Bella and Edward met when she was 18. Now 4 and a half yrs later they meet again. Bella is a teacher and Edward works for the fire department. Will they let love in or be burned? AH. M for language/lemons.
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AN: This has been circling in my head for a while. This if my first Fireward fic and I am sure I will get a few things wrong, so please bear with me as I learn. Thanks goodness for Wikipedia.

She walked between the rows of desks spouting out spelling words and making sure her second grade class wasn't cheating.

"Spell attack. Jared don't attack Emily with your pencil." She explained in a sentence while also reprimanding one of the boys.

When the spelling test was complete a knock on her door indicated it was time for recess. "Alright, line up by the door, please. Mr. Crowley is going to take you all out for recess."

The kids clambered to line up in a boy-girl fashion. When they were calm she opened the door and smiled at her fellow teacher. He grinned back and led the kids down the hall to join his class out on the playground.
Once she had shut the door, she collected the test papers and sat down with a sigh at her desk. One week left until summer break and then she would begin her summer job. Looking down at her attire, she couldn't wait to exchange her dress slacks and blouse for jeans and T-shirts.

"Miss Swan?" A little voice said beside her. She hadn't even heard the door open.

"Yes, Emily."

"My Mom wanted me to give you this," Emily handed her an envelope.

"Thank you, you can go back and play now." She chuckled as she watched little Emily McCarty shuffle off back to the playground.

She opened the envelope and pulled out the letter from her older sister.

_Bella,

Emmett and I are going to Felix's tonight and were hoping that you were going to be there. Charlie is keeping Emily overnight for us. Emmett wants you to meet his cousin, who just transferred from another department. You remember Edward, right? Hope to see you there.

Love you,"
Great, more match-making on the part of her sister and brother-in-law.

**HH**

He walked into the fire station and took a look around. Not much difference between this one and his old stomping ground. He set his gear down and walked to the chief's office. He knocked and chuckled at the gruff greeting, before pushing open the door.

"Edward Cullen reporting for duty, sir."

The man looked up and wore a grin to match his son's. "About time you got here, boy." Carlisle stood and grabbed his son in a hug.

"Good to see you too, Dad."

Carlisle sat back down and indicated for Edward to sit as well. "How have you been Edward? Are you settling in okay?"

"I'm good dad. I have an appointment to look at an apartment this afternoon and then Emmett and Rosalie are taking me down to the local watering hole."

"Ahh…Felix's. Yeah, that's a great place. Rose's sister works there on the weekends and in the summer when school lets out." Carlisle explained.
"Rose's sister? She's only like eighteen, right?" Edward wondered.

"Wow, Edward, you have been gone a while. Bella is twenty-two and teaches second grade at the elementary school. She's actually Emily's teacher."

Edward thought back to when his cousin married Rosalie Hale. It had been a fun time. Jasper, Rose's twin, had spent most of the evening keeping all of his firefighter buddies away from his little sister.

"I remember, now. Jazz was hilarious trying to keep Newton and Hunter away from her." Edward chuckled.

"Yeah, well, now Bella gets pissed when Jazz does it, because now Emmett joins in. Poor girl, she has had to keep her dates a secret from both of them. Not that she gets many. Those two guys have intimidated any man that even speaks her name." Carlisle sighed. "Well, come on. I'll get you set up and then see you back here on Monday morning."

Edward followed his dad out and picked up his gear as Carlisle showed him a place to stow everything. He introduced him to some of the guys on the crew that he didn't know. He couldn't wait to get settled in and back to work.

**HH**

"Emmett, come on. We have to get Emily over to Charlie's and then to Felix's. Jasper and Alice are meeting us there."
"I'm coming Rose. Keep your pantyhose on." Emmett walked down the hall to his daughter's room. "Hey, baby. Are you ready to go see Grandpa?"

"Yes, Daddy." Emmett watched as Emily packed up her coloring books and crayons and grabbed Mr. Bear and leaped into his arms.

Emmett carried her down the stairs and handed her to Rose as he bent down to pick up her overnight bag. "Is Bella going to be there?"

"I don't know. Probably." Rose said as she followed her husband out to their car. After placing Emily in her booster seat, Rose climbed in and thought about her little sister.

Bella was her half-sister. When she and Jasper's father died they had only been two. Their mother Renee had struggled raising twins on her own until she met Charlie Swan. Renee had always said it was love at first sight. They had been married and by the time that Rose was five, Bella had been born. She loved her sister and had carried her around the house and played with her like a doll. Charlie had doted on both his girls. Rose had never felt like a step-daughter. To her and Jasper, Charlie was their father.

Emmett pulled into the driveway and Rose got out getting Emily from her seat. She laughed as her daughter ran to where her Grandpa was waiting on the porch.

"Grandpa!" Emily squealed.
"How's my girl?" Charlie asked, as he picked her up and nuzzled her. She giggled when his mustache tickled her.

"Thanks for keeping her, Charlie." Rose said giving him a hug.

"Hey, we're gonna have fun. You and Emmett go enjoy yourself. If you see your sister, tell her I expect all of you here on Sunday for dinner."

"Yes, sir." Rose gave him a mock salute.

"See you tomorrow, sugar. Be good for grandpa. We love you."

"Bye daddy, mommy. Love you!"

Emmett and Rosalie got back in the vehicle and headed to Felix's.

**HH**

Bella walked into Felix's at quarter to eight. She wasn't surprised to see the place almost packed. She spotted her brother and sister-in-law at a table and waved as she ducked under the bar.

"Hey Felix. Looks like a busy night." She greeted the owner.

"Yep. You think I could talk you into singin' tonight?" Felix smiled down at her as she attached an apron to her waist.

"Felix…" She groaned.
"Come on Bells. The house band is here. You know how much Demetri loves it when you sing with 'em."

"We'll see. I'm gonna get to work." She smiled knowing that he would probably convince her.

She walked to her brother's table and smiled when she saw Em and Rose and joined them. "Hey guys. What can I get ya?"

"Hey sis. Just bring us a pitcher of whatever is on tap. Bring an extra glass too, please." Jasper ordered looking around the table for confirmation.

"You got it. Be back in a minute." Bella shuffled off to get their drinks. Ducking back under the bar she noticed her ex walk in. She couldn't hide her groan.

"What's the matter, B?" Kate, one of the bartenders asked her. Bella just pointed, as Jake made his way over to the bar. Kate just nodded.

Bella filled her order and grabbed a tray. She stuck everything on it and then headed back over to her family's table. She met Rose's eye and did a head nod in Jake's direction letting her know that he was here. Rose nodded once and picked up her beer that Jasper had poured her.

Bella wandered from table to table, getting drink orders and laughing with a few of the regulars. She had just made it back to the bar when Jake cornered her.
"Hey, Bells. How you been?" Jake slurred.

"What do you want Jake? You know Felix doesn't like it when you come in already drunk." Bella tried to move past him.

"Oh, come on baby. Don't be like that."

"JACOB! Back off!" A voice yelled behind them.

Bella turned and met the emerald gaze of Emmett's cousin, Edward. She smiled gratefully.

"Cullen, mind your business." Jake slurred again.

Felix came around the bar and grabbed Jacob's arm. "What'd I tell you Black? Huh? I told you next time you came in here and harassed Bella, you'd be out. Now get out of my bar, you're not welcome anymore." Jake wrenched his arm free and stumbled out the door. "You all right, Bells?"

Bella nodded. "Thanks, Felix." Bella turned and saw Edward had been joined by Jasper and Emmett.

"You okay, little one?" Jasper asked his sister.

"I'm fine, Jazz. You guys go sit and I'll bring you another pitcher."

"Hey Bells? Is the kitchen open?" Emmett asked hopefully.

Bella laughed, "Yes, Em. I'll get you the usual."
Bella went back to the bar and told Felix that Em wanted some beer-battered fries. Felix nodded and headed to the kitchen. Bella had just filled the pitcher and was halfway to the table when she heard Demetri and the rest of the band start in on her signature song. She set down the pitcher and smiled as she walked to the stage.

**HH**

Edward had just joined the table when Bella brought out another pitcher. He heard the house band start up some music and Bella headed for the stage. He looked at Jasper, "Is she going to sing?"

"I guess. She does sometimes." Jasper explained.

The room quieted, when the sweetest voice he had heard began to sing.

I can stand with the weight of the world on my shoulders
I can fight with the toughest of the tough
I can laugh in the face of all my insecurities
Anytime, anywhere, anything, I'm strong enough

But when you're holding me like this
I'm carelessly lost in your touch
I'm completely defenseless, baby, it's almost too much
I'm helplessly, hopelessly, recklessly falling in love

So let consequence do what it will to us, I don't care
Let the stars stand as witness to it all
Say the word and tonight I will follow you anywhere
I just can't pretend anymore, I'm too sturdy to fall

But when you're holding me like this
I'm carelessly lost in your touch
I'm completely defenseless, baby, it's almost too much
I'm helplessly, hopelessly, recklessly falling in love

I am not afraid
I am not afraid

'Cause when you're holding me like this
I'm carelessly lost in your touch
I'm completely defenseless, baby, it's almost too much
I'm helplessly, hopelessly, recklessly falling
(Helplessly, hopelessly, recklessly falling)
I'm helplessly, hopelessly, recklessly falling in love

When the final notes drained away and Bella hopped off the stage, Edward and the rest of the bar began whistling and clapping. He watched as her cheeks turned an amazing shade of pink.

"I didn't know she could do that." Alice said to her fiancé.

Jasper laughed. "She doesn't like to. Felix and Demetri usually back her into a corner or give her no choice. Demetri saw her and started the music, knowing she wouldn't let him down. She'll probably do it one more time before the night is over."

Edward looked over to where Bella was laughing at a table
with another group of firemen. They were from one of the other stations. Edward didn't understand the pang of jealousy that he felt.

**HH**

Bella breathed a sigh of relief when Felix called last call. She began wiping down abandoned tables and pocketing her tips. She laughed when she saw some of the folded napkins with names and numbers on them. Every weekend the same guys came in and hit on her. She was amazed that they were still walking, with Emmett and Jasper around.

"Hey Bells!" Felix hollered.

"Yeah!"

"I'm closing up. Tell your family to get the hell out!" Felix guffawed.

She laughed and walked to their table. "Hey guys, Felix is closing up. You ready to head out?"

"Yep, we'll go settle up." Emmett stood and Jasper and Edward followed.

"Bella, how are you getting home?" Alice asked. She and Bella had been college roommates. Bella had brought her home on one of their breaks where she met Jasper. It was all over for both of them and they had been inseparable ever since.
"I walked over, so I'll walk back." Bella explained.

"I don't think so, Isabella Marie." Jasper said from behind them.

"Jazz. Don't start playing the over protective brother now. I'll be fine. It's only a couple of blocks." Bella complained. Jasper eyeballed his sister and Emmett joined in. "Come on guys, I'm a big girl."

"I can walk her. I walked here myself," Edward volunteered.

"Edward, you don't have to do that. I don't need an escort." Bella complained.

"I don't mind Bella. My apartment is a couple of blocks away." Edward explained.

"Fine. I still have some stuff to do. Go sit at the bar if you want, I can get you another beer."

Bella hugged her family as Edward said goodbye. He said he would see them all on Monday. He followed her over to the bar where he perched on a stool as Bella poured him a drink.

"Hey Felix!"

"Yeah?"

"Emmett and Jasper are being weird so Edward is gonna walk me home, okay?"
"Sure thing. Finish up and get out of here!" Felix hollered as he started to wash the dishes.

Bella wiped down all the tables and stacked the dirty glasses in the pass through so Felix could add them to the wash. Once she was done with all of her work, she hollered out to Felix again.

"Felix, I'm out!"

He came around the corner, "Alright, Bells. See you tomorrow."

She waved and followed Edward out into the warm evening air. Once they were outside, Bella wondered what to say. She turned in the direction of her apartment, knowing that he would follow.

"So what have you been up to? I haven't seen you since Rose and Em's wedding." She started.

"I lived in Seattle for a while. To damn wet and cold up there. So I moved back to the warmth. I like North Carolina. The beach is only an hour away, my family is here. What have you been up to? You sure have grown up since I saw you last."

Bella blushed at his words. "Well I went to college and got my teaching certificate while I worked part time at Felix's. Once I graduated and got a job, I told Felix that I would work one weekend a month and on summer break unless I tell him otherwise."
"Wow. That doesn't leave much time for fun." Edward chuckled.

Bella scoffed. "Oh, please, Edward. Jasper scares away any guy that comes around and Emmett helps. I mean I work in a bar that is a fireman hangout. The only men I meet are the ones that work with them."

Edward just laughed as they continued to walk. Bella stopped in front of a duplex and looked at Edward. "This is me."

"You're kidding."

"No why?"

"Well, this is me too. I guess we're neighbors."

Bella and Edward smiled at each other as they walked to their doors. "Goodnight Edward. Thanks for walking me home."

"Night Bella and you're welcome."

They both went inside and closed their doors, each of their thoughts lingering in the other.

**AN:** Well, I am going to rate this M for language, but only because I am paranoid. I promise I am not going to forget about Game of Love, but I had to get this one started. Leave me some love....
Bella woke early despite not having gotten in until two a.m. She went to the kitchen and started coffee and turned on the TV to the morning news. She had picked up the habit after Jasper had joined the fire department. There had been a small fire last night, but only a small crew was needed to put it out. It barely had five seconds of coverage. She turned it off and flipped on her stereo, as she went about getting her breakfast ready.

She poured her first cup of Joe and sat at the kitchen table. She pulled out the spelling tests from the day before and started grading them. A loud knocking startled her. She looked up and realized she had been absorbed for twenty minutes.

She walked to the front door and looked through the peep hole, but saw nothing. She waited to see if the person knocked again. After a few seconds the knock sounded again. Only this time a voice was behind it.

"Come on Bella. I can hear the music, open the damn door!" Jake's voice greeted her.
"No! Go away Jacob."

This time he pounded so hard the door shook. "Open the fucking door!"

"I'm calling the cops." She screamed.

"So help me Bella, if you don't open this door I'm gonna break it down."

"I don't think so, Jacob." Edward's voice came through Bella's closed door.

"Go away Cullen. This doesn't concern you."

"Bella!" Edward called.

"Yeah?"

"Call the cops, sweetheart."

"Okay." Bella moved away from the door and picked up her phone to call the local PD. Mainly her dad.

"Lautning Police Department, How may I help you?"

"Hey, Jess, it's Bella. Can you send a couple of units to my apartment please?"

"Jake, bugging you again?"

"Yep."
Okay, sweetie, they're on the way.

Bella hung up the phone and went back to the door. "Edward?"

"Still here." He said while he kept his eye on Jacob.

"They're on the way. Should be here in a minute or two."

"Alright, just keep the door shut until they get here." Edward instructed.

Bella took the opportunity to go get dressed. Slipping on a pair of khaki capris and a T-shirt, she pulled her hair up into a messy bun and washed her face. Another knock at her door, she ran up the hall to answer it.

"Hello…"

"Bells open up."

Bella unlocked the door and undid the chain then opened her door to her father. "Morning, Daddy." She smiled.

"Morning, baby. Hell of a way to start the day." He grinned.

Bella stepped out onto the porch and watched as the deputies put Jacob in the back of a patrol car. She looked to her dad, "What now?"

"Well, this time I'm afraid he's under arrest. We have a witness that he threatened to break in your door. I'm sorry,
"It's okay, dad. He needs help, maybe now he'll get it." Jacob was an alcoholic. He was rarely sober, which was why Bella had ended their brief relationship. Too bad he didn't want it to end. It was still too bad since she had caught him in bed with another woman.

"You alright, Bella?" Edward asked.

"I'm fine. Thanks for stepping in." She smiled.

"I'll see you tomorrow, Bella. Edward, nice to see you again." Charlie headed back down the porch and took off in his cruiser.

Bella smiled at Edward, "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

"I would love one, my stuff isn't unpacked yet." Edward followed Bella into her apartment.

"How do you take it?"

"Black."

Bella poured him a cup of the warm brew and handed it to him. "I was gonna make a bagel, do you want one?"

"Bella you don't have to feed me."

"I know." She went to the pantry and took out a pack of bagels and popped two in her toaster oven. While they
toasted she set out cream cheese, butter and jelly, not really sure what Edward would want.

"So, tell me how you and Jacob met." Edward began.

Bella sighed as she plated the popped bagels. "Emmett. Jacob used to work at the department, but was let go when his drinking became a problem."

"Bella I've known Jacob for a while now. He never used to drink, what happened?"

Bella sipped her coffee and watched as Edward spread cream cheese on his bagel. "He was dating this girl, from what I understand, it was new. I guess he really liked her, kept telling everyone that she was the one. Anyway... A fire started at the office she worked at. Leah was caught in the stairwell with several other people, and I'm not sure of the details, but by the time the firemen were able to get them, they had died of smoke inhalation. Jake didn't handle it very well."

"I imagine not. How long ago was that?"

He watched the wheels turn in Bella's head, "Umm... I think like three years ago. I was still in college."

They finished breakfast and Edward helped Bella clear everything up. "Thanks for the coffee and bagel. I have to go. I'm getting my stuff from storage today and need to get unpacked before I start work Monday."
"No problem, I'm sure I'll see you around."

Edward smiled and nodded before letting himself out of her apartment.

**HH**

"No, Demetri. I am not going to sing that." Bella huffed as she helped get everything ready for that evening.

"Come on Bells. It's a great song."

"I don't care; it's too intimate a song to sing in public. Especially for a single woman. Forget it."

"Fine, but I will get you to sing it someday." Demetri wandered back to the kitchen to talk to Felix.

Bella set out all the napkins and menus and other paraphernalia that was supposed to be on the tables, humming to herself. She was singing and swaying he hips in time to the juke box that was playing in the corner. She would never understand why Felix felt the need to have a juke box and a house band. Whatever floats his boat.

She had just finished with the last table when she felt some hands at her waist. She spun around and came face to face with Emmett.

"Dammit, Emmett, you scared the shit out of me," she said as she swatted at his shoulder.
Emmett was laughing. "Sorry, Bells. I just couldn't resist."

Bella huffed and then grinned. "Whatever. Where's Rose?" Bella looked behind him.

"Home with Emily, she has a tummy ache. Probable from your Dad's cooking."

"So what are you just gonna hang out by yourself?"

"Nope." Emmett commented, making sure to pop the 'p'.

Bella waited for him to elaborate, to no avail. "Okay. Would you like a beer?"

"Sure, thanks." Emmett sat in a booth, next to the stage. He wondered if Felix and Demetri had backed her into a corner yet.

Bella came back with Emmett's beer and noticed that he was no longer alone. Her brother and Edward were there as well.

"Hey, guys. Here you go, Em." She placed his beer down and smiled at her brother.

"Hey, sis. Can I get the usual?"

"Sure. Edward?"

"Whatever's on tap is fine."

Bella smiled, "Alright, I'll be right back."
Edward watched the sway of her hips as she walked back to the bar. He heard Jasper and Emmett chuckle and looked at his friends. He shrugged, "What?"

Jasper and Emmett just laughed harder. "Dude, you like her." Emmett said.

Edward couldn't deny that he had felt an instant attraction to Bella. After coffee this morning, she was all he could think about. He had heard her moving about through the thin walls of their duplex and he had wanted so badly to go over and talk to her, but he had a lot to do.

"Yeah, and?"

"Nothing man. You just better treat my baby sister right or you'll have to deal with me." Jasper threatened with a grin.

They all looked up when Bella came back to the table. After placing their drinks in front of them she looked at their faces. "What?" she asked as she felt the blush rise.

"Nothing. Thanks." Edward said as he glared at the two men with him.

"Okay..." Bella turned to check on her other tables.

She kept waiting to find out if Demetri was going back her into another corner and force her to sing. The music kept up, but still nothing happened. Until close to the end of the night, when she heard the familiar strains of a song that she had
asked Demetri not to play.

"Hey Felix!" Bella hollered.

"Yeah?" Felix came around the bar and heard the music. "Fuck!"

"He didn't listen, I'm outa here. I don't need this shit." Bella ripped off her apron and grabbed her tips. She was out the door before Felix could protest.

"Dammit, Demetri!"

Demetri actually looked sorry. "I didn't think she'd get that pissed."

Edward and the guys watched Bella stomp away and threw down some money, before they chased her out the door.

"Bells?" Emmett hollered.

"Bella wait up!" Jasper chased.

"Bella, come on stop, please." Edward pleaded.

Bella stopped when she heard his velvet voice behind her. She turned and waited so that they could catch up.

"What happened, Bella? You took off so fast and Felix was yelling at Demetri." Jasper questioned.

"Did you hear the music, Jazz?" Jasper nodded. "Did you
"Okay, well…Did you tell Demetri?" Emmett asked.

Bells just stared at him. "Really, Em? When have I ever not told someone how I felt?"

"Point taken."

"Well as long as you're okay…I think I'll just head home. Call if you need anything." Jasper hugged her followed by Emmett.

"See you guys tomorrow for dinner at Dad's." Bella smiled.

Edward walked her home again and although they talked very little, the silence wasn't uncomfortable.

**HH**

Monday came early for Edward. He was up and preparing his coffee before he jumped in the shower. First day back to work and he was on for twenty-four hours. He had to be at the station by seven. After his shower he pulled on his uniform, blue pants and a blue T-shirt with the fire departments logo on the left breast.

When he was ready he grabbed his gear and walked out to his truck. He was driving a new Ford F-150 XLT in candy apple red. Just as he was opening the driver side door, Bella
"Morning, Edward." She smiled.

"Morning, Sunshine. Last week, right?"

Bella smiled. "Yes. Then I am taking a week off before I get really busy at Felix's."

"Have you talked to him since Saturday?"

"No. I might call him tonight. How late are you working tonight?"

"I'll be back to see you off in the morning. I'm on for twenty-four. But then I'll be off for the next forty-eight so..." Edward trailed off.

"Be careful." Bella said.


They both climbed into their vehicles and drove off in separate directions.

**HH**

Bella was helping the other teachers get things set up for field day. It was an annual end of the school year event for the students, kind of like the Olympics. Ribbons were awarded. Every kid got one; there were no losers at this school.
"Hey Miss. Swan! Can you help me over here?" Tyler Crowley yelled from across the field.

"Sure." Bella jogged to where he was standing, trying to put up the net for the badminton game.

Bella held the poles and Tyler hammered the spikes into the ground to keep the net in place. "Thanks."

Bella nodded and walked over to finish setting up, as some students started to trickle in. Let the games begin.

Bella was laughing and cheering as she watched her niece run down the track in a relay race. She wasn't sure how little Emily became the anchor, but she was actually pretty quick. Rose was cheering right beside her and just as loud.

As soon as the races were over everyone sat down to enjoy their bag lunches that the cafeteria had provided. Rose and Bella settled into easy conversation, until they were interrupted when the fire trucks drove by, sirens blaring.

Bella saw her sister tense and knew Emmett was on one of the trucks. "He'll be fine Rose." Bella squeezed Rose's hand.

"I know. It's just hard when you see them drive by. Edward was on there too, you know." Rose grinned. Bella blushed and ducked her head. "I knew it! You like him."

"So? Come on Rose, he's five years older than me. I'm probably nothing but a kid to him." Bella looked away.
"Bella, look at me." Rose waited until she had her sister's full attention. "I saw him, okay? The looks he was giving you the other night at Felix's, that man is in to you. Trust me."

Bella just nodded and went back to her lunch, sending up a silent prayer that everything would be okay.

**HH**

Edward arrived at the station and immediately sought out the chief. He knocked and waited until he heard the come in.

"Morning, Dad. How are you?"

"Morning, son. Can't complain, you?" Carlisle asked.

"I'm doing fine. I got everything unpacked and organized. You'll never believe who my neighbor is." Edward smiled.

"Okay…Who?"

"Bella…She and I are sharing that duplex over on Fairfield."

"I know the place. Well good, I'm glad you'll be there too look out for her. She's had some…issues lately."

Edward nodded, "Yeah, her issue threatened to kick her door down on Saturday."

"Jesus! Is she okay?" Carlisle was immediately concerned.

"Yes, I had her call the police. Charlie came and arrested
Carlisle shook his head wondering what the hell happened to his former employee. He hadn't wanted to fire Jake, but his drinking was a danger to the rest of the team.

Edward left Carlisle after a while and went out to get to know the guys on the squad. Mike Newton, James Hunter, Emmett, and Jasper, were the ones that he would be sharing a rig with. Eric Yorkie, Quil Ateara, Sam Uley and Embry Call made up another rig. They were a man short, so Carlisle was actually riding with them. We had just sat down to lunch, when the call came in. We had two rookies with us, Seth Clearwater and Colin Brady. They looked like they were going to piss themselves when the tones dropped.

"Engine 2, Engine 4, Ladder 17, Medic 3. Structure fire, 27 Maple Avenue."

The men jumped up leaving everything on the table as they ran for their gear. Boot, pants, hat, jacket. They climbed in the rigs and were off, lights and sirens blaring. Edward sat back in his seat and felt the wind on his face. At last he was home. Doing what he loved.

They flew past the elementary school and Edward wondered if Bella would worry about him. He knew he needed to get those thoughts out of his head and concentrate on his job. He looked over at Colin, he was struggling with his hooks and snaps on his coat.
"You're doing it wrong!" Edward yelled over the sirens. He reached over and fastened the snaps and hooks like a pro. He pulled the collar down and sat back.

"Thanks." Colin said in relief. Edward nodded his head and grinned as they continued on.

They pulled up on seen and saw a partially engulfed home. It looked abandoned, but looks can be deceiving. They hopped out of their rigs and Carlisle ran over to the lieutenant in charge and got their instructions, before he took over.

Carlisle walked over to his men and explained the situation. He sent Mike, Jasper and Edward in to do a primary search. James and Seth were in charge of the hose line keeping the fire under control. Emmett was on the roof, making a ventilation hole. The rest of the crew was waiting outside, manning the outside line and waiting to retrieve anyone that was found.

After an hour the blaze was under control and out for the most past. There were still some hot spots that were being taken care of. No victims had been found, much to the relief of the men and they took a breath. Aro Voltera showed up on scene and began his investigation. Edward and the crew were doing a last walk through, before heading back to the station house.

