

A Killer in the Shadows

momma2fan

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Detectives Edward, Emmett and Jasper are on the case of a serial killer roaming the U-Dub campus. With their sisters on campus, can they keep them safe and do their jobs effectively? What happens when feelings begin to change for Edward and Jasper? Will they be too late to save the girls they love? And who is that Killer in the Shadows? AH, canon couples. M for language and lemons.

A Killer in the Shadows

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Table of Contents

- [1. Prologue](#)
- [2. Chapter 1](#)
- [3. Chapter 2](#)
- [4. Chapter 3](#)
- [5. Chapter 4](#)
- [6. Chapter 5](#)
- [7. Chapter 6](#)
- [8. Chapter 7](#)
- [9. Chapter 8](#)
- [10. Chapter 9](#)
- [11. Chapter 10](#)
- [12. Chapter 11](#)
- [13. Chapter 12](#)
- [14. Chapter 13](#)

[15. Chapter 14](#)

[16. Chapter 15](#)

[17. Chapter 16](#)

[18. Chapter 17](#)

[19. Chapter 18](#)

[20. Chapter 19](#)

[21. Chapter 20](#)

[22. Chapter 21](#)

[23. Epilogue](#)

1. Prologue

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Who's ready for some copward? I know I am. Eventually I will be touching on some strong subject matter, but for now we'll get the back story as to how things got started for our favorite pair. Enjoy and I will see you at the bottom. As always special thanks go to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you are the best, even when we are both busy, we still find time to be creative...love you!

I would also like to give a shout out to my good friend and fellow author, Bee1982. Her new book is available for order on Amazon. Embrace Me by Rebecca Turley, the long awaited companion book to Notice Me. Order yours now. Congrats, Bee! I'm so proud of you.

Prologue

"Give it up! The building is surrounded!" Edward yelled toward the man that was holding a gun to Bella's temple.

"No way! The minute I put this down and let her go, I'm as good as dead."

Edward wanted so badly to look at Bella, but he couldn't afford to lose his focus. "Come on, let the girl go. Take me instead," he offered.

"Edward, no!" Bella screamed.

"Shut up, Bitch." The arm that was around her waist tightened and the gun was pressed harder against the side of her head.

Bella flinched and closed her eyes, letting the tears that she had been holding back, spill over and down her cheeks.

"You know what, little Bella? Perhaps you should watch loverboy die in front of you," the menacing voice said in her ear.

The gun was pulled from her head and aimed at Edward. Bella began pleading with her captor for Edward's life. "Please, don't. I'll do anything you want, just please don't kill him!"

A noise behind them spooked him, and before Bella could blink, the gun had fired. She screamed in horror as Edward collapsed to the ground, blood beginning to stain his shirt.

"NO!" She stamped on her captor's foot, distracting him long enough to get away and run over to where Edward lay. The minute she was clear, shots reverberated throughout the room and she watched as the man who had already taken so many lives, fell to the floor, eyes open but unseeing.

She turned to Edward and pulled her sweatshirt over her head, pressing it to his wound. "Don't you leave me now, Edward."

"Be...Bella," Edward moaned through the pain. He fought to stay conscious, if for nothing else than to tell her the truth.

"Stay with me, Edward," Bella pleaded. "Jasper! Hurry!"

Edward opened his eyes again and stared at the face of the girl he had watched grow up. "I'm sorry."

"You have nothing to be sorry for. Edward, you have to stay with me. Please! I can't lose you!"

Edward lifted his hand weakly and pressed it to her cheek; Bella leaned into his touch. "Don't you *dare* give up on me, Edward!" she was sobbing.

"My...Be...lla." Edward's hand fell away from her as his body went limp.

"No, Edward, no! Stay with me, please!" Bella cried. "Please, Edward. I love you!"

Jasper and Emmett rushed forward with paramedics on their heels. It took the both of them to pull Bella away as Edward's prone form was loaded onto the stretcher. All Bella could do was pray.

AN: So who is our killer? I guess you'll have to read to

find out. Reviews get a teaser for chapter 1, so leave me your thoughts. I have no planned update schedule, so keep me on alert. Until next time...

2. Chapter 1

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: I am completely overwhelmed by the response to this story. We will be getting back to the action, but first we are going to be covering some back story—just so that everyone knows why Edward will be fighting his feelings so hard. I am hoping that no one is disappointed.

Once again I must thank my amazing beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best. Love you!

Chapter 1

Spring, 1993

"Ahoy, ye land lovers!" Edward yelled from the makeshift pirate ship that he was playing on with his brother and best friend.

"Arrgh! Walk the plank, ye yellow bellied..." Jasper's word halted when he heard his dad yell for him. "Darnit!"

Edward and Emmett's dad was soon calling for them, too. The three boys climbed down from their tree house pirate ship

and separated, running to their homes.

Jasper followed his dad, Charlie, into the house and into the living room where he found his mom, Renee, sitting on the couch.

"Mom, what's going on? I was playing with Em and Edward."

Renee smiled softly at her son. "Sit down, Jasper. Your dad and I have something to tell you."

Jasper sat down and listened while his parents told him that he was gonna be a big brother in about five months. He had noticed that his mom had been getting sick a lot lately and that she seemed to have been getting a little chubbier, but he hadn't thought anything of it. Now he understood why.

Next door, the Cullen twins were hearing similar news, only Esme wasn't due for another six months.

"Mom! That's gross!" Emmett yelled.

"Emmett Matthew Cullen! Don't talk to your mother like that!" Carlisle roared.

"Mom?" Edward asked. "Are we going to have a sister or a brother?"

Edward had always been the more loving and gentle of the twins, while Emmett was the larger and more boisterous one.

Esme smiled gently at her son. "It's a little girl. We haven't

decided what to name her yet and we're hoping that you two will help us with that."

Over the next several months, all three boys watched their mothers' bellies grow with their sisters. Edward had thought of a name but was refusing to tell his brother. He wanted to tell everyone on the day that she arrived.

Jasper was still adjusting to becoming a big brother, but the more he thought about it, he couldn't wait. He helped his mom prepare the nursery—as much as his parents would allow, anyway.

Emmett was still fighting against having a sister because he liked his family the way that it was. He was the only one that was upset about the baby coming, and had gotten grounded because he yelled at his mom and made her cry. He didn't care though...he didn't want a baby sister!

Charlie got the call while he was at the station; Renee's water had broken while she was picking up the boys from school. Luckily, Esme had been with her and had driven her straight to the hospital where she was currently corralling the boys in the waiting area while Renee pushed their daughter into the world.

"That's it, Ne, one more," Charlie encouraged his wife.

Finally, with a lustful cry, Isabella Marie Swan entered the world. After making sure that everything was okay with his wife and daughter, Charlie went to get his son.

"Jasper, would you like to come meet your sister?" Charlie asked the boy in front of him.

"Okay, Dad."

Jasper followed his father down the hall and into his mother's room. He saw his mom, sitting in the bed holding a pink bundle.

Renee looked up and smiled at her oldest child. "Jazzy, come meet Bella."

He walked over and climbed up on the bed beside his mother. "She's so tiny."

"You were this tiny once, too." Renee smiled at him. "Do you want to hold her?"

Jasper shook his head. "I might break her."

"No you won't, Silly. Sit back beside me," Renee ordered. Once Jasper was settled, she handed over the baby and watched as he bonded with his sister.

"Hi, Bella. I'm your big brother, Jasper." He watched as she just slept on, but her mouth twitched a bit. He looked up at his mom. "She smiled at me."

"I don't think so, Sweetie...not yet anyway."

Jasper turned back to his sister. "I promise that I will always protect you, Bella." Then he leaned down and kissed her

forehead.

A week and a half after Bella was born, Carlisle heard Esme yell that it was time. "Esme, are you sure? You're four weeks early."

"Carlisle, I am standing in a puddle of water and I doubt very much if the T.V. sprung a leak! Get me to the hospital. NOW!"

Carlisle sprinted out of his office, calling for the boys as he ran to the car. "Edward! Emmett! Let's go!"

Once everyone was loaded up, Carlisle peeled out of the driveway.

"Um, Dad?"

"Not now, Emmett! I have to get your mother to the hospital."

"Yeah, I know that, but Dad...where's Mom?" Emmett asked.

Carlisle looked at the passenger seat and realized that Esme wasn't sitting there. "Shit!"

Carlisle turned around in the next driveway and headed back to his house. He found his wife with her arms crossed, tapping her foot, on the porch. He noticed Charlie standing on the porch next door, laughing hysterically.

"Forget something, Carl?"

"Bite me, Chuck!" He grabbed his wife, loaded her and her

bag into the car, and sped off toward the hospital.

Four hours later, weighing five pounds and four ounces, the Cullen's welcomed their new baby into the world.

"Go get the boys, Car. Edward wanted to name her." Esme smiled down at the pink bundle in her arms.

Carlisle found his boys sitting in the waiting room with Charlie and Jasper. The two had left their house right after in order to sit with the boys while Esme delivered. "Boys, your sister is ready to meet you."

Edward jumped up and immediately walked forward, while Emmett took his time, still unsure about having a sister.

Once they entered the room, Edward went straight to his mom. "Edward, this is your baby sister and she is ready for you to name her."

"I only have her first name. Emmett has to give her a middle name."

"I'm not naming that...thing."

"Emmett Matthew Cullen! You are going to go see your baby sister and you are going to love her and protect her," Carlisle ordered.

Emmett grumbled as he made his way over to his mother's side. The minute he looked at the face hiding beneath that pink blanket, his mind and heart changed.

"Mary," he said.

"Emmett, I'm supposed to name her."

"So? Yours will be in the middle and we'll call her that. Mary is what I want."

"Fine," Edward growled. "Alice. Her name is Mary Alice Cullen."

Both boys leaned over and kissed her pink cheeks, silently vowing to always look after her.

AN: There you have it, the girls are born. Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.

3. Chapter 2

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: I realized after I posted that I had forgotten to change the year that the girls were born. They were born in 1990 not 1993. I apologize.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and by pre-reader, Bee1982. Love you, ladies!

Chapter 2

Ten years later...

Summer, 2000

"No, Bella! Barbie marries Ken, not Midge!" Alice ordered.

"But maybe Ken doesn't like Barbie. Maybe he wants something different," Bella suggested.

"Not in *my* house! Barbie and Ken *always* get married. If you want Ken to marry Midge, then go to your house!"

"Fine, I will!" Bella threw down her dolls and ran from the room.

"Whoa, little B!" Edward caught Bella as she flew down the steps. "Where's the fire?"

"Alice is being mean. I want to go home." Bella turned her tear filled eyes to Edward. She hated him to see her cry, because she thought he would think her a baby and she wasn't.

"Alright, Bells. Go ahead, I'll watch you from the porch."

"I'm ten, Eddie, not five!" Bella huffed and stomped to the door. "I can make it across the yard."

Edward chuckled and shook his head. At seventeen, he had seen enough of Ali and Bella's fights to know that they would make up by the next day. It would make the summer too long if they didn't have each other to play with.

Bella ran across the yard, into her house, and up to her room where she slammed her door as hard as she could. She walked to her window seat and sat down, letting her tears flow freely. She hated fighting with Alice, but her friend was just so bossy. She wasn't much fun anymore.

A knock on her door made her quickly wipe her eyes. "Come in!"

She looked up as her brother walked in. "What's wrong, Bells?"

Jasper walked over to his sister and sat beside her, listening to her cry about her best friend. When she was done, he

wiped her tears and told her that they would make up tomorrow. Alice would surely apologize. He hugged her and then walked out of the room, out of the house, and to the tree house. Not surprisingly, Edward and Emmett were already there.

"Is Bella okay, Jaz?" Emmett asked.

At seventeen, Emmett stood six-two. Although he was huge, he was a big teddy bear. He had fought it, but he loved both his sister and Bella.

"She's fine. Cried a bit, but she's ten and fighting with her friend. She said that Alice was bossing her around again."

"She was. She was crying too, though. She didn't think that Bella would leave," Edward explained.

"Dude, I love our sisters, but I am so ready to get out of here." Emmett lay back on the old wood.

The three of them were going into their senior years, and after graduation had all decided to join the police academy. They wanted to be cops like Charlie.

"Come on, Em. It's only a year. I think we can handle it."

"Are we going to T's party tonight?" Edward wanted to know.

"Why? You wanna hit that?"

Tanya Denali was the most well-endowed girl in school and

she wasn't afraid to show everyone what she had to offer. Edward had become her flavor of the summer. He, however, wouldn't touch her with Emmett's dick.

"Hell, no, Em. Then I would be fucking every dude in the class except you two. Unless, you two have something to tell me?"

"What do you mean, every guy in the class?"

"Jeez, Emmett, don't you listen when Dad gives the 'sex' talks?"

"Not really."

Edward and Jasper shook their heads. "Emmett, when a girl sleeps around, every guy that she sleeps with, sleeps with her former partners. Or some shit like that. So I am *not* gonna have sex with Tanya."

"Dude, that's just...gross!" Emmett gagged.

Jasper cracked up. "I really didn't need to know that."

Edward shrugged and hopped down from the tree house. "I'm not going to that party. Jake and the Q-tips invited us down to La Push for a pick-up game."

"Seriously? Last time we wiped the court with them."

"Yeah, Quil and Embry suck at ball."

"Either way, it will be fun."

The boys all agreed that it was a plan and then went their separate ways.

~~K~~

Bella was sitting in the boys' tree house when they wandered home later that evening. She was sad because Alice hadn't apologized yet, so when the boys found her, they knew that the girls were still fighting.

Bella looked up when three sweaty and bloody guys popped into the tree house. "What happened to you guys?" she gasped.

"What are you doing out here? Do mom and dad know where you are?" Jasper asked his little sister.

Bella shook her head. "They think I'm sleeping. I needed to get some fresh air. Alice still isn't talking to me."

"Bella, she's going to talk to you. You know how she is," Edward tried.

She just nodded her head. "What happened to you?"

"We got into a fight at the basketball game," Emmett told her as he reached for the first aid kit that they kept hidden there.

Bella immediately took it from his hands. "Let me," she smiled. She quickly cleaned all of their cuts and bandaged the ones that needed it. She was putting things away when she heard someone on the ladder.

"Isabella Marie! You are supposed to be in bed, young lady," Charlie said when his head cleared the top.

"Sorry, Daddy." Bella hung her head, but the tears were unmistakable in her voice.

Jasper was ready to defend her. "Sorry, Dad. She heard us come home and came out to fix up our scrapes."

"She was with you the whole time?" their father questioned. The three boys nodded.

"Alright. Well, Bella get inside and get to bed."

"Yes, Daddy. Night, guys." Bella climbed over her brother and his friends and followed her father in the house.

Charlie looked back at the boys and smiled. He knew that Bella had been out there for quite some time, but he also knew that the boys would protect her—no matter what.

AN: We have a little more history. The girls are growing up. When do you think that they will change in Jasper and Edward's eyes? I love reading all of your murder suspects. Keep in mind though, I *never* do the expected. Until next Wednesday, leave me some love.

4. Chapter 3

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

Chapter 3

Fall, 2005

"Stop! Police!" Emmett yelled as he and Jasper chased after a perp.

Jasper noticed where the young man was headed and called out to Emmett. "He's heading into the alley. I'll head him off and we can trap him!"

The two men separated, Emmett going one way and Jasper the other. When the perp turned in the alley, he had no idea that he was boxed in, or that Edward and his partner were en route as backup.

The kid that had tried to hold up a convenience store with two cops in it leaned back against a wall in the alley, thinking that

he had outrun the police. He tried to catch his breath when he heard sirens approaching. He turned to get out of his hiding place and came face-to-face with the barrel of Jasper's gun.

"Don't move!" Jasper growled.

The scared boy turned to run in the other direction, but found Emmett at his back.

"You're under arrest!"

The kid hung his head in defeat. Jasper slapped the cuffs on him and he and Emmett led the boy to Edward's waiting squad car.

"You two look a little winded," Sam, Edward's partner, joked.

"Fuck you! We actually had to work, not ride in a cruiser," Emmett sneered.

"Chill, Bro. He was just kidding." Edward grinned as he settled the perp in the back seat.

Emmett hated Sam. No one really knew why, but Edward thought that it had something to do with the dispatcher that Sam was dating.

"We'll meet you back at the house to write up the paperwork on *our* collar," Emmett told them.

"Whatever, Cullen. You just want the glory for this one."

"You're damn right we do, Uley!" Jasper growled. "We chased this little fucker for ten blocks. He's ours."

Sam held up his hands in a peaceful gesture. "Chill, Swan. I'm just messing with you."

Emmett and Jasper nodded and then turned, heading back for their cruiser. They were close to the end of their shift and wanted to get this fool processed so that they could go home. The three of them had the weekend off and were supposed to head back to Forks for a family get together. It was rare that they were all available at the same time.

Edward and Sam made it back to the house and put the kid in a holding cell.

"Come on, Edward. Let's process this fool," Sam said.

