t.”

“Hmm,” she reached under her and cupped his bulge, “why?”

“B-because…oh god that feels good…no we…shit,” his hips moved with her hand, “we aren’t ready…we’ve only just begun to date.”

“I’m not saying I’m loose,” she kissed his neck, “but I’ve gone down on a guy by now and probably at least had sex once at this point.”

“I don’t…want to be like…damn…everyone else,” his eyes pleaded for her to understand.

“Hmm,” she unzipped his pants, “you are definitely not like every other guy,” her eyes got big as she felt how large he was.

“Dammit…please,” his breathing grew heavy.

“I’m sorry Mr. Masen,” she pulled him loose of his boxers, “damn,” she smiled and she bowed her head and licked him.

“Holy fuck,” his eyes closed and his hips bucked up as she teased him, “you don’t…oh god yes!” all protesting died.

“Lay back and enjoy.”

Bella watched him as she gently licked him from base to tip. Edward bit down on his lip as if it was the only way to stay in control. She swirled her tongue around the tip and she listened as he growled deep in his throat. Bella chuckled and closed her eyes as she took him all the way into her mouth. He became incoherent as she took him into her throat. She flicked out her tongue and teased his most sensitive area. She heard him inhale sharply. She realized how much larger than others he was. On a normal basis could do that trick without her gag reflex being triggered but not with him. She had to stop to keep from choking. Bella massaged him
with her tongue as she sucked gently. The louder he got the more enthusiastic she became as she slurped quietly. She took him all the way again and worked her throat around the tip as her hand massaged him.

Edward couldn’t think anymore. All he knew was that she was wonderful and her beautiful pouty mouth was wrapped securely around him. He tried to slow his thrusts but he couldn’t because it felt so good. Edward wasn’t sure what he was saying because his mouth had detached itself from his brain. He felt his lips moving so he knew he was vocal. His mind was mush and the electricity and warmth began to move up his legs and down his chest. He knew he wouldn’t last much longer.

Bella sucked and licked the tip as she stroked him firmly. He knew that women didn’t like to swallow he opened his eyes to warn her but her beauty in the middle of ecstasy overwhelmed him. Her face was flushed from exertion and her hair had fallen in her face and her lips puckered around his throbbing flesh. She was gorgeous to him.

“Bella…” he managed as she peered up at him from behind the veil of hair it became too much.

Bella smiled around him as he released into her mouth. Edward threw his head back and just let go. He felt his entire world stop for a minute until he was done. He began to breathe and calm down. He felt himself smile and his eyes fluttered open. She wiped the corners of her mouth and smiled back at him.

“Feel better,” he mumbled.

“Much,” her voice was husky with desire.

“Your turn.”

In minutes he had her undressed. Bella had one foot on the floor and the other on his shoulder as he licked her. She knew she must have looked like he had only minutes ago. Bella pushed her hips up as he slipped two fingers into her. She knew she was too excited to last much longer especially since he knew exactly how she liked it.

Edward cupped his tongue and licked firmly against her pleasure button. She cursed like a sailor as she endured the best oral sex of her life. She began to convulse under him as her orgasm hit. She felt weightless and her entire body rocked and quaked as he continued to penetrate her with his tongue lapping up her juices. Bella dropped the ‘f’ bomb about six times before she returned to normal. Her eyes fluttered open and took in a smiling Edward.

“Damn man,” she sighed, “I’ve never ever…yeah…damn,” she shivered again as she looked for her panties.

“I think I’m keeping these,” he said as he held them to his lips, “you are so freaking sexy. That garter belt and the thong. You must have read my mind to know how much I love purple panties.”

“Or I asked Adrian what your favorite colour is.”

“I must make you mine this evening,” he lifted her into his arms and carried her to his room.

“Mr. Masen for someone who wanted to wait you sure are enthusiastic this evening.”

“You make me weak,” Edward lay her down on his bed.

“Good because I need to feel you in me,” Bella whispered and pulled him to her.
“Mm you are so damn sexy,” he pulled off his tee shirt and stood before her naked.

“Damn you are gorgeous. Now come here daddy. I’ve got an IUD so no worries.”

Edward growled as he climbed on the bed and immediately pushed into her. He hissed in delight at her tightness. Edward moved slowly as not to hurt her. She felt so go wrapped around him. She pushed her hips forward to urge him on. They found a steady pace as he rocked into her and she met his every thrust. He kissed her and pulled her close and they continued. He eventually pushed all the way into her and she gasped in excitement. Her legs tightened around him as she tried to pull him deeper. He felt her end and knew he would only hurt her if he pushed anymore. She smiled in content to be completely filled for once. He muscles squeezed and stroked him. They moved with shallow thrusts. She felt him throb and knew he was close again. He reach in between them and his thumb played with her as he worked up to his second release. A few moments later they climaxed together. They lay breathless and happy wrapped in his sheets.

“I,” he caught himself, “I think that you are amazing.”

“You’re not so bad yourself,” she ran her fingers through his hair.

They eventually fell asleep together and both were pleased they had moved to the next step in their relationship.
Edward went to Bella’s with Adrian in tow. Bella had invited him over for a kid’s party with a few other kids from their school. He took the ice into the house and put it in the freezer as Adrian went to the game room where the other kids were. He was greeted by Alice as she brought in the cake and ice cream.

“Hey there handsome. She’s downstairs getting everything together. A few of the other kids and parents are down there as well.”

“Thanks.”

Edward headed down the stairs and saw Adrian already huddled together with the kids. He smiled very pleased that he was able to form relationships easily with others since they had moved in. Edward scanned the room for Bella and his blood ran cold. Bella was in the arms of another man. A very tall, well built, and handsome man. The hug was longer than just a friendly hug and she looked too comfortable with him. He quickly made his way over to them.

“Bella,” he greeted her and put his arm around her.

“Hey Edward,” she kissed his cheek, “Edward this is Jacob. Jacob this is Edward.”

“Hey finally I get to put a face with the name. She talks non-stop about you.”

“Same as you,” Edward said relieved it was just her friend from childhood, a married man.

“I’d like you to meet my wife she’s getting the twins cleaned up. They got into a chocolate bar on the way over.”

“Here she comes,” Bella said and waved to beautiful Native American and black woman.

“Ayasha,” Jacob put his arm around her waist, “this is Edward the hunky,” he chuckled at the girls’ nickname for him.

“Edward nice to meet you,” she shook his hand, “the twins are there with your son. Shilah and Tuari.”

“They are beautiful. How old are they?”

“They turned six in November.”

“They’re only six and as tall as my son. They definitely take after their father,” Edward said as he looked over to the kids.

The adults went upstairs once all the children had arrived. Bella had made finger sandwiches that she cut in the shapes of fingers with her sense of humor everyone enjoyed. Edward was glad to make a few more adult friends. He knew that Jacob would be a very close friend since they had so much in common. Soon the girls came up the stairs because the boys had taken over the video game console.

“How about I put in a movie for you guys?” Ayasha asked as she picked up Shilah in her arms.
“Mommy can we play make up princess?” Shilah asked with innocent eyes.

“No. Remember last time you got in the make up? I do and we can’t have that again. Bella has Sleeping Beauty.”

All the girls cheered as Ayasha walked them to the television area. She sat her daughter down and put in the DVD. Bella and Edward made some popcorn and took it over. Jacob pulled the juice boxes and Twizzlers for them as well. The parents moved to the kitchen so that the girls would have their space.

“We should go out to dinner one night the four of us,” Jacob said as he helped Ayasha into her coat as they prepared to leave a couple hours later.

“That would be great. Bella pretty much knows my schedule so you guys just let me know and I’ll be there. My parents would take the kids for the night. They have a new home theater system put in and a bowling lane.”

“What?” Ayasha asked with a shocked expression.

“My parents are a bit eccentric.”

“His parents are like Bill Gates loaded. They spoil the crap out the kids. Shilah and Tuari will love it. Fiona and Nigel went to their ‘cabin’ which is like a mansion apparently according to Fiona,” Bella said laughing.

“Okay then. We’ll make plans. Okay I see Shilah and Fiona, but where are the boys?” Jacob said as he looked out the door.

“Probably still playing Mario,” Bella went to the game room and returned alone, “not down there.”

“I feel a prank coming,” Ayasha said.

“It does kind of feel that way.”

As if on cue the girls squeal and ran back up to the porch. Water balloons still rained down on them from Nigel’s window. Bella stepped out and looked up. Before he could stop himself Adrian launched the last balloon. Bella’s hands flew up to block it but were too late. Edward and Jacob tried not to laugh as Ayasha went to her side. She wiped the hair from her face. The boys ducked out of view then raced down the stairs.

“Ms. Bella I am so sorry.”

“Adrian you,” chuckle, “you did that?”

“Sorry dad. We were aiming for the girls,” he looked down at his feet.

“Go get your shoes and coat on.”

“Here mom,” Nigel held out to Bella a towel.

Bella stared at him. She dropped to her knees and hugged him to her. Everyone smiled at the loving scene set before them. Tears slowly streamed down her face. He pulled back and made a face at her when she kissed his forehead. He handed her the towel and she dried herself.

“What’s wrong?”
“You don’t realize what you just said do you?”

“Oh no.”

“You just called her mom,” Fiona said with a proud smile and hugged him too.

“Oh,” he scratched his head, “is that okay?”

“It sure is,” she said happily.

“Okay,” he blushed.

“Now whose idea was it for the ice cold water balloons?”

“Well…” Tuari started.

“Son!” Jacob grabbed him by the ear, “you know better.”

“It was supposed to just be fun.”

“You are grounded until further notice. Grab your coat and get in the car,” Ayasha said.

“Sorry about that Bells.”

“No problem.”

“Adrian the same goes for you,” Edward said as he handed him his coat.

They got the children in the cars and departed. Bella went into the house and changed clothes. She pulled her hair back and began to clean up.

“I’ve got that. It’ll be part of my punishment,” Nigel said as he grabbed a garbage bag.

“Okay. Then I am going to take a shower. You guys decide what you want for dinner. Something that delivers.”

Bella went to her room and took a quick shower. Her thoughts floated over to Edward. She was glad that he and Jacob had gotten along. She knew that if Jacob hadn’t like him that she wouldn’t have advanced further into the relationship. Jacob is her longest living friend and means the world to her and she values his opinion. She saw the pure look of acceptance in his eyes as he talked with Edward. She went back to the kitchen and shook her head.

“So we couldn’t decide between pizza and Chinese huh?”

“Not really,” Fiona said as she used her chopsticks to place noodles on her pizza.

“I have no idea where you get that from.”

“Probably the sperm donor,” Nigel said.

“Excuse me,” she stopped mid scoop.

“That’s what Fi calls him since he doesn’t want to be a dad.”

“Please do not let me hear that term from either of you again,” she shook her head, “that is not appropriate for your age group.”
“Mom we’re almost teenagers.”

“Oh god, don’t remind me,” she placed rice on her plate with the general tso’s chicken.

“It isn’t going to be that bad. We’re good kids ya know,” Nigel said as he ate his pizza.

“You are I couldn’t ask for better kids.”

They finished dinner then Bella read the next chapter in Great Expectations. Once she finished she tucked them into bed. She thought about how quick the years had gone by and how soon they would be in high school then college. She wanted to keep them her babies as long as she could.

****

Bella was at the grocery store while the kids were at practice. It was Edward’s turn to pick them up. She completed her list and went to the check out. As she stood in line she felt like someone was watching her. Bella glanced around there was no one with eyes in her direction. She shrugged it off and loaded things onto the conveyer belt. She left the grocery store and went to the post office. She dropped off the items she needed to ship and bought stamps. On her way home she remembered to stop and pick up their uniforms for the hockey team. Bella got home and began to unload the car. She had the last bags in one hand and the uniforms in the other when she heard footsteps behind her. She turned and her breath caught in her throat.

Edward closed out his till and placed the money in the safe. His usual cashier had called in sick and he had taken her shift at the restaurant. He made sure Jasper knew that he was gone before he left for the day. He was glad that Alice had talked him into hiring her husband because he was the perfect fit. They got along great and he was a very hard worker that knew how to balance iron fist, compassion and leading by example. The restaurant that he had worked for was a chain location and had closed down once the company filed bankruptcy. He had been without a job for several months. Edward was glad he was able to help out Bella’s friend and got a spectacular employee. He removed his tie and headed to the field to pick up the kids.

Edward smiled as he watched them run cool down drills. The other parents on the team were not like they were but it wasn’t their fault. They had different types of parenting skills. Emmett coached the hockey team since football wouldn’t pick up again until summer. Rosalie still coached the soccer team for spring. Edward handed each child a Gatorade and a sandwich. Bella had sent a text to remind him and he had his assistant prepare everything and put it in the coolers. The kids were happy.

Adrian said whenever Jill picked them up the team was disappointed because they wouldn’t get their snack. Jill wasn’t remembering things again and it was because she was flighty. Edward had given her one last chance. If she messed up again he would be forced to let her go. Bella had chewed her out when she had given her kids popcorn and a soda as an afternoon snack since they had both been in meetings. The look on Jill’s face had been priceless. He was shocked she hadn’t quit. He had only kept her on after she had forgotten his son because he knew she was the only one working at home and she had a family. He smiled as he thought about how Bella would pop in to surprise her early just to make sure she had fed them correctly.

“Hey Dad,” Adrian said as he put his bag in the back with the cooler.

“Hi Mr. Edward,” Fiona and Nigel said in unison.
“Hey kids you have a good practice?”

“Yup. It was fun. Adrian is one of the best players there besides us,” Fiona said.

“I think they get mad because we’re so good. You know we have that empath thing going and know what each other’s going to do before we do it,” Adrian said as he buckled up.

“Yeah mom calls it the creepy triplet thing now that it’s three of us,” Nigel laughed.

“Well I’m glad to hear that. So what do you guys want to do for dinner? I was thinking we could go to Mexico after you finish homework.”

“Ooh that sounds perfect.”

“Good.”

They drove the rest of the way singing along with the radio. Edward pulled to a stop at the curb since there was an unfamiliar corolla in the driveway. He didn’t recognize the car. It wasn’t someone who was in their inner circle. The kids got out none the wiser and headed to the house. He saw Fiona drop her bag as they reached the front door.

“Sperm donor?” she said in disbelief.
“Come on kids let’s get in the house,” Edward ushered them pass the man with the black hair.

“Fiona!” the man called and reached for her.

Edward stepped in front of her. He handed the bag that she had dropped to her. Edward made eye contact with him as the kids went inside. He heard the door shut and stood by Bella and put his arm around her waist.

“Not going to happen,” Bella said to the man and shook her head.

“So you’ve got yourself a happy little family now?” he said almost in disgust.

“Can you take this in and get the kids to put away the groceries honey?” she handed him the bag and uniforms.

“Baby, are you sure?”

“Yeah I’ve got this.”

Edward looked at him again as he took the stuff from her. He gave him a warning look. He turned and went into the house. He knew that if she needed him she would call him.

“What do you want Ryan?”

“I had no idea that you lived here. I was in the shopping center when I saw you walk into the grocery store. I wanted to check up on Fiona. She is my daughter too.”

“You lost that right when you walked out on us all those years ago. I suggest you forget that you saw me and where I live. In fact I should call the police and let them know that you stalked me all the way back to my house. That is what we call harassment and a crime.”

“I just want to see my kid. I have been thinking a lot about her and you. I’m ready to be a dad and a husband.”

“No you're not. Even if you were I don’t care. It’s been seven years and you wanted nothing to do with either of us. If you hadn’t seen me out you wouldn’t have bothered trying to locate us. It was chance Ryan. I am happy without you in my life,” she crossed her arms over her chest.

“I didn’t know how to get in touch with you.”

“That is a fucking lie. Your parents know where we are. All you had to do was reach them. They see my kids every few months. So don’t waste that lie on me.”

“I’m not speaking to my parents.”

“Hmm could it be because you walked out on their only grand children?”

“Grand children?”

“Yes. They accept Nigel.”
“What? Where are Monica and Evan?”

“Wow you don’t even keep up with news, do you? Unfortunately they were in an accident. Neither survived the accident. Unlike you your parents stepped up and were always there when I needed them. I don’t know where you learned to run but it wasn’t from them.”

“I am so sorry,” he said sincerely, “I had no idea.”

“Of course you didn’t. Please remove yourself from my property.”

They both heard the door open. They looked and expected to see Edward instead it was Fiona. She walked to the edge of the stairs as she shook her head. She looked him in the eye as a single tear trailed down her cheek.

“Fiona, come give daddy a hug.”

“You are not my father. I don’t want you in my life. You didn’t want me then I don’t want you now. As far as I am concerned I have no father. Not until mom and Edward get married this fall. Then I’ll have a dad because he is more of a father than you can ever dream of being. You are a joke and I hope that you get a parasite that eats away your heart. You need to know the pain like the pain I had when I realized you were never coming back,” with a loud sob she turned and went back in the house and slammed the door.

Ryan stood there and stared at the door. He had no idea what had happened. The news of the marriage made him panic.

“Y-you're marrying that man?”

Bella knew that she couldn’t allow her daughter to look like a liar.

“Yes. He’s been a very good man and loves the kids. He never once turned his back on us. I love him with all my heart. More than I ever loved you. He is my other half. As you can see we do not need you here. We’ve survived this long without you we don’t need you now. I’ve got my own family with a real man. Leave and don’t come back, ever,” she went to the door.

