7. Intruder

I held Bella for the rest of that short night and when she awoke, I was there—something new for us. It had been a rough night for her and that made me very angry. She hadn’t mentioned any names, but I knew already what the problem was. She’d been crying in her sleep—or rather, making pitiful whining noises and gulping air, which is as close as a human gets to crying when she is unconscious and paralyzed in sleep. Watching her reminded me of watching a vampire cry…the gasping, burning eyes, a hitch in the breath.

When she blinked herself awake and looked up at me, I saw that her eyes were bloodshot. She didn’t seem to remember the dreaming and so I didn’t bring it up. I just held her and stroked her face. When she woke fully, she covered her mouth with her hand.

“Morning breath,” she mumbled.

“Not to me,” I said and moved her hand away before touching my lips to hers.

“Mmm,” she breathed, and then “Ewww,” and covered her mouth with her hand again. “I have to brush my teeth,” she said, rolling away from me.

“If you must,” I replied, rolling off the other side of the bed. I watched as Bella dug through her small bag of toiletries before grabbing the whole thing and a short pile of clothes too.

“Be right back.”

When she returned from the bathroom, she was wearing jeans and a t-shirt and her hair was brushed. She walked across the room toward me and I opened my arms for her. She threw her arms around my neck and rose on her toes for a kiss.

“You two up?” Alice called through the door. “It’s ten o’clock. Time to get Bella home to Charlie.”

“Okay, Alice,” I replied. “Are you ready, my love?”

“I didn’t get my kiss yet,” she reminded me.

I smiled and wrapped one arm around her, lifting her so that her face was level with mine. She met my lips halfway while simultaneously raising her legs and locking her bare feet behind my waist. Reflexively, I placed my free hand under her bottom to support her weight. Whoa! This felt worlds different than when Alice had done something similar earlier in the week. I felt the throb of her pulse against the most intimate part of my body.

My craving for her intensified fast and I reached down with one hand to unwind her legs, but Bella gripped even more tightly with her arms to discourage me from pulling her loose. I gave in then and let the kiss go on for as long as I could bear it before breaking her grip around my neck and unlocking her legs from my waist. I set her on her feet, breathing hard.
“You are trouble with a capital ‘T’.”

“Mmmm..., that was nice,” Bella replied huskily.

“Nevertheless, you need to show your face at Charlie’s so I can return from my hiking trip.” I smiled then.

“Killjoy,” Bella accused and scrunched her face at me.

“Those red toenails are very nice,” I whispered into her ear. Then I brushed my fingers lightly down her jaw and kissed her cheek. “See you soon.”

Reluctantly, Bella let Alice take her home and I was left floating in a glow of golden light, high from our reunion. Being with Bella when she woke up in our bed was revelatory. I could imagine what it would feel like to be married to her with the privilege of watching her wake up every morning. I wanted it even more.

Two things had changed for me during the night. Firstly, I’d come to terms with the reality that the werewolves, and Jacob Black in particular, were in Bella’s life at least for now. I had to accept that or risk losing her altogether. I still wanted to do everything I could to keep her safe, but I also had to practice trust, no matter how hard it might be. Compromise was key. Probably, I never would feel comfortable when Bella was around the werewolves—I knew the damage they could do—but perhaps with time, they would earn my trust as they had Bella’s.

Secondly, I’d realized that though Bella and Jacob were on the outs at the moment, Bella would not be happy as long as she was fighting with her friend. The fact that he’d said something to hurt her made me exceedingly angry, but Bella was unlikely to hold it against him if he came to his senses and apologized to her. In fact, I might take it upon myself to make sure that he did, if necessary.

Until then, I wondered if Bella would continue to ride the red motorcycle that she had parked in our garage. I didn’t like the idea of her riding alone. If I had a motorcycle too, perhaps I could accompany her. Would she like that? It would be fun to ride a fast bike, a Ducati perhaps. No matter what, though, if she wanted to take the risk of riding, then at least she should wear safety gear. One false move on a motorcycle and a human could die instantly. I decided to find her a helmet and jacket immediately. She probably wouldn’t go for matching leather pants, though. Too bad. They would suit her.

I hated being separated from Bella, now more than ever. But fortunately, I didn’t have to tolerate it for long on this day. Bella should be home long enough before I arrived to convince Charlie that I’d just returned from a hiking trip. He would naturally be suspicious that Bella and I had spent the night together and though we had, of course, we hadn’t done much that he could disapprove of. Regardless, there was no reason for him to get worked up about me all over again.