"No!" Edward snapped. "Jesus, Sam! We didn't do anything but bring the punk back. Knock that shit off!"

"Whatever." Sam stormed over to his desk to fill out his paperwork for the end of the day.

Edward was walking toward his desk when he heard a familiar voice at the main desk.

"How can I help you, young ladies?" he heard the officer ask.

"We're looking for our brothers. Officers Cullen and Officer Swan."

Edward turned back toward the front and smiled when he saw his sister and Bella.

"Ali? Bells? What are you two doing here?"

"You know these two, Cullen?" Edward looked up as the Captain came around the corner.

"Yes, Sir. This is my little sister, Alice." He pointed to the pixie. "And this is Swan's sister, Bella."

"Well, little ones welcome to the Port Angeles PD. I'm Captain Marcus Grimes."

"Nice to meet you." The girls said in unison and then giggled.

"And how old are the two of you?"

Bella smiled, "Fourteen, but our birthdays are coming up."

"Bella?" Jasper asked from the door, Emmett walking in behind him. "What are you doing here?"

Bella turned and smiled. "Jazzy!" she ran and jumped into her older brother's arms.

"Do Mom and Dad know where you are?" he asked as he hugged her.

"They're the ones that dropped us off. We went to a movie and they said that you would bring us home." Alice smiled, blushing as she spoke. She had developed a crush on Jasper

when the girls were twelve.

The three men chatted with their sisters for a bit until the captain cleared his throat. "I believe you have some paperwork to do and a perp to process."

"Uh, yeah. Um..." Emmett began.

"Girls, how would you like to hang out in my office until your brothers are finished?"

Bella and Alice nodded as their brothers looked at their boss gratefully. Emmett and Jasper headed down to holding and took the kid out for processing. They weren't prepared that their sisters would know him.

"Mike?" Bella whispered.

Jasper looked at his sister sharply. "You know him?"

Alice nodded. "He's in our class. Mike Newton."

The captain looked up at the guys. "You'll have to call his parents since he's a juvenile. *Before* you process him." He turned back to the girls. "Girls, let's get you settled. This might take a while."

~~K~~

The girls were half asleep by the time the five of them made it home to Forks. Jasper carried Bella into the house and put her in bed, while Emmett carried Alice to theirs, doing the

same. Edward dropped Jasper's bags in the house and the followed Emmett next door to their own.

The girls were out for the night, so the guys found themselves sitting on the back deck, hanging with their parents and having a few beers.

"So how are things at the Station?" Charlie wanted to know.

Charlie loved to hear the boys talk about their adventures on the force. Made him wish he was a young cop on the beat again.

"Okay, enough of the adventures in copland," Esme broke in, having heard enough about the boys escapades. "Let's discuss the girls' party."

"Okay, who's coming?" Edward asked.

Esme and Renee began running down the list. Emmett stopped them, however, when they got to a certain name. "I think you can cross that Newton kid off."

"Why?" Renee asked.

"Because, Mom, Emmett and I collared him this afternoon. He was trying to hold up a convenience store in the Port. We just happened to have been *in* the store at the time," Jasper explained.

"That little boy? How?" Carlisle wanted to know.

Emmett and Jasper launched into the tale, while Edward nursed his beer. He was sitting on some information that he wanted to share, but he wasn't sure how it would be received.

"Edward, you're quiet. Something on your mind, Son?" Carlisle asked.

"I've had a job offer..." Edward leaned forward, his elbows on his knees. "...in Seattle."

AN: Some of you have been telling me the chapters are too short. I promise that some will be longer than others. Leave me some love and I will see you next week. Be sure to check out Momma's BookCase or Momma2fan's page on FB for teasers. Later!

5. Chapter 4

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

I'm not feeling all that hot and thought that sharing a bit of Copward would help. Here you go...enjoy!

Chapter 4

Fall, 2009

"Bella, let's move the beds over here so that we have more floor space," Alice said as she started pulling on the bed post.

"Okay, then maybe we can get a couple of round chairs to make a little studying nook." Bella smiled at her friend.

"Bells, this is college. We're going to have fun!" Alice clapped and jumped around.

"You're here to study, not party, young lady!" a stern voice said from the door.

Both girls turned and saw a chuckling Edward and Jasper standing behind Emmett.

Alice squealed, "Emmy-bear! I am so glad you're here!" She bounced over and hugged her brother. "Can you help us move the beds? Please!"

The three men walked into the room. "Where are we putting things, Ali?" Jasper asked as he took off his jacket.

Bella backed up out of the way and leaned against the wall, watching Alice in action, with Emmett and Jasper moving things per her instructions.

"Are you sure you can handle living with her, Bells?" Edward asked right next to her ear.

Bella felt a shiver run down her spine but tried to hide it. "It's only for a year, and then I plan to be an RA. They get singles."

Edward smiled but said nothing. He was glad that the girls were close now. He had missed them both the last four years. When he had dropped the bomb about the job offer in Seattle, his brother and Jasper were pissed, even after he had explained it was for a detective position on SPD. He had hated his partner back then; there was always something about Uley that was off. It wasn't long, though, until Em and Jaz had both followed Edward to the big city. Now they were the three top detectives on the force.

"How's Jessica?" Bella asked, not looking at him. She didn't like his girlfriend. She was an airhead and a vapid bitch, so Bella hadn't been around much at all in the last three years.

"I wouldn't know," Edward said. "She left me about a year ago."

Bella looked up at him, shocked. "Wow, Eddie, I'm sorry."

Edward grinned at her; she was the only one that was allowed to call him that. "Don't be, I'm better off. She decided that I had the wrong equipment and that Emmett's *girlfriend* had the 'right' stuff."

Bella burst out laughing but then immediately covered her mouth and turned a beautiful shade of crimson. Edward couldn't help but wonder how far that blush went. Wait, what? This was Bella—she was like a sister to him.

Before he could ponder that anymore, Edward's pager went off. He pulled it off his belt and looked at the number. When he saw the *1-8-7 on the screen he muttered a curse under his breath. He stepped away from Bella while pulling his phone from his pocket.

"This is Detective Cullen," he barked into his phone. "I'm sorry; can you repeat that address for me?"

Emmett and Jasper looked up and met Edward's wide eyes. Grabbing their jackets, they walked to him. Edward told the person on the other line that they would be there in ten

minutes and then put the phone back in his pocket.

"Where, Bro?"

Edward shook his head at Emmett and looked over at the girls. "I need you two to do me a favor."

"Sure," they said in unison.

"Stay inside until you hear from one of us. If you have to leave, *don't* go anywhere alone. Okay?" They both nodded their heads. Edward smiled, kissed their cheeks and left, followed closely by Emmett and Jasper.

~~K~~

Edward flashed his badge as he crossed the police line.

"What've we got?" he asked the medical examiner.

"Female, Caucasian. Looks to be between eighteen and twenty years. She was bound and strangled. I figure time of death to be around two in the morning. I'll know more after the autopsy."

"Any signs of sexual assault?" Jasper questioned.

"None visible at this time."

Edward donned a pair of latex gloves and picked up the victims hand. "Blood under the fingernails. Could be our perps."

"Hmm, could be," Emmett responded as he looked around for anything that might tell them what happened. "Any ID found?"

"No personal effects were found with the body."

"Sounds like this guy wanted a souvenir," Jasper commented.

"Yeah," Edward mumbled. "Okay, guys, get pictures of everything. How soon can you have the autopsy results, Jane?"

"Monday," Jane said as she signaled her crew to get the body bagged and ready for transport.

As the three of them headed back to their cars, Emmett stopped and looked in the direction of Bella and Alice's dorm. They were too close.

"This is the second vic in a month," he commented.

Jasper and Edward followed his gaze. "We'll just have to watch them, Em."

"This one was close, Edward," Jasper said. "Too, close."

"Like I said, Jaz, we'll watch them."

~~K~~

Bella and Alice were walking across the quad over to the student union so that they could get their classes picked and schedules set. Alice was of course looking for anything

fashion related, while Bella was still undecided.

"Bella, I can't believe you haven't picked your major yet!" Alice chastised.

"Ali, my parents think that they get to plan my life for me. I don't want to be a teacher. Why do you think I never babysat? I don't like other people's kids!"

Alice laughed at her friend. Bella had always said that with the way some people's kids acted they should have corporal punishment back in school, because *obviously* the parents weren't disciplining their children.

"Then choose journalism or something," Alice suggested.

"No. *If* I'm going to write, it's going to be for me," Bella explained. "I'll figure it out someday."

The girls got in line and settled in to wait. They heard the murmurs around them about the body that had been found on campus. They figured that was where their brother's had been called. Apparently it was the second murder on the campus in the last month. Although they were scared and nervous, they knew that if they guys were on the case, they would be watching them closely—a thought that comforted them.

***1-8-7 is generally referred to as Murder-Death-Kill. However, not all forces use these particular numbers to report the crime.**

AN: I hope you enjoyed this surprise update, next one not until Wednesday. Leave me your thoughts. We'll have a small time jump in the next chapter.

6. Chapter 5

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

I am amazed by the response to this story. We surpassed 200 reviews and I just want to say thanks to each and every one of you. Your words keep me writing. Now let's check in with Copward!

Chapter 5

One year later...2010

Edward ran a hand through his unruly hair. One year and he had five bodies. He had no evidence, no ties to any of the women other than that they were students at U-Dub. It made him fearful for Bella and Alice.

"Edward, come on man. Let it go for tonight. We have to meet Mom and Dad for dinner with the Swans." Emmett stopped by his brother's desk.

"Alright, let's go." Edward grabbed his jacket off the back of his chair. After flipping off his desk lamp, he followed his brother out to his car.

They were silent on the way to the restaurant. Edward couldn't figure out why this guy was killing young college girls. He was missing something. He just hoped that he could figure it out before the killer found his next victim.

Emmett pulled into the parking lot and the two men headed inside the Italian restaurant where they were meeting their parents and sisters.

"Look who finally decided to show up," Jasper laughed.

"Shut it, Swan. Not all of us were off today." Emmett smiled, before leaning down to kiss his sister and mother's cheeks. "Where's Bella?"

Charlie rolled his eyes. "Out with Tyler. He's supposed to drop her off here."

"Who the hell is Tyler?" Edward asked as he sat down next to his father.

"Bella's boyfriend. Ugh, he is such a..."

"Sorry, I'm late." Bella wandered to the table, cutting Alice off.

Jasper took a good look at his sister. Disheveled hair and tear stained cheeks. "You okay, Bells?"

Bella shook her head and promptly burst into tears and turned to leave the restaurant. Jasper got up and ran after his sister.

"Bells, stop!" He caught up to her and grabbed her arm.
"What is it?"

"He only wanted one thing, Jazzy." Bella explained through her tears. "He told me he...lov...loved me. But it was all a lie."

"Oh, Bella." Jasper sighed and pulled her to his chest. He wanted to string this *Tyler* up by his balls for taking advantage of his nineteen year old sister. "I'm sorry, baby girl."

"It's not your fault. I just can't believe I gave up a piece of myself to that lying sack of shit."

Jasper chuckled at the venom in his sister's voice. "Shall we join the others?"

Bella nodded. "I'm just gonna go wash my face. Tell Mom and Dad I'll be right there."

Jasper nodded and went back to the table while Bella went to the bathroom. When she was satisfied, she joined the rest of her family at the table. The only available chair was next to Edward.

"You okay?" Edward asked quietly.

Bella nodded. "Yeah, I just learned a lesson the hard way."

"He didn't deserve you," he whispered.

Bella snapped her eyes to Edward's. There was something there that she had never seen before and it made her tremble. All she could do was smile softly and then turn to her menu.

Dinner was a fun, boisterous event. Their parents even took it upon themselves to embarrass Alice and Bella by having the restaurant sing for their birthdays.

At the end of the night, Bella went back to her empty dorm room and lay down on her bed. She couldn't believe that she had given her virginity to a guy who had played her. She was smarter than that, but he was just so sweet and loving that she hadn't hesitated—a decision that she would regret for some time to come.

~~K~~

"Edward, look at this!" Emmett exclaimed.

Edward leaned forward and looked at the file that Emmett shoved toward him. "What am I looking at, Emmett?"

"Look at the description of all the girls. Their builds and hair lengths."

Edward read through the file and didn't believe it. How could he have missed it? Long hair, only standing about five foot two...

"Emmett..."

"I know, the victims are built like Bella."

"Say that again?" Jasper requested as he walked up to their desks.

Emmett looked up at his friend. "Apparently all of our vics share some similarities with your sister. Actually, with Alice, too."

"Do you think that he is going after them?" Jasper wanted to know.

Before Em or Edward could comment, their captain came out of his office. "Got another one, guys."

"Where?" Edward asked.

Captain Graves rattled off the address and the three men shared a look. Instead of commenting, they immediately went to their cars and drove to the alley behind Bella and Alice's dorms.

~~K~~

Bella woke up to sirens and flashing lights outside her window. She drew back the curtain and saw three police cars and a coroner's van sitting in the alley. Before she dropped the curtain back in place, she saw her brother, Edward and Emmett pull up. If they were there she knew it wasn't good.

As if sensing her there, Edward looked up and met her eyes in the window. Bella immediately dropped the curtain and threw on some clothes. If the police were outside their

building, she would have to get with the rest of the RAs and go over procedures.

She had no sooner stepped out of her room when doors began opening and questions were being thrown in her direction.

"Stop!" she yelled. "I don't know the answers to your questions. Go back in your rooms and I will find out what I can."

Although they grumbled, all of the students went back to their rooms and shut the doors. Bella sighed and turned to go down the stairs to the building RA's room. Each floor had an RA, but there was one for the whole dormitory. Bella made it down to that floor and knocked on her door.

"Hey, Bella, come on in. We're just waiting for one more."

"Thanks, Rose."

It was ten minutes before the last RA joined them and then the meeting started. "Look, I know that everyone is concerned, especially since this one landed in our backyard, but the important thing is not to panic. We need to set some ground rules. I received information from the dean's office a little while ago. The entire campus is going to be put on a curfew. Everyone *must* be back in their rooms by ten at night, and no overnight guests. If for some reason someone has to stay, then their RA needs to be informed.

"No walking around campus alone. Everyone needs to make sure they have a buddy. If you can't find someone to walk with you, campus security is adding to its detail. The phones to call for an escort are outside every building—use them. Any questions?" Rose finished as she handed out some papers. "Okay, then. Make sure that you all have a floor meeting and get these forms signed. Everyone needs to sign them." She opened the door and everyone left.

"Have they told you anything?" Rose asked Bella once the room cleared out.

"Who? My brother and the Cullen's?" Rose nodded. "No, but I know that they're out there."

"Okay, keep me posted if you can."

"I will," Bella promised.

She left the room and was heading for the stairs when she heard her name called. She stopped, turned and saw Edward coming toward her.

AN: What does Edward want? So now the girls are 19. Things are going to progress for our couples, but then of course for one, they will stop. More murder and mystery to come next week. Until then, leave me your thoughts.

7. Chapter 6

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN2: Last chapter a lot of you asked me where Alice was. Keep in mind that in Chapter 4, it was the girls first year of college and they were roommates. Chapter 5 has us a year later. They are no longer roommates and live in separate dorms. Bella is now an RA and lives in a single room. I hope this clears up any confusion.

Chapter 6

Edward pulled up to the campus and saw the lights flashing, fairly certain that the entire dorm was awake now. He looked up and saw Bella in her window, looking like a deer caught in the headlights. Edward watched her drop the curtain back in place and her shadow dance across the room.

He looked away and got focused. He was confused about what was going on in his head. He knew that he shouldn't be seeking her out, but found himself doing just that and more.

Ever since her birthday dinner, Bella had been in Edward's head.

"What've we got?" He stepped under the yellow police tape after flashing his badge at the officer standing guard.

"Caucasian female, around twenty. Bound and strangled," Jane rattled off. "I put the time of death about an hour ago. She's still warm."

"That's new," Emmett muttered.

"He's getting brazen," Edward commented as he slipped on his latex gloves. He picked up her hand and examined the nails. They were chipped and bloody. "I want tissue samples."

"You got it," Jane said as she signaled to her team to bag the body.

They had no sooner picked her up, when Jasper noticed something underneath where the body had lain. "Edward, take a look at this."

Edward shone his flashlight where Jasper was pointing. "Holy shit!"

"Is that...?" Jasper swallowed hard.

"Emmett, I need an evidence bag."

Emmett came forward shaking a bag open. Edward picked up the paper by the corner and stuck it gently inside before

sealing it up tightly. Inside was a handwritten note that was addressed to the police.

You'll never find me,

I cover my tracks well

How much more will I do?

Only time will tell.

~~K~~

Edward opened the outside door to Bella's building and saw her heading for the stairs. "Bella!"

She stopped and turned, waiting for him on the bottom step. "What's going on?"

"Can we go somewhere and talk?"

Bella nodded and led him to the empty sitting room. "Edward, you're scaring me. What is it?"