“You haven’t seen the last of me Isabella. I’ll be back.”

Bella paused and turned to look at him. She shook her head and went into the house. She shut and locked the door. She slumped against the door and held her head in hands as she began to cry. She felt strong arms embrace her and he pulled her to his chest. Bella was terrified that he would fight for custody now. Ryan hadn’t before so she prayed that he wouldn’t. She didn’t know what he wanted but she had a feeling she would find out soon enough. She allowed Edward to carry her to her bedroom as she began to hiccup and the tears subsided. He sat her on the edge of bed and got her a bottle of water. Once she controlled her breathing she sipped the water. He knelt in front of her. His eyes were dark emerald with worry. He brushed her hair from her face and kissed her nose.

“You okay for a few minutes?”

“Yeah,” she whispered.

“Okay. I’m going to go help fix a quick dinner. You get comfortable and don’t worry about anything.”

“No. Edwa—”
“Nope not having any of it,” he stood and kissed her forehead.

Edward left the room and closed the door behind him. Bella stared at the door. She wondered how much he had heard. She wasn’t sure if she cared. They had been together for almost seven months and she knew she cared deeply about him. She knew then that she did love him because she wouldn’t have been able to say the words if it didn’t hold some truth. She wasn’t sure how much she loved him but it was definitely more than just a friend. She chuckled. It took her exe to make her realize that. She sighed and got off the bed. She went to her bathroom and washed her face. She changed into her favorite pair of yoga pants and a tank top. She picked up her cordless she kept by her bed.

“May I speak to Charlie please Billy?”

Billy was Jacob’s dad and her dad’s best friend. They worked together at the construction company. Her dad came to the line and she let him know what happened. Her dad of course wanted to come and kill him but she reassured him that everything was ok and that Edward would stay the night. He said he would make the call the Jacob so she wouldn’t have to relive it. For once she was pleased that Jacob worked at a respected law firm just in case. She hung up the phone with her dad and lay back on the bed. A short while later Edward returned with grilled cheese and soup.

“It was quick and the kids enjoyed being able to help.”

“Thank you so much,” she sat up and he placed the tray over her legs.

“So that was you exe,” he pulled the chair close to the bed.

“Yeah. I had no idea he was here. He followed me home from the grocery store. You guys pulled up right behind him.”

“I’m glad that we did. Who knows what could have happened. I’m glad you’re safe.”

“Hm,” she finished her bite and looked over to him, “I know we don’t do it often but I need you to spend the night.”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“Good. My dad made me promise that you’d stay tonight. He’s called Jacob just in case. He’s also probably called Felix down at the police station. I can’t believe this happened today. He’s never wanted to be part of her life.”

“It happens. He may not have anything else going on and he wants to try and pick up the last good thing in his life. Fiona though…wow. She really kind of laid it on him.”

“Shit I didn’t even go to her.”

“She locked herself in her room and said she would come see you when she was ready. She’s like a mini you. She’s such a grownup sometimes.”

“That’s my girl.”

“Nigel owes you five dollars.”

“Damn he used the ‘F’ word.”

“A few times. He was not happy. He and Adrian are talking. They want to talk it out
before they speak with us. He’s mad because he didn’t have a choice but this man made a choice to not be there. He is seriously pissed.”

“Yeah. I knew that was going to come up. Let me shower and I’ll be there to help bring it all together.”

“Take your time. My sister is going to bring me a change of clothes so she’ll be here soon.”

“Good I haven’t seen Derrika in a while.”

Bella finished dinner and showered. When she got out Derrika was there and hugged her. She was like a smaller feminine version of Edward. Her hair was darker and her eyes were a bit more jade coloured than emerald. She still had most of his height being 5’11. They chatted for a few minutes and she had to get home.

“Mom,” Fiona called.

“I’m coming.”

She went and sat with Fiona in her room.

“You're not going to send me to him are you?”

“Never.”

“Edward heard us. He didn’t say anything but I could tell.”

“It’s okay. He needed to think that there was someone here to protect us.”

“Okay. I am a little upset and I don’t really know how I should feel. I don’t like him.”

“I wish he hadn’t showed up here. He followed me. I would never make you go to him. Even though he is by birth your dad it doesn’t mean he gets a place in your life.”

“Good because I don’t want him to be in my life ever. I can never forgive him for what he did. It’s kind of too late for him to come and try to be my dad,” she hugged her tighter.

“I know. I called grandpa Charlie already,” she rubbed her back.

“Good. I love you mom and I do hope that you and Edward can someday get married,” she hugged her.

“We’ll see.”

Bella went to Nigel and they talked before she tucked him in. Adrian slept in his room on the trundle bed and she tucked him in too. Edward showered and got into bed with her. She snuggled back into him. He felt her breath even out and smiled and he held her tight.

“One day I’m gonna ask,” he said quietly.

He had no idea that she was still awake. A smile spread across her face and she went to sleep.

Two weeks later she got the paperwork she didn’t want to have.
Chapter 11

Bella sat in the office on the other side of the desk from Jacob. He had gotten papers prepared before they had even received the notice of custody from Ryan and his attorney. She had allowed Edward to keep her from flying off the handle and trying to kill the man. She tapped her foot as she waited for Jacob to finish the review of the new papers they had received from Ryan’s attorney.

“Well?” she asked nervously.

“Well,” he chuckled and put the papers down, “this is the easiest case I’ve had in my entire career thus far.”

“Really,” she let hope sink in just a little.

“Yeah I think that he had a public attorney that he could get to take his case pro-bono or he didn’t have to pay next to anything for this guy. His request is for full custody of a child he never even sought after for almost eight years. A normal attorney would have petitioned for split custody or weekend visitations first.”

“Well then that is a good sign. That makes me feel better. Am I going to have to bring Fiona into the court?” she leaned forward in her chair.

“There isn’t a hearing scheduled yet so as of right now no. We’ll have an audience with a judge then if he feels like it needs to be more than that there will be a hearing for custody. If there is, which I highly doubt, a hearing you’ve got everything you need to fight without even having to do anything. You have a dozen character witnesses, your own business, your own home and a stable relationship. We couldn’t lose this case if the apocalypse happened tomorrow,” he smiled reassuringly at Bella.

“Oh thank you so much,” she stood and hugged him over the desk.

“That makes me feel so good. I was kind of scared.”

“Everything is going to be fine. Now get home and try to relax. Ayasha also wanted me to remind you that we’re having dinner again Friday night.”

“I know I didn’t forget. I wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

Bella left the office with a bounce in her step. She was pleased that this would be easier than she had anticipated. She headed to the field to pick up the kids. She almost forgot about the snack. She stopped by Ukrop’s and picked up one of their premade sandwich trays and grabbed all the mini juice bottles they had in their cooler section. She arrived and handed out the food. Emmett approached once all the kids were preoccupied.

“What did Jacob say?”

“It’s the easiest case he’s ever had.”

“Wow sounds like Ryan had no idea what he was doing.”

“It was the best news I could ever receive. I am thoroughly happy,” she took a sip from her juice.
“So when are you and Edward getting married?”

“Pfft,” she spit out her juice, “what?!”

“Rumor has it,” he smiled and put an arm around her, “that you and he are tying the knot soon.”

“DAMMIT. Ryan must have said something to someone. Did I mention I hate small cities? I thought that Forks had been bad the little time we had spent there. Everyone is in everyone else’s business. Fiona kind of implied that Edward would be her dad this fall.”

“Hmm I think that is enough time for you to throw together a nice wedding. Alice and Rosie would love it,” he chuckled.

“We aren’t even thinking about that. It’s way too early in a relationship to think about that. Ya know? We don’t even live together. We both have children and we have to think about them before we make a decision like that,” except he did say he wanted to but it was a private moment when he thought I was sleep.

“hm, he rents which means his lease will eventually be up and your kids simply adore each other. I mean, Fiona about killed that Clarke kid when he shoved him into the lockers in the changing room. I do understand about it being early in the relationship though to be thinking about marriage. He cares deeply for you though. I’ve seen the way he looks at you and how much he loves your kids.”

“Yea, yea, yea. We’ll talk about that in another five months. I’d like at least a year under my belt before we make that kind of choice.”

“Rosie and I only knew each other nine months before I proposed.”

“You guys belong together. There isn’t anyone else in the world that would put up with your shit,” she laughed.

“Whatever. Did she tell you we’re trying for our own?” he pointed to the field.

“About time. You’ll make a great dad and your daughter will love you.”

“My son will be just like his dad.”

“You’re going to have a girl.”

“Don’t jinx me. I don’t want to go to jail for killing some young boy for touching my precious little flower.”

Bella laughed at the image of Emmett strangling some boy for grabbing his daughter’s ass. She shook her head and called the kids over to leave. It was Edward’s turn for dinner so they went to his place. Bella used her key and went in. She smiled. They had only exchanged keys a few weeks ago, for emergency purposes and to allow the kids access. She liked the idea.

“Hey kids,” Edward said as he arrived half an hour later.

They waved from the table where they were doing homework. He kissed Bella on the head and went up to his room to change.

“I think that school should be over now. I don’t think I can make it another month,” Fiona grumbled as she worked on her math.
“You’ll be grumbling half way through July about how you hate not being in school,” Bella said as she closed her laptop.

“Yea I know but I am bored already.”

“Well if your testing goes well next week you might not have to worry about being bored. You’ll be able to advance a grade.”

“I know but I don’t want to leave Nij. If I leave him what will he do?”

“We only have one class together now. Next year we might not have any. You’ll still be in the same school as me. Plus you’ll have a chance to have classes with Adrian. With the electives we could all end up in a class together,” Nigel said as he swung his feet.

“That’s true,” Bella said as she cleared her stuff off the table.

“Ooh I hadn’t thought of that.”

“And athletics. Nine times out of ten we’ll be on a team together,” Adrian said.

“Yes! This will work out perfectly. Now we just have to get Nigel advanced in everything too so when we graduate to junior high he won’t be left behind in primary.”

“We’ll see what we can do,” Bella laughed.

Alright kids I am thinking that it is a good night to teach you guys to make sushi,” he returned in jeans and a tee shirt.

“Yay,” Fiona cheered from her seat.

“After you finish your math,” Edward added as he pulled the materials out.

“Boo,” she frowned.

“I saw something in the yard when we drove I think I should show you,” Bella said with a pointed look at him.

“Did the garden crew screw up my rose bushes again? I told the leasing people to hire another team.”

He followed her to the front stairs and walked to his prized rose bushes. He inspected it closely. When he didn’t find anything wrong he turned to Bella.

“I needed to talk to you about something,” she shoved her hands in her pockets and looked at the ground.

“Uh oh what did I do?”

“Nothing. It’s just….I was talking to Emmett….and….you see….what I’m saying is,” she sighed and ran her hand over her face.

“Yes?” he smiled as she blushed.

“Will you move in with me?” she spit out but still had her hands over her eyes.

“W-what?” his jaw dropped.
“Ok this was a bad idea never mind. Let us just pretend that we didn’t have this conversation,” she turned to go back in the house.

“No,” he grabbed her arm, “what brought this on? What did Emmett say?”

“Well ya see….we’ve gotten close and there isn’t really a need….ya know,” she took a deep breath and looked him in the eye, “we basically spend every moment at each other’s place as it is. It would cut down on gas, you wouldn’t have to worry about a place when your lease is up, the kids get along fantastically and I’ve got the extra space. I purchased the house I’m in intending to expand the family one day.”

“Sure.”

“Really?” her eyes grew large in surprise.

“Why not? You stated all the valid points. You have two extra rooms, two incomes in the household makes things easier, the kids won’t whine about having to leave, I’m falling in love with you, I’m good at fixing stuff around the house, the dinners will be easier and my parents can’t complain about seeing them as often,” and did I mention I’m falling in love with you.

“What? Wow. Whoa! What was that part before fixing stuff?”

“The kids won’t whine,” he put his arms around her waist.

“Nope after that,” she smiled.

“Uh my parents can see all of them at one time,” he leaned in.

“Hm I think I heard something about love.”

“I’m falling for you,” he kissed her.

“Aww!” sounded from the front porch.

“We’ve been caught,” she blushed.

“Yea. I was planning on being a lot more romantic when I told you. My apologies.”

“I think that was still perfect. I kind like you a lot too,” she held his hand as they went back inside.

“You guys are so cute,” Adrian said.

“Yea whatever,” he ran his hand through his hair, “how about making some sushi?”

“Remember that conversation dad about what we talked about?”

“Hm let’s see I talk to you every day,” but I do remember the exact one you’re talking about.

“You know the one. That one time when you tucked me,” he raised his eyebrows as if to say ‘you know you know which one’.

“Oh yea,” he winked at him.

“Top of the list.”
“Yes sir,” Edward mock saluted him, “I promised at the top.”

“What are you boys talking about?” Bella asked as she got the rice and shrimp out.

“Nothing,” they said in unison.

“OH!” Fiona caught on because Adrian had told them.

“Totally agree,” Nigel said.

“Ok hold on why am I on the outside of this joke?”

“No worries mom. We promise you’ll know when you’re in on the joke,” Fiona smiled a little too innocently.

“You told them?” Edward asked.

“Yup.”

“Great,” he ran a nervous hand through his hair.

“Wash your hands,” Fiona said as she handed him the soap when she was done.

Edward smiled at the children because he knew now that they all knew about his feelings for Bella. He knew that his son liked her and that was more than he could ask for. The fact that her children approved made it even more worth it. He was scared they moved too fast since there were children involved. He then realized when everyone gets along it can never be too fast. He saw them as his own. He watched them as they worked on preparing dinner and that is how he wanted it to be. He felt the love and he wanted nothing more than to make it so. He was pleased that she had asked him to move in. He just hoped that he would have time to meet her parents again before the move. He did not want her father getting the wrong idea. He knew he had made a good impression on New Years when they had visited but he wanted to make sure it was more than just a weekend. He had the acceptance of her best-friends and wanted to make sure her family also approved. He would do it right.
Bella smoothed her hands over her suit nervously as they entered the judge’s chambers. Jacob was a few steps ahead of her. They sat on one side of the room as Ryan and his attorney sat on the other. They stood as the judge entered the room. They took their seats and remained quiet as the judge went over the papers in front of him. Bella grew nervous in the silence. She briefly wondered what the stenographer was writing since no one was speaking. Then the judge cleared his throat. He looked up at them.

“So this is Swan v. Mitchell. I have looked over the documents presented for decision of custody of one,” he glanced at a page, “Fiona Simone Swan age eight. After carefully reviewing the materials I do have a few questions for you Mr. Mitchell.”

“Yes your honor?”

“I see here that you were there at time of young Miss Swan’s birth and the year thereafter but I do not see any proof of where you have taken part of her life since. Why the sudden desire to be there?”

“I have always kept up with my child support and financially provided for my child so I am entitled to seeing her.”

“I never questioned the commitment to pay your child support. Financially providing for a child doesn’t make you a parent. I am just curious after seven almost eight years, why are you interested in being part of her life?”

“Well sir. I was in a dark place for a very long time. I was not of sound mind to care for a child. I returned to seek custody because I have gotten my life together and am prepared to be a good father and husband.”

“Mr. Mitchell I am not showing any evidence of you having lived any life except of one of privilege with your computer software company. Looking over your financial history and medical history I have not seen anything that shows where you have ever had an addiction or lived at the poverty line. You do understand that lying to me in my chambers is the same as perjury on the stand, correct?”

“Yes your honor,” Ryan replied nervously.

Ryan’s attorney began to sweat as the conversation continued. The judge finished with Ryan and turned to Bella.

“Ms. Swan, before the last few months when Mr. Mitchell submitted the papers for custody, had he tried to contact you to see Miss Swan?”

“No your honor.”

“When did he first get in touch with you about this matter?”

“Ryan saw me at the grocery store and followed me home. He approached me on my property and asked to see her. At which time I did request him to leave us alone. Ryan caused my daughter to get very upset and since then I have had to have her normally schedule appointments with a therapist to aid in coping with the situation,” Bella spoke confidently as she looked him in the eye.
“How hard would it have been for him to reach you?”

“Not hard at all. I am listed in the phone book with my business as well as my personal landline. Also the children see his parents every couple of months so they are aware of how to get in contact with me. I’ve never attempted to hide.”

“Thank you. Part of the petition states that you cannot provide for Miss Swan and I have reviewed your income statements and I see no such thing. Not only have you provided for her but there is another child Nigel Evan Douglas-Swan. I am showing that you have sole custody of him as well, am I correct?”

“Yes your honor. Nigel is my nephew of which I adopted upon the passing of both of his parents. There was a time that I moved back in with my parents when things had gotten tight. I have however for the last several years provided for both my children with my own income and have never struggled to do so.”

The judge nodded as he read over something else on the page.

“Another thing that was brought to my attention was that you are in a relationship with one Edward Anthony Masen Jr. What is the status of this relationship?”

“Excuse me?” Bella was taken off guard.

“Bella answer him honestly. He needs all the details to make an educated decision,” Jacob said softly.

“Well, uh, Edward and I have been seeing each other for about nine months. He also has a child Adrian Masen. We are in a serious relationship this isn’t a fling if that is what you are wondering. I had not dated previously. I waited until I knew that the children were old enough to understand.”

