

feathersmmmm - Edward Wallbanger

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1. Chapter 2

Greetings pals and gals! Here is the first chapter of Wallbanger. It's short, more of a chapterette. Just wanted to give you a taste. This is the first E/B story I have written, other than the one shots for Smut Mondays and Friday Free For All (I might have just pimped my damn self there) so I am a little nervous to send this one out into the world. I know most of you will be crossing over from I Love LA. This new story will be pure fluff. I do not anticipate any angst. Please enjoy the ridiculous with me.

And review! Let me know what you think!

Chapter 1-The First Time

"Oh God,"

Thump.

"Oh God,"

Thump. Thump.

What the fuck?

"Oh God, that's so good,"

I swum up out of sleep, confused as I looked around the strange room. Boxes on the floor. Pictures propped up against the wall.

My new bedroom, in my new apartment.

"Mmmm, yeah baby, right there, just like that...don't stop, don't stop!"

Oh no...

I sat up in bed, rubbed my eyes, and looked at the wall behind me, trying to figure out what the hell was going on. I was still half asleep.

Earlier that day, my best friends Rose and Alice had moved me into my new apartment. It was the first time I had ever had my own place, no roommates. I was ecstatic. I was lucky enough that my boss and mentor Esme had let me sublet her old apartment, there was no way I could have afforded to live in this neighborhood in San Francisco. Thank God for rent control.

It was gorgeous. Large spacious rooms, wood floors, arched doorways...it even had a fireplace! Granted, I had no clue how to actually build a fire, but that was neither here nor there. I was aching to start placing pieces on the mantelpiece. As an interior designer, I started mentally placing things in almost every space I went to. It drove my friends mad at times, as I was constantly restaging their knick-knacks.

After soaking in the old and incredibly deep claw foot tub until I was past the prune stage, I packed my tired ass into bed and enjoyed the creaks and squeaks of a new home. I heard light traffic outside, and the comforting click click of my cat Clive walking around his new house, exploring. The click click came from his hangnail you see...

I fell into a peaceful sleep, so pleased with my new home.

Which is why I so surprised when I was woken up so abruptly at...let's see...2:37am.

As I gazed stupidly at the ceiling, trying to figure out why I was awake, I was startled as I felt the bed move underneath me. It jumped slightly, and then jumped again. I grumbled, and moved tiredly into the doorway. After growing up in Northern California, I was used to tremors. While I had never experienced a "big one", I was of the better safe than sorry variety, and always followed earthquake protocol.

"Come on Clive, get over here," I chided, noticing that he was still on the bed. He looked at me disinterestedly, and then raised his leg to clean his bum.

Huh, strange. Clive always went apeshit whenever there was the slightest tremor, in fact he was usually the one that let me know something was rumbling. Animals were the best predictor of earthquakes typically.

I didn't feel anymore tremors, so I yawned hugely and I shuffled back across my room. I heard another thump and I saw my bed move. The headboard first.

OK, that's weird...

Then I heard, very distinctly,

"Fuck Edward, that's so good! Mmm, yeah baby,"

Aw jeez...

I rolled my eyes, wide awake now and a little fascinated by what was clearly going on next door. I looked at Clive, he looked at me, and I swear he winked.

I climbed back into bed, and tried to settle back to sleep. I guess someone should be getting some. I had been in a bit of a dry spell for awhile. A very long while. Bad jackrabbit sex and an ill timed one night stand had robbed me of my orgasm...she had been on vacation for 6 months now.

Six

Long

Months.

I had carpal tunnel trying to get myself off, but O was on almost permanent hiatus. I don't mean Oprah.

I pushed the thoughts of my missing O away from me, and curled up on my side. All seemed quiet at this point, and so I began to drift back to sleep, Clive purring contentedly beside me.

Then all hell broke loose.

"Fuck yes! Fuck yes! Oh god...OH GOD!"

My painting of the Cardinal At The Vatican fell off the shelf above my bed and rapped me soundly on the head...Oh God indeed.

Rubbing my head and cursing enough to make the Cardinal blush, I looked back at the wall behind me again, and saw that my wrought iron headboard was literally banging against the wall as the fuckery continued from next door.

"Fuck me baby, yes yes yes!" I heard, and I sighed loudly. Then I heard, for the love of all that is holy, *spanking*. You can't misinterpret a good spanking, and someone was receiving a good one next door.

"Oh God Edward, yes. I've been a bad girl, yes Daddy yes, yes YES!"

Mother of pearl...

More spanking, and then the unmistakable sound of a low male voice, groaning and then growling.

I got up, moved the entire fucking bed a few inches away from the wall, and huffed back into bed, glaring at the wall the whole time.

I fell asleep that night swearing that I would bang on that wall if I heard one more peep. Or fuck. Or spank.

Welcome to the neighborhood.

Well? Thoughts? Throw tomatoes? I know people feel strongly when Edward seems like he is just another manwhore, but please. Would I do him like that? And by do him I mean...

I have to rec a new series that is so damn hot I can barely type it! It's called The Anonymous Series, by SinandShame. It is a series of oneshots featuring our favorite Mr Pattinson and a mystery woman. Right now there are 2 posted, on twi and ff. Hot Hot Hot Lick Your Computer Hot. A little on the deviant side, so be warned:) Mwa haha...

More Wallbanger on the way next week...stay tuned! And there should be a thread started later today, come and say hi!

Alice

xoxo

2. An Cat Dubh

So I was overwhelmed with how many of you had your own Wallbanger stories. Some of you were even the ones making the noise...you dirty girls.

Now, for the ones who love Edward as a manwhore, enjoy. For those of you who dislike the manwhore...stick with me ladies, stick with me.

Thx to my beta Lauren the tinman, and to Nina my taco...these two ladies are keeping me on Bangerwatch hardcore...

And thx as always to my psymommy, who championed me when no one was reading ILLA, and continues to beta for me even though she is busier than any human should ever be...

And if you are not reading Nina's new story Wingman? Do not read this chapter until you have read Wingman. I'm serious, go on, I will wait right here. la la la...

OK back? Great! Let's roll chickens...

Chapter 2- An Cat Dubh 2.0

The next morning, my first official morning in my new place, found me contentedly sipping on a cup of coffee and munching on a leftover donut from yesterday's moving in party. Rose and Alice had come over yesterday to supervise the moving crew. What that meant was they sat on their asses reading InStyle while I directed traffic. But they did bring donuts, and for that I was grateful. I was more than grateful; I was in a sugar coma.

I had finally fallen asleep last night, after the antics from next door had died down. The girl was spanked, plowed, she came, she slept. The

same for Edward. I assumed his name was Edward, as that was what the girl-who-liked-to-be-spanked kept called him. And really, if she was making up names there were hotter names than Edward to be screaming out in the throes.

The throes...God I missed the throes.

"Still nothing, huh O?" I sighed, looking down at my hoohah. During month four of The Missing O, I stated to talk about her as though she were real, an actual entity. She felt real when she was rocking my world several months ago, but sadly now that she had abandoned me, I didn't even know if I would recognize her if I saw her. 'Tis a sad sad day when a girl doesn't even know her own orgasm...

I went to rinse out my coffee cup, placing it in the second sink to drain. I pushed my hair back, and looked around at the chaos that surrounded me. As often as I had moved since I graduated high school, (every year at Berkley, and the four years since) I had moving down to a science. Still, it was a fucking mess every time. No matter how well you planned, no matter how well you labeled those boxes, no matter how often you told that mother fucking moving guy that if it said KITCHEN it did not belong in the BATHROOM, it still was a damn mess.

"What do you think Clive, should we start in here or in the living room?" I asked my cat, who was curled up on one of the deep windowsills. I admit, when I was scouting for new places to live I always looked at the windowsills. I know how fond he is of looking out on the world, and I like seeing him waiting for me when I come home. I was totally Clive's bitch.

Right now he looked at me, and then at the living room.

"OK, living room it is," I said, realizing that I had only spoken 3 times since I had woken up this morning, and every word uttered had been directed towards a pussy. Hmm...

I was about 20 minutes into sorting my DVDs back into the TV hutch when I heard voices in the hallway. Each floor only had 2 apartment, and I was on the top. There was a good chance it was my noisy neighbors. I ran to the door and pressed my eye up to the peephole, trying to see if I was right. What a pervert I was, honestly.

I couldn't see much, but from here I could hear their conversation. I heard the man's voice, low and soothing, and I could hear her giggling.

"Mmm Edward, last night was fantastic,"

"I thought this morning was fantastic, too," he said, planting what sounded like one helluva kiss on her.

Huh. They must have been in another room this morning; I didn't hear a thing. I pressed my eye back to the peephole. Dirty pervert.

"Yes, it was. Call me soon?" she asked, leaning in for another kiss.

"Of course, I will call you next time I am in town," he promised, swatting her on her bottom as she giggled again and walked away. I couldn't really see her; she was on the short side though. Bye Bye Spanx.

I couldn't see this *Edward*; he was back in his apartment before I could get a good look at him. Interesting, so this girl did not live with him. And I didn't hear any I Love You's when she left, but they did seem very comfortable with each other.

They would have to be, what with the spanking and all.

Yes, the spanking indeed.

I pushed thoughts of spanking and Edward from my mind, and went back to my DVDs. I was alphabetizing, and I was only up to the G's. Goonies came after Garfields Halloween Spectacular. I loved my retro holiday specials.

Spanking Edward. What a great name for a band...

I was just placing The Wizard of Oz after Willy Wonka when I heard a knock on the door. I could hear scuffling in the hallway, and as I approached the door I could hear my two friends.

"Don't fucking drop it you idiot," I heard Rose snap.

"Oh shut up, don't be so damn bossy," Alice snapped back.

I rolled my eyes and opened the door to see them standing there, holding a large box.

"Ladies settle down, you're both pretty," I laughed, raising an eyebrow at them.

"Ha ha, funny Bella," Alice answered, rolling her eyes and staggering inside.

"What the hell is that? And I can't believe you guys carried that up four flights of stairs!" I exclaimed. My girls did not do manual labor when they could get someone else to do it.

"Believe me, we waited outside in the car for anyone to walk by that we could talk into bringing it in, but no luck. So we schlepped it ourselves. Happy Housewarming!" Rose said, as they set it down and she fell into the easy chair by the fireplace.

"Yeah quit moving so much, we are tired of buying you shit," Alice laughed, laying down on the couch and dramatically placing her arms over her face.

I poked at the box with my toe and asked,

"So what is it? And I never said you had to buy me anything. The Jack LaLane Juicer was not necessary last year, truly."

"Don't be ungrateful, just open it," Rose instructed, pointing at the box with her middle finger, which she then turned upright and displayed in my general direction.

I sighed, and sat down on the floor in front of it. I knew it was from Williams Sonoma, the tell tale ribbon with the tiny pineapple tied to it. The box was heavy, whatever it was.

"Jesus, what did you two do?" I asked, catching a wink from Alice to Rose.

I opened the box, and was pleased as punch with what I found.

"You guys, this is too much!"

"We know how much you miss your old one," Alice laughed, smiling at me.

I had been given an old Kitchenaid mixer from a great aunt that had passed away years ago. It was over 40 years old, and still worked great. Those things were built to last by God, and it wasn't until a few months ago that it had finally bit it in a big way. It smoked and went wonky one afternoon while mixing dough for zucchini bread, and as much as I hated to do it, it was tossed out.

Now I stared into the box, a shiny new stainless steel Kitchenaid mixer staring back at me, visions of cookies and pies dancing in my head.

"You guys, its beautiful," I breathed, gazing with delight at my new baby. I lifted it out gently to admire. I ran my hands over it, splaying out my fingers to feel the smooth lines, and the cold metal pressing against my skin. I moaned gently, and actually hugged it.

"Do you two want to be alone?" Rose asked, laughing slightly.

"No, its OK, I want you to be here to witness our love. Besides, this is the only mechanical instrument that will likely bring me any pleasure in the near future. Thanks guys. It's too expensive, but I really appreciate it," I answered. Clive came over, sniffed the mixer, and promptly jumped into the empty box.

"Just promise to bring us yummy treats and it is all worth it dear," Alice sighed, sitting up and looking at me expectantly.

"What?" I asked warily.

"Can I please start on your drawers now?" she asked, bouncing a little.

"Can you start doing what to my drawers?" I said hesitantly, pulling my drawstring a little tighter around my waist.

"Your kitchen! I am dying to start placing everything!" she exclaimed, bouncing higher now.

"Oh hell yes, have at it! Merry Christmas freakshow," I answered, and she pranced into the other room, leaving Rose and I laughing at her.

Alice was a professional organizer. She had driven us so crazy in college with her OCD tendencies and her insane attention to detail that one day Rose suggested that she become a professional organizer. After graduation, she did just that. She now worked all over the Bay Area, helping families get their shit together literally. Esme's design firm sometimes had her consult on a job or two, and she had even appeared on a few HGTV shows that were filming in the city. The job suited her to perfection.

Rose and I let her do her thing, knowing that my things would be so perfectly arranged even I would be astounded. Rose and I continued to putz in the living, laughing over DVDs we had watched throughout the years. We paused over each and every Brat Pack movie from the 80's, debating on whether Judd ended up with Molly once they all went back

to school on Monday. I voted for no, and I bet she never did get that earring back...

Later that night Clive and I were settled on the couch in the living room, watching reruns on The Food Network. I was already dreaming of the creations I would be whipping up with my new mixer, and thinking about how one day I wanted a kitchen like Ina Garten when I heard footsteps on the landing outside my door. I heard two voices, and I rolled my eyes at Clive thinking that Spanx must be back. I sprang from the couch, and pressed my eye against the peephole once more, trying to get a look at my neighbor. I missed him again, only seeing his back as he walked into his apartment behind a very tall woman with long brown hair.

Interesting. Two different women in as many days...manwhore.

I saw the door swing shut, and I felt Clive curl around my legs, purring.

"No, you can't go out there silly boy," I cooed, bending down and scooping him up in my arms. I rubbed his silky fur against my cheek, smiling at him as he lay back in my arms. Clive was the whore around here; he would lie down for anyone who rubbed his belly. I settled back down on the couch, and watched as Barefoot Contessa taught us all how to host a dinner party in the Hamptons with simple elegance. And an assload of money.

A few hours later, with the imprint of the couch cushion pressed firmly into my forehead, I made my way back to my bedroom to go to sleep. Alice had organized my closet so efficiently all that was left to do in here was to hang my pictures and arrange a few tchotchkes. I had placed The Cardinal safely on the other side of the room. I was taking no chances tonight. I stood in my bedroom listening for sounds from next door. All quiet on the western front. So far, so good. Maybe last night was a one-time thing.

As I got ready for bed, I looked at the frames containing pictures of my family and friends. My dad, Charlie, and I at my college graduation. My

mom, Renee, and her husband Phil skiing at Tahoe a few years ago. Me and my girls at Coit Tower. Rosalie loved to take pictures next to anything phallic. She played the cello with the San Francisco Orchestra, and even though she had been around musical instruments all her life, she could never pass up a joke whenever she saw a flute. She was twisted.

All three of us were unattached at the moment, something that had never happened. Usually at least one of us was dating someone, but since Rose had broken up with Royce several months ago, we had all been in a dry spell. Luckily for them, their spell wasn't quite as dry as mine. They at least were able to connect with their O's.

I thought back to the last time O and I were together. I had been going out on a series of bad first dates, and I was so sexually frustrated at one point that I actually allowed myself to go back to a guy's apartment that I had no intention of ever seeing again. It wasn't that I was adverse to the one-night stand, I had made the walk of shame many a morning. But I usually liked the guy, and maybe even planned on a second date or at least another shack. But not with this guy. Mike Newton, blah blah blah. His family owned a chain of sporting goods stores up and down the West Coast, great on paper right? Only on paper. He was nice enough, but boring and vanilla. But I hadn't been with a man in awhile, and after several martinis and a pep talk in the car on the way there, I relented and let Mike "have his way with me".

Now, up until this point in my life, I had harbored the belief that sex was like pizza. Even when it's bad, it's still pretty good. I now hate pizza.

This was the worst kind of sex. This was jackrabbit style, fast fast fast like he was trying to win a race. This was 30 seconds on the tits, 60 seconds on the clit, and then in. And out. And in. And out. And in. And out.

But at least it was over fast right? Hell no, this shit went on for months. Well no...but for almost 30 minutes. Of in. And out. And in. And out. My

poor hoohah felt like it had been sandblasted.

By the time it was over, and he yelled out, "Mommy!" before collapsing on top of me, I had mentally rearranged all my spices and was starting on the cleaners under the sink. I dressed, which didn't take that long as I was still almost fully clothed, and headed home.

The next night, after letting Lower Bella recover, I wanted to treat her to a nice long session of self-love, accented by my favorite fantasy lover, Jordan Catalano. But, to my great regret, O had left the building. I shrugged it off, thinking that maybe she just needed a night off, still experiencing a little PTSD from Newton.

But the next night? Still no O. No sign of her that week, or the next.

When it hit a month, I called in reinforcements. I called up my favorite "Buddy" from Berkeley, Tyler Crowley. That man could hit it like nobody's business...nothing. He left almost in tears after I screamed at him to "Make me come God dammit! What the hell are you doing down there?"

As the weeks became a month, and the months stretched on and on, I developed a deep seething hatred for Mike Newton. That jackrabbit fucker...

I shook my head, clearing my O thoughts from my mind as I crawled into bed. Clive waited until I was situated before snuggling into the space between my legs. He let out one last purr as I turned out the lights.

"Night Mr Clive," I whispered, and fell right to sleep.

Thump.

"Oh God."

Thump Thump.

"Oh God."

Unbelievable...

I woke up faster this time, knowing what I was hearing. I rolled my eyes, and sat up in bed, looking behind me. The bed was still pulled safely away from the wall so there was no movement, but there was sure as hell something moving over there.

Then I heard hissing.

Surprised, I looked down at Clive, who's tail was at full puff. His back was arched and he was pacing back and forth at the foot of the bed.

"Hey mister, it's cool...we just got a noisy neighbor that's all," I soothed, stretching my hand out to him.

That's when I heard it.

"Meow,"

I cocked my head sideways, listening more intently. Was that a fucking cat?

"Meow! Oh God, meow!"

No

Fucking

Way.

The girl next door was meowing. My neighbor had the power to make a woman meow.

Clive at this point went utterly apeshit, and launched himself at the wall. He started talking back to the wall, climbing it literally, trying to get to where the noise was coming from.

"Oooh yes, just that like Edward...mmmm fuck me good...meow meow MEOW!"

Sweet Jesus there were out of control pussies on both sides of that wall tonight. The woman had an accent, although I could not place it. Eastern European for sure. Czech? Polish? Was I seriously awake at...let's see...1:16 and attempting to divine the national origin of the woman getting plowed next door?

I tried to get a hold of Clive and calm him down. He was neutered, but he was still a boy, and he wanted what was on the other side of that wall. He continued to caterwaul, his meows mixing with her meows until it was all I could do not to start crying with the hilarity of this moment. My life had become theater of the absurd.

I could now hear *Edward*, hear him moaning. His voice was low and thick, and while the woman and Clive continued to call to each other...I listened solely to him. He groaned loud, and the wall banging began. He was bringing it on home.

The woman meowed louder and louder as she undoubtedly climbed towards her climax. Her meows turned into nonsensical screaming, and she finally yelled out,

"Da! Da! Da!"

She was Russian. For the love of St Petersburg.

One last wall bang, one last groan, and one last meow, and then all was blessedly silent. Except for Clive.

He would continue to pine for his lost love until four mother fucking am.

If *Edward* ever brought Purina home again, I might have to kill her. The cold war was back on...

Well? What do we think? We are building here kids, what's next for these poor Bella and her missing O?

Tune in next time.

Now, some business. I always like to rec the fic that is currently knocking me on my ass, and this week I am reaching back into my favorites bag and bringing out one that makes me shake and shiver whenever I see an update. The Lost Boys, by hwimsey. The only word my limited vocabulary lets me come up with to describe this story is magic. Truly. I wish I knew a better word, but that's it. Pure Magic. Read it, find it, love it, review the shit out of it.

And then come play on the Edward Wallbanger thread...teasers chickens. Teasers...

3. Chapter 3

Finally, I freaking updated! Real life has been thoroughly kicking my assneck lately, but I am in love with Wallbanger, and will be getting these out sooner I promise.

Thanks to my gorgeous beta Lauren, my partner in crime Nina Taco, and to Psymom as always. MWAH

See you below...

Chapter 3- A Celebration

After Clive finally settled down and stopped his cat screaming, I was thoroughly exhausted, and wide awake. Knowing that I had to get up in just another hour made me realize I had already gotten what sleep I was going to get, and might as well get up and make some breakfast.

"Fucking meower..." I aimed at the wall behind my head and padded out into the living room. Switching on the TV to catch the Today show (East Coast feed), I turned on the coffee maker and studied the pre-dawn light just starting to peek in my windows. Clive curled around my legs, and I rolled my eyes at him.

"Oh now you want some love from me huh? After abandoning me to go after Purina last night? What an asshole you are Clive," I muttered, stretching out my foot and rubbing him with my heel. He flopped onto the ground, and posed for me. He knew I couldn't resist when he posed.

I laughed a little, and knelt down next to him.

"Yeah yeah I know. You love me now cuz I am the one that keeps you in vittles," I sighed, scratching his belly.

I headed back into the kitchen, Clive at my heels, and poured some food into bowl. Now that he had what he needed, I was quickly forgotten. I fixed myself some toast, poured some coffee, and headed back into the living room to Matt, Meredith, Al and Anne. I might have planted a kiss on my Kitchenaid on the way past.

Since I had so much extra time, I decided to relax a bit and take the morning as it came. I was headed back to work today after taking a few days off and the weekend to get settled, but I was anxious to get back. I loved my job. No, I mean I *loved* my job. I was lucky enough when I was in my last year at Berkeley to intern with one of the top design firms in the city, and came in under Esme Platt. I worked closely with her, and her passion and her love for this industry made me all the more excited to finally graduate and begin working in interior design. She taught me more in the semester I was with her than I had learned in almost four years in college.

The last day of my internship, as I was packing up my little desk in the corner of her office, she asked me if I would consider coming on board after graduation.

Totally unprofessional, but I launched myself across her office and told her I would have sex with her should she ever decide to swing the other way. After I recovered from shock at my outburst, and she recovered from her laughing fit, we began to talk business.

Esme was extremely down to earth, sweet, warm and kind. She was also one of the smartest, strongest, most hardcore businesswomen I had ever come across, and all I wanted to be when I grew up was Esme Platt. In her late 30's but looking in her late 20's, she had made a name for herself within the design community at an early age. She challenged convention, was the first to sweep Shabby Chic off the map, and was instrumental in bringing back the quiet neutrals and geometric prints that dominated the "modern" look that was all the rage now.

She brought me on as a junior designer, paying my dues and assisting on smaller projects. Residential design was my preference, but I assisted on many commercial design jobs as well, which introduced me to an entirely different side of the business. After only a year or so, I began taking on my own clients, building my "book" as it were, and garnering a name for myself within the community.

Now, I had an office, a shared assistant, my name on the door, and a Rolodex filled with some of the finest society names in all of San Francisco.

I sighed into my coffee cup, looking around at my apartment once more. I was so appreciative of Esme, letting me sublet from her. Esme had been dating Carlisle Cullen, a very prominent businessmen, since before I met her. They had been together for years, never married but very committed. He had wisely avoided the big dot com bust that hit Silicon Valley hard several years ago, quietly moving much of his business ventures into more conventional channels. Now, he was a venture capitalist although he was semi retired. At 44. Semi retired at 44. Jesus...

The two were in the process of renovating a house on the bay in Sausalito, and lived a charmed life. Esme had not actually lived in this apartment for years, but she always held onto it. It was so low in rent, that she could never quite part with it, and had at times over the last few years sublet to friends of hers. After it had been essentially vacant for over a year, she overheard me talking about wanting to get my own place. Rent being what it was in the city, that was still a few years away. She offered, I accepted, and now I was here.

As I was making my way towards the shower, I heard movement in the hallway. Like the Peeping Bella that I was quickly becoming, I pressed my eye to the peephole to see what was going on with Edward and Purina.

He was standing just inside the door, far enough inside that I could not see his face. Purina was standing in the doorway, and I could see his hand running through her long hair.

Fuck me, I could hear her purring through the god damned door.

"Mmm Edward, last night was...mmmm," she *purred*, leaning into his hand that was now pressed against her cheek.

"I agree, a fine way to describe the evening *and* this morning," he said quietly, as they both chuckled.

"Call me when you're back in town?" she asked, as he swept her hair back from her face. That freshly fucked face. I miss that face.

"Oh you can count on that," he answered, and then pulled her back into the doorway for what I can only assume was a kiss that killed. Her foot came up like she was posing.

I rolled my eyes, but that hurt. The right one was pressed so firmly against the peephole you see.

"Do svidaniya," she whispered in that exotic accent. It sounded much nicer now that she wasn't caterwauling like a kitten in heat.

"See ya," he laughed, and with that, she gracefully walked away. I strained to see him before he went back inside his apartment, but nope. Missed him again. I had to admit, after the spanking and then the meowing, I was dying to see what he looked like. There was some serious sexual prowess going on next door. I just didn't see why it needed to affect my sleep habits.

I pried myself away from the door and made for the shower. I had exhausted every single hand held shower massager when I was still holding out hope for O's return, but had given up when I realized how eco-unfriendly I was being, draining the city's water supply. Esme had

renovated her apartment a few years ago, and while she kept the existing claw foot tub, she had installed a new shower, complete with a rain shower attachment. I stood underneath, wondering how the hell he could get a woman to meow...

As 7:30 rolled around, I was on the BART and headed towards my office. I was anxious to get back to work. I was starting a new project for a new client that was coming into the office for the first time today, and I was also having lunch with Esme.

Esme's design firm was in a beautiful part of town called Russian Hill. Old beautiful mansions, quiet streets, and a killer view from the taller peaks. Some of the larger older homes had been converted into commercial space, and the house that we called our "office" was simply stunning.

I came in through reception, originally the formal parlor, and said hello to a few people on my way to my office. I was exceedingly lucky to work where I worked, as from my office I actually had a view of the bay. I still pinched myself when I came in some mornings. Esme made me stop it though, I was giving myself bruises and it tended to creep people out. A grown woman pinching herself and all...

I breathed a sigh when I entered my office. Esme wanted each designer to make their space their own, and I spent an entire weekend creating my work space. Soft dove gray walls, accented by plush salmon pink curtains. My desk was dark ebony, with a chair draped in soft gold and champagne silks. The room was quietly distinguished with a touch of whimsy. The whimsy coming from my collection of Campbell's Soup ads from the 30's and 40's. I found a bunch of them at a tag sale, all clipped from old issues of Life magazine. I had them framed and mounted, and every time I looked at them they cracked me up.

I spent a few minutes throwing out the flowers from last week, and arranging a new display. Every Monday morning I stopped in a local flower shop to choose flowers for the week. The blooms changed, but

the colors tended to fall within the same palette. I was very fond of deep oranges and pinks, peaches and warm golds. Today I had chosen hybrid tea roses that were a beautiful coral color, the tips tinged raspberry. I had worshiped at the altar of Martha Stewart since I was in junior high, and even tried to send her cookies when she went to the pokey.

I gave up when I realized that she would probably not eat them, but would critique the presentation. I folded under the pressure...

I stifled a yawn and sat down at my desk, preparing for my day. I caught sight of Esme as she breezed past my door, and waved at her. She came back and stuck her head in the door.

"Hey girl! How's the apartment?" she asked, walking inside and sitting in the chair across from my desk.

"Fantastic, thank you again so much! I can never repay you for this, you are the best," I gushed. She stopped me with a wave of her hand.

"Shush, it's nothing. I know I should get rid of it, but it was my first place in the city, and for the rent it would just break my heart to let it go! Besides, I like the idea of it being lived in again, it's such a great neighborhood," she smiled, and I stifled another yawn. Her sharp eyes caught it.

"Bella, it's Monday morning? How can you be yawning already?" she chided.

I laughed and rolled my eyes.

"When is the last time you slept there Esme?" I asked, looking at her over the rim of my coffee cup. It was my third already; I would be cruising soon.

"Oh boy, its been awhile. Maybe a year ago? Carlisle was out of town and I still had a few things over there, including a bed. Sometimes if I was working late I would stay in the city overnight. Why do you ask?"

"Did you hear anything from next door?"

"No, no I don't think so. Like what?"

"Hmm, just noises? Late night noises?"

"No, not when I was there. I don't know who lives there now, but I think someone just recently moved in. Never met him, what did *you* hear?"

I blushed furiously, and sipped my coffee.

"Late night noises Bella? Seriously? Did you hear some sexy times?" she prodded, and I banged my head on the desk. No more banging.

I peeked up at her, and she had her head thrown back in laughter.

"Aw jeez Bella, I had no idea! The last neighbor I remember living there was in his 80's and the only noise I ever heard coming from that bedroom was reruns of Gunsmoke. Come to think of it, I could hear that TV show remarkably well..." she trailed off.

"Yes well, Gunsmoke is not what is coming through those walls now, straight up sex is coming through those walls. And not sweet boring sex either...we are talking...interesting," I smiled.

"What did you hear?" she asked, her eyes lighting up.

I don't care how old you are, or what background you come from, there are 2 universal truths. We will always laugh at...ahem...*gas* if it happens at the wrong time, and we always are curious about what goes on in other peoples' bedrooms. And I hate bathroom humor.

"Esme, seriously...it was like nothing I have ever heard before! The first night, my own bed was being knocked around. I stood in the door frame like a fool, thinking it was a tremor!"

Her eyes widened, and she leaned forward on my desk.

"Shut up!"

"I will not! I finally got back into bed, and then I heard...Jesus...I heard spanking,"

I was discussing spanking with my boss. Do you see why I loved my life?

"Nooo," she breathed, and we giggled like schoolgirls.

"Yeesss. And he made my bed move Esme, made it move! I saw her the next morning, as Spanx was leaving. And then last night,"

"Two nights in a row! Spanx got spanked again?"

"Oh no, last night I was treated to a freak of nature I have named Purina," I continued, reliving the night in my mind.

"Purina? I don't get it..." she frowned.

"The Russian he made meow last night,"

She laughed again, causing Tyler from accounting to stick his head in the door.

"What are you two hens clucking about in here?" he asked, shaking his head at us.

"Nothing," we answered at the same time, and then cracked up again.

"Two women, in *two* nights. Wow, do you know his name?"

"I do in fact, because Spanx and Purina kept screaming it out over and over again. I could make it out over the wallbanging. His name is Edward. Stupid wallbanger..." I muttered.

She was silent for a moment, and then she grinned.

"Edward Wallbanger, I love it!"

"Yeah, you love it. You didn't have your cat trying to mate with Purina through the wall last night," I chuckled ruefully, and laid my head back on the desk as we continued to giggle.

"Ok, I expect you to land this new client today, when are the Blacks coming in to meet with you?" she finally said, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"Ah, Mr. and Mrs. Black are here at one. I've got the presentation and the plans all ready for them. I think they will really like the way I redesigned their bedroom. We are going to be able to offer an en suite sitting room and entirely new bathroom. It's pretty great,"

"I believe you, can you run through your ideas with me at 11?"

"Yep, I'm all over it," I answered as she made her way towards the door.

"Ya know Bella, if you can land them as a client, this would be huge for this firm," she said carefully, eying me over her tortoiseshell glasses.

"Esme, wait until you see what I came up with for their new home theater."

"They don't have a home theater."

"They will want one when I'm done with my presentation," I said, arching my eyebrows and grinning devilishly at her.

"Nice," she appraised, and left me to start her day.

I looked down at the notepad in front of me where I had doodled the words *Edward Wallbanger*.

"Wallbanger," I said under my breath, and scratched it out.

I spent the morning putting the final touches on my presentation and running it by Esme. I was excited to meet with the Blacks today; they were an interesting couple. Jessica Stanley Black was money. Old San Francisco money, since before the big quake. A débutante and Vassar educated, she turned her entire family on its ear when she married Jacob Black. He was a young upstart businessman who now owned one of the largest chains of auto parts stores on the West Coast.

The rumors around town had been that Old Man Stanley had been very put off initially by her impulsive marriage to someone with than was less than a full blue blood. But as time went on, Jacob Black was accepted within the society circles of old San Francisco, as well as anyone that had new money could ever be. Jessica could have reverted to type and turned into another boring vapid housewife, but the couple was now a powerhouse. They were heavily involved in charities and philanthropy, and were well known specifically for their work with WOTPN (Wolves Of The Pacific Northwest).

Alice had done some work for them when they moved into their new home in Nob Hill last year. She had helped Jessica organize her kitchen and office. They had kept in touch and when the time came to redo their master bedroom, Alice put her in touch with me. I was thrilled to get to work with them, and was banking on today's presentation going well.

I got my ducks in a row, fluffed my hair, and when I heard my assistant page me out to reception I put on my game face.

"Fantastic Bella, simply fantastic," Jessica gushed as I walked her and her husband to the front door. We had spent almost two hours going through the plans for the remodel, and while there were a few key points that we had compromised on it was going to be an exciting project. Jacob and Jessica were a great couple, and we had a great time talking about what they wanted to accomplish.

"So, you think you are the right designer for us?" Jacob asked, his deep brown eyes twinkling at me as he wrapped his arm around his wife's waist.

"You tell me," I teased back, smiling at the two of them.

"I think we would love to work with you on this project," Jessica smiled as we shook hands.

I internally high-five my damn self, but kept my face composed.

"Excellent. I will be in touch very soon and we can get started on a schedule," I answered as I held the door for them.

I stood in the doorway as I waved them off, and then came back inside. I let the door close behind me, and glanced over at Leah our receptionist. She raised her eyebrows at me, and I raised mine right back.

"So?" she asked.

"Oh yeah, nailed it," I sighed, and we both squealed. Esme was coming down the stairs as we were dancing about and she stopped short.

"What the hell happened down here?" she asked, grinning at us.

"Bella got hired by the Blacks!" Leah squealed again, raising her voice so high the neighborhood dogs would soon begin to contribute to the conversation.

"Nice," she praised and walked over to me for a quick hug.

"Proud of you kid," she whispered in my ear, and I beamed. I freaking beamed.

I danced back to my office, putting a little bump and grind in it as I did the Running Man on my way around the desk.

I sat down, twirled in my chair and looked out onto the bay.

Well played Bella, well played I thought to myself and grinned.

That night I went out for cocktails with Rose and Alice and may have imbibed more than one or even five margaritas. It was necessary; I was celebrating. I continued with tequila shots, and was still licking at the nonexistent salt on the inside of my wrist while Alice and Rose walked me up my stairs.

"Rose, you're so pretty...you know that right?" I cooed, leaning on Rose as we crawled up the stairs.

"Yes Bella, I'm pretty. Good grasp on the obvious," she said as she rolled her eyes. Alice laughed, and I turned to her.

"And you Alice, you're my best friend. And you're so tiny! I bet I could carry you around in my pocket," I giggled as I tried to find my pocket.

"We should have cut her off after the guacamole left the table, she is never allowed to drink again if there is no food present," she muttered as she dragged me up the last few steps.

"Don't talk about me like I'm not here," I complained, taking off my jacket and starting in on my shirt.

"Ok Shelby, but lets not get naked here in the hallway huh?" Rose shot back, taking my keys from my purse and opening my door.

I tried to kiss Rose on the cheek, and she pushed me off.

"You smell like tequila and sexual repression Bella, get off me," she laughed and opened my door.

As we made our way back towards the bedroom I caught sight of Clive on the windowsill.

"Hey there Clive. How's my big boy?" I sang to him. He glared at me, and stalked off towards the living room. He disapproved of my alcohol use. I stuck my tongue out at him, and made my way back towards the bedroom. I flopped down onto the bed, and caught sight of my girls in the doorway. They were rolling their eyes in that you-are-drunk-and-we-are-not-so-we-judge way.

"Don't act all high and mighty ladies, I have seen you more drunk than this on many an occasion," I muttered, my pants going the way of my blouse. Ask me why I kept my heels on, I will never be able to tell you.

The two of them took hold of either side of my duvet, and pulled it down. I crawled under the covers and glared at them, peeping back out. They tucked me in so well all that was sticking out were my eyeballs and my messy hair.

"Why is the room spinning, what the hell did you guys do to Esme's apartment? She will kill me if I fuck up her rent control!" I cried, moaning as I watched the room move around.

"The room isn't spinning Swan, settle down," Alice chuckled, sitting down next to me and throwing an arm around my shoulder.

"And that thumping, what the fuck is that thumping?" I whispered into Alice's armpit, which I sniffed then complimented her deodorant choice.

"Nothing is thumping either. Jesus, you must have started drinking before we got there!" Rose exclaimed, settling down at the end of the

bed.

"No Rose, I here it too. You can't hear that?" Alice said in a hushed voice.

Rose was quiet, and all three of us listened as carefully as we could. There was a distinct thump, and then an unmistakable groan.

"Kittens, lay back. You are about to get Wallbanged," I stated, and laid back against the pillows.

Rose and Alice's eyes grew wide at my statement, but were quiet.

Would it be Spanx? Would it be Purina? Anticipating the latter, Clive had padded into the room and jumped up on the bed. He was staring at the wall in rapt attention.

The four of us sat and waited.

I can barely describe what we were subjected to this time.

"Oh God..."

Thump.

"Oh God..."

Thump Thump.

Alice and Rose looked at Clive and I. The two of us just smirked.

A slow smile spread across Rose's face as she realized what we were listening to.

I was more interested in the voice that I heard coming through the wall. The voice was different, the pitch was lower, and the accent was

different.

That ain't Spanx *or* Purina...

" 'Ere Guv'nah, take me to Cockfoster!"

Huh?

"Lor' luv a duck!"

Ah jeez...she was British.

"Gordon Bennett you're well 'ung!"

No, no strike that, she was Cockney.

All three of us busted up as we listened to the foulmouthery going on next door. Clive, realizing quickly that his beloved wasn't making an appearance, beat a hasty retreat back into the kitchen.

"What the hell is this?" Alice whispered, her eyes as wide as apple pies.

"This is the shit I have been listening to for the last two nights, you have no idea," I growled, still feeling the effects of the tequila.

"Eliza Doolittle has been getting done like this for the last two nights?" Rose cried out, slapping her hand over her mouth as we heard more indecipherable words from through the wall.

"Oh hell no, tonight is the first night I have had the pleasure of this one. The first night was Spanx, she was a naughty, naughty girl and needed to be punished. And last night Clive met the love of his life when Purina made her debut,"

"Why do you call her Purina?"

"Because she fucking meows when he makes her come," I said, hiding under the covers. My buzz was beginning to fade, and I was starting to feel the lack of sleep I had been experiencing since moving into this den of debauchery.

The two of them peeled the covers back from my face just as the chick screamed out "Pop my cork!"

"The guy next door can make a woman meow?" Rose asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Apparently so," I chuckled, feeling the first wave of nausea begin to wash over me.

"What is she saying, does anyone have a clue what she is saying?" Alice asked the room.

"No fucking clue, although I assume she is enjoying herself. Who is Gordon Bennett?" asked Rose.

"Have you seen this guy yet?" asked Alice, still staring at the wall.

"Nope. My peephole is getting a workout though."

"Glad to see at least one hole is getting some around here," Rose muttered, and I glared at her.

"Charming Rose, charming. I have seen the back of his head, and that's it," I answered, sitting up.

"Wow, three girls in as many nights. That's some kind of stamina," Alice said, still looking in wonder at the wall.

"Yeah well, that fucking Wallbanger is about to get a beatdown if this shit keeps up. I can't even sleep at night!" I wailed as I heard that growl and groan from *him*.

"Why do you call him Wallbanger?" Rose asked, and I held up my hand.

"Wait for it please," I said, and then he began to bring it on home.

The wall began to shake with the constant banging, and the screams of the woman got louder and louder. Rose and Alice stared in wonder, as I just shook my head.

I could hear Edward moaning, and knew he was getting close. His sounds were quickly drowned out by his friend.

"That's it, shag me raw guv'nor, no holdin' back innit? There there, cor blimey yes, right there Eddie! Gordon Bennett that's it!"

And with one last bang, and one last blimey, silence fell across the land. Rose and Alice looked at each other, and Rose said,

"Holy..."

"Fucking..." Alice came back with,

"Shit," they said together.

"And *that's* why his name is Edward Wallbanger,"

While the three of us recovered from The Cockney, Clive played in the corner with a cotton ball.

Cockney, I think I hate you most of all...

When will these two meet? Soon chickens, very soon...

Now then, I am sure you have heard about a little project called Twigasm, A Podcast that I am involved with. Myself, Ninapolitan, tby789, and eddiescherry have all gotten into bed together and cooked this little fucker up. First show goes up this Saturday June

27th, and will be available for downloading from the blog as well as from iTunes. Check us out at . I know you will love my pic...heh heh heh

What fic is kicking my ass this week? Oh my, I am crushing hard on Unexpected...jesus I love me some Frennyward. Check it out, and you will see why. Damn, just damn.

4. Chapter 4

Ah chickens...you have waited so patiently with me. And now you will get what you have been waiting for.

Shout out to Team Wallbanger Lauren and Nina Taco. Also to sweet and sassy Emmy for those great Cockney phrases! And to all the Clivettes! See you below!

Chapter 4- A Sort Of Homecoming

The next few weeks were blissfully quiet. No wallbanging, no caterwauling, no spanking, and no cockneying. While admittedly Clive was a little forlorn from time to time, everything else around the apartment was great. I had finally met some of my neighbors, including a great couple that was in the apartment below me. Felix and Demetri were in the import/export business, and we found that we actually knew a lot of the same people from within the design world. They were really sweet, and had lived in the building almost as long as Esme had. They remembered her when she was a young upstart designer, all piss and vinegar, and they delighted in telling me stories of her hellcat days, before she met Carlisle and settled into domesticity.

They also gave a little insight into my noisy, yet mysterious, neighbor. I had not heard or seen Edward since that last night with The Cockney, and while I was grateful for the nights of perfect sleep, I admit I was curious as to where he had disappeared to. Felix and Demetri were only too glad to fill me in on the details. They had been together for so long, they were the kind of couple that would finish each other's sentences. They were a hoot.

"Darling, wait until you see our dear Edward, what a specimen that boy is!" Felix exclaimed one night over cocktails in their apartment. I had gotten into the habit after work on Fridays of stopping by to have drinks with them, and found that I really looked forward to visiting with them.

"Oh my yes, he is exquisite! If only I were a few years younger," Demetri crooned, dramatically fanning himself as Felix looked over his Bloody Mary at him.

"If you were a few years younger you would what? Please, you would have never been Edward's league, he is filet while face it love, you and I are tube steaks."

"You would know," Demetri cackled, sucking pointedly on his celery stalk.

"Ladies, please, tell me about this guy. I admit, after the show he put on last month I am a little intrigued to meet the man behind the harem."

I had broken down and told them about his late night antics after realizing that unless I dished the dirt, they would not reciprocate. They clung on every word like a fat kid at a buffet. I told them about the ladies he made the sweet love to, and they filled in a few more blanks.

Edward was a freelance photographer, who traveled extensively all over the world. They guessed he was currently on assignment, which explained the good sleep I had been getting. Edward worked on assignments for The Discovery Channel, The Cousteau Society, National Geographic, etc. He had won awards for his work, and even spent some time covering the war in Iraq a few years ago. He always left his car behind when he was traveling, an old beat up black Range Rover, the real one. Like the kind you would find in the bush in Africa, the kind with no top. The kind people drove before the yuppies got a hold of them.

He was from the Bay Area, Stanford educated. Between what Felix and Demetri told me, the car, the job, and the international house of orgasms from the other side of the wall, I was beginning to piece together a profile of this man that I had yet to see. And was getting more and more intrigued with by the day.

On the work front, things were going exceedingly well. We were well on the way at the Black house, creating an entirely new master bedroom. We had found lots of extra room by knocking down a wall between the main bedroom and a small guest room. Removing one other wall and consolidating a closet also gave us enough room to double the size of the master bath, add an en suite sitting room, and make the entire space flow. Alice came to work with me some days, as she was in the process of designing a new closet system for both Jacob and Jessica. Jessica worked from home mostly on her foundations, and usually would join us for lunch. She was a quick wit, and I found myself looking forward to the time I spent with her. Sometimes her husband would join us, and one day all four of us actually knocked off work early to drink martinis on their roof. They were a great couple, and I was enjoying the new friends I had found in my clients.

One afternoon, I brought a bunch of tile samples over to choose the coordinating colors for the shower and the sink backsplash. The Blacks had given me a key so I could let myself in, and I found Jessica in the kitchen. She was sitting at the island, head in hands.

"Hi?" I asked, the room very quiet. She started, and accidentally knocked her water glass onto the floor, shattering into pieces.

"Shit!" she cried, and knelt down to begin picking up shards of glass.

"Hey, hey settle. Let me help you," I rushed over, and knelt down next to her.

She was crying, and I could see she was trying to hide her sniffles.

"Hey, what is it?" I asked gently, placing my hand on her knee. She stopped picking up the glass, and slumped to the floor. Tears were running down her puffy face.

"I'm sorry Bella. I am so embarrassed."

"Why? You should see the stuff I break on a daily basis. I even broke something of yours the other day, I just didn't tell you," I chuckled, trying to get her to smile.

She laughed a little, and exhaled heavily, wiping her face with the back of her hand.

"Sorry about that. You caught me by surprise. Ever just had one of those days where you know it will end with something getting broken?" she asked, as we hoisted ourselves off the floor. She pulled a broom from the pantry, and I held the dustpan while she swept.

"Yep, all the time. Wanna talk about it?" I asked, looking up at her.

"Eh, it's just one of those things. We want kids, we can't have kids, it sucks," she said matter of factly, taking the dustpan from me and dumping the glass in the trashcan.

I stood there, not quite sure what to say.

"Sorry, I know that's not what you want to hear today Bella. I got some news today that I knew was coming, but it doesn't make it any easier ya know?"

"It's ok, do you want some tea?" I asked, moving over to where I knew the kettle was.

"Why does everyone make tea when people are upset?" she asked, laughing a little as she sat back down. I set the kettle back down, and raised an eyebrow at her.

"Bloody Mary?" I asked, smiling a little.

"It's 1:30 in the afternoon Miss Thing," she chided, but looked interested.

"Oh hell, you're paying me to be here, it's your call."

"That's true, Bloody Mary's all around," she laughed, and pulled the Stoli from the freezer.

We both laughed as we made drinks, and spent the afternoon pleasantly sauced as we poured over design books and chose her tiles. We talked as we laughed, and it turned out that the couple had been trying for almost two years to get pregnant. Jessica had already had three miscarriages, and they had been working with a fertility specialist. The news she had gotten today confirmed what they had thought all along, that children just were not going to be in the cards for them. She told her story throughout the afternoon and I listened and poured when necessary.

When Jacob got home, the two of us were sitting on the floor in the living room laughing hysterically.

"Well ladies, I see you killed the afternoon," he chuckled, removing his jacket as he walked in.

"We totally did babe, but we did pick out tiles!" Jessica cried from the floor, struggling to get up and stumbled across the floor to him.

"What the hell did you do to my wife?" he smirked as he caught her before she slipped and fell.

"She was the bartender, I just went along with it," I laughed, watching the two of them. He had her tiny frame tucked solidly into his side, and she had her arms wrapped around him. I felt a twinge of envy pass through me as he pushed her hair back from her face and smiled down at her. They seemed perfectly suited for each other.

"Ok kids, I am gonna hit the road. I will stop by tomorrow and make sure that we didn't pick out terrible stuff today under the influence of Mr. & Mrs. T," I quipped, on my way towards the door. Jessica caught me by

my hand, and squeezed.

"Thanks Bella," she smiled at me, and I smiled back.

"Absolutely," I answered, and walked towards the door. Jacob followed me out after kissing his wife on the forehead.

"You want me to call a cab?" he asked, looking at me carefully.

"Nah, its a gorgeous night. I'm gonna walk for a bit, pick up a cable car if I get tired," I replied.

He was quiet for a moment, looking out at the San Francisco night from the front porch.

"She got bad news today didn't she?" he asked quietly, his eyes sad.

He broke my heart in that second, his love for her so palpable.

"Go make her some coffee, she'll be ok," I replied, patting him on the shoulder. He smiled tightly and nodded.

"See ya Bella," he called out to me as I walked down the porch steps.

"See ya Jake," I answered, and started walking home.

I enjoyed my walk, and while it was a bit long, the stroll sobered me up. As I rounded the corner to my apartment, I noticed that the Range Rover was not in its usual place behind the building. Which meant it was out and about.

Edward was back in San Francisco.

The next few days were uneventful. I worked, I walked, I Clived. I went out with my girls, I made a killer zucchini bread in my now well broken in Kitchenaid, and I spent time researching my vacation. Each year, I took

a week and went somewhere totally alone. Somewhere random and exciting to me, and I always went alone. One year I spent a week hiking in Yosemite. One year I went zip lining through a rain forest canopy in Costa Rica. Another year I spent a week scuba diving off the coast of Belize. And this year, I wasn't sure where I was going to go. Going to Europe was getting prohibitively expensive in this economy, so that was out. I was considering a trip to Peru. I had always wanted to see Machu Picchu. The other destination on the short list was Alaska, and spending the week backpacking in Denali National Park. I had plenty of time to decide, but I often found that half the fun was deciding where I wanted to spend my vacation.

I also spent an inordinate amount of time at my peephole. Yes, it's true. Whenever I heard a door close, I actually ran to my door. Clive looked on with a smirk; he knew exactly what I was up to. Don't think I didn't notice how his ears perked up though as well every time he heard footsteps coming up the stairs. Smartass cat.

I still had not seen Wallbanger. One day I got to the peephole in time to see him going into his apartment, but all I was able to see was a black t-shirt and a mess of hair. It appeared to be coppery colored, but I was sure that was just the light out in the hallway. Who actually had coppery colored hair?

Another time I saw the Range Rover pulling away from the curb just as I was coming around the corner on my way home from work. It was going to pass right by, and just as I was about to get the first peek at him, actually see the man behind the bangbang, I tripped and fell and went ass over applecart on the sidewalk. Luckily Felix spotted me and helped me, my bruised ego, and my bruised bum off the concrete and inside for some Bactine with a whiskey chaser.

But all was quiet at night. I knew he was home, and I could hear him occasionally. A chair leg moving across the floor, a quiet laugh or two. But no wallbanging, no harem.

One night, I was treated to an impromptu concert when I fell asleep listening to the strains of Duke Ellington and Glenn Miller through the walls. My grandpa used to play his old records at nighttime, and it was comforting to listen to as I fell asleep, Clive curled up at my side.

The sense of calm and quiet was too good to last, and the Wallbanger came back loud and proud a few nights later.

First, I was treated to another round of Spanx. She had once again been a very bad girl, and certainly deserved the resounding spanking she received. A spanking that lasted for almost half an hour, and ended with calls for "That's it Big Daddy, right there, God yes, right there!" before the actual walls began to shake. I laid awake that night, rolling my eyes and getting more and more frustrated as the night went on.

The next morning, from my post at the peephole I saw Spanx leaving and got a very good look at her. Pink faced and glowing, she was a soft round little bit of a girl with curvy hips and thighs, and packing some serious junk in the trunk. She was short, really short, like Alice short, and a little plump. She stood on tiptoes as she kissed Wallbanger goodbye, and I missed seeing him as I watched her walk away. I marveled at his taste in women, she was the total opposite of what I had seen of Purina, who looked like a model.

Anticipating that Purina was soon up on the roster, the next night I gave Clive a sock full of catnip and a bowlful of tuna. My hope was that I could get him a little wasted and pass out before the action started. It had the opposite effect; my boy was ready to party down when the first strains of Purina came shrieking through the walls about 1:15 in the morning.

If Clive could have put on a mini smoking jacket, he would have. He stalked the room, pacing back and forth in front of the wall, playing it cool. When Purina launched into her meows though, he couldn't contain himself and he launched himself at the wall. He jumped from nightstand to dresser to shelf, scaling pillows and even a lamp to get closer to his

beloved. When he realized he would never be able to burrow under the plaster, he serenaded her with some weird kind of kitty Barry White, his yowls and her howls matching each others in intensity. When the walls began to shake, and Edward was bringing it on home, I was thunderstruck at the way they could maintain their control and focus with the racket that was going on. Clearly, if we could hear them, they must have been able to hear Clive and all his carrying on. Although if I was impaled on the Wallbanger Wondercock, I imagine I could compartmentalize as well...

Later that night they went for round two, and every time she said "Da!" I answered her back in a bored voice. I was tired, I was horny with no release in sight, and my cat had a Q-Tip sticking out of his mouth that looked frighteningly like a tiny cigarette.

The next morning, I dragged my neighborly stalker ass to the peephole for another round of HaremWatch, and was rewarded this morning with a brief side profile of Edward as he leaned in to kiss Purina goodbye. It was quick, but all I saw was jaw.

The jaw was strong.

The jaw was defined.

The jaw was good.

He gave great jaw...

The best thing about that day was the jaw sighting. The rest of the day was shit.

First there was a problem with the general contractor over at the Black house. It would seem that he was not only taking extremely long lunch breaks, he was actually blazing it up in their attic everyday. The whole third floor of their house smelled like a Dead concert.

Then an entire pallet of tiles for the bathroom floor came in cracked and chipped. The amount of time it was going to take to have another order placed and to arrive on site was going to set the entire project back at least two more weeks, leaving no possibility of finishing on time. Any time major construction takes place the project end date is always an *estimated* time of completion. However, I had never missed a deadline. I was always able to bring my projects in on time, and this being such a high profile job, it made me very warm to realize there was nothing I could do short of flying to Italy and bringing back those tiles my damn self.

I had a late lunch with Rose that day, meeting her at our favorite little mid day haunt, Harvest and Roe. It was close to the design center, and had the best made to order salads in the city. It was usually packed, but since we were there around 2:30, we got right in.

"So what is the latest with Wallbanger, has he brought home any gypsies yet? Or an Argentinean cowgirl?" she asked, as she crunched down on a piece of celery.

"Oh God. Things were quiet for a while, but now the orgasms have begun again, full time. Although he seems to stick with his regular chickens. The Cockney hasn't made an appearance yet, but I am just waiting for it any day now. I even watched Mary Poppins the other night getting ready for the assault," I sighed, digging through my salad to get to all the good stuff at the bottom. Why did I even bother getting lettuce when clearly all I wanted was the avocado and the Parmesan cheese? And the croutons. And the hearts of palm. And the...

"Hey, eyes up here sledge. Have you met him yet?" Rose interrupted my salad reverie.

"Nope. Although I did finally get a tiny peek at him this morning as Purina was taking her leave of him," I replied, sucking on an artichoke heart.

"And?"

"I only saw the profile, but the jaw was pretty hardcore," I answered, thinking of the way it clenched when he leaned in to kiss his Russian kitten goodbye.

I sipped my Pellegrino, thinking back to this morning.

"Bella Swan, look at you blush," she cried, and I looked down at my napkin.

"Shut it," I insisted, feeling my cheeks grow even warmer.

"You have a crush on your manwhore of a neighbor that you haven't even seen yet! How thoroughly fucked up," she teased.

"Seriously, shut your pretty mouth. All I saw was the side of his face, who knows what the other side looks like. This could be a Sloth situation ya know," I frowned, not believing it for a second. The same God that gave this guy the power to make a woman meow is also the same God that would make him sinfully cute.

"Sure, sure, whatever Swan. You are so screwed."

After lunch I made my way back towards work, stopping in at store to look at some new hiking boots. I had made plans with a friend I attended Berkeley with to go hiking over in the Marin headlands this weekend. I was checking out the different selections, when I felt a warm breath in my ear that I instinctively flinched against.

"Hey you," I heard, and I froze in terror. Flashbacks poured over me, and I saw spots. I felt cold and hot at the same time, and my vision wavered in and out. The single most horrifying experience of my life passed in front of my eyes, and I closed in to try and stop the onslaught of images that threatened to make me pass out. I turned and saw...

Mike Fucking Newton.

I may have vomited a little in my mouth.

"Bella Swan, lookin' good in the neighborhood," he crooned, channeling his inner Tom Jones.

I swallowed back bile, and struggled to keep my composure.

"Mike, good to see you. How are you?" I managed.

"Can't complain, just touring stores for the old man. How are you? How is the decorating business treating you?"

"Design business, and it's good. In fact, I was just on my way back to work so if you'll excuse me," I sputtered, beginning to push past him.

"Hey, no rush pretty thing. Did you want to buy those shoes? I can get you a discount, how does five percent off sound to you?" he said. If it was possible for a voice to swagger, his did.

"Wow, five percent. As much as that does sweeten the pot, I am gonna pass," I chuckled.

"So Bella, when can I see you again? That night, damn. It was pretty fucking great huh?" he winked, and my skin begged me to tear it from my body and throw it at him.

"No. No Mike. And hell no." I got out, the bile rising again. Flashes of in and out and in and out and in and out. My hoohah was beginning to shriek in its own defense. Granted, the two of us were not on great terms as of late, but nevertheless I knew how afraid my vajayjay was of being subjected to the jackrabbit again. Not on my watch.

"Oh come on baby, let's make some magic again," he cooed. He leaned in, and I could tell he had sausage for lunch.

"Mike, you should know I am about to vomit on your shoes, so back the fuck up,"

He blanched and pulled back.

"And I would rather sew my head to the carpet that make some magic with you again. You and me and your five percent discount, not going to happen. Bye bye now," I said through clenched teeth, and turned and stalked out of the store.

My broken hoohah and I hiked back to work, angry and alone. No tiles, no shoes, no man, and no O.

Mother fuck.

I spent the night on the couch, in a funk. I didn't answer the phone. I didn't make dinner. I ate Thai from the takeout container and growled back at Clive when he tried to sneak a shrimp. He flounced to the corner and glared at me from under the chair. I told him to fuck off.

I watched Barefoot Contessa. Which usually cheered me up. Tonight I watched her make French Onion Soup and then take it to the beach for lunch with Jeffrey. Normally, watching the two of them made me all warm and fuzzy inside. They were so cute. Tonight they made me nauseous. I wanted to be sitting on the beach in South Hampton, wrapped in a blanket eating soup with Jeffrey. Well not Jeffrey per se, but a Jeffrey equivalent. My own Jeffrey.

Fucking Jeffrey. Fucking Barefoot Contessa. Fucking lonely takeout.

I heard footsteps on the stairs, two sets. I was too pissy to drag myself to the peephole.

When I didn't hear anything for a while, I breathed a sigh of relief. I was not in the mood for any wall banging tonight.

A few hours later, I dragged my sad sack self back to my bedroom. I went to take out my pj's, and realized that I had not done any laundry. I dug around in my jammies drawer, looking for something, anything. I had plenty of sexy little numbers, back in the day when me and the O were on the same page.

I grumbled and fumed, and finally pulled a pink baby doll nightie out. It was frilly and sweet, and while I used to love to sleep in beautiful lingerie, now I hated it. It was a physical reminder of my missing O. Although, it had been a while since I had attempted to contact her. Maybe tonight would be the night. I was certainly tense, and no one could use the release more than me.

I closed the door on Clive. I didn't need anyone watching this.

I turned on some music, tonight I needed all the help I could get. I went INXS. Michael Hutchence always got me close.

I climbed into bed, arranging the pillows behind me and slipping between the sheets. Wearing the tiny nightie, my legs slid along the cool cotton. There is nothing like the feeling of freshly shaven legs on clean sheets.

I closed my eyes, and tried to slow my breathing. The last few times I had attempted to find the O, I was so thoroughly frustrated by the end I was near tears.

Tonight, I began with the usual fantasy roundup. I started with a little Catalano, allowing my hands to slip up under the bottom of my nightie and begin to come up to my breasts. As I thought of Jordan Catalano, kissing Angela Chase in the basement of the school, I imagined it was me. I felt his kisses thick and heavy on my lips, and it became his hands sliding up my skin towards my nipples. As my/Jordan's fingers began to massage my nipples, I felt that familiar tug low in my tummy, getting warm all over.

With my eyes closed, the image changed and now it was Jason Bourne/Matt Damon that was attacking my skin. With the two of us on the run from the government, it was all we could do to stay connected. My/Jason's fingers trailed lightly down my belly, sliding inside my matching panties. I could feel that it was working, my touch was waking something, stirring something inside. I gasped out loud when I felt how ready I was for Jason, and for Jordan.

Jesus, the thought of the two of them together, working to bring back the O made me actually twitch. I moaned, and then went for the big guns.

I went Clooney.

Flashes of Clooney came to me, as my fingers teased and twirled, twisted and taunted.

Danny Ocean...

George from Facts Of Life...

And then I went for it.

Dr. Ross. Third season of ER, after the Caesar haircut had been rectified.

Mmmm...

I moaned and groaned as I could feel myself getting wetter and wetter. It was working; I was actually getting really turned on. I rolled onto my side, hand between my legs as I saw Dr. Ross kneeling before me. He licked his lips, and asked me when was the last time anyone had made me scream.

Dr. Ross, you have no idea.

Make me scream Dr. Ross, make me scream.

Behind tightly closed eyes, I saw him leaning towards me, his mouth getting closer and closer to me. He was gently pressing my knees further apart, placing kisses on the inside of each thigh. I could actually feel his breath on my legs, making me shiver.

His mouth opened, and that perfect Clooney tongue flickered out to taste me.

Thump.

"Oh God,"

Thump Thump.

"Oh God,"

No.

No.

No!

"Bombay duck me 'ard!"

I could not believe it. Even Dr. Ross looked confused.

"You better fuck me so 'ard I feel your alberts 'ittin' me throat!"

I groaned as I felt Dr Ross leaving me. I was wet, I was frustrated, and I now hated Mary Poppins.

No, don't leave me Dr Ross, not you!

"That's it! That's it! Fuuuuuck I'm gonna tweedle!"

The walls began to shake, and the banging began.

That's it. Now I'm gonna kick some ass...

I scrambled to my feet, The Catalano and The Bourne and The Ever Loving Clooney fading away in wisps of testosterone laden smoke.

I threw back the covers and stalked out of my bedroom. Clive started to reproach me for shutting the door on him, but when he saw my face he wisely let me pass.

I thumped to my front door, my heels pounding into the hardwood floor. I was beyond angry. I was livid. I had been so close. The Cockney was going to bloody well pay. In actual blood preferably.

I opened the door with the strength of a thousand angry O's, denied release for centuries. I crossed the landing quickly, and began to pound on the door. I pounded hard and low, like Clooney had been about to pound into me. I pounded again and again, never relenting, never letting up. I could hear feet slapping towards the door, but still I didn't let up. I continued to pound and bang, the frustration of the day and the week and the months without an O unleashing itself in a sexual tirade the likes of which no one had ever seen.

I heard locks rattling and chains coming undone, but still I banged. I began to yell.

"Open this door you mother fucking asshole or I will come through the wall!"

"Take it easy, quit that banging..." I heard Edward say from the other side of the door. Nice choice of words.

The door swung open and I stared.

There he was. Edward Wallbanger.

Silhouetted by soft light from behind, one hand was on the door. The other hand was holding a white sheet around his hips.

I looked at him from top to bottom, my hand still the air and clenched into a fist. My hand was pulsing I had been banging so hard.

His hair was standing straight up, likely from The Cockney's hands being buried in it as he plowed into her. His eyes were blazing green, cheekbones just as strong as the jaw. Kiss swollen lips, and what looked like about three days worth of scruff.

Jesus, there was scruff. How had I missed that this morning?

I gazed down his long lean body. He was breathing heavy, and his chest rose and fell under his heavy panting. His skin was coated in a thin sheen of sex sweat, and as my eyes traveled down further I saw that he had a smattering of auburn colored hair low on his torso, leading below the sheet. Below the sex V.

He was stunning. Of course he was stunning. And why did there have to be scruff ?

I inadvertently gasped as my gaze went further than I had initially intended. My eyes were drawn, like a magnet, lower and lower. Below the sheet, which was already lower on his hips than should be legal.

He

Was

Still

Hard...

Heh heh heh...

So some business. After a slight delay, the Twigasm Podcast is ready to launch. Look for 2 shows this week, and then a new show each Saturday. First show has an interview with Psymom from the Twilighted site, as well as an interview with Hmonster4 and Gustariana discussing the Indie Twific Awards! 2nd show should be a doozy, Manyafandom stops by to discuss something near and dear to our hearts...Smut and its rightful place within the fandom.

Also, check out episode 24 of The Temptation Podcast. I was lucky enough to be a guest, and we spent some time discussing Real Person Fics, and why they are such a hot topic lately. Also Rob Pattinson stops by for lunch and makes us tunafish sammiches!

Here are a few recs this week, let me know what you think! And I would love to know, especially all you new readers out there, where you heard about Edward Wallbanger and what made you give it a shot.

I am currently loving The Fallout. Really interesting, and totally different than anything else I have ever read. And I am also really digging The Woods Are Lovely Dark and Deep. I am only a few chapters into this one, but it is intriguing me.

See you next time lovelies!

5. Lady With A Spinning Head

Wow.

I just...wow.

The reviews and the response to the last chapter is overwhelming. I really wasn't sure how this story would go over after I Love LA, and I am so pleased that you all are taking this ridiculous little journey with me.

Big huge mother fucking thanks to Team Wallbanger, who worked overtime with me to get this chapter to you. Nina, Nicole, Liz, Lauren...we are gonna have one helluva time together down in the Wallbanger vault...panties are optional.

To all the Clivettes out there, thank you for being so patient with me. Real life has been crazytown lately, and I appreciate you waiting for so long with this chapter. Poor Ed, let's find out what is under the sheet now shall we?

This chapter was really hard for me but I am willing to let it go. Have you ever been to a dinner party and the host practically opens the door apologizing for the food? The chicken didn't turn out right, the whipped cream should have less vanilla, the sauce has never curdled like this before but let's give it a try? It makes it worse when people apologize in advance right?

So I give you the new chapter of Wallbanger...and I still think the chicken could have come off the grill just a few minutes earlier...and I probably put too much garlic in the salad dressing...and...eh fuck it

Enjoy!

Chapter 5-Lady With A Spinning Head

EPOV

"Oh God."

Thump

"Oh God."

Thump Thump

She was surrounding me. I could feel her back arching under me and her breasts pressing against my chest, reaching to meet my every thrust. Her legs were wrapped solidly around me, heels digging into the backs of my thighs. She filled every one of my senses.

Her touch, her skin sliding under mine, warm and slippery from the perspiration outlining her curves.

Her scent, that secret female scent that I was privy to, was heady and thick around us.

Her taste was still thick on my tongue, sweet and salt and woman.

Her face below me was beautiful. There was nothing more amazing in my world than the sight of a woman coming undone. To see this strong woman just before she came, to know that I had brought her there was a sight that I could never live without.

Her sounds? Well, she was unique...

"That's it! That's it! Fuuuuuuck, I'm gonna tweedle!"

I silently smiled as I heard her. She was her own woman, and made no apologies.

I drove into her hard, fast and furious. I took my pleasure as she took hers, feeling her coming all around me. She screamed through her orgasm, wrestling underneath me. I was close; I could feel it building from down low, very low. I met her eyes, and she winked at me. She was always so quiet and so sweet after she came, but continued to meet my ferocity and drive me on, towards my own release.

I rose up as she wrapped her legs more firmly around me. Her hands ran up and down my back as I grabbed onto the iron headboard, giving me leverage as I pressed into her body more fully. I rocked back and forth over her, staring down at her as I felt the groans leaving my lips as I gave in.

So close...

So fucking close...

BANG BANG BANG

What the fuck?

I froze, perilously close to coming but shocked into stillness.

BANG BANG BANG

I looked down as we stared at each other. She shrugged, and I cocked an eyebrow at her.

"You suddenly get a jealous husband that I don't know about?" I asked. She rolled her eyes at me.

Reluctantly, I slowly slipped out of her, feeling her wince as I left her and feeling my own cock protest at the absence of girl. He waved angrily in the air, and longed to dive back in. I knew how he felt. I started towards the door, wrapping the sheet that had fallen on the floor around my waist. I looked over my shoulder at the bed, where a

gorgeous woman waved lightly at me as she rolled over, showing me her backside.

Jesus...

I sighed and began to make my way towards the front door. Whoever was there was now banging relentlessly, not stopping at all. I considered briefly grabbing the poker from the fireplace to bring with me, but decided against it. I began to undo the locks, and was about to slip the chain out when I heard a woman's voice scream,

"Open this door you mother fucking asshole or I will come through the wall!"

Oh for the love of all that is holy...

"Take it easy, quit that banging," I muttered, as she continued her assault on the door.

I swung the door open and stared into the face of an angry woman.

Her hand was still in the air, clenched into a fist as she continued to bang, even though the door had been removed from her path.

She was breathing hard, her chest heaving as she looked me up and down. I rested one hand on the door as I stared back at her. I watched as her face dropped down, looking at my frame without any sign of modesty.

I noticed the door to the apartment across the landing was wide open, and a cat was peeking around the door at me curiously. Hmmm, new neighbor.

While her eyes were down, I took the opportunity to appraise her as well. Her hair was messy and rumpled, especially in the back. The color was high in her cheeks, and spread down her neck. That's when I

noticed it.

Pink...

Pink Baby Doll...

Pink Baby Doll Nightie...

Jesus, why did it have to be pink?

I heard her gasp slightly, and I saw where she was looking. My cock was still hard, and now inexplicably was straining towards her.

I smirked slightly, and as her eyes traveled back up to meet mine, I waited for her to speak.

In hindsight...I could have done without her speaking.

She had a mouth on her this one...

"You're a dick."

"No, you're a dick!"

"Me? You're a total dick!"

I sighed and looked at my two friends, taunting each other like a pair of fourth graders. I picked up my gear and threw it in the back of the Rover.

"Girls, you're both pretty. Now get in the fucking car before I leave you here to fight it out," I groaned sweetly at Jasper and Emmett as they scrambled over the last beer in the cooler. Watching as the two continued to fuss, I reached over the back seat to the second cooler I had stashed there and dangled a cold Killian's within reach of Emmett.

"Nice Masen, very nice," he whistled appreciatively and grabbed at the beer, leaving Jasper the other they had been squabbling over. I nodded and rolled my eyes at the two and then began to peel off the top of my wet suit.

Windsurfing in the bay on the weekends had been something the three of us had been doing since college, weather permitting. Today had been a great day to be out on the water, cold and clear. Back on the beach, the breeze was not as strong and as the sun beat down it was finally warm enough to start wriggling out of the wet suits that were wholly necessary when in the water.

As the other two followed...well...suit, we were soon all perched on the back bumper of the Range Rover watching the other surfers in the water and enjoying the day. With all the traveling I had been doing lately, it was a rare day when all three of us could get together. Usually when I was in the city we would head out on the town or catch a game. Emmett was a sportscaster for the local NBC affiliate and always got us great seats for the Giants or the 49ers.

While we were getting more comfortable, a group of girls settled themselves on a blanket nearby. We all did what men do. We ogled.

As they arranged themselves, Jasper brought our attention back to our conversation when he asked me how my last assignment had gone.

"It was good, great weather and got all the shots I needed," I answered. I had recently returned from a trip to the Galapagos. Being a highly sought after photographer that specialized in exotic locations and animal studies made it possible for me to pick and choose the assignments that I was really interested in. When the Discovery Channel, with whom I had enjoyed a great working relationship for years, called and asked me to participate in a study on the effects of Eco-tourism on a place like the Galapagos I jumped at the chance.

I had been there once before, working on the Blue Planet series and I had been anxious to get back. Places like that, where nature was close enough to reach out and touch, made my job the best job in the world. In my humble opinion.

"So did you ride on the turtles?" Emmett asked, tipping back his beer and draining half the bottle in a single draught. Jasper and I scoffed at him, his wide eyes looking back at us.

"It's not a theme park ass, you don't ride the turtles. And they are tortoise, not turtles," I chided him, tipping back my own beer.

"Turtles, tortoises, they have the fucking shells! And I know I have seen pictures of people riding around on them so suck it Masen," he fired back. He stood up to stretch and I heard the group of girls gasp a little. He had been recognized. Emmett was a very high profile man about town. Being on TV every night definitely had its perks when it came to dating. He was still built like the linebacker he had been at Stanford, and he got plenty of attention from the fairer sex. He was subtle in his approach, but lethal when he zeroed in a female.

"The two species are distinctly different, you should try watching one of the specials that Eddie here has worked on once in awhile," Jasper chimed in, standing up as well and shooting a glance over towards Beach Blanket Bingo. I had been watching Jasper and his women trapping ways since we all pledged the same fraternity freshmen year of college. He was a brilliant guy, and what I had been told by countless women over the years was that the "bookish nerd" thing was apparently damn near irresistible. I just saw the nerd.

"I watch all of his specials ya jack-off, now if you will excuse me," Emmett shot over his shoulder as he sauntered in the direction of the giggling girls. We watched as he sat down with them, something about NBC floating back over the sand towards us. I rolled my eyes and settled back further into the Rover.

"So how are the ladies? Narrowing them down at all?" Jasper asked, grabbing another beer and sitting down in the fold up chair that he had pulled out of the back of his car.

"The ladies are good, no complaints," I answered as I sipped. Jasper and Emmett knew all about the three ladies I saw whenever I was in town. They couldn't quite understand how I managed to keep all three at the same time and have them not hate each other. I still wondered about that myself from time to time.

I had been dating Kate on and off for years whenever I was in town. She was delightful. Soft and smooth, tiny and plump in all the right places. She was all round curves and sinfully decadent skin. She also liked it quite rough, something you would never guess to look at her. She and I attempted to have a regular relationship when I was first out of college but we both wanted different things and eventually we drifted apart. A chance encounter at a coffee shop a few years ago, and a fantastic afternoon in bed changed all that and we morphed into what we were now.

Irina was the next to make an appearance. I met her when I was shooting in Prague one winter. I never worked in fashion photography, but I was asked to participate in special shoot where nature and action photographers lent their talents to the fashion world and that is how we met. She was wonderfully exotic. Russian born and Paris educated, she was also insatiable. We had spent a naked weekend at a house on the outskirts of the Czech city, and when she moved stateside we began to see each other whenever we were in the same place. She had finally relocated to San Francisco last year when she went back to school to get her masters, as her modeling career was beginning to slow down. The idea that someone as beautiful as Irina could be at the tail end of her career at 25 was beyond me, but she was exceedingly smart and was refocusing in an academic sense. I liked her body *and* her mind, and her purr especially.

Then there was Tanya. That girl was a trip. I had met her in a dark bar in London late one night. She was rude, crude, and loud. And she was crazy in bed. She knew exactly what she wanted, and she asked for it. Yelled for it more like it usually, and I craved her the way an addict craved that next hit. Bad for you sure, but what a ride while it lasted.

I had several traditional relationships with women over the years, all of which ended badly. With my schedule being so crazy it was very difficult for me to be involved with anyone that that needed me to be something that I was not. I would never have a 9-5 job. I would never carry a briefcase. I would never drive a Volvo. And while I was not against marriage, I found it hard to believe that I would ever want to enter into that institution.

All three of the women I was involved with understood that and understood me. I adored them all, and they never asked me to change for them. These were relationships based on mutual pleasure, and I was very lucky that things had worked as well as they had for as long as they had. They all knew about each other, and we were all OK with the way we rolled. They each brought something to my life that I needed. It would be tempting if you were on the outside of this to characterize it simply about the sex, but it was much more than that. I cared about these women, and in turn they cared for me. I could bring them something that they were not getting elsewhere in their lives. And when I made it home, from somewhere far away they were a soft place to land. Or a purring place to land. Or a Cockney place to land...

Although the last time I was with Tanya, things had not gone according to plan. Just as things were getting really hot and heavy, we were interrupted by my neighbor. My doorbanging neighbor. My pink nightie wearing doorbanging neighbor. My pink nightie wearing, legs as long as the Golden Gate Bridge, breasts that made me want to weep, infuriating, insane, tantalizing, angry, extremely gorgeous doorbanging neighbor.

It had been two nights since she banged on my door, and the image of her in that pink nightie still flashed in my brain. But the words she said still clanged around as well.

"I still don't see how you manage that, how do they not kill you?" Jasper joked, bringing me back to the present.

"Everything is cool in Masen Land, leave it at that," I winked and stood to walk over to where Emmett was still talking to the blanket ladies. It seemed oxymoronical for someone currently sleeping with three woman at the same time, but I was faithful. I certainly looked at other women, but since I was not looking for anything romantic, I would enjoy but I never touched.

Jasper loped along behind me and we sunk down onto the blanket just in time to hear Emmett telling the girls how he could get them tickets for the next time the Giants were in town. I laughed as I heard the same pickup line he had been using for years.

It always fucking worked.

Later that afternoon I was sorting through laundry and toying with the idea of going for a run when I heard a tentative knock on the door. I walked through the apartment, shrugging into a t-shirt as I went. I wasn't expecting anyone, and I hadn't been making any noise so it certainly couldn't be The Cockblocker.

I opened the door to find Kate, looking like she had the weight of the world on her shoulders. Her eyes were red and puffy and she had a giant wad of crumpled Kleenex in her hand.

"Hey babe, what's wrong?" I asked gently, taking her arm and pulling her inside. She let me lead her to the couch, and when I sat down beside her she collapsed against me. She lay her head on my shoulder, and I let her. We were quiet for a few moments. She just sat and let me rub circles on her arm until she was ready to speak. I cuddled her closer

to me, and pressed a kiss down on the top of her head. She sighed, and looked up at me.

"It's Angela," she sniffled.

"What about her?" I asked, brushing her hair back from her face.

"I had to put her down today," she cried, and broke into a fresh wave of tears.

When I first met Kate back at Stanford she had just adopted the ugliest mutt I had ever seen. At the time I thought it was hysterical that she named a dog Angela, but the little dog grew on me. After we reconnected, Kate had informed me that Angela was still going strong, although now that she was a bit older she had slowed down quite a bit.

Then the last few weeks, she had gotten more and more sick. I knew what was coming, and had tried to be there for Kate.

I hugged her tightly and soothed her as best I could.

"Aw Katie, why didn't you call me? I would have gone with you, you shouldn't have gone by yourself," I whispered in her ear, feeling her tears wetting the front of my t-shirt.

"I wasn't alone. Garrett went with me," she said, her voice muffled in my shoulder.

"Sweetie, who's Garrett?" I asked, as she began to pull herself together.

"I told you about him, didn't I? He works in the office next to mine, he's friends with some of the guys I work with," she said, blowing her nose loudly as I groaned.

"Shut up. I have to blow my nose," she sighed, rolling her eyes at me and beginning to smile. I smiled back, and helped her sweep her hair

back.

"I know, I know, blow away," I answered.

"Boy if I had a nickel for every time you said that," she joked, and then she laughed. One of those exhausted if-I-don't-laugh-I-will-cry-again laughs that just breaks your heart.

I went to get her a bottle of water, and when I came back into the room she was standing at the window, looking outside at the courtyard behind the building. I came up behind her and stood, resting my chin on the top of her head and slipping my arms around her waist. I hugged her close as she relaxed in my arms.

"Thanks Edward, I needed some hugs," she said softly, leaning back against me.

"That's what I'm here for babe," I replied.

She giggled and pointed out the window. I followed her gaze, and saw a brunette struggling with the dumpster behind the building. With a few choice words, and loud grunt, she got it open and threw her trash in. We both chuckled as we heard the words 'asshole dumpster' float up to us.

The brunette turned around to head back inside, and I saw her face.

Pink Nightie Girl.

Kate ended up staying for dinner and when she left I walked her to the door.

"Thanks for letting me come over Edward," she said, turning in the doorway.

"Well, you kinda just showed up here. You didn't leave much choice," I joked, ruffling her hair.

"Ass," she chided, elbowing me in the ribs.

"You know you are welcome anytime. I'm glad you came Katie," I said, leaning in to give her a quick peck on the lips. I adored her, and I wished I could make this better.

Just as I was pulling away, the door across the landing opened, and my neighbor started to come out into the hallway. She took one look at us, rolled her eyes, and flounced back inside her apartment.

"What the hell is her problem?" Kate asked, turning back to me.

"That would be my new neighbor, and she has several problems. Don't worry about it, I'll call you tomorrow and check in, OK?" I asked.

"Yes please, when are you leaving again?" she asked.

"I'm heading out on an assignment in two weeks to Ireland, I'll be gone almost a month this time."

"Well you make sure I get some time with you before you leave. I have to send my boy off happy," she said, her eyes twinkling.

"That is a promise, sassy, now go get some sleep," I winked, giving her a little swat on the bottom as she headed down the stairs.

She blew me a kiss as she rounded the corner and was gone. I glared at the door across the hall, and slammed back into my apartment.

Doorbanger...

Just before I turned in that night I got a call from one of my favorite people on the planet.

"Mr. Cullen, to what do I owe the pleasure?" I said, in a serious voice when I answered the phone.

"Ah young Mr. Masen, you are still awake. I wasn't sure if you would still be up," Carlisle replied.

"I'm up, although not for much longer. What can I do ya for?" I yawned, eyeballing my bed in the next room. Traveling as much as I did, I relished in a good night's sleep in my own bed.

"Wanted to make sure you would be in town next weekend for the housewarming."

"Did you two finally get that house finished? How many years have you been working on it?" I asked. Carlisle and his fiancé had been renovating a house in Sausalito forever it seemed.

"Too long, but you know Esme. She likes everything to be perfect. So next Saturday night, will you be in town?"

"Yep, count me in."

"And bring your boys, they are always fun for a laugh."

"I will, they love a chance to hit on your fiancé."

"Don't I know it! Secretly, I think Esme loves it too. And give me a call this week some time, I want to go over your portfolio. I moved some things around, I think you'll be pleased."

"Do what you want, I trust you."

"I know you do, I could be robbing you blind kid," he laughed.

"Well if you are, just don't tell me about it," I laughed back. Carlisle had my best interests at heart, he always had.

"Yeah yeah, but call me anyway. You can buy me lunch."

"Make it a drink and you're on."

"Now you're talking."

We talked for a few more minutes and when we hung up I headed back towards the bedroom. As I climbed in bed, I heard something on the other side of the wall.

As I listened, I could hear a cat meowing, and then a soft voice talking back,

"Yes, I know, you are a good boy Clive...thank you for bringing me my sock...yes, you killed the sock...good little hunter."

I rolled my eyes as I thought about my neighbor. Cat people were so weird. The scene she made in the hallway the night she banged on my door kept running through my mind.

Once she stopped staring at my package, she finally opened her mouth to speak.

*"Now look here mister, do you have any idea how loud you and your little Doolittle are? I can't fucking sleep! If I have to listen to one more night, one more **minute** in fact of you and your harem banging away on my wall, I will go insane!"*

She was yelling so forcefully, I could feel her breath hitting my face.

"Just settle down. It can't be that bad, these walls are pretty thick," I smiled, pumping my fist against the doorframe and trying to unleash a little charm.

"Are you out of your mind? The walls are not nearly as thick as your head, I can hear everything! Every spank, every meow, every guv'nah, and I have had it! This shit ends now!" she yelled back, her face turning almost purple in her fury. She had even used air quotes to emphasize

the spank, meow and guv'nah.

She was mouthing off about my girls, and now I was getting pissed.

"Hey, that's about enough! What I do in my home is my business. I'm sorry if I disturbed you, but you can't just come over here in the middle of the night and dictate what I can and can't do! You don't see me coming across the hall and banging on your door telling you to quiet down."

"No, you just bang on my fucking wall. We share a bedroom wall man, you are right up against me when I am trying to sleep...have some common courtesy."

"Well how come you can hear me and I can't hear you? Wait, wait, I know...cuz there ain't nobody bangin on your walls now is there?" I smirked, and watched the color drain from her face. She crossed her arms tightly across her chest, and as she looked down, she realized what she was wearing.

I let my own eyes drift back down her body, taking in the pink and the lace and the way her hip was jutting out as she tapped her foot angrily.

My eyes came back up to hers, and I saw the anger flashing in her eyes. I met her stare, and winked once.

"Oooohhh!" she screamed, and slammed back into her apartment. I heard her cat meowing angrily behind her as she stalked through her apartment, and then I heard what sounded like...a mixer?

Tanya came up behind me in the doorway as I continued to stare across the hall. She pulled me back inside, and instead of taking her back into the bedroom, I turned her around, pushed her over the end of the couch, and took her from behind as she moaned her approval.

I had thought about that conversation over the last few days more than I cared to admit. She was a hellcat, that's for sure.

I turned on the stereo, selecting an old Benny Goodman record. I listened to the pop and crackle of the needle on the vinyl as I turned off the light and settled in. Right before I fell asleep I heard something else through the wall. She was moaning a little, did she talk in her sleep? And why in the hell did that give me a semi?

Fucking Pink Nightie Girl...

BPOV

That was the first night I dreamed of Edward Wallbanger...

So, now we know a little about the Man and his international house of orgasms. I do not plan on having a lot of EPOV's in this story, but a few sprinkled here and there to lend some color.

Thanks also to all of you who checked out our Twigasm Podcast, and to those you haven't yet get your ass over there...we talk dirty and sing songs.