Edward grabbed his hair and yanked on it. "I really need you and Ali to be careful. This time it was different."

Bella gasped. "How?"

"The bo...the victim was still warm. It only happened about an hour ago, two at the most." Edward sank into a chair. "I shouldn't even be telling you this, but I want you to be on

guard."

Bella was silent, but then a sob broke free causing Edward to look up at her. His heart broke at the look of fear and hopelessness on her face. He immediately stood and went to her, wrapping her up in his arms.

"Shh, I won't let anything happen to you. I swear." He pressed a kiss to her hair. "I will *a/ways* protect you."

Bella fisted her hands in his shirt and clung to him like a lifeline. She ignored the tremors that ran through her body at the feel of being in his arms. She had dreamed of him holding her like this for three years, but he had always looked at her like a sister...she thought he still did.

"You'll need to take precautions." Edward pulled back from her, his hands on her cheeks, looking into her eyes.

Bella nodded and stepped away from him. She wiped her eyes and showed him what Rose had given all of the RAs. "I know what to do. I'll have my pepper spray with me if for some reason I'm left with no choice."

Edward snapped his head up from the paper. "No, Bella. If you have no other option then you call me, Emmett, or your brother. We'll come get you." He dropped the paper and stepped to her. He grabbed her face in his hands. "If anything were to happen to you..."

Any other words he was going to say were cut off by his

pager going off. "Fuck!" he muttered. He checked the number and then looked back at Bella. "I have to go. Please, be careful."

"I promise. Go, it could be important." Bella smiled.

Edward nodded, and before he knew what he was doing, he kissed her lips and was gone.

She stood there stunned, her fingers pressed against her lips that were still tingling from his brief touch.

~~K~~

Edward ran out to his car and headed for the station. Once he slowed down, he realized that he had kissed Bella.

"FUCK!" Jasper was going to kill him. *If* he found out, that is.

Edward got back to the station and found Emmett and Jasper waiting for him. "What's up?"

"FBI called. They're threatening to take this case from us," Jasper explained.

"I'm not surprised. They can't have it, though." Edward lowered himself into the chair at his desk.

Jasper ran his hand through his unruly locks. "I, uh...I talked to Alice after we left the scene."

Emmett looked surprised, but Edward looked...green. "Yo,

Edward! You alright, Man? You look like someone just killed your dog."

"I uh...went and found Bella after we cleared," Edward choked out.

"Okay, what the fuck is going on with you two?" Emmett growled.

"I think that we all need to sit down and talk," Edward told them. "Let's go get some coffee."

~~K~~

Bella lay in bed after knocking on everyone's door, explaining the procedures and getting them to sign the agreement. Her lips still felt warm from where Edward had kissed her. She needed to talk to someone, so she picked up her phone and called her best friend.

"Alice?" Bella said when she muttered a 'hello'.

"Bella, oh my, GOD! I have to talk to you."

Bella giggled. "I need to talk to you, too."

"Okay, so are we meeting for breakfast, then?"

"Yeah, I'll meet you at the Starbucks at eight," Bella told her.

"Okay, see you there."

Bella hung up her phone and laid it on her nightstand before turning off her light, rolling over, and drifting to sleep.

She woke early and was showered, dressed, and waiting for Alice at the coffee shop with time to spare. Finding a table in the back, she ordered her coffee and muffin. While she waited, she pulled out her Intro to Psychology book and looked over yesterday's assignment. She wasn't sure how long she sat there, but someone finally joined her.

"Where the hell..." the words died on her lips as she looked up. Her companion wasn't Alice. "Who are you?"

AN: He kissed her! Do you think he regrets it? Who could possibly be sitting with her? Find out next time. Until then leave me some love.

8. Chapter 7

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: No, your eyes aren't playing tricks on you. I am updating again. From here on out updates will be on Wednesday and Saturday. Enjoy!

Chapter 7

He had watched her cross the quad and then followed her over to the Starbucks, watching her over the rim of his own coffee cup. He figured that the other girl was supposed to join her, but when she hadn't shown thirty minutes later, he decided to make his move.

He crossed the room and pulled out the chair across from her, sitting down just as she spoke.

"Where the hell...?" She looked up at him. "Who are you?"

"Really, Isabella?" he smiled at her. "I can't believe that you

don't remember me."

Bella cocked her head and narrowed her eyes. "Should I?"

"I used to play ball with your brother and the Cullens."

She thought back—that had been almost ten years ago. "I'm sorry. My brother played ball with a lot of people and that was a long time ago."

He thinned his lips into a tight line. This wasn't going the way that he wanted. "I'm Jacob Black. I lived down in La Push."

"Oh, yeah." Bella remembered him, Jake and the Q-tips. "What are you doing here?"

He cleared his throat. "I work for campus security."

Bella giggled. "You're certainly big enough."

Jacob laughed as well. "That's what my wife tells me."

Bella and Jacob talked for a few minutes until Alice joined them. Jacob finally left but not before telling the two girls to be careful.

"We will," they said in unison.

After Jacob left, Alice turned to Bella with an excited look on her face. "Jasper kissed me last night!"

Bella was shocked. "My brother?"

"Do you know another Jasper?" Alice giggled.

"Well...no." Bella smiled. "Edward kissed me."

"What!?" Alice screeched.

Bella quickly explained what had happened. Alice listened silently, but was literally vibrating in her seat. By the time she had explained everything, Alice was about to jump out of her chair.

"Oh my, God! Bella that is amazing!" Alice squealed. She then told Bella what happened when Jasper had shown up at her room. "It was..."

"Amazing?" Bella finished for her with a grin.

"Yeah," Alice sighed.

Bella looked down at her watch and gasped. "Shit, Alice! I'm going to be late. Gotta run!" She grabbed her bags and ran out of the coffee shop and across the quad.

Bella made it to her psych class in time and plopped down in a seat. She hated this class, mostly because the professor droned on like a robot. He was more lecture than anything, and God forbid you ask a question.

When the class finally ended, Bella grabbed her bag and left, sprinting to her next class on the other side of campus.

~~K~~

Edward sat at his desk, his hands fisted in his hair as he stared at the crime scene photos on front of him. He wasn't really seeing them, though. All he could think about were his lips on Bella's and how right it had felt, but wrong at the same time.

"Morning, Edward."

He looked up and saw Jasper looking at him. "How can you look so...at ease?"

"Simple, Bro, I've been in love with Alice for over a year. She changed for me when the girls were sixteen. I know that was young, but..."

"Jasper, we watched them grow up. Bella was like a sister to me and now..." Edward lowered his head and banged his forehead on his desk.

"Dude, she was *never* your sister, just like Ali was never mine. Edward, stop beating yourself up over this. I'm not mad and I know that my parents won't be, either."

"How do you know that, Jaz?"

Jasper leaned forward and put his elbows on his desk.

"Because I called and talked to Carlisle and Esme last night. I wanted them to be aware of my feelings. Your mother asked me if you had said anything about Bella."

"Bro, you aren't exactly stealthy," Emmett commented as he

walked up to his desk. He slammed a file down in front of Edward.

"What's this?"

"Autopsy on our latest vic. Jane called this morning. This one is different. She found signs of sexual assault."

This new information put a halt on the conversation about Alice and Bella as the three detectives went over the new findings.

~~K~~

Bella sat at the desk in her room studying for a couple of tests that she had coming up. It was getting close to their Thanksgiving break and then she would be buckling down, preparing for her exams.

She was just shutting her book when Rosalie burst into her room. "Bella, you need to come look at this newscast!"

She got up and ran from the room behind Rosalie. When the two of them entered the media room, they were met with silence except for the news on the TV.

"...Once again, police have released the name of latest victim of the U-Dub Strangler. Holly Webb, twenty-one, college senior. Ladies on campus need to be aware and make sure that they are traveling in pairs. Our informant at the department has told us that there were signs of sexual

assault. We'll have more on this story as it develops."

"Bella, you have to call your brother," Rosalie whispered.

Bella nodded and walked slowly back to her room, letting the information sink in. She mechanically dialed her brother's phone number but it went straight to his voicemail. She tried Edward next.

"Bella?" Edward's voice sounded harried.

"Ed...Edward, I just saw the news. Is it true?"

Edward sighed over the line. "Yeah, I can't give you details, but it's true."

"Oh, God! He's getting worse."

"I know. Bella, you have to promise that you're going to be careful and not go anywhere alone."

"I promise. What am I supposed to do about my evening class?"

"What evening class?"

Bella sighed. "My Bio-Psychology class meets one evening a week instead of during the day."

"Just make sure that you aren't walking alone, and if you have to, call for an escort."

"Okay, I have to go. I'll talk to you later?"

"Yeah," he sighed again. "We need to talk, Bella."

Bella sighed. "If what you want to talk about is what happened last night, then I don't want to. I don't regret it, but I know that you probably do, so just forget it, okay?"

Edward wanted to say something. He knew Bella was giving him an out, he just wasn't sure that was what he wanted. Unfortunately, she took his silence as agreement.

"Bye, Edward."

He heard the click of her ending the call before he could say anything else.

AN: Do you think he wanted that out? Let me know. Until next time.

9. Chapter 8

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

Chapter 8

Thanksgiving was tense for Bella, especially since she had to watch her brother and her best friend being affectionate. She was glad that she had brought her books with her. They were a much needed distraction.

A knock on her door startled her. "Bella? Can I come in?"

"Sure, Mom."

Bella turned from the window and watched as her mother walked into the room. "Are you okay, Sweetie? You seem a little down."

She shrugged. "I'm fine. Just ready for the semester to be over, you know?"

Renee nodded. "Bella, did something happen at school?"

"What do you mean, Mom?"

"Honey, you just don't seem very happy. What's wrong?" Renee pressed, knowing that her daughter would spill eventually.

Bella sighed and looked out her window. She could see the Cullen's house from her vantage point and wondered what he was doing. "Edward kissed me."

"Really?" Renee squealed. "When?"

Bella turned back to her mother. "The same night that Jaz kissed Ali. The difference is he regrets it, Mom."

"Oh, Bella," Renee sighed. "How do you know?"

Bella stood up and walked to her closet. She grabbed a hooded sweatshirt and pulled it on before grabbing her brown Uggs. "Because I gave him and out and he took it." She turned back to her Mom and shrugged her shoulders. "He doesn't want me."

"Bella..."

"No, Mom. It's okay. He will always look at me like a sister. I'll just have to get used to it." She opened her door and walked down the steps, her mother on her heels.

"Bella, you don't have to..." Renee stopped, seeing that all of the Cullen's were in the living room.

Bella looked into Edward's eyes, and he just stared back at her. "Mom, I'm going for a walk. I'll be back later."

Renee looked back and forth between her daughter and Edward. "Okay, Honey. Be careful."

Bella turned and walked out the front door, down the walkway, and then headed in the direction of the elementary school. She needed to get away and think—about everything.

~~K~~

Edward watched Bella walk out of the house. He wanted to follow her, but the look on Renee's face stopped him. Instead, he got up, walked out the door, and went back to his parent's house. He sat down on the couch and looked at the pictures that were spread across the mantle. Charlie, Renee, Jasper, and Bella were in almost all of them.

"What's going on with you, Bro?" Emmett asked as he and Jasper walked into the house.

"Nothing, why?"

"Edward, you know that whatever you are feeling for Bella is fine with our parents, right?" Jasper asked as he plopped into the recliner.

"Jasper, I'm not feeling anything for her. She's like a sister to me," Edward protested. "It's this case. It's driving me crazy!"

Emmett just grinned at his brother. He was in deep denial.

"Edward, we'll solve this case. What are you going to do when that's no longer an excuse?"

Emmett and Jasper got up and left Edward alone with his thoughts.

~~K~~

Bella sat down on the old swing at the playground outside the elementary school. She thought about the way the Edward's lips felt when they touched hers. She had known that he would regret the act immediately, she just didn't expect it to hurt like it did.

She replayed that moment in her head on a continuous loop, and had known the minute he pulled away. He had rushed out of her dorm and then sounded so...harassed when she had called him the next day after the news report. She understood that he had a lot on his mind, but he had never *not* wanted to talk to her before.

She was frozen by the time she made it home. She had also strengthened her resolve that she wasn't going to let Edward bring her down anymore. She was going to forget how she felt when he was around. She was going to let him go.

Bella walked inside and found all the men in the living room watching a football game. She knew that her mother, Esme and Alice would be in the kitchen finishing their holiday dinner. She bypassed the stairs and went into the kitchen.

"Oh, Bella. I was just about to send your brother after you," Renee said when she spotted her.

"Sorry, I was just thinking. I'm gonna go take a hot shower and then I'll come help you, okay?" Bella smiled. "Oh, and I am gonna blast some music, but please don't say anything. I have a message to deliver."

"Okay, Sweetie."

Bella didn't miss the look that passed between Esme and Alice, but she let it go. Alice would figure it all out anyway.

Bella went up the stairs and found the song that she wanted on her iPod. After placing it in her docking station, she turned the volume all the way up and hit play. Carrie Underwood's voice filled the room, and hopefully the house.

I know you don't mean to be mean to me

*'Cause when you want to you can make me feel like we
belong*

We belong

Lately you make me feel all I am is a back-up plan

I say I'm done and then you smile at me and I forget

Everything I said

I buy into those eyes

And into your lies

You say you'll call, but I know you

You say you're coming home, but I know you

You say you'll call, but I know you won't

You say you'll call, but I know you won't

Bella stepped under the hot spray of the shower while the song continued. It was like the soundtrack to her heart.

Edward sat on the couch in the living room, listening to the words of the song and knew that he had fucked up. This would take a while to fix.

"Ne?!" Charlie yelled.

Renee stuck her head around the corner. "Yes, Dear?"

"What's wrong with my baby girl?" Charlie wanted to know.

Renee smiled softly at her husband. "She's fine, Charlie. She's just letting go of some grief."

"If you say so," he grumbled as Renee went back into the kitchen.

Bella came down the stairs minutes later, dressed in a pair of jeans and a beige sweater, her brown hair flowing down her back. Edward bit back a groan, lifted his beer to his mouth,

and took a long swallow.

"Isabella Marie..." Charlie started when she made it to the bottom of the steps.

"Yes, Daddy?"

"What is the meaning of that music and the volume?" he asked.

Bella grinned at him, "Sorry, Daddy. Just a dumb boy that was frustrating. It's all out of my system." She walked over and kissed him on his stubbled cheek.

"Hmm," was the only thing he said.

Thanksgiving passed without further incident or interaction for Bella and Edward. By the time she was back at school, Bella had her focus back and was ready to buckle down and pass the semester.

AN: Head on over to Momma's BookCase on FB for a link to the song that Bella listens to. Emoward looks to be around for a bit. Hope you all plan to be. See ya Saturday!

10. Chapter 9

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

Chapter 9

"I know, Jaz," Alice was saying when Bella walked into the cafe and over to her table. "Listen, I have to go. Your sister just got here. I'll talk to you later."

"You didn't have to get off the phone. I could have occupied myself," Bella told her. She knew that Ali and Jaz had been talking about her, but she couldn't bring herself to care.

"It's fine. So what's going on?"

Bella smiled. "I have a date."

"What!?" Alice exclaimed. "With who?"

"James Collins." Bella smiled.

"James Collins? I don't know him, do I?" Alice wanted to

know.

Bella shook her head. "No, he's in my sociology class. He's cute."

The girls were silent while the waiter took their order. When he was gone, Alice started.

"Bella, you've had a crush on..."

"Stop right there, Alice. Your brother made his choice. He decided that I was more of a sister to him than I was a woman, so let's not bring him into this, okay? James seems like a nice guy."

Alice sighed. "Alright, Bells. I'll let it go. Just know that it's easier said than done to get someone else out of your heart."

Bella didn't comment. Instead, she quickly ate her sandwich once the waiter brought it over, and then hurried toward her last class of the day.

~~K~~

Rosalie sat on Bella's bed, talking to her as she finished getting ready for her date.

"Am I overdressed, Rose?" Bella wondered when she turned around to face her friend.

Rose inspected Bella's outfit. She was wearing skinny jeans with a grey tank and a grey cable knit sweater over top,

paired with grey suede knee high boots. The large silver hoops that swung from her ears completed the look.

"You're just doing dinner and a movie, right?" Bella nodded, so Rose smiled. "I think that you look fine, then. Beautiful even."

Bella blushed and thanked her as Rose left to go back to her room. Bella decided to play matchmaker and try and get Rose and Emmett together. She didn't dwell on it though. She grabbed her bag and walked down to meet James at the front of her dorm.

He wasn't there when she got outside, but she did see campus security idling by the curb. She waved at the car just as James walked up.

"Wow, Bella. You look...stunning," he complimented.

Bella blushed again. "Thanks."

James handed her a pink carnation. "Are you ready?"

Bella smiled and the pair left under the watchful eye of someone in the shadows.

~~K~~

Edward sat at his desk, pulling at his hair. He had been staring at the crime scene photos in front of him for hours and was beyond frustrated. He needed to catch this bastard before he killed someone else.

