They grew up together. Relationships and feelings change, separating them. When an accident happens, they band together leaning on their faith, hoping that love will pull them through. AH
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1. Prologue

Disclaimer: I own nothing...

AN: I'm back! At long last here is my new story. I am trying to make this one a little bit different from what I usually write. I hope you enjoy it. Special thanks to my beta, toocute24. Thanks, Sally!

Prologue

The beeping noise was the only thing that indicated she was still alive. The doctors had done all that they could; the rest was up to Bella.

It had been a long day for her family and friends, all of whom had refused to go home. Now, all but one sat in the waiting area and prayed that their loved one would come back to them.

One, however, stayed by her side and held tightly to her hand, praying that he hadn't missed his chance. He would never forgive himself for not telling Bella how he felt before now, but he planned to cherish her forever once she came back to him.

"Bella, please, come back to me," Edward whispered as he lowered his head and placed a kiss to her hand. He then
closed his eyes and thought back on all the times they had spent together and how much more there was left for them.
2. Ch 1: They Met

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

AN: I am overwhelmed by the response to this story. Thanks for all of your kind words, I love reading all of them. Special thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best! Now let's start at the beginning...(they are all around 10 and 11 in this chapter)

Chapter 1

They met…

Bella looked around the room and saw that everyone was already grouped together. She felt like an outcast. At ten, nobody wants to feel left out. She could feel the tears building in her eyes and looked up at her dad.

"Daddy, please. I don't know anyone."

Charlie looked down at his only daughter. Seeing the shine in her eyes made him feel guilty, but this was what they both needed. "Bells, you'll make friends. You've always been an outgoing girl. Just trust me, Honey. If you meet people here, then starting school tomorrow will be easier."
When his wife passed the year before, Charlie worried that he wouldn't be able to raise his daughter—not alone. Deciding that they needed a new start, he accepted a job as the Chief of Police for the small town of Forks, Washington. Bella was understandably upset, not wanting to leave her friends, but Charlie felt it was for the best.

They had made the move two weeks ago and Charlie thought that it was time to settle into the community. Their first destination, Calvary Chapel for Sunday morning service. Now, here they stood on the threshold of the Sunday school class for Bella's age group.

"You'll be fine." Giving her a little nudge, Charlie watched as Bella timidly walked in the door.

"Good morning! You must be Isabella Swan. I'm Mrs. Brandon. Welcome, have a seat."

Bella smiled, "Bella."

Mrs. Brandon cocked her head to the side, "I'm sorry?"

"It's Bella."

"Well, come join us, Bella." She looked around the room and her eyes settled on her daughter. "Alice? Could you come here please?"

Bella watched as a young girl with long black hair and ice blue eyes bounced over. "Yes, Mommy?"
"Sweetheart, this is Bella, she's new here. Would you take her over and introduce her to your friends?"

"Sure." Turning to face the new girl, she stuck her hand out. "I'm Alice."

"Hi." Bella smiled shyly and shook the girl's hand.

Alice didn't let go of Bella's hand and drug her over to meet her best friends. She knew that the new girl was going to fit in well with them.

"Guys!" Alice asked for their attention. Once their eyes were on her, she continued. "This is Bella. She's new here and is our new best friend. Bella, this is Edward and Emmett Cullen, Jasper Whitlock, and Rosalie Hale."

A bronze haired boy and another boy with dark curly hair were the Cullens, Jasper had wispy blonde hair, while Rosalie had flaxen hair and aqua eyes.

"Hi, Bella!" They all said in unison. It was enough to make Bella jump. Once she was calmed down, she sat and Mrs. Brandon began their bible lesson.

"Okay, children. Let's begin," Mrs. Brandon started. "I want to ask all of you a question and then we can discuss it."

Charlie walked in the house behind his daughter. He watched her and noticed that her shoulders weren't as hunched over as they had been when they left the house that morning.
"Did you enjoy church this morning, Sweetie?"

Bella turned at the bottom of the stairs, "It was nice, Dad. I met a few of the kids."

Before Charlie could respond, she bounded up the stairs and to her room. Once her door was shut, she fell on her bed and let the tears fall. She missed her mom and she was mad at her dad for moving them away from home. He had told her that this was their new home.

She thought about the five people that she had met that morning and smiled easily. Alice had said that they would all be best friends forever. Bella had never had a best friend before. Sure she had had friends at her old school, but no one that she wanted to tell all of her secrets to. She only hoped that her first days at Forks Elementary were happy ones.

**AN: Next update...next Friday! See you then!**
3. Ch 2: They Grew up

Disclaimer: I own nothing...:(

AN: Thanks for all the kind words. In this chapter we have aged 7 years and are seniors in HS. Let's see what's going on. As always, thanks to my beta, too cute24.

Chapter 2

They grew up...

"Hey, Bella! Wait up!"

Bella spun around and watched as Jasper sprinted over to her. She stopped walking and waited, wondering what he was going to tell her now.

"What, Jaz?"

Jasper flung his hands in the air. "I'm sorry, Bella."

Bella relaxed her posture. She wasn't so much mad as she was hurt. "Look, Jaz, we've been friends since we were ten. When you asked me on our first date, you knew that I was afraid it would ruin our friendship. You swore to me that it wouldn't and I believed you. Now, I find out that you are sneaking around with Alice!"
"Bella, it's not..."

"Don't tell me it's not like that, Jasper!" Bella tried to reign in her temper. "If you wanted to be with her, you could have just told me. I would have backed off. Instead, I feel humiliated."

"We never meant for that to happen, Bells." Jasper looked down at the floor of the hallway. He hated hurting Bella, but his heart belonged to Alice. He finally looked back up at her. "What do you want me to do?"

Bella sighed, "I need some time. I know that you didn't love me as anything other than a good buddy, and you know that I felt the same, but this..." she looked down and fought the tears that threatened. "It still hurts. I just need you to give me some time."

Jasper nodded, "What about Alice?"

Bella's eyes clouded. "Tell her to stay the hell away from me."

Having said that, Bella turned on her heel and stalked down the hallway toward her locker. Jasper felt like an ass. He had never meant to fall for Alice, but being with Bella wasn't like a relationship. It was just like their friendship, except he got to hold her hand and go places just the two of them. With Alice, it was passionate and nothing that he had ever experienced before. With a sigh, he walked toward the cafeteria where the rest of their friends were.
Rose saw Jasper walk in without Bella and wondered what the hell had happened. "Where's B?"

"Umm...we're...uh."

Edward piped in, deciding to reveal what he had figured out. "Did she find out about you and Alice?"

Alice squeaked beside him and looked at Jasper. He was staring at Edward in shock.

"Oh, come on. You two aren't exactly discrete. Is she pissed?" Edward wanted to know.

Jasper shook his head. "Not really. She said that she is humiliated. She said that if I had just told her that I wanted to be with Alice that she would have backed off. Man, I really fucked up."

Alice sniffled from beside him. "Jasper? What did she say about me?"

Jasper looked at her with a sad expression. "She said for you to stay away from her."

Emmett banged his fist on the table. "Fucking fantastic! We're supposed to be camping this weekend. I'll bet that she won't go now."

Rosalie looked at Emmett in shock. "Would you?"

Emmett looked at her and shrugged. "I guess not, but man,
Edward looked around the table at his friends. He had grown up with these people. When Bella had joined them seven years ago, it was like they were complete. Now there was a rift because Jasper couldn't decide who he wanted to be with. Pushing back his chair, he decided to go ahead and go to class. He just hoped that Bella was there.

~~FHL~~

Bella sat at the table in biology, swinging her legs on and off the stool. After she had seen Alice and Jasper kissing in the hallway, she lost her appetite and skipped lunch. After her confrontation with Jasper, she decided to hide out in her next class. She still had ten minutes before the bell rang, so she was surprised when the door opened and closed with a soft click.

"How're you doing, Bells?"

She looked over at him and shrugged her shoulders. She went back to swinging her legs and didn't say anything. Edward sat beside her and waited. He knew that she would talk eventually.

Finally, Bella sighed. "I'm not mad at them. Well, I am, but not like I should be. I feel more betrayed than anything else. If either of them had just talked to me, I would have backed away. But they didn't, Edward. I thought that they were my
friends."

"They *are* your friends, Bells. They made a mistake. Alice feels terrible and was crying when I left them. Jasper feels guilty."

"Alice should feel terrible and he should feel guilty. I didn't do this, they did."

Edward nodded, "I know, but are you really so mad that you want it to ruin seven years?"

Bella shrugged. "I don't know. I just need some time away from them."

"What about the camping trip?"

"I don't know. It's only Monday. We'll see what happens by Friday, okay?"

Edward nodded, "Whatever you need, Bella."

**AN:** Hmm...I think Bella is justified, don't you? See you next week.
4. Ch 3: Camping

Disclaimer: I own nothing...:(

AN: Sorry that this chapter is late. RL was busy. Let's find out what happens with the gang after J/A betrayal. See you at the bottom. As always thanks to my beta, too cute24.

Chapter 3

Bella decided to go on the camping trip, but stayed by herself most of the time. She chose instead to hang out on the dock and read. She didn't want to disappoint her friends and it wasn't as though she was jealous; she just didn't want to watch everyone be...couply.

It was on the last day that they were there when Alice finally approached Bella. She was willing to do whatever it took to rebuild their friendship, even if that meant that she had to give up Jasper.

"Bella?" she approached quietly.

Bella looked up and sighed. "Hi."

"Can we talk?"
Bella nodded and put her book away. She had wondered if either of them were going to try and talk to her. She should have known that Alice would be first.

"Bella, I am so sorry. I never meant to hurt you."

"I know you didn't, Alice. At least I hope you wouldn't do that intentionally. You can't help who you fall in love with. I know that. The simple fact is, Alice, that you knew that Jaz and I were dating, but you made a move anyway." Bella kept going when Alice would have interrupted. "And don't tell me that it wasn't you who made the first move. I know from experience that he likes to take it slow. So you see, you doing that showed me that you have very little respect for me or our friendship."

Alice whimpered, fearing that Bella was going to tell her to go away. "Bella, please. What can I do?"

Bella chuckled. "You know if I was a royal bitch, I would tell you to stay away from him. Good thing for you, I'm not. What you need to do is back off and give me some time. I'm not jealous or even mad that you are with him. I'm disappointed in you," she stood up and brushed off her jeans. "That's the worst part. I never thought that one of my best friends would do that to me."

Not giving Alice any time to comment, Bella strode up the dock and into the cabin. She went to her room and packed up her bag. After a quick sweep to make sure that she had everything, Bella walked out to her truck and jumped in the
"Bella, wait!" Edward ran up to her truck and stopped her.

"What, Edward?"

"Were you even gonna say goodbye?"

Bella looked at Edward and sighed. "I'll see you on Tuesday at school."

"Okay, Bells."

He stood back and watched her drive away, wondering if things would ever be the same again.

~~FHL~~

Over the next month, Bella slowly began speaking to Alice again. Finally, on the night of the homecoming dance, she forgave her completely. She had decided that if she wasn't heartbroken in the first place, then their friendship didn't need to be either.

Rose and Alice were playing Bella Barbie as the three of them got ready for the dance. As a group, the six of them had decided that they wouldn't let any outside people invade them, including dates. That stuck Bella and Edward as each other's dates for the evening.

"Bella, Edward is gonna flip when he sees you." Alice bounced like Tigger.
"Ali, Edward and I are just friends," Bella reminded her.

Rose piped up with a laugh, "Yeah, and I am the queen of England."

Bella blushed but remained silent. Once they were ready, the three girls headed down the steps and to their dates.

Edward was not prepared for his reaction to seeing Bella in her dress. He had never liked the color blue until Bella walked down the stairs. The dress was a strapless thing that went to her knees in a choppy, flowy mess. She looked amazing. It was the first time he saw her as anything other than a friend and that scared him. He had seen what happened with Jasper. He didn't want to end up the same way, so he sucked down his attraction and decided to be her friend, even if it killed him.

AN: Give me your opinions...did she forgive them too quickly? How long will Edward be able to hold back his feelings? Until next time...
5. Ch 4: College Bound

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot

AN: A lot of you think that she forgave them too quickly, maybe so, but things are never as they seem. Special thanks to my beta, too cute24. Sally, I'm glad that you make time for me in your busy schedule...Love ya, girl!

Chapter 4

College bound...

Charlie sat in the chairs at Forks High School's graduation ceremony. He couldn't believe that his baby girl was graduating and soon would be leaving him to go to college across the country. He wondered if she had told her friends her decision yet.

"This is so exciting." Esme Cullen vibrated next to him. "I can't believe that they're all grown up."

Carlisle rolled his eyes at his wife and handed her his handkerchief. "Esme, we still have them for another two months."

"I know, but Edward is going so far away," Esme cried.
Charlie turned his head and smiled at the pair. "Where is he going?"

Carlisle smiled at Charlie. "He's going to Columbia."

Charlie nodded. "Wow. You must be thrilled."

"Yeah. He decided that he wants to go to Med school so…" Esme sniffed. She dabbed at her eyes and then looked at Charlie. "Is Bella going to U-Dub with the others?"

