

## MEMORY #4

Setting: Bella's graduation

Time: Summer

Age: 16

*Not a great time for us to be off the rez with that redheaded leech hanging around. What the hell does she want here anyway? We'll get her, though. I can't wait. I get to kill a vampire for a change instead of mollycoddling them and making nice.*

*There she is! "Way to go, Bells!" Gosh, they really messed up the whole promenade bit...all the graduates are bunched up into a lump. Finally, they get to the S's! "Hey, Charlie, she looks pretty good up there, eh? Whoo hoo!"*

*I wonder if I should go to that party at the Leech Farm and take my posse. As much as I hate those bloodsuckers, it is Bella's party. Yeah, yeah, she's still mad at me for that kiss. I don't care...it was worth it!*

*Yeah, I'm goin' to that party. I've got my present to give her and when else can I do it? Besides, how much longer do I have before she turns into one of them? After that, I don't know if we'll even be friends. I don't see how...I can't stand their stench. Would I even want her after that? If she lets him do that to her, I don't think I could touch her again. So I gotta up my game. I gotta give it everything I have right now.*

*But damn! The redheaded leech keeps coming around. I can't get enough sleep to be charming. Running all night, catching a few winks here and there. It's hard to be my big, beautiful self.*

*Okay, cool, this thing is over. Ack...there go the bloodsucker and his fortune-teller sister. Wonder how many times they've graduated? That must get old.*

*"Yeah, yeah, Dad, we gotta get outta here. I'll roll you. Charlie, we've gotta be somewhere. Congratulations on having an adult kid. You feel old?"*

*"Not too old to take you down, Jacob! Better watch yourself. See you Saturday, Billy. Thanks for coming. I'll tell Bella you were here."*

*I've gotta go home and patrol before we head over to the bloodsucker's house. Then I'll get Bella to forgive me and take my gift. Heh, heh... she'll be wearing me on her wrist. And she'll do it too because she loves me. That'll blow his mind. I'll put my mark on her first! I'm so good! How can she resist me?*

*There was Jacob, scheming and plotting to steal Bella from me. I didn't know what the present was that he wanted to give her, but it sounded like a "marking" of some kind. Probably a bracelet, but maybe he was giving her a tattoo—a wolf or, worse, his name—but I didn't think she'd go for a tattoo.*

*I had a few plans of my own and was pretty sure I could compete. I had my eye on a wrought-iron bedframe with a bower of iron roses... no thorns. We finally inaugurated that bed for real several months after we were married. The rest of the family had gone hunting together on a hint from me to Carlisle. But before we were married, it was also part of my seduction plan for convincing Bella to marry me. That night...that night was a watershed. It was also one of the most difficult ever in terms of my self-control. While trying to entice her into marriage, I drove myself crazy too.*

*It was the night before Victoria was to bring her newborns to wipe us out. The wolves had decided to join the battle, though, so I was no longer particularly worried that my time with Bella was soon to end. Still, emotions were running mighty high—Jacob was out there fighting for her too. I knew that on the morrow, he would be spending several hours with her pressed against his nearly naked body while he carried her up the mountain to our campsite. I knew that Bella loved me, of course. But I wasn't at all sure that she didn't love him too and agreeing to let him be so close to her was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I wanted to take my best shot the night before if at all possible.*

*Turns out, it was possible. She did agree to marry me, though she refused to wear her engagement ring in front of Jacob. I would have to tell him myself. Maybe then he would back off.*

*I wanted Bella so badly that night...so badly. And she wanted me too. She almost had her clothes off before I realized how serious she was about it. The fear that I would hurt her was the only thing that kept me from giving in to her demand, though I honestly did want to wait until after we were married—it's how I was raised.*

*Fortunately, fear cemented my resolve when nothing else could have.*

*Edward*

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