"How's it going, Bro?" Emmett's voice broke his concentration.

"I feel like I'm missing something. It's like the clue to who this son of a bitch is, is staring me right in the face."

Emmett pulled out his own desk chair and sat down. "Let me help. I want to catch this guy as much as you do."

Edward nodded and passed the photos over to his twin. "I know that I'm missing something in these."

For the next two hours, Emmett and Edward studied the photos, lab reports, and witness statements, searching for anything that would stop these crimes. When they finally left the station that evening, they were no closer than they had been when they started.

~~K~~

James walked Bella back to the door of her dorm. "I had a great time tonight, Bella. I hope we can do this again."

Bella turned and smiled up at him. "I'd really like that."

James leaned down and brushed his lips across her cheek and then smiled. "I'll call you."

"Okay. Goodnight, James."

He waited until she was inside before walking back toward his vehicle. Bella all but skipped up to her room. She threw herself down on her bed and giggled. Tonight had been the

most fun she'd had with a guy since she dated Tyler. Boy did he turn out to be a jerk!

Changing into her flannel jammies, she crawled beneath the covers. She had a long day at the library ahead of her and needed her rest. She drifted to sleep with a smile on her face.

~~K~~

Edward stood in the booth and reloaded his weapon. He donned the goggles and protective ear pieces before firing in rapid succession, emptying his clip. He had been at the gun range since early in the morning—anything to get his mind off of the baffling case he was working on.

He was also trying to get his mind off of Bella. He hadn't seen or spoken to her since Thanksgiving, something that was difficult for him. Since she and Alice had started college, he had seen or at least talked to her twice, sometimes three times, a week.

He was loading his clip for the fourth time when his cell buzzed in his pocket. Taking off all of his protective gear, he answered the call.

"Detective Cullen."

"Where the hell are you?"

"I'm at the firing range. Why? What's wrong, Jasper?"

"Nothing is wrong, but Alice has been trying to get a hold of

you all morning."

"Okay, I'm almost done here. I'll call her when I'm done."

"Okay. Later, Bro."

Edward disconnected the phone and finished his shooting. Once he had emptied his fourth clip, he cleaned his weapon and stowed it after taking the proper safety precautions. He turned in his goggles and ear covers, and then left the range.

He had just walked into his apartment when his cell started ringing again. He pulled the offending object from his pocket and saw that it was Alice.

"Hey, Ali-Cat. What can I do for you?"

"Bella had a date last night."

Edward felt his heart fall into his stomach and he sank down on his couch. "Okay...what's that got to do with me?" He tried to keep his voice even.

"Dammit, Edward! I know that you're in love with her," Alice told him.

"Alice, I'm not. I care about her, sure, but it's in the same way I care about you. She's like my sister," he lied.

"Whatever, Edward. Keep *lying* to yourself and you'll have to watch her marry someone else," Alice told him just before she hung up on him.

Edward put his phone on his coffee table and put his head in his hands. He realized then that he would never again feel her lips on his, see her smile at him, or call him out on his bullshit the way that only she could. He had lost her because he couldn't face up to the way that he felt.

Only then did he allow the heartbreak to come out. For the first time since his grandmother died, Edward cried.

~~K~~

Bella ran out of her dorm and found Jake sitting by the curb.

"Hey, Jake! You waiting on someone?"

Jake smiled. "No, we've each been assigned to a certain dorm. This one is mine now."

"Okay. Well, see you later."

Bella got to the library and claimed a back table. Spreading her books and notebooks out around her, she made it so that no one would disturb her. She wasn't sure how much time had passed, but she noticed that the shadows from the window were getting deeper. She knew that she had a little bit of time left.

When she looked up an hour later, it was completely dark.

"Dammit!" She quickly gathered her belongings and ran out the door. She had just walked up to her dorm when she saw a shadow lying over by the side of the building.

Bella knew that she should go inside and call campus security, but she wanted to be sure of what it was before she made that call. She rounded the side of the building but was not prepared for what she saw.

Jake was lying on his stomach, naked with his hands bound behind his back. His eyes were open, but she could tell that there was no life in them. She backed away while shaking her head, not wanting to believe what she was seeing.

She stepped on something as she backed up and lost her balance, ending up sprawled out on the ground. When she looked to see what she had stepped on, she began to scream.

AN: Aww, poor Jake. Is anyone shocked? I know a lot of you thought that he was the killer...haha! Poor Bella is gonna be in a bad place for a bit. Leave me your thoughts. Until Wednesday!

11. Chapter 10

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: In this chapter you will find a quote from Bella, closer to the end...If anyone can name the movie that it was originally in, I will give you a teaser of Chapter 11. Happy reading and I will see you at the bottom.

Chapter 10

"911, what is your emergency?"

"He's dead! Oh my God! Please send someone!"

"Miss, I need you to calm down. Did you just say that someone was dead?" the operator asked.

Bella took a deep breath. "I live on campus at U-Dub. There is a dead man lying on the ground outside my dorm." She was still on the verge of hysterics but was trying to make herself clear.

"Okay, I need your address. Are you hurt?"

Bella was beginning to hyperventilate and was almost unable to speak.

"Miss? Calm down, Miss. I'm going to get someone to you. Stay on the line with me," the operator cooed as she called it in.

~~K~~

Edward got the call as he was getting out of the shower.

"Detective Cullen." He was silent as he listened. "Where?"

He quickly threw on some jeans and a shirt, grabbed his gun, badge, and keys, and was out the door. He arrived on the campus less than twenty minutes after he got the call. His heart was already in his throat, but it dropped to his stomach when he saw Emmett and Jasper trying to console Bella.

"Em? Jaz?" he asked as he walked on scene.

"She found him, Eddie," Jasper whispered.

"She also slipped on *that*." Emmett shined his flashlight on the object on the ground.

"Damn!" Edward looked up. "Who is it?"

That's when Bella started screaming again. "He's dead! He's dead...!"

"Bells, easy, baby girl," Jasper crooned to his sister.

Emmett grabbed his brother and took him over to the side, away from Bella. "It's Jake, Edward."

"Jake who?"

Emmett sighed. "Remember Jake and the Q-tips?"

"Jacob Black?" Edward looked where the crime scene unit was collecting evidence. "What the fuck was he doing here, Emmett?"

"He worked for campus security."

"Shit!" Edward looked around before finally walking forward to where the body lay.

He knelt down and looked at his old basketball buddy. What had he done to find himself in this position?

"Anything guys?" he asked CSU.

"Nothing, Detective."

Edward nodded and walked over to where Jane was standing. "What are you thinking, Jane?"

"He was bound and strangled. This has all the calling cards of the U-Dub Strangler, but I won't know for sure until I get him back to the house."

Edward nodded. "Go ahead. Call me as soon as you know."

"You got it," Jane said. "Bag him!"

Just as her team turned his body, Jane stopped them.
"Cullen!"

Edward ran over. "Yeah?"

"Look at this." Jane pointed her light at Jacob's chest.

He shouldn't have talked to her!

"Holy shit!" Edward spat. "Pictures! I want it all on film."

"You got it!"

Edward turned and walked over to where Emmett was standing. "We were left a message."

Emmett turned to Jaz. "You may want to call your parents. Have them come get her."

Jasper nodded and pulled his phone out. "Dad? I need you to come to Seattle and get Bella." Jasper was silent while he listened to his father. "No, Dad, we've had another one, only um...Bella found him." He nodded his head. "Okay...yeah. They're taking her to the Medical Center now. Alright, see you there."

Jasper hung up the phone and looked at Emmett. Em came over and easily picked Bella up in his arms and carried her

over to the waiting ambulance. He had barely let go, when her screams started again. This time it was Edward that came to the rescue.

"It's okay, Bells. I got you." He cradled her to his chest and gently rocked her.

"We'll meet you there, Bro."

Edward nodded at Emmett as the paramedics closed the doors. With lights flashing, they drove off toward the hospital.

~~K~~

Bella stared at the wall of her bedroom in her parents' house. She was in shock, the doctors had told her parents. She had fought them against sedation. When Charlie and Renee had explained that Dr. Carlisle Cullen lived next door and was like another father to Bella, they had released her.

Esme was currently sitting beside her on the bed, running her fingers through Bella's long tresses.

Renee had gone to try and get some sleep, but wasn't having much luck. She was scared for her child—her baby.

Charlie was nursing a cup of coffee in the kitchen while reading the newspaper—anything that would distract him. He wanted to find the fucker that was terrorizing the campus where his baby girl lived and carve into him.

Carlisle was sitting across from Charlie, wondering when his

friend was going to crash, as well as worrying about his own sons.

A loud scream had them all running.

"NO!"

By the time that Carlisle and Charlie made it upstairs, Bella was thrashing wildly on the bed, fighting against Esme and Renee.

Carlisle felt that he had no choice and reached for his medical bag, pulling out a vial and a syringe, and filling it with 5 CCs. "Charlie, grab her arm," he ordered.

Charlie grabbed a hold of his daughter and held her arm still while Carlisle gave her a sedative.

Bella looked at her father accusingly before she closed her eyes.

~~K~~

The four parents were sitting at the kitchen table when Edward and Emmett walked in the house. Jasper had gone to be with Alice and they would be there later.

"How's Bella?" Edward asked first.

"I had to sedate her," Carlisle said wearily.

"What happened?" Charlie wanted to know.

The two of them sat down and began to explain. "We're not sure. The killer apparently saw Jacob talking to someone and he didn't like it. He left a message written on Jake's chest and also cut off..."

Their parents' held up their hands. "We know that part, Sweetie," Esme said gently.

"What is Leah going to tell their sweet babies?" Renee cried.

A voice from behind startled them all. "She'll tell them..." Bella's voice cracked. "She'll tell them that our lives can change with every breath we take...and to hold on like hell to what they've got: each other. She'll tell them we've all got meanness in us, but we've got goodness, too. And the only thing worth living for is the good."

Before her family could respond, Bella turned and walked outside. She kept going until she reached the boys' old tree house. She climbed up the rotted ladder and crawled inside.

That's where Jasper found her hours later.

AN: So what movie was that line from? Do you think that Bella is gonna snap out of her funk? Wait and see. Until Saturday, leave me your thoughts.

12. Chapter 11

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: No your eyes aren't playing tricks on you. It's Friday and I am updating. I have a sick little boy at home with me, so since I took the day off, you all get a special treat. For those of you who didn't know the movie...*Where the Heart Is* starring Natalie Portman and Ashley Judd. Great film!

Chapter 11

Bella didn't go back to class for the rest of the semester. Her professors spoke with her parents and the police, and given the grades that she had, they all passed her with a C average. Not what she wanted, but she also didn't think that she could go back to campus so soon after finding Jacob's body.

James had understood. He'd even driven to Forks once and taken Bella to dinner. It had been nice to see him, but she just

wasn't feeling sociable.

Rose had called and come down to see her, also, but she wasn't sure what to do for her friend. She did bring the gifts that Bella had purchased for her family to her.

Bella had completely forgotten about Christmas. She was in an almost zombie like state and hadn't slept in two weeks. The little sleep that she did get was plagued by nightmares.

"Bella?"

Bella looked up and saw her mother coming into her bedroom. "Yeah?"

"You're dad and I are going to go to the diner for some dinner. Would you like to join us?" Renee offered.

Bella shook her head. "No thanks, Mom. I'm not really hungry."

Renee walked further into Bella's room and sat down on the bed. "Baby, maybe you should talk to someone. You need something. You're not living, Bella, you're *existing*...and barely at that."

"You think I need to see a shrink?"

"No. I mean, not really. Maybe a grief counselor or something," Renee pleaded. "Honey, Daddy and I don't know what to do anymore. We don't know how to help."

"I'll think about it." Bella turned to look back out her window.

"I love you, Sweetie," Renee said as she left the room, not expecting an answer.

~~K~~

"Get up!" He kicked her bed, startling her.

"What the fuck?" Bella sat up and came face-to-face with Edward. "What the hell, Edward?"

"Get up, get dressed, and come with me." Edward didn't leave her a choice. He walked out of her room and down the stairs before she could say a word.

Bella thought about lying back down and shutting out the world some more, but she knew Edward, and she knew that he would come back up if she didn't do as he said.

She climbed out of her bed and pulled on some jeans and a sweatshirt, followed by her boots. She was tossing her hair into a messy bun as she walked down the stairs.

"Let's go," he said once she stopped in front of him.

Bella grabbed her jacket and followed Edward out to... Emmett's jeep. "Where are we going that you need that?"

"Just get in the fucking jeep, Isabella."

Bella huffed but did as she was told. She barely had her belt

buckled before Edward took off. "Are you gonna tell me where we're going?"

"No," he said curtly.

Shaking her head, Bella turned to stare out the window at the passing scenery—houses decorated for Christmas, children playing in the snow, all things that she used to look forward to. Now, she just wanted to stay in bed and pretend that nothing bad existed in the world.

She wasn't aware that they had stopped until Edward yanked her door open. "Out!"

"What the fuck is wrong with you?"

Instead of answering her, Edward grabbed her by the arm and pulled her from the vehicle, all but dragging her down a snow-covered path. He didn't say anything, just kept pulling her until they reached a clearing. He pushed her in front of him and then stopped.

"This stops now, Bella."

"What? What stops?" She was confused at what he meant.

"You are acting like you lost your best friend instead of a man that you hardly knew. You are acting like you lost your spouse, boyfriend...whatever, and he was a virtual stranger! You're hurting your parents, my parents, your brother and mine, not to mention Alice and Rosalie. It needs to stop, Bella."

Leah is the one that deserves to wallow but she isn't! She gets out of bed every day and lives. She lost her husband, the father of her children, and she continues to live each day...for them! He was nothing to you other than a security guard that you talked to and someone that I used to run around with when I was seventeen! Get over it!"

"Fuck you, Edward! You don't know, you weren't there! I stumbled on his body, I tripped over his...his..."

"Shit, Bella! You stepped on something squishy and lost your balance! You freaked! It's understandable!"

Bella just stared at him in disbelief. How could he stand there and tell her that what she had seen and gone through was nothing? Was he right? She sank to the ground, ignoring the cold and wet that seeped into her pants. She thought back over the last few weeks and began to cry.

"Why is this happening?"

Edward ran a hand through his hair. "I don't know," he said as he knelt down in front of her, "but I promise you, Emmett, Jasper, and I are doing everything we can to catch this guy."

Bella nodded but didn't say anything. Edward helped her up and they silently made their way back to the vehicle and home.

~~K~~

Edward had the heat cranked up, trying to warm Bella.

"Thanks," she whispered.

"For what?" he asked, looking over at her.

"For making me see sense. For being there like you always are."

Edward smiled gently then turned back to the road. "You're welcome."

The rest of the ride was silent. Bella stared out the window and wondered what she had put her parents through over the last few weeks. When they pulled up to the house, she had the door opened and was out of the jeep before Edward had put it in park.

Bella ran inside and straight to her mother's arms. "I'm so sorry, Mom!"

When Edward walked into the house Charlie looked at him. "What did you do?"

Edward grinned. "Remember when I was sixteen and just learning to drive?" Charlie nodded. "I hit that dog my first time out and I refused to drive again. You came over after two weeks and told me that I was acting like it was *my* dog that had died, when in reality it was someone else's."

"You told her to stop acting like it was her husband," Charlie finished, nodding in understanding.

Edward just shrugged. "Let me know if I can do anything else."

"Thanks, Edward. I just knew that if anyone was gonna reach her, it would be you."

Edward nodded and left, leaving Bella to spend some time with her family...without the dark cloud hanging over them.

AN: Edward to the rescue. Why do you think he was able to reach her and no one else could? Why did he even try? Do you think it changed anything? Only time will tell. I will have another up for you in the morning and then not again until Wednesday. Until then, leave me your thoughts.

13. Chapter 12

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: You all have theories and I love reading them, however, I think this is gonna blow up the last one. Also, and I don't want this to seem harsh, this story is completely written, so the chapter lengths are set. Please, don't ask for longer ones. If the story gets told the length doesn't matter, right? Now on with the show...

Chapter 12

Christmas passed without incident, as did the New Year. Before she was aware of it, Bella was back on campus. She only had five more months of her sophomore year, then her parents had agreed that she could get an apartment off campus. Bella had decided to see if Rose and Alice wanted to split the cost. Rose was all for it, but Alice was planning a different move.

So Bella and Rose began apartment hunting during the day when they weren't in class, and then Bella spent her evenings

either studying or going out with James.

The days and weeks began to pass quickly. Bella hadn't heard from Edward since Christmas Eve when their families had gotten together. She tried not to dwell on it, but she missed him.

February arrived with a snowstorm that no one expected. James still wanted to take Bella out for Valentine's Day, but everything was closed and the roads were impassable.

"James, I know that it's Valentine's Day, but where are we gonna go?"

"Babe, I just want to celebrate with my girl," he sighed into the phone.

