

# *Glass*

momma2fan

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Three women develop a close bond despite having never met face to face. When tragedy strikes one of them, they band together to help her heal. A story about friendship, loss, and love. AH, Canon characters. M for language and future lemons.

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# **Glass**

by  
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# 1. Chapter 1

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

**Summary:** Three women develop a close bond despite having never met face to face. When tragedy strikes one of them, they band together to help her heal. A story about friendship, loss, and love.

**AN:** Told mostly in BPOV, but will have some R and A thrown in. Enjoy!

**BSwan:** I have no idea; he said that he has a business dinner this evening. Something about an important client.

**RHale:** Then I'm sure that's where he is. Try not to think what I know you're thinking.

**ACullen:** Yeah, calm down, B. I'm sure Rose is right.

**BSwan:** Ok...thanks guys. I don't know what I would do without you! 3

I logged off my computer twenty minutes later and went to clean up the dinner that I had made for my fiancé and me. He had stood me up once again. I wanted to believe that he was

where he said he was, but he was making it really hard.

After everything was cleaned up, I turned out the lights and then settled on the couch to watch a movie. I must have fallen asleep, because I woke when I felt my body lifted from the cushions.

"Gar?"

"Yeah, Baby. Go back to sleep. I'm home."

I smiled, sighed and snuggled back into his embrace.

"Mmm, love you." I felt his lips on my forehead before I completely succumbed to the darkness of sleep.

~G~l~a~s~s~

**RHale:** Good morning, beautiful!

**BSwan:** Morning gorgeous!

I smiled as I read our normal morning greeting. Keeping our chat open, I set about checking my email and then getting into the program that I needed to start my editing. I was very blessed to be working for a publishing house that allowed me to work from home.

I had just gotten all of my screens set up when a steaming mug of coffee was placed beside me. I looked up and smiled at Garrett. "Thanks, Babe."

"No problem. I'll see you this evening. I don't have anything scheduled, so why don't we go to dinner and a movie?"

I looked up at him, shock apparent on my face. "Really?"

"Jesus, Bella, you act like we never do anything together." Garrett's voice was laced with irritation.

"Garrett, we haven't gone anywhere together in over a month. You've canceled on me every time we have plans."

"I have?"

"Yes, but I would love to go out this evening. Just call me when you're on your way."

"I'm sorry, Baby. This merger is killing me. I promise that tonight, I am all yours." Garrett leaned down and pressed his lips to mine. "I love you!" he called as he walked out the door.

"I love you, too!" I shouted after him.

I looked up at my screen and saw that Rose had messaged me. I still couldn't believe that I had found friends like her and Alice. We had never met face to face, and yet the three of us shared a bond that some might find hard to understand. We had only been as close as we are for a few months, but it felt much longer than that since we were alike in so many ways.

**RHale:** What are you doing? Getting ready to work?

**BSwan:** Sorry, Garrett was leaving. Yeah, I'm getting started.



**RHale:** Don't worry about it. Get to work, I'm gonna take a shower and get some laundry done. My only day off, you know?

**BSwan:** Okay, I'll be here.

I always kept my browser open while I did other things. Every once in a while, one of us would message the other and Alice would pop in. She worked in an actual shop, though, so we had to wait until she was done most evenings.

I had really gotten in the groove of the manuscript I was working on when my cell buzzed with a text.

*I have been messaging you! Where are you? ~R*

I laughed and then texted her back.

*Sorry, working! Everything okay? ~B*

*Yes, just making sure you were still breathing. LOL. ~R*

*LOL. I am! ~B*

I put my phone down and got back to work. I turned the volume up on my computer so that I could hear the ping when Rose messaged me. It wasn't long before I heard it.

**RHale:** Lauren emailed me again!

**BSwan:** \*groan\* What did she want this time?

We talked and laughed a little more about Lauren and what all was going on until I looked at the time and panicked.

**BSwan:** I have to go. Garrett gets off soon and he promised me a night out.

**RHale:** Ooh, okay. Talk to later. Have fun! Love you! 3

**BSwan:** I will. Love you, too! 3

I shut down all my programs and sprinted down the hall and straight to the shower. I washed, shaved, and buffed my body smooth. I had just put the finishing touches on my make-up and slipped into my dress when I heard the doorbell.

"Garrett! You live here; you don't have to ring the bell!" I yelled as I made my way to the front door. I swung it open and wasn't met by my smiling fiancé. Instead, a tall man in a blue uniform greeted me.

"Miss Swan?"

**AN:** So I know that I promised nothing until January, but this one hit me and I can't sit on it. I have no planned update schedule, so you'll just have to bear with me through the holidays. Thanks for giving this a chance. Special thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally thanks for taking this journey with me again!



## 2. Chapter 2

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

**AN:** Thanks to those of you who have reviewed. I have no set update schedule. When I get a chapter up, you'll know if you have me on alert. Thanks to my beta, toocute24. I know that the chapters are short, but it's possible that they will get longer.

### RPOV

**RHale:** Ali, have you talked to Bella?

**ACullen:** No, why?

**RHale:** She's not answering when I text or call. I'm getting worried.

**ACullen:** Maybe she and Garrett went out of town. They are planning a wedding after all, and things have been stressful.

**RHale:** Maybe...she would have told me, though. We talk every day, Ali!

**ACullen:** Okay, keep trying, and if you haven't heard from her

by tomorrow let me know. Actually, let me know either way.

**RHale:** I will. 3

**ACullen:** 3

"What are you doing, Rose?"

My brother, Jasper, walked around the corner of the kitchen, a bottle of Pepsi in his hand.

"I was talking to Alice to see if she had heard from Bella." I turned to look at him.

"Which one is Bella?" Jasper plopped down on our couch.

"She's the book editor in Denver," I said as I sat down beside him.

Jasper was one of the only people that knew about my relationship with these women. He was surprisingly supportive.

"Have you tried calling her?"

"Calling, texting, email and chat. Nothing. I'm worried, J."

"Why don't you try her again? Maybe this time you'll get a response," Jasper suggested.

I picked up my phone and dialed the familiar number. Once, twice, three times it rang, only this time instead of voicemail, a

man answered.

*"Hello?"*

I looked at my phone before I responded, making sure the number was correct. Seeing that it was, I finally spoke. "Is Bella around, please?"

*"May I ask who's calling?"*

"This is Rose."

I heard some muffled voices and then the man came back on.  
*"Rose?"*

"Yeah?"

*"Listen, um, Bella really can't talk right now."*

"Is everything okay?"

*"Not really. This is her brother Emmett. Um..."*

His next words succeeded in shocking me so badly that Jasper had to take the phone and talk to him. Bella was in pain. She needed me and Alice. I was gonna do whatever I had to, to get to her, and fast.

~G~l~a~s~s~

APOV

I closed down the computer and walked into the kitchen where my brother and roommate was making dinner.

"What are you making?"

Whatever it was, it smelled great. I was a fashion consultant, not a chef, but I knew when food tasted good.

"Chicken and dumplings," Edward commented over his shoulder. "Who were you talking to?"

"Rose. She hasn't heard from Bella. It's rather worrisome."

"Hmm, have you tried calling her?"

"Yeah, but we work different schedules, so I can go two or three days without speaking to her. Rose talks to her daily," I explained before I snuck a bite of the warm goodness.

"Stop that!"

I grinned and walked back into the living room just as my phone started to ring.

"Hello?" I answered. "Rose, slow down! What are you talking about? WHAT!?" I looked over at my brother and watched as he dropped his spatula and came toward me. "Okay, yes. I'll make flight arrangements and then call you. Oh, um, I'll ask him. Alright, I'll call you in a little bit." I hung up and stared at the wall.

"Ali?" Edward looked at me.

"Um, I have to go to Denver," I said distractedly.

"What happened?"

I sank to the couch and looked up at my big brother. "Bella's fiancé. He was in a car accident. He was killed."

"Book the flight for two," Edward ordered.

I nodded and walked to my computer in a daze. I was glad that Edward was going with me. I knew that he didn't really understand how I could be friends with women that I had never actually met, but they were like my sisters.

"Thanks, Edward," I mumbled.

I felt him press a kiss to my head as he headed back to the kitchen. I made our flight arrangements and then called Rose back.

"Okay, my flight leaves at seven tomorrow morning. I should be there about three and a half hours later."

*"Okay, I may already be there. Do you want us to wait in the terminal for you?"*

"Us?" I asked.

*"Jasper is coming with me."*

"Oh, okay. Edward is coming with me, so yeah, if you wouldn't mind waiting. We can all check in and then drive over



to Bella's together. Have you called Emmett back to tell him that we are coming?" I wondered as I pulled a suitcase out of my closet.

*"No, I was waiting to hear from you. I'll call him, though. I hate this, but at the same time I'm excited to be meeting the two of you."*

I smiled. "I know what you mean. I'll see you tomorrow." We said our 'goodbyes' and then hung up.

I started packing up my clothes. I couldn't wait to meet my sisters, but I wished it was under happier circumstances.

"Edward?"

I looked up when he poked his head around the corner of my room. "Yeah?"

"Thanks." I smiled.

"Love you, Sis." He smiled that crooked grin and then left me to my packing.

**AN: Poor Bella. I hope you are enjoying my little story. I know I promised no update schedule, but that will change after Christmas. Right now the holidays are kicking my butt! Leave me some feedback.**



### 3. Chapter 3

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

**AN: Thanks for all your thoughts. I know that I failed to respond to all of them, but I did read every one of your reviews. Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you rock!**

#### **BPOV**

I lay on my bed and stared at the wall. I felt like my life was over. The man that I had planned to marry was gonna be buried today. I tried to be sad...anything except what I was.

I was angry. Angry that he was dead - angry that he hadn't died while on his way home to me. I was angry that he had died with another woman. His fucking secretary. How cliché.

"Bells?"

I rolled over and looked at my brother. "What is it Em?"

"There are some people here to see you."

"Tell them to go away. I don't want to see anyone."

"I think you'll want to see these people. Just come with me,"

Emmett pleaded.

I sighed, grabbed the sweatshirt from the end of the bed, and followed Emmett out into the hall while putting my hair up into a messy bun.

When we turned the corner, I stopped in my tracks. There standing in my living room were my two best friends. I choked back a sob as they walked toward me, but I let the tears flow when they wrapped me in their arms.

"We're here, Bells. Let it out," Rose crooned.

I let them lead me to the couch and sat down with them on either side of me. I couldn't believe that they were there. "How...did...you know?" I asked in between sobs.

"I kept calling and your brother finally answered your phone. He told me, and I called Alice," Rosalie explained.

I looked up at my brother through tear filled eyes. "Thank you, Emmett."

Emmett smiled at me, "I knew that you needed them, Bells."

I looked over at Alice and smiled before taking the tissue from her outstretched hand. "Thanks. I'm sorry that this is the way we're meeting for the first time."

"Don't sweat it, Bella; we're here for you."

We sat quietly until I noticed that there were two men

standing off to the side, looking rather uncomfortable. "Um..."

Rose perked up immediately. "Oh, sorry. Bella, this is my brother, Jasper, and Alice's brother, Edward. They wanted to come with us."

Each man waved nervously in turn, and I couldn't help but giggle. "Guys, I'm not gonna bite."

"Sorry, Bella, we just weren't sure what to think. You have to understand that when our sisters came to us and said that they were going to Denver to help a friend they had never met, it made us a little nervous. We needed to make sure that you were real," the blonde one spoke.

"I wasn't about to let Alice hop on a plane without me. I needed to make sure that you weren't some crazy, psycho killer," the green eyed one added.

"Well, I hope that your consciences have been eased," I chuckled, my gaze lingering on the one I thought was Edward.

All I received as an answer was a crooked grin, which made me blush and look away. I shouldn't be having this reaction. I was going to bury my fiancé today - not that he had cared about me. He had apparently been fucking his assistant.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

I stood at the gravesite and tried to rein in my anger. Any grief that I was feeling had died the moment that I learned about

Kate. Now I was facing her sister, who also happened to work with Garrett. I was praying that she didn't approach me because I wasn't sure I could hold my tongue.

Finally, the minister committed Garrett's body to the ground. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The whirring of the machine that lowered the casket was the only sound that was heard.

I stood stock still, staring as the wooden box sunk further and further into the dark abyss of the six foot hole. I felt the rage building and had to turn away before I did something I would regret.

Rose and Alice flanked me as I made my way to the car. I should have known that I wouldn't get that far.

"Bella?"

I stopped and turned, coming face to face with Tanya Denali. "What is it?"

"I just wanted to tell you how sorry I am. Garrett will be missed."

I nodded. "Thanks," I said before I turned with the intention to leave...I should have known that I wouldn't get to.

"I'm sorrier that Kate won't get to live the life that he promised her."

I spun back around, not aware that I was swinging until I heard the crack of my hand hitting her cheek and the sting

that followed. "How dare you? You selfish bitch!"

I felt arms pull me away and I tripped in order to keep up. I turned and looked into the emerald gaze of Edward. He slowly dragged me to the car while I turned and watched as my two best friends and my brother squared off with Tanya.

"Edward, stop." I waited until he did as I asked. "I'm fine. Let's just wait here. I want to watch the fireworks." I turned to him and grinned when I saw his amused expression.

He nodded his head forward. "Then you better watch. Alice can be scrappy when she is defending people she cares about."

I turned and leaned against the car next to him and watched as my friends had it out with the blonde bimbo.

**AN: Till next time. Leave me some love.**

## 4. Chapter 4

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Love ya, Sally!**

### **BPOV**

I rolled over in my bed and heard a grunt from beside me. Turning my head, I looked and found my two best friends lying beside me. With a grin, I scooted out of bed so as not to disturb them. I stumbled into the bathroom and went through my morning routine before making my way to the kitchen to start the coffee.

When I walked past the living room, I found my brother and the other two men sprawled out in various locations and positions on my furniture, the game console still shining brightly. I grinned and continued on my way to the kitchen.

I popped open the coffee and smelled the heavenly aroma. Turning to the coffee pot, I measured out the grounds and added the water. As I waited for the brew, I pulled out the ingredients for pancakes. I flipped on the radio for some noise and found myself dancing around to Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas*. I was mixing batter and swaying my hips to the



beat when I heard a chuckle and a throat clear from behind me. I spun around and came face to face with a grinning Edward.

I blushed and reached for the volume, turning it down. "Sorry, did I wake you?"

"No, I smelled the coffee and came searching." He walked further in the kitchen and leaned against the counter.

"Oh, well, mugs are behind you and there is cream and sugar in the cabinet beside the fridge." I turned back to the mixture, giving it another good stir. Next, I checked the heat over the griddle, and then reached up into the cabinet to grab the cinnamon. I gave the container a few shakes into the batter before putting it back. I stirred it into the mixture and was getting ready to pour it onto the griddle when he spoke again.

"Cinnamon? I never would have thought to use that."

I looked over at him and grinned. "Trust me, you'll never have pancakes without it again." I poured four round globs and then turned on the oven so that they would stay warm while I prepared the rest.

"Anything I can do to help?"

"Sure, there's some sausage in the fridge; you can get that started."

We worked in companionable silence and I reveled in it.

Garrett had never wanted to be in here with me. Now I knew why, and it frustrated me that he was always busy with someone or something else. It made me wonder what else I didn't know about the man I was supposed to marry.

I felt the sadness start to weigh me down until I heard a new voice behind me.

"Good morning, gorgeous!"

I smiled and turned to look at Rose. "Morning, beautiful!"

I heard Edward chuckle beside me and looked over at him. "What?"

He grinned down at me, "I thought Alice was joking when she told me how the two of you greeted each other."

"Nope," Rose replied. "I have said the same thing to her every morning for the last five months."

I grinned and turned back to my pancakes. I had just taken the last one off the griddle when I heard the sounds of Emmett making his way to the kitchen.

"I smell pancakes!"

"Jeez, Em, keep it down. Some people are still sleeping!" I hissed.

"Not anymore," the sleep tousled pixie said as she came wandering in.

"Lord, give her coffee or no one will be happy," Edward grumbled

"Shut it. Good morning, ladies!" Alice grinned and took the cup that I held out to her.

"Morning, Ali."

Jasper wandered in soon after and we all sat down to eat. Conversation flowed freely - almost as if we had all known each other for years. I had never had this easy camaraderie with Garrett or anyone that we hung out with, and it was a nice change.

"Bella, these are fantastic. In fact, I think they are better than Edward's. What's your secret?" Alice asked around a mouthful of food.

I looked at Edward and smirked, "That is a secret that I will carry to my grave." I blanched at the words as they slipped from my lips, thinking of where we had been the day before.

Conversation stalled as we all processed everything, however, the silence didn't last long thanks to my big brother.

"So! Girls, Bells here has four bedrooms in this house... How is it that the three of you ended up sleeping together?"

Edward and Jasper both spit coffee across the table in their shock.

"Emmett!"

"What, Bells? I was just curious." Emmett grinned and stuffed more pancakes in his mouth.

I couldn't believe my bonehead brother, but I was more shocked by what I heard next.

"I don't know, Em," Rose began. "We've all been friends for so long and knew so much about each other, but there was still so much to explore. I guess we just wore each other out and then passed out," she winked.

I looked at my big brother and laughed when his mouth was hanging open and his eyes were wide. Rose and Alice joined me, and soon the whole table was laughing at Emmett's expense.

"Haha, you're hilarious." Emmett went back to his breakfast and the rest of us picked up our conversations.

~G~l~a~s~s~

The days passed and it was time for me to face reality. Emmett had taken everyone out on a tour of the city before they all left to return to their lives, miles away from mine.