Listening to Charlie’s thoughts after returning from Florida, I’d figured out what had caused his sudden change of heart toward me. The pivotal moment had been when Bella told Charlie she was a virgin. After recovering from his initial embarrassment and surprise, he began looking at me differently than he had before.
Unfortunately, the afterglow of Bella’s revelation had been diminishing steadily since then. The idea of my being “old–fashioned” didn’t fly very far with him. He’d decided that past behavior did not predict future behavior, especially for a twenty–first–century teenage boy and obviously, Bella and I were closer than ever.

I laughed to myself, thinking of an episode that had occurred a few nights earlier. I had been kissing Bella goodnight before she went to sleep when I felt one of her hands moving southward down my torso. I grabbed her wrist before she got too far.

“I want to touch you,” she’d complained.

“I might be old–fashioned,” I said, repeating her description of me to Charlie, “but I’m not made of stone. Well, I am kind of,” I amended.

“You listened!” she sputtered. “When we were talking about…”

“I couldn’t very well help it. Charlie’s thoughts were practically screaming at me all the way home.” I could feel the heat of her blush. She buried her face between my arm and chest.

“Don’t be embarrassed. He’s been surprisingly nice to me since then,” I told her. “Is that why?” Bella asked forgetting her shyness and raising her head. “I was wondering.”

“It probably won’t last.”

After Alice returned from Charlie’s house, I waited another forty minutes and then left to go back to town. As I neared the last corner before Bella’s house, suddenly I was punched in the face by a scent coming through the vent. It was a vampire’s scent and not one I recognized. I stomped the accelerator to the floor. Bella was in danger!

My car fishtailed around the corner and I slammed it to a stop in front of Charlie’s house. I leaped out and ran to the front door. The scent led here!

I turned my head in every direction, looking for signs of him before I realized that the scent was not fresh. Hadn’t Alice smelled it? I knocked on the front door and with relief, heard both Charlie’s and Bella’s voices behind it.

“Door.”

“Don’t strain yourself, Dad.”

They didn’t know that anything was wrong. Bella pulled open the door and looked at me first with a smile and then with surprise. I was in tracking mode, sniffing the air, ready to attack.

“Edward? What—?”

I touched her lips with a finger to shush her so I could listen. “Give me two seconds. Don’t move,” I warned in a whisper.

I dashed up the stairs following the scent, and as I’d feared, it led to Bella’s room, but the individual had been gone for a while, probably since before Bella returned home this morning. Alice had some explaining to do! I dashed back downstairs and grabbed Bella around the waist, relocating her swiftly into the kitchen against the far wall away from the windows, so no one could sneak up behind us. I stationed my body in front of her
defensively.

“Someone’s been here,” I whispered in her ear.
“T’ll swear that no werewolves—” Bella began.
“Not one of them,” I hurriedly explained. “One of us.”
Bella’s face paled instantly and I tightened my arm around her, still alert.
“Victoria?” she gasped.
“It’s not a scent I recognize.”
“T’e of the Volturi,” she deduced.
“Probably.”
“When?”
“That’s why I think it must have been them—it wasn’t long ago, early this morning
while Charlie was sleeping. And whoever it was didn’t touch him, so there must have been
another purpose.” Charlie himself had none of the scent on him and it didn’t lead into his
room.
Looking for me,” Bella guessed. I was sure she was right. I went silent and stiff
with anxiety. If he’d stuck around, she could have been killed when Alice brought her
home!
“What are you two hissing about in here?” Charlie inquired, entering the kitchen
with an empty bowl. Then he saw the look on Bella’s face and made an incorrect, but
convenient, assumption.
“If you two are having a fight…well, don’t let me interrupt.” He was smiling,
perversely glad that we might be having problems. I couldn’t focus on him and Bella
seemed unable to speak. Charlie put his bowl in the sink and returned to his Saturday sports
in the living room, smirking.
“Let’s go,” I muttered. There was no time to waste.
“But Charlie!” Bella cried softly, her voice high and tight, the sound of panic. I
considered that for a moment before reaching for my phone. If the visitor had wanted to kill
Charlie, he’d had a perfect opportunity. I didn’t think Bella’s father was in danger, but I
knew she wouldn’t see it that way.
“Yo, bro!”
“Emmett,” I began immediately, giving him no time to speak. “T’e vampire has been
here looking for Bella—nobody I recognize. I need to get her out of here, but she’s worried
about her father.”
“Wow, cool! I’ll chase him down!”
“Good. Bring Jasper. You two can track him. At least make sure that Charlie’s safe.
We also need to know where he’s gone…if he’s still in the area. See you at home after.”
I hung up and pulled Bella through the kitchen toward the front door. She didn’t
want to leave Charlie and began dragging her feet. I had spoken in such a rush that she
hadn’t understood the conversation.
“Emmett and Jasper are on their way,” I told her in a whisper. “T’e’ll sweep the
woods. Charlie is fine.” I didn’t give her time to say goodbye. I rushed her out to the car, watching for any unusual movement or scents.