Charlie looked down at his shoes. "No, she finally decided that she wants to be a nurse, so she accepted a scholarship to Northwestern State in Louisiana."

"Wow, she's going far away. Is she aware that there is an excellent program for that at U-Dub?" Carlisle asked.

Charlie nodded. "Yeah, but I think that she wants to learn how to stand on her own two feet. The six of them have been inseparable since they were ten. I think it's a good idea."

The Cullens nodded as the ceremony started, both quietly thinking how hard it was going to be for the children to separate.

~~FHL~~

Bella watched in admiration as Edward delivered his speech as valedictorian. She was probably going to miss him the most. Over the last year it had been the two of them, while the others coupled up. She wasn't sure when her feelings for
him became more, but after what happened with Jasper, she wasn't willing to jeopardize another friendship. Even though it was a tough decision, she had chosen to go far away for school instead of following everyone else to U-Dub. She just hoped that they all took the news well.

"...so today we end one journey and start a new one. What the future holds we don't yet know, but it will be quite the ride finding out. Congratulations, Graduates." Edward finished his speech. His eyes swept the crowd and landed on Bella. He hadn't told her yet that he wasn't going to U-Dub, he just hoped that she took the news okay.

Alice was vibrating with excitement as she waited to cross the stage and receive her diploma. She just knew that after today, the six of them would be off on new adventures...together.

Jasper watched as all of his friends got their slip of paper that stated they were adults. He wondered how a small piece of paper could determine that. When his name was called, he crossed the stage, shook Principal Green's hand, and then walked away, ready to start a new chapter in his life.

After the ceremony and a celebratory dinner with their parents, the six of them drove down to First Beach. Once Emmett had the bonfire started, they sat in their small circle and reminisced about the days behind them and planned for the days ahead.

Bella decided that while they were planning, it was time to reveal her secret. "Um, guys, I have something to tell you."
"What, Bells?" Emmett asked as he wrapped his arm around Rose.

"I'm not going to U-Dub with you guys," Bella said quietly.

Alice laughed. "Of course you are, Bella. We've been planning it for a year."

Bella shook her head. "No, Alice. I'm heading to Northwestern State in Louisiana. My plane leaves August first."

"But…but…why? Don't you want to be with us for college?" Alice asked, still surprised.

"Oh, Alice, it's not that. I want to do something on my own. Make new friends, have different experiences. I can't do that if we're all together," Bella tried to explain.

"Bella, why Louisiana?"

Bella looked down and scuffed her shoe in the sand. "I need some distance, Rose."

Bella looked up at her friend, meeting her eyes. After a moment, Rose nodded in understanding. She was one of the only ones who knew how strained things had been between Bella, Alice, and Jasper. Bella put on a good front, but Rose knew that she had never fully forgiven Alice for making a move on Jaz while they had been dating.

"What are you going to study, Bells."
Bella looked at Edward. "Same thing I would have done at U-Dub—nursing."

Edward nodded and looked down. He was losing her and she wasn't even his. He decided then that is was time to make his own announcement.

"Uh, I'm not going to U-Dub, either."

"Edward!" Alice screeched.

"Alice, I was accepted to Columbia. I would be a fool not to go."

"Why does everyone want to leave?" Alice grumbled.

For once, Emmett was the voice of reason. "Look, Alice, sometimes we need to do things on our own before we come back to the life we know we're supposed to have. Maybe that's what they're doing. It's not like we won't see them. There will be holidays and summer. We're not... breaking up, for lack of a better term, just having a trial separation."

"Yeah, Alice. Besides, there is email and skype and we can call all the time. You're all still my best friends and I love you," Bella said.

They spent another hour on the beach before leaving for their own homes. Bella had just gotten settled in her bed when her phone chimed with a new text.

*i'm gonna miss you. ~E*
I'll miss you, too. We can still talk. ~B

I'm holding you to that. ~E

Goodnight. ~B

Night. ~E

AN: Sorry for the short length, but I think that Bella leaving is enough. They are separating and things are going to change. Hope you are all still with me.
Chapter 5

Separate lives...

It took four months until Bella was so busy with classes and the friends she had made that the everyday calls dwindled to almost once a week. She wasn't the only one. Edward was focused and was studying hard so that he could get the placement that he wanted when it came time for his residency. He had also met someone that helped to take his mind off Bella, although she was never out of his heart.

He had met Heidi in his chem lab, and they had agreed to be partners. Lunches became dinners, which became sleepovers disguised as study sessions. He wasn't a virgin, but his first time had been rushed in the back seat of a car with a senior his sophomore year. With Heidi there was no heat, but it was gratifying none the less.

Bella had met and begun dating Liam. He treated her great
and helped keep her mind off of missing her friends and Edward. On their three month anniversary, Bella had finally caved and slept with him. She had told herself she was saving it for marriage or for Edward, but she decided that that part of her life was over and it was time to move on.

It was two weeks before Thanksgiving when she got the email.

_Bella,_

_I haven't talked to you for two months, so I wanted to warn you—I'm bringing my girlfriend home with me for the holiday. Her name is Heidi and she is a med student like me. I think you'll like her. Can't wait to see you._

_Edward_

"What are you looking at, Sweetheart?" Liam asked from behind her.

"An email from my friend, Edward. He was letting me know that he was bringing his girlfriend home."

Liam nodded. "Have you told anyone that I'm coming with you?"

"Yeah, everyone knows." Bella smiled.

"Everyone except Edward, right?"

Bella spun in her chair to face him. "I haven't talked to him in
two months, Li. No, he doesn't know."

"Tell him, Babe."

Bella turned back to her computer and composed a quick email in response.

*Edward,*

*Thanks for the heads up. I guess I should warn you that my boyfriend is coming with me. His name is Liam and he is looking forward to meeting all of you. Can't wait to see you, too. I've missed you.*

*Bella*

"Good, now he'll know that you're taken."

Bella turned from her computer, stood up, and wrapped her arms around his waist. "You have nothing to worry about. It was never like that with Edward and me."

"Whatever you say."

~~FHL~~

Bella walked through the crowded terminal filled with travel weary passengers, Liam hot on her heels. She hopped up onto a chair and scanned the sea of faces looking for her father, but she couldn't see him.

"Can't see him?"
"Nope. Let's just get our bags and then we can walk outside."

Once they had procured their belongings, they headed toward the front entrance. They were just about there when Bella heard someone yell her name. She looked up and saw Alice and Jasper heading straight for her.

Bella dropped her bag and ran to her friends. Jasper picked her up and spun her around, while Alice hopped up and down beside him. As soon as Jasper put her down, Alice grabbed her in a surprisingly strong hug for someone her size.

"I've missed you, Bells."

"I've missed you, too." Bella pulled away and turned to Liam, ushering him forward. "Guys, this is my boyfriend, Liam. Liam, this is Alice and Jasper."

Liam held his hand out to Jasper, not surprised when it took him a minute to take his. "Nice to meet you."

Jasper was polite, but standoffish. Bella couldn't understand what her friends problems were, but she didn't want to spend her vacation fighting with them.

Alice looked down at their luggage. "Is this everything?"

"Yeah, let's go."

The foursome walked out to Jasper's waiting SUV and climbed in once everything was loaded. The drive to Forks was filled with uncomfortable silence. Alice and Jasper would
periodically glance at one another, Alice wondering how Edward would react to Bella's boyfriend and Bella to his girlfriend. Jasper couldn't wait for the trip to be over so that he could get back to school...back to where things made sense.

After they were dropped off and Liam had met Bella's father and survived that interrogation, Bella got her list together and they headed down to the store.

"Bella, how many people do you cook for on Thanksgiving?" Liam asked as he pushed the cart that was filling quickly.

"Um...generally about five, you make it six this year," Bella said as she perused the shelves looking for what she needed.

Liam only nodded, choosing not to distract her with needless conversation. They were just about through the store when he heard someone yell Bella's name. He watched as she spun around and then ran into the arms of a bronze haired man.

Edward picked Bella up and crushed her to him. "I missed you, Bells."

Bella turned her head into his neck and breathed him in. "I missed you, too."

The clearing of a throat behind her pulled them from the embrace. Edward turned and saw Heidi tapping her foot, while Bella turned and saw Liam with his arms crossed.
"Eddie?"

Bella turned back to her friend and raised her eyebrow; Edward just rolled his eyes. "Bella, this is Heidi."

"His girlfriend," the tall brunette women said as she stepped forward and placed her arm through Edward's in a possessive manner.

"Nice to meet you," Bella smiled, turning and ushering Liam to her. "This is my boyfriend…"

"Liam," he said as he wrapped his arms around Bella's waist.

Bella was suddenly annoyed. She didn't appreciate the possessive nature of Liam's hold and immediately pulled out of it.

"Edward, we'll see you this evening. I have to get the groceries back to Charlie's."

Edward nodded in understanding. "Okay, Bells."

Bella grabbed her cart and headed for the check out. She was silent all the way back to her father's; she wanted privacy for what she was about to say.

**AN:** Uh-oh, I think Bella is pissed, don't you? Until next time, leave me your thoughts.
Chapter 6

Single again...

Bella slammed into the house and put the groceries in the kitchen. She was slamming cabinets and throwing things in the refrigerator when Liam walked into the kitchen.

"What's wrong?"

"What the fuck was that?"

Liam looked confused. "What was what?"

Bella slammed the cabinet door closed and rounded on him.
"That display in the store, Liam? What the fuck was with the possessiveness?"

He shrugged. "I was just letting him know who you belong to."

Bella's eyes almost popped out of her head. "Who I belong to!? I didn't realize that I was a possession! What the hell, Liam? Edward is one of my best friends and has been since I was ten. He was here long before you were and will be, I'm sure, long after you are gone."

"I don't like it, Bella," Liam said calmly.

"I don't care. I'm not kicking him out of my life for you, Liam."

Liam stood up and started out of the kitchen. "Then I don't think I need to be here. I'm not going to play second fiddle to someone that obviously feels more for you than friendship."

He turned back to look at her. "I'll stay at a hotel in PA and try to get the first flight out. Have a happy holiday, Bella, and good luck."

Bella stood and stared after his retreating form. She was stunned. She wanted to follow him and ask him not to do this, but she couldn't. She didn't love him, and she wasn't about to choose him over one of her best friends. She had no idea that at that moment, Edward was having a similar conversation with Heidi.

"I don't want you around her, Eddie!" Heidi screeched.
Edward winced at the decibel. "Too bad, Dee. Bella is my friend and I'm not going to allow you to tell me that I can't see her."

"But, Eddie!"

Edward groaned and walked down the stairs, knowing that she would follow. "But nothing, Heidi. You will just have to get used to her."

He walked into the kitchen and found his mom, Alice, and Rose sitting at the table. He smiled as he walked to the fridge.

"Eddie! We are not done!" Heidi followed him, oblivious to their audience. "You are going to stay away from her!"

Edward sighed. "No, Heidi, I'm not. Now stop the damned screeching—you're giving me a headache."

"It's either her or me, Eddie. So what's it gonna be?" Heidi put her hands on her hips and looked at him expectantly.

The three women were sitting at the table, trying to hide their snickers behind their hands. All three of them knew that the annoying girl would soon be on her way to the airport.

"Fine," Edward started. Heidi grinned like she had won something. "Go get your bag, I'll take you to the airport."

"WHAT!?" she squealed.
"You heard me. Get your stuff, we're through."

Heidi screamed and ran from the room. Edward looked at his mom and gave her an apologetic smile.

"Don't you dare apologize for her, Edward. I'm proud of you. Bella will be here long after her, just like she always has been." Esme stood and kissed her son's cheek. "Now, can you please get that annoying girl out of my house?"

Edward laughed and nodded. "I'll be back in a few hours."

Just as he was pulling on his coat, his phone vibrated in his pocket.

*Liam is leaving. He told me to stay away from you. ~B*

*I'm taking Heidi to airport. She said the same. ~E*

*Pick me up on your way home? ~B*

*You got it. I'll call you. ~E*

He put his phone away and went out to his car to wait for Heidi. She finally came slamming out of the house, lugging her suitcases behind her. Edward knew that he should have offered to help her, but he was too pissed to care.

The drive to Port Angeles was tense to say the least. Neither Heidi nor Edward spoke. Every once in a while she would huff and turn like she wanted to say something, but changed her mind. Edward had only one thought as he drove, and he
decided that since she couldn't run, he would speak now.

"Heidi, we still have a few labs left. I really hope that you don't want to sabotage me just because you are angry."

"I'll be hurting my own grade if I do that, Edward. You have nothing to worry about. Just because we aren't together anymore doesn't mean I am gonna do anything. I'm not that vindictive. I would appreciate it if you would return my things when you get back to the dorms."

"No problem." The rest of the ride was silent.

Heidi refused Edward's offer to help her get a flight, so he headed back to Forks. He was about fifteen minutes away when he called Bella.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Bells. I'll be there in fifteen."

"Okay, I'll be outside."

Edward pulled up to her house and found Bella waiting as promised. She hopped into his car and they drove to the Cullens'.