I decided to take the time to box up all of Garrett's clothes and belongings and send them to his parents, as I wanted no part of anything that had to do with him. That may sound callous since he just died, but any love that I felt for him died with him when I found out about his extracurricular activities.

I had just pulled down one of his old boxes when an envelope floated down from below it. I stared at it for a long while before I finally got the nerve to pick it up. I sat down in the armchair that sat in the corner of my room and opened it.

*Bella,*

*I have been trying to find a way to tell you this for months. As I sit here writing this letter, I know that I am taking the coward's way.*

*I can't marry you, Bella. While I do love you, it's not the passionate love that we should have, and you deserve better. I'm sorry.*

*I never intended to fall for Kate, but things happen that are beyond our control. If you are reading this, then I did take the cowardly way, and I have left you with nothing but a note.*

*Please move on and find the love that you deserve.  
Goodbye.*

*Garrett*

I folded up the letter and sat back, thinking about what I had just read. He was gonna leave me for her. I guess in a way, he did exactly that. I sat up and finished packaging up the rest of his things. When I was done, I dragged them toward the door so that Emmett could take them down to the UPS store and ship them to his family. I was finished with Garrett York.

**AN: So, tell me what you thought. Is she wrong to consider it done, since he really left a long time ago?**

## 5. Chapter 5

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

**AN: So, I have to apologize for my lack of response to your reviews. I do read and cherish every one of them. Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Love ya, Sally!**

I stood and watched as my friends walked to their separate gates at the airport. I couldn't go through the security check with them unless I bought a ticket, and it just wasn't worth three hundred dollars to me to do that. We had said our goodbyes with promises to meet up in our Facebook chat later.

After they had disappeared, I turned and made my way back to airport parking, ready to make the long drive home. I flipped on the radio for noise; Emmett had been unable to accompany me, having already taken a week off work and the school year had barely begun.

I hit the afternoon traffic and knew that I was in for a long wait, so I turned up the music and sang along with SheDaisy and their *Little Goodbyes*, laughing when the man in the car next to me started staring. It must have looked like I was talking to myself.

When traffic finally began moving again, I was happy because my bladder was screaming at me. If I had a dick, I would have pissed in the empty bottle on my floor, but being a woman, that was impossible. Men had it so easy...

A little over two hours later, I pulled into my drive and was barely out of the car before I was sprinting to my door. I dropped everything in the foyer and ran to the bathroom.

"Bells, did you have to pee?" my brother yelled through the door.

I squeaked, not knowing he was there. "Yes, Emmett, now leave me alone!"

I heard him chuckle as he walked away. I finished my business and, after I had washed my hands, I went into the living room to find out why my brother was in my house.

"What are you doing here, Em?" I plopped down on my sofa and waited.

He shrugged. "No reason."

"Liar." I knew he was lying since he wouldn't meet my eyes. "What's going on, brother of mine?"

Emmett sighed before sitting forward and leaning his elbows on his knees. "Mom called."

"What did she want?"



"She's worried about you. She wanted me to have you call her." Emmett smiled gently at me. "Dad and Sue, too."

I groaned and leaned my head back. "I'll call Dad, but Em, I am not in the mood for Mom's drama. Can't you just tell her that I am fine?"

"Are you? Fine, I mean?" Emmett asked.

I stared at my big brother for a minute and thought about his question. Am I fine? "You know, Em, I should be angry and upset that my fiancé died while with another woman, but I'm not. If I think about it, Garrett really left a long time ago. He was physically here, but emotionally he was with her. I know you don't want to know this Emmett, but we hadn't had sex in months."

Emmett jumped up from his seat, "Ok, well, on that note, I'm outta here. Just call the 'rents, okay?"

I nodded and he kissed my forehead before leaving quickly. My laughter followed him out the door.

After Emmett left, I went into the kitchen and made myself some dinner. It was weird; I always made enough for me and Garrett, but now I only had to worry about me. I decided on a grilled cheese sandwich and then sat down to watch a movie.

I sighed in unexpected contentment as I snuggled deeper into the couch.

~G~l~a~s~s~

I woke the next morning to the incessant pinging of my cellphone, indicating a new text. I rolled over, picked up the offending object, and almost chucked it across the room. However, I looked down and saw that it was Rose.

*Morning gorgeous! ~R*

I sat up and looked at the time. The sickly looking green light glowed back at me, telling me it was after ten in the morning. I hadn't slept that late since college.

*Bella, are you ok? ~R*

I chuckled, realizing that she was worried about me.

*Morning beautiful! Sorry, I just woke up. Let me get moving and we'll talk. ~B*

Her response came quickly.

*You got it! ~R*

I crawled out of bed and slowly made my way to the en suite. Once I was showered and dressed, I went into the kitchen for some caffeine and breakfast. While I waited for my bagel, I turned on my computer and opened up my email. I had several from friends, and some indicating that my bills were ready to view, but one actually shocked me.

**To: bswan**

**From: ecullen**

**Re: How you doing?**

**Bella,**

**I hope you don't mind, but I got your email address from Alice. I just wanted to check and see how you were doing. I know that I don't know you very well, but I could tell that you were holding back a little at the funeral. I'm sorry that I didn't let you kick the blonde's ass. No hard feelings?**

**Drop me a line if you want to talk sometime. Also, thanks for your hospitality. I enjoyed getting to know the woman that my sister talks about so much.**

**Edward**

Once I was over the shock, I pulled up my Facebook account and messaged Rose.

**BSwan:** Rose, Edward sent me an email!

**RHale:** Is that good or bad?

I chewed on my fingernail as I thought about her question. How did I feel about Edward emailing me? I had just buried the man I had planned to spend the rest of my life with, and

yet when I saw Edward's name in my inbox, a little thrill ran down my spine.

**BSwan:** I think it's good...

**RHale:** I KNEW IT!

**BSwan:** Knew what?

**RHale:** That you were attracted to Edward.

**BSwan:** Rose! I just buried my fiancé. I hardly think that I am attracted to another man so soon.

I was greeted with nothing. I knew she had seen the message, but I also knew that she could see right through me.

**BSwan:** Is it obvious?

**RHale:** LMAO! Only to me and Alice. Jasper and Edward are blissfully ignorant. I think Emmett is, too.

**BSwan:** What should I do?

Rose's response took a minute. I was sure that she was thinking about how to respond to me. This was new territory for me. I hadn't been attracted to a man since I met Garrett, four years before.

**RHale:** Don't do anything that you aren't comfortable with, B. Let Edward be a friend for you. All you have is me and Alice. You can never have too many friends. You never know what

could happen.

**BSwan:** Alright, Ro. I'm gonna email him back before I get to work. I'll be around. Love you!

**RHale:** Love you, too!

I minimized the window and then looked at his email again. I smiled at the thought that there was another person out there who may care about me.

I quickly typed out a response and then opened the program for Random House and got set to work - keeping a green-eyed hottie in the back of my mind.

**AN: What do you think of Rose's advice? Leave me your thoughts.**

## 6. Chapter 6

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

**AN: Sorry for my epic fail in responding to your reviews. I do read every one of them.**

**Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you are awesome!**

### **BPOV**

I lay in my bed staring at the ceiling. I knew that I needed to get up, but I couldn't force myself to do it. It had been like this for the last month. I didn't want to get out of bed, talk to my friends, or do any work. I'm pretty sure that everyone is or was worried about me, but I just couldn't bring myself to care. The loneliness had crept in slowly and I was blindsided.

My phone buzzed beside me, alerting me to an incoming text. It was probably Rose or Alice; even Emmett and Edward had taken to pestering me. Couldn't they understand that I just wanted to be left alone?

I sighed and rolled over, turning my back to the phone and the window that was shining brightly with the sun. I thought back to what had led me to this point in my life. Ah, yes, my

philandering fiancé had cheated on me and then died.

If I really looked back on it, I could see all the signs that Garrett was cheating: broken dates, late business dinners, and no sex. Garrett and I hadn't been intimate in months - he had barely kissed me. I was so in my head and my job that I didn't take the time to look around me and realize that my life was slipping through my fingers.

Sure, I put on a good front when the girls were here, but I was dying inside. I tried for a while, but I reached my breaking point right before New Year's.

*I sat at the dining room table at my mother's on Christmas Day, laughing and pretending to have a good time. It was after dessert was served that she started in with the questions.*

*"So, Izzie, have you thought about dating again? You're not getting any younger."*

*"MOM!" Emmett yelled.*

*"No, it's okay, Em." I smiled softly at him before turning back to my mother. "No, Mom, I haven't thought about dating again. Regardless of what was going on in my relationship with Garrett, I was faithful to him. I think that deserves at least some mourning."*

*"Alright, Sweetheart, you know what is best for you." Renee sighed before tucking back in to her pie. "I just think that you*

*are wasting your life...mourning for a relationship that had been gone longer than you realized."*

*"Thanks, Mother; I will take your words under advisement." I pushed away from the table and carried my dishes to the kitchen. I looked around me and started cleaning up all of the mess from our dinner, thinking about what my mother had said. It wasn't until I got home that evening that it hit me. I was alone.*

I had immediately emailed my boss and requested a leave of absence. Carmen had been very understanding, and I was granted two months off with pay. I had never taken a vacation the entire time that I had been with the publishing company, preferring to save all of my time for our honeymoon - a honeymoon that was apparently never going to happen.

I rolled back over onto my back and stared at the ceiling some more. I closed my eyes as *Hedwig's Theme* from Harry Potter came from my phone, indicating that Edward was calling me again. I picked it up, and thought for one minute about answering, but finally hit the ignore button and sent it to voicemail.

After our initial email, we had gone back and forth, getting to know each other in the safe way. I had stopped communication in every way, though, not just with him, but with Rose, Alice, Emmett, and the rest of my family.

Too tired to think anymore, I rolled back over and felt the exhaustion run through me before I finally succumbed to



sleep.

~G~l~a~s~s~

## RPOV

I heard the buzzing coming from beside me and groaned. I rolled over and grabbed the offending object, flipping it open and answering it. "Hello?"

"Rosalie?"

The sound of his voice had me sitting straight up in bed. "Emmett? What's wrong?"

"I can't find her Rose!" Emmett cried. I was up and out of my bed, flinging clothes into a duffel bag as he explained. "I went to her house this morning because I am sick and tired of her ignoring me. I am worried. When I got here, I had to use my key because she didn't answer when I rang the doorbell. I searched the whole house for her, Rose! She isn't here!"

Before I responded, I hollered for my brother. Disoriented, Jasper appeared in my doorway. Taking in my actions, he ran back to his room, and I heard him slamming drawers as he packed. "Okay, Emmett, calm down. Jasper and I are gonna get on the next available flight and we will help you. She hasn't been answering any of us. I know that Alice and Edward are worried, too."

I disconnected the call and ran out to the living room before

going into the kitchen to dispose of all the perishables. I had no idea how long we would be gone, and I didn't want the apartment to stink when we did return. I then called my store and explained to my manager that I was needed out of town, and that she was in charge, but that I could be reached on my cell phone if any problems arose. Angela assured me that things would be fine in my absence. I knew that I had hired her for a reason.

Jasper joined me in the living room and we quickly locked up and sprinted to his car. While he weaved in and out of traffic, I called Alice to bring her up to speed. Instead of reaching her, however, I got her voicemail. "Dammit!" I waited for the tone, then hurriedly explained the situation and begged her to call me.

"What's wrong?" Jasper questioned.

"I forgot that Alice is busy with her fashion show this week."

"Okay, so call Edward. I know that he would jump on a plane," Jasper told me as he reached the exit for the airport.

I picked up my phone and called Edward. He answered after two rings.

"Hello?"

"Edward, it's Rosalie."

"What's wrong, Rose?"

I sucked in a breath before I explained. "Emmett went over to Bella's and can't find her. He said that she wasn't in her house. He doesn't know what to do. Have you heard from her?"

"I got a weird text from her yesterday, and I've been calling ever since. Are you flying out to Denver?"

"Yeah, we're at the airport now. Jasper is at the counter trying to get us a flight." I wanted to ask what the text said, but I didn't want to intrude. I knew that Edward was developing feelings for Bella. I had thought that the feeling was mutual until she disappeared off the radar.

"Okay, I'll get some stuff together and see you guys in Denver."

We hung up and I walked up to the counter beside my brother.

"Okay, Sir. I have two tickets aboard Flight 827 non-stop to Denver. You will be departing from Gate 6A, and boarding will begin in half an hour. Did you have any bags to check?" Jasper and I both shook our heads. "Then here are your tickets. Have a pleasant flight and thank you for choosing American Airlines."

Jasper and I took the tickets and sprinted toward our gate. We were lucky that there wasn't a long line to get through security, and we got to our gate just as they made the boarding call. Jasper and I boarded the plane, and after he

stowed our duffels, we settled in, not knowing what to expect when we got to Denver.

**AN: Where is Bella? Do you think that her depression is well deserved? Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.**

## 7. Chapter 7

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

**AN: Let's hear from Edward, shall we?**

**Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Love you, Sally!**

### **EPOV**

After I hung up with Rose, I immediately called my sous chef and explained that I was needed out of town, and that she would need to run my kitchen in my absence.

"Is everything okay, Mr. Cullen?"

"A friend of mine is in trouble, Maggie and I need to go see if I can help her."

"Okay, go do what you have to do. I'll make sure that Jamie doesn't burn down your kitchen," Maggie chuckled.

"I appreciate that. I'll be in touch." I hung up and quickly packed my bags. I left the apartment not twenty minutes after Rose called, and headed for JFK.

Amazingly, I was able to get on a flight that was leaving in an

hour. I went ahead and walked toward my gate, knowing that it would take a while to get through security. After I made it through that half hour obstacle, I got to my gate and had twenty minutes before boarding. I sent off a quick text to Rose and then shut off my phone.

I sat back in the chair and thought about the months since I had met Bella. I had been so untrusting in the beginning, not knowing what she wanted from my sister. After I met her, though, I saw the bond between the three of them and found myself drawn to her. She was beautiful. I had never seen eyes as warm as hers - like melted chocolate. I wanted to run my fingers through her mahogany locks and kiss every inch of her creamy skin. I wanted to see how far that blush of hers went.

We had been emailing back and forth for about a month, when I finally realized that something wasn't right. Her last email to me held a tenor that something was very off with her. Unable to get it out of my head, I turned my phone back on and pulled up my email.

**To: ecullen**

**From: bswan**

**Re: So tired.**

**Edward,**

**I am so tired, and I'm lonely. I don't miss Garrett per se,**

but I do miss having someone to talk to. I miss having someone's arms around me when I sleep. I'm just so alone. I never really felt it until the other day, especially after my mother pointed it out.

I'm just so tired.

**Bella**

I had responded back immediately, but had gotten no response. I had known deep down that she was on a downward spiral, but I knew that Emmett was with her. I should have just gone to her when it first started, but I was trying to be a friend and not be too pushy. *Some friend*, I scoffed at myself.

After what seemed like hours, but in reality was only minutes, my flight was called and I made my way over to the attendant. She took my ticket, wished me a pleasant flight, and then checked out my ass as I walked away. I just shook my head and found my seat, thinking of the woman who was already more important than even I cared to admit.

~G~l~a~s~s~

**BPOV**

I took my bottle of Jack and put it to my mouth, taking a long pull and coughing when I felt the burn. I had never been one for drinking, but I figured if I was gonna get out of bed, I should take a walk. I walked to the liquor store around the

corner and purchased my new friend, Jack, and then decided to take a stroll.

I concentrated on taking one step and then another, already feeling the effects of the alcohol. I never intended to walk there, and was surprised when I stopped. I just stood and stared for what seemed like hours, but must have been minutes. I'm not sure what possessed me to stand there staring, but I felt the anger building, and knew that I was gonna erupt.

I lifted the bottle one last time, took another large gulp, and then flung it at the marble stone I was in front of.

"You son-of-a-bitch! How could you?! Did I really mean so little to you?!" I kicked and threw the pebbles I found on the ground at his marker. "I hate you! You left me here alone!"

I kicked until my feet were numb, punched until my knuckles bled, and finally sank to my knees sobbing, not feeling the glass as it cut into my knees. I cried until I had no tears left, I yelled and cursed until my throat was raw, and then I just sat there and stared. I'm not sure how long I was there, but I know that I started to get cold and the blood had long since dried.

"Bella!"

I heard my name, but didn't acknowledge the person calling it. I never broke out of my trance, even when I felt the arms pick me up off the ground and place me in the warm vehicle. I



didn't make a sound as I was driven home, taken in my house, into the bathroom, and then stripped.

"My God, she has glass in her knees. Emmett!"

"What?" Nothing. "Holy shit! Just get her in the shower, Rose, I'll get the first aid kit."

It wasn't until I felt the hot spray beating down on my head that I made any noise. Once the warm water cascaded down my body, I screamed. Then I let the tears come.

"Bella? Bella! Bella, look at me!"

I finally snapped out of it and focused on the voice and face in front of me. "Rose?" My voice sounded foreign to me.

"I'm here, Bella. Jasper, Emmett and Edward are all here, too." I watched as she adjusted the temperature and reached for the loofa, lathering it up before washing my cuts and scrapes. "Let's get you cleaned up and then we'll take care of those knees."

"I'm sorry, Rose."

"Don't apologize. We knew that something was wrong. I could have come sooner. We should have..." She shut off the water and wrapped a towel around me.

"It's not your fault. I shouldn't have kept it locked inside."

Rose helped me step out of the shower and let me dry myself

off, then handed me a soft robe, which I pulled tight around my body. Leaving the bathroom, I noticed for the first time that my knees were sore. I let her lead me into the living room, where I saw my brother, Jasper and Edward.

Emmett jumped up and swiftly wrapped me in his beefy arms. "Don't you ever do that to me again, Isabella!"