“Where are we going?” Bella asked in the car.

“We’re going to talk to Alice.” How could she have missed this? I was becoming angrier by the minute as I wondered what else she had missed.

“You think maybe she saw something?”

“Maybe,” I answered carefully, trying to control my temper. She should have!

My sisters, mother, and father were waiting for us in the living room, each of them immobilized by anxiety. They were horrified by the near miss, but were also anticipating my reaction. When I saw them standing there, affirming the danger, my panic exploded as anger, aimed directly at Alice.

“What happened?” I fired at her, my hands curling into tight fists.

“I have no idea,” Alice answered from her perfect stillness, arms folded protectively across her chest. “I didn’t see anything.”

“How is that possible?” I roared.

“Edward,” Bella cautioned.

“It’s not an exact science, Edward,” my father chastised.

“He was in her room, Alice,” I shouted. “He could have still been there—waiting for her.”

“I would have seen that,” she disagreed coldly.

“Really? You’re sure?” My sarcastic fury was lost on nobody.

“You’ve already got me watching the Volturis’ decisions, watching for Victoria’s return, watching Bella’s every step. You want to add another? Do I just have to watch Charlie, or Bella’s room, or the house, or the whole street, too? Edward, if I try to do too much, things are going to start slipping through the cracks.”

“It looks like they already are.”

“She was never in any danger. There was nothing to see.”

“If you’re watching Italy, why didn’t you see them send—”

“I don’t think it’s them,” Alice insisted. “I would have seen that.”

“Who else would leave Charlie alive?” I demanded.

“I don’t know,” Alice answered. That was utterly useless. What good was her skill if it was randomly ineffective, especially in such dangerous circumstances?

“Helpful,” I said snidely.

“Stop it, Edward,” Bella demanded.

I spun around ready for a fight when I saw her expression. I was scaring her! That pulled me up short. I took a deep breath to try and calm myself.

“You’re right, Bella. I’m sorry.” I turned to my sister. “Forgive me, Alice. I shouldn’t be taking this out on you. That was inexcusable.”

“I understand. I’m not happy about it, either.”

“Okay, let’s look at this logically,” I suggested as evenly as I could. “What are the
possibilities?"

When I calmed down, everyone but Rosalie relaxed and re–animated. They’d been almost as stressed by my reaction to the situation as by the situation itself. I shouldn’t let my temper make everyone unhappy. That was wrong and unfair. Everybody here cared about Bella too, I knew. Esme moved to the couch and I pulled Bella in that direction, remembering that it was uncomfortable for her to stand as we habitually did. I sat beside her and took her hand in both of mine, while Esme put her arm around Bella’s shoulders.

Rosalie was looking out the window, motionless as a statue, waiting for Emmett’s return. She had always resented his being put in danger for Bella, though Emmett didn’t—he loved every minute of it. It wasn’t hard to see why that might bother Rosalie. Still, I had recently noticed that she was making an effort to change, something that was difficult for us under any circumstances.

Carlisle began to pace. When he reached Alice, who was standing behind the couch, he brushed her arm with his hand as a gesture of support. He was such a good man—and I fell so far short of him. As he paced back toward me, I saw his eyes return from the distant memories of Italy he was examining to see if anything explained what was going on now. He had found nothing there.

“Victoria?” he posited.

I shook my head. “No. I didn’t know the scent. He might have been from the Volturi, someone I’ve never met…. That was my best guess at the moment.

Alice disagreed. “Aro hasn’t asked anyone to look for her yet. I will see that. I’m waiting for it.”

“Oh!’ That was a clue. “You’re watching for an official command.”

“You think someone’s acting on their own?” Carlisle asked. “Why?”