“Okay. You and Mr. Masen have intentions of being wed later this year?”

_Shit. I knew this would come back and bite me. I cannot perjure myself._

“Your honor,” Bella took a deep breath, “Edward and I have no intentions of being wed this year. Fiona made a comment indicating such as a scare tactic to defend herself. I confirmed what she said because I always vowed to back up my daughter. I had no idea that it would come up like this. I am not in the habit of condoning lying with my child but it was her security that I was concerned about at the time,” she didn’t want to look like a bad parent.

“Understood. I am going to take an hour to make my decision. We will reconvene at thirteen hundred. We are adjourned for now,” he tapped his small gavel.

Bella stood and followed Jacob out of the room. Ryan looked at her with only what she could assume was hatred. The judge had caught him in several different lies and made a point in pointing it out and with what evidence. Bella felt confident but was still scared.

“I’m going to get custody of my daughter,” Ryan spit at her.

“Excuse us but you are not to talk to my client,” Jacob stepped in front of her and towered over Ryan, “make no assumptions. The judge has heard everything that he needed to know. He’ll make the decision. Now excuse us but we are going to have lunch while we wait.”

Bella choked back a laugh as Ryan looked up at Jacob. She allowed Jacob to guide her around him with a firm hand placed on her lower back. Once in the safety of the café across the
street she allowed herself to laugh.

“I thought he was going to piss himself when you stood in front of him.”

“So did I,” Jacob laughed as he looked over the menu, “I never realized how small he was until then. He’s an inch or two shorter than you so he’s like a foot shorter than me. I can be intimidating when I have to be.”

“Yes you can.”

They ate lunch and Bella texted Edward to let him know they were about to get the answer. He had stayed home with the kids so he would be there when she got back.

**No worries my love. We will win. 143.**

Bella smiled and placed her phone back in her purse after she turned it off. She was happy that he thought of them as a combined unit. That made it easier for her to make it through the day. They waited in the chambers for the judge to come back. The judge returned and sat behind his desk a few moments without a word spoken.

“In the case of Swan v. Mitchell I hereby rule in favor of Ms. Isabella Swan. If it is pleasing to her Mr. Mitchell you are allowed visitation once a month supervised. She will notify the guardians with the days and we will provide the person that will supervise you. You must work with her schedule and location she chooses. We will set a court date for the beginning of next year to revisit the case. At which time you can again petition for more visitations. I will let you know now that there is no use in you requesting custody because no judge in the state will rule in your favor.”

“Yes your honor,” he said defeated.

“Meeting adjourned. I’ve got a golf game to get to you have a great afternoon.”

Bella jumped up and hugged Jacob. They allowed Ryan and his ever quiet attorney to leave first. They headed straight to her house. Jacob popped the bottle of champagne and a bottle of sparkling juice for the kids. Bella hugged Fiona to her chest.

“You’re mine forever.”

“Well duh,” Fiona said with a laugh.

“Now I do have a question for you. The judge said it is up to us if he is allowed to see you. You don’t have to go with him. He can come here or what have you. I am leaving that decision up to you.”

“Okay. He can come over here,” she said mischievously, “for the family dinner next week.”

“Sure. I’ll call the court and let them know,” she said skeptically.

“Uncle Jake,” Nigel called.

“Yeah?”

“Did you scare him?”

“Yup,” he laughed, “I scared him without having to say much of anything.”
“Good.”

“I guess I should bring the grill over and an extra table,” Edward said as he kissed Bella on the cheek.

“Yeah.”

They celebrated that night out at their new favorite restaurant, Zone. Edward was proud of his restaurant. They had done well and he was very pleased with the steady regulars and everyone seemed to love it there. He was pleased to his family in his place of business that he knew would mean nothing without them.

****

Bella looked over the yard and was happy to see that her family and his family meshed so well that one would have thought they had known each other for years. Charlie and Edward Sr. talked sports as they manned the grill while Elizabeth and Renee talked about more grandchildren. She was pleased that her friends had also joined. The look of Emmett, Jacob, and Edward side by side was intimidating even though they were laughing. She watched the kids play and sighed a happy sigh. She knew the guardian would be there soon and so would Ryan. She sensed Fiona was up to something but she wasn’t sure what. She heard the door bell and walked back through the house to the front.

“Hi Ms. Swan I’m Gretchen the court appointed guardian for visitations.”

“Come on in. We’re in the backyard. We’re having a family barbeque.”

“Oh I feel like I’m intruding.”

“No worries. We’ve got plenty of food. Well as long as you get there before the boys,” Bella laughed, “Ryan isn’t here yet but help yourself to whatever.”

“Thank you.”

Bella watched as everyone immediately accepted her as well. She knew why Fiona had made the decision that she had. Her daughter was devious and she knew she got that from her side of the family. Bella refilled the cooler with ice and threw out all the empty bottles. The door bell finally rang one last time. She sighed and opened the door. Ryan stood there with a grimace on his face and was not happy clearly that he had to be there.

“Come on back,” she said pleasantly.

“Thank you,” Ryan grumbled.

They walked through the house and to the backyard. Ryan paused and looked around at everyone. They were there together as a family and the love showed on their faces. He was introduced to the guardian and was shocked that she too seemed to be part of the bigger family. Fiona smiled at him and shook his hand. She looked up at him with innocent eyes.

“Ryan this is my family and these are my friends. This is my life. Do you feel like you should be part of it?” she stood in front of him with her hands clasped in front of her.

Ryan looked around again. He knew he didn’t belong there and he knew that he only was there to piss off Bella. All eyes were on him. He didn’t like her parents and he didn’t like the way Edward had his arm around her. He didn’t want to be there. He shook his head and left back the way he came. There was a uniformed sigh from everyone and they picked right back up
where they had left off as if he had never shown up.
Edward handed another beer to Emmett and sat down in his recliner. They cheered for the Bulls as they scored. Jasper passed the chips and he opened his beer. The game went to commercial. Edward turned to Emmett.

“Thanks again for making the suggestion to Bella about me moving in. She thought it was her idea so it made it easier.”

“No problem. I don’t mind aiding in the happiness of the worlds cutest couple.”

“Naw I think Alice and I have that title,” Jasper said with a smile.

“That is true. So how’s the baby making coming along?” Edward asked.

“Eh. I thought I loved sex until it became work. My little Em is just like fuck it some days. I think she’s been on the pill too long. I think she’s sterile,” Emmett said with his head hung.

“Poor guy,” Jasper chuckled, “isn’t it part of the exam to get both of you checked to see how fertile you are?”

“Yeah we’re both fine. I just didn’t think it would be hard to get a girl pregnant.”

“It’ll happen,” Edward said and patted his back.

“Soon hopefully. I’m getting a little old to be raising a child. We’re in our prime. We’ve got like another seven years before we’re going to be too old to be a parent. I don’t want to be a grandpa age raising a teenager.”

“You’ll get her pregnant before you know it. I wasn’t trying and it happened so you won’t have to wait too much longer.”

“I hope so.”

They turned back to the game and finished up. They went to meet Edward Sr. for a game of golf at the country club. Edward made sure they all changed and warned Emmett about his temper. He didn’t want to get kicked out the country club again.

“Hey dad.”

“Good to see you boys. I’ve got everything already set up for us. Let’s get in the carts and go.”

Edward loved that his dad enjoyed spending time with him and his friends. They had made it a monthly outing that all the men got together. Charlie usually joined them as well but he had taken Renee on their honey moon after they had renewed their vows. It had been a beautiful ceremony that Alice and Bella had planned. He was pleased to have been part of it. He was glad to be part of the family functions that were popular in the Swan family. He had even been invited to several of the Mitchell family events. He knew that the more he appeared at functions she would feel that he belonged. That was part of why he had talked to Emmett about making the suggestion that they move in together. He knew if he had said it that she would have felt they were moving too fast. Since she thought of it as her idea it was nothing to her.
They parted ways in the early evening and he headed to meet Bella for dinner. The kids had a birthday slumber party so they were gone for the rest of the evening. He stopped by his place and changed before he headed to her house. When he rounded the corner of her street he panicked. There were police everywhere and he didn’t see her. Edward pulled to a stop and raced from the car. An officer tried to stop him but he pushed him aside and vaulted over the yellow tape. He heard people yell at him to stop but he was in search for his girlfriend.

“Bella!” he yelled as he tried to brush hands away, “Bella!”

For a moment he thought back to A Streetcar Named Desire and promised if everything was alright he would laugh about it later.

“Edward!”

Edward stopped and turned around. Bella was in the backyard with an officer. He rushed to her side and wrapped his arms around her. She sobbed into his chest as he held her.

“Baby…what the hell happened here? The windows are broken and the place is trashed.”

“S-someone broke in. I g-got home and the front door was kicked in and a brick had been thrown through the front window. I called the cops immediately and went to Esme’s until they got here.”

“Oh baby. I’m so sorry I wasn’t here.”

The police allowed Edward to console Bella a few minutes before they resumed questioning. They covered everything they had to before they let her go. Bella went back in and packed a few bags for her and the kids. They went back across the street to her neighbors. She made the calls she knew she had to make to her insurance company then the parents where the kids were. She made sure they knew she’d pick them up instead of them being dropped off in the morning.

“Here you are,” Esme handed her a mug of tea.

“Thank you so much Esme,” she sipped the tea and immediately knew something had been slipped in to calm her nerves.

“Did you want to stay here this evening?” she sat across from her.

“No. I’ll be staying at Edward’s. I’m just not ready to leave the street yet,” she sipped some more.

Esme smiled over to Edward as he held Bella’s hand. She knew that already but she wanted to still offer.

“I wish I had been home. I gave them the film that the cameras here had recorded. They don’t reach all the way across to your place but maybe they had cased it out or at least we get the tags.”

“I’m just glad you had the security cameras installed. There has to be something on there.”

“I’ve got a call in to my guys. As soon as the police release the scene they’ll be there to make repairs. It’ll be all fixed and ready to come home to by tomorrow evening.”
“You are the best.”

“It’s why I’m here. Your insurance company would have taken weeks. There is no need for you to have to worry about that when I’m here and can have it done quickly.”

“I don’t know how I’ll repay you.”

“You’ll help me find another location to expand the design firm. I hear that the old Candid building has a few floors left for lease,” she winked at her.

“Oh it’s yours. That would be wonderful. Let me know when you’re ready to take it over and it’s yours.”

“Thank you.”

“What’s going on at Bella’s?” Carlisle asked as he came in the house from work.

“She’s here honey. Someone broke in.”

“Oh Bella are you okay?”

“Yes sir. I wasn’t home at the time.”

“Good. These times are getting rough. So sorry that something like that had to happen. Not wishing it on anybody but they could have hit a few doors down.”

“Carlisle!” Esme tried to hide her smile.

“I’m just saying if it had to happen it would have made me feel better if it was James and Victoria than our sweet little Bella,” he commented as he undid his tie.

“Who are James and Victoria?” Edward asked.

“They’re the lottery winners. In the neighborhood most of us are old money or like Bella here worked hard as nails to get where she is. They are lottery winners. If James hadn’t asked for help with investments from Carlisle they’d be broke by now. They are beyond lavish,” Esme explained, “they’re…uh…how to put it nicely?”

“They’re like a bad blue collar tour that planted their feet here in our town,” Carlisle supplied as he sat down beside Esme.

“Really?” Edward couldn’t help but laugh.

“Don’t encourage him,” Bella said happy to feel her heart lift.

“They are not the traditional society dwellers,” Esme said with a soft smile, “they tend to be a little extravagant when they don’t need to be.”

“Hm, the Lotus with the runner lights?” Edward asked.

“Yes,” Carlisle said with a snort of laughter.

They talked a few more minutes. Bella almost dropped her empty mug and Esme smiled. She took the mug and winked at Edward. Bella was a little giggly as Esme and Carlisle directed her to Edward’s car. She was safely in the car and strapped in when Edward turned to Esme.
“No worries she’ll be ok. I slipped a little cocktail in there to keep her from freaking out. She’ll be fine. As soon as you get her back to the house she’ll be knocked out.”

“Thanks.”

“Take care of her. I’ll call in the morning with the progress of the repairs.”

“Thank you so much. She really appreciates it,” he said then jumped as the horn sounded.

“Come on big daddy I want to play doctor,” Bella yelled from the window.

“Yea she’s going to go through the loopy stage for a few more minutes then she’ll be back to normal and sleep,” Carlisle said chuckling.

“This is going to be an interesting drive. Have a good evening.”

“You too.”

Edward got in the car and started it. He shook his head at the sight of her waving like a small child to the Cullen’s. Once they hit the road she was a bit calmer. Bella laughed and pointed at everything that passed the window. When he pulled into his driveway he was pleased to see she was drifting to sleep. He carried her in and laid her on his bed then went back for her bags. As Edward took her bags in he called the restaurant and canceled their reservation and rescheduled it for next week. He smiled down at her as she stretched across the entire bed. He pulled the afghan over her from the end of the bed. Edward knew there was no way he’d be able to move her without her waking. He went to his dresser and pulled out his pajamas and changed. He went to the kitchen to make himself something to eat since they were not going out to dinner. After he ate he grabbed his phone and called to the Whitlock-Brandon house hold.

“Hey Jasper this is Edward is Alice available?”

“Yeah let me get her.”

“Hey there cowboy what’s up?” Alice asked a few minutes later.

“I’m not sure if Bella had talked to you but there was a break in at her house.”

“Shit is she okay?”

“Yeah. She is supposed to pick the children up from the sleep over in the morning and I don’t think she is going to be able to do it.”

“So you just need me to get them when I got get Harmony.”

“Yes please,” he stirred the soup.

“Not a problem. I can take Adrian shopping for his birthday party supplies. That way we have a theme down.”

“Great idea. Thank you so much.”

“Have they closed the scene or made any guesses?”

“Not yet. She’s sleep after she took a sedative. I just want to give her time before the kids have to be told.”
“I’ll make sure they don’t see the news or anything. Something happening in that neighborhood is definitely going to be a top story.”

“I know,” he poured himself a small glass of scotch.

“Well take care of her and if need be we can do a sleepover here tomorrow night.”

“We’ll see what tomorrow is like.”

“Go get some rest. When she wakes up she’s going to be Isabella and that is never fun.”

“What’s the difference between Bella and Isabella?”

There was a dark taunting laugh from Alice, “oh just you wait and see.”

“You have me scared.”

“You should be very scared. I’d wear a cup just in case. Have a good evening.”

Edward shook his head as he sat his phone down. He was glad that Alice had brought up Adrian’s birthday he had almost forgotten he had promised he could have a party. It would be his first big party. He hoped that he would pick out a simple theme and nothing too complicated to put together. Though he knew that between Bella and Alice it would be nothing. They had a couple of weeks to put it together. He made a grilled cheese sandwich to go along with his tomato soup and ate his dinner. He smiled at the sleeping Bella as he checked on her. He made himself comfortable in the guest room and was fast asleep.

****

Bella stretched and rolled over onto her side. She froze in the bed. She knew right away she wasn’t in her bed. She opened one eye and looked around. She relaxed once she realized it was Edward’s bed. She smiled and frowned as she realized that he wasn’t there with her. She sat up and giggled. She was in the middle of the bed at a diagonal and there would have been no room for him. She looked down and saw that she was still in her work clothes from the previous day.

Bella got out of bed and immediately took a shower. She spotted her bag by the door and retrieved it. She dressed and followed the smell of fresh French press coffee to the kitchen. She grabbed the mug as he handed it to her.

“I think that I’m going to have marry you sir,” she said as she used her other hand to take the plate of food.

“Only if you promise to let me in the bed.”

“Sorry about that.”

“No worries. I didn’t want to wake you. I slept fine in the spare room. Esme called this morning to let me know that I needed to give you a hearty breakfast so that you bounce back.”

“She drugged me,” she said around a mouthful of eggs.

“Yup.”

They ate a few moments in silence at the kitchen table. Bella refilled her cup and
grabbed another muffin. She sat back down and looked up at Edward.

“So we’re going to go by the police station to see where they’re at in this investigation. After that we’ll head to pick up the kids. Then we’ll go by the house to see how far along everything is and then we can schedule a lunch time. I’ll tell the kids what happened I’m a little better with the emotional side of this than I think you can be. Fiona will need you to hold her back from destroying something. I’ll drop them off with my parents because I am going to need some sex tonight. After the sex you’ll make dinner then we’ll go another round. Once we’re done we’ll shower and go grab the kids.”

Edward was frozen with a forkful of eggs half way to his mouth. He looked at her and realized what Alice had meant. He put his fork down and wiped his face. He cleared his throat.

“Uh, Alice will get the kids. I spoke with her last night. The police said they’d call when they had something. I don’t think that I can just have sex because it’s on a schedule.”

“Great Alice has the kids. That gives us a little more free time this morning,” she smiled as she stood and took her plate to the kitchen.

“I’m going to finish breakfast then shower.”

“You have fifteen minutes to get ready. I will leave without you,” she said as she grabbed her purse.

Edward mentally groaned and wondered if he had a cup in his gym bag. He finished eating as quickly as he could and took a fast shower and was dressed as she tapped her foot in the front hall way. He had two minutes left he knew it.