"I won't, I'm sorry, Emmett."

"Forget it. Come sit down; let's clean up those knees." He led me over to the couch.

I thought he was gonna fix me up, but I was surprised to see Edward kneel in front of me, first aid kit in hand. He gently lifted one of my legs and placed it across his lap. I noticed Jasper come over with a lamp, giving him extra light. I watched his face, waiting for his eyes to meet mine, but he concentrated on the task at hand and was soon bandaging up my torn knees.

"Don't ever do that to me again, Bella," Edward whispered, lifting his head and finally allowing me to see his green eyes. I was unprepared for the hurt I saw swimming there.

"I'm sorry," I whispered as the tears welled in my eyes. I was immediately swept into his arms and I clung to him as I cried - not for Garrett, but for the hurt I had caused my family and my friends, and mostly....Edward.

**AN: This chapter was very difficult to write. I hope that**

**no one is upset with Bella. She had to work through this on her own. Keep in mind that she never really let her anger go and this was closure for her. Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.**

## 8. Chapter 8

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

**AN: Thanks for all your reviews. I know that last chapter was really angsty, so let's move on. Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Love you, Sally!**

### **BPOV**

I sat at my kitchen table with my hands wrapped around a hot mug of coffee. I had barely slept last night knowing what I had put my friends and brother through. I can't believe that I allowed myself to wallow for so long, especially over a man who had decided long ago that I wasn't who he wanted.

"You look like you are thinking heavy thoughts, gorgeous."

I smiled and looked up at Rose. "Just feeling sorry for myself, beautiful."

Rose sat down opposite me and cleared her throat before speaking. "Bella, you went through a terrible thing. I knew that you were hanging on to a lot of anger, but I never said anything. I knew that you would work it out. I never thought you would pull a disappearing act, though. Don't ever do that

to me again or I will fly out here and kick your ass."

I giggled and nodded. "Yes, ma'am."

We sat quietly drinking our coffee and lost in our thoughts for a while. Rose was the first to speak.

"Do you remember that woman in the club? The one who thought that reading Danielle Steel would be a good idea."

"You mean, PalominoDaddy?" I laughed.

Rose nodded and laughed with me. "How could she think that was a good idea?"

"I don't know. All of those books sound exactly alike. Although, I did read *Message from Nam*. It was actually pretty good." Rose shook her head. "What, Ro? Oh, come on; you admitted that you had read Jackie Collins!"

"In high school! I like to think that my tastes have improved since then," Rose scoffed.

I rolled my eyes and laughed at her. "You know, for the longest time I thought that Alice was PalominoDaddy. She just seemed so uppity until I got to know her. I was glad that Carmen suggested I join the book club."

Rose, Alice and I had met in an online book club. Every week we read a different book and then would meet in a designated chat room and discuss what we had read. Some of our conversations got a little out there and off topic. Rose and I

had actually gotten berated by the leader of the group for monopolizing the chats with our arguments, so we exchanged emails, found each other on Facebook, and continued our talks there.

Alice had found us later. She had been part of the group, but only spoke when she was asked a specific question. It wasn't until she joined Rose and me that her real character came out. And what a character she was. Alice was very opinionated and not shy about letting us know how she felt. It had become a regular thing for the three of us to chat outside the book club until we had left altogether and just chatted about our everyday lives.

"Me, too. I'm glad that Angela turned me on to it. Otherwise I wouldn't have met my crazy sisters." She laughed.

"What are you two laughing about?" Jasper wandered in to the kitchen.

"Nothing, just thinking about how we met."

"Ah, the ill-fated book club," Jasper chuckled as he poured his coffee.

"What book club?" Edward mumbled as he shuffled in to the kitchen

"The book club that we all met in. Are you okay, Edward?"

"Yeah, I just need coffee."

I watched as he wandered over to the cabinet, got a mug, poured a cup, and then stumbled over to the chair beside mine. I stared at him as he took a sip and sighed. I was mesmerized by the angles of his jaw, strong cheek bones and long eyelashes that accentuated his emerald eyes.

He must have felt me staring at him, because he turned his head, winked at me, and then turned back to continue talking to Jasper.

I blushed and looked away, meeting Rose's laughing eyes. I glared at her and excused myself to go get ready for the day.

## **G~l~a~s~s**

"Hi, Daddy," I spoke in to the phone.

"Bella, how are you, Honey?"

"I'm good. I'm sorry that I worried everyone."

"Bella, I know that you have been through a lot, but you can't go shutting yourself off to the world. Your mother, brother and I have been worried sick about you."

"I know, Dad. I'm okay now. I just had to get rid of the anger I was feeling. I was pissed off. Now, I...I don't know how to explain it. I feel...lighter somehow."

"Well, Sweetheart, as long as you're okay, that's all that matters. I love you, little girl."

"Love you, too, Dad. I'll call you soon."

I hung up my phone and looked up as my friends came in the living room. They were all dragging their suitcases behind them.

"I guess you guys have to go, huh?" I said sadly.

"It's time, Gorgeous. We all have jobs and lives to return to. I hate to leave you, B, but..." Rose trailed off.

I nodded and stood up. "I understand, Ro, I do. Next time I'll come to you."

Rose wrapped me up in a hug and whispered, "You better."

I stepped back and looked at them. "Do I need to take you to the airport?"

"Nope, I got it, Bells." Emmett came in the room, tucking in his shirt.

I smirked at him and then looked at Rose, who blushed and turned away.

I giggled and then turned to Jasper. "Take care of her, okay?"

He nodded and pulled me to him in a tight hug. "Take care of yourself, Bella. I don't want to come out here again and find you wasting away. You need to eat, Girl. You're too skinny."

I laughed and pinched his side. "You're one to talk, String-



bean!"

Jasper put his hand to his chest. "Bella, you wound me."

Rose and Emmett's laughter followed him out, leaving me alone with Edward. I turned to look at him, not really knowing what to say. Luckily, he spoke first.

"Bella," Edward walked toward me. "Please, don't do that again. If you need to talk, cry, scream, or anything...promise that you will call me."

I nodded, not able to find my voice. I felt his hand come up to my face and leaned into his palm as his thumb stroked the apple of my cheek. I closed my eyes, relishing in his soft touch. I slowly opened my eyes and met his. I licked my lips before I spoke.

"Will you, uh...tell Alice that I'm fine, but have her call me?"

"I will," he said before pulling me to him.

I wrapped my arms around his waist and lay my head on his chest. I felt him press a kiss to my hair and found myself wishing that it was my lips.

"Come on, Eddie, you're gonna miss your flight!" Emmett bellowed from outside.

I reluctantly extricated myself from his arms and stood back. "Have a safe flight and call me when you get home."

Edward nodded and leaned down to pick up his bag. "Take care of yourself, Bella."

"I will." I told him softly. He brushed past me as he walked to the door. I refused to turn around. Not wanting to watch him walk away. I sighed when I heard the door shut, wishing that I had the strength to ask him to stay.

"Bella?"

**AN: Oh, no...not a cliffie! Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.**

## 9. Chapter 9

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

**AN: Sorry about the cliffie from last chapter. Let's see who came in, shall we. Special thanks to my beta toocute24. Sally, you're the best!**

**BPOV**

I whipped my head around and saw Edward still standing in my door.

"Did you forget something?"

Edward nodded and stalked toward me. Before I knew what was happening his lips were pressed to mine and I had tingles running up the base of my spine. He gently nibbled along my lower lip as I sucked at his top. When I felt his tongue run along my lip, I opened my mouth and allowed his tongue to dance with mine.

When oxygen became an issue, he pulled away but leaned his forehead against my own. "I couldn't leave without doing that," Edward whispered breathlessly.

Instead of responding, I grabbed the back of his neck and pulled his lips back to me, kissing him again.

We broke apart when a throat cleared behind us. Edward turned but never let go of my waist.

"Umm...sorry to interrupt, but uh...if we don't leave soon, you'll miss your flight." Emmett ran his hand around his neck.

"Okay, Emmett, I'm coming," Edward said quietly. When Emmett nodded and turned to go back outside, Edward turned back to me. "I have to go. I'll call you when I get back, though, okay?"

"Okay. Have a safe flight." I looked in his eyes and saw that they mirrored mine - extremely turned on and full of emotions I wasn't ready to decipher.

Edward leaned down and kissed me one last time, then turned and walked out the door.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

I woke to the shrill ringing of my phone. I rolled over, still half a sleep, and mumbled a hello.

"Bella!"

I sat up at the sound of my boss's voice. "Carmen?"

"Oh, Lord, Bella. I need you to come to New York. There is a problem with Mr. DeRaven."

"Laurent? Carmen what's going on?"

I listened while Carmen explained that Laurent wasn't getting along with the new editor for his current book. He was demanding that I fly to New York and help him get his book back.

Laurent was a diva, but he was an excellent writer. He was a five time bestselling author that I had worked with before and if he was requesting me, he must be pissed.

"Okay, Carmen. Make the necessary arrangements and I will fly out tomorrow. And please tell Ren that I am on my way."

"Thank you so much, Bella. I'll get you your suite at the Plaza and take care of calling Ren."

When we disconnected the call, I got out of bed and headed for the shower so that I could get ready for the day and start packing.

After I was out and dressed in a pair of jeans and a sweater, I pulled my suitcase and garment bag out of my closet. While I went through my clothes to find what I would need for a potential month in New York, I called Emmett.

"Hey, Em. Call me when you get this. I need a ride to the airport in the morning, and it would mean missing your first few classes. Just call me, okay? Love you!"

I continued packing my clothes and was folding the last pair of

jeans when my phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Morning, gorgeous!" Rose's voice greeted me.

"Morning, beautiful!" I smiled.

"What are you doing?"

I chuckled. "I am currently packing."

"Where are you going?"

I sat down and talked to Rose, telling her about my unexpected trip to New York. "So I'm not sure how long I'll be gone, but I am preparing for an extended stay just in case."

"Wow! Are you gonna call Alice and Edward and tell them that you'll be there?"

I hadn't thought about that. While I knew that Edward and Alice were based there, I hadn't really thought about whether I would see them, or him, while I was in town.

"I don't know, Rose. I hadn't really thought about it."

"Bella, are you afraid to see Edward again?"

"No! I mean...why would you think that?" I stuttered.

"Come on, Bella. You guys shared an intense kiss. You talked

to me about it for at least a week afterward."

I could feel the heat rising in my cheeks and knew that I was blushing. I hadn't spoken to Edward in the two weeks since we shared our kiss. I wasn't sure what to say because I had enjoyed it more than I thought I should - especially for a woman who had just buried her fiancé.

"Rose, I..."

"I know, Bella. Just call him."

"I will. Listen, I gotta go. Talk to you soon?"

"Yep. Call me when you get to the city that never sleeps. Love you."

"Love you, too." I hung up my phone and bit my lip as I zipped up my bags. Once I had everything sitting by my front door, I went to the living room and sat on the couch to think.

I couldn't help but stare at the place where Edward and I stood when his lips met mine. Unconsciously, I brought my hand up to my mouth and could almost feel his warmth against me, his breath on my face and his lips pressed to mine.

The ringing of the phone brought me from my reverie. I picked it up and answered without checking to see who it was first.

"Hello?" I felt goose bumps form at the melodious voice that filled my ear.

"She lives. I was beginning to wonder."

"Hi, Edward."

"What's going on, Bella? I haven't heard from you for two weeks. Are you avoiding me?"

I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding. "Why would you...I'm sorry, Edward. I didn't mean to avoid you, I just..."

"You didn't know what to say. I get that, Bella, I do, but do you regret it?"

He thought that I didn't want him, and that made my heart hurt. "No, Edward, I don't regret it at all." I heard his sigh of relief and smiled. "Listen, I have to go, but I'll call you when I get in tomorrow."

"Get in?"

"Oh, sorry. Um, yeah, I'm flying into JFK tomorrow. I need to be there for work, so..."

"You're coming here? Were you gonna tell me?"

"Yeah, I was actually getting ready to call you but you beat me to it. Edward, I uh...I want to see you while I'm there."

"How long will you be here?" Edward asked, his excitement evident in his voice.

"A month at least, I'm not sure," I giggled. He was making me



feel giddy.

"Okay, well, call me when you get checked in to your hotel. I may not answer because I have to work, but I'll get back to you as soon as I can. And, Bella?"

"Yeah?"

"I can't wait to see you."

"Me either. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

I disconnected the call and lay back on the couch. Suddenly I was more excited to see Edward than I was about anything else, and I had no idea what to make of it.

**AN: Well, she's heading to the Big Apple. I wonder what will happen. Leave me your thoughts. Until next time.**

## 10. Chapter 10

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta toocute24. Sorry for making your job harder by adding in the French. Love you, Sally!**

**I apologize for the late update. My husband was in the hospital for the last couple of days. He was released this morning and hopefully will not have to return. Thanks to all of those who offered up your thoughts and prayers. Love you all!**

**Thanks to all those who reviewed last chapter. I did read them all. Some of you were curious about a lemon...not yet. Bella still needs to get her head on straight. Edward knows that they have to take everything slow and is willing to be patient. Now, let's see what's happening in NY.**

### **BPOV**

The flight was smooth, and I soon felt the hum of the landing gear as we made our decent to JFK. This was the part that I hated the most about flying – the landing. When the plane finally touched down, I let out a sigh of relief.

After I had disembarked, I headed straight for the baggage claim area. I joined the throng of people around the carousel and waited for my three suitcases. I was wondering how I was going to get it, along with my shoulder bag and laptop, all out by myself. When I left Denver, Emmett had helped me. Now I was here alone.

"Bella!"

I turned when I heard my name shouted over the din. What I saw both surprised and pleased me.

Edward was walking toward me with a large smile on his face. "Hey!" he said as he approached.

"Hi! What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to pick you up." He reached me and wrapped his arms around me in a hug. "Is it okay that I'm here?"

I nodded into his chest as I pulled him in tighter. I had almost forgotten how good his arms felt around me – almost.

I pulled back and looked up at him. "It's more than okay. Thanks for coming."

He grinned and pressed his lips gently to mine. When he pulled away, we turned to the baggage carousel and retrieved my suitcases as they spun toward us.

"Is this everything?" I nodded in answer. "Okay, come on. I'll drive you to your hotel."

"Oh, Carmen said that she was sending a car for me," I told him offhandedly.

"I called her office and told her that I would see to it that you were delivered safely," he chuckled.

I couldn't help smile and be a little grateful that he wanted to spend time with me. I followed him out to the airport parking garage and helped him load my things into his trunk.

"So where to, beautiful?"

"Um...Carmen said that I was staying at the Plaza, but let me call her and double check," I stammered. No one ever called me beautiful.

I plucked my cell phone out of my purse and dialed my boss. While I waited for her to pick up, I took a moment to stare at Edward. He kept his eyes on the road, but I saw his jaw tense, almost like he knew that I was staring at him.

"Hello?"

"Carmen? It's Bella. I just wanted to let you know that I made it in, and to verify my accommodations."

"Oh, Bella, I'm glad you called. The Plaza was booked solid, but I was able to procure you a room at Trump Towers in SoHo. You are in the Deluxe Suite Ten."

"Thank you, Carmen. When am I meeting with Ren?"

"You will be having a dinner meeting with him and his wife, Irina, this evening at Raoul's. It's French cuisine, so I thought he would feel at home there, plus since you speak the language..."

I chuckled. "Okay, Carmen – Trump Tower and Raoul's. I will see you on Monday morning."

I placed my phone back in my bag and looked at Edward. "I guess the Plaza was booked, so I am at Trump Tower in SoHo." Edward nodded, but didn't speak. I looked at him questioningly. "Is everything okay?"

"Huh? Oh, uh...yeah."

We were silent the rest of the drive. The playful banter that we usually engaged in was gone, and in its place was a tension that I didn't understand. We arrived at my hotel, and the doorman opened my door, helping me from the car.

"Welcome to Trump Tower, Ma'am."

"Thank you." I turned to see if Edward was coming, and saw him at the trunk removing my bags. I turned back to the doorman, who had signaled for a bellhop. "Thank you, again. I will be in in just a moment."

The two men turned and returned to their posts, taking my bags with them. I turned back to Edward, who had walked to my side after shutting the trunk.

"Edward, what's going on? You got very quiet all of a sudden."

Edward looked down at me. "Nothing is wrong. Listen, I have to go in to work, but I have a surprise for you later."

I laughed. "That's cryptic. What kind of surprise?"

"If I told you, then it wouldn't be a surprise." He kissed me quickly and then called over his shoulder, "I'll see you later."

Shaking my head, I turned and went in to the hotel. I stepped up to the reception desk and checked in, then followed the bellhop and my bags up to my room. I decided that after my travels, a nap and a bath were in order before I headed to dinner.

~G~l~a~s~s~

I walked into the restaurant and looked around. I spotted Laurent and a beautiful blonde woman sitting at a table in the corner. I nodded to the maître'd and pointed. He led me over and pulled out my chair, then pushed it back once I was seated.

"Bon appetit."

"Merci beaucoup." After he walked away, I turned to Laurent and Irina. "Bonsoir, Laurent. Comment avez-vous été ?"

"Très bien, Bella. Je vous remercie d'avoir accepté de prendre la relève."

I waved a hand at him. "Pas de problème." I turned to Irina. "Irina, tu es magnifique, comme toujours."

"Merci." Irina blushed.

She had always been a quiet woman, so I wasn't surprised when she didn't say much. We continued to speak to each other, and I discovered exactly what the problem was that Laurent had been having with Jessica, the former editor. She had apparently been trying to sleep with him, and Irina had walked in on her attempted seduction.

"Femme stupide." Irina muttered under her breath, causing me to giggle.