“Caius’s idea,” I concluded with dread. Aro might let things ride for a time, but Caius would keep his promise to check on Bella and to take action against us if necessary. How soon he might do that was anyone’s guess.

“Or Jane’s….,” Alice added. “They both have the resources to send an unfamiliar face…."

She was right. Jane was a certain threat to Bella who had frustrated and embarrassed her in Italy. “And the motivation,” I added.

“It doesn’t make sense, though,” Esme interjected. “If whoever it was meant to wait for Bella, Alice would have seen that. He—or she—had no intention of hurting Bella. Or Charlie, for that matter.” That was an important point. The visitor had come and gone, clearly for some purpose, but why?

Bella flinched at Charlie’s name.

“It’s going to be fine, Bella,” Esme reassured her, stroking her hair.

“But what was the point then?” Carlisle said.

Exactly.

“Checking to see if I’m still human?” Bella suggested.
“Possible,” Carlisle agreed.

Long gone. What a disappointment! I heard Emmett’s thoughts outside the house. So they had found nothing. Rosalie saw him coming and broke her stillness, visibly relieved. We both looked toward the kitchen.

“Long gone, hours ago,” Emmett announced to everyone. “The trail went east, then south, and disappeared on a side road. Had a car waiting.”

“That’s bad luck,” I realized. “If he’d gone west…well, it would be nice for those dogs to make themselves useful.” They would have attacked instantly. And if he was unconnected to Victoria—who already knew about them—then he’d have been caught by surprise and probably would be dead already.

Bella cringed. She was actually worried about the mutts. They weren’t frightened of vampires, though. They got excited about the chance to take one out.

Jasper had brought some evidence with him, a piece of broken fern. “Neither of us recognized him. But here. Maybe you know the scent.” He passed it to Carlisle who took a whiff of it.

“No, not familiar. No one I’ve ever met.” That was a bad sign. The Volturi would have selected someone whom Carlisle wouldn’t recognize if they were doing a surreptitious check on Bella. Jane would have, at least, especially if the visit wasn’t authorized by Aro. My heart quailed.

Then Esme suggested a less ominous possibility. “Perhaps we’re looking at this the wrong way. Maybe it’s a coincidence…” Esme began. We all looked at her in disbelief. She clarified her point. “I don’t mean a coincidence that a stranger happened to pick Bella’s house to visit at random. I meant that maybe someone was just curious. Our scent is all around her. Was he wondering what draws us there?”

“Why wouldn’t he just come here then? If he was curious?” Emmett asked.

“You would,” Esme said to him with a motherly smile, knowing Emmett as she did. “The rest of us aren’t always so direct. Our family is very large—he or she might be frightened. But Charlie wasn’t harmed. This doesn’t have to be an enemy.”

Carlisle was considering that possibility, wishing it were true. It was how he preferred to see the world, less threatening, less evil. It seemed unlikely to me, though. A nomad wouldn’t have hesitated to kill Charlie unless he simply wasn’t thirsty.

Bella shuddered and I stroked her hand.

“I don’t think so,” Alice said. “The timing of it was too perfect…. This visitor was so careful to make no contact. Almost like he or she knew that I would see….”

“He could have other reasons for not making contact,” Esme pointed out.

But I saw Alice’s point and it was a frightening one. Someone who knew her capabilities and how to skirt them would be a serious threat to us. This undetected visit was proof of that.

“Does it really matter who it was?” Bella asked with a touch of desperation. “Just the chance that someone was looking for me…isn’t that reason enough? We shouldn’t wait
for graduation.”

“No, Bella,” I hastened to disagree. I didn’t want danger to be her reason for changing. Acting in fear could be cause for regret later. “It’s not that bad. If you’re really in danger, we’ll know.”

“Think of Charlie,” Carlisle reminded her. “Think of how it would hurt him if you disappeared.”

“I am thinking of Charlie! He’s the one I’m worried about! What if my little guest had happened to be thirsty last night? As long as I’m around Charlie, he’s a target, too. If anything happened to him, it would be all my fault!”

“Hardly, Bella,” my mother chided. “And nothing will happen to Charlie. We’re just going to have to be more careful.”

“More careful?” Bella echoed doubtfully.

“It’s all going to be fine, Bella,” Alice told her and I squeezed her hand. Bella didn’t believe it. Did we? Did we truly believe it or were we all just trying to reassure her? Certainly, we were not frightened as she was, but that didn’t mean there was no danger.