Carlisle called back in to dispatch and pronounced them in service as the guys loaded back up. Once back at the station they worked together, refilling oxygen tanks, cleaned the hoses, and reloaded the truck. Once that was complete they
hit the showers. The rookies, reheated lunch, which had become dinner and everyone sat around talking and laughing, wondering when the next call would come.

Edward sat on the couch in the lounge and watched as his best friends called their wives and significant others, wishing there was someone worrying for him.

Edward had no idea that across town sitting in her living room, Bella was wishing that she could call him, just to hear his voice.

AN: Okay so…first fire out of the way. Special thanks to teamswitzerlandmom for all your helpful input. I hope that I wrote it believably. Till next time…

Story Rec's

Illegal Contact by JenGreen03
3. Chapter 3

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. No copyright infringement intended.

Edward trudged up the steps to his apartment, trying to be quiet. He knew that Bella would still be sleeping, trying to enjoy her first day of summer vacation. He was amazed that it had been over a week since he had been back. It seemed that he and Bella had more in common than he had with anyone he had dated in Seattle; he just wished he had the nerve to ask her out.

Edward walked into his apartment and headed straight for the shower. After washing away the grime, he crawled naked into his bed and was out before his head hit the pillow.

Bella was in the middle of a great dream, when she heard her phone ring. She mumbled incoherently as she fumbled for it. "Mm…Hello?"

"Sorry B, did I wake you?" Kate's voice came over the line.

"Yeah, it's okay. What's up?"

"Felix wanted me to call you. He said you haven't been in for well over a week and he was worried."
"Shit! I meant to call." Bella sat up.

"It's alright, B. We all know that Demetri pissed you off. Anyway, why don't you come down tonight and just hang. I'll buy you a beer. What do you think?"

Bella thought for a moment and wondered if Edward would be there tonight. "Alright, I'll come down later."

"See you then B." Kate hung up.

Bella decided to get up and get in the shower. Once she was out and dressed, she went to her stereo to turn it on, and then remembered that Edward was probably sleeping, so went for her iPod instead. She was singing and dancing around as she cleaned her apartment and worked on her laundry. Once she had her home in order she decided to sit on the front porch with a good book and soak up some vitamin D.

She poured a glass of ice tea and went out the door. Settling down on the top step she leaned against the railing, before opening up her tattered copy of *Wuthering Heights*. Soon she was engrossed in the book and didn't notice when Edward sat next to her.

Bella squealed when she felt a hand on her knee. Edward chuckled at the sound. "Sorry. I didn't mean to scare you."

Bella pulled her ear buds out and smiled. "It's okay. I didn't hear you walk out. Did you sleep okay?"
He nodded, "Like a rock. We weren't too busy last night so I got some sleep at the station. I haven't seen you around lately, how've you been?"

Bella shrugged. "I've been good. School's out, so now I have to figure out what I'm gonna do with myself for the next three and a half months. How about you?"

"I've been okay. I'm looking for a couple days rest. I don't go back until Thursday morning." Edward smiled.

Bella bit her lower lip as she thought about something, oblivious to the problem she caused Edward. "Well, listen, I'm going to Felix's later to grab a bite and maybe hang. Would you like to join me?"

Edward grinned, "Are you asking me out?"

"That depends, are you saying yes?"

"Yes." Edward smiled. "When?"

Bella glanced down at her watch and gasped. "Shit! I didn't know it was almost five." Edward chuckled as Bella jumped up. "Meet me back out here in twenty," She called over her shoulder.

Edward ran back inside and took another shower. He shaved quickly and tried to tame his wild hair, to no avail. He gave up and went to his room to get dressed. He settled on a pair of dark wash jeans and a green T-shirt, it was June after all.
Satisfied with his appearance he grabbed his keys, wallet and phone and went out to wait for Bella.

Edward had just turned from locking his door when Bella walked out hers. He took in a ragged breath at the sight of her. Her mahogany hair was flowing like a river down to her waist. Her peaches and cream skin was radiant against the deep blue of her shirt. When she finally turned, he tried to remember how to breathe.

Bella looked up and met the stunned gaze of Edward. "What?" Bella looked down at herself. "Do I have something on me?"

"You're perfect." Edward finally said.

Bella blushed and smiled. "Stop it. Let's go."

They decided to walk instead of taking a car, since it was such a beautiful evening. "Although, I must say Edward, I wouldn't mind taking a ride in that fuckhot truck of yours."

Edward felt his dick twitch in his pants. "We'll have to do that then."

They walked into the bar and Bella headed straight for Kate. "Hey, Katie-girl."

"B! Glad you could make it doll."

"We're gonna grab a booth. Can you bring us a couple beers?"
Kate raised an eyebrow, "We? Sure thing B." Kate smiled as she watched Bella and Edward walk to a booth to sit, not missing Edwards hand on the small of her back.

Bella lead Edward to an open booth smiling when she felt his hand on her. She hoped she wasn't the only one to feel that tingle. They had just settled in when Kate came over with their beers.

"You guys want anything to eat?"

Bella smiled. "I would like a Felix special."

Kate chuckled. "I have no idea where you put that much food, B. What about you Edward?"

"What is a Felix special?" He wondered.

Bella and Kate laughed. "A triple meat burger, stacked high with onions, tomato, lettuce and Felix's secret sauce and a large side of beer-battered fries."

"That's a lot of food. Bella are you sure you can eat all that?" Bella just nodded. "Well, Kate, make that two."

"You got it." Kate wondered off to give Felix the order and to tell him that Bella was here. "Hey, Felix, two specials. Bella is here by the way." She called when she made it back to the bar.

Edward and Bella sat and talked some more as they waited on their food. They should have known that it wouldn't be
peaceful. "Bella!" They both looked up when Jasper hollered her name.

"Hi, Jazz. Hey Ali. What are you guys doing here?" Bella asked.

"Dinner time, Bells. Plus Emmett and Rose are on the way. They have to drop Emily off at the Cullen's." Jasper explained.

"Why are they taking Emily to my parents'?

Alice looked at Bella and gave her a knowing smile, "Charlie got called in or he would have kept her. Besides, your mom and dad love her. I think they want some grandbabies of their own."

"Alice," Bella hissed.

Jasper turned to yell at Kate, "Hey Katie-girl, bring us another round and add two more specials."

Kate gave Jasper thumbs up and hollered at Felix.

Demetri walked over to the table, "Hey Bella."

"Hey Demetri." Bella said blandly, still not forgiving him for the stunt he pulled.

"Listen, B, I'm really sorry about pulling that shit on you. You told me you weren't comfortable with the song and I disregarded your request. Sorry."
Bella stood from the table and hugged Demetri. "Thanks, D. I do have an idea though. Think you could help me later?" she whispered.

"You got it. Come see me in a bit."

Kate brought over their food just as Bella resumed her seat. "So B, think you might sing for us tonight?"

Bella smiled secretively, "Maybe, we'll see."

Conversation flowed easily around the table as they laughed and told jokes. When Em and Rose finally arrived, it became even funnier. Emmett had a whole new list of Chuck-isms.

"Okay, okay, stop me if you've heard this one. 'Chuck Norris never sweats. He just allows the water to leave his body as a natural cologne.' Great huh?"

"Oh yeah, Em. Hilarious." Jasper rolled his eyes.

Bella shocked them all. "The Titanic sank because Chuck Norris ran into it during a swim."

"Alright, Bells." Emmett laughed.

"Excuse me." Bella got up and smiled at Edward. "I'll be back."

Edward watched Bella head over to where Felix and Demetri were talking. "I think Bella's going to sing."
"What makes you think that?" Alice asked.

Edward pointed to where Bella was talking and they all watched as Felix walked away and Bella followed Demetri on the stage. Her eyes met his as she walked up to the mic. Then Felix made his announcement.

"Tonight, for your listening pleasure, Bella. This song goes to Edward."

Edward just stared and watched as the blush crepted up on her face. The music started with a rockin' beat, but he recognized the song. He smiled, understanding what Bella was saying to him. He just leaned forward to listen.

I'm gonna do it darlin'...
I could waste time tryin' to figure it out,
but I'm jumpin' anyhow.
I've never been this far;
didn't know love could run so deep...
Didn't know I'd lose this much sleep.

Holdin' you close, chasin' that moon.
Spendin' all night,
Lovin' just who you are...
Sparks flyin' in the dark.
Shootin' out lights, runnin' down dreams,
Figurin' out what love really means...
Baby, givin' you my heart,
is a real fine place to start.
Rose smiled as she watched her sister lay it all out there on the line. She had always hoped that Bella would find someone, but first she had to be open to it. She was glad that she was taking the chance. She sat back to listen and observe.

Somethin' is goin' on,
I can't explain but sure can touch...
It's callin' both of us.
Stronger than any fear or doubt,
It's changin' everything I see...
It's changin' you, it's changin' me.

Holdin' you close, chasin' that moon.
Spendin' all night,
Lovin' just who you are...
Sparks flyin' in the dark.
Shootin' down lights, runnin' down dreams,
Figurin' out what love really means...
Baby, givin' you my heart,
Is a real fine place to start.

Bella crooked her finger and beckoned Edward to come over. He gladly got up from his seat and walked toward the stage.

Right here, right now's the perfect spot, the perfect time.
The perfect moment when your skin is next to mine.
[Instrumental break]

Bella wasn't sure where the sudden confidence came from,
but she leaned down and brushed her lips across Edwards'. She nibbled his bottom lip, eliciting a moan from somewhere deep within him. Then just as suddenly as she was there she was gone again.

Yeah, yeah...
Holdin' you close, (Holdin' you close.)
Chasin' that moon. (Chasin' that moon.)
Spendin' all night,
Lovin' just who you are...
Sparks flyin' in the dark.
Shootin' out lights, (Shootin' down lights.)
Runnin' down dreams, (Runnin' down dreams.)
Figurin' out just what love really means...
Baby, givin' you my heart's a real fine place,
Real fine place to start.
Oh yeah.
Oh, oh, oh.

When the final notes were gone and Bella went to step down from the stage, she found herself swept up in a pair of strong arms. Edward lifted Bella from the stage and then crushed his mouth to hers.

Cheers erupted all around the bar and Emmett could be heard offering a shrill whistle. When they finally broke apart, smiles adorned both of their faces.

Until the shrill beeping of pagers going off interrupted the moment. For off duty firemen to be paged it was a big one
and all extra hands were needed.

Edward kissed Bella one more time, before he had to go.

"Be careful," She whispered against his lips.

"Always am." Then he was gone.

Bella walked to her sister and they wrapped their arms around each other and sent up prayers that all would be okay.

**HH**

The smoke was thick and black when they arrived on scene. Edward spotted his father already taking charge and went over to find out the situation.

"Chief?"

"Edward! Good, you, Jasper and Emmett, grab a line and go around to the west side. We have to hit this bitch from all angles." Carlisle ordered.

Edward ran back to the guys and told them what Carlisle had said. They donned the rest of their gear and grabbed a line. Jasper opened the nozzle and water shot out the nose. Edward and Emmett braced themselves for the force and the three of them were able to maintain control.

They concentrated on the heaviest areas and doused every flame they saw licking its way through the building.
After several hours and several crew changes, Carlisle realized that they were going to lose the building. All they could do was make sure that the blaze didn't move to other areas. Containment was key.

Emmett and Jasper dropped Edward off at his apartment ten hours later. Sweaty and exhausted his first thought was for a shower, until he saw the beautiful brunette leaning against his door, sleeping. He couldn't help but smile.

He leaned down to her, his muscles groaning from over use and exhaustion. "Bella?" She only moaned, a sound that went straight to his cock. "Bella, baby."

Bella blinked her eyes open, "Edward?"

"Yeah, baby."

Bella's vision finally cleared, "Thank God. When I didn't hear from you, I thought the worst."

"I'm fine, filthy and tired, but fine. Come on." Edward held a hand out to her to help her up. Bella stood and took in Edward's sweaty attire and soot covered face.

She laughed, "Babe, you stink."

He laughed with her, "Thanks. I'm gonna hit the showers and then try and get a couple Z's. You can go home if you want…"

Despite his dirty appearance, Bella wrapped her arms around his waist. Edward carefully brushed a loose piece of hair
behind her ear. "How about I come in and take a nap with you?"

They went inside Edwards's apartment and she curled up in his bed while he cleaned up. When he came out, she was asleep. He settled in the bed and pulled her to his chest. Snuggled into her warmth, he was asleep in minutes.

**HH**

Edward woke alone. The indention on his pillow proved that it wasn't a dream. So where was Bella? Just as the thought entered his head his phone chimed with a text.

I'm Felix's. Kate is sick. ~B

K. See u l8r? ~E

Sure. ~B

Bella couldn't help being disappointed that he wasn't coming down, but then again, he didn't say he wasn't. She served beer and food and joked with the regulars, but couldn't stop watching the door in the hopes that Edward would come see her.

"Bella! Go home." Felix said coming out of the kitchen.

"But what..?" Bella started.

"You are still on vacation. Go to the beach or something. I don't want to see you back here until Monday."
"Fine. I'm out." Bella took off her apron and walked out the door. She stopped short once outside. There parked by the curb was a sexy man in a sexy ride. She smiled and made her way over to him.

AN: I hope the fire scene was alright. New chapter on Sunday. Till then...leave me some love
4. Chapter 4

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. No copyright infringement intended.

She couldn't believe that it had been two weeks. Two weeks since Edward had surprised her outside of Felix's. He had taken her on a picnic at the beach. It was sweet. After they had eaten, they had taken a stroll along the water's edge. It had been very romantic. She smiled now at the memory.

"What are you smiling about?" Rose asked.

Bella turned to her sister, "Hmm…oh, nothing."

"Oh, please. You can't fool me Isabella Marie. I haven't seen you smile like that since Alec."

Bella's smile dropped. "Rose…"

"Sorry, Bells. Honey, have you told Edward about him?" Rose reached her hand across the table and held fast to her sister.

"No. It's never really come up. We haven't talked about our past relationships. How exactly would I tell him Rose?"

"You just do. I'm sure he would understand."
"Rose, I was engaged. How do you tell the new man in your life about the other one? He's gone Rose. Even after all this time, it still hurts. I loved him Rosie."

"I know you did sweetie and what happened was a tragedy. Bella, he died, he didn't leave you willingly. Keep that in mind."

Bella and Rose finished their lunch and then went their separate ways. Bella went home and sat in her living room, thinking of the past. She didn't know how long she sat there, but it was growing dark outside when she finally moved. She grabbed her phone on the way to her bedroom.

"Felix's…"

"Hey Kate, its B. Listen, I won't be in tonight. Will you tell Felix I'm sorry?"

"Sure B, you okay?" Kate asked, concern lacing her voice.

"Yeah, just old ghosts, you know." Bella knew that Kate would understand.

"Oh, Bella…Do you need anything?"

Bella pulled the box down from the top of her closet. "No, I'll be fine. Thanks Kate."

Bella hung up and pulled out the framed photo of herself and Alec. It had been taken at their engagement party, three years before. He had his arms wrapped around her and they were laughing into the camera.
Bella smiled at her brother and laughed when Alec whispered in her ear. "I love you, Belly-B."

"I hate it when you call me that." Bella giggled.

"I know."

Bella had turned in his arms and wrapped hers around his neck. "I can't wait to marry you." They had sealed the agreement with a kiss.

Bella had never been happier and never wanted the feeling to end. Little had she known it would all come crashing down around her a week before the wedding.

Bella was out with Alice and Rosalie, when Emmett had called his wife. "Is Bella with you Rose?"

"Yeah, why?"

"I need you to take the girls to the house and stay there. Charlie and I will be there in a few."

Rose hadn't questioned her husband, just grabbed her daughter and sister and dragged them back to her house, Alice following close behind.

"Rose you're freaking me out. What's going on?"

"I don't know. Emmett just said to go home." Rose tried to remain calm.
Bella however was trying to call Alec and not getting any answer. After leaving her tenth voicemail, she finally stopped calling. She couldn't imagine where the hell he was.

Charlie and Emmett showed up soon after the women had arrived. They both had grim expressions on their faces.

"Dad? What is going on? I can't find Alec and it's not like him to not answer when I call."

"Bells, sit down." Charlie waited until she did as she was told. "There was an accident sweetie. Alec was in traffic when the call came out. He pulled over to the side, since he was already on scene. There was a tractor trailer that had jack-knifed and he was trying to get to the driver. Bella another car hit the truck. I'm sorry sweetie, Alec didn't make it."

Rose raised a hand to her mouth and turned to bury her head in Emmett's chest. Bella was waiting for the punch line. When it didn't come, she started sobbing.

"No, no, no…You're lying! He's not dead. He can't be. We're getting married next week." Bella grasped her stomach and fought back the bile. "Oh, God! Daddy, nooo!"

Bella sobbed holding onto the picture. She never heard the knock on her door. She didn't hear the person come inside. She was so caught up in her emotions that she didn't feel the arms come around her. She just was.
Edward couldn't understand why Bella wasn't answering the phone. He had tried calling several times, before giving up and trying the bar.

"Felix's..."

"Hey, this is Edward. Is Bella around?"

"Hey, Edward. No she called in and said she wasn't coming."

"Alright, thanks." He hung up and wondered if she was avoiding him. He decided to try Emmett.

"Hey cuz! What can I do you for?" Emmett answered.

"Have you or Rose talked to Bella? She's not answering her phone."

Emmett sighed. "Listen, I know she's home and probably shouldn't be by herself right now. She has a spare key hidden under the pot on the first step. That's all I'm telling you."

Emmett hung up before Edward could comment. He decided to take his cousins advice and headed next door to Bella's. He knocked, when he got no answer, he got the hidden key.

He heard a noise coming from the direction of her bedroom and immediately headed that way. What he saw broke his heart. Bella was curled on her bed, clutching a framed photo and a T-shirt to her chest. Her sobbing was gut wrenching.
He didn't hesitate, but went to her and wrapped her up in his embrace. He rocked her gently until her sobs became soft sighs and he felt her breathing even out in sleep. He lay down beside her and looked at the picture, still clutched in her hands. He wondered who the guy was and if he would ever get Bella to smile like that.

Hours later Bella woke with a terrible headache. She tried to roll over, but strong arms prevented it. She turned her head and took in the prone form of Edward. She swallowed and wondered how the hell he had gotten into her house. She licked her dry lips and tried to speak.

"Edward?" She rasped. He stirred, but didn't wake. She tried again. "Edward?"

"Hmm…?"

Bella giggled and poked him in the rib. "Wake up."

Edward's eyes blinked open. He looked around and smiled when his eyes settled on Bella. The he remembered why he was there. He sat up quickly and turned to her, "Are you okay?"

She nodded. "I'm fine. How did you get in here?"

"Emmett told me where to find the extra key. I had been calling you for hours, with no answer. Kate said you called in sick. I wanted to check on you. I called Em and he said that he didn't think you should be alone, so here I am." Edward
"Damn him. He should have left well enough alone." Bella got out of bed and went to the kitchen.

"He was worried," Edward followed. "He had reason to be. You were a mess when I found you."

"Yeah, well, I would have been fine. I wanted to be alone." Bella replied angrily.

Edward was taken aback by her tone. He held up his hands in a defensive gesture, backing up from her. "Fine. I'll get out of your hair." He turned to go out the door, but she stopped him.

Bella sighed, "No, wait. Don't go."

Edward turned and slowly made his way back to her. He sat on the couch and waited until she was ready to talk. He didn't have to wait long.

"I'm sure you saw the picture. You must have a million questions. Why aren't you asking them?"

Edward shrugged, "I figure you'll tell me when you're ready."

Bella nodded, not used to someone not prying into her business. "My first year of college, I met this guy. His name was Alec. He was training to become an EMT. He actually knew my brother and father, and they approved of us dating, so he asked me out. From that first date we were inseparable. He finished his training and went to work for one
of the stations. I loved when I saw him in his uniform; I thought it was so sexy." Bella explained as she got lost in her memories. Edward watched her face and wondered if he would ever have a place in her heart.

"We had been seeing each other for about a year when he proposed. Of course, I accepted and we started planning. That picture you saw was at our engagement party. I was getting ready to start my last year of school. We were set to get married two weeks before classes started, so that we could enjoy our honeymoon.

"Anyway, a week before the wedding, there was an accident. Alec was stuck in the traffic from it when the call came in. Being the guy that he was, he pulled off to the side of the road and tried to get to the scene." Her breath was hitching now. "He had just made it on site, when a looky-loo car, lost control and hit him. He was killed instantly."

"Oh, Bella…I'm so sorry." Edward felt helpless as he watched the tears leak from her eyes. "What brought this all up?"

Bella smiled, but it didn't quite reach her eyes. "I was having lunch with Rose and Emily today. I was telling Rose about our date on the beach. Rose said she hasn't seen me smile like that since Alec and I guess it just hit me."

Edward rose and knelt in front of her. "Bella, I'm sorry. I'm glad that I can make you smile, but I don't want you to struggle with this…with us."
Bella shook her head and brought a hand to his cheek. "I'm not. It's been three years Edward. It's time to move on. I'm ready. It just really hit me, you know. I haven't found someone that I think I could be happy with in a very long time. Until you walked into Felix's." Bella smoothed his worried brow and traced his face down to his lips. She leaned forward and pressed her lips softly to his.

When they parted they both smiled. "Thank you for telling me." Edward said honestly.

"Thanks for listening."

**HH**

The week of the fourth rolled around and Bella was busy helping Rose and Alice get ready for the ice cream social. The stage had already been set up and now the girls were erecting the dunking booth. This was always a favorite. Many people took the opportunity to dunk their favorite fireman. They also helped set up the concession stands and then left when the rest of the crews showed up.

The drive to Esme and Carlisle's house wasn't long, so they arrived rather quickly. Esme was on the front porch waiting when the alighted from the vehicle. "Come on ladies get in here we have a lot of baking to do."

Apple pies, cobblers, cookies, brownies and cakes. Any desert that would go well with ice cream, they were making it. Some of them would be auctioned off; others would be given
as prizes. It had become a tradition. One that was very successful.

Six hours later a very hot and tired Bella stumbled into her apartment. She half walked, half crawled to the shower. She watched as chocolate and sugar washed away down the drain. When she was finally rid of the grime and sticky she stepped out to get dressed.

When she felt human again she poured herself a cup of iced tea and went to sit on the porch. She wondered what Edward was up to and if he had had an eventful day or if he was bored. This was generally a busy week for them, with fireworks and the like. She decided to go down to the station to see him. She went back inside and slipped into her sandals. She grabbed a plate of brownies that she had made earlier and went out to her car.

She pulled into the station and heard the whoops and hollers coming from the back. She walked around the rigs and opened the back door to the courtyard. She found eight sweaty guys running around playing basketball. She spotted Carlisle sitting off to the side and walked over to him.

"Hey Mr. C!"

"Hey Duck, what's up?" He patted the spot beside him. She giggled at her old nickname and sat down.

Edward had seen her come out and smiled. He hadn't seen her since Saturday, since he was covering an extra shift. He
continued on with his game and discretely watched her talk with his father.

"Hey, Swan! Your sister is here." Newton yelled to Jasper.

"Thanks. Hey Cullen, your lady is here." Jasper laughed.

"Fuck off!" Edward chuckled and walked over to Bella.

He leaned down and kissed her forehead. "Hey, babe. What're you doing here?" Carlisle raised his eyebrow at his son's endearment. Edward just shrugged.

"I thought I would stop by. I haven't seen you since Saturday. I actually missed you." Bella grinned.

"Aww!" Came from the rest of the guys.

"Go fuck yourselves," Edward complained, embarrassed.

"Aww, come on Eddie," Emmett started.

"Hey! Back off or I'm taking home the goodies." Bella threatened. When the crew noticed the plate in Bella's lap they all shut up and smile apologetically. It was amazing how a home cooked treat could have that effect.

Everyone laughed when Emmett grabbed the plate and ran inside with it. The rest of the men gave chase and you could hear nothing except the muffled chewing and moaning coming from inside. Carlisle followed, to give the couple a few minutes alone.
Bella stood up and wrapped her arms around Edward's waist. "Hey."

"Hi. I missed you too you know."

"When does this double shift end?"

"I'll be home in the morning."

"Good. I want to make you dinner on Tuesday. Would you be opposed to that?"

Edward smiled down at her. "Not at all. I have to get back to work though."

Bella pouted for about two seconds. "Okay. I'll see you tomorrow." She went to remove her arms, but Edward held her fast.

He lowered his head and their lips met in a soft kiss. When Bella would have pulled away, Edward traced her lower lip with his tongue, seeking entrance. On a shuddered sigh, Bella opened her mouth to allow his tongue to dance with hers. When Edward would have extended it, the tones dropped, breaking the couple apart.

"I gotta go, baby."

"Okay. Be careful." Bella smiled.

"Always am." He kissed one last time and then ran off to do his job.
Bella smiled all the way home, thinking it had been the first time that he had called her baby. She liked it.

AN: Next chapter will most likely jump ahead a bit. I'll probably have that for you after V-Day. I am working on the colab for Breath-of-Twilight's Countdown to V-day. Please bear with me. Leave me some love.
5. Author's Note

Hey all! Sorry this is not a chapter, more of an announcement. Helplessly, Hopelessly has been nominated for a Hidden Star Award, for best all human story. Voting starts February 10th thru the 12th. Please go vote.

Here is the site of all the nominees and categories. Please vote for this story!

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Thanks everyone and stay tuned!

Liz
6. Chapter 6

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. No copyright infringement intended.

"Bella I need some ideas here. Business has been slacking since that fire down the street. The guys just aren't streaming in. Help me, girl." Felix pleaded.

"Felix, chill. The guys are busy. There have been a string of fires since July fourth. Carlisle was worried about arson. I haven't seen Edward except in passing for a week. I don't know what you want me to do." Bella explained.

The pair was sitting at a table with the books spread out around them, trying to think of ways to bring in extra money. There had been five fires in the three weeks since the fourth and the fire marshal was trying to find a connection. He suspected and was gathering evidence that it was the same accelerant used in all, but it was a long process.

Edward tensed every time the tones dropped, wondering if the next fire would claim a life. So far all of the fires had been at night and no one had been around, but still there were way too many for our little town.

Bella got up from the table and looked around the bar. "What
about a karaoke night? May be people want to do something besides hear me sing. It can't be that hard to rent the equipment or lease it."

Felix raised his hand and rubbed his jaw as he thought of her suggestion. "I like it. Let's do it."

Bella held up her hands and backed away. "Oh, no. This is all you and Demetri. Keep me out of it. I gotta go anyway."