"I know you do, but Sweetie, we can't fight Mother Nature."

James huffed. "Okay, how about I trudge over there and we watch a movie and cuddle?"

"That sounds great." Bella smiled into the phone. "When are you coming?"

"Give me an hour, okay, gorgeous?"

"Okay. See you then. And James..."

"Yeah?"

Bella took a deep breath. "Bring some with you."

"Really?" He sounded surprised.

"Yeah, I'm ready."

"See you soon, Baby." James hung up and fist pumped the air.

~~K~~

Edward sat on the couch in his apartment nursing a beer. He had a movie on that he wasn't paying any attention to. His work was spread out on his coffee table and floor. He was trying to find the common denominator with each victim. They had all been women—long hair, slim builds, none taller than five-two. Then there was Jake. The only thing he had in common with any of them was that he was campus security.

Edward flipped to all of the information sheets, addresses, and phone numbers. He narrowed his eyes when he saw something on Holly Webb's sheet that caught his eye.

"No, it can't be..." He picked up sheet after sheet, a connection finally revealing itself; they all had the same address. Haggett Hall on the North Campus of U-Dub—the same dorm that Bella lived in.

"Fuck!" Edward grabbed his phone and called Emmett.

"Emmett!" he barked after his brother picked up. "I found the link."

"What?"

"All of our victims, except Jake, lived in Bella's dorm, and well, Alice's until she moved."

"Fuck! Are you serious? What about Jacob?"

"Campus security said that all of their officers were assigned to a specific dormitory. Jake was assigned Haggett Hall."

"And all of the vic's lived..."

"In Haggett Hall."

The brothers were silent as they let the information sink in. "We have to tell the Captain," Emmett sighed.

"Yeah, we'll do it in the morning. Do me a favor, will you?"

"Sure, what?"

Edward ran a shaking hand through his hair. "Call and check on Bella."

"I think she would rather..." Emmett stopped. "You know what, never mind...I'll call her. Night, Bro."

Edward hung up and then leaned his head back on the couch. Bella was his common denominator. That wasn't something that he was prepared to deal with.

Needing to release some of his fear and frustration, Edward got up and walked over to his piano. It was always the one place that he could find the peace he desired. He sat down

and let the music take over, so lost in the melodies that he never heard his phone ring.

~~K~~

He watched as the blonde man left his dormitory, then followed him, making sure to stay a few paces back. When they came to the place on campus that wasn't very well lit, he made his move.

He ran up behind him and covered his mouth with the white rag that he had prepared. When James' body went limp almost instantly, he dragged him to the bushes. Once he was satisfied with the placement, he pulled his knife from his back pocket and began cutting his clothes away.

After he had the body stripped, he pulled the flex cuffs from the pocket of his coat and tied James' hands behind his back. When he felt that he was ready, he put the tape on his victim's mouth, cracked open the ammonia tablet, and waved it under James' nose.

James came to with a jerk. He took in his surroundings, then met the eyes of the killer and whimpered.

"Ah, yes. You've figured out that I am going to kill you."

James struggled against his restraints and tried to talk through the tape, but gave up as his muscles began to freeze from the cold air and icy ground.

"Don't struggle. It only makes it worse...for you," his tormentor scolded. "I'm going to tell you why I chose you, James. You see, for the longest time I thought it was Alice that I wanted. She was always a beautiful and spunky little thing, but Bella...my sweet little Bella grew up, too, and far surpassed her friend. So you see, when you chose *my girl*, you signed your death warrant."

James watched as his would-be murderer stood up and pulled a rope from his pocket. Tears leaked from his eyes, knowing that this was the end...all because of a woman.

The shadowy man stepped over James and straddled his back as he wrapped the rope around his neck and tightened it, laughing when James struggled against him. When he stopped fighting, the killer stood, removed the tape, and left the rope behind as he stepped away from the dead man.

He walked away from his crime, whistling a happy tune and knowing that the idiot cops would never figure him out.

~~K~~

It had been three hours. Three hours since he had said he would be there and still no James. Bella had been calling his cell phone for the last two, but it just kept ringing. She was beyond worried—she was scared.

She finally pulled on some shoes and walked down to Rose's room.

"Rose?" she knocked.

The door swung open and Rosalie looked at her in surprise. "I thought you and James had plans?"

"The snow forced us to stay in, but he was supposed to come over and watch a movie. He hasn't shown up, Rose, and I'm worried."

"Okay, come in and let's call your brother." Rose let Bella past her and then shut and locked her door.

Bella sat down in the chair opposite Rose's bed and called her brother.

"You've reached Detective Jasper Swan. I am unable to answer..."

Bella looked at Rose and shook her head. Rose nodded. "Try Edward."

Again Bella dialed, and again, no answer. "Rose, where are they?"

"I don't know, Bells. Try Emmett."

Bella dialed the next number.

"Hello?"

"Emmett, thank God!"

"Bells? What's wrong?" Emmett tried to keep his tone even when he was actually panicking from the sound of Bella's voice.

"My boyfriend was supposed to have been here three hours ago. I haven't heard from him and he's not answering his phone. I'm worried, Emmett."

"Have you called campus security?"

"Not yet."

"Okay, where are you? Are you in your room?"

"No, I'm at Rose's."

Bella could hear the rustle of clothes and keys. "Okay, call them and I will be there in about thirty minutes. Try and calm down, Bella."

"Okay." Bella hung up and looked at Rose. "He said to call campus security and that he was on his way."

"Okay, Bells. Go wash your face and I'll call them," Rose offered.

"Okay. Thanks, Rose."

Bella walked over to Rose's sink and washed her face while Rose called security. She wondered if this was just a misunderstanding, or if it would become a bloody Valentine's.

AN: You got a look into the killers mind and it's not James. Show of hands, who was shocked by that? Until Wednesday, leave me your thoughts.

14. Chapter 13

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Many of you have asked why Emmett never called Bella...I guess I never really thought about it, so let's just say that he fell asleep. I know that you were shocked that James wasn't the killer. Two more chapters (after this one) and you will find out. On with the show...

Chapter 13

Bella lay on Rosalie's bed trying to come to terms with the fact that yet another person that she knew had fallen prey to this psychopath. How many more people in her life was he going to take?

"Bella?" Rose put her hand on her friend's shoulder.

Bella looked at her but didn't say anything.

"Do you need anything? Is there someone that I can call?"

Bella shook her head as fresh tears filled her eyes. The one person that she could always count on wasn't speaking to her. And she wasn't sure why.

"Okay. Just rest then, Sweetie."

Rose got up and left her friend alone. She walked out into the hallway and found Jasper and Emmett waiting.

"How is she?" Jasper wanted to know.

Rose shrugged. "She's not talking. She's just staring at the wall."

Emmett shook his head. "Edward figured out the pattern, Jaz."

"What is it?"

Emmett looked at Rose, then moved his eyes to Jasper. "All of the victims were connected to Bella in some way. The girls all lived in her dorm and...well you know what Jake and James were doing."

"Fuck!" Jasper muttered.

"If..." Rose licked her dry lips. "If this...*person* is targeting people that are close to her, shouldn't Bella have some sort of protection?"

"We'll have to clear that with the Captain in the morning. Keep her here with you tonight, and I can call you in the morning

when we know. Here," Emmett placed his phone in her hand. "Put your number in here."

Rose cocked her head and narrowed her eyes. "How do I know this isn't just some ploy to get my number?"

Emmett grinned at Rose's attempt at levity. "Baby, when I call you for a date, you'll know the difference."

Rose blushed but input her number into his phone before handing it back. "I'm gonna go back in there. She won't let me do anything for her," she sighed. "I have a feeling the one person that she wants, is the one that isn't talking to her."

Jasper growled under his breath while Emmett shook his head. "My brother needs to get his head out of his ass... before it's too late."

~~K~~

Edward joined Emmett and Jasper in the captain's office first thing in the morning.

"Detective Cullen, nice of you to join us. Exactly where were you last night?" Felix Graves asked his best detective.

"I was home all evening, Sir. Why?"

"He struck again, Edward," Emmett started.

"What!?" He jumped out of his chair. "Why wasn't I called?"

"Check your phone, asshole," Jasper spat.

Edward pulled his phone out of his pocket. He noticed that he had fifteen missed calls—three of which were from Bella—and nine texts. He cursed under his breath. "I'm sorry, Sir. I left my phone in my living room last night. I never heard it."

"Fine. Just don't let that happen again."

"Yes, Sir." Edward resumed his seat. "Who is our vic?"

Emmett passed over the folder. "James Collins, twenty-one. Was on his way to see his girlfriend but never showed."

"James Collins..." Edward turned the name over in his head. "Why does that name sound familiar?" he looked up.

"Because," Jasper sighed, "he was Bella's boyfriend."

Edward closed his eyes as pain clutched his heart. He wanted to get up and go to her, but he knew that he couldn't.

"Sir," Edward turned to look at his captain. "I looked over all of the case files last night. I found a pattern." He paused until Felix gestured for him to continue. "All of our victims were connected to Isabella Swan in some way. The first two victims lived in the dorm that she resided in her freshman year. The next four lived in her current building. Jacob Black, the first male victim, worked for campus security and was assigned to watch her specific building. Now this James. Sir, I think that we need to put her in protective custody."

Emmett and Jasper nodded their heads in agreement. Felix was silent while he contemplated their request. When he finally spoke, it was with a question that Edward had been praying he wouldn't ask.

"Where do you think she should stay? Assuming that your theory is correct, we don't have the money in our budget to put her in custody." Felix looked at Jasper. "She's your sister, why not with you?"

"Sir, I live in a one bedroom apartment. I don't think that my sister would be very comfortable there."

"Cullen?"

Emmett's head shot up. "I mean, I guess she could stay with me, but..."

"She can stay with me," Edward volunteered.

Emmett and Jasper snapped their heads in his direction. "Bro, are you sure?"

"Edward, I don't know..."

"Look, you two can't take her—I can. I have the room. It'll be fine."

Felix clapped his hands. "Okay, go. I want Miss Swan in your care by this evening."

The three of them nodded and left the captain's office. They

were all hoping that Edward could handle having Bella around him. Jasper wasn't so sure.

~~K~~

Rose answered the knock on her door. When she saw Edward, her protective instincts kicked in. "What are you doing here?" She crossed her arms and glared at him.

"Is Bella still here?"

"Yes, but *why* should I let you see her? *You* abandoned her!"

"Rose...?" Bella's voice was muffled.

Rose turned and went into her room. "Bella, Edward is here. I can tell him to go away if you want."

Bella sat up and saw Edward standing in the doorway, a pained expression on his face.

"No, Rose. It's okay."

"Okay, I'm just going to go get a soda." Rose stood up and walked to her door. "You better not hurt her," she threatened as she moved to pass.

"I won't," Edward promised.

"Hmm...we'll see." Rose left the room, leaving Bella and Edward alone.

"Hey, Bells."

"Hey, Eddie."

Edward smiled at her nickname. "You know, you're still the only person allowed to call me that."

Bella's answering smile was pained. "What are you doing here, Edward?"

He sighed and ran his hand through his hair—a nervous gesture that Bella recognized. "Bella, we need to take you into protective custody."

"What? Why?" Bella sat up.

"I can't really tell you the details yet, but you're in danger. We have reason to believe that *you* are the catalyst to all of these murders."

Bella paled. "H...how?"

"I can't tell you that, Bella, but I need you to trust me," Edward pleaded.

Bella looked at him, noticing for the first time the dark circles under his eyes. "I do trust you, Edward," she sighed. "Where am I going to go?"

"You'll be staying with me."

AN: Do you think that this is a good thing or no? Will he

be able to resist her while she is living in his home? Next chapter jumps ahead a year, so we'll find out. Until Saturday, leave me your thoughts.

15. Chapter 14

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Sorry for the delay on this chapter. I had a death in the family, so Wednesday's chapter will be postponed until Thursday. Thanks for your understanding. Now, on with it...

Chapter 14

It had been a year since her boyfriend had been murdered, and Edward had watched Bella retreat into herself. She didn't go out and she didn't have any dates—she had no social life whatsoever.

Bella had closed herself off, fearing that someone else that she cared about would be the next victim. She saw Rosalie and Alice, but only when they came to see her at Edward's. All she did anymore was study. She had actually doubled her course load and would be graduating a year early.

She had her books open and spread out all over Edward's

dining room table and was buried nose-deep when he walked in the apartment.

"Bella."

"Hmm?" she said, never raising her head.

Edward tried again. "Bella, dinner is burning!"

"Huh, what?" Bella ran into the kitchen. Then she realized that Edward had played her. She turned back to him and glared. "That wasn't nice."

Edward chuckled. "Sorry, but I said your name twice." He took in her appearance and decided that they needed to get out of the house. "Go get dressed, we're going out."

Bella shook her head and walked back over to the table to study some more. "I can't. I have to get this done."

Sighing, Edward walked over and started shutting her books. "Bella, all you do is study and sit inside this apartment. Everyone is worried about you...your parents, mine, Jasper, Emmett, and the girls." He knelt down in front of her so she had no choice but to look at him. "I'm watching you waste away and I can't do it anymore."

Tears filled her eyes. "I'm afraid."

Edward reached up and brushed a tear from her cheek. "Of what, Baby?"

Bella got up and walked away from him. "What if it starts again? I've avoided forming any kind of attachments because I don't want someone else that I care about or know to be next. I don't know why this guy has fixated on me, but I can't lose anyone else."

"Bella, you can't let fear stop you from living. If you do, he wins. Don't let him win."

Edward started toward her, but Bella held up her hand, stopping him. "I have only ever wanted one thing in my life," she started. "I wanted to find that all-encompassing love that would last me a lifetime. I wanted what our parents have. Now...now all I want is to make sure that the person I fell in love with is safe. If I have to be alone, then that's how I'll be. *His safety means more to me than my having a life.*"

She stopped talking and left Edward in the middle of the living room. Hearing her door shut brought him out of his stupor, and his thoughts immediately changed. She couldn't possibly be talking about him, right? There was no way she felt the same way about him. He needed to find out.

Edward walked to her door before he could change his mind, rapping softly. "Bella?"

"Go away, Edward," came her muffled reply.

"Come on, Bells, open the door," he pleaded.

"No."

"Bella, I am not going to talk to you through a door, so open up. Please!"

He heard shuffling on the other side and then the click of her unlocking it. He twisted the knob and opened the door slowly. He saw Bella sitting on the side of her bed. "Bells?"

Bella looked up at him with a red eyes; her face was still wet from her tears. "Edward, just leave me alone."

"I can't do that." He stepped into the room and sat beside her on the bed. "Bella, don't shut me out. You've been a part of my life for a long time. I care about you."

Bella looked up at the man that she had fallen for when she was sixteen. He had hardly changed through the years. His features were more defined, but he was still *her* Eddie. "I just want to forget," she whispered.

"Tell me what I can do?" Edward asked as he placed his arm across her shoulders.

"Hold me?" Bella requested, then looked at his face. "Just until I fall asleep...please."

Edward nodded and helped her lie down. He took his phone out of his pocket and put it on the nightstand, then settled in beside her. Bella sighed as his arm wrapped around her waist, pulling her close to him.

He only planned on waiting for her to fall asleep, but instead

fell asleep with her. At some point during the night, he was having the best dream; it felt so real. Bella was in his arms, and his lips were against hers. Even Bella's moans sounded like they were really happening.

In his dream, Edward pulled back and whispered her name. Dream Bella moaned his back.

"Edward," Bella moaned.

Edward's eyes shot open and he realized that he wasn't dreaming. Bella's eyes were tiny slits, but she opened them fully when she felt him pull away.

He looked at her in the darkened room with only the moonlight shining on her. Her face was flushed and her eyes were dark with desire. He had never seen her look more beautiful. For just one night he didn't want to fight his feelings. He knew that it was the wrong choice, but as he closed his mouth over hers, his reasons for resisting were gone.

Bella sighed as his mouth touched hers again, allowing his tongue to slip in and dance with hers. When he pulled her closer and crushed his chest to hers, she moaned.

Edward moved his lips down the column of her neck and to the space where it met her shoulder, nipping and sucking at her pulse point. He pulled her shirt down over one shoulder, his lips leaving a trail of fire along her body.

Bella's nails were digging into his back as he rolled them so

that he lay half on her and half off. They soon allowed the passion to overtake them and clothing was quickly shed.

"So beautiful," Edward whispered as he lowered his head to Bella's breasts. He took one nipple into his mouth, switching between flicks with his tongue and nips with his teeth.

"Oh, God! Edward...please," Bella begged.

"What do you need, Baby?"

"You," she whispered breathlessly. "Just you."

Edward made his way back up to her, hovering his body over hers. "Bella, look at me."

Bella opened her eyes, watching him as he searched hers. He must have seen what he was looking for as he positioned himself at her entrance and slowly pushed forward.

Once he was fully seated in her heat he stilled, allowing her to adjust to the intrusion and his size. Bella nodded her head and rolled her hips, letting him know that she was ready.