I wish I could tell you that I was the kind of writer that could get a new chapter out every few days, but I simply can not. I don't think the next chapter will take as long as this one, in fact I am sure of it. But it won't be out for at least another couple weeks so be patient with me chickens. I promise it will be worth your wait.

Want something fun to read in the meantime? I am currently in love with several stories.

Bloodline by Ooohlalaaah.

Carpe Noctem and Fiat Lux by queenofgrey

Clipped Wings and Inked Armor by hunterhunting

I highly recommend all of these, and they should give you something to play with until Clive and I come back...

MWAH!

Alice

xoxo

6. Stuck In A Moment You Can't Get Out Of

Well turn me upside and paint me blue...did I actually just get a chapter out in less than a year? Hells bells...

Thanks as always to Team Wallbanger, Nina and Lauren keep me from being a "comma rapist",,,,, I really can't help myself sometimes.

Read it, and then after we will chat. See you down below!

Chapter 5-Stuck In A Moment That You Can't Get Out Of

"Oh God."

Thump...

"Oh God."

Thump thump...

I was being driven up the bed with the strength of his thrusts. He was driving into me with unflinching force, giving me exactly what I could take and then just pushing me past that edge. His face stared down at me, hard, flashing me that knowing smirk. I closed my eyes against him, letting myself feel how deeply I was being affected. And by deep I mean deep...

He grasped my hands and brought them above my head, placing them on the iron headboard, grabbing on tight.

"You are gonna wanna hold on tight for this," he whispered in my ear, and threw one leg up and over his shoulder as he altered his hips,

making me scream out his name.

"Edward!" I shrieked, feeling my body begin to spasm. His eyes, those damnable green eyes, stared into mine as I shook around him.

"Fuuuuccckkkk, Edward!" I screamed again, and promptly woke up.

With my arms over my head and hands grasped tightly around and under the iron headboard.

I closed my eyes and forced my hands to release the metal, seeing the dents in my hands from holding on so tightly.

I was breathing heavily as I struggled to sit up. I was covered in sweat, my skin flushed, and I was panting. I was actually panting. I found the sheets were in a ball at the foot of the bed, and Clive was buried underneath, just his nose peeking out.

"Oh Clive, are you hiding?"

"Meow," came the angry reply and a tiny face followed the nose.

"You can come out silly, Mommy's done screaming. I think," I chuckled, running a hand through my damp hair. I had charmingly sweat through my pj's and was now standing over the A/C vent, drying out my body and beginning to calm down.

My oonie was twitching.

"That was close, huh O?" I grimaced, pressing my legs together and feeling a not unpleasant ache between my thighs.

Clive pushed past me and ran into the kitchen, doing his little dance next to his bowl.

"Yah yah yah, settle down," I croaked as he threaded himself in and out of my ankles, looking up at me the whole time. I dumped a scoop of lams in his bowl, and hit the coffee.

I settled myself against the counter and tried to collect myself. I was still breathing a little hard.

That dream had been...well...it had been intense.

The thing is, I didn't want to be dreaming about Wallbanger. He was an ass with a harem and I didn't care how good he was with his dick...I wanted nothing to do with him.

I thought again of his body perched over me, a little drop of sweat rolling down off his nose and dropping down onto my chest. He had lowered himself down, and dragged his tongue up my stomach, towards my breasts and then...

PING PING

Mr. Coffee brought me back from Mr. Wallbanger, and I was grateful as I could feel myself getting worked up again. Sweet Jesus, was this going to be a problem?

I poured myself a cup of coffee, peeled a banana, and looked out the window. I ignored my compulsion to massage the banana, instead thrusting it inside my mouth. Oh sweet Christ, the thrusting! I was a sick, sick pervert and this was headed south fast. And by south I mean...

I slapped myself in the face and forced myself to think of other things than the manwhore I was currently sharing a wall with. Inane things. Innocuous things.

Puppy dogs...doggy style.

Ice cream cones...licking his cone and two scoops.

Beach ball...balls...OK enough, *now you aren't even trying...*

I forced myself into the shower, and sang the Star Spangled Banner over and over again to avoid my hands doing anything other than washing up. Yes, I needed to make sure that my nipples were that clean. Hey, just because O had left me high and dry didn't mean the girls didn't need a little love from time to time...and they really adored Amazing Grace bath gel from Philosophy.

As I opened the front door that morning, tossing a goodbye to Clive over my shoulder, I prayed silently that there would not be any random harem girls in the hallway. All clear.

I pushed my sunglasses on as I walked out the door, barely noticing the Range Rover. And by barely I mean I barely noticed that rover rhymed with over as in bend me over the chair in my family room and...

BELLA!

I might have a problem here...

Later that afternoon I was in my office when Esme stuck her head inside.

"Knock, knock," she said, smiling.

"Hey! What's going on?" I smiled back, leaning back in my chair.

"Ask me about the house in Sausalito."

"Hey Esme, how's the house in Sausalito?" I asked, rolling my eyes.

"Done," she whispered and threw her arms in the air.

"Shut up!" I whispered back, eyes now wide. I loved the fact that I had the kind of boss I could tell to shut up.

"Totally, completely, absolutely done!" she squealed and sat down across from me. I offered a fist bump across the desk, which she leaned into.

"Now that is some good news. We need to celebrate," I answered, reaching into a drawer.

"Bella, if you pull out a bottle of scotch I'm going to have to consult human resources," she warned, a grin twitching.

"First of all, you *are* human resources. And second of all, like I would keep scotch in my office! Obviously that's in a flask lashed to my thigh," I giggled, producing a Blow-Pop.

"Nice, watermelon even. My favorite," she approved as we unwrapped and began to suck.

"So, tell me all about it," I prompted.

Esme and Carlisle had been renovating a house in Sausalito for almost 108 years. It felt like that anyway. They had been looking for a property in the seaside community for years, one that contained the right combination of view, space, scale, and environment. They found everything they wanted except that the existing house was hopelessly outdated. They moved in anyway, renovating room by room so they could stay on property during the construction. She drove across the bridge everyday from her little hideyhole overlooking the bay and the city in the distance. I had been over many times as the house took shape, and I knew if it was really finally finished it would be incredible.

I had been consulting a little with Esme as she finished choosing the final touches, and just from the pictures I knew it was just the kind of house I had been dreaming of for years. Like Esme it would be warm, inviting, elegant, homey, and filled with light.

We talked shop for a while, and then she let me get back to work.

"By the way, housewarming next weekend, you and your posse are invited," she said over her shoulder on her way out the door.

"Did you just say posse?" I deadpanned.

"I might have, you in?"

"Sounds great, can we bring anything and can we stare at your fiancé?"

"Don't you dare and I would expect nothing less," she fired back.

I smiled and went back to work. Party in Sausalito? Sounded promising...

"You don't seriously have a crush on Wallbanger do you?" Alice asked sucking on her straw.

"Of course she doesn't. Who knows where that dick has been? Bella would never," Rose answered for me, tossing her hair back over her shoulder and stunning stupid a table of businessmen who had been staring at her since she walked in to meet us for lunch at our favorite little bistro in North Beach. It had been a week since I began dreaming of Wallbanger. A very long week.

Alice settled back into her chair and giggled, kicking me under the table.

"Fuck off midget," I stared hard at her, blushing furiously. Alice always knew, she had a knack for reading people and it was useless to try and keep anything from her.

"Yeah, fuck off midget! Bella knows better than to..." Rose laughed then trailed off, finally taking off her sunglasses and switching her gaze to me.

The cello player and midget watched me fidget. One smiled and the other swore.

"Ah jeez Bella, do not tell me you are crushing on that fucker? Shit, you are aren't you?" Rose huffed as the waiter set down a bottle of Pelegrino. He stared at Rose and she waved him away without a glance. Rose had always been beautiful, but the fact that she swore like a sailor made men insane. And when they found out she played the cello? They really didn't stand a chance.

Alice was different. She was so tiny and cute, that initially men were drawn in by her innate charm and grace. Then they really got a look at her, and realized that she was beautiful. There was something about her that made men want to take care of her and protect her, until they got her into the bedroom. Or so I had been told. Crazytown that one was...

I was apparently a hottie, or so I had been told, and not just by my girls. Eh, on a good day I knew I could work it. I never felt as hot as Rose or as perfect as Alice, but I cleaned up good. I knew when the three of us went out we could really work a scene, and until recently we had all used this to our advantage.

We each had very distinct types. Which was good, as we rarely went for the same guy.

Rose was very particular. She liked her men long, lean, and pretty. She liked them not too tall, but a little taller than her. She wanted her men polite and smart, and preferably blond. She also was a sucker for a southern accent. Seriously, a guy called her 'darlin' and she would wet herself. It's true, I had played with her one night when she was wasted and used my best Oklahoma accent. I ended up having to fight her off half the night. She claimed it was college and she wanted to experiment.

Alice on the other hand was still particular, but not so much with looks. She liked her men big, huge, tall, and strong. She loved the feel of a giant man, since she was so tiny. She loved when they had to pick her up to kiss her, or stand her on a stool so they didn't get neck cramps.

She liked her men a little on the sarcastic side, but hated when they called her anything like "pixie" or "tink" or anything like that. "I am all women! I'm a tiny woman, but I ain't no fucking fairy. Save the Disney shit for someone else," she yelled at a giant one night that had been promising until he compared her to his Sprite.

I was harder to pin down, but I knew what it was when I saw it. Like the Supreme Court and pornography, I was aware. I did have a tendency to be attracted to very outdoorsy guys, lifeguards, scuba divers, rock climbers, etc. I liked them clean cut but a little shaggy, gentlemanly with a touch of bad boy, and making enough money so I didn't have to play mommy. I spent a summer with a hotter than hell surfer who couldn't even afford his own peanut butter. Even Eric's round the clock orgasms couldn't save him when I found out he had been using my Amex to pay for his sex wax. And his cell phone bill. And his trip to Figi that I wasn't even invited on. To the curb surfer boy, to the curb.

I might have taken one more for the road before he left though...ah the days before O's departure.

Round the clock orgasms. Sigh.

"So wait a minute, have you seen this guy yet?" Rose asked after we had ordered and I had come back from my little surfer memories.

"Yes, I have met him," I groaned and Alice rubbed my shoulders soothingly.

"When the hell did this happen? Where was I?" Rose asked, looking between the two of us.

"She just told me this morning, when I caught her yawning on the phone. I assumed it was from all the wallbanging, but nooooo. Miss Bella has been having some naughty dreams about her neighbor," she giggled. I rolled my eyes at her.

"So when did you meet him? And I take it he is cute?" Rose asked.

"Yes, I met him. And yes, he is cute. Too cute for his own good, he's such an asshole!" I exclaimed, slamming my hand down on the table in frustration. I made the silverware bounce.

Rose and Alice exchanged a glance and I showed them both my middle finger.

"So what does he look like?" Rose asked, digging into her salad that had just arrived.

I sighed again, and told my tale. I told them about The Cockney and the way I went over and yelled at him in the middle of the night. About how I went over to do my yelling dressed in a very skimpy nightie upon which Rose choked on her olive. I told them about what we said to each other, and the crack he made about the lack of banging from my side of the apartment.

"You didn't tell me that part, he *is* an asshole!" Alice breathed at this.

"I know! And then the very next day, he is in the hallway with Spanx, kissing on her when I was trying to leave! It's like some sick little twisted orgasm town going over there, and I want no part of it!" I said, chewing furiously on my lettuce.

"I can't believe Esme didn't warn you about this guy," Rose mused, pushing the rest of her croutons around on her plate. She was on a no bread thing again, terrified of the five pounds she claimed she put on in the last year. She was full of it, but there was no arguing with Rose when she set her mind to something.

"No, no, she says she doesn't know this guy. He must have moved in since the last time she was there. I mean, she hardly ever stayed in that place. They kept it so they always had a place to stay in the city, but the more she sublet it out, she rarely was there. And according to Felix and

Demetri, he has only been in the building a year or so. And he travels all the time, its no wonder they never met," I explained, realizing as I said it out loud that I had compiled quite a dossier on this guy.

"So, how has the wallbanging been this week?" Rose asked.

"Relatively quiet actually. Either he really listened to me and is being neighborly, or his dick finally broke off in one of them and he has sought medical attention," I said, a little too loudly. The table of businessmen must have been listening pretty closely as they all choked a little just then, and crossed their legs in unwitting sympathy. The three of us giggled and continued on with our lunch.

"Speaking of Esme, you guys are invited out to the house next weekend for their housewarming party," I told the girls, as they both fanned themselves. We all had not so secret crushes on Carlisle. He was the one guy that we all agreed on that we adored and wanted to eventually find someone just like. Whenever we were all with Esme, and we had plied her with enough liquor, we would confess ourselves to her and make her tell us stories about him. If we were lucky and had managed to get an extra martini into her...well...let's just say it was nice to know that sex continued to be worth doing well into your 30's and 40's. The story about Carlisle and the Tonga Room at the Fairmont Hotel? Wow. She was a lucky woman.

"That will be cool, why don't we come over and get ready at your place, like the old days?" Alice squealed as Rose and I plugged our ears.

"Yes, yes, that's fine, but no more squealing or we will leave your ass with the bill," Rose scolded as Alice settled back into her seat, her eyes sparkling.

I loved my girls. And I mean the actual girls this time, not just my boobs...

After lunch, Alice walked away to her next appointment which was in the neighborhood and Rose and I shared a cab.

"So you never told me about the naughty dreams you had about your neighbor," she reminded me, to the great delight of the cab driver.

"Eyes on the road sir," I instructed as I caught him looking at us in the rear view mirror.

I let my thoughts drift back to the dreams, which had come every night in the past week. I, on the other hand, had not. Which had ratcheted up my sexual frustration. When I could ignore the O, then I was OK. Now that I was being treated to dreams of being banged by Wallbanger himself every night, O and her absence was even more pronounced. Clive had taken to sleeping on top of the dresser, safer for him and my flailing legs you see.

"The dreams? The dreams are good, but he is such an asshole!" I exclaimed again, thumping my fist down on the door handle.

"I know, that's what you keep saying," she added, looking at me carefully.

"What? What is that look?" I cried.

"Nothing, just looking at you. You are awfully worked up for someone that is an asshole," she reminded me.

"I know," I sighed, looking out the window.

"You're poking me."

"I am not."

"Seriously, what the hell is in your pocket Alice, are you packin'?" Rose exclaimed, jerking her head away as Alice pressed the flat iron through

her hair. I giggled from my place on the bed, lacing up my sandals. I had put my own hair up in rollers before the girls got there and was spared from the full treatment. Alice fancied herself some kind of beauty school dropout, and if she could open a shop from her bedroom she would have given it some careful thought.

Alice produced a brush from her pocket and showed it to Rose before starting to tease. With the brush that is.

We were pre-partying just like we did at Berkeley, right down to the frozen daiquiris. Although we had upgraded to the good alcohol and freshly squeezed lime juice. Still, it made us a little hyper and slaphappy.

"I have a good feeling about tonight, ya know?" Alice said as she forced Rose to flip her hair over so she could 'get some lift at the crown'. You didn't argue, you just let her do it.

"I have a funny feeling, maybe because I am upside down," Rose muttered, which sent me into another gale of giggles. As we were laughing, I heard voices from next door. I got up off the bed and went closer to the joint wall where I could hear better, and this time instead of just Edward there were two other distinctly male voices. I couldn't make out what they were saying, but suddenly Guns N Roses came blaring through the walls loud enough to make Rose and Alice stop what they were doing.

"What the fuck is that?" Rose snapped, looking wildly around the room.

"Wallbanger is a G'n'R fan I guess," I shrugged, secretly enjoying being welcomed to the jungle. I put a headband low on my forehead and did Axl's little crab dance back and forth much to the delight of Alice, and the scorn of Rose.

"No no no, that's not it fool," Rose scolded over the music and grabbed another headband. Alice screamed with laughter as Rose and I Axl

battled. Until of course Rose started to mess up her hair and then Alice lunged. Rose jumped on the bed to get away from her and I joined her. We jumped up and down, shrieking the lyrics now and dancing wildly. Alice finally gave in, and all three of us danced like mad fools. I started to feel the bed moving underneath us, and I realized that it was banging merrily against the wall. On Edward's wall.

"Take that Wallbanger! And that! And a little of...that! No one's banging on my walls huh? HAHAAH!" I shrieked crazily as Alice and Rose watched in amazement. Rose climbed down off the bed and she and Alice clutched each other as they laughed and I banged. I rocked back and forth like I was on a surfboard, driving my headboard into the wall again and again.

The music cut off suddenly, and I dropped like I had been shot. Alice and Rose clasped their hands over each other's mouths looking like some kind of Stooges movie. I lay flat on the bed, biting down on my own knuckle to keep from laughing. The frenzy in the room was like when you got caught tping someone's house, or when you were giggling in the back of church. You couldn't stop, you couldn't *not* stop.

BANG BANG BANG

No fucking way. He was banging at me?

BANG BANG BANG

He was banging at me...

BANG BANG BANG my fists rang out as I gave as good as I got. I couldn't believe he had the balls to try and get me to quiet down. I heard male voices chuckling.

BANG BANG BANG came once more, and my temper flared.

Oh you snide mother fucker...

I looked at the girls incredulously and they jumped back on the bed with me.

BANG BANG BANG BANG we pounded, six furious fists raining down on the plaster.

BANG BANG BANG BANG came back to us, much, much louder this time. His boys must have gotten in on the action.

"Give it up Wallbanger! No sex for you!" I yelled at the wall as my girls cackled maniacally.

"Tons of sex for me Doorbanger, none for you!" he yelled back.

I raised my fists to bang once more.

BANG BA BA BANG BANG rang out from my side.

BANG BANG! A single fist answered back, and then silence.

"OOOOOOHHHHH!" I screamed at the wall and I could hear Edward and his boys laughing on their side.

Alice, Rose and I stared wide-eyed at each other until we heard a tiny sigh from behind us.

We all turned at the same time to see Clive sitting on the dresser. He stared back at us, sighed again, and proceeded to lick his bum.

"The nerve, I mean the mother loving nerve of that guy! He has the balls to actually bang on my wall, on my wall? I mean, God what an..."

"Asshole, we know," Alice and Rose said in unison as I continued my rant.

"Yes, an asshole!" I continued, still worked up. We were in the car on the way to Esme and Carlisle's house. The car service had arrived promptly at 8:30, and we were soon headed over the bridge.

As I looked out the window and saw the twinkling lights of Sausalito I began to calm down a little bit. I refused to let Wallbanger upset me. I was out with my two best friends about to attend a fantastic party hosted by the best boss in the world. And if I was lucky, her husband would let us see the pictures of him when he was a swimmer at in college, back when swimmers still just wore tiny Speedos. If Carlisle had imbibed enough, he would sometimes let us take a peek at his old albums and then we would sigh and gaze endlessly until Esme made us put them away. And then she would usually put Carlisle away too, for the night.

"I am telling you, I have a really good feeling about tonight. I just get the sense, I don't know. I feel like something is going to happen tonight," Alice mused, staring thoughtfully out the window.

"Something is going to happen all right. We will have a great time, drink way too much, and I will probably try to cop a feel off Bella on the car ride home," Rose said, winking at me.

"Mmm darlin'," I teased, and she blew me a kiss.

"Oh would you two forget your pseudo lesbian romance, I am being serious here. I really feel like something is going to happen tonight. I can't explain it," she continued, sighing in the Harlequin romance voice she got sometimes.

"Who knows, maybe you will meet your Prince Charming tonight," I whispered, smiling back at her hopeful face. Alice was certainly the most romantic of the three of us, and she was steadfast in her belief that everyone had a soulmate on the planet.

Eh...

I would just settle for the Return Of The O.

When we pulled up to their house there were cars parked everywhere along the winding street and Japanese lanterns and votive bags were lining the property. Like most houses set into the hilly landscape, from the street the homes were nothing to look at. You usually saw the garage and the front door, maybe even just a front gate. These houses were spectacular once you got beyond the first glance, boasting some of the best views of San Francisco around.

We giggled as we made our way through the front gate, and I smiled when the girls stared at the contraption before us. I had seen the plans for this, but had yet to take a ride.

"What kind of fucked up rickshaw is this?" Rose blurted out, and I couldn't help but laugh. Like many houses built into steep hills, Esme and Carlisle had designed and installed a Hillavator. It was basically an elevator that went up and down the hill. Very practical when you considered the amount of steps there were to reach the house. The hillside was blanketed with terraced gardens and benches and different garden scenes, all artfully arranged on flagstone paths lit with tiki torches that led down the hill to the house. But for grocery shopping and day-to-day, the Hillavator made for a much easier ride.

"Would you ladies care to use the lift or make your way down the path?" an attendant asked, appearing from the other side of the carriage.

"You mean...ride in that thing?" Alice squeaked.

"Sure, that's what its made for, come on," I encouraged stepping through the little door that he had opened in the side. It really felt like one of those sky carriages they have at Disney World, or a ski lift. Except that it was going down a hill instead of up in the air.

"Yeah, OK, let's do it," said Rose, climbing in behind me and plopping down on the seat. Alice shrugged, and followed.

"There will be someone at the bottom waiting for you, enjoy the party ladies," he smiled, and we were off. As we rode down the hill, we could see the house coming up to meet us. Esme had created a purely magical world here, and as there were huge windows throughout the house, we could see into the party as we continued our descent.

"Wow, there are a lot of people here," Alice wondered, her eyes huge. The sounds of a jazz band that was set up on one of the many patios down below came tinkling up to us.

I felt a little fluttering in my tummy as the cart came to a stop at the bottom and another attendant came to open the door. As we filed out and heard our heels click clacking across the flagstone, I could hear Esme's voice from inside the house and I smiled without thinking. I truly adored her.

"Girls! You made it!" she gushed as we walked in. I turned in the space, taking it all in at once. The house was almost like a triangle, set into the hillside and then sprawling outwards. Smooth mahogany colored wood floors spread out beneath us, and the clean lines of the smooth walls contrasted beautifully. Esme's personal taste was a comfortable modern and the colors in the house reflected the colors of the surrounding hillside. Warm leafy greens, rich earthy browns, soft muted creams, and hints of deep marine blue.

The house was two stories, and almost the entire back of the house was glass, taking advantage of the spectacular view. The moonlight danced on the water in the bay, and in the distance you could see the lights of San Francisco.

Tears sprang to my eyes as I saw the home that she and Carlisle had created for themselves and as I looked back at her, I saw her excitement mirrored in her own eyes.

"It's perfect," I whispered to her, and she hugged me tightly. Rose and Alice gushed to Esme as a waiter brought us each a glass of

champagne. As Esme left us to go and mingle with her guests, the three of us made our way outside onto one of the many terraces to take stock. Waiters were passing trays, and as we munched on roasted prawns and sipped our bubble, we scanned the crowd for anyone we knew. Of course many of Esme's clients were there, and I knew I would be mixing in a bit of work tonight, but for right now I was content to eat my crustacean and listen to Rose and Alice size up the men.

"Ooo Rose, I see a cowboy for you right over there, no, no wait, he is taken by the other charming cowboy. Moving on," Alice sighed as she continued her search.

"I got him, I spotted your boy for tonight Alice!" Rose squealed in a whisper.

"Where, where?" Alice whispered back, hiding her mouth behind a shrimp. I rolled my eyes and grabbed another glass of bubbly as the waiter passed by. The two of them were forever picking out boys for each other, and they were usually pretty good at it.

"Inside, see. Right over there by the island in the kitchen, black sweater and khaki pants? Jesus, he is a tall drink of water...hmmm, nice hair too," Rose mused, narrowing her eyes as she looked at Alice's new prospect.

"Yes, with the curly brown hair? Yes, I could definitely work with that. Look how tall he is. Now, who is that yummy he is talking to? I can see blond hair, if that bimbo would just move out of the way," Alice murmured, raising an eyebrow as the alleged bimbo finally moved on giving us a more clear shot of the man in question.

I looked as well, and as a path opened up we could now see both of the men in question. The big guy was, well, big. Tall and broad, linebacker shoulders almost. He filled out his sweater quite nicely and as he laughed his face lit up. Yeah, he was exactly Alice's type.

The other gentleman in question had wavy blond hair that he was constantly pushing behind his ears. He wore bookish glasses and they really worked for him. He was long and lean and intense looking, almost classical in his beauty. Make no mistake, this guy was bangin' and Rose drew in a quick breath at the sight of him.

As we continued to watch the scene unfold, a third man joined the other two, and we all smiled at the same time. Carlisle.

We headed for the kitchen immediately to say hi to our favorite man on the planet. No doubt, Rose and Alice were delighted of course that Carlisle would be able to handle the introductions. I glanced at the two as they were simultaneously working themselves over a bit. Alice surreptitiously pinched both cheeks a la Scarlett O'Hara, and I saw Rose sneak a quick boob prop to make sure she was bangin' as well.

These poor guys didn't stand a chance.

Carlisle caught sight of us making our way across to him and smiled. The guys opened up their circle a little to let us in and Carlisle enveloped all three of us in a giant hug.

"My three favorite girls, I was wondering when you three were going to turn up! Fashionably late as always," he teased and we all giggled. Carlisle did that, he made us all turn into silly schoolgirls.

"Hi Carlisle," we all said in unison, and it struck me how much we sounded like Carlisle's Angels at that moment. I was gonna wind up as Kate Jackson, I just knew it...

Big Guy and Glasses stood there grinning as well, waiting for an introduction as the three of us just stared openly at Carlisle. He really was the picture of the ideal older man. Golden blond hair, just barely beginning to silver by his temples. Wearing jeans, a dark blue shirt and pair of old cowboy boots he could have walked right off a Ralph Lauren runway.

"Allow me to make some introductions here. Bella works with Esme, and Alice and Rosalie are her, oh what do you call it...BFF's?" Carlisle smiled, gesturing to me.

"Wow, BFF's? Who's been teaching you the lingo Daddy-o?" I laughed and extended my hand first to Big Guy.

"Hi, I'm Bella, nice to meet you," as he engulfed my hand with his paw. It actually was like a paw it was so big. Alice was gonna lose her mind with this one. His eyes were full of fun I could tell already as he smiled down at me.

"Hey Bella, I'm Emmett. This tool here is Jasper," he said, nodding over his shoulder at Glasses.

"Thanks, remind me of that next time you can't remember your password to get into your email," Jasper laughed goodnaturedly, and extended a hand to me as well. I shook it, noticing now that I was up close how scorchingly blue his eyes were. If Rose had kids with this guy they would be illegally beautiful.

I made sure to smoothly handle the introductions as Carlisle stepped away for a moment. We began to small talk and I chuckled as the four of them began to do their little getting to know you dance. Emmett spotted someone he knew behind me and shouted out,

"Hey Masen, get your pretty boy ass over here and meet our new friends."

"I'm coming, I'm coming," I heard a voice say from behind me, and I turned to see who was joining our group.

As I turned the first thing I saw was green. Green shirt, green eyes. Green. Beautifully green.

Then I saw red as I recognized who belonged to the green.

"Fucking Wallbanger," I hissed, frozen on the spot. His grin slid off as well as he played place the face.

"Fucking Pink Nightie Girl," he grimaced, his lips turned upwards in a sneer.

We stared at each other, seething as the air literally turned electric between us, snapping and crackling.

The four behind us had fallen silent, listening to this little interchange. Then they caught up.

"That's Wallbanger?" Rose screeched.

"Wait a minute, that's Pink Nightie Girl?" Emmett laughed, and Alice and Jasper snorted.

My face flamed bright red as I processed this information. His sneer became that damnable smirk I had seen that night in the hallway. When I banged on his door and made him quit fucking The Cockney and yelled at him. When I had been wearing...

"Pink Nightie Girl. Pink Nightie Girl!" I choked out, beyond pissed. Beyond angry. Well into FuriousTown. I stared at him, pouring all of my Wallbanging tension into that one look. All of the sleepless nights and lost O's and cold showers and banana thrusting and fuckhot wet dreams went into that one look. I wanted to level him with my eyes, make him beg for mercy. But no...Not Edward Wallbanger, Director of the International House Of Orgasms.

He

Was

Still

Smirking...

Well? So they are progressing nicely, yes? I am really enjoying writing this for you guys, let me know what you think. I love that so many have said that you enjoy the Clive almost more than any other character!

Make sure you check out the latest episode of the Twigasm Podcat. Crazier than shit interview with Algonquirt...all kinds of fantastic fuckery.

I will try and get this next chapter out to you as soon as I can chickens. MWAH to all.

Recs for the week:

A Blessing And A Curse by The Black Arrow. Lovely little ball of angst and gorgeous.

Ethan Church by Dryler. A twisted mystery with more questions than answers.

Reality Without Expectations by mjinaspen. Straight up, in your face, hotter than fuck, lemony goodness. Jesus lord, whew...

7. Mysterious Ways

Notes for Chapter 7

Hello all! I am back, and sooner than I thought I would be to bring you a new chapter of BangBang. The reviews for the last chapter blew me away, and I was truly grateful for each and every one of them. It makes me so happy that you all are having as much fun with these two as I am. I hope you enjoy!

Thanks as always to Nina and Lauren, and the Twigasm posse. Crazy bitches, all of you...

See you down below...

Chapter 7-Mysterious Ways

The two of us stood staring at each other, waves of anger and annoyance and pure curiosity pinging forth between us. We stood, he with the smirk and me with the sneer, until I noticed that the peanut gallery had fallen silent along with every other guest in the kitchen. I looked past Wallbanger and saw Esme, standing with Carlisle, with an inquisitive expression on her face. No doubt she was wondering why her prodigy was squaring off in the middle of her housewarming.

Wait a minute, how the fuck did she know Wallbanger? Why was he even here?

I felt a tiny hand on my shoulder and spun quickly to see Alice standing before me.

"Easy trigger, you don't need to go nuclear at Esme's, ya know?" she whispered, smiling shyly at Edward. I rolled my eyes and turned back to him where he had now been joined by our hosts.

"Bella, I didn't realize you knew Edward, what a small world!" Esme exclaimed, clasping her hands together excitedly.

"I wouldn't say I know him, but I am familiar with his work," I replied through clenched teeth. Alice was dancing almost in a circle around us like a little kid with a secret.

"Esme, you won't believe this but..." she started, her voice bubbling over with barely concealed mirth.

"Alice..." I warned, trying to stop her.

"Edward is Edward Wallbanger!" Rose cried out, grasping Carlisle's arm in excitement. She really only did it so she could touch the Carlisle.

"Dammit," I breathed as Esme took in this information.

"No fucking way," she giggled, hand clapping over her mouth as she realized that she had dropped the f-bomb. Esme always tried to be such a lady. Carlisle looked a little confused as Edward had the decency to blush a little.

"Asshole," I mouthed to him.

"Cockblocker" he mouthed back, the smirk returning in full force. I gasped and my eyes widened. I clenched my fists and started tell him exactly what he could do with his cockblocker when Emmett burst in.

"C, check this shit out. This little hottie here is the Pink Nightie Girl! Can you stand it!" he laughed, as Jasper struggled to keep a straight face. Carlisle's eyes widened and he raised an eyebrow as he stared at me. Edward swallowed a laugh.

"Pink Nightie Girl?" Esme asked and I heard Carlisle lean in and tell her he would explain later.

"OK, that's it! Wallbanger, a word please?" I barked and grabbed him by the arm. I yanked him outside and pulled him down one of the little paths the led down the hill and away from the house. He scrambled along after me, my heels ringing out angrily on the flagstone.

"Jesus slow down will you?" he protested. My response was to dig my nails into the skin on his arm, which made him yelp. Good.

We reached a little enclave set away from the house and the party. Far enough away that I knew no one would be able to hear him scream when I removed his balls from his body. I released his arm and rounded on him, pointing a finger in his surprised face.

"You've got some nerve telling everyone about me asshole! What the hell, Pink Nightie Girl? Are you kidding me?" I whisper/yelled.

"Hey, I could ask you the same question! Why do all those girls in there call me Wallbanger huh? Who is telling tales now? And for that matter, they also know you as Doorbanger and Cockblocker. Pink Nightie Girl is just a better visual, they liked that one!" he whisper/yelled right back.

This guy pushed every button I had.

"Are you kidding me? Cockblocker! Just because I refused to spend another night listening to you and your harem does not make me a cockblocker!" I hissed.

"Well due to the fact that your doorbanging blocked my cock, it actually *does* make you a cockblocker. Cockblocker!" he hissed back. This entire conversation was taking place in whispers and it was beginning to sound like something that might have happened in fourth grade. Except for all the nighties and the cock talk.

"Look fucko, I'm not going to spend every night listening to you try to crash your girl's head through my wall with the force of your dick alone! No way buddy," I replied, pointing a finger at him. He grabbed it.

"What I do on my side of that wall is my business. Let's get that straight right now. And why are you so concerned about me and my dick anyway?" he answered, smirking at me again. It was the smirk, that damn smirk that made me go ballistic. That and the fact that he was still holding my finger.

"It is my business when you and your sextrain come knocking on *my* wall every fucking night!"

"You are really fixated on this aren't you? Wish you were on the other side of that wall? Are you lookin' to ride that sextrain, Nightie Girl?" he chuckled as he wagged his finger in my face.

"OK, that's it," I growled.

I grabbed his finger in defense, which instantly locked us together. We looked like two loggers trying to cut down a tree. We struggled back and forth, looking beyond ridiculous. We were both huffing and puffing, each trying to get the upper hand, each refusing to relent.

"Why are you such a manwhoring asshole?" I asked, my face inches from his.

"Why are you such a cockblocking bitch?" he asked and when I opened my mouth to tell him exactly what I thought...the fucker kissed me.

Kissed me.

Placed his lips to mine and kissed me. Under the moon and the stars, with the sounds of the ocean crashing and the crickets cricketing. My eyes were still open, furiously looking back into his. His eyes were so green, it was like looking at two angry limes.

He pulled away from me, our fingers still holding on to the others like pliers. I released his hand and slapped him across the face. He looked shocked, and then I grabbed his sweater and pulled him closer to me. I

kissed him, this time closing my eyes and letting my hands fill with wool and my nose fill with warm boy smell.

Fuck off...he smelled good.

His hands crept around to the small of my back and as soon as he touched me, I realized where I was and what I was doing.

"Fuck," I said, and pulled away. We stood looking at each other, and I wiped at my lips. I started to walk away and then turned quickly.

"This never happened, got it?" I said and pointed at him again.

"Whatever you say," he smirked and I felt my temper flare again.

"And cool it with the Pink Nightie shit, OK?" I whisper/yelled and turned to walk back down the path.

"Until I see your other nighties, that's what I'm calling you," he shot back, and I almost tripped. I smoothed my dress and headed back to the party.

Unbelievable.

"So I told the guy, there is no way I am organizing your 'play room', you can arrange your own riding crops!" Alice shrieked, and we all laughed with her. One thing about Alice, she can tell a story like nobody's business. She has a knack for bringing a group together, especially when it's a group of new people just getting to know each other.

The party was beginning to wind down, my girls and the Wallbanger posse were all gathered around a fire pit Esme had designed on one of the terraces. Dug deep and lined with flagstone, it had benches all around. While the fire crackled merrily, we laughed and drank and told stories. And by that I mean Alice, Rose, Emmett, and Jasper told stories while Edward and I glared at each other from across the pit. I could see

him through the flames, and with the sparks flying, if I squinted my eyes a little I could imagine him roasting in the fires of hell. It was fun having a good imagination.

"So, are we gonna address the elephant in the room here?" Jasper asked, drawing his knees up and placing his beer on the bench next to him. He had sat down next to Rose, who was quite pleased at this seating arrangement.

"Which elephant would that be?" I asked sweetly, sipping my wine. I had switched from champagne to shiraz when I realized that the bubbly was going to my head.

"Oh please, the fact that the guy banging the shit out of your walls is the hottie across the way girl!" Alice squealed, almost tossing her drink in Emmett's face. He laughed along with her, but pried the glass out of her hand before she could do any real damage.

"There really isn't anything to talk about. I have a new neighbor and her name is Bella, that's it," Edward smirked, eyeing me across the fire. I raised my eyebrow at him and sipped at my wine.

"Yeah, it's nice to know Pink Nightie Girl has a name, although the way he described you...wow! You're as hot as he said you were!" Emmett hooted at me appreciatively, trying to fist pump Edward thru the flames, but flinching back when he realized how hot they were.

My eyes shot to Edward. He grimaced at the description. Interesting...

"So, you were the guys that were banging back at us tonight? Listening to the Guns N Roses?" Rose asked, nudging Jasper on the shoulder.

"You were the girls singing along I suppose, yes?" he nudged back, smiling at her.

"Small world, isn't it?" Alice sighed, gazing up at Emmett. He winked at her, and I saw quickly where this was going. She had her giant, Rose had her pretty boy and I had my shiraz. Which was getting more and more empty by the second.

"Excuse me," I muttered and stood up to find the one of the waiters with the last of the wine.

I made my way through the dwindling crowd, nodding at a few faces that I recognized. I sighed as I accepted yet another glass of wine and strolled back outside. I started back towards the fire pit when I heard Alice say, "And you should have heard Bella when she told us about the night she banged on his door."

Rose and Alice leaned together and said breathlessly,

"He. Was. Still. Hard..." and they all dissolved into laughter. I needed to remember to kill those girls tomorrow, with pain.

I groaned at my public humiliation and spun about angrily to stomp off into the gardens when I saw Edward in the shadows, smoking. I tried to back away before he saw me, but he waved his hand over.

"Come on, come on, I don't bite," he scoffed, offering me a cigarette. I started to decline, I had quit smoking years ago, but if tonight was not the perfect night for a relapse, I don't know what was.

"Yeah sure, I guess," I answered, taking one and leaning forward when he struck a match. My eyes met his again and this time they were not so angry.

"Thanks," I said and the two of us smoked quietly in the night. I was looking out over the bay, enjoying the silence, when he finally spoke.

"So I was thinking, since we are neighbors and all..." he started, and I turned to look at him. He was grinning a crooked little half grin at me,

and I knew that was what he used to make the panties drop. Ha, little did he know I wasn't wearing any.

"You were thinking what? That I would want to join you some night? See what all the fuss is about? Join you in the welcome wagon? Honey, I have no interest in becoming one of your girls," I answered, glaring at him. I looked around for a place to put my cigarette out, and seeing none I dropped it with a hiss into my glass. I had enjoyed enough wine for tonight anyway. Edward was just looking at me with a frown on his face.

"Well?" I asked, tapping my foot angrily. The nerve of this guy...

"Actually, I was going to say, since we're neighbors and all maybe we could call a truce?" he said quietly, looking at me in a very irritated way.

"Oh," I said. It was all I could say.

"Or maybe not," he finished and started to walk away.

"Wait wait wait, Edward," I groaned grabbing him by the wrist as he pushed past me.

He calmly stood there, glaring at me.

"Yes. Fine. We can call a truce. But there will have to be some ground rules," I replied, turning to face him. He crossed his arms over his chest.

"I should warn you now, I don't enjoy women telling me what to do," he answered darkly.

"Not from what I have heard," I said under my breath, but he caught it anyway.

"That's different," he answered, the smirk beginning to reappear.

"OK Wallbanger, here's the thing. You enjoy yourself, do your thing, hang from the ceiling fans, I don't care. But late at night? Can we keep it down to a dull roar? Please? I gotta get some sleep," I began. He considered it.

"Yes, I can see where that might be a problem. But you know, you don't really know anything about me, and you certainly don't know anything about me and my 'harem' as you call it. I don't have to justify my life, or the women in it, to you. So no more nasty judgments, agreed?" he added, looking closely at me.

I considered it.

"Agreed. By the way, I appreciated the quiet this week. Something happen?"

"Happen? What do you mean?" he asked, as we started walking back towards the group.

"I thought maybe you were injured in the line of duty, like maybe your dick broke off or something," I joked, remembering when I told this zinger to the girls earlier in the week.

"Unbelievable, that's all you think I am isn't it?" he retorted, his face getting angry again.

"A dick? Yes, in fact," I snapped back.

"Now look-" he began, and Emmett appeared out of nowhere.

"Nice to see you two have kissed and made up," he chided, pretending to hold Edward back.

"Fuck off McCarty," he muttered as the rest of the newly paired off reappeared.

"Bella, we're taking off!" Rose giggled, as she leaned on Jasper's arm. I glared at Edward one more time and stalked towards the girls.

"That's good, I have had enough fun for tonight. I'll call for the car and we can take off in a few," I replied, reaching into my bag for my phone.

"Actually, Emmett was telling us about this great little bar, and we were going to head that way. Do you two want to come?" Alice interrupted, stopping my hand. She squeezed it, and I saw her shake her head almost imperceptibly.

"No?" I asked, raising both eyebrows.

"Great! 'Ol Wallbanger' here'll make sure you get home OK," Emmett said, clapping Edward roughly on the back.

"Yeah sure," he said through clenched teeth.

Before I could even blink, the four of them were on their way towards the Hillavator, saying sloppy goodbyes to Carlisle and Esme, who just laughed and shared a high five.

We stared at each other, and I suddenly felt exhausted.

"Truce?" I said tiredly.

"Truce," he said, nodding his head.

We left the party together.

We drove back across the bridge, the late night fog and silence enveloping us. He had opened the door for me when I approached the Rover, probably some ingrained training from his mother. His hand had rested on the small of my back when I climbed in, and then it was gone and he was around to his side before I even had a chance to make a snarky remark. Maybe it was best; we had called a truce. The second

truce within the span of mere minutes. This was going to end badly, I could tell. Still, I would try. I could be neighborly, right?

Neighborly. Ha. That kiss was all kinds of neighborly. I was trying as hard as I could not to think about it, but it just kept bubbling up to the top of my head. I pressed my fingers to my lips without even thinking about it, remembering the feeling of his mouth on mine. His kiss was almost a dare, calling my bluff. A promise of what would follow if I allowed it.

My kiss? Straight up instinct that frankly surprised the shit out of me. Why had I kissed him? I had no idea, but I did. It all happened so fast, it must have looked ridiculous. I had slapped him, and then kissed him like some scene out of an old Cary Grant movie or an episode of Will and Grace. I had thrown my entire body into my kiss, letting my soft places curve against his strong places. My mouth sought his forcefully and his kiss had grown as eager as mine. There was no fairy tale electricity, no zapping of electrical current between us, but there was something there. And it had quickly hardened against my thigh...

His messing about with the radio brought me back to the present. His focus was on his iPod while we drove across the bridge, making me quite nervous.

"Can I help you with that? Please?" I asked, looking nervously at the water below me as he took his eyes off the road once more to look for a certain song.

"No thanks, I got it," he said, glancing at me. He must have noticed the way I was peering over the side of the bridge, and he chuckled.

"Sure, go ahead. I mean, you knew every word to Welcome To The Jungle, so you might pick something good out," he challenged, and I looked at his profile. Even from the side, I could see the smirk. Which, and I was loathe to admit it, made his jaw look like it had been chiseled out of the hottest piece of granite ever unearthed.

"I'm sure I can find something," I sassed back, reaching over his hand and leaning towards him. His hand grazed against the side of my breast, and we both flinched.

"What, you tryin' to cop a feel Wallbanger?" I snapped, selecting a song.

"Did you or did you not just place your tits in the path of my hand?" he sniped back.

"I think your hand just moved in front of the girls trajectory, but don't sweat it. You are hardly the first that these celestial beings have brought into their orbit," I sighed dramatically, looking at him out of the corner of my eye to see if he could tell I was joking. The corner of his mouth rose into that crooked little grin and I allowed myself a small smile as well.

"Yes, celestial. That's the word I was going to use as well. As in, not of this earth. As in, suspended in the heavens. As in, courtesy of Victoria's Secret," he grinned back and I pretended to be shocked.

"Oh my, you know of the secret? And here I thought we silly girls had you all fooled," I laughed back, and settled back into my seat. We had crossed the bridge by now and were making our way back into the city.

"It takes a lot to fool me, especially when it comes to the opposite sex, dear Doorbanger," he replied, as the music came on. He nodded at my choice.

"Too Short? Interesting selection, not many women would have chosen this," he mused.

"What can I say, I am feeling very Bay Area tonight. And I should tell you now, I am not like most women," I added, feeling another smile sneak across my face.

"I am beginning to get that," he said quietly.

We were both quiet for a few more minutes, then suddenly we both started to speak at once.

"So what do you think about-" I started.

"Can you believe that they all-" he started.

"Go ahead," I chuckled.

"No, what were you going to say?" he prodded.

"I was going to say so what do you think about our friends tonight?"

"That's actually what I was going to say, I couldn't believe they just up and left us!" he laughed, and I giggled along with him. He had a great laugh, kind of a like a little boy.

"I know, but my girls know what they want. I could not have painted two better guys for them, they are exactly what they look for," I confided, leaning against the window so I could watch him as we navigated the hilly streets.

"Yeah, Emmett really loves the tiny girls. As soon as I saw that brunette, I knew it was on. And Jasper loves him some leggy blond," he laughed again, glancing over at me, making sure that I was OK with the leggy blond comment.

I was. She was.

"Well I'm sure I'll hear all about it tomorrow, and what kind of impression they made on my ladies. I'll get the full report, don't you worry," I sighed, thinking about how my phone would be ringing off the hook tomorrow.

Silence crept back in, and I wondered what to say next.

"So how do you know Carlisle and Esme?" he asked, saving me from small talk fever.

"I work for Esme at the firm. I'm a designer."

"Wait. Hold up, you're *that* Bella?" he asked incredulously.

"I have no idea what that means," I answered, wondering why he was now staring at me.

"Damn, it really *is* a small world," he exclaimed, shaking his head from side to side as though trying to clear it.

He was silent as I sat there in limbo.

"Hey, wanna clear that up a bit? What did you mean, *that* Bella?" I finally questioned, slapping his shoulder.

"It's just that...well...huh. Esme has mentioned you before, let's leave it at that," he said, trying to end the discussion.

"Hell no we won't leave it at that! What did she say?" I pushed, slapping again at his shoulder.

"Would you cut that out! You are really rough, you know that?" he said, flicking me on the knee.

There were simply too many ways that I could go with the rough comment, but I wisely kept quiet.

"What did she say about me?" I asked quietly, now worried that perhaps she had said something about my work.

He looked over at me and saw that I was perplexed.

"No no, it's not like that, it's nothing bad. It's just that, well, Esme adores you. And she adores me, of course right?" he teased, flashing me that grin again. I rolled my eyes, but played along.

"And well, she might have...mentioned a few times...that she thought I should meet you," he dragged out, only to wink at me when I met his eyes.

"Oh. Ohhhh," I breathed as I realized what he meant. I blushed.

Esme, that little matchmaking shit.

"Does she know about the harem?" I asked.

"Would you quit with that? Enough about the freaking harem! What if I told you that those three women were incredibly important to me? That I care for them a lot and they for me. That the relationships that I have with them work for us, and no one else needs to understand it, got it?" he said plainly, pulling the Rover to an angry stop at the curb of our building.

I was quiet as I studied my hands and then watched him as he raked his hands through his already messed up hair.

"Hey, you know what? You're right. Who am I to say what's right or wrong for anyone else. And if it works for you, then great. Mazel tov. Hit it. Whatever. I would just be surprised that Esme would want to set you up with me, she knows I am a pretty traditional girl, that's all," I answered, trying to appease.

He smirked a little, and turned the force of his green eyes on me.

"As it happens, she does not know about the harem. I keep my private life private. Apparently with the exception of my neighbor with the thin walls and the devastating lingerie," he said, with a low voice that could melt, well, anything. My brain most certainly amongst those, seeing as it

felt it was suddenly beginning to ooze out of my ears and on down to my collar.

"Except for her," I muttered, feeling thoroughly scrambled.

He let out a dark laugh and then opened his door. He walked around, keeping his eyes on mine as he strode around the car and opened my door for me.

Now I was the one shaking my head and gathering my thoughts. I climbed down out of the car, taking the hand that he offered me, and almost not noticing that he traced a tiny circle on the inside of my left hand with his right thumb. Almost didn't notice it my ass...it made my skin pebble and my hoohah sit up straight.

We walked inside the building, once again with him opening the door for me. He really was charming, I had to give him that.

"So how do you know Carlisle and Esme?" I asked, walking up the stairs ahead of him. I knew for certain he was checking out my legs, why wouldn't he? I had great stems, and they were flattered by my flouncy little skirt.

"Carlisle's been a friend of my family's for years. I've known him practically my whole life. He also unofficially manages my investments for me," he answered as we rounded the first floor and started on the second. I looked over my shoulder at him, and noticed him peeking at my legs. Ha! Caught him.

"Ooo, you're investments. Have a few bonds left over from birthdays there, moneybags?" I teased, and he chuckled.

"Yeah, something like that."

We continued up the stairs.

"It's curious, don't you think?" I offered.

"Curious?" he asked, his voice slipping over me like warm honey.

"Well I mean, Carlisle and Esme both knowing us, meeting at a party like this, and you being the one that has been keeping me nocturnally amused all these weeks...it's just curious, isn't it? Small world and all that?" I pondered, as we rounded the top stair and I got my keys out.

"San Francisco is a big city, but it can feel like a small town in some ways. But yes, it's curious. Intriguing even, who knew that nice designer Esme wanted to set me up with is actually Pink Nightie Girl. Had I known? I might have taken her up on it..." he replied, that damnable grin back on his beautiful face.

Dammit, why couldn't he have stayed an asshole?

"Yes, but Pink Nightie Girl would have said no. After all, thin walls and all..." I winked, making a fist and thumping on the wall next to my door. I could hear Clive prattling around behind the door and I needed to get inside before he began to wail.

"Ah yes, thin walls. Hmmm. Well good night Bella. Truce is still on right?" he asked, headed for his door.

"Truce is still on, unless you do something to make me mad again," I laughed, leaning in the doorway.

"Oh count on that. And Bella? Speaking of thin walls?" he said, as he opened his door and looked back at me. He leaned in his own doorway, thumping his fist on the wall.

"Yes?" I asked, a little too dreamily for my own good.

He smirked again and said,

"Sweet dreams."

He thumped on the wall one more time, winked, and went inside.

Huh.

Sweet dreams and thin walls.

Sweet *dreams* and thin walls...

Mother of pearl.

He had heard me...

Tee hee. These two crack me up. Now then, few things to discuss. First, several of you PM'd me this week to ask me about I Love LA and where it had gone. Well it was pulled from ff, but not by me. does now allow real life fiction, and frankly I am surprised it stayed up as long as it did. But as much as people would love to rid the entire world of real life fan fiction, George and Gracie are alive and well over on twilighted:) In fact, when the sequel comes out, it will only be available on twi, so make sure you favorite author me over there so you know when it is on its way:)

Also, new episode of twigasm podcast available soon, make sure you are subscribing so that you get our new episodes automatically. So many of you are taking us with you on your way to work, at work, on the treadmill, everywhere. And we love it!

OK, I actually am only going to give you all one rec this week, because I am so totally over the moon for this story I can't even stand it. In The Land Of Milk And Honey by Jesus is magic. It has so thoroughly kicked my ass it is not even funny. Give it a shot, and make sure you don't stop after just the first few chapters or so. It is a little confusing at first, and it is deliberate. This story combines everything I love about a great story, and I want you all

to read it. Make sure you let her know who sent you:) And make sure you let me know when you get to the steak...heh heh heh. Go now!

See you next time chickens:)

Alice

xoxo

8. Chapter 8

Greeting ladies and jellyspoons! New chapter, all ready for you and yours.

Thanks as always to team Wallbanger, consisting of the lovely Miss Nina and the lovely Miss Lauren. To Christina and Moi at Twigasm HQ, to Bittenev for taking all those colon kicks, to the chickens on the thread, and to all of you that have reviewed so faithfully. Mwah to you and your lady bits...

Poke

"Grrr."

Poke. Knead knead. Poke.

"Enough."

Knead knead knead.

Head butt.

"I realize you don't know how to read a calendar, but you should know when it's a Sunday. Seriously Clive."

Hard head butt.

I rolled over, away from Clive's head butts and persistent poking and pulled the covers over my head. Flashes of the night before kept appearing. Seeing Edward in Esme's kitchen with the smirk heard round the world. Hearing his friends call me Pink Nightie Girl. Seeing Carlisle as he put two and two together that I was the Pink Nightie Girl. Kissing Edward. Mmm, kissing Edward.

No, no kissing the Edward!

I snuggled deeper under the covers.

Sweet dreams and thin walls...

I remembered his parting words to me and sheer mortification washed over me as I burrowed further.

The night had been decidedly dream free, but to make sure no one (read Edward) could hear me screaming out in passion, I had slept with the TV on, something I am loathe to do. The revelation that Edward had heard me dreaming of him had thrown me for such a loop last night, and I found myself flipping endlessly through the channels, trying to find anything that would **not** sound like me having my own version of the Wallbanger Wet Dream. I ended up on the all infomercial channel, which of course kept me up later that I had planned, finding everything they were selling fascinating. I had to pry the cell phone out of my hand at 2:30 in the morning when I almost ordered the Slap Chop. To say nothing of the half hour I will never get back watching Bowser try to sell me the Time Life collection of songs from the 50's.

This was when I was not listening to the sounds of Tommy Dorsey coming through the wall. It made me smile. I can't lie.

I stretched under the sheet lazily, stifling a giggle as I watched the shadow of Clive stalking me, trying to figure out a way under the covers. He tried every angle he could as I deflected his advances. Finally, he resumed his poke-poke-knead approach, and I popped my head back up laughing at him.

I could handle this thing with Wallbanger, I didn't have to be totally embarrassed. Sure, my O was gone, maybe for forever. Sure, I'd been having sex dreams for the last week about my overly attractive and overly confident neighbor. Sure, said neighbor had heard these dreams and commented on them, getting the last word in an already extremely

bizarre evening.

But I could handle this. Of course I could, I would just acknowledge it before he could, take the air out of his sails as it were. He didn't always have to have the last word. I could recover from this, and keep our ridiculous little truce going.

I was totally fucked.

Just then I heard the alarm go off next door and I froze. I actually froze, and slipped a little deeper under the covers, just my eyes peeping over.

Why are you hiding, he can't see you...

Right, right.

I heard him slap at the alarm clock and then heard his feet hit the floor. Why was he up so early on a Sunday? It was amazing when all was quiet how much you could truly hear through these walls. How the hell did I not realize before that if I could hear him, he could obviously hear me. I felt my face color as I thought of my dreams again but then got control. This was further aided by Clive of course, head butting the small of my back in an attempt to physically push me from the bed and give him his breakfast.

"Ok, Ok, let's get up. God, you are such a little jerk sometimes Clive."

He fired back a reply over his cat shoulder as he stalked towards the kitchen. I shook my head at the attitude that I was receiving from my damn cat, and then shuffled towards the kitchen myself.

After getting Mr. Clive fed and running through the shower to remove the Shiraz and embarrassment from my body, I was heading out the front door of my building to meet the girls for brunch. I was looking down at my phone answering a text from Alice when I collided with a hot wet Wallbanger.

"Whoah," I cried as I started to teeter backwards. A strong arm shot out and caught me just before I went from flustered to flat out wrong and on my ass.

"Where are you running off to this morning?" he asked, as I took him in. Sweaty white t-shirt, black running shorts, damp curly hair, iPod, and a grin.

"You're sweaty," I word vomited.

Nice. He knows you dream about him, and now you are commenting on his sweat. Smooth.

"I *am* sweaty, it happens," he added, sweeping the back of his hand across his forehead and making his hair stand straight up. I had to physically block the neurons from my brain trying to get to my fingers to instruct them to lift and nestle. Lift and nestle.

He stared down at me, the knowing smirk beginning to make a reappearance. He was going to make this painful if I didn't go ahead and out the giant sex elephant in the room.

"So listen, about last night," I started, thinking it would be best to get it out in the open.

"What about last night? The part where you were berating me about my sex life? Or the part where you were sharing my sex life with your friends?" he asked, raising an eyebrow at me and raising his t-shirt to wipe off his face. I drew in a breath that sounded like a wind tunnel as I stared at abs you could grate pecorino on. Fucker, why couldn't he be a soft fat Wallbanger?

"No ass, I mean the crack you made about the sweet dreams? And the...well...the thin walls?" I stammered, avoiding all eye contact. I was fascinated suddenly with the new shade of toenail polish I had on. It was a lovely color...

"Ah yes, the thin walls. Well, they work both ways you know. And if someone were to say, have a very interesting dream some night, well let's just say it would be quite entertaining," he whispered as he got a little closer. His mouth was terrifyingly close to my ear, and my knees were turning a little Jello-like. Damn him and his power...

I had to get back control. I placed a hand on his stomach and backed him right the fuck up.

"Hey man, this is my dance space. And yes, you may have heard something that I would have preferred you did not hear, but that's not the way shit goes down. So, you got me. But you won't actually ever have me, so let's move on. You got that Wallbanger? And brunch by the way," I answered as I concluded my little self effacing diatribe. It might have made me sound insane.

He looked confused and amused at the same time.

"Brunch by the way?" he asked.

"Brunch. You asked where I was off to this morning, and my answer is brunch."

"Got it. And are you meeting your girls that were out with my guys last night?"

"I am, and I will gladly share the scoop with you if its any good," I giggled, twirling a piece of hair around my finger.

Nice. Flirting 101. What the hell...

"Oh I'm sure its good scoop, those two look like man eaters," he quipped, rocking back on his heels as he began to stretch out a bit.

"Are we talking Hannibal?"

"No, more like Hall & Oates," he laughed, looking up at me as he stretched out his hamstrings.

Christ, hamstrings...

"Yes, well they can definitely work a room when they need to," I said thoughtfully, beginning to back away.

"And how about you?" he asked, standing straight again.

"How about me what?"

"I bet you can 'work a room' Miss Doorbanger," he chuckled, his eyes twinkling down at me.

"Eh work this," I fired back and started to walk away with a twinkle of my own.

"Charming. Truly charming," he added as I shot him a look over my shoulder.

"Oh please, like you're not intrigued," I called back to him. I was about ten feet away at this point.

"Oh I'm intrigued," he shouted back as I walked backwards, shaking my hips at him while he applauded.

"Too bad I don't work well with others! I ain't no harem girl!" I yelled, practically at the corner.

"Truce still on?" he yelled.

"You tell me!"

"Oh hell yes, it's on!" he shouted back as I rounded the corner.

I twirled about once, actually doing a little pirouette. I smiled big as I bounced along, thinking a truce was a very good thing.

"Egg white omelet with tomatoes, mushrooms, spinach and onions."

"Pancakes, four stack please, with a side of bacon. And I will need the bacon very crispy please, but not blackened."

"Two eggs sunny side up, rye toast with butter on the side and the fruit salad."

All three of us ordered and settled in for a morning of coffee and gossip.

"Ok, so tell me what happened after we left last night?" Alice said, placing her chin in her hands and blinking prettily at me.

"After you left, you mean after you left me with my jerky neighbor to drive me home? What were you thinking? And telling everyone the He Was Still Hard story? Seriously? I am writing you both out of my will," I snapped, swallowing coffee that was too hot and instantly seared off a third of my taste buds. I let my tongue hang out of my mouth to cool.

"First of all, we told that story because it's funny, and funny is good," Rose began, fishing a piece of ice out of her water glass and handing it to me for my taste bud situation.

"Thanh ooo," I managed, sucking on the cube. She nodded.

"And secondly, you have nothing to leave me anyway, as I already have the entire set of Barefoot Contessa cookbooks, which you bought me yourself. So write me out of the will. And thirdly, the two of you were being such downers there was no way we were taking you out with our new boys," Rose finished, smiling wickedly.

"New boys. I love new boys," Alice clapped, looking like a Disney cartoon.

"How was the ride home?" Rose asked, winding her hair up into a bun and securing it with a pencil with grace I would never possess.

"The ride home. Well, it was interesting..." I sighed, now sucking on the cube with wild abandon.

"Interesting good?" Alice squealed.

"If you call fucking someone on the Bay Bridge while he drives a Range Rover interesting then yes!" I replied, calmly drumming my fingers on the table. Alice's mouth began to fall from her face when Rose placed her right hand over Alice's left, which was about to squeeze her fork into something unrecognizable.

"Sweetie, she's kidding. We would know if Bella had been fucked last night, she would have better skin tone," Rose soothed.

Alice nodded quickly and began to release the fork from her firm grasp. I pitied any guy who ever pissed her off during a handjob...

"So, no dish Swan?" Rose asked.

"Hey you know the rules. You dish, I dish," I answered, eyes widening as our breakfast was served. After we all dug in, Alice fired the first shot.

"Did you know that Emmett played football for Stanford? And that he always wanted to go into sports broadcasting?" she offered, separating her melon from her berries. She was methodical with a fruit salad.

"Good to know, good to know. Did you know that Jasper sold some kind of amazing computer program to Hewlett Packard when he was just 23? And that he put all the money in the bank, quit his job, and spent two years teaching English to kids in Thailand?" Rose added next.

"That is very good to know as well. Did you know that Edward doesn't consider his lady friends a "harem" and that Esme actually at one point told him about me as a potential girl he should be dating?" was my contribution to the dish pot.

We all hmm'd and chewed.

Round Two.

"Did you know that Emmett loves to windsurf? And that he has tickets to the symphony benefit next week? When he found out I was already going with you Rose, he suggested we double."

"Mmm, that sounds fun. I was thinking of asking Jasper. Who by the way also loves to windsurf. And I can further report that he now runs a charity that puts computers and educational materials into inner city schools all over California? It's called," Rose began, and Alice quickly joined in,

"No Child Left Offline?" they said together.

"I love that charity! I give to that organization each year! And Jasper is the one who runs it? Wow...small world," Alice mused as she began to cut into her eggs.

We were all quiet while we chewed again, and I tried to come up with something else to say about Wallbanger that didn't have anything to do with him kissing me, me kissing him, or him being aware of my nocturnal verbal emissions.

"Um, Edward has Too Short on his iPod," I mumbled, which was met with hmms as well. My dish wasn't as good, but I hardly knew anything about my neighbor that I maintained a tentative truce with.

"So last night was good for you guys huh? Any kisses at the door, any spit swapping?" I asked, switching the focus back to them.

"Yes! I mean, Emmett kissed me," Alice sighed.

"Oooh I bet he's a good kisser. Did he wrap you up tight and run his hands up and down your back? He has great hands, did you notice his hands? Damn fine hands," Rose rambled, face down in her pancake stack. Alice and I exchanged a glance and waited for her to come up for air. When she saw us both staring at her, she blushed a little.

"What? I noticed his hands? They are huge, how could you not?" she stammered and crammed her mouth full so we would move on. I giggled a little and turned my attention back to Alice.

"So, did Mr. Great Hands use his great hands?" I asked and it was Alice's turn to blush.

"Actually, he was very sweet. Just a little peck on the lips and a nice hug at my door," she answered, grinning hugely.

"And you Miss Hale? Was the computer genius charitable with his goodnight kiss?" I giggled as I made a terrible joke, which did not go unnoticed by Rose.

"Um...yes he was, he gave me a great good night kiss," she replied, licking syrup off the back of her hand. She didn't notice the way Alice's eyes burned a little when she mentioned the goodnight she received, but I did.

"So, you escaped the Wallbanger last night unscathed I take it?" Alice asked, sipping her coffee. I was still nursing a sore tongue, so I chose to stick with juice.

"I did, we came to another truce last night and will try to be more neighborly."

"What exactly does that mean?" she asked.

"That means that he will try to curtail his banging to earlier in the evening, and I will try to be a little more understanding about his sex life, as lively as it is," I answered, digging into my purse for some money.

"One week," Rose muttered, digging for her money as well.

"Come again?"

"One week. That's how long I give this truce. You can't keep your opinions to yourself, and he can't keep that Cockney quiet. One week," she said again as Alice smiled away.

Huh, we'll see...

Monday morning bright and early I was in my office reviewing the numbers on the Black house. Jessica had decided she did in fact want a home theater in the basement after all, after much pressure from Jacob. Apparently, he had an entire pack of friends that would come over and get quite rowdy when the Giants were playing, and the idea that she could banish them to their own little man cave was very appealing to her. So now the little bedroom remodel had grown to quite a large project. This would not only result in a huge commission for me, but would add a very substantial few pages to my portfolio. I was pleased, and it was already a good morning.

And then Esme came waltzing in for a little face time.

"Knock knock," she called out and poked her head around the door. She was immaculately dressed, the picture of sophisticated casual chic. Hair swept back into a loose chignon, heather grey cashmere turtleneck, black wide-legged trousers opening onto red peep toe slingbacks. Slingbacks that would probably constitute almost a week's pay for me. She was my mentor in every way, and I made a mental note to make sure that I someday would obtain the quiet confidence that she carried with her daily.

As she walked in, she smiled when she saw the new flowers in the vase on my desk. This week I had chosen orange tulips, three dozen.

"Morning, did you see that the Blacks have added a home theater? I knew they would come around," I smiled as I sat back in my chair. Esme settled herself in the chair across from me and just smiled widely.

"Oh, and Alice is coming over for dinner tonight, we are hoping to finalize the plans for the new closet system she is designing. She wants to add carpet, she heard Jessica was a big fan of the Sex And The City movie, and thought it would be inspirational for the two of them," I giggled, sipping coffee from the mug on my desk. My tongue was semi healed. Esme just continued to smile. I began to wonder if I had a Cheerio stuck to my face.

"Did I tell you that I got the glass company in Murano to give me a deal on the pieces I ordered for the chandelier that is going in their bathroom? It's going to be beautiful, and I think we'll definitely want to use them again," I tried again, as she continued to smile away.

She finally sighed and leaned forward with a cat-that-ate-the-canary-and-went-back-for-the-feathers-to-play-with grin.

"Esme, did you have dental work done this morning? Are you trying to show me your new dentures?" I joked and she finally flinched.

"As if I would ever need dentures, pffft. No, I am waiting for you to tell me about your neighbor, Mr. Masen. Or should I say Wallbanger?" she laughed, finally sitting back in her chair and giving me a look that said I would not be allowed to leave this room until I told her everything she wanted to know.

"Hmm, Wallbanger. Where to start? First of all, you can't tell me you didn't know he lived next door. How the hell could you have lived here as long as you did and *not* know he was the one banging away every night?" I inquired, looking back at her with my best detective sneer.

"Hey, you know I hardly ever stayed there, especially the last few years. I knew he was living near there, but I had no idea it was in the same building, much less next door to the apartment I was subletting! And he travels so much, it's not that hard to imagine that we would have never figured it out. When I see him, it's always with Carlisle, and we usually go out for drinks or we have him over to the house for dinner. I swear I had no idea. But it's the beginnings of a great story don't you think?" she tempted, grinning again.

"Oh you and your matchmaking. Edward told me you had mentioned me to him before, you are so busted," I groaned, as she held up her hands in front of her.

"Wait wait wait, I had no idea he was so, well...active. I would have never set you up with him had I known he had so many girlfriends. Carlisle must have known, but it's a guy thing I guess," she replied, and I was the one to lean forward now.

"So tell me, how does he know Carlisle?" I asked. She leaned in as well, and the girl talk began.

"Well, Edward isn't originally from California. He grew up in Chicago, and only moved out here when he went to Stanford his freshman year of school. Carlisle had known him most of his life, he was really close to his dad. He has kind of watched out for Edward, favorite uncle, big brother, surrogate father when needed, that kind of thing," she said, her face growing soft.

"Was really close to his dad? Did they have a falling out or something?" I asked.

"Oh no no, Carlisle was always great friends with Edward's dad, he was the one who mentored him early on in his career. He was very close with the entire family," she said, her eyes growing sad.

"But now?" I pressed, having a strong feeling I knew what was coming.

"Edward's parents were killed when he was a senior in high school," she said quietly and my hand flew to my mouth.

"Oh no," I whispered, my heart full of sympathy for someone I barely knew.

"Car accident. Carlisle says they went really quickly, almost instantly," she replied.

We were both quiet for a moment, lost in our own thoughts. I couldn't even process what that must have been like for him.

"So after the funeral, he stayed in Chicago for awhile and he and Edward began to talk about him going to school at Stanford," she continued. I smiled at the image of Carlisle, doing everything he could to help someone he cared about.

"I can imagine, it was probably a good idea for him to get away from everything," I answered, wondering how I would deal with something like that at such a young age.

"Yeah, I think Edward saw the chance and he took it. And knowing that Carlisle was close by if he needed anything? I think that made it easier," she added.

"When did you meet Edward?" I asked, curious as to how long she had known him. She smiled, clearly a strong memory.

"His senior year. He had spent some time in Spain the summer before, and when he came home that August he came into the city to have dinner with us. We had been dating for awhile by then, and he knew *of* me, but hadn't actually met me," she giggled.

Wow, Wallbanger does Spain. Those poor flamenco dancers, they never stood a chance.

"We met for dinner, and he charmed the waitress by ordering in Spanish. Then he told Carlisle that if he was ever stupid enough to leave me that he would be quite happy to, now what was it he said...ah yes, he would be quite happy to warm my bed," she giggled again, her face growing pink.

I rolled my eyes, thinking that this would match up with what I knew of him already. Although, as brash as me and my girls flirted with Carlisle it was the pot calling the kettle forward.

I smiled as I thought of her fiance and his good heart. Even with me, in the time that I had known him, I had always felt that if I ever needed anything he would be there in a second and question nothing.

"And that's how I met Edward," she finished, her eyes far away. "He really is pretty great Bella, wallbanging aside."

"Yes, wallbanging aside," I mused thoughtfully, running my fingertips back and forth across the tops of the flowers.

"I hope you get to know him a little better," she grinned, the matchmaker back.

"Settle down there, we have called a truce but that's all," I laughed, shaking my finger at her. She got up and started for the door.

"You are very sassy for someone who is supposed to be working for me," she said, trying to look severe.

"Well I would get a lot more work done for you if you would let me get back to work and stop with your nonsense!" I said, looking severely back at her.

She laughed and looked out towards reception.

"Hey Leah! When did I lose control of this office?" she called out.

"You never actually had it Esme!" I heard Leah yell back and I laughed.

"Oh go make coffee or something! And you," she said, turning to me and pointing, "design something brilliant for the Black's basement," she directed, pointing at me.

"Again, all things I could've been doing while you were yakking away in here..." I murmured, tapping my pencil on my watch. She rolled her eyes.

"Seriously though Bella, he's really sweet. I think you two would make great friends," she answered, leaning in the doorway. What was with everyone leaning in doorways lately?

"Well I can always use another friend, now can't I?" I replied and waved as she disappeared.

Friends.

Friends who called a truce...

"Ok, so we know that floors in the bedroom are going to be reclaimed honey toned wood, but you for sure want carpet in the closet?" I asked, settling on the couch next to Alice and starting in on my second Bloody Mary. We had been going through her plans for almost an hour trying to get her to see that I was not the only one that would have to compromise on my designs, she would as well. As long as we had been friends, she loved to think she won every argument. Tiny Alice saw herself as a bad ass that could strong-arm anyone into anything. Little did she know that Rose and I had figured out that we only had to let her *think* she was getting her way. She was much more tolerable this way.

The truth was, I always knew I wanted carpet in the closet, just not for the same reasons she did.

"Yes yes yes! It has to be carpet, really thick and luxurious carpet! It will feel so good under cold toes in the morning," she cried, almost shaking in her excitement over carpet. I really hoped Emmett was going to be around long enough to fuck her silly. She needed to get out some of this excess energy.

"Ok Alice, I guess you're right. Carpet in the closet. And for that, you have to give me back those two feet you wanted from the bathroom for the rotating shoe rack that I vetoed," I placated carefully, wondering if she would go for it.

She thought for a moment, looked at her plans again, took a long pull from her cocktail, and nodded her head.

"Yes, take back the two feet. I get my carpet, and I can live with that," she sighed, offering me her hand in agreement. I shook it solemnly, and then offered her my olive. Clive came sauntering into the room while we were negotiating and began to pace in front of the front door.

"I bet our Thai is almost here, let me get my money," I said, pointing towards the door. Just as I spoke, I could hear steps in the hallway.

"Alice, get the door, I think I hear our takeout," I called back, rummaging through my purse.

"Got it," she yelled back, and I heard the door open.

"Oh, hey there Edward!" I heard her say, and then I heard the strangest sound.

I would swear, on a stack of bibles in a court of actual law, that I heard my cat speak.

"Porrrrrreeennnnnya," Clive said in cat speak, as I whirled about.

In the span of five seconds a thousand things happened.

I saw Edward and Purina in the hallway, bags from Whole Foods in hands, key in front door.

I saw Alice standing in the doorway, barefoot and leaning (again with the leaning) in the doorway.

I saw Clive, rearing back on his hind legs preparing to jump in a way that I had only ever seen him do once when I hid the catnip on the top of the fridge.

Babies were born, old people died, stocks were traded and someone probably faked an orgasm. All in those five seconds.

I launched myself at the door in a slow motion run reminiscent of every action movie ever made.

"NOOOOOOOOO!" I cried as I saw a look of confusion cross Edward's face, a look of panic cross Purina's face, a look of amusement cross Alice's face, and a look of pure lust cross Clive's face as he prepared to woo.

If I had started for the door any earlier, maybe even only a second earlier, I could have prevented the clusterfuck that ensued. As it was, we were lucky that blood was not shed. And no one lost their pants...

As Edward pushed the door open, he smiled a confused smile at me as I caught his eye. No doubt he was wondering why I was charging the door and screaming noooooo.

His apartment door opened, and Clive jumped. Leapt. Charged. Purina saw Clive jumping directly at her, and she did the worst thing she could have done.

She ran.

She ran into Edward's apartment.

Of course the girl who meows when she has an orgasm is fucking afraid of cats...

Clive gave chase, and as I stood in the hallway with Edward and Alice, we heard shrieking and meowing echoing back to us. It sounded oddly familiar, and I was reminded of the last time Edward brought it on home. I shook my head and took over.

"Bella, what the fuck was that? Your cat just-" he started, and I placed my hand over his mouth as he was still talking as I hurried past him.

"We don't have time Edward! We have to find Clive!" I stated seriously, in the way that one would speak to someone in the middle of a mental breakdown. Alice followed me into his apartment, Ned Nickerson to my Nancy Drew. Mrs. Smith to my Mr. Smith. The Keymaster to my Gatekeeper.

I followed the shrieks and meows towards the back of the apartment, noticing that Edward's apartment was an exact mirror image of my apartment. It was very 2009 guy, with the flatscreen and the amazing sound system. I didn't really have time for a proper shakedown, but I did notice the mountain bike in the dining room, as well as beautiful framed photographs all over the walls lit by retro sconces. I didn't have time to admire, I could hear Clive getting worked up in the bedroom.

I paused by the door, hearing the screams of Purina and she danced on the hardwood.

I looked back at Edward and Alice, who were wearing twin expressions of fear and confusion...although Alice's also showed quite a bit of merriment.

"I'm going in," I said in a low brave voice and with a deep breath I pushed the door open. And saw the Wallbanger bedroom of sin for the first time.

Desk in the corner. Dresser on one wall, top covered in loose change. More photographs on the wall, black and whites. And there it was. His bed.

Cue trumpets.

Pushed up against the wall, my wall, was a giant California King bed, complete with wrought iron headboard. No wonder it was so fucking loud, it was immense. And he had the power to move that thing with his hips alone? Once again, my hoohah sat up straight and took notice.

I centered, I focused, and I pried my eyes away from Orgasm Central. I whirled about, and acquired the target.

There was a leather club chair in front of the window. Purina was perched on the back of this chair, hands in her hair, moaning and wailing and crying in fear. Her skirt was shredded, and there were tiny claw marks in her stockings. She was pointing and attempting to shrink away from the cat on the floor in front of her.

And Clive?

Clive

Was

Strutting.

Strutting back and forth in front of her, giving it his all. He was turning like he was on a runway, pacing along a line in the floor and then glancing at her over his shoulder.

If Clive wore a blazer, he would have taken it off, draped it casually over his haunches and pointed at her.

It was all I could do not to fall down laughing.

I entered the room, and Purina shouted something at me in Russian. I didn't need to speak the language to know that she likely shouted something like, "Get that fucking cat away from me you crazy bitch before I throw borscht at you".

Just a guess.

I approached.

"Hey Clive, hey. Where's my good boy?" I crooned, and he turned to see me. He glanced at me, then I swear he jerked his head in Purina's direction as though he were making the first round of introductions.

"Who's your new friend?" I crooned again, shaking my head at Purina when she tried to say something. I held my finger up in front of my lips, telling her to keep silent. This would require great finesse.

"Clive, come here!" Alice yelled and barreled into the room. She always had trouble containing her excitement.

Clive made for the door as Alice made for Clive. Purina made for the bed as I raced after Alice. Who collided with Edward just outside the bedroom door, still holding his damn Whole Foods bags. Overpriced organic produce rained down on both of them as I pushed past, leaping limbs and a wheel of Brie on my way back to the front door. I caught Clive just as he made a break for the stairs, and held him close to me.

"Clive, you know better than to run away from mommy," I chastised, as Edward and Alice finally caught up to us.

"What the hell are you doing Cockblocker, are you trying to kill me?" he shouted as Alice rounded on him.

"Don't you call her that you...you...you Wallbanger!" she fired back, smacking his chest.

"Oh you two shut up!" I yelled back, as I saw Purina making her way down the hallway towards us, wearing only one shoe and a furious look. She began to shout in Russian.

Alice and Edward continued to yell, Purina screamed, Clive struggled to get loose and be reunited with his one and only, and I stood in the middle of the chaos trying to figure out what the hell had happened in the last two minutes.

"Get control of your damn cat!" Edward yelled, as he saw Clive trying to spring free.

"Don't you yell at Bella!" Alice yelled, smacking him again.

"Look at my skirt!" Purina cried.

"Did someone order Pad Thai?" I heard rise above the chaos. I looked, and saw a petrified delivery boy standing on the top step, reluctant to come any further.

Everyone stopped and grew silent.

"Unbelievable," Alice muttered and walked into my apartment, motioning for the delivery boy to follow her. I set Clive just inside the door, and pulled it shut, cutting off his cries. Edward ushered Purina inside his place, telling her softly to go find something in his room to put on.

"I'll be in in just a minute," he said encouragingly, nodded again for her to go inside. She glared at me once more, and turned in a huff, slamming the door.

He turned back to me, and we stared at each other.

We both started laughing at the same time, unable to control it.

"Did that really just happen?" he asked through his chuckles.

"I'm afraid it did. Please tell Purina I am sooo sorry," I answered, wiping tears from my eyes and the absurdity of what just happened.

"I will, but she needs to cool off for awhile before I will attempt that. Wait, what did you just call her?" he asked, looking at me as he continued to laugh.

"Umm, Purina?" I replied, still giggling myself.

"Why do you call her that?" he asked, beginning to settle down finally.

"Seriously? Come on, you can't figure it out?" I said incredulously.

"No tell me," he said, running his hands through his hair in a comfortable way.

"Oh man, you're gonna make me say it? Purina... because she, god, because she...meows!" I blurted out, laughing again. He blushed deep red and nodded in understanding.

"Right right, of course you would have heard that," he laughed. "Purina," he said under his breath and smiled back at me.

We could hear Alice arguing in my apartment with the delivery guy, something about missing spring rolls.

"She is a little scary you know?" he said, gesturing towards my door.

"You have no idea," I moaned. I could still hear Clive wailing behind the door. I pressed my face to the door and opened it just an inch.

"Shut it Clive," I hissed. A paw came out through the crack, and I swear he flipped me off.

"Why did your cat go apeshit just now?" he asked, witnessing the exchange.

"He has a rather odd attachment to your girl there, ever since the second night I lived here. I think he's in love."

"I see, well I will make sure I convey his sentiments to *Irina*," he stressed, "when the time is right of course," he chuckled, preparing to go back inside.

"You better keep it down over there tonight Wallbanger, or I will send Clive back," I warned.

"Jesus no," he fired back.

"Well then turn some fucking music on or something, you gotta give something," I pleaded, "or he will be climbing the walls again."

"Music I can do, any requests?" he asked, turning to face me inside the doorway. I backed up into mine, and put my hand on my door.

"Anything but big band, Ok?" I answered softly. A look of disappointment crossed his face.

"You don't like big band?" he inquired, his voice low.

I pressed my fingers to my collarbone, my skin feeling warm under his gaze now. I watched as his eyes followed my hand, his eyes further heating me with the intensity of his expression.

"I love it," I whispered, as his eyes jerked back to mine in surprise. I smiled a shy smile and disappeared into my apartment, leaving him smiling back at me.

Alice was still yelling at the delivery guy as I began to school Clive, a simpering look on both of our faces.

At around 11:30 that night, the sounds of Prince came through the walls.

The song he chose to play to block the potential banging?

Pussy Control.

I smiled in spite of myself, delighted at his wicked sense of humor.

Friends? Definitely. Maybe. Possibly.

Pussy Control. I thought of it again and snorted.

Well played Wallbanger, well played.

So there. Some things happened, some things were revealed. Who loves the Wallbanger? Hands up in the air please to be counted!

I got a ton of new readers, especially in the last week or so. I would love to know where you all came from, let me know where you heard about Wallbanger! Also, so many of you wrote to tell me how much you are enjoying the stories that I usually rec at the end of each chapter. When I love a story, I can't wait to tell everyone about it!

Of course I have a few more that are currently kicking my ass.

When Fiction Becomes Reality by Bittenev. This story has been going on awhile, and when it updates I always squeal like an idiot. It is exactly the kind of story I adore, tons of ust. Lovely little nugget.

The Blessing And The Curse by The Black Arrow. The girls on Twigasm think this authors name sounds like a superhero! It does, and she is...this story totally rocks my tiny little world. Make sure if you start this one, you keep going. The most recent chapters are

mindblowing, beautiful, and incredible. This is one of the darkest Edwards I have come across in awhile, and hopelessly flawed. This is how I like my Edwards, heh heh heh.

If Love Could Light A Candle by Pastiche Pen. I have been reading this one since the very beginning, and there is something that happens in the most recent chapter that is so powerful and so exceptionally written, it turned me upside down and painted me blue. I love this story, make sure you head over there.

Let me know what you think about all these stories, and make sure you review and let me know what you thought about this chapter!

Oh, and episode 6 of Twigasm? Mother Fucking VJGM stops by the studio...no shit. Get your fangirl beanies on ladies, and get ready to bow down...

MWAH

Alice

xoxo

9. Pride

Hello chickens. Thank you as always to Nina/Mrs Facinelli and Lauren the taskmaster. Big shout to Pysmommy. And a special thanks to Moi for teaching me how to mother fucking tweet.

Here's the new chapter, enjoy!

Chapter 9-Pride

"Oh my God, it's huge!"

"I warned you."

"I never thought it would be so...well...so huge! I mean, you hear about these things, but to actually see it is totally different."

"I know, I was hoping you would be pleased."

"Pleased? I am in awe..."

"And it's big enough that you can even lean into it, ya know, really move around."

"I can't wait, can I try it out?"

"Sure, I'll do it with you."

Jessica and I both climbed into the giant soaking tub, in our clothes, and relaxed. She sat at one side, and I at the other. We both giggled as we sat in her tub, looking around at the almost finished bathroom.

"Bella, truly this is going to be beautiful," she smiled, leaning back against the side of the tub. It was an infinity tub, almost like having a tub inside another tub. The benefit? You could fill it all the way up to the top,

and when it spills over it goes into the other tub. To actually be able to be totally submerged and not have to worry about flooding your bathroom? This was the definition of luxury. Not to mention the many jets that dotted the perimeter of the tub, designed to soothe sore muscles.

Or get you off. It's a fact...

I smiled back at her from my side of the tub, being careful not to scratch the surface with my heels.

"Good to know that it's big enough for both you and Jake, huh?" I said pointedly, as she blushed a little.

"Yes, Jake is a total kid when it comes to bathtubs. You've seen how many bottles of high end bubble bath I have, and yet it's the box of Mr. Bubbles that he keeps hidden away at the back of the closet that make him lose his mind," she explained as we both laughed at the image of a tall, tan Jake, surrounded by bubbles.

We both sighed, and relaxed again. The fact that it felt this wonderful and there was not even water in it made me vow then and there to someday have a tub just like this one. It really seemed necessary.

"So, tell me about this neighbor of yours Miss Bella..." Jessica said, looking at me as she pretended to scrub her back.

"What the hell, was it on the news? How in the world do you know about that?" I asked incredulously, standing up and climbing out of the tub.

"Where do you think?" she laughed as she followed.

We looked at each other in the mirror and I grimaced.

"Alice," we both said, and I sighed.

"Honestly, that girl needs a new hobby. She is entirely too interested in what goes on in my building," I replied, rolling my eyes. "You should have seen the scene she caused when she was over for dinner the other night!" I continued.

"Oh you mean with Clive and Purina?" she giggled as I whirled about.

"Unbelievable, that girl should be here working on your closet, not flapping her gums," I grumbled, heading out into the bedroom.

"Oh please, you know your friend is a little gossip, don't you dare act surprised," she chided, following me.

"True, but damn she works fast!" I added.

We examined the paint samples on the wall and I could tell she wanted to ask me something by the way she kept stealing sideways glances at me.

"Just say it..." I muttered and looked at her with a small smile.

"Nothing, I just want to be invited over next time there is a show like that! Or least when he is 'bringing it on home' as Alice says you call it," she giggled and I mimed throwing a hammer at her that the workmen had left.