"So what happened?"

Bella sighed. "I was pissed when we left the store. I couldn't figure out why he would act like that, so I called him on it." She continued to explain what had happened. When she was
done, Edward was nodding beside her.

"Yeah, Heidi was pretty much the same."

"I'm done with it, Edward. I miss you guys and I'm lonely. I think when I come home for the summer, I'm going to transfer to U-Dub. I thought that I wanted to be away from all of you, but that's not the case. It took me leaving to find out that there are no friends like all of you."

Edward wasn't sure what to say. He knew that Alice and Rose were going to be thrilled. He just wished that he could do the same, but you don't leave Columbia.

"I envy you, Bells. I wish I could do that."

Bella nodded, wishing that he could, too.

AN: So Bella wants to come home. Poor Edward. Leave me your thoughts.
8. Ch 7: Time Rolls On

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: Thanks to all those that reviewed. We'll be at the prologue soon. Hope you are all still with me. Thanks to my beta, toocute24.

Chapter 7

Time rolls on…

Bella did indeed transfer to U-Dub the following year, and ended up graduating with her BA of Science in Nursing. She was among the top in her class. Edward continued at Columbia and emailed Bella daily, just to say hi. He missed them all more than he could say, and was looking forward to starting his residency. He hadn't told them yet, but he had been accepted into the residency program at Seattle Children's hospital, since his focus was going to be in pediatrics.

After passing her boards, Bella accepted a job at Forks Hospital. She loved it. Alice had graduated with her degree in business and had opened a boutique in PA. Jasper was almost done with his masters in history. He was hoping to get a teaching position somewhere. Rosalie got her degree in
mechanics and opened up an auto-body shop in Forks, while Emmett took over for Coach Clapp when he retired.

Bella stayed with Charlie while she looked for an apartment, however she felt like a third wheel in her own home since Charlie had been dating Sue Clearwater. She was thrilled the day that she loaded up her last box and moved into her first place by herself.

She had just broken down the last piece of cardboard and had placed it by the door when her phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Hey." Edward's smooth voice greeted her.

"Hi. How are you?"

"I am so tired, Bells. I knew what I was signing up for when I chose medicine, but I feel like I am never gonna be a doctor."

Bella sank down on her couch. "You will. Maybe you just need a break. When's your next day off?"

Edward sighed. "I just came off of a thirty-six hour rotation. I don't go back until Monday."

She looked at the clock, it was only six. "Edward, why don't you drive down here? You can stay here—no one will bother you. I'm off all weekend. We can just vedge. I'll even cook for you."
Edward was so tempted, but he didn't know if he would make it there without getting into an accident and he told Bella as much.

"Okay, so I'll come there," she offered.

"I can't ask you to do that. You just moved into your apartment."

"You aren't asking me, Edward. I offered. I'm worried about you."

"Don't be. I'll be okay. I'm just gonna sack out for a while. I'll call you tomorrow, okay?" Edward knew that if he went to her now, that he would tell her how he felt. He had no filter when he was tired.

"Okay. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Night, Edward."

"Night, Bells."

Bella hung up with a sigh. He needed her and wouldn't admit it. She thought about just driving up there and surprising him, but didn't want to piss him off. The more she thought about it, the more she didn't care. She finally decided to go anyway and got up to pack a bag. When she was done, she called Rose to let her know where she was going to be.

"Hey," she said once Rose answered the phone.

"What's up, Bells?"
"Listen, I'm driving up to Seattle. Edward called and sounds exhausted. I'm gonna go make sure he gets some rest and decent food, okay?"

"Sure. Just be careful."

"I will."

She hung up and ran out to her jeep. It had started raining, and she knew that could make for treacherous roads. She had been on the road for about an hour when it happened. A truck crossed over into her lane, causing Bella to jerk her car to miss him. Her tires tried to gain traction on the slick pavement, but she hydroplaned out of control and went over the embankment. When the car came to a stop, it was on its top and Bella was unconscious.

AN: Uh-oh...
Chapter 8

Accident...

The emergency vehicle pulled into Forks Memorial an hour after Bella's accident. She still hadn't regained consciousness.

"Female, early twenties, MVA. BP 90/60, breathing shallow. Has not regained consciousness," the paramedics told the doctor that greeted them at the ER doors.

Carlisle looked down and saw Bella, and his heart stuttered in his chest. He immediately began to pray. As he followed the EMTs to the trauma room, he yelled for the desk nurse to call his wife and get her down to the hospital.

He walked around the gurney and grabbed the white sheets. "On my count. One…two…three." They lifted Bella over onto the exam table and he immediately began assessing her
injuries. He could tell that she had a broken arm, but he needed an x-ray to find out how severe. She was bleeding profusely from her head, and that was a cause for alarm.

"I want a CBC and a head CT. Call X-ray and get them down here. I want films on her arm," he ordered as he opened Bella's eyes and shone his light in them. "Pupils are equal and reactive."

Carlisle worked tirelessly until he had stabilized her, but there wasn't anything more he could do until the CT was back. He suspected a concussion, but wasn't sure of any other head trauma. When Bella was taken up to have the CT done, Carlisle went out to find Esme consoling a hysterical Charlie.

"Carlisle?"

"She stable for now, Charlie. She has a broken arm and a possible concussion. I just sent her for a CT. We should know something soon."

Charlie nodded. "Where was she going?"

Rose came running in with Emmett behind her. "She was going to see Edward," she said breathlessly.

"Why?" Charlie wanted to know.

Emmett answered for her. "He called her tonight and I guess he was exhausted. Bella was worried about him."

Carlisle nodded. First year residents were constantly getting
burned out. This was when they lost a lot of potential doctors. "Did he know she was on her way up there?"

Emmett shook his head. He was about to suggest they call him when Alice and Jasper ran in.

"How is she?" Jasper asked.

"She's still unconscious," Carlisle said before he was paged. He went to the desk and picked up the phone. He listened for a minute before he immediately barked out orders. "Page the neurologist on call and prep her for emergency surgery. We need to stop that bleed."

"Oh, God!" Rose cried and clung to Emmett.

Carlisle started backing away. "I'll update you as soon as I can."

The six of them all settled into the waiting area. When the silence became too much, Alice spoke. "Has anyone called Edward?"

~~FHL~~

He had been lying in bed for the last two hours. Sleep had eluded him. He didn't know why, but he felt like something was wrong. He finally got up and jumped in the shower. He was going to go to the coffee shop around the corner and get a nice cup of coffee. Perhaps then he would take Bella's advice and head to Forks for the weekend.
After showering and throwing on some jeans and a T-shirt, he went ahead and packed a bag and decided to hit the drive-thru. He would just surprise Bella.

He had been on the road for about half an hour when his cell rang.

"Hey, Alice." He heard sniffling and then some shuffling. "Alice?"

"Hey, Edward, it's Jasper. I think you need to come to Forks."

"I'm on my way there. What's wrong, Jaz?"

"It's Bella, Edward. She was in a car accident."

Edward felt his heart fall into his stomach. He didn't even notice when he pressed harder on the accelerator, anxious to get there as soon as possible.

"How bad?"

"We don't know yet. Just get here."

"I'm coming."

AN: *runs for cover* Still with me? Remember, this story is not labeled a tragedy. That's all I am saying!
10. Ch 9: Stay With Me

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: I'm not usually one for dedications, but today I am. This chapter is dedicated to my good friend Bee1982. Bee, you may not be writing fanfic anymore, but we will never forget you! Love you, hun! Also, I am by NO means a medical professional so please bear with me if I made any mistakes. Special thanks to my beta, toocute24.

Chapter 9

Stay with me...

Edward barely got his car in park before he was sprinting in the doors of the hospital. He found Jasper waiting for him at the nurses' station.

"Jaz! Where is she?"

"She's in surgery. Come on, the family is upstairs."

Jasper and Edward hurried to the elevator bank and waited. Edward was just about to take the stairs when the doors finally opened. The two men boarded and then waited as the elevator rose the four floors to the surgical area. When the
doors finally opened, they stepped off and went to join the others.

"Any news?" Edward demanded when he saw his father.

Carlisle shook his head. "Alistair is performing the surgery. He wouldn't let me stay."

Edward nodded; Carlisle was too close to the case and Dr. George was nothing if not professional. "What was the prognosis?"

Carlisle couldn't help the small smile that graced his face. Edward had put on his doctor cap and wanted information before he became the distraught friend.

"When her car flipped, her head hit the driver side window. She was jostled, but there were no obvious signs of head trauma. Her pupils were equal and reactive. However, the CT showed a small bleed on the right side of her cranium and her brain was swelling. Alistair wanted to go in and drain the bleed and then get her stabilized. He's going to leave her under in hopes that the intracranial pressure will lessen."

Just as he finished his speech, Dr. Alistair George walked into the waiting room. "Charlie?"

Charlie stood up and Carlisle stood by him. "Is Bella…?"

"She made it through surgery. I have every confidence that she will make a full recovery. I'm going to keep her sedated
for the next couple of days, and then I'll slowly wean her off
the medication. Right now, I've done all I can. The rest is up
to her."

Charlie nodded and licked his lips. "Can I see my daughter?"

Alistair placed a hand on the chief's shoulder. "As soon as she
comes up from recovery, I'll send a nurse to get you. You can
visit two at a time."

Charlie nodded and sank back into his chair. Carlisle looked at
his colleague and friend. "Thank you, Alistair."

The doctor nodded and then left them, returning to his patient.

The room was silent for a few minutes before Edward finally
stood up. "I'm going to the chapel." He didn't say anything
else, and he didn't expect anyone to follow him.

Edward sat down in the empty room and stared at the floor.
He would never admit it to anyone else, but when Jasper had
called him, he thought that he had lost his chance. Now
knowing that Bella was in a coma, he let his tears flow. When
he couldn't take the silence any longer, he lifted his head
toward the heavens and spoke to God.

"Dear Lord, please help Bella to be okay. I know I screwed
up a lot in the past by not telling her how I felt, but I promise if
you give her back to me, I'll do everything I can to take care
of her like she deserves. She's everything to me, and without
her, I'm lost. Please send her back to me. I need her more
Edward turned toward the voice behind him and saw Charlie standing in the doorway. "I love her, Charlie."

Charlie nodded and walked to where he was sitting, lowering himself to the bench. "I know you do. I just wondered if you could admit it to me. I've known since you were in high school."

Edward looked at him sheepishly. "Why didn't you ever say anything?"

Charlie sighed. "After the Jasper and Alice debacle, Bella closed herself off to anything other than friendship for anyone. She doesn't think that I noticed, but she doesn't lie very well. At least, not to me."

Edward nodded. "She put on a good front for all of us, but Rose and I knew that she never fully forgave either of them."

"She hadn't, until they graduated from college," Charlie told him. "With Alice living in P.A., she was able to see that those two are perfect for each other. She decided to let the past be and move on."

The two men sat in silence for a while, both praying quietly for Bella.

"She was so happy when she found out you were moving
back, Edward. I think that she cares more for you then she'll admit. She was on her way to see you when she was in the accident."

"What?" Edward turned to him in shock.

Charlie nodded. "You didn't know?"

Edward shook his head.

"She could hear how exhausted you were and wanted to take care of you."

Edward couldn't believe what he was hearing. Was it possible that Bella cared about him the way that he did her?

Chapter 10

Need you...

Edward and Charlie left the chapel and joined the others in the waiting room just as a nurse walked in. She looked at Charlie with a soft smile. "Mr. Swan, your daughter is out of recovery and in her room. I can take you and one other to see her."


He nodded and followed Charlie and the nurse down a white, sterile hallway. When they reached the room, the nurse turned to the two of them. "She looks a lot worse than she is. There will be a lot of tubes and there is a drain in her head where the doctor did the surgery. You can touch her hands, but try not to disturb any of the equipment."

They thanked her and then walked in the room. Charlie
gasped at the sight of his baby girl lying so helplessly in that bed. He rushed forward and gently picked her hand up in his, careful of the brace. The doctors were going to have to put a cast on, but wanted to wait.

"Talk to her, Charlie." Edward stepped forward. "They say that coma patients can hear us. Let her hear your voice."

The older man nodded and sank into the chair by his daughter's bed. "I love you, Bells. You need to get well and come back to us, you hear? I need my baby girl around. I need grandbabies."

Edward sucked in a breath and then walked closer. He slowly lowered himself into the chair on the opposite side of her bed and carefully picked up her hand, trying not to disturb the IV that was in the top. The words that Edward wanted to say were suddenly gone as he looked at the broken woman before him. Instead, tears leaked from his eyes and down his cheeks as he lowered his head to her hand.

Charlie watched as the young man before him cried quietly and was unsure how to comfort him. There was only one thing that came to mind—one thing that he could do to make this easier on Edward. He got up, walked out of the room, and to the nurses' station. Once he had the two gossiping women's attention, he requested to speak to the head nurse and Dr. George.

~~FHL~~
Hours passed, but Edward was unaware of the time. He didn't even notice that Charlie was gone, and he never saw the nurse come in to take Bella's vitals. All he saw was her.