Edward began to move slowly, each time sliding in deeper and hitting that spot that caused her eyes to roll back in her head.

"So...warm," Edward groaned. "Bella, I'm not gonna last, Baby. It's been too long."

"Edward, so close," Bella panted, meeting him thrust for

thrust.

"Let it go, Baby. Come for me." Edward thrust harder and faster. He watched as Bella came undone beneath him and followed soon after.

When he collapsed on her, Bella held him tighter, never wanting him to leave her. Part of her knew, however, that this would be a onetime thing—that he would regret it later. She couldn't allow her heart to break now.

Edward rolled off her, pulling her to his side. She lay her head on his chest, listening to his heartbeat. The rhythmic sound lulled her to sleep, but not before he heard her whispered declaration.

"I love you."

~~K~~

Bella woke alone. She sat up, thinking that perhaps last night had been a dream. Her naked form told her that it had happened, though. She and Edward had made love and now he was gone.

She crawled out of bed, padded her way to the bathroom and started the shower. Stepping under the hot spray, she allowed the water to wash away the tears but not the hurt. When she was clean, she stepped out and wrapped a towel around her body. She wiped at the mirror and took in her reflection. She looked no different, and the only way that you

would notice that anything happened between them was the small love bite in the hollow of her neck.

"At least it wasn't a dream," she whispered to her reflection.

She got dressed in yoga pants and a T-shirt, and then pulled on a hoodie. She then dried her hair a little before pulling it into a messy bun. After she had on her tennis shoes, she left her room in search of coffee...and Edward. Not necessarily in that order.

She found him in the kitchen, looking forlornly into his cup. "Morning," she whispered.

"Morning." Edward looked up and took in her appearance. She looked just as beautiful in the morning light as she had in the moonlight. "Bella, I..."

"Don't, Edward. Please," Bella begged. "Don't ruin last night. I have no regrets."

"Bella, I can't. Last night shouldn't have happened. You were vulnerable and scared, and I shouldn't have taken advantage."

"Is that what you think? That you took advantage of me?" Bella began to shake. "I was a willing participant. Last night was *not* a mistake. How dare you act like it was something sordid!"

"Bella..."

"No! You don't get to act like this. Last night was the best

night of my life and I *refuse* to allow you to cheapen it." Bella walked into the living room, Edward hot on her heels. She picked up her bag and then turned back to him. "One of these days, Edward, you're going to realize that there is no one more perfect for you than me. I just hope you aren't too late."

Edward watched her walk out the door. When it slammed shut, he hit his knees. He felt like his heart was breaking. He hadn't meant to make her think that their lovemaking hadn't meant anything to him. It had...it meant *everything*. Now he was losing her.

Bella stormed down the stairs and toward her car. She was so angry and lost in her head that she never saw the person come up behind her and press a cloth to her mouth and nose. She couldn't even scream before she was consumed by darkness.

AN: Dammit, Edward! You are a fool! Who has Bella? Find out soon. Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.

16. Chapter 15

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Thanks to all of you for your support. I did read all of your reviews. Many of you are appalled at Edward's behavior, well...this chapter is his proverbial kick in the ass. Enjoy!

Chapter 15

Edward wasn't sure how much time had passed since Bella walked out the door, but he didn't want her to get far. He jumped up, flung open the door and then ran out after her. When he got to the parking lot, he froze. Bella's bag was laying on the ground beside her car, her keys dangling in the lock. She was gone.

"Oh, God! No!" When he walked forward and looked at her belongings, he saw something attached to her bag. He wanted to pick it up, but his instincts kicked in and he stopped.

He pulled his phone from his pocket and called it in. "This is Detective Cullen, badge number 22638. Send units to my address for possible abduction."

After he hung up with dispatch he called Jasper. "Jaz? You need to get to my place now."

"Okay, what's wrong?"

Edward sighed. "Bella's missing."

"What!?"

"Just get here."

His next calls were to Emmett and then Captain Graves. While he waited, CSU arrived on scene and waited for instructions. As soon as Emmett and Jasper pulled up, Emmett began directing CSU while Jasper walked over to question Edward.

"What happened?"

"We had an argument this morning. She grabbed her bag to go to school and stormed off. It took me maybe three minutes before I came after her. By the time I got down here, she was gone."

Jasper nodded. "What did you fight about?"

Edward looked at Jasper. "Jaz, man, I don't think I can talk to you about it."

"What'd you do, kiss her again and regret it?" Jasper asked, mostly kidding. The look on Edward's face changed his mind. "Dude, did you fuck my sister?"

"No, Jasper! I slept with her yes, but it wasn't like that." Edward sighed and sank down on the bench in front of his building. "I love her, Jaz. I just..."

"You fucked up. Let me guess, you acted like you regretted it and that pissed her off and she told you off, right?" When Edward nodded, Jasper continued. "Jeez! What happened last night?"

"When I got home, she had her books spread out around her. I told her to take a break and that I was going to take her out. She told me that she was afraid...afraid that someone else she cared about was going to be killed by this guy. She was vulnerable and scared and asked me to hold her. It just happened, Jaz. When I woke up with her this morning, I felt like an asshole who had taken advantage of her."

"What did she say?"

"She told me that she was a willing participant and that I was cheapening what we had shared." Edward put his head in his hands. "God, I fucked up so bad."

"So you came after her and found her stuff."

Edward nodded. "We have to find her, Jaz."

"Yo, Ed! Come look at this," Emmett hollered.

Jasper and Edward walked to where Emmett was standing. He had a bag in his hand that contained the paper that had been on Bella's bag.

"What does it say?" Edward asked.

She's mine now.

"Son of a bitch!" Edward growled as he stared at the note.

"What?" Emmett asked.

"I know who has her."

~~K~~

When Emmett and Jasper got to the station, Edward was sitting at his desk on the phone.

"Thanks, Marcus. I really appreciate this." He hung up and turned to his partners. "Do you two remember Marcus Grimes?"

"Yeah, he was our Captain in PA. What about him?" Emmett asked as he sat down.

"I asked him to fax over some of the case files that I worked on with my old partner."

"Wait a minute." Jasper looked at Edward, shocked. "Are you

telling us that you think Sam Uley is behind this?"

Edward shook his head. "I don't think he's behind this—I *know* he is." He picked up the evidence bag and held up the letter. "I would recognize that handwriting anywhere."

"Excuse me, Detective Cullen, this was on the fax for you," a little blonde woman said as she came into the room.

"Thanks, Mallory."

Edward sat down and opened the file. He found the documents that he needed easily. "Jasper, I need you to call your dad. He needs to know about your sister. Ask him to bring Eleazar with him."

"Okay, but why Eleazar?" Jasper asked as he picked up his phone.

"He's a graphologist."

"A what?" Emmett asked.

"He's a handwriting analysis expert. I need him to compare this note to a sample of Sam's handwriting before I can get a warrant to search his records and anything else," Edward explained.

Emmett looked over at Jasper as he made the call that was going to panic both of their families.

Bella woke up, confused. She wiped her eyes, trying to get the blur out of them.

"Oh, good, you're awake."

She turned in the direction of the voice. A blurry figure stood in a doorway. "Who are you? Where am I?"

The figure moved forward toward her. "I am your future, My Sweet. We are going to be together forever."

Bella reached up and rubbed her eyes, trying once more to clear them. When she looked again, the shadowy figure that was looming over her began to clear.

"Oh, my God! I know you," she whimpered. "You used to work with my brother."

"Yes, and your lover, *Edward*, was my partner."

Bella looked at him in shock. How could he have known that she and Edward had been together? It had only *just* happened.

"Don't worry how I know, little Bella. Just know that I do. I won't punish you this time, but you will never see him again," he threatened.

When he reached out to touch her, Bella shrank away and curled up next to the wall. "Leave me alone, you psycho!" As she looked at him, his face turned menacing.

"One of these days, you will understand that you're mine. I look forward to that time."

"Edward, Emmett, and my brother will find me. When they do, I hope they put a bullet in you!" Bella spat at him.

"Not likely." He turned and walked away from her.

Bella watched him shut the steel door and then heard a lock click into place. Only then did she give over to her fear and allow the tears to fall.

"Please, oh please, Edward...come find me."

AN: Many of you guessed correctly early on who the killer was. Are any of you shocked? I did tell you to think outside the box. Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.

17. Chapter 16

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: With all of the fuckery that is taking place on FFN, I can't guarantee that this story will still be available here. However, I can assure you that it will be found on TWCS and FictionPad. The links to both are available on my profile.

Chapter 16

Edward tried to leave Eleazar alone while he examined the document, but it was very hard. Now that he knew who it was, he wanted to go after him and get *his* Bella back.

"Sit down, Edward. You hovering over me will not make this go faster," Eleazar chuckled.

"Sorry," he muttered and walked out of the room, intent on getting some fresh air.

Captain Grimes stopped him before he could make it out the

door. "I wouldn't if I were you."

"Why?"

"The press is crawling all over the place. Somehow they found out that this guy got his first live victim."

"Fuck!" Edward pulled at his hair. "Felix, we have to get them away from here. They could compromise what we're trying to do!"

"I know that, Detective. How do I look?" Felix grinned and adjusted his tie.

Edward smirked. "Like you are about to go schmooze with the press."

"Then I look great. Wish me luck."

Edward laughed, then turned to go back in the squad room where he turned on the TV. He sat with his brother and parents, as well as the Swans, and watched as Felix convinced the press to back off so that they could catch the perp.

"Edward?"

When he looked up, he saw Eleazar behind him. He jumped up just as Felix walked back into the room.

"Is it...?"

"It's a spot on match."

Edward turned to Felix. "I need a warrant to search his financials, properties...everything. If he took a shit, I want to know where he last squatted!"

Felix nodded. "I'll call Judge Carroll. Aro owes me a favor."

"Thanks, Cap."

Felix waved him off and went into his office. He came back out fifteen minutes later. "You got your warrant. Listen, fellas—be thorough, but be smart. I don't want anything that could tip him off that we know, you got it?" A series of 'yes, Sirs' rang around the room. "Alright, get to it and let's bring this fucker down and the girl back...alive."

~~K~~

Bella thought that maybe two days had passed, but she couldn't be sure since she hadn't seen the sunlight. All she knew was that Sam—yeah, she had finally remembered his name—had periodically brought her food and something to drink. At least he wasn't starving her. She could only pray that he stayed away from her otherwise.

It was the morning of what she thought was the third day that all hell broke loose.

"Mother-fucker!"

Bella couldn't help it when she began to tremble with fear. She

cowered into the corner of the room she had been left in, trying to blend into the shadows.

Her door was suddenly thrown open and Sam stormed in. "Where the fuck are you?"

Bella covered her mouth to hide her whimpers, but a sob escaped her when he turned the light on her.

"How the fuck could he have figured out who I was?" Sam walked over and grabbed her by the elbow, yanking her to her feet.

"I don't...know!" Bella cried.

Sam wasn't really listening. "I covered all my tracks. I had everything perfect," he was mumbling.

He pulled her into the main room of the hovel that they were staying in and all but threw her into a chair. Bella cried out as she hit the side of the hard surface and fell to the ground.

She watched Sam pace the room and pull at his hair. She could only hope that he didn't hurt her in his frustration. How did Edward figure it out? She didn't care; she just wanted him to come get her.

~~K~~

Edward was knee deep in Sam Uley's financial records. He was looking for anything that would lead him to Bella, but was coming up short.

"Dammit!" Edward slammed down the file he was currently searching through.

"What?" Charlie asked from his position beside him.

"I can't find a fucking thing!"

Emmett looked at his brother. "Ed, man, go get some air. You need to step back from this for a minute."

Edward nodded, got up from his desk, and walked out of the squad room. He sat on a bench outside and put his head in his hands. It wasn't long before he felt someone sit beside him.

"You know, I fell in love with your mother when she was fifteen. She was absolutely stunning, but I was engaged to someone else."

Edward looked up at his dad. "What?"

Carlisle looked down and smiled. "Yeah, I was twenty and I saw her in the library. She took my breath away."

"No offense, Dad, but why the hell are you telling me this?"

"Edward, your mother and I and the Swan's have watched you fight the way that you feel for Bella for years. Son, falling in love with her is *not* a bad thing. In fact, I couldn't be happier and I know that her parents and your mother feel the same. We know that you will always protect her, just like Jasper will your sister."

"That's just it, Dad, I didn't protect her. He got her, and I am terrified that I won't get to her in time."

Carlisle placed his hand on his son's shoulder. "You will, Edward." He stood then and went back inside, leaving Edward alone with his thoughts.

"I'm coming, Baby. Just hang on," he whispered to the wind.

~~K~~

Sam had finally grown tired and locked Bella back in her hole. She couldn't call it a room or even a cell; it was a dark and cold...hole. She lay on the cot that he had provided for her and cried herself to sleep.

Bella didn't see him again for days. She was starving and thirsty, but Sam never came. She wondered where he had gone and why. Perhaps Edward was closer that she thought, perhaps he knew where she was.

"Hurry, Edward, please."

~~K~~

Edward was once again buried in paperwork. He was looking for any clue as to where Bella could be being held. He had been at it since five in the morning the previous morning. Bella had been missing for over a week and he felt like they were no closer to finding her now than they were then.

Emmett walked in and saw his brother in the same position

that he had been in the night before and wondered if he had even left.

"Bro, have you even left?"

"No, I can't—not until I find her."

"How about a fresh pair of eyes?" a voice sounded behind them.

Both men looked up and saw Rosalie standing in the doorway holding a tray of coffee and a bag of donuts. She smiled as she walked over to them.

"Rose? What are you...?"

Rose put her fingers to Emmett's lips. "Bella is my best friend—my only friend. I need to help somehow."

Edward stared at the blonde woman for a minute, and then picked up a folder and handed it to her. "You can look over these. Maybe you'll see something I missed."

Rosalie took the folder and sat down at the next desk. An hour later the coffee and donuts were gone, but the three of them were still looking. They had been joined by Jasper, Charlie and Felix. Rose's voice startled them out of their silent studies.

"Why in the hell would someone want to own an abandoned warehouse in the middle of nowhere?" she asked no one in particular.

"What are you talking about?" Edward demanded.

Rose looked over at him. "Oh, sorry. Um...I was just trying to figure out why someone would buy a place like this. It has to be in horrible disrepair."

Edward got up and walked to where she was sitting. "Show me."

Rose showed him the paper that she was looking at that listed Sam's properties.

"Son of a bitch! How did I miss this?" Edward took the sheet of paper and walked over to the wall of monitors, punching the address into the computer. A map of the property immediately popped on screen.

"This is where he has her," he stated matter-of-factly.

"Edward, you can't be sure..."

He turned around and looked at his boss. "Come on, Felix. This is *exactly* the type of place that he would take someone. It's secluded and abandoned. The only people that would go there would be squatters."

"Fine, I want surveillance. Get the teams ready, we're going to watch it for the next twenty-four hours. I need solid proof that this is where our vic is *before* we make a move. Understood?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Let's go."

Edward turned back to the monitor and whispered one last promise. "I'm coming, Baby."

AN: So Edward's biggest problem was worrying about having everyone's blessing to pursue Bella. Now that he knows that he has it, he's ready for the next step. Now let's find her. Until next time.

18. Chapter 17

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Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN:

Chapter 17

"Listen up people. This is how this is gonna play out," Felix shouted above the din.

Edward couldn't stand the noise or the waiting anymore, so he put his fingers to his mouth and blew, letting out a very shrill whistle.

"Thank you, Detective Cullen." Felix nodded at him, then turned back to the full squad room. "We finally have the identity of the U-Dub Strangler—Sam Uley." Gasps rang out through the room. "That's right, he's one of us. That makes him even harder to catch. We have an idea where he may be, so I am going to break you all into three teams."

Edward tuned Felix out, instead trying to get his head in the

game and not think about Bella.

"Team A, Swan and myself, will be watching the back of the building. Team B, the brothers Cullen, will be watching the front. The rest of you will be parked or sitting in restaurants nearby. The minute that we get confirmation that our suspect is there—as well as our victim—I'll give the signal and we'll roll out. Any questions?"

When no one said anything, Felix dismissed everyone so that they could get to their posts. Edward and Emmett headed to their unmarked vehicle and sped off, Felix and Jasper on their six.

~~K~~

Bella woke up unaware of her surroundings. Somehow in the middle of the night she had been moved. She wasn't sure how he did it without waking her, but she guessed that evil men did things the dirty, evil way.

"Ah, you're awake." Sam walked over to her.

"Where are we?" Bella demanded.

"You can call this...home."

Bella cringed back, trying to make herself as small as possible, especially when he reached his hand out to touch her. "Keep your fucking hands off me!" she growled.

Sam narrowed his eyes and backhanded her. "Don't swear at

me, Isabella."

Bella spit the blood out of her mouth, making sure to hit his shoes. "Fuck you!"

Sam charged at her again, but Bella managed to stop him by kicking her leg out and getting him in his stomach. He fell to his knees with an "Oof."