"Yeah yeah yeah, you have a gorgeous husband at home every night and you want to come over to my place to listen to my neighbor gettin' busy. Nice. You sure you're a socialite?" I asked, as she brandished a giant wrench at me.

"If you spill any of this blue blood I'll be forced to defend myself," she laughed back and I held up my hands in surrender.

We spent a few minutes deciding on the final paint colors and then she tried again.

"So, you're going to the symphony benefit this weekend, right? Alice mentioned it."

"Yep, that's the plan," I answered, knowing where this is going.

"So, are you taking anyone?"

"Hadn't planned on it. I am tagging along with the new fantastic four."

"Well, why don't you ask your neighbor? I mean, it makes sense with your friends dating his friends," she prodded.

"It makes sense except that he is currently seeing a few lovelies, and we just barely called a truce. So no, thank you," I replied and turned to walk out of the room. She followed me down the stairs.

"Bella, I know plenty of men I could set you up with. Guys that would go crazy to go out with you, want me to set something up?" she pleaded and I knew her heart was in the right place.

I stood at the bottom of the stairs looking back up at her.

"That's very sweet of you, but the thing is, I'm just not that interested in dating anyone right now," I said and saw her face fall.

It was a hard thing to describe. People tended not to understand why I wasn't dating anyone, and it was hard for me to understand at times as well. Ever since the Newton Affair, I obviously had lost touch with the O. And as that went away, I found that men in general weren't that interesting to me anymore either. Certainly as the months went on, I found myself momentarily lonely, but overall I was enjoying being alone.

I had always been someone that was either in a relationship or at least dating someone casually. I had never spent an extended period of time alone, and once I did, I found that I quite liked it. I found that I enjoyed seeing movies alone, eating dinner by myself at times, and it was nice

to know that I was more than capable of functioning without a man.

Did I want one to lie on top of me once in awhile? Hells yes. And lately there was one that kept springing to mind. And yet, for the most part, I was happy by myself.

Except for those nights that Ina and Jeffrey pissed me off...

I knew that I might find someone that would complement me the way that Jacob complemented Jessica. But if I didn't? Well, as long as someone finally manufactured a Rabbit that was capable of resurrecting the O, that would be enough for me.

It would have to be, right?

Hell, at least I had my Kitchenaid.

I dragged myself away from the single girl vignette inside my head, and refocused on my client in front of me.

"Hey, don't be sad. Wait until you see the dress I got for the benefit, maybe I will meet my Prince Charming while I'm there. I assume you're going, yes?"

"Please, socialite remember?" she laughed, pointing at herself.

"Right right," I laughed.

I spent a little more time with her, finalizing a few last minute touches and then I kissed her on the cheek goodbye, and headed back to the office. I walked, taking my time and enjoying the sunshine. Usually by this time of day, the fog had burned off and it was my favorite time to walk the hilly streets.

Invite Wallbanger to the benefit huh?

Hmmm...

That evening I was headed out to yoga when I found myself face to face with Edward once again. He was coming up the stairs as I was headed down.

"If I said we have to stop meeting like this, would it sound as trite as it sounds in my head?" I offered and he laughed.

"I dunno, give it a try."

"Ok. Wow, we have to stop meeting like this!" I exclaimed in mock surprise.

We both waited a beat, and then we laughed again.

"Yep, trite," he said and laughed again.

"Maybe we can work out some kind of schedule, share custody of the hallway or something," I replied and shifted my weight from one leg to another.

Great, now it looks like you have to pee...

"Where are you off to tonight? I seem to always catch you when you're leaving," he said as he propped himself up on the wall.

"Well, clearly I am headed somewhere very fancy," I chuckled, gesturing to my yoga pants and cami. I then showed him my water bottle and my yoga mat. He pretended to think very carefully, and then his eyes widened in realization.

"You're going to pottery class!"

"Yes, clearly that's where I'm headed...ass," I answered, and he smiled that grin at me. I smiled back.

"So you never gave me the scoop on what you heard at brunch the other day, what's going on with our friends?" he began, and I didn't at all feel the flutter that ran around in my belly at the mention of the word 'our'. Not at all...

"Well, I can tell you that my girls were quite taken with your boys. Did you know they're all going to the symphony benefit next week?" I said, instantly horrified that I went there that quickly.

"I heard that, Emmett gets tickets for that every year. Perks of the job I suppose, sports broadcasters always go to the symphony, right?" he joked.

"I would assume, especially when they're trying to cultivate a certain man about town persona," I snarked with a wink.

"You caught that, huh?" he winked back and then we found ourselves staring at each other. With nothing else to say.

No word vomit...

"So, are you going?" I asked and could feel my face begin to flame.

It's all for the truce, come on...

"Not this year, I'm headed overseas. I'm leaving tomorrow actually," he said softly. If I didn't know better, he almost looked a little disappointed.

"Really? On a shoot?" I said and then realized my mistake. The smirk came back with a vengeance.

"Checking up on me huh?" he teased and I felt my face go from pink to a lovely tomato red.

"Esme mentioned what you did for a living, yes. And I noticed some of the pictures in your apartment. When my pussy was chasing your

Russian? Ring any bells?" I said as he began to shift his own weight at my use of the word pussy.

Hmmm, weak spot?

"You noticed my pictures huh?" he asked quietly.

"I did. You've got a great set of sconces," I offered, smiling sweetly and looking directly at his crotch.

"Sconces huh?" he mumbled, clearing his throat.

"Occupational hazard. So where are you headed anyway? Overseas I mean," I asked, dragging my eyes deliberately back up to his, and noticing his were nowhere near my face.

Heh heh heh...

"What? Oh, um Ireland. Shooting a bunch of coastal shots for Conde Naste, and then heading into some of the smaller towns," he answered, bringing his gaze back to mine as I finally noticed him a little flustered.

Thank God, the Wondercock is human and is susceptible to suggestion.

"Ireland huh? Well bring me back a sweater."

"Sweater, got it. Anything else?"

"A pot of gold? And a shamrock?"

"Great, I won't have to leave the airport gift shop," he muttered.

"And then when you come home, I'll do a little Irish dance for you!" I cried and started laughing at the lunacy of this conversation.

"Aw Nightie Girl, did you just offer to dance for me?" he said in a low voice, stepping a little closer to me.

And just like that, the balance of power shifted.

"Wallbanger Wallbanger," I exhaled, shaking my head. Mainly to clear it from him being so near. "We've been over this, I have no desire to join the harem," I teased.

"What makes you think I would ask you?"

"I think that would mess with the truce, don't you?" I laughed.

"Mmm, the truce," he answered.

Just then I heard steps on the stairs below.

"Edward? Is that you?" a voice called up, and at that he leaned back, away from me. I looked down and realized that we had been inching towards each other on the landing during the entire exchange and had been quite close.

"Hey Katie, up here!" he called down. He smiled sheepishly at me, and I laughed at him. If we were going to be friends, I might as well meet the harem by God.

A moment later we were joined by 'Kate', who I of course knew as Spanx. I muffled a laugh as I smiled at her. Edward handled the introductions.

"Kate, this is my neighbor, Bella. Bella, this is Kate."

I offered my hand, and she looked curiously between Edward and I.

"Hi Kate, nice to meet you."

"You too Bella, you the one with the cat?" she asked, a twinkle in her eye. I looked at Edward, and he shrugged.

"Guilty, although Clive would argue with you that in fact he isn't a cat but an actual person."

"Oh I know, my dog Angela watched TV and would bark until I put on something she actually liked. What a pain in the ass she was," she smiled, but looked a little sad.

We all stood for a moment and it was beginning to get a little awkward.

"Ok kids, I'm off to yoga. Edward, have a safe trip and I'll fill you in on all the gossip from the new couples when you get back."

"Sounds good, I'll be gone awhile but hopefully they won't get in too much trouble while I'm gone," he chuckled as they started up the stairs.

"I'll keep my eyes on them. Nice to meet you Kate," I said, headed down the stairs myself.

"You too Bella. Night!" she called back to me as they went up to his place.

As I walked down the stairs, slower than necessary, I heard her say,

"Is that the Pink Nightie Girl?"

"Shut it Katie," he fired back and I swore he swatted her on the butt.

Her yelp a second later confirmed it.

I rolled my eyes again at no one in particular as I pushed the door open and I headed out into the street.

When I got to the gym, I switched my class and took kickboxing instead.

I stood in front of the mirror in my apartment, admiring the way I looked.

I looked goooooood.

I loved getting dressed up like this. After Homecoming and Prom, there weren't tons of opportunities for a girl to get this dressed up. And tonight I wouldn't have to wear a dorky corsage that matched someone else's cummerbund.

Someone Else's Cummerbund. What a great name for a band...

I removed myself from my own stream of consciousness nonsense and set about brushing my hair one last time. The car service was due any moment, and I wanted to be ready.

Alice and Rose had insisted that I ride with one of them to the benefit, but then it really *would* feel like Prom, and I was the sad sack that didn't get asked but her mom insisted she go anyway.

"Nope. I'll see you two there. Most likely I'll be the one by the bar," I joked with Rose earlier that day on the phone when she tried one last time to get me to come with her and Jasper.

"Jesus, Swan, don't be so stubborn. It will be fun if you come with us, we can get tipsy in the limo."

"As tempting as that is, I will just see you there. No big deal. Why aren't you two doubling with Emmett and Alice?" I asked, twirling my hair around my finger as I got my pedicure for the evening.

The four had been out several times in the last couple weeks, always together. I joked with both of them that they were going to end up having group sex. Something neither of them thought was funny.

"Believe me, Jasper was pushing for us to go with Alice and Emmett, but we thought it was time to have some solo dates," she answered, her

voice saying something I couldn't quite place.

"Things going well with the genius philanthropist?" I asked, nodding to the woman selecting my favorite color, Holy Pink Pagoda.

"Um...yes. Yes, things are good. He is really perfect for me, I mean it's like my perfect guy walked off the pages of my brain," she prattled.

"The pages of your brain?" I repeated.

"Shut it, you know what I mean. He's great ok, he's great," she replied.

"He definitely seems pretty great," I had agreed.

I had gone out with all four of them earlier in the week. We all met up for sushi and I had a great time. Emmett was very silly and fun, definitely a charmer. The more time I spent with him, I knew he was a good egg. And he had made us all laugh with a story he told about himself, Edward, and Jasper when they went skiing in Tahoe once.

"So I come in to take an innocent dip in my parent's hot tub, and who do I find but Jasper, naked as a jaybird with twins! And a can of Crisco," he finished, throwing back his head and laughing loudly.

"Naked? With twins?" Alice cackled and Jasper blushed as he looked back at her with an embarrassed grin.

"Hello? Forget the naked and the twins, explain the Crisco please," I exclaimed, leaning into him.

"The Crisco I had no part in, Edward had stumbled in a few minutes before and thought it would be funny to 'decorate' the scene for me. What you didn't see were all the hot dogs he had strewn about on the floor. What an ass," he laughed as Emmett laughed even louder. Rose was giggling the entire time, and every time Emmett laughed, she laughed harder. The two of them were almost in tears. Even I was

laughing, especially at the image of a sneaky Edward surreptitiously "decorating" the scene.

I knew he was a little wicked.

"Your parents have a house in Tahoe?" Rose asked looking across the table at Emmett.

"They used to, not anymore. They got divorced a few years ago, and it was sold."

"My grandparents have a house up there, I used to spend so much time there growing up. I haven't been up there in years," she answered, smiling at him.

I had watched this exchange with interest, and watched Jasper and Alice continue to giggle on the other side of the table over Crisco and twins.

I smiled as I thought of this and heard my phone beep. The car service was just around the corner.

I took one last look in the mirror and smoothed out my dress.

Benefit time...

"I'll have an Absolut martini, straight up with three olives please," I murmured to the bartender as I looked around the crowded event. There were so many people here, it was hard not to take the opportunity to people watch. To my left was an interesting couple. Silver haired gentleman with a woman younger than I was, with newly purchased tits. Good girl, you get yours. I mean, if I had to look at flabby old man buns I would want bigger boobs too...

I sipped my cocktail and surveyed the rest of the room. Esme and Carlisle, looking as grand as they ever did when decked out for events

like this, had already circled once and saved me from talking to an old blue haired lady that seemed to think I was her cousin Mathilda. I spotted Rose in the crowd, her tall frame and gorgeous almost white blond hair setting her apart even in a crowd of almost a thousand.

Playing cello in the San Francisco Symphony certainly had its privileges, and the ticket to this gala once a year was just the tip of the iceberg. Rose was a natural born performer, and I wasn't kidding when I told Edward she really knew how to work a room. Part of her role tonight was making sure the patrons were happy. People that gave to organizations like the Symphony, or the Ballet, or the Opera loved the chance to interact with the performers. It made them feel a part of their investment. And Rose never disappointed.

I could see her chatting with the Mayor, and off to the side Alice, Jasper, and Emmett. What was odd? Emmett was standing off to one side, eyes clearly fixed on Rose as she chatted. Alice and Jasper? Totally caught up in their conversation, not even caring that they were leaving Emmett out.

From where I stood, the distance I had afforded me perfect clarity of thought and I saw something very intriguing. Rose glanced to the side during her conversation, not at Jasper, but at Emmett. He would smile, and before too long, waded into the conversation himself. Being on the news every night made it very easy to talk to Emmett, as we often feel we know those that we watch on TV.

I sipped my drink again, and heard Esme's distinct laughter. And I knew no one could make Esme laugh harder than her own Carlisle. I spun slowly and saw them approach.

"Three olives? I'm sure I could find you a bowl if you just wanted to munch dear," Esme teased, clinking my glass with her own.

"I am off the clock Boss Lady, don't think I won't tell you where to stick your pimento," I teased back, leaning in to kiss Carlisle cheekily.

"Step away from my man junior, or you will find yourself behind the counter at Pier 1 before Monday," Esme warned, wrapping her arm snugly around Carlisle's waist. He smiled at her in a way that I had seen him smile before. No other woman existed on the planet for him other than Esme. She would never have to worry about that man cheating on her, it wouldn't even enter into his mind. It just wouldn't. We could flirt and tease and flaunt as much as we wanted, he would never engage in more than good natured flirtation with me and my girls. It was nice to see a man so in love with his woman. And she was over the moon for him.

"So, any cuties here tonight?" she asked, leaning in conspiratorially towards me as Carlisle left to say hello to someone he knew.

"I'm sure there are, but I have been concentrating on the bottom of this here martini glass thank you very much," I mumbled, draining my glass and seeing the upside down images of my girls and their new boys approaching.

"Esme!" Alice cried, rushing into her arms and giving her a tight squeeze. Alice was tiny but fierce. She was what I called a Hard Hugger. It wasn't funny, she could do some damage.

"Hi Alice," Esme choked out, releasing her hands from behind her back and smiling down at her. She smiled at Rose as well, who was a little more restrained in public. They did the classic air kiss, and then the boys both leaned in to hug her as well. I could tell that Emmett and Jasper thought of her the way we thought of Carlisle. The ideal.

"How is it going, having fun mingling with all the other patrons?" I asked Rose, as we disengaged from the others long enough to head back over to the bar.

"It's good, having fun," she mused and then told the bartender exactly how to make her skinny girl margarita.

I watched her for a moment, and then when she turned back to me I asked,

"How's Emmett tonight?"

Her eyes lit up briefly, and then she realized who I had asked about.

"Emmett? Good I guess, Jasper looks great in his suit doesn't he?" she covered, gesturing over to where we had left our group. Where Alice and Jasper were deep in conversation once more, Emmett and Esme now talking to Carlisle.

Jasper did indeed look good in his suit, the nerd cleaned up good. Black suit and a blue tie that exactly matched his icy blue eyes. The eyes that were fixed delightedly on Miss Brandon.

How could they not see it?

"Emmett looks pretty nice to me tonight," I tossed out, moving on towards the brawny sportscaster.

Charcoal gray suit, crisp black shirt and gray tie, he looked every inch the man about town he was. And he was looking fine.

"Yep," she said icily, licking a bit of salt from the rim on her glass.

I giggled and placed a hand on her arm.

"Come on pretty girl, let's get you back to your perfect man," I whispered, and we rejoined the group.

The evening was delightful and fruitful as well. Esme introduced me to several of her clients that I had not met before, and I could see that my fall was going to be booked solid with projects. More bedrooms to be reconfigured, kitchens remodeled, playrooms designed. The economy may have gone into the toilet for most, but here in the world of

symphony galas, the money flowed.

I departed a little before my friends did, tired but happy. Once again I had spent an evening alone, and lived to tell the tale. I wondered if other single women understood the delight that came from attending an event like this alone, and happy about it. To not have to make small talk with some guy someone set you up with, to not have to worry about some idiot with peppercorn encrusted filet breath trying to force his wiggly tongue down the back of your throat, and to not have to explain to that same idiot why you insist on taking a cab home when his super fast Camaro is parked right over there.

I was in the car headed home when my phone beeped, alerting me to a text. I scrolled up and saw a number I didn't recognize.

Have a good time tonight?

Who the hell was texting me?

Who the hell is texting me?

As I waited for the reply, I leaned down and slipped off my shoes. Fantastic heels, but damn they hurt my feet. My phone beeped again and I read the responding text.

Some people call me Wallbanger...

I hated myself a little for the way my now naked toes curled. Stupid toes.

Wallbanger huh? Wait a minute, how did you get my number?

I waited to get the response, and knew it had to have been either Alice or Rose. Damn girls, they were really pushing it lately.

I can't reveal my sources. So, did you have a good time tonight?

Ok, I can play this game.

***In fact I did. On my way home now. How is the Emerald Isle?
Lonely yet?***

It's beautiful actually, just having breakfast. And I am never lonely.

I believe that. Did you buy my sweater yet?

Working on it, want to get just the right one.

Yes please, give me a good one.

Not going to respond to that one...how's that pussy of yours?

***Really not going to respond to that one...is there something you
wanted?***

This not responding thing is getting harder...

I know what you mean, it's hard not to touch that one...

***Ok, officially ending this round, the innuendos are too thick to see
straight.***

Oh I don't know, it's better when it's thick...

Wow. I am enjoying this truce more than I expected.

I have to admit it's good for me too...

Are you home yet?

Yep, just pulled up in front of our building.

Ok, I'll wait until you're inside.

Bet you can't wait to get inside.

You are a demon you know that?

I have been told. Ok, inside. Just kicked your door btw.

Thanks for that.

Just being a good neighbor.

Good night Pink Nightie Girl...

Good night ya stupid Wallbanger...

I laughed as I turned the key in my lock and went inside. I sank down onto my couch, still laughing. Clive quickly jumped into my lap, and I petted his silky fur as he purred his welcome home.

My phone beeped once more.

Did you really kick my door?

Shut up. Go eat your breakfast.

I laughed again as I turned my phone off for the night, and laid back onto the couch. Clive perched on my chest as I relaxed for a bit, thoughts of that damn Wallbanger in my head. It was shocking how clear I could see him in my head.

Soft faded jeans, hiking boots a la Jake Ryan. Off white Irish cable knit turtleneck sweater, hair all in disarray. Standing on a rocky coast somewhere, ocean in the background. A little tan, slightly weathered, hands in pocket.

And that fucking smirk on his arrogant face.

My hoohah must enjoy a good smirk, as she was sitting up straight once more.

EPOV

I laughed as I closed her last text. Eat my breakfast indeed. I dug into my oatmeal as I scrolled through some of the other texts and emails that had come in through the night.

An email from the Chronicle back home, asking me to shoot for a story they were running on travel around the bay area, weekend getaway kind of thing.

Another text from Emmett asking me if Lucky Charms were in fact magically delicious.

An email from Kate. I was hoping she would get in contact with me, I didn't want the way we left things to impact our friendship. I was friends with these women first and foremost, and though our extracurricular activities were less than conventional at the core I counted each of them as women I would spend time with outside of the bedroom. Kate was special, I had known her the longest. She was wonderfully giving, and though the sex was now off the table I knew that we would stay close.

Selfishly I hoped she would still make me her banana bread. Damn, that girl made the best banana bread.

That Garrett was a lucky lucky man.

I finished my breakfast and tea, and walked over to the big picture window. I had stayed in this little bed and breakfast before, and I felt very comfortable here. Traveling as much as I did, I had learned that the smaller the inn, the more like home it typically felt. The older couple that ran the inn remembered me from my last trip and were determined to make sure I had everything I needed.

I stared out at the massive expanse of green, and wondered if Bella had fallen asleep yet. I smiled to myself as I further wondered if she was dreaming about me again.

OK lovelies, what do we think? Progressing nicely, yes? Oh my, are there some things in store for this gang.

So many of you commented on switching up Rose with Jasper, and Alice and Emmett. What's really funny is that most of you feel R/J is incestuous, but you were not so against A/E. Funny...

New episode of Twigasm Podcast should be up soon, total and complete fuckery ensued when the amazing vjgm visited Twigasm HQ in her heavily guarded bullet proof popemobile. Check it out and let us know what you think.

Recs for this week:

The Boy By The Window by hopefulhappenings09. Really interesting Edward, and very different. You will be a little surprised by the characterizations I think. Give it a few chapters, its quite good.

Elemental by tallulahbelle. This is like Twilight meets The Craft meets The Village meets Charmed meets DaVinci Code. I have to tell you, this story is one that stuck with me all weekend, and I found myself thinking of it constantly. This is a great popcorn story, just intriguing and fun with a splash of creepy. I am really enjoying this one.

See you soon chickens:)

MWAH

Alice

xoxo

10. The Ground Beneath Her Feet

Hello chickens. Sorry this chapter took so long, but this time I have a really really good reason. My laptop bit it. Bit it hard. Bit it hard and good and rough and then he pushed me up against the wall, hands digging into my soft aching skin and then his mouth...wow, wait a minute

(Alice shakes her head to clear it)

Sorry about that, as I was saying...my laptop bit it. Bit it hard. Bit it hard and good and....jesus

Anywho, I am focusing. The point is, I had to wait until I could get a new laptop, and then recreate the entire chapter. So there, that's why it took so long. BUT the good news is that I think the chapters will be coming even quicker now, dare I say once a week? And I will apologize in advance for any typos or weird formatting issues, we had a bitch of a time getting my new laptop to work with weird programs, I know...can you imagine I had issues with technology...shocking.

As always thanks to Team Wallbanger, Miss Lauren and Miss Nina, and of course all thanks to my lovely psymommy. And shouts to the Twigasm hoors, the thread CockBlockers, and the twitter Clivettes!

And holy shit! We made the top ten author list on Twilighted! Smack my ass and call me Judy!

See you down below bangers...

Chapter 10- The Ground Beneath Her Feet

Text intercepted from Bella to Edward

You had a package delivered, I signed for it and it's at my place.

Thanks, I'll pick it up when I'm back. How are you?

Good, just working. How are the Irish?

Lucky. How's that insane cat?

Lucky. I caught him trying to climb the walls. He is still looking for Purina. He misses her.

Judging on her reaction, I don't think a romance is in the cards for those two.

Probably not...he will not over it anytime soon tho. I might have to bump up his catnip rations.

Don't over medicate. No one likes a pussy that can't hold a conversation.

I am actually a little scared of you...

LOL. Don't be scared, wait until I offer you candy for that.

If I catch you in a trench coat I am running the other way! When are you coming home btw?

Missing me a little?

No, I wanted to hang some pictures on the wall behind my headboard and I am wondering how much time I have. I probably need to have them anchored pretty deep...

I'll be home in 2 weeks. If you can wait that long, I'll help you. It's the least I can do.

The very least, and I will wait. You provide the hammer, I will provide the cocktails.

Curious about my hammer are you?

Going across the hall right now to kick your door btw...

Text intercepted from Alice to Bella

Girl, guess what? Rose found out her grandparents' house was available next month. We are on our way to Tahoe baby!

Sweet! That will be nice, I have been dying to get away with my girls...

Actually, we were thinking of inviting the boys along...is that cool with you?

That's fine, you guys will have a great time.

Idiot, obviously you are still invited.

Aw thx! I would love to go along on a romantic weekend with 2 other semi couples. FANTASTIC!

Don't be an asshole Bella. You are totally still coming. You won't be a 5th wheel, it'll be so much fun! Did you know Jasper plays guitar? He is gonna bring it, we can have a sing along!

What is this...fucking camp? No thx!

Text intercepted from Alice to Emmett

Hey Big Man, what are you doing middle of next month?

Hey Shortie. No plans yet, what's up?

Rose grandparents are gonna let us have the Tahoe house, you in? Ask Jasper...

Fuckin a! I'm there, I'll ask the nerd if he's in.

Trying to talk Bella into coming along too

Great! The more the merrier. Are we still meeting up for drinks with Rose and Jasper tonight?

Yep, see you tonight

You got it kiddo...

Text intercepted from Edward to Emmett

Quit fucking asking me about Lucky Charms

That little guy cracks me up every time! Hey, when are you getting home? We are headed up to Tahoe for a weekend next month

I'll be home next week, who is going?

Rose and Alice, me and Whitlock. Maybe Bella. That girls pretty cool.

Yah, she's pretty cool when she's not cockblocking. Tahoe huh?

Yep, Rose's grandparents have a house there.

Nice

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

You going to Tahoe?

How the hell did you hear about that already?

Word gets around...Emmett is pretty excited.

Oh I am sure he is. Rose in a hot tub, isn't too hard to figure out.

Wait, I thought he was dating your little friend, Alice.

Oh he is, but that he is def thinking about Rose in a hot tub, trust me.

What the hell?

Strange things are afoot in San Francisco. They are each dating the wrong person.

What?

It's shocking really to see them all together. Alice can't stop talking about Jasper, who is usually staring like a sad little puppy dog at her. And then Rose is so busy mooning over Emmett's giant man hands, she can't see that he is staring right back at her. It's pretty funny.

Why don't they swap?

Says the guy with the harem...it's not always that easy.

Wait until I get home, I'll take care of it

OK Mr. Fix-It. Before or after you hang my pictures?

Don't worry Nightie Girl, I am all about getting into your bedroom

Sigh

Did you really just type the word sigh?

Sigh...

Are you going to Tahoe?

Not if I can help it. Altho it would almost be worth it to watch the fuckery that is sure to happen when they finally figure this out

Indeed

Text intercepted from Bella to Rose

What is this I hear about you not coming to Tahoe?

Ugh! What is the big fucking deal?

Easy Trigger, what crawled up your ass?

I just don't know why it is essential that I accompany all of you on a romantic weekend, I am perfectly happy to go next time.

It won't be like that, I promise.

I already have to hear Wallbanger when he's home, I don't need to hear Jasper drilling you in the next room, or Alice getting manhandled.

Do you think he's manhandling her?

What?

Emmett. Do you think he's...manhandling her?

Is he what?

Oh you know what I mean...

Rosalie Hale, are you actually asking me if our dear friend Alice is fucking her new boy toy?

Yes! I am asking!

As it happens, no, they are not "manhandling" yet. Wait a minute, why are you asking me that? Are you not fucking Jasper yet?

Gotta go

Text intercepted from Rose to Jasper

Is it weird that we only ever go out on double dates with Alice and Emmett?

What?

Is it weird?

I don't know, is it?

Yes it is. Tonight you are coming over, alone, and we are watching a movie.

Yes ma'am.

And btw, ask your buddy Edward to come to Tahoe.

Any specific reason I am doing this?

Yes.

Care to share?

Nope. Bring popcorn.

Text intercepted from Jasper to Edward

Are you sick of green yet?

I am ready to come home yes, my flight gets in late tomorrow night. Or tonight. Fuck, I don't know.

Rose asked me to ask you if you want to come along to Tahoe, you in?

Tahoe huh...

Yep. I think Bella is going.

I thought she wasn't going?

Have you been talking to the Cockblocker?

Yes, a little. She's pretty cool, the truce seems to be holding.

Hmmm. So, Tahoe?

Let me think about it. Windsurfing this weekend?

Yep.

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

So I got invited to the Tahoe thing, are you going?

You got invited? That little shit...

I take it you are still not sold on the idea?

I don't know, I love going up there, and the house is pretty fantastic. Are you going?

Are you going?

I asked you first.

So what?

Child. Yes, I suppose I will end up going.

Great! I love it up there

Oh you're going now?

Might as well, sounds like fun.

Hmm, we'll see. Home tomorrow, yes?

Yep, late flight in and then sleeping for at least a day.

Let me know when you're home, I've got that package for you.

Will do.

And I am baking zucchini bread tonight, I'll save some for you. You probably have no groceries at all, right?

You make zucchini bread?

Yep

Sigh...

EPOV

I sat in the back of the cab, struggling to keep my eyes open. I had touched down at SFO late, flights were delayed across the country. Even though I always paid the extra fare for first class when traveling internationally, I could never sleep on a plane. Ever. Never.

So after flying for essentially 14 hours, and my body having no idea what time zone it was in, I was exhausted. I was ready for a shower,

and bed, and that was it.

I dragged myself up the stairs, pausing to throw a smile over my shoulder as I looked at the door across the hall. I fought the childish compunction to kick it, and let myself into my own apartment. I dropped my bags, peeled off my jacket, sweater, t-shirt, and pants on the thousand-mile journey from front door to bathroom. I shuffled across the hardwood floor, pants around ankles as I yawned. I removed shoes, socks and finally boxers as I stepped under the hot water. I almost choked, falling asleep underneath the warm water. I quickly soaped up, rinsed off, and towel dried my hair into giant Flock of Seagull waves on my way to the bedroom.

Clean boxers on? Check.

Pillow scrunched underneath my head? Check.

Goofy I-am-so-glad-to-be-in-my-own-bed-smile on my face? Check!

I sighed tiredly and let sleep come to take me.

Come on sleep.

Come on sleep, take me.

It was too quiet.

I sat up and looked at the record player on the desk.

I crawled back out of bed and stood in the dark trying to select some music.

Duke Ellington.

The needle hit the record, my head hit the pillow, and I was out before the first song was over.

BPOV

I woke up suddenly to hear music coming from next door. I looked at the clock and saw that it was after two in the morning. Clive poked his head out from under the covers and hissed when he heard the tunes.

"Oh shut up, don't be jealous," I hissed back, and he glared at me, showing me his bum as he turned back around under the covers, head first.

I snuggled deeper under the covers myself, smiling as I listened to the music.

Wallbanger was home.

The next morning when I woke up I was so happy it was a Saturday. It was one of those days when I was caught up on everything, had no laundry to do, no errands to run, just a day to enjoy and relax. Fantastic.

I decided to start with a nice long bath, and then I would decide what I wanted to do with my day. I was planning a run at Golden Gate Park later that afternoon. Fall was so pretty there, and the light was so wonderful, I just might take a book and spend the entire afternoon there after my run.

I started the bath and Clive came into the bathroom to keep me company. He weaved in and out of my legs as I dropped my pjs on the floor, meowing as he explored the top of the bathtub. He loved to balance on the edge of the tub while I took a bath. He had never fallen in, although sometimes he would dip his tail. Silly cat, one of these days he was gonna dip more than his tail...

I tested the water. It was about halfway up the side of the tub when I decided I needed a little coffee before I settled in. I padded out to the kitchen, naked as the day is long, to make myself a cup. I yawned as I measured the beans and ground them in my Kitchenaid grinder. Really,

why I hadn't applied to get a position with Kitchenaid was beyond me. If Esme ever decided to fire me, I felt quite sure I could convince the Kitchenaid people to hire me.

I tossed a few spoonfuls into the filter and went to get a pot of water. As soon as I turned on the faucet, I heard the screeching begin.

I heard Clive meow like I had never heard before and then I heard splashing. I started to smile when I realized he had finally fallen in when the water from the sink shot straight in my face.

I blinked furiously, confused until I realized that water was shooting sideways from the faucet, spraying the entire kitchen.

"SHIT!" I screamed, trying to turn it off. No luck.

I ran into the bathroom, still swearing and saw Clive hiding behind the toilet, soaking wet, and the tub faucet spraying wildly into the bathroom.

"What the fuck!" I cried, trying to turn off the water in there as well. I began to panic when I realized that it would not turn off either. It was like the entire apartment went haywire at the same moment, there was water spraying everywhere, and Clive was still screeching at the top of his lungs.

I was naked, sopping wet, and panicked.

"MOTHERFUCKING COCKSUCKER SHIT DAMN DAMN!" I screamed and grabbed a towel.

I tried to calm down, thinking there must be a shut off valve somewhere. I had redesigned bathrooms for Christ's sake, think Bella!

It was about this time that I heard the pounding coming from somewhere else in the apartment. Of course I thought it was coming from the bedroom first, naturally. But no, it was the front door.

Wrapping the towel around myself and still cursing enough to make a sailor blush, I stomped across the floor, luckily not slipping in the water that was now collecting on the floor and angrily swung the door open.

Of course it was fucking Wallbanger.

"Are you out of your god damned mind? What's with all the screaming?" he moaned and I practically didn't notice the green plaid boxers, the sleep hair, or the abs.

Practically.

Survival mode swung into focus, and I grabbed him by the elbow as he was wiping his eye and dragged him forcibly into the apartment.

"Where the hell is the shut off valve in these apartments?" I shrieked as he looked around at the chaos. The water spraying from the kitchen, the water on the floor from the bathroom, and me in my Camp Snoopy towel, which was the first one I grabbed.

Mother of pearl, even in a crisis Wallbanger took 2.5 seconds to look at my nearly naked body. Ok, I might have taken 3.2 to look at his.

Then we both snapped into action. He ran into the bathroom like a man on a mission and I could hear him knocking around. Clive hissed and ran out, straight into the kitchen. Realizing it was just as wet in here, he leapt across the room in an acrobatic fit and landed high atop of the fridge, safe for now. I started to run into the bathroom to help and collided with Edward as he ran into the kitchen, and opened the doors under the sink. He began throwing my cleaning supplies all over the floor, trying to get at what I assumed was the shut off valve, and I tried not to notice the way the back of his boxers clung to his buns. He was covered in water as well now and his feet slipped out from under him, crashing him to the floor.

"Ow." I heard from under the sink, his legs now splayed out across my wet kitchen floor as he rolled over. He was now soaking wet and a tad bit glorious.

"Get over here and help me, I can't get this one turned off," he yelled over the din of the water and the cat meows.

Remembering that I was only in a towel, I gingerly knelt down next to him, and tried to avoid looking at his body. His wet, long, lean body that was dangerously close to my own.

One more random jet of water straight into my eyeball was enough to pull me from my stupor and I called down to him.

"What do you want me to do?" I yelled.

"Do you have a wrench?"

"Yes!"

"Can you go get it?"

"Sure!"

"Why are you yelling?"

"I don't know!"

I sat there, trying to see underneath the sink.

"Well go get it for Gods sake!" he yelled.

"Right right!" I answered back and took off running for the hall closet.

When I came back, I knelt down again, slipping a little on the wet tile and sliding into his side.

"Here," I yelled and thrust the wrench under the sink.

I watched him work, his face hidden. His arms were straining, and I saw how strong he really was. I watched in amazement at his stomach hardening and showing me 6 little packs. Oops, make that 8. And then the V showed up. Hello V...

He grunted and groaned and as he strained to turn off the valve, his entire body was caught up in the struggle. I watched as he fought the battle of the valve and finally was triumphant. I also kept a close eye on those green plaid boxers, that when wet, clung to him like a second skin. Skin that was wet, and probably warm, and smelled like...

"Got it!"

"Hurray!" I clapped as the water finally stopped. He let out one last groan that sounded oddly familiar and then his body relaxed. I watched as he slid out from under the sink.

He lay next to me on the floor, soaked and in his boxers.

I sat next to him, soaked, naked, and in a towel.

Clive sat on top of the fridge, soaked and angry.

He continued to yell/meow and we continued to stare. Edward was breathing heavily after his battle, and I was breathing heavy as well. From his battle.

Clive jumped down from the fridge to the counter and skidded across in the puddle. He hit my radio, bounced off of it, and fell to the floor.

Loud Margin Gaye poured into the wet kitchen as Clive shook himself and ran into the living room.

"Let's get it on..."

Marvin sang it like he meant it, and Edward and I looked back at each other, both of our faces stained crimson red.

"Are you kidding me?" I said.

"Is this for real?" he said and we both started to laugh.

At the chaos, at the ridiculous, at the sheer insanity of what had just happened and the fact that we were now both laying half naked in my kitchen, covered in water, listening to a song that was encouraging us to in fact "get it on", and laughing our asses off.

I finally straightened up first, wiping tears from my eyes. He sat up next to me still holding his stomach.

"This is like a bad episode of Three's Company," he chuckled.

"No kidding, I hope someone called Mr. Ferley," I giggled, trying to hold my towel tighter around me.

"Shall we get this cleaned up?" he asked standing up. I noticed that his boxers, and anything that might be contained inside, were now at eye level.

Settle Bella...

"Yes, I suppose we should," I laughed again as he held out his hand to help me up. I couldn't gain any traction, so as I hung onto his hands, with my feet continuing to slip out from under me, I started to laugh again.

"This is never going to work," he muttered and swooped me up. He carried me into the living room and set me down.

"Watch it there, Snoopy is drooping a little," he joked, gesturing to the part covering the girls.

"You'd love that, wouldn't you," I joked back, pulling it tighter.

"I am going to get changed and I will bring you back some towels. Try and stay out of trouble," he winked and headed over to his place. I laughed again and made my way back to the bedroom where Clive was now just a bump under the covers.

I looked in the mirror over my dresser as I dug for something to put on. I was positively glowing.

An hour later and things were back under control. We had cleaned up all the water, let the people know downstairs in case there was any leakage below, and had placed a call to the maintenance guy. Sadly, it was not Mr. Ferley. I would have loved it if Ralph had to handle this comedy of errors.

We began to move towards the front door, mopping up the last little bit of water with the towels he had generously provided.

"What a fucking disaster!" I cried, sinking down onto the couch.

"Could have been worse. You could have had to deal with this after only three hours of sleep, and being woken up by some woman screaming at the top of her lungs," he joked, sitting on the arm of the couch. I arched one eyebrow at him and he recanted.

"Ok, bad example, since that scenario is something you are familiar with. What are you going to do now?"

"I dunno, I need to stay here and wait for the guy to fix this mess. In the meantime, I am without water, which means no coffee, no shower, no nothing. Sucks," I muttered, crossing my arms across my chest and slinking further down into the couch.

"Well, I guess I will be across the hall, drinking coffee and thinking about my shower if you need anything..." he teased, starting for the

door.

"Ass, you are totally making me coffee."

"Are you taking me up on the shower too?"

"You won't be in there with me you know."

"I guess you can take one anyway, come on Doorbanger," he huffed, pulling me up off the couch and leading me across the hall. Clive tossed one more angry cry at me from the bedroom and I rolled my eyes at him.

"Oops, wait. Let me grab breakfast," I cried, snatching the foil wrapped package from the table.

"What's that?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Your zucchini bread," I answered.

I swear he almost bit through his bottom lip. He must really like zucchini bread.

Thirty minutes later, I was sitting at Edward's kitchen table, legs curled underneath me, drinking French pressed coffee and towel drying my hair. He seemed really relaxed and happy. I guess, he had devoured the entire loaf of zucchini bread. I had barely managed half a slice before he took it away from me, the entire chunk disappearing in his mouth.

He pushed away from the table and groaned, patting his full belly.

"You want another loaf? I baked plenty you little piggy," I remarked, wrinkling my nose at him.

"I will take anything you want to give me Nightie Girl," he winked and let out a tiny burp.

"Now that's sexy," I frowned and took my coffee cup into the living room. He followed me in, glancing out into the hallway to see if the maintenance guy had shown up yet.

"Thanks, the ladies seem to like it," he snarked back, and sat down on his big comfy couch. I wandered around the living room, looking at all his pictures. He had a series of black and whites on one wall, prints of the same woman on a beach. Hands, feet, tummy, shoulders, back, legs, toes, and finally one of just her face. She was gorgeous.

"This is beautiful, one of your harem?" I teased, looking back at him. He sighed and ran his hand through his hair.

"Not every woman has made a trip into my bed you know," he muttered.

"I know, I'm kidding. Where were these taken?" I asked, sitting down next to him.

"On a beach in Bora Bora. I was working on a series of travel photography, most beautiful beaches of the South Pacific, very retro styled. But she was on the beach one day, and the light was perfect, and I asked her if I could take some shots of her. They came out great."

"She's beautiful," I answered, dropping down onto the couch next to him, sipping my coffee.

"Yes, yes she is," he agreed with a sweet smile.

We sipped silently, quiet and being ok with being quiet.

"So what were you planning on doing today?" he asked.

"You mean before my pipes revolted?"

"Yes, before the attack," he smiled over the rim of his mug, green eyes twinkling.

"I didn't have a lot planned actually, and that was a good thing. I was gonna go for a run, maybe sit outside and read this afternoon," I sighed, feeling warm and comfortable and cozy. "What about you?"

"I was planning on sleeping the entire day before tackling a mountain of laundry."

"You can go sleep you know, I can wait in my own apartment," I replied, starting to get up. Poor guy, he had gotten in late and I was keeping him from his sleep. He waved me off and pointed to the couch.

"I know better though, if I sleep I will have jet lag all week. I need to get back on Pacific time as soon as I can, so it's probably a good thing your pipes attacked."

"Hmm, I guess. So how was Ireland? Good times?" I asked, settling back.

"Good times yes, although I always have a good time when I'm traveling."

"God, what an amazing job. I would love to be able to travel for a living like that, living out of a suitcase, seeing the world for my job, amazing..." I trailed off, looking around the room again at all the pictures. I spotted a slender shelf on the far wall with tiny bottles on it.

"What's that?" I asked, moving across the room towards the curious little shelf. They each contained what looked like sand. Some were white, some gray, some pink, one was almost pitch black. They each had little labels on them. I felt rather than saw him move behind me, his breath warm in my ear.

"Every time I visit a new beach, I bring back a little sand. Like a reminder of where I was, when I was there," he answered, his voice low and wistful. I looked closer at the bottles and marveled over the names I saw.

Harbour Island-Bahamas, Prince William Sound-Alaska,
Punaluu-Hawaii, Vik-Iceland, Sanur-Fiji, Galicia-Spain, Patura-Turkey.

"Amazing, and you've been all these places?"

"Mmm hmm,"

"And why bring back sand? Why not postcards, or better yet, the pictures that you take? Isn't that enough of a souvenir?" I asked, turning to look at him.

"I take pictures because I love it, and it happens to be my job. But this? This is tangible, it's tactile, this is real. I can feel this, this is sand I was actually standing on, from every continent on the planet. It brings me back there, instantly," he answered, his eyes going all dreamy.

From any other guy, in any other setting, it would have been pure cheese. But from Wallbanger? The guy had to be deep...dammit.

My fingers continued to trail over all the bottles, almost more than I could count. My fingertips lingered on the few from Spain, and he noticed.

"Spain huh?" he asked. I turned to look at him.

"Yep, Spain. Always wanted to go, I will someday," I sighed and crossed back to the couch.

"Do you travel much?" he asked, sinking down next to me again.

"I try to go somewhere each year, not as fanciful as you, or as frequently, but I try to take myself somewhere every year."

"You and the girls?" he smiled.

"Sometimes, but the last few years I have enjoyed traveling by myself. There's something nice about being able to set your own pace, go where you want and not have to run it by a committee every time you want to go out for dinner, ya know?"

"I get it, I am just surprised," he said, frowning slightly at me.

"Surprised that I would want to travel alone? Are you kidding, it's the best!" I cried.

"Hell, you'll get no argument from me. I am just surprised. Most people don't like to travel alone, too overwhelming, too intimidating. And they think they will get lonely."

"Do you ever get lonely?" I asked.

"I told you, I am never lonely," he answered, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes yes, I know, says the Wallbanger, but I have to say I find that a little hard to believe," I mused, twisting a lock of almost dry hair around my finger.

"Do you get lonely?" he asked.

"When I am traveling? No, I am great company," I answered promptly.

"I hate to admit it but I'd agree with that," he answered, raising his mug in my direction. I smiled and blushed slightly, hating myself as I did it.

"Wow, are we becoming friends?" I asked.

"Hmm, friends..." he thought carefully, examining me and my current state of blush. "Yes, I think we are."

"Interesting. From Cockblocker to friend, not bad," I giggled, and clinked his mug with my own.

"Oh it remains to be seen whether you are lifted from Cockblocker status yet," he teased, swept a hair out of my face.

"Well just give me a heads up before Spanx comes over next time, ok *friend*?" I laughed at his confused expression.

"Spanx?"

"Ah yes, well you would know her as Kate," I laughed harder. He finally had the decency to blush and smile sheepishly.

"Well as it happens, Miss Kate is out of the harem."

"Oh no! I liked her! Did you paddle her too hard?" I teased again, my giggling beginning to get out of control. He ran his hands through his hair frantically.

"I have to tell you that this is frankly the strangest conversation I have ever had with a woman."

"I doubt that, but seriously, where did Kate go?"

He smiled quietly.

"Kate met someone else, and seems really happy. So we ended our physical relationship of course, but she is still a good friend."

"Well that's good," I nodded, and was quiet a moment. "How does that work actually?"

"How does what work?"

"Well, you have to admit your relationships are unconventional at best. How do you do it? Keep everyone happy?" I prodded. He laughed at my questioning.

"You're not seriously asking how I satisfy these women are you?" he grinned.

"Hell no, I have heard how you do that! There doesn't seem to be any question about that. I mean, how does no one get hurt? "

He thought for a moment.

"I guess because we were honest going into this. It isn't like anyone sets out to create this little world, it just happens. Kate and I have always gotten along great, especially in that way, so we just fell into that relationship. I am too busy to date anyone for real, and most women don't want to put up with a boyfriend that is across the globe more often than they are home."

"I can see that, but I think you would feel differently if the right woman came along."

"You're a romantic aren't you?" he leaned in, bumping my shoulder.

"I'm a practical romantic. I actually can see the appeal of having a guy that travels a lot because, frankly? I like my space. I also take up the entire bed so it's difficult for me to sleep with anyone," I shook my head ruefully, remembering how quickly I used to kick my one-nighters to the curb. In reflection, some of my past wasn't all that different than Edward's, he just had his sexcapades tied up into a much neater package.

"A practical romantic, interesting. So what about you, dating anyone?" he asked.

"Nope, and I am ok with that."

"Really?"

"Why doesn't anyone believe that? Is it so hard to believe that a hot sexy woman with a great career doesn't need a man to be happy?" I asked.

"First of all, bully for you for calling yourself hot and sexy...because it's true. It's nice to see a woman give herself a compliment instead of fishing for one. And secondly, I'm not talking about getting married here, I'm talking about dating. You know, hanging out? Casually?"

"Are you asking me if I am fucking anyone right now?" I shot at him and he spluttered into his coffee.

"Definitely the strangest conversation I've ever had with a woman," he muttered.

"A hot and sexy woman," I reminded him.

"That's for damn sure."

We both grinned at each other, having a good time with this great honesty. We were both startled with the knocking on my door across the hall. The maintenance guy was finally there.

"Thanks for the coffee, and the shower, and the pipe rescue," I said, stretching as I walked towards the door. I nodded at the guy in the hallway, and held up one finger to let him know I would be right there.

"No problem, it wasn't the nicest way to be woken up but I suppose you owed me that one," he smirked.

"Indeed I did, but thank you anyway."

"You're welcome and thanks for the bread, it was great. And if another loaf happens to make its way over here, that would be ok."

"I'll see what I can do. And hey, where's my sweater?"

"Do you know how expensive those are?"

"Pffft, I want my sweater!" I cried, slapping him in the chest.

"Well, as it happens I did bring you something, as sort of thanks-for-kicking-my-door present."

"I knew it, you can drop it off later," I grinned and walked across the hall to let the guy in. I directed him towards the kitchen, and then turned back towards Edward.

"Friends huh?"

"Looks that way."

"I can live with that," I smiled, and closed the door.

I showed the maintenance guy the problem, and he set about fixing it.

I wandered into my bedroom to check on Clive, and saw that my phone was blinking. I had a text already from Wallbanger. I grinned, and laid down on the bed, snuggling a still freaked out kitty to my side. He began to purr instantly.

You never answered my question...

I felt my skin heat up as I realized what he was referring to. My skin actually got warm and a little tingly, like when your foot falls asleep but all over. And in a good way. God *damn* he gave great text...

About whether I am fucking anyone?

Jesus you're crass. But yes, friends can ask that can't they?

Yes they can.

So?

You are kind of a pain in the ass, you know this right?

Tell me, don't get shy on me now...

As it happens, no. I am not...

I heard a thud from next door, and then a slight but constant thumping on the wall.

What the hell are you doing? Is that your head?

You are killing me Nightie Girl...

As soon as I finished reading his last text, the thumping resumed.

I laughed out loud as he continued to thump his head against the wall. I placed my hand on the wall over my bed where the thumping was concentrated and giggled again.

What a strange morning...

I am really really really starting to love these two! They are killing ME! Let me know what you think, I am loving your reviews...they give me really great insight into where you think these 2, or even these 8 are going

And now for some recs:

What Comes Naturally by playitagainsam. This one was not being updated very often, but it has come back and with a vengeance! This is

a great story about what will you give up for your true love, and what will you sacrifice? Your family, your world, even your faith?

Last Rites by halojones. This story is still just getting started, but looks at the meeting btw vamp Edward and human Bella in a really unique way. I love this author, and I love this story!

I am getting ready to start a bunch of new stories, and I will continue to bring you my faves with each and every chapter. I would love it if when you review, you let me know which you are reading and loving!

See you soon chickens!

MWAH

Alice

xoxo

11. Stateless

Can you believe it my little bangers? A new chapter within only 1 week? It's like a new world order. And thanks for the reviews last chapter, so many of you enjoyed my little laptop novella I am tempted to write an outtake about it...kidding. I read each and every one of those reviews, and I am blown away by the sweet thoughts you left me. And how much you love Clive, who is clearly the star of the show. But pussies always tend to steal focus...

Thanks again to my main chickens Nina and Lauren, and to the lovely Miss Psymommy. Big props to Christina in the corn field, and Moi with her avada kedavra...

Oh, by the way. I feel that an Edward Wallbanger is best served with a twist...

See you down below!

Chapter 11-Stateless

I sat in my office, gazing out the window. I had a list in front of me of things to do, and it wasn't a small list either. I needed to run by the Black house, the renovation was almost completed. The bedroom/bathroom was finished, and the last few details were being buttoned up on their new basement home theater/man cave. I also needed to get some new sample books from the design center. I had a meeting with a new client that Alice had referred me to, and on top of all that I had a folder full of invoices to go through.

But I gazed out the window. I might have had Banger on the brain. And for good reason. Between the pipe implosions, the head banging, and then the constant texting all day Sunday asking for more zucchini bread, my brain simply could not expunge. And then last night, he brought out the big guns.

He Glenn Miller'd me.

And even knocked on the wall to make sure I was listening.

I put my head down on the desk and banged it a few times to see if it helped. It seemed to help Edward.

"Do I need to check and see if this is covered under our insurance? Self inflicted desk wounds?" I heard Esme ask from the door.

I raised my head up and saw her trying to not to smile.

"No worries, only a little blunt head trauma. Not using it for anything anyway, come on in," I waved.

"How was your weekend?" she asked.

"It was good, interesting. You?"

"Very good, we had some friends from the city out for the weekend and went sailing."

"I thought you looked like you got some sun, better watch out for those sun spots."

"Hmm, weren't you due for your annual review soon?" she warned.

"Nope, you just gave me a raise two months ago. By review time next year I will have assumed control of the office and voted you off the island," I laughed, poking her with my pencil.

"Just let me pretend to have control of this office for the time being, yes?" she pleaded dramatically.

"Yes, I'll grant you that," I answered, pointing to my long list of things to do and gestured towards the clock on the wall.

"Oh, I'll let you get back to your window gazing soon enough, first tell me how the Black projects are going," she instructed.

We spent the better part of an hour going over the final details, and true to form she made a few suggestions that I would have never thought of. This is why she was a genius, the little tweaks she made would make the finished result have that polish, that finish that only an Esme Platt design could have. For all the teasing back and forth, she knew how grateful I was to her for taking me under her wing, and I was fully aware of lucky I was when she chose me as her intern those years ago. Especially that year, senior year I needed all the distraction I could get. I spent the early part of that year just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

"So, I have a new client for you, someone that asked for you by name Miss Bella."

"Really? Fantastic, what kind of job?"

"Just interiors, new condo. Needs the whole place redone, furniture, artwork, accents, everything."

"Wow, my favorite kind of job. Who is it?" I asked, getting excited already. Blank slate, very fun indeed.

"Up and coming lawyer, can't for the life of me think of his name. I met him at the symphony benefit last month, and he asked me about you. Then called the office this morning, anxious to get started."

"That works out perfectly, since finishing up with the Blacks will give me some open time. Give me his contact information and I will call him to set up...."

"Already done, he's your 10am tomorrow morning," she interrupted.

"So he is ready to start working soon I take it? Did he give you any indication of styles that he is interested in?"

"A little, but he seemed to want to discuss with you. He seems like he has some pretty specific ideas, likes modern particularly. He used the word 'clean' several times," she said, rolling her eyes a little. I knew what she meant, ever since HGTV everyone thought they were a designer.

"Ok, I will pull a few things but keep an open mind."

"Atta girl. Listen, I gotta scoot, lunch tomorrow?"

"Yep, sounds good," I waved to her as she glided out of the room. I gazed out the window for two more minutes, and then got to work.

That night I went straight to yoga after work, and was heading upstairs when I heard a door open from above me.

"Nightie Girl?" I heard called down to me. I grinned and continued up the stairs.

"Yes Wallbanger?" I called up.

"You're home late."

"What are you, watching my door now?" I laughed, rounding the last landing and stared up at him. He was hanging over the railing, hair in his face.

"Yep. Zucchini me woman!" he instructed, tapping on my door.

"You're insane, you know this right?" I rolled my eyes, climbing the last stair and standing in front of him.

"I have been told, you smell nice," he said, leaning in and sniffing me.

"Did you just sniff me?" I asked incredulously as I opened the door.

"Mmm hmm, very nice. Just get back from a workout?" he asked, walking in behind me and closing the door.

"Yoga, why?"

"You smell *great* when you're all worked up," he said, wagging his eyebrows at me like the devil.

"Seriously Wallbanger, you pick women up with lines like that?" I asked, turning away from him to take off my jacket and squeeze my thighs together manically.

"It's not a line, you do smell great," I heard him say and I closed my eyes to block out the bangbang voodoo currently making my hoohah curl in on itself.

Clive came bounding out of the bedroom when he heard my voice and stopped short when he saw Edward. Unfortunately, he gained little traction on the hardwood floors and skidded rather ungracefully under the dining room table. Trying to regain a little dignity, he executed a difficult four-foot leap from a standing position onto the bookshelf, and waved me over with his little paw. He wanted me to come to him, typical male.

"Hi sweet boy, how was your day? Hmm? Did you play? Did you get a good nap? Hmm?" I cooed, scratching behind his ear and making him purr loudly. He gave me his dreamy cat eyes and then turned his gaze towards Edward. I swear he winked at him.

"Zucchini bread huh? You want some more I take it?" I asked, throwing my jacket on the back of a chair and setting down my gym bag.

"I know you have more, gimme it," he deadpanned, making his finger into a gun.

"You are oddly into your baked goods, aren't you? Support group for that?" I joked, walking into the kitchen where the last loaf was. I might have been saving it for him.

"Yes, I am in BA. Bakers Anonymous. We meet over at the bakery on Pine," he replied seriously, sitting down on the stool at the kitchen counter.

"Good group is it?"

"Pretty good. There's a better one at the Au Bon Pain over on Market, but I can't go to that one anymore," he said sadly, shaking his head back and forth.

"Get kicked out huh?" I asked, leaning on the counter in front of him.

"I did actually," he said, and then curled his finger at me to get me to lean in closer.

"I got in trouble for fondling buns," he whispered shamefully.

I giggled and gave his cheek a light pinch.

"Bun Fondler, might be a new nickname!" I snorted as he pushed my hand away.

"Just fork over the bread see, and no one gets hurt," he warned. I rolled my eyes at him and grabbed a wine glass from the cupboard over his head. I raised my eyebrow at him, and he nodded.

I handed him a bottle of Merlot and the wine opener, and let him open it while I grabbed a bunch of grapes from the colander in the fridge. He poured, we clinked, and without another word, I started making us dinner.

The rest of the evening happened naturally, without me even realizing it. One minute, we were discussing the new wine glasses I had purchased from Williams Sonoma, and 30 minutes later we were sitting at the dining room table with pasta in front of us. I was still wearing my workout clothes, and Edward was in jeans and a t-shirt and his stocking feet. He had taken off his Stanford sweatshirt when he was draining the pasta, something I didn't even have to ask him to do. He wandered into the kitchen behind me, and had it drained and back in the pot just as I finished the sauce.

We had talked about the city, his work, my work, the upcoming trip to Tahoe, and soon we were making our way over to the couch with coffee.

I leaned back against the pillows with my legs curled up underneath me. Edward was telling me about a trip he had taken to Brazil a few years before.

"You've never been to Carnivale?" Oh Bella, you have to go, sometime in your life. It's not to be missed. It's like the biggest street party in the world, it's crazy!" he sighed, stretching his arm along the back of the couch. I smiled and tried not to notice the butterflies when he said my name that way. With the word "Oh" right in front of my name...Oh me Oh my.

"I would love to go, sometime. God, I wish I could travel like you do. Do you ever get sick of it?" I asked.

"Hmmm, yes and no. It's always great to come home. I love San Francisco. But, if I'm home too long I get the itch to get back out on the road. And no comments about the itch, I'm starting to get to know your mind there Nightie Girl," he teased, patting my arm affectionately. I tried to feign offense but the truth was I had been about to make a joke. I giggled and noticed that he still had his hand on my arm, and was absentmindedly tracing tiny circles on it with his fingertips.

Had it really been so long since I had let a man touch me that fingertip circles sent me into a mental tizzy? Or was it that *this* man was doing it...oh God the fingertips. Either way, it was doing things to me. If I closed my eyes, I could almost imagine O waving at me, still far away, but not as far as she had been before.

I glanced at Edward, and saw that he was watching his hand, his fingers on my skin. I breathed in quickly, my intake of breath drawing his eyes to mine. We watched each other, closely.

Clive jumping up on the back of the couch and putting his bum right in Edward's face killed that real quick, and as we both laughed, he moved away from me as I explained to Clive that it was not polite to do that to company. Clive seemed oddly pleased with himself though, so I knew he was up to something.

"Wow, it's almost ten! I have taken up your entire evening, I hope you didn't have plans," he said, standing and stretching. As he stretched, his t-shirt came up and I was treated to another view of his pecorino grating abs.

"Well, I did have a rather exciting night planned of watching So You Think You Can Dance, so damn you Edward!" I yelled, shaking my fist in his face as I stood up next to him.

"And you even made me dinner, which was great by the way," he said, searching for his sweatshirt.

"No problem, it was nice to cook for someone other than myself. It's what I do for any guy that shows up demanding bread," I teased as I handed him the loaf that I had left out for him. He smirked as he grabbed his sweatshirt off the floor next to the couch.

"Well next time, let me cook for you. I make a fantastic...huh, that's weird," he interrupted himself, grimacing.

"What's weird?" I asked, watching as he unfolded his sweatshirt. That looked like it was wet.

"Why is this all wet?" he asked, looking at me confused. I looked from the sweatshirt to Clive, sitting innocently on the back of the couch.

"Oh no," I whispered, my face turning purple. "Clive, you little shit," I said, glaring at him. He jumped off the couch and darted quickly between my legs, headed for the bedroom. He knew I couldn't reach him behind the dresser and that's where he hid when he had done a bad bad thing. He hadn't done this in a long time.

"Edward, you might want to leave that here. I'll wash it, dry clean it, whatever, I am so so sorry," I apologized, so embarrassed.

"Oh, did he? Oh man, he did, didn't he?" he said, his face wrinkling as I took the sweatshirt from him.

"Yes, yes he did. I'm so sorry Edward. He has this thing about marking his territory. Any guy that leaves clothes on the floor, oh man, he eventually pees on. I'm so sorry, I am so so sorry...I'm so-"

"Bella, it's ok. I mean, it's gross and we both have pee hand now, but it's ok. I've had worse things happen to me. It's all good, I promise," he said, starting to put his hand on my shoulder but thinking better of it when he realized the last thing he had touched.

"I'm so sorry, I-" I started again as he started for the door.

"Stop it, if you say sorry one more time I'm gonna go find something of yours and pee on it, I swear."

"Ok, that's just gross man," I grimaced and finally laughed, "but we had such a nice night, and it ended in pee!" I wailed, opening the door for him.

"It *was* a nice night, even with the pee. There'll be others, don't worry Nightie Girl," he winked and walked across the hall.

"Play me something good tonight, huh?" I asked, watching him go into his apartment.

"You got it. Sleep tight," he said and we closed the doors at the same time.

I leaned back against the door, hugging the sweatshirt in my arms. I had the goofiest grin on my face, as I remembered the feeling of his fingertips. And then I remembered I was hugging a pee stained sweatshirt...

"Clive you asshole!" I yelled and ran into my bedroom.

Fingers, hands, warm skin were pressed against mine in an effort to get me closer. I felt his warm breath in my ear, his voice that was like wet sex in my ear,

"Oh Bella, how can you feel this good?"

I moaned and rolled over, twisting legs with legs and arms with arms, pushing my tongue into his waiting mouth. I sucked on his bottom lip, tasting mint and heat and the promise of what was to come when he pushed into my body for the first time. I moaned as he groaned and in a flash I was pinned beneath him.

Lips moved from my mouth to my neck, licking and sucking and finding the spot, *that spot*, underneath my jaw that made my insides explode and my eyes cross. A dark laugh against my collarbone, and I knew I was done for.

I rolled on top of him, feeling the loss of his weight but the gain of my legs on either side of him, feeling him twitch and throb exactly where I needed him to be. He pushed my hair from my face, gazing up at me

with those eyes, the eyes that had the power to make me forget my name but scream his own.

"Edward!" I cried out, feeling his hands grabbing my hips and pushing me against him.

EPOV

I lay in bed, listening to what I knew I shouldn't be listening to. Even over the smooth sounds coming from the turntable, I could hear her.

Could hear her moaning my name, over and over again.

If I was any harder I could drill for oil. Drill baby drill.

"Edward! Oh...My...God...that's so fucking good...just...like...that...mmmm," she called out from the other side of the wall, and I bit down on my knuckles.

When I first heard Bella moaning earlier, I thought at first she was playing, trying to get me back for the first times I heard her dreaming of me. But as her cries escalated, and she began to bring it on home, I knew there was no way she was faking this. She was asleep, and she was having one hell of a dream.

A dream about me. I found that highly erotic, and completely intoxicating. This gorgeous, smart, sexy, highly fuckable girl that was separated only by a few inches of thin plaster was dreaming about me, and apparently I was doing a very good job of pleasing her.

Why wasn't I on the other side of that wall tonight? Beats the shit out of me.

I rolled over on my side, trying to not to hear her, but so totally fascinated and turned on there was no way I could block it out.

I had not had sex since before I left for Ireland, and while I was not opposed to a little self love from time to time, my ladies typically kept me satisfied. But not lately.

I was not craving my ladies as I usually did. I thought for sure I would have called Irina or Tanya by now to let them know I was back in town. I hadn't however, and I wasn't really sure why. Was I growing up? Nah.

"Fuck Edward, right there, yes yes, Jesus that feels amazing..." came through the wall, and I closed my eyes tight.

Speaking of growing...

My hands reached inside my boxers, and found myself hard and ready. It would not take much, Bella had already done most of the work. I saw her behind my eyelids, naked body tangled in my sheets as her own hands roamed over my body. I heard her, and saw her in my mind as she grasped me firmly, her beautiful hands wrapped around me. Her hands stroked me, sure in each action, designed solely for my pleasure. I heard her moan my name and I saw her eyes gazing down at me as she worked me to the brink, her deep brown eyes that were full of want and need and intense desire as she tightened her hold.

She moaned and I groaned and I came as she smiled at me, winking devilishly.

My eyes opened, sluggish and lazy after one of the most intense orgasms a woman had ever given me.

And she wasn't even in the room.

I could hear her on her side of the wall, soft sighing breaths giving way to quiet contentment. I staggered into the bathroom, realizing that I was in deep deep trouble.

I wanted to have sex with my friend Bella.

I sat at my desk, going over some notes before I met my newest client. Esme had given me only a little to go on in terms of what kind of style he preferred, so I had my portfolio opened to various styles, as well as pictures of some of the other interiors I had designed.

I had a few minutes before he was due, and as it had been doing all morning whenever not occupied, my mind traveled back to the dream I had last night. My skin blushed immediately when I thought of what I had let Dream Edward do to me, and what Dream Bella had done to him as well...

Dream Bella and Dream Edward were some naughty kids.

"Ahem," I heard from behind me. Leah stood in the doorway. "Bella, Mr. Brown is here."

"Excellent, I'll be right out," I nodded, standing and smoothing my skirt. My hands pressed my cheeks, hoping they were not too red.

"And he is cute cute cute!" she murmured as she walked beside me.

"Oh really? Cute *and* a lawyer? Must be my lucky day," I laughed, rounding the corner and seeing my new client for the first time.

He certainly was cute, and I would know.

It was my ex boyfriend, James.

"Oh. My. God! What are the chances?" Esme exclaimed at lunch, two hours later.

"Well considering my entire life lately is ruled by odd coincidences I figure it's right on track," I mumbled, breaking a piece of flatbread and chewing determinedly.

"But I mean, come on! What are the chances, really?" Esme wondered again, pouring us another glass of Pellegrino.

"Oh, there is nothing chance about this, James doesn't leave anything to chance. He knew exactly what he was doing when he approached you at the benefit last month."

"No," she breathed.

"Yep, he told me. He saw me, and when he found out I worked for you, BAM. He needs an interior designer," I smiled, thinking to the way that James always had of arranging things exactly how he wanted them. Well, almost everything.

"Don't worry Bella, I'll move him over to another designer, or I'll even take him on. You don't have to work with him," she decided, patting my hand firmly.

"Oh hell no, I already told him yes. I'm totally doing this," I nodded, crossing my arms over my chest.

"Are you sure?"

"Yep, no problem. It wasn't that we had a bad breakup. In fact as far as breakups go it was mild. He didn't want to accept the fact that I was leaving him, but eventually he came around. He never thought I would have the balls to do it, and boy was he surprised," I answered, playing with my napkin.

I had dated James junior year of college, and most of senior year. He was already in law school, and he was steadily moving through on his way to his future of perfection. My goodness, he was beautiful. Strong and handsome, very charming. We met at the library one night, had coffee a few times, and it grew into a strong relationship.

The sex? Unreal.

He was my first serious boyfriend and I knew he wanted to marry me eventually. He had very specific ideas of what he wanted from his life and that definitely included me as his wife. And he was everything I ever thought I wanted in a husband. Engagement was inevitable. But as we grow, we change. At least I did.

When I realized he was no longer what I wanted for my own future, things got a little strained. We fought constantly, and when I finally ended the relationship he was convinced I was making the wrong choice. I knew better, and he finally accepted that I was really done, and not just pitching a 'feminine fit' as he liked to call them. We didn't keep in contact, although he was a major part of my life for a long time and I cherished the memories we had together.

Just because we didn't work out as a couple, didn't necessarily mean we couldn't work together, right?

"Are you sure about this? You really want to work with him?" she asked one more time, ready to let it go.

I thought about it again, thinking back to the flash of memory when I saw him standing in the lobby. Sandy blonde hair, piercing eyes, charming smile. I was hit with a wave of nostalgia and grinned as he crossed to me.

"Hey there stranger," he said, offering me his hand.

"James. Wow, you look great!" I had gushed, and we hugged to the surprise of Leah, who was gawking.

"It'll be good for me, call it a growth experience. Plus, I don't want to give up the commission. We'll see what happens tonight," I winked, and she looked up from her menu.

"Tonight?"

"Oh, I didn't tell you? We're going for drinks to get caught up," I smiled.

I stood in front of the mirror, fluffing my hair and checking my teeth for wayward lipstick. The rest of the day at work had gone quickly and I soon found myself at home and getting ready for tonight. We had agreed to just drinks, very casual, although I was leaving the option open for dinner depending on how the evening went. Skinny jeans, black turtleneck and cropped grey leather jacket was as fancy as I was gonna get.

The time I had spent today with James at the office beginning to discuss plans for his new condo were pleasant, and when he asked me to go for drinks to catch up I agreed instantly. I was anxious to see what he had been up to, and also to make sure that we would be able to work together. He had been a huge part of my life at one time, and the idea of being able to work with someone I was once so close to felt good to me, it felt right. Closure? Not sure what to call it, but it seemed like a natural thing to do.

He was picking me up at seven, and I planned on meeting him outside since parking was so difficult on my street. Since it was almost seven now, I went ahead and gave a quick kiss goodbye to Clive, who had been on his best behavior since the pee incident, and let myself into the hallway.

And straight into Edward, who was in front of my door.

"Ok, you are officially my stalker! There is no more zucchini bread mister, I hope you made that loaf last because there is no more for you," I warned, pressing him back from my front door with my pointer finger.

"I know, I know, I am actually here on official business," he laughed, throwing up his arms in defeat.

"Walk with me?" I asked, nodding towards the stairs.

"I'm actually headed out as well, going to rent a movie," he explained as we headed downstairs.

"Do people still rent movies?" I joked, turning the corner.

"Yes Nightie Girl, I guess you're gonna have to watch whatever I pick out tonight," he replied, raising an eyebrow.

"Tonight?"

"Sure, why not. I was coming over to see if you wanted to hang out, I owe you for dinner from the other night and I got an urge to watch something spooky..." he trailed off, then launching into the Twilight Zone theme. I couldn't help but laugh at his claw hands and crossed eyes.

"I wish I could, but I have plans tonight. Tomorrow night?" I asked, as we rounded the last stair and headed into the entryway.

"Tomorrow I can do, come on over after work. But I get to pick the movie, and I'm making you dinner. Least I can do for my little Cockblocker" he smirked and I punched him in the arm.

"Told you I don't like that name, but I'll let it go. Only since you're making me dinner though. I'll bring dessert," I said, lowering my voice and batting my eyelashes like a fool. He smirked instantly, and came right back.

"Dessert huh?" he asked, holding the door open for me as I walked outside into the night.

"Mmm hmm. I picked up some apples today while I was out, and I have been craving pie all week, how does that sound?" I asked, scanning the street for James.

"Apple pie? Homemade apple pie? Fuck, are you *trying* to kill me? Mmm..." he smacked his lips and looked at me hungrily.

"Why sir, you look like you have seen something you like would to eat," I teased, in my best Scarlett.

"Indeed," he breathed, and launched himself at me, lips smacking at my neck, tickling and making me squeal.

"Settle down, settle! Wallbanger!" I cried, laughing as we wrestled playfully on the sidewalk.

He relented, but kept his arm around my waist.

"You show up with apple pie tomorrow night, I may not let you leave," he breathed, his cheeks rosy and messy hair blowing in the cool night air.

"That would be terrible," I whispered, feeling how close he was holding me and knowing that my own cheeks must be rosy as well.

"Bella?" a concerned voice came from behind me, and I saw James walking towards us.

"Hey James," I called out, disentangling myself from Edward with a giggle. He smirked and let go.

"You ready to go?" James asked, looking at Edward carefully. Edward straightened to his full height and looked back, just as carefully.

"Yep, ready to go. Edward, this is James, James Edward," I introduced the two, and they leaned in to shake hands. I could see that they both were exerting a little extra force, and neither seemed to be the one to want to let go first. I rolled my eyes. Yes boys, you can both write your names in the snow. The question is, who would have the bigger letters?

"Nice to meet you James, it was James right? I'm Edward, Edward Masen,"

"That's correct, James. James Brown," he answered, looking straight at him. I saw Edward's face, and the beginnings of a laugh.

"Ok James, we should get going. Edward, I'll talk to you later," I interrupted, ending the handshake of the century. James turned towards his car where he was double-parked and Edward looked at me.

"Brown? James Brown?" he mouthed and I squelched my own laugh.

"Shut it," I mouthed back, smiling at James when he turned back towards me.

"Nice to meet you Edward, see you around," James called back, steering me towards the car with his hand on the small of my back. I didn't even think twice about it, as that is always how we used to walk together, but I did see Edward's eyes widen a little at the sight. Hmm...

James opened the door for me and headed around to his side. Edward was still standing in front of our building when we drove away, and I gave him a small smile.

I rubbed my hands together in front of the heater and grinned at James when he got in.

"So, where are we headed?" he asked.

EPOV

I grinned at Bella as he turned her towards the car, and she smiled back at me, giving me a little wave. As James shut her door and walked around to his own side, he shot a cold look back over his shoulder.

Between the way he shook my hand, and the "hands off" look he just gave me, of one thing I was absolutely certain.

James Brown was a dick...

Heh heh heh. Now before you begin to storm Gringotts (where I am currently hiding) may I remind you that this is a silly little ridiculous story. I just gave James the last name Brown for fucks sake, this story isn't going anywhere dark. Just keep playing with me, that's what she said.

And for those of you that want the recipe for zucchini bread (which tastes a lot like carrot cake fyi) I will be posting it on the thread in the next week. Shouts to the girls on the Wallbanger thread who are on Team Breakfast Bread...

RECS! Who wants recs?

Currently going apeshit over:

Daedalus in Exile by EZRocksAngel. This is my current dose of vamp Edward. I have never seen a premise like this one, and it is kicking my ass. Of course I loved Creature of Habit, and I am loving this one hard now too!

Rough Start by ItzMegan73. Oh boy, is this an interesting story. Edward is not immediately likeable, and I LOVE that. Although I imagine he smells like Lava soap and denim...mmmm

High Anxiety by edwardsbloodtype. I am not usually a fan of high school fics, but boy does this one have one helluva twist. I am really enjoying this one, and highly recommend it.

Hard at work on Chapter 12 already, and next up? Mother fucking Tahoe chickens...

MWAH!

Alice

xoxo

12. With A Shout

Hello Banger Chickens!

This chapter is extra long and thick, just the way we like it right? And although I had originally planned this chapter to include Tahoe, sadly these kids just wouldn't shut it! They just kept saying and doing things, and soon I was forced to make a choice. Get you to Tahoe in this chapter, but it would be the biggest mother chapter in all the Bay Area...OR...end it where it seemed to want to end, and we all go on a road trip next time...sound good? Hope so, cuz thats what yer gonna get.

Shouts to Team Wallbanger, (which this chapter includes the lovely hwimsey, the devious sinandshame, and the charming songirl as well as of course Nina and Lauren) Team Breakfast Bread, and Team Twigasm. And extra special thanks to hwimsey for proofing my Sf details and making suggestions whenever I ask!

Read it, and then we'll chat down below chickens...

Chapter 12- With A Shout

The two of us made ourselves comfortable in the swanky bar, the one he had picked out. It seemed very James, chic and sophisticated, and laced with hidden sexuality. The blood red leather banquettes, thinly cushioned and cool, ensconced us as we settled in and began the process of getting to know each other after years.

As I waited for a server to come by, I studied his face. He still looked the same, closely cropped sandy blonde hair, intense eyes taking in his surroundings, and lean frame folded in on itself like a cat. Age had only improved his good looks, and his carefully torn jeans and black cashmere sweater clung to his body that I knew was still in great shape. James had been a rock climber, and severe in his pursuit of the sport.

He viewed each rock, each mountain as an obstacle to overcome, to conquer.

I went climbing with him a few times towards the end of our relationship, having previously been skittish about heights. But watching him climb, seeing the sinewy muscles stretch and manipulate his body into positions that seemed unnatural was a heady experience, and I had pounced on him those evenings in the tent like a woman possessed.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked, interrupting my musings.

"I was thinking how much you used to climb. Is it something you still do?"

"I do, but I don't get as much free time as I used to. They keep me pretty busy at the firm, but I try and get out to Big Basin as often as I can," he replied, smiling as our waitress approached.

"What can I get you two?" she asked, placing napkins down in front of us. "She'll have a dry vodka martini, three olives, and for me bring three fingers of Macallan," he answered, grinning as the waitress nodded and left to fill our order.

I studied him as he sat back then turned his gaze towards me.

"Oh Bella, I'm sorry, is that still your drink?" he asked as I narrowed my eyes at him.

"As it happens, yes, but what if I didn't want that tonight?" I answered primly, wagging my finger at him.

"My mistake of course, what did you want to drink?" he corrected, waving the waitress back over.

"I'll have a dry vodka martini with three olives please," I told the waitress with a wink, and she looked confused.

James laughed loudly and she walked away shaking her head.

"Touché Bella, touché," he said, studying me again.

"So, tell me what you've been up to the last few years?" I asked, elbows leaning on the table and chin in hands.

"Hmm, how to encapsulate years in a few sentences. Finished law school, signed on with the firm here in the city, and worked like a dog for two years. I've been able to ease up a bit, only around 65 hours a week now, but its been nice seeing daylight again I admit," he grinned, and I couldn't help but smile back. "And of course working as much as I do leaves me very little time for a social life so it was just blind luck that I saw you at the benefit last month," he finished, mirroring my stance and leaning forward on his elbows as well.

"So you saw me, but didn't come and talk to me. And now here you are, weeks later, asking me to work on your condo, why is that exactly? I asked, accepting my drink when it came and taking a long pull.

"I *did* see you Bella, and I wanted to talk to you, believe me. But I couldn't, so much time had passed. But then I realized that you worked for Esme, who a friend had recommended to me, I thought how perfect," he answered, offering his glass towards mine for a clink.

I paused for a moment, then clinked him.

"So you are serious about working with me, this isn't some kind of ploy to get me into bed is it?" I asked and he looked at me evenly.

"Still direct as ever I see...but yes, this is professional only. I didn't like the way we left things admittedly, but I accepted your decision. And now here we are, I needed a decorator, you are a decorator, works out well don't you think?"

"Designer," I said quietly.

"What's that?"

"Designer," I said, a little more loudly this time. "I'm an interior designer, not a decorator. There's a difference there Mr. Attorney Man," I corrected, taking another sip.

"Of course of course," he replied, signaling for the waitress. Surprised I looked down and noticed that my glass was empty already.

"Care for another?" he asked, and I nodded.

As we small talked for the next hour, we began to discuss what exactly he needed in his new home. Esme was right, he was basically asking me to design his entire place, from the area rugs to overhead lighting fixtures and everything in between. It would be a huge commission, and he had even agreed to let me photograph it for a local design magazine that Esme had been wanted me to submit my work to. James came from a wealthy family, the Browns of Philadelphia don't ya know, and I knew his family must be footing most of the bill for this. Young lawyers didn't make enough money to afford the kind of place he had, not to mention living in one of the most expensive cities in America. But trust funds live on, and he was the recipient of a large one. One of the perks of dating him in college is we could actually afford to go on real dates, not eat cheap takeout all the time. I had enjoyed that aspect of being with him, not gonna lie.

And I would enjoy that aspect of this project, a basically unlimited budget? I couldn't wait to get started.

We had a great time, and like all past relationships there is a feeling of knowing, of nostalgia that you can only share with someone that has known you intimately, especially at that age as you are still forming. I admit, it was great to see him again. James had a very strong personality, intense and confident, and I was reminded again of why I had been attracted to him in the first place. We laughed and told stories about things we had done while a couple, and I was relieved to find that

the same charm was there, that we could get along quite well in a social setting without any of the awkwardness that *could* have accompanied this evening.

As the evening wound down and he was driving me home, he got around to the question I know he had been dying to ask me all evening.

We turned on my street and as he pulled the car to a stop, he turned to me.

"So, are you seeing anyone?" he asked quietly, with an inquisitive look.

"No, I'm not right now. Hardly a question a client would ask me..." I teased and looked toward my building. I could see Clive sitting in the front window waiting for me, and I inwardly smiled. It was nice to have someone waiting up for you. I couldn't stop myself from glancing next door to see if there was a light on in Edward's apartment and I also couldn't stop my tummy from doing a little flippity flop when I saw his shadow on the wall and the blue light from his television.

"Well, as your client I will refrain from asking those kinds of questions in the future Miss Swan," he chuckled, and I turned back towards him.

"It's ok James, we passed designer/client relationship a long time ago," I teased, feeling triumphant as I saw his blush carve out a chink in his careful façade.

"I think this is gonna be fun working together," he winked, and it was my turn to laugh.

"Ok, you call me tomorrow at the office and we'll get started on your new condo. And I am gonna fleece you blind buddy, get ready to work your credit card," I taunted, stepping out of the car and turning back around to face him.

"Oh hell, I am counting on it," he winked and waved goodbye.

He waited until I was inside, and then I tossed another wave towards him. I walked up the stairs, thinking back on the evening. It was good overall, and I was glad to see that I could handle myself with him again.

I turned the key in my lock, and thought I heard something behind me. I looked over my shoulder, but saw nothing. Hearing Clive calling to me from inside I smiled and stepped inside, scooping him up and whispering softly in his ear as he gave me a tiny cat hug with his big paws around my neck.

EPOV

I pressed my eye to the peephole for what felt like the thirtieth time that evening, having sworn I heard someone on the landing.

Nothing.

I paced. Why the hell was I pacing? Why did I care when Bella came home? She was my neighbor, barely friends, why did I care?

I paced.

I ran my hands through my hair, feeling tense. Did I want to go out for a run? Did I want to go out for a fuck?

Neither.

I paced.

I was feeling agitated, frustrated, like I had misplaced my keys or I had forgotten to pay a bill or something. Something just felt...off.

I mother fucking paced.

Eventually, I forced myself into a chair, and flipped on the TV. Funnily enough, there was an episode of Blue Planet on Discovery, and

although I hadn't worked in this particular show I fell into it. I was watching a segment on coral reefs, and I remembered Bella telling me about scuba diving off the coast of Belize. She was so animated when she told the story, the excitement she had over swimming with a reef shark, and the way she laughed when she told the story about peeing in her wet suit had me almost spit take my coffee.

I had been surprised for sure when she told me the day her pipes exploded that she enjoyed traveling alone, but I didn't realize at the time the extent of some of her travels. Frankly, I expected her to tell me tales of a weekend in Napa, or going to a spa in Carmel.

The girl had climbed Half Dome at Yosemite with a group of guys she had met that morning. She had stayed in one of those eco lodges in Costa Rica and went zip lining through the canopy. She "screamed so loud while she was hanging by her hoohah that she woke up half the forest" and loved every minute of it.

This girl was different.

Irina loved to travel, but as a model she had also been turned loose on the world stage alone at 14 and spent all her time in big cities staying in nice hotels. She was a true cosmopolitan, able to blend in anywhere in the world and I had always admired that about her. She loved being a global woman and spoke several languages. She had a terrific mind, and I was so glad that she was going back to get her masters in international studies now that her modeling career was slowing down.

But imagining Irina hanging from a pulley hundreds of feet above a rain forest?

I smiled thinking of Bella's cat cornering Irina in my bedroom, and the look on Bella's face when she tried to catch him. Priceless...

I heard movement in the hallway again, and like a sad sack, I went back to my post at the door and pressed my eye against the peephole. I

heard high heels clicking up the stairs, and they sounded familiar.

Then I saw the shape of Bella come into view, warped into sideshow image through the peephole contours but still, there was no mistaking that brown hair and sweet ass.

Did I just think about my neighbor's sweet ass?

Yep, I sure did.

And she was alone. James Brown was not with her, he had not been invited into the inner sanctum.

Why the hell had I just executed a fist pump?

"Shit," came out of my mouth before I had a chance to stop myself, and I saw Bella turn back around in her doorway, looking behind her as though she had heard something. She smiled a little as she looked across to my front door, and then continued on into her apartment, stooping down a little to pick up the pee cat, affording me one more spectacular view of that sweet ass.

As her door clicked shut for the night, and I backed away from the door like a Peeping Ed, I realized that my frustration, my agitation was gone.

Huh...strange.

I headed to bed.

I picked out some music, Count Basie this time, and settled in under the covers. I heard a light knocking from the wall behind me, and I knew Bella approved of my selection for the evening. I knocked back with a grin, and fell into an easy sleep.

I was rolling out the pie crust when the text came in from Edward.

Come on over whenever. I'll start dinner once you're here.

I'm still working on the pie, but I'll be over soon

Need any help?

How are you with peeling apples?

The next thing I heard was a knock on the door. I walked over, hands covered in flour, and elbowed the door open.

"Well hello there," I said, holding the door open with my foot.

"Looks like the end of Scarface in here," he observed, reaching out to touch my nose and show me the flour on the end.

"I tend to lose a little control when there is pie crust involved," I joked as he shut the door.

"Duly noted, that's good information for me to have," he joked back, swatting at my hand as I tried to slap him. He took a good long look at me then, green eyes dropping down from my face and across my body. "For the record, I lose control when I see women in sassy little aprons, so I don't know long I'm be able to hang in here without trying a little grabass,"

"Get in there and grab an apple, buddy," I deadpanned and walked towards the kitchen, adding a little extra swish to my hips, which caused him to sigh heavily. I glanced down at my outfit, noting my tank top, old jeans, bare feet, and my chef's apron that said, "You should see my scones..."