The waiter came and took our orders, and while we waited for the chef to prepare them, the maître'd came over with a bottle of champagne.

"Compliments of the chef." He bowed and then popped the cork. He poured three glasses before placing the bottle in the chiller that was sitting beside the table. "Enjoy." He bowed again and then retreated.

I looked at Laurent, forgetting that I was supposed to be speaking in French. "Do you know the chef?"

"No, I 'ave never eaten in zis place before." His thick accent overwhelmed his English, although I was impressed that he was speaking it back to me. He never had before.

I sipped at the champagne and giggled as the bubbles slid down my throat.

"Peut-être que vous le connaissez, Bella. Il est là à regarder à droite à vous," Irina spoke in rapid French.

I turned and met the amused gaze of Edward. How did I not know that this was his restaurant?

I turned back to Irina and Laurent. "Excusez-moi un instant."

I didn't wait for them to agree; I rose and made my way over to where Edward stood with a crooked grin on his face.

"Hi, beautiful."

"Edward, why didn't you tell me this was your restaurant?"

"I wanted to surprise you. It looks like I succeeded." He reached up and brushed a wayward strand of hair behind my ear.

"Yes, you did. Thanks for the champagne. You didn't have to do that."

"I wanted to. I've also comped your dinner for this evening, so enjoy yourself, okay?"

"Edward..." I started to protest.

He reached up and took my face in his hands. "Bella, I want you to have a good time tonight. You deserve to be



pampered, and this is just the beginning of what I have planned for you while you're here."

Before I could protest further, he pecked my lips with his own and then sent me on my way. "Get; I have work to do."

"Alright, you've won this round, Mr. Cullen, but I have a few tricks up my sleeve, too." I winked and then turned to go back to my table.

It took all I had not to turn back around and see what he thought, but I knew that if I did, I wouldn't go back to my table, and this was my job. I would just have to see what else he had in store for me. This could be a very interesting trip.

**AN: So, she is in NY, Edward's home turf. I would love you hear your ideas on ways that he can romance her. Until next time. Translations are at the bottom.**

**Bella: Thank you very much. (Merci beaucoup)**

**Bella: Good evening, Laurent. How have you been?**  
(Bonsoir, Laurent. Comment avez-vous été)

**Laurent: Very well, Bella. Thank you for agreeing to take over.** (Très bien, Bella. Je vous remercie d'avoir accepté de prendre la relève)

**Bella: No problem. Irina, you look beautiful, as always.**  
(Pas de problème) (Irina, tu es magnifique, comme toujours)

**Irina: Thanks. (Merci)**

**Irina: Stupid woman. (Femme stupide)**

**Irina: Perhaps you know him, Bella. He is staring right at you. (Peut-être que vous le connaissez, Bella. Il este a regarder a droite a vous)**

**Bella: Excuse me for a minute. (Excusez-moi un instant)**

## 11. Chapter 11

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **BPOV**

I rolled over when the phone on the nightstand rang. I picked it up and muttered a hello into the receiver, only to have a recorded message in my ear telling me that it was my wake-up call. I hung up and rolled back over.

"Who in the hell ordered me a wake-up call at six in the morning?" I asked no one.

I was feeling the jet lag set in, but knew that I had to get up. I had been in New York for three days and had managed to wade through the mess that had been made of Laurent's book in a decent amount of time. At the rate I was going, I would only have to remain in town for about another week. I would still be here for Valentine's Day, but at least I had Alice and Edward to distract me.

Last year on the most romantic day of the year, Garrett had proposed. Cliché I know, but it had been perfect. Too bad the

relationship had been anything but.

Shaking off those thoughts, I stumbled out of bed and to the bathroom. I flipped on the shower and let the bathroom fill with steam while I stripped off my oversized T-shirt. Once I was inside, I shifted the temperature from scalding to comfortable and began my day.

Once I was dressed, I called room service and ordered breakfast. While I waited, I opened my laptop and pulled up Laurent's book. I had just gone over another chapter when there was a knock on my door. Expecting room service, I didn't look through the peephole to see who was on the other side.

Instead of the room service cart, I came face to face with Alice. "Ali? What are you doing here?"

Alice held up the brown bag and coffee cups. "Do I need an excuse to come see one of my best friends?"

I ducked my head sheepishly. "No. Sorry, come on in. It's so good to see you."

I closed the door and followed Alice over to the small living room and sat beside her on the couch as she spread our breakfast out on the coffee table.

We made small talk while we ate. Once I was full, I turned and looked at her over the edge of my coffee cup. "So how's the line coming?"

"Really good, actually. The fashion show was a success and I have several buyers interested." Alice smiled.

"Alice that's fantastic! I'm so happy for you."

"Thanks, Bella. I'm really sorry that I have been so preoccupied that I wasn't there when you needed me." Alice looked down at her lap, ashamed.

"Oh, Ali, I understand. No one expected me to go off the deep end – least of all me."

Alice looked at me, scrutinizing my expression. She leaned forward, put her cup down on the table, and then reached for my hands. "How are you doing, really?"

"I'm better. This time of year is a little hard, but I'll get through it."

"What do you mean?" Alice cocked her head at me.

"Garrett proposed to me on Valentine's Day last year. Then everything went to hell. I just want to bury my head and hide when that day gets here."

"Bella..." Alice started.

"I know if I do that then I will be right back where I was." I sighed.

"Bella, all you have to do is call us. One of us is always here for you." She grinned and I knew what was coming, "Now, tell

me what's going on with you and my brother."

I blushed and smiled. "I don't know, Alice, honestly. I like him - he makes me smile - but I'm not sure that I am ready to jump into another relationship."

Alice sighed before she spoke. "Bella, I know my brother. Edward would never push you into something that you weren't ready for. I need you to prepare yourself, though, because I think he is planning something for the two of you for Valentine's Day."

I had been afraid of this. Not that I didn't want to spend time with Edward, because I did. I just didn't want to build up his expectations and then have him be hurt.

"Alice, I..."

Alice just nodded like she knew what I was gonna say. "Bella, I know. Just talk to him, okay?"

I nodded. "I have to get to the office, but I'll talk to you later. We need to have dinner while I'm here."

"Why don't you come to the apartment around seven? Edward is working, so he won't be there; it'll be just us. Maybe we can Skype with Rose or something, too." Alice followed me to the elevator once I had grabbed my things.

I nodded. "Sounds like a plan. I'll call you later."

Alice and I parted ways once the elevator reached the lobby.

She hailed a cab, while I got into the car that was waiting for me at the curb.

The drive to the office was slow going in the morning traffic, but I still managed to beat Laurent to the building.

"Morning, Miss Swan. You have a couple of messages." Heidi, the receptionist, smiled as I walked in the door.

"Thank you." I took the slips of paper from her and walked to my temporary office. I shut the door, booted up my laptop, and sat down, quickly becoming engrossed.

A knock on the door broke me out of my trance. "Yeah?" The door opened and I looked up. "Hey, Carmen, what can I do for you?"

"Bella, you've been holed up in here for three hours. Come on, let's get some lunch."

Smiling, I shut everything down and then followed Carmen. "I'm surprised Laurent isn't holed up in there with you."

"He and Irina were called back to Paris. Some sort of emergency with her family," I explained as we entered a small café.

"Ah, how are things going with the novel?"

"Carmen, I'm not sure what Jessica did, but it wasn't any kind of editing. He has a good plot line going, though."

We made small talk for a while before heading back to the office. I shut myself back in and didn't come up for air until my phone beeped at me, indicating a new text.

*Come up for air yet? ~ R*

I laughed and began a reply.

*LOL! Just now. Thanks, I'm supposed to be at Alice's in half an hour. ~B*

*You better get over there then. I'm waiting with my computer. ~R*

*Okay, I'm going! ~B*

I switched off my computer and loaded everything into my messenger bag. Once I was ready, I turned out the lights and went to the elevator to catch a cab to Alice's.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

"Alice, I can't believe you!" I laughed.

"What?" Alice laughed innocently. "Jasper is hot!"

"Alice! That is my brother!" Rose laughed on the computer screen.

We had already gone through two bottles of wine and were working on a third. Rose had joined us, via internet, but obviously wasn't as drunk as we were. Alice and I had a case



of the giggles, while Rose, who had never been a big drinker, just laughed at us.

I wasn't sure how long it was, but Rose eventually had to go, and Alice went to the bathroom but never came back. I stumbled down the hall and found her passed out in her bed. Giggling some more, I went to the bathroom, did my business, and then stumbled back out to the couch, where I promptly passed out.

I woke when I felt my body lifted from the couch and moved. I didn't go very far before I was settled again on a different, yet softer surface. I groaned and then turned into the pillow. Warm breath caressed my cheek before I drifted again.

I woke with a start when the sun hit my eyes. I sat up quickly and groaned, holding a hand to my head.

"Morning, sunshine!" a velvet voice sounded from the doorway.

I groaned and lay back down, pulling a pillow over my head. "Go away," I mumbled.

"Come on, Sweet girl, I come bearing coffee and aspirin," Edward chuckled.

I felt his weight settle on the bed and he gently pried the pillow from over my head. I rolled over and looked at him. "How did I get here?"

"Where? Here?" I nodded. "I carried you in here when I came home last night. You didn't look comfortable on the couch, so I put you in my room."

"Thanks." I sat up slowly and took the coffee and pills that he had for me. "Edward, you didn't have to give up your bed."

He grinned. "Shut up and take your pills. Then come out and have some breakfast."

"Okay. I'll be there in a minute." He nodded and then left the room.

I watched him walk away and wondered how much longer I was going to be able to fight the attraction. I didn't want to fight it anymore, but I still needed time. I didn't want Edward to be my rebound romance. I could see him as my future – and that scared the hell out of me.

**AN: Leave me some love. Until next time.**

## 12. Chapter 12

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **RPOV**

I am bored! Mostly because I miss Bella and I am lonely. Jasper just flew to New York to surprise Alice for Valentine's Day, and Bella was still there for another week or two.

I sat at the counter in the front of my shop and waited for the rush. The day before Valentine's, I always had male and female shoppers. Women wanted that extra something sexy to surprise their men. The men would come in and try to find the sleaziest lingerie they could find, because that's what they wanted to see on their wives or girlfriends. Men are so stupid!

Thanks to Muzak, I had romantic love songs piping throughout my shop and candles burning – an attempt at romance. I was hoping that the right ambiance would allow for more money to be spent.

*Devine Designs* had been my brain child since I was eighteen. I had wanted a place where I could choose what the styles

and the sizes were. I knew that not every woman in the world was a stick, and that bigger girls liked to be sexy, too.

I looked up from my musings as the chime above my door sounded. I was in no way prepared for the man that crossed the threshold.

"Emmett?"

Emmett grinned at me and strolled toward me. Leaning across the counter, he pressed his lips to my cheek. "Hello, Gorgeous."

I was stunned. "What are you doing here?"

"Aren't you happy to see me, Rosie?" Emmett's blue eyes met mine.

"Of course I am, but what about your classes? You've taken a lot of time off lately."

"Rosalie Lillian Hale, I wanted to see you. I took three personal days; they can live without me for that period of time. Now, how about giving me a proper hello?" He stood back and opened his arms.

Grinning, I leapt from the counter and launched myself at him. I sighed once my lips were against his, finally feeling at home. Who would have thought that I would fall for my best friend's brother?

~G~l~a~s~s~

## APOV

I crumpled yet another piece of paper and launched it at the wall. Unfortunately, I missed and hit my brother instead.

"Alice!" Edward's head snapped to me. "I am trying to clean this place up! Will you knock it off, please!?"

"I'm sorry, Edward. I just can't get this design right and I have to have it by tomorrow," I whined.

I watched my brother walk toward me with a pile of crumpled paper in his hands. Edward dropped them all on the table before me, and slowly smoothed each one out. He examined each piece before looking at me. "Can you tell me exactly what is wrong with all of these? They look fine to me."

I huffed loudly. "Edward you are such a guy! They don't look right at all!" I looked away from him and went back to my sketch book, once again getting lost in my design.

I was so lost in my world of fashion that I didn't even realize that the doorbell had rung until I noticed a shadow fall across my paper. Without looking up, I waved my hand at Edward. "Go away, Edward!"

"Sorry, Darlin', no can do."

I looked up at the sound of that drawl and met the cool blue gaze of Jasper. "Jazzy?"

"Hey, Sugar."

I squealed and jumped up from the table and into his waiting arms, planting kisses all over his face before finally meeting his lips. We were so focused on each other that we never heard Edward leave.

~G~l~a~s~s~

## **EPOV**

After leaving my sister in Jasper's capable hands, I headed to the hotel where Bella was staying. I had a deal worked with hotel management and had been able to gain access to an empty room that was three doors away from Bella. I had Maggie meet me there with the meal that I had prepared, and she helped me set it up.

I was taking a huge risk with my kitchen, but I knew that she could handle it. She was ready.

"Thanks, Mags. Sorry about leaving you tonight, especially since it's Valentine's Day..."

Maggie held up her hand to stop me. "Don't sweat it, Edward. I can handle it. This is what you have trained me for."

I nodded, smiled and thanked her again before sending her on her way. I pulled out my phone and sent Bella a text confirming what time I would pick her up.

*Hey, beautiful! Just making sure that we are still on for 6? ~E*

Her response was almost immediate.

*Hey. I'm gonna try, but I am swamped. Laurent came back this morning. ~B*

I felt my heart sink. I had put a lot of work into this evening, but maybe it was too soon for her. I was quickly falling for her, but I had noticed in the last week that she had been pulling away from me.

*Edward? ~B*

When her message came through, I realized that I hadn't said anything back to her. I wanted to play it off like it was no big deal, but it was. I wanted to wine and dine her. She deserved some romance after what that idiot had done to her. Swallowing my pride, I texted her back.

*Bella, if this isn't what you want tell me now. I'll back off. ~E*

## **BPOV**

I sighed when I read Edward's last text. I did want him, but I was afraid that it was too soon. I knew that my relationship with Garrett had been over a long time ago, and I knew that he had left me long before I had let him go, but I just didn't feel ready to jump into something with the man that was quickly becoming a part of my heart.

"Qu'est-ce qui vous préoccupe, Bella?"

I looked up at Laurent and sighed. I wondered if I should tell him. I needed someone to talk to, but my best friends were unavailable. Emmett had gone to California to surprise Rose, and I knew that Jasper had flown in to be with Alice.

I sighed again, "Vous rappelez-vous l'homme du restaurant?" Laurent nodded, so I continued. "Il a fait des plans pour nous ce soir. Je ne suis pas sûr que je suis prêt à commencer à quelque chose de si peu de temps après la mort de mon fiancé."

Laurent actually stood up and placed his palms down in front of me on the desk. "Isabella, sortez votre cul de cette chaise et aller mettre une robe et laisser vos cheveux vers le bas. Qui a dit que vous aviez à sauter dans le lit avec cet homme?"

I smiled at him. "Oui, Monsieur!" I mock saluted him before I rose and we shut everything down for the night.

I sent Edward a quick text and let him know that I was on my way.

*I'll be there soon. We need to talk. ~B*

His response was almost immediate.

*Okay. I'm in the lobby. ~E*

I smiled and hurried out to the car that was waiting for me. The drive back to the hotel didn't take long since there was almost no traffic – something unheard of in New York. When



the car pulled up to the place that had been my home the last few weeks, I quickly got out and headed inside.

I saw Edward when I walked in and felt my panties get damp at the sight of him. He was wearing a black Armani suit with a red tie. I knew that it would match my dress perfectly, and couldn't help but wonder what he had planned.

Edward smiled when he spotted me and stood up, heading in my direction. "Hey."

"Hi, sorry I'm late."

"You're not late. We have plenty of time." He led me to the elevators and we silently rode up to my floor.

When we got to my room, I invited him in and told him to have a seat while I went to get ready. I pulled the red sheath dress with the twisted lace front out of the closet and laid it gently across the bed. I went in to the en suite and stripped before getting in the shower.

Once the grime of the work day had washed down the drain, I stepped out and set about styling my hair in loose waves and putting on a little make-up. Once I was satisfied that I didn't look like I was trying too hard, I slipped on my panties before I put on my dress. I looked in the full length mirror and thought that I looked very...sexy, although I wasn't trying for that.

Not able to hide any longer, I stepped out of the room and heard Edward's sharp intake of breath.

"Bella...you, umm...wow!" Edward stuttered.

I smiled. "Thanks." I started for the door. "Should we go?"

Edward nodded, "Yeah, but we aren't going far." I looked at him with confusion on my face. "Just trust me."

I nodded and followed him out the door. Instead of turning toward the elevators, he headed the opposite way and stopped three doors down.

"Edward...what?"

"Trust me," he pleaded. He opened the door and allowed me to enter first.

What I saw took my breath away. Edward had lit candles on every surface. A small table was in the center of the room, set for two. The intimate setting brought tears to my eyes – not just at the gesture, but at the thought that he was trying so hard to romance me and I wasn't ready.

"Edward..."

"I know, Bella. But just let me pamper you for one night, okay?"

I turned and looked into his sparkling emerald eyes and knew that this was going to not only be the easiest time I spent with him, but also the hardest.

