

Body and Soul

by Addicted to Edward

Bella woke up with a pounding headache. She squeezed her eyes closed and massaged her forehead. She sat up and gasped. She hadn't expected Edward to be there, since he left to go hunting last night, but she *had* expected to see an empty rocking chair in the corner of her room.

There was no rocking chair. This wasn't her room. It wasn't Edward's room. It wasn't Alice's room, either.

It was a room Bella had never seen before.

The walls were covered in posters of the hottest bands and actors. Clothes were strewn all over the room, along with CDs and magazines. Bella looked down, biting her lip as she tried to figure out where she could possibly be. If Edward had brought her here in her sleep, for whatever crazy reason, wouldn't he be here with her? She saw her hands then, with perfectly manicured and painted nails.

This wasn't her room and those weren't her hands.

Where were her short, bitten nails? She could feel the terror rising in her chest as she walked over to the vanity mirror. She clapped her hands over her mouth to stifle her scream as she studied her reflection. Instead of straight chocolate-brown hair, her hair was black, curly, and thick.

She recognized the face in the mirror immediately. It was Jessica Stanley's face.

Bella continued to stare in the mirror as her hands explored and poked her face and body. She felt the pressure from her fingers, but she couldn't reconcile the image in front of her eyes with the feeling. How could this be possible? How could she be inside Jessica's body? It just wasn't possible. Was it? Bella could not believe this was happening, but the logical side of her brain was already rationalizing the reality before her eyes. It *was* happening, whether she wanted to believe it or not.

Four months ago, I didn't believe in vampires, either.

She began to hyperventilate as a terror ten times stronger than before shook her whole body. *Edward!* If Bella was in Jessica's body, it would make sense that Jessica was in Bella's body. Edward was in danger. She had to warn him before he exposed his true self to Jessica.

She sat on the bed and tried to control herself. Pulling her knees up to her chest, she wrapped her arms around her legs and put her head down. *Deep breaths. Focus. Edward.*

Help Edward.

Once Bella could breathe normally again and her hands no longer shook with fear, she raised her head and looked around. Jessica's cell phone sat on the desk. When Edward had tried to buy her a cell phone so she could call him anytime she needed him, she thought he was going overboard. He'd settled for her memorizing his number and she had rolled her eyes at him. Now, she was grateful she had memorized the number and had a way to reach him right away.

The phone rang and rang, until Edward's voicemail finally picked up. "Edward, it's Bella," she said after the beep. Her voice sounded so wrong. "I know it doesn't sound like me, but please, you have to trust me. Call me back right away. Don't talk to me in person until you've called me on this number. I know that sounds crazy, just trust me. Please, Edward."

She dialed the number again as soon as she hung up. *Please answer, Edward. Please, please, please.*

* * *

Edward arrived at Bella's house a few minutes before eight a.m. He stopped short in the driveway when he realized he was hearing someone's thoughts from within the house. He recognized the mental voice as Jessica Stanley's.

Holy shit, I cannot believe that really worked! Amazing! Now what? A cell phone. Bella must have a cell phone.

He heard Jessica rummaging through Bella's room. What was going on? Did Bella know that Jessica was going through her room? What was Jessica doing here so early in the morning anyway? Her car wasn't here, how did she get here?

What the hell?! Bella must be the only person over ten years old without a phone! How will I contact him?!

Edward knocked on the door. He relaxed his hands out of the fists they'd clenched into. He must control his anger.

Oh crap, who could that be? Jessica panicked.

That's right; you're caught in the act! he thought.

After a few minutes, Bella still had not answered the door. Usually she was waiting for Edward the moment he knocked. Edward resisted the urge to barge in and demand what was going on. When the door finally opened, his jaw dropped slightly. Bella was wearing the same blue chemise she'd worn to bed, but she'd put a white blouse over it, the top half-unbuttoned. Her nipples were clearly defined against the thin fabric. No bra. Was she an angel sent to fulfill his fantasies or a devil intent on destroying him?

"Bella -" he began, his voice breathless. Then he heard Jessica's thoughts again.

Wow, that was easy!

Edward clamped his mouth shut and took a step back. Jessica's thoughts came from *Bella*. There was no mistaking it.

"Well, good morning, handsome!" Bella said with a huge smile. It wasn't a Bella smile at all. There was a sly, seductive quality to it. *He's standing right in front of me and thinks I'm his girlfriend. Edward fucking Cullen! How about a good morning kiss, baby?*

He couldn't speak. He couldn't even breathe. Dread and fear began to spread through his body.

"Honey, aren't you going to come in?" Bella asked after he didn't move for a few minutes. She reached for his hand, flinching back after she touched his skin. "You're so cold! Come inside and warm up."

How can he be so cold in June? Oh, who cares - I get to be the one to warm him up!

He forced himself to blink and resume breathing. *Stay calm. Think.* "I had the air conditioning on full blast." It was a lame excuse, but it would have to do for now. He rubbed his hands together as if to warm them.

She stepped back and gestured towards the kitchen. He walked in and sat at the kitchen table, watching her warily.

What now? Did he have plans with Bella? Is he expecting something? Jessica sat across from him.

In the small confines of the kitchen, the scent of Bella's blood assaulted Edward. Mornings after hunting always hit him the hardest, after being separated from her for several hours. This morning, however, was different. It was harder than usual for him to swallow back the venom that pooled in his mouth. He looked into Bella's eyes; that always helped him calm the monster inside him. Staring into her deep, brown eyes, down to her soul, had an amazing effect on him.

In that moment, he knew for certain that the girl sitting across from him was not his Bella. This girl's eyes were dull and shallow, lacking Bella's sparkle.

Just then, the cell phone in Edward's pocket rang. He made no motion towards it. He gripped the edge of the table tightly. All he wanted in that moment was to bite this girl and drink the sweet blood that called to him.