"Now when you said 'grab an apple' what exactly were you referring to?" I heard from inside the kitchen where he was taking off his sweater and rolling up his sleeves. I shook my head a little at the sight of Edward with a black t-shirt on, and old weathered jeans. He was in his

stocking feet once again, and I marveled at how easy he seemed to be in my kitchen.

I walked around the kitchen counter rolling my eyes at him and picked up my rolling pin.

"Ya know, I won't think twice about whacking you over the head with this if you continue this line of borderline sexual harassment," I warned, now running my hand up and down the rolling pin suggestively.

"I'm gonna have to ask you not to do that if you are serious about me peeling apples here Nightie Girl," he answered, eyes widening at the sight.

"I never joke about pie Wallbanger," I teased and sprinkled a little more flour on the marble.

He was silent for a moment while he watched me pat out the pie crust, breathing through his mouth.

"So, what are you gonna do with that?" he asked, his voice low.

"With this?" I asked, leaning over the board, and perhaps arching my back a little as I did it.

"Mmm hmm," he replied.

"I'm gonna roll this crust out see, like this?" I teased again, thrusting the pin back and forth over the dough, making sure that I arched my back each time and that the forward action pushed my girls together.

"Oh my," he whispered, and I grinned naughtily at him.

"You gonna be ok over there big guy? This is just the top crust, I still need to work on the bottom," I said over my shoulder, looking at him as his hands clutched at the edge of the counter.

"Apples apples, gonna peel me some apples," he told himself and turned away from me and towards the colander filled with apples in the sink.

"Let me just get you the peeler," I said quietly, coming up behind him and pressing myself against him as I curled around his side to grab the vegetable peeler from the other sink. It was way too much fun to tease him in this way.

"Peeling apples, just peeling apples, didn't feel your boobs, didn't feel your boobs," he continued to chant as I openly laughed at him.

"Here, peel this," I said, taking pity on him and removing myself from his cooking space. I might have sniffed his t-shirt.

He was April fresh.

He was making me fresh.

"Did you just sniff me?" he asked, keeping himself turned away from me so he couldn't see my blush.

"I might have," I admitted, going back to my rolling pin, which I squeezed mightily.

"I thought so," he added.

"Hey, if you can sniff I can sniff," I shot back, taking out my sexual frustration on a defenseless pate brisee.

"Only fair, how do I rate?"

"Good, very good actually. Downy?"

"Bounce, I lost my Downy ball," he said sheepishly.

I laughed, and we continued to roll and peel. Within 15 minutes, we had a bowlful of peeled and sliced apples, a perfectly rolled out pie crust, and we had both consumed our first glass of wine.

"Ok, what's next?" he asked, cleaning up after me, wiping up flour and generally tidying up.

"Now we spice things up and add a little citrus," I answered, lining up cinnamon and nutmeg, my sugar bowl, and a lemon.

"Ok, where do you want me?" he asked, taking care to show me his hands that were now covered in flour.

"First dust yourself off and then we'll get started. You can be my assistant."

He looked around for a dishtowel, and I turned to look for the one I knew I left out. Spying it, I had already started for it when I felt two very strong and very specifically placed hands on my ass.

"Um, hi?" I said, freezing in place.

"Hi," he answered cheerfully, not releasing his hands from my posterior.

"Explain yourself please," I ordered, trying not to notice how my heart was trying to leave my body by way of my mouth.

"You told me to find something to clean my hands with," he stuttered, trying hard not to laugh as he gave each cheek a little squeeze.

"And you took that to mean my ass?" I laughed back, and turned to face him, removing his hands with my own.

"What can I say, I take liberties with my neighbors," he replied, his eyes darting back and forth now between my lips and my eyes.

"We have a pie to make mister, I'll thank you to remember your manners. No one touches my ass without an invitation," I giggled, still holding his hands in my own. Once again, I felt his thumb begin to trace little circles on the inside of my palm and my head got swimmy and silly.

Fuck, this guy was going to be the death of me.

"Get over there handsy, and behave," I instructed. He smirked and turned away, which gave me the opportunity to mutter "Oh my Jesus Lord," to no one in particular and then meet him back at the apple bowl.

"Ok, you do what I tell you, got it?" I said, and started sprinkling sugar into the bowl.

"Got it."

I started tossing the apples with my hands and Edward followed my instructions to the letter. When I asked for more sugar, he sugared. When I asked for more cinnamon, he complied. When I asked him to squeeze the lemon, he lemoned me so good I had trouble keeping my tongue in my mouth and off his throat.

I tossed and tasted, and when they were finally the right balance, I lifted a wedge to his mouth.

"Open up," I said, and he leaned in. I placed an apple on his tongue, and he snapped his mouth shut before I had to chance to remove my fingers. He let his lips close around two and I slowly withdrew them, feeling his tongue wrap around them delicately and deliberately.

"Delicious," he said softly.

"Gah," I answered, eyes crossing a little at the sex on two legs displayed in front of me.

"Good for you?" he asked, the smirk returning.

"Good for me," I answered, cheeks and hoohah on fire after the fingerlatio.

Jesus fuck.

Jesus fuck.

Jesus *fuck...*

My sexual wall had been hit, and I was preparing to rip the clothes from his body and throw him to the ground and fuck him amid a pile of apples and cinnamon with only a rolling pin to guide us when I heard my phone ring.

Thank you Jesus.

Thank you Jesus.

Thank you *Jesus...*

I looked at the green-eyed devil, and launched myself across the room, away from the bang bang voodoo, and scrambled for my phone. I saw his face as I ran, it showed a little disappointed.

It was Alice.

"Girl, what are you up to tonight?" she screeched into the phone. I held it away from my ear before the bleeding started.

Alice had three sound levels.

Normal Loud, Excited Loud, and Drunky Loud.

She was leaving Excited and on her way to Drunky.

"I am getting ready to have dinner, where are you?" I asked, nodding at Edward who was starting to pour the apples into the pie dish.

"I am out for drinks with Rose and Jessica, what are you doing?" she screamed.

"I just told you, getting ready to have dinner ya lush," I laughed.

Edward came out into the living room just then with the pie in his hands.

"Should I put this in the oven?" he asked.

"Hang on Alice...not yet, I still need to brush it with a little cream," I answered and he ducked back into the kitchen.

"Bella Swan, that was a man! Who was that? Who are you having dinner with? And what are you brushing with cream?" she fired at me, her voice getting even more loud.

"Settle down, my goodness you're loud! It was Edward, and we're making an apple pie," I started to say, which she immediately screamed out to Rose and Jessica.

"Shit," I muttered as I heard the phone angrily yanked away from Alice.

"Swan, what are you doing? Are you baking pies with your neighbor? Are you naked?" Rose yelled, the next in line to grill me.

"Ok no, and you all need to seriously settle down. Hanging up now," I yelled over her yelling back at me. I could hear Alice squealing nasty things about pies and cream and Jessica laughing loudly. Rose was in the middle of threatening me not to hang up on her, when I did just that.

I sighed and got up from the couch and went to find Edward, with his hands full of pie. I snorted in spite of myself.

"Oh my God, that's so good," I whimpered, closing my eyes and losing myself to the sensations that my body was experiencing.

"I knew you would like it, but I had no idea you would enjoy it this much," he whispered, staring at me with rapt attention, focusing on the way my lips were moving.

"Stop talking, you're going to ruin it for me," I moaned, stretching and feeling myself to respond to everything he was giving me.

"Did you want another one?" he offered, raising up on his elbows.

"If I have another, I'll won't be able to walk tomorrow."

"Go ahead, be a bad girl...you deserve it. I know you want it Bella," he teased, leaning closer.

"Fuck..." I managed, opening up to him once again.

I closed my eyes, and heard him fumbling about before putting it in. Sighing as I felt it, I wrapped my lips around and bit down.

"I've never seen a woman that could take so much in one sitting," he marveled, watching me come undone once more.

"Yes well, you've never met a woman who likes meatballs as much as me," I moaned around another mouthful, feeling stuffed beyond belief but not wanting the meal to end.

Edward had just cooked me quite possibly the most perfect meal ever, hitting every single taste bud that needed to be hit. He had learned how to make the most amazing meatballs from a woman in Naples, and swore to me they would be the best I'd ever had.

After no less than seven jokes about balls and mouths, I had to agree they were the best balls I had ever had in my mouth.

Jesus...

I then proceeded to eat almost a pound of pasta myself, and all of my meatballs plus half of his. I insisted he eat the last one, but he refused and brought the perfection that were his meatballs to my willing mouth.

When he had invited me over for a home cooked meal, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Guys making me dinner in the past had ranged from ramen noodles (in a bowl rather than in the cup, very fancy) to exploding potatoes in the microwave.

Edward was a great host, insisting that I sit and drink wine and watch rather than help out. He entertained me with stories about his travels as he got everything ready, and while the food was simple it was good. Really good. Smack yourself in the head good. He made us a salad with lemon and olive oil and shaved Parmesan, and the sauce on the pasta was thick and rich.

"Nonni made me promise if she showed me how to make her *polpette* I would only serve them with her special sauce. If I dared serve these with a jar of Prego, she would cross the ocean to break her wooden spoon against my backside."

"She made you call her Nonni?" I laughed, leaning back in my chair and unbuttoning the top button on my jeans. I had no shame, I had eaten an obscene amount.

"You know what Nonni means?" he asked, surprised.

"It's Grandma, right?" I answered, laughing again when his eyes went to my hands massaging my stomach.

"You gonna be ok there?" he rolled his eyes, getting up to clear the table.

"Yep, just need to breathe a little," I groaned, pulling myself up from the table.

"No no, you don't have to help," he said, rushing to my side and grabbing my plate.

"Oh no, I wasn't. I was gonna drop this off and pass out on that couch right there," I said, nodding towards the living room.

"You go relax, anyone that just had that many balls in their mouth deserves a rest," he teased, and I flicked his ear.

"I said, no more ball jokes! You've had your fun now let me go die in peace," I groaned and shuffled into the living room. I really had made quite a little piggy of myself, but it was seriously good. I reclined and popped open another button on my jeans, relaxing into the cushions and replaying some of the finer points of the evening.

Watching Edward cook was hot. And I mean hot. He was really at home in a kitchen, his earlier fussing about with the pie aside. Even his salad, simple greens dressed lightly with lemon and olive oil, salt, pepper and good Parmesan. Easy and perfect.

"Pink Himalayan salt thank you very much," he had said proudly, producing a bag from his pantry. He had brought it back from one of his many trips, and had me taste a little before sprinkling a little on the salad. Could have been pretentious, but it fit Wallbanger. The many sides and facets of this guy were astounding, and made me realize that my earliest assumptions about him were proving to be completely wrong.

As assumptions tend to be...

I could hear him tending to the dishes, and as much as I probably should go help him I simply couldn't remove myself from the couch. I snuggled down on my side, and looked around his living room again,

my eyes drawn once again to the tiny bottles of sand from all over the world. I marveled at how traveled he was, and how he seemed to enjoy it still. I gazed at the pictures of the woman in Fiji again, her dark beautiful skin, smooth planes of her body and thought about how different all three of his women were. Oops, make that two now that Kate was with her new man.

I could smell the apple pie when I heard the oven door clank shut. I had put it in his oven as soon as we came over to his place so it would be ready after dinner.

"Don't you dare try to serve me pie now, I am stuffed I tell you, stuffed!" I yelled.

"Quiet, it's just cooling," he scolded, coming around the corner from the kitchen and into the living room where I was still curled on my side.

"You're gonna have to scooch over sister, its movie time," he instructed, pushing at me with his big toe as I struggled to sit up straight.

"What are we watching again?"

"The Exorcist," he whispered, turning off the light on the end table, leaving the room quite dark.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" I screeched, leaning over him to turn it back on.

"Don't be a pussy, you're watching it," he hissed, turning it back off.

"I'm not a pussy, but there is stupid and not stupid and stupid is watching a movie like The Exorcist with the lights off! That's just asking for trouble!" I hissed back, turning it back on.

It was starting to look like a disco in here...

"Ok, I'll make a deal with you. Lights off, but..." he started as he saw me begin to interrupt me, "if you get too scared, lights go back on, deal?" he asked. I was still leaning across him on my way to turn it back on when I noticed how close I was to his face. And how I was angled across him like a girl waiting to get a spanking. And I knew he was capable of delivering one...

"Fine," I huffed, sitting back as the opening credits came on. He smiled triumphantly and settled back into the cushions, and gave me thumbs up.

"If you show me that thumb one more time I will bite it off," I growled, pulling an afghan off the back of the couch and curling it protectively around me. One minute into the movie, and I was already getting spooked. Stupid Wallbanger...

I was tense from that moment on, and any idea I might have had about girls being ridiculous around guys when they watched scary movies went by the wayside when Regan pissed herself at the dinner party.

By the time the priest came for a little visit, I was sitting practically on Edward's lap, my right hand had a death grip on his thigh, and I was viewing the movie through the holes in the afghan which I had draped entirely over my head.

"I fucking hate you for making me watch this movie," I whispered in his ear, which was right in my face as I refused to leave any space between us. I even accompanied him to the bathroom earlier when we took a break. He insisted I stay out in the hallway after I tried to follow him in, instead standing just outside the door, eyes glancing all around furtively, still with the afghan over my head.

"Do you want me to stop? I don't want you to have nightmares," he whispered back, his eyes on the screen.

"Just no banging on the walls for a few nights please, I won't be able to take it," I added, looking at him through one of my eyeholes.

"Have you heard any banging lately?" he asked, rolling his eyes again, as he did every time he looked at me with the ridiculous afghan on my head.

"No, I haven't actually...why is that?" I asked, and he took a breath.

"Well, I..." he started, and then the most maniacal scary noises started coming from the TV and we both jumped.

"Ok, maybe this movie is a little scary, you wanna sit a little closer?" he asked, pressing pause on the remote.

"I thought you'd never ask," I cried, launching myself fully into his lap and settling myself between his thighs, which he wrapped around me.

"Do you want some afghan?" I offered, and he laughed.

"No, I can take it like a man, you stay under there though," he teased, my eyes narrowing at him through the eyeholes. I poked one finger through the weave.

"Guess which finger this is?" I asked, waving it at him.

"Shhh, movie," he answered, wrapping his arms around me and pulling me back against his chest. He was warm and strong and powerful, and absolutely no match for terror that was The Exorcist.

We watched the rest of that damn movie wound around each other like Siamese pretzels, and he finally succumbed to the false security that an afghan eyehole can provide.

Click. Click. Click.

What the hell was that?

Click. Click. Click.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

I lay paralyzed in my bed, every light in my entire apartment blazing. Even in the living room, every light was on.

Click. Click. Click.

I pulled the covers up higher, covering my face up to eyes, which were wildly looking back and forth.

I hated Wallbanger with every fiber of my being in that moment. I also wished he was there.

Click. Click. Click.

What the fuck was that?

Click. Click.

Nothing.

Then Clive leaped on the bed and I screamed bloody fucking murder.

Clive puffed out his tail and hissed at me, wondering why the hell mommy was screaming at him I'm sure. The click click click was his god damned kitty hangnail...

I heard my phone ring. I saw the name on the screen.

"What the hell is wrong? Why are you screaming? Are you ok?" Edward yelled, and I could hear him through the phone and through the wall.

"Get your ass over here right now you mother fucking scary movie pusher," I seethed and hung up. I pounded on the wall and ran out to unlock the door. In much the same way I had ran up the last few steps of the basement stairs when I was a kid, I ran back into my room, jumping the last few feet and landed in the center of my bed. I wrapped the covers around me and peered out, waiting for him. He knocked, and I heard the door push open.

"Bella?" he called.

"Back here," I yelled, sad that I had been reduced to this, but glad to see him.

"I brought the pie," he said with an embarrassed grin, "and this," he added, producing the afghan from behind his back.

"Thanks," I answered, smiling from under the blanket.

A few minutes later we were settled on my bed, each of us balancing a plate and a glass of milk. We had both been too terrified to eat pie earlier, promising to eat it later.

Clive and his phantom hangnail had retired to the other room, rolling his eyes at Edward and swishing his tail.

"How old are you?" I asked, cutting into my pie.

"28, how old are you?"

"26. We are 28 and 26 years old and terrified of a movie," I mused as I tasted the pie. It was good.

"I wouldn't say I'm terrified, spooked yes. But I only came over to stop you from screaming," he answered.

"And to taste my pie," I added, winking.

"Shut it you," he warned and then went ahead and tasted my pie.

"Jesus that's good," he breathed, eyes closed as he chewed.

"I know, what is it about apples and homemade pie crust? Is there anything better?"

"If we were eating this naked, that's the only way it could be better," he grinned, opening one eye and looking at me.

"No one is getting naked here buddy, just eat your pie," I said, pointing at his plate with my fork.

We chewed.

"I feel better," I added a few minutes later, drinking my milk.

"Me too, not too spooked anymore," he smiled, as I took his plate and set it on the nightstand. I sighed contentedly and lay back against my pillows, sated and less scared.

"So, I gotta ask...James Brown? I mean, James Brown?" he laughed and I kicked him as he lay down next to me. We both turned on our sides facing each other, arms curling under the pillows.

"I know I know, I can't believe you held it in as long as you did! I know you've been dying to make jokes since last night."

"Seriously, who is this guy?" he asked.

"He's a new client."

"Ah, got it," he said, looking pleased.

"And an old boyfriend," I added, watching his face for his reaction.

"I see, new client but old boyfriend," he repeated, careful to keep his expression neutral.

"Yep, haven't seen him in a few years."

"How's that gonna work?" he asked.

"Don't know yet, we'll see," I answered truthfully. I didn't know how things were going to go with James. I was glad to see him, and we did have a good time the night before. It was going to be tough to keep things strictly professional if James wanted more. And every instinct I had told me he wanted more. He tended to have a little more control over me that I was comfortable relinquishing, and in the past I found myself sucked into the gravitational pull that was James Brown.

Lawyer, not Godfather of Soul.

I knew James well enough to know that he wasn't just looking for a designer. The question was, did I want more than that as well?

"Anyway, we're just going to be working together. It'll be a great job for me, he wants his entire place redone," I sighed, already planning the palette. I rolled onto my back and stretched out. I had really abused my stomach tonight and was starting to get sleepy.

"I don't like him," he said suddenly, after a long pause. I turned my face towards his and saw him scowling.

"You don't even know him! How could you possibly not like him?" I laughed.

"I just don't," he said simply, now turning his gaze to mine and unleashing the power of the green.

"Oh please, you're just a stinky boy," I laughed again, ruffling his hair. Wrong move, it sure was soft...

"I don't stink, you said yourself I was April fresh," he protested, lifting his arm and sniffing his pit.

"Yes Wallbanger, you smell delicious," I deadpanned, sniffing the air around me. He left his arm up higher on the pillow and I knew that if I just rolled a little to my right I could slide right on into the nook. He looked at me, raising his eyebrows just a little. Was he thinking what I was thinking?

Did he want to nook me?

Did I want to nook him?

Fuck it...

"I'm coming into the nook," I announced and went full snuggle. Head nestled in, left arm over chest, right arm tucked under his pillow. Legs I kept to myself, I wasn't a total fool.

"Well hello there," he said in surprise, and then curled himself around me immediately. I sighed again, wrapped in boy and banger.

"What brought this on, *friend*?" he whispered into my hair and I shivered.

"Delayed reaction to Linda Blair, I needed some nook time. Friends can nook, can't they?"

"Sure, but are we friends that can nook?" he asked, tracing circles on my back. Him and his demon finger circles...

"I can handle it, you?" I held my breath, breath that was sweet and apple like.

"I can handle just about anything, but..." he started, and then stopped.

"What? What were you going to say?" I asked, leaning up and staring back down at him.

One piece of hair uncurled from my bun, and fell down between us. Slowly, and with great care, he pushed it back behind my ear.

"Let's just say that if you were wearing that pink nightie? You'd be in a heap of trouble," he answered, staring into my eyes.

I breathed in, he breathed out. We traded actual air.

"Just nook me Wallbanger," I said quietly and he grinned.

"Come on back down here," he said and coaxed me back onto his chest. I slid back down, resting where I could hear his heart beat. He folded the afghan over us, and I noticed again how soft it was. It had served me well tonight, this afghan.

"I love this afghan, but I have to say it doesn't really fit your apartment, the cool dude motif you have going on," I giggled. It was orange and pea green and very retro.

He was silent for a moment, and I thought maybe he had fallen asleep.

"It was my mom's," he said quietly, and the grip he had on me became infinitesimally tighter.

There was nothing to say after that.

Wallbanger and I slept together that night, with every light in the entire place on.

Clive and his hangnail stayed away.

Awww. I love him. I love him. I want to go to there.

So my taco in crime Ninapolitan is involved with something pretty cool. Go to .com and check it out. As much as we all love lemons, should be a no brainer. And tell Peter Facinelli that Nina says hi:)

I am so pleased that you all are enjoying the recs so much, it makes me so happy to hear from the authors that their alerts and reviews have gone up due to the banger chickens reading! You know I love a good fic as much as the next chicken, so tonight I have a few more for you.

Burn and Shine by pulsepoint. This one will tear out your heart a little and show it to you. Rough, but so worth it. You are pulling for this Edward from almost the beginning. All Human. So in love with this story right now, pwns me hardcore.

The University of Edward Masen by SebastienRobichaud. This is another story recd to me by one of you fabulous ladies. This is similar to In The Land Of Milk And Honey in that its a mind fuck and you don't know quite whats happening. And in a good way. I squeal each time I see an update for this one, and I had mad mad theories about what is going on in this Edwards mind...heh heh heh

OK lovies, please let me know how you found our favorite BangBang and Afghan Eyeholer...dying to know what you thought:)

And Tahoe next time fuckers, I promise

MWAH

Alice

xoxo

13. Shadows and Tall Trees

Hello banger chickens. How I have missed thee. I am so grateful for the break you all let me take, I am ready to dive back into the world of Wallbanger now, refreshed and happy as a little girl

Thanks as always to Nina and Lauren, my Twigasm whores Christina and Moi, SinAndShame for our dual interview on the Perv Pack Smut Shack, and ezrocksangel for the fun interview we did for TLYDF (coming soon)

Sit back, relax, and come back into the world of Wallbanger and Pink Nightie Girl...let's see what these two have been up to, shall we?

Chapter 13

I woke up quickly, startled into being awake by the warmth of the body next to me, which was decidedly bigger than the body that was usually nestled into my side. I rolled carefully onto my back and away from Edward, so that I could see him in the light of the lamps that continued to blaze away into the night, fighting back the evils of that awful movie.

I rubbed my eyes a little, and inspected my bedmate. He was still lying on his back, arms curled as though I was still in them and I thought of how good it felt to finally nook with Wallbanger.

But I shouldn't be nooking with Wallbanger, that was definitely a very, very slippery slope. One that I was reluctant to climb. And though the images that climbing a slippery Wallbanger that immediately came to mind were far from innocent, I pushed them aside.

I glanced further down his exquisite form and noticed the terribly wonderful afghan that was tangled in between his legs, and mine for that matter.

It was his mom's. My heart broke a little more each time I thought of his sweet timid voice sharing that little nugget with me. He didn't know that I had talked to Esme about his past. He didn't know that I knew his parents were no longer alive. The idea that he still clung to his mother's afghan was inexorably sweet, and once again my little heart broke open.

I was close with my crazy mother Renee, and closer still to my steadfast father Charlie. The idea that I would someday have to walk on this earth without their anchor and their misguided guidance made me wince, to say nothing of losing both of my parents when I was only 18. I could still barely imagine it.

I was happy for Edward that he seemed to have such good friends, and such a powerful advocate as Carlisle watching out for him. But as close as friends and lovers could be, there was something about belonging to someone completely that gave you roots, roots that you sometimes needed when the world battled against you.

Edward stirred slightly in his sleep, and I watched him again carefully. He murmured something that I couldn't quite pick out, but it sounded a little like 'meatballs'. I smiled, and allowed my fingers to slip slightly into his hair, feeling the soft silk that was tousled on my pillow.

God he gave good meatball.

As I stroked his hair, my mind wandered to a place where meatballs flowed endlessly and there was pie for days. I giggled a little to myself as I felt the sleepiness begin to take me back over, and I nestled back down into the nook. As I felt the comfort take over once more that only warm boy arms could provide, a little alarm went off in my head, warning me not to get too close here. I had to be careful.

Clearly we were both divinely attracted to each other, and in another space and time the wallbanging would have been ringing out across the land and around the clock. But he had his harem, and I did not have my

O. And while I knew I would be willing to risk sex with Edward even without the O, there was no way I was going to become one of his girls.

So friends we would remain. Friends who nook. Friends who meatball.

And we were headed to Tahoe very soon.

I mentally chastised myself for picturing Edward soaking in a hot tub with Lake Tahoe spread out in all its glory behind him. Which sight was actually more glorious remained to be seen.

My hoohah and I settled back into sleep, rousing only slightly when Edward snuggled me a little closer.

And even though it was quiet, and barely above a whisper...he sighed my name.

I smiled as I slipped back into sleep.

The next morning I felt a persistent poking at my left shoulder. I brushed it away, but it continued.

"Clive, stop it you asshole," I moaned, hiding my head under the covers even though I know he wouldn't stop until I fed him. Ruled by his stomach that one. Then I heard a distinctly human laugh, quiet and definitely not Clive.

My eyes sprang open, and the night before came back to me in glowing detail. The horror, the pie, the nook. I reached backwards with my right foot, sliding it along the bed until I felt it stop against something warm and hairy, although I was now more sure than ever it was not Clive. I poked with my toe, inching my way higher until I heard another chuckle.

"Wallbanger?" I whispered, not wanting to flip over. True to form, I was spread eagled diagonally across the entire bed, head on one side, feet practically on the other.

"The one and only," a delicious voice whispered in my ear, and my toes and hoohah curled.

"Shit," I said, rolling onto my back to take in the damage. He was huddled in the one corner my body had allowed him, my nocturnal bed sharing habits having not improved at all.

"You sure can fill a bed," he muttered, smiling at me from where he was curled into a ball under the little bit of afghan I had allowed him. "If we are going to do this again there'll have to be some ground rules."

"This won't be happening again, this was in response to a terrible movie that you inflicted on both of us. No more nooking," I stated firmly, wondering how dreadful my morning breath was. I cupped my hand in front of my face, breathed, and gave a quick sniff.

"Roses?" he asked deadpan.

"Obviously," I smirked. I looked at him, exquisitely rumpled and in my bed. He smiled that smile and I sighed heavily. I allowed myself a moment to indulge in a Wallbangerian fantasy where I was then quickly flipped and ravaged to within an inch of my life, but I wisely got control of my inner whore.

"What if you get scared tonight?" he asked as I sat up and stretched.

"I won't," I threw back over my shoulder.

"What if I get scared?"

"Grow up pretty boy, let's make coffee and then I have to get to work," I laughed, whacking him with my pillow. I watched as he slid out from under the afghan, taking care to fold it and carry it with him into the kitchen where it was set gently on the table. I smiled thinking of what he said just before we fell asleep the night before, and then later on when he said my name. What I wouldn't give to know what was running

through his mind when he said it.

We moved about the kitchen in quiet economy, grinding beans, measuring coffee, pouring water. I placed the sugar and cream on the counter while he peeled and sliced a banana. I poured granola, he milked and bananaed the bowls for us. Within a few minutes we were seated next to each other on barstools, eating breakfast as though we had been doing so for years. The simple ease that we had fallen into intrigued and worried me.

"Plans for the day?" I asked, digging into my bowl.

"I need to stop by the Chronicle office."

"Are you working on something for them?" I asked, surprised at the level of interest even I could hear in my voice.

"I'm spending a few days working on a piece for the paper on weekend getaways in the Bay Area, weekend drives kind of thing," he answered through a mouthful of banana.

"When are you going to do that?" I asked, examining the raisins in my bowl and trying not to look too interested in his answer.

"Next week, I leave on Tuesday," he replied and my stomach was instantly queasy. Next week was when we were supposed to go to Tahoe. Why the hell did I care so much that he wouldn't be going?

"I see," I added, again fascinated by the raisins.

"But I'll be back before Tahoe, I was planning on just driving straight there when I finished my shoot," he said, looking at me over the rim of his coffee mug.

"Oh, well, that's good," I answered quietly, shocked to shit at the way my stomach now was bouncing all around.

"When are you headed up anyway?" he asked, seeming to now be studying his own bowl.

"The girls are driving up with Emmett and Jasper on Thursday, but I have to stay in the city to work. I'm driving up on Friday afternoon."

"Perfect, I'll swing through to pick you up then," he offered and I quietly nodded. That settled, we finished our breakfast and watched Clive chase a stray piece of fluff around the table over and over again. We didn't talk much, but whenever we met each other's eyes, we both grinned.

APOV

"Hey Esme! How are you? Beautiful jacket," I said, pulling Esme into a fast hug. I was stopping by the office to chat with Esme about an organizing job she wanted me to consult on, and I thought I would swing by my girl Bella's while I was there and see if she wanted to grab some lunch.

"Thanks love, you doing well? How's it going with Emmett, excited for next weekend?" she asked, eyeing me carefully.

"Yes, we should have a great time. Jasper and Emmett are driving us up there next Thursday, can't wait!" I squealed. I was very excited for the trip, I had this weird feeling about all of us up there together, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

"Well come on up to my office and we can chat there, want some tea?" she offered as we made our way past the reception area and up the long staircase. I could hear Bella laughing as we reached the top step; she had a laugh you could pick out of a crowd.

"What's got her so giggly today?" I asked as we walked closer towards Bella's office on the way to Esme's.

"New client, I don't know how much work they are actually getting done in there but they sure are having fun," she remarked, raising one eyebrow. We both instinctively slowed down as we passed Bella's door, and I couldn't help but peek inside. What I saw made me stop cold.

James Brown.

Bella was leaning across her desk, still laughing like a loon as James Brown looked to be buried in design books. He was laughing as well; they looked quite cozy. As I watched, I saw him reach across the desk and pat her hand, and she didn't swat it away.

I inhaled, preparing for the assault and subsequent ass kicking when I was lifted out of my shoes and moved from the doorway by a surprisingly strong Esme. With one hand clasped firmly over my mouth and the other wrapped around my waist, I found myself being carried down the hallway like a mannequin into her office. She quickly darted back down the hallway to grab my heels, and came back in, shutting the door firmly behind her.

"Esme! What the hell!" I said, sliding back into my shoes and then stomping my size fives angrily. "Do you know who that was?"

"I know that is Bella's new client, one that is about to spend a ton of money with this firm and by the look on your face, someone I did not want you yelling at. My goodness Alice, you looked like a teakettle! I've never seen someone's face get that red that fast..." she sighed, sinking into her chair. I began to pace back and forth in her office, continuing to get more and more worked up.

"New client my foot, that is James!" I yelled.

"I know, James Brown. Seems harmless enough," she shrugged, sipping her tea out of a bone china cup.

"Do you know who he really is?" I asked, turning to face her, trying to keep my voice level.

"Chuck Berry? Kidding, I'm kidding! Yes, I know he is an ex-boyfriend of Bella's, what's the big deal? She seems ok working with him. I asked her before she agreed to take the job, she can handle this," she assured me, wondering what all the fuss was about. I sank down into the tufted wingback chair in front of her, trying to gather my thoughts. I took a deep breath.

"Esme, he isn't some ex-boyfriend, he is *the* ex-boyfriend. The ex-boyfriend of all ex-boyfriends."

"Ok, you're gonna have to explain that, I have no clue what that means," she grinned, nibbling on a cookie. I sighed, and tried to think how I could tell Esme about Bella and James, and more importantly how Bella was *with* James.

"They were really serious, practically engaged until Bella ended it with him. He didn't take it so well, and wasn't really ok with letting her go. He isn't used to not getting what he wants," I answered, chewing on a piece of my hair.

"I got that sense already, but they seem to be fine together," she assured, offering me a cup of tea as well.

"Sure, now they're fine. That's how it started out. But James, he's, well...he's just not good for her. He has this way of making her second guess herself, limiting herself."

"Bella? Please, that girl gets exactly what she wants! I've never seen her back down from anything," Esme huffed.

"Oh really? She almost didn't take your internship Esme," I huffed back, my face stony. She stopped mid nibble.

"Why on earth would she-"

"James didn't want her to have to work after college," I interrupted, leaning back in my chair as I heard the two of them leave Bella's office.

Esme and I eyed each other as we heard the two of them argue about where to go to lunch.

"We should just go to the Thai place around the corner, it's so good, and it'll be faster."

"Bella, I'm really in the mood for Vietnamese, don't you think that would be better?"

"Have you forgotten I'm not really big on Vietnamese food?" I heard Bella say, and I mentally high-fived her for it.

"Come on, you can get soup," James purred, and I could almost see the look on his face.

Esme chuckled from behind her desk.

"Not gonna fly pretty boy, Bella hates Vietnamese food," she said confidently.

"Fine, Vietnamese food it is, I can find something," we heard Bella say, and I shook my head sadly.

"I just don't like this at all," I whispered to Esme, her face reflecting the look on my own.

Text intercepted from Alice to Rose

Did you know that Bella is working with James?

James who?

James Brown obviously, who else?

NO! What the hell?

He is her new big client... remember she told us about him? Of course she neglected to mention who he was

I am gonna kick her ass when I see her next...she better not cancel on Tahoe

Did Jasper tell you he was bringing his guitar?

Yep, he told me you wanted to have some kind of fucked up sing along

He did? Haha, I just thought it would be fun...

Text intercepted from Emmett to Alice

Hey Tiny, are we still bowling with Rose and Jasper tonight?

Yep, and you better bring your A game, Rose and I are pretty severe

Rose knows how to bowl? Wow...

Why is that Wow?

I just wouldn't have expected her to bowl is all, see you tonight

Text intercepted from Emmett to Edward

You still planning on heading up with us this weekend?

Yep, but I'm coming a little late, have a shoot

When are you coming up?

Fri night, stopping thru the city on my way up

Why the hell are you going back in to the city, you're doing that shoot in Carmel right?

I just need to pick some shit up for the weekend

Dude, pack your shit and get your ass to Tahoe

I will, just need to pick up Bella first

I see

You see nothing

I see everything

You sure about that Big Boy? What about Rose?

Rose? Why is everyone asking me about Rose?

See you in Tahoe

Text intercepted from Alice to Bella

You have some splainin to do Lucy...

Oh no, I hate it when you go Ricardo on me...what the hell did I do?

Explain to me why you didn't tell me about your new client?

Bella, don't ignore my text...

BELLA!

Oh settle down, this is exactly why I did NOT tell you

Bella Marie Swan, this is news that obviously I should have known about!

Look, I can handle it ok? He's my client, nothing more He's going to spend an obscene amount of money on this project

I frankly don't care how much he is spending, I don't want you working with him

Listen to yourself! I will take on whatever new client I damn well please! I have this under control...

We'll see...did I hear a rumor that you are driving up to Tahoe with Wallbanger?

Wow, subject change Yes, I am

Good...take the long way

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Alice? You there?

Damn you Alice...HELLO?

Text intercepted from Bella to Edward

Wallbanger...come in Wallbanger

Wallbanger isn't here, only the exorcist

Not even a little bit funny...

What's up?

What time are you picking me up tom?

I should be back in the city by 3ish, and if you can knock off work a little early we can beat rush hour

I already told Esme I needed to leave a bit early. Where are you right now?

In Carmel, on a cliff overlooking the ocean

Boy are you a closet romantic...

I'm a photographer, we go where the money shot is

Oh man, we're not discussing money shots

Besides, I thought you were the romantic one

I told you, I'm a practical romantic

Well then practically speaking even you would appreciate the sight I am looking at right now, waves crashing, sun setting, it's nice

Are you alone?

Yep

Bet you wish you weren't...

You have no idea

Pfft... you old softie

There's nothing soft about me Bella

And we're back...

Bella?

Yep

See you tom afternoon

Yep

Text intercepted from Bella to Rose

Can you give me address again to the house so I can plug it into the GPS tom?

No

No?

No, not until you tell me why you are hiding James Brown

Jesus, it's like having 2 more mothers...

This isn't about sitting up straight or eating more vegetables, which we do need to have a conversation about your posture at some point...

Unbelievable

Seriously Bella, we just worry

Seriously Rose, I know. Address please?

Let me think about it

Not gonna ask you again...

Yes you will...you want to see Wallbanger in that hot tub, don't lie

I hate you...

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

You done with work?

Yep, at home and waiting for you

Now that brings up a nice visual...

Prepare yourself Wallbanger, I'm taking bread out of the oven

Don't tease me woman...zucchini?

Cranberry orange...mmm

No woman has ever done breakfast bread foreplay the way you do

HA! When are you coming?

Can't. Drive. Straight.

Can we have one conversation when you're not twelve?

Sorry, I'll be there in 30

Perfect, that will give me time to frost my buns...

Pardon me?

Oh, I didn't tell you? I also made cinnamon rolls

I'll be there in 15...

"I'm not listening to this."

"Like hell, it's my car, driver picks music."

"Actually, you're wrong about that. The passenger always picks music, it's what you get when you give up driving privileges."

"Bella, you don't even own a car, so how could you ever have driving privileges?"

"Exactly, so we listen to what I pick."

"But it's Journey, how can you turn this off?"

"It's one song Wallbanger, suck it up ya big baby," I chided, sitting back in my seat after changing the radio station for the hundredth time. I hit the iPod and scrolled until I found something that I thought would please us both equally.

"INXS? Really?" he asked, raising his eyebrow and smiling.

"I'm still in mourning over Michael, you have no idea the soft spot I had for him," I sighed, tucking my legs up underneath me and watching the highway as it whizzed by.

"Good song," he nodded, and we both hummed along.

The trip had been great so far, and although I was loathe to admit it, Wallbanger was quickly turning into one of my favorite people. I'd been wrong about him, although with the round the clock orgasms he was delivering through my wall constantly back then, it was understandable that we would dislike each other.

I glanced at him, humming along to INXS, drumming his thumbs along the steering wheel in time to the music. As he was concentrating on the road, I took the opportunity to catalogue some of his more swoon worthy features.

Jaw? Strong.

Stubble? About two days worth and nice.

Lips? Lickable and lonely looking...maybe I could check them out, do my own little tongue inspection...

I sat on my hands to stop me from launching myself over the console. He continued to hum and drum.

"What's going on over there Nightie Girl, you look a little flushed. Need some more air?" he asked, starting for the air conditioner.

"Nope, I'm good," I answered, my voice sounding ridiculous even to my own ears. He looked at me strangely, but resumed his hum drum.

"I think it's time we broke out that cranberry orange bread, hit me," he said a moment later, as my mind was indulging in a mild fantasy of how exactly I could maneuver his penis into my vajayjay while still maintaining a good highway speed.

"I'm on it!" I hollered quickly, diving into the backseat at top speed, surprising us both. I had my legs in the air, and my bottom on display as I clasped my upside down face in my hands behind the seat. I could feel how red my cheeks were, and I gave myself a little slap to snap me back into this world.

"That is one sweet ass my friend," he sighed sweetly, leaning his head on it as though it were a pillow.

"Hey. Ass Man. Pay attention to the road and not my heiney or no bread for you," I scolded, giving his head a bump with my bum and sending myself flailing again as he took a turn.

"Bella, you need to control yourself back there or I am pulling over."

"Oh zip it, here's your damn bread," I snapped back, crawling back into my chair in a graceless way and throwing the bread at him.

"What the fuck? Don't throw this, what if you had bruised it?" he cried, gently stroking the foil wrapped bread.

"I worry about you Edward, I really do," I laughed, watching him open the end of the wrapper.

"You want me to cut you a piece-ok, or you could just do that," I frowned, as he took a giant bite out of the end.

"Thif if mine, righ?" he asked, spraying crumbs throughout the front seat.

"How do you function in normal society?" I asked, shaking my head as he took another monster bite. He just smiled and continued to eat the entire loaf of bread in less than five minutes.

"You're gonna be so sick tonight, that's meant to be eaten piece by piece, not ingested whole," I said, shaking my head. His only response was to burp loudly and pat his tummy. I couldn't help but laugh.

"You're one twisted fuck Wallbanger," I chuckled.

"You're still intrigued though, aren't you?" he grinned, turning the green limes loose on me in such a way that I felt my panties actually disintegrate.

"Oddly, yes," I admitted, feeling my face flame again.

"I know," he smirked, and we drove on.

"Ok, the turn should be coming up just around this corner, I remember that house," I cried, bouncing in my seat excitedly. It had been awhile since I had been up here, and I had forgotten how beautiful it was. I loved Tahoe in the summertime, all the water sports and everything. But in autumn? Autumn was beautiful here.

"Thank God, I need to pee," Edward groaned, as he had been doing for the past twenty or so miles.

"That's your own fault for drinking that Big Gulp," I admonished, still bouncing away.

"Wow, is that it?" he asked as we turned into the drive. Lanterns lit the way up the drive to a sprawling two-story cedar house with a giant stone fireplace up the left side. Cars were already in the driveway, and I could hear the music spilling out from the back deck.

"Sounds like our friends have already got their party on," Edward noticed, as we heard squealing and laughter coming from the back side of the house.

"Oh, I don't doubt it. My guess is they have been drinking since dinner and are half naked in the hot tub by now," I laughed, walking around back to grab my bag.

"Well, we'll just have to catch up now won't we?" he winked, pulling out a bottle of Galliano from his bag. "I thought we could make some Wallbangers."

"Now isn't that interesting, I was thinking the same thing," I countered, pulling an identical bottle from my duffle.

"I knew you were dying to get me inside you Bella," he chuckled, grabbing my bag and his as we headed towards the door.

"Please, you would make up a drink and call it a Pink Nightie just to have me in your mouth, and don't even try to lie," I laughed, nudging him with my shoulder. He stopped midway up the walk and looked at me fiercely.

"Is that an invitation? Cuz I'm a hell of a bartender," he stated simply, the eyes glowing in the darkness.

"I've no doubt," I breathed, the space between us now crackling with the tension that was becoming ridiculously hard to ignore. I took a deep breath, and I noticed he did as well.

"Come on, let's get sauced and start this weekend," he chuckled, nudging me with his shoulder and breaking the spell.

"Sauce away," I muttered, walking up the path behind him.

Did I look at his ass the entire way?

Hell yes.

Finding the front door open, Edward and I stashed our bags and made our way through the house towards the back deck. There, the stunning lake was spread out before us, just barely lit by the tiki torches that dotted the dock and pathways that led down to the shore. The entire back of the house was flanked with brick patios and decks, and that's where we found our friends.

"Bella!" Alice screeched from the hot tub, where she and Jasper were splashing each other. Ah, we were into Drunky Loud already.

"Alice!" I squealed back, looking around for Rose. She and Emmett were perched on the stone bench by the firepit, roasting marshmallows. They both waved merrily, Emmett gesturing obscenely with his stick.

"Making them see the error of their ways might be easier than we thought, fellow matchmaker," I whispered to Edward, who was already beginning to mix us a cocktail at the patio bar.

"You think its gonna be that easy?" he whispered back, giving his friends the international guy head nod that said "What's up man?"

"Hell yes, they are almost already there without our help. All we have to do is show them what's already right in front of them," I whispered back.

"You don't think they see it?" he asked, handing me a cocktail.

"I don't see how they've missed it this long, it's staring them right in the face," I answered, taking a sip.

"So, how am I?" he asked, winking.

"Is this a Wallbanger?"

"It is,"

I took another sip, swirling the taste around my mouth and over my tongue.

"You're as good as I knew you'd be," I whispered, taking a dangerously large swallow.

"To things staring you right in the face," he added, clinking my glass and taking his own large gulp.

"To things staring you right in the face," I echoed, our eyes locking over the rims.

God damned banger voodoo...

Whew. Thanks for hanging with me while me and the banger took a little break. I appreciate so much the support and patience you all gave me while I got some shit in order. Now we're back, and hopefully back on a more regular update schedule again.

Some of you may notice that you are unable to review this chapter, you might have been one of the lovelies that reviewed the authors note that was previously playing the part of Chapter 13. If it doesn't work, you can always try going back and reviewing a chapter you didn't leave one in, maybe Chap 1? Ah well, I love ya for trying

Of course, I must rec a few fics that I fell in love with over the hiatus

I Know You by HMonster4. This is darker than what we usually expect from her, and I LOVE it. Vamp Edward, Darkward, and originally appearing as a one shot for the Darkward contest. Highly recommend that you check it out. It will make you warm...just sayin

Crushed Seraphim by MrsTheKing. Oh, My. God. This is utterly enchanting...truly magical, and perfect for the time of year. This woman has quite possibly the best imagination I have ever seen, and this story sucked me in from Chapter 1. I dare you to start this one, and not finish it. Triple Dog Dare you...

The Daily Grind, by letmesign. This is what I love about fics. Light, fun, great banter, great pop culture references, and steamy steamy steamy UST. I adore this story, and I loved one of her other stories, Marble and Mahogany. Read them, read them both.

With Teeth, by talulahblue. I know you all saw me go apeshit on twitter for this one, but I wanted to make sure that everyone got a chance to read this one. It is only available on twilighted, make sure you do not miss this one. I had the privilege of reviewing this one for TLYDF and I want everyone that will listen to me to read this, read this now!

OK chickens, have a fantastic new year. Lots of exciting things coming in the New Year for me and the entire fandom, so I hope this holiday finds you well and rested, happy and sassy, well sexed and thoroughly fucked. As am I...

MWAH

Alice

xoxo

14. Spanish Eyes

Hello Banger Chickens. We have been through a lot in the last 2 months, haven't we? I won't take up your time here with a long author's note, see below for all the exciting news.

Thanks as always to the thousand of you who read and review, and made sure I knew you were waiting desperately for this next chapter. Thank you to Nina and Lauren who read this literally at the eleventh hour to make sure it was postable. And thank you to the Banger Nation, who ensured Clive was safely returned from MrsTheKing, and will never be kittynapped again.

Read it, and then see me down below for some very exciting news. Your Alice has been busy...

Chapter 14-Spanish Eyes

"Whose foot is that?"

"It's mine Emmett, quit rubbing it,"

"Dude! Quit trying to play footsie with me Jasper!"

"You are the one still holding my foot dude,"

Jasper and Emmett both tried to look nonchalant as they disengaged from their footsie session under the bubbling water. I laughed as I caught Edwards's eye from across the hot tub, and he grinned back at me.

"Want another?" he mouthed to me, nodding to my empty glass.

"I have had enough of you for tonight, don't you think?" I mouthed back, as our friends cackled back and forth all around us.

"You think you could ever get enough Wallbanger?" he mouthed, the characteristic smirk returning.

I looked back at him, the image of Hot Tub Wallbanger that had been in my head for the last few weeks actually paling in comparison to the real thing. Strong arms stretched across the back of the hot tub, hair was wet and artfully swept back. If I thought seeing Wallbanger wet and half naked on my kitchen floor was enticing, it was nothing like having him backlit by tiki torches and seen thru a strong alcoholic buzz.

He was now the most singularly handsome man I had ever seen, and if I wasn't mistaken, he was trying to get me drunk.

"Are you trying to get me drunk?" I asked, giggling again as I pushed my empty glass away from me, resolving myself to ingesting no more Wallbanger tonight. Jesus I had a dirty mind...

"Nope, a sloppy Pink Nightie Girl gets me nowhere," he grinned as I splashed water towards his side. I noticed that our friends had all quieted and were now watching us with undisguised interest.

After Edward and I had arrived, we got our drinks and then I showed him around the rest of the house. I didn't place my bags anywhere, not knowing how the sleeping arrangements had been laid out. We returned to the patio to find that Rose and Emmett had joined Jasper and Drunky Alice in the hot tub. A quick trip to the pool house left me in nothing but a dark green bikini and a smile, as I approached the others. Edward had already jumped in, and I watched him watch me. As I slid under the warm water, I

sipped my Wallbanger cocktail and drank in the sight of wet Wallbanger in front of me. Rose actually had to nudge me to stop the staring.

Now we were smack dab in the middle of a testosterone/estrogen soup, bubbling away with 2 pairs of mismatched lovers and more pheromones than we knew what to do with.

So did I want another cocktail? Didn't matter, I couldn't afford it.

I had to shake my head a little to clear it, and looked around at the rest of the group. Alice had gotten too hot, and was perched on the side, kicking Emmett with her tiny feet as they swung back and forth. He indulged her in much the way a big brother indulges his little sister. Rose and Jasper were huddled on the other side, Rose scratching Jasper's back as she and Emmett talked back and forth about the 49'ers starting lineup or defensive line or something footballish and frankly boring.

"So what are we doing this weekend?" I asked, focusing my attention on the group at large and not the sex limes staring back at me. Damn those limes, they would be the death of me.

"We were thinking about going for a hike tomorrow, who's in?" Jasper called out, as Rose shook her head.

"Count me out of that, no way am I hiking,"

"Why not?" Emmett asked, not noticing Edward and I steal a quick glance at each other at his sudden interest.

"Can't. Last time I hiked I took quite a spill and sprained my wrist. Can't take the chance during the season," she said, waving and reminding us all that she made her living with her hands. As a cello player, she could get out of quite a bit. Once she dodged hand jobs all winter. Investment banker Bob was not a happy camper.

"How 'bout you Tiny?" Emmett pulled on Alice's foot.

"Um no, Alice doesn't hike," she replied, adjusting her barely there black bikini. Her actual boytoy didn't notice, but I saw Jasper's eyes grow to the size of pies from across the hot tub when her breasts were almost revealed.

"You gonna take a pass as well?" Edward nodded to me.

"Hell no, I am hiking with the boys tomorrow!" I laughed, as Rose and Alice rolled their eyes at me. They hated all things outdoors, and never understood why I loved "mountain man activities" as they called them.

"Good girl," Edward purred, and for a second I calculated the distance between my mouth and his.

We were all quiet for a moment, all 6 of us lost in our own thoughts. I remembered the plan to out the 4 of them, and I jumped right in.

"So Jasper, did you know that Alice here gives to your charity every year?" I asked, surprising them both.

"You do?" he asked.

"Yep, every year. I've seen what having access to computers can do, especially for kids that wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity," she said, shyly looking at him. The two of them began a conversation about the process he used to determine which schools he awards scholarships to each year, and Edward and I grinned at each other. Looking sideways at Rose, Edward launched the second wave of the attack.

"Hey Emmett, how many seats did you get this year for the symphony?" he asked, as Emmett blushed.

"You bought tickets?" Rose asked.

"*Season* tickets," Edward added, as Emmett nodded. The two of them began a discussion of where his seats were, and Edward raised his foot above the surface of the water.

"Come on, don't leave me hangin"

"What?" I asked.

"Gimme a little high five, I can't reach your hand," he insisted, waving his foot back and forth. I giggled, and slid lower on my seat, stretching my foot out and patting his lightly.

"Ugh, pruneey," he laughed.

"I'll give you pruneey," I warned, dipping my foot below and splashing him lightly.

"I could not be more comfortable. Seriously, I literally could not feel more comfortable right now if I were actually inside a marshmallow," I mumbled, through a thick tongue coated in Bailey's and coffee. I was curled up on top of about 50 pillows next to fireplace. A fireplace with a hearth almost 10 feet wide, and a chimney almost 3 stories high. Made out of stone that was quarried nearby, it was massive. It was the focal point of the entire house, with rooms radiating outwards. And it gave off massive heat.

We were all chilled to the bone when we finally made it back inside. One by one, we all got too warm in the hot tub, so we hoisted ourselves out to cool off a little. By the time we realized how cold the night had really gotten, we were all chattering and puffing, and wanting nothing more than to curl up next to the fire. As we had yet to pick rooms, the girls all snuck into the large master bedroom to change into our pj's and rejoin the boys, who were now all decked out in t-shirts and pajama pants. We made a quick pot of coffee, and I sliced up some of the cranberry - orange bread that I had wisely hid from Edward. A couple of shots of Bailey's in the coffee cups, a strategically placed iPod in the sound system, and we were all relaxing by the fire like we were in an ad for Currier and Ives.

I had spotted Edward over by the fireplace, and he patted the stack of pillows next to him. I dove in, letting a few stray puffs of feathers swirl around our heads. I breathed deeply, there was nothing like the smell of

an actual fire. Not a gas fireplace, not a bunch of candles, but an honest to goodness fireplace. With snaps and crackles and funny little whizzing screeches when the steam came out of a piece of wood. Each boy had a different method of starting a fire. Use kindling, use newspapers, use kindling *and* newspapers... when finally Rose stuck her head up there and declared that the flu was actually still closed. Brought back down a few pegs, the guys at that point deferred to Jasper, if for no other reason than he actually was holding the matches. But within minutes, they had a fire blazing and we were now all seated in front of or around the fireplace.

There's something about your skin after swimming, especially at nighttime. Cotton feels softer, your skin feels softer, and even though you haven't done anything, you feel sleepy and content. Of course the Wallbangers and the Baileys had nothing at all to do with that.

"So Bella, have you asked Edward to teach you how to wind surf yet?" Alice asked suddenly, from her perch on the arm of the couch. We'd been quiet for awhile, drowsy and almost dreaming that we all started a little.

"What? I mean, what?" I asked, startled out of my pillows and back into the present.

"Well, these boys here all wind surf, you want to learn to wind surf, I bet Eddie here would show ya, wouldn't ya Eddie?" she giggled, polishing off the last of her coffee, and sliding off the arm of the chair and onto Jasper's conveniently placed lap. They smiled at each other for a moment before they realized what they were doing, and Jasper jokingly launched her off his own lap, and into Emmett's. Who was not awakened by Alice's earlier question, and was now wide awake with a lapful of Scheming Brandon.

"You want to learn to wind surf?" Edward asked, turning from his place by the fire towards my pillow pile.

"Actually yes, I've always wanted to try it,"

"It's tough, not gonna lie. But totally worth it," he smiled, as Jasper gave him a head nod from across the room.

"Sure, Edward'll show ya, he'd love to," Jasper added, earning a wink from Alice and an eye roll from me.

"We can plan something for when we get back to the city," I grinned, not liking Alice's methods but grateful to maybe pick up a new sport.

"No more talk tonight, this girl has had it. I'm pooped, where are we all sleeping?" Rose said, poking her head over the back of an armchair where she had been curled up.

"Well, how many rooms we talking about?" Edward asked, as I sat up straight and gave a great yawn.

"There are 4 bedrooms, so take your pick," Rose answered, wisely draining an entire bottle of water.

"Are we doing boy-girl, boy-girl?" I asked, laughing when I saw Edward's surprised face.

"We can, sure," Alice answered, looking a little nervously at Emmett. I stifled a giggle when I saw Rose and Jasper trade a similar spooked look. Edward caught it as well.

"Yeah sure! Don't let Bella and I stand in the way of the lovebirds! Alice, you and Emmett pick a room, Rose and Jasper can pick a room, and Bella and I will take the rooms that are leftover. Perfect, right Bella?"

"Sound perfect to me! I'll just rinse out these mugs...now off to bed with you all...scoot scoot!" I cried, gesturing towards the 2 couples to hit the road. Edward and I scurried about cleaning up while sneaking peeks over our shoulders at the 4 of them, looking like they had just begun the

Bataan Death March.

"Oh man, I hope this works out...for my sake," I murmured, standing behind Edward as we watched the 4 become 2 pair as parted ways by the bedroom doors.

"Why for your sake?" he whispered, turning his face just a little so we were quite close.

"Because right now, behind those doors? Rose and Alice are trying to figure out the best way to hurt me. Physically hurt me," I sighed, backing away and rinsing the last of the coffee cups, placing them in the dishwasher. Edward added the soap, and switched it on. As we walked around turning lights off for the night, we talked about the hike we would be taking tomorrow.

"You're not gonna slow me down, are you?" he teased, as I shoved him into the wall.

"Please, you will be eating my trail dust tomorrow bucko," I warned, grabbing my bag and making my way down the hallway towards the bedrooms.

"We'll see Nightie Girl. Speaking of, got any nighties in there for me?" he teased, poking his head into my bag as he followed me down the hall.

"Stay outta there. Nothing for you in there, or anywhere for that matter," I grinned, stopping at the room I was taking. He went past me to the room next door.

"Look at that, sharing a bedroom wall once again," he smirked.

"Well, I know you're in there alone so there had better not be any banging going on in there," I warned, leaning in the doorway.

"No, no banging. Night Bella," he said softly, leaning in his own doorway.

"Night Edward," I answered back, giving him a little waggle of my fingertips as I went inside and closed my door. I placed my bag on my bed and smiled, thinking about what a great weekend this was going to be.

"Come on guys, not that much further," I yelled behind me, as I surged up the final leg of the trail. We had been hiking for about 2 hours now, and while everyone stayed together as a group for the most part, in the last 30 minutes or so, Emmett had slowed down considerably, and Jasper hung back with him. Edward and I kept the pace together, and were about to reach the crest of the trail.

It had been a great morning. And by that I mean I had managed to avoid being alone with either Rose or Alice, although the sleep bags and tired faces on all 4 of them proved to illustrate that no one had gotten a good night sleep. Except Edward and I. We made breakfast for the Grumpersons, and they were so tired and out of sorts they missed the entire "frost my buns" exchange Edward and I had over by the oven when I was...ahem...actually frosting my buns. Cinnamon that is.

After breakfast, I dodged the firing squad by changing quickly and waiting outside for the boys before the hike. I knew once we made it back to the house I would be in for it, although I admit, I was curious to see how they were planning to rage without acknowledging that having to sleep in a bed with the guys they had been seeing for weeks now was, in fact, not what they wanted to be doing. But as Edward had quipped, "Here's to things staring you in the face."

Tonight should be interesting.

I pushed up and over the last little ridge, and made it to the top. Edward was only a few yards behind me; I could hear him on his way. I breathed deep, the clear air prickling at my lungs. It was chilly, but I was

warm with exertion. It had been awhile since I had gotten out of the city, I missed hiking like this. My legs were burning, my nose was running, I was sweating like a pig, and I couldn't remember a time when I had felt better. I laughed out loud as I looked down at the lake below, spying a few hawks cruising the thermals. The steely blue of the lake, the deep green of the forest trees, the clean whites and creams of the rocks, it was beautiful.

And then there was my new favorite green.

Edward appeared at my side, breathing deeply as I still was, stretching his arms wide and taking in the sight of the valley below. He had peeled off layers as we went higher, and was now wearing a simple white t-shirt, with a flannel knotted at his waist. Khaki shorts, hiking boots, and a shit eating grin completed the wet dream I was now staring at instead of the natural wonders all around us. And the green eyes, that I could see framing each shot as he looked around.

"Beautiful," I breathed, and he turned to me. I got caught staring.

"I mean, isn't it beautiful?" I stuttered, gesturing widely with my arm as though I were on a game show. He knew exactly what I had been doing, and I felt the blush come up in my cheeks. Luckily, I was still a bit winded from the climb, and was hoping that I was already sufficiently red.

"Yes, it is beautiful actually. Quite beautiful," he smiled, and we stared at each other. He took a few steps closer to me, and I felt the air shift and change. I bit my lip; he ran his hand through his hair. We smiled. There were no words, but even the woodland animals could tell there was something about to happen, and wisely stayed in their hidey holes.

If there were harpists nearby, now would be the time they would start...harping.

"Hi," he said quietly.

"Hi," I answered.

"Hi," he said again, taking one last step towards me, bringing him inside my little circle of self. One more step and he would practically on top of me. Ahem.

"Hi," I said once more, tilting my head to the side and letting him know that he could take that last step.

"MASEN!" thundered from below, and we both sprang back. "MASEN!" came again, and I recognized Emmett's voice underneath the quasi jungle man yell.

"Emmett," we both said, and smiled. He raised his hand for a second, almost as though he was going to...but then he dropped it and backed away. Now that the banger voodoo wasn't so concentrated, I could see things clearly again, and I repeated the word 'harem' over and over again in my head.

"Up here!" Edward yelled down, and Jasper appeared from around a bend.

"Hey there, Emmett is done, kaput, thrown in the towel so to speak, you guys about ready to head back down?" he called, jumping from rock to path to rock again with the ease of a mountain goat. He didn't even appear to be breathing heavy.

"Yep, we were just about to come looking for you guys," I called out to him, kicking my legs up behind me for a quick stretch before heading back down the trail.

"Is he lying down?" Edward asked, following close behind me.

"Straight across the trail like he owns the place," Jasper laughed, bounding ahead and calling down to Emmett to let him know we were on our way.

"You sure you didn't want to stay up here a little longer? I mean, we worked so hard to get all the way here," he asked, reaching out his hand to stop me running down the mountain after Jasper.

"I'm sure, we should get back. Looks like a storm is coming," I nodded towards the horizon, a group of dark clouds beginning to build in the distance. I felt the warmth of his hand on my shoulder, and I willed my hormones to flee to the other side of my body.

His eyes followed mine and frowned when he saw what was coming.

"You're probably right, we don't want to get caught out here all alone," he muttered.

"Besides, if we don't hurry, we can't tease Emmett about getting beat up the mountain by a girl," I grinned, and he laughed loudly.

"Hell, we don't want to miss that, let's go,"

And down the trail we went.

"So how was your gangbang Bella?" Rose sang sweetly when she found us all in the kitchen drinking water after our hike. All 3 boys did different versions of the classic spit take, while I calmly continued sipping like a lady.

"Fantastic, thanks. Emmett especially, we practically had to carry him back down the mountain after I finished with him," I answered back just as sweetly. The boys recovered their game faces, but I noticed Emmett could barely stop staring at Rose's tight tank top. Her actual suitor? Playing Spot The Alice, his head rotating so fast I could have sworn he was an owl. I shook my head, and put him out of his misery.

"Where's Alice?" I asked.

"Shower, which you 4 clearly need. It's freezing outside, how could you have gotten so sweaty?" she asked, wrinkling her nose a little.

"We worked hard making it up that mountain, hiking is harder than you think it is," Emmett puffed, and the rest of us wisely kept silent about the heart attack he almost had 50 feet from the summit.

I grabbed an apple and headed in the direction of my room, with Rose hot on my tail, as expected. I smirked a little, knowing she wanted to lay into me for making her sleep in the same room as Jasper the night before, but she couldn't without admitting her secret/not so secret interest in Emmett. I contemplated going easy in her, and just asking her about it, giving her an out.

"Those shorts look terrible on you Bella," she remarked as she followed me into my room.

No easy out.

"Thank you dear, should I have packed a little cat food for you when I packed Clive's travel bag?" I sneered as she collapsed onto my bed, curling her body around one of the giant pillows.

"Where is he anyway, who's watching him this weekend?"

"He is staying with Uncle Felix and Uncle Demetri. That cat is lounging on a silk bed being handfed tuna rolls right about now, he is living the life," I laughed, thinking about how well my cat was treated.

"That fucking cat, he has the life, that's for sure," she said, her earlier snark settling into a little sad sack. I started peeling off my sweaty clothes, wrapping up in a terrycloth robe that was hanging on the back of the door. She complimented my choice of sports bra, and laughed when she saw that I had paired it with a little pair of leopard panties, but then went back to her previous wistful expression.

"What's up Rosie?" I asked, laying on the bed next to her and wrapping myself around a pillow as well.

"Nothing, why?" she asked.

"You look a little blue,"

"Eh, I just didn't sleep well I guess,"

"Oh really? Mr. Jasper keeping you up late at night hmm?" I teased, nudging her with my elbow.

"No no, nothing like that, I just. I dunno, I just couldn't get settled last night. Normally I sleep really well up here, but it was so quiet last night, I just...I dunno. I just couldn't get settled I guess," she mumbled, beating her pillow a little with her fist, forcing it into a new shape.

"I see, well I slept great!" I laughed, and she starting trying to force my head into a new shape with her fist.

"You wanna get drunk tonight?" she asked as we finally settled down.

"Hell yes, you?"

"Yes ma'am," she laughed as Alice walked by with a towel on her head.

"Is this a private session, or can a non lesbian get into this bed?" she called from the doorway. We laughed and waved her in. She vaulted from the floor to the bed and landed on top of both of us as we shrieked.

"What are we doing in here ladies? Foreplay or just going for it?" she asked.

"Please say foreplay," we heard a male voice say from the door. We all rolled over to see our boys in the doorway, different versions of the same oh-my-goodness-girls-in-bed-together look on their faces.

"Oh get over yourselves, like we would ever need a guy to tell us whether we needed foreplay or not," Rose giggled, kicking a foot in the air and waving at them from over my shoulder. They all shifted their weight from one foot to the other, and then all cleared their throats a little. So predictable.

"We're planning on getting drunk tonight, you boys up for it?" Alice yelled out. Even though no alcohol was currently present in her system, Drunky Alice was already making an encore appearance in her volume level.

"Done and done," Jasper answered, giving us all a weird little salute that made us giggle even harder.

"Now run away boys, and let us have our girl time," she tossed over her shoulder, lifting my robe a little and giving my ass a quick smack. I squealed, and tried to cover myself up, but it was too late.

"Dude. Leopard print." Emmett whispered to Edward, in the kind of whisper that is louder than actually just speaking.

"I know I know," Edward countered, and then drew his hand that had been tugging on his hair down his face as though he were trying to remove the image physically from his brain.

Wallbanger liked animal prints. Oh Edward...

"Come on guys, the ladies have requested a little alone time, let's leave them, to it," Jasper tugged them out into the hallway, closing the door behind them with a wink in our direction that made Alice's entire neck turn bright red. Rose was examining her fingernails.

I was really going to have fun with these two tonight.

"Where the hell did you learn to cook like this? Jesus this is good!" Emmett exclaimed, taking his third helping of paella from the giant pan

in the center of the table.

"I have always cooked I guess, I love it. Especially when I get to cook for such an appreciative eater," I laughed as he dug into another pile of rice. Edward nodded towards my wine glass and I nodded back, asking for another pour. I had planned on making a quick version of paella when I saw all the wonderful seafood on sale at the local market, and when I saw the special they were having on Spanish Rose and Cava, my plans came together. We had all started in on the Cava while we were prepping in the kitchen, the sparkling Spanish wine going perfectly with the wedge of Manchego I had picked up, as well as the little dishes of salty olives. Once again, Edward and I moved together in the kitchen extremely well, and he was my little helper. The other 4 settled into bar stools across from us while we cooked, someone popped in on an old Otis Redding record on the ancient turntable, and we were in business.

The wine flowed as freely as the conversation, and even though it was the first time all 6 of us had really spent any time together as a group since we all met at Esme's weeks ago, I could tell this would become a tight knit group quickly. Similar interests, similar senses of humor, but everything just different and complementary enough to keep it lively.

Speaking of lively, as the alcohol was inhaled, the walls were coming down, and Alice and Rose were barely hiding their interest anymore. Not that the boys were minding, in fact, they were encouraging it. Jasper currently was examining Alice's foot for what she insisted was a spider bite. The fact that he had been inspecting it for several minutes, and said inspection included a calf massage did not escape my attention, or Edward's. He grinned at me, and motioned for me to move closer. I slid across the bench towards him, and inclined my head to his. He put his mouth next to my ear, and I inhaled. Wine, smoke, heat, and actual sex ran straight up my nostrils and invaded my brain, turning everything into a fuzzy world of banger voodoo.

"How long before the kiss?" he whispered his mouth so close, I swear I felt lips brush my ear and my hoohah began to consider how to launch.

"What?" I asked, beginning to giggle the way I did when I had had a little too much to drink, and a little too much sexy man dangled in front of me.

"How long? Ya know, before they kiss the wrong person?" he asked, as I turned to look into his eyes.

The limes, oh the limes were now calling to me, increasing the chances of the hoohah launch.

"You mean the right person?" I whispered.

"Yeah, the right person," he answered, scooting a little closer to me on the bench.

"I don't know but if they don't kiss soon, I'm gonna burst," I admitted, knowing full well that I was no longer talking about our friends. Knowing full well that he knew full well that I was no longer talking about our friends.

"Hmm, I wouldn't want you to burst," he grinned, and he was now mere inches from my face.

Harem. Harem. Harem. I repeated this mantra over and over to myself.

What the hell was a harem?

"I wanna go in the hot tub,"

The whining pulled me away from the voodoo and back into the kitchen. Where there were people present. My hoohah screamed as I encouraged her to stand down. Mentally. I didn't actually touch myself.

"I wanna go in the hot tub," I heard again, and turned to address Alice. Imagine my surprise when I saw that Rose was actually the whiner, and was now hanging on Emmett like a bookbag.

"OK, so go in the hot tub. No one's stopping you," I insisted, sliding away from Edward and back in front of my plate where I began separating my peas from my lobster. I was full, but I would never leave lobster on the plate. Come on now.

"You have to come too," Rose whined again, as I began to comprehend. Rose was drunk. Rose got clingy when she got drunk. Oh boy.

"Go ahead, I'll clean up the kitchen a little bit and then meet you guys out there," Edward said, taking my plate and starting to stand up.

"Hey hey hey! Lobster bite, hello," I protested, as I grabbed at my fork.

"Here, I would never get in between a woman and her lobster," he smiled, offering me my fork back. I accepted the bite with a smile, and stood up. I was a little drunk than I thought, and this fact made itself known as gravity began tease me.

"Whoah there, you OK?" he asked, steadying me as Rose started off for the bedroom.

"Yeah, I'm fine I'm fine," I answered, planting my feet and winning the battle.

"Maybe you outta slow down?" he asked, taking my wine glass.

"Oh lighten up Wallbanger, it's a party," I cried, beginning to giggle as I started to find everything funny.

"OK Nightie Girl, party on," he smiled as I headed towards the bedroom to change into my suit. Which proved harder than I thought it would as string bikinis are difficult to tie when you are more than a little buzzed.

"OK, Bella's next. Truth or Dare," Alice yelled, once more proving that Drunk Alice only had one sound level. Yelling.

"Truth," I yelled back, splashing Rose in the face accidentally as I reached behind me for my glass of wine. We had brought out the last bottle of Cava, and were steadily working our way through it. And it was steadily working its way through us, our game becoming more and more dangerous.

Once we came outside and got settled into the hot tub, it was only minutes before Emmett suggested a game of Truth or Dare, and only seconds for Rose to agree to it. I laughed it off at first, saying there was no way I was going to play such a childish game. But when Edward implied that I was chicken, the alcohol reared its ugly head and shouted something to the effect of, "I will play Truth or Dare you sucker until you can't tell you Truth from your Dare!" This statement made perfect sense in my head, and must have to Alice and Rose as well, as they immediately began offering me high fives and you-go-girls. I'm pretty sure I saw Edward shake his head, but he was smiling when he did it so I let it go. And poured another glass of sparkly.

"Where is the one place you want to travel, and haven't been yet," she asked, humming along to the tunes coming through the French doors. Rose had found all of her grandfather's old records, and Edward almost had a fit when he saw the collection. He had selected a Tommy Dorsey album, and the big band accentuated the night perfectly.

"Boring, make her take a dare!" Edward sang out, and I stuck my tongue out at him.

"It's not boring, and she chose truth so she gets truth. Bella, where is the one place on earth you want to go?" she asked again, and I leaned my head back against the edge of the tub. I looked up at the stars and thought about the image that immediately came to mind. Soft wind blowing, warm sun on my face, the ocean spread out in front of me dotted with craggy rocks. I smiled just thinking about it.

"Spain," I sighed quietly, the smile lingering as I imagined myself on a beach in *Spain*.

"Spain huh?" Edward asked me, and I turned my face towards his. He was smiling back at me.

"Spain. That's where I want to go. But it's so expensive to travel to Europe right now, it's going to have to wait awhile," I smiled again, my head still wrapped around the image.

"Hey wait, Edward, aren't you going to Spain next month? Coastal Spain or something like that?" Jasper called out, and my eyes widened.

"Um yeah. Yeah, I am actually," he answered.

"Great! Bella, you can go with him," Alice decided, clapping her hands together, and turning to Jasper.

"Jasper, you're next,"

"No no, wait a minute. First of all, I can't just go with Edward to Spain. And second of all, it's my turn," I protested, as Edward sat up straight.

"Actually, you could *just go with Edward to Spain*," he quipped, turning to me fully. The other side of the hot tub got very quiet.

"Um no, I can't. I can't afford a trip like that, and besides, I don't know that I can take time off next month," I answered, feeling my heart swell as I processed what he just said.

"Actually, I heard Esme telling you the other day at the office that next month would be a good time to take your vacation before the holiday season," Alice piped up, and then sank back into the shadows as I glared at her.

"Be that as it may, I also can't afford it, so discussion ended. Now then, I believe it's my turn, let's see, who should I pick?" I stalled, looking around at everyone.

"It wouldn't be that expensive, I'm renting a house so that would be paid for. Airfare and spending money, that's all you'd have to cover," Edward continued, not letting this go.

"Hey, that's a pretty good deal there Bella," Alice piped up again, her energy making little ripples across the tub.

"OK, Alice, Truth or Dare?" I asked, pushing ahead with the game.

"Hey, we are talking about something here, don't change the subject," she objected.

"Well, I am done discussing it, Truth or Dare you little shit," I said again, letting her know I meant business.

"Fine, Dare," she pouted.

"Great. I dare you to kiss Emmett," I shot back, not missing a beat.

"What?" she shouted, as the entire hot tub erupted into gasps.

"Hey, we're just playing a game right? And Alice really, it's not that shocking that I would dare you to kiss the guy you have been seeing for weeks now, is it?"

"Well no, I just, I don't like public displays," she sputtered, almost going under. This from the girl who was almost arrested for public nudity at Berkeley when she was found actually under the bleachers under a football game freshman year.

"Oh come on, what's the big deal?" Edward chimed in, and I looked at him gratefully.

"Nothing, it's just-" she said again, and Emmett interrupted.

"Oh come here Tiny," he exclaimed, and pulled her over. They stared at each other for a second, and then Emmett swept some of her hair out of her face. He smiled at her, and she leaned in. I heard Rose inhale at the same time Jasper did and we all watched as Alice kissed Emmett.

And it was weird.

They broke away, and Alice swam back over to her side. Next to Jasper. All was quiet for a moment. Edward and I looked at each other, not sure what to do next. We had been outsmarted. And I got pissed when I got outsmarted. I began to burn. The fact that I was drunk had nothing at all to do with my overreaction.

"OK, I guess it's my turn, hmmm, Jasper, Truth or Dare," Emmett started, and I stood up, splashing everyone around me as I did.

"No no no! That's not what was supposed to happen!" I yelled, stamping my foot, and losing my balance and going under in the process. Strong Wallbanger hands brought me back up to the surface, and I continued my alcohol induced tirade.

"You, were supposed, to not let her kiss him!" I yelled pointing at Jasper and then at Alice. I whirled on Rose. "And you, were supposed, to get mad at her!"

"Why would I get mad at Alice? For kissing her boyfriend?" Rose mumbled, not looking up.

"Argh!" I screamed, and turned back to Alice.

"Alice, are you even remotely interested in Emmett?" I challenged, hands on my hips as I steamed into the night air.

"Emmett is exactly what I have always wanted in a man, he is my type to a T," she countered, flinching when she saw Jasper look at her with hurt in his eyes.

"Blah blah blah, have you fucked Emmett yet?" I screeched into the air, starting to point as I tend to do when I drink.

"OK Bella you've made your point," Edward soothed me from behind, trying to get me to sit back down.

"What point? What are you two talking about?" Rose asked, leaning forward.

"Oh please, the four of you are ridiculous! I don't care what you all think you want on paper, in reality, you're doing it all wrong!" I answered, smacking the top of the water emphasize what I was trying to say. Why weren't they getting it? I don't know when I got so riled up, but in the last 60 seconds or so, I became blazing mad.

"Are you kidding?" Alice cried, jumping to her feet in the hot tub, which still kept the water at almost the same level on her.

"Alice ,come on! Anyone with eyes can see the way you and Jasper feel about each other! Why the hell are you wasting any more time on anyone else?" I pushed, as Edward pulled me back against him in an attempt to quiet me. I ended up on his lap.

"OK, this has gone far enough," Emmett stated, starting to get out of the tub.

"No no! Emmett, look at Rose. Can't you see she is totally into you? Why the hell are you all so thick? Seriously? Are Edward and I the only ones that can see clearly here?" I yelled once more, bringing Edward into the conversation whether he wanted to be in it or not. Emmett looked at Jasper, and then at Edward.

"Dude!" Emmett exclaimed.

"Dude," Edward answered, gesturing towards Rose. Who stood up like she was going to say something. Emmett put his hand on her shoulder,

and she stopped and sat back down. Emmett nodded at Jasper.

"Dude?" he asked, and Jasper nodded back. Emmett took a deep breath, and looked at Rose.

"Rose, Truth or Dare?" Emmett asked.

"We are not playing any more-" I started to yell, but Edward took that moment to place his hand over my mouth.

"All clear over here," Edward stated, as he pinned me to his lap more securely with his other hand on my waist.

"Rose?" Emmett asked once more. She was quiet, and not looking in the direction of Alice and Jasper.

"Dare," she whispered, and closed her eyes.

Alcohol sure made everything much more dramatic.

"I dare you to kiss me," Emmett said, and all you could hear was the occasional loon over the lake. The loons in the tub were finally quiet.

We all watched as Rose turned towards Emmett, and placed a hand on the back of his head, pulling him towards her. She kissed him, slowly but surely, and it went on for days. I smiled into Edward's hand, and he patted my stomach. Which made me giddy.

When they finally broke apart, Rose was laughing into Emmett's mouth and he was answering back with his giant goofy man giggle.

"Well it's about freaking time," Edward said, releasing my mouth.

"Alice, I-" Rose asked, turning towards Alice.

Alice and Jasper were gone. We all looked around to look for them, and caught just the edge of Jasper's towel headed into the pool house. With a tiny wet brunette on his arm.

"Well then, I guess we'll call it a night," Rose sighed, grabbing Emmett by the hand and leading him to the edge of the hot tub.

"Night," I giggled as I saw her walk away with Emmett in tow, heading into the house. They were cuddled close and already a picture in the making. I looked towards the pool house, and noticed no lights had come on yet, and probably would not be coming on in the near future.

"Well, that was a fine bit of matchmaking, although your bull in a china shop delivery left a lot to be desired," he chuckled, letting his head rest against my back. I was still perched on his lap, and although his hand had left my mouth, it was now drifting south, while his other hand was still tightly on my waist.

"Yes, I usually leave a lot to be desired," I observed wryly, not wanting to leave this exquisite spot, but knowing I needed to, and soon. Edward was quiet behind me, and I started to move off his lap.

"You leave everything to be desired Bella," he answered quietly, and with the feel of his hot breath against my skin, I lost all control. I turned quickly, catching him off guard as I stayed in his lap but was now facing him, wrapping my legs around his waist and throwing caution, and my mantra, into the wind. I sunk my hands into his hair, luxuriating the feel of wet silk around my fingertips as I pulled him towards me.

"Why did you kiss me that night at the party?" I asked, my mouth mere inches from his. Once he realized that I was driving this bus, he quickly responded by pressing his hips into mine, bringing us closer together than we had ever been.

"Why did *you* kiss *me*?" he asked, running his hands up and down my back, settling into the space where his palms spanned my waist exactly,

thumbs in front, fingers in back, and pressed me into him further.

"Because I had to," I answered honestly, remembering how I had reacted instinctively that night, kissing him when I wanted to do anything but. "Why did you kiss me?" I asked again.

"Because I had to," he answered, the smirk returning. Luckily I didn't see the smirk for too long. Because I had finally discovered the secret of the ages.

How do you make a Wallbanger stop smirking?

You kiss him...

So? Heeheehee...so glad to be back with these two.

So, what is the exciting news? Well, as some of you may know, I was given the chance of a lifetime. I am having my first novel published. For those of you that read I Love LA in its original form, it has been reworked and is being published under the new title The Unidentified Redhead. This is happening soon, in fact the novel goes on sale Tuesday Feb 16th. Hang on for a second.... (HOLY SHEET!) OK, back with you. If you read it the first time, you will be glad to see your George and Gracie cavorting again, and if you missed it before, now is your chance. Please visit my new websites [aliceclayton\(dot\)com](http://aliceclayton(dot)com) and [theunidentifiedredhead\(dot\)com](http://theunidentifiedredhead(dot)com). Also make sure you check out all the other titles for sale at [omnific\(dot\)com](http://omnific(dot)com), you will see some other familiar titles that you have come to love, as well as some new novels that will wrap you up as well!

What else is amazing about Omnific? Well, I would love to be the first one to tell you that they are actively seeking amazing novels for publication. Check out their website to get the details on how you can submit your work for consideration. Amazing opportunities for a first time author.

And speaking of websites, let me be the first one to announce a big shocker, I am woefully challenged when it comes to internet anything. So, thank goodness the team at Creative B Design created these beautiful websites for me. Please consider them for anything you need, home business, fandom related blogs, anything you need, they are the ones to ask. Email them at admincreativeb(dot)com or hit them up on twitter Kassiah or heatherdawnxoxo for more details. They are my computer senseis

And speaking of Twitter , make sure you are following me feathers_mmmm and my new account alice_clayton.

Now, I know it was a long time between posts this time, and I while I know I will not make you wait 2 whole months again, it won't be a weekly thing as I had anticipated after the holidays. I am in the process of making a career change, and need to devote my time to making sure my new business is a success. I know you all understand, but I love when you let me know you are missing your banger!

Rec time!

I am giving you a few extra this time to make sure you have stuff to read while you are waiting to see what happens next with Banger and his Nightie Girl.

Volition, by Rochelle Allison. This is a newly completed fic with Irishward. I repeat, Irishward. Started as a one shot, it was expanded to an amazing story of 2 young people in Belfast in the 70's. Its amazing, you will read it straight thru.

Hide and Drink, by Savage. As far as I know this is only available on Twilighted, but worth a trip over there. Very dark Edward, very dark themes, but sooo intriguing and very different. You know I love something different and unique, and this is it.

Dark Games and Twisted Minds, by katinki. Can you tell there is a theme to these recs? I was reading some dark and twisted shit in the last few weeks, and this one is fantastic. James, a game, Edward racing against time....ooooooo. Give it a try, you will sink your teeth into this one...

Goodnight, Noises Everywhere by Feisty Y. Beden. If you have ever read The Stand, if you have ever wondered what would happen if you were the only person left alive, then this is for you. And oh my goodness, is there a twist. Found this one during an old fashioned readalong on twitter, and am soooo glad I did. Make sure you read this one, only 9 chapters so far, but such a great story.

OK my loves, I adore you. Stay above the fray, don't believe the hate, and keep it together. You stay classy San Diego. Sparkle out!

Alice

xoxo

15. Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me

To my betas Nina and Lauren, and to the extra step in beta Liz, I thankee.

To the Banger Nation who waits patiently (and not so patiently) I thankee.

Trust.

Chapter 15- Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me

I looked at Edward underneath me, warm and wet and *there*. Right there, and there was nothing in the world that I wanted more at this moment than his lips against mine. So even though every single cowbell in my head was ringing out the alarm, I centered myself, wrapped my legs tighter around his waist, and gazed directly into his eyes. The sex limes refused to let me get away from them, they were bringing me on home like the Death Star brought in the Falcon. And I wasn't going to hide in the smuggling compartments this time...

"Mmm, Nightie Girl, what are you up to?" he smirked, his hands strong on my waist as his fingers dug into my skin. His skin was slipping against mine in a way that was making me not right in the head, and I could feel, I could actually feel his abs against my tummy. He was so strong, so powerfully delicious that my brain began to burn and my hoohah began to make all my decisions.

I think O even popped her head up for a moment like the groundhog, taking a quick glance around and pronouncing it much closer to spring than she had been in months.

I licked my lips, and he mirrored my actions. I could barely see him

through the haze of steam from the hot tub, and the actual lust that was now brewing in this little cauldron of chlorinated chemistry. I couldn't fight it anymore, my goose was cooked, and I was looking forward to the figgy pudding.

"I am up to no good, that's for sure," I breathed, rising up just a little bit, the feeling of my breasts crushing against his skin unimaginable. As I settled on his lap again, I felt his reaction to me in a very tangible way, and we both groaned at the contact.

"You're up to no good huh?" he said, his voice gruff and thick and maple syrup pouring over me.

"No good, wanna be bad with me?" I whispered in his ear as he pressed his mouth against my neck.

"You sure about that?" he groaned, hands clutching at my back with delightful abandon.

"Come on Edward, let's bang some walls..." I answered, allowing my tongue to dart out from between my lips and against the skin just underneath his jaw, feeling the scruff scratch against my taste buds and giving me the sense of what that very scruff would feel like against other soft places on my body.

O poked her head out just a little more at that point, and went straight to my brain, which in turn spoke directly to my hands.

I grasped him firmly at the base of his neck, and positioned him directly in front of me, his eyes flaring wide and the sex limes turning into tiny little hypnotizers.

The smirk was hard, and so was he.

I leaned in, and quickly sucked his bottom lip between my own, nibbling lightly before biting down, pulling him closer to my body with only my

teeth. He came willingly, ceding control to me as my fingers pulled and pushed at his hair, my tongue pressing into his mouth as he groaned into mine. Everything in my world now narrowed down to just the feeling of this man, this wonderful man in my arms and threaded between my legs, and I kissed him like that world was about to end.