**AN: Oh, no. What is going on in her head? Guess you'll**

**have to read the next chapter to find out. Until next time, leave me some love.**

**Translations:**

**Laurent: What is troubling you, Bella? (Qu'est-ce qui vous préoccupe, Bella?)**

**Bella: Do you remember the man from the restaurant? (Vous rappelez-vous l'homme du restaurant?)**

**He has made plans for us this evening. I'm just not sure that I am ready to start something so soon after the death of my fiancé. (Il a fait des plans pour nous ce soir. Je ne suis pas sûr que je suis prêt à commencer à quelque chose de si peu de temps après la mort de mon fiancé.)**

**Laurent: Isabella, get your ass out of that chair and go put on a dress and let you hair down. Who said that you had to jump in bed with this man? (Isabella, sortez votre cul de cette chaise et aller mettre une robe et laisser vos cheveux vers le bas. Qui a dit que vous aviez à sauter dans le lit avec cet homme?)**

**Bella: Yes, Sir! (Oui, Monsieur!)**

## 13. Chapter 13

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**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **BPOV**

I rolled over at the sound of my alarm and hit the clock to turn it off. I turned back on to my back and stared at my ceiling. I had been at home for a week now and still couldn't get the look on Edward's face out of my mind. Every time I thought about the words I said and his reaction, I wanted to reel them back in and start over. But I couldn't.

Rather than lay in bed and wallow all day like I wanted, I got up and took a shower and got dressed. I was supposed to meet my mother for breakfast at nine, and I would be pushing it to get there on time.

After I was satisfied that I at least looked presentable, I left my house. When I pulled up to the restaurant, I saw my mother through the window, already seated. After I parked, I quickly walked in and joined her.

"Sorry I'm late, Mom." I leaned down to kiss her cheek before

I sat down.

"It's okay, Izzie, I just got here myself." She smiled at me.

We talked while we ate. I knew that it wouldn't be long until she asked about any men, and she didn't disappoint.

"So, how was New York? Did you see that young man while you were there?"

"Yes, Mom. I saw Edward and Alice while I was there."

Watching the expression on my mother's face was hilarious. It was like she wasn't expecting me to mention one of my best friends.

"And how is Edward?"

"Not obvious at all, Mom," I giggled.

"Well? Don't leave me in suspense."

I shrugged. "I assume that he is fine. He and I aren't really talking a whole lot right now."

"Why? What happened?"

I was quiet for a moment before I spilled everything. My mother may be nosy and she may also be a drama queen, but the one thing that she cares about is her children's happiness.

I told her about him kissing me two months ago, about the

airport, all of it. I then told her about the disaster that had become Valentine's Day. "He set up this romantic dinner, Mom. It was beautiful. Then I ruined everything."

"Oh, Izzie, Honey, what happened?"

"I told him that while I was developing feelings for him, I thought we needed to slow things down. Mom, Garrett really hurt me and I just don't want to jump into anything. I don't want Edward to be my rebound. I can see a future with him, and that scares the hell out of me."

"Did you tell him all of that?"

I nodded, "Yes and he...God, Mom – the hurt that was in his eyes just about broke me. I never want to hurt him, but I need to know that I am completely ready before I get too involved with someone else."

"I understand that, Sweetheart, but I think that you're selling yourself short. You and Garrett were over a long time ago. He left you before he left this earth, Izzie. I know that's not what you want to hear, but it's the truth."

"I know." I looked out the window before I told her, "I have a date tonight."

"WHAT!?! With whom?" I could hear the shock in Renee's voice.

"Mom, lower your voice!" I hissed.

"Sorry, but with whom?"

"Emmett has a friend at work who has been pestering him for a date with me, and therefore Em has been bugging me. I finally agreed just to shut him up."

"Izzie, this can lead to nothing good. Edward is bound to find out, Sweetie."

"He would have to talk to me first, Mom." I let the subject drop and we finished our breakfast before going our separate ways.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

I stood in front of my closet and pondered what to wear. *Do I really want this guy to think that I am trying?* I knew the answer to that was a resounding...no.

I picked up my phone and called the one person that I could always count on. She answered on the second ring.

"Hello, gorgeous."

"Rose, I am in big trouble."

"What's the matter, Bella?"

I sighed and sank down on my bed. "I have a date tonight."

I had to pull the phone away from my ear at her reaction.

"You have a WHAT!"

"You heard me."

"Bella, what about Edward?"

I groaned. "Rose, Edward won't talk to me. After what I said to him on Valentine's Day, I wouldn't be surprised if he never spoke to me again."

"Bella, all you told him is that you weren't ready. But, Sweetie, what are you gonna do when he finds out about tonight? This is gonna hurt him even more."

"Rose, this is me trying. I'm trying to be open to another man – trying to be open to Edward. I need a kick start. I don't have a good feeling about tonight, though. I think that this guy I'm going to dinner with has been a little overzealous. Something seems off here."

I never could understand why Benjamin was so insistent that we go out. Something seemed off, and even Emmett questioned him about it. This is why he was going to the restaurant tonight, to keep an eye on him and to protect me.

"Bella! If you think something is off with this guy..."

"Don't worry, Rose. Emmett is gonna be there. If anything happens, he'll know about it."

"I don't like it, Bella. You need to call Edward and let him know what's going on in your head."



I nodded silently. "Okay, Rose. I gotta go."

"Okay. I love you, Bella. Be careful."

"I will. Love you, too!"

We hung up and I immediately dialed Edward. I hoped that he answered this time.

"Hello?"

"Hi." I smiled.

"Hey, Bella." Edward's voice sounded sad and there was something else that I couldn't put my finger on.

"How are you?"

"Umm, I'm okay. Busy. Work, you know." He sighed. "Was there something you needed?"

"Edward, please don't be like this. I told you that I wasn't ready for a relationship, not that I didn't want you in my life."

"I can't talk about this now, Bella. I have to go."

"Edward wai..." He hung up before I could say anything.  
"Dammit!"

Instead of laying in my bed and dwelling on the fact that he wouldn't talk to me, I got up, got dressed, and decided that I would let someone else distract me.

## ~G~l~a~s~s~

I sat in the restaurant and tried to carry on a conversation with Benjamin Fields. He worked with my brother, teaching history. I found out that he had just been dumped by his girlfriend of five years on the night that he planned to propose.

"So you're telling me that it's only been a month since you and Tia split up, but you feel that you're ready to date again?" I was shocked.

"Sure, I mean, it's her loss, right?" he commented as his eyes looked anywhere but at me.

I looked around the restaurant and found Emmett. He looked pissed. I looked around further and found a beautiful young woman shooting daggers in my direction. I turned back to Benjamin and found that he was staring at her.

Suddenly everything seemed clear to me. I was a pawn in his scheme to make his ex jealous. I sat back and stared at him while the anger inside me grew. Why? Why would I choose to go out with this asshole when I could have been with Edward?

I decided that I deserved better than this bullshit, so picking up my wine glass, I leaned forward and hissed at Benjamin. "You little prick! Who the hell do you think you are? Did you really think that bringing another woman to the restaurant where your ex works would help you get her back?" He blinked and looked at me with wide eyes. "Oh, you did. That's sick."

I stood up and tossed the contents of my glass in to his face and smiled as he sputtered. Droplets of red wine dripped to his white shirt. "You bi..."

"Watch it! You know that you deserve that and so much more. I have a feeling that the 'more' will be coming from my brother. Thanks for dinner, asshole!" I turned from the table and stormed out of the restaurant with my brother on my heels.

"I'm so sorry, Bella. I had no idea."

"It's okay, Emmett. Can you just take me home, please?"

"Sure, Bells." He led me to his car and then we set off toward my house. "Umm, Bella, I don't know how to tell you this, but uh, Edward called me. He said you weren't answering your phone. I told him that you were on a date."

"You did WHAT?! Emmett, please tell me that you are joking! Please!"

"I'm sorry, Bella."

"Why now? He hasn't wanted to talk to me since I came home from New York. I finally talked to him today, but he hung up on me. Now...now he wants to talk and my bonehead brother tells him that I am on a date!"

Emmett didn't say a word – he just drove. I pulled my cell phone out of my purse and sure, enough Edward had called

three times.

I pulled up his name and pressed send. It rang and rang until I finally got his voicemail. I didn't leave a message, instead hanging up. I decided to text him to see if I got any response.

*Edward, please! It isn't what you think! Call me! ~ B*

By the time Emmett pulled up to my house, I still hadn't received a response. I thanked my brother and then went into my house. The first thing I did was open my computer and pray that Rose was on.

**BSwan:** Rose, I screwed up!

It didn't take long before I saw her typing a message back.

**RHale:** What happened?

So I told her. I told her how I was used, and about Edward calling Emmett and what the doofus had told him.

**BSwan:** Rose, he won't answer my calls and he won't respond to my texts.

**RHale:** Have you tried to call Alice? Maybe she could help.

**BSwan:** No, give me a sec. I'll try her now.

I dialed Alice's number and she picked up on the first ring.

"Bella?"

"Alice, where is he?"

"He went flying out of here after he talked to Emmett. What the hell is going on?"

"Long story short, I went out to dinner with a guy that Emmett works with as a favor to Em. I was being used to make the man's ex jealous. Emmett had no idea and told Edward that I was on a date."

"Oh no, Bella. Have you tried calling him?"

"He won't answer me, Alice! I don't know what to do!"

"Okay, calm down. I'll find him and explain. Are you going to be home?"

"Only until tomorrow. I am taking a much needed vacation. I have to get out of here, Alice!"

"Okay. Where are you going?"

"I'll be in California. I'm gonna stay with Rose for a while."

"Alright. Bella, don't worry, okay? I'll find him and let him know."

"Thanks, Alice."

When we hung up, I turned back to the computer and told Rose what Alice had said.

**BSwan:** Alice is gonna find him and tell him what happened.

**RHale:** That's good then. See, everything will be fine.

**BSwan:** Feel like some company?

**RHale:** Sure, when?

**BSwan:** I'll try to get a flight out tomorrow. I need to get out of here for a while.

**RHale:** Just let me know when you'll be getting here and I'll pick you up at LAX.

**BSwan:** Thanks, Rose. Talk to you soon. Love you!

**RHale:** Love you, too.

We signed off and I went to my room. Before I turned in for the night, I sent Edward one last text.

*Please don't give up on me. ~B*

**AN: So, she made a mistake. Let's not count her out just yet. Remember, she's scared. Next chapter will make up for it, and there will be a lemon soon! Until next time, leave me some love.**

## 14. Chapter 14

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **EPOV**

She had a date! How could she do that? I know that she said that she wasn't ready for a relationship and that she wanted us to slow down, but I never would have thought that she would go out with someone else. I am so angry with her.

After I stormed out of my apartment, I found myself in the one place that would calm me down – my kitchen. I pulled ingredients out of the refrigerator and cabinets and just started making things. It was all mechanical for me. I found myself calming down and was able to think about things rationally, at least until my phone chimed with a text.

*Edward, please! It isn't what you think! Call me! ~ B*

I slammed my knife onto the cutting board and growled at my phone. Not what I think?! What a crock of shit! "You went on a date with someone else!" I screamed out in frustration.

I wasn't sure how much time had passed while I was working off my anger and hurt, but Alice eventually walked in.

"I've been looking all over for you."

"Well, now you found me. You can run along and tell your *friend!*" I sneered.

"Edward! Don't take this out on me, and don't take it out on Bella. She was a victim in a cruel game."

I looked up at my sister for the first time since she walked in my kitchen. "What are you talking about, Alice?"

"Emmett set her up with a guy that works with him at the high school. He should have known that something was up because I guess he had begged and begged for weeks to go out with her."

"Alice get to the point, please."

"Sorry! Anyway, I guess he only wanted to go out with Bella so that he could make his ex-girlfriend jealous. She is a waitress at the restaurant he took Bella to. Bella at least had the foresight to have Emmett be there watching so she had a ride home after she threw her drink in his face."

"Okay, but Alice, that doesn't mean anything. She still went out with someone else. After everything she told me when she was here, she went out with someone other than me."

"Edward! You are missing the point! She has feelings for you



and that scares her. She buried her fiancé, who was cheating on her, not even eight months ago. I don't blame her."

"Alice, I just don't know how much I can take." I sighed.

"What do you mean?" Alice wanted to know.

I looked up and met the eyes that matched mine. "I'm in love with her, Alice." I had barely admitted it to myself, let alone anyone else, but this was Alice and I knew that I could trust her.

"Oh, Edward," Alice sighed. "Don't give up on her yet, okay?"

I nodded and turned back to the food that I had been making. I decided to wrap it all up and freeze it. Maggie could do something with it later. I needed a break and decided that it was time that I move on. Maybe I would open the restaurant that I always wanted. I was getting bored here at Raoul's, anyway.

I had just turned out the last of the lights and was leading Alice out when my phone chimed with another text. I pulled it out of my pocket and saw that it was from Bella. I didn't hesitate to open it.

*Please don't give up on me. ~B*

I smiled. At least there was still a chance.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

## **BPOV**

My flight from DIA to LAX was smooth and quiet. I had a window seat and no flying partner, so I had plenty of time to think. Edward had never responded to any of my texts, but Alice told me that she found him and that they talked. I just wished he would talk to me.

I had texted him before my flight left and told him that I was taking a vacation. I didn't tell him where I was headed, though. If he wanted to know, he needed to call me.

I was excited when the plane touched down. I had only been to California once, and that had been years ago. I was also happy to see my friend.

I followed the flow of passengers through the airport and toward baggage claim. I grabbed my two suitcases as they came around the conveyer and turned to head where Rose said she would meet me.

I heard her before I saw her. "Bella!" I looked around and saw her waving her arms while jumping up and down. I laughed because she was getting some looks – some appreciative, some not.

I walked over to her still laughing, "Rose! Stop jumping; you'll give yourself a black eye!"

She glared at me and then cracked up. I dropped my suitcases as she drew me in for a hug.

"I missed you, gorgeous!"

"I missed you, too, beautiful!"

We pulled apart and she helped me carry by bags out to her car. I was surprised that it was waiting by the curb, but smiled when I saw Jasper behind the wheel.

"Hey, Bells!"

"Hey, Jazz!" I climbed in and we took off down the road. Rose turned in her seat to talk to me.

"Have you heard from him?"

I shook my head. "I texted him before the plane took off. I haven't turned my phone back on, though. I'm afraid that there won't be anything there."

"Isabella Marie Swan, turn your phone on right now," Rose ordered. "He could have texted or called."

I reached for my purse, took out my phone, and turned it on. I looked at Rose when nothing came up. "I told you. I blew it, Rose. I hate this!"

"Bella, listen, from a guy's perspective you haven't blown anything. Edward just needs to deal with the feelings that he is having for you and about the situation that he is finding himself in. He wants to be with you, but he wants to respect your boundaries. He also doesn't get why Emmett would set you up with someone who would use you. He's torn between

being mad at Emmett and being mad at you," Jasper explained.

"Okay, I get that Jasper, but he won't even let me explain. I know that Alice told him what happened, so why won't he talk to me?" I wanted to cry. I missed Edward – more than I thought I would.

"Bella, how do you feel about Edward?" Rosalie asked.

"I don't know. I miss him. He's easy to talk to. I think I'm falling for him, Rose."

"That's what I thought." Rose turned back around and the rest of the drive was silent.

I stared out the window and watched the scenery pass us by, not really seeing any of it. I picked my phone back up and sent him one more message. I would leave the ball in his court.

*I'm in Cali with Rose and Jazz. Please talk to me. If I don't hear from you, then I won't text again. I miss you! ~B*

I pressed send and then put my phone away.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

Jasper pulled into a long winding driveway about an hour later. When he stopped, I gasped. "Rose, I knew that your house was beautiful, but you didn't tell me it was huge!"

"Yeah, the shop is doing well and Jasper has some high profile clients, so we were able to afford a nice place."

I stared slack-jawed at the structure before me. Lush greens and vibrant colors lined the sidewalks up to the front door. The windows sparkled in the sunlight and made you want to sit outside and stare. I couldn't wait to see the inside.

"Come on, Bells. Let's get you settled." Jasper took my luggage inside and I followed Rose, still gazing at the beauty around me.

The inside was just as beautiful as the outside. Spacious and bright and very welcoming. Plush cushions on the couch that a body could sink into, and a chair that matched. There were oversized throw pillows on the floor by the fireplace that looked as though it had never been used.

I walked behind Jasper as he led me up a large staircase and down a long hallway. He stopped at one door and opened it to reveal a beautifully decorated guest room.

"This is where you'll be staying, Bells," Jasper commented as he placed my luggage on the floor beside the bed. "I'll let you get settled. Rose and I want to take you to dinner, so get freshened up. We'll leave in about thirty minutes."

"Okay. Thanks, Jazz," I smiled before looking around the room.

I sat on the white duvet and lay back, taking in the opulence

around me. I could get used to this. My phone beeped at me indicating a text, and I sat up quickly to grab it. I saw that it was from Edward. Finally!

*I miss you, too. ~E*

It wasn't much, but it was enough – for now.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

## **RPOV**

While Jasper showed Bella to her room, I went into the kitchen and picked up the phone. I was gonna put a stop to this shit now!

I dialed and waited, and he finally answered on the fourth ring.

"Hello?"

"I want to know exactly what you think you are doing to her."

"Hello to you, too, Rose."

"Don't give me that shit, Edward. What the hell is your problem?"

"Nothing, Rosalie. It's something that Bella and I have to work out on our own."

"Really? 'Cause the girl that I just picked up from the airport looks worse than she did after Garrett died. You need to get

your ass on a plane and get out here. Tonight!"

I heard Edward sigh into the receiver. "She looks that bad?"

"Are you kidding me? You haven't talked to her for weeks! She loves you, you dope! She may not realize it yet, but she does. You need to fix this! I want my happy friend back, not her depressed replacement."

"Okay, Rose, okay. I'll be on the next flight. Don't tell her that I'm coming, though."

"I won't." I hung up the phone just as Jasper came in the kitchen.

"Is he coming?"

I nodded. "He said he would catch the next flight out. She looks terrible, Jazz. I hope that he can fix her."