"Don't touch me again," she sneered.

She kicked him again, right in the crotch, just to make sure he understood her, then ran away from him. She knew that him being down was her chance to get out. She took off for the only exit that she could see and tried to open the door, to no avail. It was locked.

Swallowing back a sob, she ran down another hallway. She came across another door and again found it locked.

"ISABELLA!"

"Dear, Lord, please help me get out of here," Bella prayed silently as she shrank into the shadows and away from Sam.

~~K~~

"This is a waste of fucking time," Emmett muttered.

He was sitting in an unmarked car, staring through binoculars at the abandoned warehouse that they believed housed Bella and Sam.

Edward looked at his brother and growled. "If it gets her back to me, Emmett, I will wait here forever."

Edward picked up his own binoculars and then grabbed the walkie-talkie. "Jasper, you guys see anything?"

A crackle sounded before Jasper's voice came back. "No, nothing. I'm beginning to wonder if this isn't a waste of time. We've been here for twelve hours."

Edward hit the button on his device and spoke again. "I have a feeling that we'll see something as it gets dark. I don't know, Jaz."

"Okay, Ed. We'll keep watching," Jasper crackled again.

Edward set the device back on the dash and then concentrated on the building in front of him. He prayed that something would happen. He needed Bella like he needed air, and all he wanted was the opportunity to tell her.

~~K~~

"Where are you?" Sam bellowed. "I'm gonna fucking get you, girl!"

Bella shrank further into the shadow as his footsteps passed her. She would have sighed in relief, but she knew that she needed to keep trying to escape. She slowly and silently crept out from her corner and ran back down the hallway. She found a door that she hadn't tried and grabbed the handle just

as Sam's voice sounded behind her.

"Going somewhere?"

Bella turned and stared at him for a minute before turning back to the door. When she twisted the handle, it opened. Bella inhaled at her first taste of freedom in weeks. She ran through the opening and out into the fading sunlight as fast as she could, but it wasn't fast enough.

Sam grabbed her by the hair and started pulling her back to his hideaway. "You aren't going anywhere!"

Bella screamed and kicked at him. "Let me go, you son of a bitch!"

Tired of her fighting, Sam pulled the 9mm out of his pants and aimed it at her. "I may want you for life, but if you keep fighting me, I'll take it instead."

Bella paled and stopped fighting instantly, letting him drag her back inside. She couldn't stop the tears that flowed down her cheeks, nor did she want to. She didn't say a word or make a move, even when Sam forced her into a chair and tied her down. She felt defeated.

~~K~~

Emmett dropped his binoculars in shock. "Motherfucker!"

Edward snapped awake, having lay back to catch a few minutes rest. "What?"

"I see her!" Emmett told him as he picked up the walkie-talkie and called it in to the captain.

"I have a visual. Victim is running from the building with suspect following behind her." Emmett watched through his binoculars as Sam grabbed Bella by the hair and dragged her back inside. "Sir, suspect has taken victim back inside."

The walkie crackled, then Felix's voice rang out over the speaker. "All units, move in. Surround the building. Team A around back, Team B in the front, everyone else provide backup. Move!"

~~K~~

Bella was numb. She stared at the wall and didn't acknowledge Sam. Every time he spoke, she turned her head from him. When he came into her line of sight, she looked away.

"Fucking bitch! Look at me!" Sam bellowed.

Bella didn't act like she heard him, which pissed him off even more. He jerked her up out of the chair, causing her to yelp from the ropes that were tying her to the seat. Sam grinned and pulled a knife from behind his back, slicing through them and releasing her from the bindings. Then he shook her.

"You are going to pay attention to me! Look at me when I am talking to you!" Sam shook her again, causing her teeth to rattle in her head.

He took one hand off her and was about to strike her when the sound of glass shattering echoed from the main room.

"What the fuck?"

Sam pulled Bella in front of him and pushed her forward as he grabbed his gun from his waistband. "Move it."

"Sam Uley, you are surrounded! Come out with your hands up!"

Bella had never been more scared than she was at hearing that voice. She knew that it was coming to an end, but she wasn't sure if she would survive it.

AN: Is she gonna make it out alive? Tune in next time to find out. We are almost at the prologue. Leave me some love.

19. Chapter 18

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: I decided to go ahead and update today as well as Saturday. We are at the prologue now, so this will be familiar. Saturday, we'll find out what happens to Edward. Hang on tight....

Chapter 18

Felix and Jasper took the back of the building while Edward and Emmett covered the front. Edward was trying to control his urge to just storm inside and get the girl, but Emmett had a hand clapped on his shoulder, preventing him from getting away.

"Edward calm down, Bro. We're gonna get her," Emmett vowed.

"I need to get in there, Em!"

They both heard Felix's voice break through the silence. "Sam

Uley! We have the building surrounded! Come out with your hands up!"

They could hear an evil laugh coming from inside, followed by a yelp of pain. Edward couldn't hold it in anymore.

"Bella? Are you okay!?" he yelled.

"EDWARD!" came her scream.

"Emmett, I have to get in there!"

~~K~~

Sam laughed maniacally when he heard Edward call for Bella. "Loverboy sounds anxious, Sweetheart. Should we let him in?"

"No, please. Leave him alone," Bella begged.

"Oh, but where is the fun in that?" It was a rhetorical question, yet one that caused Bella to sob.

Sam shouted out to the cops that were surrounding the building. "FUCK OFF! I'm not coming out! Why don't you send Cullen in?"

"NO!" Bella screamed.

But her screams fell on deaf ears as the door creaked open and Edward walked into sight.

"You got me, Sam, what's on your mind?" Edward asked as

he walked cautiously into the open space, his hands out in front of him, although his gun was safely tucked into the back of his jeans.

"I just want to know, Edward, why you thought it was okay to touch what is mine?" Sam growled and yanked Bella in front of him.

"When was she ever yours, Sam?" Edward had to keep saying his name so that he kept his emotions out of the room. If he allowed himself to feel, it could be the end for him—and for Bella.

"She was mine the minute I saw her when she was fourteen. She was all I could think about since that moment when she came to the station to see her brother and you guys. At first I thought it was Alice, but Bella became more beautiful than she is. Anyone that dared to talk to her became my enemy. Anyone that talked about her, sealed their fate."

"Is that why you killed all those innocent girls, Sam? Because they were talking about her?" Edward was shocked. This man was insane. He had no real reason other than he was crazy for having killed all these people. "And what of the two men? Why did they deserve to die?"

"Simple...the rent-a-cop spoke to her and made her smile and laugh. I couldn't have that. The other one..." Sam chuckled and turned to Bella. "They had made plans to sleep together. Bella was going to give herself to him freely." Sam reached forward and stroked a hand along Bella's cheek, causing her

to cringe away from him. "You're mine."

She shuddered and allowed the tears to fall from her eyes. "You make me sick," she spat.

Sam pulled his gun around, showing Edward for the first time that he was armed. He watched as Sam ran the gun along Bella's body and wanted to kill him, but he knew that he had to wait.

He pulled his own gun out and aimed it at Sam. "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

Sam looked up and smiled when he saw Edward with his weapon out and trained on him. "Oh, but I disagree. I think it's a very good idea," he sneered and pulled Bella directly in front of him, using her as a shield.

Edward tried one more time to get him to let her go. "Let her go, Sam."

"No, I don't think I will. You'll have to kill me, Cullen, but I guarantee if you pull that trigger, she'll end up with a bullet in her, too."

Edward finally lost his temper. "Give it up! The building is surrounded!" Edward yelled toward Sam, who was holding a gun to Bella's temple.

"No way! The minute I put this down and let her go, I'm as good as dead."

Edward wanted so badly to look at Bella, but he couldn't afford to lose his focus. "Come on, let her go. Take me instead," he offered.

"Edward, no!" Bella screamed.

"Shut up, Bitch." The arm that was around her waist tightened and the gun was pressed harder against the side of her head.

Bella flinched and closed her eyes, letting the tears that she had been holding back spill over and down her cheeks.

"You know what, little Bella? Perhaps you should watch loverboy die in front of you," his menacing voice said in her ear.

The gun was pulled from her head and aimed at Edward. Bella began pleading with Sam for Edward's life. "Please, don't. I'll do anything you want, just please don't kill him!"

A noise behind them spooked Sam, and before Bella could blink, the gun had fired. She screamed in horror as Edward collapsed to the ground, blood beginning to stain his shirt.

"NO!" She stamped on Sam's foot, distracting him long enough to get away and run over to where Edward lay. The minute she was clear, shots reverberated throughout the room and she watched as the man who had already taken so many lives, fell to the floor, eyes open but unseeing.

She turned to Edward and pulled her sweatshirt over her

head, pressing it to his wound. "Don't you leave me now, Edward."

"Be...Bella," Edward moaned through the pain. He fought to stay conscious, if for nothing else than to tell her the truth.

"Stay with me, Edward," Bella pleaded. "Jasper! Hurry!" she shouted to the cops that were now moving in.

Edward opened his eyes again and stared at the face of the girl he had watched grow up. "I'm sorry."

"You have nothing to be sorry for. Edward, you have to stay with me. Please! I can't lose you!"

Edward lifted his hand weakly and pressed it to her cheek; Bella leaned into his touch. "Don't you *dare* give up on me, Edward!" she was sobbing.

"My...Be...lla." Edward's hand fell away from her as his body went limp.

"No, Edward, no! Stay with me, please!" Bella cried. "Please, Edward. I love you!"

Jasper and Emmett rushed forward with paramedics on their heels. It took the both of them to pull Bella away as Edward's prone form was loaded onto the stretcher. All Bella could do was pray.

AN: Will Edward survive? Tune in next time to find out.

Leave me some love.

20. Chapter 19

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Let's find out about Edward. See you at the bottom.

Chapter 19

Felix walked onto the scene just as Bella collapsed in her brother's arms. "Take her to the hospital. I want regular updates on her as well as Cullen. I'll be there after the scene is cleared to get her statement."

Emmett and Jasper nodded before Jasper lifted his sister into his arms and followed Emmett out to his car. Once they were all inside, Emmett tore off to the hospital, sirens blaring.

~~K~~

Dr. Carlisle Cullen was in the ER when the call came in that an officer had been shot and was en route. He called for a crash cart, an intubation tray, a chest tube tray, and anything else that came to mind. When he had everything ready, he felt that

he was prepared to serve the patient to the best of his ability—at least until the gurney was wheeled in and he saw his son.

The paramedics immediately began to shout out his vitals. "BP 80/50, pulse is thready. Respirations are low. Patient lost consciousness on scene and has not regained it. Arrested en route, shocked at 100. One milligram of atropine in. IV fluids started."

"On my count..." Carlisle shouted as he grabbed for the edge of the sheet that would bring Edward over to the examination table. "One, two, three..."

With the help of the EMTs and his nurses, Carlisle had him moved quickly and without jostling him too much. Once Edward was settled, Carlisle began life saving measures.

After about twenty minutes, Edward began to stabilize enough that he was immediately rushed into surgery where there was a team already waiting. Carlisle stood in the empty ER and hit his knees, praying for the life of his son. He was interrupted when a nurse walked in announcing that a kidnapping victim was being set up in trauma room two.

Carlisle knew that this would be Bella and that Edward would need her. He got up and walked into the other room, shocked at the bruises that covered her face.

"Bella? Honey, I need you to let me examine you, okay?"

Bella looked at him and nodded. "How's Edward?"

"He was stable when I sent him to surgery," Carlisle whispered to the young woman who was like a daughter to him. He did a quick assessment of Bella, and other than some bruises, he found her to be in good health. But there was one thing that he needed to know before he could release her. "Bella, were you...I mean did he..." He couldn't get the words out.

Bella understood and was quick to reassure him. "No, he didn't rape me."

Carlisle breathed a sigh of relief and smiled at her. "Okay, I don't see anything wrong with you other than a few bruises. Do you need to speak to anyone? I need to know about your psyche."

"I'm fine, Carlisle. I just need to see Edward. I can't lose him." The tears began to fall slowly down her cheeks.

"Okay, Sweetheart. Let me just let the nurses know that I am done for the day and we'll go up and wait for word."

~~K~~

Bella was curled up in a chair, surrounded by her family and waiting for any news on Edward's condition. Her parents had shown up at the hospital thirty minutes after she had left the ER. Their reunion, while joyous, was weighed down by the fear that they could lose Edward.

Now she was resting against her father, awaiting news about

the man that she loved. She dozed on and off, but never fully went under.

Just as she closed her eyes again, the doors to the surgical wing opened and out walked the doctor.

Everyone jumped to their feet and swarmed him. Dr. Amun held up his hands and forced them to settle down. "Edward made it through surgery. I had to remove his spleen, but I was able to repair the damage the bullet did to his intestines. He should be in recovery for about an hour. I'm going to keep him sedated for the next couple of days to help his body begin to heal, so he is still on the ventilator. I'll remove that once he has come out of the sedation and proves that he can breathe on his own."

"Can he have visitors, Ben?" Carlisle asked his friend and colleague.

"Sure, but only two at a time, and only for a few minutes."

Bella whimpered at hearing that she could only see him for a few minutes at a time. Carlisle heard her soft cries and looked at his friend. "I need to make a special request."

"Carlisle..." Dr. Ben Amun warned.

"Please, Ben. I need you to allow Bella to stay in his room with him. She needs this as much as he does. She was the person he was trying to save when he was shot," Carlisle pleaded.

The doctor looked around the room for a few minutes and then nodded. "Okay, I'll make the arrangements with the nurse. She can stay in his room in the ICU."

"Thank you." The two men shook hands before the surgeon walked away to make the necessary arrangements.

~~K~~

Two hours later, Bella walked down a sterile hallway behind Carlisle as he led her to the ICU, scared of what she would see. Would he look like he was on the brink of death? Could she handle seeing him with all of the machines and tubes around him?

"Bella?"

She looked up at Carlisle and realized that they had stopped. When she glanced in the window, she gasped out a sob as she saw Edward lying there. She covered her mouth and walked into the room, sitting beside his bed.

She picked up his hand and brought it to her lips, kissing the back of it. "I'm here, Edward. I need you to come back to me."

Carlisle watched the monitors as Edward's heart rate spiked, but then relaxed as Bella spoke.

"Keep talking to him, Bella," he whispered.

Bella spoke again, making sure he knew that she was okay

and that she would be waiting when he was ready to wake up. Carlisle was stunned as he watched Edward's vitals stabilize even more. His heart rate was that of one in a restful slumber.

"He's stabilizing, Sweetie. Just keep talking. I'm going to let Esme back for a while."

Bella nodded, but never took her eyes off of Edward's beautiful face.

AN: *Runs and hides* Go easy on me. I know you want to know if he is okay, tune in Wednesday to find out. Until then, leave me some love.

21. Chapter 20

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Is he going to wake up? Is he going to tell Bella how he feels? Let's go find out...

Chapter 20

He was floating in a sea of pain and confusion. He could hear the murmuring noises around him, but couldn't make them out clearly. He struggled to break the surface and heard a loud and fast beep around him. Suddenly, a soft touch that was comforting loosened the hold that the blackness had on him and he felt himself float closer to the surface. He squeezed his eyes shut and gave the hand in his a squeeze.

"Edward?"

He knew that voice—that was his Bella. He struggled to come fully to the surface, only to find that he couldn't.

"Esme, get the doctor. I think he's waking up."

He heard the footsteps of someone leaving quickly and began to panic.

Bella heard his heart rate jump and squeezed his hand. "Edward, I need you to calm down. You're safe and so am I. Your mom went to get the doctor. Calm down, Sweetie. Listen to my voice."

He did as she asked and settled down.

"There you go," Bella crooned.

He tried to open his eyes again, but still felt that consciousness was just beyond his reach. He was suddenly blinded by a bright light in his eyes and he tried to get away.

"Edward, if you can hear me, squeeze my hand," an unfamiliar voice greeted his ears.

He clenched his eyes shut, but squeezed the hand of the person that spoke. He missed the soft comforting touch of Bella.

"He seems to be coming out of it. When he opens his eyes, come and get me. I won't be far," Dr. Amun told Esme and Bella.

He felt another gentle touch—one that he recognized—followed by someone speaking to him. "Edward, honey, open your eyes. We've missed you. There is someone here that needs to see those green eyes."

Trying again to come to the surface, he squeezed his eyes shut and then began to blink until he was able to slowly open them up. He saw his mom leaning over him and tried to smile, but found he was unable to.

"It's a breathing tube, Baby. I'll get the doctor and maybe they can take it out."

He watched his mother move out of sight, but she was replaced by someone else. Bella came into view and he had never seen anyone so beautiful.

"Hi," she whispered.

He tried to move closer but she stopped him.

"No, stay still. Once the doctor comes in and gets the tube out, then you can move. Just stay still, okay?"

Edward nodded but brought his hand up to Bella's cheek. He raised his eyebrows at her in a silent question.