"Aren't you going to answer your phone?" she asked timidly. Her eyes widened in fear as she took in his hostile posture. *What's wrong with him?*

Edward had stopped breathing. He was afraid to open his mouth. He took the phone out of his pocket and glanced at the number just before the voicemail picked up. The number was

not one that he recognized. The phone immediately rang again, the same number. He pressed "Ignore" and held up a finger to Bella, indicating he needed a minute. He pushed the voicemail button and listened, shocked when Jessica Stanley's voice came through.

"Edward, it's Bella. I know it doesn't sound like me, but please, you have to trust me. Call me back right away. Don't talk to me in person until you've called me on this number. I know that sounds crazy, just trust me. Please, Edward."

Her voice was desperate and pleading. His suspicions were confirmed. This was Bella's body but Jessica Stanley's soul.

And Bella's soul was trapped in Jessica's body.

"Excuse me, Bella. I have to return this call," Edward said, all in one breath. He walked out the door without waiting for her answer. Rude, but necessary. He had to get away from the concentrated scent. And out of earshot.

As he walked down the driveway, the phone rang a third time. This time he answered immediately.

"Bella?"

"Edward," she said, relieved. "You got my message? You're not at my house yet, are you?"

Edward pictured Bella in his mind, but he was hearing Jessica's voice. It was very disconcerting. "Yes, I am, actually."

"Oh no," she moaned. "Is everything okay?"

"Yes, so far. It was very confusing. I could...hear...Jessica, know what I mean? So I knew right away something was wrong."

"What are we going to do?"

"I don't know. I need to see you."

"Are you sure everything is okay?" Even over the phone, Bella detected the stress in his voice.

"Not exactly. Her blood...your blood...whatever...well, it still calls to me. Strongly. But it's not *you*. It's harder to...to resist...when it's not you." This was difficult for him to admit. He was ashamed of his weakness. What would Bella think of him?

"Edward," she said softly, her voice gentle. "I have complete faith in you. You have amazing control. You can do this. I know you can."

Relief washed through him at her words. For a moment, he couldn't speak.

"Edward?"

"I'm here. I'll pick you up at Jessica's house at noon. For now, I will pretend nothing is wrong. I can't tell Jessica I can read her thoughts, after all. We'll figure something out,

together."

"Okay. I love you."

"I love you too, Bella."

Edward put the phone back in his pocket and headed towards the house. He took several deep breaths of the clean air. He'd have to breathe as little as possible in the house, with the scent swirling around him. He let himself in the house and found Jessica still sitting in the same chair.

"Bella, I'm sorry about that. I was terribly rude. That was the weirdest phone call, though. Forgive me?" He looked directly into her eyes, with half his mouth turned up in a smile. Bella often accused him of dazzling her when he did this; he hoped it had the same effect on Jessica.

Oh my God...those eyes...

"Oh...um...of course." Not quite the same effect as with Bella, close enough anyway. He could use this to his advantage.

"Would you believe that was Jessica Stanley of all people? Trying to claim that she was Bella and you were Jessica! Isn't that crazy?"

The spell broke. *Oh crap! Stay cool. He doesn't believe it.*

"What? Jessica? How could I be Jessica?" It was a good act, enough to fool humans perhaps.

"I know. Crazy." Edward shook his head. "I think that girl needs to get her head examined."

Jessica laughed weakly.

"I don't know why you are friends with her."

She swallowed and just shrugged.

Every time Edward took a breath, he was bombarded by the scent. *I have complete faith in you.* He repeated Bella's words in his mind. *You can do this.* Over and over, like a mantra. *I know you can.* They were his savior, his beacon in the storm.

"So, what are the plans for today?" Jessica asked.

He couldn't resist playing with her mind. "I don't know. You said you had a surprise planned for today."

Great. "I'm glad you didn't forget." She batted her eyelashes coyly, something Bella would never do. She walked over to Edward and straddled his lap, wrapping her arms loosely around his shoulders. He stiffened and held his breath. "I think we should stay in today, and just ... *enjoy* ... each other's company."

Edward knew exactly what Jessica was inferring. He was about to protest when his

attention was averted. From the angle Jessica was sitting on him and the way her arms were raised, he was able to see the curve of her breasts under the chemise. It may be Jessica's soul inside, but it was still Bella's body. He was instantly aroused and fascinated by the sight, and though he tried to look away like a gentleman, he couldn't. If he could have blushed, he would have, for he was certain Jessica was able feel his erection.

He wrapped his arms around Jessica, and buried his fingers into her hair. It *felt* like Bella. She shivered slightly at his touch but didn't complain. He pulled her close and pressed his lips to hers.

YES! That's what I'm talking about!

Jessica's internal dialogue interfered with his pleasure, so he blocked her out. His body responded as if it was Bella. He wanted her as much as he wanted Bella. Jessica ran her tongue over his lips, seeking entry. She shivered again.

Edward snapped back to reality. What has he doing? He was risking exposure, not just for himself but his entire family. Gently, he pushed her away, being sure to keep his hands on her blouse, though she could probably feel the coldness through the thin fabric.

Hurt crossed her face for a brief moment. It was such a *Bella* look that he wanted to cradle her in his arms and comfort her.

"What's wrong, baby?" Her breath blew in his face. Pure, concentrated Bella. He lost control in that fraction of a second. Just inches away, the vein in her neck was pulsating with that warm, delicious blood. The monster within him roared with delight. He saw it with clarity then, an answer to all of his problems. He could kill this girl sitting on his lap, drink every drop of her blood and enjoy it thoroughly. There were no witnesses to worry about. He could then go to Bella, in Jessica's body, and be with her without the strong draw of her blood. It would still be *Bella*, just in a different body. He could have his cake and eat it too, so to speak.

In that same second, his phone rang in his pocket again. Jessica jumped up, startled by the vibration under her thigh. He didn't have to look at his phone to know it would be Alice, freaking out about the vision she would have just had. A vision of Edward killing Bella in her kitchen.

I have complete faith in you. I have complete faith in you. I have complete faith in you.