It wasn't sweet and tentative, it was pure carnal frustration spiked with banger voodoo and rolled into a giant ball of
please-God-let-me-live-in-this-man's-mouth-for-the-forseeable-future...

My mouth led his in a dance as old as the mountains that were watching us approvingly, our tongues and teeth and lips smacking and cracking and giving in to the sweet tension that had been building since I showed up at his door wearing the inspiration for my nickname.

I was actually shaking as I felt his hands reach lower, grasping my bottom in his beautiful hands and pushing me even closer still, my legs scrambling for purchase as I panted like a whore in church. The Church Of Edward...where I was dying to kneel before him.

My eyes were closed, my legs were open, and I was now moaning into his mouth like some kind of rabid dog. The idea that a kiss, just a kiss had turned me into one giant lusting bag of BellaNeedThat was undeniable, and I knew that if he continued to make me feel this way I was going to invite him straight into my Tahoe.

"Come into my Tahoe Wallbanger," I mumbled incoherently into his mouth, as he paused to try and decipher what I had just said.

"Bella, come into your what? Oh God," he managed, as I pushed us off the side of the hot tub and vaulted us across the water, emptying half of its contents onto the deck and the other half smacking us around like it was high tide. He slammed me into the wall of the hot tub, pushing me up against the bench and rewrapping my legs around his waist, as I gamely pushed my mouth back onto his, unwilling to let go of him. At one point, I kissed him so hard, he had to push me off so he could catch

a breath.

"Breathe Edward, breathe," I giggled, stroking his face as he struggled before me.

"You. Are. A mad woman," he panted, his hands looping underneath my arms and curling his hands around the tops of my shoulders, keeping me firmly against the side while I dug my heels into his backside, nudging him to exactly where I needed him. He closed his eyes and bit down on his lower lip, and animalistic growl sounding low in his throat as I launched my second wave of the hoohah commanded attack.

"You feel uncommonly good," I moaned, as I began to kiss him again, raining them down across his mouth, his cheeks, his jaw, slipping underneath to suck and bite at his neck as he dropped his head back to allow my assault. His hands were rough on me, dipping back down below against my back and catching on my bikini strings, loosening the sides. The thought of my naked breasts against his skin drove me crazy with lust, and I removed my hands from his poor hair to snake back behind my neck and start to pull on the knot. As I maneuvered, I knocked into one of the empty bottles of Cava, starting a domino effect of bottles crashing to the ground. I giggled as he pulled back, startled at the sound.

His eyes were vibrantly green, crowded with lust, but as they focused on me, they began to clear. I finally managed to get to the knot untied and could feel the water begin to swirl across my naked skin. I started to drop the strings, when Edward grasped them tightly in his hands. He shook his head as though to clear it, then closed his eyes firmly, cutting off my connection to the sex limes.

"Hey. Hey. Hey!" I prodded, forcing his eyes open and making him look at me, even though I was physically holding his eyelids open. "Where did you go just now?" I whispered, as he wrapped his hands, still holding my strings, back around my neck. He slowly began to tie my suit back together, as I felt my face flush bright red, all of the blood in my

body betraying me in that instant.

"Bella," he began, now breathing heavily, but looking at me carefully.

"What's wrong?" I interrupted, as his hands came to rest on my shoulders, steadying him, and seeming to keep a careful distance between us.

"Bella, you are amazing, but I...I can't..." he started, and I was now the one to close my eyes. Emotions whirled behind my eyelids, shame being chief among them. I could feel his eyes on me, willing me to open my own.

"You can't..." I stated, opening my eyes but looking anywhere but at him.

"No, I mean, Bella, I..." he stammered, increasing the distance and his unease as he moved away from me. I began to shake.

"You. Can't?" I asked, feeling icy cold even in the water. I unlocked my legs from around him, allowing him the room he needed to move away.

"No Bella, not you, not like-"

"Well, don't I feel like a fucking idiot," I managed, laughing shortly and pulling myself up and out of the water, sitting on the side of the hot tub, feeling the snap of the cold air.

"What? No Bella, you don't understand, I just can't-" he started towards me, and I kicked out a leg, pressing my foot square in the center of his chest, keeping him away.

"Hey Wallbanger, I get it, you can't. It's cool, wow what a crazy night huh?" I laughed again, swinging over the side and starting for the door, wanting to get away before he could see the tears fall that I knew were on their way. Of course, as I tried to navigate the steps, I slipped on a

wet patch, and down I went with a big thud. I could feel the back of my eyeballs begin to burn as I scrambled up as quickly as I could, I didn't want him to have to help me, and panicked that I was going to cry before I could get inside. Now that I was moving, I could feel the effects of all the alcohol I had consumed, and the beginnings of a very strong headache.

"Bella! Are you okay?" Edward cried, starting to get out of the hot tub as soon as I was upright again.

"I'm fine, I'm fine, just..." I got out, my throat beginning to close as I choked back a sob. I held my hand out behind me, telling him that I did not need his help. "I'm fine, Edward."

I couldn't turn around and see him; I just began to walk away. The cursed big band music was still playing on the turntable, but I still heard him say my name once more. I ignored it, and made my way towards the door, feeling foolish now in my barely there bikini that clearly was not as enticing as I thought it was.

I didn't even bother to grab a towel, instead throwing open the glass door, hearing it slam shut behind me as I all but ran for my room. I left little puddles along the slate floor as I headed back down the hallway, trying to ignore the sounds of giggles coming from Rose's room. As the tears finally coursed down my cheeks, I hastened into my room, locking the door and stripping off my bathing suit. I stumbled into the bathroom, flicked on the light, and there I stood, reflected back to me. Naked, wet hair streaming down my back, a bruise already beginning to form on my thigh from where I had taken my drunken spill...and puffy, kiss swollen lips.

I wrapped my hair in a towel, and then leaned on the countertop, bringing my face within inches of the mirror.

"Bella my dear, you just got turned down by a man who once made a woman meow for 30 minutes straight. How do you feel?" the naked

woman in the mirror asked me, turning my thumb into a little microphone. She gestured towards me, holding out her thumb.

"Well, I drank enough wine to sustain a small Spanish village, I haven't had an orgasm in a thousand years, and I will probably die old and alone in a beautifully designed apartment with all of Clive's illegitimate children swarming around me...how do you think I feel?" I asked back, offering Mirror Bella her thumb back.

"Silly Bella, you had Clive neutered," Mirror Bella answered, shaking her head at me.

"Go fuck yourself Mirror Bella, since I can't even do that," I finished, ending the interview and taking my naked ass back into my bedroom. Throwing on a t-shirt from the floor, I fell into the bed, my drunk self exhausted from the hike and the dinner and the wine and the music and the best make out session I had ever engaged in. The thought of it brought the tears to the surface again, and I rolled over to grab some tissues, only to find an empty box. Which made my drunken ass cry even harder.

Could this night get any worse?

Then my phone rang.

EPOV

I sank back into the water, stunned at what had just happened. I could still feel Bella, as though her skin were still against mine, her beautiful legs still keeping me snugly into her, her soft lips teasing at my own as I struggled not to do what I had been fantasizing about since she showed up at my door, angry and intoxicating.

She drove me crazy, right from the beginning. She annoyed the piss out of me, and yet from the second I saw her thought she had the best legs to ever grace a pink nightie. Her snap judgments about my love life

irritated me, but intrigued me as well. The easy friendship we had fallen into after the initial truce was struck was one that I was quickly becoming used to. I hadn't been friends with a woman that I wasn't sleeping with in so long, that it was simple to be myself. She matched me snark for snark, and I looked forward to the time I was spending with her.

If it weren't for the other women in my life, I would have been trying to get on the other side of that wall from the very beginning. But as our friendship grew, I knew that as easy as our friendship was, an actual relationship would be anything but. Not that I hadn't thought about it.

I hadn't seen Irina or Tanya since I got back from Ireland, and that was unheard of. I had stacks of texts from both of them, wondering where I was and why I hadn't gotten in touch with them. I'd been avoiding the texts, and the conversations for weeks, enjoying the evenings I'd been spending with Bella, the cat and mouse we had both been engaged in.

Did I really tell her to come to Spain with me? Yep, I did, and I wanted her to. I detested traveling with other people, and never in my professional career had I invited someone along on a shoot with me. Why did I want her to come with me?

It would be great. That's why. Bella was great, in a way that I had not experienced with a woman in a long time. She embodied *all* of the qualities I used to look for when I thought about settling down with one woman, before I decided my lifestyle simply wasn't conducive to a more conventional relationship. She was funny, smart, adventurous, worldly, independent and fearless. Well, armed with an afghan she was fearless.

And the best part? I knew my mom would have loved her.

Why the hell was I out here all alone? Minutes before, I had an incredible woman in my arms, who was encouraging me to get closer to her than I ever thought possible. When she began to untie her strings, and I knew I was about to see Bella Boobies, it was all I could do to not

let my eyes bug out of my head like an old cartoon. But her perfect elbow, yes even her elbows were stunning, bumped into a bottle, and the sound of it crashing into the others brought me out of my cock-driven stupor, and I was reminded of where we were and what was actually happening.

Bella, my *friend* Bella, my thoroughly drunk and sexy *friend* Bella was throwing herself at me, and I could never allow that. Not when she was drunk, and not totally within her own mind. My sudden stop had surprised her, and hurt her feelings. The thought of naughty, crazy, outdoor sex was certainly enticing, but as much as I wanted to sink myself into her body and make her say my name over and over again, there were a few things that were certain. Bella was better than that, and certainly better than my little sexual arrangement. And while admittedly I had recently begun to question whether or not that arrangement was still right for me, it had worked well for me and my lifestyle for a long time, and something I wouldn't just give up without giving it some serious consideration. Bella deserved someone that would be around, be able to be there for her, rather than flying off to all corners of the earth.

Also, there was a part of me that knew she could potentially alter the trajectory of my life, and that scared the shit out of me.

I leaned my head back against the side of the tub, dragging my hands down my face and trying to get the image of a wet, warm Bella out of my mind, and realized that I couldn't. I didn't want to. Why was I fighting this?

In seconds I was on the patio, less than a minute later I was poised outside her door, ready to knock and ask her to invite me in, wanting to talk to her, apologize to her for hurting her feelings, and then let her do anything she wanted to with my trajectory.

I curled my knuckles, about to knock when I heard a low laugh coming from inside, then another. I cocked an eyebrow, straining to hear.

"James...come on now, you are so silly," she purred, and my skin prickled. Another laugh came from Bella, then silence.

James Brown. God I hated that guy.

Not wanting to disturb her while she was obviously on the phone, I walked down the hall, went into my room, and saw the light on my own phone was blinking. Stripping down and stepping into a pair of pajama pants, I grabbed my phone and sank down on my bed; my head beginning to throb from a headache that I knew was brewing. Bella was a friend, nothing more. And I had other parts of my life that I had been neglecting.

Just like at home, I could hear Bella through the wall, although this time I knew it was James making her laugh, and not Clive. I never thought I would miss that little poo cat. She was still laughing as I scrolled through my missed calls, noticing I had a text from Irina.

I miss you, when can I see you? I miss your hands especially, and those fingers of yours.

Irina

I shoved the image of Bella out of my mind, knowing remaining friends, and friends only, was for the best. I typed a quick text to Irina, pushed send, and put a pillow over my head, blocking out the sounds of Bella laughing at whatever witty thing James Brown was saying. Stupid James Brown...

I will be back in the city tomorrow night, I need to see you. Soon.

Edward

"Pancakes sweetie?"

"Love some, thanks babe."

Jesus.

"Is there still cream for the coffee?"

"I got your cream right here honeybunch."

Jesus Christ.

Listening to a new couple, much less TWO new couples was vomit worthy. Add that to an actual hangover, this was going to be a long morning.

After talking to James last night, I feel into a deep sleep, aided no doubt by all the wine I had consumed. I woke with a thick tongue, a splitting headache, and a queasy stomach. Made even more queasy with the knowledge that I would have to see Edward this morning and have that weird we-totally-made-out-last-night conversation.

James made me feel better though, he made me laugh and I remembered again how well he took care of me at one point in our lives together. It was a nice feeling, and a nice memory. He had called under the pretense of checking with me about a paint color, which I quickly called as a bluff. He admitted he just wanted to talk to me, and after the Great Hot Tub Rejection I was happy to talk to someone who I knew wanted my attention. When he asked me out for dinner the following weekend I took him up on it immediately, knowing that we would have a great time...and since my O was back in her hideyhole I might as well enjoy a lovely night out on the town.

Now, I was seated at the breakfast table, surrounded by two new couples that were filling the kitchen with enough sexual satisfaction to make me want to scream. I didn't though, I kept it to myself as Alice perched happily on Jasper's lap and Emmett fed Rose melon balls as though he was put on this earth specifically for this purpose.

"How was the rest of your evening Miss Bella?" Alice chirped, raising a knowing eyebrow at me. I pressed the tines of my fork into her hand and told her to shut it.

"Wow, grumpy. Someone must have spent the night alone," Rose murmured to Emmett, causing me to look up at her in surprise. The casualness with which they were treating this was really starting to bother me.

"Well of course I spent the night alone, who the hell do you think I spent the night with? Huh?" I asked, slamming back from the table and knocking my orange juice glass over.

"Ah fuck it all to hell," I muttered, stomping off towards the patio, tears threatening for the second time in less than twelve hours, and I hated to cry. I sat down in one of the Adirondack chairs, and looked out over the lake. The cool of the morning soothed my heated face, and I wiped clumsily at my tears as I heard the girls footsteps follow me outside.

"I don't want to talk about it, okay?" I instructed, as they took the seats opposite me.

"Okay...but you gotta give us something. I mean, I thought for sure when we left last night, I mean...you and Edward are just-" Alice started, and I stopped her.

"Me and Edward nothing, there is no me and Edward. What, you thought that we would pair off just because you four finally figured your shit out? You're welcome for that by the way," I snapped, pulling my ball cap down lower on my face, shielding my continuing tears from my best friends.

"Bella, we just thought-" Rose began, and I cut her off as well.

"You thought since we were the ones left over we would just magically become a couple? How storybook, three sets of perfectly matched

couples, right. Like that shit ever happens, this ain't some romance novel."

"Oh come on, you two are perfect for each other, you called *us* blind last night? Hi pot, it's me kettle," Rose snapped back, not letting me get away with it.

"Well kettle, you have about 30 seconds before this pot kicks your ass. Nothing happened, nothing is going to happen. In case you forgot, he has a harem, ladies, a harem! And I am not about to become his third chippie. So you can forget it, ok?" I yelled, pushing out of the chair and turning for the house, running right into a quiet Wallbanger.

"Great! You're here too! And I see you two peeking through the blinds, idiots..." I cried, spying Emmett and Jasper trying to listen in from the kitchen.

"Bella, can we talk, please?" he asked, grasping me by the arms and spinning me towards him.

"Sure, why not? Let's make the embarrassment complete. Since I know you're all dying to know, I threw myself at this guy last night and he turned me down. Ok, secrets out, now can we please drop it?" I huffed, wiggling out of his grip and walking towards the trail down to the lake. I stalked off, hearing nothing behind me. I turned to see all five of them, wide eyed and unsure what to do next.

"Hey! Come on Wallbanger, let's go," I snapped my fingers at him, and he started after me, looking a little afraid.

As I stomped down the trail, I knew he was following me. I tried to slow my breathing down, my heart was pounding and I didn't want to talk to him when I was this riled up, no good could come of it. As I breathed in and out, I took in the beautiful morning all around us, and could feel my heart begin to lighten somewhat. I truly valued Edward as my friend, and I didn't want to make this any worse than it already was. I

left the treeline behind, and didn't stop until I reached the end of the dock. The sun was beating down and casting a silver light on the water. It was a cold morning, but it was lovely.

I heard him approach, and then stop just behind me. I took one more deep breath. He was silent.

"You're not going to push me in, are you? That would be a bad move Edward," I warned, and he exhaled a laugh. I smiled a little, not wanting to, but not able to help it.

"Bella, can I explain about last night? I need to you know, that-"

"Just don't, ok? Can't we just, chalk it up to the wine?" I asked, whirling about to face him. He stood, staring down at me with the strangest look on his face. He looked like he had gotten dressed in a hurry, white thermal, well worn jeans, and hiking boots that weren't even laced up, the strings damp and muddy from the short trek through the woods. Still, he was stunning, the early morning sun illuminating the strong planes of his face and the faint red in his light beard.

"I wish I could Bella, but-" he started again, and I shook my head.

"Seriously Edward, just-" I began, but stopped when he pressed his fingers against my mouth.

"You have to shut up, ya know? You keep on interrupting me, and watch how fast you get tossed in that very lake," he warned, with the twinkle in his eye that I had become so used to. I nodded, and he removed his hand. I tried to ignore the flames that licked at my lips, brought to the surface by just that little touch.

"So, last night, we came really close to making a very big mistake," he said, and when he saw my mouth begin to open, he wagged his finger at me. I zipped my lip, miming throwing the key into the water. He smiled sadly, and continued.

"Obviously I'm attracted to you Bella, how could I not be? You're amazing. But you were drunk, I was drunk, and as great as it would have been, it would have...ah Bella, it would have changed things, you know? And I just can't, Bella, I just can't," he struggled, running his hands through his hair in a gesture I had come to understand as frustration. He stared at me, willing me to make this ok, to tell him that we were ok. Did I want to lose him as a friend over this? No way.

"Hey, like I said, it's cool, too much wine. Besides, I know you have your arrangement, and I can't...things just got away from me last night," I explained, trying to sell it to him. He nodded, and sighed a great sigh.

"We still friends? I don't want this to get weird for us, I really like you Bella," he asked, looking as though he thought his world was about to come to an end.

"Of course friends, what else would we be?" I teased, swallowing hard and forcing a smile. He smiled back, and we began to walk towards the house. He stopped to pick up a handful of sand from the beach, and put it in a little plastic baggie.

"Bottles?"

"Bottles," he nodded, and we started up the path.

"So it looks like our little plan worked," I began, trying to make conversation.

"With those guys? Oh yeah, I think it worked well...they seem to have found what they needed."

"That's all anyone is trying to do, right?" I laughed, as we crossed the patio towards the kitchen. Four heads disappeared from the window and began to assume positions of nonchalance around the table. I chuckled under my breath.

"Always good when what you need and what you want are the same things," he quipped, holding the door open for me.

"Boy did you say a mouthful," I answered, not having to force the smile this time when I saw how happy my friends were with their new partners.

"You want some breakfast? There still some cinnamon buns I think," he offered, walking over towards the counter.

"Um no, I think I'm gonna go pack, get my stuff together," I answered, noticing his eyes close off a little. Well, that's what happened when two friends kissed, things were never the same. I nodded at my girls and headed for my room.

Spurred by my insistence about getting back to the city, within two hours we were all packed up and deciding who was going to ride with whom. I didn't want to ride alone with Edward, pulling Alice aside and instructing her to bring Jasper along with us. Without too much prodding, we were all outside arranging bags. As Edward was piling everything into the Range Rover, I shivered a little, realizing too late that I had packed my fleece jacket into my bag, which was now buried. As he turned back towards me, he noticed.

"You cold?"

"A little, but it's fine, my bag's at the bottom and I don't want you to have to rearrange everything," I answered, stamping my foot a little to keep warm.

"That reminds me, I have something for you," he exclaimed, rummaging in his bag which was on top. He handed me a lumpy shaped package, wrapped in brown paper.

"What's this?" I asked, as he blushed deeply. Wallbanger does blush? I rarely saw that...

"You didn't think I forgot this, did you?" he replied, his hair falling down into his eyes a little as he smiled a boyish smile. "I was going to give it to you last night, but then-"

"Hey Masen! Could use a little help over here!" Emmett called, as he struggled to load all of Rose's purchases from her shopping excursion yesterday. Yesterday, how the world had changed in one day.

He backed away from me, as Alice and Jasper got themselves settled in the backseat.

I opened up the package to find a very thick, very soft Irish knit sweater. I lifted it out of the paper, feeling the weight and the nubby texture of the weave. I pressed it against my nose, inhaling the scent of wool and unmistakable Wallbanger that clung to it. I grinned into the sweater, then quickly slipped it over my t-shirt, admiring the way it hung loose and low, yet still wrapping me in a comforting way. I turned to see Edward watching me from over at Emmett's truck, giving me another smile as I twirled for him.

"Thank you," I mouthed.

"You are welcome," he mouthed back.

I sniffed my sweater the whole way home to the city, hoping no one noticed.

So we took a turn here chickens, but a turn that needed to be taken. I appreciate those who have stuck with me these loooong months, your reviews and PMs and tweets and emails make me as happy as a little girl, and as silly as well. I don't always like stories that seem to go exactly where you expect them to go, and so...we go on a journey together. For those that don't like long authors notes, haha, caught you, you are still reading...but you should stop here. If you keep reading from this point on, then you are simply silly...you have been warned.

Anywho, look for more frequent updates, if you notice this chapter is coming to you only 3 weeks after the last chapter! Well turn me upside down and paint me blue, I actually brought you a new chapter before the new year!

Thank you for the amazing reception you gave me with my debut novel The Unidentified Redhead. So many of you ordered your copy, you made my tiny Grinch heart go pitty-pat! 'Tis a scary scary thing to put your work out there, but you chickens have made Nuts Girl and her Sweet Nuts feel very very welcome. Check out theunidentifiedredhead(dot)com for ordering info...and make sure if you are a user on GoodReads that you check out the Alice Clayton author page, which should be up later this week

And thanks to all of you who are following me on twitter, got a lot of new chickens after this last chapter! feathers_mmmm and alice_clayton.

And btw...there will be a new Twigasm Episode very very soon, it's been recorded and is being edited at Twigasm HQ even as we speak! We missed you guys, check out the website at twigasm(dot)com!

OK, here are some recs to focus on while I get your next chapter ready...how much do we want James Brown to get wallpapered into the closet on this design job? *snickers*

Awake in the Infinite Cold by quothme. Oh. My. Goodness. This is such a heartbreaking story, if you don't sob hysterically but also find yourself smiling like you slept with a hanger in your mouth, you are made of steel and should be checked for missing parts. Ever read Flowers For Algernon? Jesus, the writing in this story is exquisite, please promise me you will push through, do not stop reading this one...

Innocence is Dripping Red by EchoesOfTwilight. Ever just need some serious banging? Like, knock me down and ravage me? Mix that with a slightly dark Vampward, and a hardcore Bella, and you've got a lovely little smutty wonder. This one will make your toes curl and your chacha beg you to turn on some Nitzer Ebb and dance your ass off, then go get some...well..you know.

So Be It by Anne. If you grew up in the 80s/90s and had a big crush on Christian Slater, you will love this Twilight/Pump Up The Volume crossover fic. I usually do not like crossover fics, but there was just something about imagining Edward as none other than Happy Harry Hard-On that made me click on this little gem, and it was worth it. Not very far along in chapters, but the smut is warm and the nostalgia is thick. Not to mention, Bella as the Poetry Lady? Sigh.

The Weight of Words by georgeygirl. Love the Bard? You will love this fic. Love unimaginable UST? You will love this fic. Love Edward as a dirty boy in the library? YOU WILL LOVE THIS FIC! This fic has it all, Shakespeare, a great Jake, a smart Bella, and of course a sexy as all get out Edward. I don't know how I missed this story as long as I did, but I am sure glad I finally read it, and I can't wait to see where we go next!

For Sale By Owner, by taco..i mean..by ninapolitan. Here's the thing about about my Nina. Am I biased when it comes to her? Sure, but by biased I mean, I expect extraordinary things from her. Nina is my comedic partner in crime, but she does something I could never do. She puts her heart out there, and behind that witty sardonic insane woman you see, she is a softie. And in this new story, she puts her heart out there once again. This is a different side of our Nina, and if you are expecting this to be the smutty hilarity that was Bella Swan Diaries, or the equally wonderful if somewhat more subtle comedy stylings of The Wingman (which I have to interject my own freaking rec to say that Wingman is sooo much more than a subtle comedy, but it's one of those stories that

is hard to put into a certain genre, much like my Nina) this is a kick you in your teeth gut wrencher, and is uncompromisingly good. What I love about Nina is she is ever afraid to try to write something new, and she has done just that. I challenge you to read this, put it on alert, it will knock your dick in the dirt. Sorry, the John Hughes tribute got to me, I have been quoting Breakfast Club all damn day...

So there you have it Banger Chickens...see you very very soon. You play nice, and stay above the fray.

Alice

xoxo

16. A Man and a Woman

So here we are, the longest chapter yet. Enjoy, and see me below for some thoughts.

Thanks to mah beta team which has grown as of late, Nina, Lauren, Nicole, and Miss Jess!

Roll that beautiful Banger footage...

Chapter 16- A Man and a Woman

THE FOLLOWING SCENE TAKES PLACE INSIDE A BLACK RANGE ROVER ON ITS WAY BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO.

Bella:

OK, I can do this...It's only a few hours back into the city, I can be the bigger person here... I can act like he didn't pull an ALL STOP at the thought of seeing my ta-tas last night, and what the hell? What man says no to ta-tas? I mean, they are nice ta-tas, they were pushed up nice and tight, they were wet for Christ's sake...why didn't he want my ta-tas? Bella, just settle down... Just smile at him and act like everything is fine...wait, he's looking over here...smile...OK, he smiled back...stupid ta-ta turner downer...I mean, what's up with that? And he was hard!

Edward:

She's smiling at me...I can smile back at her, right? I mean, we're acting natural right? I smiled back at her...I hope it looked more natural than it felt like...Jesus, who knew a giant sweater would look so good on a girl...but everything looks pretty good on Bella...especially that green bikini...God what the hell was I doing last night? Never turn down boobs Masen, never turn them down...and I know they were gonna be perfect boobs too, not fake, not too floppy, not too round, just actual real natural

boobs....what the hell...she is looking at me again...what the hell are we going to talk about the whole way back to the city...Jasper isn't even paying attention...I told him he needed to help me out...looks like all he is helping himself to is a handful of Alice...I'm almost sorry Bella and I worked so hard to push them together...hmm...Bella and I...Bella and I in a hot tub where bikinis are outlawed...Jesus...wait a minute...yep...now I've got a semi...

Bella:

Why is he twitching like that? Jesus does he have to pee? Maybe I have to pee...maybe this would be a good time to suggest a pee break...then I can grab Alice and make sure she knows that the reason they are riding with us is not so that they can suck face the whole way, but to run interference for me and Scared Of Ta-Tas over there...OK, just ask him to pull over at the next gas station...wow, he really does have to pee I guess...I hope this gas station has Gardetto's...

Edward:

Thank God she wanted to stop, now I can adjust without looking like a pervert...oh who am I kidding...I am a pervert...I am riding in a car with a woman that was straddling me last night and just the thought of it makes me hard...pervert pervert pervert....I hope this gas station has Gardetto's....

Alice:

Oh goodie! We're stopping! I hope this gas station has bubble gum!

Jasper:

Oh man, we're stopping already? I really wanted to make it back into the city before dark...Alice wants me to see her place and by see her place I am really hoping that means walk around naked and let me watch...I hope this gas station has condoms...

Bella:

OK...you could have handled that a little more smoothly...Alice suggesting Edward and I split the big bag of Gardetto's was not that big of a deal...am I a little sensitive today? Yes...I suppose I am...but I know for a fact that Edward was checking out my ass when I was walking away from the car...why the hell is he checking out my ass now, when last night he didn't even want to take a peek at my boobies? Is he really that complicated? Why the hell is he looking at me....he is reaching his hand out...stay still Bella stay still...oh, sesame seed on my chin....well....if you weren't looking at my mouth Mr. Mixed Messages you wouldn't even have noticed it...you will never get this sesame seed buddy....damn why does this sweater have to smell so good....I hope he hasn't noticed me sniffing at this sweater the whole way...

Edward:

She is really sniffly today, I hope she isn't catching a cold. We spent so much time outside this weekend, I would hate for her to come down with something...she just sniffled again...should I offer her a Kleenex?

Alice:

Busted Swan, I totally knew you were sniffing that sweater...

Jasper:

I wonder if Alice has any more of that bubble gum...I hope she didn't notice me buying those condoms...I mean, I don't want to be presumptuous, but I definitely want to be underneath her again sometime very very soon...who knew someone so tiny could be so loud...and now I'm hard...

Alice:

*Alice Brandon Whitlock...Alice Whitlock....Alice
Brandon-Whitlock...Jasper Brandon...*

Bella:

OK Bella, time to have that difficult conversation...with yourself...why exactly did you throw yourself at Wallbanger last night? Was it the wine? Was it the music? Was it the combination of all those things? OK...OK...no more bullshit...you did it because...because...fuck I need some more Gardetto's...

Edward:

She's so pretty...I mean...there's pretty and then there's pretty...what a pussy I am...fuck pretty, she's beautiful...pussy...and she smells good...pussy...why do some girls just smell better than other girls? Some girls smell like flowery fruity bullshit...I mean...why would some girls want to smell like strawberries? Why should a pussy smell like a strawberry? Wait a minute...why are you thinking about what pussies smell like? I mean, I bet Bella's....Jesus Masen...you are one sick fuck...and now I'm hard....

Bella:

He looks like he needs to pee again....he is drinking too much coffee....he's had like 6 cups already from that thermos...that's funny...he never has a second cup at home...why the hell do I know how many cups of coffee he drinks? Face it Bella...you know so much about him because...because...

Jasper:

Dude...we're stopping again? We are never gonna make it home...my boy is having some serious issues today...I should probably see if he wants to get a beer or something when we get back...in case he wants to come clean about what really happened last night...should I offer?

Wow...Alice looks fantastic in those pants...I wonder if she is buying more bubble gum...

Alice:

Stop sniffing your sweater Bella! Seriously girl, if I could just get her alone...OK, Edward seems to be hobbling towards the men's room, I can get her alone by the beef jerky...

Bella:

I am so embarrassed...I can't believe Alice knew I was sniffing the sweater...I wonder if Edward noticed? Yeah, right, he doesn't notice anything...

Edward:

Her cold seems to have gone away...she's not sniffing anymore...

Alice:

I need to text Rose...she needs to know the Edward/Bella situation is not getting any better...what the hell are we gonna do with these two? I mean seriously...sometimes people just can't see what's right in front of them...aww...Jazz wants me to scratch his back...I adore him...and damn are his fingers long...

Jasper:

MMM...back...scratch...back...scratch...MMM...

Bella:

OK, no more avoiding it in your own head Swan...and now I am serious because I am using my last name....now listen up Swan...heeheehee...I sound like such a badass....

Edward

So...she is giggling...inside joke she says...so maybe she is OK with how this is going...oops, grabbed the wrong bag of Gardetto's...did she just growl at me?

Bella:

Turn my ta-tas down and then try to steal my Gardetto's...I don't THINK so buddy....OK Swan...no more giggling....you can't avoid this forever, even in your own mind...here are the questions on deck...1. Why did you throw yourself at Edward last night, and you are not allowed to blame alcohol or music or vacation vibes...2. Why did he turn you down when you and I both know he had been flirting with you for weeks and not just in the neighborly way...3. Does being rejected by Edward have anything to do with the date you agreed to go on with James...and 4. How the hell do we go back to being just friends now when both of you know what the inside of each other's mouths taste like...and his tastes very very very good....OK...yes...you can sniff the sweater one more time...just don't let anyone see you...

Edward:

I have to figure this shit out with Bella...she is so great and I mean so great...has there ever been a woman that has possessed every single quality you have been looking for? Except for Natalie Portman of course....but Bella? I have to stop watching so much Lifetime...I mean what guy in their own mind even thinks in sentences like "has there ever been a woman that has possessed every single quality that you have been looking for?"...you're such a pussy Masen...Jesus, Bella...she is a fucking keeper...wait a minute...what the hell? Are you even really entertaining the idea of a...gulp...relationship? And why the fuck did I actually think the word "gulp"...that was a little dramatic Masen....come on...think about this...don't run away from it...Dude...did she just sniff her sweater?

Jasper:

MMM...my girl likes beef jerky...could I be any luckier? She scratches my back AND eats beef jerky...I have died and gone somewhere like heaven...

Alice:

I can't believe he ate all my beef jerky...what a jerky...heehee

Bella:

Question 1 is too hard...I can't start with that one...I will answer them in reverse order...4. I don't know if we can be friends, but I really want to be...and not in the fake way, I really like Edward and even though what happened last night sucked major balls I think we can still figure out a way to remain friends...and I would like to have some of whatever I am smoking...3. OF COURSE I AGREED TO GO OUT WITH JAMES BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH EDWARD...its funny how even that thought shows up in all CAPS in my head...2. If I knew why he turned me down then I would be a fucking genius...bad breath? No. Because I was drunk? Possibly...he DID keep saying "I can't" and that it was a "mistake"...which those words could potentially bring me waaaaay down but frankly? I don't buy it. Maybe "I can't" means he has some kind of erectile dysfunction....yeah right...you felt it on your thigh...damn that was a fine wang...did I just actually think the word wang? This sweater is doing things to my head....Sniff...

Edward:

She just sniffed it again...why does she keep doing that? When I wore it I didn't notice it smelling like anything other than wool...girls are weird...weirdly wonderful...pussy...Bella's pussy...and now I'm hard...why the hell am I even pretending that I am not totally and completely over the moon for this girl=] and it has nothing to do with her pussy...and now I'm harder...

Bella:

Stop trying to get out of answering this question...face it head on....Why did you throw yourself at Edward, forgetting about the friendship and the harem and the O drought and all of the very good reasons you had for staying away from him and his banger voodoo....come on Bella...suck it up and say it...what was it he said when you asked him why he kissed you that night you met? "Because I had to". Jesus...even in my head he sounds amazing when he said it...there's your answer Bella...because you had to...and now you have to figure this shit out...I kissed him and he kissed me because we had to, and the choices that we made were ours and ours alone...and the fact that he stopped it and said he couldn't? He must have a damn good reason...because I am a fucking catch...O or no O...I am a fucking catch....yeah you are Swan...weird how you flip back and forth between first and third person during my inner monologues...thank Christ...the Bay Bridge...enough introspection...

Edward:

Shit...the Bay Bridge...we're almost home...and I have no idea how this is going to go with Bella...we have barely said anything the entire way home...although I'm glad to be almost home...I need to shower this beef jerky smell off me and I need to jerk off like you wouldn't believe...

Alice:

Yay! The Bay Bridge! I wonder if Jasper would mind spending the night at my place!

Jasper:

Thank fuck, the Bay Bridge...we're almost home...I wonder if Alice knows I am spending the night at her place, and planning on making her call in sick tomorrow...little girl...the things I plan to do to you tonight...but I'm never eating that much beef jerky again...this has been

the quietest road trip ever...

BPOV

We dropped off the new couple at Alice's and headed on our way to our apartment. Our apartment building that is. The tension had been building the entire drive back to the city, made even more noticeable once we were alone in the car. Edward and I had always had things to talk about, and now that we seemed to have so much to say, we were silent. I didn't want things to be weird, and I knew I would have to be the one to make sure that he knew I was OK. My outburst that morning had been fueled by embarrassment and the knowledge that my friends were all going to find out anyway, and once again my "bull in a china shop" delivery seems to have taken care of that. I was a firm believer in the idea that the best defense is always a good offense, so rather than wait for it to out, I outed my damn self before anyone else could.

A vision of me shouting on the deck that I had made a pass at Edward flashed across my eyes, and while my cheeks certainly heated in embarrassment once again, I also had a mental chuckle at how odd I must have looked, arms flailing, mouth set as though I could spit nails, and then barking at a frightened Edward to follow me towards the beach. He must have wondered at that point if I was going to thrash him, and then dump his body in the lake.

I glanced over at him then, strong hands on the steering wheel as he navigated the city streets, and wondered for the thousandth time that day why he had stopped himself the night before. He definitely had his reasons, and they must have been good reasons. His body was certainly into it, even if his head was not.

The thing is though, I *did* think his head was in it, at least until he thought about it too much. And what was it that made him stop? Ah Wallbanger, will I ever unravel the mystery that you truly are? I glanced over at him once more, noticing that we were pulling down our street. As we stopped at the curb, he looked over at me, biting down on the

same lower lip that less than 24 hours ago I had the fortune to be biting on.

He sprang from the car and ran around to my side before I even had my seatbelt unbuckled.

"Um, I'm just gonna...get the bags," he stammered, and I studied him closely. He ran his left hand thru his hair while his right hand drummed against the side of the car. Was he nervous?

"So, yeah," he stammered once more, disappearing around the back.

Yep, he was nervous, just as nervous as I was. He worried my bag out of the car, and we made our way up the three flights of stairs to our apartments. Still quiet, the only sound was our keys jangling in the locks. I couldn't leave it like this, I had to square this with him. I took a deep breath, and turned towards him.

"Edward, I-"

"Look Bella-"

We both started then stopped, and laughed a little.

"You go,"

"No you go," he said.

"Nope, what were you gonna say?"

"What were *you* gonna say?"

"Hey, spit it out Wallbanger, I got a pussy to rescue from two queens downstairs," I instructed, hearing Clive calling to me from the apartment below. He snorted, and leaned against his door.

"I guess I just wanted to say, I had a really great time this weekend,"

"Until last night, right?" I joked, leaning against my own door, watching his face flinch as I addressed the elephant in the hot tub.

"Bella," he breathed, closing his eyes and letting his head fall back. He looked like he was in actual pain as his face twisted. I took pity. I shouldn't but I did.

"Hey, can we just forget it happened? I mean, I know we can't, but can we pretend to forget it? I know people say things won't get weird all the time, but then it always does. How can we make sure things don't get weird?" I prodded. He opened his eyes, and looked hard at me.

"I guess we just don't let it. We make sure it doesn't get weird. OK?"

"OK," I nodded, and was rewarded with the first real smile I had seen since I unwrapped my sweater back in Tahoe, as he gathered up his bag.

"Play me something good tonight, yeah?" I asked as I headed inside my apartment.

"You got it," he answered, and we shut our doors.

But he didn't play me big band that night.

And didn't speak again all week long.

Which was weird.

"Who peed in your chili?"

I looked up from my desk to see Esme, composed as always with her casually elegant loose chignon, black pencil trousers, white silk blouse and raspberry cashmere sweater wrap. How did I know it was cashmere

from across the room? Because it was Esme...

I selected one of the 5 pencils currently stuck in my twisted hair bun, and returned my attention to the mess that was my desk. It was Wednesday, and this week was flying by and dragging by at the same time. No word from Edward. No texts from Edward. No songs from Edward. But to be fair I hadn't reached out to him either.

I was finishing the last few details on the Black house, ordering knickknacks for James's condo, and starting the beginning sketches on a commercial design project I had lined up for the following month. It looked like chaos, but sometimes it was the only way I could get work done. There were days that I needed neat and orderly, and days when I needed the mess on my desk to reflect the mess in my head. This was that day.

"What's up Esme?" I barked, knocking over my cup of colored pencils as I grabbed for my coffee.

"How much coffee have you had today Miss Bella?" she laughed, taking the seat opposite me and handing me the pencils that had spilled on the floor.

"Hard to say, how many cups are in a pot and a half?" I answered, restacking the papers on my desk to clear a space for her teacup. The woman walked around drinking tea out of a bone china cup, but it worked for her.

"Wow, I take you aren't seeing any clients today?" she asked, leaning over the desk and casually removing my coffee cup from within my reach. I hissed at her, and she wisely withdrew her hand.

"Nope, no clients," I answered, hurriedly shoving the new sketches into color coordinated folders and shoving them into their appropriate drawers.

"OK sister, what's up?"

"What do you mean, I'm working, what you pay me to do, remember?" I snapped, grabbing for a ring of fabric swatches and knocking my flower vase over. I had picked out dark purple, almost black tulips for this week, and they were now all over the floor. I sighed heavily, and forced myself to slow down. My hands were shaking from the amount of caffeine arguing through my system, and as I sat and surveyed the state of affairs in my office I felt 2 fat tears forming in my eyes.

"Fuck!" I muttered, and covered my face with my hands. I sat for a minute, listening to the tick of the retro clock on the wall, and waited for Esme to say something. When she didn't, I peeked through my hands at her. She was standing by the door with my wrap in her hand.

"Are you throwing me out?" I whispered, as the traitor tears made their way down my face and slipped underneath my fingers. I rolled my eyes as she waved her arm at me towards the door. She draped my sweater around my shoulders and handed me my purse.

"Come on Bellie, you're buying me lunch," she winked and pulled me down the hallway.

Twenty minutes later she had me ensconced in an ornate red booth hidden partially hidden behind 2 gold curtains. She had brought me to her favorite restaurant in Chinatown, ordered me chamomile tea, and waited in silence for me to explain my semi breakdown. Actually, it was not entirely silent; we had ordered the sizzling rice soup.

"So, you must have had a helluva weekend in Tahoe huh?" she finally asked, and I laughed into my sizzling rice.

"You could say that,"

"What happened?"

"Well, Rose and Emmett finally got together and..."

"Wait a minute, Rose and Emmett? I thought Rose was with Jasper?"

"She was, she was, but truthfully she was always meant to be with Emmett so it all worked out in the end,"

"Poor Alice and Jasper, that must have been weird for them,"

"HA! Poor Alice and Jasper my Aunt Fanny, they got in on in the pool house for God's sake," I snorted, and Esme's eyes grew wide.

"In the pool house...wow," she breathed, and I nodded.

We souped.

"So, Edward went to Tahoe, right?" she asked a few minutes later, looking everywhere but at me. I grinned a little at her imagined stealth. Esme was many many things, but subtle was not one.

"Yep, Edward was there,"

"And how was that?"

"It was great, and then it wasn't, and now it's weird," I admitted, setting aside my soup and drinking my tea. It was soothing, and non caffeinated, which Esme had insisted on.

"So, no pool houses for you two?" she asked, still glancing around the restaurant as though she weren't asking me anything of importance.

"No Esme, no pool house. We hot tubbed, but we did not pool house," I said emphatically, and then spilled my guts and told her the entire ridiculous story. She listened, she hmm'd in the right places, she groaned in the right places, and got indignant in the right places too. By the time I was finished, I was in tears again, which was really pissing

me off.

"And the stink of it all, *he* is the one that stopped it, but I don't really think he wanted to!" I huffed, angrily wiping tears away with my napkin.

"So why do you think he did?" she prodded.

"He's gay?" I offered, and we both smiled. I took a deep breath and got control. Esme looked at me thoughtfully, and then finally leaned in.

"You realize that we are two smart women, who are not acting very smart right now,"

"Huh?" I asked.

"We know better than to try to figure out what a man is up to, this'll get worked out when it's supposed to. And your tears? These are tension tears, frustration tears, nothing more. I will tell you one thing though,"

"What's that?"

"As long as I have known Edward, I've never heard of him inviting someone on a shoot with him, ever. I mean, inviting you to Spain? That's very unlike Edward,"

"So?"

"So stick that in your pipe and suck it,"

"I think its smoke it Esme, stick that in your pipe and smoke it,"

"Ah smoke it, suck it, whatever. Eat your fortune cookie sweetie," she smiled, nudging the cookie across the table towards me. I cracked it open and removed the fortune.

"What does yours say?" I asked her.

"Fire all employees who have more than one pencil in their hair," she stated seriously. We laughed together, and I could feel some of the tension leaving my body finally.

"What does yours say?" she asked.

I opened it up, read the words, and rolled my eyes to the ceiling.

"Stupid fortune cookie," I sighed, and handed it to her. She read it and her eyes went wide again.

"Oh man, are you in for it! Come in, let's go back to work," she laughed, tugging my hand and leading me from the restaurant. She gave it back to me and I started to throw it away, but then slipped it into my purse.

BE AWARE OF THE WALLS YOU BUILD AND WHAT COULD BE ON THE OTHER SIDE

Confucius, you kill me.

Texts intercepted from James Brown to Bella

Hey there

Hey to you

We still on for Friday night?

Yep, I'm in...where are we going for dinner?

There's a great new Brazilian restaurant that opened that I've been wanting to try, how does that sound?

Do they walk around with meat on giant sticks?

I think that's Argentinean...

Ah...either way sounds good to me...btw, the last of your furniture should be delivered Monday, I will be there to receive and place...

How much longer until the whole project is finished?

Except for a few pieces I ordered for the bedroom, should be all done by next weekend...ahead of deadline I might add...

Very good, will you be there to finish things in the bedroom?

Stop it Jamie

I hate when you call me Jamie

I know Jamie...see you Friday night

EPOV

"So you're happy?"

"I'm insanely happy,"

"You seem really happy," I smiled, ruffling Kate's hair. We were walking along Fisherman's Wharf, stopping at different food stalls and having an impromptu lunch. I hadn't seen Kate since we had broken things off, but after trading texts all week we finally agreed to meet and get caught up. She had a thing for watching the sea lions, and even though the wharf wasn't one of my favorite places in the city, I agreed. She'd talked my ear off for the better part of an hour about Garrett, and I willingly listened, pleased that my friend was in such a good place.

"So what's up with you and the other ladies? Since I have left your bed, are they keeping my man satisfied?" she laughed, taking my hand and dragging me over to the crab cart.

"Does Garrett know about me?" I asked, changing the subject as she and the vendor dickered over the price. She handed me her purse to hold while she juggled the crustaceans.

"He knows I have a great friend that I was involved with yes, he's cool with it. He also knows I was meeting you today, but he said you weren't allowed to try and have sex with me though," she winked, and took her purse back, leading me over to a bench.

"I'll try to keep my hands off his woman," I smirked, as she cracked a claw and offered it to me.

"Are you trying to give me crabs?" I asked, deadpan.

"It's one crab, singular. Technically, I am trying to give you crab," she answered back just as seriously. We sucked on crab for a few minutes, enjoying the sunshine that had decided to make an appearance this afternoon. Fall in San Francisco could be fickle at best.

"So how are you? How are the other ladies, things good?" she asked again, picking a piece of crab off my chin for me.

"Um, good. Things are good,"

"Mm hmm, and your neighbor?"

"My neighbor? What neighbor?"

"What neighbor, please Eddie Boy, this is your Katie you're talking to," she said softly, leaning against my shoulder as I wrapped an arm around her.

"Bella?"

"Yes Bella, how is she?"

"She's good. I mean, I haven't talked to her much lately, but I think things are good,"

"You are so full of shit it's not even funny,"

"What? What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing love, nothing, wanna go to Ghirardelli's?" she laughed, standing up and offering me her hand.

"You want chocolate now? You just had crab!" I laughed back at her, taking her hand as she offered it and we headed in the direction of the chocolate factory.

"Hey! I lost 5 pounds, and Garrett noticed. He says he 'likes a little cushion for the pushin'". His words, not mine," she giggled, and I stared down at her. She was actually radiant.

"Katie, you're the best, you know that?" I grinned, and hugged her.

"This I know," she said into my chest, as she wrapped her arms around me. She spun me around so I was facing away from her, and poked me in the back.

"Bend down," she instructed, and she climbed on my back. We walked, or rather I walked and she got a piggyback ride towards the other end of the wharf.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Of course," she said into my ear.

"Did you know, I mean, when you met Garrett, did you know, I mean, did he seem-"

"Did I know he was the one?" she mercifully interrupted.

"Yes,"

"I think I did actually," she said quietly. "Any particular reason you're asking?"

"No, no reason," I muttered, shifting her a little on my back.

"Why Eddie, I believe you're blushing! The tips of your ears are red!"

"Shut it you," I warned, and carried her the rest of the way to buy her chocolate.

"Bella, it's beautiful,"

"Seriously Bella, it's even better than I thought it was going to be,"

"Thanks guys, it turned out pretty great," I smiled as I walked with Jessica and Jacob through their finished master bedroom. We had started out down in Jacob's new man cave, and I think he may have actually drooled when he saw the XBOX station I had designed for him, complete with gaming chairs. Jessica had a similar look on her face when she saw the chandelier we had installed over her soaking tub. All was good in the Black household this evening.

Even with the mix-up on the tiles, I had still managed to bring in the project very close to the original deadline, which was amazing considering the additional work we did on the home theater. I had sent them away to the Fairmont for the last 2 nights, on my dime, so they wouldn't see everything until it was completely the way I wanted it. I had pictures taken early this morning, and now I was ready to hand back their key and walk away. It was one of the best jobs I had ever worked on, and the bonus was I now considered the Blacks friends of mine.

"Here, let's have a toast," I encouraged, popping the bottle of champagne I had waiting on ice. I poured, and raised a glass.

"To the sassiest socialite couple in all of San Francisco," I offered. "And make sure you give me all the credit when your socialite friends ask you who did your remodel," I finished, winking at Jacob.

After the walk through, they asked me to stay for dinner, but I was beat. It had been such a long week, I was very glad that tomorrow was Friday. Jessica walked me to the front door, and thanked me again for the work I had done.

"Hey, that's my job. I really am glad we got to work together, I'm a little sad that I won't get to see you all the time anymore," I said, giving her a quick hug.

"Oh hell no, we're gonna keep in touch, I still have an entire Rolodex full of men I want to set you up with," she giggled. I began to wind up as though I was going to punch when her husband let out a scream.

"Babe! Wait until you see all the channels I can get on this new setup!" Jacob yelled from within the house, and we both rolled our eyes.

"You realize your husband will now live in there, right?"

"I do, but I'll be relaxing in my new tub so what the hell do I care?" she laughed as I walked down the walkway.

"Wanna have lunch next week sometime?" I asked.

"Or cocktails?"

"Even better, I'll call you," I winked, and as she waved goodbye I could see Jacob come up behind her. Through the glass door I saw him hug her from behind as she grinned and let herself be picked up by her husband. I had a feeling they might both be enjoying that tub tonight.

Too tired to walk home, I caught a cab and was outside my apartment door within 10 minutes. I could hear Edward's TV, and I was tempted to

knock and see what he was up to. As I debated, I heard his phone ring, and heard his voice through the door.

"Irina? Hey, how are you?" he said, and I turned and faced my own door. Clive was waiting for me, and as I set my things down he told me all about his day, in cat speak. I interpreted for him, and it would seem that Clive's day consisted of a light snack, a nap, about 30 minutes of grooming, another snack, another nap, and then he watched the neighborhood for the rest of the afternoon and evening. Leftover takeout with Ina and Jeffrey on the couch, a quick shower, and I packed it in. I was in bed before 930, something I had not done since I was 12.

With Clive curled in between my legs, I went to sleep, once again with no music from the other side of the wall.

The following night I stood in front of my mirror, trying on different shoes for my date-not a date-of course it's a date-with James. I had almost called him twice that day to back out, but in the end, I pushed through it and got fancied up. The truth is, sometimes a girl needs to get fancied up.

I had been conflicted about this date-not a date-who was I fucking kidding it's a date-all week long, but in all honesty, I wanted to go. Was I using James a little? Perhaps, but I did have a good time with him, and maybe it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world for us to start back up again.

"Bella Swan, you heartbreaker," I whispered to myself in the mirror, and then actually cracked myself up. Clive was embarrassed enough for both of us, and hid his nose behind his paw. I was still laughing when I heard a knock at the door. I slipped into my heels quickly, and made my way towards the door, Clive close at my heels.

I took a deep breath, and opened the door.

"Hey James,"

"Bella, you look great," he murmured, stepping inside and catching me into a hug. As his arms went around me, I knew immediately.

This was a date.

James smelled spicy. I don't know why girls always say boys smell spicy, but some do, and it's a good thing. Not like he smelled like cloves or saffron, just warm and spicy. But not like potpourri...

I hugged him back, enjoying the way my body still fit into his, curving where it should. We always were good at the hugging, we got A's for our hugs.

"You ready to go?"

"Yep, let me grab my bag," I said, and knelt to give Clive a quick kiss. He tossed his tail angrily in the direction of James, and wouldn't let me kiss him.

"What's your problem?" I asked Clive, who turned and showed me his rear end.

"You know, that's starting to become a very rude habit Mr. Clive," I warned him, and picked up my purse from the table. I stuck my tongue out at Clive, grabbed James, and locked the door behind us.

"OK, so dinner?" I asked, as we stood outside my door.

"Yep dinner," he replied, standing very close to me. We both stared at each other, for only seconds really, but it felt much longer. He stepped a little closer, and my breath caught. Of course, just then, Edward decided to open his door.

"Hey Bella! I was just, oh, hi, James right?" he said, the smile that had lit up his face when he saw me falling slightly when he saw my dinner date. Date, date, date.

"Edmund, right?" James said, offering his hand.

"Edward actually," he stated, declining to shake his hand as he was taking out the trash. "After you," he nodded towards the stairs, and the three of us began to troop down together.

"So, where are you two crazy kids off to tonight?" Edward asked, as we walked ahead of him. I could feel his eyes on the back of my neck, and as I hit the landing I looked back. He had a fake smile plastered across his face, and his voice was colder than I had ever heard it before.

"Bella and I are headed out for dinner," James answered, and I smiled back over my shoulder.

"Yes, some lovely little Brazilian restaurant, sounds wonderful," I cooed, watching Edward's face carefully. He pursed his lips together more tightly as we made our way closer to the ground floor.

"I am fond of Brazil myself, great food," he mumbled. I smirked to myself and followed James through the front door, as he held the door for me, and then for Edward.

"Well, have a good night," I said to Edward, as James walked me towards his car with hand on the small of my back.

"Night," he answered, lips tight. I could tell he was irritated.

Good.

James bundled me into the car, and we were off.

EPOV

I stared at the woman sitting across from me on the couch, she was stunningly perfect. Legs that were long and lean, little waist, tiny hips, soft breasts peeking out of the top of her shirt, all leading to a face that

could stop traffic. I had truly never been with a woman more empirically attractive than Irina, she was exquisite. And brilliant as well; so often such beauty was accompanied by a tiny brain with a giant ego. Not Irina, she was always going to be the perfect combination of beauty and brains, and men would forever be falling at her feet. And speaking of feet...

She currently had her bare feet resting in my lap as we each enjoyed a glass of brandy. She had come for dinner, and while we cooked together she told me about her latest research for her dissertation. It was comfortable and easy, as it always was with Irina. I listened as she told me all about what was going on in her world, and she was just as interested in me and everything I had been up to.

It was great getting caught up with her, and now as it was getting later in the evening, as usual we were beginning to get a little bit...closer.

She sipped her brandy, and got a little more comfy on the couch, her feet staying in my lap but pressing a little more firmly, nudging purposefully against me. I pulled on my collar a little, I needed to talk to the landlord about the heat in my apartment; it felt warmer than it usually did...

"I missed you Edward, it feels like forever since I have...seen you," she purred, catching a drop of brandy from the edge of her glass with her tongue in a move I had seen before, and not just on a glass. My heart beat a little faster, was the brandy affecting me more than usual?

"Well, I missed you too, it's been awhile" I replied, running my fingers through my hair and noticing that my forehead felt a little damp. Wow, it really was getting warm in here.

"I'm just gonna open a window, are you warm at all? I feel warm, a little warm," I prattled, the sound of my own voice sounding ridiculous even to my own ears.

"Mmm, I do not feel warm, but I am definitely feeling a little...how do you say...flushed?" she purred, her eyes watching me as I battled with the window. As I struggled with the lock, I looked outside onto the street below and saw Bella and that stupid James Brown walking up to the front door. I stared at them, wondering whether he was going to be invited in or not.

"Edward! What are you doing over there, I am lonely on this couch all by myself" Irina called to me, extending one of her legs straight up in the air and pointing her toes. Her leg was about 10 feet long by the way, and lovely.

"Just trying to get this window open, just one minute," I called back over my shoulder, watching the pair on the sidewalk below. They didn't even stop at the front door, instead walking right inside, and the asshole didn't even hold the door for her. Heat flooded my face as I realized she was inviting him inside, up to her apartment, and she didn't even hesitate! No discussion, no awkward "So, did you want to come up for some coffee?" Nope, just straight in.

The window finally flew open, and I stumbled a little bit, knocking into a coat stand and almost toppling it completely before it righted itself. I turned back around to find a very beautiful Russian model starting to undress. The shirt was already unbuttoned, pushed back, and her black lacy bra was staring at me, taunting me.

Holy shit.

"Hey hey hey there, Irina...whatcha doin'" I stammered again, dragging my hand across my forehead and feeling it absolutely drenched with sweat. My heart was pounding, and I was almost a little dizzy. By now I could hear footsteps on the stairs, and as Irina began to stalk towards me like a cat, I could distinctly make out the sound of Bella...and she was giggling. James Brown was laughing too, a high pitched wheezing kind of laugh that made me want to vomit in my hand and smear it on his stupid face.

I was staring at the front door, almost willing it to become transparent so I could see through it when I felt Irina's hands sneak around my waist and pull me close to her. I let out a little squeak that reminded me of a little girl, and Irina laughed at me.

"Edward Edward, why are you so tense? Let Irina take care of you, yes? Mmm..." she moaned into my ear, and her hands began to travel south. Just as her hands reached the buckle on my belt, I heard Bella and Stupid Face reach the landing and begin to open the door. I strained to hear them as Irina loosened my belt and unbuttoned my pants.

"I think I still have some red wine, I know I at least have some white, let's see what I have," Bella said, and I heard Stupid Face chuckle.

"I will take whatever you have to give me," he said, and I could almost see his sneer. I walked towards the door, Irina following me with her arms around my waist and her tongue in my ear, and my pants around my ankles. Bella laughed, but I could tell even from here it was her that's-not-really-funny laugh.

Bella's door shut, and their voices were cut off. I couldn't hear anything, nothing! What was going on in there!

As I debated this at my front door, pants still around ankles, I then noticed that Irina's hands were no longer around me. I turned to see that she had disappeared. I began to call to her, when my foot stumbled across something. Bending down to pick up my jeans, I saw her discarded shirt. Looking further into the apartment, I saw her bra, skirt, and finally just outside my bedroom door...panties.

My heart was beating even more emphatically, and as I began to follow the trail of clothing breadcrumbs, I realized that I could hear Bella again. The closer I walked to my bedroom, the more clearly I could hear her and Stupid Face. As I neared my bedroom door, I stopped. All was quiet. Where had they gone?

"Edward..." Irina sang from my bedroom, and within seconds I heard a thump on the wall and the unmistakable sound of Bella's cat begin to caterwaul. Knowing that Irina was the cause of it, I smirked a little. I stood at the threshold of my bedroom, looking around until I found Irina.

There, in my bed, was quite possibly the most beautiful woman in the world, and she was naked. She was frowning at the wall as she could obviously hear her kitty admirer, but still posed and ready. For me. For me to kiss and tongue and bite and nibble and flip and ravage and suck and fuck and all I had to do was take 4 more steps.

4 more steps.

I took one, bringing me into the bedroom. I help my jeans up with one hand, and of course ran the other through my hair, which was now sticking straight up.

"Mmm Edward, I have missed you my little *zaichik*," she cooed, and held out her arms to me.

I heard Bella laugh again from the other side of the wall, and then I heard the unmistakable sound of bed springs. *Bed springs*.

She was on her bed with James Brown.

I could no longer make out what either one of them was saying, only getting a sense here or there. Low mumbling, soft laughter, her distinct voice interspersed with...his.

And of course, her fucking cat was singing to beat the band.

I took another step towards the bed, towards the wall. Irina smiled, Clive wailed, and Bella?

She was silent. I couldn't hear anything else. She was quiet, but the bed was not. I mean, it wasn't singing out a loud her-hee-her noise, but

there was definitely...movement happening on the other side of that wall.

My head felt like it was about to explode, and I pressed the heels of my hands against my eyes until I saw pinwheels and shooting stars, which of course left me with my pants around my ankles again.

"Edward? Come to bed," Irina called once more, and I shuffled the last two steps. What the hell was wrong with me? I had a naked girl in my bed wanting nothing from me except the pleasure that I could bring her, and wanted nothing more than to grant me that same pleasure. I could hear her, breath coming in short pants as she waited for my touch, and I knew exactly how to touch her, how to bring her to her orgasm quick and fast and intense, or how to draw it out of her slow and low, making her beg and scream for me, taking her to the edge but then nudging her back down, until I was ready for her to experience all I could bring her. I knew this woman intimately, knew her mind as well; I knew her heart. She was sweet and kind and wonderful and fit perfectly into the kind of life I led.

How in the world could I ever walk away from this? What kind of a fool would turn this down?

As I stood at the edge of my bed, sweaty and a trifle nauseous and still not at all sure why, I heard a thump come from the other side of the wall. But not against the wall, not anything like that. I wasn't sure what I was hearing.

I stopped rubbing my eyes, letting my vision clear and letting the room come back into frame. Irina was staring at me on the bed, her face confused. I heard another thump, and what sounded like bare feet hitting the floor. Someone was pacing. Someone was pacing and digging their heels into the wood floor, exactly the way Bella did when she was worked up about something. What the hell was going on over there?

Over Clive's sweet talk, I could now distinctly hear Bella's voice, and she was not happy. I could only make out about every fourth word or so, and so far all I gotten was: "Can't...stupid...think...never...Clooney..."

Clooney?

I scrambled up onto the bed, bypassing Irina to get a little closer to the wall. I could hear James now as well, only I still couldn't hear everything. I was able to make out:

"Baby...good...remember...change...decorator..."

Something was going on over there, and Bella's voice continued to get louder and louder. She was angry about something, and he seemed angry too.

I was all but pressed up against the wall, when I felt a tiny poke on my knee. I turned and found Irina, smiling sadly at me, covering herself with a sheet.

"Irina, I'm sorry, I think something might be wrong next door with Bella and-" I started, when she pressed her fingers to my lips, silencing me. She moved her hand to cover the side of my face, and I leaned into her cool touch.

"My sweet Edward, I will miss you," she said, and then began to rise from the bed.

"Wait, what? Irina, where are you going? I'm sorry I have been a little distracted tonight, I must be coming down with something, I don't know why I am feeling so strange, I should open the window in here too," I explained, starting for the window, and tripping over my jeans, hitting the floor with a thud. She giggled at me, and offered me her hand to help me up.

"You are definitely coming down with something dear, of that I am certain," she nodded, and stood on tip toe to kiss me softly. I pulled her

closer to me, expecting her to kiss me more deeply, but instead she placed one more kiss on my cheek and looked at me almost wistfully, but then she gave me a knowing smile and stepped away.

"I was accepted into a program back in Moscow, I am heading home after classes end next month," she said, gathering her clothes as she changed subjects briskly and leaving me in the center of the room, looking I am sure completely bewildered. I wanted to follow her when she went into the hallway to grab her things, but I was drawn to the wall behind my bed, and wanting to make sure Bella was OK. I did manage to finally button my pants again however...

"Hold on, you're leaving leaving?" I asked when she came back in, her clothes back on and long hair pulled back into an efficient bun.

"Yes *zaichik*, I'm leaving, you take care of yourself," she whispered, kissing me again, sweetly and firmly.

I realized she was not just leaving for tonight, she was going away for good. I paused, feeling her lips against mine. She started to release me.

"Will I see you before you go?" I asked, catching hold of her and keeping her against me.

"We'll see now won't we?" she teased, smiling at me.

"I'm sorry about tonight, I just-"

"Shh, you are a sweet sweet man, good things will always come to you," she said in my ear, wrapping her arms around me tightly and squeezing.

I walked her to the door, our hands clasped. When she opened the door, we could both hear Clive wailing, almost screaming into the hallway from inside the other apartment. She glared at the door, but then looked back at me.

"Goodbye Edward," she smiled, her accent thick and exotic as always. She was beautiful.

"Goodbye," I nodded, and kissed her one last time. I watched her walk down the stairs, and then headed back into my apartment, closing the door.

Once back inside, I made my way back to my bedroom, feeling my headache begin to fade slightly. I could still hear raised voices from next door, and I was beginning to get a little concerned. I didn't like James Brown, that was obvious, but I also didn't trust him. Just as I made it back into my bedroom, and could begin to listen in like the stalker I was quickly becoming, I heard Bella, loud and clear.

"I said no James, and I am not going to say it again!"

My right hand immediately curled into a fist, and I started to go for the wall, planning on smashing my way directly through it when I heard the front door to her apartment slam open, echoing through the stairwell. I listened for another moment, the EdwardHulk becoming slightly more manageable as I realized that he had left and she was alone. Through the quiet I strained to hear something, anything, from her side of the wall.

And then I heard her...she was crying.

I was at my front door and across the hall before I barely knew what I was doing, and when I saw that her door was still slightly open, I felt no remorse at all about slipping through uninvited and heading straight back towards her bedroom.

Clive was fetal in the corner of the living room, looking for all the world like the saddest cat in the entire world, but oddly glad that I was there. He nodded me towards Bella's room, and I swear I found myself nodding back. To a cat...

I padded quietly in my socks, trying to be quiet. When I got to her door, I peeked inside to see her curled up on her bed, facing away, her back shaking and the room filled with her tiny cries. I was overcome in that moment, with anger at what he might have done to her, and at the shock I felt go through me at how much I had missed her this past week.

What should I say? If James had hurt her, I needed to handle her delicately, gently.

"Bella?" I called softly, not wanting to startle her. Her back tensed, and she rolled over to face me.

"What the hell are you doing here?" she glared, actual venom dripping from her mouth. Surprised, I backed into the doorway.

"Um, I heard you crying and I wanted to make sure that you were OK. That he didn't, well, that he didn't, hurt you," I stammered, wondering why I was having such a hard time tonight articulating.

"You're not here to *rescue* me, are you?" she said, swinging her legs off the bed and stomping towards me. I backed away again, finding myself pushed into a corner. She had used air quotes around the word "rescue". I had learned over time that women using air quotes were never a good thing.

It wasn't in this case; she continued.

"Why do all men seem to think they need to rescue a woman, are we not capable of rescuing our damn selves? Why do I need to be rescued? I don't need a man to rescue me, and I certainly don't need no wallbanging, sex-liming, Purina-fucking, listening-at-my-wall-like-a-god-damn-psycho coming over here to rescue me! You got that, Mister?"

She had punctuated this entire speech with pokes at my chest, and was now walking wildly around the room, arms flailing as she ranted on.

"I mean, what the hell is with you men? I got one who wants me back, and one who doesn't want anything to do with me! One who tells me he wants to be my boyfriend again, but can't even remember that I am a interior designer, *designer*, not a fucking decorator! "

At this point I wasn't even sure if she remembered I was in the room, but I listened as she paced.

"I mean, I shouldn't have to eat Vietnamese food if I don't like Vietnamese food should I? Should I Edward?" she whirled on me, walking back over and pointing directly at me.

"No Bella, I don't think that you should have-" I started, and she went pacing off again.

"No, of course I shouldn't, but I did and I hated myself for it! And I'm not gonna eat Vietnamese food ever again, not for James, and not for you, and not for anyone! You got that?" she came back, hands on hips and foot tapping. She had stopped crying, but the tracks of her tears still were there, creasing through her makeup and making her look so sad, so very sad. I now noticed she was wearing only a t-shirt, and nothing else. I sincerely hoped she was wearing more when she was in here with James, but I also knew it was not my place to question. But I could hope.

"Well Bella, I think that..."

"And for your information, I did not need a rescue tonight! I took care of it myself. I know you think James is some kind of psycho, but he isn't," she said, starting off all spitfire, but now beginning to break down again. Her lower lip began to quiver, and she fought it, but finally let go.

"He isn't a bad guy, he just...he just...he just isn't the right guy for me," she sputtered, turning for the bed and sitting down, head in hands. She cried for a moment, as I stood against the wall. I watched her, wanting to go and comfort her, but quite frankly a little terrified of her. She cried while I watched, until she finally raised her head.

"Hello! Girl crying! Are you just gonna hug the wall there Sporto?" she said, her eyebrows raised higher than I have ever seen them.

"Right! Right, I just...right," I shouted, instantly across the room and next to her on the bed. I put both my arms around her and held her close, feeling her breath against my chest as she sighed and sobbed. Her tears made my shirt wet, and I didn't even care. She continued to cry as I held her, stroking her hair and running my hands up and down her back, noticing that she seemed to quiet a little when I made tiny little circles between her shoulder blades. She began to calm eventually, her sobs giving way.

"To be clear, comforting is not the same thing as rescuing," she mumbled, taking deep breaths. She inhaled and exhaled against me, her little body coming to rest in what she called my "nook". She finally pulled back a little, as I ran my thumbs under her eyes and wiped her tears. I smoothed her hair back, and smiled at her, prompting a small smile in return.

"Why didn't you play me music this week Edward?" she asked, her voice so little.

"My needle was broken, I have to get it fixed," I answered simply, her smile growing bigger.

"Oh, I thought maybe, well, I missed it is all," she said shyly.

"I missed you this week," I told her honestly, which was true. Things had felt off all week.

"Me too," she admitted, her eyes moving towards the door as Clive entered, settling in the doorway and taking us in. Her eyes moved back to mine, and they had hardened somewhat.

"So, Purina came to call tonight I hear," she said, her tone cool.

"Yes, she did,"

"Clive has been beside himself, I'm tempted to let him go over there and say hi,"

"Irina's gone,"

"Wow, that was quick, my walls didn't even move," she said, the hurt clear on her face.

"It's not what you think, nothing happened,"

"What do you mean nothing happened, you expect me to believe your Russian lover was over tonight and nothing happened?"

"Believe what you want Bella, but when I say Irina's gone, I mean, Irina's gone," I said studying her closely. It suddenly became very important to me that she understand this.

"You mean, gone? Like, no more bangbang?"

I snorted a little at that, she certainly a way of turning a phrase.

"No more bangbang. She's moving back to Moscow, finishing her Masters there so-

"Oh I see, so she's moving away. *That's* why there's no more bangbang," she interrupted, pulling away from me further.

"Yes, she's moving away but-

"Wow, only The Cockney left! And then there was one. I guess technically one does not make up a harem, so will she be shouldering the load for the others or will you need to be interviewing for some more women? How does that work exactly?" she asked, her words and tone becoming more and more sharp.

I paused, taking her in. My way was suddenly very clear, and I needed her to be clear as well.

"Actually, I am going to be having a conversation with Tanya very soon, I think we are going to be just friends from now on," I said carefully, watching her face. "What used to work for me, just doesn't work anymore."

Surprise crossed her face first, then...happiness? It was tough to say, as she walked towards the door quickly.

"I'm gonna go wash my face, don't move, OK?" she instructed, pointing at me.

"Bella, I'm not going anywhere," I smiled. She rolled her eyes a little bit, but I could tell she was pleased. I heard the water turn on in the bathroom, and I looked around the room. I had no idea what I was doing, but I felt good.

I felt eyes on me, and I looked down to see Clive sitting at my feet. We stared at each other for a moment, and then he jumped up on the bed next to me. The stare down continued, neither of us willing to break the gaze.

Finally, without moving his eyes from me, he lifted one paw in the air.

Now, no one else was in the room to witness this, but I would swear on a stack of bibles that he was offering me a kitty high five.

And even though I couldn't believe what I was doing, I pressed my palm against his paw. I couldn't leave him hangin'...

He regarded me for one more long moment, then walked to the end of the bed, turned around, and started cleaning his backside.

Bella came out of the bathroom just then, freshly washed and looking much more like herself. I looked at her expectantly.

"OK, it's late Edward, time for you to go," she said, taking me by the hand and leading me through her apartment and towards the front door.

"Um, really? You want me to go? Don't you want to, I don't know...talk a little more?" I asked, as she continued to pull on me.

"Nope, no more talking tonight, I'm tired," she said, opening her door and ushering me onto the landing. I turned back to say goodnight, and she was holding 2 fingers in the air.

"I need to say two things Edward, OK? Two things," she said, and I nodded.

"First, you hurt my feelings last weekend," she started, and I tried to interrupt her. "Shut it Edward, I don't want a rehash. But you need to know you hurt me," she finished, her face softening somewhat. I waited a moment, then looked around uncertainly. I raised my hand, and she laughed.

"Yes Edward, you can speak," she said, the grin huge on her face.

"I'm so so sorry about that, I'll try my best to never hurt you again," I offered, my apology lacking I'm sure, but true nonetheless. She closed her eyes for a moment, and when they opened again, they were full of mischief.

"Apology accepted," she said, and she began to close her door.

"Wait Bella, what was the second thing?" I called out, crossing back into her doorway and leaning over her. She stepped closer to me, bringing her body to within inches of mine. I could feel the heat of her skin bounce across the tiny space between us, making my body react in ways that lately only Bella could induce. She smiled up at me like the cat that had caught the canary.

"I'm coming with you to Spain," she said, and with a wink, she closed the door.

LONG ASS AUTHORS NOTE...

I was overwhelmed with the response to the last chapter, I have to be honest. I underestimated the emotional connection that you all have forged with this Bella, and you are very protective over here. I had no idea how strongly you would feel about her being "rejected" in the hot tub, and it was stunning for me to read how sad you were for her. Our Bella is a strong Bella tho chickens, and she is OK...she and I both love you for your tears

And Edward...sigh. Here's the thing...he is actually monogamous in his own weird twisted little way to his women, and he would never go forward with anything physical with Bella until he had cleared the decks so to speak.

And for those of you who are continually upset about the cockblocking...well...I WOULD NEVER HAVE THEM FUCK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A MOTHER LOVING HOT TUB This can lead to infection chickens...not to mention they are worth more than that to me. Not that hot tub sexing isn't hot, I remember this one time...never mind.

And James Brown...ah James Brown. I know some of you expected him to either hold her at knifepoint or rape her or skin a few kittens...but may I remind you of his last name? I would never write a true villain with a name like James BROWN for the love of

Pete...I mean, James Brown people

And finally, for those of you who were thrown by the last chapter by the unexpected angst, I get it, I really do. I know I sometimes need a truly silly fic to break up all the angst I read, and for some of you, this was that story. But, if there wasn't some kind of twist, some kind of grrrr here, then it would just be a series of silly little vignettes strung together with a few dick jokes, right? And while that has its place, I couldn't do that to these guys. There is a plan, just TRUST it please, k?

Now on with the recs:

Recs:

Grasping Darkness by KiyaRaven: Um...yeah...white fucking hot. My fingers are actually trembling as I type this, remembering some of the scenes in this story...jesus lord its hot. Imagine Vampy Edward coming into thru your window every night just to make sweet love to you...is it a dream? Windowward....ungh.

Stranger Than Fiction-masenvixen: Been reading this one for awhile, and it is wonderful. Years after New Moon, and Bella has turned her heartache into a bestseller...what does Edward think about that? Impossibly hot reunion scene...jesus lord...

How to Save a Life by : How I resisted reading this as long as I did I will never know...my fic buddies on my daily email thread kept telling me about this one, but I didn't start it for the longest time, thank goodness they are some pushy bitches High school, all human. Edward is terribly broken, former golden boy who has serious issues and new girl Bella is drawn in, even tho he is constantly pushing her back. This fic will break your heart, and the writing is impeccable.

Tips for better living by adorablecullens: Here's the thing, this is the writer that brought us Behind Enemy Lines and The Mirror...I would read fucking tax code if she wrote it. This is another brilliantly woven tale of a coffee shop waiter and his customer who leaves him little life lessons along with a great tip. You must read this, she is a genius that I want to carry in mah pocket.

Becoming Bella Swan by BellaFlan: OK, this is the reason I still scroll thru Most Recent on Twilighted, because sometimes I can still come across stories like this. I can't even begin to describe this story, it is such a damn clusterfuck...I found myself laughing my ass off several times, this writer can do one liners like I have never seen. Hot sex, Edward under a bed, plenty of medication for all, I am BEGGING you read this, and promise me you will give it at least 10 chapters (they are short). You prob still won't know what's going on, I don't, but I love it

That's it! Bye bye chickens, I love you!

Alice

Xoxo

PS, hi to all the flouncers, in case you are still reading heeheehee

17. Elevation

From the desk of Clive Swan...

Greetings and salutations. I've been asked by Ms. Alice to convey to you her deepest apologies for the delay on this highly awaited chapter. She has received every single one of your emails, PMs, tweets, schmeets, and smoke signals demanding to know when and where Wallbanger will return. Many of you have asked if this story will be completed, and the answer to this is a resounding MEOW! Pardon me, that means YES! This story WILL be completed, as it states in Alice's profile, and as she has stated numerous times in tweets and schmeets. While this story might not be the most readily updated, it is still very close to her heart, and it is on her mind constantly. The tale of Wallbanger and his Pink Nightie Girl has, and has always had, an ending.

Where this journey will take us, we do not know. All I know is that from time to time, I get to stay with my Daddy Felix and my Daddy Demetri, but that is another story. For now, on behalf of Alice, I bring you the next chapter of Wallbanger, as well as her deepest apologies for the long wait. She has many many irons in the fire, but Banger Nation remains very dear to her. So be well and merry, and let us spend some time with everyone's favorite neighbor....Edward Wallbanger.

Sincerely,

Clive

Aka

Coollest mother fucking cat in San Fran

"Eggs, sunny-side up, bacon, wheat toast with raspberry jelly."

"Oatmeal, with raisins and currants, cinnamon and brown sugar, side of sausage links."

"Belgian waffles, fruit cup, bacon *and* sausage," Rose said, completing our order and earning a raised eyebrow from both Alice and I.

"What? I'm hungry."

"Nice to see you getting a real breakfast for a change. Must have been working up an appetite with Mr. McCarty last night, hmmm?" I teased, winking at Alice over my orange juice glass.

The three of us were together for breakfast on a Sunday, something we hadn't done for a couple of weeks after the trip to Tahoe. Since then, they'd been busily settling into the life of new coupledness with their recently switched about boyfriends, which left me out most of the time. What's funny is when they were dating the wrong guys they were always more than happy to have me along for the ride, the more the merrier they would say. It helped when there was no real chemistry. But now? Alice and Rose were definitely with the right guys, and enjoying every second of it.

Initially I'd been a little worried that the Parent Trap shenanigans would make things a little uncomfortable for my friends, but they had made me proud. They took it in stride, and since each wound up with their new better half, all my worries went by the wayside. We giggled this morning as we got caught up on work news and friendly gossip, waiting until the food arrived for any big news, as was protocol.

"Ok, who's going first, who has news?" Alice began, and we settled into our ritual. Rose paused from shoveling in the waffles, indicated that she would serve the first volley.

"Emmett has to go to LA for a sportswriters in television conference, and he asked me to go with him," she offered, as Alice and I nodded.

"Jasper is thinking of letting me reorganize his home office, you should see it. Civil War memorabilia everywhere," Alice giggled.

"Jessica Black referred two new clients to me, Nob Hill, very posh thank you very much," I added to the conversation, pouring myself more coffee from the carafe as they congratulated me.

We chewed.

"Emmett talks in his sleep, it's the cutest thing. He calls out football scores,"

"Jasper let me paint his toenails last night."

"I told Edward I'd go to Spain with him."

Now I've seen a spit take on television many, many times. But I've never actually been present for one in real life.

I was wiping orange juice and coffee off both sides of my face...

"Wait a minute, wait a god damn minute... what?" Rose said, waving the waiter over and asking him for more napkins.

"Bella, you told him what?" Alice managed, still choking on her juice.

"I told him I'd go to Spain with him, no big deal." I grinned, knowing it was a big deal indeed.

"I can't believe you had the nerve to sit here and talk about random shit all morning and *not* tell us this? When did this happen?" Rose asked, leaning forward on her elbows and looking for all the world like Tom Cruise when he realized he was about to get something good out of Jack Nicholson.

"The night that I went on a date with James."

They couldn't spit take again, because they were now staying away from liquids, but I felt sure that there would have been another shower if their mouths had been full.

"OK, that's it Swan, no more dicking around, spill it." Alice said, rounding on me with a butter knife and a frown.

"What the hell Bella, I can't believe you kept all this from us, when did you go on a date with James? And don't you dare leave anything out, tell us everything now or I'll let Alice loose on you!" Rose warned, as Alice gestured in a menacing way with said knife. In a very West Side Story way mind you, I imagined an actual fight with Alice would involve hitch kicks and barrel turns...

So I took a deep breath and spilled. All of it. Why I went out with James, the feelings that had been percolating with Edward, everything. They listened intently, only interjecting occasionally when they needed some clarification.

"OK, hold on...you invited James back to your apartment, with the plan of giving him a little HelloThere, but then stopped him...why?" Alice asked, having finally put down the knife and was now digging into an order of bread pudding. There was so much news to tell them, we had moved on to dessert. We needed the carbs to get through it all.

"Look, you two may have not liked James, but you have to remember that we had a great time together, and it was really good between us, for awhile," I began, as they nodded. "And the sex was always phenomenal. And, well, I don't know, I guess after the Tahoe debacle with Edward, it was nice to feel...well...desired. Even if it was someone that I knew better than to get involved with," I admitted. I nibbled on the crust from my peach cobbler as we all thought.

"So you were thinking it would be a onetime kind of thing?" Rose asked.

"I don't know what I was thinking, we'd been spending so much time together, working on his apartment, and it's not that James was ever a bad guy, he just..."

"Say it Bella," Alice prompted, through a mouthful of bread pudding.

"James Brown is absolutely, unequivocally, without a doubt, the wrong guy for me," I sighed, spooning up some more cobbler.

"Would've been nice if Edward had heard you with another man though, just sayin'," Rose mumbled.

"Oh he was home all right, he made it over just in time for my breakdown," I laughed, thinking about that night.

"Breakdown? What breakdown?" Alice asked.

"Well, James came up, like I said, and we made it back into the bedroom, and I was planning on going through with it, I really was, but he called me a decorator again, and that just pissed me off royally," I said, scraping the bottom of my dish with my spoon angrily, as though it had done something to personally offend me. "And then, when he realized he wasn't going to actually get any, he got a little tense and we had a few words, and..."

"He attacked you! I knew it! I hate that guy, I always did! OK, heres what we need to do, we-" Alice started, and I cut her off.

"He didn't attack me, settle down tater-tot. Everything doesn't have to be an afterschool special. I mean, he's a guy! So of course he thought he could put on a sexy face and whine a little and I'd give in, but nope. Besides, maybe it's just been that long for me, but his sexy face looked a little more constipated than I remember," I laughed, remembering the look he gave me just before I told him to hit the bricks.

"So you stopped because he called you a decorator? That's the only reason Bella? Nothing else was going through your mind at all. Nothing at all?" Alice pressed, shooting a quick side look at Rose.

"Well, there *was* maybe another little thought working its way in there." I admitted, remembering how clearly I saw Edward's face when I closed my eyes that night. James and I were always very compatible, sexually speaking, but when it was his mouth on my neck, and his hands on my hips, I couldn't hide the fact from even myself that I had Wallbanger on the brain. "Besides, James wants a different kind of women than I am, someone that wants to be Little Miss Housewife and look beautiful on a Christmas card, and that's not me. Except for the beautiful part of course," I laughed, and Rose and Alice just looked at me.

"I'm so proud of you," Rose said quietly, and Alice nodded her head in agreement.

"For what?" I asked, surprised.

"Bella, there was a time if James told you to jump, you'd fucking jump. I guess we thought him showing back up in your life would take you back to that girl again," Rose explained.

"I know you were worried. You're both sweet and no one will ever take care of me as well as you two, even though you worry like old chickens in a henhouse," I smiled, and reached out to pat Rose on the arm. I winked at Alice, and she grinned a toothy Alice grin back.

"So you sent James Brown packing, and then what happened?" Rose asked, and I proceeded to tell them how the rest of the evening went. With Edward showing up, and everything else...

"So you just, had this epiphany in the bathroom, just like that? Go to Spain with Edward?" Alice asked.

"Yep, I didn't really over think it. I just, I can't explain it...I just know I should go on this trip. I mean, I've always wanted to go to Spain, and I know he'll be a good tour guide, and come on, how much fun will it be? We'll have a blast together!"

"Bullshit," Rose stated simply.

"Come again?"

"I call bullshit Swan, you're going with Wallbanger because you want something to happen there with him, don't deny it," she said, eyeing me severely.

"I deny nothing," I quipped, signaling the waiter for our check.

"And he's gotten rid of two out of three harem chippies, right?" Alice asked.

"So it would seem. I'm not a fool, I know a man like Wallbanger doesn't change overnight, but if The Cockney is out of the way before Spain? Well then, that's a banger of a different color now isn't it?" I grinned cheekily, wiggling my eyebrows at my girls.

"Why Bella Swan, I do believe you plan on seducing this banger," Rose answered, while Alice clapped her hands with glee.

"We'll see," I allowed, knowing that I wouldn't dare put myself in the same position as I did in the hot tub again. "If, and this is a big fat if ladies, if I ever allow anything to happen between Wallbanger and me, it's gonna be on my terms. Which would include no harem, no drinking, and no hot tubbing,"

"I don't know Bella, no drinking? I think it'd be criminal to be in Spain and not be indulging in a little Sangria," Alice piped up.

"Well, I do enjoy me some Sangria," I mused. Visions of Edward and I, sipping Sangria while watching the Spanish sunset. Hmm...

X-X-X-X-X

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

So are you the type of girl that wears a big floppy hat on the beach?

Pardon me?

You know, those crazy giant beach hats? Do you have one?

As it happens, yes. Is this a concern of yours?

Concern no. Just trying to get a visual of you on the beach in Spain...

How's that working out for you?

Pretty spiffy

Spiffy? Did you just say spiffy?

I typed it actually, you got something against spiffy?

This explains the old records...

HEY!

I enjoy the old records, you know this...

I do know this...

Are we really going to Spain together?

Yep

Are you home? I didn't see the Rover this morning

Checking up on me?