She all but ran out the door and then quickly walked back to her apartment, almost like she was being chased. She slowed when the duplex came into view and a smile stretched across her face. She bounded up her steps and walked to her door. Before she had it open her name was called to her left.

Bella smiled and turned to look at Edward. "Hi."

Edward smiled as he walked to her. He wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her against him. "Hi. I missed you."

Bella grinned and leaned up on her toes and place a soft kiss to his lips. "I missed you. What are you gonna do today?"

"Well there is this beautiful girl that I've been seeing and I thought I would take her to the beach. Picnic, walk in the surf, sunset fire, the works."

"Lucky girl. Anyone I know?"

Edward grinned down at her. "Wanna go with me?"
"I would love to. When?" Bella asked.

"How about in an hour? Give me time to get the food and other stuff ready." Edward reluctantly let her out of his grasp.

Bella turned to her door and quickly let herself in. She immediately went to shower and change. She wanted to make sure she was prepared for whatever happened that night. Once she was smooth all over she got out and went to get dressed. She kept her clothes simple, white capris and a blue off the shoulder top. She lightly dried her hair and let it hang in waves down her back. Light make-up and she was ready, just as Edward knocked on her door.

Edward took in a sharp breath when Bella opened the door. Stunning was the only word that he could come up with to describe how she looked. The blue shirt she has on complimented her creamy complexion and made Edward want to do things that he shouldn't, at least not yet.

"Ready?" He asked, holding out a hand to her.

She placed her small hand in his and followed him to his truck. He helped her in it and jogged around to the driver's side, after stowing their dinner in the bed.

Bella looked over at Edward. "How is everything going?"

Edward chanced a glance over at her, "You mean at work?" Bella nodded. "Tense, obviously. Nothing really we can do, except fight them and hope that the fire marshal can find
"Do you really think someone is deliberately setting them? I mean who would do that?" Bella was worried about the safety of her family and friends.

"I don't know. I don't want to worry about it tonight. How are things at Felix's?" Edward changed the subject.

"Not good. He's freaked out because business has been slow. I met with him today to go over the books. It's not as bad as he thinks it is, but he won't listen. I think he's going to start a karaoke night."

Edward raised an eyebrow, "Really?"

Bella nodded and grinned. "I told him that may be other people would like to sing instead of listening to me all the time."

"I like to hear you sing." Edward commented as he pulled into the parking area of one of the beaches.

They both got out of the truck, Edward grabbing the picnic basket and blanket before rounding the truck and grasping Bella's hand. They walked for a few moments looking for the perfect spot to sit. Finally they found a relatively quiet location and Bella spread out the blanket, before having a seat. Edward sat next to her and began pulling out the contents of the basket. Cold fried chicken, potato salad and some cheese and crackers.
"How many people are you expecting Edward?" Bella chuckled.

"Too much?" he asked as he produced a bottle of wine and two glasses.

Bella shook her head. Edward uncorked the wine and poured them each a glass. The conversation continued to flow easily, neither of them running out of things to say. After they were both full from the food and wine, they decided to walk along the water's edge.

They walked and continued to talk as the waves rolled in on their ankles. They paid no attention to the time just enjoyed one another's company. When the surf started getting higher, Bella decided to have some fun and kicked up some water at Edward.

The shock on his face was priceless. "I am so gonna get you."

Bella laughed at him and took off running, her hair flying behind her. Edward gave chase and finally caught up to her. He wrapped his arms around her from behind and picked her up off her feet swinging her around. Bella laughed and squealed the entire time.

Edward placed her back on her feet, holding her arms until she was steady. He grasped her hand in his as they made their way back to the blanket. "That was evil, Miss Swan."

"I'm sorry," Bella tried to apologize, but couldn't stop laughing.
"The look on your face was priceless though."

Her laughter was contagious and soon Edward was joining her. "Alright, alright. Enough laughing at Edward." He said, trying to catch his breath.

Bella pulled her lip between her teeth to stifle her laughter. When she looked up into his emerald orbs, she noticed them darken. He reached out and pulled her lip from her mouth with his thumb. He slowly leaned to her and pressed his lips to hers.

Bella's sharp intake of breath spurred him on further. He traced her lower lip with his tongue, seeking entrance, which Bella gave willingly. She brought her hands up to tangle in his hair as he slowly lowered them to the blanket, his body angling toward hers, theirs tongues battling for dominance.

The waves crashing to shore was the only other noise that could be heard, silencing the moans that were coming from both of them. When oxygen became an issue, Bella pulled her mouth free from his, but Edward's lips never left her body. He trailed kisses down her jaw and to her neck, nipping and sucking, creating sensations in Bella that she hadn't felt since Alec.

Alec. Suddenly Bella was pushing Edward away and sitting up. She ran her hands through her hair and stared out at the ocean. Why would she be thinking about him?

"Bella? Are you okay?" Edward's voice was laced with
"Yeah, sorry." Bella couldn't look at him.

Edward sat up more fully and took her chin in his hands and turned her face to look at him. "Tell me."

A tear slid slowly down her cheek as she looked into his eyes. "I haven't felt like this in a long time Edward. I don't know why, or...Alec popped in my head. I couldn't keep kissing you and thinking about him. It's not fair to you." She sighed. "I'm sorry." She lowered her eyes from his.

"Baby, look at me." Edward waited until she met his gaze. "I get it. I do, but Bella you're not betraying him by moving on with me. Don't you think he would want you to be happy?"

Bella nodded. "Will you come somewhere with me?"

"I would go anywhere with you." They quietly packed everything up and walked to the truck. Edward handed Bella the keys. "You know where we're going, you drive."

The ride was silent as Bella thought about what she was about to do. Edward watched her and wondered if she would be as understanding of his past. He knew he was going to have to tell her soon, he just didn't want to burst the bubble that they were in.

Bella pulled through the gates and drove through the rows of headstones until she pulled over and got out. She didn't wait
to see if Edward followed, she just walked to the place where her heart lay. She knelt down and ran her hands over the smooth, cold stone.

"Hi," she said quietly. "I know I haven't been here in a while, but I need to talk to you. I miss you every day, but I've met someone. You would like him. I think I'm ready to let you go Alec. I will always love you, but...I'm falling for him. Goodbye, Alec."

Edward listened as Bella said goodbye to the man that had held her heart for so long. Hearing her say that she was falling for him made his heart skip a beat. He knew he would have to tell her soon, since he was falling too.

**HH**

The fire was burning out of control. No matter how much water they hit it with, it just kept growing. Emmett and Edward were holding a line, keeping it directed at the flames that were licking their way to the other buildings nearby.

"This is ridiculous." Edward muttered. "Chief, where the hell is our backup?" He shouted into his headset.

"No backup, we just need to keep it contained."

" Fucking fantastic!"

"What?" Emmett yelled.

"No backup, we're on our own." Edward seethed.
Hours later, the crew as well as Aro, walked through the destruction looking for hotspots. Aro had started combing the rubble looking for signs of arson. It would take a while before any evidence was found; there was a lot of debris to sift through.

Carlisle was on the phone trying to find out exactly why they had no backup. All he was told was that another fire had broken out in a warehouse in another county at the same time. Since it was larger, more engines had been required. Bullshit, but Carlisle couldn't say anything.

Emmett and Edward were standing off to the side watching Carlisle pace as he spoke to the commander. They could tell it wasn't good.

"How's Bella?" Emmett asked.

Edward smiled. "She's good. She took me to the cemetery last week."

Emmett turned shocked eyes to his cousin. "She did. Why?"

Jasper walked up then, "Why what?"

"Your sister took Eddie here to Alec's grave." Emmett explained.

"Really? How did that work out?" Jasper hoped it went okay, for his sister's sake.

"She told him goodbye. I don't know if I was supposed to hear
all of it, but she said she was falling for me. I guess she needed to talk to him." Edward didn't tell them what sparked that need for conversation.

Emmett looked at Edward curiously, "Have you told her yet?"

"No."

"Told her what?" Jasper wanted to know.

Edward glared at Emmett. His cousin knew why he was keeping his past from everyone; in fact Emmett was the only one. Not even his parents knew. He wasn't going to be able to keep it a secret much longer.

Early the next morning, he could hear shouting coming from Bella's as he walked up the steps to his door.

"What a bunch of bullshit, Mom. You only show up when you want something. Now what is it?"

"Isabella, I did not raise you to speak to me that way."

"You didn't raise me at all. Rosalie and Dad did. You took off, abandoning ALL of your kids."

Edward could hear the anger and hurt in Bella's voice so he took out his phone and called Em.

"Dude, we just left each other's company. What do you want?"
"I think you and Rose might want to get over here. And grab Charlie." Edward requested.

Emmett looked over at his wife, "Why? What's wrong?"

"I can hear yelling coming from Bella's apartment. She's yelling at her Mom."

"WHAT?" Emmett roared. "We'll be there in ten." Emmett hung up and told Rose to get ready to go now.

"Emmett what's going on?" Rose asked warily.

"Mommy's back." Emmett explained and had to run after his wife as she tore out of their house, Emily in her arms.

Rose climbed in the car after she had buckled Emily into her seat and was on her phone before Emmett got in the car. "Daddy?"

"Rosie, baby what is it?" Charlie asked. Rose only called him daddy when something was wrong.

"She's at Bella's." Rose explained.

"I'm on my way." Charlie hung up.

Jasper answered on the second ring. "Hello."

"Jazz, get to your sisters now!" Charlie ordered and then hung up.
Jasper threw on his pants and a shirt, grabbed his keys and was out the door, Alice hot on his heels. "Jazz, you're scaring me!"

"She's back, Alice."

Edward was still standing on the porch listening when the three cars screeched to a halt. Five voices greeted him at once.

"How long…?"

"Have you seen…?"

"What the fuck dude?"

"Why haven't you gone…?"

"STOP!" Edward shouted above the din. "I haven't gone in there, because I don't know what's going on. I haven't seen either of them and I don't know how long they've been in there. Emmett watch your mouth."

Charlie looked at his children and took the lead. "Stay here, I'll be right back."

"Dad…"

"Daddy…"

"I mean it you two." Charlie grabbed the key from under the pot and walked into the firestorm.
"Get out of my house Renee. How did you get in here anyway?"

"Bells?"

Bella looked at her father in relief. "Daddy, get her out of here."

Charlie turned to look at his ex-wife. "Hello Renee. Don't you think it's time you left?"

"Not until I get what I came for." Renee sneered. She needed money and wasn't leaving until she got it.

"And what is that exactly?"

"She wants money, what else?" Bella asked sharply.

"Bella, go outside with your sister and brother. Now." Charlie ordered.

Bella thought about protesting, but quickly changed her mind. She sprinted out the door and into Edward's waiting arms. "Let's go into my place. Charlie can come there when he's done."

They followed Edward to his apartment. Bella went to the kitchen and started a pot of coffee, while everyone else got comfortable. Edward went to change while they sat down.

"Bells, you seem to be at home here." Jasper commented.
Edward came down the hall then and looked over at Bella, watching as she moved easily around his kitchen. He saw her cheeks turn pink at her brothers' teasing. Before he could say anything, a knock sounded and Charlie opened the door.

"Is she gone?"

"Yes." He sat down on the couch next to Rose.

"Dad, you didn't give her any money did you?" Jasper asked.

"No, son. I told her if she showed up here again and broke into Bella's or any of your houses again, I was gonna throw her ass in jail. She ran. I guess she gambled away all of Phil's money."

The mood was somber as they sat around and had coffee, all of them in deep thought. Edward watched the family and was glad they had each other. Bella would need them when the truth came out.

AN: Thank you so much for your patience as I completed another work. I am back now and hope to update regularly (once a week). RL has slapped me in the face though, so please bear with me.

What could Edward be hiding? Leave me some love and tune in next week.
Chapter 7

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. No copyright infringement intended.

The flight to Seattle was turbulence free. Edward disembarked and wound his way through the terminal to the baggage area. He claimed his one bag and then looked around. He saw Carmen standing by the gate and walked to her.

"Edward…I'm so glad you're here." Carmen hugged him.

"I told you I would come when I could. Any change?" Edward pulled free from her embrace. Carmen shook her head. "Where's Eleazar?"

"He stayed at the hospital. He and Tanya haven't left her side except to sleep and shower. They watch her for any change."

Edward nodded and thought about Irina. She had been comatose for almost two years. He had waited a long time for his estranged wife to wake up. He felt guilty for wishing that it was over, but there was really no love lost between the two of them.

Irina had been a bright and beautiful part of his life. They were
married in secret, having only known each other for a few weeks. Edward thought it was love at first sight, but now he knew better. After a year they both realized that it wasn't going to work and separated. Then Irina found out she was pregnant. They reconciled after she told Edward. They both wanted the baby and felt that two parents were better than one.

When they had gone for her first ultra-sound, they received a blow that devastated them both. Irina had miscarried. She was admitted to the hospital and a DNC performed. After that Irina was never the same.

For months she was depressed. She tried anti-depressants and therapy, but nothing could take away her grief. She finally had enough and swallowed a bottle of pills while Edward was working. He came home to find her barely breathing and with a thready pulse. He called 911 and they tried, but her brain function was low. She had been in a coma ever since.

Edward followed Carmen into Irina's room. Eleazar and Tanya stood and greeted him. Edward hadn't wanted to come, but her doctor had called and said it was time. Edward had come to let his wife go.

"Edward," Eleazar shook his hand.

"Good to see you, sir. I'm sorry it's under these circumstances." Edward said.

Tanya scoffed. "Oh please. Don't act like this is going to hurt
"You. You don't care about my sister."

"Tanya!" Carmen exclaimed.

"What mom? It's true. They were getting a divorce until she found out she was pregnant. When there was no more baby, there was no reason to try."

Edward watched as the tears slipped down Tanya's cheeks. "I'm sorry you feel that way Tan. I loved your sister very much, but we weren't right for each other. When the baby died, your sister died too."

A knock on the door interrupted any further discussion. Dr. Young walked in. "Ahh, Edward I see you made it. Thank you for coming."

Edward nodded and looked over at his wife. She was a shell of her former self. Her skin had a pale and wax-like pallor to it. Her hair, once a vibrant blonde, now lay in dark strings. He just wanted to get this over with and get back home. He needed to talk to Bella.

Edward slowly made his way to the side of the bed. He leaned down close to Irina's ear and whispered, "You can be at peace now. Go take care of our baby. I'll never forget you. I love you." He kissed her forehead and cheeks, and then stood up.

He stepped back and waited as her parents and then her sister said their goodbyes. Then Dr. Young handed him a
clipboard with papers to sign. She explained what was about to happen and then pointed to where Edward's signature was required. Once he dropped the pen, she walked over and turned off the machines that were keeping his wife alive.

The only sound in the room was the beeping of the heart monitor and the quiet sobs of Tanya and Carmen. Tears slipped silently and unnoticed down Edward's cheeks as he listened to the final beats of her heart and then nothing. He was a widower.

**HH**

Emmett waited outside the airport for Edward. He wondered what kind of mood his cousin was in, because Bella was pissed. She had been trying to get in touch with him for days and had been unable to. Emmett had heard all about it. He just couldn't tell her that Edward had gone to Seattle to bury his wife.

"Em!" Edward shouted.

Emmett turned and saw Edward coming towards him. "Hey, man! How was your flight?"

"Fine."

"Did you get some rest?"

"A little. Why?" Edward wondered.

"Because you're not gonna get any when you get home. Bella
has been calling you for days and then bugging me and Rose. She is seriously pissed at you, bro. I think she could give Chuck a run for his money."

Edward groaned. He had been ignoring Bella, because he didn't want to explain over the phone. He was afraid he was gonna lose her. "She's really pissed?"

"Yeah, don't be surprised if, when you see her, she starts throwing punches. Actually you might prefer that. If she acts indifferent, you know you're in trouble."

Edward sighed and looked out the window as Emmett drove him home. When they reached his apartment he noticed Bella's car was gone. He figured she was at Felix's.

He unloaded from Emmett's car and went into his place. He showered off the sweat from traveling and got dressed. He went into the kitchen and got a glass of water. He was stalling and he knew it. He pulled out his phone and sent a text to Emmett and Jasper.

You guys at the bar? –E

Yeah, u coming? –J

On my way. Bells there? –E

Yep. –J

Jasper's one word response concerned him, but he didn't
dwell on it. He left his apartment and set out on foot. The walk didn't take long and he was soon walking into the packed bar. He spotted his friends and quickly went over to join them. He looked around, but saw no sign of Bella.

He nodded at Kate as he passed; she nodded back and signaled to the other waitress.

"Hey, Edward, glad you could make it." Emmett commented. The waitress brought over a fresh round and quickly left.

Edward picked up his beer and looked around. "Where's Bella?"

"She's around. Felix is starting karaoke tonight, hence the busy-ness." Rosalie replied. "So are you okay? How did it go?"

"Rose!" Emmett hissed.

"What are you talking about, Rosalie?" Jasper asked.

"Sorry, Edward." Rose said.

"It's fine. It's gonna come out anyway, just let me tell Bella first."

"Here's your chance. Here she comes."

Edward turned and watched Bella walk in his direction and not even glance his way. She said hello to her siblings but ignored him completely, then walked away.
"You're screwed. Indifference is the worst." Jasper explained.

Bella walked past him again and didn't say anything. She knew he was here, but he had hurt her. First he disappears without a word, and then he doesn't answer her calls. She was beyond pissed. She wanted to hit him, but decided that ignoring him was better; give him a taste of his own medicine. She also decided to let him know just how hurt she was. She just needed to pick.

"Hey, Bells, are you gonna kick this off for us?" Felix asked coming around the bar.

"Yeah, I just need to pick a song. I want a, tell it like it is, you fucked up, song. I have a point to make. And Felix... when I'm done I'm leaving, because he'll come after me."

Felix nodded his head, "You got it Bells."

Bella made her selection and handed it to Demetri. He grinned and headed over to the machine and got everything loaded. Bella went into the bathroom and took her hair down and ran her fingers through it. She was pissed and he was gonna know it.

Felix lowered the lights and conversations stopped. Demetri cued up the music. When it started Jasper and Rosalie looked at each other, while Emmett muttered under his breath.

"Shit..."
Bella walked out and grabbed the mic.

I should have known by the way you passed me by
There was something in your eyes and it wasn't right
I should have walked but I never had the chance
Everything got out of hand and I let it slide

Now I only have myself to blame for falling for your stupid games
I wish my life could be the way it was before I saw your face

You stole my happy, you made me cry
Took the lonely and took me for a ride
And I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it
You had my heart, now I want it back
I'm starting to see everything you lack
Boy, you blew it, you put me through it
I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it

Na, na, na, na, na
Na, na, na, na, na
Na, na, na, na, na, na

Now your photos don't have a picture frame
And I never say your name and I never will
And all your things, well I threw them in the trash
And I'm not even sad

Now you only have yourself to blame for playing all those stupid games
You're always gonna be the same and, oh no, you'll never change

You stole my happy, you made me cry
Took the lonely and took me for a ride
And I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it
You had my heart, now I want it back
I'm starting to see everything you lack
Boy, you blew it, you put me through it
I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it

Na, na, na, na, na
Na, na, na, na, na
Na, na, na, na, na, na

You want my future, you can't have it
I'm still trying to erase you from my past
I need you gone so fast

You stole my happy, you made me cry
Took the lonely and took me for a ride
And I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it
You had my heart, now I want it back
I'm starting to see everything you lack
Boy, you blew it, you put me through it
I wanna uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-undo it

You stole my happy, you made me cry
Took the lonely and took me for a ride
Boy, you blew it, you put me through it
As soon as the music ended, Bella hopped off the stage and Edward watched as she left the bar.

"Fuck…" He looked at his friends and got up.

"Good luck, bro." Emmett yelled.

**HH**

"Bella will you stop…" Edward shouted after her.

Bella continued to ignore him. She refused to have this confrontation in public, on the sidewalk.

"Dammit, Bella, stop. Let me explain, please."

Hearing the pain in his voice almost made her stop, almost. She walked up the steps to her apartment and let herself in, leaving the door open behind her, knowing he would follow her inside.

Edward stared at her open door and mustered the courage to go in and tell her the truth. He walked in and closed the door behind him. "Bella?"

"You have ten minutes to explain why you left without a word and why you ignored me for five days." Bella said from behind him.

Edward gestured to the couch, "You'll want to sit down." He
waited until she was comfortable. "Bella, I went to Seattle. I couldn't tell you because I got the call at the last minute."

"Call for what?"

Edward sucked in a deep breath, "I went to bury my wife."

Bella felt like she had been punched, "Excuse me?"

"You heard me." Without letting her interrupt, Edward explained everything. He watched as the tears rolled down her cheeks, afraid that he had lost her. "Bella, I never meant to lie to you, hell I wasn't expecting you. I came here to start over. Please understand…" He pleaded.

"Get out." Bella said quietly.

"Bella…please…"

"I said get out!" She said a little more forcefully.

Edward stood up and walked to the door. "I'm not going away Bella. Remember that." He walked out the door, closing it with a soft click.

Bella picked up her phone and called the one person who had always been there for her. "Rosie…"

"I'm on my way."

**HH**
Two weeks. She hadn't spoken to him in two weeks. Edward had taken to staying at the station to give her room. He missed her, desperately.

"Edward?" Carlisle called from his office.

"What's up chief?" Edward asked leaning on the door jam.

"I should be asking you that. You've been hiding here for over a week. Wanna talk about it?"

Edward stared at his father. He still hadn't told his parents about Irina's death. Hell, he hadn't told them a lot of things. "Are you asking as my boss, or my father?"

"I'm your father first Edward you know that."

Edward nodded, "Alright, barring any bad fires, I'll be at your house tonight. I need to talk to you and mom."

Carlisle nodded and hoped that whatever his son was going to tell them wouldn't destroy him any further.

Edward drove to his parents place five hours later and saw his mother come out on the porch to greet him.

"Edward, I'm so glad you're here. I saved you some dinner, come on." Esme wrapped her arm around her only son.

Edward followed her into the kitchen and sat as she fussed over him. When Carlisle joined them, she fussed some more.
"Alright son, enough stalling. What's going on?" Carlisle asked.

"Do you remember Irina?"

Esme smiled, "Wasn't that the girl you were dating in Seattle?"

Edward nodded, "Actually, Mom, Irina was my wife." He held up his hand, "Now before you get upset, we married in secret, she never told her family either." Edward launched into the story and watched his parents' reactions.

"Oh, Edward. I wish you had told us. We could have been with you."

"How did Bella take the news?" Carlisle got straight to the point.

"She…ah…she won't talk to me. I think I blew it Dad."

Esme sniffed, "Bullshit. You haven't lost her Edward. She was just here today. That girl loves you, even if she doesn't realize it."

Edward couldn't breathe, Bella had been here. "Why was she here, Mom?"

Esme explained that they were working on a project for a fundraiser and Bella was helping. Anything to raise funds for the fire department. Bella fully supported the cause because of Jasper and Emmett.
"Edward, those guys mean the world to her, just like you do. Give her some time."

Edward nodded and hoped that time was all it would take. When he got home that evening, he found Bella sitting on the steps. He had avoided going to his place until he couldn't stand it any longer. He never expected to see her first thing.

He walked up the sidewalk, praying that she would look at him, speak to him, anything. As he neared the stairs, Bella looked up. He noticed the dark circles and immediately felt guilty for being the cause.

"Hi." Bella whispered.

"Hi."

"Hi."

"I think we should talk."

AN: His secret is out. Do you think Bella reacted appropriately? What should she do now? Leave me your thoughts. Next update ETA: Friday.
Edward sat on the stairs beside her and waited. He wasn't going to rush her; he just hoped she was going to tell him he still had a chance.

"I'm not mad that you were married. I'm mad because you hid it from me," she started. "I was open with you about my past relationships. I told you everything about Alec, hell I took you to his grave. Why did you hide this from me?"

Edward ran his hand through his hair. "Any answer that I give you Bella is just gonna seem like an excuse. I have no excuses. I didn't tell you. That's it, I didn't even tell my parents. All I can say is that I'm sorry."

Bella sighed, she knew he was sorry. "I know that. Look, I get it, I do. I can look past a wife, but a lie is so much harder." She explained as a tear slid down her cheek.
"I know," he whispered. He didn't think he could take much more. It hurt like hell when he told her about Irina and she kicked him out. This though, this was breaking his heart to pieces.

"I don't want to lose you Edward. I care about you, maybe more than I should."

Edward's heart skipped a beat, "What are you saying, Bella? I really need you to spell it out for me here."

"I'm saying that I'm not ready for us to be over. I am saying that I think we should start over. I have two more weeks until school starts, for me at least. Let's just take it slow, okay?"

For the first time Bella looked over at Edward.

He wanted to touch her so badly. "Slow…I can do slow. I will do whatever I have to do to keep you in my life."

Bella stood and turned to go into her apartment.

"Bella?"

"Yes?" She watched as Edward stood up and turned to look at her.

"May I take you to dinner tomorrow night?" Edward grinned.

Bella smiled her first genuine smile in weeks. "I'd like that."

**HH**
Bella walked into the school and made her way to her classroom. She couldn't believe the summer had flown by so fast. She looked at the empty desks and wondered what her students would be like this year. She was getting a fresh set of young minds to fill. It made her sad that her niece was no longer in her class, but looked forward to seeing her grow and hopefully someday she would have more. She knew that Rose wanted more children and that Jasper and Alice couldn't wait to start a family.

Her big brother was getting married this weekend. She couldn't be happier that she was getting another sister, especially another one that was considered to be a friend.

The summer had been filled with ups and downs, and she worried that her relationship with Rose wouldn't recover. After she had found out that her sister and Emmett had known about Edward's wife and not told her she was understandably upset. She understood that it wasn't their place to tell her anything, but they could have at least stopped her from dating a married man. It didn't matter anymore, though.

Edward had been doing as she asked and taking their relationship slowly. They had gone back to the way things were when they began. They talked about nothing and everything, finding more in common than before. When they went for walks on the beach, Edward would tentatively reach for her hand. They had yet to progress to the kissing stage; instead he would kiss her cheek, leaving her skin burning from his touch. She wanted more and she was determined that she was gonna get it.
She turned to her construction board and proceeded to decorate it for back to school. She was up on a step stool when a voice sounded behind her, startling her so she almost fell.

"Holy shit," she exclaimed as she fought for balance.