"I should have known that you wouldn't stay in Forks. You always try to help make things easier for everyone. You always have," he whispered to her. "That's one of the things I love about you, Bella. It's also one of the things that makes you such a great nurse. So you need to get better. You have patients that need you, family and friends, too. I need you."

"Edward?"

He looked over at the door and saw Rose. "Hey, come on in."

Rose walked over to Bella's bedside and leaned down to kiss her friend's cheek. "Come back to us, Bells." She stood up again and looked at Edward. "Charlie made arrangements for you to stay in here with her. Just try to get some sleep, okay?"

Edward nodded. "Tell him thanks for me, Rose."

She nodded and then left the room to join the others as they continued their vigil. No one had any plans to leave anytime soon. They all wanted to be there when Bella woke up and to help Edward.

Alice stared blankly at the wall. She was worried about her friend. Things had never been the same for them after she had gone after Jasper while he was dating Bella. She was
praying that perhaps this would be the push they needed to rebuild.

Jasper stared at Alice, wondering what she was thinking. He couldn't imagine life without her, so he could only imagine the pain that Edward was feeling. None of them were stupid. They all knew that Edward and Bella were in love with each other. They also knew why Bella had never taken the chance. It was all his fault. If he had just been honest with her all those years ago, Bella and Edward would be together. Instead, he had been selfish.

Emmett leaned against the wall and stared at the picture in front of him without really seeing it. He wondered if it would be inappropriate to run out and get some food; he was starving. Not that he wasn't concerned about Bella—he was—but his stomach was louder.

Esme, Carlisle, and Charlie sat back and watched the kids. They knew that this was hard for them, especially since it was Bella. She was the glue that kept them all together. All at once, they closed their eyes and said silent prayers.

AN: Another short one...I'm sorry. Leave me your thoughts.
12. Ch 11: Making Amends

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: I feel like I should clarify something. A reader/reviewer pointed out to me that you can't go to med school right out of high school. I would like to take a moment to say that I know that, however for this story to work, I NEEDED for Edward to be doing his residency. So, lets just say, for FICTION'S sake, that after his breakup with Heidi, Edward threw himself into his studies and fast tracked into med school and then into his residency. Remember, this isn't real life, it's fiction. Thanks!

Special thanks to my beta, toocute24. She makes sense of my nonsense.

Chapter 11

Making Amends...

It's been said that comatose people dream. If that was true, then Alice was certain that Bella was dreaming. As she sat by her friend's side, she watched Bella's eyes roll beneath her closed lids. Edward had left for a much needed break, and also to talk to his attending to find out what he needed to do about his residency. Under the circumstances, he was in no condition to be practicing medicine on patients.
Alice picked up Bella's hand and squeezed gently. "Bella, Edward will be back soon. I hope that me being here is okay. I know that things between us haven't been right for a while now, but you have to know that I would give anything to have us back. I miss my friend. I know that you've been here and that I could talk to you, but..." she sighed, "...it hasn't been the same. Rose is who you call now. Edward is who you lean on."

Alice felt a tear slide down her cheek and hastily wiped it away. She didn't deserve to cry.

"Alice?"

She looked over to the doorway and saw Edward standing there. "Hey. Did you get everything worked out?"

"What's wrong, Ali?" Edward asked, ignoring her question.

"Nothing." She plastered on a smile.

"I'm not buying it. Tell me." Edward sat back down in his chair after softly kissing Bella's forehead.

Alice shook her head. "So much time wasted," she mumbled.

Edward cocked his head at her. "What?"

"I said, so much time wasted."

"What does that even mean?"
Alice looked down at her feet. "If I hadn't done what I did in high school, you and Bella would be together already."

"Alice, I…"

"Don't try to deny it, Edward. We can all see it. Hell, the only ones who don't know how you feel about each other is you and Bella," Alice told him.

Edward sighed. "Even if that's true, Alice, how is it your fault?"

"If I…if I hadn't moved in on Jasper all those years ago, Bella wouldn't be worried about her feelings for you."

"Worried? How?" Edward was confused.

"Come on, Edward. The six of us were inseparable…then Emmett and Rose paired off and Jasper asked Bella out. If he and I had been honest with her, we wouldn't have ruined our friendship and she wouldn't be scared of ruining what you two have."

"But, Alice, you didn't ruin your friendship. You guys are still friends." He looked up at her and then lifted his eyebrow. "Aren't you?"

She shook her head. "Not like we were. We'll never be like that again. Sure, we talk, but Bella has always held herself back from me. I know that I fucked up, but I just don't know how to fix it."

"Alice, it's been five years. I think that Bella has let it go by
"now," Edward tried to assure her.

"I wish I could agree with you, Edward, but I can't."

The pair was silent for a minute. Edward was the first to speak. "Look, Alice, you're right. I love Bella—I always have—but she isn't the only one who was scared. I was, too."

"What did you have to be afraid of, Edward?"

He scoffed before he answered her. "Really, Alice? What if I told Bella that I love her and she rejected me? I would have ruined the one relationship that means the most to me."

Edward held up his hand when Alice would have interrupted. "Don't get me wrong—I value the friendships that I have with all of you, but with Bella it's different."

Alice nodded her head. "I understand that. I always felt that with Jasper. I'm only sorry that I went about it the wrong way."

Edward leaned over Bella's prone form and touched Alice's hand. "I forgive you, Ali, and I know that Bella will, too."

She looked down at her friend and squeezed Edward's hand. "I hope so."

~~FHL~~

Minutes turned to hours and hours became days, but Edward had no concept of that. He maintained his vigil next to Bella, only leaving to give Charlie some time with her and to shower
and get something to eat. It was four days after her accident when Dr. George felt that the time had come to wean her off of the drugs.

"It could take a day or two for her to come around. We'll have to wait and see," Alistair explained.

Charlie cleared his throat and asked the question that no one else wanted to. "What about lasting effects? Brain damage?"

Carlisle placed his hand on his old friend's shoulder as Alistair answered. "We won't know that until she's awake, Charlie."

Charlie nodded and looked at his shoes. Alistair wished that he could give them some definitive answers, but he just didn't have them. Unfortunately, all they could do was wait.

After receiving the news, Edward once again found himself in the chapel.

"Lord, it seems as if I have talked to you more in the last few days than I have in the last few years. But if you could see fit to bring my Bella back to me—to all of us—I would be eternally grateful. We need her, Lord. More than you know..."

He hung his head down just as voices sounded behind him. "Amen," was said collectively from his family and friends.

"Amen," was said collectively from his family and friends.

Esme stepped forward and wrapped her arms around her son. "Bella is going to be fine, Edward. God wouldn't have let her survive the accident just to take her from us now. Have
faith, Sweetie. You'll get your time."

He knew that she was right. All he could do now was rely on his family and his faith…and wait.

AN: Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.
Chapter 12

Coming Around…

She felt like she was swimming in a sea of blackness. She could hear the rumble of echoes all around her, and she was desperately trying to break the surface, only to find the darkness descending upon her once again.

"It's been two days, Edward. Why hasn't she woken up?" Charlie questioned.

"I don't know, Charlie." Edward knew that the chief was frustrated; he was, too.

He watched as the older man stood up in frustration. "I have to get some air. If anything changes, you'll get me?"
Edward nodded, not taking his eyes off of Bella. Charlie left the room, walked to the elevator, and waited. He was tired. Tired of waiting for his daughter to wake up. Tired of sitting in this hospital. All he wanted was for her to wake up and be okay. When the ping of the elevator sounded and the doors slid open, he stepped inside and jammed the button for the ground level. Once he was outside, he walked to the courtyard and screamed in frustration.

Edward sat beside Bella's bed and gently picked up her hand, slowly raising it to his lips. He softly kissed her and then pressed his cheek to the back of her hand.

"Come on, Beautiful. It's time to open those pretty brown eyes," he nearly begged. He lowered their hands back to the bed and then followed with his head, pressing his forehead to her wrist. "I miss you, Bella."

The silence that descended was deafening. Edward was almost asleep when he felt Bella's hand twitch in his. He sat up abruptly and looked at the women still sleeping on the bed. He was certain that it was just a spasm, but then it happened again.

"That's it, Baby," he coaxed. He slowly reached for the intercom and pressed it.

"Yes?"

"Can you page Dr. George and have someone find Charlie Swan? I think Bella is waking up."
"Right away, Edward."

Edward looked back at the beauty in the bed. "Bella, can you hear me? We need you to wake up, Sweetheart." He watched as her lashes fluttered against her pale cheeks and did an inward cheer. "That's it, Bells."

He sat patiently and waited for her to wake up completely, but it seemed to be taking her forever.

Charlie came charging around the corner just as Dr. George was walking into the room.

"I hear our patient is trying to wake up."

Charlie pushed the doctor out of the way in his rush to get to his daughter. "Bells? Baby?" He picked up her hand. "Squeeze my hand if you can hear me."

He looked anxiously at her hand in his and waited. When nothing happened, he looked at Edward and then the doctor. "I thought she was waking up!"

"Calm down, Charlie. Bella is trying to fight her way to the surface. She'll wake up when she is ready," Dr. George assured the distraught man.

Edward wanted her to wake up just as much as Charlie did. He was tired of hiding the way he felt and wanted to shout from the rooftops that she was the love of his life. He tried to rein in his frustration and wait patiently, but it was the most
difficult thing he had ever done.

Charlie sank into the chair by her bed and began to speak. "Bella, we've been waiting a while to see those big brown eyes of yours. What do you say you open up and give us a smile? Come on, Baby girl. We love you."

As he finished speaking, Bella's hand twitched in Edward's again before she closed her fingers over his.

Dr. George smiled as he looked on. "Keep talking to her."

"Hey, Bells, everyone is waiting for you. Come back to us, Sweetheart." Edward watched as she squeezed her eyes tightly and then slowly began to blink them open.

Bella tried opening her eyes only to be met with a harsh, bright light. She immediately squeezed them closed again. She wanted to raise her hand to shield her eyes from the glare, but they were being held down by something heavy and warm.

Edward watched as Bella slowly blinked her eyes open and realized that the light was too bright. "Turn that light off, please."

Dr. George hit the switch and the three men watched as Bella opened her eyes and kept them open.

Bella took in her surroundings and couldn't figure out where she was. She looked around and saw her father sitting in a
chair with tears running down his cheeks, but she couldn't understand why he was crying. She turned her head in the other direction and saw Edward. She tried to smile, but something in her mouth prevented the action.

She yanked her hand up and felt the tube that was in her mouth and began to panic. She looked at Edward with wild eyes and whimpered.

"It's a breathing tube, Bella. You were in a car accident," Edward explained calmly.

Dr. George stepped in. "Bella, I'm Dr. George. If you're ready, I can remove that tube." She nodded her head slowly. "Okay, give me just a minute and I'll have that out of there."

The doctor left the room, but returned quickly with a nurse in tow. He donned a pair of gloves and then looked at Bella again. "When I tell you, I want you to take a deep breath and then blow like you would a balloon. Can you do that?" Bella nodded. "Okay, on three…"

The doctor counted, and on three, Bella blew and the tube was pulled out. She coughed as she took her first breaths on her own. When she lay back, she loosened the grip that she had on Edward's hand and looked at him.

"What happened?" she rasped.

AN: She's awake! Yay! See you next Friday.
Chapter 13

Explanations...

"What's the last thing you remember, Bells?" Charlie asked.

Bella turned her head to look at her father. He looked like he hadn't shaved or slept in a week. She licked her dry lips, but when she tried to open her mouth to speak, she still sounded like she had swallowed sand.

"Let me get you some water," Edward said before walking out of the room. He returned quickly and held a straw to her lips.

Bella sucked greedily at the cool liquid. When she had enough, she looked over at her dad. "I remember Edward calling and telling me how tired he was, and how I had
decided to drive up to Seattle to make sure he got enough rest and good food. I had been on the road for about an hour when a truck swerved into my lane. I jerked the wheel, but..." She shook her head. "I don't know."

Charlie nodded and told her what happened after that.

"What about my jeep?"

"I'm sorry, Honey, it was totalled," her dad told her.

Bella turned her head to look at Edward. "You look so tired. How long have you been here?"

"You've been here for six days. I got here while you were in surgery that first night."

"But, Edward, what about your residency? You can't afford to take that much time off!" Bella exclaimed.

Edward picked up her hand and held it in an attempt to calm her down. "I called my attending. It's fine, Bells. He gave me two weeks. I just have to be back at the hospital on Monday."

Bella relaxed back into her pillow but maintained her hold on his hand. "Okay."

Charlie felt like he was intruding on a private moment between the two and stood to leave. "Now that you're awake, Bells, I'm going to head home. I haven't slept in my own bed since you were brought in." He leaned down and kissed her forehead. "I'll see you in the morning. Edward, take care of her."
"Night, Chief."

"Bye, Dad. Get some rest."

Once they were alone, the two of them weren't sure what to say. Edward finally broke down. "I thought I had lost you, Bella." He lay his head on her bed and allowed his tears to flow again, this time in relief.