Driving Bella home in the late afternoon, I sought to put her mind at ease, though I suspected it was futile.

“You won’t be alone for a second,” I told her. My family had decided to keep a twenty-four–hour watch on her house, with Jasper organizing time slots. “Someone will always be there. Emmett, Alice, Jasper…”

“This is ridiculous,” Bella protested. “They’ll get so bored, they’ll have to kill me themselves, just for something to do.”

“Hilarious, Bella,” I said tonelessly. She didn’t understand that we considered her to be part of our family now, though I did think it would be easier to protect both her and Charlie if she lived with us. I would work on that.

When we got to his house, Charlie was still grinning to himself about what he presumed was a fight between Bella and me. That was handy, actually. He had a ready explanation for our stress and wouldn’t be looking for the real problems lurking in the shadows.

Bella set about making Charlie’s dinner while I went outside to traverse the area and make sure no one was hanging around. I knew Charlie had some news about Jacob he wanted me to hear when I came back. The way Charlie pushed Jacob in my face at every turn was intended to make me angry, I suppose, but it didn’t especially. If I were a father, I might have preferred Jacob as my daughter’s beau over me too. I couldn’t blame him for his opinion of me after what I’d put Bella through and I knew that chastity would go only so far to redeem me in his eyes.

“Jacob called again,” Charlie announced as soon as I returned to the house.

“Is that a fact?” Bella replied coolly.

“Don’t be petty, Bella,” Charlie scolded. “He sounded really low.”
“Is Jacob paying you for all the P.R., or are you a volunteer?”

If Charlie knew what Jacob Black had said to his daughter, perhaps he would not be so eager to push the young man’s cause. But in spite of her retort, Bella appeared to be pondering his remark. I’d already discovered that Jacob’s pain—whether real or contrived—shot an arrow right through her heart.

At ten-thirty, I officially left Bella’s house to go home, but I merely dropped off my car and returned on foot to join Jasper who was taking first watch. 

I don’t like this, he was thinking. He wasn’t referring to the duty of protecting Bella, but to the uncertain dangers of the situation. As an army major by trade, he wanted to know his enemy. So did I.

After Charlie went to bed, I rejoined Bella in her room. When she finally fell asleep, she slept more peacefully than she had the previous night. Jacob’s cruel words must be troubling her less, I concluded, which was good. I didn’t want her to be hurt by their quarrel, even if he had behaved like an ass.

Charlie left early in the morning for a day of fishing, so I didn’t bother going home at daybreak. Two mornings in a row I’d gotten to wake up with Bella. 

“I’m going to let Jacob off the hook,” Bella said at breakfast, unwittingly using a fishing metaphor.

“I knew you’d forgive him,” I replied, giving her a smile. “Holding grudges is not one of your many talents.”

She rolled her eyes at me, most likely assuming that the compliment was a joke. A few minutes later, she went to the telephone and dialed.

“Jacob?”

I heard his exuberant voice apologizing profusely on the other end of the line. He was so glad to hear from her.

“I’m not mad. You’re forgiven,” she said.
“Can’t believe I was such a jerk,” I heard him say.
“Don’t worry about that—I’m used to it.” I chuckled to myself.

Bella paused while Jacob asked her a question.

“How?” she asked and waited.

“Oh, there’s a brilliant idea,” she scoffed and glanced at me.

“Not right now,” she told him, reluctantly, I thought.

“That’s not the problem. There’s…well, there’s this other problem that’s slightly more worrisome than a bratty teenage werewolf….”

“What’s wrong?” Jacob inquired loudly on the other end of the line.

Bella hesitated and I held out my hand for the phone. Sam needed to know about the intruder so the pack could be on their guard in case he came back. Bella looked at me dubiously. It was obvious that she didn’t trust me to speak civilly to Jacob. I sighed and moved my hand closer.

“Do you mind speaking to Edward? He wants to talk to you.” I heard the
uncertainty in her voice. I waited with my hand out while Jacob considered it on the other end of the line and then Bella handed me the receiver.

“Hello, Jacob,” I said, as evenly as possible. I had to remember that I was practicing tolerance now.

“There’s a problem?” he asked abruptly. “What is it? What’s wrong?”

“Someone was here—not a scent I know. Has your pack come across anything new?”

“He was in Forks?” Jacob’s hackles went up. “Maybe he knows we’re here and he’s trying to go around us! There’s been no sign of him on our land.”