“I called the office and Kelley has cleared my schedule for the next two days. I’ll be in need of new furniture for the living room and new consoles for the game room. We’ll hit Ikea and Pier One then Gamestop. I’ll have to make a full list once we’ve been able to inventory the house. Alice is taking the kids to the park and shopping for Adrian. She said she will keep them tonight. I have made an appointment with the insurance company they will be out tomorrow to get the estimate and cut me a check for the stolen items. The police will fax over the pictures of the damage so they can reimburse Esme.”

“Bella,” he stopped her outside the car.

“Yes Edward?”

“Stop. Everything doesn’t need to be scheduled and in order. I know you feel vulnerable right now but everything isn’t going to change just because you have a list.”

“Please call me Isabella,” she got in his car.

He groaned as he walked to his side of the car. He hoped that he had that bottle of Advil in the car. He knew that it would be a long day.

Edward watched in pure shock and awe as Bel-Isabella worked the room in the police station. He vaguely recalled the scene from Boondock Saints II when Special Agent Eunice had shown up. He added that to his list of things to laugh about once this was all said and done. He was terrified of the fierce short woman. He had never seen a six foot tall detective flinch away from anyone smaller than him. Poor Detective Clearwater never saw her coming. They put a rush on everything to get results as soon as possible. As they were about to leave the detective called them back in to the office. They had been able to get a hit of the partial print.
Ryan Gregory Mitchell.
Chapter 14

Bella inhaled and a low growl rose through her. She balled her hands into fist and spit on the floor. She was so angry that she knew that something had to be done. She felt as Edward tried to calm her with his touch but she was having none of that. She punched her fist through the first thing she could. The entire room went silent as the chalk board with the details of her break in splintered. Edward stepped back and left her with a wide span of space.

“Well I guess that’s where the term mad enough to spit comes from,” one of the female officers said.

“You know this Ryan I presume?”

“He’s her daughter’s father. They had a custody battle just a few months ago.”

“Really? Who got custody?”

“She maintained full custody,” Edward said softly as he watched her curse and pace.

“That makes him prime suspect especially now that we have fresh prints from him.”

“Where’s Felix?” Isabella asked as she rejoined the circle.

“He’s on his way. He had gone home to get some rest. I just paged him to return since we have a lead. He’s grabbing Sam and they’re going to pick up your exe.”

“I think it’s best if we go grab a bite to eat then come back since they have to go get him.”

“Oh no you don’t I am not leaving here,” she stood with her arms crossed firmly over her chest.

Edward ran a nervous hand over his face and took a deep breath prepared to fight with Isabella. Her phone went off and she quickly answered it. Her eyes grew large as she spoke rapidly into the phone. She hung up quickly and grabbed her purse.

“We have to get to the hospital. Fiona’s hurt.”

“I’ll drive.”

Edward and Bella moved quickly through the police station to the doors. He got in and headed from the station to the hospital once she told him which hospital she was at. He kept silent as he was pleased that Bella had returned to him. He patted her thigh to keep her calm. They reached the hospital and were met immediately by Alice, Harmony, Adrian and Nigel.

“Where is she?” Bella asked.

“In X-ray. I am so sorry,” Alice wept.

“What happened?”

“Mom please don’t be mad,” Nigel said with his eyes pleading.

“Nigel I can’t be mad she’s alive and that’s what matters just tell me what happened.”
“Well…” he looked at his feet, “we were on the ATV and it flipped.”

“Y-you were on what?”

“I saved all my money for the last few years and grandpa Charlie helped and we got an ATV. He didn’t know we were out back. We had Alice take us there under the impression that it was ok. We hit a hill. I fell off and bumped my head but we had on our helmets. Then the thing turned over on her. It’s all my fault.”

“I didn’t know until it happened that they were not supposed to be there. Your parents weren’t home so I brought her straight here.”

“Crap. They aren’t going to be happy. I’ll have to discuss their little secret with them.”

They sat in the waiting room and waited for someone to come and get them. Bella paced and chewed on her lip nervously.

“Ms. Swan,” a doctor called.

“Yes?”

“Good you made it. I see that young Ms. Fiona takes after her mother.”

“Dr. Hines,” she smiled weakly.

“She’s going to be okay. She fractured her leg. You can go on back. They’re putting a cast on it now. Here’s the prescriptions. She’s going to be alright. She has the same courage as her mom,” the grey haired doctor said with a smile.

“Thank you so much.”

“I’ll have the release forms in a bit for you.”

They all went back to the room. All the older staff greeted Bella by name as they passed. She blushed. She was sure it had been several years since her last accident. Though she had spent a lot of time there in her younger years because she was prone to being clumsy.

“Mom! Look I got this awesome purple cast!” Fiona said excitedly from the bed.

“Hey there dear. I’m glad to see you’re ok.”

“I’m better than ok. I broke my first bone. They seemed shocked since I’m your daughter. They got the X-rays back so quick.”

“Pain meds,” Alice mumbled.

“Well I’m glad,” Bella hugged her, “that you’re okay. I was so worried.”

“Please don’t be mad at us. We just wanted to have fun. Aunt Alice didn’t know any better. We kind of lied to her. Adrian and Harmony had so much fun too. We are so sorry.”

“Honey I’m not even going to think about that right now. I am so glad that you’re ok.”

“Cool.”

Bella made sure that Edward and the kids were out before she sat down to talk to Fiona. She wanted to go straight home so she could call her friends to come sign her cast. Alice
ushered them out so she could have time alone.

“Fiona there is something that I have to let you know.”

“Uh oh are you and Edward breaking up?”

“Uh no. This is more serious than that type of deal. Last night the house was broken into. They are out there doing repairs.”

“Holy crap mom.”

“Yes. So we’ll be staying at Edward’s tonight. The police have a lead but I don’t want us to be alone there until we’re sure he’s been captured.”

“Okay.”

“Are you okay with this or are the meds they have you on clouding your mind?”

“I’m good mom. Is that why everyone else left because you thought that I was going to flip out?”

“Maybe.”

“Mom. Bad crap happens. I can’t believe someone broke into our house but as long as you’re okay that’s what matters.”

“You are too grown for your own good sometimes.”

“I broke my leg. I cried for a bit so I’m not too grown up.”

“I would’ve cried too,” she hugged her again.

“Well then I don’t feel bad.”

Once the cast had dried completely they let them go. Edward lifted Fiona into the car and watched as she reassured Alice that all was well. Bella put the crutches in the trunk and they headed back to his place. They sat with Nigel and Adrian and explained what had happened as well. They made sure that they understood that it was going to be safe and didn’t have to worry about it being repeated at his house.

“I’ll cook you guys some food while you get cleaned up,” Edward said as he made his way to the kitchen.

Bella helped Fiona get cleaned up. As she handed her a shirt to put on when her cell rang. She made sure that Fiona was ok before she went to answer. It was Felix. She was excited to hear from him but also angry. It brought back the knowledge that her exe had went to drastic ends for no reason. They talked for several minutes. Ryan still had not given his motive for his actions but he had admitted to it. She let him know that she was not in place to where she could come down yet. She wanted to be with her family. He laughed about the small hole she had put in the chalk board and promised there wouldn’t be any fees attached. He was glad that she was ok and that she hadn’t hurt herself. She ended the call and went to the kitchen. She looked down at her hand. It was only a few scratches no real damage.

“So they caught the guy and he admitted to the crime. He hasn’t given them a reason why. I told Felix I’d be down in the morning and would take care of the paper work.”
“Yay! The bad guy goes down,” Fiona said as she twirled the noodles on her fork.

“Youp.”

“That was kind of quick,” Nigel said.

“Yeah. They found his prints there and he was on file. They are excited too about being able to close this case.”

Edward watched her carefully. He knew that this was going to have an effect on her and he just wasn’t sure how. She seemed composed but the kids were around so he knew that she would never reveal how she truly felt. Her phone rang and she grabbed it and excused herself from the table. He started up with questions about Adrian’s birthday party so their attention would be focused.

Bella went to the back patio and shut the door and she picked up the call. It was Jacob. There was a meeting with the judge from the custody case tomorrow. She hadn’t expected something from him so soon. Then she realized that charges were being pressed so it did have a response through the judicial system. She sighed and mentally prepared herself for the long day that was in front of her. She thanked Jacob and went back to lunch.

“Everything okay?” Fiona asked.

“I just some more stuff to tack on to my long day tomorrow,” she made eyes at Edward to let him know they’d talk about it later.

“Ya know since I’m in a cast now my summer is going to suck.”

“No way. You can get a head start on your summer reading list,” Nigel said with a smile.

“Sure because that is going to make it easier for me knowing that you guys are out running the streets while I’m stuck in the house. Six weeks that’s the rest of the summer!” she groaned and allowed the fork to clatter to her plate.

“We’ll make some special things for you to do,” Edward said, “I’ve got a load of model cars that need to be put together. Plus with you here Lucky won’t feel so lonely. You can keep her company.”

“I guess.”

They finished lunch and the boys helped keep Fiona company while Edward and Bella left to go get ice cream for dessert. Bella waited until they were down the road before she left out the frustration. A string of profanity escaped before she could speak coherently.

“I’ve got to see the judge tomorrow.”

“Really? That’s kind of quick.”

“About the custody situation. That was Jacob.”

“Crap. Well it can’t be bad.”

“Right but I just hate being in front the judge.”

“We’ll get through this,” he said and held her hand.
There’s that we again. She thought happily but also a bit sad. She knew that she loved him. She could admit that but she wasn’t ready for it to be more than a fresh new relationship. Even though they would be living under the same roof in a few months there was still some hesitance in saying it out loud. She wouldn’t let that get to her though. She had more than enough on her plate for the next few days. She talked to Esme before she went to bed. The work had been completed and was ready whenever they were. She let her know that they would be staying an additional night away. Esme just giggled and made her promise to drop by after everything was taken care of.

****

Bella walked with Jacob into the court house. She allowed him to guide her to the chambers. She was shocked that Ryan was there in shackles. She took her eyes away from him immediately. They stood when the judge came in.

“As a result of the actions that were taken two days ago all visitation has been revoked. There is no chance in the future for visitation and parental rights have been completely and utterly removed from Mr. Ryan Mitchell. There cannot be any appeals. I don’t know what the motivation was that you had but you are not allowed within 10,000 feet of any of Swan family members. I signed the restraining order myself this morning just in the unlikely chance you make bail.”

“You can’t do that to me!” Ryan shouted.

“I can and I have. This was not up for discussion I just wanted to make sure that you understood before your sentencing for the other crimes. You are all dismissed. Take him out of my sight.”

Bella watched unbelieving how smoothly everything had gone. They waited for Ryan to be removed before they left the office of the judge. Jacob guided her to his car. She was still lost in a world of wonder. She had planned on getting a restraining order but had never thought that it would be done for her. It was odd but she felt safer and justified.

“If he makes bail the judge has already ordered a protection detail for a few days. Since his bail is set at $600,000 I don’t think he’ll be making it,” Jacob said with a smile.


“None what so ever. One other thing I’d like to do also is update your living will. I know it’s kind of morbid but I don’t want to risk anything at all.”

“No I get that. My parents get custody of the kids and if they aren’t able to then Edward gets custody,” she said without a thought.

“Bella,” Jacob tried to repress his smile.

“Yeah,” she looked over at him.

“You realize what you just said?” he glanced at her as he drove.

“Uh...” she thought about it, “crap. Shit. Wow.”

“Hmm...kind of coming to realization of something you’ve been hiding huh?”

“Yeah. I’m completely head over heels in love with Edward friggin Masen.”
Chapter 15

Bella walked the kids through the remodeled house. She had panicked after her realization of how intense her feelings for Edward were. She had distanced herself in the excuse of having to get the house back in order. When she had returned home from the judge’s office she had packed up their belongings and was gone before Edward had gotten home from work. She had called him on his lunch break to let him know how it had gone. He was enthusiastic and wanted to celebrate but she told him she wanted to spend the night with the kids.

The next day Bella had Broadview put in security system that would alert the police if someone broke into the house or if the fire alarm went off for heat as well as smoke. She felt more secure and she felt at ease if she had to leave the kids at home while she ran errands. She had also enrolled in a self defense class. Alice had joined her and they did it twice a week after work. She felt a little more liberated and it also gave her excuse for spending less time with Edward.

Bella stepped out the shower and dressed for the evening out with the kids. Alice would be by to pick them up in half an hour for movies and ice cream. She hadn’t invited Adrian because it was her day off from Edward until she was ready to tell him in more depth exactly how she felt. He knew that she liked him a lot but not to that extent. She checked to make sure that the kids were dressed as well. She raced to the house phone as it rang. She usually allowed the kids to get it since it was usually for them but they were in the middle of dressing.

“Hello?” she said breathless.

“Ms. Bella?”

“Hey Adrian what’s up?” she tied her hair back as she cradled the phone against her shoulder.

“Can you come and get me? Jill forgot me and dad is out at grandpas until eight.”

“Oh baby boy of course. Where are you?”

“I’m at Josh’s. Since you guys were with family today dad dropped me here before he left.”

Ah shucks, “okay that is closer to Alice. She is on her way here so I’ll have her pick you up on the way. You can join us tonight. Don’t call your dad though. We’ll surprise him.”

“Ok. See ya in a bit then. Bye bye.”

“Bye.”

Bella smiled glad to hear his smile at the end of the call. She clicked the phone back on and called Alice. When they got there she changed plans since she knew that Adrian probably hadn’t eaten. As much as she hated it she took them to Chill Spot, the pre-teen hang out with an arcade and restaurant. She knew that the kids would like the games and were too old for Chuck-e-cheese’s.

“So have you come to your senses now? If you hadn’t blown him off his kid would have been with us anyway,” Alice said as she dipped a fry in ranch dressing.

“Yeah. I’m gonna stop being a pain in the ass.”
“Good. Plus the guy is going to be living with you a matter of months so it’s better if you just get it together now instead of waiting for you to try and figure things out. So are you going to be getting a bigger bed?”

“Uh why?” she asked as she sipped her water.

“You only have like what a double. There is no way you're going to be sleeping in that small bed with him.”

“I have a queen. It’s more than enough space plus he’ll be sleeping in his room.”

“I know you didn’t just say what I think that you said,” she looked her intensely in the eye.

“What?”

“You guys are sharing a room?”

“No. I think it would send the wrong message to the kids.”

“Have you even told the kids?”

“No,” she looked down at her plate.

“OMG! Belly. You need to get it together.”

“I will.”

Alice shook her head as she stood to refill her drink. Bella bit her lip worried about the sleeping arrangements even though they had already made that decision. Maybe it would be worst trying to fool the kids. They did understand the relationship was more than just friends. She groaned and put her head down on the table. She looked up again and saw Alice playing Area 51 with Adrian, Harmony and Fiona played DDR and Nigel was intense as he played Tekken. She smiled as her phone rang. She chuckled at the caller id and cleared her throat as she answered. She walked briskly to the quiet of the lobby.

“Hey Edward.”

“Hey Bella,” he sounded panicked.

“How’s your day?” she asked and tried to keep the humor out of her voice.

“Uh, it’s good. Have you heard from Jill?”

“No I haven’t why?”

“Oh nothing.”

Edward had promised her that he would hire someone else since she wasn’t taking care of them to best of her ability. She had forgotten all three of them while she had been at a convention in New York. Edward has said it was a mistake and it had been their first fight. She would not allow it to happen again.

“Are you guys ready for Adrian’s birthday?”

“Uh sure. Has Josh Hanson’s mom called by chance?”
“Uh no. Edward you sound a little upset. Are you sure everything is ok?”

“Bella,” he said her name so dramatically she had to bite her lip not to laugh, “I can’t find Jill and she was supposed to get Adrian. I called Josh’s because I was going to be home early and he isn’t there. I came home and they aren’t here.”

“Hm sounds like a dilemma there young man,” she walked back in the restaurant.

“I don’t know what to do. I feel like I should call the police but there’s that 24 hour thing and I just don’t know what to do.”

“Edward. Take a breath, a nice long deep breath. Then listen to me.”

“Okay.”

“Adrian is fine. He is playing Area 51 with Auntie Alice.”

“He’s what? Huh?”

“Eddie baby, I picked him up when Jill didn’t show. We’re at the Chill Spot I just wanted it to sink in to you before I let you know. So I have the number of a great service that I used when the kids were younger and a few resumes of potential sitters. I will email them to you as soon as I’m off the phone with you. Shoot me your schedule and I can set up a few interviews for you if you want. We can do it together. Since we’ll be sharing the responsibility soon.”

“If I wasn’t so relieved I would so be mad at you right now. I’ll meet you guys there in a few.”

“Later.”

Bella smiled as she sat back at the table and emailed him the resumes she had saved just for that reason. They finished up dinner and when Edward arrived he took time with each child to play their favorite game. Alice left with Harmony shortly after Edward arrived. Edward gave the kids a dollar a piece for one last round of games before they had to leave. He sat next to her and they shared the last of the salad.

“That was not funny you know.”

“I think it was hilarious if I do say so myself.”

“Whatever you say.”

“Um there is one thing I think we, uh, need to talk about,” she looked down at her cup as she stirred the straw slowly.

“What is it?”

“When you move in ya know we had agreed on separate rooms, is that something you still want to do?”

“Why is it something that you don’t want to do?”

“I mean, do you think the kids would care?”