Edward set his jaw, and reined in the monster within him. Killing Jessica was not an answer to his problems. It was not the right thing to do. There would be no murder of innocent girls today.

All of this happened in the space of a few seconds. Jessica suspected nothing of the danger her life had just been in. Edward's phone stopped ringing; Alice's vision must have changed.

"Nothing." *Smile and dazzle her.* "Let's watch a movie since we're staying in today. Why don't you go pick one out, I'll be right there."

Whatever you say. "Okay. Any requests?"

"Lady's choice."

Jessica skipped off to the living room to survey the selection. *Not much to choose from. Doesn't Bella own anything good?*

Edward pulled out his phone and typed a quick message to Alice: *Please drop my car off at Bella's by 11:30. Everything is fine. Don't come in. Don't talk to Bella. I'll explain later.* Jessica hadn't seemed to notice that he arrived at Bella's door without a car, but she would certainly notice if he left without one. He was fairly certain he wouldn't be getting out of here without a goodbye kiss.

His phone buzzed three seconds later with her reply: *You really scared me for a minute there. Answer your phone next time, asshole. You're damn right you're going to explain. Everything.*

He sent one final message, *Sorry!*, and then joined Jessica in the living room. She was just putting the DVD in. *The Princess Bride*, a surprising choice. Perhaps she was planning to work the romantic angle.

Edward sat in the single chair. He had a theory. It seemed that Jessica had done something to cause the switch to happen, however it was able to happen. And based on her one-track-mind he had a strong suspicion as to her reason. What if he could make her no longer interested in him? Could she make the switch back?

Jessica turned and frowned at his seating choice. *Well, we can make this work.* She bounced towards the chair and sat on his lap, curling up against him. *Damn, he's solid as a rock! I'll bet he's totally built under that shirt. Wonder how long it will take me to get it off him?* She attempted to stifle her giggle, but didn't quite succeed.

"Bella," he said, annoyance in his voice. "I can't watch a movie with you all over me like this." He pushed her gently off his lap.

Jessica's face fell and her forehead wrinkled. Edward had to tighten his grip on the armrest to keep himself from comforting her. On the one hand, he knew it wasn't really Bella. Yet, on the other, he was so attuned to her body and gestures that it was practically an instinct to comfort her.

The movie started then. Edward groaned. "You know I hate *The Princess Bride*. Why would you pick that movie?"

"Huh? But, you said I could choose."

He rolled his eyes. "You should know by now that 'Lady's choice' means you pick

something that you know I will like."

Jessica was speechless for a moment. *What the hell? Is he always this rude?* "What do you like?" She was starting to get annoyed, too.

"You know what I like. Christ, Bella, we've been dating how many months now?" It was hard to be so rude while looking at Bella, even knowing that it wasn't really Bella. But at least it was distracting him from the burn in this throat.

"Well, why don't you just pick something then," she practically yelled. *Lauren was right, he is weird. Talk about mood swings!*

Edward let out an exasperated sigh. "Whatever. We'll just watch *The Princess Bride*, I guess."

Jessica sat down on the couch, still looking stunned. He had to turn away from her. She had the same expression Bella had the first day he saw her, that bewildered look that haunted him for a week afterwards. It wasn't exactly the same, however, with Jessica's depthless soul in Bella's eyes.

Holy buzz-kill, Batman!

Edward wondered what Bella was doing, aching to be with her. He had to get out of here and get to her. Why did he tell Alice 11:30? To pass the time, he thought about holding Bella close to him. Kissing the hollow of her throat. Her lips... That brief peek at her breasts left him wanting to see more. To touch them. Squeeze them...

His phone buzzing in his pocket again pulled him out of his fantasies. Alice again. Continuing with the rude charade, he didn't bother to excuse himself or lower his voice.

"What, Alice?"

Jessica shot him a dirty look. *Hel-lo?!*

"What the hell is going on?! Would you like to explain to me why you are planning on sneaking into Jessica Stanley's room tonight?"

Excellent idea, Alice! he thought. And then he had one just as good.

"You're done with your hair appointment already?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Alright, you can pick me up now."

"You owe me."

"See you soon. Bye."

Jessica was still glaring at him when he shoved the phone back into his pocket.

"Sorry, love. Alice is done early and coming to pick me up. She'll be here in a few minutes."

"Yeah. I heard." She was definitely angry. Somehow, it wasn't quite as cute as when

Bella got angry, even though it was the same voice.

He stood and started for the door. Jessica followed him. *Well, that didn't go quite how I planned...*

"I at least get a goodbye kiss, don't I?" she asked with the most innocent expression on her face. Very Bella-esque.

Edward felt the familiar twist in the pit of his stomach. He wanted to scoop her up into his arms and kiss her breathless. Swallowing the venom in his mouth, and holding his breath, he gently pressed his lips to hers. He pulled away before she could wrap her arms around him. He wanted more -- much, much more -- but didn't trust himself.

Wow. He may be rude, but his kisses are amazing, even if they're short and without tongue.

She stared up into his eyes, and he couldn't take his eyes off her lips, wanting to taste her again. Mercifully, Alice pulled up then and pressed on the horn. But even that blaring noise wasn't enough to drown out the mental yelling she directed towards Edward.

"Goodbye, Bella." He pulled his eyes from her face and opened the door.

"Call me?"

"Sure."

He walked down the driveway and climbed into the car without a glance behind him.

"What the hell is going on?" Alice started as soon as he closed the door behind him, her questions coming a mile a minute. "First, I see you killing Bella -- *killing* her, Edward -- and then you are spending the night with Jessica Stanley? And why did you need me to pick you up? Why didn't you just run home?"

"You would not believe the morning I've had," he replied, pinching the bridge of his nose. He took in several deep breaths of the clean air of the car.

Alice truly looked at him for the first time, and her face softened. "What happened?"

"In your visions, did you notice anything different about Bella?"

As soon as they were around the corner from Bella's house, she really stepped on the gas.

"No," she replied, surprised by his question. "I mean, besides the fact that she was dead."

