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A Single Day of Forever

by Christie Speich

I stroked Bella's hair from the top of her head to the middle of her back. I continued to trail my fingers down her spine.

She sighed. "We should get dressed before Renesmee wakes up. You're not making this easy on me."

Bella lifted her head to kiss me. I held her face between my hands. "You know what today is?"

Bella's forehead wrinkled in confusion. "Of course. It's Monday."

"One year ago today you made me the happiest man in the world by becoming my wife." I kissed her again, fiercely, before she could even respond. It didn't matter that we'd had all night to ourselves. I was being greedy and didn't want to let go.

"Edward," she gasped, pulling away. Her dark gold eyes burned with desire, betraying her. She turned her back to me to get dressed. I knew, because I felt the same way, that if she didn't look away it would be hours before we left our bedroom again. I channeled my focus on finding my own clothes.

It was easier to concentrate once we were both dressed. In the top drawer of my tiny portion of the closet, I moved the clothes aside until I found the black velvet box I'd hidden there.

I stood behind Bella, my lips brushing her ear. "Happy Anniversary, love," I whispered as I clasped the necklace around her neck. "I wanted to give this to you at the stroke of midnight, but you distracted me."

She held up the small clock hanging from the chain. "Oh Edward, it's beautiful."

"It was my mother's pocket watch. I had it engraved for you."

She turned over the pendant and traced her fingers over the words. *For my Bella, my love, every single day of forever.* "Thank you. I'm sorry...I didn't realize vampires marked occasions such as anniversaries."

I laughed into her hair. "I suppose in 300 years or so it'll start to get tiresome."

She turned then, to face me, touching my cheek. "I still can't wrap my head around the fact that in 300 years I'll still be here, with you. And even longer beyond that."

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I pressed my lips to hers, intending a short, gentle kiss, but as soon as our lips met, all the desire I'd so carefully shut away came to the forefront. My fingers tangled into her hair as I pulled her closer and she parted her lips.

"Momma! Daddy! Good morning!" Renesmee called from the doorway of our bedroom. That neither of us heard her approach was a testament to our distraction. We pulled apart instantly.

"Renesmee, sweetheart, good morning." Bella's attempt to mask her breathless voice failed.

Renesmee leaped into Bella's arms in one fluid movement and pressed her hand to Bella's cheek. Bella laughed. "I know, I know, you're hungry."

Renesmee pushed off Bella's shoulders to jump into my arms. She kissed my cheek as she wrapped her arms around me. She was squeezing with all her might but it was feather-light to me. *I'm hungry NOW!*

"Alright, let's go get breakfast."

Renesmee climbed around to my back, grasping her arms around my neck tightly. I reached back with one arm to hold her small legs securely against my back. I twined the fingers of my other hand through Bella's fingers, and together we ran to the main house.

* * *

"Aunt Rose!" Renesmee cried, throwing herself into Rosalie's arms.

"Good morning, darling! I'll bet you're hungry."

"YES! Eggs, please!" Renesmee ran to the kitchen.

"Of course." I laughed, following her.

Rosalie put her hand on my shoulder. "I'll cook for her today, Edward. I've watched you making omelets enough times to do it myself. You and Bella should celebrate your first anniversary, *alone*." She winked. *You know how Emmett and I celebrate our anniversaries. Go enjoy yourselves.*

"Rose—" I couldn't even form a sentence. Rosalie was replaying the highlights from her many anniversary celebrations, as if she were trying to give me ideas. "Enough, Rosalie, please."

Rosalie flashed a brilliant smile, a wicked glint in her eyes.

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“Thank you, Rosalie. Actually, Edward and I should hunt.” Bella reached for my hand.

Rosalie and I both looked at Bella incredulously. Bella would rather hunt than go back to the cottage...alone? *Geez Edward, maybe you do need some pointers from Emmett and me, if Bella wants to hunt instead.*

I glared at Rosalie, growling.

“Aunt Rose!” Renesmee sang from the kitchen. “I’m still hungry!”

Rosalie laughed, ignoring me. “Coming, darling!” she called. “You guys don’t have to hurry back, you know,” she added, with another suggestive wink, before sauntering off to the kitchen.

I wrapped my arm around Bella’s waist. Her eyes were wide. If she were human, her cheeks would be bright red. I stroked her cheek, remembering how the heat had felt. It was not, however, enough to completely distract me from Rosalie’s comment. Was I failing to satisfy Bella? It certainly didn’t seem so. Although it wouldn’t be beyond Bella to put her pleasure second to mine.

Bella pulled me to the door. Once we were outside, she turned to face me. “So, Mr. Cullen...” Her voice was low and seductive. One hand caressed my cheek. Was the hunting plan a ruse, to hide her embarrassment in front of Rosalie? I lowered my lips to hers, but before they met, she was out of my arms. “Catch me if you can,” she called playfully as she ran off into the forest.

I watched her for half of a second, my jaw dropped in surprise. Then I laughed. Why not play along?

“Oh, I will, Mrs. Cullen.” I followed her trail into the forest, just walking. She needed the head start anyway. A few hundred yards into the forest, Bella’s trail turned left, the opposite direction of the cottage. I stopped, confused. Where was she going?

Then I chuckled. When had Bella ever failed to surprise me?

Eager now to figure out her plan, I picked up her trail again, this time running. Several minutes later, I could hear Bella ahead of me, about a quarter of a mile. After a few strides, I heard her stop. I pushed my legs harder, the faster to find her.

Moments later I stopped, and turned to find her leaning against a tree, arms crossed and eyebrows raised.

“Well, it’s about time. I thought you were fast?”