"Lord, Bella, I am so sorry." Jacob said reaching up to help her.

Bella turned her head to look at him, "Jake? What are you doing here?"

Jacob dropped his hands and eyes. "I wanted to talk to you. Would it be okay if I bought you lunch?"

Bella looked into his eyes. They were bright and clear, his face was once again the russet color that she was familiar with instead of pale. He looked better. "I guess, just let me call Jazz and let him know I won't be meeting him okay?"

"Sure, sure."

Bella pulled her phone from her bag and sent a quick text to Edward. Why she had lied to Jake, she wasn't sure, but she wanted someone to know where she was.

Jake is here. Wants 2 take me 2 lunch. Will call when done. ~B

She collected her things and was walking out with Jacob, when her phone chimed with a new text. She pulled it out and
sighed when she read Edward's message.

*No, Bella! Did u forget ur last meeting w/ him? Please don't go. ~E*

*I'll be fine. Don't worry, he looks so much better. ~B*

*Promise me Bella, if u get uncomfortable u will call me. ~E*

*I promise. ~B*

*Be careful, baby. ~E*

Bella tucked her phone back in her bag and left her classroom. She smiled, since it was the first time since Irina that Edward had used any kind of endearment with her. She liked it.

Bella and Jacob arrived at a small café and found seats on a small patio. A waitress came and took their drink order and gave them menus, before giving them some space.

Jacob cleared his throat before beginning. "Bella, I owe you a big apology. I was in a very bad place when we began seeing each other and I wasn't fit to be with anyone. I know that's no excuse, but..." Jacob looked away, as the waitress came back. They gave her their orders and she left again.

"Jacob, I don't care about an apology. I just want to know that you're getting better." Bella smiled gently.
"Thanks. I've been sober for ninety days now. I just wanted to apologize and try and maybe be friends. I need all the support I can get."

"Aww, Jake, I've always been your friend. I'm glad you are doing well." Bella smiled as their food was delivered and they began eating. "So is this part of the twelve steps?"

Jacob nodded, "Yeah, it's like step nine or something. I need to go to the station and talk to Carlisle and the rest of the crew. This is kind of where I need a favor."

"What's that?" Bella asked with a hint of trepidation in her voice.

"Will you come with me? Please, Bells. You could maybe help break the ice. I don't know how happy they'll be to see me. Especially your brother, Emmett, and perhaps Edward." Jacob pleaded.

"Jake…I don't know. Isn't this something you are supposed to do on your own?"

"I could really use the moral support. Please, I can't ask anyone else."

Bella thinks for a moment and then nods her head. Jake smiles and they finish their meal before climbing back into Jake's car and heading to the station where Jacob used to work, where Bella's boyfriend, brother and friend work. The silence was deafening on the trip there.
Jacob took a deep breath, parked the car, and got out. Bella followed. They could hear the sounds of laughter coming from the living/sitting area where the fireman was hanging out.

Jacob stopped short of the door. "I don't think I can go in there Bells."

Bella turned and glared at him. "Jacob Ephriam Black, you are gonna get your shit together and get in there now. I am right behind you."

Jacob squared his shoulders and marched through the door, Bella on his heels. The minute the door shut, everyone turned to look at them. The tension was palpable. Carlisle came out of his office and saw them standing at the door. He smiled at Bella and walked forward.

"Bella, good to see you dear, how are you?" Carlisle hugged her.

"I'm fine, chief. How are you? How's Esme?" If he wanted small talk, she would make small talk.

"Good, she's good," he turned to Jacob, "Jake good to see you. You're looking well."

"Thanks chief. I was hoping I could speak with you," he looked around the room, "Well, all of you actually."

Bella leaned against the wall and waited. She watched Jake walk to the middle of the room and watched as his old
comrades gave him their full attention.

"This isn't easy for me and I know you guys probably don't want me here, but I came to apologize. I'm sorry that I let you all down when you trusted me and needed me. All I can say is that I was a mess and in a very bad place. It took a lot for me to get the help that I need and to actually admit that I had a problem. I am an alcoholic, but I have been sober for ninety days. I have a long road ahead of me, but I wanted to make amends here, with you all, before I went any further."

As she watched him speak, she could see the weight of his decisions slowly lift from his shoulders. She could also see the respect shining in the eyes of his comrades, his brothers. Bella felt her eyes well up with tears as she watched forgiveness fill the room.

Carlisle was the first to speak. "Congratulations, Jake. It takes a lot of courage to admit that you have a problem and that you need help. I'm proud of you, son."

Bella quietly left the room and walked down to the basketball court, she sat down on the makeshift bleachers and waited. She knew that Edward would find her in a moment. She was so proud of Jacob, for getting help and staying sober. She knew deep inside that today was just a visit and that he wouldn't be sticking around. That thought made the tears spill over. She didn't want to lose another friend.

"You okay, baby?" The velvet voice sounded behind her.
Bella just nodded her head, unable to speak. She felt Edward sit beside her and wrap her in his arms.

"I'm sorry." Bella said, wiping her eyes.

Edward turned her to face him. "Why are you crying? Did he say or do something to you?"

Bella shook her head, "No, he was very kind and apologetic. I am just so damn proud of him and sad at the same time, does that make any sense?"

"You are afraid to lose a friend. I get it, but he has to leave so that he can make a complete recovery. I can't tell you the amount of pride in that room. The guys are so damn proud of the progress he's made. I never worked with him, but hell I'm proud of him. What he did takes guts."

Bella nodded and leaned her head back down on his shoulder. They sat that way for a while until Jake cleared his throat behind them.

"Bells, you ready to go?" Jacob asked taking in the scene before him.

Bella and Edward stood and came toward him. "Sure," she turned to Edward. "I'll see you when you get home." She leaned up and kissed his lips before he could pull away.

"Okay, I'll bring dinner. Anything you want?" Edward asked with a smile.
"Chinese," she grinned.

Edward nodded, kissed her again and watched as she walked away with Jacob. For some reason he still didn't trust that guy, maybe it was just because he was walking away with his heart.

**HH**

Edward knocked on Bella's door several hours later. He smiled, thinking how far they had come in the last few weeks. Just when he thought he had lost her, she gives him a second chance. He was trying to make sure that he deserved it. He heard her yell for him to come in, so he opened the door. He was surprised by the sight that greeted him.

Bella smiled when she saw his face. She had gone to the effort to clean her apartment well. She wasn't ready to have sex with him yet, but she did want to try and move forward a little. She had candles covering every available and safe surface and soft piano music playing. One thing that she and Edward shared was a love of Yiruma.

"Bella…baby, what?" Edward stuttered.

"I thought we could have a nice dinner. Is that okay?"

"Sure, but…is this the right mood for Chinese food?" Edward grinned.

"It's the right mood for me, do you not like it?"
Edward moved quickly into the room and sat his package down on the table. He brought his hands up to Bella's face and held her in place. "It's perfect."

Bella smiled and brought her hands up to his. They gazed into each other's eyes before Edward leaned down to take her lips softly with his. He nipped at her lower lip, causing her to moan softly, before deepening the kiss.

Where he had shied away from intimate gestures before, now he was caught up in the romantic setting. As they clung to one another, their dinner forgotten, two hearts merged. When the need for air became prevalent they broke apart, but leaned their foreheads against each other.

"Bella, I think we need to eat before it gets cold." Edward wanted anything but food; however he didn't want to push too far, too fast.

Once they were seated in front of the coffee table and had dished out the food, Edward asked what had been weighing on his mind all afternoon. "How did the rest of your visit go with Jake?"

"Fine. After we left the station he dropped me back off at the school. He was curious about our relationship. He seemed…disappointed, I guess…that I was seeing someone."

"Did he really think that you were going to wait for him to sober up?"
"I don't think it was that Edward. I think he was upset that I was dating you. What happened between you two?"

Edward took a deep breath. "Jacob knew about Irina, Bella. I don't think that he is aware that she is gone. I mean her obit was in the Seattle Times, but no one would have heard about it here."

Bella nodded in understanding. "I guess that makes sense now. He warned me away from you."

"Huh...always protective of you." Edward grinned. "I think everyone in this town loves you Bella."

Bella smiled, "Not quite," she whispered.

Edward cocked an eyebrow at her. "Do you know someone who doesn't love you? I think I need to meet this person."

Bella looked at him in shock, "What are you saying?"

Edward sighed and put down his chopsticks. He took both of her hands in his and looked into her eyes. "I'm saying...I love you, Bella. I love you very much."

**AN: What do you think? Should she say it back? Sorry this update took so long, RL got in the way. I don't want to give an ETA for another chapter, but my hours at work just got cut, so I should have them rolling out faster.**

For fic rec's check out this site: /make-a-fic-rec/
You can make recommendations or find a story…its great!
9. Chapter 9

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: I posted a O/S called Single. You should check it out and leave me your thoughts.

The flames licked up the wall and to the ceiling, following the path of the accelerant she had used to light the fire. She reveled in watching her handy work grow, but knew that she would have to leave soon before it got out of control.

When she was twelve she lit her first fire and became obsessed. The passion and the color brought her back every time. The heat and destruction was never something she worried about. She didn't care how much money the damage cost or if anyone was hurt in her quest for a fix. That's right, she was a fire junkie. Pyromania. That's what they called it.

As the heat and flame grew she knew it was time to go. She felt bad that the bar was going to have to suffer, she liked it here. But this is where that bitch had ruined her life. Bella Swan. Oh how she hated her. She had stolen the only man she had ever loved. Edward was going to be hers, just as soon as the brunette was out of the way.
Walking out of the building she went to a nearby payphone and made the anonymous call to 911. Then she turned and walked away trying to be inconspicuous. She walked for several blocks, until she heard the sirens. She noticed people coming out of their homes and turned to follow them, ready to watch with the crowd, her handy work.

**HH**

The tones dropped and everyone froze momentarily. Edward listened as dispatch gave the location of the fire. Once the address was read, all of the guys jumped into action, ready to go save their favorite hangout.

Gear was pulled on; engines fired up, sirens blaring the station crew tore off down the road toward Felix's. When they arrived on scene the fire was already raging. They knew that the damage was going to be irreparable and Edward could only hope that Felix had good insurance.

This fire was going to devastate the community more than any other. Felix's was a favorite among firefighters and policeman alike. It was a place to unwind and compare horror stories. It was also the place where he had fallen in love with Bella.

He wasn't looking forward to telling her about this, if she didn't already know. He tried not to look through the crowd to see if she was there, a quick glance told him that she wasn't. He got his head back in the game and held a hose line with James while the others went to their assignments. They worked for a little over an hour to control the blaze, but all that was left was
a smoldering pile of ash and brick.

The painful and horrified wale of grief was all that was heard after their hoses and been put down. Edward turned and saw Felix come through the crowd and look at what remained of his business. Demetri and Bella were hot on his heels. He felt helpless when he watched Felix fall to his knees in visible pain. He watched as Carlisle stepped over to him and tried to offer a bit of comfort.

Edward walked to the truck and sat on the bumper for a moment. He looked up when a shadow crossed in front of him. Bella stood before him, her eyes brimming with tears.

"Oh, baby. I'm so sorry." Edward stood and wrapped her in his embrace.

"Please tell me that this was an accident, faulty wiring, anything but arson." Bella pleaded.

Edward looked down at the woman in his arms and his heart broke a little, "I can't. We don't know the cause yet. Aro will have to run his investigation." He didn't want to tell her that he didn't think it was an accident or anything to do with the wiring.

"Edward, what the hell is happening in this town? I hate all these fires popping up. First the abandoned house, then the warehouse, two other businesses on Main Street, and now Felix's. I hope Aro finds the culprit soon." Bella nestled into Edward's arms.
"Me too, love me too." Edward sighed. "I have to get back to work. I'll see you later?"

Bella nodded, "Be careful."

Edward leaned down to kiss her gently. "Always am. I love you."

Bella smiled. "I love you, too."

Edward started hearing those words from her. Ever since he had expressed himself to her over a week ago, he had been waiting, patiently, for her to say it back. He reached out and brushed her cheek with his hand, grinning when he smeared soot on her face. "Really?"

Bella nodded, "I'm sorry it took me so long to say it. I love you Edward, with all my heart."

"I love you, Bella, oh, I love you so much." Edward sighed and pulled her to him. He held on for dear life to what he hoped was his future.

**HH**

School began with cries of uncertainty and trepidation, from new and old students. Bella stood outside her classroom directing her students into her class and helping the stragglers find their way. When the hall was finally clear, she closed her door and the year began.

"Welcome. I am Miss Swan, your second grade teacher."
Bella started. "I am so glad to see so many familiar faces, as well as some new ones. This year is going to be a little different from what you are used to, but I am sure…"

Her speech was cut off by the fire alarm sounding. "Okay, no one panic. I am sure this is just a drill. Let's line up and we will go outside okay? Come on."

Bella helped her class to get in a line and then opened her door to find it filling with other classes. She led her class calmly toward their designated location that was a safe distance from the school. While they waited she allowed her kids to chat, quietly. She spoke in hushed tones to the teacher next to her.

"Ty, did they tell you about a drill happening today?"

Tyler Crowley shook his head. "No, I hope nothing is wrong."

Bella looked around, but didn't see anyone from the office. She pulled her cell phone out of her pocket to see if maybe Edward had called, but had no missed calls. She decided to send him a quick text to see if he knew anything.

_Fire alarm school. U heard anything? –B_

His response was quick.

_I am here. All okay._ –E

Bella breathed a sigh of relief. At least it was just a false alarm. She turned to Tyler and told him what she knew. Little
The fires were just the beginning. Soon after Bella had started school she started getting strange letters. The first one she thought was a prank. Edward however wasn't convinced. He couldn't help but wonder if it was all connected.

Aro's preliminary reports were showing that all of the fires had been started with the same accelerant, a combination of paint thinner and gasoline. It had put everyone on edge. The police still had no suspects, but both departments were working closely together to catch this nut.

Even worse is the fact that Edward's department was one man short. Carlisle had taken to putting ads in out of town papers. He had done a few interviews with the commissioner, but without success.

When Bella received the first letter, Edward, like her, thought it was a sick joke. She said that Emmett was probably playing a trick on her. So they asked him.

"I don't know what you guys are talking about." Emmett started, "I didn't send shit. What's it say?"

The family was sitting around the table on Sunday at Charlie's house having dinner. Bella produced the letter from her purse and handed it to her brother-in-law.
I'm watching you.

"This is it?" Emmett asked incredulously.

"Let me see it." Charlie demanded.

It was passed around the table and everyone had something to say.

"Bella, I don't think you should take this lightly." Jasper said his voice laced with concern.

"That's what I keep telling her." Edward said putting his arm around her.

"Come on guys, really? This is nothing."

"Bells, someone said that they are watching you. This is a big deal. Think about it sweetie, all of the fires, then the false alarm at school, now this...you can't take this lightly." Rose added.

"Yeah, B, think about it. Look at all the places that the fires have occurred. You had a connection to all of them. Be it directly or indirectly." Alice jumped in.

"No I haven't, I had nothing to do with that abandoned house." Bella cried.

Charlie cleared his throat, "Actually, Bells, you were conceived in that house. Your mother and I used to live there. Jasper and Rose wouldn't remember you two were so young..."
when we moved."

Bella paled as all the pieces of the puzzle began to slip in place. "I just don't understand though. Why would someone target me? My life is far from exciting. I teach elementary school for heaven's sake."

Edward looked around the table, "Bella, think about it. What's new in your life since all this started?"

Bella was silent as she looked around the table. Realization finally dawned on her and she moaned in pain. "No! I am not going to let someone ruin my happiness. I can't do it again." Bella got up from the table and ran out the back door.

"Edward, you can't really think that someone wants to get rid of her to get to you, right?"

"Think about Jasper. It's the only thing that makes sense. That first fire started the day after Bella and I saw each other again. I know you remember that night. We couldn't keep our eyes off each other. Excuse me." Edward got up and went after Bella.

"He's right, Jazz." Rose whispered. "The next fire was after their first kiss, the next after their first date. The pattern fits. Someone wants our sister out of the way, to get to Edward."

Edward found Bella sitting on a swing in the backyard. He walked up and sat next to her. "Talk to me."
"What do you want me to say?" Bella sniffled.

"Bella, I am not going anywhere. I love you. Whoever is doing this will be caught and we'll be together. I won't let anything happen to you." He promised.

Bella sobbed and threw herself into his open arms. "I can't lose you too."

"I'm not going anywhere." Edward vowed.

Charlie turned from the window and sat back down with his family. "Bella has already lost the love of her life once. I can't stand by and watch it happen to her again. I know she won't survive it."

"What do we do Dad?" Jasper asked.

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

Silence surrounded the table as they all struggled to come to terms that someone wanted Edward and they wanted Bella out of the way, by any means necessary.

**HH**

When Edward and Bella got back to the duplex on Sunday evening they were both emotionally exhausted. He could see the toll it was taking on her, knowing that someone wanted her out of the way. He was going to do everything in his power to keep her safe.
Bella looked at Edward and made a decision. "Stay with me tonight?"

"Bella, I…"

"I don't mean that Edward, although I wouldn't refuse you. I just want you to hold me. I need to know that you are still going to be here tomorrow."

Edward nodded and followed her into her place. As he shut the door, he was unaware of the eyes that followed his movements.

"Do you want to watch a movie or something?" Bella asked.

"No sweetheart. Let's just go to bed. We both have an early day tomorrow."

Bella nodded and turned to her room. She went into the bathroom and changed into her shorts and tank. When she came out, Edward was waiting in her bed. She crossed to the bed and climbed in beside him. Edward opened his arms and smiled when Bella laid her head on his chest.

"Your heart is beating so fast." Bella commented.

"Because of you." He ran his fingers through her long tresses. She turned her head and placed a kiss on his chest above his heart, causing it to stutter and then beat again rapidly.

"Bella…"

Bella lifted her head and met his gaze, "Edward, please…"
make love to me."

Edward searched her eyes for any hesitation, he saw none. What he saw was love shining back at him. "Are you sure?"

As an answer she scooted up and placed her lips against his. She nipped at his lower lip and then sucked it into her mouth. Edward moaned and fisted his hands in her hair. He sat up and turned them so he was laying half on her half beside her, while he deepened their kiss.

In between kisses and moans, nips and sucks, clothes were discarded and tossed somewhere about the room. They took the time to savor each other, not wanting to rush through their first time. Bella's hands were fisted in his hair as he explored first one breast and then the other. She was writhing beneath him as he awakened sensations in her that she thought were long dead.

"Edward…please," she begged.

"Tell me what you want my beautiful Bella," Edward said as he positioned himself at her entrance.

"You, just you." Bella moaned as Edward slid slowly into her heat.

"I love you…" He began to move slowly. Long languid strokes that built a fire inside her.

"Edward…oh…more. I need more."
Edward began moving faster as Bella met him thrust for thrust. He hadn't felt like this in so long. He didn't think he ever would again.

"Bella…so good…not gonna last." He groaned as he increased his pace even more.

"Edward…I'm gonna…" Bella screamed his name as her walls clenched around him.

"Bella!" Edward followed soon after.

When their breathing had returned to normal, Edward slid out of her and rolled them so she was tucked in his shoulder.

"I love you, baby." Bella whispered as she drifted to sleep.

"I love you, too. Always," Edward drifted off, neither of them seeing the flame outside the window.

**AN: Ducks for cover...don't hate me. A little cliffie never hurt anyone. So who do you think it is? I will leave you with a clue…It's NOT Tanya. Until next time. I already started the next chapter; I may have it up tomorrow. Fingers crossed.**
10. Chapter 10

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: Thanks for all of the guesses as to who is the culprit. Keep in mind though, Jessica was already introduced. She answered the phone at the PD in chapter 2…As to Lauren, Victoria, Bree or Jane; I guess you'll need to read on…

Dammit! They didn't believe that she was serious. She was going to have to step it up a bit. She already knew what she was going to do, it was time to execute. She got back into her car and drove to her destination to get everything in place.

The night was quickly turning to morning when she was finally satisfied. She had everything where it needed to be. She didn't care who was going to get hurt and there would be plenty of injuries, she laughed when she envisioned all the people crowding into the hospital. All she cared was that Bella was in there as well, she just wanted her to be in the morgue.

She thought back to the day she met Edward. She had been nineteen, maybe twenty, but she knew that he was her destiny. She had watched him dance with her cousin and
wondered if she could get a dance. Of course after that
dance he had started talking to her. Bella had been a thorn in
her side for as long as she could remember. When her Uncle
Charlie had married that whore Renee she knew that she
would be forgotten.

Charlie had been like a father to her, but then he got married
and adopted those two brats. When Bella had been born, she
had been forgotten. She had been left alone to deal with
drunk parents who had to be reminded to feed her. She had lit
out of there soon after watching Rosalie get married, but had
never forgotten the bronze-haired god.

It had been fate when she had run into him again in Seattle.
Of course, he didn't remember her. He had been with the
blonde then. When she had seen the rings adorning their
fingers she was filled with so much rage. He was hers. Well
she took care of Irina. It didn't take much really. Slipping her a
couple pills that were guaranteed to cause a miscarriage. She
never thought that he would go home and see Bella again. Let
alone fall in love with her.

She wasn't worried though. Bella would be taken care of soon
and Edward would be all hers. First, perhaps a little family
reunion.

**HH**

Felix walked around the skeleton of his bar. He had contacted
his insurance agent and they said that they would send
someone out to survey the damage. He just couldn't figure out
why his place had become a target.

"Oh, Felix. I'm so sorry." Bella cried next to him.

"No worries, Bells. It's not your fault."

"Actually Felix, it might be…" Bella led him over to a bench near the rubble and explained the theory that everyone had, the look on his face said he didn't agree.

"Bella, I don't know of anyone who could hate you like that. You are the sweetest, kindest woman I know and if I swung in that direction I would snatch you up for myself." Felix chuckled.

"Felix! What would Demetri say?" Bella giggled.

They both looked up when they saw a car stop at the curb. A man in a polished suit stepped out and made his way over. "Felix?"

Felix stood and held out a hand, "And you are?"

"Marcus Bellini. Let's get started shall we?"

Bella stayed seated and observed the two men as they surveyed the damage. She heard Marcus say that he had a meeting with the fire chief and investigator to find out the cause and that would help decide on whether the full amount of the policy was going to be issued.

"If this was in fact arson, you will be given the full amount. I
will be in touch." Marcus got back in his sedan and drove away.

"Well, I guess now we wait." Felix said solemnly.

While they sat discussing the charred remains of his life, Bella's phone chirped with a new text.

*Hey, baby. Come 2 the station. Please! –E*

Bella giggled and showed Felix the text. He laughed, "Answer the man, Bells and then get the hell out of here. I'll call you later."

Bella hugged her friend and went to her car.

*On my way. Luv u! –B*

*Good. Luv u 2! –E*

Bella pulled up to the station and could hear laughing and carousing coming from upstairs. She ran up the steps and in through the open door. Nothing could have prepared her for what she saw.

All of the men from the station, as well as Carlisle and the commissioner were present. They were all surrounding a short guy with brown hair and a dimpled smile. A slightly taller girl stood beside with an equally large smile and long brown hair.

"Ang?" Bella asked.
The brown haired girl turned and squealed. "Bella!"

The two women embraced and then leaned back and started rapidly firing questions at the same time.

"Whoa, slow down, sis. You're gonna give Alice a run for her money," jasper chuckled. "How the hell do you two know each other?"

Bella and Angela laughed. "Ang was my college roommate, before Ben there drug her off and married her. Alice came a year later."

"Bells and I had a good freshman year together, then I met Ben and the rest is history." Angela added then turned back to her old friend. "I didn't know you were living back here. I thought you would have stayed out west."

Bella shook her head. "I came back after Renee went to rehab the first time. I just kinda stayed put. Where did you guys end up settling?"

Ben walked over and wrapped his arm around his wife. "We were in Seattle for a while."

Bella looked over at Edward. "Do you know them?"

Edward walked to her and smiled. "Yes baby, who do you think called them?"

"Baby?" Ben and Angela questioned. They had heard that Irina died, but didn't know the back story.
After a couple of hours and a lot of explaining Ben and Angela understood everything. They joined Bella and Edward for dinner and the women caught up. It was revealed that Ben was going to be taking the place of Jacob and giving the station a full house again. Angela was going to be taking a position at the high school since one of the teachers there was ready to retire early.

"So have you guys found a place to live?" Bella asked.

"Right now we are staying at a motel near the station. We'll start looking soon."

"Nonsense," Edward piped up. He looked at Bella and at her nod made the suggestion. "I have an apartment that is just sitting unused since I am at Bella's every night. How about you guys stay there?"

"Are you guys living together?" Angela wanted to know.

Bella looked at Edward, "We hadn't really discussed it, I guess now is as good a time as any." Bella smiled at the man she loved and knew that it was time. "Babe, you're at my place all the time anyway, just grab all the important stuff and your clothes and just move in."

"Are you sure?" Edward tried not to show how thrilled he was.

Bella nodded, "Yes, Edward I love you. You love me, what are we waiting for?"
"Nothing. Looks like you got yourself a roommate." Edward kissed her lips and then turned to their friends. "Looks like you got yourselves a place to live."

**HH**

The transition from dating to living together had gone smoothly. Bella and Edward grew closer every day. The 'accidental' fires had all but stopped and it had given the town a sense of peace. Carlisle was wondering how long it would last.

Bella, Esme, Rosalie, Alice and now Angela had been working on a fundraiser to help all those affected by the fires. It was to take place in the city park. Somehow Rose had been able to convince her sister to provide the entertainment, so Bella had been busy rehearsing with Demetri and the rest of the band. They had made sure to choose popular and fun songs, since this was supposed to be a happy and helpful event.

The day the event rolled around the entire town had come out to support the cause. Somehow Bella had been able to convince an old college buddy, who happened to play for the Carolina Panthers, get the team to sign a football to auction off. There were also cakes pies and a win-a-date with a fireman auction. All of the eligible bachelors in the department had volunteered.

"Welcome family and friends to the first ever Lautning Park Fundraiser. Thanks for coming. Games are available all afternoon; there are also some silent auctions. Take a look
around see what you want and make your bid. Later this evening we will be having a date auction so pick out your favorite bachelor. Music will be starting on center stage in about twenty minutes. Until then have fun."