Perhaps...where you at Wallbanger?

Have a shoot in LA, driving back in a few days...can I see you when I get back?

We'll see...

I'll play records for you...

Spiffy

X-X-X-X-X

"So, since things are all completed on the Black project, and I'm almost done with the Brown project, I was thinking...since I don't have anything lined up for a few weeks, and you mentioned before that I could take some time off before the Holiday season, that, well, maybe I could..."

"Spit it out Bella, you trying to ask me if you can go to Spain with Edward?" Esme asked, not trying very hard to hide her smile.

"Maybe," I winced, dropping my forehead to the desk and banging it slightly. How apropos...

"You're a grown woman, capable of making her own decisions. You know I think it's a good time to take vacation, so why should I tell you whether you should go away with Edward or not?"

"Esme, to clarify, I'm not *going away* with Edward, you make it sound like some illicit affair,"

"Right right, it's just two young people off to enjoy a little Spanish culture, how could I forget," Esme drawled insinuation all over her face, as well as a little satisfaction. She was enjoying my squirming.

"OK, OK, so can I go?" I asked, knowing that I would never hear the end of it, but was past caring.

"Of course you can, but can I just say one thing?" she asked, eyebrows raised.

"Like I could stop you," I grumbled.

"You couldn't actually. All I ask is that you have a good time, play hard, and take care of him while you're there, ok?" she asked, her face taking on a seriousness that I rarely saw.

"Take care of him? What is he, seven?" I laughed, stifling when I saw that she was more serious than I thought.

"Bella, this trip will change things. You must know that. And I love you both, I don't want either of you to get hurt, no matter what transpires while you're there," she said softly, care clear in her tone and in her eyes. I started to make a joke, but I stopped. I knew what she was asking.

"Esme, I don't know quite what's going on between Edward and I, and I've no idea what's going to happen in Spain. But I can tell you this, I'm quite excited about this trip. And I get the sense he is too," I added.

"Oh my dear, he's definitely excited. Just, be careful,"

"I promise," I answered, and she reached across the desk to pat my hand affectionately.

"Now then, fill me in on where we stand with James Brown, what's left to be done?" she asked, with a deep breath and changing the mood in

the room entirely. I smiled, and flipped my planner open to the end of that week, when I would be finishing up with All Things James Brown.

X-X-X-X-X

I was in my apartment a few nights later, settling into my couch comfortably with Mr. Clive and Barefoot Contessa when I heard something in the hallway. Clive and I looked at each other, and he jumped off my lap to investigate. I knew Edward wasn't due home for another day or so based on his texts, and the fact that I might have been counting the days, so I followed Clive to my old post...The Peephole.

I peered out into the hallway, seeing a flash of strawberry blonde hair at Edward's door. Who was visiting Edward? Was I wrong to stare? What was that package she had with her? The woman that the hair belonged to knocked once, then twice, then before I knew it, whirled about and looked directly at my door, curiously staring at my Peephole. Not accustomed to anyone staring at my Peephole, I froze, eyes unblinking as she appraised my door. She crossed the tiny landing, and rapped soundly on my door. Surprised, I flinched back a little, bumping into my umbrella stand and letting her know that there was, in fact, someone home. I turned my face to the side and shouted, "Coming!", then proceeded to walk in place as though I was headed for the door. Clive looked on with interest, tossing his head, assuring me that I was not nearly as clever as I thought I was.

I made a great noise of clicking the locks, and then opened the door.

We appraised each other instantly, in the way that women do. She was tall, beautiful in a cold patrician way. She wore a black suit, severely cut and buttoned up to the collar. Her strawberry blonde hair was twisted and pinned back, although one solitary piece had marched away from her sisters and now hung in her face, which she now pushed back behind her ear. Her cherry red lips pursed as she looked me over as well, and then offered me a thin smile.

"Bella, yes?" she asked, a solidly British accent piercing the air as clearly as her attitude. I already knew I didn't care for this woman.

"Yes, can I help you?" I offered, suddenly feeling underdressed in my Garfield boxers and tank top. I shifted my weight from one leg to the other, feet clad in giant socks. I shifted my weight again, realizing that I probably looked like I had to pee. I also realized at the same time that this woman made me nervous, and I had no idea why. I straightened up immediately, putting my game face on. This all took place in less than 5 seconds, a lifetime in the world of Woman Figuring Out The Other Woman.

"I needed to drop this off for Edward, and he mentioned that if he wasn't at home to leave it at the flat across from his, that *Bella* would take care of it for him. You're Bella, so here you go I suppose," she finished, thrusting a cardboard box towards me. I took it, taking my eyes off of hers for a moment.

"What does he think I am a mailbox?" I muttered, setting in on the table just inside the door and turning back towards the woman.

"May I tell him who dropped this off, or will he know?" I asked, as she stood in the hallway, still looking me over as though I were a great puzzle.

"Tanya, but he'll know," she answered, her cool tone sounding musical but clipped at the same time. As an American, I admit I was always fascinated by a British accent, but could do without the side of superiority.

"Ok, well...I'll make sure he gets it," I nodded, leaning my hand on the door. I closed it ever so slightly, but she didn't move.

"Is there anything else?" I asked, not wanting to be rude, but I could hear Ina working on her shortbread in the other room and I didn't want to miss any Kitchenaid porn.

"No, nothing else," she replied, still making no move.

"OK then, have a good night," I answered, almost making it a question as I started to close the door slightly. Just as I did, she stepped forward just enough so that I was forced to catch the door before it hit her.

"Yes?" I asked, my irritation beginning to show through. This Limey was stopping me from seeing the completion of the pecan squares I'd been waiting for all episode.

"I just, well, I'm really glad to have met you," she answered, her eyes softening finally and a hint of a smile breaking through her façade. "And you really *are* quite lovely," she added. I stared back at her, thinking her voice sounded oddly familiar but couldn't quite place it.

"Um Ok, thank you?" I answered, as she started for the stairwell. Her heel caught just slightly and she stumbled a little. As I was closing the door I heard her say, in a tone completely at odds with her appearance, "Gordon ruddy fucking Bennett..."

My eyes widened to the size of dahlias, and I hurled the door back open. I stared unabashedly at her, and her face broke open into the widest cheeky grin. She winked as I blushed, realizing exactly who this woman was and how I'd been present for some of her greatest moments.

She wiggled her fingers at me in a goodbye, and she made her way down the stairs. Clive brought me back from my stupor by lightly nipping me on the calf, and I closed the door.

I sat on my couch, pecan squares all but forgotten as my brain processed everything that had just happened.

I'd just been visited by The Cockney.

Who said I was lovely.

And she basically told me that Edward *told* her I was lovely.

Edward thought I was lovely.

Was The Cockney out of the harem?

Was there even a harem left?

What did this mean?

Would I only think in questions now?

And if so, who is Eric Cartman's father?

x-x-x-x-x

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

What are you doing?

What are YOU doing?

I asked you first

You sure did

Waiting...

Me too....

Jesus you're stubborn. I'm driving back from LA, happy now?

Yes thank you. I'm baking pumpkin bread.

It's a good thing I'm at a gas station right now and now driving or I would have a hard time keeping the car on the road...

Right, the baking gets you worked up doesn't it?

You have no idea

So I probably shouldn't tell you that I smell like cinnamon and ginger right now?

Bella...

How about the fact that I'm soaking my raisins in brandy at this very minute?

That's it...

I peered out the window again, scanning the street below and still seeing no signs of the Rover. The fog was getting quite thick, and although I didn't want to be a nag, I was getting a little concerned that he wasn't home yet. My loaves had been cooling for awhile now, and no Banger had shown up to inhale them. I picked up my phone to text Edward, but then called instead. I didn't want him texting while he was on the road. It rang a few times, and then he picked up.

"Hi there my favorite baker," he purred into the phone, and my knees clanked together. Wallbanger was like the best Kegel exercise ever, he prompted instant clench.

"Are you close?"

"Pardon me?" he laughed.

"Close to home. Are you close to home?" I asked, rolling my eyes, and unclenching the hoohah.

"Yes, why?"

"There seems to be a lot of fog tonight, I mean, more than usual...be careful OK?"

"That's very sweet of you to be looking out for me,"

"Shut up Wallbanger, I always look out for my friends," I scolded, making my way back towards my bedroom and starting to get ready for bed. I was a multitasker from way back. I could do my taxes while getting waxed, and not bat an eye. I could certainly get undressed while talking to Edward. Ahem.

"Friends? Is that what we are?" he asked.

"What the hell else would we be?" I shot back, pulling my shorts off and grabbing a pair of thick woolen socks. The floor was chilly tonight.

"Hmmm" he muttered, as I took off my t-shirt and slipped into a button down to sleep in.

"Well, while you are humming, I have to tell you about the visit I had earlier this week from a friend of yours,"

"A friend of *mine*? This sounds intriguing,"

"Yep, Julie Andrews accent, buttoned up Brit? Ring any bells? She dropped off a box for you, I have it here when you get back," I explained, while his laughter rang out.

"Julie Andrews accent, that's brilliant! That must have been Tanya, you met Tanya!" he continued, laughing all the while like he had heard the funniest thing ever.

"Tanya Schmanya, she will always be The Cockney to me," I smirked, sitting on the edge of my bed and applying my Philosophy Amazing Grace body lotion. My favorite, the perfect blend of classy and sweet, with a hint of warmth.

"Why do you call her The Cockney?" he asked, and I could tell he was on the verge of going into absolute hysterics. In my head, a slew of Tanya's finer moments ran through my head and I cursed myself once more for not asking her who the hell Gordon Bennett was when I had the chance.

"You really need me to tell you? Come on, even you can't be that thick..never mind, walked right into that one," I cut him off before he could go into detail how thick he was, indeed. I had been pressed up against that very thick in a hot tub, so I was familiar. Kegel, and thank you, another Kegel.

"I like messing with you Nightie Girl, it gives me a giggle,"

"First *spiffy*, now a *giggle*...I worry about you Edward," I teased back, heading back into the family room to turn off lights and get the place ready for bed. Which included freshening Clive's water bowl, and hiding a few *Pounce* around the apartment. He enjoyed playing Big Game Hunter while I was sleeping sometimes, the *Pounce* being the big game. Some nights the pillows were unfortunately involved, as well as any hair ties, loose shoelaces, and pretty much anything else that a cat might enjoy attacking around 2am. Some mornings my place looked like Wild Kingdom had been filmed overnight...

"Well no worries, I'll pick it up when I get back. So, did you two have a nice chat?"

"We chatted briefly yes, but no dirty secrets were shared. Although with the thin walls, I'm already a bit familiar. How is the lonely harem-ette? Missing her sisters?" I teased again, flipping off lights and padding through the kitchen to fetch the Big Game. I was dying to ask him if he had actually broken up with The Cockney, as he had hinted at. In that guy hinting way that never actually meant anything, but you were left constantly analyzing. Did he, did he not?

"She may be a bit lonely yes," he said, in what I thought sounded in a careful way. Hmm...

"Lonely because..." I led, pausing in my *Pounce* scattering and tensing up, waiting to see what he would say.

"Lonely because, well, let's just say, for the first time, in a very long time, I am ...well...I am...you see..." he stuttered and stalled, dancing around the issue.

"Say it. Out loud," I instructed, barely moving.

"Without. Female. Companionship. Or as you would say, harem free," he breathed, the words coming out in a quiet whoosh, and my legs began a little shimmy shake, making the *Pounce* shimmy shake in their container, alerting Clive to begin his hunt a little early.

"Harem free huh?" I breathed back, visions of Sugar Edwards dancing in my head. Single Sugar Edwards, Single Sugar Edwards in Spain...

"Yeah," he whispered, and we were both silent for what seemed like months, when in actuality it was only enough time for Clive to claim his first victim, finding the *Pounce* hidden in my tennis shoe by the front door. I walked towards where he was, to congratulate him on his catch.

"She said something that was curious," I mentioned, breaking his spell.

"Oh yeah? What's that?" he asked.

"She told me, and I quote, that I was quite lovely,"

"Did she now?" he laughed, easing back into the comfortable nature we had around each other.

"Yes, and the thing of it is, she said it like she was agreeing with someone else had already said. Now I'm not a girl who fishes for

compliments, but it would seem , Wallbanger, that you were talking sweet about me," I smiled, knowing my face was breaking into a pink glow. I started back for the bedroom when I heard a soft knocking at the door. I walked back, unlocking the door and opening it without looking out of the peephole, getting a strong feeling that I knew who was on the other side of the door.

There he stood, phone in hand and cradled to his ear, holding his duffel bag and smiling a big toothy grin.

"I told her you were lovely, but the truth is, you're more than lovely," he said, bowing his head towards mine and bringing his face to within inches of my own.

"More?" I asked, barely drawing breath at this point. I know my own grin matched his.

"You're exquisite," he said simply, and with that, I invited him in. While wearing only my button down.

From far away, the O cheered...

x-x-x-x-x

An hour later, we were sitting together at the kitchen table, a decimated loaf in front of us. In between his frantic pawing of said loaf, I'd managed a bite or two. The rest now lived in Edward's tummy, which he proudly thumped like a melon. We'd talked and ate, got caught up, watched Clive as he finished his hunt, and were now relaxing as the coffee brewed. His bag was by the front door still, he hadn't even gone to his apartment yet. I was still in my button down, feet curled beneath the chair as I stared at him. We were so comfortable, and yet that low level hum, that electricity that was always sparking and snarking between us continued.

"Fantastic touch by the way, your raisins? Loved them," he smirked at me, poking one more errant raisin in his mouth.

"You're terrible," I rolled my eyes, stretching up out of my chair and collecting the plates and the few crumbs that had not been inhaled. His eyes watched me as I moved about the kitchen. I grabbed the pot of coffee, raising my eyebrows at him and he nodded. I stood next to his chair to fill his mug, and I caught him peeking at my legs below my shirt.

"See something you like?" I teased, leaning across him to the sugar bowl.

"Yep," he answered, leaning towards me to take it.

"Sugar?"

"Yep,"

"Cream?"

"Yep,"

"That all you can say?"

"Nope,"

"Gimme something then, anything," I giggled, walking back around to my side. Once again, his eyes watched me as I arranged myself in the chair.

"How about this?" he finally said, resting on his elbows, face intense. "As I mentioned earlier, I broke it off with Tanya,"

I stared back at him, barely breathing. I tried to play it cool, so cool, but I couldn't stop the grin from sneaking across my face.

"I see you are not at all broken up by this," he scoffed, sitting back in his chair.

"Not so much, no. Want the truth?" I asked, the grin giving way to a sudden surge of confidence.

"Truth would be good,"

"I mean truth truth, back and forth truth, no witty comebacks, no snappy banter, although we do give great banter," I added.

"We do, but I could go for some truth," he said, his voice quiet as the limes blazed away at me.

"OK, truth. I'm glad you broke things off with Tanya,"

"You are, are you?"

"Yes. Why did you? Truth now," I reminded him. He regarded me for a moment, sipped his coffee, ran his hands through his hair in a maniacal way, then took a deep breath.

"OK, truth. I broke it off with Tanya because I didn't want to be with her anymore. With any other women in fact," he finished, setting his cup down. "We'll always be friends, but the truth is, I've been finding lately that three women? It's a lot for me to handle. I'm thinking of paring things down a bit," he smiled, the limes getting dangerous. Knowing I was a grin and a clench away from total embarrassment, I stood quickly and walked into the kitchen. I dumped my coffee in the sink, and stood there for a second, only a second, thoughts whirling. He was single. He. Was. Single. Mother fucker, he was SINGLE.

I felt him move across the kitchen until he was standing right behind me. I froze, feeling his hands gently brush my hair away from my shoulders, and then slip down to my hips. His mouth, his ever loving mouth barely touched the shell of my ear, and whispered,

"Truth? I can't stop thinking about you,"

Still facing away from him, my mouth dropped open and my eyes went wide, torn between fist pumping and actual kitchen sex. Before I could decide, his mouth now moved more purposefully, pressing into the skin just below my ear and making my brain burn and my hoohah dance a jig.

His hands gripped my hips with strength, and he turned me towards him, towards that body and those sex limes. I quickly composed my face, losing the freak-out look and trying desperately to keep it together.

"Truth? I've been thinking about you since the night you banged on my door," he whispered, bending towards my neck and kissing the hollow of my neck with breathtaking precision. His hair tickled my nose and I fought to keep my hands to myself. He pushed me to the side a little, surprising me by lifting me onto the counter. My legs automatically opened to allow him between them, the Universal Law of Wallbanger superseding any actual thought I had in my head: my thighs knew what to do.

One hand snuck around to the small of my back, while the other gripped the back of my neck. "Truth?" he asked one more time, then pulled my hips to the edge of the counter, forcing me to lean back as my legs once more went on auto-pilot, wrapping themselves around his waist. "I want you in Spain," he breathed, then brought his mouth to mine.

Somewhere, a kitty began to call...and an O finally began to make her way home.

x-x-x-x-x

"More wine Mr. Masen?"

"No more for me, Bella?"

"I'm fine, thank you," I answered, stretching out luxuriously in my seat. First class to LaGuardia, then first class all the way to Madrid. We would be taking a car from there to Nerja, the small coastal town where Edward had rented a house. Scuba diving, spelunking, hiking, beautiful beaches and mountains, all set in a lovely quaint village.

Edward squirmed in his seat, and shot an angry look over his shoulder.

"What? What's the problem?" I asked, looking behind and seeing nothing out of the ordinary.

"That kid keeps banging my seat," he grumbled through clenched teeth, and I laughed for a solid twenty minutes.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Hello my darling chickens. As Clive stated so succinctly above, I love and adore each and every one of you, and although I do leave you hanging at times, (see above chapter) I promise you I will always return to this story.

The idea that through this story, the authors notes, the reviews, the twitter free-for-all, can bring together so many people from across the globe still amazes me. The fact that thru the little conversations we have together, and I do consider this a conversation, that you all get me and my personality, my sick and twisted sense of humor, speaks volumes and is something I truly treasure. Like attracts like, and we are all on this weird fucked up little journey together. And together we shall go to Spain, to a tiny town called Nerja that I found while researching their trip together last Fall. Yes, I was planning this damn trip last Fall! I can't wait for you to see what will happen next.

And now for some recs! Lots this time, as I know I take forever in btw updates, this way at least you have something to be reading that I adore.

The Diner, by Jessypt. Want a little baking with your Edward and Bella? Then this is your story. Take a girl with a past, a guy with some hot, add a diner and a new set of friends, you have the makings for a lovely tale! This is a sweet story with some dark underpinnings that will leave you wanting more. And oh snap, she even gives you cupcake recipes! My kind of chicken...

The Wedding Party, by Spanglemaker9. This is one of my favorites right now, and brought to you by half of the team that brought you Girl With The Red Umbrella, one that I know a lot of you love as well. Bella and Edward are thrown together at a wedding in Chicago, both bring some baggage to the table. Bella has a little sumpin sumpin waiting for her back home. There is smoldering tension, wonderfully spun scenes, and oh yeah...hot hot lemons. Be sure to check this one out!

For The Summer, by camoozle. For anyone who loves a coming of age story, or a summer story, or a first love story, this is your summer reading. This is adorable! Young Edward and Bella meet in Arizona each summer where Bella's father runs the river resort. Each summer we get to see how they are growing up, and growing together. Young teenage hormones have never been so well remembered.

Stampede of a Thousand Pulses, by ss10. This story knocked me on my ass from the second I starting reading it. It is powerful, heart wrenching, lustful and lusty, broken and redeemed. I can not tell you how much I love the way this author has crafted our favorite couple in this story, this will leave you breathless.

And With Thee Fade Away, by Derdriu oFaolain. I read this in one sitting, I couldn't stop. Not so canon, it takes Twilight and turns it on its ear, with all new mythology and backstories for our characters. Some that were nice are not so nice at all. This is amazing, and the writing superb. For those who long for vamp Edward, here is is. Just be careful, he ain't no nice guy...

02/23/11 04:07:28

feathersmmmm - Edward Wallbanger

OK chickens, see you next time. Me love you long time!

Alice

xoxo

18. Into the Heart

Hi Banger Nation. I love you so. Thank you for being so patient. Mother long author's note at the end, so get ready.

Thank you as always to Lauren and Nina, but this time there were several others that talked me off the ledge and back into this story. Liz, Nic, PQ, and a special thank you to ItzMegan for helping me find my "voice" again and letting me tell my story, my way.

Read, and then let's chat chickens...

Chapter 18

"We did it too soon, we should have waited."

"We waited long enough, are you kidding? You know I was right, it was time to do it."

"Time to do it, what a crock...we could have waited just a little longer and then we wouldn't be in the mess we're in now."

"Well I didn't hear you complaining at the time, you seemed pretty pleased as I recall."

"I couldn't complain, my mouth was full. But I had a feeling, I just knew this was wrong, what we were doing was inherently wrong."

"Ok, I give up, you tell me how to fix this."

"Well for starters you're holding it upside down," I shot back, grabbing the map and turning it right side up. We had been parked along the side of the road for five minutes, trying to figure out how to get to Nerja.

After landing in Madrid, navigating customs, navigating the rental car system, and finally navigating our way successfully away from the city center, we were now lost. Edward drove, so I was in charge of the map. And by that I mean he took it away from me every ten minutes or so, looked it over, hmm'd and haw'd, and then thrust it back my way. He didn't actually listen to what I had to say, instead relying on his innate man-map that all males have. He refused to turn on the GPS that was provided for us, again, instead determined to get us there the old fashioned way.

Which is why we were now lost. Taking a train would have been too easy. Edward needed a car to get around to get his shots, which is ultimately why we were here. After flying through the night, we were both exhausted, but the best way to fight jet lag, allegedly, was to try to get on local time as quickly as possible. Which meant we had both agreed not to nap until we could go to sleep that night. At first this was easy to accomplish, as I was stoked to finally be in the country I had been dreaming of visiting as long as I could remember. Edward found me endlessly amusing as I looked left to right, shouting out landmarks as we drove through the city of Madrid and into the countryside. It was tough, being in Madrid and doing zero sightseeing, but as I was accompanying Edward on his trip, I was subject to his schedule. And that was ok, I knew I would be back someday and would be able to see more of the traditional sights.

Now we sat, on the side of the road, as we argued about where we took a wrong turn. I had been devouring some churros from a local stand when the wrong turn supposedly took place, and now we played "Place the Blame".

"All I'm saying is that if someone wasn't stuffing their face and was watching for the turn, we wouldn't be-"

"Stuffing *my* face? Seriously? You were stealing *my* churros, I told you to get your own when we stopped!"

"Well I wasn't hungry at first, but then you were smacking your lips and licking that chocolate, and well...I got distracted," he grinned, breaking the tension. We were standing on the side of the road, map spread out on the hood of our car.

"Distracted huh?" I grinned back, leaning a little closer to him. As he looked at the map, I looked at him. How could someone who had been on a plane for the last hundred years look as good as he did? But there he was, faded jeans, black t-shirt, dark green North Face jacket. Twenty four hours worth of stubble that was begging to be licked. Who licked stubble? Me, that's who. He braced himself on his strong arms as he studied the map, his lips moving soundlessly as he tried to figure out where we took the wrong turn. I snuck underneath his arms, effectively draping myself across the hood of the car as shamelessly as a pin up girl in a garage calendar.

"Can I make a suggestion?"

"It is a lewd suggestion?"

"Surprisingly no, can we please turn on the GPS? I'd like to make it there before I have to leave in four days," I moaned. Due to my last minute ticket booking, I actually had to fly back a day before Edward, and would only get to be there for five days. But five days in Spain...I was not complaining.

"Bella, only pussies use GPS," he scoffed, turning the map again.

"Well this pussy is dying for some dinner, and a shower, and a bed, and to get rid of this jet lag. So unless you want to see me reenact *It Happened One Night*, Spanish version, turn on the mother fucking GPS Wallbanger," I warned, grabbing him by the North Face and pulling him down to me.

"Did that sound harsh?" I whispered, giving him the tiniest of kisses on the chin.

"Yes, I'm terrified of you now."

"Does this mean GPS?"

"It means GPS," he sighed resignedly, leaning back and pulling me off the car with him. I gave a little cheer and started for the door.

"No no no, you were harsh Nightie Girl, I'm gonna need some sugar," he instructed, eyes twinkling.

"You need some sugar?" I asked, as he tugged on my arm, bringing me back to him.

"Yes, I require it."

"You're twisted Edward," I laughed, as I leaned into him, slipping my arms around his neck.

"You have no idea," he replied, licking his lips and waggling his eyebrows like an old timey gangster.

"Come get your sugar," I teased, as he brought his lips to mine.

I would never get tired of kissing Edward. I mean, how could you? Since the night he "truthed" me right up onto my kitchen counter, we had slowly been exploring this new side to our relationship. Underneath all the snark and spark, there was some serious sexual tension that had been building these many months. And we were letting it all out, albeit slowly. Sure, we could have raced right back to the bedroom that night and let the sex ring out across the city for days, but Edward and I, without saying a word, seemed to be on the same page for once, and were content to let this unfold naturally.

He was wooing me. And I was letting him woo. I wanted the woo, I deserved the woo. I needed the wow that would surely follow the woo, but for now, the woo? It was woah.

And speaking of woo...

Edward's lips on mine made me drunk. I mean, he actually intoxicated me. No lie. I could feel my brain begin to fog and leave me behind. He was physically intoxicating me, making me drunk on Banger. He was like some kind of sexual heroin, destroying my brain. My brain? Who needs a brain? I didn't need it.

My hands slipped into his hair, tugging and twisting and trying to pull his entire body inside my own. He groaned into my mouth, a sound that could have inspired choirs of angels to turn to sin. I felt his tongue touch mine, and I fell apart at the seams. I sighed, the tiniest whimper, and it became harder and harder to kiss him due to the giant grin that was overtaking my face. He pulled back a little, and laughed.

"You sure look happy."

"Keep kissing me please," I insisted, bringing his face back to mine.

"It's like kissing a Jack 'o' lantern, what's with the grin?" he laughed again, smiling down at me with a grin that looked as wide as my own.

"I'm happy, aren't you?" I sighed contentedly, messing with his hair.

"I don't think happy is the word for it, but yes, I'm happy," he answered, kissing me again, gently, sweetly.

"Ok cowboy, ready to see where the GPS takes us?" I asked, messing up his hair and stepping away. I couldn't keep my hands on him for too long, or we would never leave.

"Let's see how lost we really are," he grinned, and we were on our way.

XXX

"I think this is the turn, yep, this is it," he said, making me bounce in my seat. It turned out, as soon we (the GPS) figured out where we were, we were only about 15 kilometers away from Nerja, and we were getting a bit punchy as the jet lag began to assert itself a bit more. Which for us manifested as slap happy.

As we made one last turn, we both looked at each other and I squealed. We had seen bits of the ocean for the last few miles or so, peeking out every so often from behind a stand of trees or over a cliff. Now as we turned down a tiny cobblestone drive, the realization that Edward had rented a house not just *near* the beach, but *on* the beach became apparent, and I was struck silent by the sight in front of me.

Edward pulled up to the house, the tires crunching the soft stones. When he turned the car off, we were both quiet, and I could instantly hear the sounds of the waves crashing against the rocky coast that was only about a hundred feet away. We sat for a moment, just taking it all in, grinning at each other before I scrambled out of the car.

"This is where we're staying? This entire house, it's yours?" I exclaimed as he grabbed our carry-on bags and moved to stand next to me.

"It's ours, yeah," he smiled, and gestured for me to walk ahead of him.

As I walked towards the house, my eyes grew bigger and bigger. It was charming and magnificent all at the same time. White stucco walls, clay tiled roof, clean lines and soft archways. Orange trees lined the walkway from the drive, and bougainvillea climbed the garden walls. The house was a classic cottage, built to weather the sea and cocoon those inside. As Edward looked under the flowerpots for the key, I inhaled the citrus scents, the green grass and the distinctly salty air.

"A ha! Got it, ready to see the inside?" he asked, struggling with the door. I reached for his hand, threading my fingers through his, and leaned in to kiss his cheek.

"Thank you."

"For what?" he asked.

"For bringing me here," I smiled, and kissed him square on the lips.

"Mmm, more of that sugar you promised me," he grinned, dropping the bag and catching me into a close embrace.

"Sugar this, let's see the house!" I cried, wiggling free and charging past him through the door. As soon as I made it past the first entryway, I stopped cold. He was close on my heels, and he bumped into me as I stood still, just taking it all in.

A sunken living room, dotted with plush white sofas and comfy looking chairs opened up to what I assumed was the kitchen. French doors at the back of the house opened onto several large terrace patios, sinking down towards the rocky beach. But what was truly amazing was the ocean. From left to right, through the giant windows, all you could see was the deep blue of the lazy Mediterranean. The coastline curved back towards the town of Nerja, the lights just beginning to sparkle as twilight sank towards the beach, illuminating the other white houses that dotted the cliffs. I pushed open the doors, and let the soft air spill over me and into the house, blanketing both of us in perfume.

I walked towards the wrought iron railing, perched at the edge of an earthen tile patio flanked by olive trees. Placing my hands on the warm railing, I looked and looked and looked. I felt Edward walk up behind me, and without a word placed his arms around my waist and nestled into me, resting his head on my shoulder as we looked out towards the sea. I leaned back into him, feeling the angles and planes of his body fit against my own, breathing deeply of our surroundings and of him.

You know those moments, when everything is exactly the way it was meant to be? When you find yourself and your entire universe aligning in perfect synchronization, and you know you couldn't possibly be more

content? I was inside this moment, and fully conscious of it. I giggled a little, feeling his smile stretch across his face as he pressed into my neck.

"It's good, right?" he whispered.

"It's so good," I answered back, and we watched the sunset in spellbound silence.

xxx

After watching the sunset until it was totally gone, we went exploring the rest of the house. The house was more and more beautiful as we went room by room, with me squealing once again at the sight of the kitchen. It was as if I was transported to Ina's home in East Hampton, with a Spanish flair. Sub Zero fridge, gorgeous granite countertops, and a Viking stove. An actual Viking range, one so sparkly and beautiful that Edward actually had to physically drag me away from when I threatened to climb inside and take a nap. I didn't even want to know how much he was paying for this house, I had decided to just enjoy. And enjoy we did, running back and forth like kids when we found the bathroom with a sunken Jacuzzi tub.

And then we made our way into the master bedroom. I was coming out of the bathroom with the tub built for two when I saw him standing at the end of the hallway, just outside the door.

"What the hell did you find that has you so quiet-oh my. Would you look at that?" I stopped next to him, admiring from the doorway.

If my life had a soundtrack, the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey* would be playing.

There, in the middle of a corner room, with its own terrace overlooking the most beautiful ocean in the world, was the biggest mother loving bed I had ever seen. Carved out of what looked to be teak, the bed was

bigger than my apartment back home. Thousands of silky soft white pillows stacked against the headboard, spilling down over a white duvet. It was folded down just so, the million or so thread count sheets shining, actually shining as though they were lit from within. Soft sheer white silk curtains hung from rods suspended over the bed, creating a canopy, while even more curtains hung in the windows overlooking the sea below. The windows were open, causing all the curtains to blow gently in the breeze, giving the entire room a blousy, flouncy, windblown effect.

It was the bed to end all beds. It was where beds went to die. It was bed heaven.

"Wow," I managed, still in the hallway next to Edward.

It was hypnotic. It was like a bed siren, luring us in.

"You could say that again," he stammered, neither of us able to look away from the bed.

"Wow," I repeated, still staring. I couldn't stop staring at it, I was suddenly very, impossibly, excruciatingly nervous. What I had was a lovely case of performance anxiety, Party of one.

Edward chuckled at my weak joke, and it brought me back to him.

"No pressure, huh?" he said, eyes shy. Wallbanger does shy?

I had a choice. I could go with conventional wisdom, said wisdom being that two grownups on vacation together in a gorgeous house with a bed that was sex incarnate would immediately begin non-stop fucking....or. Or, I could let us both of the hook and just enjoy. Enjoy being together and let things happen when they happen. Yeah, I liked this idea better.

I winked, and took a running leap onto the bed, displacing pillows all over the room. I peeked over the mound to see him leaning in the doorway, a sight I had seen so many times before. He looked a little

nervous, but still beautiful.

"So, where are you sleeping?" I called out, and his face relaxed into a grin, my grin.

xxx

"Wine?"

"Am I breathing?"

"Wine it is," he snorted, selecting a bottle of rose from the generously stocked wine fridge. The family that rented this house included some of the necessities, which would include many bottles of wine, and a few things to nosh on. It was now fully dark, and any thoughts we had about going into town faded away as the jet lag made itself more present. We decided to stay in tonight, get a good night's sleep, and head into town in the morning. There was a roast chicken, olives, a wedge of Manchego, some gorgeous looking Serrano ham, and enough little odds and ends to make a meal. I assembled plates while he poured the wine, and soon we found ourselves sitting on the terrace. We could hear the ocean crashing below, the wooden walkway down to the beach was strung with tiny white lights.

"We should go down to the beach before bed, at least take a little walk."

"Done. What do you want to do tomorrow?"

"Depends, when do you need to start working?"

"Well, I know some of the places I need to go, but I need to do a little scouting still, want to come along?"

"Of course, start in town in the morning and see where that leads?" I asked, nibbling on an olive. He raised his glass and nodded towards me.

"To seeing where it leads," he toasted, and I raised my glass to his.

"I'll second that," I answered, our glasses clinking and our eyes locking. We both smiled, a secret smile. We were finally alone, all to ourselves, and there was no place else on the planet that I wanted to be. We ate our dinner, stealing little glances at each other throughout, and sipped our wine. It made us sleepy, and drowsy, and a little touchy feely.

By the time we made it down to the beach, picking our way carefully over the rocky shoreline, we had grasped hands to navigate but never let go. We stood at the edge of the earth, the strong salty winds whipping through our hair and our clothes, buffeting us back a bit.

"It's nice, being with you. I, um, well, I like holding your hand," I admitted, feeling brave from the wine. Witty banter had its place, but sometimes, all you need is the truth. He didn't respond, simply smiled, and brought my hand to his mouth, placing a small kiss on my knuckles.

We were silent as we watched the waves, and when he pulled me into his chest, snuggling me to him, I breathed out slowly. Had it really been so long since I had felt so, oh what was it I was feeling...cared for?

"Esme told me you know what happened to my parents," he said so softly I could barely hear him.

"Yes. She told me,"

"They used to hold hands all the time, not for show though, you know?"

I didn't say anything, just nodded into his chest and breathed him in.

"I always see these couples, that hold hands and make such a show of it, calling each other Baby and Sweetie and Honey, and it seems like, I don't know, false somehow. Like, would they be doing it if they weren't in front of anyone?"

I nodded again.

"My parents? I never thought much about it at the time, but when I think about it now, I realize that their hands were practically sewn together, always with the hand holding. But when no one was looking, ya know? Like, I would come home after practice some night and find them watching TV, at either end of the couch, but with their hands propped up on a pillow so they could still be touching...it was just...I don't know, it was nice."

My hand, which was still tucked into his own, squeezed his, feeling his strong fingers envelop my own.

"Sounds like they were still a couple, not just a mom and dad," I said, hearing his breath speed up a bit.

"Yes, exactly."

"You miss them."

"Of course."

"Might sound weird, since I never knew them, but I feel like they would be so proud of you Edward."

"Yeah."

We were quiet for another minute, feeling the night around us.

"Want to go back to the house?" I asked.

"Yeah," he answered, kissing the top of my head as we began to make our way back. Hands stuck together like someone had spread Krazy Glue on them.

xxx

I had left Edward to clean up the mess from dinner, wanting a quick shower before bed. After washing away the days' worth of airport and travel, I threw on the button down that I usually slept in, too tired for some of the lingerie I had packed. Yes, I had packed lingerie. We were waiting, but come on, I was no nun.

I stood in front of the mirror in my bedroom, wringing my hair out with a towel when I saw him appear in the doorway. He was on his way to his room after his own shower, wearing a pair of pajama pants and nothing else but a towel wrapped around his neck. I was exhausted, but not so exhausted that I didn't appreciate the form in front of me. I watched him in the mirror as he appraised me as well.

"Hi."

"Hi, have a good shower?"

"Yes, it felt amazing."

"Heading to bed?" he asked.

"I can barely keep my eyes open," I replied, yawning hugely to punctuate.

"Can I get you anything, water? Tea? Anything?" he offered. I turned to face him, as he stepped inside.

"No water, no tea, but there is one thing I'd like before I go to sleep," I purred, taking a few steps his way.

"What's that?"

"Good night kiss?" I purred, and his eyes darkened.

"Oh hell, is that all? This I can do," he grinned, closing the distance between us and slipping his arms easily around my waist.

"Kiss me you fool," I teased, falling into his embrace like an old time melodrama.

"One kissing fool, coming up," he laughed, but within seconds no one was laughing. And within minutes, no one was standing.

After falling into Pillow Town, we scrambled about, arms and legs twisting this way and that, kisses becoming more and more frantic. My shirt was bunched up around my waist, and the feeling of his HiThere against my Hoohah was wholly indescribable. He rained kisses down upon my neck, licking and sucking my skin into his mouth, as I moaned like a whore in church.

To be fair, I'd never actually heard a whore moan in church, but I had a feeling she sounded a lot like the unholy sounds pouring forth from my mouth.

He flipped me like a rag doll, his strength unbelievable as he settled me on top of him, my legs on either side, the way I'd wanted to be for so long. He sighed underneath me, gazing up as I impatiently pushed my hair away from my face so I could truly appreciate the magnificence that I was perched upon.

We slowed our movements, then stopped altogether, staring unabashedly at each other, appraising each other without shame.

"Incredible," he breathed, reaching his hand up to gently cup my face, as I nuzzled into it.

"That's a good word for it, yes. Incredible," I agreed, turning my face to kiss his fingertips. He stared into my eyes again, the limes doing their voodoo that made me a puddle of voodoo goo. For him to woo. See what he did to me?

"I don't want to screw this up," he said suddenly, his words breaking me from my Seussian rhymes.

"Wait, what?" I asked, shaking my head to clear it.

"This. You. Us. I don't want to screw this up," he insisted, sitting up underneath me, my legs wrapping around to his back.

"Ok, so don't," I ventured, unsure where this was going.

"I mean, you need to know, I have no experience with this," he started, and I raised an eyebrow.

"I have a wall back home that would disagree with that..." I laughed, and he crushed me to his chest, inexplicably hard.

"Hey, hey...what's up? What's going on?" I soothed, my hands rubbing up and down his back.

"Bella, I, Jesus, how do I say this without sounding like an episode of Dawson's Creek..." he stumbled, talking to my neck. I couldn't help it, I giggled a little as Pacey flashed into my head, and the giggle brought him back. I pulled back a bit so I could see him, and he smiled ruefully.

"Ok, Dawson's be damned, I really like you Bella. But I haven't had a girlfriend since high school, and I have no clue how to do this. But you need to know, that what I feel for you? Shit, it's just different, ok? And if walls could talk, whatever your wall would say back home, I *need* you to know, that this? What we have, or will have? It's different ok, you know that right?"

I knew what he was saying, he was telling me I was different, that I was no replacement for the harem. And this, I knew. He was looking at me so earnestly, so serious, and my heart just opened even more. I pressed a gentle kiss against his sweet lips.

"First of all, I *do* know this. Second of all, you're better at this than you think," I smiled, pressing his eyes closed and kissing each eyelid.

"And thirdly, I loved Dawson's Creek, and you did the WB proud," I laughed, as his eyes sprang back open and relief rushed in. I tucked him into my nook, the space between my shoulder and breast, and held him there as we rocked a little back and forth, the rush of the earlier hormones subsiding as we found this new space, this quiet intimacy that was becoming almost as addicting.

"I like that we're taking things slow, you give good woo," I whispered, and he tensed underneath me. I could feel him shaking a little.

"I give good woo?" he laughed, tears springing into his eyes as he tried to control his hysterics.

"Oh shut up," I cried, smacking him with a pillow. We laughed for a few more minutes, falling back into the lush bed, and as the jet lag finally overtook us, we settled in. Together. There was no question in my mind about making him sleep in his own room, I wanted him here. With me. Surrounded by pillows and Spain, we nooked. The last thought I had, before slipping into sleep, with his strong arms wrapped around me...

I might be falling in love with my Wallbanger.

XXX

So? A little shorter than my regular chapters, but this was a good breaking point, and I have realized that there is a pace to their romance that I am reluctant to rush. Now, a word on the epic cockblocking.

I get it, I really do. We have been on this journey together for a thousand years, and these two need to get together, I get it. I swear I do. But here's what happened when I was writing this chapter. I couldn't write this chapter. I really couldn't. I rewrote this over and over again, and I have never rewritten anything. I was writing this, thinking, "jesus, if these two don't start fucking the second they hit the coast, they will be outside my house with

pitchforks and torches and scaling the walls to bring me out and castrate me. And I don't even have a penis, so it will really hurt,"

I was really concerned about this, not the castration part, but you know what I mean. I like to think that my story isn't influenced by the need for this sex to happen, but sometimes I wonder how much I can keep at bay. And I almost let that sway me, and the way I want to tell this story. Finally, I had to sit back, delete a bunch of shit, and listen to what I wanted. What I wanted to read. If I was the reader, what would I want to happen, what would make me get a little silly and squealy. So this is what came out, and I finally enjoyed writing these two again.

So here is what I promise, as your storyteller. I will continue to tell this story, the way I want to and the way I need to. If its smut you need and want, which I totally appreciate as I am a bit of a smut whore myself, then let me direct you to the one shots on my profile. The Jack Officers and Vestibule Style will get you right where you need to be, pervs. And I had a blast writing those too, so enjoy!

I am wrapping this story up, there are only a handful of chapters left. And this is the deal I will make with you, fair bangers. I will give you a chapter every 2 weeks until this story is finished. I am honored and humbled by you, banger reader, and I hope you will stick with me. I think you will be pleased, and even more so by the promise of more frequent updates...I know you Banger Nation. And to know you is to love, and to make sweet sweet love to you, and I, wait, what? Lost my head for a second, apparently I need some smut too...

So, do we have a deal? I am cyber shaking with all of you right now.

Here are some recs in the mean time sweet bangers...

Night Must Fall, by katinki. I rec'd one of her other stories in a previous chapter, Dark Games and Twisted Minds, which I still implore you to read. But this one, wow. It's shaping up to be a goooood one. Edward is a member of the Volturi, dispatched to hunt down and find Bella, and take care of her. Ahem. Katinki writes dark and twisted like no one else, and makes me crave Darkanddangerousward. Do NOT miss this one.

Hourglass, by Bronzehairedgirl620. I had the luck to get to meet this writer during my travels this summer, and have fallen in love with this story. Broken and sadsack, this Edward will make your heart hurt and your palms get sweaty. She is a wonderful author, this story is brilliantly woven so that you never feel like you are missing anything, but rather experiencing everything right along with our E and B.

Clockwork, by Derdriu oFaolain. I am a sucker for some science. Something that I hated in school, I am now fascinated by all things quantum. I have a tiny crush on Stephan Hawking, and my heart melts for a guy that can speak quark to me. Just saying. So for someone to combine Bella, Edward, time travel, and all kinds of particle psychics...I can't handle it. This from the woman who brought us And With Thee Fade Away. This story is still early, only a few chapters, but they are meaty and thick, just like we like them. Beat the crowds, get in on this one now.

Paper Heart, by hexpixie. Are you kidding me? ARE YOU KIDDING ME? This story has me tied in knots, its perfection. Bella and Edward fall in and out of love over the course of 5 years. We begin at the end, we end at the beginning, and somewhere in the middle, we realize just how easy it is to lose each other along the way. She promises right from the beginning that this story will be unlike the traditional HEA, but trust me, you need to read this. The writing is uncompromisingly good, she is a genius. I honestly can't say enough about this story, except that the heartache that I experience when I read this one is genuine and palpable. I truly

feel for these two, and it is NOT TO BE MISSED. Put on your big girl panties, and read it. Not for the wussies out there, but suck it up and dew it.

Love you chickens, I truly do. If you need to flounce, good luck and godspeed. For those are sticking, you're the best.

Alice

xoxo

19. Desire

Hello good chickens of Banger Nation. Can you believe we are back together so soon? I kind of like this update schedule, I think I shall keep it.

Thx to Nina, Lauren, and Christina...read it and then we chat.

In the time that I've spent with Edward, I have several images of him committed to memory. Seeing him for the first time, clad only in a sheet and a smirk. Driving back across the bridge with him the night of Esme's housewarming, when we called a truce. Warped and blurry Edward as seen from inside an afghan. Backlit by tiki torches, wet by hot tub and looking devilishly handsome. And a recent addition to my Best Of Edward's, the sight of him underneath me as he clutched me close, his warm skin and sweet breath all over me as we nooked in the Giant Bed of Sin.

But nothing, and I mean nothing, was hotter than watching Edward while he was working. I mean it, I actually had to fan myself a little bit. Which he took no notice of, as when he was working he was delightfully focused.

Earlier that morning I woke up to a great rumbling. Forgetting where I was for a split second, I automatically assumed I was home and we were experiencing a tremor. I was halfway out of PillowTown with one foot on the floor before I noticed that the view outside my bedroom window was decidedly more blue than it was at home, and I was looking at the Mediterranean. And the rumbling that I heard was no tremor, it was Edward snoring. Snoring. Snoring to beat the band, and by beat the band I mean beat them up with his nose. His nose, from which the most unearthly sound was emitting, making me clap my hands over my mouth to stop from laughing. I crept back into bed, the better to appraise the situation.

True to form, I'd taken up most of the bed in the night, and he'd been relegated to the far corner of the bed, curled into a little ball with a pillow tucked between his legs. But what he lacked in size, he made up for in sound, the sounds pouring forth from his nasal passages registering somewhere between grizzly bear and exploding tractor trailer. I wiggled across the mile wide bed, curling myself around his head and looking down at his face. Even while making these horrific sounds, he was still adorable. I carefully placed my fingers next to his nose, and plugged. And then waited.

After about 20 seconds, he inhaled and shook his head, looking around wildly. When he caught my eye, he relaxed and then noticed me perched on the pillows next to him and he smiled.

"Hey, hey, what's up?" he mumbled, rolling into me and wrapping his arms around my waist, resting his head on my tummy. I ran my hands through his hair, delighting in the feel of the casual freedom we finally had in touching each other.

"Just woke up, someone was being quite noisy on his side of the bed," I teased, as he opened one eye and looked up at me.

"I hardly think someone who is as flaily as you can complain about anything."

"Flaily? That's not even a word," I huffed, enjoying the strength of his arms around me more than I wanted to admit.

"Flaily, as in, one who flails. As in, one who even though they are sleeping in a bed the size of Alcatraz, still needs almost the entire bed to spread out and kick," he insisted, accidentally on purpose pushing my shirt up so he could rest his head on my naked tummy.

"Flailing is better than snoring, Mr. Snorey Pants," I teased again, trying not to notice the way his stubble scraped against my skin in the most delicious way.

"You flail, I snore, what are we going to do about this?" he smiled happily, still half asleep.

"Ear plugs and shin guards?"

"Yep, that's sexy. We can suit up before bed each night," he sighed, pressing the tiniest of kisses just above my belly button. A noise that sounded sadly like a whimper escaped my lips before I could pull it back, my ears burning as I took in what he said about "each night", as in sleeping together each night. Oh my...

XXX

And now here I sat, watching Edward work. We ate a quick breakfast at the house that morning, then headed into town. I fell in love with the village instantly, the old stone streets, the whitewashed walls glimmering in the strong sunlight, the extreme beauty that poured forth from every open archway, from every speck of azure peeking through from the coast, to the friendly smiles on the sweet faces of the people who were lucky enough to call this enchanted spot home. It was market day, and we wandered in and out of stalls, picking up fresh fruit to nosh on later.

I have seen beautiful places on this earth, but this town was heaven for me, I had truly never experienced anything like it. Now, I had been traveling alone for years, finding my own company pleasant. But traveling with Edward? It was...cool. Just, cool. He was quiet, the way I am when I am seeing something new. He never felt the need to fill a silence with chattery words, we were content to simply soak up the scenery. When we did speak, it was to point something out we thought the other couldn't miss, like the puppies playing in a dooryard, or the old man and woman talking back and forth over their balconies. He was a great companion.

And when we headed back to the rental car, the afternoon sun baking through the thin cotton covering my shoulders, my hand tangled with his

in the most unassuming way. And when he took the time to open my door for me, and he leaned down to kiss me in the warm Spanish sunshine, his lips and then smell of olive trees were the only things I needed in the entire world.

We had driven up the coast, to a place a local guide had told him about to get some test shots. And this is how I found myself getting to watch this perilously handsome man concentrate on the task at hand. As he had explained to me, it wasn't about the actual pictures he was taking, it was about testing the light and the colors. So as he scrambled this way and that from rock to rock, I sat back on a blanket we had dug out from the trunk of the car and observed. We were on the coast, on cliffs perched high above the sea. We could see for miles, the rocky shoreline stretching and curving back in on itself and millions of waves pouring in from the deep sea. And while these sights were gorgeous, there was something really intoxicating about the way that the tip of Edward's tongue poked out from between his pink lips. The way he bit down on his lower lip as he puzzled over something. The way excitement broke out over his face when he saw something new inside his lens.

I was glad I had something to do, something to fixate on, as there was the beginnings of a battle currently waging inside my body. Ever since Edward had acknowledged the pressure that giant bed could have potentially placed on us, all I could think about was that very pressure. And the pressure of an O long denied, waiting patiently and sometimes impatiently, for her release.

Currently taking sides on this internal debate were my brain, my hoohah (speaking for the distant O), my backbone, and although starting out quiet and small, but becoming louder and louder by the hour, my heart.

It should be noted that my hoohah had somehow drafted Edward's penis into the fray, and even though his penis didn't have direct access to my hoohah, and by proxy my brain, backbone, or heart, my hoohah felt it necessary to speak up on his behalf. While I didn't like the term

penis, internally I felt strange about calling him dick or cock, so penis it was...for now.

Now, Backbone and Brain were solidly in the Wait-To-Fuck camp, believing that waiting was essential to the foundations of this burgeoning relationship. Hoohah, and therefore Edward's Penis, were in the Fuck-Him-As-Soon-As-Possible society, obviously. O, while not officially in residence, could be counted among Hoohah's supporters, but I felt a twinge, and just a twinge, of her floating above both camps, along with Heart, who was currently singing songs about everlasting love and warm fluffy things.

Take all this into account and what do you have? One totally confused and challenged Bella. So was I glad to have something else to think about other than the pressure cooker of Sex Indeterminate? Yes. Could I spend a little more time trying to come up with a more clever name for Edward's Penis? Probably, it deserved it. Mammoth Male Member? No. Pulsating Pillar of Passion? No. Back Door Bandit? Hell no. Wang? Sounded like the noise those doorstoppers things made when you flicked 'em...

I said it out loud to myself a few times, under my breath, cracking myself up a little.

"Wang. *Wang*. Waaaang," I muttered.

"Hey! Nightie Girl! Get yourself over here," he called, breaking me out of my Wang study. I shook my head to clear it, leaving behind the mental battle, picking my way carefully across the craggy rocks to where he was poised.

"I need you."

"Well that's implied," I snorted, as he lowered his camera just enough to raise one eyebrow.

"I need you for *scale*, get over there," he insisted, pointing me towards the edge of the cliff.

"What? No-no, no pictures, uh huh," I shot back, backing away towards my blanket.

"Yes yes pictures, come on. I need something in the foreground, get over there."

"But I'm a mess! I'm all windblown and sunburned, see?" I protested, pulling down my v neck just a little to show him my skin that was beginning to pink up.

"While I always appreciate any excuse for you to be showing me your cleavage, save it sister. This is just for me, just to give me some perspective. And you don't look windblown. Well, only a little," he smirked, tapping his foot to show me his impatience.

"You're not gonna make me pose with a rose in my teeth, are you?" I sighed, shuffling over to the edge and peeking over.

"Do you have a rose?" he asked, looking serious except for the shit eating grin that had begun to creep over his face.

"Shut it you, take your pictures," I laughed, noticing what a great place for rock climbing this would be.

"Shutting it. Ok, just be natural, no posing, just stand there, facing the water would be great," he instructed, and I complied. He moved around me, trying different angles, and I could hear him muttering under his breath about what was working for him. I admit, even though I was shy about having my picture taken when I was in fact feeling windblown and a little icky, I could almost feel his eyes, though the lens, on me, watching me. He moved around me for only a few moments, but it felt longer than that. The internal war was beginning to show up again.

"You almost done?"

"You can't rush perfection Bella, I need time to get the job done right," he warned. "But yes, almost done, you getting hungry?"

"I want those oranges that are in the basket, grab me one? Or will that mess with your masterpiece?"

"Won't mess with it. I'll call it Windblown Girl On A Cliff With An Orange," he laughed, headed back over to the car and grabbing a few pieces of fruit we had picked up at the market.

"You're funny," I said wryly, catching the orange he threw me and starting to peel.

"Are you sharing?"

"I suppose so, the least I could do for the man that that brought me here, right?" I laughed, biting into a wedge and feeling the juice dribble down my chin.

"You got a hole in your lip?" he fired back, capturing the moment on film as I showed him a particular finger.

"Do you actually *think* you're funny, or are you just assuming that you might be?" I countered, beckoning him over with the orange peel. He shook his head, laughing as he took the orange from me. Of course, he took a bite and no dribble. He opened his eyes wide in feigned amazement and I took the opportunity to smash another wedge in his face. His eyes still wide open, as juice now ran freely off the tip of his nose and onto his chin.

"Messy Wallbanger," I whispered as he looked at me. In a flash, he pressed his lips to mine, getting orange juice all over the both of us as I squealed into his mouth. He turned us both so the sea was behind us, held up the camera, and took a picture of both of us, covered in orange

mush.

"By the way, why were you saying wang earlier?" he asked. I just laughed harder.

XXX

"This is it, this is now officially the single best thing I have ever had in my mouth," I announced, closing my eyes and moaning.

"You've said that about everything you have eaten tonight."

"I know, but I seriously can't handle how good this is. Smack me, pinch me, something, this is too good," I moaned again. We were seated at a little table in the corner of a small restaurant in town, and I was determined to try everything. Edward, showing off a little of his language skills, had ordered for us. I told him to go for it, that I was in his hands and that I knew he wouldn't steer me wrong. And the boy did good. We feasted.

We started with traditional tapas of course, accompanied by glasses of the house wine. Little bowls and plates showed up at the table every few minutes. Tiny pork meatballs, slices of ham, marinated mushrooms, beautiful sausages, grilled squid with fruity local olive oil, all of it lined up. With each bite, I was sure that I had just eaten the best thing I had ever had, when another wave of gorgeous food would show up and convince me once again. And then these prawns showed up. I mean, holy lord they were prawns like I had never had before. Fried crispy in olive oil with tons of garlic and parsley, smoky paprika and just a hint of heat from the chiles, it was unreal. I swooned, I actually swooned.

Edward? He loved it, he ate it up. My reactions as much as the food, he ate it up.

"Honestly, I can't handle anymore," I protested, dragging a piece of crusty bread through the olive oil. He smiled as he watched me

shamelessly enjoy another piece of bread before finally pushing back from the table with a groan.

"Best meal ever?" he asked.

"It really might be, that was insane," I sighed, patting my full tummy. Ladylike schmadylake, I pounded it down like someone was going to take it away from me. A waiter appeared with two small glasses, which Edward informed me was a wine from a neighboring town. Sweet and crisp, it was the perfect after dinner drink. We sipped slowly, the breeze coming in through the windows lightly scented with the sea air.

"This was a great date Edward, really. Couldn't have been more perfect," I said, taking another sip of my wine.

"Was this a date?" he asked, and my face froze.

"I mean, no, I suppose not, I just-"

"Relax Bella, I know what you meant. It's just funny to consider this a date, two people on vacation together, but only now on a date," he smiled, and I relaxed.

"Hmm, we haven't really followed the traditional rules so far have we? This might even be our first date, if we wanted to get technical."

"Well technically, what defines a date?" he asked.

"Well dinner I suppose, although we have had dinner before," I began.

"And a movie, we have already had a movie," he reminded me as I shuddered.

"Yes, and that was definitely a ploy to get me to snuggle with you. Scary movie, so obvious," I scoffed.

"It worked didn't it? In fact, I do believe I slept with you that night Nightie Girl."

"Yes, I am cheap and easy, I admit it. I suppose we really did do this whole thing backwards," I grinned, sliding my foot across the floor under the table and kicking him lightly.

"I like it backwards," he smirked and I rolled my eyes.

"Not touching that one."

"Seriously though, I have no experience with this stuff. The last time I was actually dating someone in the traditional sense, I was a kid. How does this work? What if we were doing this...not backwards? What would happen next?" he asked.

"Well, I suppose there would be another date, and another after that," I admitted, shyly smiling.

"And bases, I would be expected to try to round some bases, right?" he asked seriously as I spluttered my wine.

"Bases? Are you for real? As in, cop a feel, over the shirt, under the shirt, those bases?" I laughed incredulously.

"Yes exactly, what am I allowed to get away with? As a gentleman. I mean, if this were truly a first date, we wouldn't be going home together, would we? Dating now, not hooking up. Remember, apparently I give good woo," he replied, eyes twinkling.

"Yes, yes you do. We wouldn't be going home together, that's true. But, to be honest, I don't want you sleeping in the bedroom down the hall, is that weird?" I asked, and I could feel my ears burning as I blushed.

"It's not weird," he answered quietly. I slipped off my sandal and pressed my foot against his, rubbing lightly along his leg.

"As far as your bases are concerned, I think you could definitely plan on a little under the shirt action, if you were so inclined," I answered, just as quietly. Internally, Brain and Backbone gave a little cheer, while Hoohah and Wang kicked some things. Ta-Tas were just glad someone was considering them for once, instead of just a stopover on the way to points south. Heart? Well, she was still flitting about, singing her song.

"So, we go a little traditional, but not totally traditional. Take it slow?" he asked, his eyes burning, the sex limes beginning to do their little hypnotic dance.

"Slow, but not too slow. We are grownups for goodness sake," I laughed.

"To under the shirt action," he smiled, raising his glass in toast.

"I'll drink to that," I replied, as we clinked.

XXX

Fifty seven minutes later we were in bed, his hands warm and sure as he slowly slipped each button through, revealing my skin to his eyes. He went slowly, purposefully, as he let my shirt fall open as I lay beneath him. He gazed down at me, the fingertips of his right hand lightly drawing a line from my collarbone down to my navel, straight and true. We both sighed at the same time, earning us each a smile. I can't explain it, but knowing that we had set some boundaries for this evening, silly as it may be, but limiting our physicality? Made it so much more sensual, something to be truly savored. His lips hovered around my neck, whispering tiny kisses against my skin, below my ear, under my chin, the dip between my neck and my shoulder, working his way down to the swell of my breasts. His fingers swept out, lightly, reverently, ghosting across the sensitive skin as I inhaled and then held my breath.

As his fingers gently grazed my nipple, every nerve ending in my entire body reversed and began to pulse in the direction of where he was concentrated. I exhaled, feeling months of tension begin to simultaneously flow out of me *and* begin to build back up. With sweet kisses and soft touches, he began the process of getting to know my body, and it was exactly what I needed. Lips, mouth, tongue, all of it, on me, tasting, stroking, feeling and *loving*.

As his lips closed around my breast, his hair tickled my chin in the cutest way and I wrapped my arms around his body, holding it close to my own. The feeling of his skin against mine was perfection, and something I had never experienced before. I felt...worshipped.

As we explored that night, what started out as something funny and cute and our classic banter became something more. What was crassly called "under the shirt action" became part of a romance, and something that could have been merely physical, became something emotional and pure. And when he cradled me to him, bringing me into his nook with tender kisses and breathless giggles, we fell into a contented sleep.

Flaily and Mr Snorey Pants.

XXX

For the next few days, I luxuriated. Truly, there isn't another word in the English language to articulate the luxury I indulged in. Now for some, the definition of a luxurious vacation might be endless shopping, spa pampering, expensive meals, elaborate shows. But to me, luxurious meant spending two hours napping in the sun on the terrace off the kitchen. Luxurious meant eating figs dripping with honey and dotted with crumbles of local cheese while Edward poured me another glass of Cava, even though it was breakfast time. Luxurious meant time alone to poke through the markets of Nerja, poking through bins of beautiful lace. Luxurious meant exploring the nearby caves with Edward while he photographed, losing ourselves in the colors under the earth. Luxurious

most certainly meant gazing at Edward dangling from a rock face while he searched out another foothold, shirtless.

And luxurious meant that I got to spend each night in that bed with Edward. Now that's a priceless luxury, not offered on every grand tour. We rounded another base or two, teasing each other with a little over the panties/manties encounter. Were we being ridiculous, waiting until the last night in Spain to consummate this "thing"? Probably, but who the hell cared. He spent almost an hour kissing every inch of my legs one night, and I spent about the same amount of time having a conversation with his belly button. We just... enjoyed.

But with all this enjoyment came a certain amount of...well, how shall we say, nervous energy?

Back in San Francisco, we had spent months engaged in verbal foreplay. But now, here? The actual foreplay? It was not to be believed. My body was so in tune with his, I knew when he walked into the room, I knew when he was about to touch me, seconds before he actually did. The actual air between us was sexually charged, vibes zinging back and forth with enough energy to light up the entire town. Sexual chemistry? Had it. Sexual frustration? On the rise and getting close to critical.

Which was why the evening after we spent in the caves, we found ourselves in the kitchen, kissing madly. We were both a little tired from the day, and I had been wanting to test out that beautiful Viking range. I was busy, preparing vegetables for the grill and stirring some saffron rice when he came in after a shower. It was almost impossible for me to explain the sight of him, black t-shirt, faded jeans, barefoot, scrubbing at his wet hair with a towel. He grinned, and I began to see double. I literally couldn't see through the haze of lust and need I suddenly felt surge through me. I needed my hands to be on his body, and I needed it to happen immediately.

"Mmm, something smells good, want me to get the grill started?" he asked, walking over to where I was chopping vegetables at the counter. He stood behind me, his body only inches from mine, and something snapped. It may have been the pea pod I was holding...

I turned around, and my tummy actually fluttered at the sight of how good looking he was, it freaking fluttered. I pressed my hand against his chest, feeling the strength there, and the warmth of his skin through the cotton. Reason waved bye-bye, this was now purely physical. An itch that needed to be scratched, scratched, and then scratched again. I slid my hand up around the back of his neck, and pulled him down to me. My mouth crashed against his, my intense need for him pouring forth into his mouth and down to the tips of my toes. Toes which kicked off their flip flops and started shamelessly rubbing themselves across the tops of his feet, my body needing to feel skin, any skin, and needing it now.

He responded in turn, matching my rough kisses with his own, his mouth covering mine as I groaned at the feel of his hands on the small of my back. I quickly spun him around and pressed him up against the counter, in a move that was reminiscent of the night in my kitchen in San Francisco, when he said he wanted me in Spain and then proceeded to give me great countertop.

"Off, I need this off, now," I muttered in between kisses, yanking at his t-shirt. In a great whoosh of fabric, his shirt was thrown across the room as I maneuvered my body against his, sighing as I felt the contact. I was alternately trying to hug him and climb him, the lust now running freely through my body like a freight train. I reached between us, lowered my hand, and palmed him through his jeans. His eyes caught mine and they crossed a little, letting me know I was on the right track. Feeling him, getting harder by the second under my fingertips, caused a tiny fracture in awareness, and suddenly all I wanted, all I needed, all I had to have to function in life, was him. In my mouth.

"Hey Nightie Girl, what are you, oh God-"

Moving with a grace that was surely not my own, I expertly snapped open his jeans, dropped to my knees before him, and brought him forth. My pulse raced, my blood actually boiled within me as I saw him for the first time. My breath drew in with a hiss as I regarded him, faded jeans just pushed down enough to frame this luminous sight.

Wallbanger went commando. God bless America.

I wanted to be gentle, I wanted to be tender and sweet, but I simply needed him so badly. I glanced up at him, his eyes clouded but frantic, as his hands came down to brush my hair back from my face. I took his hands within my own, and placed them back on the counter, encouraging him to grip the edge.

"You're gonna want to hold on for this," I promised, as he groaned a delicious groan. Doing as he was told, he leaned back a little, pushing his hips forward just a little, but keeping his eyes on mine. Always on mine.

I took him in, lips purring as I slipped his length inside my mouth. His head dropped backwards as my tongue caressed him, taking him in deeper. The pure pleasure of this, the absolute pleasure of feeling his reaction to me was enough to make my head split in two. I drew him back out, letting my teeth just barely graze his sensitive skin as I saw him grab the counter even harder. I ran my nails up the inside of his legs, pushing his jeans further down and allowing me more access to him, to his warm skin. Pressing kisses across the tip of him, I let my hands come up to grasp him, stroking and massaging the feel of silk over steel. He was perfect, all smooth and taut as I took him in again, and again, and again. I felt crazed, drunk on his scent and the feel of him inside me.

He was moaning my name over and over again, his words drifting down like molten chocolate sexy times, pouring inside my brain and making me dedicate every sense I had to him, only to him. On and on I went, making him crazy, making *me* crazy, licking, sucking, tasting, teasing,

luxuriating in the madness that was this sinful act. To have him here, in this way, was the very definition of luxury.

He stiffened further, and his hands finally came back to me, trying to make me pull back a bit.

"Bella, oh Christ, Bella, I'm...you...first...you...oh God...you," he stuttered. Luckily, I was able to interpret, as he wanted me to have something as well. What he didn't realize is that this, this total abandon he was giving me, was all I needed. I released him only for a moment, placing his hands once more on the counter.

"No Edward. You," I replied, taking him in deeply once more, feeling him hit the back of my throat as my hands tended to the rest of him that my mouth could not. His hips moved once, then again, and then with a shudder and the most scrumptious groan I had ever heard, Edward came. Threw his head back, closed his eyes, and let go.

And it was wonderful.

Moments later, crumpled into me on the floor of the kitchen, he sighed contentedly.

"Good lord Bella, that was...unexpected."

I giggled at the admission, bending down to kiss his forehead.

"I couldn't control myself, you just looked way too good, and I...well...got carried away."

"I'll say, although I don't think it's fair that I am somewhat exposed here, and you are still fully clothed. *We could* remedy this pretty quickly though," he teased, starting to pull at the drawstring on my pants. I stopped him.

"First of all, you aren't *somewhat* exposed, you are hanging free on the kitchen floor, and I quite like it. And this wasn't about me, although I admit I enjoyed it immensely."

"Silly girl, now I want to enjoy *you*, immensely," he persisted, running his fingers along the edge of my pants, dancing across the skin there.

"No no, not tonight. I want to make you a nice dinner, let me take care of you a little bit, can't I just do that?" I asked, removing his devil hands and kissing them. He smiled up at me, his hair messy and a goofy grin still adorning his face. He sighed in defeat, and then nodded. I started to climb off the floor, when he caught me around the waist, pulling me back down to him.

"A word please, before you leave me, what did you say, hanging free, here on the kitchen floor?"

"Yes dear?" I teased, earning a raised eyebrow in return.

"So, using the base rounding analogy we've applied to this week, I would say we just skipped ahead a few dates, yes?"

"I should say," I laughed, patting him lightly on the head.

"Then I think it's only fair to warn you, tomorrow night? Your last night in Spain?" he said, his eyes blazing through the twilight.

"Yes?" I whispered.

"I'm gonna try and steal home," he warned, and I smiled.

"Silly Edward, it's not stealing if I invite you to come inside," I purred, kissing him solidly on the lips.

XXX

Later that night, as I slept, wrapped thickly in Banger, Hoohah began to prepare. And Brain and Backbone began to chant...O...O...O. Wang? Well, we knew where he was, pressed rather closely against Backbone.

Heart continued to float above, but was circling ever closer to home.

But a new entity began to make herself known, wiggling her way in and out of the others, tinting my dreams with her quiet whispering.

Hello Nerves, I'd been wondering when you were going to show up.

My sleep was most decidedly...flaily.

XXX

So I guess the question is, am I still cockblocker? I have to tell you, the response to the last chapter was a little overwhelming for me, I really appreciate all the time you took to let me know what you were thinking, and continue to think. I am so pleased that you are on board with the telling of this story, and where we are going. As we speed towards the ending, thank you for enjoying the ridiculous with me.

After this last chapter tho, I admit, I am really interesting to get your thoughts, take your temperature if you will. So let me know chickens, where you're at. What camp are you in? Hoohah? Brain and Backbone? Heart? Lemme know loves, lemme know.

I will keep to the every 2 weeks updating schedule, it was a few days past this time due to the release of Mockingjay (dur, of course I was reading it along with all of you) but I am planning approx every 2 weeks until the end of Banger, we will spend some time together.

Not as many recs this time as I didn't get a chance to read much in the last 2 weeks, but nevertheless, here are some lovelies for you!

Fox Fire, by WoodLily. This rec came straight from one you, from a reader, and I'm so grateful for it. A retelling of Twilight from EPOV, but not the same as Midnight Sun. Don't you sometimes just need a good hit of canon? This is it. I am only a few chapters in, but really enjoying the insight into our dear Edward's mind, def worth a peek!

Twinned, by Conversed. *Edward and Masen Cullen look identical, but mistake them at your peril. Watch as their carefully constructed world falls apart when they meet the new girl in town. There's slash, smut and Jasper having shower sex with y'all. Are you ready for it?* Rec'd by my good friends over at the FicPushin' podcast, this story is loads of fun, and loads of angst all wrapped together, which is hard to manage. Not to mention, this is an award winning Jasper, I mean it. Funniest Jasper I have read in a long time...this fic is eat-it-with-a-spoon good.

Tangled Up In Blue, by TXBirdie. I have been reading this one for awhile, and I am glad to share it with you guys, think you will really enjoy. Bella is an aspiring writer getting a little vacation once a year at a writer's conference from her life back in Forks with Jacob. She meets Edward, a famous author, at this conference and the sparks fly, although not in the way you might think initially. Sexy times, writey times, fighty times, this fic has it all, including a few twists you might not anticipate.

The Cullen Campaign, by belladonna1472. Fucking hell, I am a sucker for some political porn. *Edward Cullen and Isabella Swan both have parents who are powerful on Capitol Hill. Problem is, their families are political enemies. What happens when Democrat!Edward and Republican!Bella bump into each other at Union Station in D.C.?* I can tell you, one white hot fic! This writer has such a brain on her, and some of the best banter I have read in a long time. It makes you think, it makes you horny, and it makes you want to watch politics in a whole new way. This fic has it all, including fantastic car sex. Read it, read it now!

02/23/11 04:07:28

feathersmmmm - Edward Wallbanger

OK chickens, see you in 2 weeks!

Alice

xoxo

20. Please, Part 1

So here it is, a little later than I had planned, but I wanted to get this out to you. This chapter is a 2-parter... The next part is almost complete, and should be out to you in just a few more days.

See you down below for some exciting news!

"I can't believe I'm leaving tomorrow, I feel like we just got here."

"So stay. Stay with me, we can spend a few more days here, and then, who knows? Where else do you want to go?"

"Pfft, I'll stay and Esme will have my hide, you know how many jobs she has lined up for me when I get back?"

"She'll understand, she's a sucker for a good romance story, come on. Stay with me," he teased, his eyes twinkling over his coffee mug. We were out on the terrace, having breakfast and planning my last day in Spain. This last week had been perfect, amazingly perfect, and now like all good things, it was coming to an end.

"Is that what this is, a romance story? Shouldn't we be embracing on the beach? And ripping my bodice?" I joked back, lifting my legs and placing them in his lap. Wearing his shirt from the night before, my legs were bare and he took full advantage of this, rubbing my skin between his warm hands.

"Lucky for you, I'm a bodice ripper from way back. I could probably even throw together a pirate costume pretty quickly if that's what you're into," he replied, the limes beginning to burn.

"It has been quite a romantic tale, hasn't it? If someone would have told me this story, I doubt I'd have believed it," I mused, breaking off a piece of my *Magdalena* and dunking it in my café con leche. This is one thing

I would miss about Nerja, the wonderful little sweet lemon cakes we ate each morning for breakfast.

"Why not? It's not that strange how we met, is it?"

"How many women do you know who would voluntarily go to Europe with a man who had been banging the shit out of her walls for countless weeks?"

"This is true, but you could also spin me as the guy who played you all those great records through the wall, the same guy that gave you, and I quote, 'the best meatball ever'?"

"I suppose, you did begin to wear me down with the Glen Miller. That got me," I admitted, sinking into my chair as his hands did delicious things to the bottoms of my socked feet.

"I got you, huh?" he smirked, leaning closer to me.

"Oh shut it you," I pushed his face away, smiling big as I contemplated what he said. Did he have me? He hadn't actually "had" me yet, but yeah. He totally had me. And would have me, sometime later that night. At the thought, another whoosh of nerves hit my tummy and I felt my smile falter a bit. Nerves had set up shop big time, and no matter where my head went, eventually Nerves invaded every thought, every idea I had about where the night would go. I was ready, lord knows I was ready. There was never a Hoohah more ready to be invaded, but I was damn nervous.

But tonight was the night, no more cockblocking. I was entirely eager to lift said block on said cock, but I was nervous. Damn nervous. Did I say nervous? Damn damn nervous. Hot diggity damn nervous. Hot diggity...ok, enough with the nervous.

"So, are you almost done with your work? Do you still have a lot to do tomorrow?" I asked, quickly changing the subject. As was always the

case when he talked about his work, Edward's eyes lit up as he described the shots he still needed to take of the Roman-style aqueduct in town, and a little more time spent out on the water.

"I wish we had time to go scuba diving. I hate that we ran out of time," I frowned.

"Again, something that would be solved if you stayed here with me," he frowned back, making a big deal of mimicking my eyebrows, turning them down in a comical way.

"Again, some of us have nine-to-five jobs, we can't all be jet set photographers. Speaking of, where are you off to next?"

"I'll be home for a few weeks, and then I'm headed down south for a bit."

"Down south? As in, LA?"

"No, a bit more south."

"San Diego?"

"Souther."

"Stanford educated, right? Where are you going?"

"Promise you won't be mad?"

"Spit it out Edward."

"Peru. The Andes. More specifically, Machu Pichu."

"What? Oh man, that's it, I officially hate you. I'll be in San Francisco, planning rich peoples Christmas trees, and you get to go there?" I raged, stuffing the rest of my Magdalena in my mouth and chewing

furiously.

"I'll send you a postcard?" he grinned, looking like a kid trying to get out of trouble. "Besides, I don't know what you're so pissy about, you love your job Bella, don't even try to tell me you don't."

"Yeah I love my job, but right now I wish I was headed south," I huffed, snatching my feet away.

"Well, if you want to head south, I can think of something-" he started to say, and I leaned in to place my hand in front of his mouth.

"No way buddy, I'm not machuuing your pichu now, huh uh," I stated firmly, not wavering a bit when he began pressing open mouth kisses against my palm. Not one little bit...

"Bella," he whispered against my hand.

"Yes?"

"One day," he began, removing my hand and leaving tiny kisses up the inside of my arm. "One day," kiss "I promise," kiss kiss "to bring you," kiss "and my woo," kiss kiss "to Peru," he finished, now kneeling in front of me and dragging his mouth across my shoulder, peeling the fabric away just enough to let him linger along my collarbone, his lips making me hot and shivery.

"You wanna woo me in Peru?" I asked my voice high and stupid and not fooling him for a second. He knew exactly how he was affecting me.

"True," he grinned, his fingers tangling in my hair and bringing my mouth to his. I tried for a second or so to come up with something that rhymed with true, but in the end, I gave up and kissed him back with all that I had. And so, I let him make out with me, on the terrace, overlooking the ocean. Which was...blue. Ahem.

XXX

Later that day Edward and I settled into our seats at the small restaurant we found in a maze of quietly winding streets. We had driven over to the aqueduct on the edge of town. Edward was photographing it the following day and needed some test shots, so once again I got to watch him at work. As soon as we sat down at our table and began to sip sangria, I leaned in.

"Did you always know you wanted to take pictures for a living?"

"What? Where did that come from?" he laughed, sitting back in his chair and looking at me over the rim of his glass.

"I mean it. Did you always want to do this? You seem, well, you're very intense when you're working. You seem like you really love it."

"I do love it, I mean, it's a job so it has its tedious moments, but yeah, I love it. But it wasn't something I always planned, in fact, there was a different plan altogether," he replied, a darker look than normal crossing over his face.

"What does that mean?"

"For a long time I planned on following my father into his business," he sighed, a rueful smile slipping over his mouth. My hand was in his before I even realized I had offered it. He squeezed it, and then took another sip of his wine.

"Did you know Carlisle worked for my father? Dad hired him right out of school, mentored him, taught him everything. When Carlisle wanted to go out on his own, you would think Dad would've been pissed, but he was so proud of him."

"Carlisle's the best," I grinned.

"Don't think I don't know about the crush you girls have on him, I'm aware," he rolled his eyes.

"I'd hope so, we are not exactly subtle in our admiration," I laughed. He smiled at me, that smile that I adored, and then went on with his story.

"Masen Financial Services was getting big, really big, and he wanted me to come on board as soon as I was done with college. I honestly never thought I'd leave Chicago. It would have been a great life, working with my dad, country club, big house in the 'burbs, who wouldn't want that?"

"Sounds amazing," I murmured. It was an ideal life that's for sure, but I couldn't picture Edward there.

"I worked on our high school newspaper, taking pictures. I took the class as an easy A, right? Good for my transcript? But, and even though I got assignments like covering the women's field hockey tryouts, I really liked it. Like, really liked it. But, I figured, it would always be a nice hobby, never really thought about it as a career. My parents supported it though, my mom even got me my first camera for Christmas that year, the year that...well," he paused, clearing his throat a bit.

"After everything happened with mom and dad, Carlisle came out to Chicago for the, um, for the funeral. He stayed for awhile, he was the executor of my parents will. And now that he was living out on the West Coast, well, the idea of staying behind in Chicago didn't sound so great. So, long story short, Stanford accepted me, I started studying photojournalism, got really lucky with some internships, and then right-place-right-time and bam! That's how I got into this gig," he finished, taking a long pull on his drink.

"And you love it," I smiled.

"And I love it," he agreed, just as our lunch arrived. He winked at me as we dug into plates of salty *Bacalao* with tomatoes and green olives,

crusty bread, and another round of sangria.

"So what happened to your dad's company? Masen Financial?" I asked, barely containing the moan over how good my lunch was.

"Carlisle took over some of the clients for awhile, and over time quietly closed up shop. The assets were transferred to me, per the will, and Carlisle manages it for me still."

"Assets?"

"Yep, didn't I tell you that Bella? I'm loaded," he grimaced, nibbling on an olive.

"I knew there was a reason I was hanging out with you," I teased, dipping my bread into the sauce that was in the dish between us.

"Seriously, loaded."

"Ok, now you're just being an ass," I laughed, trying to lift the tension that had settled over the table.

"Well, people get funny about money, you never know," he answered.

"The only thing this changes is that you're buying lunch, and when we get back home you're buying our building so we can rework the floor plans to allow for a hot tub in between our apartments. Other than that, it changes nothing," I grinned.

"When we get home? You know there's gonna be a firing squad to face when we get home, everyone is going to want to know what happened here, between us," he said seriously.

"I know, we'll handle it," I answered, wincing when I thought about the grilling I would be receiving from the girls, to say nothing of Esme. I wonder if a kitchen blowjob was what she had in mind when she said to

take care of him in Spain.

"We?"

". "

"I could we with you," he smiled.

"Aren't we already we-ing?"

"Yeah, we're we-ing on vacation, quite a different thing to be we-ing back home, in the real world. I travel all the time, that takes its toll on the we unit," he said, his brow knit together.

It took all my power, all of it, not to break out my Scotty impression, and talk about *we units*.

"Wallbanger, chill. I know you travel, I'm well aware. Keep bringing me pretty things from faraway places, and this girl has no problem with your we, ok?" I assured, patting his hand once more.

"Pretty things I can do, guaranteed," he grinned, pouring me another glass of fruity sangria as we continued to eat our lunch.

We said very little, just smiled and ate, but every now and again someone's feet would brush against someone else's under the table, and it was good. It was really good.

XXX

All week long, we had been seeing signs of a festival being put together around town. It started tonight, my last night in Spain. We were headed out to dinner, somewhere considerably more fancy than the places we had been eating all week. What I had discovered about Edward, is that we were very similar in many of our tastes. I was all for getting dressed up from time to time, but I much preferred smaller places, casual

places, and he was much the same way. So tonight, to be getting dressed up and going out someplace a little special and then maybe hitting the festival, had a special feel to it. And I was definitely looking forward to this evening, in more ways than one.

They say when a man loses a leg in battle, sometimes, late at night, he can still feel twinges of that leg, phantom pain they call it. I lost my O in battle, the battle of Mike Newton-that Jack Rabbit Fuckers- and I was still feeling the aftershocks. And by aftershocks I mean feeling nothing for months now, and finally, an end was in sight. I'd been feeling twinges from the phantom O all week long, and I was very much looking forward to her return later that evening. The Return of the O. Of course I would see it as a title of some kind of action film in my head, but truly, if she was returning, I would capitalize anything. Any Thing.

Because tonight sports fans, I was gonna get me some. Not to put too fine a point on it, but I was ready for some serious Wallbanger Wang.

I ran my fingers through my hair once more, noticing how the strong sun had brought out more the natural reddish highlights that hid normally in the foggy San Francisco weather. I smoothed out the front of my dress, white linen with a little swing to the skirt. I paired it with some turquoise jewelry I had bought in a local market and little snakeskin sandals. I was the most dressed up I had been all week, and feeling pretty good. I took one last look at myself in the mirror, noticing how my cheeks were pretty pink, and I hadn't even added blush tonight.

Nerves? Oh yes, she had set up camp in Tummy and was currently banging out a drumbeat, making sure I knew she was here. As if I could outrun her.

Trying to ignore Nerves, I made my way down the hallway towards the kitchen to pour myself a quick glass of wine while waiting for Edward to get ready. As I poured a glass of Cava, I saw him on the terrace, facing the ocean. I smirked when I saw that he was wearing a white linen shirt, we were quite matchy-matchy tonight. Khakis completed his look, and

he turned just as I was walking out to meet him. My heels clicked across the stone as I sipped my bubbly wine, and he leaned back on his arms across the wrought iron railing. It didn't escape my attention that as a photographer, he was innately aware of the kind of imagery he was creating...anytime Wallbanger leaned, he oozed sex. I just hoped I didn't slip in my heels...sex ooze could be slippery.

I offered my wine to him and he let me bring the glass to his lips. Slowly, he sipped, his eyes on mine the entire time. When I removed the glass, he quickly wrapped an arm around my waist and pulled me to him, kissing me deeply, the taste of wine heavy on his tongue.

"You look....good," he breathed, pulling away from my lips to press his mouth against the skin just below my ear, his scruff tickling me in the most delicious way.

"Good?" I asked, tilting my head back to encourage everything he was doing.

"Good. Good enough to eat," he whispered, grazing my neck with his teeth, just enough to make me aware of them.

"Wow," was all I could manage, wrapping my arms around his neck and sinking into his embrace.

The sun was beginning to set, casting a warm glow all around, making the terra cotta blaze red and orange, coating us in fire. My eyes were drawn to the cool blue of the sea crashing against the rocks below, the salt in the air actually present on my tongue. I clung to him, letting myself feel and experience everything. His body, hard and warm against my own, the feel of his shaggy hair against my cheek, the heat of the railing against my hip, the rush of every cell in my body curling towards this man and the pleasure he would surely bring me.

"You ready?" he asked, his voice gruff in my ear.

"Yes," I moaned, my eyes rolling back in my head at the nearness of him, the feel of him.

And then Wallbanger took me to town.

XXX

"So, explain to me why, you don't have a boyfriend. No bullshit," Edward asked unexpectedly, while we waited for our table.

After he had driven me to the brink with his kissing on the terrace, he had literally driven me to the brink. We were at a restaurant overlooking the water, which was easy to do in a coastal town. But where the little hole in the wall places we'd been frequenting this week had their cozy charm, this was a romantic restaurant with an emphasis on romance. Romance was served up on a platter here, it was in the wine, the pictures on the walls, the floor beneath our feet, and in case you missed the romance, it was actually being piped in through the air. If I squinted, I could actually see the word romance floating through the air on the sea breeze...I had to really squint, but it was there I tell you.

Floor to ceiling window panels were rolled back to let in the scented coastal air, while hundreds of tiny tea lights sparkled in hurricane glasses. Each table was dressed in white, with low tumblers spilling over with dahlia blooms in rich shades of crimson, pomegranate, and lusty fuchsia. Tiny white Christmas lights twisted into the wooden beams overhead casting a magical sepia tone over the entire scene. In this restaurant, there were no children, no tables of four or six. No, this restaurant was filled with lovers, old and new.

Now we sat, pressed closely together at an epic mahogany bar, slowly sipping wine and awaiting our own little table. And he had asked an innocent question that I was debating on how to answer. Did I tell him the truth, that O had left me high and dry, no man able to satisfy me? Or did I fudge.