Bella lifted her hand and ran her fingers through his hair. "Edward, stop. I'm fine and I'm here. I'm not leaving you."

Edward looked up at her. "Bella, I…"

"Time for your medicine, Miss Swan." The nurse walked into the room, interrupting what he was going to say.

Bella watched as she administered something into her IV. "Now this is most likely going to make you sleepy, so don't fight it. You need to rest."

Bella nodded and watched as she left the room. "What were you going to say?"

Edward shook his head. "Nothing. You need to rest. It can wait."

She nodded and let her eyes drift closed, the medicine already taking effect. She knew that he would tell her whatever it was eventually.

Once she was fully asleep, Edward decided to go to his
parents' house and get some sleep. Now that he knew she was okay, the lack of decent sleep was hitting him. Rising from his chair, he leaned down and kissed her cheek.

"I'll be back tomorrow."

~~FHL~~

Bella woke up the next morning to the nurse checking her vitals. "What time is it?"

"It's seven. Your day nurse will be coming on in a few minutes."

Bella nodded. She was hoping that she would be moved out of ICU today, but it all depended on her doctor. "When is Dr. George coming in?"

"He usually does rounds at about nine." Bella watched as the nurse wrote something in her chart and then looked up. "Everything looks good. Have a nice day, and if you're still here tonight, I'll be seeing you."

Bella nodded and closed her eyes, trying to get a little more sleep. She must have succeeded, because when she opened her eyes next, Rose was beside her.

"Hey."

"Hey, Bells. You really scared us." Rose smiled at her friend.

"Sorry."
"Don't be. I'm just glad that you're okay."

"Tell me the truth, Rose. How were they?"

Rose looked down at her feet and then back up to her friend. "Your dad was a mess. He wasn't sure if you were going to make it. I think it got him thinking about your mom." She took a breath before she continued. "Edward…well…Bella, he didn't leave your side. If he did, it was only so that Charlie could be with you. When he wasn't here, he was in the chapel."

Bella was speechless. She couldn't believe that he had stayed with her the whole time. "Why would he do that, Rose? He's in the middle of his residency. I just…" she closed her eyes, "…I don't get it."

"He loves you, Bella," Rose stated matter of factly.

Bella's eyes shot open and she stared at her friend. "Rose, come on."

"Bella, I know that you don't see it, but he does. And I know that you feel the same way. I know that what happened with Alice and Jasper has made you afraid to ruin your friendship with Edward, but, Honey, that will never happen. You're lucky, Bells. Not everyone gets to fall in love with their best friend. Now all you have to do is tell him."

Bella felt the tears rolling down her cheeks. She lay back and thought about Rose's words. She did love Edward, but could
she really risk their friendship?

AN: Aww...I know! You wanted him to confess...sorry. If you're good, maybe I'll post again this evening...
Edward woke with the sun shining brightly on him. He groaned and rolled over, scrubbing a hand over his face. When he turned his head and looked at the clock, he shot up straight. The green numbers read 12:00.

"Fuck!"

He swung his legs over the side of his bed and ran into the adjoining bathroom. He flipped on the shower, stripped, and jumped under the spray, screaming when the frigid water hit him.

"Shit, that's cold." He adjusted the temp and then hurried through his shower, brushing his teeth as he washed his hair one handed. When he was done, he grabbed his electric razor and buzzed off the four day growth, leaving just the scruff.

He yanked on a pair of jeans, pulled on his socks, and slipped
his feet into his well worn Chucks. He then pulled a shirt over
his head and ran down the stairs, sliding to a halt in front of
his mother.

"Mom, why'd you let me sleep so late?"

Esme smiled, handing him a to-go cup of coffee and a bagel
sandwich. "Sweetie, you needed the rest and Bella isn't going
anywhere. Now take your coffee and eat your breakfast. Go
see your girl and tell her that I'll be there to see her later."

Edward nodded and bit into his bagel. "Fanks, Mom."

He walked out the door, got in his car, and quickly drove to
the hospital. When he stepped off the elevator onto Bella's
floor, he finally settled down. He walked down the corridor
and to her room. Before he reached it, however, the nurse
called his name.

"Edward!"

He turned and grimaced. "Hey, Lauren."

"They moved her. She's in room 205 down on the second
floor."

He nodded and turned back to the elevator bank. "Thanks."

~~FHL~~

Bella was giggling at Emmett. He had just taken a taste of the
broth that had been brought for her lunch.
"Bella, seriously! There is no way you can survive on that," Emmett grimaced.

"She's not allowed solid foods yet, Emmett." Edward smiled from the doorway.

Bella returned his smile and waved him over. "You look better. Did you sleep?"

"Yeah, I slept until noon. I feel better," he nodded. "You look good. What did Dr. George say?"

Bella leaned her head back on her pillow. "My scan from this morning came back clear, so the bleed is gone. No more swelling. Someone from ortho is coming up to set my arm and put it in a cast. So I got a new room and crappy food. All's well."

"Good. You still have to take it easy though, right?"

Bella nodded. "I'm still going to be here for another week. They want to make sure all of my motor functions are operating correctly. Then someone has to stay with me for a week after I get home. I'm not allowed to do anything for myself for a month. I can't come back to work for another month, and even then, I'll only be allowed back part time."

Edward sank into the chair by her side. "That stinks, but it's only temporary. You'll be back to full time before you know it."

Bella nodded but didn't say anything. The room was suddenly
filled with an awkward silence that even Emmett didn't know how to change. Instead, he looked at Rosalie and the couple silently agreed to leave.

"Okay, Bells, we're gonna take off," Emmett said. "You get some rest and we'll come see you tomorrow."

Rosalie leaned down and hugged her friend. "Love you, Sweetie."

"Love you guys, too." Bella smiled as the left. She sighed once the door was shut and looked at Edward. "I love having visitors, but it's exhausting."

Edward reached out and took her hand. "Rest, Bells. I'm not going anywhere."

She shook her head. She had so much that she needed to tell him. "I don't want to, Edward. There is so much…"

He shook his head. "We have plenty of time."

"That's just it, though. If this accident has taught me anything, it's that life is fragile. I've been scared for so long." She stopped and looked him in the eyes. "I don't want to be scared anymore."

"Scared of what?" Edward needed to know what she was thinking.

Bella shook her head. "So many things."
"Bella, we all have fears. Lord knows I do." Edward squeezed her hand.

"What are you afraid of, Edward?"

"I'm scared of never being a doctor, or if I become one, will I be any good? I'm afraid to lose someone that I care about—my friends, my family. Mostly, though, I am scared that I'll never get to be with the woman that I love."

Bella felt her heart clench. He had found someone; she was too late. She tried to stop the tears from falling, but one slipped out anyway.

Edward watched her reaction and suddenly had reason to hope. When he saw the tear slide down her face, he reached forward to wipe it away. "Baby, please don't cry."

Bella turned to him in shock at that endearment. "Edward?"

"Bella, I have been trying to figure out how to tell you this for years. It took almost losing you to open my eyes." Edward took a deep breath and looked deep into her eyes. "I'm in love you with you, Bella."

**AN:** Lets out a squeal! He finally said it! See you next time...
Chapter 15

Reunions...

"Do you need anything, Bella?"

"No, Esme, I'm fine." Bella settled onto the couch. She had been released from the hospital four days ago and all she wanted was to be left alone. She also really wanted to talk to Edward. They hadn't spoken but for a few minutes since his confession the week before when he had been called away.

"I'm in love with you, Bella."

Bella had opened her mouth to respond. However, before she could, Edward's phone rang.

He pulled it from his pocket and looked at her apologetically. "It's the hospital." He turned to take the call. "Hello?...Yes, Dr. Vilinni...But...Yes, I understand...I'll be there in three hours."
Bella watched as he ran a hand through his hair and turned back to her. "What's wrong?"

"They're short two residents and need me to come back immediately." He sighed and stood up. "I have to go now. I'm sorry, Bella, I…"

"Hey," Bella placed her hand on his arm. "Don't worry about it. Call me when you can."

Edward leaned down and pressed his forehead to hers. "I will. I love you, Bella." Now that he had said it, he didn't want to stop.

He kissed her cheek and then was gone before Bella could say anything.

"Bella?"

Bella shook her head and looked over at Esme. "Yes?"

Esme cocked her head to the side. "Are you alright, Sweetheart?"

She nodded her head. "I'm just tired."

"Okay, if you're sure." Bella nodded. "Alright, Honey. I'll be back in a couple of hours. You think about what you want for dinner."

Esme kissed Bella's forehead and then walked out the door. She had a meeting that she couldn't reschedule, or she
wouldn't be leaving Bella alone.

Bella sank into the cushions of her couch and turned a movie on. She missed Edward. He had been working long hours and only had enough time in between shifts to catch a few hours of sleep, grab a quick bite, or a say quick hello.

She still hadn't responded to his confession. She wanted to so badly, but it wasn't something that she wanted to tell him over the phone. He was supposed to be getting a few days off that weekend and had told Bella that he was coming down to stay with her. She couldn't wait.

~~FHL~~

Edward was exhausted and frustrated. He had been working on and off for the last nine days. He was desperately in need of a break, but he was even more desperate to see Bella. They'd had a two minute conversation five days ago, but nothing since due to his schedule.

"Dr. Cullen, you're needed in trauma one," one of the nurses told him as he walked past the check in desk.

"Thanks." He walked in that direction. When he stepped through the door, it was pandemonium.

"Get over here, Kid, and get your hands dirty!" Dr. Aro Vilinni ordered.

Edward knew then that it was going to be a long night. He
wasn't wrong, and when he finally left the hospital, he had been there for almost seventy-two hours. He walked into his apartment, threw himself on his bed fully clothed, and was out before his head hit the pillow.

~~FHL~~

Bella woke with a start to the shrill ringing of her phone. She grabbed it from the bedside table and answered without looking at the ID. "Hello?"

"Hey, Baby," a velvet voice greeted her.

"Hi," she sighed, grateful to hear his voice. "Where are you?"

"I'm about forty minutes from your apartment. I can't wait to see you, Bella. I miss you."

"I miss you, too, Edward." Bella smiled.

"See you soon, Love."

Bella hung up and rolled onto her back. He was coming, and Bella prayed that there would be nothing to prevent her from telling him how she felt.

She was just sitting up when her door was pushed open and Esme came in. "Morning. Are you ready for your shower?"

Bella nodded, and Esme walked over to help her into the bathroom. The one residual effect of the accident was that she still had trouble walking on her own, and with her arm in a
cast, crutches weren't option with the weakness on the other side of her body.

"Is Edward still coming this weekend?"

"Yeah, he just called and is about thirty minutes away by now."

"Then let's get you ready and I'll get out of your hair."

Bella smiled gratefully at her while Esme wrapped the plastic bag around her casted arm. Twenty minutes later, Bella was sitting on her bed while Esme ran a comb through her long tresses, careful to avoid the surgery site.

"Do you want the hair dryer?"

Bella shook her head. "No, the heat still bothers me a little."

"Okay, let's get you to the living room." Esme helped Bella out to the couch just as the doorbell rang.

Edward didn't wait for an invitation. He gently opened the door and found his mom and Bella in the living room. His heart leapt in his chest just at the sight of her. He walked farther into the room and smiled.

AN: Leave me your thoughts. I'll have another one up later today.
Esme stared at the couple who only had eyes for each other. She couldn't help the smile that graced her face, nor the feeling that she was intruding somehow.

"Hello, Sweetheart. Did you have a good drive?"

Edward glanced away from Bella for the first time and smiled at his mother. "Yeah, it was fine."

"Good. Well, let me show you where everything is and then I'll get out of your way." Esme led Edward into the kitchen and showed him where all of Bella's medications were. She knew that she didn't really need to give him instructions, but the mother in her couldn't stop. "She has a tendency to get tired in the afternoon, so..."

"Mom, I think I can handle it. Thanks for being here with her."
Edward kissed her cheek.

"Like I would be anywhere else. Bella is like my daughter. I love her, too."

"I know you do. Now go spend some time with Dad."

Esme didn't have to be told twice, and with a quick hug to Bella, she was out the door, leaving the pair of them alone for the first time.

Edward sauntered out of the kitchen and into the living room, where he sat down beside Bella. "How are you feeling?"

She shrugged, "It depends, I guess. Sometimes I feel great, like I can walk a mile...then other times my head is pounding so bad that I can't keep my eyes open."

He reached his hand out and ran it down her cheek. "I'm sorry, Bells. Trust me, it'll get better."

Bella opened her mouth to speak, but nothing came out. She so desperately wanted to tell him how she felt, but something was holding her back. She wasn't sure why, but part of her was afraid. Edward had bravely confessed and here she was, with the man that she loved sitting in front of her, and she couldn't speak.

Edward watched the myriad of emotions cross her face and needed to know what she was thinking. "What's wrong, Bells?"
Bella took a deep breath. "I have something that I need to tell you, but I'm so afraid of what will happen when I do."

"Bella, you can tell me anything." Edward reached out and took her hand in his.

She looked into his beautiful emerald eyes. She wasn't sure what she needed to see, but the love shining back at her gave her the courage that she needed.