Esme place the microphone back in its holder and went to help Rose serve the homemade ice cream. They had expected a large turnout, but nothing compared to this. It looked like the whole town as well as a couple neighboring ones had shown up. She loved word of mouth advertising.

Bella was running around like a chicken with her head cut off trying to make sure that everything was running smoothly. She had about five minutes before she needed to get over to the main stage and she was on the other side of the park.

"Bellsy, calm down, everything is fine. You need to get over there like right now." Emmett was whining.

"Emmett, back up off me. I'm heading there now. Can you just make sure that the football is still there and that no one had wondered off with it?"

"Sure, now get."

Bella took off at a brisk walk, not wanting to risk bodily injury to anyone, herself included, if she fell. She finally made it over to the stage, just as Demetri was starting the music. Esme was on stage again and saw Bella walking over.

"Ladies and gentleman, please welcome to the stage one of
the organizers of this event, Miss Bella Swan."

"Thanks Esme. Welcome everyone. There is only a few hours left of the silent auction so make sure you make your bids now. How about some music?" she grinned when the crowd cheered. She looked over at Demetri and he switched into the first song they were gonna do.

He promised her a new and better life, out in Arizona
Underneath the blue never ending sky, swore that he was gonna
Get things in order, he'd send for her
When he left her behind, it never crossed her mind

There is no Arizona
No Painted Desert, no Sedona
If there was a Grand Canyon
She could fill it up with the lies he's told her
But they don't exist, those dreams he sold her
She'll wake up and find
There is no Arizona

The crowd was clapping as Bella finished singing. Edward couldn't keep his eyes off of her. She seemed so at home up there, he couldn't help but wonder why she didn't do it professionally. Rose sidled up to him so he asked her.

"Why didn't Bella try and go pro with her singing?"

"You've seen how shy she can be. She isn't very comfortable up there in the first place. She's only comfortable when
Demetri is behind her and he'll never leave Felix." Rose explained.

Edward nodded in understanding. He smiled when the band started up another song and Bella put on her big girl pants. She hated this song. She was really gonna be pissed at Demetri later. They had a little surprise planned for her, and she wasn't going to be able to leave the stage.

Well I'm an eight ball shooting double fisted drinking son of a gun
I wear my jeans a little tight
Just to watch the little boys come undone
I'm here for the beer and the ball busting band
Gonna get a little crazy just because I can

You know I'm here for the party
And I ain't leavin' till they throw me out
Gonna have a little fun gonna get me some
You know I'm here, I'm here for the party

Bella was ready for a break after they had done four songs, but apparently Demetri wasn't. She looked at him and he shrugged and started in with another song. This one she recognized and immediately tried to get off the stage. She turned in one direction and Felix and Emmett were blocking her, in the other stood Jasper and Charlie. She realized then that she had no choice and began to sing.

Baby I've been drifting away
Dreaming all day
Of holding you
Touching you
The only thing I want to do
Is be with you
As close to you
As I can be

Let's make love
All night long
Until all our strength is gone
Hold on tight
Just let go
I want to feel you in my soul
Until the sun comes up
Let's make love
Oh, baby

She was unprepared to see Edward walk on the stage toward her with a microphone in hand, singing the next verse.

Do you know what you do to me
Everything inside of me
Is wanting you
And needing you
I'm so in love with you
Look in my eyes
Let's get lost tonight
In each other
Let's make love
All night long
Until all our strength is gone
Hold on tight
Just let go
I want to feel you in my soul
Until the sun comes up
Let's make love

Bella could feel the tears on her cheeks as she sang the words that a while ago she would have been embarrassed to sing in public, but with Edward in front of her, touching her face, all she felt was love.

Let's make love
All night long
Until all our strength is gone
Hold on tight
Just let go
I want to feel you in my soul
Until the sun comes up
Oh, until the sun comes up
Let's make love

Oh baby, let's make love
All night long
All night long
Let's make love

The roar of applause went unnoticed by the couple on stage;
they were lost in each other. When they finally were able to break from their trance, it was time to announce the winners of the silent auction.

Esme walked on stage and grabbed Bella by the hand. "Come on sweetie, time to announce the winners."

The night wound down and the winners went home with their prizes, all in all it was a huge success. They had made enough money to help with rebuilding and any other expenses that the fire and police departments would require. Bella was surprised at the amount of money that the autographed football brought in.

She and Edward fell into bed exhausted and were immediately out. They had a long day the next day with family dinners and getting ready for the work week ahead.

**HH**

Charlie got up to answer the door while they were having dessert Sunday evening.

"Are you guys expecting anybody?" He asked his children.

"No, everyone is here Dad." Bella grinned and stuffed a bite of pie in Edward's mouth.

Everyone laughed at the look on Edward's face, even Emily. All laughter ceased when they heard the voice from the doorway.
"Hi, Uncle Charlie."

AN: Who is at the door? Next update....questionable...I'll get it ASAP, the drama will unfold even more and we find out who our mystery guest is.
11. AN: Apologies

AN: Allow me to apologize in advance. My computer has gone down and I am going to be unable to post a new chapter to this story until I get it back from the manufacturer. I had planned to give you a sneak peak, however nothing is cooperating with me at this time.

I should be back up and running in approx. 7-10 days, if not a few more.

I appreciate your patience and loyalty as I will be going through withdrawal. Thanks again.

Liz
12. Chapter 12

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

Stay away from Edward. If you don't, bad things could happen. He is mine.

Bella read and reread the note that had been taped to her windshield on Monday morning. She hadn't shown it to anyone and it was already Wednesday. She decided to stop by the station and have her dad meet her in Carlisle's office, anything to avoid her.

She still couldn't believe that her cousin had shown up after all these years and expected to be welcomed with open arms. No one had seen or heard from her since Emmett and Rosalie's wedding. Now all of a sudden she was back. The only other person who had spent her life making Bella's miserable.

As she stepped out of her classroom at the end of the day, she thought she smelled something coming from the janitor's closet, but realized that it was most likely cleaning supplies and kept walking. When she reached her car she sent a text to Edward letting him know that she was on her way and
needed to talk to him and would he mind making sure Carlisle was there. She also put in a call to her dad.

"Lautning Police Department, how may I help you?"

"Hey Jess, is my dad around?"

"Sure Bella, hang on."

Bella waited while Jessica patched her through to her dad's office.

"Chief Swan."

"Hi dad, are you busy?" Bella asked as she stopped at a red light.

"Never for you, what's up?"

"Can you meet me at the fire station? I need to tell you and Edward something and I would rather do it once."

"Sure, I am on my way."

Bella disconnected and continued driving to the fire house. She pulled in about ten minutes later and parked in the lot. She walked up the steps and into the lounging area and spotted Emmett.

"Hey Em."

"Bellsy! Okay stop me if you've heard it." A collection of
groans sounded in the room. "Chuck Norris buys his girl scout cookies from Green Berets."

"Hmm…well…Chuck Norris taught an old dog a new trick."

"Now ya see, Belly-bean, that's why I love you. You speak Chuck." Emmett threw an arm around her shoulders.

"Hey, Bella, where the hell do you learn all these Chuck Norris jokes?" Mike Newton asked.

"Well, ya see Mikey, there is a website. I have a tendency to memorize the ones I think are funny." Bella replied, spying Edward at the door with her dad. "Later guys."

She crossed the room and immediately pulled them both into Carlisle's office. After telling them to sit, she began her explanation.

"When I walked out to my car on Monday morning, this was taped to it," she pulled the note from her purse and handed it to her dad.

Charlie read the note and felt his blood run cold. "Isabella Marie, how could you not tell us about this? At the very least tell Edward."

Edward slammed out of his chair and started pacing the room. Bella's eyes followed him as she answered her father, "I'm sorry Dad. Once again though, I didn't really take it seriously. This has got to be a sick joke, right?"
Carlisle cleared his throat, "Bella I don't think the person who is sending these is kidding. I think that you and Edward are both in danger. Someone has developed a twisted reality where Edward is their, for lack of a better word, property. They see you as the threat. From what this sounds like, you are going to be eliminated. And I would think that it will be soon."

"DAMMIT! Who is this asshole?" Edward roared.

"Edward…"

"Don't Bella, just don't. I have never been so angry and I really think that you should stay away from me. Go home." Edward ordered.

"I am not leaving here without you." Bella said quietly.

Edward turned on her. Neither noticing that their fathers had slipped out of the office. "I am NOT going to put you in danger. I will go stay with my parents. I will do whatever I have to do to make sure that you are safe."

Bella stood up and walked to him, gently placing her hands on either side of his face. "Edward Anthony Cullen, I love you. Wherever you are, that is where I am going to be. I refuse to let someone else come between me and the man I love again."

"Bella, I…"
"No! I repeat I refuse to let someone else come between me and the man I love again."

"Bella, I…"

"No! You had your say. Now let's go home." Bella pressed her lips to his and poured all the love she felt into that one kiss. When they broke apart, Edward just nodded and they went home, hand in hand.

**HH**

Friday morning dawned clear and bright. Bella and Edward rose as they normally would and had coffee and breakfast, before sharing a shower. Soft touches, gentle caresses led to moans of pleasure from both.

"Edward, I need you," Bella whimpered.

Edward lifted her and she wrapped her legs around his waist, putting him right outside her entrance. They moaned in unison as he slid home. The water continued to cascade around them as they made love slowly, almost as if it were the last time.

"Oh…Edward…so close…"

"I love you, Bella. Cum for me baby." Edward thrust harder, deeper, until he felt Bella come undone around him.

"Edward…" Bella cried his name, as he followed her into the abyss.
They cleaned themselves up before the water ran cold. The dried each other, with more words of love and gentle kisses. They finally decided that it was time to finish getting ready. Bella went to her closet, while Edward put in his uniform.

Once they were ready to go, they climbed into Edward's truck and set off for the school.

"I have a bad feeling about today," Bella commented.

"Why, baby?"

Bella looked at him, "I don't know. I just have this feeling. I can't explain it."

Edward pulled into the school parking lot and parked the truck. He turned to Bella and waited until she looked at him. "Bella, I need you to do something for me."

"Anything," she smiled.

"Keep your phone on you all day. Put it on vibrate, on silent, whatever, just please keep it in your pocket."

Bella placed her hand to his cheek, "I promise. I love you."

"I love you." Edward kissed her passionately, before releasing her.

Bella got out of the truck and walked toward her class. Edward watched her walk away, praying that it wasn't the last time her would ever see her.
It was time. She had arrived at the school extremely early this morning and had come in through the window that she had left unlocked. She was lucky that she was skinny enough to fit through.

She stopped at the janitor closet that was just across Bella's classroom and made sure that her stuff was still stashed there. She noticed that one of the bottles had been opened and not closed back up. *Who in the hell has been in this?* She decided not to worry about it and got to work.

She poured a small amount of accelerant around Bella's classroom and out into the hallway, lining the wall all the way to the door, effectively trapping anyone who tried to leave once the fire had spread this far. She then turned and lined the hall leading to the library, where she was going to have the fire originate. Once she was satisfied, she set back to wait.

**HH**

Bella was on edge most of the morning. She couldn't figure out why, but she just knew that today was the day that the threats against her were going to happen.

Somehow she made it through her lunch and was sitting during her planning period, while Tyler and Lauren had the kids out at recess. She looked out her window wistfully thinking about Edward and hoping that today didn't turn out
like she thought it might. So far everything had been peaceful; she should have known it wouldn't last.

The sound of the fire alarm had Bella springing into action and running from her room, not noticing the eyes that watched her.

**HH**

Edward and the guys had spent the morning scrubbing the engines and making sure that all of their equipment was ready to go. It had been a surprisingly quiet morning. No fires, no accidents, nothing to report. Nothing could have prepared any of them for what they heard when the tones dropped.

"All engines, all engines. Respond to fire at Lautning Elementary School. All engines and medics respond."

Edward felt his stomach drop and his heart settle in his throat. This is it, the day he had been dreading since Bella had received her first note. He jumped into action and quickly pulled on his gear.

"Edward?"

"What!"

"I know that this goes without saying, but you need to be extra cautious. You are really close to this one and I just need to make sure you have your head on straight." Carlisle warned.

"I got it, Chief." Edward slid down the pole and ran to the truck, just as his phone started to buzz. "Bella?"
Bella ran down the hall out to the playground just as Tyler blew his whistle and the students ran to line up.

"Miss Swan's class over here," Bella called calmly, even though she felt anything but calm.

She watched as her students lined up, once all of them were in place she turned and they followed her to their specified location. Once they were in place, Bella turned to take roll. After hearing that all of her students were there, she turned back around and saw the smoke billowing out of the library windows. Then she knew this was real.

Bella pulled her phone from her pocket and immediately dialed Edward.

"Bella?"

"I got out baby. I am at the end of the property with my students."

Edward's sigh of relief made her smile. "Okay, baby. I love you. We are on our way."

"I love you, too." Bella hung up and turned as she heard her name shouted. Lauren Mallory came running to her.

"Bella!" Lauren stopped and grabbed Bella's arms.
"Lauren, what?" Bella asked.

"I can't find Emily. I don't know where she is..." Lauren breathed.

Bella felt her heart slip into her stomach. "Lauren! What do you mean you can't find her?" Bella all but shouted.

"She was with us when we left the playground, but she didn't answer roll call."

Bella spun around and frantically scanned the school area. She could find no sign of her niece. She turned back and looked at the school and she knew. Whoever was after her had Emily and was waiting for her inside that burning building. Bella took off running leaving Lauren yelling behind her.

**HH**

It was time. She got out of her hiding place and walked to a far corner, where she stuffed some loose paper into the shelves and lit them. She stood back and watched in awe as the flames licked across the books, eating its way up the shelves and toward the ceiling.

She giggled as she thought of that Bella burning as well. When she was satisfied that the flames were good and strong she slipped out of the library and waited. What she saw pissed her off even more. She watched as Bella ran out of her classroom. No! She had to get her back in the school. Looking out the window, she found a way to do just that.
She grabbed the little girl with the blonde curls and yanked her inside and into Bella's classroom. There she began to wait.

**HH**

The fire engines came around the corner of the school, sirens and lights blaring. Edward looked at the smoke coming from the school and was instantly on alert, although relieved that Bella wasn't inside.

Once the trucks had stopped all of the firemen clambered out and went to find out their instructions, anxious to get the fire out.

Edward watched as Carlisle spoke with the principal, getting all the information possible and finding out if everyone had gotten out. Just as Carlisle was turning to give instruction a teacher ran up.

"Principal Green!"

"What is it Miss Mallory?"

Lauren took a breath, "One of my students is missing. When I told Miss Swan, she ran back into the school."

"WHAT!" Edward exclaimed.

"Edward…" Carlisle hissed.

"Lauren, which student was missing?" Principal Green questioned.
"Emily McCarty."

Emmett walked forward, "I'm sorry, did you just say that my daughter is inside that burning building?"

Lauren could only nod, as tears streamed down her face.

The anguish was written plainly on Emmett and Edward's faces as they realized how bad things could get and how fast they could get that way. Sending up silent prayers the two men turned to Carlisle for instruction.

**HH**

"Emily!" Bella shouted as she ran through the smoky halls of her school. She stopped when she heard the faint voice call her back.

Bella turned, "Emily!"

"Aunt Bella!"

Bella ran toward the voice and found herself outside her classroom door. She eased it open, softly calling for her niece. "Emily?"

"Aunt Bella…"

"Yes, come on in Aunt Bella." A voice sneered.

Bella turned around and came face to face with her cousin. "Victoria?"
"Hello, cuz. Surprised?"

"What is going on here?" Bella slowly backed toward Emily. Victoria chuckled. "Haven't you figured it out yet?"

"Oh, God. You're the one who's been sending the notes? Why?"

"Because you stupid bitch. Edward is supposed to be mine." Victoria sneered.

Bella looked at the woman before her and wondered how she could think that Edward was hers. Instead of asking what was on the tip of her tongue, she turned and picked up Emily. She looked around the room for possible escape routes. Victoria stood between her and the door, so Bella looked over at the window. There was no way that she could fit, but Emily certainly would.

"Looking for a way out, princess?"

"Victoria, just let Emily go. I'll stay and you will get what you want. Please, she is just a baby." Bella pleaded.

Victoria looked at her for a minute. "No. Bye, bye now." She turned and left the room. Bella watched through the small window as she lit a match and soon her door was engulfed in flames.

"Aunt Bella, I'm scared." Emily cried.
"I know sweetie. I'm gonna get you out of here."

Bella put Emily down on the floor and walked over to the window. She pulled it open and looked out as far as she could. It wasn't that far of a drop, Emily could get out. She hated that she was going to be trapped here. Unfortunately the school hadn't updated the windows since the sixties, and they were the old fashioned pull down type, that only opened to a forty-five degree angle. She grabbed a chair and scooted it over to the window and then walked back over to the little girl that was depending on her.

"Emily, I'm going to lower you out the window. When your feet touch the ground I need you to run and find your daddy and Uncle Edward and tell them where I am. Can you do that sweetie?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Bella picker her up and getting on the chair helped to lower Emily out the window, all the while watching the fire behind her as it burned through the door and started licking the walls of her classroom. "Go, baby."

She watched as Emily ran, praying that help would come in time.

_AN: Sorry for the cliffie. Thanks for being so patient while I waited for my computer to be fixed. I have it back now and I am planning to have another chapter of both my stories up on Sunday. Leave me some love and let me
know what you think. Till next time.
13. Chapter 13

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: Thanks for all of those reviews. We've almost reached 200. Some of you have expressed concern regarding Bella dying...she is NOT gonna die. That is all I am gonna tell you.

Now on to the rescue...

"Daddy!"

Emmett looked up and saw his daughter streaking across the school lawn as fast as her little legs could carry her.

"Emily!" He ran and caught her up, hugging her to his chest. "Where's Aunt Bella, baby."

Edward and Jasper ran over, just as she replied, "She's stuck in her classroom. That lady lit the door on fire. Uncle Edward, she can't fit through the window. You have to help her!"

"We will baby, we will." Emmett promised his little girl, hoping that he wasn't lying to her.
Edward walked away from them and pulled his phone out, dialing Bella's number. He listened to the phone ring and ring, praying that she still had it on her and was able to answer it.

**HH**

Bella frantically looked around the room to find a way to break the window so that she could get out. She spotted a stool sitting in the corner of her classroom and ran to it. She also grabbed the extinguisher, hoping to buy some time.

She went back to the window and looked at her options. She left the one window open for ventilation, but the smoke was getting thick and she was starting to cough.

She felt a vibration in her pocket and remembered that she had her phone on her.

"Edward?" she wheezed.

"Bella, are you alright?" Edward listened to her coughing and knew that time was slipping away.

"I'm fine," she lied. "I have an extinguisher and I am going to break a window to try and get out, but I don't think it'll work."

"Bella we're coming to get you, just sit tight okay. And please, baby, be careful and get to the floor."

"Okay." Bella hung up her phone and turned to look at the flames that were all along the wall and starting to spread across the ceiling. She looked at the extinguisher in her hands
and following the instructions and aimed it at the fire. She sprayed the ceiling and wall putting out what she could, but adding to the smoke in the process, making it harder to breath.

Knowing that there was no more that she could do to extinguish the blaze, she turned back to the window. She looked at the stool and then the window, wondering if it would even be possible. She looked to the ceiling to send up a small prayer and noticed that the ceiling tiles were beginning to sag under the weight if the heat and water. Please, don't fall on me! She looked away quickly knowing that she was running out of time.

She picked up the stool and swung it toward the window with all her might. The glass shattered, however the impact had caused the window to open. Bella dropped the stool and tried to close it back up, but it was bent and wouldn't budge.

"Are you kidding me? Come on, God give me a chance," she begged to no one.

Just as she was about to pull her phone from her pocket to call Edward, she heard something hit the floor behind her. She turned and looked up, just as the ceiling tiles buckled under the weight if the water from the sprinkler systems, that ironically were not installed in the classrooms, and the heat of the fire. All she could do was throw her arms over her head as they came crashing down on her. The impact caused her knees to buckle, knocking her to the ground and her head bouncing on the linoleum floor. Her last thought before
Edward, Emmett, Jasper and Carlisle had just turned the corner outside if the school building, when they heard Bella scream. Rushing forward, they saw the ceiling collapse, right on top of Bella.

"Bella!" Jasper and Edward screamed.

They rushed forward and stopped at the windows. They saw the window that she had smashed and couldn't help but chuckle that her luck was so bad that she had bent the window. Sobering quickly they looked inside and saw her on the floor covered in the debris from the ceiling.

Jasper removed his axe from his ladder belt and reached back preparing to break a window, when Emmett stopped him.

"Think about it, bro. That glass will most likely hit her. We don't want to cause her anymore injury. We'll find another way." Emmett reasoned.

Carlisle took charge, "Go around front and grab a hose and get in that building. We are not losing anyone on my watch. Edward, come on son, we'll get her out."

The three of them reluctantly followed their chief and went back around and quickly grabbed the line their drive laid out
for an initial attack. They headed for the doorway that was engulfed in flame and took aim. It took a matter of minutes to get the fire under control enough that they could get in. Keeping the hose trained on the flames they slowly made their way down the hallway and toward Bella.

"There's her door, come on." Edward ordered.

They aimed their hose at her burning doorway and were able to get in fairly quickly, with only the metal frame of her door left. With Emmett and Jasper maintaining control of the hose, Edward rushed over to Bella and began pulling the tiles from her prone form. He saw a cut on her head that was still bleeding; her arm was also lying at an odd angle.

"What we got, Edward?" Emmett asked.

"Possible broken arm, a head laceration and most definitely smoke inhalation. We gotta get her out of here, but I'm afraid to move her." Edward explained.

"Edward, just pick her up, we're running out of time. Let's go." Jasper said.

Edward scooped her up in his arms and followed them out to the waiting ambulance. He placed her gently on the stretcher and immediately the medics strapped an oxygen mask to her face and started their assessment.

"Pulse is thready, BP 80/60. Let's get her in and out of here."
"Edward, go with her. We'll meet you down there when we get done here." Emmett said, while Jasper nodded in agreement.

Edward nodded and climbed in the back, picking up Bella's hand and praying that they weren't too late.

**HH**

The waiting room was filled with Bella's family and friends. Jasper was pacing while Alice watched him. Carlisle and Esme were sitting quietly whispering to each other. Rosalie was holding her daughter tightly in her lap while Emmett rubbed her back, trying to soothe her.

"We almost lost her today Em," Rose sniffled.

"I know babe, but we didn't."

"Thanks to Bella," Rose kissed her sleeping daughter's forehead. "Did she tell you who did this?"

"No. Just that it was a lady." Emmett looked at the doorway as Charlie appeared.

"Any news?" he asked.

"Not yet. Edward is still back there though. He refused to leave her side. Pissed off the doctors too," Jasper told his father.

Charlie chuckled and came further into the room, followed
closely behind by Victoria. Rose cringed and turned her head way from her cousin.

Victoria took a seat across the room from everyone and quietly observed them. She wanted to scream that Bella had made it out of that school with her life. She would just have to try harder next time.

Just then a doctor came around the corner. "Isabella Swan?"

**HH**

Edward sat at Bella's side watching her sleep. She looked so peaceful, but he knew better. She was fighting to breathe and had been intubated just to get enough oxygen into her lungs. Her arm had been broken in two places and had been put in a cast. She was also suffering from a concussion. She had ten stitches in the cut above her eye and a nasty lump on the back of her head. The doctors had said she was very lucky.

"Lucky," he scoffed.

"Edward?"

He turned to the doorway and saw Charlie standing just inside. "Hey, Charlie."

"Son, why don't you go get some coffee." Charlie suggested.

"I'm fine."

"Edward," Charlie waited until he met his eyes. "I'd like some
time with her if you don't mind. I promise I'll come and get you if there is any change."

Edward looked at Charlie and then back at his life. He nodded, stood up and leaned down to whisper in Bella's ear. "I'll be back, love." He placed a kiss to her forehead and nodding at Charlie, left the room.

Charlie took the seat that Edward had vacated and looked at his daughter. He had given up hope of ever having children when he had met Renee. He had to admit that he had fallen in love with Rose and Jasper first and then Renee. When she became pregnant with Bella it was a dream come true. From the moment he had first clapped eyes on her he loved her. It wasn't until Bella was two that Renee's bipolar disorder appeared. She had refused all medication and any form of treatment. She would frequently disappear for days or weeks. Charlie had finally told her that the next time she left she shouldn't come back. And she hadn't.

"Hi baby. You just need to rest sweetheart. We'll find the person who did this." Charlie held her hand and vowed that whoever was responsible for putting his baby girl here would pay.

**HH**

Edward left the room and walked out to find his family sitting in the waiting area. He noticed that Bella's cousin Veronica, or something like that, was sitting on the opposite side if the room. He wondered why she was even there.
Rose stood up when she saw him, "How is she?"

"She's still unconscious. They are keeping her sedated while she's intubated, so that she doesn't fight the tube." Edward sat down beside his mother and leaned his head back against the wall.

"How are you?" Esme asked her son.

Edward looked at his mother, "The love of my life was almost killed today Mom. How would you be?" He didn't mean to snap at her, it wasn't her fault. "I'm sorry, Mom. I'm just worried," he explained.

Esme nodded in understanding and placed her arm across her son's shoulders. "We all love Bella, honey. She'll be fine."

Edward nodded and looked over at Rose and Emily, "How's she doing?"

Rose smiled, "She breathed in a little smoke, but Bella got her out before too much damage was done. I just wish I knew why and who, you know?"

"Me too, Rose, me too." Edward sighed.

"Edward, I stopped by your and Bella's apartment and got some clothes for both of you. Why don't you go get cleaned up and then you can go back in to her?" Alice said with a small smile.

"Thanks Ali, I appreciate it and I'm sure Bella will too."
Edward picked up the bag and headed to the shower that the nurse directed him to. He let the hot spray loosen the tight muscles in his neck and shoulders. He watched as the soot and dirt flowed down the drain and released silent tears. Thankful that Bella was going to be okay and praying that they would catch this nut.

**HH**

Bella sat up in bed a week later, waiting for the respiratory therapist to come in for her daily session. She was tired of blowing into a tube and trying to get a little ball to float higher in a different tube. She wanted to go home. She wanted to sleep in her own bed, next to Edward.

She knew he wasn't sleeping, she could tell from the bags under his eyes. She was glad when Carlisle put him on leave until she was back on her feet.

"Good morning, Bella."