"He loves her, Rose. It will all work out. Why don't you call Emmett and I'll call Alice, and we can get them out here, too. We could all use some fun."

"Great idea. Em is starting spring break, so it shouldn't be a problem for him." I looked at my brother then. "How long are we all gonna live like this?"

"Like what?" Jasper asked.

"So far away from the loves of our lives?"

"I don't know, Sis. I'll tell you this, though, it won't be for long."

I watched Jasper leave the kitchen to go get ready for dinner, and hoped that he was right.

**AN: Rose is demanding isn't she? Do you think that her plan will work? There might be a lemon in your future. Until next time, leave me some love.**



## 15. Chapter 15

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

**BPOV**

After I received Edward's text, I felt some of the tension leaving my body. I heard a noise in the doorway and looked up, spotting Rose standing there with her arms crossed.

"What's up?"

"Are you ready to go get something to eat?"

"Do we have reservations somewhere?" I wondered.

"No, why?" Rose grinned.

"I think I would like to shower and get the travel grime off of me. Give me an hour to get ready?"

"You got it. Cleaning up sounds good – I think I'll shower, too."

I lifted my suitcase on to the bed as Rose walked away. I

pulled out a clean bra and matching boy shorts before walking to the adjoining bathroom and turning on the shower.

After a nice warm shower, I felt refreshed, so I stepped out and dried off. Once I had my undergarments on, I wiped the condensation from the mirror and took in my reflection. I sighed at the person looking back at me. I had deep, dark circles under my eyes from lack of sleep. I could tell that I had dropped weight, and knew that it was time to make a change. I couldn't keep living like this. It was time.

~G~l~a~s~s~

Jasper, Rose, and I walked into the Olive Garden and were immediately seated. We all ordered some wine to go with our meals, and since we already knew what we wanted, our orders were taken quickly.

During dinner, conversation flowed freely. Between Jasper and his off-color jokes, and Rose telling tales of their childhood, I was in stitches the whole time. I couldn't remember when I had laughed that hard. It wasn't until we ordered dessert and coffee that the conversation took a different turn.

"Bella, be honest with me for a minute, okay?" Rose started.

"Okay...I'll do my best," I told her as I sipped my coffee.

"Are you ready for a relationship?"

I was quiet for a minute, thinking about the best way to respond. I finally sat my cup down softly and leaned back in my chair, looking my friend in the eyes. "Yes, Rose, I am. I'm not scared of being with someone – of being with Edward. I'm assuming you're asking about him."

I watched her head bob at my comment.

"Then what are you afraid of?" Jasper wanted to know.

"I'm afraid because the feelings I have for Edward have come on so quickly. Everything that I feel for him is ten times stronger than anything I ever felt for Garrett." I lifted my cup to my lips and took a sip before continuing. "That gets me thinking, you know. If after eight months I already feel more for Edward, then did I ever really love Garrett?"

"Bella, I think you did love Garrett...in some way, at least. But, Sweetie, his betrayal has made you question everything – every touch, every look, and every word. Bella, honey, Edward isn't Garrett; he would never betray you like that."

I nodded but looked away, officially calling a close the conversation.

Trying to lighten the mood, Rose decided that we needed to go dancing. After settling our bill, we left the restaurant and headed to a local club.

Jasper got us a table and some drinks while Rose and I joined the sweaty bodies on the dance floor that were swaying to

the beat. We danced and giggled until our bodies were coated in sweat and our throats were dry. When we arrived back at the table, I quickly downed the drink that Jasper had waiting for me while I signaled a passing waitress for another.

"Pace yourself, Bella," Jasper chuckled. "I don't want to carry you out of here."

I laughed as my new drink was delivered. "I'll be fine, Jazz."

Rose and I sat down to catch our breaths and cool off. As we were talking, a slow song came over the speakers. I sat there and let them talk while I let the lyrics wash over me.

*Trying to live and love  
With a heart that can't be broken,  
Is like trying to see the light with eyes that can't be opened.  
Yeah, we both carry baggage,  
We picked up on our way, so if you love me do it gently,  
And I will do the same.*

*We may shine, we may shatter,  
We may be picking up the pieces here on after,  
We are fragile, we are human,  
We are shaped by the light we let through us,  
We break fast, 'cause we are glass.  
Cause we are glass.*

*I'll let you look inside me, through the stains and through the cracks,*

*And in the darkness of this moment,  
You see the good and bad.  
But try not to judge me, 'cause we've walked down different  
paths,  
But it brought us here together, so I won't take that back.*

I must have had a look on my face because Rose was suddenly in front of me. "Bella? Are you okay?" Rose grabbed my hands.

I blinked and looked in to her blue eyes. "Yeah...uh, yeah. I'm fine, Rose. Listen to this song, though."

Rose was silent while she listened. "Yeah, okay, I've heard it. What about it?"

"Rose! Don't you see? This song sums up my entire relationship with Edward! This is us, Rosalie!" My voice kept rising.

Rose looked shocked as she listened harder. "Oh my...Bella, you're right!"

"Rose, we need to leave! Now!" I started searching for my purse. "I need to call him! Where's my phone? We need to go; I need to fly to New York."

I was panicking as I stood up, not paying any attention until I slammed into a hard body. I looked up, ready to apologize, but found I was unable to speak. I was looking in to the emerald eyes of Edward.

"Whe...wha...how?" I stuttered.

Edward smiled softly and brushed a wayward strand of hair behind my ear. I closed my eyes at his touch. When I opened them again, he was staring intently at my face.

"Rose called me and told me I needed to catch the first flight out. Luckily for me, there was one seat left on a flight that was already boarding."

I looked over at Rose to see her smiling at me. I turned back to Edward, still wondering how he knew where we were.

"How did you know that we were here?"

Jasper chuckled, bringing my attention to him. "Edward called me when he landed; I told him where we were."

I turned and looked at the two people who were responsible for getting him here. "Thank you. Both of you."

Rose pulled me into a hug while Jasper handed Edward the keys to his car and the house. Rose pulled back and looked me in the eye. "You two go back to the house and talk. Jasper and I are gonna go to the airport to pick up Em and Ali." She hugged me again before whispering in my ear. "Love you, Bells."

"Love you, too, Rose," I whispered.

Rose pulled away and then she and Jasper left. I turned and looked at the man who was staring at me – the pain and

sadness still in his eyes. I walked over to him and grabbed his hand. "Come on, Edward. We have a lot to talk about."

He followed me silently and helped me in to Jasper's car before going around and getting inside. We drove in silence until I couldn't take it anymore.

"Are you gonna give me the silent treatment while we're in the same state, as well?"

"Bella, just let me get us to the house safely and then I will talk until I am blue in the face," Edward told me quietly.

I just nodded and stared out the window, feeling further away from him than I had when he was in New York.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

When we pulled up to the house, I got out and made my way to the front door. Edward was right behind me. He unlocked the door, his arm brushing my side in the process. I headed straight for the kitchen when we walked in, intent on starting a pot of coffee, but Edward stopped me.

"Bella, stop. I don't want any coffee. Let's just sit down and talk. I need to say a few things." I nodded and followed him out to the living room.

I sat down on the couch while he took the chair opposite me. I sighed and sat back.

"Why'd you do it, Bella?" Edward asked sadly.

"I did it as a favor to my brother." I looked at him.

"Bullshit, Bella. You had to have had another reason."

I looked down at the floor, afraid to meet his eyes. "I'm scared, Edward." I held up my hand, stopping him before he could say anything. "I was with Garrett for four years. I had no idea when he proposed that we were already living a lie. When he died, I thought that I would never find someone who would love me and only me. And then I met you. The attraction was instantaneous and I didn't know how to deal with that.

"I have watched my friends have relationships only to have them go sour because of the curse of the rebound. I didn't want that with you. The more we talked and got to know one another, the stronger my feelings became. I was so afraid that something would happen, and I would lose the best thing that ever happened to me.

"So I went out with another man, who decided to use me in his plot for revenge. I am tired, Edward – tired of being used and tired of being forgotten. I want to be loved. I'm ready to be loved, because I love..." I stopped my tirade and looked him in the eyes while the tears leaked from mine. "I love you, Edward."

I watched in silence – having said all I needed to say – as Edward put his head in his hands. "Bella, I..."

I knew then that I was too late. I had already lost him. I



choked back a sob and stood up, making my way from the room and my humiliation. Arms wrapping around my waist stopped me before I got to the first step.

"Bella, stop, please," Edward pleaded, his voice thick with emotion.

I slowly turned around but didn't meet his eyes until he placed his hand under my chin and gently lifted my face to his.

"Stop running from me. You laid a lot at my feet over there. You have to give me a minute to process it all." Edward gently wiped the tears from my cheeks with his thumbs as he spoke. "I understand why you thought the way that you did. Next time, talk to me. We won't make it if we don't communicate and I...I love you too much to fail now."

My breathing hitched at his words. "Say it again," I whispered.

Edward smiled, ghosting his lips across mine. "I love you, Bella."

After his whispered declaration, his lips met mine in a passionate, yet loving and gentle kiss. I could feel it in my toes and felt the heat that rushed to my core.

Edward picked me up bridal style and carried me to my room, his lips never leaving mine.

**AN: They talked and they confessed. What's next?  
Remember, reviews get a teaser. Until next time.**



## 16. Chapter 16

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **RPOV**

I reluctantly followed Jasper out of the club. A part of me felt like I was ditching my best friend, but the other part knew that if she was ever gonna be happy with Edward, then they needed to talk – alone.

"Come on, Ro. She'll be fine," Jasper urged.

"I know that, J."

Jasper hit the button on my key ring, unlocking my black Porsche Cayenne. We had driven it over before picking Bella up from the airport, having already planned to have Edward get out here.

"What time does Alice's flight land?"

Jasper looked at his watch before answering me. "In about an hour. What about Emmett's?"

"The same," I said while fastening my seat belt. "Let's get to LAX; I need to give that big oaf a piece of my mind."

Jasper chuckled, then put the car in gear and headed to the airport. The ride was silent for the most part. Occasionally Jasper would ask about Emmett or I would ask about Alice, and we both found it hard to believe that we had found our other halves from a friendship that I had made through my love of reading.

Half an hour after we left, we arrived at the airport. After we parked my car away from the other cars, we headed inside and looked at the arrivals board.

"What airline is Emmett coming in on?"

"American," I replied without looking at him.

"Alice is, too. We need to head to terminal four."

I just nodded and followed Jasper, all the while wondering how Bella and Edward were fairing.

**~G~l~a~s~s~**

**EPOV**

"So I went out with another man, who decided to use me in his plot for revenge. I am tired, Edward – tired of being used and tired of being forgotten. I want to be loved. I'm ready to be loved, because I love..." Bella stopped her tirade and looked me in the eyes while the tears leaked from hers. "I

love you, Edward."

Hearing Bella tell me that she loved me, along with everything else that she had just laid on me, was a little overwhelming. I cradled my head in my hands, "Bella, I..."

I heard movement and raised my head in time to see Bella fleeing from the room. Refusing to let her run again, I went after her and caught her before she could get to the steps. I wrapped my arms around her from behind and pulled her to me.

"Bella, stop, please," I pleaded, my voice heavy with the emotions I was trying hard to suppress. I watched as she slowly turned in my arms but wouldn't meet my eyes. I gently placed my hand on her chin and lifted her face to mine.

I watched her carefully before I spoke. "Stop running from me. You laid a lot at my feet over there. You have to give me a minute to process it all." I gently wiped the tears from her cheeks with my thumbs as I spoke. "I understand why you thought the way that you did. Next time, talk to me. We won't make it if we don't communicate and I...I love you too much to fail now."

I exhaled, having finally expressed the feelings that I have been holding in for months. Bella's breath hitched at my words and I looked deep in to her eyes.

"Say it again," she whispered.

I smiled before leaning down and ghosting my lips across hers, "I love you, Bella."

Once I had made my declaration, I pressed my lips firmly to hers in a passionate, yet gentle and loving kiss. I let everything I felt for her pour into the embrace.

Never removing my lips from hers, I bent and easily swept her up in my arms. I climbed the stairs, only breaking the kiss to ask where her room was.

"Second door on the left," Bella directed me breathlessly.

I brought my lips back to hers and headed in the direction she had pointed. Needing to breathe, she removed her lips from mine, but trailed them down my jaw to my neck. I moaned as she first sucked then licked her way to the hollow of my throat.

"Bella..."

I opened the door to her room and carried her inside, kicking the door closed behind me. I walked to the bed and gently placed her on it before following her down and laying my body along hers.

I looked into her eyes, searching for any kind of hesitation. All I found was love shining back at me through her chocolate orbs.

I reached out and gently cupped her cheek, watching as her

eyes fluttered closed. "Bella, look at me, Baby." I waited until she opened her eyes and met mine. "I love you, Bella. You have to tell me if I..."

Bella's hand came up and covered my lips, stopping my words. "Edward, I want this. I want you. I love you. Please don't make me wait any longer to be yours."

Needing no more encouragement, I brought my lips back to hers. I swept my tongue along her bottom lip, begging for entrance which she gladly gave. The touch of her tongue to my own after so long sent tingles down my spine. I wanted her naked and writhing beneath me, but I knew I needed to take my time.

I ran my hand from her cheek, down the curve of her neck, to the swell of her breast. I heard her sharp intake of breath as I passed my thumb over her nipple, causing it to harden.

"Edward..."

I smiled as my hand drifted down to the hem of her shirt, where a small sliver of her pale skin was exposed. She was warm and smooth. Pushing the material up, I bared more of her peaches and cream flesh to my eyes.

My lips, that had been following the path of my hand, nipped and sucked her exposed belly. I smiled next to her skin as she tangled her hands in my hair.

I continued my exploration by pushing her shirt upward,

revealing blue lace. "Holy..." I muttered.

Bella giggled, "See something you like?"

I looked up at her, noticing her cheeks were flushed. "No... something I love."

~G~l~a~s~s~

## **BPOV**

"Edward...please," I pleaded.

He pushed the lace aside and closed his lips around my hardened peak, flicking it with his tongue and causing tremors to run through my body.

I could feel the moisture pooling at my core, and knew that I wouldn't last long once he touched me.

While his mouth was busy at my breast, his fingers were leaving a fiery trail down to the waist of my jeans. He deftly released the snap and lowered the zipper.

I was panting with need when I felt him slip his hand inside my panties. Wanting to feel his skin against mine, I quickly grabbed his hand and pulled him up to me. Fusing my mouth to his, I made quick work of the buttons on his shirt. Once it was open, I ran my fingernails down the hard planes of his chest and abs.

"Ung...Bella!" Edward ripped his lips from mine.



Pressing lightly against his shoulders, I gently pushed him to his back before moving to straddle him. I sat up, pulled my shirt over my head and tossed it somewhere across the room, my bra following right after.

Edward reached up to cup my breasts in his hands, running his thumbs over my already hard nipples. "You're so beautiful."

I leaned down to meet his lips with my own. The feel of his naked chest pressing to mine was almost too much. I rocked my hips against the bulge that was pressed against my heat, and Edward's hands came up to still them.

"Baby, as good as that feels, I want to be inside you when I come."

Edward sat up and kissed me again as my hands reached between us and unsnapped his jeans. He rolled us and made quick work of removing my jeans and boy shorts. I pushed his pants down his hips until I couldn't reach. His erection bobbed free and I groaned at the site.

Edward removed his jeans the rest of the way, and they joined the pile of discarded clothes on the floor. He crawled up the bed and leaned down to kiss my lips while resting his weight on me. I relished the feel of his skin against mine.

"Edward, please, I don't want to wait anymore."

Never breaking eye contact, Edward dipped his finger into my

slick folds, making sure I was prepared for him. Finding me ready, he lined himself up at my entrance.

"Bella, do we need...?"

I shook my head. "I'm on the pill and I trust you."

"I love you, Bella," he whispered as he slowly pushed into my hot center.

"Oh, my..." I moaned.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes," I panted.

Edward gave me a moment to adjust before he began to move leisurely in and out, slowly building the pleasure. I lifted my hips and met him thrust for thrust and with each stroke he brought me closer to the precipice.

"Edward, oh...so close..." I panted.

"Cum for me, Bella. I want to feel it," Edward moaned, picking up the pace of his thrusting.

Edward shifted his hips and started hitting that spot deep inside of me that sent me into my release, and caused me to cry out his name.

"Edward!"

It wasn't long until he followed me into the abyss with a guttural cry of his own.

He collapsed on me but rolled us so that we were lying chest to chest and still connected. We stayed that way as our breathing returned to normal. When he finally slipped out of me, I whimpered at the loss.

Edward reached below us and pulled the comforter down before drawing it up to cover us. I rested my head in the curve of his shoulder while he made lazy patterns along my spine.

"Edward?"

"Hmm?"

I took a deep breath. "I'm sorry." I lifted my head to look in his eyes.

Edward looked down at me. "For what, Baby?"

"For taking so long to figure out what everyone else already knew. For putting you through so much..."

"Bella stop." Edward covered my mouth with his finger, much like I had done to him earlier. "Baby, I don't regret a thing. If it means that I get to keep you like this, with me, then it was all worth it."

A lone tear slid down my cheek. "I love you."

"I love you, too. Now let's get some sleep." Edward tucked

my head back against his shoulder and under his chin.

I smiled my first genuine smile in weeks before closing my eyes and drifting off to sleep to the rhythm of Edward's heartbeat.

~G~l~a~s~s~

## **RPOV**

We left the airport after collecting Alice's *five* bags and headed for home. When we finally pulled up, I noticed that it was dark save for a lone light that was shining from the living room window.

"Rosie, are you sure that my sister is here?" Emmett asked.

I looked at Alice and smiled at her. "Yes, Emmett, she's here. She's probably sleeping."