Edward grimaced. "Alice, please. Must you keep reminding me?"

"Sorry."

"That girl...that was not Bella."

She raised her eyebrows, disbelieving. *Oh, really?*

"Bella's body, yes. But it wasn't Bella on the inside. It was Jessica Stanley," he continued.

"You're talking nonsense, you know."

"I know it sounds crazy. But somehow, Jessica and Bella have switched brains, switched souls. It was unreal, Alice, it really was. I could hear all of her thoughts, but they were *Jessica's* thoughts. And Bella called me, but she sounded like Jessica."

Alice was silent for a moment, thinking. *But then why would you...oh, sorry.*

He sighed and answered her unspoken question. "For a moment, it was very difficult to resist. She still *smelled* like Bella, but she just wasn't Bella."

She placed her hand on his shoulder. "You *have* had a rough morning. You're forgiven." She winked.

She pulled into the driveway then, maneuvering the curves perfectly despite the speed of the car. As soon as she was out of the car, Edward slid over to the driver's seat.

"Where are you going? You should talk to Carlisle about this."

His hands were shaking on the steering wheel. He couldn't control the trembling completely but he was careful not to break the car. "I have to see Bella. I need her. She calms me."

Alice smiled sympathetically. *You poor boy, you're so shaken up. I'll talk to Carlisle and let him know what's happening. He'll know what to do.* She leaned into the car and kissed his cheek before closing the door.

"Thanks, Alice."

"I know, that's why you love me," she sang as she skipped up to the house.

Edward almost smiled. The tires screeched as he swiftly turned the car around and raced back down the driveway.

* * *

Bella sat at the table in the Stanleys' kitchen. She picked at the toast in front of her, but her stomach was too full of butterflies to actually eat any of it. Was Edward still at her house with Jessica? Had Jessica touched him and felt his cold, hard skin? Did she now know he was something other than human? The only thing she knew for certain was that Jessica was alive. Despite what Edward had said about the scent of her blood tempting him, she knew he wouldn't act on his vampire instincts. She didn't know how she knew, she just did, all the way down to her bones. Or, rather, Jessica's bones.

She glanced at her watch for the hundredth time. Two more hours before Edward would be here. She began to pace. How to pass the time?

She was searching through the bookshelves looking for any interesting book to read when

a knock on the door made her jump. She peeked out the window and saw a silver Volvo in the driveway. Breathing a sigh of relief, she opened the door and threw herself at him. She stumbled on the way and ended up falling into his arms instead.

Edward stared into her eyes. "Bella." Relief saturated his voice.

She tried to stretch up on her tiptoes to kiss him, but Jessica was several inches shorter and she couldn't reach. He chuckled and scooped her up in his arms. He stepped into the house and shut the door behind him, while simultaneously pressing his lips fiercely against hers. His grace and ability to do several things at one time without seeming to watch what he was doing continued to fascinate her.

He'd never kissed her like that before. There was still restraint, but it seemed not as much as usual. There was the sense of a frantic need, of a hunger he couldn't fully satiate. When he finally pulled away, he set her down in a kitchen chair but continued to stare into her eyes. She had to catch her breath and couldn't speak for a few minutes.

"Are you alright?" she finally asked. She couldn't understand the expression on his face. It scared her.

"Yes, now that I'm here with you," he replied with her favorite crooked smile. But there was still something deep in his eyes that she'd never seen before. The clear gold that his eyes usually had after hunting was almost murky, as if bits of black had swirled in.

"You're here early."

His forehead creased, trying to understand her meaning. "Is that okay? Do you want me to leave?"

"No!" she replied quickly. "I'm glad you're here now. I was anxious."

"So was I. I managed to sneak away." He winked.

Just then, Jessica's cell phone rang. Bella glanced at the number. It was her own.

"Should I answer it?" she whispered. Why was she whispering?

Edward nodded, his face solemn.

"Oh good, you answered." It was Bella's voice on the line but the haughty tone made it sound like someone else.

"Jessica, what's going on?"

"Having a good morning, are you? I am. Kissing Edward Cullen is a great way to start your day, but you already knew that, didn't you?"

Bella's stomach turned over. Edward had kissed her, knowing it was Jessica? Her eyes flashed to his face, but he averted his eyes. Shame was written all over his face. So, it was true. She swallowed hard. Above her jealousy, she felt a new wave of fear. If they kissed, they must have touched. What did Jessica know? What did she suspect?

"You're lying." Her voice was shaky, betraying her.

"You wish." Jessica laughed. "Anyway, I wanted to let you know that you have a date with Mike tonight. He'll pick you up at 8:00. I hope you have fun. I know I'll be having *tons* of fun with Edward tonight." The implication in her tone was too obvious to miss, and it sounded all wrong coming from Bella's voice.

Before Bella could reply, Jessica hung up. Bella didn't move for a full minute; she didn't even put the phone down. She concentrated on taking deep breaths and calming herself down.

"Bella, I -" Edward began.

"Does she know?" she whispered.

His forehead creased again. Clearly, he was not expecting that question. "Know what?"

She gaped at him. How could he be so calm? Shouldn't he, of all people, understand the severity of the situation? "That you're a vampire? That you're not human? That you're different? Any of this sounding familiar?" She was surprised at how angry she was. What was he thinking?

He still looked confused. "Aren't you mad?"

"Hell yes, I'm mad!" she cried. Edward's eyes widened in shock. "Why are you so calm? Don't you care that your secret is exposed? Aren't you worried about the danger your family could be in?"

Several emotions crossed his face but the most prominent was the softening of his eyes and set of his jaw, his lips parting slightly, making him look very vulnerable. Bella instantly regretted yelling at him, and reached over to take his hand. "I'm sorry," she said softly.

Edward rolled his eyes. "*You're* sorry? Bella, you have nothing to be sorry about. Jessica was too caught up in ... her thoughts ... to really think about it. She touched my hand and commented on the coldness, but she didn't wonder about it beyond that."