Bella groaned, "Good morning, Heidi. Here to torture me some more?"

Heidi grinned, "Awe Bells, you know you love to see my smiling face. Ready to blow your way home?"

Bella chuckled, "You're hilarious."

"Well, I brought someone to see you, but you still have to blow the tube. Okay?" Bella nodded. "Alright, just a second."
Bella watched as Heidi turned and opened the door. Bella's smile was huge when she saw her niece standing on the other side. "Emily!"

"Aunt Bella!" Emily squealed and ran into the room. Heidi helped Emily to get on the bed with Bella. The little girl wrapped her small arms around Bella's neck and held on.

Bella smiled through the warm tears that were running down her cheeks. She looked at the door and saw her sister standing there with tears to match her own. Bella held out her arm and beckoned for Rose to join in their hug.

Rose crossed the room and wrapped her arms around her daughter and sister. "Thank you Bella," she whispered.

"No thanks necessary. I love you Rosie."

"You too, Bellsy." Rose replied.

Rose stepped back when Heidi cleared her throat. "Bella let's do this. Emily, why don't you sit over here with your mommy?"

"Okay," Emily hopped down and crawled into Roses lap.

"Now, Bella, I want you to blow as hard as you can. I want that ball to get up to eight and stay there for at least five seconds."

Bella nodded and took the tube, placing it between her lips. Stealing herself, she took a breath and blew into the tube. The ball rose to six and held there until Bella couldn't hold it any
longer. She started coughing immediately.

"Okay, here, sip this," Heidi handed Bella a small cup of water.

Bella took a few sips and sat back, trying to relax like Heidi had told her. When she felt better, she nodded at Heidi. "I'm ready."

Heidi handed her the tube and Bella blew again. This time the ball rose to eight and stayed for about three seconds, before Bella started coughing again. "That was much better, Bella. Okay, you get to keep this one. I want you to take it home and practice. When I see you again after your release, I expect it to be all the way at the top, okay?"

Bella nodded and sipped at her water. She watched as Heidi made some notes on her chart. The doctor came in soon after she left and read the notes. "Well, Bella, looks like things are improving. How do you feel?"

"Still a little tight in the chest, but Heidi said that was normal. When can I get outta here?"

"I want to do one more set of labs and assuming that they come back okay, I don't see any reason why you can't go home tonight." Dr. Aro Vilini replied. "Let me get this order put in. I'll see you in a bit."

Bella nodded and then leaned her head back on the pillows. She looked at her sister and niece and smiled tiredly. "Is
Edward in the waiting room?"

"Yeah, you want me to send him in?" Rose smiled at Bella's nod. "I love you Bella."

"Love you, too, Rose."

Bella was dozing when she felt a hand on her cheek. She turned and met the green gaze of Edward. She smiled and licked her lips. "Hi."

"Hi. Rose says you might get to go home tonight."

Bella nodded. "Yeah, they had to do some blood work, but he said we would have the results soon." They turned at the knock on the door. "Speak of the devil."

Dr. Vilini smiled. "Hello Edward. Well Bella, I have your blood tests back. I'm glad you're both here. Everything came back normal, except for one thing."

"What's wrong, doc?" Edward asked as he sat beside Bella on the bed.

"Nothing is wrong, I wonder if you two will think it's good news. I guess we won't know until I tell it, huh?"

AN: Well she survived...did you really doubt me? I wonder what her blood test results were, I bet you can't guess? Leave me some love; let's get to more than 200. Next update ETA: Tuesday? I hope. Till then.
14. Chapter 14

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: Thanks for all the reviews, your words mean a lot. Some of you have expressed concern about Emily and Bella not saying anything about Victoria, however you have to remember, no one asked. They will be asked in this chapter. Also, Emily didn't wake up in the waiting room when Vic was there, or else the chapter would have been a lot longer.

Okay, enough of that see you at the bottom…

Bella and Edward were still reeling from the news that the doctor had delivered several days ago. They also hadn't talked about it. Bella had been home for three days and although she was settled, she still felt unsettled.

Dr. Vilini smiled. "Hello Edward. Well Bella, I have your blood tests back. I'm glad you're both here. Everything came back normal, except for one thing."

"What's wrong, doc?" Edward asked as he sat beside Bella on the bed.
"Nothing is wrong, I wonder if you two will think it's good news. I guess we won't know until I tell it, huh?"

"Just spill it." Bella insisted.

"Okay, Bella you're pregnant."

The silence was deafening. Bella went pale and Edward was slack jawed.

"I'm sorry, what?" Edward tried to speak.

"Kids, you're gonna have a baby." The doctor repeated with a chuckle.

Bella finally broke from her stupor, "Why wasn't this checked before?"

"Honestly, I don't know. I wasn't on your case initially and I mistakenly thought that the ER docs had checked. I'm sorry, Bella, it was an oversight on my part and that of the hospital."

"Is the baby okay?" Edward's voice was laced with concern.

"According to the blood work, yes, but we'll know for sure after an ultrasound. I am going to order one before you are released. Any other questions?"

Bella smiled as she remembered how shocked they were to hear the news. They had both been relieved to find out that their baby was okay, healthy and right on track. Bella only
being eight weeks was thrilled. She just wondered how Edward really felt about it.

"Hey, babe?" She called from the living room.

"Yea?" Edward hollered from the kitchen.

"Come here, please."

Edward walked around the corner. This was what he had been dreading. He knew Bella wanted to know how he felt about the baby. He was beyond happy, but with the nut that was after her still on the loose, he was worried.

"What's up?"

Bella looked at him and smiled. "Sit down, we need to talk."

"Bella, I already know what you want to talk about. Baby, I am thrilled that we are gonna have a little one of our own. Ever since I met you all I could think about was marrying you and having a family. Granted I think it's happening fast, but I couldn't be happier."

"Then what's going on?"

Edward took her hands in his, "I'm worried, Bella. This person is still out there..."

Bella stopped him before he could say anything else. "I think we should call my dad and yours. I know who is after us and it's time to put a stop to it."
"Okay, Bella. I need you to start from the beginning. How did the day start?"

Bella looked at her father and Carlisle and launched into her tale. She explained how Edward had taken her to work and the bad feeling that she had. She told how the day and progressed and nothing happened, how she started to feel a little more at ease. She recalled the fear when the fire alarm sounded and then went on to describe when Lauren told her she couldn't find Emily.

"I didn't even think about it before I ran into the school to find her." Bella told them.

"Then what happened?" Charlie asked.

Bella took a deep breath. "I found them in my classroom. Emily was scared, but I was shocked. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I actually knew the person who was doing this." She paused and took a sip of her water. "When I asked her why, she said that I had always had everything, but that she knew the minute she saw Edward that he was supposed to be hers and that I wasn't going to stand in the way."

"Who was it Bella?"

Bella looked at her father, then Carlisle and finally Edward. "She has been fixated on you since Rose and Em's wedding."
Edward grimaced, "Who? The only person I remember from that day besides family and friends is you."

"Aww, that's sweet. I didn't figure you would remember." Bella commented.

"Isabella, I am losing my patience..." Charlie started.

Bella held up her hand, "It's Victoria, Dad."

Charlie was shocked. His own flesh and blood wanted to kill his daughter, because of a man. He couldn't wrap his mind around it. "Are you sure Bells? That is quite the accusation."

"Dad, I saw her, I spoke to her. Emily saw her. Ask her. It was Vic. She said that she has hated me since I was born. Apparently, I took you away from her and she was going to let me take Edward too."

The silence filled the room. Finally Charlie broke the silence. "Well, shit!"

**HH**

**Dammit! Dammit! The little bitch survived.** Victoria paced her small apartment wondering what the hell to do. She was sure that Bella was spilling the beans to Daddy about who was behind the attack. She was going to have to lay low for a while, maybe get out of town.

"Fuck!" She ran her hands through her hair and tried to think.
She thought about that day in the hospital, when Edward had walked in. He had tried to look worried and exhausted, but she had known that it was all an act. When he called her Veronica, she had known that he just didn't want the people in the room to know about them.

She sat down on her couch and pulled the framed photo of Edward over to her. "Soon, baby. We won't have to hide."

She thought about the way he moved and could feel her panties getting moist. She pulled up the DVD she had made, without Edward and Bella's knowledge and hit play. Soon the room was filled with grunts and loving words of the couple on screen. Victoria closed her eyes and imagined that it was her that Edward was making love to. She slipped a hand inside her panties and flicked her swollen nub in time with Edward's grunts. She climaxed at the same time he did.

"Soon, she'll be out of the way and we can be together."

**HH**

Bella was out of commission for a while and so was her school. Since Felix's had burned down she was getting bored quickly. She decided to go for a drive, just to get out of the house, while Edward was at work. She sent him a quick text letting him know and set off to the beach.

An hour later she pulled into the sandy parking area and got out of her car. Although it was early October, there were still quite a few people out here for a Saturday.
Bella walked for a while and thought about the turn her life had taken lately. First she meets the love of her life, gets stalked, and almost gets killed by said stalker and then finds out that she is gonna have a baby. To say that she was surprised by the turn of events would be an understatement.

She smiled to herself and ran her hand down her still flat tummy. She wondered if it was a boy or a girl. She knew that there was only one the ultrasound had proven that. She hoped that he or she looked like Edward. Green eyes and bronze hair.

She turned and walked back along the beach toward her car when she saw a flash of red. She blinked her eyes and looked again, still seeing the red hair standing beside her car.

She stopped and turned to look out at the water and tried to stamp down her fear. She nonchalantly looked over her shoulder before she pulled out her phone. She quickly dialed Edward's number and pressed the phone to her ear.

"Hey, baby. I'm on my way home. Are you still at the beach?"

Bella choked on her air, barely able to speak. "Edward…" she squeaked.

Edward was instantly on alert. "Bella? What is it?"

"I think that Victoria is standing next to my car."

Bella heard the squeal of tires over the line and Edward's
frantic cursing, "Stay away from your car baby. I'm on my way. Don't hang up."

**HH**

Edward pressed on the gas hard, almost touching the floor, trying to get to Bella as quickly as possible. "Is she still there, sweetheart?"

The only reply he received was silence. He pulled the phone up to his face and saw that he had no signal. "Dammit!" He tossed the phone into the passenger seat and kept driving, hoping that he made it before she was hurt.

Bella kept yelling into her phone when she lost Edward. She tried to redial, but it kept going straight to his voicemail. She turned her head and noticed that Victoria was still standing there. Taking a deep breath to strengthen her resolve, she turned and started to walk toward her.

"What are you doing here, Victoria?" Bella as she approached her.

"Well I thought we should have a little chat." Victoria sneered.

"I have nothing to say to you. You tried to kill me over a man. _MY_ man to be exact. He doesn't even know your fucking name and yet you claim to love him." Bella knew she shouldn't be provoking her, but she was pissed."

Victoria took a step toward her, "Listen here, you little bitch,
Edward will be mine and no amount of interference from you will stop it. You might as well just leave him now, before you get hurt again."

Just as Bella was about to respond, tires squealed around the corner and skid to a stop right beside them.

"Bella!" Edward jumped out of the truck.

"Hi Edward." Victoria plastered a smile on her face.

"What are you doing, baby? I told you to stay away from her." Edward wrapped his arms around Bella, completely ignoring the redhead standing there.

"Sorry, but I had to know what she was thinking." Bella pressed her lips to Edward's, while trying to keep an eye on her cousin.

Victoria wanted to rip every hair out of Bella's head for daring to kiss Edward in front of her. Just as she made a move toward her, Edward flipped around on her, grabbing her outstretched arm. Before she knew what happened, she found herself hand cuffed.

"What the fuck!" she screeched.

Edward just sneered at her. "Did you really think I was gonna let you get away with trying to hurt her again?"

"Edward, please. Don't do this. She was listening and was going to let us be together. Please, I love you." She pleaded.
Edward chuckled, and then laughed; soon he was doubled over with tears running down his cheeks. Bella was concerned and started to pat his back, "Edward? Are you okay?"

Edward straightened and wiped his eyes. "I'm fine sweetheart. I just found it to be funny. She loves me, ha, she doesn't know me." He turned and looked at the woman standing before them with her hands cuffed behind her back, a look of pure anger on her face. "How can you love me? Do you know my favorite food? My favorite color? Do you know how grouchy I am when I first wake up in the morning? Bella knows all these things and more. She knows my deepest desires and my darkest fears."

"I can learn you just have to let me." Victoria cried.

"I don't want you. I have everything I need standing right here. She is the love of my life. She is going to give everything I will ever want." Edward stated as he wrapped his arms around Bella. "She is the mother of my child. Something you will never be." Edward leaned forward and pointed at her. What they heard next shocked them both.

Victoria stared at the two of them, "Do you really think that she will be able to carry this baby? I got rid of one of your kids, I can do it again."

Bella felt Edward tense beside her and knew that this person had had something to do with the death of Irina.

"What are you talking about?" Edward wanted, no, needed to
Before she could answer, Charlie turned the corner followed by another police car, as well as Jasper and Alice and Emmett and Rose and Carlisle and Esme.

"Edward, what are they all doing here?" Bella wondered.

"You didn't think I'd come without the cavalry did you?" Edward smiled and placed a kiss to her forehead.

"Don't kiss her! Have a little respect!"

This time it was Bella's turn to laugh. She took a step forward and got in Victoria's face, "Why should we have any respect for you? You have no respect for us or our relationship. You obviously had something to do with the death of his first child, so you inadvertently killed his wife. You are one sick bitch." Bella took another step closer, "I have one thing you never will. I have him. I know what his lips feel like against mine. I know what it feels like to have his arms around me. I know how wonderful it is to wake up next to him and I will get to do that for the rest of my life. I also know what it feels like to have him moving inside of me, pulsating as he comes and screams MY name. You will never have that."

Charlie grabbed Victoria, just as she lunged for Bella. "That'll be enough of that little girl. Now get in the car." He pushed her into the backseat of his cruiser. He nodded at his daughter and Edward and got in, driving toward the station.
"Damn, Bells, I didn't know you had it in you." Rosalie smiled.

"I did grow up with you, Rose." Bella grinned.

She turned to look at Edward and smiled at the desire she saw in his eyes. She knew then that it was going to be a fun night.

AN: Sorry this is a little behind. Did everyone like her reaction? Leave me some love. Till next time.
15. Chapter 15

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: First: I want to apologize for my error. I found out when I did a read through of the story that I used Aro twice. Granted I gave him a different last name, however. I'm just glad that none of you said anything. I feel dumb enough. Okay, here comes the trial. I want to say that I am not a lawyer or a psychiatrist. My husband works in a prison and has given some advice, but...please don't judge to harshly. Save that for Victoria.

Now on with it...

Bella and Edward sat in the uncomfortable seats in the courtroom waiting for Victoria's trial to start. They felt like they had been waiting forever. Four months seemed like a long time, but it really wasn't. Her lawyer had been filing motions trying to get evidence and statements suppressed until the judge and finally thrown the book at him, literally, and told him no more.

Caius Giordano is a scumbag. He tries every way he can to get a client off, even if it is illegal. Bella was sure that he
would use whatever means necessary to get Victoria out of this mess.

Garrett Walker sat at the prosecutors table surrounded by an air of confidence. He knew that this was going to be difficult, but he also knew that he was going to win. Victoria had screwed up. She had left witnesses.

Bella ran her hands over her pregnant belly as the baby kicked. She smiled every time she felt the movement, knowing that Victoria had been unable to destroy this life as she had destroyed others. Edward's child would see the light of day because Bella had the courage to fight and stay alive.

"All rise," the bailiff called. "The honorable Jason J. Jenks presiding."

After the judge had sat down he told everyone to sit. He looked at the court stenographer and told her to note that the prosecutor as well as the defense attorney was present. "Please bring in the jury."

Everyone watched as the twelve men and women filed into the courtroom and sat down in the jury box.

"Ladies and gentleman you have been selected to hear testimony regarding Victoria Swan. She is charged with attempted murder as well as seven counts of arson. You will be presented with evidence and will be asked to come to an unbiased verdict. Mr. Walker, you may begin your opening statements."
Garrett rose and buttoned his suit jacket. "Thank you your honor. Good morning ladies and gentleman. Victoria Swan is a cruel and vindictive woman who was willing to go to any lengths necessary to gain the attention of a man. A man, whom was and is in a happy and long term relationship with the defendants own cousin. The state will prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Miss Swan willfully and deliberately planned and executed many fires in which to garner the attention of Mr. Cullen. The state will also prove that Miss Swan willfully and deliberately planned the execution of her cousin Miss Isabella Swan. We intend to prove all of these offenses and request that you find her guilty on all charges. Thank you."

Bella watched as Garrett took his seat and cringed when Mr. Giordano prepared to make his statements. She blocked out his words that she knew were a blatant lie. She closed her eyes and thought back to the day that Edward proposed.

Edward had been acting weird all day. Not letting Bella cook or do anything. She was finally irritated enough that she called him on his behavior.

"Edward what is going on? You're running around here like a chicken with its head cut off."

"Sorry, babe. I have a lot to do and limited time to do it." Edward apologized.

"Well, you could make it easier and let me help."
“No…uh, it's fine. I'll be done soon.” Edward had stuttered causing Bella to giggle.

An hour later he had finished whatever he was planning and had come over to sit beside her.

"Do you trust me?"

Bella smiled, "With my…our lives."

Edward pulled something from behind him. "Will you put this on and please don't ask any questions."

She had looked at him nervously but complied and let him blindfold her. She felt him lead her outside and then lift her into his truck. Edward ran around to the other side and started the vehicle, heading toward the beach.

He had known he was going to propose to Bella at the beach since their first date. He had everyone in on it. They would actually all be there, watching at a discrete distance, yet close enough to see.

When Edward pulled into the parking lot, Bella knew they were at the beach by the sounds and smells. She grinned and wondered what he had in store for them. She let him lead her down to the sand and then felt him disappear.

"Edward?" She heard him chuckle from a distance and immediately pulled off her blindfold. After her eyes adjusted
to the change in light, she saw him. He was kneeling on the beach, surrounded by lilies and candlelight. She slowly walked toward him as he began to speak.

"Bella, I knew the minute that I saw you that you were meant for me. You were only eighteen, but I knew. I left before I really knew who you were and let my life take a different path. Somehow fate brought me back here, back to you. When I saw you again, my heart yearned for you. I loved you from that day on. I love you more today than yesterday, but not as much as I will love you tomorrow or for the rest of our lives. Isabella Marie Swan, will you marry me?"

The tears poured down her cheeks as she squeaked out her answer, "Yes."

Edward rushed to gather her in his arms and kissed her, pouring all the love he had into it. The cheers of their family and friends could be heard over the ocean.

Bella smiled as she twirled her ring around her finger. Edward looked down and laced his fingers with hers, leaving them to rest over their unborn child.

Mr. Giordano resumed his seat, as Garrett stood to call his first witness. "Your honor the state calls Miss Isabella Swan to the stand."

Edward helped Bella out of her seat and watched as she walked to the stand. He was worried that the trial might be
too much for her and the baby, but Dr. Gerandy had said everything was going fine.

The bailiff approached her and asked her to raise her right hand. "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

Bella nodded, "I do."

"State your name." The bailiff requested.

"Isabella Swan."

After Bella was seated, Garrett walked forward. "Miss Swan, can you tell the court how you know the defendant?"

Bella licked her dry lips, "She is my cousin."

"How long had been since you had seen her?"

"Victoria hasn't been around for the last four and half years."

"So she left town at about the same time that Edward Cullen did, is that correct?"

Bella shrugged, "I suppose. I didn't really know Edward then."

"Would you say that you know him now?"

Bella smiled. "Yes, I would say that I know him well."

"What is your relationship with him today?"
"We are engaged to be married and I am pregnant with his child."

Garrett smiled. "Congratulations. When did you find out?"

Bella had known this was coming, they had rehearsed it. "I found out in the hospital while recovering from injuries sustained in a fire."

"Miss Swan, can you tell the court what happened on the day of that fire?"

"Edward had driven me to school that day, since I had been receiving threats. It was after lunch time and during my planning period, when the fire alarm sounded," Bella paused to take a breath. "I ran out to the playground to collect my students and get them to a safe location. I had just completed roll call and called Edward to let him know that I was safe, when another teacher ran over to me because she couldn't find one of her students."

"This teacher was Miss Lauren Mallory, is that correct?"

Bella nodded, "Yes."

"Please continue."

Bella cleared her throat, "Miss Mallory informed me that it was my niece was missing. I didn't even think before I ran back into the school. I just knew that I had to save her for my sister."
Garrett walked forward and handed Bella a tissue. Edward could hear Rose crying behind him and his heart went out to her, but he refused to take his eyes off of Bella.

"Where did you find her?"

"I found her in my classroom, with Victoria."

"What was said when you entered the room?"

"Victoria called me a stupid bitch and said that I wouldn't make it out of there. She said that she was tired of me always getting everything and that she wasn't going to take Edward from her like I did my dad."

"How did you take your dad from her?"

"Before I was born and before he had met my mom, Victoria had a rather close relationship with my father. I guess when my dad met my mother and he became a father to first my brother and sister and then me, well she became angry."

"Well if you weren't born yet, why wouldn't she blame your sister and brother?"

"Because I was biologically linked to him I guess, I don't know."

"What else happened the day of the fire?"

"When I saw how scared Emily was I pleaded with Victoria to let her go. I didn't care what she did to me, just as long as my
niece was safe. I told her that she could kill me as long as Emily lived." Bella choked on her tears, she had never told Edward that part.

Edward felt like he was going to be sick. He had known that Bella was willing to die for Emily. He just hadn't known that she had offered to.

"What did Miss Swan say to that?"

"She told me no and then left the room, lighting the door on fire, trapping us." Bella explained.

"What happened next?"

Bella explained how she got Emily out, the phone call from Edward, breaking the window and then the ceiling tiles falling on her. "The next thing I remember was waking up in the hospital."

"No further questions at this time your honor." Garrett returned to his seat.

"Mr. Giordano, you will cross when we return. We will take an hour recess for lunch." Judge Jenks banged his gavel on his desk.

"All rise."

The courtroom cleared and Bella stepped down from the stand. She walked over to Edward and wrapped her arms around his waist.
"Bella, don't ever do that to me again." Edward whispered.

"What?" Bella looked up and met his eyes.

"Don't ever be willing to die. I can't live without you." Edward explained.

"I promise. Now feed us, we're hungry."

**HH**

Judge Jenks looked down on Bella, "Please remember that you are under oath."

Bella nodded and resumed her seat.

"Good afternoon, Miss Swan." Caius sneered.

"Good afternoon."

"Is it not true that you called your cousin to tell her to come home, that Edward had returned?"

"No, Mr. Giordano. I haven't spoke to her in almost five years. I wouldn't even know how to contact her."

"Hmm, well I have your phone records here showing many calls to your cousin's phone number. Can you explain these?"

Bella looked over the documents that were handed to her. "Yes, this isn't my phone number."
"Really?"

"Objection! Your honor I believe Miss Swan knows her own phone number." Garrett interjected.

"Sustained. Find a new question Mr. Giordano."

"Did you threaten my client Miss Swan?"

"No, I have only spoken to her twice since she has been in town."

"Really? You didn't tell her that she would never know what it would be like to sleep with Mr. Cullen, because she was going to be dead?"

"No I didn't."

"Mr. Giordano, I am losing my patience."

"Yes your honor." Caius huffed.

"Miss Swan, can you tell us what transpired between you and my client on the day she was arrested?"

"Victoria followed me to the beach and again told me that I should leave Edward, before I was harmed again. Edward showed up before she could follow through and cuffed her, my father and his deputies were right behind him."

"What did you say to her?"
"I told her that she would never know what it felt like to wake up with Edward, to feel his arms, to feel his body over hers, to know what it felt like when he was inside her and that she would never hear him scream her name like he does mine."

The jury was stunned, some were chuckling, but Bella never wavered in her staring at Caius. He was trying to break her and was not succeeding.

"No further questions."

Garrett stood up, "Redirect your honor?" The judge waved his hand. "Miss Swan, how did Miss Swan react when she learned of your pregnancy?"

Bella visibly winced. "She told us that this baby would never be born, that she had already gotten rid of one of Edward's kids, that she could do the same to this one."

"YOU FUCKING BITCH!" Victoria roared, slamming her hands on the table and trying to come at Bella.

The courtroom flew into an uproar. The bailiffs were trying to control Victoria, as Garrett stood in front of Bella to protect her. Judge Jenks was banging his gavel shouting for 'order'. When Victoria was finally under control and things settled, the judge spoke.

"Young lady, you will not use that kind of language in this courtroom. One more outburst and I will hold you in contempt. Do you understand me?"
"Yes, sir." Victoria said quietly.

"Mr. Giordano, if you can't maintain control over your client I will hold you in contempt as well. Are we understood?"

"Yes, your honor." Caius actually looked embarrassed.

"We will recess until nine tomorrow morning. Court is adjourned." Jenks stood and left the courtroom.

"All rise." The jury was lead out and then the courtroom quickly cleared.

Bella wondered if that was what the remainder of the trial would be like. Victoria was crazy and her little outburst did nothing to help her case.

AN: Well there you have it, trial part 1. I should have part two up later this week. Till then, leave me some love.
Tuesday morning found Edward, Bella and their families seated back in the courtroom. Once again everyone stood as the judge came in. Once he was seated and the jury present, things began again.

"Call your first witness, Mr. Walker." Jenks ordered.

"Your honor, the prosecution calls, Edward Cullen."

Edward stood and made his way to the stand. He took the oath and then was seated. Garrett walked to him and began.

"Mr. Cullen, what is your relationship with the defendant?"

"I have none." Edward said calmly.

"Have you ever had a relationship with the defendant?"
"No."

Garrett smiled at Edward's one word response. "Do you recall ever meeting the defendant?"

"I met her once at my cousins wedding over four years ago."

"You never saw her after that?"

"I vaguely recall meeting her when I was living in Seattle. I believe she knew my late wife." Edward explained.

"I'm sorry for your loss Edward. May I ask how did your wife pass?" Garrett asked.

Edward swallowed hard and cleared his throat. "My wife tried to kill herself. She didn't succeed, but did end up in a coma that lasted two years. She was taken off life support about four months ago."

"And what was your relationship like prior to those events?"

"Irina and I were separated. When she found out she was pregnant, we reconciled."

"Where is your child, Mr. Cullen?"