“Honestly I think we need to give them time to get used to the idea. Right now we’re all excited about moving in together but the truth be told we’re going to be sharing space. It isn’t that I don’t want to share a bed with you believe me I do. I just feel that lets give us all a month or
“So we’ll tell them soon then. That makes sense.”

“Of course it does I said it,” he smiled.

“Whatever.”

The kids came back once their money was done and they left and went their separate ways.

****

Bella watched on at the beautiful monstrosity that Alice had done for Adrian’s birthday party. She had rented out the entire park and turned it into a mystical Harry Potter like world. There were wizards, goblins, elves and other mythical creatures everywhere. There were dragon cut outs, an animatronic Cerberus, fog machines, and lots of interactive booths. Bella wasn’t exactly shocked because it was Alice but she knew that a lot of money had gone into the design, actors, props and magicians. She hadn’t asked for any additional financial assistance so she had no idea who it had all gotten paid.

“This is ridiculously amazing,” Edward approached her with a wizard’s hat on.

“Isn’t it though? She had said that it was just a little thing she put together. I guess it is little compared to the kids’ sixth birthday party. She had come out to where we were living at the time and she turned the entire house and surrounding neighbors’ property into Middle Earth. It was insane. She likes to do it big.”

“Adrian says he wishes that we had been here forever and that all his birthdays were this extreme,” he took her hand as they walked around the party.

“He says that but he has no idea. One year she got the entire town to pretend like we were Jem and the Holograms. It was so much fun but it can be overwhelming sometimes.”

“Makes life interesting.”

“You can say that again.”

“She got some really great magicians too. Their sleight of hand is unbelievable. This one guy does all these levitating tricks. Even I couldn’t figure some of them out.”

“I know it is simply amazing. Have you seen Fiona? I want to make sure she isn’t walking too much without her crutches.”

“We actually got her on horseback. I’m I mean unicorn back.”

“I hope that we’ve got enough space on the memory card.”

“Not only that, Alice has video cameras set you around as well.”

“She thinks of everything.”

The party went on until early evening where they had a crew began to clean up while the kids had dinner and cake. Then Adrian opened his presents. Edward had gotten him his own digital camera and iPod. Bella got him DDR since he had loved it so much and a few other video games. She had helped the kids pick out books and board games for him. He had gotten a lot of
sports related items, race car tracks, video games and lots of gift certificates. It was a birthday he would never forget.

They gathered at Edward’s house afterward. Bella made sure that each child showered before they got in their pajamas. They watched a movie then the kids spent the night in Adrian’s room and were fast asleep after such a busy day. She took a shower as Edward tucked the kids in and he showered while she settled into the livingroom. She glanced up at him as he walked to the couch. She swallowed hard. His hair was still damp, his navy sweats hung low on his hips and his grey tee shirt clung tightly to his well defined chest. She bit her lip and shook her head.

“What?”

“If should be illegal to look so hot in comfy clothes.”

“You are a silly girl,” he slid into the spot next to her and wrapped his arms around her.

“Mm you smell so good.”

Before she could say anything else he pressed his lips firmly to hers. She immediately wrapped her arms around him and pulled him to her. He kept the kiss less than aggressive but more than timid. He didn’t want to force anything on her if she was too tired or not in the mood. Her legs immediately went around him. He moaned against her soft lips as she teased him with her tongue. He parted his lips and his tongue slithered out to meet hers. She smiled against his mouth and ran her hands up his back under his shirt.

“What are you doing?” he whispered as he kissed down her neck.

“It’s been awhile and I think I might need a little time with you.”

“Mmm that sounds good. Then we certainly have to move to the bedroom,” he said between kisses.

“Ok.”

Bella shoved him off and pulled him back to his room. He chuckled at her enthusiasm. She let him go to remove her shirt. He locked the door and before he could turn around she yanked him over to the bed and pushed him back on it. He looked up at her as she straddled him. He opened his mouth to speak and she pressed her lips firmly against his. She pressed her hips down against him. He pulled her closer and unhooked her bra then pushed it off. She pulled back long enough to take it off and remove his tee shirt. She kissed and nibbled his newly exposed chest. He gasped as her teeth pressed hard against his neck.

“Wow…you’re really…in need huh?”

“You have no idea. I’m sorry I’m not really in the mood for that making love thing tonight,” she said as she wiggled out her pajama pants.

“I'm not complaining.”

As much as Edward enjoyed taking his time to explore her body he knew the need to get to that connection and feel release together. He lifted his hips so she could remove his pants. He threw his head back as her lips wrapped around his hardening flesh. He hissed loudly as he felt the back of her throat meet his tip. He gulped and bit his lip to keep from it ending too soon. He twisted his fingers in her hair as she held his hips down to keep him from moving. She bobbed up and down several times to make sure he was at his height of excitement. Then she moved up his body kissing and licking the entire way. She lowered herself down onto him and
threw her head back when he was sheathed all the way in her. She moaned loudly as she began to rotate her hips. He opened his eyes and looked up at her. Her pony tail had fallen loose and her hair bunched at the base of her neck, her eyes hooded, her slips slightly swollen and the pure beautiful look of ecstasy washed over her. He grinned at her as he began to thrust up deeper into her. She pressed her hands to his chest to keep her balance. She moved quickly with desire and need. He pulled her forward and kissed her deeply to share the mix of emotions that filled him. They increased their pace and tried to keep their noises to the minimum. She went first and he followed close behind her. They kissed and cuddled until they drifted to sleep.
Chapter 16

Bella looked around the living room. It was organized chaos with Edward’s belongings littered throughout the space. They had just brought in the last of his belongings and he had to return the u-haul. Alice flopped down on the couch by her.

“He has a lot of crap. Damn.”

“Yeah. I’m glad we had made space ahead of time. You think Jasper is going to remember his way to the u-haul to grab him?”

“Yeah he doesn’t get lost that often,” Alice said with a smile.

“Cool.”

“Rose texted to say she can keep the kids tonight if you need her to.”

“That would be wonderful.”

“So what are you going to do for your anniversary?” Alice asked as she took a swig from her bottle.

“What anniversary?”

“Oh wow. Your one year with Edward is just a month away.”

“Oh shit it is. I have no clue. What did you and Jasper do?”

“He took me to Egypt because I was studying the Egyptian influence on medical history.”

“Oh my god that is wonderful. Maybe he has something planned. I shouldn’t plan something if he’s got something plan.”

“Though if you forgot do you think he’ll remember?”

“Yes. For our first month he brought me cupcakes and made dinner. I’m not really good with remembering these types of things,” she leaned back and closed her eyes.

“Well whatever you decide I’ll take the kids.”

“You rock.”

Bella and Alice got up and put a few of the boxes into the places where they belonged. They cleared the dining room table so they would have a place to eat. Then they both took showers to get the sweat and must off. By time the guys had made it back dinner was on the table.

“I’ve got everything in the storage unit and the u-haul back in time,” Jacob said as he and Sam returned.

They had taken all of the stuff that Edward didn’t really need to a storage unit they rented while they had finished the stuff that belonged to the house. They gathered around and ate their fill.
“Man you ladies put other wives to shame,” Emmett said as he sat back rubbing his belly.

“I’m sure Rose would appreciate that,” Bella winked at him.

“See what I meant is that you did all this heavy lifting with us and now you cooked a nice meal without any trouble.”

“Em I’d stop while you’re ahead. I’m not sure your foot can fit any further into your mouth,” Sam said with a laugh.

“Yea that was one breath short of ‘a woman’s place is in the kitchen’ style of comment,” Edward agreed.

“Yea. So what’s for dessert?”

“Ice cream sandwiches. We didn’t have time to bake anything,” Alice said with a smile.

“That works for me.”

“Thanks again everyone. I couldn’t have done this move without you,” Edward said as he lifted his beer in a toast.

“That’s what friends are for. Plus Rose and I will need help moving once we get pregnant. You’ll return the favor and then some.”

“Oh god I think I’m going to be sick then,” Bella chirped in.

“Why?”

“He hasn’t seen Rose’s closet,” she turned to Edward, “it’ll take three trips for just her clothes and another for her shoes.”

“Plus she’ll have maternity clothes as well.”

“That will be an adventure in moving,” Emmett said with a laugh.

Everyone went their separate ways and left Bella and Edward alone for the remainder of the evening. They began to unpack the bedroom.

“I’m glad the kids took this so well. I hope Adrian doesn’t mind sharing a room until the other one is finished. I wish I had checked the paint in there before hand. I didn’t realize how old this house was.”

“It’s just odd that one room would still have lead paint.”

“Well it had been a storage room and that’s what I used it as. There wasn’t a reason to check it until you guys moved in. I’m glad I took that sample in. If I hadn’t wanted to redo it he would have been in there with it,” she said as she folded a box down.

“Yea. So, how weird is it for you having someone else here under your roof?” he pulled her into his arms.

“It isn’t too bad yet. We’ll have to see how it goes.”

He kissed her softly and looked deep in her eyes. He knew that she felt strongly for him by how passionate she had become in their relationships and even before the move she had begun
including him in everything. Adrian went on family events with Renee and Charlie and when school started the Mitchell’s had included him in the back to school shopping. The Masen’s had gotten used to having the extended family as well. Elizabeth was constantly asking about a wedding and more grandchildren. He had advised her it hadn’t been a year yet so he wasn’t ready to make that decision. Even though he already knew he would gladly spend the rest of his life with Bella it was different being in love under two different roves so the move would stand as testament if it was meant to be. He pulled her close again and kissed her. He ran his hands slowly up and down her back then went for the button on her jeans.

“Mr. Masen you sure are frisky this evening.”

“Sorry. I figure we’ll have the ability to be close very little with being under one roof.”

“Oh no we’ll have plenty of time. With three sets of grandparents who die to have the kids all the time and great friends who throw slumber parties every other week we’ll have the time.”

“No time like the present.”

They giggled as they kissed again. Their hands stripped the clothes away slowly. Edward lifted her and she wrapped her legs around him as he carried her to the bed. He broke the kiss long enough to remove her bra and his boxers. He kissed down her neck and stopped at her breasts. She gasped as his mouth engulfed her and his tongue teased her perky flesh. She moaned as his hand slipped between them and massaged his way up and down her thigh. His fingers crept to her center and gently rubbed. She moaned as her hips bucked forward. His lips traveled up to her neck and he nibbled on her as he dipped his fingers into her.

“Damn that’s good,” she mumbled.

“You’re so wet baby,” he moaned into her neck.

“For you.”

He growled low and bit a little harder which caused her to thrust hard against his hand. He chuckled and pulled his fingers from her. Her eyes fluttered and looked up at him. She bit her lip as he licked his fingers. She wasn’t sure why she found it hot but it definitely turned her on even more. She reached for him. He moved up so she could reach. She wrapped her hand around his length and pumped him a few times before she guided him into her. They both gasped as he pushed into her. With both his hands on either side of her head he balanced himself as he moved slowly in and out of her. He lowered himself to his elbows and kissed her forehead as he pushed entirely into her. Her walls clamped around him begging for more. He pressed his lips firmly to hers as he increased his pace. She matched his every thrust. At that moment she felt his passion and love wrap around her and become part of her own. She opened her eyes to see him staring down at her. She smiled as her climax edged closer.

“Edward,” she said breathless, “I love you.”

“Bella….I,” he tried to hold back but couldn’t so he rode it out and kissed her, “I love you too.”

Bella peppered his face with kisses as they relaxed against each other. They drifted to sleep in his bed. Bella woke a few hours later and climbed out of bed. She grinned down at him as he snored lightly. She went to her room and grabbed her favorite tee shirt gown and pulled on a pair of panties. She tip toed to the kitchen and pulled out the pint of Americone Dream she had hidden in the freezer.
She went to her office and sat at her computer. She had to check her work email since she hadn’t gone to work that day. She ate spoonfuls of ice cream as she returned a few emails. Then she felt a presence behind her and she looked up at Edward.

“So the sexy nighties are gone now huh? I thought I’d have to marry you before I gotten the cotton gowns,” he laughed.

“I’ve got you now. There is no need for the silk,” she fed him a spoon full of ice cream.

“That’s okay because you’re still sexy. What are you doing up so late? Besides eating the ice cream that you had hidden.”

“Who says it was hidden?”

“Because I looked for ice cream after the guys left,” he said as he took the spoon from her.

“Ok so maybe I did hide it. If I don’t Fiona will eat it all and I won’t get any,” she tilted the ice cream toward him so he scoop it.

“I guess that makes sense. I have to learn these things. So I must hide ice cream from Fiona.”

“And gummy bears and anything chocolate. I don’t know what I’ll do when she starts puberty in a few years. Nigel you have to hide carrots and peanut butter anything,” she licked the spoon and handed him the ice cream as she turned back to her email.

“Adrian is chips any kind of chips and almonds. I don’t know why he loves almonds but he does.”

“OMG!”

“What?”

“We’re a family.”

“Uh yeah. We kind of are.”

“Do you think we moved too fast? We have only been together like a year. We’re living together and sleeping together and hadn’t really thought about this would truly effect the kids.”

“Bella calm down. Remember we sat down and talked with the kids already. We also sat down with both of our parents and talked at length about this. It is a decision we planned out. Plus a lot of couples move in together to test the waters before making that final commitment. I care for you so much that I don’t want to just jump in it and hope for the best. I’d like to make this a serious relationship with much more than just friends with benefits. I want our kids to be more than just friends. These are the games we play as adults. We have to figure out what works and the score is kept and in the end the winner is both of us because we can have everything together.”

Bella couldn’t say anything. She didn’t know what to say or how to feel. He had just given the most beautiful speech and she truly did want to make more of this than she wanted anything else. She wanted this just as much as he did.

“Okay. I am going to panic every now and again.”
“I know,” he put the lid on the ice cream.

“I’m not really tired now. How about a movie?” she said as she turned off the computer.

“Sounds good.”

He put the ice cream in the freezer and popped some popcorn. She put the movie in and they settled on the couch. He smiled as the opening credits for Batman and Superman: Public Enemies scrolled.
Chapter 17

Bella’s mouth dropped as Edward removed his hands from over her eyes. The entire backyard was lit with candles and white lights. The picnic table was prepared as if they were in a five star restaurant. The sound of soft violin music filtered through the air from some unseen source. She turned to him and smiled. He had asked her to dress a little up but not too formal and he was in a button down and slacks. He grabbed her hand and escorted her to the table.

“This is so beautiful.”

“I figured you’d want special but wasn’t ready for something too extravagant yet. I’ll save that for next year,” he said as he sat across from her.

“Thank you.”

“You're more than welcome. We’ve been together for one fantastic year. Even with all of our ups and downs we’ve made it through. I couldn’t ask for more of an extraordinary mate than you. You kinda complete me ya know,” he smiled as he poured champagne in her glass.

“How long did it take you to set all of this up?”

“No time at all. I strung the lights a few days ago and you just didn’t notice since I took care of all the yard work back here. Then while Alice had you preoccupied I set up the candles and she texted me when you were on the way home so I could get everything lit. I just put dinner on a little later than I should have. It’ll be ready in a little bit.”

“I was worried because I couldn’t think of anything. I wanted to surprise you and couldn’t think of any way to do it.”

“It’s alright. It’s my job to be all romantic.”

“I guess so.”

They talked lightly for a few minutes then he excused himself to check dinner. Bella giggled with excitement as she waited for him to return. She hadn’t expected too much and it turned out to be perfect. It had been several long years since she had someone take care of her like Edward did. She enjoyed it immensely. She sipped her champagne and waited for his return.

“Dinner is served,” he returned with their plates.

“Oh wow this looks amazing,” she once he sat her plate down in front her.

“Thank you. We have roasted chicken over angel hair pasta sautéed with garlic and sweet onions. Then a little of my secret ingredients makes it wonderful.”

“You watch too much top chef,” she chuckled as she lifted her fork to her mouth, “oh my god this is good.”

“Told you.”

They ate silently as she enjoyed the food. He refilled her champagne glass and took their plates. He returned with dessert.

“Strawberry tarts for malady. I made sure to add extra cream to yours.”
“I am so spoiled. I am glad that I snagged you up before you could get away.”

“So am I. It’s time for your present.”

“You didn’t have to get me anything.”

“Did you get me something?”

“Yes but that’s different.”

“I’ll be right back. Finish up your dessert. I’ll finish mine when I get back.”

Edward stood and walked into the house. He glanced back at her once. His heart sped up as he made it to his room. He reached into the top drawer of his nightstand. He pulled out the small velvet box. He opened it and looked at the sparkling sapphire and diamonds. He hadn’t wanted her ring to look like all others so he had picked the darkest sapphire. It looked almost black until the light hit it. He knew that it would look spectacular against her fair skin. He took a deep breath and realized he had begun to sweat. He wiped his face with his hand and slipped the ring box into his pocket. His hands shook with his nerves. He went to the bathroom and splashed cold water on his face. He took a few calming breaths and grabbed the gift bag off the dresser in his room. He went back to the back yard. She had just finished her dessert and glanced up at him. That was when he noticed a wrapped package on his side of the table.

“Hm someone made a mad dash while I was gone.”

“Yeah. I was hoping you wouldn’t catch me. You have to open yours first.”

“Okay,” he handed her the bag and went to open his box.

“It’s two things so don’t let the first thing stop you.”

“Hm ok.”