"At least not while you were there." She didn't want to think about Edward kissing Jessica, even if it was her lips he was kissing. He'd just kissed Jessica's lips too. It was enough to make her head swim. She tried to focus on the fact that he was here, with her, by his choice.

He pursed his lips for a moment. "True. There's no way for me to know what's she's thinking now. Although I'm sure she would have mentioned something while on the phone with you."

She nodded. Thinking about the phone call reminded her about her upcoming date with Mike. She groaned. "I can't believe I have to go on a date with Mike Newton tonight."

A murderous look flashed across Edward's face for the briefest moment before it cleared. "You could call him and cancel," he suggested.

"Yes, I could call him and cancel tonight, but what about tomorrow? And the next day?"

How long is this going to go on? How long do I have to pretend to be Jessica?" Bella could feel the panic rising in her chest again.

Edward pulled her onto his lap and held her close to his chest. She snuggled into his cold, hard chest, but it didn't feel the same. With Jessica's body, she didn't fit into his so neatly. He slowly rubbed his hand up and down her back. "Bella, love, don't worry. First, I have a theory. Second, if things are not set right, I will be breaking up with Bella Swan and taking Jessica Stanley out tomorrow." He placed one finger under her chin to lift her head so she could look him in the face. He was smiling, but his eyes had that same mysterious, murky quality.

"What's your theory?"

"When I arrived at your house, I could hear Jessica's thoughts. She was incredulous that 'it really worked' and didn't seem confused about what had happened to her. So I suspect she somehow caused this to happen. Her thoughts all revolved around one thing..." He shifted his eyes away. "...me. My hope is that if I can make her ... lose interest ... she can somehow reverse the switch."

Bella thought about that for a minute. "I can't believe she would purposefully do this. Who does this to a friend?"

"Jessica Stanley has never been a friend of yours. I knew that from the moment I first saw you in the cafeteria. I thought you knew. You are always so perceptive."

"I guess I've always known. But I still didn't think her capable of inflicting this much hurt."

He smiled. "Not everyone is as wholly good as you are, Bella."

She blushed but rolled her eyes. "How are you trying to make her 'lose interest'?"

"I was incredibly rude to her. It seemed it was working, but then..." Edward didn't seem to want to finish the thought.

Bella was afraid to ask what happened. She didn't want the details. She didn't want to think about Edward with Jessica.

"She seems to think we have plans tonight," he continued. "We didn't discuss anything but she asked me to call her."

She looked down. "Are you going to call her?"

He gently lifted her head again. "Please stop hiding your eyes," he said softly. "And yes, I will call her. The sooner I can convince her to switch back, the better."

Bella couldn't agree with that sentiment more. Being here, with Edward, things weren't so bad. With his strength, she could get through anything. But what will happen when he's not with her? When Bella has to pretend to be Jessica with other people? Tonight, on a date with Mike Newton?

"I love *you*. No matter what happens that won't change. I'll always be wherever you are."

He leaned down to kiss her gently.

* * *

Carlisle was at the hospital when Edward arrived home. It was just as well; although Edward valued his father figure's wisdom and advice, right now he needed the kind of advice that only a brother could give.

Even before he entered the house, Alice was talking to him. *Talked to Carlisle. He's happy to do some research on this phenomenon. Said he's not worried, that he knows you'll be careful. And because I know you'll ask, I've been trying to see something, anything, about Bella, but to my vision, she's the same Bella. I can't see Jessica as well; I'm not attuned enough to her.*

Edward closed the front door behind him. "Thanks, Alice."

She looked up briefly from her magazine and flashed him a smile. *Sure. Oh, I did see that Bella is going to be very upset when you break up with her tomorrow.*

He sighed. That meant the switch wouldn't happen by tomorrow. Carlisle's faith in him was overestimated as always. He'd already nearly exposed his true self to Jessica, simply because he couldn't control his hormones.

Jasper didn't look up from the computer screen as he sent a wave of calm towards Edward. He was trying to be inconspicuous, but it's hard to surprise a mind reader. Edward didn't protest; he merely nodded in Jasper's direction to let him know he appreciated the help. If only Jasper could be with him when he was with Jessica, to help control his arousal. He briefly considered a double date with Alice and Jasper. No, one vampire spending so much time with a human was enough. No need for three.

Alice raised one eyebrow. *What the hell was that, Edward?* He saw the flicker of the vision in her head: the four of them at the movies.

"Nothing. Passing thought," he replied quietly.

He walked over to Emmett, who was sprawled across the couch, watching a baseball game. He knew it was pointless to try to say anything to Emmett without everyone hearing him, but he whispered just the same. "Come hunting with me, Em?"

"What? Now? But we just went last night." He didn't even look up and he definitely didn't bother to whisper.

"Please?"

His simple plea, in a quiet voice, got Emmett's attention. He turned his head to look over the back of the couch at Edward. Taking in his expression, he nodded. *Sure, bro. Where do you want to go?*

"Anywhere."

They headed out the door and ran off into the forest.

You don't really want to hunt, do you?

"No."

Alice said you were having a rough time. She wasn't exaggerating, was she?

"No."

Once they were several miles away and Edward was sure they were alone, he stopped running and leaned against a tree. He didn't even know where to start. So much confusion was swirling within him.

Waiting for Edward to start, Emmett picked up a branch that had fallen to the ground. He began to peel thin pieces of bark off it, stripping it down layer by layer. Edward took several deep breaths, trying to organize his thoughts.

"So, Bella and Jessica have switched brains, and you nearly lost control and killed Jessica in Bella's body, right?" Emmett was not one to beat around the bush, and he was getting impatient with Edward's silence.

Edward nodded. "There's more." He took one more deep breath. "When I was with Jessica -- Bella's body, I mean -- I felt like I was with Bella, even though I knew it wasn't Bella because I was hearing Jessica's thoughts the whole time."

"Okay. That sounds reasonable." Emmett shrugged. *What's the big deal?*

"When I say I felt like I was with Bella, what I mean is... well, Bella's body has certain effects on me, and ..."