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So she wanted to play like that. Interesting. I looked down, ashamed, as I approached her. Our bodies were just half an inch from each other.

“I am so sorry, Mrs. Cullen. Am I in trouble now?” I slowly raised my eyes to stare into hers.

Bella seemed to forget what she was going to say as she stared back into my eyes. Her hand rose, but before her fingers caressed my cheek, she stopped. She closed her eyes for several seconds, taking a deep breath. What was she doing?

“No. But if you’re that slow there won’t be any animals left for you.” Her tone implied this was obvious.

“What? Animals?”

“Hunting? Remember, Edward?” She rolled her eyes and stepped away from the tree, grabbing my hand as she passed me. “C’mon. There should be some deer over here.”

Sure enough, there were deer nearby. The buck I had my eye on sensed my presence before I was able to strike; Bella’s strange actions distracted me so thoroughly. Everything had been fine this morning at the cottage. She’d even accepted my anniversary gift gracefully. *Anniversary gift*. Bella must be feeling guilty about forgetting our anniversary. Silly Bella. As if she hadn’t already given me the best gifts of my existence: herself and our daughter.

I looked to my right and watched Bella gracefully pounce on the remaining doe. Even after nearly a year, I was amazed at how well she seemed to fit in with vampire life, as if it were natural for her. After draining the blood, she looked up and met my eyes. She rose slowly, fluidly. By the time she was standing straight, I was at her side, staring into her eyes.

“Oops,” she whispered, raising her hand to wipe the trickle of blood on her chin.

“Allow me.” My eyes never leaving hers, I slowly wiped away the blood with one finger. She trembled at my touch. I put my finger to her parted lips, and she sucked the blood off. I moaned at the sensation.

Bella’s teeth lightly grazed my finger as I pulled it from her mouth. Unable to hold back any longer, I crushed my lips to hers eagerly, wrapping my arms around her and pulling her against my body. Her fingers tangled into my hair and she parted her lips. My right hand trailed up her spine, to the back of her neck, and into her hair.

Abruptly she pulled away. “Edward, I…” she looked down shyly.

“What? What’s wrong?”

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“I would just feel more...comfortable...if we went back to the cottage, if you don’t mind?”

I scooped her up into my arms, bridal style, laughing. “Of course, love.”

And then I took off running. I had been so eager to find Bella and unravel her plan earlier that I didn’t pay attention to where we were, so I followed our scents back the way we came for the first several miles. I realized Bella had traveled in a wide serpentine pattern, and we actually weren’t as far as I had originally thought. Was that part of her game?

Bella’s arms were wrapped around my neck, and she kissed my throat, trailing her tongue against my skin occasionally. I pushed my legs harder, suddenly impatient to get to the cottage.

As we approached the cottage, I smelled something different. Something old, yet somehow familiar too. The memory nagged at me, faded and dim – a human memory.

I paused. I didn’t sense any danger – nothing looked out of place, and I heard nothing unusual. The wildlife of the forest felt no threat either; they were as loud and active as ever.

I set Bella down on her feet. “What is that?”

Bella looked around, breathing the scent in deeply as well. “I don’t know. Did we miss it this morning in our haste to get Renesmee’s breakfast?” Her eyes widened.

“It’s familiar, but I can’t place it...” How frustrating it was to try to sift through human memories. Everything since becoming a vampire had been crystal clear – perfect recall.

“Emmett...Esme...” I murmured as I caught their scents as well. “It’s fresh – from today.” I turned to Bella suddenly. “You don’t think something happened to Renesmee?”

Fear flickered across Bella’s face for the briefest moment as she considered the possibility. She shook her head slowly. “No...no, I’m sure they’d have called us if anything was wrong.”

I relaxed. “Yes. I suppose you are correct.”

There was still no sign of danger, but I wasn’t going to take any chances. It didn’t matter that Bella, as a vampire, could hold her own against any enemy as well as I could. I positioned myself in front of her before opening the door.

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The scent was stronger in the cottage. It was some kind of wood...mahogany...old, but with a new varnish. What *was* it?

Then I saw it. My mouth opened, but no sound came out. I walked across the room and stroked the dark wood ever so gently. The memories – dim as they were – came flooding back into my mind immediately. I sat on the bench as my fingers danced over the black and white keys. I turned to see Bella watching me, smiling widely.

“Bella, how ...when ...This is a 1900 Steinway Model K, the very piano my mother owned when I was a child. How did you know?”

“Carlisle. He saw the piano when you went back to your home to get your mother’s jewelry. He remembered it in perfect detail, of course, and described it to me. I did some research on the Internet, and here it is.” She shrugged, as if this wasn’t an amazing feat.

“Were they all in on this?”

Bella laughed. “No, it was very much a need-to-know situation. When Carlisle told me about the piano, months ago, he didn’t know my plans.”

“Alice must have known.”

“Yes, and she told Esme last night. Alice is the only one who’s harder surprise than you are! But she’s also probably the best at hiding things from you.”

I had to agree with that. If Alice had known about this for months, she certainly never slipped up once.

Bella stood behind me, her hands on my shoulders, as I began to play her lullaby. “I don’t *ever* want to hear any more grief about my acting abilities, got it?”

I laughed, resting my head against her shoulder. Her words combined with the music triggered another memory: a frail, human girl with her hair fanned over the pillow, pretending to be asleep when her father came to check on her. The music was obsolete now; the melancholy ending no longer needed. There was no frail human to sleep in her father’s house any longer. Instead, a vampire stood at my side, every single day of forever.

[Author’s Note: Want to see the piano Bella purchased for Edward?
<http://www.immortalpiano.com/index.php?page=steinway-upright>]