Bella smiled and nodded. "I'm okay."

Edward nodded again, then relaxed back into the pillow, never taking his eyes off her but moving his hand down to grasp hers.

"Well, I see that our patient has indeed woken up. Welcome back, Detective. Let me take a look and listen, and then we can get that tube out of your throat." Dr. Amun put his stethoscope to Edward's chest and listened to his heart and

breath sounds. "Sounds good. Let's get this out, shall we?"

Edward nodded and waited for instructions.

"Okay, on the count of three I want you to take a deep breath and blow like you are blowing up a balloon," Dr. Amun explained as he raised Edward's bed. "Okay, one...two...three."

Edward blew as Dr. Amun pulled the tube free of his body. He coughed as he took his first breaths on his own. A cup was suddenly in front of him.

"Here. Small sips, okay?"

Edward looked up and met the brown eyes of Bella. "Thank you," he rasped.

"Okay, Edward..." Dr. Amun spoke, gaining his attention. "Any pain?"

Edward coughed. "A little when I cough, mostly in my belly."

"Okay, I want you to rest and take it easy."

"Can you tell me what happened?" Edward's voice was still raspy, but he needed to know about Sam.

"I can answer some of that. You were shot in the abdomen. The bullet fragmented when it entered your body, causing damage to your intestines and spleen. I had to remove the latter, but I was able to repair the rest of the damage. We

kept you sedated for the first couple of days so that your body could begin to heal."

"How long have I been out?" Edward wondered.

"Five days."

He tried not to let his surprise show, but he could tell by the look on his mother's and Bella's faces that it didn't work.

"Wow."

"Edward, your body went through a traumatic experience. It's understandable that you would need rest," Dr. Amun explained. "I'll let you rest now, because we'll be moving you into a new room later today."

"Thank, Ben," Esme smiled, then turned to her son. "I'm going to go call your father, Alice, and Emmett. I'll be back later."

Edward nodded, "Thanks, Mom."

Esme kissed his forehead before turning to Bella. "Remember your promise to me, young lady."

"I know, Esme. I will."

The two of them watched Esme leave before looking at each other.

"You look so tired. Have you not been sleeping?" Edward asked.

Bella walked over and sat down in the chair beside his bed that had been her home for the last five days.

"A little in this chair," she admitted. "I haven't gone home since you've been here."

"Bella...why?"

"I couldn't leave until I knew that you were okay." Bella ducked her head down.

Edward hated the awkwardness that was now present with them. It shouldn't be like that and he knew that it was all his fault. "Bella, I..."

"ED!" Emmett boomed as he came into the ICU.

"Emmett, keep your voice down," Bella admonished.

"Sorry, Bells." Emmett actually blushed. "Um...am I interrupting?" He looked between the two of them.

"No, uh, I was just going to leave. I promised Esme that as soon as you woke up, I would go home and rest." Bella stood and picked up her bag. "I'll be back later."

"Okay," Edward nodded. "Are you still at....um, my place?"

Bella nodded and walked over to him. "I have nowhere else to go. I'll see you later." She leaned down, kissed his cheek, and was gone.

"You are one lucky guy, Bro," Emmett said as he sat down.

"Why do you say that?" Edward wanted to know.

"That girl hasn't left your side. She slept here, ate when we forced her to, and showered in the nurses' lounge. I have never seen someone so devoted to another human being. At least not since Mom and Dad. So you're lucky."

"Hmm..." was all he said as he lay back against the pillow and closed his eyes.

AN: Frustrated yet? Relax, it's coming. So is the end so be patient. Until next time, leave me some love.

22. Chapter 21

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: A lot of you have asked/wondered why Edward wasn't wearing a vest. While I know that it's protocol for him to have worn one, he just didn't. He had been sitting in a car doing surveillance for about ten hours (I never mentioned the time, right?) and he was hot and uncomfortable. If anyone has ever worn one...bullet proof vests are heavy. So, he took his off and in the rush of adrenaline to get to Bella, he forgot it. I took some creative liberties here, obviously.

This is the last regular chapter; next up is the epilogue, which I will post on Monday. Enjoy...

Chapter 21

Bella opened the door to the apartment and stepped inside. She was immediately assaulted with Edward's scent. It was comforting for her. She went to her room and lay down on the bed. She was just going to close her eyes for a second.

Sunlight streamed through the curtains and landed across Bella's eyes. She slowly opened them and blinked at the daylight.

"Daylight!" She sat up quickly and looked at the time. "Oh my, GOD! I slept all day and night!"

She flew out of bed and into the bathroom. Once she was showered, she threw on some jeans and a T-shirt. With her hair up in a messy bun, she ran out the door and down to her car. She was back at the hospital within forty minutes of waking.

When she got to reception, she asked where they had moved Edward, and once she had his room number, she sprinted for the elevator and willed it to hurry.

She made it to his floor and walked down the corridor to his room. She heard voices and laughter as she got to his door and knocked tentatively. No one must have heard her, so she slowly pushed open the door. Nothing could have prepared her for the sight that greeted her.

Edward was sitting up in his bed with a beautiful blonde perched beside him. Bella thought that he looked healthier than he had in days. It wasn't until the blonde reached out and touched his arm that she gasped.

Edward looked up and saw Bella standing in the door, tears building in her eyes. "Be..."

She turned and fled before he could say her name, but it didn't stop him from shouting for her. She could hear him as she made it to the elevator bank. Only when she was safely ensconced inside did she allow the tears to fall.

~~K~~

"Dammit!" Edward slammed his hand down on his bed.

"Who was that?" Jane asked.

Emmett and Jasper came around the corner just then. "Dude, why did I just see my sister running from here?"

Emmett took in the scene before him and immediately knew what Bella was running from. He sighed before he looked at his brother, "Edward..." He shook his head.

"What!?" Edward wanted to know.

"Fucking hell, Edward! What do you *think*? Take a look around and tell me what's fucking wrong with this picture!" Jasper took an aggressive stance and glared at his friend.

"Ed, look, Jaz and I know who Jane is. Bella, on the other hand, does *not*. Think of how this looked to her. She comes around the corner to see you cozied up to a blonde who has her hand on your arm," Emmett said, quietly for once.

"Oh, no. Edward, I'm sorry." Jane got up and looked like she was going to be sick.

"No, Jane. It's my fault. I should have told Bella how I felt about her a long time ago." Edward hung his head.

"I'm just going to go. I hope everything works out for you, Edward," Jane said as she left the room. She just hoped that she could find the brunette and repair the damage that she had helped do, even if it was done inadvertently.

~~K~~

Bella sat down heavily on a bench in front of the hospital and stared at nothing while the tears fell down her cheeks. She wasn't sure how long she sat there, but she knew that she should have gone home. She just couldn't go back to that empty apartment—not without her heart, which would be staying at the hospital with Edward.

"Excuse me?"

Bella looked up and saw the blonde from Edward's room. She didn't say anything, instead turning away and looking at the sky.

"You're Bella, right?" Jane asked as she sat beside her on the bench.

"Do I know you?"

"No. I'm Jane. I work with the Cullens and your brother."

"What do you want, Jane?" Bella voiced the question even though she didn't want to hear the answer.

"Bella, there is nothing going on between Edward and me. We've been working on the Strangler case since the beginning and have become friends, but that's it."

"Why should I believe you?" Bella whispered.

Jane grinned. "Because I'm gay, Bella." She lifted her arm and pointed. "Do you see that beautiful brunette walking this way?"

"Yeah."

"That's my girlfriend, Heidi. We've been together for eight years. We recently decided that we want to be parents," Jane chuckled. "We were actually thinking of asking Edward to donate, but we won't now."

Bella watched as the long-legged, stunning woman walked toward them. She suddenly felt like a fool. "I think I'm gonna go back in. Thanks, Jane, for explaining."

"Go easy on him, Bella." Jane smiled as Heidi reached them.

"Ready to go, Honey?"

"Yeah." Jane stood and then looked at Bella. "Good luck."

Bella watched as the two women walked away hand-in-hand. With a smile she then looked up at the windows on Edward's floor. She knew that she needed to go back in, but wasn't sure if she was ready to face the music.

Bella walked down the corridor again after a quick stop at the bathroom to wash her face. She turned the corner and looked into Edward's room. His eyes were closed, but he didn't look like he was resting. She knocked softly and watched as his head rolled in her direction.

Edward popped up as quickly as he could upon seeing her. "Bella, I'm sorry. It's not wha..."

Bella moved forward and stopped him. "I know. Jane found me outside. She explained."

"Good." Edward smiled as he eased his way back down.

"How are you feeling?" Bella asked, trying to avoid the elephant in the room.

"Tired, but I'm okay." He patted the space next to him, indicating that Bella should sit. Once she had, he grabbed her hand in his. "Did you get any sleep?"

She nodded. "I was only going to rest for a few hours, but didn't wake up until this morning. I guess I was more tired than I thought."

They were silent for a minute before they both tried to speak at the same time.

"Why..."

"I need..."

Bella smiled and ducked her head. "What's wrong with us? We never used to have problems talking to each other."

Edward sighed. "I don't know. I think that we changed things." He waited until Bella's eyes looked back at him before continuing. "I owe you an apology."

Bella looked at him, confusion visible on her face. "For what?"

He glanced down at their hands before looking back at her. "On the day that you were taken, I said some words to you that I didn't mean."

"Edward..."

"No, Bella, I have to say this." She nodded so he continued. "I don't regret what happened between us that night, Bella."

Bella looked up at him in shock. She shivered when he brought his hand up to her cheek.

"Making love to you was the best night of my life."

"Then, why?"

"Because I'm an idiot. There is no other excuse. I have been so scared that the way I felt for you was wrong that I never looked at the big picture. I kept telling myself that you were like a sister to me and that our families wouldn't approve. I had no idea how wrong I was."

"What do you mean?"

"Our families don't disapprove. If they did, then Ali and Jasper wouldn't be together. Bella, my mom and yours have known how I've felt about you since you were sixteen. I didn't even know then."

"Edward, what are you saying?" Bella was hoping, but she needed to hear the words.

Edward sat forward—his face only inches from hers—and he looked deeply into her eyes. "I love you, Bella. I love you so very much."

The tears that had been brimming in her eyes spilled over. "I love you, too."

Edward closed the distance between them and gently pressed his lips to hers. He wrapped his hand around the back of her neck and turned his head to deepen the kiss. Bella opened her mouth on a sigh, allowing Edward's tongue inside.

He had meant it to be a chaste kiss, but the love that they had been holding back made it more passionate. When they broke apart they were both breathless. Edward leaned his forehead against hers and whispered his love for her again.

"You have no idea how long I've waited to hear those words from you," Bella whispered.

"You'll probably tire of hearing them, since I plan to tell you that as often as I can," Edward chuckled.

"Never." Bella looked at him and touched his cheek with her hand. "I love you, Edward."

Edward grinned her favorite crooked grin. "I love you, too."

AN: That's it folks. All that is left is the epilogue. As I was writing this story I realized that it was the only one I have ever written where it has taken until the end for anyone to confess their feelings. Did it make for better UST or was it just irritating? Leave me some love.

23. Epilogue

Disclaimer: All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24 and my pre-reader, Bee1982. You girls keep me going. Love you both!

AN: Thank you for going with me on this journey. I hope you enjoyed Copward as much as I did writing him. I have nothing new coming up. I have a lot of ideas, but nothing concrete. Add me you your author alerts to see what I am up to next. I am participating in the Lyrics to Life contest (a first for me). You can find the link to that in my FB group Momma's BookCase. Try and guess which story is mine. See you soon!

Epilogue

Three years later...

Bella drove her car toward the station. The captain had called her to come in and look at one of their old unsolved cases to see if she could make a profile on it. That's right, Bella had graduated from U-Dub and become a profiler for the Seattle PD. She also had her own successful psychology practice. She focused mainly on victims of kidnapping and abuse,

having survived through her own experience.

When she walked into the station after parking her car, she headed straight for the Captain's office. She knocked and heard the gruff voice telling her to come in, so she pushed open the door and saw him sitting at his desk, messing around on his phone.

"Are you texting someone important or crushing candy?"

He looked up and grinned. "Well, if it isn't the soon-to-be Mrs. Cullen. How are ya, Darlin'?"

"You just saw me this morning, Edward," Bella chuckled.

Edward had accepted the promotion to captain of the homicide division when Felix had retired six months prior. It was a decision that the two of them had talked about at length before he had accepted the promotion. Edward hadn't wanted to make such a major career choice without the input of his fiancée.

"How's the munchkin?"

Bella smiled as she ran her hand over her swelling belly. They had found out that she was pregnant the day that Edward had accepted his promotion. They couldn't have been happier, but it had put their wedding plans on hold.

"She's kicking."

"He is?" Edward laughed at their joke. He insisted it was a

boy, while Bella said that she knew it was a girl. They had decided not to find out just to see who was right.

"Hmm...so what's this case you need me to look at?"

"Oh, yeah. Here." Edward handed her a file and watched as she lowered herself onto the couch.

Bella read over it and was shocked. "Edward, are you serious? This can't be real."

"What do you mean, Baby?" he got up and joined her on the couch.

"Well, look..."

"Hey, boss!" Emmett yelled as he walked into Edward's office, stopping their conversation.

"Emmett! What have I told you about that?"

"Sorry, I just thought you'd like to know that you're going to be an uncle..."

"Rose?"

Emmett stared at Bella like she had two heads. "Come on, Bells. Rose would kick my ass if I impregnated her. No, Jaz called. Ali is in labor!"

Edward jumped up from the couch and pulled Bella up with him. The three of them left and headed toward the hospital

where they waited with the rest of the family for the newest arrival.

~~K~~

"I fucking hate you, Jasper Swan!" Alice growled as she gripped her husband's hand. "You are never touching me again."

Jasper took it all in stride and just smiled at his pretty wife as she pushed their child into the world.

The lusty cry of the baby brought tears of joy to Alice's eyes. "It's a girl!"

The baby was cleaned up and then wrapped in a pink blanket before she was placed in Alice's arms. "She's perfect," she whispered.

"What are we going to name her?" Jasper wanted to know.

Alice looked at her husband and then down at the bundle in her arms. "Madison Elise Swan."

"That's perfect."

Without looking away from her daughter, she added, "Go tell the family and send Bella and Rose back."

Rose and Bella walked into the room and grinned when they saw Alice holding the little baby. They crossed to her and passed her around until a nurse came in to take her for her

newborn testing.

"We'll bring her back, I promise." The nurse smiled and left the room.

"You did good, Ali..." Rose said.

"She's beautiful," Bella smiled.

"You're next, Bells," Alice giggled.

The three of them broke into laughter and knew that it was just the beginning of the new lives they were starting.

~~K~~

The family was gathered around the Christmas tree at the Swans' for their annual Christmas Eve dinner. Madison was in her daddy's arms while the women—minus Bella—were in the kitchen cleaning up. There had been laughter and good food, like always, but it was extra special since it was Maddy's first Christmas.

Alice, Rose, Esme, and Renee had just walked into the living room when Bella gasped.

"Baby?" Edward looked at her in concern.

"I'm okay, I just felt a twinge."

Carlisle immediately went into doctor mode and began asking questions. "What kind of twinge? Have you felt them before?"

How far were you dilated at your last appointment?"

"Dad!" Edward shouted, trying to get his attention.

"Sorry," Carlisle backed off.

Bella gasped again, feeling another and then a gush of water.
"Edward, I think we need to go to the hospital."

"Bella?"

She looked up at him with a gentle smile. "Your son wants to come now. My water just broke."

The house was suddenly a flurry of excitement as everyone rushed around trying to get everything loaded up. Bella sat on the couch and watched, but was then stunned when the living room was suddenly cleared out, followed by the door slamming shut.

She got up from the couch slowly, walked to the door, pulled on her coat, and then stepped outside to wait on the porch.

Edward sped down the road with Emmett and Carlisle in the backseat. Carlisle was shaking his head and Emmett was trying to get his brother's attention.

"Um, Bro!"

"Shut up, Emmett! I'm trying to get Bella to the hospital!"

"Um, yeah, but...where is Bella?"

Edward looked over at the passenger seat and slammed his hand on the steering wheel. "Shit!"

He made a U-turn and headed back to the Swans' house, where he found his fiancé standing on the porch, bundled up and waiting for him.

"I'm sorry, Baby!"

"It's okay, just get me there," Bella smiled.

Once they were settled back in the car and on their way, they heard Carlisle chuckle in the backseat.

"What, Dad?"

"Like father, like son. Remember, Edward, I forgot your mother when Alice was born."

Bella smiled and realized that they had come full circle. As she held her son in her arms later that night, she wondered if the pattern would continue.

"Thank you, Bella," Edward whispered.

She looked up at him and gave him a tired smile. "For what?"

"For loving me, for Parker," he smiled, gazing at his son, "for everything."

"I love you, Edward."

When their lips met over their son's head, they didn't know what the future would hold, but they both knew that they would face it—together.

~~THE END~~