"Oh, just spit it out already! You were horny. You had a boner. This isn't med school, for Christ's sake!" Emmett laughed. "Lighten up. I still don't see what the big deal is. It was Bella's body, right? You already knew you were attracted to her physically, right?"

"It was so hard," Emmett burst out laughing and Edward glared at him, "to control myself. I accidentally saw down her shirt and just couldn't stop myself from kissing her."

"Dude, you saw Bella's breasts?" He slapped Edward on the back. Edward pushed his hand away. Why didn't he talk to Jasper instead? Jasper would probably react the same way, actually.

"It *wasn't* Bella."

Emmett nodded, suddenly serious. "And you feel guilty. Like you cheated on Bella."

Edward let out a breath he didn't even realize he was holding. "Yes. Look how close I

came to exposing our whole family. If Jessica hadn't been so caught up in the moment, I could have ruined everything, simply because I...I..."

"Couldn't keep it in your pants?" Emmett suggested with a smirk.

Edward ignored him. "But that's not even the worst of it. As if all that wasn't bad enough, being tempted by her blood, her body, exposing our secret..." He sighed and shook his head. "After all that, I went to Jessica's house to see Bella. I could see it in her eyes that it was Bella. They were blue instead of brown, but it was her. Staring into her eyes, the world was right again. And then I kissed her." He grimaced and put his head in his hands. If his eyes had been able to form tears, they'd be spilling over.

"So now you feel guilty about kissing Bella - er, Jessica, or whatever?" Emmett's eyebrows knit in confusion.

"No. I didn't feel anything, except that I wanted to go back to Bella's body. I knew it was Bella I was kissing, but it felt all wrong. My body had no response. On the one hand, resisting the blood in that body was ridiculously easy compared to the pull of Bella's blood. On the other, I just had no desire to be with her. I had to force myself to stay. Looking into her eyes, seeing *Bella*, was the only way I could keep myself there."

Emmett tossed what was left of the branch into the forest and nodded his head thoughtfully. "Major guilt."

"Yes. When Bella found out I had kissed Jessica, I wished that my existence was over. I couldn't even look her in the face. I expected her to yell, cry, or something. But what did she do? She worried about *my* safety! All she cared about was whether or not Jessica knew our family's secret."

The words began to spill out of Edward faster now. He felt as if he was compelled to confess his sins and couldn't stop. "And then, I told her that if things weren't back the way they were supposed to be by tomorrow, that as far as the world is concerned, I'd be leaving Bella for Jessica. And even as I said the words, even as I looked into her eyes, into her *soul*, I knew I'd never be able to do it. I'll always be drawn to her body. And her blood."

He looked up at Emmett. "I don't deserve her, Em. She's too good to love me. I'm going to ruin her."

Emmett clapped his large hand onto Edward's shoulder. "First things first, bro. You need to give yourself more credit. You're not the monster you think you are --"

"I'm a murderer, Emmett! A murderer. There's no way around that."

"That was how many years ago? How many innocent lives do you think you saved by your own personal form of justice? Let it go. You've done your time. This is your time to be happy, man. You're a good person. Bella is an excellent judge of character, don't you think?"

She loves you. She chooses you. Have faith in her."

I have complete faith in you.

A fresh wave of anguish washed over Edward. He was letting Bella down. She trusted him completely and he was lying to her.

"But let's get back to the problem at hand here. So you're feeling guilty that you're attracted to Bella's body? Edward, that's not a sin!"

"I thought I loved *her*. Not just her body."

"You *do* love her, numb nuts! You love all of her. The two of you have some crazy kind of connection. I don't understand it, but I don't have to understand it in order to see it. This is all still so new to you and the physical part of love in vampires is very strong. Especially for you, since you can't actually get any real action. Come on, you remember me and Rose in the beginning, right?"

Edward grimaced. Images of Emmett and Rosalie in numerous sexual positions flooded his mind. "Emmett, you don't need to show me, I get it."

Oh, sorry! "Tell me, how did you feel when you first saw her today? When you looked into her eyes and knew it was your Bella?"

"Relief. Calm. Peace."

Emmett nodded, as if he expected that answer. "And how did you feel when her only reaction was fear for your safety?"

"Awe. Wonder. Pride. Guilt." Edward smiled slightly. "And love."

"Yes," Emmett said, uncharacteristically softly. Then he grinned. "But, dude, you need to chill on the guilt. Seriously. Don't beat yourself up so much! Bella loves you, and you love her. You two are going to find a way to get through this. It's what you do."

Edward started to relax for the first time in hours. "Thanks."

Emmett smiled wickedly. "I still can't believe you saw Bella's tits! My little brother, growing up!"

Edward growled and tackled Emmett to the ground. A shallow ditch was carved out of the ground where Emmett landed. He moved to shove Edward off of him, but Edward dodged him and rolled off. He started walking back towards the house, without offering a hand to Emmett. "That was for disrespecting Bella. And I'm fifteen years your senior!"

"You may be older, but you'll always be smaller!" Emmett said as he ran towards Edward, preparing to retaliate. Edward saw his intentions and stepped out of the way at the last second. Emmett had lunged and had to brace himself against a tree to keep upright. The tree snapped under his weight. "Cheater," he muttered.

It continued like that the entire walk back to the house. Every attempt Emmett made to

attack Edward was thwarted, but Edward managed to get a few punches in. By the time they reached the house, they were laughing and joking like brothers do.

* * *

Bella had been dreading her date with Mike Newton all day. However, once she was there, she realized it wasn't so bad after all. The holding hands part was a little uncomfortable. Pretend to be Jessica, she reminded herself.

She realized she'd become accustomed to Edward's outdated chivalry when she sat in the car, waiting for Mike to open the door for her, while he waited outside for her to open it herself. She giggled. She never thought she'd be the girl expecting the boy to open her door.