Edward unwrapped the almost flat box. In the box was an envelope but on top of the envelope were two receipts. He looked at the receipts and still didn’t comprehend what it meant. Then he looked at it one last time. His eyes grew big and she smiled.

“The game room has been officially packed away temporarily. The top receipt is for the restoration of your piano that you had in storage. The game room will be transformed into a music room. The second one is for the construction crew. They will begin on Monday to sound proof the room and begin construction on the expansion of the garage. That will become the new game room.”

“Oh…my…wow. I don’t know what to say.”

“I know how much music meant to you as a young adult and I’d like to bring that back. Plus I’m getting a drum kit for Fiona for Christmas. That’s the reason for the soundproofing. I wanted you to be the inspiration for the kids to get involved in music. I know how much of a passion it was for you.”

“Bella,” he leaned across the table and kissed her.

“No problem,” she smiled thoroughly happy that he liked her gift.

“Now I’m curious at what’s in the envelope.”
It made Bella more nervous. She had made the decision after he had moved in. She hoped that he didn’t feel like it was too forward or assuming. She twisted her hands in her lap as he opened it and pulled out the legal document. He looked up at her with his mouth hung open in surprise. He went around the table and grabbed her up in his arms. He kissed her and held her tight.

“Oh my Bella. I have no idea what to say. I am just…..I don’t even know. This means so much.”

“Jacob thought so too. I know that you and the kids are perfect for each other if anything happens to me. I already talked to my parents about it and they understand. I want what’s best for them and for me. I trust you to make the best decisions as my power of attorney as well. I have a DNR in case something does happen to me. I know that you love me but you will make sure that is carried out,” she said as she laid her head on his shoulder.

“Then I guess I can tell you that I updated my will as well. You’re my POA and guardian for Adrian too.”

“That’s good to know. How much is that insurance policy?” she giggled as they parted.

“Maybe I should rethink that for my own safety,” he laughed and watched her pull her bag to her.

Edward reached into his pocket ready to present the ring after she opened the other present. She took her time as she pulled the tissue paper out. Her eyes lit up as she pulled out the rectangular box. She chuckled and looked up at him.

“I was worried there for a moment. I thought it was going to be an engagement ring,” she laughed lightly.

Edward’s hand halted on the box in his pocket. He hadn’t expected that. He thought that it was the right time and they had been together a year and she would be happy to make the logical next step. He left the box in his pocket and smiled at her as she pulled the necklace from the box. He was sure she said something flattering about it but he couldn’t remember his mind flew a mile a minute as he tried to figure it out. He stood and put the necklace with the dark sapphire on her. It was a mirror of the ring, a single raindrop sapphire with a diamond on each side. He cringed as Etta James voice filtered through. He had set everything up so that it would be most effective and he had worked with the music to make sure everything was moving on time. He pulled her close and dance slowly with her as he had originally planned.

“This has been the best night,” she said softly.

“It certainly has been. One of the most memorable of my life.”

After they danced to the songs he had selected as the post proposal songs he let her go. She promised she’d meet him in her bedroom after he cleaned up. He blew out all the candles and made sure all the food was put away. He couldn’t wrap his mind around it at all. He knew that she loved him but she wasn’t ready for engagement or marriage. He sighed and went to meet her. He moaned quietly as he entered her room. She was sprawled across the bed with her plump behind in the air covered by the skimpiest burgundy lace he had ever seen. He walked in and began to unbutton his shirt.

“You are too gorgeous.”

Edward bent down and kissed her as he shrugged out of his shirt. She smiled against
his lips. She undid his belt and his pants. He pushed them down and stepped out of them. He maneuvered her to her back as he climbed on the bed on top of her. He kissed Bella hard on the mouth as his hands roamed over her body. Her hips pushed against him when he pinched her nipples through her barely there bra. He moved his lips to the perky flesh and sucked lightly. Bella threw her head back with a low growl of pleasure. She spread her legs for him as his free hand moved in between her thighs. He gently massaged her through the fabric. He bucked against him as he moved his tongue in circles and his fingers pressed against her growing heat.

“Baby please,” she whispered.

Edward moved to her neck as he undid the front clasp on her bra and set her free. He sat back long enough to pull off his tee shirt and boxers. He pressed his hips down to meet hers. The lace was the only thing stopping him from pushing into her and he enjoyed watching her face grow desperate for his touch. He chuckled as he moved down her body and pulled down the panties with his teeth. Bella raised her hips so he could remove them. Once they were gone he kissed her thighs and moved to where she wanted him the most. As his tongue teased her she thrashed on the bed. He licked and sucked with such fervor until she was close. As she whined and tried to tell him she was close he moved in one swift motion up her body and plunged all the way into her. She gasped as her pleasure began to climb again. She knew she was only a second away from explosion as his thrusts grew fast. She tried to hold off because she wanted to climax with him but she couldn’t. Especially not when his thumb rubbed steadily against her and her world was glittery and full of desire.

“Come for me baby,” he said in voice laced with sex.

“Shit!”

Her hips rose off the bed as she twisted a hand in his hair as the other clawed down his back. She squealed as she rode out her orgasm. He smiled down at her as he continued to move in and out of her. He picked up his pace and he kissed her as he felt his climax approach. She whimpered in delight as he held on to her hips with one hand and held himself up with the other. He watched her face as he finished. He couldn’t get enough of her. He lay down on his side and pulled her to him and kissed her light and sweet. He ran his hand through her hair and realized no matter what he would make her his wife. He was head over heels and wouldn’t allow anything to get in his way not even her. He chuckled at the thought. He lay on his back she curled up against him. He relaxed and allowed sleep to overcome him.

Bella woke in the middle of the night thirsty. She smiled at Edward fast asleep next to her. She eased her way out of the bed and down to the kitchen. She grabbed a bottle of water and drained it. Once she finished her bladder wouldn’t allow her to go back to the bed. She left the bathroom and headed back to the bedroom. She stopped short and chuckled at Edward who had moved to her side of the bed with his face buried in her pillow. She went to climb in the bed from his side and stepped on something hard and she jumped. It was his pants. She bent down and wondered what had caused the pain in her foot. She reached into the pocket it was empty she reach into the other pocket and her hand froze. Her mind screamed at her NO NO NO!

She slowly pulled out what her fingers had curled around. She felt her throat go dry as she opened the box. Her worst fears had come alive. An engagement ring. She thought about her comment at dinner and wanted to kick herself.

“Hindsight,” she mumbled.
“Estoy en mi camino al cine con mi novio,” Fiona said out loud as they sat at the table doing homework.

“Excuse me?” Bella said as she came in with the groceries.

“What?” Fiona looked at her confused.

“You have a boyfriend?”

“No mom,” she laughed and put her pen down, “I’m working on my Spanish with Esmeralda.”

“Sorry Ms. Swan,” Esmeralda said in her thick Spanish accent.

“Naw it’s okay Esmeralda. I wasn’t expecting to come in and hear that my daughter was going to the movies with her boyfriend,” she chuckled as she put the groceries away.

“She is very good with her Spanish.”

“I hope she is further along than that. This will be her third year.”

“Por supuesto mamá que soy más adelante pero estudiamos para una prueba para ver si puedo avanzar al próximo nivel.”

“Did you get that?” Esmeralda smiled at Bella.

“Something about me, studying and going to the next level.”

“That’s very good. She said ‘of course mom I’m further along but we’re studying for a test to see if I can advance to the next level’. I could take her home and my kids would be jealous.”

“She speaks so fast and it seems like it’s a different dialect than I’m used to.”

“Yes it is they teach the Latin America version of Spanish whereas when you learned the language it was Spain Spanish. Most of the people you deal with will be more familiar with your dialect than hers.”

“In that case I am glad that you're here because we might run into a problem with her studying.”

“I am glad to be here as well. You got me out of the house with those awful bratty little niños.”

“I’m glad I could help. Did Edward give you your check for this week?”

“I haven’t seen Mr. Masen this week.”

“Okay. I just want to make sure you get paid. Would it be easier if I just did a direct transfer into your bank account?” she asked as she folded up the empty bags and put them under the sink.

“That would be fine if it is easier for you.”
“Yeah it is. I just don’t keep a lot of checks around anymore since I do most everything online,” she walked to the computer, “that way I can set it up to just automatically go into your account every other week so you don’t have to come and find one of us if we forget. It’ll be more like a direct deposit. I don’t know why I didn’t think about it before.”

“Thank you so much. Adrian and Nigel will be home in about fifteen minutes as well. I did not want to forget. I gave them permission to go to the Cullen’s to help Mr. Cullen with the yard work and he promised them smoothies. They have finished their homework. I signed off on their assignment pads. Fiona just has her Spanish to finish and to start a research project for Inglés class.”

“You are such a miracle worker. I don’t know how I survived without you. I don’t know how Edward existed with that crazy Jill chick. You’re always two steps ahead and she was always a mile behind.”

“No problema,” she laughed, “Jill Stanford is a no in our community. She doesn’t come with references except from homes with older couples and unhappy esposos.”

“I heard that,” Bella said with a laugh, “ok you can enter your account number here and we’ll be all set.”

They got the direct deposit set up for Esmeralda and she finished a few chores then was gone. Bella ordered Thai food as the boys came home. They washed and helped Fiona set the table. Bella smiled happily as they worked together. She knew that even though things on the outside could appear alright that there could always be internal conflict. Bella tended to watch them closely just to be prepared.

“No that doesn’t go there,” Fiona said as Adrian sat the vase on the left side of the table and not in the center.

Bella gulped but didn’t jump in. Fiona had been diagnosed with a form of OCD and things had to be centered if there was only one and the entire table to be symmetrical or else she wouldn’t eat at the table. Adrian stepped back and allowed Fiona to finish setting the table. She mentally added a point to Adrian’s side of the score board she kept in her head.

“Lucy I’m home,” Edward said as he came in the door.

“You know she thinks you're calling her,” Bella said as Lucky ran up to him.

“Yeah she still can’t tell the difference,” he lifted the cat and petted her as he went to the bedroom.

“Don’t forget to brush her while you're back there in the bathroom,” she called.

“Mom I need another ‘S’ fork not a salad one,” Fiona said as she looked in the drawer for the monogrammed forks.

“Check the dishwasher. That’s all clean. Esa ran it earlier.”

When dinner was done they all gathered around the table and took their seats. The conversation was kept light. Edward cleared the table and took the tin out with the brownies. Each child got one with a half of scoop of ice cream. He went back to the room he had just begun to share with Bella.

“Fiona we got you something the other day. You got straight A’s on your report card
and we thought you deserved a reward.”

“You don’t have to. Mom just puts money in my account in case I want something.”

“Nope you have to take it. I won’t take no for an answer,” he smiled and produced the wrapped box.

“Hm nice size box, not too heavy and no noise.”

“Just open it,” Nigel said excited because they had all decided on the gift for her.

“Ok,” she said as she went to the table and sat it there to open.

Bella grabbed the camera and got it ready as she tore the paper from it. Edward was excited as well. Bella had had to get him excited about it because he was scared at first. He knew it would be good for her though.

“OMFG!” she squealed as she pulled out the pink hand wraps, head gear and gloves.

“Excuse me!” Bella took a picture then looked at her daughter.

“Sorry it slipped sorta. I didn’t think you’d know what it meant. This means I get to take a martial art!”

“Yes it does. We all talked about it. Since you hadn’t decided on a sport this winter or for the spring we needed something for you. You like the UFC so we found a class for young adults. This is very basic and not at all like you see on television. I just want you to have something you can work hard at and continue. You are to remember that you are not Chuck Liddell, Rampage, Silva or BJ Penn. I do not want to hear anything about you picking fights at school or with the boys. You have to maintain you honor roll. If a C shows up you’ll be pulled from it. Do you understand?”

“Yes ma’am,” she bounced up and down happily.

“Now put those away and change for bed.”

“Can I call Karly and tell her?”

“Ten minutes on the phone then to bed.”

“Thanks guys you are the best,” she said as she hugged everyone then jetted to her room.

“And boys you both did well too. I have put the money in each of your bank accounts. I do expect to see no C’s in January once that report card comes.”

“When you guys get there you too will get something extra special,” Edward said as he emptied the dishwasher.

“Do we get to pick?” Nigel asked.

“Yeah do we?”

“Maybe. I always like surprises.”

“Okay.”
“Get ready for bed boys as soon as you’re done with your desert. Don’t forget to do your reading before you shut your lights off.”

“Yes sir.”

Once the kids were tucked in and the dishwasher loaded they settled down in the bedroom. Bella watched him as he read his book and couldn’t help but smile. She hadn’t said anything about the ring but now she knew she had to say something. She had told Alice and Alice said she’d just act like she didn’t know, but she couldn’t because she felt guilty to have the knowledge.

“Hey Edward.”

“Yes baby?” he didn’t look up from his book.

“You know you can always talk to me about anything right?”

“Mm hm.”

“I really mean anything. You can ask me anything too,” she twiddled her thumbs nervously.

“Yes I know.”

“I…like see…crap.”

Edward marked his place in his book and sat it down on the side table. He turned to his side and looked over at Bella. He smiled at the pink that dusted her cheeks.

“What’s up honey?”

“You like sharing my bed?”

“Yes as a matter of fact I do,” he said and grabbed her hand.

“Good,” she giggled as he kissed her finger tips, “I totally love the fact that you are here with me. It’s kinda awesome.”

“Kinda awesome?” he chuckled at her use of words.

“Yeah.”

“Is there something you want to say to me Bella?”

“Yes! I mean…no…I mean, I have no idea,” she said with a sigh.

“Does this have anything to do with the fact that you saw the engagement ring that I got for you?”

“WHAT!? How do you know?”

“You do realize you can’t hide secrets in this house. Or should I say you shouldn’t try to when you have somniloquy.”

“I have what?”

“Sleep talking. It’s a type of parasomnia. I’m not sure when you found it but you let it
slip a few weeks ago. I figured I’d let you keep the secret as long as you wanted to. I’m shocked you kept it this long,” he laughed and ran a hand through her hair.

“I feel silly now,” she mumbled and leaned into his touch.

“Don’t. I thought we were at a place where it was logical to go to that step. You aren’t ready and I am not going to make you. I am curious why you’re freaked so much by it. I don’t understand such an aversion to getting married.”

“That is a long story for the middle of the day. I want to know how you feel.”

“Eh, I’m happy being here with you as we are. When we’re ready to walk down the aisle then we will. I can wait for you. I feel like I have waited for a life time for someone as perfect as you. If it’s another few months or years I can wait.”

“Why are you so friggin perfect?” she leaned in and kissed him.

“I’m not perfect. I like Hanson and you don’t approve.”

“Yuck yeah I do not approve of that,” she giggled and kissed him again.

They kissed for a few minutes then pulled apart. She stared down at him and couldn’t imagine living without him. She made up her mind and knew that she’d let him into that part of her mind sooner than later.

“Did you at least like the ring?”

“Yes. Just a FYI, I will say yes when it’s the right time.”

“I know. It had upset me at first then I realized it isn’t going to change who we are. I still love you and you love me. We’re a family.”

“One wacked out crazy family but a family all the same.”

“Yes princess we are.”

She smiled at him and let him go back to his book. She felt a lot more at ease with the fact that it was out there and she had resolved to explain it all to him. She made a mental note to ask her doctor about the sleep talking.
Chapter 19

Bella mumbled frantically under her breath as she weaved in and out of traffic. She was terrified and angry all in one moment. She tried to calm herself. She had called Edward so that he would head back to the city to meet her. She wasn’t sure who would get there first and she wasn’t sure who she wanted to get there first. She knew she would react one way and Edward might react completely opposite of her. She chewed her lip as she tried to process the thoughts that were flowing lightening quick through her mind.

Bella pulled into the middle school grounds. She saw the police car and inhaled sharply. She let the breath out slowly as she pulled into a parking spot a few feet away. Bella glanced around the parking lot as she got out of the car and grabbed her purse. There was no sign of Edward. She was a little happy with that. She realized that she wanted to be the first one to arrive. Her heels clicked on the pavement as she basically sprinted into the school. She winced as she heard the voices. She slowed as she reached the nurses office. Bella peeked in and wished she hadn’t.

Bella scurried pass the door and went to the office. She nodded at an almost deathly pale frightened looking receptionist whose name she couldn’t recall at that instant. She ushered her into the conference room. Bella gulped as she saw the police officer she vaguely remembered. She saw the kids and walked toward them when the principal addressed her.

“Mrs. Masen I am so glad that you could make,” Principal Height said.

“It’s actually Ms. Swan. I am Adrian’s guardian until his father arrives,” she said and shook his hand embarrassed that their first meeting since he had taken over was for that reason.

“You are that demon child’s parent?!” a high pitched voice sounded from the other side of the room.

“Excuse me?” she narrowed her eyes at the stout woman who jumped up from her seat.

“Mrs. Tanner there is no need for name calling,” Mr. Height reassured.

“Hey mom,” Fiona mumbled and caught Bella’s attention her.

“Holy fuck why is my daughter in restraints?” she dropped down beside her and fingered the zip ties around her wrist.

“Don’t be frightened it’s just common procedure,” the officer said.

“Uh no it isn’t she is a minor and should not be detained with restraints without the parent’s permission or in cases of officer’s inability to restrain them. Code 26 section 123. Take these off of her now before I call Mr. Jacob Black and have him meet us at the station,” she ordered as she tried to calm herself because the last thing she needed was for Edward to have to post bail for her.