That didn’t surprise me since Jasper and Emmett had followed the scent trail east and south away from the reservation.

“Here’s the crux, Jacob. I won’t be letting Bella out of my sight till I get this taken care of. It’s nothing personal—”

“That’s totally unnecessary!” Jacob interrupted. “We can protect her as well as you can. We’ve already proven that a hundred times! Before you came back, she was here all the time and it was fine!”

“You might be right—”

“And you can’t cover that much territory anyway. There’s no reason for us to sit out here on our tails if he’s staying on your side of the line. We have to make sure he doesn’t get around you. We should share patrols in Forks. Around Bella’s house at least.”

“That’s an interesting suggestion. We’re quite willing to renegotiate. If Sam is amenable.”

“I’ll convince him,” Jacob said assurably.

“Thank you.”

“When are you all going hunting again? Bella can come to the reservation while you’re gone. Charlie won’t mind and she’ll be safe here. We can watch over her.”

“I’d planned to go alone, actually,” I replied. “And leave her with the others.”

“There’s no need for you to do that! The pack is always here and we can easily protect one little human. And you should let her visit when she wants to. We’re her friends and she practically lived here the whole time you were gone.”

That had to be a jibe, but Jacob was right—he and his pack had saved her life more than once when I wasn’t there to do it.

He continued, “We don’t lose control as much as you think we do. We keep each other in check. I know what you think about Sam and Emily, but Sam was alone then. It was much harder for him.”

I thought about that for a moment. He had a point.

“I’ll try to consider it objectively,” I replied. “As objectively as I’m capable of.”

“I want to come over to Bella’s to get his scent so we don’t confuse him with any of you.”

“That’s not a half–bad idea. When?”
“I was thinking right now, say ten minutes. Is that a problem?”
“No, that’s fine. I’d like a chance to follow the trail personally, anyway. Ten minutes…”
“You’ll leave so I can get a cleaner sample?”
“Certainly,” I agreed, though we both knew that wasn’t the reason he preferred me out of the house. I also preferred not being in the same room with him. I held the phone out.
“Bella?”
She gave me a suspicious look. I thought she seemed uncomfortable that Jacob and I were planning something together. She wanted us to get along, or so she said, but maybe in a way, she also didn’t want that.
“What was that all about?” she said into the phone, while I went to look out the windows. I heard only her part of the conversation.
“Is that what you were trying to sell him?”
“Get Billy on it. What else?”
“What do you mean by ‘keep an eye on things’?”
“Of course not. You really shouldn’t do anything…risky, though….”
“I’ll keep that in mind.”
“You’re coming up?”
“Jake, I really don’t like the idea of you tracking—”
Jacob must have laughed at this objection or said something dismissive because when I reentered the room, Bella was glaring at the handset like it had made a rude noise. She stuck her tongue out at it before hanging up.
I moved up silently and wrapped my arms around Bella from behind, setting my chin on her shoulder.
“When Jacob gets here, I’m going to follow the intruder’s trail. Emmett and Jasper already did it, but I want to check it for myself. I might notice something new.”
“Edward, I thought we were getting past this ridiculous stuff. You have to leave the house when he comes over?”
“It’s not that I feel any personal antagonism toward him, Bella, it’s just easier for both of us,” I told her, though I was still working on the antagonism part. I wasn’t quite there yet. “I won’t be far away. You’ll be safe,” I assured her.
“I’m not worried about that,” Bella said, predictably.
I turned to leave when I felt an overpowering urge to do something tremendously immature. I whirled Bella around and pulled her to me, burying my face in her hair. Then I forcefully exhaled all the air in my lungs.
Take that Jacob Black! I thought, terribly amused with myself.
Hope he’s gone, I heard as Jacob Black approached the house.
“I’ll be right back,” I told Bella, chuckling.
Just as we found the wet doggy smell of werewolves repulsive, the wolves were disgusted by our vampire scent. The sweetness of it burned the insides of their sensitive
noses. Jacob wouldn’t enjoy coming too close to Bella after I’d saturated her hair with the scent of my breath. In crude terms, I’d just marked Bella as mine, much like a dog would raise his leg to mark a tree. It was rude and childish, but exceptionally funny, I thought. I started laughing out loud imagining Jacob’s reaction.

“What’s so funny?” Bella pressed, but I wasn’t about to tell her.

I opened the front door and slipped out, still laughing to myself. The joke was between me and Jacob Black’s nose.