"Irina suffered a miscarriage. She went into a deep depression, which led to her suicide attempt."

Bella watched Edward and prayed that Garrett got to the point.
"Mr. Cullen, did the doctors ever discover what caused your wife's miscarriage?"

"No, I never had any clue about why she lost it until a few months ago."

Garrett nodded. "What happened a few months ago?"

"I was at the beach with my fiancé. She had called me because her cousin had shown up while she was walking and she was frightened. We had just found out that Bella was pregnant and didn't want anything or anyone to harm her or the baby. It was there, right after Miss Swan had been informed of our baby that she told us."

"Told you what?"

"She told us that she had taken care of my other unborn child that she could certainly take care of this one."

"And did Miss Swan tell you how she had 'taken care' of it?"

"She said that she had slipped Irina a pill that made it look natural."

Garrett turned to the judge, "Your honor this is a toxicology report on the tissue that was expelled from the late Mrs. Cullen when she had her miscarriage showing the presence of a dangerous amount of progesterone..."

"OBJECTION! Your honor this has no bearing on the present case. I have also had no prior knowledge of such testing or
evidence." Caius sprung to his feet.

Garrett immediately jumped in with, "Your honor this goes to motive."

"Overruled, proceed counselor." Judge Jenks said exacerbation evident in his voice.

Before Garrett could continue his questioning a commotion at the back of the court caused everything to stop. Bella was confused as she watched the two women in suits come into the courtroom. They were followed by an elegant looking couple and a beautiful blonde woman.

"Pardon the interruption your honor, but I am Heidi Giovanni and this is my associate Jane Delong, we are here on behalf of the Denali family out of Seattle. We also have a warrant for the arrest of Victoria Swan."

The courtroom erupted. Voices were raised in outrage and Victoria was obviously the loudest. Judge Jenks was banging his gavel in an effort to gain order. Finally, after the bailiffs had cleared the courtroom, a recess was called.

Bella was sitting outside the room on a bench, rubbing her belly in an effort to calm down the excited child moving in her womb.

"Are you okay babe?" Edward asked, placing his hands over Bella's.
Bella nodded and smiled. She leaned over and placed a soft kiss on his lips. "Introduce me."

Edward grinned, "Are you sure?" At her nod, Edward stood and helped her up. Taking Bella by the hand, he led her over to his former in-laws. "Eleazar, Carmen, Tanya, I would like you to meet my fiancé, Bella. Bella this is…"

Bella smiled, "It's nice to meet you. I'm sorry it's under these circumstances."

Carmen stood and wrapped Bella in a hug. "Nonsense dear, this needed to be done."

Edward was watching Tanya, worried about how she would act. He shouldn't have. Bella had a way of making everyone feel at ease.

"Tanya, it's nice to meet you. I'm sorry for the loss off your sister and the part that my cousin played."

Tanya was taken aback. "Bella, don't apologize. I know now that everything happens for a reason. I'm just glad that Eddie didn't have to lose another love to her."

Edward raised an eyebrow, "Tanya, you know I hate that name."

"Why do you think I use it?"

Any other comments were interrupted when the bailiff called everyone back to court.
"Mr. Giordano, it would appear that your client has been extremely busy." Judge Jenks addressed Caius.

"Your honor, my client is being falsely accused." Caius complained.

Heidi scoffed, "Oh, please. Your client is a raving lunatic and a pyromaniac. We have documents proving that she was with Irina Denali-Cullen on the night that she miscarried. Furthermore we have proof that she encouraged as well as provided the medication that Mrs. Cullen took on the evening of her suicide."

Garrett sat back and watched as Heidi laid her case out for the judge and smiled when Jane pulled out the documents substantiating their arguments. He watched as the judge reviewed all the information. He couldn't decide if the silence was good or bad. Finally Jenks cleared his throat and gave Garrett a pointed look.

"This is disturbing indeed. I have never seen someone go to such lengths to gain the favor of a man. Miss Giovanni and Miss DeLong, I hope that this won't be a waste of your time. As soon as this trial concludes I will start processing the paper work to have Miss Swan moved to your jurisdiction for trial."

One all parties were satisfied, with the exception of Caius, the judge led them out to resume the trial.
Sitting in the courtroom cell waiting for the recess to end, Victoria was able to plan. There was no way she was going to see the trial to completion. Once again little Bella had managed to pull the wool over everyone's eyes and get her in trouble.

Why did bad stuff always happen to her?

Before she could make any concrete plans the bailiff came in and got her. After making sure her cuffs were in place she was led back to the courtroom.

Judge Jenks called court back in order and Edward resumed his place on the stand.

"Mr. Cullen, please remember that you are still under oath."

"Yes your honor." Edward answered.

Garrett continued to question him, "Mr. Cullen, tell the court how you felt when you had to make the decision to take your late wife off of life support."

Edward took a deep breath, "I felt a lot of things. Fear, sorrow, hurt. I was afraid that I was making the wrong choice. I knew that meant that my wife would be dead, although we hadn't been together in years I was still sad and I didn't want to hurt her family."
"In hindsight, would you change anything about your life with Irina?"

"No."

"When you found out that your fiancé was pregnant, how did that make you feel?"

"I was scared. I knew what it was like to lose a child before I ever knew it. When we found out I had no idea that Irina's miscarriage wasn't an act of nature. I was worried that with Bella in danger, so was the baby."

"And now? How do you feel?"

Edward looked at Bella and then back at Garrett. "The fear is still there, but for a different reason. I wonder if I am going to be a good father."

"Nothing further your honor."

"Mr. Giordano."

"Thank you sir," Caius stood and straightened his suit. "Mr. Cullen have you ever been intimate with my client?"

"No!"

"Really? Well then can you explain how your semen was located on her sheets?"

Bella hung her head. She knew that Edward hadn't been with
Victoria, she also knew that she was missing a set of sheets from her apartment. Now she knew why. She leaned forward and tapped Garrett on the shoulder, whispering to him when he leaned back. He nodded and straightened.

"Your honor, where are the tests on these alleged sheets?" Garrett objected.

"Good question," Jenks said. "Mr. Giordano?"

Caius sputtered. "I no longer have them sir."

Garrett jumped up, "Would that be because Miss Isabella Swan's DNA was also present on said sheets?"

Caius hung his head knowing that he was busted. Jenks glared at him. "Mr. Giordano, I believe I have told you before about fabricating evidence. One more warning and you will be held in contempt."

On and on it dragged. Caius making shit up as he went. By the end of the day Bella was exhausted and pissed. The baby had been kicking all day and her back was killing her. She also still had to go with Esme, Rose and Alice to another fitting for her wedding dress. Edward was pulling weekend duty and then they would be back in court on Monday for the beginning of the defense's case. Which from the sounds of it would be more fabrications? She wondered how much more she could listen to.

**HH**
Edward walked into the station just as the tones dropped. He, Emmett, and Jasper looked at each other before donning their gear and hightailing it out of there. They piled onto the rig and raced to put out some flames.

Across town Bella was sitting at the bridal boutique watching Rosalie try on her dress. Emily was laying in the floor on her belly coloring in her coloring book waiting for her turn.

"Mommy, you look like a princess."

Rosalie smiled at her daughter, "Thanks baby, but wait until you see Aunt Bella."

Bella grinned at her sister. "Emily, do you want to go with Aunt Alice and try on your dress?" Emily jumped up enthusiastically and followed her pixie aunt.

Bella looked back at her sister. The dress was really gorgeous on her. It fit her frame perfectly. With it being late January, Bella had gone for a knee length dress. It was strapless, but Rose pulled it off elegantly. It was in a brown color, although Alice had said that it was actually called 'truffle'. Bella just thought brown, but no one argues with Alice. The dress was a flowing chiffon fabric, with a ruched bust and an asymmetrical hemline.

Emily came out moments later in her flower girl dress. She was so cute. Spinning in front of the mirrors saying that she was the princess now. "Look at me, mommy."
Rosalie smiled down at her and then looked at Bella with tears glistening in her eyes. "Thank you Bella."

"Stop it Rose." Bella smiled, as her own eyes filled.

"Come on Bella, your turn." Esme helped Bella into a standing position, just as the fire engines drove by. Bella turned and then closed her eyes sending up a silent prayer.

Bella followed Esme back to the dressing room, where she slipped into her dress. Her dress was white with a deep V-neck bodice featuring a finely pleated neckline. The waist was a flattering ruched empire and accented with delicate beading. It was made of a soft jersey fabric that is lightweight, forgiving and airy.

Once she was dressed, she walked out and stood on the pedestal so that the seamstress could make sure that everything fit okay.

"Oh Bella, Edward is gonna flip when he sees you." Rosalie cried.

"Well, Miss Swan, as long as your baby doesn't grow much more, then we shouldn't have to make any changes. When is the wedding again?"

"The baby is due in mid-March, so the wedding is at the beginning of that month. Unless this trial ends sooner."

"Okay, well, let's have you come in two weeks before the
wedding for a final fitting." Bella nodded and stepped down to go change into her clothes. She was exhausted and just wanted to go home and put her feet up, maybe watch a movie.

"Come on baby sister, let's go relax." Rosalie said as the pair walked to the car.

**HH**

Bella was lying in bed when the first pains started. She moaned and rolled over think that if she changed positions that they would stop. She slowly opened her eyes and tried to sit up. She reached for Edward and instead of his warm body; her hand met something wet and sticky. She leaned over and turned on the lamp and turned back. She began to scream when she looked into his lifeless eyes.

"Bella, baby. Wake up!" Edward frantically shook her.

"Edward!"

"I'm here sweetheart." Edward crooned as her grabbed her up in his arms.

"Oh, Edward, it was terrible. You were dead and the bay was coming…" Bella panted, still coming out of the nightmare.

"I've got you. I'm not going anywhere and the baby is fine." Edward's words soothed.

Bella's nightmares had been growing steadily worse as the
trial went on. They had talked to her doctor about an anti-anxiety medication and although one had been prescribed, Bella refused to take it.

"Try and get some sleep baby. I'm here and I love you." Edward said as he lay back down and settled Bella into the crook of his neck. He started humming to her and when her breathing evened out he finally relaxed.

Closing arguments began in the morning and then the rest was left up to the jury. Edward finally drifted off himself and was only awoken again when his cell phone buzzed next to him.

"Hello?" He asked sleepily.

"Edward, its Garrett."

Edward sat up. "What's wrong?"

"Victoria is dead."

AN: Do you think anyone will shed a tear? We'll find out what happened on Friday. Until then, leave me some love. I also leave you with this....

*When duty call's me, oh Lord,*
*Wherever Flames may rage,*
*Give me the strength to save some life*
*Whatever Be its age.*
Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late
Or save an older person from
The horror of that fate

Enable me to be alert,
and oh Lord, guide my every move,
for life is so precious,
please don't let us loose.

I want to fill my calling and
To give the best in me
To guard my every neighbor
And protect their property

And if according to thy will,
That I must give my life,
Then with thy protecting hand my Lord,
I pray thee, protect my children and my wife.

Amen
17. Chapter 17

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copy right infringement intended.

AN: Thanks for all the kind words. You'll never know how much it means to me to know that you are enjoying what you are reading. We are coming to the end now, only two, maybe three chapters left. Thanks for sticking with me.

Now on with the show...

She sat in the little room and stared at the four walls. She couldn't believe she was here. It was all that bitches fault. "I can't believe that she actually had the nerve to testify against me. When I get out of here I am gonna make her pay."

"You still talking to yourself Red?"

She watched as the large woman was led by her. She had never been afraid of anyone before, but this woman scared her.

Victoria stood and made her way to the chow hall to get her dinner. She was repulsed by the food that was served; it
resembled pig slop more than anything else. She picked up her spork and made her way to a table. Once she was seated the shit storm started.

**HH**

Edward sat up more fully in the bed and looked at Bella as she stirred beside him. "Garrett, what do you mean she's dead?"

Bella turned over and met Edward's eyes. Her were large in her pale face.

"Apparently there was a fight of some kind during dinner and Victoria didn't get out of the way. She was knocked to the floor and a rather heavy body fell on top of her. She was stuck on the ground as the two women were fighting. It was an apparent distraction, because the women were moved off of her and she was bleeding out from a stab wound in her gut. The prison officials are investigating, but..."Garrett trailed off.

"So what happens now?" Edward wanted to know.

"Well, come to court in the morning. The judge is going to officially end the case and release the jurors. You don't have to be there, but it would look good if you were."

"Okay, see you soon." Edward hung up the phone.

"What's going on?" Bella asked.

"Victoria is dead." Edward said still stunned.
"What?"

Edward looked over at her and saw the tears welling up in her eyes. "Bella, why the tears? You should be happy. It's over she can never hurt us again."

Bella got out of bed as quickly as her body would let her. "How can you say that Edward? She may have been evil, but she was still my family."

"Bella, she tried to kill you. She tried to kill our baby. She killed my wife and child. How can you show compassion?"

"Because, she was sick. There was obviously something broken inside her head that led her on the path that she was on. I forgive her Edward. I know that you don't understand, but I have to do this for my peace of mind. I will never forget what she did, but I have to forgive her."

Edward stood and angrily and stormed to his dresser. He yanked on his clothes, muttering under his breath the entire time.

"What are you doing Edward?" Bella asked as she watched him.

"I have to get out of here. I can't listen to you tell me that you forgive her for everything that she has done. I won't ever forgive her. I need to leave before I say or do something stupid." He finished dressing and stormed out of the room. The sound of the front door slamming caused the tears to spill
down her cheeks.

**HH**

"Mm, hello?"

"Rose!"

Rosalie shot up in bed, "Bella, what's wrong? Is it the baby?"

"No, umm, can you and Emmett come over, please. I really need you."

Rosalie could hear the tears in her sister voice so she promised that they would be over soon. She reached over to her husband and shook him awake. "Emmett, get up. Bella called something is wrong."

Emmett sat up and looked at his wife, while wiping the sleep from his eyes. "Did she say what?"

"No, but she was crying."

Emmett nodded and got out of bed, heading for the shower mumbling something about breakfast as he went.

Rosalie chuckled and went to get Emily up. Less than fifteen minutes later everyone was dressed and driving to Bella and Edward's.

"What time do we have to be in court?" Emmett yawned.
"Not until nine. I hope she's alright. This trial is taking a lot out of all of us."

"Bella is fine sweetie." Emmett pulled up to the duplex. They looked at each other when the noticed Edwards truck was missing.

Rose left Emmett to get Emily while she went ahead inside. "Bella?" Bella walked around the corner and straight to her sister. Rose wrapped her arms around her and led her to the couch, wondering what had upset her. "What happened?"

"Edward and I…got into a fight. He…he left." Bella cried.

"What…why?"

Bella took a deep breath hoping that her sister wouldn't be angry at her too. "Victoria is dead, Rose. Garrett called this morning. I guess she was killed in the dining room."

"Was it Colonel Mustard with the wrench?" Emmett asked as he came in the room.

"Emmett…" Rose shook her head. "Why would Edward get mad that she's dead?"

"He's mad at me Rose. I cried when I heard. I tried to explain that I have forgiven her. I will never forget what she did to me and Emily and this baby, but I have to forgive her. He was angry at me for that. He told me he needed to leave before he said or did something stupid." Bella explained and waited.
Rose looked at her sister for a minute, before clearing her throat, "How…no, why do you forgive her?"

Bella got up so that she could move, "Because she was sick Rosalie. I know that she wasn't rational. I know that if she had maybe sought some help this wouldn't have happened. I have to believe that. Because if I don't then…"

Rose watched her sister, "Okay, Bells, I understand that you felt that you had to forgive her, but you didn't expect him to, did you?"

"No! I know what she took from him. I would never ask him to forgive her. I do ask that he understand why I need to. He wouldn't Rose, he just left." Bella sat back down and let the tears fall again.

**HH**

Edward slammed the front door and stormed to his truck. He took off and just drove. He tried to drive the anger away. He found himself at the beach and was still angry. He got out of the trunk and walked toward the water. He sank into the sand and sat replaying the conversation over and over in his head.

'I forgive her…'

Her words kept replaying. How could she forgive her? He knew that he never would. Victoria had killed his first child and indirectly had killed his wife. She had tried with Bella and Emily and this baby that they had created. No, he would never
"What are you doing out here?"

Edward turned and saw Tanya walking toward him. He turned back to the water as she sat beside him. "Bella and I had an argument. I felt I had better leave before it got any worse than it was."

"What happened?" Tanya asked. She watched Edward as he traced patterns in the sand.

"Victoria is dead."

"Good."

"See, that's what I thought. I mean look at what she has done. To me, to you, your parents, to Bella..."

"But Bella isn't happy is she? She forgave her didn't she?"

Edward looked at her, "How'd you know?"

Tanya grinned, "Oh Edward, you have finally found the perfect woman for you. Bella sees something that the rest of us don't. Bella's life wasn't affected as harshly as ours was. No, don't say anything just listen..." Tanya waited while Edward closed his mouth. "Think about it. You and Irina lost a precious life that you had created together. Then Irina, depressed, was pushed by this creature to end things. We waited for two years for her to leave us. Me, my mom and dad, you, we suffered the pain of not knowing why, until recently."
"Now take Bella, the love of her life was killed in a tragic accident. Since she met you she realized that Alec was supposed to die for a reason. You have always been meant to be the great love of her life. That's why Bella can forgive her. She didn't lose anything. If you think about it Edward, neither did you. Sure the loss of your wife is hard, but you said it yourself, you and Irina weren't meant to be." Tanya stood up then and brushed the sand from her clothes. "Think about it Edward. Look inside yourself, forgiveness is there, you just have to embrace it."

Edward watched as Tanya walked away. He marveled at the strength of women. He thought about what Tanya had told him and he realized that Tanya had forgiven Victoria too. He didn't think he would ever be that strong.

**HH**

Bella arrived at the courthouse with Emmett and Rosalie. She hadn't seen or heard from Edward for hours and she was getting pissed. She hadn't asked him for anything and he was acting like an ass.

Bella sat down behind Garrett and waited for the judge to come in and call things to order. Just before he did, Edward rushed in and took his seat beside her. He tried to reach for her hand, but she moved it from his reach and slid down on the bench a little. She knew she was acting like a baby, but he had really hurt her.

"All rise." Judge Jenks walked in and started court.
"Ladies and gentleman, this morning some disturbing news reached my ears. Mr. Giordano I am sorry to hear of your client's demise. I assure you that the state police will do everything in their power to discover the culprit. Mr. Walker it's unfortunate that the individuals who have suffered at the hand off this individual will never see the justice that they seek. I hope that they all can rest easy knowing that she will not be hurting them anymore. Having said that, this court is adjourned, the jury is released, have a good day." He banged his gavel and everyone rose to leave.

Bella walked out of the courtroom with her sister and niece. If Edward wanted to be an asshole and ignore her all day, well then he was gonna know how it felt.

Edward sighed and followed. He knew that she was mad at him, he was a fool. He knew that she was a compassionate woman and that eventually she would have forgiven Victoria, he just didn't expect it so soon. He watched as she walked away with Rosalie and felt a pang in his heart.

"Bella you need to talk to him." Rosalie stated.

"I know. I just don't want to yet. He walked away from me Rose. How would you feel?"

Rose sighed and didn't say anything else. She got in the car with Emmett and waited for Bella to get in. When she didn't she smiled silently.

"Bella," Edward said quietly. He watched as she slowly turned
her head to look up at him. "Please."

Bella looked up and into his emerald orbs, searching for something. She nodded and turned to walk with him toward his truck. She smiled when he opened the door for her and helped her up into the cab. HE shut her door before jogging around to get in himself.

He didn't want to ask what he was thinking, but he had to know, "Do you want me to just drop you off or can I…"

"Edward," she waited until he looked at her. "Let's go home. We'll talk there."

The drive was quiet, but not uncomfortable. They never had to speak to be at ease with each other. Soon he was parked outside their apartment. They walked slowly up the steps and inside, waiting for the quiet before the storm began.

"Edward, why did you leave like that?" Bella needed to know.

"Babe, I never expected to hear that you had forgiven her. I suffered so much at her hands that I was shocked. I guess I never took the time to look at it from your point of view." Edward said as he sank onto the couch.

"Where did you go?"

"The beach, I needed to clear my head."

"Did it help?" Bella sat down beside him.
He reached out and grasped her hand, lazily stroking her knuckles with his thumb. "Not until I talked with Tanya. She helped me see that even though what Victoria had done was terrible, that you hadn't been traumatized in the same way that I had."

"Tanya told you that? Hmm, I surprised she actually listened to me." Bella averted her eyes for a moment. She finally looked up at him, "She's right you know. I wasn't affected as profoundly as you were. You lost a child, your wife, a surrogate family. Then you almost lost me and the baby. Edward I understand that you can't forgive her. I just wish that you could understand why I do."

Edward reached forward and laid his hand on her cheek, "I do understand, baby. I just hope that you understand that I may never get there."

Bella leaned her cheek into his hand, "I understand that." She smiled reassuringly at him and placed her hand against his on her cheek.

Edward leaned slowly toward her and pressed his mouth to hers. What he meant to be an apologetic kiss quickly became heated. They soon found themselves naked and in their bed as their hands explored one another.

They made love slowly and softly, reveling in the fact that they were safe and together. Once they were sated and just as he drifted to sleep he heard he whisper...
"I love you, Edward."

He smiled, "I love you too, my Bella. Always."

AN: Well I hope that answers your questions. Next update ETA: Monday. We should be having a wedding and a surprise. Leave me some love.
Bella sat in the waiting area of the office, waiting to be called back and wondering where the hell Edward was. He hadn't been late or missed an appointment since they found out she was pregnant. Now at the final appointment before her due date, he wasn't with her.

"Isabella Swan," the nurse called for her.

Bella pushed herself up from the chair and waddled her way toward the nurse. She smiled and followed her to an exam room, where she was told to wait for the doctor. While she was waiting she pulled out her phone and sent a quick text to Edward.

Did u forget? ~B

When she didn't get a response right away, she tried her sister. She text her a quick message just as the doctor came in.

Are they on a call? ~B
"Good morning, Bella. Where's Edward?"

"That's what I'm trying to find out." Bella responded waiting for Rose to respond. Her phone chimed at that moment.

Yeah, everything ok? ~R

At the doc, E supposed 2 b here w/ me. ~B

Sorry hun, u need me? ~R

No, its ok. Luv u! ~B

Luv u 2! ~R

Bella turned to the doctor, "He's on a call. Let's go ahead without him."

"Okay." Dr. Gerandy did a quick exam and looked at Bella seriously. "Alright, well you are at two centimeters and your about ten percent effaced. I want you to take it easy, no heavy lifting and I want you to limit your standing."

Bella was shocked, "But…but, I'm getting married in two days."

Dr. Gerandy chuckled, "Bella I know that, you can still get married, I just want you to take it easy until then. Understood?"

Bella nodded and the doctor said to call when her water broke. Bella smiled and left the doctor's office. She didn't
want to go home, so she drove to Felix's instead.

She pulled her car to the curb and got out. She couldn't believe how much they had gotten done. The entire outside was completely finished, complete with a new sign. She opened the new doors and walked into the new space. She looked around and was surprised again at how much had been completed. Felix wanted to have her wedding reception here, but she worried that it wouldn't be ready in time. Now she realized she may have been wrong.

"Bella, what are you doing here?" Felix walked around the corner.

Bella smiled, "I wanted to see what you had done. Felix this is amazing, I can't believe it."

"Yeah, the contractor said they should be done tomorrow. Just in time for your wedding." Bella smiled and couldn't help the tear that slipped down her cheek. "Awe sweetie, don't cry."

Bella waved her hand, "Damn hormones. Felix...this is great really. I'm so happy for you and D."

"Yeah, well, this was always our dream," Felix looked around. "Come on sweets, let's sit down and talk for a bit."

**HH**

Edward had just left his dad's office to let him know he was
leaving for Bella's appointment, when the tones dropped. He sighed and knew he was going to miss this on. He just didn't have time to get a message to Bella.

Edward sat in the engine and watched as the city flew by them. He thought about Bella and their baby. He thought about the fact that he was getting married again and wondered if he was ready. He didn't doubt his feelings for Bella. He was feeling extremely nervous.

"Yo, Cullen, are you in there man?" Emmett ran up to him.

Edward shook his head and blinked, "Yeah, sorry."

"Cuz, get your head in the game or you're gonna get hurt." Emmett ordered.

"I know, sorry."

Edward grabbed the hose line and helped Emmett hold it steady while they tried to control their area of the fire. He tried to focus on his job, but still found his mind drifting to Bella. He blindly followed Emmett into the building, but was so caught up in his thoughts that he didn't hear the cracking of the beams and didn't realize they were coming right at him until Emmett shouted.

"Edward!"

**HH**

Esme was starting on dinner when Carlisle called her. "Es,
baby you need to get to the hospital. Edward has been hurt."

"Bella?"

"Charlie is on his way."

"Is Edward okay?" Esme knew she was prolonging the inevitable, but she had to know before she got there.

"He's still being worked up."

Esme disconnected the call and grabbed her things. She sent up a silent prayer that Edward would be okay and that he and Bella would have a long life together.

**HH**

Charlie couldn't believe that he was doing this again. He thought it would kill him to tell Bella that Alec was dead. Now, to tell her that the father of her unborn child was in the hospital with unknown injuries, no father wants to do this, let alone do it twice.

He drove to her house and didn't see the car. He sat at the curb for a minute and though he knew where she might be. He turned the car around and headed to Felix's.

Charlie pulled to a stop and took a deep breath before he got out and went inside. He found his daughter laughing while Felix and Demetri painted a wall, getting more paint on themselves then said wall.
"Bells…"

Bella turned and her smile died on her face, "Daddy?"

"Honey, I hate to tell you this but…"

"No! No Daddy. I can't do this again."

Charlie watched as Bella's hands went to her protruding stomach, like she was cradling the life inside. "Bella stop. Calm down, honey. Edward isn't dead." He watched her sag in relief. "He is in the hospital, so get your things and I'll take you to him."

He watched as Bella quickly gathered her things and followed him to his cruiser. Once she was settled he flipped on his lights, to get her there faster, hoping and praying that he would be okay.

**HH**

Bella walked as fast as she could into the hospital and went to the nurses' station.

"Can I help you?" A bubble-gum popping nurse asked.

"My fiancé was brought in. Edward Cullen." Bella asked panting from the exertion of walking so quickly.