"Why I don't have a boyfriend, hmm. Interesting question..." I stalled.

I fudged.

"Is there an interesting answer?" he asked, letting his hand settle against the small of my back, claiming me quietly and succinctly.

"I don't know about that, I just, well...hmm," I stalled once more, sipping my wine. "Oh look! The oysters!" I sighed in relief as the bartender set a platter before us. Saved by the half shell...

On a bed of ice, a dozen gorgeous little black and grey shells rested. Twisted and craggy, they glistened with slices of lemon nestled here and there. Edward raised an eyebrow as if to let me know I dodged his question, but prepared two oysters nonetheless. I nodded as he squeezed the lemon, his strong and elegant fingers making short work, albeit erotic work, of the oysters, prying one from its home and bringing it to my mouth on a tiny fork.

"Open up Nightie Girl," he instructed, and I surely did as I was told. Cold, crisp, like a burst of seawater in my mouth, I moaned around the fork, as he slipped the tines back out. He grasped his own oyster and tossed it back like a man, licking his lips as I watched this little bit of pornography play out. He winked at me as I rolled my eyes, trying not to let on how desperately turned on I was. The entire day had been like one giant controlled ball of sexual tension, a slow burn that was now igniting into a wildfire. He slurped two more in quick succession, and as I watched his tongue dart out to lick his lips, I felt the sudden urge to help him. With no shame or sense of social propriety, I closed the distance between us, and kissed him, hard.

He grinned in surprise, but quickly kissed me back with equal intensity. The sweetness and tenderness that had been marinating between us all week was quickly deteriorating into full on touch-me-touch-me-now, and I was all for it. My entire body turned towards him, my legs nestling in between his as his fingers found my skin, the skin just above the hem of

my dress. We were kissing, kissing all out Hollywood style. Slow, sloppy, wet and wonderful. My head tilted to one side so I could kiss him more deeply, my tongue sliding against his, leading and then letting him lead. He tasted like sweet and salt and lemons and it was all I could do not to grab him by his pretty linen shirt and have my way with him in the car in the parking lot, in a very lady like way mind you.

I heard someone clearing their throat, and I opened my eyes to see my sexy limes, and an embarrassed host.

"Excuse me, Mr. Masen, I have your table ready sir, *sir*?" he asked, carefully averting his eyes from the display we were putting on in his very romantic but still very public restaurant. I might have moaned a little as he removed his hands from my legs, and turned my chair so I could stand. Taking my hands and pulling me from the chair, he smirked as I wobbled on my feet a bit, my knees being actually weak. He grinned at the bartender.

"Oysters man, oysters," he laughed a little as we shuffled me off to our table. I almost let out an indignant huff when I saw him discreetly adjust himself. I was not the only one feeling the slow burn...

I stuffed my huff and smiled serenely at him, lowering my eyes just enough when his gaze met mine so that he knew I knew. As we were led to our table, Edward pulled out my chair for me. As he scooted me in, I let my hand drift backwards just enough to accidentally on purpose graze him, feeling how worked up he was. I heard him hiss, and I smiled inwardly. Just as I went in for Graze #2, he grasped my hand tightly in his own, pressing himself against me, my breath catching in my throat as I felt him harden further under our hands.

"Do I need to change your name to *Naughty Girl*?" he murmured, low and thick in my ear as my entire body went on point. I closed my eyes and tried to get control as he made his way to his seat across from me, grinning in a devilish way. As our waiter busied himself around us, filling water glasses and presenting menus, I only had eyes for my

Wallbanger, cocksure and beautiful, across the table from me. This meal was going to take forever.

XXX

The meal did take forever, but forever in the way that I as much as I was aching to get him alone again, I also never wanted this night to end. We were served a beautiful paella, coastal style with chunks of prawns and spiny lobster, chorizo and peas. Made in the traditional way that was almost impossible to recreate, the simple shallow dish it was cooked in allowed the saffron rice on the bottom to become crunchy and nutty, delicious in every sense of the word. We finished a lovely bottle of rose, and now were lazily sipping tiny glasses of Ponche Caballero, a Spanish brandy with hints of orange and cinnamon.

The liquor was spicy as I rolled it around in my mouth. I was pleasantly warm and more pleasantly tipsy. Not drunk, just heady enough that I was aware of my surroundings and was finding anything and everything sensual. The way the smooth brandy slipped down my throat, the feel of Edward's leg against my own as they tangled under the table, the way my body had begun to hum. The entire town it seemed was out and about tonight, in a celebratory mood for the festival that was kicking off in the center of town. There was a vibrancy in this night, an energy that was raw and a little wild. I was sitting back in my chair, teasing him with my big toe, a silly smile on my face as he stared at me hard.

"I ate your paella once," he said suddenly, causing me to choke a little.

"Pardon me?" I sputtered, catching the drop of brandy on my lip before it rolled off onto my dress.

"In Tahoe, remember? You made us all paella," he reminded me.

"Right right, I did. Not like we had tonight, but it was pretty good," I smiled, thinking of that night. "As I recall, we polished off some wine that night as well."

"Yes, we ate paella, and drank wine, got the others together and then you kissed me."

"We did, and yes, I did," I blushed, thinking of this as well.

"And then I acted like an ass," he replied, his blush present now as well.

"You did," I agreed with a smile.

"You know why, right? I mean, you have to know that I, well, that I wanted you. You do know that, right?"

"It was pressed against my leg, dear, I was aware," I laughed, trying to play it off, as I thought of how I felt when I ran away from him in that hot tub.

"Bella, come on now," he chided, his eyes serious.

"Come on now yourself, it really was pressed against my leg," I laughed again, a little weaker this time.

"That night? Jesus, it would have been so easy, you know?" he continued, leaning across the table and taking my hand, which was now so easy. "But I'm glad we're here, now," he said, raising my hand to his mouth. He laid kisses across my knuckles, opening my palm and pressing a wet kiss at its center. "Where I can take my time with you," he said, kissing my hand once more as I stared back at him.

"Edward?"

"Yes?"

"I'm really glad we waited."

"Me too."

"But I really don't think I can wait any longer."

"Thank God," he smiled, and signaled the waiter. We laughed like teenagers as we paid the bill and began making our way up the hill towards the car. The festival was in full force now, and we passed through part of it on our way back. Lanterns lit up the sky overhead as a heavy drum beat pulsed and we saw people dancing in the streets. That energy was back, that sense of wild abandon was in the air, and the brandy and that very energy knocked Nerves back down, way down into my gut, where Hoohah and Wang threatened to beat her to within an inch of her life. As we reached the car, I went to grab the door handle when I was whirled suddenly and pressed against it by a very intense Wallbanger. His eyes burned into mine as he pressed me against the car, his hips strong and his hands wild, in my hair and on my skin. His hand slid down my leg, grasping my thigh and hitching it around his hip as I moaned and groaned at the strength that I was about to let run wild across my body and soul.

But I slowed him down, my hands pulling at his hair, making him moan in turn.

"Take me home Wallbanger," I whispered, pressing one more kiss against his sweet lips. "And *please*, drive fast."

Even Heart seemed pleased, floating around above, still singing her song, but singing a song that was infinitely more dirty.

XXX

How excited are we all to get to the next chapter? Me included, honestly. For all the cockblocking, I feel like we have all been going through this story together for 108 years! Those must be some serious blue balls for Mr Banger, right? But Part 2 of this chapter chickens, next time...heh heh heh

Lots of stuff for you this author's note, so for those who simply adore long author's notes...this one's for you.

So many of you have asked when the sequel to The Unidentified Redhead is coming out, and I am so pleased to be able to finally tell you that this Tuesday, September 28th The Redhead Revealed by Alice Clayton (that's me!) will be available for purchase! Check out my profile for details, and make sure you visit [aliceclayton\(dot\)com](mailto:aliceclayton(dot)com) or the new site which will be up soon, [theredheadrevealed\(dot\)com](http://theredheadrevealed(dot)com), to see a sneak peek at the cover, read the back cover blurb, and all sorts of good stuff. As we did for The Unidentified Redhead, there is a fun playlist for the new book, new trailer, all that jazz.

So many of you supported the first book, and I can't wait for you to see what kind of adventures Jack and Grace are up to this time...in New York!

I have oodles of recs for you this time chickens...oh yeah, a word about the chickens thing. It has been suggested in certain circles that perhaps the term "chickens" is rather demeaning and rude. To clarify, my grandmother called me chicken. I call my sister chicken. I call all my girlfriends chicken. Hell, I even call Mr Alice chicken, although I also call him pork chop, but this is beside the point. The point is, I call people I love and adore and feel a sense of giggly with, chickens. And that's it. I mean no harm, I mean no...well...demean. It is a term of endearment in my family and within my circle of friends, and so I shall continue to use this term. So there, chickenhaters...mad love to you anyway. I firmly believe you see what you want to see, so if you want to find something negative, you will damn sure find it. Me? I prefer lollipops and dildos...much more positive way to look at life. Lollipops and Dildos...wow, that could be my next fic!

Recs:

Discovering You, Discovering Me by JSFazz. This was recd to me by my lovely friend MsTallulahBelle and thank goodness she did because I want to make out with Edward in the back of a pharmacy. Yep, that's right, a pharmacy. I love me some timid geekyward, especially one who likes to go shopping for new pants. This story is super cute, and quite darling.

Empire State of Mind, by belladonna1472. From the same author that brings us The Cullen Campaign, this is a very interesting tale set in Manhattan, in a ritzy high school. Take canon, and flip it. Edward and Alice are bro/sis, but their father is Charlie. Witchcraft, new powers, and young love mix together into a lovely little cauldron of hormones. I don't read a lot of hs fics, but this one is very very interesting, and still low chapters so get in now!

Glitch, by quothme. I read this story nonstop one day, and when I got to the last chapter I literally screamed out loud....WHAT? Not kidding, my cat went flying from the bed she was so surprised. Bella has felt someone watching her for her entire life, someone she calls Edward. Does she have an imaginary friend, or is he real? I can not tell you how intricately woven this plot is, it is shockingly good. I would honestly read the phone book if quothme wrote it, I kid you not.

Starry Eyed by Rochelle Allison. She brought us Volition people, read it, then read this one. This one is still pretty new, and wonderful. Another high school fic, she captures what your life is like when you are in high school. When your entire life is what you wear to school and what can happen in the cafeteria. She writes like she is still living it, and when I read it I feel like I am back there. Wonderful. Amazing. Super fantastic.

America's Sweethearts by ciaobella27. Like many of you, I adored Living Backwards by this same author. They were on the cover of every magazine. America's Sweethearts. Until the pictures surfaced. Then it was over. Can they prove their worth to the world

nearly a decade later? This one is only a few chapters in, still learning a lot about these characters and how they come to be, but looks like its gonna be great!

Grand Jete, by Stella Luna Sky. Wow, these recs are all about authors I have enjoyed in the past and recently started reading their latest work! This story is no exception. I loved Bare, and I am loving this one as well. he moves through her comfortable life without much passion, without much conviction. When she meets the man who can teach her the importance of treating transient life with respect and love, she has to take the grandest leap of faith she's ever faced. This story had me hooked from the beginning, truly. It isn't about big in your face drama, although these two definitely have their issues. It isn't about crazy dramatic scenes and over the top antics. Its simply a story about 2 rather unique people meeting and falling in love, and dealing with all that implies. Love it.

Ok chickens, look for a new chapter in just a few days. I am really excited to hear your feedback as we round this last turn, we are almost to the end and I have to say, as we near the end of our time together, I have enjoyed writing this story for you immensely, and I am honored that you have chosen to spend a little time, every now and again, with me in this silly Wallbanger world.

Stay above the fray and stay classy. Don't go negative, enjoy this ff world for what it is. Entertainment and fun and friendship. You stay classy Banger Nation...

Alice

xoxo

21. Please, Part 2

About twenty months ago, I called my good taco Nina with an idea I had for a story. Within 5 minutes of the initial inspiration, I had the entire plot outlined in my head, and as we laughed about how this story might take shape, this is the scene that I was most anxious to write. Trust me when I say that I have been waiting almost as long as poor poor Edward. And this was always, always, the way it was gonna go down.

Let's chat below...

I looked at my reflection in the mirror, trying to look objectively. When I was a kid, especially in those charming early teen years, I used to see myself very differently. I saw mousy brown hair and pale uninteresting skin. I saw boring brown eyes and knobby knees that bisected skinny bird-like legs. I saw a slightly upturned nose and a bottom lip that looked like I might trip over it if I wasn't too careful.

When I was 15, one afternoon my Gran told me she thought the blue dress I was wearing looked nice against my skin tone. I scoffed and immediately disagreed with her, "Thanks Gran, but I got about three hours of sleep last night and the last thing I look like today is nice. Tired and pale, but not nice."

I rolled my eyes in that way teenage girls always do, always discounting what someone older said. She reached for my hand and grasped it in her own.

"Always take a compliment Bella. Always take it for how it was intended. You girls are always so quick to twist what others say. Simply say thank you and move on. Besides, you don't see yourself clearly," she smiled, in that quiet and wise way she had.

"Thanks Gran," I smiled back, busying myself with the spaghetti sauce I was making, turning my face so she couldn't see my blush.

"It breaks my heart the way young girls pick themselves over, never thinking they're good enough. You make sure you always remember you're exactly the way you're supposed to be, exactly. And anyone that says otherwise, well, poppycock," she giggled, her voice lowering a bit when she said that last word, the closest she would ever actually come to swearing. Gran had a list of bad words and really bad words, and poppycock came close to approaching the former.

The next day at school I mentioned to a friend that I thought her hair looked great, and her answer was to run her hands through it with disgust, "Are you kidding? I barely even had time to wash it today," even though it looked fantastic. Later on that day after gym class, I was in the locker room getting changed, when I observed another friend touching up her lip gloss. "That's pretty, what's the name of that color?" I asked as she pursed her lips in the mirror. "Apple Tartlette, but it looks terrible on me. God I have no tan left over from summer!"

Gran was right. Girls really *didn't* take compliments well. Now, I'm not gonna lie and say after that day I didn't magically have any more bad hair days or ever pick the wrong lipstick again. But I *did* make a conscious effort to see the good before the bad, and really look at myself in a more clear way. Objectively. Kindly. And as my body continued to change, I became more and more aware of features that I could look at positively instead of negatively. I never thought of myself as lethally gorgeous, but I did clean up well.

And so now, as I stared into the mirror in the bathroom, knowing Edward was waiting for me, I took the time to take a little inventory.

The mousy brown hair? It was looking pretty good, a little wavy and curly from the salt water that had been cooking in it all week. The pale skin? Nicely browned up and, dare I say, a little glowy? I winked at myself holding back a maniacal giggle that threatened to run out of my

mouth. My mouth had that slightly pouty lower lip that was just full enough to trap me some Edward, *and not let him go*. And the legs I saw peeking out from below the lace just covering my thighs, well...not so bird-like anymore. In fact, I think they were going to look pretty spectacular wrapping around Edward's...well...whatever I felt like wrapping them around. Ahem.

And so as I smoothed my hair back once more and mentally ran through all my internal checklists, I was wildly excited about the night ahead of me. We had raced back to the house, practically disrobed each other in the entryway and after begging a few moments of girl time, I was now ready to go out and claim, really claim, my Edward. Because who was kidding who, I wanted this man. Wanted him for my own, and did not, would not, share him with anyone else.

Brain for once was finally in agreement with Hoohah. Especially since Hoohah had crawled up Backbone and slapped Brain right in the stem, telling her in that special way that only Hoohah's can, that we needed this. We deserved this and we were ready. Nerves, well, they continued to circle in Tummy, but that was to be expected, right? I mean, it had been a long, long time, and a little bit of Nerves were normal, I expect. Had I been stalling all week? Maybe.

Kind of.

A little.

Edward had been more than patient, content to take things slow, at my pace, but for crying out loud, he was only human.

The night after my impromptu kneeling in the kitchen, I had actually turned down his reciprocal kneeling. Who ever turned that down? As good as he was with leaning, I bet he also gave great kneel...and yet I had turned him down. Part of me really did just want it to be about him. I don't know if all women are as inherently turned on and subsequently satisfied by *his* satisfaction, but I was. But still, when he wants nothing

more than to bring you to that same place of multiple Hail Marys, do you turn that down?

I did.

I tried to shake it off, adamant that I would not let Nerves turn another Spanish night into the land of cuddle and coo. I became aware that my internal checklist was being read out loud, and unless I wanted Edward to hear me have an actual conversation with my Hoohah, which he may be into who knows, I needed to get my butt in gear and get out there. I mean, Butt.

I turned in the mirror once more trying to see myself as Edward might see me. I smiled in what I thought was a seductive way, flipped off the light, took one more deep breath, and opened the door.

The bedroom had been transformed into something out of a fairy tale. Candles were lit on the dresser and on the nightstands, bathing the room in a warm glow. The windows were open as well as the door to the little balcony overlooking the sea, and if I listened closely, I could actually hear the waves crashing, romance novel style. And there he stood. Hair messy, body strong, and sex limes blazing. The way the candlelight was dancing, it almost made his skin, well...sparkle.

I watched as his eyes took me in, dragging down my body and back up to my own, a grin spreading across his face as he appraised my outfit of choice.

"Mmm, there's my Pink Nightie Girl," he sighed, holding out his hand to me. And when I stalled for just the tiniest second, Backbone picked up my hand and gave it to him.

We stood in the darkened room, a few feet apart, but connected by our woven fingers. I could feel the rough texture of his thumb as he traced tiny circles on the inside of my hand, the same circles he had traced weeks and weeks before when I began to fall under his spell. Our eyes

full of each other, he took a deep breath.

"It's criminal how good you look in that," he said drawing me towards him and giving me a little spin so he could better see the pink baby doll nightie. As he spun me, the lacey edges flipped up just a little, showing off the accompanying ruffley panties. A low noise sounded in his throat, and if I wasn't mistaken, it was a growl? Damn...

He spun me back closer to him, grasping my hips and pressing me against him, my breasts crushing into his chest. He placed a tiny kiss just below my ear, letting me feel just the tip of his tongue.

"So there are some things I need you to understand, you listening?" he murmured, nuzzling with his nose, his hands brushing up under my nightie to fluff my ruffles and grab a handful of backside, catching me by surprise and causing me to gasp.

"You listening? Don't get distracted on me now," he whispered again, flattening out his tongue and dragging it up the side of my neck.

"It's kind of hard to focus with your distraction poking me in the thigh," I groaned, letting him bend me backwards just enough so that my entire body was pressed against him, his hard places perfectly content to mold my soft places around them. He chuckled against my neck, now dotting my collarbone with his trademarked baby kisses.

"Here's what you need to know Nightie Girl. One, you're amazing," he said, his hands now traveling up to the small of my back, fingers and thumbs massaging and manipulating.

"Two, you're amazingly sexy," he breathed, my hands now hurriedly unbuttoning his shirt, pushing it back off his shoulders as our pace began to transition from slow and easy to fast and frantic. Now his hands were sneaking around front, his nails lightly scraping along my tummy, lifting my nightie so that we were skin to skin, nothing left between us. I ran my own hands up and down his back, my nails much

more aggressive with him, digging in and anchoring him against me.

"And three, as amazingly sexy as this pink nightie is, the only thing I want to see on you the rest of this night...is me," he panted in my ear as he picked me up, straight up, as my right leg went around his waist on its own.

Once again, the Universal Law of Wallbanger dictated that legs went around hips when they were offered.

He walked me backwards towards the bed, towards Pillow Town, and set me down. Leaning over, he forced me backwards onto my elbows. His shirt was hanging down off his shoulders and he winked at me, nodding at his state of undress. I reached forward, crooked one finger behind the button on his khakis, and quickly snapped it open. Seeing no peek of boxers, I gently nudged his zipper down just an inch or so, exposing the barest hint of happy trail that led down down down, to where all good things were considered.

"You got something against underpants Wallbanger?" I whispered, raising one knee and forcing him between my hips. Forcing. *Right*.

"I'm against *your* underpants, and isn't it a shame they're still there?" he smirked, pushing his hips into me, letting me feel everything. I dropped my head back once more, silently pushing down Nerves when she threatened to bubble up just a smidge. This was really happening.

"No shame. I have a feeling they won't be on for long," I sighed, stretching my arms over my head, lengthening my body against his, encouraging his lips to further dance along the hollow at the base of my collarbone, feeling him licking and sucking at the skin between my breasts. I arched into him, anxious to feel more, I needed more. His right hand began peeling the straps of my nightie down, baring me to him, allowing him the access he needed to make me orbit the planet.

Feeling his mouth on me, on my breasts, hot and wet, tickling and sloppy, was unreal. So I told him so.

"That feels unreal," I moaned into the top of his head as the scruff from his light beard roughed my skin pleasantly. His lips closed around my right nipple and my hips went off on a tangent of their own, bucking wildly underneath him, both legs now wrapped firmly around his waist, pulling him into my world, feeling the heat of him. Lips and tongue and teeth now lavished across my cleavage, which was spilling out over the edge of the nightie, as he alternated between both breasts, loving them equally. I was surrounded by Edward, even his scent was turning me on, equal parts peppery spice and thick warm brandy.

Nonsensical words were pouring forth from my mouth. I was aware of a few "Edwards," and one or two, "Yes, fuck that's good," but mostly what I overheard from myself were things like "Mmph," and "Erghh," and a rather loud "Hyyyyaeahhh," which frankly, I can't even begin to think how to spell. Edward was sighing over and over again into my skin, his actual breath a turn on as I felt it wash over me. My hands had been left free to roam in the wonderland that was his hair, and as I swept it back from his face I was rewarded with the amazing sight of his mouth on me, his eyes closed in clear worship. He lightly bit down on me, closing his teeth around my sensitive skin and my hands almost tore the hair from his head. It. Felt. Phenomenal.

His left hand was running up and down my leg, encouraging me to grasp him tighter between my thighs as his magical fingers began to come ever closer to the edge of the lace. It was the last boundary we had yet to cross. It was the lace frontier.

I felt my breathing still as he went on final approach, his fingers brushing just under the edge of my panties, barely brushing underneath and towards me. His breathing slowed as well and as he continued to touch me gently, his face came back up to mine and we had this moment, this quiet moment, where we just...stared. Awe, it's the only way I can describe the feeling of his hand ghosting over me, delicately,

reverently. Our eyes were locked as he eased his hand further underneath the lace and then, with achingly perfect precision, he touched me.

My eyes fluttered shut, my entire body was awash with so many different sensations. My breathing started back up again, the intense pressure that had been circling all around and inside and out was like a low level hum, just beneath the surface of my skin. I moved with him, feeling his fingers begin to explore me, and I let out the tiniest moan. It was all I could let out, the feelings were so intense and the energy, oh my goodness, the energy that surrounded us in that moment.

I was sure Edward was unaware of the entirety of the emotion that was flying around behind my closed eyelids. The poor man was just finally getting a little touch.

As his fingers became more deft and sure of themselves, something incredible began to happen. That teeny tiny little bundle of nerves, that had been dormant for centuries, began to spark to life. My eyes flew open, as a warmth began to move through me, starting at the center of my being and working its way outward.

Bella was gettin' wet. And talking about herself in the third person.

Edward was most certainly enjoying this, his eyes hazy and crowded with lust as I writhed underneath him, feeling me tense and come alive.

"God Bella, you're so...God you're beautiful," he murmured, his eyes now crowding with something a bit more than lust and I felt tiny pin pricks behind my eyeballs. I threw my arms around his neck and held him close, tearing at his shirt to get it off, get it off him so that I could feel everything. He lifted himself from me for only seconds, ripping off his shirt in an exaggerated way that made me giggle but yearn for him even more.

Lowering himself back onto me, he slipped lower, his lips now tracing a path down to my belly button. Circling it with his tongue, he laughed into my tummy.

"What are you laughing at mister?" I giggled, squeezing his ear. He was below the nightie now, his face hidden from me. Poking his head back out, he let loose a slow, devilish grin that made my toes point.

"If your belly button tastes this good, fuck Bella. I can't wait to taste your pussy."

I need to take moment here...

There are certain things a woman needs to hear at different times in her life:

You got the job.

Your ass looks great in that skirt.

I would love to meet your mother.

And when used in the just the right context, in just the right setting...sometimes, we need to hear the P-word.

This could be better than Clooney.

It's embarrassing the effect this line had on my body. What was once parched was now...well...not.

The moan that came out of my mouth when he said that word, well, let's just say that it was loud enough to wake the dead. He let his tongue trace a path from my belly button down to the edge of my ruffles, and then with loving precision, hooked his thumbs underneath the lace and dragged them down my legs.

There I was, spread out on top of PillowTown with a pink nightie bunched up around my midriff, breasts and Hoohah exposed, and damn happy about it. He pulled my hips just to the edge of the bed and dropped to his knees. Sweet Jesus.

Running his hands up and down the tops of my legs, I lifted up on my elbows so that I could watch, needing to see this wonderful man tending to me, taking care of me. Kneeling between my thighs, with his khakis unbuckled and halfway unzipped, hair at atomic heights, he was stunning. And on the move.

Once again letting his tongue lead, he planted open mouth kisses along the insides of my thighs, one side and then the other, with each pass getting closer and closer to where I needed him most. Carefully lifting my left leg, he hitched it over his shoulder as I arched my back, my entire body now aching to feel him. He gazed at me for a moment longer, maybe even just a few seconds, but it felt like a lifetime as he regarded me. "Beautiful," he breathed one more time, and then he pressed his mouth to me.

No quick licks, no tiny kisses, just incredible pressure as he surrounded me with his lips. It was enough to make me drop back on the bed, unable to actually support myself any longer. The feel, the exquisite feel of him was all consuming, and I could barely breathe. He worked me slow and low, bringing one hand up to open me further to him, letting his mouth and fingers and perfect tongue gently and methodically coax me into the stratosphere, rising up, filling me with a sense of awe and amazement that I had been missing for so long.

I allowed one hand to drift down towards him, tangling into his hair, running my fingers through it with as much love as I could show. The other hand? Useless, it was fisting the sheets into some kind of ball.

He lifted his head from me once, just once, to press another kiss against my thigh. "Perfect, Jesus, just perfect," he whispered, almost so quietly I could barely hear him over my own sighs and whimpers. He

returned to me almost immediately, an urgency now to his movements, his lips and tongue twisting and pressing as he groaned into me, the vibration riding straight through me.

I opened my eyes for a second, just a second. The room was glowing, almost incandescently. All of my senses came alive and I could hear the crashing of the surf, could see the candlelight flickering off the auburn in Edward's hair, made even more pronounced from a week in the hot Spanish sun. I could feel my skin break into gooseflesh, the very air caressing me and announcing what I had been missing for months, years even.

This man could very possibly love me.

And he was about to bring back the O.

Snapping my eyes closed again, I could almost see myself, standing at the edge of a cliff, staring down into the raging ocean below. Pressure, enormous pressure was building behind me, nudging me towards the edge where I could fall, fall freely into what was waiting for me. I took one step, then another, closer and closer as I could feel Edward grasping my hips. If the O was coming for me, then I wanted Edward inside me. I *needed* him inside me.

Tugging on his shoulders, I pulled him up my body, feet kicking at his khakis until they lay defenseless on the floor.

"Edward, I need, please, inside, now," I panted, almost incoherent with lust. Edward, schooled in Bella shorthand, understood this completely and was poised between my legs, hips nuzzled up into mine within seconds. He leaned down, kissing me wantonly, the taste of me all over him and I loved it.

"Inside, inside, inside," I kept chanting, my back and hips alternately arching, desperately trying to find what I needed, what I had to have, to let me jump off that cliff.

Finally, I felt him, exactly where he was meant to be. Barely nudging inside, just the feeling of him entering me was earth shattering. My own needs quieted for the moment, I watched his face as he began to press inside me for the first time. His eyes bore into mine as I cradled his face in my hands. He looked as though he wanted to say something, and I wondered. What words would we speak, what wonderfully loving things would we say to commemorate this moment?

"Hi," he whispered, smiling as though his life depended on it. I couldn't help but smile back.

"Hi," I answered, loving the feel of him, the weight of him, above me. He slipped gently into me, and my body at first resisted. It had been a long time, but the little pain that I felt was welcome. It was that good kind of pain, a pain that let you know something more was coming. I relaxed a bit, allowing my legs to wrap around his waist, and as he pushed further into me, his smile became infinitely more sexy as he bit down on his lower lip and tiny frown lines appeared on his forehead. I breathed in, inhaling his scent as I watched him pull back just the tiniest bit, only to thrust once more into me. Now fully inside, I welcomed him the only way I could. I gave him that little internal hug, the one that made his eyes flash open and peer down at me.

"There's my girl," he murmured, raising one rakish eyebrow at me and thrusting into me again, with more conviction this time. My breath caught in my throat and I gasped, unwittingly rocking my hips into his with an instinct that was as old as the waves crashing down below.

Slowly, he began to move within me, sliding against me with a fantastic pressure, each new angle and sensation giving way to more of that warm tingly feeling that was working its way out to the tips of each finger and toe. The feeling of having Edward inside me, inside my body was more than I can articulate. I groaned and he grunted, he moaned and I mewled, together. His hips pushed me higher onto the bed, up towards the headboard. Our bodies were slick with sweat, crashing and smashing into each other. I threaded my hands deeply into his hair,

tugging and writhing beneath him wonderfully.

"Bella, so beautiful," he sighed, in between kisses he left across my forehead and nose. I closed my eyes and could see myself, once again, on the edge of that cliff, ready to jump, needing to jump. Again, that pressure began to build, that crackle of energy spinning itself wild and frantic, pulsing with every thrust, every slip and dip of his hips into mine, driving him, unrelentingly, in and out of my body.

I took one final step, one foot now dangling off the edge of the cliff, and I saw her...O. She was in the water down below, her hair like fire dancing along the waves. She waved and I waved and just like that, Edward brought one hand down between our bodies, just above where we were joined, and he began to trace his little circles.

Little circles from a perfect hand, and I jumped. I jumped free and clear and loud and proud, announcing my approval with a lusty "Yes!" as I rushed towards that certain high.

And I fell.

And fell.

And fell.

And crashed. Crashed and smacked into the unforgiving surface of the water, and didn't come up. I fell for what seemed like an age, but instead of O meeting me at the bottom with open arms, I floundered alone, and wet. Every muscle in my body, every cell was concentrated on the return of the O, as if I could will her back. I strained, body tight and taught as I caught sight of her, just the very tips of her hair, like fire under water, slipping away from me. She was so close, so very close, but no. No.

I scrambled after her, trying with sheer will to make her reappear, but nothing. She was gone and I was left underwater. With the most

beautiful man in the world inside me.

I opened my eyes and saw Edward above me, saw his beautiful face as he made love to me, and that *is* was this was. This wasn't sex, this was love, and I still couldn't offer him all that I had. I saw his face. I saw his eyes heavy and thick and half closed in passion. I saw a bead of sweat running down his nose and watched as it splashed lazily down onto my breasts. I saw as he bit down hard on his lower lip, the strain on his face as he delayed his own well deserved climax.

He was everything I had hoped he would be, he was a generous lover and I could feel my own heart beat to within bursting out of my chest to be nearer to him, to love him. He was everything.

I lifted his hand from between us and kissed his fingertips, then wrapped my legs tighter around his waist and let my hands anchor themselves in his back. He was waiting for me, of course he was. I adored him. I closed my eyes once more, steeling myself for all I was able to give him.

"Edward, it's so good," I panted and I meant every word of it.

I bucked my hips. I clenched in all the right places and I called his name, over and over again.

"Bella, look at me, please," he begged, his voice rife with pleasure. I allowed my eyes to open again, feeling one tear spill down my cheek. A strange look stole over his features for only a second, as his eyes searched mine, and then? He came. No thunder, no lightening, no fanfare. But it was stunning.

He collapsed onto me and I took that weight, took it all, as I cradled him to my chest and kissed him over and over again, my hands soothing on his back, my legs hugging him to me as tightly as I could. I whispered his name as he nuzzled into the space between my neck and my breast, simple touches and caresses.

Heart sat to the side and quietly sighed.

Nerves? You mother fucker. Don't even think about showing your face here.

We lay for awhile, listening to the ocean in our own personal little haven, this romantic fairy tale that could have, should have been enough. When his breathing returned to normal, he lifted his head from me and kissed me very softly.

"Hi," he smiled.

"Hi," I smiled back.

Sex could be good, even without the O.

"I'll be right back," he said disentangling from me and walking towards the bathroom, naked backside a sight to behold. I watched him retreat, and then I sat up quickly, pulling the straps of my nightie back up around my shoulders. I rolled onto my side, away from the bathroom, and curled around my pillow.

I would not cry.

I would not cry.

I would not cry.

Even though he had only been gone from the bed a few minutes, when he came back, I pretended to be asleep. Childish? Yep.

I felt the bed dip as he climbed back in, and then his warm and still very naked body was up against me, spooning me. Arms wrapped around my middle, and then his mouth was at my ear, whispering.

"Mmm, Nightie Girl back in her nightie."

I waited, not speaking, just breathing. I felt him shake me a little bit and let out a little chuckle.

"Bella? Hey you, are you sleeping?"

Should I snore? Whenever people faked sleep on sitcoms, they snored. I let out a tiny one. He kissed my neck, my traitor skin pebbling in the wake of his mouth. I sighed in my "sleep", snuggling closer to Edward, hoping he would let me pull this off. The fates were kind tonight as he simply hugged me tighter to his chest and kissed me once more.

"Night Bella," he whispered once more and the night settled around us. I fake snored for a few more minutes until his actual snoring took over and then I sighed heavily.

Confused and numb, I was awake until dawn.

XXX

I had faked it.

Faked it with Wallbanger. There must have been a rule written somewhere, maybe even chiseled into a stone tablet. Thou Shall Not Fake It With Wallbanger. So let it be written, so it be done. I faked it, and now I was doomed to wander the planet forever, Oless.

Was I being overly dramatic? Oh my yes, but if this didn't call for a little drama, what did?

That next morning, I was up and out of bed before Edward was even awake, something that I had not done the entire time we were on our trip together. Usually we stayed in bed until the other one was awake, and then lounge for awhile, laughing and talking. And kissing.

Mmm, the kissing.

But this morning, I ran quickly through the shower and was in the kitchen making breakfast when a sleepy Edward made his way in. Shuffling across the floor in his socks (the floor was always a bit cold) and with his boxers low on his hips, he grinned through his sleep haze and burrowed into my side as I sliced melon and berries.

"What are you doing out here? I was a little lonesome, big bed, no Bella, where'd you go?" he asked, planting a quick kiss on my shoulder.

"I needed to get moving this morning, remember the car is coming for me at ten? I wanted to make you some breakfast before I left," I smiled, turning towards him and giving him a quick kiss. He stopped me from turning away from him and kissed me more thoroughly, not letting me hurry through anything. I could feel myself closing off towards him, almost unable to stop myself. I needed some time to process this, to understand how I was feeling about this, other than miserable. But I adored Edward, and he didn't deserve this. So I let myself fall into the kiss, be swept away by this man once more. I kissed him back feverishly, passionately, and then pulled away just before it could become something more than a kiss.

"Fruit?"

"Huh?"

"Fruit, I made fruit salad, want some?"

"Oh, yeah. Yeah, sounds good. Coffee made?"

"Water is boiling, French press is all ready to go," I answered, patting him on the cheek as I waved him towards the pot. We quietly made our way around the kitchen, talking quietly and stealing a kiss or two when possible. I was trying not to show how messed up my brain was, trying to act as normal as I could. Edward seemed to sense something was up, but was taking his cue from me, letting me lead this morning. We sat outside on the terrace one last time, eating our breakfast together and

watching the breakers roll in.

"Are you glad you came?" he asked as I bit down on my lip at the obvious.

"I'm so glad. This trip was amazing," I smiled, reaching across the table for his hand and giving it a squeeze.

"And now?"

"And now, what? Back to reality, what time does your flight get in tomorrow?" I asked.

"Late, really late. Should I call you or..." he left off, seeming to ask me if he should come over.

"Call me when you get in, no matter what time, ok?" I replied, sipping my coffee and watching the ocean. He was quiet now and this time when I bit down on my lip it was to keep from crying.

XXX

I had packed early in the morning, so when the driver got there, I was ready to go. I was flying back home through the much closer airport in Malaga. An extra connection, but it saved me a lot of driving time. Edward had tried to tempt me to join him in the shower, but I begged off, making up an excuse about finding my passport. I was panicking, pulling away just when we had been getting so close, but this had really thrown me for a loop.

I had put all my O's in one basket so to speak, and the problem wasn't Edward. It was me. The sex had been unreal, amazing, romance novel worthy, and yet still. No. It was enough to make me want to smack myself in the Nerja.

Edward walked my bags out to the car, placing them in the trunk. After speaking to the driver for a moment, he came back to me as I walked through the house one last time. It truly had been a fairy tale, and I had enjoyed every moment of it.

"Time to go?" I asked, leaning back against him when he approached me at the railing on the terrace. I had heard him walk up behind me, and I was glad for the feel of him against me.

"Time to go. You have everything you need?"

"I think so, I wish I could figure out a way to get some of those prawns home though," I laughed and he snorted into my hair.

"I think we can find something at home that will be suitable, maybe we can have the others over next weekend and recreate some of the stuff we ate here?" he asked and I turned to face him.

"Make our debut?" I grinned.

"Yeah sure, I mean, if you want to," he nodded sheepishly, looking at me carefully.

"I do," I answered honestly. And I did. Even without the stupid blessed O, I wanted to be with Edward.

"Ok, debut over prawns. That sounds weird," he grinned and I laughed as he hugged me to him. The driver honked his horn and we made our way out front.

"I'll call you when I'm back, ok?"

"I'll be there. Get some good work done," I instructed and he gave me a little salute. He brushed my hair back from my face and leaned in to kiss me once more.

"Bye Bella."

"Bye Edward," I whispered and got in the car. And away from the fairy tale.

It turns out I did cry.

XXX

Once I was ensconced in my first class seat, I had nothing but hours to contemplate. Strike that. I had nothing but hours to sit and stew and grumble. I had cried in the car on the way to the airport, trying to reassure the driver that I was fine and not stone cold crazy. I cried because, well, there was sure as shit a lot of tension in my body and it had to come out some way. And so it did, through my eyeballs. I was sad and I was frustrated. Now I was done crying.

I tried to read. I had stocked up on trashy magazines in the airport in Malaga. As I paged through them, titles of articles jumped out at me.

How to Know If You Are Having the Best Orgasm You Can Have!

Secret Sex Tips For Your Maximum Orgasm!

How to Kegel Your Way to Multiples...

New Weight Loss Plan, Orgasm Your Way to a Thinner You!

Hoohah, Brain, Backbone, Heart, all I were lined up and throwing stones at Nerves, who was trying her best to hide from the rest.

I slammed down all my new magazines, throwing into the seat back in front of me. I grabbed my laptop, powering it up and putting in my ear buds. I had loaded some movies on before the last flight. I could let my brain escape into a film. Yes, I could do that. I scrolled through some of the movies I had on file... *When Harry Met Sally*, nope, not with that

scene in the deli. *Top Gun*? Nope, that scene where they do it and it's all lit blue with the breeze blowing through the gauzy curtains, no, too close to my fairy tale. *Pretty Woman*? Hell no, Edward?

I found a movie that I could safely watch, took three Tylenol PM, and was asleep before Luke even took Obi Wan to Mos Eisley.

XXX

Somewhere between the connection at LaGuardia and the flight across the country, I got mad. I had caught up on my sleep, was done with the crying bullshit, and now I was good and mad. And on a plane where pacing was discouraged. I had to stay in my seat and try to rationalize what to do with this anger, and how I was going to live my entire life with no hope of an O. And again, overly dramatic? Perhaps, but with no O in sight, it's not too hard to lose focus.

Finally, we touched down at SFO and as I made my way down towards baggage claim, physically and emotionally exhausted, I looked up into the face of someone I never wanted to see again.

Mike. Fucking. Newton. That jackrabbit fucker.

Plastered across the newsstand was his stupid face in a giant ad campaign for Newton Sporting Goods. I stood in front of his giant head, with the biggest shit eating grin on his face as he posed in front of a rock climbing wall, and my anger bubbled over. It now had a face. My anger had a face, and it was a stupid face. I wanted to punch it in the face, but it was only a picture.

Unfortunately, that didn't stop me.

Not a smart thing to do, have a fit in an international airport. Turns out they frown on that. So after a strongly worded warning from TSA, and a promise that I would never attack a poster again, I packed myself in a cab, stinking of airplane, and made my way back to my apartment. I

kicked my own door this time, and as I threw my bags down, I saw the only two things that could make me smile.

Clive and my Kitchenaid.

With a strongly worded Meow, he came running to me, actually jumping into my arms showing affection that he usually only reserved for moments exactly like these. His little cat brain knew when I needed it, and he lavished attention on me like only he could. Shaking his tail and purring incessantly, he butted his head up under my chin and wrapped his big paws around my neck, giving me a tiny kitty hug. Laughing into his fur, I held him closely to me, breathing out heavily. It was good to be home.

"Did Uncle Felix and Uncle Demetri take good care of you? Huh? Who's my good boy?" I cooed, dropping him to the floor and grabbing a quick can of tuna for him, his treat for behaving while I was gone. Turning now from Clive, who was focused solely on his bowl, my eyes laser locked on my Kitchenaid. I was going to shower and then I was going to bake. I needed to bake...

XXX

An unknown amount of time later, I heard a knocking at my door. I had been baking so long I had lost track of all time and felt my back creak and squeak as I lifted my head from my brownies. I was frosting some of Ina's Outrageous Brownies. They took a few extra steps but oh boy, were they worth the trouble. What the hell time was it? I looked around for Clive and didn't see him.

I shuffled to the door, noticing that as I stepped, I was doing a little soft shoe dance, there was sugar all over the floor, brown and white. There was another knock at the door, more insistent this time.

"Coming!" I shouted, rolling my eyes at the irony. As I lifted my hand to open the door, I noticed the chocolate frosting all over my knuckles. Not

one to ever waste, I gave them a heavenly lick as I opened the door.

There stood Edward, looking tired and exhausted.

"What are you doing here, you're not supposed to be home until-"

"Not supposed to be home until late tonight, I know. I took an earlier flight," he stated, pushing past me into my apartment. As I closed the door and turned to face him, I smoothed out my apron a bit, feeling bits of cookie dough clinging to it.

"You took an earlier flight, why?" I asked, soft shoeing across the floor towards him.

He looked around with an amused grin, noting the piles and piles of cookies, the multiple pies on the windowsills. The aluminum wrapped bricks of zucchini bread, pumpkin bread, cranberry orange bread, stacked liked the foundation of a house all along the dining table. He grinned once more, then turned to me, picking a raisin off my forehead that I didn't even know was stuck there.

"Are you gonna tell me why you faked it?"

XXX

I could tell you about how many times my two wonderful betas and I agonized over this last chapter. I could tell you about the Choose Your Own Adventure ending that I almost had planned, and ready to post as an outtake for those that were going to need the fairytale. But when it came right down it, and when I saw this story take shape all those many months ago, I always wanted to write a wrinkle like this. Haven't we all been there? The lead up, the slow burn, the amazing foreplay, and as women, sometimes we almost get in our own way, we psyche ourselves right out of the payoff.

This story is almost over, I split a few chapters up so there will be a few more than I had initially planned but basically we are looking at 3 more, give or take an epi. And Clive is coming back in a big way, he has missed the spotlight and we are gonna give it back to him very soon. I hope you will stick with this story, but I will understand if we need to part ways. But I think you will enjoy the next chapter...

Recs:

Where The Sidewalk Ends, by Bronzehairedgirl620. Set in the 1940's in San Francisco, Edward is imprisoned in Alcatraz. The chapter where he arrives is the most heartwrenching tale, it made me a little teary I must admit. I have always had a secret fear of going to prison for something I didn't do, and so this story is yanking on all my issues. Only a few chapters in, but the characterizations are well crafted and setting is impeccably researched. Get in on this one now please, you will not be sorry!

A Pound of Flesh, by jaxon22. You like your UST? Well, this story has it in spades. Another prisonward, tutor Bella, and hot steamy bad boy-you can't touch him scenarios....this story makes me warm in the storm. I love me some flawed Edward, and this one gives great flaw. Plus, a really nice backstory on Bella and Charlie, I am really enjoying this one.

Lions Eat Lambs, by Raggdoll of Twilight. This story is just in time for Halloween, and it is creeping me out bigtime. Camping in the woods, a strange mansion in the middle of nowhere, Bella's friends go missing, and a handsome man about the manor comes to her rescue? Um yeah, this story is fucked up in the most fantastic way. I love being scared out of my mind, and this one is coming close. The writing is amazing, and I am really intrigued to see where this one is going. The chase, the hunt...(cue thunder) Ooooweeeeeeoooooooo.....

Pistols and Petticoats, by saltire884. I had seen so many of my buddies reading this one, and thank goodness I was able to spend an evening getting caught up on this one. Like many of you, I grew up on the Little House books, and was pleased to see a Bella back in the 1800's calling Charlie, Pa. Well, this Pa shares nothing in common with our beloved Michael Landon. Bella struggles to find her place in this frontier town, with a father that would sooner sell her out to the highest bidder than find her a nice husband. Enter Edward, the loner. Ooo, this one is good. I am really really loving it, def give it 2 petticoats up.

That's it for this edition, I will be updating again in 2 weeks, hopefully sooner if real life cooperates. Your reviews and PM's mean the world to me, especially lately, so for that I thank you. Stick with it folks, not too much longer for us to share this time together.

xoxo

22. Hallelujah Here She Comes

Here it is, the chapter we have all been waiting for. Please enjoy the ridiculous with me...

EPOV

It was all I could do to not start laughing when I saw her, even as tired as I was. It was almost beyond my own comprehension that I'd just flown halfway across the globe for this woman, and yet as soon as I saw her, covered in sugar and errant raisins, I knew I was right to do it. And while the sight of the dried fruit stuck to her forehead was enough to make me laugh out loud, it was far more important at this moment to find out why she had lied. For my perceived benefit certainly, but lied nonetheless.

Now, every man worth his salt can tell when a woman is faking it. And any man worth his salt knows it happens to every guy. And any man worth his salt shouldn't be offended by it. Any man worth his salt...wow, my blood pressure was rising just thinking about all this salt. And there was no salt in this room right now, just a gorgeous woman that I was clearly batshit crazy for, along plenty of sugar. It crunched when I walked in it, it was all over the floor. And why was that exactly?

As I walked further into the room, I glanced around and saw that my girl had been busy. My girl. Jesus that sounded trite, and yet, really fucking fantastic. My eyes took in the pies, the cookies, the brownies, and then holy shit, the bread. Countless stacks of bread wrapped in her signature foil...they were stacked three deep on top of the table. I wonder what kind were in there, cranberry orange? Pumpkin? Zucchini? Zucchini...that's where it all started. She had me at zucchini. Was this what happened when you fell in love? You thought in sentences like, she had me at zucchini? Shit, I was falling hard.

Again, the fact that I had flown home early, skipped shots that I knew I should take, just to make sure my girl (it was like bells going off inside my brain every time I thought about those words) was ok...damn she owned me. And there she stood, beautiful in her disarray, and I wondered why in the world she hadn't been honest with me. I mean, faking it? Not in my bed. No way. I knew the moment it happened, she was so close, I could feel her, all around me, pulsing and warm and wet and slick and wanting and perfect.

And then, something changed. It was her eyes, they changed, and then she closed them to me. She gave a great show, but Bella had always been so real, so perfectly there with me, that as soon as she checked out, I knew it. I needed to know why. Why would she have faked it? Because for me, damn. Being inside this woman was almost more than I could take.

The feeling, the intense all encompassing feeling, of entering this woman for the first time, it was all I could to not come instantly. I mean, we are talking the sexual endurance of a 15 year old, it was almost embarrassing how quickly things could have ended that night. It was just, after years of experiencing amazing sex with fantastic women whenever I wanted, whenever I needed, with Bella it was the sense of sinking into something....*sacred*. It was mind blowing.

I loved this woman.

Not sure when that happened. Somewhere between battling her water pipes and the night we spent under my mother's afghan.

I loved this woman. She needed to know this.

There was nothing in the world, in my world now, more beautiful than the sight of Bella, bare and beneath me. And it was something that I wanted to see again and again. As always when thinking about naked Bella, my mind ran away with itself and now I was shaking my head a bit, trying to remember where I was. Right right, Bella's kitchen,

surrounded by an entire bakery. As I took in the amount of baked goods around me, I realized that a baking frenzy had taken place in the mere hours since she left my side. I wasn't one to use the word frenzy very often, but there is no doubt a frenzy had been entered into, and from the way she was now punching at a defenseless piece of dough on the counter, it would seem the frenzy was still its throes.

Ah the throes. When could I be all up in Bella's throes again?

Focus Masen, your woman is punching dough.

I watched as Bella flipped and kneaded a hunk of white fluffy dough on her countertop, manipulating it around and around, her face flush with color. She was clearly upset, but what in the world could this harmless piece of dough have done to make her so frustrated?

She had yet to answer my question. Should I have framed it a little more carefully, this faking business? Maybe, maybe I should have worked up to it. But fuck it, I just flew across the Atlantic, and then the entire country to ask her this question, I wasn't going to beat around the bush. I walked over to her, brushing a lock of hair behind her ear as she continued to knead and flip. She winced when I touched her, her face tense and jaw set.

"We gonna talk about this?" I asked quietly, dipping my nose to her neck and taking in her scent. Brown sugar, honey, warm and homey. Her body leaned into mine for a scant second, then seemed to catch herself and resumed her bread beatdown.

"What is there to talk about? I don't even know what you're talking about, are you delirious from the time change?" she asked, avoiding my eyes while her telltale blush crept up her neck. I was going to stop this right now.

"Nightie Girl, come on. Talk to me," I prodded, nuzzling now into her neck, feeling my body respond to her proximity as it always did. "If we're

gonna do this, then we need to talk to each other."

She picked up the dough one more time and threw it against the wall. It dripped and rolled down, sticky like those creepy crawly things I used to play with when I was a kid. She whirled about to face me, her face still red but her eyes blazing.

"What was that going to be?" I asked, nodding to the dough.

"Brioche, it was going to be brioche," she answered quickly, her tone frantic.

"I bet it would have been good."

"It's a lot of work, almost too much."

"We could try it again. I'd be glad to help."

"You don't know what you're offering, do you have any idea how complicated it is? How many steps there are? How long it might take?"

"Good things come to those who wait."

"Christ Edward, you have no idea, I want this so badly, probably even more than you."

"They make croutons out of it, right?"

"Wait, what? What the hell are you talking about?"

"Brioche, right? It's like, some kind of bread, isn't it? Hey, quit banging your head against the counter," I panicked, watching her thump her forehead repeatedly against the granite, getting more flour all over her face.

Still gorgeous though. But I didn't want a gal with brain damage, so I attempted to intervene between her and the countertop before the granite won.

XXX

BPOV

He knew. He knew and he'd flown all the way home to find out why. How did he know? How could he have possibly known, after the performance of a lifetime I'd put on when I put out. He knew.

Damn he's good...

Heart had damn near leapt out of Chest when she saw him at the door. Hoohah was close behind, involuntarily clenching at the sight of Wallbanger. Brain immediately analyzed the situation and pronounced him a worthy candidate, noting the time and distance he had committed to discovering the cause of concern. Backbone straightened immediately, knowing innately that proper posture created a better looking rack...could you blame her. Nerves...fluttered.

And now here he was, in my kitchen in that green North Face pullover that made his eyes limey and his entire body look cuddly and warm and sexy and virile and kick-me-in-the face fantastic. And here I was, covered in honey and raisins banging my head on the countertop after killing my brioche.

Killing my brioche. What a great name for a...*focus Bella!*

Why. Why. He wants to know why. I chanced a quick look at him in between bangs...ahem...and saw that he was getting concerned. As was I, my head was really starting to hurt. I was tired, overwhelmed and underorgasm'd. And a touch slaphappy?

After one last bang, I straightened up, then listed a little left. I caught my balance, drew in a breath, and let fly.

"Why. Why? You want to know why?"

"I'd like to, are you done banging?"

"God bless it, no more banging. Ok, why. Why? Here goes," I started, pacing in a tight circle, dodging chocolate chips and pecans that had congregated close to the counter. I spied Clive in the corner, batting a walnut back and forth between his giant paws. Nuts all over the floor, nuts in my head, fitting.

"Know anything about sporting goods Edward?"

EPOV

She was circling the counter like a shark, mumbling. I could pick out a few words, and so far what I'd caught was, "Newton...one night...jackrabbit...it went away...night off...Catalano...not even Clooney...hiatus...Oprah...lonely...single...not even Clooney...Jason Bourne...almost Clooney...pink nightie...banging..." and by then I was as dizzy as she was. I'd attempted to grab her each time she circled near me, but she was always out of reach. Close, but then off on another tangent. She came near me, almost close enough to grab, but then off in another spiral.

My own head hurt just watching her, and I hadn't been anywhere near the counter.

She made one last pass, this time muttering, "Spanish fairytale with prawns," and I finally caught hold of her. She tripped over a muffin tin, which was thankfully empty, and fell into my arms. I held her close, breathing her in, feeling her heart racing even through her shirt. Which was a tiny little tank top, a thing of beauty.

"Bella, sweets, you gotta tell me what's going on. The mumbling, it's cute and all, but we're not really getting anywhere," I teased, pressing my hands into the small of her back, holding her as close to me as I could. She pulled back a little, resisting my embrace, and looked me straight in the eyes.

"I faked it because I haven't had an orgasm in what feels like 108 years," she stated matter of factly.

"Come again?"

"I'm going across the hall to kick your door now," she sighed, pulling away and shuffling through the sugar town on the floor as I smacked myself in the face at my choice of words.

"Wait wait wait, you what? You haven't had a what?" I started after her, grabbing for her hand as she turned back to me with a defeated look in her eyes.

"An orgasm Edward, an orgasm. The Big O, the climax, the happy ending. No orgasms, not for this nightie girl. Mike Newton can give me a 5% discount whenever I want one, but in return, he took my O," she sniffled, tears now coming to her eyes as her entire face came over sad. "I'm, I'm one of the cold ones Edward."

"Cold ones? What? Come here please, get your dramatic buns over here," I encouraged, pulling her unwillingly back into the kitchen. I wrapped her up in my arms, automatically beginning to rock her back and forth as she let out tiny little sobs. She began to speak again, her words punctuated by little Bella sobs and giant Bella wails.

"You're so...so...great...and I can't...I can't...you're so good...in...bed...and everywhere else...and I can't...I can't...God...you're so hot ...when you came...so hot...and you came home...and I killed my brioche...and I...I...I think...I love you."

All stop. Breathe.

"Bella, hey, stop crying you gorgeous girl. Mind running that last part by me again?"

BPOV

I just told Edward Wallbanger I loved him for the first time. While my snot soaked into his North Face.

I breathed in his scent, then peeled myself off and headed towards the wall, beginning to peel off the dough that was stuck there. Nerves sprang to life, for once working for us. Could I cover? Could I rally?

"Which part?" I asked the wall, and Clive, who had stopped playing with his nuts to listen in.

"That last part," I heard him say, his voice strong and clear.

"I killed my brioche?" I hedged.

"You really think that's the part I'm asking about?"

"Um, no?"

"Try again."

"I don't wanna."

"Bella..wait, what's your middle name?"

"Marie."

"Bella Marie," he warned, in a deep voice that unexpectedly made me giggle.

"Brioche is really good, when it's not flavored with wall," I blurted out, my exhaustion mixing with my confession for a nice little buzz.

"Turn around please," he asked, and so I did. He was leaning against the counter, unzipping his snotty North Face.

"I'm a little jetlagged, so a quick recap if I could. One, you seem to have lost your orgasm, yes?"

"Yes," I mumbled, watching as he took off his fleece, throwing it over the back of one of my chairs.

"Two, brioche is really hard to make, yes?"

"Yes," I breathed, not able to take my gaze away from him. Underneath the North Face was a white button down. Which was good enough on its own, but couple that with the way he was slowly and methodically rolling up the sleeves? It was mesmerizing.

"And three, you think you love me?" he asked, his voice deep and thick, like molasses and ginger and all things afghan. Blanket, not country.

"Yes," I whispered, knowing it was 100% the truth. I loved Edward Wallbanger. Big. Giant. Dur.

"You think or you know?"

"I know."

"Well now, that's something to consider, isn't it?" he replied, his eyes dancing as he walked towards me.

EPOV

There was a time in my life when those words would have sent me running for the hills. And now, when spoken by *this* woman that had

careened into my life with a bang on my door and an axe to grind, it made me feel...hmm...how did I feel?

Comfortable. Which was weird, because I always equated that word with settled and boring, the sexual equivalent of an easy chair. But no, comfortable now meant all kinds of different things. Comfortable in my own skin, especially with her skin against mine. Comfortable with something being still new and weird and undiscovered...and yet *comforting*.

Yeah, comfortable was a good place to be. I walked towards her, seeing her eyes widen as I took her in. I placed my hands on her shoulders, dipping my fingers underneath the straps of her apron. Which read *You Should See My Scones...*

"You really have no idea, do you?" I asked, moving my hands so that that they now spread out along her collarbone, brushing my thumbs across the very tops of her breasts. Her breathing quickened, her eyes finally sparking to life, losing a bit of their desperateness.

"No idea about what?" she murmured, as I pressed her against the wall. I delighted in the feel of her, the way I was able to touch her with such a sense of *comfortable*. She was my own comfortable, and no one else would ever touch her in this way again. Just me.

"How thoroughly you own me Nightie Girl," I said, leaning in so I could whisper this part in her ear. "And I *know* I love you enough to want you to have your happy ending."

And then I kissed my girl.

BPOV

And then he kissed me.

Heart was in heaven.

Kissed me like it was a fairy tale, even though in this fairy tale I had dough sticking to my back and a cat with a paw-full of nuts. But that didn't stop me from kissing him right back as though my life depended on it.

He loved me. But wait, what's this? He was backing away...where was he going?

"I'm going to do something I never thought I would do," he sighed mournfully, looking at all the stacks of bread on the table. With a deep breath and a grimace, in one fell swoop he knocked them all off the table and onto the floor, bread raining down in foil covered bricks all around us. I can't be sure, but I think I heard a tiny whine escape his mouth as he watched them hit the floor, before turning to me, eyes dark and dangerous. He grabbed me and swung me up on the table before him, nudging my legs apart to stand between them.

"Do you have any idea how much fun we're going to have?" he asked, slipping his hands inside my apron, warm and a little rough on my tummy.

"What are you up to Wallbanger?"

"An O has been lost, and I'm a sucker for a challenge," he grinned, pulling me to the edge of the table and snugly into him. With his hands behind my knees, he wrapped them around his waist, kissing me again, lips and tongue hot and persistent.

"It's not going to be easy, she's pretty lost," I protested between kisses, worrying his buttons open, exposing his Spanish suntan.

"I'm done with easy."

"You should print that on cards."

"Print this, why do you still have clothes on?" he asked, laying me back across the table as I grinned up at him. My foot hit the flour sifter and sent it crashing to the floor, after dusting us thoroughly. Edward's hair looked like a biscuit, powdery and puffy. I coughed and a plume of flour came out, making him laugh out loud. The laughing stopped when I reached down for him, finding him hard yet still covered in denim. He groaned, my favorite sound in the world.

"Fuck Bella, I love your hands on me," he said through his teeth, dipping his mouth down towards my neck and leaving a trail of white hot kisses across my skin. His tongue swept out across me, underneath the edge of my apron. Hands quickly found the bottom of my tank top, and it went sailing across the room, into the kitchen sink. Within seconds, a pair of shorts found themselves swimming alongside, quickly followed by a pair of jeans and white button down.

The apron, well, we were having a little trouble with that one.

"Are you a fucking sailor? Who tied this knot, Popeye?" he seethed, struggling to get it undone. In his struggles, he managed to knock over a bowl of orange marmalade glaze, which was now dripping down the table and onto the floor. My contribution was to flip over a carton of raisins while I craned my neck around trying to see the knot behind me.

"Oh fuck the apron Edward, look here," I insisted, snapping the front of my bra and tossing it to the floor. I pulled down the top of the apron, arranging and propping up my cleavage. Pie eyed, he looked at my now naked breasts and went in for the kill. I was pushed roughly back onto the table once more, his insistent mouth now dragging down my neck, attacking my skin like it had done something personal to him and he was exacting his revenge. And a lustful revenge it was.

Dipping a finger into the marmalade puddle, he traced a path from one breast to the other, circling and pressing the sticky into my skin. Bending his head, he tasted one, then the other, both of us groaning at the same time.

"Fucking hell Bella, you taste good."

"I'm glad I wasn't making hot wings this afternoon, this could be a different story...wow, that feels good-" I sighed, as he responded to my smart assery with an actual bite.

"These would be extra spicy," he laughed as I rolled my eyes.

"Want me to get you some celery to cool you down?"

"No one's cooling down in this apartment, not anytime soon," he promised, grabbing the bottle of honey from the nearby counter and pulling aside my apron. Without missing a beat, he got my panties all wet. And not in the way you think, although there was that...

As I watched, he poured, actually poured the honey all over me, covering my panties and making me squeal. He stood back amid the mess to admire.

"Look at that, those are ruined. They're going to have to come off," as he came close again. I stopped him with one marmalade foot.

"You first Mister Man," I instructed, nodding towards his flour covered boxers. He raised an eyebrow, and dropped the boxers. Standing naked in my wreck of a kitchen, he was insanely cute.

In that instant, Heart, Brain, Backbone and Hoohah lined up on one side of the playground. They beckoned for Nerves, waving her over like a game of Red Rover. I looked at Edward, naked and floury and perfect, and I sighed with a giant smile. Nerves finally, blessedly, scampered over, and we were finally all on the same page.

"I fucking love you Wallbanger."

"I love you too Nightie Girl, now lose the panties and gimme some sugar," he grinned back. I looked around.

"It's all around us," I laughed, sitting up and sliding my panties down my honey dripped legs. I threw them towards him and they hit his chest with a loud whack, the honey still dripping down.

"We're going to need one helluva shower after all this," I remarked, as he wrapped me in his sticky arms.

"That'll be round two," he smiled, picking me up and carrying me back towards the bedroom, my body aligned with his, only the apron between us. And that wasn't going to keep us apart for long.

Did I need an O? I mean, was it necessary for life? Being near Edward, being so close to him, wrapped up in his arms and feeling him move inside me, was it enough?

For now, it was. I loved him you see...

EPOV

She was stuck with me. She was actually almost stuck *to* me with all the stuff I had thrown on her, but stuck with me for sure. Was this how easy it always was when you fell in love? Because this was simple and easy, and I wasn't kidding when I told her I was a sucker for a challenge. My girl was going to get off, and I was going to get to be the guy who was there when it happened.

I carried her into the bedroom, dropping her down onto the bed. Her tits bounced perkily when she hit the mattress and I watched mesmerized. She also bounced towards the headboard a bit too hard, and it...well...it banged. A little.

"A preview?" she laughed.

"A preview," I nodded, and folded up her apron so I could see her, really see her. She sighed and threw her arms over her head, completely giving herself to me. She lazed backwards, with a giant smile on her

face. Beautiful. I let my fingers walk down over her tummy, her hips, her thighs, finally reaching her. Her. With a gentle nudge, she let her legs fall open, and I drew in a breath at the sight of her. Honey. Sugar. Bella.

I licked my lips, and sank to my knees.

This was my new favorite place to be on earth. And I had been damn near everywhere. But perched between Bella's legs? This was it.

I could feel her, feel her begin to build. If I touched her a certain way, moved my lips in a certain way, things began to change. She was certainly turned on, that much I could tell. But it was this way in Spain for her, so what was different? She seemed much more, relaxed. I explored. Twisting and turning my fingers, I found that spot, the one that made her back arch and her moans grow deep. I groaned into her, causing her to arch off the bed again, my lips and tongue finding her once more, deliberate against her. Her hands sought her breasts, and as I watched, she teased her nipples, bringing them taut once more. She was beautiful, and I could tell this time she was close.

She was moaning and groaning now, thrashing about on the bed, her voice getting louder and louder.

BPOV

Once more, I had the distinct honor of feeling his mouth, his wonderful mouth, on me. I seized up, my entire body tensing at the sizzle of energy that ran through me, and then I relaxed into it. I started to feel, really feel everything that was going on inside at that moment. Love, I felt love. And I felt loved...

Here, in the daytime, where nothing could be hidden, everything was on display, and covered in messy stuff, I was being loved by this man. No fairy tale, no waves crashing, no flickering candles. Real life. A real life fairy tale where I was being loved by this man. And I mean looooved by this man, Jesus he was good at this.

Tongue. Lips. Fingers. Hands. All of it, dedicated to me, and my pleasure. A girl could get used to this.

I could feel the sweet tension begin to build, but this time my body was receiving it differently. My body, perfectly in tune for once, was ready, and in my mind, behind closed eyes, I saw myself begin to approach that cliff. In my head, I grinned, because I knew this time I was gonna catch that bitch. And then? Really amazing things began to happen down below. Long gorgeous fingers pressed inside me, twisting, and curving, and finding that secret spot. Lips and tongue encircled that other spot, sucking and licking, pressing and pulsing. Tiny pricks of light began to dance behind my eyelids, intense and wild.

"Oh God...Edward...that's so...good...don't...stop...don't...stop..."

I groaned loud, louder, and then louder still, unable to contain the sounds I was making, it was so good, so good, so very very good, so close, so close...

And then the screaming began...

And it was not my own.

EPOV

Out of the corner of my eye, I became aware of some kind of furry missile, racing across the floor.

And then I felt, could actually feel, ten individual claws sink into my back all at once.

Like some kind of pussified dive bomb, her poo cat ran at me, leapt, and dug into my back, attacking me from behind.

The scream I let out was less than manly, but impossible to contain. I ran from her bedroom into the hallway, then back in again, the little

fucker still latched on like some kind of rabid coonskin back cap, and would not shake off. He had his arms...does a cat have arms?...wrapped around my neck that in other circumstances would have seemed like an adorable cat hug. But right now, he meant business.

Bella, naked except for her apron, came running after me, trying to get me to slow down, but with those ten claws digging deeper in, I continued running from room to room.

I was literally trying to run away from pussy, something I had never done in my life.

BPOV

I was closer to the O than I had been in months, and Clive decided to play protector-cat again. Years and years ago, whenever I was...ahem...intimate with a man...if I reached a certain vocal level, he would somehow infer that his mommy was being attacked, and would jump to my defense. Eventually, he outgrew this habit, but since the O had been on hiatus, apparently he was not ready to abandon his protector post. So, now I was tasked with chasing a naked Wallbanger through my apartment while Clive caterwauled loud enough to beat the band.

Are you kidding me with this shit?

If I could have watched from outside, and not been involved, I would have peed myself.

As it was, I was having a hard time stifling myself listening to the screams Edward was letting out. I really must love him.

Finally, I backed Wallbanger into a corner, turned him around, resisted the urge to squeeze buns, and pried Clive loose. I quickly headed out to the living room and deposited him on the sofa with a thunk, patting him

on the head once as a thank you for the defense, unwarranted as it was. Clive responded with a prideful meow, and began licking his whiskers.

I went back into the kitchen to find Edward, still huddled against the wall. I appraised him, his wild eyes, as he leaned against the wall, wincing at his back. My gaze was drawn lower.

Unbelievable.

He.

Was.

Still.

Hard.

Mother fuck him *and* John Wayne, this man was going to be mine forever.

EPOV

Even with the intermission, as the pain in my back subsided, a new pain settled in. An ache rather, deep and low inside. I still wanted her desperately, but was she shellshocked by this feline sideshow? She couldn't still want to...in the words of my 13 year old self...do it?

I saw her eyes travel down my body, reminiscent of the first time we were face to face. Her eyes widened, and I looked down. Yep, I was still good to go. I nodded sheepishly, a little shame coloring my cheeks as I realized that this was how attracted to her I was. Not wind or rain or sleet or snow, not even flying pussy could keep me from my mission.

To fuck that orgasm right out of her and into the open, where we could both enjoy it.

Bella tried once more to remove her apron, but the knot stubbornly refused to budge. I saw frustration, anger, and actual crazy flash in her eyes as she struggled with it.

"You're still hard," she blurted out, breathing heavily as she messed with her apron.

"Yeah."

"That's amazing."

"You're amazing."

"Ah fuck," she huffed, giving up on the knot.

"Yes please."

She paused for a split second, flashed me a wicked grin, then whirled the apron around to her back in one swift movement. She leapt across the room, her apron flying behind her like a cape and crashed into me, driving me up against the wall as she assaulted me. In the very best way. I caught her as she wrapped around me like a feisty blanket, kissing me furiously. She was crazed and wild, her hands grasping me with a fury. Nails raked down my chest making me gasp.

"Your back ok?" she asked in between kisses.

"I'll live. Your cat however..."

"He's protective. He thought you were hurting mommy."

"Was I?"

"Oh no, quite the opposite."

"Really?"

"Hell yes," she cried, sliding against me, manipulating my body against hers, honey and sugar slick and gritty between us.

She dragged herself down my body, stopping to kiss the very tip of me with her sweet lips, taking my breath away. She pulled me down onto the floor with her and flipped me onto my back so quickly a puff of flour clouded the air. There, in the middle of her kitchen, naked and glorious, with marmalade dotting her breasts, she straddled me. Raising herself up just a little bit, she caught my hands and encouraged me to grab her hips.

"You might want to hang for this," she whispered, and sank down onto me.

"Hi."

"Hi," I whispered back, as she surrounded me.

It's quite possible that I died a little.

BPOV

Sometime in the moments between Edward leaning in the corner and the knot that refused to die, Nerves stepped forward and said, "Hell, let's get this."

Driven by pure carnal frustration, I pounced. Crossed the kitchen in seconds and literally pounced on Edward. And now, the feeling of him inside me, underneath me, hands strong on my hips, it was almost more than I could bear.

Almost.

If I had my druthers, my druthers might say something like, "he slid into me and it felt like home" or "I felt complete once again as we were joined in the most intimate way".

But today, drutherless, all I could think was,

"God *damn*, that dick feels fine."

Forgive me for my crass.

I arched my back and flexed my hips experimentally...once...twice...a third time.

It really was true what they said about riding a bike. This was something my body remembered quickly.

With my stupid apron riding bitch behind me, I began to move above Edward, feeling him move inside me, responding and rewarding, thrusting and never relenting. Driving, pushing, we moved together, actually even moving across the kitchen floor a little. He sat up underneath me, moving deeper into me as I cried out. My hands were wild in his hair, it was standing straight up beneath my fingers as I took hold, anchoring myself as I closed my eyes and began.

Began that long march towards the edge of the cliff.

I could see the edge, high above the raging waters. As I peeked over the edge, I saw her. O. She waved at me, diving under and above the water like a sexual porpoise. Crafty little bitch.

Edward was kissing my neck, licking and sucking my skin, making me insane.

I stuck one foot over the edge, pointing my toes directly at her, waving little circles in the air in her direction.

Little circles.

I pushed Edward back onto the floor, grabbing his hand in mine, and brought it to between my legs. I rode him hard, pressing my fingers

against his against me, my cries getting louder as we sped up our rocking, both of us, in tune and right there. Right there. Right right right....there....

"Bella, fucking hell Bella, Jesus, you...are...amazing...love...you....so...much...killing...me..."

That's the little extra that I needed.

In my head, I took one step back, then dove. Not jumped. Dove. Executed a perfect swan dive, thank you very much, straight into the water. Clean and true, I grabbed onto her and didn't let go as I slipped into the water.

The O had returned.

White noise filled my ears as my toes and fingers got the news first. They tingled, tiny fizzles and sparks of energy spinning upwards and outwards, driving through every nerve and every cell, starving for this for months. These cells told other cells, communicating to their sisters that something fantastic was happening. The message grew, spreading across the continent of Bella, Liver talking to Pancreas, one Ovary screamed to her twin, " Let's give her duds for awhile so they can enjoy themselves!" Lungs told Appendix, who was the only one who didn't get caught up in the storm that was taking over the world.

Vestigial organs, pffft.

Color exploded behind my eyelids, bursting brightly into tiny little sensory fireworks as they continued to spread to every corner of my body. Pure pleasure shot through, pulsing and slicing through me, filling me up as I shook and shimmied on top of Edward, who hung on through the entire thing.

I don't know if he could see the choirs of dirty angels that were singing, but no matter. I could. And it was the definition of bliss.

O came back, and she brought friends. Wave after wave crashed through me, as Edward and I continued to press and twist, arching into every single one of them. My head was thrown back as I continued to scream lustfully, not caring who or what could hear me in my own House of Orgasm.

I opened my eyes at one point to see Edward below me, frantic and happy, smiling big as he stayed with me through it all, his strenuous effort clear across his face as the flour in his hair turned into a wonderful little paste.

He was becoming paper-mache.

Still onward I thrashed, passing through the land of multiples and into some kind of no man's land, passing Six and Seven, my body beginning to become limp with ecstasy.

But O brought one more friend. She brought along G, the Holy Grail.

Stuttering like an idiot, I grasped hold of Edward, holding on for dear life as the biggest tidal wave of love and toe-curling heat hit me like a ton of bricks. Sensing I needed help for this one, Edward sat up once more, which positioned him even more uniquely. He found a spot deep inside, hidden to most, leaning into me and driving himself against me over and over again as I held my breath and hung on tight.

I would swear on a stack of bibles, this one was so powerful we made the earth move.

I opened my eyes once more, seeing light spark around the room as oxygen back rushed in. I babbled incomprehensibly into his chest as he rocked into me again and again, finally finding his own wonderful brand of amazing somewhere deep inside me.

I held onto him, feeling the waves finally retreat as he sunk into me, both of us shaking now. As we panted, I clung to him as the pleasure

left and the love simply rushed in, filling me back up again. My mouth was too tired to move, literally we had taken my breath away. So I did the best I could, I placed his hand over my heart and kissed his sweet face. He understood, and kissed me back.

I hummed with happiness. Humming didn't take as much effort.

Utterly spent and exhausted, punch drunk and covered in sticky sweat, I lay back against his legs, not caring a bit how contorted and ridiculous I looked as tension tears ran down the sides of my face and into my ears. Sensing this was not the most comfortable position for me, but also knowing I was unable to unbend my pretzel legs, he moved from underneath me, leaving my body but then cradling it to his own, cuddling me to him on the kitchen floor.

We lay quietly, not speaking for awhile. I noticed Clive sitting inside the doorway to the bedroom licking his paws quietly.

All was good.

When movement seemed possible, I tried to sit up, the room spinning a little. He kept one strong arm around me as we appraised the situation, the overturned bowls and bottles, the scattered bread, the chaos that was my kitchen. I laughed quietly and turned to him. He was silently watching me with happy eyes.

"Should we clean this up?" he asked, nodding to the mess.

"No, let's shower."

"Kay," he answered, helping me up. I cracked my back like an old lady, wincing at the good hurt that my body felt. I started for the bathroom, then changed direction, heading for the fridge. I grabbed a bottle of Gatorade and tossed it to him.

"What's this for?"

"You're gonna need it Wallbanger," I winked, flouncing my apron on my way to the shower.

Now that the O was back, I was wasting no time in summoning her again.

EPOV

She would be the death of me.

I watched her backside head towards the bathroom, swishing her way through the clutter on the floor, straightening a picture that hung crookedly on the wall as she walked by. Starting after her, I noticed that all of the pictures were a little crooked. Weird. I caught sight of Clive in the doorway, regarding me silently. As I approached the bathroom, taking a swig of Gatorade, he suddenly flopped onto the floor, rolling over on his back. He seemed to be waving me over with his paws. I walked closer, waiting for another attack. He wiggled on his back, continuing to wave me over. I knelt down right next to him, cautiously reaching out one hand. Winking at me, I swear to Christ he did, he wiggled a little closer. Knowing this could still be a trap, I gently rumped the fur on his belly, smiling a little as he began to purr.

Huh.

"You coming? Cause I sure did...", I heard Bella call over the rush of the water, laughing at her own joke. Giving Clive another scratch, I stood up and headed inside to find her already underneath the spray, the apron finally conquered and abandoned on the floor.

I looked at her, naked and covered in bubbles, and drew in a deep breath. She was smiling, and looking at me devilishly, especially once my body responded to her gaze. I stepped inside, her hands immediately sneaking around to my backside, pressing her body into me.

"This is nice," she murmured into my skin.

"Yeah."

We were silent, feeling the water beat down around us. I held her close, feeling her chest rise and fall with each breath. I had my arms full of Bella, and I wanted nothing else. Except maybe one thing.

"Bella?"

"Hmm?"

"Is any of that bread I threw on the floor...well..."

"Yes?"

"Is any of it zucchini?"

"Yes Edward, there's zucchini bread,"

Silence once again, but for the water.

"Bella?"

"Hmm?"

"I didn't think I could love you more, but I really kind of do,"

"I'm glad Edward, now gimme some sugar,"

XXX

Intercepted from NBC nightly news, local San Francisco affiliate.

This afternoon San Francisco was rocked with several earthquakes, beginning with a series of smaller quakes and

building to a larger rumble that resulted in several water main breaks and one cable car accident. Oddly, this pattern was repeated several times over the course of the afternoon, ending finally before the evening commute. Will this pattern continue into the evening hours? Stay tuned...

Yes, it's true. The earth actually moved. Jesus, I need help. I had the best time writing this chapter, and whether or not it worked for you...shit, it really worked for me. So I hope you enjoyed. There was a time in my life when I had a cat who did exactly this, would protect whenever she thought someone was "hurting" mommy. Just so you know...

I haven't been reading as much fic lately, I started a 52 Week Book Challenge, a book a week for a year. It's been wonderful, but has definitely been taking up the time I used to spend reading fic. However I do have 3 remarkable recs for you this go around, I hope you take some time to read them as they are wonderful.

Creatures of Habit, by ezrocksangel. Where this came from was one of my all time favorites, Creature of Habit. Seriously, this fic is on my Top Ten all time. I badgered and pestered her all last winter to write a sequel, I needed more, I craved more. And because of some lovely readers than won her in the Fandom Gives Back auction, she has done just that. Picking up a few years after Creature Of Habit left off, we find Edward and Bella, still together and living the vamp lifestyle. But is there trouble afoot? The Volturi is very interested in this power couple, will they be able to recruit them? As is everything that she writes, this is a new favorite of mine. If you haven't read the first story, start there, fall in love with these characters, and then join in me reading her new work. Love, love, love.

We Come To Life Beneath The Stars, by Lillybellis. I started this a few weeks ago and have been pacing myself, as I am really enjoying this one. I am only a few chapters in, but I can tell this is my brand of fic. Give me a flawed and mysterious Edward, especially if he is a little bit of an asshole, and I am there. Couple that with a newly single Bella, I am

hooked. I am actually really fascinated by a secondary story within this fic, the relationship Bella has with her mother. This is well crafted and intricately woven, I am really looking forward to where this is going.

Metaphysics, by Anais Mark. I saw this one mentioned months and months ago, and it somehow became buried in my TBR file. Thank goodness it cyber-tumbled out because I am so invested in this fic now, its shockingly good. This story bounces back and forth centuries, a mystery so deeply buried it is frustrating as hell not knowing what's going on, and I love when that happens. Set in London, it entertains the idea of someone else discovering Carlisle's secret, years and years ago. It stands to reason that Bella can't have been the only one to ever think...hmmm, something is off here, isn't it? Please please please read this one, you will not be disappointed.

OK chickens, that's it for me. I am working hard on the next chapter, and if things go the way they are shaping up, this could be the last one. But lemons lemons lemons...all I can tell you. You know I love a good lemon, we have waited long enough. Let the lemons roll. Plus an epi that I can't wait to write.

Love you ladies,

Alice

xoxo

23. When Love Comes To Town

Bang away chickens, bang away...

XXX

ONE DAY AND NIGHT

4:37pm

"Is that the soap? Don't slip on the soap."

"I won't slip on the soap."

"I don't want you to slip, be careful."

"I won't slip on the soap, now turn back around and be quiet."

"Quiet? Not possible, not when you...mmm...and then when you...ooohhh...and then when you...ow, that hurt Edward, you ok back there?"

"I slipped on the soap."

I started to turn around to see if he was indeed ok when he suddenly pressed me up against the shower wall, holding my hands flat against the tile. Lips tickled and water sprinkled down my skin, across my shoulders as his body flexed against mine. Thoughts of runaway soap slipped from my mind as he slipped inside me, hard and thick and delicious. My breath left me in a gasp, amplified by the tiles walls, made sexy by the water falling, and quickly followed by another gasp as he proceeded to thrust into me, achingly slow and purposeful, hands now gripping my hips firmly. I threw my head backwards, turning my face to the side, and was rewarded with the sight of Edward, naked and wet. His brow was furrowed, mouth open as he invaded completely and

without apology. I spiraled fast, awareness and clear thought narrowing down to a pinpoint before exploding once again, wordless words falling out of my mouth and down into the water, circling towards the drain.

Now that O was back, she didn't dally. She arrived promptly and without question, shattering the memory of days and weeks and months of waiting and crying, begging and pleading, now rewarding me with a steady constant parade of O's that left me scrambled and silly, boneless and ready for more.

Groaning into my ear at the feel of me around him, shivering and pulsing, he failed to slow his roll. He knew inherently, as I knew, that his girl was good for a few more. And so, with agonizing dexterity, he planted a sloppy kiss on my neck, left my body, spun me quickly, and was back inside before I could say, "Hey, where'd you go?"

"No where Nightie Girl, I'm not going anywhere anytime soon," he muttered in my ear, roughly grabbing my bottom and lifting me against the wall, using his weight to crush me against the tile, holding me to him and holding me inside. His body flexed while mine flattened, our slippery skin feeling indescribable against the each others. How had I stayed away from this man as long as I had? No matter, he was here, inside me, and about to crash down another O parade throughout. I pressed back against him just enough, opening the space between just enough to gaze down, lust clouding my vision but not so much that I couldn't see the devilish sight of him entering me, over and over again, filling me up like no man ever had.

Now glancing down himself to see what had me so transfixed, he was captivated as well, and a sound rather like "Mmph" left his mouth. His movements sped up, chasing it down, that feeling, that tipping point that felt so close to pain and so close to perfection. Those green eyes, now filled with lust and fire flew back up to mine as we both threw ourselves off that cliff again together.

Seizing. Freezing. Locked and unloaded. We came together with a roar and a grunt and a groan that left my throat raw and my pussy thrilled.

Thrilled pussy...what a great name for a...mmm

XXX

6:41pm

Walking around my apartment in only a towel, dodging flour piles and raisin clumps, Edward was still a sight to behold. When he skidded on a patch of marmalade and bumped into the counter, I laughed so hard I had to sit down on the couch. He stood in front of me with a slice of zucchini bread as I laughed, looking down with an amused look on his face. I continued to laugh, and in doing so my towel slipped down, revealing more than a little of my assets. At the sight of tits, two things happened. His eyes popped, and something else popped. Popped out. I raised an eyebrow at this latest development.

"You realize you are turning me into some kind of machine?" he teased, nodding down at his HiThere that was poking through the towel. My eyes widened and my hoohah, she didn't widen, because, well, gross. But she definitely took notice. And may have saluted. If hoohahs can salute. Edward took the time to carefully place his zucchini bread safely on the coffee table.

"How cute is that, it's like he's poking his head out from behind a curtain!"

"You may not be aware, but as a general rule, no man likes the word cute in the same sentence as his junk."

"But he is cute, uh oh, where'd he go?"

"He's shy now, still not cute, but shy."

"Shy my ass, he wasn't so shy in the shower a little bit ago."

"He needs his ego stroked."

"Wow."

"No really, I think you'll find he is quite receptive to stroking."

"Now see, I was thinking maybe he just needed a good tongue lashing, but if you think stroking will suffice then..."

"No no, I think a tongue lashing is quite in order, he...God *damn* Bella..."

I leaned in, brought the shy one forth, and immediately surrounded him with my mouth. Feeling him grow harder still, I settled myself on the edge of the couch, wrapping my arms around him and dropping the towel. Pulling him closer, and therefore deeper into me, I hummed in satisfaction as I felt his hands come up into my hair and trace tiny patterns on my face. Reverently, he placed his fingers on my eyelids, cheeks, temples, finally letting one hand bury itself in my hair and the other, well, fucking hell. He held himself, as I concentrated all my attention on the tip of him, he stroked himself at the base, something that was quite possibly the sexiest thing I had ever seen. Seeing his strong hand, wrapped around himself as he moved in and out of my mouth, holy fucking Christ.

Sexy isn't the right word for it, it is inadequate in the face of the pure erotica that was being played out in front of me. And speaking of in my face, I hummed again in appreciation, feeling myself getting worked up just at the play my mouth was getting. Lucky mouth.

Falling back against the couch, pulling him with me, he now used both hands to brace against the back of the couch, thrusting in and out of my mouth with conviction, the angle allowing him to penetrate me more deeply, and yet making it easier for me to take more of him in. I grabbed his backside, clutching him to me, feeling the thrill of attending to him,

knowing it was me, only me, that got to have him in this way.