"I have been miserable and lonely for so long. You see, when I was ten I met this guy and he's great, but he's also my best friend. I always thought that was all he was…until my senior year in high school. I was dating this one person and he betrayed me with someone I thought was my friend. That scared me. I didn't want to ruin this friendship by confessing my feelings and then ending up alone…again.

"But you see, by not telling him how I felt, I have essentially been alone anyway. Although I've had him in my life, I have kept him at arms length. If this accident has taught me anything, it's that life is too short to be afraid of the 'what if's.' I don't want to spend another minute of my life without him by my side."

Edward's eyes were glistening with emotion. He wanted so badly to pull her into his arms, but he needed to hear the words. "Bella…" he whispered.

Bella swallowed thickly. "I love you, Edward. I have for so long."
Edward didn't need to hear anymore. He gently pulled her to him and pressed his lips to hers. The kiss was slow and easy, and everything that a first kiss should be. He didn't rush it, knowing that they had the rest of their lives ahead of them. For now, Bella still needed to heal.

~FHL~

"Alice, I think we need to give Bella some more time. We don't need to go there right now." Jasper tried to reason with his girlfriend.

"Jasper, I can't take it anymore. I know it's selfish and that I should leave her alone, but I have left this alone for five years. I have to tell her, Jaz!"

"Alice, this isn't the right time!" he insisted.

Alice whirled on her boyfriend. "Jasper, because of my inconsideration, Bella and Edward hid from their feelings. I have to tell them both how sorry I am. We all need to move on from this. And don't think that you aren't just as guilty as I am, Jasper."

"I know my part in this, Alice. I also know when to let sleeping dogs lie."

Alice sighed. "Jasper...please!"

Shaking his head, knowing this was a bad idea, he put his boots on and followed Alice out to the car. During the forty
minute drive, neither one spoke. Jasper was irritated that she was so insistent, and Alice was irritated that he was so resistant.

When they finally reached Bella's apartment, Alice rushed from the vehicle and was already at the door before Jasper had even gotten out of the car.

Edward pulled open the door and was shocked to see the pair of them there. "What are you guys doing here?"

AN: Okay, before you lynch me for the Alice thing...next chapter will be the last time that their past situation is mentioned. The relationship will be more in the background after their talk. Please go easy on me. All four of them need closure on this. Until next time. IF you're NICE, I may put you out of your misery today and post again. If you really want another, let me know. :)
Chapter 17

Forgiveness...

"I need to talk to you and Bella," Alice said once Edward opened the door.

"Um..." Edward looked over his shoulder at a sleeping Bella. "She's asleep, Ali. Perhaps this can wait?"

Alice bit her lip. She knew that it could wait, but felt that the longer she waited, the worse the situation would be for everyone. "Edward, I really, really think that this needs to happen now."

Shaking his head, he opened the door fully and let them in. He just hoped that Bella wasn't pissed at him later. He led them into the living room and then leaned down to wake his love.

"Bella..." He gently shook her shoulder. "Baby, wake up. We have company."
"Hmm?" Bella stretched and yawned. "Who?"

"Ali and Jaz are here. She says she needs to talk to us."

Bella looked from Edward, to Alice and Jasper, and then slowly sat up. "Hey, guys. What's going on?"

Alice sat in the chair, wringing her hands in front of her. Now that she was here, she wasn't sure how to start the conversation. "Umm…"

Edward shook his head. He suddenly knew what this was all about and just wanted to get it over with.

"Bella, five years ago, I did something that betrayed your trust in me. At the time, all I could think about was how much in love I was. I never stopped to think about your feelings or what the repercussions of my actions would be. I hurt you and then had to sit back and watch while you stayed clear of the one man you really loved. I am so sorry, Bella."

"Alice, you…"

"Don't tell me that I have nothing wrong. I have! We all know that. Because of my actions, you and Edward wasted so many years not being together."

Bella stared at Alice, stunned. "Wow, you really think a lot of yourself, don't you? I mean, you are telling me that you believe your actions are the reason Edward and I haven't gotten together. Wow!"
Alice held her hands up, "No, Bella, I…"

"Look, Alice. I get that you're sorry, but your actions have nothing to do with decisions that Edward and I made."

Edward decided that he needed to interject. "Alice, Bella and I...it wasn't our time yet. We weren't ready to be together five years ago, and that had nothing to do with you. What happened didn't really help the matter, but it wasn't what kept us apart, either. Now that the time is right, we're ready to be together."

The four of them sat in silence for a while. Jasper was the one who spoke first.

"Look, I was a stupid teenager and made a mistake. It cost me and Alice your friendship, Bella. Now, before you say anything...I know that we've been friends, but it's nothing like it used to be. We..." he indicated Alice and himself, "just want to know how to get back to that point."

Bella looked at Edward, then back at the couple across from them. "I don't have the answer to that, Jasper. Trust is something that is earned, and you two broke that. Now, having said that, I will never forget the way that you both made me feel, but my life is different now. Jasper, I'm not going to fool myself and say that we were soul mates, because we weren't, but you know that you could have handled it differently. Alice, you've always had a selfish nature. It's part of who you are. You see something that you want and you go after it. Jasper wasn't the exception. But
being a woman and my friend, you should have thought first.

"With that said, this isn't high school anymore. We're all adults and have moved on. I may never forget what transpired, but I can forgive you. I think that's what you are asking me for. Will we ever be friends again like before?" Bella shrugged. "I can't say for sure. We'll have to build that trust again, and that's gonna take some time. I hope that you can understand that and not push, Alice."

Alice quickly agreed. If it meant Bella staying in her life, she would agree to just about anything.

AN: And closed. So, do you think that Alice will back off now? Some of you have said that Alice is your least favorite character in this story...mine too. I have to admit that 50 percent of the time, I don't like her. She is ALWAYS so pushy! I can honestly say I have only read maybe 3 or 4 fics where she wasn't. That's it for today folks. Until next week.
19. Ch 18: Distances

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: I apologize for the late posting. Yesterday was an EXTREMELY busy day. Here is your update. I may have another one up later today, but I make no promises. I have another busy day. Now, on with it...

Chapter 18

Distances...

Alice kept her word and didn't push. She allowed Bella to come to her. Bella, however, was busy. Between physical therapy and doctors appointments, she felt like she was never in her apartment. Plus, having a boyfriend who lived three hours away that she hadn't seen in a month was frustrating the hell out of her. She finally couldn't take it anymore and voiced her frustration to Edward.

"I haven't seen you in a month. When are you gonna get some time off?"

Edward sighed. "I don't know, Baby. I've only been having a day between shifts."
"I miss you," Bella whispered.

"Oh, Sweetheart. I miss you, too. It won't be like this forever, Bells."

Bella sighed. "I know, but we just got together and when our time finally came, you had to leave. I'd come see you, but I'm still not allowed to drive. Not to mention I don't have a car. I hate this, Edward!"

"What do you want me to do, Bella? What can I do?" Edward tried to keep his voice even, but Bella knew him well enough to know that he was getting frustrated.

"Nothing, Edward."

"Bella, please, I'm sorry. I know it sucks, but…"

Bella interrupted him. "It does suck. I'm not trying to make you feel bad or piss you off. I'm just having a bad day and I miss you."

"I miss you, too. I'll try to trade some shifts and get down there. I love you, Bella."

"I love you, too." She hung up and then lay on her couch. The distance between them was starting to get to her. Could they make it if they never saw each other?

~~FHL~~

"You have to figure out a way, Dr. Vilinni! I need out of here"
for a while." Edward pleaded with his supervisor.

"I understand that, Dr. Cullen, but what you're asking for can't be done." Aro Vilinni wasn't a cruel man. He really did understand what the young man needed. "I've had four residents drop out and two interns transfer to other facilities. I can't afford to give you the time off, Edward. Look at it this way, all of the extra hours you have been putting in are going to push you out of your ER rotation faster. I think by next week, we should be able to move you into the surgical rotation."

Edward gave a frustrated sigh, but then an idea struck him and he turned to Aro. "Is it possible for me to finish my residency in Forks?"

Aro cocked his head to the side. "You mean at Forks General?"

"Yeah."

Aro thought about it for a moment. It wouldn't be the first time that it had been done, it was just a little unorthodox. He would have to call the chief of staff and make arrangements. "Let me make some calls and see what I can do."

"Seriously?" Edward was suddenly excited at the prospect of maybe going home. "Are you sure, Dr. Vilinni? You just said that we were shorthanded."

"I know what I said. I'll work it out. Now get back to work
before I change my mind."

Edward sprinted from the office and ran back down to the ER. Aro chuckled as he watched him leave, and then picked up the phone and called his good friend.

"Hello, Carlisle."

"Aro, how are you?" Carlisle smiled into the phone.

"I'm well, although I have a predicament with a certain resident that we both know."

"Ah, my son, I presume."

Aro chuckled. "You're correct. He wants to transfer his residency to Forks General. Do you have the space?"

Carlisle smiled. "Funny you should ask, Aro. I was going to call you in the morning. Seems that two of the residents I have are looking to transfer to Seattle. Are you in need of more than just one?"

The two men discussed the transfer arrangements and then chatted for a while before they were both paged. They disconnected with promises to keep in touch.

Carlisle smiled as he walked out of his office. His son was coming home.

~~FHL~~
Edward could hardly contain his excitement. He was going home. He knew that it was going to take a few days to work out the logistics, so he didn't call Bella to tell her anything. He wanted to surprise her.

Bella sat in the doctor's office waiting for them to come in and remove her cast. She was also scheduled for a CT scan to make sure that there were no lasting effects from her accident. She still had another two weeks before she would be allowed to go back to work, but she would at least be free to resume normal activity and could stay by herself again. She was tired of being mothered, something she never thought would happen since she lost her mom.

"Isabella?"

She looked up and smiled before walking back to the exam room.

"Have a seat. Dr. Black will be right in."

"Thanks, Leah." Bella smiled at her friend.

She hadn't been in there but five minutes when Dr. Jacob Black walked in. "Bella, good to see you. I bet you're ready to get that cast off, right?"

"You have no idea." Bella smiled.

Jacob walked to the sink and washed his hands, then sat in front of her with a small saw. "Let's get this off and then I'll
send you down for an X-ray."

**AN:** There you have it. There are a few issues, but things are coming together. Until next time, leave me your thoughts.
Chapter 19

Homecoming...

Bella breathed a sigh of relief when Dr. Black had deemed her arm healed. He gave her a list of strengthening exercises and then sent her on her way. Her next stop was Dr. George's office.

"Good afternoon, Bella. Let's go ahead and send you down for a CT and then we'll go from there," Dr. George said upon entering the exam room his bitchy nurse had stuck Bella in.

"Sure." Bella smiled and then followed the same nurse out of the office and to the radiology department in the hospital.

Half an hour later, she walked back up to the office and sat in the same room, waiting for her results. She filled the time by texting with Rosalie.
Alice wants us all to have dinner tonight. What do you think?
-R

I don't know, Ro. I've been with doctors for the last two hours and I'm not done yet. -B

Okay. Let me know. Love you! -R

Love you! -B

"You aren't supposed to have your phone on in the office."

Bella raised her eyes. "I'm sorry, exactly what is your problem?"

The nurse, who Bella recognized from high school, sneered at her. "I have no problem."

Bella rolled her eyes and was happy to see the doctor enter the room. "Well, Bella, everything looks good. There are no signs of the bleed at all, so I think we're in the clear."

"Yay," was muttered under the breath of the nurse that remained in the room.

"Okay! That's enough!" Bella jumped from the table and pointed her finger at the small woman. "I don't know what your problem is, but this is not the place!"

"She's right, Miss Stanley. If you value your job, you'll leave your personal feelings for our patients outside the door. If you
can't do that then we need to discuss your employment here," Dr. George said calmly.

Nurse Stanley huffed but stood silently.

Bella took her seat and sat sedately listening to the doctor drone on about still needing to be careful. "Otherwise you're clear for all normal activity. Just be smart."

"Does that mean I can return to work?" Bella asked hopefully.

Alistair smiled. "If it were up to me, I would say yes, but it's not. Dr. Black will have to clear you for that."

Bella nodded.

"Any other questions?"

"No, I think we've covered everything. Thanks, Dr. George."

"You're very welcome. Have a good day, Bella."

~~FHL~~

Edward zipped his final suitcase and carried it out to his car. He then ran back into his apartment to take one quick look around, making sure he wasn't forgetting anything. He would be back in a few weeks to get everything else, but he wanted to leave now. He only hoped that Bella would let him stay with her.

With Bella in his thoughts, he settled into his car and started
Bella was sitting on her couch telling Charlie about her appointments. He was pleased that she was given the all clear.

"I just wish I could go back to work, Dad. I'm going stir crazy."

"I'm sorry, Bells. Remember that your arm is gonna be a little weak for a while." Bella heard the static of his scanner echo over the line. "I have to go, Honey. I'll call you in a couple days."

"Okay, Dad. Love you and be safe."

"Always am. Love you, too, Kid."