The nurse typed something on her computer and then looked at Bella. "Go down this hallway honey, he is still in the ER. They'll show you where to find him there."
Bella thanked her and walked down the hall. She went through the double doors and looked around. She saw Emmett and Jasper standing outside a doorway and walked toward them.

"Jazz?"

Jasper looked up and smiled when he saw his sister. "He's okay. He's asking for you though."

He led Bella around a door and there she found her future smiling at his mother.

"Edward," she breathed.

Edward looked up and smiled, "Bella." He watched as she walked over to him on shaky legs and then pulled her to him. She wrapped her arms around his neck and hugged herself to his chest. "I'm fine baby. It could have been a lot worse, but I'm fine."

"What happened?" Bella asked as she pulled back from him.

Edward sighed, "My head wasn't really there today. I was leaving the station to get to your appointment when the tones dropped. I was upset about missing it and I had other things running through my head, so I wasn't focused. I didn't hear the beams crack and I didn't notice when they started falling, until they landed on me. Emmett yelled at me, that's what got my attention and I was able to curl up and the impact wasn't as bad as it could have been."
Bella looked him up and down; he had a few scratches and bruises, mostly on his torso. Some scrapes on his face, but she wasn't sure whether there were any bruising since he was still covered in soot.

"Don't ever do that to us again Edward Cullen." Bella said as she rubbed her belly.

Edward smiled and leaned forward to kiss her lips. "What did the doctor say?"

Bella smiled, "I am dilated two centimeters and I am ten percent effaced. He basically said that I can go into labor anytime and that I should take it easy."

Carlisle chuckled behind them, "I guess you'll be resting together. Edward you are officially on leave. I don't want you back at the station until the baby is a few weeks old."

Edward didn't take his eyes off his father as he nodded. He simply lay there and stared at Bella, wondering why he was having second thoughts. All he would ever need was in front of him.

**HH**

Friday evening found Edward at Emmett's with Jasper, Carlisle, Charlie, Felix and Demetri. The table was set up for poker, the snacks were ready and they were just waiting. For what he wasn't sure, he hoped that Emmett hadn't done anything stupid.
"Alright fella's let's get this party started." Emmett yelled.

Charlie and Carlisle cracked up. "Emmett, there are only seven of us. You don't have to shout."

"Sorry, Uncle C."

Demetri rubbed his hands together, "Who's ready to lose some money to me?"

Everyone laughed as they sat at the table and the poker night began. Edward couldn't think of a better way to spend his last night as a bachelor. Tomorrow he and Bella would be married and then their baby would be here.

"Where'd you go son?" Charlie asked.

"Yeah, Ed, man you looked a little lost." Jasper smiled knowingly.

Edward smiled, "Just ready to be married and a father."

The men in the room all smiled and knew just what he meant.

Felix decided that it was time to make his announcement.

"So, Demetri and I have some news." He waited, when he had everyone's attention he continued, "We are adopting a little girl from Guam."

Congratulations rang out. And that set the tone for the remainder of the night. Edward just hoped that Bella was having a good time as well.
Bella groaned as the masseuse dug her fingers into the soles of her feet. The spa night that Esme and Alice had planned was perfect. She looked around the room at her family and friends. Kate was getting a back rub, Alice a pedicure, Rose a manicure, Esme a facial and Emily was giggling as she got her toes painted. The only person who was missing was someone that had never cared in the first place. Her mother.

Bella sighed. She refused to dwell on that fact anymore. Esme more than made up for the fact that she had an absentee mother.

"Ooh." She exclaimed.

"Bella, you okay over there?" Rose called.

"Yeah, I think so. I just felt a twinge."

Esme looked over at her, "What kind of twinge? Was it a contraction or do you think it was gas?"

"I think it was gas. It's gone, I'm fine. Carry on." Bella smiled. She would not go into labor until she was a married woman. She decided if she felt anything else, she was keeping it to herself.

"So I have some interesting news." Kate said out of the blue. "Demetri and Felix are adopting. They are getting a little girl from Guam."
"That's great." Alice smiled.

Bella looked at her friend. "Alice…something you want to share?"

Alice actually blushed. "How do you do that?"

"I know you." Bella stated.

"Hmm…okay, I was going to wait but…I'm pregnant." Alice announced.

Squeals sounded around the room, even Emily was jumping up and down. Bella was happy for her brother and sister-in-law, she was also happy that the announcement took the focus off of her while she had another contraction. Dammit!

**HH**

Saturday morning found Bella sitting in the window seat, trying to relax and concentrate on her breathing. Her contraction had continued overnight, but they were still coming at least an hour to forty-five minutes apart. She knew she had time, just not how much.

"Bella, are you okay?" Esme asked from the entryway.

"I'm fine. Just some last minute jitters." Bella smiled.

"Bellaaaa!" Alice came bounding down the stairs. "Let's get you beautiful."
Bella followed Alice and went to shower as instructed. When she was done she put on the robe that Alice laid out for her. She then sat down and quietly let the torture begin. Several hours later she was being led downstairs and to her father.

"You look beautiful sweetheart." Charlie choked.

"Thanks Daddy."

Charlie led her toward Edward with the quiet strains of Kenny G's *The Wedding Song* leading the way. Bella sucked in a breath as another contraction hit. She squeezed Charlie's arm and breathed quietly. Thinking that she was just nervous, he patted her hand.

Edward smiled as he reached to take her hand from Charlie. Bella tried to smile, but her contractions were about fifteen minutes apart. All she needed now was for her water to break and then she was really going to be upset.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join…" Pastor Webber began.

"Ooh..." Bella breathed and squeezed Edwards's hands just as she felt a rush of water.

"Bella, baby...what?" Edward asked as he saw the pool forming at her feet.

"My water just broke."

"Okay, well we have some time right? This usually takes a
while." Edward smiled. He was gonna be a daddy today.

"Um...well normally yes, but I have been having contractions since last night." Bella explained, just as she had another.

"WHAT!"

Everyone got into motion and Bella was soon strapped into a vehicle as Edward called Dr. Gerandy and explained the situation. They pulled up to the hospital in no time at all and Bella was wheeled to labor and delivery. Her wedding dress was gently removed and she was placed in a gown.

Dr. Gerandy came in and asked everyone to leave. He did a quick check and then looked at Bella and Edward. "Bella you're at nine. It won't be long."

"NO!" Bella shouted. "I am not having this baby until I am a married woman. I will cross my legs. Get Webber in here now!"

"Bella we can get married on a different day..."

"NO! NOW!" Bella was determined.

Edward ran out and got the preacher and their family and pulled them all into the room. Emmett was laughing so hard he was crying and Jasper wasn't far behind him.

Pastor Webber came in and performed the ceremony. Just as he pronounced them husband and wife and Edward had kissed her, Bella shouted again. "Everyone get the hell out, I
have to push!

Their families left and Dr. Gerandy took position. "Perfect timing, the baby is crowning. Okay Bella, on the next contraction I want you to give me a good push."

Bella did as she was told and after four pushes a piercing cry filled the room. Bella sagged as Edward kissed her. "Thank you Bella."

"Mrs. Cullen, here is your son." The nurse placed him in her arms and stood back.

"He's beautiful." Bella whispered.

Edward looked down at his wife and child, "What are we going to name him?"

Bella looked at Edward and smiled, "Matthew Edward Cullen."

**AN: We have a boy! I hope you enjoyed this chapter... Several surprises. Leave me some love.**
19. Chapter 19

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the plot. All characters are the express right of Stephenie Meyer. No copyright infringement intended.

AN: I am amazed at the response from last chapter. We reached just over 320 reviews. Thanks so much. I think that this might be that last chapter. I think I have almost covered everything. This is gonna pick up about a month after the wedding/baby. Enjoy.

Bella rolled over in bed and slid her arm over to Edward's side, finding it empty and cold. She sat up and looked around, before hearing a noise on the baby monitor.

"Matty, do you know how lucky you are? Your mommy is the most beautiful and kind woman in the world."

She smiled as she listened to her husband talking quietly to their son. In the month since he had been born, Matty had completely changed Edward. Bella had thought she loved him before, but it was deeper and stronger now.

Bella got out of bed and went into the bathroom to start her shower. She stepped under the warm spray and let the tension roll of her shoulders. Edward was going back to work
today and to say she was worried would be the understatement of the century.

When she was clean she got out and dried off. She pulled on her clothes for the day and went to Matty's bedroom to feed him, so the Edward could get ready to go.

"How long has he been up?" She asked as she walked into the room.

Edward looked up and smiled, "Not long. He was wet, so I got him changed; now I think he's getting hungry."

Bella grinned and took her son. She turned and sat in the rocking chair, before freeing her breast, giggling as Matty immediately latched on. "I think Daddy is right little man. You are hungry."

Edward smiled as he watched his wife feed their son. He looked at his watch and kissed them both quickly before heading out the door to get to work. He pulled up to the station just as the tones dropped and jumped into action.

He ran to the wall and pulled on his turn outs, smiling at the familiar task. He jumped onto the moving engine and fist bumped Emmett.

"Glad to have you back cuz. How's the baby?"

"You wouldn't believe how big he is and only a month old."

They talked as they made their way to the blaze. As they
Bella checked and re-checked the diaper bag to make sure she had everything. When she was satisfied she threw it over her shoulder and picked up Matty and his car seat. They were going to spend the afternoon with Nana Esme. It would be his first outing since they had brought him home and Bella was looking forward to getting out of the house.

The drive to Esme's was peaceful since the baby had fallen asleep almost as soon as she had pulled away from the curb. She smiled as she pulled up to the house and noticed Alice and Rose were there too. She was out of the car and in the house before Matty could wake.

"Bella!" Alice squealed.

"Alice," she hissed. She pointed at her sleeping son and gave her a dirty look.

"Oops, sorry." Alice whispered.

"It's okay. Just keep it down." Bella admonished. She carried the still sleeping Matty into the living room and sat his seat down.

"Bella dear, I'm so glad that you could come today. How much longer until that grandson of mine wakes up?" Esme smiled.

Bella grinned at her mother-in-law. Just as she was about to
speak Matthew let out a loud cry. "He's all yours Esme."

Esme clapped and immediately removed her grandson from his seat. She cooed at him and swayed gently until he settled down, gurgling and holding onto her finger. While Esme entertained the baby, Bella settled in for some girl talk.

"So Alice, how are you feeling?" Alice had been sick for the last month or so with morning sickness. Too bad that for her it lasted all day.

"I'm feeling okay. I've only puked twice today, so that's something." Alice giggled. "You were so lucky Bella that you didn't have to deal with this with Matty."

Bella nodded, "I know. I just had to worry about a psycho out to get me."

"Have you talked to Garrett? Have they figured out what happened yet?" Rosalie wanted to know.

Bella nodded, "He called Edward last week. I guess Victoria ticked off an inmate because she was always muttering under her breath. So a plan was cooked up and Vic was killed. Is it wrong that I want to send them a thank you card?"

"Does Hallmark make a 'thank you for killing the person who tried to kill me' card?" Esme giggled.

The women laughed, "Maybe we should suggest it."

The rest of the afternoon was spent laughing and catching up.
Bella finally left to get Matty home and bathed before Edward got home. She had just settled him in his crib and was in the kitchen starting dinner when the door opened.

Edward saw his gorgeous wife making dinner and couldn't fight the urge to be near her. He walked to her and wrapped his arms around her and pulled her back against his chest. He leaned his head down and kissed her neck at the base of her ear. Her moan went straight to his dick.

"Edward, don't start something that you can't finish." She breathed.

Edward moved to her earlobe. He nibbled as he whispered, "Who says I'm not gonna finish?"

Bella turned in his arms and met his lips as they descended to hers. Their tongues danced and Bella felt herself grow wet under his familiar touch.

"Edward, baby, we can't. I haven't gotten the all clear yet." Bella panted.

It had only been four weeks since Matty was born. They had to wait another two before they could have sex again. Bella wasn't sure why, she was in no pain and the doctors had not had to do an episiotomy so there were no stitches. She wanted to make love to her husband. They hadn't been able to since they got married the day that she gave birth.

Edward made no move to pull away. He could almost hear the
wheels turning in her head as she contemplated her options. He moved from her mouth back to her neck and to her collar bone. He sucked and nibbled at her skin, smiling when he felt the goose bumps pop up.

Bella ran her hands down the hard planes of Edwards chest and then slowly pulled his shirt from his pants and up over his head. She threw it somewhere and raked her finger nails down his hard abs. He hissed at her motions.

"Baby, we can do other things. Please I need you so much." He swept his arms under her knees and carried her to their bedroom. He laid her gently on the bed and then began to slowly undress her. He kissed his way down her body as her clothing was removed.

Bella was moaning and writhing, "Edward please…" she begged.

Edward was at the apex of her thighs when he looked up at her, "What do you need baby?"

"You..." she moaned, as she watched him lower his head.

He could smell her arousal and wanted her all the more. He ran his tongue through her slit, before reaching to flick her clit. He grinned when Bella bucked her hips into his face. He sucked her swollen nub into his mouth as he gently eased a finger inside her.

"Edward!" Bella reached her hands into his hair and held him
where she wanted him.

Edward added a second finger and moved them in and out, while sucking and flicking her clit. He could feel her begin to tighten around him and sucked her into his mouth, while curling his fingers inside.

Bella cried her release as Edward lapped up all her juices. When he was done he crawled up her body and kissed her, knowing that she would taste herself on him.

Bella pressed on his shoulder and turned him to his back. She kissed her way down his chest, showing careful attention to his sensitive nipples. She reached his uniform clad legs and released the button and lowered the zipper slowly, making sure to trace his erection as she went.

"Bella," he groaned.

Bella smiled as she removed his pants and boxers in one tug. She licked her lips when she saw his long glorious cock waiting for her attention. She leaned forward and blew on his sensitive head, smiling when he twitched. Lowering her head she licked the tip, while cupping his balls in her hand. She leaned forward more and licked the vein that ran along the underside, before closing her lips around him and sucking him into her mouth.

Edward groaned at the feel of her warm, wet mouth wrapped around his rigid cock. He had missed her touch. He reached down and wrapped his hands in her hair and helped her set
the pace as she bobbed her head up and down.

Bella alternated between soothing licks and gentle scrapes of her teeth, until Edward could feel the tightening, signaling his impending release.

"Oh, baby…I'm gonna…"

Bella just bobbed her head faster and hollowed her cheeks more and soon Edward erupted into the back of her throat, screaming her name with abandon. After Bella had licked him clean she crawled back up the bed to him and curled into his side.

"I love you Bella." Edward whispered as they drifted off.

"I love you too." Bella smiled against his neck.

They had only been asleep minutes when Matty woke up needing to be fed. Thus was the life of new parents.

**HH**

Edward was gone when Bella woke the next morning. She got up and walked to Matty's room and found him cooing at the mobile above his head. She smiled and leaned down to run her finger down his cheek.

"What are you doing little man?"

He continued to coo at her as she got him out of his crib to get him changed and fed. She had just laid him back down
and was on her way to the shower, when her phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Bells."

"Hi Dad. What's up?"

Charlie sighed. "Bella honey, I need you to come down to the station please."

Bella was instantly on alert. "Why dad, what's wrong?"

"I'll tell you when you get here sweetie." Charlie disconnected.

Bella quickly jumped in the shower and got dressed. She packed the diaper bag and grabbed her son, before heading to the police station. When she got there she looked around for her dad.

"He's in his office, Bella." Jessica said from her position at the desk.

"Thanks," Bella headed in that direction. She knocked softly and heard the gruff welcome. She peaked around the door, "Dad?"

"Hey, Bells come on in honey."

Bella walked into her father's office and put Matt's car seat down. She sat in the chair across from his desk and shifted nervously.
"Bella there is no easy way to tell you this so I am just gonna say it. Demetri and Felix died this morning."

Bella's eyes filled with tears and she felt her hands start to shake, "H…How?"

"You know that they were flying out to Guam to go pick up the baby they were going to adopt right? There was something wrong in the engine of the plane that was missed on the pre-flight inspection and the plane went down. There were over a hundred passengers on the flight, unfortunately there were no survivors."

Bella sat in the chair stunned as the tears poured down her cheeks. She barely heard Matty start to cry. She was only aware of Charlie picking up and cooing at him. She quickly got herself together and wiped her eyes.

"Do you have him Dad? I need to call Edward." Charlie nodded and Bella pulled her phone out and called her husband.

"Hey babe."

"Edward…" She couldn't get anything out as she began to cry again.

"Bella, what's wrong? Is it Matt? Baby?"

"No, um…I'm at Dad's office. Uh, Felix is dead…so is Demetri."
"I'll be there in ten minutes."

Bella hung up and looked back at her dad. "What's gonna happen to the bar, Dad?"

Charlie looked up from his grandson, "I don't know Bells. That's for the lawyers to handle."

The door opened behind them and Edward walked in, "Hey." He immediately wrapped Bella in his arms, holding her as she grieved for her friends.

**AN: Sorry this update took so long, RL has been kicking my butt. I am on a mini vacation now and I plan to have this one completed before Wednesday.**

I'm sure that the ending of this chapter was a shock, but I had their deaths planned since the beginning. I have re-written this chapter four times and I am still not happy with it, but this comes closer to what I wanted than any of the others. Let me know what you thought. I know it's kind of bland....
Three years later...

"Edward I need you…" Bella called.

Edward walked around the corner from where he had been unpacking in the living room. "What's up babe?" He saw what his wife was doing and immediately jumped in to stop her. "Bella, stop, you know you're not supposed to be straining yourself. Doc Gerandy said the twins could come early."

Bella laughed at her husband. "Sweetie, I still have three months until they are here. I just need you to move it so I can get it unpacked." She looked around and grew concerned when she didn't hear anything. "Where are Matty and Maya?"

Edward hefted the box up on the table top and then moved to wrap his arms around Bella's expanding waist line. His movements received a couple of kicks. "They fell asleep about twenty minutes ago."

Bella nodded and extricated herself from Edward's grasp. She turned and kissed him softly before turning back to her box.
"Sorry, honey, I'm just hot. Now get back to work."

Edward chuckled and walked back to the living room. Before he got there, his pager went off. He knew Bella was going to be upset, so he called Rose before he went to her.

"I'm on my way Edward. Emmett will ride with you."

"Thanks Rosie."

Edward wandered back into the kitchen to tell Bella that he had gotten called in. He knew she was going to be upset, but she was beginning to slowly be okay with his job again. He hadn't had an accident on the job for at least a year. The only reminders of his last one were the burn scars on his left arm.

"Bella, honey, I've got to go. Rose is on her way over to help you."

Bella looked at her husband and felt the usual fear run down her spine. She sent up a silent prayer and then gave him a smile. "Be careful. I love you."

Edward grinned, "I love you too. Kiss the kids for me." He kissed her mouth and was gone.

**HH**

"Mommy, I hungry." Maya whimpered.

"Me, too."
Bella smiled at her three year old children. "Okay, I'll make some grilled cheese." She turned to her niece and smiled, "Emily would you like one too?"

"Sure Aunt Bella. Do you want me to go play with M and M while you get it ready?"

"Thanks that would be very helpful. Just be careful of all the boxes."

She watched as Emily took each of their hands and took them to play.

"You are doing a great job with her." Rose commented.

Bella turned to her sister, "It's the least I can do after all that Felix and Demetri did for me."

"Bella, you adopted their daughter. I don't think it's the least you could do. You did what you thought was right. Maya would have been left alone. You and Edward saved her from an uncertain future." Rose turned back to her son, as he nursed.

Bella put the sandwiches on the griddle and thought back to the day that her father delivered the blow about her friend's death. They had been on their flight to get Maya when the plane went down, killing everyone aboard. She and Edward hadn't given it a second thought, before they had made arrangements to get Maya to America and home with them. A year after fostering her, they officially adopted Maya.
"Bella, do you have to work at the bar tonight?"

"No, Tanya and Kate have everything under control. Jazz said he would stop by there and check things out for me."

"Who's waitressing tonight?"

"Jane and Heidi." Bella commented as she flipped the sandwiches. She still couldn't believe that Felix had left her the bar. Bella plated the kid's lunch and called for them to come eat and then commenced cleaning up the mess.

Rose watched her sister bustle about, despite her growing belly and wondered if she ever ran out of energy. She was like Alice, especially when she's pregnant. "Don't you ever settle?"

Bella giggled, "Rose we just moved in to this house, I want to get it unpacked. I can't relax in clutter. You know this. You've known me my whole life."

"I suppose so. Well, let me put Eli down and I'll give you a hand."

For the next couple of hours the sisters worked side by side, unpacking boxes, cleaning crevices and taking care of the children. Bella knew that Edward had called Rosalie over to help distract her and was glad for it. Ever since the accident that had almost killed him, she was scared for him to go out on a call. She wondered if that fear would ever abate. She doubted it.
Edward walked up the stairwell at the station and was met with a surprise. His dad stood at the top right beside the Chief Commander and the Commissioner.

"Dad, what's going on?" He asked as he came to a stop in front of them.

"I think I can answer that for you Mr. Cullen. Why don't you follow us into the office?" Commissioner Banner said.

Edward looked at his father before following them into the office. Carlisle shut the door once everyone was inside.

"Have a seat son." Carlisle said.

"Edward, we have been receiving reports on you. Your conduct and leadership skills are exemplary. These are all things that we look for in a chief."

Edward looked at the three men before him, "I'm sorry, but chief of what station?"

Carlisle cleared his throat. "I'm retiring Edward."

Edward opened and closed his mouth in shock before finally being able to speak. He turned to the Commissioner, "Are you telling me that you want me to take over this house?"

"That is exactly what we are saying. Would you be willing?"
"I, uh…I would have to discuss it with my wife first."

"Of course, we'll give you two days and then meet back here on Monday morning. Agreed?"

Once agreements were made they left Edward and Carlisle alone. "Dad, are you sure about this?"

"What, retiring? Yes, your mother and I have discussed this quite a bit and have decided it's time." Carlisle grinned and then chuckled, "Besides, I want to play with all these grandchildren you keep giving me."

Edward laughed and got up to hug his father. He wondered how Bella was going to react.

**HH**

Emmett arrived home and found Rose sleeping in the recliner with Eli asleep on her chest. He smiled and walked to pick up his son. He quietly carried him to his room and placed him in his crib. Once he was settled, Emmett rounded the hallway to check on his daughter.

"Watcha doing kiddo?"

Emily looked up at her father, "Homework. I want to be able to have fun this weekend."

Emmett walked forward and kissed her forehead. "Alright, don't stay up too late."
He walked back down the hall to find his wife waking up. "Did you put Eli down?"

"Yea, babe. Did you eat?"

"No I waited for you." Rose stood up and crossed to him. "Are you hungry?"

Emmett smiled, "Not for food."

"Why Mr. McCarty, are you trying to seduce me?" Rose asked seductively.

"Yep, is it working?"

Rose just giggled as her mouth met her husband's.

**HH**

"J.W. come here now!" Alice hollered for her son.

She watched as he toddled his way to her, "Yes momma?"

"Come here sweetheart." She waited until he was at her feet. "Can you tell mommy why she stepped on your truck?"

"No, sowwy momma."

"It's okay baby. Please put it in the toy box okay."

He picked up his truck and ran away. "Jasper, dinner!"
"Coming darlin'."

Alice smiled and went back to the kitchen and finished preparing their dinner. She was craving Velveeta shells and cheese and tuna right now, so Jasper had to eat it too.

"Oh…Alice what the hell is that smell?" Jasper came in fanning the air.

"Tuna. Sit." Alice ordered. She was extra bossy when she was pregnant.

"Oh…" Jasper sat and kept his mouth shut. He would grab something at the bar later when he met up with Emmett and Edward.

**HH**

Edward was just walking down the stairs when a knock sounded on his front door. He detoured to it and opened it up. He smiled at the person on the other side. "Jake, good to see you. Come on in."

"Thanks. I was wondering if I could talk to you and Bells." Jacob asked.

"Sure, we were just about to eat. Are you hungry?"

"I could eat," he smiled.

Edward led the way to the kitchen, "Babe, set another place. Jake's here."
"Unca Jake!" Matty and Maya squealed.

"Hey guys. Watcha eating?"

"Roni..."

"Mm, where's mine." Jake grinned when Maya held out her spoon for him.

"Maya, eat your dinner."

Matty and Maya went back to their macaroni and cheese, while Jake greeted Bella.

"How are you feeling?" He asked as he gave her tummy a rub.

"Fine, but Jake I am not a magic genie lamp, so don't rub me." Bella snickered.

Bella served Edward and Jake some dinner and then sat down to her own. "So what's up?"

Jake looked at the couple who had become his closest friends. "Uh, well, I'm kinda lookin' for a job."

"What? Why?" Bella wondered.

"I had to quit, I couldn't work there anymore, especially after I found my boss in bed with my girlfriend."

"Oh, Jake, I'm sorry. I really thought Claire was it for you." Bella patted his hand.
"Well, I might know of a place. In fact I was going to call you, after I had this conversation with Bella. I guess you could hear it too." Edward grinned.

"Tell me what?"

Edward explained about his dad and about his promotion.

"You mean you wouldn't be in the thick of it anymore?"

"I would still go, but I would be more supervisory than anything else. Would you be okay with that?"

"Yes, call the commissioner now!" Bella bounced.

"Calm down, babe. I'll see him a couple days and give him my answer." Edward turned to Jake. "Do you think you're ready to come back? We're gonna be a man short."

Jacob looked at Edward. "Are you sure?"

"Jake you've been sober for three and a half years. I think it's time." Bella smiled.

"Well okay then, but you have to clear it with the guys and the commissioner."

Edward nodded, "Just come down to the station with me on Wednesday and we'll get it done."

When they had everything settled, the three of them enjoyed their meal and watched as the kids covered themselves in
macaroni. Bella smiled quietly. She thought about how rough things had been for all of them and realized that it had only made them all stronger. She wasn't sure what the future would hold, but she knew that they could face anything, as long as they faced it together.

AN: Well that's all she wrote. I hope you enjoyed this story. I want to give a shout out to teamswitzerlandmom, without who I might not have written Fireward very well. Thanks Missy! I appreciate it so much!

I have an idea for a new story, but I am going to finish Game of Love first. A little hint though, it's a Soldierward story. I hope you will all put me on author alert and keep an eye out for it. Until then…happy reading and reviewing!

Liz s