Dinner went very well. Mike was easy to talk to. She asked him all about growing up in California, and how he'd felt about moving to Forks. She tried to keep the attention on him as much as possible.

While they waited for the check, Mike grew quiet. He smiled shyly at Bella. "You've never been so interested in my life before, Jess. It's...kind of sweet."

She just smiled in return. She always liked Mike. Just never as more than anything but a friend.

He held the door for her as they left the restaurant, but she knew better than to expect him to open the car door.

"Where are we going?" Bella asked when she realized Mike had turned in the opposite direction of town.

He smiled and winked at her. "Just your favorite place to go on a date."

She returned the smile. She didn't know where Jessica's favorite place to go was, but it was sweet of Mike. Her curiosity made her actually look forward to the rest of their date, instead of dreading it. As they drove further and further from town, however, she started to get nervous. The road was dark and deserted. Finally, Mike turned onto a very small side road that eventually ended in a cul-de-sac at the forest. She could just make out the shapes of a few other cars also parked in the dead end.

He turned off the engine, turning the key all the way back so that the radio turned back on. He adjusted the station and the volume until quiet, sensual jazz music filled the silence.

Bella's heart thumped loudly. She was sure it was louder than the music. She just realized where Mike had taken her. Spending the day alone in the forest with a vampire, no problem. Alone with a human boy in his car, at a dark, out-of-the-way location, with soft music

playing in the background...*that* terrified her. She realized exactly what Jessica would consider her favorite part of a date, and it shouldn't have surprised her.

* * *

Edward was sitting in his car, watching Bella walk out of the restaurant through Mike's thoughts. He had parked around the corner, out of sight, but he'd been watching everything from the moment Mike showed up at Jessica's house.

He never did call Jessica; it would just be another reason for her to be angry with him. He didn't trust himself to see her again tonight.

He gave them a long head start. They were easy enough to follow by watching Mike's thoughts, and he wasn't sure how Bella would react to his following them. But he couldn't help it. He had to be sure she was all right. He didn't trust Mike any more than he trusted himself.

"Where are we going?"

Edward snapped to attention, watching as Mike turned north - away from town - instead of south.

Like you don't know. "Just your favorite place to go on a date." And mine.

The excitement in Mike's thoughts scared Edward. A flash of their destination crossed Mike's mind: dark, secluded, in the car, his arms around her...

Bella simply smiled. She clearly had no idea what Mike was planning.

Edward started the car and hit the gas. The tires squealed as he pulled away from the curb. He turned off his headlights long before he caught up to Mike's Suburban on the highway. It wasn't like he needed the lights to see the road.

He stayed a few car lengths behind Mike, who never noticed he was being followed. His thoughts continued to revolve around his dinner date and what was yet to come. Jessica's sudden interest in his life made him feel that their relationship was ready for the next level.

Mike finally pulled off the highway several miles north of town, onto a small road. Edward knew this road would dead end within a mile. He parked several yards away from the cul-de-sac as Mike pulled in at the end of the row. Several other cars were already parked. Edward quickly blocked out everyone but Mike. The occupants of the other cars were sufficiently distracted with each other that they wouldn't notice anything he did, as long as he didn't yell. Just the brief glimpses he'd gotten of their minds had already made him start thinking of Bella's body, and how badly he wished she was here with him, in *his* dark car.

Focus. This is not the time for that.

Mike slid closer to Bella, draping his arm over her shoulder. Edward could see her wide,

scared eyes, but Mike interpreted it as excitement rather than fear.

Mike pushed his lips against hers, forcing his tongue into her mouth. She stiffened and pushed against his shoulders gently.

Come on, Bella. Say something. Give me an excuse to rip off his car door. Or better, his head. Edward's hands tightened on the steering wheel. *Don't break it, don't break it...*

Once again, Mike misinterpreted her reaction. "I put the backseat down, and there are blankets in the back. If you'd like to get more comfortable..."

"Um...no, Mike. I'm not really in the mood for this tonight..."

Yeah, right. When have you ever not been in the mood? "Playing hard to get, are we?" Mike whispered in her ear. "I like that..."

"No -"

Mike cut off Bella's protest with another aggressive kiss. She dropped her hands and her shoulders slumped. She seemed to give up resisting.

Edward had had enough. Within a second he was yanking open the passenger-side door of Mike's SUV, remembering to control his force at the last second before the door flew completely off the hinges. Bella and Mike both looked up in surprise. He could see his own face in Mike's mind: dark, fierce, murderous. He didn't look remotely human; his face was the personification of the monster within him.

"What the hell, man?" Mike attempted to yell bravely but Edward's glare terrified him. *Holy shit. He looks like he wants to kill me.*

Edward reached in the car and grabbed Mike by his shirt. His voice was low but full of menace. "When a lady says 'no' --"

"Edward," Bella whispered. Edward looked at her for the first time. Her eyes were wide and filled with a terror he'd never seen in her before. Her heart thumped loudly and quickly, pumping the adrenaline through her body. Her whole body began to tremble. This was, without a doubt, the most scared of him she'd ever been.

He took a deep breath and released Mike.

"Just take me home, Mike. Please," she whispered.

Mike hadn't moved. His face was white. "Yeah. Sure," he said weakly. He still hadn't taken his eyes off Edward.

"Straight home," Edward commanded. He stepped back, closing the door.

It took Mike several minutes to collect himself. Edward didn't rush him; he wanted to be sure Mike would get Bella home safely.

He followed Mike to Jessica's house, and this time he made sure Mike knew he was being followed. Bella wouldn't let Mike walk her to the door. She walked shakily up the driveway

and let herself in the house without a look back. After Mike pulled away, Edward dropped his car off at his house before running back to Jessica's house.

* * *

Edward climbed silently through the open window of Jessica's bedroom. He'd spent the last hour sitting in the shadows next to the house, waiting for her parents to go to sleep. The memory of the tremendous fear in Bella's eyes was the only thing that kept him there, rather than hunting down that scum Mike Newton. He would do better by her than murder.