After they hung up, Bella leaned back and tried to call Edward again. It kept going straight to voicemail and she was getting irritated. She knew that he was off today because she had already called the hospital. She thought about calling Carlisle and Esme, but they had been apart long enough with as much as Esme had been helping her. She didn't know who else to call to ask.

She must have fallen asleep because a loud banging on her front door startled her, making her feel out of sorts. She shook her head to clear out the fog and got up to open the door.

She swung it open but wasn't prepared for who was on the
"Hey, Baby. I'm home!" Edward smiled at her.

"What do you mean, you're home?" Bella wanted to know as she stepped aside for him to come in.

"I mean that I couldn't stand not being where you are, so I will be finishing my residency at Forks General."

The tears began to fill her eyes. "Really?"

Edward stepped forward and grabbed her around the waist. "Yes, Baby. I'm home."

Bella flung herself into his chest and cried tears of happiness while Edward held her close and kissed her hair.

When she finally calmed, she looked up at him. "Where are you gonna stay?"

Edward shrugged and met her eyes. "I was kinda hoping you would want a roommate."

**AN: And he's home. Only a few more chapters to go. Till next time!**
21. Ch 20: Adjustments

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: SURPRISE! Special update today. This story is completely written and beta'd, so I will have the last chapters by Saturday. Then it will be on to my new story...I'm thinking either Mobward or Boxerward...what would you rather read?

Chapter 20

Adjustments...

Bella and Edward had to adjust to the changes that they were making. Her to living with a man, him to having his father as his boss. It was something that was taking them a little bit of time.

"Dammit, Edward!" Bella snarled as she picked up his wet towel from the bathroom floor—again.

Had he been there, she would have thrown it at him and growled in his face. Unfortunately—or fortunately, depending on how you looked at it—he was already at the hospital.

Edward hated that Bella's hair was always in his pockets. He
wondered how she wasn't bald with the way it fell out. It was also annoying how she had to tighten the sheets every night before they climbed into bed. Like they weren't going to get messed up anyway.

But he loved holding her close, smelling her hair as it spread out around them, listening to her gentle breaths, and her sleep talking. He was fascinated every time, wondering what was going to come out of her mouth.

All in all they had settled in. The only thing that was missing was the intimacy. While they shared a bed every night, they hadn't made love. Bella was growing frustrated and was sitting in the living room with all the lights off when Edward got home that night.

"Babe? What's going on?" Edward asked as he approached her.

"We need to talk."

Those four words together were never a good thing, so Edward was immediately on alert.

"Okay…" He sank into a chair near where she was sitting and waited. What he was waiting for he didn't know.

Bella turned to look at him. "Do you love me?"

"What?" Edward choked out.

"Do. You. Love. Me?" she repeated.
"Of course I do, Bella! What kind of question is that?"

"An honest one." Bella held up her hand when he would have interrupted her. "Just let me get this out." She took a breath and continued. "Since you've moved in, I can count on one hand the number of times you've kissed me. I've only heard you tell me you love me twice. Every night we share a bed, yet you don't touch me. So, that has me wondering. I know that you're tired and that the hospital takes a lot out of you. I'm just wondering where I fit. Am I just a roommate? Am I your girlfriend? Tell me what's going on, please."

Edward sighed. "I'm sorry, Baby. I know you probably think that I don't want you, but that is the furthest thing from the truth, trust me. You are not just a roommate to me, Bella. You are my girlfriend, but you're also so much more. You're my best friend, my love, my life, and my soul mate. I want everything with you. I want to touch you and hear you cry out my name in pleasure. I want to lose myself inside you and feel you all around me. When we do make love, I don't want it to be rushed or something that we feel we need to do to prove how much we love each other. I want to take the time to savor you.

"Bella, I haven't touched you because I know that once I do, I am gonna want to all the time. I just didn't want to scare you with how much I crave you. Because that's what it is—a craving."

Bella just stared at him, but apparently he wasn't done.
"Bella, I don't want our first time to be something that happens in between one of our shifts. I want to woo you. I want to make you feel special before, during, and after. Not only that, but I don't want to disappoint you."

Now she had to speak. "Oh, Edward." She moved so that she was kneeling in front of him and placed her hands on his knees. "You could never disappoint me. I love you. I know that when we do finally make love, it will be wonderful. But, Sweetie, I don't need all of the pomp and circumstance. I just need you." Bella decided to break the tension now that she knew where his head was. "I also need you to start picking up your damn towel in the morning."

Edward chuckled. "Sorry, Baby."

He leaned down and pressed his lips to hers. What he meant as a chaste kiss, quickly became more. He felt her tongue as it swept out along his bottom lip. He opened for her with a groan. When she touched his tongue with hers, he almost lost it. He gathered her quickly in his arms and held her tightly to his chest.

Bella moaned at the feel of chest pressed to hers and felt her nipples tighten. She wanted to rip her shirt over her head and remove his, as well, so that she could feel his skin against hers, but she didn't want to rush him. If Edward wanted to be in control of their sex life, then she was going to let him.

They broke apart, both panting for air but staring into each other's eyes.
"I love you, Bells."

"I love you, too."

AN: Leave me your thoughts...
22. Ch 21: Surprises

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: A lot of you have asked about Jessica, let's find out what her problem is. Also, I have a poll up on my profile...go vote for what story you want to see from me next.

Chapter 21

Surprises...

Bella breathed a sigh of relief when she was finally released to go back to work. Things with Edward had definitely improved since their talk. He made sure that he always told Bella how he felt—several times a day. He kissed her goodbye whenever he left her and again hello whenever he was back. They hadn't taken that next step, but Edward had a plan for that. First, he had to get rid of the leach that had suddenly latched onto him.

"For the last time, Stanley, I am with Bella and I love her. You need to back off of me or I will be forced to go to the board."

Jessica Stanley had been in love with Edward Cullen since they were in junior high. He had never noticed her, though. His
eyes had always been on Bella, but she was too stupid to do anything about it. Now that he was here, Jessica wasn't about to let this opportunity pass her by. Bella didn't deserve this beautiful man.

"Come on, Eddie. I can make it worth your while," she purred.

Edward barely held in the grimace. He was getting tired of her behavior. "Your behavior is inappropriate and I have had enough. I've asked you repeatedly to stay away from me. Now you leave me with no choice…"

Jessica watched as Edward reached for the phone that was sitting on the nurse's desk. In an act of desperation, she forced him to face her. Once she had his attention, she planted her mouth firmly to his. She took no notice that he was still as a statue and forced her tongue between his lips.

Bella rounded the corner and found her boyfriend in an embrace with that bitchy Nurse Stanley from Dr. George's office. "What the hell!?"

Edward wrenched his mouth from Jessica's. "Bella, baby, this isn't what…"

Bella raised her hand, effectively cutting him off. "So this is the reason you were such a bitch to me at the office. I should have known."

"You don't deserve him, Swan," Jessica sneered. "A man like Edward needs a real woman. I can fulfill his needs like he has
never known."

Behind Bella, she heard hysterical laughter. Carlisle and Alistair were holding onto each other and laughing.

Bella walked forward and was immediately in Jessica's face. "He doesn't want you! He has made that perfectly clear on several occasions. I know all about your attempts to get at him. Trust me when I tell you we laugh our asses off over dinner." She turned to Edward and wrapped her arms around his waist. "Now, I believe that you have some explaining to do to the board, seeing as two of its members witnessed your pathetic attempt at sexual harassment."

Carlisle and Alistair had sobered and were looking at Jessica with contempt.

"Nurse Stanley, I think you should join us," Alistair insisted.

Jessica sent Bella one last glare before following the two administrators to meet her fate.

~~FHL~~

Edward stood under the hot spray and let his day wash down the drain. He was exhausted both mentally and physically. He wanted to stay under the water forever, but he had so much to get done before Bella got home. Tonight was his night and he wanted everything to be perfect.

He shut the water off and wrapped a towel around his waist.
Wiping the water from the mirror, he quickly shaved and tried to tame his wild hair. He finally gave up and walked into their room, where he threw on a pair of jeans and a green button down. As he walked into the kitchen, he rolled the sleeves up to his elbows.

He preheated the oven while pulling out everything he would need for a fresh salad. Once the salad was prepared, he covered it, put the bowl in the fridge, and collected the pre-made lasagna his mother had made for them. After putting it in the oven, he set the timer.

He rubbed his hands together and walked into the dining room. He set the table, adding two red candles that would be lit just before Bella came in. Once he was satisfied, he re-entered their bedroom, quickly stripped the bed, and put on fresh linens. He then set candles all around the room.

He knew that Bella said that she didn't need all of the pomp and circumstance, but he wanted her to have it.

Ten minutes before she was due home, he had the lasagna cooling, the bread heating, and a warm bath running. When Bella opened the door five minutes early, she was shocked at what she saw.

"Edward?" she asked as she watched him light the last candle.

"Hey, Baby." He walked over to her, took her coat, and hung it up. He then leaned down and pressed his lips to hers.
they broke apart, she was breathless.

"What is all this?"

"This..." Edward swept his hand around the room, "...is all for you, Sweetheart."

Bella looked at him, her eyes shining with emotion. "Oh, Edward."

There were rose petals strung across the room forming a path toward the bathroom. Edward gently grasped her hand and led her in that direction. "I want you to go in there and relax. I will come get you when dinner is ready. He leaned down and kissed her nose. "I love you, Bells."

He was gone before she could respond, so she slipped into the bathroom. The sight that greeted her brought tears to her eyes. Not wanting to waste a minute, she quickly stripped and then slid into the warm water, closing her eyes and letting herself drift.

AN: I wonder what he's up to? Last chapter for the day, see you Friday!
Proposals…

Edward stood in the doorway and couldn't take his eyes off of his love. She looked so relaxed as she soaked in the tub. He felt himself growing hard as he watched her, but needed to get things under control before he lost control.

"Baby…" He smiled as he knelt down next to the tub.

"Mmm…hi." Bella smiled as she opened her eyes.

"Hi. Hungry?"

She nodded. She was hungry, but not so much for food. However, this was Edward's dance and she was going to let him lead.

"I hung your robe up on the door. You can wear that, or if you prefer, I can get you some clothes. I would ask that you don't
"Okay." Bella rose and allowed Edward to place a towel around her. He leaned down, gave her a searing kiss that left her breathless, and then he was gone.

Bella dried her body before placing the red satin robe around her. She tied the sash and then followed the smell of tomatoes and garlic. When she entered the dining room, she saw Edward pouring two glasses of Merlot.

"So, what's the occasion, if you don't mind me asking?" she questioned as she took the proffered glass of wine.

"Do I need a reason to pamper you?" Edward asked as he pulled out her chair.

Bella smiled. "No. I was merely curious."

She sat down and waited for Edward to join her, but he didn't. Instead, he walked out of the kitchen, his arms laden with steaming dishes. When Bella would have risen to help him, he stopped her.

"You sit, I've got this."

After everything was on the table, Edward finally sat across from her. He raised his wine glass. "To us."

Bella clinked her glass against his and took a sip. Conversation flowed between the couple as they dined. Edward should have been nervous for what he was planning,
but he wasn't. He was confident in their love and knew that everything would be fine.

After they were both full, Edward led Bella into the living room, where soft piano strains could be heard from invisible speakers. "Edward, what?"

"Stay here for a minute. I'll be right back." He rushed from the room and into theirs, closing the door with a click.

When he was alone, Edward took a deep breath. "Get it together, Cullen. You can do this." He pulled the book of matches from his pocket and lit every candle in the room. Once he was satisfied with the ambiance, he cracked the door and called for Bella.

"Sweetheart, can you come here please?"

Bella stood from the couch and walked to their bedroom. When she pushed open the door, the sight that greeted her caused her eyes to fill and the tears to spill. She brought her hand to her mouth to muffle her cry. "Oh, Edward."

He was poised by their bed, on one knee. "Bella, I have loved you for half of my life. You have been my best friend and the one constant in my life. When I thought that I had lost you, I realized that life is too short to waste. I want to share everything with you, have a family with you, and grow old with you. Having you by my side is what completes me. Isabella Swan, will you do me the honor of becoming my wife? Will you marry me?"
Overcome with emotion, Bella could only nod. Edward was up off of his knee and swept her up in his arms. He rained kisses all over her face before his lips met hers. He gently placed her back on her feet and pulled back.

"Would you like to see your ring?"

Bella nodded and watched as he opened the small black box. Nestled inside in the satin was a beautiful, round cut diamond in a platinum setting.

"Edward, it's beautiful. I love it," she whispered as he slid it onto her finger. "I love you."

Edward cupped her cheeks in his hands. "I love you, Bella, so much."

This time, when his lips met hers, it was with the passion that they had both been keeping at bay. Their love flowed freely and they didn't try to rein their feelings in.

Their tongues danced that familiar dance as Edward slowly led Bella to the bed. Her robe had slipped down one shoulder and had partially exposed her breast. As Edward tore his mouth from hers, he left a fiery trail down the column of her neck.

Bella's hands were on his chest and she deftly began to unbutton his shirt, all the while exposing more of her neck for his lips and teeth.
Once she had divested him of his shirt, the pair fell onto the bed. Edward reached for the sash on her robe, loosening the tie and separating the sides, exposing her naked form to his eyes.