"Yeah, Em, so don't go roaring in the house. Got it?" Alice asked as she flicked his ear.

Emmett ducked his head. "Dammit, Alice! Leave my fucking ear alone!"

"Aww, poor Emmy," Jasper chuckled.

"Let's just get the bags and go inside. I'm tired," I ordered.

The four of us each grabbed some luggage, Emmett more than the rest since he was the biggest, and headed inside.

The house was quiet as we made our way up the steps. Emmett followed me and put his stuff in my room, while Alice followed Jasper.

After Emmett's bag was stowed in my room, I wandered back down the hallway. I stopped when I reached Bella's door, leaning my ear against it and listening for movement. Satisfied that all was quiet, I slowly opened the door. The sight that greeted me brought a tear to my eyes.

Bella and Edward were sound asleep, wrapped around each other. Their clothes were strung around the room making me smile.

"Is she in there?" Emmett asked from behind me.

"Jeez, Emmett!" I put my hand to my chest. "Shh! Yes, she's in there."

Emmett peered around me and caught sight of his sister in bed with Edward. "What the..."

I reached my hand up and smacked him in the back of the head. "Do you see what almost didn't happen because of you and your stupid matchmaking?"

"Ow! Yes, Rosalie, I see." Emmett actually looked sorry. "Sorry, Bells, Edward," he whispered to the sleeping pair. "I'm going to bed."

As he slunk off back toward my room, I heard laughing

coming from Bella's bed.

"Nice one, Rose," Bella giggled.

"You, too, Bella." I smiled. "Night you two."

"Night, Rose," they said in unison.

From somewhere in the direction of Jasper's room, I heard,  
"Goodnight, Jon Boy!"

Laughter filled the house before all was quiet once more.

**AN: Ok, so there is your lemon. Was it worth waiting for?  
Leave me some love. Until next time.**

## 17. Chapter 17

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **BPOV**

I woke slowly, the morning light shining on my face. I tried to roll onto my back, but a warm, heavy arm was pinning me in place. I turned my head and saw Edward sleeping soundly behind me. *So last night wasn't a dream*, I thought.

I wanted to snuggle deeper and stay in bed, but my bladder was screaming at me and I needed coffee. I eased my way out of bed, trying my best not to wake him. I held in a giggle when Edward curled up with my pillow.

I looked around the room at our discarded clothes and found my panties and Edward's T-shirt. I headed to the bathroom and did my business, then slipped his shirt over my head before leaving the room and my sleeping love behind.

I walked into the kitchen and got a pot of coffee started. While I waited, I opened the terrace doors and stepped out into the fresh California air. The sun was just rising over the

hills and the view from Rosalie's patio was breathtaking.

I don't know how long I sat out there, but I soon wasn't alone.

"Here you go, Gorgeous."

I looked up, and Rose was standing there with a steaming cup of coffee for me, and her signature bottle of Dr. Pepper in her hand for herself.

I took the mug from her and inhaled it's delicious scent.

"Thanks, Beautiful."

Rose folded herself into the lounge chair beside mine and sipped her soda. "How long have you been up, B?"

"I don't know — a while, I guess. The sun wasn't quite up." I sipped my coffee.

"Something on your mind?"

Before I could respond, the doors slid open and Alice joined us with her morning tea. There was no way that she needed coffee, not with as hyper as she was in the morning — or the entire day, for that matter.

"Morning, ladies." Rose and I mumbled back. "What are we talking about?"

"Nothing yet. You're not as hyper as you normally are, Alice. Are you feeling okay?" Rose asked.



"I feel fine, Ro. Let me get my tea in, and then I will be hyper-Ali again."

We laughed and sat in silence for a while before the thoughts that had been plaguing me came back. I decided to voice them to my two best friends.

"What are we gonna do guys?"

"About what, B?"

"All three of us are in love with men that live in different states than we do. We can't continue to keep our lives separate."

I watched Rose lean forward and put her hands on her knees. "Actually, Jasper and I were talking about that. I am tied to California since my store is here, and he is tied here because of his clients."

I looked at both of my friends. "I am the most flexible of us all, so I can easily relocate to wherever Edward wants to be. Emmett can teach anywhere, too. All he would have to do is take a class to get his California certification."

Alice smiled. "My clothing line can be designed anywhere, so if Jazz needs to stay, then I will come here."

The three of us looked at each other and laughed. "So the only questionable one is Edward."

"Did I hear my name?"

I turned and looked up at the man who had stolen my heart. He sauntered over to me, and I smiled when he raised his eyebrow in my direction.

"So *that's* where my shirt went." Edward smiled and then groaned as he took in my bare legs. He leaned down and captured my mouth in a kiss that curled my toes and caused me to moan.

"Do you think they remember that we're here?" I heard Rose giggle.

I reluctantly pulled away from Edward and shot her a glare, then turned back to him. "Sorry, it was just laying there and looked comfy."

Edward flashed me his signature smirk. "It's okay, Baby; I kinda like seeing you in my clothes."

I blushed and sat back, a warm feeling spreading throughout my body. Edward moved to the end of the chair I was sitting on, picked up my feet, sat down, and then placed my feet in his lap.

"So what are we talking about?"

Rose spoke first. "Actually, we were talking about our living situations. None of us want to be separated from you guys any longer. We were discussing who was tied to what location."

We brought Edward up to speed and then waited to hear his comments. "Well, I um...actually made a decision about my career earlier this week."

"You did?" I sat up, pulling my feet out of his lap. "When was this?"

I didn't miss the look that passed between Edward and Alice, but before I could question it, Edward spoke again.

"Yeah, uh, the night that you had your...um, date." My mouth formed an 'o' but before I could say anything he continued. "I had gone to Raoul's to blow off some steam and decided that being in that kind of fast paced restaurant wasn't what I wanted anymore."

"What do you want?" Rosalie wanted to know.

Edward looked at me and then smiled. "I want my own restaurant."

"What kind of restaurant?" I asked.

Edward smiled and looked out over the hills. "I want an old fashioned soda shop. One that makes you feel at home, but also where you can get something more than just a burger and shake. Someplace, I don't know...different."

"I think that's a great idea, Edward. Do you know where?"

I watched as Edward stared at his feet, and wondered what was going on behind those green eyes. When he stayed quiet,

I looked at Rose and Alice and rolled my eyes toward the house. They both nodded and walked inside, leaving Edward and I alone.

I scooted forward and pulled his chin around, forcing him to meet my eyes. "What's up?"

When Edward finally met my gaze, I could see the nervousness in his. Whatever he was thinking about had him worried.

I brought my hand up to cup his cheek softly. "Edward, I'm right here. You can tell me anything," I promised. "I'm not going to freak out like I did before."

He leaned into my touch and then turned his face to kiss my wrist gently before pulling back. "Bella, New York isn't where I want to be anymore. It doesn't feel like home."

His eyes bore into mine expectantly, like I was supposed to understand what he was saying. "Where *do* you want to be?" I finally asked. "Where is home?"

Edward removed my hand from his face and held it in his lap, playing with my fingers and again not meeting my eyes.

"Edward, it has never been this hard for you to be open with me. I know that I've hurt you, but..."

His eyes snapped to mine. "No, Bella, that's not it. I am just trying to put everything that I need to say and everything that I

am feeling into the proper words."

I nodded and sat still, giving him the time that he needed.

With a sigh, Edward finally began to speak. "Home to me is where my heart is. Home is the place where I feel loved, wanted and needed. Home is wherever you are, Bella."

I felt the tears welling up and threatening to spill over. "Edward, I..."

"Don't say anything yet, just hear me out." I nodded and he continued. "Jasper and I have been talking and the kind of place that I want to open would fit perfectly in this area. There are no other restaurants like it, and he thinks it would be successful, especially since this is a more family oriented area."

"So you want to move to California?" I asked slowly.

"I think the bigger question would be, do *you* want to move to California?"

Before I could answer his question, my brother's booming voice sounded from inside the house.

"Bella! Where are my pancakes?"

I giggled while Edward started cursing under his breath. I turned when the sliding door opened and smiled at Rose. "It's okay."

"I'm sorry, I tried to keep him quiet, but you know how he is."

Edward stood up and grumbled. "Yeah, always thinking with his stomach or his dick."

He pulled me up from the lounge chair and led me into the kitchen.

"Bella, my dear little sister, please feed me before I waste away to nothing," Emmett pouted.

"Emmett, one of these days your mouth is gonna get you in trouble," I commented.

"Yeah, and that day may be sooner than you think," Edward growled. "We were having a serious conversation, Emmett."

"Oh? Well then I'm glad I interrupted. Bella can't do serious on an empty stomach."

They all had a good laugh at my expense until I threatened to lace the pancakes with castor oil.

Following the instructions Rose gave me, I quickly located everything to make the pancakes. Once they were ready and on the table, my big-mouthed brother wanted in on the conversation between me and Edward.

"So what's the deal?"

Edward choked on a bite and tried to breathe. "What's the deal with what?"

"Oh, please, Bro. What's up with you and Bells?"

I took a sip of my coffee and looked at my nosy yet loving brother. "Edward asked how I would feel about moving to California."

The four of them started talking at once. I looked at Edward and saw amusement written on his face. I leaned over and whispered in his ear, "Wherever you are...is home to me, too."

I watched the light shine in his eyes as he turned to look at me. He raised an eyebrow in an unspoken question. I nodded and the smile that broke out across his face warmed me to the core.

Edward grabbed my face in his hands. "I love you!" Then his lips were on mine.

**AN: So it would seem that there is a move in their futures. Hope you're all still with me. Leave me some love. 'Til next time!**

## 18. Chapter 18

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **EPOV**

Once Bella and I had decided to make the move to California, things got hectic. After a week of visiting and looking, we still hadn't found a place that we liked well enough to live in. Unfortunately, our jobs called us back and we had to go home. I went back to New York and Bella returned to Denver.

My first day back at Raoul's, I pulled my boss aside and gave him my notice. I had enough savings to live on for quite some time, plus my trust fund that I never touched.

Bella and I lived for our phone calls, which were every night. I was amazed at how fast the time was passing. I was so busy packing and getting ready to move, that I hardly noticed that two weeks had passed.

"Hello?" I heard the sweet voice of my girl.

"Hey, Baby. How are you?"



"Hi, much better now. How's the packing?"

I smiled, happy to be talking to her. "I just taped up the last box. Are you sure that Rose agreed to store this stuff until we get out there?"

Bella giggled in my ear. "Yes, Sweetie. She is gonna rent a storage unit because my stuff is going there, too."

I was just about to speak when I heard her squeal into the phone. "Bella?"

"Sorry, sorry. I almost forgot. I got an offer on the house today."

Bella had decided to sell her house, rather than renting it out like she had originally planned. I left the choice up to her since it was the place she had purchased with Garrett.

"How much did they offer?" I wondered, since it had only been on the market for a week.

"Actually, they offered well over my asking price. When I had the house appraised, it was valued at just over two-hundred thousand. These people offered me two-fifty if I can be out in a week."

"Bella, that's an insane offer and it sounds impossible. Can you be packed and ready in a week?" I waited, but she didn't respond. "Bella?"

"Sorry, Baby. I just realized that I know these people."

Her voice was quiet, and I immediately knew that something was wrong. "Who is it?"

"Um...it's the Denalis. Kate and Tanya's parents."

"Kate? As in the hussy that was screwing Garrett?"

"Edward, what do I do?"

I could hear the tears in her voice and wished more than anything that I was there with her. "Call Emmett and your Dad. I'll be there tomorrow, just like we planned. I don't like this."

"Okay."

"Everything will be fine, Bells. I promise."

We talked for a few more minutes until I had to leave for my final shift. While I was driving, I called the airline and changed my ticket. I was catching the first flight out after I was done at work. I wasn't about to let Bella face blondie alone. I had a feeling that this time, though, I would let her get a shot in.

~G~l~a~s~s~

## **BPOV**

When I saw their names on the offer that the realtor had faxed to me, I felt it in the pit of my stomach—fear, dread, confusion. Why would they want this house?

After I hung up with Edward, I called Emmett and my father. They agreed that something didn't seem right and promised they would be over the next day. With my mind at ease, I went to bed and slept through the night.

The next morning I woke feeling refreshed. Heading straight to the bathroom, I began my day. I still had a lot of packing to do and I needed to start cleaning.

I had barely poured my coffee when my doorbell rang. Carrying my cup with me, I pulled open the door. The person standing there almost made me drop my mug.

"Surprise!"

I smiled in response. "What are you doing here? I wasn't expecting you until later tonight."

"I caught an earlier flight. I needed to be here with you," Edward said as he walked in and wrapped his arms around my waist. "Plus, I missed you and couldn't stand to be away from you anymore."

I smiled and leaned up to kiss him. When we broke apart, I led him to the kitchen. It was only partially packed up, so he was able to grab a cup of coffee and sit with me. I had some news that I had been keeping from him and decided that now was the best time to tell him.

"So, um, I have to tell you something," I started.

"Okay." Edward looked at me warily.

"I quit my job."

"Why? You loved that job."

"I know, but when I told Carmen that I was moving to California she was extremely upset. She said that they had no problem with me living here, but that the west coast was too far. She explained that while she wanted to keep me on, she just didn't think that the board would allow it. So I quit."

"Wow! Are you okay?" Edward asked, reaching for my hand.

"I am. You know that I have always wanted to write my own books," I shrugged. "Now's my chance."

We talked some more as we finished our coffee and then Edward helped me pack up the guest rooms and tear down the furniture. We had just taped up the last box in my bedroom when I heard Emmett's voice in the entryway.

"Bella? We're here!"

"We're in the bedroom!"

"Who the fuck is we?" Emmett came careening around the corner. "Oh, hey Edward. When did you get in?"

"About three hours ago."

Edward stood up and pulled me off the floor with him.

"Where's Dad?"

"He's in the kitchen. He wanted to take his vitamins before the freak show arrived," Emmett laughed.

Edward looked at me, his eyebrow raised in question. I laughed. "Dad's favorite beer is Vitamin R."

Edward just nodded and followed us out to the kitchen. I walked up to my dad and wrapped my arms around his expanding middle. "Hi, Daddy."

"Hey, Babybell." He gave me a squeeze. "How are you, Sweetheart?"

I looked up at him and smiled. "Better now that Edward is here."

Before anyone could say another word, the doorbell rang.

"Showtime," Emmett said, rubbing his hands together.

I sighed and gave him an irritated glare, then walked to the door. The people standing on the other side were not what I was expecting. They were dressed casually, but were still putting on airs.

"Mr. and Mrs. Denali?"

"You must be Isabella." The woman held out a pale hand.

I took her hand in mine. "Yes, won't you come in?" I held the

door open for the pair. I did glance behind them to make sure that no one else was with them, though, not wanting any surprises.

"Look, El, so quaint," I heard Mrs. Denali saying to her husband.

"Would you like a tour?" I asked as I walked to them.

"Oh, no, thank you. We'll just wander a bit, if that's alright?"

I smiled. "Of course."

Once they had walked away, I nodded my head to Emmett and he silently followed the couple.

I made my way into the kitchen where my father and Edward stood. "Who do they think they're kidding?"

A throat cleared behind me. I spun around and saw Emmett and the Denalis.

"Well, obviously not you," Irina spat. "If you figured us out, it's a wonder that you had no idea that your fiancé was cheating on you."

"Well, given the respectability that you are trying very hard to pass off, I would have thought you would have raised better than a whore." I placed my hands on my hips, ready for a stand-off.

"Why you little..."

"Listen, lady. You're in *my* house and I demand some respect. *Your* daughter was the one that was sleeping with a man that was unavailable. Maybe if you had even an ounce of common decency, you would have gone about this differently. I have no problem selling this house, and I don't give a damn who buys it. What pisses me off is the fact that you come in here and try to act all high and mighty, and then have the gall to insult my intelligence."

I couldn't *believe* these people, and with each word that spilled from my mouth, I only got angrier. "Maybe I was blind to the fact that my fiancé was a lying, cheating bastard, and that's on me, but your daughter knew exactly what she was doing. She *chose* to get involved with Garrett, despite the fact that we were already together. *That's* on her, and in turn, you, for the way she was raised."

I stood back and felt hands come up to my shoulders, instantly calming me.

"You're right."

I turned my head, trying to make sure I heard correctly. "I'm sorry?"

Eleazar cleared his throat. "You're right. What Kate did was wrong and disrespectful, but she didn't act alone."

I nodded. "True, but she could have said no and then come to me. Instead, she chose to carry on in that misbegotten relationship and act like a slut." I sighed. "I'm sorry."

"We understand." Eleazar smiled easily. "We know that we came here under false pretenses, but that doesn't negate the fact that we are interested in the house. Our original offer is still on the table."

"I appreciate that. I'll get in touch with your realtor after I speak to my family." I turned to my brother, "Emmett, would you mind showing our guests out?"

Emmett followed the Denalis to the door. As soon as they were out of sight, I sagged under the weight of the emotions from the last few minutes. Edward caught me around the waist and put me in a chair.

"How are you feeling?" he asked as my Dad brought me a glass of water.

"Free."

Emmett walked back into the kitchen. "Well I say you should. You really laid into them, Bells."

"Not to be all pre-school, but they started it," I giggled.

We sat and talked for a while, and I asked for their honest opinions on whether or not I should take their offer.

"It's a lot of money, Bells. You would be able to live comfortably and write like you've always wanted," Charlie said.

"Em?"



"I think you should. I mean, you're leaving anyway, right? What do you care who lives here."

"True."

I got up and called the agent who was handling my sale, and told him to accept the Denalis offer. Since I only had a week, I also called the MayFlower Moving Company to move up the date for the pickup of my belongings.