Bella was sitting in the middle of Jessica's bed, her hair still wet from her shower. Her arms wrapped around her knees, holding them up to her chest and she was shaking. He had never seen her like this. In all the near-death situations he'd saved her from, she was always so calm. So calm it had unnerved him. Seeing her like this was worse. She must have been terrified. The only other time she'd seen him so angry was the night he rescued her from four low-lives in Port Angeles. The same night he learned that she knew he was a vampire. He never believed she fully understood the extent of his rage that night.

"If you want me to leave, I understand," he said quietly.

She looked up, her eyes wide. "God, no, Edward, please stay!" Her voice cracked at the thought of him leaving.

He didn't move towards the bed. He didn't know what to do. He wanted to hold her close to him, but would she want that?

"Please...I need you," she whispered, holding her arms out to him.

He moved at vampire speed, scooping her off the bed so he could lay back, curling her up on his lap and wrapping a blanket around her. Holding Jessica's body was almost awkward; she just didn't fit his shape the way Bella did.

"Bella, I'm so sorry. I lost control. I'm too dangerous --"

"You could have killed him..."

"I know," he whispered. "I would have, but you stopped me."

Bella shivered. Edward started to place her back on the bed, out of contact with his cold body, but she clenched her fingers into his shirt. "No! I need you," she repeated, her voice shaking.

He wrapped his arms around her securely. He didn't know what else to say. He had been sure this was it, that Bella had finally seen him for what he truly was and would leave him.

She took several deep breaths, trying to calm herself. He rubbed her back gently. With every pass his hand made, her shaking slowed a little more.

"Promise me you'll never, *ever* put yourself in danger like that again," she said finally.

He stopped rubbing. "Bella, I wasn't the victim."

"You know what would have happened if you had attacked him, right?"

"Yes." His voice was tight. There wouldn't have been much of a body left to find.

"Then promise me."

"I can't," he whispered. "Why aren't you frightened of me? You know what I'm capable of now."

"Edward, I've always known what you're capable of. And I *am* scared -- terrified, really -- that you would kill another person over me. I hate that I put you in a position that you'd *want* to kill someone. But I could never be scared of you."

He raised her head to look her in the eyes. "*You* didn't put me in that position. This was not your fault at all, do you understand that?"

She rolled her eyes. "We both know that if it had been anyone else in that car besides me, you wouldn't have bothered. Admit it."

He sighed. "That doesn't make it your fault."

He pulled her back down to his chest and resumed rubbing her back. "Talk to me, Bella. Tell me how *you* are. Are you alright?"

She was silent for a moment. "You promise to stay here with me?"

"Yes."

"Okay." She took a deep breath. "I was very glad you stopped him. I was prepared to put up with him, grin and bear it, since I was supposed to be pretending to be Jessica anyway. I had to keep reminding myself that he really believed I was Jessica and was only playing hard to get. I truly don't believe he meant to harm me in any way."

A low growl rumbled in Edward's chest. She was too quick to forgive.

"I hated every second he kissed me," she assured him, mistaking his reaction for jealousy. "All I wanted was you. Even in this strange body, having another person kiss me like that just felt so wrong. I told myself I should act like Jessica and at least not resist so much, maybe even put my arms around him, but I couldn't. I felt like I was doing something wrong. As soon as I got back here, I took a long, hot shower. I had to scrub every inch of my body at least three times. The hot water felt good, but it wasn't what I really wanted." She snuggled closer into his chest and tried to pull his arms closer around her.

"I am so sorry, Bella. I never should have let you go on that date with him. You'll never have to do that again."

She lifted her head. "I love you."

He brought his lips to hers, trying to make her lips fit against his the way he was used to.

Would he ever become accustomed to kissing these lips? How much longer would this go on?

He held her, humming her lullaby, until she finally fell asleep. After listening to her deep, even breaths for several minutes, he placed her gently on the bed, pulling the blanket off her so she wouldn't sweat.

"Edward," she sighed in her sleep.

He kissed her forehead, then slumped against the wall in the corner of the room. He held his head in his hands and silent, tearless sobs shook his body. This was not where he wanted to be. He desperately wanted to be with the beautiful girl with the silky brown hair, the glorious brown eyes, the perfectly formed lips, and the most amazing scent he'd ever known.

* * *

Jessica tossed and turned in Bella's bed that night. She was having that strange dream again. No, not the same dream exactly...

"You've had your chance to live as Bella Swan for a day. Do you wish to stay as Bella?" a soft voice whispered from somewhere far away.

She tried to see who was talking but her eyes would not focus on the strange blue glow. "Hell, no! I want back to my own life!"

"As you wish..."

* * *

At three in the morning, Edward was still slumped over in the corner, wrestling with his desire to go to the body he loved. Bella, who had been sleeping uncharacteristically soundly since he'd left the bed, stirred then. Suddenly, he was bombarded with images he didn't understand. An eerie blue light was floating away. A soft laughter echoed in the distance.

Is it over, then?

He looked up, recognizing Jessica's mental voice coming from the girl sleeping in bed. As he was about to climb through the window, Jessica's cell phone on the desk caught his eye. Quickly, he erased every instance of his phone number from the history. Then he jumped out the window and ran with every ounce of strength he had. It still wasn't fast enough. Three long minutes later, he was climbing into Bella's window.

The scent in the room hit him hard, but he welcomed it. He drew in several deep breaths of the delicious, tempting scent. The beautiful girl in the bed was tossing and turning. He could hear nothing; her mind was silent to him.

"Edward," she murmured, still asleep.

Careful not to wake her, he lay down in bed next to her. Instantly, like a magnet, she turned her body into his, placing her hand on his chest. He chuckled softly and wrapped his arm around her, holding her close. It was like two puzzle pieces fitting together perfectly.

Edward felt complete. He understood Emmett's words now. It was the unique combination of everything about Bella that he loved. No single aspect was more important than another one.

"Welcome back, my Bella." *Thank you for having faith in me.*