“Ma’am I--” the officer stopped when he caught the look in her eyes.

The officer knew who she was and knew that Felix would not be happy with him if he didn’t help Bella. He walked over to Fiona and snipped the zip ties. She nodded and rubbed her wrists. She clasped hands with Adrian and looked up innocently at Bella. That was when she noticed Nigel wasn’t with them. Fiona recognized the questioning look.
“He’s in the library.”

“Okay,” she turned to Mr. Height, “now is the time to explain.”

“Yes ma’am, please have a seat,” once he realized she wouldn’t he continued, “there was an altercation in the school yard as they were getting ready to board the buses for a field trip. We are still at this point not sure what happened. By time I got there Adrian had Colin in some sort of wrestling hold and Fiona was physically involved with Brent and Tommy. Brent and Tommy suffered several injuries and are being cared for by the nurse and Colin is in a separate room with his mother waiting for her husband. Their religion forbids her to be in a room with any unmarried man without her husband.”

“Okay so why is there a policeman here?”

“When Fiona refused to…let go of Brent we had to get a neutral person to remove her. He is our campus officer.”

“A fight,” she turned back to both of them, “what happened?”

Bella toned out the rest of the room and focused on her children. She smiled at the thought internally. It wasn’t the first time that thought had crossed her mind but she enjoyed it none the less. She wanted to get to the bottom of what happened and she knew that they wouldn’t lie to her.

“Mom I can’t,” Fiona responded in a low voice with a pleading look.

“Adrian?”

“Bella I can’t.”

“Look…I don’t hate you for getting into a fight. I am disappointed in both of you but I don’t love you any less. I just need to know why so that way we can keep it from happening again. We want to meet this problem head on.”

“We can’t. I-I’m so sorry mom but we just can’t say why. Just know that it wasn’t bad reasoning,” Fiona said with tears in her eyes.

“Holy crap on a crap cracker…what is it? Baby you can tell me anything,” she knelt down by Fiona.

“That child isn’t fucking innocent. Don’t let those tears fool you. You should see what she did to my son. She is evil that little bitch,” Mrs. Tanner yelled.

Bella wasn’t sure when she moved all she knew was that she was in the frumpy stout lady’s face before her husband could move. She pointed her finger and spoke through clinched teeth.

“It isn’t half as bad as what I’ll do to you if you say one more negative thing about my child. They won’t give me bail for what I intend on doing to you. Do you understand that?”

“Bella,” Edward walked into the conference room at that moment.

“No I mean it I’ll cut her up and feed her to my friends pigs if she so much as blinks wrong at my children.”

“Calm down baby,” he grabbed her hand.
“See that’s where she gets it from,” Mrs. Tanner said as Edward pulled Bella away.

“Ma’am I cannot guarantee that she will not snap at you again if you continue this way. I am not sure what led up to this but I will not be held responsible for her actions if you cannot control yourself.”

“Hmmph,” she sat back in her seat.

“You must be Mr. Height. I am Edward Masen Adrian’s father.”

“Thank you for coming,” he shook his head and eyed Bella.

“So what exactly is going on here?”

“The kids got into a fight. Apparently Fiona and Adrian decided to take things into their own hands. They won’t say why. It’s something serious because it brought tears to Fiona.”

“Hm well that is something that we can discuss in the privacy of our own home.”

“We would like to know so we can prevent it,” Mr. Height said.

“Yes sir I definitely understand that but our family is a private family. If it is something that you can indeed prevent again then we will share that information with you immediately. As far as we know now it may just be some squabble about whose clothes are the coolest.”

“You can’t allow that. What if we want to press charges?” Mr. Tanner voiced.

“This is a childhood fist fight no one is seriously life threatening injured and on all accounts given your sons instigated it. The punishment will be dealt out the same. There is some paper work each family will sign. If any more information is gathered outside of these walls we are to know. All parties will be suspended for three weeks, all assignments will be forwarded to you and there will be an anger management required course to be completed before each student returns to classes,” Mr. Height said as he got all the paper work in order.

They got all the proper documentation signed and copied. The officer walked them to the lockers to get their books and then to the car. The other students’ parents had to wait for them to exit. Edward got Nigel and they headed home. Bella assumed the Colin kid was dealt with as soon as the father arrived. She was furious but also worried about her children. Fiona was not one to cry and over a fight. She couldn’t begin to wrap her mind around what happened.

When they arrive home Fiona immediately locked herself in the bathroom the children used and Adrian hid in his bedroom. Edward and Bella looked at each other both felt useless.

They turned to Nigel.

“I don’t know what happened. I was late getting to the buses. When I got there I tried to break it up but the teachers were there and were able to do it. All I know is that Fi put it on that Brent kid first so I assume he started it,” Nigel said as he brushed his bangs from his face.

“Was there anything that the kids have been saying?”

“Not that I know of. With them being in a few of the same classes they hang out with the kids older than me. The only classes we have together are English and PE. I really don’t know mom. I’ve never seen her like that,” he hugged Bella, “the rage in her mom. I don’t know what it is but it’s something serious.”

“Thanks honey,” she patted his head, “we’ll need you to pick up their assignments
tomorrow. Go on and get your homework done. I didn’t want to leave you in school since I
don’t know what happened. Why weren’t you on the field trip?”

“I couldn’t leave my family behind mom. I didn’t want to walk away and I knew you
wouldn’t want me to.”

“You’re such a good kid.”

Bella hugged him then let him go. She kicked off her heels and took off her blazer.
She looked over to Edward who had remained quiet. Edward looked just as confused, worried
and hurt as she felt. He walked over to her and pulled her close. He kissed the top of her head.

“What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know. I think they’ll come around. They’ll let us know what happened
eventually. I just can’t believe they got in a fight. I know that Fiona’s got a temper she gets that
from her mom. I just never thought I’d see either of them in a fight. They are such great kids.”

“I know. Fiona was in tears Edward, tears just flowing down her cheeks. Whatever it
is it’s something big. I think I need a drink.”

“Rum or whiskey?” he opened the cabinet over the fridge.

“Whiskey.”

“Jim or Jack?”

“Jack.”

Edward pulled a short glass and put two ice cubes in it and poured the liquor into the
glass. He repeated the actions for himself. He slid a glass to her then put the bottle back in the
cabinet. They stood silently sipping their drinks.

“It’s about a boy,” Bella started, “some boy tried to make a move on Fiona and she
wasn’t having any of it. Adrian caught this and he pummeled the boy. Then when his friends
joined in Fiona took them down.”

“That sounds plausible. Or it’s about a girl. Adrian likes a girl the boy who also likes
her started crap with Adrian and Fiona jumped in when they tried to outnumber him.”

“Maybe someone said something about us. That we aren’t a real family since we aren’t
married and they aren’t really brother and sister since they have different parents,” she said and
sipped her drink.

“Hm,” he sipped his drink, “I can’t see that one because of how the modern family isn’t
about being traditional anymore. I mean their best-friends have two dads.”

“What can it be that would make Fiona flip out like that?”

“I don’t know. I do know that part of me is proud that they stuck together and didn’t let
the other go down.”

“I’m so sorry that I had to call you back. Is there any way you can take a later flight?”

“It’s just a stupid foodie convention. I can skip it. I called Jasper and transferred my
ticket to his name. He’s going to represent our place. Alice isn’t happy but she understands. I
have no place I’d rather be than here with you and the kids,” he leaned in and kissed her.

“Thank you so much. I love you,” she smiled against his lips.

“Love you too.”

“I think I’m going to have to lock the music room as part of her punishment and the game room.”

“Hm I’d say the game room but let her keep her music to vent. Maybe we should split up. I’ll talk to her and you take Adrian.”

“Hm that sounds like a good idea. Let me change into comfy clothes.”

“I’ll call and let Alice and Rose know what’s going on as well. They won’t be able to participate in any school activities so they’ll have to find a new starter for his team and her under study will need to know about her spot in the play,” Edward said as he grabbed the landline.

Bella finished her drink and went to their bedroom. She pulled off her work attire and slipped on a pair of worn blue jeans and a baby tee. She pulled her hair back into a ponytail and headed to Adrian’s room. She paused outside the door when she heard voices.

“Adrian I won’t tell them. I promised you that I wouldn’t. You know that I won’t break a promise,” Fiona whispered.

“I know I….I just have to make sure. They’d kill me and probably disown me. If you hadn’t found out I wouldn’t have told anyone.”

“They’ll still love you no matter what. I swear it. You’re my big brother so you know I ain’t going anywhere. If I have to fight every fucking day for you I will.”

Bella cringed at her language. She wanted to barge in and let him know that there was nothing that could change her love for them but she wasn’t sure if it was fair to eavesdrop then react on it.

“You put it on those boys,” he laughed.

“You did well too. You have a mean left hook,” she giggled.

“Why do you think Casey turned on me? No one would have known if not for that.”

“Idk. Peer pressure or something. Ya know we’ll do and say anything to get the heat off of us. Don’t worry about. If I get my hands on Casey no one will know about your making out again.”

“It’s too late for that. Everyone knows. Now we’re both suspended. Mom and dad haven’t done anything about it. Do you think it’s the calm before the storm?”

Bella chose that moment to leave. She walked silently away. She put the pieces together as she headed back to the kitchen. She sat down on the couch as Edward finished up his call. He sat next to her. She stood and dragged him to the music room. She shut the door and turned to him.

“It is about a girl. Apparently Adrian was making out with her and the boys found out. They started hassling him about it or something then took a swing on him. That was when Fiona jumped in.”
“How do you know all this?”

“How was I going to talk to him they were in his room.”

“Oh my god my 13 year old son is making out with girls. I’m old.”

“No you're not,” Bella giggled.

“So why did you drag me in here?”

“Soundproof. I just eavesdropped I didn’t want them to hear us.”

“So that means they both need the sex talk then,” he ran a worried hand over his face.

“Yup. Emmett and Rosalie can do it. Gives them practice for Violet,” Bella suggested.

“NO! Do you really want the freakiest of our friends to give them advice?”

“That’s true. Jacob and Ayasha.”

“Yeah that works that way we don’t freak them out.”

“The drug talk from Alice and Jasper worked perfectly so this will be good,” Bella said with a nod.

“Wow they fought over making out. I can’t imagine what it will be like when they actually start dating.”

“We had this conversation. At the time we didn’t live together so it’s different now but I’ll ship them off to your parents.”

“Ha my parents got enough with me and Derrika.”

“You think we should have bail set up just in case?”

“I’d like to say that is funny but I have a feeling we might want to just in case.”

“Why do you think they want to keep it a secret?”

“So they won’t have to have the sex talk,” he sat down at the piano and began to run his fingers over the keys.

“Hm,” she leaned on top of the piano, “play me a song.”

“What do you want to hear?”

“Anything.”

Edward began to play a few different songs. Suddenly Bella straddled him. She pulled him to her and began to kiss him hard on the lips. Edward moaned against her and wrapped his arms around her.

“Uh uhh keep playing.”

“Yes ma’am.”

They kissed passionately as he tried to keep his mind on a song as she moved her hips
against him. He began to play Christmas carols because his fingers didn’t need his mind to play those. She slipped her tongue into his mouth and pulled at his hair. He didn’t know what he had done to turn her on but he wasn’t mad. Maybe it had been all the talk of the sex talk. His hips began to move with her and he missed several notes. She moved her hands in between them and undid his pants and her own.

Edward stopped playing and helped her out of her pants and pushed his own down over his hips. She jumped into his arms and he almost tumbled to the floor. His back hit the wall behind the piano. He was shocked by her aggressiveness. She kissed him forcefully and undid the buttons on his shirt as he held her. He felt her warmth pressed against him and that drove him crazy. They maneuvered the shirt off and he managed to get hers off as well. He kissed her chest as she moaned loudly. He put her down for a moment and dropped to his knees. He slowly pulled down her panties and kissed her thighs. She gasped as his tongue traced her entrance.

“No. I need you in me.”

“Yes ma’am,” he lifted her up and pressed her back against the wall.

He pulled himself free of his boxer briefs. He eased into her and she wrapped her legs tighter around him and yanked him forward. He buried his entire length inside her and squealed in pleasure. He was so excited he knew that he wouldn’t last long. He thrust deep into her repeatedly as he kissed her neck and moved back to her lips. She tugged at his hair and made noises of appreciation. It was rare she could be as vocal as she wanted to so she took advantage of the situation. He placed a thumb on her clit as he drove deep into her.

“Oh fuck yes!”

“That’s it baby. Come for me.”

He nibbled on her neck and pushed all the way back into her and held it there while he worked her over. She clamped down around him and clawed down his back as she rode out her release. He mumbled incoherently as he climaxed a few minutes later. After a few minutes they drew apart and redressed.

“What the heck was that for? We were all serious one minute and the next…yeah.”

“I love to watch you play. I don’t know what it is but it’s a turn on,” she said sheepishly as she straightened her ponytail.

“I have to bring you down here more often.”

“Whatever. C’mon I’ve got to get Nigel to practice and you have a dinner to make.”

“Hmm okay,” he grabbed her for one more kiss before he let her go.

They went back to the main part of the house. Nigel sat at the table with his school work out but the other two were nowhere to be seen.

“Nigel you ready to go to practice.”

“I don’t think I’m going.”

“Why?”

“It isn’t the same without Adrian. I don’t really feel like it.”
“Okay. Well then you can help us pick something out for dinner.”

“Chicken would be good and I can make the macaroni,” he smiled up at her.

“That sounds perfect.”

He had chosen culinary arts as one of his electives and he liked to cook as much as he could. Bella liked that he did have a hobby that was constructive and helped her around the house. She took the chicken from the freezer and defrosted it.

“Edward, can you go check to see what else they would want?”

“Sure.”

Edward went to Adrian’s room first and they weren’t in there. He walked down the hall to Fiona’s room. He pushed the door opened and smiled. They were on her bed playing cards.

“We’re making chicken for dinner. Nigel’s making mac and cheese what else do you guys want?”

“It doesn’t matter. Can we eat back here?” Adrian asked.

“Sure. Do either of you want to talk?”

“Not really. Thank you for the offer,” Fiona said.

“Ok.”

“How long are we grounded?” Adrian looked up at him.

“Right now indefinitely until we have time to talk it over.”

“Ok.”

He headed back to the kitchen. Bella looked up at him expectedly.

“Broccoli.”

“Good.”

They made the early dinner and Bella took the dinner up to the kids and then they ate around the table. After dinner they laid down the rules of the grounding and expectations of house work. Bella went for a jog to clear her mind and took a shower once she returned. She put on a pair of yoga pants and a tee shirt and went to her computer. She froze as she took her seat. There was an envelope there. She opened it. Eternity. One word written in calligraphy. She shrugged and turned on her computer she reached for the mouse and instead there was origami fortune cookie. She opened the cookie and gasped. She looked up and Edward was in the door of the office.

“It’s time,” he whispered with a smirk.

She slid the ring on her finger and jumped up and hugged him. She kissed him and wouldn’t let go. He chuckled and hugged her back.

“Yes.”
“When I went to get their plates I heard him call you mom and I knew right then it was time.”

“I heard it early too and it just warmed my heart.”

“He loves you. I love you and I can’t wait for us to have a child together.”

“Thank you so much. Tomorrow I’ll tell you. I’ll fill in the blanks like I should’ve done two years ago.”

She kissed him and couldn’t help but fall in love with him all over again.
Nigel stared at Bella. Bella tried to meet his eyes but she couldn’t. She sighed and took his hand into hers. She chewed on her lips and tried to will the tears back. She had promised him and she wouldn’t break her promise. She took a deep breath.

“Are you sure you want to hear this?” she asked softly as she stroked his hand with her thumb.

“Mom…I really do have to know. I’m not a little boy anymore and I know that I am more ready for this now than I will be if we wait a few more years.”

“Ok then. You remember we used to live in Colorado for a few years right?”

“Yeah. I remember because there are pictures of all of us out there. You came up there once Fi’s dad left. She stole a lot of my toys that first year,” he chuckled.

“Right. Fiona and I had gotten things together and we were moving back here to be close to grandma and grandpa Swan. So she and I were at home. You, your mom and dad were headed back from his parents place. Remember this was in the winter time and winters out in Colorado were no joke. They didn’t get the warnings because they had already left the house. I had talked to them when they called to let me know they were on the way. That was the last time I had talked to them,” she stared off in the distance not really focused on anything.

“I know this is hard, take your time.”

“There was avalanche as you guys were passing the river. It was behind you guys but it caused all the snow to shift. It came down fast is what we were told. Evan never saw it until it was too late. The car was forced into the river. Monica was the only one awake. Evan had been knocked unconscious….and you…had been too. Your mom got free somehow and was able to get you to the shore. She went back to get your…..dad….and,” she closed her eyes and thought back to everything that the police had told her, “the water was too cold and his seatbelt was stuck. She didn’t have the strength because her body was going into shock from the freezing water. She had placed her cell phone on you and dialed 911. You began to cry because of the cold and they sent help. It took you a few days to recover from the exposure.”