"Beautiful," he whispered as he leaned down and captured her nipple in his lips.

"Oh…" Bella sighed as she reached up to tangle her hands in his hair, pressing him closer to her.

Edward's tongue snaked out and flicked across her hard peak before he pulled it between his teeth and gave it a light nibble. He repeated the action with his tongue and teeth until Bella was a writhing mess below him.

"Edward, please," Bella moaned.

He moved from his place at her side and quickly removed the rest of his clothing. His shaft was rock hard and weeping in anticipation. He wanted nothing more than to bury himself to the hilt inside her, but needed this to be about her first. He took a deep breath to center himself before he rejoined her on the bed.

AN: Lemon up next...see you in an hour or so!
Chapter 23

Something right…

Bella watched him as he lay along side her. She couldn't help the shudder that ran through her at the thought that they were finally going to make love.

Reaching out to him, she pulled him to her and fused her mouth to his. When he swept his tongue along her bottom lip, she opened for him willingly. Their tongues began that familiar dance once more before Edward left her mouth and trailed his lips down the column of her neck and farther to her breasts. He stopped and gave each some attention before he continued on his journey down her body.

"Edward…" It came out as a breathless sigh.

"What do you need, Baby?" he asked as he looked up at her while slipping his tongue into her navel.

"You, Edward, please!" Bella moaned when she felt his breath...
in her most sensitive area.

Pressing his hands to her thighs, he opened her legs and ran his nose over her mound. He could smell her arousal and feel the moisture on her inner thighs. He ran two fingers through her slick folds, stopping only when he reached her clit. Lowering his head, he gently flicked the hard nub with his tongue, causing Bella to arc off the bed.

"Mmm, Baby, you smell so good." He groaned before taking a long lick through her folds.

Bella moaned as Edward continued his torture. He soon slid a long finger inside her and found that soft place that he knew would send her over the edge. He added a second finger, trying to prepare her for his invasion. She was so tight and warm, he knew he wouldn't last long.

Edward sucked her nub into his mouth as his fingers pumped in and out of her body. He could tell by the way she was moaning that she was close. He backed off and looked up at her. "Come for me, Baby." He blew lightly on her sensitive flesh, sending her careening over the edge.

"Edward!" Bella cried as she rode out the waves of her orgasm.

Edward leaned away from her, bringing his fingers to his mouth and cleaning off her juices. "Mmm, delicious."

"Edward, I need you. Please!"
He crawled up her body and pressed his lips to hers. Bella could taste herself on his tongue and felt herself grow wetter. Edward slowly lowered himself between her legs and lined his hard cock up with her entrance.

"Are you ready for me, Baby?"

Bella nodded. "I've always been ready. Please, Edward! I need to feel you inside me."

Not needing anymore encouragement, he slowly pushed his way inside her heat. They both moaned once he was fully inside.

Bella had only ever been with Liam, and he was nothing compared to Edward.

Edward stilled himself and waited for the signal that Bella was ready for him to move. When she lifted her hips, he pulled out and the pushed back in. He made love to her in long, languid strokes.

"Oh, Bella you feel so good!"

"Harder, Edward, please!"

Not wanting to disappoint, he thrust harder and faster into her, both of them moaning. Soon, the room was filled with nothing but the sounds of their heavy breathing and flesh on flesh. They were both drenched in sweat as Bella's orgasm crept closer.
"Oh, God! So close, don't stop!" she cried, digging her nails into his back and wrapping her legs around his waist.

Edward groaned at the new angle. "Fuck, Bella! I need you come, Baby!"

His strokes became faster and harder as they both chased that pleasure they had denied each other.

"Oh…Edward…I'm…coming!"

Edward felt Bella's walls constrict around him. As she rode out her orgasm, he reached between them and pinched her clit, sending her careening into yet another release before she had even stopped convulsing.

"Fuck!" Edward shouted as he thrust twice more and then emptied himself into her. Keeping most of his weight on his arms, he fell on her.

They lay catching their breaths, still connected. Bella was running her hands up and down Edward's back in a soothing manner.

Finally, Edward lifted his head and kissed her already swollen lips. He then rolled off her, pulling out in the process. Bella whimpered at the loss. He wrapped her in his arms and pulled her to his side.

"I love you, so much, Bella," he whispered into her hair.

"I love you, too, Edward."
They lay silently for a while. When Edward heard her breathing even out, he slowly disentangled himself from her and got up to distinguish all of the candles. Once everything was out, he gently pulled back the comforter and climbed back in bed with his fiancée. He smiled at the thought as he drifted to sleep.

AN: Only one more chapter, then the epilogue. Both will be posted on Saturday. Until then, leave me your thoughts and if you haven't already, vote for the next story. Poll closes tomorrow.
Chapter 24

Plans and Vows…

Bella was sitting in the hospital cafeteria on her lunch break when Rosalie came strolling in. She immediately spotted her friend and made a beeline for where she was seated.

"Hey, Bells," she smiled as she took a seat.

Bella looked up from her book. "Hey. What are you doing here?"

Rose shrugged. "I had an appointment and thought I would come see you when I was done."

Bella was immediately on alert. "What kind of appointment?" Rosalie smirked but didn't answer. Bella just stared at her friend before it dawned on her. Her hands immediately flew to her mouth. "Really!?"
Rose nodded and then glanced at Bella's left hand. "It looks like I'm not the only one with news."

Bella blushed. "He proposed last night."

Rose squealed. "I'm so happy for you, Bells. So when?"

Bella thought for a minute. "When are you due?"

Rosalie smirked. "Around Thanksgiving."

"Then I guess I'm going to be a June bride."

"Bella! That's in like three months!"

"I know." Bella waved her hand away. "Trust me, Rose, Esme can pull anything together in that time frame. And besides, we don't want a big wedding."

"You really think that it can be done?" Rose wondered.

"I have every confidence that between Esme and my matron of honor, that my wedding will be beautiful."

Rose just looked at her friend. "You want me?"

"Of course, Mrs. Cullen. You're gonna be my sister and you're my best friend. Who else would I want to stand up with me?"

Rose shrugged. "I thought maybe, Alice…"

Bella smiled sadly. "She's going to be invited, Rose, but Alice
won't be in my wedding. Edward and I have already decided that it will be you and Emmett."

"Okay…so let's get to planning."

~~FHL~~

Before they even knew it, June was upon them and the morning of their wedding had arrived. Bella rolled over in the bed that she shared with Edward, hoping that he had snuck out of his parents' house and had joined her. His side of the bed was cold, so she knew that he had been unable.

"Rise and shine!" Rose sang as she walked into Bella's room.

She rolled over and stared at her friend. "Hey."

"How're you doing, Sweetie?"

Bella sat up and smiled, hugging her knees to her chest. "I'm great. Today I get to marry my best friend. I've never been so happy, Rose."

Rose hugged her friend. "I'm so happy for you, Bellsy."

"Thanks. How's the bean?"

Rosalie placed a hand on her small bump. "Well, he's no longer making me sick, so that's a plus." They smiled at each other before Rose got up. "Come on, so much to do, so little time. Get in the shower. I'll get you some breakfast."
Bella hopped up and sprinted to the shower, ready to get to her wedding and pledge her heart to Edward's forever.

Edward stepped out of the shower and was wrapping a towel around his waist just as Emmett walked in his room with a cup of coffee.

"Hey, thanks, Bro. I need this."

Emmett just nodded. "Rose called. Bella is up and at 'em and can't wait to get here."

Edward smiled. He couldn't wait either. "It's been a long time coming, hasn't it?"

Emmett shrugged. "You guys were always meant to be together. When the time was right, you knew it. Just like me and Rose."

Edward nodded. "I can't wait to make her my wife, Em. I love her."

"I know you do, Ed." Emmett clapped his brother on the shoulder before moving to go out the door. "It only gets better."

~~FHL~~

Just as the sun hit the horizon in its descent from the sky, the harpist began to play. Edward turned to look at the walkway and saw a vision in white, holding tightly to her father's arm.
Bella smiled when she captured his eyes. He looked gorgeous in his gray slacks and white button down. They had opted for simple attire. Emmett was dressed similarly, and Rose wore a simple, off the shoulder, pink chiffon dress. It perfectly matched the pink roses that were in Bella's bouquet.

Bella walked toward her future on her father's arm. She smiled at all of those that were seated as she walked past them. Esme already had tears on her cheeks and Charlie was barely keeping his at bay.

When they finally reached the end of the aisle, Charlie gently placed his daughter's hand into the one of the man who was taking her from him.

"Take care of my girl, Edward." His voice broke.

"I will, Chief."

Charlie kissed his daughter and then turned to take his seat and watch as Bella gave her heart and soul away.

"Dearly Beloved…" Pastor Weber started.

Bella hardly heard a word. She was staring deeply into the eyes of her love. She knew that she spoke the words that she had rehearsed, and the Edward spoke as well, but all she saw was the love shining at her through his emerald orbs.

"By the power vested in me by the State of Washington, I pronounce that they are husband and wife. Edward, you may
kiss your bride."

Edward smiled and gently grasped Bella's face in his hands. "I love you, Mrs. Cullen."

"I love you, Dr. Cullen."

They smiled as their lips met. The future was bright for them and they knew that they would survive whatever life threw their way. They could face anything together with a little faith, hope, and love.

AN: There you have it. Only the epi left. Leave me your thoughts. Remember, poll closes after the epi posts. Cast your votes now. See you in a few hours.
26. Epilogue

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot.

AN: Here it is. Keep an eye out for my new story. Should start posting in a few weeks. I am closing the poll, so I hope you got to vote for what you wanted.

Epilogue

Three years later…

She watched from the top of the hill as the two women played with their children. She was happy that they were happy, even if she was jealous. Her life hadn't turned out at all the way she had planned when she was ten.

She was going to be friends with Rose and Bella forever, and they were all going to marry their sweethearts. At least the other two women had gotten to. Perhaps she was getting her just desserts for how she had behaved in high school.

If someone would have told her that Jasper would leave her, she would have laughed at them. Not now. She had asked him four months prior why he hadn't proposed and why they didn't have a family. He had looked her in the eye and told her that she wasn't who he thought she was and that he had met
someone else. He had packed up his stuff and walked out on her. Now she was left floundering.

Bella felt eyes on her and looked up, spotting Alice standing on the hill. She lifted her hand to shield her eyes, just to make sure that it was her.

"What are you looking at, Bella?"

She pointed. "Alice."

Rose sniffed and rubbed a hand on her growing belly. "Hmm. I wonder what she is doing."

Bella shrugged. "I'm gonna go talk to her. Will you watch Sadie for me?"

"Sure." Rose smiled as Bella made her way up the hill to where Alice was standing.

"Ali? What are you doing?"

Alice shrugged. "Just watching. You have a beautiful little girl, Bella."

Bella watched her daughter run on her chubby little legs after Rose and Emmett's two year old son, Matthew. "She just learned to walk, so for her to be running is a feat."

Sadie was a surprise that arrived nine months after Edward and Bella were married. She was the apple of her daddy's eye and he was already trying to convince Bella to have
"How's everyone?"

Bella looked back at Alice. "You could come visit, Alice."

She shook her head. "Jasper and Kate are living here now. I actually came to say goodbye."

"What? Where are you going?" Bella wanted to know.

"I'm not sure. With mom gone and Jasper leaving, there's really nothing keeping me here. I'll drop you a line when I get settled." Alice turned back to her. "You take care of that baby and be happy, Bella. That's all I ever wanted for you."

Alice leaned in and gave Bella an awkward hug. Their friendship never did get repaired. Through no fault of Bella's, she had tried to reach out, but Alice was standoffish. When she pulled back, Bella noticed the tears on Alice's face.

"Take care, Bells." Alice's voice broke as she turned, ran to her car, climbed in, and drove away.

"Goodbye, Alice," Bella whispered to the wind. She then walked back down the hill and watched as her daughter toddled her way over to her.

"Mama!"

Bella scooped her baby girl up and smiled as she squealed in happiness.
"What was that all about?" Rose wanted to know as they were making dinner later that evening and waiting for the boys to get home.

"She was saying goodbye. She left town."

"Who left town?" Edward asked as he came into the kitchen, Emmett and Jasper on his heals.

"Alice." Bella met Jasper's eyes. "She came by the park while we had the kids there. She said goodbye."

Edward turned to look at his friend. "You okay?"

Jasper nodded. "Yeah, we're over and have been for a while. I'm happy now. She'll find her way."

They all nodded, but then went back to their lives. Alice would live hers as she saw fit. They couldn't do anything about that. They were all happy now and in good places.

As she lay in bed that night, Edward's arms wrapped around her, she came to a decision.

"I'm ready."

"Ready for what, Baby?" Edward leaned in and kissed her shoulder.

Bella rolled over and smiled at him while placing her hand on his chest over his heart. "I'm ready for you to give me another baby."
Edward's smile lit the room, and as they came together, they forgot all about everything and everyone but themselves.

the end