Emmett and my dad left soon after I had fed them dinner, and it was just Edward and I. Even though it was spring, the evenings still grew colder, so Edward had built us a fire. We sat together on the couch, staring at the flames.

"Do you think I was too harsh on them?"

"No. I think you said exactly what needed to be said to get the closure that you required."

"Okay." I leaned into him and placed my head on his chest while his thumb made lazy circles on my shoulder. "This is nice."

"What?"

"Sitting here, with you."

Edward looked down at me. "Yes it is."

When he lowered his head, I met him halfway. When he licked my lip begging for entrance, I opened willingly. When he

picked me up from the couch and carried me to bed, I didn't protest. And when he started to undress me, I helped.

"I love you, Bella," he whispered as he slipped inside me.

His movements were slow and sensual, and he hit all the right places. It wasn't long before I felt my orgasm flow through me.

"Edward, I love you." My declaration must have been all he needed, and his release followed quickly after mine.

When our breathing returned to normal, he rolled off me but pulled me to his side and we drifted to sleep in each other's arms.

**AN: We are almost to the end folks. One more chapter and then the epi. Leave me some love! 'Til next time.**

## 19. Chapter 19

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

**AN: Thanks to my beta, toocute24. Sally, you're the best.**

### **BPOV**

I flung myself down on the bed that I was sharing with Edward at Rosalie's. It had been a week and we still hadn't found a house that we both liked well enough to purchase. I was getting frustrated, and Edward was amused. He had no problem finding the building for his restaurant, but finding us a place to live...

"Ugh!" I groaned in frustration.

"Stop it, Baby." Edward sat beside me. "We'll find a place."

"When, Edward?"

"I don't know, Bells. We'll know when we find it." He got up and walked out of the room—probably tired of my whining.

I curled up on my side and hugged a pillow to my body, falling asleep quickly.

*"Bella, it's perfect!" Edward smiled as he picked me up and swung me around.*

*I looked up at the house. It really was perfect. It was a ranch house only about a block from Rosalie, nestled on a quiet cul-de-sac.*

"Bella, time to wake up, Baby," Edward crooned in my ear.

I rolled onto my back, stretching. I heard Edward moan when my shirt rode up, revealing my stomach. I couldn't hold back the chuckle. Opening my eyes, I met his lust filled ones.

"Don't look at me like that," I whispered.

Edward graced me with a smirk. "Like what?"

I sat up and scooted around him and off the bed. "Like I'm something to eat."

I left the room and headed down to the kitchen where my laptop was. I needed to find the house that I had dreamed of. I just knew that it was meant to be mine and Edward's.

I was flipping past house after house when Edward and Jasper walked in, laughing about some joke that Em had told them a few weeks ago. I ignored them and went back to my search. I had just flipped past what must have been the fifteenth house when I gasped loudly.

"Bella?" Edward rushed over.

"Look, Edward," I whispered, pointing at the computer screen. I never took my eyes off the picture in front of me. I just knew that this was where Edward and I were meant to live.

"It's perfect. Do you want me to call them?"

I nodded, still unable to look away. I was too busy checking out the specs for the house. It was a one story ranch house, with three bedrooms and three baths. There was a three car garage with a separate set of stairs that led to an optional office/apartment space.

I didn't realize that Jasper was beside me until he spoke. "I know this house, Bells. It's the next block over."

"Really? I think it's perfect for us," I told him as I looked at the next picture.

"Bella, the agent can meet us at the house in ten minutes. If you want to see it, that is." Edward walked back in the room with Rose on his heels.

"Yes, I want to see it!" I pushed away from the table and ran to get my shoes on and brush my hair.

I was back down the stairs in record time, and the four of us headed over to see Edward's and my potential home.

## **EPOV**

Seeing Bella so excited to go see a house that she would want to live in was a major turn on. I can't count the number of

houses that we had looked at in the last week that were nothing like our visions. Most were too small and needed way too much work. This time, I think we had finally found home.

After we had looked at the house and I watched Bella fall in love with it, I pulled the realtor aside and made an offer. It was a little below the asking price, but the woman assured me that the owners were anxious to unload the place. Apparently, they were going through a nasty divorce.

After we were done looking at the house, we decided to get something to eat. We found a small pizza place close by and ordered a pie for the table and a round of beer.

Bella turned to me and smiled. "I think that we should make an offer on the house."

I grinned down at her, but wondered if she would get pissed. "Umm...I kinda already did."

"What?" Bella asked, shock plain on her face. "Without even asking me?"

I looked at her while I pondered my words. "Baby, I saw the look on your face when we were walking through it. I watched you fall in love with it and knew that it had to be our home."

Bella's face softened. "Edward..."

I smiled, knowing that she had no problem.

~G~l~a~s~s~

Amazingly enough, the closing on the house didn't take long once our offer was accepted, so a month later, Bella and I were all moved into our new home. Now we just needed to leave each other alone long enough to get unpacked. In a 2450 square foot home, we had already christened half of it.

"Bella! Where are my jeans?" I hollered down the hall.

"I don't know! Did you check the laundry room?"

Dammit! She wasn't playing along. "No, can you check for me?"

"Edward! I am in the middle of making dinner for everyone!"

"Please, Baby! I have no pants on!" *Come on, Bella. Do this for me—you won't regret it*, I thought.

"Ugh! Alright, fine!"

I chuckled when I heard her stomp into the laundry room. I counted to five in my head and then heard her running in my direction. Again, though, my plan backfired, as my jeans flew at my face with no sign of Bella.

"Well, shit," I mumbled. I quickly dressed and walked down the hall to the kitchen. There stood my Bella, stirring the sauce and dancing to the radio. "Baby?"

"Yes?" she inquired without turning around.

"Did anything fall out of my pocket when you grabbed my

jeans?"

I grinned when Bella waved her hand at me. "I don't know...go check."

I huffed and then walked out of the kitchen to the laundry room. I found what I was looking for laying on the floor in front of the dryer. Bella must not have even noticed it laying there. I laughed and made my way back to the kitchen, but Bella was nowhere to be seen. I looked across the hall and found her in the dining room setting the table.

Walking over to her, I wrapped my arms around her from behind, effectively stopping her movements.

"Edward, stop. The guys will be here soon."

Ignoring her, I opened one of my hands, revealing the prize inside. "I think you left something on the floor in the laundry room."

I felt more than heard her sharp intake of breath. "Edward..."

"Open it, Baby," I encouraged. I watched from over her shoulder as she lifted a shaky hand to pick up the black box from mine. "I have been trying to ask you this all day."

Bella popped open the lid to the box and brought a hand to her mouth. "Oh, Edward."

Loosening my hold, I walked around her and got down on my knee. "Bella, when Alice told me she wanted to fly halfway



across the country because her best friend—whom she had never met—needed her, I was skeptical. I went with her though, because I knew even if I didn't, she'd go anyway.

"When I first met you, I could see how broken you were, but beyond that, I could see the beautiful girl you were on the inside—a girl who deserved so much better than the hand of cards she was dealt.

"When I held you in my arms for the first time at Garrett's funeral, I realized I didn't want to let you go. Something changed in me that day, and I knew why my sister was so drawn to you.

"I know things haven't always been easy. You're as stubborn and pig headed as I am sometimes, but I know we can make it through anything as long as we're together.

"I love you more than life itself, and I promise to for the rest of my days. I can't promise you that things will always be perfect, but I can promise to cherish you and treat you with the love and respect you deserve.

"Isabella Swan, will you do me the honor of marrying me?"

## **BPOV**

My cheeks were wet with the tears that I was shedding from his beautiful words. I found that I had no voice, so all I could do was nod. Edward was suddenly off the floor, with me swept up in his arms. He was raining kisses all over my face

before he finally got to my lips.

When we broke apart, I found my voice. "I love you so much. I can't wait to be your wife."

Edward smiled then touched his lips to mine. I opened up to him and let my tongue swirl around his until the doorbell rang, interrupting our moment.

"Can you get that? I need to wash my face."

Edward smiled. "You got it, Beautiful."

Once I felt refreshed, I went out and joined our friends. The minute that Rose and Alice spotted me, they came running toward me, both talking at once.

"Wait, stop, slow down." I waited until they were quiet. "Now, Rose, what?"

Rose flipped out her left hand. "Emmett proposed!"

"So did, Jasper!" Alice squealed, showing us her hand.

I laughed and added my hand to the mix. "So did, Edward!"

The squeals that came from the three of us could have shattered glass, but they didn't. They did, however, 'cause our fiancé's to protest the sound. We laughed and told them to get used to it.

I went into the kitchen and started carrying the food to the

dining room. Once we were all seated, served and stuffing ourselves, wedding plans began.

"So how long do you want to wait?" I asked Rose.

She swallowed and took a drink of her water. "Not too long. I don't want to waddle my way down the aisle."

My fork clattered to my plate. "Are you pregnant?" Rose nodded. "Well, I'll be damned. I'm gaining a sister and a niece or nephew." I got up and rushed around to where she was sitting. "I am so happy for you!"

I ran over to hug my brother next. "Congratulations, Em!"

"Thanks, Bells."

I sat back down and dinner resumed, with more talk of weddings and now babies. When everyone left for the evening and the kitchen was clean, I lay in bed beside my sleeping fiancé with heavy thoughts in my head.

"Bella, go to sleep. I can almost hear the wheels turning in your head," Edward mumbled sleepily.

"Sorry."

I felt the bed shift as he rolled toward me. "What's on your mind?"

I looked over at him, his green eyes shining in the moonlight. "Nothing really."

Edward raised up and leaned on his elbow while he stroked a finger along my cheek. "Bella, I know you better than that. I know that you have something on your mind. Tell me, Baby."

"I want a baby," I blurted.

Edward just grinned at me, and then wagged his brows. "Well, then I guess we should practice."

His mouth cut off my laughter. Soon we were caught up in the passion and heat of the moment, and I let the emotions take over.

I wasn't sure what life would bring, but as long as I had Edward and my sisters, I knew that I could handle anything. If I have learned anything in the last year and a half, it's that life is fragile. We are all made of glass—sometimes you shine and sometimes you shatter. Having a strong family that can help pick up the pieces that are broken and put them back together is key. Then, it's all about the light that you let shine through.

**AN: Here you have it folks, the last chapter before the epi. I want to thank you all for joining me on this amazing journey. See you next Monday.**

## **20. Chapter 20: Epilogue**

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

**AN: Here it is the final chapter. Allow me to apologize now for the long winded note here, but I have to thank some special people. These two women have become very dear to me and were also the inspiration for this story.**

**Sally, you are more than my beta. You are my rock and one of the best friends a person could ask for. It never matters the time, you are always there for me. You have helped me more than you know these last few days and I know that you will continue to be there for me, no matter what I need. You will never know how much you mean to me. You are my sister by choice. I love you!**

**Bee, through your writing you gave me the courage to express myself and let other's read my work. Through you, I met Sally, and several other women that I now consider friends. You are also my rock and I couldn't have made it through the last few days without you and Sally. Thank you for becoming my sister. I love you!**

**Although we have never met face to face, I know that the two of you will be there for me always, as I will be for you! Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.**

**Now...enough with the sap. Let's check in with the gang and see how their lives turned out.**

## **Epilogue**

**BPOV**

***1 year later***

I sat at the table and looked around the room at my family and friends. Everyone was laughing and having a great time while enjoying the wine, beer and music. Emmett, of course, was enjoying the cake that Edward and I had cut not twenty minutes ago.

I looked down at my left hand and smiled. I was finally Mrs. Edward Cullen. It had taken a year to get this to point, and there had been fights and tears, but there had mostly been love.

Rose had given birth to my niece, Rebecca 'Becca' Jean Swan two months ago. Becca was a beautiful baby, with chubby little cheeks that I just loved to kiss. I couldn't wait until Edward and I started our own family.

"You look like you're thinking heavy thoughts, Mrs. Cullen," my husband said in my ear as he wrapped his arms around me

from behind.

"Just thinking about starting our family." I turned my head and smiled at him over my shoulder.

"Hmm...We'll get started on that tonight, Baby." Edward kissed that place on my neck right below my ear, sending shivers down my spine.

I turned in his arms and leaned up to kiss his lips, smirking at him when I pulled back. "We already did, Sweetheart."

I watched as Edward's eyes widened and then filled as he looked at me, then down to my still flat tummy, and back up to my eyes. "Really?"

I nodded. "I found out last week. I wanted to tell you as your wedding gift."

"I love you, Bella." Edward smiled as he put his hand on my stomach, covering our growing peanut.

"I love you, too, Edward."

~G~l~a~s~s~

***5 years later***

I opened the back door and yelled for the kids to come inside, and for them to bring our children. Rose and Alice laughed. They knew the truth—our husbands acted like big kids.

The baby in Rose's arms began to get fussy. "Here, Bells. I think she's getting hungry." I turned and took my baby from Rose and sat down. Opening my shirt, I brought her to my breast just as the rest of our brood came barreling through the door.

"Mommy? Why is Aunt Bella feeding Jody like that?" Alice's son, Jon, asked innocently.

Alice looked at her husband and lifted her eyebrow, trying to make Jasper explain it to him.

"Umm...Jon, Aunt Bella is trying to make sure that Jo has all the best food possible. You ate like that when you were a baby, too. So did Becca."

Edward and Emmett were standing by the door, holding each other up while they tried to keep from laughing out loud.

"Oh, stop it you two!" I ordered as I removed Jo from my breast.

Edward walked over and took her, putting her on his shoulder and managing to coax a rather large burp from her little body. "Just like her uncle."

Emmett smiled proudly. "That's my girl."

I smiled, then turned and left the room, heading for the kitchen. My shadow followed me.

"Aunt Bella?"



"Yes, Becca?"

"May I help you make dinner?"

"Of course, Sweetheart."

And that's how our lives went. Emmett and Rosalie had Becca, and their second child would join us in a few short weeks. Alice and Jasper had Jon, but were trying again. Edward and I had had a bout of bad luck; I had miscarried twice before we saw a specialist who helped identify the problem. One minor surgery and I was pregnant not three months later, welcoming Jody Louise into the family.

Once the six of us decided to start families, Charlie and Sue had moved out to California to be near their grandchildren. Renee moved to the opposite coast and hadn't kept in touch as much as I would have liked, but I had learned to live with it.

I smiled as Becca helped me prepare the dinner that we had every Saturday, just so that we could catch up with what happened during the week. It was the one event that we all looked forward to and never missed.

~G~l~a~s~s~

**EPOV**

***10 years later***

I stood back and watched my wife as she lay sleeping. She

was just as beautiful today as she was the day I first saw her. Even back then, with her face stained with tears, I thought she was gorgeous.

I walked over, sat down beside her on the bed, and leaned over to kiss her cheek. "Time to wake up, Sleeping Beauty."

Bella rolled over and stretched her arms above her head, causing me to groan when a sliver of skin appeared at the bottom of her shirt.

"Hi, Baby," she smiled sleepily.

"Hi. Rose and Alice will be here soon. Are you all packed?"

Bella sat up and nodded. "Yep. Are you sure that it's okay with you that I go?"

I smiled at her; this wasn't the first time that she had asked me that since the three of them had decided to go away for a week.

"It's fine, Bella. Jo and I are gonna hang out and watch some movies, and Little E will probably hide in his books or something."

Our children could not be any more different. Jo was exactly like me, active and sporty. Little E, or Edward Matthew, was just like his mother. Clumsy to boot, and always with his nose stuck in a book.

"Edward, try to get him outside while I'm gone, please."

A horn sounded outside and Bella quickly kissed me and the kids before taking off on her adventure with her best friends.

~G~l~a~s~s~

## **BPOV**

I hated to leave my kids and my husband, but Rose, Alice and myself were in need of a break—from a lot of things.

Rosalie and Emmett had been having some problems. There had been a teacher at his school that had been pursuing him, and although he remembered nothing about it, he had apparently succumbed to her advances. It was later proven that she had drugged him, but Rosalie was still having a hard time of it.

Jasper and Alice had been unable to produce any more children, causing her to sink into a deep depression. However, when one of Jasper's clients had offered to let them adopt her unborn baby, she had snapped out of it. They were now the proud parents of not only Jon, but also twin girls, Kristen and Mallory.

Edward and I had had our rough patches over the years, especially when Tanya Denali walked back into my life. She had apparently gone out of her head, 'cause she decided that it was *my* fault her sister was dead, even though it had been almost twelve years.

She had set her sights on my husband immediately, and had

Edward been a different man, I am sure that her plan would have succeeded. Lucky for us, her mother and father had shown up. Apparently, Tanya had escaped the mental facility that she had been living in for the last ten years.

"Bella!"

I shook my head and turned to look at Alice. "Sorry, what?"

"You're thinking some heavy thoughts over there," Rose laughed.

I smiled. "Just thinking about everything that has happened over the last few years."

"Ah...Tanya?" Rose guessed.

"Jessica?" Alice wondered.

"Dammit, Alice! I could have gone all week without hearing that bitch's name!"

I laughed, full out belly laugh, bringing tears to my eyes.

"Bella, stop!"

"I...can't...help it," I said through my laughter.

The two of them ignored me while Alice continued to drive. The place that Rose had found for us was only three hours away from our families, but far enough that we would have no interruptions.

Before long, Alice pulled the car to a stop in front of a small beach house. The three of us gathered our luggage and walked inside. Once we were settled in our rooms, we joined up again in the living room. And as we sat and talked, the three of us got back to basics. It was just us again.

Three women, who had met over the internet and had formed a bond that has withstood the test of time. Through pain and heartbreak, love and loss, I knew that three of us would be friends for all time. Even if we had never met face to face, I knew that they would always be...my sisters.