I could feel him getting close. I was already beginning to know his tells intimately. I wanted him again. I was selfish this way. Releasing him with a final strong pull, I pushed him down onto the couch and quickly straddled him. Feeling me against him, he thrust upwards as I sank down, and then there was that moment, you know that moment? When everything feels stretched and pulled, in the most delicious way. Your body reacts, something that shouldn't be inside is now inside and for a split second, it's alien, unknown. And then your skin senses a returning champion, your muscle memory takes over, and then it's so good, that feeling of fullness, of wonder and awe.

And then you begin to move.

Grabbing onto his shoulders to get leverage, I rolled my hips into his, noticing not for the first time that he had been intelligently designed with my exact measurements in mind. He fit inside me perfectly, two halves of a whole, some kind of sexual Lego. He sensed it too, I could tell. He placed his hand flat against my chest, directly on top of my heart, feeling it race at the sensation of his hands on me.

"Stunning," he whispered as I rode him, sweet and hot. He kept my heart in his hand as I rocked into him, his other hand on my hip, guiding me, positioning me, feeling me attend to us both. He struggled to stay with me, to keep his eyes open as his release rushed towards him. I took his hand from my heart and placed it further down, where he began to trace those damnable perfect circles.

"Jesus, Edward...oh God...so...soooo good...I...fuck..."

"I love watching you fall apart," he groaned, and I did. And he did. And we did.

I collapsed into him, watching as the room stopped spinning and the feeling returned to my fingers and toes, warmth snaking through my

body as he held me to him.

"Tongue lashing. What an idea," he snorted, and I giggled. That did interesting things to our bodies, which just made me giggle harder.

XXX

8:17pm

"Ever think about changing the paint color in here?"

"Are you serious?"

"What? Maybe a lighter shade of green? Or even a blue? Blue might be nice, I'd love to see you surrounded by blue."

"Do I tell you how to take pictures?"

"Well, no. Mmm..."

"Then don't tell me how to pick paint colors. And as it happens, I'm planning to change the palette in here, but it's going darker. Deeper, you might say."

"Deeper you say? How's this?"

"That's pretty good, mmm, that's really good. Anyhow, as I was saying, I'm thinking of maybe a deep slate gray, with a new creamy sugar marble countertop, deepening the cupboards to a rich dark mahogany. Holy shit that feels good."

"Noted, deeper is good, and very deep is even better. Can you put your foot on my shoulder?"

"Am I breathing? Like that?"

"Christ Bella, yes, like that...so...new countertop you say? Marble huh, might be a little cold don't you think?"

"Yes, yes, yes! What? I mean, what? Cold? Well, since I'm not usually laid out like a jelly roll on the counter, the cold won't bother me. Besides, marble countertops are the best for rolling out dough."

"Don't," he warned, turning his face to the side and kissing the inside of my ankle.

"Don't what Edward?" I purred, my breath hitching as I felt his steady pace begin to quicken slightly, unnoticeable to anyone but me, the one he was currently inside of.

"Don't try to distract me with dough talk, it won't work," he instructed, letting go of the countertop with his left hand and running it lightly over my breasts, back and forth, teasing my nipples into hard peaks with his fingertips. He heard my own breath catch as a frantic energy began to settle low, low in my hips and in my thighs, the pit of my stomach and points in between.

"No dough talk? No dirty dough talk for Edward? Mmm, but don't you think a little distraction is good from time to time? I mean, can't you just imagine me, bent over the countertop, working so hard for you..." I trailed off, running my fingers through his hair, bending him to me to kiss him with a wet mouth, tongue and lips and teeth intent on bringing him deeper into me.

I was perched in the very edge of my kitchen island, the very place where an earlier assault on my senses had taken place. But now, I was very much naked, as was our fair Mr. Masen, buried inside and determined to make this last as long as possible. We wanted to see how long we could carry on a conversation while...well...doing it. So far, 17 of the most intense, sensual, fantastic minutes of my life, and that wasn't counting the foreplay. O was dancing in the periphery, wondering why she wasn't being granted immediate access. But now I had control

of the bitch again, and this sweet torture was incredible. And worth enduring.

That is, until Edward asked me to place my foot on his shoulder. Holy hell, he was wrecking me. One leg on his shoulder, the other leg he held open to one side, his hips rotating in maddeningly tiny circles, increasing in the smallest of increments. He was the one that insisted upon the conversation, and I'd been able to keep up, until the foot on shoulder. Suddenly, parts that hadn't really been a part of it before were now being stimulated, and it was getting harder and harder to keep my wits about me. But really, who needed wits? I could be witless, as long as I could be under Edward, I was ok being witless.

But I could play this game right now, while a few lingering wits remained.

"Don't test me Naughty Girl, I will dirty talk you right off this island."

"Mmm Edward, can't you just see me? Bent over, little apron with nothing underneath, rolling pin in hand, and a bowl full of apples?"

"Apples? Oh boy, I love apples," he groaned, picking up my other foot and placing it on the opposite shoulder, his hands roughly pulling me even further towards the edge, his pace picking up again just a bit.

"I know you do, with cinnamon? I could bake you a pie Edward, your very own apple pie, even a homemade crust...all for you big guy...you know all you have to do is ask me..." I smirked, trying to keep my eyes from crossing as he sped up again, the sound of skin slapping not even funny at all. There went another wit.

"How does that feel Bella, good?" he asked, surprising me.

"Good? It feels amazing."

"Amazing? Really?" he smirked, pulling out almost all the way before sliding back into me, all at once, making me feel every single inch. And the wit stands alone.

"You know it does, but back to the apples. Would you like your pie served hot with vanilla ice cream? Warm and melty with...oh my God..."

"You really want to talk about this while I'm fucking you? Because if you keep this up, I'm going to be forced to get really dirty myself."

"Dirtier than apple pie talk?" I asked, stretching and pointing my toes towards the ceiling, creating a new sensation for us both.

"How about this, if you don't stop all this apple pie talk," he started, leaning down to place his mouth against my ear, making me shiver. One hand grasped my breast roughly, turning and tweaking my nipple. The other snuck down, feeling against me until he found the spot that made me tense and cry out. "If you don't stop, I'm going to stop fucking you, and believe me when I say, I haven't even begun to ravage you in all the ways that I've dreamed about."

He stood back up, and thrust. Hard. Last wit? Bye bye. I ain't too proud to beg.

"God Edward, I give, just fuck me."

"Apple pie for me?"

"Yes, yes! Apple pie for you! Oh God..."

"That's right, apple pie for me, apple pie for...fuck you're tight this way," he groaned, switching both of my legs to one side, holding them up as he pounded into me, again and again, never retreating, only advancing, looking down at me, watching me as my back arched and my skin flushed, heat creeping over me, pinking my skin as my climax broke over me, stunning me silent in its intensity as I was shaken to the very

core of my being.

"I love you Bella, I love you, I love you, I love you," he chanted, thrusting erratically now as he sped towards his own release, sweat breaking over his brow as he clutched at my hips as I clutched him from the inside, holding him inside as long as I could, feeling his solid weight on me as he laid his head on my breast. How could his warm weight feel so good? It should have made it hard to breathe, constriction of the lungs and all that, but it didn't. Holding him, cradling his face as I swept his hair back as he shivered, it felt the opposite of heavy.

"You're going to kill me, sure as I am laying here," he moaned into my skin, kissing everywhere he could.

"I love you too," I sighed, gazing at my kitchen ceiling. With a smile as big as the bay across my face. The O was going to be around for a very long time.

No way am I painting my kitchen blue...

XXX

9:32pm

"I can't believe this is the second time we're cleaning flour and sugar off each other, what's wrong with us?"

"The sugar is good for exfoliation, not sure what good the flour is doing for us though."

"Exfoliation?"

"Yeah, I figure every time we sex it up out there, all that sugar is helping us remove dead skin cells."

"Really Bella? Dead skin cells? That's hardly sexy."

"You weren't complaining earlier."

"Well no, how could I? You promised to bake me an apple pie, don't forget that part."

"I won't forget, but I was somewhat under duress."

"You were under me, not under duress, under me."

"Yes Edward, I was under you."

"Wash your back?"

"Yes please."

We were lying on opposite sides of the tub, relaxing and soaking off yet another round of kitchen schmutz. At some point, I was going to have to clean all that mess up, but right now the only thing I could concentrate on was this man in front of me. This man, up to almost his neck in fragrant bubbles, strong arms snaking out now to bring me closer to him. I spun in the tub like a buoy, bobbing back and forth and arranging myself in front of him. He used a washcloth to gently remove the last of the sticky goo that covered me after our last kitchen tryst. He pulled me into his chest, leaning back against the edge of the tub. Arms encircled me, tucking me in, surrounded by warm water and warmer Edward. I closed my eyes, relishing the feel of it all. The safety, the sweetness, the sexiness. I shifted, trying to get impossibly closer, and then I felt him against my bum. Growing.

"Why, hello there friend," I murmured, sneaking my hand through the bubbles to find him, wanting and wanton.

"Bella..." he warned, laying his head back on the edge of the tub.

"What?" I asked innocently, trailing my fingers along the sides of him, feeling him react.

"I'm not 17 you know," he chuckled, his voice growing husky and needy in spite of his words.

"Thank goodness, or I would have to answer for my actions, corrupting a minor and all that," I whispered, slowly turning over to rub myself along the length of him, soap and bubbles and wet water making me slippery. He hissed slightly and smiled.

"You're going to break me, you know this, right? I swear on all that's holy, I'm not a machine...Christ, don't stop doing that," he groaned, thrusting into my hand without thought.

"Ah break schmake, I just want to fuck you until you can't see straight," I purred, tightening my fist as he splashed water over the side a bit.

"I can barely see as it is, there seem to be three of you," he moaned, pulling my legs apart and positioning me above him.

"Aim for the one in the middle Edward," I instructed and slid down.

We may have splashed more than a bit more water over the side.

XXX

11:09pm

"I'm just going to get the food. I need sustenance woman."

"Get it, then hurry back to me, I need you Edward, why are you crawling on the floor?"

"I don't think I can actually stand at this point. The machine needs a break. The machine may very well need repairs. The machine, wait, what're you doin' there Bella?"

"What, this?"

"Yeah, yeah it looks like you're, wow, do you touch yourself like that a lot?"

"I haven't lately, why? Looks good to you, yes?"

"Yes, that's...wow...um...that's the door...the guy with the Thai is here, I..and I...Thai...I..."

"Are you really rhyming right now Edward? Mmm, that feels nice..."

"Hello! Hello, anyone there? Someone called in an order for, dude, how am I supposed to give you your change?"

"Keep the change."

"Dude, you shoved a fifty under the door, you know that's like a thirty dollar tip, right?"

"Keep the change. Leave the Thai. Bella, get on that bed."

"Mmm, so close Edward, sure you don't...want...me...to...mmm...finish...ooo, I love when you do that."

"Mmph, mumph, hah, hooo..."

"Don't talk with your mouth full Edward, Edward, Edward, Edwaaarrrddd..."

"Ok, dude, I'm totally setting your food out here, um, thanks for the tip?"

XXX

1:14am

We lay in bed, limp and a little stupid. My poor Edward, I'd ridden him to the brink of extinction. It was true, he wasn't eternally 17, but god damn

if he didn't give a good impression of someone who was. After the last round of crazytown, he crawled once more to the hallway, retrieved the food, and we ate Thai sitting in the middle of the bed. I had quickly stripped the sheets, lingering raisins and flour clouds remaining from an earlier encounter. The amount of work I was going to be faced with tomorrow when I had to clean the kitchen was daunting, but it was worth it. All of it, all of it was worth it.

Now we lounged, settled but not settling, still wrapped around each other but now clad in a pink nightie and a pair of sweatpants. To be clear, I wore the pink nightie.

"When do you have to go back to work?"

"I told Esme I'd be back on Monday, although that is the last thing I can think about right now."

"What *are* you thinking about?"

"Spain."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, it was amazing. Thank you so much for taking me, and then taking me," I joked, nudging him with my elbow. We lay side by side, facing each other, legs tangled and hands held.

"It was my pleasure, on both counts. I'm glad you could...come..." he snorted. Now that the O had returned, we could joke about it. We were both quiet for a moment, just enjoying the music. Edward had hobbled next door a little while ago to put on a record. Even hobbled, he was hot. A hot hobbler.

"When are you leaving for Peru? Ass, I still hate you a little for getting to go, but when are you leaving?"

"About two weeks. And no hating on the photographer. I have to go, but I'll always come back."

"Oh to be clear, I don't hate you for leaving. I hate you because I want to go too, but I digress. I love you more than I hate you, so we're good."

"We're good?"

"Yes of course, you have to travel for your job. It's not like I didn't know this."

"Well, knowing about it and then being the one left behind are two different things," he stated, eyes getting a little cloudy. I reached out with my free hand, smoothing across his cheek, feeling his scruff and skin and watching him lean into my touch. His eyes closed and he hummed a contented hum.

"You're not *leaving me behind*. We live busy lives and will continue to do so. Just because you get to stick your dick in me now, that isn't going to change us," I replied as a slow grin spread across his face. Eyes still closed, but grinning.

"Sometimes dicks change people," he said through the grin.

"Sometimes dicks change what needs to be changed, sometimes dicks make it better."

"Sometimes dicks make it better, what an odd thing to say."

"Stick around, who knows what I'm gonna say next."

"Sticking."

"Stuck."

"Going to kiss you now."

"Thank Christ," I giggled, as he wrapped his strong arms around me and pulled me into him. We kissed quietly, thoughtfully. I settled down into his nook, perfectly shaped and smelling like heaven.

"I adore this nook."

"Good."

"No one else gets this nook."

"It's yours."

"Yes, yes it is, make sure you tell that to all those Andean women who will try to seduce the hot American."

"I'll make sure to tell them my nook is spoken for."

I smiled and yawned hugely. It had been an exhausting few days. I was still jet lagged and had been fucked to within an inch of my life. Tended to make a girl tired. He leaned across me to shut off the light, and tucked me back into the nook.

XXX

1:23am

"Edward?"

"Mmm?"

"Are you asleep?"

"Mmhm..."

"I just wanted to say that, well, I'm really glad you came home early."

"Mmhm, me too."

"And that, I'm pretty smitten with you."

"Mmhm, me too."

"Smitten like a kitten."

"Mmhm, me too."

"Who's lost her mittens."

"Mittens, mmhm..."

"Edward?"

"Mmhm?"

"Are you asleep?"

"Mmhm..."

"I love you."

"I love you too."

...

...

...

"Bella?"

"Mmhm..."

"I'm really glad I came home early too."

"Mhm..."

"And I'm really glad you came."

"Enough."

"Night Bella."

"Night Edward."

And with the sounds of Count Basie and his orchestra trailing softly through the wall, and Clive curled between us, although mostly on my side to be fair, we slept. The deep sleep of those who have truly earned it.

XXX

The next day

Text intercepted from Alice to Bella

Where the hell are you?

What?

We're waiting for you at the diner, are you coming?

Shit, I totally forgot...can I take a raincheck?

We want to hear all about Spain! You went away for a week, didn't call, didn't email, you didn't even text!

I was stupid busy, I know, I'm sorry

Did you feel the earthquake yesterday afternoon?

YES! Wait, what?

The earthquake? Not a huge one, but everyone felt it...you didn't?

Oh yeah. I felt it.

Well?

Well what?

How was Spain?

Amazing

How was Edward?

Amazing

I knew it

You knew nothing

I did too! I have a sixth sense about these things...you fucked him didn't you?

You just asked that question out loud in the diner, didn't you?

Maybe...quit stalling

I will tell you everything, come over this afternoon, I baked all kinds of cookies and stuff to send home with you anyway...bring Rose

You just got back, when the hell did you have time to bake?

***I'll tell you everything, just be here around 2...better make it 3.
Something just came up.***

Bella?

Hey Bella?

Fine, see you at 3.

XXX

First day back at work, post Spain

I sat at my desk, trying to clear my head enough to actually focus on work, but scenes kept popping into my head, flashing across the inside of my eyelids like a movie trailer. Edward, holding himself over me, arms tight and muscles straining, brow furrowed, biting down on his lower lip as he moved inside me. Edward, between my legs, hands curled over the backs of my knees, nudging my thighs apart with his nose. Edward, laughing as he scrubbed flour from the floor, shirtless. Edward, groaning into my ear as he watched me roll out dough for his apple pie, watching from over my right shoulder as he clasped his arms around my middle.

It was a nice trailer.

"She's back!" Esme called out from the doorway, striking as always. Black pencil skirt, black turtleneck, honey colored leather cropped jacket, honey colored mile high pumps.

"I'm back, miss me?"

"Please, of course I did. Office wasn't the same without you, work was actually done!"

"Pfft I say, pfft," I laughed, gesturing for her to come in and sit down. Tea cup in hand, she waltzed in, settling into the chair across from my desk with a knowing look on her face.

"Spill it Swan."

"That's it? Just right to it?"

"Was Spain beautiful?"

"Yes, unimaginably so."

"And the house you stayed in? Lovely?"

"Very much so."

"So out with it, what happened with Edward? Did you two, you know, have the sexy times?"

"Why is every woman in my life so interested in my sexy times?"

"So there *were* sexy times? Thank Christ. And for the record, not just the women, Carlisle is chomping at the bit for details as well, such a gossip that one," she grinned, sipping her tea. I focused on the short vase of flowers in front of me. I had stopped, per usual, this morning at the flower shop to make my selection for the week. No tulips, no dahlias. Roses. Two dozen velvety blood red roses. I let my fingertips drag lightly across the tips, soft and silky. Sexy.

"Esme? It was wonderful, let's just say that," I smiled softly, still playing with my flowers.

"Oh my goodness, really? So you, and he, I mean, you and he..." she trailed off.

"Yeah, we're a thing," I admitted, feeling my face flush as I said the words.

"A thing?"

"A thing, a very good thing," I smiled, thinking back to earlier that morning when I left him, rumpled and beautiful in my bed. Kisses and more kisses had left me breathless and almost late for work. Esme and I just stared at each other for a few more seconds, and then let out a most unprofessional squeal. We dished for a few moments, I shared some of the more work appropriate highlights, and we then spent some time on my calendar planning some upcoming projects. I was to start work on a few Christmas design jobs, very common this time of year, as well as two new bedroom remodels that I had slated for January.

"By the way, I'm having the apartment I did for James photographed Wednesday, should turn out beautiful. Want to come along?" I asked, as we wrapped things up.

"You need me there?"

"Oh lord no, just wanted you to see the final product."

"I know it'll be perfect, I'll take a look at the stills when you get them back."

"I should have them back this weekend, which brings me to Saturday. Edward and I were thinking about getting a little dinner party together, have everyone over, have some food, drink some wine, we'd love to have you and Carlisle."

"Entertaining together already? Wow, serious..."

"Stop it, we just thought it'd be fun, don't make it into a big deal."

"We'll be there. I'll just check with Carlisle, but I'm sure he can make it."

"Don't come without him. You know my ladies only tolerate you to get to see him."

"I do know this," she frowned, peeling herself out of the chair and heading for the door. She stopped and turned.

"Happy for you Bella."

"Happy for me too Esme."

And with a wink, she disappeared down the hall. I gazed out the window for another moment, the fog momentarily lifting so I could see the bay. What a great place to work.

"Quit woolgathering and get to work Swan!" I heard from down the hall.

"On it boss!" I called back.

Two days later

Text intercepted from Bella to Rose

You and Em still in for Sat night?

We're in, and we're bringing the beverages..wine, both red and white, and ginger ale

Great! Jake and Jessica are able to make it too, so that makes 10.

10?

Esme and Carlisle are coming too

Nice, I have been missing my Carlisle peep time

Me too, oooh, make him open the wine, he always looks good opening wine

Good call, maybe I'll bring some champagne too, then we can see some thumb thrusting. Besides, we might be celebrating...

Don't you "dotdotdot" me, what are we celebrating?

I'll tell you Saturday

You'll tell me now

Does Wallbanger like you when you're bossy?

Wallbanger likes me any way, now tell me

Jeez, now that O's back you are extra sassy. See you Saturday...

Rose?

Rose dammit, don't you screen my texts!

I hate you...

...

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

So I talked to a buddy of mine, I think I figured out how to do those prawns you went so crazy over in Spain

Perfect, they'll fit in with my little Spanish feast I am planning for Saturday

Sure you don't want to have it at my place?

No, it'll be easier at mine, I have the island which is better for prepping, but I'm commandeering your oven

Can I commandeer you, on the island?

That's not the correct usage of the word commandeer

Please, you know what I meant

I did, and you may

Sweet. Have you seen my running shoes?

Yep, they're in my bathroom where you left them last night. I tripped over them this morning when I was getting ready for work...

Is that the thump I heard?

You heard that?

Yep, woke me up

And yet, you didn't come see if I was ok?

I didn't want to disturb Clive

I can't believe he's been sleeping on your side, traitor cat

We're friends now...well, almost friends. He peed on my sweatshirt again

HA! I have to get back to work cat stealer, we still watching a movie tonight?

If that's what you want to call it

Makes it seem like we actually had plans

I have plans, oh man do I have plans

As do I...

I'm sitting here...eating your apple pie...think about that

That's all I can think about now...hating you

You don't hate me

That's true, now go eat my pie

...choking...

Wednesday

I walked through the apartment, changing just a few little things here and there. Switched this throw pillow for that throw pillow, flounced the curtains just so, repositioned an end table, restacked pears in a bowl to look a little more casually arranged...which took ten minutes. Finally, I stood back and took it all in.

Deep leafy greens, anchored by rich earthy browns. Creams, mineral grays, splashes of ochre. Outdoors brought indoors, in a metropolitan setting. Sophisticated. Savvy. And yet, livable.

"It's perfect."

I jumped when I heard the words from behind me. James.

"You like it?" I asked, turning to face him. I didn't know whether he'd be here today or not.

"I love it. It's exactly what I wanted."

"That's my job, I'm glad you like it," I smiled, watching him. We hadn't really spoken since the night in my apartment, communicating mainly through emails and texts as the last few pieces fell into place. He walked through, taking it all in. A smile here, a nod there, he missed nothing. He made it all the way to the windows, then turned around.

"I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry too," I nodded, smiling genuinely. He wasn't a bad guy, he just wasn't my guy. My guy was at home, washing his Stanford sweatshirt for the third time this week.

"The photographer should be here soon, she said she'd meet me at 3:00. Once I get her set up, I'll be out of your hair," I started, gathering up my bags so they would be out of the way once she got started. An envelope made out to James Brown fell out of the side pocket.

"Oh yeah, this is for you," I said, walking it over to him.

"What's this?"

"This, is your final bill. You might want to open that after I've gone," I laughed, and he smiled big.

"Worth every penny. Can I call you again? If I ever need another designer?" he asked, stressing the last word.

"Yes, if you ever need another designer, you can call me," I said standing in front of him. I gave his right cheek a light slap and then moved on. I could hear someone at the door, and James went to let them in as I hefted all my bags onto my shoulders.

"Bella Swan?" a musical voice asked, and I turned. A beautiful woman stood before me, tall and lean. Vibrant auburn hair, tumbling over her shoulders, piercing blue eyes, flawless skin.

"Yes, Victoria?"

"Guilty. Sorry I'm a bit late, stuck in traffic coming back in from Big Basin, fantastic day for a climb, couldn't resist," she grinned, her energy filling the room. I grinned back, shaking her hand.

"No problem, we're all set up, want to run through the shots?" I asked, noticing James walk back into the room looking thunderstruck.

"Sure, sounds good," she answered looking around with an appreciative eye.

"This place is amazing, who's is it?"

"Let me introduce you to the owner, this is James..."

"James, James Brown, pleasure to meet you," he rushed in, reaching out and clasping her hand. They both jumped back.

"Wow, must be some static from the new rugs, quite a shock there," she laughed as his eyes lit up. They continued to smile, hands still clasped, as I watched from the corner amused. Finally, I discreetly coughed.

"Victoria, if you like, I'll just walk you through so you know what needs to be done, and then I will leave you to James. How'd that be?"

"Sure, great, sounds great," she mumbled, letting go of his hand and looking at me through a bit of a daze.

By the time I left thirty minutes later, she and James were thick as thieves and had already made plans to go climbing that weekend together.

Was there love at first sight? Who was I to say there wasn't.

XXX

Thursday

Text intercepted from Alice to Bella

You sure I can't bring anything Saturday?

Nah, Rose is bringing drinks, and we're taking care of the rest

So good to hear you in a "we" again

Yes, I'm enjoying the we

And the we-we?

What are we, 7? Yes, the we-we is good

Good to hear it, so have you slept in the bed of sin yet?

No, staying at my place, I think I'd feel weird in that bed

Many walls were banged from that bed...

Exactly, that's my point, feels strange

***Maybe it would be nice to make your mark on his bed, so to speak.
New era, new girlfriend, new banger?***

***I don't know, we'll see...I know at some point I'll sleep there, just
not yet. Besides, he's having too much fun bonding with Clive***

WHAT? Clive hates guys! Except gay guys

***I know, but the two of them have come to some kind of weird
kitty/man understanding. I'm not questioning it***

It's like a new world order

I know

Want me to come over early Saturday and help?

You just want to get into my drawers again

They need to be reorganized...

Come over early

WAHOO!

Get some help...

XXX

Thursday night

Quiet. All things quiet. Edward and I sat on the couch, working. I was sketching, working on a Holiday concept for someone's ballroom. Yep, ballroom. This was the world I visited. Visited, not lived in. I was still in my yoga clothes, having gone straight to class from work. Edward cooked, using my kitchen in which he was becoming very much at home. He said it was because he knew it would be easier since we'd just end up at my place anyway, but I caught him lifting Clive up onto the counter so he could "watch". I put that in quotes, because the actual word was spoken, by Edward, to Clive. The entire sentence I believe was "Here ya go buddy, this way you can watch! You can't see too well from down on the floor I bet, right? Right?"

And Clive answered back. And even though I know it was technically impossible, the meow he uttered sounded like... "Thanks."

My boys were bonding. It was nice.

So here we sat, me sketching and Edward making his travel plans for Peru online. He had something like seventy billion frequent flyer miles, and loved to flaunt them in my face.

So quiet it was, save the scratching of my colored pencils on the page and his clickety clack on the keyboard. And the clicking from Clive. Most stubborn kitty hangnail in the free world.

Edward finished his work and closed up his laptop, stretching his arms over his head and exposing his happy trail. I may have drawn outside the lines a bit. He laid his head back against the back of the couch, eyes closed. Within a few moments, the tiniest of snores began to show up, and I grinned silently. I continued my sketching.

Ten minutes later I felt his hand reach out across the pillows, and grasp my hand.

I only needed one hand for sketching after all.

XXX

Saturday night

"Holy shit Bella, these prawns are sick!" Alice moaned in a way that made Jasper readjust the way he was sitting.

We were all gathered around my dining room table, full of Spanish food and Spanish wine. I had a blast coming up with the menu and tried to recreate all the wonderful food we had eaten. Not as good certainly, but pretty close. And of course without the coastal ambiance, but the coziness that only an autumn evening in foggy San Francisco can provide. The city lights were twinkling through the windows, a fire crackled in the fireplace that Carlisle had made, and laughter filled the apartment.

I sat in my chair, tucked into Edward's side as we laughed with our friends. I'd been a little nervous that we'd be subjected to some kind of hazing, since our inevitable getting-together had been the topic of conversation for so long. But it was good, everyone settled into the evening with only a little teasing. Edward and I had stuck pretty close together most of the evening, but I could already tell we would morph into one of those couples that *didn't* need that.

I never wanted to be *that* couple, the one that was entirely co-dependent and in constant need of reassurance from the other. I loved Edward, that much was clear. One of us traveled for goodness sake, so we needed to be the kind of couple that could roll with it. And I think we would be. I felt him next to me, and I moved just a little closer to him. He noticed and his hand patted my shoulder, squeezing and just making me more aware of him. I was aware.

"So, what's your big news Rose? Don't you think you've kept us in suspense long enough?" I asked as she returned from clearing the table. I cooked, therefore I never had a problem with someone else clearing...

She sank down into her chair, Emmett standing behind her, hands on her shoulders. My tummy turned just a bit. Something was up.

"Well, I suppose now's as good a time as any. We have some news," she said quietly, face turning pink.

"Wait wait, lemme guess, you're pregnant!" Edward burst out, starting to laugh. Within seconds, Emmett was grinning huge and Rose was turning from pink to purple.

"Edward, shut up, shut *up*!" I hastened, as he was the only one at the table laughing. Quiet now, he turned with wide eyes towards the grinning purple couple.

"Dude?" Edward asked.

"Dude," Emmett affirmed.

"Dude!" Jasper congratulated, as all the female eyes at the table rolled. After the roll, I concentrated on Rose. She was beaming. I raised an eyebrow at her, and she nodded. Alice and I looked across the table at each other, tears beginning to form.

"We're gonna be aunts?" she asked Rose.

"God help us, yes!" she cried, and shed a few tears with us. After a Lifetime-worthy group hug, I chanced a quick glance towards Jessica and Jacob, wondering how they would take the news. They were quiet, but smiling too. I saw her nod to him, as he cleared his throat.

"Not to steal anyone's thunder, but we have a bit of news as well," Jacob boomed, his cheery voice cutting through the clatter. Esme was already planning the nursery.

"It's been a bit of a process, but we finally settled on a surrogate, and we're hoping to be pregnant soon as well," he announced, his grin big enough to split his face in two. Another round of applause went up, the room starting to feel a big like a game show.

"I didn't even know you were exploring surrogacy. That's wonderful! What's she like?" I asked, hurrying to Jessica's side.

"She's pretty fucking fantastic," Alice piped up. Laughter quieted. Everyone looked at the tiniest person in the room, with the biggest heart. Jasper held her hand tight.

"What?" I asked, my tummy now churning.

"Yep, I'm gonna be their surrogate," she whispered, eyes shining. Jessica was crying full on donkey tears now, Jacob still smiling like he'd won the lottery. And in a way, he had.

"You sure about this?" I asked, catching her other hand in my own.

"Totally, how cool is this?" she shrieked and I couldn't help but laugh.

"Very very cool," I smiled and hugged her tight. Everyone was congratulating each other, everyone was hugging, guys were slapping each other on the back, everyone was talking over each other as we all scrambled for details. Everyone jumped when the sound of a champagne cork being popped ricocheted through the room. We all turned and there was Carlisle.

White button down, faded jeans, and that killer grin. Champagne pouring over his perfect hands.

In concert, everyone with a uterus sighed.

"Shit, we missed the thumb thrusting," Rose muttered. Pregnancy would never shake her from the fold of Carlisle's Angels.

"I didn't," Esme added as we all eyed her man.

XXX

"OK, that's the last of it, no more dishes," Edward announced, closing the dishwasher door. After everyone finally left, we decided to clean up the rest of the mess instead of leaving it for the morning after.

"Thank goodness, I'm beat,"

"And I have dishpan hands," he winked, showing me how red they were.

"That's the mark of a good housewife," I joked, just barely sidestepping his grabby hands.

"Just call me Madge, and bring that fantastic ass back over here," he fired back, snapping a dishtowel in my direction.

"This ass? This ass right here?" I asked, propping myself against the island just so, leaning forward on my elbows.

"You want to play now, is that it? Thought you were beat," he murmured, catching my bottom in his dishpan hands and giving me a light smack.

"Maybe I'm catching my second wind," I giggled, as he promptly swept me up in a fireman's hold and started heading back towards the bedroom. Upside down, I beat my fists against his own bottom and kicked, not so much as to actually get away. His feet stopped at the bedroom door.

"Forget something today?" he asked, turning so I could see inside. Stripped bed, no sheets.

"Damn, I forgot to put the sheets in the dryer, they'll still be soaked!" I grumbled.

"Problem solved, slumber party at Edward's," he announced, striding over to my dresser and pulling open my lingerie drawer.

"Pick a nightie, any nightie,"

"You want to stay at your place tonight?"

"Yeah, why not? We've been sleeping here since we got back from Spain, my beds lonely," he teased, ruffling through piles of lace and peek-a-boo. Hmm, his bed was probably lonelier that it had ever been before.

"So, pick one," he nudged, giving my ass another slap.

"Eh, you pick out something you like, I'll model it for you," I grinned, talking myself into this. Come on, I could certainly spend the night in his bed, could be fun. I saw something especially lacey make its way under his arm and then we were off across the hallway. I managed to kick his door on the way in, something pretty hard to do while upside down.

XXX

Once more, I found myself in a bathroom, putting on lingerie for Edward. He really liked everything I wore, whether it was actual lingerie or one of his old shirts, he didn't seem to care. And it was rarely on for very long.

Without meaning to, I thought of all the women that had come before me, all the women he had enjoyed and had enjoyed him. But I was here now, and I was who he wanted. I smoothed the silk over my body with a deep breath, my skin already beginning to tingle in anticipation of his hands on me once more.

I heard him messing about with his record player, the telltale crackle and pop of needle on vinyl such a comforting sound.

Glenn Miller. Moonlight Serenade. Sigh.

I opened the door, and there he was. Standing by the bed, the giant Wallbanger bed of sin. His slow grin overtook me, and he looked me up and down.

"You look good," he murmured, as I walked towards him.

"You too,"

"I'm wearing the same clothes I was wearing earlier Bella," he answered, smirking as I encircled his neck with my arms. His fingertips dragged up and down my arms, tickling the inside of my elbow.

"I know," I replied, placing a wet kiss under his ear. "You looked good then and you look good now,"

"Lemme get a better look at you," he whispered, responding with his own wet kiss at the base of my throat. I shivered. The room wasn't at all cold.

He spun me out like on a dance floor, and held me at arms length for just a moment. Pink nightie, his favorite. He neglected to bring the matching panties, and I neglected to notice. He spun me back into him, and I immediately began to work at the buttons on his shirt.

"Quite a night tonight," he remarked. Two buttons down.

"You're telling me, I thought we had the biggest news,"

"What news do we have?" Another button down.

"Well, just that we're, you know,"

"That you're my girlfriend?" Shirt untucked and on its way off.

"Really? And here I thought we were just fucking!" I giggled, scrambling to get his belt buckle poked through.

"Well then, here's to fucking my girlfriend," he grinned. Belt buckle undone, jean buttons popped. Thank goodness for old fashioned button fly. He picked me up, by my naked bottom I might add, and walked me towards the bed as I pushed his shirt off to hang just by the sleeves.

"I like the sound of that," I whispered in his ear, as he lay me down on the bed. Hovering over me, placing kisses across my chest, he kept saying the word over and over again. Girlfriend, then kiss. Girlfriend, girlfriend, then kiss.

"It was a lot to take in though, I hope they're doing the right thing," I commented, thinking back on how everyones lives were about to change.

"Which ones? They all dropped some bombshells tonight,"

"Well, all of them. There's gonna be babies everywhere soon! Tonight felt very, I don't know, like some kind of Capra movie. It all seems to perfect, too wrapped up. I just hope they all know what they're getting into," I continued, although coherent thought was beginning to be a problem. His hands were under my lace now you see.

"Well I know what I'm getting into," he mumbled from somewhere south of my belly button.

"You do? What's that?"

"You, silly," he said, as I heard the blessed sound of his belt buckle hitting the floor. "I'm only concerned with our own happy ending. Or two, or three even. Drank that ginseng tea you left me this morning, watch out," he chuckled, standing before me and lifting one leg onto his shoulder, kissing a path down the inside of my calf.

"Happy ending huh?"

"Don't you think we've earned it?" he asked, kneeling now, lips trailing along the top of my thigh as I panted.

"Oh hell yes," I laughed, throwing my arms over my head and arching up to meet him. Hello O, nice to see you again.

With his lips, he brought me one.

With his tongue, he brought me another.

And when he slid into me, and pushed me high up onto the bed, I almost had another on contact.

Clothes now discarded, skin on sweaty skin, my legs wrapped solidly around his hips, pushing against mine. His eyes burned into mine as I felt every inch of him. Inside. Outside. All around the town.

"Oh God," I moaned. And then I heard it.

Thump.

"Oh God," I moaned again.

Thump thump.

I giggled at the sound, knowing we were banging. He looked down at me, raising one eyebrow.

"Something funny?" he asked, pausing in his movements. He pushed back into me, slowly, very very slowly.

"We're banging the walls," I giggled again, watching his eyes change as he registered my giggling.

"We sure are," he admitted, chuckling a little as well. "You ok?" I wrapped my legs even tighter around his waist, making sure I was as close to him as I could be.

"Bring it on home Wallbanger," I winked, and he complied.

I was being driven up the bed with the strength of his thrusts. He was driving into me with unflinching force, giving me exactly what I could take and then just pushing me past that edge. His face stared down at me, hard, flashing me that knowing smirk. I closed my eyes against him, letting myself feel how deeply I was being affected. And by deep I mean deep...

He grasped my hands and brought them above my head, placing them on the iron headboard, grabbing on tight.

"You're gonna wanna hold on tight for this," he whispered in my ear, and threw one leg up and over his shoulder as he altered his hips, making me scream out his name.

"Edward!" I shrieked, feeling my body begin to spasm. His eyes, those damnable green eyes, stared into mine as I shook around him.

He called out my name, and no one else's.

XXX

A little while later, almost asleep, I felt the mattress dip as Edward left the bed. Hearing him flip over the record, I snuggled deeper into the pillow. My body was deliciously tired, having been worked to within an inch of total exhaustion. We banged that wall, yes indeed. I owned both sides of that wall now.

I heard him bumble down the hall, not sure what he was up to. Thinking in that tired-half awake way that he was just getting some water, I slipped back down to sleep.

A few moments later I was awoken by his arms sliding back around me, pulling me back against his warm body. He kissed me on my neck, then cheek, then forehead as he got settled. Then I heard...purring?

"What's that?" I asked, looking around.

"I thought he might be lonely," he admitted sheepishly. Looking over my shoulder, I saw Edward, and then Clive. Edward had gone across the hall, and brought my cat over. Clive was purring very loudly, quite pleased with all the attention he'd been receiving lately. He poked his nose into me, settling into the nook between us.

"Unbelievable," I muttered, rolling my eyes at the two of them.

"Are you that surprised? You know much I love pussy," he deadpanned, then his silent laughter shook the bed.

"You're very lucky I love you," I added, letting his arms hold me tight.

"I'll say,"

And then, as the laughter faded and we fell into an easy sleep, I pondered what the future might hold for me and my Wallbanger.

I knew it wouldn't always be this easy. But it sure as hell would be a good time.

The End

So there it is. The ending. There will be a short epilogue to follow in the next week or so, and then that's all she wrote. Major thanks to Lauren for the quick and dirty beta job, she did this with an hour to spare before hosting a New Year's Eve party so pardon if there are crazy commas! Thanks always to Nina for pre-reading.

My author's notes tend to be a bit on the lengthy side, and this one will surely not disappoint. I need to take a moment and thank you all for sticking with me on this wild ride. You are all either crazy or amazing, and I tend to think it's both, to stay with me all this time. The reviews? Out of this world, and I have read every single one of them, you have blown me away. Here's your last chance to blow me...away...ahem. Tell me what you loved, what you hated, what you wanted more of, what you could have had a little less of, most of all tell me whatever you want to tell me, I owe you everything.

Would I like to have been able to finish this in a more timely fashion? Hells yes, but this process has taught me so much about stories, and storytelling. While this outline has remained

unchanged since the very beginning, I look back now and wonder if it would have written itself a little differently had I been able to focus on this solely, and not been working on other projects at the same time. Hindsight is always 20/20, and although I see places I would like to tweak a little here, rearrange there, like those throw pillows at James Brown's apartment, I am pleased that they got their happy ending. Not everything is fireworks and heartfail, sometimes the easiest way is the best way. And for this pair, they just fit.

Now that this is wrapping up, I am excited to look forward to some new projects in the near future. I am starting work on a new book in the Redhead Series, Book 3. It's been outlined for some time, but I have been holding off beginning the real writing of this story until this one was finished. I can't wait to spend some time with Jack and Grace again, and I'll keep you posted on the progress.

I have been dying to tell you all about this next project for weeks, but I wanted to wait until we were a little further along in the process. Nothing in the world will ever top the incredible time I spent with Christina, Moi and Nina in the Twigasm studio, but I have been working on a new podcast with 2 of my very good friends in Los Angeles, and we have created a new podcast which will be going live on Feb 1st 2011. Not Your Mother's Podcast is just that, a show for women about anything and everything you want to talk about. We already have an amazing panel of guests lined up, some of you will be very excited to hear from, so stay tuned! Please check out [notyourmotherspodcast\(.\)com](http://notyourmotherspodcast(.)com) for more information and to see my girls Ashley and Keili, who are just as insane as I am...oh boy. I can't wait to share this new chapter of ridiculous with you all.

Finally tonight, I have some amazing recs for you. I might not be around the fandom as much anymore, but I still read a shitton of fic, and I can't wait to share my new crop of favorites!

Bronze, by mothlights. A vamp Bella that's more than 3000 years old, and a newborn Edward. This fic is smart, scary smart, and chock full of historical imagery. There's Volturi, a chase around the world, and a budding love to boot. This fic is insanely good, there are not near enough readers for this one. Do NOT let this one pass you by.

Of Kith and Kin, by Chicklette. This is one of those that somehow ended up in my TBR pile, and I almost lost it. Thank Christ I didn't, because it's a little piece of fantastic. The pacing is impeccable, the story is heart wrenching, and the payoff is brilliant. Complete, and well worth it. I'm so glad I didn't lose this one, it's beautiful.

For Whom The Bell Tolls, by CyraBear. Edward. Vampire. Bookstore owner. This is the stuff of legends ladies, the stuff of legends. I am really into vampward lately, and this story takes me where I need to be. Bella shops in his store, she's his singer, wolves descend, the entire family is involved. Mystery. Intrigue. Unresolved Sexual Tension like you wouldn't believe. Do nothing until you have read this...promise me chickens...

Branching Inward, by LifeInTheSnow. As a Midwest girl, I love any time we pick up these Cullens and move them to the heartland. Set on a college campus in Ohio, this explores the boy-meets-girl in an entirely unique way. And boy does it make me steamy. It's quirky, it's funny, it's sexy, it's simply lovely. I stumbled across this one late one night and thought about it all week, that's when you know you've got a good one. Love it!

The Plan, by QuantumFizzx. How sad is this, this story came and went before I could even get this damn chapter finished! I was really hoping to get this up before this story was complete, but alas, I am fail. But that doesn't mean that you still can't read this amazing story that was told, for those of us that read the updates like crackwhores as soon as they posted, in REAL TIME. Yep, don't be intimidated when you see how many chapters there are, they fly

by and before you know it, you are fucking hooked. Great story, tight writing style, and some knock you on your ass funny shit!

The Art Teacher, by spanglemaker9. If I may wax a little nostalgic, I feel like this girl and I really came up in this crazy world of fanfic around the same time. She has not written a thing that I have not gone apeshit over. Truly, the ability she has to craft a story that we all fall head over heels for is unparalleled. I am so glad that I have another story of hers to tell you about, except I know you are all reading it already! But in case you're not, get thee to The Art Teacher. She takes me to a place, a very very good place.

OK chickens, have a very safe New Year, and I will see you for the epilogue in 2011. I hope I did you proud.

Alice

xoxo

24. Dreaming With Tears In My Eyes

Thank you for taking this journey with me to the end, from the beginning, 107 years ago.

X

A Year

December

I had never spent a Christmas away from my family. My parents divorce had been amicable, and so I was able to spend the holidays with both my mom and my dad, and then when Phil joined our family he rounded things out nicely. Trees were decorated, gigantic dinners were prepared, gifts were exchanged, and family was sacred. As I got older, Christmas still held the same significance as it did when I was a child, but was less magical and more "fun"; no doubt inspired by the cocktails I was now able to freely drink with the family. But no matter how old I was, no matter where I roamed, Christmas was always spent in one home or another, surrounded by family and friends.

This Christmas was entirely different. This Christmas was much more storybook and much less family oriented than any I had experienced before.

Edward had booked a job photographing cities in Europe during the holidays and was essentially gone the entire month of December. Since we had started dating he had been in and out of town, on trips to Peru, Chile, England, even a long weekend in LA where he had been tapped to do a study at the Playboy Mansion...ass. But when he was home, he was home. Home with me, either in my apartment or his. Home with me, in the dinners out with Esme and Carlisle or playing poker with the other two couples that made up our best friends. Home with me, in my bed or his, my kitchen or his, on my counter or his, home with me.

So when he began to hem and haw about the holidays, I knew something was up. Thanksgiving he spent in New York City, photographing the parade and documenting tourism in the city from November through New Year's.

I knew Christmas was hard on him, you didn't have to be a genius to figure that one out. Christmas with *my* parents would be a big deal, and I liked the idea of the two of us doing our own thing this year.

So when he started planning to be away for the entire month, legitimately for work but legitimately *choosing to* work, I invited myself along. "So from Prague I am heading to Vienna, then Salzburg, and I'll probably be there on Christmas, they have this festival where they-

"I'm coming."

"Again? Damn, I'm good, we finished an hour ago..." he joked, covering the area between my legs with one of his beautiful hands. We were lying in bed, late into the night. He was home for a few days in between trips, and we were nooking after nookie.

"No sir, I mean I'm coming with you, to, wait, where are we going?"

"Hold up, you want to come with me?"

"Of course, I don't want you to be alone on Christmas, and it sounds like fun!"

"But what about your Dad, and your Mom? Won't they be disappointed?"

"Sure, but they'll get over it. Will there be snow?"

"Will there be snow, yes of course there'll be snow. Are you sure about this? I don't mind being alone, I've been alone most Christmases the last few years, it's not a big deal," he muttered, his hand absently

stroking the curve of my hip.

"I mind it, ok? Besides, I have the week off between Christmas and New Year's, and you know Esme would be thrilled to let me go, so I'm coming. Settled."

"You're bossy," he answered, moving his hand decidedly south of my hip.

"Yes, now don't stop doing what it is that you're doing there...mmm..."

And that's how I found myself surrounded by a fairytale. I flew into Salzburg and met him for his last stop, staying in a wonderful little inn around the old city center. Snow falling, trees lit with thousands of little white lights, and Edward looking ridiculously adorable in a ski cap with the poof at the end. Being supremely touristy, he arranged for a horse drawn sleigh with actual jingle bells. On Christmas Eve, wrapped underneath a warm blanket and wrapped entirely in Edward, I gazed out at the city and the moonlight on the river.

"I'm so glad you're here," he whispered in my ear, followed by a light nip to my ear.

"I knew you would be," I chuckled as he snuck a hand underneath my sweater.

"Love you," he murmured, his voice laced with honey.

"Love you more," I answered back, my eyes sparking with tears.

XXX

Middle of February

EPOV

Text intercepted from Edward to Bella

Just pulled up, you ready to go?

Almost, still need to get dressed, just come on in

I'm on my way up the stairs, we're going to be late

No we won't, just keep your pants on

Never heard that before

Quit kicking my door and get in here...

I let myself inside Bella's apartment, and could hear her fussing about in the kitchen, banging about pots and pans. We were due to meet our friends at a restaurant in twenty minutes, and with traffic we'd be very very lucky to make it in forty.

"Babe! What're you doing, we gotta go!" I called out to her, tracking her sounds towards the kitchen.

"I decided against going out tonight. I'm not feeling so good," she called back. I ran my hand through my hair in instant aggravation at the sudden change in plans. She'd been pestering me for weeks to take her out for Valentine's Day, insisting that we make it a night out with our friends. I was only home for a week, and wanted nothing more than to stay in, veg out on the couch, and sleep with my girlfriend. Girlfriend.

I still puzzled over the word, knowing that when I first met this woman that had thoroughly unraveled my life, the last thing that I would want was an unraveling.

Turns out it was exactly what I did want.

However, going from being single and being beholden to no one, to being the other half of a "we" was still a bit of an adjustment.

Girls were weird sometimes. Sure, as much as I had dated I was aware of this, but without ever fully investing myself into someone else's life the way I had with Bella's, I had remained blissfully unaware of how weird girls really can be.

I caught shit for leaving my running shoes by the front door, but she could leave her colored pencils all over the dining room table. I couldn't leave my cereal bowl in the sink, but she could leave cookies and milk on the nightstand. I questioned this at first, but I'd learned in the last few months that a well timed "No problem babe" went a long way. So, after dropping hints since mid-January about me making sure to be home for Valentine's, and then spending hours on the phone with Rose and Alice planning the perfect romantic evening out, her deciding at the last minute to stay in had me marveling once again at my thoroughly weird girlfriend.

"You sure about that? I thought you had your heart set on-" I started, then stopped as I rounded the corner into the kitchen. Perched on the counter wearing an apron, a devilish grin and heels that were at least six inches tall, was my girlfriend Bella. Holding an apple pie on her lap.

"I have my heart set on something, but it isn't a crowded restaurant. How could I get away with wearing only this?" she asked, hopping down from the counter and turning around. She was wearing the apron, and only the apron. And the shoes, don't forget the shoes.

"Well well well, don't you look tempting?" I chuckled.

"I have pie."

"You sure do."

"Silly boy, I baked for you. Your very own hot apple pie, all you have to do is come over here and get it," she purred, breaking off a piece of the crust and dragging it through the cinnamon sugar goo that was dripping down the side. Did I want pie, or Bella first?

Turns out, they were both delicious...

XXX

Early March

"I'll have an egg white omelet with spinach, black olives, and tomatoes, wheat toast, and coffee."

"I'll have scrambled eggs, wheat toast, turkey bacon, and orange juice."

"I'll have pancakes, bacon, sausage links, hot chocolate and orange juice."

I sat with Alice and Rose in our usual booth for breakfast on a Sunday. Things had been so busy the last few months, in very good ways, that we didn't get as much time to see each other as we used to. We were trying to get these breakfasts in now, as much as we could, knowing that once the baby came, Rose would be quite tied up.

She was a radiant pregnant lady, as we all knew she would be. What we didn't expect is how thoroughly she would embrace the excuse to eat anything and everything. Forty pounds and counting, and Emmett was thrilled with her boobs. And apparently her ass.

"I mean, it's like he can't stop staring at it. And forget sex, he wants it doggy doggy doggy," she declared, miming the position, and then rolling her eyes at a table of young hipster guys with weed clouds hanging around their heads staring at her. She managed to suck on a sausage link in a way that made them all hold their breaths.

"How are things with Edward?" Alice asked, trying to steer the conversation away from the sausage and the staring.

"Great, they're actually really great. He's in town for almost the entire month of May, and I am most definitely looking forward to that."

"I don't know how you do it Miss Thing. If Jasper were away so much like that, I would die, I would just die!" she said dramatically, pouncing on her toast and spearing it with her knife.

"It's not that bad really. I miss him sure, but we make it work," I smiled around my coffee mug, thinking of all the phone sex across many time zones. The truth was, sure I missed him, but I liked my space sometimes. I loved sleeping in my big bed all alone, and I loved his homecomings even more. The practical romantic in me came in handy when my boyfriend was half way around the world. I loved my life, he loved his life. We were learning to love our lives together.

"Can we get dessert?" Rose asked, eyes shining as a tray of bread pudding waltzed by. I grinned at my two best friends.

XXX

April

"See, now I thought we were making progress. We watch baseball together, I sneak you peanut butter every now and again, and you go and do this. What I don't understand is why! Why? Why do you continue to do this? And furthermore, why do I continue to allow this to happen?"

I halted at the top of the stair, overhearing the conversation coming from inside my apartment. Knowing that Edward was home alone, I figured he was on the phone. Once inside however, I peeked around the corner and found him sitting across the table from Clive, his Stanford sweatshirt in between them.

I stifled a laugh at how seriously Edward was staring at Clive, and how unseriously Clive seemed to be taking all this. Unserious was the best way I could describe him, as he was batting at his tail as though it were unattached from his body. I backed out of the room silently, and then made a big show of rattling the doorknob to let him know I was home.

Coming into the dining room again, I found Edward reading the newspaper nonchalantly, making no mention whatsoever of the conversation he had been previously having with my cat.

I allowed him that dignity and pretended not to notice when I found the sweatshirt in the trash a few hours later.

May

A loud noise filled the room, punctuating the night, and my eardrums. A great sawing, a loudness of indeterminate origin dragged me kicking and screaming from my dreams of Clooney and back into my bed. I was sweltering, a very warm body wrapped around me from the back, noises pouring forth from his mouth and directly into my brain. I grappled for a cool spot on my pillow, the heat from him billowing towards me in waves as the snoring, oh my sweet Lord the snoring, rattled my insides.

Even Clive was horrified and had retreated to a safe perch on top of the dresser.

In a completely shit move, reminiscent of schoolyard playgrounds, I kicked him. Drew back my legs and kicked the mass of sweaty snoring boy that was filling my bed and ruining my sleep.

"Oof!" he yelled out, bending forward and inadvertently pressing more of his hot skin against mine. I peeled myself off the bed, standing over him, brandishing my pillow which no longer contained even an ounce of coolness.

"Babe, what are you doing? Did you kick me?" he whined, still half asleep and curling back in on himself like a roly poly.

"You have to stop!" I yelled, wheeling about in a flash of nightie.

"Stop? Stop what, come on, come back to bed," he huffed, already slipping back into his sweet dreams where he was a lumberjack or whatever boys dreamed about.

"Don't you dare go back to sleep! No! More! Snoring!" I yelled, wild inside and out now, being deprived of my sacred sleep turning me into a woman possessed.

"Snoring? Come on, it can't be that bad-what the hell Bella!" he yelled as I snatched his pillow away, smacking his head in the process with my hand.

"If I can't sleep, no one will sleep! You are loud, and you are hot!" I shrieked, feeling a smug sense of vindication knowing that I had disturbed his slumber as well.

"Well the hot we knew, right?"

"Aaahhhhh!"

"Wait, are you PMS'ing?" he asked, his eyes growing wide then fearful as he realized his mistake.

That night Edward slept across the hall in his own bed. I needed my sleep.

XXX

Late May

"Will they let us go in? When will they let us go in?" Alice asked, bouncing around outside the door, peering through the window. We were camped out in the waiting room of the hospital, waiting to hear the news about Rose and Emmett. They had opted out of knowing the sex ahead of time, so it was a true surprise to everyone. Arriving a week early, Rose was in labor for the better part of a day, leaving the four of us playing round robin on the waiting room couch and visiting the cafeteria. Jasper and Edward had just left to grab us some more snacks, leaving Alice and I to wait it out.

We'd gotten word from one of her nurses a few moments ago that mommy and baby were doing fine, and we should be able to go back soon and meet the new family.

"I still can't believe she's a mom, I mean, who called that one?"

"What do you mean?"

"I just mean, she isn't who I thought would have kids first is all. I thought for sure it'd be you."

"Don't say that around Jasper, he is already sniffing around to be the next daddy on the block. This belly has been giving him all kinds of ideas," she rolled her eyes, patting the bump that had been growing steadily. After months of prep work and getting the timing just right, Alice was now carrying Jessica and Jake's baby. In the end, what had seemed like a spur of the moment decision made perfect sense for her. There was no one who was more loving and giving than Alice, and when she saw a friend in need, she couldn't help herself. She loved that she was helping out such a great couple, and she looked at it as a perfect way to "try this pregnancy thing out".

While Jasper understandingly had his reservations at first, he had come around and was very supportive of Alice's decision to become their surrogate. I mean, it was a lot to ask coming into a new relationship, but it worked out for the best.

"I mean, he loves to rub it, like, *loves* to rub it. It's his favorite thing to do, well, second favorite," she grinned, catching sight of Jasper coming towards her from the elevator.

"How's my girl?" he asked, hands slipping around her from behind and immediately gravitating towards her baby bump.

"See?" she mouthed at me, giggling as he pressed kisses against her neck.

Edward was messing with his phone, smiling big as he watched something on the screen.

"You're not watching it again, are you?" I laughed, tucking myself into his side and peering over his arm.

"I can't stop, it's too damn funny!" he snickered, pressing play once again.

When Emmett found out Rose had gone into labor, he was shooting a remote shot for the six o'clock news, live from Giants Stadium. An assistant who was holding his phone saw the text and whispered it to him off camera. Emmett's response was to holler "We're having a baby! Whoooo!", drop his microphone, and hijack the NBC van, leaving behind his team. His reaction, and the subsequent reaction from the anchor team back in the studio, had become an instant hit on YouTube. Everyone was watching it, and Edward couldn't stop.

As we were watching it, Emmett, clad in scrubs, came to the door of the waiting room, with a smile as big as the Golden Gate Bridge.

"You guys want to come meet my daughter?"

XXX

July

"Hey."

"Hey you."

"You awake?"

"Not really, wait, what are you doing here?"

"I caught an earlier flight back. I missed you."

"Mmm, I missed you too."

"Jesus Bella, what the hell are you sleeping in?"

"It's too hot for clothes."

"That's a very good thing," he whispered, his warmth welcome in spite of the heat. Hands moved across my ribs, towards my hips, angling me backwards as I moaned at the feel of him, my body always ready to respond to the feel of his hands on my skin. Feeling him stop momentarily to join me in my naked sleeping times, I arched into him when I felt him again, anxious and ready to love me.

He stroked my breasts, his movements deliberate and teasing, knowing the instant reaction he would achieve. Nudging between my legs, he brought one leg back over his, opening me to him.

"Yes?" he asked, wet in my ear.

"Yes," I nodded, reaching behind me and tangling my fingers into his hair. With a groan, he thrust inside me. I sighed as I felt him, insistent and tangible. Where he belonged.

XXX

September

"Go ahead, I know you're dying to say it."

"I don't think I have to Bella, your moaning is saying it all."

"No no, I know you want to, go ahead."

"I told you so."

"Feel better?"

"Yes."

"Good, now shut up and let me get back to my noodles."

Edward laughed at me as I slurped up my pho ga, amazing Vietnamese chicken noodle soup. For years, I thought I didn't like Vietnamese food. I suppose eating it in Vietnam made all the difference for me.

Once again, dating Edward Masen proved to be a windfall. I was invited along on a trip he had planned for photographing Southeast Asia, ending in Vietnam. I couldn't join him for the entire journey, but I was able to meet him in Hanoi and spend a week with him, touring and photographing for National Geographic.

We toured cities and villages, sandy warm beaches, and quiet mountain tops. We ate amazing food every day, and loved our way through every night. We were currently floating in Halong Bay, dining on a wonderful meal cooked on the houseboat we were staying on. I gazed at the tiny islands, breaking the surface like the backs of dragons, swooping from underneath the water. The sun was beginning to set, and to cool off from the sweltering heat Edward had taken a dive off the back of the boat. Water trickling off his skin, his cargo shorts stuck to his legs, and shirtless torso making my mouth water more than the pho, life was good.

Of all the trips I had taken with Edward, the quick weekend getaways or the week long journeys to exotic places, this was the one that had taken me truly outside myself. Vietnam was magical, intoxicating, and magnificent. I wanted to come back. I wanted him to bring me back.

Continuing to slurp my noodles while he popped open a Tiger beer, we grinned at each other. Our months together had segued into a shorthand. No words were necessary. As I turned to watch the sunset, he pulled me backwards into his lap. We were warm and sticky, salty from the water and from our sweat. I had lived in my green bikini top and sarong for almost two days now, and his hands spanned my hips, thumbs dipping just under the fabric.

"It's good right?" he asked.

"It's so good," I replied, watching the sun begin to dive into the bay. I turned backwards to kiss him, feeling the butterflies that had never gone away. I hoped they never would.

XXX

Early October

"God damn Bella, that was amazing."

"Yes, yes it was," I purred, stretching my legs around him, clutching him closer to me, feeling him still inside me. His breathing synched with my own, relaxing into me, as I scratched at his scalp and made little patterns on his back with my fingertips. After a few minutes he raised up on one elbow, and I smoothed his hair back.

"You didn't, did you?"

"No sweetie, but it was fantastic anyway."

"But, you didn't, let me make it up to you," he insisted, moving his hand in between us, surprised when I stopped him.

"Babe?"

"It's not always about that, it can still be amazing, you know? Being here, being close with you, some nights? It's all I need," I promised, bringing me down to me for another kiss, slow and sweet.

"I love you so much," I whispered in his ear, his answering grin making my heart swell.

After the Great O Hiatus, as it came to be known, was she always there for me? Of course not, not every time. But mostly she was there, and mostly she was there a few times, and sometimes, she brought G with her. And those were the nights I damn near passed out.

But while I loved the countertop sex, and the shower sex, and the kitchen floor sex, and the stairway sex...well, one night of stairway sex, Felix and Demetri made us promise no more of that...the quiet sex was still my favorite. When it was Edward on top of me, letting me feel his good weight and his good love pressing down on me, inside me, all around me. And if on occasion the O stayed away, it was ok.

I knew she would always return.

Edward shuffled back towards the bed, bringing a bottle of water with him, Clive close at his heels. Clive wisely stayed away now during the relations, he'd attacked once more and was almost punted. So now he took cover, away from the action. Edward getting water was the signal that he could come back in to snuggle.

Passing me the bottle, I turned on the news to check the weather for the next day to see if I'd need an umbrella. Each on our own side, with Clive in between us, we watched the forecast. Our hands were clasped on the pillow in between.

XXX

Mid October

"Want to go for a walk before dinner?"

"Yeah sure, lemme get my shoes," I told him, lacing up and heading out with Edward into the cool fall evening. We were house-sitting for Esme and Carlisle who were on their honeymoon. They had finally tied the knot in a simple ceremony at City Hall, witnessed by about twenty of their closest friends. After being engaged for eons, they decided to keep it small and tasteful. We all celebrated with them at their house in Sausalito before they headed off for a few months. A few *months* of a honeymoon, that's how they rolled. With the design firm in my capable hands, they were taking the time to relax into being newlyweds, spending a few weeks in the south of France and then on to points unknown.

Esme had asked if I would be interested in staying out there, not every night, but weekends especially, and a few nights during the week. I quickly agreed, loving the waterfront community. Edward initially balked, "It's so boring out there, what will we do?" but started suggested we drive out more and more. He loved the hills for bike riding and running, and I used the Range Rover to get in to work in the mornings easy enough. Drinking wine on the terrace at night, looking across the bay to the lights of San Francisco, it was easy enough to get used to living the high life.

There was a winding path at the edge of their property, and through several hidden doors we found ourselves right smack down in "downtown" Sausalito. Downtown being wonderful little restaurants and shops, residents out enjoying the evening on the pathways and sidewalks. We held hands as we walked, coming into a more residential area.

"So I said, no way, there is no way I am tearing out these beautiful built-ins to make way for your treadmill, you need to find another designer if that's what you want," I laughed, telling him about something that had happened at work that day. Thanks to the work I had been doing, and all the work Jake and Jessica had thrown my way through their blueblood network, my dance card was full. I had made enough of a name for myself, and was "hot" enough to be in a position of turning down jobs, taking the ones I was most excited by. It was a good place to be, moving up within Esme's little shop to a better office and even more prestigious, second in command when she was out of the office, which was becoming more and more these days. I had even been able to hire two of my own assistants, and was mentoring a design student that was in her senior year at Berkeley.

I had given serious thought to breaking away from Esme and starting my own firm. I had the client list now, and I had enough of a book to stand on my own. But the truth was, I loved working for Esme, and while the day may come that I stepped away, for now? It was exactly where I wanted to be.

"Did you hear me Edward? Hey Edward," I called, snapping my fingers to get his attention. He was staring at a house at the end of the street we were on, partially hidden by trees and, well, weeds.

"Babe, look at that."

"Look at what, that shack? Yeah, its charming Wallbanger, lets head back. I'm starving," I answered, pulling on his hand. He stood fast, peering through the autumn twilight at the house.

"No, look at that, that house. Isn't it, interesting?"

"Interesting isn't the word I would use Edward, come on, let's get a move on. I'll let you do things to me while I make the salad," I teased, leaning in and kissing his neck. Usually, this got a response, but tonight, not so much. He tugged me in the direction of the house as I noticed the

for sale sign in the front yard.

"You're kidding, right?" I asked, dragging my feet as he led me up the walk. As we got closer, I saw the weeds and the neglect, but it was probably once a pretty nice house. Victorian, but not frou-frou. Peeling paint gave it a melancholy look, but it had clean lines and looked to be decent sized. I glanced around at the other houses on the street, very nice. How had this house deteriorated so?

"It's pretty, isn't it?" a voice called, and we turned to see an older woman peering over her newspaper from her front porch.

"Um, well," I hedged, smiling at her.

"Well, it used to be pretty, want to see the inside?" she asked.

"Oh no, we couldn't-" I started, only to be interrupted by Edward, "Yes, we'd love to."

"Edward, what are you doing?" I asked, as the woman produced a set of keys from her pocket and threw them over to us. He caught them in midair, nodding in thanks.

"No trouble at all, the realtor has only shown it a few times, but I still have a set of keys. Mrs. White, she's the old owner, went to live with her daughter in Sacramento. She let the house get the best of her the last few years, but it's got good bones," she mused, going back to her paper. Good bones, someone's been watching HGTV.

"Have you lost your mind? What the hell are we doing?" I whispered, smiling at the woman as we made our way up the walk. Dodging clumps of grass and twigs, we headed up onto the porch.

"I don't know, I just want to see the inside, don't you?" he asked, his green eyes lit up with something I couldn't pinpoint.

"Sure Edward," I smiled back, indulging him. As he worried with the lock, I glanced around, noting the orange trees, the honeysuckle vines, the shrub roses. Whoever this Mrs. White was, she was definitely a gardener. Now, looking past the debris, I could see the white clapboard, the faded shutters flanking an enormous picture window. A traditional two story home, its porch curved away from the street and wrapped around towards the back.

"There we go," he announced, the door swinging backwards. We walked in, the last light of the day showing us an outdated interior. I gazed at the mauve wallpaper, the calico cat motif present in every corner. But as we moved further into the house, the entire back wall opened up into a view of the bay.

"Oh," I gasped, seeing the little lights of Sausalito twinkling from down below, and further out, San Francisco. The porch wrapped all the way around the house, with two comfortable looking lounge chairs positioned to take in the view. The grass needed mowing, the weeds needed weeding, but it was a killer porch.

I turned back towards Edward, leaning against the mantel of a stone fireplace, complete with leaded glass bookshelves. They were covered in shelf paper, but the craftsmanship was unmistakable.

Thumping my feet along the pink wall to wall carpeting, I made a guess. "There's hardwood under here, I bet you anything there's hardwood floors under the Pepto rug," I said, my heart racing a little. I passed him on the way towards the kitchen, finding avocado green appliances but ample space. My mind began to work.

"Interesting?" he asked, reaching out his hand to me.

"Interesting," I allowed, letting him pull me towards the stairs. On the way we passed a formal dining room, complete with bay windows facing the...well...bay. The carpet on the stairs continued the pink, but was only a runner, exposing the hardwood underneath. Making our way

upstairs, golden sunlight broke through the stillness, another huge window hiding under an eave but making for great light. I held my breath as we headed to the second floor, peeking inside rooms and counting one, two, three bedrooms, a hallway bath with subway tile, original probably, and heading into what was the...master bedroom.

High in the trees, overlooking the porch and the undeniable view, it was a large room. With windows on two sides, I finally caught a look at the hardwood floor, stained a honey that could easily be lifted or darkened. My mind began to whirl, placing a highboy dresser on one wall, a desk in the nook in the corner, would the bed be four poster or sleigh...oh no. I was...staging the room. Something I usually only did when I was in a space I was...considering. I saw Edward, coming out of the bathroom with a smirk. "Holy shit, are you going to lose your mind when you see what's in here," he laughed as I pushed past him.

Claw.

Foot.

Tub.

"What are you doing to me Edward?" I managed, leaning against the wall as he chuckled. "Why are we in here, why are we looking at something we...wait, do you wanna, wait, what the hell am I saying?"

He caught me up in a close hug, leaning his forehead onto mine, the sex limes piercing into mine.

"Nightie Girl, we should totally buy this fucking house," he said, laughing when I shrieked.

"Are you high? What the hell, we can't...can we?"

"Oh yeah, we can."

"But, you don't want to live in Sausalito, do you?"

"It's grown on me, besides, they're turning our building into condos, we'd have to move sooner or later."

"That's a rumor."

"That's a fact. Felix told me."

"Felix would say anything to...hold up. Are we actually talking about this? And can we afford this?"

"I can, and you can help out. I know you're already thinking about all the things you want to change."

"We'd start with the carpet, that would come up immediately," I answered promptly, then slapped a hand over my mouth.

"I knew it," he laughed and I rolled my eyes. I dragged him out of the bathroom over to the window seat, yes there was a window seat, and sat him down. When he pulled me onto his lap, I let him.

"Ok, look. A year ago, you had just left behind your harem. Now you want to move out to the suburbs with me?"

"I would hardly call this the suburbs."

"You know what I mean."

"Yeah, I know what you mean, and yeah, I do. I love you Bella, that's not going to change. I want this, I want you," he insisted, "I just think, oh hell, here comes the Dawson's Creek," he grimaced and I squealed in delight.

"You know how much I love it when you go Pacey on me."

"Seriously though, I just adore you, you know that. And when I'm home, I want to be home, with you."

"You are killing me Edward," I sniffled, tears and nose beginning to run.

"I know, I'm very cute when I'm vulnerable," he stated, making me snort in a very unladylike way.

"So without knowing how much this house costs, without knowing anything about buying a house in Sausalito, without an inspection or a real estate agent *and* knowing there is a helluva lot of work to be done, you want this? All of it, you really want this?"

He nodded his head, looking determined but a little afraid of my answer. I got off his lap, and walked around the bedroom once more.

"I get to pick the paint colors?" I asked facing the windows.

"Yes dear."

"And the furniture? We'll need a lot of furniture."

"Yes dear."

I turned around and threw myself into his arms. "I totally want this too," I cried, the waterworks in full effect now. He spun me around then started pulling me down the stairs.

"First thing is, we need to find out how much this is gonna cost me, then I'll need to call Carlisle, make some arrangements. I wonder how soon we can move in..." he mumbled, his excitement palpable in the air. I gazed in wonder at him, making plans for us as we made our way back onto the street, as he talked to the neighbor, maybe soon our neighbor, about getting in touch with the real estate agent to take another tour. He was giddy, as giddy as I had ever seen him, talking about turning the garage into a studio and which bedroom would be best for my office,

apparently I got an office in this deal, and finally stopping when he noticed a silver car in a driveway down the street.

"Maybe I'll get a new car, that's a nice one. I wonder what kind of car that is?"

"That's a Volvo Edward, a Volvo."

"*That's* a Volvo? Come on, really? Wow, I like it."

I laughed at him the entire way back to Esme's and didn't stop laughing until he had me half-naked in the Hillavator. Ahem.

XXX

Mid December

"Bella, it's perfect."

"You think?"

"I think," Esme nodded, coming to stand next to me by the window. We were perched at the edge of the living room looking at what we had created.

True to his word, Edward left the design of our new home entirely to me. He made suggestions here and there, suggestions that were carefully led by me so that he thought he was coming up with an idea all on his own mind you, but for the most part, he left it solely up to me. By no means was he a silent partner, he just had no interest in picking colors or fabrics. And since it was like religion to me, it wasn't as easy as it would have been for most boyfriends to troop through Home Depot on a weekend. No, for me, designing an interior, especially when it was my interior, was like a blood sport. So he left it up to me.

He'd been traveling a lot this fall, being one of his more busy times. I had insisted we spend Christmas at home this year and so he was getting in a few last minute jobs before flying home tonight. My mom and Phil were due in a few days before Christmas, and even Charlie was going to make it in for the New Year. They were anxious to see our new house, and while my mom was thoroughly enamored of my globetrotting boyfriend, both Phil and Charlie wanted to spend a little more time with him. Understandable, he had changed my world completely.

I had been burning the candle at both ends trying to get things ready for his homecoming. With unlimited resources, it's astonishing how quickly you can purchase a home, gut it, and furnish it. It was addicting. I still didn't know quite what Edward's net worth was, but I had seen a few numbers on some of the banking reports that we dealt with while purchasing the home, and I had to sit down. But as he told me, "It's just money Bella, I'd still rather have my parents back than all of this," so I decided to go with it. Having a home of his own was something I don't think Edward ever thought he would have, so I was determined to give him all that I could.

And while the feminist side of me grumbled a bit that I shouldn't let a man pay for things the way I did, are you kidding me? He let me pick out furniture for the entire house for Christ's sake, I wasn't going to say no to that! Besides, we had worked the finances out in a way that made sense for both of us. I helped with the down payment so my name was on the deed, he handled the monthly mortgage, I paid for all our utilities and living expenses, and he insisted that I save the rest of my salary.

So after that accelerated pace, I now found myself a proud co-owner of classic Sausalito Victorian, complete with bay view and the customary telescope through which I could gaze at my favorite city in the world, San Francisco.

Now, Esme and I looked around at all the hard work we had put in. A long thin custom shelf filled with the bottles of sand Edward had

collected was on one wall, with a smaller shelf below for the bottles from our trips together. Tahoe, Nerja, Halong, they all clustered together to tell the beginning of our story, with room left for the next chapter.

Windblown Girl on a Cliff with an Orange hung in a frame on the opposite wall, his only absolute for the living room. He loved this picture of me, cringing in embarrassment about having my picture taken, orange juice and pulp clear on my lips and chin, hair blown out wildly by the Spanish sun. It was his favorite, and he insisted that it be displayed somewhere downstairs.

I let the natural landscape be my palette, especially in the living room, the surrounding hillside undeniably inspiring the colors and textures inside. Buttery creams, burnished bronze, soft muted greens, and dashes of goldenrod mirrored the outside and made our home cozy. As I threw the afghan, Edward's afghan, across the back of the plush chocolate couch to bring it all together, Esme looked at it quizzically, no doubt curious as to why such a strange retro blanket was in residence.

"It was his mom's," I explained as she smiled in understanding.

Later that night, after Edward had finally arrived home, we were getting ready for bed. He had been thrilled with everything I had accomplished, and he was quite touched when he noticed how I had used the afghan. We sat in our new breakfast nook as I watched him eat a late supper. He always craved comfort food after traveling, and tonight all he wanted was a bowl of my chicken noodle soup and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. And a glass of milk. We talked easily and comfortably about his trip, my work, and plans for the rest of the house, which would wait until after the holidays. Clive weaved in and out of Edward's legs welcoming him home. Clive had settled into the new house quite well, headbutting his appreciation to me of the deep windowsills for maximum bird watching.

I'd been sleeping in one of the guest rooms, wanting to wait for him to sleep the first night in our new bed, together. Maybe there was more

romantic than practical in me than I thought.

"So I passed a great Christmas tree lot on my way in, want to go pick one out tomorrow night after work?" he asked, towel drying his hair. After being on planes for the last day or so, he always wanted to shower before bed. Which was fine with me, because then I got to watch him walk around the room in just his pajama bottoms.

"Sure, I have a meetings all morning but the afternoon I just have to check on a few houses, make sure their decorations are just so, then over to Jessica's to make sure all the furniture was delivered for the nursery. You should see it, it's a damn fine job if I do say so myself," I laughed, nodding for him to pull down his side of the duvet. We flipped pillows, folded down blankets, and I sighed when I saw the sheets. Egyptian cotton, thread count in the millions, and gleaming white. He caught me admiring my choice of sheets, and he threw a throw pillow at me.

"That pillow is not for throwing."

"Um, it's a *throw* pillow, right?"

"Hey mister, if you knew how much of your money I spent on that pillow, you wouldn't be so quick to throw it."

"I don't even want to know how much this little number set me back, do I?" he asked, tilting his head towards the little number in question.

The little number was our new bed. It was necessary, we needed it, and I wanted it. A new bed for a new home. California King to accommodate the snoring *and* the flailing, it was simple and elegant, with a massive, and well-padded, headboard.

I was no fool, I was acquainted with the strength of his hips.

"It's better if you just let me do my thing," I sassed, crawling across the bed to him on all fours, making sure the pink nightie swished in all the right places.

"I like it when you do your thing, even better when I get to *watch* you do your thing," he breathed, raising an eyebrow as I turned a bit to show him my ruffles. Smoothing his hand across my leg, he pressed his body against mine, his shower warm skin heating me as much as his words.

"I know you do, but tonight I'd rather it be your hands all over me, not to mention that mouth," I instructed as he flipped us both so I was perched on top of him. I had positioned the bed so that when cuddled up, you could see the lights twinkling over the bay.

"Look at that view," I whispered, looking out at all that lay before me.

"I'll say," he muttered from below me, peeking up my nightie. I slapped his hand away, which was his cue to wiggle me right out of my coordinating panties.

And with pajama pants abandoned, ruffles hanging from a perfectly placed lamp, and one pink nightie pushed up around my chin, Edward brought it on home.

And god damn if he still didn't find a way to bang that headboard.

Thump.

"Be careful...oh God...that's new paint...oh *God*..."

"You want me...to be...Christ Bella...careful?"

Thump thump.

"Well...maybe...a little...oh God...ungh...Edward!"

"That's my Nightie Girl."

Thump thump thump.

XXX

?POV

All was quiet as I set out on patrol, making sure the perimeter was secure. I padded through the house, taking notice of any loose Q-Tips that would need to be dealt with if unruly. If those were allowed to run unchecked, they would multiply. I'd seen it happen.

Making my way upstairs, I stopped for a stare-off with an owl outside. No side gave in willingly, and it was another forty five minutes before I continued to check in on my people, who had finally quieted down after several rounds of caterwauling. Honestly.

The Feeder was, predictably so, taking up most of the sleeping quarters. The Tall One, aptly named because he was taller than The Feeder, was making that noise again, that noise that I simply couldn't tolerate. The Feeder was beginning to toss and turn, she was not sleeping soundly. Without enough sleep, she would be unlikely to play with me the following evening, so this would have to be remedied. She did seem to enjoy the games, so I would once more take matters into my own paws.

Jumping from the floor to the bed with a natural grace, a grace that was barely appreciated I felt, I navigated my way through knees and legs, arms and elbows, reaching the pinnacle, coming to rest just beneath his chin. Stretching out one paw, I placed it over his breathing holes, stopping the noise momentarily. The Tall One brushed away my best efforts, although once he rolled onto his side, the noise stopped. He curled into himself, on the one corner The Feeder had allowed him. I had remained standing, doing my best log rolling impression and retaining perfect balance while doing so. Again, my people just didn't

get it.

Settling into the nook between my two people, I rested. Knowing the house was protected as I watched over The Feeder and The Tall One, I allowed myself to dream. Of the one that got away.

Yes. I totally, absolutely, 100% ended that story from a pussy's POV. I think Clive deserved that, don't you? Thank you to the team who bought a scene from Clive's POV in FGB...I have been waiting to write that since the very beginning and I can honestly say, I had a blast.

Thank you to Nina and Lauren, who stayed with me in Gringott's since we started this story together. It's finally finished!

Thank you to everyone who has supported, rec'd, pimped, and even bashed this story. It's made this an incredible experience for me, writing this for you. I've learned so much about how I like to tell stories, and I thank you for enjoying the ridiculous with me.

I have been asked many times whether I will allow translations of this story, and while I appreciate the request, I have decided to allow no translations at this time.

I have also been asked many times whether this story will be the last story I will write for this community, and the answer to that is, most likely yes. Never say never, but at this time, and for the foreseeable future, I do not have any plans to start work on any new fan fictions.

If you will indulge me for a moment, this community has given me more than I can possible say. I found a voice that had been squelched for years, buried in the day-to-day of working and getting along. I've realized that I love to tell stories, and if it were not for this weird little fucked up online world of ours, I would probably have never rediscovered my love of reading fiction, or

known that I enjoy telling my own stories. If you would like to continue this journey with me, and see where it takes us, please follow along on my Alice twitter [alice_clayton](#). Also check out [notyourmotherspodcast\(.\)com](#) for all the details on my new project, can't wait to hear your thoughts!

I will be giving my normal chapter end recs (and there are some amazing fics in that list) but I am taking it a step further and bringing out some of my favorites from the past 2 and a half years I have been knocking around this fandom. And please make sure to review, to pimp, to rec, and tell these authors how much you enjoy their work. Believe me, it means the world.

My new discoveries:

Drift, by [denverpopcorn](#). I only wish I could write like this. This story is heartbreaking, but in the very best way. Push through until the end, you will be so glad you did. There are guts all over these pages, but they are Edward guts so of course they are nice looking guts. And never have I been more happy to see someone knocked on their ass into a snowbank as in this story!

A Thousand Leaves, by [BellaSunshine](#). Whodunit? Edward is a jerk, Bella has a crush, but this story takes a very unexpected turn when Bella's mom ends up dead. Was the wrong man framed? Will his family stand by him? Or will the last person he suspects be able to clear his name? I love a good mystery, and this is turn the page good...or click the next button good...or whatever, read it.

Through The Oak Door, by [struckatthesky](#). I am a huge fan of a good ghost story, a paranormal creeper, but this combines that feeling you get when the lights go out...with the feeling you get when your pants come off...kwim? Twists and turns, scary and sweet, I have never wanted to know what's behind that secret door more! Read it, with the lights on...

Once More, With Feeling, by WhatsMyNomDePlume. Oh my goodness, is this one a gem! Hilarious, witty, carefully constructed, I have never wanted the X-Files to come back more, just so she could write an episode or two. This Edward and Bella are so crazy made for each other, and so horrifyingly bad at it, it's fantastic. Think X-Files meets Men in Black meets Ghostbusters meets Clue meets please please let them have hot monkey sex and let me watch. Do NOT miss this one!

Committed to Memory, by KrisMom. Just when I think I have read every story there is in this little world, something like this comes along and smacks me upside my head. With such restraint, and such imagery, she tells this story of a widowed mom and a friendly neighbor with aching precision. I have to admit, I teared up a bit at several scenes. The writing is so good in this, it makes me weep.

A Quiet Fire, by Magnolia 822. I am a sucker for when couples get back together. I admit it, I wanted Brenda with Dylan, Carrie with Big, Ross with Rachel, Felicity with Ben. What I love even more than that, is when they get thrown back together, years later. Bella is pulled away from her life, as she is in the beginning stages of falling in love with Edward, a year older. Now, years later, they are back in each other's lives, different city, different circumstances, same chemistry. I adore this story, and I adore this couple in this interpretation.

Best Laid Schemes, by EZRocksAngel. I love anything this girl writes, and this is no exception. Lighter than her usual fare, she has served up a great little scenario of a high school Bella, aching to be noticed by Edward, and ready to step outside her box a bit. Hmm, but helping Jake out by posing as his 'easy lay', is that the best idea? Will Edward see it as a good thing? Now that all the other boys are noticing Bella for her...assets...will he see her as Bella? Love this story, light and fun and sexy.

Blame it on Rio, by DoUTrustMe. OK, this is straight up silly pants, and I adore it. Bella and Edward on an island off the coast of Brazil. A talking lobster, accidental sex, too much to drink and a jet ski. Honestly, this is some funny shit, tinged with just enough ridiculous to make me giggle. Looking for a laugh with your smut? This is your girl.

The Diva Diaries, by KiyaRaven. As an old theater brat, I adored this story from the beginning. Told over the period of several years, this story is set on the connection between Edward and Bella from the moment they set eyes on each other, on a stage. Undeniable chemistry onstage, undeniable aggravation offstage, will their passion be their saving grace or their downfall? This coupling is white hot, and the tension jumps off the page, er, laptop. I get giddy when I see this update show up on my phone, happy times for me.

We Were Here, by lola-pops. An interesting spin on a high school boy meets girl, what if girl is already with another boy? And what if girl cheats? And what if boy has been pining for years? There is a scene in a car that makes me...warm. To say the least. Love where this is going, get in now, get in early.

And now for my old school recs. These are stories that I have revisited during my time in this fandom, that I always rec to anyone new and is confused as to where to start. These are my all time favorites:

The Nymph and the Waterfall, If Love Could Light a Candle, by pastiche pen

A Rough Start, The Tutor, The Cannabean Betrothal, by itsmegan73

Creature of Habit, Creatures of Habit, Daedelus in Exile, EZRocksAngel

Carpe Noctem and Fiat Lux, by queenofgrey

Elemental, by MsTallulahBelle

Hydraulic Level 5, by Gondolier

Last Rites, by halojones

The Mirrors, Tips for Better Living, adorablecullens

Tropic of Virgo, in..bathrobe

Hi Honey I'm Home, Teenage Angst Brigade, Retrograde, Mutually Assured Destruction, Scotch Gin and the New Girl (co written by withthevampsofcourse), by Jandco

Welcome Home, It's Good to be Back, by withthevampsofcourse

The Fallout, OCDIndeed

Realize, by Goo82

Dark Games and Twisted Minds, Night Must Fall, by katinki

Abbracciare il Cantante by brattyvamp

Volition, With or Without You, Rochelle Allison

The Blessing and the Curse, by The Black Arrow

With Teeth, by tallulahblue

I could actually continue to list these for days and days, but this is a good peek into what I love to read, and what has brought me the most joy,swoon,laughs,heartache,tears,giggles, and pleasure...ahem...over the last few years. I hope you enjoy and get

to read something you maybe didn't know was out there.

Edward Wallbanger will remain posted for one month, after which I will be pulling it down. Please read it, share it, save it, do whatever you need, but it will be pulled.

Thanks for sticking with me chickens, I have had a blast and I hope you did to.

Alice

xoxo