Nigel stayed in her arms as they both let their emotions show. They were alone for the day since Edward had taken Adrian and Fiona to their anger management class. He had approached her after he had had a dream about both of his parents. He wanted to know what happened. He had always remembered the snow moving toward them because he had thought they were flying up the mountain. He remembered his mom saying she loved him and then he remembered Bella’s face stained with tears. He knew he needed one more bit of information before he would be able to put the past behind him.

“Why did I end up with you?”

“Nigel. I think that is enough for one day.”

“No mom I need to know. Why am I not with my dad’s family? Why don’t we spend time with them?”
“Nigel I have thought about this conversation a thousand times and I never know how to answer that question. The honest truth,” she took a deep breath and looked him in the eye, “they made the choice to give me full parental rights. They did not want custody.”

“Th-they….they,” his brow creased, “they didn’t want me.”

“Right,” she said quietly.

“They suck.”

“They do suck but that is why you have me.”

“So Fiona’s dad, his parents wanted me but my own grandparents didn’t want me. I guess I won’t understand that until I’m a grown up but that pisses me off.”

“I will let that one slide. I know how it feels. Believe me I was taken in by the police with the way I showed my displeasure with the situation.”

“You got arrested?” he asked shocked.

“No, because being arrested would mean that they booked me and I was let go with a warning. I packed you guys up and we met Charlie and Renee at the airport the following day.”

“I love you,” he threw his back around her and held her tight.

“I love you too,” she said trying not to start crying again.

“Thanks for being honest with me.”

“Not a problem.”

“Why aren’t you and Edward married?”

“Nope. You’ve got enough for today,” she jumped up.

“Come on you can trust me.”

“So where are those research papers that are due next week? I can edit them for you.”

“Ok. We’ll move on to something more normal for mom and son. Can I have friends stay over this weekend?”

“Sure. Three is going to be your max.”

Bella left him to make the calls to his friends as she checked her e-mail. She busied herself with responding to work items then went to her Facebook. She checked on her friends and then went to her personal e-mail. She responded to a few e-mails from college friends then got off the computer. Edward arrived back with the kids. Per her usual self Fiona stormed off to her room. She was five feet eight inches of fury after the anger management classes. Bella didn’t fail to see the irony in the situation.

“What was it this time?”

“Pottery,” Adrian said with a smile.

“How bad?”
“It wasn’t her fault this time. The man in charge is a hippie and he was going on this stupid rant about channeling the anger. We made the pots last class and were painting them today. He was like ‘imagine each stroke as a release of the tension and aggression’. He got to Fiona as he walked around the room and said that her strokes weren’t right,” he giggled into his hand, “he repeated what he said. Then he followed it up with ‘well don’t you want it to look nice? Channel and be artistic in the same stroke’.”

He fell into full laughs after that. Bella turned to Edward who just smiled as he chopped strawberries by the sink.

“And?”

“Then…Fi….” he leaned forward and continued to laugh, “painted FU on the pottery… then while he was at the front of the class she threw it. I mean, really threw it like I was at the other end of a football field needing to make a touchdown kind of throw. It missed him but he almost peed himself. She put her hands on her hips and said ‘how the hell is that for channeling my anger?’ Mommy B it was the funniest thing in the entire world.”

“Edward,” she said as she turned to him while he laughed, “you cannot condone this type of behavior.”

“I don’t,” he cleared his throat and tried not to laugh again, “but it was hilarious. It was only super hilarious because she did a great job at painting the letters in calligraphy.”

“Great. It already sucks that I live in a house of giants but now it’s a house of giggling giants who don’t know right from wrong when a twelve year old girl is involved,” she threw her hands up in defeat.

“Sorry love,” he said and popped a slice of strawberry in his mouth.

“Plus Nigel’s still your height so we’re not all giants.”

“Mm hm. You take after your father too much. You’re charming, adorable, six feet tall, stubborn, and too intelligent for your own good some times. You’re going to break some girl’s heart one day,” she picked up a strawberry off Edward’s plate.

“Yeah sure,” he said and looked to the floor.

“Sorry I guess it’s too soon after the sex talk to discuss girls,” Edward said with a smile.

“Naw…uh I’m gonna go to my room.”

Adrian disappeared up the stairs. Bella and Edward shared the fruit silently. Once it was gone and the kids were still gone Edward knew that it was time for the conversation. She had avoided it for a few extra days. He had let two years pass without bringing it up and now that she had his ring he had to know the answers.

“Bella my darling,” he kissed her lightly, “I have waited and I don’t think I can any more. I want to start planning the wedding. I want to know that you do too and that you won’t run from this. I have to know that you have overcome whatever it was that made you scared.”

“Hm I was wondering how long you’d let me get away with that.”

“I think I have been patient enough.”

“You have. Meet me in the music room.”
She dashed up the stairs. Edward shrugged and went to the music room. He sat at the table they had in there for writing music. He knew if he sat at the piano he’d play and she would get distracted. He didn’t want her to be distracted. She entered the room a few minutes later with a couple of sheets of paper. She held it out to him.

“What’s that?” he didn’t take it.

“The answer to your question.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yes,” she blushed.

Edward took the pages from her. They had faded with age and her writing was erratic on the page like it was years of thoughts accumulated on the page. He read the title “Reason’s to Stay Single Forever.” He looked up at her again and she looked down at her feet. He began to read the list.

“You won’t have to excuse your husband’s behavior,” he glanced up at her then went back to reading, “you know where the bar of soap has been.”

“This has been made since before Fiona was born and a few things have been added since.”

“I see,” he said and continued to read.

Bella watched and hoped that he understood it all now. He laughed at some and scowled at others. She knew that some of them were idiotic but didn’t care.

“No need to remember stupid dates or birthday’s that you don’t care about, no mood swings and you have single nights with the ladies and no one to contend with if you don’t come home until dawn. This is quite a list. I think my favorite is the farting one,” he laughed.

“Okay now here,” she pulled a folded sheet from her pocket and handed it to him.

“Hm only one sheet,” he smiled and took it from her.

“I compiled that one after I met you,” she whispered.

“How long after we first met?” he asked after he read the first few.

“Well…ya see,” she scrunched her face up nervously, “two days.”

“Hmm,” he continued to read without looking up at her.

Edward finished the list and set them aside. He stood and walked over to her. He wrapped his arms around her. He kissed her softly on the lips.

“So you feel you know me better now?” she asked as she settled into his arms.

“Yes. The only issue I have is that you were fantasizing about marrying me before you even knew me but then when I wanted to ask you freaked the fuck out. I am a little confused by that.”

“Fantasies are things that you don’t expect to come true. When it became a possibility I got nervous.”
“So now we can tell the kids and you’ll wear the ring?” he looked down at her.

“You betcha.”

“Good.”

He was happy mostly because he could finally tell his parents and then pop the question about her stopping the birth control. He led her back to the living room.

“I guess I’ll call Charlie and Renee to let them know.”

“They already know.”

“What do you mean?” she looked at him.

“I had to get his permission to ask. He wasn’t happy when I had to tell him it had been delayed. He wants at least a baseball team worth of grandkids before he get too old to play with them,” he laughed.

“OMG! You are such a gentleman,” she kissed him one last time.

Bella knew that she was going to be happy with him for the rest of her life.

****

Edward pulled into the driveway pleased to be home. It had been a long day at the restaurant since he was short handed. The flu that was going around seemed to strike his staff at once. He was glad that he didn’t have it yet and that the kids were still healthy. He grabbed the groceries from the backseat and went into the house. He made the second trip needed to get the rest of them. He heard music from Adrian’s room so he knew that he was there and hadn’t tried to sneak out like Fiona had done a few times. It was their last week of suspension and they had gotten restless the last few days.

Edward put the groceries away and grabbed a beer from the fridge. He sipped it as he removed his tie. He knew that it was most likely to find Fiona in the music room so he checked there to make sure she was in the house. It was Esmeralda’s day off so she tended to get a little sneakier when no one was there to watch them. He pushed the door open quietly and she sat at the piano and poured her heart into a composition he had helped her write. He was pleased with her talent with the instruments and her voice. She belted out the notes with her eyes closed. She was as passionate about the music as he was.

Edward closed the door and headed upstairs. He changed into jeans and long sleeve pull over. He had let his hair grow out more than he usually did because Bella enjoyed running her fingers through it. He pulled it back and braided it. He smiled at his reflection. In his mind he saw himself on a motorcycle with Bella hugged close to him as they drove along the coast somewhere. Whenever he thought of long hair he always thought about cowboys, bikers, and hippies. He didn’t prefer either of the other two. He chuckled to himself and headed to Adrian’s room.

Edward had promised to allow him to come with him the next time that he went to chop the firewood at the farm. He knocked and when he didn’t answer he knew that he wouldn’t be able to hear him over the music he had blaring. He tried again because he never liked to barge in unannounced. He opened the door and froze. Adrian was otherwise preoccupied and that was why he didn’t hear him knock even without the music he was sure he wouldn’t have heard him.

Adrian was wrapped in the arms of another person as they kissed sitting up on his bed.
Edward’s first thought was maybe they should have had Emmett and Rosalie do the sex talk it may have scared the shit out of him. As a father he felt like his little boy had grown up too fast even though he remembered his own first kiss before he was Adrian’s age. The one thing that shocked him the most outside of the make out session was that in his son’s arms was another boy. He was sure fifteen or twenty minutes had passed. He knew though it was only seconds.

“Adrian,” Edward turned off the stereo and spoke in a half shock and half stern voice.

“Dad!” he jumped apart from the other boy.

“I’d like to see you downstairs in ten minutes,” he said and left the room.

His mind raced and he wasn’t sure what his thoughts were on the discovery he had just made. He finished the beer he had opened and put the bottle in the recycling bin. He opened another and tried to focus. He took a few deep breaths as the puzzle pieces began to fall in place. The reason they had been suspended became clear. In school being different was a sin and being gay was being different. Somehow his secret had gotten out and Fiona had jumped in to save him. He was sure he would get crap for that as well. He wished Bella was there because she was better with the sensitive types of situations.

“Dad,” Adrian entered the kitchen.

“Where’s your…friend?”

“He’s going to wait upstairs. His mom isn’t due to pick him up for an hour.”

“Right before you were expecting me home. That was good planning on your part. I was able to get off early though. It kind of messed up your plan.”

“Yeah,” he said as he eased onto one of the stools at the bar.

“What do you have to say for yourself?”

“What?” he looked up at him for the first time.

“Rules are rules and you have broken them. What do you feel your punishment should be?”

“Wh-what? I mean…how…what…crap dad. You’re not mad at me for being gay?” he stared at Edward terrified.

“Son,” Edward walked over to him and put his arm around his shoulders, “why would I be mad?”

“Because…ya know….it’s wrong and stuff?” he questioned instead of stating.

“Who said that to you?”

“I don’t know,” he looked away again.

“Adrian,” he lifted his chin to look at him, “I don’t care if you like guys and not girls. I couldn’t care less. I just want to make sure you're being safe and understand what you're doing. I also care that you have someone in your room with the door shut. With deductive reasoning I know this is what the fight was about. I’m not sure why you thought I’d care about you being gay but know now that nothing is going to change about how much I love you.”
“Oh dad,” he hugged him and began to cry.

“I know. It’s okay. The kissing behind closed doors is freaking me out more than you kissing a boy.”

“Sorry,” he blushed.

“Oh shit your dad’s home,” Fiona said as she came into the kitchen.

“Yeah and he kinda caught me,” he mumbled into his shoulder.

Edward let him go once he had composed himself. Fiona smiled and hugged Adrian too.

“I told you,” she whispered to him.

“I know.”

“Well I guess you better formally introduce me to your friend. Are you guys dating or just make out buddies?”

“OMG!” Fiona and Adrian exclaimed at the same time.

“What?” Edward asked innocently.

“We’re dating. Casey and I broke up before the fight. I found out about Taylor. Casey found out as well and was mad at me and that’s how the fight started. Taylor and I have been texting and getting to know each other. We’ve kinda ya know hit it off,” he blushed then raced out the room.

“He really likes him,” Fiona said with a smile that reminded Edward of Alice, a bit too chipper.

“Thank you for standing up for him just next time don’t get in a fight,” he said and ruffled her fuchsia hair.

“Yes sir. You gonna tell mom?” she asked as she got a juice from the fridge.

“Nope. It isn’t my place.”

“You’re cool sometimes,” Fiona sat at the bar and waited for them to come down.

“Dad this is Taylor. Taylor this is my dad,” Adrian said bashfully.

“Nice to meet you Taylor,” he reached out his hand.

“You as well Mr. Masen.”

Edward immediately approved since the boy gave a firm handshake. He sized him up. He wasn’t quite as tall as Adrian probably about 5’10 with an average build and chin length layered sandy blonde hair. His blue eyes looked a little terrified but eased as soon as Edward smiled at him.

“In case Adrian has failed to mention to you he is grounded. Because your mother isn’t due until later I can let this one pass but in the future there would be trouble. I don’t mind you hanging out but the bedroom door will be open at all times. Now why don’t you guys watch a movie or some TV and I’ll make us a snack.”
“Yes sir,” Taylor said shocked.

“My dad’s cool like that,” Fiona whispered as they went to the living room.

Edward smiled and shook his head. She had never called him dad. He had no intentions of requiring them to call him dad. They had discussed that when they had talked about the engagement. Adrian easily had taken to Bella and was at ease with the mom term. Nigel had hinted about the change by getting tongue tied addressing him occasionally. It pleased him to know that she was ready for the change.

****

Bella looked nervously into the mirror. She gulped and tried to calm her breathing. Alice and Rosalie busied themselves as they assisted her in her preparations. She caught Fiona’s reflection in the mirror as she entered the room. She smiled. Fiona was beautiful. The soft yellow gown looked amazing on her. She had begun to fill out and a hint of the woman she would become glimpsed through. Her royal blue hair was swept up in beautiful curls and her elegant neck made her look even more regal. She wasn’t her little girl any more. Adrian grabbed her and handed her the something borrowed. She turned and waved at him. He smiled and was gone.

She was so happy to be his mother. She remembered the day when they sat in court and his mother released her parental rights. It had been the second best day of her life. She was pretty sure in another hour it would be bumped down a bit. He didn’t hate his biological mother but he wanted to be free of any claim she had of him. She had obliged because she had gotten married and had a baby on the way. In one of their long talks Adrian had confided in her his resentment for his old mother wanting to be a mother after she had given it up the first time. She held him as he cried. It had been almost the same when he had come out to her. She was glad to be his confidant when he needed it the most. He was her second son. She looked down at her almost nonexistent bump and prayed that it was a girl so Fiona would have a little sister.

Laughter caught her ears and she turned to see Renee, Esme, Elizabeth, and Gail (Ryan’s mother) in the corner as they put the finishing touches on her veil. Her family. She felt the tears again. She wasn’t sure if it was the pregnancy or the stress but she had been overly emotional for the last few days. Alice shook her head as she dabbed her eyes. Bella sat down and allowed Alice to do her makeup as Rosalie finished her hair.

All the women helped her into her gown and veil. There were lots of pictures taken and she vaguely remembered Fiona practicing her speech. Adrian had helped her write hers and she had critiqued his. She slipped her foot in the blue garter and then the pin Nigel had gotten for his science fair win was something borrowed and pinned to her gown. Esme handed her a necklace that was her something new. She thought how silly the traditions were but didn’t voice it aloud.

Next thing that she remembered was the orchestra as the doors open for her. He had actually done it. She tried not to laugh but the crowd soon listened to the music and realized it wasn’t the bridal march but ‘Faith’. It was their song. There were a few chuckles but it was so very Edward and Bella that no one took offense. She even danced a little as she made it up the aisle. Her father let his laugh slip as he gave her to Edward. She handed Fiona her flowers so she could hold Edwards hands.

Edward stood a little nervous at the front of the grand hall. He had waited so long for that moment. He watched as Adrian guided Fiona up the aisle and they separated and he couldn’t be a prouder parent. Nigel was supposed to be his second best man but had broken his leg during a bad soccer run in so he had to sit out and Jacob had taken his place walking in with Derrika. As they took their spots he smiled. He had kept his secret and as the music changed the butterflies
turned to giant condors in his stomach. He couldn’t see her expression because of the veil but her body language said everything. His breath caught as he saw her in her Vera Wang original ivory gown. She was gorgeous. He felt the tears in his eyes.

As he pushed back her veil when the moment was called for he couldn’t think of a single thing outside of his son’s birth that was as magical. He remembered the ‘I do’ and then they were kissing. Her lips were as soft as ever and he loved every second of his wife held against him.

“This is supposed to be a PG event mom and dad. There are kids here,” Fiona said as she cleared her throat.

“Sorry,” he chuckled as he pulled away, “just wanted to kiss Mrs. Masen.”

“Mrs. Swan-Masen,” Bella said with a chuckle.

Edward shook his head. He didn’t care if she wanted to be called Smurfette he would oblige. His family was seven months from being complete and he couldn’t be happier. He had his happily ever after with all the strings attached that made them human. They stared at each other for a few moments longer knowing that no matter the faults or arguments they may have they were the princess and prince charming that every little girl dreamed of. With that ceremony they had found home.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks everyone that read and left kudos! I don't actively write in this fandom anymore. All of my writing has been under the requests of my best friend, Mel. I do still have a few other things I wrote for that I will post here as well in the future if you would like. Again, everything was written years ago and some references may not be relevant anymore.

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